Sea monsters and other mythical creatures associated with the primeval flood in the Old Testament. A history of denial?

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SEA MONSTERS AND OTHER MYTHICAL CREATURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRIMEVAL FLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. A HISTORY OF DENIAL?

I declare that the above dissertation/thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

[Signature]

28 February 2017
DATE
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the fond memory of my late parents, Man and Anne Dyssel.

You taught me that dreams only have a compass, never ever a deadline.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Peet J van Dyk, for his insight, knowledge, guidance and his patience throughout this thesis. Secondly, I would also like to express my appreciation to my wife Irma, my sons Wesley and Marc and daughters Natalie and Nelda, and Layla my first grandchild, for their love and moral support. To everyone who supported and encouraged me during this remarkable journey, thank you so much!
ABSTRACT

Leviathan and the other sea-monsters in the Hebrew Bible have been a source of dissension amongst biblical scholars. Evidently, no consensus exists amongst them on how to translate the Hebrew words referring to these mythical monsters. Therefore, a tendency developed amongst exegetes to transfigure these mythical beasts into ordinary animals, to translate them in a vague and general way or to interpret them as mere symbols. This study, therefore, investigates ways in which the assumed existence of mythical creatures in the OT are denied, identified, or rejected. To gain a better understanding of the nature and function of these mythical creatures in the OT, similar creatures in the Ancient Near East (ANE) have been examined with a focus on sea-monsters and dragons associated with the primeval sea. These findings propose not only a more distinct epitome of Leviathan, but also of other monsters associated with the primeval waters as depicted in the OT. These are Rahab, תַּנִּינִֶ֖ם (tanninim), behemoth and the דָגִּגְדוֹל (Jonah’s big fish). It was concluded that when these beasts are interpreted in the light of the magico-mythical cosmology of the ANE and the OT, they should be seen as mythical creatures, assumed to be real by the ancient audience of the biblical text. When striving for fidelity to and loyalty with regard to both the text and the current reader, any translation should, therefore, present the foreignness of these monsters or dragons to the contemporary reader.
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<th>Translation or Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASV</td>
<td>American Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBE</td>
<td>The Bible in Basic English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSB</td>
<td>Holman Christian Standard Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBY</td>
<td>The Darby Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRA</td>
<td>The Douay-Rheims American Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELO</td>
<td>Unrevidierte Elberfelder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERV</td>
<td>English Revised Version (1885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNV</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWN</td>
<td>God's Word to the Nations Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEI</td>
<td>Leidse Vertaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXA</td>
<td>English Translation (LXX)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAB</td>
<td>The New American Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJB</td>
<td>The New Jerusalem Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKJ</td>
<td>New King James Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLT</td>
<td>New Living Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRS</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Psalm Targum English</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLL</td>
<td>Statenvertaling</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVV</td>
<td>Schlachter</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEB</td>
<td>The Webster Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>YLT</td>
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CHAPTER 1 – THE PROBLEM OF SEAMONSTERS IN THE OT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sea-monsters are mentioned in several texts of the Hebrew Bible and ancient, as well as modern interpreters, were not clear about how to deal with this phenomenon. It is evident that there is no consensus amongst Old Testament (OT) exegetes and translators of how to translate the Hebrew words referring to such mythical beasts. The problem seems especially acute when the OT mentions mythical creatures and other deities generally known in the Ancient Near East (ANE). The problem seems exacerbated by many OT scholars in their belief, that relying on the extra-biblical literature of the ANE, may well elucidate the OT at the expense that this may refute the authenticity of the Bible.

There may have been several reasons for this fact. One rationale may have been to try and justify biblical monotheism in the face of the polytheistic elements of the ANE. Although the Hebrew Bible is supposed to deal with a strictly monotheistic religion, it seems that this transformation from polytheism to monotheism has not been completely successful, because some vague references to big sea creatures and cosmic deities remained in the Hebrew text and most translations of the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, the tendency developed amongst exegetes to change or transfigure these earlier mythical beasts or mythical deities into ordinary animals. These transfigurations may either have been done deliberately to avoid confusion amongst modern readers, or due to the fundamentalist beliefs of the commentators that the Bible is also authentic in its references to such beasts and could therefore only refer to real animals.

It will be argued in this thesis that this "unwillingness" by some modern scholars to accept the possibility of mythical creatures being regarded as just as real as any natural animal by the ancients, may be due to an insufficient appreciation of the many differences which may potentially exist between the ancient cosmology of
the ANE (within which cadre, the OT originated) and the scientific cosmology of the modern (that is, post-Enlightenment) reader of the Bible.¹

It must be acknowledged that it is not always easy, or even possible, to identify the various animals mentioned in the OT. Not only is it a matter of language, but often readers of the OT are not knowledgeable about the exact animals which occurred in ancient times within Palestine and are therefore prone to identifying animals incorrectly by associating them with those known to themselves. It is especially problematic when translating the biblical text into modern languages, because the animals may be unknown to the reader and may necessitate a long description in a footnote, should the translator retain the authentic name. For this reason, Bible translators often choose the nearest equivalent name, known to the readers, to avoid cumbersome footnotes.

The possible misidentification of animals, mentioned in the OT is, however, not only due to our deficient knowledge of ancient Hebrew or because of a lack of knowledge about animals that existed in Palestine in ancient times. An even bigger challenge is posed when exegetes and translators must deal with the possible mythical creatures mentioned in the OT.

1.2 REASONS FOR MISIDENTIFYING MYTHICAL CREATURES IN THE OT

The possible reasons why biblical exegetes and translators may knowingly or unknowingly misidentify mythical creatures, or deny the fact that the OT may have regarded such animals as real animals, may be attributed to three possible reasons.

1.2.1 Fundamentalist reasons

As can be appreciated, any reference to mythical creatures within the OT, especially when they are described as real creatures or when they are regarded

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as supernatural creatures, may challenge Yahweh’s omnipotence and may pose serious theological questions. Within a fundamentalist framework, the authority of the Bible is depended upon the inerrancy of the Bible, also regarding its historical and scientific detail.² Fundamentalist convictions are however, not the only possible reasons why mythical creatures may be incorrectly identified or translated incorrectly.

1.2.2 Insufficient appreciation of the magico-mythical cosmology of the OT

Even when biblical interpreters and translators do not necessarily accept the fundamentalist view that the Bible is also authoritative in all its historical and scientific details, scholars may (unconsciously, as a matter of habit) revert to their default modern (namely, scientific) cosmology. This may then cause them to fall into the trap of identifying mythological creatures with natural animals. It is essential for interpreters and translators to gain insight into the magico-mythical milieu of the ANE to honour the biblical text.

1.2.3 A specific view of monotheism

An extreme view of the kind of monotheism promoted by the OT may also cause reluctance on the part of the OT scholars to acknowledge the assumed existence of supernatural, mythical creatures within the OT. When OT monotheism is viewed as an absolute denial of any other supernatural creature or deity, who may challenge Yahweh’s authority, then it is logical that scholars with such a view of OT monotheism would try their best to identify these creatures with real known animals.

More recent studies such as those by, Assmann, Smith, Chang and Rosenbaum on OT monotheism have, however, concluded that former extreme views about OT monotheism are not tenable. OT monotheism should therefore, not be regarded as an absolute denial of the existence of other deities or powerful supernatural creatures – as is illustrated, among other things, by the fact that the existence of a powerful Satan is acknowledged by the OT, although only in some of its latest strata. If a strict and extreme view of biblical monotheism is no longer accepted, then it would be logical to expect that other supernatural creatures (especially if their power is limited) may also feature within the OT.

1.3 WAYS OF DENIAL OF MYTHICAL CREATURES IN THE OT

During the history of OT exegesis and translations, various “strategies” have been used to deny the assumed existence of mythical creatures within the OT.

1.3.1 Identifying the animal as a real and known animal

Identifying the animal with a real and known animal – notwithstanding the fact that its description is not completely compatible with the features of the natural animal is one way of denying the existence of mythical creatures in the OT. For example, a big water monster may be identified as a whale or by regarding these fantastical creatures, mentioned in the Bible as references to the dinosaurs or other large creatures, which may have existed in earlier times. Thomas Aquinas likened Leviathan with a whale, and some modern Bible translations also speak of Leviathan as a whale. Two examples are Job 3:8, where LXA speaks of a “great whale” (Table 6.1), and in Isa 27:1, the DRA uses the term “whale.”

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mostly been associated with a crocodile, but is also identified as a “tunny” and a dolphin. Importantly, it remains questionable why translators and exegetes have transfigured mythical beasts into ordinary animals. There should be no need for an interpreter or translator to change the original meaning into something else just so that the modern reader may have a proper/modern frame of reference to understand the text “better.” Modern translations of Greek mythology, for example, do not allow for the hellhound Cerberus to be changed to Satan, as modern readers may have a better chance of understanding Satan as the guardian of hell.

1.3.2 Interpreting the description as mytho-poetic

Another way of denying the existence of mythical creatures in the OT is by explaining the differences between the natural (and known) animals and the ones described in the Bible as a matter of poetic (symbolic) language, which tend to overemphasise some features of the animal, for example, its length or strength. There is no indication that these monsters really exist, but these images from the ANE mythology are only used because they are fitting symbols. Examples are, “…poets who mention this also abhor the pagan idolatry and insist on a strict monotheism”.⁹ "The problem. . . is not one of borrowed theology but one of borrowed imagery,"¹⁰ that is, the Israelites borrowed mythopoeic imagery from their neighbours, but never incorporated it into their own religion.¹¹ Thus, all such descriptions were only a figment of the narrator’s imagination.

1.4 PURPOSE AND AIMS

It became evident after consulting different translations, that variations exist in the way terms associated with mythological creatures in the Hebrew Bible have been translated. This study will, therefore, analyse and evaluate these occurrences.

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1.4.1 How large sea-monsters should be interpreted

The message of the Bible should be interpreted against its historical backdrop. OT theologians (of which most are also translators) are generally guilty of “looking down,” especially when non-biblical texts are involved. These texts and myths are treated as “inferior” to those of the biblical narrative, exactly because they are not biblical texts. This treatment of the literature of the ANE is unfortunate, because it has been shown that they share many similarities with the Hebrew Bible – in poetry, wisdom, prophecy and mythology. An example, unrelated to this study, is Psalm 29 with its matching praise of God compared to the Ugarit praises of Baal. Ugaritic texts give Baal the title of “Cloud Rider”. In the Hebrew Bible, the same title is given to Yahweh (Ps. 68:5).

1.4.2 To investigate of the nature of mythical creatures in ANE

This study aims to explore the traits and portrayal of mythical creatures in the ANE. The resultant insights would assist the evaluation of similar creatures in the Hebrew Bible.

1.4.3 To examine the fidelity of translations and interpretation

Fidelity in translations, as well as interpretations, is paramount when transferring the intrinsic “meaning” from the source text to the target audience. The adherence to concepts such as ‘foreignisation,’ ‘loyalty’ and the ‘principle of necessary precision,’ is crucial to obtain fidelity. This study, therefore, wishes to expose cases of non-fidelity, such as “translatorial gatekeeping”, (a new term coined and described in Chapter 2), and “falsification,” the deliberate and intentional altering of the original into something totally different.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

The rationale for the division of chapters is as follows. After the discussion of the methodological approach, the primeval waters, as both the origin and habitat of sea-monsters in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible, are examined. This forms the
basis for subsequent discussions on sea-monsters. After that, the monsters and deities of the ANE are assessed, followed by a similar review of ancient Israel. The ensuing chapters then evaluate and assess Leviathan, Rahab and רַנְּנִים, Behemoth and Jonah’s דָָ֣ג גֶָ֣דוֹל.

1.5.1 Chapter 2

The methodology of this study makes use of a historical approach. Employing the basic principles of the religio-historical method, it compares the OT and ANE literary texts concerning sea-monsters. The subsequent insight gained from these comparative outcomes, is in agreement with Gadamer’s hermeneutics in appreciating the “otherness” of the text.

1.5.2 Chapter 3

This chapter appraises the primeval mass of waters, known as the primeval sea in the ANE and יָם in the Hebrew Bible. Existing even before creation as a dark, amorphous abyss, it is the personification of chaos, incarnated as a divine sea-monster encircling the earth.

1.5.3 Chapter 4

Religions primarily pertain to gods and supernatural beings, such as angels. However, religion also deals with other monster deities, and even dragons and demons. The rich heritage of the ANE literature and iconography introduces a great variety of creatures such as, monsters, dragons, serpents as well as demons. This chapter will introduce these creatures briefly, but the focus will be on monsters from the sea, including rivers and lakes.

1.5.4 Chapter 5

To obtain comparative insight, monsters, serpents, and demons appearing in the Hebrew Bible are identified and discussed. These creatures, although not associated with the monsters from the primeval waters, are important as they help
with the identification of probable similarities to creatures from the ANE discussed in the previous chapter.

1.5.5 Chapter 6

Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible has caused great dissension amongst biblical exegetes and scholars even though it appears in only five texts in the Hebrew Bible, namely in Job 3:8; 41:1; Ps 74:14; 104:26; and Isa 27:1. After an evaluation of translations on each of these texts, this researcher hopes to provide a more distinct epitome of Leviathan with an exegesis of each text. A comparison with sea-monsters and cosmic deities from the ANE as discussed in Chapter 4, and possible resemblances will conclude this chapter.

1.5.6 Chapter 7

Leviathan is not the only sea-monster mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Other sea-monsters associated with the primeval sea and Leviathan are also prevalent in this Bible. They are תַּנִּינִִּ֖ם and Rahab. An assessment of the various translations will be followed by an exegesis and their attributes and identities and inter-relationship with similar monsters in the ANE will be deliberated.

1.5.7 Chapter 8

The only appearance of Behemoth in the Hebrew Bible is in Job 40:15-24. Initially recognised as being a terrestrial creature, the ensuing discussion will attempt to identify Behemoth as a chaos monster associated with the primeval waters as well. After reviewing its translational history, an exegesis will precede an evaluation of relevant texts referring to sea-monsters, monsters (in general), and cosmic deities associated with the primeval sea. This study hopes to change the general adage that Behemoth is only a natural hippopotamus.

1.5.8 Chapter 9

Jonah is universally known for being swallowed by a big fish. The Hebrew term דָּגָגִּים (big fish) has been translated as different sea-animals over the ages, but mostly it has been identified as a natural whale. This chapter considers the magico-mythical milieu of the narrative and rather identifies the דָּגָגִּים as a sea-monster associated with the primeval sea. The translational history of the דָּגָגִּים will be followed by exploring links to the possible identification of this creature.

1.5.9 Chapter 10

The final chapter concludes this study with a summary of its findings. Questions such as the following will be answered. Did the Hebrew Bible deliberately ignore or suppress the inherited ANE myths? In instances where the Hebrew Bible failed to get rid or masked the mythical sea-monsters, did the translators and interpreters of the OT do this by means of “translatorial gatekeeping”? If so, how and why?
CHAPTER 2 - METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to assess the place of sea-monsters in the worldview of the Israelites within the ANE. Therefore, the texts’ meanings in their original social and tradition milieus, is of vital importance. In the endeavour to achieve this, the choice of a historical approach seems to be a foregone conclusion.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF APPROACH

The methodology of this study will employ the basic tenets of the religio-historical method (Religionsgeschichte Schule), with special consideration to the literary text being comprehended in its Sitz im Leben.¹³ This religio-historical study will, therefore, compare OT and ANE literary texts pertaining specifically to sea monsters.

Nations or different cultures rarely exist in absolute isolation. Ancient Israel was no exception, as it had not only been surrounded by various cultures, but the people of Israel had been living amidst some other cultures. The major source of ANE history for many centuries was the Bible. The discovery of, and subsequent deciphering of ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Akkadian and Ugaritic texts (these texts are mostly known to precede the texts of those of the Hebrew Bible) make a compelling case for a comparative study. To quote Roberts,¹⁴ “The value of ancient Near Eastern literature for the OT is profound…”

A comparative study between the Hebrew Bible and texts from the ANE poses an immediate problem in that they seem to appear to be poles apart. Despite the similarities between the cultures of the ANE, the culture of ancient Israel and the

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¹³ The Religionsgeschichte Schule was a German initiative to study religion from its social and cultural perspective acknowledging the Bible’s setting to be part of the ANE. Cf. Hermann Gunkel, Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12, trans. Peter Machinist, The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

rest of the ANE are regarded by many biblical scholars to be so intrinsically different, that it is beyond comparison. The reason is that for too many, the Bible is historical fact, whereas the ANE writings are all considered to be myths. No matter what the views may be on the literary heritage, the Israelites and other cultures of the ANE share history. It is accepted that not all writings represent history, but all texts contain some history. Fretheim speaks of three ways that history is presented in texts. History in the text, history behind the text and history of the text. History in the text is the story or narrative as it appears in either the Bible or the ancient text. The history behind the text refers to an attempt to reconstruct actual history. As the Hebrew Bible seldom gives a comprehensive and explicit rendition of a narrative, it becomes imperative to use extra-biblical data to complete the picture. The history of the text focusses on the formation of biblical and other texts over the ages and has two important components to consider, firstly, the history of its literature (the evolving of the literature through authors and editors) and secondly, its history of interpretation (the way the authors and editors articulate the significance of the past).

It is, therefore, evident that comparison is the only way to accentuate similarities as well as dissimilarities. Only through a comparative study, borrowings from another culture and certain periods in history may be exposed.

The advantages of a comparative study concisely are firstly, that it has the propensity to transcend borders and cultures, secondly, that it illuminates some areas of complexity and thirdly, it affords the prospect of discovering transcending motifs and themes and the subsequent evaluation of them. The last point thus indicates that the use of the comparative method is not an option, but is rather a requisite as one may consider the impact this method has already had on understanding the Bible.

Some scholars endorse the comparative method by naming it differently. One example is reciprocal illumination where “…knowledge of another tradition enables us to gain a better understanding of our own tradition and vice versa.” An inherent concern with regard to the comparative method has been named asymmetric understanding (having two sides or halves that are not the same). To counter asymmetric understanding, the researcher needs to possess a special aptitude to identify equivalent occurrences in different cultural contexts. This supports the general concern against using the comparative method questioning the ability of the researcher to really get familiar with the inherent context of the unfamiliar and to gain deep enough insight from this encounter with regard to its essence, and still have room to internalise and compare these insights objectively. This, however, may not be an authentic concern.

The inherent resistance by many biblical scholars to the comparative method may be ascribed to two issues. Not only does this method provide a voice to previously unheard texts, but it may result in the content of these texts being recognised as having been sacred texts in their own right as well. This realisation then, may lead to a diminished view of the Bible as a sacred text. All texts from the ANE are ancient writings of which almost all the relevant texts became sacred texts in their milieus and eras. In modernity, all these ancient texts, apart from the Bible, lost their sacredness. Their sacredness has been replaced by myths.

Dawn breaks on all horizons. Therefore, a comparative study is legitimate in that the Hebrew Bible and the ANE share the same basic magico-mythical cosmology, even though each religion adapted the cosmology in different terms such as the names and functions of their gods, for instance.

18 ‘Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary’ (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 2005).
Biblical texts cannot be understood properly without a thorough examination of the historical circumstances that fashioned them. This research demands a full religious-historical analysis of these texts rather than a merely grammatical or literary analysis. The aim is to fuse all the horizons of understanding in an acceptable manner and to approach the text as far as possible “stripped” of any ideological baggage or beliefs alien to the text. It is noteworthy that OT studies are generally guilty of “looking down” on the text, especially when non-biblical texts are involved. These texts and myths are then treated as “inferior” to those of biblical narratives, exactly because they are “guilty” of not being biblical texts. The literature of the ANE, though, has been shown to have many similarities with the Hebrew Bible – in poetry, wisdom, prophecy and myth. An example, unrelated to this study, is Ps 29 with its matching praise of God compared to the Ugarit praises of Baal. Ugaritic texts give Baal the title of “Cloud Rider”. In the Hebrew Bible, the same title is given to God (Ps 68:5).

If it is accepted that the OT and ANE shared the same basic magico-mythical cosmology, then it would be possible to interpret the OT against its broader ANE background or horizon (to use the term preferred by Gadamer). A problem, however, arises when modern readers (post-Enlightenment) attempt to interpret an ancient text like the Old Testament, with its completely different horizon (or cosmology). Such a potential clash in horizons between text and reader can lead to a serious misinterpretation of the OT text. To avoid this potential pitfall, the hermeneutics of Gadamer may be especially helpful and will, therefore, be used as the broad frame of reference for interpreting the OT texts about sea monsters.

2.1.1 Gadamer’s fusion of horizons

Gadamer’s hermeneutics emphasised that exegetes should acknowledge the “otherness” of ancient texts. Gadamer speaks of the “otherness” of a text referring to the endless possibilities inherent to the “other” and to be “… sensitive to the

text’s alterity.”

Many exegetes are inclined to forget the “otherness” of the ancient text and seem hurried to rationalise the text, for example, by either denying the notion of mythological monsters or by assuming that they refer to real animals.

According to Gadamer there are two horizons of meaning in the hermeneutical circle. Full meaning of the text cannot be derived from either the interpreter’s horizon or that of the author, but only by a fusion of the two horizons. When the modern reader attempts to interpret a text, a continual interaction therefore needs to take place between the two horizons of understanding. This is not to say that it will be easy for the modern reader to imagine exactly what the author had in mind. However, being historically conscious (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) makes interpreters conscious of the limitations of their horizons.

Thus, it is quite right for the interpreter not to approach the text directly, relying solely on the fore-meanings already available to him, but rather explicitly to examine the legitimacy – i.e., the origin and validity – of the fore-meanings dwelling within him.

Gadamer further believed that the characteristics for constructive dialogue consists of three steps, summarised as “…it embraces the possibility of dialogue with texts, it takes dialogue to be the model of language at work, and it considers dialogue successful when there has been a ‘fusion of horizons’.”

Gadamer’s insight in the fusion of horizons can best be said in his own words:

When we want to understand sentences that have been handed down to us, we engage in historical reflections, from which it is determined just where and how these sentences are said, what their actual motivational background is and therewith what their actual meaning is. When we want to

20 Ibid., 271
21 Ibid., 301ff
22 Gadamer, Truth and Method, 270.
represent a sentence as such to ourselves, we must, therefore, represent its historical horizon.\textsuperscript{24}

This also indicates that the horizon is elastic and that a change in insight shifts the horizon. Therefore, a horizon does not limit anyone from being able to see beyond it, furthermore, it changes when the perspective of a person changes. Because of the historical movement of human existence, no person can ever be absolutely bound by only one standpoint – therefore a fully closed horizon is improbable.\textsuperscript{25} A horizon is never an inelastic boundary, but “…something that moves with one and invites one to advance further.”\textsuperscript{26} Therefore, horizons change for someone who changes position.

Gadamer further insists that “… it requires a special effort to acquire a historical horizon.”\textsuperscript{27} Our hermeneutical situation has a historical distance to overcome. Therefore, Gadamer cautions that one must be cognisant of personal preconceived notions and in that way, allow the text to present itself to the reader.

To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one’s own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.\textsuperscript{28}

That is exactly what this research aims to achieve. It is for the exegete to be informed and transformed from the text itself and not to propose to enter into communion with the text and walk away after an own horizon has been transposed onto the text. In this instance, all that has been achieved is to have read the text from a personal horizon being totally ignorant of what the text could actually have meant if the horizons were allowed to merge. The following serves as an example

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 285.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 304.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 371.
to illustrate how dialogue between text and reader can transform the initial understanding of the reader.

The spiritual leader of Tibet is the 14th Dalai Lama, a reincarnation of a deity whose sole task is to be a servant to humankind. Although being highly educated in Sanskrit and Buddhism, he describes himself as only a Buddhist monk. When he was to speak for example about recognising the five *skandhas* in *Prajñaparamita* (the perfection of wisdom), it would be incomprehensible to most Western listeners. In order for these two horizons to fuse, it would necessitate the listener to learn to know about Buddhism and Sanskrit. It would lead to increased insight if one were to further investigate the Dalai Lama’s personal views on similar philosophies. Even though all these efforts may still not be sufficient to gain a full understanding of what he originally implied, some perspective would certainly have been gained.

The fusion of horizons does therefore, not imply the perfect integration of horizons. Gadamer certainly acknowledges that one may have no horizon, as in the instance above and therefore “...does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him.”

To summarise this reasoning, Gadamer does not see horizons as a limit to understanding, but rather as an invitation to approach the horizon with the aim to expand our own horizon. Here, the individual may initially have had a prejudiced reaction to the five *skandhas* in *Prajñaparamita*, because of rejecting it as too foreign and therefore, either not true in terms of their own belief systems, or too difficult to even try to comprehend. By refusing to be deterred by this initial reaction, and by approaching this horizon in an open-minded way, it leads to a new understanding, after gaining more and more information on this topic, and the information becomes internalised, the horizon of the receptor becomes expanded, and the two horizons becomes fused. What has happened here is that the initial evaluation has been revised and that a new (and more valid) understanding and

29 Ibid., 301
perspective has been acquired. It is not entirely integrated as a new whole as mentioned before, but merged in harmony.

This clarifies Gadamer’s view that in attempting to understand a foreign text, the goal is not to transpose ourselves into the mind of the author but, that we try to transpose ourselves into the viewpoint from which the author has formed his views instead. This basically means that we attempt to “…understand how what he is saying could be right.”30

2.1.2 Scholarly reflections on Gadamer’s fusion of horizons

Gadamer’s fusion of horizons had indeed been criticised by scholars such as Habermas31, Derrida,32 Betti33 Caputo34 and by Hirsch,35 who did not believe that horizons can be fused. Hirsch believes that the only two horizons that can be understood are an inner horizon and an outer horizon. The inner horizon may be understood, but no one can understand the outer horizon (anything beyond our inner horizon). He believes that if “…the original sense of a text is beyond our reach”36 no valid interpretation can be possible. No understanding obviously results in no fusion of the horizons.

Dalmayr37 emerges in strong support by agreeing with Gadamer that “prejudice” can be partly rehabilitated, that is "fore-meanings" or prejudgments that can be

30 Ibid., 292.
36 Ibid., 445.
adapted and can even be revised, but that it is impossible that it can ever be removed or eradicated completely.

2.1.3 Expanded views on Gadamer's hermeneutics

Despite critique on Gadamer, one of the main reasons why he remains relevant in this research is that Gadamer agrees that a horizon of understanding includes “…the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular standpoint.”\textsuperscript{38} The textual analysis of this study further attempts to expand the basic assumptions of Gadamer by acknowledging supplementary insights from Bultmann, Iser and Van Dyk.

As this study deals with mythological texts in the Hebrew Bible and its horizon, Bultmann, renowned for his insight to demythologise biblical texts needs to be recognised. \textit{Demythologizing} is defined as a hermeneutical procedure that probes the reality referred to by mythological texts\textsuperscript{39} and that “…demythologizing seeks to bring out myth’s real intention to talk about our own authentic reality as human beings.”\textsuperscript{40} Bultmann defines “myth” as “…a very specific historical phenomenon…” and “mythology as “…a very specific mode of thinking”.\textsuperscript{41} Although myth and reality may generally be juxtaposed, he remains convinced that myth talks of “…a reality which lies beyond the reality that can be objectified, observed, and controlled, and which is of decisive significance for human existence.”\textsuperscript{42}

Bultmann\textsuperscript{43} further recognised the cultural distance between the world of the text (when it was written) and the world of the reader. For the biblical texts to speak to contemporary readers, he suggested that a “pre-understanding” (\textit{Vorverständnis}) should be established by the “\textit{Lebensverhältnis}” (life-relationship) of the

\textsuperscript{38} Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 301.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 161.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 160.
reader/interpreter to the reality which the text conveys. This reality can never be cast in stone as “…all of the results of science are relative and that any world picture worked out either yesterday, today and tomorrow can never be definitive.”

Finally, Bultmann views historical phenomena as many-sided that may be perceived from different perspectives plainly because of the complexity of human beings themselves, and only where a specific way of looking is “…absolutized and turned into dogma”, the picture becomes falsified. This absolutism and falsification may prove to pose a problem and needs to be identified in this study.

Literary work has two poles according to Iser, namely the artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic pole is the author’s text and the aesthetic pole that what the reader realised from the text. Therefore, Iser concludes that in view of this polarity “…it is clear that the work itself cannot be identical with the text or with the concretization, but must be situated somewhere between the two.” This outlook is congruent with that of Gadamer’s two horizons that must be fused.

Van Dyk places the emphasis on cosmology and how this may determine our understanding and meaning of the text, which is closely linked to Gadamer’s two horizons (that of the text and of the reader). From this perspective, Van Dyk argues that the biblical text assumes a completely different cosmology to that of the modern (post-Enlightenment) reader.

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44 Bultmann, New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings, 97.
47 Iser, Ibid., 21.
2.2 PROBLEMS WHEN TRANSLATING PROBLEMATIC SECTIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

As argued above, the horizons of both the reader and text are important when attempting to understand Old Testament texts. Most of the focus of this study will be on the horizon of the text, that is, to understand possible references to mythological monsters in the OT against the broader magico-mythical cosmology of the ANE.

Translations of these problematic OT texts are, however, important indications to what extent readers of the OT text (in this case translators) have paid sufficient attention to the horizon (or cosmology) of the ancient biblical text, or imposed their own modern horizon unto the text.

A brief exploration of theories of translation will, therefore, be necessary to indicate to what extent they relate to Gadamer’s hermeneutics and was successful, in practice, with regard to implementing the ideals proposed by the theories of translation.

Translation is a multifaceted process of communication, not only having to bridge cultures, but also different eras in history. The following quote describes the quest for worthy translations:

We expect approximate truth in a translation …. What we want to have is the truest possible feel of the original. The characters, the situations, the reflections must come to us as they were in the author’s mind and heart, not necessarily precisely as he had them on his lips.50, 51

On the other hand, Gleason acknowledges potential dangers in biblical translations by saying that “Translation can obscure some features of meaning or falsify others.”52 Translation is not an exact science, it is also an art. Nevertheless, to

achieve excellence in translation, scholars in translation proposed different theories of translation. This section will therefore evaluate the two most influential theories of translation, and more specifically, how they relate to Gadamer’s emphasis on the horizon of both text and reader. As no translation can be deemed absolutely perfect, problems with translations and possible remedies to improve it will be deliberated.

2.2.1 Formal equivalence

Biblical translations of yesteryear all followed the long-standing translation theory of formal equivalence, also being referred to as word for word-, literal- or direct translation, with its major tenet to protect the form of the source text. The focus is consequently solely on the source text, while it is fundamentally important to honour its poetical tone and content.

Within this theoretical framework, there are two possible ways of dealing with the text in Bible translations. The first option, is to merely transliterate the Hebrew word, for example, לִוְיָתָ֔ן (Job 41:1 WTT) (Leviathan), or בְְ֭הֵמוֹת (Job 40:15) (Behemoth). In these instances, no interpretation is necessary. The reader is aware of the foreignness of the word, and needs to do personal research in order to achieve a better understanding of the text.

The second option is to translate the Hebrew word with the closest possible English, German or Dutch word. The same Hebrew word לִוְיָתָ֔ן (Ps 74:14), is consequently translated as het Gedrocht (monster) (LEI), the great snake (BBE) or the dragon (DRA). בְְ֭הֵמוֹת in Job 40:15 has been translated das Flußpferd (hippopotamus) (SCH), het Reuzendier (giant animal) (LEI) and the wild beasts (Job 40:10 LXA).

2.2.2 Functional equivalence

Eugene Nida emerged as one of the pioneers of translation theories. He first introduced the concept of ‘dynamic equivalence’ and later, in 1986, he renamed
the concept to ‘functional equivalence’. Nida describes functional equivalence as “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.” This definition, according to Nida, contains three key terms, namely “equivalent”, which refers to the source-language message, “natural”, which must be an equal message in the cultural milieu and context of the receptor-language audience. The third term, “closest”, unites the source and target texts as closely in meaning as possible.

This translation theory places a strong emphasis on meaning. Added to that, there is a concomitant strong focus on idiomatic translation to endeavour to produce an equivalent meaning in the receptor language. To put it in Nida’s own words, “… the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message.” Functional equivalence, therefore, overrides form for understanding the original meaning.

New developments/variances/elaborations in functional translation theory include, *literal-idiomatic equivalence*, *complete- or optimal equivalence*, and once again conceptualised by Nida - a renewed theory namely, the *closest natural equivalent*.

To conclude, this approach is striving for an equivalent outcome of understanding. Therefore functional equivalent translations are more “free” in their quest for an active relationship between the source text and the target text.

This inevitably brings one to the question, which type of translation is the best? Formal or functional translations? The answer is simple - neither. None is perfect and both translation theories have proven shortcomings. It is true that no translation can be fully formal or wholly functional. Bible translations contain a

54 Ibid., 55.
varying percentage of each in its endeavour to strive for the best possible translation. Because of this goal, some other translation theories and hypotheses have emerged over time. Broadly speaking, the readers of English translations still seem to prefer the formal equivalence, whereas the broader international community seems to prefer Bible translations focussing on functional equivalence.\textsuperscript{57}

In both formal and functional translation theories, it is imperative for the translator not to yield to the notion that the Bible is a factual scientific document and therefore, considered to be so close to being perfect that nothing else matters but a basic translation for the message’s successful transmission. This may lead to ignoring the cultural differences between the readers of the target text. To overcome this potential obstacle, the Skopos theory, discussed later, may be a solution.

2.3 PROBLEMS WITH TRANSLATIONS

The general criticism against translations is that “… translation can obscure some features of meaning and falsify others.”\textsuperscript{58} With specific reference to Bible translations, the major vulnerability “…has been the desire to retain the sound and feel of previous translations.”\textsuperscript{59}

Each translation theory and hypothesis will subsequently be addressed regarding its distinctive problems in translation.

2.3.1 Formal equivalence

Formal equivalence translations may not be easy reading, as the “flow” of the text is restricted. The accepted notion that the translated message in the receptor language should be in accord with all the elements of the source text, leading to a “stiff” and archaic translation. This could be expected as different words from

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 2.  \\
\textsuperscript{58} Gleason, \textit{An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics.}, 42.  \\
\end{flushright}
different worlds (ancient and post-modern), might in some instances require an
effort by the target text reader to conclude a similar meaning to that of the source
text. Furthermore, the reader’s understanding of the target text is compromised by
a formal translation as it necessitates additional information to enlighten the reader,
usually by means of footnotes. On a cautionary note, by strictly adhering to form,
translators should be cognisant of the fact that, when the general reader fails to
fathom the meaning of the text, the translation becomes a botched attempt.60

2.3.2 Functional equivalence

The superfluous quest for easy reading and spontaneous communication may lead
to excessive translation by adding “relevant” information that extends past what the
source text endeavoured to say. Functional equivalence, therefore, has the
propensity for “… making exegetical decisions that should be left to the reader.”61
The translation may therefore be responsible for “guiding” the receptor to possibly
come to an incorrect exegetical verdict.

The second dilemma with functional translations is that it is inclined to spawn
unwarranted exploitation. The exploitation hypothesis62 defines the propensity of
translations to be more explicit than the source text and has been formulated by
Blum-Kulka in 1986 and defines it as “… an observed cohesive explicitness from
SL to TL texts regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two
linguistic and textual systems involved.”63 Laviosa explains it concisely and clearly
as “… the introduction in the target language of information which is only implicit in
the source language, but is retrievable from the context of the situation”64.

60 Strauss, ‘Form, Function, and the “Literal Meaning” Fallacy in English Bible Translation’,
26.
61 Ibid., 21.
62 For a detailed discussion on explicitation and implicitation read Klaudy, Kinga, and
63 Shosana Blum-Kulka, ‘Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation.’, in Interlingual
and Intercultural Communication, ed. Juliane House and Shosana Blum-Kulka (Tübingen: Gunther
64 Sara Laviosa, Corpus-Based Translation Studies: Theory, Findings, Applications,
Approaches to Translation Studies 17 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 52.
The potential pitfalls become apparent in a functional equivalence setting, where allowing too much creative freedom by the translator results in exploitation. Noorda explains it saliently:

…this is not to say that translation should aim at being difficult and opaque: whenever possible, we should not make the Bible a book of riddles. What I mean is that we should practice restraint, avoiding excessive explanation and explication.65

An example of explication in the Old Testament can be noted when comparing the following translations of Ps 74:14b:

…and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness…(KJV).

…thou hast given him to be meat for the people of the Ethiopians (DRA).

…you handed them (Pharaoh’s warriors) over for destruction to the people of the house of Israel, and their corpses to jackals (PST).

…you gave them as food to the fishes of the sea (BBE).

The selected translations confirm explicitation of the text. This explicitation is directing the reader to a whole new idea of what actually transpired in the source text. What exactly does the source text want to convey? The wilderness, Ethiopians, jackals or marine fish? The translation in PST additionally refers to “Pharaoh’s warriors” instead of “they” as in the other translations.

It is also important to also take cognisance of the effects of implicitation. Implicitation is a reversal of explicitation. In this case, a word with a specific meaning in the source text is translated with a word or words with an extensive meaning base in the target text. This approach may result in implicit meanings in the source text to be diminished into an ordinary or shallow meanings.

