

**From Creation to Apocalypse:
Reading the Bible with Wilfred G. Lambert**

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Abstract

Professor Wilfred G. Lambert passed away on November 9, 2011. This paper was delivered at a mini-conference held in his memory at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem on 5 June, 2012. The paper discusses Lambert's impact on Biblical studies which includes indirect contributions in the form of publication of Akkadian texts essential for understanding the ancient near eastern context of the Bible and Biblical Israel, as well as direct contributions investigating important Biblical texts in their ancient near eastern background.

From Creation to Apocalypse: Reading the Bible with Wilfred G. Lambert¹

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It is widely believed that for one reason or another many Assyriologists, especially in America and Europe, harbor an aversion to the Bible and to Biblical scholarship. Such, fortunately, was not the case of Wilfred G. Lambert. No more proof for Lambert's affection towards the Bible and its study is required than the fact that he was an active member of the Society for Old Testament Study, Britain's foremost body for Biblical scholarship. According to Viv Rowett, his membership started in 1956, and in 1984 he even served as its president. Prof. John Day of Oxford University, Lady Margaret Hall, reports that Lambert attended just about every conference of the Society, from the early '70-s until around 2009. Markham Geller added that "nothing was ever proposed in a meeting about the Bible and Mesopotamia without deferring to WGL. There is no one new to take over his role." Adrian Curtis remarks in a similar fashion: "Wilfred was, of course, a regular attendee at SOTS meetings until relatively recently, and it was often with an awareness of the likelihood of his presence that speakers were very cautious about venturing into matters Mesopotamian!" Others report that he attended meetings of the European SBL, and I personally met him at IOSOT conferences and heard the paper he delivered at the meeting of that organization in Jerusalem in 1986². I will return to this paper below. In addition to entries on Mesopotamian topics contributed to the Anchor Bible Dictionary³ and the Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies⁴, articles on Israel and Assyria and Babylonia in the Theologische Realenzyklopädie⁵, and a number of

Biblical articles in journals and collected essays aimed at Biblical audiences, he also lectured on Biblical topics at various conferences, as we shall see.

Lambert's degree in Oriental languages earned between 1945 and 1950 at Christ's College, Cambridge included not only Akkadian but Hebrew, Aramaic, and Rabbinic Hebrew.⁶ Prof. Day revealed to me Lambert's own testimony that he received only lower second marks in Hebrew because he dared criticize some pet theories of his examiner D. Winton Thomas. His other degree was in Classics, and he knew quite a lot about the Septuagint and even taught it at Johns Hopkins⁷.

It is not my purpose to turn Prof. Lambert posthumously into a Biblicalist, an "Alttestamentler". He certainly was not, and of his more than three hundred publications, only a handful had anything to do with the Bible. As everyone knows, apart from certain newspaper obituaries which headlined him as an archaeologist,⁸ or at best an historian, Lambert was without question an Assyriologist's Assyriologist, a cuneiformist, a Kuyunjikologist⁹. Nonetheless, and primarily in his capacity as one of the world's leading Assyriologists, he contributed invaluable, sometimes directly but more often indirectly to our understanding of the Bible. Markham Geller notes, "he never worked on the Bible *per se*, but it always factored in his thinking (e.g. Wisdom Literature, hermeneutics, creation stories, god lists, etc.) without him ever needing to flog the comparisons, because to him they were obvious. His intro to BWL is a good example of this, and labels such as 'righteous sufferer', etc. So it was always there, if not mentioned *per se*, as integral to his thinking about Mesopotamian religion. In fact, his generation and the generation before him were focused primarily on religion (Jacobsen, Bottéro), as the starting point for all analyses of literary texts."

Lambert's indirect contribution to Biblical studies takes the form primarily of publishing authoritative, accessible editions of some of the Mesopotamian texts most essential for study of the Bible in its ancient near eastern context.

