CHAPTER ELEVEN

Cosmic Judaism: The Temple of Aaron

IT WAS SAID at the outset that the guide to interpreting the paintings must be the details of the paintings themselves, and that what literary sources should be used to interpret the paintings must be determined by the designs and their relation to one another. Examination of the scenes to this point has strongly suggested that a master "philosopher" had planned the wall in general, and specified the artistic and symbolic details by which the Old Testament scenes should be represented. After studying the reredos with the portraits of Moses, we have examined the lowest register and found in balance two scenes of kingship, each flanked by a scene of a suprahuman baby, marked as such by the artistic conventions for such babies in pagan art. Since the suprahuman baby in the ancient world normally became the king, the connection of the royalty and the baby scenes appeared by no means accidental.

The conception of royalty in each of the two scenes is different, however. On the left the widow's son, miraculously restored to life, fig. 335, adjoins a scene that shows all the Jewish chauvinism of Purim, fig. 336. Through the intervention of the heavenly "four," Haman, degraded, has to lead the now utterly royal Mordecai, in comparison to whose dignity even Ahasuerus and his court are thoroughly subordinated. On the right of the reredos, however, beside the miraculous baby Moses, Jewish royalty is presented in a totally different way. David is being anointed by the leader of a purely hieratic group of seven. While no parallel representation of initiation could be found in pagan art, the scene so much represents the abstraction of mystical initiation that we feel here a royalty not of this world, a sort of royal mystic achievement. This impression of contrast between the triumphant Judaism of the material world and an immaterial Judaism, as it will repeatedly recur, will justify our looking for explanation to the Jewish sources which expound such a double value in Judaism, do so in hellenistic language as we see it expressed in pagan art in the synagogue.

The paintings on the west wall immediately above the ones we have been considering continue to present this same contrast. Here again two scenes stand on either side of the reredos, with one of the portraits of Moses integrated with each pair. Moses as a mystic philosopher expounding the law, at the right, balances Moses being taken through the heavenly bodies, or sharing their worship, on the left. Beside each Moses is a scene in

which a temple unit is painted. In both cases it consists of a lower outer wall with three doors, and an inner shrine with columns, whose acroteria are winged Victories bearing the wreath. But with this basic similarity of the two temples resemblance strikingly ceases. Beside the cosmic Moses, if I may so describe the figure on the left with the heavenly bodies, the temple stands on the ground, and shows Aaron in priestly robes, with five men assisting him. Two bulls and a ram advance for sacrifice, and an altar, two incense burners, and a lighted Menorah, stand in the court. The veiled Ark can be seen within the sanctuary. Details will be discussed below; but this shrine teems with activity. In complete contrast, the temple on the right stands beside Moses as he reads from the scroll; it has no priests, animals, or ritualistic implements. It does not even touch the ground, but is indicated almost like a modern abstraction showing an inner shrine superimposed upon courses of stones that run from border to border. Symbols are painted on the doors, but the temple otherwise has not a suggestion of realism.

Each of these two temples in turn has an accompanying scene as did the two scenes of royalty below. Beside the temple of Aaron, Moses strikes the rock for the twelve tribes. At the right of the abstract temple stands an incident clearly based upon the return of the Ark of the Covenant from the temple of the Philistines.

The selection of these paintings and their details seems to me for several reasons to follow the interpretation of the register below, which we have been discussing. First the balance of the two scenes of royalty is repeated in the balance of the two temples, and is obvious at first glance, in that Aaron's comparatively realistic temple stands over the realistic royalty and the abstract temple stands over the hieratic and abstract royalty of Samuel anointing David. As I have further studied these paintings it has seemed to me that the two scenes beside the temples belong ideologically each with its own temple, just as did the two babies with the two conceptions of royalty. It will be best, then, to consider the paintings of this register as they appear paired on either side, or, really, in triple balance, as each pair is introduced by its distinctive representations of Moses.

A. THE PAINTING AND ITS DETAILS

AARON PRESIDES over the temple at the left, a large figure identified by his name painted in Greek beside his head. See plates I and X, and fig. 332. If the artist had been guided by the description of the sanctuary over which Aaron presided as found in Exodus, he would have shown us a portable tent—the "tabernacle," as Kraeling still calls this temple.[1] Instead, the building is of stone, and thereby disassociates itself at once from the shrine of the wilderness. An outer crenelated wall extending only part way across the painting encloses an inner sanctuary. The courses of stones turn slightly upward at the

1. Kraeling's title for this scene, "The Consecration of the Tabernacle and Its Priests," seems to me entirely unjustified. For the Tabernacle and its furniture see Exod. XXV–XXVII, XXXVI–XXXVIII. Philo says that the "Tabernacle was constructed to resemble a sacred temple" (*Mos.* II, 89), but he otherwise follows the literal description of the tabernacle in the Bible. A drawing in a manuscript of *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, as published in Riedin, 290, fig. 316, shows that it was quite feasible at least to try to represent the tent of the curtains. The Dura temples show no signs of such an attempt.

right end, the change in direction beginning at the door on the right. Considering the representation of the two faces of the inner sanctuary above the wall, and the similar turning of the inner sanctuary of fig. 333, it would seem that we should recognize two faces of the outer wall also. The abstract temple clearly represents the same design further broken down for purposes of symbolism. The court of the Aaronic Temple is adapted to Judaism by having the cult utensils of the Jewish Temple or Tabernacle, but these clumsily intrude themselves into a design which showed two faces of an outer wall, a temenos, and two faces of a colonnaded shrine, topped by Victories. The design was almost certainly affected, or made to seem pertinent, by the great stone Temple of Herod, which Philo describes as an outer wall of great length and breadth, whose massive appearance was broken by four porticos (*stoai*).[2] Then came inner walls, and within this the inner sanctuary "with a beauty baffling description, to judge from what is exposed to view." The whole unit was of "mountainous" proportions, and "amazed visitors with its beauty and magnificence." Josephus' description makes the Temple even more phenomenal.[3]

Fortunately several examples of temples having the design of the synagogue painting have been preserved to us from paganism. Fig. 227,[4] a relief of unknown origin at the Berlin Museum, illustrates our first specimen. It shows Apollo carrying a cithara and holding a basin out to Victory who stands beside an altar and pours wine into the basin. Artemis [5] and probably Leto [6] follow him. But behind the row of figures rises a wall, which, like the outer wall of the Aaronic Temple, bends just above Apollo's head to suggest that it encloses the inner court. Within the court stands a peristyle shrine, its two faces flattened out just as at Dura, and again with exaggerated figures of Victory as the acroteria. A holy tree indicates the inside of the temenos at the right, and in front of it, outside the wall, the statue of a putto, or an actual child, stands on a high pedestal. Those who have examined the original say that a tripod once stood upon the free-standing column at the left.[7] Overbeck lists sixteen varied examples of this design.[8]

It would seem that Jews, either originally at Dura, or at the source of all this Jewish iconography, thought the design most suitable to illustrate their Jewish Temple worship. Other designs could have been adopted, and we know one striking Jewish example where the outer wall and inner temenos and colonnaded shrine were so adopted—on the famous gold glass at Rome.[9] Here the whole is seen from above: the wall surrounds a temenos in

2. *Spec.* I, 71–75.

3. *Antiquities*, XV, 380–425 (XI, 1–7).

4. Photo courtesy of the Staatliche Museen at Berlin. See F. Studniczka, "Die auf den Kitharodenreliefs dargestellten Heiligtümer," *JDAI*, XXI (1906), 77–89. See esp. his fig. 3, where a smaller fragment from the British Museum is illustrated, and J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, 1889, III, 259–269. The object has often been discussed. See the bibliographies in Studniczka and by P. Paris in DS, II, 139, n. 219; and O. Jahn's list of parallels in his *Griechische Bilderchroniken*, 1873, 45 f.

5. She carries her torch with the flame, as commonly, blown over. See Paris, 137, fig. 2356; 143, fig. 2373.

6. Little identifies her here, except that a second female figure with Apollo and Artemis can usually be taken as their mother.

7. The tripod still remains on a fragmentary example published by Studniczka, 82, fig. 3; cf. p. 81.

8. *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, 259–262.

9. Above, III, fig. 978; cf. II, 113–119.

which there is a shrine in perspective, the front with four columns and four steps. Again Jewish cult instruments are crowded into the court, drawn as though they stood on the wall. But except for the central menorah, which again burns toward the inner shrine, only the cult instruments of the synagogue appear—the lulab, ethrog, two unidentified objects, and two cups for wine. Since the design was in a cup, the whole centers in wine as definitely as the painting at Dura suggests the old cultus of Israel.

In trying to reconstruct what ideas may have lain behind the Dura design, we must understand what the Apollo relief really represents. We notice first that the Victories on the inner shrine are as exaggeratingly emphasized on the pagan relief as on both the Jewish paintings, and that even "Apollo" himself is being given the wine by Victory. At one place Strabo refers to a wall at Athens which stood between the temple of the Pythian Apollo and that of the Olympian Zeus.[10] Studniczka accordingly supposed that the relief celebrates the sanctity of the *citharodia*, a contest in singing to the cithara. The temple over the wall, he said, is that of the Olympian Zeus as actually reconstructed by Hadrian.

Studniczka may have been right, but he was drawing heavy conclusions by a slender thread.[11] His argument rests upon the assumption that the relief represents an actual scene, a specific temple, and does so with complete realism. But the main motif of the foreground, in which the god Apollo, accompanied probably by his sister and mother, has wine poured into his cup by Victory, could not be further from realism. There is no more reason to suppose that the temple and wall in the background represent real structures than that the procession to Victory in the foreground depict an historical incident. The composition in itself speaks of the divine power of ceremonial music to take one to a victory which seems represented below by the goddess in person, and above by the inner temple, mysteriously screened by the wall, a temple which she dominates in exaggerated emphasis. With such a victory, the artist seems to tell us, the tree, the putto, and the tripod of Dionysus find proper association. All this manifest declaration of the design itself may be ignored perhaps, that we may use the quotation from Strabo that a wall stood in Athens between the temple of Apollo and that of the Olympian Zeus. But to do so is to identify a design by a literary passage of no obvious relevance to any details of the relief except that it shows a wall before a temple.

The head in the front gable would seem to indicate that the temple was dedicated to Medusa—that is, to the supreme solar deity that Medusa had come to represent.[12] On such a temple Victory is to be found, or the temple is characterized by Victory, Victory so great that even Apollo and his music are appropriately glorified in her. We would seem to have the Apollo of the mystery which Rostovtzeff described as being very popular among the more intellectual people of the first centuries of the Roman empire.[13] In this, Apollo was still associated with Dionysus, as he was at Delphi, and as the tripod suggests here, but his was a more dignified and less ecstatic approach to salvation.

10. Strabo, IX, 2, 11 (Loeb ed., IV, 295).

11. C. R. Morey, *Early Christian Art*, 1942, 250, in commenting on his fig. 12, says that the temple was "possibly meant to represent Apollo's shrine at Delphi."

12. On the symbolism of Medusa see above, VII, 224–229.

13. Rostovtzeff, *Mystic Italy*, 1927, 126 f.

The emphasis of the design indicates this interpretation, but it would be much strengthened by external evidence, and this can be found only in the meaning and usages of Victory in the early imperial centuries. We have already seen that Victory and her crown were used primarily in contexts of the athletic games of Greek worship, in crowning a king or emperor, in crowning a victorious general, or a victor in contests of the Muses (poetry, music, etc.), or as a symbol of success in the mystic *agōn* or struggle, and hence appropriate for the "crown of life" on funerary monuments.[14] Of these the symbol seems to have settled down to two predominant usages, the one for a victorious general or emperor, which continued the ancient association of the goddess with military victory; the other for the mystic victory which gave immortal life.[15] Both had a common denominator in the supranatural or divine character of the king or emperor, or the supranatural power which victory in war implied, which was quite analogous to that aspect of divinity, immortality, which the mysteries promised. Figs. 228[16] and 141[17] show the two ideas combined for Roman generals in the East, where Victory brings the crown from the supreme solar deity, represented as either a Medusa or a Helios figure.

We are concerned, however, to see on what sort of temples people of the time used Victory as an acroterion. The question seems difficult, since acroteria are among the first things on a building to perish, and restorations cannot always be trusted for such details. The coins, however, show clearly that emperors liked to use the goddess in various ways to indicate their own power,[18] and that they accordingly put her up as an acroterion on temples to themselves or to Rome.[19] If the temple of fig. 227 was a temple built by Hadrian, then he might have used Victories, but would dubiously have done so for a temple to the Olympian Zeus at Athens, at least in the sense in which he used Victories on temples to imperial divinity, as in fig. 229,[20] or as shown on his coins.

In contrast, Victory appears on mystic temples, as on the temple to Cybele or the Great Mother in fig. 230.[21] She rarely appears on the temples in Roman paintings, but

14. See above, VII, 135–171.

15. Pausanias, for example, mentions two temples with Victories as acroteria, or on the pediment in his *Description of Greece*. In V, x, 4, he says she is on the pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, a temple, the context shows, deeply associated with military and athletic contests. In II, xi, 5–8, he describes a sanctuary of Asclepius at Titane, which had images of Asclepius, Hygeia, the deified Alexanor and Euamerion, as well as of Dionysus, Hecate, Aphrodite, Tyche, and a famous athlete who distinguished himself in the Olympic games. On this temple Heracles and Victories stand "on the gables at the ends," presumably as acroteria. The two types of associations, that is, seem very old.

16. From Sélim Abdul-Hak, "Rapport préliminaire sur des objets provenant de la nécropole romaine située à proximité de Nawa," *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie*, IV/V (1954/55), plate VI.

17. See above, IX, 149.

18. See M. Bernhart, *Handbuch zur Münzkunde der römischen Kaiserzeit*, 1926, II, for example plates 4, no. 4; 8, nos. 1, 9; 47, no. 10; 93, no. 12. Cf. the Text, pp. 101 f.

19. Ibid., plates 57, no. 2; 91, nos. 6–8; 93, nos. 2, 5.

20. Photo courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Studniczka, *JDAI*, XXI (1906), 86–89, and fig. 4. Mrs. Arthur Strong, *La Scultura romana da Augusto a Costantino*, 1923, I, 71, fig. 45; cf. p. 69.

21. Photo courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Strong, ibid., fig. 44. For this and the foregoing see also E. Petersen, *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 1902, plate III, 7, 13.

when she is represented she seems usually to accompany mystic motifs. She appears many times in the decoration of an extraordinary Pompeian house, the Villa Farnesina.[22] While a few of the scenes in it are erotic, most of them, and especially those with which Victory is associated, belong to what even Rostovtzeff was forced to call "Mystic Italy." [23] In a similar Roman house, that of Livia, Victories flank a painting, itself within a painted shrine, in which Hermes, and perhaps Ares, come to a woman seated beneath a female statue on a high pedestal.[24]

The most important example, however, is a painting from Pompeii in the Casa del Citarista, of which I publish the old drawing, fig. 232.[25] Here a woman and a girl, perhaps mother and daughter, are apparently engaged in some sort of rite, since another woman approaches at the left with a dish of fruit and with two wreaths ready to be tied on their heads. The woman who approaches also carries a pitcher. Helbig thought the goose or swan beside the central woman might indicate Leda, but the great eagle flying in at the left would hardly go with this interpretation. Notably the two statues at the back have one a musical instrument, the other a bird. Behind these figures stands the temple drawn in two faces, like the other temples we are especially considering, and it has Victories at two of the angles of the roof. The festoons on the temple lead us again to suppose that the occasion being depicted had special significance. The wreath at the side of the temple certifies that the value of the temple and its rites was that of the Victories. Trees appear, but this time outside the wall, which itself again has the angle of bending. The scene, that is, represents the inside of the temenos, perhaps in a "House of the Cithara Player," ideologically the same temenos. The wall has a row of little plinths with urns on them, and this may originally have been the function of the crenelations on the wall of Aaron. We recall at once the similar jars of wine on the wall of the temple scene of the Jewish gold glass.

We strongly suspect, accordingly, that this painted temple from Pompeii had some sort of mystic significance, and that its Victories and wreath, certainly here not mementos of imperial or martial divinity, referred to the mystic victory. The wall and the little temple may well have been modifications, or variations, for expressing the ideas we found suggested in the citharode scene with Apollo.

Another ancient relief, fig. 231,[26] gives us a fresh approach to our problem. Here a female figure very similar to those in the cithara reliefs again offers a basin to Victory,

22. *Mon. ined.*, XII (1884–85), plates v*a*, XVIII, XIX, XXVIII; Supplementary Volume, plates XXXII–XXXVI. Cf. J. Lessing and A. Mau, *Wand- und Dekkenschmuck eines römischen Hauses*, 1891, plates I, V, VII, XII–XVI.

23. He discusses the house in his book of that title, 113–124.

24. Curtius, 93, fig. 65. I can find no discussion of this scene.

25. From Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 1868, Tafeln, plate V; cf. p. 44, no. 152. See also *Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia*, III, 1939, Pompeii, i, by O. Elia, plate IV.

26. Courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. See Jahn, *Griechische Bilderchroniken*, plate V; cf. pp. 39–53; L. Stephani, "Der ausruhende Herakles," *Mémoires de l'Académie imp. des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, Ser. VI, Vol. VIII (1855), 251–540; idem in *Compte rendu de la Commission Impériale Archéologique pour l'année 1873*, 228–242; Furtwängler in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.*, I, 2251 f.

who pours into it with the same gesture. The female figure holds a torch, and by this seems to me identified with Artemis.[27] Victory stands beside an altar on which Apollo is carved with the cithara, accompanied by two females. Behind Artemis is a tripod on a high pedestal, and behind it, his name written beside his head, Heracles, who also holds out a libation basin. In an upper register "Heracles at rest" is shown on a great lion skin like a flying carpet, where he is surrounded by a Bacchic company. It has seemed clear that the whole design represents the apotheosis of Heracles, and clearly the means presented is the pouring by Victory into the basin. We have in this and the Apollo relief, then, exactly the same mystic rite, with the implication here spelled out that the rite takes one "out beyond." The *au dela* is the Bacchic heaven in the lion skin; in the Apollo relief it is the hidden inner shrine with its Victories. Fig. 233 [28] shows Apollo alone with Victory in the same act. Between them an omphalos takes the place of an altar.[29]

I see no reason to try to identify the original pagan temple, or the scene. For our purpose we note that this scene of pouring by Victory, so important that it could be represented quite by itself, shows by its setting in the two other scenes that it carries the hope of immortality or divinization which the mysteries offered. The immortality could be presented as Heracles in the Dionysiac thiasos, or as the hidden temple with Victories. Readers of my earlier volumes will recall that the motif of a woman thus pouring for a man, a woman who could become Victory herself, seemed a very important one, with significance much like this, in classical Greece. Victory and Apollo stand here in an old and meaningful relation.[30]

It becomes now highly important that the artist or "philosopher" at Dura should have taken over from such a setting precisely this design of shrine and wall, with the exaggerated Victories as acroteria, to use in representing the Aaronic priesthood and its significance. I cannot believe that he selected it, and kept the Victories, just because it was what Kraeling calls a cliché. The artist has broken the wall with doors, he has raised the inner shrine to make room for the Jewish cult objects, and been quite ingenious in putting them into the narrow space, especially in planning the relation of the menorah to the inner Ark. And he could at once keep the design and break it down almost completely for the other Jewish temple, fig. 333. Both the Victories and the design seem to say that for him the Aaronic worship was a sort of mystery which led to the victory of eternal life.[31]

Other details of the Aaronic temple strengthen such a conclusion. Of the three doorways which break the wall, the center one is slightly larger than the other two, the one

27. I make this suggestion tentatively, in the hope that it may not bring down the wrath of a Stephani, as did the suggestions of Jahn.

28. Courtesy of the Louvre Museum. Cf. Overbeck, plate XXI, no. 11.

29. On the significance of the omphalos see, inter alia, my "A Jewish-Gnostic Amulet of the Roman Period," *Greek and Byzantine Studies*, I (1958), 74, and A. A. Barb, "Diva Matrix," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XVI (1953), 222 f., n. 104 f.

30. See above VI, 34 f., figs. 209 f.

31. The form reappears in Christian art on many pages of the ninth-century Utrecht Psalter. See E. T. DeWald, *The Illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter* [1932], passim, esp. plates XV, XCII, CIX. Cf. *Menolog. Basil II*, plate III.

at the right slightly larger than the third. Possibly we are to suppose that the doorway at the right goes with the face of the wall here turned, and that the difference in sizes represents an attempt at perspective. Of this, of course, we cannot be sure, for in fact the doorways as painted are not integrated with the courses of stones at all. They merely indicate three openings in the wall, with little attempt at realism.

The doorways contain each a pair of doors, six in all, and each door has two panels. The lintels over the doorways carry a shell in an arch. The shells, here drawn with exaggerated prominence, would mark the entrance to a sacred place, if they did not carry more specific suggestions of hope for immortality.[32] The doors with their panels and shells have the favorite form used for mystic shrines and arks of the Law,[33] and that three doors stand in the outer wall of this and the other temple will also imply a symbolism of immortality to those who have read my discussion of the shrine form in a previous volume.[34] Actually the three entrances correspond to the biblical requirement of the "gate of the court," which was to have "four pillars and with them four bases." [35] The four pillars would have made three entrances, and it may well be that symbolism lay behind the original specifications. According to the Bible, a curtain was to be hung across this entire front, apparently, since the curtain was twenty cubits long, approximately thirty feet. But I should guess that the "philosopher" is following an allegory of the specifications for the temple rather than the biblical text, since he so rarely agrees with the text. The pink-lined blue curtain, half withdrawn from the center door, has little resemblance to the curtain before the three entrances to the tabernacle as described in the Bible. The curtain as here drawn suggests at once a mystery,[36] and, by being half withdrawn, an invitation to enter. Possibly its colors too may have had significance: blue curtains and robes have for centuries been the robe of the heavens, and the light pink, which is also the color of the veil with the Ark above, will seem often at Dura to represent light.[37] On the matter of color symbolism, however, I put no emphasis, since one cannot select some colors in a painting to be symbolic and not others, and I am by no means prepared to trace color symbolism throughout these scenes. Philo allegorizes the biblical colors,[38] but they only occasionally correspond to the colors in the painting. It will appear, however, that the scene as a whole represents a Judaism which expressed itself in cosmic mysticism, so that the possibility of color symbolism should be borne in mind.[39]

32. See above, VIII, 95–105.

33. Above, III, figs. 471 f., 573, 639, 666, 964–968, 973 f.; IV, figs. 49, 58 f.

34. Above, IV, 103–111.

35. Exod. XXVII, 16.

36. C. Schneider has collected most interesting material on curtains in the mystery religions: "Studien zum Ursprung liturgischer Einzelheiten östlicher Liturgien," *Kyrios*, I (1936), 70–73.

37. The colors of the curtain in Exod. XXVII, 16—blue, purple, and scarlet—may have been emphasized in the allegory which the "philosopher" is following.

38. *Mos.* II, 87 f.

39. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 130, identifies this curtain on the central door with the screen or cloth for the gate of the court of the tabernacle, Exod. XXVII, 16; XXXVIII, 18. But this screen, as just recalled, was to be twenty cubits long. It might be identified, as du Mesnil suggested (*Peintures*, 56), with the "screen at the gate of the court" of Exod. XL, 33; Num. IV, 26.

Within the temenos or court between the wall and the inner sanctuary stand at the left one of the five temple servants or priests whom we shall discuss together, as well as two burning altars of incense, a menorah with lamps lighted, an altar of sacrifice with an animal lying on it (which Kraeling felt he could identify as a ram [40]), and, finally, the majestic figure of Aaron himself. The wall obscures Aaron's feet, so that we must assume that he, like the other objects, stood in the court behind it. No smoke rises from the altar, presumably because the artist had no room to show it, but the fire of the menorah and smaller altars indicate a ceremony being performed.

Behind these, the inner sanctuary of the Greco-Roman form has been adapted to show the Holy of Holies of the ancient temple. Its front and one side, drawn with no attempt at perspective, show five columns; four are on the side, and the first of these serves also, along with the fifth column, to carry the gabled pediment of the front. Brown stone courses form the wall behind the side columns. The little shrine carries only two symbols: an eight-point rosette in the gable, and the three representations of the goddess Victory with her wreath as acroteria. We recall again that the rosette was symbolically a counterpart of the gorgoneum of the pagan temple so much like this one.[41] Beneath the gable, where we should have expected a front wall and door, the artist has given no masonry whatever. Instead, a black background fills the space. The branches of the menorah stand out against the lower part of this background, and above it the artist has put the front face of a round-topped object with paneled front. In spite of the varieties of detail with which this object frequently appears in the synagogue paintings, all scholars agree that it represents the Ark of the Covenant. A pink curtain draped behind it seems to follow the convention so common on sarcophagi of the period. For when a curtain is put behind the portraits of the dead at the center of a sarcophagus the scene must be read in reverse, and we must suppose that it shows the dead as having gone behind the curtain of death. The convention seems an obvious one to represent a curtain and what is behind it at the same time.[42] So I take it that we are to understand that the Ark stands behind the curtain in this scene, as it did in the biblical tradition. In the rounded top of the Ark above the paneled doors the artist put a menorah, with a rosette on either side of it.[43] The Ark is represented several times in the paintings, each time with different insignia.[44] The dominating symbol of both this scene and the one at its left, fig. 331, is the menorah, and we shall see that it is entirely proper that the Ark should be marked here with that symbol.

Although the Ark and the inner sanctuary seem to have little connection with the active sacrifice, the Ark could well be taken to be the object before which the sacrifice is offered, as would be true according to both biblical and pagan traditions. The hidden

40. *Synagogue*, 126, where he gives a detailed description of the altar and the other objects, with a line drawing of the altar and ram.

41. See above, p. 6 and fig. 227.

42. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 57.

43. In the final restoration these were painted out except for a meaningless arc of a circle, plate x. Gute's painting, fig. 332, and the early photographs support du Mesnil's drawing.

44. See below, p. 84, where drawings of the three are shown. We are here concerned with the one on the left.

"real presence" is here not a statue, but again the supreme symbol of Yahweh, the Ark itself.[45] Most obviously the lights of the menorah are oriented toward it. The Ark conspicuously has no cherubim and takes the form of a bookcase such as Moses has beside him for the scrolls in fig. 326. The form itself is attested as a chest for scrolls beside Moses, but does not appear in pagan art to represent a bookcase.[46] But there can be no doubt that the artist or "philosopher," who could have put winged Victories as cherubim on the box had he so desired, did not wish to do so, and instead, for the box with Moses, and all the arks of the synagogue, shows a form extremely old, one chiefly associated with tombstones, or the ends of round-topped sarcophagi.[47] When one considers the great care often taken to represent Jewish tomb doors as paneled,[48] one suspects that, like the similar paneling on the doors of the outer wall below, paneling was in some way itself at least so much associated with sacred doors that whether used with conscious symbolic intent or not, it had almost become *de rigueur* to put panels on sacred doors. Here we are helped by the paneling of some sacred object adored by a priest, and with the sign of Ohrmazd above it, on early coins of Persia, fig. 234.[49] It is customary to call this object a temple, but it may well have been a chest which, like the Ark, brought the divine presence. The form of the Ark as a whole is also that of actual Jewish Torah shrines as represented in the period, except that they usually had a shell in the rounded top.[50] The most important single things that God told Moses to put into the Ark of the Covenant, indeed the only ones which the Old Testament mentions,[51] were two stone tablets of the Decalogue. Hence the Ark of the Covenant, once the Old Testament description of the box with the cherubim was abandoned, inevitably took the form of the synagogal Torah shrine. But the historic origin of this object remains for later discoveries to illuminate. One of the most telling witnesses that the Dura art had an original connection with the tradition which lay behind the early Old Testament manuscript illustrations of Christianity is that the Ark takes precisely the same form in them. Fig. 235 [52] shows the Ark without the cherubim, fig. 240 [53] the same sort of Ark with the cherubim added. The two lines almost certainly met in pre-Christian Jewish art in Alexandria.

45. The arrangement of the tabernacle of the wilderness, as well as of the later temples of Yahweh, had the sacrifices there before the Ark. Josh. VIII, 30–33, describes such a sacrifice at an altar erected by Joshua on Mount Ebal.

46. See above, IV, figs. 72–75, 78.

47. Above, III, figs. 144, 208, 233 f., 236, 281; IV, figs. 24, 33.

48. See above, III, figs. 45, 47.

49. A coin of Autophradates, of the late second century B.C., from de Morgan, *Numismatique de la Perse antique*, Planches, plate XXVII, 19; cf. plates XXVII–XXIX passim. On later coins the paneling disappears and the god sits directly on the chest. Cf. Hill, *Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*, 1922, plates XXVIII–XXX (*CBM*).

50. See above, n. 32.

51. Deut. X, 5; XXXI, 26 (where it is put beside the Ark), I Kings VIII, 9. The statement in Heb. IX, 4, that it also contained "a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded" has no counterpart in existing Jewish legend, but may well have been current among Jews at the time. See *JE*, II, 103–106.

52. Courtesy of the Vatican Library. It is from fol. 331[r] of cod. vat. gr. 746, an illuminated Octateuch.

53. Courtesy of the Vatican Library. It is from fol. 158[v] of cod. vat. gr. 747, another illuminated Octateuch. The cherubim could be angels in the form of Victories: Riedin, *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, 283, fig. 304; 286, fig. 311.

Before this Ark in the synagogue painting the sacrifice takes place. Again it seems to me not a matter of chance, however, that even the altar is subordinated, and that the cult object put in immediate relation with the Ark is the menorah, shown in exaggerated importance as compared with the other objects. To this we shall return.

Aaron himself stands in impressive dignity beside the altar of sacrifice. Kraeling [54] has gone to considerable trouble to find details of resemblances between his dress and the robes prescribed for Aaron in the Bible,[55] but seems to me to fail completely. I fully agree with Widengren when he says that the two robes are *diamétralement opposées*, and that "one could not imagine a costume more Iranian and less Jewish." [56] Widengren was here still using the earlier sketches of the robe that showed Victories and Erotes along with the "round objects" for jewels, but although I myself earlier used this sketch,[57] Kraeling seems quite right in discarding it for the robe as drawn in fig. 237,[58] where only jewels are shown. But to this Widengren's remarks seem also appropriate. The costume consists of the caftan and trousers in rich colors and with a yellow stripe down the front of the caftan and each leg. The red cape, open at the bottom and covered with jewels, is held together across the breast by a large oval brooch of gold, and is lined with a checkerboard pattern of black (or dark) and white squares clearly visible in fig. 237.[59] These checks, so far as I can see, have intruded themselves into the painting from the Old Testament, for in Exodus XXVIII, 39, the whole coat of Aaron was to be made of checker work of fine linen. I can find no trace of such checks on Iranian robes. The cape itself, without the checks, is worn over the caftan and trousers by a man on the ladder above Jacob, fig. 345,[60] but by no one else in the synagogue. The royal cloak, as it appears on Ahasuerus and Mordecai, fig. 336, on Pharaoh, fig. 338, and on a figure who is apparently a captain on horseback, fig. 344,[61] resembles this, but has sleeves and no checks. The sleeveless cape does reappear, however, in the Dura Mithraeum on each of a pair of enthroned figures at either side of the sanctuary, fig. 140,[62] on holy figures of some sort on three frieze fragments from the middle Mithraeum, and, we now recall, here and generally on Mithra himself, both when he

54. *Synagogue*, 127 f.

55. Exod. XXXVIII.

56. "Juifs et Iraniens," 212. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 127, n. 451, notes the similarity to Iranian royal costume, but tries to connect its parts with details of the biblical garments, for which see J. Gabriel, *Untersuchungen über das alttestamentliche Hohepriestertum mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des hohepriesterlichen Ornates*, 1933 (Theologische Studien der Österreichischen Leo-Gesellschaft, 33).

57. See above, VII, 136, n. 6.

58. From Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 127, fig. 41.

59. The checks disappeared in the course of restoring or exposure to light, if we can judge from plate X. Such checks appear on the dress of the woman in fig. 346, and on the chiton, himation, clavi, and gams of Moses in fig. 331. Pfister, *Nouveaux textiles de Palmyre*, 29 f., discussed fragments of such cloth found at Palmyra, and thought them to be very fine cloth with purple dye, but whether these fragments had ceremonial use or implication with pagans I cannot say.

60. See below, p. 167.

61. So it appears in the original photograph: the reconstructed drawing is clearly wrong.

62. Courtesy of the Yale University Art Gallery. This is the figure at the right: see above, III, fig. 57, and Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos*, VII/VIII, plates II and XVI f. Cf. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Le Nouveau Mithréum de Doura-Europos en Syrie," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Ser. VI, Vol. XIII (1935), 1–14.

kills the bull [63] and when he is the mystic hunter.[64] It is worn by Adonis in his Dura temple, fig. 149, and, by Ohrmazd in the Tak-i-Bostan relief, on which from either side a god and goddess offer king Chosroes II a crown, fig. 236.[65] Daniel in the lion's den at Ravenna wears this cape, as does Melchizedek at Ravenna and at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.[66] The figure of Daniel is often clearly designed to double for Mithra himself,[67] so that the combination of Persian caftan and trousers with the cape would seem to distinguish a divinity or priest rather than a king, though of course the king might have worn such a cape when he functioned as a priest. The transition to the Christian cope clearly appears when Daniel wears it as a priest, but still without the chiton-cassock.[68]

The jewels on Aaron's cape are another token, I should guess, of divinity or priesthood. True, the king Chosroes II in fig. 236 has a caftan and trousers covered with jewels, but in this scene the king seems in the act of being apotheosized by the god and goddess.[69] A similar jeweled dress appears on two little unpublished bronze figures, one in the Yale Babylonian Collection, fig. 238,[70] the other in a private collection in New York, fig. 239.[71] Their headdress is unique in Sassanian art so far as I know, but the horns would probably

63. Rostovtzeff, plates XXIX f., and H. H. von der Osten, *Die Welt der Perser*, 2d ed., 1956, plate 90 (Grosse Kulturen der Frühzeit). See above, I, fig. 57.

64. Rostovtzeff, plates XIV f.

65. From E. Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, 1920, plate XLIV, and see his plates XLII, XLIX, LV f., LVIII; cf. Pope, *Persian Art*, IV, plate 160*b;* Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 127, n. 451; du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 61, fig. 48. Chosroes II (A.D. 539–628) was the last great Sassanian king.

66. The three are reproduced by Alföldi, *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of A. M. Freund*, plate IX, 19; cf. 20, 22, and p. 47. And see du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 60, fig. 47.

