

# The Symbolism of the Biblical World

Ancient Near Eastern Iconography  
and the Book of Psalms

*by*

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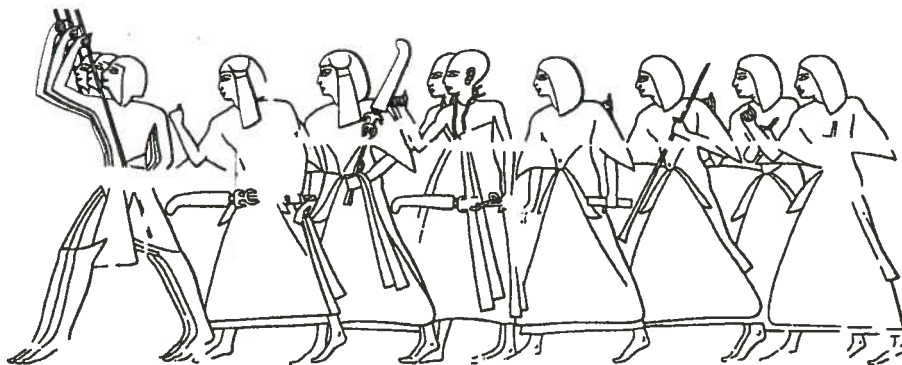
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CHAPTER V

THE  
KING



328a. The highest dignitaries of the Egyptian empire march briskly in parade behind the king's three flail-bearers. First are the two eldest princes, wearing the prince's lock; then, alongside each other, come the viziers of Upper and Lower Egypt (cf. 392); next is the royal "scribe," with a scroll, followed by

the "speaker," who carries a long staff as a mark of his dignity. Two officials who cannot be clearly identified bring up the rear. Israel adopted from Egypt the offices of scribe and speaker, but the viziership was apparently unknown, at least in the early monarchy.

The repudiation of all powers save Yahweh undergoes a special modification in the royal psalms.

It is possible to discern in the various strata of the Book of Judges (cf. especially 8:27-28; 9:7-15; 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) and the two Books of Samuel the revolutionary nature of the introduction of monarchy into Israel. Even at a late stage it could be viewed as no more than a completely unwarranted aping of foreign customs (1 Sam 8:5; Deut 17:14).

In fact, the monarchy, since it was without tradition in Israel, was obliged to rely heavily on forms and institutions drawn from outside. Thus, for example, the official apparatus, in titles as well as in functions, was apparently modeled largely on the famous and venerable Egyptian apparatus (328a). The *supr* corresponds to the Egyptian *š*, "scribe, secretary"; the *mzkyr* corresponds to the Egyptian *whmw*, "speaker," etc.<sup>1</sup> There will be further discussion below of the influence of Egyptian institutions on the royal ritual and royal titulature (cf. also 146). Fig. 329 bears eloquent testimony to the high regard enjoyed in Egypt by the positions of official and scribe. It is also revealing that in Egypt war heroes

were never deified, whereas scribes and other bearers of culture, like Imhotep and Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, were accorded that honor.<sup>2</sup>

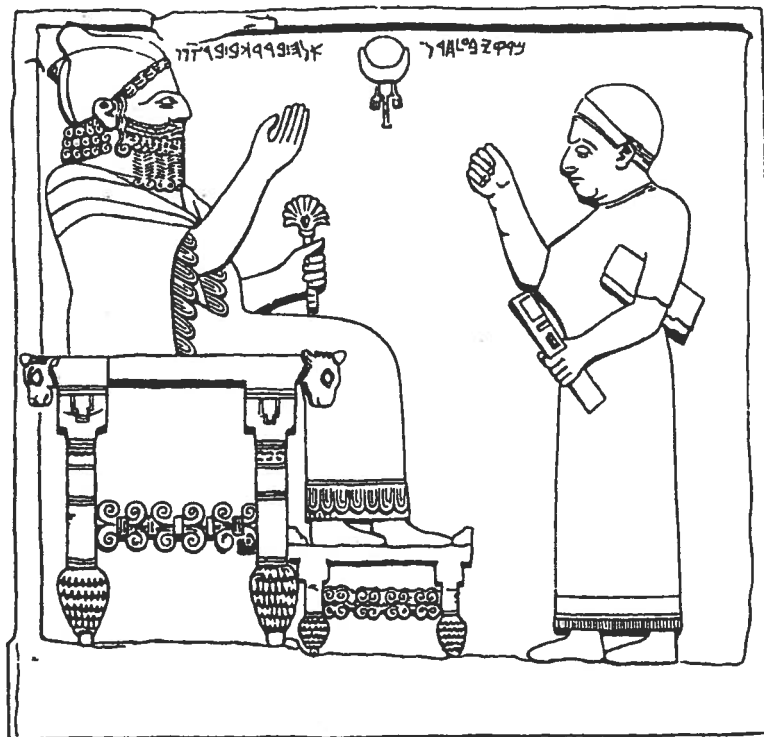
In accentuating the dependence of Judaic-Israelite kingship on foreign models, we must not, however, disregard its independent features.<sup>3</sup> The epic literature is well aware that Israelite kingship, unlike the Sumerian-Akkadian or Egyptian kingship, did not descend from heaven in remote antiquity, but arose instead under specific historical circumstances. Without challenging Yahweh's part in it, the tradition records that the king was made king by the people (1 Sam 11:15; 2 Sam 2:4a; 5:3; 1 Kgs 12:1, 20). A large segment of the OT tradition (narrative books and Prophets) is very critical of kingship, if not entirely hostile toward it. The weaknesses and failures of the kings are mercilessly portrayed in a manner quite unusual in the ancient Near East.<sup>4</sup> Because Israel always cherished the memory of the prenational period (patriarchs, exodus, Sinai, settlement of the land), it never shared the Mesopotamian and Egyptian consciousness of kingship as an inevitable and inviolable necessity.

The royal psalms provide a marked



329. The positions of official and scribe were highly developed and much esteemed in Egypt from the period of the Old Kingdom onwards. Therefore, a certain Ramsesnakht, high priest of Amon of Thebes and holder of one of the most influential offices of the late period, can have himself depicted as a scribe. Just as the Horus falcon embraces Khefren the king (cf. 260), so here the baboon, animal of the scribal god Thoth (cf. 478*a*), is at one with Ramsesnakht. Thus, the scribe is shown to be fully inspired by the god whose powerful knowledge sustains the heavens (cf. 29). In other representations, Thoth himself (with the ibis-head) appears as scribe (349-50; 352; S. Schott, "Thoth als Verfasser").

331. ". . . I address my verses to the king" (Ps 45:1b).





330. "My heart overflows with a goodly theme; . . . my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe" (Ps 45:1a, c).

contrast to this specifically Israelite view of kingship. In them the king appears endowed with unprecedented power. He represents Yahweh. Relation to Yahweh is decided in relation to the king. To "serve Yahweh" means to submit to the king in Jerusalem (cf. Ps 2:11-12). It is true that the king is not unequivocally identified with God in

these psalms, nor does he become lord over the forces of nature or the object of cultic veneration.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, he bears a number of features of the divinized kings of Egypt or Akkad. That fact is also reflected in the relation between ancient Near Eastern iconography and the royal psalms.

The court was the circle in which the

unique dignity of the king was expressed and nurtured. The lips of the poet, inspired by the king, move like the stylus of a nimble scribe (Ps 45:1). In Egypt, and also in Assyria, such scribes were present on all important occasions (330). They wrote with brushes on parchment or papyrus (left), or with styluses on clay or wax-covered wood tablets (right).

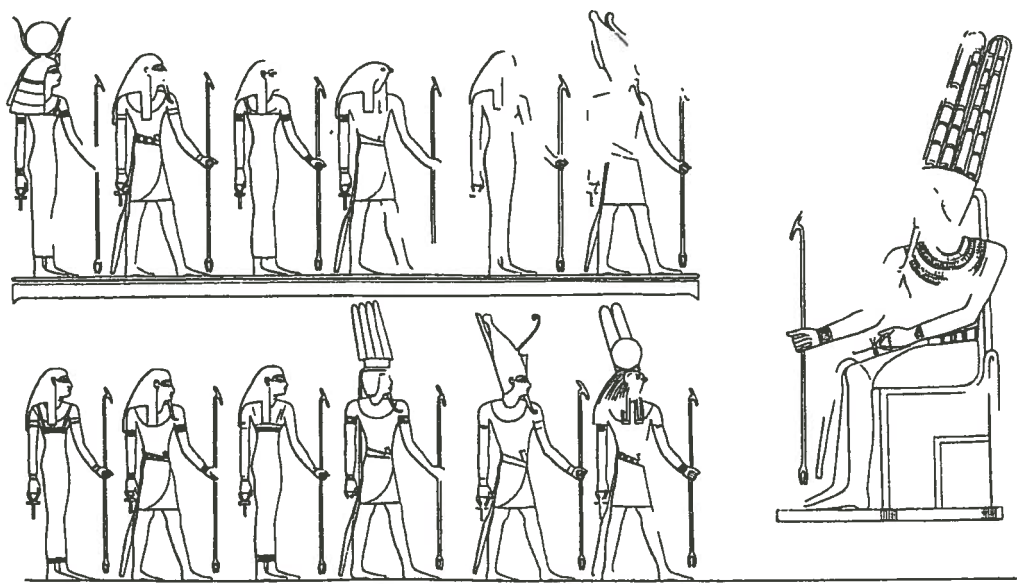
The scribe-simile, the artful self-consciousness ("my verses"), and the aim to please the king all point to courtly circles. The royal official was maintained entirely by the good will of the king. Aside from the king's personal attitude toward him, the king's glory was his glory (cf. 1 Kgs 10:8; 331).

## 1. THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF THE KING

The need for effective and competent leadership in the face of powerful enemies (Philistines) was an essential factor in furthering the rise of kingship in the OT. Military abilities and successes brought Saul (1 Sam 11) and David (2 Sam 5:2) to the throne (at an earlier stage, cf. Judg 11:8). In Mesopotamia and Egypt too, kingship may have originally achieved its plenitude of power on the basis of specific needs and functions. As late as the sixth century B.C., Ezekiel recognizes that the Pharaoh's power rests in the guarantee he affords for the construction and maintenance of the canals necessary to Egypt's existence (Ezek 29:3). The concrete, political basis of kingly power was importantly linked from the beginning, however, with a mythical-religious basis. The effective fullness of power could not be understood without reference to divine action. This applied, first of all, to the office which the king fulfilled,<sup>6</sup> but it was increasingly extended to his person. The practical consequences of this understanding were by no means so great as one might expect.<sup>7</sup> The myth of divine generation provided the Egyptians with their most consistent answer to the question of why one and not some other holds in his hand the fulness of power. A cycle of fifteen scenes, found almost entire in the temple of Hatshepsut (1501-1480 B.C.), represents the full history of her infancy. A similar cycle is

found in the temple of Amenophis III (1413-1377 B.C.) at Luxor.<sup>8</sup> Fragments of the cycle exist also at Medinet Habu and Karnak.<sup>9</sup>

In the Hatshepsut temple, the picture cycle begins with a portrayal of the assembly of the gods (332), at which Amon-Re makes known his love for the future queen mother (Scene 1). Amon's colossal size is a striking feature of the representation. He is more than twice the size of the twelve deities who have appeared before him, even though they are the most important of the Egyptian divinities. In the upper register (from right to left) are Osiris, Isis, Horus, Nephthys, Seth, and Hathor; in the lower register (also from right to left) are Mont, Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, and Nut. At Luxor, the first scene shows the love goddess Hathor, who communicates to the queen mother Amon's intention to unite with her (Scene 1). In another picture (Scene 2), Amon himself communicates his intention to the king. Scene 3 depicts Amon on his way to the queen. The large picture (Scene 4; 333) depicts a preliminary high point, discreetly and delicately portraying the conception of the future king. The god and the queen are seated on the sign for "heaven" (cf. 11, 17, 21). The left hand of the god rests in the queen's right; her left hand tenderly supports his right, which extends the life-sign toward the queen's nose. Amon's feet are supported



332. In the OT, the mark of a true prophet is his access to the circle in which God takes counsel with his heavenly company. Jeremiah queries in regard to his opponents: "Who among them has stood in the council [*swd*] of

the LORD to perceive [him] and to hear his word?" (Jer 23:18).