In conclusion, functional equivalent versions should take care not to distort the meaning of the source text by omitting central nuances of meaning. Strauss therefore, cautions that “Functional equivalent versions must recognise that if most readers cannot infer the meaning of the text, then the translation has failed.” To underscore this, one should consider Nida’s belief that there are three lexical levels to be considered in translation, namely, terms for which available equivalents are at hand, for example, three terms that may be something different in diverse cultures, such as a book that contains multiple pages bound together with a spine and a rolled-up scroll in a temple; and terms identifying a unique cultural meaning, for example, כְּרֻבִּים (cherubim) in the Hebrew Bible. In this case, no “foreign associations” can be avoided by translators. One cannot remove names such as Pharisees from the Bible as these expressions are profoundly entrenched in the psyche of the message.

2.3.3 Translation as “falsification”

The intentional meaning of the source text can easily be falsified if the translator does not take special care to reproduce all the essential elements of meaning in the target text. Independent of the underlying theory of translation, any translation should have fidelity. For example, in an apparent criticism of some earlier Bible translations Ajunwa emphasises the fidelity of translation saying that, “… on no account and for no reason, whatsoever, should the translator deliberately modify, alter, falsify, or attempt to improve upon the message of the original text.” In the light of Ajunwa’s remark, one can rightly ask to what extent earlier and more recent Bible translations have adhered to this maxim. Alternatively, can one agree with Van Dyk that theologians (and with them translators) have often with “… a blend

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of deliberate deceitfulness, vagueness, self-delusion, wishful thinking and ignorance succeeded in keeping the ordinary Bible reader in the dark."^{69}

Ajunwa asserts that certain texts such as pharmaceutical and medical, legal and religious texts, demand greater levels of fidelity than literary texts require. He concludes “… a wrong translation of such a text can result in disastrous consequences."^{70} Mistranslation or falsification of a pharmaceutical or medical text, for example, mandates absolute accuracy as any, even a slight, deviation may lead to the loss of life. Biblical mistranslations and falsifications are never strictly seen as a life or death proposal, but translators with a strong religious bias may indeed judge their translations as a matter of life after death for its readers. Biblical translators, therefore, have the propensity to believe that an “incorrect” translation could be calamitous for its readers and may, therefore, decide to deliberately falsify texts, because they sincerely believe that a direct translation may cause people to misunderstand the clear message of salvation in which they themselves believe. In fact, they can falsify translated texts either consciously or unconsciously. Both are erroneous and may cause a great deal of harm. Unconscious falsification, the misreading of a text in translation with best objective intentions for the translation, can be the result of poor skills, inadequate knowledge of the source text and its cultural milieu. Whatever the reason may be, and there certainly are more reasons for unconscious falsification, it still remains a falsification and should be avoided at any cost. Conscious falsification occurs when the translator deliberately endeavours to “improve” a text. This misstep is frequently driven by a subjective notion of pastoral deliverance.

2.3.4 Translatorial gatekeeping

The concept of “translatorial gatekeeping” is not an existing expression, but a new term conceived by the author, in an attempt to define the tendency of gatekeeping

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in biblical translations. It may probably initially be confused with being equivalent to falsification, but there is a distinct difference between translatorial gatekeeping and falsification.

Gatekeeping is a sagacious process of deliberately ignoring any undesirable and contentious information to influence the receiver/s of the message in a predetermined way. Falsification consists of a deliberate removal and/or altering of the source text, to strengthen the message of the original text to be congruent to the translator’s personal core beliefs.

The initial reference to gatekeeping was by Lewin.71, 72 The term “gatekeeping” is well attested and used especially in the advertising industry and occurs when a feature of a product or service may seem to be a hindrance in convincing people to buy the product/service, that specific feature or element is then merely “silenced.” Another tactic is to portray the negative feature in such a way that it becomes acceptable and if the copywriter is excellent, that feature may even become adorable.

Biblical authors have on occasions been guilty of gatekeeping, whilst Bible translators have been guilty of either perpetuating gatekeeping, although they should have been informed enough to recognise the gatekeeping, or being guilty of translatorial gatekeeping. The translator is responsible for translatorial gatekeeping in texts where the source text does not gatekeep, but where the translator may feel “compelled” to change the implicit content of the source text in order to protect the target text reader from potential bewilderment, resulting in the asking of probing questions of which the answers may lead to the reader’s loss of faith.

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72 Kurt Lewin, a German psychologist first mentioned gatekeeping in his article “Frontiers in Group Dynamics,” in 1947.
How was gatekeeping applied in the Old Testament? In two manners. Firstly, by the biblical author, and secondly, by perpetuation through translators.

Gen 1-2:4a provides a good example of this phenomenon. It was written by the priestly writer to try and uplift the people of Israel in Babylonian captivity for the reason of explaining how greater their god Yahweh was when compared to the exulted god Marduk of the Babylonian Empire. He started off in Genesis 1:1 by narrating that the earth was void and empty and that the spirit of God hovered over the waters. A judicious assumption would be that all these matters had been present before God’s creation started. The priestly writer then continued with a beautiful story about creation in which Elohim is portrayed as the God above all gods. He takes the reader/listener through God’s creation, day by day, and repeatedly states that God looked at the relevant completion of creation, and deemed that it was good. Then, in Gen 1:21, the reader/listener is informed about the creation of the great sea monsters. This could not have come as a surprise, as the people of Canaan and Babylon were well-informed about the chaos dragon, or the sea dragon, or the sea-monster. Therefore, if the priestly writer were to give a complete rendition of creation, he would have no choice but to include these sea-monsters in the creation texts of Genesis 1. In a possible act of gatekeeping the priestly writer informs the reader/listener that Elohim was the creator of these monsters. One may approach the gatekeeping in two ways. If the creation of the تَنَّينُم are compared to the Enuma Elish where the monsters were specifically created by Tiamat to assist in her battle against Marduk, it is not gatekeeping and just a continuation of an ANE myth. However, the tannimim created in Gen 1:21 are later portrayed as enemies of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible that was not created by him. This then clearly points to an act of gatekeeping by the priestly writer. The “prickly” issue of the possible reality that the sea-monster was not created by Elohim, but pre-existed in the primeval waters where over the spirit of God hovered before creation, is an example of how gatekeeping can portray a negative feature
in such a way that it even becomes attractive. Here the “truth” of Elohim’s superior greatness as a creator God was underscored by means of gatekeeping.

How did the Bible translators then perpetuate the gatekeeping of the source text? Many texts have followed the original by translating the tanninim as sea-monsters, but one notices that some attempted to gatekeep even more. These are “the large sea creatures” (GWN), and an even further altered “great whales” (KJV; LXA).

Finally, an example of translatorial gatekeeping, where the source text was free of gatekeeping by its author, is Job 3:8 reading “Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.” (ESV). The author called Leviathan by name. However, by means of translatorial gatekeeping Leviathan is displaced by translating it as “the great whale” (LXA) being no more than a natural animal. Leviathan as a specific element and mythical creature has been “silenced” and replaced by a more innocent and harmless natural animal, devoid of any intrinsic danger. The KJV translator of the same text is also guilty of translatorial gatekeeping with the translation of “their mourning,” a synonym of bereavement, sorrow, lamentation or grief. Again, Leviathan has been “silenced” in an astute and deliberate ignorance of Leviathan as being undesirable and too contentious. The translator subsequently changed information to influence the receiver/s of the message in a predetermined way.

Translatorial gatekeeping is not what Gadamer meant by “… a special effort to acquire a historical horizon.”73 The translator indeed applied a special effort, but the translated text has now become devoid of an historical horizon, resulting in a failure to fuse the horizon of the source text and the modern reader.

73 Gadamer, Truth and Method, 301.
2.4 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO TRANSLATIONAL OBSTACLES

The following shortcomings regarding translation discussed above can briefly be summarised as:

a) Formal equivalence translations may not be easy reading, as they may be experienced as “stiff” and archaic translations to the general reader, leading to failure to understand the meaning of the text.

b) Functional translations may lead to excessive translation or unwarranted explicitation by adding “relevant” information that may lead the receptor to come to an incorrect exegetical understanding.

c) Falsification is where the intentional meaning of the source text has been falsified especially if the translator does not take special care to reproduce all the essential elements of meaning in the target text.

d) Translatorial gatekeeping is a deliberate attempt to ignore or silence any undesirable and contentious information or to portray a negative feature in such a way that it becomes acceptable by the receiver/s of the message.

To some extent, these shortcomings can be solved by the following translation theories:

2.4.1 Skopos theory

The skopos approach, formulated by Reiss and Vermeer\(^\text{74}\), may be seen as a broadening of functionalism by the addition of the emphasis on the skopos or cultural milieu of the target text audience and in this regard, it is compatible with Gadamer’s emphasis on the horizon of the text. The skopos approach to translation considers factors beyond the bounds of language, primarily the culture of the target text reader. Kussmaul\(^\text{75}\) speaks of *Informationsangebot* (information offered), signifying that the source text should not be acknowledged as a “holy original”, but that the purpose of the translated text must be focussed on the needs and


expectations of the target text readers. The potential pitfall here is that when the skopos is not clearly identified, the translation may be based on the translator’s creative instinct or hunch leading to potential misinterpretation by the reader.

Target audiences are numerous and differ vastly, therefore necessitating translations to be widespread and numerous as well. This may be one of the reasons why the past few decades produced many new Bible translations in the English language. In order to afford each cultural grouping a “localised” translation, and because of the uniqueness of the various texts, publishers benefit most from the resulting sales. This may also pose a dilemma for the target text reader in the selection process, on which version to acquire.

Another problem of the resultant multiple Bible translations attempting to meet the skopos of various target text audiences, is that they add to a greater diversity to the translated text, causing further confusion (and sometimes consternation) in distinguishing which of these translations are the closest to the original “word of God.” On the other hand, the possible solution of one standardised text to satisfy the needs of all the diverse cultures is not the answer to this dilemma, as a “…specific purpose is best achieved by a text specifically designed for this occasion.”

Kelletat and Koller, cited by Chesterman, are concerned that skopos is prone to be a too expansive translation, allowing extremely free translations because of its relegation of the source text.

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Another concern had been voiced by Flynn, as cited by Chesterman is that the skopos theory allows for the “dominance of the translator’s own expertise”. Furthermore, as the translator does not always have the final say, this could lead to friction between the translator and publishers.

In terms of both formal and functional translation theories, it is imperative for the translator not to yield to the notion that the Bible is a scientific document and subsequently to deem it to be close to perfect, therefore aiming to present its translated content without any special cognisance of the cultural identities of the target text. In this respect, the skopos theory may be beneficial. However, the potential problem of the skopos theory is that the source text may be minimised as the purpose of the translated text are predominantly fixated on the needs and expectations of the target text readers. This relegation of the source text contraindicates Gadamer’s aim of fusing the horizons as the dominance of the translator’s own expertise, may prevent the horizon of the source text and that of the reader to be fused.

2.4.2 Principle of necessary precision

The principle of necessary precision was proposed by Hönig and Kussmaul, influenced by skopos. It becomes essential when confronted with recognised and established terms in the source culture with absolute no equivalent word in the target culture. The only option then is to paraphrase and/or explain the meaning of the term. Pym concisely describes the principle of necessary precision as that “… the appropriate amount of information is determined by the function of the translation.” The problem escalates when confronted with the various questions around this issue – how much additional information should the translator provide

81 Chesterman, ‘Skopos Theory: A Retrospective Assessment.’, n.p.
to elucidate the word or text? This additional information poses a further problem. How should it be conveyed – by means of a footnote or an explanatory sentence placed in brackets? Conveying this additional information is essential; the execution is secondary. The principle of necessary precision clearly helps to fuse the horizons of understanding as it requires that the amount of information must be established by the specific required purpose of the translation.

2.4.3 The concept of ‘translatorial action’

Holz-Mänttäri, a Finnish translation scholar, is responsible for the concept of “translatorial action”, simply meaning that an expert cross-cultural communicator should be responsible for the translation where the transmission of a message from one culture to another is required. By implementing expertise in cross-cultural communication, the translation could certainly be improved. However, according to Chesterman, Vermeer considers translatorial action as just a variant of the skopos theory.

2.4.4 Relevance theory

The relevance theory, sharing the focus on the receptor text, has a definitive and specific scope, contrasted by the skopos theory’s wider focus. Relevance aims to be descriptive (not prescriptive) as well as explanatory and to diminish free translation, in contrast with skopos which has the propensity to lead to free translation.

2.4.5 Foreignisation

Foreignising is also known as resistant or minoritising translation. Although Venuti is known to be the originator of the foreignisation theory, he credits Schleiermacher

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86 Hans J. Vermeer, A Skopos Theory of Translation: (Some Arguments for and against), Textcontext Reihe Wissenschaft 1 (Heidelberg: Textcontext-Verl, 1996).
87 Chesterman, ‘Skopos Theory: A Retrospective Assessment.’, n.p.
with initiating this concept. According to Venuti, the reader must be made aware of the foreignness of the source text. Berman concurs that “…the properly ethical aim of the translating act is (my italics) receiving the Foreign as Foreign.”

A foreignising translation intentionally strives for a translation where the target text preserves the foreign connotational heritage of the source text. It is a means of exposing the unique tenets of the source text to the target text readers. When foreignising a text, the translator wilfully chooses to illuminate the distinctiveness of the source text. In this instance, the unfamiliar origins of the source text are retained in full.

This brings one to the question whether foreignisation benefits the reader of the target text? Encountering a foreign word or sequence in the target text, the reader is generally intrigued as the world of the source text is brought to his attention. Foreignisation tends to highlight the foreign milieu of the source text. The serious target text reader should be inquisitive about the real meaning, enticing the reader to do some further research on the relevant foreignisation, thereby deepening the experience of the target text.

Strauss cautions that translators should always be mindful of the foreignness of the Bible, and must aim to denote the rich diversity of the different genres in their special and historical milieus constantly. However, this does not refer to foreignisation, but supports Strauss’s argument citing the Cotton Patch Version, where Bethlehem is transformed into Gainesville, Georgia and the Pharisees and Sadducees into Protestants and Catholics, and concludes that this is inappropriate.

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The idea of foreignisation can be linked to Gadamer’s hermeneutics where the exegete explicitly analyses both the horizon of the text and the horizon of the reader to expose the foreign nature of the text.

2.4.6 Fidelity

Fidelity refers to how the translator maintains the ethical correlation between the source text and the translated text. As stated succinctly:

Fidelity...means the extent to which a translator accurately renders a source language text into a target language text, without distorting, violating or betraying the message as well as the style of the source language text. It could also be viewed as the level or degree of thematic and stylistic conformity of the translation to or its compliance with the original text. Therefore, every translator is primarily faced with fidelity challenges during any translation operation.91

This is congruent with Gadamer’s view that both horizons should be honoured and that a fusion of these horizons results in the best insights.

Ajunwa92 lists several indicators of fidelity in translation, of which the following should be noted. Firstly, factual accuracy entails the authenticity of the intrinsic meaning of the source text to be transposed into the target text. Secondly, harmony - the harmony of the source text should be obtained at all time and should never contradict or alter the message, especially if the translator is of the belief that the message of the original text could be improved by the translation. Lastly, tonality – that normally reflects on the tone of the spoken word, transmitting non-verbal expressions of feelings, thoughts and attitudes. Although a word on its own also expresses tonality and when it is translated, it should communicate the same tonality of the source word, be it fear or joy or another emotion.

Fidelity in translation requires factual accuracy and the maintenance of the intrinsic meaning, harmony and tonality of the source text. Therefore, it is compatible with

92 Ibid.
Gadamer’s focus on the horizon of the source text milieu and the specific reader’s horizon, with its resilient aim for a fusion of these two horizons.

Importantly, fidelity in translation should not be confused with loyalty.

2.4.7 Loyalty

According to Chesterman, Nord introduced the concept of ‘loyalty’ to counter arguments that the skopos theory is solely target oriented and that it demotes the value of the source text. Therefore, loyalty can be defined as being loyal to both the source and its author, as well as the target text audience. This idea probably also originated with Gadamer as loyalty links the translator bilaterally to the source and target horizons.

In biblical translations, though, loyalty could also mean that translators are loyal to their own personal belief in the Bible, as well as to the publisher who has appointed the translator. However, a publisher does not only appoint a translator solely for his/her technical skills, but also because of the translator’s theological outlook that matches that of the publisher, to create a target audience-oriented translation. In this understanding of loyalty, it clearly poses a problem as it disaffirms the value of the source text to promote the preconceived aims of the Bible publisher.

2.4.8 Other insights into translational obstacles

In order to gain a greater understanding of the source texts, the following questions will be asked: Who is the author and when and in what milieu was it written? What was the author’s intention with this text? Who was the target audience at that time, and what did the message convey to them? How did the relevant texts evolve up till today? Keeping this in mind, I am continuously reminded by the words of Schlier

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93 Chesterman, ‘Skopos Theory: A Retrospective Assessment.’, n.p.
cited by Ratzinger95 with regard to exegesis, “Do not squander your time on trivialities.”

It may seem trivial, but this study cannot even think of recreating the past. All it can achieve is to attempt to comprehend the significance event, set within its culture, its motifs and motives, as well as actions, and accordingly, it can set out to illuminate the past by creating a holistic picture that is congruent with the greater milieu. Again, here one is reminded of a saying by Thomas Aquinas: “The duty of every good interpreter is to contemplate not the words, but the sense of the words.” as quoted by Wiercinski.96

When contemporary people speak about the sea, it is not a singular body of salt water, but different bodies of salt waters, called oceans, some with warmer water than others. When the people of the ANE spoke about sea, it also had many meanings, with only some referring to bodies of salt water, but mostly as one, gigantic mass of primaeval chaos, just waiting to erupt and to disrupt the ordered world.

Finally, for ancient people, the horizon was an end. Accordingly, when you reach it, you will fall from it into an abyss. For postmodern people, on the other hand, the horizon will always move away from you, revealing changing scenes and you will never reach the horizon. Our horizons do not only differ physically, they also differ psychologically. Therefore, it is important not to allow our own horizon of understanding to tell us what we should find in the text, but to allow the full historical milieu and ambience of the text to guide us to understand what we find.

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2.5 TYPE OF DATA USED

This study made use of primary as well as secondary data. As primary data, apart from the Masoretic text is scarce, some archaeological data including artefacts, iconography, incantations and inscriptions form part of this research. As this research aims to delve back in history two notes of caution must be heeded.

Firstly, it is important to note that everything from ancient Israel’s heritage cannot be accepted as historically exact, as it is not “… at the outset a historical construct, but an ideological one.”97

Finally, as one sometimes must compare data from two different stages in history, they are seldom exact parallels, and any conclusion should be treated with caution.

2.6 LIMITATIONS TO THIS STUDY

Although the intention of this study is to conduct an exegesis, one must take cognisance of the instinctive propensity of eisegesis by the researcher. A consistent awareness hereof when “reading” the history of a text will help to eliminate such eisegetical behaviour.

Another limitation is that answers posed to questions such as: What role did biblical texts play in the communities that produced these texts? Furthermore, how did these communities understand themselves and the world in which they lived? I agree with Pfoh98 that the answers to the questions posed can never be absolutely conclusive.

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98 Emanuel Pfoh, The Emergence of Israel in Ancient Palestine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives, Copenhagen International Seminar (London: Equinox, 2009), 55.
2.7 DELIMITATIONS

The foundation of this study is the Hebrew Bible and the main focus will be on this text. References to texts like the Septuagint and Vulgate, as well as Rabbinical writings, may only be used to elucidate the biblical text.

References to the ANE normally excludes Greece, but this study includes Greece as part of the ANE. The possible similarities and cross-cultural influences between the ANE and Greece have been debated endlessly, with the divide possibly focussing on the ANE as an antiquated region in contrast with Greece that was regarded as modern. The modernity tag for Greece may be based on the distinct view of Greece as part of the Western Civilisation whereas the ANE are seen as part of antiquity. Nevertheless, it is important to note in this study that the myths and religions of the ANE and Greece certainly show strong similarities. Their gods and deities, even monsters and demons, seem to have similar functions. In addition, it is known that there was close interaction between the ANE and Greece as indicated and admitted by Herodotus: “In fact, the names of nearly all the gods came to Hellas from Egypt. For I am convinced by inquiry that they have come from foreign parts, and I believe that they came chiefly from Egypt.”\textsuperscript{99} Whether the influences emanated from the East to the West, or from the West to the East, is not the question. As this study, will investigate possible trends and similarities between the ANE and Greece, these two regions would both form part of all references to the ANE.

Bible quotations will be from the KJV as well as the NRSV, with consistent use of classical commentaries as well. The KJV has been “anchored” virtually in Bible history for more than 400 years and as such, it contains many old-fashioned translations. The word-for-word translation method is followed as it shows necessary reverence for the source text (with certain exceptions that will be pointed

out during this study). The NRSV is a relatively new translation.¹⁰⁰ As an update of the RSV, it has consulted later discoveries of manuscripts such as the Qumran texts and has gained wide acclaim and usage by biblical scholars and has also been widely accepted ecumenically.


Although the research will encounter certain philological questions, such as the possible development of \textit{ltm} in Ugarit into \textit{leviathan} (using Hebrew transliteration), it will only indicate an interest and will not be explored in depth.

2.8 CONCLUSION

What then constitutes a good Bible translation? It is achieved by simply taking heed of Gadamer’s reverence for both the source text and its milieu as well as the horizon of the reader. Accordingly, two issues are vital. Firstly, Nida’s functional equivalence theory aims for conveying the “intentional meaning.” Post-modern scholars have a considerable problem with this term. According to them, readers cannot access the original author’s intention. I do not agree with them! I agree with Popper and Fuzzy logic that it is not possible to reconstruct the original intention of the author. However, if this cannot be achieved at least to some extent, no communication would be possible.¹⁰¹ Secondly, to provide an acceptable reconstruction of the cultural and historical milieu of the source text and transposing it in an understandable manner to a target text audience without compromising the intrinsic content and meaning of the source text in any way.

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¹⁰¹ Van Dyk, ‘A Fuzzy Interpretation of the Bible: Going beyond Modernism and Postmodernism’. 
It is important to note that translation of “holy” scriptures poses a more precarious issue. The translator may indeed aim for equivalence (and succeeds in this quest), but is still mired by the perception that Bible texts are more “authoritative” than secular texts and may eventually succumb to the notion that the more “stiff-necked” the translated text is, the more it reflects its “holy” decorum.

Regardless of which translation technique is chosen, a translation that may be accepted as a successful translation, should match the understanding of the reader of the source text with the understanding of the reader of the translated text near perfectly. Therefore, the words of Nord\textsuperscript{102} “…the end justify the means” could be applicable here. Should the meaning be a near to a perfect translation of that of the source text, anything is acceptable. The possible problem resulting from this train of thought is that to match a translation with the clear understanding by a reader; a specific target audience must be predetermined. This is the basic and easy part, as one may be translating for a specific target audience, but no one can predetermine any eventual reader/s, whose level of understanding may lie far outside the scope of translation.

As biblical studies encounter a strong tradition that exists within a historical consciousness, it would obviously involve tension between the text and the present.\textsuperscript{103} Therefore, this study will attempt to explore the horizon of the ancient text (that is, its mythological cosmology), as well as the horizon of the modern reader in an opened an unbiased way by not interpreting the monsters in terms of modern beliefs as imaginary creatures, but in full awareness and the cosmologies related to them.

The next chapter discusses demons, monsters and dragons, as experienced in the cultures surrounding Israel.

\textsuperscript{103} Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 305.
CHAPTER 3 - PRIMEVAL SEA IN THE ANE AND ים ים IN THE OT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The cosmos before creation was an amorphous void. Dark primeval waters pre-existed creation. Accordingly, the cultures of the ANE viewed the mass of primeval waters as the personification of chaos. Chaos is further incarnated as a sea-monster of colossal size, mostly encircling the earth. Chaos, or the primeval sea-monster as its personification, was of divine origin and endeavoured to rule over the universe. In the Hebrew Bible, “… biblical authors are at a loss to define the initial chaos.” Gen 1:2 calls it the primeval waters ים תְה֑וֹם. In the absence of a more explicit insight by the priestly author, the informed deduction is that Elohim created from “… unexplained primordial chaos”, thought to have existed before creation began.

Westermann translates Gen 1:2 in this way: “The earth was still a desert waste, and darkness lay upon the primeval deep and God’s wind was moving to and fro over the waters.” Use of the word “still” indicates that prior to creation there was “a desert waste,” the “primeval deep” was covered with “darkness” and “God’s wind” was swirling over the waters. The significance is that the existing pre-creation material, such as infinite primeval waters, darkness and other undisclosed substances over which God hovers in Genesis 1, represent chaos and is derived from Egyptian as well as Mesopotamian heritage.

This chapter appraises the primeval sea in the ANE, with specific attention to the cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Ugarit. Thereafter, the idiosyncratic nexus between the primeval sea and sea-monsters in the ANE is assessed, especially considering that the primeval waters carry the designation “father of the

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104 Sjoerd Lieuwe Bonting, Creation and Double Chaos: Science and Theology in Discussion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 95.
105 Ibid.
106 Claus Westermann, Genesis 1-11: A Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 76.
gods.” The primeval sea, יָם, as presented in the Hebrew Bible, forms the subsequent discussion. This includes God’s relation to יָם and its relation with תְהוֹם.

3.2 THE PRIMEVAL SEA/WATERS IN THE ANE ASSOCIATED WITH SEA MONSTERS

Samuel Noah Kramer once declared that history began at Sumer. According to Sumerian myths, the primeval or cosmic waters, Apsu, pre-existed anything else. The main realms of the universe existed of three tiers, namely heaven and earth, as well as the netherworld, situated in the deep recesses of the primeval sea. The primeval sea, therefore, could be related to uroboric world-encircling serpents.

The serpent in the ANE is composite and ambiguous. In one place, it is presented as a personification of chaos and evil, and at the same time, the cosmic serpent adopts the function of being instrumental in creation. An example here is where Atum as the principle deity, refers to the fact that he was encircled in his coils as he created himself and that he, in fact, dwells amongst his coils (Coffin Texts, spell 321). Thus, the serpent is evil on one hand, as well as seamlessly slipping into the function of the creator god. This is further attested by the rudimentary connotation of the creator god to the primeval sea, found in the “Debate between Osiris and the High God” (Book of the Dead, chapter 175), where Atum says: “…in the end I will destroy everything that I have created, the earth will again become part of the Primeval Ocean, like the Abyss of waters in their original state…”

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continuing that “…I will have changed myself back into the Old Serpent who knew no man and saw no god.”112

The following section will demonstrate that the primeval sea was universal in the cultures in the ANE.

3.2.1 Mesopotamia

Although primeval darkness is not encountered in Mesopotamian cosmogony,113 Apsu and Tiamat were the deities of the sweet and salt cosmic waters respectively. Tiamat is also the personification of the primeval waters. She later became a monstrous serpent when battling Marduk, who subsequently became the chief god of the pantheon. It is believed that the name Tiamat was derived from a myth where Labbu (Akkadian word for lion), is depicted as an enormous sea-dragon/lion-serpent born from tamtu, the sea.114 Tiamat is sometimes portrayed as a dragon and a sea-monster, but also as a goat, cow or human female.115 Tiamat starts out as a creator-goddess in the Enuma Elish, but in later texts, she is portrayed as a “composite behemoth” comparable to Egyptian Apophis, as having the horns of a bull and bird’s legs and talons on a scaled reptilian body.116

Tiamat was not only depicted as a sea-monster, but she also created other gruesome sea-monsters in preparation for her battle with Marduk. The Enuma Elish discloses that she created eleven monsters. The creation of the eleven monsters concurs with Sumerian traditions where Ninurta was also opposed by

112 Robert T R Clark, Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), 140.
eleven monsters. In the narrative, Tiamat is the personification of chaos and evil, who became enraged and wanted to destroy everything. The storm god Marduk engaged in a battle with Tiamat and after a ferocious combat, he eventually overcame Tiamat, cutting her body in two, in a creative act, flung the upper half up to form the sky and heavens and trampled on the lower part of her body to form the earth.

Marduk’s “threat” to Erra depicts the general view that should the conquering deity ever step down from his thrown (for any reason imaginable), chaos would return.

When Marduk heard this,
He made his voice heard and spoke to warrior Erra,
“I shall rise up from my dwelling, and the control of heaven and earth will be undone.
The waters will rise and go over the land.
Bright day will turn into darkness.
A storm will rise up and cover the stars of heaven.
An evil wind will blow, and the vision of people and living things will [be obscured (?)]."

The same threat is echoed in the epic of Atrahasis, where Anzu as “The divine annihilating weapon… tearing the sky with his talons…” resulting in the Flood “…bellowing like a bull…” bringing back chaos “…darkness was dense, there was no sun.” (Atrahasis III, iii, 7ff).

3.2.2 Egypt

In Egyptian myths, before the beginning of time, the primeval waters were endless, formless and inestimable. These waters were known as Nun that was feared eternally in that the destructive waters could mean the end/destruction of the universe and that everything could be returned to the “ever-latent primordial
state” of Nun. Nun, harboured the principle/creator deity below the surface from where he emerged, either as the complete god or a primeval mound where the god could climb onto, to order the created world. Interestingly, Nun was mostly depicted as a serpent. This depiction as a serpent is like that of Apophis, and although nowhere clearly attested, there may be a link between the two. After the creation in Egypt, when the boundaries of the created world became stable, Nun was still encircling the outer limits of the cosmos, posing the intrinsic threat that the world could ultimately be destroyed and returned to its original chaotic state.

The Egyptian’s mythology did not provide us with a complete and continuous creation story. Current knowledge had to be reconstructed from incomplete fragments of diverse cosmogonies, each with many diversions and depicting different creator gods. The theologies alluded to below do not represent the complete Egyptian notion of creation, but they are the most widely accepted versions of the Egyptian mythical heritage.

The most orthodox is mostly based on the Pyramid Texts that originated in Heliopolis about 2350 BCE. The nine gods of Heliopolis are known as the Ennead. It is important to note that it also starts, as with all the Egyptian creation stories, from Nun, the primeval waters. In Memphis, it appears that the Nubian pharaoh Shabaqo (716-701 BCE), deliberately directed its theology against the theology of that of Heliopolis, by adjustments and reinterpretations where Ptah, is the creator-god.

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121 Ibid., 82.
In the city of Hermopolis (Khemenu) the emphasis was placed on, “… a great abyss of nothingness out of which creation came.” Here, primordial chaos consisted of four pairs of gods known as the Ogdoad. The fourth region was Thebes, where it was Amun, the principal god, who created the world. The Thebans took the Heliopolis as well as the Memphite cosmogonies to a further conclusion, in that Amun was a transcendent god who stands outside of creation in sovereign existence, as he begot creation when nothing existed. Out of Amun was created the gods of Heliopolis as well as the gods from Hermopolis. Although the four religious centres discussed above form the core of Egyptian cosmology, the Elephantine island deserves to be mentioned. Here Khnum was the god being worshipped and he was acknowledged to be the creator of human beings out of clay from his potter’s wheel and for giving life to them by breathing into their nostrils, as well as being the guard of the source of the Nile.

Considering the lack of a uniform religious outlook, an important insight is that Nun is designated the “eldest one” and “the father of the gods” from which Atum was spawned. Intriguingly, Atum is not rated as younger or a subordinate god to Nun, but equal and of the same core. This identifies Nun as a principle deity. It is clear from the Coffin Texts, that the Pharaoh clearly identifies himself with Nun, by stating that “I am the Waters, unique, without second,” followed paradoxically a few lines later with the assertion that he had been “born” from the Nun. “I am the one who began therein, (in) the Waters.” Nun, the primeval waters, Atum the principle/creator god who rose from the waters, and the serpent Nehebkau (also known as Kematef and Iru-to) with its multiple coils, are all one and the same entity.

Iru-to is a cosmic serpent who has risen from Nun. Kematef originates from the Theban tradition and can be equated with the ouroboros, a serpent that created the world from Nun. Amun sometimes accepted the persona of the serpent Kematef/Nehebkau/Iru-to. They were not created, but like Atum, they emerged from the Nun. They claim that they are the author of the book of the Divine with the sole authority of what is and what will be.\footnote{Pyramid Texts paragraph 1146.}

Nun, therefore, entailed the waters of chaos and also assumed the role of the god of the waters of the netherworld.\footnote{H. and H.A. Frankfort et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East., Sixth impression, Oriental Institute (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 22.} The equation stretches even further to a sea monster in view of the Egyptian Instruction of Merikare (dated ± 2000 BCE) describing the god Re as, “He made sky and earth for their sake, He subdued the water monster…”\footnote{Hendrik Bosman, ‘Humankind as Being Created in the “image of God” in the Old Testament: Possible Implications for the Theological Debate on Human Dignity.’, Scriptura 105 (2010): 562.}

The same threat, similar to that of Marduk in the Enuma Elish who threatens the return of chaos when he seizes to reign, is also exhibited in the 175\textsuperscript{th} Chapter of the Book of the Dead – “…I shall destroy all that I have made, and this land shall return into Nun, into the floodwaters, as (in) its first state.”\footnote{James B Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 9.}

3.2.3 Greek mythology

In Hesiod’s Theogony, chaos was first in existence, the entire universe was a place of darkness and silence and only then earth came into being, “First of all, the Void (Chaos) came into being, next broad-bosomed Earth, the solid and eternal home of all, ...Out of Void came Darkness and black Night, and out of Night came Light and Day….”\footnote{Hesiod, Hesiod’s Theogony, trans. Norman O Brown (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1953), 116ff.}
In Greek mythology, Okeanos, the primeval ocean is, like that of Egypt and other ANE cosmologies, not only the source from which all the gods came into the world, but also of everything that has been created.\textsuperscript{134} These renditions also comprise a variance, as it seems that the primeval waters originated from the river god Acheloios, from where Okeanos later expanded from the idea of only a river to represent the primeval waters.\textsuperscript{135}

### 3.2.4 Ugarit

Although no known Canaanite cosmogony exists, the Ugaritic cosmic waters are represented by Yamm. Yamm is not only the deity of the sea but also of the rivers, as the salutations of Prince Nahar, Judge River attest to (KTU 1:265).\textsuperscript{136} Yamm has the unique eminence that he is not only the personification of the primeval waters but also has a special relationship with the head of the pantheon, Ilu (El). Ilu, in a discussion with Athirat regarding Yamm, says, (KTU 1.1.IV, 19-20).

\begin{quote}
I have proclaimed [your name].
[Yammu is your name],
your name is Beloved of I[lu, Yammu].\textsuperscript{137}
\end{quote}

The fact that Yamm is a principle deity within the pantheon, is supported by Anat when she boasts about her victory over Yamm, who is the personification of the primeval sea in Ugaritic folklore, but is also accredited as being a destructive chaos monster, (KTU 1.3 III, 38-40):

\begin{quote}
I indeed smote the Beloved of El, Yamm
I indeed destroyed River, the Great God…
I smote the Serpent, the Twisty One…\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

In another text, Baal is involved in a battle with the monster, Litan. The last two lines of this description are identical to those of the fight with Yamm as cited above. It, therefore, seems salient then to assume that Yamm and Litan were, in fact, the

\textsuperscript{136} Smith, The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU 1.1 - 1.2.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
same sea-monster, and with different names, or that the sea monster Litan was one of the physical manifestations of Yamm (CAT 1.5 I 1-3).

When you struck down Litan, the fleeing snake,
Annihilated the twisting snake,
The powerful one with seven heads...

Yamm then, as the sea-monster, was an adversary of Baal, the Ugaritic storm-god, but Baal eventually gains victory over Yamm.\textsuperscript{139} The reality is that the enemies of Baal are deities depicted as dragons, like Tannanu (Tannin in the Hebrew Bible) and Litan (Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible).\textsuperscript{140} Thus Yamm, the sea in the Ugaritic Baal cycle, was not only personified with chaos, but also with Lotan (known as Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible).

Finally, the Ugaritic text also clearly equates יָם with תַּנִִ֖ין (sea-monster/dragon, cf. Isa 51:9) in the following lines.\textsuperscript{141}

Did I not muzzle the Tnn…?
Indeed, you shattered the writhing [חיל] serpent,
The ruler with the seven heads.\textsuperscript{142}

3.2.5 Concluding remarks on the primeval waters in the ANE

The primordial waters in ANE myths are all primordial deities as well. The sea, or primeval waters, had been the embodiment of chaos, and it had to be defeated in combat by the storm-god who subsequently became the ruling deity of and over creation. The established world therefore basically hinges on two feats. The first is that in ancient times, the storm-god defeats the gruesome primeval chaos monster

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{139} CTA 2 (iv 25–27)
\textsuperscript{140} Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, \textit{The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3-1.4.}, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 255.
\textsuperscript{141} Patricia K. Tull, \textit{Isaiah 1-39}, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), 400.
\textsuperscript{142} This correlates with descriptions of Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible, and will be comprehensively discussed in later chapters.
\end{footnotesize}
and proscribes it to the depths of the watery abyss, thereby creating order in the universe.

