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EXODUS 14–15 AS AN ANTI-BAAL POLEMIC AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERPRETING EXODUS 15:17 AND DATING THESE CHAPTERS

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Brent Olson
May, 2021

Approved by:	Dr. Andrew Bartelt	Dissertation Advisor
	Dr. Thomas Egger	Reader
	Dr. Tremper Longman	Reader

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Dedicated to my mom and dad, Helene and Rodger Olson, who have made obeying the Fourth Commandment very easy.

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PREFACE

Since the discovery of the *Baal Cycle* tablets at Ras Shamra in 1929, study of the Baal Myth has continued in earnest among specialists in the Ugaritic documents and/or the Old Testament. In particular, the Ugaritic discoveries have piqued interest in Exodus's account of the Sea Event, as the vast majority of inquiring scholars have noticed the narrative and semantic parallels between the Baal Myth and Exodus 14–15. Recognition of this relationship has resulted in numerous attempts to apply the Ugaritic parallels toward understanding these biblical chapters and the circumstances of their composition. Yet, thus far, such scholarship on Exodus 14–15 has not been significantly impacted by relatively recent studies in rhetorical-narrative analysis, biblical anti-Baal polemics, and second millennium BCE Egyptology. The following dissertation attempts to demonstrate this impact. Bringing these recent studies to bear on the relationship between the Baal Myth and the canonical account of the Sea Event, the dissertation argues the case that the Song of the Sea, together with its prose narrative frame in Exodus 14, functions in part as an anti-Baal polemic and plausibly does so originally in a New Kingdom historical context. That is, the final god which Yahweh defeats in his sustained attack against "all the gods of Egypt" in Exodus 7–15 is Seth-Baal, the second millennium Egyptian hybrid of native Seth with the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god Baal-zephon. The proposed anti-Baal polemical nature of the canonical account will be shown to have important implications for both interpreting and dating Exodus 14–15.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Series
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
AEL	Ägypten & Levante/ Egypt & the Levant
ALUOS	*Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society*
ANE	Ancient Near East
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament. 400 vols. Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series.
AUSTR	American University Studies, Series 7: Theology and Religion
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979
BETL	*Bibliothecha ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places. KTU*. 2nd and enl. ed. Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens 8. Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995.

CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series
ConcC	Concordia Commentary
ConcCC	Concordia Classic Commentary
CPNIVC	College Press NIV Commentary
CTA	*Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939. Mission de Ras Shamra 10*. Edited by Andrée Herdner. Paris: Institut français d'archéologie de Beyrouth, 1963
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst. 2d ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999
EA	*Egyptian Archaeology*
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
Ee.	Enuma Elish
ErIsr	*Eretz Israel*
ESV	English Standard Version of the Bible
ET	English translation
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IJSSJ	Institute of Jewish Studies Studies in Judaica
IOSOT	The International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament
JAEI	*Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEOL	*Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap (Genootschap) Ex oriente lux*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society of America
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JTC	*Journal for Theology and the Church*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit; Einschliesslich der keilalphabetischen Text ausserhalb Ugarits*. Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
NA	Nestle, E. and E. K. and B. Aland, et al. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibel-gesellschaft, 1993
NAC	The New American Commentary Series
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society of America Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Versions
NT	New Testament
Or	*Orientalia*

OT	Old Testament
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	Old Testament Library
POS	Pretoria Oriental Series
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RC	*Religion Compass*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminary Papers*
SWBAS	Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary Series
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UH	*Ugaritic Handbook*. Edited by Cyrus H. Gordon. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947.
UT	*Ugaritic Textbook*. Edited by Cyrus H. Gordon. Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1965.
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*
ZAS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZAW	*Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZfA	*Zeitschrift für Ägyptologie*

CHRONOLOGY

The Pyramid Texts	ca. 2400–2100 BCE
The Coffin Texts	ca. 2134–2040 BCE
Egyptian Middle Kingdom	2100–1630 BCE
Nehesy (14th Dynasty pharaoh)	ca. 1700 BCE
Tel el-Daba Cylinder Seal	ca. 1700 BCE
Egyptian Second Intermediate Period (Hyksos)	1630–1550 BCE
Egyptian New Kingdom	1550–ca. 1070 BCE
The Book of the Dead Spells	1550–1070 BCE
Thutmoside Dynasty (18th Dynasty)	1550–1292 BCE
Ramesside Dynasties (19th and 20th Dynasties)	1292–ca. 1070 BCE
400-Year Stela erected	ca. 1279 BCE
Composition of *Baal Cycle* Tablets?	early 14th or early 12th century BCE
Composition of *Enuma Elish*?	ca. 1100 BCE
Discovery of *Enuma Elish*	1849 CE
Discovery of the *Astarte Papyrus*	before 1871 CE
Discovery of the 400-Year Stela	1863, 1933 CE
Discovery of the site of ancient Ugarit/Ras Shamra	1928 CE
Discovery of the Baal Cycle Tablets	1929 CE
Austrian Excavation at Tel el-Daba begins	1966 CE
Discovery of the Tel el-Daba Cylinder Seal	1979 CE
Rediscovery of the *Astarte Papyrus* prologue	2000 CE

ABSTRACT

Olson, Brent, M. "Exodus 14–15 as an Anti-Baal Polemic and Its Implications for Interpreting and Dating These Chapters." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2020. 257 pp.

This dissertation seeks to answer the following questions: What is the relationship of Baal-zephon worship and its governing narrative, the Baal Myth, to the accounts of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15? Secondly, what are the implications of this relationship for interpreting and dating these chapters? Building upon scholarship's engagement with these questions since the Ras Shamra discoveries, the dissertation makes the case that Exodus 14–15 function in part as an anti-Baal polemic. Four pieces of evidence are adduced: (1) *the Baal Myth parallels* in the Song of the Sea; (2) *the Baal-zephon cultic site references in* the Song's immediate canonical context; (3) *the theme of Yahweh's defeat of the gods of Egypt* in Exodus 1–15; and (4) *the historical evidence for the centrality of Baal-zephon worship* in the East Nile Delta—particularly as controller of waterways—during the New Kingdom period, precisely the historical context for the exodus presented in the biblical canon. To confirm this case, the dissertation employs Yairah Amit's methodology for identifying biblical polemics, demonstrating these chapters' fulfillment of Amit's criteria for an implicit anti-Baal polemic—namely, the occurrence of other anti-Baal polemics in the Bible, striking signs by which the author indicates a polemic, and the identification of the text's anti-Baal polemical subject by others within the history of exegesis. Finally, the dissertation argues that an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 has implications for dating these chapters and for interpreting the referent of Exod. 15:17. Evidence for the zenith of Baal-zephon worship in Egypt during the New Kingdom supports the plausibility of a Mosaic era dating for the narrative traditions constituting these chapters. The Song's polemical paralleling of the Baal Myth also implies that Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" in Exod. 15:17 is likely as discrete and at least as permanent as Baal's "mountain of inheritance," Mount Zaphon.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Much of what is proposed in this dissertation is not new. The thesis that Baal-zephon worship in Egypt influenced Exodus's account of the Sea Event is evident in the history of exegesis as early as the *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* of the early first millennium CE. Following the Ras Shamra discoveries, Otto Eissfeldt made Baal-zephon's influence on the Sea Event a central hypothesis of his pioneering work. John Gray and Frank Eakin later affirmed Eissfeldt's association of the Sea Event's paralleling of Baal's victory with the Baal-zephon references in Exod. 14:2 and 9. Recently, James Anderson found the Exodus 14 references "striking."[1] He stated, "Any passage that places Yahweh in relation to Zaphon is likely to be a claim for Yahweh to Baal's domain."[2] Anderson also suggested that "the parting of the Sea of Reeds by Moses … belong[s] to [the] polemical motif" of "Yahweh's representative tak[ing] over Baal's control of the waters of chaos."[3] Yet Anderson did not mention, let alone develop, a connection between the "likely" anti-Baal polemic he saw indicated by the Baal-zephon references and the anti-Baal polemic he perceived in the Sea Event. One can speculate that Anderson was discouraged from making such a connection by the standard source critical ascription of most of Exodus 14 to the purported post-seventh century Priestly redactor who would, we would expect, tend more toward anti-Marduk than anti-Baal polemic.

Also "old news" is the thesis that the Baal Myth[4] influenced the composition of the Song of the Sea. This idea was proposed within two decades of the Ras Shamra discoveries and became commonplace in Old Testament scholarship by the early 1970's. It is now the strong majority position in scholarship on the Song. However, again, scholarship's general maintaining of disparate datings between the Song and its prose narrative frame seems to have prevented scholars from connecting the Baal Myth's impact on the Song with its possible influence on Exodus 14.

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[1] James S. Anderson, *Monotheism and Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 88.

[2] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[3] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71.

[4] *Baal Cycle* is the most frequently used term for the cycle of stories pertaining to Baal found on six tablets

One new aspect of the following study of the Baal Myth's relationship to Exodus 14–15 is the application of insights from recent scholarship in biblical polemics. Though a polemical understanding of the Sea Event is evident in extra-biblical sources as early as the third century CE, and a polemical view of the preceding plague narrative is common in modern Exodus scholarship, scholars only began to develop methodological approaches to biblical polemics in the past twenty years. Yairah Amit and James Anderson, who have both proffered typologies for identifying and classifying polemics, have largely ignored Exodus's account of the Sea Event. (The extent of Anderson's treatment is described above). Again, it appears that Amit and Anderson's respective applications of their typologies were limited by their conventional source critical divisions of Exodus 14–15.

In the past decade, at least four scholars have suggested that the Song implies Yahweh's supplanting of, or superiority over, Baal. One is Shawn Flynn in his 2014 study of the development of the doctrine of divine kingship in ancient Israel.[5] Flynn submitted that Exodus

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which are widely maintained to be continuous. I will predominantly use the term "Baal Myth," calling attention to these stories' mythological nature and highlighting, in particular, the arguably linear narrative of Baal's victory over Yamm, procession to Mount Zaphon, and eventual building of his Temple there to signify and seal his universal kingship. That is, use of the term "Baal Myth" clarifies this narrative as the Ugaritic version of the ANE conflict myth.

[5] See also Paul K.-K. Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 211; and Brian D. Russell in "The Song of the Sea and the Subversion of Canaanite Myth:

15 “impl[ies] the displacement of Baal in favor of YHWH as the one who is more powerful than the sea.”[6] “[T]he Song,” Flynn asserted, “is attempting to supplant … the Baal tradition.”[7] Flynn, however, dated the Song well before its prose narrative frame and thus interpreted it independently of its literary or canonically presented historical context. In a personal communication, Flynn downplayed the novelty of his assertions about the Song’s (as I understood him) anti-Baal polemic, advising me that the Song’s supplanting of the Baal tradition is an ancillary point in his treatment of the development of Israel’s doctrine of Yahweh’s kingship.[8]

Along with engagement with the scholarly field of biblical polemics, another fresh aspect of the following study of Exodus 14–15 is the incorporation of information provided by studies in Egyptology. In the past four decades, discoveries have been made and older discoveries have been brought back into the light to establish this strong consensus among Egyptologists: Baal-zephon was, perhaps alongside of Ra, the chief god being worshipped in the East Nile Delta from no later than 1700 to the close of the thirteenth century BCE. A 2000 CE rediscovery of the prologue of the *Astarte Papyrus* has led to more scholarly agreement: Egyptian knowledge of the Baal Myth and worship of Baal-zephon reached its zenith in the New Kingdom period. Specifically, based on this recent rediscovery, Egyptologists have concluded that Pharaoh Amenhotep II not only knew the Baal Myth but sought to emulate Baal-zephon perhaps even to

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A Missional Reading,” in *Distinctions with a Difference: Essays on Myth, History, and Scripture in Honor of John N. Oswalt*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Lawson G. Stone (Wilmore, KY: First Fruits, 2017), 148–49.

[6] Shawn W. Flynn, *YHWH Is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 53.

[7] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 54.

[8] Personal communication, [email], January 8, 2019. Flynn follows Propp’s redactional analysis in W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

the point of personal assimilation. The centrality of Seth-Baal worship during the Nineteenth Dynasty has also been highlighted recently. Establishing their capital in the East Nile Delta, the Ramessides adopted Seth-Baal as their dynastic god. Rameses II, Amenhotep II's counterpart in the Nineteenth Dynasty, proudly endorsed the *Poem of Pentaur*, the Kadesh inscription which explicitly likens him to Seth-Baal in his victory over the Hittites.

The available evidence from Egyptology, which thus far has not been significantly incorporated into Exodus studies, suggests that a plausible date for an exodus account featuring a Baal-zephon cultic site, and a plausible period when a potential Israelite polemic would be marshaled against an Egyptian god who controls waterways and is culturally identified with the power of a reigning pharaoh, is New Kingdom Egypt. Such a suggestion lends support to the integrity of the canonical account of Exodus 14–15, both these chapters' literary continuity and the canonical presentation of their dating.

Admittedly, although we have evidence of Egyptian knowledge of both Baal-zephon and the Baal Myth, we do not yet possess non-circumstantial evidence that the Israelites knew the Baal Myth during their Egyptian sojourn. The dissertation lays out the circumstantial evidence which, in the author's opinion, "stands (closely) around" and points strongly towards Israelite knowledge of Baal-zephon and the Baal Myth by the New Kingdom period. This evidence includes illustration of the strong consensus among Exodus scholars that the Song of the Sea is consciously dependent upon the Ugaritic conflict myth.

In the end, this dissertation amounts to an attempt to answer the challenge issued by Robert Shreckhise in his 2006 dissertation on Exodus 15, "'I Will Sing Unto the LORD': A Rhetorical-Narrative Analysis of the Poem in Exodus 15:1–21." Shreckhise observed that the diachronic emphasis in the predominant source and redactional critical approaches to Exodus 14–15 "ha[d] led to a [‘serious’] neglect of the relationship of the Song to its given narrative context.”[9] In response, Shreckhise adopted a wholly synchronic approach, what he termed a “rhetorical-narrative” approach, to these chapters. Having decided to bracket out “historically-focused “ questions *ab initio*, Shreckhise closed his dissertation by recommending that future scholarship on the Song “bring to light” “the manner in which the Song uses motifs from the larger ANE world, especially those from Egypt.”[10] “Others have touched on both the Semitic and Egyptian parallels to the Song,” Shreckhise acknowledged, but “the results have been tantalizingly incomplete.”[11] Taking Shreckhise’s lead, this dissertation synthesizes a rhetorical-narrative approach with both recent studies in biblical polemics and relatively recent developments in second millennium BCE Egyptology to argue the following thesis: Evincing historical plausibility within a New Kingdom context, the Song of the Sea, together with its Exodus 14 prose narrative frame, functions in part as an anti-Baal polemic, demonstrating and celebrating Yahweh’s victory over Seth/Baal-zephon—the Egyptian/Syro-Canaanite Storm-god worshipped as controller of waterways—and culminating with the Israelite Storm-god’s[12] establishment of his people on his own Zaphon-like, discrete, permanent mountain sanctuary within the Promised Land of Canaan.

The Methodological Procedure to Be Employed

This dissertation employs four major methodologies. The first is Richard Hays’s methodology for identifying inner-biblical “echoes,” which is adapted for determining parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song.[13] Based on its frequency of use, Hays's methodology appears to be the foremost, if not the only one, of its kind. It is employed, for example, in Patricia Willey's 1997 study of Second Isaiah's use of previous texts,[14] in Richard Schultz's 1999 work on verbal parallels in the prophets[15] and in Brian Russell's 2007 monograph on the Song of the Sea in which Russell attempted to determine the *terminus ad quem* for the Song's composition by locating its first use in subsequent biblical tradition.[16] Notably, Russell did not employ Hays's methodology for examining the "Ugaritic parallels" which he cited throughout his book.[17] Based on my research, the lack of methodological control in identifying the Song's dependency on the Baal Myth is common in scholarship on Exodus 15. As a corrective, I attempt to provide a methodologically controlled argument for the Song's conscious dependence on the Baal Myth by means of Hays's well-regarded approach. At the same time, I acknowledge that I only synthesize the evidence for dependency adduced in several former studies of Exodus 15. My contribution is to connect this dependency with the Baal-zephon references and the trajectory of Yahweh's battle with the Egyptian gods in Exodus 1–15, as well as with historical information about Egyptian Baal-zephon worship during the New Kingdom.

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[9] Robert Shreckhise, “‘I Will Sing Unto the LORD’: A Rhetorical-Narrative Analysis of the Poem in Exodus 15:1–21” (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2006), 16–17. See also Shreckhise, pp. 29, 33.

[10] Shreckhise, “I Will Sing,” 246.

[11] Shreckhise, “I Will Sing,” 246.

[12] I am asserting that the Israelite God is acting like an ANE Storm-god particularly in the Sea Event.

Secondly, to demonstrate the literary unity of Exodus 1–15, especially chapters 7–15, the dissertation utilizes rhetorical-narrative analysis, the preferred methodology for demarcating literary units. My use of this approach, which applies the methodology of rhetorical analysis (criticism) to the narrative genre, supplemented by some tools from narratology,[18] builds from Robert Shreckhise's work on the Song's place within the narrative structure of Exodus 1–15.

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[13] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32. Hays's approach to allusion, which he calls "echo," is undeniably author-centered as opposed to reader-centered. Defining an "echo" in distinction to an "allusion," Hays said that "[i]n general, *allusio*n is used of obvious intertextual references, *echoes* of subtler ones." Hays, *Echoes*, 29.

[14] Patricia T. Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah*, SBLDS 161 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

[15] Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (London: A&C Black, 1999), 39.

[16] Brian D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1–21* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 102–3. In the terminology Russell adopts, he attempts to locate the first *traditio* of the Song's *traditium*.

[17] In *Song of the Sea,* Russell notes "the Ugaritic parallels" on pp. 2, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 39, 40, 44, 68, 77, 82, 83, 84, 93, and 94.

The third major methodology I employ in the dissertation is Yairah Amit's methodology for identifying and classifying biblical polemics. To my knowledge, Amit's typology is the first and—with the exception of James Anderson's—the only one of its kind. Though Amit's study does not focus on narratives within biblical poetry, I can see no issues with adopting it for assessing the potential polemical function of the Song of the Sea in relationship to (as I am contending) the polemic of Exodus 14's narrative. After presenting four pieces of evidence to make the case that Exodus 14–15 are functioning in part as an anti-Baal polemic, I will employ Amit's methodology for confirmation. Specifically, I will demonstrate these chapters' fulfillment of Amit's three criteria for an implicit anti-Baal polemical subject—the occurrence of other anti-Baal polemics in the Bible, striking signs by which the author indicates a polemic, and the identification of the text's anti-Baal polemical subject by others within the history of exegesis. My only departure from Amit is in terminology. Whereas Amit uses the term "hidden polemic" to describe polemics with an implicit polemical *subject* (in contrast to "implicit polemics" which, according to Amit's typology, have an explicit *subject* but implicit *stance*), I prefer James Anderson's simpler typology. Anderson categorizes any polemic with an implicit subject as an "implicit polemic."

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[18] Shreckhise's work is built on the foundation laid down in the following scholarship: James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," in *Hearing and Speaking the Word: Selections from the Works of James Muilenburg*, ed. Thomas F. Best (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 27–44; James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," in *Studia Biblica et Semitica*, ed. W. C. van Unnik and A. S. van der Woude (Wageningen, Netherlands: H. Veenman en Zonen, 1966), 233–51; Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994); Robert W. Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988); Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 70, trans. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000); and Jan Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, trans. Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999).

In the process of determining the existence of this polemic, I synthesize Amit's definition of polemic as "conceptual confrontation," or "ideological struggle," with James Anderson's conception of the means of polemic, namely the "appropriation of domains." Hence, the Bible's *stance* on the ideological *struggle* with Baal is signaled by Yahweh's appropriation of Baal's purported domains.

Finally, in order to highlight and interpret the contrasts between Exodus 14–15 and the Baal Myth, I also employ a more generic comparative methodology for understanding this relationship, namely William Hallo's "contextual approach," which guards against the extremes of parallelomania and parallelophobia by attending to both similarities and differences between the compared texts.[19]

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[19] Hallo's more generic comparative methodology was recommended by Dr. Tremper Longman III in a personal communication. Personal communication, [email], June 12, 2020. The methodology is described in William W. Hallo, "Biblical History in its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach," in *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. C. D. Evans, W. W. Hallo, and J. B. White (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980), 1–26.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BAAL MYTH AND EXODUS 14–15

In the wake of the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets in 1929,[1] Old Testament scholarship has carefully labored to apply knowledge of the Ugaritic conflict myth[2] of Baal-zephon to biblical exegesis, especially to interpretation of the account of the Sea Event[3] in Exodus 14–15. Such scholarship on the Baal Myth's relationship to the Exodus account is characterized by a marked complexity, the product of almost a century of debate over sundry interdependent topics. In light of this complexity, this section will first briefly highlight three issues complicating assessment of the relationship between the Baal Myth and Exodus 14–15 before embarking on a historical survey focused more narrowly on scholarship's view of the *existence* and *nature* of this relationship.

The Issues Complicating Assessment of the Baal Myth's Relationship to Exodus 14–15

One issue which has complicated assessment of the Baal Myth's relationship to Exodus

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[1] Miller Prosser of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago has succinctly described the discovery and provenance of the Baal Myth tablets in "The Ugaritic Baal Myth, Tablet Four," CDLI:wiki, Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, last modified September 10, 2013, http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=the_ugaritic_baal_myth. Cf. Aaron Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics of Poetry* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 11–12.

[2] I will use the term "conflict myth" as shorthand to refer to the myth of the combat between the Storm-god and the Sea-god. The term has been frequently employed this way in scholarship, early by John Gray in "Canaanite Mythology and Hebrew Tradition," *Glasgow University Oriental Society Transactions* 14 (1953): 55, and most recently by Debra Scoggins Ballentine in her monograph, *The Conflict Myth and Biblical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

This dissertation's working definition of myth is taken from Paul Kang Kul Cho's recent work on the "sea myth" (Cho's term for the conflict myth) in the Hebrew Bible. Cho wrote, "Myth is a story about weighty matters involving deities, human beings, and other personalities that, in the understanding of its adherents, reveals something true about the real order of the world." Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 28. Cho's definition of myth is an adaptation of Robert A. Segal's definition in *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4–6.

[3] The term "Sea Event" will be used throughout this dissertation as shorthand for the Reed Sea Crossing Event. I have taken the term from Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 1 n2.

14–15 is dispute over *the basic purpose of the Baal Myth*. Prior to the Ras Shamra discoveries, identification of the ancient Near Eastern influence on the Old Testament had become centered around *Enuma Elish*, a conflict myth indisputably containing a cosmogony. Gunkel was thought to have established that *Enuma Elish* was essentially about the origin of the cosmos; Marduk conquered and split Tiamat to create the heavens and the earth.[4] It is understandable that Gunkel's cosmogonic lens would then be brought to readings of a similar narrative discovered just eight decades later at ancient Ugarit.[5] However, as the following survey will clarify, since the Ras Shamra discoveries, scholars have increasingly recognized that the fundamental purpose of the Baal Myth is not cosmogonic; it is politico-religious, depicting Baal's acquisition of kingship through conflict. In short, the purpose of the Baal Myth is to demonstrate Baal's universal sovereignty.[6] By implication, although one might acknowledge some form of cosmogony in the possible "creation" of Israel through the Sea Event, an establishment of Exodus 14–15's relationship to the Baal Myth would more likely point to a similar politico-religious purpose in these chapters.

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[4] See Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. W. Whitney, 1895 (repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[5] One notable example of a scholarly emphasis on cosmogony in the *Baal Myth* at the expense of the centrality of its kingship theme is Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," *VT* 15 (1965): 313–24.

[6] A recent study which clarifies that *Enuma Elish* is essentially about Marduk's legitimacy as the head of the pantheon is Ballentine's *Conflict Myth*, 22–23, 30–48. As Ballentine points out, the concluding lines of *Enuma Elish* clarify its main theme: "Let them recite the song of Marduk, / Who bound Tiamat and took kingship." *Enuma Elish,* Tablet VII, 161–62; trans. Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 22. For the Akkadian text of *Enuma Elish*, see Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Corpus Project, 2005).

The highlighting of the cosmogonic focus of *Enuma Elish* vis-à-vis the kingship focus of the Baal Myth is still prevalent in much scholarship, as will be seen in the survey to follow. My purpose for maintaining the distinction between the oft-presumed cosmogonic focus of *Enuma Elish* and the non-cosmogonic focus of the Baal Myth is to highlight the "kingship through conflict" *emphasis* of the Baal Myth and undermine notions of *Enuma Elish*'s influence on Exodus 14–15. Recently, Noga Ayali-Darshan has contrasted the Baal Myth and *Enuma Elish* as representing two versions of the ANE conflict myth, both of which are fundamentally about the attainment of kingship. She distinguishes between Version A, the non-cosmogonic version of the conflict myth, and Version B, the cosmogonic version. Noga Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version of the Story of the Storm-god's Combat with the Sea in the Light of Egyptian, Ugaritic, and Hurro-Hittite Texts," *JANER* 15 (2015): 47–49.

A second issue complicating the assessment of the Baal Myth's relationship to the Exodus account is dispute over *the Sea Event's relation to history*. Scholars have puzzled over whether Yahweh relates to the waters of Yam Suph in the same way that Baal-zephon relates to Yamm. Most have agreed that the Song mythicizes the exodus event by fusing a mythology appropriated from Syro-Canaan with historical events, but disagreement remains over the extent of the mythicization.[7] In at least one notable case, a scholar has argued that the Song actually presents a fictive history, that the Song's author has "historicized" the Baal Myth—with its mythological battle between Storm-god and Sea-god intact—into a charter myth for Israel.[8] One of the most recent studies of the mythological influence on the Song challenges the application of the mythicization-historicization opposition to the Sea Event, attempting, through an adoption of Ricoeur's tensive theory of metaphor, to maintain both views simultaneously.[9]

Still, as will be noted, several scholars, beginning with the earliest pioneer in this field (Eissfeldt), have recognized that the Storm-god Baal-zephon was being worshipped in the ancient West Semitic world and in second millennium Egypt, as, among other things, the controller of historico-geographical waterways.[10] The precise connection between these waterways and the divinized Yamm is still not apparent in our extant documentation. However, the historical entailments of Baal-zephon's victory over Yamm have become reasonably clear. Baal-zephon cultic sites have been discovered alongside bodies of water both in Egypt and Syria, and nautical objects and inscriptions at these sites have portrayed Baal-zephon as the god who can protect or persecute seafarers and their vessels by controlling the waters of their navigation.

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[7] This is the majority position, as represented by Frank Moore Cross and his students, Richard J. Clifford and Patrick D. Miller.

[8] Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Amsterdam: van Oorschot; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 167, 191. Kloos described scholarship's usage of the terms "mythicizing and historicizing" as follows: "we find the term 'mythicizing' used to indicate that history was pictured with mythical features, whilst we find the term 'historicizing' to indicate that myth was placed in a historical framework." Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 159. Kloos herself argued that the Song intends to present an actual battle with a sea deity in history, the myth being transformed into a fictional history. Other versions of "historicizing" fully demythologize the Sea Event. For a discussion of "historicizing" and a reference to some other versions, see Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 158–59, 171–90.

[9] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 133–34.

[10] Otto Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1932), 42.

A final issue complicating scholarly assessment of the relationship between the Baal Myth and the biblical account of the Sea Event is *the dating of the Song of the Sea and its prose frame*. Significantly, source and redaction critical assumptions about the respective dates of composition of Exodus 14 and Exodus 15 have compelled scholars to divorce interpretation of the Song from its prose framework, thereby precluding any exegetical input from the Song's canonical literary context. Most Exodus scholars locate the Song of the Sea's composition in the post-thirteenth century pre-monarchical or early monarchical periods.[11] At the same time, these scholars (to my knowledge) unanimously attribute the initial four verses of Exodus 14 to the exilic or post-exilic Priestly redactor(s), based largely on speculation that Exodus 14's description of Israel's retreat back into Egypt is a Priestly amendment of Non-P's more rectilinear exodus.[12] Thus while scholars commonly observe the Baal Myth's influence on the earlier Song, some posit the more likely imprint of *Enuma Elish* on Exodus 14, a judgment they typically deem confirmed by the narrative's description of Yahweh's (in their minds) "Marduk-like" division of the waters of Yam Suph.[13] The numerous scholars attributing Exod. 14:1–4 and 9b to the Priestly redactor(s) generally offer no explanation for the apparent anachronism in these late redactors' insertion of the Baal-zephon references.

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[11] See Appendix Two for a list of datings of Exod. 14 and 15 in representative Exodus scholarship.

[12] I am using the term "Non-P" to designate all purported non-Priestly material in Exodus, following the lead of Exodus scholar Thomas Dozeman. As a result of the continued "debate over the identification of the author" of the non-Priestly material in "pentateuchal studies," Dozeman employs "the tentative title 'Non-P'" following David M. Carr. Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus,* ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 39, http://www.questia.com/read/126551628/commentary-on-exodus. Cf. David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 141–294.

Brevard Childs's more conventional source critical divisions of Exod. 14 are as follows: J (14:5b, 6, 9aα, 10bα, 11–14, 19b, 21aβ, 24, 25b, 27aβb, 30, 31); E (14:5a, 7, 19a, 25a); and P (14:1–4, 8, 9aβb, 15–18, 21aαb, 22–23, 26, 27a, 28–29). Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1974), 220.

Besides the almost unanimous scholarly distancing of the composition of the Song from Exodus 14, two other theories pertaining to dating have virtually become scholarly *regula fide*. One is the almost universally unquestioned notion that the "inhabitants of Philistia" mentioned in Exod. 15:14 were the Sea Peoples who immigrated to Canaan no earlier than the twelfth century. Such a theory understandably precludes a pre-twelfth century date for the Song's composition.

Another veritable scholarly axiom pertaining to dating the Song inextricably links the date of the Song's composition to the referent of Exod. 15:17.[14] Almost without exception, scholars have insisted that the date of the Song's composition determines the referent of Exod. 15:17, or, conversely, the referent determines the date of composition. More specifically, it is consistently maintained that a pre-monarchic date precludes a Zion referent and that a Zion referent precludes a pre-monarchic date.[15] At the same time, scholars have widely acknowledged the parallel between Baal's "mountain of inheritance (*ġāri naḥlati-ya*)" at Mount Zaphon and Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance (הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ)" in the Song, a phrase unique to the Baal Myth and the

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[13] See Appendix Three for various scholarly positions on the mythologies influencing Exod. 14–15.

[14] Exod. 15:17

תְּבִאֵמוֹ וְתִטָּעֵמוֹ בְּהַר נַחֲלָתְךָ
מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פָּעַלְתָּ יְהוָה
מִקְּדָשׁ אֲדֹנָי כּוֹנְנוּ יָדֶיךָ
You will bring them in and you will plant them on the mountain of your inheritance,
The place you made for your dwelling, LORD,
The sanctuary, Lord, your hands established. (my translation)

[15] See Appendix Four for a list of citations illustrating this dilemma within scholarship.

Song of the Sea in extant ANE literature.[16] In consequence, some have opted for a Zion referent and thus a monarchic date of composition. Still others, holding a pre-monarchic date, have attempted to discern Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" in a, however disanalogous, pre-Zion site, whether it be the land of Canaan *in toto*, its hill country, or earlier cultic sites at Gilgal or Shiloh.[17] A third course has been to maintain a pre-monarchic date of composition and locate Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" at Sinai. The dilemma presented by scholars' linking of the Song's date and Exod. 15:17's referent has been problematic, of course, for scholars who desire to maintain a non-Sinai, Mount Zaphon-like referent for Yahweh's "mountain," in keeping both with the Baal Myth parallel and a face-value reading of the Song's narrative, while also upholding a Mosaic-era date of composition, in congruence with the canonical account.

Historical Survey of Scholarship on the Existence and Nature of the Relationship between the Baal Myth and Exodus 14–15

The following survey will focus on the scholarly treatment of *the existence and nature of the relationship* between the Baal Myth and Exodus 14–15. This will include scholarship's discussion of *the basic purpose of the Baal Myth* as well as the related assessment of *the basic purpose of the canonical account of the Sea Event.*

Joseph Frederick Berg (1838)

In 1838, ten years before the discovery of *Enuma Elish* and almost a century before the discovery of the *Baal Cycle* tablets at Ras Shamra, Joseph Frederick Berg posited that the Baal-zephon site in Exodus 14 signifies an "idol-god" opposed to Yahweh. In other words, Berg suggested that the careful specification of the crossing site might be intended polemically. Berg's hypothesis is significant in that it represents an exegetical approach to the Sea Event which dates back to the *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael*[18]and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*[19] of the early first millennium CE. Berg wrote,

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[16] The Ugaritic phrase comes directly from KTU 1.3 III 30, IV 20 in *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit; Einschliesslich der keilalphabetischen Text ausserhalb Ugarits*, ed. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartin AOAT 24/1 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976). The Ugaritic *naḥlati-ya* includes the first person singular possessive pronominal suffix, while נַחֲלָתְךָ from the MT of Exod. 15:17 includes the second person singular pronominal suffix.

[17] See Appendix Five for a list of various scholarly positions on the referent of Exod. 15:17.

> The reason why this site was chosen for the temple of Baal-zephon was, in order that all fugitives from Egypt might, by its influence, be detained and hindered from escaping. Perhaps it was, with a view to cast eternal reproach upon this idol-god, that Jehovah commanded his people to come within the reach of its pretended power. In sight of this impotent thing, Pharaoh and all his host, who pursued the Israelites, sank like lead to the bottom, when God called back to their accustomed bed, the waters of the Red Sea.[20]

Otto Eissfeldt (1932)

Following the discoveries at Ras Shamra, Otto Eissfeldt pioneered study of the relationship between the Baal Myth and Exodus 14–15 in his 1932 *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer*. Although he did not discuss parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song, Eissfeldt did surmise a connection between the Baal-zephon cultic site mentioned in Exod. 14:2 and 9 and the Sea Event. He suggested that the Israelites may have originally attributed their victorious crossing to Baal, "the Semitic not Egyptian god," and only later ascribed this salvific act to Yahweh in their canonical tradition. He hypothesized,

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[18] The *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael* reads: "When Pharaoh saw that (the idol) Ba'al Tzefon had remained, he said: 'Ba'al Tzefon has concurred with my decree. I thought to destroy them by water, and Ba'al Tzefon has concurred'—whereupon [Pharaoh] began slaughtering, offering incense, and bowing down to his idol." Jacob Zallel Lauterbach and David M. Stern, eds., *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael* (Jerusalem: JPS, 2004), 137.

[19] *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* reads: "[I]t is the place of Tanes, which is between Midgol and the sea, before the idol Zephon (Typhon), that is left of all the idols of Mizraim. For the Mizraee [i.e., the Egyptians] will say, 'More excellent is Baal Zephon than all idols, because it is left, and not smitten; and therefore they will come to worship it.'" The paraphrase continues, "Pharaoh saw the idol Zephon (still) preserved, and offered oblations before it," Sefaria, *Targum Jonathan on Exodus 14*, https://www.sefaria.org/Targum_Jonathan_on_Exodus.15?lang=bi.

[20] Joseph Frederick Berg, *The Scripture History of Idolatry Showing the Connections between the Traditions of Pagan Mythology and the Bible* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1838), 108.

> Thus it is also conceivable that near Baal Zephon, that is, so to speak, under the eyes of the Semitic—not Egyptian—god sitting here, that the rescued first attributed the wonderful help they experienced in the happening, of the event of the salvation of Israel and the destruction of Egypt, to the god of this area, Baal Zaphon.[21]

Umberto Cassuto (1951)

Umberto Cassuto was one of the earliest and most esteemed commentators after the Ras Shamra discoveries to recognize the imprint of ancient Near Eastern mythology on the Song.[22] In his 1951 Exodus commentary, he claimed that the myths noticeable in the Hebrew Bible were "derived from similar myths that were current among the neighbouring peoples concerning the war waged by one of the great gods against the deity of the sea."[23] Citing *Enuma Elish* and the *Baal Cycle* as examples, Cassuto said that "similar narratives" were pervasive across the ancient Near East.[24] In reference to the Song of the Sea, besides identifying the shared motif of the god's battle with Yam, Cassuto noted a parallel with the Baal Myth in Exod. 15:18's acclamation of Yahweh.[25]

Unlike Berg and Eissfeldt, Cassuto was silent on a possible connection between the Song's "similar narrative" to the Baal Myth and the Exodus 14 Baal-zephon references; this being so despite his acknowledgement of the religious significance of this Egyptian site. In his commentary on 14:2 and 9, Cassuto highlighted the site's Canaanite religious background, describing it as "the temple of Baal-zephon":

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[21] Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 69–70.

[22] Noga Ayali-Darshan recently attested to Cassuto's importance in this discussion: "The most noteworthy attempt to examine the relation between the Ugaritic findings and the biblical traditions appears to be that of U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975 [original Italian and Hebrew 1937–1950])." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 21 n3.

[23] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997), 177.

[24] Cassuto, *Exodus*, 177.

[25] Cassuto, *Exodus*, 177.

> [Baal-zephon] is the appellation of one of the Canaanite deities (‘Al’iyn Ba’al of the Ugaritic texts, who dwells in the heights of the North),[26] which the Canaanites introduced also into Egypt, and apparently this tower was called after the temple of Baal-zephon, which was close by. … Accordingly, the meaning of our text will be: Let the children of Israel encamp on the stretch of land between the tower and the sea, in front of the temple of Baal-zephon. Encamp opposite the temple, on the sea, that is, close to the bank of the lake.”[27]

William Foxwell Albright (1944, 1968)

One of the first Bible scholars to obtain access to the Ras Shamra discoveries, William Foxwell Albright, as early as 1944, observed the linguistic parallels between the Song and the Late Bronze Age Ugaritic tablets and recognized their potential for determining early Hebrew poetry.[28] This led to the careful comparative linguistic studies of his students, Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, which were brought to their fullest realization in the 1972 work of D. A. Robertson[29] and reaffirmed in the recent study of Dong-Hyuk Kim.[30]

John Gray (1953)

A quarter century after Eissfeldt, John Gray revived the German pioneer’s conjecture that the shrine references in Exodus 14 indicate influence of the Baal-zephon cult on the earliest version of the exodus tradition. Gray wrote, “This cult-legend of the shrine of Baal Saphon, which might be well known to the Israelites and the ‘mixed multitude’ in their sojourn in Goshen to the east of the delta, coloured the Exodus tradition in oral transmission and later in the written narratives of the Pentateuch.”[31]

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[26] Cassuto wrote that “Heb. ṣephōn (zephon) signifies ‘north.’” Cassuto, *Exodus*, 160. Cassuto was apparently unaware of Eissfeldt’s explanation that in Ugaritic “zaphon” means “look out” and only later became a directional marker in Israel and Phoenicia due to the Syrian mountain’s geographical relation to these countries. Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon,* 16–18. Eissfeldt wrote, “For Bauer-Leander are correct … in their *Historical Grammar of the Hebrew Language*”: “in analogy to *hazon* ‘watcher’ (from *hazah* ‘to watch’), [they] derive “look out” from *ṣapah* (“to look out”) and explain it [*ṣapan*, that is, zaphon] as “Look out.” Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 17; my parentheses. John Day confirmed Eissfeldt’s explanation of *zaphon*’s etymology in *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, JSOTSup 265 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 108. Day added two arguments: first, that Mount Zaphon’s use as a directional marker accords with Israel’s use of other geographical locations in this manner: *yām* (sea) signifying west and *negeb* (dry place) denoting south. Secondly, Day asserted that “the equivalent Hurrian name for Mt. Zaphon, namely *Ḫazi*, could be explained from the root *ḥzh*, ‘to see,’ particularly frequent in Aramaic, which is very comparable in meaning to *ṣph*.” Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 108 n33. Cf. Ayali-Darshan, “The Other Version,” 26. Thus, “Zaphon” in Ugaritic likely means “look out.” Mount Zaphon, or Mount Hazzi, would equate to “Look Out Mountain.”

[27] Cassuto, *Exodus*, 160. For Cassuto, *Yam Suph* is the Great Bitter Lake.

[28] W. F. Albright, “Oracles of Balaam,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 208–33.

[29] See Appendix Six for a brief review of scholarship on the linguistic dating of biblical texts.

[30] Dong-Hyuk Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, VTSup 156 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 11–44.

To substantiate Israel’s possible “intimate acquaintance with the conflict-myth of Baal and the Sea” during their Egyptian sojourn,[32] Gray cited an Egyptian papyrus from “the early XIXth Dynasty” which portrays the Sea as “an arrogant tyrant demanding tribute.”[33] Adducing the authority of Egyptologist A. H. Gardiner, Gray claimed that this papyrus attests to “an influx of Canaanite elements [into Egypt] in the late XVIIIth and early XIXth Dynasties.”[34] He concluded that the motifs common to the Baal Myth and the New Kingdom papyrus evince an early Egyptian awareness of “the cult-legend of some Canaanite shrine in or near the Delta.”[35]

Gray was also the first scholar after the Ras Shamra discoveries to highlight the politico-religious purpose of the Baal Myth and view its central theme as “kingship” through “conflict.” He even argued that the biblical concept of Yahweh’s kingship manifest in the Song of the Sea originated from the Egyptian Baal-zephon site which he, following Eissfeldt, located at Pelusium along the Mediterranean.[36] At the same time, Gray contended that the Israelite appropriation of the Baal Myth was not the product of artful intention but an "artless assimilation of elements of [an] alien faith[]."[37] In other words, Gray eschewed any notion of Israel's deliberate allusion to the Baal Myth for ideological purposes. "The elaborations of the [exodus] narrative, such as the control of the sea," he declared, were mere literary "accretions," reflecting "the cult-legend of the neighbouring shrine of Baal."[38]

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[31] Gray, “Canaanite Mythology,” 55. I learned of this article through Frank E. Eakin Jr. in “The Reed Sea and Baalism,” *JBL* 86 (1967): 383.

[32] Gray, “Canaanite Mythology,” 55.

[33] Gray, “Canaanite Mythology,” 50 n11. Gray’s manuscript evidence came from C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947), 137, 37. Gray is referring to the *Astarte Papyrus* which has since been dated to earlier in the Eighteenth Dynasty, specifically during the reign of Amenhotep II.

[34] Gray, “Canaanite Mythology,” 50 n11. Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (Oxford: Egypt Exploration Society & Humphrey Milford & Oxford University Press, 1932), 74–85.

[35] Gray, “Canaanite Mythology,” 50 n11.

Norman Habel (1964)

A decade after Gray's "Canaanite Mythology," Norman Habel contributed a focused discussion of the relationship between the Sea Event and the Baal Myth in his 1964 *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Culture.*[39] Like Cassuto and Albright, Habel identified parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song of the Sea, particularly emphasizing the "kingship through conflict" theme highlighted earlier by Gray. He affirmed that "the issue at stake" in

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[36] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55–56. Gray concurred with Eissfeldt on the location of the Baal-zephon site. "Pelousion" (Πηλούσιον) became the site's name in the Hellenistic period. It became "Pelusium" in the Roman period.

[37] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 57. Gray disagreed with Eissfeldt's speculation that the Israelites were ever "sympathetic worshippers" of Baal-zephon. Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 57.

[38] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55. Later, in *The Legacy of Canaan*, Gray reaffirmed his agreement with Eissfeldt's hypothesis that the Israelites originally became familiar with the Canaanite myth of Baal-zephon in Egypt, particularly at the cultic site mentioned in Exod. 14. Gray wrote,

> We believe that [the Israelites'] familiarity with this idea [of the kingship of God] dated from the time of their sojourn in Egypt and particularly at Baal-Saphon in Goshen, which as the name indicates and as archaeological remains of the Roman Imperial period and a reference in Philo of Byblos … show, was a cult-centre of Baal, who, in Canaanite mythology won kingship in conflict with the power of Chaos typified by the unruly waters.

John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 11–12 n2.

[39] Norman C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Culture* (New York: Bookman, 1964). Habel's work was based on his doctoral dissertation: Norman C. Habel, "Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Culture" (ThD diss., Concordia Seminary, 1962).

Baal's conflict with Yamm was "the 'eternal kingship' among the gods."[40] After tracing the sequence of events leading to Baal's cosmic overlordship, Habel asserted that the "kingship sequence of the Baal text has its biblical counterpart in 'The Song of the Sea' (Exod. 15:1–18)."[41] "[T]he thought sequence in the respective battles for divine kingship is remarkably similar," he wrote.[42] Though noting the parallel terminology and concepts, Habel was unwilling to assert "direct literary dependency" but argued that the biblical writer "either consciously or unconsciously employed" a kingship sequence "current in Canaanite cycles" to emphasize Yahweh's sovereignty.[43]

Notably, Habel considered that the remarkable parallels between the Song and the Baal Myth might evince an anti-Baal polemic; but the evidence of the parallels alone was not enough for him to embrace the hypothesis. He demurred, writing, "Whether this presents a conscious and direct polemic against Baal is not clear, despite the numerous striking antitheses."[44] However, Habel followed this demurral with another assertion about the incomparability claim in Exod. 15:11 which appears to strike a different note. He argued that the declaration "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Yahweh?" is utilizing the "common Canaanite image" which portrays "divine kingship" as "an established superiority over all gods." Relating this image to Yahweh, as the Song's writer does, he said, "is a culturally relevant way of saying Yahweh, not Baal, is King."[45]

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[40] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 53.

[41] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 58.

[42] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 62.

[43] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 62–63.

[44] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 63.

[45] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 64.

Frank Eakin (1967)

In 1967, Frank Eakin observed that "baalism's influence on the water-separation motif" in Exodus 14–15 was still being "ignored in the main."[46] Following Eissfeldt's trajectory, Eakin understood the Baal-zephon cultic site references not as suggesting anti-Baal polemic, but as possibly implying ascription of the "water-separation" to Baal. Like Habel, he remarked on the similarity between the narratives of the Sea Event and the Baal Myth, pointing out that Baal's martial demonstration of superiority over Yam transformed the Sea-god into Baal's compliant agent, just as Yam Suph was rendered subject to Yahweh's control. Eakin wrote, "By Baal's victory over Yam, the watery chaos ceased to be a destructive and threatening force and, by virtue of Baal's superiority over Yam, became rather a helpful entity. Is not this what happened at the yam suph?"[47]

Ultimately, Eakin deemed it improbable that the Sea Event depicted in Exodus was meant to be credited to the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god in light of "the clear attribution of the act to Yahweh in the Miriam couplet," which Eakin viewed as the earlier tradition. Similarly to Gray, Eakin conjectured that the Israelites simply appropriated Baalism's water-separation motif for describing Yahweh's parting of the Sea. Echoing Eissfeldt, Eakin theorized that the canonical account may retain remnants of an earlier edition of the Song in which Baal was celebrated as Israel's warring rescuer. This edition, he speculated, may have been sung to commemorate an alternative hypothetical historical event, the story of some Hebrews of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh leaving with the Baal-worshipping Hyksos during their expulsion by the Eighteenth

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[46] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 381–82.

[47] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 382.

Dynasty.[48]

Concomitant with his theory that Baalism impacted Exodus 14–15, Eakin proposed an alternative hypothesis for how the Israelites became aware of Baal mythology. Going beyond Eissfeldt and Gray's proposal of Israelite contact at Pelusium, Eakin suggested that a Hyksos awareness of Baal worship would have generated a similar awareness among the Israelites. He submitted that a demonstration of Hyksos "cognizance of baalism"—a phenomenon still unsubstantiated in the scholarship of his day—would "likely" verify Hebrew awareness:

> While the evidence does not warrant the conclusion that there was a Hyksos cognizance of baalism, the Semitic composition of the Hyksos plus some supportive evidence argues affirmatively. We can only affirm that the Semitic linkage between the Hyksos and the Hebrews would likely lead to a Hebrew awareness of the Baal mythology if this were a part of the Hyksos structure.[49]

Frank Moore Cross (1968, 1973)

In the same year as the publication of Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, Frank Moore Cross, Albright's student, submitted what would subsequently become a chapter in his watershed work on the relationship of the Baal Myth to the Song, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*.[50] In "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," Cross advanced a cosmogonic reading of the Baal Myth, while simultaneously maintaining the politico-religious interpretation of Gray and Habel. Primarily, the Baal Myth "appear[ed]" to Cross to be "a cultic cosmogony," that is, a myth employed in ritual which "delineates … events which constitute cosmos."[51] At the same time, Cross clarified that, in the case of the Baal Myth, "cosmogony" meant the establishment of order among the gods.[52] Therefore, echoing his immediate predecessors, Cross submitted that the "Baʿl cycle relates the emergence of kingship among the gods."[53]

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[48] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 383.

[49] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 381–82.

[50] F. M. Cross, "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," *JTC* 5 (1968): 1–25. Cross's initial article was reissued as a chapter in his 1973 book, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). Quotations will be cited on the basis of the book chapter pagination.

[51] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 120.

Cross then elucidated the narrative sequence of the Baal Myth—what he called "the old mythic pattern"—in terms which became the standard for future scholarship on the Baal Myth's relation to the Song. He wrote, "We recognize here the old mythic pattern which the following themes of the Song of the Sea preserve: (1) the combat of the Divine Warrior and his victory at the Sea, (2) the building of a sanctuary on the 'mount of possession' won in battle, and (3) the god's manifestation of 'eternal' kingship."[54]

Richard Clifford (1972)

In the years immediately preceding *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, Cross directed Richard Clifford's doctoral dissertation, a study of the ancient motif of the cosmic mountain.[55] Clifford's elucidation of the Baal Myth's narrative sequence followed Cross's but particularly emphasized the causal relationship between Baal's victory over Yamm and the building of Baal's temple on Mount Zaphon. Highlighting a politico-religious reading, as Gray and Habel had, Clifford observed that Baal's temple is meant in "recognition of [Baal's] newly won kingship" "to symbolize his rule."[56] "Baal will seek the temple for his holy place, on the mountain which he has acquired by his victory over the forces of evil."[57]

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[52] The understanding of the Baal Myth's "cosmogony" as the creation of order from chaos has been most pronounced in the work of Loren Fisher, who calls it "Baal type creation." See, for example, Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," *VT* 15 (1965): 313–24. Kapelrud has criticized Fisher for his overly broad definition of creation in Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Creation in the Ras Shamra Texts," *Studia Theologica* 34 (1980): 1–11.

[53] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 120.

[54] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 142.

[55] Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1972).

[56] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 41.

Like Cross, Clifford was insistent that the Song of the Sea borrowed the narrative pattern and language of the Baal Myth. He wrote, "By the time of the earliest Israelite poetry, for example, the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15), Yahweh is described in Baal language—the motif of the battle with the sea and probably the mount of heritage, the fruit of the victory over the sea, clearly belong to the Baal tradition."[58]

Patrick D. Miller (1973)

In the same year in which Cross published *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, another of Cross's doctoral students, Patrick D. Miller, also addressed the Song's relationship to the Baal Myth. In *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*,[59] Miller affirmed a politico-religious reading of the Song in keeping with the Ugaritic conflict myth, arguing that the Song's portrait of the divine warrior borrowed its conception of deity from Syria-Palestine. He wrote, "[O]ne may assume that the direct contact with Baʻalism from an early period strongly influenced the way Israel conceived its God."[60] Specifically, Miller noticed that the Song's "focus on the sea" and "storm god imagery" "reflected Israel's use of available and influential mythic patterns."[61] In delineating these patterns, Miller quoted Cross's "old mythic pattern" almost verbatim.[62]

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[57] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 75.

[58] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 141.

[59] Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[60] Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 60.

[61] Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 115.

[62] "[A]s Cross has pointed out, the Song of the Sea preserves a familiar mythic pattern: the combat of the divine warrior and his victory at the Sea, the building of a sanctuary on the mount of inheritance, and the god's manifestation of eternal kingship." Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 117.

Foster McCurley (1983)

In 1983, Foster R. McCurley resurrected the latent view that the Baal-zephon references in Exodus 14 were significant for interpreting the Sea Event. McCurley interpreted the Baal-zephon site references in relationship to the narrative of Yahweh's battle against the gods of Egypt, a story which he largely attributed to the Yahwist. But because he deemed Exod. 14:2 and 9b to be the contribution of the Priestly redactor, as Cross had, he credited the anti-Baal polemic which he identified in the canonical account to this "exilic" source. He wrote,

> To include the Priest's itinerary in the complex of these traditions is to make the polemics even broader. According to that writer, the battle at the sea took place in the vicinity of Baal-zephon (Exod. 14:2). Baal-zephon was a place of worship in the Egyptian delta for the Canaanite deity who vanquished the chaos force of Yamm and who erected his palace on Mount Zaphon. While this Egyptian site is not the Canaanites' mountain of Zaphon, nevertheless the place was a locale for the worship of Baal. According to the Priest, then, right under Baal's regal nose Yahweh used Yamm to vanquish his chaos opponent, the pharaoh and god of Egypt.[63]

In effect, McCurley became the first scholar after the Ras Shamra discoveries to recognize anti-Baal polemical intent in the carefully specified location of the Sea Event. At the same time, however, McCurley's discussion of Exodus 14–15 reveals that he deemed *Enuma Elish* to be the principal influence on the Priestly account, with anti-Marduk being the primary polemic. McCurley reasoned that since Marduk "divides" Tiamat and "splits" her in two,[64] while Baal simply crushes Yamm with his two clubs, Yahweh's בָּקַע of the Sea in Exodus 14 indisputably points to the Mesopotamian conflict myth.[65] McCurley explained: "[W]hile the term *bāqaʿ* did not originate with the exilic author, the priest might have chosen that image out of other possibilities because of a polemical purpose against the Babylonians who paraded Marduk's statue in victory every New Year's Day."[66] In the end, McCurley identified the influence of both the Ugaritic and Mesopotamian conflict myths on Exodus 14–15, together with an allusion to a native Egyptian myth.[67] He summarized the canonical account as "a powerful mythicized interpretation of the historical deliverance from Egypt" by means of an "amalgamation of originally separate stories out of the ancient Near East."[68]

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[63] Foster R. McCurley, *Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 45–46.

[64] Ee., Tablet IV: 136–37 (W.G. Lambert, *Imagining Creation,* IJSSJ [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 15–59).

See n74 below for a response to the thesis that occurrences of בָּקַע [*bāqaʿ*] are indisputable markers of the influence of *Enuma Elish*.

[65] Hebrew בָּקַע is usually rendered "divided" or "split." Other likely allusions to *Enuma Elish* for McCurley were the Song's use of *tehomot* in verse 5 as well as the image of "wind" in verse 8. McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 37.

Carola Kloos (1986)

A few years after McCurley, Carola Kloos provided one of scholarship's most thorough discussions of Exodus 14–15's relationship to the Baal Myth. In *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, Kloos argued that the Canaanite conflict myth's influence on Israel was indisputable. She wrote, "Now in my opinion, it cannot be doubted that the Canaanite conception of the battle of the deity with Sea exercised a direct influence upon Israelite belief; or, to put it better: that the Israelites shared this belief with the non-Hebrew population of Canaan."[69]

One of Kloos's contributions to the discussion was her citing of additional textual evidence for the existence of a relationship between the *Baal Cycle* and the Song. Prior scholarship had observed the Song's sharing of the conflict myth's "battle with/at the Sea" motif and "kingship through conflict" theme. Former studies had also recognized the Baal Myth and the Song's common connection between kingship and temple as well as the semantic parallels; but Kloos developed the vocabulary linkage in more detail. In addition to the parallels of "mountain of inheritance" (הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ // *ġāri naḥlati-ya*[70]) and acclamation of eternal kingship (יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד // *tiqqaḥu mulka ʻolamika, darkata dāta dārdārika … baʻlu-mi yamlu[ku]* [71]), Kloos cited three word pairs which the Song shares with the *Baal Cycle:*

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[66] McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 44–45.

[67] For McCurley's reference to the native Egyptian Myth, see McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 23, 38. More recently, John Currid proposed the influence of the Third Tale of the Westcar Papyrus on the Sea Event. This tale was presumably told originally during the reign of Snefru, ca. 2575–2551 BCE, while the Westcar Papyrus is dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty. See John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 123–27.

[68] McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 45.

[69] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 69.

> Exod 15:11: אֵלִם—קֹדֶשׁ // *ilm—bn qdš* in KTU 1.2 I 20–21, 37–38; 1.17 I 1–22 (five times); Exod 15:17: מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ— הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ // *ksu ṯbt—arṣ nḥlt* in KTU 1.1 III 1; 1.3 VI 15–16 [72]; 1.4 VIII 12–14; 1.5 II 15–16; Exod 15:17: מִקְּדָשׁ—הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ // *qdš—ġr nḥlt* in KTU 1.3 III 30, IV 20.[73]

Relatedly, Kloos strongly objected to the alternative theory that the principal influence on Exodus 14–15 was the Babylonian conflict myth, dismissing McCurley's notion that "splitting" (בָּקַע in Exod. 14:16 and 21) is an indisputable marker of the influence of *Enuma Elish*.[74]

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[70] CAT 1.3 III: 28–31 in eds. Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, Joaquín Sanmartín.

[71]

Thou shalt take thy eternal kingship,	[*tiqqaḥu mulka ʻolamika*]
Thy dominion forever and ever.	[*darkata dāta dārdārika*]

CTA 1.2 IV. 7–10 = KTU 1.2 IV. 7–10. Translated by Cross in *Canaanite Myth*, 114.

Sea verily is dead;	[*yamma la-mitu*]
Baʻl rules!	[*baʻlu-mi yamlu[ku]*]

CTA 1.2 IV. 32–33 = KTU 1.2 IV. 32–33. Translated by Cross in *Canaanite Myth*, 116.

[72] This is not a perfect parallel, since the הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ refers to "your mountain of inheritance," while *arṣ nḥlt* refers to "land of inheritance," which is the expression used to describe the sacred precincts of Kothar-wa-hasis, the Ugaritic craftsman god, and Mot, the Ugaritic god of the underworld.

[73] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 133.

[74] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 148–49. Kloos wrote,

> Now if it is assumed that the Reed Sea tradition contains elements which have been derived from myth, and which were already present in an early period, it must surely have been the combat myth as it was told in Israel, that is: a myth resembling the Baal-Yam story rather than Enuma-elish. In other words: "splitting" was not a feature of the myth which presumably influenced the Reed Sea story. I do not think that that is a

For Kloos, however, the parallels between the Song of the Sea and the Baal Myth did not indicate an Israelite appropriation of Baal motifs for Yahweh, as her predecessors had argued; rather, for Kloos, in the Song, Yahweh is Baal by another name. She wrote, “[W]e take it that Yhwh functioned at one time as an Israelite Baal.” She continued, “[T]he deity of the Song of the Sea was just as much a Baal as the deity of Ps. 29.”[75] In drawing this conclusion, Kloos opted to read Psalm 29 and the Song in isolation from the rest of the Old Testament canon. This is warranted, she argued, because the biblical canon should not be assumed to be a “closed system,” especially since “the OT is a compilation of texts from different periods.”[76] Kloos meant that clear anti-Baal polemics in certain canonical passages should have no bearing on the interpretation of other texts which, in her judgment, “[do] not express any polemical attitude.”[77]

> problem, however. As I observed above, “drying up” and “splitting” must—as far as the Reed Sea story is concerned—be considered one and the same act. The “congealing” of the waters is a feature of the Song of the Sea, whilst “drying up” is a feature both of the OT story about the combat with the Sea and of the Ugaritic one. That fits excellently with the idea, that the Israelite-Canaanite myth should be the first to be taken into consideration as a possible influence on the Reed Sea story.

Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 148–49.

David Tsumura’s work has buttressed Kloos’s dismissal of attempts to identify *Enuma Elish* as a mythological influence on Exod. 14–15. See David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015); David T. Tsumura, “The Creation Motif in Psalm 74:12–14? A Reappraisal of the Theory of the Dragon Myth,” *JBL* 134 (2015): 547–55. Tsumura noted that *téhôm* in Exod. 15:8b is more likely derived from Ugaritic *thm* than Akkadian *Tah a m(at)u*, writing, “Morphologically, Hebrew *téhôm* corresponds to Ugaritic *thm* rather than to the Akkadian divine name Tiamat [*Tah a m(at)u*] with a feminine ending /-at/” (Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 42). Tsumura also observed that the splitting of the carcass of Tiamat happens some time after she is killed. (My note: *Enuma Elish* uses the verb *ḫepû* for the splitting of Tiamat’s corpse: “He split her into two like a dried fish”: ***iḫ-pi-ši****-ma ki-ma nu-un maš-ṭe-e a-na ši-ni-šu. Ee.*, IV: 137. Hebrew has a possible cognate to *ḫepû*, namely הִפָּרֵד, which means “to separate.” The account of the Sea event uses בָּקַע, a cognate of Ugaritic *bqʿ*). Tsumura elaborated, “[T]here is no reference here [in the description of the killing of Tiamat in lines 105–106] to “splitting” Tiamat’s corpse in two. That act of dividing (ḫepû) does not occur until much later, in lines 137–38.” Tsumura, “The Creation Motif,” 551.

[75] Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 124. Offering a rationale for an Israelite Baal, Kloos speculated that “the Israelites, seeing that Baal could satisfy a fundamental need by sending the rain, wanted to possess ‘a Baal of their own.’” Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 124.

[76] Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 98.

[77] Kloos wrote, “[W]hen we find functions of Baal ascribed to Yhwh in a text which does not express any polemical attitude, the logical conclusion seems to be that the text in question does not stem from times or circles which were polemically inclined. In other words, we must not conceive of the OT as a closed system.” Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 98.

Following Cross and his students, Kloos also argued that studying the Song of the Sea divorced from its Exodus context is warranted by the much later linguistic dating of the Song's prose frame.[78]

Finally, as Eissfeldt, Gray, and Eakin had before her, Kloos sought to explain how the Israelites became acquainted with the Baal Myth. She argued, following Cross and his students,[79] that this contact occurred within Canaan. This is "a more plausible explanation," she said, "than Eissfeldt's theory concerning an Egyptian Baal cult."[80] Noting the adoption of Eissfeldt's theory by Gray, Hillmann, and Norin,[81] Kloos called Eissfeldt's theory "far too hypothetical":

> This theory is ingenious, but I think that it is far too hypothetical. It must then be assumed that the Israelites had become acquainted with the sanctuary and the myth while they were living in Egypt, for they would hardly have had time to get to know them on their flight. In my view, we are on safer ground if we assume, that the Israelites had become familiar with the myth in Canaan.[82]

Martin Brenner (1991)

Five years after Kloos's influential work, Martin Brenner published his widely read monograph, *The Song of the Sea: Ex:1–21*, which espoused a radical post-exilic dating of the Song's composition. Beginning with a survey of modern scholarship on Exodus 15, Brenner noted Cross and Freedman's employment of linguistic dating based on comparisons with

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[78] "[G]iven the result of the linguistic analysis, the prose account is obviously younger than the song. It will therefore be best to analyze the song independently of its present context." Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 135.

[79] Cross wrote, "Israel's religion in its beginning stood in a clear line of continuity with the mythopoeic patterns of West Semitic, especially Canaanite myth." Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 143.

[80] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 162.

[81] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55–56; Reinhard Hillmann, "Wasser und Berg. Kosmische Verbindungslinien zwischen dem kanaanäischen Wettergott und Jahwe" (PhD diss., Martin-Luther-Universität, 1965); Stig I. L. Norin, *Er spaltete das Meer. Die Auszugsüberlieferung in Psalmen und Kult des alten Israel*, ConBOT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 38.

[82] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 162.

Ugaritic prosody.[83] He agreed with them that "[t]he Song of the Sea more than any other piece of Israelite poetry conforms to the canons of Ugaritic prosody."[84] Even the Song's orthography, Brenner acknowledged, could buttress the conclusion that the Song "is more consistently archaic than any other work in the scriptures."[85] Additionally, Brenner recognized the validity of Cross and Freedman's observation of semantic and conceptual parallels between the Song and the Baal Myth.[86] Yet, in the end, Brenner dismissed the Ugaritic linguistic and conceptual parallels as post-exilic archaizing. As Freedman had before him, Brenner contended that the Ugaritic parallels were not exclusive to the pre-monarchical period, stating, "[W]hile the evidence for Ugaritic influence is valid, the time period when this influence was felt has not been established."[87]

Bernard Batto (1992)

A year after Brenner's monograph on the Song, Bernard Batto published another influential study on the Bible's appropriation of ancient Near Eastern mythology. In *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition*, Batto began by challenging the "commonplace" claim that 'history is the chief medium of revelation' in the Bible."[88] Believing that myth was as important to the biblical accounts, he sought to demonstrate the ways biblical writers employed myths originating from the nations, particularly “the Combat Myth,” to express theological insights about Yahweh.[89]

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[83] Brenner began his work by acknowledging the importance of ancient Near Eastern mythology to the study of the Song: "The entrance of the myth systems of the ancient Near East into Israel's literature and the mode of their use is of particular import in the investigation." Martin L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex. 15:1–21* (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 1–2.

[84] Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 9.

[85] Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 9.

[86] Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 9.

[87] Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 143.

[88] Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 1.

In his fourth chapter, “The Exodus as Myth,” Batto distinguished sharply between the “historical event” of the exodus, “whatever that may have been,” and the “exodus of tradition.”[90] He went beyond Cross and his students in claiming that in the canonical account the mythicization of the historical event was so thorough that its author clearly did not intend for it to be read as an account of historical memory.[91]

Batto maintained that this “supra-historical” canonical account is the “priestly rewriting of the narrative as an extension of the Combat Myth.”[92] In the exodus event, he asserted, the Priestly “rewriter” borrowed from both the West and East Semitic Combat Myths, but chiefly from the latter.[93] Mirroring McCurley from a decade before, Batto claimed, “[T]he Priestly Writer took his inspiration principally from the Babylonian version of the Combat Myth rather than from the Canaanite version.”[94] Batto’s late dating of the exodus tradition’s composition based on redaction critical suppositions coalesced with his view of the apogee of Israelite appropriation of foreign myth; that is, during Israel’s captivity in Marduk-worshipping Babylon. He wrote, “[M]ythopoeic speculation based upon this Combat Myth flourished within the

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[89] Batto called this process “mythopoeic speculation”; that is, the process by which “old myths are extended to include new dimensions.” Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 12.

[90] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 103.

[91] Through a series of questions, Batto implied that the exodus event was an “attempt” by biblical writers not merely to present a “past event,” but to “explode the exodus into an ‘event’ that transcends” space and time, “making it the story of every Israelite generation.” Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 103.

[92] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 109.

[93] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 110. Batto’s theory echoes McCurley’s idea of an amalgation of mythic sources.

[94] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 152.

Israelite community around the time of the Babylonian exile."[95]

Mark S. Smith (1994, 1997, 2004, 2007, 2008)

Over the past quarter century, Mark S. Smith's translations and analyses of the *Baal Cycle* tablets, as well as numerous related books and articles, have established him as one of the world's foremost experts on the Baal Myth.[96] Smith, together with Wayne Pitard, surveyed scholarly positions on the *Baal Cycle*'s central theme and concurred with past scholars who viewed this myth politico-religiously, that is, as essentially about the acquisition of kingship among the gods. They stated unequivocally, "The central theme of the cycle is the kingship of Baal." It's "a text dealing with the status of Baal among the gods."[97] Accompanying this claim, Smith and Pitard argued adamantly against the kind of cosmogonic reading of the Baal Myth suggested by Cross and advanced by Batto. They stated, "[O]ne of the most noteworthy aspects of these stories is that they do not culminate in creation,"[98] adding, "[T]he Ugaritic mythographers have removed the combat myth from the context of cosmology."[99]

A related vital issue for Smith and Pitard was the purpose of the temple construction narrative in the Baal Myth. Building upon Clifford's study which had highlighted the causal relation of Baal's victory over the Sea to his temple building project, Smith and Pitard called the building of Baal’s palace “the central episode of the *Baal Cycle*.” “[T]he attempt to build a palace for Yamm is clearly intended as a sign of that god’s claim to sovereignty.”[100]

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[95] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 110. Batto identified the thorough Priestly mythologization (Cross's "mythicization") of the Sea Event via the Combat Myth in several "mythopoeic processes." His discussion of these "processes" can be found in *Slaying the Dragon*, pp. 110–17, 130.

[96] Mark S. Smith, *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2, vol. 1 of The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, VTSup 55 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1994); Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.3–1.4, vol. 2 of The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, VTSup 114 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[97] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:14. Smith and Pitard also highlighted the familial aspect of the battle for kingship, writing, the Baal Myth is "the story of a family quarrel over power within the patrimonial household." Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal* Cycle, 2:54.

[98] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal* Cycle, 2:45.

[99] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:54. Cf. 244–45.

Smith and Pitard’s translation and analysis of the Cycle’s first four tablets (KTU 1.1–1.4) also affirmed the parallels which prior scholarship had identified between the Baal Myth and the Song. In their analysis of KTU 1.3 III:28–31, Smith and Pitard recognized the similarity between this description of Baal’s residence and the Bible’s descriptions of Yahweh’s residence, particularly Exod. 15:17. For the sake of comparison, the oft-cited description of Baal’s sacred precinct reads:

	(Come and I will reveal it)
bi-tôki ġāri-ya ’ili ṣāpani	In the midst of my mountain, Divine Sapan,
bi-qidši bi-ġāri naḥlati-ya	On the holy mount of my heritage,
bi-nu‘mi bi-gab‘i tal’iyati.	On the beautiful hill of (my) might.[101]

Juxtaposing this description with the Old Testament’s references to Yahweh’s sacred precinct, Smith and Pitard re-illuminated the several parallels which prior scholars had highlighted:

> The last three poetic lines of Baal’s message (lines 29–31) contain expressions for Mt. Sapan [i.e., Mount Zaphon] reflecting its sanctity (*qdš*), it status as Baal’s patrimony (*ġr nḥlty*), its aesthetic aspect (*n‘m*), and its character as the place reflecting Baal’s victory in the cosmos (*gb‘ tl’iyt*)…. Yahweh’s mountain is accordingly called *har haqqodes*, ‘the mountain of holiness’ (Jer 31:23), *gebul qodso*, ‘his holy territory’ (Ps 78:54), *neweh qodseka*, ‘your holy dwelling’ (Exod 15:13); cf. Jer 31:24) and *miqqedas*, “sanctuary” (Exod 15:17). Exod 15:17 also captures the patrimonial character of the divine mountain, describing Yahweh’s mountain as *har nahalateka*, “the mountain of your inheritance.[102]

In his 1997 *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus*, Smith confronted those who challenged the existence of Baal Myth parallels in parts of the Song. Namely, he addressed scholars like J. Jeremias, whose argument for the composite authorship of the Song rested on the premise that the second half of the Song lacks such parallels. Smith countered that, in fact, the "parallels with the *Baal Cycle*" in verses 13–17 "may be used to argue for the unity of the poem in Exodus 15."[103] Echoing Freedman, Smith attested to the inseparability of Baal's "victory over the Sea" and "establishment of [his] house at his holy abode, Mount Sapan." "[S]o, too," Smith said, "in Exodus 15, the victory of vv. 1–12 is only complete with the establishment of the house of v. 17 at the holy abode mentioned also in v. 13. In both cases, the victory cannot be separated easily from the house-building."[104]

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[100] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:35.

[101] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:234.

[102] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:234.

Finally, in 2005, Smith participated in a symposium of the world's preeminent Ugaritologists which convened to define the current state of scholarship on the Ras Shamra discoveries. His presentation, "Recent Study of Israelite Religion in Light of the Ugaritic Texts," protested the continued tendency of some Ugaritic and/or Bible scholars to speak in Canaan-versus-Israel constructs and myth-versus-history dichotomies when comparing the Ugaritic documents and the Bible. Following his admonition of those who persisted in highlighting discontinuity, Smith issued a challenge for scholars to bring "biblical genres and their amalgamation … into a diachronic framework that situates them in relation to … the Ugaritic texts and Israel's larger Levantine literary heritage."[105]

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[103] Mark S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 220.

[104] Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 220. Smith will later call this relationship "the divine battle plus temple-building thematic complex in the Bible." Mark. S. Smith, "Recent Study of Israelite Religion in Light of the Ugaritic Texts," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five: Proceedings of the Symposium Ugarit at Seventy-Five Held at Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois, February 18:20, 2005*, ed. K. Lawson Younger (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 6.

[105] Smith, "Recent Study," 8. Smith included Mesopotamian influence as well. In another, nearly contemporaneous essay, Smith argued that both Israel and Ugarit participated in "a larger continuous cultural matrix," which he called "the West Semitic [cultural] milieu." Mark S. Smith, "Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic

John Day (2000)

At the turn of the twenty-first century, a few years after Smith's *Pilgrimage Pattern*, John Day published a "thoroughgoing and comprehensive examination of the relationship between Yahweh and the gods and goddesses of Canaan."[106] In his third chapter, "Yahweh versus Baal," Day discussed the Baal cult's prominence as the chief threat to exclusive Yahwism and observed how Israelite writers routinely responded with anti-Baal polemic. "When reading the Old Testament," Day wrote, "it becomes clear that it was the Baal cult that provided the greatest and most enduring threat to the development of exclusive Yahweh worship within ancient Israel."[107] Day then noted the correlating "strength of the Old Testament polemic against" the Baal cult, which, he said, was motivated by the "tempting nature" of a fertility cult in "a land utterly dependent for its fertility upon the rain."[108] As is standard, Day highlighted the "[s]trong polemic against Baal" in the contest on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. His framing of the polemic as Yahweh's appropriation of Baal's domain is noteworthy, as it anticipated the definition of polemics in subsequent scholarship. Day wrote, "the polemic [in 1 Kings 18] is especially marked, as Yahweh is shown as the God who can bring lightning and the rain, which were regarded as Baal's particular sphere of influence."[109]

In his fourth chapter,"Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal Imagery," Day confirmed the

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and Akkadian Literature: Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible: Consideration of Recent Comparative Research," *RB* 114 (2007): 12, 11.

[106] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 7.

[107] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 70.

[108] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 70. Providing rain "was held to be Baal's special realm of influence," said Day. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 70.

[109] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 76–77. Day identified the Baal referenced in 1 Kings 18 as Baal-Shamem whom he says "was essentially the same as the Ugaritic Baal and the Baal known elsewhere in the Old Testament." Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 74. Day understood all of the Baals mentioned in the Old Testament to be "local manifestations" of "one great cosmic deity." Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 68.

relationship between the Song and the Baal Myth. He conveyed the consensus of scholarship since Eissfeldt on the principal mythology influencing biblical texts: "[I]n general, since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts from 1929 onwards, it has become generally accepted that the Old Testament's references to a divine conflict with a dragon and the sea are an echo of Canaanite rather than Babylonian mythology."[110] Specifically, Day highlighted two aspects of the Song—already pointed out by the majority of scholars since Habel—which indicate the Baal Myth's influence: "conflict" leading to "kingship" and a Zaphon-like divine residence. In his words, "The influence of Baal's conflict with Yam on the depiction is supported by the association of the divine conflict at the sea with the kingship of God (Exod 15:18) and the construction of the deity's mountain sanctuary, described in language reminiscent of that of Baal of Zaphon."[111]

Finally, like at least four scholars before him,[112] Day speculated on the way the Israelites had learned the Baal Myth. He contended that the Israelites adopted Zaphon language for Zion from a Jebusite El-Elyon cult which itself had appropriated this language from Baalism. He surmised, "[I]t is probable that the concept of Zaphon as applied to Yahweh was mediated through the Jebusite cult of El-Elyon, rather than being directly taken over from Baal."[113]

Alberto Green (2003)

At the turn of the millennium, another major contribution to the study of the Old Testament's relationship to the Baal Myth was Alberto R. W. Green's 2003 monograph, *The*

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[110] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 98–99.

[111] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 104.

[112] Namely, Eissfeldt, Gray, Eakin, and Kloos.

[113] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 116. Day based his argument for Jebusite mediation of Zaphonic language to Israel on three Old Testament passages: Isaiah's taunt song in Isa. 14, which associates Zaphon and Elyon; Ps. 48:3's reference to Jerusalem as Zaphon; and Ps. 46:5's reference to Jerusalem as "the holy habitation of Elyon." Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 116.

Storm-God in the Ancient Near East.[114] Green's study demonstrated the antiquity of the Storm-god motif, attesting to its beginnings as early as 7000 BCE in the Anatolian Highlands.[115] Green also established the Storm-god motif's prevalence throughout the ancient Near East. As for the Baal Myth, Green supported Smith and Pitard's Late Bronze Age dating of the Ras Shamra tablets,[116] but in line with these Ugaritic specialists, he asserted that the traditions behind them are much older. He wrote, "The theological conceptions of the Ugaritic pantheon and the nature and function of Baal in particular were probably well established as early as the third millennium BCE."[117]

Tracking the "Storm-god" motif's appearance through Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria, and Coastal Canaan, Green clarified the lineage of the Baal Myth and distinguished its context from that of *Enuma Elish*. Based on the rich Storm-god traditions predating the Babylonian conflict myth by as much as five millennia,[118] he cautioned against facile intertextual interpretations between the Baal Myth and *Enuma Elish*, writing,

> The mythology of Ugarit … has been shown to be singularly independent from that of Mesopotamia. We must interpret the Canaanite myth within its own cultural and geographical context rather than attempting to fit the various pieces into a predetermined Mesopotamian framework. While there may indeed be some similarity

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[114] Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, BJSUCSD 8 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003).

[115] Green, *Storm-God*, 93. Green pointed out that the "earliest Storm-god of the Anatolian Highlands who can be identified by name is the Hurrian Storm-god, Teshub." He added, the "first inscriptional evidence of Teshub as the high god of the Hurrians comes from the time of Su-Sin of Ur III [2100–1950 BCE]." Green, *Storm-God*, 129.

[116] Green argued that the Baal Myth Cycle tablets should be dated between 1400 and 1350 BCE based on references to Niqmad of Ugarit and Suppiluliuma of the Hittites. More recently, Aaron Tugendhaft has argued for a late thirteenth century date of composition. Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 30. Cf. Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 48–49.

[117] Green, *Storm-God*, 176.

[118] Green dated *Enuma Elish* to 1100 BCE, following the work of W. G. Lambert in W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadrezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of T. J. Meek*, ed. W. S. McCullogh (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 3–13.

> in form, this need not imply a similarity in function, either for the myth or for the deities involved.[119]

In his discussion of the relationship between Baal religion and Yahwism, Green claimed that the Israelite conception of Yahweh as Storm-god developed over almost half a millennia, from the time of Moses to the time of Elijah. He contended that "the warrior-god Yahweh"—the god of Moses and the emigrants from Egypt—"became syncretized first with Bull El, the Warrior-god of the pastoralists," that is, the god of "the earlier Israelites of the tribal league." Only after that, Green submitted, "the continuing process of assimilation resulted in ascribing to Yahweh the rain-producing characteristics of Baal, the warrior god of the farmers."[120] Thus, Green suggested, the conception of Yahweh in the time of Elijah was born of the syncretization of Moses's Yahweh with two native Canaanite deities. Resonating with Kloos's theory of Yahweh as the Israelite Baal, Green elaborated that no "[e]vidence of hostility" between Yahweh and Baal is evident until two centuries after the period of the Judges "when Yahweh alone was identified as the Israelite Storm-god."[121]

Green discussed the Song of the Sea as the first among seven Old Testament passages that "depict Yahweh as Storm-god, drawing on the imagery of Baal."[122] He argued that the writer of the Song was "consciously drawing on" the Baal Myth. Green elaborated, "Though the mythic language is somewhat restrained, the writer's description of Yahweh's power was quite consciously drawing on available West Semitic mythical symbols, terminologies, and patterns. The Song reveals a clear line of continuity with contemporary Canaanite mythopoeic literature."[123]

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[119] Green, *Storm-God*, 186.

[120] Green, *Storm-God*, 274.

[121] Green, *Storm-God*, 276.

[122] Green, *Storm-God*, 258. Among the other passages "dating from the twelfth to tenth centuries BCE," Green included Ps. 29, Hab. 3, Deut. 33, Ps. 19, 2 Sam. 22, Ps. 77:15–20, and Ps. 89. Green, *Storm-God*, 258–59.

Comparing the narrative scheme of the Baal Myth and the Song, Green drew the same conclusion which P. D. Miller had pioneered three decades earlier. The Song of the Sea, Green asserted, "borrowed Canaanite mythical patterns" "deriv[ed] from" the Ugaritic conflict myth, thus portraying Yahweh as the Israelite "Storm-god."[124] Green's elucidation of the Song's narrative and semantic parallels with the Baal Myth expands upon the conception of much prior scholarship and accurately expresses the current consensus on this relationship:[125]

> [T]he writer's portrayal of Yahweh's triumph is influenced by Canaanite motifs deriving from the mythical conflict between the Storm-god Baal and Yam/Nahar.… Like other cosmic Storm-gods of the ancient Near East, Yahweh the Warrior achieves his great victory at the sea and then marches victoriously to his sacred mountain and takes possession of his sanctuary, har *naḥălātĕkā mākôn lĕšibtĕkā*, escorted by his followers. Yahweh then rightfully assumes his kingship, which he will possess forever. This progression of events is a familiar motif in Canaanite mythology. Even though the mythic language is not as effusive as in the Ugaritic texts, it is apparent that the Song of the Sea has borrowed Canaanite mythical patterns. Similarly, in the Canaanite sources Baal's victory over Yam is followed by all of these activities, including inheriting and building a temple on a sacred mountain, *btk.ġyh.il.ṣpn.bqdš. bġr.nḥlty*, "within my mountain divine Ṣaphon, in the holy place, in *the mountain of* my inheritance." This [is the] mythical concept of a deity assuming his throne in the land of his inheritance.[126]

Thomas Dozeman (2009)

In his 2009 Exodus commentary, Thomas Dozeman distinctively forged beyond Miller and Green's explicit recognition of the Song's presentation of Yahweh as Storm-god. Dozeman novelly contended that the plague narrative and the prose account of the Sea Event also portray

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[123] Green, *Storm-God*, 260.

[124] Green, *Storm-God*, 261.

[125] Green's view is that intimated by Gray (1953), attested by Habel (1964), and codified by Cross (1968).

[126] Green, *Storm-God*, 261. Green observed that "[t]his mythical concept of a deity assuming his throne in the land of his inheritance is attributed to other deities in the Ugaritic texts as well." Green, *Storm-God*, 261. He mentions Mot (*UT* 51: VIII: 12–14; 67: II 15–16 [KTU 1.4 viii: 12–14; 5 ii: 15–16]) and Kothar and Khasis (*UT* ʻnt VI: 14–16 [KTU 1.3 vi: 14–16]). Green, *Storm-God*, 261 n171. Notably, neither Mot nor Kothar-wa-Hasis are Storm-gods.

Yahweh as a warring Storm-god resembling the Syro-Canaanite Baal.[127] He argued that this portrayal of Yahweh extends from the plague of hail all the way through the celebration of Yahweh's victory in Exodus 15. In short, Dozeman suggested that Yahweh behaves like a Storm-god, particularly Baal-zephon, all the way from Exodus 9 to Exodus 15.

To make this case, Dozeman initially recognized the "intensification" of the plague narrative in the plague of hail episode. The "most significant development" causing this intensification, he asserted, "is that Yahweh is presented as the Storm God."[128] "Hail is the weapon of the Storm God," Dozeman declared.[129] He added, "The imagery of the storm god suggests an invasion of Yahweh into the land of Egypt through the plague of hailstorm. The point of emphasis in the plague is on war."[130]

For Dozeman, the intensification begun with the plague of hail continues with the plague of locusts: "Locusts continue the attack of Yahweh, the Storm God, against Pharaoh and the land of Egypt," he wrote.[131] Dozeman noted that in the prophet Joel locusts signal the coming of the Day of Yahweh. He surmised the same for the exodus plague, writing, "[A]s in the case of Joel, the locusts are a portent of coming events that represent the terrible Day of Yahweh for the Egyptians."[132]

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[127] In his discussion of the third plague cycle (hail, locusts, and darkness) and its narrative continuity with the Sea Event, Dozeman described the writer's depiction of Yahweh as the portrayal of a Storm-god. In his discussion of the plague of hail, Dozeman explicitly likened Yahweh to the "Canaanite Baal." Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 235.

[128] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 234.

[129] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 247.

[130] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 235.

[131] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 241.

[132] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 241.

Citing the "prophetic parallels,"[133] Dozeman identified the plague of darkness as the onset of the Day of Yahweh. He delineated its extent, explaining that "[t]he Day of Yahweh will progress through the death of the Egyptian firstborn and the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea."[134] Dozeman held the same endpoint for the account's presentation of Yahweh as Storm-god. He concluded, "The motif of Yahweh as the warring Storm God will continue through the defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, which will conclude with the hymn of victory in 15:1–18, which praises Yahweh as the Warrior God."[135]

In his discussion of Exodus 14–15, Dozeman, like Batto, originally emphasized a cosmogonic reading of the Sea Event, focusing on creation over kingship.[136] In keeping with both this cosmogonic reading and the exilic or post-exilic context of P, Dozeman argued that the chief mythological influence on the P History of the Sea Event was *Enuma Elish*. On the other hand, he asserted that the non-P History reflected the Baal Myth. He summarized, "The Non-P and P Histories employ different traditions of the chaotic sea to describe the destruction of Pharaoh. The Non-P History reflects the Canaanite myth of Baal and Yamm-Nahar, while the P History is influenced more by the Babylonian myth of Marduk, who splits Tiamat."[137]

Dozeman detailed the pervasive influence of the Baal Myth on the Song, writing, "The Song of the Sea is rich in literary allusion to the Canaanite mythology of the storm god Baal."[138] Like Cross and his students, as well as Smith and Pitard, and Green before him, Dozeman traced the narrative, motif, and semantic parallels:

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[133] Besides his references to Joel, Dozeman mentions Amos 5:20, Zeph. 1:15, and Isa. 8:22; 58:10, and 59:9. See Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 247.

[134] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 247.

[135] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 238.

[136] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 298.

[137] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 300.

[138] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 335.

> The Song of the Sea follows the pattern of Baal's conflict with Yamm-Nahar. It too progresses from conflict to enthronement on a divine mountain, and it includes an account of conquest to create an empire.[139] Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh in the sea (15:1–12) leads to the conquest of people (15:13–16) and the enthronement of God on the "mountain of inheritance," a cosmological image for the sanctuary (15:17–18). The Song of the Sea includes phrases from the mythology of Baal. Yahweh's victory over the enemy leads to the proclamation of an eternal kingship, "Yahweh will reign forever and ever!" (15:18), as it does for Baal (CTA 2.iv.10, 32). The designation of Yahweh's sanctuary as "the mountain of inheritance" and "the place of dwelling" (Exod 15:17) is also applied to the temples of Canaanite gods (CTA 1.iii.1; 3.F.16; 4.viii.12-13).[140]

Utzschneider and Oswald (2014)

Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald's 2014 commentary shared Dozeman's views on Exodus's portrayal of Yahweh as a Storm-god resembling Baal. Utzschneider and Oswald postulated that Yahweh's action in the plague of hail episode, in particular, "implies the type of deity known as the Syrian storm and weather god." "YHWH," they clarified, "is portrayed with attributes of the weather God, on the one hand, and the God of Sinai, on the other."[141]

Like Dozeman, Utzschneider and Oswald also maintained that the exodus narrative bears "intertextual relation to the mythical narratives from Ugarit and Babylon."[142] Departing from Dozeman, however, they saw the canonical account of the Sea Event not as a cosmogony but as politico-religious propaganda. In their words, Exodus 14–15 is a "theo-political" text "bring[ing] to light the power relations among the nations, and their order."[143] That is, "by drawing upon the language of myths," the Old Testament not only legitimizes Israel's politico-religious status, it also legitimizes the Old Testament.[144] Utzschneider and Oswald summed up the purpose of the exodus account's appropriation of ancient Near Eastern mythology: "Political theology takes the place of myth."[145]

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[139] Dozeman was referring to the *Baal Cycle*'s account of Baal's triumphal march through human cities and his conquest over them following his victory over Yamm but prior to the construction of his temple on Mount Zaphon.

[140] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 335–36.

[141] Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1–15* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2014), 188. Utszchneider and Oswald present a false dichotomy here between YHWH as Storm-god and YHWH as God of Sinai. A better view is to recognize the Pentateuch's consistent portrayal of YHWH as Storm-god, including in the Sinai theophanies.

[142] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 285.

As for the relation between Exodus 14 and 15, Utzschneider and Oswald recognized no correlation between the Baal-zephon cultic site and the mythological parallels in the Song. They merely mentioned that "'Baal-zephon' refers to a 'filial sanctuary of the Syrian-Ugaritic weather God' Baal, who had also been venerated in Egypt since the second millennium BCE."[146]

Lastly, Utzschneider and Oswald attempted to determine the source of the Baal-zephon references in Exod. 14:2 and 9. Assigning these verses to the Priestly redaction,[147] they located the Sea Event at one of the Baal-zephon sites uncovered by Egyptology.[148] They suggested that the reason for Exodus 14's geographical specificity was precise Priestly knowledge of Egyptian geography. "Hebrew authors in the middle of the [first] millennium had relatively precise local knowledge of Egypt, whether based on their own experience or through reports."[149]

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[143] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 285.

[144] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 285. They explained, "It seems to us that by drawing upon the language of myths the Old Testament is claiming to be equal to them in status. Just like the myths of Israel's neighbors, the theo-political texts of the narrative of the miracle of the sea ground the relation of the narrator and his addressees to God and the world and stabilize it." Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 285.

[145] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 285.

[146] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 299. Here they quote Manfred Gorg.

[147] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 295.

[148] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 295, 299.

[149] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 299–300. Utzschneider and Oswald speculated that this knowledge might have come to the Priestly redactor through emigration to Egypt. "If nothing else, this is due to considerable emigration from Judea to Egypt during this period. The narrative here draws upon this acquired local knowledge." Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 300.

Shawn Flynn (2014)

In his 2014 study of the development of divine kingship in ancient Israel, Shawn Flynn also recognized the Song of the Sea's parallels with the Baal Myth. He argued that they demonstrate Israel's early adoption of "the Ugaritic-Canaanite model of kingship," which he described as "a warrior model," of "limited" kingship.[150] Flynn thereby positioned himself in alignment with the majority of scholars of the Song who have identified "kingship" through "conflict," not creation, to be its central thrust.[151]

In his treatment of the Baal Myth's impact on the Song, Flynn claimed that the Song "develops from its Canaanite echoes."[152] Specifically, Flynn contended that Exodus 15 functions to supplant Baal and the Baal Myth. He submitted that Exodus 15 "impl[ies] the displacement of Baal in favor of YHWH as the one who is more powerful than the sea."[153] "[T]he Song," he concluded, "is attempting to supplant … the Baal tradition."[154]

Notably, Flynn's suggestion of Exodus 15's intent to supplant the Baal tradition was based on reading the Song in isolation from its canonical context. Thus, departing from Dozeman, Flynn confined Yahweh's Baal-like action to the Song's narrative. Yahweh's "sphere of authority," he said "is [merely] over the storm,"[155] a fact which, in Flynn's view, underscored Yahweh's Baal-like limited kingship. At the same time, Flynn did not see the conflict within the

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[150] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 48–49. Flynn clarified the "Ugaritic-Canaanite model" of divine kingship which he saw evinced in the Song, writing, "The poem presents YHWH's kingship as an early warrior deity, with a limited sphere of kingship, and a kingship devoid of creation language." Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 49.

[151] Namely, Habel, Gray, the Albright School (Cross, Clifford, Miller), Kloos, Day, and Smith and Pitard.

[152] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 53.

[153] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 53.

[154] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 54.

[155] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 53.

Song as depicting a direct confrontation with a rival god, whether Yamm or Baal, in a discrete historical event. Instead, similarly to Cross and Day, he observed in the Song a development beyond the Ugaritic conflict myth, that is, a "shift to a battle with the human king rather than another god."[156]

James Anderson (2015)

In his 2015 *Monotheism and Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal*, James Anderson focused on the Old Testament's presentation of the relationship between Yahweh and Baal. He contended that Israel's eventual monotheism was the product of Yahweh's gradual appropriation of Baal's attributes. This appropriation, he explained, was revealed in the biblical account through anti-Baal polemics. "[P]olemics were a means of displaying appropriation," he said; that is, "Yahweh's appropriation of the domain of all other deities formerly worshipped in Israel and Judah," and "advancing monotheism."[157]

Anderson surveyed the bulk of the anti-foreign-god polemics throughout the Old Testament, concluding that, "There are more polemics directed against Baal in the Hebrew Bible than against any other."[158] He defined anti-Baal polemical texts as "instances where Yahweh takes over Baal's domain."[159] More specifically, he said that these texts function in one of two ways: in the case of Baal polemics, either these texts "display that Yahweh presides over" Baal's domains, or "they presuppose that Yahweh always had dominion over the elements of" Baal.[160] In essence, Anderson suggested, if a passage displays Yahweh's native ownership or appropriation of Baal's domains, the passage contains an anti-Baal polemic.

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[156] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 57.

[157] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 43.

[158] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 47.

[159] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 47.

[160] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 45.

At the heart of his study, Anderson laid out a very simple typology for determining a polemical text, anti-Baal or otherwise. An "explicitly polemical" text, he delineated, "condemn[s] another god overtly, or by means of some clues which, taken together, disparage any deity aside from Yahweh and reveal … the appropriation of the numen being disparaged." An "implicitly polemical" text, on the other hand, disparages a deity and reveals appropriation of the deity's domain "by implication."[161]

When bringing his typology to Exodus 14–15, Anderson suggested that "the parting of the Sea of Reeds by Moses and the parting of the waters of the Jordan by Joshua, Elijah and Elisha belong to [the] polemical motif" of "Yahweh's representative tak[ing] over Baal's control of the waters of chaos."[162] However, following McCurley and Batto, Anderson also contended that this motif "also recall[s] the splitting of Tiamat, the sea dragon of the Babylonian creation."[163] Anderson was unwilling to credit the biblical writer with direct knowledge of the Ugaritic or Babylonian conflict myth, but he recognized that the Israelites were "immersed" in a cultural milieu in which such knowledge was fundamental. He speculated, "The biblical writers may not have had access to Ugaritic and Babylonian texts as we do, but they were immersed in a world founded upon the mythological themes recorded in these texts."[164]

Applying his typology specifically to the Baal-zephon site reference in Exod. 14:2, Anderson acknowledged as a matter of principle, "Any passage that places Yahweh in relation to

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[161] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 43.

[162] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71.

[163] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71.

[164] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71–72.

Zaphon is likely to be a claim for Yahweh to Baal's domain."[165] Yet Anderson remained noncommital on the significance of the Baal-zephon reference; he simply called it "striking." He ended his discussion of Exod. 14:2 with questions, writing quizzically, "In light of the clear association of Mount Zaphon with Baal, the mention of a Baal-zephon in Egypt (Exod. 14:2) is striking. Does it refer to an actual toponym, an Egyptian branch of the North-Syrian cult? Or does it transpose Baal's dwelling in Egypt to fit the framework of the Exodus?"[166]

Debra Scoggins Ballentine (2015)

In her 2015 *The Conflict Myth and Biblical Tradition*, Debra Scoggins Ballentine focused on the general ideological function of conflict myths, among which she placed the narrative of Exodus 14.[167] Reminiscent of Utzschneider and Oswald's concept of "theo-political" texts, Ballentine analyzed how conflict myths were employed in ancient West Asian cultures to do ideological work, that is, to legitimate particular divine and human hierarchies. She explained, "Each [conflict myth] narrative … promotes a particular deity at the expense of another deity." "Beyond this ideological work," she said, "we have differing amounts of evidence for use of these narratives to promote the institution of temple, specific localities, and individuals."[168] Echoing Day and Anderson, Ballentine suggested that one form which the ideological employment of conflict myths could take was legitimation through appropriation. Ancient West

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[165] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[166] Anderson seems to mean that the biblical writer transfers Baal's temple from northern Syria to Egypt as if, as Kloos had argued, Yahweh had become the Israelite Baal. Whatever the case, Anderson admits that "Exodus 14 does not associate Yahweh with Baal-zephon," and therefore "any type of transference" is unlikely. Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[167] Ballentine referred to what I have been calling the conflict myth by three categories: the "conflict myth" is used to refer to "whole narrative[s]"; "conflict motif" refers to "recurring" instances of the conflict "theme" "outside of a whole narrative"; and "conflict topos" is the umbrella term encompassing all instances of the conflict myth or motif. Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 14.

[168] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 68.

Asian cultures would redirect allegiance to their particular god through the appropriation of another god's "themes." In particular, Ballentine cited Dina Katz's argument that Ninurta, the Sumerian Storm-god's "themes" were appropriated for Marduk in an attempt "at redirecting religious activity from Nippur to Babylon."[169] She also noted Wilfred Lambert's study of the Sumerian Storm-god, Ninurta, in which Lambert observed that Marduk's list of enemies was patterned after Ninurta's.[170] Ballentine concluded that "[t]he adaptation of Ninurta-centered traditions for the purposes of promoting Marduk and Babylon" reveals "a conscious flexibility in the taxonomy of the conflict topos."[171] Ballentine implied that in the conflict myths of ancient West Asia appropriation of another god's domain or achievements for one's own god was admissible, even common; moreover, such appropriation, she intimated, did not necessarily indicate syncretism.

Ballentine's discussion of the Baal Myth, in particular, affirmed the centrality of the "kingship through conflict" theme, a notion which, as we have seen, pervaded past scholarship. Contra the scholars who have categorized the Baal Myth as a cosmogony, Ballentine asserted, "The Ugaritic Baʿlu Cycle narrates the rise of the storm deity Baʿlu Haddu to kingship after he defeats the sea deity Yammu (literally, 'Sea'). … [T]here is now general agreement that the narrative is about Baʿlu's rise to power."[172]

Later in her monograph, Ballentine expounded on the "kingship of the gods" through

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[169] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 35. Ballentine is paraphrasing Dina Katz in Dina Katz, "Reconstructing Babylon: Recycling Mythological Traditions Towards a New Theology," in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident*, ed. Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess, and Joachim Marzahn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 133–34.

[170] Wilfred G. Lambert, "Ninurta Mythology in the Babylonian Epic of Creation," in *Keilschriftliche Literaturen: Ausgewahlte Vortrage der XXXII. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Munster, 8–12 Juli 1985*, eds. Karl Hecker and Walter Sommerfield (Berlin: D. Weimer, 1986), 56.

[171] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 35.

[172] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 48.

"conflict" theme in the Baal Myth and in other West Asian conflict myths more precisely than any scholar before her. She described the heart of the conflict topos as the legitimating and delegitimating of power. "Every example" of the conflict topos, she asserted, "bears a legitimating/delegitimating ideology, functioning to validate a particular divine and/or social-political hierarchy."[173] Ballentine's explanation of the legitimating function of the conflict myth defined the conflict myth and illuminated its ideological potential, particularly here the conflict myth's employment to justify the dominion of one's god:

> The theme of combat among deities is prominent in ancient West Asian literature: a warrior deity defeats an enemy, most often the sea or sea-based superhuman figures, and attains kingship. The victory of the divine warrior is used to justify his dominion, that is, the divine warrior attains power that is proven via narrative to be legitimate through his success in combat. Within narratives and epitomes of the warrior deity's rise to power, the implications of victory for the god's authority (victory indicates legitimate and rightfully attained power) are asserted and naturalized. Any god portrayed in the role of the victorious warrior deity is thus shown to possess legitimate power—this is the primary ideological work accomplished through the conflict topos. … Authors claim that these deities [Ninurta, Marduk, Assur, Baʿlu, Adad of Aleppo, and Yahweh] have legitimate divine authority by referencing or elaborating their victory over foes, prowess in battle, and/or superiority over the sea or sea-based figures.[174]

When Ballentine applied her theoretical framework to Exodus 14–15, she resisted identifying the Song of the Sea as a conflict myth. By definition, she contended, a conflict myth requires battle between two superhuman entities, usually the Storm-god against "the Sea or sea-based superhuman figures"; she saw Yahweh's conflict in the Song as solely with Pharaoh and the Egyptian army.[175] Channeling Cross, Ballentine asserted, "In the 'Song of Moses,' the sea is not divided or dried up, and the people do not cross through it. Rather, Yahweh throws the Egyptian enemy into the sea, and the sea/deeps cover them (Exod. 15:4–5, 10). There is no violence toward the sea, only toward the Egyptian enemy, and Yahweh uses the waters as a tool to kill the Egyptians."[176]

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[173] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 189.

[174] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 189.

[175] Ballentine wrote, "The story of exodus, including the Reed Sea event, describes Yahweh acting on behalf of the people (*hā ʿām*), identified as 'Israel' and the 'children of Israel,' against the Egyptian king and people. References to this story, however, sometimes show that the event was reconceived as a conflict between Yahweh and the Reed Sea, rather than Yahweh and only the Egyptian king and his army. The incorporation of the conflict

On the other hand, Ballentine recognized that references to the exodus story in later biblical traditions—including what she deemed P's rendering in Exodus 14—"reconceived [the Sea Event] as a conflict between Yahweh and the Reed Sea."[177] Due to appearances of the verb בָּקַע (split, divide) in Exod. 14:16 and 21, Cross had understood the prose account of the Sea Event as one of the passages depicting Yahweh's violence against the Sea. Ballentine concurred with Cross's reading, asserting, "The P portion states that Moses divides the sea and the Israelites pass through the sea on dry ground, between two walls of water (Exod. 14:16, 21C–22, 26, 29). … Thus, the P revision of Exod 14 portrays Yahweh acting violently toward the sea as well as human enemies."[178] Hence, Ballentine recognized Exodus 14's account of the Sea Event as a conflict myth. However, she expressed the ideological significance of this later "incorporation of the conflict motif within depictions of the Reed Sea event" without reference to Yahweh's legitimacy: It helps portray "the Egyptian king and army as illegitimate," she said.[179]

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motif within depictions of the Reed Sea event adds to the portrayal of the Egyptian king and army as illegitimate." Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 92.

[176] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 95.

[177] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 92. In her discussion of Exod. 14–15, Ballentine contrasted the historical nature of these later Reed Sea traditions, which incorporated the conflict myth, with other West Asian conflict myths. She wrote, "[A]mong surviving texts, the biblical materials are distinct (and possibly innovative) in pinning divine combat to a specific moment, in the exodus story or contemporary context." Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 93.

[178] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 95.

[179] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 92.

Brian Russell (2017)

Three years after Shawn Flynn's assertion of the Song of the Sea's supplanting of the Baal tradition, Brian D. Russell published an unmistakable endorsement of the same position. In "The Song of the Sea and the Subversion of Canaanite Myth: A Missional Reading," Russell compiled the frequently attested textual evidence for the Song's conscious paralleling of the Baal Myth, acknowledging that "the argument for the connection between Exodus 15:1b–18 and the Baal Cycle does not stand on any one specific piece of data but on the preponderance of evidence."[180] As myriad scholars had before him, Russell cited the "broad narrative parallels with the Baal Cycle."[181] He asserted, the "Song of the Sea narrates the deliverance at the sea, YHWH's guidance of his people to his holy mountain, and final acclamation of YHWH's kingship in roughly the same order as Baal's story."[182] Russell also adduced the commonly observed "two striking linguistic ties that link these two ancient poems," mentioning the shared terminology for the gods' mountain sanctuary—"mountain of inheritance"—as well as the similar language for the "acclamation of kingship" in Exod. 15:18a and CAT 1.2 IV: 32 and 34–35.[183]

Russell then described the purpose of the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth as the "subversion of Baal and the elevation of King YHWH."[184] The parallels, Russell implied, illuminate the contrasts between Baal and Yahweh and ultimately underscore Yahweh's incomparability and the goods news of Yahweh's kingship. In Russell's words, "By deploying language and narrative patterns common to Canaanite religion, the Song of the Sea presents the

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[180] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 147.

[181] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 147.

[182] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 147.

[183] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 148.

[184] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 148.

Gospel of YHWH."[185] Russell described four contrasts which "serve as key elements of the Song of the Sea's strategy for undercutting the ideological claims of Baal's story"[186] and thereby illuminating the good news of Yahweh's. First, Russell noted "the subversion of the powers behind the gods."[187] That is, according to Russell, in the Exodus account Yahweh is the only God who acts and controls the realms thought to be the domains of other gods. Secondly, the Song evinces the "historicization of Canaanite mythic themes."[188] While Baal operates in a heavenly realm, the "good news of the Song of the Sea is the reality that it occurs in human space and time."[189] In other words, Yahweh is intimately concerned with the affairs of the earth. Thirdly, in contrast to the Baal Myth, the Song of the Sea presents "a pro-human vision." Whereas Baal and his sister Anat conduct a bloody rampage against the only human beings mentioned in the Baal Cycle, Yahweh has a loving relationship with his people and delivers them from their enemies. Moreover, rather than maintaining the socio-political status quo, a key function of ANE conflict myths, Yahweh "intercedes, creates, and guides a people who were the opposite of connected and prosperous."[190] In addition, in contrast to Baal who only invites other gods to his mountain sanctuary, Yahweh "desires a relationship with this delivered people." Russell clarified the novelty in the Song's portrayal of Yahweh's relationship with his people. "In Exodus 15:13 and 17," Yahweh even "brings God's people to the dwelling place of God. This is unprecedented." Russell concluded, "We can easily miss the power here. The Song of the

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[185] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[186] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[187] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[188] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[189] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[190] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 150.

Sea not only tells the story of a different kind of god—one who engages our world in order to deliver a people to himself, but it also emphasizes that YHWH the true King (15:18) in fact desires the sort of relationship with God's people that the Near Eastern myths reserved for members of the divine pantheon."[191] Altogether, said Russell, the Song of the Sea's subversion of other gods, historicization of mythic themes, and pro-human vision are intended to demonstrate "YHWH's incomparability" and the "true security" which only He, the breaker of the mythic cycle of life and death, can provide.[192] In the end, although Russell, like Flynn, avoids the term, Russell appears to view the Song of the Sea as an anti-Baal polemic, that is, as a pointed expression of Yahweh's superiority over Baal.

Aaron Tugendhaft (2018)

In his 2018 *Baal and the Politics of Poetry*, Aaron Tugendhaft contributed another study focused on a conflict myth's ideological function. In Tugendhaft's case, study was directed toward the particular ideological intention of the *Baal Cycle*'s author within the specific politics of the time of the work's composition. Specifically, Tugendhaft argued that the *Baal Cycle* was an original composition of the early twelfth century BCE in which Ilimilku, an intensely politically involved Ugaritic official and scribe, offered not a fortification (in the vein of Ballentine) but a critique of Bronze Age political theology, namely a theology in support of the grounding of kingship in divine favor.[193]

Although Tugendhaft was not concerned directly with the relationship of the Baal Myth to the Bible, let alone the account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15, his study has still contributed key insights to the scholarly discussion of this relationship. Like Ballentine, Tugendhaft reinforced the position that the Baal Myth is essentially about "the struggle for kingship among the gods."[194] Sharply distinguishing the Baal Myth from *Enuma Elish*, Tugendhaft asserted, "the *Baal Cycle* is not a cosmogony."[195] He reiterated, "Baal's victory has no cosmogonic implications."[196] It is a "noncosmogonic employment of the topos of divine battle against the sea."[197] Secondly, Tugendhaft affirmed the thesis highlighted by Kloos that the "Israelites were of Canaanite origin" and thus, Tugendhaft implied, should be expected to evince cultural continuity with the Canaanites. Thirdly, Tugendhaft directed attention toward "the nitty-gritty of historical context," recognizing, as Ballentine had, the importance of interpreting texts, even mythologically associated ones, in a particular historical context.[198] Echoing Ballentine, Tugendhaft added that the Ugaritic authors exercised "some freedom" to adapt "the received mythic motif to their own purposes."[199] Thus, the Ugaritic poet could develop a "political message" through a "specific manipulation of the combat motif."[200]

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[191] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 150.

[192] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 150.

[193] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 7.

Perhaps most importantly for this study, Tugendhaft foregrounded one of the earliest epigraphic evidences of Egyptian Baal-zephon worship still extant, the Egyptian papyrus known as "Astarte and the Tribute to the Sea."[201] As Tugendhaft explained, not only does this document demonstrate Egyptian knowledge of the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, but its recently rediscovered prologue (in 2000 CE) attests intimate knowledge of the Baal Myth and personal adoration of Seth/Baal-zephon by Amenhotep II, the New Kingdom pharaoh of the mid-fifteenth century BCE. Eighty-six years after Eissfeldt, then, Tugendhaft clarified that Seth-Baal, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, was being worshipped by the Egyptians and emulated by the pharaoh in the fifteenth century BCE as the Storm-god who defeated the Sea to thwart the Sea's tyranny over the gods and become their champion.[202]

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[194] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 6.

[195] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 64.

[196] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 79.

[197] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 79.

[198] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 28–29.

[199] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 57.

[200] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 57. The idea that the Song's writer is developing a particular "political message" through a "specific manipulation of the combat motif" is precisely what I am arguing in this dissertation.

[201] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 92.

Paul K. K. Cho (2019)

In his 2019 *Myth, History, and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, Paul K. K. Cho offered one of the most recent treatments of the relationship between the Baal Myth and the Sea Event, along with an assessment of this relationship's implications for interpreting Exodus 14–15. Cho's central premise for understanding the relationship between the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15 and ancient Near Eastern conflict myths ("the sea myth") was that the relationship "is metaphorical."[203] His corresponding "new method" for analyzing this relationship was largely an adoption of Paul Ricoeur's "tensive theory of metaphor."[204] Fundamentally, Ricoeur maintained that metaphor describes reality, but, while describing reality, also creates it.[205] In short, Cho believed that Exodus's description of the Sea in Exodus 14–15 is metaphorical and therefore, by Ricoeur's theory, the Sea can refer both to the historico-geographical waterway and the Sea dragon of mythology, the latter being the new reality the Sea metaphor has created.

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[202] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 92–93. I credit Tugendhaft's work for alerting me to the Egyptological scholarship of Collombert and Coulon in Philippe Collombert and Laurent Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer: Le début du 'papyrus d'Astarte' (pBN 202)," *BIFAO* 100 (2000): 193–242.

[203] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 10. "Sea myth" is Cho's name for what Ballentine called the "conflict myth" or "combat myth." See Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 1.

[204] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 10.

[205] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 37–38.

To justify applying Ricoeur's tensive theory of metaphor to the Song of the Sea, Cho needed first to establish the Song's metaphorical nature. Namely, as Cho himself admitted, he had to demonstrate that the Song presented Yam Suph as the Baal Myth's Yamm or the *Enuma Elish*'s Tiamat. The "mythological identity" of the Sea was essential, he said, for the biblical writer to employ it to "depict a historical event" as well as a mythological battle.[206] Cho's attempt led him to argue, echoing Batto, that the *těhôm* (deeps) in Exod. 15:8b alludes to *Enuma Elish*'s Tiamat and that Yam Suph "refers to the cosmological sea at the End."[207] Cho went on to describe Yahweh's battle in the Song as displaying a fusion of the influences of the Baal Myth and *Enuma Elish*. Specifically, Cho depicted Yahweh's control of the Sea (in terms of the Baal Myth) as assum[ing] the slaughter of Yamm."[208] He then explained the rhetorical action of the "poet" of the Song (in terms of *Enuma Elish*) as "split[ing] the mythic Yamm into two and transfer[ring] Yamm's enmity to historical Egypt but Yamm's power to the spatial sea."[209] Cho concluded with questions, implying the need to jettison the mythicization-historicization opposition in interpretations of the Song: "Now, if the sea in the Song is not Yamm, or not fully Yamm, what or who is it? What exactly is its relationship to the mythic world whence it came and the historical reality in which it now resides? Can such binary categories describe the sea?[210]

Later, Cho more clearly expressed his challenge to what he saw as the false dilemma of the mythicization-historicization opposition dominating scholarly discussions of the Song. He asserted that “the poet of the Song at the Sea so utterly fuses the two frames of reference, myth and history, as to frustrate all attempts to locate the plane of origin, whether we are here dealing with history that has been mythicized or myth that has been historicized.”[211] He concluded with Ricoeurian paradoxes, “The sea is Yamm and is not Yamm. … [T]he Sea Event is myth and is not myth, history and not history.”[212] Cho’s most lucid delineation of his position came near the close of his book: “To summarize,” he wrote, “in the Song at the Sea, God does not battle his cosmic, aquatic foe. The defeat of Sea is a silent assumption of the radical Song. Rather, YHWH fights a historical enemy, Egypt, at the sea.”[213]

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[206] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 192.

[207] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 199–202.

[208] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 127.

[209] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 127.

[210] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 127.

One of Cho’s chief contributions to the discussion of the sea myth’s (i.e., conflict myth’s) influence on the Bible, including its account of the Sea Event, was to recognize the deep structural relationship between the sea myth and the overarching narrative arc of the Enneateuch. Cho asserted that the Bible does not contain sea myths analogous to Ugarit or Babylon, but that the Song of the Sea, in particular, does adopt the sea myth’s motifs and, most importantly, mirrors the sea myth in its main plotline, that is, in its *muthos*.[214] Cho suggested that the Song’s narrative, paralleling the sea myth, arcs from the Sea Event all the way to Yahweh’s establishment of his people in and/or around his temple. In Cho’s words,

> [T]he sea myth—its *lexis*, themes, and *muthos*—color and shape the presentation and conceptualization of the Song at the Sea and adumbrate the plot of the larger narrative that stretches from Genesis to Kings, the so-called Enneateuch. … The sea myth[’s] *muthos* [endures] as the framework of the long arc of Israel’s history from birth to

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[211] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 133–34.

[212] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 134.

[213] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 215.

[214] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 18–19. Cho described the *muthos* of a story as “the events of the story set in their chronological order,” or “the skeletal frame of a story on which everything else hangs.” Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 34–35. Several times, Cho simply used *muthos* as a synonym for “plot.” Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 10, 18, 33.

> maturation: YHWH defeats the enemy at the sea, creates a people for himself, leads them to the temple his hands made, and reigns as king forever.[215]

Cho also identified polemics in Exodus's account of the Sea Event. He felt that one could "safely assume" that the Priestly treatment of the Song, evident in Exodus 14, is as an anti-Marduk polemic.[216] He argued that the Priestly redactor(s) would have "recognized the mythic dimension of the Song at the Sea" in the *tehomot* of Exod. 15:5 and 8 and seen "in it an opportunity [via 'rewriting the Sea Event'] to resurrect the specter of the chaos monster and to slay it once again as an affirmation of YHWH as creator—over against the claim of their Babylonian overlords for Marduk."[217]

Cho was more hesitant in suggesting possible anti-Baal polemic in the Song of the Sea. But in closing his analysis, Cho speculated that the Song's composer "perhaps" was employing the sea myth in an anti-Baal polemic. Noting the poet's emphasis in Exod. 15:17 on Yahweh's "agency in making (פָּעַל) and establishing (כון) the sanctuary," Cho conjectured that this emphasis might be intended to extol Yahweh over Baal (who inferiorly needed permission and help to build his Temple) as the incomparable one.

> The poet emphasizes YHWH's agency … perhaps to make clear that YHWH required neither permission from a higher authority (from El) nor help (from Anat and Athirat) nor assistance (from Kothar), as did Baal, to build his sanctuary. The Baal Cycle or a native Israelite variant likely lies in the fraught background of the Song, but the poet transforms and innovates upon the sea myth to galvanize his representation of YHWH as the incomparable one (15:11).[218]

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[215] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor,* 111–12. According to Cho's parallel description, the salvation history metanarrative implied in the Song's *muthos* clearly has its endpoint in the Solomonic Temple. He said, "At the bottom of the layers of the Sea Event, lies the Song at the Sea in which Moses and the Israelites reveal in song the basic plot of Israel's history from her redemption from slavery under Pharaonic tyranny to grateful service at the Temple of YHWH the king; at the heart of the Song is the sea myth." Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor,* 172.

[216] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 221.

[217] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 221.

[218] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 211.

Finally, Cho, perhaps more than any scholar before him, perceived the hermeneutical aspect of the Sea Event, particularly in his discussion of the Yahwistic source. He described the "Yahwistic battle" as taking place not in the historical event but in "the perceiving mind of the Israelites" to whom Yahweh was seeking to "become visible." He wrote,

> According to the Yahwist … the Sea Event is a contest between God and Egypt for visual dominance, to be visible to and seen by Israel as the mastering power over her fate, indeed, as her king. Whereas the battle between God and Egypt in the Song at the Sea takes place in the mythic geography of the sea, the Yahwistic battle takes place offstage in the perceiving mind of the Israelites. … The contest between God and his foe has been moved from the physical to the hermeneutical sphere.[219]

Cho's perception of the hermeneutical contest for "visual dominance" posed by the Sea Event beacons a course through the turbulent sea of the past ninety years of scholarship on the Song and its prose framework. This survey has displayed the turbulence in scholarship on the Baal Myth's relationship to the account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15. Conflict continues over the precise nature of this relationship and over if and when the Baal Myth's influence was brought to bear on Israel's account of the Sea Event. This dissertation desires to navigate a course through these turbulent waters. In essence, I seek to split the roaring seas with a careful cut of Occam's razor, demonstrating the literarily and historically coherent picture which Exodus 14–15 presents of Yahweh, the Israelite Storm-god—the God who culminates his victory over all the gods of Egypt by appropriating Baal-zephon's historico-geographical domain to destroy and paralyze Baal's worshippers, rescue his own, and ultimately lead his people to a discrete, permanent mountain sanctuary whose eventual establishment in Israel's history will serve to *plant* their nation.[220] In the end, I hope to demonstrate that the Song and its prose framework function as the very kind of hermeneutically pointed polemical employment of the conflict myth which Cho intimated in his recent work.

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[219] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 216.