Lambert's first major contribution in this regard is his *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, published in 1960. This is an Assyriological publication in which he provides under one cover hand copies of the cuneiform texts, transliterations, translations, philological notes and introductions to over twenty Akkadian and bilingual (Akkadian and Sumerian) compositions. But these compositions in particular are selected because contemporary scholars might classify them under the problematic rubric "wisdom literature", a term borrowed from biblical studies. These include *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*¹⁰, the Babylonian Theodicy, several collections of precepts and admonitions, Hymns to Ninurta and Šamaš, the Dialogue of Pessimism, several fables and contests, and collections of sayings and proverbs. But even while "biblifying" his corpus by its very creation, Lambert expresses reservations about the category of "wisdom literature" itself, calling it "strictly a misnomer as applied to Babylonian literature", and recognizing that the term is more at home in Biblical studies. Moreover, several of the selected works stretch to, if not beyond the breaking point any definition of "wisdom literature"¹¹. In a probing introductory essay Lambert offers a broad survey of Mesopotamian literature in general with emphasis on philosophical and theological aspects, characteristics of Biblical wisdom literature. Despite reservations and problems, this eclectic collection achieved for a while a more or less "canonical" status as the representative, *par excellence*, of this supposed genre.¹² Additional Akkadian "wisdom literature", discovered after the appearance of *BWL*, such as the "Ballad of Early Rulers" from Ugarit and Emar, is surveyed and discussed in his article "Some new Babylonian wisdom literature", which appeared,

appropriately in a Festschrift for leading English Biblical scholar, Prof. John Emerton, *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*.¹³ In this essay he revisits somewhat the compositions in *BWL* as well as the new texts, compares and contrasts the terms for and concepts of wisdom in the Mesopotamian and Biblical corpuses, and is more specific about possible Biblical parallels than he was in *BWL*.

Moving from wisdom literature to myth, his cuneiform text of *Enūma eliš*, published in 1966,¹⁴ replaced earlier, partial editions such as those of King, Langdon, and Labat; and it remained for a generation the standard edition of the myth, superseded only in 2005 by Philippe Talon's edition in the SAACT series¹⁵. A brief conversation with Lambert about Talon's new edition left me with the impression that he was not overly pleased with it. In his characteristic, quite animated manner he cited one mistake as an example. In iv 32 the gods command Marduk *alikma ša tiamat napšatuš purušma šāru dāmiša ana PU-UZ-ra-tum* (PU-ZU-ra-ti in mss. KM) *libilūni*, "go and cut Tiamat's throat, so that the north wind will carry her blood to PU-UZ-ra-tum"¹⁶. Talon, following earlier scholars had read *ana puzrat*, meaning to "secret places". For Lambert this made little sense, and he insisted that this passage should be read *ana bussurat*, "to announce", "spread the news".¹⁷ This is indeed the reading found in CAD Š/2 p. 134. Lambert did not live to see the publication of his *Enūma eliš*, but his translation of the entire composition and of related texts appeared as part of his article "Mesopotamian Creation Stories" in M. J. Geller and M. Schipper, (eds.) *Imagining Creation*.¹⁸ It can also be found in the "eTACT" slot on the Etana web site.¹⁹

On December 18, 1989 he was invited by the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem to deliver the annual "Willard L.

Cohodas Lectureship in Biblical Archaeology" on "Creation in the Ancient Near East".²⁰ I exploited the opportunity to "borrow him" and drove him down to Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva where he gave a seminar on creation in Mesopotamia based not only on the myths but on some god-lists.²¹ I mustered the nerve to ask him why he had not finished his edition of *Enūma eliš*, to which he replied that the list of Marduk's fifty names concluding the composition is related to the god lists, and he can't finish his edition because he kept coming up with new fragments of god lists. These delays seem to have come to an end, and Wayne Horowitz informs me that the edition, completed before Lambert passed away, is now being prepared for publication by Eisenbrauns and includes over 100 pages of editions of related Babylonian literary material. This will be a true feast, and I can't wait!

In 1969, a mere three years after giving us *Enūma eliš*, he published along with Alan Millard an edition of *Atra-ḥasīs*, the Babylonian story of the flood.²² This was a watershed event in studying the Flood story on the one hand and Mesopotamian views about the creation of Man on the other; and still remains the major edition, although significant new material such as a neo-Babylonian version from the Sippar library²³ as well as Old Babylonian tablets from the Schøyen collection²⁴, justify a new edition. In the introduction to the book Lambert discusses the Biblical accounts of the creation of Man as well as comparisons between *Atra-ḥasīs* and the Biblical Flood story, for in the Book of Genesis are its only certain parallels.

