ANAT'S INFLUENCE OR NON-INFLUENCE IN THE RELIGIOUS MILIEU OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

By

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I declare that this thesis, "Anat's influence or non-influence in the religious milieu of ancient Israel", 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.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

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ABSTRACT

The motivation and purpose of this research revolved around the goddess Anat and the possible influence or effect that she might have had on the religion of the ancient Israelites.

This led, to the ancient city of Ugarit, on the western coast of the Mediterranean Sea in what is now, Syria. The excavations that were begun in 1928, after the chance discovery of a funeral vault by a farmer, who was plowing his land when his plow struck a stone from a vault. The excavations has delivered a most remarkable treasure trove of history, unknown languages and religious mythologies that has astounded both archaeologists as well as biblical scholars during the past century.

Unravelling the culture, art, customs, and cults from Late Bronze Age Ugarit has been a fascinating adventure to the student who discovered how interwoven all the kingdoms of that time was with their correspondence, and trade. The discovery of the mythological texts of the Baal Cycle and Anat and Aqhat led to the study of authors like Oden and Albright.

The discovery of the goddess Anat in the Ugaritic mythology led to question the influence, if any, this war goddess might have had on the religion of ancient Israel. The study of Anat, as war goddess led to comparisons between the Ugaritic mythologies and the Hebrew Bible. The many times the other gods and goddesses were mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, for instance the god Baal and Asherah, led the student to wonder about the war goddess Anat. The Hebrew Bible was the product of a nation called Israel, which led to the investigation of ancient Israel: her oregen, her culture and especially her religion.

Who and what was ancient Israel? Where did they come from and how did their religion originate? Investigation into ancient Israel as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible and the study of the archaeology of the Levant led to the realization that there was a discrepancy between the two. Archaeology was the one thing that could enlighten the puzzle of the origin of ancient Israel. The student joined a team of excavators at Hazor in upper Israel to broaden her knowledge of

archaeology. Excavating at Hazor in Upper Galilee taught the value of pottery in its revelation of a time and a place and a people in history.

After examining the archaeological results from excavations such as Jericho (by Kathleen Kenyon 1960) and the city of Ai and realising that much of the historicity of the book of Joshua was disputed, the research continued to the religion of ancient Israel. The discovery was made that there were two religions; the one archaeologically discovered about the people of Israel and their daily lives and the other the religion of Israel as portrayed in the Hebrew bible.

Archaeologists, such as Amihai Mazar, Israel Finkelstein and William Dever helped to unravel the mystery of ancient Israel and her religion. In biblical research, authors such as van de Mieroop, Albertz and others were studied concerning the settlement of the Israelites in the land of the Canaanites. This brought about a Canaanite cultural and religious influence on the religion of Israel. The prophets condemned the Canaanites and their religious cultic activities, but archaeology brought to light that the ancient Israelites' way of worship was very much like that of the Canaanites.

The question then arose: why was there such a discrepancy between the way the ancient Israelites really worshipped and the biblical narrative? This led to the identification a group of historians, the Deuteronomists, and their direct influence on the biblical narratives.

In returning to the goddess Anat, as she is portrayed in the Ugaritic mythologies in the Baal Cycle, the search of her was extended to her possible presence in the Hebrew Bible and in extra biblical proofs. She was found in personal names and public place names in the biblical account as well as in a temple at Beth-Shean in Israel where she was worshipped as a deity.

Key Terms

Anat, Archaeology, Aqhat, Ancient Israel, Baal Cycle, Canaanite Mythology, Conquest, Egypt, Elephantine, Joshua, Ugarit, Yahweh.

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I dedicate this thesis to my two loving parents, Petrus, and Joey Jurgens, who taught me about the Bible and led me on a path of discovery into the secrets of the Almighty and the great expanse of the Universe as a child. From a very young age, I became aware of a loving heavenly Father who was my friend, Saviour, and Redeemer. My parents instilled a love of the Word of God and a love and fascination of His revelation of Himself to humankind in me.

I began with Bible Study in my first year as a BA student at Pretoria University in 1966 with Dr Murray Janson. I later enrolled at Unisa and started with Biblical Archaeology with Prof Coenie Scheepers. I took an immediate interest in the subject and found the subject thrilling. I later completed my BA degree at Unisa.

I enrolled for my BA Honours degree at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein and after completing it, I went on to complete my master's degree in New Testament Theology there.

In 2017, I joined the Unisa group to do excavations at Tel Hazor in Upper Galilee in Israel and just loved it. We discovered and unearthed boxes full of Late Bronze Age pottery and analysed it in the evenings with Prof Amon Ben-Tor. Those were wonderful times!

I was amazed at how Prof Ben-Tor could place each pottery piece in context of time, place, and culture.

After returning from Israel, I completed my Research Proposal and handed it in. I had decided to research the goddess Anat as I found her in the myths on the tablets of Ugarit.

The discovery of the ancient city of Ugarit was to me one of the marvels of our age. How a huge city such as Ugarit had disappeared from all human memory until the chance discovery in 1928 by a farmer who was ploughing his field when his plough struck a stone is fascinating. Then, the slow excavation by the French archaeologist was amazing. The most wonderful discovery of Ugarit was the thousands of cuneiform tablets found in the archives there, which opened a new vista into the unknown world of the Bronze Age at Ugarit.

I found the slow unravelling of the religious pantheon with all its various gods and goddesses enthralling. The Baal Cycle with all its intrigue and drama was most fascinating, along with the story of Anat and Aqhat. Who had thought of and created all these lively myths? So imaginative and fascinating!

The whole of the Ugaritic pantheon inspired the study of the ancient Israelites and their religion. The student started to see parallels between the Ugaritic pantheon and the stories told in the Hebrew Bible. A full enquiry of the history of ancient Israel in the Iron Age I, circa 1200 BCE followed. This was indeed a journey of discovery! I worked through books like that of Amihai Mazar, Israel Finkelstein, and William Dever, to mention just a few, and soon realised the disharmony between what the archaeology of the last century has brought to light, and the stories as told in the Hebrew Bible. I became enthralled with the study of the religion of ancient Israel and what an astonishing journey this proved to be!

I wish to thank the librarians of the Bloemfontein Unisa branch who always helped me so patiently with the handing back of my books. I also wish to thank Elsabé Nell and Amos Makubma at the Muckleneuk Unisa Library. They assisted me in getting hold of hard-to-find library books throughout the years.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The question that I am investigating is what influence (if any) the ancient goddess Anat, known from the mythological texts from the city of Ugarit, had on the religious milieu of ancient Israel.

My hypothesis is that she might have had a significant influence on the religion of ancient Israel. I discovered her in the Hebrew Bible in place names and personal names. I found that she was once worshipped at Beth Shean and in Egypt by Ramses II, and that she was worshipped as the consort of the God of the Israelites, Anat-Jehu, at Elephantine in Egypt by soldiers from Palestine. Jewish settlers there even had a temple built in her honour.[1]

I propose that her murderous ways of fighting and killing may have inspired the writers of the saga of Joshua to have him (Joshua) enter the land of Canaan with a military force fighting their way into Canaan.

From archaeological excavations of the past century, we now know that the historicity of such a military invasion is in doubt. (See full explanation in Chapter 6). I propose that the authors of the story of Joshua had knowledge of the Ugaritic pantheon and were perhaps influenced by the tale of the war-goddess, Anat, in construing a narrative of conquest and destruction.

The Ugaritic texts detail the lives of many deities who were worshipped not only at Ugarit, but also throughout Canaan to the south. Likewise, the Ugaritic language provides a linguistic bridge from Northern Syria to Canaan. The texts discovered at Ugarit are significant because they inform our understanding of the origin of many of the Bible's stories and provide a backstory for many of the deities mentioned in the Bible (Cargill 2017:31).

[1] Apart from Anat's influence on the authors of the book of Joshua, she was also worshipped as the consort of Yahweh on the island of Elephantine in the 5th century BCE. The Jews on Elephantine worshipped Anat-Yehu – Anat as the consort of Yahweh.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

My aim with this thesis is to investigate the possible influence of the mythological war goddess Anat on the religion of Ancient Israel.

The following passages from the book of Judges are examples of her notoriety among the authors of the Hebrew Bible: 'Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them.' (Judges 1:33) and 'And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.' (Judges 3:31).

In these passages, we can clearly see the influence of Anat in ancient Israel. For example, the murderous attack of Shamgar on the Philistines – killing and slaughtering six hundred of them! Being the 'son of Anath'[2], it might indicate the influence of the Canaanite goddess Anat in the Bible. We also find a reference to Anat in Judges 5:6: 'In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath.'

Another objective with this thesis is to expose Anat as not only the consort of Baal, but also as the consort of Yahweh. Confirmation of this would be, as mentioned above, the 5th century BCE Elephantine texts (AP 44 line 3 in Cowley's numbering) where Yahu[3] was worshipped and is paired with Anat. The Jews of Elephantine were biological descendants of soldiers from ancient Israel who had served in one of the imperial armies of the sixth century BCE. They built a temple in Elephantine as early as the Twenty-sixth Egyptian Dynasty, prior to the invasion of Cambyses in the 520s BCE. The temple was dedicated to Yahu with Anat functioned as Yahweh's wife among the Jews at Elephantine (Noll 2001:391).

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

I postulate that the Canaanite goddess Anat, present in ancient Israel, possibly had a profound influence on the religion of ancient Israel in Iron Age I. The aim is to prove my hypothesis by

[2] "Anath" is an alternative spelling of "Anat".
[3] "Yahu" is a shortened form of the name of Yahweh.

examining archaeological findings related to her and documenting her presence and influence in ancient Israel. The aim is not to discover Anat in the Hebrew Bible but to prove that she, as a mythological war goddess, was known to the Iron Age people of the Levant, and she influenced their traditions to a certain extent.

Archaeology has been used in discovering the goddess Anat in the mythological clay tablets which were discovered by the French Archaeologist Claude Fréderic-Armand Schaeffer in 1929. The tablets were discovered at the ancient city of Ugarit, today, Ras Shamra (Curtis 1985:15). Anat, as *Anat-pane-Baal* ('Wrath of Baal') as her original name was, means that she is the 'active presence of Baal' (Albright 1956:195). She carries out his desires when he is absent and is the hypostatic manifestation of Baal's will (Bowman 1978:260-269).

Just as Anat is part of the Canaanite religious mythology found in the tablets of the Bronze Age city of Ugarit, so too is Joshua part of a mythological narrative in the Hebrew Bible. Anat is portrayed as a goddess, whilst Joshua is portrayed as a man, a leader of a group of Asiatic slaves that escaped from Egypt. This specifically refers to the narrative of Joshua's cruel and ruthless conquest of Canaan. Starting with Jericho, and moving on to the city of Ai, the story tells us about how Joshua besieged the cities and killed man, woman, and child (Joshua 6 and 8).

Baal was certainly worshipped in ancient Israel and accepting Bowman's (1978) hypothesis that Anat carried out the desires of Baal, it would seem as though she had an influence and a presence in ancient Israel, and perhaps in the myth of the conquest narrative of Canaan.

Like Anat in the Baal Cycle, where she slays the enemies of Baal, Joshua is seen slaying the inhabitants of the city of Ai (Joshua 8:10-29). Both of these are stories written by humans. Anat is seen as the war-goddess and Joshua is seen as the war commander of the Israelites. If we follow the archaeological hypothesis that the city of Ai did not exist at the time that Joshua would have come to conquer it in Canaan (Van Bekkum 2011:41-42), then chapter 8 of the book of Joshua is just as much myth as the myth of Anat and all her fierce attacks.

Both William Foxwell Albright (1968) and John Walls (1992) discuss the action of Moses at Mount Sinai, when he comes down from the mountain and discovers that the Israelites were worshipping a golden calf that Aaron had made for them. In Exodus 32:20, 'Moses took the bull-calf which the people had made, melted it, ground it into fine powder, and mixed it with water.' There appears to be a strong association between the actions of Moses described in Exodus 32:20, and Anat's destruction of Mot. Moses' burning, grinding, and strewing the golden calf, can be compared to a similar series of actions performed in mythological texts from Ugarit. 'She seized Mot, with a blade she split him, with a sieve she winnowed him, with fire she burned him, with millstones she ground him, in the field she sowed him.' This image of 'total destruction', is what we find in the Ugaritic myths written around 1400 BCE, hundreds of years before the Bible writers wrote the book of Exodus. Thus, the possibility exists that the influence of the mythological story of the goddess Anat, impacted the religion of ancient Israel. Albright (1968:43) writes that the destruction of the golden bull-calf 'shares three steps in progressive annihilation with the destruction of Death by the goddess Anat in the Baal Epic of Ugarit – each account using the same verbs, though in a different order.'

There are five examples below of corresponding references to the goddess Anat, which amalgamate in her being present in the religious life of ancient Israel as the 'Queen of Heaven.'

The first is the description of the folk religion that was practised in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE. Jeremiah writes: 'Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying … we will not hearken to you, but we will … burn incense to the queen of heaven, and pour our drink offerings to her….' (Jeremiah 44:15-17).

Secondly, we have a letter from Hermopolis in Egypt, dating from the 5th century BCE, in which the first line sends 'Greetings to the temple of Bethel and the temple of the Queen of Heaven' at Syene. Syene was situated next to Elephantine, where we know that the 5th century BCE syncretistic Jews worshipped Anat-Bethel and Anat-Yahu alongside Yahu and other deities (Day 2002:147).

Thirdly, we have the treaty between Esarhaddon of Assyria and Baal, King of Tyre (c. 675 BCE), where the deities of Bethel and Anat-Bethel are cited together which suggests that Bethel's consort was Anat-Bethel and that she is the deity intended as the 'Queen of Heaven' (Day 2002:147).

Fourthly, in the Ugaritic mythological narrative, in KTU 2 1.108.7, the title 'Lady of Exalted Heaven' is given to Anat in the Ugaritic texts.

Lastly, another reference is found in Jeremiah 7:17-19: 'Don't you see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven'. Corresponding with the reference to Anat as the 'Lady of Exalted Heaven' as mentioned above, Day's argument that Jeremiah is referring to the goddess Anat when speaking of the 'Queen of Heaven' appears to be valid (Day 2002:147).

The lore of the Canaanite gods and goddesses and the dramatic stories of their loves and wars would have persisted throughout the Iron Age in Canaan. The oral traditions, preserved in poems and songs, constituted a strong undercurrent in Israelite religious thought and practice (Dever 2002:186).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed in this research is qualitative and multi-disciplinary in nature. Qualitative research is useful for a topic such as this because the focus is on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication. A multi-disciplinary approach will be applied where disciplines such as archaeology, literature, linguistics, and mythology will be combined, and therefore a cultural anthropological approach will be used in this study.

1.4.1 Archaeological finds

Archaeology is the study of the material remains of man's past. This includes all tangible manmade matter, such as texts written in ancient languages and iconography on, inter alia,

stone, clay, and papyrus, as well as buildings, sculptures, weapons, household items, religious artefacts, and human and animal remains (Mondriaan 2010:22).

Scholarly curiosity and the search for knowledge is a motivation for excavation. Archaeology establishes the possibility for new images and a new concept of history. In the past century, archaeology contributed to a new understanding of the post-exilic period, whereby Judah's sacred texts are interpreted and reinterpreted. Biblical and post-biblical archaeology are accepted by the Jewish communities in Israel as a sanctioned and valuable discipline. Ancient, excavated sites such as Dan, Megiddo, and Hazor, among many more, have become places of secular-national pilgrimages. Israel itself has one of the longest excavation- and scholarly research traditions (Mondriaan 2010:22).

There are striking analogies between archaeological data and folklore in the biblical texts that indicate that the actual remains of early Israel disclose a different picture to that which was generally accepted about the origins of Israel.

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE DIFFERENT CHAPTERS

1.5.1 Chapter 2: Historical overview – discovering ancient Ugarit

Clay was a universal medium for writing throughout Mesopotamia and for a shorter period in the second millennium BCE in parts of Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt (as witnessed in the Amarna letters, and archives from Ebla, Hattusas, Alalakh, and Ugarit). A sharpened reed was used to impress forms of writing, known as cuneiform (from its wedge-shaped impressions [Latin *cuneus,* a wedge]), upon a damp lump of clay. The clay was fired in a kiln that then created a permanent record (Wyatt 2003:11).

As mentioned before, a farmer ploughing his field, in 1928, near tells Ras Shamra, on the Syrian Mediterranean coast, dislodged the top of a stone-built tomb with his ploughshare.This proved to be the top part of an ancient grave. Syria, at that time was a French colony so, by 1929, Claude Schaeffer, a French archaeologist, came to investigate and found a large ancient town with two temples, palaces, and many houses with archives (Wyatt 2003:13).

During the first season of excavations at Ras Shamra in 1929, several clay tablets were found in the ruins of a house on the city's acropolis. To the surprise of the excavators, the tablets were written in a previously unknown script, rather than in the expected Akkadian cuneiform. With the decipherment of the script, scholars began to realize the extraordinary treasure that had been found at Ugarit. It soon became apparent that Schaeffer had discovered a library of 'Canaanite' religious and literary texts that allowed a direct view into Canaanite mythology, legend, and cultic practice. In fact, it is felt that the impact of these texts on biblical studies can hardly be overestimated (Watson & Wyatt 1999:46).

1.5.2 Chapter 3: Discovering the goddess Anat in the Baal Cycle

Amongst the many types of tablets from Ugarit, such as trade and personnel lists, there are also religious and mythological texts containing the Baal Cycle. In these texts, Baal is portrayed as a storm-god with folktales relating to King Keret and Aqhat, the son of Danel. This mythological material and the conflict of Baal with Yam has affinities with Hittite, Greek, Mesopotamian, and Israelite-Judahite material (Wyatt 2003:22). This is where the goddess Anat was found.

For the general reader, the texts from Ugarit have three main claims to attention. Firstly, they open one further vista into the slowly unfolding world of the ancient Near East, gradually and tentatively rolling back the frontier of prehistory as the skeleton is fleshed out with the echoes of the song of laughter of real people. Individuals like Ilimilku the scribe, brings to life a completely new world in the Baal Cycle (Wyatt 2003:22).

The Ba'lu myth constitutes, by its length and relative completeness, the most important literary work preserved from those produced by the West Semitic peoples in the 2nd millennium BCE. More recent discoveries show that the Baal myth had a long prehistory among the Amorite peoples. The presence of motifs like those in the Ugaritic myths in the Hebrew Bible indicates the existence of a Canaanite mythology remarkably similar to the Amorite one (Hallo et al 1997:241).

1.5.3 Chapter 4: The battle between Anat and Aqhat

The story of Anat and Aqhat was found among the many other religious clay tablets at Ras Shamra. 'Aqhat' has become the conventional designation of this narrative poem. Virolleaud, in

1936, named the poem after Danel, Aqhat's father, although the Ugaritic author Ilimilku also identified it as 'Aqhat' (KTU 1.19) (Wyatt 2003:246).

In his 1936 publication, Virolleaud accepted Ilimilku's authorship and dated the tablets to the mid-fourteenth century BCE. He was precise on genre and referred to the legend and the mythological texts without demur. He concluded that Aqhat is a member of the family of the god of death also claiming that Mot personified the ripe ear of wheat and that Aqhat is to be the harvest-genius. Since Virolleaud's interpretation, there have been many other views and interpretations (Watson & Wyatt 1999:238).

The story of Aqhat portrays a family of heroes - a father, son, and daughter. The skill of hunting is taught to the young boy Aqhat during his adolescence. With the skill of hunting, Aqhat is also taught that it is an activity belonging to males and not to females. This included Aqhat's sister, Puqhat, who would later heroically seek to avenge his death (Smith 2014:135).

With the story of Aqhat we focus on the inexplicable act of Anat's violence against the hero, Aqhat. Anat is a great warrior in her own right and the conflict with Aqhat captures the deadly threat that warrior life entails. The story of Aqhat is a cautionary tale that imagines Danel as a hero known in the distant past (Smith 2014:136).

1.5.4 Chapter 5: Ancient Israel

Mazar (1990:353) wrote that it was not easy to judge the ethnic identity of the settlers in an Iron Age I site or cluster of sites. He explains that this problem is complicated by the differing theories regarding the origin of the Israelites. Various population groups who settled in the country during this time may have identified themselves as 'Israelites' and merged with this emerging national body in a slow process that lasted from the late 13th century BCE to the early Monarchy. Therefore, it is not a simple matter to define distinctly 'Israelite' material culture (Mazar 1990:353).

1.5.5 Chapter 6: Discovering the religion of ancient Israel.

On its own terms, the religion of Iron Age Israel cannot help but interest and fascinate the student of the ancient world. During the much larger and equally fascinating empires of

Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt, the small nation of Israel found itself at a crossroad of political, economic, and cultural life in the Fertile Crescent. When the impact of the extant literary remains of the religion of ancient Israel is realised, then the religious life and faith of the people of Israel is of heightened significance (Miller 2000:xv).

Albright (1968) wrote: "We can no longer survey the religious back-ground of early Israel without a brief sketch of the religion of the Canaanites of Phoenicia and Palestine as we now know it from the alphabetic texts of Ugarit, supplemented by sporadic archaeological finds. The mythological texts and rituals from Ugarit, the myths recorded by Philo Byblius on the authority of a Phoenician named Sanchuniathon (about the 7th century BCE), and the scattered evidence from other sources agree so completely in all main aspects that there can no longer be any doubt that the Canaanites possessed just as sharply defined a religious and mythological system, as did the Egyptians and the Sumero-Accadians. From the names of Early-Bronze towns in Palestine and Phoenicia we know that the Canaanites of the third millennium BCE had the same gods as appear at Ugarit and elsewhere" (Albright 1968:230).

Amongst the many stone tablets found at Ugarit, were the religious Canaanite mythological texts. Here, along with many gods and goddesses, we discover the goddess Anat. She stands between the earlier traditions of goddess worship and those cults and myths that endured after Ugarit but had ceased to be a centre and cultural focus. The Ugaritic materials, like the texts of the Hebrew Bible, present attempts both to deconstruct and to construct a religious culture. The creators of the texts of the Hebrew Bible were aware of the complexity of the traditions that they were dealing with. Anat is visually present at Ugarit, depicted on a stela and a seal, which have been identified as representations of this goddess. She is associated directly with spring and stream and life source and is by epithet the organ of vision and womb. These associations indicate the power of the ancient goddess (Day 1994:25-29).

Neal H Walls (1992) wrote 'Largely unknown prior to the discovery of the alphabetic cuneiform texts from the ruins of Late Bronze Age Ugarit, the goddess Anat is a striking figure from ancient Syrian mythology. Her most famous characteristic is her fierce and violent temperament; portrayed as a ruthless warrior who glories in bloodshed and exults in slaughter' (Walls 1992:1).

This is where a link of her is found with the bloodshed described in the Hebrew Bible in the conquest of Canaan as described in the book of Joshua.

War comes to Ugarit: Anat is the very embodiment of all its horrors, but because of her ubiquity, she is at the same time represented as a nubile maiden for whom warriors will give their all. Her ambiguity, at once attractive and repellent, is a measure of the ambiguity of the warrior's calling. She symbolizes the utter devotion and single-mindedness required of the king's soldiers (Wyatt 1999:541).

The origins of the worship of Yahweh are shrouded in mystery and reach back to at least the early Iron Age, or even back to the Late Bronze Age. The earliest possible known reference to the name of the deity occurs in an Egyptian toponym list from the time of Amenhotep III (c. 1400 BCE), where a place called *Ybw* is associated with a nomadic group, called the Shasu. The location of the Shasu to the south of Palestine is indicated by other toponyms in the list. This is consistent with indications in the early poetry of Israel that Yahweh was a deity associated with the South at the beginning (Miller 2000:1).

Morton Smith (1987) proclaimed that the Hebrew Bible is primarily concerned with the cult of the god Yahweh, cult being understood in its widest sense to include all ways of securing or retaining the god's favour. The Hebrew Bible undertakes to show how this cult was established, to outline the rules for its practise, and to show that, throughout history, its proper practise led to prosperity, its neglect to disaster. The bulk of the Hebrew Bible is concerned with Yahweh as the god of 'Israel' with its people acting as the principal worshippers of Yahweh. The Hebrew Bible contains many stories of agreements made between Yahweh and the Israelites. In Exodus 20:3, it is stipulated: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' which could be seen as a confirmation that the cult of Yahweh as the 'religion of Israel' – and all other Israelite worship was a deviation from this (Smith 1987:13-14).

1.6 UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

Several books have been written about Anat, as found in the archaeological records, but what is new about this thesis, is the investigation that was done on the influence she had on the religion

of Ancient Israel. Specifically, her possible influence on the authors of the book of Joshua in the Hebrew Bible and the reference to her as the possible consort of the God of Israel, Yahweh.

CHAPTER TWO

ANCIENT UGARIT AND ITS PANTHEON

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes Ugarit as the Late Bronze Age city that, for millennia, nobody knew had existed. Ugarit was an ancient port city in northern Syria, on the outskirts of modern Latakia. This city is our main source of information concerning the goddess Anat. At Ugarit, we have a treasure trove of clay tablets written in cuneiform, which consists of many mythological stories of the Canaanite religion, and, amongst them, we are introduced to the maiden Anat. Therefore, Ugarit is where we meet her for the first time. From here, we will follow her and trace her influence in other ancient Near Eastern cultures.

According to Curtis (1985: 18), Ugarit was discovered but forgotten for more than three thousand years, and nobody knew of its existence. A part of this newly found reality is the Ugaritic mythological Pantheon. We meet the head of the Pantheon, El, and his family which include his wife and consort Asherah and many other gods. Central to this study are Baal, the storm-god, and his sister Anat. We will meet Anat in the Baal Cycle as well as in the narrative of Anat and Aqhat.

Many decades have passed since the chance discovery of Ugarit by a Syrian farmer in 1928, named Mahmoud Mella Az-Zir, who, when his plough struck a stone slab, removed the thin covering of soil. He then uncovered several stone slabs which, when raised, revealed a tomb vault containing several small pottery items. The discovery was reported to the governor of the territory, and then to the *Service des Antiquites en Syrie et au Liban* whereupon Charles Virolleaud and Leon Albanese from Paris, France, went to examine the site and identified it as a royal necropolis. They despatched samples of some of the pottery discovered to the Louvre and it caught the attention of Rene Dussaud, Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiques. He noticed the similarity between the tomb vault and ancient Cretan tombs and suggested that an important city might be situated nearby of which this was the cemetery (Curtis 1985:18).

Albanese had already noted that there was a mound nearby which shape suggested that it might be a tell. This hill was known as Ras Shamra ('fennel headland'). The name is derived from the plants that grew on its surface. Some pieces of ceramics appeared to be of Mycenaean or Cypriot origin that dated to about the 13th century BCE. (Curtis 1985:6)

It was during the spring of 1929 that the first team of archaeologists (accompanied by a detachment of soldiers to safeguard them), arrived on the site, their equipment having been transported on the backs of camels because of the state of the roads in the vicinity. After a survey of the site, traces of occupation stretching from the Neolithic period to the time of the Romans were discovered (Curtis 1985:6).

This discovery then sparked off a series of archaeological investigations, which led to the revealing of the ancient city of Ugarit. Among the earliest discoveries from Ras Shamra was a small statuette, just 22 cm in height, of a male figure with one arm raised above his head and the other reaching forward, and one leg in front of the other as though marching, or perhaps poised to throw something. The figure wore the accoutrements of a warrior – helmet, armbands, and greaves; the head was covered in gold leaf and the armbands and greaves were of silver, suggesting that this was perhaps a deity. It is thought that the figure represents Baal, originally armed with club and spear, symbolizing thunder and lightning as his 'weapons' (Curtis 1985:6-7).

Recently discovered texts from Mari, on the middle Euphrates, show that Ugarit was already famous in the mid-eighteenth-century BCE. The international language of the time was Akkadian, the principal language of Mesopotamia, and the use of it remained constant to the end of the Bronze Age (Pardee 2002:20). Of great interest for West Semitists was the discovery of a new script and language, namely Ugaritic, after the city. This language belongs to the great family of languages of Syria, Palestine, and Arabia (Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Old South Arabian, and Phoenician). For the first time, scholars of these languages did not just have a few scattered words datable to the 2nd millennium BCE, but rather texts in a language related to, although older than, the confirmed forms of any of these West Semitic languages (Pardee 2002:20).

As archaeological sources for the religion of the ancient Near East, by far the most important epigraphic class, is formed by several hundred clay tablets and fragments, excavated by Schaeffer at Ugarit between 1929 and 1939. The tablets were published by Virolleaud (1936) and deciphered by Bauer and Dhorme. (Albright 1940:38). These documents that were written in a previously unknown cuneiform alphabet and in a Canaanite language closely related to ancestral Hebrew, was a great discovery. This discovery has been epoch-making. Numerous large tablets and fragments belong to several Canaanite epics, relating to Baal and Anat, Danel and Aqhat. The date of these priceless records of Canaanite religion and mythology is about 1400 BCE, but the original compositions probably enjoyed a long oral prehistory before they were reduced to writing. There are innumerable parallels with the Hebrew Bible in terms of vocabulary and poetic style (Albright 1940:38).

The Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600 – 1200/1150 BCE) is one of the most important periods in the study of international and trade relations in the Near East. Because of the wealth of documents that have survived, passing from Egypt to the Syro-Levantine region, Anatolia, and northern Mesopotamia, we now know how international relations were formed and have a clear idea of the nature of political life at that time (Aruz et al 2008:235).

2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF THE CITY

Ancient Ugarit was a major cosmopolitan centre – a centre of trade, government, and religion and was situated to the east of the island of Cyprus on the mainland (cf. Fig. 2.1). To the west was the Mediterranean Sea and to the east a chain of mountains running from north to south, separating the coastal plain from the interior. The coastal chain of mountains reaches an average height of 1564 m. The ancient city was surrounded by a plain, but north of the plain the land rose gradually into the rocky country that formed the foothills (Craigie 1983:27-28).

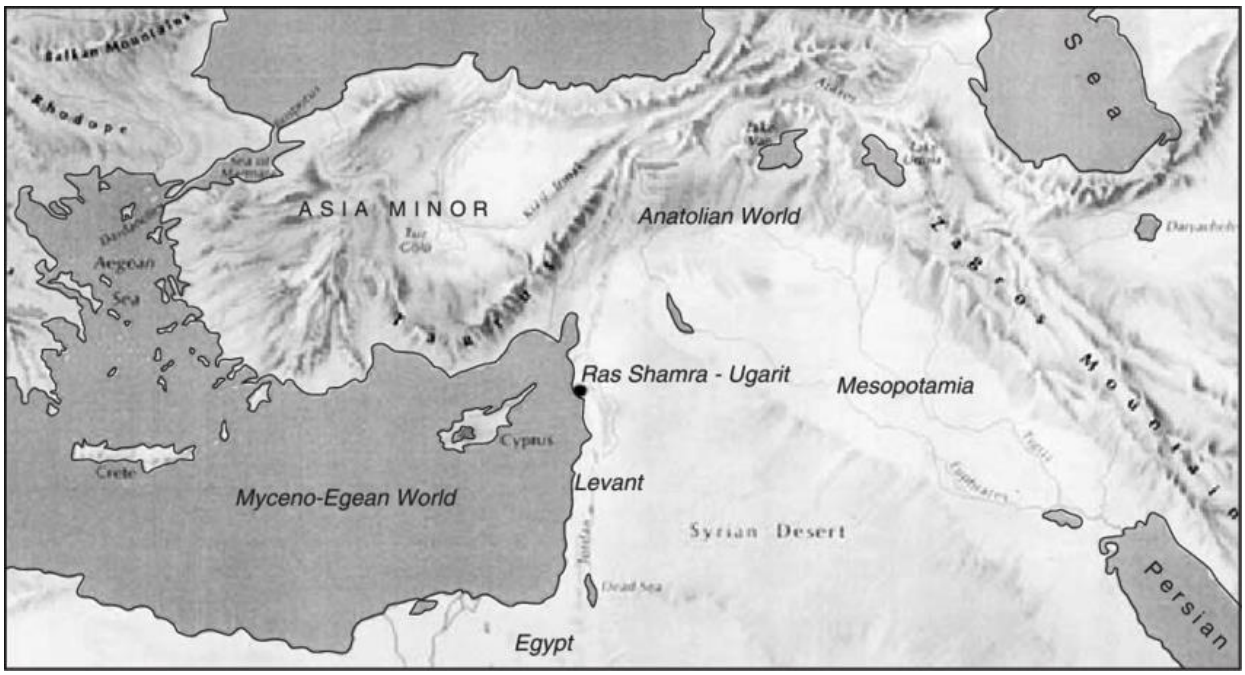

Fig. 2.1 Location of Ugarit (Dalix & Vila 2007:360)

The Kingdom of Ugarit covered a territory of considerable size (Watson & Wyatt 1999:455). Ancient Ugarit was located approximately 12 km south of the Orontes River. It was a seaport that lay about half a mile southeast of a cove. The inlet that the ancient Greeks referred to as the white harbour is known as Minet el-Beida today (De Vries 1997:83).

The river, now called Nahr al-Kabir, which flows from the north to the south, enters the Mediterranean just south of the modern city of Latakia. Compared to Mesopotamia with the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and Egypt with the Nile, Ugarit did not have enough alluvial waters for the same type of irrigation, but the surrounding land was usable as farmland. The land was heavily forested during the time of the Kingdom of Ugarit and benefited from a mild and moderate Mediterranean climate with about 750 mm of rain per annum, which met the needs of farmers. The strategic location of Ugarit on the Mediterranean Coast was perhaps what benefited it most and what led to it becoming a major centre of sea trade. The city's merchants engaged in trade with other cities along the coast, such as Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, and Ashkelon, as well as with Egypt, Anatolia, Cyprus, and Crete. Ugarit was also a major centre of land trade with several important trade routes converging at the site. One route led south along the coast through Phoenicia and Canaan to Egypt, and the other north to Anatolia and east to northern

Syria and Mesopotamia through cities such as Mari, Babylon, and Ur on the Euphrates River (De Vries 1997:83).

The main section of the city covered an area of about 20 ha and in the northern part of the city were two temples: one for Baal and one for the god Dagon. Between the temples, there was a priest's house containing a library, probably serving a dual purpose as a scribal school. South of the temples, still on the higher ground, was the upper town with its streets and houses (Craigie 1983:29).

In the western section of the city was the very large royal palace which is indicative of the wealth of the city during its Golden Age in the Late Bronze Age (1500 to 1200 BCE). The city had, however been occupied since the 5th millennium BCE in the Neolithic Age. Judging from the several large archives that were found within the palace complex, the palace also served as the kingdom's administrative centre. Originally, the palace was a relatively small building that was later extended as the city became more prosperous. It had some ninety rooms, five large courtyards, a dozen staircases leading to an upper floor, and it boasted an interior garden. Water (Craigie 1983:29), was obtained from several wells, inside and outside the palace, and ran through an aqueduct system. Apart from the royal palace, there were also many affluent families, such as a citizen called Rapanou, whose house had thirty-four rooms, including a library with an impressive variety of written texts. He seems to have been a leading official in the court of King Ammistamru III. In many of the houses, as in that of Rapanou, there were family vaults or sepulchres under the house or the courtyard seeming to commemorate the dead as an aspect of their religion (Craigie 1983:29).

The Royal Palace and part of the fortress was architecturally composed of different elements. The entrance porch opened onto a royal square supervised by an official and led to a ceremonial courtyard, at the far end of which was the throne room. Along the eastern side of the official compound was a group of four units. The first was densely built and continued east through a large courtyard bordered by a colonnaded porch and connected to the area of royal tombs. The third unit was a large banquet hall with a type of dais at the south end on which the king would take his place. From there, leading south, one would come to a room furnished with a large,

well-proportioned basin. All these features were in keeping with the Mesopotamian model of a central space surrounded by rooms and courtyards but unique in the sense of successive rooms and courtyards and the colonnaded porches. The palace also had an upper level where most activities in the palace took place, whereas the ground floor housed the storerooms and common areas. The royal apartments were situated above the throne room and adjacent units (Aruz, Benzel & Evans 2008:236).

With the rise of the Hittite supremacy and Ugarit's quasi-protective status, new influences began to make themselves felt in the transformations that the palace underwent from the 14th century BCE.

West of the city of Ugarit was its port town (now called: Minet el-Beida, and then probably called Ma'hazu) with a waterfront area facing northwards across the bay. Around the bay, to the east was a large necropolis or cemetery, which served both the port and the city. Apart from the port at Minet el-Beida, there were also three other ports: Attalig, Gib'ala, and Himuli (located on Pigeon Island). There was also a large rural community living in approximately two hundred villages in the kingdom, totalling about twenty-five thousand people who were important to the kingdom's economy; engaged in agriculture, forestry, and cattle raising (Craigie 1983:30-31).

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRATA AT UGARIT

Excavations at the site revealed five settlement levels. Level V dates to the Pre-pottery Neolithic period when tools and other implements were made of bones and flint. During the Chalcolithic period, the inhabitants established a well-developed culture and used a type of painted pottery associated with Tell Halaf in northern Syria (De Vries 1997:84). In the third occupation level, Ubaid pottery appears which indicates that Ugarit was influenced by the Ubaid culture of Mesopotamia and now began to develop into a major trade centre. However, by 3000 BCE the town was destroyed and resettled by outsiders and then a new city was established (De Vries 1997:85).

The different levels of occupation at Ugarit are the following (De Vries 1997:84):

Level V:	Neolithic	(8000 – 6000 BCE)
Level IV:	Chalcolithic	(5000 – 4300 BCE)
Level III:	Ubaid to Early Bronze	(4300 – 3500 BCE)
Level II:	Middle Bronze	(3500 – 2100 BCE)
Level I:	Late Bronze	(1600 – 1180 BCE)

The significant cache of clay tablets found at Ugarit is perhaps the most valuable discovery made there because they provide crucial information about the Ugaritic language, historical, and administrative matters, and especially about the religion of Ugarit. Some tablets were also written in Sumerian, Hurrian, and Egyptian. These different languages attest to the fact that Ugarit was a cosmopolitan centre (De Vries 1997:86).

The excavations at Ugarit have proven a continuous occupation from the 8th to the 2nd millennium BCE (Watson & Wyatt 1999:608).

2.4 UGARITIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The physical remains of the ancient city of Ugarit are of considerable significance, but it is the written texts that have a distinctive importance. Without the texts, we would only have a visual impression of the city, its layout, and principal buildings and style of life from surviving artefacts. The written cuneiform texts provide an insight into the names of persons, their daily lives and business transactions, their religious beliefs, and much more. They are also important for the comparative study of the world of Ugarit and that of the Hebrew Bible. From the historical period of the Hebrew Bible, very few ancient texts have been recovered by archaeologists. Complete Hebrew inscriptions from the early biblical period are few and then there are about 150 seals, each containing no more than one or two words (Craigie 1983:44).

The archives at Ras Shamra have so far yielded some 1400 texts in the Ugaritic language. While some of these texts are fragmentary, and a small number are illegible, the majority constitute primary data for the comparative study of the Hebrew Bible (Craigie 1983: 45).

The Ras Shamra Tablets are now housed at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California. Ugaritic has been called 'the greatest literary discovery from antiquity since the deciphering of the Egyptian hieroglyphs and Mesopotamian cuneiform' (Pardee2002:120). Like most Semitic scripts, Ugaritic is *abjad*, where each symbol stands for a consonant, leaving the reader to supply the appropriate vowel.

Scribes in Ugarit appear to have created the 'Ugaritic alphabet' around 1400 BCE: 30 letters and corresponding sounds were inscribed on clay tablets. Although they are cuneiform in appearance, the letters bear no relation to Mesopotamian cuneiform signs; instead, they appear to be somehow related to the Egyptian-derived Phoenician alphabet. Ugaritic is classified as a Northwest Semitic language and is therefore related to Hebrew, Aramaic, and Phoenician. Its grammatical features are highly like those found in classical Arabic and Akkadian. It possesses two genders (masculine and feminine) (Pardee 2002:120).

In these texts, we meet the goddess Anat, an independent and unrestrained female in the divine realm. The Maiden Anat plays an active role in the Ugaritic myths. Although she is described as a nubile female, Anat aggressively engages in the masculine pursuits of hunting and warfare. She delights in the carnage of battle, and she wades in blood up to her thighs; yet, Anat's violence also serves a positive function, and indeed her extirpation of Death allows fertility to return to the earth. She is an ambivalent force in Ugaritic myth (Walls 1992:2).

2.5 THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF UGARIT

With many years of continuous excavation, Ras Shamra is the most explored city in Syria. The main source for the history of Ugarit is its own archives. The most valuable texts for the reconstruction of the political history of Ugarit are the international letters, the treaties concluded with Hatti and Amurru, and the various decrees and legal edicts issued by the Hittite authorities. It is not surprising to find a cosmopolitan city that has been described as 'probably

the first great international port in history' mentioned in several foreign archives, including Ebla, Mari, Alalah, Amarna, Hattusa, and Emar Aphek (Watson & Wyatt 1999:603-604).

2.5.1 Mari and Ugarit

During the Amorite Age the kingdom of Yamhad, with its capital at Halab (Aleppo), (Watson and Wyatt 1999:617) replaced Ebla as the dominant power in northern Syria. Information on Ugarit during the Amorite Age comes mostly from the Mari archives. The city-state of Mari was initially a close ally and later an enemy of Yamhad. During this time, we have the well-documented journey of Zimri-Lim to Ugarit. In the 9th year of his reign (1765 BCE), Zimri-Lim set out from Mari to Ugarit. A grand entourage of courtiers, merchants and artisans accompanied him. There are eighty preserved documents, written en route, that describe the course of his journey in unusual detail. He advanced along the Lower Habur and the Lower Balih and then traversed the Euphrates towards Halab. Here Zimri-Lim was probably joined by his father-in-law, Yarim-Lim, and the two continued to Ugarit together, via Muzunnum, Layasum, Hazazar, and Mahrasa.

The journey fitted into the Mesopotamian tradition of reaching the Great Sea. The people of the interior in Mesopotamia, yearned to reach the Mediterranean Sea, and compared this feat with the storm-god Baal in his victory over the sea god, Yam (Watson & Wyatt 1999:617).

The journey to Ugarit helped Zimri-Lim to strengthen his western alliances, just before a military campaign in the east against Larsa. He and his men were also engaged in lucrative commercial exchanges, both with local authorities and through messengers. They received several golden and silver vessels and in return distributed precious textiles, jewellery studded with lapis-lazuli, and large quantities of tin, which Elamite merchants brought from the east (Watson & Wyatt 1999:617). Consignments of tin were sent out from Ugarit as far as Qatna and Hazor and were also sold to Cretan merchants (Watson & Wyatt 1999:618).

Shortly after his journey to Ugarit, Zimri-Lim's father-in-law died and was succeeded on the throne of Halab by Hammurapi who transmitted a short message to Zimri-Lim in which he makes mention of 'the man of Ugarit' who had wished to visit the palace of Mari (Watson & Wyatt 1999:618).

2.5.2 Ugarit and the Mitannian confederacy

The void left by the Hittite destruction of the old Amorite centres of Syria, in particular Yamhad/Halab, was gradually filled in during the 16th century BCE by the growing power of Mittanni. For the next two centuries, most of Syria and southern Anatolia formed part of a loose confederacy controlled from Wassukkanni and, therefore, for a short while the Mittannian domination was threatened by the campaigns of the Egyptian kings of the early 18th Dynasty. By the mid-15th century BCE, the two empires agreed on a division of Syria, with Qadesh on the Orontes as the borderline. Ugarit was never directly integrated into the Mittannian confederacy, but it maintained close neighbourly relations with one of Mittanni's vassals, Alalakh. A small fragment from Alalakh IV contains a stipulation concerning the judgement of runaway slaves crossing borders. An actual case of theft (three horses) was found in a letter in the courtyard of the Temple of Baal in Ugarit. The lack of Hurrian names at Ugarit compared to its southern neighbour, where Hittite-Hurrian names where often given, proves the limited Mittannian influence in Ugarit (Watson & Wyatt 1999:620).

2.5.3 Ugarit in the Amorite Age

In the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE, Ras Shamra was resettled by tribal groups, called the 'necklace wearers' after the rich metal ornaments discovered in their tombs. Hereafter, in the 19th century BCE, a new urban civilization developed (Level II). The city covered almost the entire surface of the mound and was fortified with a massive rampart covered with a glacis (Watson and Wyatt 1999:610).

There are no independent sources from Ugarit on its history in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE (Watson & Wyatt 1999:609). Despite the scarcity of data on the earliest phases of Ugarit's history, the combined evidence of the dynastic seal and the Ugaritic King List indicates that the kings of the 14th -13th century Ugarit, traced back the origins of their royal house to the outset of the 2nd millennium BCE. It seems that the foundations of the kingdom of Ugarit were firmly set within the context of the Amorite expansion in Mesopotamia and Syria at the turn of the 2nd millennium BCE and is supported by cultural elements, such as Ugaritic language, religion, and mythology (Watson & Wyatt 1999:610).

2.5.4 The Levant and the Egyptian Middle Kingdom

Egypt's involvement in Asia during the 12th and 13th Dynasty is debated. Albright's (1956:221) view was that 'the Pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty claimed, and often held, the suzerainty over Palestine and Phoenicia, extending their influence as far as Ugarit and Qatna'. He argued that the Egyptian officials took their sculptures to their outposts for eventual burial in the Levant. A scrutiny of the archaeological evidence has shown that the Middle Kingdom statues of Egyptian kings and nobility excavated in the Levant, including Ugarit, were deposited in their findspots decades or centuries after their manufacture, and therefore could not provide evidence for Egyptian occupation. The inscriptions on these statues clearly indicate that they were originally erected in temples and graves in Egypt itself and do not have any connection to their secondary findspots. Alternatively, the Middle Kingdom statues found throughout the Levant, and even as far as southern Anatolia and Crete, owe their provenance to a vast pillage of royal and private tombs by Hyksos rulers, who then traded their prestigious loot at foreign courts (Watson & Wyatt 1999:615).

2.5.5 Ugarit under Egyptian influence

The Egyptian campaigns of the early 18th Dynasty kings reached as far as the Euphrates and the Halab area. Ugarit first enters the orbit of the Egyptian interests under Amenophis III when its name appears in Egyptian geographical lists. The correspondence between the two lands is partly preserved in the Amarna tablets. The Amarna tablets are a body of 14th century BCE correspondence exchanged between the rulers of the ancient city of Akhetaten (built by order of the Pharaoh Akhenaten) now known as Tell el-Amarna in Egypt (Goren et al 2004:76). From the 16th to the 13th century BCE, Ugarit remained in regular contact with Egypt and Alahiya (Cyprus) (Watson & Wyatt 1999:624).

Niqmaddu II was the second ruler and king of Ugarit, and he reigned from 1350 – 1315 BCE succeeding his lesser-known father. He took the name from the earlier Amorite ruler Niqmaddu, meaning 'Addu has vindicated' to strengthen the supposed origins of his Ugaritic dynasty in the Amorites (Smith 1994:55). Although the exact date of his accession to the throne of Ugarit is unknown, he might be a contemporary of both Akhenaten and Tutankhamun (Watson & Wyatt

1999:624). Niqmaddu was a vassal of the Hittite ruler Shuppiluliuma I (Smith 1994:55). Niqmaddu II had good relations with Egypt and conceded to the Amorites in a dispute over the Shiyannu region early in his reign (Kuhrt 1997:306). King Niqmaddu II also commissioned the writing of the Baal Cycle about the god Haddu/Baal (Smith 1994:55).

The flow of prestigious presents from Egypt went on as before, as shown by the hundreds of pieces of alabaster vessels, many of them inscribed, found throughout the city and in the port of Minet-el-Beida. One of them contained the cartouches of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (Watson & Wyatt 1999:625).

The close Egyptian-Ugaritic contacts in the Amarna Age can be defined in the political nature of the relationship. Most scholars maintain that Ugarit was a vassal of Egypt whereas others have argued for her full independence (Watson & Wyatt 1999:626).

The bond with Egypt, although economically lucrative and culturally influential, could hardly secure Ugarit's borders and its autonomous political status. Towards the mid-14th century BCE, Ugarit's southern neighbours, the Amurru, started to put pressure on the city and the port. The rulers of Byblos, Rib-Haddi, and Yapah-Addu, claimed that the entire coast from Byblos to Ugarit banded together with the resented Amurrites against Egyptian interests. In its heyday the palace of Ugarit, covering an area of nearly 7 000 m^2, was no doubt one of the most spectacular edifices in the Levant. When Rib-Hadda of Byblos wanted to describe the wealth of the king of Tyre he compared his residence to that of Ugarit (EA 89:51). So, when a fire broke out in the palace of Ugarit, the news spread swiftly throughout the Levant and was also promptly reported to Egypt by Abi-Milku of Tyre (EA 151:55) (Watson & Wyatt 1999:630).

2.6 THE GOLDEN AGE OF UGARIT

Ugarit came under Egyptian, and then Hurrian influence, followed again by an Egyptian influence. Under the reign of Pharaoh Amenophis II (1438 – 1412 BCE), the relationship between Egypt and the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni changed after many years of alliance. Amenophis' successor, Tuthmosis IV (1412 – 1402 BCE), married the daughter of the Mitannian king while Amenophis III (1402 – 1364 BCE) travelled to Mitanni to go lion hunting; he also had a Mittannian

princess in his harem. The Egypto-Mitannian alliance ushered in a period of peace for Ugarit. During this time, Ugarit flourished as is evidenced from the size and plan of the city with its spacious quarters of streets intersecting at right angles and impressive houses. The city flourished thanks to its commercial activities that thrived on the security of its sea routes. A new quarter was built in the bay area and stores and large warehouses have been discovered by excavators with many rooms of which one room contained over eighty jars in neat rows for the storing of oil or wine. Close by, a building was discovered with over a thousand vases of Cypriot origin used for exporting perfumes. Alabaster flasks were also discovered along with vases of Syrian origin that were modelled on Egyptian designs (Curtis 1985:42).

Monarchs during Ugarit's Golden Age according to Craigie (1983:32):

Monarch	Approximate Date
Ammistamru III	1380 BCE
Niqmaddu II	c. 1350 – 1315 BCE
Arhalba	c. 1315 – 1313 BCE
Nicmepac. 1313 -	c. 1313 – 1260 BCE
Ammittamuru II	c. 1260 – 1235 BCE
Ammurapi III	c. 1215 – 1180 BCE

The most prosperous and best documented age in Ugarit's history dated from about 1450 to about 1200 BCE. This included the period of Egyptian (1400-1350 BCE) and Hittite (1350 – 1200 BCE) domination (Craigie 1983:32).

2.6.1 Government of ancient Ugarit

Ancient Ugarit was governed by their royal families. It functioned as a hereditary monarchy. The roots of the monarchy stretched far back to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE. Internally it seems to have gone well, but the king faced external pressures from the Hittite Empire in Anatolia to the north and Egypt in the south. Ugarit became a buffer between the large powers and they benefited from the presence of Ugarit (Craigie 1983:31).

The kings of Ugarit were able to acquire great wealth and power for themselves. The great palace complex signifies the possession of personal wealth, achieved through trade and taxation systems. There was a noble ideal of kingship in Ugarit, which helped to guard against corruption. The king maintained control, both internally and externally, by means of his army that consisted of infantry and chariots. Infantrymen were equipped with weapons such as lances, slings, and shields but the chariot troops were more powerful in military operations. The chariots were manned by a special class of chariot warriors called *maryannu.* They perpetuated their military profession in a hereditary tradition. Grooms cared for the chariot and horses. The standing army was strengthened by a system of conscription that was compulsory: each village had to supply several able-bodied men for military service (Craigie 1983:34).

The *maryannu had* their own structure and were directly connected with the crown. The term *maryannu* is a well-known term in the ancient Near Eastern sources of the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, but in Ugarit it denoted a social group or status rather than a type of soldier of the war-chariots. The term *mudu* was assigned to the scribe of the village but was also the name for a kind of courtier, the 'expert' either of the king or queen (Watson & Wyatt 1999:57).

2.6.2 The Social Structure of the City

The king was the most important member of society in ancient Ugarit. The king controlled the political destiny of the city and negotiated on its behalf with the monarchs of other states. The queen shared the luxurious life of the king, as is evidenced by clothes and jewellery found. In 1952, a tablet was discovered that depicted the trousseau of Ahatmilki, which included gold jewellery, bracelets and belts, vessels of precious metals, phials of perfume, and boxes of cosmetics with clothes and materials. The queen had an important role to play as is evidenced in letters written to her asking for her intervention with the king in diplomatic matters (Curtis 1985:64).

The city of Ugarit, like any cosmopolitan city, had a richly diverse population. A colony of foreign merchants and diplomats resided there, functioning both in the context of trade and diplomatic relationships. Merchant companies, ambassadors, and diplomats represented both Egypt and the Hittite Empire at various periods during Ugarit's Golden Age. There were also people from

Cyprus (Alashiya) and Crete, with the Cretans building their homes in the native Cretan style (Craigie 1983:36).

The legal and administrative documents from Ugarit indicate that the inhabitants of the kingdom could belong to different social classes in a structured society. Various circumstances could bring about a change in a person's class, such as a royal decision, marriage, or one's own economic circumstances. The variations in the social and economic position of the Ugaritians are also reflected in the archaeological remains of tombs and houses found in the city. There was also a social disparity between the residents of the capital and the rest of the kingdom. On the lowest rungs of the social ladder, were a number of servants, slaves, and fugitives (Watson & Wyatt 1999:464).

2.6.3 Ugaritic Law

In comparison to other near Eastern countries, excavations at Ugarit have not brought a Ugaritic Law such as the code of Hammurabi, Lipit Ishtar, or the kingdom of Eshnunna to light. Yet, the discovery of large numbers of legal texts provides an insight into the legal traditions of ancient Ugarit of which the majority were written in Akkadian (the language of law and diplomacy in the ancient Near East) (Huehnergard 2012:3).

The judicial texts can be grouped into three categories:

(i) Acts transacted before witnesses with a list of names of the witnesses and of the scribe, and the seal of a private individual. These acts include gifts being given, wills to relatives, purchases and sales, the selling or freeing of slaves, and the repayment of debts.

(ii) Acts transacted before the king: characterised by the dynastic seal of the kings of Ugarit. Also, sales and exchanges of goods, gifts to members of a family or other people, rules of inheritance, and adoptions.

(iii) Acts or decrees of the king, which, like the acts transacted before the king, are characterised by the dynastic seal, and the name of the king. It would typically say: King A has taken away the goods of B and given it to C. (Huehnergard 2012:3)

2.6.4 Commerce and Industry

Ugarit's geographical location on the Mediterranean Sea made it an ideal centre for trade. It stood at the intersection for maritime and overland trade routes. This made it a natural link between the Mediterranean world and the land routes to Mesopotamia and Anatolia. Ships from the ports of the East Mediterranean coast, and from places further afield such as Cyprus, Crete, and Egypt, would load and unload cargo (Curtis 1985:57).

