

PURIM

ously fixed in Adar. would be separate. have been anticipated. True, in historical a regular order, of question. Still, is widely departed to have 'loaded' appeal to the 'lot.' yet to be consulted unfortunately, these Adar was so far n might be eaten: in 'good,' whilst the other the 14th was the 13th is 'favour' ntry preserved for para, in the ninth festivals of Samas, ch vestments and e 15th of Adar. th, and feasts on eping with knowu

and Esther outside is not so complete not be sacred to the case in the

real derivation of meaning to Baby- e stories told in ave no parallel in has pointed out, be found in the shown reason to d, with the same ure. Erbtingrees at Esther itself is to have been a re or less closely e original Baby- nite relative, and ese Jewish tales, nally unrelated, illustrating God's ngeance on their ne of these stories difications is not may be artific'ial, n the Macedonian y is probably the h festival, which older sources of Babylonian, with e adaptation of appropriate to an deliverance from ewish features of of observance is f institution, hut rved festivals of

C. H. W. J. lines to hold that ly at the time of the Babylonian Zakmuk, which innox. Further, Br. Meissner, he with the Sacrae, ssus (Athenaeus,

tr the full develop- s possible from all a sketch of J. G. ough² (8 130-200), h of the position e closest bearing

14639c; cp Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* iv. 69 f. M) and Strabo (xi. 85). A serious objection, however, to identifying Zakmuk with the Sacrae is that, whereas Zakmuk was held in spring, the Sacrae seems to have fallen in summer, probably in July. The two chief features of the Sacrae were (1) its Bacchanalian or orgiastic character, and (2) the appointment of a condemned criminal to be a mock or temporary king (Zoganes), who after enjoying full license for five days, including permission to use the king's concubines, was stripped of his royal robes, scourged, and hanged or crucified. Resemblances to these two features of the Sacrae are found (1) in the orgiastic character of Purim, and (2) in the story of Haman and Mordecai, of whom one sought and the other attained a temporary grant of royal honours, while the unsuccessful aspirant perished on the gallows. Further, a vestige of the leave granted to the mock king of the Sacrae to use the king's concubines may perhaps be discerned in the suspicion of Ahasuerus that Haman intended violence to the queen (Esther 7.8). Following Jensen and others, Frazer identifies Mordecai and Esther with the great Babylonian deities Marduk and Ishtar, and he further inclines to accept Jensen's identification of Haman and Vashti with the Elamite deities Humman and Vashti. Frazer conjectures, however, that this opposition between the native Babylonian deities on the one hand and the deities of the hostile Elamites on the other hand was not original but sprang from a later misunderstanding. Originally, if he is right, Haman and Vashti on the one side and Mordecai and Esther (Marduk and Ishtar) on the other represented the same divine couple viewed under different aspects. Haman and Vashti stood for the god and goddess of fertility regarded as decaying and dying with the old year; Mordecai and Esther stood for the same divine beings coming to life again with the new year in spring. He supposes that at the New Year festival the god and goddess were personated by a human couple, a mock king and queen, whose temporary union was meant to promote, by means of sympathetic magic, the fruitfulness of the earth and the fecundity of the flocks and herds for the year. When the mock king (the Zoganes of the Sacrae) had discharged this function, he was put to death, originally perhaps at the end of the year, and his place was taken by a new representative of the deity, who after a similar union with another mock queen shared the fate of his predecessor. Movers pointed out long ago (*Die Phönizier*, 1490 ff.) that the legends of Sardanapalus and Semiramis appear to embody reminiscences, both of the debauchery of these temporary kings and queens and of the violent death of the male partner. Thus, on Frazer's theory, Haman and Vashti were originally the outgoing representatives of the powers of fertility, of whom at the end of the year one was slain and the other deposed: Mordecai and Esther (Marduk and Ishtar) were the incoming representatives of these same powers, who were appointed at the beginning of the year in spring, and after enjoying their regal and conjugal privileges for a season went the way of their predecessors. A reminiscence of a conjugal relation between Mordecai and Esther is preserved in Jewish tradition (J. J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, ii. Theil, 316). The whole custom may thus have been the oriental equivalent of those popular European ceremonies which celebrate the advent of spring by representing in a dramatic form the expulsion or defeat of winter by the victorious summer; and it would be intimately related to the custom of personating the powers of vegetation by a king and queen of May. At the Sacrae, at least in later times, the mock king was always a condemned criminal; so that public opinion was not shocked by the custom of putting him to death.

