Course Reading

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Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic

Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel

Frank Moore Cross

6   *The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth*

The Mythic Cycle of Ba'l and 'Anat

Much study has been given in recent years to the mythic cycle of Ba'l and 'Anat.[1] The texts are written in Canaanite cuneiform[2] of the mid-fourteenth century B.C. and come from Rās eš-Šāmra, ancient Ugarit. The date of the copies we possess does not answer the more important question of their date of composition, nor does the Ugaritic provenience determine the original setting in which they were first sung. There can be no doubt that this poetic cycle was orally composed. It is marked by oral formulae, by characteristic repetitions, and by fixed pairs of synonyms (a type of formula) in traditional thought rhyme *(parallelismus membrorum)* which marks Semitic oral literature as well as much of the oral literature throughout the world.[3] Moreover, their repertoire of traditional formulae overlaps broadly with that of the earliest Hebrew poetry, a circumstance impossible to explain unless a common tradition of oral literature embraced both Israel in the south and Ugarit in the north. In view of this shared oral repertoire, its formulae, its themes, and its prosodic patterns, it seems highly likely that the mythic cycle stems from the main centers of Canaanite culture and dates in terms of its earliest oral forms no later than the Middle Bronze Age (1800–1500 B.C.). Such a context is confirmed both by the geographical terms preserved in the corpus and by its archaizing diction.[4]

The mythic themes in the Ba'l texts share much in common with the Phoenician traditions preserved by Sakkunyaton (Sanchuniathon), and for that matter, in the Bible. At a greater distance, we also can perceive now the influence of the Canaanite theme of the battle with the sea-dragon in the Mesopotamian creation epic, *Enuma eliš*,[5] and in the Greek myth of *Typhoeus-Typhon*.[6] At all events, we must insist that in the Ba'l cycle we are dealing with a version of a mythic literature common to the Canaanites and to those who shared their culture from the border of Egypt to the Amanus in the Middle and Late Bronze Age.

When first the content of this complex of myths becomes clear, we find a conflict developing between Prince Sea and mighty Ba'l-Haddu.[7] The scene portrays Yamm, Sea, sending his divine pair of messengers to the assembly of the gods held at the tabernacle[8] of 'El located at the source of the double-deep, at the cosmic mountain, that is, at the gates to heaven and the entry into the abyss. Prince Yamm, alias Judge River, demands that Ba'l be given over to him as a captive and that his, Yamm's, lordship be acknowledged.

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1. This chapter is a revised and expanded form of the writer's essay, "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," *JThC*, 5 (1968), 1–25; it rests, too, on *SMir*, pp. 237–250 [= *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, Baltimore, 1950 (microfilm-reprint, Ann Arbor, 1961, pp. 84–127)].

2. The appearance of tablets in a simple cuneiform alphabetic script from three sites in Palestine, as well as a second type of alphabetic cuneiform at Ugarit, makes clear that the system had wide usage in Syria-Palestine and cannot be viewed as a local Ugaritic script. That the cuneiform alphabet was not originally designed for the Ugaritic dialect should have already been clear from such evidence as the existence of the grapheme *ḏ*, a sign for the voiced dental spirant which at Ugarit had already merged with the stop *d*. It may be that the secondary development of the *'alep* sign into *'a*, *'i*, and *'u* is a local Ugaritic phenomenon designed to facilitate transcription of Hurrian, but even this is uncertain. Very likely, the center for the radiation of the Canaanite cuneiform alphabet was central Phoenicia. However, we shall have to await systematic archaeological exploration of the great port cities before we can be sure; these cities have escaped major excavations carried out with modern techniques.

3. See the epoch-making work on the character of oral literature by A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960). The methods of formula analysis developed by Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and their followers furnish new tools to attack both Ugaritic and early biblical literature. For the analysis of Ugaritic literature utilizing these methods, see Richard Whitaker's forthcoming study based on his Harvard dissertation, "A Formulaic Analysis of Ugaritic Poetry" (1970). Among other things, they sharply undercut theoretical conceptions of oral transmission presently ruling certain circles of both Old and New Testament scholars and may very well have an impact on the analysis of biblical tradition comparable to that of *Gattungsforschung* which similarly developed first in Homeric studies. See also the paper of R. Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and its Russian Facet," *Language*, 42 (1966), 399–429. (This study is wider in scope than its title suggests.)

4. The contrast between the prose of letters from Ugaritic and the older parts of the mythic literature is very striking.

5. See above, chapter 5, n. 11.

6. Professor David Flusser has reminded me of the unmistakable ties of the Typhon myth with the East. Apollodorus, *Bibl.*, I, 5, 3.7ff. describes Typhon's birth of Gaia and Tartarus in Cilicia and Zeus' battle with Typhon on Mount Cassios (Hittite *Ḥazi*, Canaanite *Ṣapōn*). Cf. Homer, *Iliad*, 2, 782f.; Hesiod, *Theog.*, 820ff. Compare also the curious story of the she-dragon and Typhon in Hom., *Hymn to Apollo*, 300–375. The Hittite myth of Illuyanka has also influenced the form of the Typhon myth, but in general is further removed from the Greek theme than the Canaanite. Cf. E. von Schuler, in *WM*, I, 178.

7. Mesopotamian Adad < Hādād < Haddu. Compare Phoenician Dagōn (Hebrew dāgān) < Dāgān Dagnu, etc.

8. See above, chapter 3, note 112; and chapter 2, notes 143 and 144.

The council is cowed, and despite Ba'l's rebuke, 'Ėl, patriarch of the gods, replies to the terrible ambassadors of Yamm:

'abduka ba'lu ya-yammu-mi
'abduka ba'lu [la-'ôla]mi
bin dagani 'asīruka-mi

Ba'l is thy slave, O Sea,
Ba'l is thy slave forever,
The son of Dagan thy prisoner.[9]

Ba'l in this decree of the assembly comes under the sway of Prince Sea. After a break in the text we hear Kôtar, craftsman of the gods, predicting a victory of Ba'l over his captors:

la-ragamtī laka la-zubūli ba'li
tanītī la rākibi 'urapāti
hitta 'ibaka ba'lu-mi
hitta 'ibaka timḫaṣu
hitta taṣmit(u) ṣarrataka

tiqqaḫu mulka 'ôlamika
darkata dāta dārdārika

Let me speak to you, O Prince Ba'l,
Let me recite (to you), O Rider of the Clouds:

Behold, thy enemy, O Ba'l,
Behold, thy enemy thou shalt smite,
Behold, thou shalt smite thy foes.

Thou shalt take thy eternal kingship,
Thy dominion forever and ever.[10]

Kôtar fashioned two clubs for Ba'l and gave them magical names:

9. *CTA*, 2.1.36f. Note the pattern abc:abd:efg, and the chiasm of the last line. The enclitic *-mi* provides perfect overall symmetry of line (9:9:9) as well as rhyme.

10. *CTA*, 2.4.7-10. Cf. Ps. 92:10. The metrical forms in the passage are typical. Each unit is symmetrical: a bicolon 11:11 (in syllables); a tricolon 8:8:8 (9); and a bicolon 9:9. The tricolon is in climactic parallelism (abc:abd:aef). The final bicolon is marked by strong assonance, especially with the repetition of the syllables *ka* and *da(r)*.

šimuka 'atta yagarriš
yagarriš garriš yamma
garriš yamma la-kussi'ihū
nahar(a) la-kaḫti darkatihū

Thy name is Yagarriš ("Let him drive out . . ."):
Yagarriš, drive out Sea!
Drive out Sea from his throne,
River from the seat of his dominion.[11]

šimuka 'atta 'āy-yammarī
'āy-yamarrī marrī yamma
marrī yamma la-kussi'ihū
nahar(a) la-kaḫti darkatihū

Thy name is 'Āy-yamarrī ("Ho! let him rout . . ."):
'Āy-yamarrī rout Sea
Rout Sea from his throne,
River from the seat of his dominion.[12]

With clubs, Ba'l overcomes Yamm:

yaparsiḫ yammu/yaqul la-'arṣi
tinnagiṣna pinnātihū/wa-yadlup tamūnihū
yaquṭṭu Ba'lu/wa-yaštī yamma
yakalliyu[13] ṭāpiṭa nahara

Sea fell,	He sank to earth,
His joints trembled,	His frame collapsed.
Ba'l destroyed,	Drank Sea!
He finished off Judge River.[14]	

11. *CTA*, 2.4.11-13. The names like personal names and divine names are verbal elements, shortened from sentence names. In this passage as in the following, the two bicola are interlocked by repetition to form what is in effect a tetracolon in a variation of climactic parallelism.

12. *CTA*, 2.4.19f. 'āy is cognate with Hebrew hôy or 'ôy.

13. The vocalization of prefixal verb forms in the perfect sense, or better, for historical narration, is here puzzling. Apparently yaqtul and yaqtulu can be placed in "impressionistic" parallelism, quite as qatal and yaqtul are placed in parallel. We should expect yaqtul not yaqtulu/a. For a discussion of the use of the standard Canaanite verb forms, see W. L. Moran, *A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos as Reflected in the Amarna Tablets* (Xerox reprint, Ann Arbor, University microfilms, 1961) pp. 43-52.

14. *CTA*, 2.4.25ff. In the battle, the meter shifts into staccato form. Described in terms of the Ley-Sievers system the passage scans: 2:2::2:2, 2:2:3 or one could read 4:4, 4:3.