[220] See Exod. 15:17; Cf. 2 Sam. 7:6–7, 10; 1 Kgs. 8:13

CHAPTER THREE

THE SONG OF THE SEA'S DELIBERATE PARALLELING OF THE BAAL MYTH

The first premise in the argument for Exodus 14–15's anti-Baal polemical function is that the Song of the Sea evinces a deliberate paralleling of the Baal Myth. This is the current scholarly consensus, as attested by the historical survey above. Thus far, however, scholars have not substantiated this claim by means of any established methodology for intertextuality. In this chapter, I will attempt to bolster the scholarly consensus by employing Richard Hays's approach for determining intertextual echoes. Following the employment of Hays's methodology, which focuses on potential parallels between texts, I will analyze the relationship between the Song and the Baal Myth by means of William Hallo's "contextual approach" which seeks to balance this focus with an equal focus on contrasts.

Testing the Song's Relationship to the Baal Myth with Richard Hays's Methodology

Hays enumerates his criteria for determining the existence of an intertextual echo in order of importance, beginning with the most significant. His first criterion is "*availability*."[1] ("Was the proposed *traditium* actually available to the authors?"[2]) Due to the prevalence of Baal-zephon worship throughout the West Semitic world and in Egypt as early as the end of the Middle Kingdom, it is probable that the Israelite author of the Song of the Sea knew the Baal Myth. I will argue this point in more detail below. For now, I point preliminarily to the attestation of the Baal-zephon cult's pervasiveness by the Egyptologist Wolfgang Herrmann and the Old Testament scholar W.F. Albright. Hermann wrote, "The worship of Baal demonstrably pervaded the entire area inhabited by the Canaanites. During the period of the Middle Kingdom, if not earlier, the cult was adopted by the Egyptians, along with the cult of other Canaanite gods."[3] Albright made the same claim three decades earlier, asserting, "in [Baal-zephon's] honour temples were built and ports were named along the Mediterranean littoral as far as Egypt, where we find Baal-zephon worshipped at Tahpanhes (Daphne) and Memphis."[4] As for the Baal Myth, the Egyptian *Hearst Medical Papyrus*, dated to the early fifteenth century BCE, and the Egyptian *Astarte Papyrus*, dated to the mid-fifteenth century BCE, "attest to," in the words of Noga Ayali-Darshan, "the popularity this version (the version which "originated in the area around Mount Ṣaphon"[5]) enjoyed among the people of the ancient Near East during the second millennium BCE."[6] In light of the pervasiveness of Baal-zephon worship in the West Semitic world as well as in Egypt, and in view of the popularity of the conflict myth originating from northern Syria, it is likely that the Baal Myth was available to the Israelite author of the Song.

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[1] Hays, *Echoes*, 29.

[2] This question is Russell's rendering of Hays's criterion. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 102.

The second of Hays's criteria for determining an inter-textual echo is "*volume*." Hays explained that the "volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns" but also by "how distinctive or prominent … the precursor text [is] within Scripture."[7] Adapting Hays's criterion to extra-biblical parallels, I adduce the three word pairs shared by the *Baal Cycle* and the Song, as cited by Kloos,[8] as well as the cognate יָם (// *yamma*), which is central to both narratives. Another arguably “explicit repetition of words” is the parallel between 15:18’s יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד and KTU 1.2 IV’s *tiqqaḥu mulka ʻolamika / darkata dāta dārdārika* or *baʻlu-mi yamlu[ku]*.[9] The most notable semantic repetition is Exod. 15:17’s first epithet for Yahweh’s residence. It is the identical phrase used to describe Baal’s residence in the Baal Myth—הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ // *ġāri naḥlati-ya*.[10] Among extant ancient Near Eastern literature, this parallel is unique. To be clear, this exact phrase is only found in Exod. 15:17 and the Baal Myth (KTU 1.3 III 30, IV 20).

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[3] Wolfgang Herrmann, "Baal," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 133; cf. Meindert Dijkstra, "The Weather-God on Two Mountains," *UF* 23 (1991): 127–40.

[4] Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 127–28.

[5] Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 39.

[6] Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 50. Comparable myths are also evident in the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Ullikummi* and *the Song of Ḫedammu*. Ayali-Darshan anticipated the likelihood of more archaeological findings of the conflict myth: "It may be assumed in this regard that more findings belong to this widespread and popular account may well emerge, thereby providing further information concerning the Storm god's combat with the Sea." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 50.

[7] Hays, *Echoes*, 30.

It is notable that Hays developed his methodology originally to determine inter-textual echoes of Old Testament texts within the Pauline epistles. This particular focus may explain why his methodology does not address broader narrative parallels. If we expand Hays’s category of “syntactical patterns” to include patterns at the level of narrative, we can identify additional parallels between the Song and the Baal Myth. As evidenced in the preceding survey, over the past seven decades, scholars have identified a common “mythic pattern” composed of three motifs: combat with or at the Sea, sanctuary, and kingship. In the influential rendering of Frank

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[8] Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 133.

Brian Russell’s fifth chapter, “Linguistic and Comparative Evidence for the Dating of Exodus 15:1b–18,” contains Russell’s analysis of all of the Ugaritic linguistic influences on the Song of the Sea, including word pairs. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 59–73, esp. 71.

[9] Thou shalt take thy eternal kingship, [*tiqqaḥu mulka ʻolamika*]
Thy dominion forever and ever. [*darkata dāta dārdārika*]

CTA 1.2 IV. 9–10 = KTU 1.2 IV. 9–10. Translated by Cross in *Canaanite Myth*, 114.

Sea verily is dead; [*yamma la-mitu*]
Baʻl rules! (or “Baal will reign”; see Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 70.) [*baʻlu-mi yamlu[ku]*]

CTA 1.2 IV. 32–33 = KTU 1.2 IV. 32–33. Translated by Cross in *Canaanite Myth*, 116.

[10] CAT 1.3 III. 30, IV. 20.

Moore Cross, the Song evinces the pattern of "(1) the combat of the Divine Warrior and his victory at the Sea, (2) the building of a sanctuary on the 'mount of possession' won in battle, and (3) the god's manifestation of 'eternal' kingship."[11] This pattern, shared by the Baal Myth and the Song, was reiterated nearly verbatim in the works of Miller[12] and Kloos.[13] Gray similarly described how the god "won kingship in conflict with the power of Chaos typified by the unruly waters."[14] Habel called this pattern the "kingship sequence."[15] Day recognized the pattern in the Song's "association of the divine conflict at the sea with the kingship of God (Exod. 15:18) and the construction of the deity's mountain sanctuary."[16] Smith called it "the divine battle plus temple-building thematic complex."[17] Finally, Green described the Song's pattern as "a progression of events [which] is a familiar motif in Canaanite mythology." He asserted, "Like other cosmic Storm-gods of the ancient Near East, Yahweh the Warrior achieves his great victory at the sea and then marches victoriously to his sacred mountain and takes possession of his sanctuary, *har naḥălātĕkā mākôn lĕšibtĕkā*, escorted by his followers. Yahweh then rightfully assumes his kingship, which he will possess forever."[18] In short, the "kingship through conflict" pattern which the Song shares with the Ugaritic conflict myth increases the likelihood that the Song is alluding to this myth.

To adapt Hays's criterion of *volume* to scriptural "echoes" of extra-biblical texts, we might determine “how distinctive or prominent … the precursor text [is] within” the broader culture at the time of composition. To my knowledge, belief in the Baal cult’s prominence in Canaan during Israel’s occupation of the land is unassailable. One of the chief aims of this dissertation is to demonstrate the centrality of Baal-zephon worship, including knowledge of its governing narrative, in Egypt during the period of Israel’s sojourn there. This question will be taken up below.

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[11] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 142.

[12] Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 117.

[13] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 152.

[14] Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 11–12 n2.

[15] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 58.

[16] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 104.

[17] Smith, "Recent Study," 6.

[18] Green, *Storm-God*, 261.

Hays’s third criterion is “recurrence.” Here Hays is referring to a single author alluding to the same text in more than one of his own texts. In our case, “recurrence” would entail finding allusions to the Baal Myth in other texts purportedly authored by Moses. F. M. Cross discerned the imprint of the “Canaanite” old mythic “pattern” in Moses’s final blessing of Israel. Cross pointed to what he deemed the Baal-like march of the divine warrior in Deut. 33:2–3[19] and the Baal-like storm theophany in Deut. 33:26–29.[20] Especially notable is the explicit Baal-like Storm-god imagery which Moses uses to describe Yahweh in Deut. 33:26. Numerous passages in the Baal Myth describe Baal as the Cloud-rider (*lê-rākibi ʿurpati*),[21] just as Moses describes Israel’s God here:

אֵין כָּאֵל יְשֻׁרוּן	There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
רֹכֵב שָׁמַיִם בְּעֶזְרֶךָ	rider of heavens for your help,
וּבְגַאֲוָתוֹ שְׁחָקִים	and clouds in his majesty. (my translation)

A fourth criterion for determining the existence of an allusion is “thematic coherence.” Hays asks, “How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that [the speaker or author] is developing? … Do the images and ideas of the proposed precursor text illuminate [the speaker or author's] argument?"[22] We can take this criterion to the semantic parallels of יָם, הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ, and יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד and their role in the "kingship through conflict" theme which numerous scholars have observed in both narratives. As Habel had argued, the Baal Myth and the Song employ this common "kingship sequence"[23] "in the[ir] respective battles for divine kingship."[24] That is, he said, the "remarkably similar" … "thought sequence[s]" in the Baal Myth and Exodus 15 are intended to demonstrate, respectively, Baal and Yahweh's "eternal kingship among the gods."[25] More recently, Ballentine explained how "the primary ideological work accomplished through the conflict topos" is to demonstrate that the "warrior deity" … "possess[es] legitimate power" by showing him defeating "an enemy, most often the sea or sea-based superhuman figures, and attain[ing] kingship."[26] I will argue below that the Song of the Sea is functioning to establish, as Habel phrased it, Yahweh's "eternal kingship among the gods" and doing so opposite—that is, in the face of—Baal-zephon, the god legitimated by the Baal Myth.[27] Thus, the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth would strengthen the Song's argument that Yahweh is preeminent among the gods.

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[19] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 101.

[20] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 157.

[21] KTU 1.3 IV. 4, 27; 1.4 III. 11; 1.4 V. 60, etc.

Hays's fifth criterion is "historical plausibility." Richard Schultz helpfully renders this criterion with the question, "Is it likely that the later text would be understood [by its audience] as echoing an earlier text?"[28] Considering Israel's extensive sojourn in the East Nile Delta where Baal-zephon worship was central, as well as the extensive propagation of the Baal Myth throughout the West Semitic world and into Egypt, it is plausible that the Song's original Israelite hearers would have understood its intention to echo the Baal Myth. Moreover, the later employment of the Baal Myth in the Psalms and Isaiah to describe the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15 demonstrates that later Israelites clearly related the Sea Event to the conflict myth.[29]

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[22] Hays, *Echoes*, 30.

[23] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 58.

[24] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 62.

[25] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 54.

[26] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 189.

[27] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 54.

Hay's sixth criterion for determining the existence of inter-textual echoes is the "history of interpretation," which asks whether the parallel, or "echo," has been noticed in previous interpretations. The survey above illustrates the current scholarly consensus that the Song is dependent on the Baal Myth. In brief review: following the Ras Shamra discoveries, scholars were initially tentative in claiming direct dependency. Gray, for instance, wrote that the "cult-legend of the shrine of Baal Saphon … *might be well known* to the Israelites" and that it "*coloured the Exodus tradition* in oral transmission"[30] (italics added). Habel submitted that the biblical writer "*either consciously or unconsciously employed*" a "kingship sequence" which was "current in Canaanite cycles"[31] (italics added). More recent scholars have asserted the Song's conscious dependence on the Baal Myth with greater certainty. Clifford, for example, stated that the Song's "motif of the battle with the sea and probably the mount of heritage … *clearly* belong to the Baal tradition"[32] (italics added). Similarly, Kloos opined, "*it cannot be doubted* that the

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[28] Schultz, *Quotation*, 39.

[29] Psalm 74, Ps. 89, and Isa. 51. In these passages, Yahweh is presented as the Baal-like Storm-god who defeats the Sea (Yam) or the zoomorphization of the Sea in the form of a many-headed sea dragon called Leviathan or Rahab.

[30] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55.

[31] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 62–63.

[32] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 141.

Canaanite conception of the battle of the deity with Sea exercised a *direct* influence upon Israelite belief"[33] (italics added). For his part, Day observed the "influence of Baal's conflict with Yam on the depiction," noting, the Sea Event is "described in language reminiscent of that of Baal of Zaphon."[34] More recently, Green claimed that in the Song "the writer's description of Yahweh's power was *quite consciously drawing on* available West Semitic mythical symbols, terminologies, and patterns"[35] (italics added). The writer, Green concluded, "borrowed Canaanite mythical patterns" which were "deriv[ed] from the mythical conflict between the Storm-god Baal and Yam/Nahar."[36] Finally, Brian Russell summarized the evidence for this case in his 2017 article, "The Song of the Sea and the Subversion of Canaanite Myth: A Missional Reading." Noting, as others had, the "broad narrative parallels … as well as close linguistic ties,"[37] Russell acknowledged that the "argument for the connection between Exodus 15:1b–18 and the Baal Cycle does not stand on any one specific piece of data but on the preponderance of evidence."[38]

Hays's final criterion is "*satisfaction*:" "Does the proposed interpretation of the alluding text illuminate the surrounding discourse?"[39] This question is at the heart of what will follow. I will argue that understanding the Song of the Sea as a polemical parallel of the Baal Myth illuminates the account of the Sea Event's role in the conflict narrative arc of Exodus 1–15.

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[33] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 69.

[34] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 104.

[35] Green, *Storm-God*, 260.

[36] Green, *Storm-God*, 261.

[37] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 147.

[38] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 147.

[39] Schultz, *Quotation*, 39; a paraphrase of Hays, *Echoes*, 32.

Evaluating the Song's Relationship to the Baal Myth with William Hallo's Contextual Methodology

William Hallo's "contextual approach" seeks to balance scholarly focus on identifying parallels between ancient texts with an equal focus on identifying contrasts. His stated desire is "not to repudiate the comparative approach," an approach typified in the identification of literary parallels above, "but to define it, refine it and broaden it, notably by wedding it to the 'contrastive approach.'"[40] As will now be demonstrated, the contrasts between the Song of the Sea and the Baal Myth may serve to underscore Yahweh's incomparability vis-à-vis Baal-zephon.

In *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, F. M. Cross had emphasized the distinctiveness in Yahweh's relationship to the Sea, remarking on the inconsistency in the Song's "mythicization" of the Sea Event. Clearly, he said, Yahweh does not battle a divinized Yamm as in the Baal Myth but uses the natural sea to defeat the Egyptians. He elaborated, "Rather it is a storm-tossed sea that is directed against the Egyptians by the breath of the Deity. Moreover, the sea is not personified or hostile, but a passive instrument in Yahweh's control. There is no question here of a mythological combat between two gods. Yahweh defeats historical, human enemies."[41] Cross attempted to explain the first part of the Song's variance with what he deemed the more overtly mythical second part (Exod. 15:13–17) as the product of varying influences of "historical impulses." While "[w]e recognize here [in Exod. 15:17] the old mythic pattern," he wrote, "[o]ne must conclude … that influence of the mythic pattern is extraordinarily restrained in Part I, a restraint which can be due only to the force of historical impulses in Israel's earliest Epic traditions."[42] As I will discuss below, while Cross's recognition of the contrast between Yahweh's relationship to Yamm in the Song and Baal's relationship to Yamm in the Baal Myth is valid, Cross's reason for the contrast fails to incorporate both the exegetical cues provided by the Song's canonical literary context and the more recent discoveries of Egyptology. Yahweh's relationship to Yamm in Exodus 14–15 should be understood in terms of the gods' relationships to their historico-geographical domains. I will show below that Baal-zephon was worshipped by Canaanites and Egyptians alike not only as the god who defeated the divinized Yamm in the Baal Myth but also as the god who, by virtue of that victory, controls the historico-geographical waterways. Similarly, in Exodus 14–15, Yahweh is manifesting his mastery not over a mythical Sea-god but over the actual waters of Yam Suph. Brian Russell also recently noted this contrast, arguing that the Song's "historicization of Canaanite mythic themes"[43] reveals that Yahweh, contra Baal in the Baal Myth, is intimately concerned with what "occurs in human space and time."[44]

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[40] Hallo, "Biblical History," 2.

[41] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 131–32.

Cross and Ballentine's failure to recognize Yahweh's control of the waters of Yam Suph as a polemical appropriation of Baal-zephon's historico-geographical domain obscured their vision of the Song's potential relationship to the ancient Near Eastern conflict myth. Cross contended that the Song's presentation of Yahweh's relationship to the Sea manifests the influence of "the old mythic pattern," but an influence "extraordinarily restrained" by "the force of historical impulses in Israel's earliest Epic traditions."[45] Yet, reading the Song in isolation from its canonical context, Cross limited these "historical impulses" to the historicization of the sea water used to drown the Egyptian army. Similarly, Ballentine disqualified the Song of the Sea as a conflict myth, since it does not feature Yahweh fighting against a Sea-god. Also disregarding the canonical context, she asserted that the Song merely describes Yahweh's drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Reed Sea. In contrast to Cross and Ballentine, I contend that both Exodus 14 and 15 present a novel employment of the traditional pattern of the conflict myth within a particular historical setting as a means both to legitimate Yahweh's sovereignty before the world—especially vis-à-vis Baal-zephon, the Egyptian god who will also be Yahweh's principal rival in the Promised Land—and to save his specially chosen and purchased missionary people. Awareness of the novelty of the Song's employment of the narrative framework of the conflict myth should inform attempts to diminish the myth-history dichotomy as exemplified by Bernard Batto and Mark Smith. In short, Exodus 14–15's relationship to the Baal Myth maintains this dichotomy.

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[42] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 141–42; cf. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 104.

[43] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[44] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 149.

[45] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 141–42.

The contrasts between the Song and the Baal Myth also extend to the second half of the Song. Paul Cho and Brian Russell have both commented on distinctive aspects of Exod. 15:17 which signify Yahweh's superiority over Baal. Cho observed that the poet's emphasis on Yahweh's "agency" in Temple-building may indicate that Yahweh did not require "permission from a higher authority."[46] This is in contrast to Baal who expends significant effort in securing sanction for a temple from El even after the Storm-god's victory over Yamm. Baal even solicits his sister Anat and El's wife Athirat (Baal's grandmother) to serve as mediators of his request. Cho's second comparison, juxtaposing Yahweh's sole "agency" in Temple-building against Baal's use of an agent, the craftsmen god Kothar-wa-hasis, is a distinction without a difference. When Yahweh eventually establishes his temple, the extension of his "mountain of inheritance," he, too, will employ an intermediary, an earthly king.[47] Moreover, in the Baal Cycle, Baal employs similarly monergistic language to describe the construction of his temple. In KTU 1.4 VI: 35–36, the narrator relates Baal's ownership of the construction: "Mightiest Baal rejoiced: / My house I have built of silver, My palace of gold."[48]

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[46] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 211.

Brian Russell also recently identified a contrast between Baal's exploits in the Baal Myth and Yahweh's in the Song, particularly in Exod. 15:17. In Russell's view, the Song's description of Yahweh's action illuminates the good news of Yahweh's kingship vis-à-vis Baal's.[49] Namely, Russell argued that the Song presents "a pro-human vision." Whereas Baal's only interaction with human beings is his brutal slaughter of the "black headed" ones, Yahweh loves his people and delivers them. Desiring "a relationship with this delivered people," Russell noted, Yahweh unprecedentedly "brings [his] people to the dwelling place of God."[50] To buttress Russell's point, according to Exod. 15:17, Yahweh's mountain will be accessible to the people of Israel.

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[47] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 211.

[48] KTU 1.4VI: 35–36. See Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 148. The monergistic conception of temple building suggested in Exod. 15:17 and in KTU 1.4VI: 35–36 is reinforced by a ritual mentioned in the account of the building of the Sumerian Storm-god Enlil's temple. Victor Hurowitz noted that the ancient Sumerian temple construction narrative of Gudea, the king of Lagash, describes a ritual at the close of the construction project in which all of the temple builders were ceremoniously removed. Hurowitz suggested that the ritual's purpose was to symbolize that the god had built the temple, not human hands. He wrote,

> The removal of the architect and artisans may be comparable or somehow related, perhaps, to the practice of mutilating the hands of the artisans who have made a divine statue upon completion of the statue, a practice mentioned in the *mīs pî* ('mouth washing') ritual. Jacobsen (1987a) has explained the latter act as part of a ritualistic denial or abrogation of the human manufacture of idols. We would like to suggest that removing the builders from a temple may be taken as a ritualistic statement that the temple was not built by human hands, but that the gods, who are so frequently mentioned in the building process, are really the ones who built the temple.

Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, JSOTSup 115 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 43 n3.

[49] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 148–49.

[50] Russell, "Song of the Sea," 150.

He will dwell in their midst.[51] In contrast, Baal's Mount Zaphon, over twice the elevation of Zion, was too lofty to make access by Baal's common devotees practicable, likely leading to the establishment of more reachable satellite sites outside the god's sacred precinct.[52] Thus, the Song may serve to underscore not only Yahweh's incomparable might but also, as Exod. 15:13 explicitly praises, Yahweh's incomparable "steadfast love" for his worshippers.

Ultimately, the contrasts between the Song of the Sea and the Baal Myth do not discourage their comparison. Rather, as Hallo has suggested, these contrasts refine one's understanding of the relationship, in this case reinforcing the comparative superiority of the God of the Song over the god of the Myth.

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[51] Yahweh's desire to dwell in the midst of his people is a consistent teaching in the Old Testament canon. For example, in Exod. 25:8, Yahweh declares his desire to dwell in the midst of his people. In Ezek. 37:26, 28; and 43:7, 9, Yahweh reaffirms this desire. In Ps. 46:6, the psalmist celebrates Yahweh's protective presence amidst his people: "God is in the midst of her [Zion]." The Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120–134, especially imply the accessibility of Yahweh's sacred precinct to his worshippers. For example, in Ps. 122:1–4, David celebrates his ability to "go to the house of Yahweh" in Jerusalem, along with "the tribes of Yahweh." In Ps. 132:7, the psalmist underscores the accessibility of Yahweh's sacred precinct as he exhorts the pilgrims, "Let us go to his dwelling place / Let us bow down at his footstool." Unless otherwise noted, all English Scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001.

[52] In a 2008 work, historian Robin Lane Fox described Jebel Aqra, the modern name for Mount Zaphon, as a mountain that "ris[es] … steeply above sea level," with a snowclad summit "frequently veiled in cloud." Robin Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes in the Epic Age of Homer* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 268, 266. Fox noted that a 1937 survey of the mountain discovered the remnants of ancient temple structures on its summit, that is, "a huge mound of ashes and debris, about 180 feet wide and 26 feet deep." Fox, *Travelling Heroes*, 268. Still, the difficulty of climbing, or scaling, such a steep mountain would have made these temples accessible to very few.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANTI-BAAL POLEMICAL INTENT OF EXODUS 14–15, PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE BAAL-ZEPHON REFERENCES IN EXODUS 14 WITHIN THEIR CANONICAL LITERARY CONTEXT

Frank Moore Cross's study of the Song of the Sea and its observation of the Song's relationship to the Baal Myth set an influential course for subsequent scholarship. Since Cross, the history of scholarship on Exodus 15 attests a strong consensus that the Song is consciously paralleling the Ugaritic conflict myth. Cross's influence has also reached the Song's relationship to its canonical literary context. Subscribing to conventional source critical divisions for Exodus 1–15, and also dating the Song's composition to at least a century before the Yahwist source, Cross elected to read the Song independently of its surrounding chapters. Under this stricture, Cross observed that the Song's account does not even mention "Israel's crossing of the sea."[1] "So far as we can tell," Cross said, "the Egyptians are thrown from barks or barges into the stormy sea; they sink in the sea like a rock or a weight and drown."[2]

Debra Scoggins Ballentine exemplifies the scholarly heirs of Cross's decision to read the Song in isolation from its canonical context. She has echoed Cross's tightly circumscribed reading, asserting, "In the 'Song of Moses,' the sea is not divided or dried up, and the people do not cross through it. Rather, Yahweh throws the Egyptian enemy into the sea, and the sea/deeps cover them (Exod 15:4–5, 10)."[3]

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[1] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 132.

[2] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 132. While Cross situated the Song of the Sea's composition prior to the monarchy, he held the canonical account of Exod. 14 to be the contribution of the "Priestly editor of the Tetrateuch [who] wrote in the sixth century." Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 133. Belief in a sixth or fifth century Priestly redaction of the texts which now comprise the Pentateuch is now *regula fide* in Old Testament critical scholarship. In regards to Exod. 1–15, current scholarship maintains a consensus on three sources—the Song of the Sea (earliest), the Non-Priestly (sometimes called the Yahwist), and the Priestly source or redaction (the latest; sixth or fifth century BCE).

[3] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 95.

This common scholarly decision to interpret Exod. 15:1–18 apart from its canonical context has complicated attempts to understand the function of the Baal Myth parallels which these same scholars allege are observable in the Song.[4] In this chapter, I will bracket the conventional source critical divisions of Exodus 1–15 and opt to read the Song within its canonical context. I thereby hope to demonstrate that this context provides a coherent framework for the Song of the Sea, elucidating the intention of the Song's Baal Myth parallels.

The Baal-zephon Cultic Site References in Exodus 14:2 and 9b

The account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14 commences with Yahweh telling Moses precisely where he wants the Israelites to camp.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָֹה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָשֻׁבוּ וְיַחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִּי הַחִירֹת בֵּין מִגְדֹּל וּבֵין הַיָּם
לִפְנֵי בַּעַל צְפֹן נִכְחוֹ תַחֲנוּ עַל־הַיָּם

"And Yahweh said to Moses, 'Tell the sons of Israel, Turn back and camp in front of Pi-Hahiroth, between Migdol and the Sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall camp right in front of it beside the Sea.'"[5]

Exodus 14's precise description of Israel's final campsite within Egypt is unique within the Pentateuch. The chapter begins with Yahweh abruptly changing Israel's course in their exodus out of the land. He orders Israel to abandon their more secure location "encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness" and directs them to journey back into Egypt and camp on the western shore of Yam Suph, with the sea now effectively blocking their escape. Yahweh is uniquely specific about this new campsite. Exodus 14:2 marks the only time throughout the entire exodus/wilderness wandering travel itinerary when Yahweh verbally dictates where he wants the Israelites to camp. Jacob Benno also recognized this novelty. “We should … note,” he said, “that the Israelites were never again told where to encamp. God did so here as He has chosen this place for their passage through the sea and for Pharaoh’s destruction.”[6] Russell E. Gmirkin was similarly struck by the “extraordinary detail” with which the location of the crossing “was specified” in Exodus 14, though he failed to discuss the reason for this precision.[7]

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[4] Some scholars, like Thomas Dozeman and Utzschneider and Oswald, attempt synchronic readings of Exod. 1–15 but ultimately see the canonical version as the work of the post-seventh century Priestly redactor.

[5] Exod. 14:1–2, my translation.

The uniqueness in Yahweh’s dictation of Israel’s campsite beside Yam Suph signals the importance of this location. Notably, the description of the location features the geographical reference “Baal-zephon,” which, since Eissfeldt, has been understood to be a Baal-zephon cultic site. Not only does Yahweh direct the Israelites to camp in front of Baal-zephon (לִפְנֵי בַּעַל צְפֹן); he also completes the description by further specifying the relationship of the campsite to Baal-zephon. “You shall camp *right in front of it* (נִכְחוֹ) beside the Sea” (italics added). With this addition, Yahweh supplements the conventional formulation for “opposite” or “in front of”—the prepositional phrase לִפְנֵי– with the adverbial phrase נִכְחוֹ. נֹכַח conveys the nuance of “straight ahead,” being related to the adjective נָכֹחַ which signifies “straight” or “right.”[8] The purpose of the stipulation נִכְחוֹ, then, is to orient Israel unambiguously—that is straight or right—in front of the Baal-zephon cultic site.

Along with its uniqueness as the only campsite specified by Yahweh throughout the Pentateuch travel itinerary, the Baal-zephon cultic site reference is also highlighted in another way. In Exod. 14:9, the narrator reiterates the description of Israel’s campsite beside the Sea.

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[6] Jacob Benno, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus*, trans. Walter Jacob (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992), 384–85.

[7] Russell E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York-London: T&T Clark, 2006), 231.

[8] Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs and English Lexicon*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 647.

וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיַּשִּׂיגוּ אוֹתָם חֹנִים עַל־הַיָּם כָּל־סוּס רֶכֶב פַּרְעֹה וּפָרָשָׁיו וְחֵילוֹ עַל־פִּי
הַחִירֹת לִפְנֵי בַּעַל צְפוֹן

“The Egyptians chased after them and overtook them camping beside the sea—every horse (pulled) chariot of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army [overtook them]—by Pi-Hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.”[9] In the narrative context, the repetition of the precise campsite is redundant and, in the travel itinerary, exceptional.

With this unique and redundant reference to Israel’s final campsite in Egypt, the narrator of Exodus 14 is likely signaling that he intends “Baal-zephon” as more than just another place name in the Exodus travel itinerary. The narrator appears to use these means to highlight the Baal-zephon cultic site along the sea. Coupled with the existence of Baal Myth parallels in the ensuing Song, this unique and redundant reference supports the hypothesis evident in our earliest extant extra-biblical interpretations, that is, that the worship of Baal-zephon significantly informed the accounts of the Sea Event.

Exodus 14’s Account of the Sea Event as the Culmination of Yahweh’s War against All the Gods of Egypt

The broader canonical literary context of the Song of the Sea illuminates the function of the Song’s alleged Baal Myth parallels and clarifies their relationship to the Baal-zephon cultic site references in Exodus 14. While analysis of Exod. 14:2 and 9 increased the likelihood that Baal-zephon worship impacted the canonical accounts of the Sea Event, study of the larger narrative context, Exodus 1–14, further reveals that Yahweh’s precise placement of Israel along Yam

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[9] Exod. 14:9, my translation.

Suph and the Song's Baal Myth parallels function together in an anti-Baal polemic.

Exodus scholars who have been willing to read Exodus 14–15 within their canonical context have largely agreed that, in the canonical account, the Sea Event is the culmination of Yahweh's war against Egypt and Pharaoh.[10] Some have gone further and emphasized that Yahweh's war is ultimately against the Egyptian gods. David Adams, for example, has stated this unequivocally: "God's point [in the confrontation with Pharaoh] is to defeat the gods of Egypt and show Himself as the Redeemer of God's people."[11] For his part, Adams viewed the conflict between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt (represented respectively by Moses and Pharaoh) as a thirteen round prizefight, beginning with Moses's first confrontation with Pharaoh in Exod. 4:18, intensifying throughout the plagues in 7:25–10:29, and culminating in "a thirteenth round knockout" at Yam Suph.[12]

Ian Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III advocated a similar position in their 2003 *A Biblical History of Israel*. They recognized two levels to the conflict in Exodus 1–15, arguing that the conflict introduced in the opening chapters "is set" with Pharaoh's rejection of Moses and Aaron's initial request in Exod. 5:1–5: "On one level," they observed, "the conflict pits Moses and Aaron against Pharaoh and his magicians." However, they perceived that "on a more fundamental level, the conflict is between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt,"[13] noting that even "Pharaoh himself" would have been considered one of these gods "according to Egyptian theology."[14]

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[10] See Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 190; Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 46, 176, and 304; Meyers, *Exodus*, 110; and Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 188. See also in earlier scholarship: Cassuto, *Exodus*, 176; and Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 14, 41.

[11] David Adams, "Exodus 1–15" (lecture, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, October 20, 2009).

[12] David Adams, "Exodus 1–15" (lecture, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, October 13, 2009).

[13] Ian Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 128.

In contrast to those who have seen Yahweh's conflict with the gods of Egypt as fundamental to all of Exodus 1–15, the majority of commentators have framed the overarching conflict in Exodus 1–15 as a battle between Yahweh and Egypt (as represented by Pharaoh). At the same time, these scholars have generally agreed that the plague narrative (conventionally demarcated as 7:14–12:32) does, in fact, depict Yahweh's confrontation with the gods of Egypt and functions rhetorically as a polemic against belief in these gods. Douglas Stuart, for instance, argued that Exod. 12:12 alerts the reader to "what the purpose of the plagues really was." It was for God to demonstrate his sovereignty over "all the nations of the earth and their 'gods,'" a demonstration made especially effective, Stuart remarked, in light of Egypt's superpower status. He elaborated: "*By the plagues* God demonstrated his superiority to all the supposed other gods, and by demonstrating that superiority in connection with the supposed gods of the greatest economic-political-military power of the day, God showed his sovereignty, *mutatis mutandis*, over all the nations of the earth and their 'gods'"[15] (italics added).

Horace Hummel and John Davis likewise alleged that the subject of the plague narrative is the identity of the supreme God.[16] Hummel, recognizing the modern tendency to focus on the natural, advised, "It is probably more to the point to approach these struggles as a protracted struggle between the personal God, Yahweh, and the gods of Egypt, mere personifications of nature."[17] Finally, John Davis broadcast his view in the title of his Exodus commentary, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*. He observed that in the plague narrative "[t]he powerful existence of God is placed in contrast to the impotent deities of Egypt who could do nothing in the face of divine authority and power." "The events of the ten plagues," Davis concluded, "should have impressed upon Israel God's view of idolatry."[18]

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[14] Provan, Long, and Longman, *A Biblical History*, 129. Cf. Hummel: "The tenth and final plague strikes at the head of the pantheon, the Pharaoh himself, whom the Egyptians viewed as literally divine, and in the Exodus he is definitively bested." Horace D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh: An Introduction to the Origin, Purpose, and Meaning of the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1979), 72.

[15] Douglas Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2006), 278–79.

[16] Jacob Benno agreed, stating that "the struggle between God and Pharaoh actually concerned the superiority of the true God over the Egyptian deities." Benno, *Second Book*, 312. Benno also attempted to explain why the writer of the Torah would have been reticent "to recognize" these gods. It is because "[t]hey possessed no reality," said Benno. The writer "intentionally deferred" mentioning these gods until the "moment" of Exod. 12:12. "[H]ere at the final blow [i.e., the death of the Egyptian firstborn] their powerlessness should be clearly demonstrated." Benno, *Second Book*, 312.

Several arguably explicit statements in Exod. 7:14–12:32 suggest that the fundamental conflict depicted in these chapters is between Yahweh and the Egyptian gods, with Yahweh demonstrably sovereign. The most explicit statement is found in Exod. 12:12, the clear declaration that Yahweh's judgments of Pharaoh and the Egyptians—at least in the death of the firstborn—are also judgments on Egypt's gods.[19] Two others, Exod. 8:6 [ET 8:10] and 9:14, are assertions of Yahweh's incomparability, anticipating Exod. 15:11.[20] Besides these, are the several statements of the recognition formula—"that you shall know that I am Yahweh"—which, a number of scholars have argued, are also polemical, expressing Yahweh's supremacy.[21]

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[17] Hummel, *Word Becoming* Flesh, 72.

[18] John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1986), 47.

[19] "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh" (Exod. 12:12). If this statement refers solely to the polemical import of the death of the firstborn, the additional statements—the incomparability statements and "I am Yahweh" declarations—show that the other "plagues" are also meant to demonstrate Yahweh's supremacy. I have substituted "Yahweh" for the ESV's "the LORD" to be consistent within this paper.

[20] When Pharaoh, at Moses's bidding, requests the timing for the cessation of the inundation of frogs, Moses says, "Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like Yahweh our God" (8:10). The function of this statement, says Dozeman, is as an anti-foreign god polemic: "Pharaoh must learn that there is no god like Yahweh in all the land (9:14b)." Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 236. Similarly, at the outset of the episode of the inundation of hail, Yahweh announces an escalation of the conflict: "For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself [literally, "on your heart"], and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth" (Exod. 9:14).

[21] The abbreviated statement of the recognition formula in 12:12 ("I am Yahweh"), when connected to the revelation that Yahweh's judgments are also on the gods of Egypt, suggests that occurrences of the recognition

Inner-biblical exegesis helps confirm the view that the plagues of 7:14–12:32 are also, if not fundamentally, about Yahweh's confrontation with Egypt's gods. In Exod. 18:10–11, after Jethro hears Moses's testimony of "all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake … and how Yahweh had delivered them,"[22] he responds by rejoicing and acknowledging not only Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh and the Egyptians but, ultimately, Yahweh's supremacy over all other gods. Jethro declares, "Blessed be Yahweh, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians," and concludes, "Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."[23]

In Num. 33:3b–4, the narrator's recounting of the exodus travel itinerary may explicitly allude to Exod. 12:12: "On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom Yahweh had struck down among them. On their gods also Yahweh executed judgments."

In her analysis of 1 Sam. 5:1–6:12, the narrative of the Philistine capture of the ark, Yairah

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formula (Exod. 6:7, 7:5, 7:17, 8:22, 10:2, 14:4, and 14:18) may also be statements of Yahweh's supremacy over other gods. In other words, the rhetorical function of the recognition formula ("you will know that I am Yahweh") is not merely that others will know Yahweh's name but that they will know Yahweh's supremacy over Egypt's gods.

Dozeman pointed out that Zimmerli, Zevit, Krašovec, and Greenberg, all view the recognition motif as polemical. "All agree," says Dozeman, "that the motif is intended to be polemical and that it includes both a didactic role of teaching and a revelatory function of confronting a person or a group with the presence and power of God." Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 197. Cf. Walther Zimmerli, "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in *I Am Yahweh*, ed. W. Brueggemann, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1982 [1953]), 83–87; Walther Zimmerli, "The Word of Divine Self-Manifestation (Proof-Saying): A Prophetic Genre," in *I Am Yahweh*, ed. Walter Brueggemann, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1982 [1953]), 99–110; Ziony Zevit, "The Priestly Redaction and Interpretation of the Plague Narrative in Exodus," *JQR* 66 (1975): 193–211; Jože Krašovec, "Unifying Themes in Ex 7, 8–11, 10," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989*, ed. Chr. Brekelmans and J. Lust, BETL 94 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 47–66; Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1969), 169–73.

[22] Exod. 18:8

[23] Exod. 18:10–11

Amit highlighted the Philistine priests' and magicians' response to the plague of their cities. Amit recognized that these Philistine religious leaders were drawing an analogy between their plagues and the Exodus plague narrative. She concluded that the priests' and magicians' ensuing advice to the political leadership indicates their perception that the Exodus plague narrative is essentially about Yahweh's supremacy over the Egyptian gods. Amit commented,

> [though] the gods of Egypt are not explicitly mentioned, … [the Philistine priests' and magicians'] [m]ention of the Lord's making sport of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh their king serves as an indirect way of indicating His superiority over the Egyptian gods. Hence the explicit mention in our story [1 Sam. 5:1–6:12] of the Exodus, in which the motif of plagues is repeated, is good cause for drawing lines of similarity between the two stories, which have implications for the relationship ark-Dagon-the Lord-Pharaoh, and indirectly strengthen the recognition of the Lord's superiority.[24]

Finally, in Isa. 19:1, Yahweh explicitly promises to judge Egypt in the future by causing their idols to tremble before him. Isaiah wrote, "Behold, Yahweh is riding on a swift cloud / and comes to Egypt; / and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, / and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them."[25] The parallel which Isaiah implies in chapter 19 between Egypt's future judgment and Yahweh's judgment of Egypt in the Exodus account may suggest the prophet's understanding that the past judgment documented in Exod. 7:14–12:32 began with a similar assault on Egypt's gods.[26] Isaiah scholar J. Alec Motyer submitted that Isa. 19:1 is using first exodus imagery to describe Egypt's future judgment, commenting on this verse, "Judgment on Egypt's gods is an exodus theme (Ex. 12:12)."[27]

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[24] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 48.

[25] Isa. 19:1

[26] Isaiah 19's inner-biblical exegesis of the exodus narrative will be thoroughly discussed below on pp. 157–62. For other prophetic texts similarly describing Yahweh's future judgment on Egypt's gods, see Jer. 43:12–13, Jer. 46:25, and Ezek. 30:13

[27] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 164.

Such inner-biblical allusions, together with the several arguably explicit polemical statements in Exod. 7:14–12:32, have compelled the majority of scholars to recognize the plague narrative as, at least in part if not fundamentally, about Yahweh's confrontation with the gods of Egypt. The following section will endeavor to show that the so-called "plague narrative," Exod. 7:14–12:32, has been improperly demarcated from its bona fide literary unit which, rightly perceived, extends through the Sea Event. If this is the case, then the plague narrative's theme, Yahweh's defeat of the Egyptian gods, should be extended to Exodus 14–15.

Exodus's Prose Account of the Sea Event as the Continuation of the Literary Unit Depicting Yahweh's Conflict with Egypt's Gods

By employing strategies for delimiting literary units derived from rhetorical-narrative analysis,[28] the dissertation will attempt to demonstrate that the account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15 is the continuation and culmination of the literary unit to which 7:14–12:32 belongs. The literary unity of the account of the Sea Event with the plague narrative will be shown to be evident in three narrative features of the constituent texts:[29] the continuity of "the focalizing elements" (participants, time, location) in Exod. 7:14–15:21, the clarity of Exodus 1–15's overarching narrative arc, and the recurrence of three key motifs throughout Exod. 7:14–15:21.

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[28] For pointing me toward the methodology of rhetorical-narrative analysis, I am indebted to the work of Robert Shreckhise in his as yet unpublished dissertation, "'I Will Sing Unto the LORD': A Rhetorical-Narrative Analysis of the Poem in Exodus 15:1–21" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2006). The argument for literary unity based on the clarity of Exod. 1–15's narrative arc is largely a presentation of Shreckhise and his advisor David Adams's work on this topic. Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 190–91. David Adams, "Exodus 1–15" (lecture, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, October 13, 20, and 27, 2009).

The other two arguments for literary unity are the product of what is conventionally called "rhetorical criticism" in biblical scholarship and "literary criticism" in the field of literature. See Leland Ryken, "The Bible as Literature: A Brief History," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 60.

[29] The first task in rhetorical-narrative analysis is to delimit the literary unit being studied. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 27–44; cf. W. M. W. Roth, "Rhetorical Criticism, Hebrew Bible," *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Hayes (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 398; Douglas Miller, "What the Preacher Forgot: The Rhetoric of Ecclesiastes," *CBQ* 62 (2000): 216. Literary units can be delimited on the basis of—among other criteria—location/time, theme/subject. Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 70 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 95–103. Secondly, literary units can be delimited on the basis of the entrance and exit of characters. Jan Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, trans. Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 97. Thirdly, literary units can be delimited on the basis of defocalizing elements,

First, the literary unity of the account of the Sea Event with the plague narrative (7:14–12:32) is evident in the continuity of "the focalizing elements" (participants, time, location) in Exod. 7:14–15:21. The *participants* appear to remain the same throughout these chapters: Yahweh, represented by Moses and/or Aaron, is overtly in a sustained conflict with Pharaoh from Exod. 5:11 through 14:31, with the Sea Event constituting the final confrontation. Moreover, according to canonical sources, this conflict takes place within no more than a year's *time*.[30] The *location* of the conflict between Yahweh and Pharaoh is confined to the land of Egypt from Exod. 5:1–15:21; Israel only moves outside Egypt's boundaries, to the wilderness of Shur, in the wake of the Sea Event.[31] Lastly, the *specific location* at the eastern shore of the *Yam Suph* remains the same from 14:30–31 through the Song, thus binding Exodus 14 and 15 together, only changing in 15:22 following Miriam's antiphon, "Then Moses made Israel set out from the *Yam Suph*."

A second narrative feature which demonstrates the literary unity of the account of the Sea

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that is, a change in participants, time, location. Robert W. Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988), 63, 68, 71–72. Fourthly, literary units can be delimited on the basis of repetition and inclusion. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 8–18. Finally, literary units can be delimited on the basis of the beginning and resolution points of narrative arcs. Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 190–91. Cf. Adams, "Exodus 1–15" (lecture, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, October 13, 20, and 27, 2009).

[30] In the first century Acts of the Apostles, Stephen the evangelist preaches that Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt (Acts 7:23) and was commissioned by Yahweh at Sinai forty years later, implying that Moses was then eighty years old (Acts 7:30). In Exod. 7:7, on the brink of his second confrontation with Pharaoh, Moses is described as eighty years of age (Exod. 7:7). Thus, the second confrontation was likely in the same year as Moses' initial commissioning. Lastly, Deut. 34:7 documents that Moses died at the age of 120, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. If we trust the numbers in these canonical passages and take them literally, this would limit the exodus events to no more than a year's time.

[31] Exod. 15:22

Event with the plague narrative is the clarity of Exodus 1–15's overarching narrative arc.[32] The shape of this narrative arc has been delineated in the work of David Adams and his student Robert Shreckhise and buttressed in the later commentaries of Dozeman[33] and Meyers.[34] German scholar Georg Fischer, anticipating these studies, affirmed the existence of Exodus 1–15's narrative arc: "The narrative arc beginning in Exod. 1 comes to a conclusion in Exod. 15. Therefore, it is right to call this beginning of the book (Exod. 1–15) one narrative."[35]

With his focus on narrative structure, Shreckhise described the narrative arc of Exodus 1–15 as a conflict narrative, extending from the first chapter of Exodus through the Song of the Sea and Miriam's antiphon. More graphically, Shreckhise characterized the plot of Exodus 1–15 "as a war" and delineated the correlating topics of its constituent parts: "The first part is the prelude to the conflict (chs. 1–4). The middle part is the escalation of the conflict (chs. 5–12). The final part is the climactic battle (chs. 13–14)."[36] Echoing Mark Smith, Shreckhise described the succeeding Song of the Sea as a retrospective celebration and culmination of Exodus 1–14.[37] "Implied in the Song," Shreckhise attested, "is the entire conflict narrative from Exodus 6 through the final victory at the Yam Suph in chapter 14." The Song's focus," he said, is "on the culmination of the conflict at the Yam Suph."[38] Also reminiscent of Smith, Shreckhise clarified the first part of the Song's consummatory relationship to the preceding conflict narrative: "The first part of the Song is celebratory of an accomplished fact in the narrative. It is the end of the narrative arc of bondage and deliverance."[39]

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[32] Narrative arcs are illustrations of the tension levels evoked by conflict in a narrative as its events proceed through time toward resolution; they are an effective means to determine the limits of a literary unit. The end of a narrative unit can be determined by the point of resolution of the tension built up throughout that unit. Robert Shreckhise supported this understanding of the delimiting utility of narrative arcs. Paraphrasing Shimon Bar-Efrat, Shreckhise wrote, "Conflict—resolution is the central dynamic of the plot." Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 39; paraphrased from Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 94. He added, "The buildup of tension and its resolution help to identify larger parts of the narrative." Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 50.

[33] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 46, 176, 304. Utzschneider and Oswald summarized Dozeman's position: Dozeman "includes the plagues cycle and the death of the firstborn within the context of the war between Yahweh and Pharaoh." Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 282.

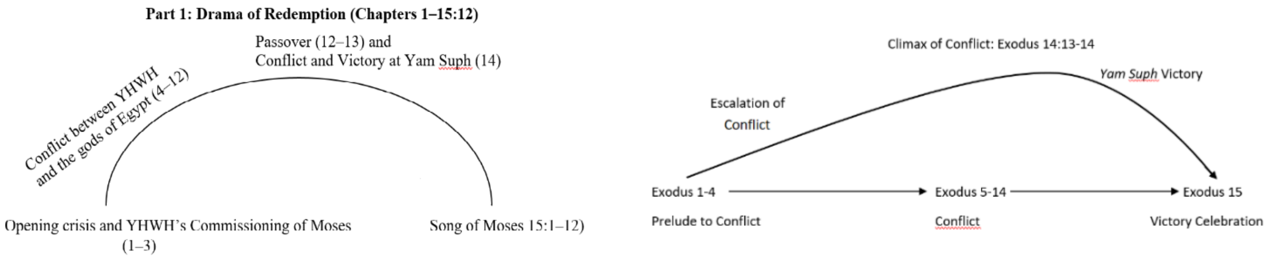
[34] Carol Meyers, *Exodus*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 110.

[35] My translation of "Der in Ex 1 beginnende Erzählbogen kommt in Ex 15 zu einem AbschluB. Von daher ist berichtigt, diesen Beginn des Buches (Ex 1–15) als »eine« Erzahlung zu bezeichnen." Georg Fischer, "Exodus 1–15—Ein Erzahlung," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction—Reception—Interpretation*, ed. Marc Vervenne (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 173.

[36] Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 190. In response to the contrary idea that Pharaoh's initial release of the Israelites marks the end of the narrative arc, I contend the following: Pharaoh's release of the Israelites in Exod. 12:31–32 marks Pharaoh's admission of defeat and recognition of Yahweh's preeminence over him and his gods, but this resignation is temporary. Following Shreckhise, Adams, and Fischer, I argue that the tension raised by Yahweh's conflict with Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt does not subside until the close of Exod. 14. In the wake of Pharaoh's decision to let Israel go, narrative tension is sustained with the description of the "strength" (חָזַק) by

Adams's and Shreckhise's concurring positions on Exodus 1–15's narrative arc are most efficiently displayed in their respective diagrams of this arc, that is, in their respective chartings of tension levels in the progression of the narrative in Exodus 1–15:

Figure 1. Narrative Arcs of Exodus 1–15 by Adams (left) and Shreckhise (right)


Part 1: Drama of Redemption (Chapters 1–15:12)
Passover (12–13) and
Conflict and Victory at Yam Suph (14)
Conflict between YHWH and the gods of Egypt (4–12)
Opening crisis and YHWH's Commissioning of Moses (1–3)
Song of Moses 15:1–12)
Climax of Conflict: Exodus 14:13-14
Yam Suph Victory
Escalation of Conflict
Exodus 1-4
Exodus 5-14
Exodus 15
Prelude to Conflict
Conflict
Victory Celebration

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which the Egyptians press them to go (Exod. 12:33) and the "haste" (מָהַר) with which they are compelled to leave (Exod. 12:33, 39). The prescription of the Passover in 12:43–50 and Moses's public exhortation to consecrate the firstborn in 13:1–16 do little to lessen the tension. Exodus 13:17–18 reminds the reader that Israel is going out of Egypt חֲמֻשִׁים, that is, in a posture for war. In summary, the tension-inducing prospect of Pharaoh's change of mind appears to hang over the Israelites like the sword of Damocles from Exod. 12:31–32 to the Sea Event. The tension release marking the resolution of the conflict between Yahweh and Pharaoh and his gods is not manifest until the close of Exod. 14.

[37] Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 207.

[38] Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 121–22.

[39] Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 206–7.

Source: David Adams, "Exodus 1–15" (lecture, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, October 13, 20, and 27, 2009); Robert Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 191.[40]

A year before Shreckhise, Carol Meyers also defended the unity of these chapters. Describing the coherence of Exodus 1–15 in terms of "overarching tension" until its release, Meyers argued that such resolution finally came with the Sea Event. In Exodus 14–15, Meyers asserted, Israel's god "categorically" overcame Egyptian power as represented by Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. In her words,

> The complex and dramatic story of the crossing of the sea is the culmination of the exodus narrative. Israelite success in overcoming Egyptian dominance will be related to the power of their god. All the signs-and-wonders and then the horrific slaying of the firstborn seem to make the pharaoh relent, but the overarching tension between pharaoh (and his gods) and the Israelite god will have to play out in one final event. Egyptian power must be overcome categorically.[41]

Like Fischer, Adams, Shreckhise, and Meyers, Thomas Dozeman identified an expansive narrative cohered by "conflict" and stretching from Pharaoh's opposition to Yahweh's people in Exodus 1 through Yahweh's defeat of Pharaoh in 14:31.[42] Dozeman affirmed, "The confrontation at the Red Sea in the P History is the final and decisive conflict between Yahweh and Pharaoh in the land of Egypt."[43]

The literary unity of the Sea Event with the plague narrative is also evident in the continuity of motifs in Exod. 7:14–15:21. The principal motif which coheres the plague narrative is expressed comprehensively in the phrase “signs and wonders” (אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים).[44] To refer to the miracles which are conventionally called “plagues,” sometimes just one of the terms—“sign” (אוֹת) or “wonder” (מוֹפֵת)—is used.” In 8:23, for example, the miracle of the inundation of flies and Goshen’s accompanying protection is referred to as a sign (אוֹת): “Tomorrow this sign [אוֹת] shall happen,” says Yahweh. In 10:1, Yahweh again refers to the preceding miracles as signs (אֹתוֹת).[45] Later, following the miracles of the inundation of locusts and the unprecedented three days of complete darkness, Yahweh looks back upon these signifying acts of power and, followed by the narrator, comprehensively calls them “wonders” (מוֹפְתִים).[46]

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[40] Adams's diagram emphasizes the "hinge" function of the Song of the Sea for the book of Exodus. Since Adams, echoing Mark Smith, saw Exod. 15:13–18 as anticipating the narrative arc of the remainder of the book of Exodus—the journey to Sinai—he refrained from including these verses in the narrative arc of the "Drama of Redemption." See Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 207, 216. In contrast, Robert Shreckhise emphasized the function of the entire Song of the Sea and Miriam's antiphon as part of the denouement of Exod. 1–15, that is, as Israel's celebration of Yahweh's victory at the Sea.

[41] Meyers, *Exodus*, 110.

[42] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 176.

[43] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 304.

In contrast to the consistent usage of אוֹת and/or מוֹפֵת throughout Exod. 7:14–12:32, there is no “plague” term similarly cohering the plague narrative. Of the ten plagues, only four are described with four different Hebrew terms which might be rendered “plagues” in English. However, in three of these cases, it is likely that a more accurate translation of the various terms is “stroke” or “blow.”[47]

Recently both T. D. Alexander and Thomas Dozeman have argued that “signs and wonders” (אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים) are a more accurate designation of the miracles in the plague narrative. Alexander elaborated, “While they are often described as ‘the ten plagues,’ this is not an entirely satisfactory designation. First, although the biblical text refers to a few of them individually as 'plagues,' as a whole they are more frequently designated 'signs' … or 'wonders.'"[48]

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[44] The precise phrase used first in Exod. 7:3 is “my signs and wonders” (with direct object markers), אֶת־אֹתוֹת וְאֶת־ מוֹפְתַי.

[45] Calling these miracles “sign(s)” (אוֹתוֹת), Yahweh refers to his turning the Nile to blood (7:17–20), the inundation of frogs (8:5–6), the dust turning into an inundation of gnats (8:16–17), the inundation of flies (8:22–23), and the unprecedented hailstorm (9:22–3).

[46] “Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders [מוֹפְתִים] may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.’ Moses and Aaron did all these wonders [מֹפְתִים] before Pharaoh, and Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land” (Exod. 11:9–10).

[47] The four different Hebrew terms are: נָגַף (“strike, smite” [Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. נָגַף]) for the plague of frogs in 7:27; דֶּבֶר (“plague, pestilence” [Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. דֶּבֶר]) for the plague on livestock in 9:3; מַגֵּפָה (“blow, slaughter, plague/pestilence” [Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. מַגֵּפָה]) for the plague of hail in 9:14; and נֶגַע (“stroke, plague, mark, plague-spot” [Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. נֶגַע]) for the plague on the firstborn in 12:29.

Dozeman made the same observation about the deficiency of the term "plague narrative," remarking, "The description 'plagues' for the divine actions in 7:8–10:20 does not capture the full range of meaning in the events."[49] For Dozeman, the "plagues" were better conceived as "signs" and "wonders" meant to reveal "the power and character of Yahweh to Pharaoh and the Egyptians … and to the Israelites."[50]

Finally, in the case of the "signs and wonders" motif, it is notable that the account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15 does not refer to Yahweh's mighty acts at Yam Suph explicitly as a "sign" (אוֹת) and/or "wonder" (מוֹפֵת). Other biblical passages, however, do suggest that the Sea Event is one of Yahweh's "signs and wonders," though admittedly, with one exception, these texts express this implicitly. Jeremiah 32:20 is one example of an implicit statement.[51] The prophet prays, "You [Yahweh] have set signs and wonders [שַׂמְתָּ אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים] in the land of Egypt … [and have continued to do so] until this day in Israel and among humankind and [in this way] you have made for yourself a name as [you now have] at this day."[52] Here Jeremiah does not explicitly state that the "signs and wonders" which Yahweh performed in Egypt include the Sea Event. But, writing in the early sixth century, he appears to be summarizing Yahweh's signifying mighty acts both in the exodus and during at least six hundred years of Israel's history with the phrase שַׂמְתָּ אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים. Thus, it is unlikely that Jeremiah is employing שַׂמְתָּ אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים merely to refer to times of judgment or salvation through plagues understood as forms of pestilence. For Jeremiah, then, Yahweh's "signs and wonders" likely encapsulate the entirety of Yahweh's signifying mighty acts in the exodus, including the Sea Event recounted in Exodus 14–15.

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[48] T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 161.

[49] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 207.

[50] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 207.

[51] Cf. Deut. 7:18–19; 11:2–5; 26:8; 34:11–12, and Neh. 9:20

[52] My translation of the MT conveys the sense of the verse based on its syntax:

אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֠מְתָּ אֹת֨וֹת וּמֹפְתִ֤ים בְּאֶֽרֶץ־מִצְרַ֙יִם֙ עַד־הַיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֔ה וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל וּבָֽאָדָ֑ם וַתַּֽעֲשֶׂה־לְּךָ֥ שֵׁ֖ם כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃

The passage which explicitly supports the Sea Event's inclusion as one of the exodus's "signs and wonders" is Acts 7:36. Stephen preached, "This man [Moses] led them out, performing wonders and signs [τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα] in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness [ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν Ἐρυθρᾷ Θαλάσσῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ] for forty years."[53] If we allow Stephen's interpretation of the Sea Event relative to the "signs and wonders" to inform our exegesis of Exodus 14, it is difficult to set the Sea Event off from the plague narrative in Exod. 7:14–12:32.

Besides the "signs and wonders" motif, another related motif appears to establish the Sea Event as part of the literary unit depicting Yahweh's confrontation with Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. This motif constitutes the symbolic actions by Moses and Aaron which accompany performance of the אֹתוֹת וְמוֹפְתִים: namely the stretching out (נָטָה) of the staff (מַטֶּה) in the hand (יָד). This motif extends from Exodus 4—Yahweh's preparation of Moses for the conflict with Pharaoh—through the prose account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14 and beyond.[54]

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[53] Acts 7:36

[54] Admittedly, the "stretching out of the staff in the hand" motif, as well as the "signs and wonders" motif extend beyond the Sea Event. Thus, by themselves, they do not demarcate the literary unit featuring Yahweh's battle with the gods of Egypt. My principal intent in pointing out these motifs is to show that the Sea Event should not be set apart from the so-called "plague narrative" in the demarcation of Exodus's literary units. If the Sea Event can be shown to be literarily continuous with the "plague narrative," then, to be consistent, the consensus scholarly view that the "plague narrative" is, at least in part, about Yahweh's battle with the gods of Egypt should be extended to the Sea Event. To clarify the boundaries of the literary unit featuring Yahweh's battle with the gods of Egypt, the "hardening of [Israel's enemies'] hearts" motif is essential, as are the preceding arguments based on the clarity of the literary arc and the continuity of focalizing elements.

