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# Lesser Gods of the Ancient Near East and Some Comparisons with Heavenly Beings of the Old Testament

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*Andrews University*

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**Lesser gods of the Ancient Near East and some comparisons  
with heavenly beings of the Old Testament**

**Alomia, K. Merling, Ph.D.**

**Andrews University, 1987**

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Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

LESSER GODS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND SOME  
COMPARISONS WITH HEAVENLY BEINGS  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
K. Merling Alomia

July 1987

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ABSTRACT

LESSER GODS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND SOME  
COMPARISONS WITH HEAVENLY BEINGS  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

K. Merling Alomia

Chairman: William H. Shea



ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: LESSER GODS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND  
SOME COMPARISONS WITH HEAVENLY BEINGS OF  
THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Name and degree of faculty adviser: William H. Shea, Ph.D.

Date Completed: July 1987.

This study examines the concept and imagery of heavenly beings as they appear described and depicted in the texts and iconography of the Ancient Near East, and compares the variegated concept and imagery with the angelic realm in the Old Testament.

Utilizing motifs commonly repeated in the mytho-epic literature of the Fertile Crescent--such as the divine assembly and its diverse constituency, the protector gods, the messenger gods, the sons of the gods, the warrior gods, the demonic gods, etc.--the study exposes the diversity among heavenly beings and their place within the divine realm or the hierarchical pantheon. The study abounds with

drawings illustrative of the heavenly population as depicted in Ancient Near Eastern iconography.

The OT references to angelic beings, examined alongside the Ancient Near Eastern material, clearly show Israelite awareness of an elaborate tradition. Although a graphic representation of heavenly beings is totally lacking on the biblical side, descriptive semblances are found in the biblical material from Adamic times to Danielic days.

Finally, the study synthesizes the differences and similarities between the Ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament imagery. Although the polytheistic side appears to be--in both written and graphic sources--more colorful and varied, there is an appreciation for the uniqueness of the monotheistic view sustained in the biblical passages. The investigation concludes by asserting that the Ancient Near Eastern literary-graphic imagery of the celestial population serves to illustrate the biblical angelic realm. Biblical and non-biblical sources alike--in their own peculiar way--attest to the reality of angelic population.

With Love and Gratitude  
to my Wife Nora  
and our sons  
Le-Roy  
and  
Haroldo

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AAA -- Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology
- AAAO -- Frankfort, Henri. The Art and the Architecture of the Ancient Orient. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954.
- AAG -- Segert, Stanislav. Altaramäische Grammatik. Leipzig: Veb Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1975.
- AAM -- Moortgat, Anton. The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia. The Classical Art of the Near East. London: Phaidon Press, 1969.
- AAS -- Porada, Edith, ed. Ancient Art in Seals. Princeton, NJ: The Princeton University Press, 1983.
- AASOR -- Annual of the American Society of Biblical Archaeology
- AB -- Anchor Bible
- ABAT -- Gressmann, Hugo. Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament. Leipzig: Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 1927.
- ABLST -- Smith, M. P. Assyrian and Babylonian Literature. Selected Translations. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904.
- ACRT -- Akurgal, Ekrem. Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey. Istanbul: Haset Kitabevi, 1973.
- ACS -- Collon, Dominique. The Alalakh Cylinder Seals: A New Catalogue of the Actual Seals Excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley at Tell Atchana, and from Neighbouring Sites on the Syrian-Turkish Border. Oxford: BAR International Series, 1982.

- AfO -- Archiv für Orientforschung
- AGE -- Talquist, Knut Leonard. Akkadische Götterepitheta. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974.
- AHW -- Soden, Wolfram von. Akkadisches Handwörterbuch. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1972.
- AHCL -- Davidson, B. The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1848.
- AJA -- American Journal of Archaeology
- AJSL -- The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
- AJSS -- American Journal of Semitic Studies
- Akk -- Akkadica
- AmpBi -- Amplified Bible
- AnBi -- Analecta Biblica
- ANE -- Ancient Near East
- ANEP -- Pritchard, James B., ed. Ancient Near Eastern Pictures. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954.
- ANESAM -- Buchanan, Briggs. Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- ANET -- Pritchard, James B., ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. 3rd. ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- AnMe -- Oppenheim, Leo. Ancient Mesopotamia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- AnSt -- Anatolian Studies
- ANT -- Caplice, Richard I. The Akkadian Mamburbi Texts: An Introduction. Los Angeles: Undena Publications, 1974.



- AO -- Der Alte Orient
- AOSEN -- Von der Osten, Hans Henning, Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934.
- AnOr -- Analecta Orientalia
- APN -- Tallqvist, Knut L. Assyrian Personal Names. Leipzig: August Pries, 1914.
- ARAB -- Luckenbill, Daniel D. Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926-27.
- ARI -- Albright, William F. Archaeology and the Religion of Israel. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942.
- ArchMit -- Archaeologische Mitteilungen
- ArOr -- Archiv Orientalni
- ASHW -- Delitzsch, Friedrich. Assyrisches Handwörterbuch. Leipzig: J. C. Hinris'sche Buchhandlung, 1896.
- ASOR -- American Studies of Oriental Research
- ATM -- Beyer, Klaus. Die Aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.
- ATR -- Anglican Theological Review
- BA -- The Biblical Archaeologist
- BANE -- Wright, G. E., ed. The Bible and the Ancient Near East. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.
- BASOR -- Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
- BAsRe -- Hooker, S. H. Babylonian and Assyrian Religion. London: Hutchinson House, 1953.
- BAT -- The Bible: An American Translation.
- BB -- The Basic Bible

- BBC -- The Broadman Bible Commentary
- BBE -- The Bible in Basic English
- BEC -- Langdon, Stephen. The Babylonian Epic of Creation. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Ber -- Berytus
- BG -- Heidel, A. The Babylonian Genesis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- BGB -- Kunstmann, Walter G. Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1932.
- BHS -- Elliger, K. and Rudolph, W., eds., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1986.
- BHSBB -- Unger, Eckhard. Babylon die Heilige Stadt der Beschreibung der Babylonier. Berlin: Verlag Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931.
- Bib -- Biblica
- BIRS -- Kapelrud, A. S. Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts. Copenhagen: A. E. Gad, 1952.
- BJRL -- Bulletin of the John Rylands Lybrary, Manchester
- BMS -- King, Leonard W. Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, Being "The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand". London: Luzac and Co., 1896.
- BOS -- Cassuto, Umberto, Biblical and Oriental Studies. Jerusalem: Ktav Publishing House, 1973.
- BPP -- Langdon, Stephen. Babylonian Penitential Psalms. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1927.
- BRM -- King, Leonard W. Babylonian Religion and Mythology. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1899.
- BSC -- Bible Student's Commentary

- BRST -- Kapelrud, A. S. Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts. Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1953.
- BSac -- Bibliotheca Sacra
- BUE -- Van Zijl, Peter Johannes. A Study in Connection with Baal in the Ugaritic Epics. Kevelaer: Butzon & Berker, 1972.
- BWL -- Langdon, Stephen. Babylonian Wisdom Literature. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960.
- CAD -- Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
- CAED -- Cunchillos Ilarry, José Luis. Cuando los ángeles eran dioses [Bibliotheca Salmanticensis XIV Estudios 12]. Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1976.
- CaMyLe -- Driver, G. R. Canaanite Myths and Legends. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965.
- CANES -- Porada, Edith. Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I. The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library. Washington, DC: Pantheon Books, 1948.
- CBEB -- Oldenburg, Ulf. The Conflict between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969.
- CBO -- The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
- CBSCM -- Legrain, Leon. The Culture of Babylon from Their Seals in the Collection of the Museum. Philadelphia: University Museum, 1925.
- CCOL -- Delaporte, L. Musée du Louvre. Catalogue des cylindres, cachets et pierres gravées de style oriental. 2 Vols. [I. Fouilles et Missions. II. Acquisitions]. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1920-23.
- CCOBN -- Delaporte, Louis. Catalogue des cylindres orientaux et des cachets assyro-babyloniens, perses et syro-cappadociens de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris: Imprimeire Nationale, 1910.

- CCRSU -- Schaefer, Claude F.-A. and Forrer, W. Corpus des cylindres-sceaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d'Enkomi-Alasia. Paris: Editions Recherches sur les Civilisations, 1983.
- CCTA -- André Herdner, Corpus des tablettes en cunéiforme alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939. Paris: Imprimeire Nationale, 1963.
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- CleM -- Clergy monthly
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- DISO -- Jean, Charles-F. and Hoftijzer, Jacob. Dictionnaire des inscriptions sémitiques de l'Ouest. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.
- DTTBY -- Jastrow, Marcus. A Dictionary of the Targumim. The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature. 2 vols. New York: Title Publishing Company, 1943.
- DWEI -- Miller, P. D. The Divine Warrior in Early Early Israel. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.
- EB -- The Emphasised Bible
- EBC -- The Expositor's Bible Commentary
- EG -- Thompson, R. C. The Epic of Gilgamesh. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.
- EGAZ -- Boehmer, Rainer Michael. Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965.
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- En-el -- Enuma elish
- ENES -- Buchanan, Briggs. Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- EnciBi -- Enciclopedia de la Biblia. 6 vols. Edited by Diez Macho, Alejandro and Bartina, Sebastián. Barcelona: Ediciones Garriga, 1963.
- Erls -- Eretz-Israel
- EsFra -- Estudios Franciscanos
- ETHL -- Ephemerides Theologicae Louvaniensis
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- ExIn -- Hallo, William W. and Van Dijk, J. J. A. The Exaltation of Inanna. London: Yale University Press, 1968.
- Exped -- Expedition
- FoVi -- Foi & Vie
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Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936.

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- HHI -- Tadmor, H. and Weinfeld, M. History Historiography and Interpretation: Studies Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983.
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- HPD&A -- Marié-Joseph Seux, Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1976.
- HRSV -- Puech, Hernri-Charles, ed. Historia de las religiones siglo veintiuno. Madrid: Closas-Orcoyen, 1977.
- HTR -- Harvard Theological Review
- HUCA -- Hebrew Union College Annual



- IAAM -- Frankfort, H. et al. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946.
- IDANE -- Oppenheim, Leo. The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956.
- IDB -- Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
- IDCB -- Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible. Edited by Geoffrey Wigoder. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986.
- IDRAE -- Gadd, C. J. Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- IEJ -- Israel Exploration Journal
- Ig and An -- Igigi and Anunnaki
- IllBD -- The Illustrated Bible Dictionary
- IMC -- Del Olmo Lette, Guillermo. Interpretación de la mitología cananea. Estudios de semántica Ugarítica. Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo, 1984.
- Iran -- Iranica Antiqua
- ISBE -- The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- JAIA -- Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America
- JAOS -- Journal of American Oriental Society
- JBL -- Journal of Biblical Literature
- JCS -- Journal of Cuneiform Studies
- JeEn -- The Jewish Encyclopedia. 12 vols. Edited by Isidore Singer. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906.
- JEOL -- Jaarbericht van het vooraziatisch-egyptisch genootschap 'Ex oriente lux'

- JETS -- Journal of Evangelical Theological Socie
- JNES -- Journal of Near Eastern Studies
- JNSL -- Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
- JPS -- Journal of Palestine Oriental Society
- JQR -- The Jewish Quarterly Review
- JSS -- Journal of Semitic Studies
- JTS -- Journal of Theological Studies
- JSAV -- Jewish Publication Society of America  
(Version)
- JVSK -- Keel, Othmar. Jahwe-Visionen und Siegel-  
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- KAI -- Donner, H. and Röllig. Kanaanäische und  
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- KJV -- King James Version
- Knox -- The Holy Bible. Translated by John Knox.  
London: Burns & Oates, 1959.
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- KTU -- Manfred, Dietrich; Loretz, Oswald and  
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Verlag, 1976.
- KuHe -- Akurgal, Ekren. Die Kunst der Hethiter.  
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- LB -- Living Bible
- LeCa -- Gray, John. The Legacy of Canaan. The  
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- the Old Testament. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957.
- LLAVT -- Vogt, Ernestus. Lexicon Linguae Aramaicae Veteris Testamenti documentis antiquis illustratum. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971.
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- LRBA -- Dhorme, E. P. and Dussaud, R. Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949.
- LRBUA -- Al-Yasin, Izz-al-Din. The Lexical Relation between Ugaritic and Arabic. New York: Shelton College, 1952.
- LTK -- Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche. 11 vols. Edited by Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1957-67.
- LVTL -- Koehler, Ludwig and Baumgartner, Walter, eds. Lexicon in veteris testamenti libros. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953.
- MAB -- Contenau, Georges. La médecine en Assyrie et en Babylonie. Paris: Librairie Maloine, 1938.
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- MAISU -- Keel, Othmar, ed. Monotheismus im Alten Israel und seiner Umwelt. Fribourg: Verlag Schweizerisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1980.
- MAM -- Mission Archéologique de Mari
- MAOG -- Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft
- Maqlu -- Talqvist, Knut L. Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû. Leipzig: Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, 1895.

- MARS -- Langdon, Stephen. The Mythology of All Races: Semitic Mythology. Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1931.
- MBJOBS -- Tsvat, Matitiah. The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1980.
- MBO -- Caquot, A., Légasse, S. and Tardieu, M., eds. Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor. Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Berker, 1985.
- MDDAH -- Davies, T. Witton. Magic, Divination and Demonology Among the Hebrews and Their Neighbors. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969.
- MeGo -- Vorlander, Hermann. Mein Gott. Die Vorstellungen vom persönlichen Gott im Alten Testament. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975.
- MIOF -- Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung
- MLB -- The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)
- MLC -- Del Olmo Lete, Guillermo. Mitos y leyendas de Canaán según la tradición de Ugarit. Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1981.
- MLD -- Margalit, Baruch. A Matter of >Life< and >Death< A Study of the Baal-Mot Epic (CTA 4-5-6). Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980.
- Moffat -- The Holy Bible. Translated by James Moffat. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Oam, 1922.
- MRS -- Schaeffer, Claude F.-A. Mission de Ras-Shamra. Paris: Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, 1938.
- MUSJB -- Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph Beirouth (Liban)
- MVAG -- Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft

- MY -- Mal'ak YHWH
- Mythra -- Lajard, Félix. Introduction à l'étude du culte public et des mystères de Mythra en orient et en occident. Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1847.
- NASB -- New American Standard Version
- NEB -- New English Bible
- NBVM E -- New Berkeley Version in Modern English
- NERTROT -- Beyerlin, Walter, ed. Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.
- NJB -- New Jerusalem Bible
- NICOT -- The New International Commentary of the Old Testament
- NIDNTT -- The New International Dictionary of the New Testament.
- NIV -- New International Version
- NSAB -- New American Standard Bible
- NSAR -- Genge, Heinz. Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs. Copenhagen: Munksgaards Boghandel, 1979.
- OIDI -- Frankfort, Henri. Oriental Institute Discoveries in Iraq. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1935.
- OLSB -- Keel, Othmar. Orte und Landschaften der Bibel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.
- OrAnt -- Oriens Antiquus
- OSSI -- Leichty, Erle. The Omen Series Summa Izbu. Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1970.
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- OTMS -- Rowley, H. H., ed. The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- OTS -- Oudtestamentische Studien
- OTT -- Von Rad, Gerhard. Old Testament Theology. 2 vols. New York: Harper, 1962-65.
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- PB -- Deimel, Antonius. Pantheon Babylonicum. Rome: Sumptibus Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1914.
- PBC -- Labat, René. Le poème Babylonien de la Création. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1935.
- PBE -- Cornfeld, Gaalyahu, ed. Pictorial Biblical Encyclopedia: A Visual Guide to the Old Testament. New York: Macmillan Company, 1964.
- PEQ -- Palestine Exploration Quarterly
- PRU -- Le palais royal de Ugarit.
- PSBA -- Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research
- RA -- Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale
- RACG -- L'Heureux, Conrad E. Rank among the Canaanite Gods El, Ba'al and the Repha'im. Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1979.
- RANE -- Mendelsohn, I. Religions of the Ancient Near East. Sumerian-Akkadian Religion Texts and Ugaritic Epics. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955.
- RB -- Revue Biblique
- ReAn -- Bernabe, A. and Vieyra, M. Las Religiones Antiguas. Madrid: Closas Orcoyen, 1977.

- ReBAs -- Jastrow, Morris. The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria . Boston: Ginn & Company, 1898.
- RES -- Revue des Études Sémitiques
- RevBib -- Revista biblica
- RHR -- Revue de l'Historire des Religions
- RHAs -- Revue Hittite Asianique
- RSO -- Rivista degli Studi Orientali
- RSPT -- Revue de sciences philosophiques et theologiques
- RSR -- Recherches de Science Religieuse
- RSV -- Revised Standard Version
- RTR -- Reformed Theological Review
- RTTLN -- Langdon, Stephen. Historical and Religious Texts from the Temple Library of Nippur. Leipzig: August Pries, 1914.
- SAHG -- Falkenstein, A. and von Soden, W. Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete. Zurich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953.
- SAHR -- Gurney, O. R. Some Aspects of the Hittite Religion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- SAKI -- Thureau-Dangin, F. Die sumerischen und die akkadischen Königsinschriften. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907.
- SBE -- Fernández Marcos, N., Treballe Barrera, J. and Fernández Vallina, J., eds. Simposio Bíblico Español. Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1984.
- SBO -- Studia Biblica et Orientalia
- SC -- The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtaroth. Edited by A. Cohen. Hihead: The Soncino Press, 1947.
- SCCNH -- Morrison, M. A. and Owen, D. I., eds. Studies on the Civilization and Culture

of Nuzi and the Hurrians in Honor of Ernest R. Lacheman on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 29, 1981. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981.

- ScEcc -- Sciences Ecclésiastiques
- ScSu -- Science et Spirit
- SCWA -- Ward, William Hayes, The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia. Washington, DC: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1910.
- SDABD -- Horn, Siefried H. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979.
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- SJT -- Scottish Journal of Theology
- SLP -- Langdon, Stephen. Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms. Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1919.
- SMIWA -- Rawlinson, H. C. A Selection from the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Western Asia. 5 Vols. London: The British Museum, 1861.
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- SPUM -- De Moor, Johannes. The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba<sup>C</sup>lu. According to the Version of Ilimilku. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971.



- SSBT -- Lutz, Henry Frederick. Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts. Philadelphia: Published by the University Museum, 1919.
- SThu -- Schweizerische Theologische Umschau
- SuG -- Friederik Delitzsch. Sumerisches Glossar. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1914.
- Surpu -- Reiner, Erica. Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations. Archiv Für Orientforschung Beifeit 11 (1958): 1-66.
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- TDOT -- Botterweck, G. Johannes and Ringgren, Helmer, eds. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1947-86.
- THAT -- Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann. Munich: Kaiser, 1971.
- THE -- Garstang, J. The Hittite Empire. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929.
- ThZ -- Theologische Zeitschrift
- TIT -- Moran, W. L., ed., Toward an Image of Tammuz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- TLH -- Bernabé, Alberto. Textos literarios hetitas. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979.
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- TSBA -- Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology

- TTSAT -- Haran, Menahem. Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- TuL -- Ebeling, Erich. Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931.
- TWOT -- Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- TynB -- Tyndale Bulletin
- UAB -- Schmökel, Harmut. Ur, Assur und Babylon. Stuttgart: G. Kilper, 1955.
- Ug -- Ugaritica
- UgMy -- Obermann, Julian. Ugaritic Mythology. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948.
- UF -- Ugaritic-Forschungen
- UH -- Gordon, Cyrus H. Ugaritic Handbook. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947.
- UJE -- The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia
- UL -- Gordon, Cyrus H. Ugaritic Literature. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1957.
- UM -- Gordon, Cyrus H. Ugaritic Manual. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955.
- UT -- Gordon, Cyrus H. Ugaritic Textbook. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965.
- VoFe -- Fuentes Estañol, María José. Vocabulario Fenicio. Barcelona: Gráficas Diamante, 1980.
- VT -- Vetus Testamentum
- VTSup -- Vetus Testamentum Supplements
- WBC -- Word Bible Commentary

- WeHe -- Riemschneider, M. Die Welt der Hethiter.  
Stuttgart: G. Kilper. 1854.
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East. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955.
- WO -- Die Welt des Orients
- WUS -- Aistleitner, Joseph. Wörterbuch der uga-  
ritischen Sprache. Berlin: Akademie-  
Verlag, 1965.
- WVDOG -- Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der  
deutschen Orientgesellschaft
- YAFIK -- Bittel, Kurt, Naufmann, Rudolf and Otto,  
Heinz. Yazilikaya. Architektur, Felsbil-  
der, Inschriften und Kleinfunde. Leipzig:  
J. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1941.
- YGC -- Albright, W. F. Yahweh and the Gods of  
Canaan. Garden City, N.Y.: 1968.
- ZA -- Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
- ZAW -- Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche  
Wissenschaft
- ZDMG -- Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländ-  
ischen Gesellschaft
- ZPEB -- The Zondervan Pictorial Enciclopedia of  
the Bible
- ZDPV -- Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-  
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195. Syrian Sphinx Monster. After Paolo Mathiae, "Le sculpture in pietra," MAIS, p. 116, pl. 49.2.
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201. A Demon from Phoenicia. After W. Culican, "Phoenician Demons," JNES 35 (1976):21-24, fig. d.
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The heavenly realm, as it is disclosed in the biblical pages, has always been wrapped in a halo of mystery. The scarcity of data about it has been a perennial spur to reach a better understanding of it. Occasionally the prophets gazed at some of the heavenly realities, but they always came short of describing its complete reality.

Undoubtedly, the study of angelology has its origin in biblical pages. When the prophets spoke about angels, however, were they referring to something that only they were acquainted with, or was this subject a matter of common knowledge to all? Were the OT writers referring to beings of a realm which only Israel knew and understood, or was the angelic population also recognized by other peoples --the Ammonites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, Egyptians, Hittites, Philistines, Phoenicians, Sumerians, etc.? Was the concept of angels exclusively an Israelite religio-cultural idea, or was it part of a common religio-cultural heritage throughout all the ancient Near East (ANE)?

Although the OT does not show a systematic angelology<sup>1</sup> like that which finally was settled upon in post-biblical times, "it is evident that even in biblical days" this reality was clearly recognized and in a quite distinctive way.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is appropriate to speak of an OT angelology which is the basis for a subsequent NT angelology.

#### Biblical Angelology in Recent Scholarship

It has been pointed out that as a general rule angelological matters are, if not completely avoided,<sup>3</sup> at least scarcely treated in biblical studies.<sup>4</sup> This tendency

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<sup>1</sup>Correctly Caquot says that "No se puede buscar en el AT una 'angelologia' totalmente acabada." André Caquot, "La angelologia biblica. El Antiguo Testamento," in Historia de los Dogmas. Los Angeles (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1973), 2:1.

<sup>2</sup>Umberto Cassuto, Biblical and Oriental Studies, trans. Israel Abraham (Jerusalem: Ktav Publishing House, 1973), 1:23 (hereafter BOS).

<sup>3</sup>G. B. Caird, Principalities and Powers. A Study in Pauline Theology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. viii.

<sup>4</sup>Landes says that "the study of BIBLICAL ANGELOLOGY has fallen on evil days," because "the recent revival in Biblical theology has strangely created no lively interest in what may constitute the theological significance of the angelic beings that frequently appear within the pages of both the Old and New Testaments." He also adds that "during the past two decades, the number of important published works on the subject can literally be counted on one's fingers," and observes that those works among Roman Catholic scholars tend to be "more dogmatic than Biblical"; while on the side of the Protestant theologians, with the exception of Barth, angels have been either ignored altogether, or they have given "scant attention to them in their Biblical theologies." George M. Landes, "Shall We Neglect the Angels?," Union Seminary Quarterly Review 14

is reflected in most of the OT theologies where angels are either not mentioned at all or only referred to in brief.<sup>1</sup> However, there are theologians who have considered the topic important enough to be included in their theological works.<sup>2</sup> In addition, during the present century a number

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(1959):19-25. More recently, Rob van der Hart feels that actually matters on angels is "a subject untouched and almost forgotten" (The Theology of Angels and Devils [Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, 1972], p. 9). Likewise, Daphne D. C. Pochin Mould also says, "Leaf through the pages of almost any bunch of modern theological periodicals and you will usually look in vain for new discussions of, or any sort of interest in the angels." "Are There Really Angels and Devils?," USC 38 (1973):6.

<sup>1</sup>Among those who have excluded angels from their work is Otto J. Baab, The Old Testament Theology (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), and Chester K. Lehman, Biblical Theology: Vol. I Old Testament (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971). Typical of a scarce mention of the matter are Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology. 2 vols., trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962); Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament. 2 vols., trans. J. A. Baker. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957). As a general rule, liberal theologians--like Millar Burrows, An Outline of Biblical Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946)--assert that "belief in angels is a part of the prescientific, mythological world-view of the Bible," or some sort of "a survival of primitive animism and polytheism," (p. 119) of the "outmoded world-view of biblical times" (ibid. p. 123); so that "angels no longer serve any vital religious purpose, and Christian faith actually makes little use of them" (ibid., p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>Among them see Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1950), who devotes section 1 of part II (pp. 128-141) to the topic; Edmond Jacob devotes a chapter of his Theology of the Old Testament, trans. Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Allcock (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 68-72, exclusively to angels, and part of his fifth chapter, pp. 73-77 for the Angel of YHWH; Barton Payne in The Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), has a whole section on the topic, pp. 284-295, and in pp. 167-176 deals with the Malak YHWH problem. On many other pages he touches other aspects related to angelology: pp.

of individual studies have been made on the subject.<sup>1</sup> In more recent years, as Rowland<sup>2</sup> notes, a growing interest in angelology--particularly Jewish--is evident.<sup>3</sup>

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147, 167-70, 205-207, 289, 291, 485, 572, etc.; A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), does the same in pp. 289-306; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament; vol. I, God (Tournai: Desclée & Co., 1965), devotes a large section, pp. 108-139, to matters of angels; George A. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), devotes a whole chapter, pp. 65-83, exclusively to the subject. Karl Barth exposes with propriety the theological relevance of angelology in his Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 3:3.

<sup>1</sup>Among them, Hans Duhm, Die bösen Geister im Alten Testament (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1904); Fridolin Stier, Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testament (Münster: Verlag der Archendorffschen, 1934); Aubrey R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God (Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales, 1942); William G. Heidt, Angelology of the Old Testament: A Study in Biblical Theology (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1949); Edward Langton, Essentials of Demonology (London: Epworth Press, 1949); Bernard J. Bamberger, Fallen Angels (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952); Jean Daniélou, The Angels and Their Mission (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952); Lothar Heiser, Die Engel im Glauben der Orthodoxie (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Rowland, "A Man Clothed in Linen in Daniel 10:6 ff. and Jewish Angelology," JSNT 24 (1985):99-110. Rowland underlines that this rising interest is closely related to the contribution that Jewish angelology "might have made to early christology."

<sup>3</sup>See R. Tournay, "Relectures bibliques concernant la vie future et l'angéologie," RB 69 (1962):481-505; B. J. Bamberger, "The Saducees and the Belief in Angels," JBL 82 (1963):433-435; Eric F. F. Bishop, "Angelology in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity," ATR 4 (1964):142-164; A. A. Di Lella, "The One in the Likeness and the Most High in Daniel 7," CBO 39 (1977):1-19; A. F. Segal, Two Powers in Heaven (Leiden: n.p. 1978); Leo Jung, Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan Literature (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974); Paul-É. Dion, "Les deux principales formes de l'angéologie de l'Ancien Testament

A similar phenomenon has occurred in regard to early Israelite angelology,<sup>1</sup> which is plainly attested in the most ancient religious writings of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Parallel to this, the ANE material--textual<sup>3</sup> and iconographical--<sup>4</sup> is now

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dans leur cadre oriental," ScSp 28 (1976):65-82; Dorothy Irvin, Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from Old Testament and the Ancient Near East (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978; Robert Murray, "The Origin of Aramaic ʿir, Angel," Or 53 (1984):313-317.

<sup>1</sup>L. Randellini, "Satana nell'AT," Bibbia e Oriente 5 (1963):127-132; E. Pascal, "Les anges dans le littérature préexilienne de l'AT" (Dissertation Pontif. Univ. S. Thomae Aqu. de Urbe Romae, 1965); Rikvah Schärf Kluger, Satan in the Old Testament (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967); R. North, "Separated Spiritual Substances in the Old Testament," CBO 29 (1967):419-449; Alexander Rofé, "Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-Exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Traditions" (Dissertation, Hebrew University, 1969) [Hebrew]; Volkmar Hirt, Gottes Boten im Alten Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1975); Henri Cazelles, "Os fundamentos da theologia dos anjos segundo do Antigo Teatamento," in Actualidades Biblicas, ed. J. Salvador, S. Voigt, and F. Vier (Petropolis: Editora Vozea, 1971), pp. 58-63; José M. Bertolucci, "The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Controversy between Good and Evil," Ph. D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1985); Walter Wink, Unmasking the Powers. The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

<sup>2</sup>Caquot, "Angelologia biblica," p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Among them see Daniel David Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), hereafter ARAB; W. G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), hereafter BWL; A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete (Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953), hereafter SAHG; C. F. A. Sachaeffer, ed., Ugaritica, vols. I-VII (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1939-1978), hereafter Ug; Erich Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellung der Babylonier (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931), hereafter TuL; E. Reiner, Šurpu. A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations, Afo Bei 2 (1958).



available to all. This extra-biblical material has been looked on as an appropriate illustrative source for biblical imagery for a long time now.<sup>1</sup> During the last decades this material has been used extensively in illustrating biblical accounts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Among them see D. J. Wiseman and W. and B. Forman, Götter und Menschen in Rollsiegel Westasiens (Praga: Artia Prague, 1958), hereafter GMRW; William Hayes Ward, The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1910), hereafter SCWA; Henri Frankfort, Cylinder Seals. A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), hereafter CS.

<sup>1</sup>Among them see Hugo Gressmann, Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament (Berlin: Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 1927), hereafter ABAT; Robert W. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament (New York: Abingdon Press, 1926), hereafter CPOT; James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), hereafter ANET; Walter Beyerlin, ed., Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), hereafter NERTROT.

<sup>2</sup>Among them see Hans Peter L'Orange, Studies on the Iconography of the Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World (Oslo: H. Aschenhong and Co., 1953); Othmar Keel, Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near East Iconography and the Book of Psalms (New York: Seabury Press, 1978); idem, Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); idem, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977), hereafter JVSK; Karen Randolph Joines, Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament (Haddonfield, NJ: Haddonfield House, 1974); Hermann Vorländer, Mein Gott. Die Vorstellungen vom persönlichen Gott im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), hereafter MeGo; L. Lowenstamm, Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980); José Luis Cunchillos, Cuando los angeles eran dioses (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1976), hereafter CAED; Urs Winter, Frau und Göttin. Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1983), hereafter Göttin.

Surveying this varied material, a diversity of ANE motifs emerges with distinctiveness,<sup>1</sup> and these provide us with legitimate features for a possible search for heavenly beings, since they pervaded the whole ANE religious thinking about the spiritual realm.

Within Mesopotamian religion and mythology, the council of the gods (puhur ilāni)<sup>2</sup> is a central motif.<sup>3</sup> This is reflected in the myths of Enuma elish (En-el)<sup>4</sup> and the bird-god Zu,<sup>5</sup> where the puhur ilāni appears in its important role to arrange difficult situations among the gods. A divine council is also attested in Egyptian sources,<sup>6</sup> and especially in Ugaritic mythology.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kramer in an article mentions at least fifteen different motifs taken from Sumerian material that can be related to the Bible. Samuel Noah Kramer, "Sumerian Literature and the Bible," Studia Biblica et Orientalia 3 (1959):185-204.

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Delitzsch, Assyrisches Handwörterbuch (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1896), pp. 520-521.

<sup>3</sup>Hans-Winfred Jüngling, Der Tod der Götter (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969), p. 60.

<sup>4</sup>E. A. Speiser, "The Creation Epic," ANET, pp. 64-67.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ANET, pp. 11-118.

<sup>6</sup>E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, 1980), p. 113 (hereafter DCC).

<sup>7</sup>W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (London: Athlone Press, 1968), p. 168 (hereafter YGC).

Within the divine assembly it is possible to distinguish some outstanding divine characters of its constituency. Especially in Mesopotamian imagery, apart from the leading gods--that is the three triads of great gods--some lesser gods are always mentioned as a whole with a generic epithet.<sup>1</sup> Among them, the Igigi and the Anunnaki (Ig and An) gods<sup>2</sup> stand out as groups subordinate to the major gods.<sup>3</sup>

The well-known ANE "sons of the gods" motif also provides some clues for an acquaintance with the heavenly beings. This motif is plainly illustrated in Ugaritic mythology with the innumerable gods that constitute the Ugaritic pantheon.<sup>4</sup> The myths repeatedly mention divine sons--bene ilim--such as "the sons of El," "the seventy sons of Attart," etc.,<sup>5</sup> as being the progeny of the

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<sup>1</sup>These minor gods mentioned as a generic group are the "gods of the night," or "the great gods of the night," "the gods and goddesses of the country." A. L. Oppenheim, "A New Prayer to the Gods of the Night," Studia Biblica et Orientalia 3 (1959):291-292, 296-297. Also A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, SAHG, pp. 242, 274.

<sup>2</sup>The Ig and An gods are elsewhere mentioned in the texts as a parallel group of gods, and they are generally presented as paying extreme obeisance to the godhead. See below under the section "The Igigi and the Anunnaki Gods," pp. 63 to 75.

<sup>3</sup>See SAHG, pp. 250-251, 275.

<sup>4</sup>J. C. de Moor, "The Semitic Pantheon of Ugarit," UF 2 (1960):185-228.

<sup>5</sup>See under the section "The Canaanite Sons of the Gods" on pp. 114-121.

principal gods. In this divine family, El is the supreme god and the "father of the gods" and he is also responsible for the hierarchization of the gods.<sup>1</sup>

This motif in the OT--mentioned mainly but infrequently as the bene ha'elohim--seems to differ notably from the parallel concept in ANE imagery, mainly because the monotheistic Hebrew view underlies their absolute subordination to YHWH and their non-divine nature. They are absolutely subordinate to the Godhead as his celestial messengers--i.e., "angels"--and hosts.

The ANE documents also depict a divine warfare in which heavenly armies are enlisted favoring the god who at the end remains as the victor and becomes exalted among the gods. In this way the warrior gods appear as another appropriate motif related to the heavenly beings. The OT, though, does not mention similar conflicts; it characterizes YHWH as the warrior par excellence, and His angels elsewhere are presented as His hosts. In fact, one of His most war-related epithets is YHWH šb'wt, "YHWH of the hosts."

In studies on this subject, some have considered that the real background for the conception of the OT angel (mal'ak) can be traced to Sumerian glyptic art.<sup>2</sup> Oppenheim

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<sup>1</sup>Umberto Cassuto, The Goddess Anath (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), pp 54-56.

<sup>2</sup>Theodora Ward, Men and Angels (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 10.

suggested that the evidence for some traces of angelology in the Mesopotamian region is archaeological as well as textual.<sup>1</sup> These texts can be divided into three main groups--myths, prayers, and rites<sup>2</sup>--and there a spiritual realm is revealed with distinctiveness and clarity.

Within this context, another common motif stands out within the ANE literary-iconographic mythical material; this is the protector deity. Throughout the whole Fertile Crescent men worshiped in a very devoted way some gods and goddesses who were recognized as personal protector deities. This worship has its roots in the consciousness of the nearness of a god(dess) who stood as an assistant (helper), protector or protectress, i.e., a guardian god or goddess.<sup>3</sup> Mesopotamians took for granted that their fate was directly related to their alliance with those personal gods.<sup>4</sup>

In connection with this belief in protection, there emerges another motif closely related to the heavenly beings--the demonic gods. The prayers and similar texts are filled with passages that portray a two-sided spiritual world which becomes wide and varied. This spiritual realm

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<sup>1</sup>A. Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>Winter, Göttin, p. 239.

<sup>4</sup>Ebeling, TuL, p. 115.

is attested in the documents of the most ancient myths of the Babylonians and later by the Assyrians, in their Akkadian documents. For them, all the world and the whole universe swarmed with spirits.<sup>1</sup> These spirits were able to control not only the whole of nature but also the very lives of men and women. The spirits were grouped into two categories--good and evil. Naturally, the good spirits were the source of good luck, but the evil ones were the cause of all kinds of misfortune. They are described as always seeking to bring evil against people.

The texts show that Mesopotamians believed that all these evil spirits belonged to the divine order. They all were created by Anu, the father of all gods.<sup>2</sup> These evil gods, however, constantly appear as warring against the better gods, sometimes in an eternal cyclical fight. As such, even the highest beings in the divine realm were constantly threatened by a host of dreadful spirits.<sup>3</sup>

The appearance of these demonic gods is one of the most interesting issues within ANE studies. They are

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Mackenzie, Myths of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston: Gresham Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Keel, SBW, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 81-82.

clearly described in the texts<sup>1</sup> and are also prolifically represented in ANE iconography.

Perhaps the most outstanding of the ANE demoniacal features is their hybrid appearance. They bear the most incredible anthropomorphic and zoomorphic mixed physiognomy in combinations that result in the most unpredictable hybrid beings.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this, wings and horns usually stress their divine nature.

Combined creatures are also familiar within the heavenly realm of OT sources. This is especially true with the cherubim and the seraphim that are occasionally described in the biblical pages. These heavenly characters have always been thought of as belonging to superior categories of angels in both Jewry and Christianity.<sup>3</sup> When one tries to illustrate their appearance, however, a

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<sup>1</sup>For a description of Mesopotamian demons, see especially R. Campbell Thompson, The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, 2 vols. (London: Luzac and Co., 1903-1904), hereafter DESB; Wolfram von Soden, "Die Unterwelts Vision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," ZA 43 (1936):1-31; Franz Köcher, "Der Babylonische Göttertypentext," MIOF 1 (1953):57-107. See also related bibliography in the section "The Demoniacal Gods," pp. 241-319.

<sup>2</sup>For a classified description and representation of the diverse hybrid forms of demons represented in the ANE glyptic, see Françoise Digard, Répertoire analitique des cylindres orientaux (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1955), 2:11-135; 3:114-121.

<sup>3</sup>H. de Baar, "Querubin," Enciclopedia de la Biblia (Barcelona: Ediciones Garriga, 1963), 4:35; P. Regamy, What Is an Angel? (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960); J. P. Arendzen, "Cherubim," The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), 6:646-648.

diversity of opinions, mainly presented within an archaeological framework, results. Thus, the seraphim are seen as a kind of serpent creatures,<sup>1</sup> and the cherubim appear either as legendary winged beings who protected the sacred places,<sup>2</sup> or as other mythological figures--mainly winged sphinxes--that were so common in sources contemporary with biblical times.<sup>3</sup>

Within the varied world of lesser gods and demons in every nation of the ANE environment, composite creatures appear in profusion.<sup>4</sup> As a result, scholars maintain a constant search to try to find the sources from which the prophets supposedly took their cherubic references. Some stress the idea of a Mesopotamian link,<sup>5</sup> others point out a

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<sup>1</sup>Karen R. Joines, "Winged Serpents in Isaiah's Inaugural Vision [Isaiah 6]," JBL 86 (1967):410-415.

<sup>2</sup>W. Gunther Plant, The Torah: A Modern Commentary (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregation, 1982), p. 37; Cecil Roth, ed., The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia (Jerusalem: Massada Pub., 1965), s.v. "Cherub"; Menahem Haran, "The Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubs," ErIs 5 (1958):83-90.

<sup>3</sup>Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Bible Ritual," IEJ 9 (1959):31-38, 89-94; I. Goldsiher, Mythology among the Hebrews and Its Historical Development (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1967), pp. 196-197.

<sup>4</sup>Ernest G. Wright, The Old Testament against Its Environment (Chicago: Henry Regency Co., 1950), p. 25 (hereafter OTAIE).

<sup>5</sup>P. Dhorme and L. H. Vincent, "Les cherubins," RB 35 (1926):328-358; 481-495.



possible Canaanite resemblance,<sup>1</sup> and still others connect the figures to Egypt<sup>2</sup> and even to the Hittites.<sup>3</sup>

It should be said that by surveying the voluminous literature and iconography related to these motifs that depict the ANE heavenly beings, one can get an idea of some characteristics of the beings as well as some of their activities.

The polytheistic picture of the ANE nations that neighbored Israel is substantiated by the biblical record which points to the diverse deities which they were accustomed to worship.<sup>4</sup> The same records also indicate the existence of heavenly beings that belong to an order different from that of humans.<sup>5</sup> These heavenly beings were invisible<sup>6</sup> and were a part of the spiritual world closely associated with God.

The lesser gods of the ANE are depicted in a variety of forms. Some appear as young men or young

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<sup>1</sup>J. Schofield, "Cherub," A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>J. W. Crowfoot and Grace M. Crowfoot, Early Ivories from Samaria (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1938), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>K. K. Harrison, "Cherubim," The Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 1:264.

<sup>4</sup>Deut 4:19; 29:17; Judg 3:7; 1 Sam 5:21; Jer 50:2.

<sup>5</sup>Ps 104:4.

<sup>6</sup>Num 22:23-27, 31; 3 Kgs 6:15-17.

women.<sup>1</sup> Some are portrayed as two or even four-faced beings, others are winged, and still others are more hybrid in appearance.<sup>2</sup>

This information parallels the OT picture of angels who are also described in a variety of forms which likewise include human likeness,<sup>3</sup> some winged entities,<sup>4</sup> and others with hybrid forms.

As for the functions generally performed by the heavenly beings, two stand out. They are described as protectors<sup>5</sup> of those who fear god<sup>6</sup> and as messengers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Ludlul says iš-ta-nu et-lu a-tir ši-kit-[ta], "a remarkable young man of outstanding physique." Also, ni-ši-iš batūlta ba-nū-u-zi [mu-šá], "a young woman of shining countenance." Lambert, "Ludlul," BWL, 3:9, 23, 24.

<sup>2</sup>See below under section "The Démoniac Gods," pp. 245-246, Figs. 94 to 143, 195-202.

<sup>3</sup>Gen 19:1; Judg 6:11-12; 13:9-11.

<sup>4</sup>Isa 6:1-2; Eze 1:11.

<sup>5</sup>This is repeatedly expressed in Ludlul as follows: id-dan-ni ili-i šá-da-šu i-[mid], "my god has forsaken me and disappeared." ip-par-ku iš-ta-ri i-bé[eš ...], "my goddess has failed me and keeps at a distance." [i]s-li-it še<ed> dum-qi šá-i-di[ia], "the benevolent angel who (walked) besides [me] has departed." ip-ru-ud la-ma-si-ma šá-nam-ma i-še-[e], "my protectin spirit has taken flight, and is seeking someone else." BWL, 1:43-46.

<sup>6</sup>The Babylonian theodicy makes this plain: n[a]-tīl pa-am ilim-na ra-ši la-ma-[sa], "he who waits on his god has a protecting angel." BWL, p. 71. Textual evidence shows that the term lamassu (i.e., goddess Lama) refers to a protective spirit whose function was to protect "the good fortune, spiritual health, and phisical appearance of human beings, temples, cities and countries." It is also explained as the "representation of the lamassu-spirits" and also a "representation in human shape." CAD, s.v. "lamassu," 9:60-61.

Notable in the OT accounts is the function of the angels as messengers par excellence.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it is this activity which most characterizes biblical angelology.<sup>2</sup> In a similar way, angels are also portrayed as protecting God's people,<sup>3</sup> and their protective services are promised to those who fear YHWH.<sup>4</sup>

### Posing the Problem

Whoever reads the biblical record is confronted with the notion of heavenly beings that often intervened in human affairs. Who they are? What do they look like? What is their nature? Whom do they represent? How would one be able to illustrate them? These are some questions to which solutions have been elusive. Thus they continue to demand an appropriate answer.

Biblical angelology is singular, variegated, and enigmatic. It is singular because its nature and characteristics are closely related and in harmony with the

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<sup>7</sup>In the Akkadian pantheon, Isimud is messenger of Enki, and Ninshubur of Inanna. Samuel Noah Kramer, Sumerian Mythology. A Study of Spiritual and Literary Achievement in the Third Millennium B.C. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1944), pp. 42-45.

<sup>1</sup>See below under the section "The Messengers of YHWH," pp. 413-417.

<sup>2</sup>See also below under the section "The Mal'akim (Angels) of YHWH," pp. 429-442.

<sup>3</sup>Gen 19:1, 10-11, 16-17; 2 Kgs 6:17; Dan 6:22.

<sup>4</sup>Ps 34:7; 91:10-11; Isa 63:9.

biblical monotheistic concept that pervades the whole Scripture. Furthermore, both Testaments resemble each other and agree in matters of angelology. As biblical angelology is seen against its ANE background, apart from some interesting parallels, biblical angelology stands out as unique amidst the polytheistic heterogeneous milieu of the Fertile Crescent nations.

Biblical angelology is variegated because the angelic beings presented in the biblical pages are quite diverse. Angels are portrayed not only as one kind but as different kinds. In addition, biblical angelology is enigmatic because almost all the biblical references to celestial beings, although numerous, are brief and lack the more extensive and greater detailed information one would wish to have in order to know them better.<sup>1</sup> In fact, their enigmatic nature is a very distinctive characteristic of biblical angels. Hence more research on this matter is desirable.

On the other hand, for more than a century archaeologists have been unearthing old written documents that reveal a vast, rich knowledge of times past. Much of this accumulated material, recovered from the debris of

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<sup>1</sup>Angelic references in the Bible occur 345 times under various names; on this variety biblical angelology is built. Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Angelology," *BS* 98 (1941): 389-420; 99 (1942):6-25: 135-146; 262-296; 391-417. In 34 of the 66 books of the Bible, specific references are made to angels--in 17 books in the OT and in 17 in the NT.

forgotten cities, reveals myths, customs, practices, epics, and representations that unequivocally delineated a reality enmeshed in the spiritual realm which obviously was not ignored by ancient men. Were the people of old really aware of the celestial population described in biblical pages? How much of those extra-biblical descriptions and representations can be properly related to the biblical reality?

The archaeological monuments found in the ancient Near Eastern (ANE) nations appear to have some parallelisms with some angelic narrations of the OT. They seem to corroborate and give extra-biblical confirmation to the reality well-attested on the OT pages from the Mosaic writings to Malachi's book and taught so authoritatively by Jesus. In other words, the angelology presented by the OT not only is consubstantial with the NT angelology but may, in some way, be expressed in the representations of the ANE documents.

Without using all kinds of mythical representations indiscriminately, attempting to match them with biblical angelic realities one can assume that in some of these sources there may be some appropriate relationship between both. Thus we assume that originally, the correct knowledge of God as well as that of heavenly beings--as it is pictured in the OT--could also have been known to ANE

peoples.<sup>1</sup> Even in the best of the cases, however, one may capture only an incomplete picture of angelology and relate it to the biblical picture in some way. Therefore, while being aware of the danger involved in an indiscriminate comparison, one is still justified in using this extra-biblical imagery in attempting to get a more enlightened picture of the angelic reality presented in the OT pages and inferred--as we believe--in the ANE material.

In the present study this particular idea is examined. The purpose of this investigation is to focus attention on the possible conception of angels in ANE during early OT times, and to try at the same time to discover its relevance for the OT angelology.

#### Aim and Method

In pursuing this enterprise, we consider the ancient documents of the surrounding cultures of Israel during OT times. In doing so we are not concerned with estimating the origin of particular concepts related to

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<sup>1</sup>This assumption is based on the certainty of the biblical record which traces a common origin for all mankind (Gen 5:1-2). In the beginning the true knowledge of God and the heavenly beings ought to have been understood by all the human race in a right way (Gen 3:23-24). However, as peoples departed from God's ways, they also perverted the true knowledge of God and His heavenly realm (Gen 6:5); Eccl 7: 29). The apodictic divine commandment of YHWH's law endorsed over Israel (Exod 20:3-5; Deut 5:7-9) not only underlines the true knowledge of YHWH known and kept in His worship, but also points out the distorted pictures that ANE peoples had of God and His heavenly realm (Deut 4:15-19).

angelology, nor in the supposed development of them. Instead we search the texts as well as the iconography for descriptions and depictions of heavenly beings. In this way we may give an idea of the concept that these peoples had of angelic beings. From this imagery we may draw a picture that could give us an idea of the variegated ANE concept of heavenly beings in comparison with the biblical description.

In referring to biblical angelology, we believe that it is unnecessary to present the concept of "angel" merely as developed by the Christian church from an idea taken from the OT with a previous demythologized work.<sup>1</sup> This is mainly because the concept of messenger in biblical records--even in its most ancient stages<sup>2</sup>--is used to mean with distinctiveness either "the man or the heavenly being dispatched with some commission."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Takahashi Masashi, "An Oriental Approach to the Problem of Angelology," ZAW 3 (1966):343-350. This idea of a demythologized work for the biblical concept of "angel" is stressed among biblical scholars. See C. L'Heureux, Rank among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al, and the Rapha'im (Ann Arbor: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 239; J. Morgenstern, "The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," HUCA 14 (1939): 29-126; Georg Fohrer, Geschichte der israelitischen Religion (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), pp. 384-389.

<sup>2</sup>Caquot correctly points out that "Las más antiguas fuentes de la religión israelita atestiguan esta fe, y hay que considerarla como parte integrante originaria de la fe judía" ("La angelología bíblica," p. 1).

<sup>3</sup>Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1:285.

Since we are mainly interested in the descriptive aspect of angelic beings, matters related to their identity and nature, although not the main concern in this investigation, are also considered. Indeed, many facets of the subject do not receive attention here, but it is anticipated that what is said here will enlighten some aspects of the ANE divine realm and OT angelology with understanding.

The renewed interest in Jewish angelology<sup>1</sup> and its Near Eastern background provides abundant material to examine for the concept of heavenly beings in the two realms, the OT and the ANE legacy. Around this concept, many motifs converge with their respective associations. It is my intention to investigate the heavenly beings in their variety on both sides, in OT and ANE sources. This includes a literary search for descriptions and an iconographical exploration in order to grasp a clearer idea of the concept.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to the idea that the Bible is "the last place to see angels,"<sup>3</sup> this study considers the biblical

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<sup>1</sup>See above p. 4, nn. 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Relevant illustrative material has been selected in order to give an accurate idea of how ANE peoples represented their spiritual reality. All the illustrations are my own which were drawn either from previous drawings or from photographs found in the catalogues which are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>3</sup>Gustav Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels: Including the Fallen Angels (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. xi; see also Peter Lamborn Wilson, Angels (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 2.



sources as basic and authoritative for matters of angelology. However, it also assumes that the biblical picture could be reinforced and substantiated with the exposition of other "angelic" conceptions outside of the biblical record. The richness of the spiritual imagery depicted in ANE sources may provide the possibility to relate some extra-biblical angelic features to the general picture of biblical angelology.

In this way the main material of concern for our investigation is brought out in chapters 2 and 3, which describe the selective motifs related to the heavenly beings which have been collected for examination. The special concern of chapter 2 is to examine the variety of celestial creatures as they appear in Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Canaanite traditions. From the textual and iconographical evidence, an attempt is made to obtain a clear picture of the ANE concept. The specific task in chapter 3 is to develop an understandable picture of the heavenly beings--i.e., angels--as they are mentioned in the OT.

The final chapter seeks to reveal the conclusions of this search for the ANE concept of the heavenly population in relation to the biblical context.

Thus the main aim of this study is to make a descriptive and comparative study of angelic motifs in the

ANE realm to try to capture some legitimate relationship of this extra-biblical imagery to the angelology of the OT.

#### Limitations

From the ANE point of view, along with the mention of the heavenly population, special consideration is given to the iconography that explicitly portrays the heavenly realm. Neither Egyptian nor Persian material is included. Selected illustrative material is presented to show concepts in a graphic way. From the point of view of the OT, special attention is given to the "angel" concept in its diversity of meanings and synonyms. However, in all this enterprise I am more concerned with the descriptive aspect of the subject. Matters of origin or borrowing are not the main concern of this study. The main task, on the one hand, is to make a comparative-descriptive study of both sources and, on the other hand, to produce an exegetical exposition of the material selected for the study.

For this reason the Near Eastern extra-biblical material is considered first, selecting from it what could be appropriately related to angelology. This, mainly, because the ANE has been provided abundant evidence--especially through archaeology--to enlighten some enigmatic aspects of the OT with a clarity appropriate to the biblical context of those distant days. This examination may show us at least certain aspects of the way in which the angelic realm was conceived in the ANE milieu. It is

not the intention here to propose new methods for writing a theology of OT angelology. The intention is simply to trace particular characteristics of ANE "angelology" that could be associated with biblical angelology.

The biblical side of this study is circumscribed to the books of the Hebrew canon that contain material related mainly to the so-called pre-exilic period. The angelological material, however, covers from Patriarchal to Monarchical times. The books are considered in their final form without entering into questions related to sources, authorship, etc.

This investigation does not pretend to exhaust the copiousness of non-biblical material nor the richness of biblical material. ANE literature and iconography as well as OT material have been selected mainly following the criteria of the chosen motifs, in order to have a picture that makes it easier to compare the subject in both realms.

Although I have tried to include a comprehensive review of OT angelological passages, not every one has been exegeted to its limits. Biblical texts are taken as they are found in the Hebrew Bible (MT), and limited to books in the Hebrew canon. The prophetic books of Daniel and Ezekiel are considered within this study since both fall into the fringes of the period under discussion, and at the

same time bridge both periods, pre-exilic and exilic. The copious angelological material of the exilic, post-exilic, intertestamental, and later Judaism periods--although related to the picture of angelology in general--indeed remains beyond the purpose of this investigation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HEAVENLY BEINGS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

As one examines the enormous quantity of ANE literature and iconography, one becomes aware of the great variety of heavenly creatures that appear referring to or depicting a spiritual realm familiar within the ANE milieu.

From this diversity, various motifs provide some features for a possible comparative study, since they are all related to that spiritual realm that pervaded the whole ANE religious thinking.

The different types of Mesopotamian religious literature<sup>1</sup> contain many references to angel-like beings,

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<sup>1</sup>Under the Mesopotamian umbrella are grouped not only Sumerian documents but also the Akkadian, Assyrian, and Babylonian material. It is well known that not a few of the Akkadian literary works go back to Sumerian prototypes that were remodeled and transformed over the centuries. The variety of these documents include myths, epics, omens, incantations, prayers, laments, etc. See Lambert, BWL; Stephen Langdon, Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1919), hereafter SLP; Marie-Joseph Seux, Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et Assyrie (Paris: Les Éditiones du Cerf, 1976), hereafter HPDBA; Reiner, Surpu, pp. 1-66.

as does the Canaanite and Phoenician<sup>1</sup> mythology.<sup>2</sup> Seemingly the Hittites<sup>3</sup> and Egyptians<sup>4</sup> were no less acquainted with this kind of knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup>Canaanite is best regarded "to designate the North-West Semitic people and culture of Western Syria and Palestine before the 12th century BC," and Phoenician "to indicate the same people and culture after this date." W. F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," in The Bible and the Ancient Near East, ed. G. E. Wright (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), p. 328 (hereafter BANE).

<sup>2</sup>By far the main sources for the Canaanite religious knowledge, coetaneous with some OT references, are the Ugaritic writings recovered at Ras Shamra-Ugarit. See Charles Virolleaud, "La déesse 'Anat," Mission de Ras-Shamra (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1938), pp. 1-98 (hereafter MRS); idem, "Les nouveaux textes mythologiques et liturgiques de Ras Shamra," Ug 5 (1968): 545-595; Dietrich Manfried, Oswald Loretz, and J. Sanmartin, Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit. Einschliesslich der keilalphabetischen Texte ausserhalb Ugarits. Teil 1 Transcription (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), hereafter KTU; André Herdner, Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques. Découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), hereafter CTCA; G. del Olmo Lette, Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan según la tradición de Ugarit (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1981), hereafter MLC.

<sup>3</sup>See Henri Frankfort, Stratigrafi ed Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Oliver R. Gurney, Some Aspects of Hittite Religion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Volkert Haas, Der Kult von Nerik: Ein Beitrag zur hethitischen Religionsgeschichte (Rome: Päpstliches Bibelinstitut, 1970), pp. 67-77.

<sup>4</sup>The religious beliefs of Egypt are well known. This religious knowledge is elsewhere expressed in monuments and records. As polytheists, the Egyptians not only believed in some principal gods but also in an enormous quantity of minor deities. Like most ancient peoples, "they had a complex roster of gods and goddesses." Janet H. Van Duyn, The Egyptians (London: Cassell & Company, 1974), p. 122.

The characteristics especially, as well as activities and nature of these heavenly creatures, can provide us with the necessary basis on which to make a valid comparative analysis with the biblical angelic realm.

The wide range of ANE motifs such as "the assembly of the gods," "the sons of the gods," "the personal god or goddess--or the protective god(dess)," "the intercessory goddess," "the messengers of the gods," "the demonic gods," etc.,<sup>1</sup> certainly provides sufficient grounds for claiming that much of the ANE celestial imagery is similar to biblical angelology.

#### The Assembly of the Gods

A divine council or assembly was a common and well-known motif throughout the entire ANE. This divine gathering is mentioned in literary sources from Mesopotamia to Egypt<sup>2</sup> along the boundaries of the Fertile Crescent.

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<sup>1</sup>Many aspects of these motifs have been already treated by others. Therefore instead of dealing extensively with them here, only some outstanding features are pointed out in connection with the theme of our concern.

<sup>2</sup>Since our research is not mainly concerned with Egypt, we only mention that in Egyptian literature this concept apparently is not as frequent as in the literature of Mesopotamia. This fact has led some to think that this motif has not "played an important role in Egyptian religion" (Mullen, DCC, pp. 113-114). However, the connection of this motif with such matters as creation (see H. Frankfort et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946], p. 50, [hereafter IAAM]), and judgment (especially in the Middle Kingdom when Egyptians believed that the final judgment took place before a tribunal or council of the gods under the presidency of the sun-god seated as judge (*ibid.* p.

### The Mesopotamian Council of Gods

In Mesopotamian literature the divine council is referred to as *puḫur ilāni*,<sup>1</sup> and indeed this motif occupies a central place in the religion and mythology of the region of the two rivers.

Since we are basically more interested in the constituent elements and functions of these beings as a body in the "assembly of the gods," matters related to the origin and nature of the Mesopotamian concept can be seen in works that deal with the idea or actuality of an assembly.<sup>2</sup>

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108), points out the prominent role the divine assembly also played in the religious thought of ancient Egyptians. Gerald Cooke, "The Sons of (the) God(s)," *ZAW* 76 (1964):27.

<sup>1</sup>Allusions to *puḫur ilāni* in Akkadian literature are listed in W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972), pp. 876-877 (hereafter *AHB*).

<sup>2</sup>See T. Jacobsen, "Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Toward an Image of Tammuz*, ed. W. L. Moran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 157-170 (hereafter *TIT*). Jacobsen traces the motif in reference back to primitive times when a citizen assembly was summoned to confront a specific menace and consequently leaders were appointed to meet the threat. It is quite accepted that the neo-Sumerian myths and epics reflect an early state of affairs such as the kings' assembly. Thus, on one hand "in the cosmic myths the chief god ruled his pantheon at the pleasure of one large assembly" of minor divinities, which included "a sort of senate of fifty minor deities"; and on the other hand "the epics show the city-state with a kind of bicameral legislature." William H. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), pp. 175-176.



The divine-assembly motif in Mesopotamia appears quite clear in the myth of Enuma elish (En-el).<sup>1</sup> Along with the narrative there emerges a series of statements in which the gods meet together to deliberate, to feast, to express their fears, to receive or send messengers, or to exalt someone.

In Tablet II, which describes the creatures that Tiamat creates to avenge the death of her husband, it is said that these beings are the gods who form her assembly,<sup>2</sup> and that Kingu is the appointed leader of her assembly.<sup>3</sup> But the myth goes on to say that the election of Kingu includes more. He is made great in the "assembly of the gods." Tiamat says to him:

. . .I have made thee great  
 in the assembly of the gods,  
 The dominion over all the gods, I have given  
 [into thy h]and.  
 Mayest thou be highly exalted, thou,  
 my unique spouse!  
 [May] thy name become greater than  
 (those of) [the Anun]naki!<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S. Langdon, The Babylonian Epic of Creation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), hereafter BEC; A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), hereafter BG. Rene Labat, Le poème Babylonien de la Création (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1935), hereafter PBC.

<sup>2</sup>i-na ilū bu-uk-ri-ša šu-ut iš-ku-nu-ši pu-uh-ru.  
PBC II:33.

<sup>3</sup>u-ša-aš-qa (il)kin-gu ina bé-ri-šu-nu ša-a-šu uš-rab-bi-iš. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>BG, p.27, II:39-42; . . . i-na pu-ḥur ilu u-šar-bi-ka. [ma-li-kut] ilū [gim-rat-su-nu qa-tuk-ka] uš-mal-li. [lu-u šur-ba-ta-ma ḥa-'i-ri e-du-u] at-ta. [li-ir-tab-bu-u

The plans of Tiamat were plainly made known to Ea who reports to Anshar. Anshar, therefore, intends to deal with Tiamat through Ea and Anu, but all is in vain.<sup>1</sup> These successive failures place Anshar and all the rest of the gods assembled with him in mute despair.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly Ea remembers his son Marduk and proposes before Anshar and the assembled gods that Marduk is an appropriate match for Tiamat. When Marduk is called before the assembled gods and is asked to confront Tiamat, he eagerly accepts the mission, but first he announces his conditions:

If I shall be your avenger,  
 If I shall tame Tiamat and (thus) save your life,  
 you must convoke the Assembly of all gods, you must  
     pronounce my power supreme!  
 All of you must sit down--voluntarily--in the  
 Upshukinakku  
 (to decide) that (from now on) my command, instead of  
     yours, shall be all powerful!  
 Whatever I shall create, shall not be changed (by  
     another [god]),  
 My personal orders shall not be revoked or altered  
     (by [them]!)<sup>3</sup>

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zik-ru-ka eli ka-li-šu-nu (il)a-nu]-uk-ki. PBC, II:39-42,  
 and parallels.

<sup>1</sup>First Anshar dispatched Ea--who was the destroyer of the husband of Tiamat--but he failed. A second attempt was made through Anu who turned back terrified. ANET, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>uš-ḥa-ri-ir-ma An-šar qa-q-a-ri i-na-aṭ-ṭa-[al].  
 i-qa-m-ma-am a-na (il)e-a u-na-si qaqqad-[su]. pa-ah-ru ma-  
 an-za-za ka-li-šu-nu (il)a-nu-u-k[-k]i. PBC II:86-88. "An-  
 shar lapsed into silence, looking upon the ground. Moaning,  
 and shaking his head at Ea. They assembled into the place,  
 all of them, the Anunnaki." BEC II:86-88.

<sup>3</sup>sum-ma-ma ana-ku mu-tir gi-mil-li-ku-ma. a-ka-m-me  
 Ti-amat-ma ū-bal-laṭ ka-a-šu-un. šuk-na-ma pu-uḥ-ra šu-te-  
 ra i-ba-a šim-ti. ina Ub-šu-ukkin-na-ki miṭ-ḥa-riš ḥa-diš

The exigencies of Marduk are explicit and since these conditions could only be granted by the totality of gods assembled in council, without delay Anshar summons the absent gods to assembly by sending Gaga his messenger god to them. The gods who were absent were not only far away but were also ignorant of the coming calamity. The divine messenger brings them up to date about the plots of Tiamat and her combined forces. The bad news distresses the assembly greatly and all the gods who are assembled cry.<sup>1</sup> Then, knowing the menace ahead, they hasten to the convened assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The happenings of this assembly are described in Tablet III lines 131-139. When all the gods are gathered, they fill the Upsukinakku.<sup>3</sup> They come to the assembly as

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tiš-ba-ma. ib-šu pi-ia ki-ma ka-tu-nu-ma ši-ma-ta lu-ši-im. la ut-tak-kar mim mu-u a-ban-nu-u a-na-ku. á i-tūr á i-in-nin-na-a sè-kar šap-ti-ia. BEC II:123-129.

<sup>1</sup>liš-mu-ma iluLah-ḥa ilatLa-ḥa-mu iš-šu-ú e-li-tum. iluIgigi nap-ḥar-šu-nu i-nu-ku mar-ši-iš. "When Lahha and Lahamu heard this they cried aloud. The totality of the Igigi wailed bitterly." BEC II:125-126.

<sup>2</sup>Gaga was charged with a message which was not only informative but, above all, urgent. He was explicitly commanded to urge the gods saying: ḥu-um-ṭa-mim-ma ši-mat-ku-nu ar-ḥis [ši-ma-šu]. lil-lik lin-ḥu-ra na-kar-ku-nu da-nu. "Hasten ye and fix for him your fates quickly. May he go and meet your powerful enemy." BEC III:123-124.

<sup>3</sup>So is called the place of assembly, which is "the council chamber of the gods." L. W. King, The Seven Tablets of Creation or the Babylonian and Assyrian Legends Concerning the Creation of the World and of Mankind (London: Luzac and Co., 1902), p. 273, hereafter Seven Tablets. The Upsukinakku was also called the "room of the destiny" since it was believed that in this chamber, the gods meet to

if they are attending a banquet. They kiss one another and chat as they are seated. Then they eat and drink until their babble becomes animated.<sup>1</sup> Soon afterward, the assembled gods become boisterous in their frolic and their drinking makes them "careless and lighthearted." Finally they "transferred their powers to Marduk their avenger."<sup>2</sup>

Tablet IV tells how the assembled gods announce to Marduk the honor granted to him among the great gods.<sup>3</sup> They make a seat for him in the assembly<sup>4</sup> and proclaim the firstbornship and kingship of Marduk among the assembly of gods. Afterward, Marduk, with the encouragement of the great gods and with the help of "the gods his helpers" who "went beside him," defeated Tiamat and "the gods her helpers who were with her,"<sup>5</sup> "the host of demons who went impetuously before her."<sup>6</sup>

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"'lay down destiny' (sûm šimti) for the coming year, both for nations, and for all individuals." S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 1:147.

<sup>1</sup>BEC III:132-136.

<sup>2</sup>A. Leo Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology I," Or 16 (1947):223 (hereafter MeMy I).

<sup>3</sup>at-ta-ma kab-ta-ta i-na ilū ra-bu-tum . . . (il)marduk kab-ta-ta i-na ilū ra-bu-tum (PBC, IV:3,5) "Thou hast become honoured among the great gods. Oh Marduk, honoured hast thou become among the great gods." BEC IV:3,5.

<sup>4</sup>The assembly said to him: ti-šam-ma i-na pu-ḥur, "Sit thou in the assembly." BEC IV:15.

<sup>5</sup>ū ilani ri-šu-šu a-li-ku i-di-šu. BEC, IV:69, 107.

<sup>6</sup>mi-il-la gal-le-e a-li-ku ka-[ad-riš pa]-ni-ša. PBC IV:116.

Because of his victory, the puhur ilani maintains the decreed destiny of Marduk. He by turns makes ingenious arrangements with the relationships and positions of the gods. As king of the gods, he divides them into two groups, the Igigi and the Anunnaki.<sup>1</sup> Then he assembles the great gods<sup>2</sup> and distributes responsibilities to them. The Anunnaki gods in gratitude decide to build a great shrine on earth for Marduk where they all might assemble. Marduk is pleased with this and decides to build Babylon and its temple Esagila, offering it as a resting place for the deities whenever they pass through the region on their way to the assembly.

When from the Apsu you go up for the Assembly,  
 There will be your night's resting (-place)  
 to receive all of you;  
 When from the heavens you come down  
 for the Assembly;  
 There will be your night's resting (-place)  
 to receive all of you;

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<sup>1</sup>The division really--it is believed--is for the gods up in heaven and down on earth. The Igigi and the Anunnaki are the same ilāni rabūti, and under this name these spirits include the highest gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon. BEC, pp. 166-167, nn. 6,14. Von Soden points out that the designation of they Igigi as heavenly deities and the Anunnaki as earthly and underworld gods is to be taken on the basis of later textual evidences. W. von Soden, "Babylonische Göttergruppen: Igigu und Anunnaku. Zum Bedeutungswandel theologischer Begriffe," Compte rendu de l'onzième Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, 1962 (Leiden: J. E. Brill, 1964), pp. 104, 111.

<sup>2</sup>ilumMarduk ú-paḥ-ḥir-ma ilāni rabūti. BEC VI:13.

I shall call its name Babylon: the home of  
the great gods.<sup>1</sup>

Then the Anunnaki gods built the city and its great temple  
for Marduk, where "he sat down before them in majesty."<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of the text recounts the reunion of  
the gods, who in assembly arrange the laws of the universe  
dividing the power among themselves. Marduk himself lays  
down his weapons before the assembly and the heaven-gods  
define the powers of Marduk. He is appointed as the ruler  
of mankind, and at same time receives fifty names.

The familiar epic of Gilgamesh<sup>3</sup> also provides us  
with some references to the Mesopotamian divine council.  
As is known, Gilgamesh becomes too anxious about the  
reality of death. He wants to live forever and decides to  
learn how to attain immortality by asking Utnapishtim, his

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<sup>1</sup>B. Landsberger and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The  
Fifth Tablet of Enuma Eliš," JNES 20 (1961):154-169. This  
passage indicates that Marduk settled his abode as the  
union of the upper and the lower regions, and at same time  
as an appropriate meeting place for the deities of these  
regions.

<sup>2</sup>Heidel, EG, p. 48. (ina tab-ba-a-ti ma-ḥar-šū-nu  
u[šī-]ba-am-ma. PBC VI:65).

<sup>3</sup>This epic is quoted following R. C. Thompson, The  
Epic of Gilgamesh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), here-  
after EG. Also used are the translations of Alexander  
Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels, 2d  
ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949, hereafter  
GEOT); John Gardner and John Maier, Gilgamesh. Translated  
from the sin-legu-unninni version (New York: Alfred Knopf,  
1984), hereafter Gilg; Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology  
II," Or 17 (1948):17-58 (hereafter MeMy II); Agustí Bartra,  
La epopeya de Gilgamesh (Mexico: Costa Amic, 1963), here-  
after Gilgamesh.

ancestor, about it, he "who stands in the assembly [of the gods, and has found life]."<sup>1</sup> As Gilgamesh arrives before Utnapishtim and informs him of the purpose of his visit, Utnapishtim points out to Gilgamesh that his birth and nature were not unknown in the council of the gods.<sup>2</sup> He also reminds Gilgamesh that matters of life,<sup>3</sup> death, and destiny are settled by "the Anunnaki in the Assembly of the great gods."<sup>4</sup> Gilgamesh then asks Utnapishtim how he

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<sup>1</sup>So answers Gilgamesh to the scorpion man who asks him what motivates his journey. Uta-na-pištīm abi-ia . . . sa iz-zi-zu-ma ina puḥur [ilāni ba-la-ta is-'-u]. EG IX. iii:3-4; see also ANET, p. 88. Bartra translates, "Ut-Napistim, mi antepasado supo llegar hasta el consejo de los dioses y obtener la Vida." Gilgamesh, p. 80. It is clear that the matter of life was a matter determined by the sovereign council of the gods.

<sup>2</sup>The remaining broken text has: [abi-k]ja u ummi-ka i-pu-[su(?)] . . . Gilgamiš ana lil-[li] . . . (sa(?)) . . . du-ma-ti . . . (sa kima(?) ana lil-li sur-sum-me . . . (EG X.v: 39-42), which Gardner reconstructs in this form: "When your father and mother made you . . . when [you] Gilgamesh, were [conceived] for the Fool . . . in the Assembly of the gods she lay down on the couch. She was given to him . . ." Gilg. X. v:39-42.

<sup>3</sup>The Mesopotamian concept that the life and destiny of every person was fixed in the assembly of the gods is stated in more than the mythical texts. In a cylinder inscription, Nebuchadnezzar II also recognizes that the life of the king was predestined by the gods assembled in totality. C. J. Ball, "Inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II. I. The India House Inscription," PSBA 10 (1887):95-96, col. I.60-65.

<sup>4</sup>iluA-nun-na-k ilāni rabūti pa[hru(?)]. iluMa-am-me-tum ba-na-at šim-ti it-ti-šu-nu si-ma-tu i-s[sim-mi]. is-tak-nu mu-ta u ba-la-ta. sa mu-ti ul ud-du-u ūme-su. EG X.vi: 36-39. "The Anunnaki, the great gods, ga[ther together]. Mamentum, the creatures of destiny, de[crees] with them the destinies. Life and death they allot; the days of death they do not reveal." GEOT X.vi:36-39.

joined the assembly of the gods and obtained life.<sup>1</sup>

Utnapishtim proceeds to narrate the hazardous experience that took him to immortality. When the god Enlil decided upon the destruction of mankind--"without discussion in the [Assembly of the great gods]"--,<sup>2</sup> Utnapishtim's personal god Ea warned him of the danger and at same time instructed him how to escape that fate.<sup>3</sup> So terrible was the storm engendered by Enlil that even the gods fled terrified to the heaven of Anu, and there they assembled crying, lamenting, and moaning with Ishtar their leader. She cried:

The olden days are alas turned to clay  
Because I spoke evil in the assembly of the gods.

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<sup>1</sup>[ki-ba-ni?] ki-i ta-az-ziz-ma ina puḫur ilāni ba-la-ta ta-su. EG XI.i:7. "[Tell me], how didst you enter into the company of the gods and obtain life (everlasting)?" GEOT XI.i:7. In Bartra's translation, "¿Cómo has podido presentarte ante la asamblea de los dioses para pedir inmortalidad?" (Gilgamesh, p. 97).

<sup>2</sup>It is the goddess Ishtar who declares "Enlil . . . without discussion [in the assembly of the gods] he brought on the Flood," but later she recognizes her participation in the calamity. Gilg. XI. iv,167,168.

<sup>3</sup>Ea instructed Utnapishtim to construct a boat, big enough in dimension to carry abundant provisions and all his family and relatives, as well as animals, domestic and wild. In addition Ea instructs him to deceive the people of Shurupak in regard to the enterprise. He tells the inhabitants that due to enmity with Enlil, he rather chose to go to live with his god Ea. Bartra, Gilgamesh, pp. 997-99.



How could I bespeak evil in the assembly  
of the gods?<sup>1</sup>

After the storm the gods assembled again, this time around the sacrifice that Utnapishtim offered them in gratitude.<sup>2</sup> All enjoyed the sweetness of the offering under the leadership of Ishtar, until Enlil arrived and realized that a pair of humans escaped his curse. He became enraged, but at the intercession of Ea, Enlil changed his mind and decided before the assembled gods to grant immortality to Utnapishtim. The god declared with solemnity:

Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but a man;  
But now Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto  
us gods.  
In the distance, at the mouth of the rivers,  
Utnapishtim shall dwell!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ANET XI:115-120. p. 94; ilāni kima kalbi kun-nu-nu ina ka-ma-a-ti rab-su. i-sis-si <sup>ilu</sup>Ištar ki-ma a-lit-ti. u-nam-ba <sup>ilu</sup>Belit i[lāni] ta-bat rig-ma. ūmu(mu) u-lu-u a-na ti-it-ti lu-u i-tur-ma. aš-šu a-na-ku ina pu-ḥur ilāni aḫ-bu-u limutti. ki-i aḫ-bi ina pu-ḥur ilāni limutti. EG XI:115-120.

<sup>2</sup>Describing the happening, Utnapishtim says: . . . a-ta-ki ni-ka-a . . . ilāni i-si-nu i-ri-sa. ilāni i-si-nu e-ri-sa taba. ilani ki-ma zu-um-bi-e eii bel nike ip-tah-ru. EG XI.155, 159-161; ". . . I offered a sacrifice . . . the gods smelled the savour. The gods smelled the sweet savour. The gods crowded like flies about the sacrificer." ANET XI:155, 159-161.

<sup>3</sup>GEOT XI.193-195; i-na pa-na Uta-napištim a-me-lu-tum-ma. e-nim-na-ma Uta-napištim u sinnisti-su lu-u e-mu-u ki-i ilani na-si-ma. lu-u a-sib-ma Uta-napištim ina ru-u-ki ina pi-i nārāti. EG XI.193-195. Bartra translates, "Hasta ahora, Ut-Napishtim, sólo has sido humano; pero desde este momento, tú y tu esposa, seréis como dioses. ¡Irás a vivir lejos, a la desembocadura de los ríos!" (*Gilgamesh*, p. 102).

Utnapishtim points out to Gilgamesh that he did not search for immortality; it was granted to him by a god who determined it before the assembled gods. Gilgamesh however has no one to speak his request before the divine assembly:

Now, as for you, who among the gods shall  
induce them to  
(assemble [in order to establish] for you  
such a special status),  
so that you too may find life (eternal.)  
which you desire?<sup>1</sup>

The epic makes clear that the assembly is totally composed of gods and that among them are mentioned some goddesses--i.e., Ishtar and the mother of Gilgamesh. Decisions and curses that menace human existence also threaten the existence of the gods, and the gods are willing to change some fates based on the intercession of other gods.

The fragmented epic of Atrahasis makes allusion to the divine assembly as being composed of gods who are all sons of Enlil. This god is mentioned as summoning the assembly of deities to complain about the noise of humans.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>MeMy II (XI.197-198), p. 51. e-nin-na-ma ana ka-a-sa man-nu ilāni u-pah-ha-rak-kum-ma. ba-la-ta sa tu-ba-'-u tu-ut-ta-a at-ta. EG XI.197-198. Utnapishtim makes plain to Gilgamesh that even if he could personally address his request of life to the gods, no one was disposed to convene the gods to grant him immortality. Also, Bartra, Gilgamesh, p. 103. The myth makes clear that man is mortal and matters of life are determined by the gods who only possess immortality.

<sup>2</sup>The neo-Assyrian version of the myth says: "Enlil sets up [his] Assembly, [saying] to the gods, his sons: "oppressive has become the clamor of the humanity." ANET,

For this reason he declares to the assembly his decision about the earth.<sup>1</sup> In this case the members of the divine council are referred to explicitly as "sons of god."

The Akkadian myth of the bird-god Zu<sup>2</sup> also refers to this motif, relating the deliberations of the puhur ilani seeking for a leader that could vanquish Zu.<sup>3</sup> A clearer picture--although never complete--of the myth is obtained by combining the surviving versions of it.<sup>4</sup>

Zu is an enigmatic god<sup>5</sup> whom Enlil charges with the custody of the Tablets of Destiny at the entrance of his own shrine. However, Zu conceives the idea of taking the tablets to rule "the totality of the Igigi."<sup>6</sup> As he consummates his felony, all the gods become upset and are gathered in gloomy and silent assembly. The silence is

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p.106. Again the expression is repeated in similar wording: "[Enlil] set up his assembly, speaking to the gods his sons." Ibid.

<sup>1</sup>The myth makes quite clear that each time the gods desire to execute something, the whole assembly is to be summoned to decide the action.

<sup>2</sup>ANET, pp. 11-118.

<sup>3</sup>The myth indicates that this assembly is gathered in order to confront a common foe that threatened the existence or authority of the pantheon.

<sup>4</sup>See references given in ANET, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup>He is better known as the bird-god Zu, and apparently is an underworld deity. See T. Fish, "The Zu Bird," BJRL 31 (1948):162-171.

<sup>6</sup>This detail is given in the Assyrian version. ANET, p. 112.

broken by Anu, who addresses his speech to the assembled "gods, his sons."<sup>1</sup> The deliberations of the divine assembly are then depicted. The gods exchanged counsel, alternately experiencing feelings of frustration and joy until the wisdom of Ea is heard and the approbation of the goddess Mah brings exhilaration to the assembled gods.<sup>2</sup>

The psalmody literature also contains allusions to the heavenly assembly. In a hymn addressed to Ninurta, it says: [The assembly] of the great gods have exalted [you] . . . Ninurta, warrior. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Again, as in the case of Marduk, it becomes clear that any exaltation of some deity among the gods should always be authenticated by the whole assembly.

In like manner, some psalms depict the reverence that the constituency of the assembly shows during the celebrations of the assembly. A psalm dedicated to Nabu says:

Astonished by his august divinity  
the gods are instructed . . .  
The assembly of the gods of heavens and earth

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<sup>1</sup>The myth points out that the council is composed of the sons of the gods. The Old Babylonian version says: "Anu opened his mouth, saying to the gods, his sons" (ibid., p. 111). The Assyrian version also says: "Anu op[ened] his mouth to speak, saying to the gods, his sons" (ibid., p. 113).

<sup>2</sup>The gods, hearing the speech of Ea, "were [excited and] kissed his feet" (ibid., p. 111). When Mah assented, also "the gods of the land rejoiced at her word. Excited, they kissed her feet" (ibid.).

<sup>3</sup>Seux, HPDBA, p. 131.

are attentive to him.  
They dreadfully came in person  
to render obeisance to him.<sup>1</sup>

In this case, the totality of gods is depicted in assembly. The head deity appears instructing an attentive and reverent audience. In addition, his leadership is fearfully acknowledged by the whole assembly.

Some characteristic details of the Mesopotamian council ought to be pointed out in order to establish later possible relationships with the matter in view. First of all, the assembly is pictured as being totally composed of deities. It does not matter that some of the beings are called great gods, or father gods, or helper gods, or whatever else; they are all gods by nature. They are all members of a polytheistic pantheon. Second, all the gods, even the highest in the pantheon, are subject to the decisions of the assembly--puḫrum.<sup>2</sup> There is no plain sovereignty or total independence of a sovereign god. "None of the gods of Mesopotamia enjoyed absolute power individually."<sup>3</sup> Third, the puḫur ilāni is composed of the host of gods. It is the totality which gives authority to the decisions made by them. Fourth, the assembled gods are

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>See E. A. Speiser, "Authority and Law in Mesopotamia," in Oriental and Biblical Studies: Collected Writings in Mesopotamia of E. A. Speiser, ed. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), p. 316.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

called sons of the god who appears leading the council. Fifth, a mediatrix ministry is performed for the humans. Sixth, the assembly is summoned by a petition of a principal god and by an express requirement conveyed by a messenger god. Seventh, the gods use some lesser gods as their messengers to announce the final decisions of the puhur ilāni.

#### The Hattian Council of the Gods

Turning to the mythological realm of the Hittites, we also find mention of the "assembly of the gods" in a fashion similar to that of Babylonian mythology.

In the song of Ullikummi<sup>1</sup> the divine council (tuliyaz siunes) is mentioned in relation to the threat that Ullikummi represents to them.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the parts dealing with the matter are quite fragmentary.<sup>3</sup> In the course of the narration of the myth, several times the

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<sup>1</sup>According to Hittite mythology, Ullikummi is the son of Kumarbi who was deposed from his heavenly kingship by the storm-god Teshub. The dethroned Kumarbi tried to regain his lost position by creating Ullikummi as adversary of Teshub. Heinrich Otten, Mythen vom Gotte Kumarbi (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1950), pp.13-21.

<sup>2</sup>H. Güterbock, The Song of Ullikummi. Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth. (New Haven: ASOR, 1952), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>The text mentions that "someone leaves an assembly" granted of the gods. H. G. Güterbock, "The Song of Ullikummi," JCS 5 (1951):139. It also mentions that Ea stands in the courtyard before all the gods (JCS 6 [1952]: 25). A revised version of the myth was published as The Song of Ullikummi. Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth (New Haven, CT: ASOR, 1952), hereafter SoU.

gods send messengers to inform their fellow gods of the plots and actions of Kumarbi, as well as the tactics they should adopt to fight him.

Parallel to this myth there exist some isolated mythical fragments that deal more directly with an assembly of the gods. There, the divine council is described<sup>1</sup> as giving an account of the fears of the gods.<sup>2</sup>

A myth that implicitly relates to the assembly of the gods is the fragmentary myth of Illuyankas.<sup>3</sup> The surviving fragments of this text describe the battle of the storm-god with the dragon Illuyankas, perhaps as aetiology for the purulli festival.<sup>4</sup> It has been suggested that the main ideas behind the purulli festivities were connected with the local fertility cult and the assembly of the gods

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<sup>1</sup>The text mentions the standing of all the gods in assembly against Ullikummi: . . . nu St. G. -as Kummiyas hastalis hassus istamasta nat tuliya pidi anda erir. nu siunes humantes Ullukummiya kunkunuzzi. "And the Storm-god, the brave king of Kummuya, heard it, and to the assembly place they came, and all the gods against Ullikummi" (ibid., p. 31).

<sup>2</sup>Certain wailing of the gods is mentioned (ibid., p. 25). The puzzle of these fragmentary remains has not been satisfactorily solved, but the fragments somehow appear to be related to the mythical matter of the Hittite concept of kingship in heaven.

<sup>3</sup>ANET, p. 125-126.

<sup>4</sup>Alberto Bernabe, Textos literarios hetitas (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979), p. 30. The term purulli probably means "festivity of the earth." See also Theodor H. Gaster, Thespis. Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East (New York: Harper & Row), p. 245 (hereafter Thespis).

in the temple of the weathergod of Nerik. They were intended to bring grace and reconciliation to the king, and thus order and blessing to the Hattian land.<sup>1</sup>

A further mention of the divine council motif is found in the myth of Telepinu.<sup>2</sup> According to this myth, Telepinu becomes angry and hides himself, disappearing from public activity. His absence brings such a severe drought that "men and gods were in danger of dying of hunger."<sup>3</sup> At the call of the sun-god, the thousand gods are assembled to eat and drink. During the meeting, the absence of Telepinu is noted, and the cause of the drought becomes known. The gods, great and small, look for him without success, until the bee helps them to find the hidden god. This, however, enrages Telepinu who causes destruction everywhere by a

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<sup>1</sup>Beyerlin, NERTROT, p. 155. The purulli was the most important festival in the Hittite calendar--to the extreme that king Mursil II abandoned a military campaign against Kalsama to celebrate it in Hattusas--related to the cultic center of Nerik, and belonging to the extended type of annual festivities that had as aim to reinvigorate the earth after its hibernal lethargy and to assure the rain. As part of the celebrations, a ritual combat was performed --reenacting the fight of the storm-god with the dragon Illuyankas--which symbolized the triumph of life over death, of fertility and plenty over drought, and, in general, of good over evil. (See also Bernabe, pp. 29-30, and Maurice Vieyra, "Las religiones de la Anatolia antigua," Las Religiones Antiguas [Madrid: Closas Orcoyen, 1977], p. 359, hereafter ReAn; J. G. Macqueen, "Hattian Mythology and Hittite Monarchy," AnSt 9 [1959]:175). For a brief synopsis of the purulli festival as well as the myth related to it, see Gaster, Thespis, pp. 245-269.

<sup>2</sup>ANET, pp. 126-128.

<sup>3</sup>NERTROT, p. 161.



flood. Again the gods--apparently in council--appear terrified and in dismay ask each other what they can do to calm the enraged god.<sup>1</sup> Finally Kamrusefas, the goddess of magic and healing arts, obtains partial control over the angered and enraged Telepinu. Then the healing goddess summons the gods and asks for some final means with which to pacify Telepinu. So all the gods and goddesses are gathered in assembly under the hatakesna tree. The whole pantheon assembles to celebrate their salvation and to express their hopes of a long, happy existence.<sup>2</sup>

Vieyra mentions that along with the Hittite festivals there probably was a festival of the new year--perhaps in connection with the purulli festival celebrated in springtime. During this the gods were reunited in assembly in order to fix the destinies. This is deduced from a text that mentions that at this time:

A great festival from heaven and earth is  
celebrated in honor of the storm god.  
All the gods were assembled and gone to the  
abode of the storm god.  
Eat during this feast and drink!  
Satisfy your hunger and satiate your thirst!  
Decree the life for the king and the queen!  
Decree the life (?) for heaven and earth . . . .!<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, it seems that for the Hittites, the assembly of the gods was summoned to celebrate an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>Vieyra, ReAn, 1:365.

achievement that favored the whole pantheon. It was also summoned to deliberate about a peril threatening the well-being of the pantheon. The total assembly included great and small gods and apparently all the goddesses; in other words, the thousand gods of Hatti.<sup>1</sup> The site of the assembly had a court but also a preferred tree as its place of reunion. The gods made free use of messengers (both male and female) to communicate among them.

#### The Canaanite Council of the Gods

When one turns to the Syro-Canaanite realm, it becomes evident that this motif also played a very important role for the Ugaritic and Phoenician pantheon in dealing with the affairs of the deities.

Deissler<sup>2</sup> has remarked that the concept of gods gathering in an assembly can be pointed out as a classical theme within the Ugaritic myths.<sup>3</sup> The myths repeatedly mention many deities who themselves are involved in one way or another in the activities of the heavenly assembly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>NERTROT, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Alfonso Deissler, Die Psalmen [Die Welt der Bibel, Kleiner Kommentar] (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1964).

<sup>3</sup>He says that "Göttesversammlung--ist ein klassisches Thema der Mythen und für Kanaan besonders durch die Funde von Ugarit (Ratsversammlung der Gotter unter Vorsitz des höchsten Gottes El) belegt" (ibid., 2:152).

<sup>4</sup>An extensive study of the Canaanite council of the gods was made by Mullen, DCC. Other studies that also deal in some way with the topic are: P. D. Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, Harvard Semitic Monographs V

As in Mesopotamian texts, so also in Canaan, the divine council is described as being constituted of the assembled gods. Elsewhere in the myths,<sup>1</sup> sacrificial lists,<sup>2</sup> and god lists<sup>3</sup> of Ugarit, the deities are mentioned as gathered in *p̄hr*,<sup>4</sup> and this assembly is designated in various ways. So, the totality of the gods was termed the *p̄hr ilm*, "the assembly of the gods"<sup>5</sup>--similar to the Akkadian *puhur ilani*,<sup>6</sup> but this designation by no means is the only one that existed for the Ugaritic concept. Phrases such as *p̄hr bn 'ilm*, "the assembly of the sons of El (or the assembly of the sons of the gods),"<sup>7</sup> or *p̄hr m'd*, "the

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(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), hereafter *DWEI*; J. C. de Moor, "The Semitic Pantheon," *UF* 2 (1970): 187-228; Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), hereafter *CBEB*; Julian Oberman, *Ugaritic Mythology: A Study of Its Leading Motifs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948).

<sup>1</sup>See "El Mito de la 'lucha de Ba'lu y Yamu' (*KTU* 1.2I)," *MLC*, pp.168-163.

<sup>2</sup>*CTCA* 30.3; 32.1.3,9,17,26,34.

<sup>3</sup>*CTCA*, 29, 30.

<sup>4</sup>The Ugaritic texts use *p̄hr* to indicate "assembly," "totality." Joseph Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1965), p. 255, hereafter *WUS*.

<sup>5</sup>*CTCA* 29. II.7. Pope pointed out that the usage of *p̄hr* by itself sometimes seems to be applied freely to any reunion of gods without necessarily always implying "a plenary session or perfect attendance." Marvin Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), p. 48, hereafter *EUT*.

<sup>6</sup>See above, pp. 32-37.

<sup>7</sup>*CTCA* 4.III.14.

gathered assembly," were also used to name the same celestial reunion. In a similar way, another quite common designation for the council was *mprt bn 'ilm*, "the assembly of the sons of El,"<sup>1</sup> which is similar to the Phoenician denomination *mphrt 'il gbl qdšm*, "the assembly of the holy gods of Gebal (Byblos)."<sup>2</sup>

Of particular interest is the characterization of the council of the gods as the assembly of El. According to the Ugaritic documents, El is seated at the summit of the pantheon,<sup>3</sup> and his numerous sons form the *phr bn 'ilm* or the *mphrt bn 'ilm*.

The myth of "the struggle between Baal and Yamm" portrays with some clarity the assembly of El. Although incomplete, the remnants of the text make plain that the theme of the myth deals with kingship within the pantheon. El appears reunited with the gods and goddesses in a drunken banquet offered by him. In the middle of the festival El proclaims the kingship of Yamm with the complete assent of the gods. The goddesses especially are pleased with the

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<sup>1</sup>CTCA 30.3; 32.I.3,9",17,26,34.

<sup>2</sup>H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968), 4.4-5.

<sup>3</sup>Johannes Friedrich, "Ras Schamra. Ein Überblick der Funde und Forschungen," AO 33 (1934):36.

decision,<sup>1</sup> and El himself complains that Baal with haughtiness and rudeness despised the assembly.<sup>2</sup> Apparently the decision of El had to be proclaimed in a new meeting. Thus, El himself convenes the assembly in his own palace. In the interim before the convocation, different gods are sent as messengers to the gods more directly involved with the decree, among them Kotaru, Anat, Baal, and Yamm himself. The arrogance of Baal reaches a climax when Yamm sends his messengers to demand the surrender of Baal before El and the *p̄r m<sup>e</sup>d*.<sup>3</sup>

The council is gathered "in the divine mountain in plenary assembly."<sup>4</sup> There the gods, eating and drinking, are seated in princely seats.<sup>5</sup> El presides over the

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<sup>1</sup>According to del Olmo's reconstruction of the text. *MLC*, p. 159. See also *Interpretación de la mitología cananea* (Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo, 1984), p. 40, lines 15-17, p. 45, hereafter *IMC*.

<sup>2</sup>The text specifically does not mention which kind of actions Baal did to the assembly, but refers quite clearly the dissatisfaction of the goddesses with him, and the joyous acceptance of Yamm as the king of the gods.

<sup>3</sup>The section of the myth dealing with the demand of Yamm before the assembly is referred to in *KTU* 1.21.1-46. In this section, the *p̄r m<sup>e</sup>d* is explicitly mentioned five times.

<sup>4</sup>The text mentions that the messenger gods of Yamm are sent to a specific place--*gr il c<sup>m</sup> p̄r m<sup>e</sup>d* (*KTU* 1.2I.13-14), "to the divine mountain, to the assembly of the gods" (*MLC*, p. 120).

<sup>5</sup>The text mentions that the holy gods took seat to eat, *ilm.lhm.ytb.bn.qdš.ltrm* (*KTU* 1.2I.20-21).

reunion. With him are the goddesses Attart and Anat.<sup>1</sup> Baal also stands close to El.<sup>2</sup> Then the messengers of Yamm, with flaming appearance,<sup>3</sup> arrive at the assembly. After the proper obeisance is given to El and the council,<sup>4</sup> they urge the submission of Baal and his followers to Yamm.<sup>5</sup> El confirms his former decision and proclaims before the assembly the sovereignty of Yamm:

. . . C<sup>b</sup>dk.b<sup>C</sup>l.yymm. C<sup>b</sup>dk.b<sup>C</sup>l.[nhr]m.  
 bn.dgn.a[s]rkm. hw.ybl.'argmnk.k'ilm  
 [ ]ybl.wbn.kds.mnhyk.  
 (...O Yamm! Baal is your servant,  
 Baal is your servant, [O Nahar]m!  
 The son of Dagan is your prisoner. He will pay you  
 a tribute like the other gods.  
 He will give you an offering  
 like the holy ones).<sup>6</sup>

At this proclaimed decision, Baal gets angry and before the assembly he accuses the messengers of Yamm of condoning the leniency of El. The goddesses Attart and Anat seize the hands of Baal and remonstrate with him about

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<sup>1</sup>This is evident since they intervened in favor of the messengers of Yamm when they were attacked by the irascible Baal.

<sup>2</sup>b<sup>C</sup>l.qm.C<sup>l</sup>.il. Ibid., 1.2I.21.

<sup>3</sup>išt.ištm.yitmr. Ibid., 1.2I.32.

<sup>4</sup>lp<sup>C</sup>n.il.[l]tpi.išthwy.phr.m<sup>C</sup>d (ibid. 1.2 I.30-31), "they did fall at the feet of El. They did prostrate them-selves before the assembly" (MLC, p. 171).

<sup>5</sup>tn.ilm.dtqh . . . tn.b<sup>C</sup>l.w<sup>C</sup>nnb (KTU 1.2I.34-35), "Give oh gods the one whom you protect . . . Give Baal and his attendants" (MLC, p. 172).

<sup>6</sup>KTU 1.2 I.36-42.

his conduct, trying to "bring him to reason."<sup>1</sup> But the enraged god persists in his conduct and speaks out about his rebellion before the assembly.<sup>2</sup> The myth is interrupted by a lacuna and it is not possible to determine the final reaction or decision of the *phr m'd*.

Another fragmentary mythical text,<sup>3</sup> however, portrays the insurgent Baal killing Yamm with the aid of Kotaru, but with the disapproval of Attart.<sup>4</sup>

This myth in cycle gives us a Ugaritic description of the Canaanite divine council as being totally composed of gods. To the assembly also belong the goddesses. As in the Mesopotamian conception, the gods decide matters in the midst of splendid meals and drunkenness.<sup>5</sup> Although the assembled are all gods, apparently they are divided into

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<sup>1</sup>Oldenburg, *CBE*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Baal rejects openly the decree of El and the decision of the assembly.

<sup>3</sup>*KTU* 1.2IV See also *CTA* 2.IV.2-36.

<sup>4</sup>*KTU* 1.2IV.28-30. *bšm.tg<sup>c</sup>rm.Cttrt.bt laliyn b[<sup>c</sup>l] bt.lrkb.Crpt.kšbyn.zb[l.ym.] [k] šbyn.tpt.nhr*, "by his name Attart rebukes (him). 'O Baal, be ashamed! Be ashamed, O rider of the clouds! Since our captive was the prince Yamm, because our captive was judge Nahar,'" i.e., "Baal you did wrong. Be ashamed of it. Yamm was subjected to us. Things should be ruled by the assembly." But alas, Baal took the matters into his own hands and he took the reign according to his own way.

<sup>5</sup>To decide the kingship of Marduk, the gods are portrayed first in a feast with much drink. In the same way the sons of El and Attart are assembled in a feast of drinking when the messengers of Yamm arrive to solicit the obedience of Baal.

groups led by the major gods.<sup>1</sup> The major gods make use of envoys to convey their messages to one another, or to communicate them to the assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The myth of "the palace of Baal" also makes reference to the divine council where the assembly is again convened on various occasions of banqueting. There different desires are expressed and decisions are proclaimed. The myth points out the fact that although Baal possesses kingship among the gods, he does not have a royal palace like all the other gods or sons of Attart and El. To solve his problem, Baal has recourse to Anat, whom he sends as his intercessor before Attart and El. The menacing impetuosity of Anat makes El and Attart, together with their sons--all the gods--recognize the validity of the request of Baal.<sup>3</sup>

During an interval in which Baal presents his allegations, he complains<sup>4</sup> of the unkind treatment given him by his brothers within the assembly: yqm.wywptn.btk p[h]r.bn.

<sup>1</sup>The text mentions "the sons of Attart" and also the attendants of Baal as being part of the m<sup>e</sup>d.

<sup>2</sup>El, Baal, and Yamm appear sending their messengers.

<sup>3</sup>El, Attart, and all the gods acknowledge: wn.in.bt [.]lb<sup>C</sup>l.km.ilm h̄zr.kb[n.] atrt (KTU 1.3V.38-39), "But, of course, Baal has not a house like the gods, nor a mansion like the sons of Attart" (LMC, p. 191).

<sup>4</sup>Unfortunately the text is incomplete and the whole sequence of the dialogue is unknown.



ilm,<sup>1</sup> "They have arisen to spit on me in the middle of the assembly of the sons of the gods."<sup>2</sup>

Then the gods, after uniting and consulting among themselves, decree: ybn. bt .lb<sup>l</sup>. km ilm. whzr. kbn. atrt<sup>3</sup> "Build a house for Baal, like that of the gods. Yea, a mansion like that of the sons of Attart."<sup>4</sup> The rest of the myth describes the execution of the divine decree and Baal gets his mansion. Then he invites his brothers, his brother gods, and the seventy sons of Attart, to his palace. There they assemble in a great and joyful feast.<sup>5</sup>

The Epic of Keret also provides some insight into how the assembly of the gods was conceived in Canaan.<sup>6</sup> Keret, a faithful devotee of El, was the king of Hubur. He was consumed by sorrow since his royal line was to be ended. When El saw his sadness, he guided Keret to marry Hurriya, a beautiful princess of a foreign monarch named

<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.4III.13-14.

<sup>2</sup>LMC, p. 197. This passage together with the one which mentions the insurrection of Baal shows that divine jealousies and bitter struggles were common among the gods, who did not always have commendable conduct within their council meeting (see p. 25, and n. 4).

<sup>3</sup>KTU 1.4IV.62-1.4V.1.

<sup>4</sup>LMC, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup>Elsewhere within the myths, the phrase 'd.lhm.šty ilm, "while the gods, eat and drink" (KTU 1.4V.49; 1.4VI.55; 1.5IV.12), is used to describe the gods in assembly.

<sup>6</sup>Text KTU 1.14 I-1.14 VI; 1.15 I-1.15 VI; 1.16 I-1.16 VI.

Pabel, who reigned over a region called Udumu. In gratitude Keret offers a splendid thanksgiving sacrifice in his palace to the assembly of the gods. This festival El attends, along with the tripartite division of the Canaanite pantheon.<sup>1</sup> This "third part of the congregation of the gods"<sup>2</sup> witnesses the blessing of El upon Keret, and after they all grant their blessing upon him, they return to their abode.<sup>3</sup>

A sickness that prostrates Keret motivates him again to consult the reunion of the gods. They are summoned by El through messengers--as is usual in the Ugaritic mythology<sup>4</sup>--to heal Keret. When the gods are assembled, El presides over the council and asks who of the gathered gods would heal the sick king.<sup>5</sup> Even though he asks the same question seven times, the whole assembly of gods remains

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<sup>1</sup>[w]Cdt.ilm.tlth (KTU 1.15 II.7), "yea, the company of the gods . . . in its tripartite division"--i.e., representing the deities of heaven, sea and underworld. T. Gaster, "The Canaanite Epic of Keret," JOR 37 (1947): 288. Since tlth, "the third" is preceded by the deities related to the realm of heaven, netherworld, and sea, Gaster observes that at this point the conception of the pantheon is enlightened.

<sup>2</sup>John McDonald, "An Assembly at Ugarit?," UF 11 (1979):523-524.

<sup>3</sup>tbrk.ilm.tity.tity.ilm.lahlhm dr.il.lmšknthm (KTU 1.15 III.17-19), "the gods blessed him and they went, the gods went to their tents; the family of El went to their abode" (MLC, p. 305).

<sup>4</sup>See above, pp. 50-53.

<sup>5</sup>my.bilm ydy.mrş gršm z[blm] (KTU 1.16 V.10-12, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21), "who of the gods will cast off the sickness, exorcising the malady?" (MLC pp. 317-318).

mute.<sup>1</sup> So El himself performs the charm and casts out the malady of the king.

This epic points out the nature of the members of the celestial council. All are gods, sons of El.<sup>2</sup> The gods answer the summons to a convocation given through special messengers who are both male and female.<sup>3</sup> There exists among the deities a certain hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> The principal deities in the pantheon have a special escort of minor gods who serve them. In the case of Baal they are called *il.t\*.dr.b\*1*, "the helper gods of Baal."<sup>5</sup>

The Ugaritic texts reveal still other enigmatic entities related to the legion of deities of the Canaanite pantheon who are depicted as being assembled mainly for

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<sup>1</sup>*in.bilm.Cnyh* (KTU 1.16V.12-13, 16, 19, 22), "there was none among the gods who answered him." *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>To the explicit identification of them as deities is added the indication of El as being their father. He says to them, "Return, my sons, to your seat[s] Yea to the thrones of your excellencies!" Cyrus H. Gordon, "Poetic Legends and Myths from Ugarit," *Ber* 25 (1977):56.

<sup>3</sup>This way of sending messages between the deities is seen elsewhere in the Ugaritic mythological literature.

<sup>4</sup>See above, pp. 49-52.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Astour, "Some New Divine Names from Ugarit," *JAOS* 86 (1966):280. Some have thought that the Ugaritic texts also speak of an additional "assembly of Baal" which could be distinguished from the general assembly of the gods and the family of El. But this is assumed only on the basis of a reconstruction of the word *p[h]r*.

banquets. These are the rephaim.<sup>1</sup> The rarity of references to them and the fragmentary nature of the texts involved makes them susceptible to a diversity of interpretations. They are mentioned mainly in contexts closely related to the divine realm, which makes it appropriate for them to be identified among the gods. At the same time, they occasionally appear affiliated with human beings in an earthly realm.<sup>2</sup> Most of the time, however, they appear totally related to the divine realm.<sup>3</sup> Some scholars also see them--with good reason--as related to the spirits of the netherworld.<sup>4</sup> It seems that Virolleaud was the first

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<sup>1</sup>The rephaim is a motif too debated even before the Ras Shamra discoveries. (See Paul Karge, Rephaim: Die vorgeschichtliche Kultur Palästinas und Phöniziens (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1917). After the appearance of the Ugaritic texts, the research on this motif was expanded into multiple studies which at the moment do not present consensus on the issue. A survey of the actual adopted positions on this issue is given by Conrad E. L'Heureux, Rank among the Canaanite Gods El, Ba'al and the Rephaim (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1979), pp. 111-127, hereafter RACG. An updated bibliography is given in MLC, pp. 411-413.

<sup>2</sup>In KTU 1.15 III 2-4; 12-15, the King Keret is blessed as being one of the rephaim. This could be in total accordance with the fact that Keret is also called the son of El (1.14 I 41; 1.16 I 10, 20; II 48), and also his gplm, "page" (1.14 I 40, II 8) and his 'bd, "servant," without necessarily implying the divinity of the king, but a special relationship to El, and consequently, to the divine assembly.

<sup>3</sup>Conrad E. L'Heureux, "The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim," HTR 67 (1974):265-274. In KTU 1.20-22, and 24.252 (Ug 5, pp. 551-557) the text is devoted to presenting a feast for the gods, the rephaim, whose host is El.

<sup>4</sup>Marvin H. Pope, "Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit," Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences 19 (1977):163. Del Olmo sees them as "dead" and

who called attention to the fact that some of these entities, as minor gods, appear to be related as servants to the major gods like Baal.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere they have been described as a group of divine chariot warriors,<sup>2</sup> on the basis of an explicit reference describing one of the rapau as a warrior.<sup>3</sup> In accordance with this view, Ryan has also recognized the rephaim as being the charioteers of Baal.<sup>4</sup> But he also suggests that they could be chariot riders of Shapshu, the sun goddess.<sup>5</sup>

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divinized heroes admitted in such state in the Ugaritic pantheon (MLC, pp. 412-413). Gordon calls them "shades of the dead" ("Poetic Legends," p. 9). See also A. Caquot, "Les Rephaim ougaritiques," Syr 37 (1960):76ff.

<sup>1</sup>As appears in KTU 22.8. See C. Virolleaud, "Les Rephaim," Revue des études sémitiques 7 (1940):77-83; likewise René Dussaud, Les découvertes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancien Testament (Paris: Geuthner, 1941), pp. 185-188.

<sup>2</sup>A. Jirku, "Rapa<sup>c</sup>u, der Fürst der Rap<sup>c</sup>uma-Raphaim," ZAW 77 (1965):80-83. Gordon also mentions them as the chariot soldiers of Baal and Anat ("Poetic Legends," pp. 30-32).

<sup>3</sup>A. F. Rainey, "The Military Personnel of Ugarit," JNES 24 (1965):17-18.

<sup>4</sup>Dermont J. Ryan, "Rpum and Rephaim. A Study in the Relationship between the Rpum of Ugarit and the Rephaim of the Old Testament" (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, 1954), pp. 84. Ryan concludes that the rpm were Baal's chariotry "military henchmen, and therefore subject to his command" (ibid., p. 94).

<sup>5</sup>Ryan especially points out that the rpm were the military henchmen of Baal. However, he also suggests that this group of deities were offered "as a princely escort to the Sun-goddess in her travels across the sky." This deference was done in recognition of her eagerness for searching for the body of Baal to make him return alive. Ibid.

Among the conclusions that L'Heureux arrives at, in accord with Ryan, is that within the Ugaritic texts, the *rephaim* are to be seen as belonging to two different ranks. Those appearing in KTU 22.B.8 together with those of KTU 6.6.44-46 are to be seen as "a subordinate level of deities who form the charioteering escort of Baal and Shapshu, respectively."<sup>1</sup> In doing this he delineates their position mainly from the general mythical context sketched in KTU 20-22 and elsewhere in relation with El, the gods, and the *rephaim*. He points out that as in the other texts, El is always *il*, and the gods are *ilm* or *bn il(m)*. In the *rpum* texts, it is also possible to see El appearing as the supreme *rapi<sup>e</sup>u* while the gods appear as the *rapi<sup>e</sup>uma*.<sup>2</sup> He then sees this relationship of the *rap<sup>e</sup>iu* to the *rapi<sup>e</sup>uma* as an explicit reference to the divine council which forms a background to the biblical relationship of YHWH//angels, *hqdš*//*hqdšym*.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps a more appropriate parallel to the *rephaim* as celestial and underworld deities within the Ugaritic pantheon is that suggested by Gaster, who sees them as corresponding to the Babylonian *Igigi* and the *Anunnaki* gods

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<sup>1</sup>L'Heureux, RACG, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>L'Heureux, HTR 6 (1974):269.

and to the upper and lower deities of the Hittite mythology.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, the diverse ANE pantheons make explicit mention of a heavenly assembly. The conception of this celestial council is invariably depicted as being constituted of all the gods and goddesses of the pantheon. In each case, it is a polytheistic entity.

This situation imposes limits upon the head god who is not absolutely sovereign or totally independent. Only the consent of the totality of the assembled gods gives authority or validity to whatever decision or decree is proclaimed by some deity.

The gods are gathered in assembly whenever it becomes necessary or a critical situation appears that menaces the security of the pantheon. It is not always necessary, however, to call all of the gods to the assembly. The expression *puḫur ilāni*, "assembly of gods," can also indicate any reunion of gods or diverse gatherings of deities, apart from the totality of the *puḫur ilāni*.

Whenever a celestial congregation is needed, the divine members are summoned by command of a principal deity who expresses the need and conveys it through a messenger god. In the same way, these messengers function as lesser deities in the service of the major gods. They are the heralds of the final decisions of the heavenly council.

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<sup>1</sup>Gaster, *Thespis*, p. 228.

The Members of the Celestial Council

Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Ugaritic mythologies speak of the heavenly council as composed of gods and goddesses. But this totality was divided into different hierarchies with specific functions.

The Constituency of the Mesopotamian  
Celestial Council

The Sumerians settled the pattern for the Mesopotamian conception of the constituency of the celestial council. They assumed that the divinities constituting the pantheon all differed in importance and in rank. They conceived of their pantheon as functioning like an earthly assembly made of diverse groups all headed by a king.<sup>1</sup>

Through Mesopotamian mythology it can be detected that in addition to the highest triad of gods--Anu, Enlil, and Ea--there were two distinct groups of deities that the Mesopotamians thought of as having the highest importance within the divine council. Those were the seven *ilu simati* or the seven "gods of the fates,"<sup>2</sup> and the fifty senior

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<sup>1</sup>S. N. Kramer, The Sumerians, Their History, Culture and Character (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup>Jacobsen, TIT, p. 115.



gods called *ilāni rabūti* or "the great gods."<sup>1</sup> After them came the other groups of deities, generally named in a collective way.<sup>2</sup>

All these deities were conceived as superhuman beings who ruled the affairs of heaven and earth according to decrees settled by them in the *puhur ilāni*.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Igigi and Anunnaki Gods

The most notable among these groups were the Igigi<sup>4</sup> and the Anunnaki<sup>5</sup> gods--known as the *dingirNun-gal-e-ne* and

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<sup>1</sup>Von Soden, AHB, s.v. *ilu(m)*; Kramer, The Sumerians, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>A. Falkenstein indicates that the nomination of the gods in a collective way was peculiar to Sumerian and Akkadian tradition. He also mentions that apart from *dingir-gal-gal*, 'the great gods,' and *ḳa-nun-na*, which are the most frequently used expressions to name the gods collectively, some of the groups of gods also referred to in a collective way were the "dingir-an-na, 'the gods of heaven,' dingir-ki-a, 'the gods of earth,' dingir-an-ki-a, 'the gods of heaven (and) earth,' dingir-kur-kur-ra, 'the gods of (foreign) lands,' dingir-ḫur-sag-ga, 'the gods of the mountains,' dingir-šár-šár-ra, 'the innumerable gods,' and dingir-ki-lagaš-ki-a, 'the gods of the region of Lagash.'" "Die Anunna in der sumerischen Überlieferung," AS 16 (1965):127.

<sup>3</sup>I. Mendelsohn, Religions of the Ancient Near East. Sumerian-Akkadian Religion Texts and Ugaritic Epics (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955), p. xi, hereafter RANE.

<sup>4</sup>The name is thought to stand mainly for the totality of the lesser heavenly gods of Mesopotamia. Hans Wilhelm Haussig, Wörterbuch der Mythologie. Götter und Mythen im vorderen Orient (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1965), s.v. *I-gi-gi*, hereafter as GMVO.

<sup>5</sup>Knut Leonard Tallqvist, Akkadische Götterepitheta (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974), s.v. *Anunnaki*, hereafter as AGE. Originally it is thought that the term covered the totality of deities of heaven and earth. Lately it

the dingir<sub>A</sub>-nun-na in Sumerian.<sup>1</sup> These gods sometimes appear as an anonymous mass, standing for the most part in fear and respect before the god who is dominating them<sup>2</sup> in the assembly of the gods.

The Ig and the An gods were especially recognized during Assyrian<sup>3</sup> and Babylonian times.<sup>4</sup> It is now known that during the Neo-Babylonian period these two groups of deities were also the object of official worship.<sup>5</sup> Such is the case with Nebuchadnezzar II who, in a wall of the city of Babylon, erected and dedicated an altar to the Ig

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stands mainly for the totality of the earthly and nether-world gods. See also D. O. Edwards, s.v. "Anunna and Igigi," in Haussig, GMVO, pp. 42, 80.

<sup>1</sup>For Igigi=<sup>d</sup>Nun-gal-e-ne, see GMVO, p. 80; Friedrich Delitzsch, Sumerisches Glossar (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1914), pp. 76-77, 29, 207, hereafter SuG. For Anunnaki=<sup>d</sup>A-nun-na, see GMVO, s.v. Anunna; SuG, pp. 1, 195-196, 207. The form appears in "Gudea Cylinder B 1:11, 21; B 2:1, 6 (F. Thureau-Dangin, Die sumerischen und die akkadischen Königsinschriften (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), p. 122, hereafter as SAKI.

<sup>2</sup>Burkard Kienast, "Igigu und Anunnaku nach akkadischen Quellen," AS, 16, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>It seems--as Jastrow mentions--that the first appearance of the Ig and the An in historical texts is during the reign of the Assyrian king Rammannirari I, who, in an inscription of a petition to the great gods, includes both groups together with the addressed deities. See Morris Jastrow, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1898), p. 185, hereafter ReBAs.

<sup>4</sup>This importance is evident in the constant mention of these groups of deities within the Babylonian texts. See M. Rutten, "Les religions asianiques," in Histoire des religions, eds. Maurice Brillant and René Aigrain (Tournai: Bloud et Gay, [n.d.]), 4:48, hereafter HiRe.

<sup>5</sup>ReBAs, p. 186.

and the An.<sup>1</sup> In the great temple of Marduk there existed a great fountain where, according to a Babylonian hymn, the gods and the An bathed their countenances.<sup>2</sup>

Nabopolasar also repaired the inner wall of Babylon, named Imgur-Enlil--"Enlil has granted"--and called that place "the wide enclosure of the Igigi, the spacious courtyard of the Anunnaki."<sup>3</sup> To this it may be added that within the city of Babylon, in addition to the temples and shrines, there were street altars which were set up at the entrances of the temples, at the corner of a street, or at any place along the streets. These altars were extremely

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<sup>1</sup>Jastrow mentions that the altar of the Ig and the An was known as a place of "joy and rejoicing," in which on the festival of Marduk--who was the lord of the Ig and the An--special sacrifices were offered (ibid). Cf. H. C. Rawlinson, A Selection from the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Western Asia [London: The British Museum, 1861], I:55, col. iv. ls. 7-13, hereafter SMIWA. Nebuchadnezzar himself boasts in different inscriptions of the care with which he built the shrines for the gods, among them the Ig and the An. He says, "I overlaid with rows of white marble and stones . . . the exalted resting-place . . . of the Igigi and the Anunnaki." C. J. Ball, "Inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II," PSBA 10 (1887):95.

The dedication of places and buildings to the Ig and An gods, however, goes back to the Neo-Sumerian period, in which it is known that Gudea built a "'lieu de Jugement' des Anunnaki dans le temple de Nin.Girsu" (Rutten, "Religions asianiques," HiRel, 4:48).

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup>TÙR šum-du-lu ša dI-gi-gi ki-sal-lu pal-ka-a ša dA-nun-na-ki. Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, "Nabopolassar's Restoration Work on the Wall Imgur-Enlil at Babylon," Iraq 47 (1985):4, ls. 13-14.

numerous, as has been indicated by the many that have been found in excavations. Hundreds of them have been interpreted as altars dedicated to the Ig and An gods.<sup>1</sup> This seems to be in plain accordance with the Tintir tablets<sup>2</sup> in which the distinctive religious topographical sites of Babylon, related to these gods, are mentioned as "300 chapels or 'holy-places' (parakku) of the Igigi and 600 chapels of the A(nunnaki)."<sup>3</sup>

In a special way, the Ig and the An are to be distinguished as two distinct groups of deities within the Mesopotamian divine assembly.<sup>4</sup> These gods are frequently

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<sup>1</sup>Eckhard Unger, Babylon die heilige Stadt der Beschreibung der Babylonier (Berlin: Verlag Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931), p. 119, hereafter BHSBB.

<sup>2</sup>The Tintir tablets--known as the Tintir<sup>ki</sup>=Babilu series--is a document of five tablets that describes the topography of Babylon, dated from the eighth century B.C., and named in this way according to the regular practice of identifying an ancient text after its opening words (A. R. George, "The Cuneiform Text Tin.tirki Ba-bi-lu and the Topography of Babylon," Sumer 35 [1979]:232). Among the different data it mentions in detail the diversity of divine dwelling-places within the city. See, O. R. Gurney, "The Fifth Tablet of 'The Topography of Babylon'" Iraq 36 (1974):39-52.

<sup>3</sup>Donald J. Wiseman, Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 48-49. The Tintir also lists the streets, gates, and shrines with their respective divine owners, and within this large list mentions the "300 parak <sup>d</sup>i-gi-gi u 600 parak <sup>d</sup>a-[nun-na-ki], "300 chapels of the Igigi and 600 chapels of the A[nunnaki]" (Gurney, "'The Topography of Babylon'," pp. 46-47).

<sup>4</sup>It seems that the actual tendency to treat these gods is more and more centered around the An gods. They are now seen as a concept which theologically went through three main stages: (1) as the collective concept of the

mentioned as acting as groups of deities in the mythoepic literature.<sup>1</sup>

The diversity of references in which they are mentioned is attested in expressions of curse<sup>2</sup> and conjuration,<sup>3</sup> and likewise in prayers<sup>4</sup> and incantations.<sup>5</sup>

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totality of gods of the Sumerian local pantheons, (2) as the gods of heaven and earth altogether, and (3) as the gods of the underworld. However, the last two alleged phases cannot be differentiated with exactitude. See Akio Tsukimoto, Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kišpum) im alten Mesopotamien (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), pp. 184-185.

<sup>1</sup>The Gilgamesh epic mentions them repeatedly. When the flood came, the An were lifting up their torches: <sup>d</sup>A-nun-na-ki issu diparati (EG XI.103). After the cataclysm reduced men to mud, they sat and wept with Ishtar (see above, pp. 37-38). Similarly when Enlil realized that Utnapishtim had survived, he was "filled with wrath against the gods, the Ig" (GEOT, p. 85, see also above p. 38). The myth of Enuma elish refers to their building of the temple of Marduk and their own shrines (EG, pp. 59-61, 68).

<sup>2</sup>In a stela inscription of Shalmanaser I (ca. 1280 B. C.) it says, "The Igigi . . . and the Anunnaki . . . all of them, look with disfavor upon him and with a terrible curse may they curse him in their anger" (Daniel D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926-27], I.123, p. 42, hereafter ARAB).

<sup>3</sup>In a conjuration intended to exorcise an anonymous specter, it says: "You, unknown spectre . . . By the life of the great gods of heaven and earth may you be conjured! By the life of the Igigi, the gods of the above, may you be conjured! By the life of the Anunnaki, the gods of the below, may you be conjured!" Erich Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co), 1931), pp. 131-132, hereafter TuL.

<sup>4</sup>There is known a prayer intended to be addressed to the An gods in these terms: "O Anunnaki, great gods, . . . who emit judgment for all the living ones. I, NN., son of NN., your servant who is afflicted with every misfortune . . . Great gods, come near to me and make judgment for me, [pronounce] a decision for me" (TuL, p. 430).