Then comes the shout:

> yamma la-mitu   ba'lu-mi yamlu[ku]
> Sea verily is dead;   Ba'l rules![15]

The completion of the palace on Mt. Ṣapōn is the occasion then of a decree by 'El, father of the gods, that a temple be built for Ba'l, king of the gods. The craftsman Kôṯar constructs a palace so that Ba'l exults:

> <b>aḥātiya banītī dāta kaspi
> hêkalīya dāta-mi ḥurāṣi

> My temple I have built of silver,
> My palace, indeed, of gold.[16]

The completion of the palace on Mt. Ṣapōn is the occasion then of a great feast of the gods, celebrating Ba'l's installation and inaugurating the temple cult.

A second conflict then developed, a struggle between Ba'l and the ruler of the underworld, Môt (Death). If Yamm represented the unruly powers of the universe who threatened chaos, until restricted and tamed by Ba'l, then Môt, 'El's dead son, represents the dark chthonic powers which bring sterility, disease, and death. The drama, however, is still a cosmogony, the victory of the god of life.

Ba'l and his entourage, Clouds, Winds, and Rain, together with the goddesses "Misty One, daughter of Bright Cloud, Dewy One, daughter of Showers"[17] went down into the Underworld city of dread Môt. The

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The former is more accurate since there is internal parallelism. However, an accentual scheme of scanning is not as efficient in revealing the symmetry of the cola as syllable counting. In syllables the cola count is 5:5, 8:7, and 5:5::10. We note the symmetry is by bicola in the first lines, but two short cola precisely balance a long colon (5:5::10) in the last lines. In general we prefer to speak of building blocks of short cola for which the siglum will be b *(breve)*, and long cola signified by l *(longum)*. The present passage thus scans: b:b, b:b, b:b::l. Mixed meter of the type l:l, l:l:l, b:b::b:b, b:b::l, l::b:b is typical of Ugaritic epic style. In pure form it is found only in the earliest Hebrew poetry, notably the Song of the Sea, the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), the Lament of David, and Psalm 29. (Provisionally see *C-F, passim*).

15. *CTA*, 2.4.32.

16. *CTA*, 4.6.36ff. I have translated "temple" and "palace" in the singular. Actually the terms are plural: "temple complex." Cf. Hebrew *miškānōt*, "tent shrine."

17. *CTA*, 5.5.10f. *'immaka Pidrayya bitta rabbi/'immaka ṭallayya bitta rabbi*. With Ba'l also are "seven squires *(galamīka)*, eight knights" *(ḫanzīrīka*, lit., "boars").

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scene is a fearful one:

> [šaptu la-'a]rṣi šaptu la-šamêmi
> [ya'arrik la]šāna la-kabkabīma
> ya'rub ba'lu ba-pīhu
> la-kabidihu yarid

> [One lip to ea]rth, one lip to heaven,
> [He stretched out his] tongue to the stars.
> Ba'l entered his mouth,
> Descended into his maw.[18]

He became a slave to Môt "in the midst of his city Ooze, Decay the seat of his enthronement, Slime the land of his heritage."[19] Ultimately the message is brought to 'El:

> kī mita 'al'iyānu ba'lu
> ḫaliqa zubulu ba'l 'arṣi

> Mighty Ba'l is dead indeed,
> The Prince lord of earth has perished.[20]

'Anat the consort of Ba'l appears to succor her lord, giving battle to Môt:

> ti'ḫad bin 'ili-mi môt(a)
> ba-ḥarbi tabaqqi'unannu
> ba-ḥaṯri tadriyunannū
> ba-'išti tašrupunnannū
> ba-riḥêma tiṯḥānannū
> ba-šadī tadarri'unnū

> She seized 'El's son Môt.
> With a sword she sliced him;

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18. *CTA*, 5.2.2-4. The reconstruction is based in part on *CTA*, 23.61f., partly on Isa. 57:4. Cf. Isa. 5:14; Hab. 2:5; Prov. 1:12; Ps. 141:7; and Jon. 2:6. The structure is b:b::l, l:l [5:6 (=11)::12, 8:8]. The paired formulae in the final bicolon have been reversed. Such errors often occur in oral literature when it is dictated to a scribe, not sung and hence controlled by music, as A. B. Lord has shown (*The Singer of Tales*, pp. 124-138). Several errors involving reversed formulae in the Ugaritic corpus can be corrected by parallel passages.

19. The description is found in *CTA*, 5.2.15; cf. 4.8.12.

20. Cf. *CTA*, 5.6.9; 6.1.4; 6.3.1.

With a sieve she winnowed him;
With a fire she burnt him;
With millstones she ground him;
In the field she scattered him.[21]

The imitative magic of Canaanite fertility rites could not be more obvious than here. With the victory of 'Anat, the dead god is strewn to fertilize the fields.

In the next episode, the god 'El sees in a prophetic vision the outcome of 'Anat's (and hence Ba'l's) victory over Death:

wa-himma ḥayyu 'al'iyānu ba'lu
wa-himma 'iṯê zubulu ba'l 'arṣi
. . .
šamāmi šamna tamaṭṭirūna
naḥalūma talikū nubta-mi

Behold, Mighty Ba'l lives;
Behold, the Prince, lord of earth exists.
. . .
The heavens rain oil,
The wadis flow with mead.[22]

The divine warrior Ba'l, after yet another combat with the dead god, returns to take up his government, sitting as king of the gods.

In addition to these major themes we find elsewhere in our texts reference to Ba'l and 'Anat's battle with a dragon called Lôtān, biblical Leviathan:

kī timḥaṣ lôtāna baṯna barīḥa
takalliyu baṯna 'aqalatāna
šilyaṭa dī šab'ati ri'ašīma
tiṯkaḥū titrapū šamāmi
ka-ri⟨ka⟩sī'ipādika

When you (Ba'l)[23] smote Lôtān the ancient dragon,
Destroyed the crooked serpent,
Šhilyaṭ with the seven heads,
(Then) the heavens withered (and) drooped
Like the loops of your garment.[24]

The cosmogonic form of the passage is clear ("when . . . then," the standard structure), as are parallels in biblical literature. The beast of Revelation 12, the dragon of Canaanite myth, and Tiāmat of *Enūma eliš* all have seven heads. Typhon is many-headed.

Variants to the Lôtān theme are found recorded in the Ugaritic texts in apparent contradiction. 'Anat slew both Yamm and/or the crooked serpent in two extant texts:

Did I ('Anat) not smite the beloved of 'El, Sea?
Did I not destroy 'Êl's River, Rabbīm?
Did I not muzzle the dragon *(tnn)*?
I smote the crooked serpent
Ṣilyaṭ of seven heads.[25]

ba'arṣi mḥnm ṯarapa yamma
lašanāmi tilḥakā šamêma
taṯrupā yamma ḏanabatāmi
tunnāna[26] lā-šabūma tašīt
tirkas la-miryamī laba[nāni]

In the land of Mḥnm he (the dragon) swirled the sea.
His double tongue flicked the heavens;
His double tail swirled the sea.
She fixed the unmuzzled dragon;
She bound him to the heights of Leba[non].[27]

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21. *CTA*, 6.2.30–35. In the last colon, the second *n* of *tdr'nn* is taken as a dittography. The vocalization of *'išt* assumes that the doubling of *š* in Hebrew and Aramaic is secondary.

22. *CTA*, 6.3.3f., 6f. Probably the conjunctions beginning the two cola of the first bicolon should be dropped as secondary. Cf. 6.3.9, 21. Note again the *-mi (-ma)* particle used *metri causa*.

23. Ba'l must be addressed, to judge from the form *tkly. takalliyu*. If 'Anat were addressed, the form would be *tkl* (takallī < *takalliyī) or *tkln*. However, it is 'Anat who smites the dragon in *CTA*, 3.3.38f. Cf. *PRU*, II.1.1 (Ba'l smites the dragon?) and *PRU*, II.3.3–11.

24. Text 5.1.1–5. The first tricolon is remarkably symmetrical. W. F. Albright's article written in 1941 is still useful: "Are the Ephod and the Teraphim Mentioned in Ugaritic Literature?" *BASOR*, 83 (1941), 39f. Note the biblical parallels: Ps. 74:14; Isa. 27:1; Job 26:10; Rev. 12:9. Isa. 34:4 is thoroughly reminiscent of the final bicolon.

25. *CTA*, 3.3.35–39.

26. On this vocalization, see *Ugaritica* V, 137.8 (pp. 240f.). The form *quttāl, tunnān* is augmentative, evidently, used along side of *tannīn* and *tannittu*.

27. *PRU*, II.3.3–11. Cf. Job 40:25.

In the biblical parallels to these texts it is clear that there is full identification between Yamm and the dragon (Isa. 27:1, and especially Isa. 51:9–10).

It is easiest to suppose that the tale of *Yamm-Nahar* elaborated in the cycle has a major variant in the myth of Lôtān, the sea dragon. One may compare the confusion in Greek mythology between Typhoeus, Typhon, and the old she-dragon of Delphi. In the extant tradition, the dragon motif appears as a torso only, but we can imagine that in Canaan as in Mesopotamia and Israel, Sea was portrayed as a seven-headed dragon, a dragon to be slain in order to establish the rule of the warrior-king of the gods. Such variation and unevenness in oral cycles of myth and epic are not surprising; indeed they are characteristic of the genre.

