JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER

An Introduction to a Study of Historical, Legendary, Mythological, and Cult Relations

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Preserved in that rich Bible storehouse of legend and dim Hebrew history, the Book of Judges, there lies the story of "old Judge" Jephthah and his daughter. The story purports to be an account of the exploits of this hero-judge in helping his people to withstand the attacks of their enemies and to strengthen their position among the struggling peoples of the ancient Semitic world. Shorn of its amplifying details, the story may be compressed as follows: Jephthah, the son of a harlot, is banished from his father's house in Gilead by his hostile brothers and goes to live in the land of Tob. There he becomes the leader of a band of freebooters. The country of Gilead being attacked by the Ammonites, the elders go to Jephthah, ask him to be their war-leader, and promise to make him their head. Jephthah accepts their proposal, tries in vain to bring about peace with the king of Ammon, and finally leads his people into battle, having first made a vow unto the Lord that if he should be successful, he would offer up for a burnt offering whatsoever should come forth from his house to greet him on his return. Victorious, he returns to his house in Mizpah and is greeted by his only daughter with timbrels and with dances. She supports her grieving father in his realization that he must fulfil his vow, asking only for a respite of two months in order that she may bewail her virginity on the mountains. At the end of this time, she returns to her father, who, as the King James version has it, "did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." Yearly, for four days, the daughters of Israel lamented the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Of the whole recital as we find it in Chapter XI and Chapter XII, vs. 1-7, that part which seems most nearly

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to fall within the province of history is concerned with the selection of Jephthah as the captain of the hosts in their fight against the Ammonite [or Moabites]¹, his successful battle, his later struggle with the Ephraimites, and his death after his six-year rule over Israel. If these cold details of war and peace were all that the chroniclers had recorded about this one Judge among the fourteen or more other Judges who ruled Israel from the thirteenth to the eleventh century before Christ, the story would have remained unknown to succeeding generations save as a connecting-link, relatively unimportant, in the chain of events in the development of the Hebrew nation. But, as the historians or poets of later centuries made their successive contributions to the story of the deeds of their ancestors, this bare skeleton of history seems to have become clothed with life-preserving elements of legend, cult, myth. These elements are the motives of the banished hero, the vow to sacrifice the first, the human sacrifice, the lament of the maiden for her virginity, and the weeping of the women of Israel. The hero is the banished illegitimate son (or brother) who returns to his home land and attains to supremacy and great power. Before going into battle, he makes a vow to sacrifice, if he should gain the victory, whatsoever [presumably, the first] out of his own house comes to meet him on his return. On his victorious return, he meets his only child, his daughter, who willingly consents to the sacrifice for the good of her people. For two months the daughter laments her virginity on the mountains. Every year, the women of Israel assemble to weep for the death of the maiden.

How much of the story in its final form is history, how much myth, how much legend? Questions for us here hardly to be asked! After nineteen hundred years of critical discussion by historical and literary critics, the

¹ Most scholars recognize at least two sources for the Jephthah narrative, one relating to the Ammonites, the other to the Moabites. Interwoven with these, according to Eissfeldt, Die Quellen, pp. 70ff, is a significant third thread of story.
problem remains today still unsettled. What St. Augustine said about the vow and the sacrifice may with equal propriety be applied to the whole story — "solet esse magna est et ad dijudicandum difficillima quaestio" *(Quaestiones in Judices VII. 49).* Some modern scholars still side with the ancient theologians and accept the story as entirely historical; others hold that aside from the kernel of the recital, the possibility for the separation of which has been suggested above, the narrative is on the whole of a legendary nature; still others accept the probable historicity of all of the narrative details up to the closing incident of the weeping of the women of Israel for the death of the daughter of Jephthah. Thousands of pages of good print are available for those who wish to concern themselves with these problems of historicity and meaning. Reams of exposition and argument have been contributed to the discussion by the ancient Jewish theologians, by the church fathers, by the rabbis of the middle ages, by the Roman Catholic and Protestant writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and by modern Biblical historians. For those of us who are willing to take the middle ground and regard the Biblical recital as

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belonging to the great body of popular legend, that fascinating even if indeterminate border-ground of fact and fancy, the records of history and of popular belief and customs and border-line history and the remains of legend and fairy-tale provide interesting material for a comparative study of the narrative details of this famous old-world story. For us, then, whatever may have been the actual facts in the development of the story, it lives today no longer as a detail of Hebrew history; it has become a record of primitive belief, a narrative of imaginative conceptions of the race in its development, a theme of universal human interest.