From the mythological mention of them it appears that the main duty of these gods was to be present at the divine assembly. In a hymn to Ea, Enlil is mentioned summoning the An gods to the assembly hall.<sup>1</sup> Their duty in the presence of the assembly becomes evident through a passage in the myth of the bird-god, Zu. The narration refers to the fact that the Ig gods hastened to gather in council when the tablets of destiny were stolen.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the Enuma elish myth depicts them as deliberating in a united assembly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>An incantation mentions that the An fought against the headache: sa-gi-ga ni-[mà-mal?]. <sup>d</sup>A-nun-na[gab-e ba-da-ab-ra?], "Headache was instituted. The Anunnaki it fought against" (S. Langdon, Historical and Religious Texts from the Temple Library of Nippur [Leipzig: August Pries, 1914], IX. 1-2, hereafter RTILN.) For a series of references to the An gods in conjuration texts, see Tsukimoto, pp. 184-211.

<sup>1</sup>[<sup>d</sup>En-lil-li <sup>d</sup>A-nun-na-ge-ne gù-mu-na-de-e]. [<sup>d</sup>gal-gal . . .]. [<sup>d</sup>A-nun-na ub-su-gin-na-ka sá(?) -im-di-di za-na]. "Enlil the Anunnaki called. Oh great gods, . . . Oh Anunnaki, in the assembly hall ye come" (RTILN, "Hymn to Ea, Ni. 2289," XV).

<sup>2</sup>It says, pahru Igigi i[lu gi-i]m-ru da-al-hu-ma, "The Igi-gi gods were called, the gods all were terrified." J. Nougayrol, "Ningirsu vainqueur de Zu," RA 46 (1952): 90, No. 30 oB version.

<sup>3</sup>When Tiamat extols Kingu it is remarked that "all the Anunnaki were assembled at the place. Their lips were closed, they sat in silence" (BG II.88; see also above pp. 5-6.) Later in Tablet XI Marduk appears addressing the assembly of the gods and both the Ig and the An appear in dialog with him. They agree to the new divine order of Marduk, and the An decide to build a temple for Marduk (see above, p. 9).

The awesomeness of the divine assembly can be glimpsed through the descriptions of the different activities performed by the Ig and the An during the sessions of the council. From the different myths, epics, and hymns can be surmised the different scenes of expectation, joy, adoration, and exaltation rendered by both groups of gods-- the Ig and the An--to the great gods in the heavenly assembly.

In a prayer to Ishtar as the mistress of Nippur, it is mentioned--together with other actions of these gods-- that the Ig and the An assembled daily:

She guideth aright the thoughts of the  
great gods with Anu.  
Daily the Anunnaki assemble unto her  
in council of affairs.  
The mighty Igigi gather about to know  
their portion, to receive their  
libation.<sup>1</sup>

However, in another tablet it is mentioned that the god Nabu summons the Ig and the An gods at the request of the other gods.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>uš-te-šir ú-šu-rat ilāni rabūti, itti ilu<sup>A</sup>-nu. ū-mi-šam-ma i-paḥ-ḥu-ru-si, A-nun-na-ki ma-la-kiš amāti. ra-bu-tū ilu<sup>I</sup> Igigi is-sa-na-hu-ru ud-du-ú is-ki-šū-un ma-ḥa-ru sir-ki-sū-un. kam-sa-ši kul-lat-si-na, ilat<sup>I</sup> Išta-rati ni-ši-i. ut-nin-na-ši mit-ḥa-riš, ša-pai-šá ka-am-sa. Michael Siderski, "A Prayer to Ishtar as the Belit of Nippur," RA 26 (1929):26, K. 9955, Rev. I 18-22.

<sup>2</sup>It says, "Nabu, recorder (scribe) of all things, who assembles the Anunnaki and Igigi." Luckenbill, ARAB II.667, p. 257.

During the meetings of the assembly, the Ig are described as listening attentively to the word of the high god.<sup>1</sup> The Ig and the An are also depicted as waiting for the counsel of the principal deity.<sup>2</sup> The Ig are expected to speak only good things about the godhead and to extol his name.<sup>3</sup>

From a hymn to Ishtar it can be determined that it is the duty of the Ig and the An to express their worship in the divine council in a united way together with the

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<sup>1</sup>In a prayer to be recited with lifted hands, and addressed to Shamash it says: ana qí-bi-tuk-ka ú-taq-qu-ú ilâni(meš) <sup>d</sup>i-gi-gi, "to your words, the Igigi gods pay attention." Erich Ebeling, Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung" (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1953), pp. 48-49, ls. 103, hereafter Handerhebung. Also in a prayer dedicated to Marduk, it says: "The Igigi . . . of the totality of heaven and earth, as many as there be, open their ears unto thee." S. Langdon, BPS, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Assurbanipal mentions this attitude when he speaks of Assur, [<sup>d</sup>Igi]gi u <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki uga''ú ana šikin tēmešu, "the Igigi gods and the Anunnaki gods are waiting for the determination of his decision" (Theo Bauer, Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1933], II 80, RS 3).

<sup>3</sup>In a prayer of "lifted hand," Enlilbanda is expected to be praised in such a way: [ilâni(meš) ra-jbu-tú li-šá-li-lu-ka [damiḡta]-ka liq-bu-ú ilâni(meš) <sup>d</sup>i-gi-gi, "may the great gods rejoice over you, good things the Igigi gods may say about you" (Ebeling, Handerhebung, pp. 68-69, ls. 21-22). In another similar prayer addressed to Shamash, it reads, ip-šu pi-ka ilâni(meš) i-qu-ul[-lu] zi-kir-ka kab-tu ú-šar-b[u]-u <sup>d</sup>i-gi-gi, "the gods honor quietly your counsel, the Igigi gods have made great your important name" (ibid., pp. 50-51, ls. 7-8).



other gods.<sup>1</sup> In a psalm to Enlil it is shown that the An gods adored him with fidelity: "Unto Enlil . . . the Anunnaki hastened thither, their hands, their mouths they opened (?). Unto Enlil adoration they offered in fidelity."<sup>2</sup> Also from a hymn to Shamash it is evident that it was their duty to express their worship in the assembly to the godhead with joyous cheering: "At your appearing the counselor gods rejoice. All the Igigi gods exult in joy."<sup>3</sup>

The acts of worship by the Ig and the An gods are mentioned many times in terms of their kneeling before god. In a prayer addressed to Marduk, it is said: "The great Anunnaki listen to his noble counsel. All the time they are kneeling before you."<sup>4</sup> Also in a hymn that glorifies Marduk as the restorer of life, it says: "The Igigi of the legions of heaven and earth, as many as there are, To thee

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<sup>1</sup>kam-sa-ši ku-lat-si-na, :lat-štarati ni-ši-i. ut-nin-na-ši miš-ša-riš, šá-pal-šá ka-am-sa, "They bow unto her, all the goddesses of the people. They pray to her unitedly, they kneel at her feet" (RA 26, K. 9955, Rev. I 21-22). This prayer mentions not only the periodicity with which the Ig and the An gather in council but also how they behave in the council before the high gods.

<sup>2</sup>en-lil šu. . .<sup>d</sup>a-nun-na mu-un-na-lág-gi-es. su-ba ka-ba mu-un-ni-gal. <sup>d</sup>en-lil-a-ra ma-a mu-ni-in-da-bi-ne. Langdon, Sumerian Liturgical Texts (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1917), p. 1917.

<sup>3</sup>a-na t[a]-mar-ti-ka ih-dú-u ilu ma-al-ku i-reš-šu-ka gi-mir-šú-nu <sup>d</sup>Igi-gi. Lambert, BWL, p. 126, No.78-79.

<sup>4</sup>[a-na e-piš pi-i-]šú šar-ši ú-taq-qu-u rabûti-(meš) <sup>d</sup>i-gi-gi [ul ip-pa-rak-k]u-ú <sup>d</sup>a-nun-na-ki pāni-ka kam-su. Ebeling, Handerhebung, pp. 92-93, ls. 3-4.

do they seven incline."<sup>1</sup> In a hymn dedicated to Marduk it says: "When he calls the Igigi and the Anunnaki kneel down before you, and the gods their procreator take their place in silence."<sup>2</sup>

However, the worship of these deities reaches superlative dimensions when the Ig are portrayed as kneeling and the An as lying before the supreme deity: "Anu Bel more than great is your name. All the Igigi gods are kneeling before you; the Anunnaki, the great gods are lying before you."<sup>3</sup> In another hymn addressed to Sin, it says: "When thy voice resounds in heaven, the Igigi cast themselves down upon their faces; when thy voice resounds on earth, the Anunnaki kiss the ground."<sup>4</sup> In a prayer also dedicated to Sin, it says: "As for thee, thy word is proclaimed and the Igigi bow the face to thee. As for thee, thy word in earth is proclaimed and the Anunnaki kiss the ground."<sup>5</sup> In the nin-me-sar-ra<sup>6</sup> hymn to Inanna, it says:

<sup>1</sup>Rawlinson, SMIWA, IV:21, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Seux, HPDBA, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>Anu Bel surbu zikirka <sup>d</sup>I-gi-gi kullassunu maharka [kam]su <sup>d</sup>A-nun-naki ilanu rabûtu [mah]arka nadu. O. R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein, The Sultantepe Tablets I, No. 56:10-13.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted by S. H. Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian Religion (London: Hutchinson's University History, 1953), p. 53, hereafter BAsRe.

<sup>5</sup>ka-um-tam a-mat-ka ina šami-e i-zak-kar-ma iluIgi-gi ap-pa i-lab-bi-nu. ka-a-tam a-mat-ka ina irši-tim i-zak-kar-ma iluA-nun-na-ki ka-ka-ru u-na-ša-ku. S. Langdon, Babylonian Penitential Psalms (Paris: Librairie Orientalis-

"How supreme you are over the great gods, the Anunna! The Anunnaki kiss the ground with their lips (in obeisance) to you."<sup>1</sup> Likewise in a psalm addressed to Enlil it is said: ". . . at the mention of his holy name . . . the Igigi bow their faces At the mention of his holy name the Anunnaki kiss the earth."<sup>2</sup>

A similar picture is depicted in the En el myth where it describes the reverence given to Marduk by these gods as he enters to the divine assembly:

Assembled were the Igigi, they prostrated  
before him altogether.  
As many as they were, the Anunnaki kissed

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te Paul Geuthner, 1927), p. 9, IV R.9:57-59, hereafter BPP.

<sup>6</sup>nin-me-šar-ra is an epithet of Inanna and means "Lady of all the me's (divine attributes)." This is the starting word of a hymn of exaltation to Inanna, authored by Enheduana who was the daughter of Sargon and the high priestess (en) of the moongod Nanna of Ur. See William W. Hallo and J. J. A. van Dijk, The Exaltation of Inanna (London: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 1-5, 48-50, 74), hereafter ExIn. In the myth of "Inanna and Enki: The transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech," the term me's is referred to be the divine laws that govern mankind and all his institutions. See Kramer, Sumerians, pp. 116-117, 160-162.

<sup>1</sup>da-nun-na dingir-gal-gal-la-e-ne a-gim ba-e-ne-dig-ga. <sup>d</sup>a-nun-na-ke-ne nundum-nundum-bi-ta ki-su-ub ma-ra-ka-ne. Hallo-van Dijk, ExIn xiv:115-116. In another passage of the same hymn speaking of the fear of these gods for this high goddess it says: nin-mu <sup>d</sup>a-nun-na din-gir-gal-gal-e-ne. su-din <sup>m</sup>sen-a-dal-a-gim du-de mu-e-si-ba-ras, "Oh my lady, the Anunna, the great gods, fluttering like bats fly off from before you to the clefts." Ibid., v:34-35.

<sup>2</sup>. . . a-na zi-kir šūmi-šu el-li [. . . ilu]Igigi ap-pa i-lab-bi-nu [a-na zi-ki šūmi-šu el-li ilu]A-nun-na-ki] kak-ka-ru u-na-aš-ša-ku. S. Langdon, BPP, p. 16, IV R. 27, No. 2.

his feet;  
 [They came] in their entirety to pay  
 reverence, and  
 Stood [before him, did obeisance, (saying)  
 'King he is indeed!'<sup>1</sup>

The texts also mention the fear and reverence that fall upon them in the presence of the deity or even at the mention of his name. This is clear from a hymn addressed to Sin, where it says: "The gods tremble like grass, the Anunnaki are shaking."<sup>2</sup> Also in a "lifting hand" prayer addressed to Ishtar it says: "When your name is mentioned, heaven and earth moves, the gods tremble, the Anunnaki gods are shaking."<sup>3</sup> In a stela inscription dedicated to Ninlil, it says: ". . . At your mention the Igigi tremble, the Anunnaki fall back."<sup>4</sup>

The fear and exalted reverence of the Ig and the An gods given to the leader god by no means deny their par-

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<sup>1</sup>[pa]h-ru-ma d'igigi ka-li-su-nu us-ki-nu-us. [d]a-nun-na-ki ma-la ba-su-u u--na-as-sa-qu GIR<sup>II</sup>.MES-su. [x x x]- ma pu-hur-šu-nu la-ba-nis ap-pi. [ma-ri-is]u i-zi-zu ik-nu-su an-na-ma LUGAL. Landsberger, Kinnier, and Wilson, "The Fifth Tablet," pp. 162, 163.

<sup>2</sup>ilāni kima<sup>meš</sup> [qa]ne(GI) i-sub-bu i-na-ar-ru-tu d'a-nun-na-ki. W. Röllig, "Erwägungen zu neuen Stellen König Nabonids," *ZA* 56 (1964):222, col. II. 41.

<sup>3</sup>a-na hi-is-sati šu-me-ki šamū(ú) u ir-si-tim(tim) i-ru-ub-bu ilāni(meš) i-ru-bu i-nar-ru-tu d'a-nun-na-ki. Ebeling, *Handerhebung*, pp. 130-131, ls. 20-21. See also E. Reiner, "The Great Prayer to Ishtar and Its Two Versions from Bogazköy," *JCS* 21 (1967):257-262.

<sup>4</sup>Seux, *HPDBA*, p. 502.

icipation in the deliberations of the assembly. On the contrary, they are able to talk with the deity in an appropriate way. This can be seen in the dialog that followed the victory of Marduk over Tiamat in the Enuma elish myth:

Marduk assembled the great gods,  
ordering (them) kindly (and) giving  
instructions.  
The gods pay attention to his word,  
. . .the king addresses a word to the  
Anunnaki. . .  
The Igigi, the great gods answered him . . .  
The Anunnaki opened their mouths  
and said to Marduk their Lord . . .<sup>1</sup>

All of this is carried on with the approbation of the chief deity: "When Marduk heard this, his countenance shone exceedingly [lik]e the day."<sup>2</sup>

From the hymns it also becomes evident that the Ig and An had an intercessory role in the divine assembly towards the principal deities from whom the worshipers are seeking divine favor. This belief would perhaps be to the fact that they were also considered as "the great gods" and their role of determinants of fate in the divine assembly is occasionally mentioned. A hymn addressed to Sin says:

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<sup>1</sup>Heidel, BG, pp. 46-47 (VI:17-20, 27, 47-48).  
(il)marduk u-pa-aḥ-ḥi-ir ilu rabûti. ṭa-bi-iš u-ma-'-ru i-nam-din te-er-ti. e-ep-šu pi-i-šu ilu u-paq-qu-ta. šarru a-na (il)a-nun-na-ki a-ma-tum i-zak-kar. . . i-pu-lu-šu-ma (il)i-gi-gi ilū rabûti. . .(il)a-nun-na-ki pa-a-šu-nu i-pu-šu-ma. a-na (il)marduk be-el-šu-nu šu-nu iz-zak-ka-ru. PBC, VI.17-20, 27, 47-48.

<sup>2</sup>Heidel, BG, p. 43 (VI.55-56). (il)marduk an-ni-tu ina še-me-e-šu. ki-ma u-mu im-me-ru zi-mu-šu ma-'a-diš. PBC VI. 42-43).

"The Igigi (may they say to thee): O Lord (be appeased).  
The Anunnaki (may they say to thee): O Lord (be appeased)."<sup>1</sup>

#### Other Minor Deities

Besides these gods, there still remain another multitude of other lesser deities whose functions are almost as varied as their number. There were the boundary gods, who were believed to have exclusive charge of the boundaries,<sup>2</sup> and the gods of the fine arts and offices.<sup>3</sup> Besides these there were the physician deities<sup>4</sup> and the

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<sup>1</sup>E. G. Perry, Hymnen und Gebete an Sin (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup>Notwithstanding that Ea was considered as the god of the fine arts, he had under his command lesser deities who acted as supervisors of the offices that were under his jurisdiction. As Jastrow says, "The very names of these deities point to their functions. Nin-igi-nangar-bu is the 'lord who presides over metal-workers'; Gush-gin-banda, 'brilliant-chief,' is evidently the patron of those skilled in the working of the bright metals; Nin-kurra, 'lord of mountain,' the patron of those that quarried the stones; while Nin-zadin is the patron of sculpture." ReBAs, p. 178.

<sup>4</sup>Well known is the physician character of such gods as Ea, Marduk, Nabu, Ningishzida, and others. Albert S. Lyons and R. Joseph Petrucelli, Medicine: An Illustrated History (New York: August Pries, 1914), p. 63. Ea is the god who is portrayed as the benefactor god par excellence. In every great calamity that would afflict mankind he seeks to change the evil plans of their fellow great gods, or counsels men to avoid it. He is the god of the physicians, and under his domain are many deities to help him in matters of health. However, suffering men usually appeal to him as a last resort to be released from their maladies. His closest helper was Marduk, his son, through whom Ea was ultimately appealed to (King, BRM, pp. 207-208). Also the goddess Gula stands out as one of the most popular of his

amanuensis gods.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, there were the interpreter deities,<sup>2</sup> etc., who were also involved in the affairs of mankind alongside the great gods.

All these references show that the concept of the celestial court in Mesopotamian thinking was not a static mass or conglomerate, but a very dynamic host which functioned under the leadership of high deities. Its members

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helpers among the lesser gods. Particularly during Nebuchadnezzar I's days, her role was that of 'lifegiver,' and thus she was called 'the great physician' responsible for the preservation of the body from sickness and disease by the 'touch of her hand.' As a powerful deity she could employ her powers for evil as well as for good. For this reason she also was requested to strike the enemies with blindness. Jastrow, ReBAs, pp. 138, 175.

<sup>1</sup>The deity who was counted as responsible for written matters was Nabu, the son of Marduk. As "creator of writing," he was the writer par excellence and "lord of the pen." Nabu recorded the decrees of his father and exerted his office, especially on the day of the New Year, when the gods determined in the puhur ilāni the destiny of man. This god was also believed to be related to the power of healing because of the control that he exercised over the lives of men when he was acting as divine scribe. E. Dhorme, Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1945), p. 52, hereafter LRBA; Luckenbill, ARAB, I. 824, p. 295. Gudea also mentions the goddess Nizaba as a writer deity who has in her hand the tablets of good omen. F. Thureau-Danguin, SAKI, p. 95, Gudea cylinder A5, 22-25.

<sup>2</sup>Gudea refers to a dream that he had in which he saw a young woman holding a pure stylus in one hand and in the other the tablet of a good (propitious) star. His dream was interpreted by the goddess Nina (Nanshe), who told him that the young woman was the goddess Nisaba, and it was she who would indicate to him the "pure star of the building of the temple." In fact Gudea also mentions that Nina is the interpreter of the gods. Thureau-Danguin, SAKI, pp. 90-93, Gudea Cylinder A2 1-2, A3 25-28, A4 12-13; also M. Lambert and R. Tournay, "Le Cylindre A de Gudea," RB 55 (1948):409-410.

acted in an orderly fashion and carried out specific missions in accordance with the directions of the godhead.

The Constituency of the Ugaritic  
Celestial Council

Ugaritic mythology basically suggests a similar composite heavenly council<sup>1</sup> but with a more authoritative leadership, and with some members of the council who had practically no active role within the council itself.<sup>2</sup>

Textual evidence shows that within the Ugaritic pantheon there existed divisions and a hierarchy. That is, the *phr m<sup>e</sup>d* was the "assembly body"<sup>3</sup> and within it were included the companies of the gods who were closely related to some major divinity. So there were the *dr il* or *dr bn il* (CCTA 15. II.7,11) who were the deities related to El.

There were also the *bn qdš*, "sons of holiness," that would be related to Attart or simply would have been another way to refer to the *sb<sup>e</sup>m bn atrt*, "the seventy sons of Attart" (CCTA 4. VI.46).<sup>4</sup> El and Attart were parents of

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<sup>1</sup>John Macdonald, "An Assembly at Ugarit?" *UF* 11 (1979):525.

<sup>2</sup>*DCC*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>As Ginsberg translates, *ANET*, p. 130. Another term of similar use and meaning for the assembly of the gods is *cdt ilim*, "the council/congregation of the gods."

<sup>4</sup>This in accordance with the name of the goddess Attart who also is called *Qds*. In *KTU* 1.17 I 26-27 and par., these gods are also called *sph ltpn wqdš*, "progeny of Ltp and Qdš." This could mean that although the divine head-couple parented all the gods, some of them had a closer relationship with him or her so that they were



the ilm rbm, "the great gods,"<sup>1</sup> who obviously were those who had outstanding roles such as Baal, Anat, Yamm, Mot, Shapash, etc. Around each one of these great divinities was attached a cadre of minor deities who served them in a variety of different functions, such as the ḡlmm, "pages," or "attendants"; the mlakm, "messengers"; t<sup>c</sup>dr, the "helpers"; the mhr, "warriors"; and the ktrt, "skillful ones."<sup>2</sup> It is now known<sup>3</sup> that the Ugaritian heavenly population was composed of the bn ilm, the mtm, and the rp'im, and that all these celestial entities constituted the mt šmm, the servants or the helpers of the gods; and mainly those gods were El on one side and Baal on the other.<sup>4</sup>

In this way, El is mentioned with the sons of his palace and also with his family.<sup>5</sup> Attart is accompanied by

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called in this particular way.

<sup>1</sup>The Ugaritic textual mention of the ilm rbm, "the great gods," is scarce but eloquent. See C. Virolleaud, *Ug* 5, p. 564, No. 6, lns. 1-2 (RS 24.272), pp. 574-580, lns. 26, 31 (RS 24.251), and M. Astour, "Two Ugaritic Serpent Charms," *JNES* 27 (1968):13-36; also *MRS* 2, p. 90. lns. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>The diversity of functions not only is determined by the variety of terminology employed to designate these lesser servant deities, but above all the variety of meaning in each term.

<sup>3</sup>Cunchillos, "Le dieu Mut, guerrier de El," *Syr* 62 (1985):205-218.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup>*CCTA* 18.I.6-12; 15.III.19; 22.17, 25, 34; 30.3.

her sons and the clan of her kindred.<sup>1</sup> It is also known that Baal had--besides his two messengers<sup>2</sup>--a number of deities acting as his attendants. Typical of these are the *sb't ǧlmh*,<sup>3</sup> who also are paralleled by the *tmn hnzr*, or the "warriors."<sup>4</sup> Anat also had her *mhr* "warriors" by her side.<sup>5</sup> In the same way, it seems that Mot had a similar force responding with him in his confrontation with Baal.<sup>6</sup> Yamm, on his part, had special messengers.<sup>7</sup> It would be

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<sup>1</sup>*atrt.wbnh.ilt.wsbrt.arhh*, "Attart and her children, 'Elat and the clan of her kindred" (KTU 1.3 V 36-39; CTCA 6.I.40-41).

<sup>2</sup>See below, p. 238, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup>who were perhaps his special body guard of warriors, which are called *sb't ǧlmh*, "the seven attendants" (CTCA VI.8; 5.V.8-9). These seven attendant gods are parallel to *tmn hnz*, as "warriors" (CTCA 3.II.4).

<sup>4</sup>Especially Baal is thought to have had under his command an imprecise number of deities which in principle are part of a military group. Miller, DWEI, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>CCTA 22.3, 9. Although the war actions of this goddess are generally mentioned as individual combats, the mention of these entities gives some indication of a group of warrior gods accompanying her.

<sup>6</sup>A. S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen: A. E. Gad, 1952), p. 109, n. 4, hereafter BIRS. The text (CCTA 6.VI.10-11) is in broken condition, but at least it makes reference to the brothers of Mot.

<sup>7</sup>These messengers are sent by Yamm to the assembled gods demanding the surrender of Baal.

natural to assume that he also had a similar retinue of deities attending him as his regular forces.

It is the Keret epic which portrays the divine council in situations most like the Mesopotamian concept of the celestial assembly.<sup>1</sup> Six major deities are named as coming down to the meeting place to deliberate about the progeny of Keret,<sup>2</sup> but the rest of the deities are not named. In the second reference to the assembly, when the gods are reunited to deliberate about the health of Keret,<sup>3</sup> El appears surrounded by the totality of gods without giving their names. The retinue of deities can only be identified as the hosts of El, which included the principal gods plus the host of peripheral deities of the Ugaritic pantheon.<sup>4</sup> Some texts mention the existence of other groups of divinities like the *rpum*, already mentioned,<sup>5</sup> and the *mlkm*.<sup>6</sup> The different parallels between the *rpum* and the *ilym*,<sup>7</sup> as well as the divine determinative connected

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 54-57.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 55, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup>See above, pp. 56-57.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes C. de Moor, "The Semitic Pantheon of Ugarit," *UF* 2 (1960):216.

<sup>5</sup>See above, pp. 56-58.

<sup>6</sup>*CTA* 29 rev. 11; de Moor, *UF* 2 (1970):309.

<sup>7</sup>See above, pp. 54-57.

with mlkm,<sup>1</sup> puts them clearly in the divine realm of the celestial assembly. Although the rpm appear as part of the chariot hosts of Baal and Anat,<sup>2</sup> they also appear to be related in the same way to Shapshu since in the Shapshu Hymn<sup>3</sup> the rp'um appear to be ruled by Shapshu.

It also should be mentioned that there are some references that connect these deities--the rp'um--with the affairs of the underworld.<sup>4</sup> From this some have suggested they have a probable connection with the Mesopotamian An gods.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Heavenly Council in the Mesopotamian Iconography

Mesopotamian representations of the different gods are numerous. Especially are the great gods repeatedly portrayed in religious art. Along with all these representations there is at least one seal that is thought to portray a scene of the gods in their assembly.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>dMA.LIK.MES=mlkm. Uq 5, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 57-58.

<sup>3</sup>CTA 6 VI., 40ff.

<sup>4</sup>J. Nougayrol, Uq 5, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>John F. Healey, "Malk: Mlkm: Anunnaki," UF 7 (1975): 235-238.

<sup>6</sup>Leon Legrain, The Culture of Babylon from Their Seals in the Collection of the Museum (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1925), pp. 194-195. Hereafter CBSCM.

The scene, although incomplete and defaced, comes from a seal impression on a fragment of a clay bulla found at Nippur. The mythological scene is displayed in two registers. The upper part depicts an assembly of seated gods who number five and they are attended by three divine assistants. One of the assistants, a goddess, appears in the scene as seated on the lap of another god--perhaps the leader. All the gods are dressed with the flounced Sumerian skirts and they wear horned caps, characteristic of the iconographical divine representations.<sup>1</sup> In addition

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<sup>1</sup>Henri Frankfort, Cylinder Seals. A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), pp. 22-23, hereafter CS. Frankfort points out that the anthropomorphic conception of the Mesopotamian gods in iconography makes it extremely difficult to distinguish them from human unless one takes the horned feature as basic for a possible distinction between them. Although Carney S. Gavin thinks that the horned attire used as a basic criterion for determining whether a figure represents a divine or a human being still remains but as a working hypothesis ("The Glyptic Art of Syria-Palestine" [Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1973], p. 3). It seems that this distinctive horned characteristic started--according to H. W. F. Saggs, The Greatness That Was Babylon (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), p. 184, hereafter GWB--around the so-called Jemdet Nasr period (ca. 2900 B.C.), and--as Frankfort also points out--so remained as a distinctive divine attribute throughout ancient history. Van Buren also remarks that the horned attire was pre-eminently a divine prerogative, since in contradistinction to the headdress of men the gods wore on their heads a horned cap, which "was above all a symbol of divinity and lordship." E. Douglas Van Buren, "Concerning the Horned Cap of the Mesopotamian Gods," Or 12 (1943):318. Likewise Agnès Spycket properly remarks that among the attributes that allows the identification of the divinity, the most characteristic is the horned tiara, which remains the same for both male and female deities. "La coiffure féminine en Mésopotamie des origines à la 1<sup>re</sup> dinastie de Babylone," RA 49 (1955):118. It should be noted that horned divine representations are just coincident with textual references to

one deity is winged<sup>1</sup> and another holds a spouting vase.<sup>2</sup> The lower register presents a god--apparently seated--who is approached by a procession of persons in which two bird-men stand facing each other carrying two weapons each, one on each shoulder. Of the male figures, the one facing the god seems to be leading the procession, while the remaining three seem to be carrying a bunch of fruit (Fig. 1).

This artistic composition portrays, at least in broad outline, some of the members of the divine assembly as winged deities.<sup>3</sup> The seated position is adopted by the

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the gods as being horned. In a prayer to Enlil he is depicted as possessing horns that "gleam like the rays of the sungod." Langdon, BPP, p. 17.

<sup>1</sup>The concept of wings as a sign of participation in the divine, or simply as sign of spirituality, was very old. Winged deities are also a repeated motif in the art representations of the ANE. See William Hayes Ward, The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia (Washington, D. C.: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1910), hereafter SCWA; H. Frankfort, The Art and the Architecture of the Ancient Orient (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), hereafter AAAO.

<sup>2</sup>The spouting vase is another characteristic motif represented in the iconography of Mesopotamia. The flowing vase is the symbol of Enki (Ea), and also of abundance. The two streams may represent the two mayor rivers of Mesopotamia, the Euphrates and the Tigris. See SCWA, pp. 216-218.

<sup>3</sup>From Mesopotamian art it is clear that winged gods and goddesses were known from very early times. The idea of winged deities was especially represented in Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources. Canaanite material in this respect is mostly related to late material traced to Greek sources (W. F. Albright, Archaeology and Religion of Israel [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1924], pp. 68-71). Ugaritians were not unaware of this concept. Although on one hand Ugaritic mythological texts seem to have but little evidence of it (F. C. Fensham, "Winged Gods and Goddesses

gods when they assemble to judge or feast or be served by their attendants in their meetings.<sup>1</sup> The throne may be also an indication of kingship among the represented gods.

A more complete scene is registered in an Akkadian seal cylinder<sup>2</sup> that represents a reunion of a diversity of winged composite creatures evidently belonging to the heavenly realm (Fig. 2). Among them, it seems that the supreme deity comes to the place of reunion riding on his sacred beast, which is a winged dragon with tail and feet of a bird, and moves spitting out fire. The godhead wields a sickle sword and thunderbolts as weapons. The other

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in the Ugaritic Tablets," *OrAnt* 5 [1956]:158), on the other hand iconographical representations of Ashera and Anat as winged deities exist. See W. A. Ward, "La déesse nourricière d'Ugarit," *Syr* 46 (1969):225-239; C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ug* 2 (1949):41, fig. 14. As for the Hittites, the concept of winged deities is also quite well represented. See H. G. Güterbock, "Recueil des sceaux et cylindres hittites imprimés sur les tablettes des archives du palais de Ras Shamra," *Ug* 3 (1956]:1-163, figs. 54-57, 81-82; D. S. Hogarth, *Hittite Seals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 195, pl. VII.195; Margaret Riemsneider, *Die Welt der Hethiter* (Stuttgart: Gustav Kilper Verlag, 1954), pp. 80, 241-243, figs 37, 42, 44, 50.

<sup>1</sup>The seated-deities motif is very common elsewhere in the mythical literature and iconographical representations all over the ANE. The position may be an indication of the importance and the rank of the entity represented in this way. For seated deities see Ward, *SCWA*, pp. 108-122, 239-247, 293-295.

<sup>2</sup>Edith Porada, "Remarks on Mitannian (hurrian) and Middle Assyrian Glyptic Art," *Akk* 13:1979.

deities are conspicuously winged, with anthropomorphic features as well as other animal characteristics, and both male and female.

Another good Mesopotamian representation of the assembled gods is the neo-Assyrian bas-relief of Maltaya.<sup>1</sup> The engraved figures represent seven deities in procession, moving toward the left and riding on the backs of their sacred animals.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the king is depicted at both extremes, praying in standing position<sup>3</sup> and with his right hand upraised<sup>4</sup> to the seven gods (Fig. 3). Two of the animals seem to be winged.

It is noticeable that only one goddess appears seated on a throne and this throne is adorned with hybrid beings such as human-faced griffins, scorpion men, etc.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F. Thureau-Dangin, "Les sculptures rupestres de Maltai," RA 21 (1924):185-197, André Parrot, Assur (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1969), pp. 71, 73.

<sup>2</sup>Hugo Gressmann, Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament (Berlin: Verlag W. de Gruyter & Co., 1927), p. 96, hereafter ABAT.

<sup>3</sup>S. Langdon mentions that in the Babylonian religion, the standing position was the only strict posture for prayer (Babylonian Penitential Psalms [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1927], p. 2, n. 13).

<sup>4</sup>This gesture of the upraised hand is universally accepted as a symbol of invocation to deities, whether attesting an oath or offering a prayer or supplication. This act is explicitly mentioned in the texts as the form to express prayers. Leonard W. King, Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, being "The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand" (London: Luzac and Co., 1896), p. xi, hereafter BMS.

<sup>5</sup>ABAT, p. 96.



The seven gods here might have some relationship with the *ilu simati*, which are always mentioned as being seven in number.<sup>1</sup> So it is possible to suggest that the Maltayan bas-relief perhaps portrays the supplication of the king before the assembly of the *ilu simati* in behalf of his whole nation.<sup>2</sup>

Glyptic representations of assembled gods of the Mesopotamian area are common. The variety of motifs and their skillfull portrayals undoubtedly reflect their understanding of the celestial realm that was rooted in preceding and contemporary myths. In a Sargonic cylinder seal<sup>3</sup> there appears to be represented a scene in which the gods are engaged in a building activity. It has been suggested that this seal illustrates the final scenes from the *Enuma elish* myth when the gods erected a sanctuary in gratitude to Marduk.<sup>4</sup> The scene portrays the An gods as masons devoted to their building enterprise (Fig. 4). They appear making mud-bricks and mortar and carrying it up

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Thureau-Dangin, based on lists of the Assyrian gods from Sargonic times, concludes that the gods represented in Maltaya are: Assur, Ninlil, Enlil, Sin, Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar. He also recognizes Sennacherib as the monarch responsible for the sculpture. *RA* 22, pp. 192-197.

<sup>3</sup>Frankfort, *CS* pl. XXIIk; Rainer Michael Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), pl. XXIX, 353, hereafter *EGAZ*.

<sup>4</sup>Dietrich Opitz, "Studien zur altorientalischen Kunst," *AfO* 6 (1930):61-62.

through a ladder. On the top of the building one god receives the mortar, while the other catches the bricks that are being thrown up by another deity standing on the ground.<sup>1</sup>

Among the seals supposedly devoted to Ishtar, Ward<sup>2</sup> mentions one which portrays five goddesses, among whom there appears a nude hero presenting an animal--perhaps a lamb or a kid--in offering. The goddess to whom the offering is presented has a nude torso and wears a long striped skirt which differs from the others. She also appears standing on two animals which are not identifiable. One of the goddesses is depicted in profile and with both hands raised. The others are all depicted from the front (Fig. 5). Four goddesses are dressed with flounced garments and one holds a forked rod with her right hand.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The scene easily recalls this passage of the Enuma elish: *ilu*A-nun-na-ki id-ru-ki al-lu šat-tu iš-ta-at li-bit-ta-šu [il-bi-nu] ša-ni-tu šattu ina ka-ša-di ša É-sag-ila mi-ih-rit apsi . . . ana *ilu*Marduk . . . bita-šu ú-kin-nu šub-tam. "The Anunnaki gods seized the pickaxe; for one year they were making its bricks. When the second year arrived they raised the top of Esagila . . . for Marduk . . . they established his temple as his abode." Langdon, BEC VI:46-48.

<sup>2</sup>SCWA, No. 418a. The seal is presently found at the Hermitage of St. Petersburg.

<sup>3</sup>The identity of these female deities as well as the meaning of the scene in connection with the male figure remains unknown. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Another cylinder belonging to the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris<sup>1</sup> portrays a group of eight deities (Fig. 6). An enthroned god appears to hold a notched sword in his right hand. He is dressed with flounced skirt and is also depicted as a flaming being. As he waits seated, seven similar deities approach him. All of them wear striped skirts,<sup>2</sup> and the one next to the enthroned one holds a staff. The meaning of the scene as well as the identification of the seven deities remains unknown.

Another Akkadian seal contains a scene of six assembled deities (Fig. 7). The godhead who is radiant appears enthroned, and being assisted by a god--carved in smaller proportions--with flowing streams. The other gods are standing before him, and the one who apparently leads them is also a radiant one. This scene has also been interpreted as "an awe-inspiring glimpse of powerful gods participating in a divine council."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, SCWA, No. 272; Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XXXVII, 440; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. VIII, 72.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Sauren, "Die Kleidung der Götter," Visible Religion. Annual for Religious Iconography, vol. 2., Representations of the Gods (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), p. 97-98, fig. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Williams Forte, Ancient Near Eastern Seals: A Selection of Stamp and Cylinder Seals from the Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore (n.p.: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), p. 13, no. 19.

An Anatolian cylinder seal portrays a divine libation scene (Fig. 8).<sup>1</sup> The enthroned god holds a goblet. Behind him a winged dragon is standing on its hind legs. A radiant god approaches the seated god with raised hand. Behind him stands nude a bull-man with flowing streams from its shoulders.

Yet another Mesopotamian seal portrays a group of five gods of diverse appearance.<sup>2</sup> The scene is interpreted as the liberation of the Sun-god from his grave.<sup>3</sup> In the center a god emerges from a mountain. He is depicted as a flaming being and he holds a saw with his right hand (Fig. 9). The god Ea stands at his right side in company with Umsu, his two-faced divine attendant. At the left side, standing on the mountain, a winged goddess is depicted with flames projecting from her shoulders like those of the Sun-god. At the extreme left, a god stands holding a bow and arrow. He is accompanied by a roaring lion.

Among the portrayals of some of the divine characters in the Mesopotamian pantheon, the anonymous four-faced

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<sup>1</sup>Nimet Özgüç, Kültepe Mühür Baskılarında Anadolu Grubu. The Anatolian Group of Cylinder Seal Impressions from Kültepe (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1965), p. 75, pl. II, 5.

<sup>2</sup>See Frankfort, SC pl. XIXa; Christian Zervos, L'art de la Mésopotamie: De la fin du quatrième millénaire au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère (Paris: Cahiers d'Art, 1935), p. 258.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-107. Porada, AAS, p. 57, fig. II-14.

gods and goddesses of the Babylonian pantheon may be mentioned.<sup>1</sup> They became known after some bronze statues were recovered from the Diyala region.<sup>2</sup> These gods differ from Umsu, the two-faced minister of Ea (Fig. 12), in having four faces instead of two (Figs. 10 and 11).<sup>3</sup> The god is represented as standing and placing his left foot upon his attribute--the ram--and in addition, he holds a sword in his right hand.<sup>4</sup> The goddess, also four-faced, is seated and holds with both hands a flowing vase from which streams are going down on either side.<sup>5</sup> A comparison of some of the artistic characteristics portrayed in these figures indicates that they present some similarities with deities represented either in the Old Babylonian fashion--dated from the time of Hammurabi--<sup>6</sup> or in the Canaanite style.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>André Parrot, Babylon and the Old Testament (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 136-137.

<sup>2</sup>Henri Frankfort, More Sculptures from the Diyala Region (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Anton Moortgat, The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia (London: Phaidon, 1969), figs. 216, 217, hereafter AAM.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>6</sup>Frankfort, More Sculptures from Diyala, p. 21. Moortgat is of the opinion that both four-faced deities were probably a pair, and both might be dated "to the period of Ishchali, that is to say, in the period of Old Babylon." AAM, p. 88.

<sup>7</sup>It is Moortgat who sees that these gods "have several details which seem Canaanite-Syrian." AAM, p. 88-89.

The Heavenly Council in Hittite  
Iconography

The Hittite glyptic also illustrates some scenes of gods in meetings. A cylinder seal<sup>1</sup> which Ward interprets as containing a scene of judgment<sup>2</sup> depicts some celestial and underworld deities in two registers (Fig. 13). In the upper register, a seated deity who holds a flowing vase awaits seven approaching personages. The one who stands before him is a two-faced deity,<sup>3</sup> and he has one hand lifted towards the seated deity and the other toward a human figure who is standing with lifted hands. Next to these are the other gods or divine attendants who stand by with a reverent attitude. The last figure is a goddess with both hands lifted who approaches the seated god. The lower register supposedly portrays a scene of the netherworld. A human figure--perhaps a deified king--stands before a palm tree which is guarded by a kneeling demon. Behind them appear three composite creatures, two of which are winged.

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<sup>1</sup>Félix Lajard, Introduction à l'étude du culte public et des mystères de Mithra en orient et en occident (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1847), pl. XXIX, 1, hereafter Mythra; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. XXIX, 425.

<sup>2</sup>William H. Ward, "Hittite Gods in Hittite Art," AJA 3 (1899):34, fig. 49.

<sup>3</sup>The two-faced attendant deity motif is also found in early Babylonian seals. Ward, SCWA, p. 80.

A seal belonging to the Louvre<sup>1</sup> portrays a procession of five deities marching from left to right into the presence of an enthroned god (Fig. 14). The scene has some similarities with the relief of Malthaya (Fig. 3),<sup>2</sup> since all the deities are depicted as riding on the backs of their sacred beasts.

Another cylinder now in the Louvre, coming originally from Lydia,<sup>3</sup> apparently portrays a scene of celebration (Fig. 15). There, a Hittite god appears seated on a high-backed throne. Before him are two upright lions who sustain some objects which are not readily identifiable. Then follows a two-faced divine attendant who holds a vessel in the right hand and a cross in the left. He is followed by three warrior deities with pointed and horned helmets.<sup>4</sup> All of them carry the Hittite trumpet and a short spear. Behind the seated god another scene is depicted in which a seated goddess appears. She is assisted by a winged being on each side. Behind them an anthropomor-

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Delaporte, CCOL, pl. A, no. 868.

<sup>2</sup>The Malthayan divine procession is believed to be traced back to an Anatolian influence. Specifically the reliefs from Yazilikaya (Figs. 23-28) are indicated as the roots for this iconographic displayed motif. See Sabino Moscatti, Historical Art in the Ancien Near East (Rome: Centro di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1963), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup>L. Messerschmidt, "Corpus inscriptionum Hettiticarum," Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft 5 (1900):I:45-46, hereafter MVAG; Sébastien Ronzevalle, "Le cylindre Tyszkiewicz," MUSJ 12 (1927):179.

<sup>4</sup>Ronzevalle, "Le cylindre Tyszkiewicz," p. 184.

phic figure raises his hands in the middle of a stream. Before him stands another attendant who seems to be holding a flowing vase, and between them appears a crescent.

Another cylinder belonging to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts has a very similar scene.<sup>1</sup> Again an enthroned deity is attended by an assistant. Between them two upright lions hold a boat-shaped figure. Behind the two-faced entity three deities approach bearing a short dagger and the Hittite trumpet (Fig. 16). The cylinder also depicts a second scene. At the center a human figure is lying on a table. From his body tongues of fire seem to emanate. At the head of the table a female attendant stands with lifted hands while a male attendant is standing at the foot. A naked figure is depicted behind the female assistant as bowing with lifted hands, while another naked figure follows him. Behind the male attendant there appears a victorious god who tramples an enemy with his foot and a spear. Closing the scene a goddess appears above a lion and a bull.<sup>2</sup> The whole scene has been inter-

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<sup>1</sup>S. Reinach, "Cylindre hittite de la collection du comte Tyszkievick," *RA* (1898):421-423, pl. IX; See also Ronzevalle, "L'iconographie du cylindre Yzskiewicz," *MUSJ* 15 (1931):261-280, pls. XLVI, XLVII.

<sup>2</sup>Douglas van Buren, "The Rain Goddess as Represented in Early Mesopotamia," *SBO* 12 (1959):351.



preted as the celebration of the victory of the Storm-god<sup>1</sup> and also as "depicting a rain-making or fertility rite."<sup>2</sup>

A cylinder seal which Porada dates in the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C.<sup>3</sup> depicts a procession of deities but without a definite objective.<sup>4</sup> Among these marching deities appears a goddess (identified as Shaushga) who advances with lifted hands, holding a vase with her left hand, and wearing a bordered mantle opened in the front revealing her nudity. The other marching gods are dressed with short kilts of different design. All these deities wear horned helmets, but one wears a flat helmet instead of a cone-shaped one like those of the others. All the gods hold their weapons, but each differs from the others (Fig. 17). One raises his right hand holding a javelin in a menacing way, while his extended left hand holds a crooked staff and a gazelle. A winged disk appears over the head of the god wearing a flat helmet. Behind him

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<sup>1</sup>A. Vanel, L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage dans le Proche-Orient ancien jusqu'au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C. (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Editeurs, 1965), pp. 94-96.

<sup>2</sup>Van Buren, "The Rain Goddess," p. 351.

<sup>3</sup>E. Porada, "The Cylinder Seals Found at Thebes in Boeotia," AfO 28 (1981-82):49.

<sup>4</sup>Porada also notes that a typical feature in some glyptic Hittite representations is a procession without a definitive objective. *Ibid.*, p. 47. This feature is distinctively seen in sealings of the Anatolian group published by N. Özgüç, The Anatolian Group, nos. 19, 24, 66.

appears a star. Also behind him, in smaller proportions, appears a seated god in a fisherman's position. The identity of the gods as well as the scene that they represent is not known.

Still another cylinder, which presently is in the Louvre,<sup>1</sup> also bears a Hittite cast, depicting a combined scene resembling a diversity of entities pertaining to the divine realm. The seal is divided into two registers, the upper border being a series of human heads in profile looking to the left. The lower is bordered with recumbent stags alternating with gazelles. The upper register portrays four male deities advancing toward a goddess who is frontal in position and is uncovering herself.<sup>2</sup> She looks towards the Storm-god who appears to be hastening in his chariot to join her. Immediately behind the god in the chariot there appears a seated griffin with raised forepaw. This is followed by a winged and bird-headed being who attends the god and pours libations from a large vessel which he holds with his right hand.<sup>3</sup> The extreme right

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<sup>1</sup>Parrot, "Cylindre Hittite nouvellement acquis (AO 20138)," *Syr* 28 (1951):180-190, pls. XII, XIV.

<sup>2</sup>Winter is of the opinion that the naked goddess is a deity native to Syria whose influence reached all over the ANE. Her popularity as an iconographic motif occurred in the first half of the second millennium and covered a varied spectrum of images within the religious concept of the ANE peoples. *Göttingen*, pp. 135, 193.

<sup>3</sup>Deities of bird-like mien were very common for Hittites as well as for Assyrians. Figs. 15, 13, 151, 184, 185, 188, 189 show this incidence in Anatolia, and figs.

ends with three figures which still appear to be moving toward the Storm-god. Behind the bird-like being, an anthropomorphic nude being creeps forward and is depicted as covered with long tongues of flame from his head to his shoulders (Fig. 18). Immediately behind him appears a mountain god emerging from a mountain--depicted as a conic heap of stones--who is followed by another mountain god. The lower register depicts a god on the back of a lion, who is followed by a sequence of four charioteers. The last chariot, however, is ridden by two.

Noticeable in this case is the flaming genius of the suite depicted in the upper register. This presents some similarity to another Hittite deity depicted in a fragmentary seal now found in the Walters Art Gallery (Fig. 19).<sup>1</sup> The central figure is a winged goddess who appears uncovered and is holding a double spear. On her right appears a god in a short kilt with one arm raised and another arm outstretched and surrounded in flames. Both deities have been paralleled to some Akkadian representations.<sup>2</sup> The winged goddess of the Akkadian version is

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119, 120, 144, 146, 151, 184, 185 are examples of the Assyrian side.

<sup>1</sup>Edith Porada, "Syrian Seal Impressions on Tablets Dated in the Time of Hammurabi and Samsu-Iluna," JNES 16 (1967):192-197, pl. XXX, 2; El-Safadi, "Syrischen Glyptik," UF 6:pl. XVI, 112.

<sup>2</sup>See SCWA, pp. 88-100, figs. 244-245, 247-248, 250-261, 270-282; CS pls. XVIII-XX.

Ishtar as warrior goddess,<sup>1</sup> and the flaming deity has been compared with certain Akkadian gods in flames.<sup>2</sup> Especially the Akkadian iconography portrays some principal deities such as Marduk, Ishtar, and Shamash as surrounded by flames or beams emanating from their bodies.<sup>3</sup> Rays issuing from the shoulders of the gods were a common feature on Sargonic seals.<sup>4</sup>

The scenes of both registers have been interpreted as a multifaceted representation of the encounter of the storm god Adad-Teshub--who is the rain-giver god--with the goddess of fertility, or the Mother earth.<sup>5</sup> The results of

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<sup>1</sup>M. T. Barrelet, "Les déesses armées et ailés," Syr 32 (1955):256-257. Hittite representations of Ishtar as a winged goddess are not uncommon (see Gurney, Some Aspects of Hittite Religion [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977], pl. IV, hereafter SAHR). As Garstang remarks, "winged deities in general are especially characteristic of Hittite art, and winged goddesses in particular" ("The Winged Deity and Other Sculptures of Malatia," AAA 6 [1914]: 117, pl. 28, figs. 2-3). Akkadian representation of Ishtar as winged goddess are also common (see Diane Wolkstein and S. N. Kramer, Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth [New York: Harper and Row, 1983], pp. 6, 51, 92).

<sup>2</sup>Parrot, Syr 28, p. 188, fig. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ward, SCWA, pp. 87-95, 96-101, 155-157.

<sup>4</sup>Frankfort, CS, p.112.

<sup>5</sup>On this symbolic encounter so represented, Amiet remarks, "On peut admettre que cela symbolise les eaux de la pluie suscitée par l'intervention du dieu, rejoignant les eaux des sources, pour féconder la déesse qui, en l'occurrence, personnifie la Terre fertile." Pierre Amiet, "Jalons pour une interprétation du repertoire des sceaux-cylindres syriens au IIe millénaire," Akk 28 (1982):30.

this meeting of fertility and fecundity are displayed in the second register.<sup>1</sup>

The variety of divine entities that constitute the Hittite pantheon have also been illustrated well by a block of seals discussed by Bossert.<sup>2</sup> In the flat face of the seals, eight gods are portrayed (Fig. 20), and among them appear bifront, winged, and hybrid deities.<sup>3</sup> Winged deities, such as that of Fig. 21 (from an orthostat discovered at Carchemish)<sup>4</sup> and mountain gods (Fig. 22) functioning as servants of major deities, are commonly mentioned and represented among the Hittites.

Interestingly enough, the Hittites have left the most outstanding representations of the assembled-gods motif. Among the most notable are those of the sanctuary

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<sup>1</sup>René Dussaud, Prelydiens, Hittites et Achéens (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1953), pp. 105-106.

<sup>2</sup>Helmuth Theodor Bossert, Janus und der Mann mit der Adler- oder Greifenmaske (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1959), pp. 2, 4, 6-7, pl. 1.2.

<sup>3</sup>Bossert interprets this seal group as a sequence of scenes of worship which start with the third--beginning from the left side--god and his worshiper. There follows scene 2 with the first god of the left extreme and the bird demon of the right extreme. The next scene is tied with the seventh figure and its worshiper, and ends with figures four and five. Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Leonard C. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, Carchemish. Report of the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1952), 3:241, pl. B.33a,b, hereafter Carchemish.

of Yazilikaya,<sup>1</sup> which has been dated not before 1400 B.C. but later, perhaps around 1270-1220 B.C.<sup>2</sup> At this place the rocky formations have shaped two natural chambers of different dimensions which were used as an open-air rock sanctuary.<sup>3</sup> On the walls of both galleries are carved in bas-relief the gods and the goddesses of the Hittite kingdom marching forward in procession.<sup>4</sup>

The larger chamber, which was the most holy place of the shrine,<sup>5</sup> is decorated on both side walls with sixty-one deities advancing in successive processions that con-

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<sup>1</sup>Yazilikaya--"sculptured stone" or "written stone" in the Turkish language--lies nearly two km. northeast of Hattusas--present Bogahzköy--the ancient capital city of the Hittites. The site, used as a principal shrine at the time of the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (1250-1220 BC), became known to modern civilization since 1834 when it was discovered by Charles Texier. See Kurt Bittel, Die Felsbilder von Yazilikaya, [Istambuler Forschungen 5] (Istanbul: Archäologischen Instituts des Deutschen Reiches, 1934):1-12, hereafter FeYa; idem, Die Hethiter (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1976), pp. 14, 134, 208, 359, hereafter DiHe; see also C. O. Ceram, The Secret of the Hittites. The Discovery of an Ancient Empire (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 8-13.

<sup>2</sup>Helmuth Th. Bossert, "Das hethitische Pantheon," AfO 8 (1932-33):298-302; Max Freiherrn von Oppenheim, "Imamkulu, ein neues subräisches Denkmal aus der Hettiter-Zeit in Kleinasien," AfO 11 (1936-37):346-348.

<sup>3</sup>To complete the scene the place was surrounded with a complex of temple buildings which were part of the whole sanctuary. The two galleries contain reliefs of the gods of the Hattic Empire. O. R. Gurney, The Hittites (Suffolk, Great Britain: Richard Clay and Company, 1961), p. 134.

<sup>4</sup>Bittel, DiHe, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

verge on the central point on a wall facing the entrance,<sup>1</sup> where the principal god and goddess--differentiated by position and size--meet standing in front of each other.<sup>2</sup> Facing the main scene at an angle near the right carved wall of the chamber is the relief of the Hittite king, also in large size, who is characterized as a god.<sup>3</sup> Behind the carving of the king and somehow outside of the main chamber, two winged demons facing each other guard the entrance of a narrow passage<sup>4</sup> which is connected with the smaller room.<sup>5</sup> More detailed descriptions of this "Assembly of all the gods"<sup>6</sup> are elsewhere given in books dealing with the Hittites.<sup>7</sup>

The left wall assembles forty-one deities which by turns could be divided into four groups. The whole line is

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<sup>1</sup>Gurney, Hittites, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>J. G. Macqueen, The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>Ekren Akurgal, Die Kunst der Hethiter (Munich: Himmer Verlag, 1976), p. 86, hereafter KuHe. Akurgal identifies the blunt peaks on which the king is depicted standing, as a characterization of the king as god.

<sup>4</sup>John Garstang, The Hittite Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 108, hereafter THE.

<sup>5</sup>Macqueen, Hittites and Their Contemporaries, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup>Garstang, THE, p. 113.

<sup>7</sup>For a minutely detailed description, see K. Bittel, Rudolf Naumann, and Heinz Otto, Yazilikaya. Architektur, Felsbilder, Inschriften und Kleinfunde (Leipzig: H. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1941), pp. 50-104, hereafter YAFIK.

led by two principal gods. Counting from the front to the rear can be distinguished among the first five deities (Fig. 23), the winged war-goddess Shaushga<sup>1</sup> (who is preceded by a male god), followed by her two attendants, the goddesses Kulitta and Ninalta. They are followed by the Moon-god who wears a coned cap which is topped by a crescent moon. Both the War-goddess and the Moon-god are represented as winged. Further on, the Sun-god appears in heaven protecting the Hittite king, who joins the assembly presumably as a personification of the Sun-god.<sup>2</sup> Among the marching gods, two demonic gods take part in the procession. They appear standing on the hieroglyph for earth and at the same time are carrying a crescent moon which conveys the ideas of the sky.<sup>3</sup> The procession ends with a group of twelve warrior gods (Fig. 24), preceded by a group of mountain gods.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Shausga, the goddess of love and war, was recognized as a winged character standing on a lion, on the basis of certain seal impressions (Figs. 30, 33) and other monuments. She also was the patron goddess of Hattusilis IV (Gurney, Hittites, pp. 135-136; Bittel, DiHe, p. 206, figs. 235-237; Hogarth, p. 38, fig. 195). Occasionally she is represented without her sacred animal (Figs. 17, 27), as appears in a seal of prince Taki-Sharuna discovered at Ugarit (Ug III pp. 37-39, figs. 54-60).

<sup>2</sup>Akurgal believes that the idea of divine kingship is stressed in this way. KuHe, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>E. Laroche, "The Pantheon of Yazilikaya," JCS 6 (1962):12.



The right side wall is engraved with figures of marching goddesses who are portrayed in identical successive groups of female deities (Fig. 25) without their actual identification.<sup>1</sup>

The central scene (Figs. 26 and 27), representing the highest divinities, gives an idea of the Hittite conception of this top level of the pantheon. It is to this focal point, this central meeting point, that all the gods and goddesses are portrayed in the gallery as eagerly marching. The great Weather-god Teshub is depicted to the left standing on the back of two mountain gods.<sup>2</sup> Facing him is the great goddess Hebat who in turn is standing on her sacred beast, the lion.<sup>3</sup> Both deities appear flanked by bulls wearing peaked caps, visible only in the forepart.<sup>4</sup> Behind the Weather-god appears a second deity

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Georg F. Brandenstein, Hethitische Götter nach Bildbeschreibungen in Keilschrifttexten (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1943), pp. 66-84, hereafter HGBK; Akurgal, KuHe, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>Bittel, YAFIK, p. 82; Volkert Haas, Hethitische Berggötter und hurritische Steindämonen (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1982), pp. 52, hereafter HBHS; Laroche, JCS 6: 116. The motif of the Storm-god standing on the back of mountain gods also is attested as a glyptic decoration, according to the findings of Ras Shamra. A cylinder seal which belonged to Amanmashu (Ug III, pp. 42-47, fig. 68), and the cylinder seal of Ini-Teshub, king of Carchemish (Ug III, pp. 37-39, figs. 54-57) portray the storm god standing on the back of mountain gods who are his attendants. In addition, other gods are also depicted standing on their sacred animals.

<sup>3</sup>Gurney, Hittites, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Macqueen, p. 142; Laroche, p. 118, NERTOT, p. 149.

standing on rounded cones typifying mountain peaks.<sup>1</sup> Farther behind this one--towards the left extremity of the central picture--a god of vegetation<sup>2</sup> stands on two rounded cones. He grasps in his hand an ear of wheat.<sup>3</sup> Behind the great goddess comes the war-god Sharruna armed with spear and axe,<sup>4</sup> also standing on a lion which in turn is standing on rounded cones.<sup>5</sup> This god is followed by two goddesses who are portrayed as going over a two-headed eagle instead of a quadruped or mountain god.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p.86.

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps the god Telepinu. See Eugene Cavignac, Les Hittites (Paris: Libraire Maisonneuve, 1950), p. 72; see also Gurney, Hittites, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>Vieyra, ReAn, p. 64.

<sup>5</sup>This god appears in the scene following his mother Hebat. It is again represented in greater proportions in the smaller gallery, but this time is portrayed as the protector deity of King Tudhaliyas IV (see Fig. 78). For a study of the god-on-a-lion motif, see Helmuth Th. Bossert, "Das hethitische Pantheon. Der Gott auf dem Panther," AfO 8 (1932-33):296-307; 9 (1933-34):105-118; also Haas, HBHS, pp. 14-20; Bittel, YAFIK, pp. 127-130; Winter, Göttin, pp. 282-284.

<sup>6</sup>The two-headed eagle figure also appears engraved on the inner left side of the southern portal-sphinx of Alaça Hüyük. Akurgal, KuHe, p. 120; Bittel, DiHe, pp. 188-190, figs. 210, 213; YAFIK, pp. 125-127, fig. 154; Th. Macridy-Bey, "La porte des sphinx à Euyuk. Fouilles du Musée Impérial Ottoman," MVAG 13 (1908):205, fig. 35. The same figure also is a known motif in glyptic art. See Briggs Buchanan, Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pl. 38, No. 562a, hereafter ANESAM; see also van Buren, Or 23 (1954):21-22, pl. II.12; T. Beran, AfO 18 (1958):271, fig. 20.

The smaller gallery--which was destined for royal worship--<sup>1</sup> also contains reliefs of deities. Fig. 28 portrays twelve warrior gods--or running gods--<sup>2</sup> which are a replica of those of the greater gallery.<sup>3</sup> The other figures do not represent assembled gods, but they do portray other divinities related to the Hittite pantheon.<sup>4</sup>

Laroche has suggested that this divine procession of Yazilikaya corresponds to the gods and goddesses enumerated in Hurrian sacrificial lists from Bogazköy.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this open-air carved sanctuary was reserved especially for annual events<sup>6</sup> connected with the great Hittite spring festival which started at the beginning of the new year.<sup>7</sup> The festival lasted over a month and it was believed that all the gods attended.<sup>8</sup> Although the totality of the

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<sup>1</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Vieyra, ReAn, p. 64; Bittel, FeYa, pl. XXIV.

<sup>3</sup>Bittel, DiHe, pp. 215-217.

<sup>4</sup>See above, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup>Laroche, JCS 6 (1952):120ff.

<sup>6</sup>Kurt Bittel, Hattusa: The Capital of the Hittites (New York: The Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 107-108.

<sup>7</sup>Muhly affirms that "the exact purpose of Yazilikaya is still not entirely clear, but presumably it had something to do with the celebration of the annual New Year's festival." James D. Muhly, "The Hittites and the Aegean World," Exped 16 (1974):7.

<sup>8</sup>Macqueen, p. 132.

Hittite gods is numbered at a thousand,<sup>1</sup> this Yazilikayan engraved assembly can be regarded as a simplified version of the Hittite pantheon,<sup>2</sup> which perhaps in the capital festivals of the Hittite purulli was thought to be performed in the real presence of the assembly of the gods.

This monumental assembly all in a single picture portrays the components of the celestial assembly as being formed by the principal deities, and it includes a variety of unknown lesser gods and goddesses divided into categories. It also shows that within the celestial realm, there were some other beings that play roles closely related to the major deities.

Among the orthostat reliefs at Malatya there appears another scene of gathered gods coming to a libation and sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> Assembled gods attending an offering

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<sup>1</sup>The Hittites themselves speak of the thousand gods of the land of Hatti and, depending on their activity, they are grouped into gods above the earth and gods below. Hass, HBHS, pp. 22-24; NERTOT, p. 148; Akurgal, KuHe, p. 87. Lehmann opines that the Hittite respect for the gods of all nations led to presenting themselves as "the people of thousand gods," and not their actual number of deities. Johannes Lehmann, The Hittite People of a Thousand Gods (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), pp. 136-137.

<sup>2</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Bittel, DiHe, p. 244.

is a repeated motif in Mesopotamian<sup>1</sup> as well as in Ugaritic texts.<sup>2</sup>

The Malatyan relief portrays the Hittite king Shulemeli offering libations to four deities.<sup>3</sup> The first is the weather-god who is followed by his consort.<sup>4</sup> They in turn are followed by their son and his spouse. Behind the king, a sacrificial victim is brought by a servant to the gods who are coming to the sacrifice (Fig. 29).<sup>5</sup>

All this material reviewed above presents us with a diversity of celestial entities conforming to and operating within the realm of the celestial council. Their description as well as their representations characterize them distinctively as divine entities playing either a major or a minor role according to their categories within the heavenly realm.

Although there are some variations in the conception of the celestial assembly between Mesopotamia, Hatti, and Canaan--especially in form of operation--in the end it

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 55, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Vieyra, ReAn, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup>Bittel, DiHe, p. 244.

<sup>5</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p. 94.

becomes clear that the whole assembly is always composed of the totality of the deities as well as a large quantity of minor gods and lesser deities who serve in the realm of the gods as warriors, intermediaries, messengers, and helpers of the major gods.

Summing up the matter of the constituency of celestial council, it may be said that the variety of the membership of the celestial assembly is well attested both literarily and iconographically.

Literarily, the texts present the ANE pantheons arranged in divisions that expose the hierarchies of the gods. Some of those divisions--like the Ig and the An gods in the Mesopotamian realm, or the *rephaim* on the Canaanite side--are repeatedly mentioned in a collective way. Through their depicted and described actions, it is possible to see their functions and relationships toward the major gods and their roles within the celestial assembly.

This variety of functions is quite diverse and the sources tend to portray consistently that every major deity is surrounded by acolyte deities who serve in a special capacity to help the major deities in the areas of their patronage, or as warriors and messengers for them.

Iconographically, there is an overwhelming quantity and diversity of great and small representations of the

different members of the celestial assembly. Most remarkable in this aspect are the Hittites, who skillfully engraved representations of the divine assembly.

According to this engraved conception, the assembly of the gods is composed of all the gods in all their ranks. From this we cannot obtain more detailed data regarding the celestial assembly, but at least it can be said that in the Hittite concept, the warrior gods played an important role within the affairs of the assembly, otherwise they would not be represented repeatedly in the shrine of Yazilikaya.

Wings and horns are the artistic devices used to distinguish the represented gods, and these characteristics are abundant in the ANE iconography.

The imagery for other celestial beings as beings from the heavenly realm is also quite well represented. This concept appears to be present everywhere in the thought of ancient man who dwelt within the boundaries of the ancient Near East.

Noticeable also are the scenes of adoration described in the texts when the group of deities--i.e., the Ig and An gods--render their obeisance to the godhead in terms of praise, joy, fidelity, and reverential fear within the meetings of the heavenly assembly.

The Sons of the Gods

The "sons of the gods" motif also can provide some clues for a possible comparison with biblical angels. This motif is repeatedly mentioned in ANE theogonies,<sup>1</sup> and it is closely related to the heavenly council.

The Mesopotamian Sons of the Gods

It is common knowledge that the Sumerians from their beginnings thought that their great gods each headed a group or family composed of his wife, his progeny of sons and daughters,<sup>2</sup> and a host of subservient divinities who performed the different duties in their divine realm.<sup>3</sup>

The Mesopotamian pantheon was headed by Anu,<sup>4</sup> whose genealogy according to the *En-el* myth is traced from Apsu<sup>5</sup> --the underworld ocean--and Tiamat--the primeval chaos.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>All the ANE theogonies make reference in one way or another to the sons of the gods. This concept is so intrinsic to every polytheistic pantheon that it is difficult to conceive of one without them.

<sup>2</sup>Heinrich Zimmern, Zur Herstellung der grossen babylonischen Götterliste An=(ilu)Anum (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), pp. 88-106.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-125. It is a well-known fact that the Mesopotamian pantheons were conceived as a great family in which "le dieu principal devint le père des autres dieux" (M. Rutten, "Les Religions asianiques," in *HiRe*, 4:31).

<sup>4</sup>In Sumerian "heaven." Tallqvist, *AGE*, s.v. Anu.

<sup>5</sup>Apsu is presented in the myths as the zari ilani rabitim, "the begetter of the great gods." *BEC* I.29.

<sup>6</sup>*GMVO*, s.v. Tiamat.



From this primeval divine couple a multitude of deities originated that later took not only rulership among the gods but also a lifeline from their ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

Among this numerous divine progeny at least two triads of important deities could be distinguished. The first was composed of Anu, Enlil, and Enki;<sup>2</sup> the second of Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar.<sup>3</sup>

Anu is depicted as engendering a long genealogy.<sup>4</sup> He first had as his consort Antu, who was replaced by Inanna or Ishtar<sup>5</sup> From his union with Antu, Anu was believed to have fathered the An<sup>6</sup> and the Ig<sup>7</sup> gods and the

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<sup>1</sup>The Enuma elish myth narrates how first Apsu is killed by Enki (BEC I.60-70), and later Tiamat is slaughtered by Marduk (BEC IV.93-104).

<sup>2</sup>Tallqvist, AGE, s.v. Anu.

<sup>3</sup>Hooke, BAsRe, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>Zimmern, Götterliste, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup>This goddess under various names and a variety of forms was the most important object of worship in the ANE. In Babylon she was worshiped mainly as the goddess of love and procreation, and in Assyria mainly as the goddess of war. See Judith Ochshorn, "Ishtar and Her Cult," in The Book of the Goddesses Past and Present: An Introduction to Her Religion, ed. Carl Olson (New York: Crossroad, 1983), pp. 16-28.

<sup>6</sup>iluAnunnaki ša ri-ḫu-ut iluAnu, "May the Anunnaki, who have been begotten by Anu." Langdon, BPP, p. 3. Schmidt mentions that "ganz wie die Anunnaki, mit denen sie irgend wie in Verbindung stehen, sind die Kinder des Anu." Aage Schmidt, "Gedanken über die Entwicklung der Religion auf Grund der babylonischen Quellen," MVAG 16 (1911):92.

<sup>7</sup>In a lamentation the origin of the An and the Ig gods--mentioned here as the deities of heaven and earth--is mentioned in this way, e-ne-ra<sup>d</sup>a-nu-na mu-un-na-lag-lag-

seven evil asakki or demons.<sup>1</sup> In this way it seems clear that these sons appear as begotten by gods higher than they.

Enlil--the storm god--for his part had Ninlil as his spouse and Nushku--the fire god--as his son and minister.<sup>2</sup> Enlil is described as having a numerous "retinue of lesser gods who served as door-keepers, cooks, shepherds and messengers."<sup>3</sup>

Enki or Ea was the god of wisdom and incantations.<sup>4</sup> He is presented in magical literature with his son Marduk as a divine pair acting in behalf of bewitched persons.<sup>5</sup>

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gi-es. an-a an a-ri-a mu-un-na-lag-lag-gi-es. ki-a an a-ri-a mu-un-na-lag-lag-gi-es, "Unto her the Anunna-ki hastened. They whom Anu in heaven begat hastened. They whom Anu in earth begat hastened." Langdon, SLT, "Lamentation to Aruru," 45:25-27.

<sup>1</sup>Hooke, BAsRe, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete (Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953), No. 3, hereafter SAHG; GMVO, s.v. Nušku.

<sup>3</sup>Hooke, BAsRe, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>GMVO, s.v. Enki. As the god of wisdom he is the bel nimeqi, "lord of wisdom"; as the god of exorcism he is the bel shipli, "lord of incantations."

<sup>5</sup>If Ea was the lord of wisdom, his son Marduk was "the wisest of the wise, the wisest of the gods" (Heidel, EG p. 21 [I.80])--li-'-ú li-'-u-ti abkal ilāni (BEC 1.80). The texts put both deities working in cooperation to make efficacious the spells. Some incantations present the myth of Marduk consulting his father as part of the regular formula to be used, as well as the answer of Ea to him, "O my son, what dost thou not know, what more can I give thee? O Marduk, what dost thou not know, what can I add to thy knowledge? What I know, thou knowest also."

Through the mythical texts it became clear that the pantheon was composed of the heavenly beings who were portrayed as being born to the major or minor deities of the pantheon. It is also clear that these celestial sons of the gods--as well as other earthly sons of the gods--belong to prolific divine parents who begot them not infrequently in an incestuous way or after philandering adventures with goddesses and women.<sup>1</sup> As the sons of the gods, they are also gods and goddesses but of a lesser rank. In the mythical framework it becomes plain that if they were born to divine progenitors they were gods anyway, but if one of the parents was human, they invariably were relegated to the human sphere. This kind of mixed offspring could attain a hero status in the earthly domain, and even enjoy certain privileges of special divine protection, but they were always banned from heavenly realms.

This situation emerges clearly within the Mesopotamian mytho-epic literature. The epic of Gilgamesh declares that he is son of a deity. His mother being a goddess, he is part-human and part-divine--šit-ta-šu ilu-ma šul-lul-ta-šu a-me-la-tu,<sup>2</sup> "two thirds of him is god, one third

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<sup>1</sup>The myths are plain narrations that reveal polygamous and incestuous conduct. The gods use every stratagem to satiate their passions. The goddesses likewise are not exempt from such irregular conduct. Gilgamesh rejects Ishtar who offers herself seductively, recriminating the love-goddess for the bad treatment that she gave to all her lovers.

<sup>2</sup>EG IX 2.16; I 2.1.

human."<sup>1</sup> Although his partial divine nature made him somehow superhuman, his residual human nature was enough to ban him from the divine realm to the human level bonded with mortal fate.

A different kind of divine sons are those deities who were born to both divine progenitors. In the myth of Atrahasis, Enlil calls the reunited gods in the divine assembly his sons, making clear their nature as well as his relationship to the principal god of the pantheon. These divine descendants not only are always related to the heavenly realm--in a special relationship to the divine assembly--but they also could reach a higher rank among the gods--even the highest rank in the assembly of the deities. Such was the case of Marduk the son of Ea who, in the myth of Enuma elish, being a lesser god, reached the kingship and firstbornship among the gods.<sup>2</sup>

This divine sonship generated some potential threats to the aged leaders of the pantheon, however, and they were violently dethroned by their own sons. This is

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<sup>1</sup>GEOP I 2.1; IX 2.16. Lit. "the two parts divine, and one part human." The goddess Ninsun, mother of Gilgamesh, endowed her son with a double divine component. The description is termed in the Mesopotamian mathematical way expressing "one part" as meaning "half," and "two parts" as meaning "two thirds" (Oppenheim, Or 17, p. 21).

<sup>2</sup>EG IX 2.16; I 2.1.

illustrated in the *En-el* myth where the primeval gods perished by the hands of their progeny.

#### The Hittite Sons of the Gods

The Hittite myths also make mention of the sons-of-the-gods motif, and they are not exempt from competitive ambition with their ancestors. The myths of Kumarbi and Ullikummi<sup>1</sup> present typical examples of this situation which deals with the common struggle for the kingship motif within the ANE pantheons.

The Kumarbi narrative mentions how Alalu and Anu each had their divine heavenly reign for nine years until they were dethroned by their sons who were their viziers and successors.<sup>2</sup> Anu, however, managed to avenge his dethronement by making Kumarbi--his defeater--pregnant and in this way Kumarbi was forced to give life to some of the children of Anu.<sup>3</sup> Among those born was a son Teshub, the storm-god, who succeeded in overthrowing Kumarbi.<sup>4</sup>

The myth of Ullikummi deals mainly with the stratagems that Kumarbi used intending to retake his lost power from Teshub. He engendered a stony son--Ullikummi--by

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<sup>1</sup>See *ANET*, pp. 120-125.

<sup>2</sup>Alalu was banned by Anu and Anu was dethroned by Kumarby. *NERTROT*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

mating with a rock supposedly of human form. This son became a granitic giant who menaced Teshub and the gods. The storm-god managed to dominate the divine stone monster, however, and this reassured his supremacy over all the deities.

Thus within the Mesopotamian and Hittite realms, these celestial divine sons are depicted as being part of the heavenly courts. They belong to that realm, and in addition they are powerful. They are capable of defying the higher deities. In the fight for the kingship among the gods, it is not strange to see them defeating their own aged parents. They can also--like the major deities--easily destroy humans by bringing down calamities upon them using the forces of nature.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Canaanite Sons of the Gods

The picture portrayed within the Canaanite pantheon is basically the same. The gods are depicted as being no less prolific nor less incestuous.<sup>2</sup> They "emerged from

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<sup>1</sup>The myth of Telepinu refers to how he started a series of calamities when he became enraged because the gods found his hiding place.

<sup>2</sup>So Pdry (Pydray) was the first daughter and consort of Baal. See W. Albright, BASOR 146 (147):35; see also Albright, JGC, p. 109. Baal was also closely associated with the goddesses Anat and Astarte. The former is known as Baal's virgin, who is by turn not only his sister but also his consort. A myth (KTU 1.5V) claims that Baal raped her "77--even 88 times" while she was in the form of a heifer. Ibid., p. 112. In an Ashera myth of Hittite version, she appears seducing Baal with the consent of El. Ibid., p. 107.

previous forms of being as a product of desire and sexual relations."<sup>1</sup>

The Ugaritic texts<sup>2</sup> refer to the sons of the gods as closely related to the innumerable gods that constitute the Ugaritic pantheon,<sup>3</sup> in which "El is the father of the gods."<sup>4</sup> They are repeatedly mentioned as "the sons of El,"<sup>5</sup> "the sons of Attart,"<sup>6</sup> etc. Among them, El is also

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<sup>1</sup>Irving M. Zeitlin, Ancient Judaism: Biblical Criticism from Max Weber to the Present (Oxford: Polity Press, 1984), p. 10. Zeitlin properly adds that the Ugaritic texts plainly state "that the deities continue to be dominated by sexual lust and other natural forces." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Cunchillos has mentioned that the 55 occurrences of *bn il* or *bn ilm* into the Ugaritic literature can be properly divided into three groups. First, the texts where the *bn il* are mentioned as the gods sons of El--KTU 1.40; 1.65; 1.122, etc. Second, the references that designate a divinized hero--KTU 1.16. Third, in the theophoric names of persons such as appear in some economic documents--KTU 4.63; 4.84, etc. ("Le dieu Mut, guerrier de El," p. 206). He also points out that Ugaritians believed that the sonship of men and "diex se fait par génération" (ibid., p. 209), and concludes that "Les *bn il* sont des dieux. Ils constituent une famille, *dr bn il*, autor du dieu El, leur Père, *ab bn il*; père, au sens propre, puisqu'il les engendre selon le texte KTU 1:23;" and since they are sons of El, they are probably too of Attart (ibid., pp. 217-218).

<sup>3</sup>Moor, UF 2, pp. 185-228.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes Pedersen, "Canaanite and Israelite Cultus," AcOr 18 (1939):4.

<sup>5</sup>For a list of the references of the *bn il(im)* in Ugarit, see J. L. Cunchillos, "Los bene ha'elohim en Gen. 6, 1-4," EstB 28 (1969): 5-31.

<sup>6</sup>Repeatedly the gods are mentioned as "the sons of Attart." KTU 1.3 V 3-4, 38-39; 1.4 IV 51. On the other hand, Attart--like El--is also called "the progenitrix of the gods." KTU 1.4 I 21-22; 1.4 III 25-26, 34-35; 1.4 IV 31-32.

responsible for the hierarchization of the gods, his sons.<sup>1</sup> This family of numerous divine sons is not exempt from frictions and quarrels among them.<sup>2</sup>

The mythological texts seem to delineate the Ugaritic pantheon in two groups: gods who are favorable to Baal and those who are not.<sup>3</sup> The texts also mention the feasts of these gods when they gathered in meetings of rejoicing and celebration for different reasons. Some of these occasions are plainly described as scenes of debauchery and drunkenness.<sup>4</sup>

Ugaritians referred with frequency to their gods as being sons of the principal deities in a very distinctive if not intimate way. The *bn il* or *bn ilm* are also called *dr il*, "the family of El."<sup>5</sup> They are so called not only because they have El as their father but also because they compose the council of the deities close to El. The texts

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<sup>1</sup>U. Cassuto, The Goddess Anath, trans. Israel Abraham (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), pp. 54-56.

<sup>2</sup>As Zeitlin states, "the Canaanite pantheon was a family of males and females who . . . fought and vanquished one another." Ancient Judaism, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>U. Oldenburg, CBEB, pp. 46-76, 1119-121.

<sup>4</sup>RS 24.258 Ug 5:545-551; KTU 1.114; Margalit Baruch, "The Ugaritic Feast of the Drunken Gods: Another Look at RS 24.258 (KTU 1.114)," Maarav 2 (1979/80):65-120.

<sup>5</sup>The epic of Keret says that the gods who came at the invitation of the king and blessed him were El and his family. See above, p. 23.



also mention some *bnt il*, "daughters of El,"<sup>1</sup> which could also be related to, if not included in, this group. As the great mother of the gods and *qnyt ilm*, "creatress of the gods,"<sup>2</sup> Attart is mentioned as having a group of sons. They are named as the *šb<sup>e</sup>m.bn.ąrt*, "the seventy sons of Attart,"<sup>3</sup> the *ąrt.wbnh ilt.wšb.rt.aryh*, "Attart and her children, Elat and the band of her kindred."<sup>4</sup> A peculiar way to express the kinship of these gods to Attart is by naming them in a construct relationship with *qdš*, "holy" or "holiness," which is another name of Attart.<sup>5</sup>

The specific mention of these gods as being sons of El or Attart would not necessarily imply the existence of these gods only in groups of deities attached only to one or another god--as totally separated progenies of El or

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<sup>1</sup>The myth of the Gracious Gods (*KTU* 1.23) mentions that El procreated two beautiful and gracious sons from two of his daughters--or at least goddesses. (Cunchillos, *CAED*, pp.56-61; Gaster, "A Canaanite Ritual Drama. The Spring Festival at Ugarit," *JAO* 66 [1966]:49-76).

<sup>2</sup>She is called *qnyt* "creatress" from *qny* "to create," "to procreate, obtain." *WUS*, p. 279. So *qnyt ilm*, "progenitress/creatress of the gods." Wherever this is a title of Attart, she is the consort of 'El.

<sup>3</sup>*CCTA* 4. VI.46.

<sup>4</sup>*CCTA* 1.6 I.40-41. The expression *sb rt aryh* is connected in parallelism with *bn* and *ah*, which in addition to the context adds clarity to the meaning. See Albright, "The North Canaanite Epic of 'Aleyan Ba'al and Mot," *JPOS* 12 (1932):197, nn. 46-47. Cassuto translates '*ąrt.wbnh ilt.wšb rt. aryh*' as "Asherah and her children, the goddess and the assembly of her offspring." *Anath*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>5</sup>*WUS*, p. 274; *MLC*, p. 167.

Attart. This kind of references perhaps would be a metaphorical way of referring to them in their totality, since the gods also could be properly described as being *sph ltp wqds*, "progeny of Latipan (El) and Qades (Qudsu, Attart)."<sup>1</sup>

As devoted parents, El and Attart provided their divine abode as shelter for their children.<sup>2</sup> In the quarrels of their children, they appear as suffering<sup>3</sup> and making decisions on behalf of them before the heavenly council.<sup>4</sup>

The polyfaceted progeny of El and Attart is perhaps more distinctively described in the myth of the Palace of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1.16 I 10-11. This phrase is generally translated as the "progeny of the Kind and Holy," as referring only to El. However, a legitimate alternative would be the mention of both head-deities of the pantheon as progenitors of the Ugaritic gods.

<sup>2</sup>The alluded-to myth of the Palace of Baal mentions that *mtb.il.mzll bnh*, "the abode of El is the shelter of his son" (*KTU* 1.3 IV, 48-49; 1.3 V, 39-40; 1.4 I, 12-13; 1.4 IV, 52), and *mtb.rbt.atrt.ym.mtb.klt.knyt*, "the abode of the lady Attart of the sea is the shelter of the glorious brides (her daughters)" (*KTU* 1.3 IV, 49, 52-53; 1.3 V, 40-41, 43-44; 1.4 I, 13-15; 1.4 IV, 53-55).

<sup>3</sup>*KTU* 1.5 VI, 1-25 describes the pain and mourning of El at the announcement of the death of Baal. In *KTU* 1.4 II, 24-25, Attart appears lamenting the disappearance of her children in the divine quarrels at the hands of Baal and Anat.

<sup>4</sup>The picture given in the texts of the divine sons is one of bellicosity. They quarrel to death for the throne, kingship, and domain. H. C. Cazelles, "Essai sur le pouvoir de la divinité a Ugarit et en Israël," *UG* 6 (1969:26). The myths also picture the expectancy of the deities as they follow the development of the conflicts. *MLC*, pp. 66-67.

Baal. The narrative mentions that when the building of his palace was completed, Baal invited the whole pantheon to celebrate the finishing of his mansion. Baal is mentioned as inviting all the gods, his brothers, his relatives, and the seventy sons of Attart.<sup>1</sup> The festival was sumptuously provided with wine and meat to gratify the taste of the gods and goddesses who came to rejoice in the new palace of their brother Baal.<sup>2</sup>

However, the texts also mention that those deities were not always the object of such splendid manners from Baal. Sometimes he was harsh and destructive with his relatives and fellow gods. In the myth of the Fight between Baal and Mot, Baal appears beating mercilessly with a club upon the great sons of Attart<sup>3</sup> and dragging the small ones on earth.<sup>4</sup> These harsh actions to the gods were carried out with Anat, since both are called by Attart

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<sup>1</sup>šh.ahh.bbth. aryh bqr̄b hklh. šh šb<sup>e</sup>m.bn.ąrt. (KTU 1.4 VI, 44-46.) "He invited his brothers to his house, his kindred to his palace, he invited the seventy sons of Attart." MLC, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>The text mentions a great quantity of fat sheep, lambs, rams, bulls and quantities of wine for the gods and goddesses assembled in the mountain of Baal (KTU 1.4 VI, 40-59, 1.4 VII, 5-6).

<sup>3</sup>yihd.b<sup>e</sup>l.bn.ąrt. rbm.ymḥš bktp. dk ym ymḥš bšmd (KTU 1.6 V, 1-3). "Baal took the sons of Attart; the great ones, he beat with the club; those who were like Yamm, he struck with the mace" MLC p. 291.

<sup>4</sup>šgr̄m.ymḥš.lar̄š (KTU 1.6 V, 4), "those who were little he dragged on earth" (MLC, *ibid.*).

assassins of her sons<sup>1</sup> and destroyers of the clan of her kindred ones.<sup>2</sup>

Baal is also mentioned as having sons and daughters,<sup>3</sup> but these sons, with the exception of Pydray, Tallay, and Arsy<sup>4</sup>--called the "worthy brides"<sup>5</sup>--do not play any important role in the Canaanite myths.

The epic of Keret refers to this king as a *bn il krt*, a "son of El."<sup>6</sup> Although this denomination is in accordance with some ANE regions which portrayed their

<sup>1</sup>*mḥṣy hm [m]ḥṣ bny. hm [mkly ṣ]b rt* (KTU 1.4 II, 24-25), "they are (Baal and Anat) my assassins, the assassins of my sons" (MLC, p. 196).

<sup>2</sup>*hm [.mkly.ṣ]b rt aryy* (KTU 1.4 II, 24-26)--"they are the destroyers of the clan of my kindred" (MLC, *ibid.*)

<sup>3</sup>The myth of the Palace of Baal refers again and again to the daughters of this god. In KTU 1.3 I, 22-25 it says: *ytmr.b'l.bnth. y'n.pdry.bt.ar. apn.tly.[bt].rb.*, "Baal contemplated his daughters, he gazed at Pidray, the daughter of the light; also to Tallya, the daughter of the dew/rain." These goddesses as personifications of the light and rain obviously had a very important role within the Canaanite mythological conception of the renovation of the cycle of vegetation.

<sup>4</sup>Astour points out that these daughters of Baal as a personification of light (Pydray), rain (Tallay), and earth (Arsy?) form a triad of goddesses within the Ugaritic mythology. Michael C. Astour, "La triade de déesses de fertilité à Ugarit et en Grèce," *UG* 6 (1969):9-23.

<sup>5</sup>*klt knyṯ*, "the worthy brides" or "the glorious fiances" (KTU 1.4 I, 15 and *par.*). The noun *klt*, "bride" (WUS, 1321) can also be seen as *kallatu* in Akkadian (CAD p. 426), as an epithet for the goddesses. The adjective *knyṯ* "to be famous" probably refers to the nobility of their origin (MLC, p. 566).

<sup>6</sup>KTU 1.16 I, 10, 20-21.

kings as sons of some god,<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding in the case of Keret it does not necessarily imply that El was the literal begetter of Keret, or that he was divine.<sup>2</sup> This divine filiation related about Keret ought to be understood according to the Canaanite "kingship ideology" which rather conveyed the "sense of adoption,"<sup>3</sup> in harmony with the fact that he is also a *šlm il*, "servant of El."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, this reference to Keret as son of El--as Ryan properly says--by no means conveys divinity but only ascribes to him a higher "dignity and authority," putting on him a worthier status "of greater respect in the community he governs."<sup>5</sup> This expression can be pointed out as a proper way to stress the fact that the king is indicated as being a special "object of divine favour."<sup>6</sup>

According to the Canaanite concept the totality of the sons of the gods--the bene 'ilim--were not only divine

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon, UL, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Ryan, p. 73. That Keret does not belong to the realm of divinity is demonstrated by his illness. As human, his life, as well his health, depends on El.

<sup>3</sup>del Olmo, MLC, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup>KTU 1.14 I, 40-41.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

beings, but as such, they were endowed to perform supernatural protection,<sup>1</sup> especially against evil demons. Their divine status and function is clearly demonstrated through the amulet inscriptions that make an explicit mention of them.<sup>2</sup>

Summing up the data for these deities, it becomes evident that all these gods were fathered by older gods. Since these deities were prolific and incestuous, their resulting progeny were not only very numerous but also very quarrelsome.

Naturally from this large a progeny, the father gods chose their close ministers to assist them in their different activities within celestial and earthly realms.

Most of the time the sons of the gods are engaged in quarrels related to the kingship. In such fights the older deity is dethroned while the younger victor is recognized as king.

Eventually some gods or goddesses had offspring through intercourse with human beings. However, the resultant descendants were not counted as purely divine. Thus, in spite of their partial divinity, these mixed entities were always banned from heavenly realms.

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<sup>1</sup>A. Dupont-Sommer, "L'inscription de l'amulette d'Arslan=Tash," RHR 119 (1939):139-140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Even in the case of the kings who sometimes were counted as sons of some deity, the reference does not strictly convey divinity, only a higher dignity and authority, or simply divine favor.

#### The Armies of the Gods

In a mythical bellicose community of deities so concerned for rulership, it is not surprising to find the mention of warrior gods engaged in battles along with their leaders or among themselves. Frequently, some gods of the ANE together with their assemblies appear acting "at times as warrior forces."<sup>1</sup> The myths already mentioned refer to deities commanding their assemblies to achieve or to defend their supremacy in the pantheon.

Van Buren<sup>2</sup> has remarked that the battle of the gods was a very common subject of ANE iconography, and in those representations the engravers expressed "an earnest desire to convey the full seriousness of the events which were believed to have occurred."<sup>3</sup> In fact, it becomes obvious that the seal cutters were familiar with mythical details

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, DWEI, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>"How Representations of Battles of the Gods Developed," Or 24 (1955):24-41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

which are not related in the unearthed texts, but are glyptically represented.<sup>1</sup>

P. Amiet<sup>2</sup> has opined that the theme of the mythological combats of the gods stresses the warrior aspect of the major gods--mainly local ones--, but he also remarks accurately that these divine battles essentially reflect the struggle between good and evil.<sup>3</sup>

From the imagery described in the narrative of the myths, and from the multiple representations conveying those episodes, it is possible to derive an idea of the concept that ANE peoples had in regard to the warrior gods who formed the celestial armies of the gods.

#### The Mesopotamian Divine Armies

The *Enuma elish* myth refers to the forces to which Tiamat gave birth<sup>4</sup> as being eleven kinds of monster deities.<sup>5</sup> United, these formed her assembly,<sup>6</sup> army, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 32. Van Buren mentions, as an example of this, the assistance of the goddess Inninn at the execution of Kingu, the leader of the forces of Tiamat, a detail which became represented in glyptic scenes.

<sup>2</sup>"Les combats mythologiques dans l'art mésopotamien du troisième et du début du second millénaire," *RA* 42 (1953): 129-161.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>4</sup>la maḫru it-ta-lad muš-mahḫê, "she gave birth to the monsters." Langdon, *BEC*, I.133.

<sup>5</sup>King points out that the plural is involved in the case of many of the classes; thus it appears clear that Tiamat created more than one of each. L. W. King, *The Seven Tablets*, pp. 18-19.



forces.<sup>1</sup> The description of some of these divine beings describes them as being hybrid creatures,<sup>2</sup> but all of them wear irresistible weapons<sup>3</sup> and are especially clothed with terror.<sup>4</sup>

These forces are also described as belonging to the divine realm, since Tiamat not only "crowned them with fear-inspiring glory" but also "made (them) like gods."<sup>5</sup> Besides these created entities, there were other deities who eagerly joined on the side of the primeval mother goddess.<sup>6</sup> Against these terrorizing hosts, Marduk is appointed to fight.

It is difficult to conceive a plain picture of the appearance of these warrior gods even with the more varied details that the texts give of them. Marduk is described thus:

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<sup>6</sup>iš-ku-nu-ši pu-uh-ri (Langdon, BEC, I.146).

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., I.148; Heidel, BG, I.148.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., the scorpion man (akrab-amelu). Langdon, BEC, I.141.

<sup>3</sup>[na--] ši kak-ku la pa-du-ú. Ibid. I.144.

<sup>4</sup>me-lam-me uš-ta-ša-ša-a. Ibid., 1.137. Adadnirari III (805-782 B.C.) described in one stela the appearance of the warrior god Adad saying: "Adad . . . the powerful warrior . . . is clothed in splendor . . . decked with terrible brilliance who brings low the wicked with his shining whip, who hurls the thunderbolt." Luckenbill, ARAB, I.733, p. 260.

<sup>5</sup>i-li-is [umtas-si-il]. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>BG, II.13-15. See above, p. 33.

Enticing was his figure, flashing the  
 look of his eyes. . . .  
 Four were his eyes, four were his ears.  
 When his lips moved, fire blazed forth.  
 Each of (his) four ears grew large.  
 And likewise (his) eyes, to see  
 everything. . . .  
 His members were gigantic, he was surpassing  
 in height. . . .  
 He was clothed with the rays of ten gods,  
 exceedingly powerful was he;  
 The terror-inspiring majesty with its  
 consuming brightness rested upon him.<sup>1</sup>

This depiction, although somewhat detailed, is beyond comparison and quite incomprehensible. As Heidel puts it in the words of the myth itself, "Beyond comprehension," since all is "not fit for (human) understanding."<sup>2</sup> This is in complete accord with the terrifying nature of the defiant forces.

For the fight Marduk is equipped with special weapons such as a bow and arrows,<sup>3</sup> a club (pike),<sup>4</sup> a huge net,<sup>5</sup> four winds to support the net,<sup>6</sup> and, as his especially mighty weapon, a rain flood.<sup>7</sup> Besides these he

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<sup>1</sup>Heidel, EG, I.87, 95-98, 100, 103-104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., I.93-94.

<sup>3</sup>kasta u mul-mu-lum.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., IV.37.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., IV.49.

<sup>7</sup>The winds are called "the south wind, the north wind, the east wind, and the west wind," which were gifts of Anu. Ibid., IV.42-43.

created seven evil winds.<sup>1</sup> To these he added a lightning bolt sent out ahead of him.<sup>2</sup> All this is apart from the flames that emanate from the god himself. The depiction of blazing flames emerging from his own body,<sup>3</sup> clad with a terrifying coat of mail, and the "terror-inspiring splendor of his head"<sup>4</sup> are seen by Oppenheim not merely as a defensive description, but as an endowing of "Marduk with additional divine power" which, in the religious concept of the ANE, equals to be depicted "in brilliancy, fire and flames."<sup>5</sup> The retinue that followed Marduk was seven evil wind-demons created by himself for his own escort.<sup>6</sup> Having readied himself for the fight, he rode his chariot forth. It was drawn by four irresistible storm monsters,<sup>7</sup> who likewise were trained to destroy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., IV.45-47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., IV.39.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., IV.40.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., IV.77, 58.

<sup>5</sup>Oppenheim, Or 16 (1947):226.

<sup>6</sup>BEC, IV.47-48.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., IV.50-53. The iconography illustrates charioteers with four yoked beasts. Some gods also are represented as charioteering.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., IV.54.

There are textual mentions of other gods and goddesses as being clad in splendor and brilliancy.<sup>1</sup> The texts also mention other warrior deities, both male and female, who are praised for their belligerent qualities. In a tablet Esarhaddon praises Agushea the warrior goddess because she "arouses to battle" and "stands firm in the fight."<sup>2</sup> In the same document the Assyrian monarch also praises "the seven warrior-gods, who hold the bow and the arrow, whose onset is battle and destruction."<sup>3</sup>

The warrior character of Ishtar is well known. Elsewhere she is praised as "the lady of the battle."<sup>4</sup> As such, she is not only "the warrior daughter of Sin,"<sup>5</sup> but also the "Lady of battle and all close fight,"<sup>6</sup> and in the combats she is furious, irresistible, and brave.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Sumerian prayer asks Innin to grant her shininess, saying, "her blazing form upon me may she cause to shine" (Langdon, SLT, p. 148). The god Shamash is praised by Shamsuiluna who he says is "terrible governor of valor, whose brilliant form shines on all living things" (ibid. p. 152). Nušku is also praised as "the lord of the wand, adorned with splendor" (ibid., p. 163).

<sup>2</sup>Luckenbill, ARAB, II.667, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. For reference to similar seven warrior gods, see below pp. 267-268.

<sup>4</sup>Albrecht Goetze, "An Old Babylonian Prayer of the Divination Priest," JCS 22 (1968):27.

<sup>5</sup>E. Reiner and H. G. Güterbock, "The Great Prayer to Ishtar," p. 262; Seux, HPDBA, p. 440.

<sup>6</sup>Reiner and Güterbock, *ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>7</sup>Seux, HPDBA, p. 190.

Another warrior god of frightening aspect was the feared Nergal. In the psalmody dedicated to him he is identified as "the organizer of the infernal world"<sup>1</sup> and is praised as "the most combative of the Anunnaki,"<sup>2</sup> and the one who possesses the eminent forces of Anu as "the most warrior of all the gods."<sup>3</sup> In the same way he is described as having an overwhelming splendor.<sup>4</sup> Of his weaponry array it is said that it consisted of bow, arrows, quiver, and sword; he also was fearless for the battle.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that the most important mythical episode represented in iconography is the conflict with Tiamat and the execution of Kingu.<sup>6</sup> The victorious god differs, depending on the tradition in which the scene is represented, but the motif of the battle against Tiamat and her forces remains the same. Figs. 32 to 34 are typical representations of this mythical heavenly battle.

In Fig. 32 Tiamat--here depicted as a monster with several heads--is attacked by Marduk and his helper gods.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>S. Langdon, BPS, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup>Seux, HPDBA, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup>Van Buren, "Battles of the Gods," p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XXV, 292; Pritchard, ANEP, fig.

The monster is depicted as having rays emanating from its back.<sup>1</sup> In Fig. 33 the same mythical scene is represented, but this time the attacking god appears alone.<sup>2</sup> The primeval divine monster is pictured as having seven heads and its radiancy emanates in rays from its body. One of its heads already appears severed by the sword of the god. Fig. 34 dramatically depicts the attack of Marduk on Tiamat.<sup>3</sup> The god is depicted as running to attack the head of the monstrous serpent with thunderbolts, while two attendants are waiting to pass to their master other weapons at the right opportunity. Tiamat is depicted as a huge horned serpent provided with two hands.

Figs. 35 and 36 are representations of the same motif according the Assyrian tradition in which the victorious god becomes Assur, but the defeated monster is always the same primeval god Tiamat.

The iconographic representations also give us an idea of how the appearance of those warrior gods was conceived. An Assyrian cylinder belonging to the British

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<sup>1</sup>Van Buren, "The Dragon in Ancient Mesopotamia," Or 15 (1946):20, pl. IV, 17.

<sup>2</sup>Pritchard, ANEP, fig. 671; Suzanne M. Heim, Ladders to Heaven (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1979), p. 10, fig. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Gressmann, ABAT, pl. CLI, 374a.

Museum<sup>1</sup> depicts Ishtar dressed in all her war attire (Fig. 37). She appears standing on a lioness and grasps with her left hand two arrows and a bow. From each of her shoulders hangs a quiver replete with arrows, and on her waist is girded a sword. She also wears a short embroidered fringed skirt as well as a short-sleeved long robe likewise embroidered and fringed. She wears a horned square helmet, crowned by a star. Likewise, stars appear connected with her weapons. She also wears sandals and her right arm and wrists are encircled with bracelets. She lifts her right arm in greeting to a female divine attendant,<sup>2</sup> who wears a long short-sleeved garment also embroidered and fringed like that of Ishtar. The attendant also wears sandals and a sword-dagger. Behind her appear two crossed ibexes, while behind Ishtar appears a palm tree.

Other seals show the same Ishtar as a warrior, encircled with rays ending in stars, in company of other stellar gods. Characteristic of this are the representations shown in Figs. 38 and 39.

In Fig. 38 Ishtar is surrounded by a stellar circle and stands on a monster which is bird-tailed and also

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<sup>1</sup>D. J. Wiseman, Werner Forman, and B. Forman, Götter und Menschen im Rollsiegel Westasiens (Prague: Artia Prague, 1958), no. 67 (hereafter GMRW).

<sup>2</sup>We may assume a divine identity of this second figure, based on her dressing, girded weapon, bracelets, and attitude, which seems to be not that of an adorant but of a peer, greeting, informing, or perhaps even imparting orders to the warrior goddess, or vice versa.

winged.<sup>1</sup> The rays emerging from both shoulders are angle-shaped and are larger than the others that are interpreted as her quivers. The same device is seen emerging from the shoulders of the accompanying god who, in addition, wears engirded other weapons and stands on a winged monster with a scorpion tail. Fig. 39 presents a very similar scene,<sup>2</sup> but the gods are not armed. Ishtar is encircled in stars, but the god only has a star over his horned helmet. Before each god goes Assur, also surrounded with stellate dots. In each case, seven dots (the symbol of the Ig gods)<sup>3</sup> appear over the attendant.

In still another seal<sup>4</sup> a warrior god is represented ornamented with stars (Fig. 40). He is accompanied by two attendants. The one behind him is a hybrid being with bird legs, scorpion tail, and anthropomorphic bust.

In the exaltation given to Marduk by the celestial assembly, he is compared to the protecting genii *shedu* and *lamassu*, who are mentioned in a context of a fierce

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<sup>1</sup>This cylinder presently belongs to the Louvre and is illustrated by Ward, SCWA, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>See Edith Porada, Briggs Buchanan, and Albrecht Goetze, The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library (Washington, D.C.: Pantheon Books, 1947), vol. I, pl. CII: 691e (hereafter CPML).

<sup>3</sup>An usual feature of the Assyrian glyptic is the representation of the Ig as seven dots. Ward, "The Hittite Gods in Hittite Art," Archeological Institute of America 3 (1899):20.

<sup>4</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 252, fig. 767.



combat.<sup>1</sup> These references imply that these protective deities also have to be considered as combatants of the heavenly hosts.

The description of the gods using chariotry or simply an animal to ride, as part of their warfare implements, is also quite well represented. In a shell cylinder<sup>2</sup> two gods appear going to assist at an offering libation (Fig. 41). The nude goddess grasps thunderbolts in both hands and rides on a winged dragon whose hind legs are of a bird. In addition, fire comes out of the dragon's mouth. The dragon itself is harnessed to a chariot in which a male god rides.

In another seal of very crude fashion, though well designed,<sup>3</sup> a winged divine servant appears to be instructed by two warrior gods who are represented as riding on their sacred animals (Fig. 42). The animals can not be identified specifically except that they have wings and tails of birds. The male god carries a sword.

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<sup>1</sup>The text reads, šu-u lu-u nu-ru ša i-lū ge-eš-tu-u dan-nu. ša ki-ma šēdi la-mas-si ilū u ma-a-ti. ina ša-aš me dan-ni e-ṭe-ru šu-bat-a-ni ina pu-uš-ki. (PBC, VI:149-151) --"Verily, he is the light of the gods, the mighty prince; Who as a shedu and lamassu of the gods of the land, In mighty combat saved our dwelling in the time of trouble." Heidel, BG, p.52. See also ANET, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Frankfort, CS, p. 125, pl. XXIIa.

<sup>3</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 50, fig. 131.

Another seal<sup>1</sup> depicts a goddess going to battle in her chariot which is harnessed to a pair of lions (Fig. 43). Warrior gods march behind the chariot as her acolytes.

A cylinder seal<sup>2</sup> presents a curious design in which a lesser nude god presents a bull before two nude gods that ride their winged dragons to meet him (Fig. 44). Interestingly enough they appear to be coming with their flock of flying dragons.

The warrior gods are also depicted in the different scenes that portray gods fighting. The scene in Fig. 45 portrays a cylinder seal uncovered at Kish.<sup>3</sup> It depicts a conflict of eight gods, who appear to be quarreling with maces and fisticuffs as they kick each other. Two of them already appear fallen, while the attacking ones mercilessly beat the defeated ones.

Numerous cylinder seals of the Akkadian period illustrate the episodes of strife between gods.<sup>4</sup> Fig. 46 shows a seal which portrays the scene of a nude, belted god

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 312, fig. 982; Delaporte, CCOBN, p. 270, tab. XXII, n. 479.

<sup>2</sup>Pierre Amiet, La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque (Paris: Editions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1980), pl. 112, 1490; Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XXX, 364.

<sup>3</sup>Louis Ch. Watelin, Excavations at Kish, IV. Paris: Geuthner, 1934, pl. XXXIV, 3. See also Eisen, Collection Moore (OIP, 47), no. 37; Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XXVII, 318.

<sup>4</sup> Among them see H. Frankfort, "Gods and Myths on Sargonic Seals," Iraq 1 (1934):22-26, pls. II.g, IV.d; CS pp. 100, 104.

who is falling while being attacked by a radiant god.<sup>1</sup> The attacker is also belted and nude, but he also presents rays emerging from his legs, arms, back, and shoulders. He is kicking and beating the god who appears to be falling, and all of this occurs on the top of a mountain. Three gods appear standing behind the aggressor. The one next to him is dressed in only a short kilt, but he is all enveloped with flames that emerge from his body. After him comes a goddess who holds the right arm of the flaming god and at the same time carries a mace as her weapon. Behind her stands a god dressed similarly to the goddess and he carries a weapon which looks like a toothed sword. The fact that the three deities are depicted as standing just behind the attacking god might imply that they are attending the execution of a defeated or judged god.

The scene of Fig. 47 presents three pairs of bearded gods fighting.<sup>2</sup> The pair on the extreme left are nude, while the others wear only loincloths. The gods appear trying to grab the horns and the arms of each other.

Fig. 48 portrays a dramatic scene of the killing of a goddess.<sup>3</sup> A bearded god with a multihorned cap wearing a

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<sup>1</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, II A. 141; cf. Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XXVI, 304.

<sup>2</sup>The seal belongs to Geba, governor of Susa, who was vassal of Manishtousou, king of Akkad and son of Sargon I. Its inscription reads Gé-bá iššak Elamtim<sup>K1</sup>, "Geba ishakou (patesi) of Elam." Delaporte, CCOL, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>Moorgart, AAM, p. 87, fig. 211.

bow and a quiver full of arrows plunges his dagger into the nude plexus of a goddess who has her hands tied behind her back. The goddess has a sun head with conspicuous tri-angled rays as locks, of which one is pulled down by the killer god. The most notable feature of the goddess is the only eye in her forehead.<sup>1</sup>

In another Akkadian seal,<sup>2</sup> a radiant nude god appears in the company of another god who is mistreating a god that is depicted as falling with his broken weapons (Fig. 49). The rays emerge from the legs of the flaming god in a way that covers up all of his body. Behind them, two other gods--one nude and the other wearing a long skirt--are engaged in a fight, each grabbing the horns of the other. Between them a smaller female god with long skirt beats the nude one with her weapon.

The scene of Fig. 50 portrays two gods beating a kneeling deity.<sup>3</sup> The victim is being pulled by hair and beard by the two gods who, with raised arms, are about to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; see also H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort and Ashmole Bernard, Art in the Ancient World (Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 108., fig. 125. The plaque has been dated from the Neo Sumerian epoch ca. 2025-1763 B.C.; Ruth Opificius, Das albabylonische Terrakotta-relief (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961), p. 136, pl. XIII, 488.

<sup>2</sup>Briggs Buchanan, Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 164, no. 432, (hereafter ENES).

<sup>3</sup>Frankfort, CS, pl. XXIII.a; Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. XLI, 482.

strike the falling deity.<sup>1</sup> In an adjoining scene, the seal also portrays a resplendent god who stands on a stepped mountain, brandishing a saw-tooth knife and a scepter before a deity who stands in front of him.

A similar scene is found in Fig. 51 which is derived from a seal<sup>2</sup> that portrays a seated nude god being attacked by two gods who both carry swords. The god on the right side has rays emerging from his back and he plucks the beard of the defenceless god. At the same time he kicks him in the groin with his right leg and also grasps the left hand of his victim. The other attacking god holds the right arm of the victim in both of his hands. A third god who carries a sword is shown at the right side, standing before a tree.

A Sargonic seal portrays three different scenes of fighting divinities.<sup>3</sup> First, a lion-headed deity is being beaten by a iridescent god who grabs him by his left arm. At the same time he strikes his head with his right hand (Fig. 52). Then follows a scene in which a god in chains

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<sup>1</sup>The scene is interpreted in relation to the myth of Zu; when the Bird-man is conquered by the god Ninurta and the tablets of destiny are recovered then Zu is executed. Ibid., pp. 133-137.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Henning von der Osten, Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pl. XIV, no. 470, (hereafter AOSEN).

<sup>3</sup>Frankfort, "Sargonic Seals," Iraq 1 (1934):pl. III b; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. VII, 68.

is killed by another resplendent deity. The killer god leans one foot against the prisoner deity and pulls up his head by his beard while he plunges his dagger into the bare throat of his victim. Behind the god who is being executed, another god tries to sustain the victim.<sup>1</sup> In the lower right corner of the seal, two gods in smaller size are shown fighting.

Fig. 53 depicts a seal which comes from the first Babylonian Dynasty<sup>2</sup> and portrays a double scene. On the right side a deity holds the dead body of an iridescent god before a standing god. The latter is also radiant and holds a sawtooth sword with his right hand. At the left side appears a demonic bird-god holding three victims.<sup>3</sup>

A cylinder seal (Fig. 54) depicts the execution of a god who is being mistreated by a god and a goddess in the presence of another female deity.<sup>4</sup> The scene of this seal

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<sup>1</sup>Frankfort, "Sargonic Seals," p. 23. This scene is interpreted as an illustration of the execution of Kingu, after the defeat of Tiamat.

<sup>2</sup>Frankfort, CS, pl. XVIIId; Boehmer, EGAZ, pl. 39, 340; C. Leonard Woolley, Ur Excavations, vol. II. The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonic Graves Excavated Between 1926 and 1931 (Oxford: The University Press, 1934), pl. 216, fig. 394. U.9026 (hereafter Ur).

<sup>3</sup>See below, p. 244.

<sup>4</sup>p. Amiet, "The Mythological Repertory in Cylinder Seals of the Agade Period (c. 2335-2115 BC)," in Ancient Art in Seals, ed. E. Porada (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), fig. II-12; Woolley, Ur, 2:pl. 214, fig. 357.U.9694.

has been interpreted in different ways.<sup>1</sup> The subdued god is seated defenceless on a mountain--shaped as a heap of stones--while a god pulls his beard and ties him up with a rope. Simultaneously a goddess tears his hair backwards.

Fig. 55 presents some of the figures that appear on a tablet case.<sup>2</sup> This depicts two gods being smitten by two other gods. The scene on the left presents a god grasping the horns of another god and beating him with a mace. The striking god wears a short kilt and also steps on a knee of his victim, who at the blow has dropped his weapon. The other scene shows a fallen god on the top of a mountain, while his attacker persists in beating him.

All of these descriptions give some details of the array of thought that the Mesopotamian people believed about their warrior gods. It may be noted here that the warfare presented within the Mesopotamian pantheon portrays a two-sided battle in which the totality of the gods are involved in one way or another. It is a war between the primeval gods and the younger deities. The former are defeated and, as a result of their success, victorious gods establish a new cosmic order which is approved by the whole *puhur ilāni*.

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<sup>1</sup>Some think that this seal depicts an incarcerated deity being liberated by a god and a goddess. Frankfort, *CS*, pp. 115-117.

<sup>2</sup>Buchanan, *ENES*, pp. 442-443.

## The Divine Armies of Hatti

The mythic literature of the Hittites also refers to warrior gods who were engaged in combat over kingship among them.<sup>1</sup> As a general rule, if they succeeded they were installed in heavenly regions, while if they were defeated, they were banished to the underworld regions.<sup>2</sup> It seems that to this category of banished divinities belonged their so-called "primeval gods"--*kauiles siunes*--who in the Hittite understanding were the Mesopotamian An gods, the great gods of the Sumerians.<sup>3</sup>

In the fragmented mythic song of Ullikummi the battles of Teshub the storm-god against Ullikummi the son of Kumarbi are mentioned. As soon as Ullikummi was born, his father named him and assigned him his duties against Teshub and the gods who were with him. Ullikummi was to obtain the kingship of heaven, and he was to crush the storm-god and his brother Tasmisu. Besides this he was to destroy the dwelling of the gods in heaven, scattering all of the gods and smashing them like empty vessels.<sup>4</sup> Then

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup>Gurney, *SAHR*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>E. Reiner and H. G. Güterbock, "The Great Prayer to Ishtar and Its Two Versions from Bogazköy," *JCS* 21 (1967): 265-266.

<sup>4</sup>The text says: "Ullikummi be his name! Up to heaven to kingship he shall go, and Kummiya, the dear town, he shall press down! But the Storm-god he shall hit . . . and like an ant with (his) foot he shall crush him! But



when the time came for the fight, Teshub and his seventy gods, led by the warrior-god Astabi, confronted Ullikummi.<sup>1</sup> The weaponry of this celestial army is described as consisting of thunder-storms, rains, and winds that broke rocks, lightning, axes, and an impressive chariotry.<sup>2</sup> But in spite of all these armaments they were still defeated.<sup>3</sup> Only the intervention of Ea weakened Ullikummi in such a way that Teshub was able to attack Kumarbi's son and defeat him,<sup>4</sup> with thunder from his chariot.

Another fragmentary myth presents the contendings of the storm-god and the dragon Illuyankas.<sup>5</sup> When the storm-god is defeated, he calls to all the gods to help him.<sup>6</sup> With the help of human beings, the dragon is snared and the storm-god attacks and eventually kills the dragon.

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Tasmisu like a . . . reed he shall break off! All the gods down from heaven like birds he shall scatter, and like empty vessels he shall break." Güterbock, SoU1 Tab.I col. III.18-25.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Tab. III, col. III.6-25-col. IV.8-10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Tab. III, col. I.2-13. For a list of the weapons of the gods represented in the Anatolian region, see N. Özgüç, Impressions from Kültepe, pp. 52-53.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Tab. III, col. I.17-24.

<sup>4</sup>The final victory of Teshub is assumed, since the text is broken. But the status of Teshub in the pantheon makes it possible to assume his victory over Ullikummu.

<sup>5</sup>Alberto Bernabé, ed., "La lucha contra el dragón," Textos literarios hetitas (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979), pp. 33-37 (hereafter TLH).

<sup>6</sup>"The storm-god asked of all the gods, Come to help me" (ibid., p. 33).

However, there is not a clear description of some intervention by the rest of the gods in the battle.<sup>1</sup> Fig. 56 sketches the battle of the storm-god with Illuyankas as it has been represented in an orthostat of Malatya.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another myth relates the battle of Teshub and Ishtar against Kal.<sup>3</sup> The text is fragmentary at the beginning, but the preserved part begins by mentioning that Kal hits one breast of Ishtar with an arrow but misses the other one. At this, Teshub attacks Kal with his chariot and Kal falls in the assault. But Kal recovers and when it is least expected he hits Teshub from behind his back with a big stone. The storm-god collapses and is decisively defeated. Teshub accepts the defeat and Kal begins a kingship which proves to be unworthy. Through divine messengers the great gods announce to Kal their discontent: "Since we made you king of heaven, you never did anything. You never convened us to an assembly."<sup>4</sup>

The passage in the text which describes the exact details of the accusations against Kal is damaged, but in the remaining legible text, Ea appears to be counseling

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<sup>1</sup>The only possible intervention of the other gods is referred to in this way, "the storm-god arrived and killed the dragon. And the gods were with him" (ibid., p. 34).

<sup>2</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, pl. 104.

<sup>3</sup>"El reinado del dios Kal" (TLH, pp. 203-207).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

Teshub and Ninurta, his vizier gods, how to proceed against Kal. This time the victory of Teshub is definitive since

They laid him down (. . .)  
and (. . .) to Kal;  
They cut him in pieces by the back  
from top to bottom with the chariot.  
And his legs they chopped up in seven hundred  
parts from his back.<sup>1</sup>

In the short remaining portion of the text, the defeated Kal appears calling Teshub "my lord," which indicates that the storm-god has reconquered the kingship within the pantheon in this second battle.

In general, written material that presents descriptions of the warrior deities among the Hittites is not as abundant as it is from Mesopotamia. However, their iconography appears more eloquent since the Hattian gods are quite often presented in warrior scenes. Reference to the carved walls of the sanctuary of Yazilikaya<sup>2</sup> ought to be made again, since this monumental representation not only depicts the high gods in warrior attire, but their armies of lesser gods are also explicitly presented. The repeated motif of the twelve running warrior-gods (Fig. 28) may well represent not only the close anthropomorphic conception of the divine Hattian hosts but also their eagerness to fight the battles of the gods. The storm-god is especially

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 99-105.

represented as the warrior god par excellence.<sup>1</sup> However, this concept was not present only among the Hittites; it was also present throughout the whole ANE, even though it came in a variety of forms.<sup>2</sup> The Hattian conception of warrior deities clothed in blazing attire appears represented in seal impressions. Fig. 57 portrays the left side of the upper register of a Hittite seal which has been mentioned above<sup>3</sup> as portraying a group of deities in which two of them are depicted as flaming beings (see Figs. 18-19). Parrot noticed the similarity of this representation with Akkadian flaming gods,<sup>4</sup> which also reminds one of the descriptions of Marduk mentioned above.<sup>5</sup> The scene also presents a god riding in his chariot, while other deities appear riding on the back of their sacred beasts. Figs. 58 to 62 present some seals that portray warrior deities who were known as winged deities. Sometimes these warrior

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<sup>1</sup>See Ward, SCWA, pp. 288-292.

<sup>2</sup>For a study of the storm-god in the ANE milieu, see Vanel, L'iconographie de dieu de l'orage dans le Proche-Orient.

<sup>3</sup>The seal has been identified as Hittite in origin, based on peculiar motifs such as griffins. See A. Parrot, "Cylindre hittite nouvellement acquis (AO 20138)," Syr 28 (1951):180-190, pl. XIII, XIV.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp.187-188, fig. 5.

<sup>5</sup>See above, p. 127.

entities appear as hybrid creatures (Fig. 59).<sup>1</sup> They are also usually depicted wearing the weapons common to those times such as mace (Figs. 60 and 61),<sup>2</sup> bows and arrows (Figs. 59 to 61), spear (Fig. 56, 60, 62),<sup>3</sup> axes (Figs. 61, 62),<sup>4</sup> or some sort of curved scimitar (Fig. 62).

In general, among the Hittites, the warfare within the pantheon appears to be between a defiant deity and the reigning god. The most documented episode is the one that occurs when the dethroned deity refuses to accept his

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<sup>1</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, II A 918. This seal depicts the weather-god surrounded by two winged deities. The one at his right side wields an axe and the one at his left holds a bow and arrows, the Hittite litus. The weather-god himself wields a mace and is depicted as crushing a snake which Winter interprets as his triumph over the powers of death (Göttin, p. 225).

<sup>2</sup>For Fig. 52 see Delaporte, CCOBN, no. 497. For Fig. 58 see, Dominique Collon, ACS, p. 55, fig. 21. Notice the similarity of motif of Figs. 58 and 60. Both gods dress similar and both brandish similar weapons.

<sup>3</sup>Fig. 53 depicts a cylinder-seal that belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of New York. It was published by Lajard, Mythra, pl. XLII, 4; William Hayes Ward, "The Hittite Gods in Hittite Art," Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America 3 (1899):20, fig. 21; Delaporte, CCOBN, No. 497. The scene presents three warrior-gods, one of whom is winged. For Fig. 61, see S. Alp, Zylinder und Stampelsiegel aus Karahöyük bei Konya [Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından V - Seri-Sa. 26] (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından, 1968), fig. 13.

<sup>4</sup>For Fig. 62, see Lajard, Mythra, pl. LIV, 8. The scene portrays the meeting of two deities. The god presents to the goddess a strangled hybrid quadruped. The goddess who appears half-uncovered is winged and has a spear and a curved scimitar. In addition, three pairs of different hybrid animals appear facing each other as if they were in a protective position. See also Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. XXI, 460.

defeat, as was the case with the son of Kumarbi. Only in this case, the whole pantheon is said to be threatened, and the other gods are willing to help the leader god on behalf of the divine community.<sup>1</sup>

#### Ugaritic Divine Warfare

Ugaritic mythology refers to deities engaged in wars among themselves. Especially the so-called cycles of Baal and Anat contain references to a divine warfare in which the gods and their companions battled,<sup>2</sup> usually in conspiracy against each other.<sup>3</sup> Some texts mention certain divinities related to some major god as being his glmm, "attendants."<sup>4</sup> These deities appear to act as "servitors,"<sup>5</sup> or "picked fighters,"<sup>6</sup> going at the side of their

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<sup>1</sup>When Teshub is defeated by Ullikummi, the dwelling of the gods and the established order among them seem to be menaced. The attempts of Ishtar also prove to be in vain, so Ea undermined the power of Kumarbi's son. Only then does the storm-god prevail and establish his kingship.