Moving to yet another genre, in 1964, he published, together with A. Kirk Grayson, in the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* a collection of Akkadian prophecies²⁵. Thirteen years later, in 1977, these texts became the basis for his Ethel M. Wood lecture, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic", concentrating on the Book of

Daniel, which I was privileged to hear at Senate House of the University of London.²⁶

In this lecture Lambert views apocalyptic literature as a form of prophecy; and in examining specific motifs he connects the reinterpretation of the seventy years of destruction with a text of Esarhaddon in which Marduk reinterprets 70 years of destruction for Babylonian; in addition he notes and the procession of empires predicted in Daniel's visions are parallel to series of empires named in the Babylonian prophetic texts. "The concept of world history as consisting of four succeeding empires, and secondly the technique of presenting history in concise annalistic forms with names omitted and verbs in the future tense are not derived from Hebrew prophecy", but from without. Lambert holds that the scheme of four world empires originated in Persia, but only developed in Hellenistic times. Presenting historical events in the form of *vaticina ex eventu* has cuneiform precedents, and several Babylonian texts with such prophecies are antecedents to Daniel 11.

As mentioned already, Lambert's main text publications did not dwell upon biblical parallels, and according to Alan Millard, who worked with him editing Atra-hasīs, the two collaborators didn't even talk about such matters while engaged in the undertaking. Lambert did, however, pen a few articles aimed at placing Biblical pericopes in their ancient near eastern context and making occasional connections between specific Biblical texts and Mesopotamian literature and thought.²⁷

One such study is his "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis", published in *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 16/2, 1965, pp. 2-30 and republished with some small addenda in 1994 as a chapter in "*I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*", ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura. In this article, which preceded by just a year the appearance of his *Enūma eliš*, he surveys several parallels

between Genesis 1-11, the so-called primal history, and Mesopotamian writings. He is critical of the practice among some biblical scholars to lump *Enūma eliš* together with the Flood story in Gilgamesh in comparative study of the Bible, in such a way that strong links between the Flood stories are construed to somehow imply equally strong links between *Enūma eliš* and Genesis 1. In fact, whereas the Biblical Flood accounts have strong parallels with Mesopotamian sources, the links between *Enūma eliš* and Genesis 1 are weak and sporadic. So, for instance, the myth of a war between YHWH and the Sea as found in various Biblical passage is of Canaanite background and should not be traced back to *Enūma eliš*. This point is further developed and central to the superb PhD dissertation of Noga Ayali-Darshan supervised by Wayne Horowitz and Ed Greenstein.²⁸ The word תְהוּם may be etymologically cognate with Akkadian Ti'amat, but they are not semantically parallel and תְהוּם doesn't bear mythological connotations. In fact, the strongest parallel between Genesis 1 and *Enūma eliš* is the theme of divine rest found in the myth and in the Biblical Sabbath which Lambert equates etymologically with Akkadian *šappatu*. After a detailed review and rejection of many suggested parallels between Genesis 1-11 and Mesopotamian sources he concludes that "We are left, then, with the succession of long lived worthies culminating in the flood, perhaps God's holding back of the primaeval waters, and more probably, God's rest". His attempt to place the borrowing of Mesopotamian traditions in the Amarna age, would probably not stand up to current scholarly trends.

Related to his study of creation in the Bible and Mesopotamia is his paper in the Prague Rencontre volume from 1996 on terms for creation in the ancient near east in which he discusses the Hebrew terms בָּרָא קָנָה and יִצְחַר.²⁹ The unique use of he

attributed to Israelite monotheism, while the other terms he related to more anthropomorphic views of God and conceiving of the creator god as a potter.

Another comparative article is his aforementioned study "Old Testament mythology in its ancient Near Eastern context", delivered in Jerusalem in 1988 and published in Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 40. *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*³⁰. This article offers a learned study of the nature and history of religion and myth in the ancient near east from the third millennium until the arrival of Israel in its land after the Amarna Age. This is all a background for the Bible and an attempt to understand how myth made its way into the Israelite tradition.³¹ Against this historical background Lambert examines three examples of Old Testament mythology with ancient near eastern roots: 1) the belief that the earth itself preexisted and that everything else was created from it; 2) the belief that the warrior god pushed waters back, after which arable land appeared and agriculture was possible; 3) the notion of YHWH's kingship.

In dealing with Biblical thought Lambert took what we might call a "comparative-contrastive approach". In his study "Destiny and Divine Intervention in Babylon and Israel"³² he suggests that Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians shared with ancient Israel the "Deuteronomistic" belief that divine power is used to maintain standards imposed from above. But whereas Israel conceived of itself as a chosen nation and that their God worked among the nations to sustain Israel with future purposes in mind, in Mesopotamia it was believed that the gods taught all the arts of civilization at the beginning and nothing new was to be expected.