The interpretation of the myth of Ba'l is not an easy task, as becomes apparent in the diverse literature devoted to the subject. One scholar will claim that the old Canaanite myths do not speak of "creation," despite the attribution in biblical lore of these myths to the time of the beginning or of the end (the new creation). Another will characterize the entire complex cycle as an elaborated cosmogonic myth, and hence properly called a "creation story." One of the problems is the confusion of two types of myths, owing to the tendency to approach Canaanite and other Near Eastern myth utilizing the biblical creation story as a yardstick. Often this is an unconscious prejudice. The biblical creation accounts, however, are atypical. The "primordial" events have been radically historicized in the Israelite environment so that the beginning is "merely" a first event in a historical sequence.

We have distinguished above[28] two ideal forms of "creation" myth, one the theogony, the other the cultic cosmogony. The theogonic myth normally uses the language of time; its events were of old. The cultic cosmogony may or may not use time language. Yet the myth always delineates "primordial" events, that is, events which constitute cosmos and, hence, are properly timeless or cyclical or "eschatological" in character. It appears to us that the myths of combat with Yamm, Môt, and Lôtān are indeed cosmogonic myths, primitive in that there is no reference to the beginning, that is, no explicit time language. The Ba'l cycle relates the emergence of kingship among the gods. The tale of the establishment of a dynastic temple and its cultus is a typical subtheme of the cosmogony and its ritual and is found also in *Enūma eliš* and, as we shall see, in the Bible.

28. See above in the final section of chapter 2.

The Song of the Sea

We turn now to the archaic victory song in Exodus 15:1b–18.[29] Much debate has been expended recently on the date of the song. The poem is to be dated by (1) the typology of its language, (2) the typology of its prosody, (3) orthographic analysis, (4) the typology of the development of Israel's religion, (5) the history of tradition, and (6) historical allusions. Most scholars have based their datings on the last three methods. The first two are more objective techniques; the third is a precarious procedure at best since usually it depends on the failure of scribes to revise spellings to later orthographic systems owing to misunderstanding or corruption of the text.[30]

We have argued elsewhere[31] that the language of Exodus 15 is more consistently archaic than that of any other prose or poetic work of some length in the Bible.[32] The poem conforms throughout to the prosodic patterns and canons of the Late Bronze Age. Its use of mixed metrical structure, its extreme use of climactic (repetitive) parallelism, internal rhyme and assonance, place it alongside the Song of Deborah. The latest comparable poems are Psalm 29 and the Lament of David.

29. Recent bibliography can be found in S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Tradition of the Exodus in its Development* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1965), pp. 146–150. To the works cited there should be added now, D. N. Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry," *ZAW*, 72 (1960), 101–107; M. Dahood, "Nādâ 'To Hurl' in Ex. 15, 16," *Biblica*, 43 (1962), 248f.; L. S. Hay, "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds," *JBL*, 83 (1964), 397–403; G. Fohrer, *Überlieferung und Geschichte des Exodus*, *BZAW*, 91 (Berlin, 1964), pp. 110–116; N. Lohfink, *Das Siegeslied am Schilfmeer* (Frankfort am Main, 1965), pp. 103–128 (also "De Moysis epinicia," *Verbum Domini*, 41 [1963], 277–289); G. W. Coats, "The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif," *VT*, 17 (1967), 253–265; J. Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," *Studia biblica et semitica*, Vriezen Volume (Wageningen, 1966), pp. 233–251; G. W. Coats, "The Song of the Sea," *CBQ*, 31 (1969), 1–17; and B. S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," *VT*, 20 (1970), 406–418, and references. The writer has also had the benefit of studying a forthcoming article of D. N. Freedman, "Strophe and Meter in Exodus 15." Mention must also be made of the Yale dissertation of David A. Robertson, "Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry" (1966) which eventually will bring an end to the discussion of the date of the poem, at least for those with training in the history of the Canaanite dialects.

30. The several orthographic systems represented at Qumrân have enriched our knowledge of scribal practices in revision, both in the direction of modernization and in certain traditions in attempts to archaize. See the writer's discussion in "The Contribution of the Qumrân Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text," *IEJ*, 16 (1966), esp. 89f., and references.

31. *SMir*, pp. 237–250.

32. This evidence has been extended by Robertson, "Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry."

The former is a Canaanite hymn borrowed by Israel probably in the tenth century but older in its original form.[33] The Lament of David is doubtless a tenth-century work. While it uses an archaic elegiac meter,[34] the patterns of climactic parallelism have largely disappeared.

33. See below, chapter 7, for discussion and references.

34. The lament is written in b:b::b:b meter (in stress notation, 2:2::2:2 [not 2:2, or 4:4]), broken by refrains in 1:1:1 (twice) and 1:1 (once, in conclusion). The structure of the refrain has not been understood owing to the corruption of its first use at the beginning of the poem. It can, however, be reconstructed. Let us review the refrain structure beginning at the end and working back to the beginning:

איכ[ה] נפלו גברים	l(8)	v. 27
[ ] יאבדו כלי מלחמה	l(8)	
איכ[ה] נפלו גברים	l(8)	v. 25
בתוך [ ]מלחמה יונתן	l(8)	
עלי במתיך חלל	l(8)	
ה[ו] צבי ישראל ‹שאול›	l(8)	v. 19
עלי במתיך חלל	l(8)	
איכ[ה] נפלו גברים		

How the warriors have fallen;
Perished the weapons of war.

How the warriors have fallen,
In the midst of battle, Jonathan
On thy heights slain.

Ho, prince (lit. gazelle) of Israel, Saul
On thy heights slain
How the warriors have fallen!

The use of the name of a male animal as a noble or military title is now well known. Precisely this usage of *ṣby*, "gazelle," "noble" is found in the *KRT* Epic (*CTA*, 15.4.6f.):

ṣḥ šbʿm ṯry
ṯmnym ẓbyy
ṯr Ḫbr rbt

Summon my seventy peers (lit. "bulls"),
My eighty lords (lit. "gazelles"),
The nobles (lit. "bulls") of Great Ḫubur.

A confusion of the familiar אלים, אילם, "chiefs" (cf. Exod. 15:15 below) and אלים "gods" probably lies behind the corrupt text of Judg. 5:8:

(8) l יבחרו אלים חדשים
(8) l אזי לק·חם שערים

In this regard it shares prosodic form with eleventh century poems, Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33, and the tenth-century hymn 2 Samuel 22 = Psalm 18.[35]

We have collected some orthographic data which would suggest a tenth-century date or earlier for its being put first into writing.[36]

We shall discuss at some length below the question of the place of the Song of the Sea in Israel's early cult. In our view, the hymn is not merely one of the oldest compositions preserved by biblical sources. It is the primary source for the central event in Israel's history, the Exodus-Conquest. In its present context, and originally, I believe, it was associated with the cultus of the old spring New Year's festival.[37] Apparently, the song was preserved in both strands of Israel's Epic tradition, that is, both in the Yahwistic version of the Epic (Exodus 15:1b–18) and in the Elohistic (Exodus 15:21), where only the *incipit* of the hymn, that is, its name, is cited. The view that the

They choose new leaders,
Yea, they took for themselves captains (lit. "bucks").

The loss of *šʾwl* after *yšrʾl* is a simple haplography, probably of the fourth-third century when *waw* and *rêš* were virtually identical in form. The structure of the refrains can be described as follows:

   v. 19   abc   (tricolon)
   v. 25   cab   (tricolon)
   v. 27   ad   (bicolon)

Hence colon "a" of v. 25, *btwk mlḥmh ywntn*, should be precisely parallel to colon "a" of v. 19, *hw ṣby yšrʾl šʾwl*. Symmetry thus requires the restoration of the personal name paired with "Jonathan" elsewhere in the lament.

35. Cf. Cross and Freedman, "A Royal Song of Thanksgiving," *JBL*, 72 (1953), 15–34; W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh, Clark, 1950), pp. 1–10, and especially his general discussion of the typology of early prosody, *YGC*, chapter 1 (pp. 1–52).

36. *SMir*, pp. 243–250 (notes to the text).

37. We must posit two New Year's festivals in the early cult of Israel, both covenant-renewal festivals. The autumn festival, falling on the New Year common to Canaan and Egypt, in Israel became the great feast of the era of kingship, both in Jerusalem and Beth'el. The spring New Year, with its ultimately Mesopotamian connections, appears to have been the time of the major festival at the old league sanctuaries of Gilgal and Shiloh, a covenant festival which virtually disappeared during the monarchy as a national pilgrimage feast, until the archaizing reforms of Josiah (2 Kings 23:22; cf. 2 Chron. 30:1–26). The associations of the Gilgal rites with the spring, with the covenant, with the sea crossing and the "ritual conquest," seem very clear indeed. I am not interested here in speculating on the origins and history of the feasts of Passover and *Maṣṣôt*, and their conflation in later tradition, at least in the present discussion. The problems are, of course, very complex. B. S. Childs' comments, "a Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," p. 415, are based on a misunderstanding of my reconstruction of the Gilgal cultus.

incipit, or the first line of the Song of the Sea, is itself the archaic hymn, the body of the victory song having been appended secondarily, survives long after the theoretical structure which permitted such an analysis has vanished. The notion that old Israel in its early stages was incapable of composing or listening to long compositions, and that "early" and "short" were in effect synonymous, stems especially from the idealistic and romantic views of the last century, expressed in most painful form by Hermann Gunkel.[38]

The poem must have been available to the Yahwist no later than the early tenth century B.C., and if we posit it as common to both Epic sources, we are pushed back into the era of the league and to the common lore of its chief shrines.

In short all the evidence points to a premonarchic date for the Song of the Sea, in the late twelfth or early eleventh century B.C..