<sup>2</sup>As Stevens rightly points out, "The texts reveal the tumultuous world of the gods and goddesses of Canaan." Bruce A. Stevens, "<Why 'must' the Son of Man suffer?> The Divine Warrior in the Gospel of Mark," Biblische Zeitschrift 31 (1987):102.

<sup>3</sup>As Obermann remarks, "The deities who have allied themselves with Baal have, ipso facto, entered a conspiracy against other gods." Ugaritic Mythology, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>glmh/k "his/your attendants" (CCTA 6.VI.8; 5.V.89).

<sup>5</sup>CCTA 3.II.4. G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1966), p. 85 (hereafter CML).

<sup>6</sup>A. Ginsberg, ANET, p., 136.

leaders as warriors into the battles<sup>1</sup> or accompanying them to the assemblies.

These divine warrior retinues appear to be mentioned in the epic of Keret when the gods were assembled to the sacrifice offered by the king.<sup>2</sup> Some have suggested that on this occasion the company of the gods attended "in its tripartite division,"<sup>3</sup> while they have referred to this as the "Assembly of the gods in its triplicity."<sup>4</sup> The Rins<sup>5</sup> point out, however, that the term tlth, which has been taken as "tripartite division," or "triplicity," could refer rather to another dimension of the Ugaritic divine Assembly. They point out that in the phrase [-]dt ilm tlt (KTU 1.15 II.7), the term tlth could instead be taken as cognate with Hebrew "shlyshyn, his lieutenants, his retinue . . . such as each major deity has;" and in this way "dt ilm, glm, or tlth are the warriors accompanying a chief deity."<sup>6</sup> So, in this way, Keret appears to have been honored even more highly on that occasion, since to his

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<sup>1</sup>Albright prefers to designate these deities related to Baal as his warriors. See YGC, p. 125, n. 89.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>See above, p. 55, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes C. de Moor-Klaas Spronk, "Problematical Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (II)," UF 4 (1967):174.

<sup>5</sup>Svi Rin and Sifra Rin, "Ugaritic Old Testament Affinities, II," Acts of the Gods. The Ugaritic Epic Poetry (Jerusalem: 'Imbal, 1968), p. xli.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

invitation the principal gods came accompanied by their warrior hosts.<sup>1</sup>

It has been suggested that within the Ugaritic mythological accounts can be detected a hidden conflict between El and Baal.<sup>2</sup> Although some episodes present scenes in which some gods appear acting disrespectfully towards El,<sup>3</sup> however, there is no explicit battle between the head of the pantheon and the other gods mentioned in the texts.<sup>4</sup>

Depictions of El as a fierce warrior or participating in scenes of war are still missing from the texts. The picture of him presented in general is that of a paternal old god watching passively and sometimes in a frightened manner while his divine progeny quarrel. Sometimes he also

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<sup>1</sup>Explicit evidence for divine companies around principal deities other than Baal are scarce and usually broken. However, the mention of attendants for them is elsewhere attested.

<sup>2</sup>Kapelrud, BIRS, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>Baal rejects his decree regarding Yamm's sovereignty before the assembly of the gods (see pp. 50-52), and Anat menaces him with rudeness (KTU 1.3 V, 19-25).

<sup>4</sup>Gray points out that although certain elements could be considered properly as such a conflict, the over-emphasis on this aspect at the present can only be made on the basis of certain fragmented passages of Phoenician religion as well as Hurrian Mythology. John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan. The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), pp. 115-117 (hereafter LeCa). Typical of this Phoenicio-Hurrian emphasis on interpretation are Cassuto, Anat; Kapelrud, BRST; Oldenburg, CBEB; and others. The Ugaritic texts always have the picture of El as the indisputable head of the pantheon.



takes sides in those quarrels, and this has led some scholars to stress the passive role of El in the affairs of the pantheon.<sup>1</sup> However, the extant texts make it possible to see at least some traces of a line of tradition in Ugaritic mythology through which El can be regarded as a warrior deity.<sup>2</sup>

This possibility is especially perceived through the Rephaim Texts<sup>3</sup> where the rpum deities are mentioned. It is now known that in Ugaritic, the "rp' was a divine epithet with a general meaning appropriate to a number of different gods,"<sup>4</sup> and that "the rpum are a band of divine or semi-divine (ilnym) chariot-warriors."<sup>5</sup> Since rpu is an epithet that also designates El,<sup>6</sup> then the father of the gods is the rpu par excellence, and the rpum can be equaled to "all the gods in El's entourage."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Among them Kapelrud, Oldenburg, Pope.

<sup>2</sup>Miller, DWEI, p. 49. Cunchillos has recently suggested the possibility of Mot as the warrior "champion de El, défenseur des 'fils d'Athirat'" ("Le dieu Mut, guerrier de El," p. 218.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon, UM, pp. 121-124.

<sup>4</sup>C. E. L'Heureux, "The y<sup>e</sup>lide harapa'--A Cultic Association of Warriors," BASOR 221 (1976):84. On the contrary, J. Gray sees the Rephaim only as the king and some of his officials, "The Rephaim," PEQ 81 (1948-49):127-129.

<sup>5</sup>B. Margulis, "A Ugaritic Psalm," JBL 89 (1970): 300-301.

<sup>6</sup>C. Virolleaud, Ug, 5:551-557.

<sup>7</sup>L'Heureux, "The y<sup>e</sup>lide harapa'," p. 84.

The fact that Baal and Anat also appear as having some *rpum* in their coteries stresses the fact that El is properly a *rpu*, head of all the *rpum*, since he is called in a Ugaritic hymn, *rpu mlk 'lm*.<sup>1</sup> This, along with the indication that he came at the invitation of Keret presiding over the hosts of warrior gods,<sup>2</sup> can present El as a warrior deity.

Otherwise it is quite difficult to see a non-warrior deity as head of a pantheon in which most of the principal gods are known mainly as warriors. The ruling of a divine warrior community at least conveys the necessity of a warrior head, who in this case would be El.

That Baal is warrior is clear at once. The myth of the fight between Baal and Yamm gives some glimpses of the acts of Baal as a warrior deity. He vociferously rejects the verdict that gave the kingship to Yamm and strikes with his sword the messengers sent to ratify the decision of the divine assembly. The text of the myth is incomplete, but some of the battle passage is conserved. In KTU 1.2 IV, 1-32 Baal appears fighting with arrows, fire, sword, and dagger against Yamm, but without great results. In fact, Baal seems to be exhausted. At this point the god Kotaru

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<sup>1</sup>Ug 5:555.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 80-81.

provides him a double mace which becomes an effective weapon with which to annihilate Yamm.<sup>1</sup>

Cassuto has suggested that between Yamm and Mot there existed an alliance in their battle against Baal.<sup>2</sup> However, the account of the conflicts between Baal and these two gods does not describe any united warfare against Baal,<sup>3</sup> and such cooperation would be alien to any other ANE mythological text.<sup>4</sup>

The myth of the palace of Baal mentions the goddess Anat speaking about enemies that Baal had to confront. Since he sent his messengers to invite Anat, she at once accepts the invitation asking at the same time that Baal should "set in the skys his clouds" and "turn on his lightnings."<sup>5</sup> This display of natural powers had the purpose of terrifying the enemies of Baal.<sup>6</sup>

The visit of Baal to Attart in company of Anat reveals some hints of his fratricidal quarrels--wars--with

<sup>1</sup>Cunchillos interprets the help of Kotaru as providing Baal with magic arms which surreptitiously are delivered to him. IMC, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Cassuto, Anath, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup>The description is given only on individual quarrels of Baal with Yamm and Mot, and there is no reference to allied forces of his enemies.

<sup>4</sup>S. E. Loewenstamm, Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup>Del Olmo, p. 187.

<sup>6</sup>KTU 1.4 VII, 35-36.

his fellow gods, which apparently were many. The mother goddess calls them, "My assassins! Lo, the assassins of my sons are they! [The exterminators] of my kin-group."<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with this episode Margalit suggests that at this time the goddess is referring to the occasion when Baal had "slain '77 . . . 88' sons-of-Asherah."<sup>2</sup>

In the myth of the quarrels of Baal with Mot, the later mentions a fight that Baal had with one of his enemies. The results were favorable for Baal since he was depicted as crushing and finishing "Lotan, the fleet and tortuous serpent. The seven-headed tyrant"<sup>3</sup>

Some have seen in this passage a reference to a confrontation between the troops of Baal and the forces of Mot who had, as his principal lieutenants, Tannin and Lotan.<sup>4</sup> However, the account of this episode is not detailed in any of the other extant texts. From the declarations of the same Mot, it seems that on this occasion Mot himself was somehow allied with Lotan since he

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<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.4 II, 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>Margalit makes this suggestion based on the Hittite Elkunirsa myth which refers to this episode of Baal. Baruch Margalit, A Matter of >Life< and >Death< A Study of the Baal-Mot Epic (CTA 4-5-6) (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), p. 31 (hereafter MLD). He also points out the possibility of seeing a similar motif in CCTA 12.II.49-50.

<sup>3</sup>KTU 1.5 I, 1-3, 27-31.

<sup>4</sup>René Dussaud, "Les combats sanglants de <sup>c</sup>Anat et le pouvoir universal de El (V AB et VI AB," RHR 118 (1938): 146.

mentions that the destruction of the serpent also affected him. Although the myth asserts the temporary death of Baal, it also mentions his returning to life, and his retaking of the throne. This time he assailed the sons of Attart fiercely, and with club in hand he struck some and dragged the others away. In this way he regained his throne.<sup>1</sup> The final clash between Baal and Mot was a hand-to-hand fight which is described as a series of attacks, one against the other, without results until the goddess Shapshu recriminates Mot and the fight ends with the victory of Baal.

The myth ends showing that the *rpim ilnym* (the repair gods) had now submitted to Baal. The other gods surrounded him as the victorious god.<sup>2</sup> The same ending shows that the victories of Baal against his enemies--"Yamm, Arsu, and Tanan"<sup>3</sup>--are in good measure due to the assistance of helper gods, in this case Kotar-wa-Hasis.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere it is demonstrated that female deities play a great role in Baal's rule.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.6 V, 1-6.

<sup>2</sup>KTU 1.6 VI 45-53.

<sup>3</sup>*ym.arš.wtnn* (KTU 1.6 VI, 51). These three gods are mentioned as have been against Baal.

<sup>4</sup>KTU 1.6 VI, 48-53. The text would also imply that in his fight against these mentioned enemies not only the specified deities but also all those who were surrounding him were included.

<sup>5</sup>Oldenburg, CBEB, p. 70.

It is impossible to speak of the warlike activities of Baal without reference to similar actions of his wife. In fact, all the enemies destroyed by Baal are also said to have been destroyed by Anat. Additional deities who were contrary to Baal are known by name through the actions of this goddess.

In the myth of the palace of Baal, when she sees the messengers that he sent to her, Anat immediately thinks of some possible new confrontation of Baal with his enemies. She wonders who would now be threatening Baal if she herself smote (mḥs),<sup>1</sup> muzzled ('išt<sup>bm</sup>),<sup>2</sup> cut off (šmt),<sup>3</sup> and destroyed (kly)<sup>4</sup> all his enemies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Smite," Margalit, MLD, p. 251; Driver, CaMyLe, p. 158; "to smite, slay," Gordon, UT, no. 1456; "zerschmettern, erschlagen," Aistleitner, WUS, no. 1547; "herir, aplastar, matar," del Olmo, MLC, p. 576.

<sup>2</sup>The 'išt<sup>bm</sup> form used in the passage is seen as the Ift<sup>al</sup> passive of š<sup>bm</sup>, "to muzzle." J. Gray, "The Blood Bath of the Goddess Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts," UF 11 1979: 316, n. 3. Virolleaud (La déesse Anat, p. 53), first related the form 'išt<sup>bm</sup> to the Arabic cognate šibam, "to muzzle the mouth of an animal" (Cassuto, Anath, p. 134). Hence lš<sup>bm</sup> is translated "to fetter, muzzle" (Gordon, UT, no. 2378; idem., UM, no. 1801). This somehow relates the episode of Anat with the fettering-of-monsters motif so distinctively described in the ANE texts "describing the fight of a god against them." Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "Anat's Victory over the Tunnanu," JSS 20 (1975):26-27.

<sup>3</sup>Oldenburg translates šmt as "destroy, to cut off," relating it to its Hebrew cognate šmt in Piel (CBEB, p. 198, n. 2). Likewise Gordon (UT, no. 2176).

<sup>4</sup>kly means "to destroy" (Gordon, UT, no. 1236); "acabar con, destruir, consumir" (del Olmo, MLC, p. 565).

This is a rather detailed description of her victories achieved "over the god sea and a host of monsters allied to him."<sup>1</sup> These points mentioned by Anat are in addition to the other battles referred to in which Baal fought with these opposing gods. Through all these references a clear picture is presented of the fierce character of this goddess as a warrior.<sup>2</sup>

KTU 1.3 II refers to how she behaved in her battles. She cut off the heads and limbs of her enemies like playthings, she crushed cities and exterminated peoples without any mercy. She hanged heads on her back and fastened hands on her girdle, and in the paroxysm of her triumph she rejoiced, wading in the blood and gore of her enemies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Seven deities are explicitly mentioned--Yamm, Nahar, Tannin, Arsu, 'Atk, Isat, Dubb (KTU 1.3 III 38-46)--as being destroyed by Anat. Since they are mentioned as defeated enemies of Baal, it is clear that the accounts of the encounters of Baal with these antagonistic gods have not yet been found, likewise the details of the dealings of Anat with them. However, all the verbs describing the dealings of Anat stress the meaning of an annihilating action.

<sup>1</sup>S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Muzzling of the Tannin in the Ugaritic Myth," IEJ 9 (1959):260.

<sup>2</sup>Kapelrud indicates that she was an extremely "demanding goddess of battle, never satisfied," and adds that "the picture we get of Anat as a war goddess makes it clear that she was always ready to fight a battle of her own. She enjoyed fighting and was present when Baal had his great struggles." The Violent Goddess (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), pp. 52, 63.

<sup>3</sup>For a description of the warrior adventures of Anat, see also Kapelrud, The Violent Goddess, pp. 49-82.

A similar picture of her is given in the accounts of the fight of Baal with Mot. When Mot succeeded in slaying her husband, she avenged him with unrestrained wrath:

She seized the divine-one Mot.  
 With a sword-blade she cleaved him.  
 With a sieve she winnowed him.  
 With the fire she burnt him.  
 With a millstone she ground him.  
 In the field she scattered him.<sup>1</sup>

The myths tend to show that in a great measure Baal is mighty in battle through the help of his goddesses.<sup>2</sup> This can be seen in the reference to Anat which makes the victories of Baal her own. It is possible that Anat "followed her husband in all battles where he was active and that consequently his victories were hers too."<sup>3</sup> The warlike actions of this goddess appear to be in great measure not only in association with but also in support of her husband and his armies.<sup>4</sup> This is evident from the fact that Baal recognizes the participation of Anat<sup>5</sup> in the destruction of his enemies when he says, "we have planted my enemies in the earth and in the dust those who rise

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<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.6 II, 30-35; Margalit, MLC, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup>Oldenburg, CBEB, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Kapelrud, BRST, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup>Miller, DWEI, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup>As Lokkegaard observes, "It is a striking fact that Baal only conquers by help of Anat." F. Lokkegaard, "The House of Baal," AcOr 22 (1955):10.



against me."<sup>1</sup> In the same way the warring forces of both deities are mentioned together as *mhr.b<sup>c</sup>l.wmhr.<sup>c</sup>nt*, "the warriors of Baal and the warriors of Anat."<sup>2</sup>

Representations of the warrior gods of Canaan in their different activities are not scarce. Ras Shamra in particular has provided some outstanding figures that give us an idea of the conception that Ugaritians and their contemporaneous neighbors had of the celestial hosts of their pantheon. A well-known representation of Baal as a warrior god is given in Fig. 89, where the god is depicted wielding a mace and holding his thunderbolt. However, this picture may also portray the role of Baal as a protector deity.<sup>3</sup> A cylinder seal found in Ras Shamra<sup>4</sup> portrays the warrior goddess Anat as a winged goddess.<sup>5</sup> She is represented with a horned helmet, seated on her sacred animal (Fig. 87) and holding a lion with a cord.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Kapelrud, *BIRS*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>As Kapelrud says, there are some "indications that Baal and Anat were regarded as one unit in their capacity as fighters. Their 'soldiers' are mentioned together: *mhr.b<sup>c</sup>l.wmhr.<sup>c</sup>nt*, the soldiers of Baal and the soldiers of Anat." *BIRS*, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup>See pp. 215-216.

<sup>4</sup>Claude F.-A. Schaeffer, "La patère et la coupe en or de Ras Shamra," *Ug* 2 (1949):41, fig. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Schaeffer, *Corpus des cylindres-seaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d'Enkomi-Alasia* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1983), R.S. 5.089, pp. 16-17 (hereafter as *CCRSU*). Cunchillos mentions that the figure of Anat as a flying goddess is not strange in the Ugaritic literature. *IMC*, pp. 9, 92.

A cylinder seal unearthed at Ras Shamra<sup>1</sup> presents the well-known motif of the battle of Baal and the serpent Lotan. This scene pictures Baal running over a monstrous serpent (Fig. 63), intending to crush its head, while two of his attendants second him bearing arms into the combat.<sup>2</sup>

Summing up the data concerning the warrior gods, it might be said that the different ANE myths give us a picture of belligerent deities. There is no pantheon whose deities were not engaged in some kind of conflict among themselves. The principal cause of the fighting has to do with supremacy among them.

On the Mesopotamian side there is a picture of all the younger deities opposed to the ancestral gods. The latter were defeated and destroyed. In the Anatolian counterpart, it is the matter of kingship among the gods which is at stake. In the Ugaritic area, it is a rebellion against the decreed sovereignty of a favored god that is at issue.

The celestial armies are arranged according to the sympathies of the gods and these matters are clarified in fierce battles where celestial weaponry is used and the gods are depicted as displaying their warlike attire.

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<sup>1</sup>Violleaud, "La légende de Baal, dieu des Phéniciens," RES, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>Porada, CANES, I, pl. CI, 688e.

It is mainly the major gods who are described as having a special coterie of warrior gods, and these are always prompt to help and fight at the side of their masters.

In appearance the gods are depicted in terms of supernatural power. Splendor is a major divine feature. Many times these warrior gods were also portrayed as winged. The wings ascribed to them not only the needed swiftness of the gods but also conveyed the idea that they belong to the celestial realms.

Chariotry and weaponry are part of the celestial armies, and the forces of nature are also part of the divine equipment.

#### The Protector or Intercessor Deities

Another common motif in the literary and iconographical mythical material of the ANE is the protector deity. Throughout the Fertile Crescent men worshiped in a very devoted way numberless gods and goddesses who were recognized as personal protector deities. This concept is shown distinctly within the varied and diverse ANE documentation in written and iconographical form.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Vorländer in his exhaustive study on the topic of the personal god points out that the diverse material through which the concept of the protector god is deduced can be classified as follows: (1) Royal inscriptions from Sumer and Akkad (since Old Sumerian times); (2) Akkadian letters (in particular from Old Babylonian times); (3) names of persons (since old Sumerian times); (4) conjurations in Sumerian and Akkadian languages (partly from Old

Winter points out that an essential aspect of worshipping a deity throughout the ANE was the consciousness of the nearness of a god(dess) as an assistant (helper), protector, or protectress, i.e., guardian god or goddess.<sup>1</sup> This protective nearness was felt to be essential and necessary because, according the religious thinking then in vogue, man saw himself immersed amidst divine forces which were always inimical to his interests.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Mesopotamian Protector Gods

Mesopotamian prayers portray the wide and varied spiritual concept of protectorship by describing it with words of earnest conviction addressed by the devotees to their deities. The terms with which these spirits or gods are mentioned are specific names and these are derived from their mythological background.

According to the Mesopotamian concept, the protector goddess par excellence was Lama, and she was one of the

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Babylonian/Assyrian times, and particularly from the Library of Assurbanipal); (5) prayers and conjurational prayers (exclusively since Neo-Assyrian/Neo-Babylonian times); (6) omen literature (since Old Babylon times); (7) Wisdom texts (in particular from Middle and Neo-Babylonian and Assyrian times); (8) legal documents (since Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian times); and (9) Letters to gods (from Neo-Sumerian and Old-Babylonian times). MeGo, pp. 6-7.

<sup>1</sup>Winter, Götin, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup>Saggs, CWB, p. 302.

most popular deities of the Babylonian pantheon.<sup>1</sup> However, there were many other lesser deities whose function was to act as protector gods. The most common terms given to these protector deities are shedu,<sup>2</sup> lamassu,<sup>3</sup> ilu,<sup>4</sup> ishtari.<sup>5</sup> These shedu and lamassu deities appear sometimes alone<sup>6</sup> but

<sup>1</sup>Theophilus G. Pinches, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1906), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>The shedu (Sumerian <sup>d</sup>Alad) is known as a protector genie (Colman-Gabriel Gostony, Dictionnaire d'étymologie sumérienne et grammaire comparée [Paris: Editions de Boccard, 1977], p. 3, hereafter cited as DES). As a masculine protective spirit it represents vigor and vitality (AHB, s.v. šed(m); see also GMVO, p. 49).

<sup>3</sup>The term lamassu (Sumerian <sup>d</sup>Lamma) designates a protective spirit especially related to good fortune and health. It is generally referred to as "the guardian genius" or minor deity who aided men in their activities (Gordon, SP, p. 308). In earlier times this protector spirit always appeared as a female figure (see CAD 9:60-66, s.v. lamassu); this deity is always related to Lama, the protector goddess par excellence (von Soden, AHB, s.v. lamassu(m); Haussig, GMVO, p. 49; Tallqvist, AGE, p. 117).

<sup>4</sup>ilu means, first of all, a god, deity; then a protective deity and, among other meanings, demon, and sometimes evil spirit (CAD, s.v. ilu). As a protector deity it means the personal god frequently mentioned in Mesopotamian texts (AHB, s.v. i'lu[m]).

<sup>5</sup>ištari[u] means first of all a goddess, deity (AHB, p. 399); then a personal or protective goddess. Sometimes it indicates the name of a specific disease caused by evil demons. It is generally used in parallelism with ilu as the feminine peer of it (CAD, s.v. "ištaru," 7:271-274).

<sup>6</sup>ana še-e-di nasiri (Afo 19:51, ln. 78); ana ameli šuati <sup>d</sup>LAMMA-su TE-šú "his protective spirit will (again) draw near the man" (CAD, s.v. "lamassu," 9:62).

often together<sup>1</sup> as a corresponding pair of protective entities. Oppenheim pointed out that the masculine *ilu* and the feminine *lamassu* appear elsewhere with their respective companion spirits--*ilu* with *ishtar* (goddess), and *lamassu* with *shedū* who is masculine. At times all four entities are mentioned or are invoked to benefit the penitent.<sup>2</sup> This varied terminology has always presented a problem for exact translation. However, the divine determinative that accompanies them, as well as the context in which they always appear, leaves no doubt about their membership in the pantheon and their protective function.

Vorländer notes that although protective functions ascribed to some gods of the ANE--such as god of the land, god of the city, god of vegetation, etc.--can fit with the function of the personal god, this function is distinctive. The personal god stayed with an individual and his family in close company and in a protective relationship.<sup>3</sup>

In trying to grasp the exact meaning of the diverse terms with which these protective divine entities are

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<sup>1</sup>*Ilanu rabiuti sud dumqi* <sup>d</sup>LAMMA *dumqi ukinnu idiija* "the great gods have assigned to me a favorable *šedu*-spirit and a favorable *lamassu*-spirit." *OECT* 6 pl. 11 K.1290:16; *ilšedu//illamassu AfO* 14:130, 146 (*bit meseri*); *BMS* 12:110; Ebeling, *Handerhebung* 82:110; cf. *lursi šeda damqa sa panuqi sa arkiki alikat* <sup>d</sup>Lamma *lursi*, *ibid.* 62:31; [...] *Uri<sup>ki</sup> it-ti še-di-e la-mas-si-e*, *AnSt* 7, 132, 43 (let. of Gilg.).

<sup>2</sup>A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 200 (hereafter *AnMe*).

<sup>3</sup>*MeGo*, p. 165.

named, Oppenheim notes that in some prayers, only one of these entities is referred to with the name *ilu*, but sometimes the name *lamassu* is mentioned "for which one may use--as a keening rather than a translation--the term *angel*."<sup>1</sup> After giving some brief comparative suggestions for the terms, he concludes that "the use of *lamassu* in Old Babylonian feminine personal names actually suggests the meaning '*angel*'."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the concept of the personal god within the boundaries of the Fertile Crescent was very wide and its significance was covered by many names. Besides those already mentioned, Vorländer lists no less than twenty-two different names for these protective personal deities,<sup>3</sup> and each designation certainly portrays a special understanding of this concept for the ANE inhabitant.

Thus within the confines of Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and Syro-Palestine, the protector-personal deities were known with appellatives such as "my (thy) god," "god of NN," "god of mankind," "my (thy, etc.) master," "my (thy, etc.) mistress," "the god of my fathers," "god of the family," "my creator," "my (thy, etc.) father," "my (thy, etc.) mother," "the god who bestows prosperity," "guardian

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<sup>1</sup>AnMe, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>3</sup>MeGo, p. 165.

of prosperity and life," "(my) shepherd," "protector god," "god of my leadership," "merciful and intercessor," etc.<sup>1</sup>

Although the personal-protector deity clearly was a widespread conception within the ANE, it would seem that the most remote past of this motif was cradled within Mesopotamian boundaries. Kramer estimated that "the belief in the existence of a 'personal god' was evolved by the Sumerians at least as early as the middle of the third millenium B.C."<sup>2</sup> Egyptians, Sumerians, and Babylonians were acquainted in their religion with those personal gods and goddesses. They were known apart from the major deities, those to whom all were subjected.<sup>3</sup>

Albeit the personal god was a lesser divinity, he or she was indeed regarded as being especially able to protect from demons. Such is the picture presented elsewhere in the incantation texts. In a Šurpu text it says:

"the [evil] [demon], the evil 'binder',  
the evil ghost, the evil devil, the evil god,  
the evil lurking demon . . .  
Shall not approach him. . . .  
[a guardian] spirit, a protecting goddess . . .  
[...] may be present in his body and in  
his dwelling  
may walk at his [side], may be present  
in his body."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 165-166.

<sup>2</sup>S. N. Kramer, "Sumerian Literature and the Bible," AnBi 12 (1959):185-204.

<sup>3</sup>Claus Westermann, God's Angels Need No Wings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 105.

<sup>4</sup>Reiner, Šurpu IX:81, 83-86.



Besides this protective capability it was also the cleverness of presenting a case before the great gods<sup>1</sup> and, above all, the attentive watching over his petition that made the protector gods so important.<sup>2</sup>

These minor deities were believed to have been given as tutelary genii<sup>3</sup> to men, and therefore they were set apart as watchers and guardians of them.<sup>4</sup> In an omen text it is mentioned that these entities are bound to men.<sup>5</sup> These genies or spirits were also portrayed as standing before the great gods and following them, consequently they could be sent in behalf of someone in response to his fervent prayers.

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 185-186.

<sup>2</sup>Von Soden, "Religion und Sittlichkeit nach den Anschauungen der Babylonier," *ZDMG* 89 (1979):143-169; Delaporte, Mesopotamia: The Babylonian and Assyrian Civilization (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), pp. 159-160; Georges Contenau, Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), p. 263 (hereafter ELBA).

<sup>3</sup>lama-dlama igi-šag mu-na-am-si, "gave him the tutelary genii of friendly mien." Kramer, VTSup 3:176,180.

<sup>4</sup>dudusig(?) ka-e en-nu-un-ag maskim nu-un-da-an-tab. "Set him . . . good(?) . . . spirit (as a) watch and guardian" (ibid.; Contenau mentions that "a man's personal god was always ready to bring his dependent or 'son' before the presence of the great god" and in same way "he would watch him from evil influences, alike from the omnipresent demons and from ghosts in search of victims" (ELBA, p. 263).

<sup>5</sup>LÚ sù dLAMA ù šedu ina zumrišu rakis, "the protective spirits L. and šedu are (bound) to this man's body." Franz Köcher and A. L. Oppenheim, "The Old Babylonian Omen Text VAT 7525," AfO 18 (1957-58):67 iii 30.

A prayer that was to be addressed to Ishtar with lifted hands describes this belief and expresses this plea:

panukki dšedu artuk dlamassu. . . .  
 Before you stands a genie, behind you  
 a guardian spirit . . .<sup>1</sup>  
 lurši dšeda damka ša pānki  
 ša arkiki ālikat lamassa lurši.  
 Would that I possess the good genie  
 who stands before you.  
 Would that I possess the guardian spirit  
 who follows you.<sup>2</sup>

In another prayer to Ishtar--also with the same hand-lifting gesture--the goddess is mentioned as surrounded by these protective divinities, and at the same time the favor is invoked:

lu tas-lim ilušidu damiktu ša pa-ni-ki.  
 ša ár-ki-ki a-li-kāt ilulamassu lu tas-lim.  
 Propitious be the favorable sidu who  
 is before thee:  
 May the lamassu that goeth behind thee  
 be propitious<sup>3</sup>  
 sa im-nu-uk-ki miš-ra-a lu-uš-šip  
 dum-ka lu-uk-šú-da ša sú-mi-lu-[uk-ki].  
 That which is on thy right hand  
 increase good fortune:  
 That which is on thy left hand attain favour!<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David Sperling, "A šu-i-lá to Istar (Ebeling, *Handerhebung* 60)," *WO* 12 (1981):11-12. Sperling indicates that the divinity of šedu and lamassu is clearly presented in this prayer. Nevertheless he also points out that in the following line another entity--*misari*--is mentioned without the divine determinative, although in the other texts--i.e., Ebeling, *Handerhebung* 50:122--it appears with it.

<sup>2</sup>Sperling, *WO* 12 (1981):12.

<sup>3</sup>King, *BMS*, no. 8:12, pp. 41, 43.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 8:13.

King mentions that in some prayers the *shedu* deities are addressed in a way that indicates they are divine ministers who carry out the will of the greater god.<sup>1</sup> All seem to indicate that since those protective divine entities were standing at the side of the great gods, it was also expected in some way that their protection could be extended to the petitioner.<sup>2</sup>

This desire for protection is expressed over and over in the prayers and incantations. An incantation directed to Marduk says:

ili-yà li-iz-ziz ina immi-[yà]  
 May my god stand at my right hand!  
 ilu-<sup>il</sup>ištari-yà li-iz-zig ina šumili-[yà]  
 May my goddess stand at my left hand!  
 ili-yà šal-li-mu ina idi-yà lu-u-ka [ai-an]  
 May my god, who is favorable, stand  
 firmly at my side.<sup>3</sup>

In a prayer to Ishtar the addressee begs the goddess to assign such protection, saying: a-na še-e-di na-širi šá-a-šú [piq-di]-šu-[ma], "[assign] him to the care of a guardian spirit."<sup>4</sup> Another prayer addressed to the god Bel--intended to be used after lunar eclipses--expresses

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>The earnest plea in this sense is transparent in the prayers addressed to the gods. See especially those of p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., no. 9:16-18. See also no. 22:12-19.

<sup>4</sup>W. G. Lambert, "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians," *AfO* 19 (1959):51.

the desire of receiving blessings through the shedu attendant as well as his daily company in this way:

ilugidu likbi magāra magāra  
 ũ-mišam lit-tat-lak itti-yā  
 May the sidu command favour upon  
 favour,  
 Daily may he go with me.<sup>1</sup>

The Mesopotamian awareness of the protection given by these protective deities is clearly described in the case of Gudea, the ancient governor of Lagash. He is described as being conducted by the hands of his personal god, while other deities preceded and followed him.<sup>2</sup> One cylinder of Gudea reads:

dingir<sub>1</sub>lugal-kur-dúb igi-šú mu-na-gin.  
 dingir<sub>2</sub>gál-alim-ge gir mu-na-gà-gà.  
 dingir<sub>3</sub>nin-giš-zi(dz)-da din-gir-ra-ni.  
 šu-mu-da-gál-gál.

The god Lugal-kur-dub went before him,  
 The god Gal-alim went (behind) him,  
 His (personal) god Nin-gis-zi-da held  
 him by the hand.<sup>3</sup>

It has been suggested that the notion of a personal god was the answer that Sumerian theologians gave to the concept current about the inaccessibility to individual men of the leading deities of the pantheon.<sup>4</sup> They resorted to

<sup>1</sup>King, BMS., no. 19:29-30.

<sup>2</sup>Thureau-Dangin, SAKI, pp. 108-109.

<sup>3</sup>SAKI, "Gudea Cylinder A," 18.14-17. See also M. Lambert and R. Tournay, "Le Cylindre A de Gudea," RB 55 (1948):417.

<sup>4</sup>Kramer, "'Man and His God.' A Sumerian Variation of the 'Job' Motif," in Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East (Leiden: E. J. Brill), p. 171 (hereafter WIANE).

these connector deities<sup>1</sup> to bridge the gap and have in this way "an intermediary, a kind of 'good angel' to intercede on his behalf" in the assembly of the gods.<sup>2</sup> So, Mesopotamians, in addition to their cosmic deities who dwelt in a distance unapproachable to them, and in addition to the host of minor deities, also had house gods, or patron divinities.<sup>3</sup> The great gods--like the An gods who were the protector gods of the countries--<sup>4</sup> were believed to be interested in community affairs or national matters rather than individual trifles or personal relations.<sup>5</sup> For an intimate and close relation with deity, therefore, the individual had to cling to his personal god.<sup>6</sup> In a clear way the ancient Mesopotamian recognized that each god, like

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<sup>1</sup>I. Mendelsohn, RANE, p. xix.

<sup>2</sup>Kramer, WIANE, p. 171, n. 3. Mendelsohn on his part sees that two basic ideas led to establishing this concept in Mesopotamian theology. First the aloofness of the great deities, and, second, the position of man as a mere servant of the gods. RANE, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup>Gudea in a stele dedicated to the An gods invokes them as the "divinités protectrices des contrées" (M. Rutten, "Religions asianiques," HiRe, 4:48. See also Thureau-Dangin, SAKI, "Gudea Cylinder," B 1.20-21-B 2.1.

<sup>5</sup>Nougayrol says that the highest divinities appeared to be so aloof, as if after having arranged the cosmos once and for all they would not be worried any more with minor details. Jean Nougayrol, "La religion babylonica," ReAn I:297.

<sup>6</sup>T. Jacobsen, "The Good Life," IAAM, p. 203.

each man, had to restrict his particular attention to his own function.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Mesopotamian concept each man had his personal god. The picture presented in the texts shows how close, intimate, trusting, and even tender a relationship existed between the inhabitant of the Two Rivers valley and his personal god.<sup>2</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar II, speaking of his rulership among the nations, boasts that they were given to him by the gods Marduk and Ea, and that he had ruled them positively and with good hand. However, he explicitly ascribes his achievements to his protector gods, in saying:

I have changed them, in a positive way,  
the right path, I have conferred upon  
them a good hand;  
With my good protector spirit (Shedu),  
With my provident genius (Lamassu),  
A protector in the desert wind, and in  
the stormy weather,  
To the malicious destroyers, the unrighteous,  
I have subdued the city of Babylon.<sup>3</sup>

The devotion to this personal deity was a serious matter for all Sumerians. Everyone expected of his god, above all, intercession on every possible occasion before the *ilāni rabūti*. This god served as his personal representative and intercessor<sup>4</sup> in the *puḫur ilāni*. in order to

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<sup>1</sup>R. Jestin, "La Religión Sumeria," *ReAn* I:327.

<sup>2</sup>Kramer, *AnBi* 12 (1959):194-195.

<sup>3</sup>Unger, *BHSNB*, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup>Kramer, *WIANE*, p. 171.

ensure a long and healthy life for him<sup>1</sup> and to protect him against the evil spirits.<sup>2</sup> From the texts it is possible to detect some of the advantages that they believed were available from these tutelary deities. However, these gods have to prove their efficaciousness lest they also lose their credibility and be discarded for other more effective and reliable gods.<sup>3</sup>

In a letter it is mentioned that a desire for blessing and an appeal is made to the addressed that the petition might be granted: "May my Lord and may my lady (the goddess Aja) keep you for my sake in good health for ever."<sup>4</sup>

In return for this protection the protégé glorified his deity with special prayers, supplications, and sacrifices. At the same time he did not neglect the worship of the other gods of the Sumerian pantheon.<sup>5</sup> The importance of the devotional relationship with the personal deity is demonstrated in the fact that every home had a small shrine for the personal god(s). There the master of the

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<sup>1</sup>G. Meier, "Die zweite Tafel der Serie bit meseri," AfO 14 (1941-44):139-152.

<sup>2</sup>Mendelsohn, RANE p. xix. For the evil spirits, see "The Demonic Gods," pp. 242-246.

<sup>3</sup>Lambert, BWL, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>A. L. Oppenheim, Letters from Mesopotamia (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>Kramer, AnBi 12 (1959):185-204.

household brought offerings to the images and worshiped.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this relationship cannot be over-emphasized since it was crucial to Mesopotamian man to maintain the right ties with his protector deity. In his attempts to maintain a constant and effective relationship with the gods, omens were used in considerable numbers. Through omens--as Jastrow says--"the bond between the individual and the gods was not, indeed, established, but in large measure maintained."<sup>2</sup> The rupture of this bond was a possible and constant threat since it occurred whenever the god(dess) became angry and consequently departed from or forsook his pupil.

The departure of the deity was not only unpredictable and sudden, it was also disastrous for humans. They had to be in a constant state of alertness for signs that might indicate eventual abandonment when they might inadvertently become involved with an angry god(dess).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mendelsohn, RANE, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, RBA, p. 404.

<sup>3</sup>The Surpu texts inform us about the meticulousness with which an individual should try in order to discover signs that eventually would indicate in one way or another the possible cause of the divine annoyance. He ought to ask for a sign of the heavenly gods in the minor and major sanctuaries, and also ask for it leaving the city or entering the city, leaving the city-gate and entering the city-gate, leaving the house and entering the house, in the street, and in the road. Besides, he should ask for a sign through the bed, through the chair, through the table, through the cup-giver, through the lit-stove, through the



This state of alertness is repeatedly presented in a diversity of ways in the different omens. An omen says:

DIŠ LÚ na-ap-lu-šú šu-su-ri-is i-ba-aš-ši  
 DINGIR-šu a-na da-mi-iq-tim Ka-a-an-šum  
 ina ki-ma-tim i-il-la-ak.  
 If a man's way of looking is straight,  
 his deity will always be with him  
 for his luck,  
 he will live in truth.<sup>1</sup>

Another omen says:

DIŠ LÚ iš-tu 1 UŠ a-na 30 GAR LÚ ú-we-ed-di  
 LÚ šú-ú DINGIR-šú it-ti-šu ka-ia-an.  
 If a man recognizes another man (when approaching)  
 from (a distance) one US to thirty GAR:  
 With this man will his deity always be.<sup>2</sup>

Another omen warns:

DIŠ LÚ šu-ut-tam ša l-im-ma-ru la ú-ka-al  
 DINGIR-šu it-ti[š]u ze-e-mi.<sup>3</sup>  
 If a man cannot remember the dream he saw  
 (it means): his (personal) god  
 is angry with him.<sup>4</sup>

The omens also indicate how the animals were believed to be involved in determining the relationship between humans and

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torch, through the bellows, through the tablet stylus, through the different measures (sutu- and qa-measures), and look for the sign at the stable, at the animals, at the plow, at the well, at the river, at the boat, at the ship, at the barge, and at the sunrise and sunset. Šurpu II.104-128; IV.1-9. The texts also give details of the different rituals and ceremonies for the incantations that deal with matters related to angry deities.

<sup>1</sup>F. Köcher and A. Leo Oppenheim, "The Old Babylonian Omen Text VAT 7525," Afo 18 (1967-68):65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Afo 18 (1967-68):65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>4</sup>A. Leo Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956), p. 232 (hereafter IDANE).

their personal deities. Omens disclosed the way the face of an animal looked or how they behaved to indicate the assurance of some protective entity. An omen says:

[BE KIMIN. . .].MEŠ ip-pal-sa-šú  
 NA.BI DINGIR u dKAL TUK- ši.  
 If sheep [. . .] frown at him . . .  
 that man will have a personal god and  
 a protective deity.<sup>1</sup>

Another omen mentions that:

DIŠ UR.GIR<sub>x</sub> (KU) KI- šú it-te-en-tu  
 EN.NU.UN DINGIR-šú UGU-šú GAL-at.  
 DIŠ UR.GIR<sub>x</sub> (KU) ina GIŠ.NĀ-šú ir-bi-iš  
 DINGIR-šú KI-šú zi-e-ni.  
 DIŠ UR.GIR<sub>x</sub> (KU) GIŠ.BANŠUR LU iš-tin  
 DINGIR-šú KI-šú sa-bu-us.  
 If a dog joins together with him--the protection  
 of his god will be over him.  
 If a dog lies down in his bed--his god  
 is angry with him.  
 If a dog urinates on the table of a man--his god  
 is angry with him.<sup>2</sup>

The Shurpu texts mention that among the things that made a protector deity angry were: to scorn the god or despise the goddess,<sup>3</sup> to speak insolent things and to use untrue balances,<sup>4</sup> to despise parents or to offend the elder sister,<sup>5</sup> to take money which was not one's own property,<sup>6</sup> to enter a neighbor's house or to have intercourse with the

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<sup>1</sup>Leichty, The Omen Series Šuma Izbu (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin Publisher, 1970), p. 173 (hereafter OSSI).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 193-194.

<sup>3</sup>Šurpu, II:33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., II:41-42.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., II:35-36.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

neighbor's wife,<sup>1</sup> to shed the neighbor's blood,<sup>2</sup> to uncover the nakedness or take away the clothes of the neighbor,<sup>3</sup> to stand in the assembly and say inadequate words,<sup>4</sup> to betray the affairs of the city or give his city a bad reputation,<sup>5</sup> to point his finger at a protecting deity,<sup>6</sup> to spread gossip,<sup>7</sup> to ignore what was a crime against a god or what was a sin against the goddess,<sup>8</sup> to omit the name of his god in his incense offering,<sup>9</sup> to sleep in the bed, or to sit in the chair, or to eat at the table, or to drink from the cup of an accursed person.<sup>10</sup>

From the fact that in several texts it is mentioned, in regards to a sick person, that his personal god had abandoned his body,<sup>11</sup> it is obvious that Mesopotamians imagined the personal god as normally living within the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 47-48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 96-97.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 100-103.

<sup>11</sup>Reiner, Šurpu, p. 14.

body of a man.<sup>1</sup> In an incantation text this idea is expressed in this way:

[a good guardian spirit]<sup>2</sup> . . .  
 may be present in his body, and in his  
 his dwelling may walk at his [side],  
 may be present in his body.<sup>3</sup>

As a consequence, misery and sickness were attributed to the fact that the personal god had forsaken man. In a Šurpu text the god Marduk is mentioned as interceding before his father Ea on behalf of a man who is ill because: ". . . His god has departed from his body. His goddess has . . . taken her place outside."<sup>4</sup> After Ea gave the prescription for the treatment he ended his statement by saying: "May the protecting shedu, the protecting lamassu settle upon his body."<sup>5</sup>

The departure of a protector deity is clearly described in the Ludlul bēl nēmeqi<sup>6</sup> in this way:

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<sup>1</sup>G. Contenau, La magie chez les Assyriens et les Babylonians (Paris: Payot, 1947), p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>[udug. sig-g]a <sup>d</sup>Lama sig-ga. Šurpu, IX:84-86.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>H. Zimmern, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion. Erste Lieferung. Die Beschwörungstafeln Shurpu, Assyriologische Bibliothek XII (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1896), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.29.

<sup>6</sup>Ludlul bēl nēmeqi means "I will praise the lord of wisdom," and is the heading of the most remarkable piece of Akkadian wisdom literature. Known also as the poem of the righteous sufferer, it deals with the suffering of a man who does not know the cause of it. Throughout the whole poem the man expresses his pain and wonders about the

id-dan-ni ili-i šá-da-šu i-[mid]  
 ip-par-ku diš-tar-i i-bé-[eš ...]  
 i]s-li-it še-<id> dum-qi sa i-di[ia]  
 ip-ru-ud la-mas-si-ma šá-nam-ma i-še-[e]  
 My god has forsaken me and dis[appeared?],  
 My goddess has failed me and keeps at a distance,  
 The benevolent angel who (walked) beside [me]  
has departed,  
 My protecting spirit has taken to flight, and  
 is seeking someone else.<sup>1</sup>

In the following lines, a long enumeration of the sicknesses that fell upon men as a result of the abandonment by their gods is given.<sup>2</sup>

The texts leave no doubt about what was expected of the personal gods. Although they were not as powerful or important as the great high god, they nevertheless were gods and thus were responsible for the life and prosperity of the individual, as well as protecting him from all menacing spiritual powers. Indeed, Mesopotamians took for granted that their fate was in direct relationship to their alliance with those personal gods.<sup>3</sup> For Mesopotamians--as T. Jacobsen pointed out--success in life was not the result of fortuitous circumstances, predestined

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reason for being treated as a wrongdoer. At the end he is restored and exalts the kindness of his healer deity.

<sup>1</sup>W. G. Lambert, "The Sultantepe Tablets III. The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," *AnSt* 4 (1954):69 (Tab. I:43-47).

<sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 257-259.

<sup>3</sup>E. Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach der Vorstellung der Babylonier (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1931), I:115 (hereafter TuL).

potential. It was an endowment of the guardian gods.<sup>1</sup> Whenever and as long as a man was accompanied by his personal god, he was allotted health and prosperity, success and happiness.<sup>2</sup> The same reality was believed to exist in relation to a city or a nation, since the abandonment by the tutelary deity implied its forthcoming ruin.<sup>3</sup>

The lamentation over the destruction of Ur gives as an explicit reason for it the departure of Ningal, its protectress goddess:

O my queen, you have departed from  
the house,  
You have departed from the the city.  
How long, pray, will you stand aside in  
thee like an enemy?  
(How long) O mother Ningal will you have  
challenges in the city like an enemy?<sup>4</sup>

Likewise Nabonidus recorded that the ruin of Babylon was due to the departure of Sin, the tutelary deity of the city:

Whereas in the 16th year of Nabopolasar,  
King of Babylon, Sin, king of the gods,  
with his city  
And with his temple was angry and went  
up to heaven, . . .  
The city and the people that (were)  
in it went to ruin.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>IAAM, p. 203-205.

<sup>2</sup>Meier, AfO 14:139-152.

<sup>3</sup>Kramer, The Sumerians (1963), p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," AnSt 8 (1958):46-47.

It also seems that each city had not only principal gods as their recognized patrons but also other additional special protective spirits that reinforced the protective duties of the gods over the cities which were under their tutelage. This fact can be deduced from a Namburbi<sup>1</sup> text which prescribes a ritual to be performed in order to prevent headache, plague, and pestilence in the horses and troops of the royal army.<sup>2</sup> It says:

On the evening of a propitious day  
you erect  
four reed altars for city god,  
the city goddess  
the city shedu (and) the city lamassu.<sup>3</sup>

Textual evidence presents Ishtar as the patron goddess of Uruk<sup>4</sup> and Kish.<sup>5</sup> However, due to the universality

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<sup>1</sup>The Sumerian term NAM.BUR.BI is translated as an Akkadian loan word *namburbu*. It means literally "its dispelling" and therefore may be understood as "ritual for the dispelling of evil." It seems that these texts were intended to provide religious and magical rites that would be effective in dispelling the threats of portended illfortune. (Caplice, "Namburbi Texts in the British Museum I," *Or* 34 (1965):105.

<sup>2</sup>Caplice, "Namburbi Texts in the British Museum IV," *Or* 39 (1970):120.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, Tab. IV.3-4. For the *shedu* and *lamassu*, see below pp. 277-279.

<sup>4</sup>S. Langdon, *BPP*, p. 37; Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, pp. 12-27.

<sup>5</sup>Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 55.

that she enjoyed all over Babylon as well as Assyria,<sup>1</sup> other places also venerated her as their guardian deity.<sup>2</sup>

Textual evidence also points out the hierarchical preferences of those protected.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the personal god was chosen according to the rank of the protege. Common persons were in the protection of common lesser deities,<sup>4</sup> but individuals of aristocratic rank usually were privileged with the assistance of more important gods.<sup>5</sup> Kings were--as is expected--protected by greater gods.

The personal gods of some rulers of Ur, Dynasty III, and a few others are known. So Sulutulua was the personal god of Ennatum, Entenema, and Entenema II; Nidaba

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<sup>1</sup>In a special way Ishtar was the patron goddess of Niniveh and Arbela, which were two important cultural centers of Ishtar. M. Seux, HPDBA, pp. 100-102.

<sup>2</sup>L. Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup>Leichty, OSSI p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>The "personal god" of a common individual was frequently one of the lesser deities, although occasionally even one of the more important deities. This personal deity was conceived by Sumerians as having fashioned a man in the womb of his mother. A Sumerian proverb says: du-mu si-nu-sa ama-a-ni na-anu-tu. dingir-ra-ni na-an-dim-dim-e, "A perverse child, his mother should never (have) give(n) birth to him, his (personal) god should never (have) fashion(ed) him." See E. I. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1969), pp. 125, 307, (1.159) (hereafter SP).

<sup>5</sup>Leichty, OSSI, p. 13.



of Lugalsaggezi; Ninsubur of Urakagima; Ningizida of Gudea;<sup>1</sup> and Ninsun for the kings of Dynasty III.<sup>2</sup>

It is well known that the Akkadian kings were accustomed to record their prowess and conquests in their annals, boasting that their deeds were directed and commanded in a personal way by their gods or goddesses.<sup>3</sup> Ashur and Ishtar are often named as personal gods of the Assyrian monarchs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Gudea inscription begins with the significant statement, "Nin-gish-zid is the god of Gudea," and repeatedly Gudea refers to him as "my god." Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 99. In the same way, elsewhere Ningizida is referred as "his god," Maurice Lambert and J. R. Tournay, "La statue B de Gudea," RA 45 (1951):50-51, 3.4-5, 9.1; *ibid.*, "Les statues D, G, E, et H de Gudea (Textes concernant la déesse Bau)," RA 46 (1952):80-81 (statue G. 2.8-10), and pp. 84-85 (statue E. 8.11-12).

<sup>2</sup>Kramer, AnBi 12 (1959): p. 194, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Elsewhere the Assyrian kings boast, "by the command of Assur my Lord, I did such and such. . . ." See Ernest A. Wallis Budge and Leonard William King, eds., Annals of the Kings of Assyria . . . in the British Museum (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1902); also Luckenbill, ARAB I.221, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Ashurbanipal (668-626 B.C.) wrote, "by the command of Assur, Ishtar and the great gods, my lords, I slew . . ." M. P. Smith, "Annals of Ashurbanipal," in Assyrian and Babylonian Literature. Selected Translations. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904), p. 120 (hereafter ABLST). Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) said, "In my fourth campaign, Assur my Lord gave me support." Robert Francis Harper, "The Taylor Cylinder of Sennacherib, king of Assyria," ABLST, p. 75. Tiglathpileser I (ca. 1100 B.C.) boasted, "In the strength of Assur my lord, I took my war chariots and warriors, and marched" (William Muss-Arnold, "Inscription of Tiglathpileser I, king of Assyria," ABLST, p. 20); "In the fullness of the lofty power of Assur, my lord, I marched against the Sugi" (*ibid.*, p. 18); "Assur my lord sent me . . . to the countries of far-off kings on the shores of the Upper-sea who never knew subjection" (*ibid.*

Although it was believed in Mesopotamia that the injury inflicted by the personal god was incurable,<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding, a complicated intercessory technique was practised intending to restore the broken ties with the personal deity. In this an attempt was made to remedy the afflictive situation. Prayers and incantations were an essential part of this procedure.<sup>2</sup> These were intended to be recited by the afflicted and abandoned person and they were conveyed through an intermediary person--known as the *asipu*,<sup>3</sup> who was believed to know how to deal with divine matters. The authority of the *āšipu* was believed to be

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p. 19). For similar declarations of the Assirian kings, see, S. Birch, ed., Records of the Past. Assyrian Texts (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1875), 1:57-108; 3:37-80, 109-124; 5:5-52; 7:21-64; 9:37-64.

<sup>1</sup>This is indicated in a Sumerian proverb which says: "For an injury made by his own personal god, there is no known remedy" (as is quoted in ReAn I:251). In a similar proverb it reads, *nig-ku-lam-ma dingir-ra-na-kam šu-tu-tu nu-ub-zu*, "The destruction is from his own (personal) god; he knows no saviour." Gordon, SP, 1.7, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>It has been demonstrated that the Mesopotamian supplication prayers dealing with estranged gods follow a regular pattern which can be divided into three main sections: The address, the supplication, and the gratitude. The first contains an invocation of the gods with honorific titles, and a praise of the gods. The second is formed by a lamentation, a transitional form, and a petition. The last is an expression of gratitude or a blessing formula. Walter G. Kunstmann, Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1932), pp. 7-21 (hereafter BGB).

<sup>3</sup>The CAD stresses the meaning of the term mainly with an exorcist connotation (s.v. *āšipu*, I,ii:431-435).

derived from the gods. The asipu also spoke words in the name of the gods.<sup>1</sup>

When a Mesopotamian prayed for relief from sickness, or from any other personal problem due to the absence of his god, he was first to pray to the god(s) of his house in terms of pleading and reconciliation. Typical of these are the prayers intended to be addressed to annoyed deities.

In a prayer, the petitioner fervently pleads with his angry deities in these words:

O my god who art angry with me,  
accept my prayer,  
O my goddess who art wroth with me,  
accept my appeal. . . .  
My lord in mercy and compassion [look  
upon me?]  
Oh my goddess, look upon me, accept my appeal,  
May my sins be forgiven.<sup>2</sup>

In another prayer the personal deity is implored with these words:

iliġa ŝabsu, [mug<sup>2</sup>)-g]i-ra t[iŝliti  
My god, you who are angry with me, accept  
in your face my prayer,  
iŝtaria sa tēzizī lēkē [unniniġa]  
my goddess, you who are angry with me, receive  
my suplication,  
iliġa muggirā tis[liti]  
My god, accept before you my prayer  
iŝtaria naplisinnima lēkē uni[niġa]

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<sup>1</sup>Edith R. Ritter, "Magical Expert (=Āšipu) and Physician (=Asū). Notes on two Complementary Professions in Babylonian Medicine," *AS* 16 (1952):321.

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, *ReBAs*, p. 323.

my goddess, look (mercifully upon me) and  
receive my supplication.<sup>1</sup>

Yet another prayer says:

Enough my god! Let your heart be still.  
May the goddess, who is angry, be  
utterly soothed.  
Desist from the anger which has risen so  
high in your heart,  
(my god), I am exhausted, hold my hand.<sup>2</sup>

An incantation intended to be addressed for appeasing an  
angry god says:

én ili-i be-li ba-nu-u šumi-ia  
na-šir na-piš-ti-ia . . .  
ili ag-gu lib-ba-ka li-nu-ha  
dištar ze-ni-tum si-il-mi itti-ia  
My god, my lord, who created my "name,"  
Who guards my life, . . .  
My fierce god, may your heart rest,  
My angry goddess, be reconciled to me.

ki-ma gi-na-a šu-'-du-ra-ku ili-i me-e-eš at-ta  
tir-ra ki-šad-ka šá tas-bu-su eli-ia . . .  
ina pi-i-ka elli qi-bi balāti([t]i.la) . . .  
ši-man-ni-ma si-mat ba-la-ṭi . . .  
umi<sup>mes</sup>-ia ur-ri-ka ba-la-ṭa qi-šá.  
I am constantly in grief: my god, where are you?  
Avert the anger you have had for me,  
Command my health with your holy mouth,  
Decree for me a destiny of health,  
Lengthen my days, grant me health.

én ili-i šur-bu-u qa-i-šu balaṭi(ti.la) . . .  
≈ ṽ-ka ili-i maḥar-ka az-ziz eš-e-ka ili-i  
šá-pal-k[a ak-mis]  
li-qi un-ni-ni-ia pu-ṭur il-t[i] . . .  
i'-il-ti pu-uṭ-ra sa-li-ma šuk-na-ni  
My god, great one, who grants life, . . .  
. . . you, my god, I have stood before you, I have  
sought you, my god, [I have bowed]  
beneath you.

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<sup>1</sup>Heinrich Zimmern, Babylonische Busspsalmen (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1885), p. 100 (IX:IV R 66, no. 2:39-40, 43-44), hereafter BBP.

<sup>2</sup>Falkenstein and von Soden, SAHG, p. 273.

Accept my prayers, release my bond,  
Release my bond, grant me reconciliation.

[én e-g]u-ú ar-num gil-la-tu hi-ṭi-tu  
[e]-gi a-na ili-a aḥ-ṭi ana dištari-ia . . .  
[la n]a-ṭu-ta e-pu-uš la šá-lim-tu aq-bi . . .  
In respect of my offence, iniquity,  
transgression and sin  
I have offended against my god, sinned  
against my goddess. . . .  
I did wrong, I spoke improper things. . . .

man-nu-ša [a]-na ili-šu la ir-šu-ú ḥi-ṭi-tum  
a-a-ú ša a-na da-riš iṣ-ṣu-ra qi-bitu  
amēlātu (nam.lú.u.ḫ.lu) mal ba-šú-ú  
ḥi-ṭi-tum ti-i-ši . . .  
lu-u ma-'-du ar-nu-u-a i'-il-ti pu-ṭu-r[i] . . .  
[ḥi-ṭa-t]u-ú-a lu-u ma-'-da a-na ma-gal  
re-mu kù-a[n?-ni?]  
[ili-i] a-ta-na-aḥ qa-ti ša-ba[t]. . .  
Who is there who has not sinned against his god?  
Who that has kept commandment for ever?  
All of mankind who exist are sinful. . . .  
Though my iniquities be many,  
release my bond . . . .  
Though my sins be many, show great kindness  
and cleanse me,  
[My god], I am exhausted, take my hand.<sup>1</sup>

If these protector deities rejected the idea of helping the supplicant, then he could turn to the great gods,<sup>2</sup> asking them to command the personal god to return.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, the gods who then were invoked were listed from the higher and lower ranks. As many as possible were mentioned in trying to secure the most power possible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lambert, "DINGIR.SA.DIB.BA Incantations," JNES 33 (1974):276-283.

<sup>2</sup>Mendelsohn, RANE, p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup>Kunstmann, BGB, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>The appeal to a group of deities was made in a more conventional way instead of mentioning them individually, since the number varied from six to fifty deities

The gods mentioned were usually listed in triads beginning with the highest ones: Anu, Enlil (Bel), and Ea.<sup>1</sup> These gods were at times invoked alone, or with their respective consorts. Next came the other triplet of Sin, Shamash, and Ramman. Then were named the other major gods such as Nin-ib, Marduk, Nergal, and Nušku. Notable among the goddesses who were addressed as intercessor were Ishtar, Ninkarrak (Gula), and Bau.<sup>2</sup>

Appealing in this way, the petitioner acknowledged the existence of a divine hierarchy in the pantheon that he explicitly had to respect. He also knew that he had to avoid any petition made directly in his own name; instead he made it through the intercession of a superior deity. He explicitly pointed out that he was "'so-and-so' whose personal god is 'so-and-so' and whose personal goddess is 'so-and-so.'"<sup>3</sup>

The incantation texts indicate that divinities such as Marduk, Nušku, and others were often invoked as mediators between the suppliant and the highest deities. Typical of such prayers is this appeal to Nušku:

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without essential specification. Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 273.

<sup>1</sup>Especially Ea and Marduk are known as the gods of the office of intercession in the incantations, and they had as their direct assistant Shamash. Langdon, BPP, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Mendelsohn, "Shurpu," II:3, RANE, p. 212.

ilNušku šur-bu-ú ma-lik iláni rabûti  
 pa-qíd nindabé ša ka-la ilI-gi-gi . . .  
 sukkal ilA-mim še-mu-ú pi-ris-ti ilBêl . . .  
 ana-ku ardu-ka pulânu mâr pulâni  
 ša ilu-šu pulânu ilIštâr-su pulâni-tum  
 as-ḥur-ka eš-e-ka na-ša-a[ku?] qâ-ta-a  
 ša-pal-ka ak-mis.

O exalted Nušku, counsellor of the great gods,  
 guarding the sacrificial gifts of all the  
 heavenly spirits,  
 Messenger of Anu, who knows the decrees  
 of Enlil, . . .  
 I thy slave so-and-so, the son of so-and-so,  
 Whose god is so-and-so, and his goddess  
 is so-and-so,  
 I turn to thee, I seek thee, I raise my  
 hands to thee.<sup>1</sup>

In a prayer of the lifted-hand series the gods Sin,  
 Tasmetu, and Adad are invoked regarding the estranged god  
 as follows:

ili-yà u ilu<sup>u</sup>ištari šá iš-tu u-um  
 ma-du-ti is-bu-su  
 ina kit-ti u mišari lis-li-mu itt-yà.  
 May my god and my goddess, who for long  
 have been angry with me,  
 In righteousness and justice deal  
 graciously with me.<sup>2</sup>  
 ina zik-ri-su kabti(ti) ilu u  
 ilu<sup>u</sup>ištâr lislimu(mu) itti-ya  
 At your mighty command my god and my  
 goddess may deal graciously with me.<sup>3</sup>

The goddess Bilit and Maṣduk are addressed as follows:

[ili-yà] u ilu<sup>u</sup>ištari-yà sulma(ma) itti-ya.  
 My protector god and my protector goddess

<sup>1</sup>Tallqvist, Die assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû  
 (Leipzig: A. Pries, 1895), (Acta Societatis Scientiarum  
Fenicae), 20:40-43, (hereafter Maqlû).

<sup>2</sup>King, BMS, 1:23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1:44.

may be merciful again with me.<sup>1</sup>

The goddess Gula (Ba'u) is addressed in this way:

. . . ina a-mat ki-bi-ti-ki [šir-ti . . .]  
 û an-ni-ki ki-nim sa la innennu<sup>4</sup>  
 ili-yà šab-su li-tu-ra ilu ištari-yà zi-ni-tum  
 [li-is-lim]  
 ilu ali-yà ša šab-su-ma gám-lu [libbu-šu itti-ya]  
 ša izi-sa li-nu-ḥa ša i-gu-ga . . .  
 . . . By the word of thy exalted command,  
 and your true mercy which never changes,  
 may my angry protector god turn towards me,  
 may my angry protectress goddess  
 be kind with me.  
 Let the god of my city, who is angry (return),  
 and whose heart is enraged with me.  
 Let him who is enraged with me be appeased,  
 the one who is enraged. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The goddess Ishtar is supplicated in this way:

ki-bi-ma ina ki-bi-ti-ki ilu  
 zi-nu-u li-is-lim  
 (ilu) ištari ša is-bu-sa li-tu-ra  
 e-ṭu-u ka-tru lim-me-ir  
 ki-nu-ni  
 Speak the word, that at thy command  
 the angry god may be favorable,  
 and that the goddess who is angry  
 may be gracious<sup>3</sup>

According to another prayer, the god Enlil is invoked to  
 turn the angered deities in this way:

lib-bi ili-ia u ilištari-ia ze-nu-ti  
 sab-su-ti u ku-um-mulu-ti  
 sa itti-ia ze-nu-u sab-su u kam-lu . . . .  
 itti-ia su-li-ma-am-ma  
 The heart of my protector god and my  
 protective goddess which are

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 21:67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 6:85-89.

<sup>3</sup>Rogers, CPOT, p. 159.



malevolent and ill-willed against me  
with anger, evil, and bad will  
may be reconciled with me.<sup>1</sup>

However, what appears to be perhaps the most sure way to make an angry god return is given in an omen which keeps this simple formula: DIŠ zi-nu-ú KI-ŠÚ is-lim. DINGIR.MEŠ šab-su-tum GUR.[MEŠ-šu], "If an angry person reconciles with someone--the angry gods will return [to him]."<sup>2</sup>

#### Iconography of the Protector Gods

The intercessor god(dess), as well as the protector divinity, is a well-attested motif, not only textually but also iconographically throughout the ANE. Numberless times deities are portrayed in a protective attitude or mediating on behalf of their wards before a major god. The glyptic material provides a great variety of scenes portraying this concept of the personal god.<sup>3</sup>

This protective relationship of the personal god towards an individual is represented with distinctiveness in the so-called scenes of enthronement on the cylinder

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<sup>1</sup>Ebeling, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1932), 68 Rs. 10ff. Hereafter as KAR.

<sup>2</sup>S. M. Moran, "A Lost 'Omen' Tablet," JCS 29 (1977): 66-67.

<sup>3</sup>Vorländer, MeGo, pp. 66-68.

seals.<sup>1</sup> Commonly these scenes portray a personal god standing beside a person, or leading him as his intercessor to a higher deity, who often appears enthroned.<sup>2</sup>

This Mesopotamian conviction that everyone had a god and goddess of his own<sup>3</sup> is represented especially by cylinder seals of Old Babylonian times that portray the worshiper being conducted by his personal god into the presence of a high god. He may be depicted also standing directly facing the god while his personal god appears interceding for him with lifted hand.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the presentation scene, the seals conveyed the names of the owners and the names of their personal gods. Sometimes mini-prayers were even added to them.<sup>5</sup> Since these seals

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 66-68. Vorländer points out that it is possible to distinguish a characteristic feature in the seal cylinders starting from the Ur III dynasty down to Dynasty I of ancient Babylon (ca. 2000-1700 B.C.). This peculiar feature is that in the seal--besides the owner's name--frequently a dedication to a certain deity was added, which indeed was the owner's personal god.

<sup>2</sup>Frankfort, CS, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>C. J. Gadd, Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 66 (hereafter IDRAE).

<sup>4</sup>Frankfort, CS, p. 158.

<sup>5</sup>A example of this occurrence is a seal from Kassite times containing the following short prayer:

dLugal-banda <sup>da</sup>	O Lugalbanda,
be-lu šur-bu-u	exalted Lord,
ša wardir ki-ni	from your loyal servant
ti-ri-iš qa-ti-ka	the protection of your hand
u-su-uh mursa-šu	may take away his sickness
li-ri-ku umu-šu.	May his days be long.

Langdon, "Inscriptions on Cassite Seals," RA 16 (1919):78,

usually were used as amulets, they expressed "the hope that the wearer's god will continually keep his protege's image fresh in the mind of that power."<sup>1</sup>

The Mesopotamian personal, protector, or intercessor god(dess) motif is well represented in the seals ascribed to the times of Gudea of Lagash and his predecessors.<sup>2</sup> It is well known that especially from the times of this monarch of Lagash there was a profusion of representations of the dames of his court with their tutelary deities.<sup>3</sup> The scenes are mostly repetitive in their motifs. A selection of them has been assembled attempting to present not only the representation of the idea of protection or intercessory function of the personal god but also the diversity of the celestial retinue that surrounded the higher deities in the heavenly realms.

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no. 20. Another seal contains a prayer to Nergal, and says:

ša-kin <sup>aban</sup> kunuki an-n[n]-i	The wearer of this seal
Mi-it-ra(?) -UR-ši	Mit . . .
mār A-b-im-mu-ut-ta-a[š]	Son of Abimmutas,
i-na a-ma-at i-li-šu	upon the word of his
	god
dN è . i r i . g a l	Nergal
šu-um-šu li-id-mi-iq	may his name become
	agreeable
ilam lam u dšédam	A (tutelary) god
	and (a) genius
li-ir-si	may he have!

Oppenheim, "Sumerian and Akkadian Inscriptions," in CPMI, 1:176, no. 571; 2:pl., LXXVIII, 571e.

<sup>1</sup>Gadd, IDRAE, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Spycket, RA 49:171.

The seal of Gudea<sup>1</sup> depicts him being presented by Ningizida, his personal god, to Ea,<sup>2</sup> as he honors him as the giver of water to the world.<sup>3</sup> The higher god is seated on a throne which is supported by the streams of overflowing vases. Ea holds two flowing flasks, and one is given as a gift to Gudea through the mediation of his personal god (Fig. 64). Ningizzida receives it with his left hand while with his right hand he holds the left hand of Gudea, who in turn salutes Ea by lifting his right hand. Behind the prince appears his personal goddess interceding on his behalf with both hands lifted. She is followed by a composite animal, which is depicted as horned and winged. The beast has the forelegs of a lion, the hind legs of a raptorial bird, the tail of a scorpion, and the body of a serpent. Notable also are the two horned serpents emerging from both shoulders of the god Ningizzida.

Fig. 65 depicts another seal of Gudea<sup>4</sup> which portrays the devout governor being led into the presence of an enthroned goddess, this time by a goddess.

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<sup>1</sup>O. Weber, "Altorientalische Siegelbilder," AO 17/18 (1920):Abb. 432; Delaporte, CCOL, I:12, fig. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Frankfort, CS, p. 143; Keel, MAISU, p. 73, fig. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup>See Price, AJSS 20:115.

In a seal of Urlama, a successor of Gudea,<sup>1</sup> a similar scene is registered. Here the prince is presented to Ea by his protector goddess who brings him forward by holding his left hand in her right hand (Fig. 63). Ea appears seated on a throne supported--or decorated--by a panther(?), while he is attended by diminutive genies, one in human form, and another with the appearance of a bird.

A cylinder belonging to Ur-Engur, king of Ur (ca. 2500 B.C),<sup>2</sup> also depicts a scene of presentation. Here the king is introduced before the god by the hand of a goddess who, at the same time, salutes the enthroned god with a raised hand (Fig. 67). The prince also salutes the god with raised hand, while behind him another female deity intercedes on his behalf with lifted hands.

In the seal of Urdum,<sup>3</sup> he presents a libation to the god Ningursu, who appears seated on a throne supported by lions. Ningursu employs a lion as his footstool. From his shoulders other feline animals emerge, while he holds a staff and a seven-headed weapon in his hand (Fig. 68).<sup>4</sup> A naked priest offers a libation while behind him a bearded

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<sup>1</sup>M. Heuzey, RA 5:139.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 22, fig. 30; Wiseman and Forman, GMRW, fig. 40; Zervos, L'art de la Mésopotamie, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, p. 13, fig. 110; Frankfort, CS, p. 143, fig. 38; Keel, MAISU, p. 71, fig. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ward, CSWA, p. 23.

god--his personal god--intercedes for him with lifted hands.

A cylinder ascribed to an unidentified king of Ur<sup>1</sup> portrays an introductory scene in which the ruler stands reverently with crossed arms before the enthroned deity. He is not led by the hand in this case. The seated deity holds a small vase in his right, which appears to be an offering from the worshiper. Between both appears a crescent moon. Behind the ruler stands a suppliant female deity interceding for him with hands lifted (Fig. 69) Two anthropomorphic genii--perhaps lahmu spirits--appear as attendants of the seated god; one kneels before the deity while the other stands holding a stick.

A cylinder seal from Tell Harmal<sup>2</sup> portrays the introduction of a dignitary--perhaps the king--before an enthroned god (Fig. 70). Notable in this case is the dragon which is used as footstool by the god who extends his right arm holding a scepter and a ring. The body of the dragon seems to extend underneath the throne. The sun disk and the crescent moon appear before the king. The goddess presents her protege by the hand while he raises his hand in a signal of reverence. A star also appears in the sky between the leading deity and the worshiper.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Lamia al-Gailani Werr, "A Note on the Seal Impression IM 52599 from Tell Harmal," JCS 30 (1978):62-64.

Fig. 71, which is a seal unearthed at Kültepe<sup>1</sup> represents a double scene. The main scene presents a view of judgment. The supreme judge is enthroned holding the divine scales to weigh the one being judged. At the same time he is assisted by attendants. Before him is represented the sign of the sun and the crescent gods together with the assembly of the seven judges--the Ig gods--as dots. The one being judged is introduced by the hand by his intercessor goddess who pleads in his favor with a raised hand. The secondary scene depicts a libation offering before a naked goddess.<sup>2</sup>

A notable representation which is believed to represent the appearance of some of these protector deities

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<sup>1</sup>Tahsin Özgüç and Nimet Özgüç, Kültepe kazisi kapuru 1949 [Ausgrabungen in Kültepe. Bericht über die im Auftrage der historischen Gesellschaft, 1949 durchgeführten Ausgrabungen], (Ankara: Tuk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1953), pp. 234-235, Taf. LXII, 693.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 235. Recently, the naked goddess has been a motif of a voluminous study by Winter. He points out that this figure, in spite of the fact that in the iconography she is usually represented without the specific emblems of divinity, is a goddess. Although literarily she is not known among the major deities of the pantheon, her position becomes outstanding in the realm of private devotion. There she appears as protector, intercessor, and mediator for the individual before the great gods (Göttin, pp. 192-197). She is also the divinized representation of the "ideal female"--Idealfrau--par excellence (ibid., p. 199), and the iconography depicts her in a very varied spectrum of images, that is, as warrior, royal protector, partner in the sacred marriage, and enthroned queen of heaven (ibid., pp. 461-467).

is portrayed by the ritual shell unearthed at Assur.<sup>1</sup> This work has been dated in the seventh century B.C. It consists of a tridacna-shell with skillfully carved winged sphinxes on both sides. An outstanding example of a protective deity appears on the outer side.<sup>2</sup> As one looks at it in detail (Fig. 72), it can be noted that the joint of the shell has been fashioned into the head of the protector spirit, which is represented in the whole outer surface of the shell from the back view. This angelic being appears to be standing with hatched cross-like feet on two papyrus blossoms.<sup>3</sup> Its arms and two pairs of wings are fully stretched out as if it were trying to convey the idea of assurance and protection.<sup>4</sup> Under the wings on both sides the figures of winged sphinxes recline on garlands of lotus. They are dressed with rich garments embroidered in a square pattern. The face of the "angel"<sup>5</sup> appears to be rather effeminate and plainly formed with overemphasized

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Andrae, "Gravierte Tridacna-Muscheln aus Assur," ZA 45 (1939):88-97.

<sup>2</sup>Andrae stresses the idea that the decorations of this shell--like those of all other similar tridacna-shells that he mentions in his article--are an indicative signal of the religious uses for which this engraved shell was made (p. 94).

<sup>3</sup>Andrae points out that standing on such fragrant representations signifies to him that the god is flying (p. 89).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>Elsewhere in his essay, Andrae calls the represented entity "angel."



eyes. This emphasizes its character as a seer.<sup>1</sup> The head appears wrapped with a broad ribbon, holding the hair which is divided in the center at the top. The hair is long and falls in locks that drop from the ribbon onto the shoulders and end in half circlets. Each hand holds forked branches with two little palm trees that have at least nine leaves. The sphinxes portrayed on the obverse and reverse sides of the shell are winged lions with a female human head.

This representation has some similarity to the well-known Assyrian winged genii of hybrid forms with horned helmets. They are commonly represented as guardians of the sacred tree, or in the company of the winged colossi that serve as guardians of some important entrances. Figs. 70 to 78 show the variety of these celestial guardian entities as they appear portrayed in the iconographic representations.

Fig. 73 portrays the seal of Lugalsushumgal.<sup>2</sup> The devotee who brings an animal offering is introduced to the Sun-god by a goddess who grasps a scepter and raises her right hand interceding before the god. The god stands as he emerges from his abode of mountains.

In Fig. 74 is represented a seal which may have belonged to Shulgi, a king of the Ur III dynasty.<sup>3</sup> Here

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, I:12, fig. 106.

<sup>3</sup>Buchanan, ENES, pp. 234-235, fig. 619a-619b.

the worshiper is introduced by two goddesses who stand before an enthroned god who welcomes them with raised hand. The goddess precedes the worshiper and introduces him by the hand at the same time that she raises her hand before the seated god. The goddess that goes behind the devotee approaches the enthroned deity with both hands raised.

The scene represented in Fig. 75 is from a seal representing a double motif.<sup>1</sup> One scene depicts the introduction of a worshiper--perhaps a prince--before Ea, who is represented as enthroned and holding a vessel from which two streams are spouting. The deity who makes the presentation is a two-faced god who leads the protégé by the hand in the presence of the god.

Fig 76 is taken from a scene painted on a palace of Mari.<sup>2</sup> The whole scene has been interpreted as an act of investiture.<sup>3</sup> The king--perhaps Zimri-Lim<sup>4</sup>--appears touching the rod and ring of the goddess Ishtar who extends them to him as he comes toward her. The goddess is presented in her role of war dressed in her full warrior attire,<sup>5</sup> and standing on her sacred animal. The king is introduced by a

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<sup>1</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, 2:pl. A, fig. 934.

<sup>2</sup>Parrot, MAM, 2:53-56, fig. 48, pls. 3-11, A.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Parrot, Mari, capitale fabuleuse (Paris: Payot, 1974), p. 119.

<sup>5</sup>Parrot, Le palais, p. 55.

protector goddess who stands behind him in attitude of prayer. Two other gods are accompanying Ishtar, of which one is male, who well might be Nishubur, his acolyte and messenger.<sup>1</sup>

The scene represented in Fig 77 is taken from a cylinder seal envelope founded at Mari.<sup>2</sup> Here the king of Mari is portrayed as a victor on the battlefield. With his right hand he is smiting a defenseless enemy with a sickle-sword, while he tramples those already slaughtered. Behind him stands a warrior goddess holding a similar sword.<sup>3</sup> The goddess, who has two pairs of wings,<sup>4</sup> encourages the royal conqueror by touching his right shoulder. Before the king another goddess--perhaps his personal goddess--stands in the scene with lifted hands.

Fig. 78 depicts a scene of royal worship according to Canaanite Nuzi Tablets.<sup>5</sup> Here a worshiper--probably

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Parrot, MAM 2:pls. XLI, XLII.

<sup>3</sup>Moortgat remarks that the winged goddess is none other than Ishtar, and the royal conqueror is Zimrilim. The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>Amiet, "Jalons pour une interpretation du repertoire des sceaux-cylindres syriens au IIe millénaire," p. 28. See also, P. Amiet, "Notes sur le repertoire iconographique de Mari à l'époque du palais," Syr 37 (1960):230, fig. 12.

<sup>5</sup>The whole scene has been reconstructed from fragmentary remains on rolling Nuzi tablets. Carney E. S. Gavin, "The Nuzi Collections in the Harvard Semitic Museum," in Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians In Honor of Ernest R. Lacheman on his

the king, or at least a prince--brings a lamb as offering to the deity before a sacred tree. The god is attired as a warrior and is armed with a sickle sword and a trident of thunderbolts. He arrives at the place riding on his sacred beast, which is a winged lion that vomits fire or thunderbolts.<sup>1</sup> Over the sacred tree is a crescent and the sun with a six-pointed star.

Fig. 79 depicts a seal found at Alalakah<sup>2</sup> in which the worshiper--perhaps the king--comes into the presence of the deity followed by four attendants over whom the winged sun disk hovers. The deity who makes the introduction is represented as a very small form and stands before the head god who holds a ring with rays ending in dots in his raised hand.<sup>3</sup>

The scene of Fig. 80 is from an Old Babylonian seal which represents the approach of a worshiper before the Sun god, Shamash.<sup>4</sup> Apparently the god is accompanied by his

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Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 29, 1981, ed. M. A. Morrison, and D. I. Owen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 145-146, fig. 3f.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Collon, SITA, no. 12.

<sup>3</sup>See El-Safadi, "Syrischen Glyptik," UF 6:figs. 135, 138; O. Keel and Silvia Schroer, Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina-Israel (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1985), p. 55, fig. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Porada, CANES, no. 399. The date for this seal is suggested for about the time of Hammurabi or Samsu-iluna.

consort who stands behind him with raised hands. The worshiper faces the god and presents a kid, while behind him stand two goddesses, one of them in a typical suppliant attitude.

Fig. 81 depicts the seal impression on a tablet from Ur III times.<sup>1</sup> A seated goddess receives a suppliant goddess, who appears leading her protege by the hand. At same time she raises her left hand before the enthroned goddess.

We may still refer to another category of gods who also were guardian deities.<sup>2</sup> They were the gods known as the Guardians of the Gate whose duty it was "to guard the divine portals of the divine abode, to drive away any hostile force which might seek to penetrate into the sanctuary," and to lead into the presence of their master those who were looking for him.<sup>3</sup>

Although the exact duties of these deities is not known,<sup>4</sup> it has been established that they were known as the talime. They formed part of a special group of divine twins.<sup>5</sup> As doorkeepers their office was considered a great

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<sup>1</sup>Buchanan, ENES, pp. 214-215, fig. 558b.

<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see the part corresponding to the demonic gods on pp. 245 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Van Buren, "The Guardians of the Gate in the Akkaddian Period," Or 16 (1947):312.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ebeling, "Talim," Afo 5 (1929):218-219.

responsibility and a high honor. Occasionally sons of the god whom they served acted in this capacity.<sup>1</sup>

Van Buren mentions the names of six of these twin deities<sup>2</sup> and makes clear that some of these talime deities came to be, in later times, acknowledged as gods having powers to cure maladies. They were invoked in incantation texts and their figurines were also used as apotropaic devices that were buried to the right and to the left of the doors, or they were drawn on the walls as protection against the demons.<sup>3</sup>

On some occasions these spirits or lesser deities fit better within the category of demons. They were, however, beneficent demons, who were assigned their tasks of vigilance in the divine realm and this put them in the category of guardian deities.

Figs. 82 to 84 portray scenes from some seals that depict concepts of these minor deities performing their guardian duties as doorkeepers of the gods. Fig. 82 portrays the scene of a seal<sup>4</sup> in which a radiant god is depicted as standing between mountains holding a sword or scepter, while two minor deities who serve as his door-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The names are "Lugalgirra and Meslamtaea; Lu-lal and Latarak; Dumuzzi and Ningizzida; Kettu and Mesaru; Girru (Gibil) and Nušku; Gilgames and Enkidu." Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>4</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 88, fig. 244.

keepers open and hold the gates of his abode. The gods represented are dressed in a plain anthropomorphic style. Two lions on the top of the doorposts guard the entrance, while a third god awaits an audience before the godhead. Fig. 83 presents the scene of a seal<sup>1</sup> which depicts the doorkeepers represented as nude, bearded, anthropomorphic deities.<sup>2</sup> They stand as sentinels at the entrance of Ea's palace holding a kind of doorway.<sup>3</sup> A god with hands held approaches the entrance, while Ea, who stands over the waters, remains inside the gates waiting for the approaching god.

Fig. 84 portrays a seal<sup>4</sup> in which a pair of these deities appear. This time they are holding a standard, but they resemble more bulls than men. The bull-men characters are well known from other representations from the time of the First Babylonian Dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Similar representations of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 214, fig. 648.

<sup>2</sup>See also Fig. 69 where the two divine nude figures are represented in the scene of presentation, but this time in a diminutive form.

<sup>3</sup>Elisabeth C. L. During Caspers, "The Gatepost in Mesopotamian Art," JEOL 22 (1971-1972):211-227, pl. XXIII, A.

<sup>4</sup>El-Safadi, "Syrischen Glyptik," UF 6 (1974):pl. XXIII, 159; Frankfort, CS, pl. XLI, r.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

this type have been discovered in the excavations at Carchemish (Fig. 194).<sup>1</sup>

#### The Hittite Protector Deities

The Hittites were also very familiar with the belief in a personal god.<sup>2</sup> Their prayers indicate that they acknowledged their benevolence and also the possibility that they could depart when they became angry. For the Hittite people, collective or individual success was closely related to the favor of the guardian gods.<sup>3</sup>

They also went to some major deities begging them to intercede in their behalf in order to bring back alienated deities. In this way they tried to have a more bearable situation in distressful times and so change an unhappy situation. Often the Sun-god or other major tutelary deity was called to act as an intermediary and to transmit the words of the petitioner to the deity for whom they were intended.<sup>4</sup>

A prayer intended to be recited by any Hittite person contains this request addressed to Istanu, the Sun-

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<sup>1</sup>See Hogarth, Carchemish, pl. B.14b; Woolley, Carchemish, pl. 49a, pl. 52b, c, d.

<sup>2</sup>Guiseppe Furlani, "The Basic Aspect of Hittite Religion," HTR 31 (1938):259.

<sup>3</sup>NERTROT, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup>H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "Hittite Royal Prayers," Numen 16 (1969):88-89.



god, who ought to convey it to the personal deity who is in bad relations with his protegee:

That god has turned his eyes to another side  
and does not give (this) son of mankind  
(a chance) to act.  
If that god is in the sky,  
or if he is on the earth,  
thou, Istanu, shalt go to him.  
Go speak to that god and transmit to him  
the words of this son of mankind!<sup>1</sup>

One prayer is known to be that recited by King Kantuzili. Apparently it is a version of the prayer already mentioned and was especially arranged for the use of this king.<sup>2</sup> It is addressed to the personal god of the worshiper who asks to be relieved of his suffering. The prayer is preceded by another prayer to the Sun-god which ends with a request that this deity should transmit to the personal god the petition that follows:

nu-ut-ta ka-a-sa LUGAL-us a-ru-w[a-i-mi(?)]  
nu-ut-ta me-mi-is-ki-mi  
ku-is-mu DINGIR-LUM ki-i i-na-an-na pa-is  
nu-us-sa-an DINGIR-LUM a-pa-a-as ma-a-an  
ne-[(e-pi-si)]  
ma-a-na-as tak-ni-i  
zi-ga <sup>d</sup>UTU-us kat-ti-is-si [pa-i-si]  
nu i-it A-NA DINGIR-LIM a-pe-e-da-ni me-e-mi  
u-uk-za ne-ku DINGIR-IA tu-uk ku-it i-i([a-nu-u])n  
nu ku-it wa-as-ta-a-ah-hu-un. . . .  
Now behold, I, the king, am praying to you  
and telling you:

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<sup>1</sup>Hans G. Güterbock, "The Composition of Hittite Prayers to the Sun," *JAOS* 78 (1958):206. For the text, see E. Laroche, *RA* 45 (1951):132, ls. 9-15.

<sup>2</sup>Güterbock points out that there are three versions of this Hittite prayer: one pronounced by a specific person--in this case Kantuzili; one that could be pronounced by any king; and one that could be pronounced by any individual (*ibid.*, p. 242).

Whichever god gave me this illness,  
 whether that god is in heaven  
 or whether he is on earth,  
 you, the Sun-god will go to him.  
 Go, say to that god:  
 "O my god, what have I ever done to you?  
 And in what have I sinned?"<sup>1</sup>

These prayers stress the awareness of the existence of a broken relation, because the deity has been distanced for some reason. When the situation turned unbearable for the suppliant, he tried to reach the angered god through the mediation of a major deity.

On literary grounds, the conception of the personal god as a protector of humans portrays some similarities between Hittites and Mesopotamians<sup>2</sup>; the iconographic details of this idea, however, appear more stressed on the Hittite side. If the Mesopotamians represented the personal gods leading people or kings by the hand, or interceding on their behalf with hands lifted before the enthroned higher deities, the Hittites conceived of this divine protection in a more intimate way. The personal god appears depicted in a closer protective relationship. He is represented as embracing his protege with strong defensive

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<sup>1</sup>Güterbock, "Appendix: Hittite Parallels," JNES 33 (1974):324.

<sup>2</sup>Especially in some Hittite prayers addressed to certain gods it is thought that there can be detected similarity of pattern and motifs--although with a proper originality--; a great deal of inspiration from Babylon. Güterbock, JNES 33 (1974):327.

determination, but at the same time with tenderness towards him.

An outstanding example of this kind of protective relationship is represented in a rock relief of the small chamber of the sanctuary of Yazilikaya.<sup>1</sup> There the Hittite king Tudhaliyas IV is represented under the protection of Sarruna his protector deity.<sup>2</sup> The god stands armed and with right hand stretched out in a defensive posture. At same time the god embraces the king and holds his right hand (Fig. 85).

The concept of this Hittite protective relationship is also represented in a seal impression uncovered at Ras Shamra.<sup>3</sup> In this case the same king is represented as being protected by the god Muwatallu. Both king and god appear armed with swords, but in addition the former grasps a spear and holds a scepter. Both are dressed alike (Fig. 86), and both stand before a goddess who is thought to be the consort of the protector god,<sup>4</sup> or perhaps the protecting goddess of the king.

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<sup>1</sup>Bittel, FeYa, pls. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup>Bittel, YAFIK, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>Schaeffer, "Recueil de sceaux et cylindres hittites imprimés sur les tablettes des archives sud du palais de Ras Shamra," Ug 3 (1954):14-19, figs. 24, 26.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

### The Canaanite Protector Deities

The knowledge of the Canaanite view on this subject comes mainly from the finds at Ras Shamra. Occasionally the Ugaritic literature and iconography present the protector god(dess) motif, but this motif does not appear very frequently.

In spite of the scarcity of sources that deal with this subject, a knowledge of the protective function of the gods is attested in the correspondence that the Ugaritians maintained among themselves and with their neighbors.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, Cunchillos<sup>2</sup> has pointed out the frequency with which this motif appears as an expression of faith and piety in the salutations of the letters of Ugarit. As a general rule any god could be mentioned by name in this epistolary correspondence, but those mentioned tend to be those who had protective function.

Especially the salutations of the letters contain phrases that recall the gods as protective entities, and

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<sup>1</sup>For the epistolary intercourse of Ugarit, see Ug 5:101-102, 120-129, 139-150, 166-67. Also Nougayrol, Textes accadiens des archives sud. (Archives internationales) [Le palais royal d'Ugarit], vols. III-VI (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1956-1970), hereafter PRU.

<sup>2</sup>See, "Expresiones de la fe y la piedad en las saluciones de las cartas de Ugarit," SBE, pp. 115-128.

there are expressed the wishes of protection and peace of the sender for the addressee.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the expressions *ilanu lissuruka*, "may the gods protect you,"<sup>2</sup> or *ilanu ana šulmani lissuruka*, "may the gods keep you (in) health"<sup>3</sup> became a phrase constantly repeated in letters from Ugarit written in Akkadian.

In addition to these, the expressions *lim ilanu lissuruka*, "May the one thousand gods protect you,"<sup>4</sup> or *lim ilanu ana šulmani lissuruka*, "may the one thousand gods guard you with health,"<sup>5</sup> are also found.

From these assertions, we can at least say that in a general way the belief in the tutelary function of the gods is attested at Ugarit. They were expected by them to protect the people and to take care to keep them in a healthy condition.

The expression "the thousand gods" was well known to the Hittites as a way to refer in general to their

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<sup>1</sup>A. L. Christensen, "Ugarit Epistolary Formulas: A Comparative Study of the Ugaritic Epistolary Formulas in the Context of the Contemporary Akkadian Formulas in the Letters from Ugarit and Amarna," *UF* 9 (1977):150.

<sup>2</sup>See letters RS 21.183, 5; RS 20.17, 5; RS 20.158, 5.

<sup>3</sup>See letters RS 20.15, 6-7; RS 20.255 A, 2-3; RS 21.07 C, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>As appears in letters 17.152, 5 (*PRU* IV, p. 214); RS 18.89, 5 (*PRU* VI, p. 17).

<sup>5</sup>See letters 17.268, 5-6; 17.83, 6-7; 17.143, 7-8 (*PRU* IV, p. 214-216).

pantheon.<sup>1</sup> Allusions to this expression occur naturally as an established epistolary cliché that was used among the Hittites and at Ugarit.<sup>2</sup> This is a tacit reference to the Hittite pantheon. Since the same expression is also used in correspondence among the Ugaritic dignitaries and governors apart from Hatti regions,<sup>3</sup> it is doubtful that this is a direct reference only to the Hittite pantheon. It may also have been used to refer to the Ugaritic pantheon.<sup>4</sup>

Other epistolary greetings employing similar wording also present the same tendency to embrace the totality of the gods as protective entities. Some letters plainly mention the gods of Ugarit in a collective way in company with the deities of another country.<sup>5</sup> In still other

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<sup>1</sup>Helmer Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East (London: S.P.C.K., 1973), p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Cunchillos points out that contrary to the expected, the expression is quite common in the international correspondence.

<sup>3</sup>Among the international correspondence with Ugarit in which "the thousand gods," appear are: RS 17.152, 5 (PRU IV, p. 214), which is a letter from the king of Aurrū to the king of Ugarit; RS 17.83, 6-7 and RS 17.143, 8-9 (RPU IV, pp. 216-217), which were written by Ariteshub, the king of Istanu, to the king of Ugarit; RS 17.48, A 5-6, B 4-5 (RPU VI, pp. 9-11), which is a letter written to the governor of Ugarit; RS 17.239, 5-6 (RPU VI, pp. 11-12), which was written by the governor of Ugarit.

<sup>4</sup>On the contrary the letters of the Hittite kings to the kings of Ugarit tend to avoid such expressions as appear in the letter sent by Suppiluliuma to Niḡqadu (RS 17.132 [PRU IV, pp. 35-37])

<sup>5</sup>In the letter RS 15.33 (PRU III, p. 15), written by Hismikusuh (a Hittite character) to the governor of Ugarit, there appears the expression *ilanu<sup>M</sup> mat<sup>M</sup> ugarit ana*

letters, the salutations not only mention the deities of Ugarit and some friendly country but also add reference to personal gods without mentioning them by name. Such is the case with a letter that says "may the gods of Amurru, the gods of Ugarit and the gods of the king your lord, protect you with health."<sup>1</sup> Likewise in a family letter it says: "May the gods of the land of Tipat, and the gods of the land of Ugarit, and all the gods of the house of our father conserve you healthy."<sup>2</sup>

From the context as a whole--as Cunchillos says--it seems that the phrase "one thousand gods" was used in Ugarit as a synonym for "all the gods."<sup>3</sup> In other words, according the Ugaritian thought, "the thousand gods" was an inclusive statement which encompassed the pantheon in its totality. In this way it was hoped that all the gods would

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šulmani lissuruka, "may the gods of the country of Ugarit guard you in health." In the letter RS 16.111 (PRU III, p. 13), written by Mme. Utmi to the queen of Ugarit, the gods of two countries are mentioned collectively as protectors, ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša mat<sup>u</sup>ugarit u ilanum ša amurri ana šulmani lissuruki, "may the gods of Ugarit and the gods of Amurru conserve you healthy." For similar salutations see RS 16.116 (PRU III, p. 10), and RS 20.200 B 5-6 (Uq 5: 122-123).

<sup>1</sup>ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša mat<sup>u</sup>amurri ilani<sup>M</sup> ša mat<sup>u</sup>ugarit u ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša šarri belika ana šulmani lissuruka. RS 15.24 + 50 (PRU III, p. 18). Such is the way that Abussgama from Amurru writes to the intendant of Ugarit.

<sup>2</sup>ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša mat<sup>u</sup>ti-pa-at. u ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša mat<sup>u</sup>ga-rit. u gab-ba ilanum<sup>M</sup> ša bit a-b[i-ni(?)]. a-na sul-ma-ni lissuruki. RS 20.227, 5-8 (Uq 5:147-149).

<sup>3</sup>Cunchillos, SBE, p. 119.

protect the Ugaritic citizens and by extension all those who were in good relationship with them.

It may also be noted that similar Ugaritic expressions appear in the correspondence,<sup>1</sup> such as ilm.tḡrk.tšlmk, "may the gods protect you and conserve healthy,"<sup>2</sup> or ily.ugrt.tḡrk.tšlmk, "may the gods of Ugarit protect you and conserve you healthy."<sup>3</sup> This also seems to indicate

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<sup>1</sup>Greetings in Ugaritic letters have become a subject of constant study through the years. For a discussion on the subject, see H. L. Ginsberg, "Two North-Canaanite Letters from Ugarit," BASOR 72 (1938):18-19; Samuel E. Lowenstamm, "Ugaritic Formulas of Greeting," BASOR 194 (1969):52-54; Benedikt Hartmann, "Mögen die Götter dich behüten und unversehrt bewahren," VTSup 16 (1967):102-105; Dennis Pardee, "A New Ugaritic Letter," BiOr 34 (1977):3-20; George J. Brooke, "The Textual, Formal and Historical Significance of Ugaritic Letters," UF 11 (1979):69-87; Cunchillos, "Una carta paradigmática de Ugarit (KTU 2.11). La carta de Talmiyanu y Ahatmiku," in El ministerio de la palabra, ed. Vicente Collado and Eduardo Zurro (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1983), pp. 61-74.

<sup>2</sup>Of all the known formulas, ilm.tḡrk.tšlmk is the most used in Ugaritic epistolary (Cunchillos, "Una carta paradigmática," p. 72), and it is pointed out as traditional in the Ugaritic correspondence. Cunchillos, "KTU 2.21 - Lettre adressée à la reine," UF 13 (1981):46. This expression in the Ugaritic language appears as quoted above, or in its variants, at least nineteen times.

Cunchillos suggests that it means the desire that the remittent is expressing towards the addressee when he receives the letter--that is, enjoying good health. At the same time, he is expressing his wishes that the gods be continually conserving him healthy (SBE, pp. 122-123). This appears to be the case in a letter sent by the king of Tyre to the king of Ugarit (RS 18.31, 4-5 [PRU V, p. 81]), and in a letter sent by Pegan to the king of Ugarit (RS 18.147 [PRU 5:87]), when both remittents desire that the Ugaritian king would be given the gift of good health by the gods.

<sup>3</sup>KTU 2.16:4-6.



that at Ugarit--as is the case for Assyria<sup>1</sup>--for the gods in their different ranks, the protection of mankind and the preservation of human health were recognized as protective functions.<sup>2</sup> The inhabitants of Ras Shamra trusted in the power of the gods as being able to help mortals in every circumstance, no matter how difficult it were.<sup>3</sup> And this help included a concept of the divine intervention of warrior character.<sup>4</sup>

The protective function of the totality of Canaanite gods is also expressed in other ways apart from epistolary. An amulet contains the petition of succor addressed to some principal gods "and to all the sons of the gods--wkl.bn.'lm--, and to the multitude of race of the holy ones in its totality--wrb.dr.kl.qdšn."<sup>5</sup> This invocation to the gods not only parallels the bn 'lm with the qdšn,

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<sup>1</sup>The extant Assyrian epistolary shows scores of examples in which a desire of blessing with good health and long days is expressed for the addressee. Especially the gods Nabu, Marduk, Ninurta, and Gula are constantly mentioned as granters of "happiness and physical well being." Also the expression "may the great gods bestow long days, well being and joy upon" you, elsewhere mentioned in the letters that Assyrian scholars wrote to their monarchs. See Simo Parpola, Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), esp., pp. 200-271.

<sup>2</sup>SBE, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>Cunchillos, "La foi et la piété quotidiennes dans le corps des lettres trouvées à Ugarit," MBO, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>5</sup>Dupont-Sommer, "L'inscription de l'amulette," pp. 134-135.

presenting them as heavenly creatures of the divine order, but also exemplifies the Canaanite belief of a supernatural protection coming from the totality of the divine beings. As Dupont-Sommer observes, the total assembly, the whole world of gods are called divine protectors.<sup>1</sup>

The iconography of Canaan presents the protector gods motif in various ways. The major gods as well as the lesser gods are depicted in their function as protectors.

Typical of this is the representation of the goddess Asherah as the wet-nurse goddess (Fig. 88).<sup>2</sup> The goddess is depicted here as horned and winged, and also as offering her breasts to her proteges.<sup>3</sup>

It may also be mentioned that in the well-known representation of Baal<sup>4</sup> in which he is depicted as brandishing a mace and holding a thunderbolt, he is shown as if

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Schaeffer, Syria 31 (1954):55, pl. VIII; Edmond Jacob, Ras Shamra et l'Ancient Testament (Paris: Neuchatel, 1960), pp. 54-55, pl. VII.

<sup>3</sup>The suckling motif appears in an episode in the epic of Keret. El proclaims that the children of Keret will suckle the milk of Attart and will suckle the breasts of Anat (KTU 1.15 II, 26-28). The motif is especially common in the Egyptian iconography where some goddesses appear suckling their favorite sons.

<sup>4</sup>Schaeffer, Ug 2:121-130, pl. XXIV; Pritchard, ANEP, p. 307, fig. 490.

covering his protégée (Fig. 89), possibly the king of Ugarit.<sup>1</sup>

In the scenes on the seals containing an enthroned dignitary it should be noted that the representation of the lesser deities indicates they act in their protective function.<sup>2</sup> This identifies those represented as protective deities. Winter simply calls them "the 'protector angel' of the enthroned prince."<sup>3</sup>

In a seal discovered at Hazor<sup>4</sup> appears a scene where two male figures greet each other. The one who is seated on a throne is the god, while the second who is the worshiper is standing on the opposite side (Fig. 90).

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<sup>1</sup>The identity of Baal is beyond doubt. However, the identity of the person under his protection remains uncertain, though it must be at least some high dignitary of Ugarit. Pritchard sees in it the possibility of "a person under the protection of the god" (*ANEP*, p. 307).

Schaeffer identifies him "comme un personnage qui s'est placé sous la protection du majestueux Baal et qui exerce le pouvoir sous son autorité, dieu mineur ou bien souverain ou grand prêtre de Ras Shamra" (*Ug* 2:129).

<sup>2</sup>The scenes can be composite or simple, but generally different deities are represented mediating or interceding on behalf of their protégés leading them to the high god or goddess. Williams, "Humans and Their Deities in Babylon," p. 365.

<sup>3</sup>"Die 'Schutzengel' des thronenden Fuersten." Winter, *Göttin*, p. 239.

<sup>4</sup>Yigael Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV. An Account of the Third and Fourth Excavations, 1957-1958* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), pl. CCCXIX, 2. Although the seal was found in strata belonging to the 14th-13th centuries BC, its Syrian-Mitannian characteristics put it as belonging to the second half of the second millennium B.C.

Behind the enthroned god is a protector goddess who stands praying with uplifted hands in behalf of the approaching worshiper. Before the enthroned god appears the winged-sun disk, while behind him the sun is encircled by a crescent.

To summarize the protector-deities motif it may be said that this category of deities is well attested in written texts as well as in engraved forms. In a variety of ways the literature makes reference to a belief in deities who were designed to protect the individual. These divine entities, although minor in rank within the pantheon, were believed to be benefactors of humanity and to be able to intercede in behalf of their protégés before the divine assembly.

This concept of intercession appears to have been essential to ANE man. The incantation texts reflect the anxiety and inner desire to be free of every kind of guilt that would interfere with the individual's relationship with the major deities. They believed in the efficacy of these intercessory deities as an indispensable link between man and god.

As a general rule everyone hoped for divine protection from the pantheon as a whole. But this desire for protection was also selective. Higher deities were protector gods of governing characters and individuals of elevated rank, while lesser gods were guardians of the

common people. From the incantation texts one can infer, however, that everyone could appeal to the major gods as their intercessors whenever they wanted to be reconciled with their protective deities.

Few personal gods are known by name. The great majority of them remain anonymous. Nevertheless they are attested beyond doubt. On occasions they are addressed in very devoted, tender, and even familiar terms by their protégés.

When one compares representations between Mesopotamian peoples and others, one can detect some contrasting features in this subject. While the people of the Two Rivers region represented their protective gods or goddesses as leading their wards by the hand before an enthroned deity, the Anatolian inhabitant conceived of the guardian deity as embracing his protected pupil.

#### The Messenger Gods

Among the large number of lesser deities of the different ANE pantheons there is explicit mention of certain gods who performed the duty of messengers. The messenger gods are likewise a motif closely connected to matters of the heavenly council. Some data tend to indicate that within the divine assembly, a number of principal gods and goddesses had their own escort of divine beings. Some of these functioned only as their messengers.

## Mesopotamian Messenger Gods

The messenger-gods motif is quite common in the Mesopotamian mytho-epic literature. Throughout the passages in the Enuma elish there occur many occasions when the greater gods make use of their subordinate deities to send them as their appointed messengers.

In Tablet I.29-31 it is mentioned that Apsu had his appointed messenger<sup>1</sup> in whom he trusted and from whom he received his secret counsels. This was the messenger whom he usually charged with delivering his messages to other deities.<sup>2</sup>

Eventually the great gods were also requested to serve as the messengers of the highest gods. Such is the case with Anu, who was appointed to be the messenger of Anshar--and the totality of menaced gods--to Tiamat.<sup>3</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup>The Akkadian term *šuk-kal-lu* stands for a court official (see CAD, s.v. *šukkallu*). Hence Heidel translates it as "vizier." The term is indicative of a personal assistant attending the gods, and in its feminine form--*sukkallatu*--indicates the attendant as a goddess. The texts make explicit mention of the commission given by the major gods to those attendants as their messengers. Thus Langdon and likewise Labat translate *shukkallu* elsewhere as messenger.

<sup>2</sup>*i-nu-šu Apsû za-ri ilu ra-be-u-tim. is-si-ma iluMu-um-mu su-ka-la-šu i-zak-kar-šu. iluMu-u-mu suk-kal-lu mu-tib-ba ka-bit-ti-ya*, "Then Apsu, engenderer of the great gods, cried aloud calling unto Mummu, his messenger: Oh Mummu, messenger, who rejoicest my mind, . . ." Langdon, *BEC*, I.29-31.

<sup>3</sup>Anu is urged to speak his own word, and the word of the other gods loyal to Anshar. [*al-kam-mja mut-tis Tiamat i-ziz-za at-ta . . . šum-ma*] *la še-ma-ta a-mat-ka. [a-ma-t]ju-ni at-me-šim-ma ši-i lip-pa-aš-ḥa*, "Go and in the

was not the usual position of Anu within the pantheon or the divine assembly. Gaga usually served as Anshar's messenger. On this occasion Gaga was sent to Lahmu and Lahamu with the message to convene the assembly that would confer the firstbornship upon Marduk.<sup>1</sup>

This passage also gives us an idea about the obeisance given by the lesser messenger gods to the great high gods. When Gaga arrived in the presence of Lahmu and Lahamu, "He kneeled and kissed the ground before them. He bowed down."<sup>2</sup>

In the myth of the death and resurrection of Bel-Marduk, Nušku<sup>3</sup> is referred to as messenger of the gods. The passage states that after Ninurta conquered Zu, he was

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presence of Tiamat stand . . . [If] she will not have hearkened to thy word, Speak our word to her. Verily, she will be appeased." Langdon, BEC, II. 75, 77-78. Probably Anu is asked to be messenger to Tiamat, due to her elevated rank among the gods; otherwise other deities would probably be asked to act as envoy of Anshar.

<sup>1</sup>Gaga would say explicitly: An-šar ma-ru-ku-nu u-ma-'i-i-ra-an-ni, "Anshar your son sent me" (BEC, III.13), and he conveyed the message with those words (*ibid.*, III. 71).

<sup>2</sup>uš-kima iš-šik qaq-qa-ra ša-pal-šu-un ik-mis . . . (*ibid.*, III.69-70). It seems that as attendant of the great god, Gaga also was acknowledged as an important deity, especially closely associated with Nergal and Ninurta (see Surpu, pp. 8, 15).

<sup>3</sup>In a song addressed to Nušku, this god is praised as son of Enlil and Ninlil and at the same time as the highest of the servants of Enlil, and one who acts according to Enlil's heart. See SAHG, 3; for the text see E. Chiera, Sumerian Texts of Varied Contents (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), no. 37.

charged with announcing the glad tidings to all the gods as the messenger<sup>1</sup> of Aššur and Gula.<sup>2</sup> In the religious literature Nusku is presented not only as the messenger of these gods but, as Jastrow pointed out, "as the messenger of the gods in general, and accordingly Asshurbanapal addresses him as the 'highly honored messenger of the gods.'"<sup>3</sup> Jastrow also mentions that the same monarch speaks of this divine messenger as the one who by the command of Assur and Belit stood at his side aiding him in the defeat of his enemies.<sup>4</sup>

The myth of the travel of Inanna to the Abzu of Enki--to get the me's in order to bring them to Erech<sup>5</sup>--mentions by name the messengers, these higher gods. Here

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<sup>1</sup>The term used on this occasion is *mar šipri*, which designates a "messenger," "envoy," "agent," "deputy," and is elsewhere found in the cuneiform texts. For references to the different use of *mar šipri* in the texts, see *CAD*, s.v. *mar šipri*, 10: 261-265.

2. . . . *ilu*AS-šur a-na *ilu*[Nušku ik-ti-bi]. ma-a a-lik a-na ilāni gab-bu pa-si-ir u-pa-sa-ar-šu-nu u šu-nu ina eli ih-[du-u-ma] . . . *ilu*Nusku . . . amelmar šipri šu-u-tu ilatgu-la ina muḫ-ḫi-šu ta-šap-pa-ra, "Ashur spoke to the god Nušku saying, 'Hasten unto all the gods, announce the tidings to them and they [rejoiced.] . . . Nušku . . . he is the messenger; Gula sends him on his (Bel's) behalf.'" *BEC*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup>Jastrow, *ReBAS*, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Me is each of the numerous aspects of human social life, and according "the ancient Mesopotamian view every aspect of human society was decreed by the gods." Lambert, "Destiny and Divine Intervention in Babylon and Israel," *OTS* 17 (1972):67.



Isimud is the messenger of Enki, and Inanna has Ninsubur as her messenger.

In a hymn to Enlil, it is mentioned that only Nusku, his exalted messenger, could come close to him and know his secret decrees. The hymn says:

When, in his awesomeness (Enlil), he  
decrees the fates,  
No god dares to look on him.  
Only to his exalted vizier,  
the chamberlain Nusku,  
The command, the word of his heart,  
Did he make known, did he inform,  
Did he commission to execute his  
all-embracing orders,  
Did he entrust all the holy laws,  
all the holy decrees.<sup>1</sup>

From this passage one can detect not only the belief in the existence of the messenger gods, but even more, the intimate relationship between them and the higher deities. They also served on missions of information to others, and faithfully executed the divine orders as ministers of the great gods.

This concept of messenger gods was commonly used in conjuration texts where the sons of higher deities usually are mentioned as divine messengers. In one conjuration text the son of Ea is mentioned in this way: "I am the messenger, who goes in front of Ea. I am the messenger of Marduk, conjurer of Enki, the first-born son of Ea."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kramer, Sumerians, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>šī-pri ālik mahri ša Ea ānaku ša Marduk MAŠ.MAŠ  
Enki māri rēštī ša Ea mar šip-ri-šu anāku. See CAD, 10:261.

Elsewhere in these texts these messengers are mentioned as being the mighty sons of the gods. By their exalted designation among the gods--as great messengers and chief counsellors--their command is supreme. A conjuration addressed in the name of Nusku says:

Nusku, great god, counsellor of the great gods,  
 . . . flashing day, whose command is supreme,  
 Messenger of Anu, executor of the decrees of Bel,  
 The one who obeys Bel, counsellor, refuge  
     of the earthly spirits,  
 Mighty in battle, whose attack is powerful.  
 Nusku the burning one, conqueror  
     of the adversary,  
 Without thee, Shamash the judge executes  
     no judgment.<sup>1</sup>

These references stress the fact that these messengers--as divine sons--partake of the divine attributes of their progenitors. Being sons and at same time messengers of the gods, it was natural that these celestial beings have to be described in terms similar to those used for the great gods.<sup>2</sup> They were clothed in splendor, with unquenchable light, and it is frequently emphasized that they had great strength, majesty, brilliance, and the terror that they were able to inspire.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly enough, the Ig and the An are depicted not only in worshiping functions but also doing service to the gods Bel, Ninib, Marduk, Ishtar, and Nergal.

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<sup>1</sup>Talqvist, Maqlû, II:1, 4-9.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 77, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 277.

Elsewhere "each class is generally mentioned in connection with the other, and they are described as carrying out the will of the great gods."<sup>1</sup> Thus, they also "are sent out to do service."<sup>2</sup> In performing this service, however, they generally manifest a character which is severe, cruel, and rather hostile to mankind. Their power is manifest in their brilliance that is able to consume the land.<sup>3</sup>

The brilliance or splendor<sup>4</sup> of the gods referred to is a motif that occurs repeatedly in the texts. It is also well represented in iconography throughout the ANE (see Figs. 6 to 8, 18, 19, 32, 33, 38, 39, 46, 49, 51-53, 82, 135-138, 178-179).

The myth of En-el mentions that Tiamat transformed her monsters into gods by endowing them with *puhuhtu* and *melammu*.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Ea bewildered Mummu by soothing him to sleep in order to steal his *melammu*.<sup>6</sup> The epic of Gilgamesh

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard King, Babylonian Religion and Mythology (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1899), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, pp. 187, 593.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>4</sup>Akk. *melammu* is usually understood as splendor, or "radiance, supernatural awe-inspiring sheen (inherent in things divine and royal" (CAD, 10:9-12, s.v. *melammu*). With this term the Akkadians expressed the resplendent resemblance that--as was believed--surrounded the gods and divine beings of the celestial court.

<sup>5</sup>[ušum]gallé na-ad-ru-ti pul-ha-a-ti u-šal-[biš-m a]. me-lam-me-na uš-taš-ša-a i-li-is um[-taš-ši-il]. PBC, I:136-137).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., I:65-68.

refers to the *puluhtu*--glamor--and *melammu*--radiance--of the scorpion-men who were guarding the mountain gate through which Shamash passed daily.<sup>1</sup>

This supernatural radiance, characteristic of the gods, is also described and depicted for the lesser deities who were at the service of the major gods in diverse activities.<sup>2</sup> This divine radiance describes them not only as acting on the divine level but over all that properly belongs to it.<sup>3</sup>

Representations of resplendent beings that belong to the Mesopotamian celestial realm are not rare (see Figs. 6, 7, 32, 33, 46, 49-53). It is believed that the iconographic representations of the divine *melammu* can be seen especially during the Neo-Assyrian period, as is attested in cylinder seals.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Oppenheim, *MeMy*, II, pp. 46-47 (*Gilg.* IX ii:6-9).

<sup>2</sup>Oppenheim points out the synonymy of *pulhu* and *melammu* as expressions of divine splendor. Both denote the luminescent appearance of the gods. As he says, *pulhu* "denotes a kind of supernatural garment," it was "conceived as a wrap of flames and fire," and the *melammu* most connected with the head of the god was conceived "as a peculiarly shaped sparkling." "Akkadian *pul(u)h(t)u* and *melammu*," *JAOS* 63 (1943):31-34.

<sup>3</sup>For a detailed study of the radiance of the gods, see Elena Cassin, *La splendeur divine. Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne* (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1968).

<sup>4</sup>In this way are interpreted seal-cylinders No. 760 of the P. Morgan Library (Porada, *CANES*), no. 790 of the Louvre (Delaporte, *CCOL*), and no. 598 (Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, [WVDOG 58, 29]).

It seems that the concept of a heavenly messenger as a being of winged human appearance can archaeologically be traced back to Mesopotamia as far as the third millennium B.C.<sup>1</sup> This earliest evidence appears in the stela of Urnammu (ca. 2113-2096 B.C.) of Ur (Fig. 91) The stela portrays a winged creature descending from heaven with a vase<sup>2</sup> from which he pours water to the worshipping king.<sup>3</sup>

Legrain observes that these angelic Mesopotamian representations pouring rainwater from heaven were not only common at that time--ca. 2300 BC--but also in its apparition is something "new and so far unique in Mesopotamian Art."<sup>4</sup> The scene of this two-sided stela--one showed in Fig. 91--is repeated at least four times in the same monument, which may indicate, as Legrain suggests, a graphic representation of the interest that the whole heaven had in the welfare of Ur.<sup>5</sup> Or perhaps better, the eagerness with which the heavenly messengers of the four corners of the heaven performed their duty as direct agents for the pouring of the rainwater that benefited the land of Ur. Since the king is presumably either worshipping or

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<sup>1</sup>E. B. Funderburk, "Angel," ZPEB, 1:166.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Langdon, Semitic Mythology [The Mythology of All Races 5], (Boston: Marshal Jones Co., 1931), p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>Leon Legrain, "The Stela of the Flying Angels," The Museum Journal 13 (1927):74-77.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

praying, we might properly assume that these celestial messengers come down to grant his petition.

A similar motif (Fig. 93) is the subject of a relief on a basin stone carved by Gudea.<sup>1</sup> The scene portrays female deities holding vessels from which water falls in streams. However, over them appear winged gods soaring down from heaven and pouring down water into the vessels held by the standing goddesses.<sup>2</sup> An identical motif is also portrayed in a dedicatory slab made by Gudea for the temple of Ningirsu in Lagash.<sup>3</sup> In all these cases we may say that winged messengers appear soaring and at the same time pouring down water, as a gift from heaven.

Although representations of winged heavenly beings are quite well-known elsewhere throughout the ANE, little is known of the character and function of these spirits, except that they are among the earliest representations of humanity's concept of God's winged ministers."<sup>4</sup>

All this shows that these Mesopotamian messenger-gods appear as individual characters and also as a host of celestial divine beings who were in the service of the

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<sup>1</sup>Moortgat, Art of Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Zervos, L'art de la Mésopotamie, pp. 214-215.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred Jeremias, "Die Weltanschauung der Sumer," AO 27 (1929):34, fig. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ilona E. Ellinger, "Winged Figures," in Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson on His Seventieth Birthday (Saint Louis: Washington University, 1953), 2:187.

higher deities. They carried out their commands and decrees and, in many instances, human beings expected their favor because of their power and close relationship with the godhead. They were also feared because of their power, appearance, and divine nature as lesser deities and sons of the gods.

#### Hittite Messenger Gods

The messenger gods were well-known to the Hittites. Their myths make reference to lesser deities who function as messengers of the higher gods,<sup>1</sup> and the importance of their function as an important means of communication among the gods.

The myth of the Song of Ullikummi refers to the fact that Impaluri was the messenger (vizier) of the Sea-god who was sent to Kumarbi.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Kumarbi had Mukisanu as his messenger.<sup>3</sup> The myth also mentions that Kumarbi commanded Impaluri to carry his messages to the gods.<sup>4</sup> For his part, the Storm-god (Teshub) had Tasmisu as his vizier-messenger, while Hebat his wife had the goddess Takiti as her messenger.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 43-44.

<sup>2</sup>Güterbock, *JCS* 5 (1951):14-17, Col. II (A) 14-17.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17, lns. 31-32.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, lns. 37-35.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, Third Tab., Col. I.30-31, Col. II.1-3.

Although the textual evidence is rather fragmentary, it appears to show that the counsel and services of Tasmisu were decisive in the struggle raised by Kumarbi against the gods. He suggested to his master that he get counsel from Ea and again and again he went into the presence of Ea to obtain the strategic details for the decisive confrontation. In fact, it was Ea who also used the services of Tasmisu as his messenger to inform the gods in the "assembly-place" of the strategy that they would have to follow to defeat Ullikummi.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the names of these deities, some details concerning the character of these divine messengers and the way in which they fulfilled their missions can be determined from this myth. They are attentive and submissive to the word and will of their master deity.<sup>2</sup> They are careful to pay obeisance to the higher deity.<sup>3</sup> They also

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Col. IV.13-17.

<sup>2</sup>Elsewhere, the messenger gods are depicted as attentive to the requirements, indications, and words of the gods who request from them their services.

<sup>3</sup>In a passage of the myth, the respect given by the messengers is described in superlative crescendo. The Storm-god and his messenger went together to the abode of Ea. At each door of the residence of the god, they bowed five times, but in the very presence of Ea they bowed fifteen times (ibid., Third Tab., Col. II. 29-32). Also when Tasmisu returns to Ea he prostrates himself before the god-head (ibid., Col. IV. 4-5).



hasten to fulfill the command of their lords.<sup>1</sup> To stress the promptness of their action, it is said that they wore the "swift winds as shoes,"<sup>2</sup> which would imply that it was believed that these divine messengers moved with windy speed. Their swiftness is also stressed in the passage which describes the journeys and that mentions the going of Teshub and Tasmisu to see Ea. It states that they covered the distance "at once."<sup>3</sup>

A curious implement which belongs to the Hittite messenger god is the unvarying presence of a staff as part of his (or her) equipment as a divine messenger.<sup>4</sup> This staff probably was not a mere rod like those of travelers. Over it was to be a symbol of the divine authority of the god whom they represented.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Of Tasmisu it is said, "When Tasmisu the words heard, he hurried, hastened" (ibid., Second Tab., Col. III. 15-16); in the same way Takiti hastens to obey: "[When Takiti the words hear]d, she hurried, she hastened" (Third Tab., Col. I. 34).

