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VISIONS OF GODS AND MONSTERS:
LEVANTINE AND MESOPOTAMIAN ICONOGRAPHIES OF DIVINE COMBAT
AND THEIR TEXTUAL IMPRESSIONS

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MADADH PYRENE RICHEY

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Abstract

Despite widespread agreement that narratives of divine combat with monstrous antagonists were politically and culturally important in the ancient Near East, scholars have not thoroughly explored how this importance can be demonstrated beyond the textual realm. This question is important in light of two central considerations in ancient Near Eastern studies. First, a model according to which communities primarily encountered narratives of divine combat through ritual recitation and performance has been rightly minimized or even set aside entirely. Second, the familiarity of non- or minimally literate individuals with ancient Near Eastern literary texts is no longer so readily assumed as in older scholarship. In order to examine whether narratives of divine combat were truly as politically and culturally significant as scholars claim, I examine first-millennium Mesopotamian and Levantine visual art along with textual sources that depict and describe both miniaturized and monumentalized divine combat. In doing so, I show that encounters with and reflections on depicted divine combat were frequent and deep. In exploring both visual art and textual data, I emphasize monster theoretical approaches to understand the ways in which depictions of combatted and subjugated monsters constitute the hegemony and normativity of victorious gods and, often through them, human terrestrial powers. I critically analyze two categories of first-millennium Mesopotamian data, namely cylinder seals and monumental statuary and reliefs depicting hybrid creatures. Lastly, I turn to Hebrew Bible figures that have been argued to reflect monumentalized cosmic antagonists: Neḥuštān (Num 21:4b–9a; 2 Kgs 18:4), the “molten sea” (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:2), and Goliath’s head (1 Sam 17:54). I argue that the first two of these have been erroneously understood and that the latter is the most promising locus for

identifying southern Levantine textual interaction with the discourse of monumentalized monstrosity. In both Mesopotamia and the Levant, the depiction of a monster or of a divine figure overcoming a monster were primary means by which individuals encountered and recollected narratives of divine combat, and they are therefore of central importance for reconstructing the ways in which populaces received and engaged these core religious images.

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has been doing with all these shiny and scribbly rectangles, I would still, with Mairead's cheerful agreement, like to dedicate this dissertation to him.

Introduction

The Way Forward in Combat Myth Studies

The question that guides the present study is how we can know that large numbers of people in first-millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamia and the Levant were familiar with such narratives as are known to us, as modern scholars, primarily through literary texts.¹ Rather than ask this question from a vague or abstract perspective, the present study focuses on a type of narrative that was central to the ideology and theology of many groups in the ancient Near East, namely narratives of divine combat with monstrous antagonists. The most famous of these are well-known even to students in general religious studies courses and include the “Babylonian epic of creation”² *Enūma eliš*, the Ugaritic epic of *Baʿlu*, and refractions and apparent allusions to divine combat throughout such biblical texts as Genesis 1, Exodus 14–15, Isaiah 27:1, Psalms 29 and 74, and Job 39–41.

¹ Footnotes in this Introduction, which summarizes the aims and outlook of this dissertation, are minimal. References for points made here should be sought in the chapters described.

² This terminology for *Enūma eliš* is common to such publications of the text as Lambert 1966 (see also idem 2013: 1) and Langdon 1923. Kämmerer and Metzler (2012) similarly term their object “Das babylonische Welterschöpfungsepos.” Heidel (1942) calls the narrative the “Babylonian Genesis,” an obvious comparative move that attempts to ally the foreign Babylonian product to the naturalized and Westernized Book of Genesis despite a surfeit of discontinuities (see Chapter 1, section 1, esp. n. 21 and its citation of Tsumura 2005).

These are often described collectively as simply “combat myths” or “the combat myth,” as though there existed an underlying logic and/or content that differs only in its surface manifestations across ancient Near Eastern cultures. The genesis and cogency of such assumptions will be discussed in greater detail throughout Chapter 1.

Before proceeding to these points, I would like to offer a further framing of the religious-historical and sociological issue that occupies that center of the present study: like most ancient Near Eastern narratives, written texts that narrativize divine combat come to us from the styli and pens of literate individuals who, by virtue of their training, constituted a political and/or social elite in most if not all ancient contexts. It is probable that readers of these texts—if such a group would represent an expansion or alternate group from the writers themselves—also constituted a relatively small, politically and/or socially elite group, again by virtue of their education. These written texts may very well be developments—by whatever precise mechanisms—of oral texts whose producers were less socially restricted and/or elevated. In whatever contexts those oral texts were produced, they may have been accessible to audiences that are more likely to have included, by virtues of the lower barriers to entry an oral text presents, individuals occupying a broader range of social positions. Unfortunately, however, the ephemeral nature of oral-textual production makes it impossible to confirm the content and contexts of these texts. This has constituted a major stumbling block in biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies, as scholars simultaneously assume the existence and, moreover, precedence of oral texts and find themselves unable to analyze such texts and especially their production and reception contexts in any meaningful way.

In studies of narratives of divine combat in particular, this assumption and discovered inability traces a trajectory from optimism in reconstructing the public recitation and even performance of such narratives to a disillusionment with such reconstructions. In other words, the

problem of written-textual restriction was originally thought solved and the cultural relevance of written texts assured by the hypothesis that written texts developed from and/or were paralleled by more broadly accessible oral texts. As it has become clear both that the broader hypothesis of oral precedence and/or paralleling is usually unsubstantiable and that, for narratives of divine combat in particular, there is only minimal evidence for ancient recitation and performance of the known written narratives, scholarship has quietly elided the problem of ancient cultural relevance by assuming but not grounding the importance or centrality of such narratives. Taken altogether, this trajectory reveals a certain anxiety on the part of the modern scholar. One often wants, from the subject position, for the object of one's analysis to have been important or central to ancient audiences. The present study does not, as a more radical repositioning might do, disavow this impulse. Rather, it offers a newly theorized evidentiary means of adjudicating whether narratives known from texts were in fact as broadly available as modern scholarly discourse assumes in both its focus and its conclusions. This evidentiary means is the corpus of visual art from Mesopotamia and the southern Levant that depicts divine combat, which has despite the expansive scholarship on textualized divine combat, never been the focus of a sustained study.

The problem of text-centrality that this lacuna reveals participates in a broader issue that goes under-acknowledged especially in Biblical Studies, namely, that modern scholars frequently assume what one might call "canonical centrality," that is, that the canon of the Hebrew Bible such as it was established in the Second Temple period and received to this day was reflective of, central to, and even determinative of Iron Age Israelite and Judahite religious thought, production, praxis, and more. Despite frequent explicit disavowals of this principle, assumptions as to the representative nature of the Hebrew Bible continue to surface in Biblical Studies. In the present context, they inform the ways in which scholars characterize not only the divine combat allusions

of the Hebrew Bible but also the divine combat narratives that arose in such contexts as late thirteenth-century Ugarit or first-millennium Babylon to have been politically important and culturally central to those contexts.

There are several core reasons for this continued surfacing of assumptions born from fallacies of canonical centrality. The first of these can be understood as pragmatic. Scholars recognize that texts, whether from the Hebrew Bible or from cuneiform tablets, constitute a large portion of the available evidence for ancient religion and other categories of analysis. To willfully exclude this evidence in attempting to answer religious and historical questions would be myopic or even obscurantist. Unfortunately, the acknowledgment that texts should be included in analysis often morphs, even over the trajectory of a given research project, into a centering of texts. This happens in any number of areas of inquiry within ancient Near Eastern studies, from archaeology to history of religions. By sheer preponderance and, more insidiously, by apparent transparency of signification, texts become the accessible prism through which all ancient Near Eastern phenomena are apprehended.

The present study is not an iconographic study in the way that terminology is traditionally used within ancient Near Eastern studies. The labelling of certain works as “iconographic studies” discursively restricts the purview of works engaging visual art to that bounded category of evidence and implicitly expresses doubt as to the potential for that evidence to be instrumentalized towards the asking and answering of broader questions in history, sociology, and religious studies. This is only one reason that I refuse the labels of “art historical” or “iconographic” for the present work, even as other scholars have championed the use of this precise terminology to guide especially biblical studies out of its stubborn text-centeredness. The other reason for not allowing the label “iconographic study” is that the present study does not engage exclusively visual art

evidence but rather develops the potential of this evidence in conversation with those ancient texts that describe or purport to describe ancient visual displays. One risk of this discursive move is that it will inadvertently center the textual in a way similar to that described above as a common pitfall of ancient Near Eastern religious-historical studies. I have attempted to guard against this potential by allotting substantial space to close visual art analysis, especially in Chapters 3 and 4, and in explicitly theorizing in Chapters 1 and 2 the exclusive potential of non-textual data to contribute to histories and sociologies of ancient religion.

The present work consists of five chapters that develop the overarching hypothesis that broad ancient Mesopotamian and Levantine societal engagement with the discourse of divine combat can be observed best through visual art sources and through textual sources that describe and imagine visual representations of divine combat. Chapter 1 begins by exposing the forces driving studies that focus on ancient Near Eastern narratives of divine combat. I call this field “Combat Myth Studies.” Towards this end, I analyze major monographs in the field, with particular attention to origins (Section 1.1), to the fixation on textual genealogies in combat myth scholarship (Section 1.2), and to developments in the last decade (Section 1.3). In Section 1.1, I focus on origins to reveal the constructed nature of the claim that this area of inquiry arises solely from Hermann Gunkel’s 1895 *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*. Such claims, made repeatedly and prominently in scholarship, reinscribe Gunkel’s source biases and guiding questions and obscure the extent to which contemporary scholars were engaging other sources and asking different questions of them. Section 1.2 reveals that, allying with or opposing themselves to Gunkel, many scholars fixate on genealogizing or stemmatizing all allegedly major written-textual manifestations of the combat myth. This participates in and furthers broader written-text-

or graphocentric tendencies in Biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies and badly misrepresents the far more complex cultural matrices and interactions that lie behind and within the textual data at our disposal. In Section 1.3, recent developments in the field are explored to demonstrate that, despite the range of excellent monographic work on combat myths in the present decade, Combat Myth Studies remain surprisingly homogenous in its aims, methods, and conclusions. Moreover, since the rate of scholarly publication has not allowed these works to interact with one another, I attempt to take a synthetic view to examine what gaps remain and why.

If Chapter 1 illustrates a core problem with Combat Myth Studies, namely its exclusive focus on texts and the questions most easily asked of them, Chapter 2 shows how this problem impacts scholarly ability to answer what is and should remain a central question in the field, namely, how combat myths are historically and culturally *important* in the way all scholars have claimed. The subsequent sections of Chapter 2 develop paths by which this question may be answered with greater attention to visual art sources and texts descriptive of such sources. In order to do this, it first discusses, in Section 2.1, the promises and shortcomings of the primary model by which scholars have understood narratives of divine combat to have been communicated to broader communities. This primary model is that according to which these narratives were recited or even performed at community festivals. I show in Section 2.1 that this model was founded on the explicit testimony of one Seleucid-period Babylonian text—extant in two manuscripts—regarding *Enūma eliš*. The model was, however, then used to generate other imagined cultic recitations, notably for present purposes at both Ugarit and Jerusalem but also, through the work of the Cambridge ritualists and other myth-and-ritual thinkers, throughout ancient and modern religious contexts. I will show that this grafting of the model onto other religious contexts was made without evidence or warrant but was nevertheless enthusiastically adopted in many circles,

especially in Biblical Studies with the reconstruction of an elaborate Yahwistic enthronement festival. To move beyond this moribund paradigm, I develop in Section 2.2 a new means by which one can perceive ancient audience interactions with narratives of divine combat. This can be done through the study of visual art, a tactic that has not yet been employed with regard to motifs of divine combat. Within this focus on visual art, I advocate particular attention to ways in which monstrosity is represented, with input from monster theoretical studies across the humanities and with close attention to how scholars have adapted this discourse for study of the Hebrew Bible and other—albeit primarily textual—ancient Near Eastern sources.

Chapters 3 through 5 contain the core of the study demonstrating that such visual art depicting divine combat does exist in the ancient Near Eastern material-culture record and that, moreover, it emerged in conversation with textual material describing real and putative representations of divine combat or its aftereffects—especially monumentalized defeated enemies—in architectural contexts. The visual art that I discuss covers both ends of the spectrum of scale, from the smallest and therefore most portable cylinder seals to the largest and therefore most visible monumental reliefs and other representations. In Section 3.1, I describe the history and sociology of cylinder seal production in order to reach conclusions about the likely social groups that first created and then consumed these miniature art pieces. In Section 3.2, which makes up the majority of Chapter 3, I comprehensively discuss three central types of cylinder seals depicting divine combat, situate these in their historical and geographical contexts, and draw conclusions about the theological and ideological messages that these visual art products communicate. To counteract a tendency in works of “iconographic exegesis” emerging from within biblical studies, I concentrate the inquiry on visual art material that is in fact contemporary or nearly so with the texts describing divine combat with which most scholars are concerned. These

texts are such Mesopotamian epics as *Enūma eliš* and *Anzû* in their first-millennium versions, the Ugaritic *Baʿlu* epic from the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E., and the allusive texts of the Hebrew Bible, which mostly date from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. I therefore focus on cylinder seal types that were likewise prevalent during the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. My emphasis throughout is on the degree to which these visual art representations were discursively available across social classes and a wide geographic range.

Chapter 4 moves to consider monumental representations of divine combat. In Section 4.1, I first discuss the ways in which “monumentality” has been defined and now serves as a rubric for analysis in ancient Near Eastern archaeology and art historical study. In Section 4.2, I engage these modes of scholarship to analyze four groups of monumental monstrosities from Mesopotamia. Throughout, I consider the ways in which these monstrosities were likely to have been interpreted by their commissioners and audiences as representations of defeated cosmic antagonists. This expands our understanding of the degree to which divine combat was indexed by Mesopotamian monumental art beyond the transparent but rare depictions of combat in progress, especially the Ninurta temple relief BM 124571–2. In this chapter, I also discuss both archaeologically recovered visual art and texts descriptive of visual art, since these two categories of data must be analyzed together to yield a deeper understanding of how individuals imagined the semiotics of these pieces. The visual art and texts in question are mostly from first-millennium Assyrian and Babylonian contexts, namely, the *nāḫiru* and *burṭiš* in late second millennium and early first millennium sources (Subsection 4.2.1); the *aladlammû*—usually called *lamassu*—statues (Subsection 4.2.2), relief representations of Tiamat’s brood, including its individual constituents (Subsection 4.2.3), and the *mušḫuššu* dragon in Neo-Babylonian monumental iconography and text (Subsection 4.2.4).

Finally, in Chapter 5, I focus on the Hebrew Bible to explore ways in which visual art representations of divine combat may have inspired or otherwise found echoes in this textual corpus. Scholars have long hypothesized that two monumental fixtures in particular, namely the Neḥuṣtan snake allegedly inaugurated by Moses (Num 21.4b–9) and later destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18.4) and the “molten sea” that two texts, 1 Kings 7.23–26 and 2 Chronicles 4.2, describe as having been mounted on the backs of twelve bovids within the Solomonic temple. I analyze these long-standing scholarly hypotheses as proceeding from a desire to discover in texts the monumental output of ancient Israelian and Judaeon religions, since there is a palpable and troubling absence of excavated monumental text and art from Iron Age Israel and Judah. I show that both Neḥuṣtan and the molten sea are unlikely to have anything to do with divine combat narratives and that better visual art parallels and logics of composition exist for the development of both imagined fixtures. In the final section of Chapter 5, I point to a biblical narrative that has more in common with narratives of divine combat and that can be understood as drawing some of its ideological power from those narratives, namely the description that David took the giant Goliath’s head to Jerusalem (1 Sam 17.54). I analyze this narrative for what it conveys about the importance of monumentalized monstrous antagonist display by comparing it to descriptions of severing and displaying the giant Ḥumbaba’s head in various strands of Gilgamesh literature and to the archaeologically attested practice of displaying Ḥumbaba head representations as an apotropaion emblematic of monster defeat.

Throughout the present work, I maintain two principles that make substantial contributions to combat myth studies in particular and to ancient Near Eastern studies in general. First, it is necessary not only to attend to visual art material in the study of ancient Near Eastern history and religion but also to analyze in detail the contexts of visual art production and reception, to explore

from a theoretically informed angle the meanings of its constituents—in this case, particularly monstrous antagonists—and to integrate this study with the study of texts so as to construct a true dialogue between art and text instead of parallel visual-art and textual monologues. Second, when asserting the cultural centrality and ideological or political importance of ancient motifs and narratives, one cannot be dependent on personal, modern perceptions of what types of narratives are especially interesting or inspiring. One must instead pay close attention to the expressed and unexpressed rationales for regarding narratives and motifs as culturally central. When one realizes that old rationales are no longer broadly admitted—in this case, the myth-and-ritual paradigm for combat myth promulgation—one needs to explore new and more promising avenues that might permit the grounding of claims to ancient religious-historical significance, in this case, a more inclusive look at sources beyond literary texts. This move both assumes and furthers the conviction that religion is more than just what scribes and elites fashioned in their restricted texts. It reveals the operation of divine combat discourse at multiple levels and within multiple arenas of society and reveals for the first time that this discursive complex was indeed a central way by which many different groups of people in the ancient Near East envisioned the legitimating activities of their gods.

Chapter 1

Biases and Blind Spots in Combat Myth Studies:

Graphocentrism and its Effects

Like most fields that have the analysis of texts as their primary goal, Biblical Studies could be described as a graphocentric³ field. I use this term to denote a focus on textual evidence to the exclusion of visual art evidence in answering questions of history and religion for which both fields of evidence would nevertheless be appropriate. Most biblicists spend most of their time reading and analyzing, on the one hand, primary texts—both those enclosed by the canons of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and contemporary products of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean world—and, on the other hand, the scholarly discourse that has grown up around these materials. Scholars who focus on material culture remains are, in the areal field of Near Eastern studies, usually trained and labeled as art historians or archaeologists⁴ and are frequently presumed to have

³ I prefer this terminology to “logocentric” as it has been used recently by proponents of art-historical analysis in biblical studies (cf. e.g. de Hulster, Strawn, and Bonfiglio 2015: 19). This is primarily because uses of “logocentrism” and related words often denote, in philosophical terminology, a preference for the spoken word over the written one, not the written word over the image. The philosophical terminology can be traced to the work of Ludwig Klages from the 1900s (“logozentrischen” and “Logozentrismus”; documented by Josephson 2017: 373 n. 81) and is prominent in the work of Jacques Derrida (summary and subsequent use in Culler 1982: 89–110).

⁴ The ways in which this terminology and discourse has created rigid disciplinary boundaries and identifications of particular scholars and their work is discussed recently by e.g. Bonfiglio 2016: 1–5 and de Hulster 2009: 24–29.

little to say about literature and other areas of textual inquiry.⁵ While biblical studies is gradually moving away from this segregation of subject domains and towards interdisciplinarity,⁶ certain areas—including the study of myth, a phenomenon usually perceived to be mainly if not exclusively textual—have not been subject to the corrective impulses now visible elsewhere.

In the introduction that precedes the present chapter, I begin by noting that there exist ancient Near Eastern texts that narrate the combat of a storm and/or high god with an ophidian or other monster and that there are texts that appear to allude—i.e. narratively, but in a more elliptical fashion—to a similar combat. In the present study, I refer to all of these texts with the inclusive label of “combat myth” or “combat myths” as many scholars have done previously.⁷ The fact that

⁵ The integration of material culture data into the study of Near Eastern religion has become increasingly common especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century, e.g. Zevit 2001 and especially Schroer 2018; 2011; 2008; Schroer and Keel 2005; and Keel and Uehlinger 1992. Several surveys of Levantine religion have been stubbornly textual, e.g. Albright 1967 and still M. S. Smith 2002; Day 2000. Regarding the question of the extent to which material culture data is integrated into the study of Near Eastern history, it is perhaps helpful to distinguish—following the Annales school—the study of *histoire événementielle* as opposed to the *longue durée*. Certain archaeologists are more comfortable claiming to elucidate primarily the latter, but there is of course a longstanding trend in so-called “Biblical Archaeology” of correlating finds with events known—significantly—from texts; for general methodology, compare e.g. Moore and Kelle 2011; Moore 2006 with Dever 2017: esp. 1–22.

⁶ The segregation of textual biblical studies from material culture analyses has recently been documented by scholars operating within a paradigm that they call “Iconographic Exegesis” and that they perceived as derivative of the Fribourg School analyses of Othmar Keel, Silvia Schroer, Christoph Uehlinger, and others. Recent studies representative and conscious of this trend are de Hulster 2009; LeMon 2010; Bonfiglio 2016 (see esp. *ibid.*: 1–5); and, to a lesser extent, Strawn 2005. A methodological handbook has recently been published as de Hulster, Strawn, and Bonfiglio 2015. These trends are discussed in greater detail at the beginning of section 2.2, below.

⁷ This widespread use is documented by the multiple quotations from relevant scholarship, especially below and in the preceding introduction. I prefer “combat myth” to major alternatives such as “Chaoskampf” and “conflict myth,” the former because it implies that these myths always have “chaos” in view, which they do not (e.g. Ballentine 2015: 186–89; Tsumura 2005: 143–46; Kloos 1986: 83–86) and the latter because in contemporary English usage, “combat” seems to imply more frequently “single combat” (nearly always the topic of the myths in question) and “conflict” more frequently a generalized state of affairs (e.g. the “Israeli-Palestinian conflict”; similarly Angel 2017; cf. Ballentine 2015 *passim*); these connotations are supported by the first definitions of each word in, for example, the

all of the data so far discussed in the present work are, in fact, textual and somehow narrative will have been at once both obvious and, to most readers, hardly remarkable. As will be shown below, most studies of the combat myth have overwhelmingly focused on narrative texts to the utter exclusion of other categories of data. Authors of these previous studies, readers of the present work, and scholars in general might not be troubled by this situation. After all, narratives of combat myth are worthy of extended and close study, and there is no denying that these texts include many interesting problems—from the lexical to the contextual—that remain unsolved.⁸

The central contention of the present work, though, is that the focus on texts has hamstrung and confused the attempt to situate production, transmission, and reception of combat myths in ancient Near Eastern communities. These difficulties are more palpable and serious for combat myths than for other mythological complexes for two reasons.

First, scholars have claimed—in my view, correctly—central political importance for combat myths.⁹ For example, combat-myth allusions in the Hebrew Bible are assumed to have promoted exclusive Yahwism, to have elevated the status of the ruling monarch as a divine surrogate, and to have solidified “Israelite” group identity. Similar things are claimed for combat myths throughout the ancient Near East. This perceived socio-political centrality of combat myths correctly suggests that it is more imperative to define how the various individuals involved in the

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “combat” 1a. “An encounter or fight between two armed persons” and s.v. “conflict” 1a. “An encounter with arms; a fight, battle.”

⁸ This is illustrated by the diverse and illuminating studies of the combat myth that are cited below. My own interest in engaging textual as well as non-textual sources is illustrated by work focused on Ugaritic mythological texts: Richey 2017; *fc.* a. These articles are on a formula in *Baʿlu* and *ʿAqhatu* and RS 16.266 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.83), respectively.

⁹ Scholars who have claimed importance and cultural and political significance for the combat myth are cited and engaged primarily in section 2.1, below.

above social processes were aware of it than to define, for example, how they might have been aware of narratives concerning the Garden of Eden (Gen 3) or the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9).

Second, even in rightly perceiving this centrality of combat myths and the resultant pressing nature of contextual questions, most discussion has focused on a single social model, namely that of public (“ritual,” “cultic,” etc.) recitation and/or performance of the combat myth.¹⁰ Most scholars now agree that this model is unsubstantiated and in fact misleading for most ancient Near Eastern contexts, especially in the Levant. For one, the former popularity of this model has resulted in its continual resurfacing and frequent uncritical assertion. Furthermore, the widely acknowledged weaknesses of this model have not resulted in its replacement by another hypothesis (or set of hypotheses) defining the transmission and reception contexts of myths of divine combat. Instead, most scholars who now allude to the socio-political centrality of combat myths simply beg the question: they assure their readers that combat myths were important and go on to describe various themes allegedly conveyed by the narrative myths to population groups.¹¹ But the fact of this importance is never demonstrated, only assumed from minimal textual data. One is left wondering how scholars know that ancient Near Eastern publics were aware of the myths at all.

In this first chapter, I will begin by chronicling the rise and spread of combat myth studies. The goal in this chapter is not to catalogue every work that has touched on the themes of god-dragon combat or chaos monsters or every work that has discussed particular central texts, such as Job 40–41, the *Baʿlu* myth, and *Enūma eliš*. Instead, I aim to introduce and discuss major

¹⁰ This preoccupation of the ritual paradigm is a holdover from the broader “Myth and Ritual School” (discussed at greatest length by Ackerman 1991, with a documentary anthology in Segal 1998). It is discussed in the present work in section 2.1, below, where one will also find further substantiation of the claims made in the present paragraph.

¹¹ As for nn. 8 and 9, above, see Section 2.1, below.

monographs in the field, with particular attention to the origins of the field (Section 1.1), to what I call the “genealogical approach” in combat myth scholarship (Section 1.2), and to developments in the last decade (Section 1.3). Origins are highlighted in Section 1.1 because the field has sometimes been inaccurately described as arising solely from the work of Hermann Gunkel and in particular from his 1895 volume *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*. The result has been the ongoing influence of Gunkel’s source restrictions and graphocentric guiding questions in later literature, especially in Biblical Studies. Attention to Gunkel’s dialogue partners and the extent to which other scholars were engaging other sources and asking different questions can begin to redress these biases. It also reveals the ways in which both this scholarship and ancient sources are embedded in a complex intertextual matrix that often cannot be reduced to simple lines of influence. At the other end of the chronological spectrum, recent developments in the field of Combat Myth Studies are emphasized in Section 1.3 not only because there has been a surfeit of excellent monographic work on combat myths in the present decade, but also because this work continues to be surprisingly homogeneous in its aims, methods, and conclusions. The current rate of scholarly publication has in general not allowed these works to interact with one another, so I attempt to bring some of them into dialogue and examine what gaps remain and why.

The other section of this first chapter (Section 1.2) documents a particular way in which Combat Myth Studies have remained stubbornly graphocentric and, within this, fixated on narrative mythological texts. This section documents how many scholars operate with the assumption that all allegedly significant manifestations of the combat myth can be related to one another in a stemma. The establishment of a central set of texts adopts a sort of canonizing approach and the process of relating these texts mirrors how manuscript interrelationships are

deduced in traditional text-critical studies. I analyze this set of presuppositions under the label “Genealogical Approach.”

In short, Chapter 1 illustrates a core problem with combat myth studies, namely its exclusive focus on narrative texts. Chapter 2 will begin by observing that this focus has major implications for the scholarly inability to answer a central question in the field, namely, how combat myths can have done the political and cultural work most scholars claim they did. The subsequent sections of Chapter 2 proceed to develop paths by which this question may be answered with greater attention to both recoverable visual art sources and texts that purport to describe visual art manifestations of divine combat.

As already stressed in the preceding Introduction, the present work does not aim to be exclusively an iconographic study. One thing it attempts to do is to break down the boundary between the disciplines of art history and textual studies as manifested in ancient Near Eastern studies by posing what is basically a two-part anthropological or sociological question and then exploring the many avenues that might lead to a clearer answer. This two-part question is: in what ways did ancient audiences encounter produced iterations of a given myth (in this case, the combat myth), and how did individuals reflect on these encounters? For the contexts considered in the present work, the primary data set for the former question is indeed iconographic, but the primary data set for the latter is mainly textual. The chief aim is therefore to discuss textual and iconographic sources in complex and interweaving ways, with a focus not on catalogue and comprehension but rather on the central question of the political and cultural valence of combat myths, which has surfaced again and again in modern scholarship.

1.1 The Discovery of Divine Combat

Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), the son of a Lutheran pastor in Springe, Hanover, at first studied the New Testament at Göttingen (Habilitation 1888), where he worked primarily with Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) and Bernhard Stade (1848–1906).¹² It was at the encouragement of the Undersecretary for the Prussian Ministry of Culture, Friedrich Althoff (1839–1908), that Gunkel moved to Halle and switched his field of study to the Hebrew Bible. Gunkel went on to teaching positions in Berlin (1894–1907), Giessen (1907–1920), and Halle (1920–27),¹³ and throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century he produced a large number of influential books on topics that included Genesis,¹⁴ the influence of so-called “Babylonian”

¹² Gunkel’s topic was “Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes, nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und nach der Lehre des Aposteles Paulus: eine biblisch-theologische Studie.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, Gunkel’s work in New Testament gets relatively short shrift from his early bibliographer, Klatt (1969: 15–17). Hammann (2014: 13–48) discusses this phase and Gunkel’s early motivations in more detail.

¹³ A comprehensive recent biography of Gunkel is Hammann 2014. Proceedings of a retrospective conference have also recently appeared (Waschke 2013); a similar recent collection of essays is Eisen and Gerstenberger 2010. Klatt 1969 is the main older discussion of Gunkel’s life and work. Scurlock and Beal 2013 is framed as a reconsideration of Gunkel’s *Chaoskampf* hypotheses. I engage with several of its essays below, but the contributions are quite diverse and not always directly relevant to Gunkel himself.

¹⁴ Gunkel 1901, translated into English by Mark E. Biddle as Gunkel 1997. As will be seen in the following footnotes, Gunkel’s major works have been translated into English as often and as recently as any German biblical scholar, with the result that his influence is perhaps increasingly felt on the semi-popular level. In addition to the monographs cited in the following footnotes, selected essays by Gunkel have been translated into English by K. C. Hanson as Gunkel 2001.

religion on Israel,¹⁵ Psalms,¹⁶ Elijah’s religious program,¹⁷ and the use of form criticism to identify “Märchen,” or folktales, in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁸

Significantly, however, Gunkel’s first book was *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895),¹⁹ a thorough study of the ways in which Mesopotamian, Hebrew Bible, and New Testament texts juxtaposed divine battles and creation in ways that suggested the former to be a precondition for the latter. The starting point of Gunkel’s study is his conviction that the creation story in Genesis 1 has a number of elements that he regards as blind motifs in the biblical narrative and/or that he believes to be somehow antithetical to Israelite thought. The line between these two observations as grounds for Gunkel’s decision that a given passage is not “eine freie Construction des Verfassers”²⁰ but is rather to be attributed to external influence is often quite fuzzy. For example, early in the volume, in discussing the רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים “wind of God” of Genesis 1.2, Gunkel first notes Wellhausen’s conviction that this sudden and unusual figuration of the deity is the now undirected remnant of an earlier Israelite source; he then asserts on the basis of allegedly similar Phoenician and Greek “spirits” that this entity is an essentially foreign mythical being:

Weiter kommt in Betracht das ‘Brüten des Geistes über den Wassern’. Auch diesen Zug rechnet Wellhausen mit Recht zu dem vorgefundenen Ausgangspunkte von PC

¹⁵ Gunkel 1903, translated into English by E. S. B. and K. C. Hanson as Gunkel 2009.

¹⁶ Gunkel’s chief work on Psalms, an “Introduction,” was published posthumously, after having been completed by Joachim Begrich, as Gunkel 1933; this was translated into English by James D. Nogalski as Gunkel 1998.

¹⁷ Gunkel 1906, translated into English by K. C. Hanson as Gunkel 2014.

¹⁸ Gunkel 1917, translated into English by Michael D. Rutter as Gunkel 1986.

¹⁹ In full, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12*. A translation into English was produced by K. William Whitney (cp. his own work on a similar topic, Whitney 2006) as Gunkel 2006. For the context of this work in Gunkel’s personal and professional development, see Hammann 2014: 58–72 and Klatt 1969: 46–80.

²⁰ Gunkel 1895: 4.

[the Priestly source]. [...] Der Hebräer kennt nur Geister, die auf den Menschen ‘fallen’ und in ihm und durch ihn allerlei Wunder tun; daneben den Gottesgeist, der in dem Körper des Menschen das Geheimnis des Lebens wirkt. Die רוח von Gen 1, das göttliche Gestaltungsprinzip der Welt, deren Parallelen das phöniciſche \piνεῦμα und der griechische $\text{\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\varsigma}$ sind, ist eine mythologische Vorstellung (Gunkel 1895: 7–8).²¹

Immediately thereafter, Gunkel asserts that not only the “spirit” but also its hovering activity, the darkness, etc. are to be connected with mythological foundations, but there is some lack of clarity as to whether he believes these foundations to be reflective of earlier Israelite religion, so-called pagan foreign religion, or both (ibid.: 8–16).

In casting about for the source of foreign influences, Gunkel quickly hits upon the Babylonian creation myth *Enūma eliš*. As Gunkel himself notes, hints of Mesopotamian cosmogonies had long been known from Greek sources, but these were for the most part garbled reports of hostile Christians (ibid.: 16–20). The end of the nineteenth century had, however, already seen the publication of fragments of *Enūma eliš* by George Smith and others (see below). Gunkel enlisted the Assyriologist Heinrich Zimmern to address published and unpublished sources for the purposes of substantiating his understanding of Babylonian myth (ibid.: 21–29, 401–28). This contribution was of crucial importance because, Gunkel argues, *Enūma eliš* preserves the full narrative to which only allusions are made in Genesis 1 and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.²²

²¹ Several more items are discussed in similar ways at ibid.: 115–16, e.g. on the emphasis on the astral bodies in the creation narrative. Gunkel regards this as inappropriate for what he calls “Jewish” religion and therefore to be explained by the assumption of influence from Babylonian tradition(s): “Bei der Schöpfung der Himmelskörper wird ihre Bestimmung, die Zeiten zu regeln, in beiden Berichten stark hervorgehoben. Diese Betonung ist in jüdischer Tradition auffallend genug; sie erklärt sich aus der babylonischen Sternreligion” (ibid.).

²² Gunkel gives at ibid.: 117 an apposite summary statement: “Aber diese These [that *Enūma eliš* and Gen 1 are parallel reflexes of a cosmologic impulse] wird durch den Charakter beider Traditionen deutlich widerlegt. Gen 1

Gunkel readily acknowledges that this is an astonishing thesis²³ and so first demonstrates to his anticipated skeptical readers that various monstrous antagonists (ibid.: 30–69, 81–88), conquered seas (ibid.: 88–114), and especially combinations thereof (ibid.: 69–81) are mentioned throughout the Hebrew Bible.

It is only after this that Gunkel attempts to prove what he claims as his main point, namely that Genesis 1 is dependent for its fundamental cosmogonic conceptions and particular formulations on Mesopotamian sources. Gunkel’s description of the correspondences is surprisingly laconic, especially given the subsequent influence of his basic hypothesis that Genesis 1 was dependent on Mesopotamian precursors. He sometimes devotes no more than a sentence to

ist, wie oben gezeigt ist, seiner Natur nach ein abgeblasster Mythos. Ferner zwingen uns, wie wir gesehen haben starke innere Gründe, den Ursprung der Tradition in Babylonien zu suchen.”

²³ Gunkel 1895: 29, “Der Unterschied zwischen dem babylonischen Mythos und Gen 1 ist so gross, in der religiösen Haltung und in der ästhetischen Färbung, dass sie auf den ersten Blick nichts gemeinsam zu haben scheinen. Man begreift die Abneigung derer vollkommen, die sich scheuen, beide Berichte neben einander auch nur zu nennen.” He returns to this point at ibid.: 117, “Der Theologe wird gegen diese historische These vielleicht—bewusst oder unbewusst—dogmatische Einwendungen vorbringen. Er wird auf die unverkennbar ungeheure Verschiedenheit des babylonischen und des biblischen Schöpfungsberichtes hinweisen.” Interestingly, Gunkel repeatedly imagines his most strident opponents as avowed theologians, and he imagines these individuals to be particularly distrustful of the comparanda he forwards. Throughout his volume, Gunkel claims to be meeting these imagined unsympathetic readers with comprehending agreement and represents himself as forced towards the relatively radical determinations on which he settles almost reluctantly. This posture likely contributes to what appears to be a currently widespread assumption that Gunkel was an intrepid pioneer facing universal opposition. In fact, as Gunkel himself quietly documents throughout *Schöpfung und Chaos* (see below), several other German scholars—especially August Dillmann (1823–94), Fritz Hommel (1854–1936), and Eduard Riehm (1830–88)—had already cleared the path via numerous publications on individual correspondences between the Hebrew Bible and emerging Mesopotamian literature and—as Gunkel very much did not acknowledge—the Englishman Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1841–1915) had put nearly the whole *Chaoskampf* picture together even without the benefit of Mesopotamian comparanda. For all of these individuals and their work, see below.

a given correspondence in listing the various items on just over two pages (*ibid.*: 114–16).²⁴ Gunkel nevertheless considers the point to be proven and sets about attempting to define the time and place at which Babylonian cosmogonic notions might have been transmitted to the Levant. Because he discerns pervasive Mesopotamian influence throughout the Hebrew Bible, including in texts that he regards as certainly pre-exilic, Gunkel thinks it unlikely that this influence would have entered and become naturalized in Israelite religion all at once; he regards it as particularly unlikely that this process occurred in the relatively short period of the Babylonian exile (*esp. ibid.*: 135). He therefore comes to the conclusion that not only the combat myth but also the vast majority of Hebrew Bible material allegedly dependent upon Mesopotamian sources had been part of Israelite religion for so long that not even the pre-exilic prophets recognized them to be foreign. Gunkel reassures his readers that even though they are therefore difficult to parse and even recognize, they are still certainly very old:

Es erscheint nach dem Vorhergehenden ganz unmöglich, ihre Reception [sic] in die prophetische Periode zu setzen. Zugleich sprechen die Sagen selbst für die These, dass sie in viel älterer Zeit in Israel eingewandert seien: Diese Erzählungen sind sämtlich in einer mehr oder weniger verdunkelten Gestalt auf uns gekommen (*ibid.*: 147–48).

²⁴ In brief, these are (1.) the use of תְּהוֹם, certainly cognate with Akkadian *ti'ām(a)t-*, to designate the “deep” in Gen 1.2; (2.) the division of the waters into two parts as connected with the creation of heaven; (3.) the centrality of the divine word for the act of creation; (4.) the creation of land animals involving distinct categories of cattle, wild animals, and reptiles, in that order; (5.) emphasis on heavenly bodies as ruling over times; (6.) the creation of light before that of the stars; (7.) the judgment that creation is good. Without going into great detail regarding each of these claimed parallels, most are either misunderstandings of the alleged Mesopotamian comparanda or represent tropes so broadly attested as to be useless for the narrow comparative purposes towards which Gunkel aims. Most are addressed throughout the first part of Tsumura 2005 (*i.e. esp. ibid.*: 9–139).

After some discussion of what little was known of the Levantine Middle and Late Bronze periods at the time of writing (*ibid.*: 149–60), Gunkel turns to his earlier field of expertise, the New Testament, and elaborates at comparable length a parallel theory according to which Revelation 12 is dependent on Babylonian traditions as transmitted in Hellenistic and Roman Jewish apocalyptic sources (*ibid.*: 173–398).²⁵

Gunkel’s central observation in the first section of this volume—wherein he discerns dragon- and sea-combat allusions in various passages of the Hebrew Bible—is the most convincing element of the work, and this has best withstood reevaluations in subsequent scholarship. Once extra-biblical Near Eastern myths describing similar combats were known from Mesopotamia and later from the northern Levant and Anatolia, most scholars could no longer doubt that various descriptions of and allusions to Leviathan, Behemoth, the Tannin “dragon,” and Rahab—among others—relied on knowledge of a similar narrative among creators and receivers of these biblical passages. The ways in which scholars have described this knowledge have varied substantially. Some, for example, have regarded the relevant texts as barely appreciated relics of an old “Canaanite” mythology. Several others, following Gunkel, have understood them as the result of foreign influence, chiefly from Babylon. Still other scholars have perceived them as fundamental, core, influential, etc. elements of so-called Israelite religion, with varying conceptions of what such emphatic language implies for ancient religious thought, trajectories of influence, and many other essential unknowns. All of these genealogical possibilities will be discussed and documented at greater length in Section 1.2, below.

²⁵ This vast topic, which is beyond the bounds of the present study, receives more thorough and recent evaluation in A. Y. Collins 1976, with, of course, many additional studies over the last forty years (e.g. R. D. Miller 2018: 257–79; Ballentine 2015: 137–50; Koch 2004).

At any rate, though, it is now virtually a given in critical Hebrew Bible studies that these descriptions and allusions are *somehow* descendent from, parallel to, or interacting with combat myth conceptualizations known from elsewhere in the ancient Near East. They are not, in other words, isolated reflections on extinct or contemporary creatures of the natural world and Yahweh's power over them, as was maintained in earlier biblical scholarship.²⁶ They are, rather, figurations that imagine Yahweh as having battled and subdued supernatural entities in mythological time. Although Gunkel was not the first to adopt this paradigm, he is often given credit for having been the first to describe *Chaoskampf* as a delineable motif in the Hebrew Bible and therefore to have inaugurated Combat Myth Studies.²⁷ But since the Assyriological materials engaged by Gunkel in

²⁶ One finds such views recapitulated in contemporary Young Earth creationism. For example, many of those working within this paradigm continue to explain that Leviathan was simply a dinosaur. A post on Ken Ham's *Answers in Genesis* site (dated July 3, 2010) asserts that fossils are the best comparanda for Leviathan and that one can therefore safely "conclud[e] that humans shared the earth with dinosaurs and other ancient reptiles" (<https://answersingenesis.org/extinct-animals/leviathan-found-broad-definition/>). R. Driver (1997) similarly defends Leviathan and Behemoth as eminently historical and in the process engages in cryptozoological claims and pseudo-palaeontology.

²⁷ In addition to those who are cited below (see n. 43) as omitting Barton's contribution, the following are among those who describe Gunkel to be, with various particular formulations, the father or originator of combat myth studies: Tugendhaft (2013: 190) describes Gunkel's argument that "the Babylonian narrative of Marduk's defeat of Ti'āmat had influenced the Bible's conception of creation" as a "groundbreaking thesis." R. S. Watson (2005: 12) asserts that "[t]he view that various passages in the Psalter reflect the idea of a divine combat with chaos resulting in creation is originally to be associated with Hermann Gunkel and his book *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*." Concomitantly, various notions that are constitutive of the broader thesis are attributed to Gunkel despite the fact that they circulated broadly in the scholarly literature, as will be seen below, e.g. Tsumura's (1989: 156) formulation "[e]ver since H. Gunkel's famous book *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895), many Biblical scholars have assumed some kind of direct or indirect connection between the Babylonian goddess of the primeval ocean Tiamat in the 'creation' poem Enuma elish and the Hebrew *tāhôm*." Several citations below from the work of Cheyne show that this scholar was taking such a connection for granted already in the 1880s.

