

NOGA AYALI-DARSHAN

The Storm-God and the Sea

*Orientalische Religionen
in der Antike*

37

Mohr Siebeck

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Noga Ayali-Darshan

The Storm-God and the Sea

The Origin, Versions, and Diffusion of a Myth
throughout the Ancient Near East

translated by Liat Keren

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Preface

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Most important of all are my family. My wonderful parents who aided and assisted in every way possible, my beautiful daughters that make my days shine and sparkle, and my husband Guy, to whom I shall never be able to fully express my debt – in any of the languages in which I work. This book is dedicated to them all with my undying love.

Noga Ayali-Darshan
Bar Ilan, 2019

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Abbreviations

A	Tablets in the Collections of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
AAAS	<i>Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie</i> . Vol. XVI (<i>Les Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire</i>)
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Ed. D. N. Freedman et al. (New York, NY: Yale University Press)
ADFU	Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament: Studien zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion Ägyptens und des Alten Testaments
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung. Beiheft
AHL	<i>Archaeology and History in Lebanon</i>
AHw	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . 3 vols. Ed. W. von Soden (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1981).
AION	<i>Annali dell'istituto universitario orientale di Napoli</i>
AIPHOS	<i>Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
Ä&L	Ägypten und Levante
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
AIT	<i>The Alalakh Tablets</i> . Ed. D. J. Wiseman (Ankara: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953)
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, with Supplement</i> . 3rd edition, ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969 [1950])
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOATS	Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Sonderreihe
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients)</i>
ARET	Archivi reali di Ebla, Testi
ARM	Archives royales de Mari (= TCL 22–31)
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientální</i>
AS	Assyriological Studies
AuOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR International Series	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic</i> , ed. F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906)

BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BM	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica
BN	Bibliothèque nationale de Paris
BPOA	Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Vols. I–XXI (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Press, 1956–2006)
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
ChS	Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler
<i>CHD</i>	<i>The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Press, 1980–)
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
<i>COS</i>	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 4 vols. Ed. W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 1997–2017) https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/context-of-scripture
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> (New Series)
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
<i>CTH</i>	<i>Catalogue des textes Hittites</i> . Ed. E. Laroche (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971 [with supplements in <i>RHA</i> 30 [1972]: 94–133 = <i>CTH Sup./RHA</i> 33 [1973]: 68–71])
CTL	GEORGE, A. R., “The Canonical Temple List” in idem, <i>House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia</i> (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1993), 5–38
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology. (Bethesda, MD: MIT, 2007–)
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . 2nd ed. Ed. K. van der Toorn et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999)
DEIFAO	Documents de fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire
<i>DULAT</i> ³	OLMO LETE, G. DEL, and SANMARTÍN, J., <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition</i> , 3rd ed., HdO 112, trans. W. G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2015)
<i>EA</i>	KNUDTZON, J. A., <i>Die El-Amarna Tafeln</i> (Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1964 [1915]) (= VAB 2); RAINEY, A., <i>El Amarna Tablets 359–379</i> ² (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1978) (= AOAT 8)
<i>ECT</i>	<i>The Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> . Ed. A. de Buck and A. H. Gardiner (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1935–1961)
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz Israel</i>
EMAR 6	ARNAUD, D., <i>Recherches au pays d'Astata: Emar 6/1–4: Textes sumériens et accadiens</i> (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986)
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain

ETCSL	BLACK, J. A. et al., <i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i> (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1998–2006); http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk
FM	Florilegium Marianum
FGrH	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Ed. F. Jacoby (Leiden: Brill, 1954–1964)
GKC	GESENIUS, W., KAUTZSCH, E., and COWLEY, A. E., <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910)
GM	<i>Göttinger Miscellen</i>
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Trans. M. E. J. Richardson. Ed. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000)
HANE/S	History of the Ancient Near East. Studies
HAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik. Vol. 1: Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten
HED	PUHVEL, J., <i>Hittite Etymological Dictionary</i> (Berlin: Mouton, 1984–)
Hethiter.net	<i>Textzeugnisse der Hethiter</i> , 2009–2010. Ed. E. Rieken et al. <i>Hethitologie Portal</i> Mainz: http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/HPM/index.html
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HUCASup	Supplements to Hebrew Union College Annual
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i> . 12 vols. Ed. G. A. Buttrick et al. (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1951–1957)
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
JANEH	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JMEOS	<i>Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society</i> (1912–1961)
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JPOS	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAI	DONNER, H., and RÖLLIG, W., <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–1964)
KAR	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts</i> I–II. Ed. E. Ebeling (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919–1923) (= WVDOG 28, 34)
KÄT	Kleine ägyptische Texte
KAV	SCHROEDER, O., <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920) (= WVDOG 35)
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916–1923; Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1954–)
KRI	<i>Ramesside Inscriptions</i> . Trans. and ed. K. A. Kitchen (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1993–2008)