67. Weitzmann may be right, but I cannot share his confidence that any of the figures in the "Martyrion" at Antioch represent either Old Testament or New Testament characters or scenes. The keystone of his argument (see his p. 135) seems to be the "certain identification" of Daniel, wearing the cape and buckle in the same way, and his feeling that, were the fragment complete, the lions would have appeared. Actually "Daniel" is so framed that the lions could never have stood beside him, and in their absence the figure would probably have represented "Mithra" or some other god. See his "The Iconography of the Reliefs from the Martyrion," in R. Stillwell, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, III, 1941, 135–149; the "Daniel" is on plate 17, fig. 368. The buckle has the form of a "round object." What Weitzmann calls the "Joseph scene" is likewise by no means certainly such. The rest of the fragments, even the "Christ Pantokrator" seem even less assured.

68. Cf. Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex*, 162, and fig. 155. It is from a manuscript of *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, cod. vat. gr. 699, fol. 75^{r}. I find it interesting that the rulers of the four universal kingdoms, described in Dan. VII as riding on monstrous beasts, wear in this drawing the Persian costume, and ride what look to be Dionysiac lions, although the second seems to have a bear's head, and the last, for no recognizable reason, a horse's or ass' head. These figures must have had a long and interesting history.

69. Cf. the jeweled royal clothing in Herzfeld, plate XLIX, and above, VII, fig. 211. Chosroes wears the same cape, at least, in a miniature in the Gothas manuscript of the Saxon World Chronicle: see L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, 116, fig. 84. See also the little figure at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D. C., published in their *Handbook of the Collection*, 1955, 85, no. 148.

70. Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection. It is 2⅞ inches high, cast in half round and hollow, presumably to be attached to a wooden surface which has disappeared. Of its provenance the only record is that it was "found in a quarry near Mosul."

71. It was formerly the property of Mr. Theodore Leavitt.

be the moon sickle associated with Mah, the moon god, and since a divinity is so much more apt to appear in little affixes than a king, I should suppose that the figures represent Mah.[72] That is, the jeweled robe is that of a deity, and may well have been a convention to suggest the "bright, white" garment, "round and manifest afar" of Ohrmazd himself, as described in Zurvanism.[73] Another source says he "is clad in the stone-hard sky," [74] and the jewels may well refer to the stars in this sky. But Vay, Ohrmazd's militant alter ego, or assistant, wears a "red, wine-colored, and jewel-bedecked robe of warriorhood," [75] so that while the jeweled robe suggests divinity, it by no means identifies the god.

An amateur runs great danger in using Iranian literary sources. As we have them, they are late compilations of early material, but how much earlier is not decided. Most scholars agree, however, that their main ideas go back at least to the period of the synagogue. The Denkart has a passage which may be relevant to our purpose. It is a Zurvanist account of how Ohrmazd through finite time made four agents of creation, two good and two evil. One of the two good ones is the "robe of priesthood," a priesthood which "orders good in its pure estate"; we shall return to it below.[76] The second good one, the "robe of warriorhood," seems so pertinent to the meaning of this painting that I quote it in full. The robe

> which, since it comprises good order, ability, priesthood, the parent of wisdom, power, and the orderly dispensation of the [natural] law, influences whatever has the character of orderliness and tends to benefit creation; and this was bestowed on him [sc. Vāy] through Time from its decisive dispensation that orders aright to its ultimate advantage, and it has the same origin as Vāy, the recipient of this very weapon above and within both [creations] till the end: and this robe is the essence of Vāy of lofty deeds and his garment; among the gods it is associated chiefly with the Spirit Vāy whose name is the Wheel, that is the firmament, and it is also called Spahr (*θwāša*), and with the swift wind and the breath of man; among virtues it is with the speed which is in men, that is valor; among modes of conduct in . . . orderliness; among characters in righteous desire and action conducive to greater good order; among material "forms" in the swift and valiant body; among the castes in the warriors; among rulers in the valiant commander of an army; among garments in the red and wine-colored garment, adorned with all kinds of ornament, with silver and gold, chalcedony, and shining ruby; among deeds in the great good ordering of character, the destruction and furtherance of both the good and evil creations.[77]

We could not get a better description of the robe of Aaron than a "red and wine-colored garment, adorned with all kinds of ornament, with silver and gold, chalcedony, and shining ruby." When we see how the symbolism of the Closed Temple accords with the de-

72. The crescent moon frequently appears on Sassanian crowns, as on that with Chosroes II in fig. 236. See also E. Herzfeld, *Archäologischen Mitteilungen aus Iran*, IX (1938), 102, fig. 1; 141, fig. 21; 143, fig. 23; plate VIII; Pope, *Persian Art*, IV, plates 213 f., 229, 239. But these all have the sun as a globe or star within the crescent. Mah appears with the crescent alone (not as headdress) on two silver plates: J. Orbeli, ibid., IV, plates 207B and 233A; cf. I, 735 f. The crescent is on the crown to represent Mah: Herzfeld, 110, 113, fig. 9.

73. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 119; cf. 122.

74. Quoted by Zaehner, 120.

75. Ibid., 122.

76. See below, p. 62.

77. As translated by Zaehner, 377 f.

scription of the other type of creation, it will seem highly likely that this conception (not necessarily this literary passage) has entered into the synagogue artist's conception of the priestly robe and priesthood of Aaron. In Iranian terms it presents him as a priest of "the good in its contaminated state"—that is, material creation.

Aaron wears the garment, I am sure, not to identify him with any Sassanian deity, but to announce to people who knew the local oriental symbolism that he was "priest of the Most High God," by virtue of his being priest of the God of Judaism. The only feature of Aaron's dress which seems to me to echo the biblical description is the checked lining of the cape which appeared at the bottom. This single detail cannot obscure the total dissimilarity of Aaron's cape to the biblical robe of Aaron.[78] It seems impossible to identify the cape more closely, in view of the difficulty of Persian written sources in the period and the paucity of plastic representations. But Aaron may well be wearing a robe like that of some priest in one of the Dura temples. We shall come to feel its relevance to order in material creation.

How this cape got into the western Christian tradition of the Old Testament illustration for Aaron's robe I cannot say, but its presence in the two traditions again suggests a common ancestor. For the cape is definitely not a western garment, much as it seems to resemble the chlamys. Yet it appears for Aaron several times in Christian art, and, indeed, became the cope of ecclesiastical dress, worn, of course, even by Aaron over the Greek tunic that became the cassock, fig. 241.[79] In fig. 242 [80] Aaron is robed by Moses in the center, and then, nimbed, stands in his priestly dress with his rod. I can only suppose that the cope or cape was borrowed by Christians for ecclesiastical dress in the East, and that Westerners kept the cope while they rejected the Persian trousers that originally went with it. In view of its complicated history in Christian art and vestments, its appearance in a synagogue for Aaron, along with its proper accompaniment of other eastern garments, is most important.

As another eastern element, Aaron wears the Parthian tiara, which here, as often, comes down over the ears and has a row of pearls round the front edge.[81] Except that Phraates III (70–57 B.C.) has an additional row of pearls over the top of his tiara, fig. 243,[82] his tiara seems identical with that of Aaron.

78. See above, p. 13, n. 56.

79. From *Smyrna Octateuch*, plate 60, fig. 183 (85 ro.); cf. *Const. Octateuch*, plate XXIV, figs. 137, 139, 146.

80. Courtesy of Museo Civico, Bologna, Italy. Cf. H. Graeven, *Frühchristliche und mittelalterliche Elfenbeinwerke in photographischer Nachbildung, aus Sammlungen in Italien*, 1900, fig. 2. Cf. a medieval enamel plaque at the British Museum published in the *Burlington Magazine*, XXXVII (1920), plate XVI, and in color by A. W. Franks, "Vitreous Art," in J. Waring, *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, 1858, plate 6.

81. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 60. Compare the headdress of many kings on Persian and Parthian coins: J. de Morgan, *Numismatique de la Perse antique*, for example plates XXXIII f.; Pope, *Persian Art*, IV, plates 141 f.

82. Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, New York. See Pope, ibid., IV, plate 141*q*. The thin cloth hanging down Aaron's back was made part of the tiara in the repainting for restoration, fig. 237. It can be clearly seen in the sketch by du Mesnil, *Peintures*, plate XXVIII, which reproduces the tiara as it appears in the first photographs.

This headdress has no relation to that of the biblical high priest, for the latter was "wound" upon the head.[83] We ordinarily call such an object a turban, but the Septuagint translates it as *kidaris*, a headdress which Philo described as "regularly worn by eastern monarchs instead of a diadem." [84] He wears it, Philo also says, to show that "he who is consecrated to God is superior to all others when he acts as a priest, superior not only to the ordinary layman, but even to kings." [85] So while the rabbis, following the Hebrew, were describing the headdress of the priest as a piece of cloth sixteen cubits long and wound round the head like a turban,[86] Philo saw in the Greek word a definite reference to the royal tiara of the East. This is also the tiara of Aaron in the painting. It would have looked quite appropriate to one whose Bible was in Greek, not at all so to one reading in the Hebrew.

The tiara likewise has a long history in Christian ecclesiastical costume, its most famous survival being the triple tiara of the Pope at Rome.[87] Aaron's tiara conspicuously lacks the distinctive mark of his Hebrew priesthood, the tetragram.

With his checker-lined and jeweled cape, the Persian garments beneath it, and the oriental tiara above, Aaron proclaims himself priest with all the dignity and prerogatives of Persian divinity, royalty, and priesthood. He is still Aaron, and, with the Jewish cult instruments before him, clearly presides over the ancient Hebrew sacrifice. We can hardly explain this combination by agreeing with Kraeling that since the artist was "not an antiquarian" he was coming as close to the biblical costume "as his repertory of design . . . would allow"; that he had "done his very best to portray . . . all six of the garments of the Israelite High Priest." [88] Instead, he has done his best, and succeeded very well, in giving to Aaron the appurtenances of Persian priesthood. When even the ephod and tetragram fail to appear, we must suppose that in giving Aaron the accouterments of Persian priesthood the artist was proclaiming that the values of Persian priesthood inhered in Judaism itself, just as when Mordecai wears the diadem in the scene below Aaron, he assumes for Jews the prerogatives of Persian royalty.

In the sacrifice five attendants, much smaller than Aaron and hence of less dignity, accompany him. Four stand each with a shofar,[89] the two at the right with the shofar at their lips, apparently just about to blow them. The shofars have bands about them, and suggest that they might have come from a special kind of ram that grew ringed horns. But I have been unable to identify any such sheep. It is interesting, however, that exactly such

83. Lev. XVI, 4 (see the Hebrew).

84. *Mos.* II, 116; cf. *QE* II, 105.

85. *Mos.* II, 131. See my *By Light, Light*, 105. There is always the possibility that this headdress was actually worn by the Hasmonean priest-kings, but I know nothing to confirm such a suggestion.

86. G. T. Purvis in *HDB*, III, 398*b*; J. Eisenstein in *JE*, VIII, 622 f.

87. Still the best treatment of the history of the tiara is that of E. Münz, "La Tiare pontificale du VIII^e^ au XVI^e^ siècle," *Mém.*, AIB, XXXVI (1898), 235–324. A late survival of Aaron's tiara is on his head in Riedin, *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, plates XXVI f.

88. *Synagogue*, 127; cf. 128.

89. Those who examined the painting carefully reported that the one at the extreme left carries some object in his hand. I see no reason for associating the peculiar form reported for it with the half-shekel of Exod. XXX, 11–16, as does Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 129.

shofars appear in early Christian illumination, as in fig. 244,[90] so that, since horns of this kind must have been rare, we have another detail that calls for an ultimate common ancestor.[91] The fifth attendant carries a sacrificial ax over his shoulder, perhaps about to strike the bovoid he holds,[92] though I should think it is here only being led in for sacrifice. We should note that sacrifice with an ax is quite foreign to Jewish tradition; while the painter may have ignored Jewish tradition at this point, he probably did not know it at all.[93] The animal seems about to be sacrificed, since he has a garland round his body. His genitals, if indicated at all (there seem faint traces in an early photograph), by no means are so presented here as to determine the sex, nor are they on two animals at the right, another bovoid and a sheep.[94] Absence of genitals on the animal garlanded for sacrifice, then, if they actually were absent, by no means indicates a heifer. Still Kraeling may be right, and it may be the red heifer of Numbers XIX, 2–9, which is indicated, for the reddish brown color contrasts with the colors of the other animals in the painting, and its being outside the temple (city) precincts makes the identification plausible.[95]

Only the three curtains, one green and two red, looped at the top of the painting, remain to be mentioned. Such curtains we found in the two scenes of the babies in the synagogue, but in no other painting there, and since the same curtains, by no means common anywhere, appeared on the sarcophagi of the baby Dionysus, we must suppose they have special significance when represented. The same conclusion suggests itself when we see a painting with draped curtains over a table in the Octateuchs, fig. 245.[96] Such curtains appear in the Octateuchs only here. The miniature, in presenting the table of the tabernacle, shows something which can be explained from Old Testament texts only by the most insistent allegory. For the table looks much like a Catholic altar, except that two ewers and two cups stand upon it. The cups rest upon plates of some kind, but the plates contain no bread. The obvious guess is that the ewers represent water and wine. If the Christian table suggests the Eucharist, incidentally, it recalls even more strongly the table of pagan

90. From the *Const. Octateuch*, plate XXXV, fig. 233 (fol. 480^{v}). For other appearances see Weitzmann, *Joshua*, plate V; cf. pp. 14, 16, 37.

91. Such a horn has actually been used as a shofar: see no. 12 of those illustrated in *JE*, XI, 303. My colleague D. Ripley tells me this is an antelope horn. How it came to be used as a shofar I leave others to investigate.

92. Cf. the cup from Boscoreale: Strong, *La Scultura romana da Augusto a Costantino*, 1923, I, fig. 56 on p. 83. Here the act of sacrifice appears clearly. The position of the man with the ax is quite different when he is in the act of striking the animal. See I. Ryberg, *Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art*, Rome, 1955 (Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, XXII), where the matter is abundantly illustrated. See, for example, the bull led in for sacrifice, figs. 25, 36*a*, and passim; the bull being struck with the ax, figs. 39*a*, 46, and passim. The man with the ax in the Dura painting has raised it higher than usual for those leading the bull, but the hand on the animal's back shows that he is leading it in.

93. For the tradition see Nordström, "Water Miracles," 81–83.

94. The two little tokens between the two animals' hind legs at the right, and possibly of the animal at the left, could as well indicate the undeveloped udder of a female as the penis of a male. Certainly the "bullock" at the right does not have carefully drawn genitals, as Kraeling says, *Synagogue*, 129, n. 465.

95. *BT*, *Sotah*, 45b (ET, 235). Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 130 f.

96. From the *Const. Octateuch*, plate XXIV, fig. 147 (fol. 262^{v}).

mystery, fig. 247,[97] where Demeter's stalks of grain are added, but the presentation is very similar. Since so much in the Octateuchs seems to have come from Jewish art (eventually), we wonder whether the table was not originally copied from a Jewish adaptation of such a pagan table as that in fig. 247.

The table strikingly recalls the one mentioned in a famous fragment ascribed to Philo, a table that I have long insisted seemed to have much of the value of the Christian mystery. The cultic table is represented in the scene immediately at the left, and we shall return to it.[98] But the table in the miniature looks very much like a "mystic table," and all the more so because above it the curtain is draped and held up by the hand of God himself, to reveal the table. The miniature is too extraordinary to furnish a basis for firm conclusions, but it does show the curtain again in what looks like a thoroughly mystic setting. This need not surprise us. Curtains naturally associate themselves with the mysterious and hidden, and the curtains over the sacrifice of Aaron in Dura may well have come from the Mysteries, have brought with them a sense of the mysterious and concealed, and have proclaimed that that value inhered in the Jewish cultus. They do not remotely recall the curtains that made the walls of the Tabernacle. They are more like the curtain that screened the inmost sanctuary, except that here are three of them.

B. INTERPRETATION

KRAELING SEES in the scene as a whole "the episode described in Exod. XL and Num. VII when the Tabernacle was finally erected, and Aaron, the priest, and the Levites were installed in office." He sees this event specifically identified by the "number and identity of the sacrificial animals portrayed." [99] The sheep on the altar (which indeed *may* be a sheep), along with the ram and bullock at the right, are, he says, the animals required for the consecration of priests by Exodus XXIX, 1. I find this very unconvincing. In Exodus XL, Moses, as instructed by God, sets up the Tabernacle with all its furnishings; he then robes and anoints Aaron and his sons. No sacrifice is mentioned at all, and in the painting Moses does not appear. In Numbers VII Moses again consecrates Aaron and his sons, but the sacrifices described in this account involved a great number of persons and animals. This scene, likewise, the painting does not represent. Kraeling does not allude to the chief account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons by Moses, Leviticus VIII–X. Here are various animals named, chiefly, of course, bulls and rams, but no list corresponds exactly with the painted animals. The great difference is that here Moses specifically is himself the one to kill all the animals sacrificed, while Moses does not appear in the painting at all. The animal at the left of the painting may indeed represent the red heifer of Numbers XIX, 1–10, as we have said. But nothing whatever in the Bible connects the heifer with the installation of Aaron in

97. A stucco relief in the Basilica di Porta Maggiore, Rome.

98. If the evidence does not warrant complete assertion of such meaning, even less does it support Kraeling in asserting that they are "ornamental" (*Synagogue*, 129, cf. n. 463) or are the "hangings" of EXOD. XXVII, 9–15 (*Synagogue*, 130). See above, p. 4.

99. *Synagogue*, 130 f.

office, and actually the heifers had to be offered in general the day before the consecration of priests so that their ashes could be used for the consecration.

If the painting cannot be taken to represent any specific biblical episode or passage, we are forced to conclude that it presents an idealized generalization of the priesthood of Aaron, the "temple cultus as such." [100] For the Tabernacle is not a real tabernacle, the curtains have no relation to it, the sacrifice is purely ideal, the attendants cannot be identified, the holy objects are quite arbitrarily selected (*two* incense burners, no table, no showbread, etc.). But the Ark, incense, menorah, and altar of sacrifice stand with the animals and priests under the dominance of Aaron. He presides over these in a temple enclosure entered by three doors, the central one suggesting a mystery by the half-withdrawn curtain. The worshiper who enters will go to Aaron and his sacrifice, which itself is directed toward a little Greek shrine marked with a rosette. In this shrine, behind a veil, stands the real center of worship, the Ark of the Covenant that represents the Shekinah, or presence of God. The draped curtains at the top again mark the scene as having mystic value, while the little Victories on the inner shrine suggest the achievement at the end, the mystic victory. If we continue to follow details of the design, we notice that the inner shrine shows us five columns (in contrast to the ten in fig. 333 and six in fig. 334), and that Aaron has five attendants. The painting itself would seem to declare, then, that the priesthood of Aaron directed Jewish cultus toward the Shekinah in the Ark, and that in the cultus, sacrifice, incense, and the menorah all had great significance, as well possibly as the number five.[101] We must interpret the painting in terms of its own details.

Few of the details come from the Bible. The veiled Ark, the menorah, the four shofars of the assistants, and the name Aaron—these are the only elements which, outside the synagogue, would justify anyone's even associating such a painting with Judaism at all. The Jewish details show, however, that the Jewish cultus was meant, but the Jewish cultus as seen through oriental-hellenistic eyes. For interpreting the painting we cannot isolate the Jewish details, but must take the hellenistic-mystic and oriental symbols associated with them quite as seriously as the Jewish components.

We have already indicated roughly some of the points of contrast between the temple of Aaronic sacrifice and the purely schematic temple which balances it. Four points of contrast especially emerge: the Aaronic Temple stands firmly on the ground, the other has no relation to this world at all; the Aaronic Temple is a temple with priests and human beings, the other has no people; in the Aaronic Temple sacrifice with cult implements, and ritual, is in active progress, in the other nothing happens whatever, and no means of cult are suggested; in the Aaronic Temple the five attendants and the five columns themselves bring out the contrast that the inner shrine of the other temple has ten columns, though on its top

100. It should be noted that du Mesnil saw in the painting an abstraction of the values of Jewish cult also: *Peintures*, 63 f. This interpretation Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 130, specifically rejected for the specific identification we have just discussed: "It is unlikely that [the artist] created this scene to represent the cultus as such."

101. I cannot make out whether the three, emphasized on the doors, is again taken up by the three animals of sacrifice, because I do not know whether we should think of the animals as being three or four, including the animal on the altar.

also the Victories offer the wreaths. The scene of the Aaronic priesthood centers in the figure of Aaron, and in the menorah burning upward toward the holy Ark.

Is there a Judaism in which these points of contrast and this focusing of interest would have meaning, one that might have resorted to pagan conventions of pictorial art to express itself? We must seek a Judaism in which these basic features are indeed basic, not look in the great forest of Jewish writing for fugitive details from here and there, which may correspond to isolated features of the design. Philo Judaeus, for all his detailed differences, did explain Judaism in a way that matches the painting in central ideas, though of course he has many differences in detail. I know no writings from the rabbinic masters which do so.

Philo conceived most elaborately of two levels of Judaism. One of these led man through law and ceremonial observances, indeed through the cosmos, to God. On this level God functioned in the cultus as a hidden referent, present as the Shekinah in the Ark of the innermost sanctuary but not directly accessible for, or a part of, the cultus itself. In contrast Philo described also a Judaism in which the soul directly communed with God as it put away all dependence upon material things, even upon the cult and cosmos itself. The Ark, he believed, revealed the inner quality of this second Judaism, since its very structure expounded the immaterial nature of God, and the immaterial approach man can make to him. The perfect number ten characterized this Judaism in contrast to the number five in which Aaron's material worship of God centered. I know no other Jewish source which contrasts so systematically a Judaism of the senses with one of the immaterial, a Judaism of the five and of the ten.

The reader at this point may wish to read my *By Light, Light*, especially chapter IV, "The Mystery of Aaron," as well as the discussion above on "Astronomical Symbols." [102] What follows is a digest of that material.

Philo discusses three times the Judaism of the five, each time in connection with the priestly office of Aaron and the symbolic value of the specified dimensions and materials of the Tabernacle, as well as of the cult instruments and their usage.[103] He admits that the specifications call for fifty-five pillars,[104] but sees in the fifty a perfect number, and at this level distinguishes the five; since

> Five is the number of the senses and sense in mankind inclines on one side to things external, while on the other its trend is towards mind, whose handmaiden it is by the laws of nature. And therefore he assigned the position on the border to the five pillars, for what lies inside them verges on the inmost sanctuary of the tabernacle, which symbolically represents the realm of conceptuals, while what lies outside them verges on the open-air space and court which represent the perceptibles. And therefore the five differ from the rest also in their bases which are of brass. Since the mind is head and ruler of the sense-faculty in us, and the world which sense apprehends is the extremity and, as it were, the base of mind, he symbolized the mind by the gold, and the sense-objects by the brass.[105]

102. See above, VIII, 169–218.

103. *QE* II, 73–83; *Mos.* II, 101–103, 105.

104. *Mos.* II, 77–140; *Spec.* I, 67–97; *QE* II, 69–124.

105. *Mos.* II, 81 f.; cf. *QE* II, 97. The contrast between the "conceptuals (*ta noēta*) and the "perceptibles" (*ta aisthēta*) is basically the Platonic contrast between ideal forms to be apprehended only by the mind, and material things "under the aether"

The "five" generally represent to Philo the five senses, of course.[106] Similarly in his most elaborate discussion of the Tabernacle and its appurtenances, that in the *Questions in Exodus*, Philo first treats the Ark and the Holy of Holies. Then he turns to the other parts of the Tabernacle, and remarks that in doing so he is turning from the symbols of the incorporeals to the symbols of those things that are *in sensu*.[107] The five appears again as the fifth element out of which the heavens are made, in contrast to the four out of which the rest of the universe is made. He says that the menorah was made of pure gold to represent this fifth element, and its seven branches stood for the seven planets in the heavens.[108] With the menorah the incense burner was associated as a symbol of the earthly, and from it properly the incense smoke goes up. The smoke and the censers represent the four elements, we gather from various passages of Philo, and they both offer themselves and are offered as a *eucharistia* to God.[109]

When Philo speaks of the altar and its sacrifice, which were as remote from most of his readers as was the original altar of Aaron, he lifts it out of any literal significance and makes it into a symbol of piety for Alexandrians. We shall increasingly feel that the incidents selected for illustration from the Bible in the synagogue, and the way they are depicted, indicate the same sense of contemporeity and immediacy. The following statement of Philo about the sacrifice therefore seems to me to have general, if not specific, relevance:

> The great altar in the open court he usually calls by a name which means sacrifice-keeper, and when he thus speaks of the altar which destroys sacrifices as their keeper and guardian he alludes not to the parts and limbs of the victims, whose nature is to be consumed by fire, but to the intention of the offerer. For, if the worshiper is without kindly feeling or justice, the sacrifices are no sacrifices, the consecrated oblation is desecrated, the prayers are words of ill omen with utter destruction waiting upon them. For, when to outward appearance they are offered, it is not a remission but a reminder of past sins which they effect. But, if he is pure of heart and just, the sacrifice stands firm, though the flesh is consumed, and even more so if no victim at all is brought to the altar. For the true oblation, what else can it be but the piety of a soul which is dear to God? The thank-offering (*eucharistion*) of such piety receives immortality, and is inscribed in the records of God, sharing the eternal life of the sun and moon and the whole universe.[110]

(*hupaithron*), the Greek word for "open air," apprehended by the senses. The passage is difficult because it presents two ideas at once, the relation of mind to sense perception, and of the "conceptuals" to the "perceptibles." Just what Philo took the LXX *stuloi* to mean, whether columns or tent poles, I see no way to determine.

106. So explained in *Opif.* 62; *Plant.* 133; *QG* IV, 110; *Migr.* 201. For similar statements in Greek literature see the references in K. Staehle, *Die Zahlenmystik bei Philon von Alexandreia*, 1931, 31, n. 32a. For the continuation of this meaning of the five into Christianity, see E. Testa, *Simbolismo dei Giudeo-cristiani*, Jerusalem (Jordan), 1961, 8.

107. *QE* II, 69. Cf. ibid., 94: "I have said that the simple holy parts (of the tabernacle) are classified with the sense-perceptible heaven, whereas the inner (parts) which are called the Holy of Holies (are classified) with the intelligible world. The incorporeal world is set off and separated from the visible one by the mediating Logos as by a veil."

108. Ibid., 73. He says that the altar was five cubits long, ibid., 97 and 99, and, that the "covering" being on five columns, the pentad is the number of the sense-perceptible class; both the outer court and the altar belong to this class.

109. In *Mos.* II, 101. Philo says that it is a "symbol of the *eucharistia* of earth and water"; later, ibid., 105, he says that the censer symbolizes "earthly things, from which vapors rise." Cf. *Spec.* I, 171. But in *Heres* 226, he says that the altar and its offering represent the four elements, for which a *eucharistia* is offered, by which he suggests the identity of the object and its offering. He has already said, ibid., 199, that the incense offering symbolizes the cosmos itself, which burns morning and evening as a *eucharistia*. Philo cannot be tied down to a single meaning, but that man should offer the elements of the universe in a thanksgiving for its benefits, and in doing so reproduce an inherent relation of the elements themselves to the whole, will trouble no one who understands ritual. The prayer in *Spec.* I, 210 f., is addressed from the microcosm, as *eucharistia* for the universe as macrocosm. I strongly suspect it reports a prayer used in Philo's synagogue. See below, p. 40.

The last sentence says quite clearly that it is the *eucharistion* which receives the immortality of the universe, but I have no doubt that in Philo's mind the pious soul who made the true *eucharistia* actually achieved that state. For in another treatise when he describes the sacrifice as properly offered within the soul he tells how

> by the washing of the feet is meant that his steps should be no longer on earth but tread the upper air. For in truth the soul of one who loves God springs up from earth to heaven and with its wings flies about, longing to take its place and share the dance with the sun, the moon, and that most sacred and perfectly attuned company of the other stars, whose marshall and leader is God.[111]

Philo's conception of the immortality achieved through correct sacrifice at last now clearly manifests itself as the celestial existence of Plato's *Phaedrus*,[112] in which properly the soul drives among, or follows, the company of the stars or gods in their diurnal revolution, the "ordered march" of Philo. He often recurs to this idea, that only in offering ourselves do we make a proper sacrifice or *eucharistia*, which essentially consists in "the true purity of a rational spirit in him who makes the sacrifice."[113]

Aaron in his robes represented this worship to Philo. He describes elaborately how various parts of the robe mentioned in the Bible represent the elements, the heaven, the zodiac. In this worship Aaron appealed to the cosmos as the Son of God to intercede for him and for nature.

> For it was necessary that he who was consecrated to the Father of the world should have that Father's Son who is perfect in virtue to plead his cause that his sins might be remembered no more and good gifts be showered in abundance. Yet perhaps it is also to teach in advance one who would worship God that even though he may be unable to make himself worthy of the Creator of the cosmos, he yet ought to try increasingly to be worthy of the cosmos. As he puts on his imitation (symbol) he ought straightway to become one who bears in his mind the original pattern, so that he is in a sense transformed from being a man into the nature of the cosmos, and becomes, if one may say so (and indeed one must say nothing false about the truth), himself a little cosmos.[114]

Here again the priesthood of Aaron is made the priesthood of all who in their devotions "put on the Cosmos," and so identify themselves with the son of God.

110. *Mos.* II, 106–108.
111. *Spec.* I, 207.
112. *Phaedrus*, 246A–247E; 250B, C; 256B.
113. For example, *Spec.* I, 272–277.
114. *Mos.* II, 134 f.

One detail of the painting seems to me to confirm such an interpretation, the red heifer about to be slaughtered outside the precincts. For just before speaking thus about the true nature of sacrifice, Philo mentions the red heifer. He says that he has fully allegorized it elsewhere (a section of his writing now lost), but he summarizes its meaning as follows:

> So we see that they who mean to resort to the temple to take part in sacrifice must needs have their bodies made clean and bright, and before their bodies their souls. For the soul is queen and mistress, superior to the body in every way because a more divine nature has been allotted to it. The mind is cleansed by wisdom and the truths of wisdom's teaching which guide its steps to the contemplation of the universe and all that is therein, and by the sacred company of the other virtues and by the practice of them shown in noble and highly praiseworthy actions. He, then, who is adorned with these may come with boldness to the sanctuary as his true home, the best of all mansions, there to present himself as victim. But anyone whose heart is the seat of lurking covetousness and wrongful cravings should remain still and hide his face in confusion and curb the shameless madness which would rashly venture where caution is profitable. For the holy place of the truly Existent is closed ground to the unholy. To such a one I would say, "Good sir, God does not rejoice in sacrifices even if one offer hecatombs, for all things are his possessions, yet though he possesses he needs none of them, but he rejoices in the will to love him and in men that practise holiness, and from these he accepts plain meal or barley, and things of least price, holding them most precious rather than those of highest cost." And indeed though the worshipers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices, the full and truly perfect oblation of noble living, as they honor with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Savior, God, sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or lips, when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise. These one ear only can apprehend, the ear of God, for human hearing cannot reach to the perception of such.[115]

If Philo shows us the way in which the values of the Tabernacle or Temple could be preserved for Jews who had no access to either, he deeply stresses the menorah and its relation to the symbol of the world of "conceptuals," the immaterial world of Platonic forms. Here I condense my former remarks.[116] The menorah has seven branches because it represents the seven planets, he says, the highest objects perceptible by the senses, and the "seven" itself the pure existence of the One. It is made of gold, and gives light because it symbolizes the Light Stream from God, or the Logos. But it represents not only the coming down of God's creative force to earth, but the praise to God (*eucharistia* again) of the celestial bodies.

Philo's discussion of the symbolism of the Tabernacle, its ritual, and the priestly garments goes far beyond what could be conveyed in the painting. Since he allegorizes the biblical text in detail, the Tabernacle is for him the tent made of curtains, and Aaron wears a robe according to biblical prescription. I see no reason to suppose that the "philosopher" who designed the synagogue painting had Philo's text as a guide. It is accordingly important to note that Philo himself tells us in one of the most mystical of his Temple allegories

115. *Spec.* I, 269–272; cf. 277.

116. See above, IV, 71–98, esp. 85–88.

that "those who are nourished by visible food in the form of allegory also say . . ." That is, Philo is writing his allegory of the Temple and its cultus in accordance with a tradition. The tradition reappears in Josephus with such variations as to show that he also did not depend upon Philo, while Clement of Alexandria gives a very similar discussion of the matter with no apparent dependence upon either Philo or Josephus.[117] All allegorize the priest's vestments in terms of the four elements, and all agree that the two outer courts referred to the material cosmos, the inner to the world of God beyond the cosmos. Clearly in the same tradition, but by no means its source, an anomalous passage in *Numbers Rabbah* [118] especially emphasizes the menorah as the seven planets, burning in worship of what lies beyond them, represented by the hidden Ark of the Covenant.

The painting seems to me essentially to represent this general tradition. The robes of Aaron have become the royal-priestly dress of the Parthians and Sassanians, a dress which, we saw, the Parthians thought appropriate for cosmic worship, worship in the realm of "the good in its contaminated state," the material world. By writing "Aaron" beside the priest's head, the "philosopher" seems to announce that the true cosmic priesthood sought by the gentiles presents itself in Aaron; he presides over a worship that is one with the worship which the universe itself offers to God. Man approaches it through the purification symbolized by the red heifer, but does not have to go back to the curtained Tabernacle of the wilderness, or even to the Temple in Jerusalem which succeeded it. For these, lost in a literal sense, were still available to Philo as he purified himself, and offered himself. The true oblation, Philo tells us, is the piety of a soul which is dear to God. The worship revealed to man in the cultus of Aaron seemed still available to the "philosopher" who designed this painting to show the Judaism of cosmic worship. One entered it by pulling back the veil in the outer court, joined the planets in their circles, and offered oneself on the altar. One ended with such an experience as only the Victories with their wreaths could typify.

How Philo introduced the crown of victory (the word is for him no longer capitalized) into his mystic language and experience, as had Cebes before him in paganism, was presented above.[119] The achievement of the crown meant to him saving knowledge—perpetual vision of God.[120] It indicated that he who received it was "given Anthropos," which means that he became the Anthropos or Logos.[121] Philo is not alone in this conception. The Mandaeans proclaimed: "The crown of aether light shines forth from the House of Life." [122] And the second ending of the liturgy of the dead of the Mandaean Qolasta closes with the following lines which I quote in Lidzbarski's translation:

> Einen Ätherkranz errichteten sie ihr auf dem Haupte
> und führten sie in Pracht aus der Welt.