The chaos monster performs an ambivalent role - it threatens order, but at the same time, the ordered world was constructed wholly from the remnants of chaos. The separation of Tiamat’s body and using the top part to form the heavens and the bottom part to form the earth, leads to the conclusion that “Chaos is the raw material of creation.”

Although the primeval waters have been defeated, it does not mean that it has been killed off permanently. Death of the primeval monster is not dead as post-Enlightenment people understand it. It is rather a “… banishment from the ordered world,” thrown back into the primeval waters surrounding the earth, ever waiting to re-invade the “god-established order and to undo the whole work of creation.”

Thus, the post-victory of the primeval sea-monster requires eternal diligence – the permanent endeavour to preserve the chaos monster in this overpowered state, thereby, thwarting any possibility of a revival and reappearance to threaten the ordered world.

The deity who has conquered the primeval monster, therefore seems entrenched in his post-victory command of the ordered world. By governing the universe, chaos is controlled, when the waters above the firmament and the deep below the sea have been bound. The Tigris and Euphrates are both deified in the ANE, but no divine status is ascribed to them in the Hebrew Bible. However, both these rivers are acknowledged as branches of the primeval flood in the Scriptures.

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146 Van Der Toorn, Becking, and Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD*, 314–16.
3.3 THE PRIMEVAL SEA/WATERS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The general cosmology of the ANE is ostensibly represented in the Hebrew Bible. Considering the creation narrative of Gen 1:2: “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.” (CSB), one may accept that the primeval waters pre-existed Elohim’s creative acts. After the completion of creation, it correlated with the general three-tier cosmological view of the ANE. The primeval sea encircles the universe, with ים being the primeval waters under the earth. It is significant to note that “… elke kosmische laag wordt gedefinieerd in relatie tot water” (each cosmic layer is delineated in its relation to water).147 Elohim thus created from “unexplained primordial chaos… thought to have existed before creation began.”148

The sea though, for the modern reader of Genesis 1, and subsequently of the rest of the Hebrew Bible, signifies a wavy mass of salty water where people fare over by boat to visit other countries, a place to catch fish or to have long walks along its shores. The sea in the Hebrew Bible was something totally different. An incisive reading reveals that it was not just a silent mass of salty waters – they were the primeval waters harbouring the deep. With a personality of its own, it had the propensity to be violent and frightful. This can be attested by reading Hab 3:10 “… the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.” Here ים had arms and hands and a voice.

By implication it could move, like a real creature, therefore it necessitated Yahweh to set bounds for the sea, “… that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.” (Ps 104:9 NRS). Further affirmation regarding Yahweh having been forced to set bounds for ים is: “… who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?” (Job 38:8 NRS); “… I determined its boundaries and put its

147 Ellen Van Wolde, Terug naar het begin (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2009), 17.
148 Bonting, Creation and Double Chaos, 95.
bars and doors in place…” (Job 38:10 CSB); “… when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth…” (Prov 8:29 NRS); “I, the LORD, define the ocean’s sandy shoreline as an everlasting boundary that the waters cannot cross. The waves may toss and roar, but they can never pass the boundaries I set.” (Jer 5:22 NLT); and, “He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses.” (Ps 33:7 NRS).

From these texts, one can verify that after God created the universe, the primeval waters of chaos have not been eliminated or dried up. God only set boundaries to contain the waters.

But, יָם also had emotions, such as fear, “When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled.” (Ps 77:16 NRS). This insight seems to expose more of an attempt to comfort the people of God, so that they are not overconcerned with Yam’s returning chaos.

Although Gen 1:2 is interpreted as being devoid of conflict, God still seems to allude to conflict with chaos, especially if one considers the possible link of the Hebrew word תְהוֹם (deep) with Tiamat in the Enuma Elish.\textsuperscript{149} It does not explicitly mention any battle but the undertones of Gen 1:2 strongly suggests one. Genesis 1 also differs from the Enuma Elish in that the תְהוֹם is not animated as a monster or a sea-dragon. Yet, later the Hebrew Bible does incarnate the תְהוֹם as an animated monster, “the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high” (Hab 3:10).

\textsuperscript{149} Nicholas Wyatt, Word of Tree and Whisper of Stone: And Other Papers on Ugaritic Thought, 1st Gorgias Press ed, Gorgias Ugaritic Studies 1 (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2007), 92.
3.3.1 ים (sea)

The word ים appears 396 times in the Hebrew Bible, mostly denoting the ordinary sea. In these cases, the word “sea” evidently refers to a large body of salt water with waves breaking on shores, but it can also refer to a large basin of fresh water and even a river. The primeval waters were either being fed by, or were feeding, primeval streams. The deity of the Nile is closely associated with Nun. Accordingly, the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia are divine rivers. In fact, the “… the watercourse of the gods…” were dug by the Igigi gods (lower gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon). In Ugarit, Yamm is often called the “Prince Sea, Ruler River” and in Greece, the river Orontes is congruent with Okeanos. The only river in Israel which has permanent water is the Jordan, but it has not been bestowed with a deity status. In the Hebrew Bible, the word נָהָר (nahar), mainly refers to rivers, but it is also employed in several noteworthy applications as briefly set out below:

- Streams and creeks (נחל nachal), Num 21:15; 1 Kgs 17:7 and 121 more verses in the OT.
- Nahar נָהָר is the primeval stream of Eden (Gen 2:10) and in subsequent uses in the Hebrew Bible, it includes the sea, the Tigris and Euphrates and even the Nile.
- The word יְאֹר is specifically used as a channel of water, but may even refer to the Nile. Therefore, יְאֹר can be equated to נָהָר as appearing in Exod 7:19.
- As ocean currents in Jonah 2:3.
- Underground streams as in Ps 24:2.
- Isa 43:2 depicts rivers as dangerous places.
- As flowing water, in Ps 34:5; Isa 2:2; 60:5, Jer 31:12; 51:54; Mic 4:1).

151 Kvanvig, *Primeval History*, 236.
A further meaning of יָם is purely directional – indicating west. In rare instances, it may even point south. Before the mythical connotation of יָם is investigated, a brief summary of the presentation of יָם as “sea” is apt.

The sea played a major role in the life-world of the Israelites. Primarily, as a mass of salty water, a source of food, sandy shores and seafaring to distant places. The following is a summary of the different senses of the word:

- יָם as being the great sea.\textsuperscript{153}
- the salt of the sea, or the sea as being salty.\textsuperscript{154}
- food derived from the sea, where mostly fish is mentioned.\textsuperscript{155}
- the shores of the sea, including specific places situated by the sea.\textsuperscript{156}

The ensuing texts speak about specific oceans:

- The Red Sea.\textsuperscript{157}
- The Mediterranean Sea.\textsuperscript{158}
- Galilee.\textsuperscript{159}
- The Dead Sea (described by the word מֶלַח melach).\textsuperscript{160}
- Islands in the sea.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{153} Num 34:6, 7; Josh 1:4, 9:1; 15:46-7, 23:4; Ps 104:25; Eccl 1:7; Isa 11:9; Jer 27:19; Lam 2:13; Ezek 47:8, 10, 15, 48:28; Nah 3:8; Hab 2:14; Am 5:8; Zch 14:8.
\textsuperscript{154} Num 34:3, 5, 12; Deut 3:17; Josh 3:16, 12:3, 15:2, 18:19.
\textsuperscript{155} Gen 1:26, 28, 9:2; Lev 11:9-10; Num 11:22, 31; Deut 33:19; Job 12:8; Ps 8:8; Isa 60:5; Ezek 38:20; Hos 4:3; Hab 1:14; Zeph 1:3, 2:5.
\textsuperscript{158} Exod 23:31; Num 34:11; Deut 11:24, 34:2; Josh 12:3, 13:27, 16:3; Judg 5:17; Ezr 3:7; Jonah 1:11-13, 15.
\textsuperscript{159} Isa 9:1. This is the only reference to waters near Galilee in the Hebrew bible.
\textsuperscript{160} Gen 14:3; Deut 3:17; Josh 12:3.
\textsuperscript{161} Esth 10:1; Isa 11:11, 24:15.
The final clustering of the use of יָם consists of a diverse corpus of orientations:

- Sea, as an icon a brazen sea as a molten item of prominence, created by King Solomon and placed in the Temple of God.\textsuperscript{162}
- A direction (mostly west).\textsuperscript{163} (with one exception, Ps 107:3, depicting south.
- A position within the sea.\textsuperscript{164}
- A direction to the sea.\textsuperscript{165}

In some cases, in the Old Testament the word יָם may have a mythical connotation, signifying the primeval waters that existed before the beginning of creation as set out in Gen 1:1-2:4a, and harbours the תְהוֹם. The mythical presumption of the sea played a noteworthy role in the life-world of the Israelites in the Hebrew Bible. יָם in this locale, is an active and living creature threatening its enemies. It has its own persona. It has a voice and speaks, and it can move all over if God is not vigilant with regard to setting and protecting its boundaries. יָם further has the propensity to overwhelm its enemies (Ps 78:53), has eyes to see and can flee (Ps 114:3, 5) and possesses enormous power (Isa 23:4).

An unanswered question, where is the border between the sea (salt water ocean) and the primeval sea? To the people of the ANE, it was in the underworld, the abyss, תְהוֹם. It was also above, surrounding the קְרָקִיע (firmament) and the earth, likened to the ouroborus. To the post-modern person, the picture is no clearer. Sea is a salt water ocean. The underworld is hell, but not situated below the waters under the earth, rather a very fiery place situated somewhere below heaven.

\textsuperscript{162} 1 Kgs 7:23-24, 39, 44; 2 Kgs 16:17, 25:13, 16; 2 Chr 4:2-4, 6, 10, 15, 18:8; Jer 52:20 (a repetition of 2 Kgs 25:16). The brazen sea was carried away by the Babylonians: Jer 52:17.
\textsuperscript{164} Deut. 30:13, Pss 46:2, 139:9; Prov 23:34, 30:19; Jer 25:22; Ezek 26:5, 17, 18, 27:4, 25-27, 28:2, 8.
\textsuperscript{165} Num 34:4; Josh 16:6; 17:9-10, 18:14, 19:11; Ezek 47:18.
A tortuous connection exists between God and ים. These are briefly indicated as:

- ים being created by God\(^{166}\)
- ים named by God\(^{167}\)
- ים been restricted by God\(^{168}\)
- having been divided or parted by God\(^{169,170}\)
- being under God’s direct control\(^{171}\)
- being God’s major rival\(^{172,173}\)
- and ים praising God\(^{174}\)

ים plays an important role in harbouring תיהום and the sea-dragons. The description by an Ugaritic text indicates that Hebrew ים (sea) has an Ugaritic parallel in Yamm (also sea), “Did you not then crush Ym, the beloved of El?”\(^{175}\) This clearly connects the Hebrew sea and the Ugaritic sea semantically, as discussed under Ugarit above.

In fact, ים is a personification of the primeval sea, associated with the dragon. The following texts refer to this role: Job 28:14; 36:30; 38:16; 41:31; Ps 68:22; 135:6; Isa 27:1; 51:10; Ezek 26:16,\(^{176}\) 32:2; Amos 9:3; Jonah 2:3; Mic 7:19.

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166 Gen 1:22; Exod 20:11; Neh 9:6; Ps 95:5; 146:6; Jonah 1:9.
167 Gen 1:10.
168 Ps 24:2, 33:7.
170 The other texts relating to the Red sea parting is under the heading of the Red Sea.
172 2 Sam 22:16; Pss 77:19, 89:9, 93:4; Nah 1:4; Hab 3:8; Hag 2:6; Zech 10:11.
173 It may be deduced from ‘was thy wrath against the sea?’ (Hab 3: 8) that Yahweh is portrayed as intimidating the sea as a mythical power.
174 Ps 69:34.
175 Tull, Isaiah 1-39, 400.
176 Ezek 26:16 speaks of “the princes of the sea coming down from their thrones”.
3.3.2 tehom (tehom)

The sea also harboured תְהוֹם simply meaning “the deep.” The LXX refers to ἄβυσσος, meaning abyss. Thus, תְהוֹם indicates the deep waters below the primordial waters of creation – a dark, isolated, bottomless and surreptitious place with immense mythical strengths.\(^{177}\) The word tehom appears to be a cognate of the Akkadian word tamtu and Ugaritic thm (a deified watery deep),\(^{178}\) which have similar meanings. The deification of thm in Ugarit, supports the probability of an etymological connotation with Akkadian Tiamat. The word tehom is also related to the common Semitic term tiham, meaning primeval ocean, which refers to all the mass of waters, indeterminate as yet, before the creation of the heavens that divided the waters to that above the firmament and that below the earth.\(^{179}\)

Several texts in the Hebrew Bible present תְהוֹם.\(^{180}\) It becomes clear that ים is the domicile of תְהוֹם and the sea-monsters. ים is actually the personification of the primeval sea, associated with the sea-dragon. The following texts refer to this role:

Job 28:14; 36:30; 38:16; 41:31; Ps 68:22; 135:6; Isa 27:1; 51:10; Ezek 26:16;\(^{181}\) 32:2; Amos 9:3; Jonah 2:3; Mic 7:19. The sea-dragon seemingly has the propensity of the tail wagging the dog, as described in Job 41, where Leviathan’s power is described in terms of commanding the sea together with his ability to make תְהוֹם boil.

The relation between sea-monsters and תְהוֹם remains an interesting subject. Although the sea monsters are always associated with תְהוֹם, they should be clearly


\(^{178}\) Van Der Toorn, Becking, and Horst, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD, 867–69.


\(^{180}\) Gen 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; 49:25; Exod 15:5, 8; Deut 8:7; 33:13; Job 28:14; 38:16, 30; 41:24(32*); Ps 33:7; 36:7(6*); 42:8(7*); 77:17(20*); 78:15; 104:6; 106:9; 107:26; 135:6; 148:7; Prov 3:20; 8:24, 27, 28; Isa 51:10; 63:13; Ezek 26:19; 31:4, 15; Amos 7:4; Jonah 2:6(5*); Hab 3:10.

\(^{181}\) Ezek 26:16 speaks of “the princes of the sea coming down from their thrones”.

distinguished from it.\textsuperscript{182} It does not matter whether יָם (sea) and תְהוֹם (the deep), Leviathan, Tannin (dragon) and Rahab are presented together, they are all directed to one supreme power of chaos that opposes Yahweh, who had defeated this power. Wildberger states that “\textit{die Namen wechseln, die Sache bleibt sich gleich}.” \textsuperscript{183} (the names may be transposable, the prospect remains the same).

\subsection*{3.4 CONCLUSION}

“… the distinction that we try make between the sea as a symbol and יָם as the name of a mythical monster would have been incomprehensible to the myth- makers…”\textsuperscript{184}

The sea in the ANE was generally regarded as the personification of evil and chaos, constantly seeking to gain dominance and to destroy the ordered world. The primeval waters in the ANE have always been depicted as elemental gods, but are further personified by many dragons and sea-serpents, which had to be conquered in a violent battle by the storm-god subsequently becoming the principle deity and ruler of the universe.

Based on the preceding evidence, the following inferences on the primeval sea in the ANE and יָם in the Hebrew Bible may be made:

a) The Hebrew Bible poses a remarkable יָם and is parallel to the primeval waters in the ANE, as it signifies the primeval waters that existed before the beginning of creation as set out in Gen 1:1-2:4a, and it also harbours תְהוֹם.

b) In the Hebrew Bible יָם is associated with the sea- monsters as in the ANE. Yamm, the sea in the Ugaritic Baal cycle and did not only personify chaos, but also Lotan/Litan, or Leviathan, according to the Hebrew Bible.

\textsuperscript{182} Names and concepts such as Rahab, the תְהוֹם, can directly link to Leviathan and will be discussed later in this research.


c) Since Lotan/Litan is equated with Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible, ים can be equated with Leviathan. Thus, I concur with Habel that, ים is a sea-monster as well, in terms of his assertion that ים is “…parallel with Leviathan in Ugaritic mythology.”

Therefore, there is a resemblance with ANE cosmogonies where the “…abyss” or, in the Ugaritic-Phoenician-Canaanite tradition, “the sea” is “… the domain of monstrous creatures, תנינים (dragons) and the seven-headed Leviathan.”

The sea as a mass of salty water was not seen as evil by people, but because no one can wade into the sea and fathom its secretive depth and abyss, the sea has always been a mysterious force for human beings, representing chaos and lurking evil. Moreover, the sea and תְהוֹם have always been “handled with care” by the Israelites due to its innate propensity to turn order back into chaos.

To end off, ים and its sea-monster has a dual status in the Hebrew Bible – firstly, it was created by Yahweh, and was therefore summoned to praise Yahweh “Praise the LORD from the earth, all sea monsters and ocean depths.” (Ps 148:7, CSB). Secondly, it was the primeval chaos enemy. Therefore, ים is “… paradoxically both constrained and birthed, restrained, but also nurtured.”

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CHAPTER 4 - SEA-MONSTERS IN THE ANE

We can learn something about a religious tradition by getting to know its monsters.\textsuperscript{188}

4.1 INTRODUCTION

For the most part, religions do not only deal with gods but also with ancillary supernatural beings such as angels and primeval and other monsters; even dragons and demons. This is no exception when examining the religions of the ANE.\textsuperscript{189} The ANE literature and iconography introduce us to manifold creatures – monsters, dragons, serpents as well as demons, but what is the difference between these creatures? Are they gods, or at least some of them? Or are they creatures created and sanctioned by gods to fulfill pre-determined duties? A further mandatory question is, what is the difference between monsters, dragons, and demons?

This chapter will endeavour to distinguish between demons, monsters, dragons and serpents as they have been presented in the ANE. There is a fine line to be drawn when one differentiates between monsters and demons. In fact, a demon in one culture may be a monster in another. Most monsters, dragons and serpents could fall in more than one of the above categories. It will be attempted to place them into the category which describes them the best. Their physical traits and characteristics will be discussed further in this chapter. This will be done per region in the ANE. During this initial discussion, there will be no differentiating between sea and land creatures. To obtain a global overview, it is essential to first present an overall depiction of these creatures. Therefore, creatures will be introduced irrespective of their habitat. This is an important part of an admittedly lengthy introduction of the sea-monsters in the ANE.

\textsuperscript{189} As mentioned in Chapter 2, the ancient Near East denotes early civilisations in a region including Mesopotamia, the Levant, Ancient Egypt, Anatolia and Persia. However, this study has included Greece in its references to the ANE.
The main focus, however, will be on monsters that the ancients believed existed in the depths of the sea, lakes, and rivers. These sea-monsters will be identified by region and will be described and discussed fully.

4.2 DEMONS

The distinction between monsters and demons in the ANE chosen for this study is based on two major contributions, “Those that walk on all fours, like animals, are designated as monsters, while those that walk on two legs, like humans, are considered demons.”¹⁹⁰ This is supported by further studies “… of ancient Mesopotamian art and iconography, the term “demon” had generally been applied to any upright human-bodied hybrid creature, while “monster” has been applied to an animal combination on all fours.”¹⁹¹

A reflection on some specifics characteristics of ANE demons will now follow. According to Aeschylus, the cry of the Erinyes (that is, Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone, see below) “… chains up the soul, destroys its harmony, and withers mortal men.”¹⁹² Apparently, their haunting included not only human beings, but some gods too. Demons generally prowl in unseen places such as graves, in the wilderness or on top of mountains. Their prime active time is after midnight and they have the propensity to enter the homes of their victims silently through even the smallest of openings. When grabbing their victims, they apply immense and gruesome force on them.¹⁹³

It is evident that demons from different cultures were similar in many respects. The ensuing survey will deal briefly with traits from different cultures from which these similarities may be deduced. The Erinyes from Greek mythology are three terrifying female demons of darkness and of the underworld and are symbols of forthcoming

doom, named Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone, they were responsible for causing madness, delusion and sterility, by using snakes, venom, whips and burning torches to castigate their victims.\textsuperscript{194} Conceived from the blood of Uranus after his castration, their bodies were covered in black and their hair housed serpents, as described graphically in Euripides’ \textit{Orestes} as “… female fiends with bloody faces wreathen in snakes” and with “… dog’s jaws and gorgon eyes.”\textsuperscript{195, 196} As Aeschylus was a playwright, he does not give a prescriptive description of his characters because the portrayal of his characters on stage is the prerogative of stage directors. Therefore, In order to gain a better description of what the Erinyes looked like, the poet Virgil (although admittedly a later Roman author) sheds a different light from Aeschylus on these demons, but with a similar holistic effect. Here they had the heads of a dog, snakes for hair and their wings were those of a bat.\textsuperscript{197}

The Egyptians believed in numerous demons of all shapes and sizes that lived in the abyss, in rivers, in the desert as well as in the wilderness.\textsuperscript{198} As attested in Egypt, the Babylonians were also stalked and plagued by a multitude of ferocious vampire-like phantom-demons, with lethal poison drooling from their serrated jaws, grabbing people with their razor-sharp claws and ripping open people’s throats, drinking their blood and finally devouring their flesh.\textsuperscript{199}

Lamashtu, a Mesopotamian female demon, barren and a perturbed virgin, attacks pregnant women and women with new-born babies and kills the babies. She is mostly represented as a naked woman with the head of a lioness and feet like the claws of an eagle.\textsuperscript{200} Namtar is the demon responsible for death. A peculiarity is “Namtar has no hand, no foot, he comes to you like a snare…”\textsuperscript{201} Apparently, he does not eat or drink either. The Babylonian demon Pazuzu is portrayed as a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{195} Dunstan Lowe and Kim Shahabudin, eds., \textit{Classics for All: Reworking Antiquity in Mass Culture} (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub, 2009), 224.
\item \textsuperscript{196} Quoted from lines 281 and 285 respectively.
\item \textsuperscript{197} Gilmore, \textit{Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors}, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{199} Gilmore, \textit{Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors}, 31.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Cohn, \textit{Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come}, 44.
\end{itemize}
winged monster with four claws and a deformed head, responsible for the hot wind that brings sandstorms from the desert. Pazuzu had a serpent-like body with scales, wings and a dog’s head with protuberant eyes. Ningizzida was known in Mesopotamia as a “lion-bird” demon with a serpent head, the body of a lion snake-like head and neck, a lion’s body and spurs on its rear legs. Added to that, he had a feathered tail. In Mesopotamian mythology, Imdugud (also known as Zu and the Akkadian Anzu) was part deity and part demon who stole the Tablets of Destiny. He is portrayed with a human upper body, the bottom part of which consists of the body of a bird of prey and a lion’s head with a peculiar bird-like mouth resembling a saw. His wings were so enormous that they could create sandstorms. The mythical Anzu bird possessed special powers and in flight was so grotesque that it scared mountain goats and wild oxen. Mesopotamian mythology also introduces the seven evil Utukki demons born from Anu and Antu. The text below is extremely descriptive with regard to their appearance and ruthless actions (IV R.2, col. v. II. 30ff.).

Seven are they, they are seven,
In the subterranean deep, they are seven,
Perched (?) in the sky, they are seven,
In a section of the subterranean deep they were reared,
They are neither male nor are they female,
They are destructive whirlwinds,
They have no wife, nor do they beget offspring.
Compassion and mercy they do not know,
Prayer and supplication they do not hear.

In summary, demons were human-bodied creatures walking on two legs. Their heads and faces were horrific and they exhibited ghastly characteristics. They showed no mercy towards their screaming victims and no prayer uttered could

202 Cohn, Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come, 44.
203 Black, Green, and Rickards, Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, 147.
208 Jastrow, Handbooks on the History of Religions: The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria.
deter them. The demon’s ferocity was so destructive that even gods were petrified of them.

4.3 MONSTERS

_Many are the horrors, dread and appalling…_²⁰⁹

A monster is a horrific creature of abnormal shape or structure, with a terrifying appearance and demeanour, extremely powerful, nefarious and brutally cruel and ruthless. Due to its generally enormous size, it is a major threatening force to humans as well as gods and, and in some cases, the cosmos itself.

ANE monsters were composed of multiple varieties of combinations. The major feature as mentioned above was their extraordinary size and immense paranormal power. Their gruesome appearance was enhanced by the diverse permutation of human and animal attributes and body parts. The monsters were composed of animal bodies with human heads, human-like bodies with animal heads and serpent-like bodies with multiple monstrous heads. In addition, some had macabre abnormal bodies and the superfluity of body parts with an overabundance of heads, arms, legs or other protrusions added to their grisly appearance. Some had certain body parts missing, or in cases had an abnormal positioning of body parts and carbuncle-like outgrowths. However, the most horrifying were the eyes that hypnotised or, in certain cases, could kill the enemy just by looking at them. Added to that were gigantic mouths with terrifying teeth to savage their enemies greedily. Before discussing individual monsters, one must take cognisance of the fact that the names of the monsters do vary from culture to culture.

4.3.1 Monsters in Greek mythology

The best culture with which to start expounding on monsters is Greece, for two reasons, apart from their reality, their myths provide a more comprehensive view of monsters. Firstly, the monsters in Greek mythology are characterised by and

resemble, many monsters in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. The second reason is that Greek mythology forms a “closer” frame of reference for modern society. The names of Greek deities and monsters are generally better known than the deities and monsters of the ANE.

The marriage between Uranus and Gaea produced some gruesome and repugnant monsters. Beginning with the hellhound Cerberus. Although Hesiod depicts Cerberus with fifty heads, the general head count is three. According to Hesiod, Cerberus “…eats raw flesh, the brazen-voiced hound of Hades, fifty-headed, relentless and strong.”

Then there is Chimaera, sometimes described as a beast with eagle wings, green eyes and with a dragon's tail. Hesiod has a more poetic description of Chimaera who:

…breathed raging fire, a creature fearful, great, swift footed and strong, who had three heads, one of a grim-eyed lion, another of a goat, and another of a snake, a fierce dragon; in her forepart she was a lion; in her hinderpart, a dragon; and in her middle, a goat, breathing forth a fearful blast of blazing fire.

In Greek mythology, the sphinx is portrayed as a calamitous monster and was subsequently depicted with eagle wings and a serpent tail. Hesiod pictures it as such:

210 The folklore theory groups the ANE, Greece and Europe together, in contrast to those of Africa, America and the Far East.

211 This is important in the light of the occurrence in some fundamentalist Bible translations where creatures in ANE literature are sometimes translated by “understandable” creatures, such as Leviathan, intermittently being translated as a mere crocodile, just because the Bible is deemed to be an inerrant holy book and is therefore absolutely correct with regard to its scientific details. On the other hand, monsters in Greek mythology (for example Cerberus - the hellhound guarding the gates of hell), remains a monster with multiple heads and is not “transformed” into a “currently known” or scientifically “identifiable” animal.


213 Gilmore, Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors, 39.


215 Although its origins lie in Egypt, the sphinx was later assimilated into other mythologies and became a well-attested monster from Greece.
...the deadly Sphinx which destroyed the Cadmeans, and the Nemean lion...he preyed upon the tribes of her own people and had power over Tretus of Nemea and Apesas...\textsuperscript{216}

Homer’s Odyssey also describes a sea monster called “Scylla”,

Verily she has twelve feet, all misshapen, and six necks, exceeding long, and on each one an awful head, and therein three rows of teeth, thick and close, and full of black death.\textsuperscript{217}

Ceto was a gruesome sea monster and the goddess of all the monsters of the deep. In the Greek mythology, Ceto eventually became the generic name for sea monsters (Cetea) as described by Oppian, a poet from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century CE,

The Cetea (Sea-Monsters) mighty of limb and huge, the wonders of the sea, heavy with strength invincible, a terror for the eyes to behold and ever armed with deadly rage...Among these...are the terrible Lion...\textsuperscript{218}

Some renditions in Greek refer to Ceto as a whale. In fact, the scientific name for whales is \textit{Cetacea}. (This may be one of the reasons why Biblical sea monsters were translated as “whales” by many scholars). Cetus was also described as having been created by either Zeus or Poseidon to devour Andromeda, who had been saved by Perseus in Joppa.

The most enormous and horrifying monster of all the monsters in the ANE arguably could have been Typhon, in Greek mythology. He was feared by all, even gods. His head reached the stars. Typhon fathered, among others, the Chimaera, Cerberus, and Hydra, a serpent-like sea monster with many heads, varying from five to fifty heads. When one of her heads was chopped off in battle, two more heads immediately grew in its place. Her breath was so ferocious that it brought death instantly.\textsuperscript{219} Typhon also fathered the...

\textsuperscript{216} Evelyn-White, \textit{Works and Days, Theogony, and The Shield of Heracles.}, 37.
Hundred-handed, as they are named: Briareus, Gyes, Cottus, who were unsurpassed in size and might, each of them having a hundred hands and fifty heads.  

Typhon will be fully discussed under sea-monsters later in this chapter.

### 4.3.2 Monsters in Egyptian mythology

The sphinx that originated in Egypt, was later assimilated into other mythologies and became a well-attested monster in Greece. Three different sphinxes were known. Typical of all three is the body of a lion, but they differed in terms of their heads. The androsphinx has a human head and face (mostly, the Pharaoh’s face), the hieracosphinx with a hawk-head (associated with Horus in Upper-Egypt) and the ram-headed criosphinx (Amun’s temple at Karnak). In is important to note that in Egypt, the sphinx was not a menacing monster and was depicted without wings.

Seth was an Egyptian deity at first and later he became the chaos monster impersonating evil. This happened after he had murdered Osiris and had taken out Horus’ eye. Seth had a man’s body with a forked tail, with a strange animal head with a long, curved nose and long horns (or ears) protruding from his head. The fact that Typhon from the Greek mythology was paralleled by Seth, may be a further indication of his size and considerable power.

Amun was an Egyptian underground monster with a crocodile’s head and the body of a lion, but his rear legs were those of a hippopotamus.

### 4.3.3 Monsters in Mesopotamia

In Mesopotamian mythology, Labbu (the Akkadian word for lion), is depicted as an enormous sea-dragon/lion-serpent born from tamtu, the sea. Labbu’s size was

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222 Hallo and Younger, ‘Erra and Ishum (1.113.168-74)’, 137.
224 Gilmore, Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors, 30.
colossal - over 500 kilometres in length and 10 kilometres high. Its head alone was over 300 kilometres long. Another detail regarding Labbu’s immense size is that after he was slain by Enlil, his blood flowed for three years and three months.226

The Akkadian god, Tishpak, fights a dragon with snake features (CT13:33-34), but Lewis relates to the fact that this monster is also called a lion (labbu).227

The Epic of Gilgamesh introduces us to the giant monster Humbaba, appointed by Enlil to protect the cedar forest (the home of the gods) and to petrify humans. Humbaba has a monstrous lion face with dragon teeth and a human-like body with lion claws and arms himself with seven cloaks, and has a toxic breath “His shout is the storm-flood, his mouth, fire, his breath is death.”228

The Akkadian deity Ea is also sometimes described as a monster:229

The head is the head of a serpent,  
From his nostrils mucus trickles,  
His mouth is beslavered with water;  
The ears are like those of a basilisk,  
His horns are twisted into three curls,  
He wears a veil in his head band,  
The body is a suh-fish full of stars,  
The base of his feet are claws,  
The sole of his foot has no heel,  
His name is Sassu-wunnu,  
A sea monster, a form of Ea.

In KAR 6, we find a rendition of the Mesopotamian god Nergal, an enormous dragon with snake-like features, who had to battle with Basmu.

In “The Song of Ullikummi”, Kumarbi created Ullikummi, the stone giant/monster to assist him with fighting Tessub. Ullikummi who grew up from the sea, had a body composed of basalt stone. He was immense in size; with his feet in the sea, his head reached the stars. Ullikummi is an exception to the typical definition of an ANE monster as it is not composed of more than one species and it also does not

have four legs. Although Ullikummi is not a monster in the general sense of ANE monsters, he should be acknowledged as a monster as he certainly poses a severe threat, not only to the gods, but also to the created order.

### 4.3.4 Monsters in Ugarit

The main monster in Ugaritic myth, is Yamm, also called Litan/Lotan, or Judge River, Prince Nahar. Yamm will be discussed further on in this chapter under sea-monsters. Two monstrous creatures deserve attention. Day\(^{230}\) equates Behemoth with El’s calf Atik (KTU 1.3.III.43-44). Another text (KTU 1.6.VI.51-3), presents El’s calf Atik as also dwelling in the waters, just like Behemoth does in Job 41:23. In both these cases, El’s calf Atik is mentioned together with Leviathan.\(^{231}\) The fact that Leviathan is presented in both Ugaritic texts as being part of a pair with Atik, and that Job introduces both Behemoth and Leviathan together (sequential) in Job 40-41, the pairing is matched. Thus, it becomes clear that a tradition existed of the “bull” and Atik and Behemoth.

### 4.4 SEA-MONSTERS IN THE ANE

Monsters from the various cultures have been introduced. The following section summarises how sea-monsters in the ANE looked like.

#### 4.4.1 Extraordinarily large in size and paranormally (and godly) powerful

In Greek mythology, Typhon’s head reached the stars. Not only was he the youngest son of the gods, Gaia and Tartarus Typhon, he was also a god. His power was so immense that he was feared by all, even the gods. Likewise, Cerberus was both relentless and strong and Cetea was immense and had invincible strength. In turn, Apophis, the Egyptian monster of the underworld was a serpent nearly five metres long (100 cubits). In addition, Seth, who became the monster of chaos impersonating evil after his murdering of Osiris was equated with Typhon from the


\(^{231}\) Ibid.
Greek mythology, which may be an indication of his size and enormous power. Furthermore, Labbu in Mesopotamian mythology is depicted as enormous in size - over 500 kilometres in length and ten kilometres high. Although Tishpak was instructed to fight him, he refused. Subsequently, Labbu was defeated but it is not clear whether it was Tishpak or some other storm-god who was responsible for the defeat.\textsuperscript{232} In turn, another monster, Ullikummi was gigantic, when standing in the sea, his head reached the stars.

**4.4.2 Serpent-like bodies with multiple monstrous heads**
Most monsters exhibited dragon-like features apart from having a reptilian appearance and wings, such as possessing one, two or multiple heads breathing fire, being covered with scales and with one or more serpent-like tails. Furthermore, they had the propensity to regenerate severed body parts swiftly. In some instances, they were covered with feathers. Finally, their breath was poisonous and venomous. Interestingly, Cerberus was depicted with three to fifty heads. In turn, Chimaera had three heads and her rear was that of a serpent. For example, Hydra was a serpent-like sea monster with many heads, varying from five to fifty heads. Typhon, true to his ferociousness, had a hundred heads.

**4.4.3 Fashioned in strange combinations**
Multiple combinations existed of sea monsters and sometimes, they were formed from a combination of animals such as lion-dragons.\textsuperscript{233} One such monster, Chimaera, had a lion’s upper part, a goat’s middle part, and the rear part was that of a dragon. In Mesopotamia, Labbu was depicted as a composition of a sea-dragon and a lion-serpent. In turn, Humbaba had a human-like body with lion claws and arms.

**4.5 DRAGONS**
The dragon is a mythical serpent-like monster that is commonplace in ANE mythology. However, a discussion on dragons as a separate entity poses

\textsuperscript{232} Fontenrose, *Python*, 147.
\textsuperscript{233} Black, Green, and Rickards, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 118–21.
problems. Dragons are monsters by nature, with the added features that they have wings and usually, breathe fire. When comparing the description of dragons in the ANE and surrounding empires, it becomes clear that each culture’s dragons look different. It seems as if each culture tried to make its dragons bigger and fiercer than those of other cultures, thereby implying that their hero-god eventually beating the ferocious dragon, is superior to the other cultures' heroic dragon-slaying gods.

Dragons had a reptilian resemblance, but had wings and could fly. In the case of sea-dragons, the “wings” and the serpent-like tail propelled them at near lightning speed through the water. Dragons were covered with impenetrable scales but were sometimes portrayed as being covered with feathers. Breathing fire was typical, as was its poisonous breath. Like other monsters, they had the propensity to regenerate body parts severed in battle swiftly.

From Egyptian mythology, the serpent dragon and god was Apophis, the personification of chaos, evil, and darkness. Apophis will be discussed later in this chapter under sea-monsters.

In the Babylonian Enuma Elish, the deity and personification of the primeval waters, Tiamat, created gruesome sea monsters. Tiamat will be discussed later in the section dedicated to sea-monsters. She created eleven gruesome monsters to assist her with her ensuing battle with Marduk. (The creation of the eleven monsters concurs with Sumerian traditions where Ninurta was also opposed by eleven monsters).

The text below provides a full rendition of what these sea-monsters looked like (Tablet II: 19-32).

Ummu-Hubur, who formed all things,  
Hath made in addition weapons invincible;  
She hath spawned monster-serpents,  
Sharp of tooth and merciless of fang.  
With poison, instead of blood, she hath filled their bodies.  
Fierce monster-vipers she hath clothed with terror,  
With splendour she hath decked them;

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She hath made them of lofty stature.  
Whoever beholdeth them, terror overcometh him,  
Their bodies rear up and none can withstand their attack.  
She hath set up vipers, and dragons, and the monster Lahamu,  
And hurricanes, and raging bounds, and scorpion-men,  
And mighty tempests, and fish-men, and rams;  
They bear merciless weapons, without fear of the fight.  
Her commands are mighty; none can resist them;  
After this fashion, huge of stature, hath she made eleven monsters.235

In Canaan, the enemies of Baal are deities depicted as dragons, such as Tannanu (תַּנִִּ֖ין in the Hebrew Bible) and Litan (Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible).236 His main adversary, Yamm, will be discussed under sea-monsters later in this chapter.