<i>KTU</i>	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten / The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places – KTU³</i> . Ed. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013) (=AOAT 360/1)
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköy (Berlin: Akademie, 1921–).
<i>KUSATO</i>	<i>Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt</i>
<i>LAe</i>	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> . 7 vols. Ed. W. Helck, E. Otto, and W. Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–1992)
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
<i>LD</i>	LEPSIUS, K. R., <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien</i> . (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913): http://edoc3.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/lepsius/info.html
LingAeg SM	Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica
MAD	Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary, I–V
<i>MARI</i>	<i>Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires</i>
<i>MIOF</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung</i>
MC	Mesopotamian Civilizations
<i>MGWJ</i>	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NISABA	Studi Assiriologici Messinesi
NumenSup	Supplements to Numen: International Review for the History of Religions
<i>OA</i>	<i>Oriens antiquus Rivista del Centro per l'antichità e la storia dell' arte del Vicino Oriente</i>
oDeM	POSENER, G., <i>Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh, Nos 1001–1675</i> (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1938–1982) (= DEIFAO 1, 18, 20)
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalische Literaturzeitung</i>
OMROSup	Supplements to Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i> (New Series)
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike = Oriental Religions in Antiquity
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
OTS	Old Testament Studies
<i>PE</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i> , in I. A. Baumgarten, <i>The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary</i> , Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain (Leiden: Brill, 1981)
PSBA	Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology
<i>Pyr.</i>	SETHE, K., <i>Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1910)
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RAI	Rencontre assyriologique internationale
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RdE</i>	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>
<i>RHA</i>	<i>Revue hittite et asianique</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>

RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods (Toronto)
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/corpus/
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Ed. E. Ebeling et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–)
RS	Ras Shamra
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAACT	State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SANE	Sources of the Ancient Near East
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature. Symposium Series
SCCNH	Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico</i>
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SMEA	<i>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</i>
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>
StBoT	Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten
TCL	Textes cunéiformes, Musée du Louvre (Paris: Geuthner, 1910–)
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TdH	Texte der Hethiter
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . 24 vols. Trans. J. T. Willis et al., ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006)
TUAT	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i> . Ed. O. Kaiser (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984–)
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UDB	<i>Ugaritic Data Bank</i> . J.-L. Cunchillos et al. (Madrid: Hermeneumatics, 2003)
UF	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i>
Ug. V	NOUGAYROL, J., et al., ‘Ugaritica V’, in <i>Mission archéologique de Ras Shamra</i> , XVI, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale/Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1968)
Urk. 4	<i>Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, Abteilung IV: Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Fascicles 1–22</i> . Ed. K. Sethe and W. Helck (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906–1958)
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Wb	<i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> . Ed. A. Erman and H. Grapow (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926–1963)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WdO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

Sigla

[]	vacat in primary source
()	editorial clarification
< >	deletion in original text
[...]	indecipherable text
...	following text is unclear or irrelevant to the discussion
?	dubious translation or interpretation
1'	line as numbered from the beginning of the fragmented text, the original line numbering being unknown

Name and Place Spellings

The texts discussed here were written in six languages and four scripts. The most common – Mesopotamian cuneiform, used by Akkadian, Hittite, and Hurrian scribes – does not distinguish between consonants and vowels. Egyptian and Ugaritic, in contrast, rarely employ graphical signs marking *matres lectiones* (consonants serving as vowels). In order to make the primary sources intelligible and accessible to readers of different scholarly fields, the following systems have been adopted herein:

EGYPTIAN NAMES: Since very few *matres lectionis* exist in Egyptian script, the consonants that lack vowels are interdigitated with the vowel e. This common scholarly vocalization does not reflect the original Egyptian pronunciation. Thus, e.g., the name of the Harvest-goddess is written Renenutet: the vowel u reflects a graphical notation in Egyptian script while the vowel e, the lack of an indicated vowel. The names of Egyptian deities that are commonly known in their Greek form, such as Isis and Horus, and names of Levantine deities mentioned in Egyptian texts that are known in their biblical forms (i.e., their common transliteration in English translations of the Bible), e.g., Baal and Astarte, are written in these common forms.

HITTITE AND HURRIAN NAMES: Mesopotamian cuneiform was used in writing Hittite and Hurrian texts, and therefore, the consonants are transcribed here according to the conventions of the field of Assyriology, without exact reference to the nuances of accent in each of these cultures. Thus, e.g., the deity Ea's name is normalized here in this manner, despite evidence suggesting that the Hurrians pronounced his name as Heya(n).