Ugarit served as a link between the Near East and the Aegean world. The city became a centre of interaction between Egypt, Crete, Cyprus, and Anatolia (Aruz, Benzel & Evans 2008:235). Ugarit was an industrial centre where goods were manufactured and produce grown for local consumption as well as for export. Metalworkers had their foundries and workshops in both the city and the port where they produced weapons and bronze tools, as is common with other places along the Mediterranean coast. Ugarit was also a centre of the manufacture of purple dye from the shell of the murex. Linen and wool were dyed and prepared for export. (Curtis 1985:59).

Economic texts from Ugarit include lists of vineyards with the owners' names or locations, and details of types and quantities of wine; there was 'good wine' and 'wine which is not good' as well as wine for the soldiers and other wine destined for the Egyptians and Assyrians (Curtis 1985:59).

As a maritime and mercantile power, Ugarit required a navy that provided protection for mercantile vessels and as defence in times of war. During the 13th century BCE, the navy appeared to have been exceptionally large in relation to the size of the kingdom. A letter, dated during the very last days of the kingdom, refers to the preparation of 150 ships as reinforcements (Craigie 1983:34).

2.6.5 Ugaritic Art

Ugaritic art was famous for its high quality of artistry and the skill involved in metalwork and bronze weapons. This, as well as the great literary tradition, suggests that Ugarit was a very cultured city. The Aegean influence can be seen in the representation of the bare-breasted

goddess of fertility on the lid of an ivory box. Various vases, goblets, heads, and masks have been excavated. The bronze falcon with gold encrusted plumage and cosmetic boxes shaped like aquatic birds are evidence of an Egyptian influence. The 1932 excavations revealed a gold plate and bowl embossed with a hunting scene – a figure in a chariot aiming an arrow at a deer, while bulls flee before the chariot. The 1952 excavations unearthed several ivory items, along with a large panel of about a meter by half a metre which was composed of eight plaques placed side by side with scenes of trees, hunting, and military scenes. The king and his wife are also portrayed with a winged goddess suckling two smaller figures (Curtis 1985:62).

The skilled metalworkers of Ugarit needed to be able to weigh with considerable precision. Discoveries suggest that both the Mesopotamian and Egyptian weight systems were known in Ugarit. Weights were in various shapes, often geometrical, but sometimes, for example, they were in the shape of a bull. Weight finds include a set of weights, two bronze pans of a balance scale, and one in the shape of a man's head with a prominent nose (it could be a portrait of the metalworker himself) (Curtis 1985:62).

2.6.6 Weapon production at Ugarit

Artisans involved in the making of the bow were the 'carvers of bows' working with the 'bow assembler'. The arrowheads could be of stone or of metal. Archaeologists have found quantities of bronze arrowheads from Ras Shamra (Watson & Wyatt 1999:490).

Other weapons used in the army of Ugarit were 'lances' and 'javelins' for combat on foot or on a chariot. The Ugaritic texts mention 'the maker of bronze lances'. There were also 'tanners' that used leather for the manufacture of cuirasses for horses and quivers for soldiers and chariots. (Watson and Wyatt 1999:490).

Chariot units of the Ugaritic army, under the command of officials such as the 'overseer of chariots', were quartered in various villages of the kingdom. As in Alalakh, Nuzi, and Hatti, the chariot units defended strategic points of the kingdom such as access routes to the interior (Watson & Wyatt 1999:491, 496). Gradually, Phoenician harbours such as Tyre, Sidon, Byblos,

and Arwad replaced Ugarit as the main ports of Levantine trade during the 1st millennium BCE (Singer 1999:733).

2.6.7 Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible

The Ugaritic tablets have been used by scholars of the Hebrew Bible to clarify biblical Hebrew texts and they have revealed ways in which the cultures of ancient Israel and Judah had parallels in the neighbouring cultures. The tablets reveal that Israelite practices known from the Bible, such as Levirate marriage, giving the eldest son a larger share of the inheritance, and redemption of the first-born son, were practices common to the people of Ugarit as well (Schniedewind & Hunt 2007:28-30).

2.6.8 The last years of Ugarit

Many documents have been found concerning the last period of Ugarit in all the archives of Ugarit and in Ras Ibn Hani. The last Bronze Age king of Ugarit was Ammurapi (circa 1215 to 1180 BCE), and he was a contemporary of Talmi-Tesub of Carchemish, and by extension, of Suppiluliuma II, the last king of Hatti. His reign was marked by drastic developments that accelerated the collapse of the Hittite Empire. A food shortage, that had been felt by the mid-13th century BCE, had now reached devastating proportions, and the destructive movements of the seaborne enemies known as the 'Sea Peoples' were probably driven by the same famine. (Singer 1999:707). Ammurapi was also reprimanded by his Hittite overlords. He pleaded for assistance from the king of Alashiya, highlighting the desperate situation facing Ugarit. In a letter from Pharaoh Merneptah to a previous king from Ugarit, one reads of the Pharaoh's approval that 'your ancestors were indeed the servants of the king, (the excellent son of Ra); you too are the servant of the king, the excellent son of Ra.' The letter was a response to a letter sent by the king of Ugarit, requesting an Egyptian sculptor to be sent to Ugarit to make an image of Merneptah in front of the statue of Baal in his renovated temple in Ugarit. However, Merneptah responded evasively saying that unfortunately the Egyptian sculptors were busy in Egypt with the sculptures of their own gods (Singer 1999:707-709).

Egypt's polite refusal to meet Ugarit's request is counter-balanced by a strikingly rich consignment of luxury goods that was about to be loaded onto a ship returning to Ugarit,

containing textile and clothing articles totalling 102 items; 50 large baulks of ebony, 1 000 plaques of red, white, and blue stones; altogether 12 large packages sealed with the royal seal. This letter provides an excellent example of the continuing demand for fashionable prestige items at the royal courts of the Near East until the very end of the Bronze Age (Singer 1999:710).

The first signs of grain shortage in Hatti appear towards the mid-13th century BCE. In a letter to Ramesses II, the Hittite queen, Puduhepa urges him to take over her horses, cattle, and sheep that had been given to her as her dowry, because 'I have no grain in my lands'. Shortly after the signing of the peace treaty in 1258 BCE, a high-ranking Hittite expedition went down to Egypt to procure barley and wheat and to organize its shipment to Hatti. The import of food to Hatti by the end of the century must have reached a sizable proportion when Merneptah boasted that he 'caused grain to be taken in ships, to keep alive this land of Hatti' (KRI IV 5-3) (Singer 1999:715).

The destructive operations of the 'Sea Peoples' are attested to in the archaeological record and in a few documents from Ugarit and from Hatti, revolving around the island of Cyprus. The dramatic description of the ravages inflicted by the enemy in a letter, sent by king Ammurapi of Ugarit, pleading for assistance from the king of Alashiya, highlighted the desperate situation that Ugarit faced. This letter must be dated to the very end of Ugarit:

> "My father, behold, the ships of the enemy have come. They have been setting fire to my cities and have done harm to the land. Does not my father know that all my troops and chariots are in the land of Hatti, and all my ships are in the land of Lukka? Thus, the country is abandoned to itself. May my father know it: the seven ships of the enemy that came here inflicted much damage on us". (Singer1999:726)

The final hours of a collapsing state are seldom in writing by the protagonists of the drama. Ugarit is the only site in the entire eastern Mediterranean that yielded written testimony almost to the very fall of the Bronze Age city, including direct references to the enemy who is about to cause ruin (Singer 1999:726).

A cuneiform tablet, found in 1986, shows that Ugarit was destroyed after the death of Merneptah (1203 BCE). It is generally agreed that Ugarit had already been destroyed by the 8th

year of Ramesses III (1178 BCE). Recent radiocarbon work indicates a destruction date between 1192 and 1190 BCE.

2.6.9 Ugarit and its region in the Iron Age

There are only a few traces of an ephemeral reoccupation of Ugarit immediately after its fall at the beginning of the 12th century BCE. At Ras Ibn Hani substantial evidence of a secondary residence of the royal family of Ugarit has been found. The Late Bronze Age palaces yielded Akkadian and Ugaritic tablets dating from the mid-13th century onwards. The site was probably evacuated in an orderly fashion. (Singer 1999:732).

The new settlers at Ras Ibn Hani and Ras Bassit produced Mycenaean III ware of the same type that appears in Cyprus and along the Levant, from Cilicia to Philistia, and is traditionally associated with the new settlement of 'Sea Peoples' along these coastal areas. There is a gradual evolution from monochrome to bichrome pottery and this could indicate that, as in Canaan, the reoccupation of the coastal sites was carried out by mixed populations (Singer 1999:732).

Little is known about the situation in the countryside of Ugarit after the fall of the metropolis. Some inland villages might have suffered less from the ravages of the sea-borne enemy that put an end to the capital city. The scattered maritime and inland Iron Age settlements cannot obscure the outstanding phenomenon of the total disappearance of the region's major city from the geo-political scene of the Levant for nearly a thousand years. The fact that Ugarit never rose from its ashes, as other Late Bronze Age cities of the Levant which suffered a similar fate did, seems to point to other causes for its decline, rather than the destruction inflicted upon the city by the 'Sea Peoples'. Perhaps, some of the climatic cataclysms did happen, especially in the harbour, which would have deprived the city of its main source of livelihood (Singer 1999:733).

2.6.10 Religion of ancient Ugarit

The religion of ancient Ugarit has its own distinctive structure which is known to us through the wealth of the religious literature from Ras Shamra. In these texts, each deity is clearly distinguished as they have their own names, features, and character and are active in their own ways. What has come down to us in these texts is the official religion of the priests of Ugarit as

manifested in the ceremonies that took place in the temples close to the acropolis in the presence of the king of Ugarit. Only the Bible can rival the Ras Shamra texts as a complete source of information about so many different aspects of religion, myths, rites, and expressions of religiosity (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:6).

Ugaritic cuneiform sources show that Anat is 'a distinct goddess rather than a western manifestation of the goddess Ishtar' (Walls 1992:2). In particular, the combination of feminine and masculine attributes in Anat's mythic character demonstrates her ambiguous identity. Anat's apparent disdain for domestic responsibility and rejection of an exclusively feminine social identity demonstrates the importance of gender to her symbolic identity. Anat holds a liminal position with respect to the gender system and social ideology of the ancient patriarchal culture (Walls 1992:2).

There is no systematic exposition of the Ugaritian worldview in any of the texts (Singer 1999:529-530). The religious life of Ugarit centred around the temples, as stated above. Among Canaanite people these usually comprised an outer enclosure containing an altar for sacrifice and a standing stone as well as the temple itself which contained an innermost room in which the image of the deity stood and one or more outer rooms where various cultic activities were carried out. Baal's temple was identified as such by the discovery of a stelae depicting Baal. Other discoveries within the temple were bas-reliefs, fragments of statues, and Egyptian inscriptions among which was a cartouche of Amenophis III. Sixteen votive stone anchors that dated from the 19th century BCE were found around the sanctuary. The famous stele depicting Baal armed with a lightning-spear and thunderbolt-club was discovered to the west of the temple (Curtis 1985:88). The temple of Baal was in the northwest and had features similar to the temple of Solomon, with an inner sanctuary, an outer room, an entranceway, and an outer courtyard with an altar. A large metal statue of Baal was found, with him dressed in a kilt, with a horned helmet, a club in his right hand, and a bolt of lightning in his left hand. The temple of Dagon was also remarkably like that of Baal. (Curtis 1985:88).

The literary texts discovered at Ugarit are especially important for revealing the Canaanite religion. The literary texts include the legend of King Keret, the legend of Aqhat, the story of Baal

and Yam, the story of Baal's palace, and the story of Baal and Mot. Among the gods, El was recognized as the chief god of the pantheon at Ugarit. He is the father of all the other gods except Baal, whose father was Dagon. El was the source of authority; he was also referred to as 'the bull', a title that highlighted his role as a fertility god and the source of life. His companion was Astarte, also known as Asherah. Her primary role was that of a fertility goddess. Although El was recognized as the head of the Canaanite pantheon, Baal was the most prominent figure in it and was also known as Hadad, as a storm-god, and the god of the rains and fertility. He had conflicts with Yam (sea) and Mot (death). Baal was responsible for the fertility of the soil, the herds, and the flocks. Baal's companion was the goddess Anat, who sometimes appears as his sister and other times as his wife. Anat was the goddess of love, fertility, and warfare who looked out for Baal's welfare (De Vries 1997:88-89).

Religious personnel constituted a further significant grouping in the city of Ugarit. Both the temples of Baal and Dagon dominated the city and were second in size only to the great palace (De Vries 1997:88).

The most important remains from Ugarit, apart from the remains of the city, temples, and palaces, are the written cuneiform texts discovered there. The texts are important for our understanding of the Ugaritic life and circumstances, but also for a comparative study of the world of Ugarit and the world as described in the Hebrew Bible. From the historical period of the Hebrew Bible in the Southern Levant, very few ancient texts have been discovered (Curtis 1985:88).

Just outside the southwest corner of the Dagon temple, a small stele-altar, 32 cm high and dated to the 13th century BCE, was found. Close to its southern wall, but well inside the *temenos* of Dagon, two stelae with dedicatory inscriptions to this deity (KTU 6.13 and 6.14) were found. Both are flat, with a rounded top, and the surface quite polished with the first one being 87 cm high and 38 cm wide. The inscription on the first refers to the object as a 'stele dedicated to Dagon' (Mettinger 1995:122-123).

There are also two flat stelae with pictorial representations of El and Baal. The so-called El and Baal stelae were found southwest of the Baal temple. The El statuette is 13.8 cm high, made of bronze, and plated with gold. Another El statuette, 25 cm high and made of limestone, also depicting the enthroned deity, and was found near the Temple of Rhytons. There are thus good witnesses to the existence of iconic cults at Ugarit (Mettinger 1995:126).

We meet the goddess Anat, with whom this thesis is specifically concerned in the mythological tablets of Ugarit. While Baal is feasting in the recesses of mount Zaphon, the goddess Anat is sadistically massacring certain mysterious enemies (Caquot & Sznycer 1980:6-8).

Evidence of Anat's 'ruling authority' include some of her epithets such as: 'the Mistress of Kingship, the Mistress of Dominion, the Mistress of the High Heavens, and the Mistress of the royal Headdress, and the fact that she has her own palace' (Walls 1992:110-111).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has greatly added to our understanding of the city from which the goddess Anat originated. We have now learned more of the city and its people, its commerce, and daily life. Next, the religious tablets discovered at Ugarit and the goddess Anat will be investigated in more detail.

Anat is a luminal figure, both socially and sexually, in that she is outside of the normative feminine categories of mother, wife, or dependent daughter. In social terms she is an adolescent female who has yet to accept the social position of a mature woman as wife and mother (Walls 1992:159-160).

The discovery of the Ugaritic texts shows that the biblical Psalms, are indebted to a Phoenician hymnology. Besides single words illuminated by the Ugaritic texts, entire ideas have parallels in the literature. For example, in Proverbs 9:1-18 wisdom and folly are personified as women. KTU 1.7 vi 2-45 is nearly identical to Proverbs 9:1. Another example of similarities between the Hebrew Bible and Ugaritic texts can be found in KTU 1.114:2-4 and Proverbs 9:5:

Hklh. Sh. Lqs. Ilm. Tlhmn

Ilm w tstn. Tstnyn ‘d sbi

Trt. ‘d skr. Yi. Db. Yrh

“Eat, o Gods, and drink,

Drink wine till you are sated,

Which is very similar to Proverbs 9:5;

“Come, eat of my food and drink wine that I have mixed” (Watson & Wyatt 1999: 49-86).

CHAPTER THREE

ANAT IN THE BAAL CYCLE KTU 1.1-1.6

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Thousands of years ago, when all the world was a stage set for divine forces of nature, the kingship of the gods was not a definitive matter. The time of the kingship of El, the supreme god of the pantheon was challenged by other gods and his time to withdraw as king had come.

Asherah, the Lady of the sea and mother of the gods and El's consort, accompanied El to visit Prince Sea, Judge River who was in line to inherit the throne. Anat, the violent and angry sister of Baal was told not to challenge Prince Sea because her brother, Baal, also had his eye on the throne. El and Asherah, in preparation for his kingship, called on Kothar-wa-Hasis to build Sea a palace from which he could reign. (Refer Video – "The Baal Cycle from Ancient Canaanite Mythology": April LynN Downey.)

The Ugaritic tablets provide us with immense knowledge about ancient Canaanite mythology, although they have not survived in their entirety. The plot or storyline of the Baal Cycle has, as its centre, a contest (under the overall supervision of El) for the kingship over gods and men, and usefully divides itself into three parts, each consisting roughly of two tablets (Gibson 1999:193).

In the rival claim to kingship, El, as the head of the pantheon, instructs Kothar-wa-Hasis, the craftsman of the gods, to construct a palace for Yam, the god of the seas and rivers. The god Athar, as a claimant to the kingship, is told by Shapash, the sun goddess that El intends to grant the kingship to Yam. Athar complains that he has no palace or court. And that he will die alone, while Yam is to be celebrated and have a palace. Athar then asks why he should not be king whereupon Shapash replies that it is because he has no wife (Curtis 1985:66-67):

'Since you have no wife like the gods
Nor a sacred bride like the holy ones, prince Yam

Ruler Nahar will be enthroned' (Wyatt 2003:55).

Batto (1992) says that the Baal myth is at its core the old Combat Myth, the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, in a new guise. In the Ugaritic Baal myth, the emphasis is on affirming that the cosmos is stable because it is firmly under the control of the divine sovereign. The myth presumes a prior stage in creation when the 'most high', El the ancient and kindly king of the gods, seemed inadequate to the new challenges of chaos afoot in his world. As was the case with Marduk in *Enuma Elish,* the challenge is met by a younger deity, the storm-god Baal. Like Marduk, Baal too appears to have been a newcomer to the inner circle of the traditional high gods since Baal was known as 'the son of Dagon' and not one of the sons of El. Baal was the patron deity of Ugarit and is put at the centre of their cosmogonic myth. El, the older god, makes the younger and more vigorous Baal his associate in divine rule. Baal and El rule together from the mountain sanctuary in the distant recesses of the cosmos and Baal from his temple-palace installed on nearby Mount Zaphon (Batto 1992:131).

The Baal mythological cycle is the largest text from ancient Ugarit, taking up six tablets and comprising about fifty percent of the contents in its surviving portions. Each tablet is written on both sides and usually has six columns. KTU 1.6 has the heading of "Baal" and, although the other two have their tops missing, this was probably written on them all and is the title of the whole composition. KTU 1.4 has a note on the edge, 'The scribe Ilimilku, the master scribe, Niqmaddu II being king of Ugarit', while KTU 1.6 has at the close a full colophon, giving the information that Ilimilku was not only the scribe but a student or assistant of a high religious officer of King Niqmaddu II probably the second of that name. The composition was officially approved – there is a banquet scene in KTU 1.3 I where there is talk of chanting and singing and of a minstrel (Gibson 1994:193).

By imagining their deities as constituting a complex, but essentially unified household, the theologians of Ugarit argued for a strong cohesion and unity in their universal outlook that was not shared by their culturally superior neighbours to the east. The Ugaritic polytheism offered its adherents a more integrated vision of reality than is generally realised. The Baal Cycle

downplays the dangers of outside chaos by making even the classic conflict between the storm-god and the sea a matter of family dispute, rather than cosmic danger.

Although the mythological epic of Baal and Anat in its present form dates to about 1400 BCE, it probably reflects an earlier stage of mythopoeia like that of Koshar, who was identified as the Egyptian god Ptah of Memphis: 'His is Caphor, the throne on which he sits, and Egypt, the land of his inheritance.' Phoenician gods are not infrequently said to be enthroned on an island in the sea; Ezekiel's words about the prince of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:2): 'I am a god; I sit on the throne of god in the midst of the seas.' El appears in Ugaritic literature as dwelling 'in the midst of the fountains of the two deeps', 'located at the sources of the two rivers.' To reach him, it was necessary to journey through 'a thousand plains, ten thousand fields' (Albright 1968:216).

The centrality of rain for the agricultural economy of Ugarit plays a foundational role in the portrayal of Baal in the cycle. Each of the sections of the Baal Cycle can be interpreted as the beginning of the rainy season: Baal against Yam could have used lightning as his weapon – and the theophany from Baal's palace can be seen as the beginning of the rainy season. Baal and Mot, and his return to life, can be interpreted as the return of the rains after a long period of dryness. He works his way through numerous obstacles in each episode but ends as the undisputed ruler of the cosmos (Smith & Pitard et al 2009:57).

Even the fact that life (Baal) cannot completely overcome death (Mot) is viewed as a necessary accommodation to the way things are in a divine household. Mot remains a beloved of the patriarch, not an implacable enemy that threatens to bring an end to the cosmos. He remains in his place, briefly ascendant during the summer or a drought but returned to his proper position regularly by the true king, Baal (Smith & Pitard et al 2009:55-56).

Bowman (1978:261) is of the opinion that Anat probably did not originate in the Ugaritic cult. He suggests that her portrayed image in the Ugaritic texts is consistent with the interpretation of her name, *'nt*. She is Baal's aid, his co-warrior who fights to maintain his status in the mythological pantheon. In fact, her name implicates her as the female counterpart of Baal as well as the male weather deity (Bowman 1978:261).

There are three main sections in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (KTU 11-6). The first is concerned with the conflict between Baal and Yam, the god of the sea, in which Baal is victorious and exalted as king. This results in the building of a house or palace for Baal on Mt Zaphon. Lastly, we find Baal's conflict with Mot, the god of the underworld (Day 2002:91).

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, we meet Kothar-wa-Hasis who is an Ugaritic god whose name means 'Skilful-and-Wise'. He is a smith, artisan, engineer, architect, and inventor. He is also a soothsayer and magician, creating sacred words and spells. Texts from Ebla suggest that he was known in Syria as early as the late 3rd millennium BCE. Kothar aids Baal in his battles by creating and naming two magic clubs with which Baal defeats Yam. Kothar also creates beautiful furniture adorned with silver and gold as gifts for Athirat. He also builds Baal's palace of silver, gold, lapis lazuli, and fragrant cedar wood. One of his significant actions is as the opener of the window through which Baal's rains can come and go to fertilize the earth and provide for the continuance of life (Smith 1994:159).

3.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE NARRATIVE

3.2.1 KTU 1.1-1.2 Baal and Yam

The first part of the tablet is missing while the rest contains the following: (Cross 1973:114).

ii There is an embassy from El to Anat.

iii This is followed by an embassy from El to Kothar, who comes from Crete…

iv There is a declaration by El of Yam's royal status, and his coronation.

v Baal arrives,

vi another missing piece from the tablet.

1.2 i Yam sends messengers to the divine assembly to demand Baal's surrender. Baal reacts violently and is restrained.

ii ----------

iii Kothar is instructed by El to build a palace for Yam. Athar's claim that he has no palace (temple) is dismissed ('KTU 1.2 iii b').

iv Kothar supplies Baal with maces, with which he kills Yam.

3.2.2 KTU 1.3-1.4 Baal's Temple 1.3

I A feast is held in honour of Baal.

ii Anat is at war. She fights in the valley between two towns and wades through gore, before going to a temple to perform bloody rites. Then she washes herself.

iii When messengers come from Baal, Anat is perturbed, fearing danger to him, and insists that she had already killed Yam and his associates.

iv Anat goes to meet Baal and says she will demand a palace (temple) for him from El, with threats.

v Anat comes before El, threatens him and pleads for Baal.

vi Athirat's assistant is sent to fetch Kothar.

i.4 Kothar receives instructions and sets to work in his forge making gifts for Athirat.

ii Anat and Baal come to Athirat with the gifts. She is perturbed until she sees the gifts.

iii Anat and Baal ask her to intercede with El.

iv Athirat goes to El, with Anat attending, and complains that Baal is a king without a palace (that is a god without a temple).

3.3 BAAL AND YAM: FROM KTU 1.1 – 1.2

In the developing conflict between Prince Sea and mighty Baal, the scene portrays Yam, Sea, sending his divine pair of messengers to the assembly of the gods held at the tabernacle of El located at the source of the double-deep, at the cosmic mountain, that is, at the gates to heaven and the entry into the abyss. Prince Yam, alias Judge River, demands that Baal be given over to him as a captive and that his, Yam's, lordship be acknowledged. El replies:

"Baal is thy slave, O Sea,
Baal is thy slave forever,
The son of Dagon is thy prisoner.'
But Kothar, craftsman of the gods, answers Baal:
'Let me speak to you, O Prince Baal,

Let me recite to you, O Rider of the clouds:
Behold, thy enemy, O Baal,
Behold, thy enemy thou shalt smite,
Behold, thou shalt smite thy foes.
Thou shalt take thy eternal kingship,
Thy dominion forever and ever" (KTU 2.4.7-10)

This is compared to the rhyme of Psalm 92:10, 'but my horn You have exalted like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil you have made me as strong as a wild ox' with a typical symmetrical form (Cross 1973:114).

Kothar-wa-Hasis constructs two maces for Baal, which he names Yagrushu ("drive out") and 'Ayyaamurru ("expel") (Gibson 1978:3). Baal uses the maces to defeat Yam and scatters him over the earth. This battle parallels remarkably the account of creation described in Psalm 74:12-17:

> "You have been our king from the beginning, O God; you have saved us many times. With your mighty strength you divided the sea and smashed the heads of the sea-monsters; you crushed the heads of the monster Leviathan and fed his body to desert animals. You made springs and fountains flow; you dried up large rivers. You created the day and night; and you set the sun and moon in their places; you set the limits of the earth; you made summer and winter".

This is perhaps the oldest preserved Hebrew creation story – even older than the accounts in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 (Cargill 2017:42).

Batto (1992) writes that the sea was an age-old ancient Near Eastern metaphor of noncreation. Sea has appeared throughout his study of the Combat Myth as the arch foe of the divine sovereign: in Mesopotamia as Ti'amat, in Canaan as Yam, in Israel as Yam or 'Yam Suph' (Batto 1992:177).

Mark Smith (1994) refers to KTU 1.1 II lines 17b-25 in this way: 'El's speech to Anat in this section has two parts. The first, lines 17b-21, commands Anat to desist from war, an activity

characteristic of the goddess. The second part of the passage, lines 21-23, orders her to hurry to El's abode. The term *ddym* is unattached in Ugaritic literature apart from this message to Anat here and in 1.3. The only other contextual parallel may be found in the Leiden Magical Papyrus dating to a New Kingdom Period: 'Anat of '*Iddkn;* she brings seven jugs of silver and eight jugs of bronze and pours the blood upon the ground' (Smith 1994:202-203).

'And Kothar-wa-Hasis spoke: "Indeed I say to you, O Prince Baal, I repeat, O Charioteer of the Clouds, now your foe, Baal, now your foe you must smite; now you must destroy your adversary! 1.2 iv 10 Take your everlasting kingdom, your eternal dominion!"
'

Baal eventually overcomes Yam: 'Sea fell, he sank to earth, his joints trembled, his frame collapsed. Baal destroyed, drank Sea! He finished off Judge River (Cross 1973:115).
Then the club danced from Baal's hand,
speeding like an eagle from his fingers.
It caught Prince Yam on the forehead –
Right between the eyes of the Honorable Nahar!
Yam collapsed, falling to the ground, his joints trembling".
Baal gathered up and drank Prince Yam to the dregs ('drank' or 'dried up' or 'dismembered')
1.2 30: "for our captive is Ruler Nahar! Then Baal went out, Valiant Baal dried him up, Yam is indeed dead! Baal will rule"' (Watson & Wyatt 1999:64-69).

Victorious Baal, from his victory over Yam or the flood-dragon, manifests himself as lord of the storm: 'Behold now, Baal has appointed his rains; he has appointed the wet and snowy season. He has thundered in the storm clouds; he has blazed his lightning bolts to the earth.' In the mixed tradition preserved at Ugarit, both Baal and his consort Anat are credited with killing the seven-headed dragon. Both are also credited with victorious battles over Yam-Nahar (Cross 1973:149).

The collapse of the cosmos in response to the battle of the divine warrior is well known in biblical lore. We find it in the 'Song of the war of Yahweh' in Isaiah 34. After the announcement of the ban (*herem)* on all nations and their armies, we read:

> "Come near ye nations, to hear…the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: Their slain shall be cast out, their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls from the vine and as a falling fig from the fig tree "(Isaiah 34:1-4).

Craigie (1983) finds this story typical of common Near Eastern creation myths. In the cosmogonic process, with the gods of the primeval, chaotic waters enters the gods who represent ordered aspects of an emerging world. Yam represents the primeval forces of chaos, whilst Baal represents fertility and is the protagonist of order, so his victory over Yam symbolizes the conquest of chaos by order which was an affirmation of the Baal religion and its principal goal (Craigie 1983:63).

3.4 KTU 1.3 – 1.4: BAAL'S TEMPLE

3.4.1 Feast in honour of Baal

Baal's Victory Banquet food is described as follows: 'He served mightiest Baal, waited on the Prince, Lord of the Earth. He stood, arranged, and offered him food, sliced a breast before him, with a salted knife, a cut of fatling.'

Baal's drink at the banquet is incorporated as follows: 'He stood, served, and offered him drink, put a cup in his hand, a goblet in both his hands, a goblet Athirat may not eye. A thousand jars he drew of the wine, a myriad he mixed in his mixture.' Alternatively: 'A holy cup, which women might not see, a goblet which even a wife could not look upon. A thousand measures it took from the wine vat, ten thousand draughts it took from the barrel' (KTU 1.3 15) (Wyatt 2003:71).

3.4.2 Music

Great warrior songs are associated with great warrior figures (Smith 2014:177-178). Smith (2014), draws a comparison between various warrior songs, such as David playing the lyre before King Saul, (1 Samuel 18:10), and the song of Achilles before Patroklos in *the Iliad* 9:185 92, witnessed in a feasting scene by the legation sent by Agamemnon and headed by Phoenix and Odysseus:

> "Now they came beside the shelters and ships of the Myrmidons, and they found Achilles delighting his heart in a lyre, clear sounding, splendid and carefully wrought, with a bridge of silver upon it, which he won out of the spoils when he ruined Eetion's city. As Patroklos was sitting over against him, alone, in silence, watching Aiakides and the time he would leave off singing". (Smith 2014:177).

The music and song mentioned in lines 18-22 is as follows: 'He stood, chanted, and sang, cymbals in the virtuoso's hands. Sweet of voice, the hero sang about Baal on the summit of Saphan. Baal gazed at his daughters, eyed Pidray, daughter of light, then Tallay, daughter of rain. Pidray knew… Indeed, the noble brides….' (Smith 2014:177) and 'He arose, intoned and sang, the cymbals in the minstrel's hands; he sang, the chorister of beautiful voice, concerning Baal in the uppermost parts of Saphon' (Wyatt 2003:71).

3.4.3 Drink and gender (lines 8 – 17).

The feasting of Baal places an emphasis on the drinking in lines 8-17. Drinking occupies a central place in this feast held for Baal. The vessel for his drinking is 'a huge vessel,' (line 12), one perhaps for 'mighty men.' This vessel is clearly not for women. It is called 'a holy cup that women may not see, a goblet that Athirat may not eye.' This drinking puts males at the centre of the activity and excludes women; not even the goddess Athirat is supposed to lay her eyes on it which seems to be gender delimitation. Men are at the centre of this drinking feast and women are at the periphery or in subservience (Smith 2014:178).

'The singers are in front, the musicians are behind, in between are the girls beating the tambourines' (Psalm 68:25) and 'As David returned after killing Goliath and as the soldiers were coming back home, women from every town in Israel came out to meet King Saul. They were singing joyful songs, dancing, and playing tambourines and lyres' (1 Samuel 18:6-7). This sort of behaviour is perhaps modelled by Anat when she sings of the love of Mighty Baal (KTU 1.3 III 4-8). The song of women is a public function, which contrasts with the public feast, such as Baal's inauguration of his palace to which all the deities are invited (KTU 1.4 V) (Smith 2014:179).

In Baal's feast in KTU 1.3 I, the gendered expression about the drinking vessel is emblematic of the gendered nature of the entire scene. Baal's female subordinates are the objects of Baal's attention, he 'eyes' Pidray and Tallay. They are his 'daughters' and it has been thought that the

females are Baal's 'brides' or 'fiancés'. Their affiliation with meteorological phenomena is associated with Baal's rain-making capacity. The name Tallay means 'dewy' and 'daughter of rain'. In the narrative world of the feast, these are Baal's 'women' (Smith 2014:180).

3.4.4 Anat's battle (KTU 1.3 ii)

'Virgin Anat like a kid…… (about 25 lines are missing)
the perfumes of seven tamarisks, the odour of coriander and murex.
Anat closed the doors of the house and she met the divine assistants at the foot of the mountain.
'And lo, Anat fought in the valley.
She battled between two towns.
She smote the people of the seashore,
She destroyed the men of the sunrise,
Beneath her like balls were heads.
Above her like locusts were palms,
Like grasshoppers' heaps of palms of warriors' (Wyatt 2003:72-73).

One could ask 'what is all the carnage about?' It could mean a ritual combat for a New Year ceremony. The fact that the passage is also the prelude to the activity of Baal and Anat in the fertility of the new season makes it feasible that it reflects bloodletting as a rite of imitative magic. In reference to 1 Kings 18:44, we are reminded that the Baal prophets on Mount Carmel shed their own blood, while Anat sheds the blood of her victims (Smith & Pitard 2009:159).

It is stated that both Baal and Anat are cosmic warriors, fighting other gods, though there are hints in 4: vii and perhaps 3: ii (Anat's blood bath) of them fighting human foes, presumably on behalf of the people of Ugarit (Fleming 1994:101).

Anat speaks in KTU 1.3 iii 32-iv 8:
'Behold, Anat saw the gods.
Below, her feet shuffled,
Behind, her loins collapsed,
Above, her face sweated.

The joints of her loins convulsed,
the muscles of her back.
She raised her voice and cried,
“Why have Gupan and Ugar arrived?
What enemy has risen against Baal?
(What) foe against the Rider of the Clouds?
Did I not smite Yam, the beloved of El?
Did I not annihilate River, the great god?
Indeed, I conquered the dragon; I destroyed it!
I smote the twisting serpent,
The close-coiling one with seven heads!
I smote Arsh, the beloved of the gods.
I silenced Attacker, the bull-calf of El!
I smote Fire, the bitch of El.
I annulated Dbb, daughter of El!
I slew for silver; I possessed the gold of him who would drive Baal from the heights of Sapon,
Who would peck his ear like a bird,
Who would chase him from the seat of his kingship?
From his resting-place, from the throne of his dominion!
What enemy has risen against Baal?
What foe against the Rider of the Clouds?”

The youths answered: they replied,
“No enemy has risen against Baal,
No foe against the Rider of the Clouds.”’

Anxious sweat is studied in the ancient Near East. The mention of sweat in the Bible does not produce evidence that sweat indicates physical exertion or hard work but rather fear. The two Ugaritic texts above show sweating fear at the first approach of those thought to bring harm or news of it, before the reality is known (Fleming 1994:95-96).

Anat's fiery personality shows itself to be a negative example of how to get things done within the divine court. After being called to Baal's Mountain and commissioned to go to El with Baal's request, Anat is described as ready to beat El up if he is not forthcoming. There are similarities between this scene and the scene between El and Anat in the Aqhat Epic, in which she asks permission to kill Aqhat because of his breach of etiquette and threatens El with bodily harm if he refuses (Smith and Pitard 2009:27).

Anat's active support of Baal is essential to his establishment as the divine sovereign. The conclusion of the Baal Cycle depicts Baal restored to his throne as the divine monarch.

Anat's demeanour, in the Baal Cycle, is also like Sumerian Inanna (and her Akkadian counterpart Ishtar, with whom she was identified). The Sumerian goddess manifests sheer force, rage, and might, with a physical power that exists in an uneasy relationship to the orderly world of the hierarchical pantheon. We find the Enheduanna's hymn to Inanna:

'In the mountain where homage is withheld from you,
Vegetation is accursed.
Its grand entrance you have reduced to ashes.
Blood rises in its rivers for you.
Its people have nought to drink.
It leads its army before you of its own accord' (Smith & Pitard 2009:152).

The weapon of Anat's initial destruction is left undescribed in the two bicola in lines 5-8. Only later when she rounds up her captives, are any weapons mentioned, namely a staff and a bow. An Egyptian stele depicts her seated on a throne, holding a shield and spear in her left hand and wielding a battle-axe in her right hand. On a lower part of a second stele, she holds a shield and lance in one hand and brandishes a club or axe (Smith & Pitard 2009:152).

Within Israel and other ancient Near Eastern cultures, theologies developed which downplayed the notion of the offering as a meal for the gods. This evidently occurred in certain elite circles of Israel, climaxing in the statement of Yahweh in Psalm 50:12-13: 'If I were hungry, I wouldn't

tell you, for the world and its fullness belong to me. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or do I drink the blood of goats?' (Smith & Pitard et al 2009:183).

3.4.5 Anat cleans herself and her palace.

The final section of 1.3 ii involves Anat cleansing herself and her house following the slaughter.

'Warrior-blood was wiped from the house,
Oil of peace was poured in a bowl.
Adolescent Anat washed her hands,
The In-law of the peoples, her fingers.
She washed her hands of warrior blood,
Her fingers of the gore of the soldiers.
Set chairs next to chairs, tables to tables.
Footstools she set to footstools.
She drew water and washed with dew of heaven, oil of earth,
Showers of the Cloud-Rider
Dew which the Heavens poured on her,
Showers the stars poured on her.'

Anat beautifies herself with the purple of the murex (whose thousand fields of habitat are in the sea). This description refers to the great amount of murex shells from the sea required to produce the purple dye. Excavations at the port of Ugarit, Minet al-Beida, yielded the remains of thousands of crushed murex shells. The Greeks also emphasized the connection between the purple dye and the sea (Smith & Pitard 2009:215).

3.4.6 The palace of Baal (KTU 1.3-4)

The sense of the transcendent appears in the beautiful message of Baal to his sister, Anat, at the beginning of the story of his palace (1.3 III 14-31):

'For a message I have, and I will tell you,
A word, and I will recount to you,

Word of tree and whisper of stone,
The word people do not know,
And earth's masses do not understand,
Converse of Heaven with Earth,
Of deeps with stars.'

The story of the building of Baal's palace reflects a known pattern of temple and palace-building stories with all their various religious elements. Some of these stories derived from rituals for the dedication of temples in the ancient Middle East. A comparison is drawn between the three-levelled world of the Old Testament temple building narratives and the three-levelled world of the house building motif in the Ugaritic texts (cf. KTU 1.3 and 1.4). In the case of the Old Testament temple building narratives, it is seen as a revival of a much older mythological way of viewing the world. The world is viewed as a three-tiered structure with Yahweh at the top, Yahweh's chosen kings in the middle, and Israel together with the rest of the cosmos at the bottom. In the Ugaritic literature, the motif is the three-levelled world of the Baal Cycle with El as the supreme god, Baal, Mot, and Yam as the royal gods on the second level, and the rest of Ugarit's gods at the bottom (Brooke et al 1994:12).

The building of a house (palace/temple) for Baal follows on his assumption of the kingship after the defeat of Yam in the Ugaritic texts (KTU 1.3-4). Does the Bible attest knowledge of this? We read about the 'song of the sea' in Exodus 15 and Yahweh's victory at the sea is followed in v. 17: 'you bring them in and plant them on the mountain, the place that you Lord, have chosen for your home, the Temple that you yourself have built' as a reference to the building of his temple.

A new plan must be made and this involves gifts for El's consort, Athirat, and the enlisting of her intercession with the supreme deity. She persuades El to let Baal have his palace. Anat takes the good news to Baal and he immediately summons Kothar-wa-Hasis to build a palace for him on his sacred mountain, Saphon (1.4 v 27ff).

Thereafter we have a description of the building of Baal's palace with cedars from the trees of the Lebanon and a fire burning in the house for six days but on the seventh day 'the fire was removed from the house' (KTU 1.4 vi 33). Is this an echo of what we find in the Bible when God created for six days, but on the seventh he rested? Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 2:1: 'God looked at everything he had made, and he was pleased. Evening passed, and morning came – that was the sixth day. And so, the whole universe was completed. By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working' (Wyatt 2003:108-109).

Baal, at first, did not want a window in his palace: 'You shall on no account put a window in the house, nor a casemate in the midst of the palace!' (KTU 1.4 v 60). Kothar-wa-Hasis replies: 'Listen, I pray, O Valiant Baal! Shall I not put a window in the house?' But Valiant Baal replied: 'You shall on no account put a window in the house, lest Pidray, daughter of Light, should escape and Taliy, daughter of Shower, should flee, or the Beloved of El, Yam, should arise, insult and spit on me' (KTU 1.4 vi 8-13) (Wyatt 2003:105).

Baal refuses the windows for his house because of his fear that Yam-Nahar may gain entrance and again wreak havoc on earth. The house is soon finished, and a celebratory feast is held (1.4 vi). Column vii tells how Baal then marches through the surrounding territory, annexing many cities and towns, and thereby forming an empire for himself. Returning home, flushed with success, he puts away his former fears and resolves that after all he will have windows in his palace. He thunders out of his windows and the earth reels and people far and near are terrified. Baal's enemies cling to the rocks in dismay and he openly taunts them. Column 1.4 viii leads into the third main division of the cycle as Baal sends messengers to the underworld abode of Mot, inviting him to a feast to acknowledge his sovereignty (Gibson 1994:195).

The importance of a deity's possession of a palace as a mark of status is reflected in Baal's efforts to secure his own palace on Mt. Zaphon. A palace bestowed by El will be a legitimization of his royal status in the Baal Cycle. The construction and inhabitation of a palace serves as a motif in ancient Near Eastern mythology to mark divine kingship (Walls 1992:112).

KTU 1.4 v 20 – 35: 'Virgin Anat rejoiced: she stamped her feet, and the earth shook. Then she set her face towards Baal, in the heights of Saphon, a thousand miles away, ten thousand leagues off. Virgin Anat laughed; she lifted up her voice and cried: "Rejoice, Baal! Good news I bring: A house will be given to you like your brothers, and a dwelling like your kinsmen! Call a caravan into your house, merchandise into the midst of your palace. The rocks will yield you much silver, the hills desirable gold. And build a house of silver and of gold, a house of jewels and lapis lazuli!"' (Wyatt 2003:102-103).

After the feast Baal held at the completion of his palace, he rethinks the matter of the window and says to Kothar:

'I shall do it, Kothar, this very day, Kothar, this very hour! Let a window be opened in the house a casement in the midst of the palace, and let a rift be opened in the clouds according to the word of Kothar-wa-Hasis!' (KTU 1.4 vii 16 – 20) (Wyatt 2003:108-109).

When the author of the biblical flood story wanted to describe the torrents of rain which fell upon the earth, he used the poetic expression, 'The windows of heaven were opened' (Genesis 7:11). The Baal Epic tells how the god Baal was at first reluctant to have windows in his house lest they provide a means of access to his enemy. When, however, he permitted windows to be placed in his temple in the skies:

'Baal opened a window in the mansion,
A lattice in the midst of the palace,
he opened a skylight and uttered his holy voice.'

Thunder is described as the voice of Baal, and from the open windows of Baal's temple he thunderes his storms upon the world of men. KTU 1.101 describes Baal enthroned on his mountain, Zaphon in such a way so as to evoke an explicit aesthetic analogue between Baal and the peak/palace:

'Baal sits enthroned like the sitting of a mountain,

Haddu…like the cosmic ocean,
In the midst of his mountain, divine Saphan,
In the midst of the mount of victory.
With seven lightning-flashes,
Eight storehouses of thunder
A tree-bolt of lightning, his head is adorned,
With dew between his eyes at his base,
The horns on him, his head with a downpour from the heavens is watering,
His mouth like two clouds, like wine is the love of his heart.'

In this passage, features of Baal with his mountain are identified. The power of his kingship is conveyed and him as god of his temple-mountain. Baal's palace (or temple) is the primary locus for creating a bond between the human and the divine. It is intended to define the god for the people. Whether in cultic activity or in literary form (such as the Baal Cycle), temples focus attention on a variety of relationships between deities and people, by serving as a meeting-site for them (Smith & Pitard 2009:67).

Baal has his palace and thunders from on high. Baal speaks:
'Annulated Dbb, daughter of El!
I slew for silver; I possessed the gold of him who would drive Baal from the heights of Saphon,
Who would peck his ear like a bird,
Who would chase him from the seat of his kingship?
From his resting-place, from the throne of his dominion!
What enemy has risen against Baal?
What foe against the Rider of the Clouds?
The youths answered: they replied,
"No enemy has risen against Baal,
No foe against the Rider of the Clouds.
A message from Almighty Baal,
A word from the mighty warrior"' (Walls 1992:175-176).

The interrelationship between mythology and religion is evident in the palace episode. Baal's palace in the heavens was represented physically by his temple on earth. The heavenly palace provided Baal with authority and protection; whilst he would provide the earth with rains for crops; Baal's earthly temple was the recognition of his kingship and authority, which would ensure the security of the ever-threatening forces of chaos, whose return could culminate in drought and starvation (Craigie 1983:64).

3.5 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN BAAL AND MOT (KTU 1.5-6)

'Though you smote Litian the wriggling serpent, finished off the writhing serpent, encircle with seven heads, the skies will be hot, they will shine' (KTU 1.5 I 1). The first two lines of this tricolon are, allowing for translation, remarkably close to the Hebrew text of Isaiah 27:1: 'On that day the Lord will use his powerful and deadly sword to punish Leviathan, that wriggling, twisting dragon, and to kill the monster that lives in the sea.' This demonstrates the close affinity between the forms of Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry (Wyatt 2003:115). Here, once again we see the connotation between the Ugaritic myths and the biblical writings which strengthens the argument for Anat's possible influence on the biblical writers of the tale of Joshua.

The episode that begins here continues through KTU 1.5 and 1.6, and it is the concluding story of the cycle: 'Baal went up to the throne of his kingship, to the back-rest, to the siege of his dominion' (KTU 1.6 v 5). This is the first time that Baal occupies his throne. Occupancy of the throne is a central motif of the epic form of the tradition (Wyatt 2003:140). The cycle continues: 'delays turned to months; months turned to years. Lo, in the seventh year, divine Mot came towards Valiant Baal. He lifted up his voice and cried: "Because of you, O Baal, I experienced downfall; winnowing with a fan; splitting with a knife; burning with fire; grinding with millstones; sifting with a sieve; and because of you I experienced abandonment on the steppe; and sowing in the sea"' (KTU 1.6 v 10-20) (Wyatt 2003:141). Once again, we have the sabbatical pattern of the seventh day.

Baal is challenged by a new adversary, Mot. The name 'Mot' means death and the god is no more than a personification thereof. Mot calls on Baal to surrender unconditionally to him, since death is thirsty and must drink and eat his fill of the substance of the god who is lord of the

waters. Baal does not accept the challenge but voluntarily gives himself up to death. Before he dies, however, he lies with a cow given to him by Anat. A whole tablet is devoted to this episode, which is clearly intended to show that Baal is the god who was responsible for increasing flocks and herds (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9).

In KTU 1.6 vi 5, Mot is the Powerful One, divine Mot. He ate his seven divine assistants and cried, 'Look! My brothers whom Baal has given me for my meal, my mother's sons for my consumption!'

He returned to Baal in the recesses of Zaphon. He lifted up his voice and cried: 'It is my brothers you have given me, Baal, for my meal, my mother's sons for my consumption!'

'They glowered at each other like burning coals,
Mot was strong; Baal was strong; they gored like wild bulls,
Mot was strong; Baal was strong; they bit like serpents.
Mot was strong; Baal was strong; they tugged like hunting-dogs.
Mot fell. Baal fell on top of him.
Shapsh cried to Mot: "Listen, pray, O divine Mot!
How can you fight with Valiant Baal?
How will Bull El your father not hear you?
He will surely pull down the pillars of your dwelling,
He will surely overturn the throne of your kingship,
He will surely break the scepter of your rule!"'
(Wyatt 2003:142,143).

In KTU 1.6 vi 30, Divine Mot was afraid; the Beloved of El, the hero, was in dread. Mot is not cowed by Baal, but trembles at the thought of offending Shapsh. She is mistress of heaven and the underworld which she traverses nightly (Wyatt 2003: 143). Mot started at her voice, he lifted up his voice and cried: 'Let Baal be installed [on the throne of] his kingship, on the back-rest, on the siege of his dominion! Thus, Baal's arch-enemy and rival for the throne, in response to Shapsh's words, is himself the official announcer of Baal's rule (Wyatt 2003:143).

Mot's embassy dismisses Baal's invitation to attend the feast to celebrate his new power. Mot's messenger advises Baal to take his wind and cloud and his other attendants down to the underworld and assume the condition of the strengthless dead. Baal obeys but, on his way, he has connection with a heifer, who is delivered of a boy whom Baal clothes in his own robe. Tablet 1.5 vi relates how the substitute's dead body was found at the edges of the earth and El, on hearing the news in his mountainous home, descends from his throne and wallows in sackcloth and ashes, wondering what will now become of Baal's followers (Gibson 1994: 196).

On hearing of Baal's death, El goes into mourning and involves the whole of humanity in his suffering – men too must suffer because of the death of Baal. Anat, however, goes off to look for her brother, helped in this search by the sun-goddess Shapsh. According to the myth, the two goddesses take the body of the dead god to the summit of Zaphon, Baal's mountain, and bury it there (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9).

The Mot version clearly has some connection with the fertility character of the Canaanite religion. The contest between the weather god, Baal, and the underworld god, Mot, replicated itself in the agricultural economy of ancient Syria (Batto 1992:130).

3.6 ANAT'S MOURNING FOR BAAL

The following is Gibson's (1994) take on this episode: The most dramatic episode in the Baal myth is the death and resurrection of Baal, the god of rain and fertility. Anat takes the body of Baal, slain by Mot, and gives it a burial with a proper ceremony:

'Then weeps she her fill of weeping:
Deep she drinks tears, like wine.
Loudly she calls unto the gods' Torch Shapsh. "Lift Puissant Baal, I pray, onto me."
Hearkening, gods' Torch Shapsh, picks up Puissant Baal, sets him on Anat's shoulder. Up to Zaphon's fastness she brings him, bewails him and buries him too,
Anat lays him in the hollows of the earth-ghosts.
She slaughters seventy buffaloes as tribute to Puissant Baal.

She slaughters seventy neat as tribute to Puissant Baal….' (Pritchard 1958: 116).

Anat then makes her way to the supreme god, El, to tell him of the death of Baal:

'There, she is off on her way to El of the Sources of the Floods,
In the midst of the Headwaters of the Two Deeps she penetrates El's Field and enters the pavilion of King Father Shunem. At El's feet she bows and falls down. Prostrates her and does him honour. She lifts up her voice and cries:
"Now let Asherah rejoice and her sons, Elath and the band of her kinsmen; for dead is Puissant Baal, perished the Prince, Lord of Earth"' (Pritchard 1958:117).

In no ancient mythology do we find such explicit identification of the body of a god with the grain, which is successively reaped and threshed, winnowed, baked as bread, and ground to meal, and finally sowed as grain in the field. The purpose of this ritual was not to revive Mot but to revive Baal by sympathetic action (Albright 1968:232).

Anat's mourning for Baal is an important element of her character and narrative function in Ugaritic myth. With the aid of Shapsh, Anat searches for Baal's corpse. She mourns him vigorously and provides elaborate sacrificial offerings at his burial. Anat avenges Baal's death by exterminating Mot. Kapelrud (1965:82-92) suggests that Anat's mourning for Baal demonstrates her primary function in Ugaritic religion as the goddess of mourning and proposes an etymology for her name from the root *'nh*, 'to mourn'. Kapelrud's interpretation is his assumption that Anat's mythic role reflects her cultic function as official mourner (Walls 1992:67-68).

Something of Baal's body remained unburied and Anat goes to Mot and demands her brother's body from the god who boasts that he has swallowed Baal. Anat then seizes Mot and kills him. El has a vision in which he learns that Baal will live again and expresses his joy freely, happy in the knowledge that 'the heavens will rain fat and the wadis will flow with honey'. (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9). Anat, still accompanied by the sun-goddess, again goes off in search of Baal – or what is left of him. There is a long gap in the text here, followed by a scene in which Baal, restored to life, is venting his fury against the 'sons of Athirath'. Seven years later, Mot

challenges him again and they engage in a desperate combat, the outcome of which is for a long time indecisive. In the end, it is the god El who decides that Mot must submit, and that Baal should replace him on his throne (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9).

Mot recounts his harsh treatment at the hands of Anat and claims to have been 'sown in the sea,' *dr' bym* (1.6 v 19). This is not horticultural imagery; it denotes complete eradication. Mot does not represent grain and his destruction does not reflect the preparation of seed for planting and germination. There seems to be a direct connection between Anat's slaying of Mot and the return of Baal. (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9).

The defeat of Death by a maiden goddess is profound; her motivation is her anxiety concerning the death of her brother, but her ability is perhaps rooted in her sexual identity. Anat's mythic identity as a nubile young female is essential to her unique ability to defeat Death and restore fertility to the cosmos. While the male Baal willingly submits himself to Mot's servitude and descends to the Netherworld, Anat is apparently able to restore him to life through her defeat of Death. This symbolism acknowledges that females have the ability to create life – to overcome death – while males do not. Similarly, 'maidens' are the source of life for a society. It is not the already fertile mother goddess who will guarantee the continuation of society but the young girl who has not yet proven her procreative ability. Anat overcomes Death by the creative potential stored within her as an adolescent maiden. Thus, Anat's unchanneled energies unknowingly serve to restore fertility and life to the world. Even though Anat may try to deny her female sexuality and feminine identity, her own passions cause her to defeat Death and restore Baal, the source of life. Thus, according to Walls (1992:184), she truly is the only deity capable of overcoming Death in the Ugaritic pantheon.

The mythic themes in the Baal Cycle texts have much in common with the Phoenician traditions preserved by Sakkunyaton (Sanchuniathon) and, for that matter, in the Bible. We can also perceive the influence of the Canaanite theme of the battle with the sea-dragon in the Mesopotamian creation epic, *Enuma elish,* and in the Greek myth of *Typhoeus-Typhon.* In the Baal Cycle, we are dealing with a version of a mythic literature common to the Canaanites and to those who shared their culture from the border of Egypt to the Amanus in the Middle and

Late Bronze Age (Cross 1973:113). Yahwism owes a debt to the myths of Baal. In the earliest poetic sources, the language depicting Yahweh as divine warrior manifests, it is borrowed almost directly from Canaanite descriptions of the theophany of Baal as storm-god (Cross 1973:147).

Despite her fierceness, Anat's hostile actions also serve to contribute to the balance of cosmic power and the establishment of Baal as king of the gods. Her extirpation of Death (Mot) allows fertility to return to the earth. Anat is an ambivalent force in Ugaritic myth (Walls 1992:1). According to Bowman (1978), she was known throughout the ancient Near East, but Ugarit is the main source of information concerning her. Her epithets occur throughout the Ugaritic material (Bowman 1978:2).

3.7 THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BAAL CYCLE

Four approaches have been identified in the interpretation of the Baal Cycle: [1] The ritual and seasonal theories; [2] The Cosmogonic interpretations; [3] Historical and Political views; and [4] The limited exaltation of Baal (Smith 1994:60).