In Ps 25:14, the privilege of the prophets is democratized: "The friendship [*swd*] of the LORD is for [all] those who fear him."

by the goddess Selket, who wears the symbolic scorpion on her head. In Mesopotamia too, the scorpion is the symbol of sacred marriage (cf. 388) and of love entering the body of the queen.<sup>10</sup> The queen's feet are upheld by Neith. The crossed darts and shield are a symbol which characterize Neith as a mighty protectress and goddess "who opens the paths."<sup>11</sup> The text indicates that Amon-Re enters the queen in the form of the reigning king.<sup>12</sup> That statement is important to the relation of experience and myth.

Ps 2:7 states that Yahweh begot the Israelite king (cf. Pss 109:3 LXX [cf. 110:3 RSV]; 89:26; and 2 Sam 7:14). The specification that it is *today* that Yahweh has begotten him, that is, on the day when the king proclaims it, precludes taking the statement literally. The term "adoption," frequently used in this context, is a bit too juridical. The same may be said of the term "vassal."<sup>13</sup> "Sonship" has emotional as well as legal

aspects. In consequence of this relation, the overlord subjects all peoples to the power of his new vassal king (Ps 2:8–11). In the pharaonic infancy narratives, kingly power is also the consequence of the divine fatherhood.<sup>14</sup>

The next scene of the cycle shows the ram-headed god Khnum receiving from Amon the charge to *form the body* of the future king (Scene 5). He executes this command (Scene 6) by "shaping" on the potter's wheel the body of the nascent king. The latter, in the manner of children, has a finger stuck in his mouth (334; cf. 31). Along with the body, Khnum forms the *ka*, the vital force or "soul" of the child (figure at the left). The cow- and mother-goddess Hathor, with the sun disc between her horns, is enthroned at the left of the scene. She extends the life-sign toward the fetus. The life-sign is usually held at the nose of the one who is to be quickened. In the present scene, this was ruled out on compositional grounds. In Egypt, a dif-



ferent deity is responsible for each phase of generation: for conception, Amon; for the shaping and vivification of the body, Khnum and Hathor; for birth itself, special birth divinities. In the OT, all these are concentrated in Yahweh. He "begets" (Ps 2:7); he forms the child in its mother's body (Ps 139:13, 16); and (at

birth) he takes it from its mother's womb (Pss 22:9; 71:6; cf. 275-77). This continuity made possible an essentially different trust relation than was possible under the discontinuity of divine actors in Egypt.

After the potter's scene, Thoth, messenger of the gods, announces to the

333. "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (Ps 2:7).





334. "Your hands have made me and solemnly ordained me" (Ps 119:73a [author's translation]).

335. Thoth, the messenger of the gods, announces to the queen that Amun is satisfied with the status of things and has granted her an elevation in rank.



queen an elevation in rank (Scene 7; 335). The formation of the fetus has made her queen mother. Like every woman in the ancient Near East, the queen attains full status by motherhood (cf. Ps 113:9). In the next scene of the cycle (Scene 8), the queen is conducted to the house of birth by Khnum and Hathor. The large cast present at the *birth* (Scene 9) characterizes it as the real climax of the cycle (336). The low degree of naturalism in rendering the scenes of generation and birth is probably less related to the delicate nature of the processes involved than to the fact that the reliefs are concerned to present a kind of "mystery play," and not the actual event. The moment depicted is scarcely reasonable under the circumstances: The enthroned queen is already holding the newborn infant in her arms. A female attendant kneels, ready to receive the child (or has just handed it to the queen?). Immediately behind the queen is a kneeling goddess, who apparently



336. The large cast of characters marks the birth of the future king as the most important

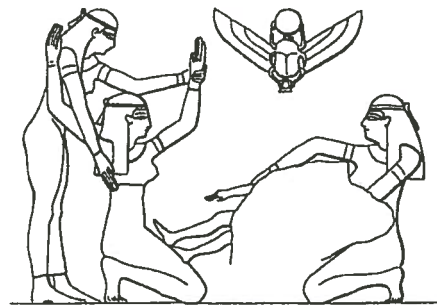
scene of the entire cycle.

embodies the mountains of the horizon from which the newborn sun (cf. 337) has just arisen. Her name is signified by the twin-peaked mountain (cf. 10–13, 17–18). Behind her stand Nephthys and Isis, who are often associated with the sunrise (and sunset) (cf. 30, 37, 63). The god Heh (cf. 27a) is portrayed twice beneath the throne. He lifts up “length of days” and “life” to the newborn child. The remainder of the middle register is occupied by various tutelary genii holding life-signs. In the bottom register, the “souls” of the forefathers kneel, hailing the newborn king (cf. Ps 45:16). The *s*-sign, signifying “protection,” stands below the throne. It is flanked by two *was*-scepters (cf. 19). Bes and Thoeris, two fortune-bringing goddesses, are seen at the outer right. The frame in which the various figures are portrayed may originally have represented a bed decorated with lion-heads, viewed simultaneously from the side and from the top. It seems to have been misinterpreted at an early stage and understood as an artificial stand on which a throne, among other things, could be placed (cf. 333).<sup>15</sup> The birth goddess Meshenet, seated outside to the right, presides over what is taking place on the stand. The symbol which she wears on her head is a stylized cow-uterus (cf. 277a).

The birth of the god-king in Erment (337) is portrayed rather less discreetly than is the case in the two cycles from the early New Kingdom. Here the woman in labor is shown not enthroned, but in a realistic kneeling posture (cf. 31). The newborn child is seen coming forth from the womb. The scarab (*hpr* = “to become, to come into being”) with the sun indicates that a new “sun” has come into being.

The two following scenes (10 and 11) show Amon acknowledging the newborn child as his son (338 and 339). In both

337. “Upon thee have I leaned from my birth; *thou* art he who took me from my mother’s womb” (Ps 71:6; cf. 22:9).



cases, it is the mother goddess Hathor who presents the child. Amon's greeting to his son consists in part of the words: "Welcome in peace, you son of my body. I grant you, like Re, to pass millions of years."<sup>16</sup> The adoption envisioned in Ps 2:7 may derive from this scene or the similar scene (14) of the installation of the crown prince (340). As opposed to Figs. 338 and 339, in Fig. 340 it is not the mother goddess Hathor, but the royal god, who presents the crown prince to Amon.



338. Hathor, the goddess of women, presents the newborn child to his divine father Amon.

339. "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Sam 7:14; cf. R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israel*, p. 226).



The suckling by divine wet nurses (Scene 12), the purification and presentation of the child before the palace gods (Scene 13), and the circumcision of the prince (Scene 15)<sup>17</sup> are not reflected in the psalms. The suckling of the Pharaoh by goddesses at the outset of every important stage of life, such as birth, accession to the throne, and death,<sup>18</sup> did penetrate into the Canaanite cultus.<sup>19</sup>

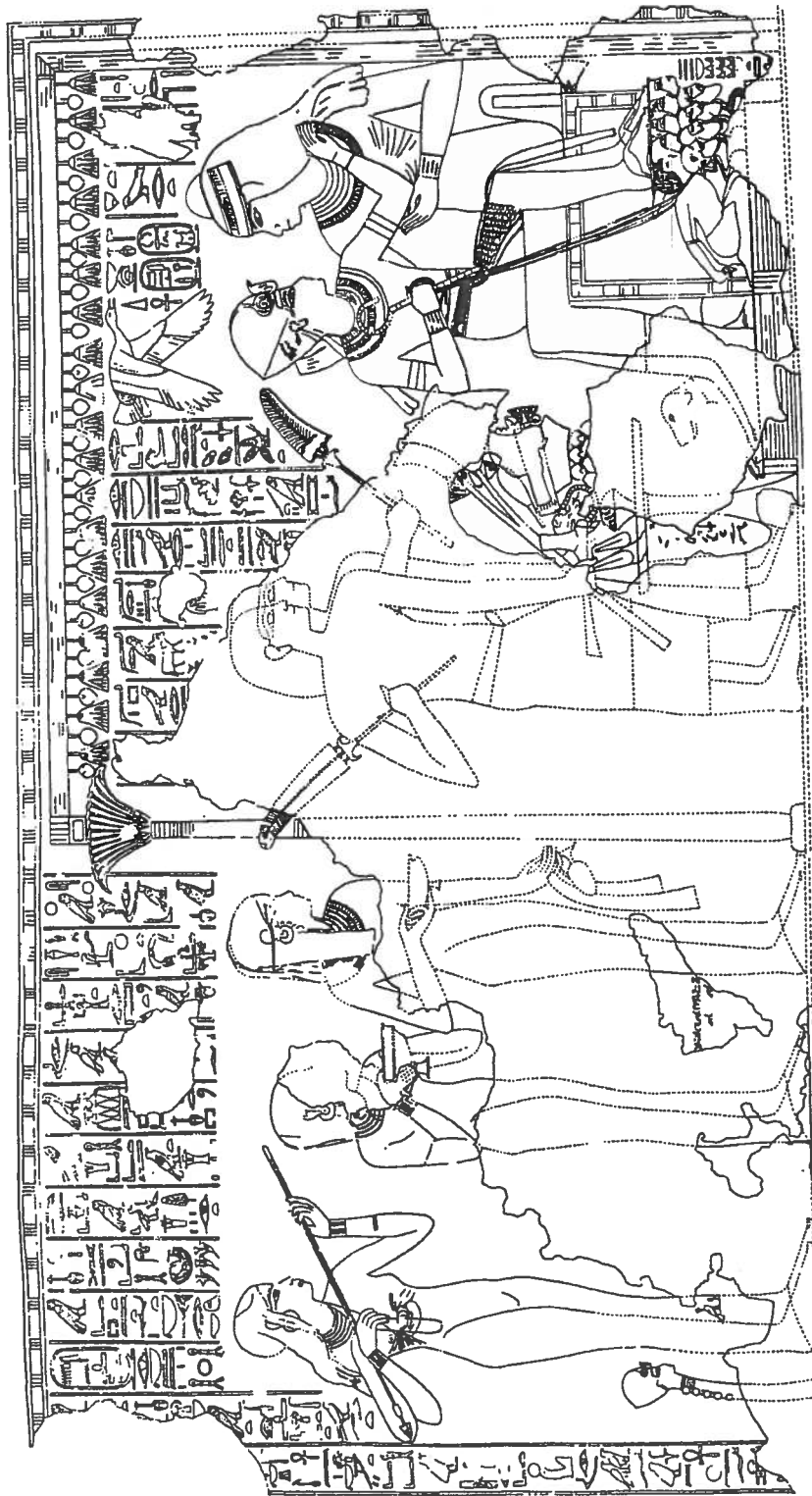
In Egypt, as in Pss 2:7-11; 89:26-29; and 110, the king's lordship is very closely related to his divine sonship. In the Hatshepsut cycle, Amon states at the conception of the future queen: "She is one who will reign over the two lands

[Upper and Lower Egypt] while governing all living things. . . as far as every place over which I [as sun god] shine in my circuit."<sup>20</sup> Khnum promises while shaping her: "I give you. . . all flatlands; I give you all mountain lands and every nation that inhabits them."<sup>21</sup> Thus it is not surprising that Egypt's traditional enemies, the Nubians and Asiatics (with the full beards), are already set as a footstool beneath the feet of the future king, even as he sits as an infant on his nurse's lap (341). The cords which bind the enemies' necks are reminiscent of Ps 2:3; their posture, on the other hand, recalls Ps 110:1. Even more strikingly than

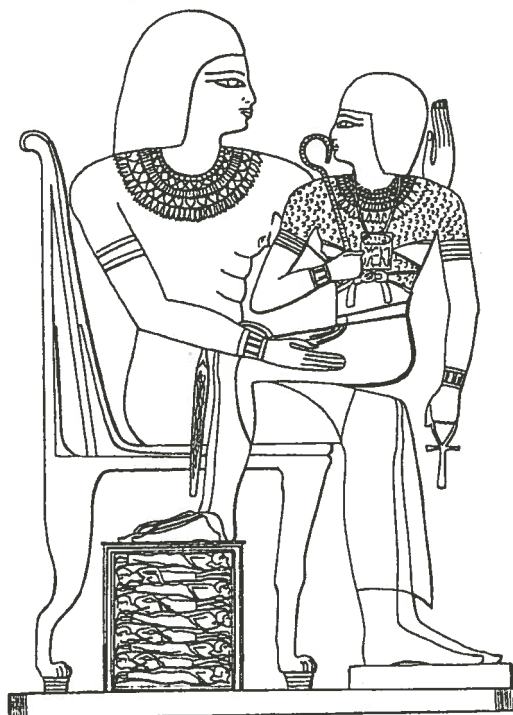
340. "He shall cry to me, 'Thou art my Father. . . ' And I will make him the first-

born, the highest of all the kings of the earth" (Ps 89:26a, 27).