117. For the passages and discussion see my *By Light, Light*, 98 f.

118. Discussed above, IV, 89–92.

119. See above, VII, 159–161, 166–168.

120. *Migr.* 133–135. See above, VII, 167 f.; *Praem.* 27.

121. *Praem.* 13–15.

122. M. Lidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien*, 1920, 9 (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Klasse, N.F., XVII, 1).

Das Leben stützte das Leben,
das Leben fand das Seinige;
das Seinige fand das Leben,
und meine Seele fand, was sie erhoffte
Und das Leben ist siegreich.[123]

The seventeenth Ode of Solomon begins: "I was crowned by my God: he is my living crown," [124] and the Ode goes on to describe the mystic ascent to this culmination. In the hellenized IV Maccabees the martyrs expect to receive the crown.[125] That is, mystic Jews widely used the crown to symbolize their highest mystic achievement and immortality, so that Christians [126] found the symbol already assimilated for them by hellenized Jews.

Whether a ritual in the synagogue corresponded to this mystic setting or not, Philo would have called the whole conception represented in the painting a Mystery. I doubt that modern philologians, who wish to define "mystery" in a way to keep it from such usage, know more accurately the meaning of the term than did Philo, following Plato, himself.[127] For him it was part of the revelation of God to Moses, who in the Bible built the Tabernacle and installed Aaron in office. I cannot believe that it is by chance, then, that Moses stands at the right of this scene, himself engaged in worship along with the celestial bodies. And again it is entirely proper that at the left Moses should again stand, this time touching the rock to give water to Israel, and that this should be so designed as to represent Israel in celestial worship as the zodiac.[128]

123. Ibid., 114, lines 3–6. R. Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, 1921, 69.

124. Ibid., 86.

125. IV Mac. XI, 20; XIII, 4; XV, 29; XVII, 15 f.

126. I Cor. IX, 25; Rev. IV, 4, 10. I could find no such symbolism of crowns in rabbinic sources: see above, VII, 168 f.

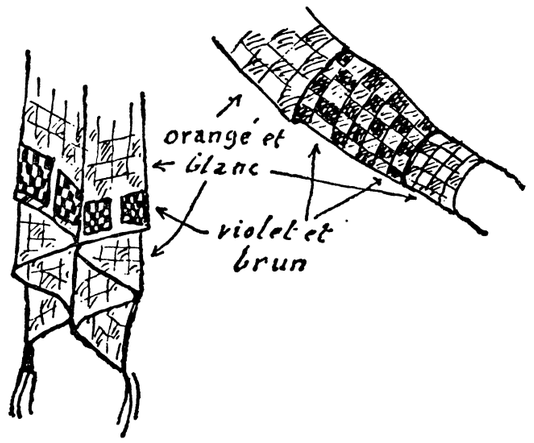
127. See my "Literal Mystery in Hellenistic Judaism," *Quantulacumque: Studies Presented to Kirsop Lake*, 1931, 227–241.

128. Daniélou, *Symboles*, 9–30, which appeared after the above had been set in type, adds much interesting material to my discussion but tries to connect all Jewish and Christian crowns with the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast itself, he feels, was free of hellenistic influence.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Cosmic Judaism: The Well of the Wilderness

THE PAINTING at the left of the Aaronic Temple, plate XII and fig. 331, shows a large bearded man in the Greek chiton and himation, this time made of a cloth woven in checks, which du Mesnil described as of orange and white giving an over-all light yellow effect. Upon it are exaggerated stripes and gams, also checked, in dark lavender and brown or black. The same darker material is used as a cuff on the chiton, and two squares of it are on the edge of the himation. The accompanying early sketch by du Mesnil, text fig. 15, shows these checks very clearly.[1] The clavi of the chiton, to be seen at the right



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shoulder and at the bottom, as well as the heavy gams across the chest and on the thigh, mark this dress at once as being akin to the usual Greek dress of the special Jewish heroes and what I take to be angelic figures, but here the painter has exaggerated the broad purple markings. The figure stands in the pagan convention of divine magnitude as contrasted

1. From du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 65, fig. 51. Such checks are clearly visible in the original photograph but were apparently obscured in the restoration or exposure to light. See above, p. 13.

with other figures. His bearded face much resembles that of Moses reading the mystic Law in fig. 326. Since he stands with his left hand gesturing toward a fountain in the center and the right holding a rod that touches it, we can only assume that the great man again represents Moses, this time bringing water from the rock. As we continue, however, we shall see great difficulty in identifying details of the scene with any single biblical incident.

The "rock" itself, as Kraeling pointed out, is a round bowl on a square base, a form called in Latin a *puteal;* several examples of it still survive at Pompeii and Delos as the opening of a cistern for water in a house.[2] Little curved lines in the water of the Dura spring were taken by Kraeling to indicate bubbles of rising water, but seem more likely to be fish. Two other fish have started to swim up the streams, in the age old convention of the flowing bowl discussed above.[3] The water flows out in twelve winding streams to twelve tents arranged roughly in two arcs of a circle at either side. Within, or before, each tent stands a little man in Persian caftan and trousers, his hands lifted in the familiar gesture which in Christian art distinguishes an "orant." The pose has appeared three times in Jewish art of the period,[4] and in view of the cosmic reference which will seem implicit in the whole design, one wonders whether the pose of the orants here, as in Christian symbolism, does not mean that the orants are in heaven, or the heavens.[5] Only one tent is empty, the second from the bottom at the right; its proper occupant has moved forward to stand nearly in the middle of the foreground. Kraeling thinks the artist put him there because he did not have space enough for him in his tent, but this is quite unlikely, in my opinion, since two of the figures at the left had to be shown without their feet because of lack of space, and the empty tent on the right could have contained its man if desired. I should guess that he stands out in front to indicate that the two arcs of tents should be understood to form a circle.

Poles support the tents themselves in such a way as to give each a peaked roof, and guy ropes hold down the covering. The form appears on Roman military reliefs, as in fig. 246,[6] but I cannot agree with Kraeling that the artist thereby indicates a military camp. When he wanted to paint soldiers, as he often did, they were armored figures. The tents at Dura house men of peace and prayer. The same tent appears, surrounded by soldiers, in fig. 349, but since it is there oriented toward an altar before it, and itself contains,

2. See the references in Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 122, n. 420.

3. See above, V, figs. 131, 145. Two of the fish at the back possibly have eyes.

4. See above, III, figs. 86, 642. The second surely, the first possibly, represent Daniel in the lions' den. And see I, 99, 255. In early Christian art, Daniel usually appears in this position, as do the Three Boys in the furnace: Wilpert, *Pitture*, for example plates 13, 25, 62, 78. "Autumn" in a synagogue mosaic of the zodiac also holds her arms in this way: see above, III, fig. 647. The orant type is not common in pagan remains, but is so omnipresent in the Basilica di Porta Maggiore that we must presume it was a familiar mystic symbol.

5. C. M. Kaufmann, *Die sepulcralen Jenseitsdenkmäler der Antike und des Urchristentums*, 1900, 108–123, 140–177 (Vol. I of his *Forschungen zur Monumentalen Theologie und vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft*).

6. From E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, G. Caldini, *Die Marcus-Säule*, 1896, plate 15A, no. VIII; cf. plates 21, no. XVI; 29, no. XXI; 43, no. XXXVII; 68, no. LX; 92, no. LXXX. See also the references to the reliefs in the Column of Aurelian in Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 119, n. 410. The stripes in the cloth do not, of course, appear on the reliefs, but are clear in late Roman illuminations: A. Ceriani and A. Ratti, *Homeri Iliadis Pictae Fragmenta Ambrosiana*, 1905, plate XXVII. For other tents with peaked roofs, see ibid., plates XXXVII, XLVII.

or has before it, a table and incense burner, the tent there too must be considered a religious rather than a military object.[7]

At the top of the painting, touching the sides of two tents, the artist put a doorway, made of two Corinthian columns bearing a gabled pediment. Victories as acroteria are conspicuously absent. According to the early field notes of Hopkins, Kraeling recalls, "the pediment originally showed traces of blue color, and was set with a black circle in the center. These are no longer visible.[8] The circle was presumably a "round object," an alternative for the rosette as we have seen on representations of the Ark of the Covenant and elsewhere.[9] Before the doorway stands a large menorah, exactly as does the menorah before the shrine in the painting beside it, fig. 332. The menorah, like the symbol in the gable, is drawn with slightly different details in this painting, but it seems to me that by means of the menorah standing in both cases before the shrine entrance, the artist has identified the two entrances. We now see that in both scenes two censers flank the menorah. The chief difference between the two is that a little three-legged table has been used in the scene of the Well instead of the altar of sacrifice with Aaron. The two paintings together, then, give us all the basic furniture of the Aaronic sanctuary. Perhaps it would have been too crowded to show all of this in each painting. It may have been, however, that the Ark does not appear in the shrine of the painting we are now considering because the chief interest of the painter or "philosopher" was to indicate that the relation of the menorah to the shrine was the heart and meaning of the scene as a whole. Since he has already defined the sanctity of the shrine in terms of the Ark it contained in the painting with Aaron, he did not have to repeat it here, and so could show a larger, dominating, menorah-shrine motif. On the same ground he could omit the Victories as already having been announced.[10] At the same time the empty shrine without the Victories may indicate some distinction from the shrine with both Ark and Victories. As I study these paintings I find many details so carefully chosen that I would hesitate to assume that space alone determined the selection of cult objects in the two scenes. One painting as completely lacks the element of animal sacrifice as the other is dominated by it. Merely because I do not understand the difference, I should hesitate to say it had no importance.

I have also no suggestion for another detail, the large pink patch in the center of the ground of the painting, like an irregular rug. All the cult instruments and the well stand on it.[11]

We return to the checked robe of Moses. Apparently we must take the checks seri-

7. See below, p. 185.

8. *Synagogue*, 119, n. 404.

9. See above, V, 62–76; VII, 200 f.; IX, 58.

10. This interpretation does not agree with Kraeling (*Synagogue*, 119), who calls the yellow ground within the shrine "stage space," and thinks it indicates that the cult instruments are inside the shrine. The base of the censer at the right overlaps the base of the column beside it, which indicates that all the implements were thought of as standing outside and in front of the shrine.

11. I suspect that the running of the pink "rug" beyond Moses' shoulder and up to the edge of the tent immediately at the left of the shrine was simply an error. I have also no suggestion as to why that tent, and the second from the top at the right, have respectively a pink and a yellow interior instead of black like the others. Kraeling's explanation of this pink patch, *Synagogue*, 120, n. 413, seems quite fanciful.

ously, since they represent so drastic a departure from Iranian or Greek cloth as we ordinarily know it in art (though fragments of such cloth exist from Dura), and since in the dress of Aaron they appear to be the only invasion from the Old Testament into what otherwise was the dress of an Iranian priest.[12] Moses here wears the Greek "robe," with the gams and clavi greatly exaggerated—that is, he has the value which all this symbolism brought with it. But when these are marked with the checks of Jewish priesthood I can only conclude that the artist is deliberately declaring that one of Moses' official capacities was to be priest, and that in bringing water from the well he is acting as a priest.

The design as a whole was probably adapted from the Parthians or Sassanians. Ringbom [13] has recently attempted to reconstruct the "chief Sassanian sanctuary," a fire and water sanctuary that seems basically to go back to the Parthians in the second century B.C. and was certainly well established by the time of Shapur II in the early fourth century after Christ. By later Sassanian times, at least, the shrine was identified with Shiz,[14] where, according to legend, Zarathustra was born. Arabian geographers of the tenth century tell us that ruins of the sanctuary were still to be seen: buildings, paintings, representations of the dome of heaven, the stars, the world and what it contains on sea and land. Part of the sanctuary, they said, was a fire temple revered by all dynasties of the Persians. From its fire, as another document of the same century tells us, all the fires of the Zoroastrians, east and west, were kindled. The same source mentions a throne hall. In the middle of this sanctuary was a "bottomless" lake, from which flowed seven streams.

Modern visitors and archeologists have by no means established these details at Shiz, in northwestern Iraq, but Ringbom concludes that the original sanctuary, wherever it was, looked much like the drawing in figs. 248 [15] or 249.[16] He connects these remains with a design on an ancient platter, and concludes that the sanctuary consisted of a round colonnade with arches, twenty-two in all, which surrounded a pool and opened into a great building behind. Streams, their number not determined, flowed out of the pond through these arches. The hall itself opened to the south toward the "Paradise," as from literary sources we apparently should call the pond with its surrounding crown of arches. Probably by painting, possibly by mechanically moved screens, the whole seems to have been associated with cosmic symbolism.

A wealth of detail has been lost, but we may conclude that the priest-king presided here over a sanctuary dedicated to fire, the cosmos, water, and the earth—and to *hvareno*, the streaming glory of God accessible only to Arians, but whose quest is an omnipresent topic in the sagas of Iran.[17] He who possessed it was made changeless, deathless, incor-

12. See above, p. 13. For the checks on the dress of Hannah, fig. 346, see below, p. 170.

13. L. I. Ringbom, *Graltempel und Paradies*, Stockholm, 1951 (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets. Akademiens handlingar, Del 73). Ringbom especially discusses this structure on pp. 92–117. In the rest of the book he attempts to establish that it was the ancestor of the western tradition and form of the "Temple of the Holy Grail."

14. See H. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 482, n. 2, on the difficulty of identifying place names in Iranian literature with actual sites. Shiz is especially named.

15. From Ringbom, fig. 36 on p. 105.

16. Ibid., fig. 115 on p. 399.

17. Ringbom's thesis is that the Grail churches, and the legend of the quest of the Grail, came to Christianity from this source.

ruptible, and the like. Its possession especially marked the legitimate king. The Jewish Shekinah, the divine presence and glory in Torah and holy men, seems to me the idea in ancient and rabbinic Jewish tradition most to resemble the hvareno. Ringbom noted that in later Grail tradition the king was a "Fisher King," [18] and that artificial fish were put in motion by air blown down through reeds into the glassy pool of the pavement near the Grail temples. We therefore suggest that the streams with fish in the well of the Dura scene may perhaps further reflect the form. For corresponding to the reconstructed shrine the Dura scene has the circle round a miraculous well from whose center water flows to each opening. Incorporated into the circle stands the hellenized entrance to the secret shrine of the Shekinah. The fire has become the Jewish menorah, while the openings have become the houses or tents of the twelve tribes. They are so arranged, also, as to suggest the sunstream coming to the "houses" of the zodiac.[19] In this case we would at once associate the well at the center with both the well of Jewish tradition and the central sun dominating the heavens, the heavens represented both by the seven-branched menorah as the planets and by the tents as the zodiac. All of this is controlled by Moses, the great figure who, under the Presence indicated by the portal behind, activates the whole with his rod.

Differences in detail strike one as forcibly as the basic similarity of design. The twenty-two openings, as Ringbom reconstructed the shrine, have become twelve; the arches have become tents, each with a person at its door; the cult instruments have become Jewish; and the priest-king has become Moses with his rod at the well, not an enthroned king invisible within the throne room. He is dressed, not like Aaron, in robes which probably resembled those of the Parthian king, but in the Greek robe, marked for its priestly function by the checkered cloth both of the garments and of their exaggerated gams and clavi. These differences seem to me the deliberate work of a master of symbolism, who, as he had turned the Greek mystic shrine into the site of Aaronic cultus by inserting Jewish and Iranian elements into a still recognizable Greek form, so has taken here the tradition of the throne-hall with its "paradise," and by introducing hellenistic and Jewish elements has made it say what he intended.

I would repeat that Ringbom's reconstruction is quite hypothetical, and his identification of the legendary shrine with the site at Shiz has yet to be justified by excavation, and is in fact denied by other Iranian scholars. But it seems to me highly likely that some such shrine or drawing or legend of a shrine inspired the Dura design. The coincidences have become too many to be dismissed, though with present evidence nothing specific can be demonstrated.

The design of the painting, we may summarize, has shown that like the scene of the Aaronic priesthood, the scene of the Well refers itself ultimately to an open shrine before which stand the temple implements, especially the menorah. The two scenes would, then,

18. Parsifal meets with this Fisher King. Margaret Reid, *The Arthurian Legend*, 1938, 167. See Jean Marx, *La Légende arthurienne et le Graal*, 1952, 182–204 (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences religieuses, LXIV); Ringbom, 65–68, 96, 109.

19. That the signs of the zodiac should be indicated by tents follows easily, since we know that the ancients spoke of the "houses" of the stars: see LS, s.v. *oikos*, I, 5.

presumably have had some related meaning. The well seems to present at once the Iranian value of the stream of hvareno and the stream God gave the Israelites through the rod of Moses, while its twelve streams to the twelve tents suggest the sun radiating its power to the universe as typified in the zodiac.

Can such implications in the design be squared with Jewish literary traditions? The first problem is to see whether any single biblical passage can be taken as its direct inspiration.

Kraeling argues elaborately that the scene is based upon the incident of the Israelites at Beer,[20] where was a well (Beer itself means "well") to which the people sang a song:

> Spring up, O well—Sing to it!—
> the well which princes dug,
> which the nobles of the people delved,
> with the scepter and with their staves.

This pericope does not allude to Moses' rod or to Moses as the one who makes the well flow; nor to the twelve streams, the tents, or the sanctuary at the back. Kraeling notes the four other biblical references to miraculous wells in the wilderness: that of Marah, where Moses sweetened the bitter water by throwing a tree into it which God showed him; [21] Elim, which had twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and where the Israelites "encamped beside the waters," but where again Moses did not produce water; [22] Rephidim, where the people again encamped, and where at God's command, Moses went beyond the camp "with some of the elders of Israel," and struck the appointed rock with his rod;[23] and Meribah, where although God told Moses only to speak to the rock, Moses used his rod twice to strike it. But in this last case Moses and Aaron first spoke to God at the "door of the tent of meeting," and the rock seemed immediately available before that door. With these Kraeling connects a passage in which the tribes are encamped in four groups of threes, all facing the Tabernacle.[24] The painting clearly reflects the grouping of tents in threes, but in that biblical passage three tribes were to encamp on the east, south, west, and north of the Tabernacle, with Levi at the center beside it, and no well is mentioned. No single one of the biblical passages could have furnished the pattern for the design in the synagogue, as Kraeling admits.[25] He feels justly that we have here a combination of incidents, and looks for the combination in such a tradition of the Well of the Wilderness as the rabbinic accounts of the "Well of Miriam." Yet he thinks that since the rabbinic tradition especially attaches itself to the incident at Beer, the scene must be entitled "The Well at Beer."

The rabbinic material on the Well of Miriam, or the Well of the Wilderness, I have

20. Num. XXI, 16–18.
21. Exod. XV, 22–25.
22. Ibid., 27.
23. Ibid. XVII, 1–7.
24. Num. II, 1–34.
25. *Synagogue*, 120, 122. In *By Light, Light*, 209 (on which see above, VII, 125, n. 313) and in VIII, 170, I identified this scene too flatly with the Elim encampment. But already according to the tragic poet Ezekiel of Alexandria, before the Maccabean revolt, the twelve streams of Elim were said to come from a single rock: ap. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, IX, XXIX, 16.

already summarized.[26] Morton Smith kindly reviewed that material for me afresh, and agreed with me that we must not identify the painting with any one passage, but see in it the composite of biblical details which tradition itself made and elaborated. That is, the painting represents the Well of the Wilderness as collectively idealized. The tradition related that a well followed the Israelites through the wilderness and regularly set itself up at each new encampment in the court of the Tabernacle, as it seems to be in the painting. The rabbis, Smith agreed, often associated this well with the well at Beer. Smith recalls the account in the Tosefta to Sukkah,[27] where it is said that the well resembled a large round vessel called a *k'bara*, and water "oozed out and rose as from the mouth of this flask." Beside this well the princes of Israel with their slaves "every one drew out the staff of his tribe and family," and "waters bubbled forth, and rose on high like a pillar." The water, indeed, formed a great river that flowed into the Mediterranean, and the Israelites had to use skiffs to get about. Here again are some elements of the painting, the well like a *k'bara*, with the elders (but without staves and slaves) assembled about it. That the Elders in the painting are singing the song of Beer is quite comprehensible, though I do not think this exhausts the significance of their positions. Smith pointed out to me that the story of the Well of the Wilderness, quite differently told, is connected just as clearly with other biblical texts. He noted especially the comment on Rephidim, where the elders are taken out of the camp by Moses to witness the miracle; Moses struck the rock as God had commanded, and, as the comment ends, "as soon as the water gushed forth, it provided all the tents of Israel with water." [28] This version of the story gives us still additional details of the painting. Smith thinks that Moses with his rod definitely associates the scene with Rephidim, since it does not seem possible that the artist would have been celebrating the disobedience of Moses at Meribah, the only other incident recorded in which Moses produced water with his rod. All of this seems to me to confirm the first part of Kraeling's statement, that the scene as given brings in details from many sources.

A constructive suggestion for interpretation from rabbinic sources seems to me that of Grabar.[29] He referred especially to the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan at the passage of Beer, where it is added that "Moses and Aaron, scribes of the Israelites" brought forth the streams of water with "their rod"; to the same Targum at Numbers XXIII, 19, which adds that the twelve streams of water at Elim were "for the twelve tribes"; again to the same at Song of Songs IV, 5, where it is said that Moses and Aaron prefigured the Messiah, *inter alia*, by releasing the water of the Well of Miriam; and to an elaborate passage in the *Pirke*.[30] The latter tells how "in the future the waters of the well will ascend from under the threshold of the Temple, and they will overflow and bubble over and issue forth and become twelve streams corresponding to the twelve tribes." The streams would be of various depths, from ankles to knees, neck, and over one's head. They will irrigate all sterile fields, "heal" the Salt Sea, generate all kinds of fish. Every sort of tree will grow by the

26. See above, VI, 185–187.
27. A. W. Greenup, *Sukkah, Mishna and Tosefta*, 1925, 76 f. (Translations of Early Documents, Ser. III).
28. *MR, Exod.*, XXVI, 2 (ET, 318).
29. Le Thème, 190–192. Cf. H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfiguré*, 1947, 42–45, 174 f.
30. *PRE*, LI (ET, 416–419).

banks, and men who bathe in it will be healed of any illness. It is clear that this passage has made the rivers into eschatological streams, a tradition presumably based upon the stream in Eden[31] which the Christians in Revelation (XXI, 22–XXII, 5) made into the river of the water of life flowing from the eternal Temple, the throne of God. Christians by no means invented this stream, for it certainly is "the river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High," [32] and the stream of fire which issued from the fiery throne of the Ancient of Days, before which "the court sat in judgment and the books were opened." [33]

Nordström [34] has gone over the material again and recalled Pseudo-Philo's saying that God "brought forth for them a well of water which followed them." [35] He has also shown a number of very interesting Christian paintings that illustrate a streaming rock being taken along on a cart in the journey, but he admits that, except as recording the tradition of a rock with multiple springs, they have little resemblance to the painting at Dura we are discussing. He concludes that the Well of Miriam became a combination of the twelve wells of Elim and the water which flowed from the rock, and that this combination already appears when the Jewish poet Ezekiel wrote that at Elim, with its seventy palm trees, twelve streams poured out from a single rock.[36] Our problem is to conceive what the Jewish artist at Dura had in mind in presenting it in his unique form. As it stands he would seem to have taken the incident to illustrate the hope that Israel would come into a cosmic relation with God in an apotheosis before the divine Presence. The Presence, properly indicated by the entrance to the shrine, is again not that of the earthly temple, or the Tabernacle of the wilderness, but the Temple or Throne of the future, which all good Jews passionately anticipated as the culmination of human existence.

The new element in the design is that the glorified Moses should still be releasing this water of life to Israel in the cosmic order. It by no means contradicts or replaces the eschatological significance of the design that its details suggest the sun in the zodiac.

The appearance of a zodiac at Dura will not surprise those who have read the earlier volumes of this series.[37] We have seen in the mosaic floors of two synagogues in Palestine itself designs in which Helios drives his chariot in the center of the zodiac and seasons. Probably the same design stood originally in the mosaics of two other Palestinian synagogues. Since in the one of these four where the floor is complete this symbol stood between the sacrifice of Abraham and the cult instruments (most conspicuously two large menorahs flanking a Torah shrine), the introduction of the sun within the zodiac and seasons at Dura would not itself have gone beyond what the monuments explicitly certify for Judaism elsewhere. And we must not forget the strange lamp-rack from Palestine consisting of a ring carrying twelve lamps, with an additional lamp hanging from a hook at the center of the circle. The lamp-rack apparently came from a synagogue, for it is marked with a menorah flanked by a lulab and shofar, and has an Aramaic-Hebrew inscription. I have listed other cosmic elements and symbols in the Jewish remains in my discussion of astronomical symbols,[38] and recall here in addition to the mosaics and lamp only the menorah placed at the apex of the "Dome of Heaven" ceiling in the Catacomb Torlonia at Rome. We have just reviewed the general values of cosmic mysticism in discussing the scene of Aaron in the temple. The scene of the well seems to go still farther, as it brings in the zodiac and the streams.

31. Gen. II, 10.
32. Ps. XLVI, 4.
33. Dan. VII, 9 f.
34. Nordström, "Water Miracles," 98–109.
35. *Antiquities*, X, 7 (ed. G. Kisch, 142).
36. Ap. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, IX, xxix, 16 (ed. W. Dindorf, 1867, 515).
37. See above, I, 217 f., 248, 255, 258; III, figs. 632, 640, 644, 658. For individual signs of the zodiac in Jewish art see III, figs. 513, 515, 541, and IX, 54. See also VIII, 167–177. It is highly likely that Palestinian Jews commonly put the zodiac in the mosaic floors of their synagogues, since it appears in such a high percentage of the floors preserved.

Identification of the twelve Patriarchs in the circle as the zodiac agrees with Jewish traditions of all sorts, for the rabbis as well as Philo identified the twelve signs with the twelve tribes.[39] One or another of the rabbis spoke of the zodiac in commenting upon any group of twelve in the Bible. The rabbis, however, seem in this to be reflecting incidental invasion from popular conceptions rather than expressing a central part of their own Judaism. The zodiac was certainly no usual part of rabbinic explanation of Jewish cultus. In contrast the synagogue mosaics of Palestine show Helios within the zodiac at the center of the design, and seem to declare that the God worshiped in the synagogue was the God who made the stars, and revealed himself through them in cosmic law, order, and right, and who was himself the Charioteer guiding the universe in all its order and law. If such an approach was not typical of usual rabbinic thinking, it appears repeatedly in the apocryphal literature, and in the Jewish gnosticism of the Maaseh Bereshith,[40] where it is used to describe mystic ascent, or as a basis for hope of astral immortality in "heaven." The Dura painting, however, gives us a picture of the signs of the zodiac as receiving each a stream from the center, the whole an interpretation of the temple cultus but under the direction of Moses. It gives a basis for hope, indeed, but essentially declares the relation of Israel and her cultus to the cosmos. We need, then, as background of the painting, such an interpretation of the Jewish cultus as makes it reveal the relation of the universe to God, and as something which, when practiced, gives the worshiper a share in this relation. The relation, the painting tells us, essentially implies a stream of some kind to the various parts of the universe which the zodiac and the seven planets exemplify. Most significantly, it implies that Moses himself dominates and distributes this flow, a Moses of priestly character who in his eminence especially directed it to humanity, humanity most clearly exemplified in the twelve Patriarchs. The giant Moses dwarfed even the Patriarchs in their cosmic relationship to the zodiac. They receive in adoration: Moses himself dispenses.

As no one Old Testament passage and no one version of the rabbinic tradition of the Well of Miriam suggested all the details in the painting, so no one passage of Philo could in itself have inspired the scene at Dura. But from Philo we get so many more de-

38. See above, VIII, 167–218.
39. Above, VIII, 197 f. In this they resembled the pagans who did the same with the twelve Olympians, and the Christians with the twelve apostles.
40. Above, VIII, 205–207. This material would much have strengthened Grabar's argument for the eschatological import of the painting.

tails which suggest the interpretation given the well in the picture that only in a tradition of Philonic type, however Iranized, could it have been conceived. Since the painting combines details found in many Philonic passages, we must look at his interpretations of the various biblical passages which mention the Well of the Wilderness, and also see what he had to say of Moses as priest.

So many features of the painting recall the well at Elim as Philo expounds it, that when the paintings were first discovered I thought this the specific incident being illustrated: "And they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." [41] As Philo interpreted this casually in a writing for gentiles, the twelve springs represent the twelve tribes, each of which pours out unceasingly "beautiful deeds" from its piety. The seventy palm trees indicate the seventy elders, he says, but specifically their quality of mind, as men who have "tasted holiness," by which they spurn earthly things as childish and give their full attention only to "divine beauties," which they reach by soaring aloft to associate with the heavenly bodies.[42] The passage clearly reflects the *Phaedrus* of Plato, who also believed that the vision one gets in such soaring produces a properly disciplined life on earth.

Philo gives much more detail in the *Allegory*, the series of treatises he wrote for the inner circle of allegorizing Jews. One passage [43] discusses five kinds of springs: the mental stream from the human mind to the senses; [44] the stream from academic studies, the encyclicals; [45] the stream of folly; [46] the stream of wisdom and life; [47] and last the stream of God himself.[48] The last of these streams represents Philo's highest hopes for mystical attainment.[49] It is the second stream, that from the encyclicals, which Philo sees in the incident at Elim.

> There are also a variety of springs of education, by the side of which there grow up, like the trunks of palm-trees, right formulae (*logoi*) which are rich in nourishment. For Moses

41. Exod. xv, 27. See my *By Light, Light*, 209. Cf. the corrections to this, above, VII, 125, n. 313; and see VIII, 170. When these were written I had not made a detailed study of the Dura paintings and thus exemplified the danger of approaching the scenes merely from literary sources. R. Eliëzer ha-Mudai saw the zodiac in both the twelve tribes and the twelve springs of Elim: see above, VIII, 197.

42. Where Philo wants the soul to associate with the stars (*meteōropolousa*), in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 246C, the proper soul, like the animal soul, *panta ouranon peripolei*. The "divine beauties" of Philo are recognizably the "divine which is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and all such qualities," but can collectively be called "the realities," *ta onta*, ibid., 246A–247E; or "true beauty," *to alēthon kallos*, 249D; 250B–D, etc. The army of the gods, divided into twelve squadrons, in 247A and B, who go in a regular revolution, have become the heavenly bodies. For the moral result of the vision, see 256A, B.

43. *Fug.* 177–201.

44. Ibid. 178–182; cf. my *By Light, Light*, 376.

45. *Fug.* 183–188.

46. Ibid. 188–193.

47. Ibid. 194–196.

48. Ibid. 197–201.

49. Except for the well of folly, the wells are here in definite progression: 1. the human mind; 2. knowledge of the cosmos ("middle education"); 3. the flow of Wisdom herself (that is, the Logos); 4. the Spring of the ultimate source, God himself, since the cosmos came from him like rain (a purely Neoplatonic notion of emanation), and he is the source of life, yet himself more than life. For the last Philo uses, most unusually, the passage in Jer. II, 13: "Me they forsook, a spring of life": *Fug.* 197 f.

says: "They came to Elim, and in Elim were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters." "Elim" means "portals," a symbol of the entrance to virtue. For just as portals are the beginnings of a house, so are the preliminary encyclicals the beginning of virtue. And twelve is a perfect number, witness to which is the circle of the zodiac in the sky, since it is adorned with that number of luminous constellations.[50] The revolution of the sun is likewise a witness, for it completes its round in twelve months, and men keep the hours of the day and night equal in number to the days of the year. And Moses celebrates this number in several places, telling us of twelve tribes in the nation, making it a law that there be twelve loaves of show bread, and commanding that they embroider twelve stones marked with the engraved emblems upon the sacred robe, the full-length garment, specifically upon the breastplate.

He also proclaims the seven multiplied by ten, saying here that there were seventy palm trees by the springs, and in another passage that there were just seventy elders upon whom the divine spirit of prophecy was bestowed,[51] and in still another that seventy calves were offered at the Feast of the Tabernacles . . . When they have arrived at the vestibules of virtue, the subjects of preliminary instruction, and have beheld the springs with the shoots of the palm trees beside them, they are described as having pitched their camps not by the trees but beside the waters. Why? Because it is with palms and fillets that those are adorned who carry off the rewards of perfect virtue, but those who are still moving on the level of the preliminaries, inasmuch as they are athirst for learning, settle down beside those sciences which can water their souls and give them drink.[52]

In this passage Philo suggests vividly that the twelve tribes in camp beside the springs at Elim represent the zodiac, and says that when the water came to them in "portals, the beginning of a house," they received the "preliminary education." [53] He points out that the seventy palm trees symbolized a higher level of experience than that of the twelve springs, and that actually, though they seem somehow to be there in Philo's exposition (how could they not since the Bible mentions them?), they essentially do not belong in

50. I have followed Colson in translating *astra* as constellations, though strictly the word means stars. Cf. what Usener thought to be an ancient gloss in a hermetic tract in Stobaeus, *Anthology*, I, xxi, 9 (ed. C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense, 1884, I, 194, lines 7–10): "*Asteres* are different from *astra*. For *asteres* are the ones which float about in the sky, but the *astra* are incorporated into the body of the sky and are borne about in it: from them we speak of the twelve *zōdia*."

51. Num. xi, 16.

52. *Fug.* 183–187.

53. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 123, with n. 431, says that this passage "might conceivably provide suggestions for a speculative interpretation of the Dura scene, but can hardly be regarded as sufficient source for its iconography." That this one incident is not the "source for the painting's iconography" I fully agree. Just what he means by his objections, however, it would be hard to say. Any interpretation of the Dura paintings involves "speculation," but many more of the details of Elim agree with the details of the painting than those of the incident at Beer. He goes on to say that the painting lacks "a gateway [we have translated "portals"] . . . which Philo finds suggested in the name Elim." A "gateway" which Kraeling failed to find is certainly there in the gabled doorway at the back, but Kraeling has missed Philo's plural, *pulōnes*, "gateways," Philo's translation of Elim. These are vestibules, again plural, *thurōnes*, into which the water flows, and in many ways are the most striking element of the painting. Incidentally, in connection with Philo's ignorance of Hebrew, "Elim," according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, means "place of trees."

the experience of Elim, as he interprets it: for the tribes camped, he specifies, not by the palms but by the waters. The painting preserves the idea that the twelve streams flow into the portals of their tents. The mystical victory which the palm trees represented has been entirely omitted. This level of experience will appear when we discuss the temple and Ark which balance these scenes on the other half of the west wall.