Day (1985: 1), on the other hand, more accurately writes that the combat myth thesis "first received a *thorough* [my emphasis] consideration in 1895 with the publication of H. Gunkel's book *Schöpfung und Chaos*"; similarly idem 2013a: 19, "A common view, argued in detail and *almost* [my emphasis] for the first time by H. Gunkel

1895 had for the most part been published since the mid-1870s, one might reasonably query whether he was the first author to hypothesize that biblical material contained palpable echoes of dragon myths and chaos battles similar to and thus perhaps influenced by *Enūma eliš* or some older source. By the time of Gunkel’s writing, the decipherment of Akkadian cuneiform had been generally acknowledged for almost a half century.²⁸ The first publications of passages of *Enūma eliš* appeared in the young Assyriologist George Smith’s (1840–76) *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, first published in the year of his untimely death (Smith 1876). Most of the tablets that came to light in immediately succeeding years were published in posthumous additions to Smith’s original text by Archibald H. Sayce (Smith 1880) and by Friedrich Delitzsch (esp. Delitzsch 1885),

in 1895, has been that the account of creation in Genesis 1 represents a demythologization of the creation story in the so-called Babylonian Creation epic (*Enuma elish*).”

²⁸ That is, since the competition sponsored by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1857. William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77) had observed that both the public and other scholars did not believe the claims of various individuals—especially the Englishman Henry C. Rawlinson (1810–1895) and the Irishman Edward Hincks (1792–1866)—to have deciphered the Akkadian script (Cathcart 2011). He therefore arranged for the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain to provide these two scholars, Julius Oppert (1825–1905), and himself with lithographs of an unpublished annal text of Tiglath-pileser I (*RIMA 2 A.0.87.1*). When the resultant four translations proved essentially identical (Rawlinson et al. 1857), the broader scholarly community correctly concluded that the nascent field sat on secure foundations (Lundström 2013: 147–48; Daniels 1994: 49).

The contributions of Hincks before and after this competition have been addressed in numerous publications by Cathcart, esp. 1983, and Daniels (1994) discusses the same scholar and especially his “lapse into obscurity” (ibid.: 49); this was largely a result of Hincks’s lack of an academic position, his residing in Killyleagh—a very small town in County Down, Ulster—and his general refusal to travel (ibid.: 50). As is apparent from a letter of Hincks to the *Literary Gazette*, he regarded Rawlinson’s claims and condescension as typically English and anti-Irish (Larsen 1997: 351; see also ibid.: 355). Hincks was nevertheless in regular contact with prominent scholars of the day; his letters demonstrating this have recently been edited in three volumes by Cathcart (2007–9). Larsen (1997) best evaluates the work of both Hincks and Rawlinson. Daniels (1994: 46–52) also chronicles briefly the friction between these two men. Talbot’s biography and especially his growing command of Akkadian during the period 1856–1877 (his death) is discussed briefly by Holloway (2002: 27–33).

who was to play a central role in an era of misguided Panbabylonianism in ancient Near Eastern studies (see Section 1.2, below).

In addition to the observation that the major source for his comparisons had been published for almost two decades, it is worth noting that Gunkel (1895: 30 and n. 1) himself acknowledges that many of the biblical passages he treats as showing combat mythology had already been cited in the service of similar hypotheses by other scholars: “Auf eine Anzahl der Stellen, die ich zu erörtern gedenke, haben schon einige Assyriologen und Theologen hingewiesen.” The impression that one gets from this footnote, which organizes contributions by passages treated, is that while several scholars recognized themes of sea- and dragon-combat in individual loci, Gunkel was the first to bring these together and provide a unifying theory to account for their presence in the Hebrew Bible. This would be, however, far from the truth. In addition to the Canadian scholar George A. Barton, considered below, a group of German scholars are cited by Gunkel at the outset of his chapter on “Anspielungen an den Mythos vom Kampfe Marduks gegen Tiâmat im AT abgesehen von Gen 1.” Brief consideration of the work of Fritz Hommel (1854–1936) reveals that Gunkel was not alone in his foci and method; attention to the work of Eduard Riehm (1830–88) and, to an even greater extent, that of Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1841–1915) illustrates the ways in which other early works on the combat myth often were more open-ended than Gunkel’s—i.e. not aimed towards simply proving Babylonian influence on the Hebrew Bible—and incorporated a wider variety of sources, including both texts and visual art.²⁹

²⁹ Gunkel also cites the Ethiopicist August Dillmann’s *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament* Genesis commentary, which briefly cites and summarizes *Enûma eliš* among other creation myths with which Genesis 1 has some commonalities. Some elements of this summary may be found already in the fifth edition of this commentary (Dillmann 1886: 6–8), but a much fuller account is given in the sixth edition (Dillmann 1892: esp. 9), with which Gunkel himself was working.

Fritz Hommel was a prolific scholar of Semitic languages generally and had become involved in Assyriology by the late 1870s, when he published a volume on Aššurbanipal's lion-hunt inscriptions (Hommel 1879). In a series of articles in the first volume of the *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* (1890), Hommel points to a number of Hebrew Bible passages that he believes can be clarified by reference to newly discovered Mesopotamian literature. In one such contribution, he indicates the following series of texts that he believes directly reference the myth of dragon- and sea-combat:

[...] oder wenn vollends Deutero-Jesaja (51, 9 f.) zu Gott spricht “werde wach, o Arm Jahves, wie in den Tagen des Altertums, den Zeitläufen der Vorwelt! warest du es nicht, der das Seeungetüm zerhieb, den Drachen durchbohrte? warest du es nicht, der trocken legte das Meer, die Wasser des *Tehôm* (vgl. Gen. 1, 9)!” und dann weiter, mit Anspielung auf den Durchgang durchs rote Meer: “Welcher wandelte die Meerestiefen in eine Straße, daß hindurchzögen Erlösete?,” oder wenn Job. 9, 13 von den “Helfern des Seeungeheuers” (עורֵי רֶהֱב), welche sich unter dem Zorn Elôahs (arab. Ilâh, mit Artikel Allah) trümmen, die Rede ist—find das nicht unzweideutige Beweife dafür, daß ein Kampf Gottes mit dem Drachen und seinen Helfern eine schon vor dem Exil in Israel von langer Zeit her eingewurzelte Anschauung war? (Hommel 1890: 406)

Hommel (1890: 406–7) goes on to assert that Genesis 1 and Revelation 12 are both reflexes of the same tradition and suggests that this tradition was carried over from the Israelites' alleged early residence in Mesopotamia. In other words—setting aside some disagreement between the two scholars on the source of putatively Mesopotamian motifs—one has in two pages of Hommel's

article all the essential points of Gunkel's later work.³⁰ It is notable that the focus of Hommel's work is very similar to that of Gunkel in terms of both sources and questions. In brief, Hommel is concerned already with locating the combat myth in texts, particularly biblical texts, and then asking how it got there.

Unlike Hommel, Eduard Riehm, professor at Halle, was not a cuneiformist. He had nevertheless, by the early 1880s, assimilated enough of George Smith and Friedrich Delitzsch's scholarship to conceive of a huge "dictionary" of biblical terms that would explain these terms in the light of the newly available material from Mesopotamia. Riehm discusses combat myth motifs and characters most extensively under the entry "Rahab" (Riehm 1884: 1262).³¹ Notably, the entry is illustrated by two images of divine combat with winged monsters, one the famous Anzû relief from the Ninurta temple at Nimrud (BM 124571–2) and the other an alleged Babylonian cylinder seal impression.³² In this context, Rahab is explained as follows:

Das Wort ["Rahab"] bedeutet [...] auch Name eines großen Meerungeheuers, welches [...] in der Urzeit gegen Gott und seinen Schöpfungsordnung ankämpfte und von Gott samt seinen Helfern zerschmettert wurde. [...] [Es] ist wesentlich nichts anderes als das mythologische Gegenbild des wider Gottes

³⁰ For Gunkel's evaluation of Hommel's work, which he tends to engage only on individual lexemes (e.g. Gunkel 1895: 46 n. 3 on 𐎠𐎫𐎧 and 264 n. 3 [cont.] on "Armageddon"), see below.

³¹ Cf. Riehm 1894: 904–6, s.v. "Leviathan," where the author discusses combat with this creature but does not spend substantial time on alleged Mesopotamian parallels.

³² Riehm (1884: 1262a) labels this merely "Bels Kampf mit dem Drachen" and does not discuss it any further. His source for this image is presumably the identical drawing in Smith 1876: 95, which Smith labels "Bel encountering the Dragon; from Babylonian cylinder." Given the (apparently first) publication of this drawing by Smith, one might expect for this to be a drawing from a cylinder seal in the British Museum, but I have been unable to locate this exact seal. Mesopotamian cylinder seals that depict combat between a deity and a monster are incredibly common, and precise identification of the present item is complicated by the impressionistic manner of the drawing. Some types of first-millennium cylinder seals depicting divine combat are thoroughly explored in Chapter 3.

Schöpfungsordnung anstürmenden Meeres (s. Meer), dasselbe als chaotisches Urmeer gedacht. In den altbabylonischen Sagen begegnen wir ihm unter dem Namen Tiamat.

Riehm then describes *Enūma eliš* as translated and described by Smith and Friedrich Delitzsch. Significantly, he does not attempt to explain the correspondences he believes he has uncovered. Riehm presents his readers with biblical and Mesopotamian parallel texts, coupled with stimulating illustrations, and then leaves the field open. Unlike in Gunkel's work, there is no dogmatism on susceptibility to myth, on monotheism, or (implicitly) on the proper object of comparative ancient Near Eastern study. While some might argue that such a scholarly attitude is aimless or unhelpful, there is with Riehm less danger of falling into repetitive scholarly questions and source biases.

There are more predecessors to note, however, beyond those scholars that Gunkel explicitly acknowledged as his forebears. As a few scholars have noticed,³³ Gunkel's brief acknowledgment of older combat myth scholarship does not come close to conveying the extent to which his major hypotheses were observable and even well-known in scholarship going back almost two decades. Some of Gunkel's central points struck certain reviewers of his book as sounding, in fact, very familiar. Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1895: 258), at the time the Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford, writes:

³³ For example, Cheyne (1895) is cited by Lambert (1965: 287–88), who writes that “Our own Cheyne, in the year in which this book [Gunkel 1895] appeared, took the author to task in the *Critical Review* for not acknowledging that as far back as 1877 he himself had been advancing such views. Cheyne had in fact mentioned the battle with Tīāmat as a possible parallel to the poetic allusions [etc.],” but with no citation of Cheyne's work other than the review mentioned. Similarly Machinist (2006: xvii) cites Lambert himself as drawing “attention to two others who anticipated some of Gunkel's work, T. K. Cheyne and G. A. Barton.” For other mentions of Barton in recent combat myth scholarship, see n. 43, below.

It can only be the inadequacy of German libraries, and the seclusion of German students, which have led Professor Gunkel to ignore the fact that I have been his chief predecessor [...] I will mention that, from 1877 onwards, in a succession of works, I have anticipated much of Professor Gunkel's exegetical evidence for the dragon and ocean-myths, and traced some of the outlines of a sketch of the relations of Israel to the mythologies and religions of other nations. [...] in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [...] my article "Cosmogony" deals with one of Professor Gunkel's most striking ideas—viz., that the Hebrew cosmogony, together with works of pronounced supernaturalism, contains mythic elements of a very archaic type.³⁴

All this could be dismissed as a mature scholar disparaging a junior colleague as insufficiently conversant with what the former regarded as essential scholarship.³⁵ The fact that Cheyne defends himself could also make one suspicious that he is over-representing his precedence in the interests of self-promotion.

But when one turns to Cheyne's work, one does find substantial anticipation of most if not all of Gunkel's major theses. As Cheyne himself notes, most of this work dates to the 1880s in various commentaries on the relevant books of the Bible, especially Isaiah and Job.³⁶ Multiple

³⁴ Cheyne gives similar and additional criticism elsewhere, e.g. in Cheyne 1897a: 134, "Before Gunkel wrote, it had been proved that there was a great revival of mythological interest in the Babylonian and Persian period [...] To Gunkel's work I have done full justice in the *Critical Review* and elsewhere, but I have not disguised its faults." And yet cf. Cheyne 1897b: 580, "I conclude with a recommendation of Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos* as a work which, with all its faults both of omission and of commission [...] is yet very useful alike for archaeological and for textual criticism."

³⁵ As mentioned above, Cheyne's dates are 1841–1915 and Gunkel's are 1862–1932.

³⁶ In Cheyne's earliest work on Isaiah, there was no hint of this thesis, e.g. his comment on Isa 27.1 that Leviathan "is the constant symbol of Egypt [...] The two Leviathans are evidently kindred or neighbouring nations, probably Assyria and Babylonia, both mentioned in vv. 12 and 13" (Cheyne 1870: 130–31). Cheyne here follows the allegorizing principle common in biblical interpretation of the nineteenth century C.E., i.e. the assumption that behind the surface imagery of the text lay the political and theological views of historical prophets.

editions of Cheyne’s commentary on Isaiah present the matter somewhat differently each time, a clear reflection of his developing thought on the subject. The first two editions of this work (Cheyne 1880–81: 151–52; 1882: 155–56) discuss Leviathan as a mythological entity. It is only in the third edition (Cheyne 1884a: 158–59), however, that Cheyne first asserts that “[i]t is impossible to help comparing the fourth tablet of the Babylonian creation-story” to the biblical account; he proceeds to present a list of passages in which the dragon and/or the sea are enemies of Yahweh.³⁷ A short chapter in his 1887 commentary on Job discusses at greatest length the poet’s “argument [for god] from the use of mythology”:

[T]he semi-mythological allusions to supernatural beings who had once been in conflict with Jehovah (xxi. 22, xxv. 2), and the cognate references to the dangerous cloud-dragon (see below) ought not to be overlooked. Both in Egypt and in Assyria and Babylonia, we find these very myths in a fully developed form. The ‘leviathan’ of iii. 8, the dragon probably of vii. 12 (*tannīn*) and certainly of xxvi. 13 (*nākhāsh*), and the ‘rahab’ of ix. 13, xxvi. 12, remind us of the evil serpent Apap, whose struggle with the sun-god Ra is described in chap. xxxix. of the Book of the Dead and elsewhere. [...] An equally close parallel is furnished by the fourth tablet of the Babylonian creation-story, which describes the struggle between the god Marduk

³⁷ Contra Cheyne (1895: 295), one finds no similar reflection in his contemporary work on the Psalms, which constituted—at least in the monographic realm—a semi-popular translation with minimal commentary (Cheyne 1884b), a volume with slightly more extensive commentary (Cheyne 1888), and the published version of his 1889 Bampton lectures on the “Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter” (Cheyne 1891). In these three books, Cheyne at no point connects Leviathan, Rahab, or other monsters to a combat myth, either involving or not involving creation. Instead, at the only point in which Leviathan is discussed in any detail, Cheyne opts for an uncharacteristic naturalization of the monster as “the whale, which in early times was probably not unknown in the Mediterranean,” followed by a long rumination on what “sporting with” Leviathan might involve (Cheyne 1888: 284). Rahab is briefly compared to putative “Ass. *rahābu*, ‘sea-monster,’” which does not exist; Rahab is, however, then opined to be merely “a symbolic name for Egypt” in Ps 87.4 (Cheyne 1888: 242).

(Merodach) and the dragon Tiamat or Tiamtu (a fem. corresponding to the Heb. masc. form *t'hom* 'the deep'). (Cheyne 1887: 76–77)

Immediately before this, Cheyne had claimed that by describing these figures and Yahweh's battles with them, the poet demonstrates "a willingness to appropriate mythic forms of expression from heathendom" (ibid.: 76). Only two pages later, though, he asserts that it is "*not* [my emphasis] necessary to assume that the authors of these books [Job and Isaiah] borrowed either from Egypt or from Bayblonia. They drew from the unexhausted store of Jewish popular beliefs" (ibid.: 78). Insofar as "heathendom" might represent, for Cheyne, not an external threat but rather a pervasive unbelief even among potentially backsliding Israelites, this is not necessarily a contradiction. But it is nevertheless easy to see how other scholars might desire more clarity and precision on the source of the biblical authors' mythologies.

Cheyne (1895: 258–59) represents his own thinking on this subject to have begun already by 1877, but the outlines of the combat myth hypothesis are less clear in the two publications to which he points, a *Theological Review* article on Jonah (Cheyne 1877a) and his contribution to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on "Cosmogony" (Cheyne 1877b). In the former, he correctly observes both the pervasiveness of the "myth of the sea-monster" in various biblical passages and the parallel "in the early Babylonian mythology [...] under the name of Tiamtu (i.e. the sea, especially the heavenly sea, like the Hebrew *t'hōm*)" (Cheyne 1877a: 215–16). He does not note, however, the extent to which Yahweh is depicted as actually combatting the dragon and sea, nor does he show that this combat was fundamental for the act of creation. The emphasis is reversed in the article on cosmogony. There, Cheyne does note similarities between the recently published *Enūma eliš* fragments and Genesis 1 (Cheyne 1877b: 395a) but does not connect the latter narrative with combat myth allusions elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. He is thus perhaps

correct to claim that he was “moving in advance of contemporary German exegetes” (Cheyne 1895: 259) in the 1870s, but he had not yet conceived the total combat-plus-creation pattern that he and several others would observe in the 1880s and early 1890s.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Canadian scholar George A. Barton (1859–1942) had earned a Ph.D. at Harvard University and begun teaching in ancient history and Semitic languages at Bryn Mawr College in 1891. One of Barton’s first articles, a version of which he presented at the 1890 meeting of the American Oriental Society in Boston (May 7, 1890),³⁸ was a lengthy study titled simply “Tiamat” (Barton 1893). After presenting lengthy extracts from the then-published passages of *Enūma eliš*, Barton suggested that these witnessed two basic conceptions of Tiamat’s character, one in which she “represents the waters, the universal sea” and another in which she is “a horrible dragon with a griffin’s head, with wings, four feet, claws, and a scaly tail, and sometimes as a serpent” (Barton 1893: 14). Barton’s heterogeneous description is based not on the text of *Enūma eliš* itself—which is notoriously laconic on the physical attributes of Tiamat—but rather on early Assyriological assumptions that several diverse monsters represented in visual art sources as opposing storm and warrior deities were all to be identified with Tiamat.³⁹ These assumptions were erroneous, but the focus on visual art is very different from what one finds in

³⁸ The proceedings of this meeting, published in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 15 (1893): i–xxxiv include the abstract of Barton’s communication (on pp. xiii–xv), from which the following is extracted: “From a careful comparison of the Cosmogonies of the Creation Tablets and Genesis, we conclude that they are probably from the same source [...] In comparing the Old Testament references to Rahab and Leviathan, we are led to the conclusion that Tiamat is probably the being referred to under these names. And finally, from a comparison of Tiamat with the ‘dragon’ and ‘beast’ of the New Testament Apocalypse, it would seem that the Assyrian dragon, modified by some centuries of traditional and literary use among the Hebrews, furnished the material for the Apocalyptic imagery” (ibid.: xv).

³⁹ The most notable (mis-)identification in this early period of scholarship was the insistence that the Anzû monster pictured in the Nimrud Ninurta Temple relief BM 124572 (mentioned above) was in fact Tiamat opposite Marduk. For more details on that relief, see Chapter 4.

Gunkel's work. Had Barton been hailed as the founder of Combat Myth Studies, such lines of inquiry might have received greater emphasis in subsequent scholarship.

Barton's explanation for the alleged co-occurrence of divergent anatomical conceptions in *Enūma eliš* is tinged, however, with social Darwinism, Eurocentrism, and even anti-Semitism. Identifying the splitting of the "monstrous female" as "savage," Barton immediately concludes "the primitive Babylonian, or perhaps the savage Semite, before he had reached the stage of scientific thought, thus explained to himself the origin of the universe" (ibid.: 14–15). The watery manifestation of Tiamat, on the other hand, was held to be more scientific in that it was supposedly based on meteorological observations (ibid.: 15). This, though, was all prelude to Barton's main point, namely that in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and contemporary Jewish and Christian literature, there existed "traces of these or similar ideas" (ibid.: 17). Barton points to the various divine divisions as echoes of Marduk's splitting of Tiamat and the name מְהַיָּהוּ itself (ibid.: 17–18). In inquiring how these and other commonalities arose, Barton follows a line of thought that sounds strikingly Gunkelian:

Abraham is said to have been a native of Babylonia, and the Hebrew had a deeply rooted consciousness that their ancestors came from that land. In addition to this, the Tel el Amarnah [sic] tablets show that in the 17th (or, according to others, the 15th)^[40] century B. C. the Babylonian language, and we may perhaps infer Babylonian ideas, were well known in Palestine, and even in Egypt. Again, the

⁴⁰ The correct date of the Amarna letters is of course the mid- to late fourteenth century B.C.E., since these represent the international correspondence of the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs Amenhotep III (r. 1388/86–51/49) and Akenaten (r. 1351/49–36/34). The solidification of both this assignation and ancient Egyptian chronology were nevertheless some decades in the future at the time of Barton's writing, and the letters themselves had only just been discovered (1887) and published in hand copies (the Berlin and Cairo collections in Winckler and Abel 1889–90) and autotype facsimiles (the British Museum collection in Bezold and Budge 1892). Winckler's (1896) comprehensive translation was still a few years in the future, and Knudtzon's (1915) authoritative edition even farther off.

Jews spent their exile in Babylon, and there modified many of their ideas. The reasonable conclusion, therefore, is that Jewish ideas of cosmogony, whenever Genesis may have been written, came from Babylonia. The differences in these cosmogonies preclude the supposition that the Jews first received such ideas as late as the exilian [sic] period. It seems rather that they got them not later than the date of the Tel el Amarnah tablets, and that, as the conceptions of monotheism became more distinct among the Hebrews, their cosmogony took its present form, and developed those points of difference with the Babylonian which we have already noted, and which lift it far above the latter. (Barton 1893: 19)

Unlike their source foci, the very question of dating and influence and even the logic supporting an early date for the adoption of Mesopotamian mythology into Levantine thought is quite similar in both Barton and Gunkel: the myth has undergone substantial modification in its biblical guise and must therefore be to some degree separated from its ultimate source and sufficiently acculturated to assist its assimilation.

After an unconvincing discussion of the serpent narrative in Genesis 3, Barton proceeds to list and briefly analyze other Hebrew Bible passages in the books of Isaiah, Psalms, and Job⁴¹ as reflective of dragon-combat mythology (Barton 1893: 22–24). He again finds sufficient commonalities between these figures and Tiamat to conclude that “there can remain little doubt that the origin of Rahab and leviathan [sic] is to be found in that of Tiamat” (ibid.: 25). Finally, like Hommel before him and Gunkel after him, Barton compares the narratives thus far analyzed with various passages in Revelation—including Revelation 12—and concludes that this monster is likewise derived from Babylonian mythology (ibid.: 27). In other words, both the first and the last of Gunkel’s later conclusions are already present in substantial detail.

⁴¹ The passages discussed are Isa 27:1; 30:7; 51:9; Ps 40:4; 74:13–17; 87:4; 89:10; 90:10; 104:25–26; Job 3:8; 26:12–13; 41, all of which mention Leviathan and/or Rahab.

Like Cheyne, Barton (1898: 781) would later note Gunkel's reliance on his own contributions, but he was unambiguously approbatory in his evaluation of the latter's work:

In the early part of the year 1895 the criticism of the Apocalypse was enriched by two most important contributions. These were Gunkel's *Schöpfung and Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* and Briggs' *Messiah of the Apostles*. The former of these works takes up the theme of an early essay of the present writer, the Tiamat myth or Babylonian creation epic, and, following in the footsteps of that essay, but with a thoroughness never before manifested in the treatment of the subject, traces its influence through the Old and New Testaments. [... on Rev in particular] Though he was not the first to see its connection with Babylonian influence, the treatment which he accords the subject forms a new departure in apocalyptic criticism.

It is of course true that Gunkel developed this New Testament aspect of Barton's work far beyond the attention given to it in Barton's earlier publication.⁴² It is nevertheless odd that, while Gunkel demonstrably knows Barton's publication, he generally cites it only on minor points and, when he does once admit to it as a conceptual predecessor, disparages it in rather uncollegial fashion:

In Hommels und Bartons genannten Aufsätzen sind bedeutende Gedanken und krause Einfälle so gemischt, dass es begreiflich wird, wenn die alttestamentliche Forschung auf solche Aufstellungen bisher keine Rücksicht genommen hat. Der Dank des Theologen an den Assyriologen würde ohne Zweifel noch grösser sein,

⁴² One can contrast the two pages in Barton 1893: 26–27 with the over two hundred pages accorded to this theme in Gunkel 1895: 171–398. Of course, a longer analysis is not necessarily a better analysis. One may be reminded of Callimachus's (Alexandria, ca. 310–240 B.C.E.) verses in his *Aetia* (ed. Gelzer 1975) against the (possibly fictional) Telchines. These supposedly believed, among other things, that they could judge poetry by length (recent discussion in Klooster 2011: 131–32). While Gunkel does go into much greater depth on both the individual verses and social and political context of the Revelation version of the dragon myth, the notion that profit might be gained by comparing this with Mesopotamian sources is hardly unique or original to him.

wenn der Assyriologe regelmässig die Praxis befolgte, Vermutungen, die sich auf das AT beziehen d[.]h[.] ausserhalb seiner Specialwissneschaft liegen, zuerst den Fachleuten und dann erst einem grössern Publikum vorzutragen. (Gunkel 1895: 30 n. 1)

Regrettably, which “Einfälle” are particularly “krause” are not specified in Gunkel’s broadside, but the practical effect of this oratory is that he need not express much indebtedness to his Canadian contemporary. I find no higher proportion of muddled notions in Barton’s work (and in Hommel’s work) than I find in Gunkel’s own monograph. This does not change the fact that the format of the latter’s contribution—as a book rather than an article—and the assertiveness of his rhetoric have resulted in Gunkel being hailed as the father of Combat Myth Studies, while Barton is all but forgotten.⁴³ As with the forgetting of Riehm and Cheyne, this has had substantial impact on the types of questions that are asked and putatively answered in combat myth scholarship.

⁴³ The following examples are taken from the most recent set of combat myth monographs. Of these, Ayali-Darshan (2016: 2) gives Barton equal billing alongside Gunkel: “ברטון וגונקל הם שכתבו לראשונה על הקשרים שבין אַנְמָה” “אלש לבין הכתובים המקראיים המתארים את מלחמתו של אלוהי ישראל בים” Lambert (2013: 460 n. 42) similarly, though not strictly accurately writes that “Attention was first drawn to the mythological relevance of these [biblical] passages by G. A. Barton [...] a theme taken up and developed by H. Gunkel.” Ballentine (2015) does not mention Barton at all, and it is asserted that “[s]cholarship on the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible began with Gunkel’s *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* in 1895” (Ballentine 2015: 16). R. D. Miller (2018: 131 n. 54) strangely cites the summary of Barton’s American Oriental Society presentation (see n. 38, above) solely for the fact that Tiamat “does appear as a dragon as Berossus’s Thalattē”; Gunkel is acknowledged to have “buil[t] on the work of others” in “demonstrat[ing] dependence of the so-called Priestly Writer of Gen 1 upon *Enuma Elish*” (R. D. Miller 2018: 200), but the fact that these others are not acknowledged in any way has the effect of silencing them and re-inscribing Gunkel’s paternal status. Töyräänvuori (2016a) mentions Barton only as having worked on the Ugaritic *Ba’lu* epic, which he indeed did (e.g. Barton 1932; 1935); references to Barton appear to have been eliminated from the published version of Töyräänvuori’s thesis (eadem 2018). Gunkel, meanwhile, is praised as having produced a “paradigm-shifting tome” (Töyräänvuori 2018: 9, with Assyriological portions of the work incorrectly attributed to “W. Zimmerli” rather than Heinrich Zimmern).

I do not mean by the present discussion to advocate that one accord some exclusive privilege to the originator or originators of a given hypothesis. I intend, rather, to draw attention to one example of the ways in which contemporary genealogizing of scholarship produces the mirage of academic geniuses laboring in isolation and creating revolutionary knowledge *ex nihilo*. In the present case, this overall issue is coupled with a one-sided focus on isolated mythological texts and the questions most commonly asked of them. Greater attention can always be paid to the ways in which texts and their authors are participants in broader conversations, the roots of which are only occasionally visible in print. Observations of this sort can also inform the ways in which one addresses ancient texts, for example by seeing them as moving parts interacting in a complex social matrix. These texts are always dependent on conversation partners seen and unseen and are not simply the products of univocal composition and unilateral transmission.

1.2 The Genealogical Approach in Combat Myth Studies

1.2.1 Panbabylonian and Panamorite Hypotheses

As briefly mentioned in the introduction to the present chapter, the genealogical approach is that taken by studies when they seek to clarify relationships of interdependency among textualized narratives of divine combat. The conclusions reached by such studies are extraordinarily heterogeneous and often carry substantial nuances that distinguish individual hypotheses only slightly from conceptually adjacent positions. Just a selection of the scholarly work containing a genealogical approach to narratives of divine combat are surveyed below, but the present section illustrates predominant trends through engagement of relevant work by the more influential voices in the field.

The previous section illustrates that the attempt to deduce ancient trajectories of influence among combat myths was already a central concern in the era of Cheyne, Riehm, Barton, Gunkel, and others. This question became, however, the topic of particular focus and debate in the period immediately subsequent to Gunkel's influential publication. The core hypothesis of a group of young Assyriologists from around 1880–1910 was that not only the combat myth but all significant ideas in religion, law, astronomy, mathematics, and more could be traced to the “Babylonians,” by which was generally meant the Old Babylonian empire of Hammurabi and his dynasty. This school came to be known, especially among its detractors, as “Panbabylonianism.” The leader of the group in both outlook and publication was the Assyriologist Hugo Winckler (1863–1913), student of Eberhard Schrader (1836–1908) and, during the 1900s, professor at Berlin.⁴⁴ But most will now more easily recognize the name of his contemporary, Friedrich Delitzsch (1850–1922)—son of the Biblicist and Lutheran theologian Franz Delitzsch (1813–90)—who brought the hypothesis of universal Babylonian origins to public attention and the academic forefront.⁴⁵ In three lectures,

⁴⁴ As discussed briefly by Marchand (2009: 236–37) and at greater length by Lehmann (1994: 153–61) and Johanning (1988: 265–81), other members of this loose confederation included Felix Peiser (1862–1921), in the 1900s Privatdozent and later Professor at Königsberg and founder and editor of the *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*; Peter Jensen (1861–1936), successor to Julius Wellhausen as Professor at Marburg; Alfred Jeremias (1864–1935), a German pastor and later (from 1922) Professor at Leipzig; Eduard Stucken (1865–1936), a writer and early Nazi sympathizer. Fritz Hommel (1854–1936), Professor at Munich, Heinrich Zimmern (1862–1931), Professor at Leipzig, and Bruno Meissner (1868–1947), Professor at Breslau and later Berlin, were of this German Assyriological generation but demonstrated less enthusiasm for Panbabylonianism.

⁴⁵ There are two substantial retrospective monographs on the “Bible-Babel Streit”: Lehmann 1994 and Johanning 1988. Both are excellent sources for the relevant publications, the personalities involved, and the more general academic and political context, and I engage them repeatedly below. There is also a lengthy consideration of this period and focus in Marchand's (2009: 212–51) volume on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German orientalism. Arnold and Weisberg 2002 and Larsen 1995 are short and accessible considerations of the conflict. The latter focuses on Delitzsch's German nationalism and anti-Semitism (for which see also below). Shavit (2003) discusses Jewish responses to the lectures and resultant publication storm.

delivered between 1902 and 1904 and to which he gave the title *Babel und Bibel*, Delitzsch laid out a program for interpreting the Hebrew Bible as built on Mesopotamian foundations.⁴⁶ In doing so, Delitzsch spent substantial time and space on the combat myth and repeated what was by then increasingly common wisdom: descriptions of divine combat against the primeval sea and/or the dragon were now known from Mesopotamia and shed crucial light on a series of biblical narratives and allusions. In Delitzsch's first lecture, he summarized the results of nineteenth-century combat myth studies and emphasized the Babylon-to-Levant directionality of narrative influence:

Furthermore, two contributions to the recent volume Scurlock and Beal 2013, namely Lundström 2013 and Tugendhaft 2013, analyze Gunkel's contributions to combat myth studies in the context of the Bible-Babel conflict. The former does so at greater length and treats Gunkel (esp. Gunkel 1903) as a theological stalwart in the face of Friedrich Delitzsch's popularizing and anti-Semitic biblical Assyriology. Tugendhaft only briefly considers the Bible-Babel conflict before turning what is for him a more significant observation, that the reorientation of Combat Myth Studies to incorporate Ugaritic studies has not resulted in some "'Babel-Baal Streit' akin to the *Babel-Bibel Streit* of a century ago" (Tugendhaft 2013: 193). He regards this as "understandable [because t]he idea that the biblical texts reflect prebiblical traditions has, of course, become more palatable over the years" (ibid.). As will be shown below, however, there has in fact continued to be significant backlash from those who regard the Hebrew Bible combat myth (or lack thereof) to be significantly distinct from *both* the Mesopotamian and Ugaritic materials to merit consideration in a separate category. This separation is often framed in theological terms. Similarly, the reaction to Amorite hypotheses, including that of Jacobsen 1968 (see below), has hardly been so eirenic as is represented by Tugendhaft. In his more recent monograph, Tugendhaft (2018: 63) does not make similar claims in the context of his even briefer discussion of Friedrich Delitzsch.

⁴⁶ The first lecture occurred at the Sing-akademie zu Berlin on January 13, 1902 to a gathering of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft that included Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941, r. 1888–1918) (Lehmann 1994: 80; Johanning 1988: 33). The second was given in the same place and to a similar audience almost exactly a year later, on January 12, 1903 (Lehmann 1994: 173; Johanning 1988: 44). The third lecture was given on three occasions before smaller audiences, namely the literary societies of Barmen and Köln (October 27 and 28, 1904) and the Verein für Geographie und Statistik in Frankfurt (November 9, 1904; Lehmann 1994: 251; Johanning 1988: 58). These lectures were published in three volumes as Delitzsch 1902; 1903; and 1905. They were translated into English as they appeared, but a comprehensive volume covering all three lectures is most accessibly published as Delitzsch 1906. For more details on these and other published editions of Delitzsch's lectures, the discussions and bibliographies of Lehmann (1994: 80–91 [first lecture], 173–85 [second lecture], 250–56 [third lecture], 378–408 [comprehensive bibliography]) are indispensable resources.

Da Marduk der Stadtgott von Babel gewesen, so begreift sich leicht, dass gerade diese Erzählung in Kanaan weiteste Verbreitung gefunden. Ja, die alttestamentlichen Dichter und Propheten gingen sogar soweit, dass sie Marduks Heidenthat unmittelbar auf Jahve übertrugen und diesen nun feierten als den, welcher in der Urzeit die Häupter des Meerungetüms zerschmettert (Ps. 74, 13 f.[:] 89, 11), als den, unter welchem zusammenbrachen die Helfeshelfer der Drachen (Iob 9,13). (Delitzsch 1902: 33–34)

Delitzsch goes on to point to other allusions to the combat myth in Isa 51:9 and Job 26:12 (ibid.: 34). As can be seen from the above, all of these are attributed to western Semites having appropriated the deeds of Marduk for their own god, Yahweh. In line with a common theme of Panbabylonianist writing, Delitzsch scorns the Israelites and especially the author of Genesis 1 for relying on external myths. According to him, they did not even have the decency to adequately disguise their narrative theft:

Der priesterliche Gelehrte freilich, welcher Genesis cap. I verfasste, war ängstlich darauf bedacht, alle mythologischen Züge aus dieser Weltschöpfungserzählung zu entfernen. Da aber das finstere wässerige Chaos mit ganz dem gleichen Namen Tehōm (das ist Tiāmat) vorausgesetzt [...] so ist der allerengste Zusammenhang zwischen der biblischen und babylonischen Weltschöpfungserzählung klar und zugleich einleuchtend. (Delitzsch 1902: 34–35)

Delitzsch's inclusion of the combat myth among motifs and narratives transmitted from Mesopotamia to the Levant is brief. But by this very incorporation into what was fast becoming a

flashpoint of public and scholarly debate, the combat myth rose to prominence as one of the canonical parallels between Babel and Bible.⁴⁷

As is well known, within the context of Delitzsch's lectures and broader scholarship, these parallels were put to highly tendentious and even insidious purposes. Arnold and Weisberg (2002: 446–51; see also Lehmann 1994: 93) have shown that Delitzsch was very poorly disposed towards the pilfering western Semites and their derivative literature.⁴⁸ Several scholars, perhaps most prominently the Jewish-French scholar Joseph Halévy,⁴⁹ were vocal in calling attention to this bias even at the time of Delitzsch's presentations and publications, but Delitzsch's racism became, if anything, more blatant as the decade progressed.⁵⁰ An eventual result was that he sank to being a

⁴⁷ This is illustrated by responses to Delitzsch and other Panbabylonianists that contained consideration of combat myth hypotheses, for which a sampling is given below.

⁴⁸ Delitzsch everywhere speaks more highly of Mesopotamian literature than of its putative Levantine offspring, e.g. at idem 1902: 29, "Ist es da Wunder zu nehmen, wenn eine ganze Reihe biblischer Erzählungen jetzt auf einmal in reinerer und ursprünglicherer Form aus der Nacht der babylonischen Schatzhügel ans Licht treten?"

⁴⁹ Halévy's (1902) response to the first *Babel-Bibel* lecture was translated and printed among responses to Delitzsch's first lecture in Delitzsch 1906: 130–31. To be sure, Halévy stops short of a direct condemnation of the German scholar but does call attention to the racially tinged rhetoric: "la sincérité m'oblige à signaler les affirmations maladroites, inutiles ou peu exactes qui déparent cette belle conférence [...] Faire de l'épouse de Sardanapal, dont on n'a qu'un ancien croquis rapide, une princesse de sang aryen et de teint blond, qualifier le juif converti Jean Astruc de 'croyant rigoureux' (*Strenggläubige*, p. 32) [...] c'est vouloir être par trop habile" (Halévy 1902: 186). For the identification of "Sardanapalus's" (see above) consort as Aryan, see Delitzsch 1902: 19–20, "augenscheinlich ist diese Gemahlin Sardanapals eine Prinzessin arischen Geblüts und blondhaarig zu denken."

⁵⁰ As Arnold and Weisberg (2002: 446–50) and Johanning (1988: 76–84) discuss in some detail, Delitzsch would give full vent to these prejudices in his *Die Große Täuschung* (1920–21). These volumes asserted the immorality and historical inaccuracy of the Hebrew Bible and claimed that Jesus of Nazareth, by virtue of his descent from alleged Aryans occupying Galilee, was not only a non-Jew but an anti-Jew. There is substantial foreshadowing of this hypothesis already in Delitzsch's third "Babel-Bibel" lecture, but Delitzsch emphasized at this date more the Babylonian than the non-Semitic aspects of the Galilean population, e.g. "Der Grundstock dieses Mischvolkes war und blieb in dem Grade babylonisch, dass der Talmud an zahlreichen Stellen die Samariter geradezu nach der babylonischen Stadt Kutha Kuthäer nennt, und dass die galiläische Mundart mit ihrer spezifisch babylonischen Verschleifung der Kehllaute noch zu Jesu Zeit sofort den Galiläer verriet [...] Gar manches in den Anschauungen,

major proponent of the abhorrent anti-Semitism that would, in the early twentieth century, come to dominate German academia and politics.⁵¹

Responses to Delitzsch's work nevertheless generally focused less on his anti-Semitism and more on his academic hypotheses.⁵² While several quarters offered praise to the German scholar for having brought the results of critical biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholarship to a broader audience, most replies to his work criticized it in diverse ways; Delitzsch's scholarship was alleged to be inaccurate, overly general, insufficiently researched, and more.⁵³ In this discourse, narratives of divine combat were occasionally discussed, and most of this discussion occurred in German lectures and publications. Samuel Oettli (1846–1911)⁵⁴ was among those who traced Delitzsch's connections between the biblical and Mesopotamian literary combat myths back to Gunkel and his cuneiform sources. He represents himself as in full agreement with Gunkel and Delitzsch on these points. After a brief recapitulation of *Enūma eliš*, Oettli represents the emerging orthodoxy in emphatic prose:

Aussprüchen und Taten Jesu, des Galiläers, drängt unwillkürlich zu babylonischen Vergleichen" (Delitzsch 1905: 11). Both Marchand (2009: 248) and Lehmann (1994: 35–37) discuss this work by comparison with the *Babel-Bibel* lectures and in the context of Delitzsch's growing anti-Semitism.

⁵¹ Lundström 2013: 156–57; Marchand 2009: 248–49; Arnold and Weisberg 2002: 446–50; Larsen 1995: 104; Lehmann 1994: 242.

⁵² For one exception, see Halévy 1902—cited in n. 49, above—but even this author did not devote substantial space to the question of Delitzsch's anti-Semitism.

⁵³ Some such responses are cited and considered in Marchand 2009: 244–47, but Lehmann's (1994: e.g. 109–23) collection of responses to Delitzsch's lectures remains unparalleled in its coverage.

⁵⁴ Oettli was a student of Heinrich Ewald and professor of Old Testament in Bern (1878–95) and Greifswald (1895–1911). Lehmann (1994: 133 n. 24) gives a very brief biography with the crucial dates and references. Johanning (1988: 130–36) discusses Oettli and his response in somewhat more detail among "conservative" reactions to Delitzsch's lectures.

[I]n der prophetischen und poetischen Litteratur des Alten Testaments finden sich noch genug Anspielungen, aus denen zum Greifen deutlich hervorgeht, dass der alte Mythos im Volksbewusstsein Israels, und zwar in sehr farbiger Gestalt, fortlebte [...] so gibt es doch in der Tat genug Fälle, wo die ursprünglich mythische Bedeutung der Ungeheuer tehôm, livjatân, tannin, rahab unverkennbar durchleuchtet, wenn sie auch den biblischen Schriftstellern keine religiös wichtigen, sondern mehr nur poetische Grössen geworden sind. (Oettli 1903: 11)

Oettli proceeds to cite what were by then fast becoming the *loci classici* for biblical narratives of divine combat, including Isa 51:9 and Job 9:13, even as he admits that Gunkel may have been misled by his enthusiasm to identify divine combat motifs in unlikely places (*ibid.*). While Oettli is not completely certain that there occurred a “direkte Entlehnung” (*ibid.*: 15) of divine combat narratives from Mesopotamia to the Levant, he will not rule it out given that—as Barton (1893: 19) was already cited above as noting—the Amarna letters attest to a thoroughgoing Mesopotamian and cuneiform influence in the Levant already in the Late Bronze Age (Oettli 1903: 15).⁵⁵

Others were not so easily convinced by Gunkel and Delitzsch. Eduard König (1846–1936) had been a student with Friedrich Delitzsch at Leipzig in the 1870s and taught there, at Rostock, and at Bonn in the succeeding decades (Lehmann 1994: 142).⁵⁶ In his early response to his colleague’s famous first lecture, König (1902) took Delitzsch to task not only for his selective

⁵⁵ This was a popular observation, made also by Delitzsch (1902: 27–28) himself.