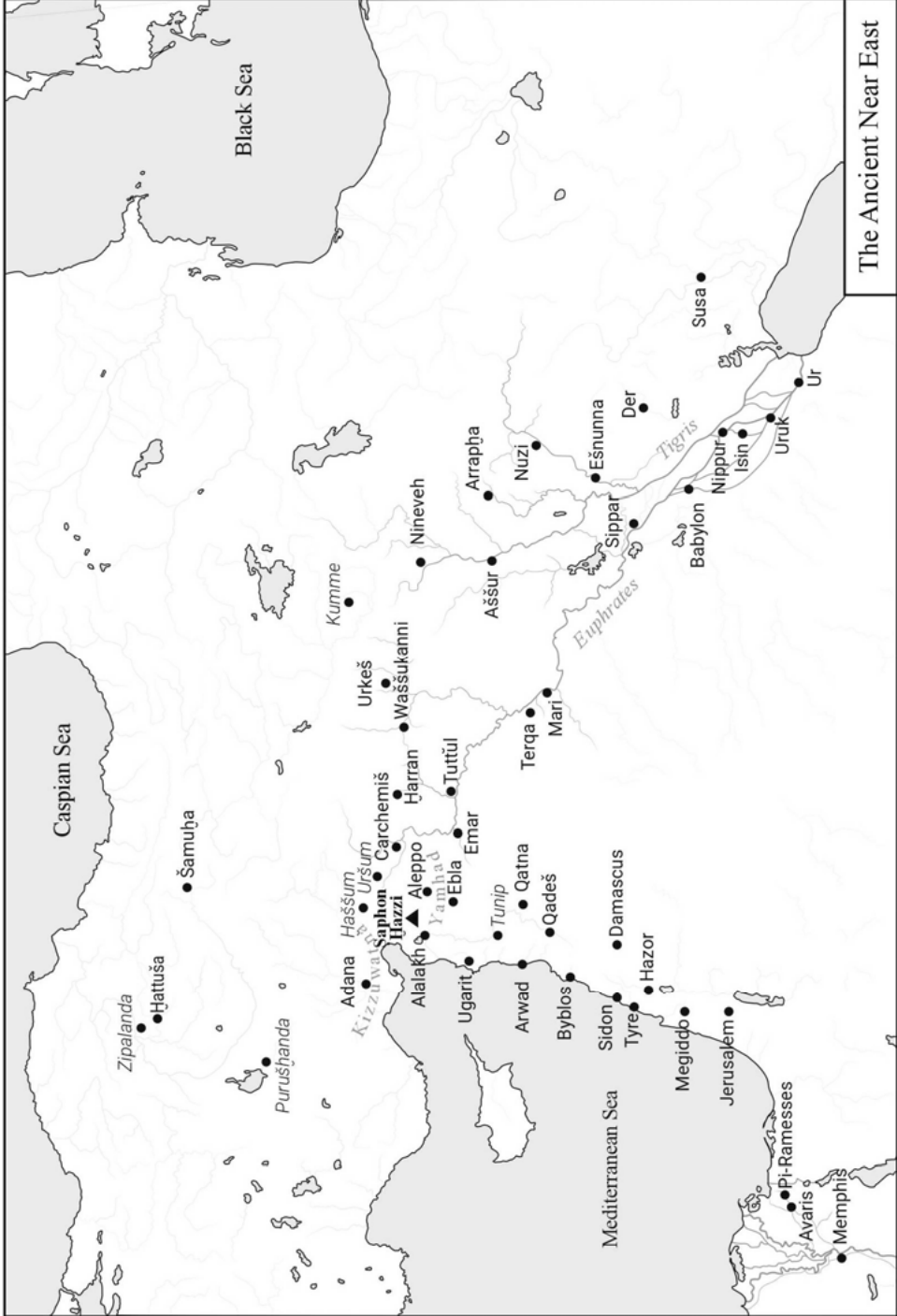
UGARITIC NAMES: The Ugaritic script lacks vowels, except for the consonant *ʿ*. For the sake of simplicity, the majority of the characters of the Ugaritic compositions are referred to by their names, as they have been preserved in the Bible (e.g., El, Baal, Yamm). The vocalization of the names of those characters that are not mentioned in the Bible, such as *Attar* and *Koṭar-waḤasis*, has been set according to their pronunciation in extra-Ugaritic texts, in keeping with scholarly convention. For a few remaining names that have no close parallel, no vocalization has been provided, and they remain written in italics.

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The Ancient Near East

Introduction

The Ancient Story of the Storm-god's Combat with the Sea

The cultures of the ancient Near East developed extensive diplomatic and trading ties across the region, made treaties with and went to war against one another, and witnessed mass migrations of peoples and individuals. It is thus not surprising that they also shared literary works and traditions. The majority of these, such as the Epics of Gilgameš and Atrahasis – committed to writing in second-millennium BCE Mesopotamia, Ḫatti, inner Syria, the Levantine coast, and Egypt – originated in Mesopotamia. Circulating widely across the Fertile Crescent, they served primarily as the means whereby scribes learned Akkadian, then the *lingua franca*.¹ The story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea is an exception to this rule. Known across the entire ancient Near East, it was written in each local vernacular. The protagonist assumes the guise of the local Storm-god who fights Sea, defeats him, and is then enthroned. This constitutes the core of the story, traces of which have been preserved in various languages in diverse versions across the region – inner Syria, Egypt, Ḫatti, Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Israel. Over time, it found its way across the sea to Greece and India, appearing in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim texts as well, and continuing to exist in popular culture up to the present day.

This volume collects all the written versions of the tale found across the ancient Near East in an effort to identify its earliest forms and determine where it was composed and how it was reworked in each tradition. As we shall see, striking correspondences exist among the various renderings. Some of these nonetheless do not fit their geographical or cultural context. This might indicate the existence of a common literary source that had not yet been fully assimilated within the cultures into which it spread when it was committed to writing. As will also become evident, the Levantine cultures lying along the Mediterranean coast played a prominent role in the crystallization of this literary source prior to its dissemination. This path of transmission is unusual, the cultures adjoining the great rivers of the region usually influencing the smaller peripheral societies rather than the other way around. We shall thus additionally explore this phenomenon and the circumstances that gave rise to it.

¹ Cf. Hallo, 'The Syrian Contribution to Cuneiform Literature and Learning', 80–82; Kämmerer, *Šimā milka*; Fincke, 'The School Curricula'.

A. The Findings

Numerous traditions echoing the story of the Storm-god's combat against Sea have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. In the first century CE, Philo of Byblos collected some of the closely parallel Phoenician sources, some of which were later copied by Eusebius of Caesarea. Although this fragmentary evidence has long been known to modern scholars, the ancient story as a whole only came to light toward the end of the nineteenth century in the wake of the decipherment of *Enūma eliš*. This Babylonian composition, which recounts how Marduk fought Sea (Tiāmtu), was the first complete work to center around the combat with Sea to be discovered in the modern era.² Following its publication, scholars such as Barton and Gunkel promptly noted its association with biblical descriptions of YHWH's struggle against Sea (Yamm), reconstructing the Israelite version of the story in its light.³ The prevailing scholarly premise that Mesopotamia formed the cradle of civilization led to the theory that the story of the Storm god's combat with Sea originated in Babylon. This became the popular view, only very few scholars proposing a divergent theory. Adducing the then-available evidence – biblical and Phoenician-Hellenistic traditions – Clay, for example, argued that the tale first arose along the Levantine coast, reaching Babylon with the migrating Amorite tribes.⁴

In 1932, Gardiner published a fragmentary Egyptian document that became known as the Astarte Papyrus by virtue of its extensive reference to this well-known West-Semitic goddess.⁵ This text also designates Sea, the gods' adversary, by its West-Semitic appellation Yamm, further alluding to other local Egyptian deities such as Ptah, Nut, and Seth. Correctly discerning the affinities between this text and an Egyptian spell in which Sea (under its Egyptian name) is portrayed as Seth's foe, Gardiner suggested that the Astarte Papyrus described Seth's battle against and defeat of Sea.⁶ Although he noted its correspondence with the Babylonian plot of *Enūma eliš*, he argued that the divergent gender attributed to Sea and other details weakened the links between the two texts.