3.7.1 Ritual and seasonal interpretations of the Baal Cycle

Rituals were accompanied by myths which were designed to present the purely functional acts in terms of ideal and durative situations (Smith 1994:60). Smith also states that the proper names of the major deities reflect their roles in the Baal Cycle. The 'Land of Baal' refers to soil watered by rain in Arabic. Yam, literally 'sea', embraces the seas, lakes, rivers 'and other expanses of water', while Mot, meaning 'death', is the god of all that lacks vitality or life. This is also reflected by the Arabic *mawat,* 'dead soil which remains arid and infertile'. In other words, each deity was sovereign over his own domain (Smith 1994:61).

The seasonal interpretation correlates the three phenomena of seasons, rites, and myths (Smith 1994:64).

3.7.2 The Cosmogonic view

There is the interpretation of the Baal Cycle that Baal, the source of life, stands on one side and Yam ('Sea') and Mot ('Death'), the sources of destruction and death in the universe, stand on the other. This is called the cosmogonic view as it interprets the Baal Cycle primarily in terms of the conflict of the major figures, Baal, Yam, and Mot revolving around the storm-god's divine kingship (Smith 1994:75).

There is a struggle between life and death. Like it or not, Death is the ultimate ruler of all that lives. However, Mot has a very serious problem in guaranteeing his source of supply. When stated differently, Mot's enormous strength, symbolized by his unlimited ability to take away life, is circumscribed by his inability to grant or restore it. To ensure his supply of food, Mot needs Baal – the agency of life-giving precipitation, especially of the winter rains (Smith 1994:75).

3.7.3 Historical and political views

Ritual and seasonal interpretations dominated discussions of the Baal Cycle from the 1930s through the 1960s. Several scholars proposed historical settings or factors to account for the formation of the Baal Cycle. Virolleaud (1936) argued that the background of the Baal's conflict with Yam in KTU 1.2 iv was to be located in the arrival of the Sea Peoples (Smith 1994: 87).

The theme of Baal's kingship provides an appealing starting point for interpreting the Baal Cycle as royal language permeates the cycle. There remain important considerations of why Baal, and not another deity, is king, and what the nature of his kingship is (Smith 1994). Baal is monarch precisely because he is the deity who can mediate the blessings of the natural cosmos both to human society and to the company of the pantheon. The meaning of providing blessings is his rains, which the seasonal interpretation has emphasized. These rains revivify the world, duly noted by proponents of the cosmogonic approach. Baal's kingship brings life to the world, prevailing over the forces of death and destruction, as stressed by who view the Baal Cycle as a struggle between the forces of life and death (Smith 1994:96).

For decades, scholars have rightly emphasized the kingship of Baal as the main theme of the cycle. Political language dominates the Baal Cycle but it should also be realized that the Baal Cycle presents the universe as a single political reality connecting different levels. This political reality of Baal's rule integrates three levels namely, cosmic, human, and natural. The Baal Cycle concentrates on the interaction of the deities in the larger cosmos. Ritual texts and other mythological works involve deities but no other text focuses so strongly on the Ugaritic deities and the larger cosmos as the Baal Cycle (Smith 1994:xxv).

For some, Baal represents the principle by which fertility is given to the earth and to all living beings. Most of the incidents relating to Baal is the myth reference to the water that is stored in the clouds that permanently encircle the summit of Jebel el-Aqra', the Zaphon of the myths. This water is lost in the parched land, which is the domain of death (Mot), but it has to disappear if the earth is to yield its fruit. This could explain the part that the sun-goddess, Shapash, represents in heating the waters of the earth to form clouds (Caquot and Sznycer 1980:9).

The political events in the Baal Cycle reflect a concern for human society. The divine struggles represent life and death for Ugaritic society. The Baal Cycle recapitulates the story of human life itself: Before life, chaos, after life, death. This pattern too is built into the myth. Therefore, the struggles of Baal mirror the struggles of humanity against the vicissitudes of a dangerous world but his victories re-invigorate not only the world of the divine pantheon but also human society. The dangers and defeats, the victories and the glories described on the divine level serve to give a religio-political interpretation of human experience. The Baal Cycle also uses natural phenomena, especially lightning, thunder, and rains to underscore the political power of Baal the storm-god. Through Baal's struggles for power, the Baal Cycle interrelates humanity, nature, and divinity, and thereby yields an interrelated political vision of chaos, life, and death (Smith 1994:xxv).

In addition to seasonal and ritual data, the Baal Cycle has incorporated older traditions of 'cosmogony', or battles pitting a divine hero against a cosmic enemy to achieve its picture of Baal. Anat's role as warrior and Baal's ally serves to exalt him, as her conflict with Mot in KTU 1.6 ii contribute to Baal's victory over Yam and Mot (Smith 1994:102).

Albright believes that the three Ugaritic epics, Baal, Aqhat, and Keret, were put in their extant form between the 17th and the 15th centuries, BCE. The Baal Epic was composed during the transition from use of *ba'lu* as pure appellation ('lord') to its use as a proper name (Baal), in the latter part of the Middle Bronze Age. Much of the poetic form of the Baal Epic may still be earlier, going back into the early Middle Bronze Age (Albright 1968:5).

Albright (1968) stresses that the goddesses of fertility play a much greater role among the Canaanites than they do among any other ancient peoples. The two dominant figures are Astarte and Anat. Who are called, in an Egyptian text of the New Empire, 'the great goddesses who conceive but do not bear', i.e., who are always virginal but who are nonetheless fruitful (Albright 1968:233).

Despite Anat's fierceness, her hostile actions also serve to contribute to the balance of cosmic power and the establishment of Baal as king of the gods. Her extirpation of Death (Mot) allows fertility to return to the earth. Anat is an ambivalent force in Ugaritic myth (Walls 1992:1).

Ilimilku's role in the preservation of Ugaritic mythology (he was also responsible for the Keret and Aqhat tablets) can be compared with the Yahwist, or J-writers, in the Pentateuch who arranged and turned into prose the ancient oral poetic epics of the Hebrew people. Ilimilku's purpose in forming his cycle was to bring a measure of order into the corpus of Baal myths which had been handed down. This had probably been done over many generations among the singers attached to his temple. The Baal Cycle was perhaps recited during an autumn festival, celebrating the successful conclusion of the agricultural past year and looking ahead towards the new coming year in prayer and expectation for early rains with which to plough and sow for the New Year's harvests. In their eyes, as the deity who was to provide rain and wind, Baal was the god on whose providence the whole process depended. Although El was the head of the gods and seen as the creator of the world and mankind, Baal was the deity who impinged most closely on their everyday lives, whether as farmers dependent on the rain, or as fishermen and trader's dependent on the sea. The ancients believed that it was Baal who kept the unruly waters at bay; he regulated the flow of rain and forming of dew; he brought the droughts to an end and

brought the autumn rains. Stories were told about Baal as the deity upon whom their hopes were set and projected back into a primeval past which related how, once upon a time, their god had defeated his enemies among the other gods (Gibson 1978:6).

3.8 THE THREE-LEVELLED WORLD OF TEMPLE BUILDING

Baal's palace in the heavens was represented physically by his temple on earth. The establishment of the heavenly palace could be the foundational authority for the earthly temple. The heavenly palace provided Baal with authority and protection; whilst he would provide the earth with rains for crops; Baal's earthly temple was the recognition of his kingship and authority which would ensure the security of the ever-threatening forces of chaos, whose return could culminate in drought and starvation (Craigie 1983:64).

Because of the lack of understanding Anat's motive for slaughter, many scholars rely on the Myth and Ritual school for interpretation. So, Gray (1965:45), interprets it as rituals to induce the rain through sympathetic magic; as the blood flows, so will the rain. Scholars draw this through to I Kings 18, where, upon Mount Carmel, Elijah prompts the Baal prophets to pray for rain and they then lacerate themselves to stimulate rain. However, the Ugaritic texts do not provide a reason for this militant action and pronounces no result (Walls 1992:165).

Albright (1968) finds it unsurprising that Anat is an extraordinarily cruel goddess who is represented as having slaughtered mankind from 'the rising of the sun' to 'the shore of the sea'. Apparently, the slaughter delighted her, since 'her heart rejoiced, and her liver exulted' over the massacre (Albright 1968:124).

Charles Bowman (1978:260) theorises that the name, Anat, could have originally meant 'sign, an indication of purpose, active will, and was originally applied to the personified will of Baal.' Anat's name is parallel to the Canaanite and Israelite conception of the panim of Baal or Yahweh as the active presence or power of the deity (Bowman 1978:260).

Bowman goes on to explain that Anat probably did not originate in the Ugaritic cult and that her portrayed image in the Ugaritic texts is consistent with the interpretation of her name, 'She is

Baal's aid, his co-warrior who fights to maintain his status in the pantheon. Her name, though, implies even more, it represents her as the female counterpart of Baal as well as the male weather deity' (Bowman 1978:261).

There is a striking similarity to the poetic form of climactic parallelism found in the poetry of the Book of Psalms and the lines from Ugarit praising Baal, for example: 'For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered' (Psalm 92:10). Similarly, the poet of the Baal Myth had written: 'Now thine enemy, O Baal, now thine enemy wilt thou smite, now wilt thou cut off thine adversary, thou'lt take thine eternal kingdom, thine everlasting dominion' (Pritchard 1958:119).

3.9 THE MESSAGE OF PEACE TO ANAT

El's speech to Anat should not only be viewed as a cessation of hostilities, but rather the prevention of war. It should be seen as a prelude to the emergence of cosmic fertility and it may be that the ritualistic connotations of the nouns may be heightened by the sense of impending fructification. Ezekiel 34:25-26 state, 'and I will make with them a covenant of peace…and there shall be showers of blessing'. These biblical passages herald in a new era of peace, established by Yahweh, and resonates with the communiqués to Anat from El and Baal who announce an impending epoch of cosmic harmony and well-being" (Smith 1994:207).

El's speech to Anat is also resonated in Hosea 2:20-24, which includes the motif of the heavens and the earth: 'I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. It will come to pass in that day that I will answer,' says the Lord; 'I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; I will sow her for myself in the earth.'

KTU 1.1 'message of Bull El your father,
Word of the Wise One, your progenitor:
Bury war in the earth; set strife in the dust; pour a libation into the midst of the earth, honey from a jar into the midst of the steppe' (Wyatt 2003:41).

3.10 CONCLUSION

The Baal Cycle reveals the goddess Anat as a warlike, aggressive goddess whose aggression might have been carried down into the Levant as mythology or legend. The Baal Cycle is central to the study of Syro-Palestinian religious literature in the Bronze and Iron Ages (2200-587 BCE).

The Baal Cycle manifests many of the religious ideas contained in the Hebrew Bible. It may even be said that the Baal Cycle expresses the heart of the West Semitic religion from which Israelite religion developed. The original god of Israel was probably El. Two deities, Baal and Athirat, who play major roles in the Baal Cycle, were worshipped in ancient Israel, according to I Kings 18 and other biblical passages (Smith 1994:26).

In his 1994 book, 'The Ugaritic Baal Cycle', M.S. Smith compared the Baal Cycle to the New Testament book of Revelation in chapter 21:1-4: 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; because the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea was no more'. The scripture goes on to describe the descending of the holy Jerusalem onto a new earth which compares to the Baal Cycle in the defeat of Yam and Baal's enthronement in his heavenly palace.

Batto (1992) describes how both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament writers made use of what he calls the 'Combat Myth', referring to Babylonian and Canaanite mythological forms. In reference to the Old Testament book of Daniel, he traces the Combat Myth imagery in Daniel 7 where God, 'the ancient of days', is said to confer his authority upon a younger divine-like figure. The source for this portrayal seems to be drawn from the Canaanite Baal myth where El seated the vigorous young storm-god, Baal, at his side as his associate. Despite all the proscription of Canaanite religious practice from Israel, this Canaanite mythic motif, known from a 14th century BCE Ugaritic text, endured outside of official Israelite religious tradition to re-emerge as a fully operative mythic motif in Judaism of the 2nd century BCE (Batto 1992:175-176).

Similarly, the Anat myth could also have been carried forth into the exilic or post-exilic period to re-emerge in the writings of the book of Joshua. Having now dealt with Anat in the Baal Cycle, we will next meet her in the mythological story of Anat and Aqhat.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANAT AND AQHAT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The story of Anat and Aqhat is essential to our understanding of the war-goddess Anat. In this chapter, we meet a self-centred, selfish Anat who kills to obtain her desire. She covets the bow of the young boy Aqhat and, when her wish is not granted, she is prepared to murder to obtain the object of her desire regardless of the consequences. Anat, like any other deity, is the product of a human rationalizing of experience. Anat's violent nature is itself an expression of warrior culture. She is potentially dangerous in her capacity as a great warrior in her own right.

Anat's particular form of flesh-devouring savagery is a graphic image of war personified. Her character as a huntress here, especially in KTU 1.18 iv 3 and 1.19, is to be compared with the imagery of her as a war-goddess in KTU 1.3 ii 3-30. The story of Aqhat is a cautionary tale that imagines Danel as a hero known in the distant past. It is also an act of recollection or memory on the part of the Ugaritic monarchy that patronised the writing and transmission of this story (Smith 2014:136).

In contrast to her secondary position in the Baal Cycle, Anat's portrayal as a passionate and violent goddess is central to the narrative of Aqhat (Walls 1992:186). The depiction of Anat's independence, her capricious nature, and her sexual and gender identity in the epic of her and Aqhat, supplies us with a wealth of primary information regarding her mythic character (Walls 1992: 187).

4.2 A SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY OF AQHAT (FOUND IN KTU 1.17-19)

Danel has no son, so he performs devotions to obtain divine assistance. He sacrifices to the gods for six days in the temple. On the seventh day Baal intercedes for him, asking El to provide him with a son who will perform all the filial duties necessary for a father to be blessed. El blesses Danel and promises a son. The son is probably born in the missing section of the tablet, between

the columns. The news is brought to Danel, who rejoices and holds a feast in his palace for the goddesses of childbirth. Kothar arrives and brings a composite bow as a gift. He is 'feasted' - a folk-tale idiom for worship with sacrifices, but uses the figure of face to face, person to person, communication between deity and devotee. The bow is given to Aqhat (Watson & Wyatt 1999:235-236).

Whilst a feast is taking place, Anat asks Aqhat for his bow. He tells her to take the raw materials to Kothar, who will make her one. She persists, offering Aqhat immortality. He tells her to stop lying and says that, in any case, a bow is a man's weapon. She goes off to El in a rage, accusing Aqhat of impiety (Watson and Wyatt 1999:235).

KTU 1.18: Anat threatens El if she does not get her way; he gives her a free hand. She comes to Aqhat, inviting him to go hunting with her. Following a successful hunt, Anat summons Yatipan, and tells him to assume the form of a falcon and pounce on Aqhat, killing him. He does so.

KTU 1.19: The bow falls into the river and is smashed. Anat immediately laments what she has done. Danel sits to dispense justice; Puqhat, the sister of Aqhat, sees the withering plants and tears Danel's cloak, as a sign of revenge,

Danel curses the falcons. As each fall from the sky, he examines its stomach. Empty falcons are healed. Finally, he finds his son in Sumul's stomach, and buries him. He then goes around the country cursing all villages in the neighbourhood of the murder. Aqhat is mourned for seven years. Puqhat puts on armour, with a woman's gown over it, and sets off to find Yatipan. He thinks she is Anat, demands wine, and boasts of his exploit while she plies him with it (Wyatt 2003:248-249).

4.2.1 Danel's social status

The question is whether Danel is a king? Danel sits at the threshing-floor and the city gate to dispense justice, comparable to 1 Kings 22:10 and 2 Chronicles 18:9 as parallels. Danel is only once called a king. One could rather see in Danel a patriarch of the Joban or Abrahamic kind. In KTU 1.17 v 5 we read:

‘Danel the man of healing, sat by the entrance to the gate, beneath the trees which were by the threshing-floor. He tried the case of the widow; he judged the cause of the orphan. In lifting his eyes, he looked over a thousand miles, ten thousand leagues, the coming of Kothar he did espy and saw the approach of Hasis’ (Wyatt 2003:267-268).

Danel is first called ‘man of Rp’u’, a title that is prominent in the first and third tablets of the story. He is also called by the parallel name of ‘hero’. The title given to Danel is associated with a place in Syria known from Egyptian sources. Smith (2014) mentions that while this name is unclear, it does place the family at some distance from the centre of Ugarit and its royal power (Smith 2013:102).

4.2.2 Danel’s reasons for desiring a son

Perhaps Baal is Danel’s personal god, or in biblical terms, ‘the god of the father’ (Exodus 15:2). Baal’s request for blessings from El voices his concern for Danel to have a child. So, Baal asks El to bless Danel with a son whose duties Baal spells out to El:

1) to establish in the sanctuary a symbol (evidently a standing stone or stele) in honour of the memory of the family ancestor, ‘the divine father’ (lines 26-272) undertake the proper rituals on behalf of the deceased ancestor (lines 27-28);
2) to protect the family from trouble (lines 28-29);
3) to take care of the living patriarch when he is drunk (lines 30-31);
4) to eat the sacrificial portion in the temples of Baal and El (lines 31-32); and
5) to maintain the roof of the house during the rainy season and to wash clothing or gear when it gets dirty (lines 32-33).

The list is important for the story as it conjures up the world of the family household, its physical needs, and its piety. The son (Aqhat) is to help the patriarch with the performance of ritual duties, namely the erection of the stele and the maintenance of ritual meals on behalf of the family in the temples of two main gods, Baal and El. The son is also to aid the patriarch in his

traditional duties to guard the family household from external threats in the larger social realm (Smith 2014:103).

There are biblical parallels to the care of a drunken father, such as the depiction of drunken Jerusalem who has no sons to take her hand in Isaiah 51:17-18: 'Jerusalem, wake up! Rouse yourself and get up! You have drunk the cup of punishment that the Lord in his anger gave you to drink; you drank it down, and it made you stagger. There is no one to lead you, no one among your people to take you by the hand.' There is also the biblical example of Noah and his sons (Genesis. 9:20-27). The god, El, similarly has sons who help him in his drunken condition in KTU 1.11 4 (Smith 2014:103).

Van der Toorn suggests: 'The tasks listed are those a son is expected to fulfil when his father has grown old and the effective leadership has been passed on to him… the acts of filial piety… suppose a situation in which the father has become too weak to take care of himself' (1996:154).

El blesses Danel and his blessing includes the wish that Danel may live (KTU 1.17 I 36-37): 'El blessed Danel, the man of healing, he gave a blessing to the hero, the devotee of *Hrnm:* "By my life! Danel, the man of healing, shall live! By my vitality the hero, the devotee of *Hrnm!*"' (Wyatt 2003:261). The blessing seems to imply that Danel is not only a living person, but that without a son, socially, he is truly not a living human being. The fulfilment of the duties, mentioned above, on the part of the son makes the father continue his life as a social being, even after he has died (Smith 2014:105).

4.2.3 Kothar-wa-Hasis

Kothar-wa-Hasis is an Ugaritic god whose name means 'Skilful-and-Wise'. He is a smith, craftsman, engineer, architect, and inventor. He is also a soothsayer and magician, creating sacred words and spells (Smith 1994:20).

Albright (1940) agrees that he was one of the most interesting Canaanite gods who was virtually unknown until the decipherment of the Ugaritic tablets. Kothar was the Canaanite Hephaestus or Vulcan, the wise artisan and the inventor of tools and weapons, as well as of the arts. Kothar,

in particular, was the discoverer and the patron of music. In Philo Chusor (Phoenician Kothar), he appears as the originator of poetry, magic and incantations, as well as the inventor of all fishery appliances and the first to employ boats; he was also the archetype ironsmith. In the Ugaritic myths Kothar appears whenever the arts and crafts are required; he is described as the artificer of the gods, their goldsmith, the 'Master of Handicrafts', the 'Skilled Workman', the 'fisherman of Asherah'. He makes the first composite bow. Women singers are called after him, just as in the Bible, where they appear as *kosbaroth* in Psalms 68:11 (Albright 1968:81-82).

Kothar, with his complex and specialized characteristics, caught the imagination of men more than many other deities have. He was considered the father of Adonis, known from pagan Aramaean mythology, where Kothar is father of Tammuz, and from Cypriote sources, in which the god of the lyre, Cinyras, plays the same role. Cinyras, was regarded by the Greeks as having been the archetype musician, a magician, metalworker, and inventor of the art of fishing. The Canaanites identified Kothar with the Egyptian god Ptah, the artificer god of Memphis, and this resulted in a temple of Ptah being built at Ascalon. The Ugaritic texts mention that Kothar's favourite residence was in Egypt. (Albright 1940:82).

4.2.4 Five different treatments of the Aqhat narrative

The five different treatments of the Aqhat narrative are as follows:

(i) The birth of Aqhat deals with the familiar childless hero who appeals to the god for help; the god responds, and the child is born. The Egyptian tale of *the Doomed Prince* and the Hurrian *Appu*story, the biblical story of Hannah and Samuel in I Samuel, and the Ugaritic Keret story are cited as comparable examples.

(ii) A bow is made for Aqhat. The account of Kothar's visit has analogues in Genesis 18:1-16 with the promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah, and 19:1-16 with the two angels' visit to Lot in the city of Sodom, pleading with him to leave the city before imminent destruction. Also, 2 Kings 4:8-17 with the promise of Elisha to the Shunammite woman that she would bear a son; and also in 1 Kings 17:9-16 describing the sending of Elijah, the prophet, to the city of Zarephath to a widow there, and the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil that multiplied.

(iii) The death of Aqhat describes Anat's coveting of the bow, her overtures to the hero, and confrontation with El when rebuffed and this gives her a free hand in accomplishing Aqhat's death with Yatipan's help. There is also a comparison with the hero Ishtar in *Gilgamesh,* both episodes deriving from an older *Vorlage*. There is also Anat's dealing with El in KTU 1.3 [014] +

(iv) The consequences of Aqhat's death. Awareness of Aqhat's death only dawns slowly. Danel's curses are directed towards the birds which have devoured his son.

(v) Puqhat's mission of vengeance (Watson & Wyatt 1999:244).

Here follows a short excerpt from KTU 1-17:

> Let Danel, the man of healing, at once the hero, enrobed, feed the gods, give the holy ones to drink, let him take off his robe and lie down, Lo, a day… a third, a fourth day … a fifth, a sixth, day, enrobed the gods he fed, he gave the holy ones to drink. Danel took off his robe, went up and lay down, he took off his clothes and went to bed. Behold, on the seventh day Baal drew near in intercession for him.

So, Baal draws near not to Danel, but to El, before whom he intercedes for Danel. Wyatt feels that this is not theophany – so the understanding is that this scene takes place in El's home. There might have been an earlier tablet explaining the events preceding Danel's present childless condition. So, in line KTU 1.17 I 20, Baal continues to intercede for Danel to El:

> Because, having no son like his brothers, nor scion like his kinsmen. You must surely bless him, Bull El my father, you must surely give a blessing to him, O Creator of creatures, so that he may beget a son in his house. He shall set up a stela for his ancestral god, he shall shut the mouths of his slanderers, he shall drive away those who are ill-disposed towards him. Taking his hand when he is drunk, supporting him when sated with wine; he shall serve up his share in the house of Baal, and his portion in the house of El; he shall plaster his roof on a muddy day, he shall wash his clothes on a filthy day (Wyatt 2003:257-259).

KTU 1.17 i 35: 'El blessed Danel … Let him go up to his bed and lie down, from kissing his wife let there come conception, from his embracing her, pregnancy! Let her give birth'.

The son is born, and the news is brought to Danel who rejoices and holds a feast in his palace for the goddesses of childbirth. In KTU 1.17 vi 10, Anat in lifted up her eyes she saw the bow she coveted. Beautiful was the form of its string. Like lightning its arrows. In KTU 1.17 v 20 we read: 'The coming of Kothar he did espy and saw the approach of Hasis. Look! He was bringing a bow!

Look! He had produced many arrows!' we are reminded of the Scripture which compares the birth of children to arrows: 'Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them' (Psalm 127:3-5).

4.2.5 Aqhat's encounter with Anat

Anat gives instruction to Aqhat 'Come, my brother, and …. you will go
on a hunt …. I will instruct you'. This suggests that the goddess Anat represents herself as his instructor in hunting, thus being both role model and mentor. She can bond with Aqhat in the hunt and address him in the intimate term of 'my brother'. So, she is represented as active in his development as a hunter (Smith 2014:175).

Watson & Wyatt (1999) are of the view that Niqmaddu II of the colopha is Niqmaddu I. It is proposed that this legitimizes a new king, whose reign may have begun in inauspicious circumstances, in which Aqhat's place was almost circumstantial, since the weighty arguments were already spelt out in the Baal myths and in Keret. If Danel is indeed a king, it highlights the magnificence of the bow, fit for a god, and as its function as a royal weapon which then attaches a peculiar importance to Aqhat, the hapless recipient of this wonder. (Smith 2014:175).

Nicolas Wyatt's view is that Anat's behavior in the Aqhat story is quite predictable (Watson & Wyatt 1999:254). Anat is seen as the embodiment of the dysfunctional aspects of the world, represented by all forms of killing (hunting and war), and is therefore regarded as a terrible power to encounter (Watson & Wyatt 1999:254).

4.2.6 The Bow

The bow becomes a symbol of power because Anat is prepared to murder for it. Some scholars argued that it was, in effect, a phallic symbol relating to, or resembling, a phallus or erect penis. As 'a phallic symbol', it's theft by Anat would constitute an act of emasculation. In Deuteronomy, we find the 'Song of Moses' and Deuteronomy 32:42 states that: 'I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh'. Psalm 64:3 reads: 'who whet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows.'

When Anat functions in the Aqhat texts, her violence is directed towards her own goal, to obtain Aqhat's bow. Here, she appears quite unlike the usual image of her as Baal's companion.

Anat and Aqhat are also written about in CTCA 17:6:16-54 (UT 2 Aqhat: 6:16-54):
'She lifts up her voice and she shout: "Hear, O Aqhat the youth. Ask for silver and I shall give it to you, for gold and I shall send it to you, but give your bow to Anat, let me take your arrows". And Aqhat the youth answers: "I vow cedars of Lebanon, I vow tendons of wild oxen, I vow horns of the ibex, sinew of the hocks of a bull, I vow stock of fine cane. Give these to Kothar-wa-Hasis. He will construct a bow for Anat, arrows for you."'

Anat answers: 'Ask for life, and I shall give it to you, for deathlessness and I shall bestow it on you, I shall make you count with Baal's years, with the son of 'Ilu you will count moons. For Baal, when he is brought to life, he is feasted, the one brought to life is feasted and they give him to drink'. The minstrel plays and sings over him.

Aqhat answers: 'Do not lie to me, O Anat, for to a youth your lying is nonsense. What lot does man get, what end does man receive? Plaster will be poured on my head, greyness on the top of my skull. And the death of all will I die, yes, I shall surely die. Also, a further word I would speak, Bows are for warriors – now shall a female go hunting?' (van der Toorn 1996:38).

Anat shouts in a loud voice while in her heart she devises a plot: 'Turn to me, O Aqhat the youth, turn to me and walk. Indeed, I will meet you on the path of revolt, on the path of presumption, I will encounter you. I shall cast you under my feet, you are most charming and strongest of men.' She stamps her foot and the earth shakes. Then she sets her face towards 'Ilu, at the source of the two rivers, amidst the headwaters of the two deeps.

She reaches the dwelling of 'Ilu and she enters the residence of the king, Father of Years. At the feet of 'Ilu she bows and falls, she bows down and honours him (Bowman 1978:107-109). Vowing revenge for Aqhat's refusal to give her his bow, Anat storms off and threatens El with

violence to secure his support for her retaliation with Aqhat, and possibly offers to teach him how to hunt (KTU 1.18 i:24, 29) (Van der Toorn 1996:38).

'But the Wise One, the perceptive god, replied: "I know you, daughter, that you are pitiless, and that among goddesses there is no contempt like yours! Depart, daughter! Ruthless is your heart: seize what is in your mind, take what is in your heart! Let him be trampled who hinders you!"'

Anat does not think before she acts. She is the very personification of human rage. Hers reflects a very modern personality. She is determined to do what is in her interests, regardless of the consequences (not unlike Aqhat). El merely concedes her autonomy. This does not mean that it is a bankrupt theology but it is a realistic theology constructed on human experience. We should remember that theology is a human construction: Anat, like any other deity, is the product of a human rationalizing of experience. Aqhat has sown the wind. Now he will reap the whirlwind. El grants Anat complete freedom of action (Wyatt 2003:279).

KTU 1.18 I 20 states: 'Virgin Anat departed, then indeed she set her face towards Aqhat the hero, over a thousand miles, ten thousand leagues, and Virgin Anat laughed. She lifted up her voice and cried: "Listen, pray, O hero Aqhat! Come, brother, and I shall satisfy your desire!"'

This brother, sister reference is commonly explained as a formal proposal of marriage, an opening gambit in a seduction scene. Brother and sister were common expressions for lovers in the ancient Near East. Some interpreters also understand Anat's speech of: 'you are my brother, and I am your sister!' as a formal proposal of marriage. Some suggest that she left her father's house to wed Aqhat. If Anat does in fact make a proposal of marriage to the youthful Aqhat then she is attempting to seduce the crown prince.

Anat continues to invite Aqhat: 'I shall teach you how to hunt' (KTU 1.18) Anat's address to Aqhat as 'brother' now becomes a conspiracy; she disarms him by pretending that all is well between them, as though they were jolly hunters together. She takes Aqhat to the town of Abilim – it is proposed by Anat as the *rendezvous* where Aqhat will await her. She is setting him up, for she

will shortly (KTU 1.18 iv 7 – 8) instruct Yatipan to murder him there. Later, Danel will curse the town for its unwitting complicity in his son's death (KTU 1.19 iv 1-7) (Wyatt 2003:280-281).

Walls (1992) also reacts to Anat's address to Aqhat as 'brother' and suggests that Anat lures Aqhat to a distant region with a promise to teach him some skill. A comparison is drawn to Ishtar in the Gilgamesh epic, where she propositions him with erotic pleasure in the guise of marriage and so Anat may entice Aqhat with hints of her own erotic capacity. If Anat promises marriage to lure Aqhat away from safety, this is merely an example of the exploitation of her nubile sexuality (Walls 1992:193).

As Athena has no compunction about parading nude before Paris in a divine beauty contest, so Anat might not be above using her own nubile charm to get what she wants. Such a proposition does not necessitate that Anat is prepared to engage in sex; her devious proposal would not conflict with her virginal character (Walls 1992:193).

Anat's deceptive seduction of Aqhat, while possible, remains speculative. Her statement: 'You are my brother, and I am your sister', might only be an affirmation of their common interests. She lures Aqhat into the countryside where she may have him killed without witnesses. She does not kill him herself but gets her henchman, Yatipan, to carry out this task (Walls 1992:194).

When it becomes clear that Anat intends to murder Aqhat to obtain his bow and arrows, the method she is described as employing to achieve her purpose clearly befits a huntress: she uses her accomplice Yatipan like an eagle, a bird of prey used by hunters in the ancient Near East, to attack and kill Aqhat (Van der Toorn 1996:38).

Certain gender observations are made, such as Anat's 'innate and blatant masculinity' and Puqhat's 'assumed and concealed masculinity' (Watson & Wyatt 1999:245).

There is also the view that 'Ilimilku deliberately wove a seasonal pattern into the Legend of Aqhat out of his conviction that life on earth revolves around a circular pattern that had been laid down in the pristine age of myth (De Moor 1971:61).

On the literal level of the narrative, the object of Anat's desire is the divine bow created by the craftsman Kothar-wa-Hasis. Walls (1992:189) is also of the opinion that there is sexual tension beneath the narrative and that it is equally significant to the analysis of this mythological scene. The warrior's bow symbolizes masculinity and warrior prowess in the ancient Near East and, as such, carries connotations of virility and sexuality. She might want the bow as a symbol of her own masculine attributes as divine huntress. Hence, her desire represents her ambiguous gender and, in Freudian terms, a case of symbolic penis envy (Walls 1992:190).

The scene may also be interpreted as the attempted seduction of Aqhat, who must surrender to Anat's desires and entrust his 'bow' to the aggressive female. Symbolically, Anat desires Aqhat's bow. Otherwise, she could have had another bow made for her. Perhaps, Anat's jealousy prompts her to deprive Aqhat of this masculine symbol and, thus, symbolically castrate him. In the destruction of Aqhat's bow, he is deprived of his phallic symbol and Anat is denied access to it. So, the bow – a symbol of masculine gender and sexuality – is an unobtainable goal for goddess Anat. While the phallic bow is clearly a gender symbol, the sexual connotation of Anat's desire in this scene remains subliminal (Walls 1992:190).

4.2.7 Anat's visit to El, the head of the pantheon

Anat heads to the palace of El. She offers obeisance to El prior to making her petition. 'At the feet of El she fell and did homage, she prostrated herself and did him honor. She denounced the hero Aqhat…The child of Danel' (here, about ten lines are lost).

Anat threatens El that she might seize him with her right hand and cause his grey hair to run with blood. 'Then call upon Aqhat and let him deliver you, the son of Danel and let him rescue you from the hand of Maiden Anat!'

And the kindly one, El the compassionate, replied: 'I know, my daughter, that you are incorrigible, and that among the goddesses there is no restraining you. Depart, my daughter, haughty is your heart. Take what is in your mind, carry out what is in your breast. He who hinders you will be utterly destroyed.' After this, Anat departed (Walls 1992:191-192).

Anat's ability to disarm Aqhat reflects the male's disempowerment and loss of masculine virility. Associations between eroticism and death and between sex and violence are old and reflect the essential nature of human self-consciousness. The similarity between the metaphorical language of seduction and battle, suggests the equality of the male submitting himself to the aggressive goddess and his surrender of his bow. Both events result in the loss of his masculinity. So, in the case of Aqhat, the male engaged in the masculine role of predator becomes the female's prey. Anat drains Aqhat of his life as she drains away his blood. Anat transforms Aqhat from a warrior into a non-warrior, from a virile male to a dead, asexual creature (Walls 1992:202-203).

After commissioning Yatipan to kill Aqhat, the maiden Anat answered: 'Pay attention, Yatipan, and I will speak to you. I will place you like a vulture in my girdle, like a bird (of prey) in my sheath. Aqhat, as he sits down to eat, the son of Danel to dine, above him vultures will soar, a flock of birds will circle. Among the vultures I will roar; above Aqhat I will release you. Strike him twice upon the head, then three times over the ear. Make his blood run like a slaughterer, like a butcher, run to his knees. Make his life go out like wind, his breath like spittle, like smoke from his nostrils, from his nostrils his strength' (Walls 1992:195).

4.2.8 Parallels with Biblical texts

We find a parallel to the biblical patriarchal narrative here, to wit, the divine promise of progeny. Difficulty in securing the right bride is overcome by Isaac and Jacob. Annunciations start with Hagar before Ishmael's birth. Divine blessings with promise of progeny typify the narratives of all three Patriarchs. Abraham (quite like Danel) receives direct instructions from God as to the proper rituals, which are combined with incubation (Genesis 15:1-12) (Gordon & Rendsburg 1997:317).

4.2.9 Comparison to the Gilgamesh Epic

There is a similarity between Anat's encounter with Aqhat and the attempted seduction of Gilgamesh by Ishtar in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and her desire for the patriarchal god to punish the insolent male. Anat's desire for the hunter's bow and Ishtar's more carnal attraction to

Gilgamesh, differentiates the two scenes. Anat offers Aqhat the very thing that for which Gilgamesh is seeking, namely immortality. Ishtar is introduced in the story of Gilgamesh after the hero's return from his successful battle with Humbaba. Gilgamesh is bathing when he catches the attention of Ishtar: (Walls 1992:197).

'Princess Ishtar gazed with desire upon the beauty of Gilgamesh. "Come to me, Gilgamesh, for you are a lover! Give me freely of your love! You will be the husband and I will be your wife!"' (Nineveh VI 6-9) (Walls 1992:197).

Ishtar follows her initial proposal with a long list of valuable gifts and honours to bestow upon her prospective groom, but Gilgamesh responds by reminding Ishtar of her malicious treatment of past lovers and asks: 'Which one did you love forever?' (VI 42). Gilgamesh spurns Ishtar's seductive proposition and she flies to the palace of her father, Anu. 'She went weeping to her father, Anu; "Father, Gilgamesh has insulted me incessantly"' (Walls 1992:198).

So, we find great similarity between the story of Ishtar and Gilgamesh and that of Anat and Aqhat. Each goddess behaves like a spoiled child in running to her father and demanding satisfaction against the tactless male.

Aqhat's vehement rejection of Anat's offer is based upon her treachery. After the initial encounter between Anat and Aqhat, she approaches the crown prince again with an offer of friendship (Walls 1992:201).

Lucy Davey gives reasons that the *bt It* may indicate that Anat is a daughter of a goddess, a descendent of the goddess of great tradition (Brooke et al 1994). Aqhat's answer indicates that he has a grasp of reality: that death comes to all humans, followed by burial. Anat experiences this rejection as Aqhat regarding her as powerless to bestow the immortality that she promises. From extra-biblical sources, Anat continued to be revered in the ancient Near East and beyond. Although the writers of the biblical texts omitted the name of Anat, there is evidence that composers of the texts were familiar with elements of the Anat traditions (Davey et al 1994:30-

31). Seemingly Anat, as fierce war-goddess, did have an influence on the writers of the Old Testament.

4.3 ANAT AND PUQHAT

Aqhat's murder is discovered, and his corpse is recovered from the vulture's stomach with the aid of Baal. Danel provides burial rites for the slain youth and Danel and his daughter Puqhat mourns Aqhat for seven years. A drought devastates the land, and it is seen as a response to the injustice done to Aqhat. Puqhat wishes to avenge the death of her brother. 'Puqhat wept in her heart, she cried in her liver'. This is Puqhat's instinctive emotional reaction to what she sees. Nothing shows outwardly. The poet is trying to analyse her reaction (KTU 1.19-35) (Wyatt 2003:294).

'Puqhat tore the garment of Danel the man of healing, the cloak of the hero' and then 'Danel the man of healing cursed the clouds, which rain on the dreadful heat, the clouds which rain on the summer-fruit, the dew which settles on the grapes: "For seven years Baal shall fail, for eight, the Charioteer of the clouds! No dew, no rain, no welling up of the deeps, no goodness of Baal's voice! For she has torn the garment of Danel the man of healing, the cloak of the hero, the devotee of *H[rnm]!*"' (KTU 1.19 I 45). Wyatt (2003) sees the whole of Danel's speech to be in the form of a curse, in reaction to Puqhat's tearing of his garment. The powerful symbolism of her gesture should be realized. It compares to the regular submission of a lock of hair and a piece of the hem of a garment of a 'respondent' (prophet) at Mari. Puqhat has thus committed a sacrilegious act (Wyatt 2003:297).

In KTU 1.19 ii 36, we read that the news of Aqhat's slaying by Anat is brought to Danel: 'We bring you news, Danel, from beneath Anat he fell; she felled him. She drove out his life-breath like the wind. Like spittle his vitality! They arrived; they lifted up their voices and cried; Listen, O Danel, man of healing: Aqhat the hero is dead! Virgin Anat drove out his life-breath like the wind' (Wyatt 2003:302).

Danel then catches sight of some falcons and looks for Aqhat without success until he eventually finds one and: 'He tore open her stomach and he looked: there was some fat, there were some

bones' (KTU 1.19 iii 40). 'Then he took out the flesh of Aqhat, the remains he took away. He wept, and he buried him, he buried him in a tomb in a cemetery and he lifted up his voice and cried.' Danel arrives home to his palace and then the wailing women arrive who mourn for Aqhat: 'those who lacerate the flesh wept for Aqhat the hero'. Men, as well as women, act as 'professional' mourners. The prohibition on self-laceration in Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1, and Jeremiah 16:6 is an indication that it was traditional practice in Israel-Judah. The ritual actions of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:28 and of El and Anat at KTU 1.5 vi 17-22 and 1.6 I 2-5 is another indication thereof (Wyatt 2003:308).

After seven years, Danel asks the mourners to leave his house and to cease their mourning. His daughter, Puqhat, then comes to him and asks if she may: 'smite my brother's smitter, that I may kill my sibling's killer!' (KTU 1.19 iv 30). Danel allows it and wishes her well and says: 'you will kill your sibling's killer!' Thereafter, Puqhat went down to the sea and washed herself and rouged herself with shellfish from the sea. She put a dagger in her sheath; a sword in her scabbard and dressed herself in woman's clothes. Puqhat comes to some tents and encounters Yatipan, who mistakes her for Anat and asks her to fill his cup with wine. Puqhat fills the cup of Yatipan who says: 'With wine, O Lady, I am strong! I am the god…. the god who owns these tents. The hand which smote Aqhat the hero will smite thousands of the Lady's enemies working spells on their tents!' Puqhat again fills his cup with wine and at this point the tablet breaks off (KTU 1.20-1.22). So, this is the end of the story of Anat and Aqhat (Wyatt 2003:310-312).

Yatipan and his crew see a girl approaching and take her to be Anat, but now consider her to be their employee, and thus call her 'girl', her main task now is like that of a barmaid to fill their glasses. So, now, with male swagger they treat her insolently (Wyatt 2003:311).

Contrary to early attempts to interpret this epic text as a myth of the dying and rising god who personifies agriculture and the devasting drought that ensues after Aqhat's death, it is in response to the injustice against Aqhat. Puqhat takes it upon herself to avenge the death of her brother. It is thought that Puqhat kills the drunken Yatipan with her concealed knife. Yatipan's role is essential to the plot of Aqhat (Walls 1992:206).

It is thought that the Epic of Aqhat is primarily concerned with issues of procreation, social stability, and death rather than the resurrection of Aqhat. So, Danel's uncertain procreative ability forms the central conflict of the first section of Aqhat. Anat promises Aqhat immortality in exchange for the phallic bow but is instead killed by her for not surrendering the symbol of masculine identity. The maiden Anat, at the threshold of feminine sexuality, has not yet become an adult. Although she is female, she still retains her childish lack of gender distinction in her social and psychological identities. She thus mediates the bipolar opposites of life and death, male and female, and social continuity and social disintegration (Walls 1992:209-210).

4.4 CONCLUSION

Anat is seen as the embodiment of the dysfunctional aspect of the world, represented by all forms of killing (hunting and war), and is therefore regarded as a terrible power to encounter (Watson & Wyatt 1999:254)

With the story of Aqhat, we focus on the inexplicable act of Anat's violence against the hero, Aqhat. Anat is a great warrior in her own right and the conflict with Aqhat captures the deadly threat that warrior life entails. The story of Aqhat is a cautionary tale that imagines Danel as a hero known in the distant past (Smith 2014:136). After meeting Anat in this story of her and Aqhat, we now know more of her and her character.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANCIENT ISRAEL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In searching for the goddess Anat I researched the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age in the Levant and especially the origin of Ancient Israel in the beginning of the Iron Age where I researched whether she was present in ancient Israel.

The only written record of the origin of Israel is found in the Hebrew Bible. It is therefore necessary to find other means to enlighten their origin and, for this, we turn to archaeology as well as other extra biblical artefacts such as the Merneptah Stele.

The home of the Hebrews was on the western end of the Fertile Crescent, in a land called Palestine. It is the region along the south eastern corner of the Mediterranean, a narrow strip between desert and sea. According to James Breasted (1944), the Hebrew people were all originally people of the Arabian Desert, wandering with their flocks and herds and slowly drifting over into their final home in Palestine. For two centuries (about 1400 to 1200 BCE), their movement from the desert into Palestine continued (Breasted 1944:220).

On entering Palestine, the Hebrews found the Canaanites there, already dwelling in flourishing towns protected by massive walls. The Hebrews had no siege machinery for attacking city walls. In 1200 BCE, the Canaanites was a 1500-year-old civilization with comfortable houses, government, industries, trade, writing, and religion. The mingling of the Hebrews with the Canaanites produced profound changes in the life of the Hebrews (Breasted 1944:220).

Ancient Canaan produced one of the most famous works of literature in the world namely the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible is not one book but an anthology of books. The books circulated independently on leather or papyrus scrolls. When the codex was invented, the individual sheets were bound together and eventually evolved into the Bible. The ancient authors who composed

the scrolls had no idea that they were contributing to the Hebrew Bible. The books were gathered according to their importance to those who put it together. Some of the literature gathered into the Hebrew Bible was not religious, for example, the Song of Songs is an ancient collection of secular love poetry. Some books do not always agree, for instance, Leviticus and Deuteronomy contradict one another in some instances (Noll 2013:19-20).

Philip Davies (1992) construes ancient Israel as a 'scholarly construct'. He argues that Israel lies between literature and history and is unlike the biblical Israel which is brought to life in the biblical text and that the literary construct does not necessarily have a historical existence. Where did the biblical literature come from that produced the history of a biblical Israel? Did such a social and political reality, as that which the biblical concepts reflect, ever really exist? In the reconstruction of ancient Israel, biblical Israel is a diverse, confusing, and even contradictory notion. Davies (1992) concludes that unless the historical counterpart of biblical Israel is investigated independently of biblical literature, there is no way to judge the distance between these two 'Israels', or to claim that the biblical Israel has any specific relationship to history (Davies 1992:16-60).

Mendenhall (1973) poses the question, who were the biblical Israelites? He denotes that the term *Yisrael* does not occur in the early parts of the Hebrew Bible. It is, therefore, a 'confusion in terminology' to refer to the 'Israelites' as an ethnic group during the biblical period (Mendenhall 1973:224). Some scholars place the emergence of an Israelite national identity in the early 9th century BCE – or even later. The settlement of the Israelites in the 12th and 11th centuries BCE, and their transformation from a society of isolated tribes into an organized kingdom, is one of the most exciting, inspiring, and at the same time controversial chapters in the history of the Land of Israel (Finkelstein 1988:15). This conundrum has been debated intermittently by scholars from different viewpoints of the biblical narrative, historical geography, and archaeology. Finds from major excavations during the 1920s and 1930s were interpreted in relation to the biblical description of the conquest of Canaan. Since that time, the reconstruction of the process of settlement has been 'rife with speculation and imagination' (Finkelstein 1988:20).

So, the question remains, 'what was "early Israel", as a people?' What, if anything, was unique, or even different, about early Israel? The population group of Early Iron Age I villages are archaeologically identified and signify a new ethnic group. To qualify as an 'ethnic' group, these people should be 'biologically self-perpetuating' and share a 'fundamental, recognizable, relatively uniform set of cultural values, including language'; constitute 'a partly independent interaction sphere', have 'a membership that defines itself, as well as being defined by others, as a category distinct from other categories of the same order'; and perpetuate 'its sense of a separate identity both by developing rules for maintaining 'ethnic boundaries' as well as for participating in inter-ethnic social encounters (Dever 1990:23).

Could these people be labelled as 'Israelites'? Dever states that the claim in biblical texts, that the appearance of early Israel in history was unequalled – validated by its Yahwistic faith – is an ideological 'mask'. Israel, like any other group of people, evolved mainly out of local conditions. Most Israelites had local Canaanite ancestors (Dever 1990:23 & 31).

We learn of Israel from the Hebrew Bible, that it was God's chosen nation, that it originated with a man called Abraham, that he was called and told to go to a land, hitherto unknown to him, the land of Canaan as appears in Genesis 12:5-7: 'Abram took his wife Sarai, nephew Lot, and all the wealth and slaves they acquired in Haran and went to Canaan. Abram came to a tree of Moreh, at Shechem. "This is the country that I am going to give to your descendants", God said. This land is then promised to him as an eternal inheritance by God to him and his progeny. Genesis 15:17 describes the extent of the land as stretching 'from the border of Egypt to the River Euphrates'.

The biblical account of the origin of Israel as a nation is disputed by most biblical scholars today. Some, like Thomas L. Thompson, dispute it to such an extent that he calls the whole idea of Israel a 'myth'. Others, like Amihai Mazar, Israel Finkelstein, and William Dever, more specifically, dispute the Patriarchal narrative, the Exodus, the desert wandering, and the Conquest narratives. (Dever 2003:2).

The question is then asked: ‘Who were the early Israelites and where did they come from?’ To answer this question, William Dever wrote a book in 2003 with precisely this title. His book was met with great scepticism but ‘the public is becoming aware that the long-cherished notions about the “Bible as history” are being questioned, undermined, and often rejected’ (Dever 2003:2).

5.2 THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND CANAAN

The Levant was the land bridge between three great centres of ancient civilization. To the northeast lay Mesopotamia, to the north, Anatolia, and to the southwest, Egypt.

The word Mesopotamia derives from the Greek language and means ‘between two rivers. These rivers were the Euphrates and the Tigris. They provided water and rich soil that sustained peoples called Assyrians (in the north) and Babylonians (in the south). (Noll 2013:10).

Anatolia, to the north of Canaan, was home to a culture called Hatti. The people were called Hittites. Just south of Anatolia, the northern portion of Canaan was called Syria. Significant cities in Syria were Ugarit and Byblos on the coast and Hamath on the Orontes River. The southern half of Canaan was Palestine, in which the city of Jerusalem was located (Noll 2013:10).

Canaan and Israel lay on a geographic arc that stretched from Egypt in the south, across the Levant, through Syria, and up into Mesopotamia. This was referred to as the Fertile Crescent. Everything on the outside of this arc was desert wasteland. If an army would have to march from Mesopotamia to Egypt, it would have to march through this arc, with its rivers and fertile lands. The army could not march directly west across the desert because the soldiers would have died on route. So, this made the Levant, and Canaan, the focus of many wars in ancient times.(Noll 2013:10).

A massive geological fault running north to south, called the Great Rift, divides Palestine into four zones which are discussed below.

5.2.1 The Coastal Plain

The Coastal Plain is situated along the Mediterranean Sea: This was the most densely populated portion of Palestine throughout ancient times, and it was divided into two regions by Mount Carmel, which was part of the land mass jutting into the Mediterranean Sea. Phoenicia lay north of Mount Carmel and Philistia to the south. The coastal plain was home to cities like Sidon, Tyre, Dor, Joppa, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza, many of which were vital to international trade in ancient times (Noll 2013:12).

5.2.2 The Cisjordan Highlands

The Cisjordan Highlands was the geological backbone of Palestine. It was never as densely populated as the lowlands, but the Jezreel Valley at least formed a lowland passageway through the middle of the Cisjordan Highlands. To the north were two large cities called Dan (previously called Laish), and Hazor, near Lake Huleh. The Jezreel Valley was a wide, fertile passageway running from the foot of Mount Carmel in the west to south of the Sea of Galilee in the east. The city of Megiddo overlooked the western portions of this valley and Beth-shean marked the eastern side, where the Jezreel Valley met the Jordan River Valley (Noll 2013:13).

The Cisjordan Highlands south of the Jezreel Valley and north of Jerusalem are the hills that the Bible calls either Jacob or Israel; or Joseph; or Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin. Much of the Bible's narrative takes place in or near this highland region. The city of Samaria in the region became the capital of the ancient kingdom called Israel. Other significant cities were Tirzah, Shechem, and Bethel (Noll 2013:13).

The Cisjordan Highlands from Jerusalem to the south, past Bethlehem, to Hebron are called Judah in the Bible. These highlands were bounded on three sides by border regions. To the west of the Judean highlands is a sloping region of foothills leading down toward the Coastal Plain. These foothills were called the Shephelah and they were home to significant cities such as: Gezer, Ekron, Gath, and Lachish. To the south of Hebron lay the Negev desert, with small cities such as: Beer-sheba, Masos, and Arad. To the east of the Judean highlands, dropping sharply towards the Dead Sea, lay the Judean desert (Noll 2013:13).

5.2.3 The Jordan River Valley

The Jordan River originates at Mount Hermon, 9 000 feet above sea-level, west of the city of Damascus, and its waters flow south into the ancient Huleh Lake, from there, it continues down into the large freshwater Lake of Galilee to the south. From the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan runs south into the Dead Sea (the lowest place on Earth at 1 300 feet below sea-level). The region surrounding the Dead Sea is arid desert. Near the Dead Sea is the city of Jericho and the Qumran Caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The Dead Sea got its name because it is 25 percent salt, which means nothing can live in it. The Great Rift runs from north to south through the Dead Sea (Noll 2013:15).

5.2.4 The Transjordan Highlands

The Transjordan Highlands are a series of hills and valleys wedged between the Jordan Valley to the west and the great Arabian Desert to the east. At the northern tip was the city of Damascus which was home to the biblical Arameans. The Jabbok River separated Bashan to the north from Gilead to the south, marking the ancient region called Ammon, home of the biblical Ammonites. South of that, the Amon River marked the territory of biblical Moab. At the southern extreme, the region becomes a vast desert stretching to the Gulf of Aqabah (Noll 2013:15).

5.2.5 The Canaanites

Iron Age I (1150-950 BCE) was a time of transition. During the first decades of this era, Egypt remained in control of its Canaanite province. The population of early Israelite Palestine was mainly composed of three groups: pre-Israelite Hebrews, Israelites proper, and Canaanites of miscellaneous origin. The Canaanites were brought into the Israelite fold by treaty, conquest, or gradual absorption. Several towns appear both as autonomous Canaanite cities and as names of ‘clans’ in the tribal genealogies: Shechem, Hepher, Tirzah, and perhaps also Zaphon (Albright 1968:279).

The Canaanites were a highly cultured people and stood far in advance of Israel at the time. The change in culture from Canaanite to Israelite is extraordinary. The Canaanites were engaged in trade by sea and shared the export and import trade with Egypt with the Philistines. The Ras Shamra documents have given us a remarkable picture of the gods and goddesses, the temples

and religious rituals, the hymns, prayers, and myths of the Canaanites. According to J.A. Thompson (1959), the Canaanites were the originators of the alphabet as a usable medium for writing, although they were versatile and were able to use several types of writing for their literature. The Canaanites were clearly superior in art, architecture, trade, and in many other departments of life (Thompson 1959:68-69).

5.2.6 The Philistines

The Bible, Egyptian texts of the 12th century BCE, and archaeology suggest that the Philistines were foreigners in the Levant. The prophets Amos and Jeremiah have them coming from Caphtor, commonly identified with Crete (Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4). Archaeology of Iron Age I Philistines points to the world of the Mycenaean Greeks, including the island of Crete. Although the Israelites are portrayed as 'outsider', their material culture, as we have seen above, suggests that they primarily emerged from the indigenous Late Bronze Age culture commonly called 'Canaanite'. In contrast, the early Philistines display a variety of material culture traits such as their pottery, raised hearths, bathtubs, culinary preferences for pig, which would all be more at home in the Aegean and Mycenaean worlds (Maeir & Miroschedji 2006:378).

The biblical texts relating to the Philistines can be periodised into four phases, as follows:

Period 1: The age of the patriarchs (Genesis 20-21 & 26), focusing on Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in the region of Gerar.

Period 2: The period of the Judges and the establishment of the United Monarchy under David (Judges through to 1 and 2 Samuel). These episodes take place within the framework of the Deuteronomistic Historians and, in turn, can be subdivided into:

(a) The Samson cycle, a 'border epic' involving the Philistines of the pentapolis and the Israelites of the foothills.
(b) The movement of the Ark of the Covenant from the times of the Shilonite priesthood through to the career of the Judge Samuel and the stemming of the Philistine takeover of the hill country after the battle of Ebenezer and the destruction of Shiloh.