⁵⁶ Both Lehmann (1994: 143–52) and Johanning (1988: 90–104) discuss König’s role in the *Bibel-Babel Streit* and cast him as a conservative opponent to Delitzsch. Johanning (1988: 90) notes that König’s popularity as a German public theologian was at its height during the first decade of the twentieth century, so that he was in a particularly good position to oppose the renegade Assyriologist.

citations from cuneiform literature but, more seriously, for what he believed was an unwarranted emphasis on commonalities over against disparities:

Denn [...] nicht das, was Israels Kultur mit der seiner Verwandten oder nachbarn gemeinsam hatte, macht den Charakter seiner Kulturstufe aus. Der Platz, den Israel in der Kulturgeschichte einnimmt, wird vielmehr durch das bestimmt, was sein eigenartiger Besitz gewesen ist. (König 1902: 34)

This opinion colored the whole of König's work, and he attempted to draw particular attention to the ways in which Delitzsch's allegedly unfounded equivalences had contaminated his treatment of Genesis 1 (ibid.: 34–37). In subsequent editions of this work, he would also dispute followers of Delitzsch directly, e.g. Oettli on Rahab in Isa 51:9. Oettli, König argued, had erred by understanding Rahab as having ever been imagined by anyone to be a primeval monster. Rather, Rahab was nothing more than a symbolic stand-in for Egypt and its Pharaoh, as could be seen by comparing Isa 51:9 with passages in which Yahweh effects great deeds on behalf of his people but against these foreign enemies (König 1903: 30). In König one has, in other words, a return to earlier allegorizing hypotheses.

It is interesting to consider the response of Gunkel to the popularization of his ideas by Delitzsch. Gunkel's thoughts on the *Bibel-Babel Streit* were published as *Israel und Babylonien. Der Einfluss Babyloniens auf die israelitische Religion* (1903). From the beginning of the text, Gunkel disparages Delitzsch's work as slapdash and parasitical. The point of criticizing the Assyriologist's lack of originality is soon made clear: not only was Delitzsch a latecomer to the scholarly conversation, but he had from this position misrepresented its assured results to an unsuspecting public. Gunkel avers that no other scholar—and certainly not Gunkel himself—could agree with Delitzsch that, for example, Genesis 1 was simply modeled on *Enūma eliš*:

Wer diesen babylonischen Urmythus mit 1. Mose 1 vergleicht, wird zunächst kaum etwas anderes wahrnehmen, als den unendlichen Abstand zwischen beiden: dort die heidnischen Götter, in wildem Kampf gegen einander entbrannt, hier der *Eine* [emphasis original], der spricht und es geschieht. Trotzdem gibt es gewisse Spuren, die uns wahrscheinlich machen, dass dem biblischen Bericht der babylonische zu grunde liegt, wenn beide auch durch einen sehr langen Zeitraum geschieden sein müssen. Der hebräische Bericht hat gewisse Reste, die uns zeigen, dass er einst mythologischer gewesen sein muss. [...] Dass aber die Erzählung vom Kampf des Lichtgottes gegen die Wasser der Urzeit und gegen das wilde Ungetüm auch in Kanaan bekannt gewesen ist, das lehren gewisse Anspielungen bei Propheten, Dichtern, Apokalyptikern, wo dieser Kampf auf Jahve übertragen worden ist. Solche Anspielungen sind in diesem Zusammenhang deshalb wertvoll, weil sie die Zwischenglieder zwischen dem grotesken babylonischen Urmythus und dem späthebräischen Bericht 1. Mose 1 darstellen. Auch für 1. Mose 1 können wir also, was den Stoff betrifft, eine Abhängigkeit vom Babylonischen annehmen; aber wiederum überwiegt das Originelle in 1. Mose 1 bei weitem das Übernommene. Also auch diese Annahme dient nur dazu, die eigentümliche Hoheit der Religion Israels zu zeigen. (Gunkel 1903: 23–24)

It is not hard to see how one might purposefully or accidentally misrepresent this position, since Gunkel seems at turns to join and to separate the narratives under consideration. On the one hand, the distinctions between Genesis 1 and *Enūma eliš* are claimed to be too substantial to posit simplistic equivalence, and the modifications made to the combat myth by the Priestly author of Genesis 1 are so radical as to create from heathen matter “die eigentümliche Hoheit der Religion Israels” (Gunkel 1903: 24). On the other hand, Gunkel still regards both Genesis 1 and, even more strongly, the various other biblical allusions to the combat myth as “probably” (“wahrscheinlich”) reliant on Babylonian models and therefore highly similar in their motifs and themes. The clearest

distinction between the positions of Gunkel and Delitzsch is in their evaluations of the relative merits of source and borrowed narratives, and naturally this question is far less amenable to objective assessment. Gunkel is clearly of the mind that the reflex of the combat myth in Genesis 1 is its purest and therefore best form, while *Enūma eliš* is “grotesque” (“grotesk”; *ibid.*). Delitzsch’s opinion is precisely the opposite: he finds the narrative and characters to be least obscured and therefore most affecting in *Enūma eliš*, while the Hebrew Bible manifestations are diluted and feeble, hardly an adequate warrant for the worship of Yahweh.

In this disagreement, Gunkel, formerly the agitator whose mythological discoveries the pious theologians of Germany and England would excoriate, suddenly found himself repositioned as the champion of Christian orthodoxy against Delitzsch’s seeming embrace of pagan mythology.⁵⁷ As the century went on, Gunkel’s supporters against Panbabylonianism grew more vocal, and the 1910s saw a clear shift in momentum (Marchand 2009: 250). This reversal came about not only as a result of Winckler’s death in 1913 and the disturbance of German Assyriological production and publication by World War I (1914–18),⁵⁸ but also because the interwar period saw the emergence of a new focus and new sources for the general history and literature of the ancient Levant and the combat myth in particular. This new focus, namely on the Amorites, and these new sources, namely the alphabetic cuneiform tablets from Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), would soon attract much greater attention than the Babel-Bibel debate.

⁵⁷ This shift in Gunkel’s positioning has also been noted by Lundström (2013: 158–60). More on this period in Gunkel’s life and particularly his role in the Babel-Bibel debate may be found in the biographies (Hammann 2014: 139–48; Klatt 1969: 99–103).

⁵⁸ In general, this disruption appears to have been less severe than that caused by World War II and primarily affected the production of monographs and communication across national boundaries. Several German periodicals, including the *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina Vereins*, and the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, were published with almost complete regularity between 1914 and 1918.

As scholars continued to read the cuneiform inscriptions of the First Dynasty of Babylon and its contemporaries, they gradually came to realize that a number of ruling houses from this period traced their lineages to an “Amorite” group. This group was almost immediately identified with the “Amorites” of the Hebrew Bible and, more gradually, with particular archaeological assemblages, especially in the Levant. Albert T. Clay (1866–1925), Professor of Assyriology at Yale,⁵⁹ was the most vocal supporter of a historical reconstruction according to which the Amorites were much more than simply a people group that had come to political power in Mesopotamia and lingered on through the Bronze Age in the southern Levant. They were, rather, the bearers of an old and illustrious culture—identified by some proponents as “Indo-European” or even “Aryan”⁶⁰—that transmitted fundamental myths to both Mesopotamia and the Levant. Although

⁵⁹ Because Clay received his Ph.D. (1894) at the University of Pennsylvania under the instruction of, among others, Morris Jastrow (Montgomery 1925: 289–90), a direct line might be drawn in this case between explicit rejection of the Panbabylonian hypotheses (Jastrow 1914) and replacement of these with Panamorite hypotheses. The ways in which this general outlook may have been supported by Clay’s anti-Zionist and evangelical Christian positions is discussed by Long (1997: 119–21), who also documents from letters a particularly tense relationship with Albright (on whom see below).

⁶⁰ Clay was of the apparently rather consistent opinion that the Amorites were simply “Northern Semites,” *not* Indo-Europeans or Aryans of any sort (e.g. Clay 1919: 60; 1909: 152). Several scholars would nevertheless interpret Clay as espousing racial theories of various stripes, e.g. Olmstead (1919, a review of Clay 1919), “Clay has proved beyond a doubt that there was a country named Amurru, which included Syria and northwestern Mesopotamia; that there were Amorites who spoke a language akin to Hebrew and probably had a Nordic infusion.” So far as I have been able to find, the word “Nordic” appears nowhere in Clay’s work, much less the hypothesis that the Amorites were somehow “Nordic.” Interestingly, though, Clay interacts with Olmstead’s review in a later footnote (Clay 1925: 129–30) and quotes this very passage, but only to dispute the extent of his reconstructed Amorite empire, not the characterization of it as having a “Nordic infusion.” False equivalences among various poorly understood groups of “Western Asia” were peddled by many scholars, e.g. von Luschan (1911: 241) “I might be allowed to suggest that the Kurds [earlier identified as ‘Aryans’], the *Amorites* of the Bible, the *Mitanni* of the Boghaz-köi tablets, and the *Tamahu* of the old Egyptian texts are, if not identical, at least somehow related to one another. About 1500 B.C., or earlier, there seems to have begun a migration of northern men to Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and *India* [...] So we find the same Aryan nobles in Mitanni about 1280 B.C. and very much later also in India. If really, as it seems, the old texts

the combat myth was but one of these fundamental myths, it was frequently mentioned by both supporters and detractors of the general theory.

Clay's theories were explicitly formulated against those who would posit a Babylonian origin for biblical and other narratives, motifs, theology, etc. The subtitle of his first major volume on this topic, his 1909 *Amurru the Home of the Northern Semites, is A Study Showing that the Religion and Culture of Israel Are Not of Babylonian Origin* (Clay 1909: 1). In this volume, the combat myth constitutes one of Clay's central examples of narratives that *must* have been borrowed from west to east rather than vice versa, as the Panbabylonianists would have it, and his proofs are by turns etymological and art historical⁶¹:

state that the Amorites and the Tamehu were fair, we should thus get a historic explanation of the great number of xanthochroic [i.e. having light hair and pale complexion] people we find down to our time everywhere in Asia Minor and in Syria, and among the modern Jews." The broader context of such statements is explored by Marchand 2009: 292–332.

⁶¹ Clay had in fact already discussed these matters in substantial detail only two years earlier in his semi-popular work, *Light on the Old Testament from Babel* (1907). Here, there are just five uses of "Amorite" in the entire volume, and Clay's hypothesis as to combat myth origins is far more Gunkelian than in his later work. In an extended discussion, he first gives a complete summary of *Enūma eliš*, including the circumstances of its discovery and publication (ibid.: 59–69), after which he writes that there exist many biblical passages that "Professor Gunkel of Berlin has brought together, in his work '*Schöpfung und Chaos*,' to show that in Israel such a conflict, prior to the creation, was known" (ibid.: 69). Clay cites in full Ps 89:9, Isa 51:9, Job 26:12, and Ps 74:13 before dutifully explaining that although substantial commonalities may thus be observed, *Enūma eliš* witnessed only "[t]he rude polytheistic grotesqueness of the Babylonian" (ibid.: 72), while Genesis 1 represented "the dignified and sublime conception of the beginning of things, with God as the supreme Creator, who called all things into existence" (ibid.: 73). Anticipating that his reader might then have in mind the question of how these narratives are related, he allows three options: that "[t]he Hebrew borrowed from the Babylonian; or the Babylonian borrowed from the Hebrew; or they have a common origin" (ibid.). The second is almost immediately disallowed given what Clay then regarded as the unimpeachably high antiquity of the Babylonian tradition, and he equivocates on the first and third options (ibid.: 73–76). This is all of strikingly different tone and force from the hypotheses he would defend just a few years later.

The root to which this word [Tiamat], as well as *tâmdu* [sic] meaning “sea,” belongs does not seem to be in use in Babylonian, except in these two words. On the other hand, there are several roots in Hebrew הוּם, הַמָּה, and הַמָּם, which mean “to make a noise, to confuse, to discomfit, to disquiet,” to one of which Tehom probably belongs. [...] And yet scholars have held that Israel borrowed the conception from the Babylonians, who, as far as is known, simply used the word *tâmdu*, “sea,” and also *Tiâmtu* in this legend. [...] The absence of the use of the stem in Babylonian, as above stated [...] makes the hypothesis that the Hebrews borrowed this idea from the Babylonians exceedingly precarious. [...] The art as represented in the seal cylinders offers a weighty argument for the comparatively late introduction of this myth into Assyria. [...] [T]he battle between Marduk and Tiamat is never represented in the early Babylonian art. It belongs, as far as we know, to the Assyrian period, which therefore justifies us in seeking for the origin of the myth elsewhere than in Babylonia. (Clay 1909: 49–51)

The second hypothesis here is of course an argument from silence, all the more curious because Clay could point to no older literary or art historical evidence for the combat myth in the areas from which the Amorites came, allegedly upper Syria. As will be shown in Chapters 3 and 4, it is also incorrect in that there exist many pre-Neo-Assyrian depictions of battles between the storm god and a monster; Clay and his contemporaries always identified these constituents as “Marduk” and “Tiamat,” respectively. The former argument partakes in an error that is common in etymological hypotheses even to this day, i.e. that languages making more extensive use of a root or lexeme must necessarily have originated that root or lexeme and spread it thence (even to related languages).⁶² This assumption appears repeatedly in Clay’s subsequent work, not regarding Tiamat

⁶² This point was already made in response to Clay’s work by Barton (1925: 17, 36).

but in his assumption that the “AMAR” element of Marduk’s name is somehow West Semitic (e.g. Clay 1922: 18, 32; 1919: 179).⁶³

In various publications, Clay (1925: 141; 1909: 45) also pointed to the “climatic conditions” of north Syria as more favorable to both the combat and flood myths than was Mesopotamia and particularly Babylon.⁶⁴ This argument was revived in a now widely cited article by the Sumerologist Thorkild Jacobsen (1904–93), “The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat” (Jacobsen 1968). In this short but influential piece, Jacobsen (1968: 105–6) first determines, on etymological and contextual grounds, that Marduk is fundamentally a storm god.⁶⁵ Given this identification, he argues, it is much more surprising that the myth of a battle between storm god

⁶³ Unlike the early and Panbabylonianist scholarship on the combat myth cited above, Clay’s work on this topic is very infrequently mentioned both in combat myth studies and more generally (cf. Ayali-Darshan 2016: 2 n. 4). Part of this may be due to the fact that Clay failed to be influential even in his own day. To my knowledge, the only Amorite- and/or combat-myth-focused work produced by a student of Clay was Stephens 1924, whose willingness to see in Hab 3 allusions to the “Babylonian dragon myth” were more Gunkelian than not. This was Stephens’s only publication in Biblical Studies; his career as Curator and Professor at Yale was marked mainly by publications on Old Assyrian texts and history and other Assyriological topics (Ellis 1970). More recently, when one encounters arguments regarding the “Amorite origins” of various biblical texts (e.g. Malamat 1988 on Ps 29), Clay’s work is rarely if ever engaged.

⁶⁴ Barton (1925: 27–28) already disputed this element of Clay’s conclusions, not on the logical grounds outlined below but rather from the observation that the flooding of rivers in lower Mesopotamia could easily have suggested a “sea [that] had to be overcome, hedged in, dyked, and barred” and that thunderstorms were not uncommon in this area, especially in the winter. For a recent article that adopts a similar climate determinism, but in order to claim that it was an earthquake and subsequent tsunami that catalyzed the composition of *Ba’lu*, see Wyatt 2019a.

⁶⁵ As many scholars have documented, this claim is perhaps overly simplistic (e.g. Schwemer 2001: 229–30; Sommerfeld 1990: esp. 367–70; Lambert 1984), and the etymological segment of Jacobsen’s argument is, in particular, open to debate. Jacobsen (1968: 105–6) favored an analysis of this *marūduk* as the reflex of a two-element personal name, *mar* “son” + *utuk* (< **utu-ak*) genitive “sun, day, storm.” This is, however, far from an undisputed etymology. In addition to the popular derivation *amar* “calf” + *utuk* (as above), “calf of Utu” (Lambert 1984: 7–8 cf. Lambert 2013: 163), several other interpretations are possible (e.g. Lambert 2013: 163–67; Sommerfeld 1990: 361–62).

and sea monster, i.e. Tiamat, should surface in Mesopotamia. This appears to be true, Jacobsen writes, when the meteorological situation of Babylon is contrasted with that found farther west:

[I]t is obviously not difficult to see why such a motif should have taken form in Ugarit on the shore of the Mediterranean. The common sight of a thunderstorm attracted to, and spending its fury as it moved out over, the sea laid to hand a mythopoeic rendering in terms of a battle between the power in the thunderstorm and the power in the sea. In Mesopotamia, in Babylon, on the other hand, all incentive for such form-giving must seem absent. The sea is far away to the South behind extensive sweetwater marshes and reed-thickets. It is not part of the basic everyday experience of the common man, plays no part in his world as he knows it of own experience. That he should independently have thought up a myth about a battle between the thunderstorm and the sea and should then have made the myth central in his cosmogony is exceedingly difficult to imagine, and common sense must exclude it as a probable possibility. (Jacobsen 1968: 107)

These assertions are followed by what appeared to Jacobsen a logical conclusion: “the motif originated on the coast of the Mediterranean, where it fits in with the environmental context, and spread from there to Babylonia” (ibid.). Less certainty is expressed when it comes to time and means of transmission; options contemplated include conveyance by eastward-migrating Akkadians before the third millennium and—apparently without inspiration from Clay—invading Amorites in the early second millennium (ibid.: 107–8). The same basic idea is repeated in Jacobsen’s later publications, usually in abbreviated form and with less discussion of the grounds for the hypothesis itself and of possible avenues of transmission.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ For example, note Jacobsen 1975: 76, “though the name *Tiāmat* means ‘the sea’ and Marduk’s attack on her in *Enūma elish* [sic] is clearly depicted as the onset of a thunderstorm, it is difficult to imagine any significant natural event in the Mesopotamian year that would pit the thundercloud against the sea; in fact it is even difficult to see what role the sea, far away to the south, could play in the consciousness of the average Babylonian.” Similarly in

Nevertheless convinced by this line of thought, many scholars have adopted Jacobsen's proposal without reservations, with some even arguing that the discovery of older Syrian allusions to the combat myth—after Ugarit, as will be discussed below, especially in the Mari letter A.1968 and in Eblaite exorcistic texts—proves or at least strongly supports Jacobsen's case.⁶⁷ This claim should be strongly suspected. Finding ever older allusions to the combat myth at a particular place does not require this place to be the very locale at which the narrative originated. Lacking additional external justification, one could just as reasonably hypothesize that the Mari allusion is based on some even older Mesopotamian tradition or that both, say, *Enūma eliš* and A.1968 represent parallel developments of a combat myth tradition that originated somewhere else entirely. To go even further, it is not at all clear that the generally assumed scholarly models really do reflect how narratives arise and are transmitted in the real world. Both the Panbabylonian and Panamorite approaches assume monogenesis of the combat myth, i.e. that it was conceived by one individual, who then communicated it to his community, representatives of which then carried it abroad, etc. But this is certainly not the *only* possibility, and polygenesis might indeed be more

Jacobsen's (1976: 168) general study of Mesopotamian religion, "The motif of a battle between a storm god and the sea, which underlies the battle between Marduk and Ti'āmat finally, is known from Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast where it occurs in the myth of Ba'al and Yam. Perhaps it was brought east with the Amorites of the First Dynasty of Babylon." Citations at both loci lead merely to Jacobsen 1968. Etymological study of the name—the major foundation of the hypothesis, repeatedly attacked by opponents (see below)—was never reinitiated.

⁶⁷ This is the position recently voiced by Tugendhaft (2013: 192; almost identically in that author's dissertation [idem 2012a: 114]): "Jacobsen's 'common sense' seemed to be proved right when, in 1993, Jean-Marie Durand published a letter from Mari containing a prophecy of the storm god of Aleppo." No further comment qualifies or contradicts this "seemed to be"; further, "This early appearance of the combat motif in the west lent support to the contention that the Mesopotamian use was derivative of an earlier Amorite tradition. [...] Scholarly opinion has accordingly shifted toward identifying an Amorite origin for the mythic motif of divine combat against the sea." The situation is framed similarly but without reference to Jacobsen in Tugendhaft 2018: 47.

likely given both the differences among Near Eastern combat myths and the presence of similar myths elsewhere in the world.⁶⁸

To return to Clay, one factor that had continually stymied this scholar in his attempts to posit an old “North Semitic” literary tradition was the absence of pre-biblical texts from the region in which he reconstructed his “Amorite empire,” and especially of pre-biblical texts that incorporated the sorts of creation, flood, and dragon combat narratives that he understood to be essential to Amorite mythology. In 1929, though, just four years after Clay’s death, an archaeological expedition to the Syrian coastal tell of Ras Shamra began to uncover large numbers of inscribed tablets, among which were many in a cuneiform script that was yet unknown. The decipherment of this script occurred much more rapidly than that of Akkadian cuneiform,⁶⁹ and the script and ancient language it recorded soon came to be known as “Ugaritic,” after “Ugarit,” the ancient name of the site. By 1931 Charles Virolleaud, the first epigrapher of the expedition, could publish Ugaritic texts from the site following a substantially correct method. Among the earliest to be published was a shocking set of narratives that described the battles of a storm god, Ba^llu, against his enemies, the sea god Yammu and the god of death Môtû (see n. 70 for

⁶⁸ See Section 1.3, below. R. D. Miller 2018 represents the most extreme recent attempt to genealogize narratives of divine combat, and Cho 2019: esp. 42 a valuable recent check on this tendency.

⁶⁹ With the first tablets uncovered at sunset on May 14, 1929, the alphabet had certainly been half-deciphered by Hans Bauer (1878–1937) by April 27, 1930, and most of the major issues had been resolved by the end of 1930 (P. L. Day 2002: 46). The decipherment of Ugaritic chiefly by Bauer and Eduard Dhorme (1881–1966) is described in exhaustive detail by P. L. Day (2002), who draws particular attention to the questionable nature of Charles Virolleaud’s (1879–1968) early claims (cf. e.g. Virolleaud 1930). Bordreuil 2009 and Cathcart 1999 are shorter and less detailed recent accounts of the decipherment. Bordreuil, Hawley, and Pardee 2010 and Fauveaud 2008 show that the linguist Marcel Cohen (1884–1974) was in direct communication with Virolleaud about Ugaritic during this period of decipherment and can be credited with first identifying some of the most recalcitrant graphemes, namely {y}, {ġ}, {z}, and {t}. Excepting the problematic sign {š}, the grapheme {d} was the last to be conclusively identified (Ginsberg 1936b: 174).

publications). It was almost immediately observed that especially the first of these battles could be understood to constitute the early western Semitic parallel to *Enūma eliš* that Clay and others had sought (e.g. Albright 1936b: 38; Gaster 1933: 381–82; Hooke 1933).

With a second lengthy Semitic-language combat myth now known, much attention turned to defining the putative theme and purpose of the six core and several additional Ba^ʿlu tablets (often described as an “epic” or “cycle”).⁷⁰ Most of these efforts interpreted the narrative as a cosmic, natural, political, or religious-historical allegory (surveys in M. S. Smith 1994: 58–114; 1986). Comparatively few scholars voiced any opinions as to the relationship between this narrative, *Enūma eliš*, and what were by then increasingly recognized analogues of the combat

⁷⁰ The “Ba^ʿlu myth/epic/cycle” as traditionally conceived is composed of six tablets having four, six, or eight columns each. These are usually cited by the now widely-used text numbers from the *Keilschrift Texte aus Ugarit* transliteration volumes of Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín (1976; 1995; 2013); equivalences with the Ras Shamra excavation numbers are as follows: RS 3.361 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.1); RS 3.367+3.346 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.2); RS 2.[014]+3.363 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.3); RS 2.[008]⁺ (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.4); RS 2.[022]+3.[565] (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.5); and RS 2.[009]+5.155 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.6). In the present study, I refer to *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.1–6 as Ba^ʿlu 1–6. Pardee (2012: 62–66; 2009) has recently demonstrated that RS 3.364 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.8) can be joined to RS 3.363 and thus forms the top of the sixth column of Ba^ʿlu 3; this is now generally accepted (e.g. Wyatt 2015: 409; Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín 2013: 10–18, 32). The tablets *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.7, 9–13 have similar content to the “Ba^ʿlu myth” and their relationship to the “Ba^ʿlu cycle” is variously understood.

Broadly speaking, Ba^ʿlu 1–2 describe the battle of Ba^ʿlu with the sea god Yammu, Ba^ʿlu 3–4 describe the construction of Ba^ʿlu’s palace, and Ba^ʿlu 5–6 describe the battle of Ba^ʿlu with the god of death Mōtu. Of these, Ba^ʿlu 6 was the first to be published, by Virolleaud 1931 (the fragment RS 2.[009]); 1934a (the joined fragment RS 5.155). Preliminary editions of the other tablets appeared in the journal *Syria* under Virolleaud’s authorship (Virolleaud 1932 [Ba^ʿlu 4]; 1934b [Ba^ʿlu 5]; 1935 [Ba^ʿlu 2 i]; 1936 [Ba^ʿlu 3 i]; 1937a [Ba^ʿlu 3 ii]; 1937b [Ba^ʿlu 3 iii to l. 28]), and almost the entirety of the epic—including the previously unpublished Ba^ʿlu 1 and columns iii:28–vi of Ba^ʿlu 3—was published together in a then-comprehensive edition as Virolleaud 1938. (Columns ii–iv of Ba^ʿlu 2 remained unpublished until Virolleaud 1944 [Ba^ʿlu 2 iii] and Herdner 1963 [Ba^ʿlu 2 ii, iv]). There is as yet no thorough re-edition of the myth; the commentary presentation of Smith and Pitard (Smith 1994 [Ba^ʿlu 1–2]; Smith and Pitard 2009 [Ba^ʿlu 3–4]; third volume in preparation) aims at comprehensiveness. Most Ugaritologists of the current senior generation and some others have produced translations of the cycle, often with extensive notes, e.g. Garbini 2014; Wyatt 1998/2002: 34–146; Dietrich and Loretz 1997: 1091–1198; Pardee 1997; Xella 1982: 73–146; del Olmo Lete 1981: 81–238.

myth in Hesiod, Hittite narratives, and Egyptian sources, among others. More often, scholars were content to construe the Ba^ʿlu tablets and the rest of Ugaritic literature as biblical “background,” and parallels were often held to demonstrate merely the high antiquity of biblical traditions. American scholars, especially following the lead of Johns Hopkins University professor William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971)⁷¹ would be most productive in this realm throughout the middle of the twentieth century, and the following subsection considers some of these contributions in detail.

1.2.2 Hebrews and Canaanites in Biblical Studies

William Foxwell Albright’s work on ancient Levantine mythological motifs was impelled by the decipherment of Ugaritic, to which he repeatedly claimed to have contributed by delivering an early publication of Bauer to Dhorme at the École Biblique, Jerusalem, in Summer 1930.⁷² Most of Albright’s early work on Ugaritic took the form of philological commentary to individual tablets or columns of the *Ba^ʿlu* epic as they were published by Virolleaud.⁷³ One can trace in the different

⁷¹ For an overview of Albright’s life and work, the hagiographic biography of Running (1975) makes for entertaining if not always illuminating reading. Long’s (1997) study on the influence of Albrightean methods—both academic and social—is much more incisive and critical. A retrospective volume on Albright’s scholarship appeared under the editorship of Van Beek (1989), and a comprehensive bibliography of Albright’s work is Freedman 1975. For Albright’s work on Ugaritic in particular, see n. 73, below.

⁷² The publication in question was Bauer 1930. Albright (1932a: 16) writes, “The present writer was in Jerusalem part of the summer of 1930 [...] and, learning of Dhorme’s work, and well as of Bauer’s results, through a number of the *Vossische Zeitung* borrowed from Dr. Galling, took the number in question to the École Biblique. Dhorme at once saw that two of Bauer’s consonantal values were better than his own, and was then able to make very rapid advance, which carried him beyond Bauer.” This is described similarly in Albright 1945: 9.

⁷³ References to Albright’s work on Ugaritic can be found in the comprehensive bibliography of Albright’s publications, Freedman 1975: 199–200. M. S. Smith (2001: 24–25, 28–37) also discusses Albright’s work on Ugaritic in some detail. The vast majority of Albright’s work on Ugaritic occurred before 1945 and thus in the early years of the field. He tended to publish brief advertisements of textual discoveries and his own understandings of them in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, which he regarded as a less technical journal (Albright 1932a on *Ba^ʿlu* VI; 1933 on *Ba^ʿlu* IV; 1936a on *Kirta* and *ʿAqhatu*; 1938a on *Ba^ʿlu* III), and more detailed philological

hypotheses expressed in these publications the gradual development of Albright's thought on the implications of parallels between Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew texts for the development of Levantine religion and literature. In Albright's earliest work on this question (see below), he appears to have regarded invasive Hebrews as having adopted and adapted literary traditions, including the combat myth, from southern Levantine Canaanites in the alleged "Settlement" period. For reasons that are never explored in any detail, though, this hypothesis morphed into the model of a highly speculative "Phoenician renaissance," the outgrowth of a vague "expansion of Phoenician trade and wealth during the period from 800 to 500 B.C. [...] in an age which witnessed the flowering of written literature in Israel and in Greece" (Albright 1938a: 24). The imagined Phoenician renaissance would have produced literature much like that of Ugarit and can even be glimpsed, Albright argues, in the citations by Philo of Byblos of Sanchuniathon (ibid.). This author therefore must—Albright concludes in a classic display of circular reasoning—date to the very period of the Phoenician renaissance! At any rate, it was this specific literary production, not vague southern Canaanite traditions, that

commentaries in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (Albright 1932b on *Ba⁹lu* VI; 1934 on *Ba⁹lu* IV and RS 2.002 [= *KTU* 1-3 1.23]); the exception to this is Albright 1941a, his most detailed treatment of *Ba⁹lu* V i:1-22 and published in *BASOR*. A few of Albright's other—and, for present purposes, most pertinent (see below)—early publications (Albright 1941b; 1936b) were formulated as direct responses to the philological work of Harold Louis Ginsberg (1903-90), whom he regarded as "easily first in the field of Ugaritic-biblical analogies, thanks to his first-class linguistic preparation, his unexcelled knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic language and literature, and his sound common sense" (Albright 1945: 13; similarly idem 1940b: 90; as Long [1997: 63-68] writes, this led to Albright and his students being comfortable with the prospective inclusion of Ginsberg, but few other Jewish scholars, in the Anchor Bible commentary series). Albright characterizes his own contributions as "both forwarded and hampered by my persistent ingenuity, which has led to some sound observations that might otherwise have been long delayed, and to a few over-ingenuous renderings which have had to be discarded."

influenced Jewish literature profoundly, whether directly or indirectly. Phoenician poems, didactic works, and songs would become so familiar to the Jews of the seventh and sixth centuries B. C. (just as Aramaic literature did in the Persian period) that no cultivated Jew could compose any original poem without introducing elements which betray their Canaanite inspiration. For we must remember that the Phoenicians were the heirs of the Canaanites. (Albright 1938a: 24)

The hypothesis is evocative, but rests on no hard evidence. It is perhaps for this reason that one finds minimal reflection of it in Albright's later work.⁷⁴

Albright was nevertheless adamant throughout his work that it was highly significant that Genesis 1–11 shared none of its motifs with anything other than Mesopotamian literature, and it

⁷⁴ It is illuminating, for example, that in a survey of "Phoenician Literary Influence on Israel," in his last major work, Albright (1967: 253–64) discusses only *late* Phoenician influence, e.g. as allegedly in Qohelet and Job, and not at all the putative renaissance to which he previously pointed. The otherwise most explicit support for the "Phoenician renaissance" hypothesis is in Albright's (1938b) review of Hölscher's (1937) commentary on Job. Here, it is the combat myth proper as it surfaces in Job (3:8; 9:8b; 40–41) that stems from "the great renaissance of Phoenician (Canaanite) literature during the period 800–500 B.C., which the reviewer has discussed elsewhere recently" (1938b: 227). Albright does not tell the reader precisely where this discussion has occurred, and one might reasonably get the impression that there was more support for this "great renaissance" than Albright's need for a palatable link between Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew literature and for a context, however imaginary, for Philo of Byblos's source Sanchuniathon. A slightly watered-down—albeit more lengthy—defense is mounted in Albright 1957: 317–19 (first ed. 1940a), where the model is described not as a "great renaissance" but rather as a "revival of interest in the past in Phoenicia" (*ibid.*: 317) and—less hyperbolically than in Albright 1938b—"a renaissance of the early epic literature, but also an unexampled diffusion of Phoenician writings" (Albright 1957: 318–19). Part of Albright's greater caution in formulation here and elsewhere is perhaps to be found in his citation of Eissfeldt (1939), whom Albright seems to have realized treated the question of both Sanchuniathon's date and his work with a more critical eye than he had been accustomed to do (see Albright 1957: 317 and n. 57). An even weaker reflection of the hypothesis is to be found in Albright 1942: 49–50 (similarly in revised form *idem* 1961: 470–71), where the author still posits Phoenician influence on Hebrew literature but essentially avoids discussion of the conditions prompting this in Phoenicia itself.

had no commonalities with Canaanite literature such as it was being recovered from Ugarit. This was asserted early on and repeatedly. Especially in Albright's later work, it came to serve as a symbol of the distinctiveness of Israel over against its Canaanite environment:

The most striking fact of all, speaking from the standpoint of total relationship between Canaanite and Hebrew literature, is that there is so little in common between Genesis and Ugaritic poetry. Not one of the cosmogonic narratives of Gen. 1–11 appears in Ugaritic or any other Canaanite source. This fact, along with many others, proves that the Hebrews were not of Canaanite stock and did not take over Canaanite religious traditions, as so often maintained in recent decades. Hebrew tradition derives the Patriarchs from Mesopotamia, and it is in Sumero-Accadian literature that we find the closest points of contact. (Albright 1945: 27)⁷⁵

This claimed surfeit of Mesopotamian influence versus the utter absence of “Canaanite” influence in Genesis 1–11 was particularly significant for Albright because he regarded the primeval history to be compositionally primeval. Albright defends an early dating for Genesis 1–11 at greatest length in his response (Albright 1939) to Mowinckel's (1939) expostulation of then-standard source criticism and concomitant source dates. The core of this response communicates Albright's continued conviction that “the principal elements of cosmogony, mythology, and heroic saga are created and combined at a very early age in the history of any given culture” (Albright 1939: 93). This evolutionist perspective can be found throughout Albright's work, and critiques of its accuracy and usefulness do not seem to have affected his general reconstructions.

⁷⁵ For similar expressions of Albright's hypotheses on Genesis 1–11 and its putative Mesopotamian sources, see *idem* 1957: 238; 1967: 184–85. His most detailed and extensive defense of both the cogency of Genesis—Mesopotamian parallels and of the high antiquity for the primeval history required by these is in his response to Mowinckel, namely Albright 1939; this is discussed immediately below.

Interestingly, though, Albright could occasionally demonstrate admirable caution in describing a relationship between particular textualized narratives of divine combat. In a study of *Baʿlu* II i—following on Virolleaud’s (1935) *editio princeps* and Ginsberg’s (1935) extensive study—Albright (1936b) discussed Yammu and his epithets {zbl} *zabūlu* and {tṗt nhr} *tāpiṭu naharu* in some detail. He begins by collapsing the chief known chaos agents—“Yammu plays essentially the same rôle in Canaanite cosmogony that Tiamat and Labbu, etc., do in Mesopotamian and that the dragon Iluyankas does in Hittite” (Albright 1936b: 18)—but abruptly intervenes with an interesting footnote:

It is too early to reach any definite conclusion with regard to the original provenience of these monsters, whether from the East or West. It is interesting to note that Accadian *Tiāmat*, which means ‘Sea’ (*tiāmtu-tāmtu*=sea) in Accadian, like Can. *Yammu*, *Yam*, corresponds etymologically to Heb. *Tehôm*, properly the subterranean ocean (Can. *tehâmatêm*, ‘the two deeps’). (Albright 1936b: 18 n. 3)

Unlike in the work of Cheyne, Gunkel, Clay, etc., then, the etymology of *Tiāmat*’s name is merely “interesting,” not determinative for genealogical hypotheses, and Albright refrains from throwing in his lot with either the Panbabylonianists or what one might call the “Panamoritists.” It is regrettable that it was not this aspect of Albright’s work, but rather his view of sharp divisions between Canaanite and Israelite and also between Canaanite and Mesopotamian, that were replicated and deepened in later Combat Myth Studies.

Albright’s scholarship came to have lasting effect—not only in Combat Myth Studies but also in other areas—primarily through the influence of one of his students, Frank Moore Cross (1921–2012). Cross held the Hancock professorship at Harvard University from 1958 until his retirement in 1992; during this time he supervised—by his own count—over a hundred

dissertations, primarily in the history of Levantine religions, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and epigraphical and palaeographical topics.⁷⁶ Cross's work on combat myths mainly took the form of comments on relevant Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew texts in his central monographic publication, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (1973) and a few articles (chiefly Cross 1968; 1966).⁷⁷ Cross also directed a number of dissertations on topics of Levantine literature and religion that focused or touched on combat myth themes.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Levantine religion was frequently conceptualized by members of the Harvard school as involving an antinomy of "Canaanite" and "Israelite" religions, and study of "both" was a primary focus for Cross and his students (Hackett 2014), alongside publication and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Northwest Semitic epigraphy and palaeography (similarly M. S. Smith 2014: 189; Machinist 2013: 2–3). Cross's main work in the Dead Sea Scrolls was in editing the Cave 4 biblical scrolls, supervising and advising dissertations and publications by his and John Strugnell's students, and his semi-popular volume *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (3rd ed. Cross 1995), originally the 1956–57 Haskell Lectures at Oberlin College; S. W. Crawford 2014 is a retrospective discussion of Cross's work in this field. Cross's contributions to epigraphy and palaeography are collected in Cross 2003. The *Festschrift* for Cross exclusively on epigraphic topics, Hackett and Aufrecht 2014, is populated mainly by Cross's students (and, in some cases, their students); this volume includes a full bibliography of Cross's publications at *ibid.*: xx–xl (337 items). McCarter 2014 offers a retrospective discussion of Cross's contributions to Northwest Semitic epigraphy and palaeography.

⁷⁷ In addition to these, Cross's work on texts frequently discussed in connection with Canaanite literature include Cross 1950, on the structure and parallelism of Ps 29, with the argument that יהוה (v. 2) designates Yahweh's apparition; Cross and Freedman 1955, on Exod 15 and discussed below; and Cross 1983a (~ 1998: 127–34), on Jonah 2 and discussed briefly in n. 81.

⁷⁸ Indeed, the combat myth is one area in which Cross perhaps had less influence in personal publication than in the direction of dissertations. Several that he oversaw addressed topics in the history of religions, including the motif of Yahweh as divine warrior in the Hebrew Bible (P. D. Miller 1973) and in Habakkuk 3 (Hiebert 1986), Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Rabbinic literature (Whitney 2006 [diss. 1992]), and various other studies of mythological topics; many of these discuss narratives of divine combat in Ugaritic and/or Hebrew sources (see e.g. Clifford [1972: esp. 40, 59–60, 116–20] on the divine mountain; L'Heureux [1979: esp. 14–18] on divine hierarchies and the Rapi'ūma; Mullen [1980: esp. 46–84] on the assembly of the gods; and P. L. Day [1988] on Satan in the Hebrew Bible). Cross also served on the dissertation committee of Adela Yarbro Collins, whose project was a thorough treatment of the combat myth in its main New Testament manifestation, *Revelation* (A. Y. Collins 1976 [for Cross's influence, see *ibid.*: xv.]).

Unlike his advisor Albright, Cross appears to have seen the combat myth as a Canaanite innovation that, through diffusion from a singular source, influenced other literatures both east and west. In an earlier and more straightforward adoption of Jacobsen's hypothesis as discussed above, Cross represents the situation as follows⁷⁹:

The mythic themes in the *Ba'l* texts share much in common with the Phoenician traditions preserved by Sakkunyaton, and for that matter, in the Bible. At a greater distance we also can perceive now the influence of the Canaanite theme of the battle with the sea-dragon in the Mesopotamian creation epic, *Enūma eliš*,⁽³⁾ and in the Greek myth of *Typhoeus-Typhon*.

⁽³⁾ THORKILD JACOBSEN has argued convincingly in a recent paper (as yet unpublished) that *Enūma eliš* is ultimately dependent on West Semitic sources for its motif of the battle with the Sea.

(Cross 1968: 2)

This is the entirety of the pertinent footnote, and Cross elsewhere evinces much less certainty as to the correctness of Jacobsen's global argument, writing only, "The Babylonian account of creation in *Enūma eliš* is not too remote a parallel [to Ps 24 and the "Canaanite myth-and-ritual pattern"] since there is *some evidence*, collected by Thorkild Jacobsen, that the battle with the dragon Ocean is West Semitic in origin" (Cross 1973: 93, my emphasis).⁸⁰ Somewhat surprisingly, this appears to have been the last time that Cross expressed his opinion in print on this particular problem.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Cross's (1968: 2) footnote 3 is reproduced in the following block quotation because it expresses the then-unpublished source for the Canaan-to-Mesopotamia hypothesis, namely Jacobsen 1968 (see above).

⁸⁰ The identical sentence is found in Cross 1966: 21 n. 32, with Jacobsen's essay then still forthcoming.

⁸¹ This is true even in contexts in which one might expect Cross to discuss the problem. For example, in his short article on the main distinctions between cosmogonies and theogonies and their literary juxtapositions, Cross (1976 ~ idem 1998: 73–83) talks at length of various combat myths—as usual, with particular reference to *Ba'lu* and

Whatever their apparent difference in opinion on the autonomy of *Enūma eliš*, Cross and Albright were equally strident in differentiating the biblical manifestations of divine combat from their putative Canaanite sources. The following discussion of the Song of the Sea (Exod 15) is taken from an early article co-authored by Cross and his fellow Johns Hopkins student and Albright advisee David Noel Freedman (1922–2008)⁸²:

Attempts have been made to read into the themes of vss. 1–12 (Part I:1–3) the familiar motif of a cosmic warfare between the king of the gods and the principle of chaos (Primeval Ocean), death (Mot), Sea (Yamm), or the like. It seems most reasonable to suppose that *the poetic styles and canons of Canaan have affected strongly the structure, diction, and, on occasion, the actual phraseology of the poem* [my emphasis]. Certain clichés concerning the anger and might of Yahweh, and, conversely, the heaving of the sea, may be derived secondarily from mythological cycles, or rather the lyric poetry and psalmody of Canaan. The striking aspect of these verses, however, is that the sea is never personified and is

Enūma eliš—but says nothing about the relationships between these. In Cross 1974, he cites numerous Ugaritic texts describing combat of Baʿlu and/or ʿAnatu with their antagonists, but the focus remains entirely on formal features of the poetry rather than the mythological motifs themselves. In Cross 1983a (~ idem 1998: 127–34), he writes that “Canaanite myths known from the texts of Ugarit and from *their residue* in the Bible provide us with *complementary* accounts of the basic conflict between order and chaos, life and death” (Cross 1998: 127; 1983a: 160 [my emphases]). It is not clear to me whether this claim of Canaanite myths having “residue” in the Hebrew Bible reflects an understanding of “Israelite” dependence on “Canaanite” myth, nor is it clear to me whether the use of “complementary” involves an understanding of the Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew combat myths as parallel independent reflexes of an older source.