The allusion to the Philistines in v. 14 has been a severe barrier to any dating of the Song of the Sea before the late twelfth century B.C. Customarily the date of the arrival of the Philistines in the maritime plain of Palestine has been placed in the reign of Ramses III at the beginning of the twelfth century. The reference then would be anachronistic, and sufficient time would have to pass for the precise time of the coming of the Philistines to be forgotten. New evidence concerning the fall of the Hittite empire, the conquests of Ugarit and Cyprus, and the southern sweep of the Sea Peoples requires that the date of the first Philistine settlements be placed a good deal earlier, in the reigns of Ramses II (1304–1237) and Merneptah (1237–1225).[39] This earlier date of the Sea Peoples' settlement eases somewhat the problem of the mention of the Philistines in a poem purporting to describe the inhabitants of the land in the era of the Israelite Conquest. Other references, to the chieftains of Edom and the nobles of Moab, reflect cor-

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38. This view appeared to be supported by short couplets or verses embedded in the old sources of the Pentateuch, and also, perhaps, by the shortness of original oracle units in Prophecy. In the latter case, brevity belongs to the ecstatic origins of the oracle form. In the case of the Epic materials, however, we are inclined to reconstruct a long and rich poetic epic of the era of the league, underlying JE, and to take the prose epic variants (with their surviving poetic fragments) preserved in the P work (i.e., the Tetrateuch, JEP) as truncated and secondary derivatives. In any case, we possess long, poetic epics from old Canaan, from ancient Mesopotamia, and Homeric Greece, and to find the same phenomenon in Israel would not be surprising.

39. See W. F. Albright, *CAH*[2], chapter XXXIII (pp. 24–33 in preliminary publication), and his references. Cf. *YGC*, pp. 157–164; G. Ernest Wright, "Fresh Evidence for the Philistine Story," *BA*, 29 (1966), 70–86.

rectly (contrary to Epic tradition [JE]) the terminology of the brief premonarchial period in these nations founded in the thirteenth century. This picture can hardly be explained as studied archaizing.[40]

The allusion to the *nᵉwê qodšéka* (v. 13) cannot be used as an argument for late date. It is a specific designation of a tent-shrine.[41] Similarly the expression "mount of thy possession" gives no hint of the date of the poem; it is a formula in the oral literature of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age, a standard way for a poet, in Ugarit[42] or in Israel, to specify the special seat of the deity, either his cosmic shrine or its earthly counterpart; often it stands in parallelism to *ks'u ṯbt* (compare *mākōn lešibtekā* in Exodus 15:17).[43] The identification of the sanctuary in v. 17 will be discussed below.

A comment should be made on the use of the "tenses," which bears both on the question of the age of the hymn and on its interpretation. Consistently *yaqtul* is used to express narrative past, precisely as in Old Canaanite of the Byblus-Amarna correspondence and in Ugaritic. Thus it stands in parallelism frequently with *qatal* forms.[44] In verses 16b and 17 we should take the *yaqtul* forms, *yaʿābōr, tᵉbīʾēmō,* and *tiṭṭāʿēmō,* as preterit in force. In this case the conquest is not anticipated but is described along with the event at the sea, as a past event. Only with the later misunderstanding of this archaic tense usage was the poem attributed to Miriam or to Moses, in Epic (JE) tradition. It is to be noted, moreover, that this misunderstanding is very ancient.

The hymn falls into two major sections by content and structure, Part I (vv. 1b–12) describing the victory of Yahweh over the Egyptians

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40. On the "non-mention" of Ammon, see *SMir*, p. 239, and Loewenstamm, *The Tradition of the Exodus*, pp. 113f.

41. See *SMir*, p. 248, n. 42; and D. O. Edzard, "Altbabylonisch *nawûm*," *ZA*, 19 (1959), 168–173, and most recently *YGC*, p. 27, n. 63. The basic meaning is "pastoral abode" or "encampment." On the localization of the tent shrine, see below.

42. See *CTA*, 1.3.1; 3.6.16; 4.8.14; 5.2.16; 3.3.27; 3.4.64.

43. See *CTA*, 1.3.1; 3.6.15; 4.8.13; 5.2.16; cf. 1 Kings 8:13, a quotation from the Book of Yašar, and Ps. 89:15.

44. In v. 5 *yᵉkasyūmū* parallel to *yārēdū*; in v. 7 *tahărōs, tᵉšallaḥ, yôkelēmō* parallel to (v. 8) *neʿermū, niṣṣebū,* and *qāpᵉʾū;* v. 14 *šāmᵉʿū* parallel to *yirgāzūn;* v. 15 *nibhălū* parallel to *yōḥāzēmō,* to *nāmōgū, tippōl,* and *yiddēmū.* While *yaqtul* forms (<yaqtulu) are also used of the future (v. 9 and v. 18), for the most part *yaqtul* has preterit force. Often in early poetry, for example, in Judges 5 and 2 Samuel 22, this stage of verbal usage has been obscured by the introduction of *waw-consecutive* at the beginning of cola. Fortunately, the Song of Miriam is preserved in pristine form. Cf. the discussion of this phenomenon in Cross and Freedman, "A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Samuel 22 = Psalm 18," *JBL*, 72 (1953), 17–20.

at the sea; Part II (vv. 13–18), the leading through the desert and the entry into the land. Smaller units, sequences of alternating couplets and triplets, are marked off by the change of meter:[45]

Part I

1. couplet	2 (b:b)	v. 1b	(2:2::2:2)
couplet	1:1	v. 2b	(3:3)
2. triplet	3 (b:b)	v. 3, 4	(2:2::2:2::2:2)
couplet	1:1	v. 5	(3:3)
3. couplet	2 (b:b)	v. 6	(2:2::2:2)
triplet	3 (b:b)	vv. 7, 8a	(2:2::2:2::2:2)
couplet	1:1	v. 8bc	(3:3)
4. triplet	3 (b:b)	v. 9	(2:2::2:2::2:2)
couplet	2 (b:b)	v. 10	(2:2::2:2)
triplet	1:1:1	v. 11	(3:3:3)
5. short couplet	b:b	v. 12	(2:2)

Part II

6. couplet	2 (b:b)	v. 13	(2:2::2:2)
couplet	1:1	v. 14	(3:3)
7. triplet	3 (b:b)	v. 15	(2:2::2:2::2:2)
couplet	2 (b:b)	v. 16a	(2:2::2:2)
couplet	1:1	v. 16b	(3:3)
8. triplet	3 (b:b)	v. 17	(2:2::2:2::2:2)
9. short couplet	b:b	v. 18	(2:2)

45. This analysis stands somewhere between that of *SMir* written in 1955 and Freedman's forthcoming study, "Strophe and Meter in Exodus 15." We are indebted to the latter study at a number of points. The present analysis also differs from that of 1968 in reflecting increasing scepticism that the oral poet intended strophe divisions larger than those marked off by change of meter.

Exodus 15:1b–18[46]

Part I

1.

Sing to Yahweh,	(1)	b שרו[47] ליהו
For he is highly exalted,		b כ גא גא
Horse and chariotry		b סס ורכבה[48]
He cast into the Sea.		b רמ בים[49]

This is my god whom I exalt,	(2b)	l ז אל וארממנה[50]
The god of my father whom I admire.		l אלה אבי[51] ואנוה[52]

2.

Yahweh is a warrior,	(3)	b יהו גבר[53]
Yahweh is his name.		b יהו שמ
Pharoah and his army	(4)	b פרע וחל[54]

46. The poem is transcribed in the consonantal notation used in Israel in the tenth century B.C. and earlier and used throughout Proto-Canaanite and classical Phoenician texts.

47. *Šīrū*, v. 21, is preferable *metri causa*. For a more detailed discussion of the variant readings *'āšīrā, nāšīrā,* and the conflate *'šrw* of the Samaritan, see *SMir*, p. 243, n. 1.

48. Reading *rékeb* with P. Haupt. *rōkěbô* or Old Greek *rōkēb,* is awkward, to be read "chariot driver" if correct. The original text, to judge from the renderings of the versions read *rkb.* In the era of the Conquest, cavalry had not come into use in Egypt. It appears not to have been used in Israel until the ninth century B.C.

49. V. 2a is a secondary interpolation. In the poem 1:1 and 1:1:1 appears as antiphonal elements. A quatrain 1:1::1:1 is wholly out of place. Presumably v. 2a was a familiar bicolon; it is found also in Isa. 12:2b and Ps. 118:14. A fuller discussion of v. 2a is given in *SMir*, p. 243 and nn. a–d.

50. As the received text stands, the second colon is considerably longer than the first. The simplest solution to this metrical imbalance is to interchange the verb; this produces the desired symmetry. The transposition of terms in a formulaic pair is frequent both in texts orally composed and dictated (e.g., the Ugaritic texts), and in the written transmission of a text, especially in a case where both words begin and end with the same letter.

51. In the genitive, the suffix of the first person singular is *-iya* in early Canaanite and Phoenician, written with consonantal *yod.*

52. W. F. Albright associates *'anwēhū* (cf. Hab. 2:5 *ynwh*) with Arabic *nwy,* Eth. *newa.* Ugaritic *nwyt,* "settlement," Mari *nawūm.* Heb. *nāwē* "pastoral or nomadic camp," etc. He derives these from a root meaning "to aim at," which then developed in two directions, "to look ardently at," and "to reach or settle." The *h*-stem here may be translated, "I shall make him a cynosure, I shall admire him" (i.e., "I shall cause him to be the object of ardent gazing"). The versions interpret the word correctly, either from knowledge of its true meaning or from context.