In summary, dragons are primarily gigantic fire-breathing serpents, mostly with wings as they possess the ability to fly. They mostly act on behalf of gods and are associated paradoxically, not only with the powers of death, but also with life. These life-giving properties are intrinsic in that Tiamat is the mother-god who gave life to all gods.

4.6 SERPENTS

The serpent played a paramount role in the ancient Near East. In addition. It also played different roles. Since the study of serpents in the ANE is a vast field, this discussion will only serve as a brief acknowledgement of the roles serpents played and will be in the form of a concise summary. The representation of the serpent is intricate, multifarious and mostly paradoxical. A serpent is a serpent or a monster or a dragon. Therefore, the ensuing discussion is not an attempt to describe serpents, but rather a summary of their various traits. This is done as a listing for intelligibility.

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236 Smith and Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3-1.4.*, II:258.
• Serpents have mostly been equated with evil and dark issues such as death, but were sometimes portrayed in a positive way as the provider of wisdom, life and even power.237
• The ouroboros is a serpent encircling the earth and swallowing its tail, symbolised an endless cycle of fertility and rejuvenation.238
• The uraeus, normally worn by the Pharaoh on his forehead, is the symbol of a powerful ruler. As the uraeus was believed to be the eye of the deity Horus, it was believed to possess magical power.239
• Gods were sometimes closely associated with serpents. The Theban deity, Amun resembled a snake.240 Wadjet, an Egyptian goddess, was depicted as a cobra.241
• Not surprisingly, many deities of the netherworld were also associated with serpents. Accordingly, Kebechet, a goddess of the dead had a serpent body.242
• Serpents were both feared and sacrosanct, some perceived as protectors and others as enemies.243
• Some deities possessed serpent features, whilst others did not have any resemblance to serpents at all. However, usually, even these deities were depicted with serpents surrounding them. This may have been done to demonstrate their power. Hathor, a goddess mostly associated with the sky, is sometimes depicted with headgear consisting of two horns embracing the sun disk and decorated with the uraeus, the serpent protector of deities and kings.244

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241 Ibid., 346.
242 Ibid., 159.
• The serpent “... itself is the object of fear...”\textsuperscript{245} when used in incantations and spells against potential evil.

4.7 SEA-MONSTERS IN THE ANE

A specific genus of dragons exists that needs careful consideration, namely sea-monsters, normally associated with primeval chaos. It is salient to note that people in the ANE perceived chaos first and foremost as an authentic sea-monster of colossal size, mostly encircling the earth. Chaos, or the primeval sea-monster as its personification, was of divine origin and endeavoured to rule over the universe. An ancillary characterisation of chaos was that of a mass of primeval water and a dark void.

The sea-monsters in the ANE will now be addressed by region. As no definite line of distinction exists between monsters, dragons, and serpents, all the creatures associated with the primeval waters will be regarded as sea-monsters in the rest of this study.

In the subsequent discussion on what the sea-monsters looked like, as well as the specific traits they possessed, the focus will only be on four major sea-monsters that personified chaos, namely Apophis (Egypt), Babylonian Tiamat and Ugaritic Yamm (also associated to be Litan in a discussion to follow).

4.7.1 Sea-monsters in Egypt

Egyptian mythology is home to a gigantic sea-monster, Apophis, that challenges the ordered world every night when the sun-god Re travels through the dark underworld. Another sea-monster, the ouroboros, has no specific identity, but shares the surrounding of the ordered world, without the descriptive ferocity of Aphopis. These sea-monsters will now be discussed in order of its pre-eminence.

4.7.1.1 Apophis

Apophis, the personification and deity of chaos, evil, and darkness, was portrayed as a dragon residing in the dark underworld waters. The Coffin Text 160 narrates

the myth of “The Repulsing of the Dragon (1.21),” and recounts that Apophis endeavours to destroy the universe and to return it to its original condition of chaos. The sun-god Re had to journey through the underworld at night, escorted by Osiris and sometimes by the god Seth. Apophis, an immortal primeval force, had to be conquered every night, but he has never been destroyed or killed. The sun- barge eventually rises from the waters under the earth in the morning and continues through the waters above the sky until sunset, when the battle with Apophis begins anew.

The general orientation with regard to Apophis is this nightly battle with the sun god Re. A little-known facet however, is the “Sandbank of Apophis.” As the primeval waters in the ANE surround the earth, Re travels with his sun-barge through the skies at daytime and through the underworld at night. At noon, because of the hot midday sun, it may feel that the sun is standing still. The Egyptian word for midday literally means “standstill.” To make sense of this “standstill,” it was believed that Apophis drinks so much water to recuperate that the sun-barge of Re gets stuck on a resulting sandbank. Seth next stabs Apophis with a spear so that the water he consumed can flow out again, lifting the sun-barge off the sandbank to continue with the journey. It is salient to note that this was not a threat to a cosmic crisis such as the journey with the sun-barge through the night.

Apophis was a monstrously big, immensely powerful twisting serpent dragon. His birth and eventual size are described as:

But they (the anterior gods) repelled a drop of spittle from her mouth, which she had produced in the bosom of the original water; it was transformed into a serpent of 100 cubits, which was named Apophis. Its heart conceived revolt against Re, with its associates that issued from its eye.

Apophis is further portrayed as,

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246 Löning and Zenger, To Begin With, God Created—, 13.
248 Cohn, Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come, 21.
249 Dunand and Zivie-Coche, Gods and Men in Egypt, 64.
250 This translation of Esna 206, 10–11 is based on that of Sauneron, Les Fêtes religieuses d’Esna, p. 265, as cited in Dunand and Zivie-Coche above.
…a giant writhing monstrosity. He dwells in a dark netherworld and constantly threatens the ordered world with devastation. Apophis is not only monstrously big, but also all-powerful. \(^{251}\)

Although Apophis is a typical dragon, it is not stated explicitly that he has wings. Considering, though, that he has also been presented as a strong, dark storm cloud, \(^{252}\) this may serve as an indication that he must have had wings, as clouds “fly”.

### 4.7.1.2 Other Egyptian sea-monsters

The ouroboros, borne by Shu and Tefnut, is a long, uncoiled serpent surrounding the sun god. \(^{253}\) Swallowing its tail, it forms a solid loop encircling the earth. The insight that the ouroboros surrounded the sun god may depict another battle between a serpent and the sun god, resembling the nightly combat with Apophis. The ouroboros had also been assimilated by the Greeks.

### 4.7.2 Sea-monsters in Greece

Greek mythology contains an interesting range of sea-monsters. Typhon, arguably the most gruesome of all monsters in the ANE, is the dominant one. A short discussion on other sea-monsters will include Hydra, Scylla and Ceto.

#### 4.7.2.1 Typhon

Typhon was not a sea-monster per se, as he was thought to be a cave dweller. \(^{254}\) Ogden cites Zeus entombing Typhon with these words “This is the tomb of the earthborn one…” \(^{255}\) However, Typhon was depicted in his battle with Zeus as standing in the ocean where the waves only reached the middle of his thighs, and he was assisted (like Tiamat) by “… his swimming dragons” who “…hissed war

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\(^{254}\) Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 353-356
from their brine-resounding throats and attacked the sea."  

Considering this background, together with the fact that he fathered both sea-monsters Chimaera and Hydra, he could well be classified as a sea-monster. Typhon was thus an authentic and appalling sea-dragon. His hundred heads were serpents, and fire flashed from each of his eyes and his heads. He is depicted with "... dark, flickering tongues", and he uttered the most horrendous sounds "... such that the gods understood".

He was feared by everyone, even the gods. His head reached the stars.

From his shoulders grew a hundred heads of a snake, a fearful dragon, with dark, flickering tongues, and from under the brows of his eyes in his marvellous heads flashed fire, and fire burned from his heads as he glared. And there were voices in all his dreadful heads which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable; for at one time they made sounds such that the gods understood, but at another, the noise of a bull bellowing aloud in proud ungovernable fury; and at another, the sound of a lion, relentless of heart; and at another, sounds like whelps, wonderful to hear; and again, at another, he would hiss, so that the high mountains re-echoed...

Like the Babylonian Tiamat who created other monsters, Typhon also created sea monsters to assist him in the battle with Zeus, introducing the she-dragon Delphyne, a maiden who was a combination of a human and a beast instructed by Typhon to guard Zeus and his sinews after he was slain by Typhon. Finally, Typhon was more than a monster. He was also a god, the youngest son of the gods Gaia and Tartarus. Thus, gods could be monsters and monsters could be gods.


257 With reference with Typhon’s hundred heads, Strabo (Geography, xiii 4.6; xvi 2.7) narrates that Typhon had only fifty heads, “Zeus ...smote monstrous Typhon of the fifty heads...”


259 Ibid.

4.7.2.2 Other sea-monsters in Greece

Hydra, a sea-monster with strong serpent-like features had many heads, varying from five to fifty heads. Should one of her heads be chopped off during battle, two more heads would grow in its place immediately. She also had a poisonous breath that caused immediate death. 261

Another sea-monster, Scylla, had twelve malformed feet, six heads on six extremely long necks, each with three rows of terrifying teeth. 262

The goddess of all the monsters of the deep, Ceto, was a gruesome sea-monster. The generic name for sea-monsters in Greek is cetea, derived from Ceto. A general description is that it was gigantic, immensely powerful and “… armed with deadly rage”. 263

Ceto a gruesome sea-monster was the goddess of all the monsters of the deep. Cetea eventually became the generic name for sea monsters in Greek mythology. The Cetea (Sea-Monsters) mighty of limb and huge, the wonders of the sea, heavy with strength invincible, a terror for the eyes to behold and ever armed with deadly rage…Among these…are the terrible Lion…” 263

A monster Cetus had been created by either Zeus or Poseidon to devour Andromeda. She was eventually saved by Perseus in Joppa. 264

It appears that the later Greek culture also attempted to naturalise their mythological monsters. This is mentioned here just as a matter of interest and will be handled in a later chapter.

4.7.3 Sea-monsters in Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian mythology introduces sea-monsters over several millennia. In essence, the sea-monsters were mostly the same, but the name changed at various times. Sea-monsters such as Labbu, Hedammu, Illuyanka, Azag-Labbu and the greatest of all, Mother Hubur – Tiamat were introduced.

261 Brumble, Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 173.
264 Refer to chapter 8 for more information on this event.
4.6.3.1 Tiamat

Tiamat starts out as a creator-goddess in the Babylonian Enuma Elish, but in later texts, she is portrayed as a “composite behemoth” comparable to Egyptian Apophis, as having the horns of a bull and bird’s legs and talons on a scaled reptilian body. Tiamat is almost always cited as a proper name for a female. Accordingly, Tiamat is a form of the grammatically feminine Akkadian word ĭmtu (sea) and is portrayed as both a dragon and a sea-monster, but sometimes also as a goat, cow or human female. Tiamat is a dominant and authoritative deity and had the power to promote Qingu to kingship over all the gods (Tablet I, 147-162).

Tiamat, often portrayed as a monstrous dragon-like sea-monster, is in the first place an elemental god. Here again, the border between mythical creatures and gods is ambiguous. Considering that Tiamat’s daughter Lahamu is often described as a serpent, points to her also being classified as a monster. Besides Lahamu, she was also responsible for creating gruesome sea monsters, as narrated in Enuma Elish, that describes Mother Hubur (Tiamat) preparing for her battle with the storm-god Marduk. She creates eleven gruesome monsters. (The creation of the eleven monsters corresponds with Sumerian traditions where Ninurta was also opposed by eleven monsters).

The lack of a proper physical description of Tiamat compels one to compile a better picture of her from the features present in the monsters she created. As a creator tends to create in its own image, this could give an insight into the probability that she possessed similar traits as those possessed by her creations. A brief summary of Tablet II: 19-32, reveals some of these features, namely, huge monster-serpents with poison instead of blood, with ferocious teeth and fearless in battle, and who use merciless weapons so that no one can withstand their assaults.

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265 Hogarth and Clery, Dragons, 15–16.
266 Achtemeier, Harper’s Bible Dictionary, 1069.
267 Dalley, Myths from Mesopotamia, 245.
268 Clifford, Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible, 85.
Two important notions about Tiamat merit our attention. The first is that Tiamat is also depicted as encircling the earth. A fragment (S.2, 013) speaks of the waters above and below the firmament, as Upper-Tiamat and Lower-Tiamat, supporting the cosmology of the ANE. Here she is equated with the ouroboros. The second is that, even after her defeat by Marduk and the subsequent separation of her body, when her upper part was flung to form the firmament, while her lower body formed the earth, Tiamat was not destroyed. Marduk still must restrict or bind her permanently, as this citing of the Enuma Elish confirms:

May he bind Tiamat, may her life be narrow and short.
In the future of humanity, in days to come,
May she depart, may she not return, may she be distant forever.

Tablet VII, 132ff

4.7.3.2 Other Mesopotamian sea-monsters

The Akkadian god Tishpak is depicted as an unnamed dragon with snake features in Ct 13:33-34. In a succeeding battle with the god An, this same sea-monster is called Labbu (lion).

The Hittite god Teshub battles a sea-serpent, Hedammu, the son of the underworld god Kumarbi. His mother was the daughter of a sea god. The “Song of Hedammu” describes him as a “voracious serpent.” Hedammu resided in the deep, from where Teshub’s sister had to call him up to the surface for the ensuing battle.

Another Hittite heritage is the purulli festival. Here the god Tarhunna battles and overcomes Illuyanka that simply means serpent. Two variations of this saga exist. Firstly, Tarhunna had to be assisted by the goddess Inara, who invited Illuyanka to a feast, made him drunk where after Tarhunna killed him. The description of Illuyanka in this rendition is of a giant dragon hiding in its lair. This is a description of an earth creature and not a sea-monster. However, the second account is

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269 Ernest A. W. Budge, The Babylonian Legends of Creation (New York: Cosimo, 2010), 66.
270 Dalley, Myths from Mesopotamia, 273.
272 Ogden, Dragons, Serpents and Slayers in the Classical and Early Christian Worlds, 260.
273 Ibid.
radically different. Here, although Tarhunna is initially defeated by Illuyanka, it is told that he returned to the sea to fight the serpent that he subsequently conquered.\textsuperscript{274}

In the Sumerian poem \textit{Lugal-e}, Ninurta employs winds to fight the seven-headed sea-monster Azag-Labbu. One or both must have spewed fire as the area around them was set on fire. It was evident that Azag-Labbu had assistants in his battle with Ninurta, as those had also been killed off.\textsuperscript{275}

\subsection*{4.7.4 Canaanite sea-monsters}

The Ugarit literary legacy introduces sea-monsters such as Yamm (sea), Naharu (river), Tunnan (tnn) and Lotan/Litan. All these sea-monsters played a significant role in Canaanite mythology, but Yamm is of special significance, as will become clear not only in the discussion below, but also in later chapters of this study.

\subsubsection*{4.7.4.1 Yamm}

Although there is no known Canaanite cosmogony, the Ugaritic primeval waters and sea-monster were a deity, Yamm. Like Tiamat in Mesopotamia, Yamm was the personification of the primeval sea and was regarded as a destructive monster of Chaos.

Yamm, as a sea-dragon, was an adversary of Baal, the Ugaritic storm-god, and with the battle between them looming, Baal had a vision that he would destroy all his enemies, especially Yamm, a powerful adversary that had to be defeated in battle (CTA 2 IV, 1–5).\textsuperscript{276}

\begin{quote}
[…] I will indeed force them to leave, moreover, I will drive out […].
And in Yammu I will indeed destroy the resting place, in Yammu, at (his) very heart, (I will destroy) the […], [(as for) Ruler] Naharu, (I will destroy) (his) neck.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{274} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{275} Ogden, \textit{Drakōn}, 78.
\textsuperscript{276} Day, \textit{God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea}, 8–9.
In the ensuing battle between Baal and Yamm, Baal eventually gains victory over Yamm (CTA 2 IV, 25–27).

Baal grabs Yamm and sets about dismembering (him), sets about finishing Ruler Naharu off.

After Baal has dismembered Yamm, Attartu prompts him to scatter his remains, “as Yamm is our captive”. Then something interesting transpires. Anat boasts that she was the one who has finished off Yamm (KTU 1.3 iii, 36-42).

What enemy has arisen against Ba’lu, (what) adversary against Cloud–Rider?
I have smitten ’Ilu’s beloved, Yammu, have finished off the great god Naharu.
I have bound the dragon’s jaws, have destroyed it, have smitten the twisting serpent, the close–coiled one with seven heads.

The question is, why does Anat boast that she overcame Yamm? The texts that survived and are available for investigation does not provide any clear answer. One deduction may be that Anat entered the battle scene only after Yamm had been overcame by Baal. Then only she had thrashed and finished off the dismembered Yamm and destroyed his seven jaws. The other possibility is, that through this rendition she wanted to portray herself as powerful so that ’Ilu can really fear her when she threatens him. Anat subsequently threatened to trample ’Ilu to the ground like a lamb and wound his head so that his grey hair would be covered with blood if he did not give Baal a palace as he had to give the other gods (CTA IV 99ff).

In the prelude to Baal’s battle against Mot, his success against Yamm is affirmed more than once as encouragement. The same words that Anat uttered, are cited below (CTA 5.I.1-3).

277 Ibid., 9.
278 Ibid., 13.
279 Ibid.
When you smote Lotan, the fleeing serpent,  
finished off the twisting serpent,  
the close-coiled one with seven heads.

Although Mot does not form part of in this study, the outcome of the confrontation between Baal and Mot is thought-provoking. Baal was initially killed by Mot. In a subsequent battle, Anat was the one who killed Mot. Following the general trend of splitting cosmic opponents after victory in the ANE, she then splits Mot with a knife.²⁸⁰

In the above citations from the ancient texts above, Yamm is frequently mentioned together with two other creatures namely, the “great god” Nahar and the fleeing snake Lotan (depicted as a seven-headed dragon). Tunnan (tnn) refers to the dragon, whose jaws have been destroyed. These sea-monsters will now be discussed.

4.7.4.2 Other Canaanite sea-monsters

In the ensuing battle with between Baal and Yamm, Baal eventually gains victory over Yamm, as well as Nahar (CTA 2 IV, 1-5; IV, 25-27; KTU 1.3 iii,38-39).

[...] I will indeed force them to leave,  
mfareover, I will drive out [...].
And in Yammu I will indeed destroy the resting place,  
in Yammu, at (his) very heart, (I will destroy) the [...],  
[(as for) Ruler] Naharu, (I will destroy) (his) neck.  
Ba‘lu grabs Yammu and sets about dismembering (him),  
sets about finishing Ruler Naharu off.  
I have smitten ’Ilu’s beloved, Yammu,  
have finished off the great god Naharu.

From these texts, it appears that Nahar and Yamm are a single deity with two designations. Pitard believes that the two designations “… indicate that he represents both the sea and an river, that is, the full range of water flowing on the

The joining together of Yamm (the sea) and Nahar (a river) appear to denote the personification of all the waters.

The following text introduces us to another sea-monster, Tunnan, described as “The forked tongue licks the heavens, the forked tail trashes the sea.” The following citation comes from KTU 1.3 III 38-42.

Surely I struck down the Beloved of El, Yamm,
Surely I finished off Nahar, the Great God,
Surely I bound Tunnan, destroyed (?) him.
I struck down the Twisty Serpent,
The Powerful One with Seven Heads.

Tunnan is identified with Yamm/Nahar. Tunnan, in the Ugaritic sources, is transliterated from tnn. Indicating a creature from within the sea, where tnn depicts a dragon.

In another text, Baal is also involved in a battle with the monster, Litan. The last two lines of this description are identical to that of Anat’s fight with Yamm as cited above. It, therefore, seems salient then to assume that Yamm and Lotan/Litan were, in fact, the same sea-monster. If not, Lotan/Litan was the physical manifestation of Yamm, just with different names (CAT 1.2 I 1-3).

When you struck down Litan, the fleeing snake,
Annihilated the twisting snake,
The powerful one with seven heads…

4.8 CONCLUSION

Having provided a general overview of the physical attributes and complex combinations and origins of monsters, sea-monsters, dragons and demons of the

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283 Pitard, ‘Just How Many Monsters Did Anat Fight (KTU 1.3 III 38-47)?’, 76.
284 Ibid., 80.
ANE, it still leaves one in an indeterminate state. While a distinction could be drawn between demons and monsters, distinguishing between the concepts of ‘monsters,’ ‘dragons’ and serpents proved to be problematic. For instance, a monster may be identified both as a dragon and a serpent. In turn, a dragon may possess dominant serpent features, and still be a monster. In effect, from the above discussion, it is clear that ANE monsters entailed multiple varieties of combinations.\textsuperscript{286} The information on all the compositions is extremely diverse and therefore, the traits of the monsters are listed below to facilitate the classification of these monsters.

The most significant sea-monsters from the ANE for this study are Apophis from Egypt, Typhon from Greece, Babylonian Tiamat and from Canaan Yamm, closely associated with Nahar, Lotan/Litan as well as Tunnan.

In summary, the descriptions of the monsters, dragons, serpents and demons, are steeped in poetic language. This could imply that their images could have been exaggerated. I want to argue that this is not the case, as poetry is absolutely qualified to convey the actual features of these monsters. Poetry is maybe seen as an exaggeration, but it is seldom a blatant lie. Its use of metaphors merely presents reality and truth in a congenial manner. The language used in poetry is shortened characteristically, but then again, this is ironic as this abridgement results in an increased understanding. “Poetry is satisfying the desire for resemblance.” Stevens further explains that its uniqueness, “…in the act of satisfying the desire for resemblance it touches the sense of reality, it enhances the sense of reality, heightens it, intensifies it.”\textsuperscript{287}

From our modern perspective, added to our insight that myth is not “true”, we tend to see its poetic descriptions as hyperbole. But this is certainly not how the ancients perceived it. To them, and to the modern reader striving to enter their horizon of understanding, ‘… poetic truth is factual truth, seen.’\textsuperscript{288}

\textsuperscript{286} Most of the information below is generally known, but many have been extracted from (Gilmore 2002:174-94) and (Westenholz 2004).
\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 159.
The following chapter focusses firstly on monsters, serpents, demons and sea-monsters in the Old Testament. However, the major part of this chapter is on Leviathan and its relationship to the sea-monsters of the ANE as discussed in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5 - MONSTERS, SERPENTS AND DEMONS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRIMEVAL SEA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first introduction and subsequently the most well-known evil creature in the Old Testament is the serpent. Eve’s words to God, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Gen 3:13 ESV) caused the serpent to become the universal personification of evil. This is an incorrect interpretation though, as the serpent only had been identified with the biblical figure of Satan much later.

The serpent is frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. This term is mostly used symbolically, depicting a diabolical, malicious and deadly enemy of people, as well as God. The serpent has proved to be an enigma in God’s creation. Serpents, as well as other reptiles, have mostly been associated with monstrous creatures. Therefore, before the ensuing discourse on Leviathan, a concise general review of serpents, monsters and demons is necessary. Besides sketching the ambience and milieu in which Leviathan features in the Hebrew Bible, it also forms the basis of comparison with ANE creatures in Chapter 4.

5.2 SERPENTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Serpents in the ANE, as well as נחש (nahas) in the Hebrew Bible are mythical creatures with legs and wings. However, as the serpent was cursed (Gen 3:14), it lost its wings and legs and was doomed to sail on its belly. It thereby became a natural snake. The generic word for serpent is נחש (nahas), and is based on the “hissing sound” of a snake.

The Hebrew Bible often portrays serpents as mere snakes in six different ways. The first is mostly translated as asp or adder פתן (peten), some translations have possible mythical connotations. It also appears as שפיפון (supipon), an adder (or

viper), biting the heels of a horse.\textsuperscript{290} Appearing in two passages in the OT, אֶפְעֶה (epeh), has been translated as a viper although it presents a strong mythical connection.\textsuperscript{291} Originating from a neglected root meaning “to be coiled up,” עַּכְש֑וּב (aksun) most probably indicates an adder.\textsuperscript{292} As the root word indicates a contraction and a forward lunge, קִּפוֹז (qippoz) possibly refers to an arrow snake. Here, translations range from “the great owl” (KJV), “sand partridge” (CSB) and even a “hedgehog” (LXA).\textsuperscript{293} The word זֹחֲלֵ (zohale) indicates a crawling action with a fearsome outcome.\textsuperscript{294} A strong mythical connotation is evident.\textsuperscript{295} The rather extensive list of different expositions of the serpent is as follows: The serpent in the Garden of Eden; as a metaphor;\textsuperscript{296} serpent that sprung forth from a rod;\textsuperscript{297} fiery serpent;\textsuperscript{298} fiery flying serpent;\textsuperscript{299} associated with evil people;\textsuperscript{300} as an enchantment;\textsuperscript{301} brazen serpent (Nehushtan).\textsuperscript{302} The serpent has also been equated with the dragon. This will be fully discussed later in this chapter as well as the next one, but it is salient to name it here briefly as well for the sake of completeness. The serpent as a dragon is mentioned in its generic form;\textsuperscript{303} as a dragon landmark;\textsuperscript{304} and Pharaoh as the personification of the dragon.\textsuperscript{305}

\textsuperscript{290} Gen 49:17. 
\textsuperscript{291} Isa 30:6; 59:5. 
\textsuperscript{292} Ps 140:4. 
\textsuperscript{293} Isa 34:15. 
\textsuperscript{294} Deut 32:24; Mic 7:17. 
\textsuperscript{295} Deut 32:24 
\textsuperscript{296} Prov 30:19; Eccl 10:8; 11; Amos 5:19; Isa 65:25; Jer 46:22; Mic 7:17. 
\textsuperscript{297} Exod 4:3; 7:10, 15. 
\textsuperscript{298} Num 21:6, 8; Deut 8:15. 
\textsuperscript{299} Isa 14:29, 30:6. 
\textsuperscript{300} Pss 58:4, 140:3-4. 
\textsuperscript{301} Gen 30:27; 44:5; 15; Lev 19:26; Num 23:23, 24:1; Deut 18:10; 1 Kgs 20:33; 2 Kgs 17:17; 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6. 
\textsuperscript{302} Num 21:92; Kgs 18:4. 
\textsuperscript{303} Deut 32:33; Job 30:29; Jer 9:11. 
\textsuperscript{304} Neh 2:13; Ps 44:19; Isa 13:22; Jer 9:11, 10:22, 49:33, 51:37. 
\textsuperscript{305} Ezek 29:3; 32:2.
5.3 MONSTERS

This section will first deliberate on three serpent-monsters appearing in the Hebrew Bible, namely the **שְרָפִּים** (seraphim), cockatrices **צֶפַּע** (tsepha), and the lion-serpent.

5.3.1 Serpent monsters

As in the ANE, the Hebrew Bible has magnificent serpent monsters. A discussion on each of the three serpent monsters will provide insight into what they were and what they looked like.

5.3.1.1 Seraphim

The **שְרָפִּים** (seraphim), **שָרָָּ֣ף** singular, are portrayed as magnificent and imposing beings with six wings in attendance in God’s temple. Isa 6:2 depicts **שְרָפִּים עֹמְדִִּים**, translated as “standing seraphim,” and attending to Yahweh on his throne. They most probably stood high above and next to, or behind Yahweh. The **שְרָפִּים** are described as each having six wings; two for covering their face, two for covering their feet and the other two wings were used for flying. However, who were the **שְרָפִּים** and what did they look like? The **שָרָָּ֣ף** had been likened to a kind of angelic being, often translated into English as a ‘fiery serpent’, but angelic figures (NT) had a humanlike body whereas the **שְרָפִּים** had a serpent body. The only resemblance thus, was that both had wings. Apart from reading v. 4 where it states that after the one **שָרָָּ֣ף** had spoken, the temple was filled with smoke, indicating that smoke bellowed from their mouths and nostrils as they spoke, no further details can be extracted from the following texts in which the seraphim appear: Isa 14:29 is translated as “a viper will come from that snake’s root” (GWN) and Isa 30:6 as a “fiery flying serpent” (NKJ). In Deut 8:15 and Num 21:6, 8, the prevalence of combining **נְחַשׁ** (serpent) and **שָרָָּ֣ף** as a Hebrew word combination led to translators creating a “fiery snake,” “flying serpents,” “darting adders” and “poisonous snakes.”
To get a better idea of what the seraphim looked like and to learn what their function was, the search needs to extend into the surrounding cultures of the ANE. Joines\textsuperscript{306} concludes that “the seraphim of Isaiah's inaugural vision are to be understood in the light of the Egypt symbol of the winged uraeus.” A function of the uraeus is to protect the pharaoh and sacred objects by breathing out fire on his enemies. The difference is that the Egyptian uraeus had four wings, symbolising the Pharaoh’s ruling over the four corners of the earth. My own assumption is that Yahweh’s seraphim have six wings, possibly to prove Yahweh’s guardians’ superiority over similar beings known in the ANE, as well Joines’ notion that the two pairs of wings were instrumental in covering the face and the feet to acknowledge Yahweh’s kingship above all. Whereas the seraphim shook the temple by filling it with smoke, it is attested that the uraeus in Egyptian myths possessed the power to spew out an intense fire on the enemies of the pharaoh. It is improbable that smoke will be produced without producing fire first. Therefore, it may be deduced that the seraphim also spewed out fire first, resulting in smoke, but that Isaiah chose to only record the filling of the room with smoke.\textsuperscript{307}

5.3.1.2 Cockatrices

צֶ֔פַּע (cockatrices), being part serpent and part rooster, are deemed to be “adder-like” by biblical translators, therefore their identification as serpents. However, the cockatrice is a specific creature. צֶ֔פַּא (tsepha), derives from an unused root signifying to ‘extrude’. It appears five times in the Old Testament. The KJV translates it four times as a cockatrice (Isa 11:8; 14:29; 59:5 and Jer 8:17) and in Prov 23:32 it has been translated as “an adder”. However, “cockatrice” is used in the GNV translation of Prov 23:32. Some translations of Isa 11:8; 14:29; 59:5 and Jer 8:17 also acknowledges it as cockatrices (GNV; WEB). Other references to a serpent-like or dragon-like creature appear, for example, in Isa 30:6, as “the

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 415.
burning winged snake” (BBE), “fiery flying serpent” (ASV), and “de vurige vliegende draak” (fiery flying dragon) (SVV).

The cockatrice as a serpent, is alluded to in Isa 14:29, where “out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice.” (KJV). The words following this, “and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent”, could have two meanings. The first is that the serpent’s ‘root’ and ‘fruit’ refer to the same creature as the cockatrice, or secondly, that out of the serpent, a cockatrice will come forth and that this cockatrice will produce fiery flying serpents.

What did a cockatrice look like? Apart from being described as very poisonous with a lethal bite and living in a hole in the ground, no physical description is given or can be derived from the relevant biblical texts. Most information is based on presentations of the cockatrice during Medieval times. These depictions portray this mythical creature as a combination between a serpent and a rooster, and apart from having a poisonous breath, it had the ability to kill just by glancing at its enemy.308

5.3.1.3 Lion as a serpent

Another possible serpent portrayed in the Old Testament that will be dealt with very briefly is that the Hebrew word שָָֽחַּל (lion), may originally have meant serpent-dragon and that שָָֽחַּל may denote a serpent. Mowinckle309 first suggested that the Hebrew word for “lion” may originally have meant serpent-dragon and because of this combination, it mythopoetically became the term for a lion. Jones concludes that not many scholars were convinced by Mowinckle’s argument that שָָֽחַּל denotes a snake and that fewer believed his mythopoetical explanation of the link between lion and serpent.310 However, Jones concurs that it seems likely that שָָֽחַּל could be

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310 Ibid.
used for either “lions” or “serpents” and that it could connote both.311 However, Lindenberger translated and transcribed “The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar”, and the following denotes the lion, Labbu, as being a sea-serpent: “There is no lion in the sea, therefore the sea-snake is called Labbu.”312 Although this is not a definitive conclusion that lions have been serpent-dragons, the possibility that monsters with a combination of snake-like features and that of a lion existed.

5.3.2 Non-serpents as monsters

Although the cherubim had serpent-like features, they were not really seen as serpents. Admittedly, other flying serpents also existed, but the cherubim have been allocated a more ‘holy’ persona, and will therefore be discussed as a non-serpent monster together with the unicorn and the satyr.

5.3.2.1 Cherubs

One of the first creatures we are introduced to in the Old Testament is the כְּרֻב (cherub), כְּרֻבִּים (plural), set to guard the garden of Eden, “… and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim.” (Gen 3:24 ERV). What beings were they and what did they look like? The first description is that they were flying creatures, “… the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings…” (Exod 25:20 WEB). The cherubim adorned the temple built by Solomon where they were made from olive wood overlaid with gold (1Kgs 6:23, 28). They were ten cubits high, with a wingspan of ten cubits (1Kgs 6:24, 26). Their wingspan is confirmed by 2 Chr 3:13. The presentation of the size of the cherubs is based on statues made for the temple. This is not a reflection of their true size, as Yahweh is reported to have flown on the back of a כְּרֻב in 2 Sam 22:11. Therefore the deduction could be made that the כְּרֻב was an enormously large flying creature. The normal assumption is that they had two wings, as descriptions of the כְּרֻבִּים in the temple, but Ezekiel recorded each as having four faces and four

311 Ibid., 668.
wings (Ezek 10:21 CSB). In conclusion, the Old Testament does not give any further indication of what the כרבים are.

Some extra-biblical assumptions are that the כרבים were angels, but it remains pure speculation based solely on the fact that they had wings. The כרבים appear in sixty-six verses in the Hebrew Bible. Some extra-biblical assumptions are that the כרבים were angels, but it remains pure speculation based solely on the fact that they had wings. The כרבים appear in sixty-six verses in the Hebrew Bible. Iconography reveals a possibly similar creature adorning the entrances of Assyrian temples. It had been depicted as mighty bulls, with human heads and the wings of an eagle. The interesting connotation is that it was called kuribu, a term related to the biblical cherub, who guarded the entrance to paradise as presented in Gen 3:24 and Ezek 28:16.

5.3.2.2 Unicorns

ר dép (unicorns), appear in several texts found in the Old Testament, but it is mostly translated with other names such as buffalo (DBY), rhinoceros (DRA) and wild-ox (ERV).

A selection of some texts in the Old Testament where ר dép is translated as unicorn, is: Deut 33:17 (KJV); Num 23:22 (LXA); Num 24:8 (KJV); Job 39:9, 10 (KJV); Ps 22:21 (KJV); Ps 29:6; 78:69 (LXA, DRA); Ps 92:10 (KJV); and Isa 34:7 (DRA). The general description derived from these translations is that the unicorn was enormously strong, possessed one vicious horn and that it was untameably wild. A more complete description of the unicorn poses a problem as various folklores depict it as either a horse with a singular long horn on its forehead, or a goat-like animal with a shorter single horn, also on its forehead.

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5.3.2.3 Satyrs

The Hebrew word שָעִיר (שָעִירִים plural) appears in fifty-seven verses of the Old Testament. In all but two texts, it refers to goats, either as an adult or baby goats. שָעִיר appears many times in the Old Testament as a natural animal or as a comparison, with some examples as, in Gen 27:11 where it refers to Esau as a “hairy” man, Gen 37:31 as a goat or a baby-goat and in Lev 4:23, as a male goat without any defect.

Only in two texts, both in Isaiah, it has been acknowledged as satyrs. Isa 13:21 envisages that satyrs will dance amongst doleful creatures and Isa 34:14 describes a situation where the satyr shall cry out. The following translations of Isa 13:21 use the word satyrs: ERV, KJV, GNV, RSV, WEB, and Isa 34:14: KJV, LXA, LEI, WEB, NJB, ERV, RSV, GNV.

Other translations of satyr are goat-demons, evil spirits, hairy-goats, wild goats, devils, wolves, and monsters. It is also translated as “sacrifices for satyrs” in Lev 17:7 (RSV, NJB). However, the texts cited in Isaiah 13 and 34 do have mythological undertones. Only two distinctive descriptions appear in the Old Testament to assist in picturing the satyr. Isa 13: 21 notes that it can “dance” and that it must have had a distinctive voice as it could “cry out” (Isa 34:14). Consequently, one must venture extra-biblically for a possibly more comprehensive description of the satyr. The satyr is a well attested mythological figure in Greek mythology, where it is generally depicted as a creature with the head and torso of a man, but walking with goat legs and feet. It is also mostly depicted with goat ears and horns.

5.4 DEMONS

This discussion of demons is brief and merely constitutes an overview of the topic. This section only compares their existence with the demons of the ANE, mentioned in the previous chapter. As in the ANE, demons existed amongst the Israelites, but
the Hebrew Bible does not exactly tout their presence. Extra-biblical information is also sparse. However, demons did exist in the life-world of ancient Israel.