(c) Renewed fighting between the Philistines and Israel's first king, Saul, ending in the battle of Mt. Gilboa; and

(d) The reversal of Israel's fortunes in the era of David who unites the tribes, conquers Jerusalem, and drives the Philistines out of the highlands and back to their homeland on the coastal plain, where their five major cities – Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza – are located.

Period 3: The Divided Monarchy, in which there is no sustained narrative involving the Philistines and the Israelites of Judah.

Period 4: The postexilic period (Nehemiah 4:1 & 13:23-24; Joel 4:4-8), in which the ethnicon 'Philistine' is not used at all; their name survives as a locale, as in 'Philistine regions' and, still later, in Palestine. There is no evidence that communities or polities once known as 'Philistines', still lived in those locales in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. So, the authors present the Philistines as a coherent community living in cities in the coastal plain, who are differentiated by their culture, society, and religion from the Israelites and who, throughout history, remain an enemy of the Israelites and must therefore suffer the wrath of Yahweh (Maeir & Miroschedji 2006:376).

Nebuchadnezzar, around 604 BCE, destroyed the Philistine cities of Ashkelon and Ekron, suffering under his 'scorched-earth policy'. Most Philistines had either died, fled, or were led into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, never to return to their homeland. In the excavated sites, there is a complete gap in occupation between 600 and 500 BCE, that is, until the Persian period when the Tyrians were invited to settle in Ashkelon and probably Ashdod by the Persians. Excavations there show that the Phoenicians, and not the Philistines, dominated their cultures. (Maeir and Mirosched 2006: 383). From the postexilic period on, there is not a trace of Philistines anywhere. Ekron was never a city again after 600 BCE. Only the geographical locale known as the 'land of the Philistines' appears in biblical post-exilic sources. The Philistines had long ago disappeared from the scene. During the Achaemenid period, Joel condemns the 'Philistine regions', but not the Philistines themselves, for selling the children of Yehud to the Greeks as slaves; this is

because the culprits were Phoenicians who were living in the Philistines' old homeland (Maeir & Mirosched 2006:383).

5.3 PROTO-ISRAELITE, EXODUS, AND SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE

The question of the origin of the Israelite nation (who they were and where they came from), the historicity of the Exodus, and the manner of settlement or establishment of the Israelite tribes in Palestine, has been debated intermittently by scholars for many decades. The principal concerns of lay people are the question of the 'Exodus and Conquest'. 'Anyone even remotely acquainted with Jewish and Christian traditions instinctively grasps that these are fundamental issues, as they have to do with the *origins*, as well as the distinctive nature, of the people of the Bible'(Dever 2003:3). People rightly ask, 'If the story of the Exodus from Egypt is all a myth, what *can* we believe?' In Israel, the suddenly fashionable denial of the biblical stories of the Exodus and Conquest takes on a special urgency for many because it calls into question early Zionism's fundamental rationale for Jewish claims to the land (Dever 2003:3).

Both biblical scholars and archaeologists have pursued the question of the 'Israelite origins' from the very beginnings of modern scholarship in the late 19th century. The stories of the 'Exodus and the Conquest' describes God's deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land in Canaan and this was the very foundation on which the entire biblical edifice was erected. This is the beginning of the history of Israel as a nation and it is recounted in lavish and dramatic detail in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The 'Exodus, Conquest' epic makes up about one seventh of the entire material in the history of 'all Israel' that extends from Genesis through 2 Kings (Dever 2003:3-7).

The sweeping national epic is comprised of two major works that once stood alone: (1) the Pentateuch, or 'Five Books of Moses', Genesis through Deuteronomy, and (2) the 'Deuteronomistic History', the book of Deuteronomy plus Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Scholars have long since known that each of these 'strands' of the literary tradition in the Hebrew Bible, now so skilfully woven into a whole, is in turn a composite work, written and edited by a group of anonymous authors (Dever 2003:7).

Israel Finkelstein gave a lecture in 2007 on *Archaeology and the quest for the historical Israel in the Hebrew Bible.* He opens his discussion with a chapter entitled, 'Digging for the truth: Archaeology and the Bible'. He notes that, in the early days of scholarship, there was a conflict over the history of early Israel between two camps: a conservative school of thought and higher critical scholars. He describes himself as 'the voice of the centre'. Iron Age I (1150-950 BCE) was a time of transition. During the first decades of this era, Egypt remained in control of its Canaanite province. Finkelstein (2007) divides the quest for truth into three camps: The conservative camp, the minimalist school, and, thirdly, the 'view from the centre' (Schmidt 007:10-12).

5.3.1 The Conservative Camp

Finkelstein argues that conservative archaeologists essentially went into the field with the Bible in one hand and the spade in the other. He felt that conservatives 'promoted historical and archaeological reconstructions that had no actual support in the finds or were trapped in circular argumentation' (Finkelstein 2007:13, in Schmidt (ed):2007).

Finkelstein (2007, in Schmidt (ed):2007) declares that scholars in the conservative camp follow the biblical text on the history of Israel in the way the ancient writers wanted us to read it: as a reliable record of Israel's history. Finkelstein names William F. Albright, followed by his students, having promoted the idea that archaeology could prove the Bible correct and the critical scholars, like Julius Wellhausen, as wrong (Schmidt 2007 10- 12).

5.3.2 The Minimalist School

Finkelstein (2007) refers to Philip Davies, who saw the compilation of the biblical history as a long process in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, with the final form of the narrative being created in Hasmonean Judea of the 2nd century BCE. Davies saw the biblical writers as ideologues in service to the temple elite, tracing their ideology back to the political goals of the Judean priests who had returned from exile in the Persian period. As a Persian-appointed elite that ousted the local leadership of Judah, they needed to 'create' a history to legitimatize their role; saying that the Jerusalem scribes of the post-exilic period collected folktales and vague memories and skilfully wove them into a wholly imaginary history that stressed the centrality of

Jerusalem, its temple, its cult, and its priests (Schmidt 2007:11-12). Finkelstein states that the minimalist conclusion that 'there can be no archaeological evidence of the United Monarchy, much less evidence of an historical personality like David, since both were part of a religious mythology wholly made-up by Judean scribes in the Persian and Hellenistic periods' is also not correct, and he supports the third camp (Finkelstein 2007:14, in Schmidt (ed):2007).

5.3.3 The third camp, the view from the centre

This, the school Finkelstein belongs to, adopts a late-monarchic date for a large portion of the Pentateuch and much of the Deuteronomistic History. The third camp sees the biblical stories as highly ideological and adapted to the needs of the community during the time of their compilation and reading back – *histoire regressive* as the historian of the *Annales* School was called. In short, this means that they do have historical value but, in many cases, they provide more historical information about the society and politics of the writers than about the times described in them (Finkelstein 2007:15, in Schmidt (ed):2007
).

Large portions of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History is written to supply an ideological platform for the political program of Judah in later, monarchic times wherein the Davidic kings were seen as the only legitimate heirs to the territories of vanquished Israel and to the leadership over the Israelites still living in these territories; and that the cult of all Israelites should be centralized in the temple in Jerusalem (Schmidt 2007:15). This causes the texts to be highly ideological, both politically and theologically, representing the point of view of one elite faction of Judahite society.

During the so-called 'Assyrian century', Judah was ruled by three kings: father, son, and grandson. The first, Ahaz, is depicted as a sinner and as one who cooperated with the Assyrians and compromised Judah's independence. His son, Hezekiah, is described as the second-most-righteous king from the lineage of David and as a hero who stood firmly and courageously against Assyria. The Deuteronomistic historian even makes a special effort to hide the fact that Judah remained under Assyrian domination many years after the 'miraculous' rescue of Jerusalem from Sennacherib. The grandson, Manasseh, who ruled in Jerusalem for over half a

century, is described as the evillest of all apostates and head of all villains. So, the Exilic redactor of the Deuteronomistic History blames Manasseh for the fall of Jerusalem (Schmidt 2007:15).

The prophet, Amos, announced the coming destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria. Assyria first swept away Damascus and left the kingdom of Israel exposed. Samaria was next captured by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. Thus, the northern nation, Israel, was destroyed after having existed for a little over two centuries. The national hopes of the Hebrews were now centred in the helpless little kingdom of Judah, which struggled on for over a century and a quarter more, during a great world conflict in which Assyria was the unchallenged champion (Breasted 1944:229).

Between the 1930s and the 1950s, archaeological evidence mounted so that the question of Israelite origins grew more intractable. Several models, or competing theories, arose concerning the Exodus from Egypt and the conquest and settlement of the Israelites in Canaan (Dever 2003:5).

Also, in 2007, Amihai Mazar gave his speech that was entitled: 'On Archaeology, Biblical history, and Biblical Archaeology'. He began by summarizing the aim of the essays, which was to elucidate the relationship between the Hebrew Bible, archaeology, and the historical reconstruction to address the question of the extent to which archaeology can contribute to the resolution of these questions. Mazar first provided an overview of the development of archaeology into a 'mature, full-blown social-scientific discipline with its own research methods and theoretical frameworks'. He started with the emergence of 'biblical archaeology' and concluded with discussions of processualism and post-processualism archaeology. He accepted that the Torah, the Deuteronomic History, and parts of the prophetic and wisdom literature were composed during the late monarchy, and possibly underwent expansion during the exilic and postexilic periods. Mazar also accepted 'the view of many scholars that the late-monarchic authors utilized earlier materials and sources' (Schmidt 2007:220).

5.4 MODELS FOR THE ISRAELITE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN

5.4.1 The Conquest Model

The conquest model is drawn directly from the book of Joshua. Albright defended the conquest model from the 1920s until his death in 1971. In his book, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1940), he proclaims that 'the Israelites proceeded without loss of time to destroy and occupy Canaanite towns all over the country' (Albright 1940:278). 'It was fortunate for the future of monotheism that the Israelites of the conquest were a wild folk, endowed with primitive energy and ruthless will to exist, since the resulting decimation of the Canaanites prevented the complete fusion of the two kindred folk which would almost inevitably have depressed Yahwistic standards to a point where recovery was impossible. Thus, the Canaanites, with their orgiastic nature-worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology, were replaced by Israel, with its pastoral simplicity and purity of life, its lofty monotheism, and its severe code of ethics' (Albright 1940:281).

Volkmar Fritz writes that the representation of the conquest of Jericho in Joshua 6 was worked over several times to emphasize the role of the ark and the ram horns in the event. As such, the fall of the city was narrated from the beginning as a miracle; the wall collapsed simply from the war cry. Given the obligatory consecration to destruction, only Rahab and her family were spared (Fritz 2011:27).

In Joshua 2, we find the narrative of the spies that were sent by Joshua to explore the land of Canaan, and especially the city of Jericho. Then, we find the story of the prostitute Rahab who hid the two spies on her rooftop and her dialogue to them: 'I know that the Lord has given you this land. Everyone in the country is terrified of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea in front of you when you were leaving Egypt. …The Lord your God is God in heaven above and here on earth' (Joshua 2:8-11).

The reconnaissance narrative in Joshua 2 was largely expanded, particularly in the central part (Joshua 2:8-14). This expansion contains the unusual statement about the land grant by Yahweh in the mouth of Rahab (2:9a) as well as the promise of the spies to spare Rahab (2:12-14a). The exploration of the land is a superfluous act; originally the foundational element of the narrative

was probably a history of the conquest, which contained the fall of the city by means of treason (cf. Joshua 2:1-7, 15-17a, 18-19, 21-23). The motif of the red thread in the window of the city wall through which the spies entered (Joshua 2:18 & 21) refers to that former conclusion (Fritz 2011:26).

In its current context, the red thread narrative makes the house conspicuous and, since the red thread is on the outside of the wall, it could only have marked the way into the city for the invaders. The original conclusion was then omitted in favour of Joshua 6. The foundational layer of Joshua 2 thus goes back to a pre-Deuteronomistic land-acquisition narrative about the conquest of Jericho (Fritz 2011:26).

Additional support for this approach has been based on analogies with nomadic tribes that succeeded in destroying urban societies, an interpretation that has been largely discredited. Few scholars today accept the book of Joshua at face value, making this theory the most problematic, both archaeologically and textually, of all the viewpoints presented here (Killebrew 2005:182).

Others, followed in Albright's footsteps, such as his pupil, Ernest Wright, and the Israeli archaeologist, Yigael Yadin who argued that his excavations of Hazor, in Upper Galilee proved the historicity of the account in Joshua 11:10-13 of the fall of Hazor. (Dever 2003:45). So, for many, the Conquest Model had, in its favour, the fact that it took the biblical account (in Joshua), seriously, if naively. By the 1960s, archaeological knowledge showed the absence of destruction levels at Dibon and Heshbon in Transjordan and any possible occupational context for such. This evidence was already known in the late 1960s, but it was often ignored or rationalized away by scholars still anxious to salvage something of the traditional theory (Dever 2003:45).

Kathleen Kenyon excavated Jericho between 1955 and 1958 and concluded that in the mid to late 13th century BCE (the period now required for any Israelite ‘conquest’), Jericho lay completely abandoned (Dever 2003:46-47).

Fritz (2011) writes that the book of Joshua depicted the land acquisition as a historical-theological construction. As such, the capture of the land was an event of salvation-historical

significance: under the leadership of Joshua, all the land wFest of the Jordan was conquered, the Canaanites expelled, and the Israelite tribes settled in the land. The military events are set against the Deuteronomistic theology which makes the eradication of the Canaanites compulsory (Deuteronomy 7:1-6) (Fritz 2011:119).

According to this theological premise, the land acquisition was not only a conquering expedition but also connected with an annihilation strategy to declare the land as the sole residence of the Israelite tribes. The land acquisition stories could not have reached back to the promonarchist period and, therefore, the late date of the formation of the narratives makes it improbable that historical memories had been preserved in them or that they reflect historical events. Therefore, Fritz concludes that the book of Joshua is to be designated as fiction based on its intention and formation; it is thus of no value as a historical source (Fritz 2011:120).

The next site on the Israelite itinerary across the Jordan and up into the central hill country is ‘Ai. This city was extensively excavated in 1933-1935 by a French archaeologist, Judith Marquet-Krause, who brought the massively Early Bronze Age city-state to light, with monumental temples and palaces, all destroyed sometime around 2200 BCE. After scant reoccupation in the early 2nd millennium BCE, ‘Ai appears to have been entirely deserted from ca. 1500 BCE until sometime in the early 12th century BCE – that is at the time of the alleged Israelite conquest (Dever 2003:47).

Mazar (1990:330) writes:

> There is only one site which could have been revered to as ’Ai – the large mound of Et-Tell near Deir Dibwan. The mound’s name is actually an Arabic translation of the Hebrew biblical name ’Ai, meaning ‘ruins’. A long gap in occupation followed the large Early Bronze Age city at ‘Ai until a small village was established there during the Israelite settlement in the eleventh centuries BCE. This lack of any Late Bronze Canaanite city at the site or in the vicinity contradicts the narrative in Joshua 8 and shows that it was not based on historical reality despite its topographical and tactical plausibility (Mazar 1990:330).

The ‘Ai story can only be explained as being of etiological nature, created at a time when there was an Israelite settlement on the site – which was the case in the period of the Judges (during the Monarchy, the site was deserted). (Mazar 1990:331-332). The ‘Ai settlers were surely acquainted with the substantial remains of the Early Bronze Age city and it was these which

inspired the name of the site and the formation of the story regarding the conquest of a Canaanite city there. The topographical details that were integrated into the narrative were based on first-hand observations (Mazar 1990:331-332).

The book of Joshua was written as an independent narrative, distinct from a larger Deuteronomistic History. It begins with the commission of Joshua (Joshua 1) and concludes with his death and burial (Joshua 24). The authors fashion a two-part story in which the promised land is first emptied of kings and royal cities (Joshua 1-12), and then repopulated with the more primitive society of tribal Israel (Joshua 13-24). Concerning Jerusalem, we also find contradictions. In the book of Judges, it mentions the military subjugation of Jerusalem by the tribe of Judah (Judges 1:8), this contradicts a later verse (1:21) in the same chapter, as well as 2 Samuel 5:6-9, where Jerusalem is described as a Jebusite city until its capture by David. Excavations in the City of David have revealed massive stone terraces erected on the steep eastern slope above the Gihon Spring as foundations for buildings of the Jebusite-Canaanite city (Mazar 1990:333).

Dever (2003) asks: 'what if ancient Israel was "invented" by Jews living much later, and the biblical literature is therefore nothing but pious propaganda?' If this were so, as some revisionist historians proclaim, then there was no ancient Israel and then the story in the Hebrew Bible would be considered a monstrous literary hoax, one that has cruelly deceived countless millions of people over centuries (Dever 2003: ix).

Biblical scholars have long known that all the books of the Hebrew Bible were written long after the events which it describes. They also know that the Bible was produced by many writers and editors in a long literary process stretching over a thousand years. In the Bible, we find the bias of the orthodox nationalistic parties who wrote the Bible (Dever 2003:1).

The story of ancient Israel, establishing themselves in the Land of Canaan, commences with the Exodus from Egypt. It is the beginning of the history of Israel as a nation told as a great epic narrative from Genesis through 2 Kings. It comprises two works: (1) the Pentateuch, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and (2) the 'Deuteronomistic History', which comprises the book of

Deuteronomy plus Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The sources of the Pentateuch are divided into a 'J school' (because of the preference for the divine name Yahweh, or Jahweh in German); an 'E school' (for the other Hebrew divine name, Elohim), and then there is the 'Priestly school' (known as P). J could date to the 10th century BCE, E, to the 9th century BCE, and P edited into the work, adding a lot of priestly legislation during the exilic period (6th century BCE) (Dever 2003:7-8).

Richard S. Hess (2007) refers to the destruction level at Hazor, in upper Galilee, and holds that this could be counted as evidence of the conquest model. But the absence of destruction levels elsewhere has led most archaeologists to abandon this as a dominant theory (Hess 2007:210). Sharon Zuckerman, co-director of the excavations at Hazor, disagreed with Yigael Yadin and Amnon Ben-Tor, and her theory was that the destruction levels in the palace was caused by an internal rebellion of the city-dwellers themselves: 'The torches put to the public buildings and monumental temples of Canaanite Hazor could have well been and carried and thrown by the Hazorites themselves, enraged by centuries of the elite's incessant demands for manpower and agricultural resources' (Zuckerman 2008:5).

5.4.2 The Peaceful Infiltration Model

The Peaceful Infiltration Theory envisages groups with diverse origins settling at different times in different areas. Only after the settlement of these disparate groups, did they coalesce into the entity known as Israel. While the conquest theory involved the violent overthrow of Canaanite cities as an initial move by the newcomers, the infiltration theory relegates clashes with the Canaanites to a later stage in the process of Israel's formation. In the view of Alt (1966) who originated the theory, the first phase was totally peaceful. It involved semi-nomadic pastoralists, who spent their winters in the desert fringes beyond Canaan, gradually making the transition to a settled agricultural existence in the hills where they were accustomed to graze their flocks each summer. The central highlands of Canaan were thinly populated, so their settlement involved little or no conflict with the existing inhabitants of the land. Only when these settlers had become somewhat established, united, and more numerous, did they attempt to wrest new land from the Canaanites of the plains and valleys. Alt's initial theory was supported

and developed by M. Noth, who used literary-critical approaches to the text to reconstruct the complex process of tribal settlement (Alt 1966:135-169; Noth 1981:81).

The absence of destruction levels at most cities has led to a second theory, found in the wandering seminomadic clans from east of the Jordan River who peacefully entered the land, settling in the hilly country that was unoccupied. Brought together in a loosely knit association by a group of Yahweh worshippers from the desert, and perhaps ultimately from Egypt, this larger group populated the hill country and eventually grew strong enough to band together and to gain dominance over the rest of the land during the period of the monarchy (Hess 2007:211).

This approach combines the biblical account in Judges with toponymy, 2nd millennium BCE Near Eastern texts, ethnographic analogy to seminomadic Bedouin lifestyles, and archaeological discoveries based on surveys and excavations. According to this theory, nonindigenous semi nomads originating from the desert regions wintered in the Transjordanian desert and summered in the highlands, outside the control of Egypt, in areas not populated by permanent settlements. During this process, they formed peaceful relations with the inhabitants of Late Bronze Age villages and cities. Eventually, they began to settle down, building villages in the sparsely populated hill country, and gradually began to expand into the more fertile regions, occasionally resulting in violent confrontations with the lowland peoples (Killebrew 2005:182).

This model was less rigid and more capable of encompassing long-term cultural change. It also resonated with the 'nomadic ideal' of the Bible. It speaks of the desert pastoral wanderings where an austere, but just, deity was encountered. However, Dever is of the opinion that the ethnographic theory underlying this model was badly flawed and that there is no archaeological evidence to support it, largely because peaceful migrations and movements of people leave far less physical evidence than catastrophic destructions – usually none (Dever 2003:72).

There is reference in chapter 1 to the meaning of archaeology. Here is an expansion of that meaning in order to enlighten the infiltration model here being discussed.

The term archaeology is derived from the Greek words archaios (ancient) and logos (knowledge, discourse) and was already used in ancient Greek literature with reference to 'the study of ancient times. The modern archaeologist uses a variety of methods in gathering information about the ancient past, but surveys (surface explorations) and excavations (methodical digging operations) are two primary methods of recovering data (Jewish virtual library which is an encyclopedia of Jewish and Israeli history). Archaeologists and anthropologists have developed a few simple, testable 'rules' for recognizing when we are dealing with the immigration of new peoples into an area:

1) The new society and culture must have characteristics that are different and distinguishable, usually marked by observable discontinuities in material culture.
2) The 'homeland' of the immigrant group must be known, and its culture well understood.
3) The route by which the postulated immigration took place must be traceable, so that the actual process may be reconstructed (Dever 2003:73).

The infiltration/immigration model for early Israel satisfies none of these requirements. There were probably some former pastoral nomads in the mix of early Israelite peoples, as the Bible remembers, but they have left few if any traces in the archaeological record (Dever 2003:73).

The overwhelming number of small villages, that now dot the Iron Age I landscape of Canaan, are not located along the coastal plains of Sharon and Judah, in the lowlands of the Shephelah, or in the major river valleys. In those places, the prime areas, with their rich resources and large urban sites, remained largely Canaanite or Phoenician well into the Iron Age. The Egyptian 19th Dynasty was still in political control until at least 1160 BCE. The new Israelite settlements, by contrast, are almost all founded *de novo,* not on the ruins of destroyed Bronze Age sites but in sparsely populated hill country extending from Upper and Lower Galilee, into the hills of Samaria and Judah, and southward into the northern Negev. These areas constituted the frontier – the margins of urban Canaanite society. Here, the Peaceful Infiltration and Peasant Revolt models of settlement fit the recent archaeological evidence much better than the old Conquest Model. There was no need for armed conflict, nor opportunity for conquest, in these areas since they were largely devoid of Canaanite population (Dever 2003:99).

Religiously, there is a complete absence of temples, sanctuaries, or shrines of any type in the Iron Age I hill country villages, which is in sharp contrast to the proliferation of temples in the preceding Late Bronze Age in Palestine (Dever 2003:113).

5.4.3 The Peasant Revolt Model

The third theory, called the Peasant Revolt Hypothesis, allows for a small group coming from outside and changing the religion of the existing Canaanites in the land (Hess 2007:211). G.E. Mendenhall's attempt to construct a third alternative to the Military Conquest and Peaceful Infiltration theories emerged from a sense of frustration with current methodologies. The fact that such irreconcilable accounts of Israel's origins could be developed from the same evidence led him to question fundamental assumptions underlying them both. He listed these assumptions as follows:

1. That the Twelve Tribes entered Palestine from some other area just prior to, or simultaneously with, the 'conquest'.
2. That the Israelite tribes were 'semi-nomads' who seized land and settled upon it during and after the conquest.
3. That the solidarity of the tribes was an 'ethnic' one and that kinship was the basis of the contrast between Israelite and Canaanite (Mendenhall 1962:67).

This model is based on the 14th century BCE Canaanite 'texts' referring to the 'Apiru', so-called social bandits who lived on the fringes of urban society as refugees from the Canaanite city-states. They were known as rebels, highwaymen, sometimes mercenaries, and were mostly underminers of the Establishment. They were not numerous but constituted a nuisance in the Late Bronze Age. This model draws attention, for the first time, to the largely indigenous origins of the early Israelite peoples (Dever 2003:73).

Ann Killebrew (2005) calls this model the 'Social Revolution Theory' which proposes that the origins of Israel can be traced to a conflict between the Canaanite elite ruling class and the

dissatisfied peasant class. This sociocultural and anthropological approach sees an indigenous origin for Israel (Killebrew 2005:182).

The real insight, and the continuing value, of the Peasant Revolt Model is that it draws attention to the largely *indigenous* origins of the early Israelite peoples for the first time, which previous academics tended to resist but which virtually all scholars now accept. Today we can finally deal somewhat better with the societal realities that the model sought to highlight. Largely obsolete today, this model paved the way for newer and better understandings of early Israel (Dever 2003:74).

5.4.4 The Pastoral Canaanite Model

Ann Killebrew (2005) mentions the Pastoral Canaanite Model and says that it was developed by Israel Finkelstein where he examines the emergence of ancient Israel from a long-term historical perspective. She mentions that although this approach is often presented as a variation of the Peaceful Infiltration theory, it deserves special attention because it does not depend on any biblical evidence but rather relies almost entirely on archaeological evidence. This theory is based on the survey results of the indigenous origins of the hill country villages. The patterns are characterised as cyclic 'demographic processes that characterize the hill country in the third-second millennia BCE'. This was a result of a 'long process that started with the destruction of the urban culture of the Bronze Age and the uprooting of large population groups in vast areas, and the subsequent settlement of various pastoral and uprooted groups and individuals in the highlands of Canaan' (Finkelstein & Na'aman 1994:15; Killebrew 2005:183).

This view sees the Early Iron Age inhabitants of villages in the hill country as the descendants of those Canaanites who had reverted to pastoralism towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age and who led a nomadic way of life, for several hundred years, on the fringes of the land. This nomadic population, resulting from the crisis at the end of the Middle Bronze Age, returned to sedentary life at the end of the Late Bronze Age due to the dissolution of the Canaanite city-state system and the ensuing breakdown of the symbolic relationship between the nomadic pastoralists and the settled population (Killebrew 2005:183-184).

5.4.5 The Mixed Multitude Model

The Mixed Multitude theory interprets the biblical and archaeological evidence as reflecting a heterogeneous, multifaceted, and complex process of Israelite ethnogenesis (Faust 2006). Ancient Israel's mixed multitude is defined as a collection of loosely organized and largely indigenous, tribal, and kin-based groups whose porous borders permitted penetration by smaller numbers from external groups (Killebrew 2005:184).

Dever (2017) calls this 'A Motley Crew', stressing the heterogeneous nature of the people of Late Bronze Age Canaan, their long-time adaptation to the shifting frontier, and their growing restiveness by the end of the period. Dever (2017) calls this group of colonists 'Proto Israelites'. Included in this group would be urban dropouts, the Apiru and other social bandits, rebels already in the countryside, some of them highwaymen, brigand, former soldiers and mercenaries, or entrepreneurs of various sorts, as well as refugees of many kinds, including those fleeing Egyptian injustice, displaced villagers, impoverished farmers, and others hoping to escape the coming disasters as their societies fell into decline. Perhaps also included in this motley crew were local pastoral nomads, the Shasu, and even an 'exodus group' that had been in Egypt among Asiatic slaves in the Delta (Dever 2017:226).

5.4.6 New Model for understanding Early Israel: Agrarian and Land reform

Dever (2017:222) suggests that there is now overwhelming support in favour of a new model for early Israel. The traditional Conquest, Peaceful Infiltration, and Peasant Revolt models have all been overturned in the light of the following archaeological data: There is now a universal consensus among both archaeologists and biblical scholars that a new ethnic group called the 'Israelites' came from among the indigenous peoples of the region (including Transjordan). Some evidence is gained from the Amarna Letters. The detailed eye-witness accounts of conditions in the southern Levant toward the end of the Late Bronze Age paints a picture of disputes and class struggles over land, resulting in a large underclass, dispossessed, restless people. There was also the invasion by the Sea Peoples that caused thousands of people to be displaced, fleeing inland as refugees. The weak economy and the chaotic and collapsing Egyptian administration would make the absorption of large numbers of refugees difficult. The local land-hungry peasants and

outcasts formed the reservoir from which the hill country colonists were derived. They uprooted themselves drastically and in large numbers (Dever 2017:222-223).

Nomadic peoples who had long been settled are known to revert to pastoral nomadism, throwing off government control for looser tribal affiliations. This is sometimes called withdrawal. Like other urban dropouts, such as the Apiru, the early Israelites in this view were those who chose to withdraw from society, in this case migrating to the more remote and sparsely populated hill country. More archaeological evidence explains that it was not just the flight from intolerable conditions or a supposed revolutionary Yahwistic fervour that propelled people toward the frontier; it was more a quest for a new society and a new lifestyle (Dever 2017:224).

The Agrarian Reform Model fits all the facts currently available in the archaeological evidence, and it offers a cogent explanation for the process by which a people called Israel gradually emerged in the light of history in Canaan in the Late Bronze to Iron Age transition circa 1250 – 1100 BCE. While this model challenges traditional and simplistic readings of the biblical narrative, it can comprehend old oral traditions that may be reflected in stories in the books of Judges, Samuel, and other biblical memories (Dever 2017:233).

5.4.7 The Merneptah Stele

Noll (2013) also refers to the Merneptah Stele, found in the Temple at Thebes. This is a huge stone monument that recounts the glorious deeds of this Egyptian king. It deals primarily with the king's war against the Libyans towards the end of the 13th century BCE but also recounts a military campaign that Merneptah conducted in Canaan.

'The princes are prostrate, saying, "Mercy!"
Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.
Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified.
Plundered is Canaan with every evil,
Carried off is Ashkelon.
Seized upon is Gezer.

Yanoam is made as that which does not exist.
Israel is laid waste; his seed is not' (Noll 2013:138).

The rhetoric is typical boastfulness that one can expect from a proud king of mighty Egypt. The language is a cliché: *nine bows* is an Egyptian slang expression meaning 'all the enemies everywhere'. All the northern lands to which this Pharaoh claimed jurisdiction, are mentioned. The two references to Canaan function as brackets around a list of four Canaanite enemies: Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoam, and Israel. The 19th Dynasty pursued a policy of direct intervention in Canaanite affairs and this poem might summarize one stage of that policy's implementation. The city of Ashkelon on the southern coast became a Philistine city a few generations after Merneptah but, during the lifetime of Merneptah (just prior to 1200 BCE), the Philistines had not yet arrived. These three mentioned cities have been written by the Egyptian scribe with a particle, as in Egyptian hieroglyphic grammar, which identifies them as cities but the word Israel carries the particle designating a people or ethnic group. The stone monument depicts the Israelites as a people wearing typical Canaanite clothing (Noll 2013:139).

On the Merneptah Stele, it is claimed that Merneptah annihilated the people called Israel but, in the ancient world, a king often claimed to have annihilated an enemy, yet the enemy appears again in later inscriptions. It was often a boast, not a reality. In this case, Israel could have nothing to do with biblical Israel, since biblical Israel appears only after the time of Merneptah, but it could have been that he killed some Israelites in a battle although Israel still survived (Noll 2013:140).

The biblical writers appear to have been ignorant of the fact that an Egyptian empire existed in Palestine. Noll (2013) concludes that even the oldest portions of the Bible were composed long after the Late Bronze Age and that the writers of the Bible were aware that many of their sources were folktales so they created an artificial chronology with which to link those folk traditions sequentially (Noll 2013:140-141).

5.4.8 Gezer

The 15ha site, undoubtedly to be identified with the mound of Tell el-Jezer, is prominently situated on the edge of the foothills of the northern border of the valley known as the Shephelah. One of the largest and most important Bronze and Iron Age mounds of ancient Palestine, Gezer was among the first excavations of the modern era, with work directed there from 1902 to 1909 by the Irish archaeologist, Macalister (Dever 2003:63).

According to Joshua 10:33, Horam, the king of Gezer, joined a coalition of Canaanite kings from Lachish and other Judean sites to oppose the Israelite campaign in the area and while the text implies that he was captured and executed (Joshua 12:12, along with others), nowhere does the Bible claim that Gezer itself was conquered. On the contrary, texts such as Joshua 16:10 and Judges 1:29 state explicitly that the Israelites 'did not drive out the Canaanites in Gezer', who continued to dwell there 'to this day' – that is, until the time when the oral tradition began or until it was set down in writing (probably in the 8th -7th century BCE). Elsewhere, 1 Kings 9:15-17 observes that Gezer did not come into Israelite hands until the days of Solomon who fortified it as a regional capital, along with Hazor and Megiddo (Dever 2003:64).

Dever (2003) writes that excavations have documented a sequence of events in rather astonishing detail – and the excavators did not excavate with a Bible in one hand and a trowel in the other. It is true that there is a partial destruction of some areas in the late 13th century BCE but this is almost certainly the work of the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah who, on his 'Victory Stela' of ca. 1210 BCE, claims to have captured Gezer (Dever 2003:64).

5.4.9 The Hyksos

Numerous documents and archaeological discoveries lead us to think that about 1700 BCE, Egypt was inundated by a wave of invaders at the time of the feeble kings of the 13th Dynasty. The invaders came from Palestine and installed themselves in the region of the Delta at first. Later, they took control of the whole of the land. They were largely Semitic. Wherever we have names preserved on scarabs of the Hyksos period, the Semitic element is predominant (Thompson 1959:33).

Bronn (2006) writes that the time between the Middle and New Kingdoms in ancient Egypt is known as the Second Intermediate Period. It was the time during which Egypt, for the first time in its history, lost autonomy and the inhabitants of Egypt became the vassals of the Hyksos, a name transcribed by Manetho, a historian of the 3rd century BCE as 'shepherd kings', but which actually designated 'princes of foreign lands'. The term 'Hyksos', at first, referred to the rulers only but later became the accepted word to indicate the rulers and the people themselves and everything pertaining to them. The Hyksos were not a homogenous race but were a conglomerate of peoples from the Near East. For centuries, people from the east had been filtering into Egypt. Some were nomads looking for pastures for their animals, others were employed by the Egyptian administration as shipbuilders and mining engineers or as workers in the copper and turquoise mines in the Sinai. These workers were all settled in the Delta, the hub of mining and shipbuilding activities. Others were slaves who were dispersed all over Egypt as workers in households and on farms. Despite Egypt's best efforts to keep out Asiatics who wanted to enter the country of their own volition, their fortresses on the border between Egypt and Sinai proved ineffective, especially when the Egyptian administration faltered and collapsed during the 17th Dynasty. There is evidence that the Hyksos were supported by many Egyptians who collaborated with the Hyksos and who even served in the Hyksos administration which lasted from ca. 1650 to 1550 BCE. However, the vassal princes in Upper Egypt saw the Hyksos as usurpers and amassed forces to expel the enemy. This they achieved in ca. 1550 BCE, after which it was possible to unite Upper and Lower Egypt once again (Bronn 2006:10-20).

In Egypt, the strong 12th Dynasty was followed by a period of virtual anarchy, during which several groups or families of kings successively obtained the upper hand. After 1750 BCE, native Egyptian royal inscriptions cease almost entirely. Then comes a very obscure phase in which princes with West-Semitic (Amorite or Hebrew) names appear on scarabs. This phase was followed by the 15th Dynasty, which consisted of Semitic invaders from Syria. The 15th Dynasty was followed by a short, but weak, dynasty of foreign origin, under which the native Theban princes of Upper Egypt revolted, waging persistent war against the foreigners until their capital, Avaris (later called Tanis), in the north-eastern Delta was captured by Amosis I about 1560 BCE. In later times, the Egyptians called them the *Hyksos,* literally meaning 'princess of the shepherds' but it could also mean 'Foreign chiefs' or 'chiefs of a foreign country' (Albright 1968:202).

According to the book of Exodus, trouble for the 'children of Israel' in Egypt began with the accession of a 'new king' that did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). The Jewish historian, Josephus, connected the 'Joseph story' with the rule of the once mysterious Hyksos, or 'foreign rulers'. The Hyksos were kings of Asiatic descent, interlopers from Canaan who prevailed in the Delta during the 15th Dynasty, ca. 1640-1500 BCE, and rivalled the 16th and 17th Dynasty in central and southern Egypt. Archaeologists have located and excavated Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos, at Tell ed-Dab'a on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. Its pottery, burial customs, and architectural style, all suggest that the Hyksos were Canaanite in origin. Three of the names on the 'Kings List' are Semitic: one of them is the Amorite/Canaanite name 'Yaqub' – the exact equivalent of the Hebrew name of the biblical Patriarch Jacob (Dever 2003:10).

Kathleen Kenyon (1960), who excavated Jericho from 1955 to 1958, held that the destruction level at Jericho dated to ca. 1500 BCE and was due to the well-attested Egyptian campaigns in the course of expelling the Asiatic Hyksos from Egypt at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty (Dever 2003:45).

As a result of the Hyksos conquest of Egypt, the Egyptian social and political organization was transformed. Egyptian military was changed by the introduction of horse-drawn chariots and composite bows. Many Canaanite (Hebrew) words entered Egypt during the Hyksos period, and the following age, and with them came Canaanite deities and Asiatic wares and arts (Albright 1968:203).

Widely accepted today is the belief that the city of Rameses is located at Qantir (Tell el-Dab's), about 17 miles southwest of Tanis. Qantir was an important city in the eastern Nile delta during the 2nd millennium BCE. In the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1782 -1570 BCE), the city witnessed a massive influx of foreigners and it probably served as the capital of the Hyksos (15th Dynasty). The period has recently become better known through systematic excavations near the site of Qantir in the eastern Delta, where a temple and burial site have been unearthed. The non-Egyptian pottery and grave goods are identical to those of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine (Currid 1997:128).

The Egyptian conquest of Palestine and Syria began immediately after the expulsion of the Hyksos by Amosis I, about 1560 BCE, with the siege of Sharuhen (Tell el-Far'ah). Palestine remained an Egyptian province uninterruptedly, except for brief rebellions. At first, Egypt simply took over the Hyksos feudal organization in Asia which was very different from the contemporary situation in Egypt itself, where all traces of the Hyksos regime had been eradicated (Albright 1968:207).

John van Seters wrote a book called 'The Hyksos: a new investigation' wherein the main contribution is a careful linguistic analysis in which he argues that the Ipuwer Papyrus does not belong to the First Intermediate Period of Egyptian History (ca. 2300-2200 BCE), as was previously thought, but rather to the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1782 - 1570 BCE) (1966:240).

The Ipuwer Papyrus is an ancient Egyptian hieratic papyrus made during the 19th Dynasty of Egypt. It is now held in the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, Netherlands. It contains the Admonitions of Ipuwer, an incomplete literary work whose original composition is dated no earlier than the late 12th Dynasty of Egypt (ca. 1991-1803 BCE). Ipuwer has often been put forward as confirmation of the biblical account of the Exodus because of its statement that 'the river is blood' and its frequent references to servants running away – but that is ignoring the many differences between Ipuwer and Exodus. It describes Asiatics arriving in Egypt rather than leaving. Most histories do not consider information about the Exodus to be recoverable or even relevant to the story of the emergence of Israel (Enmarch 2011:173-175).

A picture of travelling Semites was found in a tomb at Beni Hasan in Egypt and carries the word 'hekaukhasut', rulers of foreign countries, above the horns of the small animal that the chief Absha is offering to the Egyptian governor of the town. The Hyksos city of Avaris (15th Dynasty), in the eastern Delta was perceived to be a foreign occupation by the Egyptian 17th Dynasty that ruled Thebes to the south. Rivalry between these two centres of power eventually erupted into warfare. The Theban army attacked the Delta and the attack continued as the Egyptians drove

the Hyksos out of Egypt and into southern Canaan where the war continued until the Hyksos were destroyed (Noll 2013:123).

For Palestine, the end of the Hyksos marks the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (1550-1150 BCE). For Egypt, their expulsion marks the start of the New Kingdom. During the New Kingdom, Egyptian kings became known by the title of *Pharaoh,* which meant 'the Great House'. The New Kingdom was, in fact, three great houses in succession, known as the 18th, 19th, and 20th Dynasties (Noll 2013:123).

According to the biblical story, the Egyptian king enslaved the Hebrews, who had been long-time resident aliens in Egypt, to construct the royal 'store cities' of Pithom and Ramses (Exodus 1:11). Scholars have long searched for Egyptian sites by these names. 'Pithom' (Per-Atum) has been identified with the mound of Tell el-Maskhuta, or possibly nearby Tell el-Retabeh. When excavated, both sites turned out to have been occupied in the 'Hyksos'. Biblical 'Ramses', has now been conclusively identified with Avaris, the old Hyksos capital located at Tell ed-Dab', which provides extensive evidence for a possible historical setting for some of the biblical memories and stories. There is an Egyptian destruction that took place around 1530 BCE; then a long period of abandonment during most of the New Kingdom; and a refounding as the royal city of 'Ramses' in the time of Ramses II. No actual building remains have been found but the ancestors of the Israelites might have been employed in making mudbricks (Exodus 5:5-21) for Ramses II's construction projects there and elsewhere in the Delta (Dever 2003:14).

5.5 THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

From all the above, it is now clear that the biblical narratives – in many instances – are not consistent with results from archaeological discoveries, or from conclusions drawn from literary, historical, and archaeological research. Dever mentions that what archaeology 'has virtually forced upon us', is profoundly different to the biblical chronicles of an exodus and conquest (Dever 1997:45).

Noll (2013) writes that the people of Israel had existed in Palestine for centuries before they constructed the religious traditions, poetry, and narratives that the Bible contains. Although the

Bible implies that the god Yahweh chose Abraham in the period, we would call the Middle Bronze Age (Genesis 12), the reality is that a folk tale about a man named Abraham was committed to writing for the first time only during the Iron Age II (or later). This explains the many anachronisms in these biblical stories. In Genesis 26, for example, Abraham's son, Isaac, interacts with Philistines who did not arrive in Canaan until the Iron Age. Like the book of Genesis, the books of Exodus to Joshua are fiction, riddled with anachronistic details. For example, biblical Israelites spent a great deal of their 40 years in the wilderness at a place called Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 13:26; 20:1; 22; 32:8; Deuteronomy 2:14). However, archaeology reveals that this desert oasis was uninhabited in the Late Bronze Age and, in fact, would not be inhabited until the Iron Age II. Anthropologists have suggested that events of the past, even major events, tend to be forgotten unless they serve a useful social function in the community's storytelling process (Noll 2013:142).

Still others advocate that there was no Israel until the eighths century BCE and therefore the people of highland Canaan in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE would not have recognized themselves as Israelites. In all the remaining theories, the primary group that later became Israel was indigenous to the land (Hess 2007:211).

5.5.1 Establishing the dates of the alleged Exodus and conquest

Noll declares that the anthology of literature that we call the Bible does not attempt to construct a past. Like any author of a fiction, each biblical author was free to invent narratives by using a few facts from the past (a famous royal name, the vague memory of an event, or even an old document found in a royal archive). The chronology of the Hebrew Bible is almost entirely artificial. There is an attempt to establish the dates for the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under leadership of Moses and the conquest by Joshua. There is no archaeological data to shed light on the issue. There is no evidence that Egypt suffered a massive loss of population at any time in its ancient past. Ancient Egypt's population numbered about three million. The Hebrew Bible suggests that 600 000 men of military age followed Moses from Egypt (Exodus 12:37). Adding women, children, and the elderly, brings us to about two million people who followed Moses. There is no archaeological or Egyptian evidence of such an exodus. Dates provided by the Hebrew Bible for the Exodus and conquest are impossible (Noll 2013:95-97).

The folk tales of the Hebrew Bible contain fragments of old tradition, such as the memory that the city of Hazor had been large and powerful in the Middle Bronze Age and the city of Dan had been called Laish in an earlier era (Joshua 11:19; Judges 18:29). The name of Moses also sounds authentic. In Egypt, many kings had names with *Moses* in them, such as Thutmoses III and Ramesses II. The *moses* or *messes* element means 'to be born'. Thus, Thutmoses means 'the god Thut has been born'. This type of name was common in the ancient world. The name is a sentence with a god as subject noun which then of course is a theophoric name. Thus, biblical Moses is an Egyptian theophoric name from which the subject has been removed (Noll 2013:100).

Noll (2013) continues to say that the biblical exodus and conquest stories are not history; these stories do not attempt to construct a past. People living in Canaan during the Iron Age might have retained vague memories of oppression under the Egyptian imperial governors of previous generations. As they toiled the difficult land of the Cisjordan Highlands, they could have formulated entertaining poems and stories to fill the evenings after a day's toil, especially knowing that they were illiterate. Noll finds it unsurprising that the community constructed tales where they were the chosen people of their god, Yahweh, who fights on their behalf. Such tales abound in the Iron Age world. For example:

'Let me sing to Yahweh, for he has surely triumphed!
Horse and his rider, he has tossed in the sea!
My strength and might is Yah!
He has been to me military salvation!
This is my god, and I will give him residence!
The god of my ancestor, and I will exalt him!
Yahweh is a man of war!
Yahweh is his name!' (Exodus 15:1-3).

In this song, Yahweh can harden Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh is compelled to disobey, and then Yahweh punishes Pharaoh for his disobedience (Exodus 4:21; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4,

8, 17). Afterwards, this story is further embellished with mighty miracles and tangential stories preceding and following the main events. Noll concludes that the entire story from Exodus to Joshua 24 can be explained as a by-product of creative storytelling over many centuries (Noll 2013:103).

The specific timeframe for the Exodus, based on the biblical narrative, is calculated as the middle to late 13th century BCE. The calculation is done by calculating that the work on the Jerusalem Temple began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and that was 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1). Since we know that Solomon died in 930 BCE, and he reigned for 40 years, he would have ascended the throne in 970. Thus, we add 480 to 966 to get 1446 BCE – the exact date of the Exodus (Dever 2003:8). However, this date is later disputed by Dever and he arrives at a date for the Exodus at 1250 to 1225 BCE.

Today, archaeologists agree that the shift from Canaanite to Israelite culture occurred at the end of the Bronze Age ca. 1250-1150 BCE. Most archaeologists today refute the historicity of the Exodus narrative and, when coming to the conquest of the land of Canaan narrative, there are even more complications of historicity. First, the book of Joshua has long been controversial. Joshua carries out a systematic campaign against the civilians of Canaan – men, women, and children – that amounts to genocide. Throughout the entire land he annihilates 'Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites' (Joshua 9:1). These are stories that we might hope had no basis in fact, says Dever. After a thorough archaeological survey of all the sites mentioned in Joshua, one must confront the fact that the external material evidence supports almost nothing of the biblical account of a large-scale, concerted Israelite military invasion of Canaan (Dever 2003:38-39).

5.6 THE BIBLICAL DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

5.6.1 Introduction

This point would just as well fit into the chapter on the religion of ancient Israel, as it concerns the Hebrew Bible. The reason that it is included in this chapter of ancient Israel is because it is there, in the pages of the Hebrew Bible, that we meet with and discover ancient Israel. For many centuries, the Hebrew Bible was our only reference of the ancient Israelites. It is only now, after

almost two centuries of archaeological exposure, that we have an alternative source of information.

The term 'Deuteronomic' describes 'that which pertains specifically to the book of Deuteronomy', whereas the term 'Deuteronomistic' refers more generally to the influence or thought forms associated with the work of the Deuteronomists and expresses more widely and diffusely in the literature.

5.6.2 Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis (DH)

In 1878, the German author Julius Wellhausen published his theory concerning the Pentateuch. 'Prolegomen a zur Geschichte Israels' (first published in 1898 as 'Geschichte Israels') (Wellhausen 1883:10). He calls his theory the Documentary Hypothesis (DH), which is one of three models used to explain the origins and composition of the first five books of the Bible, collectively called the Torah or Pentateuch. The other two theories are the Supplementary Hypothesis and the Fragmentary Hypothesis. They all agree that the Torah is not a unified work from a single author, but that it is made up of sources combined over many centuries by many hands. Briefly stated, the Documentary Hypothesis sees the Torah as literature composed by a series of editors out of four major strands of literary traditions. These traditions are called J, E, D, and P as previously discussed. (Lance 1981:3).

According to Wellhausen's Documentary Theory, (Wellhausen 1883) there were four sources, each originally a separate and independent book – or document, joined together at various points in time by a series of editors or redactors (Dever 2003:73).

Wellhausen attributed Genesis 1:1-2:4a to the latest of the sources, namely the Priestly writer (P). According to his theory, each source reflected the historical period in which it was written. So, Genesis 1 must represent the theological outlook of Israel at its latest and most sophisticated period. As proof for the late date of Genesis 1, Wellhausen pointed to the sense of order in the stately progression of the seven days of creation. From the chaos of verse one, the rest of creation proceeds like a set of logical conclusions from a premise. Wellhausen saw Gen 1:1-2:4

as a conscious theological and cosmogonic statement, fabricated *de novo* out of whole cloth in the speculative abstract manner he believed to be typical of the Priestly writer (Lance 1981:4).

Wellhausen (1883) proclaims that the four source documents, J, E, D, and P were woven together by somebody, or some group, and do not tell us so much about the period that they purport to describe, as much as they tell us about the beliefs and practises of the beliefs of Israelites. His work created a sensation. The J-source that is named after God as Yahweh, is already reflected in Genesis 4 where the first man, Adam, knows God by this name. In the other sources, like P and D, God's name is not known to humankind. In Exodus 2-3, God introduces his name to Moses. In Exodus 6:2-3 (which is assigned to P), God appears to Moses and says: 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai but by my name Lord I was not known to them. Different sources named the deity by different names. The characteristics of the J-source begins with the second creation story, in Genesis 2, and uses the personal name of God from creation as Yahweh.

The J-source describes God very anthropomorphically. It's the J-source which describes God closing the door of the ark; that has God smelling the sacrifice that Noah offer; that God eats with Abraham and bargains with him; and that God meets with Moses one night and wants to kill him. The J-source has a very vivid and concrete earthy style and uses the name Sinai to refer to the place where the Israelites will conclude the covenant with God. In 1 Kings 19:8, Elijah visits 'Horeb the mount of God'. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, the name Sinai is used in the Torah only by the Jawist and Priestly Source, whereas Horeb is used only by the Elohist and the Deuteronomist. A clue to the dating of the J-source is 1000 BCE because of the promise of the land and it seems to protect the interests of the south and it names the mountain Horeb and not Sinai. The J- and E-sources were combined in about 800 BCE (Hayes 2012:120).

The E-source that starts from Genesis 15, and refers to God as Elohim, is the most fragmentary source. God is more remote in this source with more emphasis on prophets like Mirriam and Moses who are referred to as prophets. The D-source is essentially the book of Deuteronomy and is full of speeches. The book purports to deliver three speeches delivered by Moses. It describes a settled agrarian life, and it does not seem to be about nomads. D is the source that

says that there must only be one central place for offerings and sacrifices, it doesn't actually name Jerusalem and that's why the Samaritans think it is Mount Gerizim. It says God cannot be worshipped at all at makeshift altars. This is a quite different perspective than the other sources. The Northern Kingdom fell in 722 BCE and in 622 BCE King Josiah in Judea started his reforms. D seems to have been composed in the North, in the Israelite Kingdom, in the late 7th century BCE. D is seen as an old source, kept in the Temple, and discovered by King Josiah (Heyes 2012:125).

Scholars traditionally observed that the Deuteronomists were responsible for the Book of Deuteronomy, as well as most of the so-called Deuteronomistic History and non-narrative prose in Jeremiah, Isaiah 36-39, and small units in Amos and Hosea. However, lately, Pentateuchal studies indicate that 'the Deuteronomists are represented in most of the books of the Torah' (Wilson 1999:68). Since the development of the classical Documentary Hypothesis that restricted the Deuteronomistic contribution to the Book of Deuteronomy, scholars became aware of similarities between the work of the Deuteronomist and that of the Elohist. The latest notion of scholars who approach the Hebrew Bible is that the Deuteronomists were creative writers more than they were historians utilizing earlier sources (Wilson 1999:72).

The main characteristics of the P-source are found in Leviticus and the non-narrative parts of Numbers. It has issues with religious institutions, the sacrificial system, the Sabbath, circumcision, the Passover, dietary laws, and a great concern with ritual purity and holiness. In the P-source, God is revealed only in his *kavod* (a light filled cloud). The P-source is seen as a bridge between the other sources. We find the P-source from Genesis 1. The P-source is interested in the covenant and genealogies. Wellhausen (1883) dated the P-source to a late date. The Priestly authors drew all the narratives together and revised it during the time of exile in Babylon, after the fall of Judea (Hayes 2012:125).

5.6.3 Summary of the differences between the four strands of tradition

The four sources differ as follows:

J – Jahwist Source: Stresses Judah and its leaders, anthropomorphic speech about God is present. God walks and talks with us. God is Yahweh. J-source also speaks of Mount Sinai.

E – Elohist Source: Stresses northern Israel, and the prophets. There is refined speech about God and the Elohist is so named because of its pervasive use of the word Elohim in reference to the God of Israel.

P – Priestly Source: Stresses Judah and the cultic. There is majestic speech about God. There is a cultic approach to God. God is Elohim (until Exodus 3) and the P-source has many genealogies and lists.

D – Deuteronomic Source: Stresses a central shrine. It also stresses fidelity to Jerusalem; a speech recalling God's work. It has a moralistic approach. God is Yahweh and this source has long sermons (Hayes 2012:125).

The Torah is the result of five centuries of traditional religious activity. Different terms are used to describe the modern critical study of the Bible and this is called Source criticism. The purpose was to ascertain their relative different dates. It is also arranged according to the historical situation of the authors. The sources are assigned relative dates in the Torah to get to the history. Wellhausen's work is subtle and quite brilliant but also biased, it is Pro-Christian and against Judaism (Hayes 2012:126).

5.6.4 Hermann Gunkel's Form Criticism

Hermann Gunkel referred to folklore parallels in the Babylonian creation myth. He stated that the Hebrew Bible could no longer be interpreted in isolation from the rest of the ancient Near East, which includes written texts and artefactual material (Gunkel 1917:13).

Gunkel, in his commentary on Genesis, created the new critical methodology of Form Criticism by examining the genres used in the biblical text to identify the *Sitz im Leben* (setting in life) that produced the text. Form Criticism allowed scholars to go behind the larger literary sources by identifying the smaller and older sources used by their authors. Because of its utility, Form Criticism became immensely influential in Germany and Europe during the 20th century with

important scholars like Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth applying and developing it (Oxford Biblical Studies).

George Smith was a pioneering English Assyriologist who first discovered and translated the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest-known written works of literature. Examples include the 7th century BCE library in Nineveh of King Ashurbanipal. In 1872, George Smith read: 'when the seventh day arrived, I sent forth and set free a dove. The dove went forth but came back; since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.' This was the first hint that the stories of Genesis might have parallels in other sources. Later, in Nineveh, Smith discovered the whole Babylonian creation story, which we now call the *Enuma elish.* This story had striking similarities to the creation story in Genesis 1 (Smith 1872:20).

The Babylonian code of Hammurabi also provides us with new perspectives on the legal sections of the Hebrew Bible (Lance 1981:6).