53. The major versions (Sam G Sy) have the reading *gbr mlḥmh.* Evidently we have here a conflation of ancient variants: *yahwē gibbōr* and *'iš milḥāmā.* For metrical reasons *gibbōr* seems the preferable reading. Note the climactic pattern *ab:ac* in the first bicolon.

54. We follow Albright's suggestion that *mrkbt pr'h* and *pr'h wḥylw* are ancient variants. There is no basis, really, to choose between them; they are metrically identical.

He hurled into the sea.	ירה בים b
His elite troops	[ ] מבחר שלשו [55] b
Drowned in the Reed Sea.	טבע בים־סף b
The deeps covered them; (5)	תהמת יכסימו [56] (נפש״) b
They sank in the depths like a stone.	ירד במצלת כמ־אבן b

3.

Your right hand, Yahweh, (6)	ימנכ יהו [57] b
Is terrible in strength;	נאדר בכח b
Your right hand, Yahweh,	ימנכ יהו b
Shattered the enemy.	תרעץ איב b
In your great majesty (7)	ברב גאנכ [ ] b
You crushed your foes.	תהרס קמכ b
You sent forth your fury,	תשלח חרנכ b
It consumed them like stubble.	יאכלמ כקש b
At the blast of your nostrils (8)	ברח אפכ [ ] b
The waters were heaped up.	נערמ מם b
The swells mounted up as a hill;	נצב כמ־נד [58] נזלם l
The deeps foamed in the heart of the sea.	קפא [59] תהמת בלב־ים l

4.

The enemy said: (9)	אמר איב b
I shall pursue, I shall overtake;	ארדף אסג b
I shall divide the spoil,	אחלק שלל b
My greed will be sated,	b
I shall bare my sword,	ארק חרב b
My hand will conquer.	תרש־ם יד b
You blew with your breath, (10)	נשפת ברחכ b
Sea covered them.	כסמ ים b
They sank like a lead weight	צלל כעפרת b
In the dreadful waters.	במם אדרם b
Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh? (11)	מ־כמכ באלם יהו l
Who is like you, terrible among the holy ones? [61]	מ־כמכ נאדר בקדש l
Awesome in praises, wonder worker.	נרא תהלת עש פלא l

5.

You stretched out your hand, (12)	נטת ימנכ b
The Underworld swallowed them.	תבלעם ארץ [62] b

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55. On the omission of the conjunction here and below, cf. *SMir*, pp. 245 n. 7, 246 nn. 15 and 24. See also Cross and Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B.C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria," *BASOR*, 197 (1970), 48.

56. This form is doubly archaic, preserving the final *yod* of the root as well as the archaic suffix (*-mū = -mō*). Note that *-mō* is used regularly in Exod. 15 with the verb as the 3.m.pl. pronominal suffix, a sure sign of archaism.

57. Note the repetitive style in the couple of v. 6:ab:cd::ab:ef; this is the equivalent in meter with *b*-couplets of the pattern abc:abd in the climactic 1-bicolon.

58. *nēd* is a rare word, and appears elsewhere in the Bible only in passages dependent on this passage: Ps. 78:13; Josh. 3:13, 16. Other putative occurrences are suspected of corruption or mispointing. There is every reason to take at face value the only etymological evidence we possess, the Arabic cognate *nadd* "hill," "large mound of earth or dirt."

59. The verb *qp'w* has been taken traditionally to mean "congeal" i.e., into solid walls. Most recently, B. S. Childs insists on this meaning, claiming that the Priestly notion of a wall of water is present here (*VT*, 20 [1970], 411f., and note 3). Unhappily, there are only three occurrences of the root other than in Exod. 15:8; Zech. 14:6 where the meaning is wholly obscure, Zeph. 1:12, of the dregs of wine, and Job 10:10, used of the curdling of cheese (parallel to the pouring of milk). Apparently, the action common to wine dregs and curdled milk is the precipitation of sediment or solids. In *SMir* we assumed that the original meaning was "to churn (of milk)," or "to work (of wine)," the process leading to precipitation. Whether this be right or wrong, we see no ground for a meaning "congeal," *except* the traditional interpretation of Exod. 15:8, drawn anachronistically from the P account of the walls of water. In Mishnaic Hebrew and

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the Aramaic of the Talmud, the basic meaning is "to precipitate" of solids in liquid, hence "to rise to surface," "form scum, froth or foam," "to curdle": in the D-stem and causative-stem, "to skim," "remove foam from wine," and "to make float," "to coagulate blood (by boiling)," "to foam over" and "to flood." The derivative *qippūy* means most often "froth" or "spume," and is used specifically of the froth on the surface of fermenting wine (e.g., 'Abōdā zārā 56a). In Syriac the verb means "to skim off," "to collect," "to float (of scum or froth)." Cf. *qēpāyā*, "flotsam," "scum," and *qūpāyā*, "spume," "foam," "floatage," "scum (of broth)." In the Aramaic text of '*Aḥiqar*, *qp*' occurs in association with the sea and has been translated "flood," and "foam." The latter reading is preferable.

These data require that we take *qāpē'ū tĕhōmōt* to mean "the deeps foamed," or "the deeps churned into foam," or the like, probably under the figure of wine. The rendering "congeal (as ice? gelatine?)" must be firmly rejected.

60. *timlā'ēm*, v. 9, and *tôrišēm* are verbal forms augmented by the enclitic *-m* (*< mi/ma*) particle. The pronominal suffixes are out of place (Albright). Cf. *SMir*, p. 246 and nn. 25, 26.

61. *qdš* is to be taken as a collective as suggested by J. T. Milik here and in Deut. 33:3. In these instances the Old Greek and certain other witnesses translate in the plural. The alternate in v. 11 is to suppose a haplography of *mēm* before the following *nūn* (in Palaeo-Hebrew script).

62. For documentation of this meaning of '*ereṣ* in biblical Hebrew and elsewhere, see *SMir*, p. 247, n. 39; cf. M. Dahood, *Psalms*, vols. I–III, under '*ereṣ* in the indices to each volume.

Part II

6.

You faithfully led	(13)	נחת בחסדך	b
The people whom you redeemed;		עם ז־גאלת	b
You guided in your might		נהלת בעזך	b
To your holy encampment.		אל נו קדשכ⁶³	b

The peoples heard, they shuddered;	(14)	שמע עמם ירגזון	l
Horror seized the inhabitants of Philistia.		חל אחז ישב פלשת	l

7.

Yea, they were undone,	(15)	אז נבהל	b
The chieftains of Edom.		אלף אדם	b
The nobles of Moab		אל מאב	b
Were seized by panic.		יאחזמ רעד	b
They were melted utterly,		נמג כל⁶⁴	b
The enthroned of Canaan.		ישב⁶⁵ כנען	b
You brought down on them	(16)	תפל עלהם	b
Terror and dread.		אמת ופחד	b
By thy great power		בגדל זרעך	b
They were struck dumb like a stone.		ידמ⁶⁶ כאבן	b

While your people passed over, Yahweh,	עד־יעבר⁶⁷ עמך יהו	l
While your people passed over whom you have created.	עד־יעבר עם ז קנת	l

63. See above n. 41.

64. This appears to be a rare instance of enjambment. On the other hand *kl* may hide an old adverb (cf. late *kullō*). Compare the remarks in *SMir*, p. 248, n. 48.

65. "Enthroned." i.e., reigning kings. This meaning, which is not infrequent, seems required by parallelism. Cf. in particular, Amos 1:5, 8.

66. See M. Dahood, *Psalms*, vol. I, for an alternate interpretation of this colon.

67. This verb *y'br*, and the following *tb'm* and *tṭ'm*, must be read as preterits, referring to past events. Compare Joshua 13:13:

<div dir="rtl">

ידם שמש ירח עמד]
עד יקם גוי איביו

</div>

Sun stood, Moon stayed,
While the nation took vengeance on its enemies.

This means that, contrary to the usual interpretation of v. 16b, the poet wrote from the point of view of Israel after the Conquest, or rather from the point of view of one re-enacting the Conquest, including both the episode of the sea and the passing over into the land to a Palestinian sanctuary. This we shall argue is in fact the *Sitz im Leben* of the hymn.

8.

You brought them, you planted them	(17)	תבאמ [] תטעמ	b
In the mount of your heritage,		בהר נחלתכ⁶⁸	b
The dais of your throne		מכן לשבתכ⁶⁹	b
Which you made, Yahweh,		פעלת יהוה⁷⁰	b
The sanctuary, Yahweh,		מקדש יהוה⁷⁰	b
Which your hands created.		כננ ידכ	b

9.

Let Yahweh reign	(18)	יהו ימלך	b
Forever and ever.		לעלם ועד	b

Part I of the hymn describes the combat of the Divine Warrior with his enemies: Yahweh's defeat of the Egyptians at the Reed Sea. His weapon was a storm at sea, a storm blown up by a blast of wind from his dilated nostrils. The key passages are as follows:

> At the blast of your nostrils
> The waters were heaped up.