In Exod. 4:17, Yahweh commands Moses, “And take in your hand this staff [מַטֶּה], with which you shall do the signs [אֹתוֹת].” Exodus 4:21 describes Moses’s response: “And Moses took the staff [מַטֶּה] of God in his hand [יָד].” Later, in Exod. 7:19, Moses is commanded to tell Aaron, “Take your staff [מַטֶּה] and stretch out [נָטָה] your hand [יָד] over the waters of Egypt … so that they may become blood.”

This tripartite motif cycles, along with the “signs and/or wonders” motif, through the so-called plagues of frogs ([Heb.] Exod. 8:1–2), of gnats ([Heb.] Exod. 8:12–13), of hail (Exod. 9:22–23), of locusts (Exod. 10:12–14), of darkness (Exod. 10:21–22) and, significantly, through Exodus 14’s account of the Sea Event. The explicit continuation of this motif into Exodus 14 suggests that the larger conflict narrative containing the so-called plague narrative extends through the Sea Event:

> Lift up your staff [מַטֶּה], and stretch out [נָטָה] your hand [יָד] over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. … Then Moses stretched out [נָטָה] his hand [יָד] over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground. … Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out [נָטָה] your hand [יָד] over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.’ So Moses stretched out [נָטָה] his hand [יָד] over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.[55]

The continuity of the account of the Sea Event with the plague narrative is also reinforced by the motif of the “hardening” of Pharaoh’s heart, usually denoted with the signifier חָזַק. This motif stretches from before the so-called plague narrative all the way to the Sea Event in 14:8 and 17. In Exod. 4:21, Yahweh informs Moses that in the coming conflict he “will harden [חָזַק] [Pharaoh’s] heart, so that he will not let the people go.” This motif will resume in Exod. 7:12–13 and continue through Exod. 7:22, 8:15, 9:12, 9:35, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, and, finally, reemerge in the prose account of the Sea Event in Exodus 14. Exodus 14:8 recounts that Yahweh "hardened [חָזַק] the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt," so that he would pursue Israel. In verse 17, Yahweh declares that he will also harden [חָזַק] the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after the Israelites.

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[55] Exod. 14:16, 21–22a, 26–27

The continuation of this constellation of motifs—signs and wonders (אתות וְמוֹפְתִים),[56] the stretching out [נָטָה] of the staff [מַטֶּה] in the hand [יָד], and the hardening [חָזַק] of the enemies' hearts— from Exodus 7 through Exodus 14—suggests that the prose account of the Sea Event belongs to the same larger conflict narrative as the so-called plague narrative.[57]

In conclusion, based on the continuity of focalizing elements, the clear shape of the narrative arc, and the consistency of literary motifs, it appears evident that the literary unit which (most scholars agree) ultimately depicts Yahweh's conflict with the gods of Egypt extends beyond the plague narrative to include Exod. 14:1–15:21. Thus, if the plague narrative is fundamentally about Yahweh's confrontation with the gods of Egypt, then it is plausible that the Sea Event is also.

Exodus 15's Account of the Sea Event as the Culmination of Yahweh's War against All the Gods of Egypt

The thesis that the Sea Event is, at least in part, about Yahweh's defeat of Egypt's gods is ultimately confirmed by the Song itself—both in its paralleling of the Baal Myth and in its own presentation of its central theme.

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[56] I acknowledge that the motif "signs and wonders" [אתות וְמוֹפְתִים] is not explicit in Exod. 14–15 but is understood to be part of the Sea Event in the biblical canon.

[57] Notably, these three motifs cohering these chapters are distributed throughout the passages ascribed to each different source—the Song, J-E, and P.

As noted in the historical survey above, since the Ras Shamra discoveries, scholars have increasingly recognized that the fundamental purpose of the Baal Myth is politico-religious, depicting Baal's acquisition of kingship through conflict. That is, the Baal Myth functions to demonstrate Baal's universal sovereignty.[58] The thematic implication of the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth has been drawn out most incisively by Norman Habel. Noting that the Song shares the Baal Myth's "kingship sequence,"[59] Habel suggested that these narratives also share the same "issue at stake" which is "the 'eternal kingship' among the gods."[60] In other words, the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth indicates that the theme of the Song is Yahweh's martial acquisition of "eternal kingship" among the gods. It follows that the Song's central subject is Yahweh's superior status relative to other gods.

This conception of the Song's central subject is supported by the centrality of Exod. 15:11 within the Song. This rhetorical question, which declares Yahweh's incomparability among the gods, is the only question in the Song. It functions like a lever at the juncture of the Song's two halves, reflecting back on Yahweh's mighty acts in the Sea Event and anticipating his mighty acts in the pilgrimage triumphal march to follow.

In his analysis of the Song's strophe and meter, D. N. Freedman similarly described Exod. 15:11 as the lynchpin of the entire poem. He adopted James Muilenburg's identification of the Song's three refrains (in verses 6, 11, and 16b), which Muilenburg had recognized by their common staircase-parallelism form.[61] Locating the Song's narrative and thematic center in the second refrain, Freedman wrote, "The second refrain stands at the center of the poem, and is an elaborate apostrophe on the incomparability of Yahweh. It serves to link not only the two major parts of the poem but also the thematic statements at the beginning and end: vs. 3, Yahweh the warrior, and vs. 18, Yahweh the king who will reign over his people."[62] Freedman's conception of Exod. 15:11's thematic importance, that is, its mediating position in the Song's "kingship sequence," buttresses the notion that the Song is essentially about Yahweh's status relative to other gods. Umberto Cassuto submitted that Exod. 15:11 was, more particularly, a summary statement of Yahweh's superiority over the gods of Egypt, whose authority Yahweh had undermined in the prior narrative. Cassuto paraphrased the verse's rhetorical question, "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord?" as, "Who can be compared to Thee from among the pagan deities, and particularly among the divinities of Egypt, who were unable to deliver their devotees?"[63] Freedman's thesis of the centrality of Exod. 15:11 appears to be the consensus in scholarship on the Song.[64] Brian D. Russell is a recent espouser of this view. Highlighting the centrality of Exod. 15:11 and its cohering theme, Russell wrote, “On the basis of Yhwh’s triumphant victory over the Egyptians, the poet asserts that there is no other god like Yhwh. This is indeed the center of the Song of the Sea. This verse boldly and openly declares in a polytheistic world that Yhwh has no rivals. The future is secure for Yhwh’s people. Yhwh is indeed King of creation (cf. 15:18).”[65]

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[58] See Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55–56; Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 11–12 n2; Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 54, 58, 62–63, 64; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 120, 142; Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 41, 75; Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 117; Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 152; Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 14, 45, 54; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 104; Green, *Storm-God*, 261; Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 335–36; Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 49; Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 48; and Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 6, 64, 79.

[59] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 58.

[60] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 54.

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[61] D. N. Freedman, "The Song of the Sea," in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980) 179; and Freedman, "Strophe and Meter," in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 188. Muilenburg identified the three refrains in the Song by their common form, which, he noticed, imitates the staircase parallelism in "pre-Mosaic" Ugaritic poetry. Muilenburg, "Liturgy on the Triumphs," 233–51. Cf. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 14, 66–67. Russell claimed that staircase parallelism shows "Canaanite influence," since this form is not found in Akkadian literature. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 66.

[62] Freedman, "Strophe and Meter," 216. The three refrains identified by Freedman are as follows:

[6]יְהוָה יְמִינְךָ בַּכֹּחַ נֶאְדָּרִי
יְמִינְךָ תִּרְעַץ אוֹיֵב יְהוָה...
[11]מִי־כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִמ יְהוָה
מִי כָּמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא...
[16b]עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךָ יְהוָה
עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַם־זוּ קָנִיתָ

[63] Cassuto, *Exodus*, 176.

[64] Even the most radical redactional approaches consider verse 11 to be the summation of the original literary

Ultimately, the thematic implication of the Song’s paralleling of the Baal Myth and the Song’s presentation of Exod. 15:11—מִי־כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְהוָה— as its central verse together establish that the Song of the Sea, the culmination of the conflict narrative in Exodus 1–15, is fundamentally about Yahweh’s defeat of the gods of Egypt.

The “Plagues” as Yahweh’s Appropriation of Specific Egyptian Gods’ Domains and the Hermeneutical Implications of This Appropriation

The determination that Exodus 1–15 is fundamentally about Yahweh’s defeat of the gods of Egypt has compelled some scholars to argue further that specific Egyptian gods are being targeted through the various so-called plagues in this narrative.[66] These arguments have generally assumed the understanding of polemics elucidated by James Anderson, as discussed in the survey above. Anderson had argued that polemics are signaled by Yahweh’s appropriation of rival gods’ domains. Accordingly, he defined anti-Baal polemical texts as “instances where

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layer of the poem. See, for example, Anja Klein, “Hymn and History in Ex 15: Observations on the Relationship between Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative in the Song of the Sea,” *ZAW* 124 (2012): 518.

[65] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 30.

[66] In the recent history of exegesis, scholarly resistance to the idea that specific Egyptian gods are being targeted, or wariness about making such assertions, appears to be engendered chiefly by two factors: awareness of the incompleteness of current knowledge of ancient Egyptian worship practices and/or assessment that at least some of the plagues do not correspond to the known domain of an Egyptian god. I agree that our knowledge of ancient Egyptian religion is still maturing with the discoveries and studies of Egyptology, so caution is warranted. I contend, however, that what has been missing in attempts to correlate plagues with gods is the incorporation of Egyptological findings on the adoption of Syro-Canaanite gods into the heart of Egyptian religious practice.

Yahweh takes over Baal's domain."[67] This understanding was anticipated by John Day who conceived of anti-Baal polemic as Yahweh's takeover of "Baal's particular sphere of influence."[68] Thomas Dozeman is one Exodus scholar who has assumed Anderson and Day's understanding of polemic, arguing that Yahweh takes over the purported domains of specific Egyptian gods in the enactment of the plagues. For example, this is how Dozeman perceived the plague of frogs:

> [T]he frogs may represent a religious polemic. The Egyptian goddess Heket was portrayed with a frog's head. She was associated with life, particularly in assisting the god Khnum in the birth of humans. The invasion of the frogs into Pharaoh's palace, his bedroom, and even onto his bed as a plague, rather than the blessing of life, may be a statement against the Egyptian goddess. The invasion of frogs into the bed of Pharaoh is equally a polemic against the god Bes. He is the god of the bedroom, associated with fertility and the protection of the family—especially at night and during the birth of children.[69]

Dozeman implied that the plague of frogs signifies Yahweh's appropriation and subversion of the fertility domain shared by Heket and Bes. He added that this "polemical reading" is strengthened by Moses's subsequent announcement of Yahweh's intention for this plague: "Pharaoh must know 'that there is no [god] like Yahweh, our God' (8:10b*b* …)"[70] (Dozeman's insertion).

Buttressing his notion that specific deities were being targeted, Dozeman maintained that "the ancient Israelite writers were … familiar with Egyptian customs and practices." Thus, other plagues, too, he said, "may be polemical actions" against specific Egyptian gods.[71] He mentioned “Hapi, the god of the Nile; Osiris, the god of the dead; and Ra, the sun god.”[72] Dozeman highlighted the specific god he saw targeted in the plague of darkness. This plague, he wrote, “is an attack on the very core of Egyptian religion.”[73] He asserted, “There is most certainly a polemic against the Egyptian sun god, Ra, in the story.”[74]

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[67] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 47.

[68] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 76–77.

[69] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 221.

[70] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 221.

[71] Egyptologist and Old Testament scholar Charles Aling anticipated Dozeman's perception of the specific polemics of the plagues. In his 1981 *Egypt and Bible History*, Aling contended that "some of the plagues (the first,

Kenneth Kitchen resisted making “the supposed ‘theological critique’ of Egyptian gods and beliefs in Exod. 7–12” the emphasis of the plague narrative. However, he acknowledged that “the impact of various plagues can be understood as devaluing or denying Egyptian beliefs.”[75] Like Dozeman, Kitchen mentioned Heqat (Heket) and Amen-Re (Ra). He also agreed that the turning of the Nile into a “destructive” flood “red in hue, bringing death” was an anti-Hapi polemic, since the beneficent flooding of the Nile was Hapi’s domain. Additionally, Kitchen speculated that the “reddening” of the Nile portrayed Yahweh in the role of Seth, the “murderer” of Osiris the Nile god.

Finally, Kitchen explained the comprehensive statement of Exod. 12:12 through a hermeneutical—in this case polemical—lens. The “[d]eath of so many throughout the land,” he

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second, seventh, ninth, and tenth) appear to attack individual gods,” but he was uncertain whether the third, fourth, sixth, and eighth plagues do. Charles Aling, *Egypt and Bible History: From Earliest Times to 1000 B.C.* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 106. Herbert Wolf later concurred that at least some gods were specifically targeted, writing, “Many of the plagues were directed at specific deities to show their inherent weakness.” Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 128.

[72] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 30.

[73] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 247.

[74] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 258. Dozeman’s identification of an anti-Ra polemic has been supported most vigorously by Gary Rendsburg: “The eighth, ninth, and tenth plagues, I submit, are all directed at Ra in some fashion, especially in light (pun intended?) of Pharaoh’s comment in 10:10.” Gary Rendsburg, “YHWH's War Against the Egyptian Sun-God Ra.” *TheTorah.com*. https://thetorah.com/article/yhwhs-war-against-the-egyptian-sun-god-ra. Rendsburg had argued the same in an earlier article: “the eighth, ninth, and tenth plagues … can all be interpreted as attacks on the Egyptian sun-god Ra.” Gary Rendsburg, “The Egyptian Sun-God Ra in the Pentateuch,” *Henoch* 10 (1988): 7.

[75] Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 253.

said, “would probably seem to Egyptians to have negated the powers of the gods completely.”[76] Moreover, he remarked, the Egyptians would have also viewed such widespread death as negating Pharaoh’s “personal and official key role of ensuring [the gods’] favor.”[77]

Based on scholarly agreement that the individual plagues in the plague narrative were likely targeting specific Egyptian gods through appropriation of their purported domains, it is plausible that Yahweh is also confronting a specific god in the continuation of that narrative in Exodus 14–15. If we assume Anderson’s understanding of polemic, the observation that the canonical account of the exodus presents Yahweh as a Storm-god (by Miller, Green, Dozeman, and Utzschneider and Oswald) may indicate far more than these scholars realized. If it can be established that the Egyptians had been worshipping a Storm-god of their own, then it is probable that Yahweh’s actions as a Storm-god were intended polemically. In short, Yahweh could be understood as appropriating the domains of the rival Storm-god and thereby undermining this god’s authority while underscoring his own.

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[76] Kitchen, *On the Reliability*, 253.

[77] Kitchen, *On the Reliability*, 253.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ANTI-BAAL POLEMICAL INTENT OF EXODUS 14–15, PART 2: UNDERSTANDING THE BAAL-ZEPHON REFERENCES IN EXODUS 14 WITHIN THEIR CANONICALLY PRESENTED HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Grounded in the Egyptological discoveries and rediscoveries of the past forty years, it is the strong consensus among Egyptologists that Seth/Baal-zephon, the hybrid of native Seth with the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, was being worshipped centrally in the East Nile Delta from 1700 BCE through the Nineteenth Dynasty.[1] This time period would overlap substantially with the two most widely supported datings of Israel's Egyptian sojourn and exodus.[2]

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[1] See Appendix 1 for a discussion of the hybrization of native Seth with Baal-zephon. W. M. F. Petrie was one of the first modern scholars to recognize the hybridization of native Seth with the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god. Discussing the Ramesside era tablet which he titled, "Menu-nekht offering to Sutekh," Petrie descibed the pictured god as "a strange figure of truculent aspect, wearing a tall, pointed cap with two horns in front, and a long streamer hanging from the top of it. The name in front is *Sutekh aa pehti*, 'Sutekh the great and mighty,' the great god of the Hittites, worshipped specially in Syria. …This is entirely different from the figures in Egypt of the god Set, although the Egyptians easily confounded their Set with the Syrian Sutekh, and even used the same hieroglyph for both." W. M. F. Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1906), 127. In 1952, R. T. O'Callaghan noted the earlier scholarly recognition of the hybridization of native Seth and Syro-Canaanite Baal. "It is already well known that in the Egypt of the New Kingdom, Baal was identified with Sutaẖ (Seth)." R. T. O'Callaghan, "The Word *ktp* in Ugaritic and Egypto-Canaanite Mythology," *Or* 21 (1952): 39.

[2] The two major scholarly positions on the date of the exodus place the exodus, including the Sea Event, in the Egyptian New Kingdom period. Arguments for the two most widely held datings—the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1446 BCE) or the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1280 BCE)—were set forth by John Davis in *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*. Davis summarized the views and argued for the earlier dating as follows:

> [D]ominating the studies of the Book of Exodus are two basic views of the date of the exodus. The one date … is that the exodus occurred sometime in the early thirteenth century B.C., presumably during the reign of Ramses II. The other alternative, strongly suggested by biblical chronology, is that the oppression of Israel began during the period of the Hyksos and continued into the reign of Thutmose III who perhaps was Israel's most severe taskmaster. The exodus, then, would have occurred shortly after his death and during the reign of Amenhotep II. The latter view seems preferable in light of the fact that it is more faithful to Scripture and provides a credible background for integrating the events of the exodus and conquest with Egyptian history and culture.

Davis, *Moses and the Gods*, 39–40; cf. Aling, *Egypt and Bible History*, 57; and R. Reed Lessing and Andrew E. Steinmann, *Prepare the Way of the LORD: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 77–81.

Seth/Baal-zephon Worship in Egypt during the Pre-Hyksos Period

The beginning of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in Egypt dates to the pre-Hyksos period, ca. 1700 BCE. Extant evidence demonstrates that Seth-Baal was being worshipped in the East Nile Delta as early as the Fourteenth Dynasty, six or seven decades prior to the arrival of the Hyksos. Seth-Baal, a hybrid of the native Egyptian god with the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, became the dynastic god of Nehesy, a Fourteenth Dynasty pharaoh who ruled over the East Nile Delta from Avaris. A fragmentary obelisk from Raahu, found in Tanis, contains traces of a dedication by the "eldest royal son, Nehesy, beloved of Seth, Lord of *r-ꜣẖt*," *r-ꜣẖt* being a boundary region in the East Nile Delta.[3] An inscription on another of Nehesy's monuments found at Tell el-Muqdam refers to "Seth, Lord of Avaris."[4] John Van Seters argued that Nehesy's accession thereby "gave to Avaris a new religious and political basis" centered around the worship of Seth.[5]

Two artifacts discovered in the Nile Delta region over the past two centuries provide conclusive evidence of Seth-Baal worship in Egypt during the pre-Hyksos period. *The 400 Year Stela from Avaris* (found in Tanis in 1863 CE and dated to ca. 1300 BCE) commemorates four hundred years of the reign of Seth-Baal in Egypt.[6] It thereby dates the beginnings of Seth-Baal worship in Egypt to ca. 1700 BCE, around the time of Nehesy's reign, and implies the continuity of this worship over the succeeding four centuries. In a 2015 article, Manfred Bietak, the preeminent contemporary Egyptologist specializing in the East Nile Delta, summarized the stela's import. He described it as a monument commemorating four centuries of Seth/Baal-zephon worship at Avaris, the capital of this region:[7]

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[3] John Van Seters, *The Hyksos: A New Investigation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1966), 100–101. Van Seters noted that *r-ꜣẖt* means "the gateway of the cultivated fields," and identified it as the region of Ṣile, at the boundary of the East Nile Delta with the desert. Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 101. The probable hybrid nature of the "Seth" documented on Nehesy's monuments is clarified by the 400 Years Stela and the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal. Both artifacts portray a god worshipped in the East Nile Delta in Nehesy's time and clothed in the known attire of Baal-zephon, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-God.

[4] Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings,* vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), 37–38.

[5] Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 101–2.

[6] Kurt Sethe was the first to propose that the vizier Seti pictured standing behind Ramesses II was Ramesses's father, King Seti I, who served as vizier to Horemheb, the final ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty, 1321–1292 BCE. Kurt Sethe, "Der Denkstein mit dem Datum des Jahres 400 der Ära von Tanis," *ZÄS* 65 (1930): 85–89. John Van Seters concurred with Sethe's identification and suggested a date of 1325 BCE for the anniversary which Ramesses is commemorating. This sets the beginning of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in Egypt in ca. 1720 BCE. Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 98.

> [T]he 400 years, month 4, and day 4 on the famous Stela of 400 Years[58]—[is] a commemoration of the rule of the god Seth of Avaris. The 400 Year Stela originates from the temple of Seth in Avaris, but was found dislocated at Tanis where the god Seth is not depicted as an Egyptian god but—with his horns, high crown with a long pommel, and western Asiatic kilt with tassels—*is clearly defined as a Canaanite god who was identifiable as the Canaanite storm god Ba'al Zephon*.[8] (italics added)

Bietak understood the Seth named on the 400 Years Stela as an Egyptian interpretation of Baal-zephon. In Bietak's words, "The Egyptian storm god Seth became an *interpretatio äegyptiaca* of the Canaanite storm god."[9]

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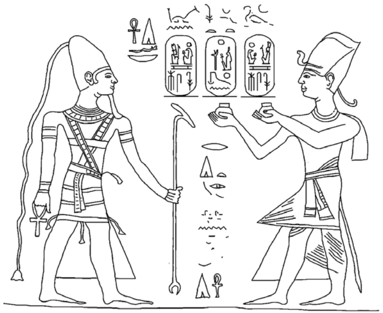
[7] Following Van Seters, Bietak similarly described the 400 Years Stela as a product of the early Ramesside Dynasty commemorating four centuries of Egyptian Seth-Baal worship which spanned from the reign of Nehesy to that of Horemheb. Bietak wrote, "Most of the abovementioned researchers [listed in note 8 below] see in the Stela of 400 Years an event commemorating a temple era in the time of Horemheb (ca. 1300 BC) which would be about 400 years after the first evidence surfaced of this cult in Avaris under King Nehesy (ca. 1700 BC)." Manfred Bietak, "On the Historicity of the Exodus: What Egyptology Today Can Contribute to Assessing the Biblical Account of the Sojourn in Egypt," in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Thomas E. Levy and Thomas Schneider (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2015), 32.

[8] Bietak lists several other scholars who have studied the 400 Year Stela with similar conclusions: Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der ägyptische Altertums. IV: Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. 2nd ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Heinrichs, 1930); Pierre Montet, "La Stèle de l'an 400 retrouvée," *Kêmi* 4 (1931): 191–215; Rainer Stadelmann, *Die 400-Jahr-Stele* (Brussels: Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, 1965); Hans Goedicke, "Considerations on the Battle of Ḳadesh," *JEA* 52 (1966): 71–80; Jurgen von Beckerath, "Nochmals die 'Vierhundertjahr-Stele,'" *Or* (1993): 400–3; Kenneth Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated, Translations, Vol. 2. Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1996), 116–17; Kenneth Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated, Notes and Comments II, Ramesses, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1999), 168–72. See also Manfred Bietak, "Kat. Nr. 391, Abguß der 400-Jahr-Stele," in *Pharaonen und Fremde, Dynastien im Dunkel* (Vienna: Eigenverlag Der Museen Der Stadt, 1994), 279–81; and Bietak, "On the Historicity," 32.

[9] Bietak, "On the Historicity," 32. In a recent article based on her dissertation, Noga Ayali-Darshan submitted that another early identification of Seth with a foreign Storm-god is found on a Sidonian seal dating from the end of the Twelfth Dynasty (1800–1650 BCE). The seal contains the Seth animal logogram along with the "foreign land" marker, signifying "Seth (or Baal?), Lord of I3ii" which, Ayali-Darshan maintained, was "the land of *I3ii* in the region of Lebanon." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 32 n33.

Figure 2. The 400–Year Stela



"400 Years Stela" from Tanis, now at Cairo Museum

Source: http://www.joanlansberry.com/setfind/400years.html.

Another artifact which substantiates Seth/Baal-zephon worship in the pre-Hyksos period is *the Tell el-Daba Cylinder Seal*. The cylinder-shaped seal, which depicts a Syro-Canaanite Storm-god standing astride two mountains in the midst of the sea, was discovered in 1979 at the site of ancient Avaris, specifically on the pavement of the Middle Kingdom Thirteenth Dynasty palace.[10] In 1984, eminent historian and archaeologist Edith Porada published the definitive discussion of this artifact. She dated the seal to the eighteenth century BCE and described its engraved image as a portrait of the "Syrian weather god":

> A Syrian weather god in smiting posture with a long curl projecting backward is seen in a powerful stride atop two mountains which have crisscross markings. … The precision of the carving and the slender figures of the Syrian cylinder suggest a date in the eighteenth century B.C.; that would agree with the date furnished by the occurrence at Mari of the duckbill ax [whose use is dated to the eighteenth century BCE], which seems to be portrayed in the Dab'a cylinder.[11]

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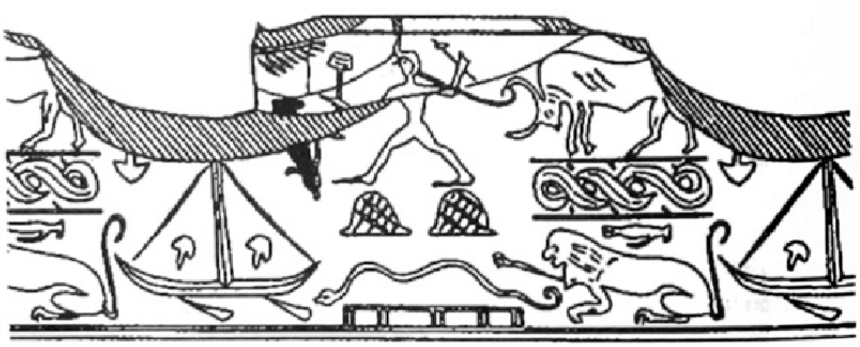
[10] Edith Porada, "The Cylinder Seal from Tell el-Dab'a," *AJA* 88 (1984): 485.

[11] Porada, "The Cylinder Seal," 487. Meindert Dijkstra affirmed Porada's interpretation in his influential 1991 article on the Tell el-Daba seal, "The Weather-God on Two Mountains": "Literary and iconographical texts indeed point strongly in the direction of an identification of the weather-god on the two mountains with Baal Saphon, who treads the high places of the earth (Amos 4:13, Micah 1:3)." Dijkstra, "Weather God," 137. For the same view, see Manfred Bietak, "Biblical Account of the Sojourn in Egypt," in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Thomas E. Levy and Thomas Schneider (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 31.

Figure 3. The Tell el-Daba Cylinder Seal



Source: Manfred Bietak, *Avaris, The Capital of the Hyksos, Recent Excavations at Tell el-Daba* (London: British Museum, 1996), 28, fig. 25, reverse image.

Egyptologists Herbert Niehr, Izak Cornelius, and Manfred Bietak have all confirmed Porada's dating and agreed with her identification of the figure on the seal as Baal-zephon. Niehr wrote in 1999, "The oldest representation of Baal-zaphon in smiting posture and standing on two mountains is preserved on a Syrian seal of the 18th cent. BCE from Tell el-Daba'a in Egypt."[12] Cornelius recently stated, "From Avaris hails a locally made cylinder seal (dated to the eighteenth century BCE) showing a menacing god in typical Levantine style. It has been identified as Baal, or, better, Baal-Zaphon, who was linked with the sea."[13] Bietak also assented to Porada's dating: "This cylinder seal dates from around the time of the reign of the Fourteenth Dynasty king Nehesy (ca. 1700 BC) who established his capital at Avaris/Modern Tell el-Daba on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile."[14]

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[12] Herbert Niehr, "Baal-zaphon," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 152.

[13] Izak Cornelius, "From Bes to Baal: Religious Interconnections between Egypt and the East," in *Pharaoh's Land and Beyond: Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbors*, ed. Pearce Paul Creasman and Richard H. Wilkinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 215.

Seth/Baal-zephon Worship in Egypt during the Hyksos Period

In his influential 1960 study of Egyptian religion, Siegfried Morenz illuminated the centrality of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in the East Nile Delta during the Hyksos Period (ca. 1640–1530 BCE). Morenz, citing the account of the Hyksos regime in Papyrus Sallier I, relayed that the Hyksos king, Apophis, chose Seth as the sole object of his worship, implying that this Seth-Baal cult was centered in the East Nile Delta.

> [Regarding] the Hyksos, who during the Second Intermediate Period gained a footing first of all in the eastern Delta (capital: Avaris) and then penetrated to varying distances into the interior of the country[:] Their god is said to have been Seth: "[The Hyksos king] Apophis took to him Sutekh [Seth][15] for lord and served not any god that was in the whole land save only Sutekh [Seth]."[16]

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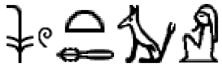
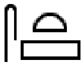
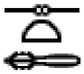
[14] Bietak, "On the Historicity," 31.

[15] Seth is the Hellenized form of transliterations of the various hieroglyphic orthographies of this god's name as found below, respectively, Sutekh (with the addition of the Seth-animal determinative and the god determinative), Sutesh, Sutekh:







[16] Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, trans. Ann E. Keep (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), 238. The passage was originally translated in Battiscombe Gunn and Alan. H. Gardiner, "New Renderings of Egyptian Texts: II. The Expulsion of the Hyksos," *JEA* 5 (1918): 40–45. Gunn and Gardiner's translation of the fuller passage reads,

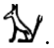
> the Prince Apophis being in Avaris, and the entire land was tributary to him with their produce in full (?) as well as with all good things of Timūris. Then King Apophis took Sētekh to himself as lord, and did not serve any god which was in the entire land except Sētekh. And he built a temple of fair and everlasting work by the side of [the palace of] Apophis, and he arose [every] day to make the daily sacrifice of [cattle]

Morenz clarified that the Hyksos Seth was Syrian Baal, noting, “Here it may be assumed that Seth stands for the Syrian god ‘Baal,’ because of all foreign deities Baal alone is designated in later Egyptian texts by Seth’s animal.”[17]

In his 1966 monograph on the Hyksos, John Van Seters corroborated Morenz’s assertions about the primacy of Seth-Baal worship among the Hyksos. He asserted, “There can be no doubt … that the Hyksos worshiped Seth as ‘Lord of Avaris,’ the principal deity of the monarchy.”[18] Along with referencing the aforementioned passage from Papyrus Sallier I, [19] Van Seters adduced an offering table, originally located at Avaris during Apophis’s reign. It contains the inscription, “he made it as a monument for his father Seth, Lord of Avaris.”[20] Also in line with Morenz, Van Seters identified the Hyksos Seth with the Asiatic Baal-zephon. “It is generally assumed among scholars,” he confirmed, “that when the Hyksos adopted the worship of Seth they identified this Egyptian god with their own principal Asiatic deity.”[21]

> to Sētekh, and the officials of [His Majesty] bore garlands of flowers (?), exactly as it is done (in) the temple of Phraᶜ-Harakhte.

Gunn and Gardiner, “New Renderings,” 40.

[17] Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 238. The Seth animal looks like . Morenz explained that the term “Seth’s animal” is used instead of the name of a specific animal because the animal’s “species cannot be determined with certainty.” Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 238.

[18] Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 173. Van Seters asserted that the Hyksos’ adoption of Seth as their dynastic god is understandable in light of two factors—“previous familiarity with the god and assimilation to their own major deity,” i.e., Baal-zephon, and “primarily by the expediency of political continuity with the previous Egyptian regime of Nehesy.” Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 103. Van Seters’s assertion about the Hyksos’ assimilation of Seth with Baal-zephon awaited correction by the discovery of the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal which demonstrated that the assimilation had, in fact, already taken place under Nehesy or before.

[19] Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 171–72.

[20] Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 171.

[21] Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 173. To my knowledge, the first scholars to make this assertion were Gunn and Gardiner, though they were then unaware that the “Semitic Baal” was worshipped favorably by the native Egyptian pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty. In 1918, Gunn and Gardiner wrote, “From the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards Sēt or Sētekh became the Egyptian stock-equivalent of any Asiatic enemy god: the Semitic Baal … is written with his sign, and Sētekh is the translation of the Hittite god Teshub in the Treaty made by Ramesses II.” Gunn and Gardiner, “New Renderings,” 44.

Seth/Baal-zephon Worship in Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty

The Seth-Baal cult was prevalent and pronounced during the Eighteenth Dynasty reigns of Ahmose and the Thutmoside pharaohs, as is evident both in the accounts of Egyptologists and in extant artifacts. Bietak detailed the endurance of Baal-zephon worship in the East Nile Delta after Ahmose's expulsion of the Hyksos:

> When Ahmose, the first pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, took Avaris, Avaris itself was not destroyed, but abandoned. Only the area of the temple of Seth/Ba'al Zephon—the chief god of Avaris—showed continued activity. The pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty respected its precinct, and it was only abandoned in the Amarna Period [1348–1336 BCE], to be rebuilt again under Tutankhamun and Horemheb.[22]

Bietak suggested that the endurance of Baal-zephon worship at Avaris was, at least in part, due to "a fair proportion of the Asiatic population which had supported Hyksos rule remain[ing] behind and [being] integrated into Egyptian society."[23] Bietak also noted that the major harbor near Avaris, which he deemed to be Peru-nefer, was "the major Egyptian naval stronghold" in the time of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II and asserted that "Canaanite cults … were certainly maintained" there as well.[24]

Nearly a half century before Bietak, Siegfried Morenz contended that worship in Egypt of

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[22] Manfred Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," in *The Egyptian World*, ed. T. Wilkinson (London: Routledge, 2007), 432.

[23] Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," 432.

[24] Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," 432. To support the existence of Baal-zephon worship at Perunefer, the principal Eighteenth Dynasty naval base, Bietak cited "Papyrus St. Petersburg 1116A (vs. 42) from the reign of Amenhotep II" which explicitly mentions a "Divine offering to Seth in Peru-nefer" (*Ḥtp-nṯr n Stẖ m Prw-nfr*. Manfred Bietak, "Peru-nefer: The Principal New Kingdom Naval Base," *EA* 34 (2009): 16.

Douglas Petrovich has firmly supported Bietak's location of Peru-nefer at Avaris, writing, "Bietak … proved conclusively that Peru-nefer—the famous naval base of Thutmose III that was depicted on the walls of Theban tombs, such as that of Rekhmire (TT 100), and was described on Papyrus BM 10056 as the site where Keftiu (i.e., Cretan) ships were docked in its harbor—is the very site of Avaris." Douglas Petrovich, "Toward Pinpointing the Timing of the Egyptian Abandonment of Avaris During the Middle of the 18th Dynasty," *JAEI* 5:2 (2013): 9.

For Bietak's response to David Jeffrey's challenges to his position, see Manfred Bietak, "The Aftermath of the Hyksos in Avaris," in *Culture Contacts and the Making of Cultures: Papers in Homage to Itamar Even-Zohar*, eds. Rakefet Sela-Sheffy and Gideon Toury (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Unit of Culture Research, 2011), 26–32.

Syrian deities—of which the Baal-zephon cult was chief—actually ramped up with the expulsion of the Hyksos invaders. This phenomenon may be explained, Morenz suggested, by the influx of slaves and, later, immigrants engendered by the continuous military offensive conducted by Thutmose III, whose sixteen continuous Asiatic campaigns spanned two decades.[25] Morenz described the impact of these campaigns as an escalation in Egyptian worship of, "especially," Syrian deities:

> [W]hen the Egyptians turned the tables on the [Hyksos] invaders, expelled them, and sent their own armies across the Euphrates, masses of foreigners from the territory they passed through reached the banks of the Nile—at first involuntarily, but later no doubt often of their own free will. This was the beginning of the period when foreign, especially Syrian, deities were worshipped on a large scale in Egypt; it came to an end only toward the close of the Ramesside period, and is worth our attention for its own sake. … [I]n addition to Baal, who is almost completely absorbed by Seth, there were Resheph and Hurun, and among the [female] gods, Anath, Astarte and Kadesh.[26]

The most notable artifact corroborating Egyptian Seth-Baal worship in the years immediately following the Hyksos expulsion is the *Hearst Medical Papyrus*. According to Noga Ayali-Darshan, this papyrus, belonging "to the period prior to Thutmose III's conquests,"[27] contains an incantation which explicitly alludes to Seth's function as the Storm-god who defeats the Sea. Ayali-Darshan wrote, "The *Hearst Medical Papyrus* (11:3) suggests that Seth casts a spell ('tie') on the Sea (… *ir mi šn.n Stẖ p3 w3ḏ-wr*)."[28]

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[25] "Beginning in the first year of his reign, and over a period of twenty years, Thutmose III conducted a series of at least sixteen campaigns in Asia by which he established Egypt's Asiatic empire." Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 29, http://www.questia.com/read/124829219/ancient-egyptian-literature-a-book-of-readings.

[26] Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 238–39. Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians: Studies in Egyptian Mythology* (New York: Dover, 1969), 2:278–79.

[27] Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 34 n38. Tugendhaft also mentioned this "medico-magical" papyrus in Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 99 n62.

[28] Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 34. Ayali-Darshan added that an early Ramesside era papyrus, the *Greater Berlin Papyrus* (3038, 21.2–3), confirms that "the latter [the Sea] ultimately yield[ed] to [Seth's] authority (… *mi sḏm p3 Ym ẖrw Stš*)." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 34.

In 2011, Christiane Zivie-Coche credited Amenhotep II with the introduction of Baal and other West Semitic deities into "the established pantheon."[29] "Particularly important," she asserted, "is the introduction of a series of Near Eastern deities into the established pantheon at the beginning of the New Kingdom, under the reign of Amenhotep II."[30] She added the insight that the "principal function" of these deities "was providing protection."[31] In other words, she said, they were worshipped particularly for personal and national security, especially as "protectors of the king."[32] Morenz anticipated Zivie-Coche, specifying that these Syrian deities were especially connected to the Egyptian kings. According to Morenz, Pharaoh's conquest of the peoples in these deities' domains enabled the Egyptian king to absorb these gods' martial power into the Egyptian pantheon for his brandishing in future battles.[33]

Bietak recently confirmed the significant role Amenhotep II had in fostering the worship of Canaanite gods, even to the point of this pharaoh emulating them. "Under his [Amenhotep II'1s] rule," Bietak asserted, "Canaanite cults flourished. … As king, he compared himself to Ba'al or Reshep."[34]

The 2000 CE rediscovery of the prologue of the *Astarte Papyrus* (*Amherst papyri*, document no. 9) established Amenhotep II's intimate acquaintance not only with Seth-Baal but also with the Baal Myth.[35] Philippe Collombert and Laurent Coulon discovered the fragment while they were conducting research in the La Bibliothèque nationale de France. Upon examination, this long-lost prologue was found to preserve a mid-fifteenth century Egyptian account of the West Asian conflict myth.[36]

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[29] "Reshep, Hauron, Ba'al, Astarte, … Qadesh, and a few others." Christiane Zivie-Coche, "Dieux étrangers en Égypte" ("Foreign Deities in Egypt"), trans. Jacco Dieleman, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7tr1814c.

[30] Zivie-Coche, "Dieux étrangers en Égypte," 1.

[31] Zivie-Coche, "Dieux étrangers en Égypte," 1.

[32] Zivie-Coche, Dieux étrangers en Égypte," 7. Zivie-Coche emphasized that these foreign deities were considered "protectors of the king" and were consequently worshipped by "private individuals [who] turned to them for help and protection." Zivie-Coche, "Dieux étrangers en Égypte," 7. Evidently, Zivie-Coche, like Morenz before her, was unaware of the century and a half of worship of Syrian gods in Egypt prior to the Thutmoside Dynasty.

[33] Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 239.

[34] Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," 436.

Collombert and Coulon's analysis of the newfound introduction revealed that P.Amh. 9 was originally dedicated to Amenhotep II during his lifetime.[37] The fragment opens with the exact date of the event being commemorated—[Regnal] Year 5, the 3rd month of Peret, day 19. The speaker then utters a blessing upon the pharaoh, calling him by name and affirming his sonship to the sun god Rê: "Long live the King of Upper and Lower Egypt … / The son of Re (Amenhotep the sovereign god of Heliopolis) … / endowed with life eternally and forever, appeared [on the throne of Horus (?)]—like his father Rê every day."[38]

Collombert and Coulon also observed that P.Amh. 9 goes beyond merely dedicating the papyrus to this Eighteenth Dynasty pharaoh; it also indicates Amenhotep II's desire to emulate Seth-Baal's martial prowess. The section following the speaker's blessing of Amenhotep II begins, “Ren [ew (?) …] that he did for the Ennead in order to fight the sea […] / [I want to celebrate (?)] (1, 3) your exploits. / [I] want to exalt [your power (?)] By telling / what you did when you were just a kid. Your deeds [are like (?) (1, 4) in] bleeding before my eyes. It has been done […].”[39] The initial “he” undoubtedly refers to Seth-Baal, but the following first and second person pronouns are referentially ambiguous. Collombert and Coulon submitted that Amenhotep II is likely the one speaking in first person, declaring his desire to praise Seth for his “deeds.” They argued, however, that the difficulty in identifying the first person speaker—whether it is the narrator celebrating Amenhotep II’s exploits or Amenhotep lauding Seth’s—may intentionally serve to obscure the distinction between this pharaoh’s and the Storm-god’s personalities. Discussing what they considered the “privileged relationship” between Pharaoh Amenhotep II and Seth-Baal displayed in the *Astarte Papyrus*, they wrote,

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[35] See Thomas Schneider, "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the Concept of Cultural Appropriation,"*AeL* 13 (2003): 160–61. This is the same document discussed by Aaron Tugendhaft in Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 92–93. Earlier, Schneider had argued for "an Egyptian acquaintance with the [Baal] myth in the Old Kingdom" in Thomas Schneider, "Wer war der Gott 'Chajtau'?" in *Les civilisations du Bassin Méditerranéen. Hommages à Joachim Sliwa*, eds. Krzysztof M. Cialowicz and Janusz A. Ostrowski (Krakow: Instytut Archeologii UJ, 2000), 215–20.

[36] The term "West Asian conflict myth" comes from Debra Scoggins Ballentine. It is synonymous with Cho's "sea myth." Ayali-Darshan affirmed that the *Astarte Papyrus* (P.Amh. 9) was "composed or written down in Egypt close to the middle of the second millennium." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 31.

[37] This pushed the *Astarte Papyrus*'s former fourteenth century date of composition back to the middle of the fifteenth century BCE. The fourteenth century date is asserted in H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion* (Leiden; E. J. Brill, 1967), 122. Collombert and Coulon's discovery is documented in Collombert and Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer," 193–242.

[38] This is my translation of Collombert and Coulon's French translation of the *Astarte Papyrus*'s rediscovered prologue in Collombert and Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer," 200. According to Collombert and Coulon, the epithet "the sovereign god of Hieropolis" (*nṯr ḥqذ Jwnw*) signals that this is Amenhotep II and not another of the Amenhotep's. Collombert and Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer," 201.

> the king/god ambiguity that appears throughout the prologue is perhaps explained if one considers that Amenhotep II addresses in person [the] god Seth-Baâl, and passes himself off here as a student and heir to the prowess of the divine hero. It is the identification of the king with his divine model, Seth-Baâl the fighting god, which will lead the editor to blend the characteristics of the two personalities into the same eulogy. This privileged relationship between the pharaoh and this god is moreover widely attested thereafter, in particular at the beginning of the XIXth dynasty, where Seth-Baâl has a status which makes him both a dynastic god and a glorious predecessor.[40]

A few years after Collombert and Coulon’s publication, Schneider confirmed the intimate relationship between this Egyptian text from Amenhotep II's time and the Baal Myth, calling it "an Egyptian version of the Canaanite myth about Baal's fight against the sea."[41] Schneider maintained that the rediscovered fragment's opening line functioned as its title. He translated line 1.2, "New copy of what he (Baal=Seth) did for the Ennead (of gods) in order to vanquish the sea." Like the French scholars, Schneider also observed that the occasion for the text "is dated to a precise day in the 5th regnal year of Amenophis II."[42]

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[39] This is my translation of Collombert and Coulon’s French translation of the *Astarte Papyrus*’s rediscovered prologue in Collombert and Coulon, “Les dieux contre la mer,” 200.

[40] Collombert and Coulon, “Les dieux contre la mer,” 208–9; my translation. Collombert and Coulon’s original reads:

> Amenhotep II s’adresse en personne au dieu Seth-Baâl, et se pose ici en élève et en héritier des prouesses du héros divin. C’est l’identification du roi à son modèle divin, Seth-Baâl le dieu batailleur, qui va conduire le rédacteur à fondre les caractéristiques des deux personnalités dans une même eulogie. Cette relation privilégiée entre le pharaon et ce dieu est d’ailleurs largement attestée par la suite, notamment au début de la XIXe dynastie, où Seth-Baâl possède un statut qui en fait à la fois un dieu dynastique et un prédécesseur glorieux.

Collombert and Coulon, “Les dieux contre la mer,” 208–9.

Schneider noted that the recently recovered addition reveals the faithfulness of the Egyptian version to the Canaanite original. "[T]he 18th dynasty Egyptian audience," he recognized, "accepted the Baal tale such as preserved in" this papyrus "almost in its original form and content."[43] Echoing the Baal Myth, the "hero of the story" in the Egyptian account "is Seth/Baal, armed for battle, with bow and horned helmet, walking across the mountains," Schneider observed.[44] Moreover, Schneider noticed that just as Baal goes out to extinguish Yamm's threat to the entire Ugaritic pantheon, the Astarte Papyrus recounts what "he (Baal=Seth) did for the Ennead (of gods) in order to vanquish the sea."[45]

Schneider then elaborated on the dramatic implications which the prologue's rediscovery has for scholarship's understanding of the depth of the Eighteenth Dynasty's "cultural appropriation"[46]: "[T]he beginning of the text," he said "offers an embedding of the tale and so proves a cultural appropriation to the very heart of the Egyptian civilization, which has generally been believed to be immune from innovation from abroad."[47] In fact, said Schneider, the very king which scholars had proffered as the model of "Egyptian kingship," i.e., Amenhotep II, redefined Egyptian kingship "on a non-Egyptian model," trumpeting Seth/Baal "as a prototype of belligerent kingship."[48] "Evidently," clarified Schneider, anticipating Zivie-Coche, "the Canaanite Baal was promoted to be a god of the Egyptian kingship by Amenophis II!"[49] Schneider concluded that the relatively recent discovery of the Eighteenth Dynasty palace at Avaris, along with the Horemheb sanctuary for Seth-Baal which had replaced an earlier temple for Seth-Baal, attests to the plausibility "that there was continuous political support for Seth-Baal throughout the 18th dynasty."[50]

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[41] Thomas Schneider, "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the Concept of Cultural Appropriation,"*AeL* 13 (2003): 160.

[42] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161. Similarly, Noga Ayali-Darshan paraphrased line 1.2 of the fragment as alluding to something "that he [Seth …] performed for the Ennead (i.e., the Egyptians gods) in order to fight the Sea (*irw.f n t3 psḏt r ʿḥ3 ḥnʿ p3 Ym*)." Ayali-Darshan, "The Other Version," 31.

Schneider speculated that the text's composition was occasioned by "the inauguration of the Astarte sanctuary in Perunefer in Amenophis' [sic] II 5th year, for which stone was cut in the Tura quarries a year earlier." Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[43] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[44] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[45] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

Schneider finished his discussion of P.Amh. 9's implications by suggesting that Hatshepsut's "invective" against the Hyksos, who had marginalized the worship of Ra, was the counterpoint to Amenhotep II's privileging of the Canaanite Storm-god.[51] Schneider argued that Hatshepsut and Amenhotep II represented two sides of the Eighteenth Dynasty debate over the identity of the preeminent god of Egypt. In Schneider’s rendering, the Hatshepsut and Amenhotep II texts represent conflicting voices “in the contemporary political discussion about which god should be the supreme god of Egyptian kingship: Re, Amun, Ptah, or Seth-Baal.”[52]

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[46] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 160–61.

[47] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[48] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[49] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[50] Schneider, "Foreign Egypt," 161.

[51] Hatshepsut had this text, called the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription, inscribed on the wall of her temple at current Istabl Antar in Middle Egypt. It reads, "I have restored that which had been ruined. I raised up that which had gone to pieces formerly, since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and vagabonds were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made. They ruled without Reʿ, and he did not act by divine command down to [the reign of] my majesty." "The Great Speos Artemidos Inscription," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 231. Cf. Alan H. Gardiner, "Davies's Copy of the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription," *JEA* 32 (1946): 43–56, 47–48. See also Van Seters, *Hyksos*, 172–73.

Noga Ayali-Darshan and Aaron Tugendhaft have presented more recent analyses of the *Astarte Papyrus*’s prologue. In a 2015 article, Ayali-Darshan discussed how the prologue unprecedentedly illuminated the P.Amh. 9’s close relationship with the Canaanite conflict myth. She specified that the conflict myth appropriated by the Egyptians—as manifest in the mid-fifteenth century *Astarte Papyrus*—came from northern Syria, particularly the area around Mount Ṣaphon. In the *Astarte Papyrus*, she explained,

> the Egyptians retained the names of the Canaanite gods known in Egypt and altered all the others. Astarte and *Ym* (the Sea) are consequently retained, and Seth—long merged with Baal—serves as the protagonist of the story. In other words, … the West-Semitic names of the gods employed in the parallel Egyptian source signify that *this text*—Version A [i.e., the non-cosmogonic conflict myth]—originated in the area around Mount Ṣaphon (*Ṣpn*) = *Ḫazzi*, where the West-Semitic names Astarte (*ʿṯtrt*) and Yamm (*Ym*) were in use.[53]

Ayali-Darshan concluded that the Egyptian *Astarte Papyrus* and the comparable myths contained in the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Ullikummi* and *the Song of Ḫedammu* “all attest to the popularity this version [of the West Asian conflict myth] enjoyed among the people of the ancient Near East during the second millennium BCE.”[54]

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[52] Schneider, “Foreign Egypt,” 161.

[53] Ayali-Darshan, “The Other Version,” 38–39. In 2008, following Schneider but prior to Tugendhaft and Ayali-Darshan, Marc Van De Mieroop also asserted the Syrian influence on the *Astarte Papyrus*, writing,

> A side effect of the introduction of Syrian gods into the Egyptian pantheon … was that some stories about them entered Egyptian literature as well. They were written in the Egyptian language and hieratic script, but were Syrian in origin. A fragmentary papyrus from the reign of Amenhotep II of the Eighteenth Dynasty contains a myth about the goddess Astarte, involving the battle between gods and the sea. The pantheon represented is multicultural. The sea was an important force in Syrian mythology, as was Astarte, who appears in the myth as the daughter of the Egyptian god Ptah. The sea’s opponent is the Egyptian god Seth, identified with Syrian Baal. Some scholars regard the composition as a translation of a Syrian myth, but it was clearly adapted to an Egyptian context. Its title reads, “New copy of what he (Baal = Seth) did for the Ennead (i.e., the Egyptian gods) in order to vanquish the sea.” Similarly, Egyptian magical papyri contained Syrian spells. These Syrian influences … are more part of an exchange of religious ideas than of cultural expressions, but they too show that speakers and scribes of the Egyptian language knew the literature of Syria.”

Marc Van De Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 199.

In his 2018 monograph, Aaron Tugendhaft further clarified the import of the *Astarte Papyrus*’s prologue, implying that the papyrus is misnamed: “[T]he introduction names ‘that which he (*scil.* Seth-Baal) did for the Ennead in fighting the sea’ as the work’s main theme.”[55] Echoing Ayali-Darshan, Tugendhaft observed that, by referring to the Sea with the Syro-Canaanite term “*Ym*,” the rediscovered column indicates the Syro-Canaanite background of the *Astarte Papyrus*’s narrative.[56] Moreover, as Tugendhaft suggested, Seth’s fighting on behalf of the Egyptian Ennead is reminiscent of the mediation of other Storm-gods who established their respective divine supremacies by serving as their pantheon’s successful champion against the Sea. By the conventions of the conflict myth, Seth’s victory over Yamm (*Ym*) on behalf of the Ennead illuminates this god’s preeminent place in the New Kingdom Egyptian pantheon.

Tugendhaft buttressed the interpretations of Collombert, Coulon, Schneider, and Ayali-Darshan, also supporting their assessment of P.Amh. 9’s implications for Egyptian intimacy with Seth-Baal and the Baal Myth. Tugendhaft likewise discerned the Syrian influence on the conflict myth at the heart of the document and agreed with the notion that Amenhotep II was attempting to emulate the Storm-god, Seth-Baal.

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[54] Ayali-Darshan, “The Other Version,” 50.

[55] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 92–93.

[56] Tugendhaft noted that pAmherst9 (aka “Astarte and the Tribute to the Sea”) “displays clear links with Levantine mythology—both in theme and terminology. For instance, the work uses the Semitic loanword *ym* (Yamm) rather than the indigenous Egyptian word for sea.” Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 99 n60. In support, Tugendhaft cited Collombert and Coulon, 220, as well as James E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 52 n52. Ayali-Darshan agreed that the *Astarte Papyrus* reflects the importation of Canaanite mythology. Ayali-Darshan, “The Other Version,” 37.

> The opening portion of the text [known as "Astarte and the Tribute to the Sea"] identifies the composition's main purpose as celebrating the exploits of Seth, who served as a divine model for the Egyptian sovereign Amenhotep II. In Egyptian thinking of the period, Seth was regularly equated with Baal. Unsurprisingly, therefore, among the god's praiseworthy exploits was a combat with the sea. In fact, the introduction names "that which he (scil. Seth-Baal) did for the Ennead in fighting the sea" as the work's main theme. … [T]his Egyptian composition depicts a conflict between the gods and the sea. Moreover, here the deity Seth-Baal is explicitly credited as the gods' champion.[57]

Seth/Baal-zephon Worship in Egypt during the Nineteenth Dynasty

Collombert and Coulon's groundbreaking 2000 article on *Le début* of the *Astarte Papyrus* asserted the surging significance of Seth-Baal into the Ramesside period. They observed that "at the beginning of the XIXth dynasty, … Seth-Baâl ha[d] a status which ma[de] him both a dynastic god and a glorious predecessor."[58] Collombert and Coulon's conception of Seth-Baal's high status during the Nineteenth Dynasty has been anticipated and confirmed by the past four decades of Egyptology.

In a 2007 article, Bietak concurred that Seth/Baal-zephon was the dynastic god of the Ramesside Dynasty, a circumstance which, he said, was fostered by the establishment of the royal residence at the site of ancient Avaris. Bietak explained, "The Ramesside dynasty seems to have originated in the eastern delta, probably Avaris.[59] This brought about the installation of the god Seth of Avaris in his Asiatic guise as dynastic god of the 19th Dynasty."[60] Bietak affirmed that the dynastic transition to the Ramessides did not alter Seth-Baal's Syro-Canaanite character. "[T]he dynastic god Seth retained his character as Ba'al," he said.[61]

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[57] Tugendhaft, *Baal and the Politics*, 92–93.

[58] Collombert and Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer," 200.

[59] Bietak noted that Avaris was renamed Per-Ramesses by Ramesses II.

[60] Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," 438.

[61] Bietak, "Egypt and the Levant," 438.

The premier artifact attesting the Ramessides' intimate acquaintance with Seth-Baal is the *Poem of Pentaur*, the official thirteenth century BCE account of Ramesses II's battle against the Hittites at Kadesh on the river Orontes. The great Nineteenth Dynasty pharaoh proudly had the account inscribed on the walls of several major temples, including those at Karnak, Abydos, Luxor, Abu Simbel, and the Ramesseum.[62] The *Poem of Pentaur* reveals how Ramesses II's might, displayed in victory over the Hittite coalition, was compared in his day to the martial power of Seth-Baal.[63]

As translated here by Miriam Lichtheim, the royally-endorsed poem evinces the acceptability of identifying Ramesses with the Storm-god. The narrator recounts, "One [of the members of the Hittite army coalition] called out to the other saying: 'No man is he [Ramesses II] who is among us, / *It is Seth great-of-strength, Baal in person*; / Not deeds of man are these his doings, / They are of one who is unique, / Who fights a hundred thousand without soldiers and chariots'"[64] (italics added). In the poem, Ramesses II himself compares his prowess in battle to Seth's: "All I did succeeded. … / I shot on my right, grasped with my left, / *I was before them like Seth in his moment*"[65] (italics added). The poem's narrator also compares Ramesses to Baal: "His majesty thee rushed forward, / At a gallop he charged the midst of the foe, / For the sixth time he charged them, / *was after them like Baal in his moment of power*, / slew them without pause"[66] (italics added). Finally, the chief of the Hittites writes to Ramesses II and identifies the great pharaoh as Seth-Baal “in person”: “Then the vile Chief of Khatti wrote and worshiped my name like that of Re, saying: ‘*You are Seth, Baal in person*; / the dread of you is a fire in the land of Khatti’” (italics added).[67] In essence, the *Poem of Pentaur*’s description of Ramesses II implies that this New Kingdom pharaoh was perhaps considered not only an emulator but even an avatar of Seth/Baal-zephon.

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[62] According to Lichtheim, sections of the *Poem of Pentaur* have also been discovered on fragments of two hieratic papyri. Lichtheim, "Kadesh Battle Inscriptions," 57.

[63] Translated in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:67–71. Cf. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 239; George Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 144.

[64] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:67.

[65] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:66.

[66] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:69.

Another artifact demonstrating the centrality of Seth-Baal worship in Egypt during the Nineteenth Dynasty is *Papyrus Sallier IV*. Discovered in Memphis and currently dated to ca. 1220 BCE, this famous document lists the gods of Perunefer, the New Kingdom naval base near ancient Avaris.[68] Baal-zephon is explicitly mentioned in this list, which reads in part: “To Amūn of the temple of the gods; to the Ennead that is in Pi-Ptaḥ; to Baˁalim, to Ḳadesh, and to Anyt; (to) *Baˁal Zephon* (*bˁr-ḏƷpn*), to Sopd”[69] (italics added).

Alluding to the two premier artifacts from the East Nile Delta discussed above, Bietak summarized the case for the continuity of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in Egypt from the Pre-Hyksos Period up through the Ramesside Period of the New Kingdom:

> Given the fact that a locally cut cylinder seal depicting Baʻal Zephon, found at Tell el-Dabʻa … proves that the cult of this storm god was at Avaris as early as the time of the late Middle Kingdom, the Stela of 400 Years can be deemed just one proof of the continuity of Canaanite cults from the Pre-Hyksos and the Hyksos Periods, through the time of the major Egyptian harbor stronghold Peru-nefer during the 18th Dynasty, and up to the Ramesside Period.[70]

Bietak concluded, “It seems that a continuous cult of Seth as *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of the Syrian storm god Baʻal Zephon and which stretched at Avaris from the late Middle Kingdom into the Ramesside Period can be advanced."[71]

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[67] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:71.