⁸² There is a very similar discussion in Cross 1968: 16. There is, however, no mention of “Canaanite” mythological—as opposed to metrical, parallelistic, or other formal—elements in Cross and Freedman’s (1975: 31–45) study of Exodus 15 in their *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*. This volume is in turn based on the later of two joint dissertations by the two authors, technically assigned to Cross in 1950 (Freedman 1975: 222); the earlier dissertation was “Evolution of Early Hebrew Orthography,” assigned to Freedman (*ibid.*) and published as Cross and Freedman 1952.

the “passive” tool of Yahweh responding to his bidding. (Cross and Freedman 1955: 239)

That the sea is passive here can hardly be seriously disputed, but Cross and Freedman make much more of this than is warranted by the monotheistic outlook of the Hebrew writer of Exodus 15. As is the theme in Cross’s work on Levantine religion, history, and literature generally, the active watery antagonist of the Ugaritic parallels is regarded as proper to and even diagnostic of “mythology,” whereas the passive natural force of the Hebrew Bible is regarded as instead necessarily “epic.”⁸³

⁸³ Similar oppositions of myth and epic in Cross’s work may be found in e.g. Cross 1973: viii, 143–44, 163; 1968: 19–21. Throughout his work—but especially in Cross 1973 and 1983b (~ 1998: 22–52)—Cross treats as “mythological” those narratives that exclusively describe action in non-terrestrial time and space and exclusively feature divinities as characters, whereas those narratives that feature divinities as characters non-exclusively (and, usually, take place in terrestrial—“historical”—time and space) are “epics.” This is spelled out most clearly at Cross 1983b: 13–14 (= 1998: 22–23), “In both the West and East Semitic myths, the actors are exclusively the gods, the terrain cosmic (or sacral). [...] In Israel’s early orally-composed narratives [...] the narrative action takes place for the most part in ordinary space and time; major roles are played by human enemies and human heroes; however shaped by mythic themes, the narrative is presented in the form of remembered events.” In immediate context, though, Cross also introduces the criterion of “oral composition” for epic. It is unclear what a narrative featuring divinities non-exclusively but—in Cross’s oral-vs.-literate dichotomy—literarily composed would be called. One gets the impression that narratives featuring divinities non-exclusively are assumed to have been orally composed even when there is no formal evidence for this (cf. Cross 1998: 23–24; 1983b: 14–15); this can be deduced from Cross’s occasional treatment of “JE sources and the common poetic tradition that lies behind them” (on Nothian grounds) as “‘Epic’ sources” (Cross 1973: 83 n. 11; see also *ibid.*: 124 n. 38, 125, 133–34, 164, 261, 292; 1983b: esp. 20; 1998: esp. 30–31).

Later in Cross 1983b (19 = 1998: 29), Cross also introduces the criteria of “a composition describing traditional events of an age conceived as normative or glorious” and “a ‘national’ composition, especially one recited at pilgrimage festivals” for delimiting the category of “epic.” If one begins to define as “epics” only those narratives that show *all* of these features, one quickly encounters the problem of needing oppositional terminology for, say, a narrative that features divine characters non-exclusively, was orally composed, and describes “traditional events” of the glorious age *but is not* “recited at pilgrimage festivals” (*ibid.*). As a rule, Cross does not attempt to prove each of these features for each of the narratives he regards to be epics. Rather, one or more characteristics are assumed for a narrative if multiple other characteristics have been demonstrated. A few scholars who have critiqued Cross’s

Cross was, of course, not alone in assuming that “Canaanite” and “Israelite” elements could be reliably differentiated in the study of the combat myth and elsewhere. In the 1977 Cambridge dissertation of John Day (1948–), later published as *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Day 1985)⁸⁴ this paradigm was juxtaposed with another according to which the “Mesopotamian” and “Canaanite” elements in Israel’s heritage could be reliably parsed in most if not all instances. Day’s main hypothesis is succinctly stated at the outset. The imagery of the Hebrew Bible conflict between Yahweh and the dragon and the sea “is Canaanite and not Babylonian in origin” (Day 1985: 1).⁸⁵ Day elsewhere specifies that the passage of influence involved “dependence on Canaanite mythology” (ibid.: 29) and that “the imagery [of Yahweh’s conflict with the dragon and the sea] was appropriated from the Canaanites” (ibid.: 61).⁸⁶ At no point does Day discuss the practical mechanisms of this dependence, and both

definitions and terminological usages on these and similar grounds are listed in a footnote at Cross 1983b: 17 n. 14 (= 1998: 27 n. 15). The most thorough dismantling of Cross’s use of “epic” in particular is Conroy 1980: 15–30, which gives special attention to the quite different ways in which “epic” is used in various other fields that involve literary studies. For more on this and the definition of “myth,” see Ballentine 2015: 8–14, esp. 11 and Kloos 1986: 160–77.

⁸⁴ To my knowledge, only two relevant publications appeared before the publication of this dissertation. The first is Day 1979a on Ba’lu and Yahweh’s seven thunders in RS 24.245:3–4 (= *KTU¹⁻³* 1.101; ed. Pardee 1988: 119–52) and Ps 29, respectively. In this article, Day mainly speaks of “parallels” between the Ugaritic and Hebrew Bible material he analyzes, but also a few times of “appropriation” (Day 1979a: 145, 148) by a Hebrew author “from the Canaanites” (ibid.: 148). The second is Day 1979b, in which Day argues that Hab 3:5 has a “Canaanite background” (ibid.: 353) because Resheph is in that biblical text, as in RS 15.134 (= *KTU¹⁻³* 1.82; *e.p.* Viroilleaud 1957: 3–7 [= *PRU* II no. 1]; recently discussed in del Olmo Lete 2014: 109–28 and Miglio 2013), represented as accompanying the storm god in his battle against the sea and/or dragon. In addition to speaking of this “Canaanite background,” Day (1979b: 354 n. 1) stresses, as in his monograph, that the parallels he sees are Canaanite and *not* Babylonian. The recurrence of this hypothesis in Day’s later work is documented in the next note.

⁸⁵ The same or similar expressions occur at Day 2013a: 20, 22; 2000: 98–99 (but see the following note); 1985: 2, 4, 7, 50–51, 61, 109, 162, 179–80. Day 2000: 98–107 is essentially a slightly updated summary of Day 1985.

⁸⁶ Similar discussion in Day’s work of this Israelite appropriation of the combat myth in particular occurs in Day 1994a: 187–88; 1979a: 145, 148. Interestingly, though, Day (1994b: 43–44) elsewhere contemporaneously discusses the biblical combat myth at some length in the context of “Canaanite religion” without saying anything as

chronological and geographical questions are largely omitted. Day is happy to discuss the *Sitz im Leben* of the combat myth in “Israelite”—more accurately, Judahite—context, since he assumes the occurrence of an Autumn New Year’s festival in Jerusalem at which creation, *Chaoskampf*, and Yahweh’s enthronement were all celebrated (Day 1985: 18–21).⁸⁷ Furthermore, Day claims, since “both the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Judg. 9:27) and the festal theme of the king-god in conflict with the chaos waters were appropriated from the Canaanites, it is reasonable to suppose that this motif was also a feature of the Canaanite Autumn Festival” (Day 1985: 21). But what did this appropriation look like, and when and where did it happen?

Day does not make this explicit, but the assumption throughout appears to be that a coherent group of Yahwistic Israelites began to hear and observe Canaanite myths and practices after they entered the Levant from elsewhere, presumably in the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age. Only later did these same Israelites begin to communicate these myths among themselves and to celebrate the observed festivals as though they were their own. To an even greater degree than in Albright and earlier authors, Canaanite religion and mythology is reconstructed almost exclusively from the Ugaritic literary texts—especially *Baʿlu*—even against Day’s own occasional

to the dependence of the biblical passages on Canaanite influence. In an even later work, immediately after declaring that “it has become generally accepted that the Old Testament’s references to a divine conflict with a dragon and the sea are an echo of Canaanite rather than Babylonian mythology” (Day 2000: 98–99), Day writes, “How exactly the Canaanite myth of Baal’s conflict with the dragon and the sea relates to the Babylonian conflict of Marduk with Tiamat is also unclear” (ibid.: 99). If this relationship is unclear, one might ask, how is it possible to assert only Canaanite and not Babylonian influence for the biblical narratives? Cf. similarly Day 2013a: 20–21 on the Jacobsen (1968) hypothesis.

⁸⁷ Day discusses the putative Autumn Festival at greater length in his commentary on the Psalms for the Old Testament Guides series (Day 1990: 67–87, with an excellent bibliography). This aspect of his work will be discussed in Chapter 2.

protestations to the contrary.⁸⁸ Day also appears to understand cultural interaction in the monarchic period of the southern Levant to have occurred between genealogically and culturally immiscible groups, specifically “Canaanites” on the one hand and “Israelites” on the other. This perspective was and still is prevalent in the field,⁸⁹ in large part because it represents the perspective of many

⁸⁸ Day (1985: 133) speaks once of a “danger of forcing all Canaanite religion into a Ugaritic straitjacket” and notes correctly that “[t]he evidence of Phoenician religion indicates the divergence from the Ugaritic model that could obtain” (ibid.). This is a welcome caveat, but the sheer extent and complexity of the Ugaritic textual material has resulted, in Day’s early work and in the work of other Canaanite-Israelite comparativists, in extreme emphasis on Ugaritic textual sources and the marginalization of other potential points of comparison. These other points indeed include Phoenician material, as Day mentions, but there are also abundant non-textual sources for the non-Yahwistic religions of both the northern and southern Levant. In the monograph in question, there are only a few instances in which Day admits that a Biblical Hebrew combat myth element he regards to be Canaanite does not (yet?) have a Ugaritic comparandum and thus must “deriv[e] from a place or time different from the Ugaritic texts” (Day 1985: 7). This particular citation is taken from Day’s discussion of Rahab, the name of which, he argues, cannot be an Akkadian loanword by virtue of the presence of *h* in the Hebrew lexeme (Day 1985: 6).

Day is much more careful and thorough later, in a contribution addressed to this particular question: “Ugarit and the Bible: Do They Presuppose the Same Canaanite Mythology and Religion” (Day 1994b). Day finds a few notable disjunctions between the Ugaritic texts and how biblical texts appear to represent Canaanite religion, e.g. epithets of ʾIlu/El (ibid.: 40), the gender of the sun deity (ibid.: 46), and the absence of human sacrifice at Ugarit (ibid.: 50). This all leads to the general statement: “We should be on our guard against the assumption that Ugarit alone provides us with a picture of the authentic Canaanite religion by which the Bible’s claims can be tested” (ibid.: 50–51), and yet, the same article concludes, “the extent of the continuity [...] is the most striking thing, all the more remarkable in view of the temporal and geographical distances” (ibid.: 52.).

⁸⁹ Significant contributions documenting and critical of this dichotomizing stance in biblical studies are Grabbe 1994 and Hillers 1985. The classic treatment of “Canaanites” as a concept in historical and biblical studies is Lemche 1991, but this study has attracted much criticism and debate (e.g. Benz 2016: 100–9; Rainey 1996; Na’aman 1994; Edelman 1992). There has in more recent decades been no shortage of studies stressing the continuity between what were once defined as “Canaanite” and “Israelite” “religion(s),” e.g. in monographic form M. S. Smith 2002; Zevit 2001; and J. Day 2000; and more concisely in e.g. Niehr 2010. As may be apparent from the criticisms of Day in the present section, however, this emphasis on continuity does not always produce work that entirely avoids privileging “ancient Israel” as religiously distinct and even superior. This aspect of the recent scholarly discourse around “Canaanite and Israelite religion(s)” and Israelite distinctiveness has been surveyed by Uehlinger (2015), who wonders whether the scholarly fashion for the use of (plural) “religions” masks the perpetuation of old oppositions

authors of texts eventually incorporated into the Hebrew Bible. One deduces Day's conceptualization not only from his biblical references for "Canaanite" versus "Israelite" practice—e.g. his citation of Judges 9:27, noted above—but also from his characterization of "syncretism" (Day 1985: 134, 186, 189) as a hallmark of the pre-exilic Jerusalem cult.⁹⁰

The largely implicit hypothesis of Canaanite-to-Israelite influence is only as strong as the broader historical reconstruction that underlies it. If one understands a substantial proportion of the individuals eventually incorporated into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah to have been immemorially *internal* to the Cisjordanian Levant, speaking of neatly separable "Canaanite" and "Israelite" groups (and associated myths, practices, etc.) in pre-Iron-Age periods becomes difficult.⁹¹ If nothing else, this reveals the danger of attempting to found textual genealogies on a comparison that lacks an explicit historical context. Even when one can look at two texts and

and whether one might not be better off speaking of simply "religion" in various geographic areas, e.g. the southern Levant.

⁹⁰ Similar use of "Canaanite influence" and of "syncretism" in Day's work may be found in his discussion of Asherah as a Canaanite goddess adopted by Israelites to serve as the consort of Yahweh (Day 2000: 59; 1986, e.g. at *ibid.*: 399, "Asherah appears to have been regarded as Yahweh's consort in syncretistic circles," and *ibid.*: 406, "a feature of popular religion in Israel, but as a Canaanite accretion to the cult of the God of Sinai"); of sacred prostitution (Day 2010: 214–15; 2004; 1994b: 51; cf. now DeGrado 2018b), such common features as agricultural festivals (Day 1994b: 52; 1990: 67, "must have been appropriated from the Canaanites"), anointing of kings (Day 1990: 99, "Israel adopted anointing from the surrounding Canaanites"), and the ascription of kingship to Yahweh (Day 1990: 125, "This epithet too was borrowed from the Canaanites"); and such terrestrial institutions as the royal court (Day 1995: 61, "the likelihood of a Canaanite origin for Israel's court officials") and the monarchy generally (Day 1998). At a certain point, it begins to seem as though the only thing "Israelite" about the "Israelites" is an idealized Sinaitic Yahwism (Day 1994a: 193).

⁹¹ This is of course a massive question. Relatively recent surveys of putative archaeological markers differentiating an "Israelite" population include Faust 2006 (most recent personal re-evaluation Faust 2017), Killebrew 2005, and, from a very different perspective, Pfoh 2009. As might be expected, most of these markers have undergone significant evaluation in the decade or so since these publications, e.g. on the putative pig taboo Sapir-Hen, Meiri, and Finkelstein 2015 (with previous literature cited). Benz 2016 is a recent thorough history of the Southern Levant in the period immediately preceding the rise of the Iron Age territorial states.

identify common language, characters, plot, etc.—as Day repeatedly does with great success—any genealogical explanation that one forwards for these commonalities will be grounded in broader historical presuppositions. If these historical presuppositions are not made explicit, they become implicit and all the more difficult to recover and critique.

Day's work shares an additional significant overlap with that of Albright, best demonstrated in Day's recent scholarship on Genesis 1–11.⁹² It was shown above that Albright's division of the Hebrew Bible into Mesopotamian-influenced and Canaanite-influenced sections runs largely along canonical fault lines. Genesis 1–11, Albright argues, is dependent chiefly on Mesopotamian sources, whereas biblical texts he identified as mythological elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible are indebted to Canaanite sources. Day's similarly dichotomous division runs instead along the fault lines of plot and motif. According to Day, anything betraying the influence of the combat myth is necessarily "Canaanite rather than Babylonian" (Day 2013a: 20), and it is generally only admissible to think of Mesopotamian sources in narratives that do not involve divine combat.⁹³

⁹² Several of these essays have been collected as Day 2013a. Day is also at work on the International Critical Commentary to Genesis 1–11 (Day 2013a: vii). For combat myth matters, the most pertinent chapters in Day 2013a are on (Ch 1) Gen 1:1–2:4a; (Ch. 4) the ten antediluvian patriarchs of Berossus (~ Day 2011); and (Ch. 6) the flood narratives and Mesopotamian parallels (= Day 2013b; see also now Boyd 2019a; 2014: 266–91).

⁹³ Day (2015; 2013a: 166–88) is happy to admit Mesopotamian influence in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9), even if the particular markers of influence he identifies are not so clearly expressed as one might wish; to Day's mind, they seem to consist of the presence of a ziggurat-like structure itself (2015: 144–45; 2013a: 172), the mode of brick-making (2015: 145; 2013a: 172), and, less clearly, possible parallels to *שָׁפָה אֶת וְיָבִיאוּ אֹהֶל יְהוָה וְיָבִיאוּ אֹהֶל יְהוָה* (Gen 11.1; Day 2015: 146–47, 152; 2013a: 173–74, 180–81; see at length Uehlinger 1990: 514–83; on the claim that *pâ istēn* in Sargon II's Dur-Šarrukin [Khorsabad] cylinder would have referred to imposition of Aramaic language, and more recently Boyd 2019b; 2014: 181–87; DeGrado 2018a: 14). Even regarding this narrative, though, Day (2015: 148; 2013a: 176) finds himself constrained to deny the influence of *Enūma eliš* on the narrative, particularly the description of the construction of Babylon and the Esaglia temple in VI.57–68 (ed. e.g. Lambert 2013: 112–15), as was hypothesized by Speiser 1956 (= Speiser 1967: 53–61). It is not certain that Day himself perceives this as a sort of

This type of division leads to difficulties chiefly in cases that scholars have identified as demythologized or, less polemically, only partial reflections of the combat myth. In the Primeval History, the Priestly creation narrative in Genesis 1:1–2:4a and the flood narratives in Genesis 6–9 are the texts most often considered within these frameworks⁹⁴ and are, therefore, the most problematic cases, in genealogical matters, for Day. In general, when Day does admit possible Mesopotamian parallels in Genesis 1:1–2:4a, he regards them as erroneously identified and therefore irrelevant. An example of this sort of putative parallel is the repose of the deity or deities in biblical and Mesopotamian creation narratives. Day asserts:

although in both Genesis and the Mesopotamian works we read of divine rest following the creation of humanity, the cases are in fact totally different. In Genesis God alone rests on the seventh day as a result of his vast labors in creating the universe. In all the Mesopotamian works it is not the creator god/goddess who rests but the gods generally, who are spared future work as a result of the creation of humanity, who are to do their manual work instead [...] The matter seems entirely different. (Day 2013a: 17–18)

Whether this does in fact constitute entire difference or, alternatively, leaves cognitive space open for productive comparison will largely depend on one's philosophy of comparativism.⁹⁵ In this

slippery slope to widespread *Enūma eliš* influence in the Primeval History, but the explicit and forceful denial gives this impression. Day similarly approves of hypotheses of Mesopotamian influence in the non-combat-myth narrative of Genesis 3 (esp. Day 2013a: 37).

⁹⁴ Gen 1:1–2:4a has been considered in this framework since the work of Gunkel and his predecessors as documented above. The main consideration that supports including the flood narrative or (J and P) narratives as somehow connected with the combat myth is the hypothesis that Yahweh's signifying נֶשֶׁבֶת in Gen 9.16 represents a weapon of war set aside for the future; orientations to this hypothesis are available in Kloos 1982 and de Boer 1974.

⁹⁵ Other examples of similar dismissals include (1.) Day's (2013a: 19–20) conclusion that "the Hebrew word *ʿhōm* is not directly dependent on Babylonian Tiamat," given the absence of the feminine singular morpheme $\text{-} \text{ } \langle$

and similar matters regarding Genesis 1, Day is firmly in the camp of the Israelite exceptionalists considered below.

Because Day does not, on the other hand, view the flood narratives in Genesis 6–9 as primarily about Yahweh’s control over waters and therefore potentially informed by combat myth narratives, hypotheses of Mesopotamian influence are evidently more permissible here. Indeed, the core theses of certain of Day’s (2013b; 2013a: 61–76, 98–112; 2011) discussions of the flood narrative are that the biblical accounts owe much to Mesopotamian flood narratives. In some cases, Day (2013a: 61–76; 2011) advocates that these commonalities be viewed particularly through the prism of Berossus; he argues this author to have been thoroughly reliant on ancient Babylonian traditions, some of which have been lost. In other cases, though, Day regards extant Mesopotamian Akkadian sources to be close enough to the reconstructed Pentateuchal sources for him to determine, for example, that both J and P relied on “some form of the Atrahasis epic rather than Gilgamesh” (2013b: 81; 2013a: 107).⁹⁶ In all of this, there is no acknowledgment that Day’s acceptance of Mesopotamian influences in this case problematizes his conviction that

*-ā < *-at) on the Hebrew lexeme; and (2.) that whereas Marduk creates earth out of Tiamat, Yahweh’s control of the waters and/or Leviathan succeeds creation in the biblical timeline (ibid.: 20). Several opinions similar to these occur in Israelite exceptionalist readings of the combat myth, especially R. S. Watson (2005) and Tsumura (1989; 2005).

⁹⁶ Less often, Mesopotamian parallels are held to alert one to polemical inclusions that demonstrate the distance of biblical traditions from those of Assyria and Babylon. For example, Day considers the narrative of Noah’s drunkenness (Gen 9.18–27) to be potentially, following a suggestion of Baumgarten (1975: 60–65), “a way of countering the earlier Mesopotamian tradition that the flood hero was taken away to live with the gods after the flood (cf. the Sumerian flood story, a fragment of the Atrahasis flood story from Ugarit, Gilgamesh 11.203–206, and Berossus). J’s rejection of the Mesopotamian tradition of the flood hero’s apotheosis at this point is certainly striking when we consider how much the underlying Mesopotamian flood story has been followed in other regards” (Day 2013a: 149–50 [not included in Day 2013c]). Day (2013a: 70; 2011: 218) makes a similar point, “the motif of Enoch’s being taken up at the end of his life was appropriated from the comparable taking up of the Mesopotamian flood hero [...] but specifically rejected for Noah in Genesis, unlike many other aspects of the Mesopotamian flood story, which are appropriated.”

Mesopotamian influence is certainly absent not only in other biblical narratives but even in other Priestly portions of the primeval history. If one admits that there is Mesopotamian—and even particular compositional—influence in some portions of P’s primeval history, it becomes more difficult to assert that P was either wholly unaware of other major Mesopotamian compositions or that P completely ignored these when composing Genesis 1–2:4a.

An attempt to circumvent this dilemma is visible in Day’s consideration of the path by which Mesopotamian traditions of the flood came to Israelite consciousness. Day will not, unlike some scholars, admit an older source or continuum of vague mythic material on which both the Levantine and Mesopotamian material is reliant, because this is “positing entities beyond necessity” (Day 2013b: 83; 2013a: 110). Rather, because Mesopotamian literary works are known from Anatolian and Levantine sites by ca. the fourteenth century B.C.E. “it is likely that the Mesopotamian flood story was originally mediated to the Israelites through the Canaanites” (Day 2013b: 84; 2013a: 110). Although Day does not explicitly say so, perhaps this mediating influence would have allowed the Canaanites to thoroughly replace Mesopotamian combat myth motifs with their own narratives, which they then passed on to the “Israelites.” As should be clear, though, Day’s reconstruction of the paths by which mythological traditions traveled in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages again assumes much about the population of this area in these periods, and in ways that are no longer in accord with scholarly consensus (see n. 91). The necessity of a hegemonic Canaanite cultural prism through which all narrative material must have passed evaporates when these assumptions are set aside.

1.3 Recent Developments in Combat Myth Studies

After Day's monograph and co-occurring with field-wise re-evaluations of "Canaanite" and "Israelite" categories as mutually exclusive, Combat Myth Studies underwent a lull that lasted through the first decade of the twenty-first century.⁹⁷ Relevant monographs contemporaneous with that of Day tended to have restricted hypotheses or restricted textual foci. An example of the former is Mary K. Wakeman's *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Wakeman 1973).⁹⁸ Wakeman's avowedly (ibid.: 5) structuralist approach produces an attempt at reading all combat myths as built from time and space oppositions between god and monster, the former of whom is figured as active and "outside" (in the sense that he is independent of the created order and exerts power upon it) whereas the latter is figured as passive ("inert") and "inside" (in the sense that it is constitutive of the created order and has power exerted upon itself, usually by splitting, separating, etc.) (ibid.: 22–24, 42). After a more traditional consideration of the ways in which narratives of Tannin/Tunnanu and Leviathan/Lôtānu manifest similar oppositions (ibid.:

⁹⁷ During the 2000s, the only relevant monographs were Tsumura 2005 (in large part a revision of Tsumura 1989) and R. S. Watson 2005. Both of these volumes could be described as reactionary in that they are aimed at contesting the widespread recognition that combat myth motifs surface in the Hebrew Bible. Whitney 2006, the published version of a dissertation completed in 1992, focuses primarily on Second Temple and Rabbinic Jewish narratives, and Koch 2004 is exclusively concerned with the New Testament. Aside from ongoing work on the primary Ugaritic combat myth narrative Ba'lu—especially the study Wyatt 1996 and the edition and commentary of Smith 1994—I am not aware of any monographs from the 1990s that focus on the combat myth. As in the case of Batto's (2013) later volume of collected essays, only portions of his earlier book (Batto 1992) are directly concerned with the combat myth; see esp. Ch. 3, "The Priestly Revision of the Creation Myth" (ibid.: 73–101). This is worth mentioning since Batto's title, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition*, might suggest that the "dragon" is the theme of the volume as a whole. The most relevant article published during this period is Uehlinger 1995, which does discuss—contrary to the general trend observed in the present chapter—images of dragon combat in Near Eastern art, primarily Mesopotamian cylinder seals, and is cited and discussed in detail throughout Chapter 3.

⁹⁸ Like Day's monograph, this was originally a dissertation, completed at Brandeis University in 1969 under the direction of Nahum Sarna. The "earth monster" aspect of Wakeman's work (see below) was published before the dissertation as Wakeman 1969.

56–105), the model leads to a questionable search for an inert “earth monster,” allegedly a structural necessity, in Ugaritic texts and the Hebrew Bible (*ibid.*: 106–38). The fact that the Ugaritic god Môtu dwells in the underworld leads Wakeman (*ibid.*: 106–8) to identify putatively mythological references to מוֹת in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Isa 25:8; 28:15; Jer 9:20; Hos 13:14)⁹⁹ as reflective of this “earth monster.”¹⁰⁰ Even less likely, in my opinion and that of several other scholars,¹⁰¹ is Wakeman’s (1973: 108–11) identification of אֶרֶץ “land” as an antagonistic “earth monster” in various texts.¹⁰² In general, Wakeman’s insistence on structuralist balance in

⁹⁹ Many of these have been treated more recently by two scholars working intensively on death in Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts, namely Hays (2011: esp. 179–90; 2010, Isa 28:15 as a play on words naming the Egyptian deity Mut and therefore Judah’s treaty with Egypt [cf. Mastnjak 2014; Blenkinsopp 2000]) and Suriano (2018a: esp. 217–48; 2016; 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Wakeman (1973: 108 n. 2) is not completely convinced of Albright’s (1950: 11, 17) emendation of the Masoretic text of Hab 3:13b מְהַצֵּת רֹאשׁ מְבִיט רֶשֶׁע “You struck the head of the wicked one’s house” to מְהַצֵּת רֹאשׁ מְוֹת רֶשֶׁע “You struck the head of wicked Death” on the basis of LXX ἔβαλες εἰς κεφαλὰς ἀνόμων θάνατον “You threw death into the heads of the wicked ones.” The most detailed discussion of this and other hypotheses of emendation may be found at Hiebert 1986: 36–40.

¹⁰¹ The hypothesis is discussed in some detail and then dismantled by attention to individual texts and their likely significations in Day 1985: 84–86. Caquot (1975) is similarly skeptical. Criticism of the non-Near Eastern aspects of Wakeman’s work (“As is all too typical of biblical scholars when dealing with comparative materials, Wakeman gives no attention to the critical literature”) is forwarded by J. Z. Smith 1975. On the other hand, Smith is all but taken in by Wakeman’s earth-monster hypothesis: “I find her evidence convincing and her conclusion deserving of further research.”

¹⁰² This monster is allegedly to be found in places in which the earth swallows humans (Exod 15:12; Num 16:32) and texts in which Yahweh acts or walks upon the earth (e.g. Ps 97:4–5; Amos 9:5–6; Mic 1:3–4; Nah 1:5). Given the absence of unambiguous personification and the ease of understanding these as simply involving the insensate earth, it is in none of these texts necessary or likely that a personified earth-entity is in view. Wakeman (1973: 71 n. 2; 111–12) also proposes that a Ugaritic antagonist {ârš}—named among ‘Anatu’s defeated enemies in RS 2.[014+] iii:43’ (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.3) and together with Tunnanu in RS 2.[009]+5.155 vi:51 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.6)—is cognate with biblical Hebrew אֶרֶץ and also to be identified as an earth monster. The cognate hypothesis is very unlikely because it requires an otherwise unattested sound change; Wakeman’s (1973: 71 n. 2) claim that {mḥšt} for a reflex of √mḥṣ “smite” is relevant must be set aside, as the development ṣ < *š the result of dissimilation of the sibilant before *t* (Held 1959 for this root; Hutton 2006 for further examples; Tropper 2000/2012: 105–6 [§32.143.35] for grammatical

mythological entities and their attributes produces a number of unlikely readings and figure identifications, especially in biblical allusions to the combat myth.

The tendency of work on Hebrew Bible divine combat allusions to focus on isolated texts is best illustrated in English-language scholarship¹⁰³ by the monograph of Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (1986).¹⁰⁴ Kloos devotes one large part each to the important texts Psalm 29 and Exodus 15 and demonstrates that each depicts Yahweh as a conquering warrior god; Yahweh is variously connected with and opposed to the sea, and he is often depicted as the master of the storm and its elements (Kloos 1986: 107–8, 157). Kloos's selection of texts appears to have been driven by her view that each of her cases have insights to contribute to a history of Levantine religions, especially with regard to Yahweh's relationship with Baal (ibid.: 123–24). A second major concern appears to have been Kloos's interest in the relationship between scholarly categories of “myth” and “history” and the alleged processes of “mythicization” and “historicization.” Psalm 29 and Exodus 15 have both figured prominently in discussions of these phenomena (e.g. Loretz 1984; Cross 1973: 121–44, 151–62). Kloos's discussion has the advantage of including thorough references to anthropological and literary studies work on myth (ibid.: 160–77) and cogent comparanda from studies of Indo-

summary). Scholars that propose an etymology and semantics for {ārš} generally point to Ugaritic $\sqrt{r}\text{š}$ “to request, demand, desire” (e.g. Smith and Pitard 2009: 259–60; Pardee 1997: 252 and n. 93; for the verbal root, see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 104–5).

¹⁰³ In German scholarship, the best illustration of this tendency to examine combat myth texts chiefly in isolation from one another and from broader cultural contexts is the work of Loretz extending over many volumes (Loretz 1988a; 1988b [both various royal psalms]; 1986 [Joel]; 1984 [Ps 29]; 1968 [Gen 1]) on individual biblical chapters that he claims to be illustrative of festal celebration of Yahweh's combats and/or storm-related powers.

¹⁰⁴ Kloos's volume is the published version of a dissertation completed at the University of Leiden under the direction of P. A. H. de Boer. To my knowledge, her only other publication on similar topics is Kloos 1982, on Gen 9:16 as cited in n. 94, above.

European mythology for processes of mythicization and historicization (ibid.: 177–90).¹⁰⁵ There arises, however, a perennial problem with the focus on isolated texts, namely that the exploration of global hypotheses and especially social contexts are subordinated to a verse-by-verse and word-by-word discussion in the style of traditional biblical commentary. This style certainly produces some excellent insights and, in Kloos’s case, the self-reflective realization that such an endeavor quickly becomes primarily or exclusively textual (ibid.: 51). One has the feeling, though, that in such studies the order of the ancient text drives the order in which material is presented and explored.

Recent Combat Myth Studies have attempted, whether consciously or not, to redress these potential deficiencies—namely the presentation of isolated, primarily lexical hypotheses and the focus on individual texts—by exploring multiple combat myths and attempting to relate these to their ancient contexts of composition and reception. Along with this, an accelerating rate of publication is also visible, with six major combat myth studies monographs having appeared since

¹⁰⁵ Here the primary reference is to Dumézil’s (first 1940; afterwards in many studies cited by Kloos 1986: 180 n. 99) hypothesis that the historicized figures of Horatius Cocles and Mucius Scaevola in Roman narrative (esp. Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 2.10–13) have analogues in other one-eyed and one-handed figures throughout Indo-European mythology, e.g. the Old Irish narrative of the Second Battle of Mag Tuired (*Cath Maige Tuired*; ed. Gray 1982), in which Lug mac Ethnenn (Maier and Edwards 1997: 178–79) significantly closes one eye while singing his war song and Nuadu Argatlám (Brythonic Nodens; Maier and Edwards 1997: 209–10) loses his hand and replaces it with one made of silver (hence his name *argatlám* “silver-handed”).

2015,¹⁰⁶ in addition to several related works.¹⁰⁷ Because authors who have published monographs in recent years have rarely been able to interact with and evaluate the core hypotheses of one another,¹⁰⁸ I present summaries and brief critiques of some of these, below, with the hope of

¹⁰⁶ I refer to the monographs Cho 2019; Miller 2018; Töyräänvuori 2018; Tugendhaft 2018; Ayali-Darshan 2016; and Ballentine 2015. I have also consulted a Ph.D. thesis by Beth Steiner (2013), completed at Oxford University under the direction of John Day, entitled “A Discussion of the Canaanite Mythological Background to the Israelite Concept of Eschatological Hope in Isaiah 24-27.” The second chapter of this thesis discusses the combat myth as illuminating for Isa 27:1 in particular and engages with the Ugaritic comparanda. The conclusion of this chapter is essentially that Yahweh’s defeat of Leviathan, etc., is already transformed in Isa 27 into an eschatological forecast rather than a recollection of things past; that this should be expressed as a “theological” development within a Canaanite—Israelite dichotomy is debatable, but the case for the eschatological figuration is compelling and nuanced. I am not aware of any plans for this thesis to be published, nor does Steiner seem to have continued work in the field.

¹⁰⁷ The edited volume Scurlock and Beal 2013 is avowedly centered around a reevaluation of Gunkel’s *Chaoskampf* hypothesis, but the topics of the various contributions are very diverse and not always focused on Gunkel. These contributions are engaged as appropriate in the chapters that follow rather than surveyed here. Volumes of collected essays by Batto (2013; see also Batto 2015) and Day (2013a) have also recently appeared; the latter is referenced at some length in Section 1.2, above. Mobley 2012 is, despite its title (*The Return of the Chaos Monsters*), a popular overview presenting several central conclusions of historical-critical scholarship as “backstories” of various biblical texts; the first chapter, “The Return of the Chaos Monsters: The Backstory of Creation” (Mobley 2012: 16–33) is the most relevant and reports mainstream hypotheses as to the presence of chaos monsters in the Hebrew Bible. Relevant scholarship that fits within the framework of “Horror Theory,” “Monster Theory,” or “Monster Studies” is explored in Section 2.2.

In recent years, there have also been significant reeditions and book-length studies of *Enūma eliš*, namely Talon and Anthonioz 2019; Gabriel 2014; Lambert 2013; and Kämmerer and Metzler 2012. Many recent articles working within the framework of combat myth studies can also be cited to support the view of a burgeoning field; these include—in the area of biblical studies—Seiler 2019; Peters 2018; Greene 2017; Tsumura 2015; Wilson-Wright 2015; Strine and Crouch 2013. (Other work has also been done by the authors of recent monographs cited above; see throughout the following for these references.) Interestingly, many of these articles have been published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, which might suggest the authors’ or a widespread view that the combat myth is a central concern of biblical studies.

¹⁰⁸ Of course, academic monographs—especially those based on dissertations—are completed long before they are published, so one can hardly expect the authors cited above, all of whom published monographs in the three-year span 2015–2019, to interact with each other extensively if at all. The particulars of this interaction can nevertheless be illustrated by looking at patterns of citation. Among the more recent monographs, Tugendhaft (2018) does cite both Ballentine (2015) and Ayali-Darshan (2016); he critiques both because “[d]espite demonstrating

illustrating briefly the direction in which combat myth studies as a whole has been moving and facilitating further conversation in this field.

Three of these recent works—Ballentine 2015; Tugendhaft 2018; and Töyräänvuori 2018—have been primarily concerned with establishing the political import of the combat myth in various contexts. To take the most narrowly focused work first, Aaron Tugendhaft (2018)¹⁰⁹ attempts to prove that the Ugaritic *Baʿlu* myth was not a legitimation of terrestrial kingship, as

excellent scholarship, these works fail to do full justice to the mythological texts because their working corpus remains largely limited to the various attestations of a motif over time and through space rather than the nonmythic contexts of individual attestations” (Tugendhaft 2018: 41 n. 7). This seems to me a misplaced and hasty critique. Both Ballentine (2015: 73–75, 112–16) and Ayali-Darshan (2016: 262–69) devote substantial space to the Mari letter A. 1968 from Nūr-Sîn to Zimri-Lim mentioning the weapons of Adad as political discourse; this is one of Tugendhaft’s (2018: 47–61) central examples of how mythological motifs can be illuminated by attention to contemporary non-mythological texts. Both scholars, moreover, discuss “nonmythic contexts of individual attestations” at great length throughout their volumes, e.g. Ballentine’s (2015: 39–48) lengthy exposition of the political and theological milieu of the Aššur recension of *Enūma eliš*, including detailed engagement of specific Sennacherib royal inscriptions that “promote Sennacherib’s kingship specifically by making references to the story of Aššur’s rise to power through his defeat of Tiamat”; and Ayali-Darshan’s (2016: 42–45) explication of the ways in which Egyptian magical practitioners incorporated combat myth motifs into their work for legitimating purposes.

Tugendhaft’s engagement with recent monographs is nevertheless more comprehensive than that of R. D. Miller (2018), who demonstrates no awareness of Ballentine or Ayali-Darshan’s monographs. Miller nevertheless claims at various points that, of the scholars who have discussed the combat myth, “none have attempted to bring it all together” (Miller 2018: 8). This is true only if by “it all” Miller includes his more far-flung points of comparison, e.g. Vedic myths of Indra and Slavic myths of Perun. For more on R. D. Miller 2018, see below.

¹⁰⁹ This is the thoroughly edited (and much shorter) version of a dissertation completed at New York University in 2012 under the direction of Mark S. Smith. The dissertation is referenced below as Tugendhaft 2012a, sometimes alongside the published book because its process of argumentation is quite different and often more detailed. Tugendhaft has also published other articles and volume contributions on the topic of *Baʿlu* and its political context (Tugendhaft 2013; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d; 2010); the content of most of these appears in some form in the book and/or dissertation. As of May 2019, three reviews of Tugendhaft 2018 has appeared, namely Pardee 2019; Lemardelé 2018; and Wilson-Wright 2018. I have a review forthcoming in the *Review of Politics* (University of Notre Dame).

frequently supposed. Rather, Tugendhaft argues, the language of vassalship, tribute, and kinship¹¹⁰ that occurs throughout the epic suggests that it was composed by the scribe and official ʔIlîmilku with the international realm in view.¹¹¹ This official intended the epic to stand as a critique of sovereignty—particularly Hittite imperial hegemony—rather than a support for it:

¹¹⁰ For language of vassalship and tribute in *Baʕlu*, see the summaries in Tugendhaft 2018: 79–99; 2012a: 122–61; 2012b.

¹¹¹ As auxiliary support for this, Tugendhaft stresses that the gods are represented in the *Baʕlu* epic as geographically dispersed and therefore more likely analogues of diverse geographical entities than of positions or individuals at the Ugaritic court: “[t]he Ugaritic poem focuses attention on the gods’ geographic separation and their interaction is modeled upon the international correspondence of Late Bronze Age kings” (Tugendhaft 2018: 38; 2012a: 27). Tugendhaft (2018: 38–39; 2012a: 27–28) contrasts this with the Olympian situation, in that “all the Greek gods’ houses are located together on Mount Olympus. This grouping of the Greek gods at a single location may be connected to the politics of Panhellenism that underlies much archaic Greek poetry. By contrast, the houses of the gods in the Ugaritic poem are isolated from each other, separated by great distances. This separation reflects the international perspective of the Ugaritic poem” (Tugendhaft 2018: 39). As with most Indo-European—Semitic dichotomies, though, the situation is hardly this simple. Scholars of Greco-Roman literature (e.g. Graziosi 2013: 37) often point to the fact that, in the *Iliad*, there are hints that individual gods are more at home on particular mountains. A *locus classicus* for this observation is the beginning of *Iliad* 13, in which Zeus, located on Mount Ida (east of Troy) at various points throughout the epic, turns away from the battle while Poseidon watches from an unnamed mountain on Samothrace (an island north-northwest of Troy):

οὐδ’ ἀλαοσκοπιὴν εἶχε κρείων ἐνοσίχθων:
καὶ γὰρ ὁ θαυμάζων ἦστο πτόλεμόν τε μάχην τε
ὑψοῦ ἐπ’ ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς Σάμου ὑληέσσης
Θρηϊκίης: ἔθθεν γὰρ ἐφαίνετο πᾶσα μὲν Ἴδη

But Lord Earth-Shaker (Poseidon) kept no blind watch,
But wondering at the war and battle,
aloft on the highest peak of wooded Samothrace,
he saw thence all Ida. (*Iliad* 13.10–13)

The travel of the gods between these peaks in fact mirrors the divine travel in Ugaritic epic. One might compare, for example, Poseidon’s journey following the above passage—τρίς μὲν ὀρέξασ’ ἰόν, τὸ δὲ τέτατον ἔκετο τέκμων (*Iliad* 13.20) “He took three strides and with the fourth reached his goal”—with those that gods take

According to Bronze Age conventions, vassal status was grounded in an international order that reflected the organization of a kin-based household—with its fathers, sons, brothers, slaves, and masters. The extension of these relations to the international sphere rested upon a legal fiction that aimed to bolster the idea that politics conformed to a natural hierarchy. Instead of reinforcing this fiction, the Baal Cycle throws it into doubt. As a witness to (and participant in) a world of incessant power struggles and competing assertions of authority, Ugarit produced a poem that encourages its audience to engage with the idea of a universe that lacks the comforts of order. The story of Baal’s rise in such a world served as the vehicle for a critical form of political wisdom. (Tugendhaft 2018: 95–96; cp. idem 2012a: 161; 2012b: 383)¹¹²

A recurring emphasis in Tugendhaft’s work is the importance of analyzing *Baʿlu* in the context of contemporary and geographically proximate documents illustrating political, economic, and social life (Tugendhaft 2018: 27–45; 2012a: 7–22). To this end, the Ugaritic and Akkadian letters and other documentary texts are taken up at much greater length than is usual in Combat Myth Studies; these aid in substantiating lexical and formulaic hypotheses that Tugendhaft forwards.¹¹³ The

throughout *Baʿlu* after representing the distance using a similarly graded formula: { ũgr . lrḥq . ilm . inbb / lrḥq . ilnym . ṭn . mṭpdm / ṭḥt . ṣnt . arṣ . ṭlt . mḥ . ḡrym} (I go) “(from) ʿUḡaru for the farthest of gods, (from) ʿInbubu for the farthest of deities, by double-lengths below the springs of the earth, triple(-lengths) in the low areas” (*Baʿlu* 3 iv:34–36; Pardee 1997: 253; cf. Smith and Pitard 2009: 279–80, 300–1).