> The swells mounted up as a hill,
> The deeps foamed in the heart of the sea.   (15:8)

> You blew with your breath,
> Sea covered them.
> They sank like a lead weight
> In the dreadful waters.   (15:10)

There is no suggestion in the poem of a splitting of the sea or of an east wind blowing the waters back so that the Israelites can cross on a dry sea bottom or of the waters "returning" to overwhelm the Egyptians mired in the mud. Rather it is a storm-tossed sea that is directed against the Egyptians by the breath of the Deity. Moreover, the sea is not personified or hostile, but a passive instrument in Yahweh's control. There is no question here of a mythological combat between

68. See above, n. 42.

69. See above, n. 43.

70. *'dny* is obviously secondary. Sam. reads *yhwh*, a rare instance of its preserving the older reading.

two gods. Yahweh defeats historical, human enemies. Most extraordinary, there is no mention of Israel's crossing the sea[71] or of a way through the deep places of the sea for the redeemed to cross over.[72] The absence of these traditional motifs is surprising and requires explanation. So far as we can tell, the Egyptians are thrown from barks or barges into the stormy sea; they sink in the sea like a rock or a weight and drown.

The phrases are unambiguous:

Horse and chariotry
He cast into the sea.   (15:1b, 21b)

Pharaoh and his army
He hurled into the sea.
His elite troops
Drowned in the Reed Sea.
The deeps covered them,
They sank in the depths like a stone.   (15:4f.)

They sank like a lead weight
In the dreadful waters.   (15:10b)

In the late prose sources in the Bible, it is perfectly clear that one picture of the episode at the Reed Sea had become regnant. It is well expressed by the Chronicler: "And you split *(bq't)* the sea before them and they crossed over in the midst of the sea on dry ground and their pursuers you threw into the deeps like a stone in the mighty waters." (Neh. 9:11).

While the last phrase is directly reminiscent of the Song of the Sea,

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71. V. 16b refers to passing over Jordan into the land in the Conquest.

72. Loewenstamm reads these verses, esp. v. 8 and v. 10, in a traditional way, one referring to the dividing of the sea, one to its return, overwhelming the Egyptians (pp. 117f.). But this cannot be educed from these archaic verses, except by reading in the (later) prose tradition. The five strophes in Part I are parallel, not consecutive in their themes. The first strophe says Yahweh cast the Egyptians into the sea, the second that he hurled them into the sea and they sank in it; the third strophe speaks of the shattering of the enemy, the sending forth of his fury to consume the foe, the blast of the storm wind against the Egyptians ... *not* to give Israel a path in the sea; the fourth and fifth strophes reiterate the mode of the Egyptian defeat. At no point is Israel's succor mentioned until Part II. Then the account is of the leading in the wilderness, the crossing of Jordan, and the arrival at the shrine of Yahweh. The poem simply cannot be made to conform to the patterns of the prose traditions, neither to that of the older (JE) sources nor to that of the Priestly source.

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the primary motif is that of the sea dividing and Israel crossing on dry ground.

The Priestly editor of the Tetrateuch[73] wrote in the sixth century as follows: "The children of Israel came into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall *(hōmā)* for them on their right and left ... And Yahweh said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea that the waters will fall back *(wĕyāšúbū)* on the Egyptians, on their chariotry and on their horsemen" (Exodus 14:22, 26).

Obviously this picture is identical with that of the Chronicler. The song in Exodus 15, however, can be dependent on neither. There is little doubt, however, that the Priestly traditionist knew the Song of the Sea. *Hōmā* in the P account appears to be a prosaized translation of the old poetic word *nēd;* if so, its meaning is distorted, unknowingly no doubt, to agree with another traditional view.[74]

The Deuteronomist of the seventh century B.C.[75] places the following speech on the lips of Rahab: "I know that Yahweh gave the land to you and that your terror has fallen on us and that all the inhabitants of the land melted before you. For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Reed Sea before you in your exodus from Egypt" (Joshua 2:9f.).

Joshua 2:9 is clearly reminiscent of Exodus 15:15 and 15:16; but the account of the drying up of the sea for Israel's escape belongs to a different tradition, close to those of the Chronicler and the Priestly tradent.[76]

The old narrative sources come from the Epic tradition of the Yahwist (tenth century B.C.) and from Joshua 24, where archaic tradition (ninth century or earlier) is only slightly reworked by the Deuteronomistic editor. In the Yahwistic source in Exodus we read: "and Yahweh made the sea go back with a strong east wind (blowing) all night, and so made the sea into dry ground ... and the sea turned back *(wayyāšob)* again in the morning to its steady flow, and the Egyptians fled against it, and Yahweh routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:21, 27).

Once again it is clear that the Song of the Sea does not derive its account from Yahwistic tradition. While a wind blows in each, the

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73. See below, Chapter 11.

74. Note also the anachronistic mention of cavalry here.

75. See below, Chapter 10.

76. Cf. also, Deut. 11:4 and Josh. 4:23, the latter to be discussed below.

timing and effect are different. The Egyptians are drowned when the wind *ceases* to blow and the sea returns to its perennial state *('ētānō)* according to the Epic tradition. In the song, the divine wind overthrows Pharaoh and his host. Contrary to the late tradition, the sea is not split so that Israel marches through the sea on dry ground while towering walls of water rose on their right and left. Rather, the divine act is described in more naturalistic language; an east wind blows, driving the waters of the shallow sea back, laying bare dry ground. The divine act is not so naturalistic as the account in the Song of the Sea in which the Egyptians sink in a wind-tossed sea.

In Joshua 24 we read: "and you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued your fathers . . . to the Reed Sea, and they cried out to Yahweh and he put a dark cloud between you and the Egyptians, and he brought on them the sea and it covered them" (Joshua 24:6, 7).

Interestingly enough, nothing seems to be said here about Israel's crossing the sea on dry ground, only that they came to the sea and that Yahweh caused the sea to cover the Egyptians while a dark cloud hid the Israelites. The passage has clear contacts with Epic material in Exodus 14, usually attributed to the Elohist. While in some ways the tradition in Joshua 24 stands closest to that of the Song of the Sea, it must be said, finally, that the hymn can only be prior to it or independent of it.

We have traced above the history of the prose traditions of the event at the sea. Nowhere, from the time of the earliest Epic sources down to the end of the Persian Age can we find a place for the traditions preserved in the song to have come into being. Most of the prose sources have reminiscences of Exodus 15, but the song cannot be derived from any of them. The primary and most dramatic theme in the prose sources, the splitting or drying up of the sea and Israel's escape across the dry sea bottom, is wholly absent from the hymn. In short, the tradition preserved in the Song of the Sea must be much older.

The poetic sources also give an interesting picture of the development of the Exodus tradition. Psalm 78, a song dated by Eissfeldt and Albright as early as the united monarchy,[77] and in any case pre-Exilic, includes a reference to the event at the sea in verse 13:

<table>
<tr><td>He split Sea and brought them across,</td><td dir="rtl">בקע ויעבירם</td></tr>
<tr><td>He made the waters to stand as a hill.</td><td dir="rtl">ויצב מים כמו נד</td></tr>
</table>

This passage fits with the prose accounts in centering on the division of the sea and Israel's crossing. The term *bqʿ*, "split," is used as in Nehemiah 9:11, a word more appropriate to the smiting of the Sea-dragon than to the drying up of the sea. The second colon, however, echoes Exodus 15:8 and is secondary to it. Other psalms, most of them late, reflect precisely the prose tradition: Psalms 136:15; 66:6; 106:9.

We turn next to texts which refer directly to Yahweh's battle with Sea or the Sea-Dragon. They fall into two groups, one in which the language is purely mythic, with no reference to the historical event at the Reed Sea remembered in Israelite tradition, another in which the cosmogonic or creation battle with monstrous Sea is combined with the historical tradition of the Exodus.

In the first group belong the passages in Psalm 89:10f.[78] and Psalm 93:1-4. Both hymns are early, or at least the sections from which our passages come are early, probably of the tenth century B.C.[79] Both are psalms of the royal cult and deal with creation. Also to be placed here are Isaiah 27:1; Job 7:12, 9:8, 26:12, and 38:7-11, all from sixth-century contexts,[80] and Nahum 1:4 from the end of the seventh century B.C. (at the earliest). These passages need not concern us here. They do fit into the general typology of the development of Israel's religion. Mythic elements were present at the beginning of Israel's history when Yahwism emerged from its mythopoeic environment. The cultus of the league was strongly shaped by historical patterns; however, it is best expressed in the Epic tradition of Israel as shown by A. Alt and his students. The myths of creation and kingship became recrudescent with the introduction of kingship and its ideology, especially in the Solomonic era with the institution of the dynastic temple. The Exile was a second era of the recrudescence of myth in the rise of proto-apocalyptic. In this era, however, notably in the poetry of Second Isaiah (including Isaiah 34, 35) and the Isaianic

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77. O. Eissfeldt, "Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes," *BAL*, vol. 104, no. 5 (Berlin, 1958). Cf. *YGC*, pp. 17 n.41, 25 n.56, 212; and G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. B. Anderson and W. Harrelson (New York, Harper, 1962), pp. 36-41.

78. In v. 11 read *'wybk*, "thy enemy." The mythological combatant is meant, not historical enemies.

79. Note, for example, the creation of the old gods (the mountains) in Ps. 89:13 (where *hmn* or *'mn* is to be read for *wymvn*).

80. See provisionally the Harvard dissertation of William Millar, "Isaiah 24-27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic" (1970) which deals with the Isaianic apocalypse as a proto-apocalyptic rather than apocalyptic work.

"apocalypse," the myths were transformed and combined with historical themes in order to formulate an eschatology, or a typology of "old things" and "new things" in the drama of salvation.