Details of the painting, however, appear in Philo's allegories of other wells, as Kraeling recognized.[54] The painting represents the heroic-sized Moses as the one who makes the water flow with his rod, and does so before the sacred empty portal adored by the menorah. Philo has relatively little to say about Rephidim, the place where Moses struck the "flinty rock" at God's command. But he frequently expounds upon the passage in that narrative where God says that when Moses takes the elders out to see the miracle, God will himself be before them on Mt. Horeb.[55] As to the striking of the rock to bring out water, Philo explains in his account to the gentiles that this miracle may have been a sudden release of water already there, but that in any case such a wonder would have been only "child's play" (*paignia*) for the God who created the cosmos.[56] Even in this brief allusion to the miracle itself, then, its connection with the cosmic has emerged. That God was "before them on Mt. Horeb," however, Philo makes into a declaration of God's transcendence and immutability in several passages. God thereby says, Philo explains, that

> the divine nature, which presents itself to us as visible and comprehensible and everywhere, is in reality invisible, incomprehensible, and nowhere. . . . "I transcend created things, preceding all demonstration or presentation to the mind." [57]

But Philo says this immediately after having declared "God fills all things: he contains but is not contained. To be everywhere and nowhere is God's property, and his alone." [58] So he uses the same biblical text to show the omnipresence of God: "God has filled all wholly and entirely, and left nothing where his presence is not." [59] The transcendental-immanent deity of this verse, however, is established on the steepest-cut (*akrotatē*) and oldest source (*archē*) of power, from which the birth of existing things (*ta onta*) showers down, and the stream of Wisdom swells. This was demonstrated, Philo continues, when Moses brought the water from the steep-cut (*akrotomos*) rock.[60] The flow from God, Philo immediately continues, was a flow of the supreme aspect of Deity, his unchangeability, but only "chosen natures" share in this supreme quality. First, the "graces" of this flow are in the Jewish Law, and become a firm "pedestal of soul-justice for the god-like image," for he says "justice and the Covenant of God are identical." It is one of Philo's most difficult passages, one which cannot be expounded here at length, but of which it may be said that

54. *Synagogue*, 123.
55. See Exod. XVII, 1–7.
56. *Mos.* I, 210–213. Philo's remarks are quite intriguing. We are amazed at such a small miracle as drawing water from a rock because it is unusual, he is saying, but we take the cosmic miracle of creation for granted.
57. *Conf.* 138 f.
58. Ibid. 136.
59. *Sacr.* 67 f.; cf. *LA* III, 4–6.
60. *Som.* II, 221 f. The "steep-cut rock" of course comes from Deut. VIII, 15, where that word is used to refer to the rock at Rephidim. Colson despairs of representing the Greek pun *akrotomos* and *akrotatē*.

Philo is speaking of justice as a gift from God, and identifying it with true Law, in the way Paul did.[61] Philo goes on to say that the flow of God's steadfastness, rest, immutability (justice is only another word here for this) also enters into the individual to give him a new "self." Supremely exemplified in Abraham and Moses, the "God-beloved," the "good man" (*ho asteios*), finds that he "belongs either to God alone or to the nature midway between the categories of God and men." The result is that "he is neither God nor man but touches the two extremities (*akra*)—humanity by his being mortal, and incorruptibility [Paul also used this word, *aphthartos*, for the unchangeable] by his being virtuous." This makes such a man "God's priestly minister (*leitourgos*), who hallows and burns as incense his holy and impalpable virtues." [62]

Philo has much more to say about the stream from God to the universe and man, and about the salvation it brings. But here a number of details from the painting have emerged. We begin to see why Moses might have been depicted in superhuman dimensions and the special robe, while at the same time the robe is made of the checkered cloth of Jewish priesthood. As mediator of the silent mystery of the unchangeable doorway, Moses releases the stream of God's graces to the cosmos and to man. We recall the stream of *hvareno* that characterized the Iranian deity and shrine.[63] Moses, indeed, seems an alternative for the heavenly butler, the Logos, who pours out himself, his own nature, or the divine virtues, in a heavenly stream for men. That early Christians made Jesus assume this same role, and give himself to his followers to drink,[64] must not confuse us. Philo, and probably many other hellenized Jews, had earlier recognized this saving flow of Logos and Grace, and had seen Moses as the one who released it, and who, in releasing it, gave himself. Hellenized Jews, who made these identifications with none of the later Christian specificity, could in one allegory make it Moses who represented and released the stream and in another, Abraham. Here is one of the distinctions between hellenized Jews and later Christians which seem to confuse modern scholars who read Philo in excerpts. Jews had the freedom to see in any person of their Bible the revelation of God (their terms are as fluid for this conception as are the same terms for Christ and his gift in the New Testament itself), but they believed just as sincerely, if Philo may guide us, that their Torah, and its great Moses, had literally brought this stream to them. Philo meant what he said, and the "philosopher" at Dura meant what he painted, that Israel, a cosmic entity, gets with the universe the great stream from the "flinty rock," as Paul called it; that Moses, in dignity far beyond man, releases this flow to man and the cosmos alike, and hence that the Jewish cultus unites men and the cosmos in worshiping the ultimate Source beyond them and it.

The problem of arrangement of material in so cumbersomely large a study as the present one here emerges. As those who have read the chapter on the menorah in Volume IV will know, the prime Jewish symbol of the cosmic approach to this great Reality was the menorah, which represented the seven planets, and with them the material cosmos.

61. See my *By Light, Light*, chapters II and III, and the appendix.
62. *Som.* II, 223–237, esp. 231 f.
63. See above, pp. 30 f.
64. John VII, 37 f.; cf. I Cor. X, 4: cf. Jeremias in *Angelos*, II (1926), 124. See fig. 70.

Man by this rose to share in the cosmic worship. Philo tells us sufficiently, as does Josephus, that everything in the worship of Tabernacle and Temple had its true meaning as taking man into the worship of God by the cosmos. Let me repeat, this time from my chapter on astronomical worship in Volume VIII, that this worship was by no means to be directed to the cosmos itself, but it did take the worshiper to a share in the great *eucharistia* which the universe offered its Creator day and night.[65] The twelve Patriarchs as adorants seem to show themselves worshiping in this cosmic sense, and they interpret thereby the true value of the Aaronic priesthood and cultus with which they are associated.[66] We hear Philo, after contrasting the heaven perceived by sense with the heaven perceived by thought alone, saying:

> From the whole human race he selected for their special merit those who were Men in the true sense, and deemed them worthy of universal pre-eminence. He called them to worship himself, who is the ever-flowing [67] fountain of what is beautiful (*ta kala*), from which he showers down the other virtues and gushes forth as a most beneficial gratification a drink that confers immortality as much as or more than nectar. Wretched and ill-starred are those who do not fill themselves full of this drink of virtue (*aretē*), but most so are those who never get a taste of the supreme good (*kalokagathia*) when it is possible to revel in the delights of righteousness (*dekaiosunē*) and piety (*hosiotēs*).[68]

I cannot give pedestrian ethical values to these Platonic terms for mystical achievement, through the flow from God. We just met them in another quotation from Philo. The Jewish people, in their very foundation, he says again, were called to be the priests of mankind, for they, purified by their legal conformity, turn to the One whom with one accord all Greeks and barbarians are aware lies behind the welter of the "gods." They have learned about this One from their astronomers and other philosophers, but only the Jews, in their prayers, festivals, and first-fruit offerings, properly and exclusively worship the One. So the Jewish cult "is a means of supplication for the human race in general, and of making its homage to the truly existent God." [69]

The "philosopher" who designed the painting at Dura does not seem to have had any of these Philonic passages directly, let alone exclusively, in mind. For example, the little fish that appear in the water of the well recall two rabbinic statements:

> Where the Israelites were drawing water, the Holy One, blessed be he, prepared for them in the water little fishes for their pitchers.[70] OF THE DEW OF HEAVEN (Gen. XXVII, 28). This

65. On Philo's interpretation of the Temple cultus, in many ways the best study is still the quite neglected one of H. Wenschkewitz, "Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe," Αγγελος, *Archiv für neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte und Kulturkunde*, IV (1932), 131–151 (printed also as Beiheft IV for this periodical: see pp. 67–87).

66. In many passages Philo enlarges upon the spiritual value of this praise or *eucharistia*. See, for example, *Plant.* 126–131.

67. We have met this figure for divine grace with the three Nymphs: see above, IX, 219.

68. *Spec.* I, 303 f.

69. Ibid. II, 163–167; see Colson's note ad loc.

70. *BT*, *Yoma*, 75a (ET, 361): above, VI, 186. The passage does not associate this with the well: it is quoted from a "Master." But I suspect the original remark recalled the pitchers of the wilderness. The biblical text does not speak of them, but they apparently had a place in the tradition, since Philo mentions the *hudriai* as being filled at Marah (*Mos.* I, 187) and at Rephidim (ibid., 211).

> alludes to the manna, as it says, Then said the Lord unto Moses: *Behold, I will cause to rain bread from heaven for you* (Exod. XVI, 4). AND THE FATNESS OF THE EARTH (Gen. XXVII, 28) alludes to the well, which brought up for them various kinds of exceedingly fat [rich] fish.[71]

That is, all the details of the scene came from no specific form of the legend of the well of the wilderness as it is now preserved in the writings of either rabbinic or hellenized Jews. The scene seems to me, however, directly to evaluate the Aaronic cultus in the painting at the right, by declaring that it represents the cosmic quality of the twelve tribes as the zodiac. Their worship is directed toward, but does not enter, the inscrutable mystery of the shrine at the back, a level of reality and experience which we shall see presented in the following chapter. The scene of the well represents Moses as the great medium who with his rod releases the divine nature and power to the universe and man; Moses who, in his checked robe, was the supreme priest by whom Aaron himself was consecrated. This heavenly flow to the children of Israel lay at the back of the Aaronic cult, the picture is saying, and explained its real significance and potency. In that worship God taught all men, and Israel as a priestly tribe led them, to join in the cosmic worship of the supreme God who, for the cult, dwelt in the inner shrine as a Presence in the Ark of the Covenant. This Shekinah, or Presence, had essentially no part in the Aaronic cultus beyond being its hidden orientation. The final achievement for the individual through cosmic Jewish cultus was illustrated by the figure of the ascension of Moses to the starry heavens, just at the right of the scene of Aaronic sacrifice. The thought again moves from the border to the center, from the cosmic Israel and Stream to the cosmic physical worship of the Aaronic priesthood to the final exemplification of what this could mean in the Moses who, as Philo said, in person joins the heavenly bodies in their praise of the supreme God. Finally the picture says that Israel through Moses truly receives the cosmic *hvareno*, that the values of Iranian cosmic orientation and worship are all found in Judaism, who has them supremely through Moses. Judaism is the true cosmic religion.

71. *MR*, *Gen.*, LXVI, 3 (ET, II, 602).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Judaism of Immaterial Reality: The Closed Temple

OPPOSITE THE TEMPLE of Aaron with its sacrifices and attendants another temple was painted, plate XI, fig. 333, which I call the Closed Temple. The two stand in striking iconographic balance, plate I, and the "philosopher" represented the second temple obviously by modifying the design of the first. The first temple stands upon the ground, and is the center of active cultus, as shown by Aaron, the attendants, the animals for sacrifice, and the implements of the Jewish temple. The second temple has become pure abstraction, with no cultus or priests and with no relation to the ground. Iconographically the second temple suggests a worship which needs no appurtenances and has no relation with the material world, but which is made Jewish by its formal kinship to the Temple of Aaron. The contrast between the two recalls the two balanced conceptions of kingship in the paintings of the register below, the one the triumph, probably the Messianic triumph, of Jews over the kings of the world, the other the abstract and hieratic kingship of the company of the Seven. So much appears at first glance from a general impression of the painting in its setting.

A. THE PAINTING

DETAILS OF THE DESIGN confirm this general impression. Like the Aaronic Temple, and the Greek design of which it appears to be an adaptation, the temple we are discussing is based upon the idea of an outer wall with an inner shrine. The outer wall is suggested by three entrances, like those of the Aaronic Temple, but unlike the Aaronic wall and the wall of the Greek model the wall we are considering does not bend. The attempt to suggest a three-dimensional view is abandoned, so that this, like the priestly scene of Samuel below it, has become purely hieratic. As Kraeling saw, the doors and the inner shrine are superimposed upon the walls, in no sense put into relation with them. The two smaller doorways cross three of the bands of wall, the center doorway four, and the inner shrine four. The seven bands of colored masonry actually represent a series of seven walls

with doors in the outer wall, and we are apparently to suppose that the shrine stands inside the last wall. But the artist has deliberately gone as far as possible to take all realism from the painting. The seven seems to be an idea that characterizes this temple in its own right, one that corresponds in fresh symbolic representation to the Seven into which David is initiated by Samuel immediately below. Conspicuously as the design presents the seven walls, however, an eighth region suggests itself in the little patches of golden yellow between the pink crenelations of the top wall.[1] But since obviously the top wall had to have crenelations like the others, and the interstices of these crenelations had in a painting to be filled in with something, we cannot be sure that an eighth region was intended.

The inner sanctuary, so much like the inner shrine of Aaron, differs from it conspicuously in that it has its doors tightly shut and has ten rather than five columns.[2] The gabled pediment rests upon four of these, and six others run down the sides. The contrast in number fits too well with the number symbolism of the day, as we shall see, to be accidental. If the seven bands of colored masonry have symbolic meaning, as all have at once admitted, then the artist had number symbolism in mind, so that the change from the five columns to the ten for the two inner shrines seems no less directly significant and intentional. We notice, too, that while the five columns of Aaron were emphasized by his five attendants, the number of the columns of the other temple, ten, is reinforced by ten rosettes put in each of the tiers of symbols in the smaller doors. The inner shrine is again marked with Victories presenting their wreaths as acroteria, and a rosette in a circle again occupies the center of the tympanum, this time a sixteen-point rosette. To it is added a vine motif, with two smaller rosettes in its openings, which fills out the rest of the tympanum.

In each of the three doorways below are two doors, or possibly one door with two tiers of three panels, like the tomb door from Egypt already illustrated, one which also had lion masks with rings.[3] These masks and rings occupy the central panels of the smaller doors. Kraeling takes them to be "conventional door-pulls," and so speaks of the doors as "massive double doors," [4] but the masks seem to me to be symbolic, as on the Egyptian door. In our discussion of the lion mask with a ring we have seen that while it was certainly

1. It may somewhat strengthen the suggestion of an eighth region to notice that although the inner shrine stands upon its own foundation, below which is a second foundation made of two stone courses, these lower ones are colored in exactly the pink of the last "wall." Also, the door of that shrine has the darker golden yellow of the little interstices at the top. We notice also that the pink courses under the shrine are not properly the foundation of the shrine, since although at the right the pink extends beyond the shrine's own foundation, it does not reach to the end at the left. The design may accordingly be identifying the last pink wall, the seventh, with the pink foundation of the inner shrine, and hence be saying that the shrine stood beyond the pink wall, and was itself characterized by the golden yellow of its doors and of the interstices at the top of the painting. The idea cannot be pressed, however, since the courses of stone of the shrine itself are of the same pink, and the three large doors below are of the same golden yellow. I point out these details on the chance that they may become meaningful to later scholars. Color symbolism clearly has great importance in the scene as a whole, and we shall return to it.

2. We notice also that the courses of stones in the shrine itself change their angles to indicate a third dimension. This is the only touch of spatial realism in the whole design.

3. See above, VII, fig. 63. We return to this detail below, pp. 56–58.

4. *Synagogue*, 108.

used as a doorpull, it was very frequently put on doors or sarcophagi as a symbol in its own right.[5]

What I have been throughout these volumes calling "round objects" are drawn along the frames of each of the three doors. Kraeling calls these nail studs, but the row of "round objects" on the stone lintels above the two smaller doorways would make it seem that the "studs" on the doors themselves are also "round objects." We have discussed "round objects" several times in the preceding volumes, and found that Jews often used them to mark sacred objects. The menorah above the Torah shrine at Dura is made of these concentric circles, fig. 66; they mark the astragal of the little painted shrine beside it, and one is on each of its two doors. A row of them seems to run along the top of the entablature of that shrine. They appear on the shrine doors of the Roman gold glasses, and tiers of them as *semeia* stand on two stone doors for Jewish tombs.[6] It will be recalled that a column of them was painted on the reveal of the smaller entrance to the synagogue of Dura itself.[7] They appear so often on shrine doors, that is, that they seem definitely to have had a meaningful implication to Jews in that connection, and hence may be supposed to have had symbolic reference on the doors of the Closed Temple.

Pediments crown the two side doors, and a seven-point rosette is in the tympanum of each. Above the narrow lintel of the central door, fig. 333, rests a raking cornice supported at either end by a console. The cornice is probably to be considered as the lower member of a pediment, since the same raking ends appear on the side doors, and a door with such a cornice was on a tomb at Palmyra.[8] The cornice has two levels, the upper one dentilated, the lower bearing another of the running vine motifs so popular in Jewish synagogues, in whose openings symbolic forms appear. In the openings here we have a bunch of grapes, leaves, and rosettes, fig. 250. That is, the rosettes in the vine, which we saw in the tympanum of the inner shrine, reappear here, set in a vine which the grapes definitely identify as the grapevine. Upon each of two tiers of three panels on the side doors, as has been said, designs are painted: in the bottom and top panels five rosettes, in the central panel the lion mask holding a ring in its mouth.

On the corresponding set of panels in the central door most unexpected designs appear, fig. 250. Each of the top panels shows a humped bull (presumably not a cow) with all four legs forward. He is lying down, as becomes clear at once when we see the two bulls ready for sacrifice in figs. 341 and 342. Indeed we shall suspect that these bulls on the door are carefully shown as themselves ready to be immolated. In each central panel stands a naked herculean male figure, one hand behind him, the other lifted.[9] Upon his head he wears a crown of leaves or a palm leaf, and what appears to be a *polos*, a high crown usually associated with divinities. A large rosette occupies each upper corner. On either side of the central figure stand two little children like putti, but they have no indication

5. See above, VII, 63–66.
6. See above, III, fig. 44; VII, fig. 226.
7. See fig. 52, and above, IX, 58.
8. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 84, plate XXXVI, 2.
9. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 109, n. 366, says that no genitals are indicated on this large figure, but in the original, plate XI, and Gute's painting, fig. 250, masculine genitals are clear. The slight suggestion of breasts is proper for a muscular man.

of sex. Each has one hand behind the back like the large figure; the other hand hangs at the side. That is, they do not carry themselves at all as do the other babies in the synagogue paintings.[10]

In the bottom panel in a sleeveless chiton and himation stands the figure of Tyche with cornucopia and rudder. She also has a polos and halo, and Kraeling [11] publishes a drawing in which she has at her hip what might be a shield, or possibly her wheel; but he does not mention it in his description, and from the photographs it might be a loop in her clothing. That she is a haloed Tyche figure, however, no one can doubt.

What does the temple mean, utterly abstracted as a whole but with its clear indications of pagan figures and symbols? I cannot agree with Kraeling [12] that we must begin to establish its meaning by identifying it with some particular shrine of the Old Testament. Brushing aside as irrelevant the extraordinary pagan features, he says that the temple represents "The Holy City, Jerusalem, with its Holy Temple, the Temple of Solomon." Particularly he thinks the design represents "the building of the walls of Jerusalem by David (II Samuel v, 9), and the building of the Temple by Solomon (I Kings VI)." For this he relies upon the painting's hypothetical relation to a scene of Hannah on another wall, and to the fact that in the Targum of I Samuel II Hannah is made to sing a song in which she prophesies that Jerusalem will be filled with people. Since not a person is shown in this painting, I cannot see that Kraeling's material has any relevance to the scene we are discussing. Interpretation must, I insist, bear some relation to the details being interpreted.[13]

Grabar [14] felt the contrast between the two temple scenes, as well as the abstractness of the Closed Temple. To him this meant that the latter was abandoned, that it was a temple of pagan astral religions, especially devoted to the sun, a worship which the reforms of Josiah, whom he saw in the figure at the left reading the scroll, had made the Israelites abandon. His argument grows weaker as he cites proof texts for the identification with Josiah and as his "abandoned temple" becomes the temple of Solomon purified of pagan idolatry. The scene as designed has no suggestion of cleansing or abandonment. The building with its walls is closed but, in its almost central place on the wall, assertive. When the artist wanted to illustrate the collapse of pagan religion, he could do so brilliantly, as in fig. 334.

The abstractness of the design taken with its assertiveness and position on the wall can be reconciled only by our continuing to see in it a mystic scheme. The abstractness here suggests that this mysticism, like most of the mystery teachings of antiquity—the mystic

10. See figs. 335 and 338, and above, IX, 233. The only design I know comparable to this is found several times repeated on a "broad border" of seventh-century Coptic textile: see A. Kesser, "Coptic Textiles from Burial Grounds in Egypt," *Graphis*, XVI (1960) (No. 90), 336–355, fig. 26 on p. 345. The textile is so late, and its details and meaning so uncertain, that I do not reproduce it. It does show a large, presumably male figure with what may be a little child, possibly an animal, on either side. The man has both hands lifted to touch (or hold) something which may have been originally the rosettes above the shoulders of the Dura figure. Absence of genitals on the little figures here means nothing, since genitals are not indicated on any baby in the synagogue paintings.
11. Ibid., fig. 33, p. 108.
12. Ibid., 110–113.
13. Other attempts to fit the scene with specific Old Testament texts seem equally strained. This temple is not from the Old Testament at all.
14. "Le Thème," 180 f.

philosophies as well as the mystery cults—presented itself as secret and other-worldly; at the same time, by virtue of detachment from material nature and ordinary men, it offered the means and way to Supreme Reality.

B. THE SEVEN WALLS

THE MOST OBVIOUS DETAIL with which to begin is that of the seven colored walls. As Kraeling described them, the colors are as follows, reading from the bottom: dull red, black, yellow ochre, light gray, dull white, dark gray (originally blue), and pink, with golden yellow filling the spaces between the top row of crenelations. To du Mesnil a shrine guarded by seven crenelated walls, each of a different color, at once suggested Herodotus' description of the Medean capital at Agbatana (now Hamadan), "great and mighty circles of walls within walls," as built by king Deioces. Herodotus' passage seems highly important:

> This fortress is so planned that each circle of walls is higher than the next outer circle by no more than the height of its crenellations, to which end the site itself, being on a hill in the plain, somewhat helps; but chiefly it was accomplished by art. There are seven circles in all: within the innermost circle are the king's dwellings and the treasures. The longest wall is about the length of the wall that surrounds the city of Athens. The crenellations of the first circle are white, of the second black, of the third purple, of the fourth blue, and of the fifth orange. Thus the crenellations of five circles are painted with colors. The crenellations of the last two are plated, those of one with silver and of the other with gold.[15]

The inner space was really a sanctuary for the king, since the people had to live outside the walls.[16] The colors of the walls of Herodotus do not at all correspond to those of the Closed Temple, and it has a shrine, not a palace and treasury, within the seven walls. But the series of colored crenelations strikingly reappears in the painting.

The existence of such a temple or royal shrine in later times is not attested, but a passage in the Bundahishn [17] describes a strange fortress, Kang, a walled city built first on the head of the demons and then established on the earth. Of enormous size, itself a creature with hands and feet and power to see and move, it has seven walls, gold, silver, steel, bronze, iron, crystal, and precious stones. That is, the conception seems to go from Herodotus to Parthian times as the form of the ideal city, though the tradition of the metals has deteriorated.

The use of colors and metals in series has long been recognized as a feature of Mithraic cult. Cumont [18] found a Mithraeum in Ostia in which the worshiper advanced to the sacred scene and altar at the end by going through seven doors, with symbols of the planets and signs of the zodiac on them. More explicitly, Origen quotes Celsus as follows:

> For there is a certain symbol [in the mystery of Mithra] of the two revolutions in heaven (that of the fixed stars and that which is appointed for the planets) and of the escape of the soul out through them. And this is the symbol: a ladder of seven gates, with the eighth gate above it. Of these gates the first is of lead, the second of tin, the third of copper, the fourth of iron, the fifth of mixed coinage (*kerastou nomismatos*), the sixth of silver, the seventh of gold. The first gate they assign to Saturn, indicating by the lead the slowness of the star; the second to Venus, comparing her to the brightness and softness of tin; the third to Jupiter, because of its copper floor and solidity; [19] the fourth to Mercury, for both Mercury and iron are adaptable for all sorts of uses, are money-makers, and are hard to work; [20] the fifth to Mars, for it is uneven and diverse because of its mixture; the sixth, the silver gate, to the Moon, and the seventh, the golden gate, to the Sun. These comparisons are based upon the likeness of colors.[21]

The passage is clear except for the metal of the fifth gate which I have literally translated "mixed coinage." Such a use of *nomisma* for a metal is unique. The only way I can understand the statement is that the fifth gate was made of the mixed metal used in making coins, the commonest of which metals was bronze. The association of bronze with Mars is quite natural, both from the point of view of Homer, upon whom Celsus draws in comparing Jupiter to copper, and from the point of view of color. It seems inevitable to take the gate of Mars as of bronze.

The last statement in the quotation is that the allotment of metals to the planets was made on the basis of colors. It would appear that the planetary ascent could then be represented as a series of colors, and it is very likely that as Herodotus suggests, the original representation was by colors. Whether the original walls, if any such ever existed, were colored to represent planets or metals we cannot say, since the two so early coalesced. But since the last two walls described by Herodotus were actually plated with metals, gold and silver, the original designer must at least have had metals as well as planets in mind. The metals reported by Celsus give us definite indication of what the colors represented to him. Lead, Saturn, is dark gray; tin, Venus, dull white; copper, Jupiter, pink or red; iron, Mercury, black; the "mixed coinage," bronze, Mars, dull red; silver, the moon, light gray; gold, the sun, yellow. Other colors are unthinkable as equivalents. The copper of Jupiter might, in itself, be either red or pink, but in contrast with the dark red of bronze would have to be a lighter red, or pink. We know that red has always been the color of Mars. The planetary ascent of Mithra, then, reduced to colors, would give us the following succession: dark gray, very light gray, pink, black, red, light gray, and yellow.

These, in a different order, are exactly the peculiar colors of the striped masonry in the Closed Temple scene, and near enough to the colors represented by Herodotus. We

15. Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 98. I have followed very closely the translation of A. Godley in the Loeb series.

16. Ibid., 99.

17. It is translated and discussed by A. Christensen, *Les Kyanides*, 1932, 82–84 (Kongelig Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser, XIX, ii). He quotes still another late version of the walls from the *Rivayat*.

18. *Les Mystères de Mithra*, 3d ed., 1913, 145, n. 2; idem, *TMM*, I, 117 f.; II, 243–245, fig. 77. I could not consult his *Notes sur un Temple mithraique d'Ostia*, Gand, 1891 (Ghent: Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, IV).

19. Zeus is repeatedly *chalkobatē* in Homer, that is, he has a house with a copper floor: *Iliad*, I, 426; *Odyssey*, VIII, 321, etc.

20. *Polukmētos* is likewise Homeric: *Iliad*, VI, 48; X, 379.

21. Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI, xxii. I have used the more familiar Latin names for the planets.

can only conclude that the temple stripes could have represented either planets or metals, or both, though in each list the colors are differently arranged. The new order of planets in the Dura scene would be, from bottom up, Mars, Mercury, sun, moon, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter. Above these are the suggestions of golden color, which might correspond to the eighth gate of Mithra, the orb of the fixed stars, or to the reality beyond the physical universe altogether, a solar yellow brighter than the gleam of the physical sun, to use the ordinary language of comparison.[22] The order of planets suggested by the colors in the synagogue painting is, so far as I know, unique; it is certainly contrary to all accepted schools of Greek astronomy to place Mars at the bottom, nearest the earth. But it is no more extraordinary than to put Saturn there, as does the Mithra ladder, while the grouping of Mercury and Venus with the sun and moon by the stripes in the synagogue corresponds to one of the first principles of Greek astronomy, a principle disregarded in the Mithra arrangement. On the whole the Jewish order, strange as it is, has fewer points of absurdity than the Mithraic from the standpoint of ancient astronomy.[23] The colored walls seem to represent Jewish borrowing from Iran, presumably, as with Mithra, for a mystic formulation of ascent. But what I have called the deterioration of the planetary scheme makes me wonder whether all reference to the actual planets had not disappeared, and the whole scheme of colors become vaguely symbolic, so that the seven colors and walls in the Closed Temple would go with the mystic seven in the initiation scene beneath it, and with the seven which Philo saw in the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark which is on the synagogue wall directly beside this temple, rather than with the cosmic seven which the menorah did specifically represent.

The colored walls of the Closed Temple may have symbolized that development of astral and planetary ascent in which the seven spheres became the seven heavens and the gates or portals of the stars became the gates or portals of the heavens. Such an explanation was widely accepted by Jews; the earliest trace of it that I know is in the description of Eden in terms of nine jewels, set in gold as the tenth.[24] There on the mountain of God and with an anointed cherub for his companion, was the king of Tyre until he fell into sin. The notion of the heavens as in a sense this Eden restored occurs in a great variety of sources.[25]

The passage of Origen, in which he quotes the above-cited (and oft-cited) passage of Celsus has not been noticed, and should be. For just before quoting Celsus, Origen talks of

22. The notion is implicit in all descriptions of God as Light, for example those of Daniel, Enoch, and the later books of Baruch, as well as those of Philo, for in none of these is the light of the physical world meant. Even the first-created light of Gen. 1, 3, is not the light of the heavenly luminaries. It is this gold which presumably prompted the background of Byzantine art.

23. If the sun and moon were reversed to make the sun the central planet, we should have an order something like Philo's, who put the sun in the middle with Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars above it, Mercury, Venus, and the moon beneath it. But Philo admits that the order of the planets is uncertain, and suggests that many other orders were taught. *Heres* 223 f.; *Mos.* II, 103. See my "A Neo-Pythagorean Source in Philo Judaeus," *Yale Classical Studies*, III (1932), 147 f. On the Chaldean order see Cumont, "La Théologie solaire du paganisme romain," *Mém.* AIB, XII (1913), 451 f., 471 f.

24. Ezek. XXVIII, 11–15.

25. These are collected in Bousset, *Religion*, 282–285. See also the early rabbinic sources quoted by Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 107, n. 360.

the "supercelestial" God of the Christians.[26] He says (quite rightly in my opinion) that it was the Platonic immaterialism which Paul had in mind when he remarked that the things not seen are eternal.[27] To these Origen hopes to go after death. He will pass beyond the fountains of eternal life and the rivers of knowledge offered to men within the universe, and then go on to be united with those waters said to be above the heavens.[28] We seem to have got beyond the planetary symbolism. But Origen at once says that while the Christian scriptures do not talk of seven heavens, or any other specific number, they speak of "heavens," and this may well mean the planets, but also "something more mysterious." [29] He continues:

> Celsus, too, following Plato, says that souls have a path to and from the earth, through the planets. But Moses, our most ancient prophet, says that in a vision of our patriarch Jacob a divine dream was seen, a ladder which extended into heaven upon which angels of God ascended and descended, and with the Lord established at the top of it. By this account of the ladder [Moses] hinted either at these things [the planets] or at something greater than these ["more mysterious"]. On this subject Philo has written a book worth intelligent and sagacious scrutiny by all lovers of the truth.[30]

Apparently this treatise of Philo was the best thing Origen knew on the matter of the ascent (perhaps descent also) of souls to the heavens quite beyond the planetary universe. The lost works of Philo have in all my study come to notice just when we seemed to approach Philo's deepest points of interest. To join the Cosmic Hymn with the planets, and to use the planets as a ladder to another world, or, even more as Origen is thinking, to have a totally different ladder which the planets only symbolize, marks precisely the distinction I have been feeling all along between the designs on the two sides of the reredos, especially between the three-dimensional temple of Aaron and the abstract two-dimensional Closed Temple. Apparently Philo gave both interpretations, especially the latter, in his lost work.

C. IRANIAN FIGURES OF CREATION

THE SEVEN COLORS as seven metals suggest, however, quite another body of ideas, the Iranian tradition that the creation began with the forming of a primitive man, whose body was made from the seven (eight) metals. The meaning of the conception, and its possible relevancy, will be discussed when we have discussed the other symbols used in the painting.

For in trying to recover the mystic idea which the temple by its form seems designed

26. Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI, xix.

27. II Cor. IV, 18.

28. In contrast, the flight of the mind *through* the universe, seems to me illustrated in the Aaronic priesthood. On this subject one must always have in mind the masterful essay of R. Jones, "Posidonius and the Flight of the Mind through the Universe," *Classical Philology*, XXI (1926), 97–113; see also W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele," *ARW*, IV (1901), 136–169, 229–273.

29. Literally "forbidden to be spoken," *aporrētoteron*, a word of definite mystic reference.

30. Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI, xxi.

to suggest we must recognize that as the artist made Aaron characterize the temple he dominates, so the designs on the doors of the Closed Temple, especially those of the central door, seem to set the tone of the whole, indeed to characterize it. The central door, fig. 250, as we have said, shows a bull, a herculean man with two children and rosettes, and a Tyche, these perhaps to be associated with the lion mask holding a ring in its mouth and with the ten rosettes, which are in the vertical panels of the side doors. As figures to characterize a type of Jewish thinking, these may never be read aright: but we cannot ignore them. They presumably announce the meaning of the shrine behind them.

The obvious one of these three with which to begin is Tyche. No figure from hellenistic religion was more variously used, and hence none could be more difficult to evaluate here.[31] She might well represent a number of oriental deities, since people of the East borrowed her for many purposes. Identified with Isis, she became the Fortune of Alexandria; [32] she was the Fortune of Antioch, apparently identified with the many-named mother goddess, or love goddess, of Syria.[33] Ackerman speaks of her identification with Ishtar and Anahita,[34] and the works listed in the notes below add many other names. The value of the goddess' figure for good luck in general appears from the frequency with which she was engraved on gems which were presumably amulets, but these as mere luck charms do not exhaust her value. On a much-discussed marble plaque [35] from Aquileia she stands beside a figure whose body is a winged ithyphallus, but which has human legs. Disagreement as to whether this grotesque figure should be called Tychon or something else should not divert us from the fact that she could be represented in such company. Whatever name the ithyphallic figure had, if any, the plaque shows that Tyche has association with the most direct symbol not only of luck but of fertility for men and the fields, which may explain, at least in part, why she seemed proper to represent the eastern goddess of fertility. Indeed this is exactly the implication of the cornucopia full of fruit that she usually carries, a symbol of abundance, not of her control of destiny like her peculiar attributes, the globe, wheel, and rudder. The mere fact that Tyche is on the door tells us nothing specific. We can begin to surmise her symbolic value here only from the figures with which she is associated.