At the very outset of the story, Jephthah is presented as "the son of an harlot," who has been banished from his home tribe, and who has become the leader of a band of "vain men" in the land of Tob. Here the hero of our story connects himself interestingly with the banished man of history and popular story who returns to occupy a distinguished position among his own people. The nearest parallel to the Jephthah narrative among the several similar stories in the Old Testament is that of David,

3 Rud. Kittel (Geschichte des Volkes Israel II, pp. 49 and 53) connects Jephthah with Samson in the following interesting observation about the historicity of the two characters:


P. 53 "Tritt uns in Jeftha eine geschichtliche Erscheinung auf sagenhaften und mythischen Hintergrund entgegen, so schwelt hingegen Simson unsicher zwischen Mythenmärchen, Sage und Geschichte hin und her, keinem derselben ganz, keinem aber auch gar nicht zugehörend."

If what F. Nork has to say about the whole book of Judges is just, it would seem to apply with special pertinency to the story of Jephthah and his daughter: "Es ist ein mythisch gefärbten Conglomerat von geschichtlichen Elementen, eine chaotische Mischung der heterogensten Bestandtheile, entstanden aus dem Wunsche, die Traditionen der Väter durch Aufzeichnung der Vergessenheit zu Entziehen." — Biblische Mythologie des Alten u. Neuen Testaments (2 vols. in one, Stuttgart, 1842, 1843), vol. 2, p. 403.

4 All references to the Bible story are to the King James Version.
who for fear first of Saul and later of Achish flees away to Adullam, where he becomes the captain of a band of discontented men, and who after many heroic adventures returns to be crowned king over Israel (1 Sam. 22.1 and 2 Sam. 5. 1-3). And we have also the less closely related stories of Joseph (Gen. 37 and 47), Ishmael (Gen. 16 and 21), Abimelech, the bastard son of Gideon, who was elevated to the kingship above the legitimate offspring of his father (Judges 8 and 9), and Jotham, who for fear of his brother Abimelech fled to Beer and dwelt there (Judges 9.21).

From Greek and Roman legend or history we have such stories as those of Coriolanus and Polynices, of the Ionians and the Orchromenians, of Caius Marius. Coriolanus, as Plutarch tells us, was impeached and banished from Rome for life, attained to great fame among the Volscians, and yielded finally to the messengers from Rome who paled with him to withdraw his hostile forces and thus to save his people. Polynices was driven out of Thebes by his brother Eteocles, but unlike so many of these outcasts did not later attain honor (Sophocles, Antigone, 11. 197 ff). Of the Ionians, the story is told that they begot children upon the Orchromenians, using them as concubines, and that, when this band of bastard youths had grown up, fearing for themselves, they drove them from their country. These banished people later became powerful (Carl Müller, Fragm. Hist. Graec., vol. 3, Paris, 1849, p. 387). Caius Marius, as a military hero, had a somewhat similar experience to that of Jephthah. He was called home from Africa to wage war against the Teutonic barbarians, it being felt by every one that he was the only man capable of saving the State. After his victories, he was received at Rome with great honours. (Plutarch, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 218).

The banished man seems to have been a familiar figure in early Arabian life. In his comment on the Jephthah story, F. Buhl refers to the hero as "ein ausgestos-

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sener Mann nach der Art der Arabischen chula' â.” 6 A bit of detailed information about this custom is furnished by A. Musil in his Arabia Petraea 7: “Wer sich feige zeigt, eine schwarze Sklavin heiratet, oder seine Stammes-genossen bestiehlt, kann aus dem Stamm ausgestossen werden. Ein solcher lässt sich dann gewöhnlich bei einem feindlichen Stämme nieder oder verbirgt sich in unzugänglichen Schluchten, wo er eine neue Familie und dadurch ein neues Geschlecht gründet.”