He also took an occasional foray into Biblical history such as in his article "Mesopotamian sources and pre-exilic Israel", in *In Search Of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*³³ or "When did Jehu pay tribute?"

in *Crossing the Boundaries; Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*.³⁴ In the first of these studies (the second was unavailable to me) he relates to the current minimalist-maximalist debate over the historicity of the Biblical narrative, contends with what he considered extreme views held by such scholars as Thomas Thompson, Niels Lemche and Philip Davies. He aims to use Mesopotamian historical writings including royal inscriptions, date lists and chronicles "to ask how far the historical content of Samuel and Kings suggests pre-exilic origins". After surveying the sources, biblical and Assyrian, he concludes "Not only does Kings offer the Hebrew rulers in correct sequence, but many items it includes contain matter which depends on knowledge known to us from the Assyrian royal inscriptions. In post-exilic times most such records were no longer surviving. This of course does not prove the literal truth of every detail in Kings but it does point to pre-exilic origin".

Lambert's interests extended beyond texts, and included ancient iconography. In a volume honoring his friend, antiquities collector Shlomo Moussaieff, he discussed the depiction in ancient art of Leviathan, a sea monster known both from the Hebrew Bible and Ugaritic writings.³⁵ After examining all the textual and iconographic evidence he reaches the conclusion that the Leviathan of Isaiah and perhaps of Psalms was not a winged quadruped or seven-headed monster, but a snake of the natural type as seen on Syrian seals.³⁶

Finally, going outside the Bible but certainly of significance for the history of Israel and early Jewish society in late Biblical times, he involved himself in publishing texts from the newly known Jewish community in Babylonia, Al-Yahūdi:³⁷.

Summing up, Lambert, as we stated at the outset, was an Assyriologist's Assyriologist. But he was also an Assyriologist for the Biblicalists. He provided in accessible form essential raw material for comparative studies and knowledge of the

Bible's ancient near eastern context. The material he has provided has since been augmented by new material, and will continue to be so as discoveries are made in the field and the museums; but it retains its value as the backbone of the growing corpus.

Moreover, he also made occasional forays into the links between the Bible and its neighboring cultures. Such forays are not, however, mere exercises in hunting and gathering parallels, or as it has been called pejoratively, "parallelomania"; but serious attempts at "Überlieferungsgeschichte" and literary history on the one hand and contextualizing the Bible on the other. He examines suggested parallels in the context of ancient near eastern literature as a whole, and in particular Akkadian, Sumerian, Northwest Semitic writings, and asks significant questions towards understanding the nature and significance of the parallels such as: is it truly a parallel?; can it be attributed to borrowing from Mesopotamia?; could it have originated elsewhere?; if it is truly a parallel with Mesopotamia, how and when did it enter the Biblical/Israelite tradition and how does has appearance in biblical garb changed vis-à-vis what it was in its original setting?

Lambert is, in general, familiar with and sympathetic to Biblical scholarship and his criticism of mistaken parallels is both incisive and constructive, although he doesn't mince words in his critique of present day minimalist-nihilist scholars. To be sure, not all of his own conclusions have stood the test of time, and some of his thinking, especially in regard to historical issues, reflects the state of Biblical studies in the 1960s, the Golden Age of Albright, through the 1990s when Biblical studies started to come more and more under the influence of the Danish/Sheffield school of so-called "minimalists". But his command of the material is unmatched, his articles are rich in detail and thought, and his questions are of permanent relevance. So in

many cases he has uttered the last word, but in others he has uttered the first word for a continued discussion.

¹ This account of Wilfred G. Lambert and the Hebrew Bible was delivered at an evening in his memory held at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 4 June 2012, organized by my friend and colleague, and Lambert's student Prof. Wayne Horowitz. It is with great pleasure that I thank Wayne for inviting me to take part. I am most grateful to Ms Viv Rowett of the Society for Old Testament Study for kindly putting out an internet request in my name among members of that organization for information; and to Dr. Adrian Curtis, and Profs. John Day, Markham Geller, Peter Machinist, Alan Millard, Stefan Reif and Jim West for sharing with me their own recollections and impressions of Professor Lambert. I am especially indebted to John Day and Peter Machinist who carefully read the manuscript at various stages of its gestation and made significant contributions of both formal and substantive nature.