The current tendency is to date the Pentateuch to the very end of the Monarchy in the 8th or 7th century BCE. One reason is that archaeologists have recently shown that literacy was not widespread in ancient Israel until the 8th century BCE at the earliest. The Deuteronomistic History is thought to be the work of a school of Mosaic reformers under Josiah (650-609 BCE), with its final addition concerning the end of Judah added during the exile in the 6th century BCE. This would mean that the history was set down at least 500 years after the exodus and the conquest they purport to describe (Dever 2003:8).

5.6.5 The Deuteronomistic School

The *Magnalia Dei* (Deuteronomy 26:5-10) makes no mention of Moses in connection with the deliverance from Egypt. Outside Exodus to Numbers, scant attention is paid to Moses, even in the pre-Exilic prophetic literature. Only Jeremiah (15:1) and Micah (6:4) mention him by name. It is only in the book of Deuteronomy and the historical epic of Joshua through Kings, shaped by the 'Deuteronomistic school' of the era of Josiah in the late 7th century BCE, at the very end of the Monarchy, that Moses looms large. There, as the focus of the 'Yahweh alone' reform movement, Moses appears as lawgiver and the founder of the Israelite religion. But, according

to Dever, scholars have long regarded these materials as nationalist and orthodox propaganda. The scroll that Josiah discovered in the Temple in Jerusalem was probably the book of Deuteronomy where Moses is portrayed as larger than life. This portrayal of Moses would be mostly a later literary invention. The Ten Commandments, attributed by later tradition to Moses, appear to have no direct connections to the major strands of the Pentateuch and probably circulated in independent circles for a long time. Most scholars today would date the Ten Commandments no earlier than the 8th or 7th century BCE (Dever 2003:136).

A striking example of the chauvinist nationalism of the Deuteronomistic school, and their obliviousness to the rest of the country, is seen in their coverage of the famous siege of Sennacherib in 701 BCE. The fall of the fortress Lachish, just 50 km southwest of Jerusalem, was considered so significant by the Assyrian king that he commissioned artists to execute huge stone reliefs showing the siege and destruction of Lachish which he then installed in his palace in Nineveh, but the editors of the book of Kings mention Lachish only twice (2 Kings 14 & 17), merely noting that Sennacherib was there. Then, the writers or compilers of the books of Kings spend almost two chapters on the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13-19:37). William Dever asks the question of 'why' and answers his own question by stating that it is because the siege of Jerusalem was miraculously lifted and the Temple of Yahweh was spared. But Lachish, which was destroyed and its population slaughtered, as the Lachish excavations make horrifyingly clear, was of no concern to the biblical writers. Dever, then, concludes that this is but one example of the biblical writers and their cavalier attitude of selectivity, the result of their political and theological biases and that theirs is not a fair and balanced history of Israel and its religions (Dever 2005:71).

Dever continues and says that the biblical literature constitutes what is essentially 'propaganda'. They are openly partisan, championing the cause of extreme nationalism and orthodox Yahwism, the truth as they saw it. They have no tolerance for divergent views, not even those held by kings, all of whom they despise except the reformist kings, Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 31) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 34-35), whom they label as 'good' kings. Dever concludes that the writers were from minority parties of the 8th to 7th century BCE and that the Hebrew Bible is thus a 'minority report' and ancient 'revisionist history' on a grand scale (Dever 2005: 71).

Referring to the book of Joshua, I remind the reader that this is the corner stone of my thesis and my hypothesis, that it was the influence of the mythological story of the war-goddess Anat that influenced the writers of the book of Joshua to write such a saga of war and cruelty upon an innocent people and nation, such as the Canaanites that inhabited the land at that time.

5.6.6 Archaeology and the extra-biblical literature

Until archaeology began to expose the long-lost world of the Bible in the mid-19th century, the Hebrew Bible was the only surviving body of literature from ancient Israel (that is, Israel of the Iron Age). It stood alone like a silent sentinel, witness to a fascinating but enigmatic past with no comparative literature that would enable us to evaluate it in context. The discovery of hundreds of extra-biblical documents has changed all that. In fact, the non-biblical literature bulks larger than that of the canonical literature. This extra-biblical literature includes:

(1) Egyptian texts
(2) Ugaritic texts
(3) Extensive Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian records
(4) Aramaic and Moabite royal inscriptions
(5) Fragments of Hebrew monumental inscriptions
(6) Hundreds of 8th to 6th century BCE Hebrew ostraca (inscribed potsherds), as well as inscribed objects, graffiti, and tomb inscriptions; and
(7) Thousands of inscribed seals and seal impressions

All this constitutes an independent witness, free of the biases of the biblical texts (Dever 2005:73-74).

Dever believed that the biblical writers had some genuine sources but that they did not hesitate to manipulate them. They did this with exaggerations and embellishments, and with their own additions and outright inventions, to make the stories serve their own ideological agenda. The newer and archaeological evidence have now become our primary source for writing any history of early Israel. The question then is: If the Hebrew Bible is not historically true, then how can it

be true at all? If the biblical stories are not historically accurate, how did they come to be written in the first place? Dever concludes that the biblical writers wrote stories to serve their own ideological agenda; well-intentioned propaganda; or 'historicized myth'. So, the books of Exodus to Numbers and Joshua through Kings cannot be read uncritically as a satisfactory history. However, neither can they be discarded as lacking any credible historical information (Dever 2003:226).

The books of Exodus and Numbers that describe the escape from Egypt and the wandering in the wilderness, as well as the massive conquests in Transjordan, are overwhelmingly contradicted by the archaeological evidence**.** There is little real history in these books; there may have been a historical figure like the biblical Moses who did exist and was recognized as a leader among a group of Semitic slaves in Egypt. He might have seemed to be a miracle worker, and perhaps the mediator of knowledge about the new deity, Yahweh. However, concerning the conquest and settlement of Canaan, as depicted in the books of Joshua and Judges, there is little that we can salvage from Joshua's stories of the rapid, wholesale destruction of Canaanite cities and the annihilation of the local population. It simply did not happen; the archaeological evidence is indisputable (Dever 2003:227-228).

Nowadays, modern scholars increasingly see the completed Torah as a product of the time of the Achaemenid (or Persian) Empire (450-350 BCE) while others place its production in the Hellenistic period (333-164 BCE) or in the Hasmonean Dynasty (140-37 BCE). The book of Deuteronomy is seen as having a history separate from the first four books and there is growing recognition that Genesis developed apart from the Exodus stories until joined to it by the Priestly writer (Lance 1981:7).

5.6.7 New focal points in Pentateuch studies

New focal points, such as a renamed interest in the Persian Period, emerged in Pentateuch studies during the past decades, whereas earlier Pentateuch studies discussed the formation of the Pentateuch against the background of the monarchic and exile periods. More recent studies have postulated that the Pentateuch, and particularly its status as Torah, is rather a product of

the Persian era. Especially the theory about the supposed Persian imperial authorization of the Torah has received considerable attention in recent years (Jonker 2014:123-146).

The Documentary Hypothesis of Julius Wellhausen and Source Criticism as method have come under pressure in Hebrew Bible scholarship the second half of the 20th century. Newer redaction-historical approaches have shown that the history of the formation of the Pentateuch and Joshua – 2 Kings cannot be treated independently. Konrad Schmidt (2008:118) has shown that the state of the discipline during a major part of the 20th century was dominated by a compromise between Martin Noth (1966) and Gerhard von Rad (1981) and their respective theories of a Tetrateuch plus Deuteronomistic History (Noth), or a Hexateuch (Von Rad 1966), which were in fact incompatible. There are now alternative theories: The broader framework of a Henneateuch, stretching from Genesis to 2 Kings, is more appropriate for describing the formation of the literary work at the beginning of the biblical canon. With this broader framework the various stages of formation and different combinations of materials can be envisioned. (Schmidt 2008:118).

Instead of working with well-defined D and P-sources like in the classical Source Critical model, scholars now suggest that these stages of formation could be the result of different phases of Deuteronomistic and priestly redactions. One should also reckon with a 'proto-Deuteronomistic History', contained in a literary unit in (pre-stages) of Samuel-Kings. The book of Genesis is probably a later addition to an extended version of a Deuteronomistic History which stretched from Exodus to 2 Kings. One can ask: How did the Pentateuch become the Torah during the post-exilic period? Priestly families of Jerusalem and major landowners of Judah were forced by the Persian imperial authority to come up with one document that could serve as community constitution in Judah (Jonker 2014:123-146).

Rainer Albertz (2009) says that the process of editing the Pentateuch seems to have ended in the Persian Period because in the Hellenistic Period the authority of the Pentateuch was already widely accepted. The promulgation of the Pentateuch was a process. An external political force must have been involved and seen to an agreement between the Judeans and the proto-Samaritans. The Persians would have wanted to limit the rivalries between their provinces,

Judah and Sumeria, after they had become the south-western borderline to independent Egypt. The primary purpose of the Pentateuch was not to regulate life within a province of the Persian Empire, but to define the conditions of membership in a specific community called 'Israel'. The internal justifications are therefore dominant. Instead of letting itself be assimilated or becoming just another province in the vast Empire, post-exilic Israel wanted to safeguard its identity. Persian politics gave it the opportunity to do this (Albertz 2009:424).

5.6.8 The origins of the major historical work Exodus 2 – 2 Kings 25

These chapters make up the 'Deuteronomists' and are assigned to later literary-historical strata belonging to the post-Priestly redactions of the Pentateuch. (It is the redactions included in the Pentateuch after the Priestly source was done and is thought to have been post-exilic) Jeroboam's creation of the two royal sanctuaries with statues of calves (1 Kings 12), in the story of the golden calf (Exodus 32) indicates that Exodus to 2 Kings was subjected to a redactional revision and was conceived as a major historical work (Schmidt 2008:118). Exodus 32 transfers the classic original sin that brought about Israel's destruction, namely the sin of Jeroboam, the first monarch of the Northern Kingdom, which was also continued by all his successors, to the people themselves: it is not the kings who are guilty; the people themselves are at fault for the catastrophe:

'He [Aaron] took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "*These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt*!"' (Exodus 34:4). The worship of the golden calf is seen as a supreme act of apostasy, the rejection of a faith once confessed. The golden calf was a symbol of virility and strength associated with the Canaanite god El. Such idolatry persisted into the divided monarchy when King Jeroboam I of the northern kingdom of Israel commissioned two golden calves for the sanctuaries of Yahweh in Dan and Bethel, to serve as the Lord's attendants.

'So, the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold. He said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. *Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up of the land of Egypt.*'" (1 Kings 12:28).

The older statements, 2 Kings 17:21-23, insists that the guilt of Israel is rooted in the sin of Jeroboam while the long and apparently secondary introduction in verses 7-20 makes it clear that the people themselves are the primary bearers of responsibility (Schmidt 2008:118). This occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against Yahweh, their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. They had worshiped other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom Yahweh drove out before the people of Israel and in the customs that the kings of Israel had introduced (2 Kings 17:7-8) (Schmidt 2008:119).

This major historical presentation lies within the intellectual and spiritual environment of the 'Deuteronomistic' writing, which refers continuously to Israel's being led out of Egypt as its foundational theological datum and emphasizes the covenant theology that links Yahweh and Israel (Yahweh is Israel's God, and Israel is Yahweh's people), and that makes the relationship between God and God's people an exclusive one. Egypt, by contrast, is a typical example of the pagan world of the nations: the offense of the Egyptian Pharaoh that evokes the plagues consists precisely in not being a worshiper of Yahweh and not wanting to be one (Exodus 5:2-3). Theologically, the exclusivist religion-political character matches the argumentation for exclusive worship of Yahweh who presents himself as a jealous God who permits no worship of other deities. It is this command that causes Israel to collapse and fall since, in the Monarchical Period, it chose the forbidden way of the nations and worshipped their gods instead of its own God (Schmidt 2008:120).

The sharp contrast between Israel and the nations in Exodus – 2 Kings has its contemporary cultural background in the increased pressure to define the identity of 'Israel' in the absence of a state, a land, or a kingship. The harsh sayings against the nations and the powerful images of conquest in the book of Joshua stand as contrafactual to, and not parallel with, the historical experiences behind them (Schmidt 2008:120).

Apart from the archaeological evidence mentioned above, today there are also the Ugaritic Canaanite religious texts as well as the Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform records. The Assyrian royal inscriptions of the period 900 to 640 BCE throw a light on the religions of the West, mostly

through the personal names and the names of gods. The Amarna Tablets, discovered in Egypt in 1887, were nearly all written in Palestine and Syria and are of first-hand value for the light which they shed on these countries' religions in about 1400 to 1300 BCE. The great number of tablets excavated at Mari in 1936 to 1939 is also of great importance (Albright 1940: 62).

Da Silva is of the opinion that there are theologies in the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler in their respective 'historiographies'. The Deuteronomist (Dtr) is the end-product of more than one author's work and must have begun before the exile. A first edition was made around 621 to 609 BCE and then received more redactions during the exile and given its final form after 560 BCE. Verbal and written historical traditions were used; traditions supporting the monotheistic views were incorporated into his work and anything containing mythological motifs were carefully edited. The main theme of the Dtr's theological thought was that there is only one God, Yahweh, who had chosen Israel as his people and had set up a covenant with him at Sinai. Israel's God was a living person who showed his love by giving his Law to his chosen people and who expected his people to return that love by keeping his Law. The Deuteronomist viewed the monarchy of Israel as a failure. So, the kings were presented as sinners who, from King Solomon onwards, adopted Canaanite ways of life and they saw the southern tribes as God's chosen people with whom he had made a covenant at Sinai. The Deuteronomists proclaimed a doctrine of retribution – God revealed his will through his Law; if they kept the Law, they would receive blessings and disobedience to his Laws would bring misfortune. Their aim was to protect the pure worship of Yahweh during the exile and to warn contemporaries to not make the same mistakes (Da Silva 1994:12-14).

The Chronicler (Chr) is regarded as a post-exilic author. It was first thought to be younger than the Dtr but is now thought to be older. The Chronicles is the work of a very competent literary artist who deliberately chose what he wanted to use – skilfully building up large units and reshaping longer units into shorter compact narratives. In his theological verdict, he asked questions like: Who are we? What happened to the monarchy and the temple? And What will our future be? So, the Chr's main theological thoughts are: He too believed in one God but he worshipped him as the God who had set up a covenant with his representative, David. Kingship rested on this God alone. He was, and would remain, in control. After the demise of the

monarchy, the Chr transferred the ideology surrounding the monarchy to the heavenly court and he equated the 'kingship of Israel' directly with the 'kingdom of God'. The figure of the king had become a prototype of the Messiah – therefore the excision from his work of all negative references to David and Solomon. The name 'Israel' had become a 'religious' name to the Chr after the disruption of the state. Both the Dtr and the Chr associated blessings with obedience and disobedience with judgement. The Chr endeavoured to persuade contemporaries to work for the 'perfect community' where all God's people would be united, under one king, worshipping the one true God in His temple (Brooke et al 1994:15).

Morton Smith (1987) speaks of religious parties among the Israelites before 587 BCE. He also regards the Old Testament as a cult collection, concerned with heroizing the patrons, priests, and prophets in the cult and to magnify the cult deity. He holds that the term, Old Testament, is used mainly by Christians but was originally the collection approved by the rabbinic successors of the Pharisees, who, by 100 CE, accepted the books as holy. In the copying process, texts were edited or corrected by the copyists. The *Sitz im Leben* of the books of the Old Testament is their role in the life of those who wrote, copied, and corrected them (Smith 1987:7 & 14).

5.7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA ON THE ORIGIN OF ISRAEL

5.7.1 The Israelite conquest of Canaan in the light of archaeological evidence

In examining the archaeological aspect of the conquest of Canaan, Mazar (1990), concentrated on the factual situation at many of the sites related to the biblical conquest narrative (mainly in Joshua and Numbers). In the book of Numbers, there is a battle depicted against 'the Canaanite king of Arad who lived in the Negev' (Numbers 21:1), mentioning 'they completely destroyed them and their towns, so the place was named Hormah.' So, according to this tradition, the Israelites journeyed to the region of Arad from Kadesh-Barnea via HorHahar, but a thorough archaeological research at the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea did not reveal even one sherd of pottery from the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age I. The place was only populated during the 3rd millennium BCE and only in the time of the Israelite Monarchy, when a royal fortress was established there (Mazar 1990:330).

Extensive research of the Arad Valley has also revealed no evidence of any Canaanite settlement of the Late Bronze Age. The conclusion that Amihai Mazar then comes to, is that the biblical stories were formulated as a literary tradition of no historical value when the Israelites began settling this region at the end of the period of the Judges and at the time of the Monarchy (Mazar 1990:330). Also, Joshua 1-11 is regarded by many as a literary creation from a much later time. The narrative of Joshua 8 concerning the city of 'Ai, is also not based on historical reality because of the absence of any Late Bronze Age Canaanite city there (Mazar 1990:331).

All authorities today agree that the major break in the archaeological sequence in Palestine would have to be correlated with a shift from 'Canaanite' to 'Israelite' culture, which occurred at the end of the Bronze Age (ca. 1250-1150 BCE). From the forty-year wandering in the wilderness, as told in the book of Exodus, not so much as a potsherd from the 13th to the 12th century BCE, the timeframe of the alledged Exodus, is found. After a hundred years of exploration and excavation in the Sinai Desert, archaeologists can say little about the desert route. The most likely route from Egypt to Canaan would have been along the coast. The reference to the Philistines that were settled there is an anachronism because they did not settle in Canaan until the time of Ramses III (ca. 1180 BCE). Dever suggests three different models for the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan: the first is the Conquest Model as suggested by the biblical account of the book of Joshua, which Dever condemns as genocide; the second is the Peaceful Infiltration Model; and the third is the Revolting Peasant Model (Dever 2003:71-73), all of which were discussed above.

5.7.2 Cities in Joshua 12:9-24

The following list is of the principal excavated Iron I, or 'early Israelite', sites (Dever 2003:56-57):

	Ancient Place Name	**Biblical reference**	**Archaeological Evidence**
1	Jericho	Joshua 12:9; 6; 24:11	Meagre Late Bronze II occupation
2	Ai	Joshua 12:9; 7:2-8:29	No occupation from 2250 to 1200
3	Jerusalem	Joshua 12:10; Judges 1:21	No destruction at the end of LB II
4	Hebron	Joshua 12:10; 10:36-37	No evidence
5	Jarmuth	Joshua 12:11; 10:5	LB II to Iron I occupation
6	Lachish	Joshua 12:11; 10:31-32	City VII destroyed in late 13th century BCE

7	Eglon	Joshua 12:12; 10:31-32	Tell'Aitun; LB occupation unclear
8	Gezer	Joshua 12:12; Judges 1:29	LB destruction, probably Merneptah
9	Debir	Joshua 12:13; 10:38-39	Tell er-Rabud, no destruction at end of LB
10	Geder	Joshua 12:23	Khirbet Jedur; LB II and Iron I pottery
11	Hormah	Joshua 12:14	Identification unknown
12	Arad	Joshua 12:14	No LB occupation
13	Libnah	Joshua 12:15; 10:29-31	Identification unknown
14	Adullam	Joshua 12:1	Khirbet'Adullam; not excavated
15	Makkedah	Joshua 12:16; 10:28	Identification unknown
16	Bethel	Joshua 12:16; 8:17; Judges1:22-26	Destruction in late 13th century BCE
17	Tappuah	Joshua 12:17	Tell Sheikh Abu Zarad; not excavated
18	Hepher	Joshua 12:17	Tell el-Muhaffer; not excavated
19	Aphek	Joshua 12:18	LB destruction followed by Iron I 'Sea Peoples'
20	Lasharon	Joshua 12:18	Identification unknown
21	Madon	Joshua 12:19	Identification unknown
22	Hazor	Joshua 12:19; 11:10-13	LB city, Stratum XIII, destroyed in 13th century BCE
23	Shimron-meron	Joshua 12:20	Identification unknown
24	Achsaph	Joshua 12:20	Khirbet el-Harbaj; LB II and Iron I pottery
25	Taanach	Joshua 12:21; Judges 1:27	Meagre LB II remains; Iron I village destroyed
26	Megiddo	Joshua 12:21; Judges 1:27	LB II/Iron I settlement, Stratum VIII
27	Kedesh	Joshua 12:22	Tell Abu Qudeis; Iron I settlement
28	Jokneam	Joshua 12:22	LB II settlement, Stratum XIX, destroyed
29	Dor	Joshua 12:23; Judges 1:27	Sea Peoples' known as Sikils occupy city in 12th century; transition from LB to Iron I not yet determined
30	Goiim	Joshua 12:23	Identification unknown
31	Tirzah	Joshua 12:24	Tell el-Farah (N); LB II and Iron I occupation; no evidence of destruction

It is conceivable that there was a military chieftain and folk hero named Joshua, who won a few skirmishes here and there but there was no Israelite conquest of most of Canaan. Most of those who called themselves Israelites, were so designated by the contemporary Egyptians and were, or had been, indigenous Canaanites. A re-evaluation of the book of Judges has a far truer ring to

it than that of Joshua. The stories of a two-century sociological and religious struggle against the prevailing local Canaanite culture fits well with the current archaeological facts on the ground.

There is, therefore, reason to think that Judges, so realistic about the humble origins of early Israel, rests on much older and more authentic traditions than Joshua, both orally and written. So, we are grateful to the final editors for including the book of Judges into the canon, despite its contradiction of Joshua. However much one would like to admire the historically accurate but politically incorrect version of Israel's origins in Judges, it remains a minority opinion, concluding that the main thrust of the biblical tradition overall is that Israel came into existence as the Chosen People of God by a unique, miraculous intervention of its god, Yahweh, in history (Dever 2003:228).

5.7.3 Comparison of themes in the books of Joshua and Judges

The following is a summary of the themes found in the books of Joshua and Judges (Dever 2017:187):

	Joshua	Judges
1	Swift, total conquest	Symbiosis with Canaanites
2	Philistine population vanquished	Amalekites continue
3	Huge territory; immediate conquest	Small, decentralized entity
4	Centralized reorganization; rapid change	Long, evolutionary process
5	Tribal' solidarity under Joshua's rule	Communitarian' society
6	Covenant with Yahweh	Family religion; polytheism
7	Little interest in ordinary folk, daily life	Many detailed sketches of village life
8	Little or no archaeological accord	Some archaeological accords

The conclusion in the light of archaeology is inevitable. The book of Joshua looks like a late, Deuteronomistic construct preoccupied with theological concerns, such as the Sinai covenant, centralization, and the temple, that were paramount particularly in the exilic and post-exilic era (Dever 2017:187).

5.7.4 More on the biblical narratives

William Foxwell Albright, although he believed in the historicity of the Exodus and Canaanite Invasion narratives, wrote that the Ugaritic texts make it clear that the menace of the Sea

Peoples was increasing steadily towards the end of the reign of 'Ammurapi', the last known king of Ugarit, and that these events could no longer be separated from Libyan and Aegean invasions of the north-western Delta in the 5th year of Merneptah. The king of Ugarit tells the king of Cyprus, who has asked for naval aid, that he has no ships to send since his fleet is in Lycian waters – obviously to guard against an attack of the Sea Peoples on the Hittite coast! Albright goes on to say that his friend, David Nelman suggested (in 1964), that it would be difficult to separate the critical phase of the Israelite Invasion of western Palestine from the world situation at the time. Albright then makes the following profound statement: 'Not only were the Egyptian coast proper and the coasts of Cyprus and Ugarit menaced by marauding Sea Peoples (believed by the Egyptians to have been sent by the Hittites), but there were also attacks of this sort on Palestine' (Albright 1968:163).

There are also the revisionists, like Thompson, who says: 'It may perhaps appear strange that so much of the Bible deals with the origin traditions of a people that never existed as such' (Thompson 1999:34). He goes on to say that 'our historical knowledge comes, rather, not from the Bible's references but, independently, from their occurrence in Assyrian texts' (Thompson 1999:15). So, Dever concludes that the revisionists attempt to read ancient Israel out of history and asks the question: 'What did happen in Canaan on the Late Bronze-Iron I horizon as new peoples emerged?' (2003:143).

Finkelstein (2007) also mentions Thomas Thompson as having proclaimed that the idea of an Israel was a very late notion and almost entirely fictional. Thompson reinterpreted the archaeological evidence in order to reconstruct a multi-ethnic society in Iron Age Palestine with no distinctive religion or ethnic identity at all (Dever 2003:143).

As far as the Moses narrative is concerned, there is no external (extra-biblical) witness to Moses, either textual or archaeological. The notion of a revolutionary new religion that emerged overnight and did not require revolutionary development is unconvincing. In the oldest part of the Exodus narrative, namely Exodus 15, the 'song of the sea', Moses is not even mentioned (Dever 2003:136).

Archaeology has given us a different perspective on Judahite affairs. King Ahaz saved Judah from the bitter fate that the Northern Kingdom had to suffer; he incorporated Judah into the Assyrian economy which led to unprecedented prosperity for Judah and in which Judah and Jerusalem experienced demographic growth. Jerusalem expanded to the Western Hill and Judah participated in the Assyrian-led Arabian trade. As a result, the Beer-sheba Valley flourished. In contrast, Hezekiah made a reckless decision to rebel against Assyria and was therefore responsible for the events that led to the utter devastation of Judah. Archaeology demonstrates the extent of the demise of Judah. Almost every site excavated in the Shephelah and the Beer-sheba Valley revealed evidence of destruction. The Shephelah – the breadbasket of Judah – never recovered from the shock. Surveys there reveal the dramatic decrease in the number of settlements in the 7th century BCE (Schmidt 2007:16).

There is also reference to the prophet Ezekiel when he utters: 'Your origin and your birth are of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite' (Ezekiel 16.3). There are strong continuities between the Late Bronze Age Canaanite culture and that of the Iron Age I Israelites, as well as linguistic continuities: modern linguists agree that biblical Hebrew is a Canaanite dialect and that even Israelite religion derives many of its supposedly unique features from Canaanite religion (Dever 2003:168).

Was the propagandistic writing of the Hebrew Bible, who wrote as though they were the chosen people of God, perhaps responsible for this Jewish people, whom Luther encountered 1500 years later, as so disagreeable, and is the bloodthirstiness that Luther experienced amongst the Jews of the Middle Ages related to the bloodthirsty book that the authors wrote when compiling the book of Joshua? And could it have been that the bloodthirsty myth of the war-goddess Anat had influenced the authors to write such a saga devoid of historicity?

5.7.5 Continuous surveys of the West Bank

From the 1970s onwards, there have been excavations of several small sites of the 13th to 12th centuries BCE, and this began to change the picture of the settlement process in Canaan. In an ironic twist of history, the establishment of the State of Israel by the United Nations in 1948, left the new nation without its ancient heartland, the West Bank, which was designated part of the

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with an Arab population. After the Six Day War in 1967, Israeli archaeologists flocked to the newly conquered territories and made a quick surface survey of the territory because they did not know how long the Israeli occupation would last. Later, in 1978 Yohanan Aharoni did a large-scale regional survey (Dever 2003:92).

The surveys in the West Bank continued for nearly a decade and produced an astonishing wealth of data that totally revolutionized our understanding of the origins of Israel. According to the data from recent Israeli surveys, the number of sites from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I period, grew enormously (Iron Age I is taken as 12th to 11th century BCE Israelite sites) (Dever 2003:96).

The number of Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I sites grew: In Upper Galilee from 8 to 23/40 with an estimated population of 2 300 to 4 000 by the 11th century BCE. In Lower Galilee, it grew from 5 to 25 with an estimated population of 2500 by the 11th century BCE. The Shephelah (foothills) grew from an unknown number to 2 with an estimated population of 500 by the 11th century BCE while the region of Manasseh grew from 22 sites in Late Bronze Age to 96 in Iron Age I, with an estimated population of 1 000 to 2 900. The Ephraim sites grew from 5/6 to 122, with a population of 9650 and the Jerusalem area grew from 8 sites to 12-30 sites with a population of 2 200 to 4 500 (Dever 2003:97).

So, the population growth from the 'Canaanite' Late Bronze Age in the 13th century BCE to the Iron Age I 'Israelite' period by the 11th century BCE, especially in the hill country, had grown from 29 to 254 sites (Population 12 000) in the 13th century BCE, and, in the built-up area, from 117 to 547 sites in the 11th century BCE. The significant fact in all these figures is that in contrast to other areas of Canaan, the hill country – where most of the supposedly Israelite peoples settled and later developed into a nation-state – witnessed a population explosion in the 12th century BCE (Dever 2003:98).

The areas described above, formed the frontier – the margins of urban Canaanite society. This pattern of settlement fits the Peaceful Infiltration Model as well as the Peasant Revolt Model better, compared to the Conquest Model. There was no need for armed conflict, also no

opportunity for military conflict (as described in the book of Joshua), because these areas were largely devoid of a Canaanite population (Dever 2003:99). Also, the Iron Age I villages were tiny villages, ranging from a fraction of an acre up to about four or five acres. None have the characteristics of an urban area or a small town; they are all agricultural villages or hamlets; and they are typically located on hilltops overlooking small, fertile intermountain valleys which were good for growing grain. The adjacent hillsides were suitable for terracing for crops like olives, grapes, fruits, and vegetables (Dever 2003:99-100).

5.7.6 The 12th century BCE Pillar-courtyard or 'Israelite' type houses

The so-called pillar-courtyard houses were dug up by archaeologists in many of the Israelite villages such as at Raddana, on the western outskirts of the present-day Jerusalem suburb of Ramallah. These houses were of a distinctive type that is now called 'pillar-courtyard' in style. It is also called the 'four-room' or 'Israelite' house. A typical example will consist (Dever 2003:77; cf. Mazar 1990:344).

The most striking continuity between Iron Age I and Iron Age II is seen in the extensive use of the pillar-courtyard house until the end of the Monarchy, not only in the rural areas but also in the built-up urban areas – an important clue to ethnicity. This form is authentically Israelite (Dever 2003:196).

The pillar-courtyard, or four-room houses are regarded as 'type-fossils' of ancient Israel, uniquely characteristic and a reliable ethnic indicator. The courtrooms often feature a deep cistern cut into the bedrock, clay ovens and hearths for cooking. Very stereotypical examples of such houses are found at almost every Israelite Iron Age I site, and they persist throughout the Iron Age II period until the end of the Monarchy, even at sites that were highly urbanised by then.

More significant than the individual house-plan is the grouping of two or three such typical houses, with common walls and shared courtyards, to form a larger complex, or family compound. The compounds are then typically grouped into larger 'clusters', several clusters then forming the plan of a village. Between clusters were open areas for penning up animals,

cultivating gardens, storage, rubbish dumping, or making pottery. This speaks of a lifestyle of close-knit, independent, self-sufficient families in small rural villages (Dever 2003:105). William Dever further argues that towards the 10th century BCE, some of the early agrarian settlements had become urbanised, like Dan, Hazor, Beth-shean, Megiddo, and Ta'anch. All of these had grown into large, fortified cities by the 10th century BCE and were now clearly Israelite as identified by their pottery and other distinct ethnic identities.

Also, the trebling of the hill country populations from some 55 000 to 150 000 for the entire area by the 7th century BC is also to be expected as the natural result of the evolution of the state, by then relatively stable and prosperous. Terraces and cisterns continue, but larger cities gradually required highly engineered public water systems, such as those found at Hazor, Megiddo, Gibeon, Jerusalem, and Gezer. Iron came into more widespread use and the pottery of Iron Age II develops out of Iron Age I, and the forms of items such as cooking pots, bowls, and juglets show continuous evolution (Dever 2003:82).

Other excavated sites with 'pillar-courtyard' houses include Tel Masos with its oval settlement; and Giloh, a Jerusalem suburb, where the pillar-courtyard, four-room houses were excavated in 1981 by Amihai Mazar. He also analysed the Giloh pottery, found there, as being typical of other early Israelite sites in the hill country (noticing the traditional cooking pot rims; and the large store jars with reinforcing band around the neck – the so-called 'collar-rim' jars that are thought to be characteristic of early Israelite sites) (Dever 2003:80-81).

Mazar speaks of the intensive archaeological surface surveys that were done in the highlands and which reveals an entirely new settlement pattern in Iron Age I. Hundreds of new small sites were inhabited in the mountainous areas of Upper and Lower Galilee, in the hills of Samaria and Ephraim, in Benjamin, in the northern Negev, and in parts of central and northern Transjordan. The greatest number of Iron Age I sites are located within the tribal territories of Manasseh and Ephraim in the central hill country of Palestine. The settlement process was intensive there. In the land of Benjamin, some twelve Iron Age I sites have been located, most of them along the mountains' watershed and slightly to the east. The biblical description of the war against Benjamin, in Judges 20-21, refers to a walled city of great importance. However, the excavations

of this level at Tell en-Nasbeh (identified with biblical Mizpah), revealed only scanty finds and include thin occupation debris, which point to the existence of a poor village at the site during this period. So, once again the biblical tradition exaggerated and distorted the proportions of the event (Mazar 1990:336).

Mazar concludes that we have only vague knowledge of the sequence of settlement emergence and its development in the various regions. It appears that the process began in the early 12th century BCE in the central hill country and in Transjordan and the northern Negev, while most of the sites in the Galilee appear to belong to the 11th century BCE. These settlers may have been partly indigenous and partly originated from the periphery of the country (Mazar 1990:337).

5.7.7 Evidence that Iron I villages were agricultural communities

5.7.7.1 Food remains

By means of 'paleo-ethnobotany' (the extensive sampling using fine sieves and flotation devices to retrieve minute remains of plants that were once used as foodstuffs), we now know that the Iron Age I villages produced large quantities of grains such as wheat and barley, cereals, and legumes. This proves that the inhabitants were farmers and stockbreeders who had long previous experience with the problems of local agriculture of Canaan, adapting quickly to the adverse conditions of the hill country frontier.

a) Animal bones: Most of the animals were sheep and goats. Cattle, oxen, and donkeys are also well attested. Pigs are absent.

b) Storage areas and facilities: There was ample storage space and large collar-rim store jars were used. Remains of grapes, raisins, wine, grains, and olive oil have also been retrieved.
c) Tools: Large, heavy plow points were found, and iron-shod daggers, knives, awls, and flint-bladed sickles.
d) Cottage Industries: We have good archaeological evidence of household facilities for making stone and flint tools, potters' workshops, olive and grape processing installations, and evidence of primitive looms for weaving textiles. All this shows that the

typical village family produced most of what it owned, used, and consumed (Dever 2003:108-109).

5.7.7.2 Aesthetic, ideological, and religious Iron I, Israelite remains

There are rich artistic finds from the 10th to 7th century Israelite Monarchy which includes carved ivories, gem seals, jewellery, terracotta offering stands, figurines, worked stone and alabaster, decorated pottery, and much more. The temples and their elaborate paraphernalia, that are so typical of Late Bronze Age Canaanite society, simply disappear by the end of the 13th century BCE. The only surviving example is the reused 'fortress-temple' that was excavated at Shechem (Dever 2003:126).

Finkelstein and Mazar (2007:19-20) summarises a list of guidelines for a viable reconstruction of the early history of Israel:

1) That archaeology is the only real-time witness of many events described in the biblical texts; especially the pre 9th century BCE formative periods.
2) Biblical history cannot be read as a modern chronicle because it is dominated by the author's theological and ideological themes.
3) Biblical history cannot be read simplistically from early to late. The point of departure should be knowledge of the social, economic, and geopolitical realities of the composition period in late monarchic times.
4) Many of the old stories in the texts are described to fit the authors' ideology.
5) Many of the texts comprises of different layers and only archaeology and extra-biblical sources can assist in identifying and separating them.
6) The compilation of the biblical texts started at the sudden growth of Judah to full statehood as a direct outcome of the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the integration of Judah into the global economy of the Assyrian Empire.

Finkelstein and Mazar (2007) conclude by saying that if this guideline had been applied at the outset of modern biblical studies, we would not have wasted a century on futile research. Ancient Israel was a world in which the Canaanite mythological tales were imbedded. The

ancient Israelites did not live in a bubble, they were part of a world in which folktales and old mythologies were told around the campfire, and it was part of their culture and existence.

5.8 CONCLUSION

In our final chapter, we will go into more detail about the religion of ancient Israel, also seeking and finding the Ugaritic goddess Anat in biblical names and place names, as well as in Egypt and amongst the Jews of Elephantine. I also hold that Anat, as war-goddess, had an influence on the writers of the book of Joshua in their portrayal of cruel extinction to obtain what they portrayed as 'the Promised Land'.

The archaeological evidence for the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I, ca. 1250-1150 BCE, in Canaan, illuminates a period of destruction, social upheaval, and population movements. Following the collapse, several small polities emerged in the region, both in Cisjordan and Transjordan. All reflect an increase in population in the rural and hinterland areas, particularly in the central hill country west of the Jordan River where the frontier was open. There, an ethnic group that is known in contemporary textual sources as the Israelite peoples can be seen in the archaeological record. Particularly striking are both elements of continuity and discontinuity with the preceding and contemporary Canaanite culture (Dever 2017:231).

Finally, I wish to mention that the reconstruction of Israelite origins, as I have suggested in this chapter, contradicts the fundamental theological themes of the literary traditions of the Hebrew Bible. The recurrent motifs in biblical narrative are: (1) miraculous deliverance of the Israelite tribes from Egypt under Moses' leadership; (2) the sojourn in the wilderness and the revelation of the divine law, or Ten Commandments, at Mount Sinai; (3) the covenant of Yahweh with his chosen people and the gift of the Promised Land; and (4) the unified and complete conquest of Canaan and its apportionment among the twelve tribes as their inheritance forever. These incidents, and the themes that accompany them, are the very foundations of the epic story of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, in the New Testament, and in both the later Jewish and Christian communities. The question is then whether the Hebrew Bible's stories are history or myth, fact or fiction (Dever 2003:234-235).

CHAPTER SIX

THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explain the goddess Anat was alive and well in ancient Israel. I aim to state my theory, that the prophet Jeremiah, is referring to the goddess Anat as 'the queen of heaven' when he writes that the women said to him:

> …as for your words, we will not listen to you, but we will do what we will; we will burn incense to the queen of heaven, and pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 44:17)

In this chapter, I aim to expose the religious practices of the ancient Israelites since their origin as a people in the highlands of Palestine through to the time of the monarchy and up until they were driven away by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylonian exile.

According to the biblical account, the Israelites were monotheistic since their sojourn in the Sinai desert. But, in this chapter, I will show by means of archaeological finds, that the Israelites were not monotheistic but indeed, polytheistic. They kept on worshipping the gods of the Canaanites and adhered to the Canaanite culture. Apart from their worship of Baal and Asherah, I aim to indicate the worship of the goddess Anat by the Jews at Elephantine in 5th century BCE Egypt.

6.2 RELIGIOUS MYTHOLOGY

By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, new conclusions were available about the origins and development of many European nations; of ancient Greece and Rome, and of the lands that gave birth to the Hebrew Bible. There were those who suggested that many, or even most, of the biblical stories were not the eyewitness testimonies that they had long been assumed to be but, were instead, a long process of community tradition. This concluded that if biblical materials were the result of centuries of orally and communally transmitted tales, then the process that led to the development of the Bible is the same process that lies behind the genesis of myth (Oden 1987:43).

Myths are attempts of man to penetrate the unknown and are personifications of the unconscious and preconscious processes describing man's awakening to the universe. When he encounters the unknown, man projects an archetypal image which involves his instincts. Myth can also be defined as 'a traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or imaginary persons and often embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena'. The mystery of coming into being of the universe is a central problem for all mythologies. (Oden 1987:43).

Since the discovery of innumerable extra-biblical texts, consensus has been reached among biblical scholars that the mythologies and legends of the different ancient Near Eastern peoples had a great influence on the mythologies and legends recorded in the Hebrew Bible. It is moreover acknowledged that the pre-exilic Israelite nation practised a syncretistic type of religion involving, inter alia, some Canaanite deities and rituals (Mondriaan 2010:11).

Myths are also products of early philosophy, reflecting on the nature of the universe, or they could be political, modelled to unite different worshipping groups into one social or political structure. Myths have burgeoned under all circumstances and throughout the inhabited world – every society has a mythology of some kind. Symbols of mythology are instinctive creations of the psyche that have survived into modern times. Mythologies are stories that incorporate supernatural elements that people believe (Mondriaan 2010:104-105).

Archaeology in the 19th century was a new contributor to the study of myth. This resulted in the unearthing and translating of dozens of myths from Mesopotamia that were startlingly and disturbingly like several biblical narratives. Among other narratives, one could read of a flood more ancient than the Noah flood story in Genesis (Oden 1987:44).

Dever asks whether morality, faith, and the life of a religious community could be predicated on myth but continues to say that the essence of folk religion is not orthodox theology, but symbol, ritual, and myth (Dever 2005:61).

The central pattern within biblical literature is based upon the shape of a central cosmogonic myth within the Canaanite religious mythology. The pattern is threefold:

1) A divine warrior battles against a god of chaos.
2) the divine warrior is victorious; and
3) the divine warrior becomes king and receives a royal palace.

This same pattern appears in some biblical texts in its pure mythical form; for example: 'The voice of the Lord is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The Lord is over many waters. The Lord sat enthroned at the flood, and the Lord sits as King forever.' (Psalm 29:3 & 10); 'Lord, you rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.' (Psalm 89:9); and 'The floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.' (Psalm 93:4). Mixtures of mythical and historical traditions are found in Psalm 77 and Isaiah 51:9-11 (Oden 1987:51).

Myths usually depict goddesses with female sexual characteristics and feminine gender traits. Gender is a social construct of polarized behaviour and attitudes based on sexual identity. Masculine attributes are often described as aggressiveness, rationality, independence, and courage, while feminine qualities are identified as passivity, irrationality, emotional sensitivity, and nurturance. Utilizing the theory of gender, myth analysis must consider the symbolic values of gender imagery concerning the 'femininity' of goddesses and the 'masculinity' of gods within the context of a myth's symbol system in order to appreciate a character's identity fully (Walls 1992:14-15).

Of central importance to the gendered role of goddesses are their sexual activity. In contrast to the identification of the gods with their mythic function, sexual orientation frequently provides the primary metaphor by which mythological traditions define female characters. Therefore, goddesses are equated with their sexual role as wife, erotic lover, or virgin, while gods have a greater range of mythic activities and identities. Modern mythographers often portray feminine imagery simply as 'female equals fertility', based on the presupposition that the dominant social role for women in ancient societies was maternal. So, a distinction should be drawn between fertility and eroticism. The interpretation of all ancient Near Eastern goddesses as mother goddesses ignores the diversity of goddesses and their individual qualities. For instance, the

maternal characteristics do not form the central metaphors for Anat's character in the Ugaritic myths (Walls 1992:15).

Batto is of the opinion that ritual cult promoted the growth of mythic tradition. In the crossing of the sea motif, he says that the 'crossing dry shod motif' originally formed no part of the Exodus tradition but was originally associated with the conquest tradition about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River at Gilgal to take possession of the land of Canaan. Gradually, over the course of several centuries, through their use in cultic celebration at the sanctuary at Gilgal, the motif of crossing dry shod was transferred to the Exodus tradition, until eventually the motif of crossing dry shod came to be associated more closely with the Exodus and the Red Sea than with the conquest and the Jordan. A powerful influence in this transformation of the motif was the linking of River and Sea in the Canaanite version of the Combat Myth in the Baal Cycle, where Baal must fight Yam (Sea) or (River) and triumphs (Batto 1992:128).

Childs (1962) states that there is a difference between the saga, the legend, and the myth, all of which share in supernatural events. The myth is an expression of man's understanding of reality. It stems from a thought pattern, which differs in decisive points from the modern critical one. People of critical mind think of the world around them as passive and impersonal but primitive people think of their surroundings as active and living with powers that influence every area of their lives (Childs 1962:17).

Studying Genesis 1:1-2 which says: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters', Childs concludes that the material found in Genesis 1:2 has its roots in myth (referring to the connection between the Babylonian monster Tiamat, the female personification of the primeval waters, and the Hebrew equivalent of Tiamat). It is thought that Babylonian mythical material found its way into Hebrew creation accounts at the dawn of Israel's history (Childs 1962:37).

'The Lord is great and is to be highly praised in the city of our God, on his sacred hill. Zion, the mountain of God, is high and beautiful; the city of the great king brings joy to all the world'

(Psalm 48:1-2). Both here and in Isaiah 2 we find the same thought about the elevation of mount Zion. ‘In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it, and their people will say, “Let us go up the hill of the Lord, to the Temple of Israel’s God… for the Lord’s teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people”’ (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Isaiah 14 is directed to the king of Babylonia where the Israelites were taken into captivity. The prophet Isaiah refers to ‘that mountain in the north’ where ‘you thought you would sit like a king’ (Isaiah 14:13). The mountain in the north refers to mount Zaphon, seat of the chief Canaanite god, Baal. So, the reference in Psalm 48 as well as in Isaiah to mount Zion, and the highest mountain of all, is a mythological picture stemming from the old Canaanite tradition (Childs 1962:89).

6.3 THE HEBREW BIBLE AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

Israel, as a person, region, and kingdom, plays a prominent role in the biblical narrative. Israel (literally meaning ‘struggles with God’) is first mentioned as an alternative name given to Jacob after wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32:28-29). Israel is also the collective name given to the twelve sons of Jacob (the ‘children of Israel’), the eponymous founders of the twelve tribes who traced their ancestry back to Jacob (Genesis 32:32; 49:16; Exodus 1:9) (Steiner & Killebrew 2014:730).

The world of Iron Age I in Canaan was a new one. It followed the near-total collapse of Late Bronze Age political, economic, and social patterns and witnessed a gradual crystallization of a new world order, culminating in Iron Age II with the formation of small territorial kingdoms. The disappearance of the two imperial powers that dominated the region in the Late Bronze Age – Hatti and mainly Egypt, meant that for the first time in centuries Canaan was free of external domination (Steiner & Killebrew 2014:624).

The peoples of the various nations of the ancient Near East, continuously and extensively migrated from one place to another, thus spreading religious and other beliefs, influencing one

another. It has been attested that those deities with cognate names and similar attributes were worshipped over a large area of the ancient Near East (Mondriaan 2010:11).

For many centuries, the religion of ancient Israel, as told in the Hebrew Bible, was our only reference. Albright states that we can no longer survey the religious background of early Israel without a brief sketch of the religion of the Canaanites of Phoenicia and Palestine as we now know it from the alphabetic texts from Ugarit, supplemented by sporadic archaeological finds. He states that there can no longer be any doubt that the Canaanites possessed just as sharply defined a religious and mythological system as did the Egyptians and the Sumero-Akkadians. From the names of Early Bronze Age towns in Palestine and Phoenicia, we know that the Canaanites of the 3rd millennium BCE had the same gods as appear in the Ugaritic texts (Albright 1968:230-231).

One of the greatest problems connected with the use of the Old Testament as a historical source is that it is a collection of literature that is not historiography but rather a book of which the scope and focus is ideology and religion. The 'historiography' of the Hebrew Bible is built on a religious understanding of the world and the individual that is static: Yahweh is, and has always been, the one true god; other gods are false, and any cult, for any other god than Yahweh, any other place than the one he has determined, is fornication, heresy, and apostasy according to the biblical writers (Binger 1997:40).

The historiography of the Hebrew Bible should in no way be seen as an attempt to give correct answers – to 'tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' – but should rather be seen as creating a past – that suits the present ideology (Binger 1997: 42).

The existence of a large body of Canaanite literature makes it possible for us to compare figures of speech and literary modes of expression as they existed in Israel and in Ugarit. Just as we draw upon classical mythology for many Western speech patterns, so the Israelites drew upon a stock of similes and metaphors, which was common to the ancient Semitic peoples (Pfeiffer 1962: 62).

6.3.1 How the discovery of the Ugaritic and Mari cuneiform texts changed our concept of the historicity of the Hebrew Bible

The title of W.F. Albright's book, *Yahweh and the gods of Canaan,(1968)* reflects the central place that the various 'Canaanite' deities have held in the discussion of Israelite monotheism, which may be defined as the worship and belief in Yahweh and disbelief in the reality of other deities. The discovery of the ancient texts in the Levant, especially the many tablets discovered at Ugarit dating to the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, have provided extensive information about the religion of the Canaanites and provides us with a native Canaanite source. This helps us to reconstruct the relationship between Canaanite and Israelite religion (Smith 2002:1-2).

Because Israel emerged into historical record in the last decades of the 13th century BCE, at the very end of the Late Bronze Age, the milieu from which the Israelite religion emerged was Canaanite. El, 'the kind, the compassionate, the creator of creatures' was the chief of the Canaanite gods, and he, not Yahweh, was the original 'God of Israel'. The word 'Israel' is even based on the name El rather than Yahweh (Smith 2002:32). He lived in a tent on a mountain from whose base originated all the fresh waters of the world, with the goddess Asherah as his consort. This pair made up the top tier of the Canaanite pantheon. The second tier was made up of their children, the 'seventy sons of Athirat' (a variant of the name of Asherah) (Smith 2002:33).

Albright proposes a background of the religion and thought from 1600 to 1200 BCE where the term 'the first internationalism' to the Late Bronze Age in the Near East can be applied. The Middle Bronze Age has been illuminated by the archives of Mari. The princesses of Mesopotamia and Syria corresponded freely in the Middle Bronze Age. They were all Akkadians and Amorites, except for a few Hurrian and other rulers who lived in regions where cuneiform had long been known. In the 15th to 13th centuries BCE, Egyptians were corresponding with Babylonians, Assyrians, Mitannians, Hittites, and Arzawans (Albright 1968:232).

Each country had its own god. Marduk of Babylon was the patron god of southern Mesopotamia. In northern Mesopotamia, he was Ashur of Assyria. In the Bronze Age city of Mari and in some

Iron Age Philistine cities, the divine patron was Dagon. In Damascus and in Dan, the patron god was Hadad or Adad as he was known by other names, particularly the royal title of Baal, which meant 'Lord' (Noll 2013:189). In Tyre, the patron god was Melqart, in Sidon he was Eshmun, in Moab he was Chemosh, and in Edom he was Qos. In Samaria and Jerusalem, the patron god was Yahweh. In Late Bronze Age Ugarit, Baal was the patron god, though he might have co-ruled with either El or Dagon, or both (Noll 2103:189).

No phase of the history of Israelite religion is burdened with so many uncertainties as the period before the state was formed (ca. 1250 to 1000 BCE). The Pentateuch seeks to convey the beginnings of the religion of Israel which it describes as a promise of Yahweh to Moses to liberate Israel from forced labour in Egypt and lead them to Palestine. It was consolidated by revelations of Yahweh on Sinai, in which he gave Israel a law and commandments, installed the cult, and concluded a covenant with Israel after which they arrived at their destination in the Promised Land.

The authors of the Pentateuch were agreed that all the essential elements of the religion of Israel had already been developed in the early period before their entry into Palestine but new insights make it clear that the Pentateuch derives its present form, only from the early post-exilic period – there is thus about 800 years between the writing of the Pentateuch and the actual events that took place. The interests of the authors were clear: they wanted to construct an ideal early period before the settlement and formation of the state so as to deprive the contemporary cultic, cultural and political features of their religious legitimation, demonstrate them to be a false development, and create the basis for a new religious identity, separating Israel from its cultural and political environment. On this basis, the post-exilic reform groups anchored the religious identity of Israel in the early period of Israel (Albertz 1994:23- 24).

Any effort to describe the religion of ancient Israel comes up against clear indications that, as in most religious communities, there was not a single understanding or expression of what that religion was. Both biblical and extra-biblical evidence suggest a certain degree of pluralism, of multiformity rather than uniformity (Miller 2000:46).

6.3.2 When did Israelite belief in Yahweh as one God emerge?

Although the Hebrews would have been interested in the origin of their worship of Yahweh, there is no general tradition that can be authenticated. We find three different accounts of the origin of Yahwism: The Yahwist account in Genesis 4:26; the Elohist account in Exodus 3:14-15, and the Priestly account in Exodus 6:2-3, which is an indication that beliefs were at variance (Boshoff et al 2000:88). The Yahwist narrator recorded that, as early as the time of the birth of Enoch, 'To Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, a son, Enosh was born…people began to call upon the name of the Lord' [*Yahweh*] (Genesis 4:26.). The Jahwist designates Cain as the ancestor of Lamech (Genesis 4:17-24) and, by implication, of Noah, whereas the Priestly narrator calls Seth their ancestor (Boshoff et al 2000:88).

Since the latter part of the 19th century, many debates evolved around the question concerning the origin of Yahweh and the Israelite religion of Yahwism but the traditional view on the origin of Israel's religion and belief in Yahweh was based on the picture we have in the Old Testament regarding the religion of Israel. This view was accepted by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The J-narrator was familiar with traditions that the worship of Yahweh preceded Moses. J, as a literary work, is lately dated by some scholars close to the Deuteronomistic History. The universalism of J is no longer the optimistic worldview of the Solomonic renaissance, but the new outlook of the Babylonian captives who retold and adapted ancient traditions in the light of their predicaments, developing a new, Diaspora theology (Dijkstra 2001:85).

6.3.2.1 Extra-biblical mention of Yahweh

The oldest mention of Yahweh was long held to be on the Moabite Stone (also known as the Mesha Stele), erected by King Mesha of Moab to celebrate his victory over Israel in 840 BCE. The inscription mentions how Mesha, after defeating the Israelites, 'took the vessels of Yahweh to Kemosh' (the chief god of Moab), meaning the objects sacred to the worship of Yahweh in the temple, most likely in Israel's capital of Samaria (Kerrigan 2018:78-79). The Moabite stone was discovered in 1868 CE in modern-day Jordan and the find was published in 1870 CE. Much was made of the discovery of the Stele as it reported the same event from the 2 Kings 3 narratives in which Mesha the Moabite rebels against Israel – with the difference of the stele claiming a Moabite victory and the Bible claiming Israel the winner. (Kerrigan 2018:78 -79).

In 1844 CE, the ruins of the ancient city of Sole, in Nubia, was studied by the archaeologist, Karl Lepsius, who documented the site in detail but did not excavate. It was only in 1957 CE that a team, under the archaeologist Michela Schiff Giorgini, excavated the site and found reference to a group of people described as 'Shasu of Yahweh' at the base of one of the columns of the temple in the hypostyle hall. The temple was built by Amenhotep III (ca. 1386-1353 BCE) and the reference to Yahweh established that this god was worshipped by another people long before the time when the events of the biblical narratives are thought to have taken place. The discovery of Amenhotep III's mention of the Shasu of Yahweh placed the god much earlier in history than had been accepted previously but also suggested that Yahweh was a desert god whom the Hebrews adopted in their exodus from Egypt to Canaan. The Moabite Stone has been reinterpreted in that the people of Moab also worshipped Yahweh and the reference to Mesha taking the vessels of Yahweh to Kemosh most likely meant that he repossessed what he felt belonged to the Moabites, not that he conquered Israel and its god in the name of his own (Van de Mieroop 2006:250).

6.3.2.2 Timeline for the emergence of the name of Yahweh ca. 3500 BCE-1200 BCE

Ca. 1080 BCE-722 BCE, Yahweh possibly develops from the Canaanite god of metallurgy during the Bronze Age. Next, Yahweh develops as state god of the Kingdom of Israel and then later of the Kingdom of Judah (ca. 515 BCE-70 CE). Finally, in the Second Temple period, Judaism is revised, scriptures canonized, and Yahweh becomes the sole deity, and monotheism is established (summarised by the author). (A Du Plessis own conclusion).