[68] I am adopting Manfred Bietak’s thesis which he defended in Bietak, “Peru-nefer,” 15–17. Others argue for a harbor site near Memphis. See David Jeffreys, “Perunefer: at Memphis or Avaris?” *EA* 28 (2006): 36–37.

[69] *Papyrus Sallier IV* (vs. 1:6), quoted in Alan H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 7 (Bruxelles: la Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1937), 89, translated in Ricardo Augusto Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, Brown Egyptological Studies 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 338.

[70] Bietak, “On the Historicity,” 32.

Egyptian Worship of Seth/Baal-zephon as the God Who Controls Historico-geographical Waterways

The centrality of Seth-Baal worship in the East Nile Delta from the late Middle Kingdom through the New Kingdom has been established in Egyptological studies of the past half century. A related thesis attaining scholarly consensus over this period concerns the domains of Seth-Baal. Based on the unanimity in scholarship over the past fifty years, it is probable that Baal-zephon, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, was being worshipped during the second millennium BCE, at least in part, as the deity who exercises dominion over the historico-geographical waterways.

This understanding of Seth-Baal's domain was initially implied by Otto Eissfeldt in his pioneering work following the Ras Shamra discoveries.[72] According to Eissfeldt, the cultic site at Pelusium was associated—at least during the Hellenistic period—with sailors and those rescued from shipwreck. There they prayed to Zeus-Cassius, Eissfeldt averred, as "a god of sailors and shipping."[73]

In his 1968 *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*, Albright became one of several scholars after Eissfeldt to suggest that the Syrian Storm-god Baal-zephon, aka Hadad, was not only the controller of the Sea-god Yamm in myth but also, in consequence, the controller of waterways in history. Comparing Baal-zephon to Poseidon, the

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[71] Bietak, "Aftermath," 22.

[72] Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 42.

[73] Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 42; my translation.

Greek patron god of sailors, Albright attested to Baal-zephon's popularity in settlements along the Mediterranean coast as well as along the Nile River and its tributaries:

> Baal-saphon was not only Lord of the North, but also lord of the northern storms. Hadad was himself in a general way the storm-god par excellence, like Greek Poseidon. *As such, he was also the protector of mariners against storms*. In his honour temples were built and ports were named along the Mediterranean littoral as far as Egypt, where we find Baal-zephon worshipped at Tahpanhes (Daphne) and Memphis. In later times he was succeeded by Zeus Casius, after Mount Casius, the Hellenized Anatolian name (Hazzi) of Saphon.[74] (italics added)

Eissfeldt and Albright's notion that Baal's dominion was over historico-geographical waterways has been reinforced by the scholarship of the past quarter century.[75] This theory was affirmed most recently by James Anderson, who, in his discussion of Baal's domains, claimed that Baal-zephon was worshipped as the protector of sailors. Anderson then surmised the connection between Baal's conquest in the myth and control of seas in history. Deriving his conclusion from elements discoverable in the Ugaritic artifacts, he wrote,

> Tablet KTU 1.92 seems to imply that fish were offered to Baal along with wine, which suggests that Baal may have been the patron of seafarers at Ugarit. Votive anchors were found in the Baal temple, which stood atop Ugarit's acropolis so that sailors could see the temple from a great distance. This accords with the motif of the storm-god conquering Yam.[76]

In a 1998 study of the religion of Canaanite and Phoenician seafarers, Aaron J. Brody asserted that the chief god of these sailors was Baal-Hadad, who was identified with Baal-zephon. He wrote, “Perhaps the god of chief importance for Canaanite and Phoenician seafarers was the storm god, Baʿl-Haddu. In addition to Baʿl-Haddu’s importance on land as the god who brought storms necessary for growing crops dependant on rain, it was he who controlled the winds which could either benefit or devastate a voyage at sea.”[77] Brody added that the Baal-zephon site references in Exodus 14 fit the practice of ancient sailors “to dedicate their havens to their patron deities.”[78] He concluded that the Bible’s Baal-zephon references “may be taken as another example of the nature of *Baʿl Ṣapōn* as a guardian of Canaanite seafarers.”[79] By implication, Brody might agree that Egyptian worship of Baal-zephon would entail that the Egyptians, and their seafarers, were also worshipping this Storm-god as lord over the waterways. According to the Egyptologists who have studied the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal, this is likely.

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[74] Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 127–28. Albright failed to recognize that the Israelites adopted "Zaphon" as a term for "north" because of Mount Zaphon's directional relation to Israel.

[75] Cf. Dijkstra, "Weather-god," 128–29; John Pairman Brown, *The Legacy of Iranian Imperialism and the Individual*, vol. 3 of *Israel and Hellas* (Berlin-New York: deGruyter, 1995), 98. Brown also added the converse of Porada's conclusion discussed below: "Presumably a god capable of stilling storms can also raise them." Brown, *Israel and Hellas*, 3:101. Cf. Niehr, "Baal-zaphon," 152–53; Lawrence A. Sinclair, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 137; Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 232; and Richard Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 96. Bietak concurred with Porada's interpretation of the Tel el-daba cylinder seal, describing its depiction as "the image of the Syrian storm god Hadad/Baʻal-Zephon as the patron of sailors." Bietak, "Aftermath," 22.

[76] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 56.

Edith Porada’s examination of this eighteenth century seal led her to conclude that Baal-zephon was worshipped by the pre-Hyksos Egyptians as a god who protects or persecutes seafarers by controlling the waters of their navigation. She observed, “The proximity of the weather god to the sailboat below [on the Tell el-Daba cylinder seal] suggests that the god shown here is a protector of seafarers.”[80] To support her claim, Porada appealed to Javier Teixidor’s study of the seventh century BCE treaty between Esarhaddon and the king of Tyre. Here “Baal-saphon” is one of three Baals called upon to punish covenant-breakers by means of a storm at sea.[81] Perceiving that Baal-zephon's mastery of the sea could be summoned both for persecution and protection, Porada asserted, "[Baal-zephon's] power for evil, invoked by Esarhaddon, was doubtless reversed to signify a protective power in the prayers of the sailors." She then deduced the implication for the Tel el-Daba seal, concluding, "It seems possible, therefore, that the cylinder from Dab'a is a pictorial invocation of the god to raise good winds, preserve the moorings of the boats, and quiet the waves."[82]

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[77] Aaron. J. Brody, “*Each Man Cried Out to His God”: The Specialized Religion of Canaanite and Phoenician Seafarers*, HSM 58 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 10.

[78] Brody, *Each Man*, 18.

[79] Brody, *Each Man*, 18.

[80] Porada, “The Cylinder Seal,” 487. Porada drew out Teixidor’s implication in Javier Teixidor, *The Pagan God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 32 n13: “Teixidor further indicated that Baal Saphon was a patron of mariners.” Porada, “The Cylinder Seal,” 487.

Probable Israelite, Particularly Mosaic, Knowledge of the Baal Myth during the Egyptian Sojourn

The available evidence compiled above attests to the worship of Baal-zephon in Egypt from ca. 1700 through the thirteenth century BCE. Extant artifacts also suggest that Baal-zephon was being worshipped, at least in part, as the god who controls historico-geographical waterways. Thus far, however, we still lack direct evidence confirming the kind of Israelite knowledge of the Baal Myth requisite to make an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 intelligible to a New Kingdom Israelite audience. Based on perceived parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song of the Sea, recent scholarship has widely agreed that the writer of the Song of the Sea was deliberately appropriating the Ugaritic conflict myth. This view, of course, presupposes that the writer of the Song knew the Baal Myth, a presupposition which has not been an issue for most scholars, who locate the Song's composition in Canaan where Baal worship was prevalent, as attested widely in both the Enneateuch and extra-biblical literary sources and artifacts. In this section, however, I will attempt to establish the probability of Israelite, particularly Mosaic, knowledge of Baal and the Baal Myth during the Egyptian sojourn.

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[81] The document containing this treaty is called the Kuyunjik Fragment. It reads (in translation):

> (i 1) [The treat]y of Esarhad[don, king] of Assyria, son of [Sennacherib likewise king of Assyria, with Baa]l, king of Tyre, with […, his son, and his other sons and grandsons, with a]ll [Tyrians], young and old.
> …
> (iv10) May Baal Shamaim Baal Malagê and Baal Saaphon raise an evil wind against your ships to undo their moorings and tear out their mooring pole, may a strong wave sink them in the sea and a violent tide [rise] against you. […]

"Kuyunjik Fragment, 3500: SAA 02 005," i1–3 and iv 10–13, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/saa02/corpus.

[82] Porada, "The Cylinder Seal," 487. Porada and Teixidor's conclusion, that Baal-zephon was worshipped in the ancient Near East as the controller of historico-geographical waterways, was also echoed by Bietak (Bietak, "Aftermath," 22) and anticipated by Egyptologist Herman te Velde in his 1967 study of the god Seth. Understandably, te Velde's early comments betray ignorance of some of the scholarly developments of the past half century:

> It was not the army and the courtiers … who introduced Baal into Egypt, but trade and the sailors. … From Ugarit it is known that Baal could function as controller of the sea, and no doubt he was venerated as such in Memphis also. … This particular aspect of controller of the sea will hardly have played any part in the presumed cult of Baal of the Hyksos [?], so that it will have been all the more easily acceptable in Egypt…. The Ugaritic myth of the combat with the sea is also known from an Egyptian source: the heavily damaged Amherst papyrus, which is dated to the time of Horemheb [?]. … In those parts of the papyrus that are left, however, Baal is not named. It is not Baal, but Seth who seems to appear in the story as controller of the sea.

te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 122; italics added.

First, Israelite knowledge of Baal and the Baal Myth during their sojourn in Egypt is made probable by the insights of past scholarship. This dissertation has sought to display the strong scholarly consensus since the Ras Shamra discoveries that the account of the Sea Event in Exodus 15 deliberately mirrors the narrative pattern and terminology of the Baal Myth. In addition, the dissertation has tried to demonstrate that Seth/Baal-zephon was worshipped continuously and centrally in the East Nile Delta from the Fourteenth through the Nineteenth Egyptian Dynasty. Moreover, the *Hearst Medical Papyrus* and the *Astarte Papyrus* attest knowledge not only of Baal but also of the Baal Myth in Egypt by the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. We might profitably bring these relatively recent findings of Egyptology to the earlier claims of scholars like Frank Eakin. As relayed in the survey above, Eakin proposed that a Hyksos awareness of Baalism would have generated a similar cognizance among the Israelites. He submitted, "We can only affirm that the Semitic linkage between the Hyksos and the Hebrews would likely lead to a Hebrew awareness of the Baal mythology if this were a part of the Hyksos structure."[83] Eakin acknowledged at the time he wrote the article (1967), that there was then insufficient support for Hyksos familiarity with the Baal cult. I propose that the Egyptological evidence compiled above establishes the centrality of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in the Hyksos structure. Thus, following Eakin's argument, I conclude that "Hebrew awareness of the Baal mythology" is "likely."

The probability of Israelite knowledge of Baal and the Baal Myth during the sojourn in Egypt is also supported by Egyptian royal education practices and the ancient testimony of Moses's participation in the palace school. Based on the association documented above between the New Kingdom pharaohs and Seth/Baal-zephon, it is probable that members of the Egyptian royal household, especially, would have knowledge of the Baal cult. For those who support a fifteenth century dating for the exodus, this likelihood is heightened by the geography of ancient Avaris.[84] The Austrian Archaeological Institute's map of this important ancient city shows the close proximity of the Seth-Baal temple to the Fifteenth Dynasty palace of the Hyksos and the Eighteenth Dynasty palace of the Thutmosides where the royal children would have lived and been trained.

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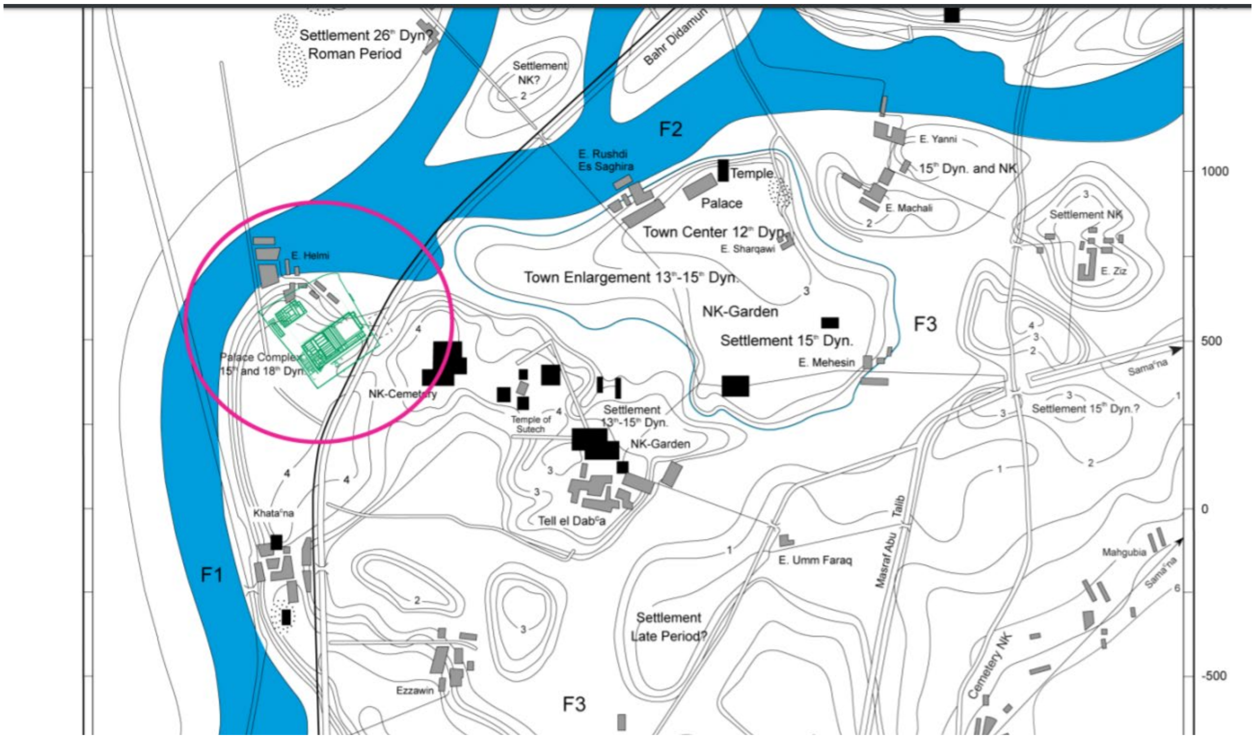
[83] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 381–82.

[84] Pi-Ramesses, the capital of the Ramessides, absorbed ancient Avaris. The Nineteenth Dynasty palace would have been a half-hour's walk from the Tell el-Daba Seth temple site.

Figure 4. Map of Ancient Avaris/Perunefer/Pi-Ramesses


Settlement 26th Dyn?
Roman Period
Settlement NK?
Bahr Didamun
F2
E. Rushdi
Es Saghira
Temple
Palace
Town Center 12th Dyn.
E. Sharqawi
E. Yanni
15th Dyn. and NK
E. Machali
Settlement NK
E. Ziz
E. Helmi
Town Enlargement 13th-15th Dyn.
NK-Garden
Settlement 15th Dyn.
E. Mehesin
F3
Palace Complex
15th and 18th Dyn.
NK-Cemetery
Temple of Sutech
Settlement
13th-15th Dyn.
NK-Garden
Sama'na
Settlement 15th Dyn.?
Tell el Dab'a
Khata'na
F1
E. Umm Faraq
Masraf Abu Talib
Mahgubia
Sama'na
Settlement
Late Period?
Cemetery NK
Ezzawin
F3
1000
500
0
-500
1
2
3
4
6

Source: Petrovich, “Toward Pinpointing,” 10.[85]

Moses’s royal education is biblically attested both in Exodus and Acts. Exodus 2:10 reveals that Moses grew up as Pharaoh’s grandson. “When the child grew up, she [Moses’s Hebrew mother] brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son” (Exod. 2:10). In his discussion of Moses’s adoption, John Davis asserted that the phrase “he became her son” “indicated the fact that [Moses] had rejoined the royal court and having done this was in a position to receive all the privileges and opportunities of a member of that court.”[86] In other words, based on the language of Exod. 2:10, it is probable that Moses would have received a true royal education.

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[85] The Temple of Sutech is the Seth-Baal temple.

[86] Davis, *Moses and the Gods*, 62.

In Acts 7:22, the evangelist Stephen reviews the history of Yahweh's people before fellow Jews gathered at the Temple. Of Moses's education, he says,"And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds." The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, echoed Stephen's account. Elaborating on Moses's royal education in Antiquities Book II, he wrote, "He was … educated with great care.… [T]he Egyptians were suspicious of what would follow such his education."[87]

If Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, as Exod. 2:10 attests, he would be educated in the royal household. This education, we can safely conjecture, would include training in the complex religion grounding Egyptian society, particularly its socio-political hierarchy. Based on the centrality of Baal-zephon worship during the New Kingdom, religious study in the royal household would likely include the dogma informing Seth-Baal worship. Thus, it is probable that Moses would have been familiar, even intimately, with Seth-Baalism's doctrine and practice.

Israelite knowledge of Baal and the Baal Myth during the Egyptian sojourn is also made probable by canonical attestation of Israelite worship of Egyptian gods. According to the testimony of Josh. 24:14 and Ezek. 20:4–10, the Israelites were worshipping the gods of Egypt during their sojourn in the land of the pharaohs. At the covenant renewal ceremony in Shechem, Joshua commands Israel, "Remove the gods that your fathers served … in Egypt, and serve Yahweh."[88] Eight centuries later, Yahweh commands Ezekiel to recall before Israel their long, tragic history of idolatry, beginning with the Egyptian sojourn. Yahweh's memories provide further details beyond the Exodus account about Israel's time in the East Nile Delta. Sometime prior to the exodus, Yahweh had "raised his hand in an oath," swearing that he would "bring [Israel] out of the land of Egypt."[89] At the same time, he had commanded each one of them to "throw away the detested things before their eyes," and commanded all of them not to "make [themselves] unclean with the idols of Egypt."[90] Yahweh sealed the command against idolatry by bracketing it with the recognition formula, "I am Yahweh your God."[91] In the remainder of the passage, Yahweh recounts his refusal to destroy Israel for their worship of the gods of Egypt and gives his reason: he does not want to profane his name among the Gentile nations. "But I acted for the sake of my name," Yahweh says, "that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness."[92] In light of the continuity and centrality of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in the East Nile Delta during Israel's extensive sojourn there, this canonical attestation of Israel's worship of Egyptian gods heightens the probability that that this Storm-god was one of the Egyptian idols served by Israel.

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[87] Josephus, *Antiquities Book II*: Ch 9, par. 7.

[88] Josh. 24:14, my translation.

In conclusion, I maintain that Moses, as well as the Israelites whose families had been sojourning in the East Nile Delta for centuries, would have known the Baal Myth at the time of the Sea Event. The evidence, though circumstantial, stands closely around this claim. Of primary importance, Baal-zephon, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, was worshipped centrally in the East Nile Delta, the region inhabited by the Israelite sojourners, from no later than the end of the eighteenth century, beginning with pre-Hyksos Egyptian pharaohs, all the way up through the early decades of the eleventh century BCE. Secondly, based on extant evidence as assessed by multiple Egyptologists,[93] the high points of Egyptian Seth/Baal-zephon worship occurred during the reigns of Amenhotep II of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who is credited for introducing Baal-zephon into the New Kingdom pantheon, and of Ramesses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who was the most powerful pharaoh of the royal household which had made Seth-Baal their dynastic god. Both pharaohs publicly professed their desire to emulate or to incarnate Seth/Baal-zephon—Amenhotep II in the *Astarte Papyrus* and Ramesses II in the *Poem of Pentaur*. These are also the two pharaohs whose reigns coincide with the two most widely attested datings of the exodus. Thirdly, ancient testimonies in Exodus, Acts, and Josephus bear witness that Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and therefore educated in Pharaoh's household, where lessons on Egyptian religion, especially on warrior gods thought to protect the royal family, would have been critical. Finally, the Bible testifies explicitly that the Israelites worshipped Egypt's gods during their Egyptian sojourn. While the extant evidence for Israelite knowledge of Baal-zephon doctrine and practice remains circumstantial, the myriad evidence listed above suggests that particularly Moses, as well as his fellow Israelites residing in the East Nile Delta near Avaris, would have been familiar with the god whose worship by the Egyptians was centered there for over 400 years.

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[89] Ezek. 20:6, my translation.

[90] Ezek. 20:7, my translation.

[91] Ezek. 20:5, 7, my translation.

[92] Ezek. 20:9–10, my translation.

The Baal-zephon References in Exodus 14 within Their Canonically Presented Literary and Historical Contexts: Conclusions

In the previous chapter, I attempted to relate the current scholarly consensus that the "plague narrative" in Exod. 7:14–12:32 is fundamentally about Yahweh's conflict with the gods of Egypt and functions rhetorically as a polemic against belief in these gods. I also sought to establish the literary continuity of the so-called plague narrative with the account of the Sea Event, concluding that Exodus 14–15 is probably also fundamentally about Yahweh's battle with the Egyptian gods and the demonstration of his supremacy.

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[93] Bietak, Morenz, and Zivie-Coche.

Based on scholarly agreement regarding the identity of several of these purported deities, chapter four also tried to establish the likelihood that Yahweh is targeting specific gods through appropriation of their purported domains, making it plausible that Yahweh is also confronting a specific god in the Sea Event. Finally, in chapter four, I relayed the view propagated by Miller, Green, Dozeman, and Utzschneider and Oswald that Yahweh is operating as a Baal-like Storm-god in various episodes of Exodus 7–15.

Suggesting that Yahweh's action as a Baal-like Storm-god would be polemical if this Storm-god was being worshipped in Egypt at the time of the exodus, in chapter 5 I laid out the following strong consensus of current Egyptology: The Egyptians were worshipping a hybrid of native Seth and the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god Baal-zephon from 1700 BCE through the Ramesside Dynasty of the thirteenth century. Specifically, the Egyptians were worshipping Seth/Baal-zephon as the god who defeated Yamm, the Sea-god, on behalf of the rest of the Egyptian pantheon. This Syro-Canaanite Storm-god became so highly regarded in Egypt that the pharaohs of the New Kingdom brought Seth/Baal-zephon into the native pantheon and even publicly identified with this god possibly to the point of complete personal assimilation. Moreover, the premier artifact attesting ancient Seth/Baal-zephon worship in the East Nile Delta (the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal) likely buttresses the long-held thesis that this Storm-god was worshipped as the controller of historico-geographical waterways by virtue of his victory over the Sea-god Yamm. Such a notion suggests the import of the Exodus account of the Sea Event: In the conflict narrative of Exodus 1–15, not only does Yahweh possibly appropriate Seth/Baal-zephon’s dominion over the Nile by bloodening it; not only does he assume the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god’s lordship over the storm; he ultimately supplants Seth/Baal-zephon at the Sea, controlling the waters of historico-geographical Yam Suph to defeat Seth-Baal’s worshippers and deliver his own.

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATING THE THESIS WITH YAIRAH AMIT'S METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING BIBLICAL POLEMICS

Chapters three through five argued the case that Exodus 14–15 function in part as an anti-Baal polemic. This chapter will test that thesis by means of Yairah Amit's methodology for identifying and classifying biblical polemics.[1]

Amit's approach begins with discerning the ideological issue, or struggle—what Amit calls "*the subject*"—being referred to in a potentially polemical text. Correspondingly, the interpreter determines the text's *stance* toward that *subject*. If the subject of the potentially polemical text is determined to be implicit, Amit prescribes that the polemical nature of the text be confirmed by means of three additional criteria.

The following chart lays out Amit's typology and indicates her technical use of the term "hidden polemic" to distinguish texts with an implicit polemical subject.

Figure 5. Yairah Amit's Typology for Biblical Polemics

Subject (the ideological issue)	**Stance (the position taken)**	**Type of Polemic**
Explicit	Explicit	Explicit
Explicit	Implicit	Implicit
Implicit	Explicit or Implicit	Hidden

Source: Data adapted from Yairah Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 56–57, 93.

Understanding Amit's Category of Hidden Polemic

To defend the existence of her featured type, "hidden polemic," Amit began by relating a poignant childhood memory. She recalled the puzzling way adult family members in her Israeli culture would interpret written correspondence from loved ones who were residing in locales where engagement in overt socio-political criticism was dangerous. She recognized later that the adults were reading the letters on two levels—on both the surface and the level of the socio-political commentary which they discerned conceptually hidden underneath.[2] Amit's underlying contention in *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* is that her Israelite ancestors communicated similarly in the biblical traditions. She called this rhetorical strategy "hidden literary polemic," which she defined as "a conceptual confrontation that found its expression in written materials, but which due to practical circumstances or rhetorical considerations there was a tendency to conceal."[3]

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[1] Yairah Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Boston: Brill, 2000).

A Rhetorical Reason for Exodus 14–15's Implicit Polemic: Yahweh's Intention to Make a Name for Himself

In the case of Amit's family letters, the reason for concealing the polemical subject was clearly life-and-death "practical circumstances." In Exodus 14–15, however, the implicit expression of the conceptual confrontation is more likely due to what Amit calls "rhetorical considerations." Notably, in the "plague narrative"—which, scholars generally agree, describes Yahweh's confrontation with the gods of Egypt[4]—the names of the gods being targeted are never mentioned. The probable "rhetorical consideration" here is that, through the confrontation with Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods in the exodus narrative, Yahweh is making a name for himself[5]—"they shall know that I am Yahweh"—while muting the names of rival Egyptian deities.

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[2] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, vii–viii.

[3] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, vii. My understanding is that Amit is using the term "hidden polemic" technically to describe polemics with an implicit subject, though that subject will be discernible to careful and knowledgeable listeners or readers. For "practical reasons," the author may intend to hide the polemic from certain potential listeners or readers; or due to "rhetorical considerations," the author may intend to communicate the polemical subject subtly and thereby more effectually.

[4] See chapter 4.

The Theme of "Yahweh Making a Name for Himself" in Exodus 1–15

The centrality of the theme of Yahweh making a name for himself in Exodus 1–15 helps explain the author's decision to withhold mention of the names of Egypt's gods. This theme appears in Moses's initial confrontation with Pharaoh in Exodus 5. Moses and Aaron announce Yahweh's will, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go." Pharaoh's disdainful response in verse 2 features his ignorance of Israel's God: "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh." Charles Trimm and Shawn Aster have both argued that the concept of "knowing Yahweh" in this context comes from suzerain-vassal treaty conventions where "not knowing" the suzerain means rejecting his sovereignty. Trimm explained, "Ancient Near Eastern treaties required vassal kings to 'know' their overlord, that is, to recognize them and to submit to them. Pharaoh's rejection of YHWH was a rejection of his divine suzerain."[6] In light of Pharaoh's contemptuously stated ignorance, Yahweh's frequent repetition of variants of the recognition formula—"that you may know that I am Yahweh"—in the rest of the conflict narrative is fitting, as Yahweh demonstrates who he is, and why his sovereignty must be accepted, through various "signs and wonders."[7]

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[5] This theme could also be labeled "Yahweh's glorification of his name" or "Yahweh's magnifying of his name." The particular meaning of שֵׁם in its Exod. 1–15 context is explained in part by Elmer Martens, who writes, "a name … in the Old Testament is shorthand for all that a person is." Elmer A. Martens, *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*, 2nd ed. (North Richland Hills, Tex.: Bibal, 1981), 14. More recently, Austin Surls discussed the semantic range of שֵׁם in the Old Testament more comprehensively, categorizing its significations under two aspects, literal/denotative and metaphorical/connotative. Surls's literal/denotative aspect is synonymous with the modern concept of "proper name." (One might also use the term "label."). The metaphorical/connotative aspect of שֵׁם is the aspect described by Martens above, and, as Surls noted, is the aspect "[i]n the majority of its appearances" in the Old Testment. Austin Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name in Exodus* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 21. Surls clarified that the metaphorical/connotative aspect of שֵׁם "warrants a variety of translations, depending on context: 'reputation,' 'character,' 'a basis for repute,' 'stigma,' or 'status.'" Surls, *Making Sense*, 20.

In labeling this theme "Yahweh's making a name for himself," I mean שֵׁם primarily in its metaphorical/connotative aspect, but not at the exclusion of its literal/denotative sense. In the conflict narrative of Exod. 1–15, the literal/denotative usage of שֵׁם cannot be easily separated from its metaphorical/connotative reference. That is, Yahweh frequently utters his שֵׁם literally/denotatively when he promises his imminent performance of "signs and wonders" which are meant to demonstrate his שֵׁם metaphorically/connotatively, i.e., his preeminent "status." This dual sense of שֵׁם is apparent in Exod. 9:16 where Yahweh informs Pharaoh of his purpose for the Egyptian king: "But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my שֵׁם may be proclaimed in all the earth." Likely Yahweh's intent here is that his name in its literal/denotative sense, "Yahweh," will literally be proclaimed as a reflection of the acknowledgment of his name in its metaphorical/connotative sense; that is, across the earth people will acknowledge that the god named "Yahweh" is the Lord of creation, manipulating natural domains for his purposes, and the Lord of nations, controlling the course of history toward his ends. This synthesis of the two aspects of שֵׁם is supported by Yahweh's repeated command that Moses introduce his warnings of imminent demonstrations of his power (which establish his name metaphorically/connotatively) with his literal name, "Thus says Yahweh." Continually, also, Yahweh follows his promises of actions that will establish his reputation with a statement of intent that his name, "Yahweh," will be known. For example, Yahweh promises Moses in Exod. 14:18, "And the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." See also Exod. 7:5, 7:17, 8:22, 10:2, and 14:4. In the end, "Yahweh's making a name for himself" in Exod. 1–15 means that in these chapters Yahweh establishes his status and reputation in such a way that people—the Israelites, the Egyptians, the Canaanites—literally say his name, "Yahweh," with the attention and reverence his nature, status, and reputation deserves.

The second confrontation, leading to the bloodening of the Nile, duly commences with a version of this formula: "Thus says Yahweh. By this you shall know that I am Yahweh."[8] The third clash, leading to the inundation of frogs, begins with the abbreviated announcement, "Thus says Yahweh."[9] Invited by Moses to request a precise time for the sign's cessation, a seemingly chastened Pharaoh fearfully confesses the Hebrew God's name, crying, "Plead with Yahweh."[10] In response, Moses divulges that Yahweh's purpose for answering Pharaoh's plea is to demonstrate the incomparability of his name: "Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like Yahweh our God."[11]

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[6] Charles Trimm, "YHWH Fights for Them! The Divine Warrior in the Exodus Narrative" (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2012), 111–12. Trimm added, "Pharaoh's ignorance of YHWH indicated his rejection of a proper relationship with YHWH. Asking the identity of a person was not a request for information about their identity, but a rhetorical method of dismissing their importance (Judg 9:28; 1 Sam 17:26; 18:18; 25:10)." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 111. Cf. Shawn Zelig Aster, "Isaiah 19: The 'Burden of Egypt' and Neo-Assyrian Policy," *JAOS* 135 (2015): 464.

[7] Trimm argued for the importance of the broader theme of "knowledge" in the exodus narrative. "Knowledge is a key theme both in the exodus narrative and the entire book of Exodus." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 156. One aspect of this theme, Trimm noted, was that Pharaoh "expressed willful ignorance of YHWH (Exod 5:2). It was this ignorance that YHWH endeavored to correct." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 157. Trimm observed that Yahweh's principal goal in the narrative was stated through the "recognition formula." He wrote, "The recognition formula "that you (or they) might know that I am YHWH," along with several variants, is the key expression of YHWH's goal for Egypt." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 157.

For a concurring discussion of the central role of the recognition formula in the exodus narrative, see Austin Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name in Exodus* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 106–11.

[8] Exod. 7:17

[9] Exod. 8:1b

This emphasis on the Hebrew God's name continues through the remainder of Exodus 1–15. It is readily apparent in 8:20b, 8:22, 9:1b, 9:13b, and then re-highlighted in Exod. 9:16. Here Yahweh informs Pharaoh, "But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." In Exodus 10, prior to the inundation of locusts, Yahweh clarifies his intent to make his name known not only among the Egyptians but also among the Israelites. He explains his purpose for the signs and wonders: "that you [Moses] may tell in the hearing of your son and your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am Yahweh."[12] Yahweh's focus on making a name for himself among both the Israelites and the Egyptians is accentuated in his announcement of the Passover in Exod. 12:12: "on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh."[13]

In the accounts of the Sea Event in Exodus 14–15, Yahweh's intention to glorify his name is explicitly expressed and fulfilled. Yahweh begins by declaring his purpose for the Sea Event in Exod. 14:4: "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh." Later, as the Egyptian army senses Yahweh's intervening presence on Israel's behalf, they shout to one another, acknowledging Yahweh's name, "Let us flee from before Israel, for Yahweh fights for them against the Egyptians."[14] Finally, the resolution of the conflict narrative in Exod. 14:30–15:21 underscores the importance of this theme. Exodus 14:31 completes the prose account of the Sea Event by repeating Yahweh's name thrice in rapid succession, "Israel saw the great power that Yahweh used against the Egyptians, so the people feared Yahweh, and they believed in Yahweh and in his servant Moses." The ensuing Song of the Sea contains the highest concentration of the divine name in the Pentateuch. Yahweh's name is repeated eleven times in eighteen short verses.[15] Verse 3b is illustrative of the Song's intention to magnify the appellation of the Hebrew God: "Yahweh is a man of war, / Yahweh is his name."

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[10] Exod. 8:8b

[11] Exod. 8:10b

[12] Exod. 10:2

[13] The variant of the recognition formula here is termed "the self-identification formula." Trimm has argued that "the self-identification formula" often goes beyond merely identifying the speaker to "emphasizing the characteristics of the speaker." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 159–60. Trimm observed that, in particular, this formula "often focuses on the power of the protagonist." He gives the example of Gen. 41:44 where Pharaoh employs the self-identification formula "as a statement of his power and authority." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 160.

The Impact of the First Commandment on the Pentateuch's Storytelling

In contrast to the highlighting of the name "Yahweh" in Exodus 1–15, the only Egyptian god's name explicitly mentioned in these chapters is Baal-zephon, though this name is presented indirectly as though merely another place name in the exodus travel itinerary.[16] Gary Rendsburg has argued for the possibility that the name of Ra is also stealthily referenced in Exod. 5:9 and 10:10. According to Rendsburg, the author of Exodus 1–15 "punned on the Hebrew word *raʿ/rāʿāh* such that the word "bears its usual meaning 'evil, bad,' but also is to be understood as

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[14] Exod. 14:25b

[15] There are eleven occurrences of "Yahweh" in the approximately 178 lexical units constituting the Song of the Sea.

[16] Trimm also recognized the distinctive absence of other gods' names relative to Yahweh's name in Exodus. He wrote, "The presence and absence of proper names plays an important rhetorical role in the narrative. The narrator frequently names Israelites, but never names an Egyptian or an Egyptian god, referring to them only by their title. However, the most important name in the narrative is YHWH (appearing almost 200 times)." Trimm, "YHWH Fights," 169.

Ra, the Egyptian sun-god."[17]

Noticing the almost complete avoidance of the names of foreign deities in the Pentateuch as a whole, Dale Patrick proposed that this absence indicates the central impact of the first commandment on the Pentateuch's storytelling.[18] In Patrick's words, "the Pentateuch has a pattern of representing YHWH and human religion which can best be understood as an application of the first commandment."[19] Patrick goes even further in claiming that Exodus 1–18 denies the possibility of "competitors for Israel's loyalty."[20] He theorized, "YHWH does not enter into conflict with the Egyptians gods, and the Egyptians themselves do not exhibit any religious behavior."[21] Despite Patrick attempts to downplay the contradicting data, the explicit evidence in Exod. 12:12 and the account of Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7 weaken his theory.[22] Patrick fails to consider that the author of the conflict narrative in Exodus 1–15 may be intentionally withholding the names of Egypt's gods, not in order to deny Yahweh's conflict with them or to deny belief in them, but to defy their authority relative to Yahweh.[23]

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[17] Gary Rendsburg, "The Egyptian Sun-God Ra in the Pentateuch," *Henoch* 10 (1988): 5. Rendsburg suggested that "ra" puns are contained in the following passages: Exod. 5:19, 10:10, cf. Rendsburg, "YHWH's War Against the Egyptian Sun-God Ra," *TheTorah.com* (2016), https://thetorah.com/article/yhwhs-war-against-the-egyptian-sun-god-ra.

[18] Dale Patrick, "The First Commandment in the Structure of the Pentateuch," *VT* 45 (1995): 107–18.

[19] Patrick, "First Commandment," 107.

[20] Patrick, "First Commandment," 116.

[21] Patrick, "First Commandment," 116.

[22] Patrick, "First Commandment," 113–14. Patrick described Exod. 12:12 as an isolated occurrence of reference to Egypt's gods: "What is so striking is that this reference to the gods of Egypt is completely isolated; nowhere else in the account is there any suggestion of a conflict between YHWH and any other deity. Not only are the gods not portrayed as personages of the drama, the Egyptians never call upon them or exhibit any religious fervor." Patrick, "First Commandment," 113–14. Regarding the magicians summoned by Pharaoh, Patrick said that their magic is presented as unconnected to religion: "Later, when Moses and Aaron demonstrate the supernatural power at their disposal by turning 'Aaron's rod' into a snake (vii 9–10), the 'Pharaoh summoned the wise men and sorcerers, and they also … did the same thing by their secrets arts' (v. 11). The magicians are also able to duplicate the first plague (v. 22). This is the closest the Egyptians come to acting religiously, but it is described without reference to any deity. Magic is virtually a secular technology.'" Patrick, "First Commandment," 114.

One might still affirm Patrick's thesis that the Pentateuch's storytelling is governed by the first commandment while maintaining a belief in the anti-Egyptian-god polemics in Exodus 1–15. Grounds for such a position can be found in Exod. 23:13, a corollary of the first commandment, where Yahweh's jealousy for his people's allegiance prohibits even utterance of other gods' names: "And you shall obey all that I have said to you, and the names of other gods you will not cause to be remembered nor let be heard upon your mouth" (my translation).[24]

In the end, the "rhetorical consideration" of magnifying Yahweh's name while muting out[25] the names of Egypt's gods helps explain the indirectness of the polemic. One might reasonably expect that the same rhetorical consideration dictating the implicitness of Yahweh's confrontation with the gods of Egypt in the "plague narrative" would prompt a similar implicitness in Exodus 14–15.

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[23] This suppression of names as a means to undermine authority appears to be the narrator's modus operandi with the names of the Egyptian pharaohs as well. In *Israel in Egypt*, James K. Hoffmeier noted that the practice of suppressing the names of enemies was in accord with New Kingdom Egyptian practice. He explained, "Another factor that might account for the absence of Pharaoh's name in the exodus narratives is that it was normal in New Kingdom inscriptions not to disclose the name of Pharaoh's enemies." James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 146. Hoffmeier concluded that the narrator's omission of Pharaoh's name in the exodus account displayed an ironic employment of Egyptian practice. Hoffmeier said, "The omission of Pharaoh's name in the exodus story, I suggest, was deliberate. For the Hebrew writer, there was good theological reasons [sic] for his silence: the reader learns of the name Yahweh and his power as the Exodus story unfolds, whereas his arch-rival, Pharaoh, remains anonymous—a nice piece of irony." Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 146.

[24] Cf. Josh. 23:7b.

[25] The biblical language for this motif is "removing from one's mouth" or "cutting off." Hosea 2:17 reads,

> וַהֲסִרֹתִי אֶת־שמוֹת הַבְּעָלִים מִפִּיהָ וְלֹא־יִזָּכְרוּ עוֹד בִּשְׁמָם׃
> I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they will be remembered by name no more (Hos. 2:17).

Zechariah 13:2 uses "cutting off" to denote the same concept:

> וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם יהוָה צְבָאוֹת אַכְרִית אֶת־שְׁמוֹת הָעֲצַבִּים מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא יִזָּכְרוּ עוֹד
> And it will be in that day, says Yahweh of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more (Zech. 13:2).

Amit's Criteria for the Existence of an Implicit Polemical Subject in a Biblical Text

Amit's methodology for determining the existence of a polemic with an implicit subject is constituted by four criteria:[26] First, by definition, the text must fulfill the condition of refraining "from explicit mention of the subject which the author is interested to condemn or to advocate."[27] Secondly, "[o]ther biblical texts [should] evidence a polemic on the same subject."[28] Thirdly, the text must contain "one striking, unmistakable sign" or "a number of signs by whose means the author directs the reader toward the polemic."[29] And fourthly, "[r]eference to the hidden subject of the polemic" should exist "in the exegetical tradition."[30] Acknowledging that Exodus 14–15 refrain from explicit mention of Yahweh's confrontation with Baal-zephon, this attempt to confirm these chapters' anti-Baal polemic will proceed directly to Amit's second criterion.

Testing the Thesis by Amit's Second Criterion

Amit's second criterion for determing the existence of an implicit polemical subject—that other biblical texts evidence a polemic on the same subject—is met by the frequency of anti-Baal polemics in the Old Testament. James Anderson asserted that "There are more polemics directed against Baal in the Hebrew Bible than against any other."[31]

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[26] I acknowledge, fulfilling this criterion, that the specific subject which I have identified in Exod. 14–15—the supremacy of Yahweh vis-à-vis Baal-zephon—is implicit, thereby designating any potential anti-Baal polemic in these chapters as "hidden."

[27] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 96.

[28] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 96. Amit clarified that this second condition "serves the function of a control, to assure that the subject of the polemic in fact belongs among those controversies that engaged the biblical world and its literature." Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 97.

[29] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 96.

[30] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 97. Amit noted that this fourth criterion, like the second, functions as a control: "its function being to assure that the polemic is not only the idea of a commentator with an imagination or relevant needs." Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 97.

According to Anderson, anti-Baal polemics are especially prevalent in Kings' account of the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha. Among these narratives, the most overt anti-Baal polemic is Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. First Kings 18:21, which prefaces the contest, makes the polemic unquestionable: "And Elijah approached all the people and said, 'How long will you keep dragging your feet between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow after him; but if Baal, then follow after him'" (my translation). The existence of an anti-Baal polemic in the ensuing contest, 1 Kgs. 18:22–40, is therefore undisputed. However, it is also common for interpreters to identify an anti-Baal polemic in the final verses of chapter 18, where no such polemic is spelled out. Readers generally understand that Yahweh is demonstrating his mastery over Baal's purported domain by sending the first rain in Israel after the three years of drought prophesied by Elijah to Ahab, the Baal-worshipping king.[32] In the case of 1 Kgs. 18:41–45, then, readers, including non-scholars who have some notion of Baal as a fertility god, generally agree that the *subject* of these verses is Yahweh versus Baal and that the *stance* is Yahweh's superiority, as Yahweh has shown his ownership of Baal's purported domain. Yet the subject here is implicit; it is not stated directly, though the surrounding context gives the reader several signs which signal the anti-Baal polemic in these verses.[33]

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[31] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 47. Anderson identified anti-Baal polemics in the following Old Testament passages: *Explicit polemic*: Jdgs. 6 (Gideon versus his father's Baal idols), 1 Kgs. 17:1 – 2 Kgs. 13:21 (The Elijah-Elisha Cycle), 1 Sam. 12 (Samuel's farewell speech), Num. 25 (Israel and Baal-Peor), 2 Sam. 4:4 (the name Ishbosheth), Ps. 29 (a Baal hymn appropriated for YHWH), Deut. 31–32 (the Song of Moses), 2 Sam. 22 (The Song of David), Hos. 2:10; 2:15; 6:1–2; 8:5–6; 9:10–14; 11:2–3; 13:1–5; 14:6, Jer. 23, and Hab. 3. *Implicit Polemic*: Ps. 68 ("As one of the mountains envying Jerusalem, Saphon produces an artful transference of Baal's domain. The polemic is implicit but the tone is sharp" [Anderson, *Monotheism*, 87]); Mal. 3:10–11; 2 Kgs. 20:5, Job 26:7–14, and perhaps Exod. 14:2.

[32] The three years of drought is prophesied in 1 Kgs. 17:1; the deluge of rain is recounted in 1 Kgs. 18:45.

[33] Some of the signs are: Ahab, a Baal-worshipping king (1 Kgs. 16:31–32), is the nemesis of Elijah, Yahweh's prophet (1 Kgs. 18:1–18). Yahweh sends Elijah to Ahab to announce his intention to deprive Israel of rain

In light of the common identification of anti-Baal polemic in 1 Kgs. 18:41–45, the issue for scholarship, then, is not whether biblical authors engaged in what Amit calls "hidden" anti-Baal polemics, that is, anti-Baal polemics where the subject is implicit; the question is how early they did so in the historiography of ancient Israel.

Testing the Thesis by Amit's Third Criterion

For Amit, her third criterion was the most significant. She asserted that "[t]he claim of the existence of a hidden polemic in a given text has greater weight if it is possible to note a series of signs, or one striking, unmistakable sign, that points toward a polemic."[34] This criterion is based on the narrative mode of the "hidden polemic," which Amit described as a strategy of concealment but with signifying hints:

> *Through various hints*, the reader is left with the feeling that a double effort has been made within the text: on the one hand to conceal the subject of the polemic, that is, to avoid its explicit mention; on the other *to leave certain traces within the text* (referred to below as "signs") that through various means will lead the reader to the hidden subject of the polemic.[35] (italics added)

To illuminate Yahweh's confrontation with Baal, or Baal worship, in Exodus 14–15, I will highlight four signs, both within these chapters and their preceding literary context, by which the author appears to be leading the reader to perceive a polemic.

Sign 1: The Song's Narrative and Semantic Paralleling of the Baal Myth

One sign pointing toward a possible anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is the Song's narrative and semantic paralleling of the Baal Myth. The shared mythic pattern between the Baal

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for three years (I Kgs. 3:1). Yahweh deprives Israel of rain for three years (1 Kgs. 18:1). Immediately prior to 1 Kgs.18:41–45, Baal loses a public contest on Mount Carmel which determined that Yahweh, not Baal, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, controls the lightning (answers with fire) (1 Kgs. 18:20–40).

[34] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 97.

[35] Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 93.

Myth and Exod. 15:1–18 has been observed widely in Exodus scholarship since Cross's *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*. One major issue has hindered scholars' attempt to identify a true parallel: In the Song, Yahweh does not fight against the Sea. As Cross and Ballentine observed, Yahweh merely manipulates the water to destroy a historical enemy, the Egyptian army. Consequently, in her recent monograph on the West Asian conflict myth, Ballentine disqualifes the Song as a possible version of the conflict myth. Cross and Ballentine are correct in recognizing that the Song's description of the Sea Event does not pit Yahweh against the Sea-god, Yamm. This is also true of Exodus 14's account, despite Ballentine and others' questionable discernment of personal "violence toward the sea" in the verb בָּקַע.[36] I concede Ballentine's stricture that a conflict myth, by definition, demands Yahweh's battle with another god, usually a Sea-god, and contend that Exodus 14 and 15 present a derivative version of such a battle.[37] Yahweh is defeating Baal-zephon (or belief in Baal-zephon[38]) in history by controlling Baal's alleged historical domain, the waterways, in favor of Yahweh's worshippers and in opposition to Baal's.[39] By ostensibly vanquishing the conqueror of Yamm and controller of Yam Suph,

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[36] Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 95–96. Cf. McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 37, 44–45; Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71. In my view, the clear historical nature of the original accounts (in both Exodus 14 and 15) allows later biblical authors to adopt the vehicle of the Baal Myth, including Yamm's zoomorphization as Leviathan, to describe the tenor of Yahweh's control of Yam Suph with security that their audiences will understand the figurative referentiality of their poetic accounts.

[37] As I stated on p. 72 above, Exodus 14 and 15 present a novel employment of the traditional pattern of the conflict myth within a particular historical setting.

[38] For Egyptians and Israelites who believe in Baal-zephon's ontological existence, Yahweh's control of Baal's purported domain would constitute defeat of an actual god, or, from the Bible's canonical perspective, a demonic entity (1 Cor. 10:19–20). For some, the Sea Event would undermine their belief in Baal-zephon's superiority. For others, the Sea Event may undermine their belief in Baal-zephon's existence.

[39] While I disagree with Paul K. K. Cho's notion that the Song assumes Yahweh's past victory over a divinized Yamm, I would agree that in the minds of Egyptian and Israelite Baal-zephon worshippers participating in the Sea Event, "[t]he defeat of Sea [i.e., the Sea-god] is a silent assumption of the radical Song." See Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 215. Moreover, while Cho held that in the Sea Event "YHWH fights a historical enemy, Egypt, at the sea," I maintain that Yahweh's battle at the sea is also with Baal-zephon, or belief in Baal-zephon. This comports with Cho's understanding that the "contest between God and his foe" in the Sea Event occurs (in Cho's case, at least for the Yahwist) in the hermeneutical sphere. See Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 216.

Yahweh thereby demonstrates his universal kingship and legitimizes his claim to a mountain of inheritance in the heart of Baal's purported territory, Syro-Canaan. This uniqueness of the Song's employment of the conflict myth pattern helps to explain the dissonance between the Baal Myth's presentation of the Storm-god's relation to the Sea and the Song's.

The semantic parallels between these texts also suggest a close relationship. Among these, most striking is the widely cited (absolutely unique in extant ANE literature) semantic parallel between Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" (הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ) in Exod. 15:17 and Baal-zephon's "mountain of inheritance" (*ġāri naḥlati-ya*) in KTU 1.3 III: 28–31. As is evident in the historical survey above, scholars of the Song since the Ras Shamra discoveries have overwhelmingly identified this parallel, and many have recognized its uniqueness. Less striking but still salient is the semantic mirroring of the Baal Myth's proleptic acclamation of Baal's eternal kingship in Exod. 15:18. The Baal Myth lauds the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god: "Ba‘l will reign! [*ba‘lu-mi yamlu[ku*]," and "Thou shalt take thy eternal kingship [*tiqqaḥu mulka ‘olamika*] / Thy dominion forever and ever [*darkata dāta dārdārika*]." Exodus 15:18 presents the same concept more succinctly, reflecting in the Hebrew a synthesis of the concepts and cognate language in the Ugaritic passages: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד. Also notable, in both the Baal Myth and the Song, the acclamation of the Storm-god's eternal kingship is proleptic, anticipating the eventual arrival and Temple-building of the victorious god on the mountain of inheritance won through the conflict. By themselves, these striking narrative and semantic parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song do not dictate an anti-Baal polemic. They do, however, illuminate a close relationship between these texts, a relationship whose precise nature will be clarified by other striking signs.

Sign 2: The Unmatched Specificity of the Campsite at "Baal-zephon" in Exod. 14:2 and 9

A second striking sign pointing toward a possible anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is the unmatched specificity of the campsite at “Baal-zephon” in Exod. 14:2 and 9. In the Pentateuch, Israel is never again told by Yahweh precisely where to camp. Moreover, the precise repeating of this location in verse 9 is notable in its redundancy, unparalleled in the rest of the Pentateuch travel itinerary. The narrator avoids explicit mention of the polemic against the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god, but, through the uniqueness and redundancy of the geographical reference to “Baal-zephon,” he carefully alerts the reader to Yahweh’s implicit confrontation with Baal over control of Yam Suph.

Sign 3: Yahweh’s Appropriation of Native Seth/Baal-zephon’s Very Particular Domains

A third striking sign pointing to an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is the preceding narrative’s depiction of Yahweh’s appropriation and subversion of native Seth/Baal-zephon’s very particular domains, namely Yahweh’s Seth/Baal-like bloodening of the Nile and his Seth/Baal-like brandishing of the unprecedented hailstorm.[40]

The eighteenth-century Egyptian hybridization of native Seth with foreign Baal-zephon did not eradicate Seth’s native role as murderer of Osiris.[41] In *Seth, God of Confusion*, the principal monograph on this deity in modern scholarship, H. te Velde presented Seth as fundamentally a disturber of order, a bringer of foreign elements. One way Seth was thought to sow confusion, te Velde said, was by murdering Osiris and dissembling his corpse.[42] According to German

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[40] I will confine discussion to these two domains. A third domain of Seth, observable from the Old Kingdom through the New, was as protector of Ra in the sun god’s nightly boat ride through the sea of the underworld. Seth—and after hybridization, Seth-Baal—was responsible for nightly slaying Apophis, the serpent inhabiting these waters. Trimm summarized the possible polemical point being made in the plague of darkness: “Whereas in [sic] most days Seth fought on behalf of the sun god and prevented any disturbances in his path, for these three days of the ninth plague it appeared that YHWH had defeated Seth and prohibited the sun god from continuing on his normal course.” Trimm, “YHWH Fights,” 192.

[41] The Tel el-Daba cylinder seal, the earliest evidence of hybridization, is dated to the late eighteenth century.

[42] “Osiris, Seth’s victim,” te Velde said, “is sometimes called tštš,” that is, “the ‘dismembered one.’” Te Velde, *Seth*, 4. For the translation “dismembered one,” see Thomas George Allen, ed., *The Egyptian Book of the*

Egyptologist Jan Assmann, the Egyptians believed that the resultant effusion of Osiris's blood generated the fertilizing inundation of the Nile. He wrote, "According to the myth, the Nile inundation had its origin in the exudations of the corpse of Osiris."[43] The inundation, Assmann said, is called "rejuvenated water"[44] or "the discharge of Osiris."[45]

Assmann's reading of the myth is supported by numerous Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and spells from the Book of the Dead, indicating that this conception of the salutary result of Osiris's murder persisted from the Old Kingdom through the New.[46] Pyramid Text, Saying 436, dated to the Old Kingdom, assures the deceased king of abundant life-giving water during the afterlife, the water's source being the flood-generating fluid flowing from Osiris's dead body: "You have your water, you have your flood, the fluid which issued from the god, the exudation which issued from Osiris."[47] In Coffin Text, Spell 362, from the twenty-second or twenty-first century BCE, the deceased reveals that the source of his water supply in the afterlife is the inundation of the Nile produced by the efflux from Osiris's corpse: "I have quenched my thirst with the efflux of my father Osiris. O Isis, [I have quenched] my thirst with the high Nile, with the flood of Osiris."[48] The Book of the Dead, Spell Pleyte 168, with a provenance during the

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Dead. Documents in the Oriental Institute of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 69, 284.

[43] Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 358, 361. Cf. Colleen Manassa, *The Late Egyptian Underworld: Sarcophagi and Related Texts from the Nectanebid Period* (Wiesbaden: GmbH, 2007), 66, 373. The collection of quotations pertaining to Osiris's role in the inundation of the Nile were found at https://mythodoxy.wordpress.com/2019/04/23/drinking-the-blood-of-osiris/#_ftnref18.

[44] Assmann, Death and Salvation, 361.

[45] Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, 361.

[46] The Pyramid Texts date from the Fifth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom through the Eighth Dynasty of the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2400–2100 BCE). The Coffin Texts date from the last half of the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2134–2040 BCE). The spells in the Book of the Dead date from the New Kingdom (1550–1070 BCE).

[47] Pyramid Text, Saying 436 § 788, translated in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 143.

[48] Coffin Text, Spell 362 V, 22, translated in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*

Eighteenth Dynasty, also suggests that the source of the Nile's inundation is the fluid flowing from Osiris. Found originally on a papyrus from the tomb of Amenhotep II, the spell summons Osiris, "Raise thyself, Inundation, Osiris who came forth at the beginning and fills the earth with his efflux. … Raise thyself, thou who hast dawned as the inundation."[49]

Egyptians believed that the effusion of Osiris's bodily fluids, particularly his blood,[50] fertilized the land and explained the red color of the Nile at the beginning of the Nile flood season in mid-summer.[51] Egyptologists have confirmed this "reddening" phenomenon and explained its geological cause. Spanish Egyptologist Maria R. Guasch noted that during the inundation of the Nile, the river "aquired a reddish colour due to the ferrous alluvium of the Blue Nile and the Atbara rivers coming from the Ethiopian land."[52] Taiwanese Egyptologist Mu-chou

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(Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), 2:5. The notion that the effusion of Osiris's blood produces the fertilizing inundation of the Nile is also implied in Book of the Dead, Spell 162 variant 267: "Hi, Osiris, Thou renewest thy youth, thou renewest thy youth, forever and ever in thy rejuvenation, in thy rejuvenation, Osiris, in the sky. … Thou comest as the inundation that waters; thou providest for the fields (and) all the flowers." Thomas George Allen, ed., *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, SAOC 37 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 158. https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/saoc37.pdf

[49] Book of the Dead, Spell Pleyte 168 S 34, 38, translated in Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, 219. For the Eighteenth Dynasty provenance of the earliest known version of this spell, see the University College of London's 2003 CE description of the BD spells at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/literature/religious/bdbynumber.html.

[50] In *The Oxford Encylopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Mu-chou Poo asserted that the Egyptians associated Osiris's blood with the redness of the wine derived from the vines fertilized through the Nile's inundation. Mu-chou Poo, "Wine," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt: Volume 3*, ed. D. B. Redford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 503; cf. Maria R. Guasch et al., "Scientific Research on Archaeological Residues from Ancient Egyptian Wines," in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists: Volume 1*, eds. J.C. Goyon, C. Cardin (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2007), 851–52; and László Török *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC – 500 AD* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 4. The association of Osiris's blood and the redness of wine is evident in numerous ancient texts, among them: Coffin Text, Spell 394 V, 67, Pyramid Texts, Saying 153 § 92, Saying 48 § 36, Saying 149 § 90, Saying 50 § 90, Saying 183 § 105, and Saying 202 § 117.

[51] Patricia Remler explained that the Nile turned red at the beginning of the inundation due to the silt suspended in the water. Patricia Remler, *Egyptian Mythology: A to Z* (New York: Chelsea House), viii.

[52] Maria R. Guasch et al., "Scientific Research on Archaeological Residues from Ancient Egyptian Wines," in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists,* ed. J. C. Goyon, C. Cardin (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 1:851–52.

Poo concurred, stating that "the iron-rich red alluvium washed into the Nile from the Atbara branch during the flood season" colors the Nile red.[53] In *Osiris: Death and Afterlife of a God*, Macedonian Egyptologist Bojana Mojsov affirmed Guasch and Poo's claim, summarizing Egyptian speculation about the mythological source of the Nile's reddening: "The red hue of the river, brought on by oxide sediments during the inundation, to this day is compared with blood. Was this the blood of Osiris?"[54]

Based on Egyptian texts ranging from the Old Kingdom to the New, Seth's murder of Osiris was thought to generate the blood-red waters producing the fertilizing inundation of the Nile. In effect, Seth, through murder, was responsible for giving life to the Nile and, by extension, the land of Egypt. Following Seth's hybridization with Baal-zephon in the late Middle Kingdom, this was then considered Seth-Baal's domain: turning the Nile red with Osiris's lifegiving blood. Consequently, one of Yahweh's first "signs and wonders" establishing his name is appropriate. In Exod. 7:17–25, Yahweh controls Seth-Baal's purported domain, bloodening the Nile, not to bring life but to bring death, not as a blessing but as a curse on Seth-Baal's worshippers.

