

inscriptions "Lord of Earth and Water," "King of the depths" "the Ram (Alimma) of the waters," "the good god, Dugga." Ea had later a daughter associated with him, Ghanna or Chavvu, our Chaos. She represented the water depths under the firmament. Chaos was regarded with friendly feelings by the Sumerians, contrary to the ideas of the North Babylonians, and the Hebrews. The most ancient cosmogony therefore gives us, above the firmament, ANU, "Heaven," and B'AU, his daughter, the water above the firmament; below the firmament, EA, the god of the earth, and his daughter Ghanna, the water depths below. B'au became, as daughter of Heaven, "Itar," representing originally heaven's ocean, and the idea of rain, or the waters above the firmament: then at a later period she became the goddess of love, Astarte the special goddess of Nineveh, in Hebrew Astaroth, then the morning and evening star, Venus of the Romans, and the Aphrodite of the Greeks. (The western Shemites later confused her with Chaos). The old Sumerian word for waters was "NUN," and it was applied to them before the firmament dividing them and the earth arose, when the aboriginal waters of Chaos were one. All original religious ideas were thus grouped round these aboriginal waters. The goddess of Heaven was sometimes called "Annuit": the angels were "Annuna-Ki"; and the most ancient settlement of South Babylonia, the seat of the worship of the god Ea, the earthly paradise, was called "Nunki," that is the place of Nun, the seat of the original waters. It was called also Eru-Dugga, the city of the good Ea, and later Eridu.

The idea connected with the original waters of Chaos, the "Nun" of the Sumerians, corresponds with Genesis i, 2. We see from the above that Giri-lamma created the firmament and separated the waters as is done in Genesis i, 6-8. I have never found it easy to quite grasp the word "firmament" in our Bible. It seems to be simply a translation of the "Stereōma" of the Septuagint, which signifies something firm, strong, solid. It does not appear that our word firmament is happily used to represent the gaseous space between the waters of heaven and the waters of the earth. Unfortunately the Chaldean word used, "Annu," and the Sumerian word "Gidir," are as obscure as our "firmament," or as the Septuagint "Stereōma."

Although Ea was thus the good god of the Sumerians he did not directly confer his benefits on man but through the most interesting person in the godhead of the Sumerians, his son, Girri-Dugga, called also "Girri-Alimma" or "Gi-lamma" which seems to mean the Hero or Herald of Ea. A later form of the name was Mirri-Dugga, so that the North Shemitic Babylonians identified him with the Sun god Amaru-duk, the Merodach of the Bible, and the Marduk by whom oaths to be binding were taken