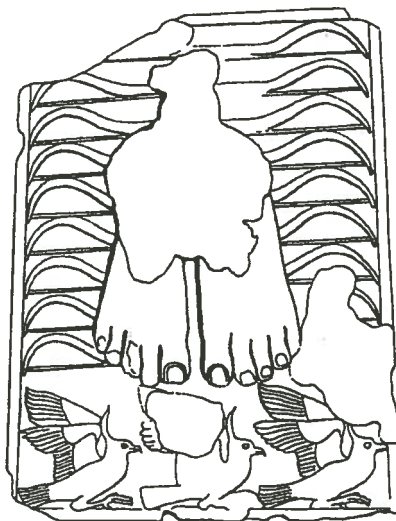




341. "... his enemies surrounded him them under the soles of his feet" (1 Kgs 5:3).  
 [David] [with warfare], until the LORD put



342. "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool" (Ps 110:1).



342a. The nine enemies beneath the king's feet (341, 342) must not be taken too concretely. This fact is demonstrated by the frequent variations on the theme. Here nine bows, rather than nine men, are placed under the soles of the king's feet. The *military capability* of the enemies takes the place of the *enemies* themselves (cf. 132a, 245, 328). Similarly, the psalms of lamentation oscillate between the *wickedness* of sinners (Ps 7:9) and the *sinners* themselves (Ps 104:35).

Up to the period of the 18th Dynasty, the nine bows were symbolic of all the nations subjected to the king by inclusion in Upper and Lower Egypt (J. Vercoutter, "Les Haou-Nebout," pp. 109, 120). On a relief of Mentuhotep (11th Dynasty) on the island of Konosso, the gods themselves (the great "Henneiad" of Karnak, consisting of fifteen gods) appear in the form of fifteen bows laid under Amon-Min, the king of gods (*LD*, vol. 4, pl. 150c; P. Barguet, *Le Temple d'Amon-Rê*, p. 22). The nine bows became a symbol of

the *countries* (regarded as hostile) surrounding Egypt only in the 19th Dynasty.

The three plovers, whose Egyptian name (*rekhjt*) also means "nation, subjects," carry approximately the same symbolic value as the thrice-three bows. There is a certain distinction in number. In Egypt, the plural is denoted by three examples of a given entity (cf. 395), whereas three times three denotes a totality (cf. 429). In Ps 83:6-8, Israel laments the fact that it is hard pressed by eight hostile neighbors plus mighty Assyria. Thus, Israel too has its nine bows/nations ("Gebal and Ammon" are to be read with the Syrian version as *g<sup>e</sup>bâl 'ammôn*, "the territory of Amon"). The plovers' crossed wings prevent them from flying away, indeed, from moving away at all, for the crossed wings make it impossible for them to maintain their equilibrium (B. Gunn, "An Inscribed Statue of King Zoser," p. 186). They lie helpless at the feet of the ruler.

in Fig. 341, enemies appear as a footstool in Fig. 342. As in Fig. 341, here too appear the *nine* traditional enemy nations (cf. Ps 83:6-8 and 342a).

In Ps 110, session at the *right hand of God* takes the place of sonship. The place at the right is the place of honor (Ps 45:9). "By his honorary position in the circle of divine power, the king partici-

pates in the warlike, victorious power of Yahweh."<sup>22</sup> This sitting, however, pertains not to the realm of "infancy narrative," but to that of enthronement (cf. 352-55). Here again, a concept which is in Egypt part of the "infancy narrative" of the Pharaoh is assigned in the psalms to the sphere of enthronement and adoption.

## 2. THE ENTHRONEMENT

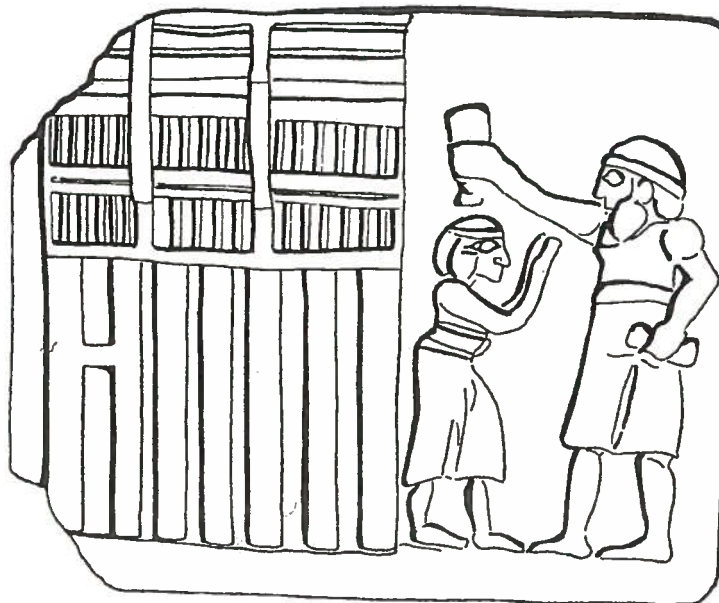
Modern exegesis indicates that the enthronement of the Davidic king may have been the original *Sitz im Leben* of Pss 2, 72, 101, and 110, and perhaps also of Pss 20 and 21.

In his study of the Judaic royal ritual, G. von Rad has shown that in many respects it may have been quite similar to the Egyptian.<sup>23</sup> To be sure, the documentation is so fragmentary that the overall course of the solemnities cannot be reconstructed with any degree of certainty, either for Israel<sup>24</sup> or for Egypt.<sup>25</sup> We must therefore underscore the

hypothetical nature of this reconstruction before we proceed below to present the various scenes as part of a unified coronation rite.

Context frequently seems to indicate that the solemn purification of the king and the coronation are but an introduction to the monarch's cultic activity.<sup>26</sup> Before performing his filial duties, he is solemnly confirmed as son. It is therefore quite conceivable that this confirmation took place by a repetition of the actual enthronement process.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear whether other ceremonies, such as

343. "I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him" (Ps 89:20).







344. A Syrian vassal (cf. 408) brings as tribute to the Pharaoh an ivory oil horn trimmed with a gold band (cf. O. Tufnell et al., *Lachish II*, pl. XV).

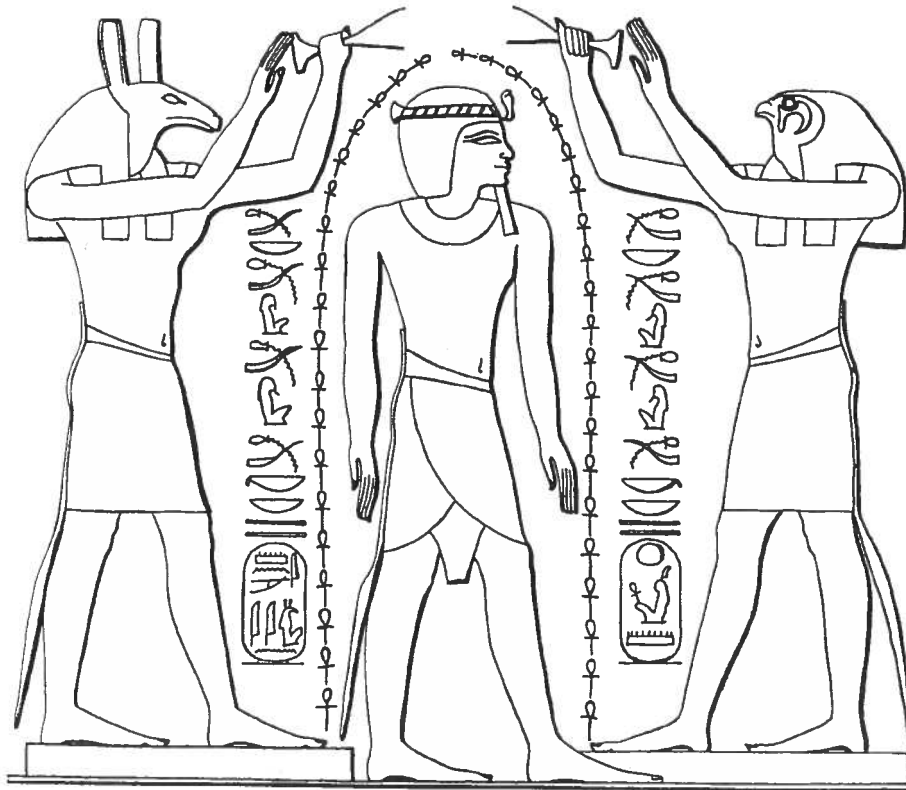
345. Before coronation the king is purified and sprinkled with the water of life. In Jerusalem, the coronation ceremonies began at the spring Gihon (1 Kgs 1:38; cf. 168 and

the carving of the name on the Ished-tree or the shooting of arrows, were part of the coronation events. Unfortunately, the royal ritual has not recently been subject to exhaustive investigation by Egyptologists.<sup>28</sup>

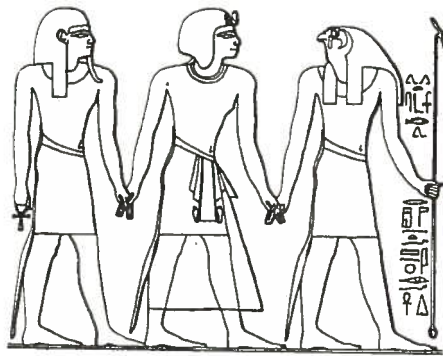
Even if the scenes treated below never constituted part of a self-contained process, they do have in common the function of establishing, legitimizing, and securing the Pharaoh's kingship. In that respect, their grouping is not entirely arbitrary.

Von Rad has set out a number of commonalities between the Egyptian and Judaic coronation rituals, but a further difficulty remains to be considered: nothing is known from Egypt of the central point of the Judaic kingly consecration, namely the *anointing* (cf. Pss 2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 45:7; 89:20; etc.).<sup>29</sup>

*Plate VIII*). In the consecration of the high priest, a rite partially analogous to the coronation, the candidate was solemnly washed at the beginning of the ceremony (Lev 8:6).



To be sure, we are informed that the king anointed vassal princes or divine images (377), but we have no information to indicate that the king himself was anointed. However, there has survived a small tablet from the Djemdet-Nasr period (343) which has been interpreted as an anointing.<sup>30</sup> Because the scene takes place before a temple, that is, before a deity (cf. 242), it undoubtedly has some religious significance. Whether it represents an anointing, however, and if so the anointing of a king, remains uncertain.<sup>31</sup> Anointing from an oil-horn



346. Atum (left) and Khonsu (right) lead the crown prince to his coronation before Amun, the god of the empire (on being led by the deity, cf. 272-74).

347. "Thou dost hold my right hand. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel" (Ps 73:23b-24a).



seems to have been distinctive to Syria-Palestine (1 Sam 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:39). Anointing horns, apparently of ivory decorated with gold bands, were brought to Egypt as tribute by Syrian princes (344).<sup>32</sup> Anointing confers glory and power. In Egypt, anointing was a means of increasing the beauty and power of the images of the gods (cf. 377) and of permitting vassals to participate in the glory of their overlord.<sup>33</sup>

According to 1 Kgs 1:38, the procession to Gihon preceded the anointing of Solomon. The enthronement ceremonial may have begun at a well because it was prefaced by cultic *purifications*. At any rate, that was the case in Egypt. There the enthronement, at which all the promises of birth were to be fulfilled, began with the candidate's purification by the water of life (345). Two priests dressed as the national deities Seth (left) and Horus (right) conducted the consecration. At this time Horus says: "I have purified [consecrated] you with life and strength so that you may endure even as Re [the sun god] endures."<sup>34</sup> There are some twenty-five examples of the scene, always associated with an ensuing coronation.<sup>35</sup> The psalms proclaim that Yahweh has consecrated (Ps 2:6) and blessed (Pss 21:6; 45:2) the king. In Ps 21:3, the blessing precedes the coronation. Kraus believes that Ps 110:7 may hark back to a sacramental draught from Gihon (cf. 1 Kgs 1:38), which would have constituted a part of the enthronement ceremonial. The draught permits the king to lift up his head in strength.

In Egypt, the newly consecrated king was led by two gods (left, Atum; right, Khonsu) before the highest god (346). This taking by the hand also plays a role in Babylonian and Hittite royal ritual. A saying on the clay cylinder inscription of Cyrus derives from the Babylonian tradition. It reads: "[Marduk] sought a righteous prince. . . , so that he might take his hand"<sup>36</sup> (cf. Isa 45:1). In several Hittite reliefs (347), a god of superhuman size places his arm about the king, grasps his hand, and thus escorts him in safety. In these instances, as opposed to

Figs. 272–73 and 346, we are faced not with a presentation scene, but with the representation of a more general kind of leading.<sup>37</sup> In Ps 73:23, an otherwise unknown suppliant claims this gracious divine action for himself (cf. Ps 63:8 and 272, 273).