This radically altered with the discovery of the Ugaritic version of the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea in the 1930s.⁷ Forming the first four tablets of the Baal Cycle, this was initially regarded as the 'original' Canaanite version of the story. It refers to the gods by their West-Semitic names – Baal, Yamm, El, and Astarte (in contrast to the Egyptian papyrus, in which only Sea and Astarte bear West-Semitic designations),

² The cuneiform tablets were first published by G. Smith in 1876: Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*. For the publication history of *Enūma eliš*, see Kämmerer and Metzler, *Das babylonische Welt-schöpfungsepos Enūma eliš*, 49–55. Ever since the first work's publication, Sea has been referred to by the name Tiāmat (in the vocative state), rather than the correct generic form Tiāmtu, despite customarily being written in cuneiform signs that give no indication of how it is to be pronounced: *ti*-GÉME or in the syllabic form with a case ending: see R. R. Borger, 'Zur neuen Schulausgabe', 272–73; and below, p. 116.

³ Barton, 'Tiamat'; Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*.

⁴ Clay, Amurru, 53–54; idem, *The Origin of Biblical Traditions*, 87–93.

⁵ Gardiner, 'The Astarte Papyrus'; idem, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, 76–81.

⁶ Gardiner, 'Notes and News'. For his comparison of this source with pHearst 11.12–15, see Chapter 1, pp. 30–31 below.

⁷ For the first edition, see Virolleaud, *La déesse ʿAnat*.

contains Levantine toponyms, uses language that exhibits numerous affinities with West-Semitic dialects, and recalls various biblical passages. To date, it is clear, however, that this Ugaritic text possesses its own distinctive features, unique to its author and his audience.

The first to fully explore the associations among the texts detected so far in relation to the tale of the Storm-god against Sea, i.e. the Baal Cycle, Astarte Papyrus, Enūma eliš, and the biblical passages, was Albright.⁸ He linked them together with two others – the Mesopotamian Myth of Labbu and the Hittite Myth of Illuyanka.⁹ Despite the fact that Sea is not hostile to the gods in either of the latter, he believed them all to derive from a common source, whether Mesopotamian or Levantine. In particular, he highlighted the affinities between the Astarte Papyrus and the Baal Cycle.¹⁰

The discovery and publication of the Song of Ullikummi at Boğazkale (formerly known as Boğazköy) in 1946 took research a further step forward.¹¹ A Hittite adaptation of a Hurrian work, the Song depicts the hostility between the great rock Ullikummi, the progeny of Kumarbi and a maternal-rock, and the Hurrian Storm-god Teššub (= Hittite Tarḫunna). Herein, Sea serves both as the close ally of Kumarbi, the Storm-god's adversary, and the place in which Ullikummi grows up. Adducing various affinities between the Song of Ullikummi and the Ugaritic story of the conflict between Baal and Yamm, Güterbock posited that the former was originally a Hurrian composition that, after influencing the Hittites and Levantines, eventually also found its way to Greece.¹² In addition to the Song of Ullikummi, Güterbock also drew brief attention to the Hurro-Hittite Song of Hedammu and Myth of Pišaiša, both of which also serve as prominent witnesses to the story in Hatti.

The Song of Hedammu closely corresponds in content to the Song of Ullikummi.¹³ Like the latter, it speaks of Teššub's foe being reared in the sea as the offspring of Kumarbi, while the same Sea – Teššub's enemy – allies himself with Kumarbi. In contrast to the Song of Ullikummi, however, Hedammu is represented herein as a serpent rather than a rock, his mother being Sea's huge daughter. The Myth of Pišaiša – named after its protagonist, Mount Pišaiša, which appears in Hittite documents in proximity to Mounts Lebanon and Sirion – contains a brief account of the Storm-god's combat with Sea.¹⁴

⁸ Albright, 'Zebul Yam and Thapiṭ Nahar'. With the exception of the Astarte Papyrus, Albright attributed the first recognition of the parallels to Ginsberg.

⁹ For these two compositions, see the Appendices in Chapters 2 and 4, pp. 71-73, 149-55 below.

¹⁰ At that time, he was followed by Lefebvre, *Romans et contes Égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique*, 108–9; Virolleaud, *Légendes de Babylone et de Canaan*, 82–84.

¹¹ Güterbock, *Kumarbi: Mythen*. He published a second, updated edition in 1951/52.

¹² *Ibid.*, 110–11, 122; *idem*, 'The Hittite Version of the Hurrian Kumarbi Myths'.

¹³ The first (partial) edition of the Song of Hedammu was published by Friedrich, 'Der churritische Mythos'. The first full edition was published by Siegelová, *Appu-Märchen und Hedammu-Mythus*. Additional fragments were later discovered. All the texts are now available on *Hethiter.net*: CTH 348 (2009), edited by Riecken et al.

¹⁴ For Pišaiša in the vicinity of Lebanon and Sirion, cf. the references in the Hittite treaties CTH 49, 53, 62, 66: see Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*.