The connection between such a legend as that of the banished Jephthah and the folk-tale motive of the outcast child should also be mentioned here. A child who is rejected by his father or family for a slight offense more apparent than real from an outcast becomes a prince and compels the person or persons who have treated him so cruelly to acknowledge the wrong. The saga of Joseph which has just been brought into connection with the Jephthah story comes in this category, as do the many other stories referred to by E. S. Hartman in “The Outcast Child.” 8

Much more interesting than the episode of the banishment for purposes of comparative study is the vow which Jephthah made to sacrifice what would come out of his house to meet him on his victorious return. Here the Jephthah story illustrates the widespread motive which we may phrase briefly as the “vow to sacrifice the first.” Looking to the Old Testament first, we find several instances of vows, but none very close to our text. Jacob vows to serve Jehovah and to give the tenth unto him (Gen. 28. 20-22) ; Israel makes a vow to destroy the cities of his enemies (Numb. 21.2) ; Hannah vows to devote her man-child unto the Lord (1 Sam. 1. 11) ; and

Absalom refers to a vow which he had made to serve the Lord (2 Sam. 15. 7, 8). When we turn to other literatures than that of the Hebrews, however, we discover a great abundance of legends and folk-tales which illustrate this motive, those stories which include a human sacrifice offering very interesting parallels to the Jephthah narrative.  

A story from the Far East offers a very interesting parallel to the Jephthah story, and, also, it may be added to the legend of Agamemnon and Iphigenia, with which, as we shall see in a moment, the Bible story has the most significant relations. The tutelar spirit of the city of Ke-sat was formerly the daughter of a military officer who before going out to war had vowed, if he were victorious, to sacrifice her to the idol. Successful, and passing before the temple of the idol, as he did not wish to sacrifice his daughter, even as he had made his vow, his ship was stopped and it was impossible for him to pass beyond until he had drowned his daughter. The inhabitants of the city then honored her as their tutelar spirit.” From the innumerable folk-tales from the peoples of Western Europe which illustrate this motive of the “sacrifice of the first,” I venture to select Grimm’s no. 88 as typical: A man, going on a journey, promised

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10 See Journal Asiatique, vol. 6, 1825, p. 159. Farther removed from the Jephthah story are the following three stories which involve a vow and the sacrifice: the Arabian story of Al-Mundhir (C. J. Lyall, Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry, New York, 1930, p. xxviii), and the Indian stories of Járo (R. C. Temple, Legends of the Panjáb [3 vols., London, 1883-1891], vol. 2, pp. 475-477) and of the Merchant and Devi (Baitál Pachísí, translated into German by H. Oesterley, Leipsig, 1873, p. 73).

11 Kinder u. Hausmärchen, Jubiläums – Auflage, Berlin, 1912, Nr. 88, pp. 285-290, Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen. One who wishes to read similar stories may well turn first to Baumgärtner, loc. cit., to Bolte and Polivka, Anmerkungen zu den
gifts to his three daughters. His youngest daughter asked for a “singing jumping little lark.” On his return, the man saw on the highest branch of a tree a lark. He sent his servant for it. A lion sprang out and said, “Whoever steals my singing jumping lark, I’ll eat up.” To save his life, the man promised to give to the lion the first thing he should meet within his gates. The first person to meet him was no one else but his youngest and best-beloved daughter. Realizing that his promise must be kept, the maid said that she would go and soothe the lion, and return to him safe and sound. The lion was a bewitched king’s son. She married the prince the night of her arrival. After many adventures, the prince and princess settled down to a happy married life. In the fairytales, as one might expect, the ending is of course a happy one. An interesting exception is the story of the white wolf as recorded by Cosquin:¹² Here the youngest daughter, contrary to a command from the white wolf, reveals the secret of the chateau; the white wolf, a prince in disguise, falls dead; and the maiden is unhappy all the rest of her life.