6.3.3 The emergence of biblical archaeology

The branch of archaeology that relates to the Hebrew Bible was traditionally coined 'biblical archaeology'. It emerged as a field of research during the 19th century and developed into a full blown social-scientific discipline with its own research methods and theoretical frameworks in the 20th century. Because it is the Holy Land, the land of Israel has continuously been the focus of archaeological research from the beginning of the modern era. In the 19th century, it suffered from the infancy of the new discipline. Early archaeologists inflicted much damage on sites like Jerusalem in the early years, prior to World War I. Yet, pioneers like Sir Flinders Petrie developed

new concepts and methods that laid the foundations for later advances and research (Schmidt 2007:27-8).

Amihai Mazar in his book, *Archaeology of the land of the Bible ca 10,000-586 BCE*, discusses the historicity of the Hebrew Bible. His view is to follow those who claim that the initial Deuteronomistic History and large parts of prophetic and wisdom literature took place during the exilic and post-exilic periods and underwent further stages of editing, expansion, and change. Yet late-monarchic authors also utilized earlier material and sources that might include (Schmidt 2007:28):

1) The archives of the Jerusalem Temple library
2) Palace archives
3) Public commemorative inscriptions, and
4) The oral transmission of ancient poetry; the Song of Miriam, the Song of Deborah, and the Blessings of Jacob.

6.3.4 The historical framework of the Deuteronomistic narrative

Both the Assyrian inscriptions and local inscriptions like the stelae of Mesha, king of Moab, and of Hazael, king of Damascus (better known as the Tel Dan inscription), confirm that the general historical framework of the Deuteronomistic narrative relating to the 9th century BCE was based on reliable knowledge of the historical outline of the century. The historical perspective of the Hebrew Bible can be seen as a telescope looking back in time: the farther in time we go back, the dimmer the picture becomes. Oral traditions and stories embedded in the biblical historiography might preserve more extensive authentic details concerning events or phenomena closer to the time of writing. There is also selective memory and memory loss, censorship, and biases due to ideological, theological, personal, and other motivations (Schmidt 2007:30-1).

Though written in what was, at the time' one of the smallest and most negligible states of the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible is perhaps the most profound product of the ancient Near Eastern world. Many ancient local memories can be identified in the biblical text; some of them

even seem to be pre-Israelite and adapted by the Israelites as part of their heritage (Schmidt 2007:33).

6.4 YAHWEH AS THE GOD OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

The centre of ancient Israel's religion was the worship of a deity named Yahweh. Biblical epigraphic and archaeological evidence all confirm that fact and so, ancient Israel's religion is often referred to as Yahwism. Since the Shasu, mentioned above, were nomads from Midian and Edom in northern Arabia, the widely accepted Kenite hypothesis of how Yahweh came to the north is that traders brought Yahweh to Israel along the caravan routes between Egypt and Canaan (Grabbe 2007:151).

We read in Exodus 3:13 that Moses asks God's name after their encounter at the burning bush when he says: 'when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you", and they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM". And He said,"Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"" Representing the biblical pronunciation of 'YHWH', the Hebrew name revealed to Moses, consisting of the sequence of consonants Yod, Heh, Waw, and Heh, is known as the tetragrammaton. In the post-exilic era, the Jews ceased to use the name Yahweh because as Judaism became a universal rather than merely a local religion, the more common Hebrew noun Elohim (Plural in form but understood in the singular), meaning 'God', tended to replace Yahweh to demonstrate the universal sovereignty of Israel's God over all others. Yahweh is also interpreted as 'He Brings into Existence Whatever Exists'. The personal name of God was probably known long before the time of Moses. Moses' mother was called Jochebed, a name based on the name Yahweh but, in Exodus 6:3, God says that he revealed himself to the patriarchs not as Yahweh but as El Shaddai, similar to El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon.

One can draw a parallel between the holiness of God and His grace and mercy. Exodus 34 expresses the demand for Israel's excusive worship of Yahweh. The claim of Yahweh's jealousy comes from ancient Israel and is strongly associated with their covenantal relationship with Him The jealousy of Yahweh was a theological form of the prohibition of worship of other gods and

was a way of expressing the mutual commitment of people to the deity and the deity to the people (Miller 2000:14).

Yahweh was the national god of the Iron Age kingdoms of Israel (Samaria) and Judah. His exact origins are disputed, although they reach back to the Iron Age and even the Late Bronze Age (Smith 2010:96-98). His name may have begun as an epithet of El, head of the Bronze Age Canaanite pantheon, but the earliest plausible mentions are in Egyptian texts that place him among the nomads of Southern Transjordan (Dever 2003:128).

6.4.1 The prohibition of images of Yahweh and of other gods

The prohibition of images of Yahweh, and of other gods, begs four questions:
(1) Was the prohibition of images directed primarily toward images of Yahweh or images of other gods?
(2) When did this prohibition against images begin?
(3) What was the function or meaning of this aniconic feature?
(4) Why were images not used or permitted?

If other gods were prohibited, then obviously their images were also prohibited. The imageless character of the cult of Yahweh also supports this understanding. The deity was represented by a cherubim throne upon the moveable ark. When the ark was carried into battle, the people and their armies believed that Yahweh was present. There was no statue or image of the deity. Rather, Yahweh was enthroned invisibly upon the cherubim. Later, in the Deuteronomic theology, the ark came to be understood as the container of the Torah, or law. As such, it still represented the deity's presence, only now in the Torah rather than upon an invisible throne (Miller 2000:16).

The defamation of the image of Dagon is described in 1 Samuel 5 where the Philistines placed the ark of the covenant in the temple of their god, Dagon. Excavations at Hazor, in upper Galilee, provide examples where the enemy or attacker finds the images of the gods of the city under attack, and breaks off the head and arms of their gods. Just so, in 1 Samuel 5: 'The statue of Dagon had fallen and broken, but on the second day, the statue had fallen again in front of the

Covenant Box, this time its head and both its arms were broken off and lying in the doorway'. So, probably, the image was broken and destroyed by attackers, when after, the Deuteronomistic writers wrote the story as if, by a miraculous act, the image of Dagon fell before the ark (the presence of Yahweh), and broke.

When Jeroboam went to Shechem, he was afraid that the people would want to return to Jerusalem to go and worship there. He therefore 'made two golden calves' and told the people: 'Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt' He set one golden calf in Bethel and the second one in Dan, and so the Deuteronomistic writers wrote 'so this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan' (1 Kings 12:26-30).

Miller (2000), is of the opinion that the absence of any condemnation of the bulls from prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, and Amos, as well as Jehu's not removing them in his drastic purge of Baalistic elements in the North (2 Kings 10:29), suggests that they were not initially regarded as Yahweh images. However, they were condemned by Hosea in the 8th century BCE. (Miller 2000:20).

Yahweh worship was, as already stated, aniconic, with the absence of images except for 'standing stones'; but, according to the Hebrew Bible, the temple in Jerusalem featured Yahweh's throne in the form of two cherubim, their inner wings forming the seat and a box (the ark of the Covenant). Pre-exilic Israel, like its neighbours was polytheistic and Israelite monotheism was the result of unique historical circumstances. The worship of Yahweh alone began at the earliest with Elijah in the 9th century BCE, but more likely with the prophet Hosea in the 8th; even then it remained the concern of a small party before gaining ascendancy in the exilic and early post-exilic period (Albertz 1994:214). The early supporters of this faction are widely regarded as being monolatrists rather than true monotheists, they did not believe that Yahweh was the only god in existence but instead believed that he was the only god the people of Israel should worship. Finally, in the national crisis of the exile, the followers of Yahweh went a step further and outrightly denied that deities aside from Yahweh even existed, thus marking the transition from monolatry to true monotheism (Albertz 1994:214).

6.4.2 Yahweh'ism as liberation theology

Israel's Yahweh religion arises in the liberation process of an oppressed outsider group of Egyptian society. In contrast to the state religions of the ancient Near East, which derive themselves from earliest mythical times, Yahweh religion has a historical foundation (Albertz 1994:46). The god Yahweh is older than Israel; he was a southern Palestinian mountain god before he became the god of liberation for the Moses group. The god whom the Exodus group got to know through Moses comes from an area which was not part of the territory of later Israel. There is some evidence, the Egyptian lists from the time of Amenophis III, that Yahweh already had his home in the mountain region south of Palestine and was worshipped there before he became the God of Israel. There are also the Hebrew Bible reports of the links between Moses and the Midianites (Exodus 2:15 and 3:1 & 18). After his flight from Egypt, Moses is said to have married a Midianite woman whose father had been a Midianite priest (Exodus 2:16, 3:1, 18.1).

The tradition fluctuates when the father-in-law is called Reuel (Exodus 2:18), Jethro (3:1; 18:1), Jether (4:18), and Hobab (Judges 1:16; 4:11; Numbers 10:29). It is not stated that Jethro is a priest of Yahweh but, according to Exodus 18:12, he is the one who invites the Israelites to a sacrificial meal for Yahweh on the mountain of God. So, Albertz (1994) concludes that the Midianites or Kenites were already worshippers of Yahweh before the Exodus group joined them. Further indication of this is that the Kenites were also regarded as notable worshippers of Yahweh later (Genesis 4:13; Judges 4:17) and that Israel felt akin to them (1 Samuel 15:6) so the Kenites were accorded an area of settlement within Judah (Judges 1:16). So, the god Yahweh who had his home in the wild, craggy mountains of southern Palestine was also worshipped, among others, by the nomadic Midianites or Kenites (Albertz 1994:51-52).

The Moses story, which in its current position, functions as the continuation of Genesis and then the depiction of the occupation of the land in the book of Joshua, was originally an oral and written document, a separate complex of traditions. The Moses narrative is thematically and theologically independent so, the patriarchs and the exodus represent two previously independent complexes of tradition that were connected in a secondary literary move. From

Exodus 1:6-8, the link between the Moses story and the patriarchs and the Exodus, was created extremely late, namely, by the Priestly document. The links are Exodus 1:7 (a verse unanimously assigned to the Priestly document) and Exodus 1:9: 'Look, the Israelite people are more and numerous and more powerful than we'. The Moses narrative was handed down independently, separate from the patriarchal history, and the two were linked in the wake of the Priestly document (Schimdt 2008:79-80). We find a description in Isaiah 40:18-19 of the making of an image of a deity: 'The workman moulds an image, the goldsmith overlays it with gold and the silversmith casts silver chains'. It is thought that the biblical prohibition on images is largely a creation of biblical authors after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. Prior to that point, there had been Yahweh's cult statue in the Temple and the exilic authors formulated a new theology which no longer had a statue of Yahweh (Kang 2018:94).

6.4.3 The Sinai narrative (Exodus 19 – Numbers 10) as foundation to the religion of Israel

A second key experience, which lay at the foundation of the religion of Israel, was the encounter with God on Sinai. The historical background of the Sinai tradition has been put in question. The Sinai narrative (Exodus 19 to Numbers 10) seems like an alien body within the Pentateuchal tradition of the exodus settlement. So, the Sinai tradition has been made to be understood as a historicized cult legend (Sch2008:80).

Assmann, in his book 'Moses the Egyptian', explains that he is concerned with Moses as a figure of memory and, as such, Moses the Egyptian is radically different from Moses the Hebrew or the biblical Moses. He is also seen as the deliverer from Egypt as the land of despotism and idolatry whilst the biblical Moses personifies the Mosaic distinction. If 'we are what we remember', the truth of memory lies in the identity that it shapes. It lies in the story, not as it happened but as it lives on and unfolds in collective memory. We are the stories that we are able to tell about ourselves. 'We have, each of us, a life-story, an inner narrative – whose continuity, is one's life. At the collective level, these stories are called "myths"' (Assmann 1997:14-15).

Unlike Moses, Akhenaten, Pharoah Amenophis IV (ruler of Egypt for about seventeen years in the middle of the 14th century BCE), as a figure, is exclusively of history and not of memory.

Shortly after his death, his name was erased from the king-lists, his monuments were dismantled, his inscriptions were destroyed, and almost every trace of his existence was obliterated. For centuries, no one knew of his extraordinary revolution. Until his rediscovery in the 19th century, there was virtually no memory of Akhenaten. Moses represents the reverse case. No traces have ever been found of his historical existence. He grew and developed only as a figure of memory. Immediately after the first publication of the rediscovered inscriptions of Akhenaten, it was realised that he had done what was ascribed to Moses: he had abolished the cults and idols of Egyptian polytheism and established a purely monotheistic worship of a new god of light, whom he called 'Aten' (Assmann 1997:23).

The Old Testament is mostly concerned with the cult of the god, Yahweh, cult being understood in its wider sense to include all ways of securing the god's favour. Since the Hebrew Bible is thus a cult collection, the party differences which shaped the collection will have been those which concerned the cult. Even if the Exodus is accepted, that all Israel came out of Egypt, the story knows of the mixed multitude which accompanied the Israelites: Midianites and Moabites, who became associated with them in the desert. There were also others who joined them after their entrance into the Promised Land, such as the Gibeonites, and Jebusites, Jerahmeelites and Kenites, and Hebrews. The Scripture tells that many Canaanite cities were left unconquered and that the Israelites soon began to marry the women and worship the god of Canaan. Marriage to aliens seems to have been common and accepted in the early period since it is reported of such heroes as Judah, Simeon, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samson, David, and Solomon – to name a few, and foreign women became national heroines, such as Jael and Rahab, for example (Smith 1987:12).

6.4.4 King David's establishment of his court in a Jebusite city

The Hebrew Bible is also silent on relationships which followed David's establishment of his court in a Jebusite city, the trains of the foreign queens and the staffs of the 'high places' built for them; the colony of Phoenician artisans required by the building programme of Solomon. (Smith 1987:13).

The presence of these foreigners doubtless resulted in numerous mixed marriages. We know of the mother of Solomon who had first been married to a Hittite then to David and one of David's sisters had a son by an Ishmaelite. Significantly, marriage with foreigners is not attacked by the pre-exilic prophets but the Deuteronomists are violently opposed to it, although their opposition derives mainly from their concern to prevent the worship of gods other than Yahweh (Smith 1987:13).

Throughout the Old Testament, one reads that there were several agreements made between Yahweh and Israel; when exclusive worship of Yahweh was maintained, it went well. When the contract with Yahweh was breached and other gods were worshipped, it went badly. So, Israel's repeated breach of contract with Yahweh led to the destruction of Samaria in 722 BCE and of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. This interpretation of history supposes, and is declared by the Old Testament, that Israelite worship of gods other that Yahweh was frequent and important (Smith 1987:14).

Dever asks: 'What do I really think of biblical theology?" I have concluded that it is useless in the attempt to reconstruct a reliable portrait of ancient Israelite religion. Indeed, it is a barrier to understanding, because it imposes medieval and modern constructs of synagogue and church, often arbitrary, upon ancient Israel' he goes on to explain that any biblical theology would obscure the variety and vitality of Israel's religious experience. He draws a distinction as an archaeologist to what happened in history and may speculate on the question of 'what these events meant' (2005:39).

The Israelites themselves were originally Canaanites but Yahweh does not appear to have been a Canaanite god (Day 2002:15). The head of the Canaanite pantheon was El. Yahweh is based on the Hebrew root HYH/HWH, meaning cause to exist', as a shortened form of the phrase *el du* yahwi *yahw saba'ot, 'El* who creates the hosts', meaning the heavenly host accompanying El as he marched beside the earthly armies of Israel (Miller 2000:2).

6.4.5 The gods of the nation states surrounding Israel

According to the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh was the national god of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. After the 9th century BCE, the tribes and chiefdoms of Iron Age I were replaced by ethnic nation states, Israel, Judah, Moab, Ammon, and others, each with its national god. There were four main festivals in the rural life of the Yahweh worship: The Passover festival, the birthing of lambs, the Shavuot cereal harvest festival, and the sukkot fruit harvest festival. This probably pre-dated the arrival of the Yahweh religion (Albertz 1994:89). These festivals became linked to events in the national mythos of Israel's Passover with the Exodus from Egypt (as portrayed in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible); Shavuot with the law giving at Sinai, and Sukkot with the wilderness wanderings (Davies 2004:112). The festivals celebrated Yahweh's salvation of Israel and Israel's status as His holy people – His worship also involved sacrifice, although the rituals in Leviticus 1-16, with their stress on purity and atonement, were probably only introduced after the Babylonian exile (Davies 2004:112).

Although the Hebrew Bible gives the impression that the Jerusalem temple was always meant to be the central or even the sole temple of Yahweh, we now know that this was not the case. The earliest known place of worship is a 12th century open-air altar in the hills of Samaria featuring a bronze bull reminiscent of Canaanite 'Bull-El' (El in the form of a bull). Archaeological remains of further temples have been found at Dan and at Arad in the Negev as well as at Beer-sheba, both in the territory of Judah (Dever 2003:388).

6.5 THE KINGSHIP OF YAHWEH AGAINST ITS CANAANITE BACKGROUND

6.5.1 Yahweh as king in creation and providence

Yahweh has his heavenly council. The description of his home resounds with the language of the Canaanite pantheon. Yahweh is described as king of gods Psalm 95:3 -5: 'For the Lord is a mighty God, a mighty king over all the gods. He rules over the whole earth, from the deepest caves to the highest hills. He rules over the sea, which he made; the land also, which he himself formed.' There is a likeness to the descriptions of the Ugaritic pantheon.

6.5.2 Yahweh as conqueror of chaos (*Baal language)*

'Why do you keep me under guard? Do you think I am a sea-monster?' This text in Job 7:12 is reminiscent of Sea (Yam) in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle of myths as also is Psalm 74:14: 'You crushed the heads of the monster Leviathan and fed his body to desert animals.'

The scriptures of rivers, floods, and the water of the deep is language inherited from the Ugaritic myths, such as Psalm 93:3-4: 'The ocean depths raise their voice, O Lord; they raise their voice and roar. The Lord rules supreme in heaven, greater than the roar of the ocean, more powerful than the waves of the sea.' In Genesis 1:2, 'The earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God was moving over the water.' Finally, Psalm 77:16 states: 'When the waters saw you, O God, they were afraid, and the depths of the sea trembled.'

6.5.3 Yahweh as warrior, Lord of hosts

The Lord is portrayed as a warrior, as is also Ugaritic mythical language: 'The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name' (Exodus 15:3); 'Who is this great king? He is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, victorious in battle' (Psalm 24:8); and 'A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace"' (Isaiah 9:6) (Albertz 1994:213).

Israel is portrayed as the Lord's hosts, as his earthly army, as in Exodus 7:4: 'I will make the king stubborn, and he will not listen to you, no matter how many terrifying things I do in Egypt. Then I will bring severe punishment on Egypt and lead the tribes of my people out of the land'; Exodus 12:41: 'On the day the 430 years ended, all the tribes of the Lord's people left Egypt'; and 1 Samuel 17:26: 'David asked the men who were near him, "What will the man get who kills this Philistine and frees Israel from this disgrace? After all, who is this heathen Philistine to defy the army of the living God?"'

6.5.4 The ark as God's throne, the sign of His presence in early battles

1 Samuel 6:12-15 states that:

> The cows started off on the road to Beth Shemesh and headed off the road. They were mooing as they went. The five Philistine kings followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh. The people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, when suddenly they looked up and saw the Covenant Box. They were overjoyed at the sight. The wagon came to a field belonging to a man named Joshua, who lived in Beth Shemesh, and it stopped there near a large rock. The people chopped up the wooden wagon and killed the cows and offered them as a burnt sacrifice to the Lord. The Levites lifted off the Covenant Box of the Lord and the box with the gold models in it and placed them on the large rock. Then the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt sacrifices and other sacrifices to the Lord.

6.5.5 Lord of heavenly hosts

The following examples from the biblical text shows examples of God as Lord of heavenly hosts. Genesis 32:1-2 states: 'As Jacob went on his way, some angels met him. When he saw them, he said, "This is God's camp"; so he called the place Mahanaim'; Joshua 5:13-15: 'While Joshua was near Jericho, he suddenly saw a man standing in front of him, holding a sword. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you one of our soldiers or an enemy?" "Neither" the man answered. "I am here as the commander of the Lord's army". Joshua threw himself on the ground in worship and said, "I am your servant, sir. What do you want me to do?" And the commander of the Lord's army told him, "Take your sandal off; you are standing on holy ground." And Joshua did as he was told ; and 1 Samuel 4:4 reads: 'So they sent messengers to Shiloh and fetched the Covenant Box of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned above the winged creatures.

6.5.6 Yahweh as storm-god (*Baal language)*

Yahweh is described in remarkably similar ways to Baal in some texts. For example, texts like Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 33:2 state: 'The Lord came from Mount Sinai; he rose like the sun over Edom and shone on his people from Mount Paran. Ten thousand angels were with him, a flaming fire at his right hand'; and Judges 5:4-5 says: 'Lord, when you left the mountains of Seir, when you came out of the region of Edom, the earth shook, and rain fell from the sky. Yes, water poured down from the clouds.' Elijah on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18 can be used as another example (Albertz 1994:214).

We find above examples of similarities between the council of gods in the Hebrew Bible and in the Ugaritic mythology. We see comparisons between El's abode on mount Zaphon and Mount Zion of Yahweh. The Baal Cycle portrays Baal as the conqueror of chaos, and as storm-god, and the Hebrew Bible portrays Yahweh in the same way.

6.5.7 The character of Yahweh and his relationship to the sun-god

Excavations of a rock-cut pool close to the Gihon spring at Jerusalem revealed a group of glyptic materials that is of major importance for the reconstruction of cultic paraphernalia from Iron Age Jerusalem. On behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, excavations were carried out in Jerusalem beside the Gihon Spring in 1995. During their work, a large Middle Bronze IIB (ca. 1700-1500 BCE) rock-pool was discovered as well as an 8th century BCE private dwelling. The material could be dated by the ceramic finds to the later part of the 9th and beginning of the 8thcentury BCE (Kamlah and Michelau 2012:317).

Yahweh has often been classified as a kind of Canaanite weather god. The oldest traditions in Judges and the Books of Samuel depict Yahweh as a deity of tempest, combat, and war. Different passages relate a wooden box with a stone in it as cult symbol or his sanctuary (the Ark of God). The character of Yahweh was closer to the Egyptian god Seth or Baal-Seth than to the Baal of Ugarit, or the Baal mentioned in Hosea 2 as the god of nature. One of the scarabs found during the Gihon fountain excavations, portrays this deity. Baal-Seth is sometimes represented as purely anthropomorphic corresponding to the Canaanite tradition and sometimes with the head of the Seth animal typical of the Egyptian custom. The Gihon scarab has wings instead of arms, probably related to the wings of the wind or storm mentioned in Psalm 18:11 and Psalm 104:3: 'who makes the clouds his chariot: who walks upon the wings of the wind' (Kamlah and Michelau 2012:333).

Another scarab with Baal-Seth, this time the variant with Baal-Seth standing on a lion, was found in Eilat. Apart from the wings of the storm and the horned cap, he is purely anthropomorphic. The association of Yahweh with a roaring lion is found in Amos 1:2 and 3:8: 'The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy?'

Both scarabs belong to the group of so-called post-Ramesside mass produced scarabs. They first appeared in the 11th century BCE and were common in the 10th century BCE and lends support to the hypothesis that Yahweh was closer to Baal-Seth than to the Canaanite weather and fertility god. The two sun discs flanking the head of Baal-Seth indicate his close relation to the

sun-god. Baal-Seth fights the Apophis snake, as shown on a group of scarabs, giving him the name: 'beloved by the sun-god'. The cooperation of these two deities, their cohabitation in the Solomonic temple, and finally their identification, is thus not as strange as it might first appear (Kamlah and Michelau 2012:333).

6.6 ASPECTS OF CANAANITE RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

6.6.1 Old Testament account of the Canaanites

The Hebrew Bible account of the Canaanites is now regarded as a biased account and extra-biblical references to Canaan is also not helpful. The scribes at Ugarit mentioned Canaanites in their country but did not seem to see themselves as Canaanites. Most specific cities which seem to fall in Canaan were in Phoenicia or in Galilee, while Ugarit does not seem to be included in any extant source. Although the antipathy of Israelite and Canaanite is still accepted in some circles, the recent trend in scholarship is to view the Israelites as originating in large part from the indigenous population (Brooke et al 1994:116-119).

The Canaanites are best known from the biblical accounts that portray them as the hostile indigenous inhabitants of Canaan who formed the major obstacle to Israel's attempts to claim their 'promised land'. Scholarship is divided regarding the concept of a Late Bronze Age Canaanite entity or whether there is a definable region called Canaan. This question has been brought to the forefront with the blurring of the distinction between 'Canaanite' and 'Israelite' during the past few decades in both archaeological and biblical circles (Killebrew 2005:94). As the main antagonists to early Israel's claim to the Promised Land, Canaanites and Canaan are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible 160 times. Most of these references appear in the Pentateuch and in the books of Joshua and Judges and deal primarily with genealogical relationships, the covenant, the alleged Exodus, and conquest. The borders of Canaan are described in Numbers 34:1-12; and Ezekiel 47:1-7; 23-29. The southern boundary is described in Joshua 15:2-4, while 19:24-31 outline the northern border. Taken together, second-millennium references to Canaan describe a region south of Alalakh and Ugarit, corresponding roughly to what is sometimes referred to as Syria-Palestine (Killebrew 2005:137). The imposition of Egyptian imperialism provided a relatively stable economic environment that was conducive to elite control over international trade in Late Bronze Age Canaan and to the development of a largely

homogeneous material culture (Killebrew 2005:138). Although it may never be possible fully to reconstruct the factors that led to the transformation of the Late Bronze Age world during the final decades of the 13th century, it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the demise of the international world and empires of the Late Bronze Age was a long process that included gradual decline, destruction, abandonment, and/or continuity. Egyptian influence is evident in Canaan through much of the 12th century BCE; however, by the middle of the century, Egyptian prestige was battered and in decline (Killebrew 2005:37).

Various kinds of evidence from biblical and extra-biblical sources attest to the fact that the god Yahweh had roots and origins among the high gods of the Canaanite religion (Miller 2000:24). As indicated in Genesis, the high god El was worshipped in the patriarchal religion by divine names such as El Olam and El Shaddai. These were also titles of the high god of the Canaanite pantheon, a patriarchal figure, and head of the assembly of the gods. The epic materials from Ugarit regularly show El answering, helping, and directing the royal figures and he was also the transcendent creator God. As the Genesis narratives reveal, the gods of the ancestors were identified with Canaanite El who bore traits that make the identification natural, so, the god of the ancestor Abraham, Jacob, and the like, may have been Ilu or El (Miller 2000:25).

To reconstruct the Canaanite religion of the ancient Hebrews brings us to realise that their religion and culture was incorporated into the Phoenician kingdoms of the time. This explains the overall cultural reconstruction that made up the Syro-Palestinian region at that time. The Phoenician-Canaanite vision of ancient Israel is becoming more evident now, surpassing the more distinctive description given to us in the Biblico-exilic revision that has been imposed on us (Miller 2000:25).

A reconstruction of the Canaanism of ancient Israel should include three stages:

1. A description of Canaanite religion according to the Hebrew Bible including what we know from its own sources.
2. A description of overt assimilation of Canaanism, its institutions, concepts, and other resources, by the Yahwistic religious system of the Hebrew Bible.

3. A description of the profession of Canaanism as revealed, supposed, and implied by the tradition of 'History, Law and Prophets'' this will be based on the way the biblical traditions contradict and polemicize against it. The texts relating to historical Israel (Joshua through Chronicles) offer much material for such a reconstruction of Canaanite religious practice and beliefs (Miller 2000:25).

As an example, 2 Kings 10:18-28 is quoted:

> 'Then Jehu called all the people together and said to them, 'Ahab served the Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. Now, summon all the prophets of Baal, all his ministers and priests; not one must be missing. For I am holding a great sacrifice to Baal, and no one who is missing from it shall live.' In this way Jehu outwitted the ministers of Baal to destroy them. So, Jehu said, 'Let a sacred ceremony for Baal be held.' They did so, and Jehu himself sent word throughout Israel, and all the ministers of Baal came; there was no man left who did not come. They went into the temple of Baal and it was filled from end to end. Then he said to the person who had charge of the wardrobe, 'Bring out robes for all the ministers of Baal'; and he brought them out. Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal and said to the ministers of Baal, 'Look carefully and make sure that there are no servants of the Lord here with you, but only the ministers of Baal.' Then they went in to offer sacrifices and whole offerings. Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside and said to them, 'I am putting these men in your charge, and any man who lets one escape shall answer for it with his life.' When he had finished offering the whole-offering, Jehu ordered the guards and the lieutenants to: 'Go in and kill them; let no one come out!' The escort and the lieutenants then rushed into the inner room of the temple of Baal and brought out the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them; and they pulled down the sacred pillar of the Baal and the temple itself and made it a refuse dump to this day. Thus, Jehu stamped out the worship of Baal in Israel' (NEB) (Del Olmo Lete 1994:266).

The above text aims to transmit an episode that emphasizes the socio-religious background that characterized the revolt of the general Jehu against Ahab, king of Israel-Samaria. The text certifies the existence of two groups or factions: that of the 'worshippers of Baal' and that of the 'servants of Yahweh'. Some of these could also have been worshippers of Baal and among them the king would no doubt be numbered. It is unlikely that he would not be a 'servant' of the national God, in spite of being described as 'worshipper,' and also principal 'officiant,' of the Baalistic cult promoted and rendered official by him, since this, like any other polytheistic cult, is not exclusive. Only the mixing of rites and sacral customs could be a sin for a Canaanite, according to Ugaritic KTU 1.4:19ff. Others were 'servants of Yahweh alone' for whom it was forbidden not only 'to have another god before Yahweh (in the cult)' (Exodus 20:3), as was the case with the Canaanite regarding the gods of other peoples and their rites, but also for whom,

according to prophetic and Deuteronomistic preaching, it was absolutely prohibited ‘to go after any other god’ (Del Olmo Lete 1994:267).

6.6.2 Canaanite sacrificial ritual cuneiform writings from Ugarit

The texts of Baal and Anat, written in Canaanite cuneiform of the mid-fourteenth century BCE, from ancient Ugarit, do not answer the question of the original setting in which they were sung. The poetic cycle was orally composed. It is marked by oral formulae, characteristic repetitions, and by fixed pairs of synonyms in traditional thought rhyme which marks Semitic oral literature as well as much of the oral literature throughout the world. Moreover, their repertoire of traditional formulae overlaps broadly with that of the earliest Hebrew poetry. Therefore, in view of the shared oral repertoire, its formulae, its themes, and its prosodic patterns, it seems likely that the mythic cycle stems from the main centre of Canaanite culture and date, in terms of its earliest oral forms, no later than the Middle Bronze Age (1800-1500 BCE). In the Baal Cycle, we are dealing with a version of a mythic literature common to the Canaanites and those who shared their culture from the border of Egypt to the Amanus (Cross 1973:112).

In Ugaritic myths we find in KTU 1.10 iii ‘O Baal of the mist, divine Haddad of the clouds.’

We find similar poetic devices shared by Canaanite and Hebrew poetry, for example, the couplets in the Psalm 92:8-9: ‘Because you, Lord, are supreme forever. We know that your enemies will die, and all the wicked will be defeated.’ and ‘Your rule is eternal, and you are king forever. The Lord is faithful to his promises, and he is merciful in all his acts’ (Psalm 145:13).

Similarly, the poet of the Baal Myth had written:

‘Now your enemies, O Baal,
Now your enemy you will smite,
Now you will cut of your adversary,
You will take your eternal kingdom,
Your everlasting dominion’ (ANET, 131) (Pritchard 1958:119).

Canaanite sacrificial ritual was much more diversified than that of the Israelites. Many more animals were employed as offerings. The Ugaritic sacrificial ritual mentions cattle (especially bullocks) and small cattle such as rams, ewes, lambs, and kids that were offered, also birds such as doves. Excavations at Beth-Shean and Lachish have yielded quantities of bones of large and small cattle and at Gezer's 'high place', deer bones were found. In the sacrificial tariffs of Carthage, dating from the 4th century BCE, young deer were offered plus all the above mentioned, which shows that the Ugaritic myth was not purely imaginative. Human sacrifice is not mentioned in Ugaritic tablets at all. Albright says that the biblical allusions to human sacrifice could imply that it was prevalent in the early 1st millennium BCE. Many Roman witnesses have attested to the fact that human sacrifice was practised by the Carthaginians, who migrated from Phoenicia in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE; this was practised on a large scale down to the fall of Carthage. According to the historian of Alexander's campaigns, Quintus Curtius, the Tyrians thought of renewing the custom during the siege of their city in 332 BCE (Albright 1940:93).

It can safely be said that the ritual of human sacrifice was gradually abandoned by the Phoenicians after their country was absorbed into the Assyrian provincial system in the early seventh century BCE. (Albright 1940:93).

6.6.3 Canaanite cultural influence on the religion of Israel

Israel inherited local cultural traditions from the Late Bronze Age and its culture was largely continuous with the Canaanite culture of the coast and valleys during the Iron Age I period. The Ugaritic evidence is pertinent to the study of Canaanite religion since inscriptions from the Late Bronze Age and the Iron I period in Canaan indicate that the deities of the land included El, Baal, Asherah, and Anat, all major divinities known from the Ugaritic texts. The proper name *'y'l,* 'where is El?' is contained in a 12th century BCE inscription from Qubur el-Walaydah, which lies about 10 km southeast of Gaza (Smith 2002:28). An arrowhead from El-Khadr near Bethlehem dating ca. 1100 BCE reads *bn'nt* 'son of Anat' (Smith 2002:29).

Throughout the Ugaritic texts, Baal is repeatedly called 'the one who rides the clouds', or 'the one who mounts the clouds. The description is recognized as an official title of Baal. Part of the literary strategy of the Israelite prophets was to take this well-known title and attribute it to

Yahweh, as the God of Israel. In support of this theory, Isaiah 19:1 states: 'This is the message from Egypt. The Lord is coming to Egypt, riding swiftly on a cloud'; Deuteronomy 33:26 says: 'People of Israel, no god is like your God, riding in splendour across the sky, riding through the clouds to come to your aid.'; Psalm 68:33 says: 'To him who rides in the sky, the ancient sky. Listen to him shout with a mighty roar'; and Psalm 104:2-4 says: 'You have spread out the heavens like a tent and built your home on the waters above. You use the clouds as your chariot and ride on the wings of the wind' (Smith 2002:30).

Another similarity is the plurality of thrones in Daniel 7:9-14:

> 'As I looked on, the thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His garment was like white snow, and the hair of his head was like lamb's wool. His throne was fiery flames, its wheels were blazing. A river of fire streamed forth before Him, thousands upon thousands served Him, myriad upon myriads attended Him; the court sat and the books were opened…As I looked on, in the night vision, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented to Him. Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; all peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship one that shall not be destroyed'.

This description is that of a divine council – the high sovereign in his throne room, meeting with the heavenly host. The Ugaritic literature has many such scenes:

a) In the Baal Cycle, El, the aged high god, is the sovereign in the council and in Daniel chapter 7 'The Ancient of Days', the God of Israel, is seated on the fiery, wheeled throne (Ezekiel chapter 1). Similarly, the Ugarit El, is white haired and aged.
b) In the Baal Cycle, El bestows kingship upon the god Baal, the Cloud-Rider, after Baal defeats the god Yam in battle.
   Yahweh-El, the Ancient of Days, bestows kingship upon the Son of Man who rides the clouds after the beast from the sea (Yam) is destroyed (Daniel 7).
c) Baal is king of the gods and El's vizier. His rule is everlasting.
   The Son of Man is given everlasting dominion over the nations. He rules at the right hand of God (Smith 2002: 30).

6.7 YAHWEH AND EL

The head of the Canaanite pantheon was the god El, just as among the Hebrews, where he was early called El ‘Elyon ‘the Highest God’ or El Shaddai. El’s consort was the goddess Athirat, the Asherah of the Bible, often called ‘Shirat of the Sea’, meaning ‘She who treads the sea’.

The original god of Israel was El. Firstly, the name of Israel is not a Yahwistic name with the divine element of Yahweh, but an El name, thus suggesting that El was the original chief god of the group named Israel. Secondly, we read, in Genesis 49:24-25, of a series of El epithets separate from the mention of Yahweh in verse 18. Deuteronomy 32:8-9 casts Yahweh in the role of one of the sons of El, here called ‘*elyon:* ‘When the most High (*‘elyon)* gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated humanity, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of divine beings. For Yahweh’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage, the nation that Yahweh received.’ It also suggests that Yahweh, who was originally a warrior-god from Sinai/Paran/Edom and Teiman, was known separately from El at an early point in early Israel (Smith 2002:32).

The term ‘*el (plural ‘elim)* was used generally of any god ‘who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?’ (Exodus 15:11), and Deuteronomy 3:24: ‘O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy might?’ Also Judges 9:46: ‘When all the leading men in the fort at Shechem heard about this, they entered in the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith’; and Micah 7:18: ‘There is no other god (‘*el*) like you, O Lord; you forgive the sins of your people who have survived.’ The many place names that include the element *‘el* may indicate that El, like Baal, was a term applied to local deities. Jacob’s struggle at Peniel, in Genesis 32:25, has been interpreted as a struggle with an *‘el* of this type. The being who struggled with Jacob had to depart when dawn broke; and this could indicate that the narrative was originally about a local deity (Kapelrud 1965:54).

In a number of books of the Hebrew Bible the term *‘el* is rarely used or not at all. This is true of the historical books, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, and the books associated with Jeremiah and Hosea, the two prophets who were perhaps most hostile to the

intrusion of Canaanite elements into Israelite religion. On the other hand, there appears to be a preference for the term *'el* in the Psalms and the book of Job (Kapelrud 1965:54).

According to Noll there were some Yahweh worshippers living on the southern edges of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age (Noll 2013:135). Perhaps due to trade with Edom/Midian, Yahweh entered secondarily into the Israelite highland religion. Other texts point to Asherah (El's consort) and to Baal and other deities as members of this pantheon. In time, El and Yahweh were identified while Yahweh and Baal co-existed and later competed as warrior-gods (Smith 2002:33).

An indication that Yahweh and El were identified at an early stage is that there are no biblical polemics against El. Israelite tradition identified El with Yahweh already at an early tradition as is also witnessed in the Hebrew Bible. The development of the name El into a generic noun meaning 'god' was also compatible with the loss of El's distinct character in Israelite religious texts. In Joshua 22:22, we find: *el Elohim YHWH* 'God of gods is Yahweh'; the first word in this expression reflects the development of the name of god El into a generic noun meaning 'god'. The phrase 'god of gods' can be compared to 'king of kings' in Daniel 2:37 and Ezra 7:12 (Smith 2002:34).

Miller also mentions that Yahweh probably appeared on the scene as a cultic name of El and would have split off as a separate deity in the differentiation of Yahweh's cultus in south Canaan, an area where the worship of El was popular. Yahweh was thus, in origin, an El figure, as Exodus 6:2-3 suggests that the pre-Mosaic manifestation of Yahweh was as El Shaddai, and the various El names continued throughout the history of Israel's religion to be acceptable titles for Yahweh. According to Miller, the roots of Yahweh can be traced far back (historically and geographically) into the religious world of the ancient Near East and especially in Syria-Palestine (Miller 2000:25).

The characteristics of El become part of the repertoire of the descriptions of Yahweh. In both the texts and iconography, El is an elderly bearded figure enthroned, sometimes before individual deities (KTU 1.3 V; 1.4 IV-V), sometimes before the divine council (KTU 1.2 I), known

by a variety of expressions. Also in Phoenician inscriptions, El is called ‘the ageless one’ (KAI 4:4-5; 14:9, 22; 26) (Smith 2002:36).

Asherah too addresses El: ‘You are great, O El, and indeed, wise; your hoary beard instructs you’ (KTU 1.4 V 3-4). Yahweh is similarly described as the aged patriarchal god (Psalm 102:28 and in Isaiah 40:28). Later biblical texts continued the long tradition of aged Yahweh enthroned before the heavenly hosts. Daniel 7:9-14 and 22 describes a bearded Yahweh as the ‘ancient of days’, and ‘the Most High’. He is enthroned amid the assembly of heavenly hosts called ‘the holy ones of the Most High’. The description for the angelic hosts derives from what we find in Psalm 89:6: ‘For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?’ The tradition of the enthroned, bearded god appears also in a Persian Period coin marked *Yhd,* ‘Yehud’ (Smith 2002:37).

In the Ugaritic texts, the god El is revealed to be wholly benevolent in nature, whereas Yahweh has a fierce as well as a kind side. Judges 5:4-5 associates Yahweh with the storm, which was not something with which El was connected at all. This is rather reminiscent of Baal. It is interesting that the Hebrew Bible has no qualms in equating Yahweh with El, something which stands in stark contrast to its vehement opposition to Baal (Day 2002:13-14). This must reflect favourably on El’s characteristic attributes: as supreme deity, creator god, and one possessed of wisdom. El was deemed wholly fit to be equated with Yahweh. Baal, on the other hand, was not only subordinate to the chief god El, but was also considered to be dead in the underworld for half the year, something hardly compatible with Yahweh, who ‘will neither slumber not sleep’ (Psalm 121:4) (Day 2002:15).

El and Yahweh exhibit a similar compassionate disposition toward humanity. Yahweh is a ‘merciful and gracious god’ (Exodus 34:6) and father. For example: ‘Is this the way to treat the Lord, He is your father, your Creator (Deuteronomy 32:6) and ‘You are our Father’ (Isaiah 63:16 and 64:7). Both El and Yahweh appear to humans in dream-visions and function as their divine patron (Smith 2002:39).

The characteristics of Yahweh in Deuteronomy 32:6-7 include motifs that can be traced to traditional descriptions of El: 'Do you thus require Yahweh, you foolish and senseless people? Is he not your father, who created you who made you and established you? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you; your elders and they will tell you.' So, we compare this with descriptions of El, known as 'Bull El his Father, El the king who establishes and creates'. 2nd millennium BCE Canaanite tradition, preserved in a Hittite text, attributes this title to El. Genesis 14:19 likewise applies this title to *'El 'elyon,* itself an old title El (Smith 2002:41).

6.7.1 Yahweh and El as symbols of opposition

The tribal alliance that was formed, by the peasant and shepherd population of the hill country of Palestine, on a tribal pattern bore the name 'Israel'. The name Israel means: 'God (or El) God contended' or 'my God show himself as ruler' also meaning to contend or to fight. In a decentralized society in which the members deliberately refrain from forming a central political authority for the sake of their rights to freedom and in so doing dissociate themselves from the monarchical structure of dominion in the traditional Canaanite city states, such a name sounds almost like a confession: God should rule and not any human ruler. The option of this society to oppose domination finds its religious expression in the name which it has given itself. The credibility of the affinity between Moses and the Midianites/Kenites need not be undermined by Numbers 12:1 that mentions the 'Cushite wife' of Moses. This name is not formed with the divine name Yahweh. Instead, the element '*el* occurs, which in north-west Semitic languages can be both a generic term and appellative ('god') and a divine name ('El'). In Genesis 33:20, Jacob names an altar, or rather a masseba, which he erects near Shechem, 'El, the God of Israel'. Here, '*el* is clearly a divine name; Israel here must denote the tribal alliance, concluding that the element '*el* in Israel points to a stage in its religious history in which El and not yet Yahweh was the god of the tribal alliance of Israel (Albertz 1994:76 & 260).

The existence of Israel is already attested to for the year 1209 BCE, on the victory stele of Merneptah, so, by that time it might have developed into a political entity in Palestine. This Egyptian mention might be related to a still pre-Yahwistic Israel. So, it seems that in the rural sub-stratum of Canaanite society, there is still the reference to the god El and, only when

entering the hill country of Palestine from the east, they mediated their god Yahweh to the tribal alliance. The integration of the newly arrived group and the change of religion associated with it seem to have taken place without major problems. So, the escaped slaves from Egypt and the former marginal and lower-class groups of Canaanite society had the same interests. Both had freed themselves from their dependence and were in search of a form of society that made it possible for them to live as freely and unencumbered as possible. So, Albertz comes to the conclusion that the statement on the Merneptah Stele, 'Israel lies fallow and has no seed corn' i.e., no descendants, even suggests that the experiment of inhabiting the barren hill country and desert regions of Palestine had already lost its attraction and the influx of further elements of the Palestinian population had failed to happen. So, the arrival of the Exodus group may have been seen as welcome reinforcements (Albertz 1994:77).

Moreover, Albertz also concludes that the god El, who had previously been regarded as the Canaanite peasant and shepherd population's symbol of their liberation movement, was a god of the west Semitic pantheon but also remained involved in the divine world which was worshipped in the Canaanite city-states. So, in contrast, Yahweh, whom the Exodus group brought with them was different: as a solitary god of the southern wilderness region, he was not integrated into the polytheistic system. He was a god who had bound himself to a group from the lower classes. So, he was almost predestined to become the god of a tribal alliance which secured the freedom from state dependence for such groups. Yahweh became fused with El and, thus, the God of Israel (Judges 5:3 & 5). Yahweh was a god who was alien to the world of the Syrian and Palestinian gods and could be claimed exclusively by the tribal alliance. So, there was possibly already a first connection between the Yahweh and El religion in the period before the state (Albertz 1994:77).

On the other hand, John Day suggests that since Yahweh and El were originally separate deities, the question is raised about where Yahweh originated. Yahweh himself does not appear in the Ugaritic pantheon list and was therefore not a Canaanite god in origin. Most scholars are of the opinion that Yahweh originated outside of the land of Israel to the south, in Midian, with reference to (Judges 5:4-5 'Lord when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the field of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens poured,' Deuteronomy 33:2 'The Lord came from

Sinai, and dawned on thCem from Seir,'and Habakkuk 3:3 & 7 'God came from Teman, the Holy One from mount Paran. I saw the tents in Cushan in affliction, the curtains in the land of Midian trembled.' According to Day, there is also an increasing tendency to locate Mount Sinai and Kadesh in North West Arabia rather than the Sinai Peninsula itself. There is evidence of a civilization in the Hejaz area in Northwest Arabia (Midian) in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, despite the general lack of this in this period in the Sinai Peninsula. The epithet 'Yahweh of Teman' in one of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions fits in with this view (Day 2002:16).

The argument can be made that several of the El epithets, referred to in Genesis in connection with the patriarchal religion, do indeed derive from the worship of the Canaanite god El (El-Shaddai, El-Olam, El-Bethel, and possibly El-elyon). The promise of progeny to the patriarch's bear comparison to the promise of progeny by the god El to Keret and Danel in the Ugaritic texts. Although no one can maintain that the patriarchal narratives are historical today, there are grounds for believing that their depiction of an El religion does at least reflect something of pre-monarchical religion, however much it has been overlaid by later accretions. The Egyptian Merneptah Stele is an indication of El's early importance in that the very name of the people incorporates the name of the god El (Isra-El). Personal names, prior to the rise of the monarchy, including the name El are quite common, whereas explicitly Yahwistic personal names are exceedingly rare (Day 2002:16-17).

The influence that El had on Yahweh, since they were originally separate deities which became equated, is given as follows: Yahweh as an Aged God. In the Ugaritic texts, El is frequently given the epithet 'Father of Years' (e.g., KTU 1.4 IV.24), a concept reinforced by reference to his grey hair. In three places in the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh's 'years' are alluded to: Job 36:26, where Elihu declares, 'Behold, God (el) is great, and we know not the number of his years.' Also, in Psalm 102:25: 'O my God (*'el*), I say, "take me not hence in the midst of my days, thou whose years endure throughout all generations!"' The fact that Yahweh is here referred to as 'my God' (literally, 'my El') is more striking in that it is the one place in the whole psalm in which God is not addressed as Yahweh. The other place is in Job 10:5, where Job asks God: 'Are thy days as the days of man, or thy years as man's years?' In Daniel's apocalyptic vision, God is there entitled the 'Ancient of Days', a term reminiscent of 'Father of Years' and we read that the 'hair of his

head was like pure wool', which likewise reminds us of El. In Daniel 7:13-14, the one like the son of man who comes with the clouds of heaven and reigns for ever after being enthroned by the Ancient of Days, derives ultimately from Baal, 'the rider of the clouds', and the beasts of the sea, whose rule is succeeded by that of the one like a son of man, reflect Yam, Leviathan, and others, who were defeated by Baal (Day 2002:18, 19).

According to the Ugarit texts, the god El was noted for his wisdom (KTU 1.4 V.65). Similarly, in Ezekiel 28, the king of Tyre's wisdom is emphasized vv. 2,3,4,5 and later, in the same context, he claims to be God (*'el*). So, John Day is of the opinion that Yahweh's wisdom was appropriated from the god El. Wisdom and old age is traditionally associated with one another, and it was from the god El that the notion of Yahweh as an aged deity derived (Day 2002:19). Eventually, of course, the name El became a general word for 'God' in the Hebrew Bible and so it is found many times. Although there were a couple of aspects of the El cult that were accepted by the Israelites, some were ultimately rejected by the authors of the Hebrew Bible. One was the appropriation by Yahweh of El's wife, Asherah (Day 2002:19).

6.7.2 The survival of the syncretistic cult of Yahweh

Morton Smith writes that the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests put an end to the royal patronage of the cult of Yahweh but the popular, syncretistic piety and exclusive devotion of the Yahweh-alone party continued and extended the cult. The leaders of the Yahweh-alone party were mostly carried off to Babylonia where they secured a strong and wealthy following among the exiles. At the time of the Persian conquest, it supported the Persians, placing members in high positions in the Persian court and gained control of the rebuilt Jerusalem temple. They then won over the populace, first of Jerusalem and then of Judea, thus becoming the largest and most important group within the cult of Yahweh (Smith 1987:62).

Most of the leaders of the Yahweh-alone party were probably among the upper classes of Jerusalem whom Nebuchadnezzar carried off to Babylon. The Hebrew Bible contains very little from Palestine between 587 BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 BCE. The lack of material from this time in Palestine is explained by the prophecies in Ezekiel, and in 'third Isaiah' (Isaiah 56-66) and Zechariah from the period following,

which denounce the Israelites of Palestine for their continued worship of other gods. It appears from the context that participation in the cult related to the legal right to the land was an important fact for when the exiles would return from Babylonia. Ezekiel goes on to prophesy that they will return and put an end to the idolatry of the Israelites who had remained. Therefore, Morton Smith concludes that the religion that survived in Judaea was not of the Deuteronomic tradition but rather the syncretistic cult of Yahweh (Smith 1987:75).

When Nebuchadnezzar carried off the upper classes and gave the farms of Judea to 'the poor of the land' (2 Kings 25:12), he created a group whose members had reason to oppose the return of the exiles (the former owners of the land). The way that the upper classes in Babylonia lost touch with the lower classes left behind in Palestine, appears in the later work of the Deuteronomic school, lacking concern for the actual Judaean situation – almost the sole criterion by which kings were judged 'good' or 'bad' was just by their religious policy. A great amount of material was produced in exile: surprising is the differences of mentality and style between Ezekiel and Isaiah, and the Deuteronomic and the Priestly legal traditions; what is amazing is that it was all preserved in one single collection – the Hebrew Bible. Some groups of the party reacted to the exilic disaster by stronger assertions of their devotion to Yahweh alone, concluding with the conception of Israel as a holy people and isolated by its peculiar purity and Isaiah's denial of the existence of any god other than Yahweh. So, from all this, we find the developments of synagogues in Babylonia. The absence of sacrifice increased the importance of psalms and prayers (like those attributed to David and Solomon and of homiletic material which now fills much of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) (Smith 1987:76-77).

The Hebrew language in the Hebrew Bible is referred to as the 'lip of Canaan' (Isaiah 19:18). Thus, the Israelites spoke the Canaanite language and preserved their culture and carried on the Canaanite traditions and literary forms. The history of Israel is the history of a Canaanite people. If one were to ask, 'what is the most extensive representation of Canaanite literature in existence today?' the answer would be 'The Hebrew Bible' (Grabbe 1994:116-119).

Some modern authors hold the idea that early Israelite society was 'pure,' from an ethnic point of view, and in possession of religious beliefs and standards that were untouched by the religion

of the Canaanites. They believe that the early Israelite religion was the pure Yahwistic faith that originated in 'the desert' and that after their settlement, the Israelites and their religion became 'contaminated' because of the Canaanite presence. So, they hold the *syncretistic* belief that the ethnic unity of the Israelites was lost and that their religion became infested with Canaanite religious beliefs and practices (Lemche 1991:14).

With reference to the 'Canaanization' of Israelite society, with their historical development as a reflection of the struggle between Israelite and Canaanite cultural phenomena, I will refer to Dietrich (1979). Dietrich understands the history of Israel as an ongoing battle between two contrasting cultures: that of the Israelites on the one hand and the Canaanites on the other. He divides the history of Israel into several succeeding phases in accordance with the periodization given by the Hebrew Bible, where each phase is characterized by Israelite relations with the Canaanites. He calls the Israelite settlement period - the *disposition period, the* period of the Judges he calls the *confrontation period. David's* empire represents the period of the *integration* of Israelites and Canaanites into a single nation, *followed* by Solomon's reign as the era of - *cooperation.* But the situation changes over the next century, following Solomon's death, when the two cultures become amalgamated into one culture, called – the *digression.* During and after the Omride reign in the 9th century BCE, Dietrich defines the period as the Canaanite *infiltration* of the Israelite period. This leads to the *reaction* against Canaanite influence by Jehu and his successors. However, when this religion-revolutionary zeal diminished, we find the period of *assimilation* between the Israelite and Canaanite elements and further influenced by the Assyrian culture in the same period. After 722 BCE, the struggle with the Canaanites continued in the southern kingdom of Judah. During the reign of Manasseh, a regular *repression* of Israelite culture ensues. After Manasseh's death and the departure of the Assyrian imperial power at the end of the 7th century BCE, the Judean society reacted forcefully against the Canaanite culture, resulting in a period of *revision* with a renewed interest in the Israelite culture and religious heritage (Dietrich 1979). Lemche is of the opinion that this interpretation by Dietrich conforms well to the biblical history handed down to us by the Hebrew Bible (Lemche 1991:15).

Lemche believes that if the Israelites originated as result of social and demographic upheavals in Palestine in the Late Bronze Age, then it is natural to consider early Israelite religion as

'Canaanite'. The writers of the Hebrew Bible understood the Canaanites to form a distinctive people or nation in the ancient world (Lemche 1991:23). Lemche also states that the stereotypical way in which the concept of Canaan is used in the Pentateuch and in the Deuteronomistic History tells us that the authors of the historical narratives had truly clear ideas about who the Canaanites were supposed to be and where their country was. The Canaanites may be considered as a kind of ideological prototype of an ethnic phenomenon which was a reality in the period when the historical narratives were reduced to writing and was extraneous and hostile to the Israelites (Lemche 1991:164,165).

Early Israelite culture cannot be separated from the culture of 'Canaan'. The highlands of Israel in the Iron Age (ca. 1200-587 BCE) reflect continuity with the Canaanite or West Semitic culture during the preceding period both in the highlands and in the contemporary cities on the coast and in the valleys (Miller 2002:19).