<sup>2</sup>So urges Hebat to Takiti her messenger goddess (Third Tab. Col. I. 31-32), and similarly Tamsisu as soon as he heard the message, "upon his feet as shoes the swift winds he put" (Third Tab. Col. II 3).

<sup>3</sup>Third Tab. Col. II. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Each time the principal god(dess) urges a message to them, they explicitly charge them, "into (thy) hand : staff take," and consequently of the messenger also it is invariably said, "into (his) hand a staff he took" (ibid., Col. I. 31, Col. II. 2 and par.).

<sup>5</sup>See H. F. Beck, "staff," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 4:439 (hereafter IDB).

## Ugaritic Messenger Gods

The Ugaritic texts attest with frequency the mention of gods acting as messengers. Within the mythical picture these deities play an important role, but they also unequivocally appear as lesser gods who are subordinated to the principal deities of the pantheon.

In general, it seems that every major Ugaritic god had not only his own retinue of servant gods but also in addition their appointed messengers.

The myth of the struggle between Baal and Yamm refers to El sending his messengers repeatedly on different missions to diverse deities to communicate his decisions and those of the divine assembly.<sup>1</sup> When he sent his messengers to Kotaru (KTU 1.1 III, 1-5) and to Anat (KTU 1.1 II, 14-18), he asked for the execution of matters related to the decreed exaltation of Yamm.

The identity of these messengers as divine beings appears in varied ways. They appear accompanying minor gods who are at the service of their master deities.<sup>2</sup> They are also reckoned as gods. In the same way, their rank appears quite clear, not only in the services that they perform or in the orders that they receive but also in the

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 151-152.

<sup>2</sup>See Arvid S. Kapelrud, BRST, p. 82. Although Kapelrud mainly deals with Baal's helpers or messengers, he makes clear that this was not a unique prerogative of Baal but also of the rest of major deities.

way they behave and before whom they have to convey the message with which they have been charged.<sup>1</sup>

The sending of messengers is a repeated motif throughout the Ugaritic literature to such an extent that it is almost an indispensable means of communication among the gods. Their function of conveying information is vital among the different references, and it is possible to perceive a three-phased process that follows a pattern which is repeated every time.<sup>2</sup>

The highest gods occasionally asked even the major gods to act as their messengers, leaving the lesser deities who functioned as their more regular messengers aside on

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<sup>1</sup>Elsewhere in the texts these messengers are explicitly instructed to prostrate themselves and render homage to the superior gods as they approach them, and they invariably act in this way. This behavior of the messenger gods clearly indicates their subordination and in the same way their lesser rank among the gods.

<sup>2</sup>This triple procedure can be formulated in a general way as: (1) the "sending" or "charging" of the message by the sender to the messengers, (2) the "conveying" of the message to the addressee; and (3) the "answer" of the consignee to the received message, usually through the same emissaries who transmitted the former communication. This typical pattern is seen in KTU 1.3 III, 9-31 with the charging of a message to Anat from Baal through his messengers. Then in KTU 1.3 IV, 7-20 they convey the message of Baal to Anat, and finally in 1.3 IV, 21-32, Anat responds to Baal through the same messengers. See Cassuto, Anath, pp. 41-42. This way of exchanging messages has similarities with Mesopotamians (see H. L. Ginsberg, "Did Anath Fight the Dragon?" BASOR 84 [1941]: 12-13). Del Olmo sees a more elaborate pattern in the process of exchanging messages and he mentions many more details that underlie the literary form. See MLC, pp. 52-62; also del Olmo, "Antecedentes cananeos (ugaríticos) de formas literarias hebreo-bíblicas," SBE, pp. 111-114.

such occasions. Such a case occurs when Attart asks Anat to convey her message to Baal (KTU 1.4 V, 12-41), implying that among the higher gods, this was a service that they willingly gave to each other.

This direct service among the high deities of the pantheon is represented in the intervention of Attart and Anat as messengers of Baal before El when they presented the matter of his need for a palace.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the texts mention the lesser messengers by name, while others do not. Even when they are not named, their function is clearly expressed.

In KTU 1.16 III there is a reference to El sending one of his assistants to call messengers to entrust them with a special message.<sup>2</sup> One of the messengers is Ilsu.<sup>3</sup> He is referred to as ngr il, "divine herald,"<sup>4</sup> and ngr bt

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<sup>1</sup>Although the text mentions that Attart acted more flattered by the silver and gold presented to her (KTU 1.4 II, 26-28), rather than spontaneously as Anat (KTU 1.3 IV, 53-55), the fact is that both goddesses went on this occasion as messengers of Baal before the father of the gods (KTU 1.4 IV, 13-18).

<sup>2</sup>KTU 1.16 IV is most damaged, but in the remaining lines it is evident that it calls for a meeting of the gods. The one who convokes is El using his messengers.

<sup>3</sup>Ilsu is known as a minor deity, who served usually as doorkeeper of the house of Ilu (del Olmo, MLC, "Glosario," p. 522). He also is referred to as the "carpenter god" (Gordon, UM, p. 138).

<sup>4</sup>The term ngr is translated diversely, but most frequently as "carpenter," like its Akk. and Ar. cognates nagaru and naggaru, respectively (see Albright, YGC, pp. 106-107, n. 30); Aistleitner, WUS, no. 1747; Gordon, UT, No. 1609; idem, UH, no. 1274; idem, UM, no. 1207). For a

b'1, "herald of the house of Baal." It is notable that this messenger is mentioned together with his wives, who like him are called ngrt ilht, "herald goddesses."<sup>1</sup> The mission was charged to all of them. Although the remaining lines of the text do not reveal the names of these female deities, the passage suggests that one of the reasons that they were charged with this enterprise is that they were gifted with powerful voices.<sup>2</sup> This text shows that in the Ugaritic understanding of things, messenger deities could be both gods and goddesses.

Yamm is also mentioned as sending his messengers to El and the heavenly assembly, but their names are not given.<sup>3</sup> In this case, however, their actions leave no doubt as to their function.

The case of Attart is different. Two of her closest attendants are mentioned by name. They are Qdš and Amrr.<sup>4</sup> The texts describe them as attending the great goddess with promptness<sup>5</sup> and solicitude.<sup>6</sup> In the same way, it is

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translation of ngr as "door-keeper, herald, steward," see Driver, *CaMile*, pp. 156-157; Gibson, *CML*, p. 152; Margalit, *UF* (1976):174, n. 91.

<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.16 IV, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12.

<sup>2</sup>tlt kmm.trry [. . .], "you three, who are powerful [of voice (?)]." KTU 1.16 IV, 15.

<sup>3</sup>KTU 1.2 I, 11-14, 19-20, 30, 41-42.

<sup>4</sup>KTU 1.4 IV, 2-3, 13, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup>KTU 1.4 IV, 1-12.

mentioned that they accompanied their mistress when she went on her mission of intercession to convey the need of Baal before the father of the gods.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the texts explicitly mention them in their function of messengers to the artisan god Kotar-wahasis (or Hayyanu) when they conveyed a message from Baal.<sup>2</sup>

Baal had different servants<sup>3</sup> but there were two special close attendants whom he always sent as his personal messengers. They were Gpn and Ugr.<sup>4</sup> They were always sent together on their missions.<sup>5</sup> This emissary

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 13-15.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 16-18, 20-26.

<sup>2</sup>KTU 1.3 VI, 8-25.

<sup>3</sup>See above, pp. 7-79, 151-154.

<sup>4</sup>For mention of these messengers, see KTU 1.4 VII, 53-55; 1.5 I, 9-12.

<sup>5</sup>The opinion that Gpn and Ugr are rather one character (see Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1942], pp. 89-90), who "as Baal's chief spokesman" was accompanied in his missions to other gods "by a number of lesser dignitaries or by a retinue of his own" (see Julian Obermann, Ugaritic Mythology. A Study of Its Leading Motifs [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948], p. 27) has to be questioned. The majority take Gpn and Ugr as two gods. The contextual evidence and the grammatical construction are fitted for two identities rather than one. Besides, "when the two are compared and the cumulative force of their evidence assessed, Gpn w' Ugr does not designate a single attendant of Baal named Gpn-w-Ugr, but a pair of attendants of Baal called Gpn and Ugr," H. L. Ginsberg, "Baal's Two Messengers," BASOR 95 (1944):29. For a similar view see also Gaster, Thespis, pp. 127-128; Kapelrud, BRST, p. 82; Driver, CML, p. 14; del Olmo, MLC, pp. 184-185; Gordon, UL, pp. 37-38.

type of activity which was performed by a pair of gods was, as we have already noticed, typical for the other emissaries of the gods, too, since they are also mentioned going as pairs.<sup>1</sup> These instances would at least suggest that, as a general rule, the Ugaritic deities preferred couples of messengers as their ambassadors when they sent messengers to each other or to the divine council.

The terminology with which they are mentioned is varied, and it relates to their function, divine nature, and rank. Among the most common terms used to refer to them are: *ʿnn*,<sup>2</sup> *ḡlmm*,<sup>3</sup> and *mlak*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This parity of function and mission can be paralleled with the mission of the ANE messengers of the kings who "were usually sent out in pairs." See F. C. Fenshan, "Remarks on Keret 136(b)-153," *JNSL* 13 (1987):49-57.

<sup>2</sup>For occurrences see *KTU* 1.1 III, 17; 1.3 IV, 32; 1.4 VIII, 15. The term covers a diversity of meanings and it is rendered as "messenger" (Aistleitner, *WUS*, s.v. 2061a), or "lacky" (Gordon, *UT*, no. 1885; idem, *UH*, no. 1507), "attendant" (Ginsberg, *ANET*, p. 133), "servant" (idem, *BASOR* 95:27, n. 8), "helper," "messenger," "herald" (del Olmo, *MLC*, "Glosario," p. 602).

<sup>3</sup>This is the most common Ugaritic term to designate messengers. It is often paralleled with *Gpn* and *Ugr*, the personal envoys of Baal (see *KTU* 1.2 I 13, 19; 1.3 III, 8; 1.3 IV, 5; 1.4 VIII, 15). This word also covers a variety of meanings with the sense of servitude. Considering it with its Arabic cognate *gulam*, "boy" (Izz-al-Din Al-Yasin, *The Lexical Relation Between Ugaritic and Arabic* [New York: Shelton College, 1952], p. 88 [hereafter *LRBUA*]), it would be possible to translate it as "servant." In this sense Gordon ascribes to *ḡlm* the meaning of "boy, servant," but also "messenger" (*UT*, no. 1969; idem, *UH*, no. 1570). Others follow the same approach. So Aistleitner renders it as "männlicher, Jüngling, Diener, Bote" (*WUS*, no. 2150), and del Olmo also mentions the meanings "servidor, paje, principe, mancebo, mensajero" (*MLC*, "Glosario," p. 607). M. Dahood translates the term also as "warrior" ("Ugaritic-

The fact that these terms appear to be derived from roots that convey a meaning of submission clearly indicates that these deities were subordinated to some major god.<sup>1</sup>

It is also evident that some of the names or titles of these gods appear in adjectival constructions with *ilm* that unequivocally indicate their divine nature.<sup>2</sup> Thus expressions such as *'nn ilm* "must designate some attendants of the gods."<sup>3</sup>

On other occasions they are directly referred to as gods, so that their divine quality is beyond doubt.<sup>4</sup> On

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Hebrew Pairs," Ras Shamra Parallels, ed. L. R. Fisher [Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972], II: 135d [hereafter RSP]). The term is applied also to Keret, praising his devotion to El--*n<sup>c</sup>mn glm il*, "the handsome servant of El"--declaring the king as a faithful servant of El.

<sup>4</sup>See KTU 1.2 I, 11, 22, 26, 30, 41-42. The term *mlak* is derived from the root *l'k* "to send" (Driver, CML, p. 158; Gordon, UT, no. 1344). So etymologically *mlak* means "one sent" or "messenger." See Aistleitner, WUS, pp. 165-166, n. 1432.10; del Olmo, MLC, "Glosario," p. 578. It seems that according to the Canaanite usage, the term was also used even to describe a person sent on a mission of trade, and not only to designate a messenger charged to transmit a message. See Virolleaud, Palais Royal d'Ugarit (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957), p. 211.

<sup>1</sup>Especially for the definition of *'nn* as servant messenger, see Thomas Mann, "The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative," JBL 90 (1971):19-24. For an emphasis on the Ugaritic meaning of *'nn* as "servant," see R. Good, "Cloud Messengers," UF 10 (1978):436-437.

<sup>2</sup>KTU 1.4 VIII, 15; 1.3 IV, 32.

<sup>3</sup>De Moor, The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba<sup>c</sup>lu. According to the Version of Ilimilku (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971), p. 129 (hereafter SPUM).

<sup>4</sup>When the messengers of Yamm arrive, the assembly acknowledges them as gods.



the other hand, the use of ilm for these divine entities, in parallel with nouns such as 'bd "slave" or the like, puts them in a rather low rank, at the level of serving in the coterie of the higher gods.<sup>1</sup>

This fact is also emphasized by the way in which they are instructed by their own masters to approach the major gods. When Baal sends Gpn and Ugr as his messengers to Anat, he instructs them in this way: "Like stewards then ye enter: At the feet of Anat crouch ye and fall down, Prostrate yourselves and honour her."<sup>2</sup> When he sends them to meet Mot, he not only instructs with similar words,<sup>3</sup> but also tells them to keep an adequate distance away from the deity lest they be consumed.<sup>4</sup>

Yamm also warned his messengers with similar words when he sent them with his request to El and the gods

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<sup>1</sup>De Moor, SPUM, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>km ḡlmm w. Crban. lp<sup>Cn</sup>. Cnt.hbr wql. tšthwy.kbd. hyt. (KTU 1.3 III, 9-10). Obermann, UgMy, pp. 23, 25. Del Olmo renders, "Como jóvenes sirvientes habeis de entrar, a los pies de Anatu inclinaos y caed, postraos (y) rendidle honores" (MLC, p. 183).

<sup>3</sup>lp<sup>Cn</sup>.mt hbr.wql tšthwy.wk bd.hwt. "At the feet of Mot do thou bow down and do honour to him" (Driver, CML, p. 103).

<sup>4</sup>When Gpn and Ugr are sent to Mot, Baal warns them: wnḡr Cnn.ilm. al tqrb.lbn.ilm mt. al.y<sup>Cdbkm</sup> kimr.bph klli. btbrn qnh.thtan nrt.ilm.špš šharrt.la šmm byd.md d.ilm.mt. (KTU 1.4 VIII, 14-18). "Keep watch, divine heralds. Come you not near to Mot son of El lest he make you like a sheep in his mouth (or) you both be carried away like a kid in his jaws. Shapask, the luminary of the gods, is burning hot without (rain from) heaven on account of Mot" (Driver, CML, p. 103).

assembled in council: "At the feet of El fall down. Prostrate yourselves before the Plenary assembly."<sup>1</sup>

In every case these messengers are presented with a description of the way in which they should act when they enter the presence of a major deity. They should go in as stewards (glmm), rather than as visitors calling upon an equal. They should appear before the major deities as inferior to them. As a consequence they were to humble themselves at the feet of gods, prostrating themselves in reverence before those to whom they were sent.

From the references to these celestial messengers something about their physical characteristics can be determined. The passage that describes the envoys of Yamm depicts them clothed in flaming appearance.<sup>2</sup> Their effulgence is displayed as they stand repeating the message of their master before the supreme god and the divine assembly.

That the celestial messengers of the Ugaritic pantheon were known to be clothed in brightness is also suggested in KTU 1.13 24-25.<sup>3</sup> There the goddess Anat is

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<sup>1</sup>KTU 1.2 I, 15.

<sup>2</sup>The text says, išt.ištm.yitmr "(like) flashes of fire they appeared" (lit. "[like] a fire, two fires they appeared"), KTU 1.2 I, 32.

<sup>3</sup>The whole text known as RS 1929, no. 6, was first published by Virolleaud, "Les inscriptions cunéiformes de Ras Shamra," Syr 10 (1929), pl. LXVI. Since then the text has been repeatedly interpreted, without consensus. For an updated bibliography on the subject, see MLC, pp. 85-134.

mentioned as being instructed by El in the way that she could perform a blessing. Thus the father of the gods says to her: "And when you have bound the evil (?) . . . , when you have been clothed with the light of the angel of the heavens, may you bless the power of the king."<sup>1</sup> This resplendent characteristic is ascribed only to divine beings elsewhere in the ANE environment.

The texts also make clear that every time their services were required they acted willingly and promptly in carrying out their missions.

Some of the texts seem to indicate that at least some of these attendants were winged.<sup>2</sup> A passage of the myth of the palace of Baal states: "the servant of Aleyan Baal . . . flying invited him and offered him to drink."<sup>3</sup> Fensham sees the possibility of describing Gpn and Ugr as

<sup>1</sup>Caquot, "Remarques sur la tablette ougaritique RS 1929, no. 6 (CTA 13)," ErIs 14 (1978):18.

<sup>2</sup>The wings permitted the gods to act in the air as on the earth, but especially indicated them as belonging to the celestial region. P. Amiet, "Problèmes d'iconographie mésopotamienne," RA 48 (1954):34; idem, "Combats mythologiques dans l'art mésopotamien," RA 42 (1953): 163.

<sup>3</sup>bd.ali[yn] b<sup>c</sup>l . . . ndd y<sup>c</sup>šr.wyšqynh (KTU 1.3. I, 2-3, 8-9). The term ndd conveys also a wide nuance. Lipinski relates it to its Hebrew cognate nadad, and gives the meaning of "running from here to there"--"courrir ça et là." E. Lipinski, "Banquet en l'honneur d'Baal CTA 3 (V AB), A, 4-22)," UF 2 (1970):77-78. Others translate it as "go, wander" (van Zijl, BUE, p. 290); "to hasten, to flee, to start up" (Driver, CaMyLe, p. 157); "to wander, stride, go" (Gordon, UH, no. 1280); "marchar, precipitarse, aprestarse," "lanzarse a, volar" (del Olmo, MLC, p. 588).

winged, and he says that this may imply speed--of them, as messengers of Baal--with which they accomplish their task.<sup>1</sup>

From the text KTU 1.13, which is interpreted as an incantation against infertility, it is now known that the Ugaritians believed not only that the great gods could help in cases of infertility, it was also their conviction that heavenly mlakm could be sent to help sterile couples.<sup>2</sup>

According to references in the text, when a wife was barren, the goddess Anat was asked for help.<sup>3</sup> But at the same time she was invoked to send heavenly messengers to strengthen the husband in this way:

. . . ml'ak šmm.tmr.zbl.  
ml['a]k šmm.tl'ak [.] hl.  
Let the messengers from heaven strengthen  
the husband,  
Let the messengers from heaven send  
(him) strength!<sup>4</sup>

In this way it can be demonstrated that the Canaanites believed that the gods commanded their mlakm in a variety of missions. They were also used as enunciators of

<sup>1</sup>Fensham, "Winged Gods . . .," OrAn 5 (1966):164.

<sup>2</sup>De Moor, "An Incantation Against Infertility (KTU 1. 13)," UF 12 (1980): 305-310.

<sup>3</sup>This becomes almost natural since Anat was worshiped as the goddess of love.

<sup>4</sup>This passage is translated by de Moor in this way: "Let the angels from heaven strengthen the husband! Let the angels from heaven send (him) strength!" (ibid., p. 306). Caquot also sees the possibility of a similar translation for the term mlakm, although he favors Shapshu as the alluded-to messenger in this passage, based on the functions of the messenger that this goddess displays in the Ugaritic mythology. "Remarques sur la tablette," p. 15.

divine speeches. Their function in this regard goes beyond mere verbal communication. They were able to grant their power to the powerless. Anat, like the other major deities of the pantheon, had under her command a group of lesser gods who served as her messengers.

Summing up the matter of the messenger-gods, it can be seen that in every ANE pantheon a number of minor deities appear as servant messengers of the higher gods.

The terms which are used to identify them are diverse, but they always emphasize their subordination and, at the same time, their divine nature. Elsewhere they are described as gods, but at the same time they also appear as paying honor to and worshipping the major deities.

As heralds of the gods they became an essential link of communication among the deities. They were entrusted with messages that they conveyed with promptness and fidelity.

Sometimes they were sent on solitary missions, but at other times they were sent in the company of fellow messenger deities. They were involved in a diversity of missions, and they also functioned as conveyors of speeches. In the Mesopotamian case, they might be connected with the task of producing rain. This function appears to be well represented in the iconographical documents of the days of Ur-Nammu and Gudea, which can be dated going back to the 23rd century before Christ.

Occasionally the messenger-gods were identified as the mighty sons of the gods, who held exalted positions among the gods.

Some of them are depicted as winged, which may essentially imply not only their supernatural status but also the swiftness of their performance. The concept of winged beings representing the heavenly servants of the gods is attested graphically since the third millennium B.C.

Another common feature for these celestial attendants is the flaming appearance which is attributed to some of them.

Although some of the messenger-gods were described in anthropomorphic terms, they also demonstrated superhuman features that included wings, supernatural strength, and blazing appearance.

The function of these gods as messengers is not limited to male deities. The texts also mention, in an explicit way, goddesses acting as messengers. Sometimes they acted alone, at other times they were accompanied.

Noticeable, too, is the fact that although many of them remain unnamed, some are mentioned by name. This would suggest at least that only the most important of them were commonly known by name.

The Demonic Gods

Among the celestial beings described as resident within the various ANE pantheons, it is possible to distinguish, in addition to the deities already mentioned, another distinctive group of deities related generally to destruction and evil; those which are demonic in type.<sup>1</sup> Though the term demon is useful in some instances for designating beings that are related to the malign spiritual world, there arises a difficulty here when naming these spiritual entities demons.<sup>2</sup> The term is Greek in origin, and in this particular instance, the term was used to denote a variety of entities within the supernatural realm.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Demon comes from the Greek daimon and means "demon, evil spirit." Walter Bauer et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the Old Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), s.v. "daimon" (hereafter GELOT). It is closely related to daimonion, which means either "a deity, divinity," or similarly "demon, evil spirit." Ibid., s.v. daimonion.

<sup>2</sup>We may also mention here that, contrary to the Greek concept of the term, in general it embraced all the entities which mediated between god and men. H. Schlier, "daimon, daimonion," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 2:11 (hereafter TDNT). In biblical Greek, the term is used to mean "devil, idol, false gods." Manuel Guerra Gómez, El Idioma del Nuevo Testamento (Burgos: Ediciones Aldecoa, 1981), p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>See James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959), s.v. "daimonion, daimon."

Since for the Greeks there was no "essential difference between gods and demons,"<sup>1</sup> it was not unusual for them to use the words *daimon* or *daimonion*<sup>2</sup> to denote "gods" or, more specifically, "lesser deities" who they believed acted as mediators between god and men.<sup>3</sup> The same terminology was also used to refer to the spirits related to the netherworld.

Being polytheists, the people of ANE had a concept of these spiritual entities that was relatively similar to that of the Greeks. The great variety of names used in this connection creates an enigma concerning the meanings of some of the terms used to name the demonic types. .

Although demons were counted as deities in general, the texts as well as the iconography tend to make a relatively sharp or notable difference between them when the focus of attention shifts from one side of the divine world to the other.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. Bietenhard, "daimonion," The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1975), 1:450 (hereafter NIDNTT).

<sup>2</sup>*Daimonion* is the adjectival form of *daimon*, and its use was to indicate the "divine." The popular belief employed *daimonion* as a diminutive of *daimon*. Bietenhard, NIDNTT, I:450.

<sup>3</sup>Schlier, TDNT, 2:2-10.

<sup>4</sup>A detailed division of the Mesopotamian demons as well as of other areas of the ANE is beyond our purpose. However, as an illustration of their variety and activity, many examples are given in an attempt to present a clear picture of the extraterrestrial beings depicted in the ANE milieu.



This distinction is based mainly on two grounds: (1) their actions, and (2) their personal appearances. Demons, then, were mainly involved in contending for evil,<sup>1</sup> while the other gods were mainly contending on the side of good.<sup>2</sup> The demons delighted in perversion and destruction; the other gods were generally thought of as benefactors--at least, men appealed to them to be freed from the evil actions of the demons. Whenever and wherever sickness or death occurred, it was caused by demons.<sup>3</sup> All their power was "directed solely towards evil."<sup>4</sup>

The distinction involved in their outward appearance is quite clear. In general, the gods usually resembled human form;<sup>5</sup> the demons were conceived as beings of "hideous and repulsive appearance, often uniting in strange

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<sup>1</sup>Whenever the gods appear to be fighting against evil forces, those forces are mainly made up of demons. See Jestin, ReAn, I:303.

<sup>2</sup>In general it was thought that "the whole family of divinely descended demons was very unequally divided between good and bad genies." Contenau, ELBA, pp. 253-254.

<sup>3</sup>For Mesopotamians, evil spirits were something material, capable of entering a man bodily, and had to be expelled in the same way. Demons (evil spirits) were enemies of man, and their attacks dangerous in the extreme. Julian Morgenstern, "The Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion," MVAG 10 (1905):21.

<sup>4</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 260. Mendelsohn indicates that "the belief in the existence of evil spirits in both the popular and the official Sumeru-Akkadian religion harked back to an earlier stage. . . . The evil spirits were believed to be the bearers of diseases and misfortunes and were held responsible for them." RANE, p. xi.

<sup>5</sup>Jestin, ReAn, I:303.

combinations the bodies and limbs of various birds and beasts."<sup>1</sup> It ought also to be remembered, however, that on both sides there existed good and evil ones, that is, destroyers and benefactors of nature and mankind.

From this conception resulted the most fantastic images of hybrid beings to depict demons. They were shown as ferocious beasts that usually retained as human only the erect position or posture.<sup>2</sup> Their appearance was like their nature. They had no compassion and were unpredictable in their attacks. Whenever a protector god(dess) abandoned his or her protégé, the demons immediately took advantage of the defenselessness of the person.<sup>3</sup> They took firm hold of their victims and tortured them mercilessly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>King, BRM, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup>Jestin, ReAn, I:303.

<sup>3</sup>Oppenheim, IDEANE, p. 231. In a Shurpu text it is said, a-šar ki-mil-ti DINGIR šú-nu i-hi-iš-šu-ma qu-la ina[m-du-u]. a-me-lu ša DINGIR-šú it-ti-šú is-su-ú im-ḥu-ru-ma GIM šu-ba-ti ik-tu-mu-šú, "they rush to the place where the god (has turned his) wrath (and) cast a silence (of) dejection. They have encountered the man from whom his god had withdrawn and covered him like a cloak." This barely suggests that for Mesopotamians there was no neutral situation in regard to gods and demons. A person was with the protection of the gods or with the misfortune of the demons, but never on neutral ground. See Reiner, Šurpu, Tab. VII, 17-20.

<sup>4</sup>Jastrow, ReBAS, pp. 264-265.

Here, then, the term demon is used to indicate mainly those gods and spiritual beings that, in the ANE, appear more directly related to destructive actions and to the realm of death.<sup>1</sup>

#### Mesopotamian Demons

Mesopotamians dwelt in a very gloomy world in which they felt interminably threatened by potential dangers that came from demons.<sup>2</sup> They lived superstitiously under a tyranny of evil spirits that pervaded their entire life activity.<sup>3</sup>

The very names of the demons suggested a general rule that divided them according to the attributes that are suggested in their names. Names such as "ahhazu, 'seizer'; utukku, 'tearer(?)'; rabişu, 'croucher';<sup>4</sup> or "ekimmu, the 'seizer'; . . . labasu, the 'overthrower'"<sup>5</sup> are only a few

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<sup>1</sup>We also name them in this way, in accordance with the authorities cited along the way, who also name them so.

<sup>2</sup>Richard I. Caplice, The Akkadian Namburbi Texts: An Introduction (Los Angeles: Undena Publications, 1974), p. 13 (hereafter ANT).

<sup>3</sup>The series of rituals and prayers intended to conjure spirits, ghosts, and all sorts of demons give us an idea of the apprehensiveness in which Mesopotamians constantly lived. See G. Castellino, "Rituals and Prayers against 'Appearing Ghosts,'" Or 24 (1955):240-274.

<sup>4</sup>Reisner points out that each kind of spirit seems to be a group or species whose members are indistinguishable as individuals. A classification in this way cannot be definitive due to the obscurity of the names. PAOS, April 1892, p. 195.

<sup>5</sup>Jastrow, ReBAS, p. 260.

of the different categories of these spiritual entities. Each one suggests a specific category of evil, which worked together with the others such as "the painful ashakku, or the perverse mantaru,"<sup>1</sup> and the shedu.<sup>2</sup>

Thompson<sup>3</sup> indicates that Sumerians originally were familiar with three different categories of evil spirits, all in readiness to torment whenever they could. They were the "disembodied human soul," which restlessly "wandered up and down the face of the earth";<sup>4</sup> the repulsive hybrid semi-human and semi-demon entities,<sup>5</sup> and, finally, the evil spirits and devils who came on noxious winds and scattered devastation and all sorts of plagues.<sup>6</sup> At the same time each of these three categories was divided into three subclasses in accordance with the many attributes peculiar to them. Out of this division emerged six principal evil spirits that were consistently enumerated in the texts in a

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<sup>1</sup>Dussaud, LRBA, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup>Especially with shedu it is possible to see the ambivalent significance of the term, since shedu may refer to an evil demon (bad spirit, or god) as well as to a good protector deity, or protector spirit (von Soden, AKHa, s.v. sedu(m), III:1228).

<sup>3</sup>Campbell Thompson, The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia (London: Luzac and Co., 1903), p. xxiv (hereafter DESE).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Georges Contenau, La médecine en Assyrie et en Babylonie (Paris: Librairie Maloine, 1938), pp. 87-91 (hereafter as MAB).

<sup>6</sup>Thompson, DESB, p. xxiv.

repetitive manner; the "utukku limnu, alu limnu, ekkimmu limnu, gallu limnu, ilu limnu, rabišu limnu," the "Evil Spirit, evil Demon, evil Ghost, evil Devil, evil God, evil Fiend."<sup>1</sup> These by no means included all the evil spirits, since the number was expanded with the labartu, the labasu, the aḥḥasu, the lilu, the lilitu, the ardat lilu, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Jestin points out that it is not exaggerated to say that Babylonians thought that everything was or could be a possible presage of demoniac activity.<sup>3</sup> For them, the smallest details, barely noticeable in dreams and sacrifices, were signs of malignant actions to come.<sup>4</sup> Their evil influence could cause men misfortune, sickness, or death at any moment.<sup>5</sup>

Among the Assyrians it was the custom to keep images of gods in the houses because they were believed to have the power of warding off the demons.<sup>6</sup> Figurines of clay and wood were usually used by Babylonians as well as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; see also Contenau, MAB, pp. 83-87.

<sup>3</sup>Jestin, "La Religion Babilonica," ReAn, I:302.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>King, BRM, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup>T. Witton Davies, Magic, Divination and Demonology Among the Hebrews and Their Neighbors (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969), p. 35 (hereafter MDDAH).

Assyrians as ritual devices, to purify houses, to heal patients, and to ward off evil spirits.<sup>1</sup>

A well-known custom of the Assyrians and Babylonians was the burying of small figurines or round plaques with reliefs beneath the floors of buildings. The items were enclosed within envelopes of baked or unbaked brick, stone slabs, or pottery jars.<sup>2</sup> Their purpose was to prevent evil and illness from entering buildings and coming upon the residents.<sup>3</sup> Among the most common figures of these protective entities were the *ugallu*, the *lahmu*, the *apkallu*, the *girtablilu*, the *mushussu*, the *suhurmassu*, the *kulilu*, and the *urmahlilu*.<sup>4</sup>

There is evidence that even exorcists had to put statues of the gods--such as Lugalgirra and Allanu--on each

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<sup>1</sup>Legrain, Terracottas from Nippur (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), p. 6.; R. S. Ellis, Domestic Spirits: Apotropaic Figurines in Mesopotamian Buildings (Philadelphia: 1985); H. F. Lutz, Two Apotropaic Figurines Complementing KAR 298, Rew 4-7 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930); Saggs, GWB, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup>Anthony Green, "Neo Assyrian Apotropaic Figures: Figurines, Ritual and Monumental Art, with Special Reference to the Figurines from the Excavations of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and Nimrud," Iraq 45 (1983): 87.

<sup>3</sup>See van Buren, Foundation Figurines and Offerings (Berlin: H. Schoetz, 1931).

<sup>4</sup>For a general description of these protective demons, see Green, "Mesopotamian Apotropaic Figures," pp., 90-94.

side of the main entrance of their residences, so they might feel well protected against all demons.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, as the mythological literature affirms, even the major gods had to be very cautious and resort to the use of talismans when they had to confront the demonic powers or when they ventured into their territory.<sup>2</sup>

Demons were also thought of as beings of celestial origin. Sumero-Akkadian religion in its stage of systematization considered them as being "direct offspring of the cosmic deities, particularly of the Sky-god Anu."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, however, they were also seen as rebels and despised, infernal creatures.<sup>4</sup> In this way they were

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<sup>1</sup>Tallqvist, "Die Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlu," Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fenicae 22 (1895):22. Van Buren remarks that "all foundation figurines had an apotropaic meaning and these objects were buried in brick boxes under the floors of houses which seem always to have been those of priests of the special order of exorcists." Foundation Figurines and Offerings, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Such is the case of Marduk confronting Tiamat and her retinue (see BEC, pp. 130-131), and Ishtar when descending to the nether world (see Wolkstein and Kramer, Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth, pp. 52-53). Marduk held a talisman of red paste between his lips (BG, p. 39), and Ishtar "attired herself in all her amulets--charms which she wore on her body to protect herself from the evil spirits in the nether world." E. Douglas van Buren, "Amulets in Ancient Mesopotamia," Or 14 (1945):18-23.

<sup>3</sup>Mendelshon, RANE, p. xv.

<sup>4</sup>Jestin, ReAn, I:304.

generally related to the nether world,<sup>1</sup> and to their number were added the spirits of the dead.<sup>2</sup>

It is Reisner<sup>3</sup> who has suggested a classification of the different Babylonian spirits based on their relation to man. According to this view he speaks of three main categories: "1. Those which are well-disposed towards men; 2. Those which are well- or ill-disposed according the circumstances;" and 3. "Those which are ill-disposed."<sup>4</sup> However, he makes it clear that those spiritual categories "thus made are not separated by any sharp line, but merge into one another so that it is difficult to tell just where one class leaves off and the next begins."<sup>5</sup>

From the myth of En-el, it is possible to derive a general impression of the appearance of the demoniacal gods. The hosts of Tiamat were not just disloyal gods. They also included monstrous creatures who were demons. They are described as monsters filled with poison instead of blood, with sharpened fangs, prompt to devour. They were extremely ferocious and were equipped with divine

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<sup>1</sup>Jastrow, ReBAS, pp. 580-581.

<sup>2</sup>Jestin, ReAn, I:304.

<sup>3</sup>George Reisner, "The Different Classes of Babylonian Spirits," PAOS 15 (1893):195-196.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 195. Saggs indicates that malevolent demon characters had well-disposed counterparts to counteract the bad actions of the evil spirits (GWB, p. 313).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 196.



refulgence as well as special weaponry. The myth names eleven different beings: the "monster serpents," the "ferocious dragons,"<sup>1</sup> the "viper, the raging-serpent and lahamu,"<sup>2</sup> "the great lion, the mad dog, the scorpion-man,"<sup>3</sup> the "destructive spirits of wrath,"<sup>4</sup> the "dragonfly, and the bi[son]."<sup>5</sup>

Marduk had by his side the loyal gods and also the fierce monsters whom he harnessed in teams of four. They were named the "Destroyer, the Merciless,"<sup>6</sup> the "Trampler," and the "Flyer."<sup>7</sup> These creatures are described as having sharpened and poisonous teeth, and they were especially trained to destroy and smite.<sup>8</sup>

The splendor with which these creatures were clad was one of their main characteristics that identified them as belonging to the divine realm. A **shurpu** incantation

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<sup>1</sup>Heidel, BG, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Langdon, BEC, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Heidel, BG, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Langdon, BEC, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup>Heidel, BG, p. 24. Langdon translates as "the Fish-man and the Fish-ram" (BEC, p. 89).

<sup>6</sup>Langdon, BEC, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup>Heidel, BG, p. 38. B. Landsberger identifies the third monster--rahisu, "the Trampler"-- connecting with Lamashtu, who also bears the epithet of **rahhisat**. "Die babylonische Theodische," ZA 43 (1936), p. 75, n. 60; see also von Soden, AHW, II:943, s.v. **rahhisu**.

<sup>8</sup>Langdon, BEC, p. 135.

which describes the divine radiance of the **Ahhazu** demons pictures them as "spreading awesome rays (i.e., 'their splendor') towards the four cardinal points, (and) scorching (everything) like fire."<sup>1</sup> This is in accord with the passage of the Gilgamesh epic in which it is noted that mixed monsters guarded the entrance of the way of Shamash.<sup>2</sup> They are described as being scorpion-human hybrid creatures, male and female.<sup>3</sup> They reflected a terrifying splendor which overwhelmed the mountains. It was deadly.<sup>4</sup> They belonged to the celestial realm, and they were part of the coterie of Shamash.

From these descriptions it can be seen that these creatures were depicted as being a mixture of animal and human elements. They were destructive in strength and appearance. They were not on the human level, however; they belonged to the divine realm.

The myth of the descent of Inanna (Ishtar) to the netherworld<sup>5</sup> contains a description of the character of the malignant demons. As she comes to the outer gates of the

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<sup>1</sup>a-na šá-a-ri ir-bit-ti me-lam-me saḥ-pu kima i-šá-ti ú-[x-y-z]. E. Reiner, Šurpu, AfO Beih. XI, 1958, Tab. VII, lns. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Heidel, GEOT, p. 65, IX.ii, 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., IX.ii, 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., IX.ii, 6-8.

<sup>5</sup>Kramer, "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World: The Sumerian Version of 'Ishtar's Descent,'" RA 34 (1937):93-134.

underworld, Neti the gatekeeper opens to her only in following the advice of Ereshkigal, queen of the nether-world. As she passes each of the seven doors, Neti deprives her of all her talismans. Then as soon as she enters the Anunnaki, the judge-gods of the underworld, decree her fate, which is seconded by the action of Ereshkigal. Thus Inanna is turned into a corpse. Through the intercession of Ninshubur, the messenger-goddess of Inanna, Enki (Ea) manages the resurrection of Inanna.

As soon as the goddess tries to ascend, however, the Anunnaki judge-gods tell her that "no one ascends from the underworld unmarked. If Inanna wishes to return from the underworld, she must provide someone in her place."<sup>1</sup> So, as soon as Inanna ascends, the galla demons of the underworld cling to her demanding one that might substitute for her. They do not depart from her until the goddess gives them her replacement.

These galla demons are described in some detail within the account as follows:

The galla, the demons of the underworld,  
 clung to her side.  
 The galla were demons who know no food,  
 who know no drink,  
 Who eat no offerings, who drink no libations,  
 Who accept no gifts.  
 They enjoy no lovemaking.  
 They have no sweet children to kiss.  
 They tear the wife from the husband's arms,

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<sup>1</sup>Kramer, "Inanna's Descent," p. 120.

They tear the child from the father's knees,  
They steal the bride from her marriage home.<sup>1</sup>

Their size is mentioned simply by comparison with small and large but skinny sticks:

The small galla who accompanied Inanna  
Were like reeds the size of low picket fences.  
The large galla who accompanied Inanna  
Were like reeds the size of high picket fences.<sup>2</sup>

In the myth of the dream of Dumuzi, it is said that the gallu are hated and feared by men.<sup>3</sup> It is also mentioned that once they select a victim, they do not cease until the unfortunate one has been caught. Then they torture him without mercy until death.<sup>4</sup>

The malignant nature and the evil actions of these feared spirits are also plainly described in the text of the so-called "Tablet of the Evil Spirit," as follows:

The evil Spirit robbeth . . . and roamed  
over the land,  
The evil Spirit with which is shrouded the land  
as with a garment,

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<sup>1</sup>Wolkstein, Inanna, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Such is the misfortune of Dumuzi, the lover of Inanna, who was selected as replacement of the goddess. As a matter of fact, they did not depart from Inanna until she herself decreed the fate of Dumuzi, "Take him! Take Dumuzi away!" Previously she refused to hand out to death Ninshubur, her messenger, nor Shara and Lulal, her sons. The myth mentions the cruelty with which Dumuzi was treated, in spite of his long and repeated running away with the help of the gods, her sister, and friends. The demons chased him wherever he went and even mistreated those who helped him. At the end he was caught, tortured, and killed. Ibid., pp. 69-84; see also Kramer, The Sumerians, pp. 154-160.

The evil Spirit which against the man  
 angrily. . . .  
 The evil Spirit is a devil which hath no shame,  
 The evil Spirit is a devil which bringeth  
 woe on the land,  
 The evil Spirit which hunted over the land,  
 The evil Spirit which chased living beings,  
 The evil Spirit is a pestilence which . . . (?)  
 the hand,  
 The evil Spirit which fiercely raiseth trouble  
 in the land,  
 The evil Spirit which receiveth not . . . .  
 The evil Spirit which draweth up the little  
 ones like fish from the water,  
 The evil Spirit which casteth down the elders . . . .  
 The evil Spirit which striketh greyhaired  
 old men and women,  
 The evil Spirit which . . . the street.<sup>1</sup>

Describing the malignant torturing action of the  
 shedim<sup>2</sup> demons, an incantation text reads:

They have gripped my . . . , they have set  
 my neck trembling.  
 They have bound my mouth, they have taken  
 away my speech, they have struck  
 my breast,  
 They have weakened my heart, they have  
 bound my arms, they have bound my knees,  
 They have bound my mobile feet,  
 They have bent my [back], they have affected  
 me with tic, they have filled my [body]  
 with paralysis and impotence,  
 They have plucked out my hair, they have  
 torn the frin[ge] of my garment. . . .<sup>3</sup>

A badly damaged text which comes from the end of  
 the neo-Babylonian period informs us of the malefic action

<sup>1</sup>Thompson, "Tablet 'X.' Reverse," DESB, pp. 126-29.

<sup>2</sup>The text mentions two different demons who are the  
 shed and Sag-hul-ha-za. (šed(alād) limuttim<sup>tim</sup> sag.ḥul.ḥa.  
 za mu-kil reš limuttim<sup>tim</sup>). Lambert translates shed as  
 angel. So the phrase would read, "An angel of ill, the  
 demon 'Sag-hul-ha-za' who sustains evil" (see "An Incanta-  
 tion of the Maqlû Type," Afo 18 (1957-58):290, ln. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., lns. 16-20.

the **shedu** demons inflicted upon Nabonidus. It says "a **shedu**-demon altered him."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the broken condition of the text does not permit us to determine more details about his affliction, but it shows plainly that monarchs were not exempt from the attack of these demonic entities.

Another incantation text of the **utukku** type describes the way the demons prey upon their victim in these ways:

An evil **mantaru** has seized his head  
 An evil **utukku** has seized his throat  
 An evil **alu** has seized his breast  
 An evil **etimmu** has seized his shoulders  
 An evil **gallu** has seized his hand  
 An evil god has seized his hand  
 An evil **rabisu** has seized his feet  
 They have covered this person like a net  
 So he can neither eat nor drink.<sup>2</sup>

A tablet which deals with demoniac deities, both male and female, names some of them and describes their appearance in some detail. A demon goddess is described as follows:

The head (has) a fillet and a horn. . . .  
 She wears a head-ornament, she wears a fly (?).  
 She wears . . . the fist of a man;  
 She is girt about the loins;  
 Her breast is open. . . .  
 From her head to her loins  
 The body is that of a naked woman;  
 From the loins to the sole of the foot

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<sup>1</sup>Sidney Smith, Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon (London: Methuen & Co, 1924), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>E. E. Knudsen, "Two Nimrud Incantations of the **Utukku** Type," Iraq 27 (1965):165, 167.

Scales like those of a snake are visible.  
 Her navel is composed of a circlet;  
 Her name is Nin-tu. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The same tablet describes another demon god, by saying:

The head is the head of a serpent;  
 From his nostrils mucous trickles,  
 His mouth is beslavered with water;  
 The ears are those of a basilisk,  
 His horns are twisted into curls. . . .  
 The body is a Suh-fish full of stars,  
 The base of his feet are claws,  
 The sole of his foot has no heel;  
 His name is Sassu-urinnu (?).<sup>2</sup>

Another demon god is described but the text is broken in the line with its name. It says:

He has the horn of an ox; hair lies  
 [from between the horns]  
 As far as his shoulders . . .  
 The face of a man; [he has] a headband;  
 He has wings; his feet are advancing . . .  
 The body of a lion with four legs . . .  
 His name the god . . .<sup>3</sup>

The demon god Lahmu is described as follows:

His (fist] is that of a man, inclining  
 to the right. . . .  
 He has wings; he is girt about his loins;  
 From the waist to the loins he is a man,  
 From the loins to the feet he is a dog;  
 He has the . . . (?) of a bird. . . .  
 His name is Lahmu.<sup>4</sup>

Another demon god named as Niziktum is depicted like this:

The head (has) a fillet. . . .  
 He has the ear of an ox; hair lies [from] . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Thompson, *DESB*, "Tablet 'DD.," pp. 146-149 (Col. II, 2-14).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 148-149 (Col. II, 15-Col. III, 23-24).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 152-153 (Col. III, 43-48).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 154-156 (Col. IV, 84-90).

As far as his shoulders (?)  
 The face is that of a . . .  
 The fist is that of a man,  
 He has wings and the fist (?) . . .  
 . . . of the wings is spread out,  
 The body is a naked woman; his legs  
 stand bent (?)  
 His name is Niziktum.<sup>1</sup>

Another female demon deity is described similarly, although her name as well as part of the description is marred. The text says:

The head is the head of a bird; a veil  
 hangs from her head to her shoulders (?)  
 Her fist is that of a man,  
 In her two hands (?) she holds a torch,  
 She has a right and left (?) . . .  
 Beslavered with drops of water,  
 The body is that of a woman. . . .  
 The . . . is that of a bird,  
 Her legs stand bent (?)  
 [Her name] is the goddess . . .<sup>2</sup>

From a document known as the vision of the underworld, it is possible to derive some idea of what was believed about the appearance of the demonic gods by the Assyrians. Describing some of them it says:

[Na]mtartu, the bastard, has a kuribu head,  
 (and) the hands and feet of a man. The Muutu has  
 a serpent-dragon head, (and) his hands are of  
 man, his feet . . .  
 The evil [She]du has hands and head of man, wearing  
 a tiara to protect it, (and have) the feet  
 . . . of a bird; with his left foot he  
 stand on a crocodile.  
 Alluhappu has a head of a lion, (and) the hands  
 and feet of a man.  
 The "Assistant of the evil ones" has a bird head,  
 his wings are opened, he flies to and fro;  
 his hands and feet are (those of) a man. . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-157 (Col. IV, 104-112).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 158-159 (Col. IV, 113-123).



The Etimmu (has) a head of a calf, (and) the hands and feet are (those of) a man. The evil Utukku (has) a lion head, the hand (and) the feet are (those of) Zu. . . .  
 [Ma]mitu (has) a goat head, the hands (and) the feet are (those of) a man. Nedu, the doorkeeper of the Earth, has a lion head, the hands are (those of) a man, the feet (those) of a bird. The "evil sexless" has two heads, one is a lion head, the other a . . . head. . . . ra (has) three feet, the fore two are (those) of a bird, the hinter one is (that) of an ox, awfulness and frightful brightness are in his appearance. . . .<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, from the incantation texts it can be determined that the demons were numberless and divided into different groups as well as into diverse grades of power. Many names repeatedly appear in the texts, and usually they are related to the maladies of specific organs of the body.<sup>2</sup> The Assyrians were accustomed to name demons after the diseases they caused, and the connection between them was so close that names of demons and corresponding diseases came to be identical.<sup>3</sup>

Akkadians were also concerned with a demoniacal realm. For them, the whole "world swarmed with spirits, which inhabited stones, mountains, and deserts, rivers and

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<sup>1</sup>Von Soden, "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," *ZA* 43 (1936):16, 22-23, lns. 41-48. For a full description of the hybrid figures of the demonic gods see also Franz Köcher, "Der babylonische Göttertypentext," *MIOF* 1 (1953):57-107.

<sup>2</sup>Dussaud, *LRBA*, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup>Talqvist, *Maqlû*, p. 17.

oceans, the air, the sky, the stars, the sun, the moon."<sup>1</sup> These were able to control not only the whole of nature but also the very lives of men and women. For them, too, the darkness was believed to be swarming with demons and ghosts of the dead, since darkness was supposed to be their natural abode. There, "the spirits of disease were lying in wait to clutch any one with cruel invisible hands."<sup>2</sup> They also conceived of the spirits of the netherworld as resembling birds "clothed with wings, zu bat gap-pi"; and dwelling in darkness--ina e-dhu-ti as-ba.<sup>3</sup>

These demoniac deities are well represented graphically in the iconography of the ANE in a profuse way.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Mackenzie, Myths of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston: Gresham Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 60. As Jürgen Thornwald says, Mesopotamians believed that "demons were always lying in wait for men. . . .By day and night demons lurked in mountain and plain, by rivers and by roads, and upon the roofs of the houses . . . the whole country was" infested with evil spirits (Science and Secrets of Early Medicine [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963], p. 148.

<sup>2</sup>Harmut Schmökel, Ur, Assur und Babylon (Stuttgart: G. Kilpper, 1955), p. 119 (hereafter UAB).

<sup>3</sup>Chad Boscawen, "Notes on the Religion and Mythology of the Assyrians," Society of Biblical and Archaeology Transactions 4 (1876):267-301.

<sup>4</sup>The reason for the ANE profusive representations of the divine, perhaps at least in part, was that they might have also been intended as an educational tool for the illiterate population who were not able to read the inscriptions, but certainly could interpret the message conveyed in the figures. See Prescott H. Williams, Jr., "Humans and Their Deities in Babylon, Sixth Century B.C., or The Answers Came from Within, Through, Above and Below," in The Answers Lie Below. Essays in Honor of Lawrence Edmund Toombs (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), pp. 360-361.

One cylinder seal depicts a demonic scene<sup>1</sup> in which demons have preyed on their victims. One resembling a dragon appears swallowing a human victim (Fig. 92), while another is swallowing an antelope victim. Another tries to take the human victim away from the dragon demon.

The left scene of Fig. 54 depicts a winged demon that with hands and claws is preying upon three human victims. In a cylinder seal uncovered in the Diyala<sup>2</sup> region, a demonic scene is depicted in which a person has been cornered by demons (Fig. 94). The victim is kneeling and raises an arm in desperation before the attack of a demon armed with a multiple mace and sword. He also looks with desperation at the other two demons that make worse his desperate situation.

Figs. 95 and 96 also give an idea how demons looked for Assyrians. Fig. 95 is an idol of demons uncovered at the entrance of a palace in Nineveh.<sup>3</sup> Fig. 96 depicts a terracotta that portrays a hideous demon of menacing feline countenance.<sup>4</sup> It is portrayed as having big eyes and a

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 169, fig. 453.

<sup>2</sup>Wolkstein, Inanna, pp. 191, 72. The cylinder has been dated from the Isin-Larsa-Old Babylonian period, ca. 2000-1600 B.C; Frankfort, CS, pl. XXVIII, c.

<sup>3</sup>Botta, Monuments de Niniveh, 2:pls. 152, 153; 5:169.

<sup>4</sup>Perrot and Chippiez, A History of Art in Chaldaea & Assyria, 2:167, fig. 86. This terracotta is dated from the 7th century BC. (Martin A. Beek, Atlas of Mesopotamia, trans. D. R. Welsh (London: Nelson, 1962), fig. 284.

huge mouth with sharp teeth. The forepaws are of a wild beast and the body is somewhat scaled.

Another typical example of such demonic characters is Pazuzu (Fig. 97), "a monster with half human, half canine head, and wide grinning mouth."<sup>1</sup> He was believed to be able to inflict maladies that could turn yellow the body of man, yellow and black his face, and black his tongue.<sup>2</sup> This demon was the personification of the West-wind and storm,<sup>3</sup> and consequently he enjoyed traveling with the hot winds<sup>4</sup> which acted as a carrier of all his maladies.<sup>5</sup> However this four-winged demon of "grotesque expression" and "vicious nature"<sup>6</sup> was also believed to have a protective

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<sup>1</sup>Langdon, MARS, 5:371.

<sup>2</sup>"pazuzu . . . der 'den Leib des Menschen gelb, sein Gesicht gelb und schwartz und sogar seine Zungenwurzel schwarz macht.'" Schmökel, UAB, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>A Pazuzu amulet contains an inscription identifying him, which Frank translates, "Ich, Pazuzu, der Sohn des Hanpa, König der bösen Sturmdämonen, (der) aus den Bergen stark wütet, herauskommend, bin ich. Die Stürme, die an den Menschen gehen, der Westwind, die Stürme sollen sich legen, die Stürme, die Stürme sollen aufhören!" (Carl Frank, "Lamastu, Pazuzu und andere Dämonen. Ein Beitrag zur babyionische-assyrischen Dämonologie," MAOG 14 (1972):16.

<sup>4</sup>Sometimes he is represented as a demon personification of the southwest wind, "the most scorching and generally unpleasant of the the winds of Mesopotamia." Georges Perrot and Charles Chippiez, A History of Art in Chaldaea & Babylonia, trans. Walter Armstrong (London: Chapman and Hall, 1884), 1: 80.

<sup>5</sup>Langdon, MARS, p. 371; H. W. F. Saggs, "Pazuzu," AfO 19 (1959-1960):126-127.

<sup>6</sup>P. R. S. Moorey, "A Bronze 'Pazuzu' Statuette from Egypt," Ir 27 (1965):34.

function<sup>1</sup> for pregnant women.<sup>2</sup> This belief in protection is commonly represented on exorcism amulets which usually contain spells against demons and in many instances also depict them.<sup>3</sup>

If there was a specially feared demon, it was Lamashtu,<sup>4</sup> the infanticide demon.<sup>5</sup> Of all the Mesopotamian demons, this one was the most dreadful.<sup>6</sup> It was conceived as a female vamp who slew children, drank the blood of men,

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<sup>1</sup>Some inscriptions present him as king of the demons. Since demons usually used devastating winds to destroy, Pazuzu opposed them by stronger contrary winds, nullifying in this way the malevolence of the demons. H. W. F. Saggs, "Pazuzu," AfO 19 (1959-60):126, and n. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Roman Ghishman, "Le Pazuzu et les fibules du Luristan," MUSJ 46 (1970-71):123; Mooret, "A Bronze 'Pazuzu'," p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Langdon, MARS, pp. 371-372.

<sup>4</sup>Initially, the name of this demon was translated as Labartu, because its second syllable could also read as bar rather than mash. However, significant attestations have changed it definitively to Lamashtu. See Arthur Ungnad, "Labartu oder Lamaštu?" ZA 36 (1925):108.

<sup>5</sup>Antonius Deimel, Pantheon Babylonicum (Rome: Sump-tibus Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1914), s.v. 1788 Labartu (hereafter PB). See also Ghishman, "Le Pazuzu," p. 122.

<sup>6</sup>A whole series of incantation texts existed with the explicit purpose to be addressed against this feared demon. Some of them are now known in the publications of David M. Myhrman, "Die Labartu-Texte. Babylonische Beschwörungsformeln nebst Zauberverfahren gegen die Dämonin Labartu," ZA 16 (1902):141-200; Karl Frank, Babylonische Beschwörungsreliefs (Leipziger semitischen Studien, III: 3), Leipzig, 1908, pp. 73-87; H. F. Lutz, Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1919), I:73-81 (hereafter SSBT); Thureau-Dangin, "Ritual et amulettes contra Labartu," RA 18 (1921):161-198; Arthur Ungnad, "Zu den Labartu-Texten," ZA 23 (1921):69-71.

and ate their flesh. Elsewhere, in the Lamashtu texts, she appears as the daughter of Anu,<sup>1</sup> or daughter of the great gods.<sup>2</sup> She is described as being, at the same time, "a malignant demon of shivering fit" and also "a manifestation of Ishtar."<sup>3</sup>

A text which comes from Uruk mentions that "she brings in her hand heat and chill of terror, she is replete with shuddering fever."<sup>4</sup> She was depicted as a lioness-headed demoness,<sup>5</sup> sometimes riding on a wild ass grasping serpents,<sup>6</sup> and wandering with bare breasts, from which hung down a wild dog and a wild hog suckling (Figs. 98-99).<sup>7</sup> To her retinue belonged a band of barking dogs and screaming

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<sup>1</sup>This nomination for Lamashtu appears in Maqlû texts (Maqlû IV:45), and also in the Lamashtu texts, which are a whole series of incantation texts intended explicitly to exorcize this demon. Myhrman, ZA 16:181, 183, 191.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Frederick Lutz, SSBT, no. 113, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Tallqvist, AGE, p. 316, s.v. La-maš-tu.

<sup>4</sup>Falkenstein, Literarische Keilschripte aus Uruk (Berlin: Zu beziehen durch die Vorderasiatische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1938), nos. 33, 5, 24.

<sup>5</sup>Myhrman, ZA 16:152, 170-171; von Soden, "Eine alt-assyrische Beschwörung gegen die Dämonin Lamaštum," Or 25 (1956):143; Frank, MAOG 14 (1941):10, 13.

<sup>6</sup>Gaalياهو Cornfeld, ed. Pictorial Biblical Encyclopedia: A Visual Guide to the Old and New Testament (New York: Macmillan Company, 1964), s.v. "Magic, Divination, and Superstition: Protective and Curative Magic" (hereafter as PBE).

<sup>7</sup>Haussig, GMVO, p.48; Myhrman, ZA 16:185; Frank, MAOG, 14:12.

wild young beasts.<sup>1</sup> Wherever she passed, she left a track of newborn children with deadly fevers, and mothers with puerperal fever.<sup>2</sup> To counteract the malignancy of this female demon, some incantations prescribed in detail the way in which kinds of seals were to be used as amulets to prevent women from aborting.<sup>3</sup>

Recently Lichty<sup>4</sup> has indicated the special role that Mesopotamians believed the demons Pazuzu and Lamashtu had especially in attacking mothers and children. It seems that the attacks of Pazuzu were the most feared during the later months of pregnancy and at the time of birth. After birth and during the puerperal days, mothers and children were in special danger from the assaults of Lamashtu.<sup>5</sup> But Lamashtu is also clearly singled out in the texts as one who caused miscarriages. A Lamashtu text says, "Abducting is the daughter of Anu. She turns upside down the inside of the pregnant woman. She forcibly pulls out the child

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<sup>1</sup>Dogs were also always required in the magic procedures of the conjuration of Lamashtu. Myhrman, ZA 16:152.

<sup>2</sup>Von Soden, "Eine altbabylonische Beschwörung gegen die Dämonin Lamashtum," Or 23 (1954):337; Contenau, MAB, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Beatrice L. Goff, "The Role of Amulets in Mesopotamian Ritual Texts," The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 19 (1956):25; Contenau, MAB, pp. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup>Erle Lichty, "Demons and Population Control," Expedition 13 (1971):22-24.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

from the pregnant woman."<sup>1</sup> She is thus the demonic abortionist par excellence.

Mesopotamians believed that the perils of mothers and children--especially the children--did not end just with the end of the hazardous puerperal period. From then on the person had to confront the threat of another demon throughout his or her lifetime. That no-less dangerous demon was the evil eye.<sup>2</sup>

Figs. 98 to 103 are taken from amulets which illustrate not only what the people believed about the appearance of Lamashtu but also illustrate details about sorcery related to this frightening demon.<sup>3</sup> Figs. 101 and 102 are the obverse and reverse sides, respectively, of an amulet which portrays Lamashtu and Pazuzu,<sup>4</sup> as well as other demonic characters related to incantations against Lamashtu. Noticeable among the demons portrayed is the representation

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<sup>1</sup>Lutz, SSBT, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26. Against the evil eye demon there existed numerous conjurations and ways to prevent his attacks.

<sup>3</sup>For a relation of the Lamashtu amulets founded only recently, see H. Klengel, "Neue Lamaštu-Amulette aus dem Vorderasiatischen Museum zu Berlin und dem British Museum," MIOF 7 (1960): 334-355. See also Thureau-Dangin, "Ritual et amulets contra Labartu," RA 18 (1921):161-198.

<sup>4</sup>Perrot and Chippiez, History of Art in Chaldaea & Assyria, 1:350-351, figs. 161 and 162. Usually amulets of Pazuzu were prescribed to be worn by women in childbirth as protection against Lamashtu, who killed pregnant women and children (Thureau-Dangin, RA 18:169, 164).



of seven demonic entities (Fig. 103), who are interpreted as the seven principal evil spirits.<sup>1</sup>

There is considerable inconsistency in the numbering of the evil spirits. Sumerian and Akkadian texts refer to the Sibitti<sup>2</sup> or seven principal spirits.<sup>3</sup> The myth of Erra mentions that they were born from a union between Anu and Earth, and then they were given to Erra as his special warriors. Speaking about the power and duty of these Sibitti gods, the Erra myth says:

The Sibitti, unrivaled heroes, their nature  
is quite different.  
Their origin is quite strange. They are filled  
with the power to frighten:  
He who looks at them is struck with terror.  
Their breath is death:  
Men are afraid: they dare not to go near it. . . .  
Anum the king of the gods fecundated Earth.  
She bore seven gods to him and he named  
them Sibitti.  
They stood before him and he fixed their destinies.  
He summoned the first one and gave  
(him) instructions:  
"Wherever you may go and spread terror,  
have no equal!"  
To the second he said: "Burn like fire,  
blaze like flame!"  
With the third he spo[ke]: "Take a lionlike aspect,  
and may be annihilated who looks at you!"  
. . . The destinies of all the Sibitti  
having thus decreed, Anum  
Gave them to Erra, the hero of the gods, (saying):  
"Let them march beside you. . . ."

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<sup>1</sup>For a textual reference as well as representation of these demons, see Frank, "Lamaštu, Pazuzu und andere Dämonen," MAOG 14 (1972):1-44.

<sup>2</sup>"Sibitti (or Sebitti) means 'seven' in Akkadian." Luigi Cagni, The Poem of Erra (Pasadena, CA: Undena Publications, 1977), p. 26, n. 11 (hereafter as Erra).

<sup>3</sup>Langdon, Semitic Mythology, p. 872.

Let them be your fierce weapons, let them  
march beside you!"<sup>1</sup>

The rest of the myth refers to how these demons urge their master to battle. They furiously raise up their weapons encouraging him to make his weapons resound. They also encourage him to raise his loud cry so that everyone above and below may be shaken, and the gallu demons may be turned away.<sup>2</sup>

Some texts that mention the seven demons also give evidence that the Mesopotamian people believed that these evil spirits belonged to the divine order,<sup>3</sup> and they were somehow engaged in an eternal cyclical struggle against the gods. Sometimes some of the gods are thought to have sided with them.

A Shurpu tablet mentions demons who descended from above and demons which came forth from below. It also mentions their devastating action in the country and to individuals. Their radiant appearance and their eager intentions take the place of the gods. The text says:

The dimetu demons have come forth from Apsu.  
The mamitu demons have descended from heaven.  
Like grass the ahhazu demons are crushing the land;  
The four winds, they enflame the  
wide-spreading splendour like a fire.  
The people of the dwellings they torment,  
their bodies they torture,  
Town and country they cause to wail, young and old

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<sup>1</sup>Cagni, Erra, Tab. I:23-34, 39-40, 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., lns. 45-46, 60-67.

<sup>3</sup>Langdon, MARS, 5:357, 373, 374.

they cause to moan.  
 Man and woman they bind, they fill (them)  
 with misery.  
 In heaven and earth they rage like a storm,  
 a chase they set up.  
 To the place of a god's anger they hasten,  
 and utter (their) wails.  
 The man whose god has abandoned him, they attacked  
 him and covered him like a garment.  
 They rushed upon him filling him with evil.  
 His hands they tied, his feet they seized.  
 In his body they have set a fever, with bitterness  
 they have bespattered him.<sup>1</sup>

This text strongly suggests that a person could not be in a neutral relationship to gods or demons. He ought to be with one or the other. If he was with his gods, he had the protection of them against the demons (spirits). If he was abandoned by the gods, the evil demons filled the void and the person came under their control and was afflicted with all sorts of maladies.

Though partially broken, the myth of the Seven Evil Demons describes them and at same time portrays their activities:

Raging storms, evil gods are they  
 Ruthless demons, who in heavens were  
 created, are they,  
 Workers of evil are they,  
 They lift up the head to evil, every day to evil  
 Destruction to work.  
 Of these seven the first is the South wind. . . .  
 The second is a dragon . . .  
 The third is a grim leopard,  
 which carries off the young. . . .  
 The fourth is a terrible serpent. . . .  
 The fifth is a furious Wolf (?), who  
 knoweth to flee,  
 The sixth is a rampant . . . which against

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<sup>1</sup>E. E. Knudsen, "A Version of the Seventh Tablet of Shurpu, from Nimrud," *Iraq* 19 (1957):50-53.

god and king . . .  
 The seventh is a windstorm, which  
 takes vengeance.<sup>1</sup>  
 These seven are Messengers of Anu, the king,  
 Bearing gloom from city to city,  
 Tempests that furiously scour the heavens,  
 Dense clouds that bring gloom over the sky. . . .  
 Mighty destroyers are they, the deluge  
 of the Storm-god. . . .  
 In the height of heaven like lightning they [flash],  
 To wreak destruction they lead the way,  
 In heaven's breadth, the home of Anu, the King  
 They take their stand for evil, and none oppose.  
 When Bel heard these tidings and pondered  
 in his heart,  
 With Ea, the mighty Guide of the gods,  
 he took counsel,  
 And Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar,  
 Whom he had set to rule the firmament  
 With Anu, apportioning among them  
 The dominion of the heavenly host,  
 He ordained to stand by night and day  
 unceasingly.  
 When the seven evil gods  
 Forced their way into the vault of heaven . . .<sup>2</sup>

The text continues its account by mentioning that  
 the seven evil gods overpowered the appointed gods, but  
 Marduk was then commanded to help them. At this point the  
 text is broken, but it can be inferred that Marduk emerged  
 victorious because elsewhere in the incantation texts  
 Marduk appears as the greatest binder of the demons.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The translation to this point is the work of Rogers, CPOT, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup>The translation of the second part is by Thomson, DESB, pp. 90-93. As it appears, these deities are in constant turmoil or perhaps it would be better to say, they have no rest, acting with evil against the deities. They can even overpower some major gods, and additional aid is needed to diminish or dominate them. Marduk is the god who is named as the champion against the evil powers of all the demoniac deities.

<sup>3</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 308.

Many texts mention that the great gods are requested to bind the demons. Among them the An gods are indicated as capable of doing that. A Lamashtu text mentions that Lamashtu could be exorcized by the power of the An gods.<sup>1</sup> In another incantation, Marduk appears addressing the demons in this way:

May he hand you over to the great devils. . . .  
May the Anunnaki, the great gods bind you.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently the demons were also lesser deities who were in the service of the gods as guarantors of the boundaries. Besides the gods of the boundaries there existed numerous demons and spirits whose duty it was to guard the frontiers.<sup>3</sup> The belief in the presence of these landmark spirits is well attested in the boundary stones which the Babylonians named kudurrus.<sup>4</sup> According to the reliefs on these stelae, they were represented as horned serpents.

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<sup>1</sup>The text says, "By the heavens, the earth and the Anunnaki you should be exorcized" (Myhrman, ZA 16:195).

<sup>2</sup>Lambert, "An Address of Marduk to the Demons," AfO 19 (1959-60):117, lns. 27, 30.

<sup>3</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 174.

<sup>4</sup>A kudurru was a boundary stone (see CAD, 8:495-497) which usually was settled as a visible sign of the limits established under solemn oath between nations. Hinke points out that the most common term the Babylonians used for boundary stones was abnunar, meaning "an engraved stone." Kudurru is employed with less frequency in referring to stones with inscriptions. He also mentions that other terms for such stones are abnu, "stone"; asmittu, "a sculptured and an inscribed stele"; tuppu, "an inscribed tablet"; and li'u, "a tablet" or "document." J. Hinke, A New Boundary Stone of Nebuchadrezzar I. From Nippur (Philadelphia: Uni-versity of Pennsylvania, 1907), p. 2, n. 1.

scorpion-men, and a variety of hybrid creatures (Figs. 104, 105, 106, 116, 168, 169) which supposedly were permanently watching over the rights of the owners. They were ready to curse anyone who dared to trespass the settled limits.<sup>1</sup> An example of this kind of demons is the winged demoness with twisted legs of Fig. 105 which was represented in a kudurru.<sup>2</sup>

Figs. 106 to 108 depict some of the demons considered as beneficent since they always played some guarding function over the places on which they were left. Fig. 106 portrays a terracota bull-man relief found at Ur,<sup>3</sup> usually known as lamassu.<sup>4</sup> Fig. 107 represents a winged Babylonian

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<sup>1</sup>For a study of the different discovered kudurrus, as well as their description and inscriptions, including a glossary of the kudurru inscriptions, see the above-cited work of J. Hinke.

<sup>2</sup>P. Dhorme and L. H. Vincent, "Les chérubins," *RB* 35 (1926):356, fig. 2; E. Herzfeld, "Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien (II. Teil) an die mesopotamische Gruppe anzugliedernde Siegel," *Archaeologische Mitteilungen* 9 (1938):3, fig. 126.

<sup>3</sup>L. Woolley and M. Mallowan, *Ur 7 (The Old Babylonian Period)* [London: British Museum Publications, 1976], pl., 64, 2. See also Theresa Howard-Carter, "An Interpretation of the Sculptural Decoration of the Second Millennium Temple of Tell Al-Rimah," *Iraq* 45 (1983):67, pl., III b.

<sup>4</sup>All seems to indicate that lamassu was a generic term that covered a diversity of hybrid creatures of protective function. One of this type was the bull-man. Yasin M. Al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace* (Pasadena: Undena Publications, 1978), pp. 12-20.

demon of human body and ornithomorphic mien.<sup>1</sup> Fig. 108 is a protective deity which was represented on a face of an altar of Nineveh.<sup>2</sup> It depicts a demonic hybrid creature of human features but having four wings, quadruped hindlegs, scorpion tail, and feet of a bird of prey.<sup>3</sup> Fig. 109 depicts a winged horse which was believed by ancient Anatolian peoples to be the usual mount on the gods.<sup>4</sup>

Another type of evil demon thought of as employed as the custodian of entrances was the rabisu.<sup>5</sup> They were believed to be charged with such a function especially in the underworld regions.

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard Woolley, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures," The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1926): 689-692, pl. IX, 2.

<sup>2</sup>R. Campbell Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson, "The Site of the Palace of Ashurnasirpal at Nineveh. Excavated in 1929-30 on Behalf of the British Museum," AAA 18 (1931):83, pl. XXVII.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 83. The figure is taken from a four-faced Assyrian altar found in one of the palaces of Ashurnasirpal at Nineveh. Each face of the altar was decorated with a different demonic figure, but the others were marred.

<sup>4</sup>The figure is the decorative representation of bronze discs uncovered in an eighth-century B.C. tomb in Altintepe, Anatolia. In addition to this figure, the objects are decorated with other fantastic creatures--winged centaurs, winged horses, a mixed being of lion and bull, a winged and horned monster lion--and a winged god. Özgüç points out that "the motif of winged horse and winged god is very popular at Altintepe." Tashin Özgüç, "Excavations at Altintepe," Bellesten 25 (1961):273-273, figs. 23, 24.

<sup>5</sup>Deimel, PE, 3016, s. v. Rabişu.

Another notable feature about the demons is their preference for a dark and deserted environment.<sup>1</sup> Those which belonged to the underworld dwelt in darkness,<sup>2</sup> and their natural activity is mainly related to the nocturnal hours.<sup>3</sup> The witchcraft connected with them favored the same dark environment for dealing with the demonic gods.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, it is also notable that in the incantations, explicit instruction is given regarding the way in which the conjurations were to be repeated. These were to be recited in whispering tones, since it was believed that this corresponded with the soft tones with which the demons and ghosts transmitted their messages.<sup>5</sup>

In attempting to establish a difference in divine matters between the Sumerians and the Babylonians, Jestin observed that the Babylonian imagination was somewhat

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<sup>1</sup>An incantation text says explicitly that it was intended against the "evil spirit . . . the evil spirit and devil who appear in the desert," and stresses that he "roves over the desert," and the spell commands him: "O evil spirit to thy desert! O evil devil to thy desert!-- utug-gul edin-zu-šu. a-lal-[gul edin-zu-šu]. Lutz, SSBT, no. 128, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Chad Boscawen, "Notes in the Religion and Mythology of the Assyrians," TSBA 4 (1875):290.

<sup>3</sup>An Utukku limnutu text says, "O evil spirit, O evil demon, who have power by night over the street, O evil ghost, O evil devil who have power by night over the path." Lutz, SSBT, no. 128, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Boscawen, "Babylonian Witchcraft," ET 9 (Oct. 1897-Sept. 1898):228.

<sup>5</sup>Jastrow, ReBAs, p. 278.



distant from the stories of the gods peculiar to Sumer. Instead they took pleasure in stories of devils.<sup>1</sup> The immense amount of religious literature where demons and malignant spiritual forces are so frequently mentioned tends to corroborate this assertion.

Madhloom,<sup>2</sup> referring to the way that Neo-Assyrians represented their pantheon, mentions that although "there are no major divinities illustrated," there are "a host of winged figures" identified as gods by their horned caps.<sup>3</sup> He goes on to say that to this numberless "company must be added the figures of human-headed monsters at the gates whose names are preceded by the divine determinative." He stresses the fact that all these divinities wear a domed horned hat.<sup>4</sup>

Figs. 110 to 111 portray figures of demons that were believed to be destructive and therefore were also feared. In Fig. 110 a horned demon<sup>5</sup> appears devouring two griffins while other creatures appear to fear it. Two lion demons of the Assyrian variety are represented in Fig. 106, taken from a relief found at the entrance of a doorway in

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<sup>1</sup>Jestin, ReAn, I:305.

<sup>2</sup>T. A. Madhloom, The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art (London: The Athlone Press, 1970), hereafter CNA.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Edith Porada, "The Cylinder Seals Found at Thebes in Boeotia," AfO 28 (1981-1982):44.

the palace of Ashurbanipal at Kuyunjik.<sup>1</sup> Both have some lion, bird, and human characteristics and both appear as menaces wielding daggers and roaring. Fig. 112 depicts a two-headed demon found at Alalakh.<sup>2</sup> The heads have some serpentine features, while the rest of the body appears to be human in nature. It is also depicted as winged, and it holds two animal victims.

It is a well-known fact that Mesopotamians placed winged hybrid creatures at the entrances of their palaces<sup>3</sup> or temples in order to prevent the entrance of evil forces.<sup>4</sup> In the same type of location, the Assyrians were accustomed to place the shedu and lamassu. These were portrayed as monsters having either a lion or a bull winged body and with the head of a man wearing a horned cap which indicated their divinity.<sup>5</sup> It was believed that the more

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<sup>1</sup>C. J. Gadd, The Stones of Assyria (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 189, pl. 32. A similar demon was carved in a doorway of a palace belonging to Sennacherib in Nineveh. This time the demon also wields a dagger and holds a scepter, and is depicted in company of a guardian deity of totally anthropomorphic resemblance that wears a horned helmet and holds up his right hand in menacing way. Ibid., p. 174, fig. 17. See also Perrot-Chippiez, History of Art in Chaldaea & Assyria, 1:61, fig. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Collon, SITA, pl. XLV, fig. 218.

<sup>3</sup>See Ernst Heinrich, Die Paläste im Alten Mesopotamien (Berlin: Verlag Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1984), pp. 102-105, figs. 53, 56-59.

<sup>4</sup>R. D. Barnett, Assyrian Palace Reliefs and Their Influence on the Sculpture of Babylonia and Persia (London: Batchworth Press, n.d.), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

mixed forms the guardian creatures had, the more powerful they were "to resist those adversaries whom it was their function to dispel from the places which they guarded."<sup>1</sup>

Figs. 113 to 118 present some examples of the variety of hybrid creatures that they posted as guardians of their palaces or other important buildings. The winged human leonine or taurine resemblance was common. Fig. 113 depicts a lion-centaur from a Kunyunjik relief dating to the times of Assurbanipal.<sup>2</sup> The monster wears a horned helmet indicating its relation to the divine realm. Fig. 114 depicts a female lion sphinx from Nimrud.<sup>3</sup> This monster is also depicted with a horned helmet and wings. Fig. 115 presents a male sphinx that appears in an orthostat from Sakjegözü.<sup>4</sup> This monster has a male human head and it wears a horned helmet. It also has wings, a lion-like body, and a serpent tail. Fig. 116 depicts a centaur mixed with too many features. It has a human and lion double head, wings, horse body, and a double tail of horse and

<sup>1</sup>C. J. Gadd, The Assyrian Sculptures (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1934), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>A. Champdor, Babylone et Mésopotamie (Paris: A. Guillot, 1953), fig. 89. See also Perrot-Chippiez, History of Art in Chaldaeia and Assyria, 2:169, fig. 169.

<sup>3</sup>R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, The Sculptures of Assurnasirpal II, Tiglath-pileser III and Esarhaddon from the Central and S.W. Palaces at Nimrud (London: 1962), pl. CIX.

<sup>4</sup>Akurgal, Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1961), fig 37.

scorpion.<sup>1</sup> Fig. 117 portrays another monster from an engraved cauldron base found in an Etruscan tomb.<sup>2</sup> In this case the winged human-lion body has a scorpion's tail.

Fig. 118 depicts a winged human-bull discovered at Khorsabad.<sup>3</sup> This type of monster is the well-known lamassu guardian.<sup>4</sup> Bull-men were also represented as guardian deities of door-posts and standards (Fig. 106)<sup>5</sup> everywhere in Mesopotamia.<sup>6</sup> They usually were located at the entrances of the palaces.<sup>7</sup> Fig. 121 is the reconstruction of the right wing of the entrance to the main palace of Sargon,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dhorme and Vincent, "Les chérubins," RB 25 (1926): pl. IX, 1.

<sup>2</sup>K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, "Urartian Bronzes in Etruscan Tombs," Iraq 18 (1956):154-156, pl. XXVIII.

<sup>3</sup>Parrot, Le Temple d'Ishtar. MAM I. (Paris: 1956), fig. 34; Beek, Atlas of Mesopotamia, p. 106, fig. 200.

<sup>4</sup>Madhloom, CNAA, pp. 95-96.

<sup>5</sup>Teresa Howard-Carter, "An Interpretation of the Sculptural Decoration of the Second Millenium Temple at Tell al-Rimah." Ir 45 (1983):64-86, pl. IIIb.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>7</sup>The Assyrian texts and iconography attest clearly this concept of protective spirits among the Assyro-Babylonian peoples. See von Soden, "Die Schutzgegnien lamassu und schedu in der Babylonisch-Assyrischen Literatur," Baghdader Mitteilungen 3 (1964):148-156. For a idea of the diversity of the bull-man, see Pierre Amiet, The Art of the Ancient Near East (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), trans. Joseph Shepley and Claude Choquet, figs. 347, 400-403. Also Botta, Monument de Niniveh, 1:pls. 24-26, 29, 30, 44-46; 2:pl. 153.

<sup>8</sup>Frankfort, AAAO, fig. 31. Similarly those uncovered in the citadel of Khorsabad, idem, Oriental Institute Discoveries in Iraq, 1933/34 (Chicago: The University of

in which the lamassu was sculptured in the company of other protective spirits. Bull-men (Figs. 106, 194) also played a part in the scenes of seals in which the guarding of the sacred tree is portrayed. Fig. 122 depicts the scene of a seal<sup>1</sup> in which a winged god stands before two bull-men who appear touching the tree and holding the winged disk of Assur. In addition to them, a small animal is also depicted at each side of the tree. Curiously, both animals are portrayed with raised forepaws as if they were worshiping.

The Assyrian representations of protective genii are also common in the reliefs and seals of Assyria. Two main types of these were known, the bird men and the winged men. Figs. 119 and 120 represent the first kind in which the entities have the wings and head of a bird, and the body and members of a man.<sup>2</sup> Figs. 123, 124, and 126 to 128 represent the winged genii of human appearance. They are represented as being both male (Figs. 123, 124, 126, 128, 129) and female (Figs. 123, 127).<sup>3</sup> Sometimes the human figure is combined with other creatures such as birds,

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Chicago Press, 1935), pp. 99-100, figs. 102-105 (hereafter QIDI). For the guardian deities of the Assyrian palaces, see especially Botta, Monument de Ninive, vols. 1, 2, 5.

<sup>1</sup>Ward, SCWA, fig. 685.

<sup>2</sup>For Fig. 119, see J. B. Stearns, "Reliefs from the Palace of Assurnasirpal II," AFO Beif. 15, no. 124583. For fig. 120 see Botta, Monument de Ninive, pl. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Both figures are from carved stones of Nimrud from the times of Ashurnasirpal.

scorpions, or some other quadrupedal creature (Fig. 125).<sup>1</sup> These genii are commonly represented as guardians of the sacred tree (Figs. 125, 129), perhaps as the main characters of some sacred ritual within the realm of Assyrian religion.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes they are represented as accompanying the worshiper (Figs. 126, 127), as they come to grant the blessing asked by the worshipers.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes the genii are portrayed as having more than two wings (Fig. 128). Fig. 129 portrays two genii flanking the sacred tree, over which Assur hovers.<sup>4</sup> Both genii are riding on the backs of lion spinxes, one of which is female.

Fig. 130 portrays two winged, bearded creatures facing each other.<sup>5</sup> The genii wear horned helmets and are in a leaping pose with outstretched wings. Between them appears a crescent and rayed sun-disk.

The Assyrian kings refer in their annals to their preference for these deities in the decoration of their

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<sup>1</sup>Lajard, Mythra, pl. LIV-C, 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, SCWA, pp. 219-238, figs. 671, 673, 679.

<sup>3</sup>Fig. 126 is taken from an Assyrian embroidery decoration (Ward, SCWA, p. 222, fig. 672). Fig. 127 portrays two goddesses accompanying a worshiper as depicted in a Hittite cylinder (Lajard, Mythra, pl. LVI, 1; Dhorme and Vincent, "Les chérubins," pp. 486, 487, fig. 6).

<sup>4</sup>Lajard, Mythra, pl. XLIX, 9; Wiseman and Forman, GMRW, fig. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Heinz Genge, Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs (Copenhagen: Munksgaards Boghandel, 1979), vol. 2, fig. 106 (hereafter NSAR).

palaces, and in this way they expressed their devotion to these creatures. Esarhaddon recounts the rebuilding of one of his palaces at Nineveh when he says:

In that palace, may the friendly bull-colossi (shedu and lamassu) who guard my royal footsteps and gladden my spirits, forever hold sway, may they never [depart from its side].<sup>1</sup>

For the decoration of their palaces the Assyrians also used reliefs depicting other beings named kuribu. Unfortunately there is no way to know how they looked.<sup>2</sup> In describing the details of the reconstruction of a temple dedicated to Assur, the same Esarhaddon gives this account for the inner and outer decorations of that sanctuary:

From its foundations to its top I built, I completed it. I roofed it with great beams of cedar, products of Mount Sirara, which I had cut down in the course of a campaign of mine. Door leaves of cypress, whose odor is pleasant, I covered with a sheathing of gold and hung them in its doors. The sanctuary of Assur, my lord, I inlaid with gold. Lahme kuribu of ruddy sariru, I set up side by (lit., to) side. The inner sanctuary of Assur, my lord, images of gold, creatures of the deep, I set up on its right and its left.<sup>3</sup>

Two other letters contain the term kuribi, and in one they are related to the protector deities. Letter No.

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<sup>1</sup>Luckenbill, ARAB, 2:270.

<sup>2</sup>Roland de Vaux, Bible et Orient (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), p. 235.

<sup>3</sup>Translation of Luckenbill, ARAB, II:275. The Akkadian text mentioning the kuribi reads, *l<sup>1</sup>lahmu l<sup>1</sup>ku-ri-bi sa sariri russu idi ana idi u[l-z]iz*, "a Lahmu and a Kuribi of brilliant sariru I set up side by side (of the gate)."

1194 from Ashurbanipal's library states, "Two statues of the mighty kings, 50 statues of **ku-ri-bi**, statues of clay, of silver, 3 thresholds of silver, one **rukku** of silver: this work is done."<sup>1</sup> The letter 1143, although marred significantly, is connected with Ishtar and the protective deity Lamassu.<sup>2</sup>

Dhorme and Vincent connect the Akkadian **karibu** or **karubu** (pl. **karibi**; fem. **karibatu**; pl. **karibāti**), with the Hebrew **cherubim** and translate **karibu** as meaning intercessor.<sup>3</sup> It should be noticed that although **karibu** is not described anywhere, and its name is not attached to any figure in particular,<sup>4</sup> its close relationship with the hybrid figures already known in the Sumero-Akkadian religious tradition makes its quite evident that these are related creatures that stood at the entrances of palaces and temples as divine guardians. So, the **kuribi**, the **lamassu**, the **lahmu**, and **shedu**, without being identical, belong to the same class of protector spirits who performed the same functions as intercessors and guardians.<sup>5</sup> They

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<sup>1</sup>Harper, Letters, no. 1194, obv. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup>The text says: "the statues of the gods of the city [. . .] Ishtar, etc., <sup>11</sup>**ku-ri-bi** [. . .] rev. the mighty Lamassu. . . ." (Harper, Letters, no. 1413).

<sup>3</sup>P. Dhorme and L. H. Vincent, "Les Chérubins," RB (1926):328-358, 481-495.

<sup>4</sup>De Vaux, Bible et Orient, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



were thought of as divine, and pictures of these deities were quite common on the walls of Assyrian and Babylonian temples, palaces, and gates (see Figs. 118 to 121, 123 to 126, 131). The mixed human-animal appearance of these creatures is quite common.<sup>1</sup> Apart from winged human-headed bulls, or winged human-headed lions serving as guardian figures at gateways,<sup>2</sup> there were also other enigmatic creatures of mixed appearance which were preferred in sculptured form or statuary as divine guardians. They were the mermen, the griffins, and other monsters.

Surprisingly, a whole variety of hybrid beings portrayed in the Mesopotamian region came to light in the excavations at Tell Halaf.<sup>3</sup> These representations are

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<sup>1</sup>A. Kapelrud, "The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise," JAOS 70 (1950):155.

<sup>2</sup>Gadd, Stones, pp. 61, 160, fig. 24; J. P. G. Finch, "The Winged Bulls at the Nergal Gate of Nineveh," Iraq 10 (1948):9-18, pls. III, IV.

<sup>3</sup>The mound of Tell Halaf was excavated in 1911 and 1929 (see Max von Oppenheim, Tell Halaf. A New Culture in Oldest Mesopotamia [London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933], hereafter Halaf). Tell Halaf--Akk. gu-za-na--was an Assyrian city which has been identified with the biblical Gozan (M. V. Arrabal, "Gozan," Enciclopedia de la Biblia [Barcelona: Ediciones Garriga, 1963], 3:948 [hereafter EnciBi]). Its beginnings go far back into the Chalcolithic period (Avraham Negev, ed. (Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972], s.v. "Gozan."), and during the tenth to ninth centuries it became the capital of a small Aramean kingdom which fell to the Assyrians around 808 B.C. Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Gozan," The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), p. 219. The two main series of cuneiform documents from 800 B.C. and from 648 B.C. (ibid.) show that the religious ideas at Tell Halaf were not different from those of Babylon

outstanding since they present a series of sculptures and orthostat figures and statues which are in some ways unique. Figs. 131 to 143 illustrate some of these mythical beings from Halaf which appear as hybrids or winged. On the other hand, literary texts, although fragmentary, indicate that the common belief regarding the demons held by the people who inhabited Tell Halaf was identical with Mesopotamian concepts elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Fig. 131 is the reconstruction of a main passage in the temple-palace of Halaf.<sup>2</sup> Besides the two huge entrance guardians--one a huge griffin, the other a winged creature--others were represented in orthostats. Notable among them are the creatures found in Figs. 132, 133, 136, 139 to 141. Figs. 132 and 136 present a two-headed winged sphinx. One head is of a woman and the other is of a panther.<sup>3</sup> Fig. 133 presents a four-winged female entity--it really shows only three wings--who holds

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and Nineveh (Bruno Meissner, "Appendix V: Remarks on the Cuneiform Texts," Halaf, p. 319).

<sup>1</sup>A fragmented text is identical with the series above which speaks "of the evil spirits," which says, "Heaven and Earth bring hurt, a bull demon, that doth harm to the land, a bull demon that doth harm to the land, whose strength is mighty, whose gait is mighty, a devil, a goring heat, a great death demon, a death demon that cometh into every house, a devil that hath no fear, are the Seven (evil spirits)" (ibid., p. 319).

<sup>2</sup>Oppenheim, Halaf, pp. 136-140.

<sup>3</sup>Similar two-headed sphinxes have been found at Carchemish. See Moorgath, Carchemish, vol. I, pl. B 14 a.

spear and bow.<sup>1</sup> It also wears a horned helmet,<sup>2</sup> and somewhat resembles that of Fig. 127 that portrays a four-winged male entity. Fig. 139 presents a two-headed demon whose body is anthropomorphic while its two heads are those of lions. The strange entity represented in Fig. 141 has a human resemblance but it is a six-winged being. An outstanding feature of the sphinxes of Figs. 132 and 135 to 138 is the fire-like designs they have on their rumps.

The Mesopotamians as well as their neighbors conceived of forms with wings, and there is a wide variety of examples of these. Some of these are presented in Figs. 144 to 174. A variety of these forms is represented in a cylinder seal discovered at Nuzi<sup>3</sup> and portrayed in Fig. 144. Apart from the gods, six different entities are represented, all of them being winged.

With similar diversity, a painted wall of the Court of Palms<sup>4</sup> of a palace of Mari provides us a variety of

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<sup>1</sup>Genge, NSAR, vol. II, fig. 92.

<sup>2</sup>The helmet resembles somewhat that of the god with a winged disk on his head in Fig. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Beran, "Assyrische Glyptik des 14. Jahrhunderts," ZA 18 (1957):204-206, Abb. 107. The seal belonged to Ithi-Tessub, son of Kipi-Tessub, king of Arrapah, and is dated ca. 1460-1430 B.C.

<sup>4</sup>Yasin M. Al-khalesi, The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1978), p. 7.

winged mixed beings.<sup>1</sup> The creatures, six in number, are quadrupedal, with four of them visibly winged, while two are wingless (Fig. 145). Unfortunately the painting is damaged in part and it is not possible to discern completely the figures of these mythic guardians.<sup>2</sup> But, the combination of motifs in the whole picture, intermingled with scenes with diverse deities, makes certain the protective function of these hybrid creatures which are represented in corresponding pairs.

Fig. 146 is a seal impression from Assur,<sup>3</sup> which presents two scenes. On the right side a nude winged goddess with horned crown grasps the hands of two attacking winged demons.<sup>4</sup> On the left side a bird-headed demon with lifted arms holds a winged sun-disk. The demon is assisted at both sides by two nude gods who also hold the sun-disk.

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Haldar, "On the Wall Painting from Court 106 of the Palace of Mari," OrSuec 1 (1952):51-65.

<sup>2</sup>Fortunately other painted walls of the palace preserve some hints for suggestions that can fit properly some of the missing parts. Fig. 170 gives an idea of how the creatures of the lower part would be which in Fig. 145 clearly appear as wingless and guarding the trees (Parrot, Le Palais, pl. A). Al-Khalesi suggests that the creatures of the upper part are lion-men, those of the center are bird-headed, while those of the lower part are bull-men. The Court of the Palms, pl. VI.

<sup>3</sup>Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum," AfO 25 (1974/77):137, Abb. 4.

<sup>4</sup>This scene is interpreted by Porada as the restriction of the menacing powers of death by the power of the goddess. *Ibid*, p. 137.

Fig. 147 depicts a four-winged genie.<sup>1</sup> He grasps animals with stretched-out hands, apparently restraining them from attacking a kneeling genie who is depicted with winged arms and bird-like feet. The scene of Fig. 148 depicts a god approaching two bent genii,<sup>2</sup> from a rolling seal found at Nuzi.<sup>3</sup> Both genii are bent with stretched-out arms and wings under a winged sun. In addition, they are depicted as having scorpion tails and the talons of a bird of prey.

The demonic entities portrayed in Fig. 149 are from a Mitannian seal cylinder uncovered at Ras Shamra.<sup>4</sup> It portrays two scenes. At the right side, a four-winged genie stands on the backs of two small winged sphinxes which have long and curved horns like those of an ibex. They appear kneeling with the weight of their rider. The genie is attired as a warrior and holds, in turn, two winged sphinxes, which in turn grasp the kneeling sphinxes

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<sup>1</sup>Beran, ZA 18 (1957):213.

<sup>2</sup>R. Mayer-Opificius, "Die geflügelte Sonne: Himmels- und Regendarstellungen im Alten Vorderasien," UF 16 (1984): 227, fig. 7. See also Beran, ZA 18 (1957):212, fig. 110.

<sup>3</sup>E. R. Lachemann, Excavations at Nuzi V. Harvard Semitic Series XIV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pl. 111, 270.

<sup>4</sup>Amiet, Bas-Reliefs imaginaires de l'Ancient Orient d'après les cachets et les sceaux-cylindres (Paris: L'Imprimerie Nationale, 1973), p. 148, fig. 424.

sustain in acrobatic position a genie--presumably female--for whom these male genii possibly act as her acolytes.<sup>1</sup> They hold her by the arms and legs, which in turn appear crossed in a zig-zag.<sup>2</sup> She supports herself by her hands on the heads of her bearers, and at the same time braces her feet on their legs. Like the four-winged genie, she also has the feet of a bird of prey. In addition, two small composite winged creatures stand on her arms. Fig. 150 portrays a seal from a Nuzi tablet.<sup>3</sup> It depicts a monstrous god grasping the heads of a griffin which has the lower part "like that of a lion-dragon."<sup>4</sup> The monster not only is two-headed, but in addition seems to have two pairs of wings. At the right side a suppliant goddess who stands before a burning altar appears to be attended by a griffin. The combined features of the griffins have been suggested to be an "equivalent to angels of death."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Schaeffer has suggested that the two male figures might be compared with "ces paires de génies de <<binômes>> de messagers divins, dans la mythologie ougaritique." CCRSU, 1:20.

<sup>2</sup>For a relation of demons with legs crossed in zigzag, see E. Hersfeld, "Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien." ArchMit 9 (1938):1-6, figs. 124-132.

<sup>3</sup>Porada, Seal Impressions of Nuzi. AASOR 24 (1947): 77, fig. 813.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

The demons of Fig 151 are portrayed from a Kassite cylinder seal.<sup>1</sup> At the right side two winged-lion (?) demons hold a winged sun disk. One of them has a bird tail. At the left side stands a two-headed griffin-man monster. Both heads are horned and the monster appears vomiting fire. At same time the demon holds in a hanging position two winged horned beasts which also have bird tails.

Figs. 152 to 154 depict a variety of supernatural beings from cylinder seals uncovered at Ras-Shamra. Fig. 152 portrays a worshiper coming before an enthroned god who is attended by two acolytes.<sup>2</sup> The one of plain human appearance stands behind the seated deity. The other, who also bears human resemblance but in addition is winged, meets the worshiper kneeling before the enthroned god. Fig. 153 portrays three different genii.<sup>3</sup> One is a bearded god who stands holding with right hand a lion and with his left an ibex by their hindlegs. In the middle stands a winged god with nude torso, who in turn helps the bearded god to hold the lion. At his right side stands a deer-headed demon which holds a curved sword and grasps an ibex

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<sup>1</sup>The cylinder belonged to the Assyrian king Eriba-Adad who reigned about 1400 B.C. Delaporte, Mesopotamia, pp. 333-334.

<sup>2</sup>See Schaeffer, CCRSU, p. 120, RS 18. 126; Uq IV, p. 98, fig. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Schaeffer, CCRSU, p. 48, RS 22.033.

by its horns.<sup>1</sup> A griffin flies out over his right side. Fig. 154 depicts four personages in two scenes.<sup>2</sup> At the left side, two genii of human physiognomy guard a tree while confronting each other. At the right side a genie with hanging wings meets a person who greets him with uplifted hand.

Fig. 155 portrays two winged creatures with lion hindlegs and human heads.<sup>3</sup> Both appear extending their wings as if they would like to cover a column-altar on which is a solar disk in the crescent. Fig. 156 depicts a winged nude goddess who stands with twisted legs holding a winged disk.<sup>4</sup> Two male genii assist her holding her arms and wings. On the left side two winged sphinxes guard a sacred tree amid antelopes and deer. In Fig. 157 are portrayed two kneeling genii with human body and lion head.<sup>5</sup> They appear as guarding a sun in a crescent set over a column which serves as an altar. A worshiper approaches the scenes escorted by two ibexes. Fig. 158

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<sup>1</sup>This demon is of similar appearance to one of the demons portrayed in Fig. 126d.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., CCRSU, pp. 123-124, RS 21.13.

<sup>3</sup>Lajard, Mythra, pl. lii, fig. 6; cf. Ward, SCWA, p. 303., fig. 949; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. XXXI, 467.

<sup>4</sup>Keel, Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob (Göttingen, 1978), p. 120, fig. 66; Herzfeld, "Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien," p. 5, fig. 132.

<sup>5</sup>Ward, SCWA, p. 303, fig. 946; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. XXXI, 466.



presents three hybrid creatures with human bodies and animal heads.<sup>1</sup> Two of them are winged and they hold animals by their hind legs. Fig. 159 portrays a double scene.<sup>2</sup> On the right side two male figures meet each other with raised hands. On the left side a winged goddess lifts two antelopes by their hindlegs with each hand.<sup>3</sup> She is standing on the rumps of two winged sphinxes. Fig. 160 portrays a single scene from a Nuzi cylinder seal.<sup>4</sup> It shows a four-winged female deity who stands with outstretched wings and arms flanked by two seated lion sphinxes. The goddess grasps maces in both hands. A globulate star-shaped object appears at her left side. The goddess has, in addition, entwined snake-legs and feet of a raptor bird.<sup>5</sup> Fig. 161 is taken from a bulla discovered at Nuzi.<sup>6</sup> Two winged creatures stand flanking a pillar-shaped altar over which stands a disk. In addition other animals--apparently ibexes and calves--form part of the scene.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 304, fig. 951; Delaporte, CCOBN, pl. XXXII, 477. Notably, apparently these same demons appear in CCOBN, pl. XXXII, 478, but at this time they are portrayed as two-headed.

<sup>2</sup>Schaeffer, Ug 3:59, figs 10-82.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Porada, Seal Impressions of Nuzi, pl. XXVI, fig. 720; pl. LII, fig. 720.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>Tzvi Abusch, "Notes on a Pair of Matching Texts," The Civilization and the Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians, p. 5, fig. I.

Fig. 162 portrays an Assyrian rolling seal<sup>1</sup> which depicts a worshiper standing before two female (?) guardian deities which are flanking an altar under a crescent and a sun. Fig. 163 presents a seal of double scene.<sup>2</sup> At the right side, a god restrains two attacking winged demons, while to the left a winged demoness with intertwined legs is assisted by her acolytes.<sup>3</sup> Below them two human-headed sphinxes stand in a crossed position.

Figs. 164 to 174 are images predominantly winged, most of them taken from glyptic representations which portray both male and female beings. The female(?) image of Fig. 164 which appears holding a bag(?), and the male winged demon of Fig. 165 holding animals in each hand, come from seals found at Alalakh. Likewise the calf sphinxes of Fig. 171 belong to the same Alalakhian glyptic cast.

The four-winged genie of Fig. 166 is from a Phoenician seal.<sup>4</sup> The winged beings of Fig. 167 come from a

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<sup>1</sup>Othmar Keel, Das Böcklein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1980), p. 103, fig. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Collon, ACS, p. 126, fig. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Collon suggests that the intertwined legs as well as the wings of this demonic entity may be an indication for an identification with a whirlwind or dust-devil. Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>4</sup>See K. Galling, "Beschriftete Bildsiegel des ersten Jahrtausends v. Chr., vornehmlich aus Syrien und Palästina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Phönizischen Kunst," Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins 64 (1941):121-202, pl. 7, no. 90 (hereafter ZDPV); cf. Keel, JVSK, pp. 196, 198, fig. 141.

Babylonian tablet<sup>1</sup> which portrays a snake goddess with a companion that is also winged. He is bent behind her with outstretched wings and arms and is looking up. Fig. 170 is a winged bull-man sphinx found at the palace of Zimri-Lim (ca. 1779-1761 B.C.) of Mari.<sup>2</sup> The scorpion men of Figs. 168 and 169 are demonic figures portrayed in Babylonian kudurrus.<sup>3</sup> One is portrayed shooting an arrow, while the other is winged. Figs. 172 to 174 portray seals with winged serpents of different form. Fig. 172 portrays a winged serpent on a Sardinian Seal.<sup>4</sup> Fig. 173, a Palestinian seal from the eighth century B.C.,<sup>5</sup> and Fig. 174 from Palestine (Megiddo)<sup>6</sup> present winged snakes. The serpent of Fig. 173 portrays a four-winged ophidian, while those of Fig. 174 are horned snakes facing each other, each one having two wings. In addition a second register presents a winged human-headed sphinx.

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<sup>1</sup>Buchanan, "A Snake Goddess and Her Companions," Iraq 33 (1971):1-18, pl. Ia, fig. 1; ENES, pp. 284-285, figs. 763a, 763b.

<sup>2</sup>Parrot, Le Palais, pl. A.

<sup>3</sup>Dhorme and Vincent, "Les chérubins," pl. IX, 2.

<sup>4</sup>Georges Perrot and Charles Chippiez, A History of Art in Phoenicia and Its Dependencies (London: Chapman and Hall, 1855), 3:656, fig. 465; Günther Hölbl, Ägyptisches Kulturgut im phönikischen und punischen Sardinien (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 1:322-323, fig. 202.

<sup>5</sup>See W. A. Ward, "The Four-winged Serpent in Hebrew Seals," Rivista degli Studi Orientali 43 (1968):135-143, fig. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Galling, ZDPV, pl. 5, no. 15.

The sphinx was also a common motif within the ANE boundaries (see Figs. 175 to 183 for examples). Fig. 175 portrays an Assyrian winged sphinx.<sup>1</sup> It has a female human crowned head with a quadruped's body full of feathers. The legs are those of a lion, but the feet are of a predator bird. Figs. 176 to 179 are from the ivories of Nimrud.<sup>2</sup> Notable in the sphinxes<sup>3</sup> of Fig. 178 and 179 are the flame designs on their thighs.<sup>4</sup> This may indicate some kind of splendor, a representation that was common among the creatures that belong to the divine realm. The ivory depicted by Fig. 177 comes from Khorsabad<sup>5</sup> and portrays the figure of a standing female winged figure who extends her wings with the intent of giving protection.

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<sup>1</sup>Delaporte, CCOL, 2:162, pl. 85, fig. 12 (A.619).

<sup>2</sup>C. Decamps de Mertzfeld, Inventaire commenté des ivoires Phéniciens et apparentées découvertes dans le Proche-Orient (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1954), pl. IX, fig. 1028; R. D. Barnett, A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories, 2nd ed. (London: British Museum Publications, 1975), pl. XIX, I, C 62, (hereafter CNI). See also M. E. L. Mallowan, Nimrud and Its Remains, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966).

<sup>3</sup>R. D. Barnett, "The Nimrud Ivories and the Art of the Phoenicians," Iraq 2 (1935):190-191, fig. 3.

<sup>4</sup>See Figs. 132, 135-138 for the same flaming designs on the sphinxes of Tell Halaf. Frankfort accurately indicated that similar designs are also part of some of the carved creatures found at Tell Halaf. AAAO, p. 191.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pl. CI, fig. 1178; Frankfort, OIDI, p. 99, fig. 98.

The sphinx motif was also a very common decoration preferred by ANE kings.<sup>1</sup> Representations of this mythical creature carved on thrones have been encountered all over the ANE.<sup>2</sup> Figs. 180 to 183 show some of these varied representations found within the Syro-Palestinian area. In this way ANE kings may have expressed their belief that their rulership was under the protection of the gods, or at least that the gods provided them with some celestial creatures to reinforce the idea of the divine awesomeness of their royal majesty.

We still refer to the *lahmu* demons as a definite group of minor deities who acted in the service of the gods. In a recent study on Babylonian demons, F. A. M. Wiggermann<sup>3</sup> points out the complex nature of the problem of determining the identification of these Mesopotamian demons. He indicates that the *lahmu*, "the hairy ones," always are referred to as acting as a group,<sup>4</sup> and in Sumerian thinking they are denoted as a class of god-like

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Metzger, Königsthron und Gottesthron (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 2 vols. (hereafter KTGT).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., vol. II.

<sup>3</sup>"Exit Talim! Studies in Babylonian Demonology, I," JEOL 27 (1981-1982):90-105.

<sup>4</sup>This is in accordance with the action of some other gods whose performance also appears related to groups (see above, p. 289).

beings.<sup>1</sup> They appear as a group of fifty beings who acted as servants of Ea while serving him as his doorkeepers.<sup>2</sup> As such they dwelt in the subterranean palace of Enki or in the unfathomable deep of the seas.<sup>3</sup>

Matters relating to the appearance of these demons have been discussed extensively, since under the *lahmu* designation Mesopotamians probably grouped a wide range of demonic entities of monstrous appearance, and these were identified as part of the coterie of some of the major gods.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, Wiggermann, after a detailed comparison of the descriptions previously published,<sup>5</sup> prefers to identify the *lahmu* demons with the "hairy" type of demons in the texts, and with the "naked heroes" of the artistic representations (Figs. 83, 84).

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<sup>1</sup>Wiggermann, JEOL 27, pp. 96-97. He indicates that "lahmu are members of a special class of 'demons' to be identified with the members of an archaeological definable class of 'demons.'"

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>Lambert, BWL, p. 136, ln. 171.

<sup>4</sup>Luckenbill has pointed out that the nomination of "lahmu, even if it had originally been a designation of some specific demon, had in the course of time become a general term for 'monster.'" AJSL, 40, 201.

<sup>5</sup>He especially refers to F. Köcher, "Göttertypentext," MIOF 1 (1953):57-107. The monsters described there are quite similar to those of Thomson's Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia (see above, pp. 262-264).

## The Hittite Demons

Hittites, like other ANE peoples, were acquainted with demon entities. Within the complexity of their pantheon it is also possible to detect some demonic gods.<sup>1</sup> In their magical literature, their attempt "to have intercourse with spiritual and supernatural beings, and to influence them for" their benefit,<sup>2</sup> is well attested.

Of special mention here are the mountain gods<sup>3</sup> who had a particular significance for Hittites. For them the mountains themselves were beings full of dynamic power; they were never a mere static scene for the battles of gods and demons, nor just the dwelling place of supernatural powers.<sup>4</sup> It was their strength that made possible the action of the gods. To them also belonged the pastures and woodlands which were feared by shepherds and hunters.

They were respected as so important in the national life that when the Hittites went about making their great international alliances, they were considered not only as witnesses to the treaties but also were enlisted as avengers of the transgressors of the stipulations in those

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene Cavaignac, Les Hittites (Paris: Librairie A. Maisonneuve, 1950), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, MDDAH.

<sup>3</sup>Phoenicians like Hittites were devoted to worshipping the mountain gods. See G. Perrot and C. Chippiez, History of Art in Phoenicia and Its Dependencies (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885), 1:57.

<sup>4</sup>v. Haas, HBHS, pp. 104-105.

covenants.<sup>1</sup> Within the international treaties that peoples made with the kings of Hatti and the Hittites, the mountain gods are named in the lists of gods invoked to safeguard the covenants.<sup>2</sup>

Parallel to these deities were the demonic deities of the same mountains that were believed to dwell all over the savage woodland, in the holes of the trees, in the rock gorges and mountain clefts, on the rocky promontories, in the rivers, and at the sources of the brooks. These diverse entities were known as male and female spirits of divine character and, like their Mesopotamian counterparts, they were mainly hostile to mankind.<sup>3</sup>

Hittite demonology is mainly derived from the region of the Two Rivers,<sup>4</sup> but with a peculiar difference. While Babylonian demons are mostly evil ones, in Asia Minor

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<sup>1</sup>William Wright, The Empire of the Hittites (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1884), pp. 76-77 (hereafter EmHi).

<sup>2</sup>Van Buren, "Mountain Gods," Or 12 (1943):76.

<sup>3</sup>Haas points out that many of those Hittite demons have some resemblance to some of those characters of the Alpine legends which have somehow survived until today (HBHS, pp. 104-105).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74. Perhaps one way to see the indebtedness of Hittites to Mesopotamians in this aspect is within the omen literature. H. G. Güterbock has indicated that "the omen literature of the Hittites is borrowed from Babylonia" in a way that "as a whole the Hittite omen literature shows no original features" ("Hittite Religion," in Forgotten Religions, ed. V. Fern [New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950], p. 96).



those same entities were given a positive and good character.<sup>1</sup> Such is the case of the mountain gods. In Mesopotamia they were destructive spirits, but in Hatti they were known as benevolent servants of the gods.<sup>2</sup>

While a sevenfold malefic deity was feared by the peoples of Hatti as the combined unity of the *sibittu* that was given to Erra,<sup>3</sup> it is also known that a beneficent counterpart of a unity of seven was quite important in the Hittite cult. Some ritual texts mention the animal sacrifices that were offered to this sevenfold unity in company with the major gods.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, it also seems to have been connected with the weather-god as a protective deity.<sup>5</sup> Different cities of this region also present the

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<sup>1</sup>Haas, *HBHS*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* Haas points out that in the concept of the Mesopotamian, the eastern and northern mountains--and in the same way the western steppes or the marshes along the river banks--were the dwelling places of the demons. It was from those mountains that the feared "Evil seven" descended. It was also from these mountains that the storm demons came down over pastures, cities, and fields, devastating all as they passed by. Similarly, the feared "gallu" were known as mountain dwellers.

<sup>3</sup>See above, pp. 270-271.

<sup>4</sup>Albrecht Goetze, "Hittite *sipant-*," *JCS* 23 (1970-71): 89-90, no. 156, 163. Text 156 says, "The goat he consecrates to the Seven-gods, but one sheep he consecrates to the Sun-god."

<sup>5</sup>Haas, *HBHS*, p. 107.

seven-god unity as serving to protect them in connection with the god Jarri.<sup>1</sup>

From a royal Hittite conjuration, it is known that a sevenfold female group of gods was feared, and they were known as dangerous way-watchers that dared to confront even the gods. Sacrifices were utilized to appease them so that the gods charged with the task of royal protection would be able to exert their power.<sup>2</sup>

This indicates that Hittites had a definite conception of evil demonic characters as well as good ones. In all social levels, the Hittites feared demons and spirits and practiced all sorts of rituals to prevent the attack of those spiritual entities. It is well known that due to the malignity of evil spirits that lurked in the dark, "the Hittites were extremely cautious to protect their royal family and palace at night."<sup>3</sup>

The demon most feared by the people of Hatti is known from conjuration ritual texts. This one was the female demon known as "The evil Lady" who was named

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<sup>1</sup>Jarri is the Hittite name for Erra, well known as the "Pestilence-god." Einar von Schuler, "Kleinasien. Die Mythology der Hethiter und Hurriter," *GMVO*, p. 180; Haas, *HBHS*, p. 105. On the other hand, it seems that other sevenfold deities were also closely related to the Sun-god, to the weather-god, and to a deity called god of protection. *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>David Herman Engelhard, "Hittite Magical Practices. An Analysis," Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1970), p. 218.

Wesuriyanza.<sup>1</sup> She was of insidious character and the one who inflicted many different kinds of misfortune upon mankind. Her name has been connected with the Sumerian GU.GID and Akkadian ha-na-a-qu "choke, strangle." This suggestion of "strangler(ess)" fits best as the meaning of the name of this demon.<sup>2</sup> Her strangling characteristic and perverse activities point out a resemblance to the demon Lamashtu, who was universally recognized in Mesopotamia as well as in Syria and Anatolia.<sup>3</sup>

Another Hittite demon of sinister character who also operated in the mountains was the so-called "Lord of the tongue."<sup>4</sup> He is known from ritual texts dealing with delivery, and they were recited in order to keep him away at those times.<sup>5</sup>

The iconography provides some outstanding illustrations of the Hittite concept of these supernatural beings. They are also described in the texts and represented on the

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<sup>1</sup>Haas, HBHS, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Albrecht Goetze, "Critical Review of O. Carruba: Das Beschwörungsritual für die Göttin Wisurijanza (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966)," JCS 22 (1969):117.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; Haas points out that "sie steht der schrecklichen, in Babylonien und Syrien, ya selbst in Kleinasien gefürchteten Dämonin Lamastu nahe" (HBHS, p. 108). That Lamashtu was well known in Syria is evident from the Arslan-Tash inscription which mentions her.

<sup>4</sup>Haas, HBHS, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>G. M. Beckmann, Hittite Birth Rituals. An Introduction (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1978).

monuments. Especially common are representations of winged forms which appear to be related to the gods as mythical beasts that form part of their escort.

A very common representation was the griffin, which was a sort of mixed bird creature. Figs. 184 and 185 portray griffin demons that were found at Sakjgozu.<sup>1</sup> They are very similar in form. One appears to have six wings, however, and the other only four. Fig. 186 is a griffin from a relief found at Ankara.<sup>2</sup> In this the griffin has a lion's body and possibly the tail of a snake. In addition, its breast appears to be that of a snake. Fig. 188 also depicts a griffin found at Carchemish<sup>3</sup> and is represented with both hands lifted up.

Fig. 189 depicts a mountain god flanked by two demon griffins. It is taken from a bas-relief in the sixteenth-century Hittite temple at Ayin Dara.<sup>4</sup> The griffins are depicted as having wings on the back and also on the feet. This may be in accordance with the references in the mythical texts in which the gods urge their messengers

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<sup>1</sup>E. Akurgal, Späthethitische Bildkunst (Ankara: Archaeologisches Institut der Universität Ankara, 1949), pls. XLIVa, XLIVb, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pl. XLIXa.

<sup>3</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, fig. III.

<sup>4</sup>Robert du Mesnil du Bouissson, Nouvelles études sur les dieux et les mythes de Canaan (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 6, fig. 4.

to put wings on their feet whenever they were charged to convey divine messages.<sup>1</sup>

In making a textual-iconographic arrangement of some Hittite deities and some of their composite mythical creatures, Brandenstein<sup>2</sup> has noticed that the winged aspect of the gods was a fixed pattern not only for Hittites but all over the ANE, especially in Assyria.<sup>3</sup> In this connection he notes some of the texts that describe deities in which they are characterized as mixed beings.

One text refers to the auiti, a sort of "winged lion sphinx,"<sup>4</sup> which apparently formed part of the realm of the goddess Shaushga and her attendants Ninatta and Kulitta.<sup>5</sup> When we come to the sphinx, we are touching upon one of the most outstanding motifs within the Hittite iconography. From this corpus we can select only a few illustrations.

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 227-228.

<sup>2</sup>Carl George F. Brandenstein, Hethitische Götter nach Bildbeschreibungen in Keilschrifttexten (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1943), hereafter HGBK.

<sup>3</sup>Brandenstein, HGBK, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup>H. Eneholf, although not identifying auiti as a kind of sphinx, indicates the term as a name of an animal ("Kleine Beiträge: 2. Zu Amarna KNUDTZON Nr. 29, 184 und 41, 39 ff," ZA 45 [1939]:72).

<sup>5</sup>a-ú-i-ti-iš KÙ.BABBAR GAR.RA GAR-ri a-ú-i-ti-ja-aš-ma-kán [p]át-ta-na-aš ZA[G-za GÜB-za] <sup>D</sup>Ni-na-at-ta-aš <sup>D</sup>Ku-li-it-ta-aš. "liegt ein Löwensphinx silberbelegt; von den Flügeln des Löwensphinx aber rechts [(und) links] steht Ninatta (und) Kulitta" (HGBK, p.5, 1:12-14).

The Hittite sphinx is textually described as a flying animal with visible teeth and an exceptional breast.<sup>1</sup> Iconographically it is portrayed with a diversity of mixed features. Not infrequently it appears as a hybrid creature of massive proportions with fierce countenance. Sphinxes were often placed at a gateway or in some other prominent place of a city. Lion-demons were regarded with special importance as apotropaic devices to guard the entrances of shrines, cities, or other important places. The winged lion-demons (Fig. 187) of the sanctuary of Yazilikaya,<sup>2</sup> the Sphinx Gate of Halaça Hüyük,<sup>3</sup> those of Yerkapi (Fig. 191),<sup>4</sup> the lion gate of Boghazköy,<sup>5</sup> the gates of the citadel of Sinjirli<sup>6</sup>, the entrances of Carchemish,<sup>7</sup> and many others provide examples of this concept.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1 I:22-26. Brandenstein shows preference for the name of "flying lion" (HGBK, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, p.87; ACRT, pp. 316-317, fig. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Riemschneider, WeHe, p. 238, pl. 9; Th. Macridy Bey, "La porte des sphinx à Euyuk. Fouilles du Musée Impérial Ottoman," MVAG 13 (1908):3-4, figs. 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, fig. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Apart from the Lion Gate of Hattusas, in the right outer jamb of the Royal Gate was portrayed the figure of a warrior-god in martial dress. He was represented with brandishing axe and girded sword, guarding the entrance of the city. E. Akurgal, Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey from Prehistoric Times until the End of the Roman Empire (Istanbul: Haset Kitabevi, 1973), pp. 290-291, fig. 122 a, b.

<sup>6</sup>Frankfort, AAAO, pp. 169-171.

<sup>7</sup>Woolley and Lawrence, Carchemish, vols. I-III.

Fig. 190 portrays the twin sphinxes of Sinjirli,<sup>1</sup> which were part of the base of a statue from Sam'al.<sup>2</sup> It was not just entrances that were provided with figures of the Hittite demons; also a diversity of reliefs and orthostats were discovered within the cities already mentioned. The sphinx of Fig. 192 is from an orthostat found at Carchemish.<sup>3</sup> Notable in this case is the double head of the monster (see also Fig. 31). One head is that of a woman with a horned cap while the other is the head of a lion. The four demons of Fig. 194 have been taken from an orthostat discovered at Carchemish.<sup>4</sup> Two bull-men stand in vigilant attitude each holding a spear. Both are flanked by lion-headed demons. One raises up his hand wielding a mace in a menacing attitude, similar to the Assyrian lion demons (Fig. 111). A lion-demon is depicted in Fig. 196 which is taken from an orthostat found at Sinjirli.<sup>5</sup> The demon carries a long sword and with his right hand wields a

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<sup>1</sup>Akurgal, KuHe, fig. 125; Beek, Atlas of Mesopotamia, p. 107, fig. 205.

<sup>2</sup>Similar creatures were also discovered at Sakje-genzi. The twin winged sphinxes were also carved as pedestal for a column. See J. Garstang, "Excavations at Sakje-genzi, in North Syria: Preliminary Report for 1908," AAA 1 (1908):109, pl. xlii, figs. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>D. G. Hogarth, Carchemish, 1:pl. B. 14a.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pl. B.14. I:10.

<sup>5</sup>Albrecht Goetze, Hethiter, Churriter und Assyrer (Oslo: H. Aschehough, 1936), pl. 48.

menacing mace. With his left hand he holds a victim. Two birds stand, one on each shoulder.<sup>1</sup>

The Eblaite version<sup>2</sup> of the sphinx is portrayed in Fig. 195. This is taken from a mythological scene from a cult relief discovered at Ebla.<sup>3</sup> The monster has a leonine head and wears a horned helmet. It is also winged and appears to be standing on enormous claws. The body is replete with protruding balls or scales that look most like those of a rhinoceros. The tail seems serpentine or that of a scorpion. From its mouth and tail fall streams of venom, or perhaps fire.

From an ivory found at Megiddo,<sup>4</sup> it is possible to derive a picture of the variegated image of the Hittite

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<sup>1</sup>This Hittite bas-relief has been interpreted as a representation of the Canaanite god Ashtar who is known as having a lion head. Here Ashtar would be holding the antelope of the night at the end of the night, while the two doves on his shoulders are the representatives of Ashtar who confers on this god the authority to rule over the heavens. See du Mesnil du Buisson, Nouvelles études sur les dieux et les mythes de Canaan, p. 247, fig. 131. The same Ashtar also has been identified as a winged sphinx represented in a bowl found at Ras Shamra, which is thought to be a primitive conception of this deity (idem, "Le mythe oriental des dieux géants du jour et de la nuit," IrAnt 8 [1968]:1-33).