The bull in itself seems as little to lead to an identification. The first and only attempt

31. Tyche, or Fortuna, was of great importance in the Greco-Roman period. The best introduction to the subject with copious references to detailed studies are the following: on "Fortuna" by R. Peter and W. Drexler in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.*, I, 1503–1558, and by W. Otto in PW, VII, 12–42; on "Tyche" by L. Ruhl and O. Weinreich in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.*, V, 1309–1381, and by G. Herzog-Hauser and K. Ziegler in PW, A–XIV, 1643–1696.

32. For Tyche identified with Isis see the figure, found in Pompeii, published in MW, II, plate LXXIII, fig. 925, also Roscher, *Lex. Myth.*, V, 1366 f., and the bibliography on the subject, ibid., 1341.

33. MW, fig. 927. The authors show an interesting collection of Tyche figures on this plate: see also their discussion in the text at nos. 926 (924)–940 (938); cf. I, plate LXXII, 408. Cf. Reinach, *Pierres*, plates XXXIV, no. 71, figs. 4 and 6; XLVI, no. 97, fig. 9; no. 98, fig. 9; XLVII, no. 99, figs. 1–3.

34. In Pope, *Persian Art*, I, 204, 215. She cites inadequate evidence for her statements, but I presume her grounds were adequate.

35. The relief is reproduced in a drawing in MW, II, plate LXXIII, fig. 936, and E. Gerhard, *Gesammelte Akademische Abhandlungen*, plate LI, 3. For summary and bibliography of discussion see K. Presandanz in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.*, V, 1383.

to identify it was that of du Mesnil,[36] who associated it with Hadad, or, as he was called in the syncretism of the period, Jupiter Heliopolitanus. So quick and precise an identification of the bull on the door seems quite hazardous. The bull at this time had been associated with a great number of deities or divine figures,[37] and one can distinguish what deity the artist had intended to suggest only by the position in which the bull is represented, and the figures associated with him. We recall again that the bull on the door is apparently couchant, which at once contrasts him with the bulls shown beside Jupiter Heliopolitanus.[38] So far as I can discover in the art of ancient Levant and, as we shall see,[39] in the synagogue itself, the bull couchant is always the bull being sacrificed. By this I do not mean to say that a bull being sacrificed is always drawn in pagan art like the ones on the door. Many bulls for sacrifice are standing, and while the bull killed by Mithra almost invariably lies down, conspicuously it has its head pulled back by the god to expose the throat. In two Mithraic scenes the head is not so lifted, but the bull on the door, since it does not have the lifted head, could not be called the bull of Mithra. Yet we can assume that the bull as drawn was a bull to be killed. Although unlike the bull of Mithra in position, this bull is ready for execution. By this, however, we have not identified the bull.

Fortunately we are on surer ground with the group of figures between Tyche and the bull, the herculean male with two children, and a rosette in each upper corner above his shoulders. For though the drawing has clearly come from Greco-Roman figures of Heracles and putti, such a group has no place in western art or mythology. Its place in the East, however, and specifically in this region drenched with Iranian tradition—especially in company of the bull about to be killed—at once strikes the eye. One of the basic conceptions in the whole Iranian tradition was that of a similar bull, a giant human figure, Gayomart, with baby twins, Masyā and Masyārē, and a female goddess, usually an earth goddess of fertility, Spandarmat.[40]

Iranian traditions so often contradict one another about these figures that they raise extremely difficult questions, upon which experts have by no means agreed.[41] An outsider like myself cannot hope to pronounce judgment, especially since one of the best scholars in the field has recently remarked about existing translations of at least the Pahlavi sources

36. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 85.

37. See above, my chapter on the bull in VII, esp. pp. 3–24.

38. See Seyrig, "La Triade heliopolitaine," *Syria*, X (1929), 328, 344–356, esp. plates LXXXIII f. Du Mesnil goes on to identify the Tyche with Atargatis, and the herculean figure with the son of these two, a deity that seemed in Syria chiefly associated with Hermes. The little children with this figure do not fit into his description of the Triad: he says, p. 86, that such a pair is "often found in Syria; their role has never been explained." He gives no references, and I cannot find a single example.

39. See below, pp. 149 f., and figs. 341 and 342.

40. Her name is variously spelled: especially Spenta Armaiti. See M. Ananikian in *HERE*, I, 795 f.

41. An excellent brief digest of the legend, with older bibliography, is that of Kraeling, *Anthropos and the Son of Man*, 1927, 85–127 (Columbia University Oriental Studies, XXV). Since then the most important studies that have come to my attention are : Zaehner, *Zurvan;* idem, *The Teachings of the Magi*, 1956, 67–74; Hartman, *Gayomart*. The latter has an excellent bibliography, pp. LXXIX–LXXXV, with many titles later than those listed by Kraeling.

that they "seem to have little relation to the maddening original." [42] I shall perhaps invite less censure if I keep to the basic generalities. In this legendary material the two principles of good and evil, Ohrmazd and Ahriman, existed from the beginning. At the first, knowing there must be a conflict with Ahriman, Ohrmazd produced a host of retainers.[43] Ahriman tried to destroy them but failed, and then Ohrmazd proceeded to create the material world in all its aspects, including a primeval bull and a primeval "blessed" man, Gayomart, whose name means "mortal life." [44] Once this second level of creation had been completed, Ahriman moved against it, and first, with many devices, attacked the bull and killed him, all vegetation perishing with him.[45]

It is hard to know just what the bull figure in this legend represented, for the sources give only confusing hints and the commentators have said little about it. In the Bundahishn [46] we learn that when the soul of the bull left his body, the bull made a mighty protest, because by his death vegetation had perished. But a little later the same text says that as the animal died, it exuded from its every limb the vegetable principle. The varieties of plants which grew up represented the bull's seminal or vital energy. Some of its seed was purified by the moon, and produced a pair of twin bovines, male and female, while the section seems to imply that birds and fish, as well as plants and animals, came also from the bull's seed.[47] Whatever the bull represented in this system of thought, however, its figure is always mentioned along with Gayomart, the man, and accordingly, although the sources do not really account for its significance, we must suppose that it had an important place in all the stories because it had an important place in current Iranian thought.

Christensen [48] has suggested that a primal bull was described along with the primal man because cattle were the most important of domestic animals. I do not think this is enough. The bull actually precedes the man in order and dignity, and has value, I am sure, as symbolizing more than man's chief domestic animal.

An outsider offers specific interpretation at his peril, but merely as a possibility I should like to suggest that the bull who is killed not only represents a religious act and symbol from earliest times in the entire Near East and Mediterranean worlds, but continues as a special symbol in the Pahlavi tradition, on the synagogue door, and over the Mithraic altars. In an earlier volume [49] I have reviewed the almost omnipresence of ancient bull symbolism, and shown that since so great a variety of gods were associated with the bull, even in a single civilization, clearly the bull as a symbol of divinity preceded the specific divine personalities with whom the bull might be associated. In all these regions it often represented power, even the storm god, but most commonly it seems to have been

42. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 6. H. Bailey remarked in the preface to his *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth Century Books*, 1942: "The little that is surely known allows so large a room for imagination, at times somewhat uneasily controlled."

43. Greater Bundahishn, I, 17–39; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 314–318.

44. Greater Bundahishn, I, 40–60; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 318–321. Cf. Hartman, 13, 43.

45. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 136.

46. Bundahishn, IV, 2 (tr. Christensen, *Types*, 17 f.).

47. Ibid., X, 1–4; XIV, 1–30(West, I, 31 f., 45–52).

48. *Types*, 40.

49. See above, VII, 3–28.

the source of fertility for man, beast, and field. Like all deities of fertility, it became also the hope of life in this world and the next. In Egypt the bull's fertility was imparted by its sexual potency, but throughout Syria and Mesopotamia it seemed released as the bull was killed, and his life force (which even in the Mithraic plaques came from his testicles) was given to man and nature primarily as his blood flowed under the knife. In the Mithraic representations it is strongly to be suspected that the deity was the bull itself, and that Mithra offered salvation by releasing the forces of this ultimate tremendum. The bull that is slain might thus have been the great symbol, and different myths could tell that the flow of his fertility came from the knife of the good Mithra, or of the wicked Ahriman.[50] When the good principle, Mithra, killed the bull and released his power, the act would of course be represented in full as a religious symbol. When the wicked Ahriman did it, and good triumphed over evil as the bull's blood even in death poured out its vitalizing and creating force, the symbol as represented would omit Ahriman, and show simply the slaughtered bull. For the worshiper had reverence not for Ahriman's act but for the bull and its vitality.

Such hypothetical reconstruction has no direct evidence to support it. The representation of the bull, Gayomart and his twins, and the female figure as a symbolic group does, however, stand on the synagogue temple door, and provokes tentative guesses at explanation. The Pahlavi sources which tell us of Gayomart make Ahriman the one who kills the bull and present so different a conception of its immolation from what is implied by the Mithraic cult scene that a cult representation of the slain bull corresponding to the Pahlavi sources must have been quite different from the Mithraic. It may well have looked much like the bull with Gayomart in the synagogue representation. At least, and at last, we do have this one representation, and even after alterations by the Jewish artists, the representations are just what the Pahlavi myths would have led us to expect.

According to the stories, Ahriman next attacked the primal man, Gayomart, whom Ohrmazd had fashioned like the bull, from the earth.[51] Our source, which Zaehner calls the "*Pahlavī Rivāyat* accompanying the *Dātastān i dēnīk*," [52] says that Ohrmazd made Gayomart from clay by "emitting him in the form of seed into Spandarmat: and Gayomart was fashioned from Spandarmat and was born." The Great Bundahishn tells the story in terms of a struggle between the planets Jupiter (Ohrmazd) and Saturn. Jupiter protected Gayomart for thirty years from the destructive enemy (Ahriman), but when the planet Saturn, which, or who, had previously created death, came to its apogee, it dominated Jupiter, and Gayomart died.

> He fell on his left side, and, in dying, his seed flowed out upon the earth, just as all men now in dying release their seed. Since the body of Gayomart was made of metals, the seven kinds of metals appeared from his body. The seed entered into the earth, and at the end of forty years Masyā and Masyārē grew out. From them came the progress of the world, the annihilation of the *dēvs* [demon companions of Ahriman] and of the destructive

50. See J. Duchesne-Guillemin in *Review of Religion*, XX (1955), 99.

51. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 137, 318.

52. Translated by Zaehner, 367.

actions of the evil spirit [Ahriman himself]. This was the first combat of Gayomart against the evil spirit.[53]

The Bundahishn, xv, 1,[54] says that in falling, Gayomart discharged his seed, which was purified by the light of the sun, and so in another source was called gold.[55] Two portions of this seed were kept by a divine figure said to be Ohrmazd's special messenger to man; the third portion went to Spandarmat, the archangel of the earth, indeed the earth itself personalized,[56] and so forty years later a special plant, the Rivash, grew up from it. The plant had a single stalk and fifteen leaves and was actually Masyā and Masyārē, "so linked together at the waist that it was not clear which of them was male and which female." [57] The obvious inference is that they grew up out of the ground already having intercourse.[58] Then they were changed from the form of a plant to human form, and soul was breathed into them.[59] Ohrmazd urged them, as ancestors of the human race, to keep the law (or live by reason), to think, speak, and act properly, and worship no demons. They began by praising Ohrmazd for creating all things, but suddenly became corrupted and ascribed creation of many things to Ahriman, after which they fell into such a succession of errors that "their souls are in hell until the last judgment." [60] The Denkart adds to this the detail that the earth which received the seed was Spandarmat, that she was Gayomart's own mother, and from this occurrence intercourse between mother and son has a special name, while the intercourse of the twins gave another title to intercourse between brother and sister.[61] All men trace their origin back to the twins.[62]

The myth as thus told, complicated as it is, would have to be modified at almost every point if all variants were considered.[63] The figures on the Closed Temple at Dura, however, suggest in themselves none of the variants. The bull, the twins with the great masculine figure who, by the rosettes beside him, seems to be made cosmic, or related to the sun, and the Tyche beneath, suggest at once that they are based upon some form of the legend. Details of the painting confirm the association. We have already said that the

53. From the Great Bundahishn, A. See the French translation by Christensen, *Types*, 21 f.

54. Christensen, 18; West, I, 52.

55. Zad-sparam, x, 3 (tr. West, *SBE*, V, 183); Christensen, 25.

56. The Denkart, III, 80, 3 f. (Christensen, 27), repeats that Spandarmat was the earth, and adds that Ohrmazd created her as a female and then produced Gayomart from her.

57. Bundahishn, xv, 3; Christensen, 18; Cf. Hartman, *Gayomart*, 61.

58. We recall that Isis and Osiris had intercourse as twins within their mother's womb: Plutarch, *On Isis*, 12 (356A). Isis and Osiris, it was also said, were not two gods, but a single hermaphroditic figure: see above, V, 158; VI, 107.

59. Bundahishn, xv, 5; the Zad-sparam, x, 6, according to West, I, 184, says that the "glory" went spiritually into them, a word which Christensen translated "souffle."

60. Bundahishn, xv, 6–9. On this passage see Zaehner, p. 75.

61. Denkart, III, 80, 4; Christensen, 26 f., 52; Zaehner, 151 f.

62. Dadistan-i-Dinik, LXV, 3; Christensen, 26.

63. For example the names of these twins are variously given, and, especially when the male has the name Mihr, Hartman (see his pp. 52, 57, 63) thinks we have a different pair altogether. In Zurvanism the primitive twins are Ohrmazd and Ahriman themselves (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 5, 56), and the father-mother is "Infinite time," Zurvan. But in this Ohrmazd seems to take the place of Gayomart (Hartman, 64), while Gayomart and Mithra become identified (Hartman, 65–78).

bull is drawn in the position used at Dura for sacrifice. We now notice that Gayomart, if I may now call him so, and both twins in every case hold at least one hand behind their backs, which recalls that in the texts when the twins grew as plants out of the ground they had their hands "behind" their shoulders or ears. The phrase, whose meaning may have been already forgotten, may well have suggested the pose of the figures. We have also noticed that they are drawn with no indication of sex, though the putti figures from which they obviously derive always showed the little phalli very clearly. We recall the expression that as the twins emerged they were in such close embrace that "one could not tell the male from the female." For presentation here the little twins with their hands behind them, but with no way to determine which is male, may reflect a presentation of the two in union which, if literally presented, would certainly have shocked the members of the congregation. If the figures were being given a Jewish interpretation as Adam and Eve, as one would naturally at first suppose, it would have been quite inappropriate to represent them in close embrace. We cannot press this, however, since, as already noted, the pudenda of infants on the synagogue walls are in no case indicated.

The lower figure we may now with less timidity identify with the great female of this legend, Spandarmat, the earth goddess who received the seeds. The only other likely or possible identification is with "Jeh, the Primal Whore," as Zaehner calls her.[64] He suspects that she is "the survival of an old chthonian goddess representing earth and water who, with the spread of Mazdean dualism, was reduced to the status of a demon." She may, he thinks, have been the female principle, the Moist, or the fertile quality of earth and the universe, so common, with various names, in the region. Zaehner finally distinguishes the two figures by showing that Jeh represented this universal female principle as perverted and captivated by Ahriman, that is, an identification of femininity with evil. In the Mazdean version Spandarmat is the same cosmic and earthly Female Principle, but here a good principle, the "mother of creation." When represented as Tyche, accordingly, we should expect a favorable connotation. Tyche often dealt badly with men, but she never, or rarely, had such a character as, for example, that of Hecate, her wicked counterpart.

Like all the ancient religions, the Iranian tradition emphasized the idea of fate or fortune. *Hvareno* was, along with divine "glory," also good fortune, and in a Palmyrene inscription was equated with Tyche.[65] In the Zurvanite books fate and fortune seem an original part of Zurvan, the deity beyond both Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Indeed in having this quality Zurvan seems to have been hermaphroditic, although later sources speak of Fortune as his wife. As spouse of Zurvan or Ohrmazd she seems the mother of Gayomart. It is by his own mother that Gayomart then begets the twins. Our interest here is to identify the Tyche figure, and we see that Tyche may well have been taken to represent this Iranian Fortune, in the good sense as spouse of the highest deity, yet receptive of Gayomart's seeds. She appears in Mithraic tradition, where she has been identified as Ashi, though she is the sister of Mithra: the two are represented together on coins of Bactria, she in the form

64. Zaehner, 183–192; cf. 74 f.

65. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth Century Books*, 32–51.

of Tyche.[66] I do not see how on the door at Dura she can be anything but this female who received the seeds of Gayomart, that is, Spandarmat.[67] The figure had had the value to the later Greeks and Romans of being at once the representation of Fortune or Fate in its desirable form (certainly the ancients did not erect statues to the *bad* luck of Alexandria or Antioch), and to carry in her arms the cornucopia of fertility. In both respects she corresponded to Spandarmat, and the orientals could use the form for their goddess without reservation. I strongly suspect, however, that they thought of her much more in terms of their own dominant notions of the female goddess—that she was the universal mother, source of fertility for man, beast, and plants, and always ready to be adapted to nuptial conceptions and to hopes for this life and the next.

D. ZURVAN AND THE LION

If we feel thus assured in identifying the figures on the door with Spandarmat, Gayomart and the twins, and the cosmic bull of Iranian mythology, we look again at the other details of the painting to see whether they may not be illuminated from the same mythological sources. We recall Zaehner's argument that at the time of Mani, founder of the Manichaeans, who began preaching in A.D. 242, not Ohrmazd but Zurvan was the supreme deity—the source, or hermaphroditic parent, of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Zaehner believes that in Mesopotamia "Zurvanism was the current form of Zoroastrianism at that time." [68] Zurvanism was the great attempt in Iranian tradition to create a monism that would rise above the popular dualism. If Jews are admitted to be here drawing upon Iranian symbolism, Zurvanism would seem a priori to have had more appeal for them than the dualism.

The lion masks with rings on the side doors accordingly strike us afresh. Here conclusions cannot be even so relatively assured. The obvious association is with Zurvan-Saturn-Kronos, for scholars have long accepted the argument of Cumont [69] that we should call thus the familiar image of a great monster god who appears very commonly as a god with human form, winged, wrapped in the coils of a large snake, holding keys in his hands, and with the head of a lion, fig. 251.[70] The lion head on this figure is often more or

66. Hartman, 63, where many references are given; see esp. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, 1938, 112 (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1938: VI); Cumont, *TMM*, I, 135, no. 54; II, 186 f.; Bailey, 65–68.

67. Cumont, *TMM*, I, 86, n. 4 (cf. 18, n. 2), quotes a passage from Theodore of Mopsuestia (ap. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 81; ed. Bekker, I, 63) in which Theodore translates "Zurvan" by the Greek "TYCHE," but I doubt that Zurvan, however much he may have had the powers of Tyche, would have been represented by her figure.

68. Zaehner, 22.

69. Cumont, *TMM*, I, 74–85.

70. Courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. It is a marble from Sidon, formerly in the Collection de Clerq. See R. Pettazzoni, "La Figura mostruosa del Tempo nella religione Mitraica," *L'Antiquité classique*, XVIII (1949), 265–277. This figure he reproduced as plate VII. Along with several others the study was published in English translation by H. Rose, in Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden, 1954, 180–192; Cumont, *TMM*, II, 259, fig. 96, no. 101. For a large number of these see ibid., I, 74, n. 2, and see above, VII, 66 and fig. 61; VIII, 184 and fig. 159; M. Boyce, "Some Reflections on Zurvanism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, XIX (1957), 304–316; on pp. 314 f. she gives further bibliography.

less humanized, but when it is wholly humanized a lion stands beside the figure.[71] Cumont has shown that as Saturn-Kronos the god was used as the head of both the Zurvanist sect and the celestial hierarchy of the Mithraic mystery of the West. He supposed that the figure of the mystery was a very old one, and was accepted widely by Semites to identify with their Kronos-Baal, although the meaning of its details was already quite uncertain. Zaehner in the body of his books accepts this identification of the figure with Zurvan, but he says in the preface (pp. viii f.) that he has changed his mind, and gives his reasons in a later article.[72] He points out that the lion and snake are identified with Ahriman, and says that Ahriman would naturally, having present dominion in the world, become adorned with the signs of the zodiac and the planets. I must agree with Mary Boyce [73] that his reasons are not sufficient. He takes no account of such varieties of symbolism as that which the lion, even when horrific, seemed to carry with it.[74] The figure, as Miss Boyce points out, is by no means always horrific, and I would suggest that it carried with it the notion that Zurvan was at once the dread god of death [75] and the hope of man after death, as so many representations of lions seem to have done. I should guess that the figure had this double meaning whether presented as horrific or benign. This symbolism in terms of the Kronos-Zurvan figure has already been discussed.[76]

We have often seen the lion mask used as a water spout, in which case it turned out to have significance indeed, and the ring in the lion's mouth seems to have become utilitarian as a doorpull or handle on a sarcophagus only after it had been put there as a symbol. The Kronos monster seems clearly connected with this object by the marble statue from Sidon, fig. 251, in which, as Pettazzoni points out,[77] the two keys usually on the breast are here held stiffly at his sides and "have the shape of a sort of ringed handle." To him these rings suggest ankhs, but they are not ankhs, only rings with a straight piece below them. They seem to associate the lion figure with the ring.

The ring in the lion's mouth used as a doorpull is most conspicuously illustrated on the beautiful funerary altar at Rome where two Victories open up mystic doors of death by pulling the rings in the lion masks upon the doors.[78] As on the Dura doors, the masks with rings stand not only on the upper panels, where the Victories pull them, but on the lower panels, where they would have had no use at all.[79] Perhaps we should see even here that the masks with rings are not primarily doorpulls, but symbols. The victory over death which the funerary altar commemorates is shown precisely in the fact that Victory

71. As in Cumont, II, 340, fig. 214. For a relative humanization see ibid., 213, figs. 41, 44; 238, figs. 68 f.; 375, fig. 286.

72. "The Lion-headed Deity in Mithraism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, XVII (1955), 237–243.

73. Boyce, 314–316. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Ahriman et le dieu suprême dans les mystères de Mithra," *Numen*, II (1955), 190–195, reviewed the problem and concluded, p. 193, that the figure must represent Aion, Kronos, or Ahriman, and that since only Ahriman is attested, "one should at least provisionally give it preference."

74. See above, VII, 29–86.

75. See Zaehner, 239–242.

76. See above, VII, 58–67.

77. *Essays on the History of Religions*, 191.

78. Above, VII, fig. 62.

79. As they do also on the Egyptian tomb door, above, VII, fig. 63.

opens the door by pulling the symbol of ring and mask. That is, the doors with the quite unnecessary masks and rings are inherently the mystic doors to immortality; and when the Victories open the doors by using them, they simply spell out the meaning of the masks and rings, viz. that it is by the mask and ring that victory over death can be attained. Even more does this appear on the doors of the sarcophagus, fig. 128. Here Medusa heads are in the upper panels, and lion masks with rings are on the lower panels, where they could not have served as door pulls.

We found these symbols used in so great a variety of ways that we could attach them to no special mythological figure. Sometimes the lions inspired terror, but even then it was felt it was a fierce guardian inspiring terror in others, and so giving comfort to the devotee. Our lion figure, that of Zurvan-Time of the Mithraic tradition, could be represented, and felt, as terrifying or not, or both, at pleasure. Certainly there is nothing terrifying about a lion holding a ring in its mouth, and I here suggest, since eternal time is best symbolized by a circle, that nothing would better have typified Zurvan than precisely that figure. Without the bull, Gayomart, and the rest on the central door, no one would dream of suggesting that Jews put the lion mask and ring on the side door of the Closed Temple to indicate Zurvan. But the other images are all there, and the possibility that the lion with the ring would thus be understood must remain open.

E. THE MYSTICISM OF THE SEVEN METALS

We return, then, to the colored walls of the main body of the temple, and the possibility that they represent primarily metals rather than planets.[80] The sources do little more than mention the peculiar fact that Gayomart's body was made up of the seven or eight metals. Fragment A of the Great Bundahishn says, "Since the body of Gayomart was made of metals, the seven kinds of metals appeared from his body." [81] The detailed account in the Greater Bundahishn [82] says that when he fell, lead came out of his head, tin from his blood, silver from his marrow, bronze from his feet, copper from his bones, glass from his feet, iron (Schaeder has steel) from his flesh, and gold at the coming out of the soul. The Zad-sparam names eight substances which came from various parts of his body: gold, silver, iron, bronze, tin, lead, quicksilver, and diamond. "And the gold, because of its perfection, issued from the life properly so called, and from the semen." Spandarmat, the text goes on, was impregnated with the gold.[83] These metals are mentioned in other texts, but with no illuminating comment.[84] The Bahman Yasht [85] has an interesting variant, according to which the peculiar tree of these legends, which usually has ten branches and produces the ten kinds of human beings, has seven branches, the seven metals.

80. Bousset in *ARW*, IV (1901), 238–245.

81. Tr. Christensen, 22.

82. I follow the translation of Schaeder, "Der Urmensch in der Awestischen und Mittelpersischen Überlieferung," in R. Reitzenstein und H. H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland*, 1926, 225 f. (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, VII). See his discussion, p. 228, n.

83. Zad-sparam, x, 2 f. (tr. Christensen, 25; cf. 35; West, I, 183).

84. Dadistan-i Dinik, LXIV, 7 (tr. Christensen, 26; West, II, 199); Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad, XXVII, 18 (Christensen, 27; West, III, 58).

85. II, 14 (tr. West, I, 198).

No one can doubt that in these traditions the metals and their colors were often identified with the planets, but the sources and modern commentators alike leave me in doubt whether the metals were primal symbols in their own right, ones which gave character to the planets by the identification. Do the seven walls with the intimation of gold, the eighth color, at the top reflect material planets and the *primum mobile* beyond or primordial principles or elements actually beyond the material world—what in Platonism would be called the forms of the material elements and planets? Such a pre-material creation of the metals may perhaps be indicated in another passage of the Greater Bundahishn,[86] when Shatrevar (Shatvairo, as West spells it), the fourth "spiritual being," took to himself the metals

> of material creatures . . . For the solidity of metals is from the sky; and the original substance of the sky is the metal of crystal [the "adamant" or "diamond" of other lists?]. It is controlled by Anairan [the Endless Light]. Anairan within is a shining house, golden and adorned with precious stones: above, it joins the place of the Amahraspands so that with the aid of these the demons could not annihilate the metals at the time of the assault of the Aggressor.

Here is another suggestion for the composition of the painting: the metals lead up to the "shining house," indeed to the place of the "Amahraspands" itself. These are more commonly anglicized "Amesha Spentas," and are the immediate assistants of Ohrmazd in creation, themselves no part of material creation.[87] The whole idea of the metals as an ascent to the highest regions may well lie behind the conception that the metal of Shatrevar at the last will melt, and that all men will pass through it for final judgment. To the pure it will feel warm like fresh milk; to the wicked its heat will be deadly.[88] Certainly any of these interpretations would be possible for the seven walls of the synagogue painting.

One thing, however, comes out with great clarity. In spite of the Greek form of the three outer doors and of the inner Roman-corinthian shrine, of the figure of Tyche and the lion head carrying the ring, we must probably read even all these in Iranian as well as Greek terms, since Gayomart with his twins, the bull, and the seven colored walls show us that the artist has in some sense fused hellenistic with Iranian thought forms. The abstraction of the temple structure still seems to me to refer to all of this in the immaterial world in contrast to the Temple of Aaron. But we shall not have explained the painting until we can explain all of this in terms of what we must always remember was its basic religious element, the Jewish thinking which found these elements appropriate to paint in a Jewish synagogue. For in representing the bull, Gayomart, and Spandarmat, the painting seems to me to present the lost link, or one of the many, which must have lain between Iranian mythology and the echoes of it in Jewish writings. In between these must have existed many frank and conscious identifications of Adam and Gayomart. These identifications would have been made on a popular level which the sages of Judaism disapproved, as I am

86. III, 14 (tr. Zaehner, 335).

87. Greater Bundahishn, I, 32 (tr. Zaehner, 317). Cf. *HERE*, I, 384 f., s.v. Amesha Spentas.

88. Bundahishn, XXX, 19 f.; cf. Shayast la-Shayast, XV, 14–19 (tr. West, I, 125 f., 375 f.).

confident they would have disapproved representing here the literal Iranian figures in a synagogue.

Why then was all this so attractive to Jews that it was put up to balance the sacred worship of Aaron in what was, after the reredos, the most conspicuous place in the synagogue? We cannot consider the Closed Temple as a pagan one, now dissolved and discredited in contrast to the Aaronic worship. In contrast to the destruction and defiance of paganism, the inner shrine with its Victories here stands triumphantly intact at the top. The painting seems to refer to a type of piety which needs no actual bulls or rams, no accouterment whatever, a piety in which man comes to a victory through the metals or planets, a victory whose beginning can be characterized by the Persian symbols of cosmic, or hypercosmic structure, but which ends in the symbolism of the number ten as contrasted with the five of Aaron.

Final interpretation of what the painting meant to the Jew who designed it, or who thought it appropriate for the synagogue, can probably never be made. The figures, as we have already seen, while generally recognizable still appear in so great a variety of Iranian contexts that a close identification with any seems extremely dangerous and would be highly controversial.

F. ESCHATOLOGY

AN INTERPRETATION which has been made, and which its exponents may well feel strengthened by some of the details we have discussed, is that the painting represents Jewish eschatological hopes. For Gayomart has long been associated with the "Anthropos" problem of the West; and the great model of humanity as the beginning of creation, or of pre-material creation, has always tended to rouse hopes that man would ultimately return to the original condition of God's first and perfect projection of himself in human form.

The best discussion of the relation of the Gayomart tradition with the Jewish Messiah is still, so far as I know, that of Kraeling.[89] He shows two invasions of the figure, one in Daniel as the "Son of Man," the other in the later rabbinic interpretations of Adam. The Son of Man, with its great but still perplexing history in Judaism and early Christianity, took its form throughout from Daniel, and showed no fresh inspiration from Iran through later centuries. The second was much closer to Iranian conceptions. Adam, for Jews, could never escape being the one who fell, and left to his descendants if not depravity in the Christian sense at least the "evil impulse" to which all men have succumbed. Yet, Kraeling continues, Adam is in Jewish tradition

> more than the author of guilt. He is set upon a plane superior to that of normal humanity. He lived in purity, beauty and wisdom, as the monarch of all creation. Heavenly light surrounded him: indeed he was himself the light of the world. Male and female were united in his person, and his body thus became a symbol of the Torah under which man

89. *Anthropos and the Son of Man*, 128–165. Earlier literature is well assembled here. For later literature see Widengren, "Juifs et Iraniens," 235–239. This discussion, brief as it is, seems to me excellent.

> was destined to live. His stature and size were those of a giant, filling both heaven and earth.[90]

Christensen [91] quotes material which Kraeling overlooked, showing that at the final resurrection the bones of Gayomart, then of the twins, and finally of all men, will be raised.[92] But this will be done under Sosyans. It is quite clear that the personage who corresponds to the apocalyptic Messiah of Judaism in this literature is not Gayomart but his descendant, Sosyans, who makes this final restoration.[93] In one passage, as the last man, he is contrasted with Gayomart, the first.[94] Into the powers of Sosyans we need not go here, because I see no trace of him in the Closed Temple painting. The painting seems to represent the eternal and ideal reality, with man's approach through the figures on the doors, not an eschatological hope. It is the symbols of primitive existence which dominate, not a messiah; nothing suggests the final restoration or throne. All is static, perfect, complete. Eschatology itself, in any of its typical forms, I do not see here at all. The contrast between mysticism, as presently realized eschatology, and eschatology itself, on which I have often insisted, helps us again. Here I see only mysticism.

G. IMMATERIAL REALITY

WE COME into the spirit of the painting with its primordial characters much more closely if we may consider that in some way the Iranian figures and structure of the Closed Temple symbolized for the Jews in Dura the perfection of primitive existence and knowledge which a mystic would hope to recover. The whole is excellently stated by Scholem, who summarized Jewish mysticism (with no knowledge of the painting) as follows:

> The purer and more nearly perfect it [mystical knowledge] is, the nearer it is to the original stock of knowledge common to mankind. To use the expression of the Kabbalist, the knowledge of things human and divine that Adam the father of mankind possessed is therefore also the property of the mystic. For this reason, the Kabbalah advanced what was at once a claim and an hypothesis, namely, that its function was to hand down to its own disciples the secret of God's revelation to Adam.[95]

If we move from the eschatological to the mystical in search of the meaning of the Closed Temple, we return to a passage which we thought extremely important in the interpretation of the scene of the Aaronic Temple. It was the one in which we seemed to have identified Aaron's robe.[96] That passage, it will be recalled,[97] describes four agents of creation, two beneficent and two evil. The two beneficent agents create: one creates "the good

90. *Anthropos and the Son of Man*, 156.

91. Christensen, 33.

92. Bundahishn, xxx, 7 and 9 (tr. West, I, 121 f.).

93. On Sosyans see West, I and II, s.v. All of this is relevant to Sosyans as the counterpart of the Messiah: his coming will be preceded by desperate suffering, he will raise the dead and purify man and nature, and he will be the final judge of all men. Sosyans is the Pahlavi of Saoshyant the Savior: see L. Casartelli in *HERE*, XI, 137 f.

94. Dadistan-i Dinik, xxviii, 7 (West, II, 60).

95. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 21 f.; cf. 350, n. 21; 276.

96. See above, p. 15.

97. In the Denkart (tr. Zaehner, 376–378).

in its pure estate," the other "the good in its contaminated state." Though many details in the passage by no means fit, it is as close a counterpart as I have found in Iranian literature to the immaterial and material stages of creation as told by Philo, to which the higher and lower mysteries he describes correspond. The red robe of Aaron covered with jewels seemed almost literally described in the garment of the priest of "the good in its contaminated state." In contrast the passage describes the priestly garment that went with the creation of "the good in its pure estate," which is the shining white garment. It seems to represent the shining light of *hvareno*, which at many times is close to the Logos, or Light Stream of the West. So in the passage of the Denkart the agent of creation for the "good and pure estate" is himself a robe

> called "Bounteous-Spirit-ness," the very essence of Ohrmazd, his garment and his brilliance. . . . Among spiritual beings it is in the progress of the soul in the body of man; . . . among characters, in noble thought and the rightly spoken word; among material "forms," in the blessed man; . . . among rulers, in the highest worldly lord and judge; among garments, with the shining white garment; among deeds, in the furtherance of good and the destruction of evil.[98]

With this we read in chapter three of the Greater Bundahishn: "(Ohrmazd) himself donned a white garment and it had the stamp of priesthood." [99]

Samuel the great figure in his white robe stands giving kingly power to David directly beneath this temple, and we shall see right beside it the three men in such a robe with the Ark, while Moses leads Israel out of Egypt in such a robe above it. True, the four representations of Moses at the center wear it, as we shall see they should, but we recall that Moses' robe was drawn with the checks of Aaron as he released water from the spring beside the scene of Aaron's temple. Elijah wears the white robe for the raising of the widow's child, but here it is the child, not Elijah, who is primarily celebrated. The four in light robe welcome Mordecai as the temporal savior, as again is right by our interpretation that they represent divine intervention. But from the mystic's point of view both the widow's baby and Mordecai belong with the "good in its contaminated," or cosmic and material, state.