The tragic end of this story is in the main similar to the unhappy endings of legends in which the vow to sacrifice the first is incorporated. We may cite first the vow of Maeander, made to the Mother of the Gods, according to which if he were successful in the war with the Pessinuntines he would sacrifice the first who should come to congratulate him for his good success. His vow, like that of Jephthah, was a fatal one, as he was obliged to sacrifice his son Archelaus, his mother, and his sister, since they were the first to meet him.¹³ A similar story is that of Idomeneus, who is said to have vowed during a storm to sacrifice to Poseidon the first living thing that


¹³ Plutarch, De Fluviis.
should meet him on a safe return to Crete. The victim was his son.\textsuperscript{14} Of greatest interest to us is, however, the vow of Agamemnon to Artemis to sacrifice the most beautiful thing that should appear during the year, a vow which unfulfilled for many years would have resulted in the actual sacrifice of Iphigenia had not the Goddess intervened and, substituting a stag, conveyed the maiden to her temple among the Taurians.\textsuperscript{15}

Closely associated with the "vow to sacrifice the first" is of course the sacrifice itself. And here the Jephthah story takes on very interesting relations with records of human sacrifice in both history and fiction. But, if this sacrifice were other than the immolation of a human being, if it were the dedication of the daughter to a life of virginity spent either in her own home apart from the world of men or in the temple of Jehovah along with the other virgins set apart for its sacred functions! Many scholars would have us believe that some such future was reserved for her as the result of her father's rash vow. And who is to say to them "nay"? The solution of the problem seems just as remote today as it has ever been, despite the multitude of words which Biblical scholars have expended on it.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

—Omar Khayyám, \textit{Rubáiyát}, XXVII

The interest of the subject for us, as we regard this element of the Jephthah story, lies at all events in the

\textsuperscript{14} See the commentary of Servius on Vergil's \textit{Aeneid}, XI, 264 — \textit{Grammatici Qui in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii}, 2.2. 510. Leipsig, 1884.

\textsuperscript{15} Other vows which are reported as having been made by Greek or Roman heroes are, for example, those of Alexander of Macedon, as recorded by Valerius Maximus \textit{(VII. 3. Ext. 1)}, of Peleus (\textit{Iliad, XXIII}), of Eteocles (Aeschylus, \textit{Seven Against Thebes}, II. 257-265), of Agathocles (Diodorus de Siculis, XX, Chap. 1), of Camillus, as reported by Livy \textit{(V. 22.7)}, and of the Hermunduri and Chatti, as recorded by Tacitus \textit{(Annal., Book XIII, Chap. 57)}. 
world-wide motive of human sacrifice and we shall so accept it, supported, if support be needed, on the firm platform of Luther who declared, "man will, er habe sie nicht geopfert, aber der Text steht klar da" (Randbemerk. zu Richt. 11.39).

The institution of human sacrifice seems to be as old almost as history itself and as new almost as our own times. Among the Hebrews, the practice was unquestionably known and practiced. The justly-famed story of Abraham and Isaac, although a substitution-sacrifice story, bears witness to the practice of the immolation of children — in this instance, of an only child. As to the prevalence of the practice among the Hebrews and neighboring people, we have abundant evidence from the books of the Old Testament. "The first born of the sons shalt thou give unto me" (Ex.22.29). "All the first born of thy sons thou shalt redeem" (Ex.34.20). "Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech" (Levit.18.21). "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire . . ." (Deut.18.9,10). "In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun" (1 Kings. 16.34). "Then he [the King of Moab] took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall" (2 Kings 3.27). "But he [Ahaz] walked in the way of the

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16 Jachino (op. cit., p. 9, n. 1), for example, refers to two instances in Russia in 1892 and 1894. Two mediaeval legends to which Jachino also refers (pp. 24, 25) are among the many suggestive parallels to the Jephthah story which turn up over all parts of the world.

