

times in the Hebrew Bible (c.g. Deut 3:8; Josh 11:3.17). The prominent mountain at the west-end of →Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon rises to a height of 2.814 m above sea-level. Its modern name is *Jebel eš-Šeḥ* "Mountain of the Hoar" or *Jebel et-talġ* "Mountain of Snow", both designations pointing to the long-lasting snow-cap on its summit. The etymology of Hermon (Heb *hermōn*) is disputed: a) The root ḤRM I Niph. means "to be split", cf. Ar *ḥarama* "perforate". This may describe the situation of the mountain massif separated from the Lebanon. b) ḤRM II Hiph/Hoph. only, means "consecrate (to annihilation)" and belongs to the same word-field as Ar *ḥaram*, the "consecrated, separated district" and may refer to the exalted position of the mountain and its holiness, too. The ending *-ōn* may be used in analogy to *lēbānōn* as a denominative adjective. As an imposing mountain, Hermon has been endowed with divine traits in West Semitic traditions.

II. In early times the name of the Hermon is not known in extra-biblical sources, but according to Deut 3:9 "the Sidonians call him →Sirion, the Amorites Senir". This last designation, used also in Egyptian (*snr* Ramses III, see J. SIMONS, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia* (Leiden 1937) list XXVII 117, *ś-n-n-r*) and the OT in Ezck 27:5; Cant 4:8; 1 Chr 5:23, is in the Assyrian annals of Shalmaneser III reported as the refugee of king Hazael of Damascus (*kur^usa-ni-ru*, WO 1 [1947/1952] 265:6; 2 [1954/1959] 38:49; *Iraq* 24 [1962] 94:22). Later on the Assyrians in the time of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal used the name *kur^usi-ra-ra* (references in S. PÄRPPÖLÄ, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* [AOAT 6; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970] 312) with the additional information that cedar-beams had been cut there. It is probable that not Hermon alone but the whole Anti-Lebanon is meant in this context. Therefore in a *lipšur-litany* (used as an incantation for purification) the *kur^usi-ra-ra* (var. [*si-r*]a-a) besides the Lebanon is invoked.

According to the OT, Hermon is inhabi-

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I. Mount Hermon is mentioned several

ted by Hiwites (Josh 12:5; Judg 3:3), belongs to →Og from →Bashan (Josh 12:5) and forms, as the region belonging to the tribe of Manasseh, the northern frontier of the Eastern-Jordan country (Josh 11:17; Deut 3:8). These—historically incorrect—attributions show the significance of the land-mark of this holy mountain, where →Baal Hermon (Judg 3:3; 1 Chr 5:23) was venerated. Therefore in Ps 89:13 Hermon and Mount →Tabor “sing forth Your (Yahweh’s) name”. Nevertheless no Iron Age sanctuary has yet been found on Hermon or in its surrounding valleys.

III. In Hellenistic-Roman times Hermon belonged to the kingdom of the Ituraeans. The ruins of various little temples of Hellenistic type may point to places where Ituraean cults were performed. At the top of the mountain at Qasr ‘Antar a sanctuary with an oval *temenos* has been identified (C. WARREN, *PEFQS* 1 [1869/1870] 210-215) and an inscription is dedicated *to theou megistou k(ai) hagiou*, “to the greatest and holy god”. He is adored by people who swore in his name. This brings to mind the tale in *1 Enoch* 6:4-6 about the 200 →angels who met on the top of Hermon, swearing an oath there before they came down to impregnate human wives. Another inscription from Qal‘at Gandal, dated 282 CE, mentions a priest of “Zeus megistos”, the Greek designation of the Baal Hermon. At the foot of the mountain another sanctuary has been identified with the cult of *Leukothea*, probably a local representation of →Astarte (*OGIS* 611). Not far from there a little sanctuary has been found at Senaim with an altar showing the relief of →*Helios*, so this sun-god may also have been venerated at Hermon. Bearing this in mind it is not surprising to hear that Eusebius in his *Onomasticon* (ed. Klostermann, Vol.III/1 [1904] 20) *sub Aermon* testifies that Hermon was still venerated as a holy mountain in his days.

IV. Bibliography

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