From the *Acts of St. Darius*, published a few years on the criticism of the theories so ably and zealously being elaborated in Germany and England.—ED.]

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ago by Prof. Franz Cumont of Ghent (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 18, 1897, pp. 5-16), we learn that in like manner the Roman soldiers at Durostolium in Moesia used to appoint one of their number as a representative of the divine king Saturn, who was put to death at the Saturnalia after enjoying a nominal reign of thirty days.¹ In later times the Jews have been wont to make effigies of Haman and destroy them at Purim. Such a ceremony has not unfrequently been a mitigation of an older practice of putting a man to death. There are some grounds for thinking that all over the ancient world, from Italy to Babylon, there prevailed at a very remote era a custom of annually appointing a human representative of the divine powers of fertility, who exercised his divine and royal functions for the purpose of quickening the earth and the flocks, and then suffered a violent death. Of such a custom both Purim and the Saturnalia are, on Frazer's theory, mitigated survivals.

J. G. W.

The hospitality given to rival though closely connected theories which assume that in the main the MT is correct, justifies us in pointing out here that the use of Babylonian material, and the application of a mythological key derived from that material to the problems of the story of Esther is only to a slight extent legitimate if the results of criticism referred to under MORDECAI and VASHTI (cp *Crit. Bib.*) are correct. The critical view of the origin of Esther to which they lead is that this book, like Judith, is based on an earlier narrative, the traces of which are still visible in the proper names, and which had a different geographical and historical setting. That Mordecai has no connection with Marduk, but is simply a corruption of a name such as Carmeli (one of the popular distortions of Jerahmeeli), appears to the present writer, from a text-critical point of view, certain (cp Ezra 2.2 Neh. 7.7). Hadassah and Esther seem to be equally remote from Ishtar, being simply variants of the same name, which in its original form is Israelith (cp Judith). Haman is Henan or Henan. Hammedatha is an outgrowth of Henidan (Gen. 36.26). In fact, the original Esther referred to a *captivity of the Jews in Edom* (cp OBADIAH, BOOK). The Persian element has been exaggerated.

If we reserve the bulk of the text-critical evidence, it may suffice to remark here that in ח'ל פס וכו' דפיתחין 13 should be emended into ירמא'ים ופיתחין (cp PARAS). With regard to פור (87) [where ל'פני הכן is no doubt an error for ח'ל פס (24) and פיתחין (26, etc.)], one must venture to say that, however plausible the connection with Ass. *piru* 'a round stone' may be, and willing as one may be to admit the possibility that, when Esther was edited in its present form, there may have been a Hebrew word פור with that meaning (cp ניל and BDB 174a), one can hardly believe that 'the stones'—i.e., 'the lots'—gives the right meaning of Purim. Even from the point of view of a conservative textual criticism, it is difficult to make a connection of Purim with the Babylonian New Year's festival probable, and from a text-critical point of view it is most improbable.

The origin of 'Purim' cannot be finally settled. In the view of the present writer, however, it is not improbable that Pur and Purim are corruptions of a place-name, and that place-name very possibly was some collateral form of Ephrath, for there seems to have been an Ephrath in Jerahmeelite² territory; cp PARADISE, § 5, end, RACHEL.

It is at Ephrath that the peril and the deliverance of the Jews are localised. It may, however, be cheerfully

¹ The analogy between the treatment of this Roman representative of Saturn and the mockery and death of Jesus was first pointed out by P. Wendland (*Hermes*, 33, 1898, pp. 175-179). Frazer has also been struck by this analogy. He conjectures that the Jews may have borrowed from the Babylonians the custom of putting a malefactor to death at Purim in the character of Haman, and that Jesus may have suffered in that character. For the details of his theory see *The Golden Bough*, 3, 187 ff.

² Jerahmeelite is here used in its proper sense, referring to the land of the Nege.