The synthesis of native Seth with foreign Baal-zephon, observable by the end of the Middle Kingdom, also left native Seth's role as Egypt's Storm-god intact. Jan Zandee and H. te Velde have both detailed native Seth's role as Storm-god before and after hybridization with Baal. In his 1967 monograph, H. te Velde portrayed Seth as the divine foreigner, the bringer of foreign elements. This included Seth's role as the agent of thunderstorms. Since Egypt relied almost exclusively on the inundation of the Nile for its fertility, thunderstorms were considered foreign affairs, the unwanted interruption of an ordered, predictable climate.[55]

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[53] Mu-chou Poo, "Wine," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt: Volume 3*, ed. D. B. Redford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 503. Poo added that Greek and Roman authors of the classical period both noted this Egyptian phenomenon. Poo, "Liquids in Temple Ritual," *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. W. Wendrich (Los Angeles: 2010), 2. http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/7gh1n151. Cf. Jean L. Kérisel, *The Nile and Its Masters: Past, Present, Future*, trans. P. Cockle (Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1999–2001), 38.

[54] Bojana Mojsov, *Osiris: Death and Afterlife of a God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 7.

Zandee preceded te Velde in illuminating Egyptian notions of native "Seth als Sturmgott." He recognized that to the Egyptians thunderstorms were "*nicht-bodenständig*," that is, not "rooted in the soil," i.e., not native.[56] Zandee derived his portrait of native Seth principally from Middle Egyptian hieroglyphs which incorporate the Seth-animal determinative.[57] These Middle Egyptian hieroglyphs have enabled scholars to gauge earlier Egyptian understandings of Seth as Storm-god, since many of these symbols are found in Pyramid and Coffin texts which predate the Middle Kingdom. Zandee discovered that the Seth-animal determinative was employed in Middle Egyptian as a component of words signifying various forms of disorder, especially words denoting meteorological phenomena like thunderstorms and raging winds. Some of the most notable words incorporating the Seth-animal ideogram are *nšn* (storm, thunderstorm, rage), *ḳrỉ* (cloud, storm, thunderstorm), *ẖnnw* (disturbance, disorder, troublemaker), *swhỉ* (roar), *khb* (being violent, damaging, storming, raging of the wind), *sh3* (revolt, illegality), and *swhỉ* (roar).[58] Te Velde concluded that half of the words incorporating the Seth-animal determinative "refer to atmospheric disturbances."[59]

Te Velde confirmed that Seth's connection to storms appears as early as the Fifth Dynasty of the twenty-fourth century BCE. He noted, "In the Pyramid texts inscribed in the pyramids of

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[55] Jan Zandee, "Seth als Sturmgott," *ZAS* 90 (1963): 147.

[56] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 145.

[57] Middle Egyptian was the form of the language of Egypt between 2000–1300 BCE.

[58] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 147.

[59] te Velde, *Seth*, 25.

Unas, the Seth-animal is used as ideogram of the god Seth, and also already as determinative of the word nšn [storm]."[60] Zandee cited a twenty-fourth century Pyramid of Unas text, Saying 247, in which Seth is called *nb ḳri͗*, lord of the thunderstorm: "The Lord of the thunderstorm, he [Seth] is forbidden from drooling [i.e., bringing rain] when he carries you [Osiris]."[61] While Seth's thunderstorms were deemed atmospheric disturbances, the winds generated by Seth's nostrils were described positively as life-giving and sustaining. A Pyramid of Neith text, dated to the late twenty-third or early twenty-second century BCE, reads, "When the winds of heaven are annihilated, the breath that is on your mouth is also annihilated."[62] Zandee summarized the view of Seth as wind source: "The wind is the breath that Seth blows out of his nostrils."[63] Seth "is the God from whom the wind proceeds" (my translation).[64]

In the Coffin Texts, Seth the Storm-god is also portrayed as a mighty warrior, protecting the realm of the dead from other gods bent on harming the deceased. In this role, Seth brandishes thunderstorms to intimidate these adversaries and, as such, is called by the epithet *Nb pḥti͗*, "The Lord of strength."[65] Coffin Text V, 214 describes thunder as Seth "in his rage." The same text portrays Seth as possessing "*3.t*," "the angry attack force of the lion."[66] Another text parallels Seth's attacking power (*3.t*) with his rage (*nšn*). Zandee asserted that here Seth's *nšn*, that is,

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[60] te Velde, *Seth*, 24.

[61] Pyramid Text, Saying 247 § 261, translated in Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 145.

[62] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 145.

[63] This is precisely how Yahweh's control of Yam Suph is described in Exod. 15:8: "At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up."

[64] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 145. Coffin Text Spell 630 calls Seth "the Lord of the air," by whom breath is given to the realm of the dead. Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 146.

[65] See Coffin Text VI, 253, k–o, Coffin Text VI, 254, a–c, t.

[66] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 150.

“rage,” “denotes the cosmic disturbance caused by the thunderstorm.”[67]

Zandee concluded his study of Seth as Storm-god by highlighting the common epithet for Seth found in epigraphs of the later New Kingdom, “Seth great in strength [*Stẖ ʽ3 pḥ.ty*]”[68] He argued that, from the Old Kingdom through the New, Seth was understood primarily as the god who manifests his strength through storms and thunderstorms, that is, as Storm-god. Zandee wrote, “For a correct understanding of Seth we have to start from his much-used epithet ‘great in strength.’ From there we have to understand the phenomena in which this force expresses itself: fertility, earthquake, storm and thunderstorm. Of all these aspects precisely this last is the most striking and the best documented in the texts” (my translation).[69]

Egyptian texts ranging from the Old Kingdom through the New demonstrate that Seth’s primary domain was consistently understood to be thunderstorms. In Egypt, where fertility was determined almost solely by the regular inundation of the Nile, such storms were rare and viewed unfavorably. Thus, the Storm-god of Egypt was mainly petitioned not to send thunderstorms but to make them cease. This prevailing understanding of Seth’s domain is epitomized on the thirteenth century Marriage Stela, the monument commemorating Ramesses II’s marriage to the Hittite princess Maathorneferure. Realizing that the journey of his queen’s entourage and Egyptian military escort might be hampered by bad weather, Ramesses II prayed to his dynastic god Seth, requesting that the Storm-god cease unfavorable storms until his bride’s safe arrival. The stela reveals the context of Ramesses II’s prayer and the precise contents of his petition:

> Now His Majesty had pondered in his mind, saying, “How will they manage, those whom I have now sent to Syria, in these days of rain and snow that happen in winter?” So, he offered a great oblation to his father (the god) Seth, saying, “The sky

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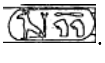
[67] Coffin Text V, 214, c, translated in Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 150.

[68] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 154. This is the epithet found on the 400 Years Stela, marked as .

[69] Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, 156.

> is in your hands, the earth is under your feet, whatever happens is what you command—and—so, may you not send rain, icy blast or snow, until the marvel you have decreed for me shall reach me!" Then his father Seth heeded all that he said, and so the sky was calm and the summer days occurred in the winter season.[70]

In light of continuous Egyptian worship of Seth as Storm-god before and after hybridization with Baal, Yahweh's sending of an unprecedented hail-bearing thunderstorm upon Egypt likely signals Yahweh's appropriation of Seth-Baal's domain. The unprecedented ferocity of the storm is vividly captured by the narrator in Exod. 9:23–26.

> Then Moses stretched out his staff toward the heavens, and Yahweh sent thunder and hail, and fire went to the earth. And Yahweh rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire zigzagging in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, which nothing had been like[71] in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote in all the land of Egypt everything in the field, from man to beast. And the hail struck every herb of the field and shattered every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel [were], was there no hail.[72] (my translation)

The importance of the plague of hail for revealing Yahweh's Storm-god-like behavior has been observed in two recent scholarly commentaries. As discussed above, Thomas Dozeman attributed this episode's "intensification" of the plague narrative to the fact "that Yahweh is presented as the Storm God" who brandishes hail as his "weapon."[73] Dozeman concluded, "The imagery of the storm god suggests an invasion of Yahweh into the land of Egypt through the plague of hailstorm. The point of emphasis in the plague is on war."[74] Like Dozeman, Utzschneider and Oswald recognized the uniqueness of the hailstorm episode in its "impli[cation of] the type of deity known as the Syrian storm and weather god." In this plague, they said,

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[70] Translated in K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1982), 86. Cf. James Henry Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 3:185.

[71] אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה כָמֹהוּ. is literally "which not was like it."

[72] Exod. 9:23–26

[73] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 234, 247.

[74] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 235.

"YHWH is portrayed with attributes of the weather God."[75]

Utzschneider and Oswald emphasized that the plague of hail episode also stands out in the progression of the plague narrative by introducing the "motif of incomparability."[76] This episode, in other words, is integral to Yahweh's glorification of his name. Here Yahweh highlights his intent to show his superiority over all others, including rival gods, presenting this purpose emphatically in three forms: he will manifest his incomparability;[77] he will make the whole earth take account of his name;[78] and he will show pharaoh his sovereignty over the earth.[79]

Notably, Yahweh's demonstration of superiority will be accomplished not only through a hailstorm, a strange enough occurrence in Egypt; it will be accomplished through an unprecedented storm, a motif the episode shares with the Baal Myth. In Exod. 9:18, Yahweh warns, "Behold, I am causing to rain [down], this time tomorrow, very heavy hail, which nothing has been like since the day of its founding until now" (my translation).[80] The novelty is noted again in the account of the hailstorm's execution: "There was hail and fire zigzagging in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, which nothing had been like in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation."[81]

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[75] Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 188.

[76] Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1–15* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 188. The motif of Yahweh's incomparability is launched in 9:14 as Yahweh alerts Pharaoh to the coming plague's expanded scope: "For this time I will send all my blows upon your heart, and on your servants and on your people, so that you will know that there is no one like me in all the earth" (my translation). Yahweh accentuates the specialness of this plague in verse 16 by clarifying that its enactment is intended to "show" pharaoh his "power," in order that Yahweh's "name may be taken account of in all the earth" (my translation). Pharaoh's emotional response to the hailstorm also distinguishes this episode. Pharaoh, with exceptional candor, confesses his sin and his people's sin against Yahweh in verse 28: "[This] time I have sinned; Yahweh [is] righteous, and I and my people [are] wicked. Make supplication with Yahweh, for there has been enough voices of God [i.e., thunder] and hail" (my translation). The translation of וְרַב מִהְיֹת קֹלֹת אֱלֹהִים וּבָרָם recognizes the idiomatic phrase וְרַב מִהְיֹת (literally, "great from being") as an expression meaning "[it] is enough." The phrase קֹלֹת אֱלֹהִים is translated literally. However, אֱלֹהִים can signify "mighty" in some contexts, as it does in Jon. 3:3; and קֹלֹת, literally "voices," when used in the context of the storm, refers to thunder. Finally, in verse 29, Moses then promises to end the hailstorm when he goes out of the city "in order that [pharaoh] will know that the earth [is] Yahweh's."

[77] Exod. 9:14

[78] Exod. 9:16

[79] Exod. 9:29

[80] אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה כָמֹהוּ. is literally "which not was like it."

In KTU 1.3, Baal similarly boasts about the novelty of his thunderstorms: "I will create lightning which the heavens do not know, / Thunder that mankind does not know, / Nor the multitudes of the earth understand."[82] Norman Habel suggested that Baal's intent with the unprecedented storm was to manifest his life-giving creative power, but also to show his sovereignty. He wrote, Baal "introduces something new into the world to demonstrate his life-giving creative power as lord of the cosmos."[83] Echoing Habel, Dozeman perceived that Yahweh's purpose in the hailstorm was to demonstrate superiority and legitimate sovereignty. Dozeman implied this perception as he alluded to the significance of Baal's storms in his discussion of the plague of hail: "In the mythology of the storm god Baal, the thunderstorm is … a proclamation of political victory and power."[84]

Dozeman's recognition of Yahweh's role as a Baal-like Storm-god is distinct in Exodus scholarship and deserves special mention. Not only did Dozeman see Yahweh behaving as a Storm-god in the hailstorm; he argued that Yahweh then continued in this role all the way through the Sea Event. He asserted, "The motif of Yahweh as the warring Storm God will continue through the defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, which will conclude with the hymn of victory in 15:1–18, which praises Yahweh as the Warrior God."[85] Thus, Dozeman conveyed awareness of Yahweh's role as Baal-like Storm-god in Exodus 9–15, while perceiving the polemical nature of the plagues.[86] Yet Dozeman's influential 2009 commentary betrays unfamiliarity with more recent Egyptological studies in the East Nile Delta. Excavations, like those at Tel el-Daba, have established the centrality of Baal-zephon, as hybridized with native Seth, in ancient Egyptian religion. Had Dozeman been aware of these findings, it is probable, considering the trajectory of his thought, that he would have understood Yahweh's appearance as Storm-god in the hailstorm and the Sea Event in the same polemical terms in which he saw the other plagues.

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[81] Exod. 9:24. "Flashing" is a common translation of the hithpael participle of לָקַח, מִתְלַקַּחַת.

[82] Habel's translation of Baal V iii 41–43: *ʾabn brq dl tdʿšmm / rgm ltdʿ nšm / Wltbn hmlt ʾarṣ*. *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 57.

[83] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 57.

[84] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 234.

In conclusion, this is the third striking sign by which the author of Exodus 14–15 leads the reader to perceive an anti-Baal polemic: In the preceding narrative, Yahweh appropriates native Seth/Baal-zephon's very particular domains. He demonstrates his control of Seth-Baal's domain, the life-giving bloodening of the Nile and its tributaries, by turning its waters to actual blood, effectively killing the Nile, the life source of all Egypt. Later, Yahweh assumes Seth-Baal's domain as Storm-god. In a land where Seth was believed to have reigned through and over storms for at least a thousand years, Yahweh brandishes a hailstorm of unprecedented severity against Seth-Baal's supplicants. Together with the Song's narrative and semantic paralleling of the Baal Myth, and the uniqueness and redundancy of the Baal-zephon cultic site references, Yahweh's appropriation of Seth-Baal's particular domains supports the likelihood of anti-Baal polemic in Exodus's accounts of the Sea Event.

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[85] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 238.

[86] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 30, 221.

Sign 4: Yahweh’s Baal-like Manifestation of His Martial Presence in a Cloud

The final sign by which the author points the reader to an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is the Baal-like form Yahweh adopts to manifest his martial presence with his people. In leading the people out “arrayed for battle (חֲמֻשִׁים),” Yahweh goes before Israel in a pillar of cloud (בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן).[87] In “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” Thomas Mann observed that the עָנָן (cloud) and its synonyms, עָב and עֲרָפֶל, occur throughout the Old Testament “in the context of basically mythological presentations of storm theophanies.”[88] Mann then explained that the עָנָן of biblical storm theophanies, observable in Exod. 13:21–22, is derived from the Baal Myth. He wrote, “In short, we may conclude from the OT and Ugaritic evidence that the provenance of the *ʿānān* must be found in the Canaanite mythology surrounding the storm deity, his messengers, and weapons of divine warfare.”[89]

Thomas Dozeman and Alberto Green have supported Mann’s claim, arguing that the עָנָן of the exodus intentionally parallels the *ʿnn* of the Baal Myth, where such clouds “indicate divine military escorts”[90] or, in Green’s words, “the Storm-god’s military retinue.”[91] Earlier, Harold Ginsberg had observed that Baal’s attendants and messengers, Gupan and Wugar, are called “gods” (*ilm*) and “cloud of the gods” (*ʿnn ʾilm*).[92] That is, Ginsberg suggested, the cloud (*ʿnn*) attending Baal is the physical manifestation of these messengers (*ġlmm*), Gupan and Wugar.

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[87] Exod. 13:21

[88] Thomas W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” *JBL* 90 (1971): 20. Mann noticed that in the Baal Myth “cloud” could also be signified by *ʿāb*, *ʿᵃrābôt*, and *ʿᵃrāpel*. Mann, “Pillar of Cloud,” 20.

[89] Mann, “Pillar of Cloud,” 23.

[90] Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 310.

[91] Green, *Storm-God*, 200. Patrick Miller described the clouds as “the war chariot of the storm god as he goes to do battle.” Miller, *Divine Warrior*, 41.

[92] H. L. Ginsberg, “Baal’s Two Messengers,” *BASOR* 95 (1944): 27. Ginsberg derives these equations from KTU 1.3III, the episode in which Baal sends Gupan and Wugar as a delegation to Anat in order to solicit her help in convincing El to authorize a temple for Baal. Cf. Mann, “Pillar of Cloud,” 21.

More recently, Alberto Green affirmed Mann and Ginsberg's interpretation of Baal's cloud. He asserted that Baal's attendants, Gupan and Wugar, are cited as "Baal's helper-gods" and "are portrayed as members of the Storm-god's military retinue" as well as being designated Baal's "'clouds' *ʿnn.ilm*."[93]

These scholars' claims find support in KTU 1.5, where Mot, the god of the underworld, appears to describe Baal's entourage appositionally as the Storm-god's messengers, moisture gods, and thunderstorm phenomena: "And you [Baal], take with you your clouds, / Your wind, your thunder-bolts, your rains; / (Take) with you your seven attendants, / And your eight swine; / (Take) with you Pidriya daughter of mist, / (Take) with you Taliya daughter of showers."[94] Another passage, clarifying the martial comradery implied here between Baal and his attendants, features Mot threatening the assembly of the gods, demanding that they "give up Baal and his *ʿnn*."[95]

The portrayal of Baal's military escort as a cloud comports with Baal's epithet, "the Cloud-rider" (*rkb.ʿrpt*),[96] which influenced Old Testament depictions of Yahweh as the warrior king. In Ps. 104:3, for instance, Yahweh "makes clouds his chariot" (הַשָּׂם־עבִים רְכוּבוֹ), while Deut. 33:26 describes him as "[the] rider of … clouds in his majesty" (רֹכֵב … בְגַאֲוָתוֹ שְׁחָקִים).

Yahweh's adoption of the cloud by day and the lightning-filled stormcloud by night to manifest his martial presence with Israel is a sign that the author of Exodus 14–15 means to portray Yahweh as a Baal-like Storm-god. Along with the Song's parallels with the Baal Myth, the highlighting of the Baal-zephon cultic site, and Yahweh’s appropriation of Seth-Baal’s particular domains, Yahweh’s appearance in a cloud helps signal the presence of an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15.

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[93] Green, *Storm-God*, 200.

[94] KTU 1.5 v: 6–12, quoted in Green, *Storm-God*, 199.

[95] *UT* 2, 1:18, 35, quoted in Mann, "Pillar of Cloud," 20.

[96] This epithet is found sixteen times in the Ras Shamra texts. For example: KTU 1.2 4: 8, 29; 1.3 IV: 4, 27; 1.4 III:11, 18; 1.4 V: 60; 1.5 II: 7, 16–17. Cf. Mann, *Pillar of Cloud*, 23.

Testing the Thesis by Amit’s Fourth Criterion

Finally, in fulfillment of Amit’s fourth criterion, I will demonstrate that reference to the implicit subject of the polemic does exist in the exegetical tradition. For over two and a half millennia, an assortment of biblical texts, Bible translations, and extra-biblical commentaries have attested to anti-Baal polemic in the Song of the Sea and its prose framework.

Isaiah 19

One candidate for an inner-biblical witness to anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is Isaiah 19’s “oracle concerning Egypt” (מַשָּׂא מִצְרָיִם). Isaiah 19 portrays Yahweh as a Baal-like Storm-god who demonstrates sovereignty over Egypt’s waterways, controlling the Nile and Yam Suph to enact new judgment on this idolatrous nation. The oracle commences with a description of Yahweh as Cloud-rider and predicts the defeated response of both the gods and people of Egypt: “Behold, Yahweh is riding on a swift cloud [הִנֵּה יְהוָה רֹכֵב עַל־עָב קַל] / and comes to Egypt; / and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, / and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.”[97] In six subsequent verses, 19:5–10, Isaiah describes Yahweh’s devastation of Egypt’s bodies of water and the economic fallout. Isaiah 19:5 introduces Yahweh’s sovereignty over the

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[97] Isa. 19:1. John Currid also recognized anti-Baal polemic here in his survey on anti-god polemics in the Old Testament, though he failed to connect Isaiah’s polemic to a more implicit anti-Baal polemic in Exodus: “Some scholars argue that this is evidence that Yahweh somehow evolved from Baal, or that perhaps there is some type of syncretism at work here. In reality, it is more likely that the biblical author of Isaiah is making an implicit criticism of Baalism: Baal does not ride on the clouds; Yahweh does! Certainly that meaning would have been clear to the Israelites of the time, who were living in the land of Canaan and were quite knowledgeable of Canaanite culture.” Currid, *Against the Gods*, 28.

יָם and נָהָר, as Isaiah prophesies Yahweh’s central act in the coming judgment:

וְנִשְּׁתוּ־מַיִם מֵהַיָּם	And he will dry up waters from the sea,
וְנָהָר יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ׃	and he will dry up and wither the river.[98]

Baal Myth scholar Nick Wyatt has argued that the language in Isa. 19:5 is derived from the Baal Myth.[99] Wyatt compared Isa. 19:5 with the language employed in one of the Baal Myth’s climactic scenes, the narrator’s depiction of events in the immediate wake of Baal’s defeat of Yam:

> Baal gathered up / and drank [*yšt*, from *šty* or *nšt*] <Prince> Yam to the dregs;
>
> he exterminated Ruler Nahar.
>
> By name Athtart chided (him): / Dry (him) up [*bṯ*, imperative of *ybṯ*]. O Valiant Baal!
> / Dry (him) up, O Charioteer of the Clouds!
>
> For our captive is Pr[ince Yam], / [for] our captive is Ruler Nahar!’
>
> Then B[aal] went out … / Valiant Baal dried him up. …
>
> ‘Yam is indeed dead! / Baal will ru[le].[100] (my italics)

Wyatt noticed that lines 28–29 contain the Ugaritic cognates of the Hebrew verbs paralleled in Isa. 19:5—*nšt* (נָשַׁת) and ybṯ (יָבֵשׁ). Moreover, the objects of these verbs are identical in the two passages—*yamm* (יָם) and *naharah* (נָהָר). Wyatt concluded that Isa. 19:5 exemplifies “the fidelity at least of theme and often of vocabulary with which the Heb[rew] preserves the Ug[aritic] tradition.”[101] In addition to the semantic parallels cited by Wyatt, in the Ugaritic passage, Baal’s drying up of Yamm and Naharah is a function of his role as *rkb.ʿrpt*, “Charioteer of the Clouds,” or “Cloud-Rider.” The fact that Yahweh is portrayed similarly in the immediate context of the cognate Isaiah passage (Isa. 19:1) helps confirm Isaiah’s intention to portray Yahweh as a Baal-like Storm-god who controls waterways.

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[98] Isa. 19:5, my translation.

[99] Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 68.

[100] KTU 1.2 iv 25: 28–32, quoted in Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 67–69.

[101] Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 68 n150.

While Wyatt connected Isaiah 19 to the Baal Myth, Michael Fishbane and Shawn Aster linked Isaiah 19 to the exodus narrative.[102] Specifically, they argued that Isaiah 19 contains multiple allusions to the original exodus account.[103] In two studies engaging Isaiah 19, Fishbane argued that Isaiah’s oracle concerning Egypt evinces “remarkable” inner-biblical exegesis of the exodus tradition. “The reuse and transformation of the exodus typology in Isa 19:19–25 is particularly remarkable," he wrote.[104] In a later work, Fishbane called Isa. 19:19–25 "a deliberate and extended play on the language of the exodus cycle."[105] For his part, Aster identified the semantic parallels cited by Fishbane and added others, among them two parallels in Isa. 19:20–22 which serve as allusions to Exodus 14's account of the Sea Event.[106]

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[102] Aster, “Isaiah 19,” 462. Michael Fishbane, “Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 353–54; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 367–68. Austin Surls has agreed with Aster and Fishbane. He wrote, “This prophetic oracle uses language from the early chapters of Exodus and suprisingly inverts its participants by applying YHWH’s salvific intervention to Egypt, the very nation from which Israel was rescued.” Surls, *Making Sense*, 113.

[103] The following evidence can be adduced to demonstrate that Isaiah 19 contains multiple allusion to the exodus narrative: In Isa. 19, Egypt often fills Israel’s role in the original exodus narrative (Isa. 19:4, 20, 21). In Isa. 19:4, for example, Yahweh warns of a coming oppression for the Egyptians which is reminiscent of Israel’s earlier affliction at Pharaoh’s hand. Isaiah writes that Yahweh will “give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard [קָשֶׁה] master, / and a fierce [עַז] king will rule over them.” Israel’s bondage at the hands of Pharaoh is described similarly in Exod. 1. At the command of this tyrannical king, the Egyptians “made [the Israelites’] lives bitter with hard [קָשֶׁה] labor in brick and in mortar and in all [manner] of labor in the field, and all their labor [by] which they served them with harshness.” Moreover, Isaiah reveals that, like the Israelites, the Egyptians will cry out in their time of oppression. Isaiah 19:20 mirrors the language of Exod. 3 and 6 to describe Egypt’s cries and Yahweh’s response: “For they will cry out [זָעַק] to Yahweh because of oppressors [לָחַץ], and he will send them a savior and a great [one], and he will deliver [נָצַל] them.” Similarly, in Exod. 2:23 and 3:7, Israel cries out [זָעַק], and Yahweh promises to deliver [נָצַל]: “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who [are] in Egypt and I have heard their cry [זָעַק] because of those hard-driving them, for I know their pains, and I have come down to deliver him [נָצַל] from the hand of Egypt” (my translation). Two verses later, Yahweh reiterates his awareness of Israel’s oppression: “Now behold, the cry [זָעַק] of the sons of Israel has come to me and I have also seen the oppression [לָחַץ] [with] which Egypt is oppressing [לָחַץ] them” (my translation). Finally, Isa.19:21 conveys the result of this deliverance: “Yahweh will be known [יָדַע, niphal] to Egypt and Egypt will know Yahweh in that day (my translation).” This is also the stated purpose of Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel. In Exod. 6:3b, he informs Moses that formerly “I was not known [יָדַע, niphal] to them by my name Yahweh” (my translation). The coming deliverance will change this: “then you [Israel] will know [יָדַע] that I am Yahweh your God who brings you out from under the burdens of Egypt” (my translation). Other times Egypt relives its prior role (Isa. 19:2–17, 21, 22), namely as those plagued by Yahweh and thereby compelled to acknowledge him. Isaiah 19:21 applies both to Israel’s role in the original exodus and Egypt’s; that is, both Israel (Exod. 14:31) and Egypt (Exod. 14:25b) are forced to acknowledge Yahweh in response to Yahweh’s signs and wonders, especially the Sea Event.

Going beyond Fishbane, Aster followed Paul Cook in arguing for the literary unity of Isaiah 19.[107] Aster wrote, "Isaiah 19:19–25 … ought not to be considered in isolation from the rest of the 'Burden of Egypt.' They flow logically from the description of the terror and confusion in Egypt found in 19:1–16."[108] Aster implied that the events causing the "terror and confusion in Egypt" in the first half of the oracle were synonymous with Yahweh's "smiting" [נָגַף] of Egypt in Isa. 19:22. The "smiting" in verse 22, he contended—and, by implication, the terrifying events in 19:1–16—are an allusion to the exodus plagues. Aster explicitly called Yahweh's new judgment of Egypt in Isaiah 19 "a re-enactment of the plagues of Egypt."[109]

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[104] Fishbane, "Aspects," 354.

[105] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 367.

[106] Aster identified the uniqueness of the phrase מוֹשִׁיעַ וָרָב in Isa. 19:20b, suggesting that it alludes to Exod. 14:30, the only place, he noted, where the root ישע is found to describe Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from their oppression in Egypt. Exod. 14:30a reads, "So Yahweh saved [וַיּוֹשַׁע] Israel that day out of the hand of Egypt." Aster also recognized the common motif of "knowing Yahweh" in Isa. 19:21 and Exod. 14. Isaiah says that "Egypt will know Yahweh in that day," the day of Egypt's deliverance, while Exod. 14:25b shows Egypt achieving knowledge of Yahweh exclusively through the Sea Event, the day of Israel's deliverance (Exod.14:30). Aster, "Isaiah 19," 464. Finally, Aster pointed out the semantic parallel between Yahweh's "smiting" [נָגַף] of Egypt in Isa. 19:22 and Yahweh's earlier smiting [נָגַף] of Egypt both through the inundation of frogs threatened in Exod. 7:27 [Heb.] and the impending hailstorm prophesied in Exod. 9:14. Aster noted that just as Yahweh's "repeated smiting" causes Egypt to acknowledge Yahweh in the exodus, so Yahweh's smiting of Egypt in Isa. 19:22 moves Egypt to "turn to YHWH." Aster, "Isaiah 19," 465. Aster concluded, "The return of Egypt to YHWH described in Isa. 19:22 seems to be the direct result of a re-enactment of the plagues of Egypt, and the Assyrian attack [of Tiglath-pileser III in 734 BCE] seems to be re-envisioned as a re-enactment of those plagues." Aster, "Isaiah 19," 465.

[107] Paul M. Cook, *A Sign and A Wonder: The Redactional Formation of Isaiah 18–20* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 82–86.

[108] Aster, "Isaiah 19," 467.

[109] Aster wrote, "The return of Egypt to YHWH described in Isa. 19:22 seems to be the direct result of a re-enactment of the plagues of Egypt, and the Assyrian attack [pictured in 19:1–16] seems to be re-envisioned as a re-enactment of those plagues." Aster, "Isaiah 19," 465.

Although Aster conceived of the events in Exod. 19:1–16 as a "re-enactment of the plagues of Egypt," he failed to recognize the portrayal of Yahweh and his actions in these verses as a possible allusion to the depiction of Yahweh in the exodus narrative. Two prominent Isaiah scholars, however, have described Isaiah's picture of Yahweh and his actions as allusive, albeit in different ways. While J. Alec Motyer failed to see Isa. 19:1's Baal imagery, he spotted an allusion to the exodus in the verse's prophecy that Yahweh would enact judgment on the gods of Egypt. "Judgment on Egypt's gods is an exodus theme (Ex. 12:12)," he wrote.[110] Brevard Childs, on the other hand, perceived an allusion to the Baal Myth in Isa. 19:1, but failed to connect this portrayal with the original exodus.[111] In contrast, Aster made no connection between Isa. 19:1 and the exodus or the Baal Myth. Rather, he associated Yahweh's cloud-riding with pictures of Assur in Assyrian palace art, where the preeminent Assyrian deity "is portrayed as suspended in the air, flying ahead of the swiftly moving Assyrian army."[112] Notably, no cloud is evident in these Assyrian pictures, weakening Aster's association. Aster explicitly objected to any connection between Isaiah 19 and the Baal Myth. He argued, contra Wyatt and Childs, that "derivation from Ugaritic imagery is out of place in the present chapter."[113] The chapter "does not engage storm god themes," he asserted, which he delimited to "the cloud imagery and storm phenomena such as water, hail, fire, and thunder."[114] However, judging by the Ugaritic and Egyptological studies discussed above, Aster incorrectly circumscribed the Storm-god's domain.

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[110] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 164.

[111] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 143.

[112] Aster, "Isaiah 19," 468.

[113] Aster, "Isaiah 19," 468.

[114] Aster, "Isaiah 19," 468.

He erred in failing to include the Storm-god’s dominion over historico-geographical waterways—in this case, the Nile and Yam Suph.

In conclusion, if Aster’s implication that Isa. 19:1–16 describes “a re-enactment of the plagues of Egypt” is accepted, then the portrayal of Yahweh in these verses should be carefully assessed as a possible allusion to the portrait of Yahweh in Exodus 7–15. In a chapter full of allusions to the first exodus, Isaiah 19’s portrait of Yahweh in clear Baal terms as the cloud-riding controller of יָם and נָהָר who would terrorize the idols of Egypt may indicate that Isaiah saw Yahweh performing this role in the Exodus account. If we assume that Isaiah was aware of Baal worship in Egypt at the time of the exodus, it is probable that Isaiah would have understood an Exodus portrayal of Yahweh as a Baal-like Storm-god in anti-Baal polemical terms. If so, Isaiah 19’s exegesis of Exodus 1–15 would bear witness that the earliest accounts of the exodus, particularly of the Sea Event, contain an anti-Baal polemic.

Psalm 48

Another possible attestation of anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 can be found in Psalm 48.[115] Psalm 48:3 sets Mount Zion on the uppermost reaches of Mount Zaphon (יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן), suggesting a polemical opposition between Yahweh’s הַר נַחֲלָה and Baal’s *ġār naḥala*. Outside of, potentially, Exod. 15:17, this is the only place in the biblical canon where Mount Zion is described with “Zaphonic language.”[116] In a psalm extolling Yahweh’s greatness and uniquely accentuating the greatness of his temple mount vis-à-vis Baal’s, the one act explicitly ascribed to Yahweh encroaches on Baal’s particular domain. Verse 8 describes Yahweh demonstrating his sovereignty by controlling the sea. By connecting Yahweh’s dominion over the sea with his “mountain of inheritance” in a polemical context which includes anti-Baal polemic, Psalm 48 suggests that Yahweh’s control of the sea in Exodus 14–15 is also intended polemically.

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[115] Dating the psalm has proven difficult. Theodore of Mopsuestia famously correlated Ps. 48 to Yahweh’s deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib’s siege in 701 BCE, so a pre-exilic provenance has been the consensus view into the twentieth century. More recently, scholarship has argued for a post-exilic provenance. Julian Morgenstern is representative, assuming that verse 8, Yahweh’s destruction of the ships of Tarshish, describes a particular historical event and asserting that such an event cannot be connected to the defeat of Sennacherib. Morgenstern proposed that the historical event being recounted is “the destruction of a considerable portion of the Persian fleet of Xerxes just before the Battle of Artemisium in 480 B.C.” Julian Morgenstern, “Psalm 48,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 16 (1941): 6–8. Morgenstern pinpoints the poem’s composition to ca. 500 BCE, judging it to be a pilgrimage psalm prayed by Galilean pilgrims ascending to the new temple in Jerusalem. Morgenstern, “Psalm 48,” 25, 95.

Translations of Psalm 48 prior to the Ras Shamra discoveries obscured the anti-Baal polemic in verse 3 which, when translated literally, positions Mount Zion above Mount Zaphon in a hierarchy of sovereignty.[117] Psalm 48:3 reads,

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[116] This is John Day’s term. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 115.

[117] John Day supported this translation of of Ps. 48:3 and its implicit anti-Baal polemic. In his chapter “Yahweh’s Appropriation of Baal’s Imagery,” Day agreed with Eissfeldt “that the *yark*^{e}*tê ṣāpôn* are to be understood in a vertical rather than a horizontal sense, that is, ‘the heights of Zaphon.’” Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 109–10. Day remarked that the older translations “simply did not make sense” but the “(Mount) Zaphon” translation does. “[I]f *yark*^{e}*tê ṣāpôn* is taken to be ‘the heights of Zaphon’ it could be made sense of as the appropriation of the name of Baal’s mountain dwelling place to Jerusalem.” Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 109. Two notable Psalms scholars have also affirmed this understanding of verse 3. James L. Mays wrote that Mount Zion “is located, not in the Judean hill country, but on the ‘summit of Zaphon’” which, he said, “is the name of the cosmic mountain where El and Baal exercised their kingship in the mythology of Canaanite religion.” James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 189. Jerome Creach shared Day’s translation and polemical understanding of verse 3. “By saying that Mount Zion is on the ‘summit of Zaphon,’ the psalmist declares that the gods of Israel’s neighbors are subordinated to the Lord.” Jerome Creach, Th*e Destiny of the Righteous in the Psalms* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2008), 118. James Anderson also perceived the anti-Baal polemic in Ps. 48:3: “[T]he appropriation becomes much clearer in Ps. 48:3 (Eng. 2), where Baal’s holy mountain is placed in poetic parallelism with Zion: ‘Mount Zion in the heights of Zaphon, the city of the great king.’ Since verse 1 states that the mountain in question is Yahweh’s, appropriation is intended, but the polemic remains implicit as Baal is not named.” Anderson, “Monotheism,” 109. Robert D. Miller II asserted that designating Zion as Zaphon was a way of depicting Zion as an “‘Olympus,’ home of the gods.” This depiction, he added, “usurps Baal’s primacy.” Robert D. Miller II, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations* (University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 166–67. Timothy Saleska agreed with the polemical reading in his 2020 Psalms commentary: “I assume that the speaker in 48:3 [2] alludes to a pagan myth because he believes that Yhwh is King over all deities (non-gods) worshiped in pagan religion. The speaker is suggesting that people’s desire for a place where God’s gracious presence could be experienced was fulfilled on Mount Zion—the true ‘Zaphon.’” Timothy E. Saleska, *Psalms 1–50* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2020), 713. Finally, a note in the NAB translation aptly recognizes Ps 48’s comparison between Zion and Zaphon: “To speak of Zion as if it were Zaphon was to claim for Israel’s God what Canaanites claimed for Baal. Though topographically speaking Zion is only a hill, viewed religiously it towers over other mountains as the home of the supreme God.” (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_PH4.HTM, accessed on Oct 22, 2019).

[118]יְפֵה נוֹף מְשׂוֹשׂ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הַר־צִיּוֹן יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן קִרְיַת מֶלֶךְ רָב׃

The change in the JPS translations between 1917 and 1985 illustrate the effect of the Ras Shamra discoveries on renderings of verse 3. In 1917, the JPS read, "Fair in situation, the joy of the whole earth; even *mount Zion, the uttermost parts of the north*,[119] the city of the great King" (my italics); the 1985 version amended the translation to, "Fair-crested, joy of all the earth, *Mount Zion, summit of Zaphon*, city of the great king" (my italics).[120]

As previewed above, the polemical comparison between Zion and Zaphon established in verse 3 is connected with Yahweh's function as Storm-god in verse 8. Here the kings of the earth attempt to ally against Yahweh, but something sends them into panicked retreat. Verse 6 explains the cause of their distress: their sighting of Zion, the city of the great King. "They saw; thus they were astounded; they were terrified; they hurried (away)" (my translation). The psalmist follows this description of the kings' hasty retreat upon beholding Zion with an apparent *non sequitur*: "By an east wind you shatter [שָׁבַר, Piel Imperfect] the ships of Tarshish." (בְּרוּחַ קָדִים תְּשַׁבֵּר אֳנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ׃).[121] The psalmist may intend this reference not as a prophecy of a specific historical event connected to the kings' retreat but as a means, more generally, to characterize Yahweh's power. In other words, the kind of power which enables Yahweh to shatter the ships of Tarshish is characteristic of the great king who resides in Zion.[122] Thus, it is Tarshish-ship-shattering power which the enemy kings behold when they set eyes upon the city.[123] In light of the comparison between Yahweh's mountain and Baal's mountain in verse 3, verse 8's characterization of Yahweh's power is fitting. Yahweh's power is that of the sovereign Storm-god who can control the winds and waves to shatter the wooden hulls and masts of the world's most unsinkable cargo ships.

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[118] Throughout the Baal Cycle, the heights (or summit) of Mount Zaphon is signified with the Ugaritic phrase "bi-ṣarirāti ṣapāni." KTU 1.3 I: 21. In the Hebrew of Ps. 48:3, the identical concept is expressed with יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן. Miller concurred. "The ירכתי of Zaphon is equivalent to Ug. *ṣrrt ṣpn* (KTU 1.2 i.21–22; 1.3 iii.47–iv.1; 1.3 iv.37–38; etc), meaning the peak of Jebel el-Aqra." Miller, *Dragon, the Mountain*, 166.

[119] The spelling "Zephon" in Exod. 14:2 and 9 is assumed to be a variant spelling of Zaphon. Likely recognizing that "Zephon" in this context is not being used as a directional marker, the LXX simply transliterates Baal-Zephon rather than translating it "Baal of the north." The Targums do the same. For a discussion of the transformation of (Mt.) Zaphon to a directional signifier for "North," see Alan S. Kaye, *Semitic Studies* [Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. 1991], 1144–46; C. H. Brown,"Where do cardinal direction terms come from?" *Anthropological linguistics* 25 (1983): 121–61; M. C. Astour, "Place names," in *Ras Shamra parallels III*, ed. Loren R. Fisher et al. Analecta Orientalia 50 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1975), 318–24; and J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite myths and legends* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 8.

[120] Psalms scholar James L. Mays has affirmed this translation. James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 189.

[121] The east wind (רוּחַ קָדִים) is Yahweh's weapon of warfare in Exod. 9:13 and Exod. 14:21, where Yahweh wields it to bring locusts and dry up the sea, and in Ezek. 27:26, where Yahweh judges powerful Tyre by destroying the "ships of Tarshish" which are full of their "merchandise" (מַעֲרָב).

John Day supported reading Ps. 48:8 as a portrayal of Yahweh as Storm-god. He wrote, "Ps. 48:8 … speaks of Yahweh's shattering of the ships of Tarshish, a motif which seems originally more at home by the coastal site of Mt. Zaphon than in the landlocked Jerusalem." Day added parenthetically, "Baal-Zaphon was noted for his shattering of ships with his wind."[124] To support Day's point, Baal's dominion over the sea winds is clearly attested in a seventh century treaty between Neo-Assyria's Esarhaddon and the Phoenician king of Tyre. Notably,

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[122] Timothy Saleska has translated the prefix verb form with the past tense ("You shattered"), judging that the change to a prefix form could simply be a matter of "poetic style." He added, however, that the reason for the switch could also be to signal a shift to a more general description. He wrote, "That is, [the psalmist] intends to say that Yhwh typically or habitually destroys the ships of the powerful, which are symbolic of human strength." Saleska, *Psalms 1–50*, 715.

[123] The popularity of this portrayal of Yahweh's sovereign power is evident in the prophets. In Isa. 2:16, the prophet places "the ships of Tarshish" alongside "the cedars of Lebanon" and alongside fortified cities as symbols of the human pride which Yahweh will judge "in that day," i.e., the day of Yahweh. Ezekiel later prophesies a particular day of Yahweh for Tyre, employing the same terms found in Ps. 48:8. In Ezek. 27:25, the city's glory is likened to the weightiness of the ships of Tarshish which, by conveying Tyre's goods, produced Tyre's greatness. "The ships of Tarshish [were] carriers of your merchandise, and you were very full and glorious in the midst of the seas." The following verse, Ezek. 27:26, describes Yahweh's judgment of the glorious city in terms of the destruction of these wealth-generating ships: "Into great waters, your oarsmen brought you. / You the east wind shattered [אתָךְ רוּחַ הַקָּדִים שְׁבָרֵךְ] in the heart of the seas." Ezek. 28:7 clarifies the identity of Yahweh's vessel for judging Tyre: "Therefore behold I will bring strangers against you, terror-striking [strangers] of the Gentiles." Like the psalmist, Ezekiel employs the trope of "the east wind shattering the ships of Tarshish" to characterize Yahweh's sovereign power. As in Psalm 48, Yahweh's power over Israel's enemies is characterized in terms of a Storm-god's dominion.

[124] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 105.

Tyre's people worshipped Baal chiefly and, according to Ezek. 27:25–26, were enriched by the "ships of Tarshish." One of the curses to be suffered by treaty violators is reminiscent of the shattering described in Ps. 48:8: "May Baal Shamaim Baal Malagê and Baal Saaphon raise an evil wind against your ships to undo their moorings and tear out their mooring pole, may a strong wave sink them in the sea and a violent tide [rise] against you."[125]

Psalm 48:8 testifies that Yahweh wields the east wind to shatter the ships which symbolize the power of enemy nations and their kings. Yahweh employs the רוּחַ קָדִים for a similar purpose in Exodus 14. At the Yam Suph, he novelly brandishes the east wind to war against his enemies and save Israel, forcefully blowing a way open for his people and then just as impactfully withdrawing it to destroy his enemies and their powerful chariots.[126] It is possible that Yahweh's role as east wind-wielding Storm-god in Psalm 48 is completely independent of Exodus 14–15. But if one sees Yahweh's powerful appropriation of Baal's domain over seas in 48:8 as legitimizing the psalm's placement of Mount Zion on יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן, then it becomes more likely that Yahweh's victory at Yam Suph leading to his establishment on his own *ġār naḥala* is perceived by the psalmist as evincing Yahweh's superiority over Baal.

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[125] "Kuyunjik Fragment, 3500: SAA 02 005," i 1–3 and iv 10–13, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/saa02/corpus. The relationship of the Baals constituting the Tyrian triad is debated. John Day has argued that local Baals, like the Phoenician Baal Shamem (Lord of heaven), were "simply local manifestations of" "one great cosmic deity, Hadad." Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 68–69. The association of the Storm-god with the mountain now known as Jebel el-Aqra by the Syrians, the Hittites, the Egyptians, and the Greeks makes it likely that local Baals were manifestations of Baal-zephon.

Aaron J. Brody noted that the Akkadian verb *lušatba*, predicated here of Baal-Shamem, Baal-Malagê, and Baal-zephon, is a third person masculine singular precative of the Akkadian causative stem (Š stem) of *tebû*, meaning to cause "to arise, rise up; to occur." Brody noted, following Teixidor, that the singular verb may connote that "the three gods are viewed as different aspects of the same individual storm god." However, he acknowledged that the singular verb may have a distributive sense, indicating that three different gods shared "similar powers over marine temptests." Brody, "Each Cried," 11 n6.

[126] Exod. 14:21 and 27

Psalm 74:13–14 and Isaiah 51:9–10

Psalm 74:13–14 and Isa. 51:9–10 frame the Sea Event first recounted in Exodus 14–15 in terms of the Ugaritic conflict myth.[127] Both passages place Yahweh in Baal's role as the Storm-god who conquers Yamm, the Sea-god. These biblical authors' association of the Baal Myth and the Sea Event may point to their perception of a similar association in the original exodus accounts.

In these passages, Yamm is described in terms of his zoomorphization as the many-headed sea dragon, Tannin, aka Leviathan.[128] Mark Smith and Wayne Pitard have argued that Yamm, Tannin (the sea dragon), and Leviathan are plausibly different names for a single being.[129] The standard Ugaritic passages for assessing the relationship between these names are KTU 1.3 III: 38–42, KTU 1.5 I:1–3, and KTU 1.83. A brief review of their contents will support the identification of Yamm, Nahar, the sea dragon (Tunnanu), and Litan (aka Leviathan). This review will also help elucidate the relationship between the Baal Myth and the Old Testament passages featured in this section.

In KTU 1.3 III: 38–42, the author of the Baal Cycle relates the thoughts of Anat, Baal's protective sister and warrior goddess, as Baal's emissaries approach her. She is perplexed by their visit, assuming it indicates a summons to battle, and wonders which of Baal's enemies may pose a new threat to the Cloud-rider. In her musings, Anat enumerates the enemies whom she had already defeated on Baal's behalf. The following is the first half of Anat's list:

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[127] In the historical survey above, Alberto Green and John Day both distanced the Old Testament's mythological language from Mesopotamian mythology. Day said, "[I]n general, since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts from 1929 onwards, it has become generally accepted that the Old Testament's references to a divine conflict with a dragon and the sea are an echo of Canaanite rather than Babylonian mythology." Day, Yahweh and the Gods, 98–99. Cf. Green, *Storm-God*, 186.

[128] The dragon's proper name is vocalized as "Leviathan" in the MT. J. A. Emerton has argued that the Ugaritic vocalization is likely *Litan*. J. A. Emerton, "Leviathan and ltn: The Vocalization of the Ugaritic Word for the Dragon,' *VT* 32 (1982): 327–31.

[129] Wayne T. Pitard, "The Binding of Yamm: A New Edition of KTU 1.83," *JNES* 57 (1998): 261–80, 280 n38. Wayne T. Pitard, "Just How Many Monsters Did Anat Fight [KTU 1.3 III 38-47]?" in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five*, ed. K. Lawson Younger Jr. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 75–88. Cf. Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:53–55, 247–58.

> Surely I struck down Yamm [*yamma*], the Beloved of El,
> Surely I finished off River [*nahara*], the Great God,
> Surely I bound Tunnanu [the sea dragon] and destroyed (?) him.
> I struck down the Twisty Serpent [*'aqalatāna*],
> The Powerful One [*šalliyaṭa*] with Seven Heads.[130]

Another passage regularly studied to assess the relationship between Yamm and the sea dragon is KTU 1.5 I:1–4. Here Mot, the god of the underworld, boasts that he will defeat Baal soundly, despite Baal's impressive past victory over Lotanu [Leviathan] and its manifest spoils, i.e., the fertilizing rain:

> When you [Baal] crushed Lotanu, the fleeing serpent,
> Annihilated the twisting serpent [*'aqalatāna*],
> The powerful one [*šalliyaṭa*] with seven heads,
> The heavens were bare, they relaxed.[131]

The final Ugaritic text which places the names of Baal and Anat's enemy (or enemies) in parallel is KTU 1.83. Ballentine argued that the principal agent who muzzles Tunannu and shatters Yammu in the passage is uncertain. She translated accordingly:

> She ('Anatu) [or, You (Ba 'lu)] puts a muzzle on Tunnanu.
> She binds [or, You bind] (him) on the heights of Lebanon.
> Dried up [or, to the desert], you will be shattered, O Yammu!

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[130] Translated by Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:54.

[131] Translated and quoted by Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 79.

To the multitude of ẖt, O Naharu![132]

Examining the three passages quoted above, Smith and Pitard noted that Tunnanu (// Tannin) and Litan (// Leviathan) are described with identical epithets. Tunnanu is called "the twisty serpent" and "powerful one with the seven heads" in KTU 1.3 III 40–42, while these epithets refer to Litan (Lotanu) in KTU 1.5 I 1–3.[133] Moreover, Smith and Pitard submitted that "the structure of 1.3 III 38–42" may indicate the identification of Tunnanu (// Tannin) with Yamm/Nahar.[134] Additionally, they recognized the probability that KTU 1.83 means to equate Tunnanu and Yamu.[135] Finally, they observed that other ancient Near Eastern mythological texts refer to a single deity in multiple forms.[136] Still, Smith and Pitard concluded (in my view overcautiously) that the identification of Yamm/Nahar with Tunnanu and Litan "remains plausible, but uncertain."[137] Assessing the same evidence, R. J. Clifford concluded more strongly, "There can be little doubt here [in KTU 1.83] that Yamm/Nahar is being equated with the captured Tannin and is thus being portrayed as a dragon-like figure."[138] F. M. Cross incorporated the parallel Old Testament texts into the discussion, arguing that they definitively clarify the equivalence of Yamm and Tannin. "In the biblical parallels to these texts it is clear that there is full identification between Yamm and the dragon (Isa. 27:1, and especially Isa.

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[132] Translated and quoted by Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 80.

[133] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:54.

[134] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:54. Smith and Pitard have also argued that Yamm and Nahar refer to the same being, based on their usage throughout KTU 1.2. Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:248.

[135] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:248.

[136] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:257. To argue for the equation of Yamm and the sea dragon, they adduced "the common appearance of multiforms of a deity in mythological texts."

[137] Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:257.

[138] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 262.

51:9–10).”[139]

An Old Testament passage comparable to the Ugaritic texts reviewed above is Psalm 74:13–14. The MT reads,

אַתָּה פוֹרַרְתָּ בְעָזְּךָ יָם	13 You divided [the] sea [יָם] with your strength;
שִׁבַּרְתָּ רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל־הַמָּֽיִם׃	you shattered the heads of the sea dragon [תַּנִּינם][140] on the waters.
אַתָּה רִצַּצְתָּ רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן	14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan [לִוְיָתָן];
תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מַאֲכָל לְעָם לְצִיִּים׃	you gave him [as] food for the people who dwell in the wilderness.[141] (my translation)

Read in light of the proposed synonomity of יָם, תַּנִּינם, and לִוְיָתָן, this passage depicts Yahweh’s division of the sea in terms of Baal’s victory over the many-headed sea dragon, tannin, aka Litan (// לִוְיָתָן). R. J. Clifford identified an additional parallel in the obscure events referred to in 14b and the final lines quoted above from KTU 1.83. Clifford adopted one of the optional translations presented by Ballentine, namely, “To the desert, you will be shattered, O Yammu! / To the multitude of ẖt, O Naharu!” Clifford observed that in both passages not only is “the defeated enemy … cast into the desert;”[142] in both cases, “the casting of the dragon into the desert appears to benefit the people in that region (‘the multitude of Ht’ in KTU 1.83, and ‘the people, the desert ones' in Ps. 74.14)."[143] The parallels between Ps. 74:13–14 and the Baal Myth indicate that the psalmist was adopting the Ugaritic conflict myth to describe Yahweh's division of the sea.

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[139] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 120.

[140] I amend the MT with Smith and Pitard who argued that, in light of these verses’ paralleling of Tannin and Leviathan, ִם in the original text was likely enclitic. Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:256; cf. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 261. Smith and Pitard noted that *tnn* “may be taken as a proper name or as an epithet.” Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* 2:249.

[141] Ballentine noted the difficult of interpreting תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מַאֲכָל לְעָם לְצִיִּים. in Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 221–22 n27.

[142] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 262.

Scholarly controversy persists over the referent of Yahweh's division of the sea in verses 13–14. Whereas more recent scholarship sees Yahweh's act as a creation event, past scholarship largely perceived it to refer to Yahweh's salvation of Israel at the Reed Sea. Ballentine recently echoed John Day, arguing that verse 15 exemplifies the *Chaoskampf* motif, that is, Yahweh's conflict with the waters of chaos "in the time of the creation of the world."[144] Ballentine and Day are correct to observe that verses 16–17 emphasize Yahweh's role as creator, but this does not dictate the same for verses 13–14. Psalm 74 may be said to be extolling God's kingship by declaring its two related aspects: God is king of the nations and king of creation. In my view, verses 13–14 instantiate the former, verses 16–17 the latter. Verse 15 appears to mediate between the two, depicting Yahweh's creative control of already existent waterways.

Of central importance in judging the debate over the referent of verses 13–14 is the textual link between verse 2 and verse 12. The MT of 74:2 reads,

זְכֹר עֲדָתְךָ קָנִיתָ קֶּדֶם	Remember your congregation [whom] you purchased [קָנִיתָ] of old [קֶּדֶם]
גָּאַלְתָּ שֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתֶךָ	[whom] you redeemed [גָּאַלְתָּ], the tribe of your inheritance,
הַר־צִיּוֹן זֶה שָׁכַנְתָּ בּוֹ׃	[Remember] Mount Zion, this [place] on which you have dwelt.

The two verbs used in Ps. 74:2 to describe Yahweh's actions "of old" toward his people are the same verbs employed to celebrate Yahweh's salvation through the Sea Event in Exod. 15:12 (גָּאַלְתָּ) and 15:16 (קָנִיתָ). In the progression of verse 2, the psalmist's calls for Yahweh to remember begin with Yahweh's purchase and redemption of his congregation; they end with Mount Zion, his dwelling place. This appears to follow the progression of Exodus 15, with Exod. 15:17 envisioning Yahweh and his people's arrival at his mountain of inheritance. Clifford supported this reading, arguing that Ps. 74:2 "condensed the Exodus-Conquest traditions which end in the entry of the people into Yahweh's sanctuary."[145] Finally, references to Israel as a "congregation" begin in the exodus narrative (Exodus 12) and become prevalent in the Pentateuch thereafter. In sum, Ps. 74:2's memories of Yahweh's actions "of old" are memories of the exodus event, not of the creation of the world.

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[143] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 262.

[144] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 99–100. Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 222 n28.

The corresponding verse, verse 12, reads, וֵאלֹהִים מַלְכִּי מִקֶּדֶם פֹּעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ׃ ("God is my king, from of old performing salvations in the midst of the earth"). Notably, the first time Yahweh performs יְשׁוּעָה in the Old Testament is in the Sea Event. The word is used only once prior to this event, prospectively, in Jacob's sudden interjection in the midst of his prophecies over his sons: "For your salvation [לִישׁוּעָתְךָ] I wait, Yahweh."[146] The next usage of יְשׁוּעָה is during the Sea Event, Exod. 14:13b: הִתְיַצְּבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם ("Take your stand and see the salvation of Yahweh which he will do for your today"). The first time Yahweh's action is described retrospectively as an act of salvation is in Exod. 15:2a, where Moses and the sons of Israel celebrate their salvation. They sing, עָזִּי וְזִמְרָת יָהּ וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה ("My strength and my song is Yah, and he has become for me salvation"). Thus, when the psalmist declares that his God is performing salvations “מִקֶּדֶם” (“from of old”), he means from the time of the Sea Event. The shared term קֶדֶם helps to links the events of verses 13–14 to the events of verse 2, suggesting that both refer to the Sea Event. Therefore in light of the Sea Event context of Ps. 74:12, as clarified by the relationship of 74:2 to the same, verses 13–14’s description of Yahweh dividing the sea should be understood as referring to the historical Yam Suph Crossing. This event, as we have seen, is focused on Yahweh’s legitimization as king, the very preoccupation of the Baal Myth and of Psalm 74.

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[145] Richard J. Clifford, "Psalm 89: A Lament over the Davidic Ruler's Continued Failure," *HTR* 73 (1980): 38.

[146] Gen. 49:18

Admittedly, Yahweh’s demonstration of kingship over the nations in the Sea Event also demonstrated his kingship over creation; he controlled the sea to save/redeem/purchase his people. The concept of the dual aspects of Yahweh’s kingship allows the psalmist to segue briefly into a declaration of Yahweh’s kingship over creation in verses 16–17, a kingship evident in his establishment and maintenance of the order of the earth.

In conclusion, Ps. 74:13–14 adopts the story of Baal’s victory over Yamm to describe the Sea Event recounted in Exodus 14–15. The psalmist’s ready association of the Baal Myth and the Sea Event suggests that he may have discerned a precedent for this relationship in the original exodus accounts. His mention of Mount Zion in the immediate wake of allusions to the Sea Event in verse 2 (see Exod. 15:12, 16) increases the probability of this connection.[147]

Isaiah 51:9–11 manifests a similar adoption of the Baal Myth as a means to recount the

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[147] A strong proponent of seeing Yahweh’s division of the sea as a reference to the Reed Sea Crossing is Richard Clifford. Clifford argued that Ps. 74:2 “condensed the Exodus-Conquest traditions which end in the entry of the people into Yahweh’s sanctuary” and that verses 12–17 “retell the same story but with emphasis on its mythic coloration.” Richard J. Clifford, “Psalm 89: A Lament over the Davidic Ruler’s Continued Failure,” *HTR* 73 (1980): 38. Admittedly, though Clifford interpreted verses 13–14 as referring to the Sea Event, he still saw the Sea Event in cosmogonic (creation) terms; in this salvific event, he suggested, Yahweh created Israel. This conflation of salvation and creation, epitomized in Loren Fisher’s work (and term “Baal type creation”), has been criticized by Kapelrud in Arvid S. Kapelrud, “Creation in the Ras Shamra Texts,” *Studia Theologica* 34 (1980): 1–11. Simply, extant Ugaritic documents do not present the Baal Myth as a creation story along the lines of *Enuma Elish*. Rather, the Ugaritic conflict myth is a narrative about Baal’s attainment of kingship through conflict. Its adoption by the psalmist to describe Yahweh’s kingship is apropos.