¹¹² The dissertation (Tugendhaft 2012a: 161) and earlier publication (idem 2012b: 383) lack reference to engaging “an audience” at this juncture: “Witness to and participant in a world of incessant power struggles and competing assertions of authority, Ugarit engendered a poem that compels engagement with a universe that lacks the comforts of order.” This earlier formulation is less clear, but it does have the advantage of obscuring, to a certain extent, Tugendhaft’s apparent disinclination to explore how this audience engagement operated (see further below).

¹¹³ The official publication of Akkadian letters from the house of ʿUrtēnu in Lackenbacher and Malbran-Labat 2016 allowed greater use of these in the book than in the dissertation. One area in which this publication assisted Tugendhaft was in his observation that an individual named ʿIlīmilku—according to Tugendhaft, the same as the scribe (and allegedly, author) of the *Baʿlu* epic—was indeed active in official circles during the reign of Niqmaddu III (ca. 1225/20–15 B.C.E.) (contrast Tugendhaft 2018: 30–37 with idem 2012a: 16–17 and see immediately below).

documentary focus results in Tugendhaft’s volume having, in common with the present study, a goal of expanding the source database for combat myth scholarship beyond the closed canon of narrative myths. The implications of this approach are substantial. For example, Tugendhaft argues that the scribe responsible for the known tablets of *Baʿlu*—{ilmlk} *ʔIlīmilku* on the basis of the colophon to *Baʿlu* VI¹¹⁴—is identical with a well-networked official who appears throughout Akkadian epistolary and treaty documents as {¹DINGIR-mil-ku} (along with similar writings); it is on this basis that the plausibility of political engagement by the scribe of *Baʿlu* is primarily founded (Tugendhaft 2018: 31–37; 2012a: 16–17).¹¹⁵ Similarly, the precise import of expressions of brotherhood such as appear between gods in the *Baʿlu* epic is argued to be international and diplomatic—rather than confined to relationships within the city of Ugarit—since similar kinship expressions recur throughout Akkadian letters and treaties discovered at Ugarit and neighboring states and in the earlier, fourteenth-century Amarna letters (Tugendhaft 2018: 101–24; 2012a: 162–239; 2012c).

As is apparent from these two examples and the general outline of argumentation given above, Tugendhaft’s focus remains on explicating the text of *Baʿlu* by comparison with other texts.

¹¹⁴ The colophon actually contains substantial detail about *ʔIlīmilku*, his paternity, and his employment: {spr . ilmlk . šbny / lmd . ātn . prln . rb / khnm rb . nqdm / ʔy . nqmd . mlk ūg^r[t] / ādn . yrgb . b^l . ʔrmn} “The scribe: *ʔIlīmilku* the Šubbanite, disciple of *ʔAttēnu*—the diviner, chief of the priests, chief of the cultic herdsmen—*ta^{ss}āyu*-official of Niqmaddu—king of Ugarit, lord of YRGB, master of ʔRMN” (for this structural analysis, Pardee 2012: 42–44; more on {prln}, a second colophon of *ʔIlīmilku* to RS 92.2016, and the possibility that that colophon reveals *ʔIlīmilku* as primarily an oral poet who composed rather than copied texts may be found at Pardee 2015; 2012: 47–48; cf. e.g. Dobbs-Allsopp 2015: 493–94 n. 378; Wyatt 2015; Greenstein 2014: 216–17; Hutton 2014: [4]–[6]). Tugendhaft (2018: 31, 42 n. 21) cites and analyzes this colophon briefly before delving into Akkadian attestations of the individual or individuals named *ʔIlīmilku*; another recent analysis of the colophon is del Olmo Lete 2017: 497.

¹¹⁵ Pardee (2019: 167) has cogently criticized the fact that Tugendhaft usually presents this identification without any caveats: “one must [...] make clear to readers [...] that each and every one of the identifications with the scribe who signed the colophons is to various degrees hypothetical.”

It is assumed that this text had political relevance and resonance, but it is nowhere demonstrated that anyone other than ʾIlîmilku ever read or heard these words that allegedly shook the foundations of terrestrial sovereignty. Tugendhaft somewhat frequently refers to an “audience” for *Baʿlu*,¹¹⁶ but the constitution of this audience and the mechanics of its engagement with the myth are not only fuzzy—they go unacknowledged as a topic worthy of fuller description. If anything, this gap is made more troublesome by Tugendhaft’s insistence that ʾIlîmilku was the “author” of *Baʿlu* or at least the source of the implicit political theories understood to be transformative.¹¹⁷ Other scholars assuming a public reach for ancient Near Eastern myths have been able to rely on the assumption that *Baʿlu*, other Ugaritic myths, and other manifestations of the combat myth were in their essential outlines orally composed and performed. In his conviction that the important elements of the written myth originate with ʾIlîmilku, Tugendhaft has paradoxically distanced the currently accessible text from any reception context even as he brings it closer to its compositional context.¹¹⁸ In order to demonstrate that a literary work had significance, one cannot restrict oneself

¹¹⁶ In addition to the block quote from Tugendhaft 2018: 95–96 cited above (and cf., as noted there, idem 2012a: 161; 2012b: 383), Tugendhaft refers to an “audience” for *Baʿlu* at idem 2018: 5–6, 102; 2017: 592–93; 2012a: 37, 134, 164–65, 206–7; 2012b: 374; 2012c: 91–92, 98–99. These references are generally in introductions or conclusions to sections or chapters and not in the course of argumentation that establishes the existence of such an audience, e.g. “By showing its audience how Baal became a brother, the play of power and persuasion involved in achieving political legitimacy is presented, as if in a mirror, to view” (Tugendhaft 2012a: 207; cp. idem 2018: 110; 2012c: 99). At an early point in Tugendhaft’s monograph (2018: 5) the “dynamic relationship between audience and text” is presented as an exciting and worthy topic of study, but the promise of attention to this audience is never fulfilled.

¹¹⁷ As Wilson-Wright (2018) notes, “Although Tugendhaft concedes that this point [ʾIlîmilku’s authorship of *Baʿlu*] is not crucial to his larger argument, he maintains it throughout the book”; see also Pardee 2019: 171–72.

¹¹⁸ Tugendhaft does refer obliquely to the performance of *Baʿlu* (e.g. Tugendhaft 2018: 27), but his thoroughly textual view of ʾIlîmilku’s *Baʿlu* and the extent to which he believes the text to have been transparently undermining royal authority complicate the assumption of performance to a greater degree than has been true for other scholarly reconstructions.

to the possible motivations and intentions of an author.¹¹⁹ One must also demonstrate that both the expressed form and any claimed meaning would have been both practically accessible and conceptually explicable to ancient audiences.

Debra Scoggins Ballentine, in *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition* (2015),¹²⁰ presents a hypotheses of political allegory that is more traditional and broader than that of Tugendhaft.¹²¹ Ballentine, working from a paradigm in which myth is “not just taxonomy, but *ideology* in narrative form” (Lincoln 1999: 147), inquires into what ancient Near Eastern taxonomies the combat myth sets out to naturalize and how this ideology operates in various

¹¹⁹ I leave aside for the moment whether these motivations and intentions are indeed recoverable, especially in “fiction” and related genres like “myth” (cp. e.g. Eagleton 2003: 90, “fiction is incapable of telling the truth. If an author breaks off to assure us that what she is now asserting is actually true—that it really, literally happened—we would take this as a fictional statement”). As Wilson-Wright (2018) has pointed out with regard to Tugendhaft’s central hypotheses: “it is unclear to me whether the Baal Cycle represents an outright critique of Late Bronze Age politics as Tugendhaft claims or simply reflects the political environment in which it was composed and recited. Seeing the Baal Cycle as the Ugaritic equivalent of *The Prince* relies on problematic notions of authorial intent: we must assume that the author had a larger goal in mind than verisimilitude in depicting political power as contingent and ambiguous”; see similarly Pardee 2019: 170–72.

¹²⁰ Ballentine 2015 is the edited version of a dissertation completed at Brown University under the direction of Saul M. Olyan in 2012. A number of reviews of Ballentine’s volume have appeared: Angel 2017; Flynn 2017; Batto 2016; Cho 2016; Kearney 2016; Mayfield 2016. Ballentine’s only other publication touching on combat myth themes and texts is Ballentine 2013, on principles of Targumic exegesis as revealed by the Targum of Ps 74.13–14; the Targum interprets the “heads of Leviathan” as Pharaoh’s warriors and thereby historicizes the myth to some extent.

¹²¹ Joanna Töyräänvuori has recently authored a similar treatment with the basic hypothesis that the combat myth has as its goal “to establish and legitimize the rule of a monarch by basing it on the claim of the ancient conquest of the (Mediterranean) Sea” (e.g. Töyräänvuori 2018: 532). Töyräänvuori 2018 is a monograph based on a 2016 dissertation completed at the University of Helsinki under the direction of Herbert Niehr. I am aware of three related publications by the author, Töyräänvuori 2016b, on the Mediterranean Sea in “Semitic mythology”; eadem 2013, on the Egyptian combat myth; and eadem 2012, a study of the “weapons of the storm god” as a motif in both texts and iconography throughout the ancient Near East; and eadem 2011, suggesting that incisions on a Jerusalem sherd (Gilmour 2009) depict a god atop the sea or a serpent; I think this hypothesis unlikely and therefore do not discuss it in Chapters 3–5.

individual narratives and motifs.¹²² According to Ballentine (2015: 189), the “primary ideological work” of combat myths in their historical and geographical contexts is legitimation of the deity portrayed as a victorious warrior. Secondly, this legitimation redounds to the credit of associated institutions, such as particular temples,¹²³ and individuals, such as real kings and imagined “secondary divine figures,” such as the “Elect One” in certain Rabbinic texts and Jesus in the New Testament and other Early Christian literature.¹²⁴ Special attention is paid to the function of Hebrew Bible combat myth motifs, which assert Yahweh’s universal dominion, endorse Israelite and Judean royalty, and invoke Yahweh against enemies (ibid.: 81–111). This last function prefigures the transposition of the combat myth to eschatological discourse, in which the conflict with monstrous antagonists is portrayed as future rather than past. As Ballentine (ibid.: 127–72)

¹²² Ballentine (2015: 14) refers to the group of “whole narratives” plus “motifs” (i.e. allusions or references to the combat myth in non-narrative form) as “topoi.” Various other terminological possibilities are explored and cogently set aside at ibid.

¹²³ For example, in *Enūma eliš*, the Esagila temple of Marduk at Babylon is established as divinely sanctioned and therefore legitimate (Ballentine 2015: 35–39), the Aššur *akītu* house is similarly constituted as legitimate by the relief of the battle between Aššur and Tiamat that Sennacherib claims appeared on the door (ibid.: 43 and see further below and in Ch. 4), Ba^ʿlu’s royal house—presumably identified by Ugaritians with the temple of Ba^ʿlu at Ras Shamra itself—is a major topic of tablets 3 and 4 of the Ugaritic *Ba^ʿlu* myth (esp. ibid.: 64), and Yahweh’s temple is argued by Ballentine (ibid.: 109–11) to have contained recollections of the combat myth in, for example, the “molten sea” (but cf. in Section 5.2, below).

¹²⁴ Among human entities thus supported are Zimri-Lim in the Mari letter A.1968 (see the introduction to Ch. 5, esp. n. 541; Ballentine 2015: 111–16) and the Judean royal house (e.g. Ps 89; Ballentine 2015: 116–20). Somewhat frequently the discourse works by claiming that the individual possesses the weapons of the victorious deity (for more on this, see esp. Töyräänvuori 2012). As many scholars have noted (e.g. Fitzmyer 1981: 728), the characterization of Jesus in early Christian literature is informed by a desire to portray him as displaying mastery over antagonists and the sea, e.g. in Revelation as a divine warrior (Ballentine 2015: 137–50) or in the Gospels as capable of walking on water (Mark 6:45–52; Matt 14:22–33; John 6:16–21) and/or calming storms (Mark 4:35–41; Matt 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25; Ballentine 2015: 174–80).

demonstrates thoroughly, this becomes particularly prominent in Second Temple and early Christian and Jewish literature.

Ballentine's volume is both an excellent compendium of texts and hypotheses relevant to ancient Near Eastern combat myths and their sociopolitical milieus and a theoretically sophisticated model of how mythography and comparativism can be pursued in a Biblical Studies context. Her understanding of how ideology manifests in and operates through myth is more explicit and refined than that of any recent or previous work on the combat myth.¹²⁵ This focus on ideology leads Ballentine to examine in greater detail how this ideology actually reached publics beyond the scribal circles responsible for the texts that form the main focus of her monograph. Her answer to this question is most thorough for the Mesopotamian context. In order to establish that some in Mesopotamia advocated worship at particular temples and allegiance to particular kings by alluding to the combat myth, Ballentine points to the above-mentioned relief of Ninurta battling Anzû on the Ninurta Temple at Nimrud (BM 124571–2) and to Sennacherib's claim in K.1356:9b–12 that the battle between Aššur and Tiamat was illustrated on the door to the *akītu* house at Aššur (Ballentine 2015: 43, 68, 190).¹²⁶ Both of these reliefs—one recovered by modern archaeology and one attested only in textual description—are cogently argued by Ballentine to have impressed on observers that the gods to whom the decorated temples were dedicated were victorious over

¹²⁵ Among other things, Ballentine (2015: 8–11) discusses persuasively and concisely how the definition of “myth” in biblical studies has continued to be based on the Grimm brothers' invocation of deity involvement as a necessary and sufficient condition. Her own definition of myth involves a functional approach (following especially Burkert 1979; Rogerson 1974; and Kirk 1970) according to which myth is any narrative that presents “a perceptual social and ‘natural’ world order, exhibiting inherently hierarchical taxonomies with which humans communicate contingent ideologies as if they were universal or ‘given’ [i.e. following Lincoln 1999]” and is thus tethered less to content than to social import. Ballentine is, however, also sensitive to the possibility that not all myths encode ideology to the same extent and allows at various junctures for the possibility that certain myths are more easily understood as primarily cathartic or entertaining than as ideological (e.g. Ballentine 2015: 3, 7, 200 nn. 5, 7).

¹²⁶ Both of these items are discussed in much greater detail in Ch. 4, below.

monstrous enemies and therefore worthy of worship. These items are discussed in Chapter 4, below. There, I agree in large part with Ballentine’s hypotheses while placing the reliefs in the context of other monumental representations of combat and defeated antagonists in order to illustrate the broader spread and multifaceted nature of this iconographic impulse. Ballentine has gone much farther than other scholars of ancient Near Eastern combat myths in describing how myth functions in theory and practice, and her work therefore lays important foundations for the present study.

A further pair of recent works—R. D. Miller 2018 and Ayali-Darshan 2016—share a basic genealogical orientation but are very different in their methods and outcomes. Robert D. Miller’s monograph *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations. An Old Testament Myth, Its Origins, and Its Afterlives* (2018),¹²⁷ has as its goal the production of a “comparative mythology” for the combat myth (e.g. R. D. Miller 2018: 1–4 and *passim*). This is claimed to be founded on the same methods as those he perceives to be operative in comparative linguistics.¹²⁸ Miller claims to prove that dragon myths of the Near East have a common “Indo-European” (occasionally “Indo-Aryan”) source, but this is not always pursued in the individual chapters and with attention to particular evidence (e.g. its utter absence in the chapter on Ugaritic myth [R. D. Miller 2018: 95–123]). Entire

¹²⁷ Two reviews of this volume have appeared in the *Review of Biblical Literature* (Grafius 2019; McEntire 2019); I am not aware of any additional published appraisals. Miller has explored narratives of divine combat in several shorter contributions, including idem 2017; 2016 (notably on the iconography of the Indic and Hittite storm gods’ thunderbolts); and 2014. Miller connects the study of combat myths to his theological concerns in idem 2019, in which it is argued that dragon combat myths in the Bible can reveal for believing readers that salvation narratives need not be factually true to be both inspiring and capable of instrumentalization, whether cognitive or rhetorical.

¹²⁸ Weak grasp of comparative linguistic principles (on which see further n. 131, below) is repeatedly demonstrated, however, by Miller’s inexact representation of language phenomena, e.g. in the introduction claiming to be an exposition of the “comparative linguistic method”: “Latin *pedis* is the ancestor of English *foot* [Latin is not the ancestor; the words are cognates]; Latin *tertius* was realized in English as *three* [ditto]” and so on (R. D. Miller 2018: 2).

sections are instead composed of accumulations of text summaries, etymological hypotheses, and comparanda that are spurious and/or non-sequiturs. For example, the following paragraph, titled “Ocean” occurs at the end of a section titled simply “Greek Traditions”:

Finally, we should consider Greek understandings of the ocean. “Ocean” referred to the *Ultimum Mare* (see chapter 1), a sea that wrapped like a river around the edge of the world [various citations from Greco-Roman literature]. The image of Ocean on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* appears to have been much like the world-river on the Babylonian world map BM 92687 [citing Anghelina 2009: 144]. Οκεανος [sic, for Ἰκέανος], Ογυγος [sic, for Ἰγύγος], and Οφιων [sic, for Ἰφίων] are all formations from the same root.¹²⁹ Thus, Og, too, is the *Ultimum Mare* [!!]. In the Orphic tradition, ocean came into being even before Ouranos and Gaia.¹³⁰ (R. D. Miller 2018: 235)

In general, Miller appears to be casting about for divisions and trajectories of tradition that are as hard and fast as those he finds in etymology-focused Neo-Grammarian linguistics, for which he is, however, reliant on the often dubious reconstructions that trace Semitic, Indo-European, and other far-flung lexemes to a putative Nostratic superfamily.¹³¹ By such forays, Miller demonstrates

¹²⁹ This “root” assertion is incorrect and based on an unlikely comparative hypothesis in Wyatt 2003: 219 = 2005: 208, which includes the apparently misunderstood (i.e. non-etymological) claim “he [Ogygos] was also a doublet of Ophion.” Miller’s inability to distinguish between {o} and {ω} has complicated matters. Possible etymologies of Ἰκέανος, most of which involve tracing to hypothetical pre-Greek sources, are given in Beekes 2010: 1677. Ἰγύγος is of completely uncertain etymology. Ἰφίων is likely to be connected with ὄφις “snake” (Beekes 2010: 1134–35).

¹³⁰ For this claim, Miller cites, without quotation marks, a very similar sentence in Anghelina 2009: 143, “In the Orphic tradition, on the other hand, Okeanos came into being even before Ouranos and Gaia.” This is not the only example in the volume of this compositional method.

¹³¹ One among many examples of this is R. D. Miller 2018: 115, on “Yamm”: “The appearance of *Īm* [sic] in Egyptian is probably a borrowing from Semitic. In the light of Dravidian **am* > Tamil *ām*, Alyutor *jaməsqən* (Chukotko-Kamchatkan family) and Uralic **jamV* > Nganasan ‘zama, some have suggested a Nostratic root **yamV*.”

an enchantment with reaching back for the oldest forms of words and myths, and in neither of these realms are his claims consistently convincing.

By contrast, Noga Ayali-Darshan (2016) has recently published what is, to date, the most thorough survey of Near Eastern texts narrating or alluding to the combat myth and the most detailed motif-based hypothesis regarding their interrelationships in her monograph **וידורך על במתי ים: מלחמת אל הסער בים בספרות המזרח הקדום** (*Treading on the Back of the Sea: The Combat between the Storm-god and the Sea in Ancient Near Eastern Literature*).¹³² This volume is especially notable for devoting attention to manifestations of the combat myth in both non-Semitic languages and non-narrative formats. Ayali-Darshan provides detailed discussions of, *inter alia*, the Egyptian “Astarte papyrus,”¹³³ Egyptian incantations and hymns that appear to allude to the combat myth

It is true that “some” have suggested this, insofar as Miller can cite Aharon Dolgopolsky (2008: 2439–40 [no. 2632]) as having done so in his work on Nostratic, but Miller demonstrates no ability to adjudicate such suggestions nor to explain why the hypothesis would be relevant.

¹³² This is the suggested English translation of the title as given in Ayali-Darshan 2016. The volume is based on a dissertation completed at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2012 under the joint directorship of Edward L. Greenstein and Wayne Horowitz. I am aware of reviews of Becker (2018) and Sperling (2018), the former of which is extremely short. Ayali-Darshan has published numerous articles on mythological topics and some of these are directly relevant to the combat myth and her monograph, namely Ayali-Darshan 2019, on the death of Mōtu and Egyptian parallels; eadem 2015, a summary of Egyptian, Hittite, and lesser-known Ugaritic versions of the combat myth; this article includes the most thorough exposition in English of her genealogical theses (see below); eadem 2014, on the “Failed God” motif in the Hittite *Song of Ullikummi* (CTH 345) and elsewhere, which is an expansion of Ayali-Darshan 2016: 84–86; eadem 2013, on the “double paternity” of Ba^ʿlu; and eadem 2010, on the Astarte-Yamm traditions, especially in the Egyptian Astarte papyrus. In an article on Levantine influences in Egyptian literature, Ayali-Darshan (2017: 196–99) again briefly discusses the evidence for the Egyptian combat myth traditions being dependent on Late Bronze Levantine models.

¹³³ The “Astarte Papyrus” is pBN 202 + pAmherst ix, *editio princeps* in Gardiner 1932. A recent translation is Ritner 1997, with some previous bibliography; more recent studies include Collombert and Coulon 2000. Ayali-Darshan discusses this text’s motifs and connections with other combat myth manifestations at greatest length in eadem 2016: 22–40 and 2010. Similar contextualizations of ʿAthtartu in Egypt may be found in Schmitt 2014 and Tazawa 2014. Wilson-Wright’s (2016) recent survey of ʿAthtartu’s varied manifestations throughout the ancient Near

(Ayali-Darshan 2016: 40–51), Hurro-Hittite traditions of the combat myth,¹³⁴ and “Inner-Syrian” textual allusions from Mari and Emar.¹³⁵ Ayali-Darshan’s basic thesis in this volume and related articles (esp. eadem 2015) is that there existed two discernible versions of the combat myth, which she calls “Version A” and “Version B” (2016: 284–93; 2015 *passim*). These two “versions” (נוסחים) are derived from what Ayali-Darshan perceives to be two distinct and mutually exclusive sets of motifs and patterns of plot development, the former exclusive to texts from Hatti, Ugarit, and Egypt and the latter found in texts from Mesopotamia and the southern Levant. The division and Ayali-Darshan’s hypothesis is best summed-up by the following chart (from Ayali-Darshan 2015: 51; cp. eadem 2016: 290):

East mentions the Astarte papyrus multiple times in his chapter on ‘Athtartu in Egypt (ibid.: 27–70), but the focus there is on discussing evidence for “magico-medical Athtart” and “equestrian Athtart” in this region.

¹³⁴ There are multiple Hurro-Hittite sources for the combat myth; the present study does not engage with these or with the Anatolian geographical area in general. *CTH* 785, a text describing a ritual performed for Mount Ḫazzi, refers to the performance of a LÚ-*nannaš ŠA* A.AB.BA ŠÌR “Song of Deeds concerning the Sea” and specifies that this narrates the storm god’s victory over the sea (Rutherford 2001; Ayali-Darshan 2016: 56–59); (2.) various mentions of a {DUB} “Tablet” or {ŠÌR} “Song” of the sea in Hurrian and Hittite catalogues and colophons (Ayali-Darshan 2016: 59–62); (3.) a fragmentary reference to the storm god’s battle against the sea in the Pišaiša Myth (*CTH* 350.3; Ayali-Darshan 2016: 63–66); and (4.) possible influence of the combat myth on structurally similar formulations in the Song of Ḫedammu (*CTH* 348) and the Song of Ullikummi (*CTH* 345; Ayali-Darshan 2016: 67–92). Several of these sources are also recently discussed by R. D. Miller (2018: 67–94).

¹³⁵ These are the Mari letter A.1968 that has been mentioned multiple times above and one of the Emar Akkadian ritual texts describing the Zukru festival, which refers to an offering to {^dINANNA ša a-bi u ^dia-a-mi}, i.e. the couple ‘Athtartu (of the sea?; Ayali-Darshan 2016: 269–70) and Yammu (*Emar* 6/3 373:92 = Msk 7429a+, ed. Fleming 2000: 234–57). Analyses of both of these texts may be found at Ayali-Darshan 2016: 262–69.

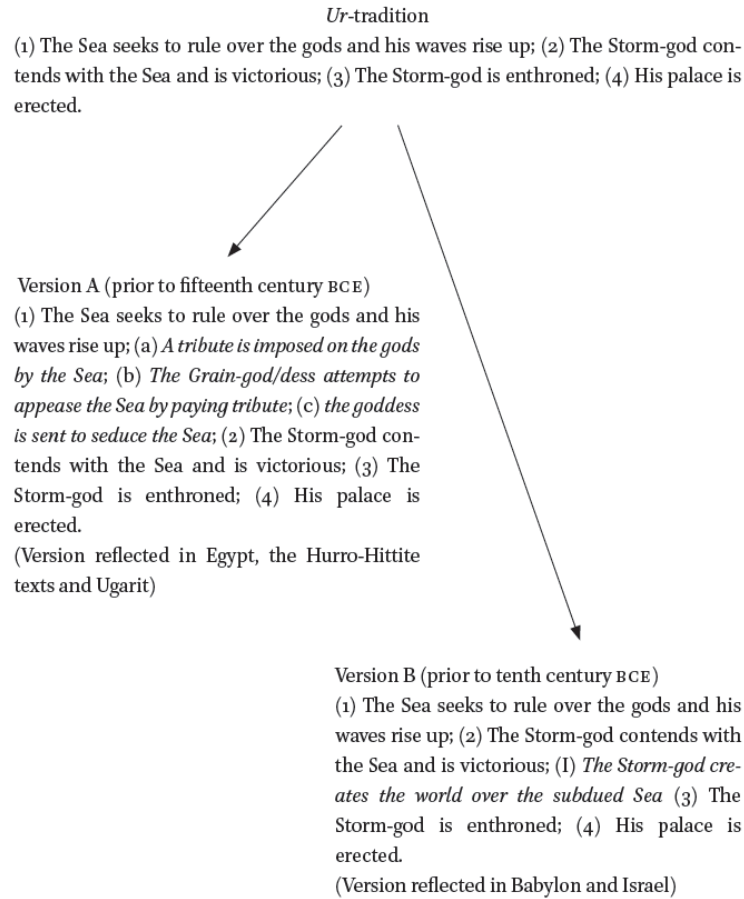


Fig. 1.1

Stemma of Combat Myth Traditions (Ayali-Darshan 2015: 51)¹³⁶

According to Ayali-Darshan (2016: 286; 2015: 50), the myth of combat with the sea must have “originated on the Levantine coast,” primarily for toponymical and geographical reasons: as for Jacobsen, and others, a myth naming the sea as a primary antagonist is unlikely to originate, according to Ayali-Darshan, “in any land-bound country” (ibid.: 49), and ṢAttartu, Yammu, and Mount Ṣapānu are all at home in North Syria. This is the core rationale for Ayali-Darshan’s positioning of the Ugaritic myth, and its having common motifs with the Hurro-Hittite and

¹³⁶ Italicized motifs are those that do not appear in all of the exempla of a given tradition.

Egyptian narratives cited above determines their membership in a common “version.”¹³⁷ The Levantine and Mesopotamian myths, on the other hand, are assigned to a second version largely by negative evidence, i.e. they do not share enough features with those in Ayali-Darshan’s “Version A” to be considered exempla of the same tradition (cf. Ayali-Darshan 2016: 258–60, 288–89; 2015: 47). Another element that is elided in this straightforward division is the sheer diversity of plot elements, characterization, and motifs attested in both the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian traditions. Ayali-Darshan (2016: 205–58) describes this diversity at great length in her monograph, but when it comes to situating it among traditions, much of this nuance is lost.

Difficulties inherent in the genealogical method as summarized in Section 1.2 therefore persist even in more recent work. Both the question and answers of the method presume that myths are composed and transmitted as texts, whether these are oral or written. Minimal allowance is made for non-narrative encounters with mythology, either in the form of allusions in language or representations in visual art. It is likely that certain individuals throughout the ancient Near East did receive and pass on mythological material in narrative textual forms, but I will show in the following chapter how this was far from the predominant mode of interaction.

In sum, Combat Myth Studies has a long history of graphocentrism. This was true in the early phases of scholarship and became canonical with the work of Hermann Gunkel in the late

¹³⁷ Certain elements of this element of the hypothesis are more compelling than others. For example, the hypothesis that Yammu’s apparent overstepping of his position is so similarly figured and plotted in the Egyptian and Ugaritic traditions that it is likely to have a common source (e.g. Ayali-Darshan 2015: 36) is compelling, as is the simpler note that the very names of the gods in the Egyptian tradition are clearly dependent on Semitic lexemes (see also recently Wilson-Wright 2016: 56). But, as Ayali-Darshan admits, there are plot elements that appear to be “missing” from the Ugaritic tradition, and this does not lead to appropriate reflection on whether the model of two simple traditions actually best accounts for the evidence; cf. Ayali-Darshan 2015: 42. More details on this aspect of Ayali-Darshan’s hypothesis are to be found in eadem 2017: 199; 2016: 40.

nineteenth century. A genealogical approach that privileges textual models of composition and transmission has remained the dominant paradigm in the field and is still pursued or assumed in recent combat myth studies. As a result, the field has neglected other categories of data that might be helpful for answering central questions regarding mythological material. One such central question is how narratives of divine combat were transmitted and received in ancient Near Eastern communities. As suggested above, answering this question is important precisely because of the ways in which the scholars have demonstrated the political importance of narratives of divine combat in the ancient Near East. The next chapter will critically engage one model for mythic transmission and reception now increasingly regarded as unlikely, namely public recitation and performance of combat myths. It will then examine the turn in ancient Near Eastern studies and Biblical Studies to iconographic sources and advocate a theoretically informed approach to understanding the role and power of combat myths.

Chapter 2

The Combat Myth and the Viewing Community: New Approaches to Ancient Mythological Interactions

It has long been recognized that in the various references to the fight between Jahweh and the dragon preserved in Hebrew literature, we have the survival of the Creation Myth and the fight between Marduk and Tiamat. But what has not been so generally recognized is that the myth thus preserved is the counterpart of the ritual combat and constitutes a vital part of the whole ritual pattern. [...] [T]he existence of such a ceremony in the earlier stages of Hebrew religion seems to be extremely probable, when it is recognized that the epiphany of the god and his triumphal procession attended by a train of lesser gods is also a part of this general ritual pattern of which we have seen traces in other elements of early Hebrew ritual. (Hooke 1933b: 13)

The courtyard is full of believers who have traveled, as they do every spring, from all corners of the kingdom to take part in the grand New Year's festival.¹³⁸ They have come to witness the great myth of a cosmic battle between the storm god Ba^ʿlu and his mortal enemies, the sea god Yammu and the god of death Môtû. The experience at the festival is like no other. At home in their villages, the average subject might be able to gather around the fire to hear a local bard sing the

¹³⁸ The following introduction to this chapter is intended as a romanticized dramatization along the lines envisioned by several myth-ritualist and ancient Near Eastern scholars but to which I do not subscribe. For detailed references for each reconstruction, see especially Subsection 2.1.2, below.

tale of Ba^ʿlu’s victories and his acquisition of a palace. Here in the capital, though, the voice of the bard is replaced by a sonorous recitation by the high priest from a lofty rostrum. His chanting of Ba^ʿlu and Môtû’s climactic combat resonates over the heads of the assembled crowd: “*yanaggiḥūna ka-ruʿumīma*¹³⁹ / *Môtû ʿuzzu Baʿlu ʿuzzu / yanattikūna baṭanīma Môtû ʿuzzu Baʿlu ʿuzzu* (They gore one another like wild bulls. / Môtû is strong. Ba^ʿlu is strong. / They bite one another like serpents. / Môtû is strong. Ba^ʿlu is strong).”¹⁴⁰ As the priest recites, the action is dramatized on a platform immediately to his right. One actor, who is playing the role of Ba^ʿlu, wears robes covered in silver; he wields a mace and holds a long staff styled with gold plating to look like lightning. The other, who stands in for Môtû, is dressed entirely in black and wears a mask with a mouth and mane like that of a ferocious lion.

The two actors dance back and forth in a choreographed mime of battle. They strike one another at the conclusion of each verse, and at intervals the sounds of drums and cymbals ring out from a bank of musicians positioned along the wall of the temple courtyard. Finally, Môtû falls to the ground, and Ba^ʿlu faces the assembly to raise his weapons in victory. The priests of the temple

¹³⁹ Cognates in several other Semitic languages—e.g. Akkadian *rīmu* and biblical Hebrew מִרְמָה—suggest that the Ugaritic noun {rūm} should be a **qitl-* noun, but the orthography with {ū} in both the singular and plural (summary of attestations at del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 712) indicates that the Ugaritic noun likely has a different nominal base. Tropper (2000/2012: 172–73 [§33.214.21], 295 [§53.322.1b]) suggests **qitl-* > **qutl-* by partial assimilation of the vowel to the labial consonant *m*, followed by secondary syllabification (**ruʿm-* > either **ruʿum-* or **rūm-* [!]) triggered by the ʿ. As Pardee (2003–4: 93) points out, though, the intra-Ugaritic evidence for the first step in this process is dubious; he prefers to consider the *i* of the Hebrew noun to be anomalous but does not appear to specify what phonology the writing of the Ugaritic noun with {ū} reveals.

¹⁴⁰ The excerpt given here is vocalized from the text in *Baʿlu* 6 vi:17–20 (RS 2.[009]+5.155; *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.6), {yngḥn / ¹⁸krūmm . mt . ʿz . bʿl / ¹⁹ʿz . yntkn . kbṭnm / ²⁰ʿmtʿz . bʿl . ʿz}. The *editio princeps* (copy, transliteration, translation) is Virolleaud 1931: 220–22. Major translations and/or studies include del Olmo Lete 1981: 233; Dietrich and Loretz 1997: 1195; Pardee 1997 272; M.S. Smith 1997: 162; Wyatt 1998/2002: 142–43; and see also Bordreuil and Pardee 1993: 66–67 (esp. *ibid.* 66 n. 10) on the contrast between Ba^ʿlu’s two battles with his major enemies, Yammu and Môtû.

approach the platform to usher the god in a procession to his temple, where a more exclusive celebration of the triumph will take place. The crowd watches the performance and hears the recitation with awe. This public recapitulation of divine combat is the closest that they will get in life to experiencing the deeds of the gods. As they look around at the buildings and the crowd, they realize that they are part of a great and powerful kingdom whose subjects rightly believe in the providence of Ba'lu himself.

2.1 The Recitation and Performance Model

The romanticized and imaginative scene described above is what a large group of scholars long envisioned as the primary mode by which ancient Near Eastern publics encountered the plot and themes of combat myths. This model clearly assumes a lot of things, but it does not necessarily presuppose a simplistic and one-directional pathway of transmission from scribal elite to broader populace. In other words, scholars have not often suggested that combat myths were concocted from scratch by literate professionals—including royal officials, scribes and/or priests—and then disseminated to an uninitiated public. Rather, it is usually presupposed that both these literate professionals and the average person often and regularly encountered, recollected, and reimagined images and narratives of divine combat. They may have done so in various ways, but neither group was a blank slate on which the other projected its ideologies. The recitation and performance of combat myths are rarely imagined, therefore, to have been the first or only occasion on which individuals became aware that myths of this type existed in their societies. As will be seen below, scholars instead usually hold that such recitations and performances were the primary occasion for solidification of combat myths as a core element of cultural tradition. These ceremonies were allegedly central opportunities for members of a group to periodically recollect core mythological

tenets, to deepen their understanding of characters, motifs, and themes, and to observe that belief in these myths was shared with a large majority of community members.

Like the myths themselves, the recitation and performance model was not concocted from scratch by scholars. This is despite the fact that, as the present section will argue, there is minimal evidence for recitation or performance of myths of divine combat in most ancient Near Eastern contexts. The model was largely based on correctly analyzed and concrete texts that attest to recitation of the Babylonian creation epic *Enūma eliš* having occurred during the Babylonian New Year's festival, the *akītu*. These texts were identified early in the history of Assyriology, and Assyriologists soon found their observations of mythological recitation to be paralleled in distant cultures and incorporated into broad and often inexact generalizations about interconnections between myth and ritual in premodern or so-called "primitive" societies. There was increasing pressure for other ancient Near Eastern societies to fit this model, since these were of both premodern and proximate to Mesopotamia and thus supposedly part of a consistent cultural continuum.

The present section discussing the rise and perpetuation of the recitation and performance model consists of two subsections. First, in Subsection 2.1.1, I will explore the most direct ancient Near Eastern evidence for recitation of a myth of divine combat, *Enūma eliš*, in the context of a major festival, the *akītu*. This evidence comes from one Seleucid-period Babylonian text extant in two manuscripts. It will be shown that scholars have shown two opposing tendencies in working with this and related textual evidence. On the one hand, scholars have introduced various considerations that minimize the congruence between instructions in the Akkadian texts in question and the sort of imaginative reconstruction presented in the introduction to the chapter, above. On the other hand, scholars have engaged in precisely this kind of imaginative

reconstruction on the basis of minimal textual evidence; examples of this are plentiful in scholarship in the broader field of Religious Studies, but only a handful as forwarded by scholars of the ancient Near East are discussed in detail below.

In Subsection 2.1.2, I widen the lens from this focus on the *akītu* to an overview of the ways in which scholars have sought parallels for the recitation and performance of divine combat in many and diverse societies. As will be described below, most of this work was done by scholars working within the paradigm of the Myth and Ritual school (or “myth-ritualism”), according to whom myths were outgrowths of and intimately linked to ritual performance. The section in question will critically survey three groups of scholars—the Cambridge ritualists working in Greco-Roman studies, biblicists, and Ugaritologists—who made similar claims about the centrality of recitation and performance of divine combat for both the development of textual myths and the social realia of ancient religion. The following section of the present chapter (section 2.2) will explore what I believe to be more promising methodologies for assessing these realia as they pertain to broader engagement with combat myth, namely through iconographic study in general and with a particular cultural-theoretical emphasis on the representation of monstrosity in the visual art corpus.

2.1.1 The *Akītu* and Recitation of Myths in Assyriology

The *akītu* was celebrated over twelve days in Nisannu, the spring month aligning roughly with Gregorian March and April. The festival appears to have begun¹⁴¹ with a *mubannu* priest opening the east-facing main gate of the Esagila, Marduk’s temple in Babylon, and performing a

¹⁴¹ The sources for the sequence described in the present paragraph are described after the brief introduction here, beginning with n. 143, below. The goal here is to present a straightforward description of the Babylonian *akītu* such as it can be reconstructed without overburdening this with caveats and immediate references and footnotes.

purification ritual. On the second day of the festival, the action is broadened to include the *šešgallu* (the chief priest), the *erīb bīti* priests, and several other cultic officials. These individuals perform various rites and recite prayers to Marduk. The third day begins with similar rites and prayers, but a new element is also introduced: two small wooden images plated with gold are commissioned, constructed, and clothed with garments; they are then placed in the temple of Madānu.¹⁴² The fourth day adds to the *šešgallu*'s usual rites and prayers two significant verbal activities, namely the recitations of a *šuilla* (raising of hands) prayer to Marduk and his consort Zarpānitu and, most importantly for present purposes, of *Enūma eliš*. Also on the fourth day, the Babylonian king travels to Borsippa, where he will retrieve the cult statue of Nabû from that deity's chief temple, the Ezida.

The fifth day of the *akītu* appears in many ways to be the climax of the festival. It is on this day that, after the *šešgallu*'s early-morning prayers, a *mašmaššu* is summoned to purify the cella of Marduk in the Esagila. Once this is done, the *šešgallu* can prepare the shrine of Nabû within the Esagila, so that it is ready when that deity arrives from Borsippa. Nabû, accompanied by the Babylonian king, probably entered Babylon on this fifth day. With Nabû in residence and the king having returned, a much discussed ritual centering on the monarch commences. In Nabû's shrine, the *šešgallu* takes the king's scepter, crown, and mace in what appears to be an act of ritual humiliation. The priest then slaps (*maḥāṣu*) the king on his cheek, tugs on his ears, and brings him to Marduk's shrine. Here, the king kneels before the statue of the patron god of Babylon and makes a negative confession: he has not neglected Babylon, its temples, or its people. The *šešgallu* then returns the symbols of kingship to his monarch and slaps the king again. This slap is intended to

¹⁴² These statues and what some scholars have reconstructed as their usage in combat myth reenactment are described in greater detail below.

elicit a sign: if the slap brings tears from the monarch, then Marduk is favorably disposed towards him. If not, then Marduk is unfavorably disposed, and sure doom will follow for the king and his reign. The end of this fifth day sees the *šešgallu* and the king co-officiating, only here during the *akītu* festival, at a sacrifice of a white bull, perhaps upon a bed of forty reeds.

The sixth day is probably that on which cult statues other than those of Marduk and Nabû at last arrived in Babylon, presumably each with their own retinue of priests and other officials. It was also on this day that Nabû, now brought to the temple Ehursagtila, was present at some ritual involving the two gold-covered images constructed and placed in the Madānu temple on Day 3; for more details on this ritual, see below. Days seven through twelve are much more difficult to reconstruct from the available sources, but they likely involved (1) a determining of destinies; (2) a procession of the king and deities to the *bīt akīti*, the “*akītu*-house,” situated outside Babylon; and probably (3) a great feast at this *bīt akīti* to honor all the gods in assembly. On the eleventh and/or twelfth days, the gods other than Marduk must have returned to their home cities to await the next year’s festival.

While mentions of an {á-ki-ti} festival go back to the Ur III period (2350–2100 B.C.E.),¹⁴³ and festivals that were similarly named or that had similar timing and/or foci were celebrated throughout the ancient Near East,¹⁴⁴ the sequence of the festival just described is in fact known

¹⁴³ The best summaries of the *akītu* through time are the survey of M. E. Cohen (1993: 401–41) and the successive *Reallexikon* articles of Sallaberger (2001: esp. 293–94; on the Sumerian sources) and Pongratz-Leisten (2001; on the Akkadian sources).