<sup>2</sup>Or better, the ancient Syrian version of it. Paolo Matthiae, "Le sculpture in pietra," in Missione archeologica Italiana in Siria, Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1965 [Tell Mardikh], ed. Giorgio Castellino, et al. (Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1966), pl. XLVIII (hereafter MAIS); cf. Metzger, KTGT, Tf. 125, Ab. 1334.

<sup>3</sup>p. Matthiae, MAIS II, 1966, pl. XLVII; Horst Klengel, The Art of Ancient Syria (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1972), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Frankfort, AAAO, p. 131.



demons (Fig. 193) in the fourteenth century B.C. when the Hittites ruled Syria during the reign of Suppiluliumas.<sup>1</sup> The figures are arranged in four rows. All of them are represented with lifted arms, and some of them are kneeling as they acrobatically support the row above. There are no less than seven different demonic entities represented here and they include two-headed demons, bull-men (Fig. 194), two-headed sphinxes (Fig. 192) and one-headed sphinxes (Figs. 190 and 191), mountain gods, (Figs. 22, 24, 27, 189) and griffin men (Figs. 184, 185, 188, 189). Other figures are depicted as plainly anthropomorphic and undoubtedly they could be taken as lesser deities in this category, but they are not identifiable. In addition to those which are plainly represented as clearly winged, there are some from which a less conspicuous wing seems to be protruding.

The Hittite textual and iconographical evidence examined presents with clarity the concept that the inhabitants of Hatti had regarding the demonic deities. The variation of forms was expressed, especially in some of the representations found at Carchemish and other Hittite cities. Notable are the winged deities as well as the leonine sphinxes that were considered as guardian spirits. These are similar to the Mesopotamian shedu and lamassu.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

## The Canaanite Demons

As was the situation with the Hittites, so also were the Canaanite deities mainly of Mesopotamian inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The picture is similar with the demonic deities. The Canaanites used conjurations--the same form and character--of Mesopotamian origin to exorcise demons.

Here we may refer again to the shedu demon deities that also appear in Ugaritic texts.<sup>2</sup> The fact that they appear in parallel with both evil and beneficent demon entities may indicate that, like Mesopotamians, the Canaanites had a double category of shedim demons, good and evil.<sup>3</sup>

Nougayrol published some texts unearthed at Ugarit that deal with incantations against evil demons such as Lamashtu.<sup>4</sup> These appear to present a definite Mesopotamian

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<sup>1</sup>Wright, *EmHi*, pp. 73-74. Against this view are R. Dussaud, who sees the Canaanite pantheon entirely independent of that of Mesopotamia (*RB* 46 [1937]:554), and R. Largeton, who sees only a slightly religious Mesopotamian influence at Ugarit (Maurice Brillant and René Aigrain, eds., *Histoire des Religions* [Paris: Blot et Gay, 1953], 4: 198). Following them Mitchell J. Dahood concludes that "the inhabitants of Syria-Palestine had a pantheon that was quite distinct from that of" the Mesopotamian region ("Ancient Semitic Deities in Syria and Palestine," in *La Antiche Divinità Semitiche*, ed. Sabatino Moscati [Rome: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1958], p. 93).

<sup>2</sup>De Moor, *UF* 12:430-432.

<sup>3</sup>De Moor, *JEOL* 27:119.

<sup>4</sup>"La Lamashtu à Ugarit," *Ug* 6:393-408.

influence on Canaan in demonic matters. Albright<sup>1</sup> and, more recently, Avishur<sup>2</sup> have pointed out the similarities that Phoenician and Ugaritic incantations against "evil spirits" have with Babylonian incantations.<sup>3</sup> In the same way de Moor indicates that the peoples of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age made use "of Babylonian incantations to ward off the nefarious influence of evil demons."<sup>4</sup> He also indicates that the copies of spells against the Babylonian demon *Lamashtu* that have been discovered at Byblos and Ugarit are quite indicative of the strong influence that the land of the Two Rivers had upon the Canaanite region.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W. F. Albright, "An Aramean Magical Text in Hebrew from the Seventh Century B.C.," BASOR 76 (1939):10-11.

<sup>2</sup>Y. Avishur, "The Second Amulet Incantation from Arslan-Tash," UF 10 (1978):29-36; idem, "The Ghost-Expelling Incantation from Ugarit," UF (1981):13-25. See also Ziony Zevit, "A Phoenician Inscription and Biblical Covenant Theology," IEJ 27 (1977):110-124.

<sup>3</sup>From incantation texts it seems clear that Ugaritians feared the same evil spirits so familiar to Mesopotamians (*ibid.*, p. 14). Avishur mentions that Canaanite incantation texts are similar to the Babylonian incantations of the *utukku limnutu* kind (see also Ebeling, "Zwei Tafeln de serie *utukku limnutu*," AfO 16 [1952-53]: 295-304; E. E. Knudsen, "Two Nimrud Incantations of the *utukku* Type," Iraq 27 [1965]:160-170), and also close to the Akkadian incantations of the *maklu* type (see Ebeling, Maqlu) in three main aspects: their subject matter, the expelling of evil spirits, and the means used to conjure them (p. 14).

<sup>4</sup>De Moor, "Demons in Canaan," JEOL 27 (1981-82):107.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

A damaged text--KTU 1.82--refers to Canaanite demons.<sup>1</sup> De Moor and Spronk, who have recently commented on the text,<sup>2</sup> point out that demonic elements are involved in the text, and they indicate that the Ugaritians also feared that men would become bound by the demons and the spirits of their parents, just as the Babylonians expressed this idea in their incantation texts.<sup>3</sup>

Demons were also thought of as a legionary multitude.<sup>4</sup> They had their own assembly.<sup>5</sup> Besides this, they were always thirsty, they loved the dark hours of the night,<sup>6</sup> they spread venom, they treated their victims viciously, and they could cause madness.

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<sup>1</sup>Virolleaud, PRU 2, no. 1. There is a discrepancy among scholars about the category and the content of this text. Virolleaud was of the opinion that this text is part of a dialog between Baal and Anat concerning the victory over Tannin. However, de Moor sees the text as "a fragment of mythological or magical text in which Ba'alu seems to play some part" (see The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'alu [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971], p. 6). Albright preferred to see the text merely as liturgical with some possible incantatory elements in it (see "Specimens of Late Ugaritic Prose," BASOR 150 [1958]: 36, n. 5).

<sup>2</sup>Johannes C. de Moor and Klaas Spronk, "More Demons in Ugarit (KTU 1.82)," UF 16 (1984):237-250.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 242; CAD 3:397-399.

<sup>4</sup>De Moor and Spronk, "More demons," p. 246.

<sup>5</sup>Von Soden, AHB 2:876, puhru A.2.

<sup>6</sup>H. Torczyner, "A Hebrew Incantation against Night-Demons from Biblical Times," JNES 6 (1947):18-29.

As the demons were considered as being bn htt-- "sons of disease,"<sup>1</sup> they were bnt s's--"creatures of agitation," and bnt hrp, "creatures of insanity."<sup>2</sup> Thus, they were responsible for the diseases of men. As for their form, it was believed that they resembled serpents, both male and female,<sup>3</sup> and that they also appeared in the form of monstrous flies that caused madness. It is in the Ugaritic tradition that "the demoniacal forces causing the madness were described as 'flies'"<sup>4</sup> or monstrous flies.<sup>5</sup>

Some other notable Canaanite demonic gods were Reshep, Horonu,<sup>6</sup> and Leviathan. The god Reshep,<sup>7</sup> who

<sup>1</sup>De Moor and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 245.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>3</sup>T. Canaan, Dämonenglaube im Lande der Bibel (Leipzig: C. H. Hinrich, 1929), pp. 13-15. Canaan points out that even present-day Palestinians believe that demons still take the form of serpents. Cf. de Moor and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 238.

<sup>4</sup>Ug. dbbm, or the older form dbbm (de Moor, "Demons in Canaan," JEOL 27 (1981-1982):115.

<sup>5</sup>de Moor, "An Incantation Against Evil Spirits (Ras Ibn Hani 78/90)," 12 UF (1980):330.

<sup>6</sup>Incantation texts mention Horon as being also a demon-expeller. Avishur, "The Ghost-Expelling," p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>In a recent study on Resheph, Yadin indicates that this demon stands as "one of the most enigmatic deities of the Canaanite pantheon." in "New Gleanings on Resheph from Ugarit," Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry, ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), p. 259. He also points out that on the basis of archaeological finds it is possible "to assume that Resheph, too, was one of those Canaanite deities absorbed by the Philistines." Ibid., p. 270.

according the Ugaritic tradition also was the door-keeper of the Shapash,<sup>1</sup> was the god who slayed "men in mass by war or plague,"<sup>2</sup> and accordingly was constantly occupied with shooting deadly arrows of disease into men.<sup>3</sup> The god Leviathan was a dreaded serpent demon.<sup>4</sup> The god Horonu was the master of the demons<sup>5</sup> who had under his service the bnt demons<sup>6</sup> and the llm night demons.<sup>7</sup>

Ugaritic tradition also presents the major gods of its pantheon as binders of the demons. Baal appears as the

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<sup>1</sup>This, according to an Ugaritic astrological text. See Virolleaud, PRU II:189-190, no. 162.

<sup>2</sup>J. Gray, "Canaanite Religion and Old Testament Study in the Light of New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra," Ug 7 (1978):91.

<sup>3</sup>De Moor and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 239. For a detailed study of the god Reshep in Egyptian as well as Semitic sources, see William J. Fulco, The Canaanite God Resep (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1976).

<sup>4</sup>Some Aramaic Incantations call this demon "leviathan the Tanninim." See C. D. Isbell, Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1975), nos. 2:4; 7:7, 9.

<sup>5</sup>De Moor and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 243. Albright, marking Syro-Egyptian relationships, sees in Horon a rival of Baal. "The Canaanite God Hauran (Horon)," AJSL 53 (1936):10-12.

<sup>6</sup>Although bnt (and bn) can be also plural forms in the construct state of bt "daughter" (and bn "son,") it can also be translated according to its Akkadian cognate binitu, which is also used to indicate demons. De Moore and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 239.

<sup>7</sup>KTU 1.82.

most outstanding of the gods in fighting the evil demons.<sup>1</sup> This concept is expressed explicitly by Mot in the text that describes the victory of Baal over Tannin.<sup>2</sup> The text not only mentions that Mot--the god of death--recognizes this victory<sup>3</sup> but also direct appeals are expressed in the text to Baal urging him to overpower Tannin.<sup>4</sup> Besides this ability, it is also clear in other references that he is able to stop the deadly arrows that Reshep shoots at mankind.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand some goddesses were also acknowledged as subjugators of demons. As consort of Baal, Anat naturally was united with him in his fight against demons.

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<sup>1</sup>De Moore and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 239. In Ugaritic tradition, Baal takes the position of a champion demon-fighter, as does Marduk in Mesopotamian tradition.

<sup>2</sup>The text says mhas b<sup>e</sup>l (e<sup>1</sup>)y tnn, "Aliyan Baal strikes the Tannin" (P. J. van Zijl, "Translation and Discussion of Text 1001:1-2 (RS 15.134:1-2)," JNSL 2 (1972):75.

<sup>3</sup>In KTU 1.5 I, 2 Mot says k . . . tkly.b<sup>e</sup>tn.e<sup>1</sup>qltn, "Although you (Baal) . . . destroyed the winding serpent."

<sup>4</sup>Some lines of KTU 1:81 intended as an incantation for a handicapped girl say, [y]m hs.b<sup>e</sup>l[.lb]t y.tnn. "May Baal smite Tannin [for] my d[aug]hter" (see de Moore and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 238).

<sup>5</sup>The deadly arrows of Reshep were the plagues and diseases that this demon god sent to mankind. See A. van den Branden, Biblica et Orientalia 13 (1971): 211ff; P. J. van Zijl, "Translation and Discussion of Text 101:3-5a (RS 15.134:3-5a)," JNSL 3 (1974): 85ff.

The goddess Shapsu by her side "was able to drive away the forces of evil by her light and warmth."<sup>1</sup>

Paradoxically in the Ugaritic texts, it is the champion demon-fighter god who becomes touched with mortal maladies inflicted by the demons.<sup>2</sup> According to the myth of "Baal and the devourers,"<sup>3</sup> this god is attacked by the *aklm* demons--the devourers--<sup>4</sup> as soon as he ventures into enter in their territory. The demons, who are also called 'aqqm, the voracious ones<sup>5</sup>--described as humped and horned creatures and desert dwellers<sup>6</sup>--, overthrow Baal, leaving him helpless in the swamps.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, the text where

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<sup>1</sup>De More and Spronk, "More Demons," p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>A fragmented myth describes an attack of demons fathered by El against Baal. The myth was first published by Virolleaud, "Les chases de Baal: Poème de Ras Shamra," *Sv* 16 (1935):247-266. Since then the myth has been treated many times, among them: Dussaud, "Le vrai nom de Baal," *RHR* 113 (1936):5-20; Gaster, *AcOr* 16 (1937); John Gray, "The Hunting of Ba'al: Fratricide and Atonement in the Mythology of Ras Shamra," *JNES* 10 (1951):146-155.

<sup>3</sup>There is no consensus in the naming of this myth. It is Kapelrud who designates it as "Baal and the Devourers." *Ug* 6, pp. 319-332. The myth tells that while Baal is hunting in the desert, he is lured by ox-like demons to a place where he is overcome by "devourers." Pedersen, "Canaanite and Israelite Cultus," pp. 6-6; T. Gaster, "The Harrowing of Baal. A Poem from Ras Shamra," *AcOr* 16 (1937): 41.

<sup>4</sup>Kapelrud, *Ug* 6, p. 323.

<sup>5</sup>Or "gluttons"; also "destrozadores," in del Olmo's concept. *MLC*, p. 604.

<sup>6</sup>Kapelrud, *Ug* 6:322-323.

<sup>7</sup>Gray, *JNES* 10:153.



this is mentioned is broken and the whole sequence of the narration is interrupted. The remaining sections, however, describe the attack of the voracious demons upon Baal and his defeat by them.<sup>1</sup>

The appearance of the Canaanite demons is clearly represented on the Phoenician amulets discovered at Arslan Tash.<sup>2</sup> One amulet describes a female demon not only textually but also graphically. She is named the "Flying one" and is represented as a winged creature that has a woman's face and horns (Fig. 197). The amulet also mentions a "strangling" demon and it is represented as a she-wolf with a scorpion tail (Fig. 197). As appears in the picture, this demon was known as a man-devouring destroyer. From the size of the victim it can also be inferred that she preferred children as her victims.<sup>3</sup>

Another amulet (Fig. 199) which comes from Arslan Tash presents the image of a hideous man-eating demon of divine status.<sup>4</sup> The demon is portrayed with anthropomorphic characteristics, most notable of which are its large

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<sup>1</sup>The myth mentions burning as the end for the attacking demons and for the attacked Baal. As a result, a period of seven years of drought ensues.

<sup>2</sup>Dupont-Sommer, RHR 120 (1939):133-159; William F. Albright, "An Aramean Magical Text in Hebrew From the Seventh Century B.C.," BASOR 76 (1939):5-11; Zevit, "A Phoenician Inscription," pp. 110-124.

<sup>3</sup>De Moor, JEOL 27, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup>A. Caquot-R. de Mesnil du Buisson, Syr 48 (1971): 391; Gaster, BASOR 209 (1973):18.

bulging eyes and big, rounded nose. These facial monstrosities have been noted as characteristic features of other Phoenician demonic characters,<sup>1</sup> such as those portrayed in Figs. 201 and 202. The lower members of this demon end in the form of scorpions.<sup>2</sup> These arachnid characteristics are also attested for some Akkadian demons (Fig. 200), which are portrayed with the upper members ending in scorpions and the lower members ending in the form of serpents.<sup>3</sup> The demon of Fig. 199 like the demon of Fig. 197 also appears to be devouring a human victim. The text on the amulet names him as "Blood-sucker," "Big-eye," and "murderous god."<sup>4</sup> Besides this the same text implies that this evil entity especially attacked eyesight.<sup>5</sup> It may

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<sup>1</sup>Cullican, JNES 35 (1976):21.

<sup>2</sup>Y. Avishur, "The Second Amulet Incantation," pp. 29-30.

<sup>3</sup>A. Caquot and R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "La seconde tablette ou 'petite amulette' d'Arslan-Tash," Syr 48 (1971):395, fig. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Commenting on this amulet, Cross suggests that two different demonic entities are mentioned here. He translates the incantations as follows: "O 'Blood-splatterer,' the lord who readies his chariot (for battle). And 'Big-Eye' with him, the god 'Spoiler': Go away, you who are from the steppe. And 'Bug-Eye' from the steppe. Woe, O divine 'Spoiler,' O holy one" ("Leaves from an Epigraphist's Notebook," CBO 36 (1974):486-487). On the other hand, it is possible that this amulet, like the other already mentioned, also presents an incantation against two demons, showing perhaps a demon tendency of acting by pairs, as is the case with the messenger gods.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 490.

even have had the capacity to strike with blindness. It is also described as a desert dweller.

Another demon god with mainly anthropomorphic features was Sasam.<sup>1</sup> He is described as a winged creature, but with the power of assuming the form of a diminutive insect. This enabled him to introduce himself through any possible crack around doors or in walls in any house.

Fig. 198 depicts a relief found in Syria and published by Moortgat.<sup>2</sup> This gives us an idea of the conception of the demons that the Canaanites had.<sup>3</sup> The demon is represented as a horned, four-winged entity. He wields a short mace with his right hand and grasps a sort of scepter with the left.

In the same way, a cylinder seal found at Tell el-<sup>4</sup>Ajjul (Fig. 203) represents a demon releasing his victim

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<sup>1</sup>Albright, "Aramean Magical Text," p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Moortgat, Bildende Kunst, pl. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ann Farkass points out that winged spirits--genies--are to be found represented in all the ANE area from Iran westward to the Mediterranean. Achaemenid Sculpture (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1974), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Flinders Petrie, Ancient Gaza, vol. IV [Tell el Ajjul] (London: 1933), pl. 12.1; Jean Nougayrol, Cylindres-Sceaux et empreintes des cylindres trouvés en Palestine au cours de fouilles régulières (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), pl. 9.

at the command of the god who comes to liberate the oppressed victim.<sup>1</sup> The demon is portrayed anthropomorphically, with the addition of a long tail, wings, and horns. The god performs his liberating task accompanied by his sacred animals.

Fig. 204 is taken from a carved bone handle found at Hazor and dated to the end of the tenth or to the ninth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> It shows an anthropomorphic female deity with four wings.<sup>3</sup> She is standing and grabbing two extended branches. One assumes that this may be the representation of a good spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The Canaanite concept of good and evil is reflected in the Ugaritic texts where they are related especially with healing activities.<sup>5</sup> To this kind of deity belongs

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<sup>1</sup>Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>Yigael Yadin, Hazor I. An Account of the First Season of Excavations, 1955 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960), pls. CL, CLI.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Similar four-winged genies are also known in seals and ivories found in other parts of Palestine. See Raphael Giveon, "Two New Hebrew Seals and Their Iconographical Background," PEQ 93 (1961):38-42, pl. III, IV; Ruth Hestrin and Michal Dayagi-Mendels, Inscribed Seals: First Temple Period; Hebrew, Ammonite, Moabite, Phoenician and Aramaic (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1979), pp. 47, 126, 168, nos. 47, 99, 131.

<sup>5</sup>De Moor, JEOL 27, p. 116.

Sha'tiqu, the healer of Keret.<sup>1</sup> De Moor points out that the passages dealing with this demon strongly imply she was able to fly in order to counteract her evil congeners efficaciously.<sup>2</sup>

It is also de Moor who sees the *rp'um* as "healers, saviours" that belong to this category of benevolent demons.<sup>3</sup> As such, they were esteemed as the benefactors of the country and they were the infallible netherworld guests during the Ugaritic spiritistic rituals.<sup>4</sup> It is textually attested<sup>5</sup> that these spirits were invoked in order to attempt to see again the loved ones who were dead. Similarly, it was believed that they came driving their chariots or flying. In this way, it can also be inferred that the *rp'um* were known as having some bird-like features, or at least that they "were feathered creatures."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes C. De Moor, "Contributions to the Ugaritic Lexicon," *UF* 11 (1979):646-647.

<sup>2</sup>De Moor, *JEOL* 27, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>The Phoenician name for them is *rp'm*. It seems that throughout Canaan this term was used to designate the spirits of the dead kings and heroes. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*KTU* 1.161 contains the invocation to these spirits urging them to assist in the feasting. Along with the conjuration they are praised as saviors of the country. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*KTU* 1.20-22.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

Summing up the matters regarding the demoniac gods, it can be said that the different pantheons of the ANE differentiated their demons. Although they did not have a systematic way of categorizing them, it is obvious that their references to them according to the descriptions given in myths, incantations, and other related religious texts do present us with certain differentiations.

Many ways were used to tell them apart from the rest of the gods. Although they have divine character and power, they appear mainly as evildoers and god fighters.

Their appearance, also, apart from the splendor, is depicted as a hybrid with the most varied combinations of human and animal aspects. Sometimes they are depicted as hideous with the most frightening appearance conceivable.

In the same way they are closely related to the realm of the dead, and their preferred abode is the darkness and desert places. They usually are inhabitants of the nether world. The incantations show their preference for the softness of speech for those who are supposed to communicate with them.

They appear especially concerned with anti-god behavior, and even though the conjuration texts indicate that the gods overcome them, it is evident that the demons are delighted to carry out actions against the gods.

Their number is tremendous and they also have their own council. A notable point is the inferior status to

which they are relegated after their defeat or fallen situation.

#### Summary and Evaluation

The sources examined in this chapter provided sufficient material that reveals the intricate awareness that ANE ancient man had regarding heavenly beings. The conspicuousness of this awareness has been expressed not only in the extensive written sources but also in the massive iconographic material unearthed elsewhere within the boundaries of the Fertile Crescent. Each examined motif in connection with heavenly beings reveals some common traditions as well as some outstanding peculiarities within the ANE environment.

Basic to the concept of a heavenly population is the assembly-of-the-gods motif. Under this idea the whole pantheon--invariably including the totality of gods and goddesses--was taken into consideration. From this basic concept, however, a diversity of motifs has emerged, providing with distinctiveness a picture of the celestial ANE population.

In all cases, every ANE divine council is polytheistic. Within them, however, some gods were naturally more influential than others, and the influential deities led the assembly but without absolute authority. They were subject to decisions reached by the whole assembly.

However, accessibility to this assembly was not limited to those gods who were considered as major, but also to the lesser ones. Repeatedly the textual evidence indicates that within that very assembly the minor gods were in every instance joined in service to some major deity, serving as part of a divine selected coterie, in a diversity of functions and offices.

The Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Canaanite myths show this hierarchical arrangement of the divine assembly as well as in iconographic representations. The ANE artist managed to represent not only separate episodes in the divine assembly, but in a clear sense the assembly itself.

The most outstanding of them unquestionably is the Hittite representation that was engraved at the open-air sanctuary of Yazilikaya (Figs. 21-26). In the same way, the Hittites, who evidently loved to represent assembled gods, produced many scenes in which assembled gods are depicted, undoubtedly expressing either some divine victory or some festive occasion in which they united together to enjoy the sacrifices presented to honor them (Figs. 11-16, 29).

On the Mesopotamian side, the bas-reliefs of Maltaya (Fig. 3) depict an assembly of seven principal deities, but their coterie is totally missing. The glyptic art, however, also depicts some scenes of the gods assem-



bled to perform some of their affairs mentioned in the mythic literature (Figs. 1-7).

Surprisingly, the Mesopotamian divine assembly connects us with a diversity of divine minorities which are constantly mentioned in a corporate form. From those, the Ig and the An gods by far stand out, and their participation is constantly recalled in the heavenly assembly. Their behavior before the leading gods is also described, along with their ascribed characteristics and powers. This gives us a fair picture of how they were considered. They appear as the conveners of the divine assembly, and during the meetings they appear as listening attentively to the words of the leading gods, to whom they give obeisance with great devotion. Many times they are described as kneeling and trembling, or kissing the ground and prostrating themselves before the chief god. They also appear extolling the name of those gods, and they exult with joy as they express their adoration and fidelity to the supreme god within the divine assembly.

In addition to these prominent functions of praise it is also clear that they carried out an intercessory duty within the assembly on behalf of the worshipers who sought the favor of the great gods. In a similar way, the Ig and the An gods were considered as divine warriors who fought efficaciously against the dreadful demons.

Other pantheons also refer to the existence of some other groups of deities, but their references are not as varied or as detailed as those in Mesopotamian sources. Such is the case of the Ugaritic pantheon in which the *raphaim* are frequently mentioned. Some of the depicted activities of these lesser Ugaritic deities have been suggested as parallels to those of the Ig and An gods of Mesopotamia.

The divine assembly also connects us with the sons-of-the-gods motif. Through the texts it becomes evident that the gods that constitute the the divine council are at the same time the sons of the leading gods. It is also notable that these sons are constantly warring against their divine fathers and their brother gods. They fight to the death in order to get the kingship or the leadership of the divine assembly.

This divine warfare, however, reveals another aspect of the usual occupations that constantly seem to demand the attention of the ANE heavenly beings. The Mesopotamian myths as well as those of the Hittites and Canaanites detail the divine wars in which some major god leads his divine hosts against another divine army. It also narrates the results of the conflict and consequently exalts the victor god over the whole divine assembly and relates the inevitable destruction of the vanquished god together with his defeated hosts.

The iconography is full of images in which this divine rivalry is represented. Warrior gods fighting (Figs. 45, 48, 55) or killing each other (Figs. 46, 49-53, 55) is a constant motif in ANE art. Sometimes these scenes can be clearly connected with some known myth, while at other times the represented mythical episode has been only guessed or still remains undeciphered. An episode that seems constantly represented is the defeat of Tiamat (Figs. 32-36, 63). This undoubtedly echoes the mythical accounts of the En-el myth, perhaps known in every corner of the ANE. At other times the warrior deities are represented only as warriors--usually presenting them in contemporary human attire but adding to it some standardized divine features such as horns, wings, and a radiancy--to give an idea of their full majesty (Figs. 35-38).

Contemporary weaponry--such as spears, maces, daggers, bows and arrows, swords, and chariotry--was also part of their represented warrior array (Figs. 2, 6, 9, 14, 17, 19, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35-38, 40, 41, 43, 45-57, 58-63, 76-78, 82, 85-86, 89, 111, 160, 168, 194, 196), without excluding thunderbolts (Figs. 2, 78, 89, 144).

Another common motif captured from literary-graphic sources is the protector deity. The glyptic evidence is enormous. According to that, the worshiper is represented being led by the hand by his personal god(dess) before the main god or goddess who appears as enthroned

(Figs. 64-71, 74-75, 81, 90) or standing in majesty (Figs. 73, 79-80,). The scenes vary from common worship (Figs. 65-67, 68-70, 74-75, 79, 81), or libations (Fig. 68) and animal offerings (Figs. 73, 80), to the most solemn of judgment (Fig. 71). If the individual is not led by hand, he usually is escorted by the personal deity, who remains closer to him with raised hands undoubtedly as a guarantee of divine intercession before the most high god.

The awareness of a protection given by these lesser gods is also reflected particularly in the correspondence that ANE people maintained among themselves. The letters--by officials and private individuals--contain explicit expressions that convey the confidence that people put in their gods for protection.

As a part of their divine coterie, the great gods had messengers. These divine messengers were an indisputable link of communication between the gods. They were gods or goddesses that acted promptly to communicate the messages of their masters or the decisions of the divine assembly. Occasionally some major god or goddess acted also as messenger for another highly ranked god; however, this was apparently only in exceptional cases. The very subordinate nature of the messenger's functions required that these deities belong to lower divine ranks. As in the earthly level, the divine messengers also were charged with a diversity of functions related to this task. By no means

were they restricted in their activities only to conveying messages.

Apart from the common anthropological features ascribed to these deities (Figs. 64-71, 73-76, 79-81), they are also represented as being winged (Figs. 72, 77) and wearing horned caps (Figs. 64-71, 73-77, 79-81), which invariably put them within the divine rank.

Another dominant written-graphic motif within ANE sources presenting non-earthly beings are the demonic deities. Although sometimes it is possible to distinguish them from the gods, it is universally recognized that their evil behavior and hybrid resemblance identifies them properly as demons. It was thought that the more hybrid form they had, the more powerful they were. Even so, however, some of these demonic entities were also conceived as being good. Consequently, some of them resembled the evil ones, since they were thought in this way to be able to counteract the powers of the evil ones. In this way, protection against demons was also believed to be obtained from demons which were fashioned in the form of amulets, cylinders, seals, and in a monumental way at the entrances of temples and palaces.

Our investigation indicates clearly that nowhere in the entire ANE was the concept of celestial beings ignored. All ancient peoples who inhabited the region of the Fertile

Crescent were quite familiar with the concept of entities belonging to heavenly realms.

As a result of this, there is a great variety of entities described as belonging to the divine realm. They are not only described or mentioned in the whole range of written materials but also appear graphically represented in every ancient ANE culture.

This ANE conception expressed in such a profuse and varied way motivates us to investigate another source of information in relation to the heavenly beings; the Old Testament. Our examination of this source follows in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HEAVENLY BEINGS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

This chapter is devoted to an examination of the references to heavenly beings as they occur in the context of specific passages in the Hebrew Bible. These references appear in various books of the Hebrew Scriptures. They are present through all of its three divisions--the Torah, the Nebi'im, and the Kethubim. Within it, however, we circumscribe the boundaries of our investigation up to Monarchical times. That is, we start with Genesis and go no further than the days of Daniel in the Babylonian exile.

For the division of the material we follow for the most part the same categories of motifs already utilized in the preceding chapter. This provides a rather direct comparison between the biblical and extrabiblical materials.

The principal tools in this chapter are: for text--Biblia Stuttgartensia;<sup>1</sup> for comparison--the Septuaginta<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1967-77).

<sup>2</sup>3rd ed., Alfred Rahlfs, ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949).

and Targum<sup>1</sup> or translated text in the available modern versions. These Bibles are used throughout and are explicitly indicated.

#### The Council of YHWH

The OT specifically attests to the existence of heavenly beings apart from YHWH. In expressing this conception, however, the OT purposely lays careful stress upon the great gulf between them and the Godhead. Basic to this concept is the assembly-of-YHWH motif. This gives us an avenue through which to learn something about the make-up of the heavenly council of YHWH itself.

The study of the council-of-YHWH motif in the OT is not new to biblical studies, and various treatments of it have been published.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the divine council, or the assembly of the gods, was a popular motif among the ANE cultures<sup>3</sup> has led some to conclude that the council of YHWH has been derived from this ANE motif. They see it only as an adaptation of the mythical pantheonic descriptions of the assemblies of the gods for the purpose of the

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<sup>1</sup>Paulus de Lagarde, ed., Hagiographa Chaldaice [Reproductio phototypice editionis, 1873] (Osnabruck: Otto Zeller, 1967).

<sup>2</sup>Among them, see H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," JTS 45 (1944):151-157; F. M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," JNES 12 (1953):274-277; E. Mullen, DCC, pp. 113-144.

<sup>3</sup>Mullen, pp. 113, 115. "The concept of the divine council must be taken as one which was common to the ancient Near East."



theologians of Israel, who managed to inject a monotheistic picture into this subject matter.<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew terms that are used to refer to the heavenly assembly vary. Among them are *sod* (Ps 89: 8), *'edah* (Ps 82:1), *qahal* (Ps 89:6), and *mo'ed* (Isa 14: 13). They are usually used in construct forms linked with God or with the beings that form the assembly of YHWH.

Looking at the term *sod*, one becomes aware of its etymological puzzle.<sup>2</sup> It can also be understood as counsel,<sup>3</sup> council,<sup>4</sup> and assembly.<sup>5</sup> The term stresses the meaning of a speech expressed as intelligent counsel,<sup>6</sup> given in a confidential conversation,<sup>7</sup> given as advice,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. G. Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and Their Interpretation," in Myth, Ritual, and Kingship, ed. S. H. Hooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 159-164. See also Ignaz Goldziher, Mythology among the Hebrews and Its Historical Development (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1967), pp. 1734, 259-289.

<sup>2</sup>Pointing out the etymological problem of this Hebrew noun, Saebo indicates that for the term, first, one has no possibility of deduction for it, and second, one has to choose between two forms as the possible roots of the noun *sod*. Either one derives it from *sud* (counsel), or connects it with *ysd* (close together). (M. Saebo, "sod sur Geheimnis," THAT 2:148). Winton Thomas has indicated that the noun can be also derivated from the Hebrew root *sdd*, which bears the meaning of "care" ("The Interpretation of *b<sup>e</sup>sôd* in Job 29:4," JBL 65 [1946]:63-66).

<sup>3</sup>R. D. Patterson, "sod," TWOT 2:1471a.

<sup>4</sup>LHAVT, p. 547.

<sup>5</sup>HCLLOT, p. 970.

<sup>6</sup>Patterson, TWOT, 2:1471a.

<sup>7</sup>CHALOT, p. 136.

or presented in a circle of confidants.<sup>1</sup> Fuerst derives the term from a root, *sud* "to sit,"<sup>2</sup> which is not used in BH. He points out that the term is used for "a sitting, for conversation or consultation, hence a circle, an assembly."<sup>3</sup> Also, it is used metaphorically for a "mutual consultation," or "a common plan," a "counsel, taken together and confidential."<sup>4</sup> This points out the nature of the assembly and its function. It is a meeting of persons assembled to take counsel or deliberate in council.<sup>5</sup>

The term *'edah* is derivated from the root *y'ed* to appoint, to gather,<sup>6</sup> or to bring together, to collect<sup>7</sup>--and it means "an appointed meeting, an assembly" or "congregation";<sup>8</sup> a "company" of individuals gathered around a prominent person,<sup>9</sup> or the council of God as it is

<sup>8</sup>Patterson, TWOT, 2:1471a.

<sup>1</sup>CHALOT, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Like *yasad*, to set, hence "to sit down for consultation" (HCLOT, p. 970).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>It is an "assembly sitting together, especially for consultation" (AHCL, p. 325).

<sup>6</sup>LVFL, p. 388.

<sup>7</sup>HCLOT, p. 582.

<sup>8</sup>HCLOT, pp. 607, 608.

<sup>9</sup>CHALOT, p. 265.

expressed in Ps 82:1.<sup>1</sup> This term stresses the connotation of the assembly around or under the leadership of someone.

The term qahal has been derived from qhl, the Nif. form of which means "to assemble."<sup>2</sup> Its Hif. signifies "to convoke,"<sup>3</sup> to "call together, summon."<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, qahal designates an assembly of people called into a convocation "of any sort and purpose" and also "especially with religious purposes."<sup>5</sup> This term also characterizes a "congregation as an organized body."<sup>6</sup>

Mo'ed is also derivated from y'd, and it designates "a meeting, and assembly."<sup>7</sup> This noun also underlines the connotation of reunion under some kind of leadership. It should be noted that all of the terms that convey the notion of assembly are by no means exclusively used to designate the council of YHWH. They also designate the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. Noticeably, in Qumranic literature 'edah appears with frequency "as a self-designation of the community" (Jack P. Lewis, s.v. "'eda," TWOT 1:878).

<sup>2</sup>HCLOT, pp. 1223-1224.

<sup>3</sup>HCLOT, pp. 12-24.

<sup>4</sup>LVTL, p. 829.

<sup>5</sup>Jack P. Lewis, "qahal," 2:1991.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. In this sense the expression qhl YHWH "the congregation of YHWH" (Num 16:3; 20:4; Deut 23:2-4; 1 Chr 28:8; Mic 2:5), gives the OT background for the phrase "the church of God" (see W. G. Wilson, "The Origin and the Meaning of the Christian Use of the Word ekklesia," JTS 49 [1948]:130-142).

<sup>7</sup>HALAT, 2:529

common reunion of Israelites, especially for religious assemblies--festive gatherings--and military gatherings.

Several OT passages deal quite directly with the council of YHWH. Among these, Job 1:6-7, 2:1-2; I Kgs 22:19-22, Isa 6:1-3; Dan 7:9-10, and many others found in the Psalter stand out. Each of them depicts the awesomeness of the reunion and the constituency of this assembly. Each one of these passages adds some additional detail, and taken all together they make it possible to grasp the biblical picture of the heavenly assembly.

The passage of Job that deals with the assembly of YHWH says:

wyhy hywm<sup>1</sup>  
wyt'w bny h'lhym<sup>2</sup>

However one day  
the sons of God came

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<sup>1</sup>The introductory phrase *wyhy hywn*, lit. "Then came a day," or "now it fell on a day," has long ago divided the opinion of its meaning in this passage. Some see that "the day" here indicates an appointed time (E. Dhorme, A Commentary on the Book of Job [New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984], p. 5; J. Vermeylen, Job, ses amis et son dieu [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986], p. 8; the RSV, the KJV, the AB); others do not see a fixed time, but "properly meaning on the particular day when it happened, i.e., 'on a certain day'" (E. Kautzsch, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980], sec. 126, rem. 4s, hereafter GHG; Paul Joüon, Grammaire de l'Hébreu Biblique [Rome: Institute Biblique Pontifical, 1947], sec. 126, rem. n; similarly L. Alfonso Schökel and J. L. Sicre Díaz, Job: Comentario teológico y literario [Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1983, pp. 95-96; NIV).

<sup>2</sup>*bny h'lhym*, lit. "the sons of God," and so it is translated in the RSV and the NJS. Long ago in the LXX and Targum (Hagiographa, p. 85) these entities in this passage had been identified with the angels; so the phrase has been translated: *oi angeloi* and *ml'ky'*, respectively. Hence, there is room for an appropriate reference to "angels" in this phrase and the following of 2:1, and in this way it is

lhtyšb<sup>1</sup> 'l-yhwh  
 wybw' gm-hštn<sup>2</sup>  
 btwkm<sup>3</sup>

to present themselves  
 before YHWH;  
 but Satan also came  
 with them.

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translated by the NIV; Schökel, Job, pp. 95-97, 107. The phrase bnv h'lhym, however, is translated in a variety of ways but always stressing the supernatural quality of them. So it is translated as "the sons of Elohim" by Dhorme (Job, pp. 5, 15) and Jean Steimann (Le livre de Job [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1955], pp. 82-83); as "the godly beings, divine creatures" by N. H. Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job. A New Commentary [Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967], p. 10); as "divine beings"--göttlichen Wesen--by Franz Hesse (Hiob [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1978], p. 26). Having in mind an Ugaritic mythological context, in the AB the expression is rendered as "the gods." The New Jewish Bible translates the term as "the divine beings." The GNB renders it as "the heavenly beings."

<sup>1</sup>lhtyšb, "to present themselves." The phrase is a Hithp. inf. const. of the verb yšb, "stand, put, place," (HCLOT, p. 593), which in the Hithp. is "to stand, set, or station oneself, present oneself" (see Paul R. Gilchrist, s.v. "yšb," TWOT, 1:894). These heavenly entities--i.e., angels--called here sons of God are mentioned here as coming to the presence of YHWH--that is, to the council of YHWH, as members of it.

<sup>2</sup>hštn, lit. "the adversary," or as the LXX renders it ο diabolos (the devil). The noun itself derives from the root štn, "to come in the way, oppose, treat with enmity." (F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Book of Job [Grand Rapids: Wm. E. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1949], 1:153). The verb itself appears six times in the OT, generally as a participle indicating "one who bears a grudge or cherishes animosity" (J. Barton Payne, s.v. "satan," TWOT 2:2252). It stresses mainly the action of obstruction and hateful opposition when a person works against another. The noun without the article has a general meaning--i.e., an adversary, an enemy, while with the article--i.e., the adversary, the enemy, it becomes a proper name expressing in essence the personal Satan (D. E. Hiebert, s.v. "satan," ZPEB, 5:282).

<sup>3</sup>The phrase btwkm, "among them," refers to Satan as being present on the occasion, but not being one of the bnv 'lhym, nor a member of the council of YHWH. Here the preposition be with twkm, "the middle, midst," gives us the form btwkm, "among, in the midst of" (AHCL, p. 751), and underlies the intruding character of Satan (see Francis I.

wy'mr yhwh 'l-hštn	So YHWH said to Satan,
m'yn tb'	Where have you come from?
wy <sup>e</sup> n hštn 't-yhwh	Satan answered YHWH,
wy'mr	and said
mšwt b'rš	from running over the earth
wmhthlk bh <sup>1</sup>	and going back and forth in it.

This passage introduces us at once not only to the council of YHWH itself but also to another spiritual realm. The heavenly realm is dominated by YHWH and the celestial sons of God,<sup>2</sup> and the earthly realm is also under the sovereignty of YHWH but has been spoiled by Satan, the adversary of YHWH.

Although many details about the assembly have to be

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Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary [London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976], p. 82). The Targum presents the intrusive presentation of Satan in a sharper way since it says "also Satan came separately in the midst of them" --w'thy lhwd štn' bmsy<sup>e</sup>hwn. Here the adv. lhwd, "singly, separately" (Jastrow, DTBYM, 2:702), indicates the coming of Satan as a separate entity, that is, the way he arrived at the assembly. Although he comes with them--bmsy<sup>e</sup>hwn, lit "in the midst of them" (from ms<sup>e</sup>, "middle," see DISO, p. 164), Satan is an intruder in this council. The way that the adversary came to the assembly point to this. Furthermore, this fact is stressed by his accusations against Job and his malevolent treatment of the patriarch of Uz.

<sup>1</sup>This is the answer of Satan, mswt b'rš, lit. "from roaming around in the earth" (verb sut, "roam around, rove around," CHALOT, p. 364), wmhthlk bh, lit. "and (being) wandering in it" (Hithp. of hlk, "to walk back and forth oneself" [HCLOT, p. 362], "walk around, wander," CHALOT, p. 80). Here the Hithpael emphasizes the continuity of the activity (Leonard J. Copens, s.v. "hlk," TWOT, 1:498). Satan himself underlines the nature of his activities. He goes to and fro throughout the earth to deceive and accuse, and whenever and wherever he has the opportunity, he mistreats the servants of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion on the "sons of God," see below pp. 402-410.

inferred from other passages, in Job it is evident that it is presided over by YHWH, and his angels--who are called *bny h'lhym*, "sons of God"--are members of the heavenly council.<sup>1</sup> It is also evident that they are not of the earthly realm but of the heavenly. It appears that the assembly is held on regular occasions<sup>2</sup> in the place where YHWH reigns. Both of these references to the appearances of these "sons of God" are explicitly said to have occurred before YHWH.

The same book of Job displays additional glimpses of this OT motif. Chapter 38 is part of the long discourse of YHWH answering the dilemma of Job and his friends. The Creator mentions some of His wondrous works. In His discourse, however, He makes explicit reference to the members of His divine council, pointing out their preeminent function of praising the creative works of YHWH. In vss. 4 and 7 it is YHWH Himself who says: "Where were you

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<sup>1</sup>The fact that the LXX says "the angels," and the Targum mentions "hosts of angels," *kythy ml'ky'* cannot be passed by. The angelic hosts are members of the heavenly assembly.

<sup>2</sup>Some Jewish commentators--like Rashi and Ibn Ezra--have opined that the general meeting of the heavenly council coincided with the day of judgment, on the new year's day--the Jewish Rosh Hashanah or religious New Year--when all mankind passed before Him (B. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 18a), as subdued rebels before a tribunal (see Mqr'wt gdwlwt [New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1951], Job 1:6, 7; 2:1). This seems to be in accordance with Targumic interpretation since there the occasion is specified as "the day of judgment at the beginning of the year,"--*bywm' ddyn' brys sth'*.

when I laid the foundation of the earth? . . . when the morning stars sang together,<sup>1</sup> and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"<sup>2</sup>

Here it is acknowledged that the heavenly assembly also functions as a celestial choir praising the wondrous creative acts of YHWH. It is also clear that YHWH recognizes the praise given to Him by His heavenly assembly as coming from a corporate body of intelligent beings. Unitedly they proclaim His sovereignty and creative power with exultant joy and jubilation. Notable here is the fact that this praising function is underlined with the use of two synonymous verbs--*rnn*, "to shout with joy," "to proclaim in shouts of joy;" and *rw*<sup>e</sup>, "to sing in acclamation"--arranged in a parallelism of word pairs.<sup>3</sup> The same celestial entities that form part of the council of YHWH

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<sup>1</sup>*brn-yhd kwkby bqr*, "when all the morning stars sang together." The verb *rnn*, "to rejoice, to shout of joy" (*HCLOT*, p. 1303) generally is used in situations of praise, when holy joy is expressed in loud celebration--shouting in congregation--of the saving acts of YHWH (see Norman E. Wagner, "Rinnah in the Psalter," *VT* 10 [1960]: 435-441).

<sup>2</sup>*wry<sup>e</sup>w kl-bny 'lhym*, "and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The verb *wry<sup>e</sup>w*--Hiph. of *rw<sup>e</sup>*--means "to shout in acclamation," "to cry aloud," "to shout" (*AHCL*, p. 679). It stresses the united praise of the "sons of God" in parallelism. The LXX rendered the phrase "sons of God" as *aggeloi mou*, while the Targ. as *kyty ml'ky'*, "angelic hosts."

<sup>3</sup>For a study of the "word pairs" in the OT poetry, see William Watters, Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976); Robert G. Boling, "'Synonymous' Parallelism in the Psalms," *JSS* 5 (1960):221-255.



are referred to in these two ways with a poetical devise.<sup>1</sup> Each verb is also followed by an adverb--yhd, "together," and kl, "all," respectively, that intensifies the unanimity of the acclamation by the totality of the heavenly assembly. It is the whole celestial assembly that shouted joyously acclaiming the Creator in united praises of joy.<sup>2</sup>

This united function of praise is also declared in

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<sup>1</sup>The Hebrew mode to intensify a concept in a parallel way is a well-known poetical devise. The union of rnn and rw<sup>e</sup> expresses the quality and the intensity of the song. The passage of Job depicts--so to speak--a joyful song shouted at the top of their lungs and with jubilant voice. This is the sense also given in passages like Isa 44:23; Ps 98:4; and 95:1. In addition to this, in Job's passage perhaps YHWH prefers to call His angelic hosts in two different ways to avoid repetition of the noun. It is the action and unanimity of the assembly that is presented and in this way one of the functions of the assembly is properly underlined by YHWH Himself.

<sup>2</sup>The Qumran Targum reads this verse, *bmzhr khd' kwkby spr wyz<sup>e</sup>q[w]n khd' kl ml'ky 'lh'*, "when the morning stars shone together, and all the angels of God shouted together" (J. P. M. Van der Ploeg and A. S. Van der Woude, Le Targum de Job de la grotte de Qumran [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971]). Perhaps the change from rnn, "to shout with joy," to zhr, "to shine," was intended to avoid some connections with the pagan concept of shouting heavenly bodies rather than shining stars (ibid., p. 70, nn. 4-5), and in this way the theological reasons of the targumist were perpetuated (B. Jongeling, C. J. Labuschagne, and A. S. Van der Woude, Aramaic Texts from Qumran [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976], p. 57). A. F. Walls points out that the joy of the heavenly assembly is a repeated motif in both OT and NT, and that the jubilation is a joyous expression of both the Deity and His heavenly council ("In the Presence of the Angels [Luke 5:10]," NT 3 [1959]:314-316). Thus the celestial joy is not merely angelic but also divine. This becomes expressed when the creative acts of YHWH are acknowledged. Also when the redemption is accepted by the sinner this joy becomes expressed (Luke 15:10), and in a superlative way it will be manifested when at the appointed time when "the saints of the Most High" receive the eternal kingdom (Ps 126:1-3; Dan 7:22, 27; Judg 24).

Ps 103:19-20, where it is said:

yhwh bšmym hkyn ks'w	YHWH has established his
wmlkwtw bkl mšlh	throne in the heavens,
brkw yhwh ml'kyw <sup>1</sup>	and his kingdom rules
gbry kh <sup>2</sup> 'šy dbrw <sup>3</sup>	over all.
lsm <sup>e</sup> bqwl dbrw <sup>4</sup>	Bless YHWH, oh you his
	angels,
	you mighty ones
	who do his word,
	obeying to the voice
	of his word.

The psalmist first establishes the sovereignty of YHWH in the explicit context of His creation and kingdom. Then the whole heavenly assembly is mentioned as being urged to bless Him. They are urged to do so because of their loyalty and promptness in executing His sovereign will. The members of the divine assembly are referred to here as being angels and mighty ones.<sup>5</sup> In other words,

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<sup>1</sup>For ml'kym, see below, the section "The Messengers of YHWH," on pp. 431-444.

<sup>2</sup>gbry kh, lit. "warriors of power," hence "mighty ones." The terms point to the quality of the warrior as full of strength and power. The term gibbor is an intensive form of gbr--"to be strong"--and particularly conveys a military meaning. H. Kosmala, s.v. "gibbor," TDOT, 2:373-376.

<sup>3</sup>'šy dbrw, "Executors (doers) of his word (or command)." The part. 'sey frcm the verb 'šh, "to work," to execute, to accomplish, perform a command, or order" (AHCL, p. 616), expresses the subordinate nature of these gbry kh in relationship to YHWH.

<sup>4</sup>lsm<sup>e</sup> bqwl dbrw, "obeying the voice of his command." The angels as subordinate to YHWH obey the commands that He gives them.

<sup>5</sup>Kosmala, TDOT, 2:375-376.

they, as members of the heavenly assembly, are indeed the messengers and mighty warrior of the sovereign YHWH.

This designation indeed points to two of the functions of the constituents of the heavenly assembly. At the same time it unmistakably also points to their relation to the sovereign of the assembly: They are executors--'šy-- of the command of YHWH. Although they are certainly considered powerful members of the celestial assembly, their role is subordinate to the orders of the supreme leader of the divine council, and so they obey--lsm`--the command of YHWH. Again the subordinate function of the members of the heavenly council is stressed in a parallel construction.

Another OT passage that presents the council of YHWH under His evident sovereignty is 1 Kgs 22:19-22. In vs. 19 it says: "I saw YHWH sitting on his throne,<sup>1</sup> and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left." The verses that follow record a dialog between YHWH and His council, and a command executed by one of the assembly members whom God charges with an explicit task. The task is faithfully executed.

This passage pictures the heavenly assembly quite clearly. The dominant figure is YHWH who is described as

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<sup>1</sup>yšb 'l-ks'w, "sitting on his throne." The picture is of an enthroned sovereign with absolute domain of his council. He is not seated on the throne of someone else, He is on His own throne.

seated on His own throne and He leads the assembled council. The passage also mentions that the components of the heavenly council are the totality of the heavenly armies. This means that the members of the assembly are described as beings with a nature other than human. On the other hand, they do not partake of the divine nature either.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is clearly indicated that they belong to the heavenly realm.

The picture of YHWH as a heavenly king surrounded by heavenly armies is a concept found elsewhere in the imagery of the OT.<sup>2</sup> Such is the case in Isa 6:1-3 when YHWH is described as enthroned on His "high and lifted up" throne, surrounded by hosts of winged creatures, named seraphim, that proclaim the name and the glory of the sovereign of the divine assembly.<sup>3</sup> This picture is also evident in Ps 80:1 and 99:1 where other entities are introduced under the more familiar name of cherubim.<sup>4</sup> These appear closely related to the throne of YHWH (Ezek 1:1-10).

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<sup>1</sup>As Lacoste properly remarks, "existencia angélique n'est point existence divine." Jean Yves Lacoste, "Les anges musiciens," 68 RSPT (1984):561.

<sup>2</sup>Isa 6:1-4; Dan 7:9; 1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 89:7.

<sup>3</sup>See below in the section "The Seraphim" (pp. 471-478). A similar picture is also given in Ezek 1 where not only the throne of God is described but also some of the creatures that surround the throne of YHWH. See below in the section "The Cherubim," pp. 491-499.

<sup>4</sup>See below under the section "The Cherubim," pp. 473-499.

A similar picture is presented in Ps 89:6-9 where it says:

wywdw šmym	The heavens praise
pl'k <sup>1</sup> yhwh	your wonders O YHWH.
'p-'mwntk	Your faithfulness, too
bqhl qdšym	in the assembly of the
	holy ones.
ky my bšhq	For who in the heavens
y <sup>ε</sup> rk lyhwh	can be compared to YHWH?
ydmh lyhwh bbny 'lym <sup>2</sup>	Who among the angels
	is like YHWH?
'l n <sup>ε</sup> rš <sup>3</sup>	God is greatly feared
bswd-qdšym <sup>4</sup>	in the council of the
	holy ones.
rbh wnw <sup>r</sup> ' <sup>5</sup>	He is greatly terrible

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<sup>1</sup>The Hebrew *pele'*, "wonder" from *pl'*, "be too difficult," or "be extraordinary, marvellous" (*CHALOT*, p. 291), is the common term used to express that is beyond comprehension. It is used in an explicit context of YHWH's actions (Victor P. Hamilton, s.v. "*pele'*," *TWOT*, 2:1768a). It is particularly used to indicate the peculiar works of YHWH in nature and in history (Exod 15:11, Ps 72:12; Isa 25:1). See James M. Ward "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," *VT* 11 (1961):332.

<sup>2</sup>*bbny 'lym*, "among the angels," lit. "among the sons of God." A possible comparison with YHWH is inquired among the heavenly assembly (vs. 5), but in vain. Not in any part of the heights, nor in the whole heavenly can be found someone comparable to YHWH.

<sup>3</sup>*'l n<sup>ε</sup>rš*, lit. "a terrifying god." The Niph. ptc. of *εrs*, "to terrify, make afraid" (*AHCL*, p. 615), or "to make to tremble" (*HCLLOT*, p. 1097), is used only once in the entire OT (Ronald B. Allen, s.v. "*εrs*," *TWOT*, 2:1702). It is used to stress the majesty and superiority of God as leader of the council.

<sup>4</sup>*bswd-qdšym*, "in the council of the holy ones." Here the members of the celestial council are called "holy ones" as a synonym for angels, in a parallel construction.

<sup>5</sup>*rbh wnw<sup>r</sup>'*, lit. "great and awesome," or "greatly revered." The Niph. ptc. of *yr<sup>ε</sup>*, "to fear, revere," is commonly used to depict something as "terrible, awesome, or terrifying" (Andrew Bowling, s.v. "*yr<sup>ε</sup>*," *TWOT*, 1:907). It is also used as an epithet for YHWH or His name (Deut 10:17; 28:58; Dan 9:4), sometimes for the heavenly messengers

<sup>1</sup>l-kl-sbybyw<sup>1</sup>

above all who surround him.

Here the heavenly council is described as consisting of YHWH and other heavenly beings. These celestial entities are named sons of God and holy ones,<sup>2</sup> and it is

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of YHWH (Judg 13:6), and for some holy places (Gen 28:17) where the presence of God was clearly manifested (HCLOT, p. 602).

<sup>1</sup>l-kl-sbybyw, "all who surround him." The noun sbyb, derived from sbb, "to surround, encompass" (HELOT, p. 685), explicitly indicated that YHWH is assisted by heavenly entities in His council.

<sup>2</sup>The usage of qdš, "holy" as a reference to the gods, and an attribute of the supreme deity, is well attested in the documents of ANE. In a special way the Ugaritic literature (see above pp. 47-49, 118-119) and the Phoenician inscriptions attest the usage of qdšy for a reference to the members of the divine assembly (see W. Albright, "The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Tenth Century B. C. from Byblus," JAOS 67 [1947]:153-160, especially the inscription of Yehimilk which repeatedly mentions the qdšm as being the gods of Byblus and the members of the heavenly assembly). Even in an incantation amulet discovered at Arslan Tash, qdšm is used to indicate "all the gods" (see A. Dupont-Sommer, "L'inscription de l'amulette d'Arslan-Tash," RHR 120 [1939]:133-159). This varied attestation indicates that among the western Semites it was usual to call "saints" the major gods or to the lesser deities that were around them as their regular divine coterie. As Luc Dequeker says, "tous ces textes montrent un usage, fort répandu chez les sémites occidentaux, d'appeler <<saints>> des divinités ou des êtres surnaturels anonymes, mentionnés à côté d'autres, indiqués par leur nom propre" (Les qedôsim du Ps LXXXIX à la lumière des croyances sémitiques, "Ephe-merides Theologicae Lovanienses 39 [1963]:471 [hereafter ETHL]). He goes on saying that "tout porte à croire que les qedôsim ou les 'lîm haggqedôsim indiquent toujours une catégorie spéciale d'êtres divins, à savoir tous les membres anonymes de la cour céleste, entourant en qualité de serviteurs et de conseillers les dieux suprêmes." He adds that "le terme qedôsim fait donc penser dans ces milieux sémitiques à des êtres célestes non déterminés, qui sont censés entourer le dieu suprême. Ce sont des <<spirits>>, présents un peu partout, exerçant une influence, tantôt mauvaise, tantôt bonne, sur le vie de l'homme" (ibid., pp. 473-474).

evident that this is a mention of the heavenly beings, performing a liturgical act in the celestial spheres.<sup>1</sup>

It is a mention of "the chorus of God's celestial attendants . . . which accompany him like acolytes when he appears."<sup>2</sup>

The manifest parallel between the *bny 'lym* and the *qdsm* becomes reinforced by the mention of the phrase *YHWH 'lhy sb'wt*,<sup>3</sup> which at the same time could be taken as a possible or valid synonym for the *qhl qdšym* and *swd qdšym*.<sup>4</sup>

Notable here is not only their inferiority in nature when they are contrasted with *YHWH* but also their position within the heavenly assembly. Although the angels are part of this council, they do not preside over the assembly, rather they surround the central figure of it. Although they may demonstrate some of the majesty of the

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<sup>1</sup>J. Copens, "Les saints dans le psautier," *ETHL* 39 (1963):486; Ward, "Psalm LXXXIX," p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>Weiser, *Psalms*, p. 592.

<sup>3</sup>Coppens, *ETHL*, 39:486. Accurately James M. Ward shows that "vss. 6-9 form a quatrain. Heavens (6a)//skies (7a); and this repeated image is itself parallel to the repeated round about thee (8b, 9b), tying the lines together from the beginning to the end. Again, holy ones (6b)//sons of God (7b)//holy ones (8a)//hosts (9a). Who is like YHWH (7a, b)//who is like thee (9a). These four lines give a unified picture of the heavenly assembly praising God" ("The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," *VT* 11 [1961]:325).

<sup>4</sup>In this way the psalmist not only uses a synonymy in an arranged parallelism for the constituency of the heavenly assembly but also uses the same literary devices for the very divine assembly.

assembly, when they are compared with their leader all of them fall short of His glory. The awesomeness of YHWH overcomes the whole assembly. He is the only one who is greatly revered by the assembly in its totality. The others that surround Him only constitute the heavenly council over which YHWH rules.

The subordinate functions of the members of the heavenly council in relation to YHWH is pointed out many times in the Psalms in commanding terms. In Ps 29:1-2 they are urged to glorify YHWH in this way:

hbw lyhwh bny 'lhym <sup>1</sup>	Ascribe to YHWH, O angels
hbw lyhwh kbwd w'z	Ascribe to YHWH glory and strenght
hbw lyhwh kbwd šmw	Ascribe to YHWH the glory of his name;
hšthw lyhwh	Worship YHWH
bhdrt-qdš <sup>2</sup>	In the splendor of holiness.

The heavenly sons of God are urged here to give<sup>3</sup> YHWH the glory and recognition that properly belong to Him. They are commanded to render obeisance to YHWH in the

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<sup>1</sup>Lit. "sons of God."

<sup>2</sup>Reading qdšw in amended text BHS (critical apparatus) perhaps due to parallelism with šmw. A literal translation would read "worship YHWH in glorious holiness." The principal motif of the whole psalm is the worship to YHWH. These first two verses begin by indicating the sphere where this worship is properly ascribed. The individuals of the celestial spheres are urged to ascribe it to YHWH, that they always render to Him in a collective way (see Kautzsch, Gesenius, sec. 124 a, q).

<sup>3</sup>hbw, Impv. of yhb, "to give, present, ascribe" (HCLLOT, p. 547). A clear demand to acknowledge the greatness of YHWH.



proper way, since He is greatly feared in the council (Ps 89:8). The same exigency is required from them in Ps 103:20-21 which says:

brkw <sup>1</sup> yhwh ml'kyw <sup>2</sup>	Bless YHWH, O you his angels,
gbry kh <sup>3</sup>	you mighty ones who
'šy dbrw	do his word . . .
brkw yhwh kl-šb'ym	Bless YHWH all his hosts . . .

The celestial beings of the heavenly assembly are addressed in a command to praise the head of the council. Notable here is the command which is made in an all-inclusive way. All the constituent members of the Assembly are urged to praise YHWH. On the other hand, this text also points to the functions performed by them; they are messengers, ministers, mighty warriors, and servants who render obedience and service to YHWH. Notable also is the variety of names used to refer to the constituency of the assembly. This usage may emphasize the diversity of tasks that they have to perform as members of the council of YHWH.

We may also refer to Ps 82 in which the heavenly assembly is presented in an image as the ideal background for the Israelite council of judgment. It says:

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<sup>1</sup>brk, "to bless, to worship" (AHCL, p. 116). Since here God is the object, the Pi. brkw should be better rendered as "praise" or "extol" (Joseph Scharbert, s.v. "brk," TDOT, 2:293, 305).

<sup>2</sup>ml'kyw, lit. "his messengers."

<sup>3</sup>gbry kh, lit. "warriors of strength," or "mighty warriors."

'lhym nsb <sup>1</sup>	God is presiding
d <sup>e</sup> dt-'l <sup>2</sup>	in the divine assembly
bqrb 'lhym <sup>3</sup> yspt <sup>4</sup>	in the midst of the gods he judges
'd-mty tšptw- <sup>e</sup> wl	How long you will judge injustly
wpny rš <sup>e</sup> ym tš'w-slh	and show partiality to the wicked? (Selah).
šptw-dl wytwm	Give judgment to the weak and the orphan,

<sup>1</sup>The Niph. ptc. of nsb, "to be set, placed or appointed" (AHCL, p. 559) indicates the position of God in the assembly. The subject of this introductory phrase is 'lhym, here used absolutely in the sense of a proper noun, as a synonym of YHWH, and as a substitute for it.

<sup>2</sup>e dt 'l, "divine assembly." For parallel documentation of the divine assembly in Israel and ANE, see Frank M. Cross, JNES 12:274, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup>The term 'lhym conveys multivalence meaning. It is a plural form with two definite meanings, one singular and another plural. As singular it means God--as the plural form of 'lwh, and synonym of 'l, "God." With this meaning it is a substitute of the personal name of YHWH (HALAT, p. 52). As a plural term it means gods--being the plural of the generic noun 'l, "god" (W. H. Schmidt, s.v. "'lohyim - Gott," THAT, 1:153-56) indicating all the gods and goddesses of the peoples (HCLOT, pp. 94-95). However, occasionally the term also conveys the meaning of "judges" and "angels" (HELOT, p. 42; Jack B. Scott, s.v. "'lohim," TWOT, 1:93. The plural ending in this case is understood as a plural of majesty for the true God and not merely a simple plural for every God (Scott, TWOT, 1:93); it conveys an intensification that presents 'lohim as "the 'great,' 'highest,' and finally 'only' God (Ringren, s.v. "'elohim," TDOT, 1:272-273).

<sup>4</sup>špt, "to judge, administer justice" (ACHL, p. 734). Well known is the period of the history of Israel in which they were governed by judges--i.e., šptym. The office of the judge certainly enclosed everything related to the affairs of a rulership (see Donald A. Mackenzie, "The Judge of Israel," VT 17 [1967]:118-121). The term points eminently to the exercise of power and authority in matters of government and judgment (Robert D. Culver, s.v. "špt," TWOT, 2:2443). The understanding that God is the one who has the true authority and He is and will be the supreme judge--šophet--is elsewhere attested in the Psalter (50:6; 75:8; 94:2; 96:3).

'ny wrš hšdyqw . . .	to the poor and the oppressed give justice . . .
'ny-'mrty 'lhym <sup>1</sup> 'tm wbny 'lywn <sup>2</sup> klkm	I said, you are gods and sons of the Most High you are all
'kn k'dm tmwtwn	But you will die like mere man
wk'hđ hšrym tplw <sup>3</sup>	and like any minister you will fall.
qwmh 'lhym špřh h'rš	Arise, O God, judge the earth
ky-'th tnhl <sup>4</sup> bkl-hgwym	For your sovereignty is in all the nations.

Modern scholarship has not yet satisfactorily solved the difficulties involved in the interpretation of this psalm.<sup>5</sup> There is on one hand a certain agreement in

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<sup>1</sup>The judges are here called "gods" in a figurative sense. They are performing a function that ultimately pertains to YHWH, in His heavenly council.

<sup>2</sup>The phrase bny 'lywn, lit. "sons of the Most High," is a hapax legomenon in the OT. The judges are addressed by God as "sons of the Most High" in parallelism with "gods." Both epithets may be pointing to the exalted position of the judges rather than to divinity in a close kinship with YHWH. As Anderson says, this "need not imply an actual 'physical' kinship with YHWH," because by no means is this the description of a pantheon (The Book of Psalms, 2:595).

<sup>3</sup>Four terms--'dm, "man," mwt, "death," šr, "prince, dignitary," and npl, "to fall"--commonly used in describing matters related to earthly realms are pointed out as part of a common fate for these corrupted judges.

<sup>4</sup>From nhl, "to obtain, to possess, to inherit" (AHCL, p. 543). Also to take or to accept a possession (CHALOT, p. 233). The psalmist points to the fact that God as the supreme judge has the right to judge the whole earth because He also is the possessor of all the nations. He is the only one who has sovereignty over all the inhabitants of the earth.

<sup>5</sup>Nearly half a century ago, Morgenstern pointed out that "scarcely any psalm seems to have troubled interpreters more or to have experienced a wider range of interpretation and a more disturbing uncertainty and lack of

pointing out that the identity of the 'lhy in vss. 1b and 6 is the most difficult problem of the psalm.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a rising number of scholars accept them as gods,<sup>2</sup> reflecting a Canaanite pagan background.<sup>3</sup> Thus they are mythological vestiges that show a transitional stage in the religion of Israel on their way towards an absolute Yahwism.<sup>4</sup>

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finality therein than Psalm 82" ("The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," HUCA 14 [1939]:29-30). Wright says that this is "one of the most difficult passages in the Old Testament" (OTAIE, p. 30).

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, Job, p. 592; A. Gonzales, "Le psaume LXXXII," VT 13 (1963):294. This difficulty is reflected even in the different modern translations of the Hebrew text which renders the term as "gods" (AB, BB, NIV, RSV, NJB, NEB), "divine beings" (JSAV), "rulers" (NSAB), "judges" (LB, NBVME), "magistrates or judges" (AmpBi).

<sup>2</sup>Matitiah Tsvat, "God and the Gods in Assembly: An Interpretation of Psalm 82," The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1980), pp. 131-147, hereafter MBJOBS; C. H. Gordon, "'Elohim in Its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges," JBL 54 (1935):139-144; E. Beaucamp, Le Psautier. Ps 73-150 (Paris: Librairie Lecoffe, 1979), pp. 54, 56.

<sup>3</sup>This supposition has YHWH standing "in the assembly of the supreme god EL making accusation against the other gods" for their leniency on matters of justice, and at same time guesses that this is an indication of the acceptance of YHWH by the neighbors of Israel as "Yahweh's victory over their gods." Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 111.

<sup>4</sup>Morgenstern, "Mythological Background," p. 114; E. Beauchamp, Le Psautier, p. 53; Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), pp. 148-150.

For the purposes of this investigation<sup>1</sup> regarding this much discussed matter, I assume that the problematic 'lhym here are to be interpreted as judges or rulers of Israel. In adopting this position,<sup>2</sup> note that:

1. God is named in a way that is more understandable in an international context. That is, although the name of YHWH is not used in this psalm, the divine epithets 'lhym and 'lywn--"God" and "Most High," respectively--are used in a special way to indicate YHWH<sup>3</sup> as the supreme

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed investigation of Psalm 82, see J. S. Ackerman, "An Exegetical Study of Ps 82" (Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Clyde M. Miller mentions that "three principal interpretations have been given to this problem: (1) It presents God's judgment against heathen deities, placing them in a subordinate role to that of God and threatening them with death. (2) It is a portrayal of the disorders caused in the world by 'spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph 6:12), that is by Satan and his angels. (3) It is a polemic against human judges and rulers in Israel." Anthony L. Ash and Clyde M. Miller, Psalms. The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1980), p. 285.

<sup>3</sup>Morgenstern's affirmation--in agreement with K. Budde ("Brief Communications," JBL 40 [1921]:41-42)--that "Elyon here is not identical with Yahweh, but is an altogether different deity" to be identified with a principal deity of Byblos ("The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," p. 92), is unfortunate. That 'lywn is a synonym epithet for YHWH is explicitly mentioned in Gen 14:22. This shows that even the forefathers of the psalmist used these different ways to address YHWH. On the other hand, 'lhym as well as 'lywn were acknowledged epithets for YHWH even by non-Israelite people (Gen 14:18). The literary device of using multiple names for a deity was used not only by Hebrew writers but is also attested in Egyptian, Babylonian, Canaanite, Hurrian, Hittite, and Old South Arabic literature (see K. A. Kitchen, Ancient Orient and Old Testament [Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966], pp. 125-127).

Leader of the heavenly assembly and at same time to point out that He is the Judge of the judges of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Cassuto has satisfactorily demonstrated that as a general rule the use of 'lhy<sup>m</sup> underscores God's relationship to the world, or mankind in general as an abstract conception of God currently understood in the international circles of the scribal world of biblical times.<sup>2</sup> Besides, 'lhy<sup>m</sup> especially stresses His majesty and transcendence<sup>3</sup> and is used when a subject-matter is proper to an universal tradition,<sup>4</sup> "giving more expression to a 'theological' and abstract-cosmic picture of God and is, therefore, used in larger and more moving contexts"<sup>5</sup>; while YHWH appears in a context of intimate personal relationship.<sup>6</sup> It should be borne in mind that this psalm was written with a clear connotation of a general concept of Deity known to Israel and shared by

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<sup>1</sup>Graham Scroggie, The Psalms (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming and Revell Company, 1978), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>U. Cassuto demonstrates that this pattern of usage can be seen especially in the first two chapters of Genesis. (A Commentary on the Book of Genesis [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1978], pp. 86-87). See also Victor P. Hamilton, Handbook of the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Cassuto, Genesis, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>Cassuto, The Documentary Hypothesis (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), p. 32, hereafter DoHy.

<sup>5</sup>I. Engnell, Gamla Testament. En traditions-historik inledning; 1:194-196, cf. Noth, "Pentateuchal Criticism," OTMS, pp. 66-67.

<sup>6</sup>Cassuto, Genesis, p. 87.

all the ANE peoples,<sup>1</sup> but with the clear, unique insight peculiar to Israel that "there is One God and that only YHWH He is 'Elohim."<sup>2</sup> Thus, since the psalmist is obviously aware of this understanding, he turns to this particular usage of the divine name to indicate God's sovereignty in His earthly jurisdiction as Judge of the judges.<sup>3</sup>

2. The meaning of 'lhym is plurivalent. It may be used to indicate humans,<sup>4</sup> although this is done only

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<sup>1</sup>It is now known that as a general rule Israel's writers, like those of ANE peoples, used in their literature two names--a specific and a generic--to designate their deity (Cassuto, Genesis, p. 35). As Archer says, "It is doubtful whether the religious literature of any of Israel's pagan neighbors ever preferred a paramount god by a single name" (G. Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction [Chicago: Moody Press, 1982], p. 119).

<sup>2</sup>Cassuto, Genesis, 2:36

<sup>3</sup>Cassuto indicates that especially in the psalmody, "when the poet wished to convey the general idea of Divinity, or to mention the Almighty as the God of the whole world, as the Creator of the Universe, as the Deity of all peoples," the preference for general names is notable; in this case 'lhym. (DoHy, p. 24).

<sup>4</sup>Although with the limitations proper to the case, due to the figurative sense of its use, the term is applied to humans at least once when YHWH himself determines that Moses would be le'lohim for Aaron, before the Pharaoh (Exod 4:16). On the other hand, Exod 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28; 1 Sam 2:25 strongly insinuate that the judges in this passage were God's representatives; therefore a plain inference of the title 'elohim as applied to judges in this passage is quite understandable. (See A. F. Kirpatrick, The Book of Psalms [Cambridge: The University Press, 1939], p. 495; R. J. Tournay, "Les psaumes complexes," RB 56 [1949]:51-53; Roger T. O'Callaghan, "A Note on the Canaanite Background of Psalm 82," CBQ 15 [1953]:313-315).

rarely. In this psalm it points to human judges<sup>1</sup> rather than to angels<sup>2</sup> or to gods.<sup>3</sup> The whole psalm depicts no

<sup>1</sup>As Rashi indicates, it is God himself who stands in the heavenly assembly to see if the judges are judging truth, and to them He recriminates their unrighteous acts-- 'lhym nsb b'ed t 'l lr'wt 'm 'mt yspwtw w'tm hdyynym 'd mty tsptw 'wl--Migraoth gedaloth, 10:53. In fact, this interpretation is prevalent since pre-Christian times. The Targums interpret it so, and likewise it cannot be ignored that the authoritative interpretation of Jesus showed to their contemporaries that their judges had been called properly gods according to the Torah (John 10:34-38). Consequently, scholars of past and present centuries have understood this psalm in this way. J. J. Steward Perowne correctly says that "there is no need to depart from the more common view that the Israelitish judges are meant, especially as this is confirmed by the general tenor of the Psalm" (The Book of Psalms [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976], p. 103). For a similar interpretation see, John Calvin, The Book of Psalms (Edinburg: Calvin Translation Society, 1947), 3:327-328; F. G. Hibbard, The Psalms Chronologically Arranged (New York: Charlton and Porter, 1856), pp. 407-408; William Kay, The Psalms (London: Rivingstons, 1877), p. 271; Kirkpatrick, Psalms, pp. 494, 496; Jerome Charles Callan, The Psalms (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1944), pp. 366-367; A. Cohen, The Psalms (Hinhead: The Soncino Press, 1945), pp. 270-271; O'Callaghan, "A Note on . . . Psalm 82," pp. 311-314; David Dickson, A Commentary on the Psalms (Minneapolis: Klock and Block Christian Publishers, 1980), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>M. Mannati, Les Psaumes (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967), p. 101; Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Psalms (Dublin: Richview Press, 1964), pp. 377-378; J. W. Rogerson, Psalms 51-100 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 2:82-83; J. H. Eaton, Psalms, Torch Bible Commentary (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 204; Cyril S. Rodd, Psalms 73-150, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries (London: Epworth Press, 1964), p. 21; Elmer A. Leslie, The Psalms (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), pp. 117, 230. Mowinckel strongly argues that the OT uses 'lohim for all sorts of super-natural entities, ranging from ghosts to heavenly messengers, i.e., angels (The Psalms, p. 57).

<sup>3</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, The Psalms (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939), pp. 374-375; O. Loretz, "Eine kanaanäische Short Story: Ps 82," UF 3 (1971):113-115; Mowinckel, The Psalms, pp. 148-150.



other imagery than a monotheistic.

3. The whole Psalm is closely related to a context of judgment administered to human subjects and also executed by human rulers.<sup>1</sup>

4. To make the heavenly angels of YHWH rulers of injustice and oppression of the less privileged human classes is outside of the biblical thought about its God.<sup>2</sup>

5. The mortal condition, so intrinsic to the fallen human race, is pointed out as a decreed fate for the unrighteous judges, no matter how exalted their positions were as rulers of the chosen people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The rebuke given by God to the judges stresses repeatedly the same evils so commonly pointed out by the prophets when they condemned the injustice of their rulers. Moses Bottenwieser suggests that the rulers are fashioned as deified kings using a trend then in vogue, and in this way he unmasks the rulers of his days and rebukes their bad administration of justice (The Psalms Chronologically Treated [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938], pp. 769-770).

<sup>2</sup>Nowhere in the whole Bible it is said that the angels of YHWH are charged as administrators of justice to humans. They may appear as executors of judgments already decided by the one who only has the judiciary power, but never as charged to exercise justice to mankind.

<sup>3</sup>James C. Murphy indicates that the sentence to die points not only to their mortal condition but to the fact that they will lose their official dignity, and finally will "sink into an unhonored grave" (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms [Minneapolis: James Family Publishing, 1977], p. 449).

Therefore, the psalmist points to judgment as the most important function of the assembly of YHWH<sup>1</sup> in a very peculiar way.<sup>2</sup> He indicates that those charged with administering justice can properly be called 'lohim as representatives of God.<sup>3</sup> But, like the heavenly assembly, they should reflect a right administration of justice. On every occasion the judges or rulers of the nation should have in mind that their high privilege was given to them by YHWH and, beyond that, at the end He will judge them all in a right way. The members of the Heavenly council are to witness that the judiciary activities of the earthly congregation of YHWH, who have been highly honored as 'lhym and bny 'lywn, are all consequent upon their appointment. Likewise, they are to be a witness to or should execute the Divine sentence upon those judges who are found unworthy of the authority invested them.

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'edah, used to indicate the heavenly assembly of YHWH, is also plainly used to name Israel as earthly assembly, or congregation of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>Coinciding with Battenweiser, Louis Jaquet correctly indicates that the psalmist chose to use a mythological vocabulary to make more understandable to the evil judges their sealed fate (Les Psaumes et le coeur de l'homme [n.p., Belgium: Ducolot, 1979], 2:99).

<sup>3</sup>God Himself saying to them "you are gods" is because they are "invested with a prerogative which can only come from God", and likely calling them "sons of the Most High" God reminds them that they were "created and constituted by the absolutely Supreme, to whom they are therefore directly accountable" (Murphy, Book of Psalms, p. 449).

In Dan 7:9-10, the awesomeness of the council of YHWH is described explicitly related to matters of judgment in these words:

hzh hwy <sup>t</sup>	As I looked
‘d dy k <sup>r</sup> sw <sup>n</sup> r <sup>m</sup> yw <sup>1</sup>	thrones were placed
w <sup>t</sup> tyq yw <sup>m</sup> yn <sup>2</sup> ytb <sup>3</sup>	and one that was ancient
	of days took his seat.
lbyšh ktlg hwr	his raiment was white
	as snow,
wš <sup>2</sup> r r <sup>i</sup> šh k <sup>i</sup> mr nq <sup>i</sup>	and the hair head like
	pure wool;
k <sup>r</sup> syh šbybyn dy-nwr	his throne was fiery flames,
glglw <sup>h</sup> y nwr <sup>4</sup> dlq <sup>4</sup>	its wheels were burning fire.
nhr dy-nwr <sup>5</sup> ngd	A river of fire issued

<sup>1</sup>The phrase *k<sup>r</sup>sw<sup>n</sup> r<sup>m</sup>yw*, "thrones were placed"--Peal pf. pass. pl. of *rmh*, "to place" (*CHALOT*, p. 421)--indicates the judicial character of the assembly (see John Joseph Owens, "Daniel," *BBC*, 6:422).

<sup>2</sup>*w<sup>t</sup>tyq yw<sup>m</sup>yn ytb*, lit. "and one of advanced days sat down." The adj. *‘thq*, "antique, old" (Vogt, *LLAVT*, p. 136) implies the longevity and the dignity of the "ancient of days" (R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929], p. 182) and points both to the venerability of the one who presides over the council and to his immeasurable age. As A. S. Russell says, it is not a picture of "senility but of venerability (*Daniel*, [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981], p. 119). He is the Eternal One. When Daniel presents Him as being aged and enthroned, the prophet is underlining the divine majesty and power of YHWH (Jorge Gonzalez, *Daniel. A Tract for Troubled Times* [New York: United Methodist Church, 1985], p. 100).

<sup>3</sup>The "ancient of Days" is presiding over an assembly of judgment. He sits--*y<sup>t</sup>b* "sat down" (*CHALOT*, p. 148)--on His own throne as supreme sovereign and judge.

<sup>4</sup>Helen Spurrel translates, "His throne was flames of fire, His rolling wheels the ardenmt flame" (*A Translation of the Old Testament Scriptures from the Original Hebrew* [London: James Nisbet, 1885], Dan 7:9).

<sup>5</sup>"A river of flame streamed and issued forth from His presence" (*ibid.*, Dan 7:10). Otto Ploger notes that this expression "ablazing fire" or "burning fire" is a common expression in the Bible (*Das Buch Daniel* [Gütersloh:

wnpq mn-qdmwhy  
'lp 'lpym yšmšwnh

wrbw rbwn qdmwhy<sup>1</sup>  
ykwmw  
dyn' ytb wspryn  
ptyhw<sup>2</sup>

and came forth before him  
a thousand of thousands  
served him,  
and hundreds of millions  
stood before him.  
the council sat in judgment  
opened.

Daniel portrays the heavenly assembly as an entity whose sovereignty is under the absolute supremacy of God or the Ancient of Days. Daniel also underlines other functions of the assembly, the most important of which is that of judgment. The members of the council appear seated on their own thrones, but they are presided over by God, who is the supreme enthroned One and who also is called "the

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Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1965], p. 111). The phrase *krsyh šbybyn dy-nwr*, "his throne (full) of flames of fire;" *glglwhy nwr dlq* "wheels of burning fire;" and *nhr dy-nwr ngd*, "a flowing river of fire," are additional indications for the identity of the "ancient of days" with *YHWH* who appears elsewhere in the OT related to a burning nature (Exod 3:2; 19:18; Ps 16:8, 12, 13; 18:8; 21:9; 29:7; Isa 29:6; 66:15, etc.).

<sup>1</sup>The numeric phrases 'lp 'lpym, "ten thousand times ten thousand," and *rbw rbwn*, "hundred of millions," indicate the incommensurability of the members of the heavenly assembly that serve--*yšmšwnh* (from *šmš*, "serve"), "they serve him"--and stand before him--*qdmwhy ykwmw*--as his heavenly attendants. Gerhard Meier correctly opines that Daniel, without pretending to have mathematically numbered every member of the divine council, describes what he saw of the multiplicity of the attendants surrounding the throne of God (Der Prophet Daniel [Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1932], p. 277).

<sup>2</sup>The phrase *dyt' ytb*, "the tribunal was set" (Vogt, LLAVT, p. 43), is an indication that the heavenly tribunal is explicitly assembled for judgment, which is presided over by the supreme judge, the "Ancient of Days." Thus, the council opened its proceedings.

Ancient of Days," emphasizing His eternal nature.<sup>1</sup> Most of the description is devoted to the supreme leader of the heavenly council and all the activities are depicted as revolving around Him. He also is described as having clean white hair--k'mr nq', "like pure wool"<sup>2</sup>--and wearing garments of a snowy whiteness--ktlg hwr "like white snow"--which could properly be described as "shining white robes."<sup>3</sup> Blazing fire is all around the being of God. His rolling throne radiates flames all over,<sup>4</sup> and a fiery river

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<sup>1</sup>The biblical writers are quite familiar with the concept of eternity of YHWH expressed in terms of countless years (Ps 90:1-2; 102:11, 12, 24-27; Mic 5:2).

<sup>2</sup>See Vogt, LLAVT, p. 115. A. A. Bevan translates as "spotless wool" (A Short Commentary on the Book of Daniel [Cambridge: University Press, 1892], p. 123), pointing out that nq' means "cleansed" or "free from spot," and not "white." R. Charles suggests "spotless as white wool" (Daniel, p. 183).

<sup>3</sup>Gleason L. Archer, "Daniel," EBC, 7:89. The snow here could also be a symbol of God's perfect purity (Isa 1:18; Isa 51:7), or as Alexander A. DiLella says, symbol of His "unsullied majesty" (The Book of Daniel [New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978], p. 218). André Lacocque appropriately remarks that the whiteness in vestments of God represents innocence, while the white hair reveals experience (The Book of Daniel [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979], p. 143). Frederick A. Tatford sees in the white garments an expression of God's "essential purity and holiness before which men stood in awe" (Daniel and His Prophecy [London: Oliphants, 1953], p. 112).

<sup>4</sup>The description of the flaming throne of YHWH as having wheels is coincident with the vivid description given by Ezekiel (1:13-16). There is no need--as W. Sibley Towner suggests--to make the accounts of Daniel an echo "of that Hellenistic tradition which represents Helios the sun god, as riding his chariot across the daytime sky" (Daniel [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984], p. 89; neither to presuppose an "unmistakable" Canaanite mythology--as J. Collins assumes--for the imagery of Dan 7:9-10 (The Apocalyptic

proceeds from there, all in accordance with the very nature of YHWH himself.<sup>1</sup> Here this manifestation of His glory is connected with His work of judgment (Ps 50:2-4, Isa 29:6).

When the nature of these numberless heavenly attendants is described in the psalmodic literature, it says: 'šh ml'kym reht mšrtw 'š lht, "He made<sup>2</sup> his angels (lit. messengers) spirits, his ministers flaming fire" (Ps 104:4).<sup>3</sup> Here they appear characterized in their celestial panoply as being in harmony with the eternal judge. As

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Vision of the Book of Daniel [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

<sup>1</sup>The fiery conception of the divinity is a well-known OT motif. Moses exhorted a diligent obedience to Israel pointing out the results that disobedience would bring to them, "For YHWH your God is a devouring fire"--ky YHWH 'lhyk 'š 'klh (Deut 4:24). Similarly the psalms contain allusions to the fiery presence of YHWH (Ps 50:3; 97:3). Montgomery properly indicated that the river of fire which proceeds from YHWH's presence particularizes "the irresistibility of the divine energy" (James A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927], p. 298.

<sup>2</sup>The active participle 'šh permits a past tense translation, since all the preceding finite verbs are in perfect, with the exception of the first one, which is an imperative of brq, "to bless." This introductory blessing also presupposes something made in the past--in this case the creation of the angels.

<sup>3</sup>KJV. Most of the modern versions translate this verse "who makest the winds thy messengers, fire and flame thy ministers" (RSV). The correction of the translations as reference of the nature of the heavenly ministers of YHWH is given in the LXX and Targum, which at that time correctly interpreted the messengers as angels. This point of view is explicitly endorsed by the author of Hebrews who interpreted it in the same way (Heb 1:7).

attendant of the Eternal One they also are ministers of fire.

Another thing that becomes clear about the assembly of YHWH in the description of Daniel is the number of its members and their function. This description surpasses any other OT account on this matter.<sup>1</sup> The members of the council of YHWH are simply without number. They are "the thousands of ten thousands" and "hundreds of millions."<sup>2</sup> All this heavenly membership is described as standing before YHWH to serve Him in the matters taken up by the council. The picture is quite similar to that of 1 Kgs 22:18 in which the members of the council promptly and voluntarily offer their services as required by YHWH.

Daniel also gives other glimpses of the heavenly assembly regarding the function of some of its members. In a special way, the prophet mentions how they assisted him in understanding the things that were shown to him in vision. In 7:15-16 he says that while he was perplexed with the things that he was seeing, he asked one of the attendants of the heavenly council for answers: "I

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<sup>1</sup>Only 1 Kgs 22:19 comes close to it. However, the picture becomes coincident with NT passages where a great number of God's assembly is mentioned (Heb 12:22; 1:14; Rev 5:11).

<sup>2</sup>The membership of the celestial assembly is given in a poetic progressive numeral description, which means "all" of a vast multitude. In other words, Daniel explicitly underlines the innumerableness of the members of the assembly of YHWH.

approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this." In this way he came to understand the vision, since he also says that "he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of the things."

In subsequent visions, however, Daniel mentions that a specific interpreter was commanded to come to him in order that he could understand the things that were being shown to him (8:15-17, 21-22; 10:11). In fact, the prophet identifies his angelic explainer as Gabriel (8:16; 9:21).

This picture suggests that within the celestial assembly there were some specific celestial beings who perform the task of interpretation. At the command of YHWH they immediately act as interpreters of His divine revelations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A full discussion of the angelus interpres motif in the OT is beyond of our task. It seems that no special study has yet been devoted to this angelic motif, although some scholars refer to it in a brief way in their works on angelology. So William A. Heidt, speaking of six angelic categories, names one of them as "the 'exegete angel'" and cautiously mentions the probability that such a celestial exegete would be always Gabriel, due to two explicit explicative missions with Daniel (Angelology of the Old Testament [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949], pp. 5962). Volkmar Hirt divides the angelic hosts into four general categories, and within the division of heavenly messengers of God with special functions "Himm-lische Gottesboten in speziellen Funktionen," he puts in a subdivision the interpreter angel "Der Deuteengel (angelus interpres)" (Gottes Boten im Alten Testament [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1975], pp. 601-609). Peter Schafer, speaking of the same character, names him as the angel of the revelation "Engel der Offenbarung" and stresses the opinion that this function in angelic realms is particular to postexilic Judaism (Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975], p. 10).



Closely related to the function of judgment of the assembly, it can be inferred that the task that some celestial beings were to perform was to function as writers, a kind of amanuensis angel for the celestial council.

Although the depiction given in Dan 7 of the assembly of God reunited in judgment does not mention anyone as serving specifically in the office of secretary, the existence of such a functionary is strongly implied.<sup>1</sup> The implicitness of this function is presented in the phrase *dny' ytb wspryn ptyhw*, "the court sat in judgment and the books were opened (7:10).<sup>2</sup> Obviously someone with that specific function must have opened those celestial books. In the same way, some being or beings with that definite task had to have written the celestial records, and someone should have been there to register the verdicts of the heavenly court.

A close connection with this scribal task may be mentioned by Ezekiel, who in one of his visions refers to heavenly beings performing a mission of judgment (9:11).

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<sup>1</sup>It could be said that an explicit reference to an angelic intervention as writer is registered in Dan 5 on the occasion of the handwriting on the wall. Although the account does not say that an angel wrote on the wall, the description obviously implies an angelic intervention.

<sup>2</sup>The mention of heavenly books related to the destiny of humans is already expressed by Moses when he appeals in behalf of Israel (Exod 32:32), and in the sameway, the Psalter also points out those records (Ps 69:29).

Although the angels there are described as having a plain human appearance 'nsym, "men," the context makes clear that they are angelic beings.<sup>1</sup> Each one of the six carried with them destructive weapons,<sup>2</sup> while a seventh dressed in linen carried writing instruments (9:1, 2).<sup>3</sup> Apparently this group constitutes six warrior angels with a writer angel. This last one was to mark all the righteous people in Jerusalem with a sign (9:4, 6)<sup>4</sup> on the forehead, while the others were to walk behind him destroying all the unmarked, indicating their nature as godless and idolatrous. The fact that he led this destructive mission marking those to

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<sup>1</sup>Keil Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>In vs. 1, w'ys kly mšhtw bydw, "each (man) with his destroying weapon in his hand." In vs. 2, w'ys kly mpsw bydw, lit. "each (man) with his smashing weapon in his hand," a "shattering weapon" perhaps a war club (HELOT, pp.658659). Both verbs šht, "to crush, to injure," (HCLOT, p.1371), and nps, "to break, to dash in pieces" (AHCL, p. 557), stress the destructive role that those angelic beings were commanded to perform in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>wqst hspr, "and an ink horn of a scribe." Although no other scribe's instrument is mentioned for the celestial scribe, he is mentioned three times within the vision (9:2, 3, 11).

<sup>4</sup>A tw, "mark." If this mark was similar to the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet then possibly it was shaped like an "x," according to the most ancient script (Ronald F. Youngblood, s.v. "taw," TWOT, 2:2496a). A sign intended to protect someone from death is a repeated motif in the OT. The cursed Cain was protected by a divine sign (Gen 4:15). Also the night when the angel of YHWH slew every Egyptian firstborn, a blood protective sign prevented the destruction of the Hebrew firstborns (Exod 12:7, 12-13, 23).

be spared from destruction, plus the information that he gave at the end of his mission (9:11),<sup>1</sup> seems to indicate that this angelic writer could be an important character within the hosts of the heavenly assembly.

In regard to the constituency of the assembly of YHWH, the OT is very explicit in establishing the difference between YHWH as the head of the council and the other members of the assembly. He is the supreme God, the absolute sovereign and the Creator. The others are His creatures, subjects and servants. Although they belong to the heavenly realm and act in close relation with the divine, nowhere do they appear as similar or equal to the supreme Godhead. Even a parallel between them and YHWH is strictly avoided throughout the OT, and thus it appears inconceivable to the Hebrew mind.

At the dedication of the Solomonic temple, the king himself addressed God saying:

yhwh 'lhy ysr'l	YHWH, God of Israel,
'yn-kmwk 'lhym	there is no god like you
bšmym mm'l	in heaven above
w'l-h'rš mtht	or on earth beneath." <sup>2</sup>

It is clear that in the conception of Solomon, no being heavenly or earthly in the entire cosmos even faintly

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<sup>1</sup>šyty k'šr šwytny, "I have done as you commanded" (NIV).

<sup>2</sup>1 Kgs 8:23 (NJB).

resembled the person of YHWH or was able to perform works like His.<sup>1</sup>

The heavenly beings are also referred to in a similar way in the Hebrew psalmodic material. Some psalms explicitly point out not only the uniqueness of YHWH but also the existence of other celestial beings apart from Him. Ps 89:7 says:

ky my bšhq	For whom in the skies above
y <sup>r</sup> rk lyhwh	can be on equality with YHWH?
ydmh lyhwh	Is anyone among the heavenly
bbny 'lym	like YHWH?" <sup>2</sup>

This rhetorical question is made up in such a way that the obvious answer to it is that not one of the heavenly beings of the heavenly assembly matches the reality or actions of YHWH.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This concept is expressed in a sharper way in the prayer of the Levites during the reconstruction of Jerusalem, when they said: "You Oh YHWH are unique. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you" (Neh 9:6 RSV).

<sup>2</sup>Lit. "who among the sons of God is (or looks) like YHWH?" We assume that these sons of God are simply no other than heavenly entities who can also be properly understood as angels, as later manuscripts attest (BHS, p. 1170).

<sup>3</sup>The fact that these heavenly beings are mentioned in parallelism with the holy ones--qdšym--that compose His council--sod--and are described as surrounding him--sebibayu--in the following verse indicates that these beings are to be identified as part of the constituency of the court of YHWH.

Indeed, the heavenly assembly is quite a frequent motif in the Psalter,<sup>1</sup> and in some of those references, the gods of the nations are referred to as if they contributed to an assembly presided over by YHWH. However, even if in this way of expression God resembles the image of the supreme Canaanite god,<sup>2</sup> the psalmists always were plainly conscious of the difference between YHWH and the neighboring deities. In using some expressions, perhaps derived from mythical literature, they resort to poetical devices to make even more acute the inequality between the so-called gods and YHWH. For the Hebrew writer, the creative power of YHWH and the wonders that He performed on behalf of Israel were the theological touchstone in matters of comparison. YHWH could do these works, but the gods of the nations were powerless to perform them.

That is why a pious Hebrew as a poet or as a common worshiper could confidently say, "The LORD is great and is to be highly praised; he is to be honored more than all the gods. The gods of all the nations are only idols, but the LORD created the heavens" (Ps 96:45 GNB). Likewise, "For the LORD is the Great God, the great King above all gods . . . Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker (Ps 95:3 NIV). Or even, "God stands in

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<sup>1</sup>L. Dequeker, "La cour céleste de Yahve," Collectanea Mechliniensia 52 (1967):134, (hereafter CoMe).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

the divine assembly; among the divine beings He pronounces judgement" (Ps 82:1 JSAV). No matter if he addressed YHWH as King, Lord, or Judge among the gods, he was always pointing out a particular aspect of His person or His work never found in the gods of the nations.<sup>1</sup> Expressions that appear wrapped in mythological language by no means convey any ANE myth related to YHWH, for He is not subject to mythic imagery. On the contrary, those literary devices emphasize the surpassing incomparability of YHWH, the creator and redeemer of Israel.

In an appropriate way Robinson has suggested that the biblical references to the assembly of YHWH are not a mere figurative conception, but are quite realistic in meaning; thus they are to be taken seriously.<sup>2</sup> He also underlines the way that the prophets were enabled to cast some features of the divine council in human language so that they could become more understandable to humans.<sup>3</sup>

Mullen correctly asserts that through the entire OT the concept of the divine council runs "as a continuing

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<sup>1</sup>In an environment so polytheistic, for the biblical writer it was just natural to use a similar terminology in addressing His god, but with the plain Israelite meaning. Every biblical writer was a devoted worshiper of YHWH. They knew that in spite of the grandiloquence that pagans ascribed to their deities in their myths, without exception their gods were as nothingness in comparison with YHWH. No matter how highly those gods were considered, they were only idols.

<sup>2</sup>Robinson, JTS 45:151.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-157.

theme of Yahweh's power and authority."<sup>1</sup> Likewise Wright, with no less accuracy, points out that the members of the assembly of YHWH, which in the minds of so many scholars are "a survival or borrowing from polytheism, possess no independent authority or even existence or worship. Their being and authority are derived, not primary."<sup>2</sup> Nowhere in the whole OT does the divine council overpower YHWH or diminish His authority. He always is far above His assembly and never is His authority less than supreme.<sup>3</sup>

From the OT references to the assembly of YHWH it is clear that occasionally the prophets were enabled to stand in the sessions of the council of YHWH, and they were endowed with abilities to perceive and hear the happenings developed there. In fact, this was the supreme proof of the difference between the true and false prophets. In this way Micaiah stood alone among the multitude of false prophets hired by Ahab. The son of Imlah was the only one who could say "I saw" and "I heard" the doom of the King of Israel decreed in the council of YHWH. In the same way, Jeremiah challenged those who pretended to be prophets, saying, "Who among them has stood in the council of YHWH to

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<sup>1</sup>DCC, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Wright, OTAIE, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>This is a picture contrary to that presented in the divine assemblies of the ANE pantheons, where the deity that occasionally precedes the council is surrounded by other gods like him and never has absolute sovereignty over the assembly or the assembled gods. See above p. 42.

perceive and hear his word?"<sup>1</sup> Naturally the claims of having witnessed the actions of the celestial council in session should be in clear and plain harmony with the standards of morality that YHWH always required in the lives of His people. The demand of God is, "If they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."<sup>2</sup>

In sum, the heavenly assembly appears as an organized body under the absolute leadership of YHWH. It consists of God and His angels, who are not gods but are beings created by Him.

Biblical references, though very concise, tend to indicate that the heavenly council meets regularly before the throne of YHWH. Despite the fact that the periodicity of its reunions is not given, it seems clear that the assembly normally gathers from time to time to present some kind of report to YHWH, to praise His name and works, and to assist YHWH in His right judgment. The OT plainly declares that God in His council deals with matters that are closely related with the present and future of His people.

Two basic functions appear evident for the members of the heavenly council: (1) They praise YHWH and worship

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<sup>1</sup>ky my 'nd bswd yhwh wyr' wyšm' 'tdbrw (Jer 23:18).

<sup>2</sup>Jer 23:22.



Him; they extol their Creator with knowledge of His fidelity. (2) They assist Him in the fulfillment of his designs and purposes and, especially, in matters related to the function of judgment. As a corollary to this, they give Him loyal and prompt assistance whenever and wherever their service is required.

In spite of the fact that the number of the members of the celestial assembly is declared to be innumerable, almost the totality of its persons remains anonymous.

The celestial creatures that constitute the heavenly council are referred to with a variety of titles which clearly point to their creaturehood and servitude in relation to God. They appear identified as sons of God, messengers (angels), mighty warriors, ministers, holy ones, cherubim, and seraphim. Also the functions of interpreter and writer appear among the references as proper service for some of the members of the heavenly assembly. Each of these designations may be a way to point out some of the varied functions that these heavenly beings perform as members of the celestial assembly; they are not just superficial labels.

Most of the terms used to name the constituent elements of the assembly of YHWH are polyvalent. As in the case of the assembly's terminology itself, it may designate heavenly entities or human beings. Basic to this exegetical reality, however, is the context and the meaning that the

term conveys in the whole OT which is decisive for a final interpretation.

### The Armies of YHWH

The expression "armies of YHWH" is found many times in the Hebrew scriptures in the form YHWH šb'wt lit. "hosts of YHWH", or the like.<sup>1</sup> The term šb' is used meaning "military service" (Num 31:36) and likewise "army" (Deut 24:5), and the root šb' appears attested as a cognate term among the Semitic languages.<sup>2</sup> Otto Bauernfeind<sup>3</sup> notes that in the OT šb' is used as a verb<sup>4</sup> and as a noun to refer to something devoted to cultic service.<sup>5</sup> He also sees the term as conveying a special sanctity whenever it is related to the name of YHWH or a service to him.<sup>6</sup> The warlike connotation of the term and its derivatives may point, in an explicit way, to the function and character of the celestial armies.

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<sup>1</sup>A. S. van der Woude indicates that šeba'ôt occurs no less than 480 times as a divine epithet within the OT (THAT, 2:499).

<sup>2</sup>Akk. šaba'u, "to go to war" (CAD, 16:41), and šabu, "people, contingent of workers, troop of soldiers, army" (ibid., 16:46). Ug. šbu, "ejército, tropa, soldados (del Olmo, MLC, p. 613).

<sup>3</sup>S.v. "strateuomai" TDNT 7:705.

<sup>4</sup>Num 4:23; 8:24; 1 Sam 2:22.

<sup>5</sup>Num 4:3, 23, 30, 35.

<sup>6</sup>Bauernfeind, TDNT, 7:705.

## YHWH the Divine Warrior

One cannot pass over the fact that in the OT an integral constituent of the concept of YHWH as king is intrinsically linked to His celestial hosts.<sup>1</sup> The mention of celestial forces which are equivalent to the heavenly armies of YHWH is repeated quite often and in an explicit manner.

In Josh 5:13-15 is mentioned that the commander of this army Himself met Joshua just before the siege of Jericho. Although he came to the Hebrew leader in human form<sup>2</sup>--probably in His warrior attire grasping a sword already drawn,<sup>3</sup> He identified Himself, however, as the

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<sup>1</sup>J. P. Ross, "Jahweh šēba'ōt in Samuel and Psalms," VT 17 (1967):83.

<sup>2</sup>The term 'yš, "man" (CHALOT, p. 13), used to describe the heavenly visitor, probably points to the appearance that the heavenly being resembled to the eyes of the Hebrew leader, and not necessarily to His nature. It should be kept in mind that throughout the OT the unexpected meeting with a man which turns out to be a meeting with God or His messengers is a frequent motif (Gen 18:32; 32:22-23). In this case Joshua himself became "aware of the presence of the deity" (Edward P. Blair, "The Book of Joshua," The Layman's Bible Commentary [Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964], 5:98), since the apparition was "nothing less than the revelation of YHWH himself" (Herbert C. Alleman, and Elmer E. Black, Old Testament Commentary [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948], p. 334).

<sup>3</sup>Although the text does not explicitly mention the heavenly commander as wearing his warrior array, mentioning Him as having hrbw šlwph bydw, "His drawn sword in his hand," and identifying Him hierarchically as a militant of the highest rank, clearly implies the depiction of a warrior dressed in his full warrior attire.

śr-šb'-yhwh" commander of the army of YHWH."<sup>1</sup> The text does not identify this celestial visitor as an angel as some commentators affirm;<sup>2</sup> rather it describes a definite theophany.<sup>3</sup>

Two point seems unmistakably indicated here; the heavenly army and the leadership of it. That is to say, the heavenly contingents are under the command of YHWH, and this supreme leader met Joshua at Jericho nearby.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The term śr, "leader, ruler" (CHALOT, p. 354), or "prince, chief captain, master" (Gary G. Cohen, s.v. "śr," TWOT, 2:2995a), also "leader of an army, general" (HCLLOT, p. 1439).

<sup>2</sup>Among them, J. Alberto Soggin, Joshua: A Commentary (London: SCM Press, 1982), p. 78; E. John Hamlin, Inheriting the Land: A Commentary on the Book of Joshua, ITC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 4041; R. G. Boling and G. E. Wright, Joshua, AB (New York: Doubleday), pp. 199; A. Cohen, ed., Joshua and Judges (London: Soncino Press, 1950), p. 26; J. Maxwell Miller and Gene M. Tucker, The Book of Joshua (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 26; R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and D. Brown, Comentario Exegetico y Explicativo de la Biblia (El Paso, Texas: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, [n.d.]), 1:185-186.

<sup>3</sup>In this way John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth (London: Nelson, 1967), pp. 71-72; George Bush, Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua (New York: Ivison, Phiney & Co., 1862), p. 62; Paul P. Enns, Joshua, Bible Study Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 50; Blair, Joshua, p. 98; Alleman-Black, OT Commentary, p. 334; Charles M. Laymon, ed., The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 127; D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, The New Bible Commentary Revised (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 238; Marten Woudstra, The Book of Joshua (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 105-106.

<sup>4</sup>Some clear points indicate that the one who appeared to Joshua was not an angel, but God Himself first, the explicit self-identification as prince of the heavenly contingent; second, the order given to Joshua to put off

The Hebrews were not only convinced that YHWH was the supreme commander of the heavenly troops, they also recognized Him as the leader of the armies of Israel. The plain conviction of this fact was expressed in the epithet given to Him as YHWH šb'wt.<sup>1</sup> This is clearly expressed in 1 Sam 17:45 which is set in a warfare context. David plainly proclaimed on the battlefield that his God was ywh šb'wt, "YHWH of the hosts", and that He also was 'lhy m'rkwt ysr'l, "the God of the armies of Israel."<sup>2</sup> Two

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his shoes from his feet--he was in the presence of the same Holy one who commanded with the same prescript to his predecessor before the burning bush (Exod 3:45); third, the worship rendered by Joshua. Joshua understood who the One was standing before him, and Joshua *wypl 'l-pnyw 'rsh wyšthw*, "he fell on his face to the earth and worshiped." Since it is clear that the Hebrew *hšthwh* signifies not an abstraction, as English "worship" conveys, but instead a particular action of specific nature, acknowledging the quality of the person thus worshiped (G. E. Mendenhall, "Old Testament and Cult," The Lutheran Quarterly 5 [1953]:239), it becomes evident that the one who appeared to Joshua was not any angelic entity but YHWH Himself.

<sup>1</sup>A century ago Kautzsch, writing on the original meaning of the expression *ywh šb'wt*, noticed that its usage is mainly in the prophetic books up to 245 times, and a few others in the historic material, 11 in the books of Samuel, 5 in Kings, and 3 in Chronicles has an eminent - warrior connotation for the God of Israel ("Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Namens *ywh zb'wt*," ZAW 6 [1886]:17). For a detailed study of the YHWH *šb'wt* motif, see B. N. Wambacq, L'épithète divine Jahvé Seba'ôt. Étude philologique, historique et exégetique (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947).

<sup>2</sup>Wambacq indicates that "dans l'interprétation de l'épithète divine Jahvé Š<sup>e</sup>ba'ôt, le cri de guerre de David est d'une importance capitale. Jahvé Š<sup>e</sup>ba'ôt y est nommé Dieu des armées d'Israël (1 Sam. 17, 45). Ce titre évoque tous les secours accordés par Jahvé pour la réalisation de ses desseins" (Jahvé Seba'ôt, pp. 174-175).

forces are mentioned separately here, the celestial contingents of YHWH and the army of Saul. In referring to both separately, David recognizes the sovereignty of God over both realms. He rules over His heavenly forces as well as over the soldiers of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

In 1 Kgs 22:19 YHWH is described as *yšb 'l-ks'w wkl-šb' hsmym 'md 'lyw mymynw wmsm'lw*, "sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left." The picture given is that of a summoned army with all its hosts divided into its respective squadrons, arranged in an ordered display before its supreme commander. He presents some tasks that need to be performed within his domain, and they voluntarily perform the assigned duty wherever they are sent. The mention, though brief in other details, makes plain that the whole composition of the army of YHWH belongs to the heavenly realm.

The heavenly hosts are also depicted as being composed of squadrons of horsemen and blazing chariotry. In 2 Kgs 6:13-17 it is mentioned that while Elisha was in Dothan, a Syrian army was sent to capture the prophet. To the despair of his servant in the situation, he confidently indicated their superiority under the protection of the hosts of God. Then at the petition of Elisha, God showed

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<sup>1</sup>Gustave Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1886), p. 438.

the servant the heavenly hosts protecting them. It says:

whnh hhr	and behold, the whole mountain
ml' swsym	was full of horses
wrkb <sup>1</sup> 'š	and chariots of fire
sbywt 'lyš <sup>e</sup>	round about Elisha.

The conception of the celestial armies being composed in part of flaming chariotry is a repeated motif in the OT.<sup>2</sup> The same prophet Elisha witnessed the ascension of his master prophet. In 2 Kgs 2:11 it is mentioned that Elijah went up into heaven amidst a whirlwind when he was taken by a rkb 'š wswsy 'š wyprdw, "chariotry of fire and horses of fire."

To the unquestioned nature of the military image in this passage,<sup>3</sup> it may be added that the blazing heavenly train which descended to transfer Elijah up to heaven was part of the host that God disposed to "take Elijah up to heaven" (2 Kgs 2:1).<sup>4</sup> The fire and the whirlwind mentioned

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<sup>1</sup>Here the singular rkb is used in a collective way, meaning chariotry or chariots rather than chariot.

<sup>2</sup>There is no way to know how the celestial chariots look. However, the chariot commonly used in ANE warfare is archaeologically well attested elsewhere from Mesopotamia to Egypt. See Yigael Yadin, The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1963), 1:45, 37-39, 2:297-302. An important iconographical motif is also the depiction of gods riding their chariots (See here Figs. 18, 41, 43). For a complete study of the war chariot in ANE iconography, see Maria Giulia Amadasi, L'iconografia del carro da guerra in Siria e Palestina (Rome: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1965).

<sup>3</sup>T. H. Hobbs, 2 Kings, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Patrick D. Miller, "The Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War," VT 18 (1968):107.

in connection with this passage are the means that point to two peculiarities about beings that belong to the heavenly realm. The fire indicates a close relation with the divine,<sup>1</sup> and the whirlwind is related to the swiftness of action of those heavenly warriors.

The number of the chariotry of the heavenly hosts is also mentioned in a peculiar way in Ps 68:18 where it says:

rkb 'lhym	the chariots of God
rbytym 'lgy šn'n <sup>2</sup>	(are) twenty thousand, (even) thousand of angels
'dni bm	The Lord is among them (KJV). <sup>3</sup>

The image presented here is clearly military, and this is an allusion "to the heavenly armies which accompany YHWH."<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew here emphasizes properly the multitude of the heavenly hosts taking not only the singular rkb

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<sup>1</sup>Fire "as a symbol of God's presence was derived from Israel's own tradition." Gwilym H. Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984), 2:386.

<sup>2</sup>The word šn'n may be related to its Ar. cognate šn', "to shine, be bright," and thus "glorified ones" (AHCL, p. 730). It is also possible to see the term derived from the Ar. saniya, "be high in rank," and thus translate it as "highness" (LVTL, p. 996), thus "angels."

<sup>3</sup>A similar translation for the first and third lines is given by A. Weiser, "the chariot of the Lord are ten thousand . . . the Lord is with them" (Psalms [London: SCM Press, 1962], p. 478). The JSAV translates "God's chariots are myriads upon myriads, thousands upon thousands, the Lord is among them . . . ."

<sup>4</sup>A. A. Anderson, The Book of Psalms, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1972), 1:491.



collectively,<sup>1</sup> with the meaning of "chariotry," but also using the dual *rbtym* "in a multiplicative sense."<sup>2</sup> In this way the innumerable retinue of YHWH is expressly underlined twice, pointing to "an indefinite plurality of myriads."<sup>3</sup> In a more warlike sense, and taking other Semitic cognates for *šn'n*, Austel suggests that in this passage not only chariotry but also archery appears to be presented.<sup>4</sup>

That this passage was correctly understood as a direct reference to the chariotry of the hosts of YHWH seems also to be reflected in the LXX<sup>5</sup> and Targum<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2 Kgs 6:17. See A. A. Anderson, The Book of Psalms, New Century Bible (Waco: Texas: Word Books, 1985), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Kautzsch, GHG, sec. 97, h.

<sup>3</sup>Keil Delitzsch, Psalms, 2:258.

<sup>4</sup>He suggests to translate "twenty thousand (chariots) and thousands of archers" (Hermann J. Austel, s.v. "*šnh*," TWOT, 2:2421). This is in accordance with the suggestions of Albright who asserted that *šn'n* equals the Ugaritic *tnn*, "warrior" ("Notes on Psalms 68 and 134," Norsk teologisk tidsskrift 56 [1955]: 2-4) and that of Wiseman who established from Alalakh tablets that *shananu*, "warriors," is a cognate for *šn'n*. He then renders the term as "archer, bowman" making those military entities explicitly related to chariotry warfare (Wiseman, The Alalakh Tablets, p. 11, nos. 183, 226). See also Dahood, Psalms II 51-100, BA [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1968], pp. 142-143; William A. Ward, "Comparative Studies in Egyptian and Ugariic," JNES 20 [1961]:39).

<sup>5</sup>The LXX renders *to arma tou thou murioplasion xiliades euthenounton*, "the chariots of God are ten thousandfold, thousands of rejoicing ones." It seems that the translators had in mind the joyful promptness with which all the heavenly hosts served their Lord.

versions of this psalm, where both the mighty forces of the Lord of heavens and their great multitude are established.

The immeasurable number of the hosts of YHWH is also unambiguously stated in Dan 7:10 where it says, 'lpym ysmšwnh wrbw rbwn qdmwby yqwmwn, "thousands upon thousands served Him; myriads upon myriads attended Him."<sup>1</sup> The infinite numbers in the host of YHWH may properly suggest the vastness of His domain.

It is quite proper to relate a vast host of warriors to a military leader, and certainly this is the case with the commander of the heavenly hosts. This is why the OT pictures YHWH as a warrior par excellence and makes YHWH šb'wt "a favorite designation for God as warrior."<sup>2</sup> It is quite possible that with this title OT writers expressed not only their recognition of the surpassing power of YHWH as warrior, but also they recalled with it every one of His interventions in behalf of YHWH's people.

The divine interventions in the Israelite warfare were high points in the experience of Israel, and they were remembered as victories of YHWH who could also eminently

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<sup>6</sup>The targumic version says: 'rtykyn dy 'lh' tryn dybbn dynwr dlyq tryn 'lpyn d'ngly' mdbryn lhwn skynt'dyhwh srt 'lyhwn 'l twr' dsyny bqdwhs.

<sup>1</sup>JSAV, Dan 7:10. See also above, pp. 361-364.

<sup>2</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1961), 1:192. For studies on YHWH as warrior, see H. Fredrikson, Jahwe als Krieger (Lund: C. W. K. Glecrup, 1945).

act as a warrior. After the victory over Pharaoh and his army, Moses shouted jubilantly about the incomparability of his God, not only as an invincible warrior but also when contrasted with all of the Egyptian gods<sup>1</sup> including the son of Ra drowned in the waters of the Yam Suph.<sup>2</sup> He asserted:

'zy wzmrt yh . . . .	YHWH is my strength and my song . . . .
zh 'ly w'nwhw	He is my God, and I will praise him,
'lhy 'by w'rmmnhw	My father's God, and I will exalt him.
ywhw 'yš mlhmh	YHWH is a warrior,
ywhw šmw . . . .	YHWH is his name . . . .
my-kmkh b'lm <sup>3</sup>	Who among the gods is like you,
ywhw . . . .	© ynwv? <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cassuto rightly points out that Moses challenges a contrast between YHWH and all the pagan deities, and particularly the Egyptian gods (A Commentary on the Book of Exodus [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983], p. 176).

<sup>2</sup>Exod 14:23-28; 15:19; Ps 136:15 point to the deadly fate that Pharaoh found at the Red Sea.

<sup>3</sup>It is true that 'lm is a synonymous term for the lesser divinities so often referred to in the myths according to the ANE religious understanding, but here any ANE pantheon presided over by YHWH is alluded to. Since it is a "fact that the God of Israel has no mythology" (Wright, OTAIE, p. 26) Moses was not praising any Canaanite deity, he simply was expressing a pivotal concept of Hebrew theology, the incomparability of YHWH. As Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman have also correctly concluded regarding this passage, "we do not have a mythologically derived conflict there," and "there is not a hint of mythological overtones" but "rather we have 'history' shaped by familiar cliches, motifs, and literary styles" ("The Song of Miriam," JNES 14 (1955):237-250).

<sup>4</sup>Exod 15:2-3, 11. As Edwin M. Good accurately observes, YHWH is the subject of the song Exod 15 which ascribes to Him at once strength and deliverance or salvation ("Exodus XV 2," VT 20 [1970]:358-359).

YHWH is here exalted by Moses as a warrior, 'yš mlh̄mh.<sup>1</sup> In making this anthropomorphic comparison he is presenting Him as "a Master of War."<sup>2</sup> Metaphorically, YHWH is "viewed as fighting for Israel in order to save them from the Egyptian army."<sup>3</sup> His quality as a warrior is presented even before Pharaoh and his armies were drowned, since Moses said to the people, yhwh yl̄hm lhm w'tm thryšwn, "YHWH will fight for you, but you will remain quiet" (Exod 14:14). This could only mean that the warrior skills of God were quite well known, even in advance of His actions. YHWH is presented as unmatched, not only because of His attributes as a warrior and His military performance against the Pharaoh and his army<sup>4</sup> but also because His

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<sup>1</sup>Lit. "a man of war," "a warrior." For studies regarding the subject of YHWH as a warrior, see Gerhard von Rad, Der heilige Krieg im Alten Israel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952); Miller, DWEI; Millard C. Lind, Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1980).

<sup>2</sup>A. M. Silvermann, ed., Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Prayers for Sabbath and Rashi's Commentary (London: Shapiro, Vallentine & Co., 1946), 1:45b. Cf. Mpr'wt qdwlwt, on Exod 15:3.

<sup>3</sup>J. P. Hyatt, Commentary on Exodus, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 175.

<sup>4</sup>Jacob Z. Lauterbach, Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933), 2:3035.

acts of war are closely related to his actions as creator and redeemer.<sup>1</sup>

The records of warfare conducted during the possession of the promised land contain some episodes which deal with encounters between the Canaanite forces and Israel in which Israel could not have prevailed unless super-natural forces had come to help them (Josh 10:11-12; Judg 4:15; 1 Sam 7:10). This help can be seen properly as a divine intervention of the heavenly forces on behalf of the people of YHWH.

A classical picture of YHWH as warrior marching with His hosts to help Israel is inferred from Judg 4:15-16; 5:4-5, 20-21. At this time, the militia of Barak destroyed the Canaanite forces of Jabin, after YHWH routed

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<sup>1</sup>According to the Hebrew conception, YHWH is far apart from any other deity on two basic realities: He is the creator of everything (Gen 1:1, 31; 2:14), and He is the redeemer of His own people (Exod 15:13). Creation and redemption are the two most characteristic manifestations that YHWH has revealed to His own (Isa 40:25-26; 41:14). And certainly as far as the extant records of the ANE are now known, there is no god that could even compare with YHWH on these two characteristics among all the gods of any pantheon of the entire ANE. This warrior is unparalleled, He is supreme. David, the warrior king, was also quite sure of YHWH's supremacy. When he compared Him with all the surrounding deities of the ANE, He excelled them all, and David concludes, *ky my 'lwh mbl'dy yhwh*, "For who is God beside YHWH? (Ps 18:32 [Heb]). The psalmist king also expresses his conviction saying, *'yn-kmwk b'lhym 'dny w'yn km'syk*," there is no god like you, O Lord, no one has done what you have done," Ps 86:8 (GNB).

all the chariotry and army of Sisera.<sup>1</sup> In praising the episode Deborah sang:<sup>2</sup>

yhwh bš'tk mś'yr	O Yahweh, when you came out from Seir
bs'dk mśdh 'dwm	When you marched here from Edom's land
'rš r'esh gm-šmym	Earth quaked
ntpw	with thunder the skies
gm- <sup>e</sup> bym ntpw mym	rained, with thunder the clouds rained water!
hrym nzlw mpny yhwh	Mountains shook before Yahweh
zh syny <sup>3</sup>	The One of Sinai
mpny ywh 'lhy ysr'l	Before Yahweh, God of Israel.
.....	.....
mn-šmym nlhmw	From the heavens fought

<sup>1</sup>ywhm yhwh 't-sysr' w'-tkl-hrkb w't-kl-hmnh, "And YHWH routed Sisera, and all his chariots and all his army." The verb hmm, "to put to the rout, disperse, defeat, to destroy" (AHCL, p. 195), makes clear that Sisera and his army were first stricken by the forces of YHWH. On the other hand, Judg 4:6-7, 14 clearly indicates that the "strategy of the battle was not of Deborah nor of Barak, but of Yahweh who would 'draw out' Sisera to meet Barak by the river Kishon, a trap that only Yahweh could spring" (Lind, Warrior, p. 76).