Reed Sea Crossing. As in Ps. 74:13–14, debate persists over the referent of Yahweh's wounding of the sea dragon in verse 9 and drying up of Sea in verse 10, with some contending that the passage alludes to the creation event.[148] The following analysis of Isa. 51:9–11 will establish that the prophet is referring to the original exodus event in his plea for a new exodus.

In Isa. 51:9–11, the prophet breaks into Yahweh's announcement of his imminent plans to save his people. He urgently pleads with Yahweh to accomplish this purpose, to reveal his salvation as he did in days of old. The following is the MT of the passage accompanied by my translation:

[9] עוּרִי עוּרִי לִבְשִׁי־עֹז זְרוֹעַ יְהוָה	Awake, awake, put on strength, arm of Yahweh,
עוּרִי כִּימֵי קֶדֶם	awake as [in] days of old,
דֹּרוֹת עוֹלָמִים	generations of antiquity.
הֲלוֹא אַתְּ־הִיא הַמַּחְצֶבֶת רַהַב	Are you not he who hewed in pieces Rahab,
מְחוֹלֶלֶת תַּנִּין׃	who deeply wounded the sea dragon?
[10] הֲלוֹא אַתְּ־הִיא הַמַּחֲרֶבֶת יָם	Are you not he who dried up Sea,
מֵי תְּהוֹם רַבָּה	the waters of the great deep,
הַשָּׂמָה מַעֲמַקֵּי־יָם	who appointed the depths of Sea
דֶּרֶךְ לַעֲבֹר גְּאוּלִים׃	[as] a road for the redeemed to cross over?
[11] וּפְדוּיֵי יְהוָה יְשׁוּבוּן	So the ransomed of Yahweh shall return
וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה	and come into Zion with a ringing cry
וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל־רֹאשָׁם	and everlasting joy on their heads.
שָׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יַשִּׂיגוּן	Rejoicing and joy they shall attain
נָסוּ יָגוֹן וַאֲנָחָה׃	sorrow and sighing shall flee.

This passage refers to the sea dragon (תַּנִּין) as Rahab (רַהַב). According to John Day, this name for the sea dragon is unattested outside of the Bible. Other Old Testament references help identify Rahab.[149] In Job’s extended portrait of Yahweh as Storm-god in Job 26, verse 13 sets Rahab (רַהַב) in apposition to the “fleeing serpent” (נָחָשׁ בָּרִיחַ).[150] Both Isa. 27:1 and KTU 1.5 I:1–4 identify the “fleeing serpent” (נָחָשׁ בָּרִיחַ) with Leviathan (לִוְיָתָן). It follows, as Day has suggested, that “Rahab” is likely “an alternative name for Leviathan.”[151] In light of the parallels in Ps. 74:13–14 and in the Ugaritic passages reviewed above, Rahab and the sea dragon in verse 9 should not be distinguished from Sea in verse 10. By extension, the hewing of Rahab into pieces, the wounding of the sea dragon, and the drying up of Sea should be read as a single action. Furthermore, the language employed in Isa. 51:9–10 to describe Yahweh’s adversary—תַּנִּין and יָם—indicates that the conflict myth being echoed is the Baal Myth.[152]

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[148] Reed Lessing mentions two scholars who maintain that the "sea-battle imagery" in this passage "reflects protological events" rather than the exodus event, namely John Goldingay and Gerard von Rad. R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 66–67. See John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel*, OTT 1 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003), 78; Gerard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 136.

Isaiah 51:9 locates Yahweh’s action against the sea dragon in days of old (קֶדֶם). In addition, the immediate context of the passage—verses 5a, 6b, and 8b—all frame Yahweh’s action in verse 9 as an act of righteousness and salvation. Verse 5a is clearest: קָרוֹב צִדְקִי יָצָא יִשְׁעִי (“My righteousness is near, my salvation has gone out”). Isaiah 51:10 then suggests that Yahweh’s action against Rahab/the sea dragon/Sea was his means of redeeming his people. That is, it enabled the redeemed to cross over (לַעֲבֹר גְּאוּלִים). In short, as was the case with Ps. 74:13–14, the evidence supports reading the allusions to the Baal Myth in Isa. 51:9–10 as a description of the Reed Sea Crossing Event.[153]

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[149] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 99.

[150] The MT of Job 26:12–13 and translation:

בְּכֹחוֹ רָגַע הַיָּם וּבתוּבְנָתוֹ מָחַץ רָהַב׃

By his strength, he disturbed the sea; and by his understanding, *he smote (straight through) Rahab*.

בְּרוּחוֹ שָׁמַיִם שִׁפְרָה חֹלֲלָה יָדוֹ נָחָשׁ בָּרִיחַ׃

By his wind, he cleared the heavens; *his hand deeply wounded the fleeing serpent*.

The MT of Isa. 27:1 and translation:

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְקֹד יְהוָה֩ בְּחַרְבוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְּדוֹלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה עַל לִוְיָתָן נָחָשׁ בָּרִחַ וְעַל לִוְיָתָן נָחָשׁ עֲקַלָּתוֹן וְהָרַג אֶת־הַתַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם׃

In that day, Yahweh, with his hard and great and mighty sword, will punish *Leviathan the fleeing serpent* and Leviathan the twisted serpent, and he will slay *the sea dragon* which is in the sea.

[151] Day wrote, “this name [Rahab] is not attested in any extra-biblical text, though as he is called ‘the twisting serpent’ (Job 26:12–13) this is presumably an alternative name for Leviathan.” Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 99.

[152] Hermann Gunkel and Ephraim Speiser contended that the passage reflects *Enuma Elish*. Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, 22; Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1964), 10.

The subsequent verse, verse 11, follows Ps. 48:3 and 8 and Ps. 74:2 in connecting Yahweh’s demonstration of dominion over the sea with Mount Zion. Simply, the new exodus for which the prophet pleads will culminate with the arrival of Yahweh’s people on Zion.

Finally, verse 15 both clarifies Isaiah’s intention to portray Yahweh as a Storm-god and implies that Yahweh’s dominion as Storm-god extends to historico-geographical waterways. וְאָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ רֹגַע הַיָּם וַיֶּהֱמוּ גַּלָּיו יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ׃ (“And I, Yahweh your God, am the one who disturbed the sea and its waves roared. Yahweh of hosts is my name”). In the end, Yahweh the Storm-god has the kind of sea-controlling-power requisite to do righteousness and bring salvation to his people.

Psalm 74:13–14 and Isa. 51:9–10 both describe the Reed Sea Crossing Event in the language of the Baal Myth. It is possible, considering the Bible’s explicit testimony of Israelite familiarity with Baal worship in the first millennium BCE, that the psalmist and the prophet’s employment of the Baal Myth to this end was a later development. However, the more recent conclusions of Egyptology based on recent excavations in the East Nile Delta indicate the likelihood of Israelite exposure to Baal worship during their Egyptian sojourn.[154] In this light, the psalmist and prophet's portrayals of Yahweh's parting of Yam Suph in terms of the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god's victory over Yamm may not evince novel appropriations of the Ugaritic conflict myth; rather, it may reflect their readings of the original exodus narrative. This likelihood is increased by the continuity both later passages imply between Yahweh's salvific act in the Sea Event and residence on Yahweh's mountain, a progression of events expressed originally and explicitly in the Song of the Sea.

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[153] Cross, Day, and Ballentine are representative of scholars who have endorsed this reading. Cross wrote, “The Song of the Arm of Yahweh in Isaiah 51 is a superb example of this new synthesis, in which the old Exodus is described in terms of the Creation myth and in turn becomes the archetype of a new Exodus.” Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 144. Notably, in this statement, Cross implied that the Baal Myth was a creation myth, a notion that receives little support in current scholarship on the Baal Myth. Ballentine echoed Cross’s view, sans creation language: “The passage summons Yahweh to act in the current historical context of restoration as he acted in the past on behalf of the ‘redeemed’ who crossed the Reed Sea. ... This manipulation of the sea occurs in parallel with Yahweh piercing the dragon and cutting Rahab into pieces. The conflict and exodus motifs are fully intertwined, and the combined motifs serve as a hermeneutic for restoration.” Ballentine, *Conflict Myth*, 107; cf. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 103.

The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

Before the discovery of the Baal Myth tablets at Ras Shamra in 1929, a few important translations and commentaries have observed anti-Baal polemic in the Exod. 14:2 and 9 Baal-zephon references. The two earliest extant extra-biblical witnesses, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, are dated no later than the sixth century CE, with the bulk of the traditions in the Mekhilta likely predating the third century CE.[155] Both sources imagine

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[154] If Job is dated to the Patriarchal Period, this would also be an evidence of the familiarity of Yahweh worshippers with the Baal Myth, since Job describes Yahweh in Baal-like terms.

[155] The majority of the traditions constituting the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael are dated no later than 135 CE, the year of the death of Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha (90–135 CE). Maimonides famously clarified the identity of Rabbi Ishmael by setting him alongside Rabbi Akiva, a first–second century rabbi. In the introduction to *Mishneh Torah* (*Sefer Yad ha-Ḥazaḳah*), Maimonides said, "R. Ishmael interpreted from *'ve'eleh shemot'* to the end of the Torah, and this explanation is called 'Mekhilta.' R. Akiva also wrote a Mekhilta." Isidore Singer and Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "Mekilta," in *The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia*. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10594-mekilta. Some of its contents suggest later editing by students. "It must be assumed, therefore, that R. Ishmael composed an explanatory midrash to the last four books of the Torah, and that his pupils amplified it" (https://www.sefaria.org/Mekhilta_d'Rabbi_Yishmael?lang=bi).

The dating of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has been controversial. Three major proponents of a pre-seventh century CE dating are Geza Vermes, Roger Syren, and Charles T. R. Hayward. See G. Vermes, 'The Targumic Versions of Genesis 4:3-16,' *ALUOS* 3 (1961-62): 81–114; R. Syrén, *The Blessings of the Targums. A Study on the Targumic Interpretations of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1986), 179–99; and C. T. R. Hayward, *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture Into Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 107–278. Three prominent supporters of a seventh century or later dating are Moise Ohana, Avigdor Shinan, and Pérez

Pharaoh arriving at the Baal-zephon cultic site and performing acts of worship to elicit the intervention of Baal-zephon against the Israelites' attempted exodus.

The Mekhilta's version of the event not only understands Baal-zephon as a significant deity to Pharaoh and a crucial divine participant in the conflict narrative; it also possibly implies Egyptian belief in Baal's dominion over the sea waters. "When Pharaoh saw that (the idol) Ba'al Tzefon had remained, he said: 'Ba'al Tzefon has concurred with my decree. I thought to destroy them by water, and Ba'al Tzefon has concurred'—whereupon he [Pharaoh] began slaughtering, offering incense, and bowing down to his idol."[156]

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan depicts a similar scenario in its rendering of Exod. 14:2–4 and 10. Here Yahweh reveals his plan to Moses, explaining the location of the campsite and elucidating Pharaoh and the Egyptians' mindset: They will interpret Baal-zephon's survival of Yahweh's prolonged attack on the gods of Egypt as a sign of this god's preeminence. When they make pilgrimage to the Baal-zephon cultic site to pay homage, they will discover the Israelites encamped there. Verse 10 contains the fulfillment of Yahweh's prediction. The narrator

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Fernández. See M. Ohana, "La Polémique judéo-islamique d'Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer," *Augustinianum* 15 (1975): 367–87; A. Shinan, *The Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1979), 119–146; A. Shinan, *The Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1979), xvi; and Pérez Fernández, *Los Capítulos de Rabbí Eliezer* (Valencia, 1984), 31–36.

Ohana, Shinan, and Fernández have argued for a later dating largely based on alleged anti-Islamic polemic in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and apparent similarities between Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, a ninth century CE work. In a collection of seven articles, C. T. R. Hayward countered both arguments. He sided with Geza Vermes who argued for an earlier dating based on similarities between the language of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Onqelos whose final form is dated to the third century CE. In a 1989 article reprinted as a chapter in his 2010 collection, Hayward expressed his agreement with Vermes's basic thesis: "Twenty-five years ago, Geza Vermes argued that much of Ps-Jon's aggadic tradition was essentially ancient, even though there were indications that the text had been 'modernized' with the passage of time. … After thorough analysis of the language, Vermes felt compelled to conclude as he did. Although his work on Ps-Jon has received some independent confirmation and support, no one has yet published a refutation of his main thesis." Hayward, *Targums*, 127–28. Hayward's seven articles suggest a dating of the majority of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan between the late 4th and early 6th centuries CE, although he acknowledges that some of its constituent traditions may date to the Second Temple Period. Hayward, *Targums*, 152, 171, 233, 258, and 278.

[156] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael Exod. 14:10. Quoted in Jacob Zallel Lauterbach and David M. Stern, eds., *Mekilta De-Rabbi Ishmael* (Jerusalem: JPS, 2004), 137.

juxtaposes Pharaoh’s vision and response against Israel’s: Pharaoh sees Baal-zephon still standing and makes offerings to his god; the children of Israel see the oncoming Egyptian army and pray to Yahweh. The conflict is set: whose god is superior, Baal-zephon or Yahweh?

> [I]t is the place of Tanes, which is between Midgol and the sea, before the idol Zephon (Typhon), that is left of all the idols of Mizraim. For the Mizraee will say, More excellent is Baal Zephon than all idols, because it is left, and not smitten; and therefore they will come to worship it, and will find that you are encamped nigh unto it, on the border of the sea. … And Pharoh saw the idol Zephon (still) preserved, and offered oblations before it. And the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, beheld, the Mizraee were pursuing them; and they were sorely afraid, and the children of Israel prayed before the Lord.[157]

Sixteenth Century Rabbi Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno

The renowned sixteenth century Rabbi Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno also maintained that the Baal-zephon site references in Exodus 14 implied the existence of a powerful Egyptian god whom Pharaoh would credit with stopping the Israelite’s escape. In addition, Sforno read Pharaoh’s assessment in 14:3 that “the wilderness shut [Israel] in” as a reference to the work of Baal-zephon. He commented that סָגַר עֲלֵיהֶם הַמִּדְבָּר is “[a] reference to the Egyptian deity Baal Tzefon whom Pharaoh credited with this accomplishment of halting the Israelites. … Pharaoh had concluded that the Baal Tzefon was an equal to G'd and could frustrate His designs."[158] Sforno then embellished Pharaoh's words of frustrated second-guessing in 14:5, מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂינוּ כִּי־שִׁלַּחְנוּ. In Sforno's version, Pharaoh chides himself and his counselors for failing to consult Baal-zephon from the start: "what (a foolish thing) have we done in dismissing the Israelites, etc! We should have consulted Baal Tzefon who would have helped us so that we would have had not need to let the Israelite depart."[159] Ultimately, in line with the Mekhilta and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Sforno understood Exodus 14's Baal-zephon references to be implying an anti-Baal polemic.

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[157] Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Exod. 14:2–4 and 10. https://www.sefaria.org/Targum_Jonathan_on_Exodus.15?lang=bi.

Targum Neofiti, which Martin McNamara dates to the fourth century CE, contains a marginal gloss on Exod. 14:10: “and Pharaoh offered sacrifices to Baal Zephon.” Martin McNamara, ed., *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus, translated with Introduction and Apparatus by Martin McNamara, M.S.C. and Notes by Robert Hayward*, Aramaic Bible 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994), 10 apparatus n. aa.

In the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia’s entry on “Baal-zephon,” the authors expound on the Mekhilta and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan’s interpretation of the Baal-zephon references in Exod. 14. These authors embellish the rabbinical versions, seeing the survival of Baal-zephon through the lens of Exod. 12:12. The plague on the firstborn had destroyed all the idols save one whose survival would inspire foolhardiness in Pharaoh. The authors explained the rabbinical perspective: “The idol at Baalzephon was the only one that remained unharmed when God sent the tenth plague upon Egypt, which not only brought death to men and animals, but also destroyed the idols. When Pharaoh overtook Israel at the sea, near Baal-zephon (Ex. xiv. 9), he said, ‘This idol is indeed mighty, and the God of Israel is powerless over him.’ But God intentionally spared Baal-zephon in order to strengthen the infatuation of the wicked Pharaoh.” Morris Jastrow Jr., Frants Buhl, Marcus Jastrow, and Louis Ginzberg, “Baal-zephon,” *The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Morris Jastrow Jr., Frants Buhl, Marcus Jastrow, and Louis Ginzberg. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2257-baal-zephon).

Joseph Frederick Berg

Joseph Berg's 1838 monograph *The Scripture History of Idolatry* shows the persistence of the interpretation of the Sea Event found in these earlier writings. Like the Mekhilta, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and Sforno, Berg recognized the possible polemical implications of the author's careful specification of the Yam Suph crossing site. He proposed that the Egyptians chose this seaside site for the Baal-zephon temple so that this "idol-god" might hinder fugitives from escaping. He suggested that Yahweh chose the same campsite for his people in view of Baal-zephon's residence there. In Berg's words, Yahweh controlled the sea "in sight of this impotent thing" with "a view to cast eternal reproach upon this idol-god" and his "pretended power."[160]

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[158] Sforno on Exod.14:3. https://www.sefaria.org/Sforno_on_Exodus.14.3.1?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en.

[159] Sforno on Exod.14:5. https://www.sefaria.org/Sforno_on_Exodus.14.5.2?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en.

[160] Berg, *Scripture History of Idolatry*, 108.

Norman Habel

As discussed in chapter 2, after the Ras Shamra discoveries, Otto Eissfeldt, John Gray, and Frank Eakin recognized the probable significance of the Baal-zephon site for understanding the Sea Event. Eissfeldt suggested that the Baal-zephon references may be remnants of a pre-canonical version of the Sea Event which attributed Israelite's successful crossing to Baal-zephon.[161] Gray eschewed Eissfeldt's hypothesis that the Israelites originally credited Baal, but maintained that the Baal-zephon site was the likely inspiration of the Israelite's Baal-like concept of Yahweh's kingship manifest in the Song's narrative pattern.[162] Eakin, however, followed Eissfeldt closely. He recognized the attribution of the Sea Event to Yahweh in the oldest canonical traditions (i.e., the Miriam couplet), but conjectured that an earlier edition may have been sung by Israelites fleeing Egypt with the expulsion of the Baal-worshipping Hyksos.[163]

In the first five decades following the Ras Shamra discoveries, the scholar who came closest to observing polemical intent in the narrative's featuring of the Baal-zephon site, and/or the Song's imitating of the Baal Myth's narrative pattern, was Norman Habel. Habel acknowledged the Baal-zephon references in Exodus 14, noting that they may indicate a possible influence on exodus traditions. Commenting on Exod. 14:2 and 9, he wrote circumspectly and vaguely, "Baal associations … may well have impressed the Israelite tribes in Egypt and have been related to the exodus stream of tradition."[164] Yet, despite perceiving Yahweh's battle in Exodus 1–15 as "ultimately … with the gods of Egypt,"[165] Habel failed to see the Baal-zephon references in a polemical light; this being so despite his recognition that Exod. 15:11 served to encapsulate the larger conflict narrative. Of verse 11, Habel wrote, “The jubilant affirmation, ‘Who is like thee, Yahweh, among the gods” is the necessary culmination of the conflict (Exod. 15:11).”[166]

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[161] Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 69–70.

[162] Gray, "Canaanite Mythology," 55–57.

[163] Eakin, "Reed Sea and Baalism," 383.

[164] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 20–21.

[165] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 14.

In his discussion of the Song’s paralleling of the Baal Myth, Habel ignored the Baal-zephon references altogether. He also again failed to incorporate the lens of his polemical reading of the prior conflict narrative. Thus, Habel considered the possibility of an anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 15 solely on the basis of the parallels between the Song and the Baal Myth. He wrote cautiously, “Whether this presents a conscious and direct polemic against Baal is not clear, despite the numerous striking antitheses.”[167] Still, Habel continued his consideration of an anti-Baal polemic based on the Song and myth’s shared kingship motif. He asserted the plausibility that Israelites aware of Canaanite mythology would have recognized the polemical implications of the Song’s presentation of Yahweh’s kingship:

> it is quite plausible that in such a milieu [where the Israelite may have “come into close contact with Canaanite culture and in particular with Canaanite mythology”] the proclamation of the victorious acts of warfare on the part of Yahweh would be an emphatic way of affirming the divine kingship of Yahweh. Such an affirmation would automatically sound certain polemical overtones.[168]

Habel concluded with a final statement on Exod. 15:11’s incomparability claim at the heart of the Song, coming as close to any scholar in the five decades after 1929 to asserting the existence of anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15. He wrote,

> If the presence of certain Canaanite divine kingship imagery in “The Song of the Sea” be granted, then the wording of Exod. 15:11 … is more readily understood. … [T]he assertion, ‘Who is like Thee among the gods, O Yahweh’ … simply employs the

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[166] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 41.

[167] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 63.

[168] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 64.

> common Canaanite image of divine kingship as an ‘established superiority over all gods’ in relation to Yahweh Himself. In other words, this is a culturally relevant way of saying Yahweh, not Baal, is King.[169]

Thus Habel attested the anti-Baal polemical implication of the incomparability claim in light of the Song’s Baal-Myth-like kingship motif. It is clear that in his 1964 monograph, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Culture*, Habel had assembled all of the major pieces of this dissertation, short of the Egyptological claims which postdate him. He noted the possible significance of the Baal-zephon references, the divine nature of the conflict with Pharaoh, the possibility of Israelite knowledge of Canaanite mythology, and the parallels between this mythology and the Song. Admittedly, this dissertation largely takes Habel’s pieces, develops them, and puts them together, reinforcing their substantiation of an anti-Baal polemic with the more recent Egyptological claims of the centrality of Baal-zephon worship in New Kingdom Egypt.

Foster R. McCurley

Following Frank Moore Cross’s *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Tradition*, scholars have largely read the Baal-zephon references as the contribution of the priestly redactor(s) and the Song of the Sea as an independent early tradition. Synchronic readings, perhaps due to the continuing influence of these diachronic claims, have failed to connect the Baal-zephon references in Exodus 14 with the Song’s paralleling of the Baal Myth. Even synchronic readings as sophisticated as Thomas Dozeman’s have avoided seeing the Baal-zephon references in light of the larger conflict narrative in Exodus 1–15. There is at least one exception. In 1983, Foster R. McCurley interpreted the Baal-zephon references in relationship to Yahweh’s preceding battle against the gods of Egypt, alleging that the priestly redactor had added much of Exodus 14 to the Yahwist's foundational narrative. In McCurley's view, the Priestly redactor intended anti-Baal polemic through his inclusion of the Baal-zephon cultic site references.[170] McCurley's diachronically-conscious, synchronic reading attested the anti-Baal polemic in the canonical account of the Sea Event:

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[169] Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal*, 64.

> To include the Priest's itinerary in the complex of these traditions is to make the polemics even broader. According to that writer, the battle at the sea took place in the vicinity of Baal-zephon (Exod. 14:2). Baal-zephon was a place of worship in the Egyptian delta for the Canaanite deity who vanquished the chaos force of Yamm and who erected his palace on Mount Zaphon. While this Egyptian site is not the Canaanites' mountain of Zaphon, nevertheless the place was a locale for the worship of Baal. According to the Priest, then, right under Baal's regal nose Yahweh used Yamm to vanquish his chaos opponent, the pharaoh and god of Egypt.[171]

McCurley's understanding of the anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15, though perceptive, is still incomplete. Because he was unaware of Egyptian adoption of the Canaanite Storm-god, he was unable to connect Pharaoh, as god, to Baal-zephon. Furthermore, McCurley betrayed ignorance about Baal's dominion over historico-geographical waterways. Consequently, he concluded by calling Pharaoh, not Yamm or Baal, Yahweh's "chaos opponent."

Shawn Flynn, James Anderson, Brian Russell, and Paul Cho

Over the past decade, at least four scholars have identified some form of what I have called anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15, though not all have preferred this term. In a 2014 study of Israel's doctrine of divine kingship, Shawn Flynn, for instance, discerned the Baal-like concept of kingship evinced in the Song of the Sea. He wrote that Exodus 15 "impl[ies] the displacement of Baal in favor of YHWH as the one who is more powerful than the sea"[172] and stated, "the Song is attempting to supplant … the Baal tradition."[173] Evenso, in a personal communication, Flynn resisted framing his position as I have framed Habel's—namely, that the depiction of Yahweh's kingship in terms of the Baal Myth was tantamount to elevating Yahweh over Baal. Flynn clarified that his focus was on Israel's evolving concept of kingship, including their relatively early appropriation of a Baal-like kingship model, rather than on any possible historical conflict with Baal or Baalism. In the end, Flynn's attribution of the Song to the period of Israel's residence in Canaan divorced the Song's historical import from its canonically presented context. Consequently, for Flynn, the Song functioned to display Yahweh's role as a Baal-like warrior deity, and the conflict in the exodus was, unrelatedly, between Yahweh and "the human king rather than another god."[174]

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[170] At the same time, McCurley asserted that the Priestly redactor intended anti-Marduk polemic through his description of Yahweh's division of the sea. Thus, for McCurley, the priest's version was an amalgamation of different traditions. McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 44–45.

[171] McCurley, *Ancient Myths*, 45–46.

Flynn's language of "displacement" and "supplanting" anticipated James Anderson's definition of polemic in his 2015 *Monotheism and Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal*. Identifying anti-Baal polemics in "instances where Yahweh takes over Baal's domain,"[175]Anderson pointed to "the parting of the Sea of Reeds by Moses and the parting of the waters of the Jordan by Joshua, Elijah and Elisha."[176] These, he said, belong to [the] polemical motif" of "Yahweh's representative tak[ing] over Baal's control of the waters of chaos."[177] Anderson also acknowledged the possibility of anti-Baal polemic in the Baal-zephon cultic site references. He wrote, “Any passage that places Yahweh in relation to Zaphon is likely to be a claim for Yahweh to Baal’s domain.”[178] Yet Anderson stopped there, concluding with uncertainty as to why Baal-zephon would be part of an account of an exodus from Egypt.[179]

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[172] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 53.

[173] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 54.

[174] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 57.

[175] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 47.

[176] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71.

[177] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 71.

In a 2017 article focused on the Song of the Sea and its relationship to the Baal Myth, Brian Russell did not employ the term “anti-Baal polemic” but used other language to describe the same concept. Like Habel and Anderson, Russell argued that the purpose of the Song’s paralleling of the Baal Myth was the “subversion of Baal and the elevation of King YHWH.”[180] Yet Russell went beyond merely expressing the polemical implications of the Song’s employment of the Baal Myth’s kingship motif. For Russell, the Song’s contrasts to the Baal Myth within the shared pattern of the conflict myth were the elements which best demonstrate the superiority of Yahweh and his salvation. In Russell’s words, these contrasts are key elements in “the Song of the Sea’s strategy for undercutting the ideological claims of Baal’s story,” chiefly, that Baal is the legitimate king of the universe.[181]

A final scholar who has identified possible anti-Baal polemic in Exodus 14–15 is Paul K. K. Cho. In his 2019 *Myth, History, and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, Cho argued that the priestly redactor of Exodus 14 was primarily engaged in anti-Marduk polemic.[182] Cho admitted, however, that the contrasts between the Song’s and Baal Myth’s descriptions of the making and establishing of the sanctuary elevated Yahweh over Baal. In Cho’s view, Yahweh was the sole agent in the making and establishing of his sanctuary. Baal, however, to build his, inferiorly had to request permission from El through the agency of Anat and Athirat and required construction assistance from Kothar-wa-Hasis. Cho wrote, “The poet emphasizes YHWH’s agency…perhaps to make clear that YHWH required neither permission from a higher authority (from El) nor help (from Anat and Athirat) nor assistance (from Kothar), as did Baal, to build his sanctuary.”[183] Cho concluded that the poet of the Song presented a novel version of the conflict myth in order to demonstrate Yahweh’s incomparability, especially vis-à-vis other gods. He explained: “The Baal Cycle or a native Israelite variant likely lies in the fraught background of the Song, but the poet transforms and innovates upon the sea myth to galvanize his representation of YHWH as the incomparable one (15:11).”[184]

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[178] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[179] Anderson seems to mean that the biblical writer transfers Baal’s temple from northern Syria to Egypt as if, as Kloos had argued, Yahweh had become the Israelite Baal. Whatever the case, Anderson admits that “Exodus 14 does not associate Yahweh with Baal-zephon,” and therefore “any type of transference” is unlikely. Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[180] Russell, “Song of the Sea,” 148.

[181] Russell, “Song of the Sea,” 149.

[182] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 221.

Conclusion

The identification of anti-Baal polemic in the Song of the Sea and its prose framework fulfills all four of Yairah Amit’s criteria for an implicit polemical subject. While Exodus 14–15 refrain from explicit mention of the specific ideological struggle which, I am contending, they feature, a multitude of other Old Testament texts attest the prevalence of anti-Baal polemic in ancient Israel. Moreover, Exodus 7–15 contains at least four signs by which, in my judgment, the author appears to be directing the reader to observe a polemic against Seth/Baal-zephon in chapters 14–15. Finally, an assortment of ancient and modern contributors to the exegetical tradition on Exodus 14–15 have recognized that the canonical account of the Sea Event is functioning as an anti-Baal polemic. This includes a handful of other Old Testament texts, led by

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[183] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 211.

[184] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 211.

Psalm 48 and Isaiah 19, which suggest a polemic on this specific subject, the supremacy of Yahweh over Baal-zephon. In the case of Psalm 74 and Isaiah 51, these later poetic mythicizations of the Sea Event via the conflict myth likely support an early understanding of this event as a narrative of divine conflict, though in Exodus 14–15 with the rival Storm-god rather than Yamm—or his zoomorphization as the sea dragon—as foe.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS OF EXODUS 14–15’S ANTI-BAAL POLEMICAL FUNCTION FOR INTEPRETING EXODUS 15:17 AND DATING THESE CHAPTERS

This chapter will spell out the implications of Exodus 14–15’s anti-Baal polemic for two controversial issues in Exodus scholarship—interpreting Exod. 15:17 and dating these chapters. I will argue that Exodus 14–15 culminate with Yahweh, the Israelite Storm-god’s establishment of his people on his own Zaphon-like, discrete, permanent mountain sanctuary within the Promised Land of Canaan. Secondly, I will show that Exodus 14–15’s anti-Baal polemical function evinces historical plausibility within a New Kingdom context, making a Mosaic-era dating for both chapters plausible. Toward this end, I will begin with a brief summary of representative scholarship on these issues before elaborating on the anti-Baal polemic’s implications.

Summary of Representative Scholarship on the Interpretation of Exod. 15:17 and the Dating of the Composition of the Song of the Sea

Frank Moore Cross and his student Richard Clifford represent scholars who maintain a relatively early date of composition for the Song and a corresponding pre-Zion referent for the Song’s conclusion.[1] Cross deduced his dating by means of linguistic comparison with Ugaritic texts and in response to two historical factors. He maintained that the Song was written after the Philistines’s arrival in Canaan but before the establishment of monarchies in Moab and Edom.[2]

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[1] See Appendix Two for scholars who share a relatively early dating.

[2] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 124–25. Cross originally maintained that the Philistines arrived in Canaan no earlier than the twelfth century and that sufficient time had to pass before the Song’s composer could successfully propagate a historical falsehood about the Philistines’s existence in Canaan at the time of the Exodus event. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 124. Secondly, Cross correctly recognized that the terminology which the Song’s composer used to describe the leaders of Moab and Edom (אַלּוּפֵי אֱדוֹם אֵילֵי מוֹאָב) likely predates the eleventh century advent of monarchy in those regions. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 124–25.

Therefore, he dated the Song to "the late twelfth or early eleventh century."[3] Assuming that the Song was written after Israel's arrival at Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance,"[4] Cross identified the "mountain" with the sanctuary in Israel's history which coincided with his dating of the Song, namely Yahweh's sanctuary at Gilgal.[5] For his part, Clifford focused on the resemblance between the language of Exod. 15:17 and the terminology used to describe Mount Zion throughout the Old Testament. Agreeing with Cross's early dating, he argued that Exod. 15:17 cannot be referring to Mount Zion but must be pointing to the hill country of Canaan. He wrote, "[T]he poem is too early to have depicted originally Israelite Mount Zion. The 'mount of heritage' must have originally meant the hill country of Canaan as Yahweh's special heritage."[6]

Like Cross and his school, William Schniedewind and his student Jennifer Metten Pantoja correlated the early language of the Song with a pre-Zion referent for Exod. 15:17. They represent scholars who maintain that Exod. 15:17 refers to "the land" of Canaan.[7] Brian Russell similarly espoused an early dating for the Song and shared the commonly held assumption of its *post eventum* composition. He noted that "the Ugaritic parallels demonstrate that such phrases [as in Exod. 15:17] could have been used by an Israelite poet at any time."[8] A consequent early dating enabled Russell to situate the Song's composition near the time of Israel's brief sojourn at

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[3] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 124.

[4] Cross's myth-and-ritual presuppositions, (in this case, the supposition that the heavily mythological Song would have been composed for use in sanctuary ritual), required arrival at this sanctuary. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 141, 143.

[5] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 142.

[6] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 139

[7] "[T]he movement of the ['archaic'] Song of the Sea is from deliverance at the sea to the planting in the land," William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 68, 151. Pantoja wrote, "When the Israelites are living in the land, they are considered 'planted.'" Jennifer Metten Pantoja*, The Metaphor of the Divine as Planter of the People: Stinking Grapes or Pleasant Planting?* (Leiden-Boston: Brill Academic, 2017), 101.

[8] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 93.

Mount Sinai, his referent for Exod. 15:17.

John Day is representative of scholars who maintain a Mount Zion referent and a corresponding later date of composition. Adopting a Zion referent on the basis of the shared language noted earlier by Clifford, Day argued that the Song's linguistic parallels with Ugaritic texts do not dictate an early date of composition and a corresponding pre-Zion referent. In Day's words, "Canaanite language, probably deriving ultimately from descriptions of Baal's dwelling on Mt Zaphon … by no means requires that the passage is pre-monarchic, since Canaanite imagery is found in the Old Testament even in very late passages (such as Isa. 27.1)."[9] Bernard Batto shared Day's position, affirming that "Yahweh's mountain sanctuary here is of course the temple on Mount Zion—Yahweh's eternal 'resting place."[10] In a later note, Batto explicitly acknowledged his departure from Cross and his school: "The patent references to Zion as Yahweh's mountain of abode establish that this poem in its present form cannot be earlier than the tenth century BCE, contra F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman."[11]

Alberto Green and Paul K. K. Cho both exemplify the continuing scholarly tendency to link an early date of composition for the Song with a pre-Zion referent for Exod. 15:17 and, conversely, a Zion referent with a later date of composition. Green noted that the expressions used in Exod. 15:17, which parallel the Ugaritic texts, were "subsequently applied to Zion," but insisted that "given the early date of the poem, Zion cannot be the context here."[12] Finally, Cho laid out the scholarly dilemma in the clearest possible terms. He contended that a Zion referent is possible only if the poem is composite and Exod. 15:17 was added later: "If the antiquity and the unity of the Song are to be maintained, Gilgal, Shiloh, and the land of Canaan are viable options. If we allow for the possibility that 15:13–17 is a later addition, in view may be the Temple in Jerusalem."[13]

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[9] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods,* 114. Cf. Godfrey Ashby, *Exodus: Go Out and Meet God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 69: "These verses [15:13–17] not only memorialize the victory at the sea but also celebrate the entry into Canaan as a past event. At first glance, Yahweh's 'holy abode' (v. 13) and 'sanctuary' and 'mountain' (v. 17) would seem to refer to Jerusalem/Zion, as in many of the Psalms (e.g., Ps. 87) and would therefore bring the composition of the song into the period of the monarchy at the earliest."

[10] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 114.

[11] Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 216–17 n11. However, in accordance with Cross's school, Batto also contended that an earlier form of the Song originated at Gilgal. He deemed the "planting" of Israel image in Exod 15:17 to be a conquest motif and implied that conquest motifs belong to Gilgal traditions: "The hymn praises Yahweh not only for his victory over Pharaoh but also for bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land and planting them firmly around Yahweh's mountain sanctuary. This combination of exodus and conquest motifs suggests an origin in the Gilgal cult." Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 109. Batto speculated that this Conquest-era composition was placed in its canonical context (in the wake of Exod. 14) by the Priestly rewriter because it shared this later prose account's "new creation themes." Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 113. He wrote, "That this interpretation of the exodus as a new creation is correct is confirmed by the placement of the Song of the Sea at this juncture in the exodus narrative. Whether the Song was first inserted into the narrative by P or had already been attached by earlier tradition, P certainly found the new creation themes in it appropriate to his purposes." Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 113.

Implications of an Anti-Baal Polemic in Exodus 14–15 for Interpreting Exodus 15:17 and for Dating These Chapters

Having reviewed representative scholarship on the interpretation of Exod. 15:17 and the date of the Song's composition, I will now elucidate the implications of what has been demonstrated in chapters 1–6 for addressing these controversial issues.

Implications for Interpreting Exodus 15:17

A determination that Exodus's account of the Sea Event is functioning as an anti-Baal polemic has important implications for interpreting the Song of the Sea's conclusion. Although a precise historical referent for Exod. 15:17 cannot be determined on the basis of the polemic alone, the kind of place to which this verse refers plausibly can be.[14] If the Song features an anti-

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[12] Green, *Storm-God*, 261 n169.

[13] Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor,* 180.

[14] Andrew Bartelt has helpfully expressed this claim in structuralist vocabulary, stating, "The conceptual signified is clear, [though] the referent is not." Personal communication, [email], January 6, 2021.

Baal polemic, it is probable, by definition, that the Song's relationship to the Baal Myth is competitive. By implication, one might expect Yahweh's sanctuary (הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ), the trophy of his theomachic victory over Baal-zephon at Yam Suph, to be comparable or superior to Baal's Mount Zaphon (*ġāri naḫlati-ya*) in its most integral aspects. For instance, one might expect Yahweh's "mountain" to be at least as discrete as Mount Zaphon, an exclusive sacred space set off from the rest of the Storm-god's domain. This implication of the Song's anti-Baal polemic is corroborated in relatively recent scholarship on the Song, in comparative studies of the sacred precincts of other ANE Storm-gods, and in scholarship on Israel's concept of sacred space vis-à-vis its surrounding ANE context.

Yahweh's Discrete "Mountain of Inheritance" in Recent Scholarship

Even without recognition of the Song's anti-Baal polemical function and its competitive nature, Carola Kloos, W. H. C. Propp, Brian Russell, and James Anderson have all agreed that Exodus 15's paralleling of the Baal Myth implies a discrete mountain sanctuary for Yahweh. Kloos asserted that "the verbal correspondence [of 15:17] with the Ugaritic designation of Baal's mountain" meant that "an actual mountain and sanctuary must have been intended by the expressions in vs. 17, even if they have a mythological background."[15] Propp mirrored Kloos's view, writing, "The parallel with Ugaritic Mount Zaphon suggests that 15:17 refers to a specific peak uniquely associated with Yahweh."[16] Based on the fact that *ġāri naḫlati-ya* refers to Mount Zaphon in the Baal Myth, Russell concluded that likewise "the expression in Exod 15:17 refers to an actual mountain."[17] Russell elaborated on the implications of the parallel for the theory that

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[15] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 150.

[16] Propp, *Exodus*, 564.

[17] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 81.

Exod. 15:17 refers to the land of Canaan: "This evidence [of the Ugaritic parallel] points away from scholars who understand the phrase to mean the entire land of Canaan. … This phrase then has in view a specific sanctuary and is not a vague reference to a territory."[18] Finally, Anderson implied that a perception of Yahweh as Storm-god would require a discrete mountain sanctuary. He asserted, "If Yahweh was ever viewed as a storm-god, his home would have been located originally on another mountain."[19] In summary, these recent scholars have proposed that the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth dictates that Exod. 15:17 refers to a discrete mountain sanctuary. The anti-Baal polemical function of these parallels makes such a referent even more likely, as Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" would be the residence of a superior Storm-god, one whose mountain sanctuary is no less holy, thus likewise distinctly set apart from the rest of his domain.

The probability that Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" is a discrete mountain sanctuary, based on the Song's parallels with the Baal Myth, has led some Exodus scholars, most recently Brian Russell, to posit Israel's arrival at Mount Sinai as the fulfillment of Exod. 15:17. To draw this conclusion, however, Russell was forced to interpret Israel's path through the nations in Exod. 15:14–16 as a figurative mirroring of their path through Yam Suph rather than as a prediction of Israel's future path leading to its eventual planting in Canaan.[20] Moreover, Russell had to interpret Yahweh's "planting" of his people as temporary (the time of Israel's sojourn at Sinai).[21]

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[18] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 82.

[19] Anderson, *Monotheism*, 88.

[20] Russell's central arguments for a Sinai referent are found in Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 86–92. Regarding Israel's path through the nations, Russell wrote, "it appears likely that an indirect description of the Israelite crossing of the sea is found in the imagery of verses 14–16. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 29.

[21] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 66.

The principal objection to Russell's view has been expressed by John Day: "The view that Mt Sinai is in mind as the final destination is unlikely in view of the fearful reaction of Philistines, Edomites, Moabites and Canaanites (Exod 15.14–16)."[22] A second objection to a Sinai referent is that Exodus's revelation of Yahweh's design, not just for exodus but for eisodus—as expressed in Exod. 3:7–8, 16–17 and Exod. 6:2–8, 13:3–5—militates against attempts to locate Yahweh's sovereignty-signaling possession of his mountain sanctuary outside of the land of Canaan. Thirdly, encampment at Sinai for a year is not equivalent to the stability and permanence denoted by "planting."[23] Finally, it is also worth noting that the most ancient versions, the LXX and Targums, translate תְּבִאֵמוֹ in 15:17 with verbs which precisely signify "bring in" (as "bring into" Canaan): The LXX has εἰσαγαγὼν, Targum Neofiti employs תעל, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan uses תעיל (from the Haphel of עֲלַל).

Russell correctly maintained that the Song's parallels with the Baal Myth imply a discrete mountain referent for Exod. 15:17. Yet, the counterarguments enumerated above make Russell's identification unlikely. In short, Mount Sinai is qualified by its discrete nature but is disqualified by, among other factors, its impermanence as Yahweh's dwelling place amidst his people.

Yahweh's Discrete "Mountain of Inheritance" and Residences of Other ANE Storm-gods

The implication of the Song's anti-Baal polemic, that Exod. 15:17 refers to a discrete mountain sanctuary, is also corroborated by ANE texts which describe the sanctuaries of other Storm-gods. Every extant temple building narrative, it appears, indicates that the sanctuaries of

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[22] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 115.

[23] Paul Cho reiterated two of the most cogent arguments against Russell's position: "Russell's argument that this passage has Sinai in mind does not take into consideration the permanence implied by the image of planting (15:17; נָטַע) [and] the reference to Philistia and Canaan among Israel's enemies (15:14–16). … These observations favor a location in Canaan." Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor*, 180.

ANE Storm-gods were singular, discrete mountains, whether the discrete mountain be actual, as in the Baal Myth's Mount Zaphon, or constructed, as in the Storm-gods' lofty sanctuaries in Mesopotamia.[24]

Early East Semitic Storm-gods, who dwelt in cities of the low-lying marshlands near the Persian Gulf, described their sacred precincts as mountains, though these mountains were in fact the lofty sanctuary structures built to house these gods. For instance, the sacred precinct of Sumer's Enlil, one of the earliest attested Eastern Semitic Storm-gods,[25] is called the Ekur (𒂍𒆳), literally, "mountain house." A hymn to Enlil, dated 2750–2600BCE, describes Ekur as towering up to the heavens from the soil of the land in "the holy settlement" of Nippur:

> In the city, the holy settlement of Enlil, in Nibru [Nippur], the beloved shrine of father Great Mountain [Enlil], he has made the dais of abundance, the E-kur, the shining temple, rise from the soil; he has made it grow on pure land as high as a towering mountain. Its prince, the Great Mountain, Father Enlil, has taken his seat on the dais of E-kur, the lofty shrine (35–43).[26]

Another of the earliest known East Semitic Storm-gods, Ningirsu, had his sacred precinct, also called Ekur, in the ancient Sumerian city of Lagash.[27] The account of Ekur's construction relates that Gudea, the "king" of Lagash, "planted it in a pure place like a rising mountain."[28] A third example of the discrete, mountain-like precincts of East Semitic Storm-gods is *é-sag-ila* ("the house whose head is raised up"[29]), the residence of Marduk. It, too, was conceived as an edifice, a stage tower peaked by a temple proper, towering up into the heavens, thereby approximating a mountain. Esagila's building account, found in *Enuma Elish*, describes the gods's participation in the building of this mountain-like dwelling place: "They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu [the heavens]. / Having built a stage-tower as high as Apsu, / They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea."[30]

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[24] Avigdor Hurowitz's study of ancient temple building accounts supports Walton's assertion of the discreteness of the gods' residences. Hurowitz displayed the requests made by patron gods to their vice-regent earthly kings to build them holy cities and temples. For example, Hurowitz quoted Tukulti-Ninurta, the thirteenth century Assyrian king, who claimed, "Assur my lord asked of me … a holy city and commanded me … to build his temple." Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, 153. Similarly, Esarhaddon, king of Neo-Assyria, relayed to his workmen the task of building the "temples of the holy cities." Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, 134 n2.

[25] Green, *Storm-God*, 34.

[26] *A Hymn to Enlil* [*Enlil in the E-kur, Enlil A*], dated Early Dynastic II (2750–2600 BCE). http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk.

[27] According to Victor Hurowitz, Ningirsu is a local form of Ninurta, also a Sumerian Storm-god. Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 38. Alberto Green argues that Ningirsu is Ninurta's brother. Green, *Storm-God*, 44.

[28] Quoted in Moshe Weinfeld, "Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia"

While the "houses of the mountain" in East Semitic Storm-god ideologies were lofty,

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in *Poet and Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism*, ed. R. E. Friedman, HSS 26 (Chico, CA.: Scholars Press, 1983), 105–106. Ningirsu's "mountain house" was described in a hymn, dated 2143–2124 BCE, celebrating the completion of the shrine by Gudea, the ensi (or king) of Lagash:

> Its [Ekur's] splendor and refulgence reach to the heavens; …
> From Magan and Meluhha they bring trees for the construction of a temple for Ningirsu. …
> The great mountain … the sanctuary of Ekur, he [Gudea] raised from the dust;
> He [Gudea] planted it in a pure place like a rising mountain.

Weinfeld, "Zion and Jerusalem," 105–106.

[29] Weinfeld, *Zion and Jerusalem*, 108.

[30] *Ee.*, Tablet VI: 55–64. In *Enuma Elish*, Marduk exuberantly responds to the request of the Anunnaki (leading underworld gods, likely) to build him a dwelling place:

> When Marduk heard this, / Brightly glowed his features, like the day: / "Like that of lofty Babylon, whose building you have requested, / Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it 'The Sanctuary.'" / The Anunnaki applied the implement; / For one whole year they molded bricks. / When the second year arrived,/ They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu [the heavens]. / Having built a stage-tower as high as Apsu, / They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea.

Ee., Tablet VI: 55–64

See also Esarhaddon's description of his building of Esarra, the temple of Assur, from the first half of the seventh century BCE. The Assyrian king depicts another "house of the mountain," a discrete, mountain-like sanctuary:

> When the second year came
> I raised to heaven the head of Esarra, my lord Assur's dwelling.
> Above, heavenward, I raised high its head
> Below, in the underworld, I made firm its foundations
> Ehursaggula (meaning) House of the Great Mountain
> I made beautiful as the heavenly writing. …
> Its lofty high head scraped the sky
> below, its roots spread in the subterranean water.

Quoted in Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, 245.

mountain-like structures, the sanctuaries of ancient West Semitic Storm-gods (whose narratives are extant) were actual discrete mountains, in most cases, it appears, the same mountain referred to as “Mount Zaphon” in the Baal Myth.[31] Following the lead of Otto Eissfeldt, scholars of the Ugaritic literature have agreed that Mount Zaphon, Baal’s sacred precinct, is the discrete mountain on the Syrian-Turkish border known today as Jebel al-’Aqra’ or Mount Kiliç. The best-known of the Anatolian Storm-gods, the Hittite-Hurrian Storm-god Teshub, had his sacred precinct on Mount Ḫazzi, the Hurrian name for the Ugaritic Mount Zaphon. Later, the Greek Storm-god Zeus was thought to dwell on Mount Cassius, the Greek appellation for the same mountain.[32]

Yahweh’s Discrete “Mountain of Inheritance” Corroborated by Israel’s Concept of Sacred Space As Depicted in Scholarship and Evidenced Throughout the Old Testament

Recent scholarship on the Song and the commonalities among ANE Storm-god sanctuaries support the implication of the Song’s anti-Baal polemic for Exod. 15:17’s referent. That is,

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[31] Mircea Eliade and John Lundquist have demonstrated that the temple buildings constructed on the discrete mountain sanctuaries of Storm-gods were considered extensions of these mountains, as were the temple cities. In his influential *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Eliade asserted that in the religious ideologies of the ancient Near East, temples, and even temple cities, were assimilated to sacred mountains, creating an inseparable whole. He elaborated, “Every temple or palace, and by extension, every sacred town and royal residence, is assimilated to a ‘sacred mountain’ and thus becomes a ‘centre.’” Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958), 375.

Three decades later, Lundquist seconded Eliade’s view and adopted Eliade’s preferred term for describing the assimilation of Temple city, Temple, and holy mountain in the ancient Near East—“homologiz[ation].” John M. Lundquist, “The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East,” in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984), 76 n66). Lundquist described “homologizing” in terms of “architectural extension” or “architectural realization”: “[T]he temple is the upward architectural extension … above the primordial mound,” that is, “the architectural realization, of the primordial mound and the mountain that rises up from the mound.” John Lundquist, *The Temple: Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 7; John M. Lundquist, “New Light on the Temple Ideology,” *East and West* 50 (December 2000): 30. Published by: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO) Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/29757450 Accessed: 02-10-2018 22:19 UTC).

[32] For Teshub-Hazzi, see Green, *Storm-God*, 128. For Zeus-Cassius, see Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon*, 16, 66; and Bernard Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 70.

Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" is probably a discrete mountain as opposed to a larger land mass—for instance, the land of Canaan or its hill country, two common scholarly interpretations of Exod. 15:17.[33] The probability of the discreteness of Yahweh's "mountain" is fortified by scholarship on Israel's concept of sacred space as depicted in scholarship and evidenced throughout the Old Testament.

In his study of the relationship between ancient Near Eastern thought and the Old Testament, John Walton observed that the sacred precincts of ancient Near Eastern gods were set off from their larger domains, the holy being set apart from the profane. He asserted that in the ancient Near East, "The residence of the deity in the temple required the recognition of sacred space."[34]

The discreteness of the residences of ANE gods engendered by common ideologies of sacred space is reflected in biblical descriptions of Yahweh's dwelling places. Exodus 19:23, for example, indicates that Yahweh set Mount Sinai apart as his sacred precinct:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה	But Moses said to Yahweh
לֹא־יוּכַל הָעָם לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הַר סִינָי	The people shall not go up to Mount Sinai
כִּי־אַתָּה הַעֵדֹתָה בָּנוּ לֵאמֹר	for you warned us, saying,
הַגְבֵּל אֶת־הָהָר וְקִדַּשְׁתּוֹ׃	"you shall set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it."

Like the strictures surrounding Mount Sinai, the law of the central sanctuary introduced in Deut. 12:5 anticipates a discrete dwelling place for Yahweh in Canaan, continuing the practice of distinguishing Yahweh's dwelling place from his greater domain.

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[33] See Appendix Five for adherents to this position.

[34] John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 118.

כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	But to the place which Yahweh your God will choose
מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לְשִׁכְנוֹ	from all your tribes to set his name there as his dwelling place
תִדְרְשׁוּ וּבָאתָ שָׁמָּה׃	you will seek and go there.

The discreteness of Yahweh’s sacred precinct is reaffirmed in the Psalms and prophetical books. In Ps. 24:3, for example, David implies the discreteness of Yahweh’s holy mountain when he asks, “Who may ascend the mountain of Yahweh, / and who may stand in his holy place [בִּמְקוֹם קָדְשׁוֹ]?” Psalm 134 likewise distinguishes Yahweh’s mountain from his domain, concluding with an encouragement for pilgrims to Yahweh’s house: יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ׃ (“Yahweh will bless you from Zion, / [the] maker of [the] heavens and earth [will].”) In other words, Yahweh, whose domain is the heavens and the earth, will bless his servants from a discrete location, Mount Zion.[35]

Prophetic passages like Ezek. 45:1–4 reaffirm the distinction between Yahweh’s dwelling place and his domain. Here the prophet issues precise commands for a new temple, with a portion of the land set apart for Yahweh as a holy district.

וּבְהַפִּילְכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּנַחֲלָה	When you allot the land in inheritance,
תָּרִימוּ תְרוּמָה לַיהוָה קֹדֶשׁ מִן־הָאָרֶץ	you will exalt a portion for Yahweh, a holy [place] out of the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, it appears that Yahweh’s sacred precinct is always set apart from his larger domain.[36] This conforms with Walton's assertion that "Israel shared in this [ANE] ideology of sacred space at nearly every point."[37]

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[35] Both 2 Chron. 33:15 and Isa. 2:2 describe Mount Zion as “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” Mic. 3:12 with Jer. 26:18 similarly call Mount Zion “the mountain of the house.”

In several other Old Testament passages, it is evident that the sacred precint and the Temple city have been assimilated to Mount Zion such that they are referred to interchangeably: Ps. 3:4 (mountain and sacred precinct), Ps. 15:1 (mountain and sacred precinct), Ps. 24:3 (mountain and sacred precinct), Ps. 48:2–3 (mountain and Temple city), Ps. 68:17 (mountain and sacred precinct), Ps. 99:2, 5, 9 (Temple city, Temple, and mountain), Isa. 27:13 (Temple, mountain, and Temple city), Isa. 30:29 (Temple and mountain), Isa. 56:7 (Temple and mountain), Isa. 66:20 (mountain and Temple city), Jer. 31:6, 12, 23 (Temple city and mountain), Dan. 9:16, 20 (Temple city and mountain); Ezek. 20:40 (Temple and mountain), Joel 3:17 (Temple, mountain, and Temple city), Zeph. 3:11 (mountain and Temple city), and Zech. 8:3 (mountain and Temple city).

Extra-Biblical and Biblically Based Challenges to the Position That Yahweh's "Mountain of Inheritance" Is a Discrete, Mountain Sanctuary

Scholars have cited two extra-biblical passages to challenge the thesis that the sacred precincts of ancient Near Eastern Storm-gods were discrete mountain sanctuaries. These possible exceptions have encouraged some Exodus scholars to propose a "land of Israel" referent for Exod. 15:17. Both apparent exceptions are found in the *Baal Cycle*, namely the sanctuaries of Kothar-wa-Hasis, the Syro-Canaanite craftsman god, and Mot, the Syro-Canaanite god of the underworld. In two places, KTU 1 describes the residence of Kothar wa-Khasis as a land (*arṣ*) rather than a mountain (*ġār*).

kptr ksu ṯbth	*kptr* the seat of his dwelling
ḥkpt arṣ nḥlth	*hkpt* the land of his inheritance[38]

The referent of *kptr* (likely Kaphtor) is still debated, with some deeming it to be Crete while others consider it to be pointing to some unknown location in Egypt.[39] Smith and Pitard understood *hkpt* to be the ancient Egyptian city of Memphis, so they translated the passage, "For Kaphtor, the throne where he sits, / Memphis, the land of his heritage."[40] Notably, this interpretation would still render the craftsman god's "land of inheritance" relatively discrete, the size of an ancient city.

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[36] The discreteness of Yahweh's "holy mountain" does appear to be made obsolete in the eschaton, following the coming of the messiah, as depicted in Isa. 11:9.

[37] John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 118.

[38] KTU 1, 1:III:1; 1, 3:VI: 14–16.

[39] On the identification of the names *kptr* and *hkpt*, see André Caquot, Maurice Sznycer, and Andrée Herdner, *Mythes et légends*, vol. 1 of *Textes ougaritiques*. Volume 1, Volume 7 of Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974), 99.

[40] KTU 1.3 VI: 14–16. Quoted in Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2: 366.

In KTU 1.4 and 1.5, the residence of Mot, the ancient West Semitic god of the underworld, is also described as a land (*arṣ*), more particularly “a hole” which constitutes “the land of his inheritance”:

mk ksu ṯbth	*low* his seat of residence
ḫḫ arṣ nḥlth	*a hole* the land of his nḥlt[41]

Here the referents of *mk* and *ḫḫ* are more certain, but their limits are still elusive. The land of Mot’s inheritance is the indeterminate size of a hole.[42]

As mentioned above, these apparent exceptions have encouraged some Exodus scholars to propose that Exod. 15:17 refers to Israel’s arrival in the land of Canaan. In response, it is important to note that Kothar-wa-hasis and Mot are not Storm-gods, and so the apparent equivalence of their “land[s] of inheritance” (*arṣ nḥlth*) and “seat[s] of dwelling” (*ksu ṯbth*) in the *Baal Cycle* should not be employed too readily to determine the referent of Yahweh’s “mountain of inheritance.” Secondly, even if one were to use the craftsman and underworld gods’ sacred precincts to determine the degree of discreteness of Yahweh’s sanctuary, it is evident that Kothar-wa-Hasis’s *arṣ nḥlth* is limited to the city of Memphis and Mot’s is limited to the indeterminate size of “a hole.” The implication of Kothar-wa-hasis’s residence for interpreting Yahweh’s הַר נַחֲלָה would not be that Yahweh’s mountain is Canaan but that it is Jerusalem. Thirdly, as Brian Russell has argued, if the Song’s composer had intended to point to the land of Canaan as Yahweh’s sanctuary, the language *arṣ nḥlth* would have been readily available to him. The composer, Russell noted, could have used אֶרֶץ נַחֲלָתְךָ “to express this [‘land of Canaan’ referent] unambiguously."[43]

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[41] KTU 1.4:VIII:12–14; 1.5.II:15–16. Quoted in Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *From Babylon to Canaan: Studies in the Bible and its Oriental Background* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 327–28.

[42] Smith and Pitard translate ḫḫ “Phlegm.” Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2: 703.