A text that identifies Canaan with only a part of Palestine, comes from the Song of Deborah in Judges 5:19: 'kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan.' This text is the oldest text contained in the Hebrew Bible, fixing the date of composition to 1125 BCE, the period of the Judges. The 'song of Deborah' contains a substantial amount of historical information that might seem 'antiquated' in comparison with the historical information of the other sections of Judges (Lemche 1991:92-93).

According to the Hebrew Bible, Palestine in pre-Israelite times was the home of a myriad of peoples and nations. Some of these names are only found in the Hebrew Bible; none of these national groups represent historical, ethnic elements that were present in Palestine before the emergence of the Israelite state in the 1st millennium BCE. The context of the Hebrew Bible is far removed from historical reality; the writers never tried to write historical information. Instead, the writers 'played' with foreign ethnic names. The nations mentioned as having lived in Canaan do not represent historical peoples. They are mentioned to populate the land of Canaan, which is, at the same time, the land of Israel. The authors of the Hebrew Bible placed the various pre-Israelite peoples of Canaan into their writings to reach the goal of their 'project': to stress Israel's claim to the land (Lemche 1991:100).

Lemche (1991) is of the opinion that the borders of Canaan, as presented by the Hebrew Bible, did not coincide with the later borders of Israel and that the inhabitants of Canaan were not historical nations who lived in Palestine. He holds that the concept of the land of Canaan/Israel in the historical books of the Hebrew Bible is an intentional, programmatic expression of the authors of the historical narratives. Canaan, according to Lemche, was not a historical place, but rather a place of ideological importance to the biblical writers and their readers. This can be compared to the literature of Israel as a society of twelve tribes who, towards the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, conquered Palestine, which does not reflect historical events in Palestine during that period. In the light of the ideological importance of the concept of Canaan in the Hebrew Bible, historical narratives, from Exodus to Joshua, should be understood as presenting a coherent narrative devoted to the relationship between two ideological concepts: Israel on the one hand and Canaan on the other. So, this story of Israel and its land ends only when Israel has attained its goal of having Canaan subdued by the Israelites and divided among the Israelite tribes (Lemche 1991:102).

The patriarchal narratives of Genesis represent a prelude to the narratives of Israel on the way to its land. So, the later history of Israel, from the death of Joshua to the Babylonian exile, represents a kind of epilogue to the conquest narratives; but this epilogue is also prepared for by the patriarchal narratives; at the end of their history, to settle in a foreign country. So, the epilogue turns the whole narrative into a tragedy, with Israel being reduced to a small group of deportees in Mesopotamia (Lemche 1991:103).

Anti-Canaanite sentiments were nourished among the historians who wrote the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History. It is doubtful that the historical writings of the Hebrew Bible were composed in the period of the United Kingdom, however, it is probable that the Canaanites of the Hebrew Bible were that part of the Palestinian population in the post-exilic period who were considered opponents of the official Jewry. Being a ‘synonym’ for such groups, the Canaanites were allowed no entry to the religious institutions of the Jews, nor were the members of the Jewish community allowed to intermarry with them (Lemche 1991:165-166). Explaining the

term ‘official Jewry’:p[with the exile, the religion of Israel comes to an end and Judaism begins. This process coincided with the emergence of scribes and sages as Jewish leaders.

6.8 ISRAELITE RELIGION DURING THE MONARCHY: THE KINGSHIP THEOLOGY

The establishment of the Kingdom, and the far-reaching social changes that it brought about, was a challenge to the young Yahweh religion. This was a religion which had arisen out of the liberation of state oppression. Rainer Albertz writes that when the institution of the monarchy was taken over by Israel, it already had a strong religious colouring in the ancient Near East for centuries. In antiquity, monarchy meant sacral monarchy, with often massive theological and cultic implications. In the Near East, the king was regarded in one way or another as more or less directly God’s representative on earth; as God’s creation, the son of God, the image of God, or even God himself, who imposed divine rule outside the state and established divine order within, thus guaranteeing the existence of the state (Albertz 1994:116).

The religious legitimation of the monarchy, which the Davidic court theologians formulated based on the kingship theology of the Near East, led to a close personal relationship between Yahweh and the king which elevated the king above all others and brought him near to God; Yahweh begot the king himself, declared him to be his son and firstborn, and made him the man at his right hand (Albertz 1994:116-117). As examples, Psalm 2:7 states: ‘I will declare the decree: The Lord has said unto me, you are my son, this day I have begotten you.’ And Psalm 110:5 says: ‘The Lord at your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.’

In the Israelite kingship theology, there is hesitation in fully identifying the king with Yahweh – but divine sonship has a clear physical component as well as a mythical dimension. (the physical component meaning father and son relationship). Albertz proclaims that there was a special relationship between Yahweh and the king, independent of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. King David was no longer dependent on the tribal levy for an army, so too the Davidic monarchy created its own independent theological basis. He further says that the kingship theology invaded the official religion of Israel, with state support, which had different roots, and which ran counter to what had constituted Yahweh religion from the beginning causing two

points of conflict – the monopolization of the relationship between God and Israel by the monarchy and the close fusion of Yahweh with state power (Albertz 1994:121).

The theology propagated by the court theologians attempted to make the king a comprehensive guarantor of salvation for Israel. Furthermore, an idea was created of the Jerusalem temple theology. The kingship of Yahweh attained theological significance in the Jerusalem state cult which is also true of the title 'Yahweh Sabaoth', meaning he who is enthroned on the cherubim as relates to the ark (1 Samuel 1:3 & 11). Isaiah sees a vision in the 8th century BCE of 'the king Yahweh Sabaoth' as enthroned gigantically during his heavenly court in the Jerusalem temple (Isaiah 6:5). This shows how centrally rooted the title Sabaoth and the notion of God as king must already have been in the theology of the Jerusalem sanctuary (Albertz 1994:132).

The advantages of such a theology are obvious: not only can it support the political rule of the Davidic king, but points of contact can also be found with the divine world of the states of the Near East with which Israel now had political, economic, and cultural links (Albertz 1994:133). In the Jerusalem theology, divine kingship takes on a new focus typical of Yahweh religion: Yahweh is proclaimed 'king over the peoples based on his victories over Israel's neighbour states. In addition to the title 'king', the predicate 'creator of the world' was probably also transferred from El to Yahweh in Jerusalem theology. The theology of the Jerusalem state sanctuary had universalistic features, drawing on Canaanite conceptions. Yahweh rose to be supreme god in succession to El-Elyon, creator of this world, fighter against chaos, king of the gods and their peoples. From El, Yahweh, the formerly wild and militant god of the southern wilderness regions, took on the features of majestic rest, wisdom, and gentleness (Albertz 1994:134). The syncretistic development of the traditional image of Yahweh formed the background to the development of a special Jerusalem sanctuary theology, by which the Jerusalem priesthood wanted to make their national temple the focal point of Yahweh worship. They claimed that Yahweh had bound himself in a special way to Jerusalem and was directly present in its temple; claiming that Jerusalem was the 'city of God'; 'the holiest of Elyon's dwellings; Yahweh in her midst' (Psalm 46:5; 48:3; 87:3); he has made his dwelling place on Zion (Psalm 76:3). A typical feature of this 'Zion theology' was its almost complete identification of Yahweh with the capital and its state sanctuary (Psalm 48:4 & 13-15). Where the earlier Yahweh

religion was his bond to a particular group, now, the Jerusalem theologians substituted it with a place: Jerusalem (Albertz 1994:136).

Thus, the Jerusalem state cult created a tradition of salvation largely independent of the Yahweh traditions from the time before the state for itself. It centres on the city and the world, rather than on the people Israel. Zion is identified with the 'peak of Zaphon' i.e., with the mountain of the gods in northern Syria – not with the mountain Sinai in the south. Zaphon, on which, according to the Ugaritic mythology, a palace was built for the god Baal after his victory over the chaos god Yam. The Baal temple in Ugarit was erected on Zaphon and in Ugarit and elsewhere, Baal was worshipped under the name Baal-Zaphon. As the mythical mountain of the gods, Zion claimed to be the centre, the 'navel of the world' (Ezekiel 38:12) (Albertz 1994:136). The theology of the Jerusalem state sanctuary had universalistic features; drawing on Canaanite conceptions: Jerusalem has been 'founded for ever' (Psalm 48:9) by Yahweh; endowed by his cultic presence with a lasting, unconditional guarantee of protection and salvation (Psalm 46:6). The universal realm of peace is a *pax israelitica,* a realm under an Israelite rule which is based on the subjection and humiliation of the nations (Psalm 46.9; 76:4). Only when the Zion theology had been refuted by the course of history, and the capital and its temple lay in ruins in 587 BCE, could this theology be fully integrated into Yahweh religion and develop a potential for hope in an eschatological refraction (Albertz 1994:137).

Yahweh rose to be supreme god in succession to El-Elyon, creator of the world, fighter against chaos, king of the gods and their peoples; thus, his sphere of influence extended. No longer just the god of a politically marginal group, he now reigned from Zion – with the help of his king; over the whole world of nations and was responsible for world history. From El, Yahweh, the formerly wild and militant god of the southern wilderness regions, took on the features of majestic rest, wisdom, and gentleness (Albertz 1994:138). The prophetic opposition, as described above, and all that of Isaiah of Jerusalem, presupposed an image of God that had extended universally (Albertz 1994:137-138).

6.8.1 The Northern Kingdom of Israel

6.8.1.1 The prophet Amos

In our effort to verify the place of the Exodus motif in the Northern Kingdom, we look to the Book of Amos: Amos was a farmer from Judah but most of his activities as a prophet took place in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, around 750 BCE. The structure and the content of his prophecies show that Amos was addressing a primarily Israelite audience. His book bears out the popularity of the national festivals. On religious feast days people made the pilgrimage to renowned sanctuaries such as Bethel, Gilgal, Dan, or Beersheba (Amos 4:4; 5:5-6; 8:14), where they stayed for several days. The festivities included a religious procession in which an image of the deity was carried through town. For example, Amos 5:26 states: 'Now, because you have worshipped images of Sakkuth, your king god, and of Kaiwan, your star god, you will have to carry those images when I take you into exile in a land beyond Damascus (Van der Toorn 1996:292).

In Amos 4:4-5, we read: 'Come to me and you will live. Do not go to Beersheba to worship. Do not try to find me at Bethel – Bethel will come to nothing. Do not go to Gilgal – her people are doomed to exile.' We read in Amos 2:7-8 that 'They trample down the weak and helpless and push the poor out of the way. A man and his father have intercourse with the same slave-girl, and so profane my holy name. At every place of worship, men sleep on clothing that they have taken from the poor as security for debts' (Van der Toorn 1996:292).

The religious criticism of Amos is directed at the state religion. Not only are the temples which he mentions (such as Bethel and Dan) national shrines, but his activities as a prophet also bring him into conflict with the state clergy. His dispute with Amaziah, the chief priest of Bethel, shows that the prophet was regarded as someone who attacked the state cult and undermined the political stability in Ephraim. That is why Amaziah reports Amos' activities to the king and orders the prophet to leave the temple of Bethel (Van der Toorn 1996:293).

And Amaziah said to Amos: 'Seer, take yourself off to the land of Judah! Earn your living there and do your prophesying there. But do not ever prophesy again at Bethel, for it is a royal shrine and a temple of the state!' (Amos 7:12-13). In his reaction, Amos dissociates himself from the

prophets working under the auspices of the state cult, to whom he refers as ‘sons of the prophets’ (Amos 7:14). Amos answered Amaziah: ‘I am not a prophet nor a prophet’s son. I am a cattle man and a tender of figs. But Yahweh took me away from following the flock and Yahweh said to me: ’Go, prophesy to my people Israel’ (Amos 7:14-15).

Amos intimates that, as a layman, he is not accountable to the authorities in the same way as the professional prophets. His familiarity with the religious traditions of the Northern Kingdom is clear from his scattered references to the Exodus from Egypt (Amos 2:10-11; 3:1; 9:7; 5:25-26). However, the authenticity of the relevant texts has been contested on the hypothesis that they should be ascribed to the hand of a Deuteronomistic editor. His exodus terminology is characteristic of the Ephraimite tradition transmitted in the sanctuaries of the Northern Kingdom (Van der Toorn 1996:293).

6.8.1.2 The prophet Hosea

Unlike Amos, the prophet Hosea was a native Ephraimite. His prophecies offer a view of the religious situation in Israel from within some 250 years after the introduction of Yahweh as national god. He regarded the religion of his contemporaries as a collective form of apostasy. The religious situation depicted by Hosea is one in which the worship of Yahweh is practised alongside the cult of the Baals. Though Hosea condemns the worship of the Baals as a reprehensible innovation, he refers to Yahweh as the first love of the Israelites, the picture he gives of the local cults is essentially a picture of traditional family religion (Van der Toorn 1996:295-296).

According to John Day (2000), it becomes clear, when reading the Hebrew Bible, that it was the Baal cult that provided the greatest and most enduring threat to the development of the exclusive Yahweh worship within ancient Israel (Day 2000:70). The Baal cult is mentioned in Hosea chapter two, although it is silent on the national shrine at Bethel and the cult practiced there. It is thought that the references to Baal in Hosea could refer to Baal-peor, Baal-hermon, Baal-meon, Baal-hazor, Baal-gad, and so on. In Hosea 9:10, Hosea looks back to the time of the wilderness and mourns the fact that when Israel came to Baal-peor they 'consecrated themselves to a thing of shame and became detestable like the thing they loved' (Chalmers 2008:72).

In Hosea 12:2-6, we find the narrative of Jacob's wrestling with the angel of God: 'he fought against an angel and won. He wept and asked for a blessing. And at Bethel God came to our ancestor Jacob and spoke with him' (Chalmers 2008:73). There is the quest for the evidence for the worship of a deity named Bethel in the book of Hosea. The name of this deity is also found in the Babylonian Chronicles where, among deity lists, the name of Bethel and Anatbethel also appear. The debate concerning these two deities is whether they were the last of the witnessing gods on the Assyrian side, or should they be listed as the first of the witnessing gods on the Tyrian side. The curse of foreign gods which says: 'May Bethel and Anat-Bethel deliver you to a man-eating lion' confirms that Neo-Assyrian lists of foreign gods invariably name the gods of the Tyrian pantheon first, such as Bethel and Anat-Bethel (Chalmers 2008:137).

Julius Wellhausen proposed a slight change in the Hebrew of Hosea 14:9 to make it read: 'What has Ephraim still to do with idols? I am his Anat and his Asherah' (Wellhausen 1892:131). From Exodus 32:18, 'the voice of Anat' is read instead of: "the sound of victory"' and Psalm 68:24 reads 'Why, O Anat, dost thou wash thy feet in blood?' But Chalmers begs the question that if Anat worship was unknown in Israel, where did Anatyaho originate? Whilst the cult at Elephantine clearly shows signs of an Anatbethel piety, it seems unlikely that the Egyptian Jewish community, who on some level at least was interested in being considered legitimate by the Jerusalem community, would invent an entirely new goddess (Chalmers 2008:189-191). The worship and creation of Anatyaho may be seen as part of a larger phenomenon, namely that the syncretistic climate in the former Northern Kingdom, where Yahweh was worshipped along with other gods, may have resulted in Yahweh ultimately being identified with those gods. Based on the model of Bethel and Anatbethel found in E/B, it stands to reason that Anatbethel would be listed here because she was the consort of the male deity represented in the list (Chalmers 2008:192).

2 Kings 17:15 says: 'They worshipped worthless idols and became worthless themselves, and they followed the customs of the surrounding nations, disobeying the Lord's command not to imitate them. … they made an image of the goddess Asherah, worshipped the stars, and served the god Baal.' If Anat was the consort of Yaho and also the consort of Bethel, she would then be sexually paired with two gods on a standard basis at the same time in the same location (Day 2000:41). The suggested solution to this conundrum is that Yaho and Bethel were practically identified at Elephantine (Chalmers 2008:193).

We have a wealth of authentic traditions concerning the Jerusalem cult but we have little of the Northern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom had lost its national independence and its religious and cultic traditions survived only in so far as they were taken over by the South, and because, from the perspective of the later Deuteronomistic renewal movement with its centralization of the cult on the Jerusalem sanctuary, the whole Northern Kingdom cult was condemned as deviation and apostasy from Yahweh (Albertz 1994:139).

The Deuteronomistic report in 1 Kings 12:26-32 connects the development of Bethel and Dan as national sanctuaries appropriately with the collapse of the empire of David and Solomon. The splitting off from the Northern Kingdom of the empire of David and Solomon primarily arose out of a social revolt against the forced labour imposed by the state (Albertz 1994:140). A young Ephraimite, called Jeroboam, caused a rebellion, and had to flee to Egypt (1 Kings 12.40). After the death of Solomon, the tribes tried to negotiate with Solomon's son Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:1). However, Rehoboam threatened to intensify the forced labour. Then Jeroboam and his tribe renounced their loyalty to the house of David (1 Kings 12:16) (Albertz 1994:141).

Albertz draws a comparison between the rebellion of Jeroboam and the earliest account of the Exodus, the Moses story, because, like Jeroboam, Moses too is depicted as a man from royal circles who shows solidarity with his hard-pressed fellow countrymen (Exodus 2:11-15 and 1 Kings 11:26-28). Both times, the attempted revolt fails; like Jeroboam, Moses too had to flee abroad to escape the punishment of the king and they both return to their fellow-countrymen only after the death of the king (Exodus 2:23 and 1 Kings 11:40). In both cases, there are negotiations with the king's successor to ease the burden but these end with heightening demands (Exodus 5:3-19 and 1 Kings 12:3-15) (Albertz 1994:142).

A further parallelism is the fact that after their failed attempt at revolt, both Moses (Exodus 3:1-4.18) and Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29-39), are given a divine oracle which commissions them and encourages them, although the Moses narrative was only inserted at a late redactional stage. It has been conjured that the whole Exodus tradition draws its vivid details of the oppression of Israel in Egypt from the concrete experience of forced labour under Solomon. Taking all these observations together, it is probable that the battle against Solomon's forced labour by Jeroboam and the northern tribes was fought with an appeal to the liberation of their forefathers from Egyptian forced labour (Albertz 1994:142).

Although the Deuteronomistic theologians accused Jeroboam of having introduced arbitrary innovations into the cult of his kingdom, his cult has a more conservative stamp. In Bethel, he chose a sanctuary, unlike Jerusalem which had old tribal legitimacy. He had two golden calves made and set up in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:28), and had constructed cultic high places, and

appointed non-Levitical priests (v. 31). So, it seems that Jeroboam wanted to develop an archaizing alternative to the state cult of Jerusalem, which would strengthen continuity with conditions existing before the state (Albertz 1994:144).

It is thought that the two images he made were that of a bull, not a calf. The bull had long taken on religious connotations in the Near East. In Ugarit, the god Baal was depicted as a bull who begets a calf by a cow into which the goddess Anat enters. The title bull was reserved for the god El. The bull represents both unbounded power as well as fertility. In making a golden *bull* for his national sanctuary, Jeroboam was probably taking up the old pre-Israelite heritage of this sanctuary. In pre-Israelite times, the God El-Bethel had probably been worshipped in Bethel ('house of El', Genesis 31:13) before Yahweh was fused with him. Perhaps before the state epithets were transferred between El and Yahweh, Yahweh could have inherited El's bull symbolism. So, Jeroboam's bull image might not have been a new creation but gave meaningful expression to an El-Yahweh syncretism which already existed in Israel (Albertz 1994:145).

6.9 BAAL WORSHIP IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

According to the biblical record, the worship of Baal threatened Israel from the period of the Judges down to the monarchy. Names with *Baal* as the theophoric element, such as Jerubbaal, Eshbaal, and Meribbaal, have been taken to indicate that Israelite society, including some royal circles, viewed the worship of Baal as a legitimate practice. Some scholars interpret this as if it were evidence that the Baal was a title for Yahweh and that the cult of Baal co-existed with the cult of Yahweh. Inscriptions from Samaria, the capital city of the Northern Kingdom, provide an important witness for the 9th or 8th century BCE. These inscriptions, called the Samaria ostraca, contain at least five names with the theophoric element of *Baal* as opposed to nine names with the Yahweh component (Smith 2002:65).

Although Baal was predominantly a fertility god, and Israel officially rejected the entire Baal cult, many things that were said about Baal by the Canaanites could also be said by the Israelites about Yahweh. Baal was the Canaanite fertility god but the Israelites insisted that it was Yahweh who 'maketh hinds to calve' (Psalm 29:9). The God of Israel was looked upon as author of the blessings of heaven (rain); of the deep (springs); and of the breast and womb (Genesis 49:25;

Deuteronomy 33:13). The Ugaritic texts frequently describe Baal as the 'rider of the clouds', for it was he who produced rain, and the same expression is used in Scripture of Yahweh (Psalm 68:4 & 33; Deuteronomy 33:26; Isaiah 19:1). The God of the Bible was regarded as sovereign over all the forces of nature. Thunder was His voice (cf. Psalm 29:3) and he sent forth arrows in the form of lightning (Psalm 18:13-14). That the biblical Baal was a Phoenician god with power over the storms may be deduced from extra-biblical texts. Perhaps, he was the main city god of Tyre, since in KAI 47:1 he is called the 'Lord of Tyre'. It could be argued that the Baal of Jezebel should be Melqart, since his name means 'king of the city', presumably referring to Tyre. A primary feature of his cult seems to be his 'awakening' from death (Smith 2002:68).

That Baal Shamem and not Melqart was a threat in Israel in the pre-exilic period might be inferred from the fact that the god in question is called 'the baal' (1 Kings 18:19, 22, 26, 40). Some scholars identify the Baal of Jezebel with the Baal of Carmel. Like Baal Shamem, the Baal of Carmel appears to be a storm-god. A 2nd century BCE inscription from Carmel identifies the god of Carmel as Zeus Heliopolis (Avi-Yonah, 'Mount Carmel', 118-24; Albright (1968), *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan,* 229-30). At Baalbek, Zeus Heliopolis had both solar and storm characteristics and was a solarized form of the Assyrian storm-god, Adad (Smith 2002:71). Macrobius writes the following: 'The Assyrians, too, in a city called Heliopolis, worship the sun with an elaborate ritual under the name of Heliopolis, calling him 'Zeus of Heliopolis.' The statue of the god was brought from the Egyptian town also called Heliopolis, when Senemur was king of Egypt…the identification of this god with Jupiter and the sun is clear from the form of the ceremony and from the appearance of the statue.' The biblical evidence suggests that the Phoenician Baal of Ahab and Jezebel was a storm-god. The extra-biblical evidence indicates that the Baal of Carmel and Baal Shamem were also storm-gods, whereas Melqart does not appear to have been a storm-god (Smith 2002:71).

In some cases, in ancient Israel, local cults may have been devoted to the worship of Baal or the deity called the Queen of Heaven, which we have previously discussed as being the goddess Anat. The temple of Baal at Samaria might be an example of a local cult devoted to Baal as imported from Phoenicia (Miller 2000:76).

The Baal worship introduced by Jezebel was most likely Baal Shamem. Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Tyre and would have brought her own private cult with her to Israel. Baal Shemen is probably not to be equated to the Ugaritic Baal. Grabbe is of the opinion that 'possibly some, certainly not all, and perhaps none of the references to Baal in the Hebrew Bible can be illuminated by appeal to the Baal of Ugarit' (Grabbe 1994:117).

Considering the biblical polemic against Baal, one could be surprised to see his name in surprising contexts: One of Saul's sons has a name compounded with Baal: Eshbaal ('man of Baal') and Jonathan's son was Meribbaal (1 Chronicles 8:33-34; 9:39-40). It was symbolic of a foreign queen and would have been opposed by certain traditionalists. The small Baal temple described in 2 Kings 10.18-28 is evidence that this was not a widespread alternative to Yahweh worship and further indication is found in the names of Ahab's family and associates: his chief minister was named Obadiah ('servant of Yahweh') (1 Kings 18:3) and his two sons had Yahweh names (Ahaziah and Jehoram); the prophets he consulted were prophets of Yahweh (1 Kings 22:5-28). Although the text accuses him of Baal worship (1 Kings 16:31-32), we see no actual evidence that he promoted Baal worship beyond the royal cult specifically established for his wife. The opposition of Elijah and others was probably political opposition to Jezebel, even as disguised as religious piety (Grabbe 2007:156).

The ostraca found during the excavations at Samaria give a similarly mixed picture. A variety of theophoric names are found in the texts known so far: of these, eleven are compounded with Yahweh while six have Baal. The impression is that the names were ordinary names. So, Baal and Yahweh were worshipped happily side by side (Grabbe 2007:156).

William Dever says that religious beliefs can only be inferred from material cultural remains, but cultic practices are often clear. Beginning with the monarchy there are numerous private and public shrines, sanctuaries, and even local temples. Then there are the cultic paraphernalia such as altars, offering stand vessels, and model temples, as well as the female (Asherah) fertility figurines, and texts with blessing formulae (Dever 2003:199).

The old male gods, El and Baal, along with Asherah the Mother Goddess, live on in monarchical Israel, attested to not only as shadowy figures in biblical texts, but also as vibrant deities witnessed in abundant archaeological remains. The name 'El' and several El-epithets occur significantly in some of the oldest textual tradition in the Hebrew Bible, as scholars have long known. The fertility themes so prevalent in Canaanite religion, and no doubt typical of early Israelite religion, continue throughout as the fundamental aspect of Israelite religion (Dever 2003::199).

'When reading the Hebrew Bible, it becomes clear that it was the Baal cult that provided the greatest and most enduring threat to the development of exclusive Yahweh worship within ancient Israel' (Day 2002:70). Even at the time of their entry into the Promised Land, the Israelites appear to participate in Baal worship in the cult of Baal-Peor at Mount Peor in the land of Moab (Numbers 25:1-9; Deuteronomy 4:3; Psalm 106:28; Hosea 9:10). During the time of the Judges, the Israelites also worshipped Baal (Judges 2:11, 13; 3:7; 10:6; 1 Samuel 7:4; 12:10). Gideon pulled down an altar of Baal and cut down an Asherah (Judges 6:25-32) (Day 2002:70).

Albright states that there are a great many minor vestiges from Canaanite religion amongst the Hebrews. The names of many pagan gods and goddesses continued to be used in Hebrew for religious or nonreligious purposes. In several poetic passages, Canaanite deities appear, going back ultimately to pagan compositions. For instance, in Isaiah 14:12 Helel is called 'son of Sahar', the Canaanite name of the god of dawn, to whom a liturgical text is devoted at Ugarit (Albright 1968:259).

The lore of the Canaanite gods and goddesses and the dramatic stories of their loves and wars would have persisted throughout the Iron Age in Canaan. The oral traditions, preserved in poem and song, constituted a strong undercurrent in Israelite religious thought and practice (Dever 2002:186).

6.9.1 The different names given to Baal

Klaus Koch says that *Baal sapani* appears in the Ugaritic texts representing the storm-god formerly named Haddu/Adad and represents the dominating figure in the Canaanite religion of

the 2nd millennium BCE. *Baal samem,* however, seems to be the dominating figure in many Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions of the 1st millennium BCE. This second figure bears a surprising new name. There is no mention of a 'master of heaven', used absolutely and as a proper name earlier than the inscription of Yehimilk, King of Byblos, in the 10th century BCE. However, during the following centuries, this deity is known in Phoenician and Aramaic texts from Hatra and Palmyra in the East to Carthage and Sardinia in the West. Concerning the relationship between the newcomer and the old 'master of the mountain *sapon'* three possibilities are discussed among scholars (Koch 1994:159-160):

a) *Baal sapon.* The primary function of each of them relates to the fertility of men and nature and its presuppositions, chiefly thunder, and rain.
b) *Baal samem* and its Aramaic equivalent relates to a god quite other than the Baal of the Syrian mountain, namely to the personified heaven, a deity common to Near Eastern or Semitic religions since time immemorial.
c) With *Baal samen/be'el semayn,* a new deity appears in the pantheon. The name means a divine figure and a great power, who uses the heavens and reveals itself by the signs of the firmament and by meteorological agents, having universal extensions. The Baal resides in the supreme heights but controls life on earth from above (Koch 1994:160).

Adad was known as the Canaanite *Baal,* or *Baal Hadad.* The word *ba'lu* is a Semitic noun meaning 'lord' or 'owner'. *El*, as the father of the gods, was head of the pantheon in Ugarit, as mentioned before, and the late acceptance of *Baal* in the Ugaritic pantheon could be ascribed to tension between *Baal* and *El.* Although Yahweh was the God acting predominantly in the sphere of history, Baal held a unique position among the inhabitants of Palestine. As a divine name, Baal appears seventy-six times in the Hebrew Bible. Baal-zebub is mentioned as the god of the Philistine city of Ekron. Baal-peor was venerated on the mountain Peor in Moab and his cult was characterized by 'sacral prostitution and by eating a sacrificial meal, by means of which an intimate relationship was established between the god and his worshippers'. According to Numbers 25:1-3, a conflict was prevalent between Yahweh and Baal even before the Israelite settlement in Canaan: 'When the Israelites were camped in the Valley of Acacia, the men began to have sexual intercourse with the women who were there. These women invited them to

sacrificial feasts, where the god of Moab was worshipped. The Israelites ate the food and worshipped the god Baal of Peor.' Indications are that the Judeans carried on with syncretistic religious practices, probably worshipping Yahweh alongside Baal (Mondriaan 2010:151-152).

Wherever Baal samem/Be'el semayn is mentioned with other deities, he is cited as the first in order and rank and therefore as the top of the pantheon, both in Phoenician or Punic and in Aramaic texts. The leading position lasts until Roman times. Only then do gods like Bel or the anonymous 'Our Lord' sometimes precede him in Hatra or Palmyra. The Baal Sapon of Ugarit was never head of the pantheon. In the course of the 1st millennium BCE, he became a patron of navigation and was known around the Mediterranean, but he has a subordinate position compared with other be'alim (Brooke et al 1994:161).

Although there is a certain vagueness regarding his relationship to El and his sons, Baal Sapon has clear genealogical connections to El and his sons. Dagon is his father and Anat is his sister at Ugarit. The divine master of heaven has no genealogy. His relationship to deities varies according to the regional pantheon: at Byblos he is mentioned before the Baal of the city, at Karatepe before El, creator of the earth, at Carthage before Tinnit and Baal Hammon (Brooke et al 1994:161).

6.10 THE DEUTERONOMISTIC PRESENTATION OF THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

According to the Deuteronomistic presentation of Israel's history, a Canaanite god, Baal, has always been one and the same great temptation for Israel. Current scholars agree that this is a late edition and limited to times of conflict between Baal and Yahweh, often separated by centuries and connected with names of prophets such as Elijah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Yahwistic polemics against a cult of Baal started in northern Israel much earlier than in the South where in Jerusalem, no Baal is mentioned before the time of King Manasseh (2 Kings 21); the resistance against this name and cult first began with Josiah, Jeremiah, and Zephaniah around the 7th century BCE (Brooke et al 1994:166).

6.10.1 Canaanite worship

The religion of Canaan revolved around an elaborate system of rituals. According to Currid (1997), the Canaanite cults centred upon forms of worship that promoted sex and fertility. Such an emphasis sprang logically from the Canaanites' belief that sustaining the cycle of life and death was vital for the fertility of their flocks, fields, and wives. Through rituals aimed to invoke the gods' favour, by manipulating the divine through magic, they believed that productivity was assured. Temple prostitution in Canaan likely centred on the worship of the divinity Baal Peor, a name meaning 'Lord of the opening' (a reference to the female vagina). Canaanite influence on other peoples is mentioned in Numbers 25:1-3 where it is reported that by fornicating with the followers of Baal Peor, the Israelites were seduced into worshipping this god. The illicit sexual activity symbolized Israel's unfaithfulness to her God, Yahweh. The passage graphically depicts this infidelity and perversion by using the sexual term 'coupled or joined together' to describe Israel's union with Baal Peor. Israel 'began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab' even though God had strictly forbidden the Hebrews to do so (Currid 1997:42).

The Canaanite religion was idolatrous with various gods depicted in human form, fashioned out of wood or stone. The goddesses of Canaan were generally represented in iconography as naked females with exaggerated sexual parts. Most worship occurred at 'high places', sacred sites, where the Canaanites placed altars for sacrifice, ritual pillars, and idols (1 Kings 14:23). At each high place there was a sacred tree or grove, a physical representation of the goddess Asherah who functioned as the goddess of fertility. Going up to the high place, the Canaanites tried to persuade the goddess to make their land, animals, and themselves fertile and productive (Currid 1997:42).

In addition, we have biblical references (e.g., Deuteronomy 18:9-11) that indicate that the Canaanites engaged in soothsaying, divination, sorcery, witchcraft, and necromancy (communication with the dead) as part of their worship. They also ritually beat and cut themselves during worship (Currid 1997:42).

6.10.2 Baal and Yahweh

The Baal with whom Yahweh was identified in the time of Saul and David certainly had the same leading characteristics as the Baal of the Ugaritic texts. It is also easy to recognize many of these features in the character of Yahweh as depicted in the Hebrew Bible. In Psalm 24, a hymn to Yahweh, he is celebrated as God of the storm and thunder. He has let his voice peal out across 'the great waters' Psalm 104, an ancient hymn, is also full of mythological elements similar to those found in the Ras Shamra texts. Yahweh is described here in vivid terms as the creator and sustainer of the world. It is said that He established the earth upon its foundations (v. 5) with the primeval sea around it (v. 6). He makes the clouds His chariot and travels on the wings of the wind (v. 3). He sends the rain and the streams, makes the grass and plants grow, the corn and the grapes, and provides olive oil and bread (vv. 10-17). Here, Yahweh has taken over the role of the god of fertility (Kapelrud 1965:50).

The designation 'Rider-of-the-Clouds' was applied to Baal long before it became an appellative of Yahweh. When driving in his chariot, Baal goes out to distribute rain, but at the same time it sets Baal in the position of a warrior god. Habakkuk 3:3-7 describes Yahweh's triumphant march from the south portraying him as a heavenly warrior. In Habakkuk 3:8, Yahweh is said to drive a horse-drawn chariot, 'You rode upon the clouds; the storm cloud was your chariot, as you brought victory to your people' (Mondriaan 2010:154).

The practice of temple prostitution was closely linked with the fertility god, Baal. It had its natural place in the cult at the great annual festival, when Baal's enthronement was celebrated, and fertility was ensured for the year ahead. It was then that the 'sacred marriage' took place and the worshippers gave themselves up to drunkenness and sexual orgies in the most licentious part of the festival (Kapelrud 1965:50).

This, too, began to creep into Israelite practice but was met by violent opposition, especially from prophetic and priestly circles. Amos, in 760 BCE, and Hosea and Jeremiah, denounced the sexual aspects of the cult (Hosea 4:12-14): 'They ask for revelations from a piece of wood! They have left me like a woman who becomes a prostitute, they have given themselves to other gods... Your daughters serve as prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery'; and

Jeremiah 2:20: 'The Sovereign Lord says, "Israel, long ago you rejected my authority; you refused to obey me and worship me. On every high hill and under every green tree you worshipped fertility gods."'

The prophets and the Yahwistic circles regarded temple prostitution, and the entire cultic system, which was characterized by it, as incompatible with Yahwism. The leading circles, especially in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, were profoundly influenced by Canaanite life and Canaanite ways. The sexual cult maintained itself tenaciously and had to be attacked repeatedly (Kapelrud 1965:50).

Zion with its temple and palace assumed Sapan's role as the mountain of the gods. This is evident from Psalm 48 with its praise of Zion: 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge' (Psalm 48:1-3). It is there that Yahweh lives and reigns – but there is ancient evidence that Yahweh was not always connected with Zion. In the Song of Deborah in Judges 5, it is said that Yahweh came from the region of Seir, the hill country in which Mount Sinai was probably situated. In Psalm 68:15, we read: 'the hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; a high hill as the hill of Bashan.' Accordingly, it was not until after David's capture of Jerusalem that Zion came to be regarded as Yahweh's Mountain (Kapelrud 1965:51).

In the enthronement Psalms (62; 93; 95), we have the cultic shout, 'Yahweh has become king', and this occurs again and again in these Psalms. Together, they provide evidence of Yahweh's kingship. So, the concept of Yahweh acquired new elements after Yahweh and Baal had been identified. Kapelrud argued that Yahweh, unlike Baal, never had a consort but we now know from the Kuntillet 'Ajrud 8th century BCE store jar that Yahweh did have a consort. We find this in the fortress-shrine of Kuntillet 'Ajrud written in paint: 'Yahweh's Asherah (Dever 2005:166; Kapelrud 1965:52).

Frank Moore Cross (1973) says that Yahwism owes a debt to the myths of Baal, and that the earliest poetic sources borrowed the language depicting Yahweh as divine warrior, almost

directly from Canaanite descriptions of the theophany of Baal as storm-god. In the Canaanite lore we find the following:

1) Baal, who on one occasion is called: 'Haddu, lord of the Stormcloud' or 'lord of the Numbus', appears enthroned on his mountain: 'Baal sits enthroned, his mountain like a dais, Haddu the shepherd, like the flood dragon' (Cross 1973:147). In a closely related text, after El gives the decree for the building of Baal's temple on Saphon, Lady Asherah praises El's wise decision and says: 'Behold now, Baal has appointed the rains; He has appointed the wet and snowy season. He has thundered in the stormclouds, He has blazed his lightning bolts to the earth' (Cross 1973:149).
2) In a parallel text, Baal's theophany coincides with the opening of a window by the craftsman god in Baal's new temple: 'Baal gives forth his holy voice, Baal repeats the utterance of his lips, His holy voice shatters the earth'.
3) In the mixed tradition preserved in Ugarit, both Baal and his consort Anat are credited with killing the seven-headed dragon.
4) Baal as the divine warrior and thunderer was also well-known in Egypt. Interesting, is a comparison of the Pharaoh Akhenaton to Baal in a letter from Abimilki of Tyre written to his suzerain by an Egyptian scribe.

In the Aqhat Epic a drought is depicted as follows:

'Seven years Baal failed,
Eight the Cloud Rider.
Neither dew nor shower,
No surging of the double-deep,
Nor goodly sound of Baal's voice.'

1) The following passage could be compared to the vision of El in which Baal's coming to life is revealed: 'The heavens are raining oil, the wadis run with mead'.

2) Alongside these Canaanite traditions of the storm-god may be put the Canaanite hymn preserved in the Psalter, namely Psalm 29, which is recognised as an ancient Baal hymn, slightly modified for use in the early cultus of Yahweh (Cross 1973:155).

In hymnic descriptions of the theophany of Yahweh, we find these same patterns and motifs. The language of theophany in early Israel was primarily language drawn from the theophany of Baal (Cross 1973:157).

6.10.3 Baal and the Exodus

The alledged Exodus out of Egypt, as described in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible, is one of the foundational events of Israel's religion. It marked the liberation from Egyptian slavery, which in turn made possible the formation of a relationship of covenant between Israel and Yahweh. The great victory hymn in Exodus 15:1-18 is known as 'the Song of the Sea.' But what is not immediately evident to the modern reader is the subtle way the poet has given force to his themes by the adaptation of Canaanite mythology. Underlying the words and structure of the Hebrew hymn are the motifs of the central mythology of Baal. Some of the central motifs of the Baal myth are: conflict, order, kingship and palace-reconstruction. In the Baal Cycle, Baal (representing order), is threatened by Yam (representing chaos) (Craigie 1983:88).

In the 'Song of the Sea,' the poet has developed the same central motifs in the structure of his song. The song begins with conflict between God and Egypt (Exodus 15:1-12). Sea (Yam) is no longer the adversary of the order, but God uses the Sea (Yam), as an instrument in the conquest of chaos. After the conquest, God is victorious and establishes order and his kingship is proclaimed. Finally, God's kingship is declared because of his victories: 'The Lord shall reign for ever and ever' (verse 18). The Hebrew expression for the statement of kingship *YHWH ymlk,* directly analogous to the celebration of Baal's kingship in the Ugaritic tests: *b'l ymlk* (Craigie 1983:89).

The significance of the motifs of the Baal myth in the Song of the Sea lies in the cosmological meaning of the motifs. The Hebrew poet has taken the symbolic language of creation and adapted it to give expression to his understanding of the meaning of the Exodus. At one level,

the Exodus was simply the escape of Hebrews from Egyptian slavery; at another level, it marked a new act of divine creation. Just as Genesis 1 celebrates the creation of the world, so too Exodus 15 celebrates the creation of a new people, namely Israel (Craigie1983:89).

Cross mentions that the language of Exodus 15 is more consistently archaic than that of any other prose or poetic work of some length in the Bible and the poem conforms throughout to the prosodic patterns and canons of the Late Bronze Age. Cross (1973) too, like Craigie (1983), places the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15, as one of the oldest hymns preserved by biblical sources and is the primary source for the central event in Israel's history, the Exodus-Conquest (Craigie 1983:90; Cross 1973:157).

6.10.4 The goddess Asherah

Traditional biblical scholarship has only reluctantly admitted that there was a goddess Asherah whom the ancient Israelites knew and worshipped. Their assumption was that from Mosaic times, before entering Canaan, there had existed a 'pure' Yahwistic monotheism. In adapting to this view, modern commentators bought into the Deuteronomistic ideology and regarded Canaanite practices as intrusive. That naivete should have been shattered with the Ugaritic mythological discoveries in 1928. Dating from *ca.* 1400-1300 BCE, the goddess Asherah re-emerged and could again be seen as the principal female deity of the pantheon in Canaan in pre-Israelite times (Dever 2005:209).

The head of the Canaanite pantheon, El, had as consort, the goddess Athirat, the Asherah of the Hebrew Bible. She was also worshipped by South Arabians and Amorites; a votive inscription in Sumerian calls her 'the bride of heaven' (Albright 1968 :231).

The site called, Kuntillet 'Ajrud, (as referred to above) and also known as Horvat Teman is situated on a mound in the valley of Wadi Qurayyat in the north-eastern region of Sinai, about fifty kilometres south of Kadesh-barnea. Kuntillet 'Ajrud is close to important crossroads, leading from Kadesh-barnea in the north to Elath in the south. The site, according to the pottery discovered there, dates from 800 BCE. Fragments of inscriptions on wall-plaster in Phoenician script were found which bare a similarity to the ink-on-plaster wall-inscriptions found at a shrine

at Tell Deir ‘Alla mentioning Balaam the seer. Deir ‘Alla is relevant to Kuntillet ‘Ajrud therein that the ‘formally scripted mythological inscriptions’ at the shrine is a clear indication that the wall-inscriptions at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud should not be judged as casual graffiti but should be interpreted within its context. Two pithoi were discovered, densely covered with drawings and inscriptions, mainly in red ink. Neotron activation analysis indicated that the pottery was not a product of local clay, but of clay from Judah or the coast, or even as far as the northern parts of Israel. The first pithos has a ‘collage’ of miscellaneous drawings on both sides with separate letters and a written benediction:

‘May you be blessed by Yahweh.
Of Shomron (Samaria) and his Asherah’
The second pithos has incomplete animal drawings and a group of five human figures, with raised hands, supposedly in veneration. A second inscription on a pithos reads:
‘Amaryo said: Tell my lord, may you be well.
And be blessed by Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah.
May he bless and keep you and be with you.’

This storage jar was probably placed at the gate as a votive. The various painted scenes on the pithoi picture humans or divine figures and illustrate familiar fertility motifs (Mondriaan 2010:51).

6.10.5 The trees of Asherah as biblical symbols

Between 842 and 836 BCE, the religious revolution inspired by Elijah was translated into political action in both the North and the South. With the accession of Jehu in Israel and Jehoash in Judah the way was clear for undisturbed worship of Yahweh, but Baalism was too deeply rooted in tradition and custom to be so easily destroyed. The Cannaanizing elements which had entered into official Yahwistic cult with Solomon and Jeroboam were only the public recognition of an increasing tendency to adapt Baalistic practices to the local cult of Yahweh in open-air shrines all over the country. We find the trees of Asherah, which were ‘sacred’ trees and altars of incense known as hamman. Their connection to the goddess of fertility is clear in their association with pagan rites of fecundity. Archaeology has brought to light numerous ‘horned altars’ where

incense was burnt in Israelite towns of the 10th to 7th century BCE. Incense was opposed in early Israel, presumably because of its close connection with licentious pagan rituals Albright (1968:310) (19 57:310).

The Ugaritic myths provide a grisly image of Anat adorning herself with the decapitated heads and severed limbs of her defeated enemies. She delights in the carnage of battle, and wades in blood up to her thighs. She is a most fearsome and aggressive character in the Ugaritic myths (Walls 1992:1).

John Day agrees (2002) with Albright (1968) and Dever (2005) that the Ugaritic texts reveal that El's consort was a goddess named Athirat. In equating Yahweh with El it would not be surprising if the Israelites appropriated El's wife to Yahweh. So, the name Athirat occurs as Asherah in the Hebrew Bible, but the biased, Yahweh alone party which compiled the Hebrew Bible, rejected the notion that Yahweh had a wife Asherah. The word Asherah occurs forty times in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural – although most of these refer to the wooden cult object symbolizing the goddess Asherah. Prior to the discovery of the Ugaritic texts in 1929, it was common for Bible scholars to deny that Asherah was ever the name of a goddess in the Hebrew Bible, or when this was conceded it was thought that she was the same as Astarte (Day 2002:42).

When we consider 2 Kings 23:4 we read that as part of Josiah's reform: 'the king commanded …to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven.' Asherah, being named between Baal and the host of heaven, both of which were worshipped as divinities, we can deduce that Asherah was likewise worshipped as a deity. Just a little earlier in 2 Kings 21:7, the king, Manasseh, is condemned by the writers of the book of Kings for 'putting in the Temple the graven image of Asherah that he had made.' We also read in 1 Kings 15:13 that King Asa 'removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother because she had a horrid thing made for Asherah; and King Asa cut down her horrid thing and burned it at the brook Kidron'. Further evidence that Asherah is the name of a goddess, not merely a cult object in ancient Israel, is in 1 Kings 18:19, where Elijah is said to have commanded 'the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah' to come to the

contest on mount Carmel. Whoever added the reference to the prophets of Asherah to the text (as many scholars believe this reference to be a late addition to the text), understood Asherah to be a divine name, which implies continued awareness of this goddess amongst the Jews even after the exile. The discovery of the inscription from both Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom referring to 'Yahweh and his Asherah' confirm this (Day 2000:44-49).

Asherah, formerly the wife of El, was worshipped as Yahweh's consort or mother. Biblical passages indicate that her statues were kept in his temples in Jerusalem, Bethel, and Samaria (Ackerman 2003:395). Yahweh may also have appropriated Anat, the wife of Baal, as his consort, as Anat-Yahu ('Anat of Yahu,' i.e., Yahweh) is mentioned in 5th century BCE records from the Jewish colony at Elephantine in Egypt (Day 2002:143).

In the study of whether many Israelite women had a patroness, the old Canaanite Mother Goddess 'Asherah', brings us to the archaeological artifacts of terra cotta female figurines that have been discovered everywhere in Palestine excavations (Dever 2005:176).

The Hebrew Bible portrays Asherah as a goddess by the side of Baal, whose consort she is, allusions to the name Asherah indicate that her name was applied to a cult-object of wood, which might be burned or hewed down like a tree, and which was set up in high places beside altars of incense (*bammanim)* and stone pillars (*Masseboth).* The word Asherah is also translated as 'grove', following the Greek and Latin versions, presumably based old traditions. Asherah in the Ugaritic literature is called *Athiratu-yammi;* which means 'she who walks on water' in both Ugaritic and biblical Hebrew, so, 'She who walks on the Sea' or 'She who on treads on water' (Albright 1940:77, 78).

The goddess Asherah is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. For example, in 1 Kings 16:32, 33, which describes the king Ahab who built an altar for Baal and made an Asherah. In I Kings 18:20-40, we read of the account where the prophet Elijah calls upon the people to choose whom they would serve: God (Yahweh) or Baal. Elijah says he alone had remained of the Lord's prophets, but the prophets of Baal were four hundred and fifty and the prophets of Asherah, numbered four hundred. Dever (2005) is of the opinion that the writers of the Bible are silent on the probable

killing of the 400 prophets of Asherah, because they probably had not been killed. He writes that they were probably spared because her cult was widely tolerated, despite the misgivings of some purists, and tolerated even in 'official religion' in the north (Dever 2005:211).

Further evidence that the cult of Asherah came from Judah during the reigns of Hezekiah in the 8th century BCE and Josiah in the late 7th century BCE. In 2 Kings 18:4, Hezekiah is said to have 'removed the high places (*bamot)* broken the pillars *(massebot) and* cut down the Asherah.' But his son, Manasseh set up 'a graven image of Asherah' in Solomon's Temple, where only Yahweh's name should have been established forever (2 Kings 21:1-7). So, Hezekiah's 'reform' was a failure, probably because it lacked popular support and royal approval. Asherah remained in the temple, alongside Yahweh. 2 Kings 23 is the most revealing passage concerning what worship in ancient Israel really was: 'the king commanded …that all the vessels made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven, be brought forth' (2 Kings 23:4 & 5) 'And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places round about Jerusalem; them also that had burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.' 2 Kings 23:7: 'he broke down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord', further 2 Kings 23:13: ' and the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites' and so it goes on; revealing what was really going on in the land of Israel (Dever 2005:212).

6.10.6 Archaeological discoveries of religious cult practices

The recovery of century upon century of lost human history through archaeological exploration, excavation, and decipherment is astonishing. All ideas about human history before the Greeks were based on the Hebrew Bible as well as history writers such as Herodotus, Josephus, and Eusebius (Lance 1981:1). It was because of Europe's imperialistic policy (of annexing foreign countries), that it was learnt that there were abundant remains of civilizations far older than Greece or Rome. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he tasked soldiers and draftsmen with him to make a survey of ancient monuments. Napoleon's soldiers discovered at a place called Rosetta, on the Nile Delta, a stone in a trilingual inscription of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes written

in Greek and in both forms of the Egyptian language, hieroglyphic and demotic. Jean Francois Champollion finally broke the system when he realised that the pictorial marking was in fact a language. So, the tombs and temples of Egypt were gradually forced to speak (Lance 1981:2-5).

There are different types of archaeological evidence. From Mesopotamia, we find the code of Hammurabi of Babylon. From Mari, on the upper Euphrates River we have clay tablets written in cuneiform. In Egypt the normal form of writing was not on clay but stone, wood, and papyrus (made from the matted pith of the papyrus reed). The Hebrew Bible has hundreds of words that describe various aspects of the religious thought that pervades its discourse. The Hebrew Bible mentions 'high places' used in cultic rites many times, usually condemning them as reminiscent of pagan 'Canaanite' practices and therefore forbidden (Dever 2005:92). In I Kings 14:23 we find the reference 'on every high hill and under every green tree' referring to a *bamah*or 'high place.' It is not always clear whether the term 'high place' just refers to a hill but in I Samuel 9:5-14 we find Saul and his men approaching a town looking for the 'seer.' They were directed to a high place just inside the gate where sacrifices were being made, to which they 'went up' (Dever 2005:93).

The term *bamah/bamot*is connected in many texts with non-Yahwistic practices that are viewed as a continuation of earlier, 'pagan' influence from Canaanite deities and rituals. King Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, is castigated for setting up 'golden calves' at high places at Bethel in the south (an old cult center) and at Dan in the north, where incense was burned (1 Kings 12:28-31; 2 Chronicles 11:15). Saul's successor David – a 'man after God's own heart' – leaves Zadok the priest and his own men to visit the high place at Gibeon. There he offers animal sacrifices on the altar and appoints musicians for 'sacred song.' In ancient Israel there must have also existed household or private shrines. We find in Judges 6:11-33 the story of Gideon's call by Yahweh to deliver his people and he meets and speaks to the angel of Yahweh sitting under the 'Oak at Ophrah,' probably an 'asherah-tree.' The rest of the account of Gideon refers to a house-cult. Yahweh instructs Gideon to 'pull down the altar of Baal which your father has erected and cut down the 'asherah' that is beside it' (Judges 6:25). There is now archaeological evidence of at least a dozen family 'shrines', ranging in date from the 12th to the 7th centuries BCE. Dever continues to describe various shrines from the 12th century BCE with altars, cult stands, and this

continued in use in the 10th century BCE during the United Monarchy (Dever 2005:114). At Megiddo, in the Jezreel Valley, we find two buildings with especially well-preserved shrines with a four-horned altar, a stone offering table, stand, tripod mortar and pestles as well as offering stands, juglets and other vessels, quantities of burned grain; and sheep and goat knucklebones. Likewise, such shrines were found also at Tel Rehov in the northern Jordan Valley as well as to the west at Tel'Amal. In the north at Tell el-Far'ah, probably biblical Tirzah, 10th century BCE, a shrine was found at stratum VII b with a terra-cotta model temple, and several figurines. The same goes for Samaria, Lachish, and Tell Beit Mirsim. Dever suggests that all the above are *family shrines,* serving single or larger extended families with their typical 'standing stones', altars, some 'horned', stone tables and basins, offering stands and benches (Dever 2005:117).

Dever concludes that the standing stones in the family shrines were obviously biblical *massebot,* commemorating the continued presence of a deity. They appeared in public shrines as well as in family shrines and high places. These standing stones, reminiscent of the old Canaanite cults, were finally prohibited in the 7th century BCE by the reform movements. They had always been in use in folk religion, and they continued to be used. The stone offering tables and basins usually found in shrines are not ordinary kitchen utensils. These vessels are large, often made of expensive and difficult-to-work black basalt (volcanic stone), and come in a variety of elaborate shapes, such as fenestrated, tripod-footed bowls. The tables could serve as altars, with the symbolism as 'tables where the gods eat' (Dever 2005:121).

The terra cotta 'cult stands,' or simply 'offering stands,' are common at many small shrines, as well as in other cultic contexts. Many dozens of them are known from excavations, from the 12th to the 6th century BC yet they are never mentioned in the Hebrew Bible in connection with any of the sacrifices and offerings that are known. They are made of fired clay, with a flaring base, a round column from one to more than two feet high, and a top that may have either iconographic motifs or just a socket for holding a separate offering bowl. Other stands, later in the Iron Age are more specifically 'Israelite,' have a slender column and drooping 'fronds' around the top, often associated with the goddess Asherah. The stands functioned in a practical way (Dever 2005:121).

Mettinger discusses the origin of the Israelite masseboth cult. It is clear that ancient Israel was the result of a process within the confines of Palestine.

In the Uvda Valley of the Negev desert, about 40 km north of Eilat, more than 40 masseboth sites were found. The desert masseboth already appeared by the 11th millennium BCE, and they became common in the time span from the 6th to the 2nd millennia (Mettinger 1995:170).

Various West Semitic cults had the following features in common:

1) The sanctuary was an open-air cult place and the central role of standing stones in cultic function as representatives of the divine is among its most prominent features.
2) The sacrifices performed were essentially animal sacrifices in the form of ritual slaughter, followed by a communal meat meal shared by all (Dever 2005:122).