Up until this point, scholars thus knew of several second-millennium texts from Ugarit, Egypt and Ḫatti that contained variant accounts of the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea. The primary plot of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle recounts Baal's combat with Sea, encouraged by his ally Astarte. Other traditions preserved in the Cycle recount Baal's struggle against the terrible creature *Ltn* and Anat's battle against Sea and the creatures *Ltn* and *Tnn*. According to the Egyptian version – reflected in the Astarte Papyrus and several spells – Sea threatened the gods, and Seth set out to fight him. The extant lines of the Astarte Papyrus also relate how Astarte assisted the gods, referring to both Astarte and Sea by their West-Semitic names. The Hurro-Hittite version is exemplified in various texts. In the Song of Ḫedammu, the Storm-god Teššub fights Ḫedammu, the serpent living in the sea. In the Song of Ullikummi, he takes on Ullikummi, the rock standing in the sea. In both, Sea also serves as Kumarbi's ally, while Teššub's sister – Šawuška of Nineveh – provides aid to her brother. The Myth of Pišaiša further adduces the warfare between the Storm-god and Sea; however, it gives no additional details.

Several years after the publication of the Song of Ḫedammu, Gaster pursued the direction Albright had originally proposed (*contra* Güterbock), suggesting that, together with the Astarte Papyrus and Baal Cycle, this belongs to the same literary source, originating in the Levant.¹⁵ Believing the Astarte Papyrus to be a reworking of a Canaanite text, he reconstructed its Canaanite/Ugaritic Ur-text, tracing this to a lacuna in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Echoes of this conjectured Ur-text he found in the Hurro-Hittite Song of Ḫedammu, which – like the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus – cites the assistance the Storm-god's sister gave Ḫedammu during his combat with Sea.¹⁶ Disagreeing with this theory, Posener argued that the Astarte Papyrus originated in Egypt, exhibiting very limited Levantine influence.¹⁷ While this view gained few adherents, the majority of scholars maintained that all the Egyptian texts relating to Seth's victory over Sea demonstrate clear evidence of Levantine influence – albeit not necessarily from the Baal Cycle.¹⁸

The links between the Hurro-Hittite Songs – which, in contrast to the Astarte Papyrus, make no use of West-Semitic names – and other second-millennium texts have been less discussed. Some scholars concur with Gaster that they all derive from a coastal

¹⁵ Gaster, 'The Egyptian "Story of Astarte" and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal'.

¹⁶ Prior to Gaster's thesis and the publication of the Ugaritic texts, Sayce already examined the Astarte Papyrus in the light of several extremely fragmentary Hittite texts from the Kumarbi Cycle: Sayce, 'The Astarte Papyrus and the Legend of the Sea'.

¹⁷ Posener, 'La légende égyptienne de la mer insatiable'. He identifies the cosmogonical account in the Egyptian sapiential work the Instructions for Merikare as an antecedent of the Astarte Papyrus, Canaanite influence only being evident in the choice of Astarte and Seth as the protagonists of the later version: see Chapter 1, pp. 28-30 below.

¹⁸ See, for example, Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens*; Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres*; Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*; Kitchen, 'Interrelations of Egypt and Syria'; Ritner, 'The Legend of Astarte and the Tribute of the Sea'; Collombert and Coulon, 'Les dieux contre la mer', 226–42. Posener was followed by Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our*, 96–97, who suggests that Sea in the Astarte Papyrus is in fact the Nile; and Shupak, 'He has Subdued the Water Monster/Crocodile', who proposes that, Sea playing a major role in Egyptian culture, no good reason exists to assume that the tale did not originate therein.

Levantine source. Others posit a local northern Syrian influence rather than a distinctively Canaanite tradition.¹⁹ In the 1980s, Helck proposed that they form the source of the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus. He, too, has been followed by several scholars.²⁰

Whatever the common source of the texts from Ugarit, Egypt and Ḫatti, most scholars continued to maintain – following Gunkel and Barton – that the story of the Storm-god’s combat with Sea as a whole originated in Babylon; first appearing in *Enūma eliš*.²¹ In 1964, however, Lambert made use of Babylonian theological and historical arguments to argue that *Enūma eliš* should in fact be dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I – i.e., toward the end of the second millennium BCE.²² This placed the composition of the Babylonian text after its equivalents in Egypt, Ḫatti, and Ugarit. Four years later, Jacobsen resurrected Clay’s proposal, contending that Marduk’s battle against Sea does not fit either Mesopotamian climate or geography.²³ Nor in his view does Sea as a hostile force have any antecedent in Sumerian tradition. Unlike Clay, Jacobsen had at his disposal the Ugaritic findings discovered thirty years earlier. His argument that the literary core of *Enūma eliš* originated in the coastal Levant, whose landscape it reflects, was thus much more firmly grounded. Like Clay before him, Jacobsen maintained that the story of the Storm-god’s combat with Sea found its way from the Levant to Babylon with the Amorite tribes that migrated there at the end of the third millennium BCE, disregarding the possibility of later transmitters.

Jacobsen’s thesis did not immediately entrench itself, primarily, it would appear, because of scholarly skepticism with respect to the small Levantine cultures’ ability to influence such a great society as Babylonia. It was nevertheless difficult to ignore the weight of his arguments regarding *Enūma eliš*’s divergence from earlier Mesopotamian literary works and the local climate and landscape. During the 1980s and ’90s, most scholars thus tended to view the diverse traditions of the story of Storm-god’s clash with Sea as versions of a single ancient myth, making no attempt to determine its provenance or paying any attention to the different way it developed in various locations.²⁴

¹⁹ Otten posits a Canaanite source behind the Hurro-Hittite texts: Otten, ‘Ein Kanaanäischer Mythos aus Bogazköy’. Popko, Haas, and Archi narrow down the provenance to the present-day region of İskenderun: Popko, ‘Zum Wettergott von Halab’; Haas, *Die hethitische Literatur*, 131; Archi, ‘Orality, Direct Speech and the Cumarbi Cycle’, 215.