17 As to whether or no human sacrifice was allowed by law in the time of Jephthah, we shall not concern ourselves. The story of Jephthah, as it has come down to us, is the product of the thought of more than one period of Hebrew history and must be thought of as "not of an age, but for all time."
kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen . . .’’ (2 Kings 16.3). Such are a few of the many references to the prevalence of this practice which are to be found in the Old Testament.18

Among the Greeks, the practice of human sacrifice occupied a prominent position, if we may judge from the innumerable historical or imaginative records of human sacrifice for one or another purpose which have been preserved. The classic stories of Iphigenia (as usually recorded, a substitution sacrifice) and Idomeneus, with both of which the Jephthah story offers a striking parallel, have already been mentioned. The part of the Iphigenia story which concerns us here may be told in her own words:

Then the King
Sought signs of fire, and Calchas answering
Spake thus: ‘O Lord of Hellas, from this shore,
No ship of thine may move for evermore,
Till Artemis receive in gift of blood
Thy child, Iphigenia. Long hath stood
Thy vow, to pay to Her that bringeth light
Whatever birth most fair by day or night
The year should bring. That year thy queen did bear
A child — whom here I name of all most fair.
See that she die.’

So from my mother’s side
By lies Odysseus won me, to be bride
In Aulis to Achilles. When I came,
They took me and above the altar flame
Held, and the sword was swinging to the gash,
When, lo, out of their vision in a flash

Artemis rapt me, leaving in my place
A deer to bleed.\textsuperscript{19}

To the student of comparative legendary literature, the relation between the story of Agamemnon and Iphigenia and the story of Jephthah and his daughter is most intriguing. The assigned time for the story is almost the same for each; Agamemnon was chosen by the Greeks as their leader against the Trojans, just as Jephthah was chosen by the Gileadites in their war against the Ammonites; Agamemnon sent ambassadors to Priam to demand satisfaction for grievances, just as Jephthah sent his messengers to the king of the Ammonites; Agamemnon sacrificed to the Gods and had recourse to Calchas, the soothsayer, who told him that the Gods, and particularly Artemis, could be appeased only by the sacrifice of Iphigenia (or as others relate, favorable winds would be obtained only if Agamemnon should carry out his vow, made years before, to sacrifice the most beautiful thing that should appear during the year), just as Jephthah prayed to Jehovah and promised him that if victorious he would sacrifice the first thing to meet him on his return home; the weeping of the daughter of Jephthah on the mountains for her virginity, which suggests a relation or some connection even if remote with the story of Artemis, the virgin goddess whose home was in the mountains, has, along with other reasons, led some scholars to set up a similarity between the name Iphigenia (Iphitigenia) and Jephthah (Jephtah). Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia (even the removal to the temple of Artemis was a sort of sacrifice) just as Jephthah sacrificed his own daughter.\textsuperscript{20}

Among other Greek sacrifice stories, we may mention that by Themistocles (North's Plutarch's \textit{Lives}, vol. 1, London, 1895, p. 298), of Polyxena (Euripides, \textit{Hecuba}, 536 ff.), of the voluntary sacrifice of Menoceus (Apollo-

\textsuperscript{19} Euripides, \textit{Iphigenia in Tauris}, ll. 15 ff. (Gilbert Murray translation, pp. 3, 4).

\textsuperscript{20} See Delort de Lavour, \textit{Conférence de la Fable avec l'Histoire Sainte}, 2d ed., Avignon, 1835, Chapter XXIII.
dorus, Bibli., III, 6,7) and of Macaria (Euripides, Hera-clidae, 404 ff.), of the daughters of Leos (Paus. I.5,2), of the daughter of Aristodemus (Paus. IV.9,4), 21 of Erec-theus, to whom the oracle promised victory if he would sacrifice one of his daughters (Apollod. Bibli. III.15,4), of a ruler of Haliartus, who in order to obtain water was advised to slay the first person he met on his return and who meeting his own son first stabbed him to death (Paus. IX.33,3). It is unnecessary to add to the foregoing list the many stories of human sacrifice among other peoples of the World. In his discussion of human sac- rifice, Westermarck (see footnote below) refers to the universality of the practice and cites examples from the Hindoos, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Teutons, Slavs, the an- cient Semites and the Egyptians, the Japanese, the Mayas, the Aztecs, etc. The purposes of the sacrifices are varied: to obtain a victory in war, to stop an epidemic or famine, to obtain water, to avert perils arising from the water, to prevent a death, to help others into exis- tence, to make sure the foundation of a building, etc. 22 The Jephthah story is one of the great sacrifice stories of the world literature. In filling the role of an only child who voluntarily allows herself to be sacrificed for the good of her people, the daughter of Jephthah has become in the minds of Christian writers symbolic of the