Mazar mentioned the clay figurines that were prominent in the daily Israelite religious practice (Mazar 1990:501). From the 1920s onwards, as excavations in the southern Levant mounted in number, and broadened in scope, a series of small terra cotta female figurines were unearthed. A few figurines from the 10th to 9th century BCE depict a frontally nude female with long hair, her arms at her sides or on her breasts. These would appear to continue in Late Bronze Age Canaanite tradition of plaque figures, either standing or lying on a couch. Most scholars identify the standing figurines with the well-known Late Bronze Age goddess Asherah. An Egyptian New Kingdom plaque shows the goddess astride on a lion and gives all her names: 'Qudshu', Holy One, Asherah-Hathor, Astarte and Anat (Dever 2005:176-178).

The prohibition by the Hebrew prophet and lawmaker against the making of idols suggests the prevalence of idolatry in Canaan. From this clue one would naturally look for the remains of Canaanite images in the debris of the dozens of ancient sites which have been excavated in Palestine-Syria. The widespread use of the fertility objects is attested both by the fact that they were sometimes mass-produced using a clay mould and by the great number of them found in almost every major excavation of remains dating from the eighteenth to the sixth centuries BC (Pritchard 1958:122).

Albright comments on the figurines of the goddess of fertility and says they appear in Israelite sites from the time of the Judges and onwards. The earliest ones, from Tell Beit Mirsim in the South, are simply nude females represented as about to give birth, which could be charms to aid expectant mothers. The characteristic later forms reflect known Canaanite (Phoenician) prototypes of the Iron Age, such as standing female figures, fully clothed and veiled, and as female busts whose prominent breasts are supported by the hands, as if to suckle an infant (Albright 1968 :311).

In the 7th century BCE, during the independent Judean kingdom, there was not less than eight nations settled in Palestine. These include the Arameans of the kingdom of Geshur, who lived in the north-eastern border of Israel; the Phoenicians, who inhabited the northern coast and the Galilee; the Israelite kingdom; the late Philistines, who prospered in their own cities, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza and Ekron; and the three nations of East Jordan, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites; and, finally, the Judean kingdom.

In this period each of these nations had its own independent cult, consisting of the worship of a pair of major deities. The male deities were Haddad for the Arameans; Baal, Dagon or Baal Shemem for the Phoenicians; Milcom of the Ammorites; Chemosh of the Moabites; Qos of the Edomites and Yahweh of the Israelites and Judeans. The chief female of all of them was Asherah. Each nation created their god in a form different to the others. Archaeologists can clearly see the difference between the figurines that are discovered. The various nations used the same cult objects, the same type of incense altars, made of stone and clay, bronze and clay censers, cult stands and incense burners (Kratz & Spiekermann 2010:396).

Ephraim Stern explains a *favissa (plural, favissae),* which is a pit into which votive figurines or statuettes had been thrown. The figurines could have been made of metal, or stone, but mostly they were made of clay. Stern accidentally discovered such a *favissa* when he was excavating at Tel Dor, on the Mediterranean coast of Israel in 1980. The *favissa* had been preserved in an area near the city gate, dating from the fifth to fourth centuries BCE.

Clay figurines are not found in nearly as great abundance as pottery vessels in archaeological excavations in Israel, and date from every archaeological period. Some date back to the Neolithic Period (8th millennium BCE), when pottery vessels were created for the first time in the Near East. In every succeeding period, clay figurines were produced, not in their hundreds, but in their thousands. The clay figurines found at Tel Dor dated from the time when the Phoenicians inhabited the land. They were actually the heirs and descendants of the Canaanites. 'Phoenician' being a term applied to them by the Greeks, beginning in about the eighth century BCE when the Phoenicians had already become a strong maritime power. By the 10th century BCE the Phoenicians were found along the Mediterranean Sea coast in cities like Dor, 'Acco, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Arwad. The figurines found at Tel Dor reflect both Eastern and Western influence. The Eastern types of figurines show stylistic influences of Canaanite, Egyptian and even Mesopotamian-Persian, merged into the finest Phoenician artistry (Stern 1989).

The process of Hellenization on the coast of Palestine began in the fifth century BC, the period of the *favissae* found at Dor. The Western type figurines found at Dor, is more uniform stylistically, without a mixture of influences and can readily be distinguished as Greek, Rhodian and Cypriot. The origin of the clay figurines goes back long before the post-Exilic period. In Jerusalem on the Temple Mount a hoard of clay figurines dating from the eighth to seventh centuries BC was found. Thus, the use of these pagan figurines by Israelites is attested both archaeologically and in the Hebrew Bible. Examples are found in Isaiah 42:17; 44:9-17; Jeremiah 44:15-25; 2 Kings 17:15-17; 23:1-15 (Stern 1989).

Stern furthermore proclaims that with the return of the Jews to Palestine, in the Persian Period, the use of figurines ceased in areas occupied by the returning Jews. Before 721 BCE, when the Assyrians attacked the Northern Kingdom of Israel and deported them to Assyria, and until the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 BCE, the figurines were used in these areas as well as in the coastal areas – but fifty years after the exile, with their return to their homeland – in the areas occupied by Jews, there were no cultic figurines found after the exile (Stern 1989).

Besides the cult-objects and amulets, described above, there was constant percolation of different non-Yahwistic cults. With the increase in wealth there was also an increase in active participation in pagan cults. There were the astral cults from Babylonia, as described in Amos 5:26: 'You also carried Sukkoth your king, and Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves' and later the vowing of sacred horses and chariots to the sun-god in Assyrian fashion, and the cult of Mesopotamian Tammuz and of Ishtar, the Queen of Heaven (Albright 1968:312).

Later, in the late 8th to 7th century BCE, two types of figurines emerge: These were specifically Judean 'pillar-base' figurines, with a lower body resembling a tree trunk. They proliferated after the fall of Samaria in late 8th to 7th century BCE. Both types depict a nude female with prominent breasts. The first has a stylized face, made by pinching the upper part with a thumb and forefinger to form a nose and two eyes. The two hands lift the breasts, as though to offer them to a nursing child. Some figurines have side-locks or wear turbans. The second type of Judean pillar figurine has a finely modelled head with elaborate coiffure, separately mould-made and then attached to the body and also with prominent breasts, sometimes pendulous. Albright, long ago dubbed these figurines "dean nutrix", emphasizing their representation of a goddess as a nursing mother (Dever 2005:179).

Katz and Spiekermann also refers to the hundreds of clay figurines found all over the Judean settlements from Benjamin to Beersheba and mainly in Jerusalem. They conclude that a cult existed between the foreign pagan practices and the pure monotheism of Jerusalem, which may be called 'Yahwistic Paganism', common to all other Judean settlements (Katz & Spiekermann 1957:400).

Many hundreds of these Judean pillar-base figurines have been found in all sorts of contexts such as in houses, in cisterns, pits, and domestic rubbish heaps and in debris of all kinds. They are rare in tomb deposits, as well as in clear cultic contexts. The context of where artefacts are found is fundamental to determining the meaning of archaeological artifacts, so we are led to conclude that the terra-cotta female figurines have more to do with households than with community cults (Dever 2005:181).

A piece of evidence for the possible worship of Asherah or Anat in ancient Israel is a tenth-century cult stand found at Taanach with four levels or registers containing a number of divine symbols. On the bottom register is a female figure with hands resting upon the heads of lions standing to either side. This represents the goddess Anat.

Job 31:1 'I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin?' A number of scholars feel that this verse refers to the goddess Anat, but this merits further investigation. (Day 2002:139).

6.11 THE EGYPTIAN COMPLEX OF THE BRONZE SERPENT

We find in Numbers 21:6-9: 'And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore, the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord… And the Lord said unto Moses, make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole …everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.'

The biblical writer employed Egyptian background material and motifs when recording the Numbers 21 incident. This is an example of sympathetic magic, which is, 'controlling an adversary through manipulation of a replication.' Moses and the Israelites attempted to change curse into blessing by manipulating an image of the very thing bringing the curse. The ancient Egyptians were well known for techniques of sympathetic magic; they frequently defended themselves against scorpions, crocodiles, and serpents by manipulating images of them. Sympathetic magic was especially common in dealing with snake bites – the Egyptians believed they could be healed by an image of a snake (Currid 1997:148). The Egyptians revered the serpent because they feared it for its power and danger, but they also honoured the serpent because at times it offered protection. They thus regarded the snake as both friend and fiend, protector and enemy, and the personification of the sacred and the profane. The most important serpent worship was the cult of Uraeus centred in the city of Per-Wadjit in the delta where a temple was built in the early dynastic period in honor of her. She personified the cobra and was

the tutelary goddess of Lower Egypt. Wadjet served the same function as did the vulture-goddess Nekhbet, the tutelary deity of Upper Egypt (Currid 1997:89).

6.12 ORIGINS OF ISRAELITE ANICONISM

Aniconism has for a long time been presented as one of the most distinctive characteristics of the religion of ancient Israel. Aniconism refers to the absence or repudiation of divine images. Such a tradition was inconceivable to Israel's neighbours, where the care, feeding, and clothing of a deity, represented in the form of a divine statue, played a central role in national cults. There are four major traditions of thought concerning the origins of aniconism in ancient Israel. First, compared to other ancient Near-Eastern deities, who were associated with natural phenomena, Yahweh was conceived as a god of history. Secondly, He could not be manipulated by magic; so, producing divine statues of Him, normally used for said manipulation, is moot. Thirdly, the transcendent nature of Yahweh distinguishes Him from other deities and leads to the avoidance of depicting Him. Fourthly, the repudiation of images is meant to contrast Yahweh with other Canaanite deities (Kang 2018:84-85).

Recent theories concerning the origins of Israelite aniconism, firstly holds that there was bias against kingship. The origin of Israelite aniconism is now addressed with a synthesis of both archaeological and textual evidence. Iron-Age Israel was replete with icons and images, as evidenced by the bronze figurine from the Bull Site, the famous 'Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah' inscription from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, thousands of Judean pillar figurines, numerous seals and bullae with images of deities, and the Taanach cult stand embellished with various icons of the sun disc, a calf or horse figure, Asherah, lions, and cherubim (Kang 2018:88).

So too, the so-called Munich terracotta figurine from Tell Beit Mirsim from the late 8th or early 7th century BCE may also represent Yahweh and his consort Asherah sitting or standing on what appears to be a throne. What is emerging from the archaeological and epigraphic evidence from Iron-Age Israel is far from an aniconic religion, contrary to the biblical notion that the Israelites never venerated Yahweh or other deities in a visual form (Kang 2018:90).

One may argue that anthropomorphic representations of a male deity in Israel were few and far between. Perhaps this is so because the Israelites allowed anthropomorphic images of Yahweh only in the Jerusalem Temple. Niehr (1997:73-95) has convincingly demonstrated that there was indeed a Yahweh cult statue in the First Temple. Uehlinger (1997:149-152) goes further in suggesting that there was also a cult statue of Asherah in the First Temple (Kang 2018:90).

The *masseboth* cult or the standing stones could represent a deity without a specific physical description. Biblical passages which attest to the cultic usage of the *masseboth,* sometimes representing deities, are found in (Genesis 35:14; Exodus 23:24; Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 16:21-22; 2 Kings 3:2; 10:26-27; 23:14; Isaiah 19:1 and Hosea 3:4). The explicit prohibition against divine images is largely a Deuteronomist literary phenomenon. We find the ban on images in the Second Commandment of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:23; 34:17; Leviticus 19:4; 26:1 and Deuteronomy 4:15-19). Contrary to the common view that the Bible outrightly condemns the production of images of Yahweh, none addresses images of Yahweh *per se.* They warn against making images of idols of foreign gods and goddesses (Exodus 20:23; 34:17; Leviticus 19:4; 26:1). The Second Commandment and Deuteronomy 4 speak of a general image ban, but not against images of Yahweh specifically, but against making images meant for the worship of anything besides God (Kang 2018:91-92).

What is the true origin of the biblical prohibition on images? One of the most significant incidents during the religion of Israel was the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. To explain this event, the Deuteronomist theologians attempted to transform the nature of Yahwism from monolatry to monotheism. Reason being, that the fall of Judah would have meant that the God of Israel was weaker than Marduk. In the monotheistic point of view, however, Yahweh becomes the god of the universe who uses the Babylonians as a tool to punish His own people. Isaiah endeavoured to proclaim Yahweh as the only true god of the universe, repudiating representations of deities, and deriding foreign idols (Isaiah 40:18-25; 41:29; 44;1-20).

‘To whom will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare with him?

An idol?
A workman melts it,
And a goldsmith overlays it with gold.
and casts silver chains for it' (Isaiah 40:18-19).

So, the biblical prohibition on images is largely a creation of biblical authors after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. Prior to that point, there had been Yahweh's cult statue in the Temple, and the exilic authors formulated a new theology to cope with the fact that they no longer had a statue of Yahweh (Kang 2018:94).

6.13 THE ELEMENTS OF FOLK RELIGION

(1) 'idolatrous' priests
(2) High places in all the cities of Judah and all-around Jerusalem even at the gates of the city
(3) Incense burnt to Baal.
(4) Standing stones
(5) The worship of the sun, the moon, and the constellations, and all the hosts of the heavens in the Temple
(6) Horses and chariots dedicated to the sun at the entrance to the Temple.
(7) Altars (for incense) on the roof of the Temple
(8) "Vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of Heaven' (Dever 2005:214).

In Jeremiah 2:28 'But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.' This verse gives clear reference to the fact that idol worship had been practiced in all their cities. It was a common thing in ancient Israel. In Deuteronomy 16:21, 22 Yahweh speaks to the Israelites who are about to inherit the Land of Canaan: 'You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of Yahweh which you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar (massebah) which Yahweh your God hates. Asherah together with her tree symbol and high places with altars in groves of trees were all held to be typical Canaanite fertility cults and were thus anathema to the biblical writers. The Asherah was a wooden object symbolizing a tree. It was an item that was 'made' (1 Kings 14:15; 16:33; 2 Kings 17:6; 21:3) it

was made or built. And ‘set up’; an Asherah is any tree under which an idol is. Various pieces of iconography indicate that the tree was the Canaanite symbol of the goddess and represented her presence (Smith 2002:112).

The Asherah that Manasseh made in 2 Kings 21:7 might have been the same Asherah that Josiah dragged out of the Jerusalem temple in 2 Kings 23:6-7; both were housed in the Jerusalem temple (Smith 2002:113).

The history of the Israelite Asherah apparently ended with the Judean exile (587/6 BCE) but biblical passages that depict the divine image of the Asherah might depict the female figure of wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 as scholars such as Albright have compared the figure of Wisdom to the Canaanite goddess Asherah. Like the symbol of the Asherah, Wisdom is a female figure, providing life and nurturing. We find this especially in Proverbs 3:18: ‘She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are made happy’ (Smith 2002:133,134).

Gender-specific language in the Bible that could be traced to the Asherah, raises the issue concerning the background and significance of female metaphor sometimes used to describe either Yahweh or Yahweh’s action (Smith 2002:137).

6.14 THE BOOK JOSHUA AS FICTIONAL SAGA AND LEGEND

The narrative literary types of the Hebrew Bible have this in common: myth, saga, and legend, all originate as forms of storytelling. They differ in that myth is usually set in a long past primordial time, while saga and legend take as their point of departure the individuality and importance of unique facts or events in space and time. The saga, with its definite temporal and spatial content, refers in the most part to historical figures, events, or sites, and is quite distinct from the myth, which describes an event in the divine realm of crucial importance for human existence (Fohrer 1968:86).

There was no sharp distinction between the individual narrative forms in the ancient Near East and in Israel. Past events were narrated in every possible fashion, on the assumption that they took place as recounted (Fohrer 1968:86).

Sagas and legends make up the bulk of the narrative literary types in the Hebrew Bible. The tribal and national saga is particularly characteristic of Israel. This type of saga is associated with a particular figure, historical or invented. Then there is also the hero saga, which begins with the time of Moses. The classic age of this form of saga is the period of the conquest of Palestine and of self-assertion against Canaanites, Philistines, and other enemies – in other words, the period from Joshua to David (Fohrer 1968:91).

The research on the book of Joshua expanded at the turn of the twentieth century from the literary focus of source criticism to the broader study of the book as a resource for recovering the history of tribal Israel. The research of A. Alt (1883-1956) and W.F. Albright (1881-1971) illustrates the shift in methodology in the interpretation of Joshua. Alt held the 'infiltration theory' whilst Albright held to the 'unified conquest theory' and both these models dominated the research on Joshua throughout the twentieth century. Alt based his 'infiltration theory' on Joshua 1-11, where the individual stories reflected the infiltration of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim into central Palestine under the leadership of Joshua (Dozeman 2015:11).

For many years, the primary source for the understanding of the settlement of the first Israelites was the Hebrew Bible but every reconstruction based upon the biblical traditions has floundered on the evidence from archaeological remains. I refer to the chapter on ancient Israel where there is ample explanation of the different models which describe how Israel came to be in Palestine. The models imply that the origin of Israel is for the most part indigenous to the land, which calls into question the historical value of the entire conquest tradition in the Hebrew Bible (Dozeman 2015:14-15).

John Calvin (1509-1564), in his commentary on the book of Joshua, struggled with the ethics of the ban. He repeatedly reflects on the inhumanity of 'the indiscriminate and promiscuous slaughter, making no distinction of age or sex, but including alike women and children, the aged and decrepit. Even the calmest minds are aroused, in reading that Joshua slew all who came in his way without distinction, although they threw down their arms and suppliantly begged for mercy.' Calvin even provides his own opinion on this matter, writing that 'in our judgement at

least, the children and many of the women also were without blame,' but the literal meaning of the text, as the signifier of the word of God, forces Calvin to counter his own instincts with the conclusion that Joshua cannot be judged for his actions, 'when it is added, that so God had commanded, there is no more ground for obloquy against him' (Dozeman 2015:87).

6.15 THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The book of Joshua was written as an independent narrative, distinct from a larger Deuteronomistic History. The author of Joshua used sources when writing the book that may include the curse on the city (6:26); the address to the sun from the Book of Jashar (10:12-13); the defeat of Sihon and Og (12:1-6); the tradition of Caleb at Hebron (14:6-15); the borders and the list of the cities in Judah (Joshua 15); Ephraim and Benjamin (Joshua 16-17), and the other tribes (Joshua 18-19); the cities of refuge (Joshua 20); the cities of the Levites (Joshua 21); and the burial reports (24:32-33) (Dozeman 2015:25).

The books of Joshua and Judges agree in portraying the Israelites as nonindigenous to Canaan, requiring an invasion to secure residency in the land. But the nature of the invasion, the view of city-states, and the relationship between the Israelites and the indigenous urban population of Canaan are significantly different in the two books. The book of Joshua does not share Judges' dark view of history, in which tradition inevitably leads to the forgetting of the past, resulting in apostasy and the decline of culture. Instead, the story of Joshua traces the procession of the ark into the land with the positive goal of the Israelites resting within the land in covenant with Yahweh. The contrasting views of history in the two books are reinforced with different presentations of the most prominent characters. Joshua emerges as the central leader and the most dominant character in the book of Joshua, as compared with his less defined role in Judges. The Israelites are presented as a unified nation in Joshua in their conquest of Canaan, rather than as individual tribes, as in Judges (Dozeman 2015:25).

According to Ann E. Killebrew, 'Most scholars today accept that the majority of the conquest narratives in the book of Joshua are devoid of historical reality' (Killebrew 2005:186).

Judges is a story of conquest; Joshua is an account of extermination. Judges is a narrative of invasion and partial conquest, resulting in episodic stories that trace the decline of tribal Israel's life among the other nations in Canaan. Joshua is a story about the successful purging of royal cities from the promised land of Canaan and the extermination of its indigenous population. The point of view of the two books provides a further contrast. Judges idealizes the southern tribe of Judah in telling the story of the conquest, while the book of Joshua focuses on the northern site of Shechem as the central sanctuary of the ark. The comparison indicates that the author of Joshua reinterprets the partial and failed conquest of Judges into an account of the successful extermination of the indigenous kings and royal cities under the leadership of the northern hero Joshua (Dozeman 2015:26).

In summary, the literary themes of Joshua and its dependence on a form of the Pentateuch suggest its composition in the postexilic period; it represents a Samarian myth of origin, in which the promised land is heavily populated with kings and royal city-states requiring holy war to empty the land of its urban culture, as the ark processes to its northern cultic site near Shechem. The message of the book of Joshua is one of opposition to foreign rule in the Promised Land. The origin story in Joshua contrasts with the competing myth of the empty land in Ezra and Nehemiah, where the promised land has lain fallow during the exile with the absence of cities so that the returning exiled Judeans had to rebuild the temple and re-establish the lost city of Jerusalem. The rebuilding of Jerusalem in Ezra and Nehemiah represents a response of assimilation to the rule of the Persian, who are viewed as benevolent throughout, while the people of the land represent the opposition. In the book of Joshua, here are no benevolent rulers or royal city-states in the Promised Land. All are condemned by Yahweh and thus require extermination under the ban (Dozeman 2015:31).

Apart from the lack of archaeological evidence of the military conquest by the Israelites of the land of Canaan in the thirteenth century BC, there is also the improbability thereof. The Joshua saga is so improbable if one considers the facts of the story. How would a group of runaway slaves out of Egypt acquire the military arms and equipment to attack and conquer the mighty fortified cities of the Canaanites? Where did they get horses on which to do battle? They could

not have kept and fed horses for forty years in the desert. How could they have attempted to do battle against such an organised, strong and fortified army as the Canaanites had?

The original book of Joshua went through two Deuteronomistic recensions after which it then consisted of chapters 1 – 11; 14:6-15; 18:2-10; 19:51; 21:1; 22:1-8; 23-24. The lists of kings defeated by Israel (chapter 12), certainly did not belong to the Deuteronomistic book of Joshua, because it lists kings and cities that were not mentioned in the rest of the book and contains a conception of the conquest of the land that does not agree with the account in 1-11. So too, the data in Joshua 15 can only be based on an idealized reminiscence of the glorious period under Josiah (Fohrer 1968:204).

The historicity of the books of the Bible is a modern question, which did not concern the writers of the Hebrew Bible, because they did not aim at portraying or writing 'history.' The purpose of the earliest writers was to justify Israelite claims to the settled areas and their sanctuaries, to legitimize their possession and the use of certain cultic practices. For later redactors everything was subordinated to the viewpoint of the dominant theological conception. This was their interest, not 'history' (Fohrer 1968:94).

The Joshua narrative is a narrative of territorial claims and the territorial occupation of various Israelite groups and tribes of which a good part contains the explicit statement: 'Yahweh has given all the land into our hands**.'** The Joshua tradition must have been appended at an early date, leading to the introduction of the figure of Joshua into the Pentateuch. From its earliest form the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob tradition was linked with the Moses tradition and the early Joshua tradition to form a continuous narrative. The patriarchal tradition emphasized the element of territorial promise, while the Joshua tradition was henceforth to be the primary vehicle for representing the realization of that promise (Fohrer 1968:127).

The opening divine speech to Joshua introduces the theme of the promised land, when Yahweh states: 'Moses my servant is dead. Now arise and cross this Jordan, you and all these people, to the land which I am giving to them. – the children of Israel' (Joshua 1:2) Thus, the theme of the Promised Land is immediately given concrete, geopolitical meaning with the description of the

land's boundaries 'from the wilderness and this Lebanon to the great river, the River Euphrates: all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea, the place where the sun goes down' (Joshua 1:4).

The promise of land is tied to a web of related themes held together by the theology of covenant in the book of Joshua. The central content of covenant is the divine promise of land to Israel**.** The opening speech to Joshua, noted above, bonds the two themes of covenant and promised land, when Yahweh is revealed to Joshua as the God who made an oath to give the land to Moses (Joshua 1:6). The covenantal promise of land also defines the Israelites. As the recipients of divine promise, the tribes become a chosen people, distinct from all of the other nations in the Promised Land (Joshua 9:6). As a result, they must live by the strict statutes and ordinances of the covenant codified in the Torah of Moses (Joshua 24:25), which includes complete separation from indigenous culture (Joshua 7:11, 15), upon the threat of losing the land (Joshua 23:16) (Dozeman 2015:75).

The book Joshua takes its name from its primary figure. There is a Talmudic tradition that Joshua also wrote it, but this is contradicted by its character as an anonymous work as well as by observations similar to those that contradict the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. In content, the book tells how the oft-repeated promise to the fathers that the land would be given to their numerous descendants came to be realized when Joshua and the Israelites conquered and distributed the land west of the Jordan river in the period between Moses and the death of Joshua. At the outset of the narrative, the Israelites are located during Joshua's lifetime in the Jordan Valley, whence – divided into tribes – they 'go up' into the land west of the Jordan to conquer it. The author did not write a history of how the occupation took place, but a survey of the results of the occupation in narrative form. The narrative is not organized chronologically but geographically – and this not according to the map, but according to the presupposed historical situation (Fohrer 1968:199).

We are dealing mostly with etiological sagas, which were originally not connected with the figure of Joshua. These were originally individual sagas, some probably of Canaanite origin, which attempted to trace conspicuous objects and circumstances back to events in the past. In Joshua chapter 6, we read of the 'fall of Jericho.' There is the curse attached to the site of Jericho

(conquest by means of a magic circle), which is probably pre-Israelite, the more so because, despite all efforts, no archaeological evidence has been found for a conquest of the city during the period of the Israelite occupation of Canaan. In Joshua chapter 7 and 8, we read how Ai is destroyed. The ruined tell of Ai, with a heap of stones at the city gate; excavations have shown that the city was last conquered many centuries before the Israelite occupation of Canaan (Fohrer 1968:200).

Joshua 10:1-2 states that 'It came to pass, when Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.' Concerning the battle between Gibeon and Aijalon in Joshua chapter 10, this passage is indissolubly connected with the figure of Joshua and depicts him as a warlike tribal leader (Fohrer 1968:201).

With the introduction of the figure of Joshua, the etiological sagas became an occupation narrative for the Central Palestinian group of tribes and, as a consequence of the political and military significance of these tribes, the common property of Israel (Fohrer 1968:200-201).

The destruction of Jericho concludes by turning the spotlight back on Joshua to idealize his leadership: 'His fame was in all the land.' The idealization of Joshua is prominent from the outset of the book. The Deity promises Joshua divine presence like that of Moses (Joshua 1:5, 8, 17). Joshua is idealized before the Israelites as a leader like Moses in the crossing of the Jordan. He is characterized as a multifaceted leader in the story, including warrior, one who exercises the power of life and death in the execution of the ban, ritual specialist, and even prophetic speaker (Dozeman 2015:338).

All the above explanations of the saga of Joshua, brings me back to my theory that the writers of these stories were influenced by the Canaanite mythological goddess of war: Anat. Her savagery and killing had an influence on the writers of the Joshua sagas, which lack historicity and was told as a saga to boost the image of the Israelites and their claim to the land as well as

to propagate their God, Yahweh. The authors of the book of Joshua attribute their warlike, cruel success, saying that it was at the command of Yahweh that they slaughtered the inhabitants of the land of the Canaanites as it was promised to their forefathers. The Canaanite Ugaritic stories of the Baal Cycle and the War-goddess Anat must have been known and told as folktales during the long summer nights around the campfires of the ancient Israelites. When the writers eventually went and sat down to write how they obtained the land, and how they came to be the 'chosen people' of Yahweh, they remembered the old folk tales and wrote them down as sagas.

6.16 JEREMIAH 8:8 'WHY ARE SCRIBES ACCUSED OF CORRUPTING THE TORAH?'

H.L Bosman wrote a thesis on Jeremiah 8:8 and asked: 'Why are scribes accused of corrupting the Torah?' The focus by Bosman on Jeremiah 8:8 was triggered by the fact that there are only two references in the Hebrew Bible where scribes are identified as writers of biblical texts, and both are in the Book of Jeremiah (8:8-9; 36:18). In Jeremiah 8:8-9 we read:

How can you say: 'We are wise, for we have the law of the Lord,' when the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely? The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?

Van der Toorn is well informed about the scribal practice in the Ancient Near East that constituted the context within which Israelite, Judahite and early Jewish scribal practice developed. He considers scribes to be highly trained specialists who were rewarded in terms of compensation and social status. The other possibility is to approach the scribes as paid officials who had to articulate the ideology and theology of their royal or priestly sponsors (Bosman 2018:128).

This insert about the 'lying pen of the scribes' recalls that much that was written in the Hebrew Bible, was not what really happened. As William Dever states when he tries to locate books in the Hebrew Bible which can be utilized by the historian, he would exclude much of the Pentateuch, specifically the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. These materials constitute a sort of 'pre-history' that has been attached to the main epic of ancient Israel by late

editors. Much of the narratives are overlaid with legendary and even fantastic materials that the modern reader may enjoy as 'story.' Joshua was written largely to glorify a great hero of early Israel. He is credited with sweeping and rapid military victories over most of Canaan, vanquishing the whole land (Dever 2001:100, 122).

The book of Judges, following the book of Joshua in the Hebrew Bible, begins its story with Joshua's death in Judges 1:1, then goes on to weave a 200-year-long tale of some 12 judges, or charismatic figures raised up by Yahweh to deal with the very threat that Joshua has disposed of, namely the continuing presence of Canaanites and of Canaanite culture. Then later in chapter one, we find a 'negative list' of the supposed 'conquest,' cities that were not taken, some of them like Hazor, the very same cities that Joshua was said to have destroyed. To explain the continuous struggle and the chaos, the authors or editors of Judges repeat the refrain: 'In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes' (Judges 21:25) (Dever 2001:122).

6.17 ANAT IN ANCIENT UGARIT, THE HEBREW BIBLE, EGYPT, AND ELEPHANTINE

6.17.1 Anat in Ugaritic mythological texts

We have met Anat in the mythological tablets from Ugarit and in the Baal Cycle where she attacks Yam and later Mot in defence of her brother Baal. We have also encountered her in the story of her and Aqhat, and how she had him killed because she coveted his bow which Kothar-wa-Hasis had given him as a gift. In KTU 1.108 R5 (from the Ugaritic texts), we find some unique descriptions of Anat: 'May Anat the powerful drink, the mistress of kingship, the mistress of dominion, the mistress of the high heavens, and the mistress of the earth. And may Anat fly, may the kite soar in the high heavens.' The rest of the clay tablet is broken and unclear (Wyatt 2003:396).

Anat is portrayed as an independent goddess in the Ugaritic mythological texts. She does not appear to be submissive to any god in the Ugaritic texts. So, her role contrasts to that of Athirat as the wife of El. Anat approaches El only twice, once to ask permission for a palace to be built for Baal, and once to ask permission to punish Aqhat for his impudence. However, Anat threatens El that she will cause his grey hair to run with blood and gore if he does not grant her,

her requests. He answers her: 'I know you my daughter that you are incorrigible, and that there is no restraining you among the goddesses' (Walls 1992:108). The Ugaritic myths provide a grisly image of Anat adorning herself with the decapitated heads and severed limbs of her defeated enemies. She delights in the carnage of battle, and wades in blood up to her thighs. She is a most fearsome and aggressive character in the Ugaritic myths (Walls 1992:1).

6.17.2 Anat in the Hebrew Bible

Anat is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible when Judges 3:31 speaks of 'Shamgar the son of Anat.' Anat was not unknown in ancient Israel. There was a temple built for the worship of Anat in the Israeli town Beth- Shan which at the time was an Egyptian city in the Levant.

We have the reference to the Queen of heaven in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 8:18 'The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto their gods.' This is repeated in Jeremiah 44:17 'we will do everything that we said we would. We will offer sacrifices to our goddess, the Queen of Heaven, and we will pour out wine-offerings to her, just as we and our ancestors, our king and our leader, used to do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem.' I hold that the Queen of heaven that Jeremiah is referring to is the goddess Anat because in the Ugaritic text of KTU 2.1 108.7 she is referred to by the title 'Lady of Exalted Heaven.' This naming is also given to Anat in the Aramaic letters from Hermopolis in Egypt, dating from the 5th century BCE, about a century after the date of the Deuteronomystically edited passages in Jeremiah (Day 2002:147). (Oden 1987:44).

Craigie (1978) draws a comparison to the story of Deborah and Barak as told in Judges chapter 5, and the goddess Anat. From Judges 5: 'Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, praise you the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. Hear, O ye kings; give ear. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anat, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways...' Craigie (1978) is of the opinion that the Description of Deborah was influenced by the imagery associated with the goddess Anat from the Ugaritic myths. He entertains a few parallels:

1) Deborah has a male warrior assistant, Barak, just as Anat has a male assistant called, Yatipan, in the Aqhat epic
2) Deborah is a leader of warriors, just as Anat is too (Craigie 1978: 39).

6.17.3 Anat worship in Egypt

The goddess Anat begins to appear frequently in Egyptian records as a theophoric element in personal names during the Hyksos period. She appears on scarabs from Tanis and in the Hyksos king lists of the Turin Papyrus (Albright 1968:231).

In Egypt, Pharaohs of the 19th dynasty gave important status to Anat under the Ramesside pharaohs and incorporated her into the Egyptian Pantheon of deities. Pharao Seti I inscribed on a picture of a horse: 'Great first span of his majesty: 'Amon-assigns-to-Him-the-Victory', his Anat.' Pharoah Ramses II choose Anat as his patron goddess. He named his daughter bnt-'nt and on the Beit-el-Wali temple, over the carving of a dog, he inscribed, 'Anat is Protection.' On the sword of Pharao Ramses was written: 'Anat is victorious' and one of his daughters married a shipping captain named bn'nt (Anat) (Bowman 1978:224-225).

In Egypt, Anat was usually associated with martial images and strongly associated with the god Seth, and as the daughter of Ptah and Re (Walls 1992:145). Ramses encouraged the cult of other gods, both Egyptian and Canaanite. He particularly worshipped Baal, who had already been identified with Seth by the Hyksos, and his sister, the goddess Anat. During the 13th century BCE, the leading deities of Western Asia and those of the Canaanites, Hittites and Mesopotamians were freely identified with the Egyptian gods. Albright calls this the 'First International Age' (Albright 1968:224).

6.17.4 Anat-Yahu and the Elephantine papyri

Papyri texts and documents, in no less than seven languages, were discovered on the island of Elephantine, situated in the Nile River, opposite the ancient village of Syene. These papyri describe the lives of Jewish mercenaries and their families, who lived there during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. The date of their arrival is not known but, by 525 BCE, they were well established there. These Jewish mercenaries probably originated from the former Northern

Kingdom of Israel, which came – together with Judah – under the rule of Egypt after the death of Josiah in 609 BCE (2 Kings 23:28-30). These Jewish soldiers were now fighting under Egyptian instruction and could possibly have been taken to serve in Egypt. Northern Israel, in seventh century BCE, consisted mainly of Israelites and Aramaeans who spoke Aramaic as their common language. They worshipped a multitude of deities and this religious pluralism was presumably carried over to Elephantine, where the fifth century BCE Jewish inhabitants were in many ways a syncretistic, non-traditional community (Mondriaan 2010:284-285)

Apart from the worship of Anat, by the Jews of Elephantine, they also worshipped the deity Bethel. One reason why it is difficult to determine the significance of Bethel is that it only appears late, the first time in the seventh-century BCE in a treaty between Esarhaddon of Assyria and Baal of Tyre (E/B). The placement of Bethel and his consort Anatbethel in the god-list of this treaty, causes most scholars to agree that Bethel is not an Assyrian deity but rather one of the gods of the 'Eber-Nari' (Trans-Euphrates), probably being of either Phoenician or Aramean origin (Chalmers 2008:168).

In Egypt, on the island of Elephantine, in the 5th century BCE, the Jews living there built a temple for Anat and Yahweh, calling on their deity as 'Anat-Yahu,' Yahu being an abbreviation for Yahweh. Formal permission for the building of their temple was asked in an Aramaic letter to the Persian representative in Judah. Their temple had been destroyed three years earlier by Egyptian soldiers under command of Colonel Nefayan by order of his father, the Persian governor Ogdanes. The Jewish community on the island of Elephantine continued to mourn and fast for three years until King Darius of Persia, gave permission that their temple to Anat-Yahu, be rebuilt (Assmann 1997:62). We also find a letter from Jedaniah at the Elephantine archives stating that the Jewish temple to Anat-Yahu was going to be reconstructed at Elephantine (Porten et al 1996:137).

The Jewish Aramaic papyri from Elephantine contain the divine names, *'ntbyt'* land *'ntyhw* and the personal name *'nty,* which some scholars have interpreted as indirect evidence for a Jewish cult of Anat at Elephantine, a practice then inferred for ancient Israel. It appears that *'nt* in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine derived from the name of the goddess Anat also attested in

other Egyptian Aramaic documents of the Persian period. The derivation of *'nt* from the name of the goddess may be viewed as due to local Aramaean or Phoenician influence. The name Anat-Bethel belongs among the Tyrian deities mentioned in the treaty between Esarhaddon and Baal II of Tyre. Anat was also known at Iron Age Bethel as mentioned in Papyrus Amherst 63 (column VII) (Smith 2002: 103).

If Anat was originally a Northwest Semitic deity, then her presence as Anat-bethel and Anat-Yahu in Elephantine is most likely due to local Aramean or Phoenician influence in Egypt (Chalmers 2008: 186). The worship (and creation) of Anat-Yaho may be seen as part of a larger phenomenon, namely, the influence of Aramaean religion on Israel, as mentioned above (Chalmers 2008:191).

6.18 ANAT THE WAR-GODDESS IN UGARITIC TEXTS AND IN COMPARISON, WITH THE HEBREW BIBLE

Anat's wars in (KTU 1.3 ii – 3-30) (from the Ugaritic texts), suggest similarities with Yahweh's wars: they speak of a mountain venue, a potential universal scope, and heaps of corpses and skulls. This might be a metaphor of a harvest, feeding on captives, drinking the blood of the defeated, wading in blood, drunkenness, and laughter (Smith 2003: 101-7).

For the mountain see Psalm 2:6: 'On Zion, my sacred hill, he says, I have installed my king'; Psalm 48:1-3: 'The Lord is great and is to be highly praised in the city of our God, on his sacred hill. Zion, the mountain f God, is high and beautiful; the city of the great king brings joy to all the world. God has shown that there is safety with him inside the fortresses of the city'; and Psalm 110: 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies!' Joel 3:9-10: 'Make this announcement among the nations; 'Prepare for war; call your warriors; gather all your soldiers and march! Hammer the points of your ploughs into swords and your pruning-knives into spears' (Smith 2003:101).

Many dead bodies are seen in Isaiah 34:2-3: ‘The Lord is angry with all the nations and all their armies. He has condemned them to destruction. Their corpses will not be buried but will lie there rotting and stinking; and the mountains will be red with blood.’

For violence see Deuteronomy 32:42: ‘My arrows will drip with their blood, and my sword will kill all who oppose me. I will spare no one who fights against me; even the wounded and prisoners will die.’

The harvest picture occurs in Joel 3:13: ‘They are very wicked; cut them down like corn at harvest time; crush them as grapes are crushed in a full winepress until the wine runs over.’

For feeding on captives and spilling their blood see Isaiah 49:26: ‘I will make your oppressors kill each other; they will be drunk with murder and rage. Then all mankind will know that I am the Lord.’ Zechariah 9:15 says: ‘The Lord Almighty will protect his people, and they will destroy their enemies. They will shout in battle like drunken men and will shed the blood of their enemies; it will flow like the blood of a sacrifice poured on the altar from a bowl.’; and Numbers 23:24: ‘The nation of Israel is like a mighty lion; it doesn’t rest until it has torn and devoured, until it has drunk the blood of those it has killed.’

For moving through blood and bathing in it see Psalm 58:10: ‘The righteous will be glad when they see sinners punished; they will wade through the blood of the wicked.’ And Psalm 68:22-23: ‘I will bring your enemies back from Bashan; So that you may wade in their blood, and your dogs may lap up as much as they want.’ Isaiah 63:3, 6: The Lord answers, ‘I have trampled the nations like grapes, and no one came to help me, I trampled them in my anger, and their blood has stained all my clothing. In my anger I trampled whole nations and shattered them. I poured out their life-blood on the ground.’

For the laughter of battle see Psalm 2:4: ‘From his throne in heaven the Lord laughs and mocks their feeble plans’ (Smith 2003:101-7).

Anat is portrayed as the goddess of war in the Ugaritic texts: She decided to carry out a general massacre. 'With might she hewed down the people of the cities, she smote the folk of the sea-coast, she slew the men of the sunrise.' After filling her temple with men, she barred the gates so that none might escape, after which 'she hurled chairs at the youths, tables at the warriors, foot-stools at the men of might.' The blood was so deep that she waded in it up to her knees – even up to her neck. Under her feet were human heads, while she attached hands in her girdle. Her joy at the butchery is described: 'her liver swelled with laughter, her heart was full of joy, the liver of Anat was satisfied and she washed her hands in human gore' (Smith 2002:104).

The importance of gender to Anat's liminal character is seen in her bloody image as warrior and huntress. In contrast to goddesses of fertility, Anat spills others' blood and deprives them of their lives rather than spilling her blood as a procreative female. Anat's role as a taker of life, rather than a life-giver communicates an important element of her gender symbolism. In her role as life-taker, Anat demonstrates a masculine aspect of her character which contrasts with the feminine role of natural procreation. She causes men to bleed in death without herself bleeding in procreative sex and childbirth (Walls 1992:222).

6.19 HEREM AND ANAT

We find the concept of *herem* where a patron god could ask for the ritual slaughter of every man, woman, and child among the enemies of war. King Mesha of the Moabites committed this type of slaughter. The Hebrew Bible offers many instances of *herem.* The Hebrew Bible sometimes defines *herem* as a punishment for the sin that results in ritual execution of the offender (for example, Exodus 22:20: 'Condemn to death anyone who offers sacrifices to any god except to me, the Lord.' (Leviticus 27:29: 'No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death) (Noll 2013:209).

The concept of *herem* frequently appears in the Joshua saga in: 'With their swords they killed everyone in the city, men and women, young and old. They also killed the cattle, sheep, and donkeys.' (Joshua 2:10; Joshua 6:21); 'Joshua kept his spear pointed at Ai and did not put it down until every person there had been killed. The whole population of Ai was killed that day – twelve

thousand men and women.' (Joshua 8:26); 'Adonizedek, the king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had captured and totally destroyed Ai and had killed its king, just as he had done to Jericho and its king.' (Joshua 10:1); and 'Joshua conquered the whole land. He defeated the kings of the hill country, the eastern slopes, and the western foothills, as well as those of the dry country in the south' (Joshua 10:40), this slaughter Joshua did in Israel's effort to conquer the Promised Land (Noll 2013:200).

The Hebrew word *herem* means 'devote' or 'destroy'. It is also referred to as the ban. It means the destruction of the enemy and his goods at the conclusion of a campaign. We find this especially in the book of Joshua where cities such as Jericho and Ai came under *herem.* This meant they had to be destroyed, except for the 'silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron' which were to go into 'Yahweh's treasury' (Joshua 6:19). Deuteronomy 20 also names six groups of people who were to be under the ban: The Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. This has led to the conquest of Canaan being referred to as genocide (Boustan 2010:3-5).

The bloody battle, represented in Ugaritic tradition by the goddess Anat, provides insight into the mythos of the biblical ban or herem. In KTU 1.13.3-7, we find Anat's ban: 'Destroy under the ban (hrm) for two days, shed blood for three days, go, kill for four days! Harvest hands, pour out blood to your waist attach heads' (Smith 1994:17).

'The nation of Israel is like a mighty lion: It doesn't rest until it has torn and devoured, until it has drunk the blood of those it has killed.' (Numbers 23:24). Anat's feasting on her captives (KTU 1.3 II 17-30), provides a literary analogue for biblical representations of the victor that 'feeds on the flesh' of captives, such as in Deuteronomy 32:42: 'My arrows will drip with their blood, and my sword will kill all who oppose me. I will spare no one who fights against me; even the wounded and prisoners will die.' Thus, the *herem*-warfare in ancient Israel may presuppose the notion of the deity receiving warfare captives as offerings for victory (Smith 2014:172).

6.20 CONCLUSION

We conclude that the religion of ancient Israel was a complex matter. The mythological tale of the warlike goddess Anat was carried down in the Levant and influenced the authors of the conquest narrative to incorporate her own cruel and warlike ways into their tale of death and destruction in Canaan. Her murderous persona is present in the saga told of the Israelite hero, Joshua, in his cruel campaign against the Canaanites who were not the aggressors. The whole Joshua campaign was a selfish route taken against a people who did nothing against the Israelites to invoke them to outright murderous war and destruction. As we have seen in the previous chapters, this is also how we got to know Anat. Especially in the story of Anat and Aqhat, we see Anat killing Aqhat for pure selfish and self-centred reasons: because of her coveting his bow and arrows. We find similar motivations in the unwarranted and unprovoked attack of Joshua and the Israelites on the cities of the Canaanites in the Joshua narrative. In fact, as we have seen, the Canaanites were a sophisticated and advanced people with a rich culture. However, the authors of the Hebrew Bible paint a biased picture of the Canaanites and then they ascribe their destructive ways as though it was all at the command of their deity, Yahweh. Many of the conquests are also described as being miraculous, all by the favour and intervention of Yahweh so that the reader is brought to believe that the whole murderous attack on the Canaanites was justified because Yahweh had ordered it.

The story of the conquest of Canaan is incompatible with a loving, all-embracing God and Father of all nations, and peoples. This is contrary to His character as God and Provider for the widow and the downtrodden. In fact, the book of Joshua, as influenced by Anat, the Ugaritic mythological character in her unforgiving, unrepenting savagery, is a misfit in the Hebrew Bible. It is a shocking tale of merciless destruction of an innocent people who lived in the land. However, according to the authors, they had the full backing of their deity, Yahweh, in pulling down the strongholds of the Canaanites and killing man, woman, and child. In fact, the Canaanite city-states were strong built-up cities with high walls and battering rams and many horses and efficient weaponry. The Israelites, on the other hand, were slaves on the run, who had just come from a forty-year sojourn in the Sinai desert. They arrived at the Jordan River without weapons or horses or chariots – how would they have attacked and conquered the mighty Canaanite cities that they were up against? So, once again we must conclude that it was all a fantastic story, a

saga that the authors, with the help of the then, century old mythological story of Anat, construed in order to promote themselves and their hero and to confirm themselves as the chosen people of Yahweh.

The Hebrew Bible gives an explicit picture of the way *Yahweh* – as the God of Israel – revealed himself to the patriarchs and to Moses and, thereby, an account of the origin of the Israelite religion. Three different recitals in the Pentateuch about this significant historic event are an indication that beliefs were at variance. According to the Yahwish narrator, people began to call upon the name of *Yahweh* as early as the time of the birth of Enosh. Exodus 3:14-15 records that God revealed himself to Moses by the name of Yahweh, stating that he is 'the LORD [*Yahweh*]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shadday], but by my name the LORD [*Yahweh*], I did not make myself known to them'. In another revelation, God told Jacob, 'I am the LORD [*Yahweh*], the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac'. Contrary to earlier accounts in Genesis, the Priestly record – Exodus 6:2-3 – creates the impression that the name Yahweh was revealed to Moses for the first time. The Pentateuch thus supports a twofold tradition about the disclosure of Yahweh and, consequently, of the origin of Yahwism (Boshoff et al 2000:88 & 104).

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I hold that the mythological stories of the gods and goddesses of ancient Canaan were carried forth orally and as folk tales into the Levant from the end of the 2nd millennium BCE until the time of the compilation of the Hebrew Biblle and beyond.

The written cuneiform tablets, discovered at Ugarit in 1928, that were published, deciphered, and translated since that year, has shed light on the ancient religion of Canaan. We know that the god Baal was worshipped in Israel for hundreds of years after the Israelites settled there and long after they had become a nation. The Hebrew Bible has many references to Baal worship among the Israelites. If Baal was worshipped in Israel, then his sister, Anat, could also have been worshipped alongside him. However, we now know that the redactors might have written her out of the Hebrew Bible. To them, all other worship, other than the worship of Yahweh, was prohibited.

In this thesis, I propose that the war goddess Anat might have had an influence on the authors of the book of Joshua. Her murderous and savage ways might have influenced them to write the saga of the hero Joshua who invaded Canaan, killing the inhabitants of that land.

Anat killed selfishly, without reason and without provocation, as we have seen in the story of her and Aqhat. In like manner, the attacks of Joshua on the innocent inhabitants of cities such as Jericho and Ai was also selfish and without provocation. What had the Canaanites done to the Israelites that would have provoked them to such murders and carnage? The Canaanites were a sophisticated, cultured, and strong nation. They had a strong army, there were city-states with strong fortified walls, with weaponry, horses, and chariots. The Israelites, on the other hand, had none of these. According to the Hebrew Bible, they had just come out of forty years of wandering in the Sinai desert. They did not have horses, or weaponry, or chariots. They were slaves on the run. The military attacks of the Israelites on the cities of the Canaanites, as portrayed in the book of Joshua, make no sense. How could a few hundred runaway slaves have

attacked a mighty nation with strong city-states such as the Canaanites? So, even in a practical way, the book of Joshua does not hold water.

I hold that it might have been the goddess Anat's influence that caused the writers to write their murderous accounts of the invasion of Canaan – they, of course, gave all the credit to their God, Yahweh. They even suggested that it was at His request that they had to launch these attacks. So, in the writers' views, they did what was sanctioned by their god.

The Infiltration Model and the Unified Conquest Model dominated the research on Joshua throughout the 20th century. The archaeologists of Syria-Palestine, in the first half of the 20th century, continued to judge the account of the invasion and conquest of Canaan in Joshua to be historical. These researchers interpreted Israel to be a nonindigenous people to the land of Canaan who experienced an exodus from Egypt and a subsequent conquest of Canaan during the 13th century BCE (Dozeman 2015:13).

The German school continued to provide a counter hypothesis of the origin of Israel based more on an anthropological model in which seminomadic clans migrated into the hill country of Canaan and were organized loosely around cultic centres. The Infiltration Theory called the historicity of the conquest in the book of Joshua into question. Subsequent research in etiology, archaeology, anthropology, and ancient Near Eastern cultural history has slowly eroded both the Infiltration and the Unified Conquest Models of the origins of tribal Israel and, with them, the interpretation of Joshua as a resource for recovering the history of tribal Israel (Dozeman 2015:14).

In the New Testament, in John 3:16, we read that 'God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, so that whosoever would believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life'. We now realise that God loves the whole world. The authors of the Hebrw Bible wanted to claim themselves as the exclusive, chosen people of God. The whole of the Hebrew Bible is written to favour the Israelites. We find this partisan attitude especially in the book of Joshua where, according to the authors, they have the exclusive right to attack a nation and then, after killing man, women and child, to inhabit their cities and their homes. Isn't that exactly what is still

happening? Jewish settlers enter the homes of Palestinians in Israel, proclaim themselves as God's chosen people, and move into the Palestinian homes, where the Palestinians had been living for many generations.

The fictional book of Joshua has had a profound influence, not only on the idea of Israel as a 'chosen people' but also on the Western world. When Rome accepted the Christian faith and legalised it, the Christian faith was taken to all of Europe. For two thousand years the 'Church of Jesus Christ' has proclaimed the Hebrew Bible as the holy, inspired Word of God. The 'church' professed that the Bible was the true Word of God, never to be doubted, and to be believed as a historical account of the events that it describes and that the church, and its millions of followers, must adhere to it.

I propose that the murderous attack portrayed in the book of Joshua, and literally believed by millions of Christians for the past two thousand years, as well as by all Jewish believers, had a profound influence on the Western wars of the past centuries. Joshua proclaims a 'holy war' on the inhabitants of Canaan. In a similar way, British imperialism saw fit to invade foreign countries, far beyond its borders, to kill their inhabitants and take their land. The Anglo Boer War in South Africa from 1899 to 1902 is one example of this. Thousands of Boers were killed and then when the British, under the command of Lord Kitchener, realised that the British were losing the war, proclaimed the 'Scorched Earth Policy' whereby soldiers were given orders to burn the houses and farms of the Boers. The women and children were cruelly driven to Concentration Camps and had to bear the brunt of ice-cold winters in thin tents, with muddy floors. More than twenty-six thousand women and children died in the British Concentration camps in South Africa because of starvation and poisoning and the harsh, inhumane circumstances. I hold that Britain, which was, at that time, a Christian country, and where all in the church believed every word in the Bible as historical truth, was influenced by the story of the military conquest conducted by Joshua.

The same applies to the two World Wars where opposing sides gleefully went to war, slaughtering each other, and where both sides of the battle were mostly from Christian countries. The fact that God, Yahweh, had given the command to Joshua, according to the

authors of the book of Joshua, to invade the land of Canaan, has had a profound influence on the justification of war in the Western World.

My primary aim with this thesis is to investigate the goddess Anat's influence or non-influence in the religious milieu of ancient Israel.

Thanks to the archaeologists of the past hundred and fifty years, today we have a much broader and better insight and perspective of the ancient Near East and its people, as well as of the Hebrew Bible and its authors.

Concerning Anat's presence in the Hebrew Bible, as we have it today, we know that redactors and theologians would not have left a stone untouched to eradicate all signs of goddesses.

Ugarit was one of many cities from the ancient world that lived on as a remote memory in other ancient texts discovered by archaeologists, but which no one expected to discover (Wyatt 2003:13).

In looking at the origin of Israel, as a nation, one must first turn to the Hebrew Bible where the narrative of its origin is described in the Pentateuch and in the Deuteronomic History. But, now in the 21st century, one has decades of archaeological and other extra-biblical evidence that brings us to another view. Mazar, Finkelstein, and Dever come to the conclusion that the origin narrative as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, is mostly based on folktale and exaggerations that were put in writing during and after the Babylonian Exile, centuries after the stories it proclaims woud have occurred. The Exodus narrative as well as the military conquest by Joshua into the land of Canaan is being questioned.

This knowledge then makes us turn to the biblical scholars such as Julius Wellhausen who is remembered for his massive and systematic presentation of the argument that the prophets predate the law. He proclaims that the prophets are responsible for the great metamorphosis of the Israelite religion. The reason for the prophets' ability to effect such a change is what is of great interest: the importance of the prophets 'rests on the individuals…they are always single,

resting on nothing outside themselves…. they represent the inspiration of awakened individuals... they do not preach on set texts; they speak out of the spirit' (Wellhausen *(1883) 4*22-423). He also believes that history represents an unceasing course of development and that it is necessary to trace the succession of the three elements [the Jehovism, the Deuteronomic, and the Priestly sources] in detail, and to test each by reference to an independent standard, namely, the inner development of the history of Israel (Oden 1987:22).

The cults of the major deities developed differently in Israel than at its neighbours. Yahweh provided fertility in the cosmos acted as ruler of the world, and showed the care of a divine parent. Yahweh was a deity who could protect: 'Just as a bird hovers over its nest to protect its young, so I, the Lord Almighty, will protect Jerusalem and defend it' (Psalm 48:1; Isaiah 31:4); and punish (Jeremiah 9:8-9) Israel. He was equally a personal deity: 'No other nation, no matter how great, has a god who is so near when they need him as the Lord our God is to us' (Deuteronomy 4:7:); whose pain matched Israel's pain (Jeremiah 9:9); and who consoled Israel: 'I am going to take her into the desert again; there I will win her back with words of love – She will once again call me her husband – she will no longer call me her Baal' (Hosea 2:16) (Smith 2002:207).

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