¹⁴⁴ The most notable of these is the first-millennium Neo-Assyrian *akītu*, which is also sometimes argued or assumed to have involved performance of divine combat. Since the evidence for this is much less direct and less frequently invoked, I have elected to focus on the Neo-Babylonian evidence here, but see the brief citation of Lambert 1963 below and in Chapter 4. Pongratz-Leisten (1994) is the most thorough study of both Assyrian and Babylonian ritual and topographical texts concerning the *akītu* (but note the lengthy reviews by George 1996; Lambert 1997). Other recent or important discussions of the Neo-Assyrian *akītu* include Barcina 2017; Finn 2017: 164–66; Pongratz-

essentially from just a single late Akkadian text. This text constitutes the focus of the present section given its stipulation of combat myth recitation and its frequent exploitation by scholars attempting to claim that a divine combat was performed in the context of the New Year’s festival, as will be seen below. The ritual text in question is extant in two Seleucid Babylonian manuscripts, DT.15+109+114 and MNB 1848.¹⁴⁵ These were edited together for the first time by François Thureau-Dangin (1872–1944) in his *Rituels accadiens* (1921) under the heading “Le Rituel des fêtes du nouvel an à Babylone” (ibid.: 127–54), with hand copies of all manuscripts and a composite transliteration and translation. Since that publication, this text has been translated¹⁴⁶ and discussed in many contexts, most notably in the comprehensive studies of the *akītu* by Pallis (1926) and Bidmead (2002), in Çağırğan’s (1975: 1–39) unpublished thesis on Babylonian festivals, and in Linssen’s (2004: 215–37) volume on the Hellenistic cults of Uruk and Babylon.¹⁴⁷

Leisten 2015: 416–26; 2001: 296; Holloway 2002: 273–75; Maul 2000; Frahm 1997: 282–88; M. E. Cohen 1993: 420–28; and Lambert 1968 (= idem 2016: 148–54); 1963 In general, the substantially different rituals that chronologically and geographically disparate texts prescribe for various days of the *akītu* suggest that common reconstructions of an essentially unchanging festival are untenable simplifications.

¹⁴⁵ The former manuscript is part of the collection of the British Museum; two of its fragments (DT.15 and 114) were published in cuneiform type already in the fourth volume of Rawlinson’s facsimiles (1875: pls. 46–47; rev. ed. 1891: pl. 40). These were transliterated and translated by Hehn 1906: 380–84. DT.109 was published in hand copy in Craig 1895: 1–2 and Hehn 1906: 398–400 and edited and translated by the latter (ibid.: 375–80). Hehn (1906: 376) recognized that DT.109 belonged to the same tablet series as the aforementioned fragments (“gehören der nämlichen Tafelreihe an”) but did not join them as belonging to the same composition. Minimal additional bibliography for these manuscripts is listed in Thureau-Dangin 1921: 127 and Borger 1967: 567. BM 32485 was published in photograph, transliteration, and translation for the first time by Linssen 2004: 215–37, pl. 1 and covers lines that I do not discuss here (ll. 235–38, 463–71; see the comment at Linssen 2004: 215 n. 1). MNB 1848 is in the Louvre and was first published by Dhorme 1911 in hand copy, transliteration, and translation. For references to more recent editions taking all manuscripts into account, see below in the main text; translations without full editions are named in n. 146, below.

¹⁴⁶ Translations of DT.15+109+114+BM 32485 | MNB 1848 include M. E. Cohen 1993: 441–47; Farber 1987: 212–27; and Sachs 1969: 331–34.

¹⁴⁷ Histories of scholarship on the *akītu* include Bidmead 2002: 17–38. Assyriological discussions of the *akītu* in general or in Babylonian contexts beyond those named above include Finn 2017: 163–67; Ballentine 2015: 37–38,

Most notably for present purposes, the Seleucid Babylonian ritual text edited by Thureau-Dangin clearly prescribes a recitation of *Enūma eliš* at the end of the fourth day of the *akītu* festival, also the fourth day of the month Nisannu. The following is the relevant section of the text:

DT.15+109+114 | MNB 1848

279 [e-nu-m]a an-na-a i-te-ep-šú
 280 [EGIR tar]-din-nu šá ki-iṣ u₄-mu e-nu-ma e-liš
 281 [TA re-š]i-šu EN TIL-šú ¹⁴ŠEŠ.GAL É.TUŠ.A
 282 [ana ^dEN i]-na-áš-ši ma-la šá UD e-liš
 283 ana ^dEN [i]-na-áš-šú-u IGI šá AGA šá ^d60
 284 u KI.TUŠ šá ^dEN.LÍL ku-ut-tu-mu-u

279 enūma annā ūtepšū 280 arki tardinnu ša kīṣ ūmu Enūma eliš 281 ištu rēšišu adi qītišu šešgallu Etuša 282 ana Bēli inašši mala ša Enūma eliš 283 ana Bēli inaššū maḥru ša agī 284 u šubat Enlil kuttumū

²⁷⁹ When they have done this, ²⁸⁰ after the second meal in the late afternoon, ^{281–82} the *šešgallu* of Etuša will recite *Enūma eliš*, from its beginning to its end, to Bēl. ^{282–83} While he recites *Enūma eliš* to Bēl, the front part of Anu’s tiara ²⁸⁴ and Enlil’s seat will remain covered.¹⁴⁸

The explicit instructions in this text make it difficult to doubt that in at least Seleucid-period Babylon, the *šešgallu* was to do something with *Enūma eliš* at the close of the fourth day of the

42–46; M. E. Cohen 2015: 389–408; 1993: 400–53; Bidmead 2014; Ristvet 2014: esp. 262–64; Zgoll 2007; 2006; Pongratz-Leisten 2001; Nakata 1968; and Zimmern 1926; 1906–18. For scholarship treating the *akītu* in other historical contexts (e.g. Assyria), see n. 144, above. Some examples of the vast scholarship attempting to relate the *akītu* to biblical studies and Ugaritology are cited and engaged in Subsection 2.1.2, below.

¹⁴⁸ The covering of these symbols of the great gods Anu and Enlil has received numerous interpretations. Most of the more prominent are surveyed by Bidmead (2002: 69–70), and note more recently Zgoll 2006: 24.

akītu. What the precise action was, though, is open to discussion because the action is denoted by *našû*, a verb with remarkably broad semantics and numerous specialized usages. While some scholars simply translate *našû* as though it has here its most concrete sense—that is, “to raise”¹⁴⁹—the risk that this will convey the unlikely physical raising of tablets requires a more explicit deliberation. Tokens of this verb often have verbal and/or textual products, especially *šulla* and *eršahunga* prayers, as their direct objects.¹⁵⁰ In most of these cases, the action envisioned is clearly recitation or reading (i.e. the latter with a written reference).¹⁵¹ Numerous scholars have therefore defensibly understood the present occurrence as involving the recitation or reading of *Enūma*

¹⁴⁹ E.g. Linssen 2004: 228, 235. In the body of his translation, Farber (1987: 217) translates “erhebt,” but see immediately below on his clarifying footnote.

¹⁵⁰ Such tokens are catalogued in *CAD* N.2 [1980] 87 (the present text and *nissatu* “wailing” in *BRM* 4 6:45), 105 (object *nīš qāti*), 108–9 (objects *šiptu* “incantation” and *šullakku*), and see also von Soden 1972: 762b. Subsequently published examples may be found in Maul 1988: 26 n. 85 (in the corpus of *eršahunga* prayers). This understanding of *našû* as having the semantics “recite” in such contexts is defended at length by Gruber 1980: 77–84. Cf. Frechette (2012: 22–24), who essentially argues that because the *šulla* has a stronger ritual element than the *eršahunga*, this character of the object of *našû* makes preferable an interpretation of the verb as having semantics closer to “enacting” or “performing” in these contexts. This view seems to make too strong of a distinction both between the *šulla* and the *eršahunga* and between ritual and prayer in general. Notably for Akkadian *našû*, cognate verbs sometimes clearly have the semantics of speech production, e.g. in the case of Hebrew נשׂא; this similarity has been noted recently by Lenzi 2011: 442 n. 1 and Tawil 2009: 249–50. Speech production uses of נשׂא, especially with the direct object נשׂא, have recently been analyzed by Vayntrub (2016a), who explores literalistic ancient translations, the cognate verb √nšʔ in Ugaritic, and the precise semantics of the Hebrew collocation (approximated by English “to speak out”).

¹⁵¹ As will be discussed below, the closest parallel—a Late Babylonian ritual text describing the *kislīmu* ritual at the Esagil temple (BM 32206+32237+34723(+)+F 220)—is missing its verb and so cannot be of direct assistance here (Çağırhan and Lambert 1993: 96 l. 63). Forms of *našû* are, however, used throughout this text (e.g. ll. 79, 113, 119, 125) with various texts as objects and thus support Farber’s argument as discussed in the present paragraph.

eliš.¹⁵² One example of this may be found in Farber’s (1987: 217) translation of the two tokens of *našû* as “erhebt” and his note: “D.h. wohl rezitiert (mit erhobener Stimme?).”¹⁵³

Even once recitation is established, many questions remain open. One group of these questions raises the possibility of distance or at least lack of a close connection between the *akītu* as a ritual performance and *Enūma eliš* as a text. For example, several scholars have wondered whether it is demonstrable or likely that the *Enūma eliš* recited by the *šešgallu* in Seleucid Babylon was identical with—or at least largely similar to—*Enūma eliš* as it is known to modern scholarship from cuneiform texts. Other scholars have noted that *Enūma eliš* is known to have been recited in contexts other than the *akītu*, particularly on the fourth of another month, Kislīmu. This fact is often invoked to minimize the connection between the ritual and the text, sometimes explicitly to counter myth-ritualist approaches such as will be surveyed in the following subsection.

Several scholars have at least allowed for some disjunction between *Enūma eliš* named as the object of recitation in the Seleucid ritual text and that which has been preserved in first-millennium B.C.E. Assyrian and Babylonian manuscripts.¹⁵⁴ Understandably in the case of non-specialists but more strangely for the Assyriologists who have approached this question, no one appears to have clarified that most if not all Babylonian manuscripts of *Enūma eliš* are no earlier

¹⁵² Similar understandings to that of Farber (cited immediately below) are to be found in e.g. Ballentine 2015: 38; Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 42; Oshima 2011: 36–38; Zgoll 2006: 23; Bidmead 2002: esp. 63–66; and Gruber 1980: 82.

¹⁵³ Farber (1987: 217 n. 66–67a) nevertheless suggests in the continuation of this footnote that these semantics for *našû* are “jedoch sonst nie belegbar.” Whether the examples catalogued in n. 150 admit this “sonst nie” is perhaps up for debate.

¹⁵⁴ Scholars allowing for the possibility of difference between the recited *Enūma eliš* and that known from manuscripts include Nakata 1968: 42; and cf. also those studies cited throughout Sommer 2000 (for which see below). By contrast, for example, Bidmead (2002: 63–70) seems to assume throughout her discussion that the recited *Enūma eliš* is the same as the epic as known from manuscripts, or at least she never introduces the possibility of difference.

than the Neo-Babylonian period, and several if not most of these are likely Seleucid or Parthian in date.¹⁵⁵ This means that *Enūma eliš* as modern scholars know it is substantially based on manuscripts contemporary with the *akītu* ritual texts described above, and this lessens if not eliminates the likelihood of substantial difference. Furthermore, Sommer (2000: 90–91) has innovatively addressed the possibility of difference by attempting to find lexical and conceptual connections between the known text of *Enūma eliš* and texts describing the *akītu*. Although these connections are relatively minimal and must be balanced against variations of emphasis between the epic and the ritual, they merit consideration in any discussion of this problem. Based on the manuscript situation and these connections, it seems unlikely that the *Enūma eliš* of the ritual was substantially different from that known to modern scholarship.

Another question impinging on the connection between the *akītu* and *Enūma eliš* arose with the publication of a Late Babylonian ritual text for the Esagila, BM 32206+.¹⁵⁶ This text describes activity in the temple on the third and fourth days of Kislīmu (month 9, approximately

¹⁵⁵ The dating of these manuscripts is complicated by the virtual absence of colophons and the fact that only seven of the ninety-five known Babylonian manuscripts of *Enūma eliš* were found in excavations. The most exhaustive documentation of findspots, dating, and colophons for the various manuscripts is Gabriel 2014: 29–70. The fact that most manuscripts are unprovenanced is discussed briefly in Lambert 2013: 4 and Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 24–26. The former briefly addresses dating as follows, “The script enables all to be classed as Late Babylonian, and in the light of the evidence obtained from all Babylonian literary tablets, it can be said that none has any claim to be older than the Late Babylonian empire, and probably most are from the Persian period or later. [...] Some of these Late Babylonian [dealers’] collections are extremely late, Seleucid or Parthian, to judge from script, textual corruption, and other factors.” Bidmead (2002: 63) asserts that all manuscripts date “from 900 B.C.E. to 300 B.C.E.,” but these should probably be understood as approximate dates.

¹⁵⁶ This tablet—BM 32206+32237+34723(+)F.220—was originally edited by Çağırğan (1975: 86–119) in his unpublished dissertation and was reissued in published form by Çağırğan and Lambert (1993) after the death of the former scholar. The text is discussed throughout Linssen 2004, and by Zgoll 2006: 50–51; and M. E. Cohen 2015: 435–37.

Gregorian November and December). During the main morning meal on the fourth day, the following occurs:

BM 32206+

62 (...) ki-i šá ina UGU ^dÉN sar-qu ^{lú}NAR

63 e-nu-ma e-liš a-na ^dÉN <inašši>¹⁵⁷ (...)

⁶² *kī ša ina pānat bēl sarqu nāru* ⁶³ *enūma eliš ana bēl inašši*

⁶² When it [the beer-mash (*billata*) of l. 62] is being sprinkled in front of Bēl, the *nāru* ⁶³ will recite *Enūma eliš* before Bēl.

Although Çağırzan and Lambert (1993) do not argue this in their edition, one could suggest that the recitation of *Enūma eliš* on the fourth of Kislīmu suggests that this epic was recited on the fourth of every month and therefore that its recitation during the *akītu* was less significant than most scholars have supposed.¹⁵⁸ There are a few problems with such a suggestion, which are

¹⁵⁷ The lexeme appears to have been omitted by haplography given the following {i-na}. The omission is assumed but the mechanics are not commented upon in Çağırzan and Lambert 1993: 96. As was noted already above (see n. 151), the use of forms of *našū* throughout this text with text titles as the objects of these verbs supports the hypothesis of omission here.

¹⁵⁸ Lambert (1968: 107 = idem 2016: 150) had indeed suggested this in an earlier publication that alluded to the existence and content of BM 32206+ without actually publishing it: “Only very recently it has become known from a similar ritual for the month Kislimu that *Enūma Eliš* was also recited on the fourth day of that month. Since evidence for the other ten months is lacking, it must be considered at least a possibility that it was recited on the fourth day of every month [...] If this is true, the recitation in Nisan loses its special significance.” In Lambert’s (2016) posthumously published collected essays, the editors add a reference to the publication of the text (ibid.: 150 n. 7). The same suggestion is repeated by e.g. van der Toorn (1991: 337), “It may have been a monthly occurrence, having no specific relationship with the New Year Festival,” and see n. 159.

perhaps best encapsulated by Bidmead’s (2002: 67) dissent in her study of the *akītu*.¹⁵⁹ She observes that recitation by the *šešgallu* would likely have been particularly powerful given his position at the summit of the Esagila hierarchy. Furthermore, the context of the festival in the annual cycle—i.e. at the new year—would only have enhanced this potency. Bidmead (2002: 67–68) cogently compares Christian recitation of creeds and prayers at such festivals as Christmas and Easter; although these recitations often encompass the same formulae and content as they do throughout the rest of the liturgical year, “their impact on the penitent is often more potent” at significant celebrations.¹⁶⁰

The special position of the recitation on the fourth day of the *akītu* may also be suggested by the fact that the action is specifically explicated in an Assyrian commentary text, the famous “Marduk Ordeal” text.¹⁶¹ This text is the Aššur version of a commentary that interprets several aspects of the *akītu* in mythological terms. The recitation is mentioned in l. 34, extant in manuscripts (A) (VAT 9555) and (B) (VAT 9538): {e-nu-ma e-liš ša da-bi-ib-u-ni ina IGI^dEN ina

¹⁵⁹ In other words, it is hardly true, as van der Toorn (1991: 337) asserts, that “[t]he severest blow to the cultic interpretation of *Enūma eliš* [...] comes from a text which shows that it was recited on the fourth day of the ninth month as well.” Several of the problems engaged in the present section are more significant for evaluating whether recitation and reenactment co-occurred in the *akītu*, which is in context what van der Toorn alludes to by his “the cultic interpretation.”

¹⁶⁰ Similar considerations are presented by Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 45; and Zgoll 2006: 50–51. Sommer (2000: 91 n. 49) notes a similar case from the Jewish tradition: “one might point out that Exodus 15 provides the liturgical reading for the seventh day of Passover. It is also recited every day in Jewish liturgy as part of the preliminary morning service, but its daily appearance does not mitigate its special significance for Passover.”

¹⁶¹ Two broadly parallel but substantially divergent texts are known from Aššur and Nineveh. The Aššur text is extant in three manuscripts: VAT 9555, VAT 9538, and ND.812a. The first and second were published in hand copy in Ebeling 1919: 231–34 (*KAR* 143) and idem 1923: 134–35 (*KAR* 219), respectively. ND.812a was published in hand copy and transliteration by Postgate 1973: 243–44 and pl. 87 (*CTN* 2 268). Both versions of the “Marduk Ordeal” were edited with extensive commentary by Livingstone (1986: 205–53) and more briefly by the same author in idem 1989: 82–91 (*SAA* 3 34–35). Other studies that engage these texts include Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 33–36; Holloway 2002: 147–48; Frymer-Kensky 1983; von Soden 1955 (see also idem 1957); Zimmern 1918: 2–20.

ⁱⁱBARAG i-za-mur-ú-šú-ni ina UGU ša ša-bit-u-ni [šu-ú]} *enūma eliš ša dabibuni ina pān Bēli ina Nisannu izammurūšuni ina muḫḫi ša šabituni šū* “*Enūma eliš*, which is recited (*dabābu*)—(and) they chant it (*zamāru*)—before Bēl in Nisannu, is about his being imprisoned.” A similar note can be reconstructed in a parallel Nineveh version of this commentary, K.6333+ with parallel manuscripts.¹⁶² This imprisonment of Marduk is usually connected to that deity’s cult statue having been captured by the Assyrians in their 689 B.C.E. sack of Babylon and subsequently transported to Aššur.¹⁶³ Whether this was understood to have mythological correlates has been much debated (see the studies cited in n. 161). But even without giving an absolute answer to this question, one can observe that the textual focus on the recitation of *Enūma eliš* assumes two things: first, that this act has some special significance in the context of the *akītu*, and second, that it cannot be intuitively explained by regularly recurring events.

This observation is particularly important because neither version of the commentary limits itself to events occurring during the *akītu* or in Nisannu.¹⁶⁴ In fact, one interpretation of an event occurring in Kislīmu has been commonly cited as an example of divine combat reenactment in the Assyrian festal context. This is the claim in the Aššur version of the text that certain races reenact Nergal’s running to Aššur to report Ninurta’s victory over Anzû¹⁶⁵:

¹⁶² The Nineveh version of the text is known from six manuscripts, all in the British Museum, listed with previous editions by Livingstone 1989: 86 n. 35. For more recent editions and discussions, see the preceding note.

¹⁶³ For more on this historical context, see recently Barcina 2017 and J. Nielsen 2014.

¹⁶⁴ Frymer-Kensky (1983: 133) makes a similar observation.

¹⁶⁵ This element of the texts is discussed together with the recitation of *Enūma eliš* in e.g. M. E. Cohen 1993: 420–21; Nakata 1968: 47–48, von Soden 1955: 151, 163; Zimmern 1918: 8 n. 3; and see also Annus 2002: 56–57. Possible parallels for cultic racing are cited by Weidner 1952–53. Gaster’s (1961: 40) interpretation is, as often, loose and simplified: “Occasionally, the Ritual Combat degenerates into a mere *race*. This development is attested in ancient and modern usage alike. At Babylon, for example, a foot race was a standard feature of the New Year (Akītu) ceremonies”; and see similarly Fontenrose 1959: 439 and Hooke 1933b: 9.

VAT 9555 || VAT 9538 || ND.812a (ed. SAA 3 34)

- 57 li-is-mu ša ina ^{iti}GAN ina IGI ^dEN ù ma-ḥa-za-a-ni gab-bu i-lab-[bu-u-ni ša
^dMAŠ šú-u]
- 58 ki-i ^daš-šur ^dNIN.URTA ina UGU ka-šá-di ša an-zi-i iš-pur-u-ni ^dU.G[UR
...]
- 59 ina IGI ^daš-šur iq-ṭí-bi ma-a an-zu-u ka-ši-id ^daš-šur a-na ^d[GA.GA? ṭè-mu
is-sa-kan]
- 60 ma-a a-lik a-na DINGIR^{meš}-ni gab-bu pa-si-ir ú-pa-sa-ar-šú-nu ù šú-nu ina
UGU-ḥ[i i-ḥ]ad-di-[u il-lu-ku]

*57 lismu ša ina Kislīmu ina pān Bēli u māḥāzāni gabbu ilabbūni ša Ninurta šū 58 kī
Aššur Ninurta ina muḥḥi kašādi ša Anzī išpuruni Nergal [...] 59 ina pān Aššur iqtibi
mā Anzū kašid Aššur ana Kakka(?) ṭēmu issakan 60 mā alik ana ilāni gabbu pasir
upassaršunu u šunu ina muḥḥi iḥaddi?ū illukū*

The race, which is in Kislīmu, in which they circle before Bēl and in all the sanctuaries is that of Ninurta. When Aššur sent Ninurta to conquer Anzū, Nergal [...] said before Aššur, “Anzū is conquered.” Aššur said to Kakka(?), “Go, spread the news to all the gods.” He spreads the news to them, and they rejoice about it and go.

Despite elaborate scholarly reconstructions, the somewhat disjunctive nature of the commentary text and especially the fact that this is the only rite herein specified to occur in Kislīmu makes it difficult to understand the social or ritual context for this *lismu* “race.” The most that can be said with confidence is that some Assyrian footrace—presumably a somewhat highly visible and significant event—occurring in Kislīmu was interpreted by certain literate professionals to have mythological resonance. It recollected, to them at least, elements of Ninurta’s pursuit of and battle with Anzū, perhaps specifically as known from first-millennium versions of the *Anzū* epic. But as

with the Seleucid Babylonian ritual texts, scholars have often been more than willing to assume that the metaphorical analyses in these commentary texts would have been shared by Mesopotamians far and wide, through various periods and in many locales.¹⁶⁶ Just as with the procedural assumptions, though, the potential variety of Mesopotamian rituals and ancient native interpretations of these rituals requires more circumspection in using one chronologically and geographically specific text to fill out another.

Going beyond the recitation itself, many scholars have more or less imaginatively described a performance of combat that took place at some point during the *akītu*. It will be recalled that the Seleucid ritual texts do not preserve extensive information on the happenings of days 6 through 12 of the festival (Nisannu 6–12). These happenings therefore must be reconstructed largely from texts of different chronological and geographical provenance. By this process, one risks manufacturing a composite *akītu* that does not accurately represent the festival as any individual ancient observer would have experienced it. Because of the dearth of data, scholars have been able to imagine the precise manifestation of the hypothesized combat performance in quite diverse ways, from a highly symbolic ritual to what some have termed a “masque” or even a “passion play.”¹⁶⁷ Claimed support has been drawn from many disparate texts, only some of which

¹⁶⁶ See the studies cited in the preceding note. This willingness obtains often regardless of the precise significance attached by modern scholars to the ancient commentary; Jacobsen (1975: 75), for example, interpreted the race as seasonal and centered on fertility concerns: “the battle of Ninurta with Anzu or the Asakku in January (Kislīmu) enacted as a footrace (*lismu*), appears to be in origin a fertility drama. Ninurta is the god of the thunderstorms of spring, and the relief from his temple at Calah [BM 124572, discussed at the beginning of Chapter 4, below] actually shows him chasing—in a footrace high up in the air—Anzu or the Asakku, the hailstorm, throwing his lightening bolts as he is chasing away winter to issue in spring.” The assumption that Anzû and Asakku are essentially equivalent and that the former is to be identified with “winter” is perhaps the most dubious element of this presentation; cf. on this point also Parpola 2001: 187

¹⁶⁷ For this language—applied to *Ba^llu* at Ugarit and allegedly similarly dramatized combat myths—see Gaster 1939; 1933.

have anything to do with the *akītu* or *Enūma eliš*, even as other scholars have simply alluded to recitation and/or performance as only a possibility.¹⁶⁸

Many Assyriologists and other scholars have simply made broad and somewhat vague claims for a reenactment of divine combat at the *akītu*. These will be considered shortly. As an example of a more elaborate reconstruction of performed combat, one can look to van der Toorn's (1991: 335) reconstruction of a Nabû-centered performance on day 6 of the *akītu*. Van der Toorn suggests that the arrival of the statue of Nabû in Babylon on day 5 of the festival is followed by climactic events on day 6:

The next morning, he makes his way to Ehursagtila, the temple of the ancient warrior god Ninurta. Here he symbolically slays two rival deities, represented by gold-coated figurines. Decapitated, the images are bound in fetters and carried to Esagil, where Nabû is warmly welcomed and seated in his chapel under a gold-embroidered canopy. Other gods from surrounding cities join in acclamation of his triumph. (ibid.)

It will be recalled from above that the Seleucid ritual texts describing the *akītu* do not preserve sequential instructions for the sixth day of the festival. Some events relating to Nabû's activities on day 6 are relayed prospectively in instructions for day 3. After an injunction to manufacture two figurines, which are then to be placed in the Madānu temple until day 6 (ll. 201–12), the text looks forward to that day:

¹⁶⁸ Thus e.g. Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 24), "Est ist zu überlegen, ob für die Neujahrsprozession bewußt ein Teil des Weges zu Wasser zurückgelegt wurde, auf dem an den Kampf gegen die Repräsentantin des Urgewässers Tiāmat und ihre Gefährten auf visueller Ebene oder in Rezitationen erinnert"; and similarly ibid.: 74–75, "Ob Marduks Kampf gegen Tiāmat und damit der Zustand vor der von ihm etablierten Ordnung nun dramatisch dargestellt oder nur rezitativ durch die *kurgarrû*- und *assinnu*-Mimen oder durch symbolische Gesten in Erinnerung gerufen wurde, ist m.E. unerheblich."

DT.15+109+114 | MNB 1848

212 (...) UD.6.KAM [...]
213 ^dAG É.HUR.SAG.TILa ina KUR-[šú]
214 ^{lú}GÍR.LÁ kar-ri SAG.DU-su-nu ŠÌ[G-a]š-ma
215 ina IGI ^dAG tur-ru(?) MÚ^{meš}-nim-ma
216 ana ŠÀ tur-ru(?) ŠUB^{m[es]}

²¹² *šeššet ūmū [...]* ²¹³ *Nabû Ehursagtila ina napāḫišu* ²¹⁴ *tābiḫ karri qaqqassunu imahḫaš-ma* ²¹⁵ *ina pān Nabû turru inappahūnim-ma* ²¹⁶ *ana libbi turru inaddū*

²¹² On the sixth day [...] ²¹³ (when) Nabû reaches Ehursagtila, ²¹⁴ the slaughterer will strike (*maḫāšu*) their (the figurines') heads. ²¹⁵ Before Nabû they will kindle the ashes(?),¹⁶⁹ ²¹⁶ and they will throw (them) into the midst of the ashes(?).

The “symbolic slaying” of which van der Toorn speaks is therefore nothing more than the striking of two figurines on the head by a *tābiḫ karri* “slaughterer (of meat dishes).”¹⁷⁰ Van der Toorn is not alone in supposing decapitation to be described here by {ŠÌ[G-a]š-ma} (*maḫāšu*),¹⁷¹ but as Bidmead (2002: 86–87) has already shown, this is an unlikely verbal root for that action.¹⁷² It

¹⁶⁹ In the excerpt given above, van der Toorn (1991: 335) follows von Soden (1981: 1397a) in interpreting *turru* as the lexeme *turru/turru* “band, fetter,” also documented at *CAD T* (2006) 164–65; by this interpretation, the sign {MÚ} is read {KEŠ} for *rakāsu* (von Soden 1981: 1397a). Because this is relatively difficult to understand in context, one should interpret this lexeme as a form of *tumru* “cinder, ember” (*CAD T* [2006] 472); this accords both with the usual function of the *tābiḫ* and the prevalence of burning rituals in the text (Linssen 2004: 234; Farber 1987: 215 n. 26a; *CAD N.1* [1980] 265a, hesitantly).

¹⁷⁰ For this individual, see also Linssen 2004: 234; *CAD K* (1971) 222a.

¹⁷¹ E.g. Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 43; Çağırğan 1975: 209; Garelli 1975: 52.

¹⁷² The verb that one would expect for such an action is *nakāsu*; this verb and its connotations in decapitation contexts are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.3, with reference to Humbaba’s head and recent work by Dolce (2018) and others on decapitation in ancient Near Eastern contexts.

seems more likely that the action envisioned is a ritual striking of figurines that is unlikely to have been as viscerally damaging as van der Toorn and others have imagined. Furthermore, because the identity of the figurines is never made clear, it is far from necessary or even likely that they represent enemies of Nabû.¹⁷³

In other words, the support for a reenacted combat here evaporates upon closer examination of the texts on which the reconstruction is nominally based.¹⁷⁴ The reconstruction of performed combat involving representations of Marduk and Tiamat¹⁷⁵ is not based on texts but rather on the assumption that some significant performance must have taken place on one of the days of the *akītu* for which we have no direct textual evidence.¹⁷⁶ The ritual reconstructions that scholars propose are often vague and qualified, but nevertheless widely disseminated, perhaps especially in survey works likely to appeal to non-specialists.¹⁷⁷ Jacobsen’s (1975: 73) presentation is typical:

¹⁷³ It is nevertheless worth mentioning Stol’s hypothesis as communicated by Linssen (2004: 80–81 n. 420). The two figures described hold a snake and scorpion as “enemies of Nabû [...] Here perhaps a myth concerning Nabû is expressed, in which he defeats two opponents”; and similarly Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 44, “auch ein von Nabû gewonnener Kampf gegen Monster thematisiert, wenngleich Details im Unklaren bleiben.” These show commonalities with van der Toorn’s reconstruction but are conveyed in a much more cautious and transparent fashion as based on tentative analyses of particular texts rather than as factual reportage of events that certainly occurred on day 6 of the festival.

¹⁷⁴ For more careful evaluations of the same text, see Linssen 2004: 80 and Bidmead 2002: 86–87.

¹⁷⁵ Oddly, van der Toorn (1991: 337–39) is very willing—despite his reconstruction of a Nabû-centered combat performance as described above—to dispute the occurrence of a Marduk-centered combat performance: “One is not entitled to draw conclusions about ritual practice from mere ornamentation [i.e. the combat reliefs that will be described below and in Chapter 4], as any informed visitor to a mediaeval cathedral can tell” (ibid.: 338). Finn (2017: 163–64) mentions both Lambert’s (1963) hypothesis of reenactment and van der Toorn’s (1991) dissent but not the grounds for these arguments.

¹⁷⁶ One partial exception to this is Lambert’s (1963) claim that a highly schematic divine combat, involving only the statue of Marduk being placed atop a cult installation representative of Tīāmat. This suggestion is discussed in Section 5.2, on the biblical הַיָּם מִיָּצֵק “molten sea” and allegedly similar basins in Mesopotamian temple contexts.

¹⁷⁷ The citations from Oppenheim (1977) and Bottéro (1998/2001) below are from widely available and repeatedly translated surveys of Mesopotamian religion and society written by leading Assyriologists.

The Babylonian Epic of Creation, *Enûma elish*, which tells how Marduk “vanquished Tiāmat and assumed kingship” is generally—probably rightly—assumed to be a cult-myth corresponding to a dramatic ritual reenactment of this primordial battle each new year at the Akitu festival. However, our knowledge about that ritual itself is scant in the extreme.¹⁷⁸

Oppenheim’s (1977: 232–33) “mimic performance” of divine combat is also mentioned only briefly and never elaborated:

[*Enûma eliš*] was written relatively late, though probably influenced by earlier texts and traditions, primarily for the Marduk cult of Babylon. It represents a transformation to a literary level of earlier and perhaps locally restricted practices such as, for example, a mimic performance or the like that took place at a New Year’s ritual.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Contrast Jacobsen (1976: 231–32), “Not only are such divine opponents as Ti’āmat, Kingu, Azag, and Anzu more or less cruelly killed by Marduk and Ninurta and their deaths ritually celebrated, but high gods such as An and Enlil are most brutally dealt with.” There is no specificity here, though, as to what form this ritual celebration takes.

¹⁷⁹ See similarly Bottéro (1998: 314), “*Marduk*, seul dans la pièce centrale, il s’agissait, d’une manière ou d’une autre, de re-présenter, et, par là, de commémorer et, en quelque sorte, re-nouveler, Sa fameuse victoire sur *Tiamat*, l’antique Mère originelle des dieux, comme la racontait l’*Épopée de la Création*, victoire grâce à laquelle Il avait conquis la première place entre les dieux, créé le monde, puis les hommes. Nous n’en savons pas davantage...” (English translation at idem 2001: 193); and Dalley (1995: 138), “In Babylon Bel is an epithet for Marduk, the god who takes the part of the hero at the New Year or *akītu* festival, defeating the powers of chaos and taking control of destinies. The story of Creation was re-enacted while the epic of creation, a Babylonian literary composition written in Akkadian, was recited”; cf. eadem 1997: 169–70, where no such reenactment is presupposed in the context of a discussion of the *akītu*.

Notably for present purposes, these reconstructions often suggest that visual art or textual descriptions of ancient iconography of divine combat are evidence for the occurrence of a performance. Lambert's (1963: 189) line of argumentation is typical of this logic:

A well known inscription describes the door of this house on which was portrayed Ashur advancing to do battle with Tiamat, escorted by ten gods in front and fifteen behind. A slightly broken list of the same ten gods occurs on a Late Assyrian ritual fragment, *K.A.V.* 49, which describes them as "preceding [Ashur] to the Akītu house". (The continuation is broken off.) A combination of these two items of information suggests, if it does not prove, that the procession of gods from the city to the Akītu house was construed as a setting out for battle with Tiamat. Presumably the battle took place inside the house.

And yet, there is no text that substantiates this. The deduction of ritual performance from iconography is tantamount to assuming that every Christian church with an altarpiece or statue depicting the archangel Michael's battle with Lucifer necessitates that there have occurred a reenactment of that battle at some point in the ecclesiastical year.¹⁸⁰ This problem will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 4, where the relevant iconography and texts are explored and scholarship on them critically engaged.

Because these opinions were published in the 1960s and 1970s by then-senior Assyriologists, one might be tempted to quickly set aside such presentations as outdated and supplanted. But the utter absence of any direct textual basis for the reconstructions needs to be

¹⁸⁰ One could refer, for example, to such paintings as Guido Reni's *The Archangel Michael Overcoming Satan* (1635; oil on silk, 293 x 202 cm.), which was commissioned by the Barberini family for their family church at S. Maria della Concezione. The history of this painting is described in Rice 1992: 429, and it is placed in the context of contemporary Archangel Michael images by Leyva-Gutiérrez 2014: esp. 425.

stressed, for at least three reasons. First, directly citing the Akkadian textual foundations for these hypotheses clarifies that scholarship is not simply a succession of fashions. There are concrete, text-based reasons for moving beyond these older reconstructions, reasons that are obscured when one merely asserts repudiation of a hypothesis rather than attending closely to the available evidence. Second, as has already been explored in Chapter 1, a failure to engage with older models of public encounters with myths has lulled scholars writing more recently into asserting the centrality of certain myths without demonstrating the social centrality they claim. Focusing even briefly on this aspect of the progress of scholarship on divine combat reenactment sensitizes one to this impasse and illustrates the necessity of overcoming it with a more robust description of ancient audiences' engagements with mythological narratives and motifs. Third, models such as those articulated above continued to be presented in related fields such as Biblical Studies and Religious Studies; as will be shown below, these often presuppose the essential accuracy of such reconstructions as those of Jacobsen, Oppenheim, and Lambert without attempting to determine whether the model can be substantiated from ancient texts.

Before moving on to myth-ritualism in non-Assyriological scholarship, it is worth noting that scholarly attempts to reconstruct performance of divine combat are hardly the only means by which the textual evidence for the *akītu* festival has been twisted to fit a myth-and-ritual paradigm. The other major way in which this has happened involves the allegedly public nature of not only the certainly visible processions but also several other aspects of the festival that were certainly somewhat private. It is apparent from the texts cited above that the recitation of *Enūma eliš* took place *not* in a public space but rather in Eumuša, Marduk's cella in the Esagila temple.¹⁸¹ This

¹⁸¹ Textual evidence for and the character of the Eumuša are discussed by George 1992: 389–91 and Pongratz-Leisten 1994: 50.

cella was not accessible to the general public, and there is no reason to think that a central day of a major festival would have involved any exception to this rule.¹⁸² In the text in question, only the *šešgallu* (high priest) is said to have taken part or even to have been present. Despite this, the widespread tendency in both Assyriological¹⁸³ and wider scholarship¹⁸⁴ to stress that the festival

¹⁸² This has been stressed by Oshima 2011: 36, “given the fact that *Enūma Eliš* was recited by the high-priest in the Eumuša, the cella of Marduk in Esagila, without any additional audience, it is not certain how much the ordinary citizens of Babylon knew about the recitation of *Enūma Eliš* if anything.” Oshima stresses on the following pages that *Enūma eliš* was probably learned and encountered only in relatively restricted social contexts. Zgoll (2007: 171; see also *ibid.*: 176), in an article contrasting visible and hidden aspects of the *akītu* festival, similarly notes that activities that occur in the Eumuša cella “geschehen in einem besonders abgeschirmten Raum.” See similarly Gabriel 2014: 88, 105; Dietrich 2006: 159–60; and Oppenheim 1977: 233, for whose reconstruction of “mimic performance” of divine combat see above.

¹⁸³ Cf. e.g. Finn (2017: 165–67), who is concerned mainly with the Sargonid *akītu* and seems to suggest that, in Aššur, *Enūma eliš* was recited in some public setting, perhaps as part of a procession, and was paradigmatically constitutive of community solidarity and royal power: “Importantly, in the Assyrian version of the ritual, the recitation of *Enūma eliš* may not have occurred until both the king and Marduk had reentered the city and were safely interred inside the city walls ([M. E.] Cohen 1993: 422). This part of the procession, a ‘Triumphzug,’ is one of the most significant ways (together with ‘Kriegsritual’) that the Assyrians pronounced the public legitimation of their kings. [...] The very public nature of these performances indicates that the king’s constituency demanded a reaffirmation of his political legitimacy.” M. E. Cohen (1993: 422) does indeed assert that at Assyria as at Babylon, *Enūma eliš* was recited to a statue of Marduk “[e]ither at the *akītu*-house or back in Aššur.”

Similarly, Ballentine (2015: 38) suggests that recitation of *Enūma eliš* was “used to frame the king’s authority in legitimizing discourse,” but it is unclear how this framing would have actually worked if most of the populace did not experience the recitation. Finally, Zgoll (2006: 49–50) attempts to mitigate the observation that *Enūma eliš* was recited essentially in private by the hypothesis that *other*, more public recitations of the epic took place throughout the *akītu*, but these have been lost given the poor preservation of rituals for days eight through eleven, e.g. “Es ist nicht unmöglich, dass *Enūma eliš* während der elf Tage des Festes nochmals, vielleicht sogar mehrfach vorgetragen wurde, auch im Beisein einer größeren Öffentlichkeit.” This is not necessitated or even suggested by any of the surviving texts and is therefore completely speculative.

¹⁸⁴ Examples of this include Levenson 1987: 132, “The periodic public recitation of the *Enuma elish*, especially during the New Year’s festival, indicates that this choice of heteronomy, the willing acceptance of Marduk’s lordship, was never so final as a superficial reading of the great creation poem might suggest.” In other words, the supposed public recitation functions as a sort of mnemonic for the populace as a whole.

as a whole was a preeminently public event has often informed representation of the recitation as *also* somehow public. This, like the presupposition of divine combat performance, is both contrary to all textual evidence and against regular principles of temple and cella access in the periods and polities under consideration.

Several conclusions can thus be drawn regarding the *akītu* as the most visible and significant context in which recitation or performance of mythic divine combat might have occurred. First, it is demonstrable from Seleucid Babylonian texts that *Enūma eliš* was, at least within these chronological and geographical parameters, read aloud by the *šešgallu* at the end of the fourth day of the *akītu* festival (Nisannu 4). The facts that many Babylonian manuscripts of *Enūma eliš* are Seleucid or later in date and that festival recitation by the high priest would have been significant do oppose attempts by scholars to minimize both connections between the myth and the ritual and the importance thereof. But while there is evidence for links between *Enūma eliš* and the *akītu* in other contexts, it is nowhere else clear that recitation and/or performance of the myth occurred. Finally, there is no direct evidence for performance of combat in any Mesopotamian context. Scholarly reconstructions of such activity are founded on misunderstood texts, the presence of combat iconography at some festival sites, and/or from the simple existence of narrative texts. None of these are sound foundations on which to hypothesize ritual performance. The following subsection explores the ways by which the recitation and performance model nevertheless became central to reconstructions of rituals and festivals involving divine combat beyond Mesopotamia.

2.1.2 The Myth and Ritual School and its Receptions

Contemporary with the Assyriological discoveries described at the outset of the preceding section, historians and anthropologists of religion had begun to interrogate the relationship between myth and ritual. The former term was usually understood to signify simply “stories about the gods” and the latter term to signify essentially any religious practice, but often specifically those involving entire communities. Frustrated with predominantly German Protestant scholars’ insistence on exclusive attention to creeds, a group of mostly British anthropologists claimed that the sought-after textual expressions of religious belief could not be understood without attention to religious praxis. Prominent among these anthropologists was William Robertson Smith (1846–94),¹⁸⁵ whose core expression of this ritual-first principle appears in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*.¹⁸⁶ Smith’s claims to the effect that ritual was worthy of attention stemmed from his conviction that myths developed secondarily to rituals and arose in order to explicate praxis in theological terms. He attempted to demonstrate this empirically by reference to numerous examples where the procedure was allegedly transparent; most such examples were drawn from modern Middle Eastern and Greco-Roman contexts. Smith admitted that rituals were not

¹⁸⁵ Smith’s life and work have recently been narrated and contextualized by Maier (2009), who is by training a scholar of Celtic studies; this speaks to the broad reception of Smith’s work and its perceived relevance beyond the field of Near Eastern studies. An earlier and more sentimental biography perhaps overly focused on Smith’s trial for heresy in 1878 is J. S. Black 1912. Several studies of Smith’s influence have appeared since the mid-twentieth century, e.g. Bediako 1997; Johnstone 1995; Rogerson 1995 (and see also idem 1984: 275–81); and Beidelman 1974. Smith’s time in Germany and his explicit reaction against German Protestant credal foci are described in Maier 2009: 117–22. Smith is discussed in the context of myth-ritualism (see below) by Segal 1997: 1–4 and Ackerman 1991: 39–44.