Scholars have also cited three Old Testament passages to challenge the thesis that the sacred precinct of Yahweh in Exod. 15:17 is a discrete mountain sanctuary. Samuel E. Loewenstamm, for example, has argued that the planting image in both Psalm 44 and Psalm 80 supports reading Exod. 15:17 as referring to Israel's settlement in the land. Psalm 44 places Yahweh's "planting" (נָטַע) of Israel in opposition to his casting out of the nations and in apposition to his saving Israel and causing them to possess the land.[44] Psalm 80 similarly describes Yahweh's planting of Israel in opposition to his casting out of the nations. "You pulled a vine out of Egypt / You cast out (the) nations and planted it./ You cleared (the ground) for its presence, / and you caused its roots to be rooted firmly, / and it filled the land."[45] Loewenstamm

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[43] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 93.

[44] Psalm 44:2–4:

[2] אֱלֹהִים בְּאָזְנֵינוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ	God, with our ears we have heard,
סִפְּרוּ־לָנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ	our fathers have recounted for us
[3] פֹּעַל פָּעַלְתָּ בִימֵיהֶם בִּימֵי קֶדֶם׃	a work you did in their days, in days of old.
אַתָּה יָדְךָ גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ וַתִּטָּעֵם	You, by your hand, drove out (the) Gentiles, but you planted them.
תָּרַע לְאֻמִּים וַתְּשַׁלְּחֵם׃	You injured (the) peoples and cast them out.

[4] כִּי לֹא בְחַרְבָּם יָרְשׁוּ אָרֶץ	For not by their sword did they possess the land;
וּזְרוֹעָם לֹא־הוֹשִׁיעָה לָּמוֹ	nor did their arm save them,
כִּי־יְמִינְךָ וּזְרוֹעֲךָ וְאוֹר פָּנֶיךָ	but your right hand and your arm and the light of your countenance
כִּי רְצִיתָם׃	because you accepted them favorably. (my translation)

[45] Psalm 80:9–10 and 15–16:

[9] גֶּפֶן מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּסִּיעַ	You pulled a vine out of Egypt
תְּגָרֵשׁ גּוֹיִם וַתִּטָּעֶהָ׃	You cast out (the) Gentiles and planted it.
[10] פִּנִּיתָ לְפָנֶיהָ	You cleared (the ground) for its presence,
וַתַּשְׁרֵשׁ רָשֶׁיהָ	and you caused its roots to be rooted firmly,
וַתְּמַלֵּא־אָרֶץ׃. …	and it filled the land. …
[15] אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת שׁוּב־נָא	God of hosts, return please
הַבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה וּפְקֹד גֶּפֶן זֹאת׃	Look down from the heavens and see and attend to this vine.
[16] וְכַנָּה אֲשֶׁר־נָטְעָה יְמִינֶךָ	and the shoot which your right hand planted,

concluded confidently, “Clearly the image depicts the settlement by the people of the entire land.”[46][47]

The problem with Loewenstamm’s bold assertion is that neither psalm clearly indicates what exactly constitutes Yahweh’s “planting” of Israel or when precisely this “planting” occurred. The vine metaphor in Ps. 80:9–10 actually lends itself to the “planting” occurring at a particular spot from which the vine grows out to cover the entire land. “You cleared (the ground) for its presence, and you caused its roots to be rooted firmly, and it filled the land.”

A third Old Testament passage adduced to argue that Exod. 15:17 refers to Israel’s settlement in the land of Canaan is Ps. 78:54–55. Admittedly, this passage presents the strongest challenge to the case that Yahweh’s sacred precinct is a discrete mountain sanctuary. Psalm 78:53–55 reads,

[53]וַֽיַּנְחֵם לָבֶטַח וְלֹא פָּחָדוּ	And he led them securely, so they did not dread,
וְאֶת־אוֹיְבֵיהֶם כִּסָּה הַיָּם׃	but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
[54]וַֽיְבִיאֵם אֶל־גְּבוּל קָדְשׁוֹ	(And) he brought them to his holy territory,
הַר־זֶה קָֽנְתָה יְמִינוֹ׃	this mountain (which) his right hand acquired.
[55]וַיְגָרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיהֶם גּוֹיִם	(And) he drove out the nations before them,
וַֽיַּפִּילֵם בְּחֶבֶל נַחֲלָה	(And) he apportioned them territory of inheritance,
וַיַּשְׁכֵּן בְּאָהֳלֵיהֶם שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	(and) he caused the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Loewenstamm exemplifies those who argue that this passage identifies Yahweh’s mountain

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וְעַל־בֵּן אִמַּצְתָּה לָּךְ׃	and upon the son you made strong for yourself. (my translation)

[46] Loewenstamm, *From Babylon to Canaan*, 333.

with the land of Canaan. Loewenstamm assumed that “the holy territory” in verse 54a is the land of Canaan and then argued that “the holy territory” is synonymous with “this mountain” in verse 54b but not with Mount Zion in verse 68 (וַיִּבְחַר ... אֶת־הַר צִיּוֹן אֲשֶׁר אָהֵב׃). Thus, in Loewenstamm’s view, verses 54–55 describe the “conquest of the land,” while verses 65–72 describe “a new period of renascence” when “the Temple [was] erected on Zion.”[48]

Contra Loewenstamm, another way to read Ps. 78:54 is as a summarizing introduction to verses 55–69. In other words, verses 53–54 present a summary description of Yahweh’s actions in the remainder of the psalm. That is, Yahweh leads his people through the sea and guides them to his holy territory, i.e., his mountain, Mount Zion. Verses 55–69 then give a detailed description of Yahweh’s actions in leading Israel eventually to Mount Zion. This would mirror the narrative progression of Exod. 15:13–17, where verse 13 likely serves as a summarizing introduction of the events detailed in verses 14–17.

[13]נָחִיתָ בְחַסְדְּךָ עַם־זוּ גָּאָלְתָּ נֵהַלְתָּ בְעָזְּךָ אֶל־נְוֵה קָדְשֶׁךָ׃	You led in your steadfast love a people whom you redeemed. You guided them by your strength to your holy abode.

Thus, if נְוֵה קָדְשֶׁךָ in Exod. 15:13 is synonymous with הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ in Exod. 15:17, then it is plausible that גְּבוּל קָדְשׁוֹ and הַר־זֶה in Ps. 78:54 are synonymous with הַר צִיּוֹן in Ps. 78:68.[49]

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[48] Loewenstamm, *From Babylon to Canaan*, 334.

[49] The plausibility of the synonymity of גְּבוּל קָדְשׁוֹ with הַר צִיּוֹן in Ps. 78 is reinforced by the discreteness of the referent of גְּבוּל קָדְשׁוֹ in its only other usages in the Old Testament. Both usages are found in Ezekiel’s description of the future temple. In Ezek. 43:12, the prophet lays down the law of the house [תּוֹרַת הַבָּיִת], designating the territory on the top of the mountain as most holy: “This is the law of the temple [הַבָּיִת]: the whole territory [גְּבֻלוֹ] on the top of the mountain [עַל־רֹאשׁ הָהָר] all around shall be most holy [קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים]. Behold, this is the law of the temple.” In Ezek. 45:1, the prophet distinguishes the holy territory [גְּבוּל קֹדֶשׁ] from the rest of the land: “When you allot the land as an inheritance, you shall set apart for Yahweh a portion of the land as a holy [קֹדֶשׁ] district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits broad. It shall be holy [קֹדֶשׁ] throughout its whole extent [גְּבוּל].”

Two additional facts weigh against Loewenstamm's position that the mountains of Ps. 78:54 and Exod. 15:17 are identical to the land of Canaan or its hill country. First, if Yahweh's mountain in these verses refers to either Canaan or the hill country, these are the only places in the Old Testament to do so. In every other place, the mountain of Yahweh is always either Mount Sinai, Mount Moriah, or Mount Zion. Secondly, in the Old Testament the terms מִקְּדָשׁ and מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ, used in parallel to הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ in Exod. 15:17, always refer to a geographically specific place for Yahweh's dwelling. John Day added, "Canaan is never elsewhere spoken of as a 'sanctuary" (*miqdas*)."[50] Similarly, the only other occurrences of מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ refer to Solomon's Temple, as in 1 Kgs. 8:13 // 2 Chron. 6:2.[51]

The Permanence of Yahweh's "Mountain of Inheritance" Based on the "Mountain" Residences of Baal and Other ANE Storm-gods

As I have tried to demonstrate, the probability that Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance" is a discrete mountain sanctuary based on the Song's competitive parallel with the Baal Myth is corroborated by scholarship on the Song, additional comparative evidence, and the Old Testament's own ideology of sacred space. Judging by the comparative evidence, the sacred precincts of ancient Near Eastern Storm-gods were also intended to be permanent. Once established on his mountain, the Storm-god did not itinerantly abandon it for a new home. In *Enuma Elish*, for example, the gods request of Marduk, "Babylon, which thou didst give a fine name, / Ther[ein] establish our [abod]e forever!"[52] In the Annals of Tilgath-Pileser I, recorded between 1114 BCE and 1076 BCE, the Assyrian king claims that he was commanded by the

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[50] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 115.

[51] For an explanation of the relationship of the temple structure to the mountain, n31.

[52] Ee., V: 136–7. Quoted in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Vol 1, 31–39, ed. James B. Pritchard, trans. E. A. Speiser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 31.

Storm-god Adad to rebuild his sanctuary, a sanctuary which, according to Tiglath-Pileser I, is 641 years old, a duration suggesting a permanent dwelling place.[53]

According to Martin Brenner, the permanence of an ANE god's temple is a product of its construction by the god's own hands. Brenner asserted that Baal's Mount Zaphon was such a temple: "In the Ugaritic myths the palace of the god becomes his permanent and unchangeable abode and the place from which he can rule forever because he has built it or caused it to be built."[54]

The permanence of the Storm-gods's sacred precincts is also suggested by the durable materials used to build these sanctuaries, namely cedars of Lebanon and silver and gold. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, for instance, described the cedars of Lebanon used to build Marduk's temple in Babylon: "I mustered … and placed on them the burden (*tupsikku*) of the construction of Etemenanki [aka Esagila]. … They bring large cedar trees from the Lebanon to the cities of Babylon. … All the men worked … at the construction of the sanctuary."[55] The Baal Myth describes the cedars of Lebanon as well as the silver and gold used to build Baal's temple on Mount Zaphon: "[Quickly] his house was built, / [Quickly] his palace was erected. (16–17) / He [we]nt to Lebanon for its trees, / To [Si]ryan for its choicest cedars. (18–19) / [Le]banon for its trees, / Siryan for its choicest cedars. … Mightiest Baal rejoiced: (20–21) / My house I have built of silver, My palace of gold." (35–36)[56]

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[53] "Annals of Tilgath-Pileser I," Column vii, lines 60–70. Quoted in Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 205–8.

[54] Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 148.

[55] Weinfeld, "Zion and Jerusalem," 109.

[56] KTU 1.4VI

Conclusion: Yahweh's Zaphon-like "Mountain of Inheritance" and Mount Zion

Considering the competitive nature of a polemic as well as the common ideology for the sanctuaries of ANE Storm-gods, it would be unlikely for Yahweh's mountain sanctuary, as described in Exod. 15:17, to be any less discrete (e.g., the land of Canaan or its hill country) or less permanent (e.g., Sinai, Gilgal, or Shiloh) than Baal's. When one surveys the record of Israel's history, still to be lived out at the time of the Song's first singing on the eastern shore of Yam Suph, it seems that there is only one place that resembles Baal's Mount Zaphon and matches the criteria of a discrete and permanent sacred precinct, especially one within the land of Canaan; moreover, there appears to be only one place which is elsewhere referred to by every parallel descriptor in Exod. 15:17: that is Mount Zion. If one accepts, on the basis of the Song's polemical paralleling of the Baal Myth, that Yahweh's temple is probably Zaphon-like, Yahweh's "mountain of inheritance," however dimly understood at the time of the Song's composition or first singing, appears to be exclusively fulfilled by Mount Zion in Israel's subsequent history.[57]

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[57] In the Dynastic Oracle, Yahweh, it appears, interprets Exod. 15:17 as referring to Mount Zion. After describing his "moving about in a tent for [his] dwelling" since "the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day" (2 Sam. 7:6), Yahweh implies that he will now "plant" his people. He informs David through Nathan in 2 Sam. 7:10a, וְשַׂמְתִּ֫י מָקוֹם לְעַמִּ֫י לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וּנְטַעְתִּיו ("And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and I will plant them" [my translation)]). The "planting" reference in 2 Sam. 7:10a is unique in Old Testament historiography following the account of the Reed Sea Crossing up to the occasion documented here, with the exception of Balaam's simile in Num. 24:6. Jennifer Metten Pantoja recently interpreted Nathan's oracle as deliberately alluding to Exod. 15:17, writing, "The deliberate choice of words in the Dynastic Oracle: YHWH as a planter of the people of Israel, recognition that this planting will occur in a specific location, the mention of rest, and the building of a house for Yahweh, are clearly allusions to Exod 15:17." Pantoja, *Metaphor of the Divine as Planter*, 152. Pantoja, however, maintained that the original referent of Exod. 15:17 was the land of Canan. Therefore, she suggested that the Dynastic Oracle evinces what Mark Smith has called "monarchic overwriting." Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 40. Pantoja wrote, "The purpose of the allusion was to bolster the political strategy of the united monarchy, namely that the place of planting referred to in Exodus is Jerusalem and the Davidic line should be the responsible party for the building of the sanctuary. Pantoja, *Metaphor of the Divine as Planter*, 152. For a similar position, see Mark Leuchter, "Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered," *Bib 92* (2011): 333, 338; and William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 151.

Implications for Dating the Composition of Exodus 14–15

I submit that scholars' inextricable linking of an early dating of the Song to a pre-Zion referent, as evinced in the summary of representative scholarship above, presents a false dilemma. If one assumes the Song's paralleling of the Baal Myth, while certainty about an original Zion referent for Exod. 15:17 is understandably questioned, confidence in a Zaphon-like referent should not be; by implication, neither should expectation of a Zion referent, especially for those who are aware of Mount Moriah's title in Gen. 22:14b, the only הַר יְהוָה in the Pentateuch besides Sinai.[58] Accordingly, a Zion referent does not preclude a New Kingdom dating; nor does an early dating preclude a Zion-like referent. This was the conclusion of Horace Hummel, who wrote in *The Word Becoming Flesh*, "Most reservations have lingered about verses 13ff. [of Exod 15], which have appeared to presuppose the later events of the conquest and even possession of Zion, but Ras Shamra parallels make actual Mosaic authorship perfectly plausible for also this part of the poem."[59]

The same line of reasoning goes for the references to Canaan and the nations surrounding the Promised Land in Exod. 15:14–15. If one similarly allows for Israelite knowledge of the patriarchal promises,[60] particularly of eisodus, during the Egyptian sojourn, then mention of these nations does not require an intra-Canaan provenance or a post-twelfth century dating for the composition of Exod. 15:14–15.

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[58] Robert Schreckhise recognized that in the historiography of Genesis–Exodus, the only mountains to be referred to as הַר יְהוָה are Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah in Gen. 22:14b. To locate the precise referent of Exod. 15:17, Shreckhise asked, "Is there any place in the Pentateuch apart from Sinai in which a mountain is seen as God's possession and connected to acts in keeping with a sanctuary?" He answered, "The Binding of Isaac happened on Mount Moriah. Genesis refers to Mount Moriah as הַר יְהוָה." Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 86.

[59] Hummel, *Word Becoming Flesh*, 73. Hummel's argument was anticipated by Alan Cole six years earlier: "Some scholars feel that the second part of Moses' song must have been written after the occupation of Canaan, with which it deals. In particular, some see references in verses 13 and 17 to Mount Zion and Solomon's Temple, but this is not necessary. Both phrases are archaic, and have parallels long before, in the Ras Shamra tablets. The past tense events throughout may be 'prophetic perfects': future events are described as if they had already taken place. This is common in early days, and particularly familiar in the prophetic books of the Old Testament." Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 124–25. Cf. Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 135: "In my opinion, … the mentioning of 'the mountain'" at which Israel arrives in verse 17 "has been occasioned first and foremost by the mythological structure of the song."

The problem of the apparently anachronistic reference to the Philistines in a purportedly (according to canonical Exodus) Mosaic era song has also been answered in scholarship.[61] In an appendix to his 2006 dissertation, Robert Shreckhise argued that the charge of anachronism laid against the "Philistia" reference does not take into account the possibility of more than one Philistine immigration to Canaan. Following the lead of Gary Rendsburg, Roland Harrison, and

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[60] The "patriarchal promises" refer to the covenant promises Yahweh first makes to Abraham in Genesis 12, 15, and 22; repeats to Isaac in Genesis 26, to Jacob in Genesis 28, reiterates to Moses in his commissioning on Sinai in Exod. 3 (esp. v. 17), and reaffirms to Moses in the affirmation of his commissioning in Exod. 6 (esp. v. 8) following Pharaoh's initial refusal. In his 2006 dissertation, Robert Shreckhise described the Song of the Sea's assumption of the narrative arc of "patriarchal promise": "Taken as a whole, the entire Song encompasses the events that … include[] the departure from Egypt and journey to the Yam Suph, the journey to Sinai, and finally the journey to the land. As such, the Song in its entirety serves a bridging element over the large portions of the narrative that describes God [sic] fulfillment of patriarchal promise, especially as given in Gen 15." Shreckhise, "I will Sing," 122.

[61] Alan Cole is representative of the scholarly tendency to date the Song after the thirteenth century based on a purported thirteenth or post-thirteenth century arrival of the Philistines: "The country cannot have taken this name [the inhabitants of Philistia] until after the arrival of the Philistines in 1188 BC., so this phrase [חִיל אָחַז יֹשְׁבֵי פְּלָשֶׁת] at least must date from after the conquest." Cole, *Exodus*, 125. Cf. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 75. Confident in equating the inhabitants of Philistia with the Sea Peoples and dating their arrival to the early twelfth century, Russell accepted this as a *terminus a quo* for the Song's composition. Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 75.

Carola Kloos helpfully summarized the scholarly tendency represented by Cole and Russell. She wrote,

> Attempts have been made to gather some information about the date of composition of the song from "historical" allusions which it is thought to contain. Thus, the mentioning of Philistia in vs. 14 occasions B. W. Anderson to write in his comment ad locum in the RSV: Philistia was settled by the Philistines about 1175BC; hence the poem was written after that event (Anderson must mean: after that date). S. I. L. Norin believes vs. 14 to be secondary because the tradition does not know of a conflict with the Philistines before the conquest—to which the second part of the song is generally thought to refer.… F. M. Cross, who also believes this part of the song to refer to the conquest and who dates the song about 1100 B.C., considers the following problem: if the Philistines were not there at the time of the conquest, the reference to them would be anachronistic; in that case the song can hardly have been composed about 1100 B.C., because sufficient time would have to have passed for the precise time of the coming of the Philistines to have been forgotten. However, new evidence concerning the fall of the Hittite empire, the conquests of Ugarit and Cyprus, and the southern sweep of the Sea Peoples requires that the date of the first Philistine settlements be placed a good deal earlier, in the reigns of Ramses II (1304–1237) and Merneptah (1237–1225). Thus, there is no anachronism in the poem according to Cross.

Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Battle*, 134.

Umberto Cassuto, Shreckhise suggested that the peoples known as the Philistines emigrated from Egypt to Canaan as early as 2500 BCE and were joined in Canaan more than a millennia later by others who had originally chosen to immigrate to Crete. It is these later immigrants, concluded Shreckhise, who are often called "the Sea Peoples."[62] If Shreckhise is correct, there is good reason to maintain that the reference to "the inhabitants of Philistia" in Exod. 15:14 evinces historical accuracy, not anachronism.

Thus, with knowledge of both the patriarchal promises and the Baal Myth, even someone standing in the immediate wake of the Sea Event during the New Kingdom period could have anticipated the intra-Canaan, Mount Zaphon-like geographical horizons of Exod. 15:17 and written the Song of the Sea.

As for dating Exodus 14, the available historical evidence suggests that a plausible time period when an exodus account would feature a Baal-zephon cultic site, and perhaps the most probable period when a polemic would be marshaled against an Egyptian god who controls waterways and is culturally identified with the power of a reigning pharaoh, is New Kingdom Egypt. This was the zenith of Seth-Baal's period of "elevated prestige."[63] It seems appropriate that, at least in the case of Exodus 14–15, scholars would weigh conventional source-critical presuppositions against this strong, though relatively recent, consensus of Egyptology which is buttressed by the clarity of the archaeological record: the Egyptians were worshipping Baal-zephon continuously and centrally in the East Nile Delta for the majority of Israel's sojourn there.[64] As mentioned above, if one can accept Israelite knowledge of both the patriarchal promises and the Baal Myth, there is nothing preventing a Mosaic era dating for the Song of the Sea. Moreover, if one can accept the consensus in current Egyptology that the pinnacle of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in Egypt was during the New Kingdom, then a Mosaic era dating is plausible for the entirety of Exodus 14–15.

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[62] Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 254. See Gary A. Rendsburg, "Gen. 10:13–14: An Authentic Hebrew Tradition Concerning the Origin of the Philistines," *JNSL* 13 (1987): 89–90; Roland K. Harrison, "Philistine Origins: A Reappraisal," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, JSOTSup 67 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 11; and Cassuto, *Genesis*, 2:208.

[63] Niv Allon, "Seth is Baal: Evidence from the Egyptian Script," *AeL* 17 (2007): 20.

In 2005, Mark Smith issued a challenge to scholars assembled for the symposium "Ugarit at Seventy-Five." He called for comparative studies of the Ugaritic texts and the Bible to bring "biblical genres and their amalgamation … into a diachronic framework that situates them in relation to … the Ugaritic texts and Israel's larger Levantine literary heritage."[65] Answering Smith's call, I have tried to bring the Song of the Sea into a diachronic framework. That is, I have attempted to establish the most likely time frame for a song which parallels, but also freshly employs, the pattern of the Baal Myth to describe not only Yahweh's defeat of Pharaoh and the Egyptian army but also his victory over Seth-Baal, the Egyptian Storm-god who controls waterways. Based on currently available Egyptological evidence—particularly the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal, the *Four Hundred Years Stela*, the *Hearst Medical Papyrus*, the *Astarte Papyrus*, and the *Poem of Pentaur*—the composition of the Song might safely be situated sometime between the end of the Middle Kingdom and the end of the New Kingdom. This six-century range accommodates the two most widely held scholarly datings of the exodus, the fifteenth century dating under the Thutmosides and the thirteenth century dating under the Ramessides.

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[64] The general consensus in Old Testament scholarship is that the exodus event occurred during the New Kingdom, either in the mid-fifteenth century BCE or the early to mid-thirteenth century BCE. Exodus attests that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years (Exod. 12:40; cf. Gen. 25:13, Acts 7:6, Gal. 3:16–17).

[65] Smith, "Recent Study," 8. Smith included Mesopotamian influence as well. In another, nearly contemporaneous essay, Smith argued that both Israel and Ugarit participated in "a larger continuous cultural matrix," which he calls "the West Semitic [cultural] milieu." Smith, "Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic and Akkadian Literature," 12, 11.

The *Astarte Papyrus*, which features Amenhotep II exuberantly praising Seth for his victory over Yamm on behalf of the Egyptian pantheon, supports the plausibility of the Song's composition during this pharaoh's reign. The *Poem of Pentaur*'s identification of Ramesses II with Seth-Baal underpins the plausibility of the Song's composition during his celebrated tenure.

Conclusions: The Implications of Exodus 14–15's Anti-Baal Polemical Function for Interpreting Exodus 15:17 and Dating These Chapters

In review, Exodus 14–15's function as an anti-Baal polemic has important implications for ongoing scholarly debate over the referent of Exod. 15:17 and the dating of these chapters. The competitive nature of polemic makes it probable that Yahweh's mountain sanctuary in the Song's conclusion is at least as discrete and permanent as Baal's Mount Zaphon. That is, Yahweh's sacred precinct would likely also be set apart from the rest of his domain and would be a stable, permanent dwelling place for Israel's God. As has been demonstrated, these were two crucial features of the sacred precincts of all ANE Storm-gods. By implication, the land of Canaan's lack of discreteness and Mount Sinai's lack of permanence make these proposed referents unlikely candidates for the הַר נַחֲלָה of Exod. 15:17. In the Old Testament, only Mount Zion will match these features of Mount Zaphon and, fulfilling the terms of Exod. 15:17, be called Yahweh's מִקְדָּשׁ and מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ.

At the same time, the eventual fulfillment of Exod. 15:17 by Mount Zion in Israel's subsequent history does not require dating the Song's composition after David's capture of Jerusalem. The Song's narrative and semantic paralleling of the Baal Myth allows the Song to be dated as early as Israel's knowledge of this myth. As this dissertation has attempted to establish, Israel would have likely become aware of the Baal Myth during their four-century sojourn in the East Nile Delta, since Baal-zephon, as hybridized with native Seth, was worshipped continuously and centrally in this region from the end of the Middle Kingdom (ca. 1700 BCE) to the end of the New Kingdom (ca. 1070 BCE).

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter will provide a summary of the arguments contained in chapters 2–6. I will begin with a brief summary and assessment of the scholarship in chapter 2, followed by a discussion of the intended contribution of this dissertation. The chapter will continue with a cursory review of the contributions of chapters 3–7 and conclude with a final iteration of the dissertation thesis.

Summary of Representative Scholarship on the Baal Myth's Relation to Exodus 14–15

The ongoing study of the *Baal Cycle*'s relationship to the Bible since the Ras Shamra discoveries has generated this strong consensus: the Exodus accounts of the Sea Event bear a clear relationship to the Baal Myth. Dating back to Otto Eissfeldt's pioneering work, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten*, Exodus scholars have identified narrative parallels to the Ugaritic conflict myth in Exodus 14's account of the Sea Event. Eissfeldt, Gray, and Eakin also noted the likely importance of Exodus 14's Baal-zephon references in light of their Sea Event context, but each exhibited uncertainty when assessing this importance. Norman Habel and Frank Moore Cross led the way towards understanding the relationship between the Baal Myth and Exodus 15. Most influentially, Cross's *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* illuminated the semantic parallels between these texts and codified the mythic pattern observable in the Song. Richard Clifford, Cross's student, highlighted the significance of the "mountain of inheritance" in this pattern, while another of his students, Patrick Miller, focused on the Song's portrayal of Yahweh as a divine warrior in terms of a Baal-like Storm-god. In the wake of Cross's school, Mark Smith, a scholar of the Ugaritic corpus, buttressed Cross's identification of parallels between the Baal Myth and the Song. Echoing Clifford, Smith highlighted the importance of the Song's conclusion, interpreting verses 17–18 in light of Baal's parallel temple construction which Smith viewed as the culmination of the Storm-god's victory over Yamm. Alberto Green, a student of the ancient Near Eastern Storm-god motif, agreed with the semantic and narrative parallels elucidated by Cross's school and built off of Miller's work on Yahweh as Storm-god. Debra Scoggins Ballentine, a scholar of the West Asian conflict myth, also recently reaffirmed Cross's parallels and highlighted the contrast he pointed out between Baal and Yahweh's respective relationships to Sea.

For all of their helpful insights, however, all of these representative scholars in and following Cross's school have failed to take the canonical context of Exodus 14–15 seriously. As evident in their work, the reading of these chapters in isolation from each other and apart from their canonical context appears to be warranted, in their view, by the standard redaction-critical divisions of Exodus 1–15. In more recent contributions to the study of the Baal Myth's relationship to the Bible, Debra Scoggins Ballentine, Shawn Flynn, and Paul K. K. Cho all appear to subscribe to these limitations. These limitations have also stymied scholars of biblical polemics, particularly James Anderson, who failed to connect the likely anti-Baal polemic he perceived in Exodus 14's Baal Myth parallels with the possible polemic he discerned in the Baal-zephon references of verses 2 and 9. Notably, even diachronically-conscious, synchronic readings like those of Dozeman and Utzschneider and Oswald have avoided discussion of any connection between the Baal-zephon references in Exodus 14 and the semantic and narrative parallels in Exodus 15. Neither have these Exodus scholars stressed the possible importance of the Baal-zephon references in light of their placement in the arc of the conflict narrative extending from the plague narrative.

In summary, in the wake of Cross's *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, scholars engaging the Exodus accounts of the Sea Event have, even in synchronic readings, avoided connecting the Baal-zephon references in Exodus 14 to the Baal Myth parallels in Exodus 15 or to the conflict narrative of Exodus 1–15; and, in wholly diachronic readings, have neglected explaining why the Priestly redactor(s) would supplement Non-P (and, or including, the Song of the Sea) with unique and redundant mentions of the Baal-zephon crossing site.

The Intended Contribution of This Dissertation

My intended contribution through this study has been to explain what a historically-informed, synchronic reading of Exodus 1–15 might reveal about Exodus 14–15's relationship to the Baal Myth. This answers the charge of Robert Shreckhise, who, in his 2006 dissertation on the Song of the Sea, lamented the neglect of the Song's narrative context in contemporary studies of Exodus 15. In response, Shreckhise's dissertation swung the pendulum toward a wholly synchronic reading. However, recognizing the value of engaging "historically-focused" questions, Shreckhise concluded by suggesting that future scholarship on the Song and its narrative context incorporate comparative studies. He called for later studies to "bring to light" "the manner in which the Song uses motifs from the larger ANE world, especially those from Egypt."[1] In this dissertation, I have tried to synthesize Shreckhise's rhetorical-narrative analysis approach with an historical approach which seeks to provide external input—both comparative and archaeological—to enhance interpretation of the canonical account of the Sea Event. As I have attempted to demonstrate, in paralleling the Ugaritic conflict myth, the Song employs motifs which the Egyptians had adopted from the larger ANE world, particularly Syro-Canaan.

In conclusion, by incorporating the recent insights of scholarship in biblical polemics and the relatively recent findings of Egyptology into a rhetorical-narrative analytical reading of Exodus 1–15, I have sought to demonstrate that Exodus 14–15's parallels to the Baal Myth and the narrator's special attention to the Baal-zephon crossing site in Exodus 14:2 and 9 are intended polemically. That is, Exodus 14–15 function in part as an anti-Baal polemic.

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[1] Shreckhise, "I Will Sing," 246.

Summary of the Arguments for Exodus 14–15's Function as an Anti-Baal Polemic

Towards demonstrating this thesis, in chapter three, I employed Hays's and Hallo's inter-textual approaches to verify the current scholarly consensus that the Song of the Sea is deliberately paralleling the Baal Myth.

In chapters four and five, I attempted to demonstrate the anti-Baal polemical intent of the parallels substantiated in chapter three. Chapter four examined Exodus 14's Baal-zephon references within their canonical literary context. Specifically, I sought to show that the polemical function of these unique and redundant references becomes apparent when Exodus 14 is read as an integral part of the narrative of Yahweh's conflict with the gods of Egypt. To establish Exodus 14–15's place within the conflict narrative of Exodus 1–15, I employed a rhetorical-narrative analysis approach which revealed the continuity of the accounts of the Sea Event with the so-called plague narrative. Toward this end, I also illustrated and adopted the scholarly consensus that the plague narrative, in particular, is fundamentally about Yahweh's battle with even specific Egyptian gods who are polemicized against in the narrative through Yahweh's appropriation and subversion of their purported domains. Chapter four closed with the following conclusion: If Baal-zephon was an Egyptian god at the time of the exodus, then it is probable that he would be one of the gods polemicized against through Yahweh's appropriation of his domains.

Chapter five supported the literary argument for the Song's anti-Baal polemical intent with an argument based on the historical context for the exodus as presented by the biblical canon. I began by demonstrating that Baal-zephon, as hybridized with native Seth, was one of the chief gods of Egypt during the New Kingdom when, according to scholarly consensus, the exodus would have occurred. As manifest in the *Astarte Papyrus*, Baal-zephon was so central to Egyptian society that he was publicly celebrated by the Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaoh Amenhotep II as the champion of the Egyptian pantheon by virtue of his victory over Yamm. In the Nineteenth Dynasty, Baal-zephon was adopted as the Ramessides's dynastic god. Ramesses II proudly had the *Poem of Pentaur*, which continually likened him as warrior to Seth-Baal, inscribed on the walls of at least five major temples. After demonstrating the centrality of Seth-Baal worship in New Kingdom Egypt, I clarified the historico-geographical domain of this Egyptian god. Egyptologists have adduced evidence from various sources, such as the cylinder seal from Tel el-Daba, the Baal temple in Ugarit, and the seventh century treaty between Esarhaddon and the king of Tyre, to assert that Baal-zephon was worshipped, at least in part, as the controller of waterways. Finally, to close chapter five, I argued that the centrality of Seth/Baal-zephon worship in Egypt during the New Kingdom, along with the Bible's indication both of Moses's education in the household of Pharaoh and Israel's worship of Egyptian gods during their sojourn in the East Nile Delta, together make Israelite knowledge of Baal-zephon and Baal religion's governing myth likely.

In summary, if the so-called plague narrative is understood, at least in part, as Yahweh's polemicizing against particular Egyptian gods, then it is probable that Baal-zephon (aka Seth), one of the chief among them, would likewise be subject to polemic. This conclusion illuminates the intent of the carefully specified Baal-zephon crossing site in Exodus 14 and the Baal Myth parallels in Exodus 15. That is, at the culmination of his conflict with Pharaoh and the gods of

Egypt, Yahweh carefully places his people in front of the Egyptian Baal-zephon cultic site along Yam Suph. Directly in front of one of Baal of Mount Zaphon's satellite temples, Yahweh takes control of Baal's historico-geographical domain, dividing the Reed Sea with the blast of his nostrils to deliver his people and then weaponizing its waters to defeat and/or destroy Baal's worshippers, Pharaoh and the Egyptian army.

Chapter 6 tested the thesis that Exodus 14–15 function as an anti-Baal polemic by means of Yairah Amit's methodology for identifying and classifying biblical polemics. Exodus 14–15 were shown to meet all four of Amit's criteria for a polemic with an implicit subject. Firstly, these chapters refrain from explicit mention of the specific ideological struggle between Yahweh and Seth-Baal. Secondly, in the Bible, Exodus 14–15 do not stand alone in presenting anti-Baal polemic; numerous other Old Testament texts contain polemics against the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god. Thirdly, these chapters and those in their immediate context contain at least four signs by which the author appears to be directing the reader to observe a polemic against Seth/Baal-zephon. Finally, ancient and modern contributors to the history of Exodus 14–15's exegesis—from the pre-third century CE *Mekhilta* to the 2019 monograph of Paul K. K. Cho—have also recognized, however hesitantly, that the canonical account of the Sea Event functions as an anti-Baal polemic. Additionally, Old Testament passages like Ps. 74:13–14 and Is. 51:9–10 testify to early Israelite association of the Sea Event with the Baal Myth, and other Old Testament texts like Isaiah 19 and Psalm 48 appear to interpret Yahweh's action in the exodus in anti-Baal polemical terms.

Finally, chapter 7 spelled out the implications of Exodus 14–15's anti-Baal polemical function for determining the referent of Exod. 15:17 and for dating these chapters. If Exodus 14–15 are functioning in part as anti-Baal polemic, it is probable, as corroborated by our best extant sources, that Exod. 15:17 points to Yahweh's own discrete, permanent mountain sanctuary somewhere within Canaan's borders. Moreover, based on Mount Zion's exclusive likeness to Mount Zaphon among all other potential referents of Exod. 15:17, as well as its exclusive fulfillment of all the parallel epithets in this verse, it is probable that Exod. 15:17 is solely fulfilled by Mount Zion in Israel's subsequent history, however dimly this was understood at the time of the Song's composition. Finally, if Exodus 14–15 are functioning in part as anti-Baal polemic, it is plausible that these chapters were both composed during the Mosaic era, whether one subscribes to a dating of the exodus in the Thutmoside era or the Ramesside era, the periods of Seth-Baal's "elevated prestige" in the land of Egypt.[2]

In summary, chapters 1–7 establish the following thesis: Evincing historical plausibility within a New Kingdom context, the Song of the Sea, together with its Exodus 14 prose narrative frame, functions in part as an anti-Baal polemic, demonstrating and celebrating Yahweh's victory over Seth/Baal-zephon—the Egyptian/Syro-Canaanite Storm-god worshipped as controller of waterways—and culminating with the Israelite Storm-god's establishment of his people on his own Zaphon-like, discrete, permanent mountain sanctuary within the Promised Land of Canaan.

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[2] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20.

APPENDIX ONE

THE HYBRIDIZATION OF NATIVE SETH WITH SYRO-CANAANITE BAAL-ZEPHON

Before the end of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god Baal-zephon was being worshipped in the East Nile Delta under the name "Seth." Formerly, Seth had been the moniker for the native Egyptian Storm-god renowned also for murdering the Nile god Osiris and for slaying the serpent Apophis to protect Ra on his nightly boat trip through the underworld.

In our extant artifacts with Egyptian provenance, we find the name "Baal-zephon" being used for the Storm-god explicitly and apart from Seth on only two occasions. One is *Papyrus Sallier IV*, the thirteenth century BCE papyrus listing the gods of Perunefer, the New Kingdom naval base in the East Nile Delta:[1] "To Amūn of the temple of the gods; to the Ennead that is in Pi-Ptaḥ; to Baˁalim, to Ḳadesh, and to Anyt; (to) *Baˁal Zephon* (*bˁr-ḏʒpn*), to Sopd." The second artifact which mentions "Baal-zephon" explicitly by name is the fourteenth century BCE Baal-Zaphon (Mami) funerary stela from Ugarit. The upright stone slab shows Baal-zephon (his name spelled out in hieroglyphs in the inscription) being worshipped by a Syrian-based Egyptian official named Mami. According to Herbert Niehr, Mami, who is pictured on the slab worshipping Baal-zephon, transported this stela to Syria after it was crafted in his home country.[2]

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[1] This is Manfred Bietak's theory which he cogently defended, in my opinion, in Bietak, "Peru-nefer," 15–17.

[2] Herbert Niehr, "Baal-zaphon," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 152.

Figure 6. Baal-zephon (Mami) Funerary Stela

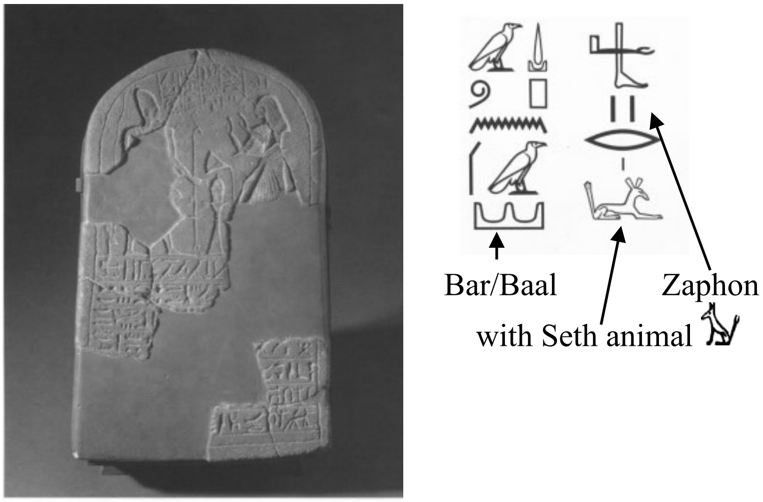

Fig. 1. The Baal-Zaphon stele (courtesy of the Agence Photographique des Musées Nationaux).

Source: Eythan Levy, "A Fresh Look at the Baal-Zaphon Stele," *JEA* 100 (2014): 294.

It bears repeating that the Baal-Zaphon (Mami) funerary stela is the only extant monument in the ancient world which contains the name "Baal-zephon." Every other stela portraying a figure which can be identified iconographically as Baal-zephon is inscribed merely with the Seth animal determinative (𓃩), with the sole exception of Stele Berlin 7256, which adds "uniliterals" (single letters transcribing a single hieroglyph) to the Seth determinative to explicitly spell *swtḫ* (Seth).[3] The Mami funerary stela's uniqueness has rendered it an indispensable touchstone for the identification of Baal-zephon on other ancient artifacts.[4] For instance, the distinctive iconography of Baal-zephon on this stela is what enables Egyptologists to identify unequivocally the figure on the Tel el-Daba cylinder seal and the 400 Years Stela as the Syro-Canaanite Storm-god.

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[3] Levy, "A Fresh Look," 306.

[4] Levy, "A Fresh Look," 309.

Eythan Levy recently offered a thorough treatment of the relationship between Seth and Baal-zephon within second millennium BCE Egyptian religion. In 2014, he argued that Syrian Baal-zephon was Egyptian Seth, just as Greek Zeus was Roman Jupiter. Levy countered the modern tendency to identify the figures labeled merely with the Seth animal determinative as either Seth or Baal-zephon. He explained their nonbinary relationship in ancient Egyptian religion:

> [F]rom an Egyptian point of view, the two divinities were closely associated, even identified. … The refusal [of some scholars] to see Seth in these depictions seems to stem from a typically modern binary classification of data, which is fundamentally alien to ancient thought. Hence, against Cornelius' bold assertion, "This is not Seth, but Baal," we might oppose: "This is Baal, thus Seth."[5]

Izak Cornelius recently affirmed Levy's analysis of Egyptian Seth's association with Syro-Canaanite Baal-zephon. Notably, in his discussion of the relationship, Cornelius was unwilling to count the Mami funerary stela as "Egyptian." "There is no Egyptian visual image associated with the name Baal," he said. Still, Cornelius's description of the Egyptian Storm-god is incisive. He explicitly calls Seth-Baal a "hybrid god," a god designated by Seth's name but displaying Baal's "Asiatic attributes":

> The Levantine storm god Baal is unique insofar as this god was identified with the Egyptian Seth to such an extent that one can speak of Seth-Baal. There is no Egyptian visual image associated with the name Baal, but stelae with the name Seth show a hybrid god not with the typical Seth head, but rather a figure with Asiatic attributes such as a headdress with horns, as on the famous 400-year Stela.[6]

To confirm the equation of Seth and Baal, Levy referred to Niv Allon's 2007 study of the Seth animal determinative ( ), where Allon anticipated Levy's assertion of the Egyptian bi-directional identification of Seth and Baal-zephon: "[I]t wasn't just Baal who was identified with Seth, but also Seth was identified with Baal, in a clear case of cultural appropriation."[7]

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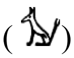
[5] Levy, "A Fresh Look," 306.

[6] Izaak Cornelius, "From Bes to Baal," 235.

In chapter five above, we saw Levy, Allon, and Cornelius's thesis of hybridization conclusively demonstrated by the clear equation of Seth and Baal in the *Poem of Pentaur*, the official account of Ramesses II's defeat of the Hittite coalition at Kadesh. We noted that in one revelatory speech, for example, a member of the Hittite coalition acknowledged Ramesses II's military prowess to a fellow soldier: "No man is he who is among us, It is Seth great-of-strength, Baal in person."[8]

Angela McDonald's analysis of the evolution of the Seth determinative () predated Allon's study. McDonald posited that the "classifier" for Seth was used negatively prior to the New Kingdom due to Seth's association with the political disunity of Egypt during the First Intermediate Period. Accordingly, McDonald called Seth the "ultimate and archetypal disturber of the established order."[9] Countering McDonald, Allon contended that the principal reason for the positive evolution of the Seth classifier was not change in Egypt's political fortunes but, rather, Seth's assimilation with the positively received Baal at the end of the Middle Kingdom.[10] Allon explained:

> I believe that through the identification with Baal, Seth was "set free" of his negative attributes during the New Kingdom. The common attributes of Seth and Baal were accentuated, shifting the center of the category towards more human features. … The

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[7] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20, quoted in Levy, "A Fresh Look," 306 n9.

[8] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:67.

[9] Angela McDonald, "A Metaphor for Troubled Times: The Seth Deity Determinative in the First Intermediate Period," *ZÄS* 134 (2007): 32.

[10] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 15.

> semantic clusters Storm and Aggressive behavior, two attributes which were also an inseparable part of Baal's character, became very prominent.[11]

The following ven diagrams from Allon illustrate the change in the Egyptian conception of Seth from the Middle Kingdom (MK) to the New Kingdom (NK).

Figure 7. Seth Categories Ven Diagram

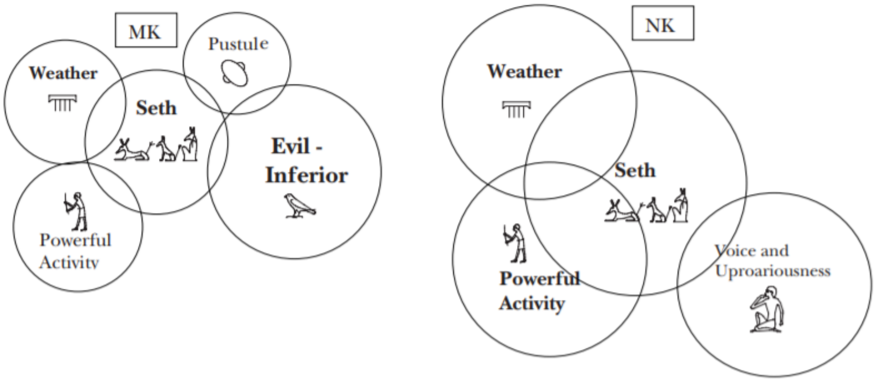
MK
Pustule
Weather
Seth
Evil - Inferior
Powerful Activity
NK
Weather
Seth
Powerful Activity
Voice and Uproariousness

Fig. 2 The Seth category and its adjacent categories during the Middle and the New Kingdoms.

Source: Allon, "Seth is Baal," 18.

Allon elaborated that there was a window from the Pre-Hyksos period through the New Kingdom—but especially during the New Kingdom—when Seth-Baal had "elevated prestige." Allon summarized his position vis-à-vis McDonald: "I have argued that this change [in the conception of Seth] can be located in the syncretism of Seth and Hadad/Baal, which evidently happened before the Hyksos Period but lasted into the New Kingdom."[12] Explaining the changes to the Egyptian conception of Seth which he illustrated in the ven diagrams, Allon added,

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[11] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20.

[12] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20.

"During the shortlived period of Seth-Baal's elevated prestige, the Sethian category was purged of its unambiguously negative sub-categories, while the shared domains of the two gods—aggression and weather disturbances—were enhanced."[13]

When this window of "elevated prestige" closed, Allon concluded, there was a noticeable "renewal of negative associations" with the Seth classifier: "But the identification with the cult of the Baal worked both ways, and unfortunately, when different times came by, it proved to be fatal to the cult of Seth. The temporary interest in the foreign god changed into hatred as a part of the hatred for foreigners."[14]

Hermann te Velde located the beginning of the demonization of Seth at the end of the New Kingdom, ca. 1070 BCE. He observed that "after the 20th dynasty the people of Egypt were increasingly uninterested in the worship of Seth."[15] According to te Velde, "no new temples were built for Seth any more after the 20th dynasty" or "existing temples of Seth … restored."[16] Moreover, personal names no longer incorporated "Seth."[17] Te Velde attributed the Egyptian demonization of Seth to deteriorating relations with the Asiatics, the product of military setbacks to the these Baal-worshippers and losses of colonial interests in their territories.[18]

In conclusion, the hybridization of native Seth with Syro-Canaanite Baal-zephon evident at the end of the Middle Kingdom, ca. 1700 BCE, enhanced Egypt's view of its native Storm-god. This favorable view of (now) Seth-Baal continued until the end of the New Kingdom, ca. 1070

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[13] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20.

[14] Allon, "Seth is Baal," 20–21.

[15] Te Velde, *Seth*, 139.

[16] Te Velde, *Seth*, 138.

[17] Te Velde, *Seth*, 139.

[18] Te Velde, *Seth*, 139

BCE, when Egypt's deteriorating relations with Baal-worshipping West Asian nations began the Egyptian demonization of Seth-Baal.

APPENDIX TWO

DATING EXODUS 14 AND 15

Exodus 14	Scholar	Exodus 15
Post-8th century	Eissfeldt	Early
Traditional (New Kingdom)	Berg	Traditional (New Kingdom)
Early	Cassuto	Early
Priestly source	Albright	13th century at exodus
Traditional	Gray	Traditional
Priestly in 6th century	Cross	Late 12th–early 11th century
Priestly in 6th century?	Clifford	Late 12th–early 11th century
Priestly in 6th century?	Miller	Late 12th–early 11th century
Priestly in 6th century?	Freedman	12th century
Traditional	Cole	Traditional
Traditional	Hummel	Traditional
Priestly	McCurley	12th or 11th century
?	Kloos	Late 12th–early 11th century
5th century	Brenner	5th century
Priestly	Batto	10th century (current version)
Priestly	Smith	Late 12th–early 11th century
Priestly	Day	Post-Solomon Monarchic
?	Green	End of 12th century
Traditional?	Shreckhise	Traditional?
Priestly	Dozeman	Monarchic?
Priestly (middle of 1st millen.)	Utzschneider and Oswald	2nd Temple era
Priestly	Russell	12th century
?	Flynn	12th–10th century
Priestly	Ballentine	Late 12th–early 11th century
Priestly	Cho	12th–11th century

APPENDIX THREE

INFLUENCE ON EXODUS 14 AND 15—BAAL MYTH VERSUS ENUMA ELISH

Scholar	Exodus 14	Exodus 15
Eissfeldt	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Berg	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Cassuto	Baal Myth/Enuma Elish	Baal Myth
Albright	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Gray	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Habel	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Eakin	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Cross	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Clifford	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Miller	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Freedman	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Cole	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Hummel	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
McCurley	Baal Myth/Enuma Elish	Enuma Elish/ Baal Myth
Kloos	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Brenner	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Batto	Enuma Elish/ Baal Myth	Enuma Elish/ Baal Myth
Smith	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Day	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Green	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Shreckhise	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Russell	Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Dozeman	Enuma Elish/ Baal Myth	Baal Myth
Utzschneider and Oswald	Baal Myth/ Enuma Elish	Baal Myth/ Enuma Elish
Flynn	?	Baal Myth
Anderson	Baal Myth/Enuma Elish? Or West Semitic cultural milieu	Baal Myth
Ballentine	West Semitic Conflict Myth	?
Cho	Enuma Elish	Baal Myth/ Enuma Elish

APPENDIX FOUR

THE DILEMMA—DATING THE SONG AND THE REFERENT OF EXODUS 15:17

SCHOLAR	THE RELATION OF THE DATING OF THE SONG AND THE REFERENT OF EXODUS 15:17
Albright	The "mountain of inheritance" "was a clear reflection of passages in the Baal epic." Therefore, the Song's composition did not await Israel's arrival at Mount Zion under David, let alone a "post-exilic date."
Cross, Clifford, Miller	"[T]he poem is too early to have depicted originally Israelite Mount Zion. The 'mount of heritage' must have originally meant the hill country of Canaan as Yahweh's special heritage" (Clifford).
Freedman	"[A]rchaic features" can "show up even in comparatively late materials."
Cole	"In particular, some see references in verses 13 and 17 to Mount Zion and Solomon's Temple, but this is not necessary. Both phrases are archaic, and have parallels long before, in the Ras Shamra tablets."
Hummel	"Most reservations have lingered about verses 13ff. [of Exod 15], which have appeared to presuppose the later events of the conquest and even possession of Zion, but Ras Shamra parallels make actual Mosaic authorship perfectly plausible for also this part of the poem."
Kloos	The description of "the mountain" at which Israel arrives in verse 17 "has been occasioned first and foremost by the mythological structure of the song." Continued uncertainty about the Song's date and place of composition should make one "refrain from identifying" the "actual mountain and sanctuary." "[I]f [the Song] was composed at some other place (and maybe some earlier time), it must have been another sanctuary [besides Zion]." "If the song was composed at Jerusalem after the building of the temple, mount Sion must have been meant."
Brenner	"[W]hile the evidence for Ugaritic influence is valid, the time period when this influence was felt has not been established."
Batto	"Yahweh's mountain sanctuary here if of course the temple on Mount Zion—Yahweh's eternal 'resting place." Batto affirmed this position in a later note, acknowledging his departure from the Albright School: "The patent references to Zion as Yahweh's mountain of abode establish that this poem in its present form cannot be earlier than the tenth century BCE, contra F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman."
Day	"Canaanite language, probably deriving ultimately from descriptions of Baal's dwelling on Mt Zaphon … by no means requires that the passage is pre-monarchic, since Canaanite imagery is found in the Old Testament even in very late passages (such as Isa. 27.1)."

Green	"[G]iven the early date of the poem, Zion cannot be the context here."
Russell	"[T]he Ugaritic parallels demonstrate that such phrases could have been used by an Israelite poet at any time. This is a key contribution of the Ugaritic materials on questions of dating Hebrew poetry."
Utzschneider and Oswald	The Song "presupposes knowledge of [the P Composition and the DtrH] by both its author and its readers."
Cho	"If the antiquity and the unity of the Song are to be maintained, Gilgal, Shiloh, and the land of Canaan are viable options. If we allow for the possibility that 15:13–17 is a later addition, in view may be the Temple in Jerusalem."

APPENDIX FIVE

THE REFERENT OF EXODUS 15:17

Scholar	Referent of 15:17	Reason(s) Given
Cassuto	“the mountainous country that Thou hast chosen for Thyself as the land of Thy inheritance”	Psalm 78:54 appears to make the mountain the entire land. “Zion” requires, at the earliest, a Solomonic date of composition.
Habel	The land of “Canaan is His throne” (mt. of inheritance); Temple symbolizes the land	Baal’s mountain is a general territory; KWH and Mot’s seats are their entire domains. “Likewise, the abode of Yahweh where Israel is ‘planted’ is not necessarily confined to Mount Zion but is, in the first instance, applicable to Canaan as Yahweh’s personal inheritance.”
Cross, Clifford, Miller	“the hill-country of Canaan as Yahweh’s special possession,” centered at Gilgal	Gilgal fits window, assuming Song was written after is events. Early dating precludes Zion referent.
Freedman	“the promised land of Canaan, which is the earthly counterpart of the heavenly mountain on which Yahweh dwells”	The temple was a “human achievement,” not the work of God. “The language [of Exod. 15:17] … cannot refer to any existing sanctuary, since all these have been made by human hands not God’s.”
Cole	A Place Like Zion, though Zion is not evident in the original context.	Yaqtul Preterites are functioning as Prophetic Perfects (Cole).
Hummel	A Place Like Zion, though Zion is not evident in the original context.	Zion is possible, though the poem is early, because of “Ras Shamra parallels” (Hummel).
Brenner	Zion	Exodus 15 was written in Second Temple period, indicated by Asaphite

		language.
Batto	Zion	“Yahweh’s mountain sanctuary here if of course the temple on Mount Zion—Yahweh’s eternal ‘resting place.’ … The patent references to Zion as Yahweh’s mountain of abode establish that this poem in its present form cannot be earlier than the tenth century BCE, contra F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman.”
Smith	Sinai, but originally (maybe) Zion	Exodus 15 serves as the fulcrum-point of Priestly redaction
Day	Zion	Language of the tricolon is applied to Zion throughout the OT.
Green	Land of Canaan	“[G]iven the early date of the poem, Zion cannot be the context here.”
Shreckhise	“the land as God's sanctuary (especially located at Moriah)….”	Bringing Israel in and planting them refers to Israel’s settlement in the land. The “mountain of Yahweh” is Sinai or Moriah, i.e., Zion; Sinai is too impermanent.
Russell	Sinai	Refers to a discrete mountain; the bulk of the references to “mountain of Yahweh” in Pentateuch refer to Sinai.
Dozeman	The land of Canaan or a location within it but not Zion	“[B]oth the Non-P and P Histories” have an “antimonarchical orientation.” Thus, Non-P, the writer(s) of the Song, would not have intended a Zion referent.
Utzschneider and Oswald	Zion	The Song “presupposes knowledge of [the P Composition and the DtrH] by both its author and its readers.”
Cho	Ambiguous in original context;	“If the antiquity and the unity of the Song are to be

	Zion in canonical context	maintained, Gilgal, Shiloh, and the land of Canaan are viable options. If we allow for the possibility that 15:13–17 is a later addition, in view may be the Temple in Jerusalem." "It is worth noting that, within the canonical text, the Jerusalem Temple is the certain referent in Exod 15:13, 17. That is to say, Exod 15:13, 17 look forward to the Jerusalem Temple."

APPENDIX SIX

THE LINGUISTIC DATING OF BIBLICAL TEXTS, PARTICULARLY THE SONG OF THE SEA

Since Albright, one of the chief issues for dating the Song of the Sea has been the validity of linguistic dating. Many of the Song's most influential interpreters, F. M. Cross, D. N. Freedman, and Carola Kloos, have adopted a pre-monarchical dating based on their own linguistic work as confirmed in the scholarship of D. A. Robertson.[1] As his touchstone for standard Hebrew poetry, Robertson had identified shared characteristics in what he deemed dateable Hebrew poetry from the eighth century onward. He then determined early Hebrew poetry both by contrast with this standard and by correlating the language in prospective early texts with "Canaanite glosses" in the Amarna letters.[2] Kloos exemplified the confidence in an early dating garnered from Robertson's linguistic arguments: "Scholars have held the most widely divergent views on the date of the composition of the Song of the Sea. In my opinion, this controversy can now be regarded as settled, due to the study of D. A. Robertson."[3] Shawn Flynn shared Kloos's confidence in Robertson's method and early dating. He wrote in 2013,

> Applying this method, Robertson considered Exod 15:11–18 the most secure early poem. The early dating of the Song of the Sea has received only minor challenges and is stably a pre-10th century text preserving the earliest Israelite expression of YHWH's kingly relationship to Israel. These conclusions have been reinforced by the scholarly community.[4]

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[1] D.A. Robertson, *Linguistic Dating in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press), 1972.

[2] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 17.

[3] Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 130.

[4] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 17. Cf. F. M Cross and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (PhD diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1950); F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1997); and Lars E. Axelsson, *The Lord Rose Up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Negev and Southern Judah* ConBOT 25 (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987).

Robertson's dating has also been reaffirmed in the recent works of Brian Russell and Dong-Hyuk Kim.[5] Shawn Flynn noted that the principal challengers of Cross, Freedman, and Robertson's conclusions have been Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensvard.[6] Although I support Robertson's view, I acknowledge one of the obvious shortcomings of Robertson's method: Simply, it does not distinguish earlier early forms from later early forms. One is left with two categories and two general time periods—middle of the eighth century BCE and after (standard Hebrew poetry) versus pre-mid-eighth century BCE (early Hebrew poetry). Thus, it is possible, though seemingly indeterminable by Robertson's method, that early Hebrew poetry—for instance, the Song of the Sea—could have been composed much earlier than most scholarly datings.

For a helpful brief summary of the history of linguistic analysis of the Ugaritic texts and its implications for biblical dating, see J. J. M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, or Mark Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century*.[7]

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[5] Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 59–73; Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 16–19*;* Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew*, 11–44.

[6] Flynn, *YHWH Is King*, 18. See Ian Young, Robert Rezetko, and Martin Ehrensvard, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (London: Equinox, 2009); and Ian Young, "Biblical Texts Cannot Be Dated Linguistically," *HS* (2005): 341–51.

[7] J.J.M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, IN., 2002), 6–8. Cf. Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001).

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