The crowning may have constituted the initial climax of the enthronement solemnities. Of an entire series of scenes shown on an obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut in the temple at Karnak, the crowning was chosen to adorn the apex (348).

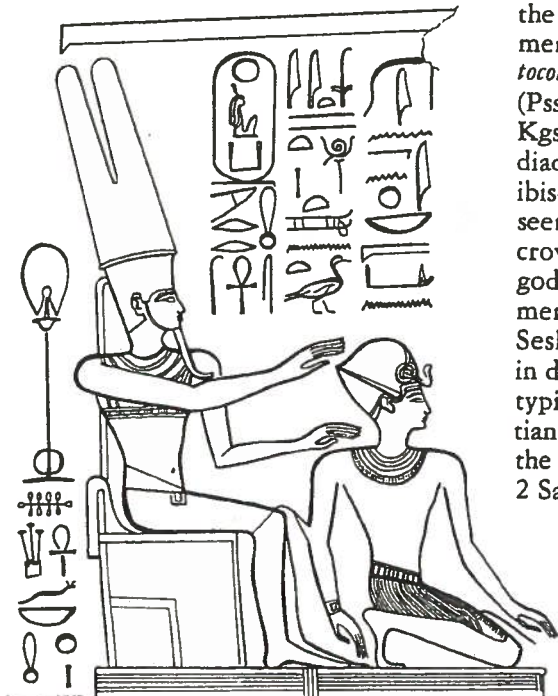
The queen kneels before Amon, who places the blue crown upon her head and causes "protection, blessing, and vital power to pour forth upon his daughter (the arms of the god form the hieroglyph *ka* = vital power)."<sup>38</sup> In Fig. 349, the conferral of blessing is shown by the life-sign held in Amon's left hand. As signs of his newly granted dominion, the

king bears, in addition to the crown, the curved *scepter* (*heka* scepter), originally probably a shepherd's staff, and the so-called flail, originally perhaps a fly-whisk. The curved scepter is the determinative of the word "to rule."

In the psalms, as in the Egyptian pictures, the king is crowned directly by God (Pss 21:3b; 132:18; cf. also 89:39). The crown signifies the manifestation and completion (cf. Pss 5:12; 8:5; 103:4) of the king's election. In Egypt, the royal crown, and especially the royal serpent (uraeus) mounted on it, was felt to be a living being. A song to Thut-mose III says: "the serpent which is on your brow, which punishes them [the enemies of the king] with fire."<sup>39</sup> There may be a reminiscence of such ideas in Ps 21:9, which says of the king: "The LORD will swallow them [the enemies of the king] up in his wrath; and fire will consume them." The king bears the scepter, as well as the crown, at the divine behest (Ps 110:2; cf. 2:9; 45:6).

On the basis of 2 Kgs 11:12, von Rad<sup>40</sup> has characterized the crowning with the diadem and the presentation of the protocol as the most important moments of the enthronement.<sup>41</sup> The psalms also mention the giving of such a divine *protocol* (ordinance, covenant) to the king (Pss 2:7; 89:39).<sup>42</sup> In Ps 89:39, as in 2 Kgs 11:12, it stands side by side with the diadem. At the left side of Fig. 349, the ibis-headed Thoth, scribe of the gods, is seen writing the protocol for the newly crowned king. In Fig. 350, the scribe-god and the Pharaoh draft the document, assisted by the scribe-goddess Seshat. The participation of the Pharaoh in drafting his own deed of appointment typifies the self-understanding of Egyptian kingship. The principal content of the protocol is the "great name" (351; cf. 2 Sam 7:9; 1 Kgs 1:47), the *fivefold royal*

348. "For thou dost meet him with goodly blessings; thou dost set a crown of fine gold upon his head" (Ps 21:3).

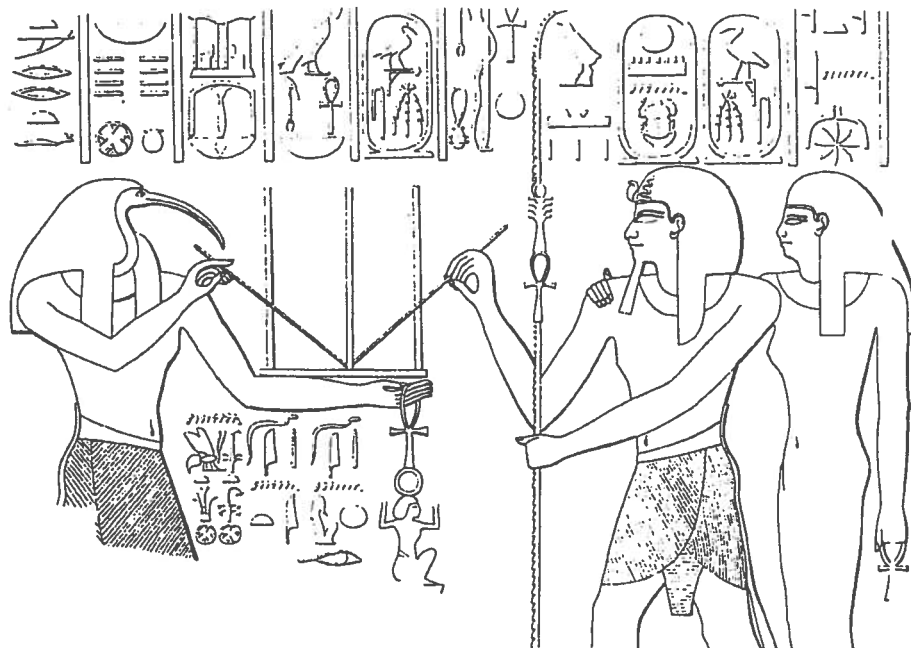




349. While Amon crowns the king, the scribal god Thoth writes the protocol. Ps 89:39 accuses Yahweh: "Thou hast renounced the

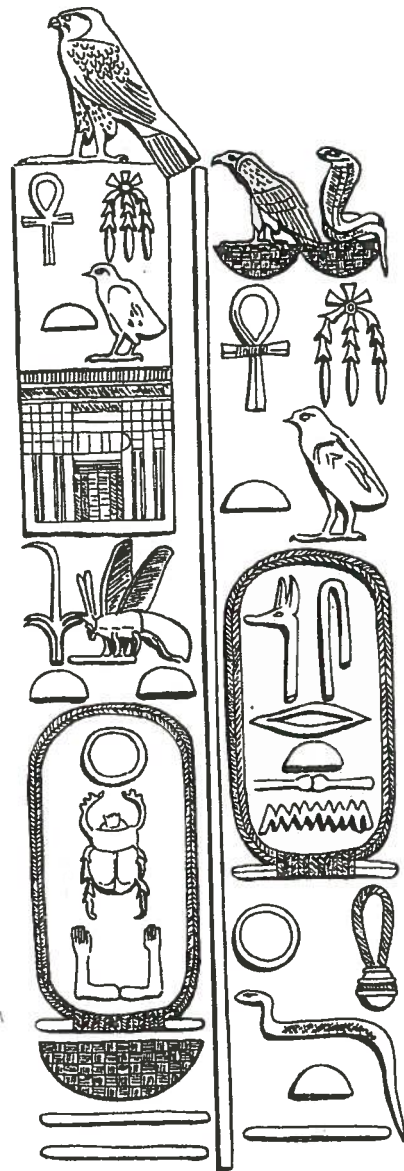
*covenant with thy servant [the Davidic king], thou hast defiled his crown in the dust."*

350. The king speaks: "I will tell of the decree of the LORD" (Ps 2:7a).



351. "I will make for you a great name" (2 Sam 7:9).

The illustration shows four of the five titles which constitute the "great name" of Sesostris I. At the upper left, the Horus (falcon) name stands inscribed in the palace facade (cf. 19): "Life of Births" (*'nh msw.t*); beneath it, in the cartouche, is the regnal name or "Name of the King of Upper [sedge] and Lower [bee] Egypt": "The Might of the Sun God Re Is Realized" (*hpr k; r'*); it is followed by the title: "Lord of the Two Lands" (*nb t; wj*). At the upper right, in the second column, stands the so-called "Two Mistresses' name" (after the vulture goddess of Upper Egypt and the cobra goddess of Lower Egypt): "Life of Births" (*'nh msw.t*). It is thus read in the same way as the Horus name and the Golden Horus name (not shown). The fourth name, the birth name or "Son of the Sun God name," is found in the second cartouche (right): "Man of the Strong One [a goddess]" (*s n wsr.t*); beneath it: "Like the Sun God in Eternity" (*mi r' d.t*) (cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 71).



title received by the Pharaoh on accession to the throne. David himself apparently adopted a fivefold regnal name: "David [1], the son of Jesse [2], the man whom Elyon appointed [3], the anointed of the God of Jacob [4], the beloved of the Mighty One of Israel [5]" (cf. 2 Sam 23:1 NAB).<sup>43</sup> A. Alt<sup>44</sup> discerned some twenty years ago that noticeable remnants of such a title exist also in Isa 9:5.<sup>45</sup>

Ps 72:17 expresses a rather unusual wish with regard to the royal name. The correct translation is probably as follows:

May his [the king's] name endure for ever,  
may his name flourish before the sun.

The *flourishing of the name* recalls the custom of writing the name of the newly enthroned Pharaoh on the leaves of the holy Ished-tree. W. Helck has gathered eighteen attestations of this name-writing scene.<sup>46</sup> They range in date from

the period of Thut-mose III (1490–1436 B.C.) to the 22nd Dynasty (945–712 B.C.). The oldest example comes from the small temple at Medinet Habu.<sup>47</sup> On its right side is shown the enthroned Amon-Re, who writes the names of the king on the leaves of the Ished-tree (*Persea, Mimusops schimperi*). The king enters at the left, accompanied by Atum and Hathor. The legend reads: "Prom-enading of the king. Coming to the tem-

ple." Here, as Helck has shown, the most ancient understanding is reflected with relative purity. In it, the king would have discovered his throne names more or less by chance after they had been written (originally perhaps by Aton in Heliopolis) on the leaves of the holy Persea tree. Helck suggests the hypothesis that at one time the names may have been read out of the nervation of the leaves.

In Fig. 352, the original sequence (writing and discovery of the name) is combined with two other concepts and, at the same time, reinterpreted. This is indicated by the words of Thoth, who now appears as writer: "I record for you years consisting of millions of Sed festivals; I have granted you eternity. . . ." Ptah (outer left) and the scribe-goddess Seshat (outer right) record the king's regnal years and jubilees on the palm panicle "year" (cf. 27a), which terminates in the tadpole, the sign for 100,000. The enthroned Amon, using a similar palm panicle, presents to the kneeling Pharaoh a set of four ideograms signify-

ing the Sed festival. This great jubilee was usually celebrated for the first time in the thirtieth year of the sovereign's reign, and was then repeated at shorter intervals.

Nowhere is the wish for eternal rule made on behalf of the Judaic king, but there is indeed a desire that his name (Ps 72:17), his line, and his throne (Ps 89:36) might endure forever. Thus, the odd "before the sun" [RSV: "as long as the sun"] of Ps 72:17 (cf. 72:5) should probably be taken to mean "as long as the sun" (cf. Ps 89:36), and both may betray Egyptian influence.

In Fig. 348, Hathor, standing behind Amon, expresses a wish for the newly crowned king: "As the sun [sun god] is, so may your name be; as the heaven is, so may your deeds be" (text under the right arm of Hathor). Such wishes are very common in the Egyptian enthronement texts.