Sammael, meaning “venom of God” and in Jewish literature sometimes as the “prince of devils” is best known as the fallen angel and guardian of Sheol. He had four demon wives and was also the husband of Lilith. The demon Abaddon, the demon of death, was the leader of a swarm of locusts that were demonic creatures. Abaddon had the body of a winged horse with a scorpion tail, but had a human face. He was the demon of death and destruction and under the control of another demon Sammael. Aluqah was a blood drinking demon (but not a vampire).

Although both the etymology and meaning of the name Azazel are not clear, it appears to be the personal name of a demon. The desert demon Azazel is depicted as resembling a goat with seven serpent heads, each head with two faces. He had human feet and hands, and could fly with his twelve wings. The Grigori are recognised as fallen angels who once served God. Mentioned in Daniel 4: 13,17, 23 and Enoch, they also disobeyed God’s law by choosing to marry human women and to father a race of children known as the Nephilim. They are generally described as large human beings who never slept and usually remained silent.

315 John D Ladd, Commentary on the Book of Enoch (Canton: Xulon, 2008), 64.
316 Bane, Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures, 206.
317 Ibid., 260.
318 Van Der Toorn, Becking, and Horst, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD, 1.
319 Bane, Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures, 10.
320 Job 28:22; Prov 15:11, 27:20; Job 26:6; Ps 88:11.
321 Bane, Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures, 33.
322 Prov 30:15.
323 Van Der Toorn, Becking, and Horst, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD, 128.
324 Bane, Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures, 62.
325 Lev 16:8,10, 26.
326 Bane, Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures, 153.
5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced and highlighted the often-masked existence of monsters and demons in the Hebrew Bible. The prevalence of similar creatures in the ANE, leads to interesting comparisons with those in the Hebrew Bible. The translators of the OT have unfortunately aided the “submersing” of these creatures, by deliberate vague translations ignoring the quest for the possible fusion of horizons of the source texts and the target text readers. The investigation and exposing of shortcomings in the translation processes and approaches regarding the prevalence of these monsters in the relevant texts, does not form part of the main aim of this study. The fact that these mythical creatures do exist and live in the Hebrew Bible, aids the tenet that myth is intrinsic in the ancient Israelite life-world.

The information regarding the actual existence of monsters and demons in the Hebrew Bible is imperative for supporting the notion that mythical creatures such as sea-monsters associated with the primeval sea do not appear in isolation. Chapter 4 discussed ANE monsters, dragons and demons, as well as the presence and central influence of the dominant primeval sea-monsters of each regional culture. Chapter 6 will concentrate exclusively on Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible, whereas Chapter 7 will cover the sea-monsters related to Leviathan, such as Rahab, תַּנִִּ֖ין, amongst others as they appear in the OT. Serpents associated with dragons and referred to in many biblical texts, could have been dealt with in this chapter, but will be discussed in due course in the next two chapters.

Thus, we may conclude that serpents and other monsters played an important role in the life-world of the ancient Israelites. This chapter highlights the fact that all serpents are named different and individually, meaning that each possess a unique and definite personality. This includes the fiery flying serpent, and other serpent-like monsters such as Leviathan and Rahab, which will be discussed in the following two chapters.
CHAPTER 6 - LEVIATHAN IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The appearance of Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible has caused some consternation amongst biblical exegetes and scholars. The Hebrew word, לִוְיָתָן, appears explicitly in only five texts in the Hebrew Bible, namely in Job 3:8; 41:1; Ps 74:14; 104:26; and Isa 27:1. In Isa 27:1 the Leviathan is mentioned twice. Each of these texts will be dealt with in this chapter in the following manner. Firstly, translations of each text will be examined and compared. After that, each translation will be classified regarding the various theories and approaches to biblical translation, as well as a discussion of why each translation was chosen with regard to Leviathan. Next, an exegesis of each of the relevant texts will be done to obtain a more distinct picture of Leviathan. After the exegesis of all these five texts, Leviathan will be compared with sea-monsters from the ANE as discussed in Chapter 4, focussing on possible similarities and differences between them, concluding with construing the information gathered.

6.1 TRANSLATIONAL OVERVIEW

Leviathan is an extremely controversial creature in the Hebrew Bible. This is evident in how he has been translated from the Masoretic Texts. A translational overview of Leviathan’s five appearances by name, will be dealt with first, each under its own heading.

6.1.1 Job 3:8

The first mention of Leviathan by name, in the current ordering of the books of the Bible, is in Job 3:8. Even here a further polemical issue arises. Most translations, such as ESV read “Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.” The NRS though, contains a radical deviation, not speaking of cursing the “day,” but cursing the “sea,” “Let those curse it who curse the Sea, those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan.” This poses an exegetical dilemma, and it will be addressed later in this chapter.
6.1.2 Job 41:1

The second appearance of Leviathan by name is in Job 41:1 (English). (Some other texts differ in verse numbers, such as Job 40:25 and Job 40:20). Chapter 41 in the Book of Job serves as Yahweh’s introduction, and comprehensive and graphic description, of Leviathan. Job 41:1 reads, “Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or press down its tongue with a cord?” (NRS).

6.1.3 Psalm 74:13-14

The psalms, and specifically Ps 74:13-14, provide more explicit renditions of the mythological imagery of chaos monsters, although they mostly became “tamed” by translators. Ps 74:13-14 reads, “… by your power you split the sea in two, and smashed the heads of the monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed Leviathan's heads, gave him as food to the wild animals.” (NJB)

6.1.4 Psalm 104:6

Leviathan appears in a second psalm. This time, though, not as a fierce and terrifying sea-monster, threatening the ordered chaos, but as a tame sea animal, specially created by Yahweh as his personal plaything. Ps 104:26 reads, “There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein (KJV).”

6.1.5 Isaiah 27:1

The translation of Isaiah 27:1 by Blenkinsopp327 reads,

On that day: Yahweh will punish with his sword, grim, mighty, and strong, Leviathan the pursuing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the Dragon [Tannin] which is in the primaeval sea.

For a coherent review of Isa 27:1, the text has been split into four sections. Isa 27:1a, speaks about that day that Yahweh will use his magnificent sword against his enemy. Translations present varied descriptions of Yahweh’s sword, where

translators seem to have applied as much artistic liberty as possible to make that sword of God enormous and frightening. Isa 27:1b speaks of the punishment of Leviathan the piercing serpent, Isa 27:1c mentions Leviathan the crooked serpent and Isa 27:1d concludes the text with the promise that Yahweh will slay the sea-monster.

6.2 EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

The Masoretic Text, together with twenty-four translations in English, German, Dutch, as well as the LXX have been consulted and compared. For the sake of easy referencing, the representation of Leviathan in the different translations of the five relevant Bible texts, is presented in a table format. This table below includes the following information:

a) The left column contains all the words used to name Leviathan.
b) The next five columns indicate the relevant biblical texts.
c) These two columns form part of the translations as a whole.
d) The numbers listed in the columns indicate how many of the 25 translations of each text used the listed translated word.
e) The section on the right of the table evaluates these translations under two headings, namely, Approach and Fidelity.
f) Approach indicates whether the translation has been functional or formal.
g) Fidelity is the overarching evaluation of whether the translations are truthful to both the source text and the target text. The various approaches and evaluation of translations are listed below. These include translatorial gatekeeping, falsification, the principle of necessary precision, whether the translation had been loyal or not to the audience and skopos.
Table 6:1 Translation choices and fidelity in translation – a summarised insight and conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPROACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 3:8</td>
<td>Formal</td>
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<td>Job 41:1</td>
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<td>Ps 74:13-14</td>
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<td>Ps 104:26</td>
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<td>Isa 27:1</td>
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<td>Loyalty to audience</td>
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<td>No loyalty to audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skopos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Leviathan         | 16 15 15 14 16 |   |   |   |   |
| leviathan         | 2 7 6 7 6   | * |   |   |   |
| sea-monster       | 6           | * |   |   |   |
| monster/gedracht  | 1 1 5 1 8  | * |   |   |   |
| dragon/κῆτος/δράκοντα | 1 1 15 2 20 | * |   |   |   |
| serpent/snake     | 1 2 49     | * |   |   |   |
| sea-beast         | 1 1        | * |   |   |   |
| reptile           | 1          | * |   |   |   |
| whale/fish        | 1          |   |   |   |   |
| mourning/rouw     | 4          |   |   |   |   |

This table reveals how Leviathan has been treated in translation. The column on the left lists all the names that were used to translate Leviathan with. Two concepts, Leviathan as a footnote, and “monster-like” as a symbolic description, have not been inserted in the table. The first has been omitted because of the variations in a specific Bible translation. Here, the NIV will be used as an overall example. One
is a study Bible, and the other a normal edition. The Study Bible has a central as well as a footnote column, whereas the standard version has very little and sparse footnotes only. Not all Bibles generally have extensive footnotes, and any reference to a specific footnote in a Bible version, may be disputed solely based on the non-consistency of footnotes even in one specific translation. However, some footnotes do attempt to honour the loyalty to the source text as well as the reader. To depict and include “monster-like” symbolic descriptions will confuse an already populated table. Some translations, for example, may possess a hint of symbolism, but lean stronger to a real animal.

Leviathan, written with a capital letter, is translated on average fifteen times per translated text. This represents 60% of the twenty five translations consulted. However, this percentage is skewed because the name Leviathan appears twice in Isa 27:1. The insertion of the name “leviathan” in lower case, is vague. Leviathan (with a capital letter) distinctly indicates a known sea-monster. Some translations write leviathan in lower case, thereby minimising his importance and deliberately ignoring Leviathan’s intrinsic meaning in the ancient context. This manner of translation, does admit to some aspects that may be likened to real Leviathan, but this is an attempt to gatekeep Leviathan, the sea-monster. Therefore, it closes the horizon of the ancient text to the modern reader in a subtle manner, and an altered insight is gained.

Other translations use generic terms for Leviathan as a basic creature such as “dragon,” “monster” and “great snake.” Four translations prove to ignore Leviathan completely, and elected to use words such as “mourning”. It becomes very clear from the table, that some translations deny any mythical presence in the text by being vague, or by identifying Leviathan with a natural animal, such as a whale. Another translation of Leviathan as a “whale”, not part of the selected Bible translations, is the DRA (Isa 27:1). In Ps 74:13-14 Leviathan is depicted as a fierce and fearsome sea-dragon, threatening the ordered chaos, but Ps 104:26, differs dramatically from this and all the other texts by depicting Leviathan as a tame sea
animal, a mere pet for Yahweh’s sole pleasure to play with. A case of “hero to zero” in thirty psalms?

The right-hand side of table 6.1 provides for two insights. Firstly, an overview into whether the translation of Leviathan honoured formal or functional equivalence. The recognition of the translation ‘monster’ as leaning toward formal equivalence, is because of the attempt by the translation to emphasise to readers that it was not an ordinary animal. The table does not recognise the translations of ‘whale’ and ‘mourning’ as being either formal or functional equivalence, as these texts deliberately falsified the source texts. I must concur with Habel regarding ‘whale’ as being totally out of place, “The mythological understanding of Leviathan in Canaan and the Old Testament, however, militates against the N.E.B. interpretation.” These kinds of translations clearly deny any mythical propensity by either being vague or by regarding Leviathan as a natural animal. The promotion of own preconceived beliefs, deliberately mislead readers.

A further representation in table 6.2 is evaluating the approaches regarding fidelity to the source text. It is salient to provide a summary of the various approaches discussed in Chapter 2. Fidelity addresses the need for an ethical correlation between the source text and the target text. It is an overarching concept to evaluate different approaches such as translatorial gatekeeping and falsification. Its aim is to assess whether a translated text honours both the source text and the modern reader. For ease of quick referencing regarding this table and subsequent similar tables in this chapter, the following briefly defines approaches followed in translations:

- Translatorial gatekeeping is the deliberate silencing of problematic facts or by simply ignoring these contentious notions as unnecessary information.
- Falsification is deliberate removal and/or altering of words and concepts from the source text and replacing it with a different impression.

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• The principle of necessary precision is the application of all the significant information that can assist with fusing the horizon of the text and the reader.

• Foreignisation stresses the fundamental need for the modern reader to be made fully aware of the foreignness of the source text, and that foreign needs to be honoured as foreign.

• Loyalty may be a two-edged sword and simply expects the translator to be loyal to the source and its author, as well as the target audience. Here the translator, especially regarding biblical translations, often misconceives loyalty by promoting his/her own beliefs and dogmatic understanding. Accordingly, this loyalty does not consider the source text and its audience, but only personal preconceptions.

• Skopos focusses on information from the source text that is transferred in a way that the reader in a specific culture may extract the intended meaning from the source text.

Please consult table 6.1 for the evaluation of translational fidelity, but please keep in mind a germane reminder of the problems of translation as Luther (cited by Jobes\textsuperscript{329}) states:

\begin{quote}
... if it were translated everywhere word for word - as the Jews [i.e. the Septuagint] and foolish translators would have it done - and not for the most part according to the sense, no one would understand it… We have taken care to use language that is clear and that everybody can understand, without perverting the sense and meaning.\textsuperscript{330}
\end{quote}

In some translations, Leviathan has been described by name, in clear language that everyone can understand. But any attempt to introduce him as a natural animal, surely does “… pervert the sense of meaning.”\textsuperscript{331} A leviathan or a monster does not reflect the grandeur of Leviathan as a voracious primaeval sea-monster

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{329} Karen H. Jobes, ‘Relevance Theory and the Translation of Scripture,’ \textit{JETS} 50, no. 4 (December 2007): 781.\\
\textsuperscript{330} Luther clearly headed his own insight when he translated Job 3:8, but his translation of Ps 104:26 is contradictory and be discussed later in this chapter.\\
\textsuperscript{331} Reiterating the last line of Luther quote above.
\end{flushright}
with the innate ability to return the ordered world back into chaos. Presenting Leviathan as a “great whale” is identifying this creature as a natural animal. This is misleading and gross falsification.

Fidelity to the source text and to the reader can only be achieved, by calling a universally well-known primeval sea-monster by name, Leviathan.

6.2.1 Assessing translations of Leviathan.

Interpreters and translators of the Hebrew Bible must bridge over two millennia. During this time, Leviathan started to represent different things to different people. To some, Leviathan is a symbol of wicked empires and nations. To others, any possible mythical reference in the Hebrew Bible borders on heresy. Intrinsically disturbed by the idea of a mythological creature, they have no other option than to reduce it to something understandable and controllable. These types of translations may be a reflection of the translator’s own insight and beliefs that Leviathan should be no more than an actual living animal.

It is evident that biblical authors, and their target audiences, were unmistakeably familiar with Leviathan. However, modern readers mostly are ignorant of what role Leviathan really performed in the ANE. Fidelity to the text though requires the correct translation, irrespective of whether the modern reader may understand it or not. In cases where the translator believes it is salient, a footnote should assist in educating or informing the modern reader.

Furthermore, Leviathan was a sea-monster associated with primeval chaos, but later the interpretations changed. Thomas Aquinas likened Leviathan with a whale, although admitting that it possessed an evil wickedness but in a nonliteral manner.332 Even some modern Bible translations speak of Leviathan as a whale. Two examples in this study are Job 3:8, where LXA speaks of a “great whale” (Table 6.1), and in Isa 27:1 DRA uses the term “whale.”

332 Gordis, The Book of Job, 563.
Leviathan has been associated with the crocodile mostly. Samuel Bochart identified Leviathan as a crocodile in a publication in 1663. Since then, especially from the early 1890s up to the late 1950s, many scholars interpreted Leviathan as an actual living animal – a crocodile. An interesting change of thought is S.R. Driver’s interpretation when he initially equated Leviathan with a crocodile, but many years later, he identified him as a whale. Lastly, Leviathan was also likened to a “tunny” and a dolphin.333

Table 6.1 has highlighted these differences as well as the approaches in translations. Some translations have been exposed as either falsifying Leviathan or guilty of translatorial gatekeeping. This will now be elaborated upon, followed by a discussion on falsification.

6.2.2 Translatorial gatekeeping

Evaluating the relevant texts on Leviathan, it became clear that some translations applied translatorial gatekeeping. One example of translatorial gatekeeping, where the source text had been free from gatekeeping by its author, is Job 3:8 that reads, “Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.” לִּוְיָתָָֽן (ESV). The author called Leviathan by name. However, by means of translatorial gatekeeping Leviathan is displaced by translating it as “the great whale” (LXA) that is no more than a natural animal. Leviathan as a specific cosmic element and mythical creature has been “silenced” and replaced by a more innocent and harmless natural animal, devoid of any intrinsic danger. The KJV translator of the same text is also guilty of translatorial gatekeeping with the translation of “their mourning,” a synonym for bereavement, sorrow, lamentation or grief. Again, Leviathan has been “silenced” in the most astute and deliberate ignorance of Leviathan as being undesirable and too contentious. The translator subsequently changed information to influence the receiver/s of the message in a predetermined way.

6.2.3 Falsification

Falsification is a major tool used by translators to radically change the context of the text. The fact that Leviathan is not mentioned by name, but is called a fleeing snake and a twisting snake, should not make people think that it refers to a normal snake (even though the Septuagint translates it with “serpent”). Wildberger\footnote{Wildberger, Jesaja 13-27, 1005.} points to Amos 9:3 speaking of a serpent that is in the sea, and here the Septuagint translates it with dragon. Similarly, Job 26:13 speaks of the “fleeing” serpent, obviously referring to Leviathan, but does not mention his name.

An exegesis of the five texts in which Leviathan is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, now follows. Thereafter a comparative analysis of Leviathan and the sea-monsters associated with the primeval flood will be done.

6.3 EXEGESIS OF JOB 3:8

The dating of the book of Job varies greatly, from as early as the 12\textsuperscript{th} century BCE to as late as the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BCE.\footnote{Seow, Job 1-21, 224.} Some attempts to narrow it further, from around 587 BCE to a very early origin.\footnote{Rebecca S Watson, Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme Of ‘chaos’ in the Hebrew Bible (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 16.} However, most critical scholars agree with a late date, although the setting may have been projected back into earlier times. Job 3 is regarded as an individual lament, although it deviates from the norm regarding addressing Yahweh directly and is seemingly directed at no one in particular.\footnote{Seow, Job 1-21, 66.} Westermann\footnote{Claus Westermann, The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis, trans. C A Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 31–33.} suggests that Yahweh is specifically not addressed, because Yahweh is the enemy to which Job complains. A further disagreement with other laments in the Old Testament is that no other lament comprises such a protracted curse as that appearing in Job 3. The book of Job exists of prose and poetry, called the prose framework and the poetic middle, thought to be composed by
different authors. An observation is that Job displays two different personalities in the prose tale and the poetic middle. In the prose tale Job is a patient person, but in the poetic middle, Job becomes hostile and impatient. The scholarly debate lies in which section had been composed first. Some are confident that prose preceded poetry, but others believed that the poetic part was earlier and only later supplemented by prose.

When reading the book of Job, one immediately comes under the impression that Job is a poet who has a beautiful way with words. Seow continues that the enigmatic beauty of Job’s poetry lies in clever word play. This word play may be problematic in some texts, and specifically in Job 3:8. Job’s poetic narrative is aided by word play, including homographs, probably because of the original text being written without consonants. Job 3:8 is a perfect example where ים (ym), may be vocalised as either יומ, meaning “day” or ים meaning “sea”. Consequently, this will obviously lead to radically different interpretations. However, it seems that most translations prefer the word “day”.

A further example of the presence of other homographs in Job 3:8 is הנשימים which can be vocalised as הָ֣אָתִידִּים, meaning “living human specialists”, or vocalised as הָ֣אָתֵּדַּדִּים meaning “idols dwelling in the afterlife.” A choice between these two homographs, combined with the interpretation of either “day” or “sea,” poses further problems regarding reaching an understanding of the text.

The reading of the two sets of homographs in its possible permutations proves to be interesting. Consideration of the occurrence of ים in Job 3:8 (the word ים is also used repetitively in verses 3-5 as well), and being cognisant that the interpretation

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343 Ibid., 80.
here is “day” (yom), the subsequent cursing would be understood to be “enchanters of Day”, which means those who cast a spell on the day.\textsuperscript{345} When ים is interpreted as “sea,” the cursing would denote “enchanters of the sea.” Interestingly, Seow does not find any occurrence of enchanters casting spells against the “day,” either in the Hebrew Bible or the ANE.\textsuperscript{346} On the other hand, enchanters of the “sea” are attested in extra-biblical Jewish magical texts.\textsuperscript{347} Fishbane\textsuperscript{348} here cites an Aramaic incantation from Nippur: “I enchant you with the adjuration duration of Yam, and the spell of Leviathan the serpent.” This clearly contradicts the decision of most translations to translate ים as “day”. A reading of ים as “sea” אֵרֶי־יָם, thus reads “the enhancers of the sea.”\textsuperscript{349} The use of “enchanters of the sea” clearly reflects that spells are to be cast against the sea-monsters.

To make things even more involved is the word וּיֶקֶב ה, “curse it”. When ים is translated as “day,” the meaning is certainly “curse it.” On the other hand, when interpreted as “sea” אֵרֶי־יָם, it subsequently changes the verb נָָקִַּ֤בְ, which may then be construed either as to “curse it,” or to “pierce it.”\textsuperscript{350} When the interpretation is “pierce it,” it is prone to comparisons with other texts in the Hebrew Bible where Leviathan is described as to be a piercing serpent, (Isa 27:1). The verb נָָקִַּ֤בְ correctly indicates “piercing” in relation to the sea-monster, as also attested in Job 40:24; 41:2 and Hab 3:14.

It is, therefore, understandable that some scholars are finding support in a later Israelite text that regard “sea” and Leviathan as an equivalent duo, have emended יָם, meaning “day” with יָם meaning “sea”.\textsuperscript{351} In the light of this, and because vowels had been added to the consonant text much later, “day” therefore is clearly an oversight and should actually be referred to as the “sea.” This is congruent with

\textsuperscript{345} Seow, Job 1-21, 323.
\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 324.
\textsuperscript{347} Enchanters of the “sea” is also attested in ANE literature.
\textsuperscript{349} Seow, Job 1-21, 324.
\textsuperscript{350} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 349.
the mythological link between Leviathan and the “sea.” Therefore, Job 3:8 clearly implies that once Leviathan is aroused from its slumber, chaos will break loose and it will again oppose creation. The translation should then rather read like this, “Let those who are skilled to curse the sea, dare to incite Leviathan!”

Job 3:8, as briefly set out above, seems to be indebted to ANE heritages. In Egypt, the ḥāʾātīdîm, “the skilled ones” (living human beings), made incantations regarding representing the knives used against Apophis to fight him in his battle against the sun god Re on his sun- barge through the underworld. This is congruent with a similar suppression of ANE sea-monsters. The gods in the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish cast spells and charms to fight their enemy Tiamat, the primeval monster. Ea casts “… his superb magic spell” (I.60-66) and Anu begs his father for help as his spell cannot counter Tiamat. (II.109-110). Marduk “… was holding a spell ready upon his lips…” as he approached the raging Tiamat (IV.60-61) and “He was reciting the incantation, casting his spell…” (IV.91). Ugaritic literature tells of Baal’s battle with Yamm which also exhibits incantations (CTU 1.2.IV.11-15).

The use of “enchanters of the sea” in Job 3:8 may initially indicate that spells are to be cast against the sea-monsters. In fact, Job is doing the exact opposite by invoking a deliberate awakening of the sea-monster by the skilled ones in the netherworld, ḥāʾātūdîm. Job (3:8), is clearly invoking death and darkness to return in the place of life and light, thereby causing an ironic twist, where the supposed suppressed become the roused instead.

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353 My translation.
354 Seow, Job 1-21, 325.
355 Ibid., 380.
356 Ibid.
darkness of the midnight before creation morning.” Job wants Leviathan to be awakened so that primordial chaos and subsequent darkness may return.

This image in Job 3:8 by calling up Leviathan is based on the notion that the cosmic sea-monster can, indeed, be conjured up by means of magic to cause an eclipse “… either by swallowing the sun or the moon or wrapping its coils around them.” However, the eclipse though, has the propensity to swallow the celestial dragon.

Many cultures believed that an eclipse exemplifies a cosmic dragon swallowing either the sun or the moon. An example is an Ugaritic text, CTU 1.6.VI.45-52, where the sun-goddess Shapsh, supported by skilled divine beings, attempts to gain authority over the creatures of the netherworld. This control over the sea monsters can take place either during the “day” or in the “sea,” possibly indicating a similar word play as witnessed in Job 3:8.

Another interesting occurrence in Job 3:8 is the use of the verb עֹרֵ ר “to rouse/raise up”. This is the same word used by Job 41:10 regarding Leviathan as well as Isa 51:9 with the call for Yahweh’s fight Rahab. This proves the general impact of Leviathan in the life-world of the Israelites. Adding to this, it is interesting to note that the NRS translation uses a capital letter for “Sea,” clearly indicating that it is not a generic sea being referred to, but “sea” as being the personification of chaos.

Job, caught up in and struggling to survive in his own personal crisis, subsequently introduces Leviathan (fully depicted in Job 40:25 - 41:26, English translations 41:1-34) as a supernatural cosmic sea-monster, Leviathan). Job (3:8) pleads for the arousal of Leviathan, the principal dragon of darkness, to extinguish the light and

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358 Seow, Job 1-21, 326.
360 Seow, Job 1-21, 352.
361 Ibid.
362 For a comprehensive reflection on ym as either ‘day’ or ‘sea’, refer to Seow, pages 349-350.
to return creation to its original state of primordial chaos. What is interesting, is that some ANE laments resemble the lamentation of Job 3, especially the decision of the divine council of the Atrahasis Epic, where they invoke a spell “May the day become dark; let it become gloom again.” Clines is basically in agreement that Job yearns for the total destruction of the ordered world, but insists that Job only uses celestial metaphors to describe his hope for this outcome.

No physical description of Leviathan is given in Job 3:8 but the text alludes to a slumbering monster. The invocation of incantations implies that when the monster is aroused, magical things happen. After consideration of extra-biblical similarities in the ANE, Leviathan may be identified as a primaeval sea-monster encircling the earth. This conclusion is in full agreement with Mobley, who states that Job 3 is giving an explicit rendition of the chaos monster just before creation dawned in Genesis 1.

6.4 EXEGESIS OF JOB 41:1

Except for the beginning of the book of Job, where Yahweh appears in the heavenly council, Yahweh only makes his next appearance in chapter 38. Here Yahweh appears in all his majesty until Job 41. Scholnick calls this section “Poetry in the Courtroom.” Yahweh here describes his dominion over the universe, his creation of the world (38:4-11), his command over nature and its inhabitants (38:24-39:30), stressing his overall role as provider (38:39-41). Then he describes the earth with all its wondrous inhabitants. Finally, he describes first Behemoth and then Leviathan. Yahweh begins his oration by asking who can catch Leviathan with “a fish-hook,” or in some translations with just “a hook”? The mere idea that Leviathan/leviathan/the leviathan could be brought to the surface by an ordinary fish hook seems beyond reality for the ancient audience. It also appears impossible

363 Seow, Job 1-21, 314.
to tie Leviathan’s tongue, or jaw with a rope. It is clearly impossible to expect this of any human being, or even any other creature. Verses 1-2 reiterates that “… known techniques for capturing huge beasts are ineffective against a monster of Leviathan’s proportions” as Leviathan is “invincible”.366 Yahweh alone, may be up to this task. Job 38-41 may be deemed to be part of the prose framework, but it is also somewhat different. This section is rich in poetic grandeur, and could well have fit in with the poetic middle.

Keller argues that Yahweh’s discourse with Job (38-41) is an exegetical restatement of the creation account canonised in Genesis 1 and that the “Joban whirlwind recapitulates, alters and amplifies the P narrative,” which “… recalls the mythological intertext of the Babylonian cosmogony.”367 Another insight focusses on God’s question to Job (41:4), whether Leviathan will make a covenant with Job, and God effectively says to Job that he, Yahweh, had in fact already made a covenant with Leviathan, and that chaos was part of the plan.368 These two insights will bolster the argument later in this chapter that Leviathan cannot be a natural creature.

Job 41 provides the best description of Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible. This rendition of singing Leviathan’s praises is rich in metaphors and poetic skills, and may easily be rejected as an overstated and exaggerated picture of Leviathan. Poetic use of language does not equate a handful of metaphor and hyperbole with no substance. In fact, poetry “… touches the sense of reality, it enhances the sense of reality, heightens it, intensifies it.”369 Thus, “… poetic truth is factual truth, seen.”370 Therefore the description of Leviathan in Job 41, should definitely not be down-sized as being a metaphorical depiction of a real living creature. The

369 Stevens, The Necessary Angel, 77.
370 Ibid., 159.
Leviathan that Yahweh introduces, is not a first introduction to the Israelite audience of the time. The people had been exposed to this sea-monster tradition since the beginning. They knew full well that Leviathan was not a normal animal, and they understood Yahweh’s description of Leviathan anything but hyperbole. It is a genuine depiction of what he, Yahweh, had conquered before as well as his magnificent enemy in the end times.

Yahweh’s description of Leviathan starts off with its enormous power and gigantic size, a description of the core of his being – the heart, his face, necks and the ability to spew fire, his terrible jaws and teeth and his impregnable body. Finally, his power is described as commanding the sea and his ability to even make תְה֑וֹם boil. (Job 41:32, English; Hebrew, Job 41:23). After every description, a random selection of translations assists with the elucidation of Leviathan’s description in Job 41.

**Leviathan’s power and size:** Leviathan is masterly built, graceful in form and strong and powerful! He has unbelievable power. Metals are like straw or rotten wood. He is so enormous and powerful that he leaves a deep wake in the water behind him when he moves, like a white fleece upon the waters of the deep.

I will not be silent about Leviathan’s limbs, its strength, or its graceful form. (Job 41:12 GWN)

He counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. (Job 41:27 RSV)

Behind him he leaves a glistening wake; one would think the deep had white hair. (Job 41:32 NIB)

**Leviathan’s heart is like a rock:** His heart is as hard as a stone, hard as the lower millstone. (Job 41:24 ESV)

**Leviathan spews fire:**
When Leviathan sneezes, it gives out a flash of light. Its eyes are like the first rays of the dawn. (Job 41:18 GWN)
His nostrils belch smoke like a cauldron boiling on the fire. Job 41:12 NJB)
His breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from his mouth. (Job 41:21 NIV)

**His neck(s) is/are incredible and powerful:** Everyone, even the strong, looking at him are struck with terror. He causes consternation with his presence.

The tremendous strength in Leviathan’s neck strikes terror wherever it goes. (Job 41:22 NLT)

When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid: they are beside themselves with consternation. (Job 41:25 DBY)

The mighty are afraid when Leviathan rises. Broken down, they draw back. (Job 41:25 GWN)

**Leviathan has exceedingly strong jaws and terrifying teeth:**

Who will open the doors of his face? terror is round about his teeth. (Job 41:5 LXA)

Who can open his jaws, surrounded by those terrifying teeth? (Job 41:14 CSB)

**Leviathan is unconquerable:**

His body is impregnable, solid as metal and nothing can harm him. Even spears or arrows cannot penetrate his armoured scales. Sling stones disintegrate against his body. A steel club is like a stubble to him. He laughs in disdain when a sword or spear is raised against him. Even his underbelly cannot be penetrated. Instead, it is strengthened by sharp edges that plough through the wet earth.371

His body is like molten shields, shut close up with scales pressing upon one another. (Job 41:6 DRA)

One scale is so close to another that no air can pass between them. (Job 41:16 CSB)

The folds of his flesh are joined together, solid as metal and immovable. (Job 41:23 CSB)

The sword may come near him but is not able to go through him; the spear, or the arrow, or the sharp-pointed iron. (Job 41:26 BBE)

Arrows do not make him flee; slingstones are like chaff to him. (Job 41:28 NIV)

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371 The normal Achilles heel for dragons is the belly.
A club is regarded as stubble, and he laughs at the whirring of a javelin. (Job 41:29 CSB)

It’s undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. (Job 41:30 TNIV)

**Leviathan is the deity of primeval chaos:**

He has full power and command over the sea. When he rises, the sea flees. He has the power to even make the deep boil like a kettle.

When he stands up, the waves take fright and the billows of the sea retreat. (Job 41:17 NJB)

It makes the deep sea boil like a pot. It stirs up the ocean like a boiling kettle. (Job 41:31 GWN)

**Leviathan is fearless:**

He is a monster without fear. Even on dry earth, he has no equal. He is king of the terrible!

Op de aarde is niets met hem te vergelijken, die gemaakt is om zonder schrik te wezen. (Job 41:33 SVV)

Nothing on earth is his equal—a creature without fear. (Job 41:33 NIV)

There is no power upon earth that can be compared with him who was made to fear no one. (Job 41:24 DRA)

**Leviathan is king of all creatures:**

Of all the creatures, it is the proudest. It is the king of beasts. (Job 41:34 NLT)

Leviathan has now been introduced in all its grandeur. Yahweh, in person, described Leviathan, although…

We do not have immediate access to the historical leviathan even in Scripture. We have a mediated leviathan, one that now exists before our
eyes only in a text and as text. Only in the text does the truth of the leviathan come to us.\textsuperscript{372}

The question that needs to be answered is: Does Leviathan form an integral part of the ancient Near East dragon-slaying traditions? This will be answered later in this chapter.

6.5 EXEGESIS PSALM 74:13-14

The temple had been demolished by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.\textsuperscript{373} The Israelites believed that the Temple was the centre of the universe, and subsequently, it was also the core of their being. Therefore, the destruction of the temple implicated that everything in their lives had collapsed. They were thus lamenting their existence of nothingness. Psalm 74:12-17 thus reflects a true communal lament, a recital of the glorious past, where the destruction of the temple on Mount Zion is bemoaned and by asking Yahweh why he withholds his right arm from destroying the enemies. As mentioned, this psalm is evidently set during the Babylonian exile, as v. 7 describes the burning down of the Temple. As part of the third section of psalms (Pss 73-89), Psalm 74 is the first exilic psalm, and enigmatic as it also contains traces of antiquity.\textsuperscript{374} Gerstenberger\textsuperscript{375} is more concerned over “the life-situation and liturgical setup”, than the exact dating of the psalm. Psalm 74 introduces its audience to a violent God who is extremely angry with his chosen people. Everything is ruined. All that remains is to search for the source of hope. Verses 13-14 thus depict Elohim as a warrior who battles against the source of chaos, embodied by the sea-monsters.\textsuperscript{376} It also recalls Yahweh’s bringing order to the world from primeval chaos, where Leviathan as the primeval sea-monster of chaos

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\textsuperscript{374} Craig Davis, Dating the Old Testament (New York: RJ Communications, 2007), 334.
\end{flushright}
had been overcome. Moreover, if Yahweh had overcome this fierce monster, the current “monster-enemy” that flattened their temple, is not really a match for Yahweh. Life on earth was thus made possible only after the chaos monster had been defeated. Leviathan in Ps. 74:14, therefore, reflects Yahweh’s conquest over the personification of chaos.

Gordon\(^{377}\) believes that this myth of the dualistic battle between the primary deity and the sea was deeply entrenched in Canaan from a pre-Hebraic era and that this myth of conflict, as well as the Canaanite literature and folklore, had been absorbed by the Hebrews at the very beginning of Israelite history in Canaan. Accordingly, it was possible that the psalmist in Ps 74:13-14 was indeed familiar with the Ugaritic Lotan as this name is similar to Leviathan.\(^{378}\) It is evident that both the Psalmist in Ps 74:13-14 and the Prophet (Isa 27:1) expected their audiences to have known that Yahweh had defeated the chaos monster before time started, and therefore, the audiences did not need an in-depth account.\(^{379}\)

The Israelites thus had prior knowledge of the *Chaoskampf*. Bernstein\(^{380}\) recognises the mythical motifs associated with the conflict between Baal and Yamm in Ps 74:13-14. In addition, he believes that a “double literal-metaphorical translation” has redrafted these texts by using the Exodus narrative of splitting the Red Sea, where the “heads of Leviathan” becomes “the heads of Pharaoh’s warriors” (PST). Other interpretations understand the epithets allegorically – the fleeing serpent is the fast-flowing Tigris and the wriggling snake is the Euphrates.\(^{381}\)

In Ps 74: 12-17 one witnesses a standoff between Yahweh and Leviathan, similar to that of Marduk versus Tiamat in the Enuma Elish, where Marduk defeats Tiamat, the personification of the primordial sea (depicted as a multi-headed dragon, the ocean goddess in tablet IV). Marduk splits Tiamat apart, just as Yahweh splits the sea in Ps 74:13. Marduk crushes Tiamat’s skull just as Yahweh crushes the skulls of Leviathan in Ps 74:13-14. After defeating Tiamat, Marduk puts the finishing touches on his creation by invoking the moon to appear, creating night and day as well as creating the seasons and establishing the rivers Tigris and Euphrates (Tablet V). Yahweh does the same in Ps 74:15-17; v.15 “It was you who opened up springs and streams...”, v.16 “…you established the sun and moon”, v.17 “…you made both summer and winter...” (NIV). Psalm 74: 13-17 hence, praises Yahweh for having incapacitated the sea-monsters and for the fact that his triumph ordered the universe. This again, is reminiscent of Marduk slaying Tiamat and using her slain body to create the earth with her bottom parts and the heavens with her body’s upper half. Similarly, Psalm 74:13 uses the word פֹּרַָּּ֣רְתָ (porarta), meaning to split and to scatter. Furthermore, some motifs relating to the Baal cycle where Baal defeats the seven-headed serpent Lotan, associated with Yamm the primeval sea, also appear in Ps 74:12-14.