<sup>2</sup>For detailed studies on the Song of Deborah, see Wm. Albright, "The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse," The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society 2 (1922):59-86 (hereafter JPOS); idem, "Some Additional Notes of the Song of Deborah," JPOS 2 (1922):284-285; idem, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology," BASOR 62 (1936):2631; Artur Weiser, "Das Deborahlied," ZAW 71 (1959):6797; J. Blenkinsopp, "Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah: A Discussion," Biblica 42 (1961):6176.

<sup>3</sup>The plain mention of the Sinai rules out any identification of YHWH with some Canaanite deity (Edward L. Dalglish, "Joshua," BBC 2:408). The One who intervened in behalf of Israel at the Tabor with the waters of the Qishon to route the chariotry and army of Sisera was the same One who divided the waters of the Yam Suph for Israel and destroyed the chariotry and forces of Egypt. On the other hand the mention of Edom and the surrounding regions is also parallel with the Song of Victory of Moses, in which Edom is mentioned as fearing and trembling because of the mighty act of YHWH (Exod 15:14-16).

hkwkby <sup>1</sup>	the stars
mmslwtm nlhmw	From their courses they fought
'm-sysr'	against Sisera!
nhl qyšwn grpm	The Wadi Qishon swept
	them away
nhl qdwmym	The Wadi overwhelmed them
nhl qyšwn . . . .	the Wadi Qishon . . . . <sup>2</sup>

Here the intervention of YHWH as a warrior with His forces<sup>3</sup> is given in a depiction that includes a display of nature's forces<sup>4</sup> similar to that manifested at Sinai (Exod

<sup>1</sup>Commentators have argued that the Canaanite tradition known through Ugaritic sources indicates the stars as a source of rain, as is meant here (Blenkinsopp, "The Song of Deborah," p. 73; Boling, Judges, p. 113, n. 20; Craigie, "Deborah and Anat: A Study of Poetic Imagery (Judges 5," ZAW 90 [1978]:379-380). Craigie points out, however, that the Ugaritic evidence for this is uncertain and adds that "it is dangerous to argue that the stars are the source of rain in Judges 5:20, at least in so far as the argument depends upon Ugaritic evidence" ("Three Ugaritic Notes," p. 34). The fact that the song celebrates a victory singing to YHWH rules out the mention of the stars with a mythological meaning (Lind, Warrior, p. 70). Indeed, as the same Craigie also concludes, "the reference to stars in Judges 5:20 develops further the cosmic scope of the battle; the stars, the heavenly host of Yahweh, fight for Israel in her holy war" ("Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah", p. 34-35).

<sup>2</sup>R. G. Boling, Judges, pp. 101, 103.

<sup>3</sup>Undoubtedly, as R. Smend remarks, "The intervention of celestial powers is directly decisive for the war of Yahweh in Judges 5" (Yahwe's War and Tribal Confederation, trans. M. Rogers [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970], p. 82). See also J. Coppens, "Miscellanées Bibliques. La théophanie de Jud., V, 45," ETL 43 (1967):528-531; Édouard Lipinski, "Judges 5,45 et Psaume 68,811," Bib 48 (1967):-200.

<sup>4</sup>The song describes vividly that the Israelite military success in the Kishon valley was mainly "due to the opportune rainstorm (v. 21), which made the plain water logged and thus hopeless terrain for the Canaanite chariot force" (P. C. Craigie, "Some Further Notes on the Song of Deborah," VT 22 [1972]:352; idem., "Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah," JSOT 2 [1977]:33).

20:18; Ps 68:7-8)<sup>1</sup> and at the Red Sea (Exod 14:24-25).<sup>2</sup> These divine interventions are also given in a more detailed imagery in other passages (Ps 18:11-15; 78:13, 53),<sup>3</sup> and these depictions are given in a vivid language which always makes plain that only the intervention of the heavenly forces reversed a hopeless situation. In this way the angelic intervention is indicated. They, as warrior angels, carry out their activity with the forces of nature by command of YHWH to help the earthly people of God and annihilate the enemy.<sup>4</sup>

The theophany of YHWH coming with His heavenly hosts at Sinai is a repeated motif in the OT. As it is recorded in Deut 33:2-3, it presents a vivid description of

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<sup>1</sup>Craigie indicates that the imagery of an intervention of nature forces like those depicted in Judges 5:4-5, 21 is recalling the Sinai theophany in a language that associates God also with storm and rain ("Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah," p. 33). In any case the author indicates "a heavenly source for the discomfiture of Sisera" (Carl Edwin Armending, "Judges," IBC, p. 322).

<sup>2</sup>Lind points out that the imagery of the Exodus and sea used in Deborah's Song "is transparent" (Warrior, p. 87.)

<sup>3</sup>Every time a war event is depicted in poetry, as elected detail is intensified (Gillis Gerleman, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Stylistics," VT 1 [1951]:172). The description of the nature elements used in God's intervention in behalf of His people has led some to suppose that the council of YHWH as well as His armies "are nature forces playing some role in the divine governance after they have been demoted from their 'former' position as polytheistic gods beside YHWH" (R. G. North, "Angel Prophet or Satan Prophet?" ZAW 82 [1970]:31-37).

<sup>4</sup>Severin Grill, "Synonyme Engel namen im Alten Testament" ThZ 18 (1962):245.



the number, nature, and function of the hosts that surround  
YHWH, since it says:<sup>1</sup>

yhwh msyny<sup>2</sup> b'  
wzrh<sup>3</sup> mś'yr<sup>4</sup> lmw  
hwpy<sup>e5</sup> mhr p'rn<sup>6</sup>

The LORD came from Sinai  
and dawned from Seir  
upon us.  
He shone forth from

<sup>1</sup>We are aware of the difficulties involved in the interpretation of the Blessing of Moses and detailed solutions for it are beyond our task. Some works dealing with this passage are: W. J. Phythian Adams, "On the Date of the 'Blessing of Moses'," JPOS 3 (1923):158166; T. H. Gaster, "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33, 35, 26, 29, JBL 66 (1947):5362; F. M. Cross and David Noel Freedman, "The Blessing of Moses," JBL 67 (1948):191-210; U. Cassuto, "Deuteronomy Chapter XXXIII and the New Year in Ancient Israel," BOS 1:4770; I. L. Seeligman, "A Psalm from Preregal Times," VT 14 (1964):7592; B. Margulis, "Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 23," VT 19 (1969):202-210.

<sup>2</sup>Elsewhere the OT repeatedly presents Sinai as the "mountain of revelation of the God of Israel." A. D. H. Mayes, Deuteronomy, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1979, 1979), p. 115. The Sinai was the place where YHWH gave His law in written form. The spectacularity of the occasion is given in detail in Exod 19:16-20; 20:18-19. Moses was familiar not only with the place but also with repeated encounters with YHWH at that place (Exod 3:26; 19:20; 24:12-13, 15-18; 33: 21-23; 34:4-8).

<sup>3</sup>Among the variety of meanings, the verb zrh was used to indicate the appearing of the morning sun and figuratively pointed to "salvation, light, glory resulting from God's coming into a" person's life (Gerard van Groningen, s. v. "zrh," TWOT, 1:580).

<sup>4</sup>Seir is the mountainous region east of the Arabah. Mayes, Deuteronomy, p. 115. For other possible locations of Seir, see J. R. Bartlett, "The Land of Seir and the Brotherhood of Edom," JTS 20 (1969):120.

<sup>5</sup>From yp<sup>e</sup>, "shine forth, cause to shine" (AHCL, p.335). The usage is related to the majestic splendor that surrounds God in His theophanic appearances (Paul R. Gichrist, s.v. "yp<sup>e</sup>," TWOT, 1:892).

<sup>6</sup>The name p'rn indicates the wilderness in which the people of Israel camped when they moved from Mount Sinai (Num 10:12). J. Simons indicates that "apparently

w'th mrbbt qdš<sup>1</sup>mymynw 'šdt lmw<sup>2</sup>'p hbb<sup>3</sup> 'mym

Mount Paran.  
 He came with myriads  
 of holy ones  
 with flaming fire  
 at his right hand.  
 Yea, he loved his

every 'midbar' may also be referred as 'har' (hr), e.g., midbar Paran = har P., midbar Edom = har 'Esau or har Seir' (GTTOT, p. 23). Mount Paran as referred to here and in Hab 3:3 is in poetical passages pointing to an explicit theophany of God (J. L. Mihelic, s.v. "Paran," IDB, 3:567).

<sup>1</sup>The qdšym, "holy ones," is a synonym for angels. Only recently qdšym has been considered as a proper term for angels and as a designation for the celestial beings that are part of the hosts of YHWH. Rashi is of the opinion that at Sinai was only "a division of the myriads of the holy angels, and not even the majority of them," escorting Him (Silvermann, Rashi's Commentary, 2:170). The interpretation of I. L. Seligmann of the qdšym in Deut 33 as being demons going at the feet of God to guard Him on His way and to ward off all evil, though he is in supreme command of His pantheon ("A Psalm from Preregal Times," VT 14 [1964]: 80) must be rejected as unacceptable.

<sup>2</sup>The phrase 'šdt lmw' is obscure, and numerous interpretations have been given to it (Cross and Freedman, "Blessing of Moses," p. 199, n. 11). This diversity is clearly seen in the different modern versions of the Bible that render it as "from his right hand went flames of fire" (BBE); "a flaming fire at his right hand" (GNB); "(myriads of holy ones) streaming at his right hand" (NEB); "with flames of fire at his right hand" (MLB); "in your hand are all the holy ones" (NJB); "on his right hand [proceeded] fire to guide them" (EB); "with his lightning bolts at his right hand" (Smith and Goodspeed); "blazing in fire from the south" (Moffatt); "From his right hand fire appointed the resting place for them" (Spurrell); "lightning flashing at them from his right" (JSAV); "from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (KJV); "on his right hand his law shone to them like fire" (Knox); "at His right hand was a fiery law unto them" (SC). Two main ideas appear to dominate: (1) the presence of fire surrounding Him, and (2) the law given to Israel at that time.

<sup>3</sup>This phrase also presents difficulties and it is diversely rendered. The term hbb, from the root hbb "to love" (HALAT, 1:273), has been suggested as a reference to the giving of the Torah by God "as a gesture of love" (Cassuto, BOS, 1:51), and also to the guardian angels of

kl-qdšyw bydk<sup>1</sup>

whm tkw lrglk<sup>2</sup>

yś' mdbrtyk<sup>3</sup>

people;  
all the holy ones are  
in your hand  
at your feet they all,  
bow down  
and from you receive  
instruction (RSV).

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the peoples, who likewise are seen as part of "the heavenly host who surround and accompany Yahweh" (Cross and Freedman, "Blessing of Moses," p. 200). Following this reasoning the phrase is translated, "At His right hand proceeded the mighty ones, Yea, the guardian of the peoples" (ibid., p. 193).

<sup>1</sup>The plurivalence of yd is quite known. It basically means "hand" (HALAT, p. 370; HELOT, p. 389) but also figuratively is extensively used with a diversity of meanings such as "power, mighty, assistance, help, support" (HCLLOT, pp. 538-539); very often the OT associates yd with the idea of possession (ibid.; HALAT, p. 371). Of the 1600 OT occurrences of yd (ibid., p. 369), 200 times it is used as yd yhwh, in anthropomorphisms for YHWH (van der Woude, s.v. "yd," THAT, 1:672). If yd is taken here as hand, we may say that it pictures the host of YHWH standing as an ordered accompaniment at His right hand as a parallel description with 1 Kgs 22:19. However, judging the term in its possible theological meaning (see P. R. Ackroyd, "yd," TDOT, 5:418421), we might propose that here the host of YHWH is not simply mentioned as standing at the right hand of God but is depicted as being under the power or domain of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>Though, for some, tkh remains without a possible solution (CHALOT, p. 390), others indicate the meaning of "to lie down" (HCLLOT, p. 863), or "to bow down" (ibid., p. 1471). The picture suggests the submissive attitude of the angelic hosts described as bowing in adoration at the feet of their maker. The picture is in accordance with the picture of reverence that the celestial army is urged to ascribe to God (Ps 29:12).

<sup>3</sup>Here this Pa. part. of dbr" to speak, to command" (HCLLOT, p. 310-311), and also "to subdue, to lead, to guide" (AHCL, p. 144), perhaps after its Ugaritic cognate dbr, "to follow, yield or submit" (WUS, No. 724), or "to guide, "to make march" (del Olmo, MLC, p. 535) possibly emphasizes the submissive role of the heavenly hosts of YHWH. Thus, the celestial host reverently attend the instructions given by their commander in order to carry out His will wherever it is needed.

This passage is recognized as a theophany whose basic theme is "the appearance of the divine warrior king."<sup>1</sup> YHWH is presented as coming to meet His earthly congregation at the mountain where He made a covenant with Israel after they came out of Egypt (2 Kgs 8:9).<sup>2</sup> Together with this mountain other places are also mentioned as the main theater of His actions. Around those regions He took special care of his people when He shepherded them during the days in the wilderness (Isa 63:11-14). The two passages that describe the theophany of YHWH at Sinai are complementary. In Exodus it is mainly the unfolding power of God that is described while Deuteronomy gives details of the celestial host that accompanied God on that occasion.

Thus we might say that the Deuteronomic record indicates that YHWH descended upon Sinai accompanied with a very numerous escort. In like manner, the blazing nature of His person and His entourage is mentioned, and the identity of this flaming retinue is repeatedly underlined. They are the holy ones qdšym. This depiction is coincident with the picture of the hosts that assist God as recorded in Daniel. Furthermore, the Mosaic description is given in a way that may be taken as portraying a host standing in formation at the right hand of God, or perhaps

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<sup>1</sup>Margulis, "Deut. XXXIII 23," p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Although the people witnessed many interventions of the power of God, the most impressive manifestation of Him certainly was on Sinai, when He gave His law.

the celestial army is presented as is to be expected under the power or directions of YHWH.<sup>1</sup> This insight also becomes evident from the fact that all the holy host appear bowing down at the feet of their divine sovereign, and at same time they receive instructions regarding their duties. We may assume that YHWH met Israel with such an escort, not only because they were selected for His retinue on that occasion but also because YHWH wanted to guarantee to His people all the protection that was available to them through His hosts of holy ones.

Perhaps the most vivid picture of YHWH as the supreme, powerful leader of His heavenly hosts is given in Ps 24:8, 10. It says:

my zh mlk hkbwd	Who is this king of glory?
yhwh 'zwz wgbwr	YHWH strong and mighty
yhwh gbwr mlhmh	YHWH mighty in battle
.. . . .	
my hw' zh mlk hkbwd	Who, then, is the

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase *kl-qdwsyw bydk* may be translated as "all your holy ones are in your power." This is in accordance with the diverse meaning that *yd* can convey in a figurative sense. In Gen 9:2 all of nature is given into the hands of humans *bydkm ntnw*, "they are given into your (pl.) hands" with the clear meaning of the dominion and care entrusted to them. Likewise, the authority of Sarah over Hagar is described in such a way by Abraham (Gen 16:6) and the angel of YHWH (Gen 16:9). Also, Joseph became steward of his master when he trusted all his house in his hands *kl-'šr-yš-lw ntn bydw* (Gen 39:4, 6, 8); and again in the jail the internal affairs of the prison were placed "in his hands" (Gen 39:22-23). Similarly of Israel is said that they went out from Egypt "under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, *"byd-mšh w'hrn*, lit. "under the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Num 33:1; Ps 77: 21). In Eccl 9:1 *yd* is applied to signify the absolute domain that God has all mankind. Therefore, this phrase might well be indicating the relationship of the holy hosts toward YHWH.

yhwh sb'wt	king of glory?
hw' mlk hkbwd	YHWH of hosts
	He is the King of glory <sup>1</sup>

In presenting the leader of the heavenly hosts here, military and royal attributes are associated with Him. His exalted position as king is repeatedly mentioned together with His heavenly panoply. He is not a mere king, he is mlk hkbwd, "the king of glory." As a warrior, He is not only strong and mighty, He is "mighty in battle." The heavenly hosts are under His command, He is YHWH of hosts.

#### The Celestial Hosts of YHWH

In mentioning the functions of the heavenly hosts of YHWH, the OT references are scarce and brief, but even from these scattered references the picture that emerges is varied. First of all, they have to be considered as the regular entourage of YHWH. Second, as the regular retinue they are charged with carrying out the different tasks that a regular royal retinue is called upon to perform.

We may mention again some references already noted in which this body of numerous heavenly beings is devoted to His service. In Ps 103:19-22 it says:

yhwh bšmym hkyn ks'w	YHWH has fixed his throne
wmlkwtw bkl mšlh	in heaven,
brkw yhwh ml'kyw	his sovereign power
gbry kh 'šy dbrw	rules over all.
lšm <sup>c</sup> bqwl dbrw	Bless YHWH all his angels,
	mighty warriors who
	fulfil his commands.
	attentive to the sound

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<sup>1</sup>Dahood, Psalms, Ps 24:710.

	of his words.
brkw yhwk kl-šb'yw	Bless YHWH, all his
	armies,
mšrtyw 'sy rswnw. . . .	Servants who fulfil
	his wishes . . . .
bkl-mqmwt mmšltw	in every place where
	he rules (NJB).

First, the identity and the rank of the heavenly king is established here. The ks' or "throne" points to His exalted rulership;<sup>1</sup> šmym, the "heavens," indicates the place of His abode and the arena from which he exerts His exalted rulership. All are under His supreme sovereignty. Then His forces are identified<sup>2</sup> and characterized<sup>3</sup> at the same time their functions are mentioned. To call them "angels," "warriors," "servants, and "ministers" is not only to show their subordinate rank, it also indicates the diversity of functions that they cover in their service to YHWH. Through these different expressions the angelic hosts are described "as ministerial servants ready to execute sovereign will."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John N. Oswalt, s.v., "ks'," TWOT, 1:1047.

<sup>2</sup>They are named ml'kyw, "angels," lit. messengers. The parallelism between the "angels" and the heavenly soldiers identifies them as the same military entity (Dahood, Psalms III 101-150, p. 30, n.21).

<sup>3</sup>They are characterized as gbry kh, "mighty warriors" or "strong warriors." The term geber has varied nuances. It may convey a sense of physical strength, courage, and valor, and also point to certain spiritual qualities (Hans Kosmala, "The Term Geber in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls," VTSup 17 [1968]:159-169).

<sup>4</sup>Dahood, Psalms, 3:30, n. 21.

Part of their constant duty is depicted as giving praise to God. This praising action is also indicated in Ps 148:2 where all the angels--skl ml'kyw--and all the warriors of the celestial army--kl-šb'w--were urged to extol YHWH. In the same way they are described as carrying out the will of their master.

It also indicates that they serve Him as His ministers in the whole vastness of His dominion--bkl-mqmwmt mmšltw,<sup>1</sup> that is, everywhere in the heavenly spheres and in the earthly regions.<sup>2</sup> This conveys the idea of a government carried on through the ministry of personal celestial entities. As Creator He can use the forces of nature to accomplish His purposes. In dealing with matters related to His kingdom among men, He acts especially through the appointed ministers that He has chosen from His heavenly hosts.

Glimpses of such a ministry strictly related to a military intervention of the heavenly armies in favor of those who were servants of YHWH are found in the OT. Such

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<sup>1</sup>The expression kl-mqmwmt mmšltw, lit. "in all places of his dominion," is an inclusive expression for the totality of the universe (A. Barnes, Notes on the Old Testament. Psalms [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950], 3:80). The whole creation of YHWH being urged to extol the creator only fits in a context of the universe (Derek Kidner, Psalms 73-150 [London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975], p. 104).

<sup>2</sup>Emile Grace Briggs, A Critical and Exgetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), p. 328.



is the case with Jacob during the encounter with his father-in-law when he was returning to Canaan. Jacob became aware of the celestial protection in two ways: (1) Laban told him that God explicitly warned him to deal with his son-in-law in a gentle way;<sup>1</sup> (2) when he continued on his way, he saw the celestial armies and he did not hesitate to name the place according to what he perceived. The narrative says:

wy <sup>é</sup> qb hlk ldrkw	Jacob went on his way
wypg <sup>é</sup> w-bw ml'ky 'lhym <sup>2</sup>	and the angels of God
	met him;
wy'mr y <sup>é</sup> qb k'sr r'm <sup>3</sup>	and when Jacob saw them
	he said,
mhn <sup>h</sup> 'lhym zh <sup>4</sup>	"This is God's army!"

<sup>1</sup>Laban recognized that he really had it in for Jacob and unwillingly changed his attitude under the clear order of God regarding Jacob, hsmr lk mdr 'my-<sup>é</sup>kb mtwb <sup>é</sup>d-r<sup>é</sup> "be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad" (Gen 31:29 [NIV]).

<sup>2</sup>The root pg<sup>é</sup> in its Qal form means "to meet, encounter" (AHCL, p. 621). Here paga<sup>é</sup> conveys the idea of a physical contact, since it is used in combination with the preposition b (Victor P. Hamilton, s.v. "pg<sup>é</sup>," TWOT, 2:1731; E. A. Speiser, Genesis, AB [New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964], p. 254, n. 2). The proper meaning of the phrase stresses the idea of a personal encounter in the sense that "the angels of God drew near to him" (Howard F. Vos, Genesis [Chicago: Moody Press, 1982], p. 122). Westermann opines that here a better translation for ml'kyhwh should be "angels" rather than "messengers" (Genesis 12-36 [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981], p. 505).

<sup>3</sup>r'h, "to see, to perceive, to experience" (AHCL, p. 671).

<sup>4</sup>The word mhn<sup>h</sup> is a military term and means either "camp, encampment," or "troop, host, army" (AHCL, p. 266). The plural connotation of the term points to the fact that Jacob saw a number of celestial warriors, otherwise mhn<sup>h</sup> would be meaningless (Westermann, Genesis 12-36, p. 205).

wyqr' šm-hmqwm hhw'

mḥnym<sup>1</sup>

So he called the name  
of that place  
Mahanaim (RSV).

This episode "echoes to the yhwh šb'wt" concept<sup>2</sup> and presents us with the usual brief biblical statement about the heavenly host functioning in a definite commission of protection within the earthly realm.<sup>3</sup> To Jacob this kind of function was not new at this time. The night that he saw the angelic hosts in Bethel, while fleeing from Esau, he saw not only the heavenly hosts, but over all the celestial leader of those celestial armies assured him protection wherever he would go (Gen 28:11-15). Although he was familiar with this idea, and although he was convinced that this return was scheduled by God (Gen 31:13), at the time when he came nearer to Esau's territory his apprehension increased. He was very afraid of his warrior

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<sup>1</sup>Gen 32:1-2. Mahanaim lit. means "two camps" or "two armies," "double camp" or "two hosts" (Vos, Genesis, p. 123). Although no archaeological site has been yet identified with biblical Mahanaim, the biblical record shows that the place was afterwards significant in the history of Israel. It seems that there Ishboshet established the capital of his ephemeral reign (2 Sam 2:8). Later David settled his headquarters there during the revolt of Absalom (2 Sam 7:24, 27); likewise Solomon took advantage of the site and settled one of his twelve capital cities there, as a district center for the taxation of the territory (1 Kgs 4:14).

<sup>2</sup>Westermann, Genesis 12-36, p. 505.

<sup>3</sup>Von Rad, Genesis. A Commentary, trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 308.

brother. Within this explicit military context<sup>1</sup> YHWH reassured him of divine protection in his return,<sup>2</sup> showing him that he was already being escorted by a body guard of His heavenly hosts.<sup>3</sup>

With this angelic manifestation, YHWH intended to reassure Jacob that He would protect him until the end of his return journey by means of His heavenly armies.<sup>4</sup> In a sense, God was giving Jacob additional confirmation that not only the Lord of the hosts was with him<sup>5</sup> but also His hosts were taking care of the affairs. Even in the coming confrontation with Esau, Jacob could "depend on God's proximity."<sup>6</sup>

This function of protection given by the heavenly hosts is also referred to in an explicit way in other instances. Such is the case mentioned in Isa 37:36 (cf. 2 Kgs 19:35) where it is recounted that the intervention of

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<sup>1</sup>Brueggemann, Genesis, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Westermann, Genesis 12-36, p. 505; Keil Delitzsch, Pentateuch, I:301.

<sup>3</sup>As Brueggemann says, "God is here at work," through His protective agents to usher Jacob "back to safety to the promised place" (Genesis, p. 262).

<sup>4</sup>G. Ch. Aalders, Genesis, Bible Students Commentary (Ontario: Paideia, 1978), 2:37.

<sup>5</sup>Basil F. C. Atkinson, The Book of Genesis, The Pocket Commentary of the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 303.

<sup>6</sup>C. Houtman, "Jacob at Mahanaim. Some remarks on Genesis xxxii 23," VT 28 (1978):41.

angelic power acted against the invading Assyrian army of Sennacherib. The above-mentioned case of Elisha in Dothan is similar (2 Kgs 6:15-17). It is also clear that the multitudes of Israel were protected by the warrior hosts of YHWH during the Exodus experience. When the Hebrews were terrified by the pursuing armies of the Pharaoh, Moses said to them, *ywhh ylhā lkm*, "YHWH will fight for you" (Exod 14:14). Indeed, he fought for them, not only covering them with His heavenly hosts as the rearguard of Israel (Exod 14:19-20) but also providing them with a sure way through the sea (Exod 14:29), and He destroyed the Egyptian forces following them (Exod 14:28).<sup>1</sup>

Resuming the matters related to the heavenly hosts of YHWH, we can say that the OT explicitly mentions the

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<sup>1</sup>We should mention that the concept of a god commanding celestial armies going to help his people in battles apparently was not a concept peculiar only to Israel. Some ANE records witness this conviction in a clear way. The records of some Assirian kings, among them, Ashurbanipal, Tikulti-Ninurta, Esarhaddon, Tiglathpileser II, Sargon II, etc., mention the intervention of the great gods in behalf of them at the battle or going at the head of their troops. (For a relation of the Assyrians' records of the alledged divine interventions, see Manfred Weippert, "'Heiliger Krieg' in Israel und Assyrien. Kritische Anmerkungen zu Gerhard von Rads Konzept des 'Heiligen Krieges im alten Isarel'," *ZAW* 84 [1972]:460-493; also R. C. Thompson, "The Inscription of Ashurbanipal from the Temple of Ishtar," *AAA* 20 [1933]:97, lines 163-164); Leonard William King, *Tikulti-Ninib I, King of Assyria* [London: Luzac and Co., 1904], pp. 85). In the same way, the records of the Egyptians and other peoples also attest this conviction (see Moshe Weinfeld, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," *History, Historiography, and Interpretation. Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983], pp. 121-147).

existence of celestial contingents, namely, among those, hosts that work in an orderly way under the surveillance of YHWH. Those contingents are His armies which sometimes appear forming a celestial choir praising Him as the indisputable king of the Universe.<sup>1</sup> At other times they act as flaming warriors in missions of protection. And at still other times they are depicted as surrounding YHWH in celestial duties. They act in a variety of functions and situations according to the references to them in the records of the OT.

A notable thing is that in every such reference, God always appears as the indisputable leader of these celestial armies. They are arranged in countless squadrons, ready to act at His command whenever and wherever necessary.

In depicting some of these beings the OT clearly mentions that they sometimes use chariotry, which is blazing in nature and super-natural in power.

#### The Sons of God

When we come to the bny 'lhyim, the "sons of God" motif within the OT, we arrive at a problem, the solution of which is still very difficult--especially in its first explicit occurrence in the Pentateuch, where it has been

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<sup>1</sup>Aubrey R. Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), pp. 73-77.

considered "a constant crux interpretum throughout the history of exegesis."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the long series of interpreters past and present who have suggested a diversity of answers for this reference,<sup>2</sup> the matter still remains a puzzle for biblical scholars.<sup>3</sup>

The OT speaks on one hand of heavenly beings with the epithet of *bny 'lhym* "sons of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps 29:1; 89:7; Dan 3:25) and for the most part their context strongly indicates that they do not resemble other than the same entities acknowledged as the hosts that form the court and the armies of YHWH.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the OT also mentions--admittedly in a unique way--some *bny'lhym* in a context genuinely human, stressing a meaning for beings of no other nature than the anthropological one (Gen 6:2, 4; Hos 2:1).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Coleran, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6,2," ThS 2 (1941):488. This is especially in relation with the well-known occurrence of Gen 6. Presenting some paradoxes in the interpretation of the problem, Robert C. Newman says that "this passage has been a center of controversy for at least two millennia" ("The Ancient Exegesis of Genesis 6:2, 4," GTJ 5 [1984]:13-16).

<sup>2</sup>Lyle Eslinger, "A Contextual Identification of the bene ha'elohim and benoth ha'adam in Genesis 6:14," JSOT 13 (1979):65.

<sup>3</sup>David L. Peterson, "Genesis 6:14, Yahweh and the Organization of the Cosmos," JSOT 13 (1979):47-64.

<sup>4</sup>Jacob, Old Testament Theology, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup>A full discussion on Gen 6:2, 4 is beyond the purpose of our research. Since problems related to this passage have long been discussed, we refer in addition to those already mentioned above to works that deal with it,

If we leave out Gen 6:2, 4--because, in my opinion, the sons of God here do not resemble heavenly beings but rather humans beings--<sup>1</sup> we find in the other references

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such as Gustav Engelbert Closen, Die Sünde der "Söhne Gottes", Gen 6, 14 (Rome: Päpstliches Bibel Institut, 1937); Willem A. van Gemeren, "The Sons of God in Gen 6:14," WTJ 43 (1981):320-348; Meredith G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:14," WTJ 24 (1962):187-204; J. A. Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:14) in the Context of the 'Primeval History'," JSOT 13 (1979):33-46; U. Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man (Genesis vi 14)," BOS 1:17-28; Poulet Donat, "The Moral Causes of the Flood," CBO 4 (1942):293-303; J. L. Cunchillos, "Los bene ha'elohim en Gen. 6, 14," EB 28 (1969):631; P. Joüon, "Les unions entre les 'fils de Dieu' et les 'filles des hommes' (Genèse, 6, 14)," RSR 29 (1939):108-114; Ronald S. Hendel, "When the Scns of God Cavorted with the Daughters of Men," Bible Review 3 (1987): 8-13, 37; idem, "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4," JBL 106 (1987):13-26.

<sup>1</sup>The whole context of this passage points to human beings. Chaps. 4 and 5 display the development of mankind in two main streams. In chap. 4 are depicted the descendants of the stream fathered by Cain, and at the end in vs. 26 it switches to trace the other descendants instead, of Abel--zr<sup>2</sup> 'hr tht hbl. This stream is characterized by saying that they "began to call upon the name of YHWH." Who were those who called upon the name of YHWH? The descendants of Seth. They were, although humans, the bny' lhyim. (As Joüon affirms, "nous pouvons conclure que la race des Séthites était, avant le déluge, ce que la rased' Abraham fut après, la race é lue de Dieu de préférence à la masse humaine, race dont les individus pouvaient être appelés 'fils de Dieu' à un titre spécial" ["Les 'fils de Dieu'," p. 11]). This line of descent is detailed in chap. 5. Some are men of renown. They reached heights of piety. This is in clear contrast with the fame attained in the other stream in a context of violence, murder, and revenge.

Chap. 6 underlines the results of the union of those two streams of mankind which worsened the corruption on the earth. It indicates that when the "sons of God" ventured in to marrying beautiful ungodly woman, they were overpowered (cf. Judg 14-16), and a more corrupted generation was born, even the "sons of God" perverted their ways, and the curse came upon all.

On the other hand, if one considers the judgment of the context, it also points to men rather than to angels as

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the right meaning for the "sons of God." Otherwise why should they remain unpunished the supposed angels those who are depicted as initiators of the wrong? As Leroy Birney remarks, "Since this passage gives the background for the near extermination of the human race by the Flood, and since the 'sons of God' were the chief initiators of the evil, they must have been a part of the human race . . . The interpretation that the 'sons of God' were angels must be considered untenable because . . . it is contrary to the biblical view of the nature of the angels, and the punishment for their crime fell upon men rather than upon angels" ("An Exegetical Study of Genesis 6:14," JETS 13 [1970]: 45).

The strict relationship of Adam as son of God is given in Gen 5:12. Throughout the OT it is not rare to see explicit references to humans being called sons by God Himself in a figurative sense (indicating, as Jastrow points out, a common Semitic usage with the meaning of "a dependant position of some sort" [ReBAs, p. 108], rather than a literal son or daughter). Such is the case in Exod 4:22; Deut 14:12; Jer 31: 9; Hos 2:1, where those related to YHWH are named bny by YHWH Himself in a collective way.

This may indicate that bny 'lhym in the OT references ought properly to be considered as a multivalent expression that indicates celestial or earthly beings in close relationship to YHWH or charged with some divine task (as Poulet indicates, "the 'sons of God' are sons of Yahweh in a moral sense. They are human beings characterized" with some peculiar relation or mission "from Him which could justify this peculiar title" ["Causes of the Flood," p. 295]).

In this way, on one hand, the angels are called bny'lhym since they are ministers of YHWH that perform His will and execute His orders within His cosmic domain. On the other hand, humans are also properly called bny 'lhym because of their close relationship with God or by reason of leadership functions granted by God (see above, p. 352, n. 2).

Mythical deities (in this case heavenly beings) having intercourse with humans--a motif so often pictured in many ancient religions--is never found in the Bible. Contrary to the interpretation that sees angels marrying women in the passage of Gen 6 is the whole biblical concept regarding angels. Those who were involved in marriage affairs during the days of Noah were just men and women (cf. Matt 24:38-39).

Divine sonship, in the OT, underlies the special bond between YHWH and His own (Brendan Byrne, 'Sons of God' 'Seed of Abraham' [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979], p.



more direct mention of angels. These give us meaningful clues for a knowledge of them.

In the first two chapters of Job the bny 'lhym are presented as forming part of the celestial beings that have to appear periodically before YHWH.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is revealed about their creation, although it is mentioned with extreme conciseness that their existence antedates the creation of the earth.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, they are mentioned in a context of exaltation praising the works of the Creator (Job 38:7). This angelic mention of praising God has been suggested as a function corresponding to that of the Mesopotamian Ig and An gods.<sup>3</sup>

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16). Nothing in the whole Bible indicates that men, like angels, cannot have the divine sonship. No angels are implicated in the contextual picture, unless they are considered as instigators of those undesired unions.

<sup>1</sup>Job 1:6 and 2:1 refer to two different occasions in which the "sons of God" came to stand before YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 341-343. The fact that the angels are named "sons of God" is by no means an indication that they were fathered by God. Such is the case with Israel who is repeatedly called son by God, without any indication that this has to be understood for Israel as being an offspring of YHWH in the pure biological sense. The sonship rather indicates the rank that Israel acquired due to the privilege assigned by God to His elected. Such is the case for the angels. They are not engendered by YHWH. They are indeed created by Him as His near ministers. It is this nearness and divine selection that put them in the special rank of bny 'lhym. It is a special designation given to them because of their relation, constant and direct, with the Creator.

<sup>3</sup>Paul E. Dion, "Les principales formes de l'angelologie de l'Ancien Testament dans leur cadre oriental," ScSp 28 (1971):71.

This praising activity is also presented in Ps 29:1 when the bny 'lhy~~m~~ i. e., angels--are urged to "ascribe to YHWH glory and might."<sup>1</sup> A more detailed scene of praising worship, however, is presented in Isa 6 where the angelic hosts are described as praising the holiness of YHWH.

An interesting mention of the celestial sons of God is given in Dan 3:25. The whole chapter is devoted to the description of the statue erected in the plain of Dura and also the deliverance of the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace. As the Babylonian monarch sat to witness the punishment of the three Hebrews, he realized that they were walking loose in the midst of the flames in the company of a fourth person. The astonished king identified him as a divine son<sup>2</sup>, or "one of the race of the gods."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John L. MacKenzie properly comments that this passage is applied to angels "more because of the general consent of the exegetes than because of any force in the context. As the words stand in the psalm they could be addressed to men" ("The Divine Sonship of the Angels," CBC 5 [1943]:293).

<sup>2</sup>dmh lbr'lhyn, lit. "like a son of the gods," or "god like" despite his apparent humanity (Joyce Baldwin, Daniel [Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978], p. 106). The phrase conveys the meaning of a divine being (Eric W. Heaton, The Book of Daniel [London: SCM Press, 1956], p.144), or "son of deity" (J. A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927], p. 214).

<sup>3</sup>C. F. Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), p. 131.

Here Nebuchadnezzar reflects his polytheistic understanding of the Babylonian belief about the gods.<sup>1</sup> His conception of the divinity is that of a hierarchized pantheon with a definite theogony. This concept is similarly expressed in other incidents throughout the same book. In 4:6 (Heb.) the monarch speaks not only about his personal god but also ascribes the wisdom of Daniel as caused by "the spirit of the holy gods."<sup>2</sup> The same concept is again made plain on occasion of the incident of the handwriting on the wall (5:11).<sup>3</sup> However, with regard to the incident of the fiery furnace, it must be noticed that although Nebuchadnezzar perceived the celestial entity to be a son of the gods,<sup>4</sup> he also recognized that he was an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 131; NJB Dan 4:5. Contrary to this, Montgomery argues that this passage rather than reflecting a Babylonian mythology conveys entirely an Aramaic paganism. Book of Daniel, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup>rwḥ 'lḥyn qdyšyn, lit. "spirit of the holy gods." Two things have to be pointed out here. Nebuchadnezzar makes allusion to his personal god since Daniel was named after the king's personal deity. In addition, he refers to the multiplicity of gods, whom he calls "holy gods," as giving wisdom to Daniel.

<sup>3</sup>This is in acute contrast with the monotheistic conviction of Daniel who explicitly declares that he could reveal hidden mysteries not by means of the "spirit of the gods," but because YHWH revealed them to him (2:19, 23, 28). The explicit declaration of Daniel, however, was so incomprehensible to the polytheistic Nebuchadnezzar that he persisted in his conception, perceiving Daniel's God as "God of gods" (2:47).

<sup>4</sup>It has been suggested that Nebuchadnezzar identified Him as the "Firegod" of his mythology, who came to protect the Hebrews that he was trying to destroy. Peter Hay Hunter, The Story of Daniel, His Life and His Times

angel<sup>1</sup> sent by the God of the Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> This parallel identification of the angels of YHWH by a non-Israelite king becomes quite meaningful for the understanding of the heavenly beings both Mesopotamian and Biblical.

It is understandable from the OT that the expression "sons of God" conveys the idea of celestial beings conforming to the assembly of YHWH.<sup>3</sup> In being named in this way, however, it is not pointing out "any preconceived genealogical derivation,"<sup>4</sup> but their close relationship with YHWH in the heavenly courts as His ministers and servants. It is this relationship with God that also enables men to be considered by the same OT as "sons of God" in an appropriate way. Nothing in the whole Bible indicates that "sons of God" is a term exclusively and only related to

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(Edinburgh: Neil and Company, 1890), p. 138.

<sup>1</sup>An entity of angelic nature, a "son of god." Dan 3:25. M. Delcor, Le livre de Daniel (Paris: J. Gabalda et cie., 1971), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>The royal declaration cannot be more explicit bryk 'lhhwn . . . dy-šlh ml'kh wšyzb l'bdwhy, "blessed be the God of them . . . who has sent His angel and has delivered His servants." This seems to indicate that Nebuchadnezzar knew quite clearly who the angels were, even considering his polytheistic concept.

<sup>3</sup>H. Renard, s.v. "Hijos de Dios," EnciBi 3:125-355.

<sup>4</sup>E. G. Kaiser, s.v. "Son of God," Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion (Washington, D.C.: Corpus Publications, 1979), 3:33-45. Kaiser properly says that when humans are referred to as sons of God, it is because those named in this way enjoy a special relation to YHWH, and this sonship and holiness in no way resemble the ANE models, since the biblical model is "indeed unique" (ibid).

angels, or that men like angels can not have the divine sonship.

We may say then that the nature of the heavenly bny 'lhy<sup>m</sup> differs from that of God and man, since they are not gods, i.e., divine, nor human, but celestial kinds of entities created to act closely in the divine realm as YHWH's ministers. This becomes evident in the diversity of references related to these entities named with a diversified synonymy.

#### The Messengers of YHWH

The "messengers of YHWH" is a common OT motif. The very term for messenger has become the most characteristic feature of the angelology. In fact, the OT is the primary source for any intimate understanding of this aspect of angelology.

The term ml'k occurs 213 times in the OT<sup>1</sup> in both its singular and plural forms.<sup>2</sup> It is thought to be derived from the root l'k--not used in the OT--<sup>3</sup>, which in

<sup>1</sup>D. N. Freedman and B. E. Willoughby, s.v. "ml'k," TWAT 4:888.

<sup>2</sup>Abraham Eben Shoshan, qwnqwrdsnsh hdsh ltwrh nby'ym wktwhym (Jerusalem: Sivan Press, 1982), pp. 658-659.

<sup>3</sup>Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Berlin: F. Margolin, 1925), pp. 625-626. The Aramaic root l'k is not used in the biblical text. The Aramaic ml'k conveys the same meaning as its Hebrew cognate (AAG, p. 540; ATM, p. 616; GBA, p. 38).

Aramaic,<sup>1</sup> Ugaritic,<sup>2</sup> Ethiopic,<sup>3</sup> and Arabic<sup>4</sup> means "to send," "to execute (a commission)," "to accomplish, to minister (a service, employment, work)."<sup>5</sup> Thus, traditionally, its most common meaning is "messenger,"<sup>6</sup> one who is sent with a message,<sup>7</sup> though sometimes, depending on the context, it is better understood as one who is sent on other missions such as ambassador,<sup>8</sup> or even one who performs a mission of espionage,<sup>9</sup> and also a person appointed to be a prophet<sup>10</sup> or priest.<sup>11</sup> The translators of the LXX

<sup>1</sup>The Aramaic root l'k, like its Hebrew cognate, is not used in biblical material (Fuerst, HCLOT, p. 722).

<sup>2</sup>Gordon, UM, No. 998; HALAT, 2:488. For a study of ml'k, see especially Cunchillos, "Étude philologique de mal'ak. Perspectives sur le mal'ak de la divinité dans la bible hébraïque," VTSup 23 (1981):30-51

<sup>3</sup>GHAHAT, p. 373.

<sup>4</sup>la'aka, "to send with a commission," von Rad, s.v. "ml'k in the OT," TDNT 1:76. For an attestation of la'ak in cognate languages, see Hort Seebass, s.v. "Engel II. Altes Testament," TRE, 9:583.

<sup>5</sup>Fuerst, p. 722.

<sup>6</sup>LVTL, p. 525; Gaster, s.v. "angel," IDB, 1:129; G. Buchanan Gray, s.v. "Angel," Encyclopaedia Biblica (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899), 1:165.

<sup>7</sup>C. V. Wolf, s.v. "Messenger," IDB., 3:359.

<sup>8</sup>Num 20:14; 21:21; Deut 2:26; Judg 11:12-14, 17, 19; 1 Kgs 20:2,5,9; 2 Kgs 19:14; Isa 30:4; 33:7; Nah 2:14.

<sup>9</sup>The spies sent by Joshua are repeatedly called ml'kym (Jos 6:17, 25), and in the same way those who were charged to inspect the tent of Achan were also named ml'kym (Jos 7:22).

<sup>10</sup>In this sense, Isa 44:26.

used the Greek *aggelos* to translate the occurrences of *ml'k*,<sup>1</sup> and thus the term angel has been turned into the most characteristic feature of angelology.

As a polyvalent term, *ml'k* thus conveys a wide range of meanings. Moreover, it should be noted here that the very term itself always implies a lower category,<sup>2</sup> and this subordinating status is reflected in both the heavenly and the earthly realms.<sup>3</sup>

Among the angels that are clearly understood as being messengers belonging to the heavenly realm, the OT presents two distinctive messengers of celestial extraction, the *ml'k yhwh* and the *ml'k* or *ml'kym*--i.e., the Angel of YHWH, and the angel or angels.

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<sup>1</sup>Mandelkern, p. 625.

<sup>1</sup>M. Balagué, s.v. "Angel," *EnciBi*, 1:499; W. Grossouw and H. Haag, s.v. "Engel," *BiLe*, col. 388. Quite properly H. M. Orlinski comments that those who took the task to translate the Hebrew text into Greek for the LXX adapted the terms for their nearness. Among those terms was *mal'ak* which was equated to *aggelos* which means "messenger." In this way, "the term came to take on in the LXX the technical meaning of "messenger of God" to correspond with *mal'akh adonai* (Essays in Biblical Culture and Bible Translation [New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974], pp. 376-377).

<sup>2</sup>Curchillos correctly indicates that the role of the *ml'k* is always secondary in relation to whom he depends on ("Etude philologique de *mal'ak*," p. 42).

<sup>3</sup>*DISO*, p. 151.

## The Mal'ak YHWH

The Mal'ak YHWH (MY) is an enigmatic anonymous heavenly character that has puzzled biblical interpreters--both Jewish and Christian--throughout past and present centuries.<sup>1</sup> This angel distinctively stands out in preeminence in the OT,<sup>2</sup> appearing fifty-eight times in the form ml'k yhwh and eleven more as ml'k 'lhym.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Generally it is accepted that four theories have been issued to solve the problem of the identity of the MY. They are: (1) The theory of the identity--which sees the MY as a manifestation of YHWH. Accordingly, he is YHWH Himself, who appeared in human form to men (see Kautzsch, Biblische Theologie des Alten Testament, 1911, pp. 83-87; von Rad, OTT, 1:300; idem, Genesis, p. 188; Eichrodt, TOT, 1:214; North, "Separated Spiritual Substances in OT," CBQ 29 (1967):419; Bernhard Stein, "Der Engel des Auszugs," Bib 19 [1938]:286-307); (2) the theory of the representation--which sees the MY as YHWH's messenger acting in the name and mandate of God; (3) the theory of the hypostasis; (4) the theory of the interpolation (W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem des Yahveh Engels," SThU 14 [1944]:97-102). (For a more detailed reference to the theories that interpret the MY, see R. Ficker, s.v. "ml'k - bote," THAT, 1:905-908; Heidt, Angelology of OT, pp. 69-100; R. Gryson, "L'Ange de Yahvé," Collectanea Mechliniensia 52 [1967]:472-482.) Another theory which some refer to as being now obsolete (Johann Michl, s.v., "angel," Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology [London: Sheed and Ward, 1969], 1:20-28) is the "Logos theory" which sees the MY as a revelation of the Logos, making Him a manifestation of the preexistent son of God (Ribinsky, Der Mal'ak Yahveh, pp. 122-23).

<sup>2</sup>G. B. Funderburk, s.v. "angel," ZPEB, 1:160-166.

<sup>3</sup>Westermann, Genesis 12-36, p. 242. Morgenstern, following the documentary-hypothesis assumptions, sees that "a great distinction must be made between the mal'ak YHWH and the mal'ak 'lohim" especially in regard to "their origin and function" ("Biblical Theophanies," ZA 23 [1914]: 31). In this way for him, the mal'ak YHWH is a concept that simply arose from a "growing reverence for and fear of the divinity of YHWH" which, detesting ascribed anthropomorphisms in the Godhead, concluded by coining merely "an



Besides, there are other occurrences in which the context obviously points to the MY, even though he is not referred to explicitly.<sup>1</sup> The most intriguing aspect of these references, however, resides in the fact that sometimes it becomes difficult to say if the MY is at the scene, or YHWH Himself.<sup>2</sup>

Pentateuchal References to  
the Mal'ak YHWH

Curiously, the first appearances of the MY mentioned in the OT were not shown to a Hebrew person but to an Egyptian woman. In Gen 16:9-13 the MY occurs four times in a dialogue with Hagar, and this narrative ends by mentioning that Hagar named YHWH with a peculiar name in accordance with her personal experience. Then, again the MY (Gen 21:7)<sup>3</sup> appears to Hagar in similar circumstances, while she is wandering and afflicted in the wilderness.

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artificial term and abstract conception, like the Logos of the Gnosticism, that never connoted any actual, concrete form of being in the minds of either author or reader"; while the mal'ak 'lohim, being originated from the conception that the peculiar and unchangeable abode of God was Horeb, ended in a more concrete and logical conception, that implied for the mal'ak 'lhym "an existence as definitely conceived in the popular mind as that of God Himself" (ibid., p. 32).

<sup>1</sup>R. Ficker, s.v. "ml'k bote," THAT, 4:892.

<sup>2</sup>P. de Letter, "Trends in Angelology," CleM 24 (1960):213.

<sup>3</sup>The text refers this time to the angel as ml'k 'lhym, rather than ml'k yhwh. (Gen 21:17).

There are some peculiarities in these narrations that ought to be pointed out in order to give a clear picture of the personages involved. In Gen 16:9-13 YHWH is mentioned twice. First, when the MY assures Hagar, "YHWH has heard of your affliction" (vs. 11), and second, when she named YHWH as 'l r'i, "the God who sees me" (NIV). During the whole episode, it is not YHWH who speaks most with Hagar, but the MY<sup>1</sup> "as God's representative."<sup>2</sup> Likewise, in vs. 7 it is the MY who is mentioned as finding Hagar,<sup>3</sup> not YHWH. Intriguingly, in the dialogue both appear to be speaking with Hagar and both appear as interchangeable in position as YHWH seems to take the place of the MY.<sup>4</sup> This angelic entity found Hagar (vs. 7), and he commanded her to return in a submissive way to her mistress (vs. 9). He gave her, obviously in the name of YHWH, a promise of numerous descendants (vs. 10), he assures her of her conception, and instructs her to name her child with a specific name (vs. 11). Then in vs. 13, Hagar, realizing

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<sup>1</sup>Perhaps with the exception of vs. 10, when the MY appears to be in a closer identification with YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>August Dillmann, Genesis (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>The verb ms' means "to come to, to reach to, arrive at" (AHCL, p. 507), and also "to find, to meet by chance" (CHALOT, p. 209). Thus the sense of the text is that of the MY coming to see Hagar's affliction.

<sup>4</sup>Verses 10 and 13 tend to point to an identification of the MY with YHWH. However, it would be more adequate to understand the whole dialogue as being made between the MY and Hagar in the presence of YHWH.

the significance of the circumstances, invokes YHWH<sup>1</sup> with a name that spontaneously links God's care with her personal experience.<sup>2</sup>

A similar situation is mentioned in Gen 21:17-20.<sup>3</sup> Again God and His angel are mentioned taking care of Hagar. The narrative says that God heard the cry of the lad and the angel of God spoke with Hagar, encouraging her with a promising future for them (vs. 19). He concluded by saying that God would take care of the lad according to the divine promise (vs. 20).

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<sup>1</sup>The text reads *wtqr' šm-yhwh*, lit. "and she called the name of YHWH."

<sup>2</sup>The name 'l r'y, "God who sees me," together with the name of the well, b'r lhy r'y, "Well of the Living One who sees me" (E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1964], p. 170), are clear expressions of Hagar's conviction when she realizes that YHWH was seeing her affliction and that he would provide a future for her and her descendants.

In commenting on the name given by Hagar to God, Dillmann opined that "she said, Have I here also, in the desert, which is not a dwelling-place of Deity, where I could not expect such a thing, looked after Him who saw me . . . She did not see Him, but as He departed she observed that the all-seeing God was present here, in the person of His angel, and she looked after Him" (Dillmann, p. 73). We think that Lobina is correct in pointing out that the passage of Gen 16:13 ought to be paralleled with Exod 33:21, 23. In this way Hagar as well Moses had a similar experience seeing the back of YHWH. (See "El conocimiento de Dios en Génesis 16,13: interpretado a la luz del Exodo 33, 21, 23," *RevBib* 19 [1957]:63-68.)

<sup>3</sup>For a detailed study of the differences and similarities of Gen 16 and 21 regarding the stories of Hagar, see Antonio Lobina, "Examen de la crítica literaria del capítulo XVI del Génesis, comparado con el XXI," *RevBib* 20 (1958):121-126.

The dialogue of the MY with Abraham when he offered Isaac is one of the most notable interventions of the MY (Gen 22:11-18). Obeying the command of God, Abraham took his unique son and went to Moriah. When he had come to the point of killing his son on the altar, the MY called to him (vs. 11) and indicated to Abraham that it was not necessary for Isaac to die. He had gone far enough in proving his loyalty to YHWH. As a result of this experience, he, like his concubine, called that place with a name that reflected his own experience as unforgettable.<sup>1</sup> A striking feature of this narrative is that when the MY speaks, he speaks as if he were the same being as YHWH. Both times, in saying to him that God accepted the offering of his son,<sup>2</sup> he repeated the promise of blessing to all the peoples through his posterity. In this the MY speaks as YHWH himself.<sup>3</sup>

The reference in Gen 31:11 mentions the same angel again, though the description is of a dream in which he instructs Jacob how to deal with the cattle husbandry enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup>As Gunkel says, with this naming "Abraham remembers with gratitude what he said to his child in his hour of deepest anguish" (*Genesis*, p. 241). In fact, the name *yhwh yr'h*, "YHWH will provide" not only became a memorial for Abraham, but also for his posterity (vs. 14).

<sup>2</sup>The MY says *wl' hskt 't-bnk 't-yhydk mmny*, "you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

<sup>3</sup>The MY speaks in the first person singular in each action mentioned. He says, "I have sworn," "I will indeed bless you," "I will multiply you," and "you have obeyed my voice."

The epiphany of YHWH to Moses in Exod 3 is also remarkable. In vs. 2 it says that the MY appeared in a burning environment, which Moses described as a *mr'h hgd1--* "a great vision" (vs. 3). Surprisingly, as the description of the vision progresses, however, the one who appears in such a manifestation seems to be YHWH Himself (vss. 6, 14-16).<sup>1</sup> Again when the Israelites left Egypt, the MY plays a very prominent role. He went in front of the hosts of Israel as they progressed in their journey to the promised land (Exod 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:2, 34; Num 20:16). His mastery as a powerful warrior was displayed when the Egyptian hosts were swept into the sea (Exod 14:19, 24-25, 27-28).

The MY is mentioned ten times in Num 22 in the story of Balaam. Here we should notice, however, that it is possible to recognize the intervention of the MY and YHWH separately. God is mentioned six times as YHWH (vss. 8, 13, 18, 19, 28, 31), and alternately another six times as *'lhym* (vss. 9, 10, 12, 20, 22, 30). Balaam identifies YHWH as his God once (vs. 18). It is YHWH who is consulted; it is He who answers; and it is He who opened both "the mouth of the ass" (vs. 28) and "the eyes of Balaam" (vs.

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<sup>1</sup>Rogerson is of the opinion that the episode of the burning bush has to be connected with angelic intervention, and that "the burning of the bush would originate from the association of angels of God with fire"; therefore, for him in Exod 3:2 "the fire is caused by an angel." Bruce Kaye and John Rogerson, Miracles and Mysteries in the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 27.

31). Whereas, it is the MY who, as a heavenly warrior, intercepted Balaam while he rode towards Moab (vss. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34, 35). In fact, in the rest of the narration, the MY is not mentioned again, while God is named twenty-five times.<sup>1</sup> It is also explicitly stated that the spirit of God twisted the words of Balaam (24:2).

From these pentateuchal references, it is possible to see the MY as a singular angelic character who is described as a celestial warrior and a powerful leader. He can appear as a flaming angel, and he is especially indicated as being in close relationship with YHWH. Eventually, the narration seems to indicate that the MY is YHWH Himself by means of interchangeability of names.

#### The Mal'ak YHWH in the Book of Judges

The book of Judges contains some notable interventions of the MY. In Judg 2:1-4 is mentioned his appearance before the assembled people. He denounces Israel for its infidelity and recalls the wonders performed in behalf of Israel when God led it out of Egypt.

In her song of victory Deborah mentions the MY as conveying a curse to those who refused to participate in the war against the Canaanites, a war which is identified

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<sup>1</sup>12 times as YHWH (23:5, 8, 12, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26; 24:11, 13 [2 times], 16), 10 times as 'lhym (23:4, 8, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27; 24:4, 8, 23), one as the Most High (24:16), and two as the Almighty (24:, 4, 16).

as having been of YHWH (5:23). The fact that the MY appears mentioned in this context of war also indicates that he was definitively known as a warrior entity who acted in behalf of the people of God and fought in company with hosts of Israel.

Gideon also witnessed the appearance of the MY. The narration begins by declaring that while Gideon was winnowing wheat he saw the MY (Judg 6:12, 22). As he spoke with him, it turned out to be YHWH Himself. Then He commanded Gideon to lead Israel in the war against Midian (vs. 14) and promised His company in the enterprise (vs. 16). This occurrence is interesting because in the description of him, the MY carries a staff with which he produces fire to consume the meal that Gideon offered to him (vss. 20-21).

That the Israelites knew of the existence of this angel as a distinct character from YHWH is expressed in vs. 22 when Gideon, realizing who appeared to him, says, "Alas O YHWH, For now I have seen the angel of the Lord (YHWH) face to face" (RVS).<sup>1</sup>

The parents of Samson had a similar experience with the MY. He first appeared to Manoah's wife who did not realize plainly who he was, since he appeared in a human

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<sup>1</sup>The mention of two different persons appears to be quite specific. Gideon expresses to YHWH his fear because he saw the MY face to face. However, both act with interchangeability.

form. She perceived, however, some superhuman characteristics in him, since she describes him as a man of God with a terrible countenance<sup>1</sup> similar to that of an angel of God.<sup>2</sup> This description gives us one of the rare descriptions of the MY. It describes him with an extremely awesome countenance, inspiring reverence even though he resembled a human being.

From all these references it is clear that the MY appeared to anyone to whom he desired to manifest himself, on any occasion and place which he chose. In addition, it seems that he was a well-known character.<sup>3</sup> Each Israelite was quite conscious of his existence, hence those who were privileged to see him discovered his identity, and they declared it without hesitation. Otherwise, how can the repeated statement "then (he/she/they) perceived that he was the MY" be explained? Only a well-known personage would allow such expression.

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<sup>1</sup>nwr'(Judg 13:6), "fearful, dreadful, terrible, marvelous" (AHCL, p. 344).

<sup>2</sup>This indicates that the concept of the angelic appearance--as being terrible--was quite well-known among the people. They express it as something of common knowledge among them.

<sup>3</sup>This is contrary to the idea that the term ml'k yhwh or ml'k 'lhym denotes some sort of mythical colored context of divine attendants of the gods (Freedman and Willoughby, s.v., "ml'k," TWAT, 4:901).



### The Mal'k YHWH in Other Books

In the second book of Samuel, the MY is presented as performing a work of destruction among the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2 Sam 24:16-17). However, the same book presents him as someone known for his proven wisdom. In 2 Sam 14:17, 20 and 19:27, the wisdom of David is compared with that of the MY.

In the same way, Elijah met the MY. One time, however, the MY came to the prophet with the explicit mission to feed him on his way to Horeb (1 Kgs 19:5, 7).<sup>1</sup> In the following encounters, the MY instructed him what to do with the messengers of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 1:3, 15).

The action of the MY as a powerful celestial warrior is described in 2 Kgs 19:35 and Isa 37:36 when he destroyed the Assyrian army of Sennacherib.<sup>2</sup>

From these references to the MY it is possible to perceive the diversity of functions in which the MY was entitled to act in close connection with YHWH.<sup>3</sup> To his qualities of wisdom, provision, and care is added that of a

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<sup>1</sup>For a relation between angels and food, see below pp. 467-468.

<sup>2</sup>The same destructive action was performed at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the sea (Exod 14:19, 27, 31). Other divine interventions in the Israelite warfare may also be pointed to as an angelic intervention with destructive power.

<sup>3</sup>As Cornfeld indicates, "His function is so nearly that of Yahveh himself" with "prerogatives beyond those of the ordinary angels," and "significantly he was the bearer of the name of Yahveh." PBE, p. 108.

powerful warrior capable of destroying even a whole human army. The different references present Him not only as "an instrument of Yahweh's gracious relationship" and the "personalized help" of God,<sup>1</sup> or as an authorized minister capable of accomplishing tasks of an official legate,<sup>2</sup> but notoriously also as "a form in which Yahweh appears,"<sup>3</sup> or the theophany of the person of God,<sup>4</sup> making the MY as YHWH "himself, appearing to human beings in human form."<sup>5</sup>

The assumption that resorts to the idea of a syncretistic development,<sup>6</sup> or later redactional elaboration,<sup>7</sup> or later theological reflection as the origin for

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<sup>1</sup>Von Rad, Genesis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Freedman and Willoughby, s.v. "ml'k," TWAT, 4:898.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Otto Procksch, Die Genesis (Leipzig: A. Diechert-sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, p. 287. Hermann Gunkel is of the opinion that the MY is only a "divine being" (Genesis [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966], p. 186).

<sup>6</sup>Cunchillos assumes that the MY is not "una hipostización de Yahweh o como su sombra, sino una divinidad local a la que la Fe Yahvista hace jugar un papel secundario respecto a Yahveh que se ha ido erigiendo en Dios supremo y único" (CAED, pp. 158-159).

<sup>7</sup>In a recent comparative study between the relationship of military agents of the Assyrian empire with the OT divine agents (see John Paul Nicholas Lawrence, "Agents and Masters in Ancient Near Eastern History Writing" [Ph. D. dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1985], Lawrence suggests that, by no means the MY or the Mal'ak 'elohim are to be seen as redactional elaborations or glossatory arrangements intended to diminish anthropomorphism of a

the concept of the MY, so favored by some scholars,<sup>1</sup> becomes irrelevant when the conspicuous interchangeability between YHWH and the MY in the passages referred to above is correctly considered.<sup>2</sup> The references to the MY show an intricate interchangeability so embedded in ancient material that it is not possible to see how they could present "any later and more sophisticated feature" or function as an intent to "combat a primitive anthropomorphism."<sup>3</sup>

I prefer to see the MY not as a common angel but either--if he was angel--as a highly ranked angelic character<sup>4</sup> who worked in very intimate association with YHWH--

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direct theophany (ibid. pp. 370, 374), but rather as a common literary device that indicates the independence of the agent and, at the same time, underlines the importance of the rôle performed by the agent (ibid., p. 373). In this way--as Lawrence argues--the proper individual identity of the agent was submerged into that of his master (ibid.), but in the case of the MY, all that one can say is that his identity is enigmatic, or in Lawrence's own words, "The angel of Yahweh/God remains an enigma. At the heart of the presentation of him in Old Testament history writing there is a paradox. The angel of Yahweh is both humanoid and divine, he is both identifiable with Yahweh and distinct from him" (ibid. p. 374).

<sup>1</sup>Among them, Morgenstern, "Theophanies," pp. 31-33; Gunkel (Genesis, p. 187), and von Rad, (Genesis, p. 189), who believe that a later theological reflection led to this understanding.

<sup>2</sup>Westermann, Genesis 12-36, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup>Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament," VTSup 7 (1959):33-34.

<sup>4</sup>Ficker, after mentioning the theories built to solve the problem, concludes that "there is no longer any difficulty . . . when one sees that a mala'ak can generally (in profane use) be identified with the sender" THAT, 1:907.

though his closest relationships with Him remain unrevealed--or as YHWH Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> The passages in which the MY appears in an intimate relationship with the Godhead and with unique divine features (perhaps it would be better to say an ambivalent configuration) are mainly those in which explicit theophanies are mentioned.<sup>2</sup> In general these reflected situations when the Godhead intended to reveal or portray a special act in behalf of His people by means of the MY. This becomes quite clear in references such as those in the Pentateuch and Judges, where the episode is not merely described as the supernatural intervention of some anonymous celestial messenger. There, in addition, the incident is combined with an explicit reference to YHWH in which a visible interchangeability is recorded. If the MY is not YHWH Himself, the only other possible solution is that which

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<sup>1</sup>Von Rad, recognizing some intermediary qualities in him, concludes that "the figure of the angel of the Lord has conspicuous Christological qualities . . . He is a type, a 'shadow' of Jesus Christ" (Genesis, p. 189).

On the contrary, the position assumed by Gryson that "le fameux Ange de Yahvé dont parlent nos versions modernes de l'Écriture est un produit de l'imagination des traducteurs et des exégètes. Ni la Bible hébraïque, ni la Bible grecque ne connaissent ce personnage" is totally unfortunate ("L'Ange de Yahvé," Collectanea Mechliniensia 52 (1967): 482.

<sup>2</sup>In fact it seems more likely to identify the MY with YHWH Himself. From all the controversial passages above quoted the picture of a double identity is underlined tending to indicate that YHWH and the MY are one and the same person.

remains within the boundaries of the angelic realms,<sup>1</sup> identifying him as Michael.

#### The Mala'kim (Angels) of YHWH

Apart from the MY, common angels are also regularly mentioned in the OT. These occurrences provide some generalizations about them but not as many details as we would like.

#### Pentateuchal References to the Mala'kim

The angels as celestial messengers are introduced in the OT as early as the Pentateuchal histories. We have already made some reference to them in describing God's dealing with Hagar through His angel. The celestial personage mentioned in those experiences, however, seems to be more directly related to the angelic character known as MY.<sup>2</sup>

Gen 18 narrates the visit of God to Abraham in the company of two of His angels. No special description is given of them except that they appeared to Abraham in full

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<sup>1</sup>"If anything, the mal'ak might be better understood as the accompaniment to the anthropomorphic appearance rather than as a dilution of it" (Barr, "Theophany," p. 34).

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps in a proper sense, it can be said that all the heavenly angels can be mentioned as being angels of YHWH, because their service and loyalty are devoted to YHWH, and they appeared everywhere they were sent as angels of YHWH.

human form (vs. 2).<sup>1</sup> They not only appeared as human but also acted as such. They talked with Abraham (vss. 5, 9-15), they washed their feet (vs. 4), they ate (vs. 8), and they also walked with Abraham (vs. 16). This anthropomorphic resemblance is consistently given in the whole chapter and in the following, when the two angels that accompanied YHWH went to Sodom to save Lot and his family.

The description given in chap. 19 is quite interesting since it describes the celestial visitors of Lot utilizing the alternating terminology for angels and men. For Lot and the Sodomites, their appearance was just like that of human beings, but afterwards their true identity and nature were revealed. As the men of Sodom began to mistreat Lot, the two angels overcame the mob and took Lot inside the house, locking the doors with security (vs. 10). In addition, "they struck with blindness the men" (vs. 11), and then they revealed both their identity and their mission: "we are about to destroy<sup>2</sup> this place. . . . YHWH has sent us to destroy it" (vs. 13). After they urged and

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<sup>1</sup>When Abraham perceived them he saw that "three men stood in front of him"--šlšh 'nšym nšbym 'lyw. Rogerson favors an interpretation of this reference that sees God as present in the three men, emphasizing that "the three men symbolize the presence of God, but only obscurely" (Miracles and Mysteries, p. 31).

<sup>2</sup>The verb šht is used twice in this verse. It regularly means "to become corrupt, spoiled," but in its Pi. and Hif. forms in which they appear here, it means "to wipe out, spoil, ruin" (CHALOT, p. 366; HELOT, pp. 1007-1008). The term points to the mission and to the nature of the actions that the angels came to perform in Sodom.

took Lot out of the doomed place (vss. 15-16), YHWH destroyed the cities of the plain (vss. 24-25).

These abridged data provide some facts regarding those heavenly angels. They were heavenly beings sent on a mission of salvation and destruction by YHWH. They were in His service. They appeared in human form and behaved like humans until the need to demonstrate their angelic qualities was urgent. They possessed superhuman powers and exercised them in overcoming the lawless crowd by striking them with blindness and by destroying those doomed cities.

References to angels as servants of YHWH are repeatedly mentioned again in the experience of Jacob. First, while he was fleeing from his brother, he saw in a dream the celestial messengers of YHWH going up and coming down on missions to the earth (8:12-13).<sup>1</sup> Then again, they worked on his behalf during his stay in Paran (31:11). Afterwards, when he was returning to Palestine, the angelic armies met him at Mahanaim (32:1-2). Jacob had a striking experience in the incident at the ford of the Jabbok when he struggled with an angel.<sup>2</sup> As a result he acquired a

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<sup>1</sup>Otto Eissfeldt identifies the ladder bearing the angels of God as representing "the bond between the earth and heaven with God." The Old Testament: An Introduction, trans. Peter Ackroyd (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>The whole episode is conceived as myth which was taken and modified through successive editions, molding its actual form with aetiologic purposes. See Nathaniel Schmidt, "The Numen of Peniel," JBL 45 (1926):260-279; Léopold Sabourin, "La lutte de Jacob avec Élohim (Gen. 32, 23-33," ScEcc 10 (1958):77-89; Antoni Cruells, "El relato

lameness for life (32:24-32; cf. Hos 12:5).<sup>1</sup> This is a controversial passage. It is common opinion among most scholars that this episode should be connected with mythological demonology. They see the "angel" as a river-god, or a demon who attacked Jacob to protect his territory. They stress the assumption that this is a mythological episode that came into the Pentateuch embellished by an anonymous editor<sup>2</sup> who did so for etiological purposes.<sup>3</sup>

But such an interpretation is contrary to the text itself and to the later prophetic interpretation (Hos 12:5). As Matitiahu Tsevat observes, the narrative leaves too little for the supposed mythological parallels presented by the defenders of such an interpretation.<sup>4</sup> Although the angel here paradoxically is presented as a fighter, the

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de Gn. 32,23-33," EsFra 78 (1977):27-92; F. Van Trigt, "La signification de la lutte de Jacob près du Yabboq Gen. xxxii 23-33," OuSt 12 (1958):280-309.

<sup>1</sup>See above pp. 402-403.

<sup>2</sup>H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 359-365. Similarly, Stephen A. Geller, "The Struggle at the Jabbok: The Uses of Enigma in a Biblical Narrative," JANES 14 (1982):49.

<sup>3</sup>John L. MacKenzie, "Jacob at Peniel: Gen 32:24-32," CBO 25 (1963):71-76. Mackenzie supposes that at least three etiologies are intended in the episode.

<sup>4</sup>"Two Old Testament Stories and Their Hittite Analogies," JAOS 103 (1983):321. Tsevat sees more possible parallelisms in the Hittite tradition rather than in the material adduced by the defenders of the mythological interpretation of the episode of the Jabbok.



whole event conveys the meaning of a mission of blessing and promise to the patriarch.<sup>1</sup>

Again, these references point to the fact that the celestial messengers, when they perform missions in earthly realms, may assume human resemblance, but their power is superhuman. They also act in armies.

The angelic agencies also played a vital role in the Exodus experience. To Moses YHWH promised angelic help in leading the people through the wilderness.<sup>2</sup>

So the picture given in the Pentateuch about angels, though scarce in its details, is varied and quite meaningful. First, they are heavenly beings that act under the surveillance of YHWH. Second, they are sent on a variety of missions that range from conveying messages, giving assurance of protection, and granting salvation, to the executing or destruction. Third, although they may appear in human resemblance, they are superhuman in nature and power. They are able to injure humans both individually and collectively. In the same way they are quite capable of protecting those whom they are sent to guard.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>If the real mission of the angel had been other than blessing, he certainly would have destroyed Jacob without hesitation.

<sup>2</sup>Exod 23:20. 23; Num 20:16.

<sup>3</sup>Analyzing mainly the references of Gen 16 and 21, Dorothy Irvin assigns five functions to the mal'ak of God. In this way, (1) he is a celestial messenger; (2) he mainly predicts the birth of a child or his future; (3) he rescues; (4) he tests humans to verify their correct judgment;

Other References to Mal'akim in  
the Books of Ecclesiastes,  
Job, 1-2 Samuel,  
and Psalms

As one looks for occurrences of celestial messengers in the other books, one notices that mention of them is more scarce. When they do appear, however, the references to them convey the same reality expressed in the Pentateuch and other books already mentioned. Occasionally, however, additional concepts attached to them may be detected.

In Eccl 5:6 appears a reference to an anonymous angel that is referred to as present during common human conversations.<sup>1</sup> Although the identity of this angel has been diversely interpreted,<sup>2</sup> the concept of an angel listening to whatever a person is speaking about is closer to the notion of the "personal god" so common in the

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(5) he punishes evildoers (Mytharion [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978], p. 94).

<sup>1</sup>The passage in question says, "Let not your mouth lead into sin, and do not say before the angel, that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?"

<sup>2</sup>Wayne A. Peterson mentions four main interpretations given to this "angel." He divides the possibilities as being related to the heavenly realm, making it God or an angel; and seemingly to the earthly realm, seeing the possibility for being "a priest who supervises the vows," or "a temple servant whose duty is to oversee the payment of the vows." Although he stresses the inconclusiveness of evidences for all these possibilities, he favors those related to the human side rather than the heavenly possibilities (Ecclesiastes, [BBC] p. 116).

Mesopotamian environment.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, since the reference is found in a context of the temple and its services of worship, it might also be pointing more to the presence of angels in the place of worship.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise in Job 33:23 there is a possible reference made by Elihu to the angels functioning as mediators of those who are accused unjustly, or those who are suffering. The passage says:

'm-yš 'lyw ml'k	If there be for him an angel
mlys <sup>3</sup> 'hd	a mediator
mny-'lp <sup>4</sup>	one of the thousand,
lhgyd l'dm yšrw	To declare to man
	what is right for him (RSV).

From this reference at least two points may be indicated here. On one hand, it seems to be referring to

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<sup>1</sup>See above pp. 163-168.

<sup>2</sup>This notion of angelic entities in the place of worship was a concept shared in the Qumran community.

<sup>3</sup>The form *mlys* is a Hiphil ptc. of *lws*, "to interpret" (*LHAWT*, p. 394). The Hiphil expresses the eloquent or pleasant way of speech (*HCLLOT*, p. 74). Hence this participle is rendered either as "intrepreter" or as "intercessor" (*AHCL*, p. 419; *HCLLOT*, p. 740; *HELOT*, p. 539; Mandelkern, p. 643). Fuerst notes that the meaning is identical with the root *mls* "to be eloquent, lovely, pleasant of speech" (*HCLLOT*, p. 822), required qualities for an intercessor.

Brown-Driver-Briggs relates *lys* (*lws*) to its Phoenician cognate *mls* (p. 539), which could be interpreted as "counselor, intermediary, interpreter," though this meaning appears to be somewhat uncertain (María-José Fuentes Estañol, *Vocabulario Fenicio* [Barcelona: Gráficas Diamante, 1980], p. 160).

<sup>4</sup>The phrase "one of the thousand" may be pointing to the number of the court of YHWH.

the number of the angels<sup>1</sup> and, on the other hand, to their intercessory function<sup>2</sup> for men.<sup>3</sup> The same superhuman intercession seems to be suggested by Eliphaz when he, with some irony, asks Job: "Call now; is there any one who will answer you? To which of the holy ones<sup>4</sup> will you turn? (5:1 RSV).

It is the same Eliphaz who speaks in Job 4:18 of the angels as being the servants of God; he says:

hn b'bdyw<sup>5</sup> l' y'myn<sup>6</sup> Even in his servants

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<sup>1</sup>For the innumerability of the angels, see above pp. 367-368.

<sup>2</sup>The concept of angelic intercession is quite similar to the Mesopotamian conviction of the "personal god" who was able to represent his/her protégé in the assembly of gods (Kramer, "Man and his god," p. 171) in order to set him free from some malady or demonic attack. See above pp. 186-192.

<sup>3</sup>The targumic version makes this angelic intercession more plain, since it renders, 'yn 'yt 'lwy zkwt' mzdmm ml'k' hd' prqlyt' mn byny 'lp qtygwryy', "if there is virtue in him, an angel prepares to intervene, an advocate from among a thousand of accusers." The OT does not mention, however, cases of angelic intercession before God in human behalf. There are, however, notable cases of human intercession in behalf of humans before God Himself. Such are the cases of Abraham who interceded for the possible righteous living at Sodom (Gen 18:23-33), and Moses who plead in behalf of Israel after the apostasy in Sinai (Exod 32: 31-33).

<sup>4</sup>The qdšym, lit. "holy ones," is generally interpreted as angels. Victor E. Reichert, Job (Hindhead: The Soncino Press, 1946), p. 17. See above pp. 353-355.

<sup>5</sup>'bd, "servant, slave" (HCLOT, p. 1003-1004). 'bd always indicates a submissive role. Thus, here is evidence of the passive angelic role in relation to God.

<sup>6</sup>This Hiphil form of 'mn means "to trust, confide, believe in, rely upon" (AHCL, p. 32).

wbml'kyw yśym<sup>1</sup> thlh<sup>2</sup>

he puts no trust,  
and his angels he charges  
with error (RSV).

Here two points become evident in relation to angels. First, they are the appointed heavenly servants of God,<sup>3</sup> and second, He is able to detect faults in them. Since the book of Job refers more than once to some matters that go back to the time of creation, it might be possible that what appears here is an indication of the fall of the angels, and it may not necessarily refer to a present detection of sin among the present angelic hosts of God.

In 1 Sam 29:9 there is a rather curious mention of heavenly angels in the words of Achish, a Philistine sovereign. This king mentions the angelic character, praising David's conduct during his stay in Philistia. The mention gives no particular description, except that it declares goodness as an angelic characteristic.<sup>4</sup> The fact that Achish speaks in this way, however, may imply that the neighbors of the Israelites were well acquainted with the knowledge of these celestial messengers.

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<sup>1</sup>The verb śym (śwm) has a wide nuance and would mean "to set, to found, to stablish" (HCLLOT, pp. 1356-1357), or "to put, to inflict, to charge" (CHALOT, p. 351).

<sup>2</sup>The term thlh, "error," is a hapax. Pope suggests a relation with its Ethiopic cognate tahala, "wander" (Job, p. 35).

<sup>3</sup>This mention of servants in parallelism with angels occurs only here.

<sup>4</sup>yd'ty ki ṭwb 'th b'yny kml'k 'lhym, "I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God" (RSV).

Similarly, on two more occasions David is paralleled to an angel of God; but at this time the angel is presented as being gifted in discernment (2 Sam 14:17)<sup>1</sup>, wisdom (14:20),<sup>2</sup> and right judgment (19:28)<sup>3</sup>, which as angelic qualities are brought out for comparison.<sup>4</sup> Again these references might be an indication not only of the current belief that the Israelites shared in common about angels at that time, but it might also be suggesting to us the qualities that ancient Hebrews believed to be possessed by an angel of God.

Ps 34:7 (8, Heb.) reads *hnh ml'k-yhwh sbyb lyr'yw wyhlsm*, "the angel of YHWH encamps around those who fear him, and rescues them" (NJB). The explicitness of this passage leaves no doubt about the functions of protection and deliverance that are performed by the celestial messengers of YHWH.

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<sup>1</sup>*ky kml'k h'lhym kn 'dny hmlk lšm<sup>e</sup> htwb whr<sup>e</sup>*, "my lord the king is like an angel of God, understanding everything good and bad" (JSAV).

<sup>2</sup>*w'dny hkm khkmt ml'k h'lhym ld<sup>e</sup>t 't-kl-'šr b'rš*, "my lord is as wise as an angel of God, and he knows all that goes on in the land" (JSAV).

<sup>3</sup>*w'dny hmlk kml'k h'lhym w<sup>e</sup>šh htwb b<sup>e</sup>ynyk*, "but my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you (RSV v. 27).

<sup>4</sup>The Tekoite woman (2 Sam 14) and Mephibosheth (2 Sam 19) praise David for his wisdom which they say is like that of an angel of God.

Ps 104:4 reads:

'šh ml'kyw rwhwt	making your angels spirits
mšrtyw 'š lht	your ministers flames of fire.

Although this passage is usually translated in another way,<sup>1</sup> it becomes evident that it declares--in rather brief terms--biblical laconism--the nature of the angels of YHWH.<sup>2</sup> They belong to the spiritual realm, and their blazing nature which is also described in other passages is pointed out in the parallel rwhwt//'š lht. In

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<sup>1</sup>The AB translates, "who makes the winds his messengers, fire and flame his ministers" (similarly RSV, NIV, NBJ). Allen prefers to translate as "Who use winds as his messengers, flaming fires as his servants" (Leslie C. Allen [WBC] Psalm 101-150 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], p. 26) taking 'š and lht as a plural predicate with a plural subject, and not as Dahood who takes them as separate nouns (Psalms, 3:35).

Keil properly indicates that here the construction of the verb followed by two accusatives underlies the idea of producing "something out of something," in a way that the second accusative indicates the material from which the created thing came. Thus, this allows one to consider as a possible interpretation: "Who makes His messengers out of the winds, His servants out of consuming fire" (Psalms, 3:129). He adds that "this may affirm either that God makes use of wind and fire for special missions, or He gives wind and fire to His angels for the purpose of His operations in the world which are affected through their agency, as the materials of their outward manifestation, and as it were of their self-embodiment" (ibid.)

Some see here a reference to lesser gods of the Canaanite pantheon, i.e., "fire" and "flame" reduced to servitors of YHWH through a demithologization process. Dahood, Psalms 101-150, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>That this is a fact is clearly indicated by the interpretation given in Heb 1:7, which is coincident with the LXX, ο ποιον τους αγγελους αυτοου pneumata, kai τους leitourgous αυτοου puros phloga. Here the predicate and object have been reversed; a conversion grammatically possible but extremely difficult from the contextual viewpoint (see Allen, Psalms 101-150, p. 26).

the same way, their function as messengers and ministers is intrinsically presented with the same parallel device naming them as ml'kyw//mšrtyw. Some find that the psalmist is freely using a mythological imagery here, but "subduing everything that is of a mythical . . . nature" to the majesty of YHWH to present the reality of his angelic heavenly hosts.<sup>1</sup>

Ps 78:49 contains a reference to angels accomplishing destructive missions when it says:

yšlh-bm <sup>2</sup> hrwn 'pw <sup>3</sup>	He let loose on them his fierce anger,
'brh <sup>4</sup> wyz <sup>5</sup> m <sup>5</sup> wšrh <sup>6</sup>	wrath, indignation, and distress,
mšlht <sup>7</sup> ml'ky r <sup>8</sup> ym <sup>8</sup>	a company of destroying angels. <sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Weiser, Psalms, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup>The verb slh means "to escort, to send, commission" (HCLLOT, 1039). The Piel used here indicates, "send away, out, of" (CHALOT, p. 372).

<sup>3</sup>The expression hrwn 'pw, lit. means "glow of his nose" (*ibid*, p. 116). It is usually translated as "his burning wrath" (HELOT, p. 354), as an anthropomorphism used to indicate God's wrath (CHALOT, p. 116; LHAVT, p. 268).

<sup>4</sup>"Anger" (CHALOT, p. 246); "overflowing rage, fury" (HELOT, p. 720); "wrath" (HCLLOT, p. 1009, 1010).

<sup>5</sup>"Indignation, anger" (HELOT, p. 276). It derives from z<sup>6</sup>m, "to be irritated, angry," and when used referring to God, it means "to perform judgment, to punish," hence the noun also signifies "wrath, judicial anger." HCLLOT, p. 400.

<sup>6</sup>"Distress, adversity, anguish" (HELOT, p. 865); affliction, misfortune" (HCLLOT, p. 1209).

<sup>7</sup>mšlht derivates from šlh, and designs "a sending," "company" (AHCL, p. 716); "a deputation" (Hermann J. Auste, s.v. "mšlht," TWOT, 2:2394f).



The main theme of this psalm is the liberation of Israel from Egypt and guidance to Canaan by YHWH. The wonders performed on behalf of Israel from Egypt to the promised land are recounted in a poetical frame.<sup>1</sup> Within the context of the divine confrontation with the Egyptian stubbornness, the angels are mentioned as conveyors of the fierce wrath of YHWH. In the same way an angelic aid is mentioned as the people progressed on their way to the promised land.

That angels may act as executioners of God's judgments performing utter destruction is a repeated theme in

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<sup>8</sup>The phrase *ml'ky r'ym*, lit. "Mission d'anges de malheur" (Jean J. Weber, Le Psautier [Tournai (Belgium): Desclée, 1968], p. 332, n. 49), "a mission of evil angels" conveys "not wicked angels, but destroying angels," thus, they are angels commissioned by God to execute His purposes of punishment (Kirkpatrick, p. 475, n. 49). *ml'ky* and *r'ym* are arranged here in a "genitival subordination of the adjective to the substantive" (Keil, Psalms 51-100, p. 379); and thus the adjective *r'ym*--probably the plural of *r'*--appears as the genitive of *ml'ky* (see Joüon, Grammaire, 141f).

So the phrase is usually rendered as "a mission of angels of evil" (Murphy, Psalms, p. 422; Dahood, Psalms 51-100, p. 244), or "an escort of pestiferous angels" (ibid., p. 234); "en envoyant des anges de malheur" (Jacquet, Les Psaumes, 2:517); "a band of deadly angels" (JSAV); "an embassy of angels of misfortune" (Keil, Psalms 51-100, p. 359); "toute une armée d'anges de malheur" (Weber, Le Psautier, p. 332); "a legion of angels of evil" (Buttenwieser, The Psalms, p. 124).

<sup>9</sup>RSV translation.

<sup>1</sup>It is a historical psalm which recounts the "infi-délités successives d'Israël et miséricordes infinies de Dieu." Weber, Le Psautier, pp. 326-327.

the OT.<sup>1</sup> Such was their mission to the cities of the plain, during the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, and on the occasion of the census of David.

The mention of *mšlḥt*, "company, group, band," may point to one of the ways they function. They may sometimes act in destructive squadrons in order to fulfill the strange orders of YHWH (Isa 28:21-22). From the mention of lightning and fire in the context of the exposition, it might be indicated that in performing their tasks they are able to use natural forces in order to bring destruction.

#### Angels in Daniel

It is alleged that Daniel is a book containing a developed angelology.<sup>2</sup> To the function of protection,<sup>3</sup> revealers of God's will,<sup>4</sup> assistants of God in his heavenly council,<sup>5</sup> Daniel adds the mention of angelic beings by name and presents their function as interpreters.<sup>6</sup> Certainly,

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<sup>1</sup>In a special way commentators are aware of this function during the tenth plague, when all the Egyptian first-born were killed by the "the destroyer" (Exod 12:23) or the exterminating angel (see Jacquet, Les Paumes, 2:541).

<sup>2</sup>Walter Baumgartner, Das Buch Daniel (Giessen: A. Töppelmann, 1926), pp. 70, 136-37; Ferdinand Dexinger, Das Buch Daniel und seine Probleme (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969), pp. 120-22.

<sup>3</sup>See above pp. 383, 407-409.

<sup>4</sup>See above pp. 372-373.

<sup>5</sup>See above pp. 360-365.

<sup>6</sup>See above pp. 364-365.

Daniel presents angels as being "much more than conveyors of messages."<sup>1</sup>

These Danielic references to angels should be seen as complementary to previous references rather than introducing new doctrine in this matter.<sup>2</sup> Nor is this innovation indicative of Maccabean apocalypticism.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Daniel's angelology is quite consistent not only with the OT angelology but also with the whole biblical picture on angels.<sup>4</sup> The angelic mentions in Daniel are:

#### The Angel in the Fiery Furnace

The episode of the fiery furnace has already been mentioned. It gives us interesting clues about angels from

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<sup>1</sup>J. Owens, "Daniel," BBC, 6:378.

<sup>2</sup>We cannot expect that each OT writer involved with angels ought to mention all related matters on angelology. Each writer in all the OT gives his own account in variety, and similar in some respects to others, but also each with its own peculiarity in regard to others. It is from all this variety that the whole picture on angels is formed. It is this whole picture which is inherited by the NT, but at the same time became diverted and confused in apocryphal literature with mythological concepts that departed from OT descriptions.

<sup>3</sup>Dexinger, p. 17. "Daniel in its present form derives from the time of Maccabees."

<sup>4</sup>As Kittim Silva properly says, "Un estudio a la angeleología antiguotestamentaria atestigua que el desarrollo de la misma se evidencia desde el libro mismo del Génesis" (Daniel: historia y profecía [Tarrasa: Libros CLIE, 1985], p. 196).

the sixth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The despotic monarch found a direct answer to his defiant question, "Who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?,"<sup>2</sup> with the direct intervention of an angel.<sup>3</sup>

Notable here is that Nebuchadnezzar himself identifies the celestial companion (Dan 3:28). It was an angel, "a member of the heavenly court,"<sup>4</sup> sent by God to deliver His loyal servants who preferred to be cast into the furnace rather than worship the king's statue (Dan 3:16-17).<sup>5</sup>

This episode is clear enough to show us that angels were familiar not only to the Hebrews but also to the Babylonians, who were not only astonished as they witnessed the angelic intervention but also described it with specific terminology.

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion on the appropriate time setting of Daniel's angelology, see Rick A. Clark, "Is Daniel's Concept of Angels Consistent with a Sixth Century Culture?" (Th. MA. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1983). In our opinion, Clark is correct when he concludes "that Daniel does not have to be a second-century writing because of its literature or its angels. Instead, it fits the culture and background of the sixth century Babylon very well" (p. 66).

<sup>2</sup>Dan 3:15.

<sup>3</sup>See above pp. 414-416.

<sup>4</sup>A. R. Millard, "Daniel," IBC, p. 857.

<sup>5</sup>The Babylonian monarch says *dy-šlh ml'kh wšyzb l<sup>e</sup>bdwhy*, "He has sent his angel and delivered his servants" (RSV).

## The Angel in the Lions' Den

The second angelic episode in Daniel is another deliverance act. This time it is a Persian monarch who is involved in the case. The jealous Persian satraps developed a stratagem that put Daniel in a position where he appeared to be disloyal to the king. His religious principles were at stake. As the Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar was so sure of the efficacy of his fiery furnace, so the Persians at this time relied upon the effectiveness of the fierceness of their lions to put an end to the loyal old prophet. But the same YHWH who tamed the destructive flames in the fiery furnace of Dura again tamed the ferocity of the lions, while Daniel spent a night among the felines within the den.

The following day Darius saw that the living God whom Daniel served was able to deliver him from the lions (Dan 6:21). His God "sent his angel and shut the lion's mouth, and they did not devour" him (Dan 6:23).

Here Daniel speaks plainly of angels as celestial servants who are sent on missions of deliverance to those who trust in God. He speaks his convictions about angels in terms that leave no doubt in the mind of the Persian monarch.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>There is no indication of a Persian angelology for this episode. Daniel mentions that, as in the Dura episode, the intervention was of an angel of his own God. All of chap. 6 describes the test of the faith of Daniel in his God (vss. 9-10). The Persian king himself recognizes that

## The Watcher Angels

The identification of angels as 'yryn, "watchers" is found only in Daniel. These angelic characters are mentioned three times and all three appear in the narrative about the second dream of Nebuchadnezzar: (1) as the king related his dream he said, "In the vision . . . I looked and saw a holy Watcher coming down from heaven" (4:10 [13, Eng.] JSAV);<sup>1</sup> (2) then he added, "This sentence is decreed by the Watchers. This verdict is commanded by the Holy Ones" (4:14 [17, Eng.] JSAV);<sup>2</sup> and (3) when Daniel interpreted the dream he said, "The holy Watcher whom the king saw descend from heaven" (4:20 [23, Eng.] JSAV).<sup>3</sup>

The Aramaic term 'yr is rendered as "vigilant."<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps related to 'yrw, "vigilance,"<sup>5</sup> but its root is probably cognate to the Hebrew root 'yr, "stir oneself

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the deliverance was made by the God of Daniel--'lhh dy-dny'l, whom he repeatedly refers to as the "living God"--'lh' hy'. No Persian divinity, major or minor, is suggested for the deliverance of Daniel.

<sup>1</sup>w'lw 'yr wqdyš mn-šmy' nht.

<sup>2</sup>bgzrt 'yryn ptgm' wm'mr qdyšyn š'lt'.

<sup>3</sup>wdy hzh mlk' 'yr wqdyš nht mn-šmy'.

<sup>4</sup>"vigil, angelus cuiusdam generis" (Vogt, LLAVT, p. 125; HAWAT, p. 593; AAG, p. 545; ATTM, p. 655). "A kind of angel" (GBA, p. 92); "Wächter, Bote," (Karl Marti, Kurzegefasste Grammatik de Biblis-Aramäischen Sprache [Berlin: Verlag von Reuther, 1896], glosary, p. 76).

<sup>5</sup>DISO, p. 207.

up, be awake, astir, lively,"<sup>1</sup> "to wake, to stir up, awaken."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Akkadian<sup>3</sup> as well Ugaritic<sup>4</sup> cognates also appear with a similar meaning. Notably the use of 'yr within the OT is usually connected with military endeavors.<sup>5</sup>

Probably before LXX times these references to 'rym in Daniel were interpreted as angels.<sup>6</sup> The Danielic references, however, provide very little additional information, apart from this peculiar way for naming the angels.

Some points appear clear in relation with the celestial vigilants. (1) They are from heavenly spheres. (2) They are under the direct surveillance of the Most Holy One. (3) They function perhaps as a kind of angelic judges in the heavenly assembly, since it is explicitly stated that they dictate sentences (4:14).<sup>7</sup> (4) They are angelic

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<sup>1</sup>HALAT, p. 758.

<sup>2</sup>Jastrow, DTTBY, p. 1057-1058. The Neo Hebrew conveys the same idea of "to awaken, awake, wake up, to be aroused, astir" (Reuben Alcalay, CHED, p. 1872).

<sup>3</sup>The Akkadian erû means "to awake" (CAD, 4:326).

<sup>4</sup>Ugaritic 'r, "arose," and 'yr ('wr), "to arouse" (Gordon, UT, Nos. 1849, 1912). See also Al-Yasin, LRBUA, No. 459, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>Carl Schultz, s.v., "'ir," TWOT, 2:1587.

<sup>6</sup>The LXX translates all three references as aggelos.

<sup>7</sup>The sentence, however, in vs. 21 [24, Eng.] is clearly attested as being made by the Most High. The vigilants would be more properly conveyors and executors of the sentence dictated by the supreme Judge.

characters since they are also clearly called "holy ones."<sup>1</sup>  
 (5) Since the usage of the term in the Hebrew in the rest of the OT is found in contexts of military settings, it may suggest that they have to be interpreted as a kind of celestial warriors here in Daniel.<sup>2</sup>

The Countless Attendants of  
 the Ancient of Days

Daniel was well acquainted with the concept of the heavenly tribunal<sup>3</sup> and its constituency.<sup>4</sup> Therefore he not only gives an account of the function of angels as liberators of the people of God but also as attendants of the Most High in His court at the final judgment. This is the time when "the son of man" coming "with the clouds of heaven" will be "given dominion and glory and kingdom" (7:14); and this kingdom of God will be set up as an everlasting kingdom (2:44) in coregency with His saints (7:26-27).

Though the scene of the heavenly court is pictured in accordance with the description given by other OT

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<sup>1</sup>For the "holy ones" as angelic characters, see above pp. 353-356.

<sup>2</sup>The very name vigilants suggests a military-like task. A vigilant is a soldier who must be always alert in his sentinel post in order that the army, or the headquarters, may be safe.

<sup>3</sup>Ziony Zevit, "The Structure and Individual Elements of Daniel 7," ZAW 80 (1968):393.

<sup>4</sup>See above pp. 371-372.



writers,<sup>1</sup> the account of Daniel presents some peculiarities. He portrays the eternal YHWH<sup>2</sup> as seated as Judge in a throne of "fiery flames" with wheels of "burning fire" (Dan 7:9). He also sees God as presiding at His judgment in an environment of fire, while "thousands of thousands" serve Him and "millions of millions" stand before Him (Dan 7:10)<sup>3</sup> as His multitudinous court.<sup>4</sup>

Through this unique OT imagery Daniel presents God "as the world-ruler, majestic, dealing with mortals through His agents, the angels."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Micai'ah's description before Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:19); the description given by Isaiah and Ezekiel of the throne of YHWH (Isa 6:1-3; Eze 1:26-27).

<sup>2</sup>Eissfeldt misguidedly asserts that the conception of the Ancient of Days was taken by Daniel from Syrian Mythology (The Old Testament [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965], p. 525). Zevit quite correctly makes note that "in the light of the description of the tribunal, there is no way of avoiding the identification of this figure with YHWH." Zevit, "Elements in Daniel 7," p. 392.

<sup>3</sup>This imagery is taken by the very Son of man to describe repeatedly His own "coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt 24:30). See also Matt 16:27; 24:31; 13:41; Mark 13:26-27. The writers of the NT do not contradict this plain revelation. Therefore all their hermeneutic related to the parousia and judgment is concomitant with the same imagery of Daniel, when they speak about the returning of the triumphant Messiah (1 Thess 4:16; Jude 14; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16). It is the revelator of Patmos who, describing the majesty of the throne of God, agrees with Daniel in mentioning that the multitude of angels around the throne of God is numbered by "millions of millions" (Rev. 5:11).

<sup>4</sup>See above pp. 367-368.

<sup>5</sup>A. R. Millard, "Daniel," IBC, p. 487.

### The Interpreter Angels

The complexity and importance of the things shown to Daniel captivated him in such a way that many times he decided to ask about their meaning. In chap. 7 where the judgment of God was revealed to him, Daniel "approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all" that he was witnessing (Dan 7:16).<sup>1</sup> The celestial attendant without hesitation answered Daniel whatever he asked with a lengthy interpretative discourse.<sup>2</sup>

Although the prophet does not mention the identity of this interpreter at this time, he makes clear that he is one of the attendants of the Most High at the scene of judgment. Therefore we take for granted that the one who gave the interpretation to Daniel was an angel.

On another occasion, while the prophet was perplexed with a vision, an angelic character was commanded to make Daniel "understand the vision" (Dan 8:16). At this time the angelic interpreter is directly named as Gabriel. Later this same celestial interpreter comes to Daniel in answer to his petition for understanding of a vision previously given to him (Dan 9:21). At this time, however, Daniel mentions an additional capacity of this angelic

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel himself approaches an angel looking for understanding of the vision.

<sup>2</sup>This implies that the attending angels of the council of YHWH are well acquainted not only with the happenings but also with the meaning of the matters underscored in the heavenly council.

character. He is able to fly quickly.<sup>1</sup>

As for the interpreting angel referred to in chaps. 10 to 12, all of these occurrences seem to indicate that it is the same Gabriel. This angel is presented in a very close cooperation in task and understanding with another even higher angelic character who is named Michael. He is presented as the heavenly prince of Israel (10:21; 12:1).

#### The Man Clothed in Linen

Among the descriptions given by Daniel of the heavenly messengers, the one mentioned in chap. 10 portrays a more detailed picture than the others.<sup>2</sup> He is described as

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<sup>1</sup>The expression  $m^{\prime}p$   $by^{\prime}p$ , although it remains obscure, is usually related to the verb  $\epsilon^{\prime}wp$ , "to fly" (HADOT, p. 199; CHALOT, p. 268; HELOT, p. 733). In this way it is translated diversely as "in swift flight" (RSV, NIV); "flying like a bird" (BA); "flying swiftly" (NEB); "came flying down" (GNB); "being caused to fly swiftly" (KJV); "flew suddenly down" (NJB); "was sent forth in flight" (JSAV).

Although the ability of flight for angelic messengers is presented here, nothing, however, is said of their possessing wings.

<sup>2</sup>Detailed descriptions of the appearance of angels are scarce and incomplete. Here, although Daniel does not identify the angel, from previous mentionings of Gabriel in 8:16 and 9:21, where he is also depicted as having human appearance, he can be only guessed to be the same heavenly character (Owens, Daniel, p. 445).

It might be said that in chap. 10 Daniel presents his experiences with heavenly agents in a detailed way. He not only describes but also identifies them. These references are in some way controversial among scholars since they touch a number of sensitive matters regarding heavenly beings. It seems, however, that in general the chapter describes--as in chap. 7--the Godhead with His angelic agents coming to assist Daniel in the comprehension of matters revealed to him.

Although the prophet here does not say plainly that

"a man clothed in linen"--'ys 'hd lbws bdyw, and girded with a golden belt (vs. 5). That this anthropomorphic mention is only a descriptive device for comparison, is evident from the account that follows and the explicit mention of "appearance of a man" (vs. 18) in referring to him.<sup>1</sup> He had a refulgent body,<sup>2</sup> with shining arms and feet.<sup>3</sup> His countenance was refulgent as lightning<sup>4</sup> with flaming eyes,<sup>5</sup> and with a thundering voice.<sup>6</sup>

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what he saw was a theophany, other described parallel theophanic experiences throughout the Bible strongly suggest that Daniel is depicting the Divinity. However, as he goes on with his report, it seems to be describing entities on a lower level that we may more properly call angelic type of agents. Throughout his book Daniel shows that he had many encounters with these celestial agents.

<sup>1</sup>Daniel describes him as *kmr'h 'dm*. In 8:15, he uses *kmr'h-gbr* for the heavenly being that stood before him in another vision. Daniel is in agreement with biblical writers who regularly picture angels in anthropomorphic fashion when they act among men (see Gen 18:1,2, 16; 19:1, 5; 32:24-32; Judg 13).

<sup>2</sup>vs. 6, *gwytw ktršyš*, "like beryl" (RSV). The meaning of *tršys* is uncertain. It may represent "a yellow or golden shade of beryl" (Archer, *Daniel*, p. 123), or may refer to the topaz or chrysolite stones, but called *tršyš* because of its Spanish origins of trade (Tatford, *Daniel*, pp. 171-172). It points, however, to the gleaming of a certain kind of gem (Di Lella, *Daniel*, p. 263, n. 6).

<sup>3</sup>The feet and arms are described as *k'yn nhst qll*, "like the gleam of burnished bronze."

<sup>4</sup>The phrase *wpyw kmr'h brq*, lit. "and his face was like lightning" underlines his supernatural origin.

<sup>5</sup>*w'ynyw klydy 'š*, lit. "and his eyes like torches of fire," RSV "flaming torches."

<sup>6</sup>*kqwl hmwn*, "like the noise of a multitude" (RSV). This Hebrew expression is regularly used to mean not only a crowd of people but also the sound of rain and running

All this description makes plain that the heavenly messengers of YHWH, though they themselves do not possess the divine nature, do indeed partake of the divine majesty.<sup>1</sup>

#### Gabriel and Michael

The same Daniel who speaks of the innumerable angelic hosts also provides us with two personal angelic names for angels--Michael and Gabriel. Both characters are respectively presented in a very distinctive context of struggle and interpretation, which may suggest that their task is closely related to order and revelation within the affairs of earthly and cosmic domains of God.

#### Gabri'el

It is well accepted that the name Gabriel is formed from geber "strong man" and 'el "god," meaning the "strong man of God."<sup>2</sup> Others etymologize the name as a compound meaning "God is great,"<sup>3</sup> or rather "God has shown Himself

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chariotry. Every detail points to a non-terrestrial character. A similar description is given in Rev 1:13-15. This description, however, is not of an angel but of the resurrected and ascended Christ. If one takes in account other theophanic instances, it seems most likely that the "man clothed in linen" described in Daniel is that of God.

<sup>1</sup>Lacocque, Daniel, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>H. Lesètre, s.v. "Gabriel," DiBiVi, 3:22-23. The description of this angel given in human terms has led some to argue that Gabriel has no appearance or powers apart from man. W. White, s. v. "Gabriel," ZPEB, 2: 618.

<sup>3</sup>White, ZPEB, 2:618.

strong."<sup>1</sup> Thus it is believed that Gabriel is "the angel of the power of God."<sup>2</sup>

Since *geber* is derived from the root *gbr* which conveys the meaning of "strength,"<sup>3</sup> the term might also be derived from *gabar* which has two closely related meanings, "to be strong" and "to be superior." Thus *geber* would mean "one (who is) strong" or "superior."<sup>4</sup> However, the same term is quite often used in the OT to convey the idea of a person in close relationship with God,<sup>5</sup> and in the case of Gabriel perhaps this may also allow us to assume that his name conveys the idea of his close relationship with YHWH.

It may be noticed that the same *gbr* is also the derivative root for the term *gibbor*, which especially

<sup>1</sup>W. Brueggemann, s.v. "Gabriel," *IDB*, 2:332; S. Horn, s.v. "Gabriel," *SDABD*, 8:395.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh Pope, s.v. "Gabriel," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 6:330.

<sup>3</sup>In this way Gabriel is interpreted "God is my strength." Gustav Davidson, s.v. "Gabriel," *A Dictionary of Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 117-119.

<sup>4</sup>As Hans Kosmala points out, "in any case a *geber* is a male individual who distinguished himself from others by his strength, or courage, or uprightness, or some other quality" ("The term *geber* in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls," *VTSup* 17 [1968]:160).

<sup>5</sup>Kosmala has convincingly demonstrated that *geber* shows among others two main meanings in its usage. On one hand, it conveys a meaning of "physical strength, courage, and valour, or virility and procreative power." On the other hand, *geber* also points to a man of any age "who stands in a special, close relationship with God," and it is in this sense that the Psalter emphasizes the concept "that the *geber* is the right man of God" (Ps 40:5; 52:8-10; 34:9; 94:12; 128:4; 18:26). ("The Term *geber*," pp. 160-164).

designates a warrior, either as a man able for military service, or a soldier in combat, or someone who performed a heroic act.<sup>1</sup> Its usage is mainly attached to military activities. It is in this connection that the angels are called *gibbore koah*, "warriors of power" since they have to perform and carry out the orders imparted to them with power.<sup>2</sup> Besides, it is in this same context that YHWH is designated the *gibbor par excellence*.<sup>3</sup>

With these etymological alternatives it would be possible that the name of this angel would either mean "man of God," in the sense that he is the right person closely connected with God, as related to *geber*; or "warrior of God," in relation to *gibbor*.

The two OT references to him in the book of Daniel as an angel only give a hint in regard to his function as interpreter of the secrets of God. Likewise they present him as a swift messenger.<sup>4</sup> As such he appears as a

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<sup>1</sup>Kosmala, s.v. "gibbor," *TDOT*, 2:374.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>3</sup>*yhw* 'zwz wgbwr yhw gbwr *mlhmh*, "YHWH the strong and mighty warrior, YHWH a hero of war" (Ps 24:8-10). See above pp. 405-406.

<sup>4</sup>The NT agrees with the OT regarding the functions of Gabriel. The gospel of Luke mentions him as a heavenly messenger sent by God--one time announcing the birth of John the Baptist (1:19), and the second time announcing to Mary the birth of Jesus (1:26). The gospel record also mentions that Gabriel presents himself as one who stands "in the presence of God"--'ego eimi Gabriel o parestekos enopion tou Theou.

It is only in the apocryphal and post-Biblical

subordinated entity who is trusted with an explicit hermeneutic task for the revelation of the future.<sup>1</sup>

As Brueggemann says, he is the appointed revelator of things related to the Day of Judgment and acts as a messenger "revealing the graciousness and powerful purpose of the one who sends him."<sup>2</sup>

### Mika'el

The description of this angelic character is not an

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literature that Gabriel is mentioned as a "mighty prince of heaven" and "one of the supreme angels." In the same way he is depicted as having a body of fire and a "voice to carry from one end of the world to the other," and as such he is "the commander of the cherubim and the angel of the retribution," and he was the angel who came to the fiery furnace (see Simon Cohen, s.v. "angel," UJE, 4: 488), and the one who destroyed the armies of Sennacherib (B. Talmud Sanhedrin 95b).

In 1 Enoch 40:3 he is one of the four presences. 2 Enoch 40:3 presents him as one of God's glorious ones, 2 Encch 24:11 he is the one who sits at the left hand of God, and in 1 Enoch 40:9 he is the one who is set over all powers. In the same way his character of intercessor and destroyer is referred to in 1 Enoch 9:1; 40:6; 2 Enoch 21:3; and 1 Enoch 9:9-10; 54:6, respectively.

The tendency to magnify the importance of Gabriel is seen even in the Targums, where Gabriel became a personage introduced even in the pentateuchan narratives, since he is mentioned as the one who leads Joseph to his brothers (Gen 37:15); and in the burial of Moses, he participates together with Michael (2 Chr 32:21).

Islamic tradition regards Gabriel (Jibril) as the first of the four principal angels, and thus, "the mightiest of all the archangels" (Mohammad Khan Durrany, The Gita & the Qur'an [Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1982], p. 82). According to Muslim tradition, the Koran "is a literal revelation of God dictated to Mohammed by Gabriel" (ibid., p. 76).

<sup>1</sup>Lesètre, DiBiVi, 3:23.

<sup>2</sup>IDB, 2:333.



easy task. In the whole OT Michael is mentioned only three times, and these all occur in Daniel. Notable in these occurrences is the fact that on every occasion the context in which he appears is that of fight, contention, and liberation.<sup>1</sup>

The name *Mika'el* means "who is like God?,"<sup>2</sup> and the OT attests that this name has been used quite frequently since pentateuchal times, especially during monarchical times.<sup>3</sup> The name is also known from pre-patriarchal periods, as it is attested in the documents of Ebla (ca. 2400-2250

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<sup>1</sup>Notable also are the two NT references which are made against the same background of controversy. In Jude 9 he is portrayed as contending with the Devil over the body of Moses. Rev 12 describes a heavenly war in which he leads his victorious angelic hosts in battle against the Devil and his angels.

<sup>2</sup>HCLLOT, p. 804.

<sup>3</sup>Of the ten biblical men named Michael, one was contemporary to Moses, lived during the Exodus, and was the father of the spy who represented the tribe of Asher in the reconnaissance of Canaan (Num 13:13). Two other Gadites, father and son were also named Michael (1 Chr 5: 11, 13, 14). Likewise, an ancestor of the psalmist Asaph had the name (1 Chr 6:40). Then an Issacharite who was a "chief man" was also so named (1 Chr 7:3), and likewise a Benjaminite (1 Chr 8:1, 16). David had a warrior bearing the name (1 Chr 12:20), and the father of one of his chief officers was also named Michael (1 Chr 27:18). King Jehoshaphat of Judah had a son with the name (2 Chr 21:2). Finally, a leader of the exiles who returned from Babylon with Ezra also was named Michael (Ezr 8:8).

B.C.).<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the name was also known in the Akkadian culture,<sup>2</sup> and it also appears in documents found at Nimrud.<sup>3</sup> Thus the antiquity of the name is well attested, as well as the popularity of the name throughout the history of Israel. This might be an indication that the angelic character known as Michael was familiar to Hebrews long before Daniel wrote his name.<sup>4</sup>

Although little can be grasped from the OT references to Michael, these references are valuable, however, for understanding this angelic character. In Dan 10:13, he is referred to as being an angelic "prince of the first

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<sup>1</sup>The name Michael is attested in the Eblaite documents in two forms, mi-kà-il or mi-ki-il, which merely exhibit a variation of ka as a comparative particle. See Giovanni Pettinato, Testi amministrativi della Biblioteca L. 2769. Parte I (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, 1980), 29 v. I 7, p. 202; 37 r. XI 20, pp. 252, 257; idem., The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1981), p. 261; idem., "The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla," BA 29 (1976):48; Chaim Bermant and Michael Weitzman, Ebla: A Revelation in Archaeology (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>The Akkadian form of the name is Mannu-ki-ili or Maniki. See Tallqvist, Assyrian Personal Names (Leipzig: August Pries, 1914), No. 126a.

<sup>3</sup>This attestation is possible from an Aramaic ostrakon found at Nimrud (Kalhu) which was written probably in the 7th century B.C. (See J. B. Segal, "An Aramaic Ostrakon from Nimrud," Iraq 19 [1958]:139-145; Albright, "An Ostrakon from Calah and the North-Israelite Diaspora," BASOR 149 [1958]:33-36.)

<sup>4</sup>Thus the idea that Michael could be a Persian figure known from Persian sources is by itself anachronistic and uncertain.

rank" (JASV), giving the help needed by another angel.<sup>1</sup> The power of Michael is emphasized again in vs. 21 when Gabriel says to Daniel that the only effective help that surpasses all other power is that which he is receiving from Michael, who this time is called "your prince."<sup>2</sup> Then in 12:1 Michael is again mentioned as the "great prince, who stands beside the sons of your people [Israel]."<sup>3</sup>

The noun *sr* occurs 421 times in the OT,<sup>4</sup> and it is used to express in a wide scope the high ranking of the persons in their political, private, cultic, and religious life.<sup>5</sup> Thus it is rendered variously as "prince, chief, captain, governor, ruler, steward."<sup>6</sup> It is a term that in general is used to express royalty, nobility, authority, and together with this there are closely related references to military commanders either of earthly (Judg 4:2; 1 Sam

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<sup>1</sup>*lynhb myk'l 'hd hšrym hr'šnym b' l'zrny*, "now Michael, a prince of the first rank, has come to my aid" (JASV).

<sup>2</sup>*w'yn 'hd mthzq 'my 'l-'lh ky 'm-mk'l srkm*, "No one is helping me against them except your prince Michael" (ibid.). Jewish tradition following Daniel's reference always maintained that Michael is Israel's Guardian Angel.

<sup>3</sup>*myk'l hšr hgdwl h'md 'l-bny 'mk*, "Michael the great prince who stands beside the sons of your people."

<sup>4</sup>Eben Shoshan, pp. 1205-1207.

<sup>5</sup>HAWAT, p. 470.

<sup>6</sup>HCLLOT, p. 1439; HELOT, p. 978; AHCL, p. 741. The Phoenician cognate *sr* also means "prince" (VoFe, p. 243). Likewise the Ugaritic *šr* means "prince" (MLC, p. 632; Gordon, UT, No. 2477).

17:55) or heavenly hosts (Josh 5:14-15). Its use in close connection with the divine realm (Josh 5:14-15) and with explicit messianic significance also indicates a proper usage to indicate God.<sup>1</sup>

As one looks at the usage of *sr* in Daniel, one notes that the pattern of use is the same; it properly points to a person of hierarchical authority. It is used no less than seventeen times--twelve for human dignitaries--referring to important persons, not only for those of the Kingdom of Judah but also including Babylonian dignitaries and the rulers of the Persian and Greek empires. In addition, he also uses it to indicate heavenly characters. Thus, unquestionably the term also ought to convey the same clear meaning of high position and authoritative hierarchy when it is applied to the angelic characters.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Michael is recognized by Gabriel as being "one of the principal princes" and also is designated as a "great prince" may indicate an actual hierarchy among the angelic entities.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, this ranking title might

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<sup>1</sup>D. K. McKim, s.v., "Prince," ISBE, 3:971.

<sup>2</sup>In fact, the mention of the term for the prince of the heavenly hosts and for the Messiah points to God, when this is paralleled with Isa 9:6. McKim, 3:971; Keil-Delitzsch, Daniel, p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Especially in later Rabbinic angelology, the biblical term *sr* is usually employed to indicate archangel and angelic princes. J. Strugnell, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumrân-4Q serek sirôt 'elat hassabbat," VTSup 7 (1960): 324, n. 1.

well be a clear indication of his supreme position in the hierarchy among the angelic hosts. It becomes very significant that Daniel portrays the defense performed by Michael in behalf of Israel not only in a military sense,<sup>1</sup> but also in a judicial way.<sup>2</sup> As Nickelsburg notes, "the war that he wages has the character of judgment."<sup>3</sup> The fact that he is explicitly mentioned as being the one who stands for Israel has led some interpreters to identify him as the MY.

#### Some Synonymous Terms for Angels in the Psalms

The Psalter also mentions angels--referring to their ministry, nature, number, and functions--but it uses a terminology that is different from ml'k, and thus the conceptions about them are expanded from those sources.

In vss. 24-25 of Ps 78, the angelic characters appear to be mentioned in the context of the miraculous

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noticed that in chap. 10 Daniel makes clear that to him were disclosed details of an unseen conflict which involved angelic agencies fighting on behalf of God's people. Heavenly spiritual agents are portrayed in an open struggle against human free will in a scale that Daniel names as great (10:1)--sb' gdwl, "great conflict," RSV. High angelic agencies are involved and the contention is closely connected with human affairs. Though the account does not expose in detail all the happenings of the conflict, it makes plain that the final result is secured for the angelic hosts led by Michael.

<sup>2</sup>Dan 12:1-3.

<sup>3</sup>G. W. E. Nickelsburg, Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 14.

provision of manna during the crossing of the desert:

ʿymtr ʿlyhm mn l'kl	And he rained down upon them
	manna to eat,
wdgn-šmyn ntn lmwñ	and gave them the grain
	of heaven.
lhm 'byrym 'kl 'yš	Man ate of the bread
	of the angels;
šydh šlh lhm lšb <sup>2</sup>	He sent them food
	in abundance (RSV).

Here, the angels poetically appear to be designated as 'byrym, "mighty ones." Nowhere else are they identified with this designation. This understanding was utilized by the LXX (Ps 77:24, 25) which interpreted this term as "angels."<sup>1</sup> Although the Hebrew 'abbir still remains problematic,<sup>2</sup> it is usually accepted that in its general meaning it conveys the idea of might, strength, and power.<sup>3</sup> Notable is the use of 'byr in poetical passages as a noun in the singular with the meaning of "Mighty" or "the Mighty

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<sup>1</sup>kai ebrexen autois manna phagein kai arton ouranou edoken autois. arton aggelon ephagen anthropos, episitismon apesteilen autois eis plesmonen, "and he rained upon them manna to eat, and gave them the bread of heaven. Man ate the bread of angels, he sent them provision to the full."

<sup>2</sup>See Kapelrud, s.v. "'byr," TDOT, 1:42-43.

<sup>3</sup>The term 'byr being derived from the root 'br, it appears as cognate to Akkadian (CAD, s.v. "abaru," "power, strength," I:38), Aramaic ('brw, "force, puissance", DISO, p. 3), Phoenician (VoFe, p. 59), and Ugaritic (probably <sup>3</sup>br with the meaning of a vigorous animal, WUS, 5). In its usage the term mainly appears to be used to convey a twofold meaning, indicating a strong animal or a vigorous person, which also is compared to the Hebrew (*ibid.*, p. 43). In this sense B. D. Eerdmans translates, "Man did eat the bread of the very strong" (The Hebrew Book of Psalms (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947), p.372).

One," which obviously is used as a designation for God.<sup>1</sup>  
 In a similar way, in Ps 78:25, 'byrym is mentioned as  
 descriptive of angels<sup>2</sup> or "heavenly powers."<sup>3</sup>

The Psalter also uses in 8:6; 97:7; 138:1 the term  
 'lym probably as a proper synonym for the heavenly messen-  
 gers.<sup>4</sup> Ps 8:6 reads:

wthsrhw m <sup>4</sup> t	For thou hast made him a little
m <sup>1</sup> lwhym	lower than angels,
wkbwd <sup>5</sup> whdr <sup>6</sup>	and hast crowned him with

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<sup>1</sup>So in Gen 49:24, Ps 132:2, 5; Isa 1:24; 49:26; 60:  
 16. Especially in Psalms and Isaiah, 'byr becomes paral-  
 leled with the divine name YHWH. See also Robert L. Alden,  
 s.v. "'abir," TWOT, 1:13c.

<sup>2</sup>Gunkel has also suggested that 'byrym may well  
 refer to the heavenly hosts and proposed the meaning of  
 "host of gods" or "host of angels."

<sup>3</sup>Kapelrud, TDOT, 1:43.

<sup>4</sup>See above, p. 358, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup>kbwd, "glory," "light," "magnificence" (HCLLOT, p.  
 632; HELOT, p. 458). The Hebrew kbwd conveys a widely  
 varied nuance. Forty-five times, however, it is related to  
 a visible manifestation of God, and wherever "the glory of  
 God" is referred to, this meaning must be taken into  
 account (John N. Oswald, s.v. "kabôd," TWOT, 1:943). The  
 term usually points to the awesome, fiery, radiant light  
 that surrounds the nature of YHWH and His messengers. But,  
 how much of this radiance was put on primeval man, or how  
 it can be related to him in his edenic state is a matter  
 which is not revealed in biblical pages. However, the kbwd  
 of YHWH--as von Rad points out--becomes without point of  
 comparison in regarding the actual human kbwd (OTT, 1:146).

<sup>6</sup>hdr, "ornament," "splendor," "honour," "majesty,"  
 (HELOT, p. 214; HCLT, p. 350). The term is related to the  
 Aramaic hdr with the same meaning (ibid, p. 350; DISO, p.  
 63). The term is always used to express the outstanding  
 majesty, the glory of God, and the dignity of royalty (G.  
 Warmuth, s.v. "hdr," TDOT, 3:337). So, hdr indicates the  
 garment of light which YHWH puts on (Ps 104:1-2), or the  
 king's achieved honor through his victories--but always as

t'ṭrhw

glory and honour (KJV).