In Egypt, the king's participation in the endless duration of the gods is expressed by his appearance in the midst of the gods as one of their own (cf. also 111

352. "May his name endure for ever; may his name flourish as long as the sun [endures]"

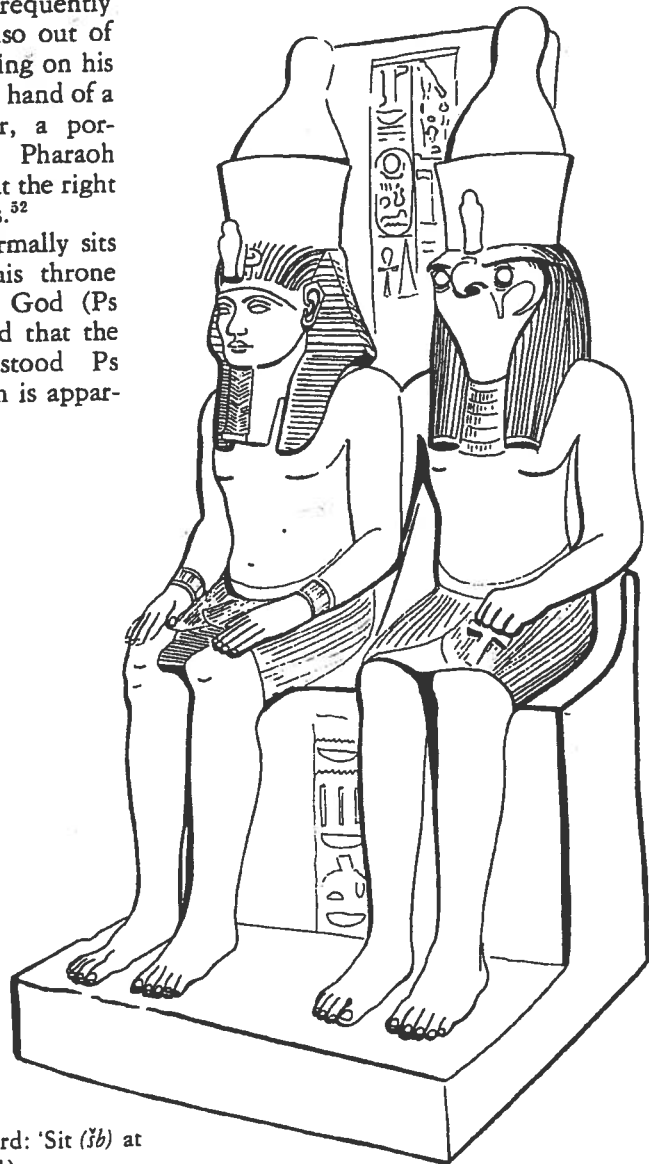
(Ps 72:17 [author's translation]).



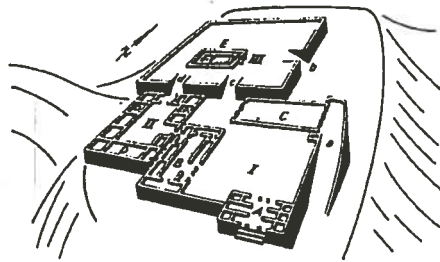
and 385). The situation is different in Mesopotamia.<sup>48</sup> There the king has access to the divine sphere only as an exception in the ceremonial of the Sacred Marriage (cf. 388).<sup>49</sup> In this context, he is occasionally shown enthroned beside a goddess.<sup>50</sup> In Egypt, on the other hand, *sitting at the right hand* is frequently attested not only in literature but in iconography as well. An illustration from Lepsius' *Denkmäler*<sup>51</sup> shows Amenophis not at the side of a goddess, however, but at the side of his mother Hatshepsut-Meryetra'. The frequently cited picture in Fig. 341 is also out of place here, for the king is sitting on his nurse's lap, and not at the right hand of a deity. In Fig. 353, however, a portraitlike representation of Pharaoh Horemheb shows him seated at the right hand of the king's god, Horus.<sup>52</sup>

In the psalms, the king normally sits *before* God (Ps 61:7), and his throne stands *before* the throne of God (Ps 89:36). It has been suggested that the psalmist may have understood Ps 110:1b, the wording of which is appar-

ently imported from Egypt, as an invitation for the king to "dwell" rather than to "sit" at the right hand of God.<sup>53</sup> *yšb* can mean both "to sit" and "to dwell." For all their differences, every attempted reconstruction situates the royal palace with its throne room on the south or right side (*yryn*, "the right side; south") of the temple (354, 355).<sup>54</sup> It was later found offensive that God and king lived *threshold to threshold* (Ezek 43:8). In the

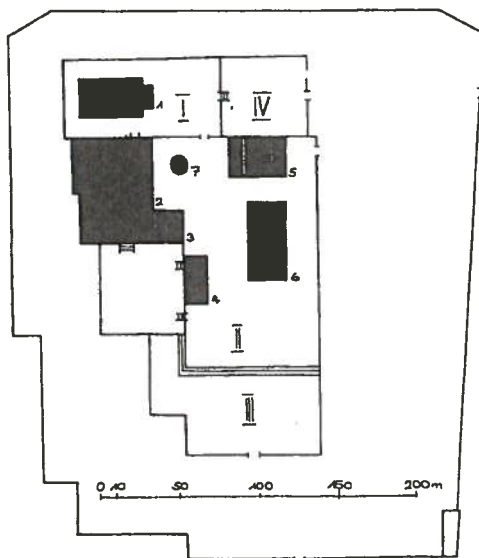


353. "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit (*yšb*) at my right hand . . .'" (Ps 110:1).



354. "Live (3b) at my right hand . . ." (Ps 110:1 [author's translation]). Reconstruction of the acropolis of Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, by K. Galling. I. outer palace court, II. inner palace court, III. temple court, A. hall of columns (entrance hall), B. audience hall, C. "House of the Forest of Lebanon" (stable), D. private apartments, E. temple, a. ramp to the "House of the Forest of Lebanon", b. east gate of the temple (Gate of the People), c. outer and d. inner gates from palace to temple.

355. Reconstruction of the acropolis of Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, by T. A. Busink. 1. Temple, 2. Palace, 3. Queen's Palace, 4. Throne Room, 5. Stables (enlarged), 6. House of the Forest of Lebanon, 7. Holy Rock, I. Temple Court, II. Great Court, III. "Other" Court, IV. New Court.



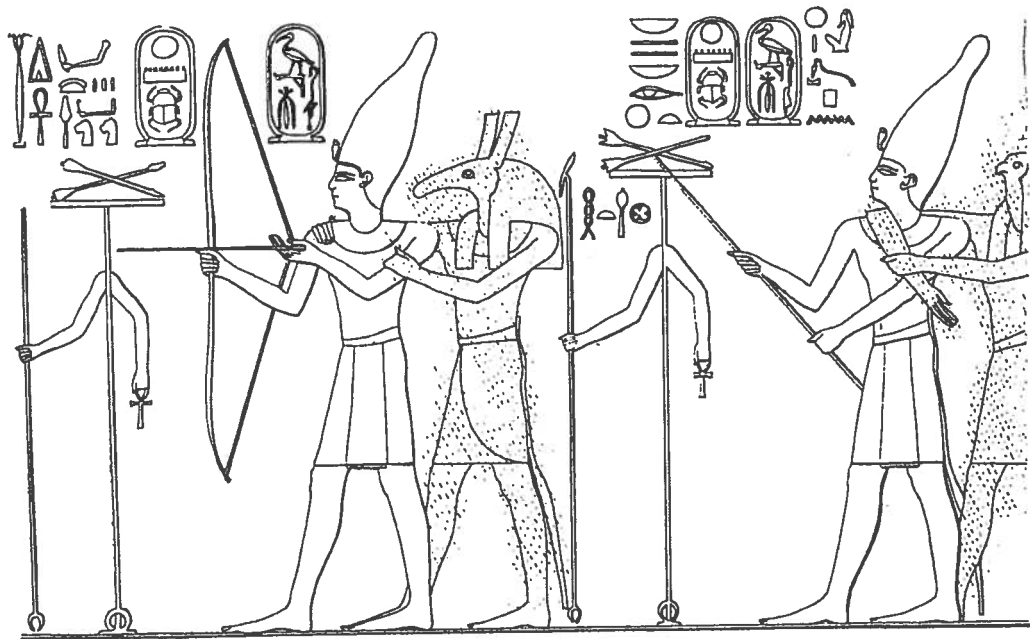
early period, the architectural unity of palace and temple was a monumental expression of the fellowship of God and king.<sup>55</sup> To Ezekiel, such fellowship had become unworthy of belief, and it was therefore necessary for him to take exception to the architectural expression of the concept.

The kingship of the newly crowned monarch was definitively manifested by his sitting on the *throne*. "To sit on the throne" means "to be king" (Ps 132:11–12; 1 Kgs 1:46). In Egypt, Isis, as mother of the king's god Horus, embodies the king's mother. Originally, Isis was none other than the throne, which she wore as her mark on her head well into the latest period (cf. 63). **It is the throne which makes the king a king; it is his mother. When the king must be especially secure in his kingship, as in the administration of justice, he sits upon the throne** (Ps 122:5; cf. 9:4, 7 and 285–86).

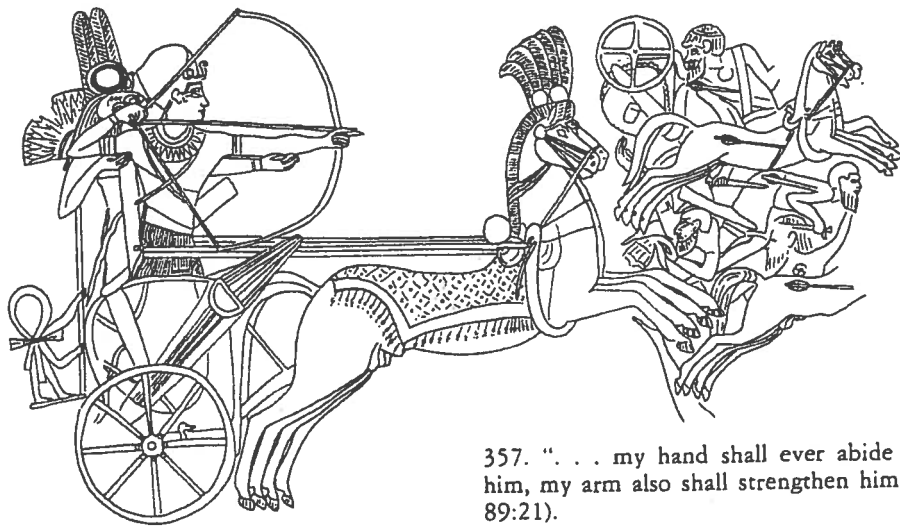
In order for the Davidic dynasty to rule "for ever," it must ever be furnished with new descendents (Ps 89:4a, 29a, 36a), and **through all generations** (Ps 89:4b) **the throne of David must endure imperishable as the heavens** (Ps 89:29b) or the sun (Ps 89:36b; cf. also 45:6). The distinctive quality of God's kingship is established by the notice that his throne is set in heaven (Pss 11:4; 103:19) and has endured since time immemorial (Ps 93:2).

If *world domination* is the most important consequence of divine generation (341, 342), it is even more the consequence of enthronement (cf. Pss 2:7–11; 45:2–5; 72:8; 110:1–2). In the Egyptian coronation ritual, that domination found expression in the shooting of arrows into the four quarters of the heavens (356). The king is assisted in this by Seth (cf. 2 Kgs 13:14–19). The wielding of the staff shown at the right probably has similar significance. There the falcon-headed Horus puts his arm around the Pharaoh's neck. The two posts with the crossed arrows are personified by the arms attached to them. They hold the *was*-scepter and the life-sign, indicating that a deity is represented. The two arrows are





356. "He [God] trains my hands for war . . ." (Ps 18:34a).



