

SIMO PARPOLA'S CLAIM OF ASSYRIAN INFLUENCE ON THE JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND ZOROASTRIAN TRADITIONS

Dr. Kersey Antia, Mar 20, 2020

As a member of the American Oriental Society I came upon an article by Jerrold Cooper of John Hopkins University (*Journal of American Oriental Society*, Volume 120, No. 3, July-September 2000, pp. 430-443) which refutes Simo Parpola's claim that much of Judeo-Christian theology and Greek philosophy can be found in the ancient Assyrian sources, including Zoroastrianism too in his claim. Parpola seems to identify "the Holy Spirit" with Ishtar and the concept of "God's Son and Chosen One" with the messianic role of the Assyrian king. Cooper admires "the breathless quality that pervades Parpola's theories," and adds: "I have always regarded Simo Parpola as one of the most brilliant of my own generation of Assyriologists." He even concedes: "I fully believe with Parpola that "Mesopotamia religion and Philosophy are NOT dead but still very much alive in Jewish, Christian, and Oriental mysticism and philosophies." I for one find the figure of glazed brick Assyrian Tree with a winged figure on p. 432 so very reminiscent of the winged figure of the Achaemenian who seem to have assimilated Assyrian architecture in absence of their own. However, as Cooper's research, too complex to be quoted in full here, indicates that Parpola's assumption that the Assyrian Tree diagram is the key that links different traditions, because "the almost total lack of relevant textual evidence" of the Tree implies that the symbolism of the Tree was esoteric doctrine. Cooper also finds various grounds to reject Parpola's claim that Tammuz died "for the assumption of all the fallen souls – and his death can be regarded as a token of God's love for all mankind in the same sense as Christ's redemptory death." It was necessary to review Parpola's thesis because his claim that along with Jewish monotheism, Platonism, Pythagoreanism, etc., Zoroastrianism also was part and parcel of the Deuteronomistic religion as well," which contradicts, even negates any assertion of Zoroastrian influence on the Judaeo-Christian tradition.