Ps 74:13 further speaks about the heads (plural) of the sea-monsters/dragons. This may either indicate that there is more than one sea-monster/dragon, each with one head, or the second option is one dragon with multiple heads. Some commentators see three different monsters, which represent three kingdoms – the dragon of the sea represents Egypt, the wriggling snake represents the Seleucid kingdom and the fleeing snake represents the kingdom of the Parthians. Many translations speak of the “heads of the monster/dragon,” clearly indicating one monster with multiple heads. This ambiguity is cleared when reading Ps 74:14 where all the

383 Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39; a Commentary, 222.
translations mostly speak of the heads of Leviathan. It is significant to note that the number of heads is not mentioned explicitly. The question remains, how many heads did Leviathan have? The answer may be found in Ugaritic Baal myth (KTU 1.5.1.28) where a twisting serpent with seven heads, called Lotan/Litan remarkable coincides with Leviathan in Isa 27:1 and Job 26:13. As seven heads on primeval monsters had been the general accepted norm in the ANE, in conjunction with the Hebrew Bible’s special affinity for this number (“seven” is mentioned more than three-hundred and fifty times in the Hebrew Bible), Leviathan’s head-count is most probably seven as well. A seven-headed sea-monster had been imaged on Aramaic incantation bowls from around 500 BCE, where magicians invoked Yahweh’s conquest over Leviathan to drive the evil forces out of the homes of the owners of these bowls.\textsuperscript{384} Therefore, Leviathan’s head-count may be confirmed as seven heads, but as Morton remarks, the number of heads of Leviathan would not have been known today, had the Ugaritic texts not been discovered.\textsuperscript{385}

In summary, the first section of Ps 74:13 addresses the breaking, or dividing/separating of the primeval seas and a monster, and the second part of the verse narrates the breaking of the heads of the sea-dragon. Is the second section merely a repeat of the first section in order to strengthen the message, thus meaning that the sea and the sea dragon named in the second part are the same creatures? This feature of naming the same creature two or more names can be seen in other texts, for example, Leviathan the creeping, dragon, twisting dragon - in this case not three but one creature triply annotated (Isa 27:1). In verse 13, Leviathan and the dragon are referred to as a pair (as in Isa 27:1).\textsuperscript{386}

Ps 74:12-15 gives a rendition of Yahweh’s victory over Yam/Leviathan. Here we read about Yahweh’s creation acts, where, at the time before creation, he planned

\textsuperscript{384} James P. Allen, \textit{Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 106.
\textsuperscript{386} Wildberger, \textit{Jesaja 13-27}, 1002.
to save the earth from evil. He then went into battle with Leviathan and smashed the dragon into pieces. Yahweh continued further in that he divided the primeval waters. Ps 74:16-17 then goes on to describe Yahweh’s creation acts. What one finds here is firstly, Yahweh’s battle with the primordial chaos and evil, before he subsequently resumes his creative acts. This, again, is congruent with ANE myths, but it highlights the “muddled” rendition of pre-creation conflict presented in Gen 1:1-2.

To conclude, as a “… myth constitutes a language in which the divine, people and nature enacts and interact on a world stage.”, Psalm 74:13-14 therefore “… is a good example of a myth, as God and humans participate in faith encounters. Ancient texts should, therefore, be read with a myth template.”

6.6 EXEGESIS OF PSALM 104:26

The contents of Psalm 104 do not reveal its historic background. It seems to be a universal hymn endorsing the theological views of creation as reflected in the Jerusalem cultic hymns. Attempts to date Psalm 104 prove to be extremely complex. Levenson poses the probability that it could have predated Genesis 1. In this scenario, this could well be appropriate as Psalm 104 does not attempt to describe the way the creation came about. It is rather “… a panorama of the natural world, conducted with a view to praising the creator for his superlative wisdom in conceiving and producing such an astonishing place.” Other estimates for the dating range from the dedication of the Temple by Solomon, up to the post-exilic period. However, the research conducted on Psalm 104 for this study demonstrated that the dating of the psalm is not of key significance for scholars.

The predilection strongly weighs in favour of the traditions and possible

390 Ibid.
391 Watson, Chaos Uncreated, 230.
associations with other similar texts, whether they appeared in the Hebrew Bible or in the ANE literature.

Psalm 104 belongs together with the creation Psalms such as Psalms 8 and 9. Wildberger also recognises Psalm 104 as a creation psalm dealing specifically with the primeval waters, especially from verses 7ff, but here Leviathan is not portrayed as a conflicting opponent, but as an innocent plaything for Yahweh.\(^{392}\) Adding some humour to this description of Yahweh’s plaything, Wildberger cites \textit{b. Aboda Zara} 3b from the Babylonian Talmud indicating that Yahweh actually plays with Leviathan for three hours every day. The same word appearing in v. 26, שחק (play), is also used in Job 41:5 (MT 40:29), “Wilt thou play with him as \textit{with} a bird?” (KJV). Although still enormous in size as in Job 41, here Leviathan the primordial sea-monster, has been demoted to become a meek and timid creature.

Ps. 104:9 affirms that Yahweh set borders to the sea. However, here the setting of the border is conveyed as a permanent action and that the orderly created world is never to be threatened again. This is contrary to the general belief in the ANE that chaos is only restricted and may return at any time to overturn the created order.

Psalm 104 includes so many of the creation acts in Genesis 1 that it may represent a re-run of God’s creation acts. In Ps 104:2 Yahweh “stretches the heavens like a tent.” This recalls images of the Enuma Elish, where Marduk stretches Tiamat’s body to form the heavens, while verse 3 describes Yahweh setting up the upper chamber of the waters (above the firmament). Furthermore, the psalm also seems to draw heavily on the Ugaritic texts. Ps 104:3 introduces the clouds as Yahweh’s chariot. Accordingly, Baal, in Ugarit, is called the “rider of the clouds.” More similarities between Yahweh and Baal entail that Baal also builds a palace after his victory over Yamm. Yahweh, like Baal, also employs fire and flames (v. 4), has a thundering voice (v. 7) and has a notorious window through which thunder and rain falls (v. 13). The author must have been aware of these similarities, and therefore

\(^{392}\) Wildberger, \textit{Jesaja} 13-27, 1002.
minimises the Ugaritic heritage to show that although their sun is a deity, Yahweh’s sun is but one of his ordinary creations. Yahweh is the real God, far superior to their god Baal. Importantly, Lotan, Baal’s enemy, had been a potent and deadly opponent. Yahweh’s Leviathan (v. 26) is not a chaos monster or a deity, but is downplayed as a created toy of Yahweh’s.

Clifford concurs that Psalm 104 owes much to the mythology of its neighbours, as Yahweh is portrayed in verses 1-18 as a Canaanite storm-god who subjugates the Sea. This psalm also describes the images of the Great Hymn to Aten (Egypt) whose rays illuminate the earth, vv. 19-30.

Ps 104:26 presents three visual pictures. It refers to the תְהַוֹם (v. 6), sketching a tranquil sea filled with ships faring, and Leviathan, the well-known primordial monster of the deep, frolicking in the sea. The sea and the deep have always been “handled with care” by the Israelites, exactly due to its innate propensity to turn order back into chaos. The ships in Psalm 104:26 incidentally, are regarded by Kraus as parallel to the Hymn of Akhenaten (14th century BCE) that reads “Die Schiffe fahren stromab und stromauf,” “the ships fare to and fro” (my translation). Leviathan appears here as grotesque “depontenzierten Gestalt,” and as a tame animal that plays with Yahweh.

The author just affirms the positive, negating any possible adversity of any kind, hence, presenting “… an entirely natural world, free from the play of supernatural forces.” This consideration is plausible, as Levenson also agrees that it is probable that the Psalmist has “… sanitised the old myth of Chaoskampf altogether, so that Leviathan appears ab initio…” as Yahweh’s plaything.

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395 Steck, World and Environment, 84.
396 Levenson, Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 57.
The author was obviously inspired by his personal observance of the creation and stood in awe of its magnificence. This must have induced him to compose this song of praise of Yahweh. In this euphoric and uplifted state, he obviously used all the artistic liberty he could muster, causing even Leviathan to become a plaything to the mighty Yahweh. It seems clear that this playful attitude by the psalmist is “... an assurance that the order of creation is not under threat.”397 The depiction of Leviathan as a tame plaything, therefore, rather shows evidence of wishful thinking. Living in these ancient times, the author should have been au fait with Leviathan’s real mythical character. In Ps 104:26, the author downplays this reality by reducing Leviathan’s power, thereby easing his own intrinsic fears, as well as that of his audience. What the author knew and what he conveyed, is not the same thing.

In summary, Leviathan is presented in a totally disparate manner as seen in Job 3:8; 41; Ps 74:13-14 and Isa 27:1 (discussion to follow next). Habel398 concurs with the dissonant portrayal of Leviathan in verse 26, in that “… the image is deliberately absurd: this violent chaos monster is but an infant, born from a womb, wrapped in baby clothes, placed in a playpen, and told to stay in his place.”

According to Kaiser399 the difference in the status of Leviathan as portrayed in Psalm 74:13, here portrayed as a powerful and chaotic sea-monster that had to be conquered by Yahweh, and in Psalm 104:26 where Leviathan is no more than the created toy of Yahweh’s, lies in different traditions. In one tradition Yahweh destroyed Leviathan (Ps 74:13), whilst in another tradition Leviathan was made to be Yahweh’s plaything (Ps 104:26). Ortlund also acknowledges that the tone and trajectory of Psalm 104 are completely different to those of the other texts in which Leviathan is named or implicated, although it does not imply that Leviathan has been demythologised in this text.400

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399 Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39; a Commentary, 221.
The notion exists that demythologising was only carried out in biblical translations, but it is evident that demythologising was also done by the biblical authors. Amos 9:3 clearly speaks of the monster of the deep, yet he refers to it as a mere serpent, whilst widespread belief around his time clearly indicates that the people were in fact “au fait” with the motif of the sea-monster. Another example here is the psalmist in 104:26, who seems to have the same principle, because here he demythologises Leviathan as a harmless creature frolicking and playing in the sea. Leviathan, the magnificently powerful sea-monster, has become “a large fish for God’s amusement.”

6.7 EXEGESIS OF ISAIAH 27:1

The dating of First Isaiah (chapters 1-39) probably falls into the era of the fall of Jerusalem 587BCE. The future looks bleak for the Israelites in captivity. The prophet, however, promises that times of hardship and evil will not persist forever. Eventually, Yahweh will finally defeat and remove all evil. Isa 27:1 must, therefore, be recognised as an old myth, which had been adopted in the Hebrew culture and is now used for its apocalyptic purposes. Isa 27:1 “… is a revised poem of Canaanite derivation which intends to portray Yahweh’s final victory in the last days over Leviathan, the ancient Near Eastern symbol of chaos and destruction.” McGuire pronounces that Israel did not merely adopt traditions from its ANE neighbours, but certainly allowed mythical elements to infiltrate its religious and social domains. Frankly, “Isaiah 27: 1 is probably one of the most pristine examples of relatively unmodified Canaanite literature which can be found in the OT canonical books.”

401 Clifford, Psalms 73-150, 148.
402 Watson, Chaos Uncreated, 16.
404 Ibid.
407 Ibid.
Standing by itself as an apocalyptic announcement of judgement, Isa 27:1 must still be treated as a part of the apocalypse. This verse is proclaiming judgement, not against people or bordering nations or even against world empires, but solely against the supremacies of chaos, here impersonated by Leviathan appearing in two ways – as the fleeing serpent and the twisting snake, as well as the dragon. Isaiah 27:1 has the apocalyptic vision that Leviathan in the end times, will not only be pushed back and/or be kept in check – he will finally be killed off permanently.

Isa 27:1 therefore deliberately deals with the future, the eschatological punishment at the end of time. Accordingly, Isa 27:1 makes no mention of past battles with the Sea, as everything that is mythically is projected into the future. This reminds of Gunkel’s well-known articulation of “Endzeit gleicht Urzeit.” This is contrasted with Isa 51:9 that refers to the past, “as in the olden days.” In both texts, the same mythical creatures are associated with either critical periods in the past, as well as in the future. Leviathan and the dragon appear in Isa 27:1 and Rahab and the dragon appear in Isa 51:9. Although Leviathan and Rahab appear to be two different creatures, it is well attested that Leviathan and Rahab refer to the same creature.

The appearance of the same creatures in either the ancient past or the distant future, as well as the time span from pre-exilic to post-exilic, serves as positive confirmation that mythical creatures are intrinsically embedded in the Israelite worldview. Isaiah 27:1 acknowledges that Leviathan is a real threat lurking in the future, and his apocalyptic vision sees that Yahweh will finally slay the primeval sea-dragon representing the sea.

A comparison between Isa 27:1 and two Ugaritic texts will be informative. Isa 27:1 reads,

408 Wildberger, Jesaja 13-27, 1005.
409 Ibid., 1001.
410 Ibid., 1005.
411 Fishbane, Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking, 57.
412 This will be discussed in the next chapter, under the discussion of Rahab.
In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. (ESV)

An Ugaritic text reads:

What enemy has arisen against Ba‘lu, (what) adversary against Cloud–Rider?
I have smitten ‘Ilu’s beloved, Yammu,
have finished off the great god Naharu.
I have bound the dragon’s jaws, have destroyed it,
have smitten the twisting serpent, the close–coiled one with seven heads.413

Another text from Ugarit recites,414
When you struck down Litan, the fleeing snake,
Annihilated the twisting snake,
The powerful one with seven heads.415

The resemblances are astonishing. Habel notes the description of Leviathan in KTU… as “an almost identical description of Leviathan.” Millar416 calls it a virtual direct citing, Kaiser417 also believes that the Israelites took the myth over from the Canaanites, although it may be in a slightly altered form, whilst Anderson418 adopts a softer stance, believing that the author (Isaiah) must have had direct access to the Ugaritic text, as myths from the Ugarit influenced the Israelite poetic folklore from an early stage. Pfeiffer419 does agree that Isaiah had full knowledge of “… the common stock of poetic imagery known to his people…,” however, with a contradictory provision that one does not have to believe in a story to use some of

its elements to illustrate one’s point. Grønbaek proposes that a connecting link with Isa 27:1 is feasible.420

This insight indicates that the correlation between the Isa 27:1 and the Ugaritic texts is incidental. What then about its linguistic similarities? The words used to describe Litan/Lotan, namely, brh “slant” and qltn “twisted,” appear to be parallel with Isaiah’s rendition in 27:1 of the same description בְּרִיא (bâriach), and עֲקַלָתּוֹן (’aqallâthôn). The word בְּרִיא appears three times in the Hebrew Bible, twice describing a serpent and once as a metaphor, while the word עֲקַלָתּוֹן appears only once. As no other text speaks of עֲקַלָתּוֹן as depicted in Isa 27:1, together with the insight that the Arabic word ’aqala’ meaning ‘twisting’ appears in ANET 138 where Mot threatens Baal,421 this clearly provides an additional association with the Canaanite tradition.

Therefore, this further exposes the remarkable fact that this monster is described with identical adjectives in both texts, namely “swift” and “crooked.”422 My own conclusion, therefore, is that the correlation between Isa 27:1 and the Ugaritic texts is so great, it has already crossed the boundaries of plagiarism.

Finally, in a long established exegetical convention, the monsters in Isa 27:1 were deemed to be symbolic of world empires. Gunkel’s hypothesis is that although only one monster is described, Isaiah had three worldly powers in mind and subsequently devised three code names.423 However, no agreement had been reached by scholars on exactly which empires are implicated.424 The symbolic link of Leviathan to world powers is rejected categorically by Wildberger, stating that Leviathan has never been portrayed anywhere in the Old Testament as being

421 Wildberger, Jesaja 13-27, 1005.
424 Wildberger, Jesaja 13-27, 1003.
symbolic of world powers. Hence, Leviathan, as presented in Isa 27:1 is equated with a primeval sea-monster, ever threatening to rise and to return the earth back to chaos.

6.8 WHO THEN, IS THIS SEA-MONSTER LEVIATHAN?

In the five texts studied in this chapter, the best overall description of Leviathan comes from Job 41. Although this has been dealt with fully in 6.4.1, a short precis may refresh our memories before the ensuing comparison with sea-monsters associated with the primeval waters from the ANE.

Leviathan has enormous power and is gigantic in size. His power is described in terms of leaving a deep a white fleece on the waters behind him when he moves. He can even make הים boil. Leviathan spews fire, so sweltering hot that it dissipates coal. Everyone, even the prodigious, looking at him become terror-stricken. In addition, Leviathan has petrifying teeth and his body is indestructible. Nothing can pierce him; therefore, he laughs with disparagement when anybody attempts to attack him with a sword or spear. Finally, Leviathan has full power and dominion over the sea, and when he rises, the sea flees. In short, he is a monster without fear and is the kings of beasts. In effect, he is the deity of chaos!

This chapter has so far dealt with Leviathan as presented in the Hebrew Bible. However, there are “… more scales on the historical leviathan than can be depicted in Job…”426

Leviathan, as noted in several connotations mentioned in this chapter, is an integral part of the ANE dragon slaying traditions. How exactly does Leviathan relate to similar sea-monsters of the ANE? These sea-monsters from the ANE were dealt with in Chapter 4. Therefore, one may now attempt to draw comparisons between

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425 Ibid.
426 Van Leewen, 'The Quest For The Historical Leviathan: Truth And Method In Biblical Studies', 151.
Leviathan and these sea-monsters. Table 6.2 below, now provides both an easy insight and an overview of similarities and differences.

**Table 6.2: A comparison of sea-monsters in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APOPHIS</th>
<th>TYPHON</th>
<th>TIAMAT</th>
<th>YAMM</th>
<th>LEVIATHAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical manifestation of a deity</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in the primeval waters</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battles with another deity</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never killed off and destroyed</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea-dragon</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisting, writhing serpent</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrounds the earth</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates helpers</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monstrously big</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-powerful</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple heads</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing out fire</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utters horrendous sounds</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can deduct from the table above, Leviathan shares most of the traits of the ANE sea-monsters associated with the primeval sea. (Please note that Yamm, from Ugarit, includes Tunnan (*tnn*) and Litan/Lotan). Many scholars agree with this conclusion. Pope concludes that Leviathan, as described in Job 41, is homogenous regarding Lotan in Ugaritic Myth.\(^\text{427}\) Leviathan thus has a parallel in Ugarit, Lotan/Litan, namely with a cosmic monster embodying chaos, destroyed by Baal.\(^\text{428}\) In Egypt, it was Apophis. The relationship with these monsters is extremely close, as Wildberger\(^\text{429}\) reveals and if one of Leviathan’s heads are severed, a new

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\(^{428}\) Hallo and Younger, ‘CTA 1.5.1’, 264.
one grows back instantaneously. This is reminiscent of some Greek sea-monsters.

Leviathan has been included in the table as a deity. This allocation was done as he has been equated with other ANE sea-monsters recognised as deities, as Leviathan has not exactly been crowned a deity in the Hebrew Bible.

6.9 CONCLUSION

After evaluating the five texts in the Hebrew Bible that mention Leviathan by name, it became evident that Leviathan is a supernatural mythical creature, and not a real animal. Leviathan has clearly been identified in the relevant texts, that he is a sea-monster living in the primeval waters. He had been conquered by Yahweh in the distant past, but Leviathan had not been permanently destroyed, as he will have to face Yahweh again in the distant future. This monstrously big, all powerful sea-dragon with multiple heads breathing out fire is no real and natural animal. This view that Leviathan cannot be a natural animal is shared by many scholars, such as Habel430 and Wolfers.431

Also, after matching Leviathan’s traits with those of the sea-monsters associated with the primaeval sea in the ANE, the following deductions can be made:

• Leviathan is exactly the same kind of sea-monster as those presented in the ANE
• Leviathan, had been acknowledged by the ancient Israelites as such.
• Leviathan also presented a threat to people. Although chaos has been constrained, he can break loose at any time and destroy the creation back to chaos.

Thus, Leviathan is commonly understood in the ANE to represent cosmic chaos. Accordingly, Leviathan is portrayed in Job as a legendary and mythological creature that no mortal can either capture or tame.

A translation is not merely the process of translating words. Computers can do it much faster and more precisely that humans. Thus, although it is easy to translate words, it is not easy to translate the meaning. Therefore, a translator cannot just translate a word in the source text before him as the author of the source text may have been guilty in the first place, masking the relevant term. This, however, does not exonerate the translator who must convey the meaning. Some cognitive dissonance may alert the translator, and the onus now falls on the translator to retrieve the original intent of the source text. Failing to do so, adds to the detriment of the horizon of the source text and the translator is just as guilty of translatorial gatekeeping and even falsification as the source text author.

Not all translations allow for the horizon of the text and the horizon of the modern reader to fuse. These translations have been identified in the tables presented in this chapter. Fortunately, some translations do honestly attempt to assist with the fusion of the horizons. Unfortunately, it takes a great deal of research to distinguish which translations strive to honour both horizons.

This chapter has dealt with Leviathan as a primeval sea-monster who has mostly been introduced by name. Apart from these direct identifications of Leviathan, there are numerous other references to this sea-monster, although mostly in a subdued, vague or even a falsely deceptive manner. Names and concepts, such as Rahab, the ים (the Sea) and ים תַּנִּים can directly be linked to Leviathan and will be investigated in the next chapter.
Chapter 6 examined the appearance of the sea-monster Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible. It became evident that Leviathan was not the only sea-monster. The introduction of the תַּנִּינִים in Gen 1:21, is the first ever mention of any sea-monster in the current order of biblical texts. This chapter will evaluate the sea-monsters associated with the primeval sea prevalent in the Hebrew Bible, namely, תַּנִּינִים and Rahab. The eccentric attributes of these three creatures, is that they each have their own identity, but at the same time, they can be equated with one another or with Leviathan. Each appears to have an individual role in one scenario, but may then seamlessly assume another role as something else, or become part of a greater whole in another scenario. This will be deliberated on further in this chapter.

As תַּנִּינִים appears first in the current order of the Bible, the תַּנִּינִים will be discussed first, followed by an introduction to, and evaluation of Rahab.

7.1 TRANSLATIONAL REVIEW OF GENESIS 1:21

Let us now specifically look at how the different translations treated the sea-monsters in Gen 1:21. As mentioned previously, a total of twenty-four translations has been consulted, and together with the MT and LXX will form part of attempting to exhibit the different ways in which translators have addressed the translation of the תַּנִּינִים. The variances in translation are depicted in table form for an easier analysis. The translated word or phrase is indicated, together with its representation in translation theories to portray, and point out the differences arising from the translations.

7.1.1 Introduction of תַּנִִּ֖ים

The תַּנִִּ֖ין, introduced as having been created by God in Gen 1:21, presents an anomaly. God created the great תַּנִִּ֖ם in Gen 1:21. Later God smashes the heads of the same תַּנִִּ֖ם in the waters (Ps 74:13), although Isa 51:9 mentions that he only wounded the תַּנִִּ֖ין. However, God promises that he will eventually, and finally, slay the תַּנִִּ֖ין (Isa 27:1). The tractability of the תַּנִִּ֖ם is further expressed as the psalmist summons the תַּנִִּ֖ם and תְהוֹם to praise God (Ps 148:7).

Many translations indicate that the תַּנִִּ֖ם are sea-monsters, but other interpretations also exist. Before analysing Gen 1:21, a discussion and evaluation of its appearance elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible will be done. This would serve as a background for the subsequent discussion of the תַּנִִּ֖ם in Genesis 1.

7.1.2 The appearance of תַּנִָּֽין / תַּנִִּ֖ם in the Hebrew Bible.

There are several texts in the OT where the word תַּנִָּֽין (singular) or תַּנִִּ֖ם is used. However, the meaning ascribed to this word, can be quite different. It could be equated with an ordinary serpent, a dragon, a symbol of a hostile empire, as a metaphor or a place name, as well as a sea-monster.

- As an ordinary serpent, the term תַּנִָּֽין appears in three verses in Exodus, namely 7:9, 10, 12. Rods are thrown onto the ground and are transformed into live serpents.
- As a dragon symbolising a hostile empire, תַּנִָּֽין appears in Ezek 29:3, and 32:2 as the Pharaoh and Egypt.
- As a metaphor, תַּנִָּֽין is used to describe wine (Deut 32:33). In Jer 9:11, Yahweh threatens to change Jerusalem into a den of dragons; in Jer 10:22 the same threat is made; this time against Judah. Jer 14:6 describes wild asses sniffing the wind like dragons.
- As a place name, תַּנִָּֽין occurs in Neh 2:13; Ps 44:19; Jer 49:33; 51:34, 37.
The interest of this study is the appearance of תַּנִָּֽין as a sea-monster. The term תַּנִָּֽין, as another name of the sea-monster, appears seven times in the Hebrew Bible. A condensed section of each appearance with its translation, is listed below.

Gen 1: 21 “…God created the great sea-monsters…” (ERV).
Job 7:12 “Am I the sea or a sea monster…” (CSB)
Ps 74:13 “…smashed the heads of the sea monsters in the waters…” (CSB).
Ps 91:13 “…the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample…” (DBY).
Ps 148:7 “…ye dragons, and all deeps…” (KJV).
Isa 27: 1 “He will slay the monster that is in the sea.” (CSB).
Isa 51: 9 “…who pierced the dragon?” (ESV).

7.2 TRANSLATIONAL REVIEW OF RAHAB, רָָֽהַּב
Rahab, a sea-monster, is mentioned by name and described several times in the Hebrew Bible.

Job 26:12-13 “… He stirred the sea, and … He crushed Rahab.” (CSB).
Ps 87:4 “… I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon…” (KJV).
Ps 89:10 “Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces…” (KJV).
Isa 30:7 “That is why I call it, 'Rahab who sits still.'” (GWN)
Isa 51:9 “Art thou not it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?” (ERV)

It becomes evident that Rahab is not depicted as a sea-monster in all the texts cited. Egypt and the Pharaoh of Egypt, a deep-rooted opponent of God’s people, was symbolised and depicted as a sea monster lurking in the Nile (Ezek 29:3), whom God would catch with a net and kill (Ezek 32:3-5). Ps 87:4 also assumes that Rahab is an accepted synonym for Egypt. Obviously, there is no mythological allusion here. The same, however, does not automatically apply to Isaiah 30:7. This text initially does not seem to refer to Rahab as a primeval sea-monster, but
rather as a symbol of Pharaoh and/or the Egyptians. However, when read in context with Isa 30:6, fraught with a rare combination of natural and mythical creatures, the reference to Rahab in v. 7 may acquire a mythical aura. The fact that Rahab and הוזין are mentioned in the same context, is that the ancient Israelites did not differentiate at all between ‘ordinary’ and ‘supernatural’ creatures recognising both as being real.\textsuperscript{433} A text where Rahab is not translated by name is Ps 40:4, where most translations refer to “the proud”. The context hints at a mythical link.

In summary, Rahab is named in three manners in the Hebrew Bible.

- As a sea-monster

  Job 9:13  God makes Rahab’s helpers bow humbly in front of him.

  Job 26:12  Yahweh divided the sea and cut Rahab into pieces.

  Ps 89:10  Rahab being smashed to pieces and his remains being scattered by Yahweh.

  Isa 51:9  At the beginning of time Yahweh battled with and wounded Rahab. (Although the interpretation convincingly leans towards being a primordial sea monster, another interpretation may be as an epithet of Egypt).

- As an epithet of Pharaoh/Egypt.

  Ps 87:4  Rahab is mentioned together with Babylon, making it a clear epithet of Egypt.

  Ps 89:10  Yahweh smashes his enemy Egypt to pieces.

  Job 26:12  Yahweh split the sea with his power he smote Rahab.

  Isa 30:7  Comparing Egypt’s worthlessness to an inactive Rahab.

\textsuperscript{433} Dyssel, "Behemoth as Mythical Creature."
Rahab is used here as a symbol of foreign powers, in acknowledgement of his immense power and danger to opponents. This context recognises Rahab as being a powerful mythical beast. Egypt and the Pharaoh inherits this epithet from Rahab, and not vice versa. It becomes evident that the primeval sea-monster was used to symbolise nations and empires offensive to Israel. This is apparent in texts where Rahab is a sobriquet of Egypt. This connotation is repeated in another milieu where God threatens the Assyrian city of Damascus and their king in Isa 8:7-9 and Isa 17:12-14. Here Assyria has been associated with Yam and Leviathan.

- Rahab used as a verb to overcome, or to strengthen.

References to רָָֽהַּב meaning to “overcome” or “to strengthen” appears in Ps 138:3; Prov 6:3; Can 6:5 and Isa 3:5.

The real interest of this study on Rahab, lies in his portrayal as a sea-monster. Isa 51:9 refers to “cut Rahab” and “wounded the dragon” (תַּנִִּ֖ין), clearly equating Rabab with a sea-monster. After referring to Rahab in v.12, Job 26:13 continues by associating Rahab with a “fleeing serpent” נָחָ ש בָרִָּֽיח. Ps 89:9-13 can be regarded as “Chaoskampf” where the sea creature’s slaying is placed in the sea, which is a significant designation as being a sea-monster.

Therefore, the distinct possibility that Rahab as a sea-monster could be equivalent to Leviathan, or even being Leviathan himself, deserves further investigation. Job though, seems to draw a definite distinction between Rahab and Leviathan. Rahab populates Job 9:13; 26:12, and Leviathan occupies Job 3:8; 41:1.434 The fact that these two creatures are handled separately, may indicate that they are different creatures. However, this may prove to be incorrect. The description of the battle against Rahab in Job 26:12-13 ends with God’s hand that has pierced the נָחָ ש בָרִָּֽיח (fleeing serpent). Reading Isa 27:1 in comparison, God with his great, strong sword, will slay Leviathan, the נָחָ ש בָרִָּֽיח (fleeing serpent). In both Job and Isaiah,

434 As mentioned before, most English and Dutch translations use Job 41:1. LXA and DRA are Job 40:20, and in the BHT it is Job 40:25.
Yahweh was in battle against the sea-monster, the one called by the name of Leviathan and the other Rahab. In both texts, the two monsters became “fleeing serpents”. In addition, in both texts, the identical Hebrew words were used to describe their fleeing - נחש בריח. One may thus conclude that, as Rahab and Leviathan are described in the same manner, it at least makes them “similar,” if not a singular sea-monster.

7.3 EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS

Table 7:1 Translation choices and fidelity in translation – a summarised insight and conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPROACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 1:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great sea-monsters</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea beasts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great monsters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large sea-creatures</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great whales</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dragons</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κῆτη</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Twenty percent of the translated texts chose “great whales”, thereby highlighting the deliberate falsification of the source text. No loyalty to the text or to its readers have been shown. Although the tonality of other translations seems to be different from falsification, “the large sea-creatures” and “great sea-beasts” carry a similar sense of conventionality to “great whales.” This outlook changes the character of the תַּנִּינִים to ordinary creatures, something that they are intrinsically not. Translations such as “great sea-monsters,” “great dragons” and “great monsters” are closer to the inherent meaning of the תַּנִּינִים.

Many translations of this text have been guilty of translational gatekeeping. They omitted facts around the identity of the תַּנִּינִים by changing its intrinsic character, calling them natural sea-animals instead. Large sea-creatures and great whales are not sea-monsters.

In evaluating the respective translated texts concerning תַּנִּינִים and יָם, the overall impression is that the horizon of the text would be difficult to fuse with the horizon of the modern reader. This may also apply to Rahab in a way, but as the name indicates, a definitive personality, stressing its “otherness”, may assist to an improved fusion of horizons.

Finally, the translators did not have the task of translating only Gen 1:21. This text had not been translated in isolation. The translators may therefore not use the excuse that they merely translated the Hebrew text in front of them at the time. It is the inherent task of the translator to have gain insight into the relevance and trans-textual presence of תַּנִּינִים in this case, in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Only

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435 The extended section of table 7.1 specifically refers to how Rahab had been translated and interpreted. For text references, refer to 7.2.
thereafter, should they have applied this understanding into the translated text, honouring the ‘meaning’ of the source text and not the written word/s appearing in the source text.

7.4 EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 1:21

The content of Gen 1:21 may be summarised as follows: God created the great sea-monsters, after which all the other living creatures inhabiting the sea are separated according to their kind, as well as all the birds according to their kind.

Therefore, each group of is presented with their own dominion – the sea-monsters in the tehom, fish in the ocean and birds in the sky.436

The root of the word tnn, means “to spread out,” “to roll out,” “to stretch out,” “to extend,” therefore the term תַּנִּינִ֖ם must refer to a long stretched out animal, an impressive one.437 The deduction is that the difference between the תַּנִּינִ֖ם and the other moving water creatures lies in their nature, and that תַּנִּינִ֖ם refers to mythical sea monsters, and the other creatures of the waters are natural sea animals.

The first part of v.21 is translated as: “And God created the great sea monsters…”438 Westermann holds that there are two stages in the use of the word תַּנִּינִ֖ם. It is either used as the mythical chaos monster or alternatively, at a later stage, where the meaning is “a creature among others”. Westermann admits that this explanation is not an easy one, but admitted that in the mythical use the context is that of a battle with Chaos, as depicted in Isa 27:1, Job 7:12 and Ps 74:13 and which has parallels Ugaritic heritage.439 The תַּנִּינִ֖ם is closely associated with Leviathan and chaos, but it is clear that many biblical scholars are in some degree of denial about this, as Watson puts it, “The presence of ‘chaos’ in the Priestly creation account had for centuries variously been assumed, denied, or even

436 Van Wolde, Terug naar het begin, 11.
437 Walter Vogels, "And God Created the Great Tanninim" (Gn 1:21)', Science et Esprit 63, no. 3 (2011): 353.
438 Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 77.
439 Ibid., 137.
reformulated – but seldom ignored." Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 16.


Mobley\textsuperscript{447} detects this drama beneath the surface of Gen 1:21 “...and then God created the great dragons.”, together with its “…casual dismissal of the importance of the chaos monsters.” Vogels\textsuperscript{448} poses that there is a strong possibility that the great תַּנִּינִים had been added to the text at a later stage. Regarding Gen 1:21, the Targum on Genesis in a later tradition presented Leviathan as a source of protein for the elect.\textsuperscript{449}

In summary, the תַּנִּינִים appears to have existed even before their creation in Gen 21:1. Isa 51:9-10 speaks of the days of old when Yahweh killed the sea-monster. This is echoed by Ps 74:13-14. Although being killed off, it appears to still exist. This is because the killing of any supernatural creature or deity, had never been implied in the magico-mythical cosmology, that they seized to exist. Even human beings do not seize to exist after they died, but they simply were moved to the kingdom of the dead. This is evident as Ps 148:7 implores the sea-monsters to praise Yahweh.

The concluding comparison with similar monsters in the ANE, as well as an evaluation of various translations, will be combined with Rahab and Yam, and deliberated on at the end of this chapter.

7.5 EXEGETICAL OVERVIEW OF RAHAB

This review will be based on all the texts relevant to Rahab as a sea-monster, as well as Rahab’s possible connotations with other creatures in the Hebrew Bible, but also that of the ANE. The name Rahab is not prevalent in any known ANE literature, and therefore is unique to the Hebrew Bible. However, although no semantic link is currently available, many direct connotations between Rahab and ANE sea-monsters may be drawn. These will now briefly be listed.

\textsuperscript{447} Mobley, \textit{The Return of the Chaos Monsters and Other Backstories of the Bible}, 2011, 10.

\textsuperscript{448} Vogels, “And God Created the Great Tanninim’ (Gn 1:21)’, 351.

\textsuperscript{449} Blenkinsopp, \textit{Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation}, 2011, 38.
7.5.1 Rahab defeated and smashed to pieces
At the beginning of time, Yahweh battled with and wounded Rahab, (Isa 51:9). This is supported by Ps 89:10-14, which is a hymn celebrating the destruction of Rahab before creation. Thus Ps 89:9-13 can be regarded as “Chaoskampf” where the sea creature’s slaying is placed in the sea, which is a significant designation as a sea-monster. Yahweh split the sea with his power and smote Rahab (v.10). This rendition of Rahab being smashed to pieces and his remains being scattered by Yahweh, is like what Marduk did with Tiamat’s body; slashing it into two pieces and flinging the upper half up to form the heavens and treading on the bottom half to form the earth. Although not as graphic in his destruction of Yamm, Baal also conquered his cosmic enemy like Yahweh. This is also attested in Psalm 89, as well as Psalm 74, both indicative of a mythical encounter for dominance by Yahweh and the sea-dragon. Rahab, in Job 26:13, may also be associated with Marduk splitting Tiamat to form the heavens and the earth. This general outcome of splitting an enemy after defeat, was an ancient custom pertaining to the disgraceful treatment of a slain victim.450

7.5.2 Rahab’s assistance from helpers
Job 9:13 reads, “Rahab’s assistants cringe in fear beneath Him!” (CSB). Tiamat, in the Enuma Elish, created helpers (eleven gruesome monsters) to assist her in her ensuing combat with Marduk.