¹⁸⁶ The first series of lectures was presented as part of the Burnett series at the University of Aberdeen in 1888–89 and published as W. R. Smith 1889. The second and third series of lectures—delivered in March 1890 and December 1891, respectively—were not published in Smith’s lifetime, but rediscovery of the lecture notes at Cambridge University in 1991 allowed publication of these by J. Day in W. R. Smith 1995. The context of these lectures in Smith’s life is described by Maier 2009: 258–70.

meaningless in their earliest incarnations, but argued that they were potentially polyvalent or, in his terminology, “the meaning attached to it [the ritual] was extremely vague, and the same rite was explained by different people in different ways” (W. R. Smith 1889: 18). These claims stand at the foundation of what later scholars have called the “Myth and Ritual School” or “myth-ritualism.”¹⁸⁷

Despite his short life, relatively restricted publications, and conscious focus on Near Eastern myth and ritual in particular, Smith’s formulations of the myth and ritual relationship were soon influential on a wider scale. He came to be cited favorably and often by several generalists in the field of Religious Studies, most prominently James G. Frazer (1854–1941) and Émile Durkheim (1858–1917).¹⁸⁸ In a certain sense, Frazer turned Smith’s method on its head.¹⁸⁹ Rather than exploring the modern Middle East for extant rituals and extrapolating these backwards through time so that they constituted a source for myths, as Smith had usually done, Frazer started with premodern texts and assumed that each sheltered an unattested and mysterious ritual that needed to be recovered by scholarship to reveal the foundations of religion and magic. Frazer’s central focus in his *Golden Bough*¹⁹⁰ was the putative myth-ritual complex of the dying and rising

¹⁸⁷ A comprehensive bibliography for myth-ritualism is impossible in the present context, but it is especially important to note the disciplinary history of Ackerman 1991, the collection of essays and primary sources Segal 1996, the primary source anthology Segal 1998, and the convenient article-length summaries Segal 1997 and Hardin 1983. Works that are particularly relevant for Greco-Roman, biblical, and ancient Near Eastern studies are cited below.

¹⁸⁸ Smith’s relationship with Frazer is discussed in Maeir 2009: 223, 264–65 and Ackerman 1987: 59–63.

¹⁸⁹ In addition to the section on Frazer in his myth-ritualism book (Ackerman 1991: 45–65), Ackerman (1987) authored an earlier biography of Frazer, in which extensive contextualization and bibliography can be found.

¹⁹⁰ The first edition of the *Golden Bough* was published in two volumes (Frazer 1890), the second in three (Frazer 1900) and the third in twelve (Frazer 1911–15). Ackerman (1991: 45) concisely captures the range of now mostly negative opinion on the *Golden Bough*: “the work today is regarded as a monument of industry by the few more magnanimous historians of anthropology and as a colossal waste of time and effort by the many less charitable.”

god, according to which religious communities worldwide allegedly imagined one of their deities—usually identified with grain or overall fertility—to perish and then be resurrected by one of various mechanisms. Frazer argued that this process was mapped onto the seasonal cycle and that it was represented in festivals, often the chief festival of a group’s sacred calendar. Supposed manifestations of the phenomenon included everything from the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth to gods undergoing ostensibly similar processes, such as Osiris, Dumuzi, and Adonis.¹⁹¹ But not only did Frazer think that a ritual stood at the source of this myth, he also claimed that even once the myth was codified—orally and/or textually—ritual reenactment of the events narrated in the myth were the primary means by which broader publics were repeatedly introduced to the narrative. This view had distinct and important implications in the fields in which Frazer’s influence was felt most strongly, including Greco-Roman Studies and Biblical Studies.

In Greco-Roman Studies, myth-ritualism found its most robust expression in the work of a group centered around Jane Harrison (1850–1928) that came to be known as the Cambridge Ritualists.¹⁹² This group first and foremost sought to establish that Athenian drama was the

One well-known criticism hovering somewhere between these two poles is J. Z. Smith 1973; see also the recent contextualization and reevaluation of this essay by Crews 2019.

¹⁹¹ The model was enthusiastically adopted by some scholars of the ancient Near East, notably Zimmern, who included in his updated study of the *akītu* a table of equivalences between Marduk and Jesus, e.g. “Bēl wird nach dem ‘Berge’ abgeführt. // Jesu Abführung zur Kreuzigung auf Golgotha” and “Bēls Kleider werden weggebracht. // Jesu Kleider werden unter die Soldaten verteilt (Synopt, Joh. vgl. Ps. 22,19)” (Zimmern 1906–18: II.12). In more recent scholarship, the applicability of the paradigm to the ancient Near East has had many detractors and very few supporters. One of the more extensive discussions on the former side is M. S. Smith 2001a: 104–31 (previously *ibid.* 1998), working within ancient Near Eastern studies with a particular focus on Ugarit and the god Ba’lu and with extensive bibliography in the endnotes (*ibid.*: 253–70); see now also Wyatt 2019b, with a similar animus and focus. The most vocal recent supporter of the utility of this category is Mettinger 2001.

¹⁹² The following summary is largely based on Harrison 1912 and the summary of the Cambridge Ritualists as a group by Ackerman in various publications, esp. *idem* 1991: 67–157.

eventual and climactic product of librettos to sacrificial rites occurring at local temples and aimed at safeguarding fertility. As time went on, it was argued, this libretto was increasingly narrativized and its physical accompaniment elaborated until it became something of a play. Within these plays, there was an emphasis on particular δρώμενα “things done,” which in their technical sense were—according to the Cambridge Ritualists—“not merely a thing done, but a thing redone, or pre-done with magical intent” (Harrison 1912: xv). The δρώμενον, in other words, both recollects and forecasts. Most importantly for present purposes, it dramatizes recurrent natural transitions, especially that to the spring season, through athletic games and drama. The conflictual aspect of the δρώμενον and the core of the local sacrificial rites involves overcoming of the ἐνιαυτός δαίμων “Year-Spirit,” who symbolizes the outgoing year. Notably for the argument, this “Year-Spirit” is never named as such by Greek ritual or dramatic texts; the Cambridge Ritualists merely identified what they perceived to be a typical figure, usually a god such as Dionysus or a tragic hero, and asserted that figure to be a “Year-Spirit.” In social terms, the audience was drawn into these plays through a sort of onstage mirroring; they were represented in the plot by Dionysus’s θίασος “band of worshippers,” who both reflect and encourage the ideal social structure of a religious community.

In parallel with these developments in Greco-Roman Studies, the influence of Frazerian myth-ritualism in Biblical Studies can be found already in 1912 with Paul Volz (1871–1941), who argues that an Israelite autumn enthronement festival prominently featured a cultic procession and dramatic representation of Yahweh’s defeat of chaos monsters. Volz draws explicit input from the *akītu* and its supposed inclusion of reenacted divine combat, e.g. “Ueberall, bei Weltschöpfung und Beginn der Herrschaff, ist die Vorstellung die, daß der Gott einen Kampf zu Ende geführt hat [...] In Babylon begeht man an Neujahr die Erinnerung an Marduks Sieg über Tiamat [...] in der

israelitischen Liturgie sind Kampf und Sieg Jahwes über die Feinde ein ständiges Leitmotiv” (Volz 1912: 14–15). This basic idea was taken up by the Scandinavian school centered on Sigmund Mowinckel (1884–1965). Mowinckel (1951; 1921–24) championed the thesis that the autumn festival hypothesis was confirmed by a set of enthronement psalms—namely Psalms 47, 93, and 96–99—and by such texts as Psalm 24 that feature language describing the procession of the deity, particularly in association with temple contexts. The enthronement psalms were identified as such by their prominent featuring of the rubric *יְהוָה מָלָךְ* (Ps 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; cp. *מָלָךְ אֱלֹהִים* at Ps 47:9), which Mowinckel argued should be understood to have perfective rather than imperfective verbal aspect, i.e. “Yahweh has become king” rather than “Yahweh reigns.” This argument is of course fundamentally one about the nature of the Hebrew verbal system and the aspectual semantics of verbal morphologies, rather than about this clause in particular; this fact has been underappreciated by the substantial ink spilt on the isolated phrase without detailed consideration of the tense-aspect problem in Hebrew and Semitic overall.¹⁹³

The contribution of such texts as Psalm 24 was their inclusion of processional and architectural language that seemed to imply a ritual context for their composition and/or subsequent use, e.g. in Psalm 24.7–10¹⁹⁴:

¹⁹³ Such discussions include J. Day 1990: 75–80; Ulrichsen 1977; Ridderbos 1954; and Köhler 1953.

¹⁹⁴ The bibliography for this psalm and particularly the verses cited below is enormous. Recent discussions include Ayali-Darshan 2016: 247–49; Smoak 2016: 95–96; Chavel 2012: 16 and n. 55; Varhaug 2011; Loretz 2010; Sommer 2010; R. S. Watson 2005: esp. 118–22, 128–30. An early articulation of the hypothesis that this psalm has a ritual context is Gunkel (1903: esp. 367), “The whole is therefore a liturgy performed as the festal company enters the sanctuary”; and an influential formulation is that of Cross (1973: 91–93, here 93), “The psalm is an antiphonal liturgy used in the autumn festival. The portion of the psalm in verses 7–10 had its origin in the procession of the Ark to the sanctuary at its founding, celebrated annually in the cult of Solomon and perhaps even of David. On this there can be little disagreement [!].”

(7) שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרֵיכֶם וְהִנְשֹׂאוּ פְתָחֵי עוֹלָם וְיִבְאוּ מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

(8) מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה עֲזִיז וְגִבּוֹר יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:

(9) שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרֵיכֶם וְיִבְאוּ פְתָחֵי עוֹלָם וְיִבְאוּ מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

(10) מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סְלֵה:

(7) Lift up, o gates, your heads, and lift yourselves up, o eternal doors, that the king of glory may enter.

(8) Who is this king of glory? It is Yahweh, mighty and a hero, Yahweh, a hero of battle.

(9) Lift up, o gates, your heads, yea lift up, o eternal doors, that the king of glory may enter.

(10) Who is he, this king of glory? Yahweh of Hosts is the king of glory. *Selah*.

Continued arguments to the effect that such passages find their most plausible *Sitz im Leben* in “temple rituals—almost certainly in the Jerusalem temple, and perhaps in other pre-Josianic temples as well” (Sommer 2010: 508) continue to assume, as did Mowinckel, that individual psalms require a recitation and performance setting beyond the text. The position of Psalms in this respect is more and more unique in biblical scholarship.¹⁹⁵ If it is increasingly allowed that prophetic texts do not necessarily have their genesis in street-corner exhortations (e.g. Mastnjak 2018: esp. 31–33; Skornik 2018) or that proverbs need not have been formulated in institutional education (e.g. Vayntrub 2016b), the possibility that certain or all psalms were primarily literary

¹⁹⁵ The approach of Magonet 2014 to this problem is fresh but does not engage much with previous scholarship; his observation at *ibid.*: 175 might nevertheless be methodologically useful, “we have no knowledge of how the psalms were actually performed so as to highlight or emphasize particular themes or elements. Just to illustrate this point, one need only visit a variety of synagogues to see how differently the identical liturgical texts may be read, sung, chanted, or read silently; while standing, sitting, or parading [...] In short, the texts themselves are merely the raw material around which the liturgical event is staged.” For recent assertion of at least the enthronement Psalms to have been composed for and used repeatedly in the Temple, cf. e.g. Clifford 2014 and Roberts 2005.

productions and experienced privately or without an elaborate community worship apparatus is far less often admitted. Such a possibility may in the end seem less likely than the alternatives, but it is worth at least clarifying that a path of argument is being followed in asserting a particular *Sitz im Leben*.

Efforts to interpret the emerging texts from Ugarit in myth-ritualist terms preceded even the publication of major sources. In an influential edited volume whose contributors argued univocally for ritual sources for myths across the ancient Near East, Samuel Henry Hooke (1933c: 78–81)¹⁹⁶ breathlessly reported the contents of *Baʿlu* from Virolleaud’s preliminary presentations and confidently asserted that the French epigrapher’s “anticipatory outline is sufficient to show the extent to which the Canaanite myth is composed of elements from the [myth and ritual] pattern already described” (ibid.: 80). More text-based but equally imaginative presentations of central Ugaritic texts as having been recited and performed in the context of either a spring or autumn New Year’s festival were soon to follow. The most extensive of these was Theodore H. Gaster’s elaborate argument that conflicts described in *Baʿlu* and several other Ugaritic texts were mythological reimaginings of seasonal change that were dramatized as such at appropriate annual junctures, e.g.,

[T]he poem [*Baʿlu*] is more than a mere literary allegory of the seasons. Both its structure and its sequence correspond exactly to those of the Ritual Pattern. THE

¹⁹⁶ Hooke’s (1933a) volume includes contributions on myth and ritual in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Levant, etc., most of which were delivered as public lectures at Oxford in 1932. Two similar collections were later published by the same author, Hooke 1935; 1958. Samuel Henry Hooke (1874–1968) generally published as “S. H. Hooke,” and a long line of scholars have mistakenly named him “Sidney H. Hooke” (e.g. Dever 2005: 34; M. S. Smith 2001b: 82; cf. the obituary Parrot 1968). The source of the error is unclear, but perhaps our Hooke has been confused with the pragmatist philosopher Sidney Hook (1902–89) and/or the Assyriologist Sidney Smith (1889–1979), who occasionally wrote on mythic kingship and published an essay in Hooke 1958.

FIRST TABLET (III AB,B) relates the triumph of Baal over the Dragon of the Sea (Yam). This answers to the ritual battle with the dragon [...] the battle is a cardinal element of seasonal ceremonies in many parts of the world. [...] the banishment of Môt [...] is the durative counterpart of the expulsion of Death (or the analogous figure of Old Year, Blight, etc.) in seasonal ceremonies. (Gaster 1961: 128–29; see similarly idem 1950: 128–29).¹⁹⁷

Frazer’s influence on Gaster is palpable not only in the line of argument exemplified here but also in his publication of an edited and abridged version of Frazer’s classic, the *New Golden Bough* (Frazer 1959), that purported to place myth-ritualist theories on more solid footing. Similar seasonal festival reconstructions of *Ba’lu* in particular remained popular in Ugaritology through approximately the 1970s,¹⁹⁸ but were thereafter increasingly criticized as lacking foundation in the narrative mythological texts and insufficiently engaging the ritual texts found at the site.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Most of Gaster’s work is in a similar vein, but Gaster 1948: esp. 185–86; 1946; 1939; 1933 are particularly relevant. Gaster’s bibliography—albeit missing certain early works crucial for understanding the development of his myth-ritualist viewpoints—was published in *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 5 (the Gaster *Festschrift*): 445–53.

¹⁹⁸ This phase of Ugaritological scholarship is described in some detail by M. S. Smith 2001b: 88–97 and therefore need not be completely recapitulated here. Prominent examples include Gray (1957), e.g. *ibid.*: 11, “Here we have, as GASTER has shown, the origins of the drama as it developed in Greece. It is possible to find elements in the Ras Shamra myths which were fundamental in Greek drama, both tragedy and comedy, which also, of course, grew from the myth and ritual of seasonal festivals under very similar climatic conditions”; and de Moor (1971), e.g. *ibid.*: 61, “The myth of Ba’lu is a combination of a nature-myth and a cult-myth because it wanted to explain the origin of the alternation of the seasons as well as the origin of the Ugaritic cult which was largely based on rites determined by the same seasons.”

¹⁹⁹ See e.g. Pardee 2012: 74–75 (with idem 2002: 231–32; 2000: 933, “D’après le rapprochement entre ces textes et les textes rituels comportant des éléments de datation, les événements théâtraux devaient être occasionnels plutôt que de faire partie de la vie rituelle de tous les jours); M. S. Smith 2001b: 91–97; 1994: 58–75; 1986: esp. 314–18; Grabbe 1976.

This development parallels those in biblical and other ancient Near Eastern work, in which the most prominent myth-ritualist theses have been wholly set aside or thoroughly problematized by more recent biblical scholarship.²⁰⁰ It is more and more widely recognized that only very few Hebrew Bible texts, for example, contain language likely to have been composed for and/or performed within a processional or enthronement ritual. It is also acknowledged the leap from processional or enthronement language to the hypothesis of a ritual correlate for every aspect of a given psalm is a substantial one that involves many unfounded assumptions. This nevertheless leaves a substantial gap in the classic line of assumption or argumentation *vis-à-vis* the social relevance of the combat myth, i.e. that divine combat was performed ritually and publicly and was therefore socially and politically important. As has been documented in Chapter 1, scholars continue to assert this importance and to posit political meanings for various myths of divine combat without theorizing non-recitation and/or -performance pathways by which these meanings might have been communicated. It is the aim of the following section and chapters to reconstruct and reconceptualize these pathways and their significance by focusing on visual art representations of divine combat that would have been broadly available and therefore socially significant to ancient religious communities.

2.2 Beyond Texts: New Theoretical Approaches to Divine Combat in Visual Art

In Chapter 1, I have discussed the ways in which previous scholarship on the combat myth systematically avoided any discussion of non-textual material. In the present section, I aim to describe the ways in which the present work embraces this material, and I discuss the motivations

²⁰⁰ The most thorough problematization is A. R. Petersen 1998, but this work has substantial gaps and problems, best summarized in Lewis 2000.

for and benefits of such an approach. The present work can be situated in a broader field-wide trend towards integration of iconographic material into histories of ancient Near Eastern religion, much of which has arisen through the industry of the Fribourg School—Othmar Keel, Silvia Schroer, Christoph Uehlinger, et al.²⁰¹—and their American followers at Emory University who have described themselves as practitioners of “Iconographic Exegesis.”²⁰²

In discussing visual art representations of divine combat, however, I aim to go beyond what I perceive to be certain theoretical shortcomings of these groups. With a few exceptions, the Fribourg School and practitioners of “Iconographic Exegesis” have restricted their methodology to (1.) collecting tokens of visual art that depict various motifs; and (2.) “relating” these visual art representations to texts, especially biblical texts. The first method is of substantial practical use, since it allows other scholars to explore all representations of a given motif or figure without having to undertake a lengthy search through all published sources.²⁰³ The program of interpreting collections of visual art has, however, often privileged the manufacturing of coherence and/or development across a corpus. Scholars have, for example, assigned representations to particular

²⁰¹ Core publications include Keel and Uehlinger 1992 and Schroer 2005–18; 1987. Many studies originating and interacting with this group of scholars continue to be published in the series *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*. Art historians working primarily on Mesopotamia and the northern Levant are cited throughout Chapters 3 and 4.

²⁰² The most recent instantiation of this trend is Bonfiglio 2016, which includes a detailed retrospective and critique of method. This method is described and exemplified in the edited volume de Hulster, Strawn, and Bonfiglio 2015; other major Emory-based monographs on iconographic exegesis are LeMon 2010 and Strawn 2005.

²⁰³ The most useful Fribourg school corpora to date are those of stamp seals from the territories of Israel and Judah (Keel et al. 1985–) and from Jordan (Eggler and Keel 2006), and Herrmann’s (1994–) collection of amulets from the southern Levant. Taken together, these represent the most comprehensive source for southern Levantine miniature art organized by site and period. The present description does not take issue with the practice of verbal description of iconography in ancient Near Eastern art historical study. Porada (1982: 502) rightly defends this practice, and there is no reason it should not be the norm in both catalogues and focused studies. Especially in Chapters 3 and 4, I allot substantial space to basic description so as to take account of those motifs that might otherwise go unnoticed and under-appreciated.

deities, so that the intellectual project becomes one of identification,²⁰⁴ or they have attempted to discern theological developments by describing changes across a broad corpus, usually in a somewhat simplified way.

In attempting to “relate” art to texts, it is often left unclear precisely what is achieved or said about the relationship by the simple juxtaposition of materials.²⁰⁵ It is often presupposed that texts uncomplicatedly interpret images or that images are of use chiefly for illustrating for the modern reader elements from the imagination of the ancient composer or receiver of texts.²⁰⁶ There are no clear criteria for adjudicating the relevance of images to texts or vice versa; especially in Biblical Studies, images invoked as relevant are often collected from hundreds of miles and/or thousands of years away without any acknowledgment of the complications such procedures introduce to the analysis. In all of these projects, the element that is frequently missing is close attention to the social and art-historical context of the individual piece, as well as any interpretations that look beyond the ancient Near East to dialogue with insights in broader art history and/or cultural theory.²⁰⁷ As Crawford (2014: 243) has recently summarized, much indirect

²⁰⁴ See for example Cornelius’s volumes on Levantine goddesses (idem 2008) and “Reshef and Ba‘al” (idem 1994) for the period 1500–1000 B.C.E.

²⁰⁵ These issues are recently discussed in Mesopotamian art historical scholarship by Nunn 2019; Postgate 2018 (the most programmatic of the contributions in the publication of the sixty-first *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* [Geneva, 2015; publ. Attinger et al. 2018], the theme of which was “Text and Image”); Steinkeller 2017; C. D. Crawford 2014; and Sonik 2014. The possibility of total disjunction between (certain) texts and (certain) images has been broached by Collon (2007: 50 n. 17) regarding the famous Burney relief (BM 2003,0718.1), “Unfortunately, text and picture belong to different traditions, and all too often it is impossible to correlate the two” (similarly, with general application, J. A. Black and Green 1992: 15–21).

²⁰⁶ This point is also made by Uehlinger 2007; Winter 1997 (= eadem 2010: 71–108).

²⁰⁷ Exceptions to this generalization are more common in Mesopotamian art history than in scholarship that is more closely aligned with Biblical Studies. Ataç (2018; 2010) and Bahrani’s (esp. 2014; 2003) work are worth noting, as are several of the contributions to Brown and Feldman 2014.

disparagement or the according of only loose attention to visual art has developed from religious, gender, and racial tensions in the study of the ancient Near East; in many diverse ways, scholars have coded the image as of interest only to the Catholic, feminine, and “primitive,” while the text is the proper and superior realm of study for (once or currently hegemonic) Protestant, masculine, and cultured groups or individuals.²⁰⁸ Art history is therefore constructed as a handmaiden to textual studies and is understood by textualists not as a sophisticated, heavily theorized discipline in its own right but as a pool from which pictures can be casually selected to illustrate narratives.

The present work cannot claim or hope to solve all of these problems at a stroke. One major reason for this is that this is not exclusively an art historical study. As was articulated in Chapter 1, it instead attempts to ask and answer primarily sociological and historical questions about the relevance of myths by exploring two types of data, i.e. not only extant visual art but also textual descriptions of ancient art such as both certainly existed and almost certainly did not exist for the ancient observer.²⁰⁹ Because of the centrality of social accessibility to my core questions, my focus

²⁰⁸ Squire (2009: 15–89) discusses the Protestant figuration in particular with primary reference to Greco-Roman art history. Coincidentally, I encountered in the course of preparing Subsection 2.1.2, above, a blatant and misogynistic association of the feminine with art in Ackerman’s (1991: 71) appalling and shockingly recent description of the pioneering Classicist Jane Harrison: “Because she was a woman I am sure (without being able to prove it) that to some extent at least her world found her behavior charming where the same behavior in a man would have been thought childish or bizarre. For instance, she seems never to have lost the habit or ability, which psychologists tell us is common in children but tends to die out in adulthood, of thinking in pictures—eidetic imagery. (She was intensely visual, as her ten years of lecturing and writing on art demonstrate.)” There is no acknowledgement here of the extent to which presuppositions such as Ackerman’s on the appropriateness of art history for women’s study might have informed Harrison’s curricular, pedagogical, and scholarly choices.

²⁰⁹ The project attempts, in other words, to contribute to the breaking down of boundaries between the textual and the art historical, for which note e.g. Crawford (2014: 241), “The historical compartmentalization of the study of the ancient Near East into philology, art history, and archaeology has resulted in the frequent parsing of analytical work into separate studies with cropped foci”; and Squire (2009) describing at book length a similar problem in the field of Greco-Roman Studies.

throughout Chapters 3 through 5 will be on visual representations that were (or were represented to be) either highly mobile or highly visible. As will be discussed in the theoretical introductions to each of those chapters, either of these features—which can be broadly conceptualized as portability and monumentality, respectively—would have contributed to widespread and close engagement with iconographic motifs. The present study operates at two extremes of portability and size: the so-called “minor” arts and monuments. Most studies in ancient Near Eastern art history focus on one or the other of these two categories, which is certainly a preferable method if the goal is to describe a feature particular to monumental art, for example, the propagandistic elements of a monumental art program at a particular site or in a particular area. But it is less necessary if one aims to assess the reach and variety of a motif, in this case, that of divine combat. Many ancient Near Eastern art historical studies have demonstrated or alluded to the fact that motifs frequently cross media borders and are therefore usefully studied together²¹⁰; this work puts that ideal into practice and allows artificially separated corpora to together inform the modern scholar as they would have together informed an ancient observer.

Attention to iconographic representations of divine combat cannot be content to merely list places in which a struggle between gods and their enemies is depicted. It is necessary to discuss not only the fact that such motifs appear in visual art but also, and much more importantly, how this motif carried out its social functions. In order to pursue these questions in a consistent and theoretically sophisticated way, the present work privileges a range of interdisciplinary theoretical discussions on monsters and how they express meaning cross-culturally. Monsters or hybrid creatures are admittedly only one element of many that appear in visual combat myths. But they

²¹⁰ See e.g. Winter 2010: x, “while a given study may privilege a particular art/artifact type, in general it is impossible to isolate such classes of work from other classes of artistic production.” Concrete observations relevant to these points will be made especially in Chapters 3 and 4, below.

are often a major aspect or the single focus of these representations. The degree to which deities appear impressive is often determined directly by the fearsome qualities of the monsters they conquer, employ, or otherwise engage. In a similar way, it will be argued below, the power demonstrated by kings whose palaces are decorated with representations of the monstrous or who are described in literary texts as engaging monsters is often derived from the degree to which these antagonists are gigantic, threatening, and gruesome, among other features. These features therefore constitute prime opportunities for analysis, and this will shed light on public discourses of power and prestige that recur throughout the ancient Near East. The following subsections explore first (Subsection 2.2.1) recent developments of monster theory within general cultural theory and second (Subsection 2.2.2) engagements with this theory in biblical and other ancient Near Eastern studies; such engagements are far less common than is appropriate for the profusion of monsters in the available sources, but ways forward will be suggested throughout.

2.2.1 Monster Theory in its Cultural Theoretical Contexts

The field of monster theory merges observations from psychoanalytic theory²¹¹ and literary theory of the grotesque²¹² to explore monsters as threatening and disgusting category crossers, disrupters of binaries, and expressive of distanced desire.²¹³ Because this disciplinary history has been surveyed at least twice in recent work on the Hebrew Bible from monster theoretical perspectives,²¹⁴ I focus in the present section less on these foundations and more on the constitution of monster theory as a disciplinary approach since ca. 1990. Monster theoretical work is increasingly pursued across fields dealing with different textual, visual, and film corpora, but it

²¹¹ The most influential early psychoanalytic work is Sigmund Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (1919). In this volume, Freud's major thesis is that "unheimlich" ("uncanny") entities and situations that provoke discomfort and—at their most extreme—horror do so precisely because they combine the familiar and the unfamiliar in unexpected and therefore unsettling ways. Freud's work on the uncanny discusses Jentsch's (1906) earlier article describing the reactions of people to situations of intellectual uncertainty. More recently, Julia Kristeva has in her *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: essai sur l'abjection* (1980) has fused Freud's hypotheses on the uncanny with Jacques Lacan's work on the relations between Subject and Object to argue that horror is provoked by entities that are expelled from the body, either literally—feces, blood, etc.—or metaphorically. Reaction to these mixes identification (hence, Lacan and others would argue, desire) and avowal as wholly Other, a process Kristeva refers to as "abjection." Studies of the abject in literature and film have become common, e.g. Harrington 2018: esp. 224–26; Arya 2014; Magistrale 2005; Creed 1993.

²¹² Study of grotesque realism as a defined literary mode goes back to Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (*Творчество Франсуа Рабле и народная культура средневековья и Ренессанса*; English translation Bakhtin 1968). Bakhtin reads Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532–34) for its upending social norms via representations of permeable and penetrated bodies. For a similar recent exposition in Biblical Studies, see Graybill 2016: esp. 20–21, who works primarily from a queer theoretical perspective and without explicit engagement of Bakhtin or the grotesque. Work in Biblical Studies that raises the heuristic potential of the grotesque as category includes F. C. Black 2009, on Song of Songs.

²¹³ For more on these points, see the engagement of J. J. Cohen 1996b, below.

²¹⁴ In their surveys of the application of monster and horror theory to the Hebrew Bible, both Grafius (2017: 34–40) and Marzouk (2015: 52–67) describe the origins of the discipline as they perceive them. The former has written a recent monograph applying horror theory to Numbers 25 (Grafius 2018), for which see further below, and the latter occurs in a volume applying monster theory to texts in Ezekiel, also engaged below.

has become highly fragmented. Scholars working on ancient Near Eastern monsters, for example, only rarely engage contemporary work on, for example, monsters in the Greco-Roman or medieval northern European worlds—two especially promising pre-modern arenas—not to mention the most productive field, that of the twentieth and twenty-first century American horror film. In the chapters that follow, I engage work with which I am especially familiar when it seems relevant. In the present section, I also place some emphasis on noting monster theoretical lines of thought that are recent or that I find promising for future study.

The interdisciplinary field of inquiry in question has been named in several ways, most often as “monster theory,” “monster studies,” or “teratology.”²¹⁵ Most of the earliest work done by scholars identifying themselves as working within such a field traced a psychoanalytic theoretical genealogy. This manner of affiliation appears to have been most common and explicit in medieval studies. Subsequently, many non-medievalists have somewhat simplistically traced “monster theory” to manifestations that originated in or are confined to medieval studies. The most commonly identified “founding” or “central” texts are Marie-Hélène Huet’s *Monstrous*

²¹⁵ This last is least frequently employed despite its brevity and adjectival potential. Recent exceptions are less than central to the field, e.g. Picart and Browning 2012, an anthology of primary sources and monster theoretical scholarship; Roux 2008, a semi-popular volume on monsters (employing French *tératologie*); and Hunter 2005, a semi-popular volume on freak shows. The apparent concern is confusion with the historical practice of teratology as simply describing allegedly real monsters, especially so-called monstrous births, and often involving prognostication from these observations. For this practice in various periods of European history, see e.g. Spinks 2009; Bates 2005; J. Crawford 2005; Huet 1993; and Wilson 1993. Teratology in this sense in the ancient Near East is also common—see e.g. De Zorzi 2014, editing the teratomantic compendium *Šumma izbu* (superseding Leichty 1970; summary of scholarship in Heeßel 2013); Pardee 2007 on teratology at Ugarit—but the present work does not engage with studies of this practice in any detail. The term teratology is also used in contemporary medical literature to describe focus on or specialization in congenital and developmental anatomical abnormalities. The “Teratology Society,” for example, studies actual medical abnormalities and formerly published a journal *Teratology* (1968–2002, now *Birth Defects Research*).

Imagination (1993), David Williams's *Deformed Discourse* (1996) and a volume edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996a).²¹⁶ Non-medievalists often identify such work as uniquely significant without acknowledging that these and other works do not encompass total "monster theory" but rather, in general, the theoretical insights of monster theory applied to—or, perhaps more accurately, partially constituted by interaction with—a particular textual corpus naturally restricted by chronological, geographical, linguistic, and other parameters.²¹⁷

I have in general found it productive to limit "monster theory" to inquiries with particular theoretical underpinnings and analytic aims. Scholarship that presents or interrogates the status of the represented monster as Other, liminal, abject, queer, etc. in the technical senses of those terms and/or that reads such monsters and modes of interaction with them as revealing of authorial and/or societal anxieties vis-à-vis categories of divinity, authority, gender, race, species, etc. most clearly instantiates the founding psychoanalytic concerns and approaches that have proven especially productive in the work summarized in this section. Such scholarship conceptualized as specifically "monster theory" might be understood as a subfield of "monster studies," which might itself be used to refer to any and all contributions having some bearing on monsters and understanding thereof. The line between the narrower subfield and the broader field is of course permeable and flexible. Many studies of particular monsters, for example, do not make explicit reference to psychoanalytic theory, queer theory, etc. but nevertheless reach conclusions along the same lines.

²¹⁶ The characterization of this volume as having "originated in" medieval studies is necessary because—although Cohen is himself a medievalist by training and his introduction (Cohen 1996b) and over half of the contributed essays deal primarily or exclusively with the medieval and early modern periods (through ca. 1700 C.E.)—several essays indeed go beyond these chronological (and geographical, etc.) bounds, albeit all by dealing with more recent periods and with European and North American contexts.

²¹⁷ Monster theoretical work produced contemporaneously with the volumes cited above could just as well be cited, e.g. Atherton 1998 in Greco-Roman studies and Borsje 1996 in Celtic studies.

For example, Joshua Blu Buhs's (2009) study of twentieth-century C.E. North American Sasquatch/Bigfoot discourse repeatedly characterizes fascination with the monster as revealing of and palliative to working class masculine anxiety around social relevance, virility, and specifically rural hunting and tracking prowess. Because I would not want to risk losing such potentially productive insights in a mass of more straightforwardly descriptive "monster studies,"²¹⁸ I might, for example, be more inclined to describe Buhs's work as "monster theory" even though Freud is mentioned just once²¹⁹ and the collocation "monster theory" not at all.

Notably for the genealogy of scholarship, J. J. Cohen's (1996a) edited volume mentioned above now has a larger, more recent, and more diverse companion in Asa Mittman and Peter Dendle's *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (2012). Essays in this volume treat several traditions beyond the medieval, early modern, and modern European and North American focus of Cohen's edited volume, e.g. monsters in the Greco-Roman world (Felton 2012),²²⁰ Japanese monsters from the Edo period (1603–1888) on (Foster 2012), and in the Mayan iconographic tradition (Looper 2012). This remains the most geographically and chronologically inclusive volume of essays on the monstrous, in large part because several similarly extensive

²¹⁸ Regal (2011), for example, wants to discover why various "crackpots [and] eggheads," according to his subtitle, perpetuated the search for Bigfoot even in the face of overwhelming negative evidence, but he dismisses out of hand psychoanalytic explanations at *ibid.*: 2 and mentions monster theory again only at *ibid.*: 180 (citing exclusively J. J. Cohen 1996a, not identified as an edited volume) to contrast it with an approach that is more sensitive to the history of cryptozoology within physical anthropology and evolutionary science. One might wonder why these approaches are mutually exclusive and how one can hope to explore the fundamentally social phenomenon of Bigfoot hunting as though it were an isolated academic preoccupation.

²¹⁹ Namely at Buhs 2009: 6 for the observation in *Totem und Tabu* (Freud 1913) that wild men are constitutive of and/or most active in the human mind rather than in observable reality or historical fact. This is augmented by reference to a similar observation by Hayden White (1972: 34).

²²⁰ A significant point of departure for Greco-Roman monsters is Atherton 1998, also mentioned in n. 217, above.

collections treat the monstrous as though it is exclusively or primarily a modern or even twentieth and twenty-first century phenomenon; as will be demonstrated in Chapters 3 through 5, this is hardly the case.²²¹ Those working in modern or postmodern literature and film studies appear to have more readily located the monstrous as a category worthy of analysis because monsters easily identifiable as such are active and pervasive subjects in particular literary and film genres, especially Gothic and the horror film.

Especially given this restriction, it will be useful to explore briefly some of the emphases of and trends within this monster theoretical work. This can be helpful both for identifying monsters as more than just hybrid creatures and for revealing the loci in which scholarship has left curious gaps. Traditional emphases can be most easily encapsulated by J. J. Cohen's (1996b) oft-cited programmatic seven "theses" on monstrosity, which are cited below according to Cohen's section headings and then briefly summarized:

(I.) "The Monster's Body is a Cultural Body." Like all entities, the monster is both constituted by and constitutive of culture. People create the monster and the monster creates certain responses and thence identities among people.

(II.) "The Monster Always Escapes." The monster is recurrent in various cultural representations despite narratives describing and even focusing on its demise.

²²¹ This is not to deny that several of the essays in the following volumes include useful insights, and I mention some of these below. Wright 2018 observes approximately the same bounds as Cohen 1996a. The vast majority of the essays in Bro et al. 2018 deal with monsters in twentieth and twenty-first-century C.E. English-language literature, television, and film. All but one of the thirteen contributions to a recent *University of Toronto Quarterly* issue on monster studies (vol. 87, no. 1 [Winter 2018]) treat monsters in twentieth and twenty-first-century materials (the exception is Spellmire 2018 on the "Blatant Beast" in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*).

(III.) “The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis.” The monster creates psychological crisis by revealing cracks in categories and especially binaries.

(IV.) “The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference.” Cultural Others are often categorized as monsters so as to emphasize difference between a subject and these Others.

(V.) “The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible.” Subjects establish monsters at borders to demarcate geographical areas as threatening. This often establishes the frontier as the exclusive domain of individuals or groups in power.²²²

(VI.) “Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire.” Monsters are constituted in such a way as to embody desired characteristics at a comfortable distance. The fear experienced and performed opposite these creatures is simultaneous abjection and identification. This is perhaps Cohen’s most baldly Lacanian claim.

(VII.) “The Monster Stands at the Threshold... of Becoming.” The monster is productive for thought on the representation of the world, its subjects, and cultural assumptions on various points. This productivity enables a sort of becoming among readers.

²²² In the context of ancient Near Eastern studies, a recent journal issue, *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 4.1–2 (2017 [published June 2018]), titled “Hic Sunt Dracones: Creating, Defining, and Abstracting Place in the Ancient World,” alludes to this positioning of fantastical creatures at the margins of the known world. But most of the contributions to the issue make no mention of this whatsoever; Konstantopoulos’s (2017b) contribution is a partial exception in that she mentions the general tendency at a few junctures and the specific Mesopotamian example of Lugalbanda finding Anzû at the margins of the known world (ibid.: 12–13).

It is immediately notable that all of these points describe relations of the subject to monstrosity and that many carry forward Freudian and/or Lacanian psychoanalytic stances. Cohen's emphases do not differ substantially from those of his medievalist contemporaries and immediate predecessors in monster theory, so that they constitute a representative sample of what hypotheses and conclusions in this discipline usually involve. A surprisingly large subset of monster theoretical studies since the mid-1990s has simply involved demonstrations that Cohen's theses hold for a given monster.

In the present work, I do occasionally engage in similar straightforward demonstration or critical testing of these hypotheses. Examples include my discussion in Section 4.1 of the *nāḥiru* and *burṭiš* as monstrously emblematic of border zones that are claimed as the exclusive prerogative of Assyrian royalty (compare Thesis V) and, in Section 5.3, my discussions of the ways in which Goliath's monstrosity overlaps and helps constitute Philistine alterity (compare Thesis IV). In the present work, however, I often differ from Cohen's emphases by privileging discussions of which precise physical features tend to be envisioned as constituting monstrosity. Authors have often been content to assert the monstrosity of the figures they study and/or to simply document that these figures have been called "monstrous" by contemporary sources. But those physical features that are censured as monstrous are defined and queried less frequently than one might expect. One often gets the impression that just about any physical feature can be figured as monstrous, and this is true to a certain extent. But there are definite trends in the embodiment of monstrosity, especially within certain geographical and/or chronological parameters, and these deserve to be drawn out in more detail.

My inspiration in this regard is an important section of Noel Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror* (1990). Carroll's volume is one of the earliest expositions of what constitutes "art-horror" as a genre. By "art-horror," Carroll (1990: esp. 52–58, 192) means those literary, visual, film, and other artistic productions that produce an emotional state merging fear and disgust. The focal point of this emotion is always, according to Carroll (1990: 41), a monster. It is argued from studies in psychoanalysis and anthropology that in order to produce fear and disgust, the monster must be both threatening and impure (ibid.: 27–35). Rather than leaving matters here, though, Carroll asks what precise physical features most commonly embody monstrosity. The more straightforward set of processes that produce monsters are "magnification" and "massification."²²³ The former involves increasing the size especially "of entities or beings already typically adjudged impure or disgusting within the culture" (Carroll 1990: 49). Most of Carroll's examples involve magnified bugs and reptiles, itself an interesting and under-theorized trend. He notes that "[m]onsters of the magnified phobia variety were quite popular in fifties's movies [...] Some examples include: *Them!* [1954], *Tarantula* [1955], *Attack of the Crab Monsters* [1957], *The Deadly Mantis* [1957], *Giant Gila Monster* [1959; etc.]" (ibid.). Carroll might also have noted, though, such films as *Attack of the Fifty-Foot Woman* (1958; see fig. 2.1, below), which illustrate that magnification can also be applied to humans that a certain discourse constitutes as impure; this enhances their threatening aspect in fantasy and reinscribes it in reality.

²²³ Carroll (1990: 46) reserves "multiplication"—which might have been a more easily understood label for the process described here—for monsters that are doubles of selves or subjects within the framework of what Carroll calls "spatial fission." Within such frameworks, the monster is an entity separated from the self by physical distance, and this doppelganger entity often "stand[s] for another aspect of the self, generally one that is either hidden, ignored, repressed, or denied by the character who has been cloned." The Freudian influences here are clear; one of the best known examples of such a structure is Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).



Fig. 2.1

Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman (1958)
Theatrical release poster (Reynold Brown)

Carroll’s “massification,” by contrast, refers to the art-horror motif of massing threatening entities in great numbers, as in the pulp horror novels *Killer Crabs* (G. N. Smith 1989) and *Ants* (Tremayne 1980) or in Daphne du Maurier’s “The Birds” (1952) and its film adaptation by Alfred Hitchcock (1963). Of course, the principles of magnification and massification can be combined to heighten the threat and disgust produced by a (collective) monster and thus the intensity of the art-horror emotion. For example, whereas the original *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (2001–3) features a single magnified monstrous spider in Shelob as encountered by Frodo in *The Return of the King* (2003), the later *Hobbit* trilogy (2012–14) attempts in *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013)

to increase the horror quotient by pitting Bilbo and his dwarf companions against hundreds of giant Mirkwood spiders.²²⁴

The other element of Carroll's discussion is a consideration of what he terms "fusion" and "fission" monsters. The former are perhaps easier to understand: fusion monsters combine features that are ordinarily viewed as diagnostic for membership in one of the members in a commonly constructed binary pair (Knöppler 2017: 27–28; Carroll 1990: 43). Fusion monsters might, for instance, combine human with animal features (e.g. vampires), living with dead features (e.g. zombies), or male with female features. This last sort of combination has received particular attention in the work of Jack Halberstam (1995; 1998) on the intersections of 19th and 20th-century monstrosity with queer embodiments.²²⁵ For an entity to produce disgust and therefore, by

²²⁴ The same contrast may of course be found in the books, with the scene in *The Hobbit* having been written first (e.g. Tolkien 1937: 189, "he [Bilbo] saw spiders swarming up all the neighbouring trees and crawling along the boughs above the heads of the dwarves") and that in *The Two Towers* second (not *The Return of the King*, as in the film version; Tolkien 1954: 378, "Most like a spider she was, but huger than the great hunting beasts [...] great horns she had, and behind her short stalk-like neck was her huge swollen body, a vast bloated bag, swaying and sagging between her legs"; the use here of lexemes that connote the grotesque and invoke liquids is in keeping with representation of monsters throughout world literatures).