²⁰ Helck, ‘Zur Herkunft der Erzählung’; cf. Schneider, ‘Texte über den syrischen Wettergott aus Ägypten’; Breyer, *Ägypten und Anatolien*, 466–72. In 1992, Houwink ten Cate drew attention to another Hurro-Hittite work that exhibits even closer affinities with the Astarte Papyrus: see below.

²¹ See, for example, Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, 22–32; Loewenstamm, ‘The Ugaritic Myth of the Sea and its Biblical Counterparts’. On occasion, this led to a vain search for a creation account in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle: see Fisher, ‘Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament’; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 118–20. For a discussion of this issue, see also M. S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 75–84; and Chapter 5, p. 195 below.

²² Lambert, ‘The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I’; cf. idem, ‘Studies in Marduk’; idem, *Babylonian Creation Myths*; Chapter 4 below.

²³ Jacobsen, ‘The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat’; cf. idem, *The Treasures of Darkness*, 168.

²⁴ When Siegelová (*Appu-Märchen und Hedammu-Mythus*, 81, 87–88) published an edition of the Hurro-Hittite Song of Hedammu, for example, she adduced closely corresponding legends – *Enūma eliš*, the Astarte Papyrus, the Baal Cycle, and, of the course, Song of Ullikummi – without designating its source. Rejecting Güterbock’s thesis of Hurrian provenance, however, she suggested that it was a

The origin of the early myth came under renewed scrutiny in the 1990s in the wake of Durand's publication of a letter from the Mari archive which speaks of the weapons with which the Storm-god Addu of Aleppo fought Sea.²⁵ Written in Akkadian, the language of international correspondence, it was sent to Mari from Aleppo, the center of the mighty Amorite kingdom Yamḥad. Composed in the eighteenth century BCE, it is the earliest witness to the myth of the Storm-god's combat with Sea unearthed so far. Several scholars have thus argued that it reflects the prominent status of the myth among the Amorite kingdoms, its dissemination being largely due to the preeminent temple of Addu the Aleppan Storm-god.²⁶ Others posit that the Akkadian name Têmtum given to Sea herein rather than the West-Semitic Yamm suggests that the myth had found its way to Aleppo from Babylonia. In the wake of the acceptance of Lambert's late dating of Enūma eliš, those scholars had to argue that this 'Babylonian tradition' is in fact a vague account of a god fighting a hostile demonic force, rather than the account of the Storm-god's combat with Sea.²⁷

The debate has now broadened beyond the issue of the tale's provenance to include its principal elements and parameters. In light of the last argument we must address the question of whether every scene picturing a deity struggling with a demonic creature can or should be considered an antecedent to the mythologem of the Storm-god's combat with Sea.

Additional fragments – particularly from Egypt and Anatolia – that refer to the Storm-god's combat with Sea have continued to be discovered since the publication of the Mari letter. Some of these constitute missing parts of fragmentary works already published, thus confirming or refuting earlier suggestions. The join of the opening lines of the Astarte Papyrus, for example, evinces that its plot centers around the Storm-god's clash with Sea.²⁸ New fragments of the Songs of Ḫedammu and Ullikummi similarly contain further descriptions of Kumarbi's consultation with Sea and the wiles the goddess employs in coming to the aid of her brother, the Storm-god.²⁹ Other new fragments

widespread Near Eastern myth. Another example is found in Wakeman's seeking in her typological study to place the biblical traditions in the context of all the stories found across the ancient Near East, Greece, and India relating to a battle fought by one of the gods against monsters. Rather than acknowledging the distinctive features of the Storm-god's combat with Sea – or of those of other tales, each of which possesses its own distinctive features and place of origin – she treated them all as a single block: Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster*. Cf. also, recently, R. D. Miller, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations*.

²⁵ J.-M. Durand, 'Le mythologème du combat'. Noted early by Charpin and Durand, they believed the legend to be an Amorite myth: Charpin and Durand, 'Fils de Sim'al', 174.

²⁶ See, for example, Popko, 'Zum Wettergott von Halab'; Schwemer, 'The Storm-Gods 2'.

²⁷ Lambert, 'A New Look', 110–13; Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu*, ix–x; idem, *The God Ninurta*, 171–86. Both these scholars also argue that the Myth of Labbu, which recounts the warfare between a deity and sea creature, was composed during the third millennium BCE: see Chapter 4, pp. 149–55 below.

²⁸ Collombert and Coulon, 'Les dieux contre la mer'.

²⁹ Groddek, "[Diese Angelegenheit] höre Ištar von Ninive nicht!"; Dijkstra, 'The Myth of Apši'; idem, 'Ishtar Seduces the Sea-Serpent'.

belong to previously unknown compositions. Among these are the so-called Hurro-Hittite Song of Sea, which describes how the gods sent tribute to Sea to appease its surging, and a Hurrian composition that bears the same name.³⁰

Only a few scholars investigating the tale's provenance or seeking to interpret the Ugaritic, Babylonian, or Israelite texts comparatively, have yet made any use of these documents. This might be partially due to the lack of a complete collection of the relevant sources, and that a full or detailed survey of all the ancient Near Eastern texts related to the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea, its transmission and dissemination history has not been undertaken until now.³¹ This is the goal the present study has set itself, collecting the ancient Near Eastern versions and references – full and fragmentary – to the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea from the first findings from the second half of the nineteenth century CE through to all the attestations extant today.