21 Of special interest to the student of literary treatments of the story of Jephthah is this account of Pausanias, in that he re- fers to a Messenian, who was betrothed to the maiden and who claimed that he alone had the right to her. In more than one modern dramatic treatment of the Jephthah story, the author introduces this element of the self-sacrificing devotion of the lover.

sacrifice of the Son of Man on the cross and is thus a forerunner of the undying hero of humanity.

The lament of the maiden on the mountains is another motive of this great world story which interests the student of custom and myth among early civilized peoples. For two months the daughter of Jephthah bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. The association which has already been set up between the daughter of Jephthah and Iphigenia may now be extended to embrace the virgin goddess Artemis, identified as we know with Iphigenia herself. The weeping takes place on the mountains, the appropriate residence of Artemis. "Montium custos nemorumque virgo," says Horace (Od.Lib.3.22.1). It was fitting that the daughter of Jephthah should lament her virginity in the home of the great virgin goddess. According to the testimony of Epiphanius, this Hebrew maiden was worshipped as a goddess, Kore-Persephoné, by the Sichemites and is thus elevated to the rank of a deity by the side of Artemis herself. — "Etenim Sicimis, quas hodie Neapolis dicitur, sacra quaedam ab indigenis in honorem puellae celebrantur, quod ab Jephthe filia manasse videtur, quae Deo quondam sacrificata fuerat" (Adv.haeres.III.2.XXIII). 24

The weeping of the daughter of Jephthah for her virginity finds some interesting parallels in classic story. In the Oedipus Rex of Sophocles (II.1501-1503), the father laments that his children would go to death unmarried and without children. In the Electra (962, 963, 1185) Electra laments for Chrysothemis and Orestes for his sister herself. So Polyxena, in the Hecuba of Euripi-
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26 See C. F. Burney, The Book of Judges, London, 1918, p. 324. A very curious instance of the survival of a pagan custom, profoundly modified to secure a new lease of life, is related of the Celts by John Rhys, Celtic Folklore, vol. 1, Oxford, 1901, pp. 312, 313: On the Sunday nearest to August 12, crowds of people used to visit the tops of the mountains. The crowds were denounced as pagans by preachers. If you ask the reason for the custom, a quasi-religious reason is given, namely, that it is the day on which Jephthah's daughter went forth to bewail her virginity upon the mountains. People who had never thought of going up the mountains read at home on that day about Jephthah's daughter.

I have read somewhere also of the custom that was followed by the young girls of the village in Palestine where Jephthah was supposed to have lived. Every Spring they went into the hills to celebrate the sacrifice of the daughter.

on fairly firm ground as we seek to establish the relations of this motive with primitive beliefs and practices of other peoples than the Hebrews. The ceremony which is merely mentioned at the close of the story takes us back to the sacrifice which has already been briefly discussed. Its presence in the story confirms us in our belief that the writer [or writers] of the story as we now have it enveloped the slight historical kernel of the event with elements of universal popular tale and cult observance in order to make more impressive the history of his ancestors. 28 He succeeded in fashioning a story which remains alive three thousand years and more after the supposed event.