The Closed Temple, where no active or material cultus could be shown, is completely surrounded by heroes wearing the garment of light in its "pure" state. In this whole scheme I take it that the Closed Temple at the center announces the "progress of the soul in the body of man"—that is, the mystical progress we may make while still in the body, or, as Philo would have put it, progress the soul can make from the world of matter to the *cosmos noētos*, the world approachable only by the highest aspects of human mentality.

To understand the paintings with their strange mixture of hellenistic and Iranian dress and symbolism, we have to shuttle back and forth between Iranian sources and the sources of Western hellenized Judaism.

In the inner shrine of Aaron's temple the inner Victory was that of the number five,

98. From Zaehner, 377.

99. Ibid., 333, section 4.

the number of the senses, and both that scene and the scene of Moses at the Well seem to celebrate the "Mystery of Aaron," which wins its final achievement through the joining of microcosm and macrocosm in worshiping the Creator beyond both. In the Closed Temple, on the contrary, man seems to ascend through the seven (or the eight) to the ten, and the ten rosettes accompanying each figure of the lion head with the ring show that even at the outset man must have the orientation which the ten suggests.

The rabbis liked the number ten, but seem chiefly to have been impressed by its frequent appearances in the Bible—for example, the ten commandments, ten plaques, the tithe; and they added many more laws in which the ten played a part, of which perhaps the most important is that ten men form a congregation.[100] Yet I cannot see how any of these would have inspired the design of the Closed Temple.

Jewish mysticism takes us into another world here, and Scholem, its greatest exponent, feels a sharp contrast between rabbinical Judaism and gnostic speculation, even though he finds traces of the latter in some of the rabbis.[101] How early Jewish mystics began to be so fascinated with the number ten that they came to formulate the ten Sephiroth of Cabbala no one knows. It clearly appears in the little Hebrew tractate Sepher Yetzirah, but Scholem, our safest and most illuminating hierophant in these matters, says of its date only that it was probably written between the third and sixth centuries.[102] Of course the ideas cannot be dated as having been first announced by the document, and it seems likely that its basic ideas were circulating among Jews at the time of the Dura synagogue. In this little work the ten Sephiroth are the "ten elementary and primordial numbers," which, along with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, "represent the mysterious forces whose convergence has produced the various combinations observable throughout the whole of creation." [103]

The author of the tractate has to all appearances clumsily put together two traditions.[104] The first ten letters of the Hebrew alphabet were, of course, the first ten numbers, like the first ten letters of the Greek alphabet. To explain the tradition of the first ten numbers, and then its being followed by another tradition of the twenty-two letters beginning with Aleph all over again, I must suppose that the Hebrew writers were taking over a ready-made number mysticism whose culmination was in the number ten, and were adding to it a mysticism of the Jewish letters.

The final total of thirty-two elements of the world became an awkward proposition indeed. But if the Hebrew-writing mystic, or the Hebraic tradition he represented, was thus trying to appropriate a symbolism of the ten and join it with what I should suppose

100. Blau in *JE*, XII, 102 f.; Ginzberg, *Legends*, VII, 467–469, s.vv. "ten" and "tenth"; L. Pick, "Der Einfluss der Zehnzahl und der Siebenzahl auf das Judenthum," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, LVIII, iii (1894), 29–31.

101. *Jewish Mysticism*, 73.

102. Ibid., 74–76; see his article in *EJ*, IX, 104–111. The book was translated into English by I. Kalisch, 1877; W. Westcott, 1893; K. Stenring, 1923. Scholem, 363, says of these only that they "contain some rather fantastic passages."

103. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 75.

104. Scholem, *EJ*, IX, 106. See now two later books of Scholem: *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 1960; *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala*, 1962.

was an anterior and independent mystic symbolism of the Hebrew letters, whence was he borrowing the mystic ten? In the balancing pair with Aaron, WB1 and WB2, the twenty-two fall into the three, seven, and twelve, numbers of great importance in the three doors, the seven branches of the menorah, and the twelve Patriarchs at the well. The basic number for this Aaronic approach, however, seems to be the five shown in the five columns of its inner shrine and the five attendants of Aaron. In the design of the Closed Temple we have the three doors, seven battlements, and ten columns (and rosettes), with the three also presented by the three panels on each door. It may well be that the "philosopher" thought that the three doors leading to the seven battlements were properly consummated in the complete ten of the inner shrine.

This way madness, my readers may well cry. But if we will understand the history of religion we cannot quarantine the madness of ancient mysteries, or commit it to sequestered oblivion. Number mysticism had come from the Pythagoreans and Mesopotamian astrological computation into the height of its favor at just the period of our synagogue, and was invading even the thinking of rabbinical academies.

Anyone who has read this literature will know how clearly the synagogue designs of the temples suggest that sort of mysticism, but will not expect me to relate the details with any single scheme of numerical interpretation. One has only to look at the number speculation of the Sepher Yetzirah, of Iamblichus, and of Philo to see how the numbers themselves had symbolic "value" (far more than the three, seven, or thirteen with us), and that the ancients loved to enhance their basic "value" by giving them as wide a variety of "explanations" as possible. Moderns, who live on explanations rather than values, will expect me to say what "explanations" the Dura "philosopher" gave these numbers, or else to abandon, because "unproved," my feeling that the numbers had "symbolic value" for him. I cannot oblige in either way, or adjust the numbers with any precision to the cosmic bull, Gayomart, and Spandarmat on the central door. Since these figures and number speculation both looked to cosmic, or to metaphysically hypercosmic, realities and relations, there seems to me no doubt that they belonged together in the "philosopher's" mind, as did the systems of ten and twenty-two for the author of the Sepher Yetzirah.

We return to the paintings, and notice that the number seven appears in both temples, in the menorah with Aaron and in the seven walls of the Closed Temple. We have already seen that Philo formulated the symbolism of the seven in two contexts, that of the planets for cosmic worship and that of the One and its radiations in the immaterial mysticism. Beside the Closed Temple is the scene in which the Ark of the Covenant, Philo's inevitable symbol of the metaphysical seven, moves out from collapsed paganism under the guidance of the sacred Three Men. Below the Closed Temple Samuel initiates David with the mystery of the seven. In such a setting the seven walls of the temple might well refer to the metaphysical rather than the cosmic seven of the planets, since Philo explicitly contrasts the planetary seven with their immaterial model. In one important passage Philo [105] has

105. *Decal.* 102–105.

the following among many approaches to the praise of the number seven. His remarks are based upon the doctrines of the mathematicians,[106] who teach that one and seven are the sacred numbers of the immaterial realm. Seven is a virgin number, of a nature which has no matter, and is the "form of the planets, just as the monad is the form of the circle of the fixed stars. For out of the monad and the seven is constituted the immaterial heaven of which the visible one is the copy." Heaven, he goes on to say, implying in the sequel that he means the visible heaven, has both an indivisible and a divisible nature. The indivisible nature is the circle of the fixed stars, and of this the monad is the overseer; the divisible nature, inferior to the other, is the collective phenomenon of the seven planets, corresponding to the ideal seven. The sun is, then, he concludes, a wonderful mirror of the creative and sustaining activity of God. In some such way we should quite possibly explain the symbolism of the colored walls of the temple in Dura. They may have symbolized not astral ascent at all, but rather the immaterial and ideal monad and seven.[107] In a context which we had reason to suppose was contrasting the cosmic with immaterial mysticism, emphasis on the seven in both cases neither destroys the possibility of contrast in the two temples nor establishes it. We return, then, to the basic contrast of the temple in the concrete with the temple in the abstract, and the centering of all this in the contrast between the numbers five and ten.

What the shift from the mysticism of the five to that of the ten implied is witnessed by many sources. Philo has two extended passages on the decade. One is in the *Exposition* for gentiles in introducing the Decalogue to them. Characteristically it avoids drawing mystical inferences, and gives only an elaborate praise of the number from the standpoint of Pythagorean number theory, which viewed numbers not only as such but as geometrical symbols.[108] More important for our purpose is his extended treatise on the number ten in the *Allegory*.[109] In one passage we learn that ten is the symbol of the perfect discipline which comes after the complete propaedeutic.[110] Philo then goes on to show a large number of instances where Moses has used the number in the Scriptures: Noah, the first "just" man, was the tenth generation from Adam, and so shows the perfection of justice; [111] Abraham's war with the nine kings shows the perfect tenth ruling as reason over the nine unreasoning parts of the human constitution; [112] the tithing of animals shows that ten symbolizes divine nature as a reality beyond the nine of human nature, for man keeps the nine parts, but offers the tenth to the God who is tenth.[113] To this and to Abraham's war with the nine

106. *Hoi peri ta mathēmata diatripsantes.* Whether these are pagan mathematicians or Jewish allegorists of the "physical" type cannot be determined: see my *By Light, Light*, 31.

107. F. Cumont has an interesting comment on how Philo (following the Neo-Pythagoreans) changed the literal solar and astral cosmogony and philosophy, which Stoics could take directly from the "Chaldeans," into a system where the sun and stars are but ascents to, and reflections of, an immaterial deity: *Mém.*, AIB, XII (1913), 467 f.

108. *Decal.* 20–31.

109. *Cong.* 88–121.

110. Ibid. 88.

111. Ibid. 90. But see *Post.* 173, where these decades, high as they are, are inferior to the seven which represents the span from Abraham to Moses, and of which Moses was the seventh.

112. *Cong.* 92 f. See *Abr.* 244.

113. *Cong.* 94.

kings corresponds the fact that our own tenth part, reason, is sacred to God in a way that the four passions and five senses are not.[114] The Levites tithed the flour, which showed that they had learned to rise above the cosmos with its nine parts (earth, seven planets, and orb of fixed stars) to come to God who is the "Tenth"; only a man who is perfect (*teleios*) in the mystic sense reaches this height.[115] The mystic who has abandoned the passions and senses has entered into the tenth stage, the decade.[116] Again Isaac found Rebecca in the number ten, for ten camels symbolize the true "recollection" which comes from the type of education represented by the ten; that is, the Orphic-Platonic "Recollection," man's connection with immaterial reality in this school, is produced and found in ten.[117] Several other instances of ten are listed, but it is already clear that ten was for Philo a symbol of God and of the hypercosmic ascent to God beyond the earth and the eight spheres. Philo himself ordinarily preferred the centering of his allegory and mysticism in seven, since for all his list of decades in the Scriptures seven had a more strategic place in Jewish reckonings, and was more adaptable, from both the Jewish and Iranian points of view, in allegorizing the Old Testament. His mystery of the seven is recognizably constructed on these foundations. So in one passage he definitely puts the decade lower in value than the seven,[118] and can on occasion treat ten as an inferior number altogether.[119]

A glance at Iamblichus shows the pagan background of this mysticism of the decade. Here we find Philo's mathematical praise of the number in such verbal reproduction that we must conclude that either Iamblichus followed Philo, which is not easy to accept, or that Philo followed a Pythagorean source. Philosophers in such a succession would then have considered the source so important that they preserved at least the tradition to the time of Iamblichus. Iamblichus ascribes the mathematical praise of the decade, along with much else not in Philo, to Pythagorean "theologians," and following the Pythagoreans he gives us what Philo does not, an identification of the decade with the cosmos, the universe, Pan, fate, Aion, power, faith, necessity, Atlanta, "the unwearied one," [120] "God in general" (*theos psilōs*), Phanes, and Helios.[121] He gives explanations of some of these, in the course of which he adds two equivalents of the decade, Memory (Holder of the Keys) and Atlas. The comments upon cosmos, universe, fate, and necessity show that the decade was primarily the cosmic symbol of the whole. But its connection with Mithraic and "Orphic" mysticism is made clear by the presence of Aion, Phanes,[122] and the Holder of the Keys, while Helios points clearly in the direction of the Orient. "Memory" definitely suggests both Orphism and Philo.[123] Philo and Iamblichus give us every reason to believe not only that the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition speculated upon the numerical mysteries of the decade, but that the number was used as the basis of a divine and cosmic formulation of

114. Ibid. 95–102.

115. Ibid. 103–105.

116. Ibid. 106–108.

117. Ibid. 111–113. See my *By Light, Light*, p. 288.

118. *Post.* 173.

119. *Mut.* 226–228; *Sacr.* 122.

120. *Akamas.* On the basis of the passage with its quotation in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, v, xxxvi, 1, I should guess that the reference here is to "Time."

121. Iamblichus, *Theologoumena arithmeticae*, x, 59 (ed. V. de Falco, 1922, 80).

122. On Aion and Phanes in Orphic poems used by Jews see my *By Light, Light*, 279, n., 284, n., 287.

123. Ibid., 288 f.

mystic ascent. The existence of such mysticism is no less clearly attested because on the whole Philo still prefers the number seven. Iamblichus has done us the great service of showing that the lion-headed doorpull with the circle (a figure which seemed to symbolize, if anything, Aion, Chronos, the "figure holding the keys," or Helios interchangeably) would not be at all an anomaly in a group of ten in Dura.

If Philo ordinarily preferred the seven to the ten as the ideal number, there is evidence that other Jewish mystic or syncretic Jews came to prefer the decade. In the "B" tradition of the first chapters of II Enoch the original seven heavens are changed to ten. In the cabbalistic tradition an original seven Sephiroth were displaced, though never entirely, by the ten.[124] But the most pertinent material for our purpose appears in the fragments of a Jewish gnostic called Monoimus the Arabian.

Monoimus taught the most extraordinary assortment of notions, for which we are entirely dependent upon Hippolytus' highly abbreviated and difficult account.[125] It is quite clear that Monoimus was not a Christian, for all his apparent quotation from Colossians.[126] Rather when he explains his mystery he admits Jews of the Law to the lower mystery of the pentad, but reserves the mystery of the decade for gnostics. Christians of any type are altogether excluded, apparently, in the sweeping statement, "All knowledge (*gnōsis*) of all things is [contained in] the ten plagues and the ten commandments. This knowledge no one has who is deceived about the offspring of the woman." [127] Such a reference is best understood if the system of Monoimus is taken to have arisen out of mystic Judaism and to have combined this with the hatred of Christians which characterized Jews of the third century.

For the teaching of Monoimus is an oriental and Pythagorean development of Old Testament allegory quite after the manner of Philo and having much in common with Philo, though with many strikingly different details. It is not possible to make a critical or complete analysis of the gnosticism of Monoimus here, but an epitome of his system must be presented. He begins with a deity which is the familiar Monad of the third century,

124. Ibid., 359.

125. Hippolytus, *Elenchus*, VIII, xii–xv; ed. P. Wendland, III, 1916, 232–236 (*GCS*). The translation by J. H. Macmahon in the Ante-Nicene Library numbers the sections differently: see I, 317–322, of the Edinburgh edition, 1868. Hippolytus, or some pupil, summarized his account, ibid., x, 17 (ET, I, 382 f.).

126. Study of the "Mystic Liturgy" of hellenized Judaism (*By Light, Light*, 306–358) has convinced me that much was drawn for the letter to the Colossians from contemporary Jewish liturgy of the same type as that which has survived. Accordingly I cannot regard a single parallel to that letter (Hippolytus, *Elenchus*, VIII, xiii, 2; and Col. 1, 19; II, 9) as establishing a connection between the two documents. As the quotation reads here, *pan to plērōma eudokēse katoikēsai epi ton huion tou anthrōpou sōmatikōs*, it would appear at first to be a composite of two verses of the letter with the addition of the "Son of Man." A similar combination of the two verses is to be found quoted by the Peratae (their only recorded "Pauline quotation," though there are several from the Gospels) in Hippolytus, v, xii, 5. Both seem to me to come from a familiar liturgical expression of Jewish mystics. Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, 65, n. 1, is quite right in refusing to connect Hippolytus, VIII, xii, 4, *ēn kai egeneto hoper estin*, with John 1, 1–3, as has often been suggested. The "jot and tittle" may come from Matthew, but is certainly not Matthew's conception.

127. Hippolytus, *Elenchus*, VIII, xiv, 5; cf. xiii, 3: "The Son of Man was born from the perfect Man; him [the Son] no one knows, but every one (*hē ktisis pasa*) who does not know the Son fancies that he was born of a woman." See also paragraph 4.

unbegotten, incorruptible, and eternal. This he identifies with the universe, and expands in two difficult figures, of the Man and of the Iota. There is the "Man," who is God, the primal Monad and in some sense the universe, though hardly the material universe. From him springs the "Son of Man," who is apparently Gayomart or some eastern figure interpreted in terms of the Logos. The "Son of Man" is Light from the primordial Fire, and so while generated he is coeternal with the source. He is obviously the "Light-Stream" of hellenistic Judaism. The "Son" is not the absolute Monad but is a monad made up by compounding the opposites together.[128] He is also at once Mother and Father.[129]

The figure of the Iota is applied to this Son of Man with a variety of inferences. The letter Iota was made in ordinary writing by a single stroke of the pen downward [130] and was thus a figure of the monad; but used numerically the Iota thus meant the monad and the decade simultaneously, a combination which had various allegorical possibilities. So it represented at once unity and plurality, indivisibility and multiformity. From such a monad-decade Son of Man all things have been produced, though not from him as a totality, only from some part of him.[131] The fact that the stroke of the Iota is made downward typifies his streaming down to us from above (again obviously the Light-Stream). Creation was affected by six Powers (the six days) from the Iota (that is, six of the ten), while the seventh day is the all-ruling hebdomad. The hexad and hebdomad come out from the single Iota, as do all the geometric forms out of which the elements are constructed (echoes of the *Timaeus* are very strong). The Iota with its single stroke was also the rod of Moses producing the ten plagues, which (though Monoimus' explanation of this is not preserved) symbolize creation. Monoimus here has obviously the Logos Tomeus theory in mind, the theory that Philo has preserved for us from Pythagoreanism.[132] The decade is also represented in the Decalogue, which is an "allegory of the divine mysteries." [133] All gnosis is in these two series of ten, though Christians, or Christian gnostics like the Naasenes, are deceived about it. To associate the whole Law with the Pentateuch and hence with the pentad is apparently a mistake.[134] The Higher Mystery, that of the decade, is also expressed in the hebdomadic feast of the Passover, which in its true sense is not a literal feast but a cosmic celebration of the "passing over" of the raw elements into a cosmos at the creative stroke of the rod, the Logos Tomeus, of Moses. Such, says Hippolytus, was the way in which these men treated the entire Law (the Old Testament or the Pentateuch); they

128. Ibid., xii, 5. Philo, we have just seen (above, p. 65), speaks in the same way about the one and the seven.

129. Ibid. His bisexuality suggests the Sophia of Philo and its Isiac and Orphic background. See my *By Light, Light*, 18, 22, 248. The phrase would seem to connect Monoimus with the Naasenes (Hippolytus, v, vi, 5), though their identification of the Son of Man with Jesus born of Mary is Christian.

130. This is the only possible meaning of the *mia keraia tou ī* as expounded in xii, 6–xiii, 2.

131. Ibid., xiii, 4.

132. Ibid., xiv, 3 f. The creation of man by a stroke of division is enough to connect the two notions. See my remarks in *Yale Classical Studies*, III (1932), 161–164. The decade is obviously the Logos Tomeus in a fragment of Philolaus: Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 5th ed., 1934, I, 411 (44 [32] B 11), where it is *peras*, without which all other things are *apeira*, and where the decade cuts the *apeira* from the *perainonta*.

133. Hippolytus, VIII, xiv, 4.

134. Ibid., 5.

have as their basis the ten Pythagorean categories (those listed by Philo).[135] But Hippolytus thinks their speculations much inferior to the pure Pythagorean teachings.[136] He ends his account with an amazing mystical quotation from Monoimus:

> Stop seeking God and creation and such things [137] and seek him from himself; learn who it is who appropriates to himself absolutely everything that is in you; pray, "My God, my Mind, my Intelligence, my Soul, my Body"; and learn whence is suffering and rejoicing, loving and hating, involuntary waking and sleeping, involuntary strife and love. If you seek out these things accurately you will find him to be single with reference to himself, and many with reference to that single Stroke [the Iota,] finding a way out from himself.[138]

Here is indeed an elaborate mystical Judaism on the basis of the decade. Those who keep to the literal meaning of the Pentateuch have only the mystery of the pentad, but those who go on to the ten are in the full mystery. Monoimus is highly important for our purpose. He shows that mystic Judaism, in a sense definitely to be linked with the Philonic school, was being taught by an "Arabian," and Hippolytus treats him as the head of a school. The obvious inference is that the Philonic type of mystic Judaism was known and taught in the East. Monoimus' use of the figure of the Anthropos is more elaborate than Philo's, but that Philo used the Anthropos for the Logos is well known.[139] Monoimus' use of the ten categories, of the Logos Tomeus, of the Decalogue, of the bisexuality of the Light-Stream, of the cosmic significance of the Jewish festivals; his division of the faithful into the legalists who belong to the five and the higher group of the ten; his implied identification of the mystery of the ten and the seven; his reference to the Old Testament as being properly an "allegory of the divine mysteries" and his fundamental Pythagorean basis for thinking—all these point definitely to a kinship between the Philonic school and that of Monoimus. It must be repeated that the only phrases which could be taken as referring to Christianity do so only, sharply, to reject the Christian notion of the incarnation in one "born of a woman." Monoimus has shown us an Eastern version of Philonic Judaism.

It is highly important, then, to find the center of his exposition consisting in a Light-Stream which is approached through the symbolism of the decade, and of the Anthropos, or Son of Man. In his system the various elements of the Closed Temple scene have a definite possibility of union. The ascent through the cosmic symbols has been shown to have influenced Judaism in the period profoundly, and Philo has connected that ascent for us with the symbolism of the decade. The ten with Helios or Aion is not only in accord with Iamblichus' identifications of the decade with these figures but is quite in harmony with Monoimus' making of the decade into the Light-Stream. The Bull-Gayomart-Spandarmat

135. Ibid., 9.; cf. *Decal.* 30.

136. Hippolytus, VIII, xv, 3.

137. The text may be corrupt, and the original meaning may have been "Stop seeking God from creation and such things." But Monoimus may be referring to the gnostic demiurge.

138. Hippolytus, VIII, xv, 1 f. The last phrase is extremely puzzling. It makes sense if understood that the Man, the Monad, the unrelated Absolute of the day, finds a way out from himself—that is, is able to come into relation with the universe and men, through the Stream out from himself, the Son of Man, the Iota.

139. See, for example, Philo, *Conf.* 41, 62 f., 146.

cycle is easily recognized as that which lay behind the Anthropos speculation, though how it was harmonized with the other symbols by the Jews in Dura I shall not guess. The painting of the Closed Temple as a whole, then, is a composite of symbols which all point in a single direction, toward a Judaism of the mystic type, more eastern and gnostic than Philo's mystery but definitely and elaborately akin to it. The symbolism of the decade shows that the Greek element, so large in Philo and Monoimus, had not perished here.

H. THE MAASIM

WHERE DID THE JEWS at Dura get this understanding of their religion? Are there not also traditions from rabbinic sources which are relevant to the mysticism of the two temples, and especially of the Closed Temple?

The only traditions from rabbinic circles I know in which material appears that might be associated with these scenes are those from the Jewish mysticism which flourished with some of the Mishnaic teachers, the two traditions of what the rabbis called the *Maaseh*. These had two centers of biblical allegory: the story of creation, whose teaching was called the "Maaseh Bereshith," and that of the first chapter of Ezekiel, the vision of God's throne-chariot, the "Maaseh Merkabah." In using this material I must, of course, speak at second hand, since only specialists in the Hebrew and Aramaic idiom can understand it, and the texts have been published in imperfect form which their leading exponent, Gershom Scholem, must constantly compare with the manuscripts. In this field, as in much else, scholarly and personal, Scholem must be my guide.

Scholem does not attempt to discover the origin of this mystic teaching. In his earlier treatment of it [140] he said that any extended sources we have in their present form are relatively late, and that the editor of the Mishnah did all he could to exclude the mystic teaching, though the Tosefta, another early collection, preserves more fragments of it. Recently he has gone further.[141] He now believes that a Jewish mysticism of the generally gnostic type existed even before the beginnings of Christianity, and that Christian Gnosticism arose out of it, although in a careful review of the works of others he shows justifiable reticence toward their attempt to reconstruct it. Some of the fragments, however, do seem to him to date at least from the second century after Christ, and he has singled out two elements of that tradition for special discussion, the song of the kine to the Ark, which we shall find illuminating in the following chapter, and the *Shiur Komah*, to which we shall come shortly.

The earliest stratum of this tradition, Scholem says, was Throne-mysticism, in which the mystic finally perceived God's appearance on the throne described by Ezekiel. On the way to this goal the mystic came to know the whole Throne world—that is, the "bright sphere of divinity" which manifests itself in potencies, archons, and the like, analogous to

140. See his *Jewish Mysticism*, esp. pp. 59–78.

141. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 1960. See the review by Morton Smith in *JBL*, LXXX (1961), 190 f., in which Smith points out that quite independently, and with totally different data, Scholem and I are reaching very similar conclusions.

the pleroma of the Gnostics and Hermetists. The writers present their ideas in direct exposition, not only in Midrashic (or Philonic) commentary on the Bible.

The vision came to those admitted to the teaching as they ascended (or "descended") through the seven heavens, or through the seven palaces in the highest heaven. The mystic can make this perilous journey by the use of secret passwords and names, which alone open the "closed entrance gates that block his progress." A great confusion of magical terms seems to Scholem to characterize the earlier and vital stages of this movement, while order and rationality mark its freezing into literary form. See now ELIOR, TARBITZ 1995

Already several points have appeared similar to notions we have encountered elsewhere. The mystic rises through the seven heavens or the seven planetary circles, a scheme which, apparently under an influence that may well have arisen within Judaism itself, had become a passage through seven palaces with closed doors. The natural assumption is that we have here a Jewish apocalyptic adapted to the hellenistic, or hellenized Jewish, cosmic mystery of which Philo and Josephus have told us, and which we felt was represented at Dura in the scenes with the menorah. This type of formulation we now call by the dubiously defined word Gnosticism.[142] Iranian influences must also have been at work, however, when the experience meant having one's flesh turned into a terrible fire, which only the true mystic could endure.[143] Scholem mentions that in the Aramaic sources there are still Greek tags and formulae incomprehensible to the Aramaic-speaking authors, and he cannot decide between the possibilities that they represent real influence of Greek religion, or only the common language of magic which borrowed words from all languages. He does not seem to recognize that in either case we are dealing with a direct survival of Hellenism in Jewish sources, a type of survival which even on the "magical" level has seemed of the greatest importance.[144]

A second mystical approach, inherently quite distinct from the cosmic, was presented in three documents in the Hekhaloth. These are "chambers" of the Merkabah, or heavenly region, a mystical formulation which Scholem says was devoted to the glory of the divine King. In this he points out a great contrast with hellenistic mysticism, for in the conception of God as King there is no "sentiment of divine immanence . . . almost no love of God . . . and no trace of a mystic union of the soul with God." The Hekhaloth tracts preserve numerous prayers and hymns of almost hypnotic monotony and repetition. Israel will sing these prayer-songs in the celestial realm, and only when they do will the angels themselves

142. Scholem's definition would apply to Philo as well as to the fragments of Maaseh and to Christian Gnosticism. Gnosticism, he says, was a "religious movement that proclaimed a mystical esotericism for the elect based on illumination and the acquisition of a higher knowledge of things heavenly and divine. . . . Knowledge of an esoteric and at the same time soteric (redeeming) character": *Jewish Gnosticism*, 1.

143. On Jewish magic see above, II, 153–295. My thesis that we have many remains of this magic from Judaism has been widely accepted: see most recently L. H. Feldman, "The Orthodoxy of the Jews in Hellenistic Egypt," *Jewish Social Studies*, XXII (1960), 215–237, esp. pp. 233 f.

144. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 51 f. Eric Peterson at one time remarked: "One may presume that a Jewish Gnosis of the Name ('Ιάω) had been known [in the region of Persian influence] in the pre-Christian period, a Gnosis which perhaps was joined with frequent ablutions and may have included the names of the Old Testament patriarchs": *ZNW*, XXVII (1928), 84.

be able to join in. The name of the angel who leads the heavenly choir is itself Israel.

One of the most peculiar books in this literature, Scholem tells us, is the *Shiur Komah*, meaning "Measure of the Body" of God. Here mystic imagination riots in incredibly large statistics for the size of God: his height is 236,000 parasangs, indeed in another tradition his soles alone are thirty million parasangs high. With S. Liebermann's approval, Scholem now considers this book part of a second-century Midrash on the Song of Songs, the section commenting on v, 10–16.[145] These scholars agree that the *Shiur Komah* was, in Liebermann's words, "the doxa (*shebaḥ*) of truth, and people are not permitted to proclaim its truth, since it is a secret truth and is hidden from men." Scholem says that the origin of the great figure of the *Shiur Komah* might have been the " 'primordial man' of Iranian speculation," [146] a speculation which at once recalls the herculean figure on the doors of the Closed Temple.

Scholem feels that the Jewish mystic books he discusses have themselves strangely little concern with the origin and destiny of the universe of the sort that largely interested Gnostics of the earlier period, although stray references to the subject make him leave open the possibility that in the earlier stages of this kind of thinking—that is, in the period of the Dura synagogue or earlier—the interest might have been much closer to that of the Gnostics. So he quotes the Babylonian teacher Rav of the third century: "Ten are the qualities with which the world has been created: wisdom, insight, knowledge, force, appeal, power, justice, right, love, and compassion."[147] He also quotes the reference in another tract to the seven *middoth* or qualities "which serve before the throne of glory: wisdom, right and justice, love and mercy, truth and peace." [148] To these he might well have added reference to the creation by the number ten and the extraordinary exposition of man as the microcosm in the same treatise.[149] But he does go on to discuss the *Sefer Yetsirah*, *Book of Creation*, based upon the other mystic approach, the Maaseh Bereshith, in which the "ten elementary and primordial numbers" are made elements of the universe, "living numerical beings," the whole showing definitely the influence of late hellenistic or Neoplatonic number mysticism, but all integrated quite securely with Jewish conceptions and the Hebrew alphabet. In this mysticism not only does one ascend to the throne as in the other speculation, but one performs a symbolic act by putting on a special garment in which the name of God had been woven.[150] He quotes two passages in which the three Patriarchs are the Merkabah or Chariot,[151] and could have quoted another in which, with the four Matriarchs, they make the mystic seven.[152]

145. See his *Jewish Gnosticism*, 36–42, and S. Liebermann in the appendix to that book, pp. 123–126.

146. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 64.

147. Ibid., 73, quoting *BT*, *Hagigah*, 129 (ET, 63).

148. *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*, XXXVII: see the translation and notes by J. Goldin, 153 (Yale Judaica Series, X). Scholem might well have quoted this whole chapter and the one following, especially the statement that the universe was created according to the seven persons, that is, the three Patriarchs and the four Matriarchs.

149. Ibid., XXXI (tr. Goldin, 125–128). See also the great variety of speculations on the ten in chaps. XXXI–XXXV, and the speculation about who will share in the world to come in chap. XXXVI.

150. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 76.

151. *MR*, *Gen.*, XLVII, 6; LXXXII, 6 (ET I, II, 756 f.).

152. *The Fathers*, XXXVI (tr. Goldin, 153).

Scholem convinces us entirely that much was behind all this which does not meet the eye. Its earlier sources are lost. He himself seems to regret that this is pure mysticism in which man loses himself in contemplating God and his aura, and hence that it makes no contribution to ethics.[153] The Hekhaloth mystic, Scholem concludes, is devoted to an ideal of "the visionary who holds the keys to the secrets of the divine realm and who reveals these visions in Israel. Vision and knowledge, in a word, Gnosis of his kind, represents for him the essence of the Torah and of all possible human and cosmic wisdom."

It is precisely the sort of Judaism which Scholem so well envisages which I see in the two Dura temples (and in the decoration in general). We understand the documents and stray traditions of the Creation and the Chariot better through having read Philo and Monoimus and the Persian sources. The quotations of Scholem show that in hellenistic, gnostic, and Iranian sources many Hebrew- and Aramaic-speaking Jews found unmistakable attraction. What still exists from these people is only a lot of oddments left in the rabbinic sieve. Their great incongruity suggests that as some mystics remained more "Jewish" in resisting any idea of union with God, and adored him simply in vision from afar, others put on robes, used sacred formulae, and did other things that indicate genuine mystic absorption and identification.

At the time the synagogue was painted, this sort of thinking had attracted many in the rabbinical circles themselves. We cannot seize upon any one of these treatises or formulations as the source of the Dura paintings, any more than we can claim that they are based upon specific allegories by Philo or Monoimus. But from all these sources together we have learned enough of the language to recognize that the painter was thinking in terms of it. Like people hearing an address in a language they know very little, we can recognize bits, know from occasional words and phrases what language the speaker is using, what in general he is talking about, even though we are quite unable to reconstruct his argument or know exactly what he is saying. The painter's design, we can see, resembles Philo and Monoimus more than anything we have from mystical writers in Iranian and Hebrew. Perhaps we say so only because we have a better account of Philo and Monoimus, and the kinship is largely in the common borrowed elements of each, borrowed elements integrated with an intensely loyal Judaism. But nothing in the rabbinic mysticism suggests as do Philo and Monoimus that Jews would have formulated a cosmic approach of the five or twelve, or the planetary scene, an approach dominated by Aaron, or by Moses in priestly checks, and would have contrasted it with a purely abstract mysticism of the ten and ideal seven. Whatever else was in the painter's mind as he characterized his design by the cosmic bull, Gayomart, and Spandarmat, he presented in the whole an immaterial approach to God as contrasted with the cosmic approach. We end, as we began, by looking at the painting itself, which has preserved a Jewish tradition otherwise almost totally lost.

153. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 78. For the seven and ten in early Christian teaching see E. Testa, *Simbolismo dei Giudeo-Cristiani*, 1961, 8 f.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Judaism of Immaterial Reality: The Ark vs. Paganism

THE SCENE of the miraculous well illuminated the meaning of the Temple of Aaron beside it. In the same way, I believe, the scene of the Ark of the Covenant, plate XIII, fig. 334, to which we now come, complements the scene of the Closed Temple.