In Psalm 8 YHWH is praised because of his whole creation, the universe and man. When the psalmist focuses upon man in his thought, he realizes the contrast of human creaturehood with the grandeur of the universe (vss. 3-4). Within this context, the heavenly and the earthly realms become focused in contrast, stressing the lowliness of man --'nws--in relation to the heavenly beings--'lhym.<sup>1</sup> One thing appears evident here, that in spite of all the glory, honor, and domain given to man, the angelic beings belong to an order superior to humans.

In Ps 97:7 the same 'lhym is used in a context of exaltation of God. The sovereignty of YHWH is presented as that of the cosmic King. Heaven and earth are presented as praising His divine righteousness and glory (vs. 6). Then the 'lhym are urged to worship the divine heavenly King, hšthw-lw kl-'lhym, "worship him all you gods."<sup>2</sup> The nearer context points here to gods rather than to angels.<sup>3</sup>

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endowed gift of YHWH (Ps 21:5 [H 6]).

<sup>1</sup>In this sense NIV translates, "Thou made him a little lower than the heavenly beings." However, as von Rad rightly states, the "little lower" concept certainly refers here to angels (OTT, 1:145).

<sup>2</sup>Or "Devant Lui tous les dieux se prosternent!" (Jacquet, Les Psaumes, 2:815).

<sup>3</sup>The whole vs. 7 introduces a sort of polemic against the false gods in a dramatic symbolism underlining the futility of the worship of idols (Deissler, 2:108). On the other hand, the imperative command is perhaps given as "an ironical challenge" to the supposed existent gods



The LXX (Ps 96:7) again takes it as angels,<sup>1</sup> however, making it a command for them to worship the Divine King.<sup>2</sup>

The mention of 'lhym of Ps 138:1 fits better--in our opinion--as a reference for the heavenly messengers than for gods.<sup>3</sup> It is quite difficult to see the psalmist, being a worshiper of the true God, praising YHWH before other gods. On the contrary, however, his praising becomes more meaningful as being performed before angels.<sup>4</sup>

It might be said that although most commentators differ in opinion, seeing 'lhym more as a proper term for gods rather than for angels, it is basically the interpretation of the LXX that points to this particular exegesis.<sup>5</sup>

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(Scroggie, Psalms, p. 286).

<sup>1</sup>proskunesate auto, pantes oi aggeloi autou, "worship him all his angels."

<sup>2</sup>This understanding is maintained as valid for the author of Hebrews who interprets the phrase as a command of God urging His angels to worship His divine firstborn when He becomes introduced in the earth (Heb 1:6).

<sup>3</sup>The AJSV translates, "I . . . sing a hymn to You before the divine beings."

<sup>4</sup>Similarly the LXX (Ps 137:1) takes the 'lhym as angels, and translates kai enantion aggelon psalo soi, "and before the angels I will sing to thee."

There is also the possibility that 'lhym here indicates the princes or judges before whom the psalmist may be praising God (Murphy, Psalms, p. 663). If the interpretation is in agreement with angels, it conveys the possibility of angels being "spectators of man's worship" (Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, p. 784).

<sup>5</sup>This LXX's interpretation is endorsed by the NT writer in a way that should be taken into consideration, since it was considered basic for some fundamental features regarding angels.

This is still quite valid within the concept of biblical angelology.

### The Seraphim

The heavenly beings named seraphim are mentioned only twice in the OT, and the references are given by Isaiah when he describes a theophany of YHWH whom the prophet saw seated on his throne and surrounded by the heavenly hosts (6:1-4, 6). The reference to the seraphim says:

šrpym 'mdym mm <sup>1</sup> lw <sup>1</sup>	Above him stood
šš knpym šš knpym l'hd <sup>2</sup>	the seraphim;
bštym yksh <sup>3</sup> pnyw	each had six wings:
wbštym yksh rglyw	with two he covered
wbštym y <sup>4</sup> wpp. <sup>4</sup>	his face,
	with two he covered
	is feet,
	and with two he would fly.

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<sup>1</sup>The expression mm<sup>1</sup>, translated as "above it," may perhaps convey the idea of hovering or soaring, while they attended YHWH (Keil, Isaiah, p.191), as if they were suspended in space. On the other hand, mm<sup>1</sup> may be rendered as "beside," giving the idea of the seraphim as standing by insinuating the idea of their promptness for YHWH's service (E. Henderson, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah [London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1857], p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Lit. "six wings, six wings to each one." The repetition of the number of wings expresses distribution. Here the dual form of the noun wings is employed instead of the plural to indicate also the idea of distribution, that each seraphim had three pairs of wings and not six pairs on each one. (See Joüon, Grammaire, 91e; Kautzsch, Hebrew Grammar, 134q.)

<sup>3</sup>esh, "to cover, to clothe, to envelope, to cover over." HCLLOT, p. 677; HELOT, p. 491.

<sup>4</sup>ewp, "to fly." HELOT, p. 733; HCLLOT; p. 1026. This indicates that the heavenly beings--at least some of them, and in this case the seraphim--that serve in the

wqr' zh 'l-zh w'mr	And one called to another and said:
qdwš qdwš qdwš <sup>1</sup>	Holy, Holy, Holy
yhwh šb'wt . . .	is YHWH of the hosts . . .
wy'p 'ly 'hd	Then flew one of the
mn-hšrpym . . .	seraphim to me . . .(RSV)

The exact derivation of seraphim is unknown.<sup>2</sup> Etymologically the Hebrew noun šrpym is usually related to the root šrp, which could mean either "to burn, to consume,"<sup>3</sup> or "to be high."<sup>4</sup> Their Aramaic,<sup>5</sup> Akkadian,<sup>6</sup> and Ugaritic<sup>7</sup> cognates basically have the same meaning. Other

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court of YHWH are winged (P. Auvray, Isaïe 1-39 [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1972], p. 87).

<sup>1</sup>This seraphic antiphonal song mentioned by Isaiah is known as the trisagion. The song did not praise merely God's highness, but above all His spotless character (Keil, Isaiah, p. 192), as the One opposed to sin (J. Ridderbos, Isaiah, Bible Student's Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984], p. 77). The trisagion stresses the superlative degree of YHWH's holiness (I. W. Slotki, Isaiah [London: Soncino Press, 1949], p. 29), and emphasizes "the uniqueness of Israel's God" (Page H. Kelley, Isaiah [BBC, 5], p. 210), underlining "the entirety of the divine perfection which separates God from his creation" (Young, Isaiah, p. 242).

<sup>2</sup>M. Gruenthaner, "The Demonology of the Old Testament," CBO 6 (1949):15.

<sup>3</sup>AHCL, p. 740.

<sup>4</sup>HCLLOT, pp. 1444-1445.

<sup>5</sup>AAG, p. 554.

<sup>6</sup>sarapu, "verbrennen," AHW, 3:1184; ASHW, p. 691.

<sup>7</sup>šrp, "to burn," UT, No. 2489; "quemar;" MLC, p. 633; LRBUA, p. 127.

OT uses of the term *šrp* are used to indicate serpents, by naming them or qualifying them.

In Num 21: 6 it is used adjectively for the serpents that invaded the Israelite camp,<sup>1</sup> while in vs. 8 it names the serpent that Moses was ordered to make to restrain the mortality.<sup>2</sup> In Deut 8:15 *šrp* is also used to describe as "fiery" the same venomous ophidians that the Israelites met in the wilderness.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Isaiah

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<sup>1</sup>*hnhšym hšrpy*, "fiery serpents." The LXX renders it as *tous opheis tous thanatountas*, "the deadly serpents."

<sup>2</sup>God orders Moses 'šh lk *šrp*, "make a fiery serpent." The serpent image was called either *nhš nhšt*, "bronze serpent" (vs. 9), or *nhštn* during the monarchy (2 Kgs 18:4).

<sup>3</sup>Again *šrp* is used as an adjective of *nhš*. Here the deadly serpents that bit the Israelites are referred to (R. K. Harrison and A. R. Millard, s.v. "Seraphim," *ILLBD*, 3: 1471). The LXX renders *šrp* as *daknon*, "biting," which emphasizes the kind of snakes from which they were delivered by God in the desert. Jehuda Feliks affirms that in the Bible, *nahash* "is a generic name, designating many species which include both the poisonous and the non-poisonous kinds," while '*saraph*' "refers to poisonous snakes only." He also concludes that "the meaning of the word '*saraph*' is 'to burn,' implying the 'burning' effect of the poison injected into the body" (*The Animal World of the Bible* [Tel-Aviv: Sinai, 1972], p. 102).

There are various kinds of deadly serpents peculiar to the Sinai Peninsula. Although it is not possible to identify with certainty the species of serpents which afflicted the Israelites in the episode related in Num 21, some suggestions have been made. F. S. Bodenheimer--who mentions 33 species of snakes for Palestine and the neighboring regions, listing five of them as poisonous--gives the asp as the probable snake of the desert episode (*Animal Life in Palestine* [Tel Aviv: Sefer, 1935], pp. 181-191). On the other side, G. Cansdale, discarding the possibility of their being cobras in that episode, mainly arguing that cobras never appear in large numbers, suggests that they were Arabic rattlesnakes (*Echis coloratus*). This species is considered as the most poisonous snake of Palestine which

himself uses *šrp* twice to name flying serpents (14:29; 30:6),<sup>1</sup> perhaps referring at least to some other similar kind of reptile with the same properties as the fiery serpents if not to the same "fiery serpents."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, a careful look at the text demonstrates that the biblical

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is also known by its aggressiveness. In addition to that, they also can appear in large numbers. (Quoted by Keel, *OLSB*, pp. 165-66.)

<sup>1</sup>The text mentions these *šrp m'wpp*, "flying serpents" as being offsprings of other deadly snakes, consequently they also partake of the same noisome properties. Thus the *NEB* translates "venomous flying serpent." Bodenheimer identifies the fiery flying serpents of Isaiah with the Efa snake (*Echis carinatus*) (see *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960], pp. 65-66), which he himself describes as "the most prone to attack and bite human beings" (*Animal Life in Palestine*, p. 190). Keel for his part, making some relationship with Egyptian art, and interpreting examples of winged snakes in some Palestinian seals of the 8th century BC, thinks that cobras are here to be understood for the seraphim mentioned by Isaiah (*Orte und Landschaften*, pp. 165-166).

<sup>2</sup>Feliks mentions that "the Cobra is an excellent swimmer and climbs trees swiftly." For this reason, he adds, "probably the '*Saraph*' and the '*Saraph Meopheph*' (flying *Saraph*) denote the cobra which is able to leap on and climb up trees" (*The Animal World*, p. 107). The identity of these flying snakes, however, at the present remains unknown. The description that Herodotus makes of a certain kind of small and variegated-color, winged serpents guarding frankincense trees in Arabia (*The Histories*, p. 219), which migrate every spring to Egypt (*ibid.*, p. 130) is imprecise and could not be related to any Isaian passage because of the imprecision of the report. As D. J. Wiseman says, perhaps "Herodotus is depicting a species of dragon-fly or tree-lizard," or even "some poisonous winged insect" ("Flying Serpents," *TynB* 23 (1972):109-110). As for the Isaian references, Wiseman concludes in an inquisitive way the possibility that the 'fiery flying serpents' of Isaiah "are but 'deadly poisonous snakes in general'" (*ibid.*).

picture is closer to a description of a zoological species than it is to desert demons.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that the root *srp* is also commonly used to mean burning.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, when it is used in relation to snakes, it obviously might not be indicative of any serpentine form, but rather it might be a reference either to a venomous serpent whose bite burns like blazing fire,<sup>3</sup> or likely "the resulting inflammation, or perhaps to its brilliant appearance."<sup>4</sup>

By and large, the proposed grammatical connections of *šrp* with the snake have served as a basis for some scholars to suppose that the seraphim are mixed creatures of serpentine form.<sup>5</sup> They assume that the seraphim are just serpents, although marvelous and intelligent beings;<sup>6</sup> a sort of "serpent-like rays of lightning which kept every-

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<sup>1</sup>Keel, *JVSK*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Exod 32:20; Lev 13:55; 1 Kgs 13:2, etc.

<sup>3</sup>Van der Born, *BiLe*, p. 1580.

<sup>4</sup>S. Horn, *SDABD*, s.v. "Seraphim." As Ivan Engnell also remarks, the passage of Num 21:8 is "obviously, an elliptic mode of expression: *šrp*, 'the burning one', to wit 'Burning snake', cf. v. 6: *hnhšym hšrpym*" (The Call of Isaiah. An Exegetical and Comparative Study [Uppsala: Lundequistka Bokhandeln, 1949], p. 33, n. 3).

<sup>5</sup>In this way, H. Hunker, s.v. "Seraphim," *LTK*, 9:681; Johann Michl, s.v. "angel," *EncBT*, 1:22; Marvin A. Sweeney, s.v. "Seraphim," *HBD*, p. 927.

<sup>6</sup>"Les seraphins ne sont pas des serpents, mais des êtres intelligents et merveilleux. Ils se tiennent au-dessus du trône de Dieu." H. Lesêtre, s.v. "Sèraphins," *DiBiVi*, 5:1670.

thing that was profane or unclean from the divine presence";<sup>1</sup> or perhaps a kind of "standing serpents,"<sup>2</sup> or even "winged dragons"<sup>3</sup> flying around YHWH. These assumptions, however, appear to lie outside of a strict biblical context<sup>4</sup> and they are more directly oriented toward an archaeological viewpoint--mainly from Egyptian iconography.<sup>5</sup>

The seraphim presented by Isaiah, however, appear to be described more with human likeness than with that of snakes.<sup>6</sup> Probably the very name suggests their refulgent

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<sup>1</sup>D. J. Dumbrell, "Worship in Isaiah 6," RTH 43 (1984):3. T. K. Cheyne also affirms that the cherubim are "serpent-like lightnings" (The Prophecies of Isaiah [London: Paul Kegan, Trench and Co., 1884], 1:39).

<sup>2</sup>Kelly, Isaiah, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>F. Delitzsch, The Prophecies of Isaiah (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark: 1889), 1:180.

<sup>4</sup>Auvray, Isaie, p. 87. Kissane is probably correct when he says that the seraphim "have nothing in common except the name" (The Book of Isaiah, 1941, p. 74).

<sup>5</sup>An imagery of winged snakes in a context of protective and surrounding deities is very common in Egyptian iconography, and D. A. Acomb says that "the association of the seraphim with the throne of God (Isa 6:1-2) makes one wonder at the imagery of winged snakes depicted on the Egyptian thrones" (s.v. "Seraphim," ZPEB, 5:349). For a study of the seraphim interpreted as winged serpent-like beings, see especially Karen R. Joines, "Winged Serpents in Isaiah's Vision," JBL 86 (1967):410-415; idem, SSIOT, pp. 42-60; Keel, JVSK, pp. 70-191; W. A. Ward, "The Four-Winged Serpent on Hebrew Seals," Rivista degli Studi Orientali 43 (1968):135-143. See also here figs. 172 to 174.

<sup>6</sup>D. E. Comb, s.v. "Seraphim," ZPEB, 5:349; IDCB, s.v. "Seraphim," p. 903.

appearance<sup>1</sup> so common for the nature of beings from the heavenly realms. They are plainly described, however, as rational winged heavenly beings with definite functions of escorting and liturgy. As members of the heavenly court, they appear with an exclusive function of service.<sup>2</sup> They are celestial spirits that surround the throne of God in a prominent ministry of holiness.<sup>3</sup> They are members of the celestial choir that proclaim the holiness and cosmic sovereignty of YHWH,<sup>4</sup> in an antiphonal way and with a powerful rumbling voice.<sup>5</sup> They are able to fly, sing, and

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<sup>1</sup>Horn, SDABD, p. 1006. Perhaps with the meaning of "burning ones, or beings resembling fire." Alfred Jenour, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah (London: R. B. Seeley and L. B. Burnside, 1830), p. 142; Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah [NICOT] [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965], p. 239). Engnell correctly affirms that "the *šrpym* are of course not snake demons, as has been asserted with reference to Num 21:6, etc. They are, conceivably, like the Cherubim, fire-and-light beings" (The Call of Isaiah, p. 33).

<sup>2</sup>Rolf Knierim, "The Vocation of Isaiah," VT 18 (1968):51.

<sup>3</sup>Ridderbos, Isaiah, p. 77. The sense of the Hebrew *šrp* can perhaps indicate that the seraphim are "purifiers" (Harrison and Millard, IllBD, 3:1417).

<sup>4</sup>Danielle Ellul Biarritz rightly makes note that the Isaian seraphim are "présente comme des êtres ailés et les définit par leur fonction liturgique: ce sont eux: qui proclament le sainteté et la plénitude de Iahwé des armées, Dieu d'Israël et Dieu cosmique" ("Les structures symboliques d'Esäie 6. Une hypothèse," FoVi 83 [1984]:19).

<sup>5</sup>The powerful reverberating seraphic antiphony shook the precinct where they were praising God (Isa 6:3-4).



intelligently dialogue with men.<sup>1</sup> As creatures of light they "are not only representatives of majesty, sovereignty, dominion, and protection, but also are agents of divine redemption"<sup>2</sup> and, above all, "bearers of purification."<sup>3</sup>

The possibility that presents itself is that the seraphim function as bright creatures attending YHWH who have been equated to the An gods.<sup>4</sup> As for the seraphim themselves, it is argued that those described in Isaiah are to be understood as personification of the lightning.<sup>5</sup> Lacheman thinks that "the seraphim are not different from the kerubim. It's only when the sun shines on the kerubim that they become seraphim."<sup>6</sup> Morgenstern has adduced Babylonian origins for the seraphim and he equates them with the shedu and lamassu attendants upon Ishtar.<sup>7</sup> It has

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<sup>1</sup>while Isaiah was confessing his impure, sinful condition, a seraph flew to him and after touching him he said to Isaiah, "Now that this has touched your lips, may your guilt depart and your sin be purged away" (Isa 6:6 JSAV).

<sup>2</sup>SSIOT, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>Joines, "Winged Serpents," p. 415.

<sup>4</sup>Grey Hubert Skipwith, "The Lord of Heaven," JQR 19 (1907):698-699.

<sup>5</sup>John Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm 29 and Habakkuk 3:9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah 6," VT 29 (1979):143-145.

<sup>6</sup>E. Lacheman, "The Seraphim of Isaiah 6," JQR 59 (1968):71.

<sup>7</sup>"Biblical Theophanies," ZA 28 (1914):30; idem, "Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion," p. 44.

also been recently suggested that the seraphim should be connected with the griffin, stressing an Egyptian connection, according to which the griffin is presented as "a saraph, a 'burning creature'," which was connected with the solar deity.<sup>1</sup>

### The Cherubim

Of all the heavenly beings related to the angelic realm, the cherubim motif is perhaps the most mentioned in biblical studies. There are ninety-three references to them in the OT, both in singular and plural forms.<sup>2</sup> The etymological connections of the term with its possible Akkadian cognates *karabu*<sup>3</sup> or *kuribu*<sup>4</sup> relating to the

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Goldman, "The Development of the Lion-Griffin," AJA 64 (1960):328.

<sup>2</sup>Eben Shoshan, p. 561.

<sup>3</sup>*karabu* as a noun means a "prayer, blessing" (CAD 8: 192). As a verb it conveys five synonymous meanings which the CAD lists as follows: (1) To utter formulas of blessing (said of gods and divine powers and manifestations); (2) to repeat formulas of praise, adoration, homage and greeting; (3) to invoke blessings upon other persons (for a specific purpose) before images of the gods --To pray to the gods; (4) To make the gesture of adoration and greeting; and (5) to dedicate an offering by pronouncing the relevant formulas (CAD 8:192-193).

<sup>4</sup>The Akkadian *kuribu* is understood as being some protective genius with specific non-human features placed at the entrance of some sacred place, or depicted as a decorative device in some temple precincts. See above, pp. 288-290.

actions of praying,<sup>1</sup> blessing, and adoration are uncertain. Since the main function of the biblical cherubim, however, is described as "near the throne of God engaged in worship and service,"<sup>2</sup> it could be somehow related to the Akkadian.

#### The Pentateuchal Cherubim

The cherubim are introduced to the biblical reader from the early pages of the OT, and they are mentioned nineteen times in the Pentateuch.<sup>3</sup> In Gen 3:24 they appear as celestial sentinels guarding "the way to the tree of life" at the entrance of the garden of Eden. No description of their appearance is given there. They are just presented as God's appointed guardians.

The only complementary mention to them is that they appear wielding a flaming sword<sup>4</sup> which may suggest that

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<sup>1</sup>It is commonly assumed that the Hebrew term "ultimately derives from the Akkadian language, in which it refers to an intercessor who brings the prayers of humans to the gods." IDCB, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup>L. R. Harris, s.v. "k<sup>e</sup>rūb, Cherub," TWOT, 1:1036.

<sup>3</sup>Gen 3:24; Exod 25:18, 19 (3x), 20 (2x), 22; 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; 37:7, 8 (3x), 9 (2x); Num 7:89.

<sup>4</sup>wyškn mqdm lgn-<sup>e</sup>dn 't-hkrbym w't lḥt hhrb hmthpkt lšmr 't-drk 'š hḥym, "he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life" (NIV).

Scholars have tried to find without success an exact parallel in ancient art for the flaming sword of Gen 3:24. They emphasize, however, both swords and fire that "figure prominently as divine weapons in mythology" (L'Heureux, In and Out of Paradise [New York: Paulist Press, 1983], p. 23).

Cassuto sees both the cherubim and the flaming sword as a description for some sort of atmospheric phenom-

they may also be seen as heavenly warriors, part of the heavenly armies.<sup>1</sup>

The cherubim also appear as a decorative motif on the curtains of the tabernacle of the desert and as a required complement of the mercy seat in the Most Holy place.<sup>2</sup> Although the references are explicit, they give us but few details. The cherubim were an indispensable part of the kapporet of the ark of the covenant placed in the Most Holy place of the tent of YHWH (Exod 37:7-9). Two of them were made of hammered gold and with outspread wings above, and were situated, probably standing, at each end of the mercy seat. These two cherubim were not just a decorative addition that Moses invented to make the holy of holies more beautiful or impressive. They were made

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enon. He argues that "if the cherubim are actually the winds blowing in the skies, then the flaming fire and the sword-flame are none other than lighting flashes which appear in the clouds like a sharp sword, drawn by the hand of the cherubim, and turning . . ., that is, revolving hither and thither." Genesis, p. 176.

Recently Hendel has suggested that the flaming sword has to be seen as "an independent fiery being, a divine being in the service to Yahveh, in precisely the same category as the cherubim." Ronald S. Hendel, "The Flame of the Whirling Sword': A Note on Genesis 3:24," JBL 104 (1985):672-673.

<sup>1</sup>The very function of an appointed sentinel guarding some special entrance suggests a military imagery. The flaming sword adds explicitness for a picture of a celestial warrior posted purposely to prevent banned men from reentering to the garden of God (Gen 3:24).

<sup>2</sup>Exod 25:18-20, 22; 36:8, 35.

according to what was shown to Moses in vision,<sup>1</sup> and under the explicit command of God. They were to meet a very specific purpose:

You shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end, . . . The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. . . . There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim . . . I will speak with you.<sup>2</sup>

In this way the throne of YHWH was represented,<sup>3</sup> and there was the appointed place for Moses to meet the Sovereign of Israel. Since the cherubim, both those on the kapporet and those on the curtains (Exod 26:1, 31), were made under the explicit command of YHWH, we may assume that they probably had the same form. They were probably made to represent the hosts that surround YHWH in His immediate presence as well as His ministers of the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> The mention of the cherubim having their faces

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<sup>1</sup>That God showed Moses in vision the pattern of the earthly sanctuary is repeatedly expressed in the Pentateuch (Num 8:4; Exod 15:9; 26:30; 27:8).

<sup>2</sup>Exod 25:17-20, 22 (RSV), italics for emphasis.

<sup>3</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Bible and the Ancient Near East (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 143; Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Exodus (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983), pp. 323, 336.

<sup>4</sup>One cannot avoid the idea of the cherubim as being part of the intricate service of the heavenly sanctuary. Moses represented what he saw in a prophetic vision of the divine dwelling-place in heaven. He put special dedication to copying "the one that he saw in vision," and thus Israel

towards each other and looking down to the kapporet<sup>1</sup> suggests that they were anthropomorphic in appearance (see Figs. 206 and 207)<sup>2</sup>.

The mention of the cherubim in Num 7:89 portrays again the same function of representing the throne of YHWH acting as a covering for the glory of God, and also provides the appropriate place for the divine presence while Moses spoke with God.

From the descriptions given in the Pentateuch it is possible to assume that the cherubim are heavenly beings who are at the service of God. As for their appearance, they can be properly described as having an anthropomorphic form, and they can certainly be described as winged. The repeated mention of them without any detailed description tends to indicate that they were well understood, or at least they were very familiar to the the people of Israel.

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had "an earthly sanctuary corresponding to the heavenly sanctuary" (Cassuto, Exodus, p. 322).

M. Woudstra also rightly understands that the assertions for the cherubim in the sanctuary were a device "to direct the attention of the worshiper to the heavenly sanctuary with its heavenly Occupant, of which the earthly counterpart meant to be a faithful image" (The Ark of the Covenant from Conquest to Kingship [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1965], pp. 67-68).

<sup>1</sup>wpnym 'ys 'l-'hyw 'l-hkprt yhyw pny hkrbym, "they must face one another, their faces toward the throne of mercy" (NEJ).

<sup>2</sup>In this way, Gressmann, ABAT, p. 149, fig. 513; Lesetre, s.v. "Arche d'alliance," DiBiVi, 1:912-920, figs. 243-244; A. Colunga, "La vocación del profeta Ezequiel," EsBi i (1941):153.

Regarding their function, it can be said that they were the appointed celestial guardians of the places of God and, in a special way, they were assigned to be the closest company of the Godhead in the heavenly sanctuary. This is evident from the fact that they are selected to be in the divine presence next to the throne of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Cherubim in the Books of  
1 and 2 Samuel, Psalms,  
and Isaiah

The cherubim are mentioned seven times in the books of Samuel, Psalms, and Isaiah.<sup>2</sup> Each one of these references is in accordance with the concept already mentioned of being the closest company of YHWH next to His throne.

In 1 Sam 4:4 and 2 Sam 6:2 the expression is repeated, "the Lord (YHWH) of Hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim."<sup>3</sup> Both statements refer directly to the kapporet of the ark of the covenant on which the cherubim were represented. Two main ideas are underlined at this

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<sup>1</sup>Undoubtedly Moses not only saw the sanctuary itself but also the cherubim ministering in its holy precincts--hence the cherubic embroidered and sculptured representations of them. Thus it is clearly implied that the cherubim are to be seen as ministers of the heavenly sanctuary before the direct presence of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 22:11; Ps 18:11; 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16.

<sup>3</sup>yhwh šb'wt yšb hkrbym, "the LORD (YHWH) of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim" (RSV).

time: (1) That the cherubim are part of the heavenly hosts of YHWH and (2) that the cherubim are the closest attendants of YHWH on His throne.

That this cherubic service is a correct way in which to interpret their activity is evident from the statement that Isaiah makes about the prayer that King Hezekiah addressed to YHWH as the supreme cosmic King enthroned among cherubim.<sup>1</sup> This imagery is accentuated even more in the Psalter when this cherubic ministry is described in a poetic fashion. In Ps 80:2 (vs. 1, Eng.) the Semitic concept of the king-shepherd<sup>2</sup> is applied to YHWH, who is also depicted as providing this special care to Israel from His throne attended by cherubim.<sup>3</sup> In Ps

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<sup>1</sup>yhwh sb'wt 'lhy ysr'l ysb hkrbym 'th-hw' h'lhym lbdk lkl mmlkwt h'rs 'th 'syt 't-hšnym w't-h'rs, "O LORD (YHWH) of hosts, God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth" (Isa 37:16, cf. 2 Kgs 19: 25 RSV).

<sup>2</sup>The concept of the king ruling as shepherd of his people was rooted among the Semitic peoples (J. G. S. S. Thompson, "The Shepherd-Ruler Concept in the OT and Its Application in the NT," SJT 8 [1955]:406-407). This figurative concept is repeatedly found in the ANE documents as an honorific title for the kings. In this way Hammurabi was called "the shepherd of the peoples" and "the beneficent shepherd" (V. Hamp, s.v. "Pastor," EnciBi, 5:907). Similarly Esarhaddon is named "the true shepherd" (ANET, p. 289, col. a) and other Assyrian kings showed the common understanding of this concept among those peoples.

<sup>3</sup>r'h ysr'l h'zynch nhg ks'n ywsp ysb hkrbym hwpy'h, "Give ear, O Sheperd of Israel, thou who leadeest Joseph like a flock! Thou who art enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth" (RSV).



99:1 the same imagery of the heavenly king is depicted, but this time in a universal way.<sup>1</sup>

In 2 Sam 22:11 David poetically mentions the function of the cherubim, saying:

wyr <sup>2</sup> k <sup>2</sup> b <sup>2</sup> 'l-krwb	He rode on a cherub,
wy <sup>2</sup> 'p	and flew;
wyr <sup>3</sup> ' <sup>3</sup> 'l-knpy-rwh	He was seen upon the wings of the wind.

Chapter 22 of 2 Samuel is a Davidic song which is repeated almost identically in Ps 18. David extols YHWH as his constant helper. Speaking of the promptness with which God always came to his help, he describes Him as riding upon a cherub, in order to come to his aid. It would appear, however, that these Davidic references may indicate that these close ministers of YHWH are also to be seen as two kinds of beings; those who are appointed guardians, and those who are YHWH's chariot bearers, sometimes described

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<sup>1</sup>yhwh mlk yrgzw 'mym yšb krbym tntw h'rs, "The LORD (YHWH) reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! (RSV).

<sup>2</sup>The verb rkb, as the Akkadian rakabu (AHW, 2:944; ASHW, p. 619), and the Ugaritic rkb (MLC, p. 624), means "to ride, mount" (HCLOT, p. 1297 HELOT, p 938). It is used for riding animals and chariots.

This presents the cherub as a creature on which one can ride and drive. Accordingly, there are three possibilities for it--either one rides on the cherub, mounts on it, or rides in a chariot pulled by cherubim (KTGT, 310-311).

<sup>3</sup>The wyr', "he was seen" of 2 Sam 22:11 is replaced in Ps 18:10 for wyd' "he came swiftly."

poetically as the embodiment of powerful winds.<sup>1</sup> The descriptions, however, strongly suggest that these cherubim are more of a zoomorphic fashion than anthropomorphic. They are quadrupeds rather than bipeds.

From these references the cherubim appear to be portrayed as the special attendants of YHWH in nearness to His throne. The consistent use of the participle *yošeb*<sup>2</sup> indicates either that they are the usual carriers of the throne of God or His closest attendants who dwell with Him in the very nearness of His throne. At the same time the use of the verb *rkb* in connection with their functions suggests that there may exist an exclusive kind of cherubim of mainly zoomorphic form.

#### The Solomonic Cherubim

When King Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem he used the cherubim lavishly as a decorative motif of the sacred building.<sup>3</sup> The walls inside and outside the temple,

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<sup>1</sup>Commenting on this aspect, Cassuto opines that "the function of the cherubim is not always the same. There are, both in the Israelite and the Gentile tradition, watchmen cherubim, which 'keep guard,' . . . and there are cherubim that appear as the embodiment of the strong winds, which drive the clouds of the sky, the chariots of the Holy One . . ." (Genesis, p. 175).

<sup>2</sup>The verb *yšb* means equally "sit, remain, dwell" (HELOT, p. 442; HALAT, p. 424; LHAVT, pp. 334,335). The verb is commonly used in a strict connection with enthronement situations, but also to indicate a dwelling situation.

<sup>3</sup>Sixteen times the cherubim are mentioned in the books of Kings, along with the references to the building of the Solomonic Temple (6:23, 24, 25[2x], 26, 27[2x], 28,

and the doors were covered all over with carved cherubim figures together with palm trees.<sup>1</sup> Solomon did this "as an indication of the presence of God," since, from the biblical viewpoint, "the cherubim are not a product of imagination; they are spiritual beings and realities."<sup>2</sup>

In the same way, the rolling bronze stands that were made for the temple were also decorated with carved cherubim together with palm trees, bulls, and lions (1 Kgs 7:29-36). The veil of the sanctuary also was decorated with cherubim (2 Chr 3:14). The more precise form of these decorative cherubim is not described.

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29, 32[2x], 35; 7:29, 36; 8:6, 7), and once with the prayer of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:15). From the twelve references that appear in the books of the Chronicles, eleven are references to the decorative cherubim of the same sacred Solomonic building (1 Chr 28:18; 2 Chr 3:7, 10, 11[3x], 12[2], 13, 14; 5:7, 8), and one is a reference to those of the ark of the covenant (1 Chr 13:6). Probably all resembled the same fashion.

<sup>1</sup>1 Kgs 6:29. The combination of the cherubim with the palm tree could have had some connection with the tree of life, which is also an interesting motif among the ancient oriental peoples. Martin Metzger suggests that the cherubim carved together with palm trees on the walls and door-leaves of the temple were not merely decorative but represented YHWH as the provider of life and vegetation. He adds, "dann haben die Keruben, die an den Wänden und Türflügeln des Jerusalemer Heiligtums in Verbindung mit der Palmette erscheinen (1. Kön 6,29-35), möglicherweise nicht nur dekorative Bedeutung, sondern sie besagen, dass Jahwe, dem der Kerub zugeeignet ist, Leben und Vegetation spendet" (KTGT, p. 324).

<sup>2</sup>Claus Schedl, History of the Old Testament (New York: Alba House, 1972), 3:332. Essentially he did not make any new thing. The tabernacle of the desert was also adorned with cherubim. The decorations represented in the Solomonic temple certainly were made following the ancient pattern, but on a larger scale.

Solomon made an outstanding cherubic addition to the debir. He placed there two huge cherubim with wings outspread from wall to wall in such a way that the ark of the covenant rested underneath the wings of the cherubim.<sup>1</sup> Among the few descriptive characteristics given for cherubim, the biblical record points out that those cherubim "stood on their feet" (2 Chr 3:10-14).

It should be noted that the Solomonic genius conceived the covering-protecting function of the cherubim in an intensive fashion. This was plainly expressed within the debir with the kapporet being covered by cherubs in a twofold way. It is possible that the two huge cherubim with outstretched wings over the ark of the covenant represented the living presence of God<sup>2</sup> in a way similar to

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<sup>1</sup>ky hkrwbym prśym knpym 'l-mqwm h'rnw wyskw hkrbym 'l-h'rnw w'l-bdyw mln'lh, "for the cherubim had their wings spread out over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim shielded the ark and its poles from above (1 Kgs 8:7 JSA; see also 6:23-28; 8:6; 1 Chr 28:18; 5:7, 8; and 2 Chr 5:7-8). The text seems to indicate plainly that the cherubim were standing images which spread their wings covering the ark. Contrary to this, however, Jean M. de Tarragon contends that "Les chérubins de Salomon étaient des grands hauts-reliefs inscrits dans le mur, face à l'entrée du sanctuaire." In doing this, he argues that this is in accordance with the decorative iconography procedures followed in the walls and doors of the temple where small cherubim were carved in relief. So, he concludes, "les deux grands suivent la même technique" ("La kapporet est-elle une fiction ou un élément du cult tardif?," RB 88 (1981):10).

<sup>2</sup>Oskar Wulff, Cherubim, Throne und Seraphim (Altenburg: Druck von Oskar Bonde, 1894), p. 2.

that of those on the kapporet symbolizing His perpetual presence.<sup>1</sup>

No further details are given regarding the appearance of those Solomonic cherubim, but it may be assumed, from the position and from the characteristics similar to those which were on the kapporet, that they may have had a similar appearance. As Haran remarks, "the two cherubim of Solomon's inner sanctum are the exact counterpart of the two cherubim on the tabernacle's kapporet."<sup>2</sup>

The explicit information, though scarce, strongly suggests a human standing form, thus presenting the possibility that the cherubim of the Solomonic temple were anthropomorphic in character or appearance.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Ezekielian Cherubim

Ezekiel mentions the cherubim more than any other OT writer.<sup>4</sup> In his thirty-three references to them, he contributes a little more data that permit us to understand

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<sup>1</sup>Haran, TSAI, pp. 225-226.

<sup>2</sup>TSAI, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup>Franz Landsberger, "The Origin of the Winged Angel in Jewish Art," HUCA 29 (1947): 234. Metzger, although favoring a different shape for the cherubim, points out that the textual information forces one to think of them at least as standing like human beings (KTGT, p. 365).

<sup>4</sup>Ezek 9:3; 10:1, 2[2x], 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9[2x], 11[3x], 14[2x], 15, 16[2x], 17[2x], 18, 19, 20; 11:22; 28:14, 16; 41:18[3x], 20, 25.

the cherubim a little better; at the same time it complicates the picture with other unsolvable mysteries.

The Ezekielian cherubim can be divided into three categories. (1) The carved cherubim of the sanctuary vision;<sup>1</sup> (2) the guardian cherub of the holy mount of God;<sup>2</sup> (3) the cherubim that appeared in the theophanies that were shown to him as being bearers of the throne of YHWH.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, Ezekiel also presents in his first chapter a description of some heavenly beings who resembled those cherubim mentioned in chap. 10. These beings, however, can be properly identified with the cherubim, since both appearances deal with the throne of YHWH and the surrounding creatures that form the heavenly court of God.<sup>4</sup>

The first category--mentioned in 41:10-20--depicts two-faced cherubim. One face was human and the other was of a lion.<sup>5</sup> They were probably represented as standing by or guarding the palm trees, "with the human face toward the

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<sup>1</sup>Ezek 41:18-20, 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ezek 28:14, 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ezek 10:1-9, 11, 14-20; 11:22.

<sup>4</sup>That on both occasions the same heavenly beings are contemplated by Ezekiel becomes plain when the prophet says, "These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim" (10:20, 15).

<sup>5</sup>wšnym pny m lkrwb. wpy 'dm . . . wpy-kpyr, "Every cherub had two faces: the face of a man . . . and the face of a young lion" (41:18-19).

palm tree on one side and the face of a lion toward the palm tree on the other."<sup>1</sup> Nothing else is said of the form of their body, nor are any of their additional characteristics mentioned.

The guardian cherub is presented in chap. 28 in a prophetic pericope which, with indicting language, forecasts the doom of the king of Tyre. At the same time he is depicted as typifying this anonymous heavenly cherubic personage. The context in which this prophecy is given seems to describe a background that appears to be more related to the heavenly realm than to the earthly, particularly in relationship with the heavenly assembly.

Since our task is mainly descriptive, we may first indicate that the cherub is explicitly identified as a created being.<sup>2</sup> Then, we may notice that the variegated

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<sup>1</sup>Ezekiel describes the cherubim as being separated by palm trees, *wtmrh byn-krwb lkrb*, "a palm tree between cherub and cherub" (41:18). Nothing is said, however, of their position, which could be standing or lying facing the trees.

<sup>2</sup>The repeated expression *bywm hbr'k*, "the day you were created" (28:13, 15) is plainly indicative that the alluded-to cherub is a created being. According to the OT concept, the cherubim are not gods but creatures (Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel, p. 414). They are but "one of a great variety of heavenly beings which the ancient Israelites believed Yahweh had at his disposal" (L'Heureux, In and Out of Paradise, p. 23).

Zimmerli sees in the use of the verb *br'* a clear connection of the cherubim with the motif of creation. Besides, the cherub "with which the king of Tyre is compared, has about it the dignity and splendor of the primeval" (Ezekiel, 2:92).

jewelry, precious stones, and gold mentioned together as part of the cherubic array may be referred to not merely as an expression of wealth but to signify above all the high rank that this cherub possessed among the heavenly creatures.<sup>1</sup> In an appropriate way the shining characteristic of all of these gems appears to be here, an appropriate description of the environment of the heavenly abode in which the cherub formerly dwelt. He is also described as "perfect in beauty"<sup>2</sup> and wrapped in splendor,<sup>3</sup> probably showing that--like all the gems that he wore--he was a resplendent being.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this he was full of wisdom.<sup>5</sup> Then his function<sup>6</sup> is also underlined twice as being an appointed guardian in the holy mount of God, that

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<sup>1</sup>Although certainly there are numerous cherubim in the heavenly courts, the description appears to be centered around a particular cherub that was assigned with a task in the mount of God.

<sup>2</sup>wklyl ypy, "and perfect in beauty" (28:12 RSV).

<sup>3</sup>In vss. 7 and 17 the "splendor" or "brilliance"--yp'h--is mentioned.

<sup>4</sup>That the cherubim, like other heavenly beings attending YHWH, possess a radiant aspect is elsewhere made clear in the theopanies. See Ezek 10:1-9, 11, 14-20; 11:22.

<sup>5</sup>He is described not only as wise but also as "full of wisdom"--ml' hkmh--(vs.12). In fact, eight times Ezekiel connects the cherub with wisdom (vss. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 17).

<sup>6</sup>krwb hswkk, "the cherub that covereth" (vs. 14, 16). With allusion to the represented scene of the cherubim overshadowing the kapporet, Ezekiel points to the consecrated privilege of the cherubim in the sanctuary of YHWH.



is, in the abode of YHWH.<sup>1</sup> It is notable that the environs in which he served as guardian are plainly described as being of burning fire,<sup>2</sup> which perfectly resembles the description given by Daniel (Dan 7:9-10) and Isaiah (Isa 29:6) of the environs of the throne of God. The same prophet Ezekiel describes the surroundings of the throne of God as filled with fire (Ezek 1:4, 13, 27) and the cherubim attending him as walking upon "burning coals."<sup>3</sup>

An even more complicated cherubic form is presented by Ezekiel in chaps. 1 and 10 of his book (1:5-27; 10:1-22).<sup>4</sup> This description is one of the most interesting, but

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<sup>1</sup>Vss. 14, 16. Eden, the garden of God (vs. 13), the holy mountain of God, and the mountain of God (vss. 14, 16) are all synonymous expressions that identify the abode of God. All these underline the idea of the intimacy that the covering cherub had as chosen guardian of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>Twice are mentioned the stones of fire as an element proper to the vicinity of the throne of God (vss. 14, 16). A similar description is given by Isaiah when he is purified by an attendant seraph (Isa 6:6). Ezekiel describes the cherub as walking in the midst of the stones of fire --btwk 'bny-'š hthlkt--while he was at his appointed post (vs. 14). A. B. Davidson sees in these references to "stones of fire" an allusion not only for the attendance to the divine presence but also to the "sons of God" (The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel [Cambridge: University Press, 1924], p. 225).

<sup>3</sup>ghly-'š, "burning coals." The description depicts the cherubim as being very familiar with the blazing surrounding of the divine.

<sup>4</sup>A similar picture is mentioned only in the last book of the Bible but with different characteristics (Rev 4:6-7).

at same time one of the most enigmatic.<sup>1</sup> From the details given by the prophet trying to describe these heavenly beings, it is possible to summarize the following:

1. They possess an anthropomorphic resemblance,<sup>2</sup> with hands similar to humans'.<sup>3</sup>

2. They possess superhuman features which are beyond comparison with any known terrestrial being.

a. They are four-faced creatures.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lesètre opines that they convey an almost impenetrable mystery. DiBiVi 2:658.

<sup>2</sup>wzh mr'yhn dmwt 'dm lnhh, "In appearance their form was that of a man" (Ezek 1:5 NIV). According to the description that follows it is possible that these phrases may also be pointing to an upright position similar to that of man. (D. M. G. Stalker, Ezekiel [London: SCM Press, 1968], p. 45).

<sup>3</sup>It is mentioned repeatedly that they have ydy 'dm, "hands of a man" (Ezek 1:8; 10:7, 8, 21), as one of their characteristics.

<sup>4</sup>w'rb'h pnym l'ht, "and each had four faces" (1:6; 10:14, 21). The four faces have been a constant enigma for the interpreters of all times. Jewish tradition thought that each face represented the highest rank of the terrestrial creatures of YHWH. According to the Midrash, Rabbah R. Abin taught that "four kinds of exalted beings have been created in the world. The most exalted of all living creatures is man; of birds, the eagle; of cattle, the ox; and of wild beasts, the lion. All of these received royalty and had greatness bestowed upon them, and they are set under the chariot of God" (Beshallah [On Exod 15:1], 23:13). And are set under the chariot of God, because "the Holy One, blessed be He, is exalted over all of them and over the whole world" (B. Talmud Hagigah 13b).

Among the modern commentators, Eichrodt opines that these creatures, "being servants of the great world-God, they carry in themselves some of the uniqueness of Yahweh" (Ezekiel [London: SCM Press, 1970], p. 57); and Zimmerli thinks of them as an "expression to the omnipotence of Yahweh which is effective in every direction" of the earth. (Ezekiel 1 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 120).

- b. They have four wings and four hands.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Although their legs may be similar to human, their feet are those of an ox.<sup>2</sup>
- d. They are capable of lightning movement.<sup>3</sup>

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Some modern interpreters tend to see more a mythological imagery related to a zodiacal Babylonical pattern.

<sup>1</sup>w'rb'h knpym l'ht lhm . . . wydy 'dm mtht knpyhm 'l 'rb't rb'yhm wponym yknpym l'rb'tm, "but each of them had four . . . wings . . . Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man" Ezek 1:6, 8. That the cherubim are described properly as being four-handed is interpreted by Richard Kraetzschmar, who says "Ein jedes also hatte vier Hände, bez. Arme entsprechend den vier Flügeln v. 6, wobei sich an jeder der vier Seiten (rb') ein Flügel und darunter eine Hand befand" (Das Buch Ezechiel, Göttingen: Vandenhock & Ruprecht, 1900], p. 12).

<sup>2</sup>wrglyhm rgl ysrh wkp rglyhm kkp rgl 'gl, "their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot" (Ezek 1:7 RSV). The LXX gives a different picture for the cherubim's feet in rendering "their legs were straight, and their feet winged [taking knp for kp, 'sole'], and emitting sparks like the flashings of bronze and their wings were light."

Johannes Herrmann has observed that even if it is not plainly declared, it is viable to conceive these cherubim with two legs and two feet each, since they are standing upright and have human hands. He remarks that "gerade die Hervorhebung der nicht menschlichen Teile lässt aber erkennen, dass sie im Übrigen und im ganzen menschengestaltig gedacht sind. Ihre Beschreibung ist nicht so zweifelsfrei, dass sie man die Vorstellung des Profeten sicher nachbilden oder nachzeichnen könnte, und sie ist ziemlich verschränkt" (Ezechiel [Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924], p. 15).

<sup>3</sup>That their movements are like lightning is clearly described in the phrase whhywt rsw' wsyb kmr'h hbzq, "the creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning" (Ezek 1:14). Although the terms rsw' and hbzq are regarded to be different from "coming out" and "lightning," respectively (Keil, Ezekiel, p. 26), it conveys an idea of restlessness and swiftness.

e. They possess a blazing and refulgent appearance.<sup>1</sup>

f. They possess multiple vision.<sup>2</sup>

g. As winged creatures, they fly in every direction with thunderous noise.<sup>3</sup>

All these characteristics indicate that the cherubim are exceptional and unique heavenly creatures.<sup>4</sup> At the same time through these and other Ezekielian descriptions, it is possible to discern at least three different kinds of

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<sup>1</sup>wnssym k<sup>e</sup>yn nhšt qll, "and they sparkled like burnished bronze" (Ezek 1:7).

<sup>2</sup>Amazingly these cherubim are described as having eyes all over their bodies. It says, wkl bšrm wgbhm wydyhm wknpyhm . . . ml'ym 'ynym sbyb, "and their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes" (10:12).

<sup>3</sup>The prophet mentions that the flapping of their wings produced a thunderous sound. In 1:24 he says, "And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of a host."

<sup>4</sup>The description of the vision of the cherubim in relation to the throne becomes, in our opinion, quite understandable after the description of Moshe Greenberg, who reducing the vision of Ezekiel to its essentials says, "As the cloud neared, four glowing creatures became visible in its lower part, like humans in their erect posture, their leg(s) and hands, but having four faces and wings. The creatures, disposed perhaps in a square, were joined at their wing tips to one another. They gave the impression of a unity as they moved, facing in every direction, and always went in the direction they faced, without needing to turn. Amidst them was a flashing torch like an apparition. The prophet noted that below each creature, and alongside it, was a high, complex wheel rimmed with eyes." HFI, pp. 159-160.

cherubim:<sup>1</sup> (1) those of four faces and other combined features, which have the express task of being the throne bearers of YHWH; (2) those designed to be the guardians of holy places belonging to God;<sup>2</sup> (3) those that are two-faced, described as a decorative motif in the vision of the temple.

We may say that it is possible to deduce the second kind from the fact that Ezekiel himself says in 10:7 that one cherubim extended his hand and took fire from among the four-faced cherubim. If that was one of the four-faced ones, it should simply say that "one of the cherubim" did this action.<sup>3</sup> Besides, when the prophet adds details of the cherubim in chap. 10 (10:14), he says that one face of the four-faced cherubim "was that of a cherub."<sup>4</sup>

This late declaration would tend to indicate that there might be heavenly beings regarded as cherubim whose

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<sup>1</sup>Haran has correctly indicated that "the cherubim in the Old Testament appear in several guises, no one of which cancels out the other." He also says that "within these limits there were possible variations even in the biblical conception of cherubim" (TSAI, pp. 253, 258).

<sup>2</sup>Since the prophet does not give any additional detail regarding their form, we may assume that in a general way they are mainly anthropomorphic.

<sup>3</sup>This would also show that more than one celestial character known as cherubim is involved in the attendance of the throne of YHWH.

<sup>4</sup>wpny hsnv pny 'dm. As Zimmerli observes, "Clearly we have in mind here a cherub with one face which must then be distinguished" from four-faced "cherubim of Ezek 1" (Ezekiel [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], p. 255).

characteristics are only peculiar to cherubim, in the same way that those of humans or any other beings are only peculiar to the specified creature. At the same time both humans and cherubim share common features, as well as essential differences. What those differences are, apart from those plainly mentioned in the text, is an elusive matter.<sup>1</sup>

From the descriptions of Ezekiel and Isaiah we know that YHWH is surrounded by a multifaced court which is composed of a variety of creatures that resemble the most unimaginable diversity of forms, of which the seraphim and the cherubim appear to be standing closest to Him. At the same time both types of creatures, either as they are described or "represented by cult symbols," appear as "preponderatingly of human type--though winged--since they have a face, feet, and evidently hands since they can handle a pair of tongs" or even burning coals.<sup>2</sup>

#### Cherubic Archaeological Connections

What was the form of the cherubim of the kapporet? The OT is almost silent regarding this matter. Although the Israelites of Moses', Samuel's, Solomon's, and possibly Ezekiel's times were familiar with their form, with the loss of the ark, with the destruction of the Temple, and

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<sup>1</sup>HHI, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Engnell, The Call of Isaiah, p. 33.

with the passing of the years, this knowledge has fallen into oblivion.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the Jews of the days of Jesus had long completely forgotten their specific appearance in such a way that Josephus wrote: "as for the cherubim themselves, no one can say or imagine what they looked like."<sup>2</sup> In spite of that, scholars have tried to depict the cherubic resemblance mainly based on archaeological discoveries.

An interpretation of the biblical cherubim from the standpoint of archaeology is wide open. An enormous quantity of texts and monuments discovered throughout past and present decades in the ANE provide a varied conception among scholars who have tried to connect the possible resemblance of the cherubim with one archaeological discovery or another.

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<sup>1</sup>The fate of the cherubim of the ark remains unsolvable and probably will remain that way forever. The rabbinic sources had diversified opinions. Some saw in 2 Chr 35:3 enough ground to suggest that it was hidden by King Josiah (B. Talmud Yoma 52b; Horayot 12a; J. Tosefta Sotah 13.1; J. Shekalim 4:1; Schek 6). Others following midrashic deductions taught that the ark was taken to Babylon (B. Talmud Yoma 53b). The apocryphal book of 2 Mac 2:4-5 says that Jeremiah hid the ark and the altar of incense in the mount where Moses died.

<sup>2</sup>Josephus, Ant. Jud. 8. 3. 3 (trans. Thackeray, LCL). It seems rather strange, at least in our opinion, that Josephus, a well-known eclectic, did not even intend to compare the cherubim with some of the profuse representations of composite creatures so common in the surrounding countries. It is doubtful that he was not acquainted with the forms of the sphinxes, griffins, or winged lions and bulls so common in the Syro-Canaanite culture of his times.

Mythological imagery has frequently been utilized as the background for the biblical cherubim. It is affirmed that "Ezekiel was dependent on Babylonian mythology for his description of the visions" in which the cherubim are mentioned.<sup>1</sup> From the hybrid creatures in ANE iconography, the Mesopotamian representations have been identified as the biblical cherubim.<sup>2</sup> Which of those many forms, however, corresponds exactly with the cherubim has never been established. Delitzsch,<sup>3</sup> Botta,<sup>4</sup> Lenormant,<sup>5</sup> Dhorme, and

<sup>1</sup>C. F. Whitley, The Exilic Age (London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 86-87. Haran affirms that "indeed, the cherub (that of Gen) . . . is unique in its distinctively Mesopotamian stamp. The ancient Mesopotamian lore which had its primary roots in Mesopotamia eventually became acclimatized to Israel" (TTSAL, p. 259). For a similar Mytho-Mesopotamian origin, see Cecil Roth, ed., The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia (Jerusalem: Massadah Publishing, 1965), cols. 433-434.

<sup>2</sup>Gaalyahu Cornfeld, Adam to Daniel: An Illustrated Guide to the Old Testament and Its Background (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), pp. 18-19; Alberto Colunga, "La vocación del profeta Ezequiel," ESBi 1 (1941):153; Cecil Roth, ed., The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia (Jerusalem: Massadah Publishing, 1965), cols. 433-434.

<sup>3</sup>F. Delitzsch, Wo lag des Paradies? (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1881), p. 150-52.

<sup>4</sup>Paul E. Botta, Monument de Ninive (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849-50), pp. 30, 142, pl. 153.

<sup>5</sup>François Lenormant, Les origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible et les traditions des peuples orientaux (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1880), 1:109-139. Although he stresses the idea of being most likely similar to the winged bull-man, he somehow favors the idea of being--especially for those of the Ark of the Covenant--"grands oiseaux, aigles ou vautours, aux ailes étendues en avant et ombrageant le couvercle ou propitiatoire" (ibid., 1:128).



Vincent<sup>1</sup> thought that they were the Assyrian lion and bull colossi. Others<sup>2</sup> observed that the cherubim possessed an eagle's head or that of a vulture, since it was supposed that those birds were represented in the Assyrian cherub. Others favor the anthropomorphic figure of the Assyrian winged genie.<sup>3</sup> But most scholars follow the idea that the Mesopotamian winged sphinx is a model for the cherubim.<sup>4</sup>

The suggestion of a Mesopotamian background becomes even more attractive with the discovery of the word *kâribu* in the Assyrian texts naming a guardian deity.<sup>5</sup> This is seen as an obvious connection between the Hebrew *kerûb* and the Akkadian *kâribu*.<sup>6</sup> The extant references,<sup>7</sup> however, "do not enable us to determine the form of the creature to

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<sup>1</sup>"Les chérubins," RB 35 (1926):486.

<sup>2</sup>Colunga, "La vocación del profeta Ezequiel," pp. 130-134; Lenormant, Origines de l'histoire, 1:128.

<sup>3</sup>B. Teloni, "La questione dei cherubini e dei genii alati (specialmente antropomorfi) degli assiro-caldei," ZA 6 (1891):124-140.

<sup>4</sup>Georges Chippiez Perrot, Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité (Paris: Hachette et cie., 1882-1914), 4:305, 331. E. Vogt affirms that "der Kerub is ein geflügelter sphinx (Löwenleib und Menschenskopf). In Ezechiel werden dem Keruben mehrere *panim*, *aspekte* (nicht "Gesichter") zugeschrieben" ("Die vier 'Gesichter' (*panim*) der Keruben in Ez." Bi 60 [1979]:327-347). See also Parrot, Le Musée du Louvre et la Bible, pp. 9-12.

<sup>5</sup>Édouard Dhorme, "Le nom des chérubins," RB 35 (1926):238-239. See also above pp. 281.

<sup>6</sup>W. Corswant, A Dictionary of Life in Bible Times (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), s.v. "Cherubim."

<sup>7</sup>See above pp. 479, n. 3; 292-294.

which this name (that of *kâribu*) is assigned."<sup>1</sup> Since no *kâribu* image has so far been found in the whole ANE,<sup>2</sup> an identification of the biblical cherubim according to any Mesopotamian--and particularly Assyrian--pattern appears to be only speculation.<sup>3</sup> As T. C. Foote convincingly has demonstrated, "This identification is, therefore, archaeological, and rests on certain supposed resemblances."<sup>4</sup>

Apparently this uncertainty in Mesopotamian realms has led some others to consider other composite creatures as resembling the biblical *kerûb*. Some see the Hittite griffin as a possible form<sup>5</sup> or, perhaps better, the Syro-Hittite conception, which portrays those guardian creatures as peaceful watchers of the godhead. These differ from the Mesopotamian conception, which depicts them as fierce raging beings.<sup>6</sup> Others, like Albright<sup>7</sup> and Bright,<sup>8</sup> argued

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<sup>1</sup>TSAI, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup>Haran, "The Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubs," ErIs 5 (1958):83-90 [Hebrew], English résumé on p. 88. De Vaux indicates that "ce *kâribu* n'est décrit nulle part et son nom n'est attaché à aucune figure en particulier mais il appartient à la même classe que la *lamassu* et le *lahmu* et il a dû être représenté comme eux" (Bible et Orient, p. 235).

<sup>3</sup>TSAI, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup>"The Cherubim and the Ark," JAOS 25 (1904):280.

<sup>5</sup>W. Muss. Arnolt, "Cherub," The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnals, 1903), pp. 13-16.

<sup>6</sup>Wulff, Cherubim, Throne und Seraphim, p. 3.

for a Canaanite pattern,<sup>1</sup> while still others consider the Egyptian imagery as an appropriate pattern for the cherubim.<sup>2</sup>

Many representations of winged sphinxes following the Canaanite form have been found in Nimrud, Khorsabad, Arslan-Tash, Samaria, Megiddo, and many other places.<sup>3</sup> In the same way other mixed creatures are represented in

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<sup>7</sup>Albright suggested that the cherub "is the winged sphinx or winged lion with human head" which "in Syria and Palestine . . . is dominant in art and religious symbolism." "What Were the Cherubim?," BA 1 (1938):1-3. He explicitly suggests the sphinx-throne of King Hiram of Byblos (Fig. 138) as a cherub of biblical times.

<sup>8</sup>Wright, "Solomon's Temple Resurrected," BA 4 (1941):24-28; idem., Biblical Archaeology (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1957), pp. 94, 141.

<sup>1</sup>Suggestions related to a cherubim after a Canaanite (Phoenician) mythological pattern (Wright, "Solomon's Temple", p. 28) meet the difficulty of the absence of the term cherub in the extant Phoenician or Ugaritic texts (Haran, TSAI, p. 259, n. 20).

<sup>2</sup>Gressmann, Die Lade Yahveh's und das Allerheiligste des Salomonischen Temple (Berlin: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1920), pp. 9-11, 70-72; H. Lesêtre, s.v. "Chérubin," DiBiVi 2:660-661. According to Heinrich Pudor the Egyptian sphinx equals the Babylonian cherub which is by turn the biblical cherub (Babel-Bibel in der modern Kunst [Berlin: Otto Baumgärtel, 1905], p. 7).

<sup>3</sup>These representations are beautifully represented in the ivories found in the above-mentioned places. See C. Dechamps de Mertzfeld, Inventaire Commenté des Ivoires Phéniciens et Apparentés Découvertes dans le Proche--Orient (Paris: E. de Boccard, Editeur, 1954); J. W. Crowfoot and Grace M. Crowfoot, Early Ivories from Samaria (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1938). In the same way the diverse seals found in Palestinian places illustrated a great many of these creatures. See Efrat Carmon and R. Grafman, eds., Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1973), Figs. 40, 126.

different objects adding material for suggestive comparisons. A curious representation of a winged quadruped was found in the royal tombs in Jerusalem (Fig. 205). This was identified as an Israelite representation of the cherubim by its discoverer Clermont-Ganneau.<sup>1</sup> Although some defined this identification as being "extremely doubtful,"<sup>2</sup> others favored it as a genuine Israelite cherubic representation coming from the epoch of the first temple.<sup>3</sup> According to this view the sculptor of this piece probably made it on the basis of inspiration received from seeing the cherubim of the temple.<sup>4</sup>

Seventy-five years ago Lindsay<sup>5</sup> published a thesis that dealt with matters relating to the cherubim. But his conclusions appear rather contradictory to the biblical viewpoint. He concludes that the cherubim of Genesis "were earthly beings and not heavenly beings,"<sup>6</sup> and those

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<sup>1</sup>Archaeological Researches in Palestine: During the Years 1873-1874 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899), 1: 247-244.

<sup>2</sup>Frederic N. Lindsay, Kerubim in the Semitic Religion and Art (Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University, 1912), pp. 7-8, n. 13.

<sup>3</sup>p. Dhorme and L. H. Vincent, "Les Chérubins," RB 25 (1926):493-494.

<sup>4</sup>De Vaux, "Les Chérubins et l'arche d'alliance, les sphinxs gardiens et les trônes divins dans l'Ancient Orient," MUSJ 38 (1961):117.

<sup>5</sup>Kerubim in Semitic Religion and Art.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

described by Ezekiel were accommodations of some fabulous creatures known to him "through popular representations"<sup>1</sup> and "familiar to us from Assyrian art."<sup>2</sup> He also sees those described by Ezekiel as imagined according to the Phoenician and Canaanite forms, but he explicitly favors the mythic form of N. Syria (Fig. 177);<sup>3</sup> and in the same way he imagines them as being fashioned according to the Babylonian mythical imagery.<sup>4</sup> In sum, for Lindsay the cherubim are "survivals of a primitive stage of civilization"<sup>5</sup> traced way back to the Babylonian myths and arranged speculatively by the imagination of the prophet.

Recently Keel<sup>6</sup> and Metzger<sup>7</sup> also have devoted two extensive works to a similar task. Keel's work is a vast iconographic study dealing explicitly with the theophanies recorded by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In working

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-26.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst. Eine neue Deutung der Majestätschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977).

<sup>7</sup>Königsthron und Gottesthron. Thronformen und Throndarstellungen in Ägypten und im Vorderen Orient im dritten und zweiten Jahrtausend vor Christus und deren Bedeutung für das Verständnis von Aussagen über den Thron im Alten Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985).

with the visions of Ezekiel, he considers Zimmerli's commentary on Ezekiel as basically correct and makes his correlative interpretations following it.<sup>1</sup> According to this view, on the basis of abundant parallels with the ANE iconography, he is convinced that the cherubim of the Solomonic temple were winged quadrupeds.<sup>2</sup> In dealing with the Ezekielian cherubim he tries to capture from the Mesopotamian art an acceptable imagery that would stand properly as a model for the composite cherubim.<sup>3</sup> But their uniqueness makes it difficult for him to find an appropriate equivalent for the cherubim.<sup>4</sup> As Lieb<sup>5</sup> found out,

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<sup>1</sup>Zimmerly himself favors Rudolf Smend's assumption of a long, complicated process of redaction for Ezekiel's book (Der Prophet Ezechiel [Leipzig: 1880], p xxi), through which too many supposed inconsistencies and contradictions became part of the book (Zimmerli, Ezekiel, 1:68-74). So he reconstructs the visions in a form that he thinks is free of the alleged inconsistencies (ibid., 1:108).

<sup>2</sup>The whole first chapter is devoted to the cherubim of Solomon (1 Kgs 6:23-28) and to those of the throne of YHWH, as are mentioned in Psalms.

<sup>3</sup>A work that preceded Keel was that of Wilhelm Neuss, Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII Jahrhunderts (Munster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912). Neuss, however, mostly deals with Christian iconographical aspects of the cherubim.

<sup>4</sup>He surely presents abundant examples of ANE beings which are winged and with several faces. But all those ANE representations resemble homomorphous physiognomy (pp. 225, 229, Figs. 177-179) instead of the heteromorphic faces portrayed by Ezekiel. Notable are the creatures of the Egyptian art, and the chariotry related to the deities, but no one comes close to the Ezekielian imagery of the cherubim related to the living wheels.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Lieb, "Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision as a Literary Event," Cythara 24 (1985):23-39.

the vision of Ezekiel is undomesticatable to any particular ANE milieu.<sup>1</sup> This is due mainly to the extreme rarity of Ezekiel's images, which are largely without precedent.<sup>2</sup>

Metzger concentrates a great deal of his work to the details of the cherubim on the throne of God as they are described in the visions of Ezekiel. After presenting some of the main past and present directions of interpretation,<sup>3</sup> he mentions that three of the most commonly represented mixed beings in the ANE environment could be the possible cherubic equivalence--the lion-dragon, the winged-griffin, and the winged-sphinx. He also underlines, however, that "none of these three mixed beings allows to be identified off-hand with the cherubim."<sup>4</sup> This is basically due to the fact that each of these mixed creatures exhibits characteristics that allow an identification with the cherubim, but at the same time each one also possesses difficulties for that identification; as a consequence, all of the suggested parity with them has a hypothetical common

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Moshe Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983).

<sup>3</sup>Mainly those of J. Wellhausen, F. Delitzsch, R. F. Pfeiffer, E. Dhorme, H. Gressmann, F. Landsberger, L. H. Vincent, M. Dibelius, H. Gunkel, A. Jeremias, W. F. Albright, O. Eissfeldt, R. de Vaux and others (pp. 312-314).

<sup>4</sup>"Keins der drei Mischwesen lässt sich ohne weiteres mit den Keruben identifizieren" (p. 318).

denominator.<sup>1</sup> In spite of that, Metzger points out the functions of the cherubim in the OT, and by making some analogies with those of the guardian deities of the ANE, asserts that these materials speak for the probability that the sphinx is the mixed creature that has to be set forward as equal to the cherub of the OT.<sup>2</sup> He also remarks that his comparison between the OT statements about the resemblance to and functions of the mixed beings and their depiction in the tradition of the ANE produced the result that the cherub is probably to be identified with the winged sphinx. The sphinx is the most frequently represented mixed being in Syrian-Palestine depictions and, like the cherub, they often appear functioning as guardians. They are also often depicted as supporting the thrones of deities.<sup>3</sup>

Modern Hebrew thinking tends more and more to

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<sup>1</sup>"Jedes dieser Mischwesen waist Merkmale auf, die für eine Identifikation mit dem Kerub sprechen, bei jeden ergeben sich jedoch auch Schwierigkeiten. Bei keiner Lösung kommt man ohne Hypothesen aus" (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup>"Spricht alle Wahrscheinlichkeit dafür, dass die Sphinx das mit dem Kerub des Alten Testaments gleichzusetzende Mischwesen ist" (ibid., p. 326).

<sup>3</sup>"Ein Verleich der Aussagen des Alten Testaments über das Aussehen und die Funktionen von Keruben mit dem Aussehen und den Funktionen von Mischwesen in der Bildtradition des Alten Orients ergab, dass der Kerub wahrscheinlich mit der geflügelten Sphinx zu identifizieren ist, da die Sphinx das syrisch-palästinensischen Bilddokumenten am häufigsten bezeugte Mischwesen ist, das, wie der Kerub, häufig in Wächterfunktion erscheint und häufig Bestandteil von Götterthronen ist" (ibid., p. 365).



assume that the cherubim are legendary winged beings who protected sacred places.<sup>1</sup> Others equate them with the mythological figures so common in times contemporary with the biblical writers. The mythical setting that pervaded the thought of the religious milieu in the ancient Middle East is underlined as a necessary thread to interpret the biblical cherubim.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the whole angelology is set in an evolutionary framework. The thesis of Alexander Rofé<sup>3</sup> is typical. After a survey of the biblical material in which he sees mythological elements elsewhere, he concludes that in the beginning the adherents of the biblical faith had a large pantheon, that is, they were polytheists. Gradually, then, the deities were distilled in a process of monotheization, and finally after "a lengthy process, lasting many generations," only the Lord remained as deity

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<sup>1</sup>W. Gunther Plant, The Torah: A Modern Commentary (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1982), p. 37; Haran, TTSAl, p. 254; idem., the cherubim is "a complex symbol inherited from a prebiblical mythological sphere" ("The Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubs," ErIs 5 [1958]: 88); W. Muss. Arnolt, s.v., "Cherub," JeEn, pp. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup>Haran is convinced that they are indicative of "vestigial traces of the mythological culture which preceded the emergence of Yahwism within the tribes of Israel." TTSAl, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup>"Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-Exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Traditions" (Ph. D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1969). A similar viewpoint of the whole angelology is the work of Cunchillos (Cuando los ángeles eran dioses).

and the other deities fell, "deposed to the status of an angel."<sup>1</sup>

In a similar way, Barton portrays the first biblical mention of cherubim in a pure Babylonian mythical setting. He interweaves the Mosaic mention of the cherubim in the garden of Eden with sexual affairs as they are reflected in some early Semitic tales and later reflected in Babylonian legends. In this way, this particular biblical reference of the cherubim placed at the entrance of the garden, as he sees it, was just "to prevent the return of man to his Eden of sexual unconsciousness."<sup>2</sup>

In consequence it becomes only natural that the more common and widely accepted interpretation is that which sees the winged sphinxes--a very common ANE iconographical motif--as the figure for the biblical

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<sup>1</sup>He presupposes that this centurial process had four definite stages, since he says that "in the initial stage of Biblical faith various divinities are believed in and worshipped. At a later stage each of these divinities is either identified with the Lord, proclaimed dead, or deposed to the status of an angel. This stage of development culminates with the suppression of the names of individual angels. Terms such as 'the sons of God', etc. are substituted by 'angels' etc. The next stage sees angelology denounced, since its pagan origins are consciously recognized. The polemical attitude gains expression through the identification of the angels with projects and the revision or reformulation of texts, aimed to obliterate all mention of angels. The next stage witnesses the revival of angelology, which is reflected in late "angelological passages appended onto non-angelological descriptions of the same event" (ibid., p. xxiii).

<sup>2</sup>George Aaron Barton, Semitic and Hamitic Origins (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934), pp. 142-144.

cherubim.<sup>1</sup> From Egypt to Mesopotamia, and from Persia to Greece this mythological mixed being was well known, and representations of it are very numerous.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the winged sphinx is widely accepted as the cherubim, it is also frankly admitted that "this identification has no solid evidence behind it."<sup>2</sup> This is mainly because the biblical cherubim have some peculiarities that point to a different creature rather than that of the ANE sphinx.<sup>3</sup> As Lacheman affirms, "Any attempt to reconstruct their form [that of cherubim] by means of ANE art is pure guess-work."<sup>4</sup> The least that one can say in regard to the cherub and the sphinx is that "it is not widely accepted that the cherub

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<sup>1</sup>Cornfeld, PBC, p. 676; Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), s.v. "Cherubim;" R. K. Harrison, "Cherubim," The Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 1:269; L. Monloubou and F. M. DuBuit, Dictionnaire Biblique Universel (Paris: Desclée, 1984), s.v. "Chérubins;" Wright categorically affirms that "the cherub can have been only one thing: a winged sphinx, that is, a winged lion with human head. This is the most popular winged being in Phoenician art" ("Solomon's Temple Resurrected," BA 4 [1941]: 28).

<sup>2</sup>W. Boyd Barrik, "The Straight-Legged Cherubim of Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision (Ezekiel 1:7a)," CBO 44 (1982): 548.

<sup>3</sup>H. de Baar, disagreeing with the Mesopotamian cherubim model, rightly points to the fact that the biblical cherub is not divine, nor does it have a female counterpart, neither does it act as a substitute of the orant person. "Querubin," EnciBi, 6:33.

<sup>4</sup>"Seraphim of Isaiah 6," p. 71.

is the creature which archaeologists miscall a sphinx."<sup>1</sup>  
 The scarcity of cherubic details, and at the same time the variety of resemblances in which they appear, make it difficult and dubious to propose any definite identification. Even considering some similar features depicted in the ANE art, it should be remembered that "similarity of features is not in itself enough to identify the biblical cherub in archaeological remains."<sup>2</sup>

#### The Old Testament Demons

Demons are also mentioned by name in the OT. Although they apparently were not a very common motif, however, the OT still is a primary source for any correct and intimate understanding of the demons. Their mention leaves no doubt of their existence and their malignant influence in human affairs. A systematic demonology, however, is not displayed in the OT pages and our knowledge of demons ought to be supported by the NT interpretation and revelation of the matter in order to have an accurate picture of the Biblical demonology.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. D. Barnett, "Ezekiel and Tyre," ErIs 9 (1969): 9.

<sup>2</sup>TSAI, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup>Epithets such as "Devil," "Tempter," "Prince of the Demons," "Prince of this world," "Ancient Serpent," and "Accuser," especially referring to the leading character of the demons, are but NT improvements that expand the general OT demonological picture.

## Satan

Although Satan is a well-known demon character, his mention in OT pages, however, poses many exegetical problems. Two Hebrew roots, *štn* and *štm*, are seen as possible derivatives of Satan. The former always conveys an explicit meaning of animosity, expressed in acts performed by an enemy who purposely seeks to bring evil results upon the other, giving hatred instead of love.<sup>1</sup> The latter--*štm*--tends to present a more general nuance for enmity and hate. In a strict sense, it conveys the idea of "acting like an enemy" or feeling hatred.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, etymologically the name Satan as a derived term from *štn*--rendered as "be

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<sup>1</sup>"Show enmity," "attack" "to persecute, be hostile to" (GHAHAT, p. 782). This verbal form occurs five times only in the Psalter pointing to "adversaries." The translation of these passages indicates the meaning of *štn*. Ps 38:20 (21, Heb.): "Those who render me evil are my adversaries--*yštnwny*" (RSV). Ps 71:13: "May my accusers be put to shame (RSV). The text literally reads *štny npsy*, "those who persecute my life." Ps 109:4: "In return of my love they are my adversaries--*yštnwny*" (AmpBi), lit., "they are hostile to me." Ps 109:20: "Let this be the reward of mine adversaries--*zwt p'lt štny*" (KJV). Ps 109:29: "May my enemies--*štny*--be covered with disgrace" (GNB).

<sup>2</sup>Most of the OT occurrences of the verb *štm* convey the idea of hating someone. In Gen 27:41: "Now Esau hated Jacob--*wyštm* 'šw 't-y`qb--because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him" (RSV). In Gen 49:23: "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him--*wyštmhw*" (KJV). In Gen 50:15: "After the death of their father, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still hates us--*lw yštmnw ywsp*--and plans to pay us back all the harm we did to him?"(GNB). Ps 55:3 ". . . They bring trouble on me; they are angry with me and hate me--*wb'p yštmwny*" (GNG). Job 16:9 "He has torn me in his wrath, and hated me--*wyštmny*" (RSV).

against," "oppose," or "attack"<sup>1</sup>--essentially means "adversary," "opponent," or "enemy," "one who withstands."<sup>2</sup>

As a noun "satan" is used twenty-five times in the OT,<sup>3</sup> and the LXX rendered it almost invariably as "diabolos."<sup>4</sup> In doing this, however, the LXX had in view "the sense of 'the enemy,' 'one who separates,' 'the calumniator.'"<sup>5</sup> Besides, it becomes clear that "the work of the adversary implies always an attempt on the part of the diabolos to separate God and man."<sup>6</sup> Even in the secular use of the term, the OT clearly stresses the notion of the adversary as being an element "opposite to rest, to undisturbed peace in this life, to a condition of safe and fulfilled prosperity."<sup>7</sup>

Two things, however, ought to be observed here. First, the fact that satan (adversary) could be used as an everyday term--commonly used to signify a bad-intentioned

<sup>1</sup>GHAHAT, p. 782.

<sup>2</sup>HAWAT, p. 462; J. Barton Payne, s.v. "satan," TWOT, 2:2252a.

<sup>3</sup>Num 22:22, 32; 1 Sam 29:4; 2 Sam 19, 22; 1 Kgs 5:4, 18; 11:14, 23, 25; Job 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 12(2x); 2:1, 3, 4, 6, 7; Ps 109:6; 2 Chr 21:1; Zech 3:1, 2.

<sup>4</sup>"The slanderer," "the devil." The Greek term for adversary is antidikos. GELNT, p. 181.

<sup>5</sup>Werner Foerster, "diabolos," TDNT, 2:72.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>7</sup>Rivkah Schärf Kluger, Satan in the Old Testament (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 35.

person--does not exclude the possibility of its usage pointing to Satan as the adversary par excellence. Second, the use of *štn* to describe a behavior of opposition by no means is restricted to Satan or men. God can also act as adversary of someone who evidently acts against His will. In other words, if Satan counteracts the ways of YHWH, YHWH also can counteract the evil ways of Satan. Since the actions of God have to be understood, it becomes natural that those ought to be expressed with the same daily language, without expecting a special vocabulary to be used exclusively to describe God's opposition.

This seems to be clearly shown in the Pentateuch when the MY came to obstruct the way of Balaam, being "an adversary to him"--*l'-štn-l'* (Num 22:22).<sup>1</sup>

The explicit mention of Satan is restricted, however, to a few passages, and those mainly in the book of Job,<sup>2</sup> and it is in this book "that Satan first emerges as a well-defined personage."<sup>3</sup> We have already mentioned that contrary to the opinion that he is a member of the council

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<sup>1</sup>In this way God can act as *satan--adversary--of* Satan, or man, in the same way that Satan is the *satan* of God and man.

<sup>2</sup>Fourteen occurrences appear only in the book of Job (1:6, 7(2x), 8, 9, 12; 2:1, 2(2x), 3, 4, 6, 7. The other occurrences are in the book of Zechariah, where he appears as the accuser of Joshua (Zech 3:1, 2(2x)).

<sup>3</sup>Kees F. de Blois, "How to Deal with Satan?" *BiTr* 37 (1986):303.

of YHWH--a sort of divine prosecutor<sup>1</sup>--he is foreign to the divine assembly.<sup>2</sup> He is an intruder character who pursues the ruin of the servants of YHWH.<sup>3</sup> He is not mentioned

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Wink believes that he functions in "the role of accuser or prosecuting attorney," and in the case of Job "Satan is not a fallen angel but a fully credentialed member of the heavenly court." (Unmasking the Powers. The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], pp. 12-13). Kluger suggests that "Satan in contrast to the real cacademons, belongs to the divine realm," and as a ben ha-'elohim, he "is entrusted with a particular function" (Rivkah Schärf Kluger, Satan in the Old Testament [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967], pp. 51, 118). Kelly affirms that "in Job and Zechariah, the satans are members of the Council of Yahweh, who fulfill the functions of tempters and accusers (or 'prosecuting attorneys')." (H. A. Kelly, "The Devil in the Desert," CBO 26 [1964]:202-203). Caldwell also affirms that Satan as a member of the council of heaven has "the duty of the Adversary to challenge and test the good." In accordance with this, "he is an intelligent servant who knows how to offer suggestions for a test-experiment, and he is jealous for the honor of God." William Caldwell, "The Doctrine of Satan. I. In "The Old Testament," The Biblical World 41 (1913):32. Randellini also affirms that "l'accusatore che era un essere celeste, ammesso alla corte di Jahvé, un funzionario del tribunale divino." L. Randellini, "Satana nell' Antico Testamento," Bibbia e Oriente 5 (1963):129. Torczyner, however, is convinced that Satan "is the Lord's eye who goes to and fro in the earth and gives account of the political loyalty of the Lord's subjects. . . . Satan came to this world as a secret political officer who does his duty, imposed upon him by His Lord" (Harry Torczyner, "How Satan Came into the World," ET 48 [1936-37]:564, 565).

It is true that the use of the definite article for Satan, i.e. "the Satan," points to a tittle rather than to a personal name. In this way, however, it is emphasized "not who he is, but what he is" (Hamilton, HBP, p. 43), in his character of adversary of God and accuser of mankind.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 345-348.

<sup>3</sup>Bishop remarks that in Job the accusing angel "was the natural enemy of the righteous and only an evil power would want to damage the chosen of God" (Eric F. F. Bishop, "Angelology in Judaism, Islam and Christianity," ATR 4 [1964]:147).



because of the services that he should render to YHWH, he is mentioned because of his own evil actions particularly in the earthly domains of God. Indeed, Satan is presented in Job "as opponent of God and intruder into the" heavenly court.<sup>1</sup> Though he has power to inflict utter destruction, sickness, and death in the earthly realm, he does not overrule the sovereignty of God. His opposition to God is clearly seen in his distorted judgment concerning the motives of Job's service to God in spite of God's judgment, and in his eagerness to destroy Job's possessions and inflict sickness upon him. Though nothing specific is said of his appearance, his dialog with God betrays him in his real character. His role is that of an insidious accuser that purposely distorts facts in trying to incite God against Job. He is anxious to add disgrace upon disgrace, and suffering upon misery in order to justify his falsity as the accuser adversary; at same time he attempts to incite Job to sin against God.<sup>2</sup>

Other OT references to Satan are, however, circumscribed to symbolic descriptions that also expose something of his history, nature, and character. The first reference

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<sup>1</sup>Hamilton, HBP, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>The negative character of Satan becomes exposed in quite a detailed way throughout the NT. He was the personal tempter of Jesus (Matt 4:1-10; Luke 4:1-13), and the instigator of Jesus' death (John 13:27-30). He is the homicide par excellence, liar and father of lies (John 8:44). He is originator of sin and instigator of sin (1 John 3:8), and his main aim is destruction (1 Pet 5:8).

is in the third chapter of Genesis in which is detailed the entrance of the sin into the world through the serpent's deceit.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Genesis history, the serpent is presented as distorting the command of YHWH;<sup>2</sup> contradicting the explicit warning of the Creator--and in this way making Him a liar;<sup>3</sup> deceiving Eve;<sup>4</sup> and casting doubt upon the

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<sup>1</sup>The purpose here is not to deal in every detail with Gen 3, but only to indicate some explicit points that can be legitimately related to Satan in this history in order to expose the correctness of the interpretation that understands Satan's participation in the fall of man.

<sup>2</sup>The command of YHWH was quite clear. "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen 2:16-17). The serpent opens a dialog with Eve with a provocative question (Michael J. Gruenthaner, "Demonology in the Old Testament" CBO 6 [1944]:7-8). The Hebrew conjunction 'ap , "so, also, yea," introduces a rebellious thought and at the same time an invitation to complicity in the rebellion.

The "you shall not eat" (vs. 1. 3), the "you shall die" (vs. 3), and the "you shall not die" (vs. 4), are all plural verbs in which Adam and Eve are the subjects. It is clear that the tempter targeted both in the deceit.

<sup>3</sup>The explicitness of God's advertence was plain, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall die"--*ky bywm 'klk mmnw mwt tmwt*, lit. "for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die." In contradicting this, Gruenthaner properly observes, the serpent plainly "accused God of lying and of envy," and with this he manifested "the utmost hatred for God and man" (ibid., p. 8).

<sup>4</sup>The affirmation of the serpent, "You will not die"--*l'-mwt tmtwn* (3:4)--and "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (3:5), is a direct accusation of falseness in God. The serpent also utters a mendacious promise of superior knowledge and transformation into the likeness of God.

intentions of God.<sup>1</sup> Within the narrative the serpent appears devoted to seek the good of the first human pair. Indeed, he acts "in direct opposition to God."<sup>2</sup> From the beginning to the end, the essential intent of the temptation of Eve was aimed at undermining her confidence in God and inciting disobedience to YHWH<sup>3</sup> and so destroying the human race.<sup>4</sup> The serpent "brought death instead of life: He was a deceiver."<sup>5</sup>

The whole narrative is wrapped in language that in some ways could be paralleled with certain ANE mythological accounts.<sup>6</sup> It is in this mythological milieu that the serpent appears in a conspicuous place in relation with

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<sup>1</sup>A twofold purpose is hidden in the serpent's speech. First, "it is an attempt to dethrone God in the heart of His creatures, by inciting them to rebellion;" and second, "it is an attempt to destroy these creatures" (Gruenthaner, "Demonology in the OT," p. 8).

<sup>2</sup>Joines, SSIOT, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>In denying the veracity of God, in accusing Him of jealousy and meanness towards man, the serpent's (Satan's) intention was to destroy Eve's faith in God, to make her lack confidence in the word of God (John J. Dougherty, "The Fall and Its Consequences: An Exegetical Study of Gen 3:1-24," CBO 3 [1941]:321), and in this way his intention was to make her reject God's authority, formally disobeying Him (Muñoz, "La ciencia del bien y del mal," p. 461).

<sup>4</sup>As Joines says, "The underlying purpose of this serpent is to deceive and to destroy mankind." SSIOT, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>Fleming Hvidberg, "The Canaanite Background of Gen I-III," VT 10 (1960):289.

<sup>6</sup>E.g., the epic of Gilgamesh, the myth of Etana.

occultism and the idolatrous cults.<sup>1</sup> It is also notable that even this mythical literature provides different symbolisms that indicate the serpent was an enemy character who opposed God.<sup>2</sup> Hvidberg suggests that the serpent "is Zbl Baal (Prince Baal, Bel Zebul), Yahweh's great adversary in the ancient struggle for the soul of Israel which is the theme of the whole of the Old Testament."<sup>3</sup> Estevez mentions that in Babylon serpents were symbols of demons.<sup>4</sup> Joines has convincingly demonstrated that according to Babylonian and Egyptian tradition serpents were known as a symbol of chaos.<sup>5</sup> Forte says that the serpent was "symbol of evil and cunning,"<sup>6</sup> and Joines also indicates that as a general rule, "in the ANE the serpent was a figure of chaos, evil and destruction."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the place of the serpent elsewhere in the ANE appears to be unmistakable.

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<sup>1</sup>J. M. Estevez, "Le serpent," Terre Sainte 5 (1977):132.

<sup>2</sup>For a survey of a diversity of ANE symbols regarding the serpent, see Joines, SSIOT, pp. 17-31.

<sup>3</sup>"The Canaanite Background of Gen I-III," p. 288.

<sup>4</sup>"Le serpent," p. 132.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Elizabeth Williams-Forte, "The Snake and the Tree in the Iconography and Texts of Syria during the Bronze Age," in Ancient Seals and the Bible, ed. L. Gorelick and E. Williams-Forte (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1983), p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

The hidden symbolism in Genesis, however, is not necessarily attached to any ANE myth, but to Messianic realities that expose Satan in his real hostility against God and forecast his final fate. This symbolism is especially contained in the cursing of the serpent. As one looks closely at the episode, it becomes evident that the serpent here is presented within an implicit symbolism which only appears unmistakable in the curse given to the serpent.<sup>1</sup> Notable is the fact that it is the serpent who is first sentenced. In Gen 3:15 YHWH condemned the serpent saying:

w'ybh <sup>2</sup> 'šyt <sup>3</sup>	.I will put enmity
bynk wbyn h'šh	between you and the woman

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<sup>1</sup>The sentence given by God only makes plain sense if it is addressed to the intelligent cause of the temptation and not merely to the ophidian instrument (Gruenthaner, "Demonology of the OT," p. 10). The whole sentence is so pregnant with Messianic eschatology, that to think it is a mere curse of a zoological species is theologically absurd. As William Robertson Smith rightly says, "the demonic character of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden is unmistakable, the serpent is not a temporary disguise of Satan, otherwise its punishment would be meaningless." Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969 [3rd. ed.]), p. 442.

<sup>2</sup>'ybh, "enmity" is derived from 'yb "to be an enemy to" (HALAT, 1:37).

<sup>3</sup>The 'šyt as the Qal imp. 1 pers. sing. of syt, "to set" (HCILOT) specifies that God himself--in spite of the fact that man became an enemy of God by obeying the tempter's falsehood, and in this way was an ally of the adversary of God--puts a hostile attitude against him who caused him to sin.

ubyn zr <sup>e</sup> k <sup>1</sup>	and between your seed
wbyn zr <sup>e</sup> h <sup>2</sup>	and her seed;
hw' yšwpk <sup>3</sup> r'š	He will bruise your head
w'th tšwpnw <sup>e</sup> qb	when you bruise his heel (RSV). <sup>4</sup>

In this way Genesis presents us with an understandable picture of whom the serpent symbolizes. He was not a giver of life; on the contrary, he brought death instead. He was the deceiver, the great adversary of YHWH.<sup>5</sup> The deceit of the serpent resulted in painful results for mankind and the serpent himself. In punishing

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<sup>1</sup>zr<sup>e</sup>, "seed, offspring, posterity, progeny" (HALAT, 1: 271; HCLOT, p. 407). This Hebrew noun as a collective obviously does not indicate any ophidian offspring, but indicates in this way those who would follow the rebellion of the adversary. As Michael J. Gruenthaner correctly says, "Since the serpent is incapable of procreation, his posterity consists of all those who espouse his cause and in some sense acknowledge his leadership" ("The Demonology in the Old Testament" CBQ 6 [1944]:11).

<sup>2</sup>The Hebrew zr<sup>e</sup> can be interpreted collectively (Gen 12:7; 15:13) as well as individually. Obviously the seed of the woman can be referred to as the human race of which she was to be the mother. But here keep in mind that the cosmic struggle of the zr<sup>e</sup> is individual. It is the One who as representative of the whole mankind and being a descendant of woman--the Messiah--will defeat the adversary (Gal 4:4; 3:16; Rom 16:20). Gruenthaner again is right in affirming that "the seed of Eve is her posterity, which includes Christ in a pre-eminent sense" (ibid., p. 11).

<sup>3</sup>šwp, "bruise" (HELOT, p. 1003); "to pierce, to wound, to crush" (HCLOT, p. 1360).

<sup>4</sup>The translation of L. Alonso Schöckel and Juan Mateos puts in a more accurate way the real meaning of the sentence given to the serpent as a symbol of the adversary of God. It says, "Pongo hcstilidad entre ti y la mujer, entre tu linaje y el suyo: él herirá tu cabeza cuando tú hieras su talón" (La Biblia [Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1982], Gen 3:15).

<sup>5</sup>Fleming Hvidberg, "The Canaanite Background of Gen I-III," VT 10 (1960):285-290.

both, God not only promised an irreconcilable enmity between man and his adversary tempter,<sup>1</sup> but YHWH Himself declares with absolute certainty that His principles will "be forever irreconcilable with those of the serpent."<sup>2</sup> Above all, YHWH also forecasts the deadly end of the liar serpent. That is, the inevitable enmity would end with the intervention of the Messiah who as the seed of the woman--although also bruised by the serpent--would crush the head of His antagonist bruiser.<sup>3</sup> This consistent NT interpretation shows that the same one who deceived Eve was the very adversary who attacked her messianic Descendant; and at the same time it indicates that the same one who incited Eve to sin is the same one who is smashed by the wounded Messiah.

This symbolic imagery, however, does not become plain without other details provided in other OT passages

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<sup>1</sup>That by divine will an "enmity should exist between Eve and her posterity on one hand and between the evil spirit (Satan) and his posterity on the other." Gruenthaner, "Demonology in the OT," p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The messianic symbolism of Gen 3:15 is actually rejected by critical scholarship. Von Rad denies any prophetic messianic victory of the woman's seed (Genesis, p. 90), and Westermann, endorsing the words of O. Loratz, rejects any evangelical connection to Gen 3:15 (Genesis, p. 260). This viewpoint overlooks--as Wifall indicates--"the royal and 'Davidic' significance of this passage for both the OT and NT" (Walter Wifall, "Gen 3:15--A Proto-evangelium?," CBQ 36 [1974]:365). It is through this imagery that the OT messianism can be distinguished from that of the NT "as consisting mainly in the increasingly eschatological stress of the latter" (ibid.).

that evidently trace the career of opposition of the adversary and set this animosity in a cosmic perspective, portraying Satan as the adversary of God. Especially Isa 14 and Ezek 28 provide us with accounts of the primeval cosmic controversy that originated with Satan's opposition to God.<sup>1</sup>

As already pointed out,<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel prophesies the end of the king of Tyre, using that as a symbolic description that exposes the uprising, the fall, and the burning end of the proud cherub who originally enjoyed the privilege of being appointed as the covering one in the holy mount of God.<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah, for his part, takes the king of Babylon as the symbol for the same cosmic adversary--the fallen proud *hyll bn-šhr*, "the Morning Star"--and basically traces the

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<sup>1</sup>For an exegetical exposition of Isa 14 and Eze 28, see Bertolucci's dissertation "The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub." Especially pp. 146-296.

<sup>2</sup>See above pp. 492-493.

<sup>3</sup>Van Dijk suggests the epithet "Serpent of perfection" for the king of Tyre; at the same time he also is named "Guardian cherub." He finds this is possible through Phoenician and Aramaic correlations, plus a comparison between Mesopotamian serpent symbolism and the story of paradise in Genesis (Ezekiel's Prophecy, pp. 113-116). If this suggestion is correct, then it is possible to see in this symbolic prophetic passage another reference to Satan as serpent, which is clearly mentioned in the NT (Rev 12:9; 20:3).



same trajectory of uprising, fall, and eternal destruction.<sup>1</sup>

Both prophets use an unequivocal imagery to adapt more properly the heavenly background and in this way to frame the events in a cosmic setting.<sup>2</sup> Both symbolize with earthly kings the heavenly adversary of God. For Ezekiel it is the "covering (guardian) cherub"--krwb hswkk,<sup>3</sup> while for Isaiah it is "the Morning Star"--hyll bn-šhr.<sup>4</sup> Both make plain that it is God who cast out and threw down to earth from the heavenly realm His proud adversary.<sup>5</sup> Both plainly speak of a previous exalted position in heavenly realms. Both underline the cause of the fall as being excessive pride, and a rival ambition of power competing

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<sup>1</sup>Fredreric Raurell, although denying that Isa 14:12 is a reference to the demon, concedes that it may be an indirect reference to the eschatological war in which the evil powers are vanquished ("Angeologia i demonologia en Is-LXX," Revista Catalana de Teologia 2 [1977]:23).

<sup>2</sup>See above pp. 493-494.

<sup>3</sup>Eze 28:14, 16. The Hebrew hswkk is the same word used for the cherubim in the sanctuary with outstretched wings over the ark (1 Kgs 8:7; 1 Chr 28:18). Its application, as van Dijk concludes, "to the role of the cherub in the garden makes the noun equivalent to 'guardian.' Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26,1-28,19) A New Approach (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), pp. 119-120).

<sup>4</sup>The similes are different but they symbolized one is the same.

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah speaks of it in an implicit language, "You have fallen from heaven," "You have been thrown down to the ground" (16:12), "You have been brought down" (16:15). But Ezekiel mentions plainly, "I cast you from the mount of God" (28:16), "I cast you to the ground" (28:17).

with the Most High. Both forecast his final fate, decreed by God, as being total destruction.<sup>1</sup> Unmistakably, both Isaiah and Ezekiel use the same literary device to present in symbolic fashion the imminent fall of two cities who at the climax of their pride, like the cherub (or the Son of the morning)<sup>2</sup> adversary of YHWH, defied His sovereignty.

We may still mention that in Isa 27:1 the same prophet, speaking in a symbolic way, discloses the eschatological destruction of the adversary of YHWH, when he says:

byw hhw' ypqd yhwh	In that day the LORD (YHWH)
	will punish

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<sup>1</sup>The whole eschatological picture becomes clear, at least in its general details: when the symbolic details are properly considered in the biblical framework and meaning, it is not an eternal, ongoing, mythological ANE struggle. It is a cosmic war that has a definite end with the total destruction of the rebel cherub who started his rebellion when he dared to defy God's position; that increased when he sank mankind into sin, and reached its climax when he dared to bruise the seed of the woman, the Messiah.

<sup>2</sup>Commentators like Edward J. Kissane have indicated the possibility that Isaiah might be alluding to some unknown myth when he mentions the "radiant one, son of dawn" (The Book of Isaiah [Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1941], p. 172). De Vaux, making some parallels from the Ugaritic texts--especially those of Hll and Šhr as gods of the Ugaritic pantheon--("Les textes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancien Testament," RB 46 [1937]:547), agrees with Gunkel (Schöpfung und Chaos, p. 134) in suggesting that Isa 14:12 was written after a Phoenician model (de Vaux, "Les textes de Ras Shamra," p. 547). This suggested arrangement sees in the Hebrew text the indication of an obscure myth that mentions one lesser god vanquished and expelled from the heavenly assembly because of his rebellion. Raurrel, however, rightly indicates that the suggested mythic texts--and especially those which see the Phoenician deity Attar as a pattern--are very imprecise, and in addition the oriental mythology lacks precise connections in that arranged sense (Raurrel, "Angeologia i demonologia," p. 22, n. 47).

bḥrbw hqšh	with his great, cruel,
whgdwlh whḥzqn	mighty sword
ʿl lwytn nḥš brḥ	Leviathan the
	Elusive Serpent--
wʿl lwytn nḥš ʿqltwn	Leviathan the
	Twisting Serpent;
whrg 't-htyn 'šr bym	He will slay the
	dragon of the sea (JSAV).

Here the adversary of YHWH is presented in total defeat and destruction. Although Isaiah refers to him with the title or name of Leviathan (lwytn), it is probably the same Satan. This is likely since Leviathan is also nicknamed "elusive serpent,"<sup>1</sup> "twisting serpent,"<sup>2</sup> and "dragon,"<sup>3</sup> which obviously cannot indicate any known zoological ophidic species, but a creature that symbolizes "evil and disaster."<sup>4</sup> In this way the prophet underlines a new and full victory that YHWH will obtain in the last day

<sup>1</sup>bariah, "fleeing" from the root brh, "flee, run away" (HCLOT, p. 838; HELOT, pp.137-138). Samuel Daiches sees in the mention of nḥš brḥ a personification of the ocean, which was thought by Babylonians and Israelites also "as 'an encircling serpent'" ("Job XXVI 12-13 and the Babylonian Story of Creation," ZA 25 [1911]:4).

Gordon sees in brḥ a second meaning of "be evil" related to an Arabic root ("Near East Seals in Princeton and Philadelphia," Or 22 [1953]:243), and consequently suggests "evil" as an epithet of Leviathan (UT p. 249, No. 358), which by turn becomes identifiable with Satan through NT imagery ("Near East Seals," p. 244).

<sup>2</sup>ʿqltwn, "crooked" (HELOT, 785). The Ugaritic literature mentions a victory of Baal over ltn which is also indicated as a "fleeing"--brḥ--and "crooked"--ʿqltn--serpent ("Cuando aplastate a Lôtanu, la serpiente huidiza, acabaste con la serpiente tortuosa" [MLC, p. 213] KTU 1.5 I 1-2).

<sup>3</sup>tnyn.

<sup>4</sup>Feliks, The Animal World of the Bible, p. 108.

over the maker of the chaos.<sup>1</sup> While Gen 3:15 foretells the defeat of Satan by the seed of the woman,<sup>2</sup> Isa 27:1 forecasts his slaying by God Himself.<sup>3</sup> The notable comparison of these two references is that in both the symbolism of the serpent is stressed.

In sum, through the references in Genesis, Job, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, Satan is portrayed in a symbolic way as the main adversary of YHWH. He is the one responsible for the entrance of sin and death into the world. He seeks evil and death of the servants of God and is delighted to bring disgrace upon disgrace upon them. He is not a benefactor of mankind but the accuser and the originator of human misery. He is first mentioned under the symbol of the serpent in an action that clearly betrays his antagonism to YHWH. The name of Satan in the OT displays not

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<sup>1</sup>Auvray, Isaïe 1-39, p. 239. Although most commentators tend to see three different creatures in this passage, Auvray observes that it is easier "considérer ces diverses expressions comme des répétitions demandées par le parallélisme, et de ne reconnaître qu'un seul monstre" (ibid., p. 238). He also points out that in the Ugaritic myth (KTU 1.5 I 1-3) above mentioned, ltn is described with triple adjectives without indicating that this ought to be understood as a mention of three different creatures, but "un seul monstre dont le nom est Lotan (Léviathan en vocalization massorétique)." Ibid., p. 239.

It might be pointed out that the same rhetorical device is used for the sword of YHWH. Three adjectives are given to describe it. It is hard--qšh, "cruel"; great--gdl, "mighty"; and strong--hzqh, "powerful." All symbolically refer to the same final judgment that will bring destruction to the cosmic adversary of YHWH.

<sup>2</sup>See above pp. 523-525.

<sup>3</sup>Page H. Kelley, Isaiah [BBC], p. 367.

only "the conflict between the forces of good and evil" but also the authentic Hebrew heritage of this antagonistic concept.<sup>1</sup> The mention in Job also unmask his antagonistic nature, and the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel unfold something about his origins and future awful end.

#### Other Demons

The OT does not abound in demonic references. To the OT believer, however, the spirits or demons were not unknown. The Torah alerts against the worship of any other deity except YHWH, and "to the Hebrews, deities worshiped by other peoples were evil spirits or demons with which" sorcery, divination, and magic traded and lived together.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Spirits of the Dead

For Israel any activity dealing with the demonic spirits involved in divination and sorcery was to be totally banned from the nation, and anyone who was involved in such activities risked his life.<sup>3</sup> The reason for such a prohibition<sup>4</sup> seems especially to be directly related to the

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon, "Near Eastern Seals," p. 244.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, MDDAH, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Exod 22:18; Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:10-11.

<sup>4</sup>Lust suggests that the main reason for this prohibition resided in the fact that these practices performed by charmers and wizards involved abomination, and "they contained a danger of syncretism which had to be avoided." He also thinks that this kind of consultation "was forbidden as a foreign practice" counter to the "typical Israelite practice of consulting Jahweh through the prophets." J.

fact that those demonic spirits echoed the deceptive affirmation of the tempter serpent, "you shall not die,"<sup>1</sup> and in addition they usually contradicted the word of YHWH.<sup>2</sup> Idolatry, magic, and witchcraft practices are not mentioned in a detailed way, but certainly the OT unequivocally relates them to demonic forces.<sup>3</sup>

Two names are especially employed to indicate the necromantic activities forbidden by the Torah. These are 'wb and yd'wny, and both are certainly "connected, at least originally, with necromancy, or the raising up of the spirits of the dead."<sup>4</sup> Though 'wb and yd'wny usually are assigned to mean both the spirits and the necromancers,<sup>5</sup> it should be remembered "that both names apply to the spirit

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Lust, "On Wizards and Prophets," VTSup 26 (1974):141-142.

<sup>1</sup>Gen 3:4. That divination may have contained abominable practices and danger of syncretism might be considered as secondary reasons for this prohibition. It seems, however, that the main reason was that the consultation of the spirits of the dead not only was in direct opposition to the Israelite practice of consulting YHWH through His prophets, but above all it echoes the original lie of the serpent.

<sup>2</sup>Deut 18:10-12, 14; Isa 8:19-20.

<sup>3</sup>C. E. McClelland, s.v. "Demon, demon possession," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, pp. 306-307.

<sup>4</sup>A. van Hoonacker, "Divination by the 'ôb amongst the Ancient Hebrews," ET 9 (1898):157.

<sup>5</sup>The Hebrew 'wb is rendered as "spirit of dead--totengeist" (Kholer-Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 18), while the yd'ny is the familiar spirit to be consulted as well as the soothsayer" (ibid., p. 367).

primarily, and only secondarily to the diviner himself."<sup>1</sup>  
 This certainly points to the fact those demonic entities  
 "belong to the mysterious world of a belief about spirits  
 of the dead, similar to that which can be found in modern  
 spiritualism."<sup>2</sup>

In a special way the name 'wb has been a matter of  
 discussion and, in Gadd's opinion, still remains incon-  
 clusive.<sup>3</sup> It was suggested that this noun indicates a  
 ritual pit through which the witches pretended to communi-  
 cate with the spirits of the netherworld.<sup>4</sup> In the same  
 way, it has been proposed that it was some kind of hollow  
 artifact that diviners used in performing their arts of  
 divination.<sup>5</sup> The idea of a ritual pit was strongly  
 suggested by Maurice Vieyra who made correlations from ANE  
 religions that performed such practices.<sup>6</sup> That witches of  
 the ANE used such holes in their divinatory practices,  
 believing that through them the deceased appeared to

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<sup>1</sup>Van Hoonacker, "Divination by the 'ôb," p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Lust, "On Wizards and Prophets," p. 134.

<sup>3</sup>IDRAE, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Gadd, IDRAE, pp. 88-89. Gadd parallels a passage  
 of the Gilgamesh epic (XII.79), in which Enkidu's ghost  
 came up through a hole to meet Gilgamesh.

<sup>5</sup>A "waterskin," as is suggested by Tur-Sinai, who  
 is quoted by C. Rabin, "Hittite Words in Hebrew," Or 32  
 (1963):115.

<sup>6</sup>"Les noms de 'mundus' en hittite et en assyrien et  
 la pythonisse d'Endor," RHAS 69 (1961):47-51.

consult them, is a well-attested matter.<sup>1</sup> Hoffner examines the etymology of 'wb through Ugaritic correlations, and suggests that 'wb should be understood as a "spirit of/from the pit."<sup>2</sup> Then, after a survey of the necromantic dealings in Greek, Hittite, Ugaritic, Assyrian, and Sumerian religions, he mentions that in those cultures he sees that the 'wb primarily is "a ritual hole in the ground dug to give infernal deities or spirits of the deceased access to the upper world for a brief interval of time."<sup>3</sup> But at the same time he concludes that the OT 'wbwt "are the spirits themselves, and can be paired with yd<sup>e</sup>ny."<sup>4</sup>

It is notable that these two names not only occur together but also form a parallel synonymy of polemicist meaning. They both contradict the biblical understanding of the deceased. While 'wbwt pretend to be spirits of the dead, the yd<sup>e</sup>ny pretend to be "the one who knows." The OT makes clear that the existence of a person totally ceases with death, and unambiguously affirms that the dead know nothing.<sup>5</sup> Through this perspective it is not strange to

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<sup>1</sup>Harry Hoffner, "Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew 'ôb," *JBL* 86 (1967):385-401.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>5</sup>*Ecc*l 9:5-6.



see why God is so opposed to any activity in which necromancy or witchcraft is involved.<sup>1</sup>

During the reign of pious Israelite kings witchcraft was banned,<sup>2</sup> although necromantic activities might have been conducted clandestinely. It seems that the hours of the night were preferable for such practices. During periods of apostasy, however, practices of divination, sorcery, and witchcraft were openly carried on,<sup>3</sup> and even the kings repaired to that forbidden consultation.<sup>4</sup>

A notable occurrence of this is the case of Saul who in desperation went to the witch of Endor.<sup>5</sup> In complete concordance with the polytheistic faith practiced by the diviners, the witch who acted as a medium designated the demon who pretended be Samuel as a "god."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>According to the OT, any witchcraft activity is related to evil spirits which are led by Satan in their rebellion against God.

<sup>2</sup>2 Kgs 23:24.

<sup>3</sup>During the reign of Manasseh witchcraft and divination were officially instituted in direct contradiction to the prohibition of the Torah.

<sup>4</sup>2 Kgs 1.

<sup>5</sup>1 Sam 28:7-19.

<sup>6</sup>1 Sam 28:13. The incantations and prayers used by Babylonian and Assyrian sorcerers contain lists of the different gods that were invoked during their ceremonies. The biblical record is silent with respect to the kind of invocation that was employed by the sorceress of Endor.

Isaiah, for his part, refers briefly to those witches and mediums who pretended to get their consultation directly from the spirits of the dead, which uttered their counsel through their mediums with chirping and muttering speech.<sup>1</sup> In the same way he may be pointing to this kind of activity in 29:4 when he mentions the 'wb as speaking from the ground with a whispering speech from the dust.<sup>2</sup> He refers to Egypt as a specialized center of divination and sorcery in relationship with those spirits,<sup>3</sup> and he especially mentions that Israel was "invaded" by oriental sorcery, and also mentions the Philistines as practicing such activities.<sup>4</sup>

Although these demonic entities are not mentioned as being the cause of maladies or attacking man, they indeed are spiritual entities that contradicted the word of YHWH through mediums. It became clear that this false consultation was aimed to lead the people astray.

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<sup>1</sup>"And when they say to you, 'Consult the mediums [h'wbwt, i.e. "the spirits of the dead"], and the wizards [hyd'ny, i.e. "the ghosts who know"] who chirp and mutter, 'should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?' Isa 8:19 (RSV).

<sup>2</sup>"Your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost ['wb], and your speech shall whisper out of the dust" (RSV).

<sup>3</sup>Isa 19:3.

<sup>4</sup>"They are full of diviners from the east and of soothsayers like the Philistines" (Isa 2:6 RSV).

## Azazel

Azazel is named three times<sup>1</sup> in relation to the day of expiation, when Israel as a whole nation had to be purified of their sins. At the same time the sanctuary had to be cleansed of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Those references, however, say nothing of his appearance, or anything else about him. On the other hand, the fact that the goat of the lot for Azazel was sent with the sins of Israel to the desert and was abandoned there to perish has been pointed out as an indication for identifying Azazel as a desert demon, whose abode was the wilderness.<sup>3</sup>

Driver<sup>4</sup> contends that 'z'z'l stands as a toponym for the place where the scapegoat was abandoned to die. Following Midrashic literature and pointing to some possible Arabic and Akkadian etymological relations, he concludes that Azazel is but "(the) rugged rocks, (the) precipice."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lev 16:8, 10, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Lev 16:15-16.

<sup>3</sup>Davies, MDDAH, p. 96. The conciseness of these Pentateuchal references has led scholars to guess four possibilities for dealing with Azazel. First, as an act, e.g., "the sending of the goat." Second, the very animal is referred to, i.e., "the one who is sent." Third, a place is referred to, i.e., "the desolate place where the goat was left to die." Fourth, it is a demonic entity of the desert.

<sup>4</sup>G. R. Driver, "Three Technical Terms in the Pentateuch," JSS 1 (1956):97-98.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

This suggestion, however, is found debatable by de Vaux<sup>1</sup> who followed another Midrashic interpretation and concluded that Azazel is a demon, whom apocryphal literature identifies as the prince of the demons who lives relegated in the desert.<sup>2</sup> This conclusion seems to be the most accepted among current scholarship.<sup>3</sup> Loisy<sup>4</sup> for his part opines that Azazel is one of the evil desert spirits. Likewise he suggests the possibility of seeing him as the Devil.<sup>5</sup> Blome in the same way thinks of Azazel as a demonic entity.<sup>6</sup> Kohler sees him as a desert demon who "was the

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<sup>1</sup>De Vaux, Les sacrifices de l'Ancien Testament (Paris: Gabalda, 1964), pp. 86-97.

<sup>2</sup>"Il est donc beaucoup plus probable que c'est ainsi que le nom d'un être surnaturel, d'un démon Azazel; c'est ainsi que l'ont compris la version syriaque et le Targum, et déjà le Livre d'Hénoch, qui fait d'Azazel le prince des démons, relégué au désert" (ibid., p. 87).

<sup>3</sup>Alexandre Westphal, ed., Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible (Valence: Imprimeries Réunies, 1956), s.v. "Azazel."

<sup>4</sup>Alfred Loisy, Essai historique sur le sacrifice (Paris: Émile Nourry, 1920), Also Gunther Wanke, s.v. "Dämonen II. Altes Testament: 'aza'zel," TRE, 8:276.

<sup>5</sup>"Le bouc est envoyé au désert; c'est là que sont les esprits mauvais, et Azazel est l'un d'entre eux, à moins qu'il ne les représente tous; le bouc envoyé au désert se trouve envoyé à Azazel; il ne lui est aucunement consacré; on peut dire qu'il va au diable, avec toute sa charge de péchés" (ibid., p. 355).

<sup>6</sup>"Man mag unter Azazel mit der gewöhnlichen Auffassung einen Dämon . . . verstehen." Friedrich Blome, Die Opfermaterie in Babylonien und Israel (Rome: Pont. Institutum Biblicum, 1930).

personification of wickedness,"<sup>1</sup> and Westphal expresses the opinion that he represents a satanic being, a prince of the malefic spirits that usually dwelt in desolate places.<sup>2</sup>

All these lines of interpretation--as Tawil has convincingly demonstrated--<sup>3</sup> take hold on Jewish Midrashic<sup>4</sup> and medieval hermeneutics.<sup>5</sup> But, as Tawil also remarks, all those traditions "though Post Biblical and late may well go back to a very ancient source," not attested in the OT, but even possibly reflected in antiquity, "specifically in the Ancient Near Eastern Tradition."<sup>6</sup>

If that interpretative tradition is correct, then we may assume again that Satan appears to be portrayed symbolically as the one who will bear all the confessed sins at the end. And he will bear those sins not as redeemer

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<sup>1</sup>Kaufmann Kohler, s.v. "Azazel: In Biblical, Apocryphal, and Rabbinical Literature," JeEn, 2:366.

<sup>2</sup>"Azazel représente un être satanique, un prince des esprits malfaisants qui, d'après les Sémites primitifs, résidaient dans les lieux solitaires et désolés." Westphal, DEC, 1:110.

<sup>3</sup>Hayim Tawil, "Azazel the Prince of the Steppe: A Comparative Study," ZAW 92 (1980):43-59.

<sup>4</sup>Pirqe. R. Eliezer 46 (p. 363, n. 9). "Azazel is to be identified with Satan or Sammael."

<sup>5</sup>Ibn-Ezra and Ramban agree in identifying Azazel as a Demon. Tawil, "Azazel," pp. 46-47. Similarly Nahmanides asserted that Azazel belonged "to the class of se'irim, goat like demons jinn haunting the desert." K. Kohler JeEn, 2:366. (See also idem, "Atonement: Day of Atonement," 2:280-281).

<sup>6</sup>Tawil, "Azazel," p. 47.

but as originator, to be destroyed together with them. As such he will perish in desolation.

#### The Shedim and Seirim

The šdym and the š'yrym are demons which are mentioned in Deuteronomy, the Psalter, and Isaiah. The scarcity of the references, however, makes it difficult to know with precision what their appearance was like or what their exact relation to some aspect of the life of Israel was. For the šdym a connection has been suggested with the Arabic sawida "to be black" and so it would signify "the black ones."<sup>1</sup> In the same way a connection is assumed with the Akkadian shedu, which apparently covered a whole range of demons, good and evil. Among them there is mentioned also a "little black one" which was believed to be a demonic character that came "once a year and does not leave the people when he comes until they are dead."<sup>2</sup>

The šdym are especially mentioned in relationship with the false adoration<sup>3</sup> that Israel rendered to pagan gods--or demons--in its apostasy.<sup>4</sup> The šdym demons may be

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<sup>1</sup>Köhler, Old Testament Theology, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>As Merrill F. Unger remarks, "the 'demons' (shedhim) are the real spiritual entities inspiring the perverted worship." Biblical Demnology (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1963), p. 60.

<sup>4</sup>Salvador Carrillo Alday, "El Cántico de Moisés (Deut 32)," EsBi 26 (1967):235.

a reference for the same Mesopotamic **Shedu**,<sup>1</sup> best known as the tutelary deities or genii regarded as inferior deities of the Akkadian pantheon.<sup>2</sup>

An abominable aspect of this demonic worship resided in the practice of child sacrifice linked to it. Ps 106:37 says, **wyzbhw 't-bnyhm w't-bnwtyhm lšdym**, "and they sacrificed their sons and daughters to the Shedim (demons)." This reference points to that of Deut 32:17 which says, **yzbhw lšydm l' 'lh**, "they sacrificed to the Shedim (demons), not to God." The Pentateuchal reference indicates the identity of those entities that Israel worshiped when they diverted their worship from God. They were sacrificing to demons rather than YHWH. The Psalter reference specifies instead the kind of sacrifices that those demonic deities required for their worship.

The **s'yrym** are also mentioned as demonic entities. The noun is usually translated as the "hairy ones" and it was commonly thought to be in the form of he-goats or satyrs.<sup>3</sup> In Lev 17:7 they are mentioned as entities to whom Israel should not offer sacrifices. This explicit prohibitive reference pairs the **šdym** with the **š'yrym** as

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<sup>1</sup>Wanke, s.v. "Dämonen II. Alten Testament: sedim," TRE, 8:276.

<sup>2</sup>Gruenthaner, "The Demonology of the OT," p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Hans Duhm, Die bösen Geister im Alten Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904), p. 47.

demonic entities that should be cast out from the worship of Israel.

The reference in the prophecies of Isaiah to some wild animals as dwellers of the ruins of Babylon and Edom is generally taken as a reference to demonic entities enjoying the environs of the ruined city.<sup>1</sup> In Isa 13:21-22 are mentioned the š'yrym--goats, lit. "hairy ones," together with the bnwt y'nh--ostriches, the 'yym--hyenas, and the tnym--jackals.<sup>2</sup> In Isa 34:11, 13-15 a larger list of wild animals is given. Among the listed creatures is

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<sup>1</sup>In this way, Sawyer comments that "satyrs, some kind of Pan-like spirits" were "dancing among the ruins" (John F. A. Sawyer, Isaiah (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 1:140; Unger, Biblical Demonology, p. 60. In same way, R. B. Y. Scott and G. G. D. Kilpatrick, "The Book of Isaiah," Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:258; Derek Kidner, "Isaiah," The New Bible Commentary Revised, ed. D. Guthrie and A. Motyer (London: InterVarsity Press, 1968), p. 599; George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), pp. 244-245; John D. W. Watts prefers to understand a simile of a haunted place, where "the cries of desert animals hint at ghosts and demons in the eerie place" (Isaiah 1-33, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 24 (Waco: Word Book, 1985), p. 199. With a contrary view, Ridderbos sees only a pathetic reference to a place "full of the horrors of desolation" until now "uninhabited except by wild animals and birds" (Isaiah, Bible Student's Commentary, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), pp. 138-139.

<sup>2</sup>Sometimes the tnym are confused with tny and consequently translated as "dragons." Feliks identifies tnym with a kind of owl--Desert Eagle Owl--that dwells among the ruins of desolate cities. The Animal World of the Bible, p. 76.



lylyt, which in Akkadian equals the name of an evil demon.<sup>1</sup> Here, however, the context strongly suggests a zoological understanding rather than a demonic description, specifically the Tawny Owl.<sup>2</sup> Feliks appropriately mentions that "the Hebrew word 'Lilit' is used as a generic name to designate the whole order of Nocturnal Birds of Prey--Striges and Owls."<sup>3</sup> Feliks also points out that "the 'tanim' are included in the list of Owls, that dwell among the ruins and in the wilderness."<sup>4</sup> He also identifies the q't with the Little Owl,<sup>5</sup> the ynswp with the Long-Eared Owl,<sup>6</sup> and the qpwd with the Short-Eared Owl.<sup>7</sup> According to

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<sup>1</sup>CAD, p. 190. Lilit (Lilû) is listed among the family of the most malefic Mesopotamian demons. He was known as a demon of license and lewdness, which seduced women while they were dreaming. He had a female companion (Lilitû) which performed the same evil function with men. Brill mentions that Lilitû "figurent régulièrement dans les litanies des démons sumériens parmi d'autres génies malfaisants qui portent avec elles leurs redoutables pouvoirs." Jacques Brill, Lilith ou la mère obscure (Paris: Payot, 1981), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>As Bare indicates, most naturalists agree that in Isa 34:14 the tawny owl (Strix aluco) is indicated. Garland Bare, Plants and Animals of the Bible (Chiangmai, Thailand: University of Medical Sciences, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>Feliks, The Animal World of the Bible, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 76. He reinforces his viewpoint with the Aramaic 'yerodin,' which is the translation of 'tanim,' which in Talmudic references categorically is taken "to mean 'birds, in every respect'" (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

this, the prophet depicts the coming desolation of those places in very graphic terms. There is a whole range of wild beasts and birds of prey who will inhabit it instead of the former proud people that populated Babylon and Edom. On the other hand, the same wild creatures would appear as demons for superstitious people, and the desolated ruins as demonic dwellings.

The OT does not provide an extensive description of demons, neither is there a systematized tract of demonology in its writings.<sup>1</sup> Demons are portrayed in their negative nature, however, through the religious exigencies that their worship required among the neighboring peoples of Israel--scarcely mentioned in the OT--and through the prohibitions that Israel itself knew, and above all they are linked to witchcraft activities. The relation of these spirits with rites whose performance implied worship of the dead, human sacrifices, sacrifices of impurity, and immoral

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 79. Feliks states that the habits of this bird are similar to the mammal also named "qippod"--porcupine." He also mentions that the mammal is not a frequent dweller of desolate places. However, the bird is found mainly in such environments and in a definite way in the moors of Babylon, as is to be expected according to Isa 14:23.