Extensive space will be additionally devoted to comparing the textual evidence in order to determine the earliest forms and elements of the story, the places of their crystallizations, and the manner in which they were adapted to local contexts. The wider the scope covered, the more the witnesses increase across time and place – but, at the same time, the literary links among them is decreased. Establishing the tale's parameters and components requires a clear and appropriate methodology that will identify the relevant documents and exclude those that fall outside our brief.

B. Methodology

The affinities between the ancient Near Eastern versions of the Storm-god's combat with Sea may be explained theoretically by two different processes: 1) parallel development of close tales, with no genetic relation, on account of similar geographical, sociological and/or historical conditions; 2) one story transmitted within different civilizations, each of which adapted it to its own context. A third possibility – that the legend developed separately and was assimilated on the basis of correspondences – does not in fact constitute a middle path, but is rather a form of accommodation to a new environment.³²

³⁰ Houwink ten Cate, 'The Hittite Storm God'; Blam, 'Le Chant de l'Océan'; Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten*, 451–54; Rutherford, 'The Song of the Sea'.

³¹ In addition to the above references (among which Schwemer's monumental work [2001] is of particular note), see also T. Fenton, 'The Attitudes of the Biblical Authors'; Greenstein, 'The Snaring of Sea'; Fronzaroli, 'Les Combats de Hadda dans les textes d'Ebla'; Wyatt, 'Arms and the King'; R. Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott*; Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*. It should be noted that this volume contains references to pertinent scholarship that was available to the author up to early 2019.

³² The various ways in which the references of the combat between the Storm-god and Sea are designated in this volume – myth (in relation to its divine protagonists), tale (in relation to its transmission and diffusion), story and account (in relation to its narrational nature), etc. – are merely stylistic, not reflecting any methodological approach.

The determination of which of these two explanations is most suitable to the present case of dissemination rests on historical-philological criteria rather than any preconceived conceptions. Initially developed in order to trace the Ur-text of copied manuscripts, in the nineteenth century scholars also began applying this type of investigation to research on folktales. This gave rise to the discipline known as the historical-geographical method. Examining stories transmitted orally from generation to generation and culture to culture across a delimited historical and geographical space, this seeks to reconstruct the Ur-form of a certain tale on the basis of the extant versions, identify the place and date of its composition, and trace its geographical dissemination and local variants in particular locations.³³ Although this method was initially developed for exploring versions of tales transmitted orally (in contrast to recensions of written texts), no tools in fact exist to discern whether a certain tale was transmitted orally, or as a written text, or as both throughout its history. Since 'oral' thus possesses little meaning in this context, I prefer Yassif's definition of folktales as stories characterized by 'multiple existence' – i.e., comprised of diverse versions. Divergence in content in delimited cultural or geographical environments indicates a tale's acceptance within a culture.³⁴ Following scholars of midrash, this definition is suitable to the texts discussed in this work, whose ultimately final form in all cases is textual.³⁵ The two concepts employed by scholars of the historical-geographical method, developed by the founders and practitioners of this field – Aarne, Krohn, and Thompson – that are most relevant to this study, are 'motifs' and 'tale type'. The smallest unit of the plot, the motif includes a protagonist, a significant object, a specific place, etc. It may also be an event (or 'formulae') – comprised of at least two motifs.³⁶ The tale type consists of a sequence of certain motifs which distinguishes it from other types. Two centuries of research have demonstrated that while the existence of a sole motif across the globe is frequently due to similar thought patterns, the tale type is virtually always a particular creation.³⁷

³³ See Ben-Amos, 'Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context', who in fact opposes this methodology.

³⁴ Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale*, 3–10. The English edition addresses this issue in brief on p. 9.

³⁵ See *ibid.*; Noy, 'The Jewish Versions of the "Animal Languages" Folktale'; Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life*; Elstein and Lipsker, 'Thematology of the Literature of the Jewish People'.

³⁶ The disparity between 'event' and other motif types has led some scholars to question the premise that it is the smallest member of a story and seek other definitions. This issue is irrelevant to the present study.

³⁷ As noted by Krohn's son in 1891 with respect to his father's theory: Krohn, 'The Method of Julius Krohn', 42; cf. Thompson, *The Folktale*, 415–16. In order to widen the scope, other approach ignore the specific content of each motif, thus finding the same 'tale type' around the world. Cf. the formal elements à la school of Propp (Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*), and the contrastive symbols, as per Lévi-Strauss: Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth'). The working methods of the comparative linguistic approach which are based solely on language also takes no note of the contents of the tale, its social and tradition environment, narrator and audience: see DuBois, 'Linguistic Approach'. Despite not generally forming part of folkloristic principles, it is noteworthy because of Watkins' monumental work examining all the stories relating to the battle between the protagonist and a dragon in Indo-European-speaking cultures: Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*. Precisely his lack of attention to non-linguistic parameters led him to take the Hittite tales out of their geographical context – despite the

The major motifs of the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea are the characters – the Storm-god and Sea – and the event: the battle between them that ends with the Storm-god's victory. Additional minor-event motifs appear in numerous versions: Sea's desire to rule, the Grain-god's involvement, the aid given by a goddess, the role played by the Storm-god's wife or sister, Sea's lust for the goddess, the Storm-god's fear of Sea, the Wisdom-god's assistance, the Storm-god's enthronement, and the erection of his palace. Several versions also contain a place motif – Mount Şaphon.³⁸ As we shall see below, three to five of the event and place motifs form the core. Together with the major motifs, these constitute the Ur-form of the tale type, out of which the other versions developed.