7.5.3 Rahab casts spells
Job 9: 13 also reads, “God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab” (NAS). This may point to casting a spell on the allies of the Sea (referred to as the helpers of Rahab). Tiamat applies spells and charms to fight her enemies (EE I. 60-66, II.117, IV61, 91). This is also prevalent in Ugaritic mythology in the combat between Baal and Yamm where incantations had been applied (CTU1.2.IV.11-15).

7.5.4 Rahab as raging

The name Rahab can be explained etymologically as “raging” and is therefore an apt term for a tempestuous sea-monster. Rahab is depicted as a raging sea monster in Isa 51:9; Ps 89:10 (v.11 in Hebrew); Job 26:12 and also Sir 43:25. Tiamat has also been presented as a raging monster.

7.5.5 Rahab personifying chaos

Gunkel states that Rahab is the personification of הוהם (chaos). He further identifies Rahab as an image of intransigence, which means, that although he raises himself up against God, he is unable to do anything against God, and that Rahab subsequently is chaos bound.

7.5.6 Rahab’s physical traits

A physical description of Rahab in the Hebrew Bible is rare, if not non-existent. From the Rabbinic heritage, a somewhat humorous description comes from R. Judah. When God planned to create the world, he instructed the angel of the sea to swallow up the waters of the world. The angel of the sea replied that he is too busy with his own agenda, whereby God stepped on him and killed him, for it is written in Job 26:12 “With his power he calmed the sea. With his insight, he killed Rahab “the sea monster” (GWN). Based on this insight, R. Isaac declares that the name of the angel of the sea was Rahab, whose breath was so putrid that if the waters had not covered him, no living being would have been able to stand its stench.

In summary, Rahab stands firm as an individual sea-monster in the Hebrew Bible. However, the insight gained from this study, indicates the possibility that Rahab was just named differently, but was known in fact by another name. Some scholars

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451 Seow, Job 1-21, 561.
453 Ibid., 59.
454 Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Baba Bathra: Folio 73b
have agreed to the strong probability that Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible and Litan in the Ugaritic Baal epic and are one and the same creature.\textsuperscript{455} Blenkinsopp asserts that the תַּנִִּין (dragon) is not only closely associated with, but even identical to Leviathan (and also Rahab). Furthermore, the תַּנִִּין, created on the fifth day of the creation week as described in Gen 1:21 are ‘admonished to praise God’ in Ps 148:7.\textsuperscript{456} Some reservations may be sensed from the insight that they “… existed as separate traditions which had, at least in part, acquired the same content…”\textsuperscript{457} More support for this probability derives from Ugarit, where the Baal myth gives a rendition of a battle with a seven-headed Lotan/Litan (KTU 1.5.I.28), that is echoed in a description of Leviathan in Isa 27:1, calling both a נחש ברוח (twisting serpent). This identical description is also given to Rahab in Job. 26:13.

7.6 COMPARING תַּנִִּין, AND RAHAB WITH LEVIATHAN AND ANE SEA-MONSTERS

Table 7.2 (on the next page) is an expansion of Table 6.2 as presented in the previous chapter. Here Tannin, Rahab and Yam have been added for a complete comparison.

\textsuperscript{455} John Day, Günkel and others.
\textsuperscript{456} Blenkinsopp, \textit{Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation}, 2011, 38.
\textsuperscript{457} Watson, \textit{Chaos Uncreated}, 12.
Table 7.2: A comparison of sea-monsters in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APHOPIS</th>
<th>TYPHON</th>
<th>TIAMAT</th>
<th>YAMM</th>
<th>LEVIATHAN</th>
<th>TANNIN</th>
<th>RAHAB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical manifestation of a deity</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in the primeval waters</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battles with another deity</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never killed off and destroyed</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea-dragon</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisting, writhing serpent</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrounds the earth</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates helpers</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monstrously big</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-powerful</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple heads</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing out fire</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utters horrendous sounds</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that תְהוֹם is not included as a potential sea-monster in this chapter as well as in the table above. Genesis 1 only offers a somewhat “oppressed” insight into תְהוֹם. This is totally different from the Babylonian Enuma Elish where the primeval waters, personified by Tiamat is depicted as a raging sea-monster. However, later the Hebrew Bible does incarnate the תְהוֹם as an animated sea-monster, “the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high” (Hab 3:10). This is noted, but תְהוֹם, being intrinsically linked to יָם, will be equated in this study with יָם, and not addressed as a separate sea-monster.

7.7 CONCLUSION

After comparing the sea-monsters of the OT with those of the ANE, and evaluating the close relationship between all these, it is salient to conclude that although these sea-monsters derives from different cultures and eras in the ANE, they all share the same DNA. Some personal features may vary, and some may appear to have individual traits, but fundamentally these are all the same.
An appraisal of the translations of the texts investigated in this chapter, has shown that not all have been truthful with regard to the inherent meaning of the source text. However, in mitigation, the authors of the source texts have in many cases not aided the translation, because of vagueness and perhaps a deliberate application of gatekeeping.

With all these sources of information available to modern Bible translators, they should be able to read between the lines to convey the original meaning of the source text to its modern reader. The treatment that Leviathan received in the Hebrew Bible is somewhat similar to the treatment the תַּנִּינִִּ֖ם received in Gen 1:21, as the first ever mention of a sea-monster in biblical texts.\(^{458}\) Several issues seem distinct considering the presentation of Gen 1:21. Not only does the Priestly author of Genesis 1 firstly omit the conflict, but the personification of the cosmic waters is also denied. Furthermore, the תַּנִּינִִּ֖ם “... are not now monstrous, and they are contained in the created order in Gen 1:21…”\(^{459}\) The priestly author seems to suppress the role of the monsters wilfully to “… differentiate the Israelite view from the Mesopotamian.”\(^{460}\) Another typical example of gatekeeping is that, as Mobley\(^{461}\) succinctly puts it, “Priestly theologians buried…the dragon of the chaos below the surface of their measured prose…”

Gatekeeping by the biblical author, and translatorial gatekeeping are not the same. A translator does not translate words; a translation requires a transfer of the concepts behind the words. Therefore, the translator is responsible for revealing the original intention of the text, even when masked by the author.

\(^{458}\) Referring to the first ever appearance, is based on the chronology of the current canon.  
\(^{461}\) Ibid., 16.
Demythologising may be deemed as a form of falsification. In Genesis 1, demythologisation has taken place as “…the conflict with the waters appear to have become simply a job of work…” 462.

In summary, this chapter confirmed that Leviathan was not the only sea-monster portrayed in the Old Testament, and that תַּנִִּ֖ין and Rahab as sea-monsters are indeed prevalent in the Hebrew Bible. However, how do these sea-monsters inter-relate with each other?

יָם is paralleled with תַּנִִּ֖ין (dragon) in Isa 51:9-10. In Ps 74:14 תַּנִִּ֖ין is identical to Leviathan. Thus, יָם and Leviathan and תַּנִִּ֖ין can be equated. The conclusion may hence, be made that all three, Leviathan, יָם and תַּנִִּ֖ין are exactly the same sea-monster in the Hebrew Bible. The inference that they are identical to one another does not end here though.

Therefore, תַּנִִּ֖ין, as appearing in a somewhat masked form in Gen 1:21, fully concurs with Barth’s conclusion that Genesis is a “veritable mythological treasure chamber.”463 The great תַּנִִּ֖ין is a creature of a monstrous kind that had been opposing God in the time before creation.464 The next chapter will evaluate Behemoth, introduced in Job 40:15. Normally, associated with being a semi-aquatic monster, Behemoth’s interesting association with Leviathan and its possible relation with other ANE monsters will be addressed.

CHAPTER 8 - BEHEMOTH

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 examined the appearance of the sea-monsters Rahab, and תַּנִִּינ in the Hebrew Bible, after it became evident that Leviathan was not the only sea-monster. As mentioned, these three creatures have peculiar attributes, in that each had their own identity, but at the same time, they were interrelated with one another, or with Leviathan.

As a first (and only?) appearance in the Hebrew Bible, Job 40:15-24, Behemoth was regarded as an amphibious creature. Thus, Behemoth may seem out of place amongst sea-monsters associated with the primeval waters.

8.2 INTRODUCING BEHEMOTH

Behemoth, בְְ֭הֵמוֹת, like Leviathan (Job 41), is being described by Yahweh in a grandiose manner in Job 40:15-24.

15 “Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you;
    he eats grass like an ox.

16 Behold, his strength in his loins,
    and his power in the muscles of his belly.

17 He makes his tail stiff like a cedar;
    the sinews of his thighs are knit together.

18 His bones are tubes of bronze,
    his limbs like bars of iron.

19 He is the first of the works of God;
    let him who made him bring near his sword!

20 For the mountains yield food for him
    where all the wild beasts play.

21 Under the lotus plants he lies,
in the covert of the reeds and in the marsh.

For his shade the lotus trees cover him;
the willows of the brook surround him.

Behold, if the river is turbulent he is not frightened;
he is confident though Jordan rushes against his mouth.

Can one take him with hooks,
or pierce his nose with a snare?

8.3 TRANSLATIONAL REVIEW

Twenty-five translations from the Masoretic texts in English, German and Dutch were consulted, as well as the LXX. For the sake of easy referencing, the representation of Behemoth in the different translations of Job 40:15 (and all the subsequent textual analyses) are presented in a table format.

Table 8.1 Translation choices and fidelity in translation – a summarised insight and conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>APPROACH</th>
<th>FIDELITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FORMAL</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behemoth</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behemoth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great, or wild beast/s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θηρία (wild beast)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1 summarises the actual translation variances as presented and the designation of these translations to the various approaches. The outcomes of
Table 8.1 serve as a reminder of the reality that certain translations falsified the source text and replacing them with a different impression. Some of these translations may also be guilty of translatorial gatekeeping, by the deliberate silencing of facts, doing a ‘soft’ translation of a vital concept. Many texts were translated in such a way that the fundamental need of the modern reader was honoured by keeping the foreignness of the source text. Here, the correlation between the source text and the target text was ethical, and reveals loyalty to the target audience.

8.4 HISTORICAL AND EXEGETICAL OVERVIEW OF BEHEMOTH

Exegetical commentary on Behemoth is virtually non-existent.

Behemoth is only mentioned once in the Hebrew Bible (Job 40:15). Here, is the plural form of the singular meaning “beast”. The plural clearly indicates a very large beast rather than multiple beasts. In classical Hebrew, the use of the plural has an added use. In English, the plural use becomes countable, but in classical Hebrew, the plural can also express an increased intensity to portray a majestically animal, much bigger than normal. An interesting conclusion is that when the plural is,

...applied to deities, this intensive plural is sometimes referred to as the “honorific plural.” In other words, the divine being is so thoroughly characterized by “God-ness” that only a plural is appropriate for his designation."466

This is certainly in the case of God, but Ugaritic heritage presents an added interpretation. The use of plural in Ugarit, may also “...reflect a divine vanguard of a deity.”467

The term בְּהֵמָּות, generally meaning cattle, large animals or beasts, appears in 172 verses in the Hebrew Bible. Because of this seemingly dominant presence, many interpreters through the ages, have been mystified as to what Behemoth actually represents. Behemoth evoked three types of responses from interpreters.

The first type of response is that Behemoth is a natural and real animal. A major discussion amongst scholars centred on what kind of animal Behemoth is. Thomas Aquinas likened Behemoth to an elephant, although acknowledging that it was wicked and evil. Samuel Bochart identified it as a hippopotamus in a publication in 1663. A possible reason for this identification is that in Egypt the Pharaoh hunted down the red hippopotamus. However, in Egyptian religion, the hippopotamus was associated with Seth, the god of chaos. The identification of Behemoth as a hippopotamus, seems to have been the general trend until Cheyne (1897) challenged the general acceptance that both Behemoth and Leviathan were merely natural animals by stating that both creatures do not correspond in any way whatsoever with any known animal. Driver transferred some of Leviathan’s features to Behemoth in terms of him being a crocodile. Then it really becomes fused (and confused?). Ruprecht believes that Leviathan is just another name for Behemoth, and that Leviathan is actually a hippopotamus. In turn, Couroyer interprets Behemoth as a buffalo and not a hippopotamus. In a subsequent article, after establishing a link with the Ugaritic rum, he confirms his initial interpretation.

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472 Ruprecht, E. Das Nilpferd im Hiobbuch, VT 21, 1971, pages 209-231
Secondly, there was no such thing as Behemoth. Behemoth was just a figment of Job’s imagination and that it only serves a symbolic purpose.\textsuperscript{476} Wolfers\textsuperscript{477} also regards Behemoth as a mere symbol. Similarly, it was expounded that the existence of Behemoth is a misreading, as Tur-Sinai believes that Job 40:15-24 does not refer to Behemoth at all, but that this passage actually only presents the mythical Leviathan.\textsuperscript{478} Behemoth does not exist, but is a parody on the possible outcomes, should God dare to follow Job’s advice on how to order the universe.\textsuperscript{479} No creature called Behemoth existed, and there is no evidence of a terrestrial partner for Leviathan.\textsuperscript{480}

Thirdly, Behemoth is a mythical creature with supernatural powers. As early as 1892, Toy argued that both “Behemoth and Leviathan were water animals associated with the “primeval seas Apsu and Tiamat as they appeared to be presented in the emerging Babylonian Epic of Creation.”\textsuperscript{481} Gunkel calls Behemoth an “\textit{Urzeit}” monster, an appellative of Rahab in Isa 30:6, as well as principal of the dry land before creation.\textsuperscript{482} In turn, Pope,\textsuperscript{483} Perdue\textsuperscript{484}, and Mettinger\textsuperscript{485} believe that Behemoth is a primeval monster of chaos.

\textbf{8.4.1 Behemoth in Rabbinic literature}

Furthermore, as mentioned above, Behemoth is only attested once in the Hebrew Bible. However, Rabbinic literature speaks at length about it. Behemoth, like the mythical bird the Ziz,\textsuperscript{486} is widely attested in Rabbinic literature, and both had a more prominent part in the life-world of early Israel than is reflected in the OT. 

\begin{footnotes}
\item[476] Habel, \textit{The Book of Job}, 1985, 559.
\item[477] Wolfers, \textit{Deep Things out of Darkness}.
\item[479] Wilson, ‘A Return to the Problems of Behemoth and Leviathan’.
\item[480] Wolfers, \textit{Deep Things out of Darkness}, 162.
\item[483] Pope, \textit{Job}, 329–32.
\end{footnotes}
possible reason for this may be that the sacredness of the Bible has been ‘protected’ by translators and interpreters, whereas, the Rabbinic literature was distant enough from the general Christian-religious reader to ask uncomfortable questions.

Attestations regarding Behemoth are found in 1 Enoch 60:7-9. Here Behemoth is a male monster occupying the wilderness and paired with Leviathan, a female monster dwelling in the abysses of the primeval ocean. Ezra 6:49-53 confirms the pairing of both creatures. Baruch 29:4 suggests that the תַּנִִּ֖ין created on the fifth day of creation in Gen 1:21 are in fact, the pairing of Leviathan and Behemoth and that both will be kept alive until the end of time, where they will be served as food in celebration. Behemoth then, is recognised as the male counterpart of Leviathan, and is a great beast that roams both on land, and in the waters. These extra biblical texts, lead to Pope proposing that Behemoth is an archetype of pre-Israelite mythology that was inter-related with some ancient myths, and may also have had parallel functions in different myths.487

8.4.2 Behemoth in ANE heritage

Behemoth, as Pope suggests, appeared to have been paralleled in ANE myths. The “ferocious bullock of El”, ‘gılıʾʾtk, (slain by Anat in Ugaritic myths), and the Sumero-Akkadian “bull of heaven” (slain by Gilgamesh and Enkidu), as well as Behemoth, are all associated and related.488 In the Ugaritic myth Anat slays Lotan together with the “ferocious bullock of El,” ‘gılıʾʾtk.

Day489 equates Behemoth with El’s calf Atik (KTU 1.3.III.43-44). Another text (KTU 1.6.VI.51-3), presents El’s calf Atik as also dwelling in the waters, just like Behemoth does in Job 41:23. In both these cases, El’s calf Atik is mentioned together with Leviathan.490 The fact that Leviathan is presented in both Ugaritic

487 Pope, Job, 265.
488 Ibid., 270.
489 Day, God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea, 84.
490 Ibid.
texts as being part of a pair with Atik, and that Job introduces both Behemoth and Leviathan together (sequential) in Job 40-41, the pairing is matched. Thus, it becomes clear that a tradition existed of the “bull” and Atik and Behemoth. An interesting connotation with the tail of Behemoth, is that Enkidu had nearly been killed by the thick tail of the “bull of heaven”. 491

The fact that Behemoth had a mythological presence in the ANE, necessitates a further investigation of whether Behemoth (as a mythical monster) has more appearances in the Hebrew Bible, than just the one in Job 40:15.

8.5 OTHER APPEARANCES OF BEHEMOTH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The term בְּהֵמָּוֹת, generally meaning cattle, large animals or beasts, appears in 172 verses in the Hebrew Bible. Amongst these 172 texts, are four that merit further scrutiny. Deut 32:24 promises absolute destruction, where the threat is that God “will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.” (WEB). Earlier in this chapter, variations in the plural in Hebrew was discussed. It may either be an increase in numbers, or may refer to an increase in the size of one creature. This is mere speculation and is an incorrect transcription, or a misinterpretation of the Hebrew text at some stage in the distant past, that may have altered the meaning from Behemoth possibly to multiple beasts. Combined with the visual impact of horrific teeth in this text, and together with the pairing with “serpents,” this points to a mythical image in the form of Behemoth.

Ps 73:22 reads, “So foolish was I and ignorant: I was a beast before thee.” (GNV). The psalmist, generally known for artistry in the use of words, wants to convey his being extremely uncouth before God. To compare himself with only a normal four-legged natural beast, appears to be a poor attempt at describing his bad behaviour to God. Therefore, comparing himself with a brutal and merciless creature such as Behemoth, would better serve his comportment.

491 Pope, Job, 272.
Isa 30:6 speaks of the beasts of the Negev, the young and old lions, the viper and the fiery flying serpent. The peculiar pairing of mythical creatures and “normal” animals requires closer examination. “The burden of the beast of the south” as in many English translations, here seems inappropriate. Behemoth as a mythical creature would be a better ‘fit’ by linking it with the fiery flying serpents. Naming natural animals together with mythical creatures may seem peculiar, but the people of the time most probably did not distinguish between mythical and real animals as both had been a reality in their daily lives. Consideration must be given to the mythological context of the rest of this text (Isa 30:6) and the reference to Rahab (although in a metaphoric role) in v. 7, and that Isaiah mentions בְּהֵמָּות in the same context as fiery flying dragons, lions the (sphinx?) and serpents. The contexts of these verses clearly indicate that it does not refer to cattle. Ezek 8:10 refers to “the abominable beasts.” This may not be the correct interpretation as this verse talks about the portrayal on a city wall of every form of detestable crawling creatures and house idols. The presence here of “normal” beasts, although loathsome, seems out of place. It is, therefore, plausible that בְּהֵמוֹת (as a mythical beast) is implicated, as in Job 41:1.

8.6 BEHEMOTH’S HABITAT

Behemoth is portrayed as a mythical monster in Job 40:15-24, although not as a sea-monster, but conceivably as an amphibious animal. However, Yahweh himself describes Behemoth as being at home on land as well as in the waters. This is congruent with Childs' observation that the image of chaos in the latter part of Gen 1:2 is “watery” and in the first part of Gen 1:2a, the image of chaos is “arid waste.” This underscores Perdue’s calling Leviathan and Behemoth “two great incarnations of chaos.” It allows for Behemoth and Leviathan to inhabit all of creation, as chaos entails intermingled waters, soil and darkness.

Rabbinic literature regards Behemoth as an aquatic creature. Behemoth is also portrayed as an aquatic creature in Job 40:23 (ESV). "Behold, if the river is turbulent he is not frightened; he is confident though Jordan rushes against his mouth." Here the Hebrew Bible clearly indicates that Behemoth is at home in water in the river Jordan. However, an interesting insight is that the author could not have been Hebrew, as he would have known that there were no hippopotamuses in the Jordan.\(^{494}\) This adds to the notion that Behemoth is not a hippopotamus, as does Konkel’s interpretation that Behemoth does not merely swallow up the water of the river Jordan in v. 23, but that it rather depicts an aggressive act by an enormous beast that “literally robs the stream of water.”\(^{495}\) Clines\(^{496}\) provides a different insight in that the use of the word, Jordan “… is used poetically for ‘a mighty river’ in general.” However, the connotation with the river Jordan is a reminder of the Baal myth, where Yamm and Nahar (Prince River) were one entity, the primeval sea. Behemoth and Leviathan have already been acknowledged as a pair. Therefore, as Leviathan is associated with the primeval sea, Behemoth’s presence in the rivers, implies that Behemoth is intrinsically associated with the primeval waters and may therefore, be deemed a sea-monster as well.

This now leads us to compare Behemoth with Leviathan and ANE monsters associated with the primeval waters.

**8.7 COMPARING BEHEMOTH WITH LEVIATHAN, תַּנִִּ֖ין, RAHAB AND ANE SEA-MONSTERS**

Table 8.2 is an expansion of Table 7.2, as presented in the previous chapter. Here Behemoth has been added for a complete comparison.


Table 8.2: A comparison of sea-monsters in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APHOPHIS</th>
<th>TYPHON</th>
<th>TIAMAT</th>
<th>YAMM/LOTAN/tnn</th>
<th>LEVIATHAN</th>
<th>TANNIN</th>
<th>RAHAB</th>
<th>BEHEMOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical manifestation of a deity</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in the primeval waters</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives on land as well as the primeval waters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battles with another deity</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never killed off and destroyed</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea-dragon</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisting, writhing serpent</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrounds the earth</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates helpers</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monstrously big</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-powerful</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple heads</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing out fire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utters horrendous sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table thus summarises why Behemoth in Job 40:15ff cannot be regarded as an ordinary hippopotamus. From the texts consulted in the Hebrew Bible, Behemoth has not been described as either a physical manifestation of a deity, or as a being that surrounds the earth, or that he breathes out fire. These traits have been included in the table above. The reason is that, because Behemoth has been equated with Leviathan, and that it had been proved that Leviathan possess these traits, these same traits are allocated to Behemoth as well.

This table attempts to provide a picture of Behemoth, as the “…origin and identity of Behemoth is far more opaque, since clear allusions to this creature are otherwise lacking.”

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497 Watson, Chaos Uncreated, 363.
8.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to evaluate Behemoth, based on his direct, and masked, appearances in the Old Testament, as well as attestations in the Rabbinic literature and ANE myths. Clines acknowledges that it must have been odd for the early readers of Job to learn that the hippopotamus is regarded by Yahweh as his masterpiece, and that the crocodile is accredited by Yahweh to be the king of the beasts. Therefore, if placed in a natural habitat and identified as a hippopotamus, Behemoth is not remotely worthy of the majestic description of him by Yahweh himself.

Investigating the probability that Isa 30:6 may have been implicated Behemoth, the portrayal of the young and old lions, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, drew attention. Here mythical beasts (from our modern perspective) are mentioned in conjunction with so-called natural beasts (again from our modern perspective). Naming natural animals together with mythical creatures may seem peculiar, but the people of the time most probably did not distinguish between mythical and real animals as both had been a reality in their daily lives. However, this reality does not allow for an argument why the mythical beast can be interpreted as a natural animal.

Therefore, Behemoth cannot be a natural animal. Despite the lotus plants, reeds and marshes pointing to a hippopotamus, his tail does not. Many visual references to the tail of the hippopotamus appear in publications concerning Behemoth. However, if this little wiggly tail inspired Yahweh’s description, Yahweh is exposed as a liar to put it bluntly.

Behemoth as a “… primordial monster with whom the ruler of creation must contend for sovereignty over the cosmos…”499, is therefore closely associated with

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Leviathan as a mythological monster of primeval chaos. In the Apocrypha and Jewish Midrash, Behemoth is further acknowledged as an archetypal chaos monster.

This chapter attempted to change the general perception that Behemoth is a natural creature, and that Behemoth should be acknowledged as a mythological creature at least with supernatural physiognomies. The final contention is that Behemoth is a monster associated with the primeval waters.

Next, Chapter 9 addresses the probability that the דָָ֣ג גָד֔וֹל, as presented in Jonah 2:1, is a sea-monster associated with the primeval sea.
CHAPTER 9 - JONAH’S דָָּ֣ג AS SEA MONSTER

“…an undertaking only mythic men attempted - going to the land of death and, after touring, coming home again.”

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The story of Jonah is generally known for him being swallowed by a big fish, דָָּ֣ג גָּֿ֣֑וֹל (Jonah 2:1 WTT), in whose body, he remained for three days and three nights and then was spat out - alive! The quest for the real identity of the fish has been extraordinary! Many, sometimes amazing, attempts have been made to identify the known sea animals, with bodies and mouths large enough to swallow and harbour an adult human being. The whale seems to be the general best-fit solution and answer to the problem of the big fish. Haupt cites Smith, remarking on the book of Jonah:

And this is the tragedy of the Book of Jonah, that a Book which is made the means of one of the most sublime revelations of truth in the Old Testament should be known to most only for its connection with a whale.

9.2 TRANSLATIONS

The Hebrew words דָָּ֣ג גָּֿ֣֑וֹל (big fish) have been translated as different sea-animals over the years, mostly indicating the quest to try and identify it with a known natural creature.

This research has consulted twenty-four translations in English, German and Dutch, as well as the LXX, and the Masoretic Texts. Presenting and evaluating differences and variations in these translations is best in table format. This allows

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for a better understanding of a specific deviation and provides an overview of the various interpretations pertaining to this topic.

Table 9.1 now highlights the variances in translation theory and practices. This overview would prove, inter alia, that there was no deliberate falsification of this term in translation, but that a faint possibility of translatorial gatekeeping is present. The foreign nature of this term should at least have been brought to the attention of the reader.

Table 9:1 Translation choices and fidelity in translation – a summarised insight and conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPROACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translatorial gatekeeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Necessary Precision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty to audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skopos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great fish</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large/big/huge fish</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a great whale</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κῆτει μεγάλῳ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It becomes evident that the Hebrew term דָָּ֣גָּ גָּדוֹּל meaning a big fish, has mostly been translated as such. Minor variations such as “a great fish”, “a large fish” and “a huge fish” is negligible, as the overall meaning of דָָּ֣גָּ גָּדוֹּל has been honoured by most translations. Two exceptions are noted; the LXX κῆτει μεγάλῳ (ketos megalo – large dragon) and “a great whale” (LXA). Apart from the LXX, all the translations merely translated the Hebrew term without considering a possible mythical connotation. To most, it was just a big fish, worthy of identification. In the LXX, it was a sea-dragon, indicating its mythical characteristics, and for the LXA, it was a
natural, real sea-animal, the whale. In mitigation of the general translation outcome of a big fish, the Hebrew term דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל has been honoured by translators, but the vagueness of this term should have prompted translators to draw on their interpretational insight into other occurrences of mythical presentations of sea-monsters in the Hebrew Bible.

Since the Masoretic Text source explicitly uses the words “great fish,” all the translations rendered it as such. These translations thereby expressed loyalty to the source text. One translation, the LXA translates this concept as “great whale.” This results in implicitation, because the term in the source text is translated with a concept that has an extended meaning in the target text. This presents a fidelity issue as well, as the LXA translation, although appearing as a minor deviation, failed to indicate the ethical correlation between the source text and the target text.

The LXX, on the other hand, recognises the mythical milieu and translates κύκλωμα μεγάλον as great dragon. It concurs with two principles of translation, namely the principle of necessary precision, where significant information is provided to assist in fusing the horizon of the text and the reader. Secondly, it adhered to foreignisation that stresses the fundamental need that the modern reader should be made fully aware of the foreignness of the source text, and through this, the foreign element has been honoured as foreign.

Next, the history of the interpretation of דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל will be discussed. This will be followed by an attempt to identify Jonah’s fish as a sea-monster.

After careful consideration of various translations of the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל in the book of Jonah, it is evident that they all did a mostly literal translation of what was presented in the Masoretic Text. Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל is a natural sea-animal – a great fish. No

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502 κύκλωμα also referred to whales and not only to monsters or dragons.
finger can justifiably be regarded as untruthful in terms of the source text. This gives rise to an important issue.

Translators do not just translate words. They translate meaning as well, which, in turn, is intrinsically embedded in the milieu of the text. Therefore, if a translator encounters a natural animal in a mythical ambiance, the natural animal should be recognised as being out of place, and the horizon of the source text needs to be investigated. It is, therefore, the task of the translator to approach this horizon with an open mind to transfer meaning. One should be alerted to the absolute dissonance of a natural fish employed to transport someone into the mythical core of שְאָוֹל. The onus is on the translator to expose and correct falsification and or gatekeeping of the source author.

The interpretation of Jonah’s גָד֔וֹל is not true to the horizon of the source text. Even though the author had obviously been hesitant to reflect the mythological reality of the ancient life-world, the translator has the responsibility of presenting the modern reader with the opportunity to fuse both horizons. This did not happen here.

What we consider myth today, was reality in ancient times. However, one cannot infer our own reality based on ancient myth. The words of the author do not consist of dry ink on a parchment that may simply be interpreted by a basic translation software package. Although cumbersome, these words must be bandied about in the milieu of the ancient text. As ancient and modern perspectives are vitally different, it must be recognised as such.

9.3 HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

Who was this man Jonah, who was willing to portray himself in such a cowardly and negative manner? Was this a man who spent three days and nights in the belly of a big fish and lived to tell his story of spiritual unease during this dark time? Was he a man whose presentation of the size of the city of Nineveh was hugely
exaggerated? Alternatively, was he a man who led the entire city, including pets and domestic animals, to repentance for their sins? The final question is, why did, and still does, the Book of Jonah seem to captivate scholars and lay people in the way it has? To form a backdrop for this study, an overview of the history of interpretation is necessary.

9.3.1 Dating of the book

A wide range of dates has been suggested in the book of Jonah, depending on, among other things, on the scholar’s view of the possible historicity of the book. Ben Zvi dated Jonah to the postmonarchic period, basing his decision on the historical audience, for which it had been written.\footnote{Ehud Ben Zvi, Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud, Journal for the Study of the New Testament 367 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 110.} Day dates it in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, citing its historical inaccuracies as one of the reasons for this dating.\footnote{John Day, ‘Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah’, in In Quest of the Past: Studies on Israelite Religion, Literature, and Prophethood: Papers Read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament Conference, Held at Elspeet, 1988, ed. A. S. van der Woude, Oudtestamentische Studiën (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 47.} This date, according to Day, further coincides with the date assigned to the myth of Perseus and Andromeda (discussed later in this chapter), that also originates from the same place where Jonah embarked on his journey, namely Joppa.\footnote{John Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan (London: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 104.} Wolff\footnote{Hans Walter Wolff, Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 110.} argues that the date was more likely to be after 587 BCE, as he detected similarities between Jonah and Arion, a Greek singer, from around that period. Sasson, initially hesitant to date the Book of Jonah, later placed the time of the final redaction during the Restoration period, 586–438 BCE, based on its literary and linguistic features.\footnote{Jack M. Sasson, Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Interpretation, The Anchor Bible 24B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 27ff.} To reach a conclusion on such a wide span of dates, each with convincing reasons, remains a difficult task. Based on the approach of this study, the most compelling motivation of dating it in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, comes from Day
with his linking the harbour of Joppa with the myth of Perseus and Andromeda with Jonah.

9.3.2 Genre and historicity

The mere presence of the large fish caused a great deal of discrepancy in how to approach the book of Jonah. Some read Jonah as a historical narrative, where its dating is interpreted differently by different scholars.

With its historical significance in question, what genre, then is the book of Jonah? As the limits of this study preclude an extensive discussion of the genre of the book of Jonah, it only allows for an abridged overview. Obtaining consensus of scholars on the genre has proved to be impossible. Hypotheses ranged from it being an allegory, a midrash, a parable, a prophetic parable, a legend, a prophetic legend, a novella, a satire, a satirical didactic fiction, a didactic short story and a historical narrative. 509, 510

This suggests that the narrative in its entirety is extremely strange regarding modern worldviews. Normally, it would immediately have been classified as an extraordinary figment of some ancient author’s imagination, if it were not that this text appears in the historically inerrant word of God, as believed by fundamentalist scholars. The inerrancy of the Bible that signifies “… that the Scriptures… are exempt from the liability to make mistakes and that it is incapable of error. In all their teachings, they are in perfect accord with the truth." 511, 512 Therefore, fundamentalist scholars would accept that Jonah has factually been swallowed by a big fish. Speculation on what kind of fish would be permissible, but it would be heresy to even consider the likelihood that this fish could most probably be a sea-monster, thereby, acknowledging the mythical worldview of the narrative.

510 Alexander’s survey provides a general representation of scholars for these genres proposed.
512 My accentuation of the word “all”.
However, one must doubt a historical reading of the book of Jonah, because of certain occurrences in the text making its historicity unlikely. Three incidences are: the existence of a human being living inside the abdomen of a fish for three days, a highly-exaggerated portrayal of the city of Nineveh’s actual size, as well as the unrecorded repentance and submission by all the Assyrian inhabitants (and their livestock) to the God of Israel.  

Fretheim expresses his views on the book of Jonah’s historical improbability as follows:

It is . . . improbable that the beasts of Nineveh fasted, cried out mightily to God and turned from their wicked ways (3:8). It is improbable that Jonah would have prayed a Song of Thanksgiving for having been delivered while in the belly of the fish (2:2-9). It is improbable that a city with hundreds of thousands of people hostile to Israel and Israel’s God, would have been instantaneous and completely (without exception!) converted.

Intriguingly, three contributions dated 1875, 1883 and 1907 still seem to be a broad representation of all subsequent views on Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָּ֣ד֚וֹל.

Ewald states that even stories about prophets are prone to emerge with not only modifications, but also with embellishments. He further notes that prophetic thoughts may not only lead to a revival, but also shaped legends afresh, as the author uses this narrative for the elaboration of his own principles.

Haupt summarises the history of the interpretation of Jonah’s whale. It is interesting to note that the main tenets of his discussion still echo in modern day reflections:

- Jonah dreamed that he was in a fish.
- Jonah, in fact, was not swallowed, but he clung to the belly of the fish.
- The whale was the name of the ship that picked Jonah up from the sea.

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516 Haupt, ‘Jonah’s Whale’. Most quoted from page 152.
• The general belief that the fish was a whale is flawed, as whales are not
known to be indigenous in the Mediterranean. Therefore, the great fish was
actually a shark.
• Jonah is not actual history, but a didactic narrative, such as the parable of
the Good Samaritan in the NT.

Moreover, that Jonah’s fish may be associated with legendary creatures such as
serpents and dragons believed to be alive within the waters of Joppe, therefore,
the association of some interpreters with a sea-monster.

Harper517 evaluates the story of Jonah as possibly:

• Not true history, but not pure fiction.
• A moral fiction, a parable, a fable, with no historical basis what so-ever.
• A historical allegory, with Jonah as a historical character symbolising Josiah
and Manasseh.
• In close relation to myths such as Hercules and Hesione, as well as Perseus
and Andromeda.
• Not only connected to, but probably derived from the Assyrico-Babylonian
myth of Oannes, the sea-monster-god.
• He concludes that many scholars (such as Delitzsch and Keil) attempted to
defend the genuine historical character of the book. Although they could not
prove the book to be totally historical, they were reluctant to concede that
the book is fiction. His supposition is that only some scholars hold a middle
ground, with the majority hinging on extreme insights. Thus, to regard the

Later suggestions that Jonah’s fish is actually a sea-monster has been presented by Keller, Lacocque and Lacocque, Wolff, Couffignal, Limburg, Snyder, Campbell and Moyers and Handy. The latter believes that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל of Jonah is not a fish and should take its rightful place in the OT amongst biblical monsters such as Leviathan, Behemoth and the beasts of Daniel. Levine also has it that Jonah is swallowed by a sea monster. Although the conclusions of these scholars are insightful, no absolutely conclusive evidence has been presented to equate the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל with a sea-monster.

9.4 THE QUEST TO IDENTIFY JONAH’S FISH AS A SEA-MONSTER.

In the absence of irrefutable evidence that identifies Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל as a sea-monster, I would therefore like to introduce several contentions that may assist in pointing to a credible identification of דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל as a sea-monster with more clarity. The scope of arguments acknowledging the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל as a mythical sea monster, will begin with the context of the narrative, as the context of Jonah’s fish and subsequent visit to the realms of שְא֛וֹל (underworld), strongly suggests a magico-mythical milieu.