357. ". . . my hand shall ever abide with him, my arm also shall strengthen him" (Ps 89:21).

usually the symbol of the goddess Neith (cf. 333). Because she was considered mistress of the arts of war and because it was she who opened the king's way in battle,<sup>56</sup> her presence would well suit this context. However, the signs set be-

neath the pair of arrows on the right are probably to be read as a short form for *nhb.t hd.t nbn*, "Nekhebet, the wise one of Nekhen."<sup>57</sup>

In Ps 18:34 (cf. 144:1), the king boasts that *Yahweh* trains his hands for

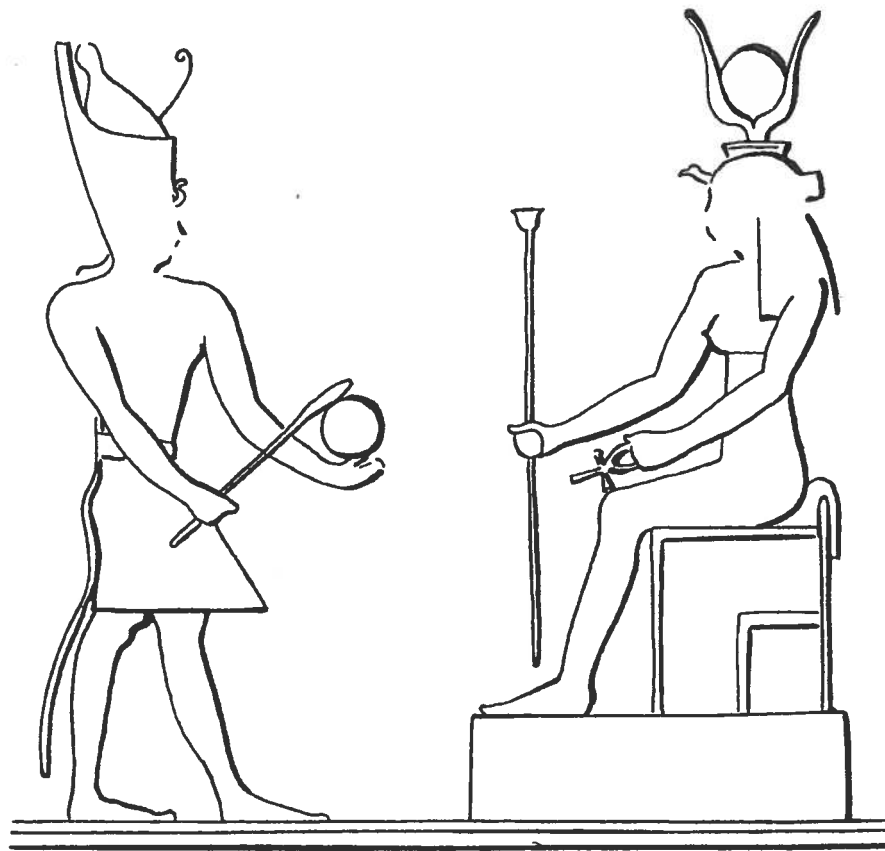


357a. The scene shows Amenophis III "shattering the red pots" (*sd dšrw*). They are symbolic of the deserts, the hostile foreign lands

surrounding Egypt. They are characterized as red (*dšrt*) in contrast to the black (alluvial) soil of the Nile.

war. Yahweh made his way smooth (Ps 18:32); Yahweh supported him in the tumult of battle (Ps 18:35). Fig. 357 shows how the fierce war god Mont, related in some way to Seth, assists the king in the midst of battle. The rites of enthronement establish a reality which is henceforth effective every day.

The smashing of vessels and figurines inscribed with the names of royal and national enemies may have had a function similar to that of the shooting of arrows and the striking of blows into the four quarters of the heavens. To be sure, this portion of the rite has not yet been attested as part of the ancient Egyptian

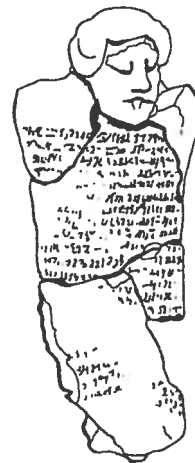


358. "You shall break them with a rod of iron . . ." (Ps 2:9a).

359. ". . . and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps 2:9b).



360. Clay figure inscribed with the names of enemy princes and nations. The figure was ritually smashed.





360a. "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling kiss his feet. . . . Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Ps 2:10–11).

Fear before Yahweh is expressed here by submission to the king whom he has appointed. The Assyrian palace relief shows a scene which might have served as a model for Ps 2. The Assyrian king has conquered the Elamites and deposed the hostile king, Teumman. As agent of the Assyrian king, a

general presents the nephew of the deposed Teumman for homage by the Elamite nobles. The nephew is friendly to Assyria (cf. Plate XXVII, part of the same scene). The first of the Elamite nobles is about to kiss the feet of the envoy of the Great King. Indeed, this homage before the new king is primarily a pledge of loyalty to the Great King who appointed him. Similarly, the homage of the "kings of the earth" before the Judaic king on Zion would be a tribute to Yahweh.

coronation solemnities, but it is clearly alluded to in verse 9 of Ps 2, which is an enthronement psalm. In Egypt, there is inscriptional and iconographic evidence for the rite as part of the cult of the dead<sup>58</sup> and the daily temple cultus (357a).<sup>59</sup> There have been numerous finds of pottery thus broken (359 and 360).<sup>60</sup> A dump containing approximately 3,600 potsherds was discovered at Mirgissa (15 kilometers south of Wadi Halfa) in 1962. The fragments may represent the remains of some 100 vessels. The fragments of the larger vessels bear star-shaped marks, indicating that they were smashed by maces.<sup>61</sup> The original background of the scene in Fig. 358 may have been a lively ball game for the entertainment of the goddess Hathor.<sup>62</sup> Like

many other activities, it was later reinterpreted as an apotropaic rite. The leather ball became a clay globe representing the eye of Apophis, the enemy of the sun (cf. 55). It was ritually smashed.<sup>63</sup>

Traces of the rite of Fig. 357a are also found in the OT, for example in Jer 19:1–2a, 10–13.<sup>64</sup> In Ps 2:9, the potent, magical rite has become a mere simile.<sup>65</sup>

News of the coronation and triumph of the new king may have been delivered to the four quarters of the world by four rollers, pintail ducks, or other birds of passage (cf. the four birds in Fig. 233; Ps 68:11–13).<sup>66</sup> The enthronement may have concluded with the obeisance of the subjects (360a; cf. 410).

### 3. THE KING AS TEMPLE BUILDER AND PRIEST

An ancient Babylonian text describes as follows the creative activity of the god Ea:

He created the king to be custodian of the temple, he created mankind to discharge service of the gods.<sup>67</sup>

This statement is typical of the Mesopotamian tradition as a whole. It is not, to the knowledge of the present writer, attested in Egypt. To be sure, one of the fundamental duties of the Egyptian king was the building of temples and the offering of sacrifices, but he did not perform this function (at least not primarily) as the representative of mankind, for in the Egyptian view mankind was not created to this end.<sup>68</sup> He performs this function as son of the gods, who in a very special way have granted him life. "In return I will perform [their] rites everywhere, truly, steadfastly, and eternally; as long as they [the gods] exist on earth, I will perform them, I, the son of Re [the sun god]."<sup>69</sup>

This difference of view is also reflected in the iconography of the king as temple builder. In Mesopotamia, representations of the king as temple builder are found from the early Sumerian period through the late Assyrian period. Fig. 361 depicts Ur-Nanshe, the Ensi of Lagash (middle of the third millennium B.C.) carrying mortar. The temple-building hymn of his later successor Gudea suggests that this picture should be interpreted as the laying of the foundation stone:

He put the water of fortune in the frame of the brick-mold. . .  
he lifted the holy pannier, approached the brick-mold.  
Gudea put clay into the brick-mold, performed the obligatory rites. . .  
He rapped on the brick-mold, brought the brick to light. . .  
he took up the brick from the frame of the brick-mold,

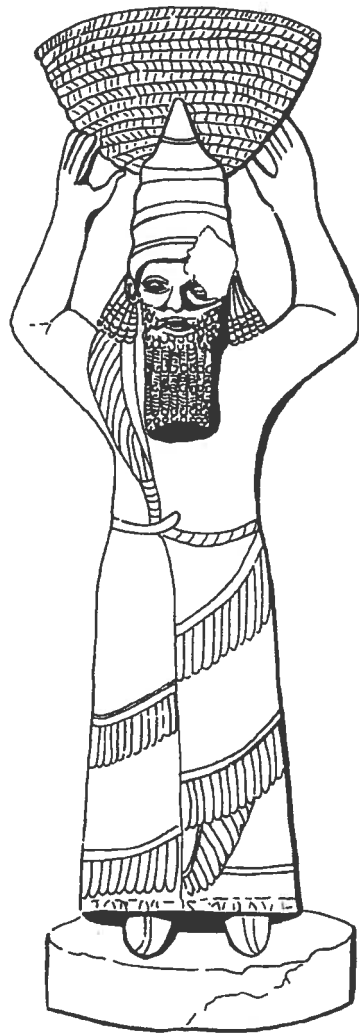
[like] a crown which An wears, he carried the brick, carried it along. . .  
made [more] bricks, brought them to the house.  
laid out the plan of the house.  
As to a little man building his [own] house anew,  
Nisaba, who knows the interpretation of numbers,  
suffers no sweet sleep come to his eye.<sup>70</sup>

Gudea's zeal is repeatedly stressed:

To build the house for his king  
he does not sleep by night,  
he does not slumber at midday. . .<sup>71</sup>

361. From the temple-building hymn of Gudea: "To build the house for his king, he does not sleep during the night, he does not slumber at midday . . ." (SAHG, p. 154).

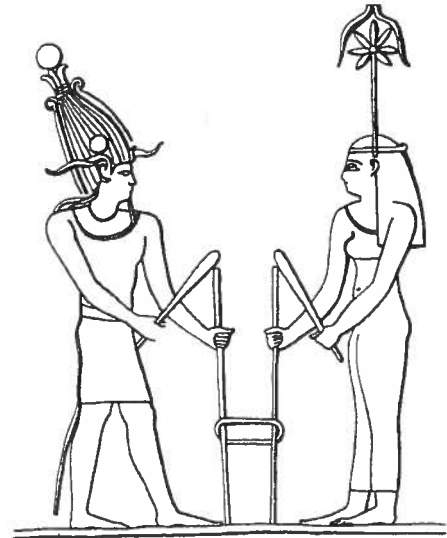




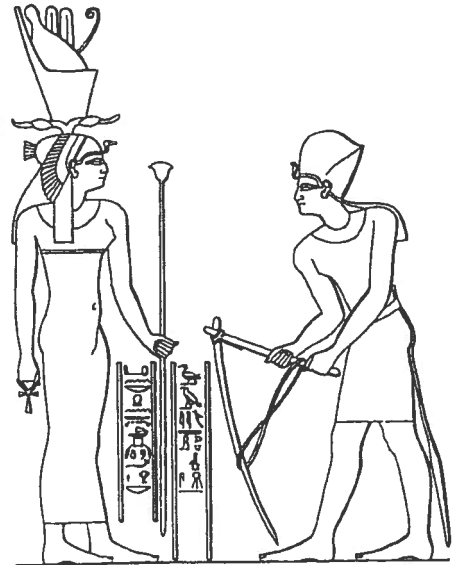
362. Assurbanipal (668–626 B.C.) engaged in the lowly task of carrying the basket for his lord Marduk, the chief god of Babylon.



363. "Remember, O LORD, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured; how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, 'I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob'" (Ps 132:1–5).



364. The Pharaoh and the scribal goddess Seshat stake out the site for the temple.



365. In the presence of Hathor, the Pharaoh lays out the course of the foundation trench (Hathor Temple of Dendera).

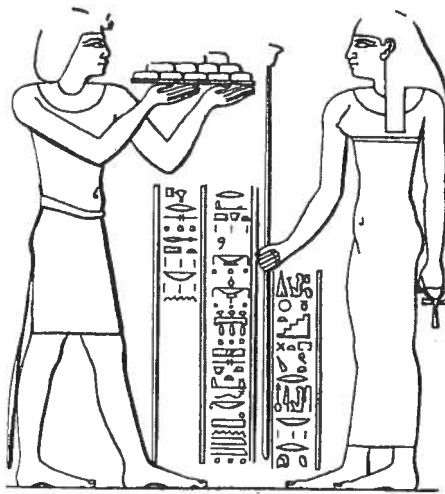
This latter declaration is strongly reminiscent of Ps 132:1–5, which relates that David had sworn not to grant sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids until he had found a dwelling place for



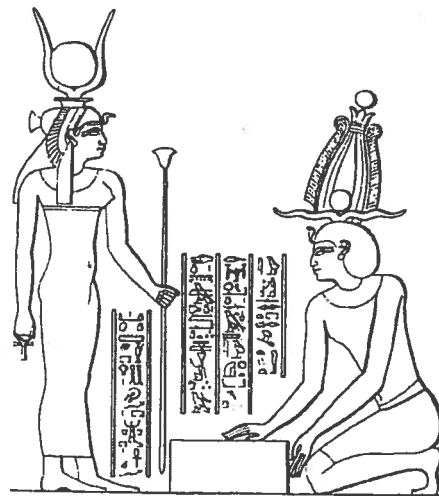
366. In the presence of Horus, the Pharaoh pours purified sand into the foundation trench (Horus Temple of Edfu). The temple must stand on pure ground.