<sup>1</sup>Duhm thinks that the OT demons of pre-exilic times can be divided into the following categories: those of animal form--theriomorphen Dämonen; those of human form--anthropomorphen Dämonen; those of uncertain development--undeutlich gewordene Dämonen; and those who formed an amorphous rest. (Die Bösen Geister, pp. 4-33).

activities depicts their nature.<sup>1</sup> They appear in a vein similar to that sketched from the beginning by the liar serpent who deceived Adam and Eve.

#### Summary and Evaluation

Our inquiry for further understanding of OT heavenly beings has demonstrated to us a diversity of creatures that act in close relationship with YHWH. Basic to this understanding is the council-of-YHWH motif.

Several passages explicitly give us essential details regarding this OT motif and two aspects of it become underlined in those references: Its constituency and its function. Regarding its constituency, it is clear that those who form the assembly of YHWH belong to the heavenly realm. These celestial members, although mentioned with a variety of names, are never identified as gods. In the council of YHWH, only one is divine and only one is the absolute authority, that is YHWH Himself. All the others, no matter whether they called "sons of God," "holy ones," "hosts," "angels," or not, are all heavenly creatures who assist YHWH and whom He uses in a diversity of functions

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<sup>1</sup>Hoffner details the rites and the performance of the sorcerers within the diverse ANE cultures. "Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew 'ôb'" (pp. 389-400).

all over His domain. It is clear that the most important function of this assembly is that of judgment. The described imagery of this aspect of the assembly is also plain. God as supreme judge is attended by the myriads of His holy assistants in a judgment in which all earthly affairs are considered in detail. No special terminology is used to refer to the council of YHWH. Each term that is used to designate it was also used to refer to common reunions in Israel. In a special way those reunions were religious and military in character.

Sometimes the assembly of YHWH functions as a celestial choir charged to praise YHWH and to proclaim His sovereignty and creative power with exultant joy and jubilation; a celebration that God accepts and acknowledges plainly.

The same assembly of YHWH introduces other motifs of its own constituency that connect us with the heavenly beings. One of those is "the hosts of YHWH." The members of the heavenly council are generally mentioned in an all-inclusive way as being the hosts of YHWH. Sometimes, these heavenly hosts--šb' šmym--are described on special occasions, as being drawn up in military formation standing beside the enthroned YHWH on His right side and on His left. Also in a special way in poetic passages they are

designated with varied terminology that points to a diversity of functions performed by them. These hosts are described in these passages as performing tasks as messengers, ministers, mighty warriors, and servants who render obedience and service to YHWH.

The OT mentions the "sons of God"--*bny h'lohym* or *bn 'lym*--as members of the celestial council. Although current scholarly opinion favors a mytho-polytheistic identity for them, the best interpretation--according to the whole biblical context as well as its monotheistic concept--seems to be different.

The OT term "sons of God" appears as a plurivalent expression, and when it is mentioned in reference to the assembly of YHWH, it is an equivalent for angels who also are mentioned as *qdšm*--"holy ones." Their sonship does not imply any kind of divine begetting--so common in ANE theogonies; rather it is their close relationship to their Creator, the One whom they serve, that is expressed in this way. It also seems likely that a similar relational sonship could be properly considered as correct for humans as "sons of God."

A dominant motif within the theme of heavenly beings in the OT is their function as angels or "messengers"--*ml'kym*. This celestial service is attested in each

period of the biblical history.. Thus, Adam witnessed this ministry as much as Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David, or Daniel. However, it may be said that on each of these occasions, as well as in others mentioned above, this function ought to be seen as complementary within the total angelic picture, rather than as developmental.

Central to the OT messenger motif is the angelic character referred to as Mal'ak YHWH. References to him are abundant and enigmatic. His character as "messenger" tends to present him as just a special angel, but his unique performance, his closeness with God, and above all the interchangeability of his name with that of the Godhead in most of the occasions tends to indicate in a strong way that he was YHWH Himself.

As for the other angels, they all appear as willing servants performing the different missions with which they are charged by their divine Master. Elsewhere they carry out functions which vary from visitors to protectors, from escorts to charioteers, from comforters to interpreters, from protectors to warriors, in situations of extreme urgency, and in an explicit ministry that accords with a promised angelic protection for those who are faithful God-fearers.

In spite of the variety of angelic interventions and the explicit indication of their innumerability, the OT

reveals only two angelic names, Gabriel and Michael. The former is mentioned as having been sent on explicitly interpretative missions, while the second is more directly connected with war in relation to the eschatological liberation of the people of God.

Within this variety of angelic characters, however, two more types stand out, the seraphim and the cherubim. For the seraphim, most interpreters favor a serpentine connection due to its derivation from the root *šrp* which can signify either "serpent" or "burning one." However, the context of their Isaianic reference, as well as the anthropological details of their described appearance, seem to indicate a radiant, winged anthropomorphic resemblance for them instead of a serpent form.

Although the cherubim are mentioned more than the seraphim and they have been studied more in biblical circles than any other angelic beings, their appearance still is a puzzle. Their Ezechielian description complicates the Pentateuchal information about them, and the only characteristic common in all sources is that they are winged creatures. It is also possible to grasp an anthropological resemblance for them--at least for those represented over the *kapporet* and the huge representations of them in Solomon's temple. They are also mentioned as beings upon whom YHWH rides. This classifies them as a

special kind of heavenly creatures--probably also named cherubim--that might exist with quadruped zoomorphic appearances, unless the biblical imagery were interpreted as Divinity riding over anthropomorphic beings similar to those conceived by the Hittites, particularly the mountain-gods (see Figs. 20, 24-25). In any case, both the seraphim and the cherubim are unique in their descriptions, and no archaeological representation of them has yet been demonstrated as satisfactory.

Any angelological picture could not be complete without mention of its demonic side. Demonic types of angels are not prominent, however, in the OT. But there are explicit references to them in some names, especially in symbolic imagery, and they function in that picture in a comprehensible way as evil angels.

Basic to this concept is the mention of Satan, who is consistently mentioned as the adversary of God, either openly or behind some symbols. Under symbolic language, Isaiah and Ezekiel trace the history of this heavenly cherub, mentioning his perfect beginning, his fall into sin because of his own pride, and his expulsion from his privileged position (Isa 14; 16:15; 28:17; Ezek 26:1-2,19; 28).<sup>1</sup> These descriptions also indicate that he only awaits his fiery destruction like those proud earthly princes who perished in the vanity of their pride.

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<sup>1</sup>See above pp. 514-522.



From the Pentateuchal implicit reference as the tempter serpent to the mention of him as the intruder within the council of YHWH in Job, Satan shows his misanthropic character and his eternal controversy with YHWH.

On the other side, the demonic realm is mentioned in connection with witchcraft activities and other idolatrous customs that openly contradict the OT teachings regarding the dead (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10-11; Isa 8:19).

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### The Ancient Near East Imagery of Celestial Entities

Investigating carefully the literary and iconographical sources of the ANE, we have found that the concept of the existence of heavenly beings goes far back towards the dawn of human history. This concept pervaded the religious thinking of every people throughout the entire Fertile Crescent.

It appears that the most influential culture in this regard started in the region of the Two Rivers, and it imposed its mold upon the cultures of the following centuries. The different pantheons with their variety of gods and heavenly beings resemble the Mesopotamian pattern even though they vary from culture to culture.

Our inquiry into heavenly ANE beings focused first upon the celestial-assembly motif in order to have a general picture of this aspect of their existence. In doing this, we found that:

1. The ANE pantheons explicitly mention the existence of a celestial council. Mesopotamians named it the

puhur ilāni, Hittites called it tuliyaz siunes, and Canaanites referred to it as the p̄hr ilm.

2. Invariably the celestial council is described as being constituted totally of gods and goddesses of each pantheon. In other words, both major and minor deities in union constituted the heavenly assembly.

3. This total-assembly idea stresses the fact that for Mesopotamians, Hittites, and Canaanites (explicitly Ugaritians), the heavenly council was without exception a polytheistic entity. It was always the totality of the gods, or a number of them, united in concert.

4. The multiplicity of gods within the council deprived the assembly of a godhead with absolute sovereignty or total independence from the council. Any major god could overrule the heavenly assembly.<sup>1</sup>

5. The total celestial assembly was convened especially when there appeared to be a critical situation that menaced the security of the pantheon. Notably, calamities that menaced the existence of humanity also vitally threatened the pantheon. In this way the gods, although divine, were intimately involved with the fate of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

6. Whenever a convocation of the divine assembly was needed, the gods were summoned by command of a major

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 42-43, 107-108.

<sup>2</sup>Especially is this phenomenon of dependance of the gods on the humans accentuated in the Hittite culture.

deity who expressed and conveyed this command through messenger gods.

7. The final decisions of the celestial assembly were most likely announced by divine heralds.

8. In exceptional cases, the assembly could be convened to deliberate over a special situation without regular heraldic summoning. Decisions reached in this type of meeting were approved in a spontaneous decision.<sup>1</sup>

9. Between deliberations by the council, some gods were allowed to function in an interim mediatorial role on behalf of humans before the heavenly assembly.

Apart from this, the texts depict the assembly of the gods in a very dynamic picture. Its functions were carried out by different deities who were arranged in specific ranks and were conceived of as being at the service of the major gods.

In fact, the texts depict all major deities as surrounded by acolyte gods who assisted them with their functions. Some acolytes acted as protectors of the fine arts. Others acted as physicians, having the power to cure or inflict illness such as blindness. Some references concern deities who acted as amanuenses of the gods, and those who performed the function of interpreters of the

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<sup>1</sup>For this kind of meeting and decision we might point out the passage concerning when Utnapishtin was divinized by Enlil before the gods assembled there.

will of the gods by revealing this to man through the avenue of a dream.

These diverse categories of lesser gods provide us with a knowledge of a whole series of different celestial entities that populated the heavenly realms. At the same time they were also intimately involved in the heavenly assembly.

This varied constituency is well attested literarily and iconographically. Literarily the texts witness to this hierarchy in many ways, and through the actions of the gods that they describe, it is possible to see their function and relationship toward the major god, and their role within the celestial assembly.

Important among the gods who constitute the Mesopotamian divine assembly are the groups of the Ig and An gods. They are depicted in diverse ways and they carried out a variety of functions that can be listed briefly as follows:

1. They formed an important part of the heavenly council. Convocations of the assembly did not take place in their absence.
2. They were daily as well as occasionally convened in a council at the summons of the major god who required their convocation.
3. Many times they are referred to as counsellors of the gods and as judges of the destinies of men.

4. They are also designated as the protector deities of the countries.

5. They are attentive to the orders of the major gods and to the final decisions of the council.

6. They express their adoration to the godhead with joy and fear. They especially praise the order of creation established by the head god.

7. Their worship of the godhead is expressed with extreme obeisance--by kneeling and lying down before the godhead.

8. They obey the will of the gods and heavenly council promptly.

9. As warriors they may also form part of the celestial army.

10. They are expected to fight against the demonic forces.

Other pantheons also refer to the existence of some of the groups of deities, but their references are not as varied or as detailed as those in Mesopotamian sources.

For the iconographic representation of the assembly of gods, the Hittites stand out. The engraved procession of gods of the sanctuary of Yazilikaya is the most outstanding example of all (Figs. 23-28). On the Mesopotamian side, only the Malthayan relief can be cited as a comparison to that Hittite representation (Fig.3). On the glyptic side, Mesopotamia provides only scenes of smaller meetings

of gods in which anonymity is the main characteristic (Figs. 1-2, 4-7). Hittite artistry seems to be more conspicuous in presenting gods assembled in meetings of celebration or marching to some important meeting (Figs. 13-17, 29).

On the other hand, the constituency of the divine assembly provides us with another divine motif that expands the dimensions of the ANE heavenly beings. These are the references to and depictions of the sons of the gods, the armies of the gods, the protector deities, the messenger gods, and the demoniacal gods--all of whom belong to the heavenly realm. Their ranks widen the concept of the celestial population.

As for the sons-of-the-gods motif, it can be said that:

1. The sons of the gods are the gods of the pantheon who were all engendered by the older generation of gods.
2. The father gods chose from their large progeny ministers to attend them in their different activities within the celestial and earthly realms.
3. The pantheons were frequently involved in quarrels agitated by the sons of the gods over the matter of kingship.
4. Usually the younger deities dethroned and eliminated the older gods in these conflicts. In the most

favorable outcome, the dethroned gods were relegated to lesser ranks or to the underworld regions.

5. The myths indicate that eventually some gods or goddesses had offspring through intercourse with human beings, hence some of the sons of the gods appear on earth. By no means, however, were these descendants considered strictly divine. They were always banned from the heavenly realms.<sup>1</sup>

6. Explicit references to some royal individuals as sons of some deity do not convey strict divinity nor a real kinship with the deity as being engendered by that god. This way of naming only refers to a higher rank and authority, or divine favor toward the devout worshiper.

Mythical sources and iconographical representations indicate with clarity that the gods commonly engaged in warfare (Figs. 32-36, 45-56). The picture given in the mythical texts also includes belligerent deities. References to celestial armies fighting are not uncommon.

In regard to the armies of the gods, the evidence points out that:

1. There is no pantheon whose deities were not engaged in some kind of conflict among themselves. The principal cause of those battles was the question of supremacy among them.

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<sup>1</sup>See above pp. 112-113.



2. The celestial armies were arranged according to their sympathies with some god, and these relations were clarified in fierce battles.

3. The picture on the Mesopotamian side portrays all of the younger deities engaged in a war against the fathers, the ancestral gods--at the end of which the elder gods were destroyed. In the Anatolian counterpart, the question at issue was the matter of kingship among the gods. In the Ugaritic area, it was a rebellion against the decreed sovereignty of a favored god.

4. It was mainly the major gods who were described as having a special coterie of warrior gods. These followers were always prompt to help and fight side by side with their master gods.

5. The appearance of these divine warriors is described in terms of supernatural power and appearance. Splendor is one of the main divine characteristics.

6. On some occasions these celestial warriors are depicted as winged. This feature characterizes them as gods, not only due to their swiftness of flight but because it portrays them as belonging to heavenly spheres.

7. Chariotry and weaponry are part of the array of the celestial armies (Figs. 41, 43). The forces of nature were also thought of as forming a part of the divine equipment for warfare (Figs. 2, 36, 89).

When we review the notions of the protector deities, we discover an overwhelming number of these references in both written and engraved sources. The concept of the protector or intercessory deity was one of the most outstanding features in the religious thinking of the ANE.

1. They appear distinctively in mythical literature, in religious texts, in incantation texts, and even in common epistolary correspondence. This concept pervades the religious thinking of every ANE people.

2. Although minor in rank in the pantheonic spheres, protector gods were believed to be benefactors of humanity and were able to intercede on behalf of their clients before the heavenly assembly.

3. It appeared as natural to ANE peoples that major gods protected individuals of royal and noble ranks, while lesser deities were charged with the protection of people of lesser rank.

4. Each individual was believed to have a pair of guardian gods--one male and the other female. It seems that along with them, two other types of spirits--designated as shedu and lamassu in Akkadian--were part of the divine protection and these spirits corresponded in sex to that of the guardian gods.

5. Success, happiness, health, and good life were in direct relation to the close company of the guardian

gods. On the other hand, failure, misery, sickness, and misfortune came when the protector gods were estranged from the individual.

6. For ANE men there was always a fear of doing something that could cause their gods to become angry and withdraw their protection.

7. Although the great deities were more properly available to nobility, one can clearly infer from the incantation texts that every individual could appeal to these deities as their intercessors whenever the return of an estranged deity was desired. However, their services could only be obtained through an intercessor.

8. Although the vast majority of personal gods are not known by name, a few of them are, and their existence is beyond doubt. These deities are elsewhere addressed in a very devoted, tender, and even familiar way by their protégés.

9. In comparing Mesopotamian representations of these deities with those of other peoples, it is possible to detect some contrasting features. As a general rule, Mesopotamians depicted their protector deities as leading the protégés by the hand before the major god, who usually appears enthroned (Figs. 64-67, 70-71, 74-75, 81). The Anatolians preferred to see their protective deities in a more protective attitude. They depicted them as embracing the protected person (Figs. 85-86).

Other important kinds of lesser deities that played a role within the ANE pantheons were the gods who communicated the desires of the gods or the decisions of the celestial assembly. The following can be said concerning the messenger gods:

1. The texts indicate that the major deities used the lesser gods who were under their service as their appointed messengers. They were charged with explicit messages to be delivered to other deities or to the divine assembly.

2. As acknowledged heralds of the gods, they became an indispensable link of communication among the deities.

3. When they were entrusted with messages, they always conveyed those messages with promptness and fidelity to those to whom they were sent. The texts always depict them as being eager and prompt to fulfill the will of their master gods.

4. The activity of these gods as messengers is by no means limited to male deities. The texts also refer in explicit ways to female deities functioning as messengers.

5. On some occasions they went on solitary missions; on other occasions--as is explicitly mentioned in the Ugaritian texts--they were sent in the company of fellow messenger deities.

6. As messengers of the gods, these deities participated in diverse missions. Their function is by no means just to be conveyors of speeches.

7. Some of these messenger gods were identified as the mighty sons of the gods, and they attained an elevated position among the gods.

8. Some of the messenger gods, though described in anthropomorphic terms, also had superhuman features. These included wings, supernatural strength, divine nature, and a blazing appearance.

9. They also appear in scenes where they pay obeisance before their masters as well as before the other major deities to whom they were sent. This behavior is typical of all messenger gods in each of the pantheons.

10. Also noticeable is the fact that although many of them were not named, some of them were known by name, and those who were named probably were of greater importance.

Finally, in regard to the demonic gods, we may say that they present a very complicated picture within the corpus of spiritual beings in the ANE. They are complicated not only in regard to their identification and origin but also in relation to their function and nature. Their diverse ranks prevent the determination of any definitive classification of them.

Some of the characteristic features that can be drawn from the written sources and iconographical representations for the demonic gods are:

1. The myths especially mention that some major gods had bands of demons in their service. They are mentioned as belonging to their special retinue of warriors.

2. The texts mention the existence of good demons along with the bad ones.

3. The good demons were mainly connected with protective functions, and sometimes with healing activities. For the most part, however, they were generally seen as sort of guardian deities of places, especially of the entrances to the divine abode.

4. The bad ones were occupied only in performing evil, bringing misery, disgrace, sickness, destruction, and death to mankind, or in warring against the gods.

5. Bad demons were depicted as on the look-out for any person who was abandoned by his personal god, so they could afflict him as much as they wished.

6. Once the demons had a victim in their control, they oppressed him and tortured him viciously, with no mercy until death.

7. The written sources as well as the iconographic sources concur in producing representations of the demonic gods that present them in hybrid form and of hideous appearance. According to this view, the demons resemble

the most diversely mixed animal forms combined with certain touches of some human features (Figs. 92, 92-103, 105-108, 110-125, 130-144, 146-175). They especially follow the anthropoid characteristic of an erect posture (Figs. 84, 92, 94, 97-103, 105-108, 110-112, 119-120, 122, 125, 139-140, 142-144, 146-151, 154, 155-160, 161, 163-169, 184-185, 187-189, 194, 198-200, 203).

8. The more mixed the forms of these hybrids, the more powerful they were. This belief was held of both the good and the bad ones.

9. Some of these hybrid forms are recognizable while others still remain elusive. Akkadian sources help to identify some of these creatures that were mentioned elsewhere later. Such seems to be the case with the shedu and lamassu entities.

10. Some of the demonic creatures such as shedu, lamassu, and kuribu were especially preferred by the Mesopotamians as decorations for their sanctuaries, palaces, and streets, due to their confidence in their ability to ward off the evil spirits from those precincts.

11. With a destructive mission, they were related more to desert regions and to darkness. Even more particularly, they were connected to the world of the dead.

Our investigation indicates clearly that nowhere in the entire ANE was the concept of celestial beings ignored. All ancient peoples who inhabited the region of the Fertile

Crescent were quite familiar with the concept of entities belonging to heavenly realms.

As a result of this, there is a great variety of entities described as belonging to the divine realm. They are not only described or mentioned in the whole range of written materials but also appear graphically represented in every ancient ANE culture.

#### The Old Testament Picture of Heavenly Beings

Our search for heavenly beings in the OT has shown that they are mentioned with implicitness and explicitness. Their existence is attested in many and varied ways as being numberless and varied. This variety and innumera- bility was first seen through the references to the heavenly-council motif. It is through this motif more than any other that one can discern with distinctiveness the reality of the heavenly creatures apart from God.

The OT reveals that YHWH in His council is well aware of earthly happenings, and during its covenanted sessions God in His assembly decides matters closely related to His people. The visions of the heavenly court, described by prophets who witnessed its assembled meetings, leave no doubt of the existence of the court, of its basic functions, and of its constituency.



Three conspicuous characteristics are evident for this heavenly assembly: First, it is an organized and dynamic body under the absolute leadership of YHWH. It is more properly the assembly of YHWH. Second, it is composed of God and His angels, who are not gods, but created beings. Third, the membership of the angels is of immeasurable number.

Some of the passages examined suggest that the assembly meets with regularity before the throne of YHWH. The periodicity of these meetings, however, is not expressed precisely. From these depicted meetings it is possible to perceive at least three functions of the assembly: First, it is to present different types of information before God, presumably of the matters related to His vast domain. Second, it is to render homage and praise to God. In this case, the heavenly assembly functions as a celestial choir, praising joyously the wondrous acts of YHWH, who at the same time recognizes the praise given to Him. Third, it is to assist YHWH in His judgment. Among these, the last function appears to be the most important. Closely related to this function are the actions of the angels as writers, and others definitely act as interpreters of the proceedings performed on behalf of mankind.

It is also evident that those who constitute the heavenly assembly are named in diverse ways. They are

referred to as "sons of God"--bny 'lhym; "holy ones"--qdwšym; "hosts (armies) of YHWH"--yhwh šb'wt, the hosts of YHWH; "angels" (messengers)--ml'kym; "divines"--'lhym; "mighty ones" or "warriors of power"--gbry kh; prince, commander, leader--sr; and "watchers"--'yryn. All these nouns, however, do not constitute a separate terminology used only to indicate these celestial entities. These words were part of the cultural baggage expressed in the daily language, and they were also commonly used to refer to humans who were in a close relationship with God, especially as functionaries of hierarchy and rank serving the king. This polyvalence of the terms describing the heavenly beings, together with the context in which they appear, becomes quite essential for understanding biblical angelology.

It is notable that in spite of the amazing number of angelic components of the celestial assembly, only Michael and Gabriel are mentioned by name. Michael especially is mentioned in a context of military and judicial action closely related to the eschatological divine intervention on behalf of the people of God. On the other hand, Gabriel is described as more related to interpretative functions.

Closely connected to the subject of the assembly of YHWH is the army-of-YHWH motif. The OT is not ambiguous in mentioning the existence of celestial contingents working

under the guidance and direction of YHWH as their military commander.

Two things have become evident from the survey of this subject. First, YHWH is described as the matchless warrior, unsurpassed in power and unparalleled in sovereignty. Second, in accordance with this incomparability, YHWH possesses a vast celestial army, which constitutes the hosts of YHWH--yhw h sb'wt.

These contingents of YHWH are portrayed in a variety of functions and they intervene on behalf of the people of God. In this way they are sometimes depicted as a celestial choir praising their leader as the supreme King of the universe. At other times they are described as flaming warriors performing missions of protection. And still on other occasions they are depicted as surrounding YHWH in celestial duties, or escorting Him as He moves to some specific theophany.

The heavenly warriors are sometimes described as being armed with a sword. Chariots are also mentioned as part of the equipment of the celestial armies. This chariotry, however, is described as blazing in nature and supernatural in power.

Most notable of all is that in every reference, YHWH is always described as the unquestionable leader of these celestial armies, which are described sometimes as

countless squadrons, ready to act at His command whenever and wherever necessary.

When we review the notion of sons of God within the OT, we find that the references are embedded in explicit contexts that strongly point to them as the hosts that constitute the court and armies of YHWH. Most of the references depict them as acting in the heavenly realm, usually in a function of praising God and exalting the works of the Creator. They are also mentioned in the function of protection, equating them to angelic personalities.

Notable also is the fact that their identity as sons of God--bny 'lhym--has nothing to do with genealogical derivation. They are not begotten by God, but they are His creatures. They are named in this way because of their close relationship with YHWH in the heavenly courts as ministers and servants of the Most High. Their identity as the sons of God does not have anything to do with divinity. They are not gods but YHWH's ministers.

In reviewing the references to the messengers--ml'kym--of YHWH, we discover why this aspect of the heavenly population has become the most characteristic feature of the angelology. **ml'k** is the term used for angel, which basically means messenger, and the OT unmistakably indicates that YHWH uses the members of His vast assembly and hosts as His appointed messengers.

Two features, however, are distinctively mentioned within the OT in regard to the messengers of YHWH. There are common messengers and there are special messengers, such as the character who is always referred to either as MY or ml'k 'lhym.

According to the Pentateuch the MY is described as an outstanding angelic character who acts as a powerful warrior and leader. His outstanding character, however, is not so much due to his acts or his flaming appearance as it is to the interchangeability of name that he enjoys with YHWH when he appears in epiphanies. Most of his intervention is given in a partnership so close with YHWH that this intimacy even points to the Godhead itself. It would seem that these references paradoxically present him as a heavenly character of double identity in his actions: as the almighty YHWH and as heavenly messenger, as the Godhead and as angel. The references outside of the Pentateuch also stress the interchangeability between the MY and YHWH Himself, and only add a puzzle to the interpretation of the MY.

In this way, we prefer to see the MY either as a highly ranked angelic character who works in a very intimate association with YHWH, or as YHWH Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. We might also say that the only other possibility of identification for the MY is that of

Michael, who is presented within the boundaries of the angelic realms.

When we review the references of the angels--ml'kym--of YHWH we find that:

1. They are consistently portrayed in anthropomorphic resemblance. From Genesis to Daniel the angels intervening in heavenly and earthly affairs are repeatedly described with human physiognomy.

2. Their power, however, is superhuman.

a. They can appear and disappear from human sight at will.

b. They can strike with blindness a whole military company or a mob.

c. They have power to destroy a whole army.

d. They can fly with inconceivable celerity in order to perform the orders of YHWH.

e. They possess knowledge beyond human capacity, and can interpret the secrets of YHWH.

f. They are able to protect those who are under the protection of God, no matter how difficult the situation in which they may be caught.

g. They can make fire rain from heaven.

h. They are able to perform destructive missions as part of YHWH's judgments.

3. At the same time, the preceding description of the types of angelic intervention in their diversity and

power also gives us the varied functions that they are able to perform as God's appointed messengers. In each intervention, however, it is clear that they are acting under the explicit charge of God. They are strictly, therefore, identified as messengers of God.

4. They have delight in praising God and His creation and they are part of the heavenly council in a diversity of functions.

5. The Pentateuch is not silent on the variety of angelic interventions. On the contrary, it reverberates with angelic interventions in an outstanding way. In a strict sense, it seems that Adam was not less aware of those heavenly beings than were Abraham or Moses.

6. In the same way the angelic pictures, be they in the books of Job, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Psalms, or Ezekiel, emerges with peculiar distinctiveness.

7. Daniel agrees with the OT picture of angels in portraying an angelology rooted in that of his predecessors, and he complements their angelology by bringing out some features in special ways. The heavenly court is described in a uniquely vivid way, and he reveals the names of two angelic characters. In describing divine intervention through His angels, Daniel stresses a reality shared by the people of God throughout their whole existence.

8. Other terms apart from ml'kym are used to indicate angels. They present a diversity of terminology that recurs through the OT in order to convey a reality that accompanied them throughout their existence.

9. It might be emphasized that the term ml'k is not part of a separate terminology that was used exclusively to indicate the ml'kym of YHWH. Notwithstanding, when they interveved in human affairs their identity as celestial beings was unquestionably recognized.

Within the heavenly realm two kinds of celestial beings are mentioned as distinctive. They are the seraphim and the cherubim. Both appear related within the angelic reality and their role is clearly established in close relationship to God.

Although described only by Isaiah, it is clear that the seraphim are heavenly creatures who surround the throne of YHWH. The root *šrp* "to burn," from which the noun seraphim seems to be derived--i.e., "the burning ones"--seems most likely to point to a creature of refulgent appearance. This fits better than one which describes a being of serpentine form. In addition, the whole description fits better with an anthropomorphic physiognomy. They also are described as having six wings and being capable of flying and also dialoguing with men.

The seraphim appear in a strict function of service to YHWH by escorting Him and in an intimate relation with



the heavenly liturgy. As celestial spirits surrounding the throne of YHWH, they perform a prominent ministry of holiness. As such they may be taken as representatives of majesty, sovereignty, dominion, and protection, and likewise they may be seen as agents of divine redemption and bearers of purification. As performers of the heavenly liturgy, they may be identified as members of the celestial choir that proclaim the holiness and cosmic sovereignty of YHWH with rumbling voice and in antiphonal way.

As for the cherubim--krbym--the references to them are much more frequent than those of the seraphim. In spite of this frequency, they are enigmatic. Basically three main sources provide data for the cherubim, the Pentateuch, the Solomonic descriptions, and Ezekiel.

According to Pentateuchal references, the cherubim are winged heavenly beings that YHWH may appoint as guardians of sacred places. This sentinel function was performed by those who were designated to guard the entrance to Eden after man's sin.

A similar function of guardianship performed by the cherubim is that of covering the throne of God. A close description and representation of this function was presented within the holy of holies of the sanctuary. There over the extremes of the kapporet, facing each other, looking down and with outstretched wings--and probably standing, two cherubim were represented as covering the

throne of God. In a similar way the curtains were decorated with cherubim which probably were made in the same fashion as those of the kapporet. We assume that those cherubim in the sanctuary represent the hosts that surround YHWH in His immediate environs as well as His ministers that serve Him in His sanctuary. From the Pentateuchal references as well as those of Samuel, Psalms, and Isaiah, it is possible to grasp the idea that the cherubim are part of the heavenly hosts of YHWH, and that they are the closest attendants of YHWH on His throne.

The Solomonic temple--like the tabernacle of the wilderness--was profusely decorated with representations of cherubim. Especially notable, however, were those huge ones of the debir that were standing with outstretched wings and covering the ark. Other cherubic representations, however, were conspicuous not because of size, but because of quantity. All the walls, curtains, and doors were covered with carved and embroidered cherubim figures. With this abundance of represented cherubim it is possible that Solomon wanted to underline the innumerability of angels serving God. Besides, since those of the kapporet symbolized the perpetual angelic ministry next to the throne of YHWH, perhaps with the huge ones he wanted to represent the living presence of YHWH as He is attended by a special cherubic ministry. It is also possible that those erected by Solomon were the exact counterpart of

those over the **kapporet**. Though scarce, the descriptions available strongly suggest that they appeared in antropomorphic form.

With the Ezekielian cherubim is completed the information about the biblical cherubim. His data, however, are complicated and full of enigmas. Interestingly enough, no less than three different forms of cherubim emerge from the portrayal of Ezekiel: first, the carved cherubim that he describes in his sanctuary vision; second, the guardian cherub of the holy mount of God; and third, the cherubim of the theophanies that he witnessed.

Although the first seems to be similar in fashion to those carved by Solomon on the walls of the temple, they are clearly depicted as different ones. They are two-faced, with one a human face and the other a lion's. Nothing else is said of them. It is probable that they were represented as standing in a position of guarding the palm trees (Ezek 41:17-20).

The second is shrouded in a symbolic description that depicts a cherubic character who lost his former heavenly position of covering cherub. Ezekiel depicts him as perfect in beauty, wrapped in splendor, walking upon burning coals within the environs where he served as an appointed covering cherub. All these indications--though scarce--tend to point out that some of the cherubim are designated to be especially guardians in the places of God.

The third is the most enigmatic of all the cherubim descriptions. A summary of its given characteristics is as follows:

1. They possess an anthropomorphic resemblance, with hands similar to humans'.

2. They possess in some way superhuman features which are beyond comparison with any known earthly creature. These peculiar features would describe them as:

- a) Four-faced creatures
- b) Four-winged and four-handed
- c) Legs similar to human's, but feet as of an ox
- d) Capable of lightning movement
- e) A blazing, bright appearance
- f) Possessing multiple vision
- h) Winged creatures--they fly in every direction with a rumbling sound.

All this indicates that these cherubim are unique heavenly creatures who probably belong to a special cherubic order, and perhaps this type of cherub has the express task of being the throne-bearers of YHWH.

According to the descriptions of Ezekiel and Isaiah it becomes plain that YHWH is surrounded by a multifaceted court composed of a variety of creatures. The seraphim and the cherubim stand out among those creatures and appear to be the ones who stand closest to Him. At the same time

both classes of creatures appear to be predominately human in physiognomy.

The scholarly search for some ANE depiction that could properly resemble the OT heavenly beings was initiated long ago, and it still continues. The cherubim have been examined to the greatest degree by scholars and many suggestions have been proposed as a possible appearance for them.

Philologically it has been suggested that the biblical cherubim equal the Akkadian *kâribu* by name and for being known as a protective deity. This proposed parallel, however, poses the problem that no *kâribu* image has been found so far in the whole ANE, and there is no way to know what they looked like.

Archaeologically it is asserted that among the hybrid creatures with which the ANE art teems, the winged sphinx is the one which represents the cherubim. The anthropomorphic characteristics, mythological connections, and especially the winged features are pointed out and underlined as sure clues for the comparison. But the uniqueness of the biblical creatures makes all these possible relations merely guesswork. To say that they are an exact depiction of the OT heavenly creatures is asking too much of them.

Finally, in regard to the demonic aspect of angels in the OT, we may say that references to it are scarce.

Contrary to the common references to all kinds of evil demons that occur in ANE texts, the OT has only a very few explicit references to them. Most of these appear in connection with witchcraft activities that openly dealt with demons.

Even the references to Satan are mostly presented in a symbolic way. Notwithstanding, under the figure of the serpent he appears from the Pentateuchal pages as the adversary of God and the one who brought chaos into creation and death to mankind from the beginning. Later, the same serpent symbolism is used by Isaiah to forecast the destruction of the adversary by God (Isa 27:1). The prophetic texts also present him under the symbol of earthly kings who, in spite of their grandeur and power, were overthrown and destroyed by God. Ezekiel symbolizes him as the proud king of Tyre and thus depicts the fall and destruction of the once guardian cherubim. Isaiah in the same way symbolizes him as the king of Babylon, tracing the rebellion and fall of the Morning Star and his dreadful destruction.

It is in Job, however, that Satan becomes plainly described as the adversary of God. He is the evil character who questions the knowledge of God of His servants. He distorts their motives and gladly looks for their destruction, inflicting upon them the loss of their property and

beloved ones, and also casting upon them sickness and misery.

The demonic character Azazel is mentioned only in relation with the annual feast of Atonement. Although most tend to see him merely as a mythological demon of the desert, his identity has long been related to the prince of the demons. Besides this, the mechanism of the whole festival suggests an eschatological function for him. He is presented as an entity closely paired with the contamination of sin, and as such, he is the ultimate bearer of all the confessed sins. In this way sin could be eradicated from the camp and destroyed in the desert.

The mention of Lilit--a name found in the Akkadian literature indicating a very vicious demon--in the oracles of Isaiah seems more appropriate to be taken as a generic term for the nocturnal birds of prey--i.e., striges and owls--that settled in the ruins of the doomed city. The mention of other names also related to the same kind of Raptors and species of mammals typical of such ruined environments makes this interpretation most likely. The general superstitious beliefs of the surrounding nations, however, undoubtedly related all those creatures, diurnal and nocturnal, as an embodiment of a diversity of demons dwelling in the deserted city.

Other demon characters are not mentioned by name, but apparently in a generic way. Such is the case with the

šdym and the š'yrym--generally assumed to be demonic entities of the desert. They are mentioned in the context of the false worship prohibited by the Torah and that was practiced in times of apostasy. In the same way, the 'wb and the yd'wny--which the OT designates as the pretended spirits of the dead--are also mentioned within the same proscriptive context and in relation to the necromantic practices performed by witches and diviners.

The kind of sacrifices mentioned as being related to the worship of the sdym demons is sufficient to establish their abominable character, and at the same time to grasp the reason why God prohibited any relation with them.

#### Contrasts and Similarities

A comparison of descriptions between those of the ANE and of OT heavenly beings shows more clearly the relevance of angelology within biblical studies. Considering first of all the characteristics and nature of both heavenly populations we may have:

#### ANE Sources

1. When one speaks of ANE heavenly beings one is referring to the whole variety of gods (and mainly lesser gods) that populated the diverse ANE pantheons.

#### OT Sources

1. When one speaks of OT heavenly beings one is referring mainly to the angels who are never presented as lesser gods.



2. This divine heavenly population was thought of as a group of living beings, man-like in form, but superhuman, immortal, and invisible to the human eye. They belong to the spiritual realm, and in all their domains--heavenly, earthly, or underworld--their existence is beyond human nature.

3. ANE lesser gods are very numerous and of awesome appearance.

4. ANE lesser gods are described as being more powerful than men. Their power can protect or harm.

5. Two different kinds of ANE lesser gods are shown: good and evil. Those considered good were usually regarded as personal companions, while those considered evil were feared as misanthropic demons.

6. The ANE sources make plain that the evil lesser gods or demons were already created that way. This evil kind is overwhelmingly stressed and the demonic realm is described and pictured abundantly.

2. The angelic heavenly population, though they appear in a man-like form, are of a different order from that of humans. They are invisible and part of the spiritual world closely associated with God.

3. OT angels are numberless and of dreadful countenance.

4. OT angels are described as being more powerful than men. Their might can be used to protect and also utterly to destroy.

5. The OT reveals the angels as being good and evil. Those who are good are associated with God, in protecting His own.

6. The OT evil angels were not created in such a way, but they become so by sinning. There is no stressed depiction nor repeated mention of demons, but a ministry of angels emerges plainly in the OT pages.

7. ANE lesser gods are described and depicted in a variety of forms. Horns and wings are mainly indicative of their divine identity. Some of them are described as a young woman or young man, others present two faces or more, still others are of hybrid appearance.

8. ANE lesser gods--together with the major gods--are part of a heavenly divine assembly or council of the gods. However, any god has absolute sovereignty over the assembly.

7. Although never represented, OT angels become described in an astonishing variety of forms which likewise include human likeness. Some of them are described as winged, others wingless, and still others in hybrid forms.

8. OT angels form part of the council of YHWH in which YHWH presides and reigns sovereign over all of them.

In a similar way, when comparing the variety of the activities of the heavenly beings some parallels may also be detected:

1. ANE lesser gods are sometimes known as messengers of the great gods.

2. ANE lesser gods are explicitly referred to as protectors of god-fearers.

3. The evil ANE lesser gods known as demons were feared as capable of harming a person with terrible maladies.

1. OT angels are messengers par excellence. It is this activity which most characterizes biblical angelology.

2. OT angels are portrayed as protecting God's people, and their protective service is promised to those who fear YHWH.

3. OT demons--often known as fallen angels--are able to destroy and greatly afflict people.

Most notable among the activities of the lesser gods are those performed by the Ig and the An gods. In comparing some of their characteristics as well as their

performed activities with those of the angels, we may detect that:

The Ig and the An gods

1. They are usually mentioned in a collective way.
2. They form part of the divine assembly.
3. They stand with fear and respect before the god who dominates in the assembly of the gods.
4. They are connected with matters of judgment within the assembly of gods.
5. They joyously praise and express their worship in a united way to the great gods in the assembly.
6. Their rendered homage is acknowledged by the leading deity.
7. They intervene in human affairs decreed by the assembly of gods.
8. They act with promptness and joy in the tasks assigned them.

The Angels

1. They are generally mentioned in a collective way.
2. They form part of the council of YHWH.
3. They fear the name of YHWH within His council.
4. They are present in the council of YHWH as His assistants while He judges.
5. They are urged to render praise to YHWH in united way.
6. The angelic worshipping is acknowledged by YHWH.
7. Angels intervene in human affairs according to the will and command of YHWH.
8. They perform with swiftness in the missions that YHWH assigns them.

There are, however, some basic differences among them, both in nature and in function. First of all, the Ig and An are gods while the angels are creatures. The divinity of the Ig and An is never excluded, and in some texts they are even presented in a more exalted way than

mere lesser gods. On the contrary, the angels are never presented as gods, and even a comparison with the Deity is totally unthinkable according to the OT thought. Second, the Ig and An are judges within puhur ilani. They are divine deciders of the human fate. The OT angels, however, are never mentioned as judges of mankind, no matter how involved they become in human affairs. They could only be executors of a judgment previously decreed and determined by YHWH, who always is the Judge of all. Third, the Ig and the An, in general, tend to have a negative disposition towards mankind, while OT angels as a general rule show a positive attitude in behalf of men.

The heavenly ANE population is overwhelmingly abundant and varied. No matter which culture is being considered, the picture tends to be the same. All are well aware of a spiritual reality closely related to the divine and deeply involved with humans. What relationship do they have--if any--with biblical angelology? All seems to indicate that the ANE literary-graphic imagery of the celestial population substantiates in an understandable way this biblical reality. It seems that both sources--biblical and ANE--have been giving an eloquent testimony, although in different ways, of the same reality.



Fig. 1

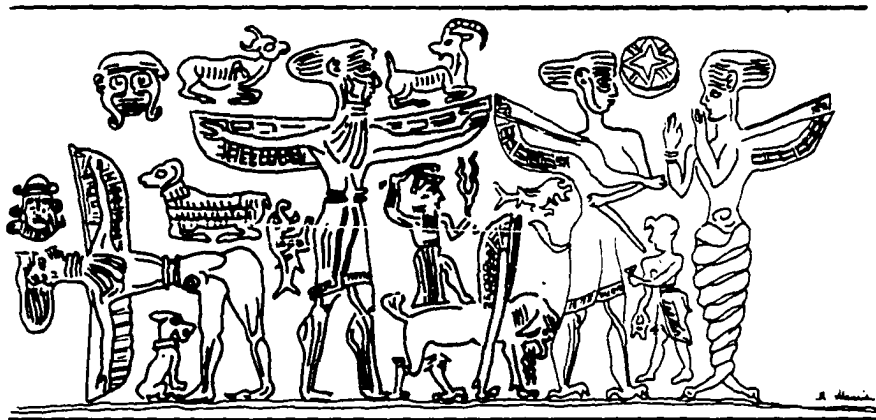


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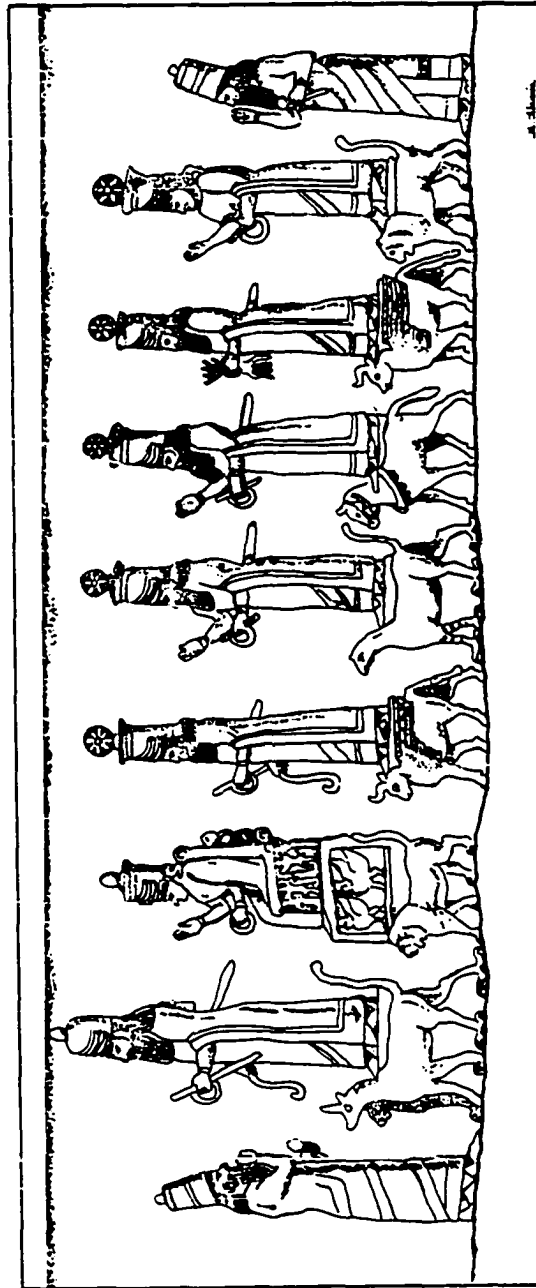


Fig. 3

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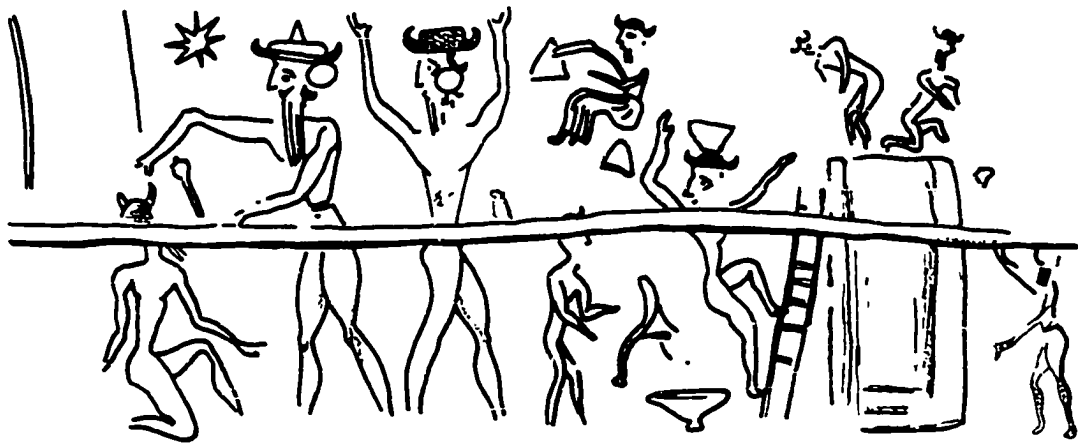


Fig. 4



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Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9





Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

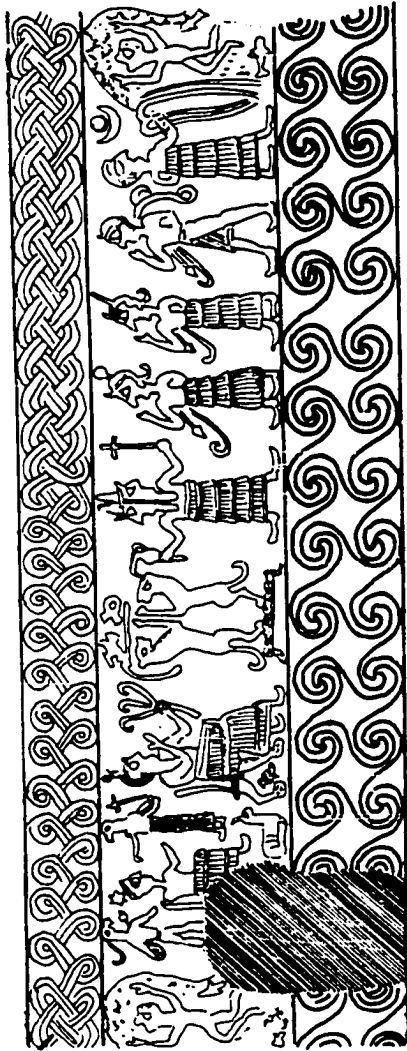


Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

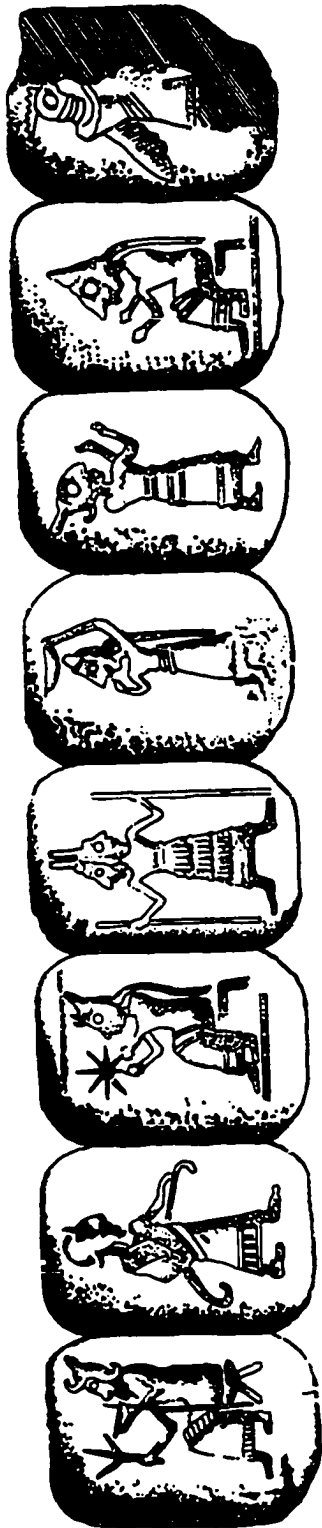


Fig. 20

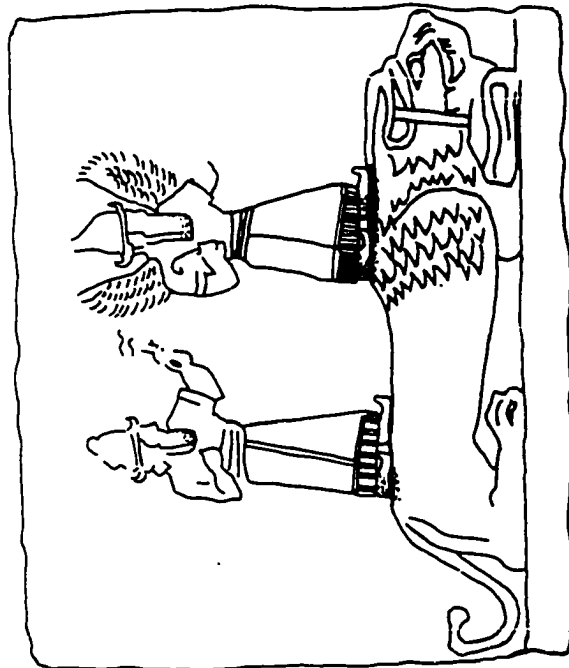


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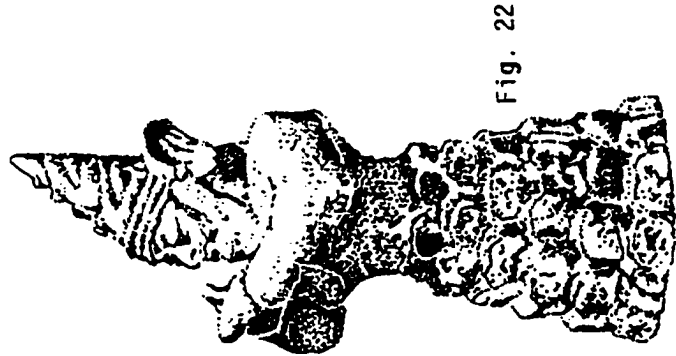


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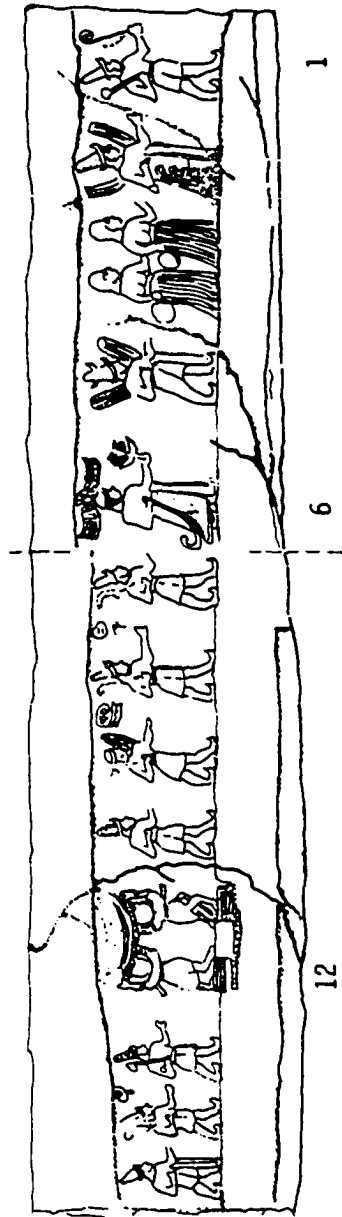


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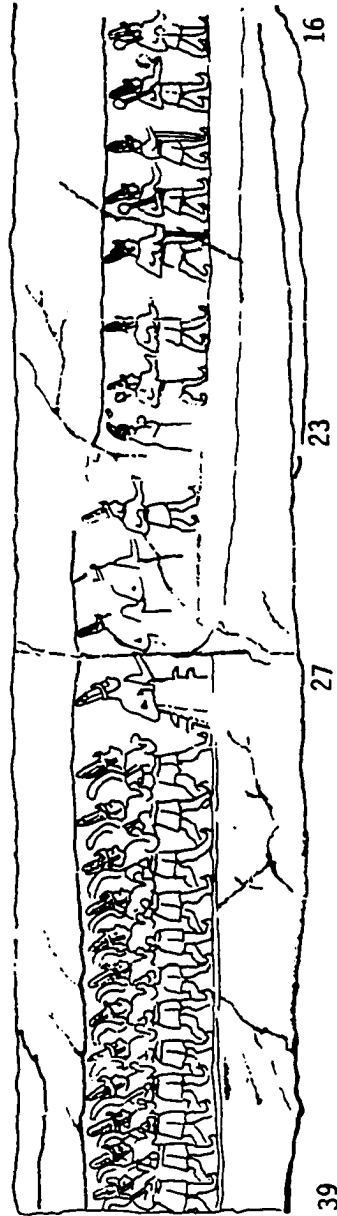


Fig. 24

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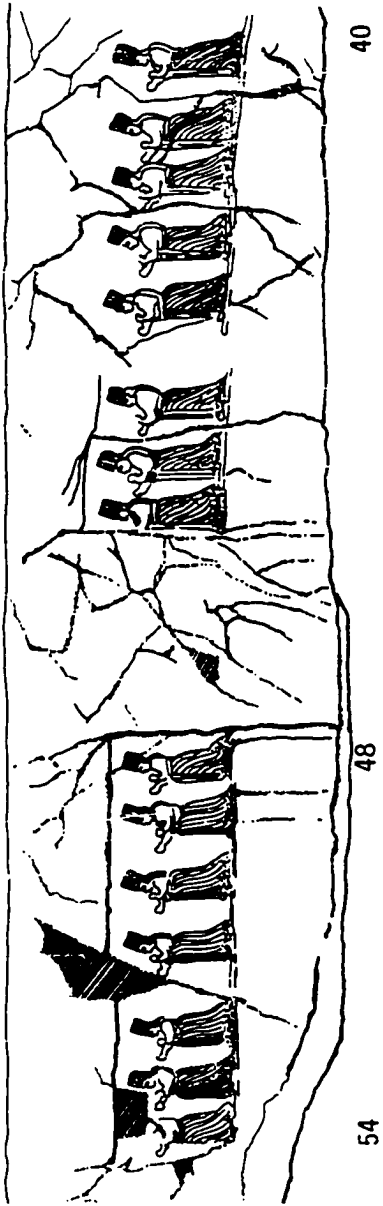


Fig. 25



Fig. 26



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Fig. 28





Fig. 29



Fig. 31

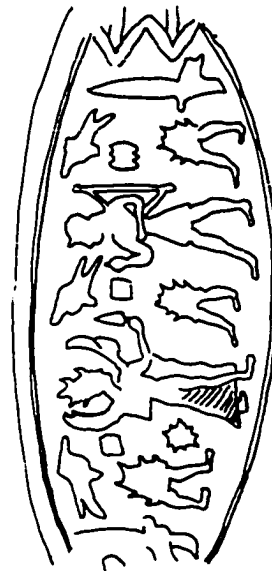


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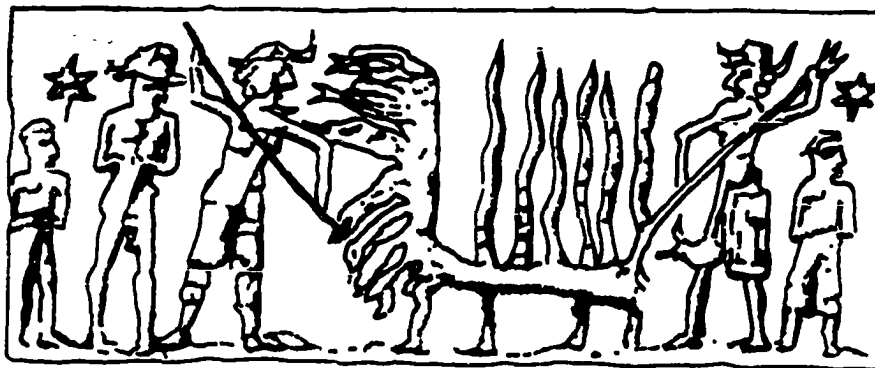


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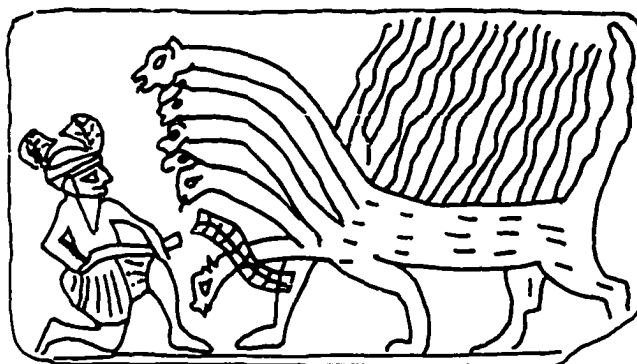


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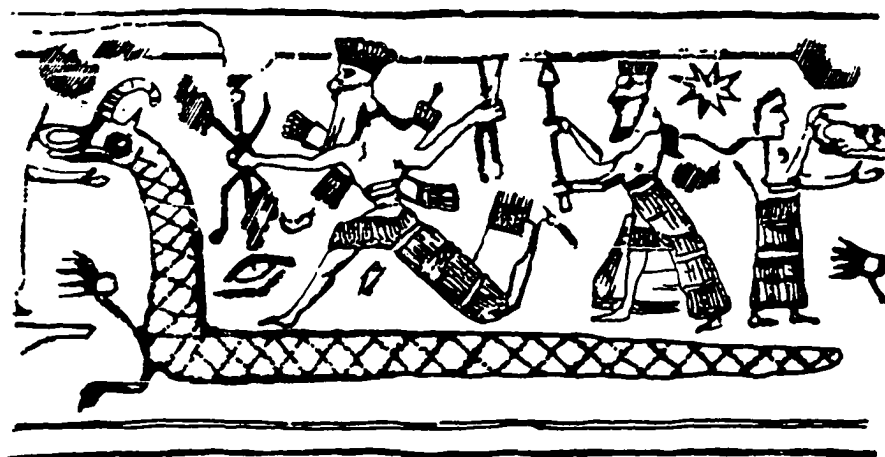


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Fig. 41

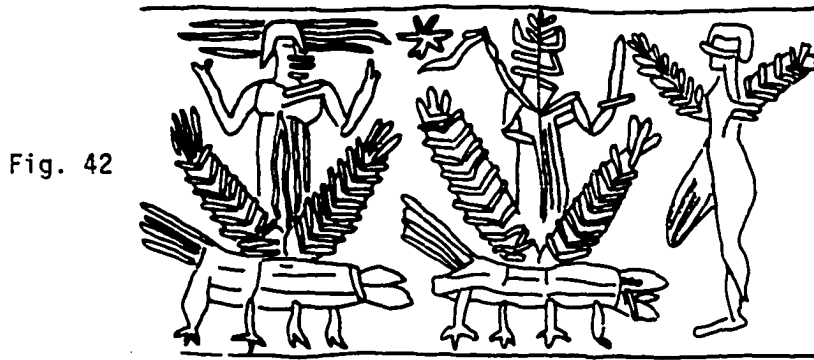


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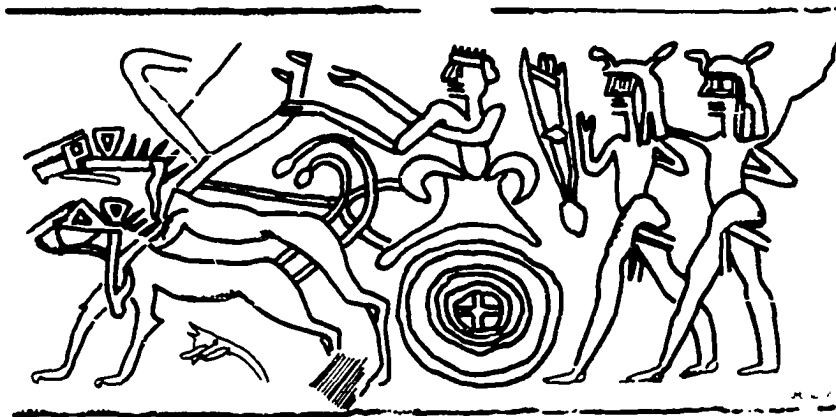


Fig. 43



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Fig. 46

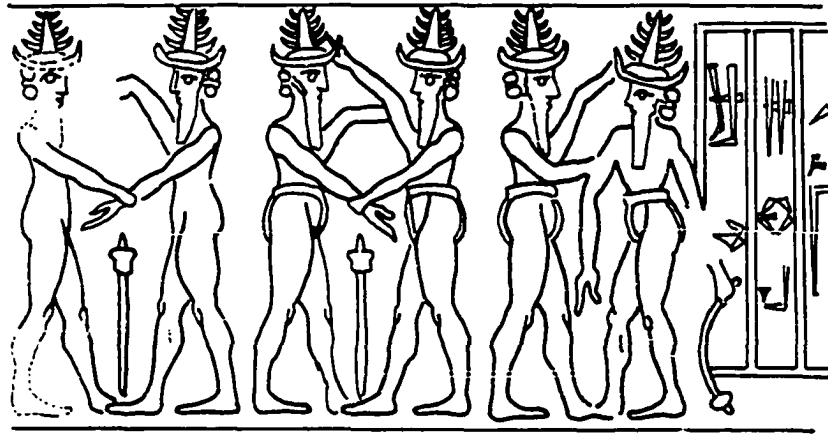


Fig. 47



Fig. 48



Fig. 49



Fig. 50

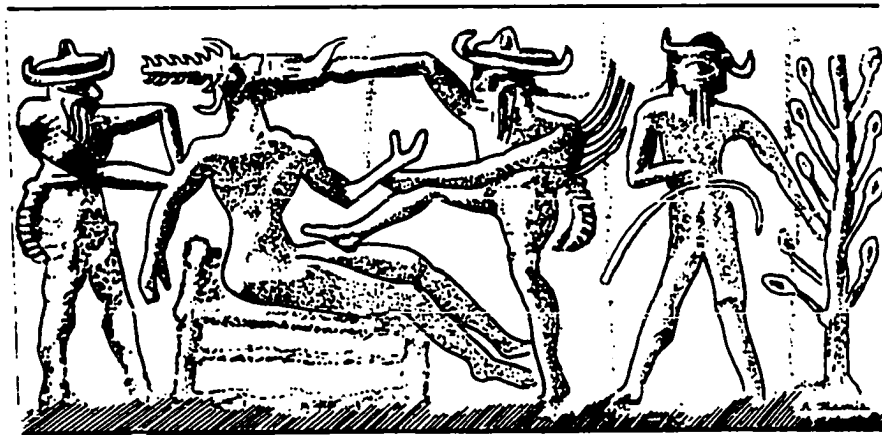


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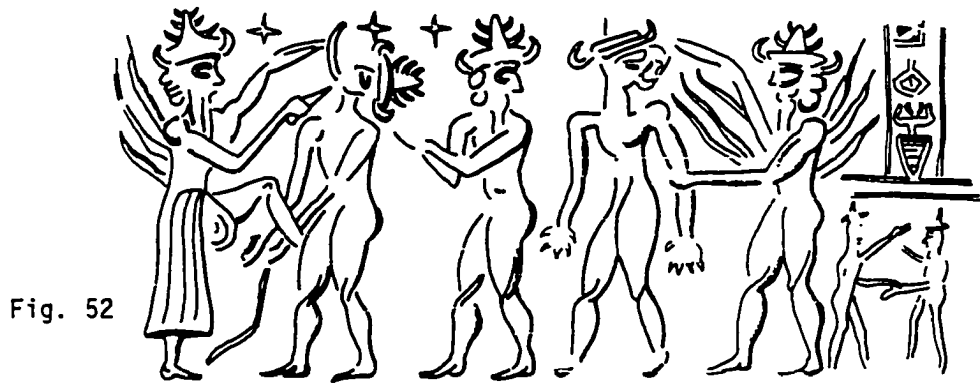


Fig. 52



Fig. 53



Fig. 54



Fig. 55

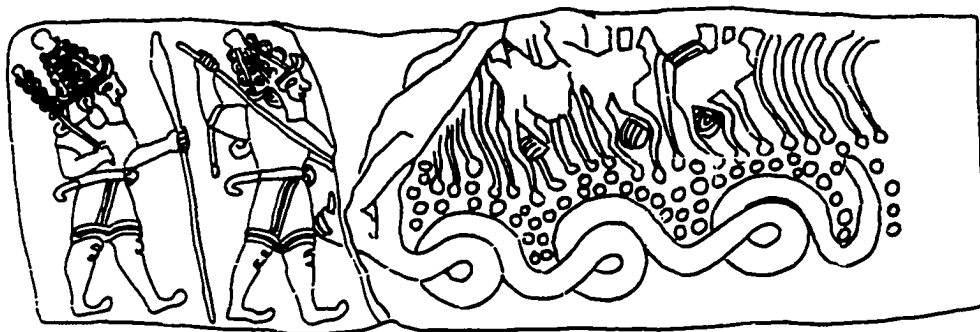


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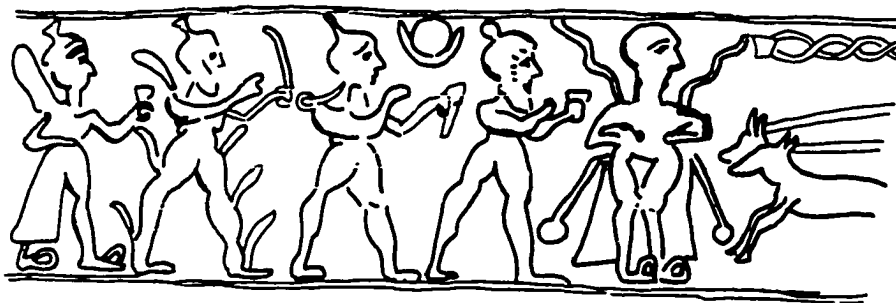


Fig. 57



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Fig. 61

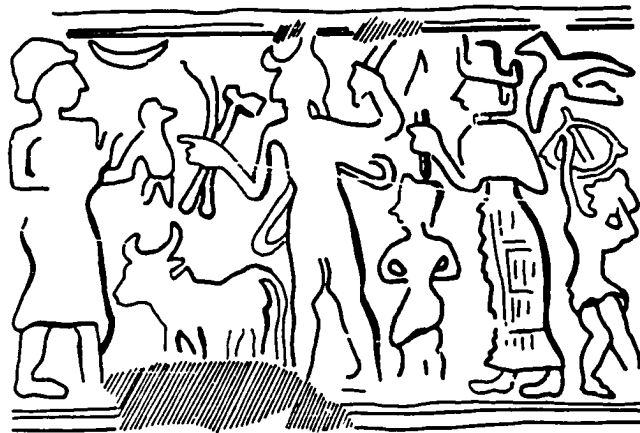




Fig. 62



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Fig. 69



Fig. 70

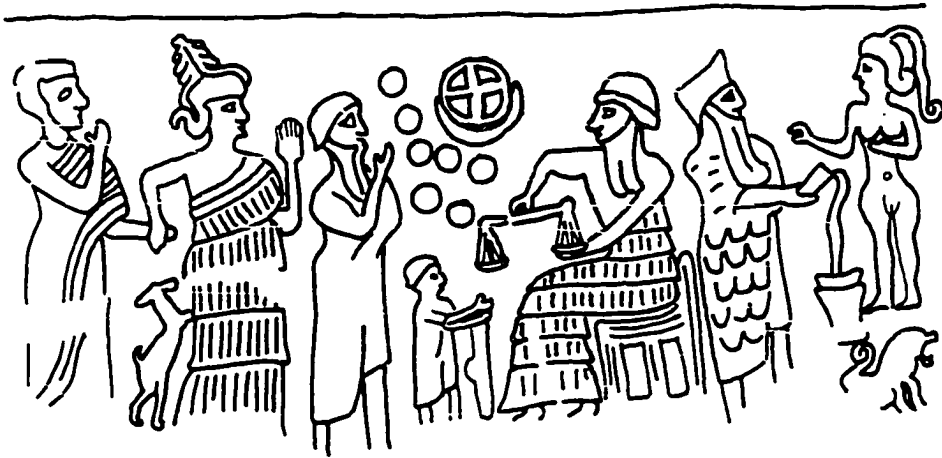


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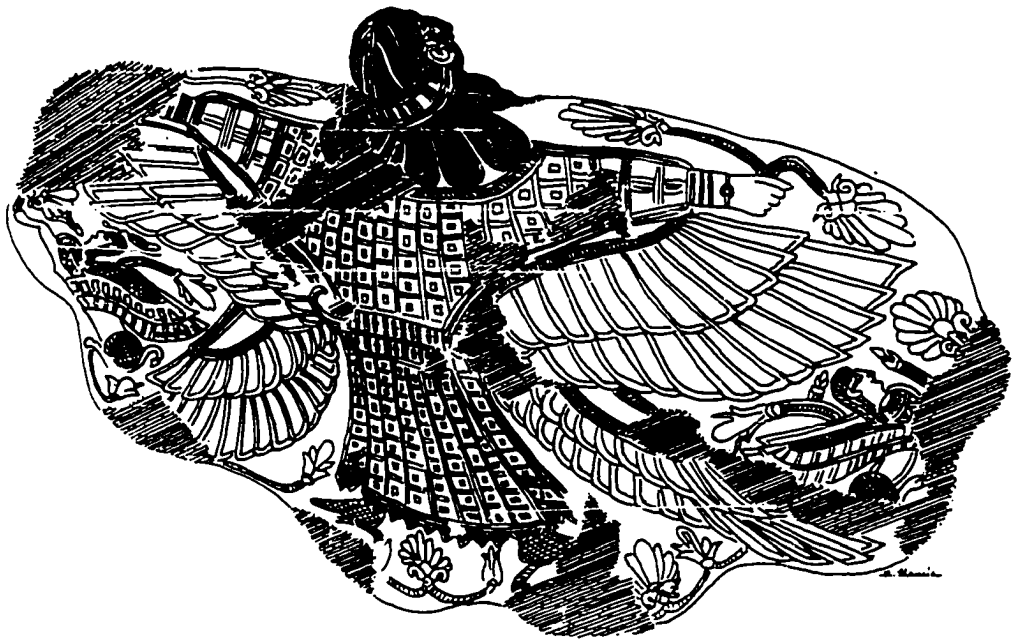


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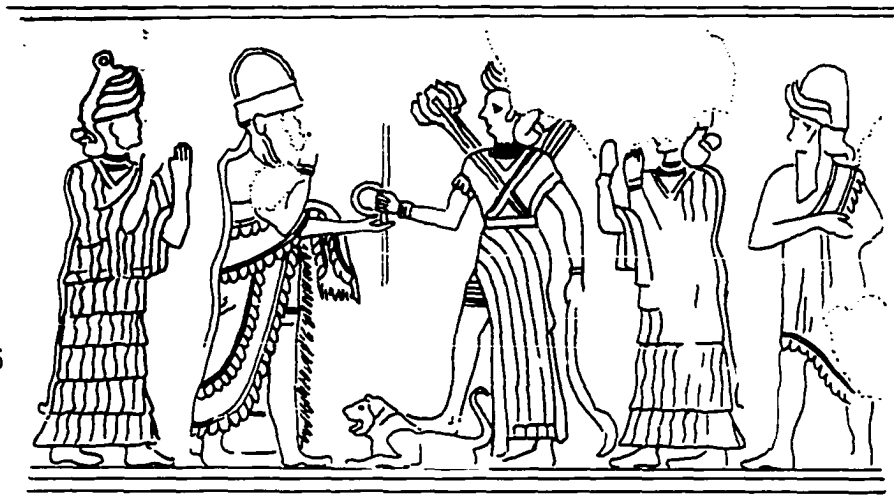


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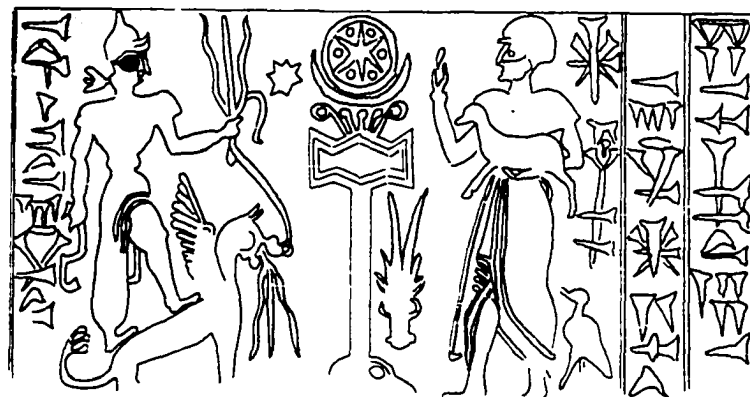




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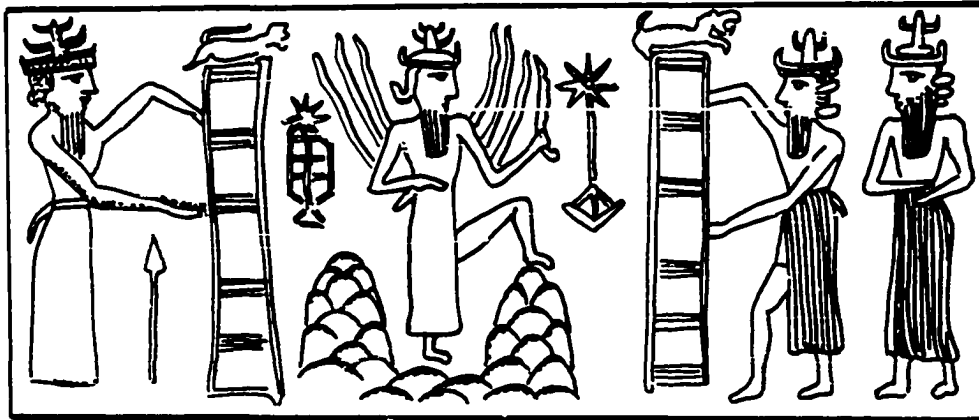


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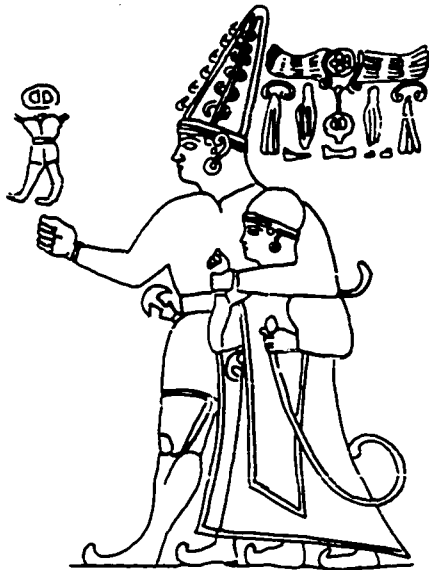


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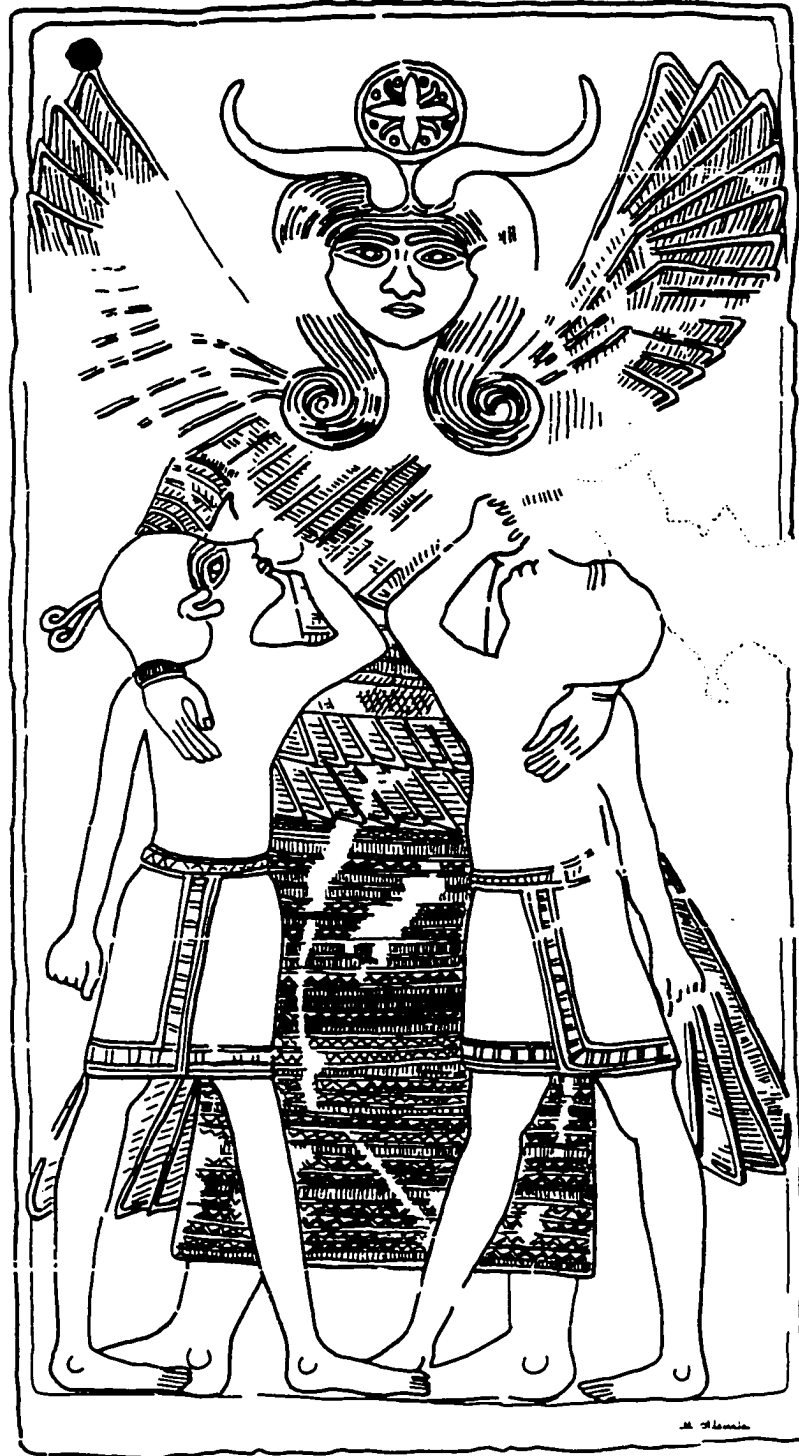


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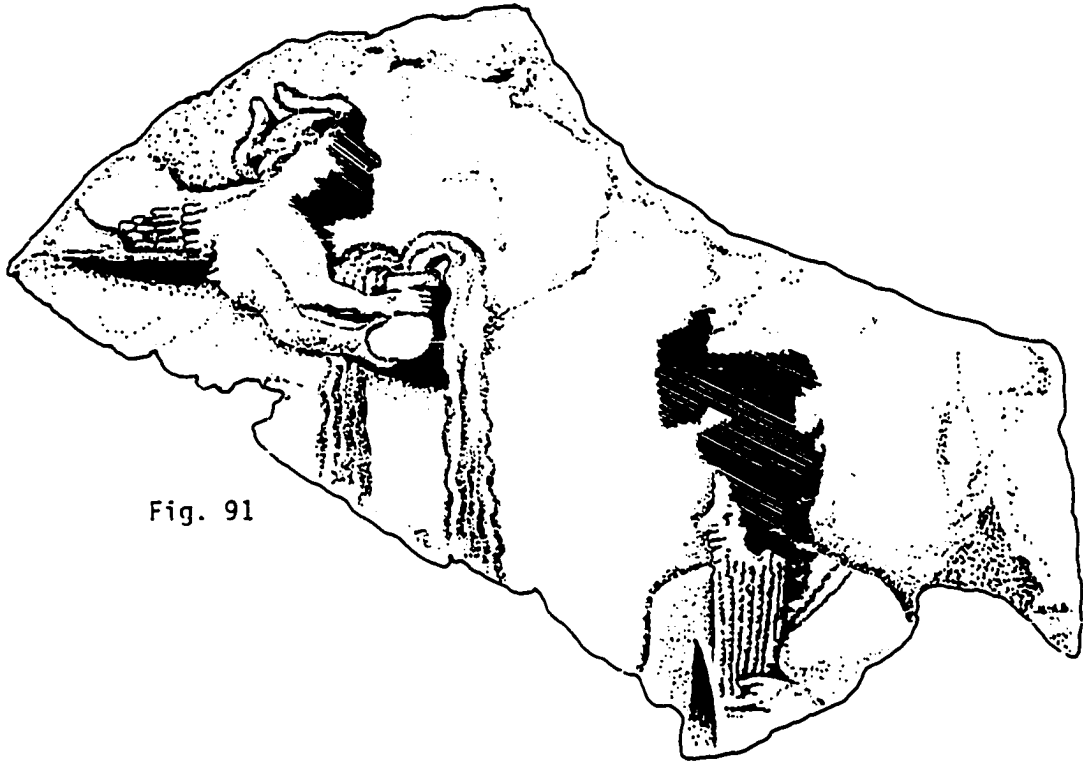


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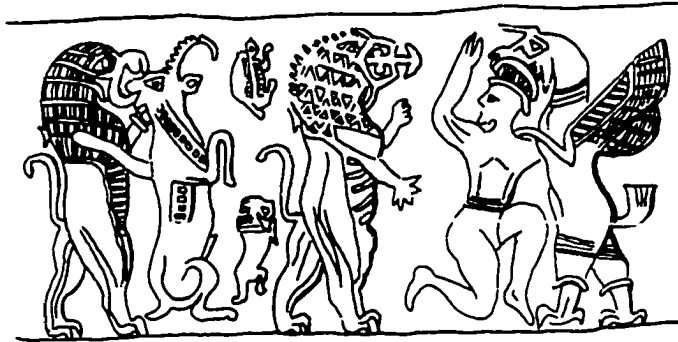




Fig. 93



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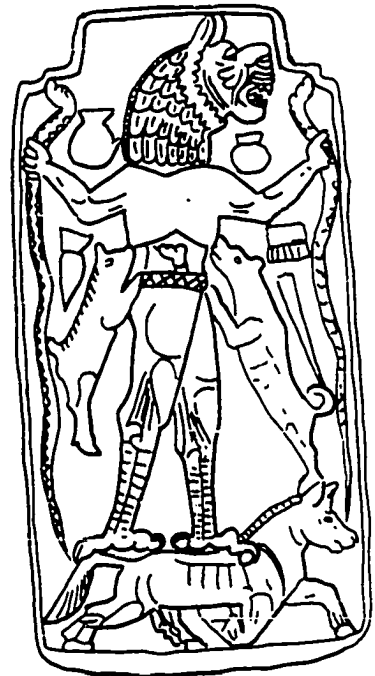


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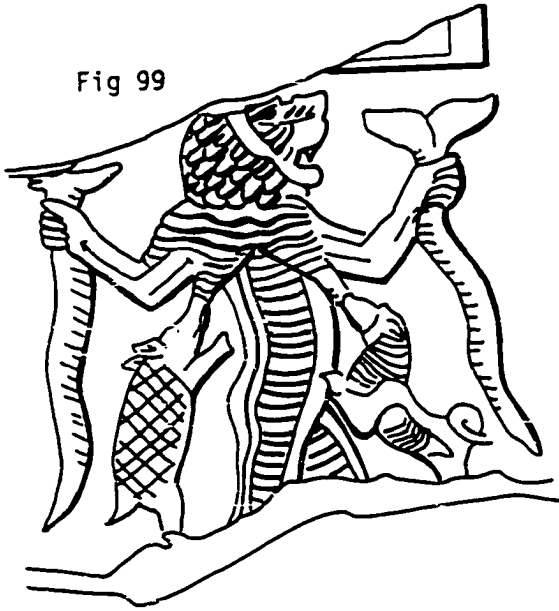


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Fig. 101

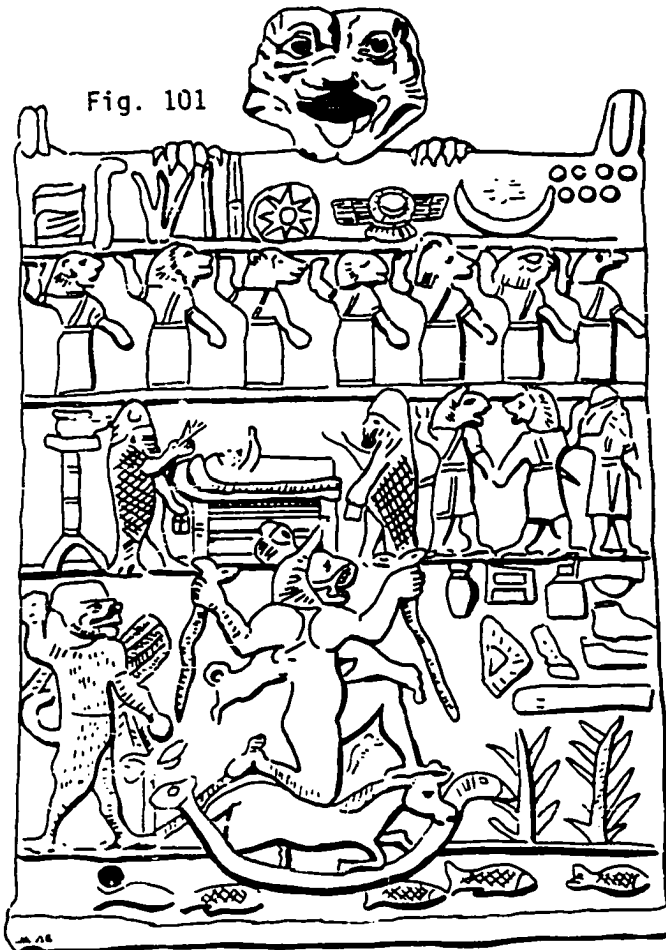


Fig. 102



Fig. 103



Fig. 104

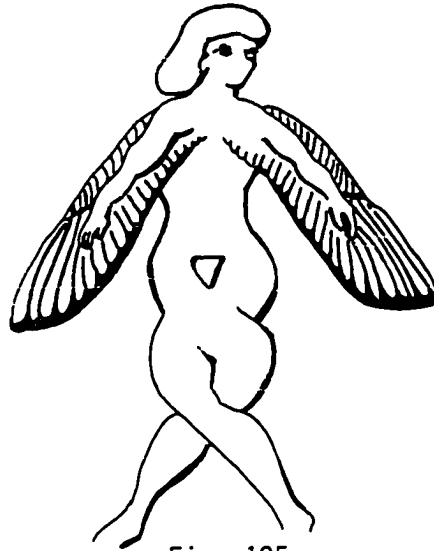


Fig. 105



Fig. 106

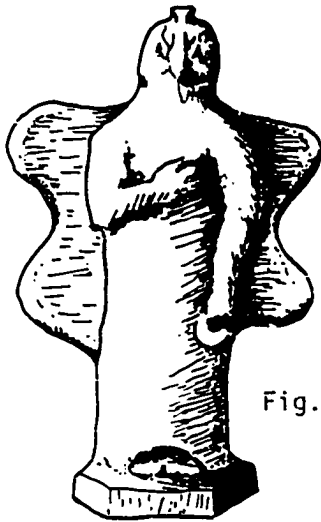


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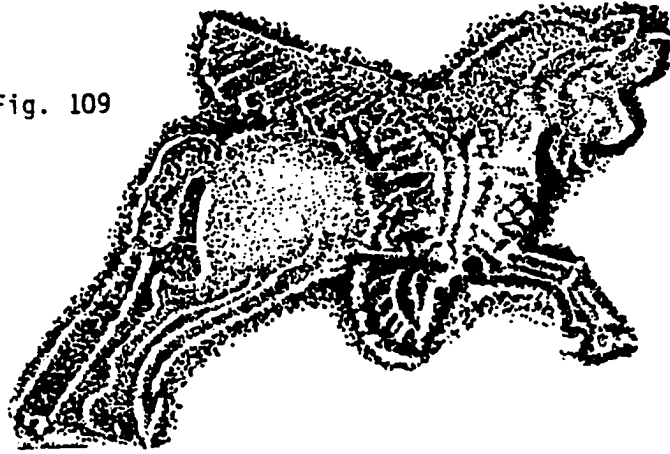


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Fig. 114

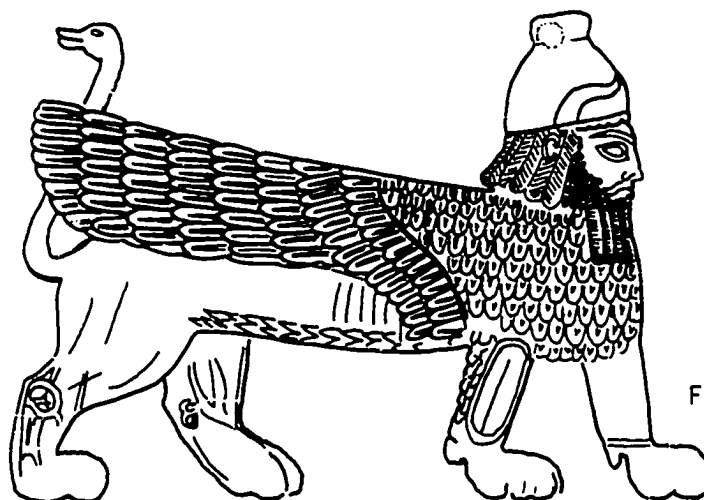


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Fig. 117



Fig. 118



Fig. 119



Fig. 120

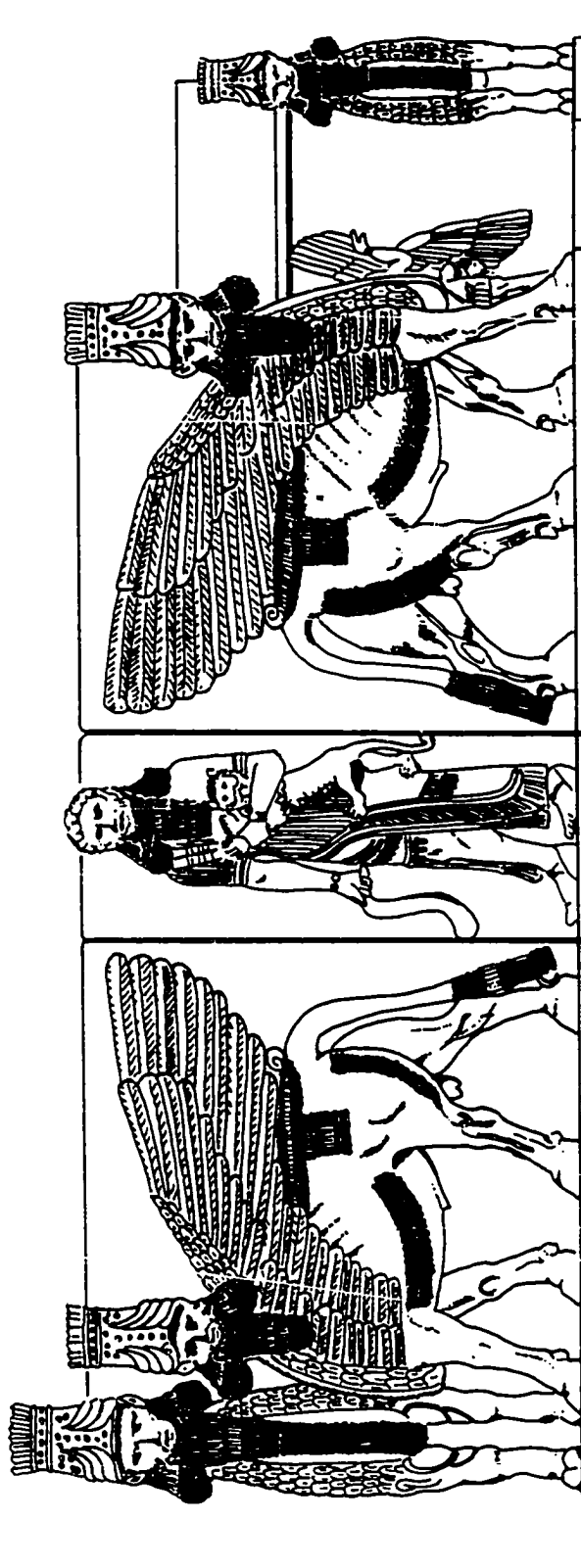


Fig. 121





Fig. 122



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Fig. 125

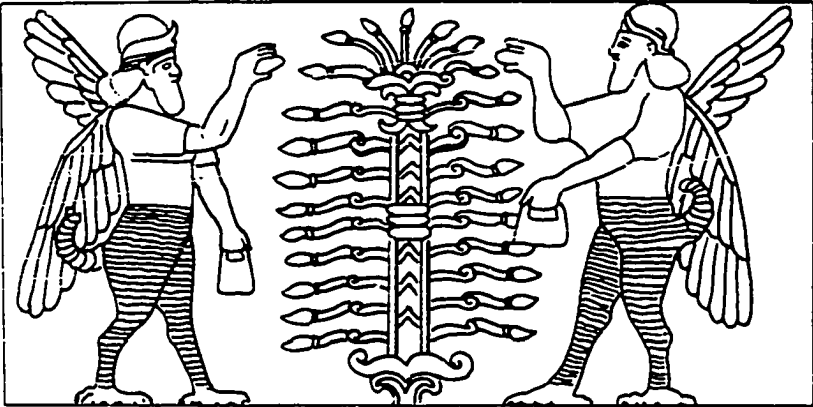


Fig. 126



Fig. 128



Fig. 127



Fig. 129



Fig. 130

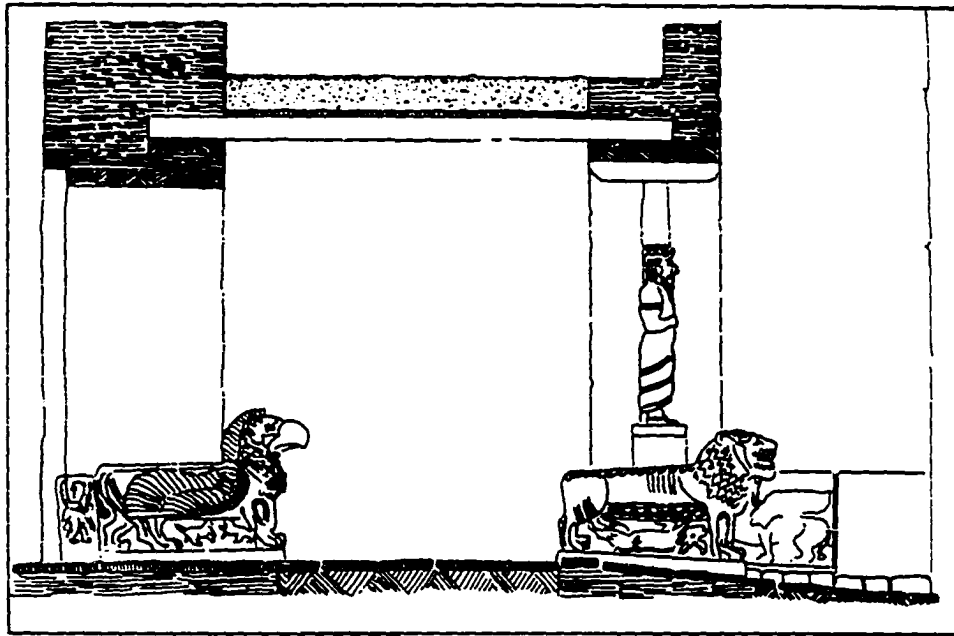


Fig. 131



Fig. 132



Fig. 133



Fig. 134



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Fig. 139



Fig. 140



Fig. 141



Fig. 142



Fig. 143



Fig 144

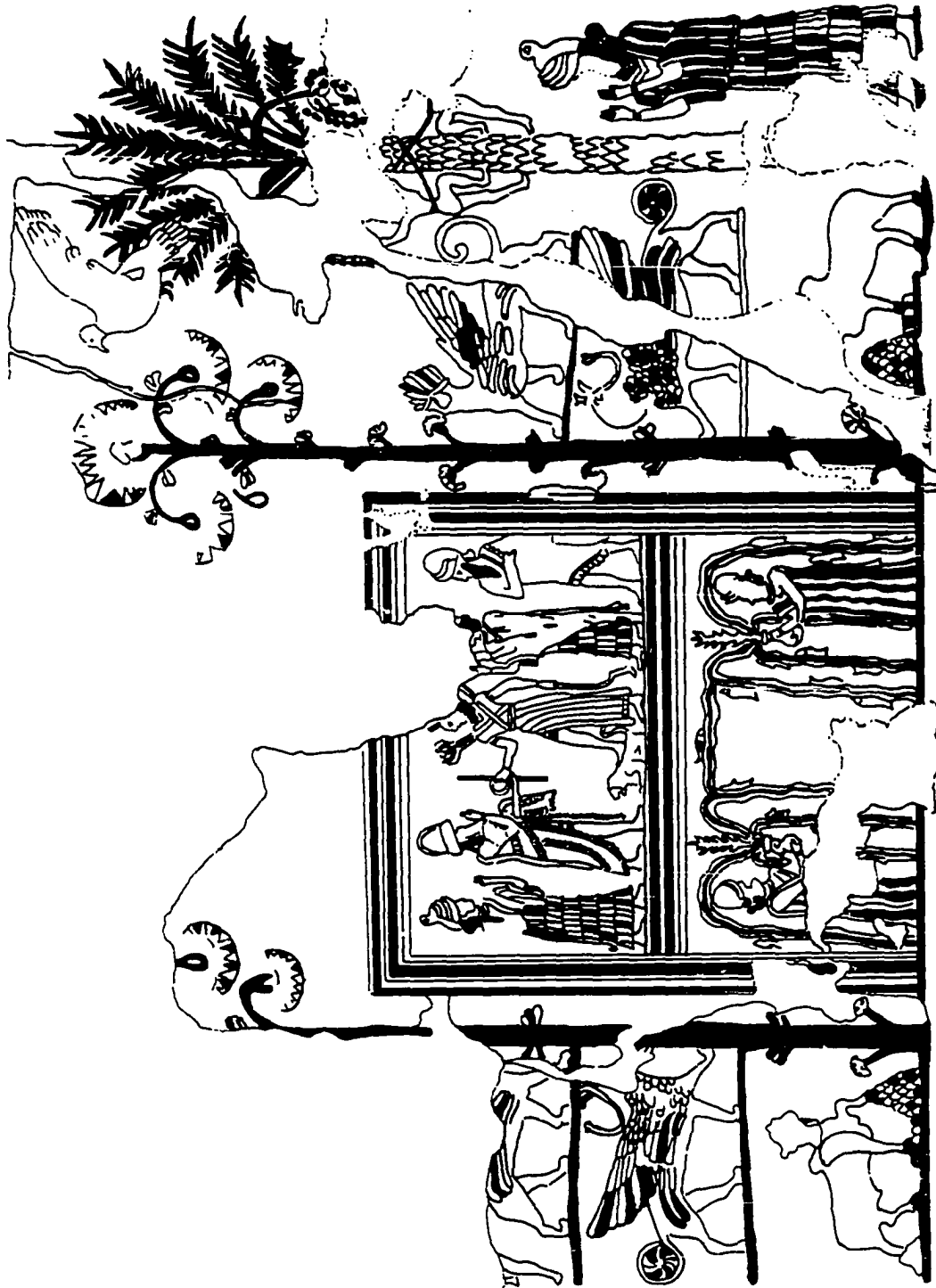


Fig. 145





Fig. 146



Fig. 147

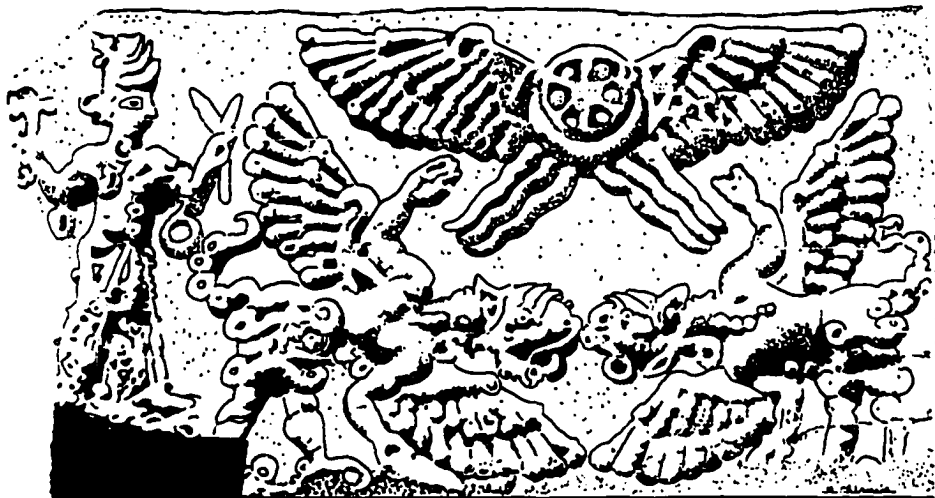


Fig. 148



Fig. 149



Fig. 150



Fig. 151

Fig. 152



Fig. 153



Fig. 154





Fig. 155

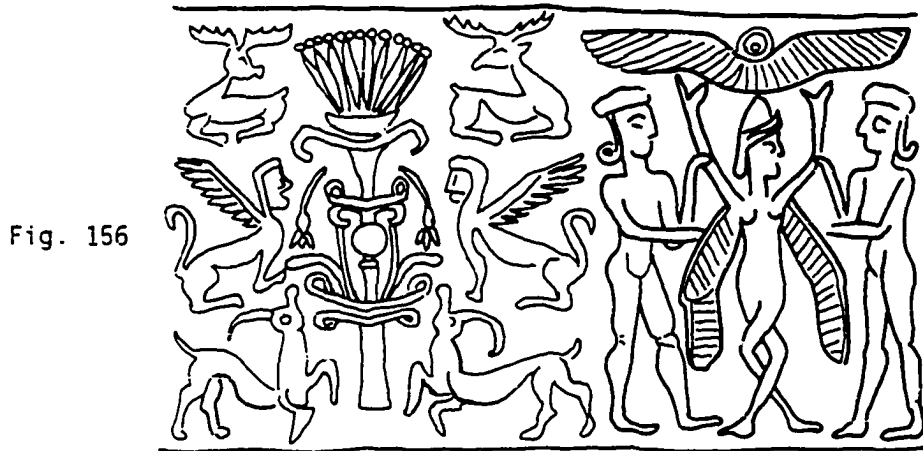


Fig. 156



Fig. 157

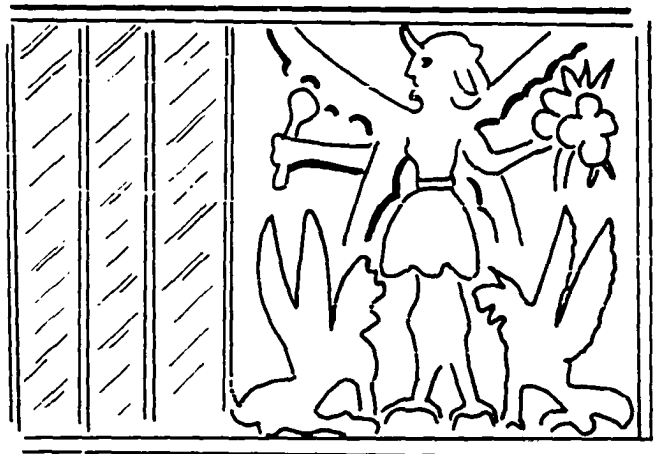
Fig. 158



Fig. 159



Fig. 160



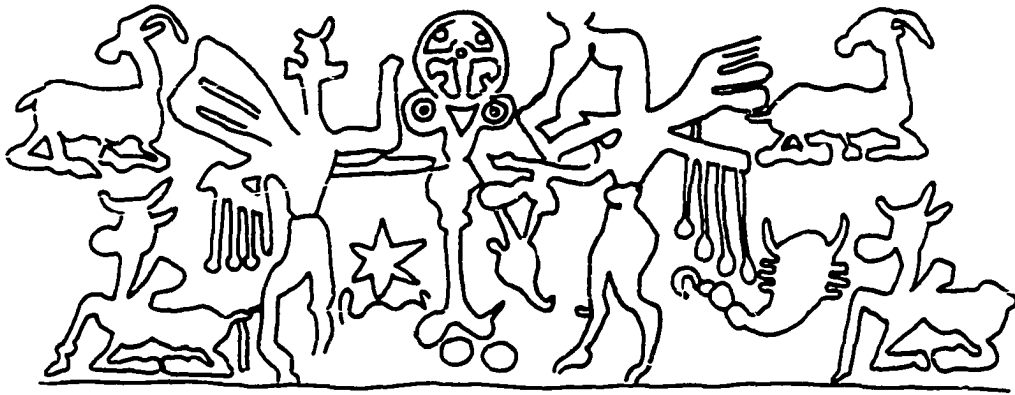


Fig. 161



Fig. 162



Fig. 163

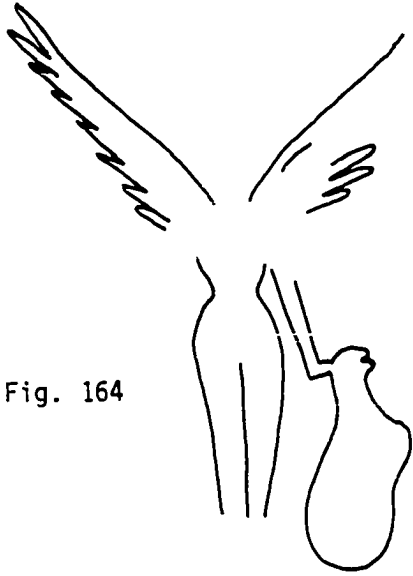


Fig. 164



Fig. 165



Fig. 166



Fig. 167



Fig. 168



Fig. 169

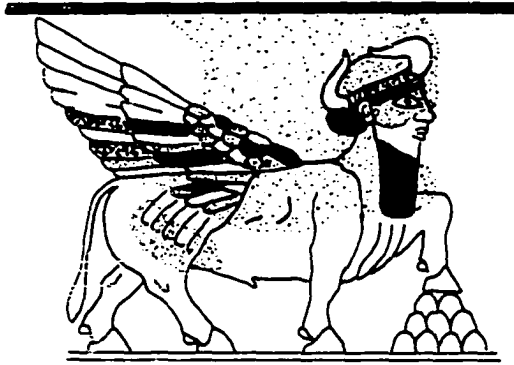


Fig. 170



Fig. 171



Fig. 172



Fig. 173



Fig. 175



Fig. 174





Fig. 176

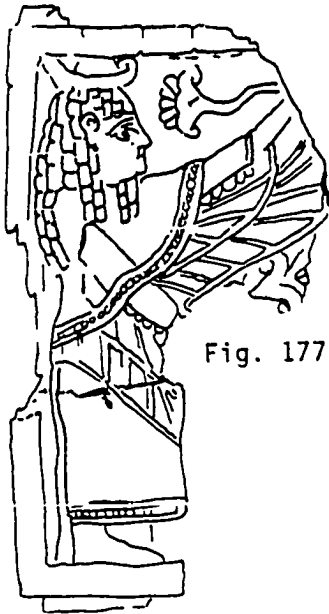


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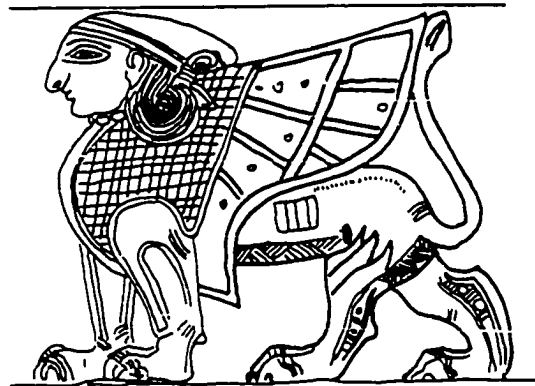


Fig. 178



Fig. 179

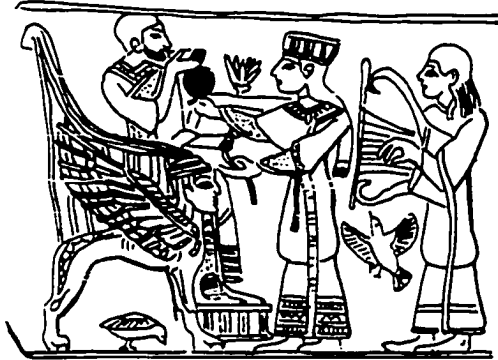


Fig. 180



Fig. 181



Fig. 182

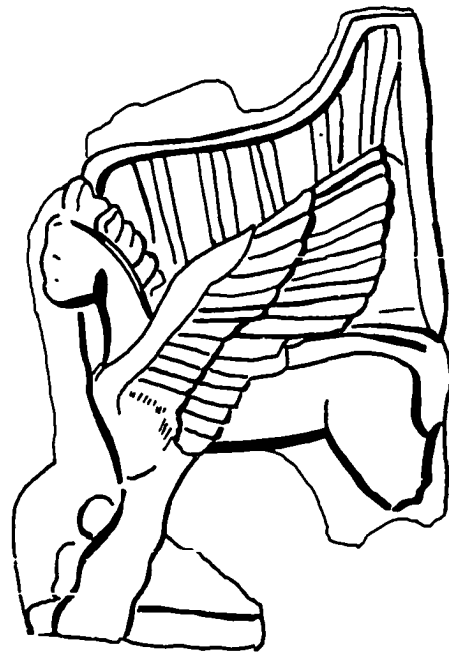


Fig. 183



Fig. 184



Fig. 185

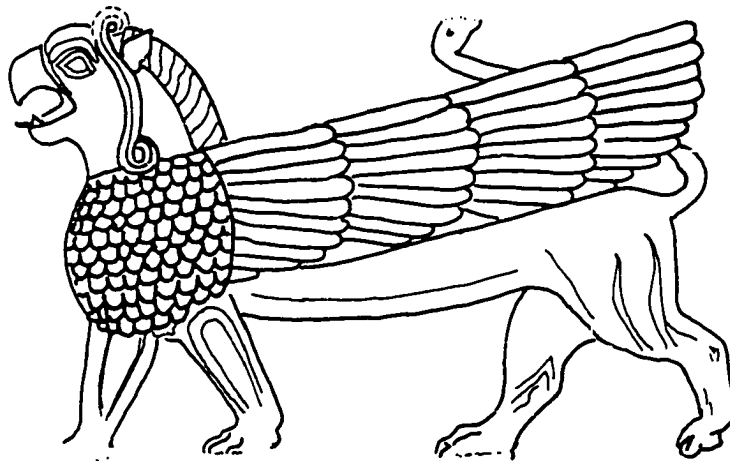


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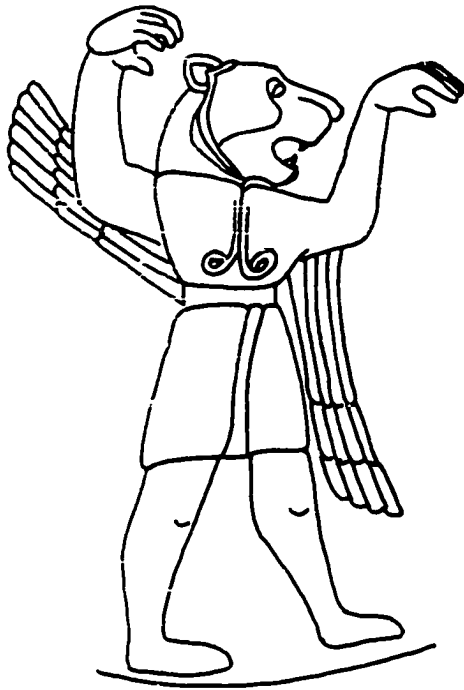


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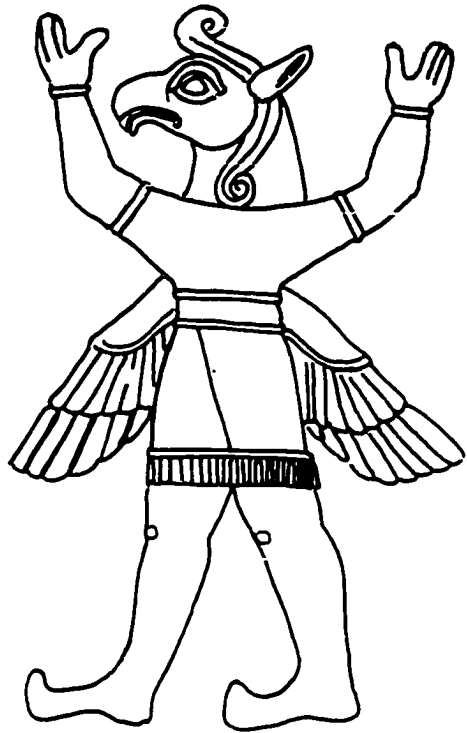


Fig. 188



Fig. 189

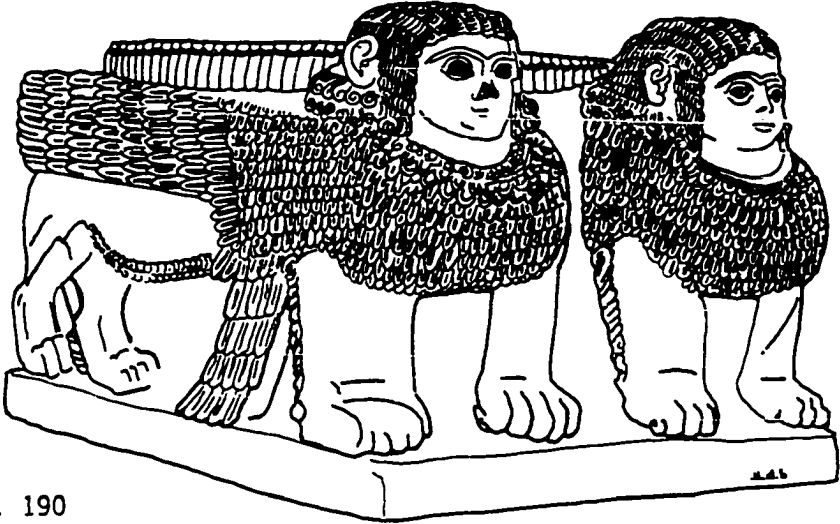


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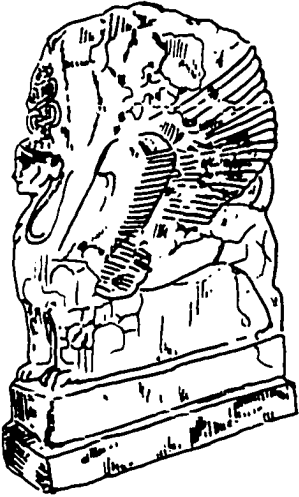


Fig. 191



Fig. 192



Fig. 193



Fig. 194



Fig. 195

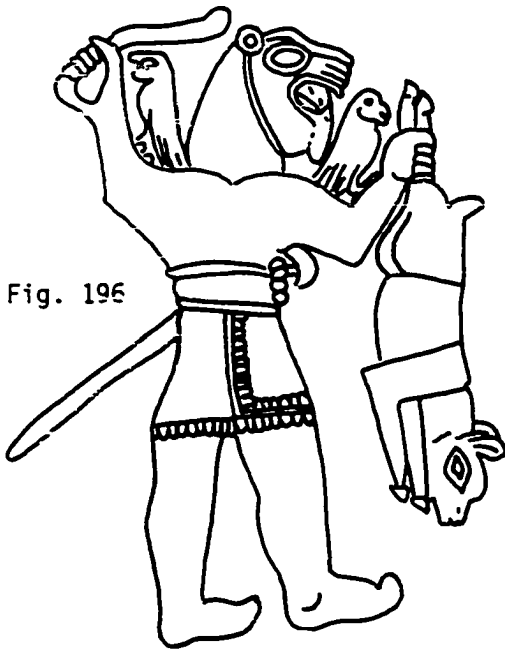


Fig. 196



Fig. 197



Fig. 198



Fig. 199



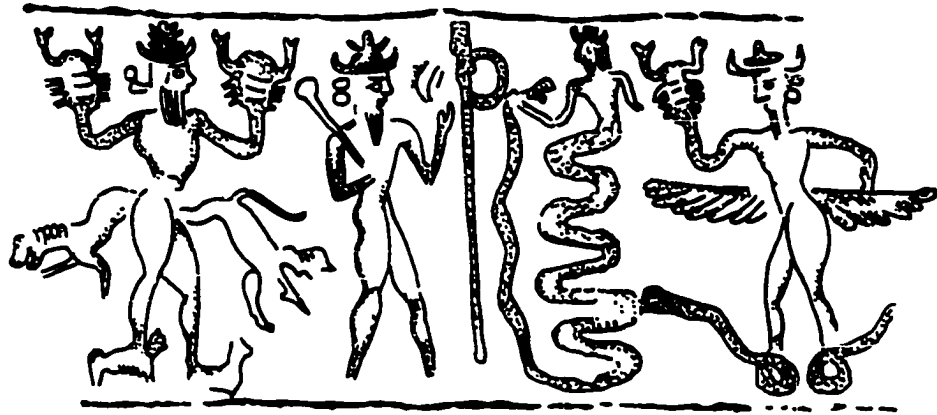


Fig. 200



Fig. 201



Fig. 202



Fig. 203



Fig. 204

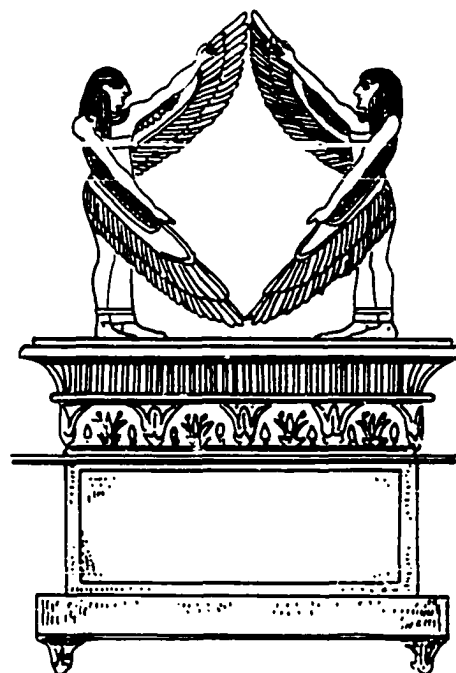


Fig. 206



Fig. 205

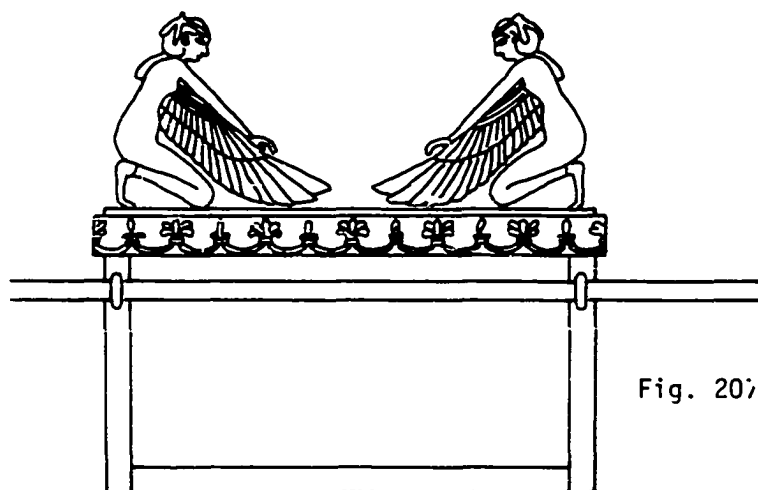


Fig. 207

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