The painting appears at first to fall into two parts, divided by the Ark, which rests upon a cart. The painting has usually been described as containing two scenes, two episodes, but we shall have reason to suppose that, although details come from various sources and passages, the painting actually gives us a single composition which is unified by the central Ark itself. At the right two idols in Persian dress lie broken on the ground, surrounded by a variety of cult objects, with an empty temple in the background. At the left two men in Persian dress guide a pair of bulls that are pulling the cart, while three men in Greek dress walk behind.

A. PAGANISM

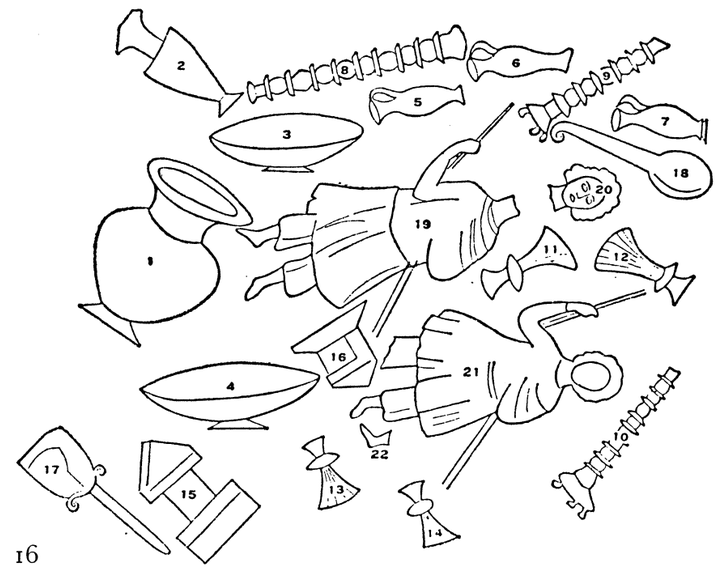
THE BIBLICAL INSPIRATION of both parts of the painting is obviously the incident in which the Philistine god Dagon at Ashdod collapsed before the Ark, after which the Philistines returned the Ark to Israel.[1] In that story the Philistines had captured the Ark in battle and set it up as a trophy before Dagon, only to find the god's image prostrate before the Ark on two successive mornings; the second time it had lost its head and hands, cut off on the threshold. This only began the trouble of the Philistines, who found themselves visited by calamities in all the five cities where they then tried to keep the Ark. So at the advice of their priests the Philistines built a new cart on which they put the Ark, along with five golden images of the tumors, and five others of the mice, that had been afflicting them, a golden tumor and mouse for each city. The cart was to be drawn by two milch cows that had never yet worn a yoke, and the cows were to go their own unguided way.

1. I Sam. v, 1–vi, 18.

> The cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went; they turned neither to the right nor to the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Bethshemesh.

That the cows thus took the cart without human guidance straight back to the Jews indicated to the lords of the Philistines who followed, five in number, that they had done right in thus returning the Ark.

The Dura artist has taken elements from both these incidents of the story to say some things which the story itself by no means indicates. Details are altered quite *a piacere*, but, we shall see, with purpose. A glance at the objects strewn on the ground before the Ark at the right, for example, shows that the artist was not reconstructing the historical scene at all. The images of the two gods each look almost exactly like the painting of Adonis in the temple dedicated to him a few streets away, fig. 149. Kraeling identified and numbered the ritualistic implements for his drawing, which I reproduce in the accompanying text fig. 16:[2]



16

> a large, wide-mouthed storage jar (no. 1), a hydria (no. 2), two shallow basins or bowls (nos. 3, 4), three small jugs (nos. 5–7), three candelabra or lampstands (nos. 8–10), two large thymiateria (nos. 11, 12), two smaller thymiateria (nos. 13, 14), and two altars (nos. 15, 16).[3]

No. 17, he continues, is probably a "snuff shovel," apparently a reference to the incense burners of this shape that were formerly called snuff shovels.[4] He plausibly suggests that no. 18 may be a musical instrument, and I suspect no. 17 is another.

2. From Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 101, fig. 30.
3. Ibid., 102.
4. See above, III, Index 1, s.v. Shovel; IV, 195–208; M. Avi-Yonah, "On the Problem of the Shovel as a Jewish Symbol" (in Hebrew), *BJPES*, VIII (1940), plate II, pp. 20 f.

The artist has made no attempt to orient all these objects, or the idols among them, with the empty temple. Instead, the idols lie prostrate facing the Ark, certainly not aligned with the pedestals in the shrine behind them from which they presumably have fallen. The artist seems to have had the problem of how to orient them toward the Ark and yet make them recognizable. For the latter, they had to lie face up, but had he drawn them face up with their heads toward the Ark the actual effect would have been that their backs were toward it. His solution was the only possible one, to make them lie on their backs, with their feet toward the Ark, their heads facing it. Such relation to the Ark had presumably greater importance than to show their relation to the pedestals. In this way he has succeeded very well in using the incident from I Samuel to show the collapse of paganism before the reality of Judaism, the collapse of paganism presumably as he knew it directly in Dura itself.

The empty temple at the back presents a shrine whose architrave is carried by six tall white columns with Corinthian capitals. Behind the columns a wall of yellow masonry flanks a central element consisting of a wall of lighter yellow above and the entrance below to the adyton.[5] A pair of dark yellow pilasters or columns flank the opening and carry a lintel with a pediment above it. The lintel and pediment were crudely drawn, for the earlier photographs and Gute's painting, fig. 334, show that the right corner of the pediment and the pilaster beneath it overlapped the larger white column, though they were clearly supposed to be behind it.[6] Upon the white inner triangle of the pediment stands a multi-pointed gold rosette, probably intended to have sixteen points; superimposed upon this Gute indicates that he saw a four-point rosette. I quite agree with Kraeling's suggestion that the artist meant to represent in this design only the façade of a temple, with the columns of the portico spaced "in the arbitrary manner familiar from Roman coins to provide an unobstructed view of the interior of the cella." [7] When the Romans did this, the opening ordinarily showed a cult image,[8] though sometimes a boss seems to indicate the closed door of the adyton, a device which suggested but did not reveal the sanctity of the cult object behind it.[9] Jews had elsewhere taken over the convention. They represented the Ark or the Torah shrine thus at the center between four columns on their coins of the Second Revolt,[10] and painted the façade with four columns and the closed doors over the Torah niche in the Dura synagogue itself.[11] On the latter the closed doors have "round objects" upon them which recall the bosses of the similar

5. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 101, has an excellent description of the temple, with interesting references.

6. In the color photograph we see that in restoring the design someone has painted the column over that corner and pilaster.

7. See his *Synagogue*, 101, and n. 325. Kraeling does not claim that the painter used the design on Roman coins as the direct model. There is some discrepancy in the various colors reported, but those in Gute's painting generally agree with the ones in plate XIII.

8. H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, IV, 1940, plate 9, no. 6; plate 29, no. 12 (contrast nos. 10 f., 13); plate 36, nos. 2 f., and passim. Hill, *Coins of Palestine*, plates XV, 10 f.; XVI, 6; XXVI, 5; XLI, 9 (*CBM*), where a pair of gods are in the shrine—here male and female.

9. Mattingly, plate 31, no. 8; plate 32, no. 8.

10. See above, III, figs. 692, 676; cf. I, 274–276, and du Mesnil, *Peintures*, plate XIII, 1–6.

11. See above, IX, 69, and fig. 66.

closed doors on Roman coins. The adyton here, on the contrary, shows only an empty mockery, with what seems to be two pedestals and a table for the cult instruments, or for cultic use of some kind. But all hope of cult or divine presence has vanished. No Victories are here, though there was plenty of room to indicate them on the extended lintel beside the inner pediment. The artist is telling us as clearly as if in words that paganism is a mockery and empty shell. Its fatuous pretense collapses before the Shekinah of the Ark.

In representing six columns on the façade, the artist may simply have been reproducing a "cliché" familiar from Roman coins, but while such façades with images on the coins had six columns more often than any other single number, many times the design shows four or eight columns while, as we have seen, the façades of the pagan temples at Dura, as well as the Jewish façades, usually had four columns with three openings.[12] I strongly suspect that the six columns for the pagan temple of the painting express a numerological value judgment, though this I cannot adequately defend. Philo often calls six a "perfect number," [13] chiefly on the ground that it is the product of two and three. In the number six, however, these numbers

> have left behind the incorporeal nature of the One; for the Two is an image of matter, since like matter it can be divided and cut, while the Three symbolizes a solid body, since a solid has three dimensions (literally, is divisible in three ways).[14] . . . [Moses] intends to show that mortal and immortal things are each formed in a way corresponding to their proper numbers, mortal things, as I said, structured in a way comparable to the Six, but the happy and blessed things to the Seven.[15]

A little later he adds: "When the holy Logos, which is after the manner of the Seven, comes upon the soul, the Six is suspended, along with all the other mortal things which the Six seems to make in this way." [16] Philo did, then, know the six as a material symbol quite inferior to the seven, though he by no means consistently holds to it. That the artist may have intended to express such a contrast of the six with the sacred three and seven will appear more likely when we consider the details of the other half of this painting.

Before leaving the pagan half, however, we must ask more closely why the shrine was made with pedestals for two gods, and what gods the two male images prostrated before the Ark might have represented. They are almost identical. Each wears Persian dress with a coat hanging behind like a chlamys,[17] similar to the one worn by Aaron in fig. 332, and fastened by a similar brooch at the chest. Each has a sword at his side, on whose pommel the left hand quietly rests. The right hand is raised to about shoulder height, and carries a staff.[18] Du Mesnil recognized the great similarity of the fallen idols

12. See above, IX, 68.

13. Cf. *QG* III, 38. Philo often says this. The passages are collected by Staehle, *Die Zahlenmystik bei Philon von Alexandreia*, 32–34.

14. Cf. *Decal.* 24 f.; *Opif.* 36; Staehle, 25.

15. *LA* I, 3 f.

16. Ibid. 16. The last phrase is corrupt textually, but the general meaning seems clear.

17. They may possibly be wearing the candys, a cape similar to the chlamys, but with short sleeves. See Cumont, *TMM*, II, 270, fig. 113; W. Amelung in PW, III, 2207 f.

18. There was some sort of knob at the top of the staff, and perhaps something on the side as Gute represented. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 102, n. 334, suggests the possibility of a thyrsus.

to the images of Adonis, as has already been noted, but got into considerable difficulty when he tried to explain why there were two images. He ingeniously recalled that I Sam. v, 3 f., reports that Dagon fell before the Ark on two successive days, and on that basis he suggested confidently that the two figures represent the same god as twice fallen. To do this he had to assume that what appear to be two pedestals in the adyton are altars (though two altars lie in the debris with the gods), and that the "table" in the center actually is a bed on which the single god reclined.[19] This stretches our fancy too far. The images on the ground clearly were not couchant, like the many we know, as for example figs. 219–226,[20] but standing, like the Adonis in fig. 149. While Brown, in publishing this restored painting, was uncertain whether he should have Adonis stand on a pedestal or a globe, his Adonis, like the fallen gods of our scene, must have stood on something.[21] I do not see how we can imagine the ones in the synagogue painting as originally doing anything else than standing on the two pedestals. In that case they must represent two distinct deities.[22] The object between the pedestals would then perhaps be a bed, but seems more likely to have been a table to hold some of the cult implements, like the table in fig. 247. From the pagan temples we should judge that the large hydria may either have been buried or have stood upon the floor,[23] and the candelabra, incense burners, and altars may have stood on the ground as in figs. 331 and 332.[24] That the implements include two altars, two large and two small incense burners, two large open bowls, and perhaps two musical instruments suggests further emphasis upon a double cult, though the single tall vase, the three ewers, and three tall lampstands weaken the suggestion. The implements for libation—that is, the bowls and ewers—may have stood upon the central table, or, less likely in my opinion, the table may have held the Ark during the roughly forty-eight hours it rested in the temple, as has been suggested. In all of this I make no firm decisions, except that the erect figures of the gods, or of a single god if they double for Adonis, could not have lain on a "bed." Less than certain but still by all means probable, the two images represent two gods, who stood on, but now have fallen from, the two pedestals, and between the pedestals is, accordingly, a table, like the table in the underpainting of the reredos, fig. 74.

If the two almost identical images actually represent two gods, we ask again what gods they were. Pairs of similar standing gods have appeared several times on the Palmyrene tesserae. The pairs are of course often god and goddess,[25] but by no means always. Fig. 252 [26] shows Iarhibol and Aglibol, identified by inscriptions and associated respectively with the sun and moon. Since the sun and moon appear with two similar images in fig. 253,[27] I should guess that these also are the same Iarhibol and Aglibol. More often the pair of such gods are Maanou and Shaarou, and perhaps these are the deities in fig. 254.[28] One broken stone, fig. 255,[29] seemed to the editors also to have had Maanou and Shaarou, as they have reconstructed it. Here they carry shields, as they usually do not, but otherwise have points in common with the fallen images in the Dura painting. Fig. 256,[30] with a god and goddess, shows the importance of the pedestal for such images.[31]

Two figures on the larger bas-relief from the Mithraeum of Dura seem also in point here, fig. 261.[32] Between the Mithra killing the bull and a person at the extreme right in Greek dress, who from his gesture is taken to be putting incense on a burner (a point of which I am by no means sure), stand two little figures on a pedestal. One has a sword, both wear Persian dress, and the one at the left has a jewel in his hair. Both raise the right hand. Such figures would have been taken as a matter of course to be deities, if a name had not been inscribed with each of the three. Zenobius is the larger figure in the Greek robe, and Jariboles and Barnaadath are the two in Persian dress. Zenobius and Jariboles both reappear as dedicants in the inscription below, but not Barnaadath. I suspect strongly that these personal names have been written, perhaps in hopeful identification, beside figures that the members of the thiasos would have known very well to be gods with other names. The resemblance of the two on the pedestal to the two fallen gods in our synagogue painting strikes one at once. From the material to which we come next, I should guess that for local benefit, as so often in Mithraic shrines, a familiar pair of Sassanian gods have been associated with Mithra, and that the two must be understood as gods.

The Sassanian coins of the period slightly before that of the synagogue, as well as centuries later, throw additional light on the problem. Many coins of Artaxerxes I (A.D. 226–240) are designed basically like the one in fig. 257.[33] The king's head is on the obverse, and on the reverse is a collection of instruments. Two stands, with a rounded ball on each of them, perhaps loaves of bread,[34] flank an altar on a tall pedestal. The top of the altar extends slightly above a table which is before it, and fire burns on the altar. Both the altar and the table recall the similar objects in the Dura painting. The coins of

19. Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 102 f., rejects du Mesnil's identification with Adonis, on the ground that this would have "introduced a type of short-range polemic into the decorations that in general appears to be alien to the rest of the work of the Synagogue artists." We are finding so many "short-range" references in the decorations that this objection has no weight at all. On the other hand, Kraeling eagerly accepts du Mesnil's suggestion that the two figures represent a single deity.

20. See also H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig, and J. Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, 1955, plate xxxviii, fig. 773; cf. figs. 760–813 *et passim* (Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth: Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, LVIII).

21. See above, IX, 154.

22. The biblical narrative has the god broken into pieces only at the second fall, while the painting has each image damaged. It may be that the one god has lost his foot, not his hands, because the artist was here following the LXX, as Kraeling pointed out, *Synagogue*, 102, n. 335. But the artist is using the story for his own ends.

23. See Chapel 4 of the Temple of Adonis, in Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos*, VII/VIII, 140; Chapel 44, ibid., p. 141.

24. See also the instruments used in the Sacrifice of Conon at Dura, fig. 151, and above, IX, 154.

25. For example, Ingholt, *Tessères*, plate xxv, 502, 507 f.

26. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. Ingholt, plate vii, 119*b*.

27. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. Ingholt, plate xxii, 417*a*.

28. From Ingholt, plate xiv, 257*a;* cf. 245–256.

29. Ibid., frontispiece, 330; cf. plate xviii, 330.

30. Ibid., plate xlix, 389*b*.

31. The gods in the Dura painting may be the pair Aglibol and Melakbel, to whom an altar was dedicated at Palmyra in A.D. 132 by a *marzeh*, an eastern sort of mystic thiasos: see J. G. Février, *La Religion des Palmyréniens*, 1931, 201–208, esp. 203, 206.

32. From Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos*, VII/VIII, plate xxx; cf. pp. 97 f., 100. It is a copy by Gute.

33. From de Morgan, *Numismatique de la Perse antique*, plate xliv, 6; cf. pp. 663 f. De Morgan publishes thirty-seven of these coins of Artaxerxes I on plates xliv–xlvi. Cf. C. Hopkins in *JAOS*, LI (1931), 129, 131.

34. De Morgan calls these "two objects in the form of vases": *Numismatique*, Text, 658.

Artaxerxes' successor, Shapur I (A.D. 240–271), the contemporary of the synagogue, changed the design. Of the instruments only the altar with the fire was left, and at either side was put a deity in Persian dress, one hand on a sword, the other holding a staff, fig. 258.[35] The tradition continued for the coins of later Sassanian monarchs, as for example the coin of Varahran I (A.D. 272–275), fig. 259.[36] In these, one figure has a radiate solar crown, the other a sphere, and from the material we have seen on the tesserae we can at least surmise that the ball is the full moon, and that the two figures represent the sun and moon. It seems inevitable that they had great importance, or that the design did, since the design continued in use, however modified, to the mid-seventh century, fig. 260.[37] I cannot believe the two figures represent mere "attendants," [38] but should guess that the two kinds of coins refer to the same cult: one showing its instruments, the other keeping only the thymiaterion in order to put in the two gods. If we combine the two, we have gods and cult implements much like the ones shown in the synagogue painting we are considering.

Nothing I have seen specifically identifies the Dura pair before the Ark, but it would appear that the artist had some definite reference in mind. The actual form of the two gods may have been copied directly from the Adonis picture at Dura, though I highly suspect this would not have been open to the public, or may have been conventional. But I firmly believe that the people of the day in Dura would have recognized them at once by their being two gods, and by their attributes.

Even though we cannot recognize the figures—as the people at Dura, Jew and gentile, probably could have done—I do not see how we can come to any conclusion but that the artist has generalized the incident of Dagon, and used it to present the Jewish belief that paganism, specifically of the Sassanian gods and cultus, collapse before the true God of the Jews, the God whose Shekinah was brought to men most vividly by the Ark of the Covenant.[39]

B. THE ARK

IN DESIGNING the other half of the painting the artist seems to have used the same freedom to adapt motifs from the biblical story to express a more general conception. As du Mesnil pointed out, in the biblical narrative the Philistines put the Ark on the cart

35. Ibid., plate XLVII, 7. De Morgan publishes many of these coins of Sapor I.

36. Ibid., plate XLVIII, 8; cf. Text, p. 669.

37. Ibid., plate LXXVII, 1*b*; cf. Text, pp. 730–732. It is a coin of Purandukht (A.D. 630–631). The persistence and varieties of details of this design can easily be followed by leafing through the intermediary plates of de Morgan. See also the plates in F. D. J. Paruck, *Sasanian Coins*, 1924; Pope, *Persian Art*, IV, plates 251–254.

38. J. Allan in Pope, *Persian Art*, I, 817. This is the usual interpretation. De Morgan, p. 649, says of them that generally the prince is the figure at the right, the king at the left. He gives no reason for this identification, and I see none.

39. That is, even though I see no ground for giving names to this pair of gods, the altar, table, and pair of gods with sword and staff make me feel that this scene presents us with a body of information about the actual Sassanian cult such as we get nowhere else.

and returned it to Israel seven months after the image of Dagon had fallen down before it. The artist was painting ideas, not an historical incident, and so had no compunction in combining the two events into a single composition. If in the right half of the picture paganism collapses before the true revelation and worship of God in Judaism, the painter has taken the left part to show the glory of Judaism. The most important element in this part of the painting is the great central Ark itself; but the details of its representation should be considered only after we have studied the other elements in the composition.

The Ark rests upon two cushions, one pink and one green, as it rides upon a peculiarly shaped cart which at first sight seems to have quite broken down the artist's ability to draw. It shows only a single pair of wheels, though we cannot rule out the possibility of two other wheels behind.[40] A low-banistered railing runs across the front, and perhaps ran round the other three sides, a rail useless to steady its top-heavy load. At the corners are flaring pieces like the horns of an altar. They, like the railing, do not go above the cushions, and so, as drawn, had no value for holding the Ark in the wagon. In view of the number symbolism we shall encounter, it may have meaning that the rails mark off seven spaces across the bottom of the Ark. The body of the cart grotesquely rests on the wheels instead of an axle. At the back runs a high frame that bears a pink canopy; whether the canopy was deep enough to cover the entire Ark I cannot tell.[41] The spokes of the wheels are carefully outlined to make them eight-point rosettes, but no shaft joins the cart to the yoke of the animals that pull it.

Identification of so crudely drawn a cart cannot be at all certain. Du Mesnil [42] thought it the funerary cart of Adonis, to which Kraeling objected,[43] and gave other parallels that seemed to him closer.[44] But no parallel yet suggested seems to me as close as the design on the silver plate of Sassanian origin, now at the Hermitage Museum, fig. 262.[45] This piece shows what Orbeli calls the chariot of the moon god, Mah, with the deity sitting on a couch in his crescent.[46] If the artist at the synagogue had some such original before him,

40. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, 82, restores the cart as having two wheels; Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 103, supposes there were four. The turning of the wheels would be impossible on a two-wheel cart, so that Kraeling's guess seems better to me. But the cart is so crudely drawn that either is possible.

41. Kraeling and du Mesnil disagree on this point also.

42. *Peintures*, 83.

43. *Synagogue*, 104, n. 343. He argued that a funerary cart would be quite inappropriate. But funerary and royal symbolism, as we have seen repeatedly, tend to be very close, since both so often imply deification. This observation has nothing to do with identifying the cart as that of Adonis, for which, I agree with Kraeling, we have not enough evidence.

44. Especially those in A. Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhofe," *MDAI, Röm.*, XLIX (1934), 107, fig. 7, and 115, fig. 10. Also the coin of Sidon in DS, I, i, 95, fig. 136. A splendid collection of ancient wagons and chariots was assembled by P. Forrer, "Les Chars cultuels préhistoriques et leurs survivances aux époques historiques," *Préhistoire*, I (1932), 19–123; see esp. the figures on pp. 77, 81, 83. Many of these have details suggestive of the Jewish cart, as for example the chariot on a coin in honor of Agrippina, p. 76, no. 11, or the eagle under a round-topped canopy, ibid., no. 2. See also idem, "Un Char de culte," *Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire d'Alsace*, III (1918–21), 1195–1242.

45. From Pope, *Persian Art*, IV, plate 207B; cf. I, 736, n. 45.

46. Both figures in this design have been vari-

he had to make few changes in the basic design to have an outline remarkably like that at Dura. The lower line of the pink canopy of the Dura design follows the lower line of the crescent. The arch containing the lower figure in the Sassanian design has by the Dura artist been made to run out practically to the edge, so that the columns, which turned the design into a temple or aedicula on a wagon, no longer appear at Dura. The Ark quite fills what was the original niche, and keeps its form. The Sassanian design has no cushions, but the floor of the wagon rests directly upon the two wheels, as in the design at Dura, and the wheels are splayed out to show the same eight-point rosettes as spokes. Further, the wagon is pulled by humped-back cattle, which Orbeli calls "four zebus, an expression of the close relation between Mah and the primeval ox." We cannot press the details too far, since there is no likelihood that the Dura artist had seen this particular Sassanian design, but coincidences have become too numerous not to suggest a common ancestor. Whether by correction of a design like this or as drawn in the original the artist was adapting, the four cattle have become two, and the position of the cattle before the cart has been made much more natural than on the plate. Both gods have entirely disappeared. But just as the synagogue as a whole was designed like the inner shrine of a pagan temple, with the Ark of the Law in the niche where a cult statue would have been, so here the Ark of the Covenant has slipped into the niche where, on the plate, a god stands. It was Orbeli who felt a relation between the bulls of the Sassanian wagon and the cosmic bull of Pahlavi tradition, a bull which we saw so strategically ready for sacrifice on the door of the Closed Temple beside this scene in the synagogue. Orbeli took a long step from the four bulls of the plate to the single cosmic bull of the tradition, although perhaps there was a connection. Kraeling called the two animals pulling the cart in the synagogue "bullocks," and Gute painted what would seem to be testicles on the one animal we can see, fig. 334. The biblical text calls for cows, and du Mesnil still makes them such.[47] So far as I could see at Damascus, and as appears on plate XIII, there is no indication of sex on the beast at all, but only a long scratch or smear that begins up on the thigh and runs down nearly to the hoof.[48]

Another departure from the biblical narrative appears in the two drivers in Persian dress who walk beside the cattle, one guiding them from the yoke, the other whipping them on. Those who opened the western prairies with covered wagons and ox teams called such drivers "bullwhackers," a term directly applicable here. Their presence surprises us, since, as we have said,[49] the biblical narrative [50] tells that once the cows were hitched to

ously identified, according to Orbeli's notes in Pope, loc. cit. See also A. Alföldi in *La Nouvelle Clio*, I/II (1949/50), 546 f.

47. But he admits that they have no teats, "ce qui prête à confusion."

48. A shadow on the ground shaped like an inverted T led Kraeling to surmise that they represent roads between which the animals are carefully choosing to get to the right place in Israel. The biblical story, of course, makes considerable point of the fact that they never turned at all. If Kraeling is right, the turning would be simply another departure from biblical details; but, while I have no other suggestion, I am by no means sure that these darker patches indicate roads.

49. See above, pp. 74 f.

50. I Sam. VI, 8–12.

the cart they were to go entirely without guidance, and if they went to Bethshemesh of their own accord, the Philistines would know that Yahweh had stricken them because they had kept the Ark captive among them. The "whacking" and guiding of the cattle thus takes all point from the original story. The two drivers seem to me to come from another incident, II Samuel VI, 1–19, when David took the Ark to Jerusalem. On this occasion Uzzah and his brother Ahio drove the animals which pulled the cart. Ahio, according to the narrative, went ahead, and by rabbinical inference Uzzah, who shortly was killed for his impiety in touching the Ark to steady it, walked behind.[51] I cannot see how we can avoid this identification, even though it throws us into still a third incident for the painting. For the two drivers may have been introduced precisely to show that the Ark ultimately did get to Jerusalem—that is, that the artist has ideas rather than incidents in mind.

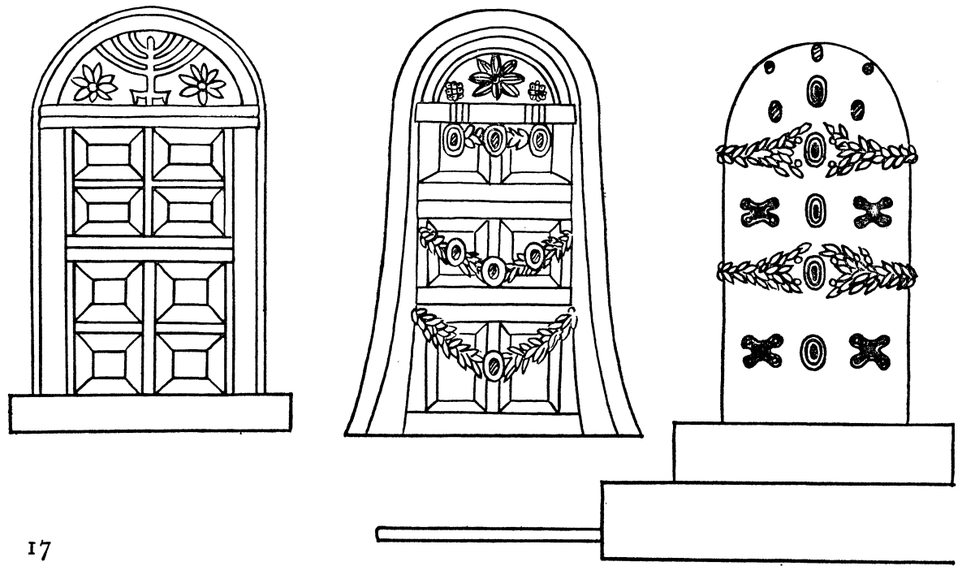
If so much in the painting has no direct source in the biblical story of the Ark with the Philistines, we have clearly no obligation to align with that story the last detail, the three men in Greek sacred dress who advance in the upper left corner behind the Ark and the drivers. Their clothing, the striped chiton and prong-marked himation so common in the synagogue, is here for two of them a light pink, while the central one is significantly marked off by a still lighter color, which seems to verge on the yellow. The biblical account specifies that five lords of the Philistines followed the Ark, and while the drivers together with the three in Greek costume make five, it is hard to believe that the two bullwhackers are to be included among these lords.[52] Who then are the three men, thus marked off in position, dress, and dignity? They seem to have intruded themselves as did the four central figures wearing similar dress in the Esther scene, fig. 336. We concluded that the four men of this scene represented heavenly intervention to save the Jews. In the scene of the anointing of David, fig. 337, the figure of Samuel in the same dress was recognizable, but the six others were a stylization of Jesse and his sons, here an arbitrary number that lost all historical reference, and again, with Samuel, represented a heavenly, or spiritual, company. We have seen Pharaoh's daughter and her attendant maidens become Aphrodite-Anahita of Iran and the three Nymphs of Greco-Roman tradition. Similarly in the scene before us the artist substituted for the five Philistines three men in the spiritual dress, walking each with his right forefinger extended, the real directors of the bullocks. What the artist is doing, as in all the paintings of the synagogue, is to use details from biblical stories to present an idea directly out of the Judaism he knew in his own time. These three men walk behind the Ark after the analogy of the five lords of the Philistines, but the three seem to me no more necessarily to represent those five Philistine lords than the two prostrate idols in Iranian dress represent the single Dagon of Ashdod, or than the three Nymphs represent

51. *MR*, *Num.*, VI, 20 (ET, I, 125, 127).

52. I Sam. VI, 12, 16. The background behind the men in the original is almost white, so that apparently the garments of the three men have a slight coloration to bring them out against it. They seem to me to be dressed in "white" in the sense of "light" discussed above, IX, 165–168. The two figures on the outside may be bearded, but I can suggest no reason that they should be.

the attendent maidens of the princess, or, as we shall see, than the Ark as represented attempts to follow the biblical description of the ancient Ark.

The Ark of this painting, to which we may now well turn, resembles in general form the Ark as twice represented in other paintings. I reproduce here, text fig. 17, du Mesnil's



17

drawing of the three.[53] In the first of these, which appeared at the door of the inner shrine of the Temple of Aaron, fig. 332, the panel at the little rounded top holds a menorah with an eight-point rosette on either side of it.[54] For the rest of the box we have only the most severe panels, eight in all. The design on this representation of the Ark seems to have carried out the symbolism of the painting in general, that in the temple worship of the Aaronic priesthood one approached the Ark, itself veiled and mysterious, only through the planets and stars as represented primarily by the menorah. The second Ark, the one as represented in the scene with the collapse of the pagan gods, has at its rounded top a large rosette instead of a menorah. Small rosettes still flank it: but the whole has taken us at once into a symbolism of the three, on the abstract level of the rosettes, and the central member of the three has much greater importance than the other two. Below this rounded top is again the paneled box, here with six panels, two tiers of three, with a laurel garland across each pair of panels. Each of the two upper garlands carries three large jewels, the lowest garland a single jewel.[55] Against the background of threes, then, the seven jewels mark the Ark as belonging to the symbolism of the seven, while the laurel garlands in-

53. Du Mesnil, *Peintures*, plate XXVI.

54. In the painting as finally restored the menorah disappeared except for a single arc, plate XIII. Gute's painting, fig. 332, and the early photographs support du Mesnil's drawing.

55. According to Gute's painting, five of the jewels are red with a black frame, and two, the bottom jewel and the one just above it, are black.

dicate triumph.[56] That is, the Ark in this design has its especial value spelled out in terms of the three and the seven. Like the round-topped ark of the Law beside Moses reading the Law, plate V, the round-topped Ark of the painting we are considering was covered with pink drapery,[57] which reminds us that although the little ark of the Law with Moses stands on legs, which none of these objects do when represented as the Ark of the Covenant, the three Arks of the Covenant are shaped like the little ark of the Law with Moses, but totally unlike what anyone would have expected from the biblical description of the ancient Ark. I can only conclude that in using the form of the ark of the Law for the ancient Ark the artist is making a definite identification of the two.[58]

We have encountered this problem before. On the Jewish coins of the First Revolt[59] the round-topped object stands in the middle of a façade and has usually been taken to be the Ark of the Covenant, but seemed to me more likely to be the ark of the Law represented within the façade to mark its sanctity. It was then, as now, the supreme symbol of Judaism. On the face of the south bench of the earlier synagogue at Dura a similar ark was drawn as a graffito.[60] Early Christian representations of the Ark of the Covenant sometimes take this form, as in fig. 235 and in the Vatican Bible, fig. 240, but usually, as here, with the cherubim added. Fig. 263[61] shows it as a three-storied, tower-like, object. In Jewish art of the period we have seen the Torah shrine in many forms, but on the whole it appears as a gabled structure which seems to be the shrine in which the *aron* proper, usually but not always round-topped, was kept and taken out for ritualistic purposes.[62] Sometimes the Torah shrine was shown as the whole gabled structure, sometimes as only the round-topped aron within it.

It is clear that the form of both the ancient Ark and the shrine in the synagogue had coalesced, as had the name for them, aron. For the name of this box of the Law came to be changed in common usage from the *tebah*, or box, as the tanaite rabbis usually called it, to the *Aron ha Kodesh*, the holy ark. The ancient Ark had several titles, of which Ark of the Covenant was most common. The history of the change from *tebah* to the word for the older Ark is by no means clearly attested.[63] Aron as a box was a word used for a coffin by the early rabbis, but my colleague Goldin agrees with my suggestion that the change of name for the box of the Law from tebah to aron would seem to mark a definite sense that

56. On garlands see above, VIII, 247, s.v. The garland was simply an untied wreath and was used with the same symbolism, VII, 158.

57. On this drape see below, p. 87.

58. For the third Ark of this drawing see below, p. 176.

59. See above, I, 276 f.; III, fig. 692.

60. Above, III, fig. 597. What was probably a second is shown in Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 320, no. 72.