As the general ANE cosmology supports this backdrop, it will be summarised and discussed briefly. The reactions of the sailors on the ship to the storm and the sea

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520 Wolff, Obadiah and Jonah.
526 Ibid., 77.
represent two motifs. Firstly, the sea as a personified wrathful deity and a belief in the presence of storm-gods controlling the sea in their own state of fury. Both motifs will be discussed in this chapter. This will be followed by an appraisal of Dagon as a fish-god with its possible semantic link to Hebrew דָָּ֣ג. The mere physical size of the דָָּ֣ג that may identify it as a monster, will be explored after that. Jonah’s visit to שְא֛וֹל and the three days and three nights of his tenure and his entanglement with the seaweeds will form the next argument. Mythical connotations with Nineveh may prove to be supportive regarding establishing the דָָּ֣ג as a mythical sea-monster. Concluding these discernments will be the evaluation of the LXX translations of דָָּ֣ג.

9.4.1 The context of a magico-mythical milieu

Considering the backdrop of the immense treasure of creative stories that emerged from the various cultures of the ANE, the natural fish, just big enough to be able to swallow the hero Jonah, is an unimaginative insipid failure. ANE narratives would simply not allow such a hero who is meekly swallowed and later spat out by an ordinary fish, without even a hint of a struggle. Even the Israelites, who considered themselves to be of a higher stature than the pagan nations around them, would not accept such a protagonist. Therefore, this could not have been the real scenario. The context suggests something much larger than just a large fish. The fish had rather to be viewed as a powerful, colossal sea-monster, just like the ferocious Leviathan in Isa 27:1 and Ps 74:13.

9.4.2 ANE cosmological beliefs

To comprehend the horizon of the text fully, proper insight into the cosmological view of Jonah’s time needs to be acquired. The book of Jonah was entrenched in the mythical world-view of the ANE, as the following discussion hopes to prove.

The cosmos in the ANE was generally depicted as a threefold division: the heavens and the waters above the firmament, the skies under the firmament with the earth consisting of land and waters such as lakes and seas, wherein the animals of the
sky, land and water dwell, with the waters under the earth forming the third tier. These waters under the earth were distinguished by subterranean fresh waters (fountains and springs) and the abyss, the waters of the deep – the underworld.

Although this description of the ANE cosmology is congruent with all the cultures represented, a brief overview of each region of the ANE should demonstrate the shared horizon of the sailors (they may represent various cultures), as well as Jonah. The differences will certainly be noted, but the shared outlook of these cultures is basically in harmony.

Egyptian cosmology believed that the Nile flowed through the core of the earth. The sky, from which the heavenly bodies were suspended, rested on four pillars on the earth. The sun went through the underworld at night where it was attacked by Apophis, the serpent/dragon of the underworld representing chaos, to prevent the sun rising again. During this nightly journey, Osiris assists Ra (the sun god) to defeat Apophis so that the sun rises again and accordingly, achieves victory over chaos.\(^{528}\) Another version articulates that Nut held back the primordial waters by arching her back, placing her feet on one side of the earth and her hands and head on the other side. She then gave birth to the sun, after its journey through the netherworld during the night.\(^{529}\)

Sharing the Egyptian view of the route of the sun, the Sumerian cosmos existed of two tiers – the earth that was a flat disk and a dome (possibly metal) holding up the heavens. The underworld was later added as the third tier.\(^{530}\) The Sumerians also believed that the sun journeyed through the underworld at night. Babylonian cosmology appears to be different in that it represents a six-level cosmos, but the

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basic tenets supports a three-tiered cosmos. The firmament was completed when Marduk, after slaying Tiamat, splits her body into two halves. He flings her upper body upwards to form the sky where the heavenly bodies and their associated deities dwell. The bottom half of her body is used to form the earth. Limited information exists of Canaanite cosmogony, and its cosmology is unfortunately not known at all.

Homer’s Iliad, generally dated to have been written in the eighth century BCE, also depicts Greek cosmology as a three-tiered cosmos. The earth was surrounded by water, with the sky above the earth and Hades below. Zeus was the god of the sky (and represented the Greek weather god as well); Poseidon was the god of the sea and Hades oversaw the underworld and death. The earth was ruled by an agreement between the three gods. Phoenician accounts present the world as a cosmic egg, which splits into heaven and earth.

The ancient Israelites imagined the earth as flat and covered by a solid dome of the firmament that is held up by mountain as pillars (Job 26:11; 37:18). Above the firmament, and below the earth, were the primeval waters that Yahweh divided at creation (Gen 1:6, 7; Pss 24:2; 148:4). The heavenly lights were attached to the firmament (Gen 1:14-19; Ps 19:4, 6). שְאֹול, the place of the dead, lay under the earth, in the deep. (Num 16:30-33; Is14:9,15). Isa 5:14 subtly suggests a touch of mythology where שְאֹול (as the equivalent of Hades and Tartarus) is presented as a power that can destroy the living.

Thus, the heavens, earth and the waters under the earth form part of a three-tiered cosmos, as can clearly be noted in Exod 20:4 “… anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth…” The part below the earth, תְהֹוֹם (the deep/primeval sea) is a deep abyss filled with water and inhabited by sea-monster deities. It should be clear from the opening verses in

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Genesis 1 that at least these waters were in existence when God started his creation. The waters of the deep were wrapped in total darkness, and the breath/wind of God lingered over the waters. One should take note that the underworld, שְאֹלוֹן, is an integral part of Hebrew cosmology. It becomes clear that the Hebrew Bible generally shares the cosmos as a threefold division, with similar beliefs than other ANE cultures.

Jonah’s actions and amazing journey can only fit into this cosmological horizon of understanding. He flees from God, and boards a ship. This enrages God and he wills a mighty storm on the sea. As storms are the actions of an angry storm-god, the sailors firstly give sacrifices by throwing all their belongings into the sea to appease the angry storm-god. When this does not have the desired effect, they believe that it was someone else’s stronger storm-god who is furious, and prayed to that deity. After tossing Jonah in the sea, it suddenly became calm, supporting their notion that a storm-god had a problem with one individual only. As drowning is the obvious result after being thrown into deep waters, the body of the dead sink down and would be accepted in the mythical realm of the netherworld. However, Jonah’s God did not want him dead, so he arranged that Jonah could be swallowed by a mythical דָָּג functioning as a “salt water taxi”.

9.4.3 The effect of the storm on the sailors

The storms gods discussed above, used the chaos monsters to bring about the storm. This storm resembled all the might of the forces of chaos and recalls memories of Tiamat in the Enuma Elish, as does Yamm in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. The sailors, non-Israelites, would have grasped this milieu fully. Realising that this was not a normal storm, the sailors started praying to their gods (in this case their respective storm-gods) to abate the storm. The casting of their valuable stock into the sea seemed to serve two purposes; to lighten the load on the boat so that it

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532 The place of שְאֹלוֹן is discussed later in this chapter.
533 Fretheim, The Message of Jonah, 98.
floats higher in the water, reducing the probability of sinking, but predominantly as a kind of sacrifice of all their valuables to their gods: Baal, who conquered Yamm in the Canaanite tradition (and for good measure against נב ים and Lotan), Teshub (Hittite/Hurrian) fought against Illuyanka,534 with battles also by Kumarbi (Mittani) and Hadad (Syria).535 Egyptian Horus who had fought against Seth, Babylonian Marduk against Tiamat, Greek Zeus against Typhon. Akkadian Tishpak battled Labbu.536 And to conclude the list of extensive examples, Demarous fought against Pontos in the Phoenician history of Philo of Byblos.537

For Jonah, it must have been common knowledge as he was a prophet of Yahweh, that the Hebrew bible’s tradition of ים, the sea, also represents the chaos waters, a primeval opponent of Yahweh. The sea is also personified in the Hebrew Bible. This is evident in Jonah 1:15, when Jonah was thrown overboard the ship “... the sea ceased from her raging.” (NRS). Considering a wider insight, the Aramaic Targum538 also personifies the sea as it depicts the sea as resting from its rage, becoming tranquil again. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the ravenous sea and its subsequent serene calmness are depicted similar to Jonah 1:15, “The sea grew calm that had fought like a woman in labour,”539 (Tablet XI, Line 132).

These personal traits of the primeval sea and ים add to the mythological milieu of the text. During a storm of this magnitude in the waters of the sea, “normal” animals like whales and other large fish, do not function at all. It is the abode of deities and

monsters only. A standard fish cannot be the *deus ex machina*.\textsuperscript{540} It calls for a monster at least.

\section*{9.4.4 Dagon as a fish-god, with its likely semantic link to Hebrew יָדָן}

Dagon’s reign stretched as far as Syria, Mesopotamia and Chaldea. Iconography portrays Dagon as a fish god of the Philistines. A description of one of Dagon’s many temples, shows that the first doorway to the temple had been adorned with fish-gods guarding the entrance. Some fragments from the first two chambers further depict a city situated on a sea.\textsuperscript{541} These apparently extensive portrayals in the temple certainly strengthen the notion that Dagon had indeed been a fish-deity, despite some attempts to encumber him as the “grain” god as well. Dagon had been a prominent deity in the ANE and seems to have outlived the Philistines as he had still been worshipped in his temple in Ashdod during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century.\textsuperscript{542}

The interest in Dagon as a fish-god in this argument arose from a popular etymology based on the Hebrew word יָדָן for fish.\textsuperscript{543} The name of Dagon as a fish-god most probably derived from the Hebrew יָדָן as fish.\textsuperscript{544} Therefore, the insight of Dagon being portrayed as a large fish\textsuperscript{545}, as well as him being a pagan deity, gives rise to the propensity that Jonah’s large fish, could actually be the physical manifestation of a sea deity, such as a sea-monster.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{540} A *deus ex machina* is the solution of an unforeseen, apparently hopeless situation, provided by the introduction of a newly introduced influence not part of the existing characters in the plot. It originated in ancient Greek theatre, where a mechanical device brought actors performing the roles of deities to the stage from above the cyclorama. These gods provided the unexpected and unpredictable solution to a major problem. The *deus ex machina* had been introduced by the 5\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, and may have formed part of the knowledge of the author of the book of Jonah.
\item \textsuperscript{541} Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon: A Narrative of a Second Expedition to Assyria* (London: John Murray, 1874), 168.
\item \textsuperscript{543} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{544} Lowell K. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 109.
\item \textsuperscript{545} B Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (London: S. Bagster & Sons, 1848), 147.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
9.4.5 Connotations with other myths

Specific connotations with myths such as Hercules and Hesione, in addition to Perseus and Andromeda have been found. In addition, it is postulated that the גָדֶל דָָּג in Jonah is not only coupled with, but possibly originates from the Assyrico-Babylonian sea-monster-god, Oannes.

Two Greek myths display the motif of a person being rescued before being devoured by a sea-monster. Herakles saved Hesione, and Perseus delivered Andromeda. Hesione was the daughter of the king of Troy, who had gained the wrath of Poseidon. Poseidon, in a rage of revenge, initially pounded the shores of Troy with massive waves of water. After her father had consulted an oracle, he laid her down at the shore as an appeasement to Poseidon, who then sent a large sea-monster to dispose of Hesione. Hercules rescued her by killing the monster.546

The second rendition is that of Perseus and Andromeda. Andromeda’s mother, queen Cassiopeia boasts that she and Andromeda were more beautiful than the Nereids (sea-goddesses). They complained to the god of the sea, Poseidon who in rage threatened to destroy the entire kingdom. King Cepheus consulted an oracle and subsequently tied Andromeda to the sea’s edge as a sacrifice for the sea-monster Cetus to devour her. Perseus, after asking her if she would marry him if he killed the sea-monster, killed the sea-monster in a gruesome battle at Joppa in Palestine.547

Some interpreters associate these myths with the Jonah narrative. Day considers the probability that a common sea-monster in the Canaanite dragon myth tradition may be behind the tales of both Jonah and Perseus and Andromeda.548 A further correlation is that the Perseus and Andromeda saga has taken place in Joppa, the

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547 Ibid., 122.
same city from which Jonah departed. These two incidences from Greek mythology where a sea-monster engaged in the action of swallowing its victim, correlates with the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל “swallowing” (Jonah 2:1).

A second significant mythical association, is that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל in Jonah is not only coupled with, but also that it possibly originates from the Assyrico-Babylonian sea-monster-god, Oannes. Spence\(^{549}\) alludes to the probability that a semantic correlation may exist between the Greek fish-god Oannes and יָוָנָה (Jonah). These associations do not prove that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל was a sea-monster, but the possibility thereof remains probable.

9.4.6 The physical size of the דָָּ֣ג as incriminating evidence being a monster

The size of the דָָּ֣ג forms the main tenets of an article by Handy.\(^{550}\) He is satisfied that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל in Jonah meets most of the attributes that establish monstrosity in world myths and legends. I disagree with him that that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל matches most of those determinants, but concede that at least two important descriptions of a monster clearly depict the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל: “an animal or plant of abnormal form or structure” – as a creature that can accommodate an adult human being for three days inside its stomach, and “one who deviates from normal behaviour or character” – no fish or whale are interested to swallow an adult human being alive. Simon\(^{551}\) on the other hand, focusses predominantly on the size of the fish without elaborating much on the fish itself. He does not make mythical connotations based on its size alone.

In lieu of the agreement to just the two determinants, I concur with Handy’s conclusion that “… on the basis of its size, Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל had such a large size


\(^{550}\) Handy, ‘Joining Leviathan, Behemoth and the Dragons: Jonah’s Fish as Monster.’

that earns it the right to join Leviathan, Behemoth and all those dragons as a bona fide biblical "monster."  

9.4.7 Jonah’s jaunt to שְאָוֹל

After creation, the function of the sea monsters changed, mostly in a guarding function. In the Gilgamesh Epic, ferocious scorpion men guarded the mountain at the edge of the world, wanting to prevent Gilgamesh to enter the garden of the gods. The כְּרוּבִִּ֗ים had the same function in Genesis 3:24. One of the assigned duties of the sea-monsters, was to guard the gates of the netherworld. The hellhound Cerberus guarded the netherworld in Greek mythology and Aker, in the form of a double-sphinx, guarded the underworld in Egypt. The fact that the דָָּ֣ג גָ־֖דוֹל in Jonah took him to the gates of the שְאָוֹל, therefore strongly suggests that it was a sea-monster associated with שְאָוֹל.

One reads about שְאָוֹל in several texts in the Hebrew Bible, but Ezek 31:16 provides a general insight into how שְאָוֹל was viewed by the Israelites:

I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

שְאָוֹל implicates the loss of contact with Yahweh, and it is one place where Yahweh does not dwell or even enter. The last part of Isa 38:18 mentions בִ֖וֹר and not שְאָוֹל, but the inference remains the same – being away from God in a place that God does not enter. As supreme deity of all the spheres of his creation, he has the propensity to enter שְאָוֹל, but the OT does not distinctly depict any visit inside שְאָוֹל. In שְאָוֹל one is separated from God.

552 Handy, ‘Joining Leviathan, Behemoth and the Dragons: Jonah’s Fish as Monster.’, 82–83.
553 Dalley, Myths from Mesopotamia, 96ff.
One text though, Ps 139:8, depicts God’s presence in שְאָוֹל, but seems to be more of a poetic comparison of the range of God’s manifestation from the highest heights of the heavens to the lowest possible place under the earth. Further possible insinuations in Job 14:13 and 38:17 of God’s presence in שְאָוֹל, are inconclusive. Two texts in the Hebrew Bible indicate that Yahweh can either see what is hidden in שְאָוֹל (Job 37:17), or that he has knowledge of its hidden mysteries (Prov 15:11). These texts represent more of a yearning for Yahweh being present even amid שְאָוֹל. A recognition of this notion is that the first appearance of God in שְאָוֹל seems to be only after the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ (the son of the triune God) when he subsequently “…descended into hell,” conquering death and the forces of evil as stated in the traditional Apostle’s Creed.

The question remains – did Jonah enter שְאָוֹל whilst in the belly of the דָָּ֣ג? The first consideration is, what does the Hebrew Bible say about entering שְאָוֹל? It describes journeys down into שְאָוֹל (Job 33:24; Ps 22:29; Is 5:14 and Ezek 32:27-30). Isa 14:15 depicts going down to שְאָוֹל, whereas Ps 107:26 speaks of going down to תְה֑וֹם. Sasson recognises תְה֑וֹם in the Hebrew Bible as a “… poetic term for a (primordial) body of water.” Thereby שְאָוֹל and תְה֑וֹם are closely associated in that תְה֑וֹם gives access to שְאָוֹל.

שְאָוֹל is further described as having gates: Gates of שְאָוֹל (Isa 38:10), gates of death/doors of the shadow of death, (indicating שְאָוֹל?) (Job 38:17), and gates of death (Pss 9:13; 107:18). It is not clear whether Jonah had been inside, or only at the mouth or gates of שְאָוֹל. Jonah’s conviction that when he called God “… out of the belly of שְאָוֹל I cried, and you heard my voice.” (Jon 2:2, NRS) could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, that he was not in שְאָוֹל, because if he was down here, God would not have been able to hear him. The other interpretation is that he had been in שְאָוֹל and was protected inside the דָָּ֣ג, but that he had been in

555 Sasson, Jonah, 184.
a delirious state, believing that God actually heard him. Fretheim’s insight regarding Jonah 2:6 is that Jonah was more dead than alive, supports the notion of Jonah’s being delirious as stated above.

Taking into consideration that שְאֹול is a place of no comeback as stated succinctly in Job 7:9 (NRS) “… so those who go down to שְאֹול do not come up.” This again indicates that Jonah had not been in שְאֹול. However, the reason why I believe that this call to God from Jonah comes from within שְאֹול is the use of participle מן that indicates “being a proper part of,” in conjunction with the word בֶּטֶן “the womb,” collectively referring to the very core of שְאֹול (i.e. “from the midst of the kingdom of the dead”). This indicates that Jonah was indeed in שְאֹול.

Then again, it may appear that outside שְאֹול, is akin to being inside. Ps 141:7 (NRS) speaks about “… their bones be strewn at the mouth of שְאֹול.” Is 14:15 (KJV) states that being brought down to שְאֹול, “… to the sides of the pit”. The Hebrew word translated as “sides,” יְרֵכָה could mean “rear” or “recess,” but probably indicates “border” or “side”.557 The LXT translation of this text, to go down to “… the foundations of the earth” apparently contradicts being on the fringes, but then correlates to Jonah 2:6 (NRS) “at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever.”

In the context of possible doubt whether Jonah was indeed inside שְאֹול, Fretheim concludes that, “Inasmuch as שְאֹול was believed to be under the floor of the ocean, Jonah was spatially near the place.”558 Another consideration is that Jonah’s visit to שְאֹול is also reminiscent of Hercules’ visit to the underworld “… an undertaking only mythic men attempted - going to the land of death and, after touring, coming home again.”559

559 Carper, ‘Hercules’ Descent into the Underworld’, 75.
I concede, that although it can be contemplated that Jonah was inside שְאָוֹל, it cannot be confirmed explicitly. However, the people of the time may most probably have believed that he was there. The reality of the situation is that Jonah’s דָּג served as a “salt water taxi,” but that no ordinary animal could enter תְהוֹם. This was the abode of deities only such as Inanna as well as mythical sea-monsters. The Gilgamesh Epic portrays the god Enki attempting to rescue his wife Inana from within the netherworld. This indicates that even gods could not enter the netherworld, but although no one could enter, reaching the gates of the deep, seems like a feat no ordinary person or animal could achieve. He did not succeed, as he could not enter the netherworld. This דָּג גָּדוֹל is therefore no ordinary fish.

9.4.8 The time of Jonah’s underwater stint

The three days and three nights of Jonah’s stay inside the דָּג גָּדוֹל have a mythological resemblance with Inanna’s voluntary descent into the netherworld.

After three days (and) three nights had passed,
   Her minister Ninsubur,
   Her minister of favorable words,
   Her knight of true words,
   Sets up a lament for her by the ruins...  

Landes, considers the “three days and three nights” to be the time of Inanna’s descent into the chthonic depths, that may have significance in Jonah’s “three days and three nights” journey inside the דָּג גָּדוֹל. However, in Jonah’s case (Jonah 2:5-6), it indicates the time span it took the דָּג גָּדוֹל to bring Jonah back from שְאָוֹל or the Deep. This, according to Landes, indicates the “… distance and separation…” of the netherworld from life on earth.

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560 Fretheim, The Message of Jonah, 98.
563 The term “netherworld” does not only refer to שְאָוֹל, but also includes the deepest parts of the primeval ocean. Thus, to go down into the netherworld, not necessarily implies that שְאָוֹל has been entered.
possibility that the period of three days and three nights refers to the time the דָָּ֣ג brings Jonah back to the earth from שְא֛וֹל.  

Landes’ insight does not infer that the author of the book of Jonah was familiar with the Sumerian myth or that it adopted the idea, but he implies that the author of Jonah has applied the same meaning as that of the mythographer of the Inanna myth, without speculation how Jonah’s author may have become aware of its mythological background.

9.4.9 A mythological link with Nineveh

The sailors, on their eventual return to Joppa, must have recounted the story of Jonah. When Jonah eventually came to Nineveh, his miraculous survival with the added new knowledge of his wondrous rescue by none other than a fish, must have prompted them to remind them of their own history of fish-gods such as Nanshe and Oannes. Whether this may have assisted in their astonishing conversion, is an open thought.

The city of Nineveh itself, may have elemental mythical undertones. The name Nineveh is derived from the Akkadian word nūnu for “fish”, thus the city’s name means “Fishtown”. The further posit that the fish-goddess Nanshe could have been the chief deity of early Nineveh, adds to the mythical intrigue of Jonah’s narrative. This mythical connotation, may add to the mounting encasing of Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג as being a sea-monster.

9.4.10 LXX translations of the דָָּ֣ג of the Hebrew Bible

The LXX leans towards the mythological by translating דָָּ֣ג גָּד֔וֹל as κήτος μεγάλῳ in Jonah 2:1 and דָָּ֣ג to in κήτος Jonah 2:2; 11. However, the translation of דָָּ֣ג in the rest of the OT is ἰχθύας (Gen 1:26, 28; Exod 7:18, 21; Num 11:5; Deut 4:18; Ps

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565 Fretheim, The Message of Jonah, 98.
105:29; Isa 50:2; Ezek 29:4, 5; 47:9, 10). As the usual word for fish ἰχθύας is translated as κῆτη in the book of Jonah, Parry⁵⁶⁸ concludes that “… the fish was a cosmic sea monster…” It is noteworthy that the LXX employ κῆτη when translating יָתְנִין in the OT texts such as Gen 1:21, but δράκων in (e.g. Exod 7:9, Job 7:12, Ps 74:13), or omits the word totally as in Isa 51:9.

Midrash expositions, linking the sea-monster to Jonah may have prompted the LXX to translate the fish as κήτος, such as that the fish told Jonah that its time is limited as Leviathan is about to devour it.⁵⁶⁹ This may be coupled with Jonah’s subsequent threats to Leviathan, causing the sea-monster to flee for his life.⁵⁷⁰ Noegel’s⁵⁷¹ conclusion that the translation of the LXX deliberately chose κήτος because it strongly relates to יָתְנִין as a term that is linked to Leviathan, affords a mythological credence to the דָּג.

9.5 COMPARING דָּגָה גָּדוֹל WITH LEVIATHAN, יָתְנִין, RAHAB, BEHEMOTH TO ANE SEA-MONSTERS

Table 9.2 is again an expansion of Table 8.2, as presented in the previous chapter. Here דָּגָה גָּדוֹל has been added for a complete comparison.

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⁵⁷⁰ Per Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer.
Table 9.2: A comparison of sea-monsters in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible

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The table above forms a summary of the features of the sea-monsters associated with the primeval waters in the Hebrew Bible. This allows for an easy comparison. Although Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל is not explicitly implicated as a deity and a twisting, writhing serpent, it matches the core DNA of a mythical sea-monster associated with the primeval waters - a supernatural and monstrously big sea-dragon.

The context of the narrative, set within, and fitting in perfectly with the general ANE cosmology, strongly supports a magico-mythical milieu in which it is more appropriate for a mythical sea-monster to be the one who swallowed Jonah.

The reactions of the sailors on the ship to the storm, each sacrificing their valuables first before praying to their own storm-god to still his storm on the sea, are clearly
set in a mythical ambience. Adding to this, the secondary motif of the sea itself, as a primeval deity being angered and the need to placate the sea (collectively in this scenario with the storm-god). This dimension strengthens the ancient world view, shared by Jonah as well.

The possible semantic connotation of the historic fish-god Dagon to Hebrew, דָָּ֣ג, serves in the context of the collective argument to consider that a mythical fish-deity could have been the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל and magical fish-deities are sea-monsters.

The mere physical size of the דָָּ֣ג that according to Handy, proves that the דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל qualifies as a monster, assists in the argument that it actually is a sea-monster. Jonah’s visit to the gates of שְא֛וֹל, asks for a mythical deity of the sort (such as a sea-monster) and not a large fish acting as an ancient Uber. שְא֛וֹל is the abode of the gods of the netherworld, who will accept mortal human beings as permanent residents, with only ANE deities such as Baal and Inanna who has entered its realms.

The three days and three nights as a depiction of the time needed to travel the considerable distance from the netherworld to the surface of the ocean, indicate and support its strong magico-mythical connotation.

Jonah became entangled in seaweeds, which Batto argues, is an expression of the primeval waters. This was most probably an attempt to describe the bottom of the sea. The association of primeval waters with יָם and its association with שְא֛וֹל supports, and adds to, the magico-mythical ambience of Jonah’s dilemma in the deep.

572 Handy, ‘Joining Leviathan, Behemoth and the Dragons: Jonah’s Fish as Monster.’
The Akkadian word for fish, *nūnu*, has also been associated with a fish-goddess as an early deity of the city of Nineveh. This may be mythically linked to the intrinsic core of Jonah’s story as a myth.

Finally, considering the scope of LXX translations of יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל, translated as a sea-monster or dragon, confirms the freedom with which the translations were made by the Greeks. This freedom of expression comes from an innate knowledge of a rich heritage of myths, thereby probably not prone to protecting the inerrancy of Hebrew Scriptures, and calling יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל a κήτεῃ μεγάλῳ.

After weighing up these arguments, the question remains. Is the mythological Umwelt enough to prove that the fish was indeed a monster?

These arguments listed above have aimed to highlight the improbability that the יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל can be translated as a large fish, and that a sea-monster is a plausible interpretation. Therefore, all these arguments together, hope to serve as a coercive supposition that the יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל in the book of Jonah is a sea-monster, and as Day surmises, that it “... probably derives from the Canaanite chaos monster.”

The יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל that swallowed Jonah and carried him off to the realms of שְא֛וֹל stimulated exegetical interest for centuries into the real identity of this creature. Some interpreters equate the גָּדוֹל with a sea-monster, and although positive cases were built as support for this hypothesis, irrefutable evidence to identify it as a sea-monster is still lacking. I have therefore endeavoured to investigate several insights that may each point to the probability that the יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל was a sea-monster. Together, these conclusions collectively hope to have come to a synergistic verdict that the יָדָּ֣ג גָּדוֹל in the book of Jonah, should strongly be considered as a sea-monster.

Our findings may surprise us, may confuse us, may anger some, but it may eventually enrich us.

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CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter aims to provide a summary of the main findings of this study on the probable denial, by translators and interpreters, of sea-monsters associated with the primeval waters appearing in the Hebrew Bible. A summary of the problem statement and how it was addressed will also be given. This chapter will conclude with a critical reflection of this study, limitations encountered, and potentially feasible research prospects for future studies.

The Old Testament mentions several mythical creatures and other deities generally known in the ANE. Mythical creatures can be defined as an ancient mythological sea-monster or beast threatening God’s creative order. Sea monsters such as Leviathan, Rahab, Behemoth and דג גדו (Jonah’s big fish) as well as cosmic deities such as תוהם, are mentioned in several texts of the Hebrew Bible and ANE. However, no consensus exists amongst Old Testament exegetes of how to translate the Hebrew words referring to these mythical monsters. Therefore, a tendency developed amongst exegetes to change or transfigure these earlier mythical beasts or mythical deities into ordinary animals. These transfigurations may either have been done deliberately to avoid confusion amongst modern readers, or may be due to the fundamentalist beliefs of the commentators that the Bible is also authentic in its references to such beasts and could therefore only refer to real animals.

Leviathan for example, has been translated, or “re-created”, into different creatures, such as a whale or a crocodile. Similarly, Behemoth became a hippopotamus or even an elephant in some instances. The “conversion” of sea monsters and cosmic deities into “understandable” creatures (e.g. crocodiles) or ordinary natural elements, for the sake of the modern reader, raises the issue of the legitimacy of a translator who assumes the role of the interpreter on behalf of the reader. The translator in such cases can redirect, or influence, or reshape the
horizon of understanding for the reader to such an extent that the horizon\textsuperscript{575} of the text is being violated.

That is exactly what this research aimed to expose. The exegete must be informed and transformed from the text itself, and not first transpose an own horizon to gain meaning. As the horizons of both the reader and text are important when attempting to understand Old Testament texts, the focus of this study had been to understand possible references to mythological monsters in the OT against the broader magico-mythical cosmology of the ANE.

10.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAPTERS ON LEVIATHAN AND OTHER MONSTERS

A summary of the conclusions of chapters on Leviathan, Rahab, Behemoth and the דָָ֣ג גָ֙ד֔וֹל in Jonah presents the outcome of the research on each of these sea-monsters.

10.2.1 Leviathan

Leviathan appears in five texts of the Hebrew Bible: Job 3:8, Job 41:1ff, Pss 74:13-14 and 104:26, and Isa 27:1. A reading of twenty-five Bible translations, revealed that several translations interpret Leviathan as a natural creature and not as a mythical sea-monster. After studying these texts, it became evident that Leviathan forms an integral part of ANE dragon slaying traditions, as he can be equated with Apophis in Egyptian myth, Tiamat as portrayed in the Babylonian Enuma Elish, Yamm/Lotan/Tunnan in Ugaritic myth, as well as Typhon in Greece. Distinctive traits similar to the ANE mythical sea-monsters were common. They were all supernatural mythical sea-monsters, associated with chaos and the primeval waters surrounding the earth, and were involved in a fierce battle with another deity. They were defeated in this battle and were only restrained and not

\textsuperscript{575} See the discussion about Gadamer's hermeneutics which involves the fusion of the horizon of the text with that of the reader in Chapter 2.
permanently killed off. Therefore, the reigning deity had to keep them in check, as they might resurge at any time to return the created world back into chaos again.

Leviathan, was the same creature as his counterparts in the ANE, was obviously known to Israelites in biblical times. This term signifying creature should therefore be translated and interpreted as such and not as a mere natural living animal. With regard to both translation and interpretation, and the requirement pertaining to fidelity and loyalty to the written text, as well as the ancient milieu of the text, the foreignness of Leviathan must be preserved and honoured. Any attempt at translatorial gatekeeping and falsification is untenable.

10.2.2 Rahab

Rahab and תַַּ֜נִּינִִּ֗ים were appraised in Chapter 7. They were found to be extremely similar to Leviathan, if not exactly the same creature. Significantly, Rahab has been interpreted as an epithet of Egypt in several texts in the OT. On the other hand, Rahab, portrayed as a raging monster with the ability to cast spells, was recognised as a sea-monster personifying chaos. תַַּ֜נִּינִִּ֗ים was found to be mentioned in a “suppressed” and “subdued” manner in many places in the OT, but is actually equal to Rahab and Leviathan. Translations and interpretations, should therefore ensure and honour fidelity to the foreignness of these creatures.

10.2.3 Behemoth

Behemoth is only referred to once by name in Job 40:15. Here he is described by Yahweh himself as a monstrously big, supernatural and amphibious creature. Depicted in Rabbinic literature as closely associated with Leviathan, it became clear that Behemoth was closely associated with Leviathan. This includes being thought of as having been battling another deity, and after being slain, constrained so as not to return. Despite the modern translations and interpretations of Behemoth as a hippopotamus, it appears that he was an integral part of the ancient Israelite milieu and culture. Therefore, translations and interpretations should honour the foreignness of Behemoth.
Jonah’s fish, has generally been interpreted as a whale. This study found that, although translators and interpreters showed loyalty to the Masoretic text, by translating דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹ as a big fish, their interpretation does not reflect the magico-mythical milieu of the ancient text. A closer reading attempted to highlight several possible mythical connotations between דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹל and a sea-monster associated with the primeval seas. Although no conclusive evidence was presented to identify דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹ as such, the notion is that, considering all the arguments together, it strongly leans in favour of such an interpretation.

Considering the insights gained from these chapters into Leviathan, Rahab, תַַּ֜נִּינִִּם, Behemoth and דָָּ֣ג גָד֔וֹ, the overall conclusion is that these mythical creatures share the same DNA with creatures in the ANE heritage.

10.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

This inevitably brings one to the question, which type of translation or interpretation is the best - formal or functional translations? The answer is simple - neither. None are perfect and both translation theories have proven shortcomings. It is true that no translation can be fully formal or wholly functional. Bible translations contain a varying percentage of each in its endeavour to strive for the best possible translation. Because of this goal, some other translation theories and hypotheses have emerged over time. All the relevant texts in this study have been assessed against the benchmarks listed below.

10.3.1 Fidelity

The intentional meaning of the source text can easily be falsified if the translator does not take special care to reproduce all the essential elements of meaning in the target text. Independent of the underlying theory of translation, any translation should have fidelity. Fidelity therefore, entails interpreting and translating a source text without distorting, violating or betraying the message delivered to the target
This is the litmus test to which all translations and interpretations must be subjected.

10.3.2 Loyalty

Loyalty be defined as being loyal to both the source and its author, as well as the target text audience. This idea probably also originated with Gadamer as loyalty links the translator bilaterally to both the source and the target horizons.

10.3.3 Principle of necessary precision

The principle of necessary precision holds that “…the appropriate amount of information is determined by the function of the translation.” This means that the target audience needs to be respected with the maximum information that they have the propensity to absorb and understand.

10.3.4 Foreignisation

Foreignisation poses that the reader must be made aware of the foreignness of the source text and that “…the properly ethical aim of the translating act is (my italics) receiving the Foreign as Foreign.” This implies that the translated text must revert to footnotes if necessary to explain the foreignness of the text.

10.3.5 Translatorial gatekeeping

The concept of ‘translatorial gatekeeping’ is not an existing expression, but a new term conceived by the author, to define the tendency of gatekeeping in biblical translations. It may probably be confused initially with being equivalent to falsification, but there is a distinct difference between translatorial gatekeeping and falsification. The translator is responsible for translatorial gatekeeping in texts where the translator may feel compelled to “silence” or “soften” the implicit content

577 Nord, Translating as a Purposeful Activity.
578 Hönig and Kussmaul, Strategie Der Übersetzung: Ein Lehr- Und Arbeitsbuch.
579 Pym, Exploring Translation Theories, 51.
of the source text in an astute and deliberate ignorance of the object of translation, as being undesirable and too contentious.

10.3.6 Falsification

Falsification is also a deliberate act of changing the core message and insight of the source text, in such a manner that a predetermined new meaning is being transposed onto the text.

As mentioned, when the approaches to translation and interpretation discussed are adhered to, this largely contributes to an improved understanding of the original intended meaning. This study applied these approaches to evaluate biblical interpretations and exposed some unfortunate translations and interpretations.

10.4 CONCLUSIONS

The original aims and objectives of this study were fourfold: Firstly, to investigate how and why translations and interpretations of the OT differ. Secondly, how the large sea-monsters and cosmic deities associated with the primeval sea, should be understood and should thus be appropriately interpreted and translated. Thirdly, to investigate the nature of mythical creatures in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible for a better understanding. Lastly, to assess fidelity in translations and interpretations.

These objectives have been achieved in this study, because after exploring the sea-monsters and investigating how these creatures relate to the mythological cosmology of the texts in the Hebrew Bible, the conclusion has been reached that the translations and interpretation of certain elements appearing in the Hebrew Bible, have infringed the principle of fidelity to the source text.

10.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During this study, some difficulty was experienced with obtaining recent data in some subjects. Furthermore, arguments for a possible mythical connotation of
Behemoth, have seemingly faded since Day\textsuperscript{581} (1985), and Pope\textsuperscript{582} (1965) in their attempts to link Behemoth to Atik and the “bull of heaven,” respectively. Much research on Jonah’s דָָּ֣ג גָָּד֔וֹל, centered around the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century. The main focus of the book of Jonah seems to have shifted away from the דָָּ֣ג, as it seems that its entrenchment as just being a big fish, has been accepted by modern scholars. Renewed research of the דָָּ֣ג גָָּד֔וֹל, may lead to fresh insights. In this regard, current studies on monsters and demons provide a global and central view and a specific study of these creatures in the Hebrew Bible seems lacking. Finally, sea- and river-monsters still seem to occupy the minds of especially traditional cultures - even in the twenty-first century. Two questions thus deserve to be investigated, namely: How and why is the ancient insight of these monsters similar to today? And, why does this phenomenon appear to be universal and span across time?

A final word; this study is but a small step to unshackle the sea-monsters in the Old Testament from its suppression by translations and exegetes.

\textsuperscript{581} Day, God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea, 84.  
\textsuperscript{582} Pope, Job, 272.
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