² The IOSOT conference was held that year 24 August – 2 September. It was the finale of a virtual Bible Fest which included the International Meeting of the SBL (18-20 August), the 6th congress of IOSCS (21-22 August), and the 7th Congress of IOMS (24 August).

³ "Enuma Elish", In: D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Volume 2: D-G (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 526-528; "Pantheons, Mesopotamian" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Volume 5: O-Sh, p. 139.

⁴ W. G. Lambert, "Ancient Near Eastern studies: Mesopotamia", in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, (ed.) J.W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp. 74-88.

⁵ W.G. Lambert, "Assyrien und Israel", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 4 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979), pp. 265-77, and "Babylonien und Israel", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol 5 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), pp. 67-79.

⁶ According to the Cambridge register of degrees, consulted by Prof. Day in the Bodleian, Lambert took a 1st in Classics part 1 in 1945, an Upper 2nd in Oriental

Languages part 1 in 1949, and a Lower 2nd in Oriental Languages part 2 in 1950. Peter Machinist remembers Lambert telling him that he studied post-biblical Hebrew, including medieval piyyutim, commentaries, etc. with J.L. Teicher, then lecturer at Cambridge. Teicher was, evidently, a fantastically learned scholar, who also had deep knowledge of Arabic, and wrote about everything, it seems, from the Dead Sea Scrolls through early modern times. While he not occasionally took stands that were against the grain – thus, for the DSS and the Ebionites – he was a heavy-weight, and, Lambert considered him to be a demanding teacher with high standards. Machinist also remembers Lambert telling him that among the texts he read, or at least read selections from was Ovadiah of Bertinoro's commentary on the Mishnah.

⁷ Peter Machinist reports being told by Carey A. Moore that when he was a student at Hopkins, he studied the LXX with Lambert, who advised him also on the Greek of Esther. Moore himself expresses his indebtedness to Lambert in the preface to his commentary on Esther (Anchor Bible 7B, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1971, p. 7). Lambert is listed first among Moore's teachers.

⁸ The *Birmingham Post* of Dec. 1, 2011 refers to him as "An eminent Birmingham-born historian and archaeologist". Prof. Lambert passed away Nov. 9, 2011. For other obituaries cf. *The Times*, December 2, 2011 p. 75; *Daily Telegraph*, January 10, 2012.

⁹ This term (the origins of which I am not sure) is used in Assyriological jargon to label a specialist in texts from Assurbanipal's immense "library" discovered at Kyunjik, Nineveh and housed today in the British Museum. These texts, in which Lambert was an unrivaled specialist, are by and large of literary, religious, or "scientific" nature and include myths and epics, prayers and incantations, as well as lexical lists and compendia of all sorts of omens. The library, discovered fortuitously around the time cuneiform was deciphered, represents Mesopotamian literature at the time of Assurbanipal and is the mother-lode and foundation stone upon which modern Assyriology and understanding of Mesopotamian culture are based. The term is used in contrast to "onionologist" (apparently coined by Prof. Lambert) which designates an Assyriologist who works primarily on the "lowly topic" (so Gelb) of archival

tablets reflecting daily life. It is based on a study by Ignace Gelb, "The Philadelphia Onion Archive", in H. G. Guterbock, Th. Jacobsen, [eds.] *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965* Assyriological Studies 16, (Chicago; The University of Chicago Press; 1965), pp. 57-63

¹⁰ For the most recent edition of *Ludlul* making use of new manuscripts which nearly complete the composition and permit all its pieces to be arranged properly see A. Annus, A. Lenzi, *Ludlul bel nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 7 Helsinki The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010

¹¹ This is true in particular of the great hymn to Šamaš, but even this hymn, which cannot in itself be classified as a "wisdom" composition, contains some details about justice which have parallels in the Biblical book of Proverbs.

¹² Cf. W. von Soden, ""Weisheitstexte in akkadischer Sprache" in *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, Bd. III, Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen, ed. W. H. Ph. Rmer, W. von Soden, Gerd Mohn: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1990) 100-187. Von Soden adds to the corpus the Babylonian "Man and His God" which had been compared with Job (a comparison Lambert rejects in W. Lambert, "A Further Attempt at the Babylonian 'Man and His God'", in F. Rochberg-Halton, ed. *Language, Literature and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (American Oriental Series 67), New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987, pp. 187-202), and the comic composition "Poor Man of Nippur".