368. The building sacrifice is offered. The "U" represents the excavation.



367. The Pharaoh presents the foundation gifts to Hathor: bars of gold, silver, and copper (Hathor Temple of Dendera).

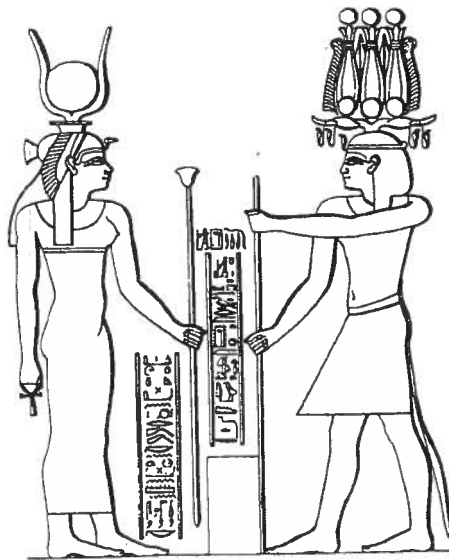


369. In the presence of Hathor, the Pharaoh shapes the cornerstone of the temple (Hathor Temple of Dendera).

Yahweh. The king is portrayed as a zealous servant.

In iconography, the zeal of the devoted servant is portrayed by showing him carrying a basket. In the ancient

Near East this task represented the most tedious, strenuous, and common form of labor. Mud was hauled in baskets; finished bricks were carried in baskets. Basket-carrying as such was not charac-



370. In the presence of Hathor, the Pharaoh sets the cornerstone (Hathor Temple of Dendera).



371. The Pharaoh presents the completed temple to Horus (Horus Temple of Edfu).

teristic of a definitive phase of labor (cf. 240). It was part of the building process from start to finish. It was a sign of servitude (Ps 81:6; 309). Yet, some 2,000 years after Ur-Nanshe, Assurbanipal had himself portrayed in this demeaning posture (362). And even where the royal temple builder is not shown in this ancient, traditional attitude, he nonetheless appears as the abject servant of the god for whom he toils (363).

Egyptian representations treating this theme are just as ancient as the Mesopotamian. They originated early in the third millennium B.C.,<sup>72</sup> although well-preserved, complete cycles have survived only from the Graeco-Roman period. The king's position in them is markedly different than in the Mesopotamian examples. He does not appear as servant of the gods. Rather, he acts on his own initiative and on his own responsibility. He builds as son for his father. As owner, he undertakes the critical tasks. Nowhere does he appear in the insignificant occupation of basket-carrying.

First, in collaboration with the scribal goddess Seshat, he lays out the base lines of the future temple, using four pegs and a line (364). Here, as often (cf. 111, 353, 385), the Egyptian king appears as equal among the gods. The four pegs (only two are visible in the picture) are firmly driven in. "Thus the four corners stand fast as the four pillars of the heavens."<sup>73</sup> Once the space has been staked out, the

372. It was necessary for the king to sustain the temple by endowing it with substantial real estate holdings. These provided support for the priests and provided a means for supplying the daily sacrifices. The illustration shows Pharaoh Shabaka donating lands (in the form of the hieroglyph "field") to Horus of Buto and his female partner Uto.

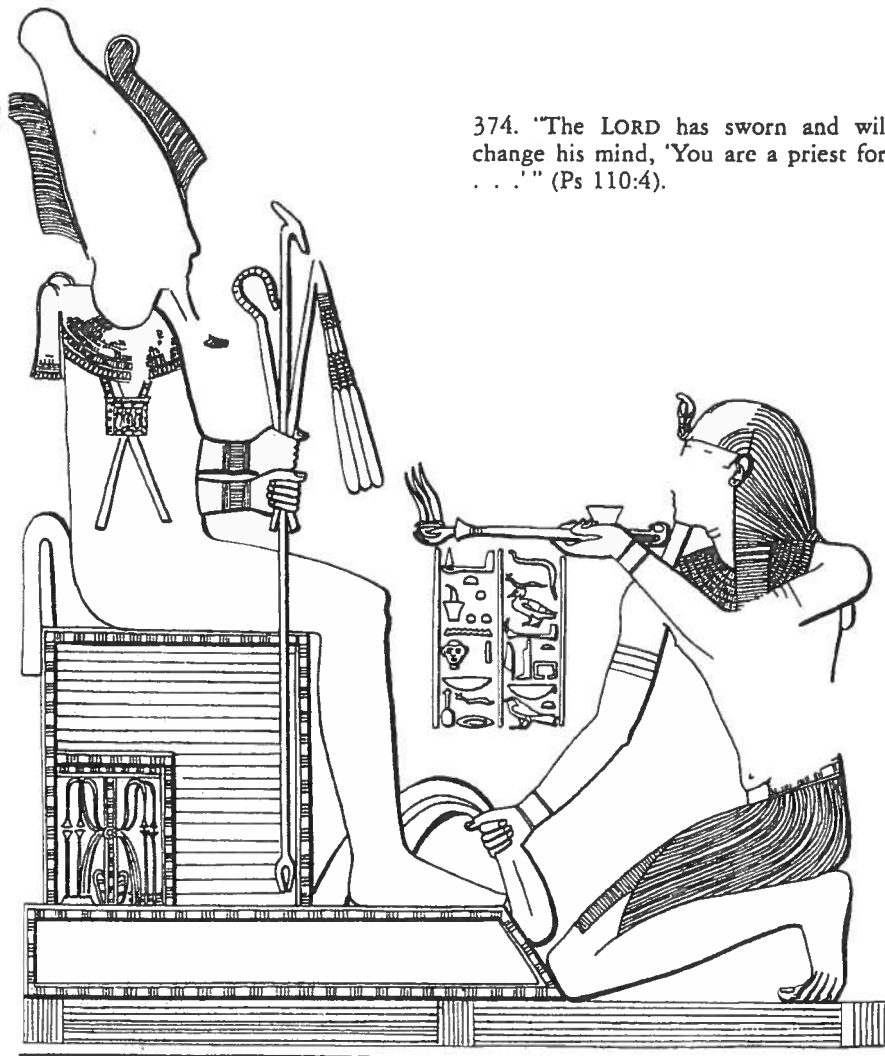






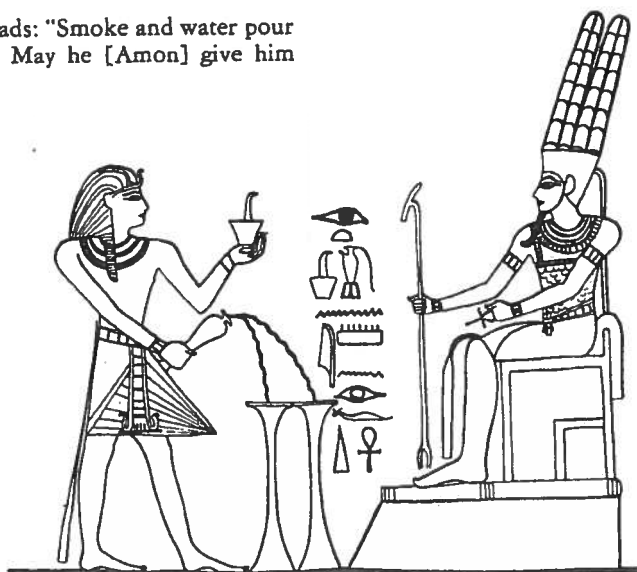
373. The sanctuary, its entrance flanked by two towers, is situated on a hill (cf. 202). The deity is seated on a throne with a footstool. A worshipper stands before him, finger extended (cf. 418-19). A show-table, a flaming

censer, and a libation bowl are seen in front of the temple. The king is offering a libation. Behind him stands a servant with a large bowl. Another servant brings forward a sacrificial bull (cf. the scene in 440).



374. "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest for ever . . .'" (Ps 110:4).

375. The text reads: "Smoke and water pour forth for Amon. May he [Amon] give him [the king] life."

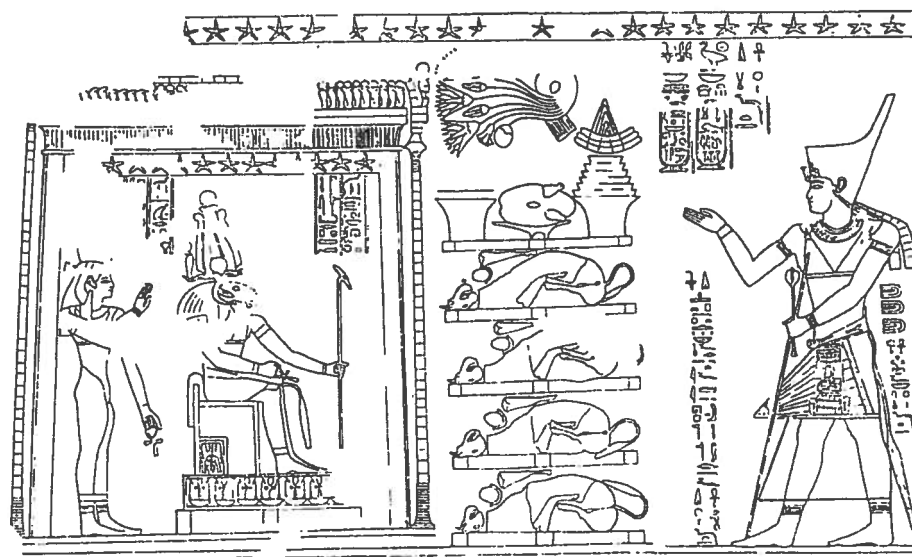


Pharaoh (symbolically) digs out the foundation trench with a hoe (365). This is done in the presence of the future owner of the temple (in this instance, Hathor of Dendera). Nonetheless, one does not gain the impression of a master-servant relationship.

The floor of the foundation trench is covered with a layer of pure sand (366). Then the foundation-offerings (bars of metal) are presented to the future lord (or mistress) of the temple (367), and drink offerings are poured out over the excavation (368). The king then forms

376. "I will come into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows. . . . I will offer to thee burnt offerings of fatlings, with

the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats" (Ps 66:13, 15).



the cornerstone from clay (369) and sets it in place with the help of a rod (370). That action concludes the great foundation ceremony.

P. Montet<sup>74</sup> places the formation of the cornerstone (369) before the pouring of the sand (366), interpreting Fig. 369 as the dressing of the foundation trench which is to receive the sand. There is evidence for both sequences at Edfu: that of Montet appears in the second hall

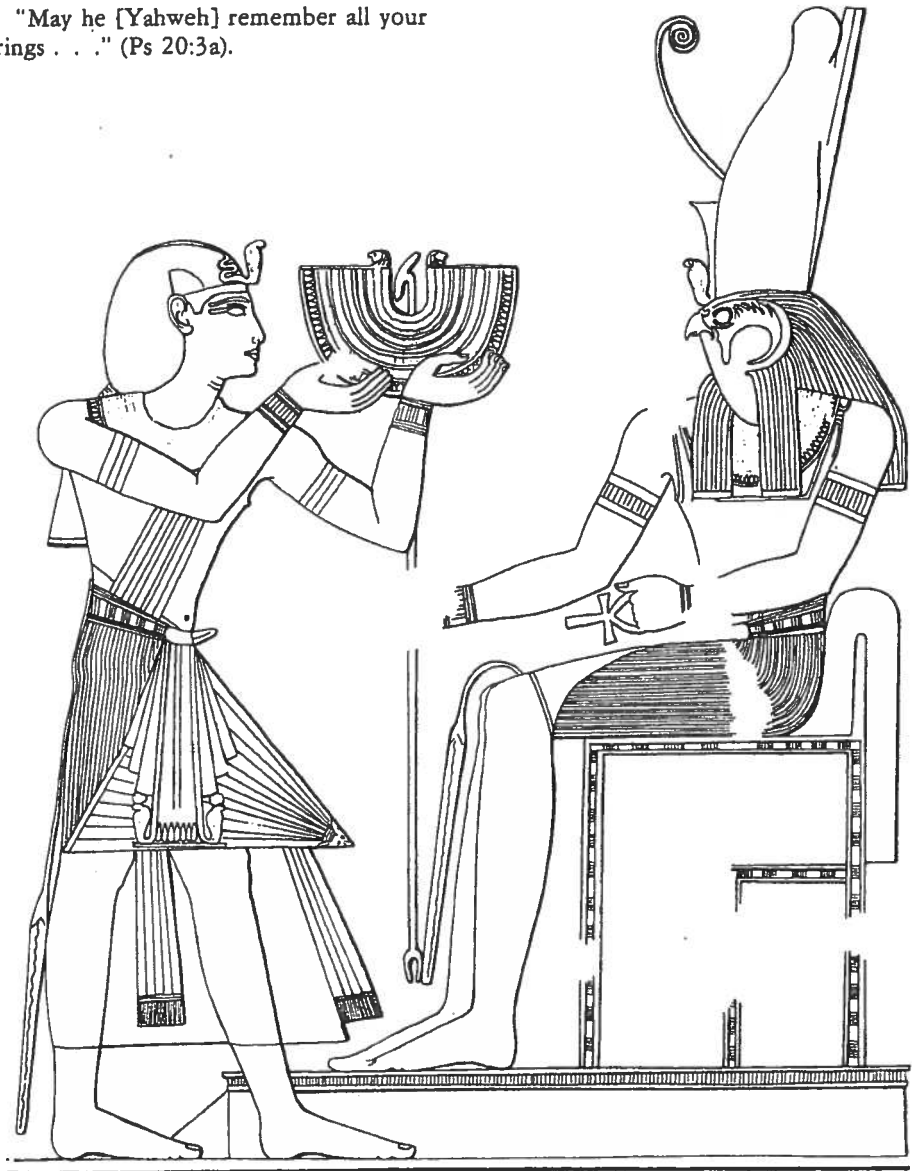
of columns; the sequence presented above appears on the exterior of the enclosure wall (cf. 177).