We are brought to a final group of passages in which the creation myth is fully combined with the Exodus-Conquest events. From the early monarchy comes a pertinent section of Psalm 77:[81]

> The Waters saw you, Yahweh,[82]
> The Waters saw you and writhed;[83]
> Yea the Deeps shuddered.
>
> The clouds[84] streamed water,
> The heavens roared,
> Your bolts shot back and forth.
>
> Your thunder was in the tempest,[85]
> Lightning lighted the world,
> Earth shuddered and shook.
>
> Your way was through the sea, Yahweh[86]
> Your path in the deep waters,
> Your tracks beyond our understanding.[87]
>
> (Psalm 77:17-20)

A number of passages in which creation and historical conquest are combined are found in Second Isaiah.[88] We can best refer again to the "Ode to Yahweh's Arm":

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81. Verse 17 begins a series of four archaic bicola inserted into Psalm 77. On their tenth century date see M. Dahood, *Psalms*, II, note to Ps. 77:17 and his references. The first bicolon is climactic structure: abc:abd:efg.

82. Reading *yhwh* for *'lhym* as is necessary often in the Elohistic Psalter.

83. "Writhe" makes clear the dragon-like form of "waters," i.e. Yamm. Cf. Psalm 29:8.

84. Probably we should read *'rbt* for *'by, metri causa.*

85. See M. Dahood's interesting suggestion for *glgl, Psalms*, II, p. 232, n. 19.

86. The first colon is not symmetrical. A divine name has dropped out most probably: *'lhym* before *bym* perhaps or *šdy* before *šbyl*. In the first instance, *'lhym* would be a substitute for *yhwh*.

87. We prefer to read *l' nd'*, "we do not know." Orthographically *lō' nôda'ū* would be identical with *lō' nēda'* in the tenth century B.C. Also, it improves the symmetry of the tricolon. For the idiom, cf. Job 37:5.

88. In addition to Isa. 51:9-11, note 43:15f.; 50:2; cf. Ps. 106:9, and especially 114:1-5 (on which see below).

> Was it not you who smashed Rahab, the writhing dragon?
> Was it not you who dried up Sea, the waters of the great deep?
> Did you not make a way in the depths of the sea for the redeemed
>   to cross?
> The ransomed of Yahweh shall return and enter Zion with a shout.
>   (Isaiah 51:9-11)

In this poem, the battle of creation merges with events of the crossing of the sea and the old Exodus gives way to a vision of the new Exodus-Conquest, the return to Zion, and the feast of the New Jerusalem. In these passages the main theme is the "Way" which splits through the Sea(-dragon) along which Yahweh leads his people, a theme absent from the Song of the Sea.

Our survey brings us to the conclusion that the Song of the Sea cannot be fitted into the history of the prose and poetic accounts of the Exodus-Conquest, except at the beginning of the development in the period of the Judges. Its independence is remarkable, preserved by the fixity of its poetic form, while prose traditions, especially those orally transmitted and the later poetic traditions, developed and crystallized into more or less stereotyped themes and images, replacing or reinterpreting the archaic poetic tradition. Our examination below of the second part of the composition will show further that the hymn fits well into the religious environment of the league, its cultic institutions and concepts. This conclusion conforms with the place the poem has in typologies of language and prosody.

How are we to understand the development of these traditions, from the archaic poetry in Exodus 15 in which the Egyptians founder in a storm to the late prose traditions in which Israel marches through walls of water which then collapse on the hapless Egyptians, or to Proto-apocalyptic poetry in which the way through the depths of the sea fuses mythically with the split in the defeated sea-dragon and the new creation?

First of all it should be said that it was not by chance that the episode at the sea was chosen as symbolic of Israel's redemption and creation as a community. Theoretically, other episodes might have been selected just as well as this one, say the march from the southern mountains into the new land, a favorite theme of old Israelite poetry, or the Conquest proper in Canaan. Nor is it by coincidence that, with the recrudescence of myth late in Israel's history, myths of creation, especially the battle with sea, came to be identified with the historical battle in which Yahweh won salvation for Israel. In choosing the event

of the sea, Israel drew upon available symbols and language which retained power and meaning even when the old mythic patterns which gave them birth had been attenuated or broken by Israel's austere historical consciousness.

More can be said about the mode in which the episode at the Reed Sea and associated traditions evolved in Israel's early cultus. In the last chapter[89] we discussed the reconstruction of the cultus at the early league shrine at Gilgal from traditions preserved in Joshua 3-5. The Ark was born in solemn procession from the battle-camp across the Jordan at Abel-shittim to the river and from thence to the shrine at Gilgal where a covenant-renewal ceremony was consummated. The crossing of the Jordan which was "divided," that is, dammed,[90] so that Israel in battle array could pass over on dry ground, was understood as dramatic reenactment of the crossing of the sea, and as well the "crossing over" to the new land in the Conquest. Exodus and entrance, the sea-crossing from Egypt and the river-crossing of the Conquest were ritually fused in these cultic acts, followed then by the consummation of the covenant which created the community at Sinai and established them in the land at Gilgal. Yahweh dried up River as he had dried up Sea (Joshua 5:1). The cultic identity of River and Sea, of course, lies close at hand in Canaanite myth in which Prince Sea and Judge River are formulaic pairs. The pairing of Sea and Jordan is found in Psalm 114.

> When Israel went forth from Egypt,
> The house of Jacob from an outlandish nation,
> Judah became his sanctuary,
> Israel his dominion.
> The Sea saw and fled,
> The Jordan turned back.
> The mountains danced like rams,
> The hills like lambs.
> What ailed you, O Sea, that you fled?
> You, Jordan, that you turned back?
> The mountains danced like rams,
> The hills like lambs,
> Before the lord of all[91] the earth,

89. For literature, see Chapter 5, note 44.
90. In Joshua 3:13, the expression *nēd 'eḥād* is evidently a gloss. It is not found in the Old Greek and is under the asterisk in the Hexaplaric tradition.
91. We read *kl* for *hl* (in later orthography *ḥwlv*), and compare Josh. 3:11, 13.

> Before the god of Jacob,
> Who turned rock into a pool of water,
> Flint into fountains of water.

(Psalm 114:1-8)

This hymn makes very clear Israel's pairing of River and Sea;[92] it is further documentation of the ritual procession of the Gilgal cult. The psalm has many archaic features and formulae. Verses 1a and 7 have contacts with Judges 5:4-5, and verses 4, 6, 7 with Psalm 29:6, 8. The psalm is not dependent on these early psalms; it merely uses formulae common to early Israel and Canaan. The use of tenses in the psalm is remarkable. *Yaqtul* is used for narrative past in parallelism with *qatal* forms.[93] The conjunction is never used at the beginning of cola. The epithet *'dn kl 'rṣ*[94] is a specific tie to the Gilgal cult. The cultic function of the hymn is difficult to conceive (as scholars have confessed), unless it is placed in the setting of the Gilgal processional, and the covenant festival celebrated there. In verse 2 there is specific reference to the creation of the nation. As we find parallelism between the crossing of Sea and River, so we should see parallelism between the covenant making of Sinai, whose sign in tradition is the twelve stone stelae (Exodus 24:4), and the festival in Gilgal and the traditions of the twelve stones set up there.[95] Finally note the two case-endings preserved in verse 8, which may be a mark of archaism (or of archaizing).[96]

92. Cf. also Psalm 66:6: "He turned the sea into dry land/They crossed through the river by foot."
93. In verse 3, *yissōb;* verse 5 *tānūs* and *tissōb;* in verse 6 *tirqēdū.*
94. This epithet may originally have belonged to Ba'l. Cf. *zbl b'l 'arṣ* (*CTA*, 5.6.10; 6.3.9; etc.)
95. There is, of course, duplication in the traditions of the twelve stones at Gilgal. As a matter of fact, there may be three variant forms of the tradition of the twelve stones and the covenant ceremony at Gilgal. Recently Otto Eissfeldt has drawn attention to confusion between Gilgal and Shechem in a series of Deuteronomic passages, notably Deut. 27:1-8 which records the instruction to set up "large stones," plastered and inscribed with the "words of the law," and to build an altar, all, according to the time notice, "on the day you cross the Jordan" (Deut. 27:2). On the complicated critical problems involved, see O. Eissfeldt, "Gilgal or Shechem?," in *Proclamation and Presence* [G. Henton Davies Volume], ed. J. I. Durham and J. R. Porter (Richmond, John Knox, 1970), pp. 90-101; and Soggin, "Gilgal, Passah und Landnahme," *SVT*, 15 (1966), 263-277.
96. [ ] *hōpĕkī* and *lēma'yēn[ī].* [The Massoretic text reads *lm'ynw.*] Owing to the fact that there is a period of considerable length in which *yōd* and *waw* were not distinguised at all in the Jewish script, and an even longer period in which *yod* and *waw* were so similar as to be easily confused, one must be very brash to claim the poet mixed case-

The parallelism between Sea and River also is found in the old verses preserved in the Psalm of Habakkuk.[97]

Was not your wrath against River, Yahweh,[98]
Your anger against River,
Your ire against Sea,
When you drove your horses,
The chariot[99] of your salvation?

These verses stand much closer to the myth of Yamm/Nahar and the Cloud Rider than those in Psalm 114.[100] But they also reveal how easily the Reed Sea and the Jordan could merge in ritual reenactment in the cult at Gilgal.

The cultic repetition of the crossing of River-Sea in the cultus of early Israel at Gilgal had a reflex effect on the historical traditions of the Exodus. Both the old mythic pattern of Canaan and the ritual crossing of the Jordan on dry ground reshaped the later story of the episode of the sea. The way is prepared for the shift of interest from Yahweh's defeat of the Egyptians, primary in Exodus 15, to interest in the march of the redeemed, the making of a way through the sea on dry ground.