¹³ *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press; 1995), ed. John Day, Robert P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson, pages 30-42.

¹⁴ W. G. Lambert, *Enuma Eliš: The Babylonian Epic of Creation: The Cuneiform Text*, Text Established by W. G. Lambert and copied out by Simon. B. Parker, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

¹⁵ P. Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš*, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 4 Helsinki The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project 2005 .

¹⁶ Cf. also the fulfillment iv 132, where, after Marduk had vanquished Tiamat and let her blood, we read šāru iltānu ana PU-UZ-rat (PU-ZU-ra-ti in mss. KM) uštābil, "a north wind carried it to PU-UZ-RAT".

¹⁷ 31~(They said,) "Go, cut Tia-mat's throat, 32~And let the winds bear up her blood to give the news."; 131~He severed her arteries 132~And let the North wind bear up (her blood) to give the news. Lambert had already suggested this reading in "Ninurta Mythology in the Babylonian Epic of Creation," in K. Hecker and W. Sommerfeld, eds., *Keilschriftliche Literaturen. Ausgewählte Vorträge der XXXII. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (BBVO 6; Berlin, 1986), p. 59.

¹⁸ W. G. Lambert, "Mesopotamian Creation Stories" in M. J. Geller and M. Schipper, (eds.) *Imagining Creation*, Institute of Jewish Studies Studies in Judaica, 5. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pages 15-59.

¹⁹ A full translation by Lambert with some notes and an introduction was published first in German in O. Kaiser et al (ed.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, Vol. III M, Gütersloh (1994), p.565-602. According to Peter Machinist, Lambert's German was absolutely and totally fluent, as Reinhard Gregor Kratz confirmed to him. As the obituaries make clear, Lambert seems to have perfected his control of the language during WW II, when as a conscientious objector he worked at a German prisoner of war camp apparently near Birmingham, his home. There are some published papers by him in German.

²⁰ Thanks to Joni Askin, Ellen Shoham and Levana Zias of HUC Jerusalem for tracking down this information for me.

²¹ See now W. G. Lambert, "Mesopotamian Creation Stories", pp. 27-32.

²² W. G. Lambert, A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

²³ A. R. George, F. N. H. Al-Rawi, "Tablets from the Sippar Library VI. Atra-hasīs", *Iraq* 58, (1996), pp. 147-190.

²⁴ A. R. George, *Babylonian Literary Texts in the Schøyen Collection*, Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 10 (Bathesda: CDL Press 2009), 16-27; see also D. Shehata, *Annotierte Bibliographie zum altbabylonischen Atramhasīs-Mythos Inūma ilū awīlum*, Göttinger Arbeitshefte zur altorientalischen Literatur 3, Göttingen, 2001.

²⁵ A. K. Grayson, W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 18 (1964): 7-30.

²⁶ W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic*. The Ethel M. Wood Lecture delivered before the University of London on 22 February, 1977. London: The Athlone Press, 1978.

²⁷ He did not hesitate to make an occasional reference to a Biblical parallel in a strictly Assyriological article. So, for instance, in his study "The Qualifications of Babylonian Diviners" in *Festschrift für Rykle Borger Zu Seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994: tikip santakki mala bašmu*, ed. S. M. Maul, Cuneiform Monographs 10, (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1998), pp. 141-158, he compares the bodily defects which disqualify a *bārû* in the legend of Enmeduranki with Leviticus 21 which lists the defects which disqualify a priest. I might also mention that in his previous edition of the Enmeduranki text at issue here ("Enmeduranki and Related Matters", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 21 (1967), pp. 126-138, esp. p. 127) he compares the concept of passing tradition from the sage who received a divine revelation to the disciples to the Mishnaic tractate Avot, which describes how Moses received oral law from Sinai and passed it on to Joshua, and so on. In his article written jointly with G. Çağirgan "The

Late Babylonian Kislīmu Ritual for Esagil" *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 43/45 (1991 - 1993), pp. 89-106, esp. 92-93 he discusses the Biblical festival of Tabernacles and its belated celebration in the month of Kislev reported in the Book of II Maccabees 10:67 as a parallel for the ritual use of palms in a Kislev festival prescribed in this text. In a remark at the end of his article "Divine Love Lyrics from Babylon", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4 (1959), pp. 1-15 he refers to the lack of no apparent sequence of events common to the Babylonian composition and Song of Songs. In his article "A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament", *JAOS* 103 (1983) 211-215 esp. p. 213 n. 8-9 he identifies the numerical sequence $x/x+1$ and relates it to the same pattern well known from the Hebrew Bible.