61. From G. Swarzenski, *Die Salzburger Malerei*, 1913, II, plate XXVI, fig. 88; cf. Text, 70. It is often a gabled structure, as in fig. 244. Cf. the *Beatus in Apocalipsin*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 8878, fol. 157v. The latest study of the original form of the Ark is M. Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim," *IEJ*, IX (1959), 30–38, 89–94; and see Nordström, "Water Miracles," 83–86.

62. See above, III, figs. 58–61.

63. As Goldin kindly showed me, the history of this change must be constructed or guessed from such scattered midrashic passages that I shall not attempt to outline it. See I. M. Casanowicz in *JE*, II, 107–109; Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 469–471; Krauss, *Synag. Altert.*, 364–376, esp. 366.

the Law, in or out of its box, had taken a place in Jewish religious life which Jews felt to be analogous to that of the ancient Ark. Indeed when the rabbis say why Bezalel, who made the ancient Ark, was blessed, they explain among other things, that it was for "having made an Ark unto me in which the Torah is kept," which seems to indicate that the rabbis already fully associated the two,[64] as, we shall see shortly, did Philo. To represent the ancient Ark, then, in the form of the current box of the Law had in these very years fresh poignancy and direct impact. By putting the quite recognizable aron of the synagogue in place of the ancient Aron in the inner shrine behind the sacrifice of Aaron, and by painting the menorah on it for this context, the artist declared that the Torah still offered the cosmic symbolism of Aaron's sacrifice, as well as the hope this represented of worshiping God in harmony and company with the cosmos itself. Similarly in the painting of the gods fallen before the Ark we have, I believe, a double assertion: the recollection of the power of the ancient Ark to destroy Dagon of the Philistines, and the assertion that the contemporary ark of the Law had kept its devastating power, and could (perhaps would) destroy the gods of the Sassanians. We shall see the same object protecting the Jews in battle, and discuss its meaning further in that connection.[65] But in the painting we are now considering, we see the Ark decked with peculiar ornament, apparently because in this setting it had, as in each of the others, a peculiar value: in this case the value before which paganism crumbles. Our antecedent hypothesis is that the three men, the three rosettes at the top, and the seven jewels on the victorious laurel garlands will lead us to an interpretation of the Ark which harmonizes with the Closed Temple beside it, just as the painting of the Well of the Wilderness supplemented and shed light upon the Temple and sacrifice of Aaron. For this we use the composition of the painting as a guide to what ideas in Jewish literature may be relevant, and so seek in literature an interpretation of the ancient Ark in which three men of divine or semi-divine nature,[66] and a general interest in the number three as well as a formulation of the number seven, appear and are connected with a body of ideas primarily associated with the Ark.

In the rabbinic writings the structure of the box is described, and such miraculous powers attributed to it as that sparks went out from it which killed snakes and scorpions and burned brambles from the path of the Israelites.[67] The two cherubim on the top of it, according to an eleventh-century midrash, correspond to the two divine names of God, *Adonai*, Lord, and *Elohim*, God.[68] Ginzberg [69] says that the symbolic representation of the Ark as given by Philo "offers many points of resemblance to that of the Midrashim." I am not in a position to say what and how many such points there are, and Ginzberg does not expand this statement.

64. *MR, Exod.*, L, 2, 5 (ET, 557, 561). See above, IV, 89, 99.

65. See below, p. 176. Morton Smith reminded me that according to the pre-Exilic documents the Ark contained oracles, while in the Priestly Code it contained the Law. The identification of the Ark with the box of the Law may be very old.

66. Such a character seems increasingly to be what the Greek robe indicates.

67. Ginzberg, *Legends*, III, 157 f.; VI, 64, n. 330.

68. *Midrash Tadsche*, 2. A. Wünsche, *Aus Israels Lehrhallen*, 1910, V, ii, 89. The translation obscures the plain Hebrew reference to the two names.

69. *Legends*, VI, 65, n. 333.

A most important detail seems to me the song to which Kraeling [70] alludes, but which I quote in Scholem's translation:

> Rejoice, rejoice acacia-[shrine]
> Stretch forth in the fullness of thy majesty
> Girdled in golden embroidery
> Praised in the recesses of the palace
> Resplendent in the finest of ornaments.[71]

This is a song which the kine who pulled the Ark from the Philistines are supposed to have sung to it. I agree with Kraeling that the painter did not represent the kine as singing but did represent the Ark "covered by a veil and adorned with jewels." The word which Scholem properly renders "ornament" might well have suggested jewels to the painter, as indeed it was translated in the Soncino edition. Scholem's brilliant discussion of this song, published after Kraeling's comment had been printed, makes it clear that the verses are at least as old as the second century. Scholem argues convincingly that they came from the Maaseh Merkabah, as, he thinks, did the very similar songs of the Greater Hekhaloth which the"Living Creatures" sing to the Throne, "songs to which only the initiate could listen without endangering his life." [72]

The jeweled wrappings of the Ark have accordingly suggested the very heart of Jewish mysticism. But the song has not prepared us to find that the wrappings are Greek garlands of victory, that the jewels should be seven in number, that there should be three rosettes, or that the Ark should be accompanied by three men in the Greek robe. The little song must have had a great context in Merkabah mysticism, but that context is lost, and for the additional details of the scene we must look elsewhere. We can learn much from the Old Testament art of early Christianity, and from the writings of Philo Judaeus.

In my *By Light, Light* I discussed "The God of the Mystery," a chapter which could well be included here. I shall take considerable excerpts from it, for there I showed how for Philo the Ark supremely symbolized the nature of ultimate Reality or Deity. Philo had been much influenced by Pythagorean speculation on the relation of the number seven to that Reality, as well as by the Amesha Spentas as emanations from God.[73] He argues at length that in the Ark God revealed and presented himself as the one God, who created and ruled the world through emanations, sometimes three, but in the Ark seven. These seven are the Law within the box, the mercy seat, the two cherubim, the voice that spoke to Moses from the Ark, and the Presence or the One who spoke. Reversing the order of these, Philo describes each part as a symbol. The Presence, the One who spoke, is the highest God, *to on*. From him radiate all the lower manifestations. First is the Logos of this One, which corresponds to the voice heard by Moses. From the Logos the Stream goes on out in two branches, the two cherubim, who are called the Creative Power, and the Royal, Kingly, or Ruling Power. Each of these is now in turn the source of a further

70. *Synagogue*, 105; the song is from *BT, Abodah Zarah*, 24b (ET, 123 f.).

71. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 25; cf. pp. 24–30.

72. Ibid., 27.

73. See the Greater Bundahishn, I, 29–35 (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 316 f.).

emanation. The Creative Power sends forth the Merciful Power or Benevolence, the Mercy Seat, and the Royal Power sends forth the Legislative Power, the Law within the box, which is also the punishing Power. The seventh and last member of this pleroma, the one typified by the box of the ark, is the Conceptual World (*kosmos noētos*), the Platonic world of forms.

Philo's most important passage describing this schematization of God and the Stream should be quoted. He begins by explaining that the two cherubim represent the Creative and Ruling Powers of God, with the second definitely inferior to the first. So the Creative Power is equivalent also to the word "God" the Ruling Power to "Lord." [74] The cherubim are said to be of beaten gold to show by the gold that they are of the highest being (*ousia*), the pure and unmixed: that is, that their nature is divine. The craftsmanship indicates that they are form, the forms of forms, and so of a conceptual nature (*epistēmonikē phusis*).[75] These serve in the universe as the guards at its limits (*horoi*). The Creative Power is not only the Creative principle but guards the world against destruction; the Royal Power puts into it the great Law, that of Equality, which preserves the cosmic peace, since it keeps all things within their proper limitations.[76] The Powers have wings because all of them "desire and struggle for the Road up to the Father"; and their wings overshadow the parts below to indicate the guardianship of these Powers over all beneath them.[77]

From this Philo goes on to explain why the faces of the cherubim are turned toward each other, and together toward the Mercy Seat. These words of Scripture, says Philo,

> are an extremely beautiful and divine similitude. For it was proper that the Powers, the Creative and Royal, should look toward each other in contemplation of each other's beauty, and at the same time in conspiracy for the benefit of things that have come into existence. In the second place, since God, who is One, is both the Creator and King, naturally the Powers, though divided, are again united. For it was advantageous that they be divided in order that the one might create, the other rule. For these functions differ. And the Powers were brought together in another way by the eternal juxtaposition of the names (i.e. Lord and God) in order that the Creative Power might share in the Royal, and the Royal in the Creative. Both incline fittingly toward the Mercy Seat. For if God had not been merciful to the things which now exist, nothing would have been created through the Creative Power nor be given legal regimentation by the Royal Power.[78]

Two things have become clear from the material thus far described, first the definiteness of Philo's schematization, and second the fact that these Powers have not distinct existence but are only aspects of the single nature and activity of God. The Power of God is being visualized in its richness by discussing it in terms of Powers, but the Powers share each other's nature, and are functional distinctions of the single Power of God, not existential distinctions.

74. *QE* II, 62. For Greek see Marcus, p. 253 f. Philo gives an interesting comment on the Creative Power as "God" in *Conf.* 136–138.
75. *QE* II, 63; cf. Marcus, 254.
76. *QE* II, 64, p. 254.
77. Ibid., 65; cf. Marcus, 254.
78. *QE* II, 66; cf. Marcus, 255.

The next section discusses the meaning of the statement of God to Moses "I shall become known to thee from there." [79]

> The purest and most prophetic mind receives knowledge and understanding of the Existent One (*ho ōn*) not from the Existent One himself, for the mind is not great enough to compass his magnitude, but from his primary and guardian Powers. One must be content with the fact that beams are borne from these into the soul, so that one may be able to perceive the elder and brighter by means of the secondary illumination.[80]

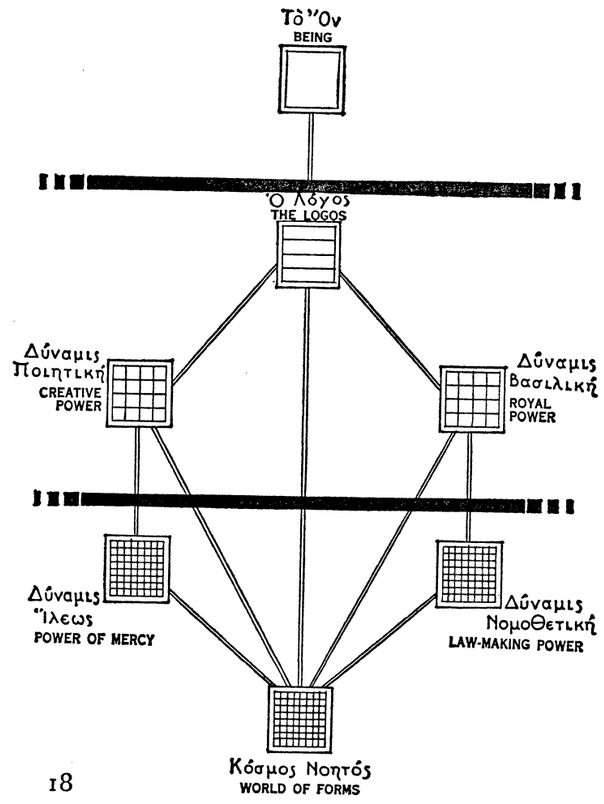
The solar character of the figure is at once indubitable, and the object of the whole schematization apparent. A ladder, each rung of which represents brighter illumination, is being constructed, with a mystic-metaphysical rather than cosmic-mythological objective.

Philo now goes on to give the whole scheme. In explaining the words, "I will speak to thee from above the Mercy Seat between the cherubim" [81] Philo says:

> Herewith it appears first that above the Power of Mercy, the Creative Power, and every Power, is the divine Principle (*to theion*); and second that [this Principle] speaks from the very center between the Creative and Royal Powers. The mind understands this as follows:[82] The Logos of God, which is a mean,[83] leaves no void in nature, but fills all things and mediates and arbitrates between what things seem to be opposed to each other; it thus creates friendship and concord. For the Logos is always the cause and creator of fellowship.[84] The parts of the Ark have been severally mentioned, but we must summarize them again from the beginning if we would understand what they symbolize. And the following [elements] are symbolic: the box of the Ark, and the laws treasured within it and the Mercy Seat upon it; the Cherubim, as they are called in Chaldean, upon the Mercy Seat; the Voice or Logos above these and between them; and, above all, the Speaker. Now if any one would become able accurately to grasp the nature of these, it seems to me that captivated by their most divine beauties he should renounce all the other things men seek.
>
> But let us consider the nature of each of these. The first is the Being more primal than the One, the Monad, or the Beginning (*archē*). Second is the Logos of the Being, the seminal substance of existing things. From the divine Logos, as from a wellspring, two Powers separate themselves. One of these is the Creative Power, through which the Artificer (*technitēs*) founded and ordered all things; this Power is called "God" [*theos*, or the Hebrew *Elohim*]. The other is the Royal Power, through which the Creator (*dēmiourgos*) rules over what has come into existence; this Power is called "Lord" [*kurios*, or the Hebrew *Adonai*]. From these two Powers others have grown out. For the form of Mercy,

79. Exod. xxv, 22 (LXX).
80. *QE* II, 67; cf. Marcus, 255.
81. Exod. xxv, 22.
82. "Mental understanding" is Philo's phrase throughout the *Questions* for the mystical meaning of Scripture as contrasted with the literal.
83. This concept echoes the *logos tomeus* theory which I have discussed in *Yale Classical Studies*, III (1932), 145–150.
84. In the first edition of this Greek fragment by Grossmann he adds "of peace," so that the line reads "cause of fellowship and creator of peace." Harris approves this, but does not put it into the text. Marcus includes the word in the text: see his pp. 115, 255.

whose name is Benefactor (*euergetis*),[85] stems off from the Creative Power, and the Law-making Power aptly called the Punitive [Power] [86] stems off from the Royal Power. Below and around these is [the box of] the Ark, the symbol of the conceptual world (*kosmos noētos*).[87] But the Ark [as a whole] [88] has in symbol all things established within the Holy of Holies.[89]



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Philo goes on to repeat the identifications of each symbolic part or aspect of the Ark as a whole, and continues:

> The number of the things here enumerated amounts to seven, the hebdomad, [that is] the conceptual world; two kindred Powers, the Punisher and Benefactor; two others preceding this, the Creative and Royal Powers, more closely related to the Creator than to what was created; sixth the Logos; and seventh the Speaker. If you count from the top, you find the Speaker is first, the Logos second, third the Creative Power, fourth the Ruling, and then the Benefactor subtended below the Creative; sixth the Punisher under the Royal, and seventh the world of forms.[90]

85. Philo clearly identifies this with the Mercy Seat in his list of symbolic aspects of the Ark as a whole.

86. This seems just as clearly to be the Law within the box of the Ark.

87. In *QE* II, 59, Philo says that the Law was put into the Ark in word, as a symbol that in deed or potency they pervade the conceptual world.

88. Philo seems throughout this passage to be using *kibōtos* now for the Ark as a whole, and now for the box only.

89. *QE* II, 68; cf. Marcus, 255 f. In revising my earlier translation of this passage I have found a number of excellent suggestions in Marcus.

Philo has indeed labored his point, and even so I have quoted only a small part of his long and repetitious exposition.[91] He describes the Ark in almost exactly the same terms in quite another treatise,[92] or alludes to it.[93] He can speak of the Powers more generally, and actually calls them in one passage "many-named." [94] But the material I have quoted is no passing allegory or momentary *jeu d'esprit*. Hidden within the Holy of Holies, he tediously explains, the Jews had the true symbol of God's nature. We must recall again that Philo definitely warned against conceiving of these as anything but aspects of God's unity. In all this Philo shows himself clearly in the intellectual tradition of Neoplatonism which made Plotinus hotly oppose the Gnostics. Teachers in both schools insisted that the supreme God or Reality has a nature which can have no immediate relation with the material world, or with man as a part of that world. Man turns to look above and beyond, but sees only manifestations of God, not God Himself. In contrast to the more popular schools, however, Philo, like Plotinus, regarded these as powers or manifestations, in no sense personalities or a pantheon of gods.

Accordingly, even though the Ark in the synagogue painting has lost the Cherubim and become the Ark of the synagogue, and though the jewels of that Ark are not arranged in the order of Philo's description as in text figure 18 (page 90), it seems much more than a chance occurrence that in this particular setting the seven jewels are arranged in groups of three, and that only here do the three rosettes appear at the top of the Ark. Philo himself had no invariable arrangement for the Powers or names for them,[95] even though he usually thought of the same three or seven, and I should not remotely suggest that the artist was working from Philo's text. I do suggest very strongly, however, that the sort of associations Philo had with the Ark as the supreme symbol of Judaism, especially expressed in terms of the three and the seven, have more relation to the Ark as here presented than does any other interpretation of the Ark I have been able to find.

C. THE THREE MEN

IMPORTANT AS PHILO has made the structure of the seven Powers with the Ark, he actually speaks more often of the three than the seven in this connection.[96] He many times brings in the three as a revelation of God.[97] But he especially found the three in the "three

90. Ibid.

91. See *QE* II, 51–68.

92. *Fug.* 100 f. This is an interruption in another long allegory in which the six cities of refuge are the Powers, and the High Priest is the Logos, *Fug.* 93–118.

93. *Heres* 166.

94. *Som.* II, 254. The number is vague, but the function identical, in *Conf.* 171 f.

95. I quote a number of these in my *By Light, Light*, 28–30, out of one of which comes a totally different diagram.

96. For example, *Mos.* II, 96–100.

97. The Logos is the flaming sword between the two Cherubim—Powers of Eden in *Cher.* 21, 27–31; God and the two Powers are symbolized by the tetragram on the turban of the High Priest, *Mos.* II, 131 f.; it was the Powers who buried Moses, *Mos.* II, 291.

men" who appeared to Abraham.[98] In one treatise [99] he says that Abraham's vision of the three typified all lifting of the eye of the mind, especially as done by the prophets; that is, it is the metaphysical vision. Of the three men whom Abraham saw, the one in the middle is called Being, Philo says, which is a term not a name, for he has no name; it is a description of his type of existence. The men on either side represent one the Creative Power "God," the other the Royal Power, "Lord."

Philo bases one of his most extended allegories on Abraham's vision of three men.[100] It and its parallels would require a monograph for proper discussion. Here I can say only that from the oak of Mamre, under which Abraham saw the men, to the mystic meal they shared, and their final departure, Philo makes every detail reveal what seems to me the very core of his religion. In describing these three men as a revelation of God, Philo says that Scripture presents

> most natural things to those who are able to see, [namely] that it is reasonable for one to be three and for three to be one, for they were one by a higher principle. But when counted with the chief Powers, the Creative and Kingly, he makes the appearance of three to the human mind. For this cannot be so keen of sight that it can see him who is above the Powers that belong to him, [namely] God, distinct from anything else. For as soon as one sets eyes upon God, there also appear, together with his being, the ministering Powers, so that in place of one he makes the appearance of a triad. . . . He cannot be seen in his oneness without something [else], the chief Powers that exist immediately with him, [namely] the Creative, which is called "God," and the Kingly, which is called "Lord." . . . [Abraham] begins to see the sovereign, holy, and divine vision in such a way that the single appearance appears as a triad, and the triad as a unity.[101]

Marcus notes that of the three adjectives used here for the vision, sovereign, holy, and divine, the first and last correspond to the "Lord" and "God," so that the Holy One at the center would be God (or the Logos), in which they were united.

The great Abraham did not stop with the vision of the three, for Philo interprets Genesis XVIII, 3, to mean that Abraham's mind

> clearly forms an impression with more open eyes and more lucid vision, not roaming about nor wandering off with the triad, and being attracted thereto by quantity and plurality, but running toward the One. And he manifested himself without the Powers that belong to him, so that he saw his oneness directly before him, as he had known it earlier in the likeness of a triad.[102] But it is something great that he asks, [namely] that God shall not pass by or remove to a distance and leave his soul desolate and empty. For

98. Gen. XVIII, 2; cf. *Abr.* 119–132, 142–146.

99. *Deo* 2–12. This highly important treatise, which also was given the title "On the Three Men Who Appeared to Abraham," survives only in the Armenian, published by J. B. Aucher, *Philonis Judaei Paralipomena Armena*, 1826, 613–619. Aucher's Latin translation was reprinted in the edition of Philo by M. C. E. Richter, 1828–30, VII, 409–414. For its relation to the Philonic corpus see M. Adler, "Das philonische Fragment De Deo," *MGWJ*, LXXX (1936), 165–170. Adler reviews earlier suggestions. None of them, including Adler's, seem convincing to me, but that the little fragment is genuine I see no reason to doubt at all. See above, IX, 85–87.

100. *QG* IV, 1–22; cf. *Abr.* 107–132; *Post.* 27.

101. *QG* IV, 2.

102. Cf. *Abr.* 131 f.

> the limit of happiness is the presence of God, which completely fills the whole soul with his whole incorporeal and eternal light.[103]

After considerable other comment Philo returns to the essential meaning of the three:

> So that truly and properly speaking, God alone is the measure of all things, both intelligible and sense-perceptible, and he in his oneness is likened to a triad because of the weakness of the beholders. For the eye of the soul, which is very lucid and bright, is dimmed before it falls upon and gazes at him who is in his oneness without anyone else at all being seen. For just as the eyes of the body when they are weak, often come upon a double appearance from a single lamp, so also in the case of the soul's vision, it is not able to attain to the One as one, but finds it natural to receive an impression of the triad in accordance with the appearances that attend the One like ministers, [namely] the chief Powers.[104]

Lebreton,[105] a Catholic writer on the origins of the doctrine of the Trinity, was aware of these passages from the *Questions* in which the three are said to be one, but thought that their phraseology could so easily have been given a Christian coloring by the Armenian or Latin translators that he needed to mention them only in a footnote. But the same conception of the three who are one appears in Philo's other books.[106] These three, not only here but throughout Philo's writings, basically symbolize Philo's single Deity, and are at the heart of his most reserved mystic teaching. "The sacred mystic account concerning the Uncreated and his Powers must be kept secret," he says,[107] "since it is not for everyone to protect the deposit of divine rites," and he thereby directly tells us that it is the *hieros logos* of his mystery, its deepest secret, and suggests that in some way it was connected with "rites." He could not have underscored its importance more vividly.

In another discussion of the three men of Abraham, Philo goes on specifically to identify the Deity they represent with the Deity manifested by the Mercy Seat and Cherubim of the Ark: "In terms of these three men the divine oracle seems to me," says Philo, "to be explained when it pronounces: 'I will speak with thee from above from the Mercy Seat between the two Cherubim.' " [108] After this identification Philo proceeds to give the same description of the One with the Powers which the Ark always suggested to him. We cannot doubt that to Philo the two symbols, the Ark and the men, belonged together. Hardly a treatise of Philo lacks at least a reference to God and the two Powers, whether with or without the Logos.[109] He steadily visualized God in this way, and he even

103. *QG* IV, 4.

104. Ibid., 8.

105. J. Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, 8th ed., 1927, I, 207 (Bibliothèque de théologie historique).

106. *Abr.* 119–132, 143–146.

107. *Sacr.* 59 f. The text I have translated is corrupt: see Cohn's note in the edition of L. Cohn and P. Wendland, 1896–1930, I, ad loc. Apparently Philo is saying that only a *mustēs* should be entrusted with the *hieros logos* of the rites (*orgia*) connected with the Uncreated and his Powers. Cohn reprints the text as quoted by both Clement of Alexandria and Ambrose.

108. *Deo* 5 (ed. M. Richter, VII, 411).

109. He expands the functions of the Powers very well in *Plant.* 50, 85–92; *Immut.* 3, 77–86, 109 f.; *Post.* 14–20, 167–169; *Gig.* 46 f.; *Conf.* 136 f., 175; *Cher.* 106; *Mut.* 15–24; *Mos.* II, 238; *Abr.* 59; *Spec.* I, 45–49, 209, 307.

represents the Jews as worshiping such a Deity when he writes, for pagan Roman readers, the defense of his embassy to Gaius.[110] Indeed it is just because Philo, and apparently the group he represents, consistently thought of God in these terms that his very monotheism seemed in danger, and he had to insist that God is still the One while represented in the Powers. His form of defense is extraordinary for its premonition of the Christian solution of a kindred problem.

I need hardly say that for the origins of the Trinity all this material deserves more than a footnote. When the early Church first talked of this experience of Abraham, if we may trust Justin Martyr,[111] the three consisted of God and two angels, and this "God" was a second God, or, to follow his general argument, it was the Logos, which now, in Christian hands, has become Christ. The interpretation that the three of this vision are one was continued by Augustine,[112] but of course by his time the special dignity of the one at the Center had to be specifically denied in order to harmonize the tradition with the Christian Trinity:

> "The Lord appeared unto Abraham." Not one, or two, but three men appeared to him, no one of whom is said to have stood prominently above the others, no one more than the others to have shone with greater glory, or to have acted more authoritatively.[113]

Augustine obviously is refuting people who still used the verse in the way Philo and Justin Martyr did.

The older tradition of Justin Martyr and hellenized Judaism, however, by which the central one of the three men was superior to the other two, appears in the Santa Maria Maggiore mosaic of the incident,[114] where a mandorla sets off the central figure, although in the lower half of the same mosaic he is like the other two. They all three wear the sacred robe, as, of course, does Abraham. As I said above,[115] this mosaic, so completely Philonic in its conception of the Logos and two Powers, first suggested to me that a Jewish Old Testament art must lie behind the Christian, and that the Christians in using it were, like Justin, only reinterpreting the originally Jewish iconography.

The art tradition continued. Fig. 100 [116] has the three men waited upon by Abraham and Sarah at the left,[117] as shown in the sixth-century mosaic in San Vitale at Ravenna. The men in this mosaic look much like those at Santa Maria Maggiore, and they obviously

110. *Legat.* 6.

111. *Dialogue*, 56; cf. my *Theology of Justin Martyr*, 1923, 142.

112. *Against Maximianus*, II, xxvi, 7; Migne, *PL*, XLII, 809.

113. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, II, xviii, 34; Migne, *PL*, XLII, 868.

114. See above, III, fig. 1. The earliest presentation of the incident, if, as I agree, Ferrua's dating is correct, appears in the new catacomb Via Latina, Rome. See Ferrua, *Via Latina*, 50, plate XXIV, 2. Here the central figure is distinguished by being slightly smaller than the other two. They all, of course, wear the full Greek dress.

115. I, 23–27.

116. Cf. M. von Berchem and E. Clouzot, *Mosaïques chrétiennes*, 151 f., fig. 191; G. Bovini, *Chiese di Ravenna*, 1957, 122–124 (Musei e monumenti).

117. Sarah in her tent recalls the figures in the tents in the Dura painting of the Well of the Wilderness, fig. 331, and the person over the niche, fig. 66. This mosaic shows Abraham not yet in mystic garb, but wearing it at last at the Akedah. At Santa Maria Maggiore he clearly had it.

belong to the same tradition. Comparing them, however, we see that the central figure in both mosaics sits well in front of the other two. The tradition persisted in Christian biblical illustrations, which have such importance for us that we must see at least a few of them. Fig. 264 [118] shows Abraham falling at the feet of the men, with the middle one emphasized. In fig. 265 [119] they are again at the table, now winged angels, with the central one exalted, a meaning made specific in fig. 266,[120] where the central figure alone wears the cruciform nimbus, and so unmistakably carries on the tradition we find in Justin Martyr against which Augustine protested. An allegory of the scene and the men, much like Philo's, clearly lies behind both the art and the early writers of Christianity, and must be taken by moderns as seriously as it was by the ancients for the origins of the Christian Trinity.[121] Indeed, so much had the "God of the three men" become itself a special description of God that in one passage of Philo God tells Moses to say to the Israelites:

> First tell them that I am "He-who-is," that they may learn the difference between what is and what is not, and also the further lesson that no name at all can properly be used of me, to whom alone existence belongs. And if, in their natural weakness, they seek some title to use, tell them not only that I am God, but also the God of the three men whose names express their virtue, each of them the exemplar of the wisdom they have gained—Abraham by teaching, Isaac by nature, Jacob by practice.[122]

The important thing for Philo is that the God who is purely Existent manifests himself as "three men," though which group of three men illustrate this makes relatively little difference to him as an allegorist.

We still have no Jewish pictorial representation of Abraham and the three men, but the three men beside the Ark in the Dura painting strikingly recall the three at Santa Maria Maggiore, and indeed in all the art tradition. The resemblance became more striking when I examined closely Gute's copy of the Dura painting, and discovered that while the two outer men wear exactly the same shade of pink, the dress of the man in the center is definitely lighter. The three are generally alike, but the one at the center is marked off.

The central rosette on the round top of the Ark's face with an identical but smaller rosette on either side seems to announce similarly the conception of the three whose central member dominates; and the seven jewels on the Ark now seem quite appropriate if the God of the seven who manifested himself in the ancient Ark was thought still to be the God of the ark of the Law in the synagogue. For the artist, as for Philo, the Ark and the three men belonged together. The most reasonable assumption seems to be that the three men

118. Courtesy Vatican Museum, Rome. It is cod. vat. gr. 747, fol. 39. Cf. Wilpert, *Mosaiken und Malereien*, I, fig. 147, p. 428.

119. From the *Const. Octateuch*, plate XIV, 46.

120. Courtesy Vatican Museum, Rome; cod. vat. gr. 747, fol. 39. Cf. Wilpert, *Mosaiken und Malereien*, I, fig. 148, p. 428.

121. By the twelfth century orthodoxy has taken over entirely, and on the mosaic of Monreale nothing distinguishes the central angel at the table except that the two others look toward him. Abraham serves them a pig! See O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, 1949, plate 103.

122. *Mos.* I, 75 f.; cf. *Mut.* 11–15, where "He-who-is" again is broken down to mean the three Patriarchs.

who walk beside the Ark were originally those of Abraham's encounter with God, as well as the three great Patriarchs, the three in which the Existent manifests himself. That they should thus walk beside the Ark makes little sense in historical or biblical terms, but is completely appropriate in symbolic terms. The three cannot be the five Philistine lords. We have repeatedly found it the most natural assumption from the use of such a robe on figures which thus intrude themselves into the paintings that they represent divine intervention in the events or, when worn by biblical heroes themselves, represent human beings who have special divine power at least for this occasion. Their pointed fingers may well mean that collectively they represent deity intervening to direct the oxen back to Bethshemesh.

D. CONCLUSION

THE PAINTING we are considering elaborately presents the divine intervention that manifested itself in the miraculous power of the Ark to destroy the pagan idols, and identifies its potency as that of God and his Powers, the seven, or even more, the three, who are one. The sense of victorious power is intensified by the three laurel garlands across the face of the Ark.

Not divided into two incidents, or two halves, the picture has a unified design, all of whose details center in the Ark itself. Its power, or the power of the God of the Jews which concentrated in it, at once demolishes the pretenses of paganism and reveals itself as the mystic potency of the seven and the three. Its symbolism goes with that of the Closed Temple, for while that temple presents the mystic seven by the convention of the walls, it announces a God and a Judaism of the seven and ten which had no relation to the physical world but was a mystic and metaphysical reality. Judaism, as Philo explains it, used the seven in two ways. One was for the cosmic ascent through the seven planets, whose total exposition was in the visible cultus of the Aaronic priesthood and whose supreme symbol was the seven-branched candlestick. In contrast there was metaphysical, immaterial Judaism, whose seven were God and the Powers but whose highest revelation was of the three who are one. The chief symbols of this were the Ark, invisible in the inner sanctuary, and the vision of God given to Abraham when the three visited him. All this leads to the completely perfect ten, as contrasted with the five, the ten being the metaphysical, immaterial world, the five the physical world of the five senses.[123] The three men guide the Ark away from the shambles of false religion to the mystic temple closed to ordinary men:

> For to the construct of wisdom as a whole belongs the perfect number ten, and Wisdom is the court and palace of him who rules over all as the sole really autonomous King. This dwelling house is a conceptual (*noētos*) one.[124]

The King, Philo has just said,[125] is he who is "Tenth and alone and eternal." Properly, above these two paintings in the synagogue is the scene of the Exodus, whose meaning we shall find summarized in Philo's terms:

123. For the five see *Abr.* 147–166.
124. *Cong.* 116.
125. Ibid. 105; cf. 103.

> We find this "ten" properly called the Passover of the soul (*to psuchikon Pascha*), the crossing from every passion and the whole realm of sense to the Tenth, which is conceptual (*noētos*) and divine (*theios*).[126]

Philo has one passage in which he contrasts the ascent through matter with the true ascent into the immaterial world. He does this in terms of the Powers, and of gates and walls, in a way that could well have suggested our two temples:

> But this world that we can point out and see, the one discerned by sense, is, as I now know, nothing but a house of "God," in the sense of one of the Powers of the Existent, the Power which expresses his goodness. The world which he named a "house," he also described as "gate of" the real "heaven." Now what is this? The world which only intellect can perceive, framed from the eternal forms in him who was appointed in accordance with divine bounties,[127] cannot be apprehended otherwise than by [our] passing on to it from this world which we see and perceive by our senses. For, indeed, it is impossible to get an idea of another sort of existences, the incorporeals, except by making material objects our starting point. The conception of place was gained when they were at rest: that of time from their motion, and points and lines and superficies, in a word extremities (*perata*), from the robe-like exterior which covers them. Correspondingly, then, the conception of the intelligible world was gained from the one which our senses perceive: it is therefore a kind of gate into the former. For as those who desire to see our cities go in through gates, so all who wish to apprehend the unseen world are introduced to it by receiving the impression of the visible world. The world whose substance is discernible only by intellect apart from any sight whatever of shapes or figures, but only by means of the archetypal eternal form present in the world which was fashioned in accordance with the image beheld by him with no intervening shadow[128] . . . he [or it] shall be summoned when all its walls and every gate has been removed and men may not catch sight of it from some outside point, but behold the unchanging beauty, as it actually is, and that sight no words can tell or express.[129]

Here is a city with walls and gates, and to penetrate the inner part is to achieve not the apocalyptic but the mystic vision. It was this, I believe, which the two paintings, of the Ark vs. paganism and of the Closed Temple, together represented.

126. Ibid. 106.
127. Literally, "benefactions for support of a chorus" (*chorēgias*). I suspect that a Greek would have understood that God was the founder of the great choral rhythm of Reality, one over which the Logos presides.
128. The text is probably corrupt. See Colson's suggestions in his note to the passage, pp. 602 f.
129. *Som.* I, 185–188. The text is extremely difficult, but not so as to obscure the point of Philo's imagery for our purpose here. See Colson's note, V, 601–603. I quote substantially his translation as given with the text. The mystic approach through walls and gates made P. Wendland suspect that this was a Christian insertion from the Apocalypse. But I agree with Colson in seeing no such intrusion. Cf. *Fug.* 183.