In order to be assigned to a specific tale type, all the versions of a story should possess the major motifs. Those which include only a few minor motifs must be excluded, their major motifs attributing them to other tale types.³⁹ An example in the present context is the Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers, which recounts Sea's lust for the protagonist's divine wife. While this motif appears in at least three versions of the tale type of the Storm-god's combat with Sea, the major motifs of the Tale of Two Brothers treat a very different subject. It thus belongs to another tale type. Nonetheless, because studies of ancient literature rest largely on epigraphical findings – some fragmentary, others yet to be unearthed – the present volume may not include some versions that originally contained the major motifs. New discoveries are likely to lead to new conclusions with regard to the scope of the corpus and the content of the texts alike.

The motifs comprising the tale type are divided into various variants, which distinguish one version from another. This can be exemplified by the role played by the place motif Mount Şaphon. The Ugaritic Baal Cycle relates how, following Baal's defeat of Sea, a palace is erected for him on Mount Şaphon. In the Hurro-Hittite Song of Ullikummi, Teššub ascends the mountain (referred to by its northern Syrian name, Mount Ḫazzi) in order to observe his adversary rising out of Sea. The Hurro-Hittite Myth of Pišaiša alludes to the divine Mount Şaphon (= Ḫazzi) in the context of the Storm-god's conflict with Sea (the description is missing because of a break in the tablet). In a Hurro-Hittite ritual text (*CTH* 785), the priest is commanded to sing the Song of Sea commemorating the Storm-god's triumph over Sea during the celebrations of Mount Şaphon (= Ḫazzi). Finally, two biblical passages (Job 26 and Psalm 89) relate how Mount Şaphon was created at the culmination of YHWH's struggle with Sea.⁴⁰ While the place motif Mount Şaphon thus differs in the various compositions, it forms part of the tale type of the Storm-god's combat with Sea.

When a tale is transmitted from one place to another, it is modified by its transmitter and new audience, giving rise to new, local adaptations. As Propp aptly observes, the

abundance of evidence evincing the decisive influence of the cultures of the Fertile Crescent on Hittite society.

³⁸ See Table 1 below.

³⁹ Cf. Krohn, 'The Method of Julius Krohn'. *Contra* the view of early folklorists, the story's length has no bearing on its antiquity, an original short version could have absorbed additional motifs while long ones could have lost them. See: von Sydow, 'Geography and Folk-Tale Oicotypes'.

⁴⁰ Also lying beyond our (chronological) scope is the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus (second century CE), which relates the combat of Zeus and Typhon on Mount Casius (= Ḫazzi/Şaphon): see *Drakon*; cf. Ayali-Darshan, 'The Question of the Order of Job 26:7–13'.

transformations are frequently marked by reduction (some details being less important to either the new transmitter or his audience), expansion, contamination, inversion (e.g., feminine for masculine), intensification or attenuation, and changes prompted by, e.g., the geographical locale or the religious faith of a society.⁴¹ Any alteration of a detail naturally draws another in its wake. In this manner, the hypothetical distortion ultimately disappears.⁴²

An example of the way in which an initial transformation prompted further changes in our tale relates to the gender of Sea. With the exception of the Babylonian version, this figure is always masculine in the ancient Near Eastern versions of the tale. While some scholars maintain that this fact suggests that the various versions are unrelated, Propp has demonstrated that gender exchange is a common folkloristic feature.⁴³ In the present case, the grammatical gender of the substantive 'sea' in the Semitic languages determines its masculine (West-Semitic languages) or feminine (Akkadian) identity. As a female mythical figure in the Babylonian *Enūma eliš*, Sea is characterized by maternal attributes – the ability to conceive and the escort of male spouses which enable her to play a dominating role. The masculine Sea in the other versions has no need of any such accompanying characters in order to reign, but he cannot conceive. In versions in which a birth motif occurs, such as the Hurro-Hittite Song of Ḫedammu, it is associated with Sea's daughter rather than Sea himself.

How are tales transmitted from one society to another? Early on, scholars propounded that they spread spontaneously from group to group, thus being confined to specific locales, the only exceptions to this rule being unusual circumstances – such as colonialism. Since storytelling always involves a narrator and audience, however, tales do not transmit themselves but are passed on through human channels – such as soldiers, migrants, travelers, or envoys. Tales can thus 'leap' from one region to another, without requiring geographical contiguity.⁴⁴ Alongside these universal modes of dissemination, the story of the Storm-god's combat with Sea was evidently transmitted by at least two other distinctive modes – the deliverance of the Storm-god's weapons from one temple to another, accompanied by an account of the central features of his battle with Sea, as documented in the Mari letter; and its recitation in ritual ceremonies, as recorded in Hurro-Hittite and Mesopotamian texts.

The transmission of a certain story frequently depends on a single transmitter. It can thus disappear completely if it did not find suitable surroundings, be subsumed within a similar story without leaving a trace, or adapt to its new environment. In regard to the third situation, von Sydow designated the different ways of adaptation as oicotypes. This is a botanical term that refers to the genetic characteristics of a plant that adapts itself to a specific context by 'natural selection'. In literary terms, the oicotype is 'a certain unification of the variants within one and the same linguistic or cultural area on account of isolation from other areas'.⁴⁵ A tale's spread from place to place can be tracked by the

⁴¹ Propp, 'Transformations of the Wondertale'.

⁴² Krohn, *Folklore Methodology*, 122–23; cf. Lüthi, 'Urform und Zielform in Sage und Märchen'.

⁴³ Propp, 'Transformations of the Wondertales'.

⁴⁴ Von Sydow, 'Geography and Folk-Tale Oicotypes'.

⁴⁵ Von Sydow, 'Folktale Studies and Philology', 238.

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