The absence in Exodus 15 of the motifs of the splitting *(bqʿ)*[101] of

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endings. In support of such a mixing Dahood (*Psalms*, III, 137) cites *'dtw* (*KAI*, 6, 2); however, the *waw* is the 3.m.s suffix on a *plural* noun (cf. *'ădōnay*). For similar reasons we must reject Dahood's postulation of a third m.s. suffix written *y* which he compares with Phoenician, forgetting apparently that the Phoenician suffix written -*y* stands for -*iyū*, *ēyū*, etc., which in Hebrew orthography would be written -*yw*. The explanation of the bizarre *hw'/hy'* confusion in the Pentateuch must be similarly explained as owing to the falling together of *waw* and *yōd* in a form which looked like *waw* to a copyist a century or so later when an old (and excellent) manuscript became the basis of the Rabbinic recension (i.e., the *textus receptus*) of the Pentateuch.

97. The basic study is still that of W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," pp. 1-18.

98. We read:
     'm bnhr-m yhwh
     'm bnhr-m 'pk
     'm bym 'brtk
'm or *h* should be leveled through. Note the first colon in the Old Greek. Albright first recognized the enclitic -*m* with *nahar*.

99. Read the singular with Greek ἱππασία. There is no reason to introduce a verb (vs. Albright); the bicolon counts 7/7 in syllables (1:1) though it fits badly in a stress-metrical scansion (3:3); *rkb* can mean both "to drive horses and chariot" or "to ride a horse."

100. See also the enthronement hymn, Psalm 93:1-5, where *nĕhārōt/maym rabbīm/ mišbĕrê-yām* stand in parallel.

101. Cf. Ps. 78:13; Exod. 14:16, 21; Neh. 9:11; cf. Ps. 74:14f.

Sea, of Israel's walking through the sea, and of the walls of water is a mark of its high antiquity. The Song of the Sea alone of the traditions of the Exodus escaped this shaping by rite and preserved an older version of the event. The poet knew only of a storm at sea and the sinking into the sea of the Egyptians. To be sure, the elements of myth which created the Gilgal rites were present in early Israel, and the pattern of the myth makes itself felt more fully in the second portion of the hymn. One must conclude, however, that influence of the mythic pattern is extraordinarily restrained in Part I, a restraint which can be due only to the force of historical impulses in Israel's earliest Epic traditions.

Part II of the Song of the Sea preserves materials of special interest to the historian of tradition. Two passages require discussion.

While your people passed over, Yahweh
While your people passed over whom you created . . .
                                        (Exodus 15:16b)

What does this couplet mean? The first strophe of this section described Yahweh's leading of Israel through the wilderness. Israel is brought to the "holy encampment" of Yahweh. Conceivably this expression might apply to a shrine in Sinai or Qadesh. Much more likely, in view of the cultic function of the hymn, is the battle encampment of Shittīm, that is, the traditional site from which Israel launched her conquest across Jordan and where the procession of the Ark began in the early traditions of Joshua.[102] The strophe which the above couplet concludes describes the dread which overwhelmed the enemy in the land as Israel was poised for Holy War. In effect Yahweh had already defeated the enemy in accord with the ideology of Holy War. In this context we must certainly understand the words of the couplet to refer to the crossing of the river, to the "passing over" into the land through Jordan: "from Shittim to Gilgal!" (Micah 6:5).

You brought them, you planted them
In the mount of your possession,
The dais of your throne
Which you made, Yahweh,

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102. It is in the same encampment in the plains of Moab that Moses, according to Deuteronomistic lore, preached the great sermons that make up the Book of Deuteronomy.

The sanctuary, Yahweh,
Which your hands created.

Yahweh will reign
Forever and ever.

(Exodus 15:17f.)

We stressed above the formulaic character of the triplet (verse 17). Yahweh led his people into the land of which he took possession[103] and to his shrine. Yahweh built his own sanctuary.[104] This contrasts with Ba'l's arrangements to build a temple in which to be enthroned. Ba'l had to seek the consent of the divine council chaired by 'El, and the actual building is done by the craftsman of the gods. Still Ba'l, too, could say that he had built a temple of silver and gold.[105] We recognize here the old mythic pattern which the following themes of the Song of the Sea preserve:

(1) the combat of the Divine Warrior and his victory at the Sea, (2) the building of a sanctuary on the "mount of possession" won in battle, and (3) the god's manifestation of "eternal" kingship.

It is appropriate to ask what sanctuary is referred to in verse 17. The "mountain of inheritance" is often a general term referring to the special land of the god; here we judge it to refer to the hill-country of Canaan as Yahweh's special possession. The actual shrine referred to in the original composition is at once the earthly sanctuary and the "cosmic" mountain of which the earthly sanctuary is the duplicate and local manifestation—built, incidentally, by the god's worshippers.[106] In this case, it may be proper to say the poet had in mind the sanctuary of Gilgal. One may complain that Gilgal was not on a high mountain and that its tent-shrine and twelve stelae were unprepossessing. Such matters were no problem to the ancient Canaanite or Israelite. A temple precinct in Sidon was called "the high heavens," *šamêm rōmīm!*[107] A temple mound or platform constituted the counter-

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103. This is the old force of the term *naḥălā*. Compare also Ba'l's "mount of victory," *ǧr tl'it*, and the formula cited in note 42 above.

104. Cf. Psalm 78:69: Yahweh builds his temple in the likeness of that in the height (of heaven), reading *kmrm*.

105. See above, note 16.

106. See Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, Harvard Semitic Monographs (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1972).

107. See Sakkunyaton *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. evan.*, 1.10.9 (ed. K. Mras); O. Eissfeldt, "Schamemrumim 'Hoher Himmel,' ein Stadtteil von Gross-Sidon," in *KS* (Eissfeldt), II, 122–126; and Ugaritic Text RS 24.252 (a title of 'Anat: *ba'lat šamêmi rāmīma*); as well as in the inscription of Bod'aštart.

part of the cosmic mountain. It should be remembered also that Mount Zion itself was a low hillock overshadowed by the towering heights of the Mount of Olives; yet it was a mountain which "at the end of days . . . shall be established as the top of the mountains/and shall be exalted above the hills."[108] In the Apocalypse, "Zion" has become a name of heaven. In short, the language of verse 17 could apply to any Yahwistic sanctuary. Certainly, in later times the verse was assumed to apply to the temple "mount" in Jerusalem.

Study of the mythic pattern of Bronze Age Canaan and the history of traditions of the episode at the Reed Sea in Israel's literature reveal a dialectic in the evolution of Israelite religion and religious institutions. Israel's religion in its beginning stood in a clear line of continuity with the mythopoeic patterns of West Semitic, especially Canaanite, myth.[109] Yet its religion did emerge from the old matrix, and its institutions were transformed by the impact of formative historical events and their interpretation by elements of what we may call "Proto-Israel" which came together in the days of Moses and in the era of the Conquest. In any case, the rites and religious ethos of the days of the league were fundamentally shaped by celebration of historical events, preserved in Israelite memory, which were conceived as acts of Yahweh creating a new community. The reenactment of primordial events of cosmogonic myth gave way to festivals reenacting epic events in Israel's past, thus renewing her life as a historical community. This was the character of the covenant renewal festivals of the league. This was the context of the composition of the Song of the Sea. Israel's early religious evolution was neither simple nor unilinear. It will not do to describe the process as a progressive historicizing of myth. Even in Hegel's dialectic, the movement from the natural to the historical was complex, and the modern historian presumably permits no metaphysical principle to motivate the movement from natural to historical consciousness. The Canaanite mythic pattern is not the core of Israel's epic of Exodus and Conquest. On the other hand, it is equally unsatisfactory to posit a radical break between Israel's mythological and cultic past and the historical cultus of the league. The power of the mythic pattern was enormous. The Song of the Sea reveals this power as mythological

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108. Mic. 4:1 = Isa. 2:2.

109. At the present stage of our knowledge of Amorite religion, we can say little of its distinctiveness from Canaanite religion. No doubt Israel did inherit elements of Amorite myth and rite.

themes shape its mode of presenting epic memories. It is proper to speak of this counterforce as the tendency to mythologize historical episodes to reveal their transcendent meaning. The history of the Exodus-Conquest theme illustrates this dialectic well.

With the institution of kingship in Israel and the temple cultus, both institutions of Canaanite origin, the old myths became resurgent. In hymns like Psalms 29, 93, and 89B (verses 6–19), the myths of creation appear, unsullied by historicizing, for example, by reference to the Epic theme of the victory at the Reed Sea. With the close of the monarchy and the end of classical (pre-Exilic) prophecy, the older theologies of history which interpreted Epic themes, the Yahwistic, Deuteronomic, and Priestly, give way to a new synthesis of mythic, royal ideological, and literary forms (now freed from their older cultic functions) and the Prophetic tradition that harked back to the league. The Song of the Arm of Yahweh in Isaiah 51 is a superb example of this new synthesis, in which the old Exodus is described in terms of the Creation myth and in turn becomes the archetype of a new Exodus. The old Songs of the Wars of Yahweh were transformed into descriptions of eschatological battle (Isaiah 34; 63). The ancient royal festival became a future "Messianic banquet" (Isaiah 55:1–3). At the feast on the mountain, Death (Môt) was to be "swallowed up" forever (Isaiah 25:6–8). In Second Isaiah, Third Isaiah, Second Zechariah, Isaiah 24–27, and the eschatological visions of Ezekiel, we detect tendencies which will produce the Apocalyptic in which historical and mythological elements are combined in a new tension and take on a new life.