²⁸ N. Ayali-Darshan, "The Diffusion of the Story of Combat between the Storm-god and the Sea in the Ancient Near East: Sources, Traditions and History", Thesis submitted for the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy", Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 2011.

²⁹ W.G. Lambert, "Technical Terminology for Creation in the Ancient Near East", In: Prosecky, Jiri [Editor], *Intellectual Life of the ancient Near East: Papers Presented at the 43rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Prague, July 1-6, 1996*, (Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republik, Oriental Institute, 1998), pages 189-194 .

³⁰ "Old Testament mythology in its ancient Near Eastern context", in J. A. Emerton, ed., *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 40, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 124-143. For an earlier version presented to an Assyriological audience see W.G. Lambert, "Interchange of Ideas Between Southern Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine as Seen in Literature", In H.-J. Nissen, J. Renger (ed.), *Mesopotamien und Seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, XXV. *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Berlin*, 3. Bis. 7. Juli 1978. Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 1, , (Berlin; Dietrich Reimer Verlag; 1982), pp. 311-317.

³¹ Here is a synopsis of the argumentation in this article. Myth starts as man's attempt to understand the world of nature. In the ancient near east it is found together with cultic ritual, but one cannot say which came first, if any. Near Eastern myths are essentially similar to myths from other civilizations. But whereas certain features are common to several civilizations, others appear in diverse forms even in a single civilization. But how does one explain the undeniable connections between the myths of various civilizations? Scholars have spoken about diffusion of myths, but this raises all sorts of practical problems as to the means of diffusion. Lambert contends that the creative period of myth was in prehistory, and that basic material spread before the invention of writing. Theological issues arose in the development of myth, and myth was also used in explanation of current social customs and to interpret history. Eventually myths were interpreted as allegories.

As for the history of Biblical mythology itself, the earliest Sumerian myths already express the widespread myth of separation of heaven and earth. In Ebla there is already evidence for the Syro-Canaanite pantheon that existed around and within Israel, with gods such as Hadda, Dagan, Kemosh, Reshef, El and Anat, and its origins can be traced to the mid-third millennium BCE. For the period from 2600 to 2200 BCE there was cultural openness and transfer between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, but this comes to a close from 2200 until 1800 BCE which is a time of cultural upheaval in the area. Prosperity gradually returned and by 1800 the internationalism was reborn and there were new connection between Mesopotamia and the west. Between 1700 and 1500, under Hurrian influence, a curtain again falls on connections. In the next 250 years, including the age of Amarna, Babylonian culture is absorbed. From this period we find a flood story at Ugarit and a piece of Gilgamesh from Megiddo. But the Amarna age was succeeded by arrival of the Sea Peoples and Arameans in the area and by the time Israel entered the arena the cultural internationalism had already dried up, so whatever Israel absorbed of foreign material came through Canaanite channels.

³² "Destiny and Divine Intervention in Babylon and Israel", in van der Woude, A.S. (ed.), *The Witness of Tradition: Papers Read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament*

Conference Held at Woudschoten, 1970. Oudtestamentische Studiën 17, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pages 65-72.

³³ *In Search Of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed.) John Day, JSOTSup. 406 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004) pp. 352-365.

³⁴ *Crossing the Boundaries; Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder.* (ed.) Stanley E. Porter [et al.]. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994) pp. 51-56.

³⁵ W. G. Lambert, "Leviathan in Ancient Art", in *Shlomo: Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archaeology in Honor of Shlomo Moussaieff*, ed. R. Deutsch (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication, 2003), pp. 147-154.

³⁶ This interpretation is difficult to accept given the fact that Ps. 74:14 clearly refers to a multi-headed Leviathan רָאשִׁי לְוִיתָן in the plural, and the emendation to רָאשׁ לְוִיתָן in the singular can find no justification outside of Lambert's own theory. The Ugaritic *ltn* also had seven heads.

³⁷ "A Document from a Community of Exiles in Babylonia" In: M. Lubetski, (ed.), *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform.* Hebrew Bible Monographs 8, (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), pp. 201-205.