In an article entitled "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," A. S. Kapelrud finds a parallel to 1 Kgs 3-9 in Gudea's temple-hymn and deduces a common scheme of temple-building. That conclusion cannot be reached, however, without a number of improbable and imprecise readings of the text.



377. The anointing of the cult statue is part of the priestly service incumbent on the Pharaoh. Since there was no cult statue in the temple at Jerusalem, this duty was omitted. Instead, we learn that Yahweh anoints the suppliant (Ps 23:5) and especially the king (Ps 45:7) with the oil of gladness.

378. "May he [Yahweh] remember all your offerings . . ." (Ps 20:3a).



Solomon's dream at Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:2-15), for instance, has no relation at all to the dream in which Gudea is commanded to build a temple. On the contrary, in Israel the initiative for the building of the temple and for the institution of the monarchy appears to have come from the nation, and more specifically, from the king. Once Israel had finally become a settled people, there was re-

luctance to leave the ark in the anachronistic, shabby tabernacle (2 Sam 7:2-3; cf. Ps 132:1-5). The permanent establishment of Yahweh in Jerusalem was intended to impart stability and permanency to the royal throne of David (2 Sam 7:13). The temple is a "pledge and guarantee of the well-being of the monarchy."<sup>75</sup> This impulse is clearly evident in Ps 2: nowhere but on Zion, the

holy hill (v. 6) did Yahweh consecrate the king as king. Zion is made holy by the temple. From his temple on Zion, Yahweh sends forth the scepter of kingly might (Ps 110:2). With an utter disregard for history, Ps 78 (vv. 68–71) has Yahweh build the temple on Zion (cf. p. 120) and at the same time choose David as king. These actions are seen as the conclusion of the great saving event of the exodus. The temple of Yahweh and the throne of the house of David belong together (cf. Ps 122:1–5; cf. 354 and 355). The importance of the spatial proximity of temple and palace must not be overstated, however, for that would degrade the temple to the status of a palace chapel.<sup>76</sup>

According to the Deuteronomic history, the building of the temple has an additional significance akin to an act of thanksgiving (1 Kgs 5:3–6). Thus, the

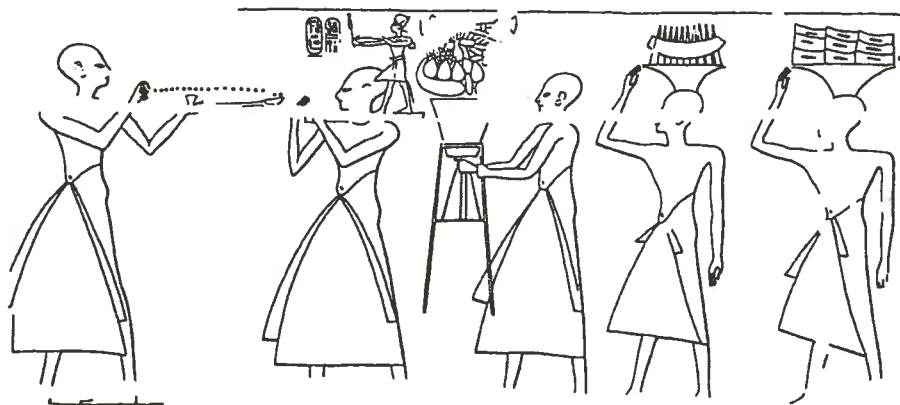
OT understanding approximates the Egyptian view, which regarded the building of the temple primarily as the fulfillment of filial obligation.

Fig. 371 depicts the Pharaoh presenting the temple which he has built to the royal god Horus. Linked with the presentation of the temple is the summons to take possession of it (Ps 132:8).

As builder of the temple, the king is responsible for its maintenance (372) and for the cultus which is carried on in it. In the enthronement psalm 110, the Israelite king is awarded the priestly office in an oath sworn by Yahweh (v. 4). The concentration of the kingly and priestly offices in a single person places the Israelite king in the succession of the ancient kings of Jerusalem. The prototype is Melchizedek, who was simultaneously king and priest of the highest god (Gen 14:18 [RSV: "God Most

378a. In the reliefs which adorned the walls of Egyptian temples, there are countless representations of the king fulfilling his service to the gods. In reality, of course, this service was performed by numerous cult personnel—a fact attested by pictures from private tombs (162, 162a). But the king's participation in the sacred actions was not merely an ideal. That would have been out of accord with ancient Near Eastern notions. The king was present, if not personally, in the

form of his statue. Here the statue is carried at the head of a procession by temple servants, who also bring fruits and breads from the daily offering. The statue holds in its hand a scepter, the determinative of the word *hry*, "to control; to undertake [a thing]; to make sacrifice." In this context, the royal statue with the scepter signifies that it is the king who offers the sacrifice. A priest with a censer greets the procession at the entrance to the temple.



High"). "The priestly activity of David and his successors is the subject of 2 Sam 6:14, 18; 24:17; 1 Kgs 8:14, 56. The king wears priestly attire (2 Sam 6:14), blesses the people, intercedes for the cult community, and presides over the rites. Indeed, he even offers sacrifice (1 Sam 13:9; 2 Sam 6:13, 17) and approaches God like the high priest.

Even in Ezekiel's concept of the 'prince,' he stands in the midst of the cultus (Ezek 44:3; 45:16, 22-25; 64:2-5)."<sup>77</sup>

Throughout the entire ancient Near East, but especially in ancient Sumer, cultic responsibilities devolve upon the king. The ancient Sumerian Ensi was as much priest as prince. He resides in the

379. "Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? . . . What right have you to recite my statutes? . . . For you hate discipline. . . . He who brings thanksgiving as his

sacrifice honors me; to him who orders his way aright I will show the salvation of God!" (Ps 50:13; 16b; 17a; 23).



temple and is responsible for the welfare of the city god. "The cult vase from Uruk places him at the head of a procession which appears before the goddess Inanna [cf. 62]. To be sure, only the train of his garment, borne by a servant, is preserved here."<sup>78</sup> As late as the Neo-Sumerian period, Ur-Nammu appears not only as temple builder (363), but also in a priestly capacity (180). Iconographic evidence for the priestly functions of Mesopotamian kings are extant well into the latest Assyrian epoch (373 and 440).

The priesthood of the king is much more strongly emphasized in Egypt than in Assyria. In the innumerable relief cycles from the temples of the New Kingdom and of the Graeco-Roman period, the king invariably appears as officiant (187, 229, 230, 374-79). This fact may be related to the obligations which devolve on the king as son of the gods. Beyond that, it is yet another indication that in Egypt the king played a much more central role than he did in Mesopotamia (cf. e. g., 19-24).

According to the relief cycles, it is the Pharaoh who daily opens the holy of holies and venerates the god, his father (229-30). It is Pharaoh who cleanses the throne (in Fig. 374, that of Osiris) and censes the cult statue, using an arm-shaped instrument (374) or a simple incense bowl (375). In Fig. 375, he also presents a drink offering with his right hand. The god Amon, to whom the offering is made, is seated on a throne whose base forms the sign for *m'it* (right world order) (cf. p. 171).

The suppliant of Ps 66:13-15 speaks of rams, goats, and bulls which he desires to sacrifice. The original speaker may have been the king,<sup>79</sup> for the king may have been the only one who could have afforded such sacrifices.

An ancient Near Eastern meal did not consist merely of eating and drinking. Anointing with oil (Pss 23:5; 104:15; 133:2; 268, 445) was equally indispensable (377).

In addition to the daily veneration, purification, censing, libation, sacrifice,

and anointing, the king was also responsible for providing the cult statue with clothing and ornaments (378). As was the case with a noble lord, not only support, but also entertainment had to be provided for the deity. Visits to other temples, song, music, dance (cf. chap. 6.3) and games of all kinds<sup>80</sup> served this purpose. These games frequently had erotic overtones. Since creation was largely understood in Egypt as generation, such games, like all aspects of the cultus, served to renew and sustain the creation.

Obviously, it was necessary for the king to delegate his priestly functions, except on special occasions. Still, the priests served under his commission. "It is the king who sends me to behold the god."<sup>81</sup> "The king gives the sacrificial gifts"<sup>82</sup> (cf. 378a).

Thus, in Ps 20:3, the king's sacrifices may be of the kind he personally offers (2 Sam 6:13, 17-18; 1 Kgs 8:5, 14, 62-64; 12:33; 2 Kgs 16:12-15). More probably, however, he has them presented by priests who act on his mandate. Undoubtedly Ps 61:8 was originally uttered by a king. Only the king, with the entire priesthood as his agent, can pay his vows "day after day."<sup>83</sup>

A peculiar scene frequently depicted in Egyptian temples is the "offering of Maat" (379) by the Pharaoh. Maat is shown as a sitting female figure with a feather in her hair. She embodies the rightness of individual things and aspects of the world (e.g., the cult; cf. Ps 132:9), and the rightness of the world as a whole. She is world order (cf. 32, 287). The gods are infused by Maat. By the offering of Maat, who becomes "in the act of presentation a kind of substance,"<sup>84</sup> the deity is supplied, as otherwise in sacrifice, with a power which constitutes his being.<sup>85</sup> While the cultic presentation of Maat may imply an ethical posture, it is nonetheless typical that in Egypt this attitude finds its highest expression in cultic-magical offerings. Quite the opposite is true in Israel. There the ethical-religious stance is not translated into reality in the cultus;

rather, the cultic is devaluated in favor of the ethical-religious (Pss 40:6-10, 50:14-15; 51:16-17; 69:30-31). In the view of the OT, the king (and man) cannot augment the righteousness of Yahweh. Righteousness and truth in the highest degree are inherent to Yahweh (cf., e.g., Pss 36:6, 10; 48:10-11; 85:10, 13; 89:16; etc.). The king receives righteousness from Yahweh (Ps 72:1-2). The

king can only make a solemn vow to hold fast to righteousness to the best of his ability. Ps 101 is such a vow of loyalty. The vow begins by praising the righteousness [RSV: "justice"] of Yahweh, then expresses the firm intention to strive for justice and right against injustice and transgression. This brings us to the king's responsibilities toward his people.

#### 4. THE REPRESENTATION AND FURTHERANCE OF THE POWERS OF LIFE

The life and blessing inherent to the king from birth are bestowed in their fulness at the enthronement. These qualities are manifested in the display of royal splendor. The king is the fairest of all men, for God has blessed him (Ps 45:2; cf. v. 7). To be sure, the passage can also be taken to mean that God has blessed him because he is the fairest of men (cf. 1 Sam 10:23-24; 16:12, 18; 2 Sam 14:25). Both translations are grammatically possible, and it would be incorrect to eliminate one in favor of the other. Beauty presupposes blessing, and *vice versa*. The king is beautiful *ex officio*. Therefore he is invariably portrayed as such. Only rarely do the interests of portraiture (cf. 353) displace the idealized image.

Nevertheless, to the ancient Near East, beauty consists not only in purity of form, but also in richness of color, light, and odor, and in display of wealth and power. A wide variety of status symbols plays an important role. One such status symbol was the war chariot.<sup>86</sup>

Though David rode on a mule (1 Kgs 1:33, 38; Zech 9:9; cf. 380),<sup>87</sup> his sons expressed their claim to kingship by equipping themselves with horses, chariots, and bodyguards (2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:5). The poet who desires to repre-

sent the king in all his glory bids him ascend his war chariot and ride forth (Ps 45:4). Here what was once foreign is no longer regarded as such. The beauty and splendor of the king are manifested in the concentrated strength of the bridled

380. The tribal princes of the period of the Judges rode on asses (Judg 5:10; 10:4); David rode on a mule (1 Kgs 1:33, 38). David's sons expressed their claim to kingship by acquiring horses and chariots (2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:5). The future Messiah, however, was expected to come riding on an ass: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech 9:9).