The clearest cult relation of this motive of the weeping of the women of Israel is with the widely prevailing worship of Tammuz and Ishtar, with its significant ceremonies. Abundant evidence of the existence of such a cult among the peoples of the ancient world is available. One thinks at once of course of the well known passage in Ezekiel (Chap. VIII, v. 14): “Then he [the spirit of the Lord] brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord’s house which was toward the north; and behold,


28 Walter Baumgartner’s comment on the nature of this story of the weeping of the women of Israel and on its connection with the vow and the sacrifice is significant. “Mit Recht sieht man darin” [the four days’ weeping]. “eine Anspielung auf einen damals geübten Kultbrauch, vermutlich die Klage um eine weibliche Vegetations-gottheit, die dann durch eine menschliche Gestalt ersetzt wurde. Die Erzählung von Jephtas Gelübde ist die dazu gehörige Kultlegende, die den Ursprung des Brauches erklärt. Sie musste also mit dem Tod des Jungfrau enden; jede Umbiegung desselben hätte den Zusammenhang mit der Kult-handlung zerstört.

there sat women weeping for Tammuz [Adonis in the Vulgate]. Other names for Tammuz are Osiris among the Egyptians, Adonis among the Phoenicians, Attis among the Phrygians, Hadad-Rimmon among the Arameans, Bormos, Hyglas, Hyakinthos, etc. among the Greeks. There are both male and female divinities who are thus worshipped and lamented. Witness the worship of Koré-Persephoné, of Ishtar along with Tammuz, of the Syrian goddess Atargatis, who, in the opinion of one scholar at least, is the original model of the daughter of Jephthah.29

In such a wide-spread cult as this of Tammuz and Ishtar, with its parallel manifestations among other peoples than the Babylonians, this ceremony of the weeping of the women of Israel seems to have had its origin. It is a cult of sorrow, death, and resurrection, originally connected with the death of a god. The mourning is for the death of a god, a son of the heavenly father and the earth mother, or for a daughter, representing the earth mother as does the son the heavenly father. So, the cult of the goddess Ishtar, worshipped as the earth goddess of fertility, is intimately connected with that of Tammuz. It is thought by some scholars30 that the myth of the abduction of Koré-Persephoné31 to the Underworld and her return to the earth represents a form of the Tammuz-Ishtar myth. This connection assumes significance in a study of the story of the weeping of the women of Israel, in the light of the statement of Epiphanius that the


30 See, for instance, Kittel, loc.cit.

daughter of Jephthah was worshipped as Koré by the Sichemites.32

This is not the place to dilate on the mythological relations which have been set up for certain divinities with whom the story of the weeping of the women of Israel has been, plausibly or not, connected, or even on the mythical origin which has been ascribed to the hero Jephthah himself.33 It must be enough to indicate here in conclusion a relation which, if accepted, would make a place for the daughter of Jephthah in the realm of the goddesses or demi-goddesses of ancient belief: Ishtar — Iphigenia — Artemis — Koré-Persephoné — the daughter of Jephthah — Ishtar, a circle complete, fancy with fact interfused, if you will, or maybe no fact at all.

32 See ante.

Three of the mythological theories as to the origin and significance of the Jephthah story are concisely summarized by Köhler, the gist of his exposition being presented as follows:

According to J. Grill — Jephthah signifies the Sun. His father Gilead is the Genius of the Night. The Harlot with whom Gilead begot Jephthah is the Goddess of Twilight. Jephthah's daughter is the Morning Red. So the story of Jephthah represents how the Sun is born in the morning from Night and Twilight, but in its shining itself consumes the rosy Glimmer of the Morning Red.

According to I. Goldziher — Jephthah is the opener, the Sun. Jephthah's daughter signifies Evening and Morning-Red. The story of Jephthah tells us how the Twilight of the Evening is born by the setting Sun and is killed by the rising Sun of the Morning.

According to M. Schultze — Jephthah is the Ploughman. He strikes the Ammonites while he prepares the fields. His Daughter comes to meet him when the seed sprouts up for him. The Daughter laments two months long while so long a mournful rustling of the seed resounds in the wind. Finally the Ploughman's Daughter is slain and offered as a burnt-offering; the crops are cut and the stubble is burnt with fire.