²²⁵ Halberstam's chief aim in his *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995) is to explore how the construction of monstrous others draws on perceived race, class, and gender differences for its structures and features (see esp. *ibid.*: 31). Examples include a reading of the titular character in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as figured according to stereotypes of the Semitic, the feminine, and the so-called "homosexual" (Halberstam 1995: 86–106; 1993). Throughout, Halberstam stresses that transgression of ethical norms is figured as visible through embodiment precisely in order to restrict this transgression to the constructed monster and to fix the supposedly properly embodied (racialized, gendered, etc.) individual as incapable of transgression. Halberstam's second book, *Female Masculinity* (1998) focuses on a particular set of gender transgressions in life and art. The most relevant chapter for present purposes is perhaps "Looking Butch: A Rough Guide to Butches on Film" (*ibid.*: 175–230), which explores masculine female representation in twentieth-century film to show that, while gender transgression among unthreatening "tomboy" children is usually figured as "spunky" or other positive appraisals, a similar category disruption by an adult woman is often figured as "predatory" (*ibid.*: 193–203). The latter tendency is

Carroll's schema, be monstrous, it is often not enough for it to combine features from entities usually conceived as existing within a common category or on one side of a major cultural binary (Carroll 1990: 45). In other words, a hypothetical creature combining features of somewhat closely related terrestrial mammals—say a lion and a dog—is less likely to be experienced as monstrous. Hybridity becomes monstrosity when it embodies a categorical threat. It may be a general principle that the less commonly one encounters a particular category transgression in one's daily life, the more monstrous a entity will seem when it instantiates that category transgression by fusion.

Fission, by contrast, assigns these contradictory features to entities distributed in either space or time. Narratives that incorporate the presence of a monstrous double—that is, an entity that mirrors the subject in some contradictory way, but as physically distinct from that subject—are the environments in which spatial fission monsters most frequently appear.²²⁶ Temporal fission monsters usually involve transformation of a figure to its opposite, thereby creating categorical transgression across time but within an individual embodiment. Well-known examples of this type of figure include werewolves and the protagonist of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) (Carroll 1990: 45–47). In sum, “Temporal fission [...] *divides characters in time*—while spatial fission [...] *multiplies characters in space*” (Carroll 1990: 47, emphasis original). The fission principle is not one that I find to be operative in the ancient Near Eastern material, but it is worth understanding as a counterpart to Carroll's fusion principle, which I engage for its potential to illuminate monstrosity in several cases.

Due to the role that monsters have played in the work of Carroll and other scholars of the modern horror film, monster theory and horror theory are intimately connected disciplines. This is

also visible in ancient Near Eastern, including biblical texts, as has been observed, for example, regarding Jezebel by Hornsby and Guest (2016: 45–80); several similar discussions may now be found in Tamber-Rosenau 2018.

²²⁶ For the example of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), see n. 223.

important for scholars of the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East to recognize primarily because scholars working within these fields have often conceptualized their work as deploying *either* monster theory *or* horror theory; this is described in more detail in the following subsection. Because scholars working on horror and monsters in modern contexts generally do not conceptualize their object of study as only the genre or, conversely, only the characters that populate this genre, one finds observations that are productive for the study of ancient monsters as often in studies of the contemporary horror film as one finds these in studies that are framed as engaging monsters particularly. The scholar of the ancient Near East who is interested in category transgression—whether this be with regard to hybrid creatures or to representations of foreigners or of queer genders and sexualities—can therefore derive numerous apposite insights into transgressive embodiment from these diverse interdisciplinary fields. As the following section will show, this has been done less frequently than one might expect or wish. To spur the discussion, Carroll, Halberstam, J. J. Cohen, and several others are engaged throughout the present work.

2.2.2 Monster and Horror Theory in Ancient Near Eastern Studies

The profusion of monsters in the ancient Near East might lead one to expect that scholars would already be applying and testing the above-noted insights of monster theory to and in conversation with data from this vast field. Work on monsters in Near Eastern contexts continues, however, to be concentrated largely on the tasks of cataloguing and taxonomizing, much as in ancient Near Eastern art history in general. By “cataloguing,” I usually intend scholarship that focuses on collecting and describing all textual and/or visual manifestations of a given monster,

demon, etc.²²⁷ This sort of work is most commonly undertaken within ancient Near Eastern studies by Assyriologists and with a focus on Mesopotamia, even when a given figure appears in iconography or text beyond that region. Similar work catalogues all hybrid figures within given source parameters, such as a particular period, geographical area, and/or corpus of texts.²²⁸ This sort of scholarship is prevalent, ongoing, and necessary. It can be difficult to describe the physical features, activities, and significance of a given figure without such catalogues, which are still lacking for numerous important entities. At the same time, one might like to see a better balance

²²⁷ This bibliography has never been collected in a systematic way, in large part because students and non-specialists often still rely on the “illustrated dictionary” of J. A. Black and Green 1992 for information about hybrid creatures (“Demons”). This volume has no bibliography and almost never gives any information about a given image beyond describing its appearance. Therefore, the provenance, current location, and publication histories of various iconographic artifacts are all routinely inaccessible. The articles on “Mischwesen” in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*—“Philologie,” i.e. textual manifestations by Wiggermann (1994) and “Archäologie,” i.e. iconographic manifestations, by Green (1994)—are informative and well-referenced, but coverage of each individual monster is understandably restricted. Unger’s (1926) earlier summary of (mostly Mesopotamian) “Mischwesen” for the *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* is similarly useful but is of course almost a century old. The *Iconography of Deities and Demons* project (ed. J. Egger and C. Uehlinger) should cover many of these entities; pre-publication articles on some are presently available online (namely, *apkallû* in Dalley fc., last updated 2011; *aladlammu* in Ritter fc., last updated 2010; and Pazuzu in Heeßel fc., last updated 2007). Only a few book-length surveys of individual hybrid creatures have been published, e.g. Heeßel 2002 on Pazuzu; Green 1986 on the lion-headed demon (probably *ugallû*); for Anzû, Fuhr-Jaepelt 1972 discusses the iconography and Hruška 1975 relevant texts. Several other important works were executed as dissertations or theses and remain unpublished: Konstantopoulos 2015 on the Sibitti; Graff 2012a on Humbaba (see also Graff 2012b); and Götting 2009 on Lamaštu (see also Götting 2018; 2011).

²²⁸ For example, Seidl (1989) catalogues representations of deities, hybrid creatures, and various symbols in Babylonian *kudurrus*; Engel (1987) does the same for Neo-Assyrian palaces and temples, including textual descriptions thereof not extant in the archaeological record; and Rittig (1977) explores hybrid figurines, mostly in Neo-Assyrian contexts. These latter two studies are repeatedly cited in Chapter 4 of the present work, along with Wiggermann’s (1992) foundational work on hybrid figurines named and described in ritual texts. More recently, Gane (2012) has catalogued in her unpublished dissertation all Neo-Babylonian hybrid creatures known from the archaeological record.

between basic data collection and analysis informed by the theoretical approaches that have been developed in other fields.

By the second function—“taxonomizing”—I mean work on monsters either that identifies a set of iconographic representations with a textual designation or to sort iconographic representations into groups independent of textual correlates.²²⁹ Other work in a similar vein attempts to identify the mundane animals on which hybrid creatures are based. One example of this is the debate as to whether the *urdimmu*, with the upper body of a man, has the lower body of a dog or of a lion. Ellis (2006) has recently argued the former based on iconographic comparison of the *urdimmu* with canids (e.g. the clay apotropaic figures BM 30001–5; see figs. 2.2–4, below), but opinion prior to this varied, often without explicit foundations.²³⁰

²²⁹ Most of the cataloguing efforts surveyed above have textual identification of the iconographic entity as a major goal, especially if this identification is disputed. One example of this is Green’s (1986: 153–55) discussion of the identity of the lion-headed demon. This expands Green’s (1983: 90–92) earlier comments and is interacted with by e.g. Wiggermann 1992: 169–72 and Thomsen 2000. For more details, see Chapter 4, n. 481.

²³⁰ See previously e.g. Ehrenberg 1995; Wiggermann 1992: 172–74; Beaulieu 1990; Engel 1987: 89; and Kolbe 1981: 132–36. In more recent work, Ellis’s hypothesis is usually followed (e.g. Kertai 2015: 329–30).

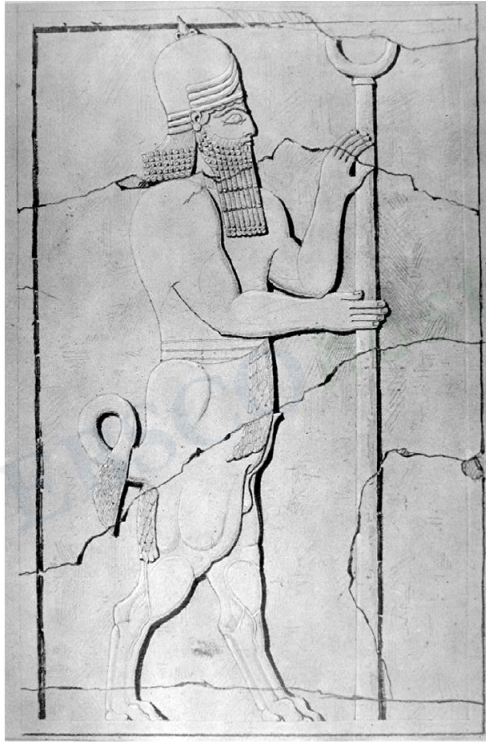


Fig. 3. North Palace, Uridimmu A

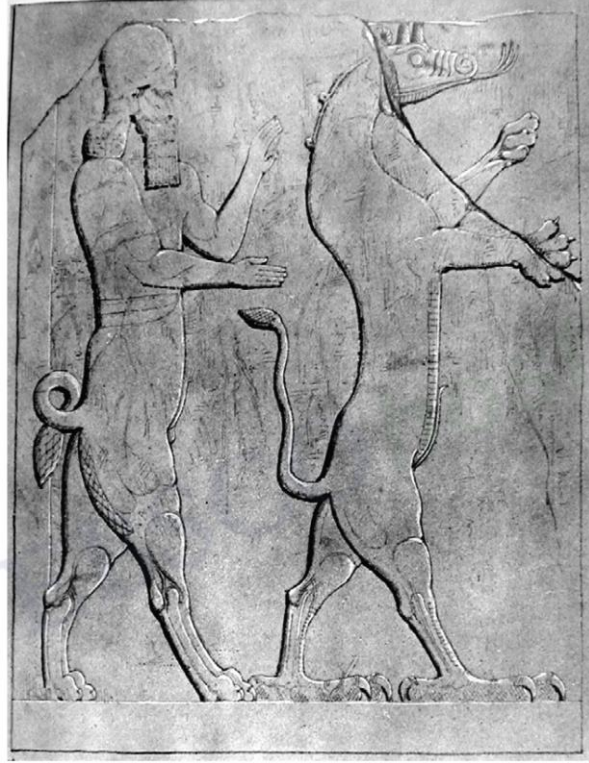


Fig. 4. North Palace, Uridimmu and Mušhuššu

Fig. 2.2

Aššurbanipal North Palace, Nineveh

Room I, doorway (a), Slab 1

Drawing only survives as BM Or.Dr. VII.10²³¹

Fig. 2.3

Aššurbanipal North Palace, Nineveh

Room S, doorway (a)

Drawing only survives as BM Or.Dr. V.45²³²

²³¹ The *editio princeps* of this drawing is Reade 1964: 5–6 and pl. 2. It has been illustrated and/or discussed also in e.g. Ellis 2006: 114, 120 fig. 3 and Barnett 1976: pl. 26.

²³² The *editio princeps* of this drawing is Barnett 1976: pl. 54, and the lost relief is discussed together with the preceding in Ellis 2006: 114–15, 121 fig. 4.



Fig. 2.4

BM 30005, Clay apotropaic dog figurine from Nineveh
© Trustees of the British Museum, BM Online Catalogue

Although it is not common in ancient Near Eastern studies, one could also consider approaches that attempt to define certain hybrid creatures as “monsters” and others as “demons,” “genii,” etc. as representatives of a taxonomizing approach (e.g. Sonik 2012, for which see briefly below).²³³

Most Assyriologists have been resistant to what they characterize as “theoretical” approaches, by which is usually intended any approach different from New Historicism and especially those literary theoretical perspectives that grew out of Postmodernist discourse in the mid- to late-twentieth century C.E.²³⁴ Work on monsters has provided only sporadic exceptions to this trend. Konstantopoulos (2015), for example, in a recent dissertation on the Sibitti, devotes the majority of her text to the admirable goal of cataloguing and describing appearances of the Sibitti in text and art. It is only near the conclusion of her study (ibid.: 310) that she mentions “monster theory,” specifically the pioneering work of Tolkien (1936) on the monsters of *Beowulf* and

²³³ I have been unable to access Sonik’s 2010 University of Pennsylvania dissertation, “*Daimon*-haunted Universe: Conceptions of the Supernatural in Mesopotamia.”

²³⁴ This is nicely expressed in a monster studies context by Feldt’s (2006: 83–87) comments on the dearth of literary theoretical approaches to Sumerian literature.

Orchard's (1995) more extensive study of the same material in its manuscript and intertextual contexts.²³⁵ Still, the broader conclusions yielded by engagement with these studies are rather restricted. First, Konstantopoulos (2015: 310) draws from Tolkien the observation that “monstrous figures found within a work [...] were not throwaway additions or ornamentations, but rather an integral feature of the work itself.” This is certainly true and was a significant contention in the 1930s, when many scholars of Anglo-Saxon were describing the monsters of *Beowulf*, for example, as simply “unserious” or allegorical (Tolkien 1936: 245–50). But featuring this in the early twenty-first century as one of two major outcomes of monster theory feels anticlimactic. Second (ibid.: 311), “monster theory sketches out the idea that a monster or a demon is created in response to a specific fear or cultural moment. [...] If monsters and demons are products of particular societal conditions, or responses to equally specific fears, they remain anchored to their cultural and temporal contexts.” This is again true, but one wonders if it is possible to move beyond the widely recognized imperative that scholars situate textual and iconographic works and motifs in their histories. Konstantopoulos has nevertheless gone further than most Assyriologists in demonstrating awareness of monster theoretical work beyond ancient Near Eastern studies, and I consider her conclusions to represent steps in a productive direction.

²³⁵ *Beowulf* is transmitted by a single ca. early 11th century C.E. manuscript often called simply the “*Beowulf* manuscript” but also by its British Library collection designation Cotton Vitellius A.xv or as the “Norwell Codex” (after its apparent onetime owner Laurence Nowell [ca. 1515–71 C.E.]) to designate the second of the two actual bound volumes comprising Cotton Vitellius A.xv. This codex contains not only *Beowulf* but also Old English texts of (in manuscript order) *The Passion of Saint Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, and *Judith* (a poetic retelling of the biblical book). Orchard (1995) argues that these particular texts were compiled in this codex because of their common concern with monsters, and he studies all of them individually and together to describe attitudes toward and the literary functions of monsters in Old English poetry and prose. Additionally, Orchard explores one prominent possible source of *Beowulf*, namely the *Liber Monstrorum* (7th–8th century C.E. Anglo-Latin), and one text presenting substantial plot and thematic parallels, namely *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* (13th–14th century C.E. Icelandic). Subsequent relevant work by Orchard includes idem 2003: esp. 24–25; 1997.

Another ongoing theoretical problem involves the use of the term “demon” in ancient Near Eastern studies; there is some variety in how the terms “monster” and “demon” have been distributed among the hybrid creatures of text and iconography, especially in Assyriology.²³⁶ Assyriologists have only rarely made explicit the criteria by which they divide entities between these two categories. Porada (1987: 1), for example, distinguishes monsters and demons on the basis of their locomotive anatomy: four-legged hybrid beings are “monsters,” and two-legged beings are “demons.”²³⁷ Sonik (2012), in a more detailed and bifurcated taxonomy, defines “monsters” and “demons” not on the basis of form but on their functions and specifically their geographical locations and interactive partners. Monsters

are characterized by their geographical alienation [...] The interstitial and “in-between” nature of the monsters, then, is reflected not only in their anomalous and striking physical forms but also in their habitats, so that they occupy in both respects the spaces between conceptual and cognitive categories, and find their proper homes in those precarious and mutable zones where the ordered world confronts the chaotic one. (Sonik 2012: 107)

²³⁶ Allusions to this problem and/or implicit attempts to solve it by describing a canon of Mesopotamian demons include Konstantopoulos 2019; 2017a; Verderame 2017; 2012; Wiggermann 2011; 2007.

²³⁷ Porada’s (1987: 1) formulation could in fact be misunderstood to mean that this distinction is somehow self evident in Mesopotamian sources: “In descriptions of Mesopotamian art, creatures which seem to belong to the animal world because they walk on all fours, are called monsters, whereas those which walk on two legs with a human gait are called demons.” While she acknowledges that “[this is] a terminology not necessarily used in the iconography of other regions,” the existential rather than analytical language is misleading. It bears stressing, nevertheless, that Porada’s formulation is brief and that the majority of her article—in fact the introduction to a “Monsters and Demons”-themed *Festschrift* in her honor—is concerned with describing highly schematic phases to the iconographic representation of ancient Near Eastern monsters.

For a higher-order category parallel to that of “monsters,” Sonik (*ibid.*: 108–10) suggests Greek *daimon* (δαίμων) to avoid the overwhelmingly antagonistic and negative connotations of English “demon” for a group that is heterogeneous in its orientations and activities (see also Konstantopoulos 2017a). To account for the polarity between good *daimons* and bad *daimons*, Sonik advocates the construction of the categories “genie” and “demon,” respectively, both characterized by the frequency and consequence of their interactions with humans. While it is certainly useful to be able to recognize distinctions like these, Sonik’s terminology—like that of Porada—has neither the benefit of being emic and therefore revealing of ancient patterns of classification nor the benefit of accounting for all figures and neatly sorting them into relatively hermetic groups. Indeed, taxonomies like this have the appearance of trying to account secondarily for a terminological distinction that arose within Assyriology in a rather *ad hoc* fashion. More recent attempts to shape this usage into probative analytical categories often merely reinscribe categorizations based on European presuppositions and tend to prevent scholars from analyzing across putative categories, e.g. exploring the etiology of a “demon” like Lamaštu’s hybrid features together with those of hybrid monsters.

In Biblical Studies, there tends to be even less terminological precision about both “monster” and “demon” despite substantial debate and anxiety around how “demon” is to be used, if at all (e.g. Frey-Anthes 2008; 2007: 2–10; A. K. Petersen 2003). I have throughout the present work included the term “demon” and figures frequently classed as “demons” in many formulations because approaches to demons as hybrid creatures share much with approaches to monsters. As in Assyriology, the risk in not including so-called “demons” in such formulations is that one will enact in scholarship a distinction between “monster” and “demon” that did not exist for biblical authors and which is of no certain usefulness to modern scholars. One risks enacting and

perpetuating a topical divide that, on a practical level, bifurcates bibliography and, on the conceptual level, obscures the connection between and represents as immutable two groups of supernatural figures. In Biblical Studies, especially Hebrew Bible studies, it has been common to understand “monsters” as the exclusive and increasingly frequent object of applications of “monster theory” to Biblical Studies.²³⁸ This category is usually seen to encompass such figures as Leviathan, Behemoth, Rahab, and some others. Although it is rarely articulated, the distinction seems to be similar to Porada’s locomotive anatomical definition. That is, figures that later Jewish tradition and/or contemporary scholars envision as more theriomorphic—and thus usually as having four feet, no feet, etc.—are classed as “monsters.” Figures that these same traditions envisioned or envision as anthropomorphic in their locomotive anatomy are “demons,” even if later tradition or popular imagination also ascribes to them theriomorphic features like fur, hooves, and wings.

²³⁸ As mentioned in n. 214, both Grafius (2017) and Marzouk (2015: 45–69) have recently surveyed the employment of monster and horror theory in biblical studies, as well as some prominent theoretical antecedents. The former has written a recent monograph applying horror theory to Numbers 25 (Grafius 2018), for which see further below, and the latter occurs in a volume applying monster theory to texts in Ezekiel, also engaged below. Since these surveys bring one nearly to the present day, there is little more recent work that need be mentioned. The field shows signs of substantial activity. Projects forthcoming or in progress include a “Horror and Scripture” series for Lexington Books/Fortress Academic edited by Grafius and Kelly J. Murphy. Several scholars, most notably Esther J. Hamori and Michael B. Hundley, have publicized that they are working on books on Hebrew Bible monsters (Justin Moses alerted me to the plans of the latter scholar, advertised on his current public *curriculum vitae*). Another recent volume by a biblicalist, Wiggins 2019, studies the use of Bible in twentieth- and twenty-first century horror films. A recent collection of essays (van Bekkum et al. 2017) includes contributions on biblical monsters and their reception history. Although it is beyond the scope of this treatment to discuss monster theory in New Testament and Early Christian studies, it is worth noting the very recent article on Macumber (2019) on monstrosity as a resistance discourse in Revelation 13. Sessions on monstrosity in the Bible and beyond have been recent fixtures at the Annual Meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion, especially the AAR exploratory session “Monsters, Monster Theory, and Religion” (2017–18), now the seminar “New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous (2019–23).

The category of the biblical “demon” has thus been the subject of substantial direct study,²³⁹ but in no case of which I am aware has this been done with reference to monster theory or any other sustained literary theoretical approach. This is in part because studies of these figures in their biblical manifestations tend to focus on function rather than form. In the Hebrew Bible, virtually nothing is said about the morphology of even those characters—like (the) Satan—whose physical image is in later periods much elaborated in both text and image. Several others, like Qeṭeb, remain fundamentally mysterious. Because monster theory does often encompass not just form but also function, the aforementioned lack of anatomical focus need not have completely

²³⁹ Two general books on “demons” in the Hebrew Bible were published around a decade ago—Blair 2009 and Frey-Anthes 2007—and a somewhat less scholarly volume covering much of the same ground was recently published (Soza 2017). The most thorough resource for “demons” in the biblical world remains the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (van der Toorn et al. 1999). The edited volume Lange et al. 2003 is organized as an introduction to the “demonology” of ancient Israel and Judah and of ancient Judaism and Christianities, but the essays are very disparate and of uneven quality and relevance to the question of “demons.”

Several studies on Rešep, particularly in his guise as a deity among so-called Canaanite groups, have been published (Münnich 2013; Lipiński 2009; Cornelius 1994; Fulco 1976), but less well-known figures like Qeṭeb, Azazel, and even Lilith have been given direct attention mostly or entirely in the above-cited general works rather than in focused studies. This is most surprising for Lilith, for whom there appears to exist no responsible scholarly investigation covering origins among Mesopotamian wind demons through later Jewish mythologies of conjugal relations with Adam, her threats to women and children, etc. The *Šatan* (hereafter simply “Satan”) is a different story entirely. A classic book-length study of this figure is P. L. Day 1988, another of the Harvard history of Israelite religion dissertations completed under the direction of Frank Moore Cross (see Chapter 1, n. 78). Forsyth (1987) takes a more global approach and extends the discussion into early Christian sources with a focus on combat myth contexts. More or less recent articles on the role of Satan in various biblical texts are numerous, e.g. Rollston 2016; A.-S. Smith 2015; Silverman 2014, on Zech 3; Kreuzer 2005; Fabry 2003; Tournay 2000; and K. Nielsen 1992, on Satan in Job. Writing a “biography” of Satan (or simply “the devil”) appears to have become a popular project in recent years, e.g. Stokes 2019; Almond 2014; De la Torre and Hernandez 2011; and Kelly 2006, with varying levels of focus on the Hebrew Bible in particular. These designedly comprehensive works tend to approach their topic in a purely descriptive fashion, in that they usually just summarize textual and artistic representations of Satan over time without offering much in the way of an overarching thesis or advocating a particular hermeneutic.

blocked off inquiry along these lines, but it appears harder to recognize as usefully “monstrous” those figures only depicted as somehow negative but not as having grotesque bodies.

Analyses of Leviathan, Behemoth, Rahab, etc. have less often been executed as character studies but are usually embedded within discussions of the narratives in which these figures appear. Most such discussions have therefore already been surveyed in Chapter 1 as representative of the subfield of Combat Myth Studies. Within such work, one occasionally finds insights that are informed, explicitly or implicitly, by monster theory as described above. Brian Doak, for example, has in his *Consider Leviathan* (2014) explored natural and especially theriomorphic strains of Joban narrative and theology. Most of the focus is on naturally occurring animals, but he also describes the rhetorical function of “God’s monsters” Leviathan and Behemoth, in Yahweh’s speech from the whirlwind in Job 38–41 with explicit reference to “contemporary theory on monsters and their roles” (Doak 2014: 221 n. 88).²⁴⁰ This rhetorical function is encapsulated as “[t]he monster points to otherness or fear or the viewer through its own body” (ibid.: 222). This is an intriguing point in line with common observations in monster theory, and Doak expands on this brief statement in a subsequent article on the Joban monsters (Doak 2015). Here, Doak primarily explores the way in which monsters are and are not natural and the likelihood that Job’s monsters inculcate primal terror in order to demonstrate Yahweh’s supreme power.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Doak (2014: 221–22 nn. 88–91) cites a number of important theoretical contributions even though his explicit engagement with monster theory lasts only two pages. Levina and Bui 2013, which collects new and reprinted articles on monstrosity, and Cohen 1996, discussed above, are cited as general works, followed by brief engagement of scholarship on one possible etymology of “monster,” namely Latin *monstrare* “to show,” and Bellin 2005 on how monsters enact and communicate various types of alterity in twentieth-century fantasy and other films. Doak’s related work includes Doak 2015—again on monsters in Job, discussed below—and idem 2012: esp. 220, on the Rephaim, heroic dead, and giants in the Hebrew Bible; I engage this volume in some detail in Section 5.3.

²⁴¹ This is again likely correct, although Doak spends more space elaborating a distinction between “doctrinal” and “imagistic” religion—in which the former is basically credal and the latter emotional—on the basis of

Safwat Marzouk’s *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel* (2015) travels even further in this direction.²⁴² A lengthy exposition of the history of monster theory (ibid.: 45–69) grounds his exploration of several nuanced ways in which Egypt and its ruler are figured as monstrous in Ezekiel. The most obvious of these is the way in which Pharaoh is described as having a hybrid and grotesque body in Ezekiel 29:3–5 and 32:2–10, e.g. וְהִדְבַקְתִּי דָגִים בְּלִחְיָיִךָ וְהַדְבַקְתִּי דָגִים בְּלִחְיָיִךָ (ק’ סחיים) וְהִדְבַקְתִּי דָגִים בְּלִחְיָיִךָ וְהַדְבַקְתִּי דָגִים בְּלִחְיָיִךָ “I will put hooks in your jaw and make the fish of your Nile cling to your scales” (Ezek 29:4a; see Marzouk 2015: 179–90).²⁴³ Marzouk argues that Egypt the geographical entity is also envisioned as a “monstrous double” of Israel because it is—especially in Ezekiel 20 and 23—represented as similar to Israel but as nevertheless a locus of deadly “impurity” (various forms of טמא; see Marzouk 2015: 115–53). For Marzouk, Ezekiel’s imagery of monstrosity is not univocal because the category of monstrosity is itself complicated and paradoxical. Marzouk cogently engages monster theory to show that monstrosity is not generally figured as exclusive or categorical otherness but as embodying twisted and therefore disturbing sameness through some overlap of characteristics with the observing subject.²⁴⁴ He therefore hypothesizes that Egypt

work by Whitehouse (esp. idem 2004) than he does exploring how monstrous terror is communicated and received. Raphael (2008: 86–105; 2004) applies a different literary theoretical approach—that of disability studies—to the monsters of Job 38–41 with similar results but including the additional observation that Job is constituted as an imperfect body by comparison to Leviathan and Behemoth’s repeatedly emphasized invincibility.

²⁴² Marzouk’s (2015) volume originated as a 2012 Princeton Theological Seminary dissertation under the direction of Jacqueline Lapsley, who has herself discussed the pierced and grotesque body in Ezekiel in a few recent articles (Lapsley 2017; 2012). Kalmanofsky 2016b is a notable review of Marzouk 2015 given her own engagement with monster theory in biblical studies contexts (see below). Marzouk 2014 summarizes major conclusions of his volume in an accessible fashion.

²⁴³ These passages are also recently discussed by Yoder 2016: 110–18; 2013. Yoder emphasizes less the grotesque aspects of these depictions than the way in which figuring Pharaoh as a dominant mythical figure who is then captured like Leviathan in Job 40.25–31 effects a stunning and even ironic rhetorical reversal (see esp. Yoder 2016: 118).

²⁴⁴ I discuss Goliath’s size in similar terms in Section 5.3, below.

represents for Ezekiel the threat of religious assimilation and the loss of a conceptual boundary between Israel and the nations (Marzouk 2015: 152–53, 238–41). Although this claim for a precise historical significance to Ezekiel’s monster discourse is difficult to prove, Marzouk’s work suggests the promise of monster theory for uncovering implicit arguments in biblical texts.

On the whole, though, monster theoretical work on the Hebrew Bible has tended to focus less on figures like Leviathan and more on entities whose monstrosity is in need of some proof or deeper probing. The earliest application of monster theory to the Hebrew Bible of which I am aware is Amy Kalmanofsky’s *Terror All Around: Horror, Monsters, and Theology in the Book of Jeremiah* (2008a).²⁴⁵ Kalmanofsky’s work is structured around Jeremiah passages that she identifies as “horror texts” on the basis of the presence of a character reaction of fear and/or disgust that predictively mirrors the reaction of the audience.²⁴⁶ Most of these character reactions are constituted by three lexemes or images. First, various instantiations of the root ה"ת are used to convey that characters are “shattered” or “dismayed” (Kalmanofsky 2008a: 15–20). Second, women (or characters compared to women) are described to experience distress equivalent to birth-pangs at frightening events (ibid.: 20–29). Third, those who will pass by the prospective ruins of Jerusalem are portrayed as ש"מ “horrified” (ibid.: 31–35) and as performing several activities potentially indicative of derision or disgust, such as ה"ר “to reproach” and ש"ר “to hiss” (ibid.: 35–40).

²⁴⁵ Several of Kalmanofsky’s articles also engage monster and/or horror theory and applications in Jeremiah, especially Kalmanofsky 2016a; 2011a; 2011b; 2008b. These themes reoccur in both of Kalmanofsky’s later monographs (Kalmanofsky 2017; 2014) both of which have a greater focus on gender and its transgressions.

²⁴⁶ This methodology is outlined at Kalmanofsky 2008a: 3–5 and is based on Carroll’s (1990) description of the constitutive features of “art-horror”; for more on Carroll, see above. Kalmanofsky (2008a) counts a relatively large number of horror texts in Jeremiah, namely Jer 4:5–6:30; 8:1–23; 13:15–27; 14:1–15:9; 18:13–17; 19:1–20:6; 23:9–22; 24:1–10; 30:5–9; 34:8–22; and the entirety of Jer 46–51.

In the second half of her volume, Kalmanofsky identifies the entities that produce these reactions as monsters because they elicit fear and shame (ibid.: 45–50). With this second criterion of shame, Kalmanofsky claims to replace Carroll’s second criterion of “disgust.” But this criterion shift is of questionable utility, and Kalmanofsky compounds difficulties by applying it inconsistently across her text.²⁴⁷ Carroll’s monsters that are identified from their production of both fear and disgust more frequently align with entities the layperson would immediately identify as monstrous—e.g. Frankenstein, Dracula, and the golem—and, more importantly, have a stronger foundation in psychoanalytic and anthropological discussions of the monstrous. Using Kalmanofsky’s criteria of fear and shame, on the other hand, results in characterizations that appear both less in line with dominant monster theory and less analytically powerful. For example, Yahweh is identified as a monster because he produces fear and shame (ibid.: 51–67), but this seems to leave minimal categorical space for an entity that is only fearsome and to complicate the characterization of hypothetical entities that would produce disgust in addition to fear and shame; in other words, would it not be useful to have something to call them? Inconsistency in criteria application arises when Kalmanofsky periodically allows disgust to suddenly stand in for shame. For example, wounds are identified as monstrous not because they are “shameful” but because

²⁴⁷ This replacement of “disgust” with “shame” begins at Kalmanofsky 2008a: 12, “Horror in Jeremiah, and I contend throughout the Hebrew Bible, is a composite emotional response comprised by the components of fear and shame. To feel horror in the Bible is to feel a combination of fear and shame.” Kalmanofsky recognizes the distinction between her own definition and Carroll’s definition most clearly at ibid.: 50, “For Carroll, fear and disgust are the essential components of the emotional response of horror. Therefore, he looks for horrible figures that terrify and disgust. In my analysis of Jeremiah’s horror texts, I identify fear and shame as the essential components of biblical horror.” Shame is, I think correctly, not identified as an emotion constitutive of or even related to horror anywhere in Carroll 1990; see further below.

they produce fear and disgust (ibid.: 72–76), and ditto for the corpse (ibid.: 76–79).²⁴⁸ The result of both the criterion shift and the inconsistency in application is that Kalmanofsky sometimes dilutes the coherence of the category “monster.” This makes it more difficult for her and others applying her method to draw compelling conclusions about a particular set of phenomena in the Hebrew Bible.

More recent applications of horror theory to Hebrew Bible studies have expanded upon Kalmanofsky’s work in intriguing ways. The most recent and robust horror theoretical monograph in the field is Brandon R. Grafius’s *Reading Phinehas, Watching Slashers: Horror Theory and Numbers 25* (2018).²⁴⁹ Grafius’s object in this book is to study the description of Phinehas’s murder of the Israelite man Zimri and the Midianite woman Cozbi in Numbers 25 through the lens of horror theory and specifically by comparison with 1980s slasher films. Grafius cogently observes that these films are productive for a reader-oriented approach to violent texts like Numbers 25 because several significant motifs or themes are common to both.²⁵⁰ These include

²⁴⁸ These characterizations are undertaken with reference to Kristeva’s (1980) theory of abjection. Like the way in which Kalmanofsky utilizes criteria similar to Carroll’s in order to identify the monstrous, she utilizes criteria similar to Kristeva’s to identify the abject. A direct equivalence between the “abject” and the “monstrous” is not, however, one with which I can agree nor one, I think, that Kristeva would admit. Constituents of the two categories have in common their tendency to produce disgust and/or their tendency to instantiate the grotesque. But the monstrous seems to involve some active threat, usually by actual or imagined penetration of protected space and/or the existence of some agonistic tension between a subject’s desire to remove the monster and the monster’s desire to remain. For more on these adjunctions to definitions of the monster, see immediately below.

²⁴⁹ Grafius’s monograph began as a Ph.D. dissertation at Chicago Theological Seminary. Grafius’s survey of monster theory in biblical studies has been mentioned in n. 214, above; this summary is partly recapitulated in Grafius 2018: 77–86, with an emphasis on origins outside the field of Biblical Studies, namely in Freud 1919 and Kristeva 1980.

²⁵⁰ Page number ranges in the citations below come from a relatively restricted portion of Grafius’s (2018) work because several chapters in this volume are not directly concerned with horror theory. Chapter 1 (ibid.: 1–31) surveys ancient and modern engagement with Numbers 25, Chapter 2 (ibid.: 33–75) approaches the passage from a

the centering of illicit sexual intercourse, the murder occurring during this intercourse, and the killer's operating outside socially accepted structures of authority (Grafius 2018: 105). Working from these motifs, Grafius draws out several psychoanalytic themes to Numbers 25, for example that the narrative balances and thereby reveals both censure of and desire for sexual transgression—in this case, intercourse with a foreign woman (ibid.: 106–10)—and that “the male, desiring gaze” is in this text inextricably linked with violence (ibid.: 110).

Notably for present purposes, Grafius's understanding of Phinehas as the monster of Numbers 25 adopts the criteria and definitions of Carroll as surveyed above. I find, however, the extent to which Phinehas displays hybrid and/or disgust-producing characteristics to be debatable. According to Grafius, Phinehas is hybrid because he has Nubian ancestry. This is argued on the basis of his name פִּינְחָס possibly being a transliteration of an Egyptian term for “Nubian”²⁵¹ and from his mother being named as among the בָּנוֹת פּוּטִיאֵל in Exodus 6.25. It is פּוּט “Punt” being mentioned among the sons of Ham in Genesis 10.6 and alongside other probably African toponyms elsewhere (Egypt, Cush, etc.) that impels Grafius to suggest that “Putiel” is basically a Libyan name (Grafius 2018: 114–15, 126). This geographic identification of פּוּט is, however, still disputed,²⁵² and it is also unclear that פּוּטִיאֵל incorporates the same onomastic element as פּוּט “Punt.”²⁵³ One wonders further whether this name would necessarily have been given only to so-

historical-critical angle, and Chapter 5 (ibid.: 129–64) describes understandings of Phinehas in Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus.

²⁵¹ This etymology of פִּינְחָס as an adaptation of Egyptian *p3-nḥsy* “black-headed (people)” has long been hypothesized (e.g. and appears to have found no major challenges (e.g. uncomplicated acceptance in Hoffmeier 2016: 20; HALOT 926a; Muchiki 1999: 222).

²⁵² Identification of פּוּט “Punt” with Libya is accepted by the major lexica, e.g. HALOT 917b and BDB 806b. References in Egyptian texts are surveyed by Herzog 1968, and see further esp. Kitchen 1971.

²⁵³ Numerous Egyptian alternatives are catalogued in e.g. Hoffmeier 2016: 21; HALOT 917b–918a; Muchiki 1999: 220; and Noth 1928: 63.

called Libyans with its resonance understood and/or intended as such by biblical authors at the time of the composition of Exodus 6.25. Grafius's (2018: 115) reading of Phinehas's name as a play on שִׁנְיָהּ "mouth of a snake" is unique and intriguing, but I skeptical that this play would have been understood in a similar fashion by any ancient audience. I nevertheless find Grafius's exploration of ways in which Numbers 25 parallel slasher plots to be highly generative and a promising sign for the future of horror theory within Biblical Studies.

In sum, while there is now exciting work being undertaken in Biblical Studies from monster- and horror-theoretical angles, there is much work yet to be done. Beyond Biblical Studies lies the largest gap noted above, namely the almost total absence of monster theory or anything similar to it from Assyriology and other non-biblical ancient Near Eastern studies. Despite the profusion of fearsome and grotesque hybrid creatures in iconography and text, these fields have focused on taxonomizing and historicizing their monsters without exploring the meanings they produce from literary or cultural theoretical angles. In the next three chapters of the present study, I attend to the many different ways in which visual art incorporates and makes use of the monstrous and in which texts descriptive of visual art engage in much the same program, albeit in a much different medium and therefore often with substantially diverging implications. Throughout, the emphasis will be on which physical properties of particular figures constitute monstrosity and therefore are particularly effective in allowing images and text to communicate social and political claims around divine combat and its meanings.

Chapter 3

Miniature Monsters:

Combat and Conquest in Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seal Iconography

Iconography that depicts combat between deities and monsters or that depicts monsters as subservient to conquering deities is incredibly common on cylinder seals from Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the ancient Near East. In Section 3.1, I briefly discuss the history and sociology of cylinder seal production and use to arrive at conclusions regarding the likely social groups that conceived and received these representations. In Section 3.2, the bulk of the present chapter, I survey three major types of cylinder seals depicting divine combat, situate these in their historical and geographical contexts, and draw conclusions about the theological messages conveyed by these visual art products. The first type (Subsection 3.2.1), a group of cheaply made and iconographically simple seals depicting combat between an anthropomorphic figure and a large snake, who is often horned, shows that representations of divine combat were not restricted to the more elaborate and expensive of cylinder seal products. They were accessible to several strata of society, as will be elaborated below. The second type (Subsection 3.2.2) is that depicting a warrior god pursuing a rampant lion-griffin and also riding upon a lion-griffin. I analyze this curious iconographic doubling in its substantial variety and suggest that it is a means of predicting the outcome of the depicted combat. The third type (Subsection 3.2.3) is that depicting a god with lightning who appears to run atop a long snake, who often has forelimbs and horns. With this

group, I discuss how the compositional principle of occupying space with the monster's body communicates its power and renders the superior positioning of the god in these scenes remarkable, unexpected, and contingent. These three types are all from the first half of the first millennium and demonstrate the currency carried by this set of mythological motifs in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, including the peripheries of the former in modern-day Syria, Urartu, and occasionally the southern Levant. In hewing to this strict chronological principle, I attempt to avoid a common difficulty in iconographically informed studies of texts from both Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible, namely that these are often illustrated by material from distant times and places that are unlikely to reflect common traditions and conceptions.

3.1 The Production and Use Contexts of Ancient Near Eastern Seals

Cylinder seals and their impressions appear beginning in the material culture record of the fourth millennium B.C.E. and they continued in broad use through the mid-first millennium B.C.E. Their earliest use was on the exterior of hollow clay balls; these are hypothesized to have been transmitted with deliveries of goods, and they contained clay discs or tokens with marks that most scholars understand to have signified the types of goods being transmitted, e.g. a quadrisectioned circle for sheep.²⁵⁴ The relationship of the signs on these tokens to early cuneiform writing continues to be debated. Cylinder seals, meanwhile, came into broader use with the advent of such writing and were impressed most often on clay tablets of various written genres. They were also impressed on many types of containers, including clay vessels and on clay elements securing bundles, baskets, etc.

²⁵⁴ A recent summary and reevaluation of the crucial Uruk evidence is now available in Scott 2018. Among the sources cited there, note especially the corpus of material in Boehmer 1999.

In such use contexts, the use of a cylinder seal could communicate various things, usually within the framework of personal or institutional guarantee regarding the content of either writing or product. For example, the impression of a cylinder seal on a letter could function as both a signature and a confirmation that the contents of the letter could be associated with a particular human individual, in much the same way as the use of signet rings on the melted wax seal of envelopes functioned until somewhat recently. The impression of cylinder seals on a juridical or economic document could communicate the agreement of various parties to conditions stipulated in writing, and the cylinder seals of witnesses confirmed their presence and concurrence. Impression on vessels themselves or on clay formations of various types sealing vessels conveyed that goods had not been tampered with between the time of their departure from a source and their arrival at a destination. There are some cases of impression on vessels and the like in which cylinder seals appear to be purely decorative, that is, not actually sealing products or communicating anything about ownership or other social realia (Collon 1987: 113), but this appears to have been a relatively uncommon phenomenon. The impression of a cylinder seal generally communicated something social and personal to their observers and therefore functioned as documentary elaborations of the texts or other objects themselves.

Because cylinder seals were used for so many types of activities that were integral to everyday and especially to commercial and legal life, possession of such seals appears to have been common across social strata. Ownership of cylinder seals were not limited to elite persons. In at least some periods, even slaves could own and use them.²⁵⁵ This broad distribution has given rise to a characterization of cylinder seals as early exempla “mass media,” again at least during

²⁵⁵ Steinkeller (1977: 48) documents this for the Ur III period, and this has been noted in several subsequent publications, e.g. Bahrani 2017: 173; Gorelick and Gwinnett 1990: 53.

some periods and in some places.²⁵⁶ Because they were so broadly available and in such regular use, individuals would have encountered the iconography and text of cylinder seals in both their source (the seal itself) and use (impressions on various items) contexts on a daily or at least regular basis, depending on their professions and/or social situations. In addition to their practical, material accessibility across social strata, both the small size of cylinder seals and their frequency of impression on dispersed commercial goods resulted in their being geographically accessible in a way that was simply not the case for the monumental reliefs and other large fixtures studied in Chapters 4 and 5. In order to see a palace relief, one had to travel to it oneself, and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, one could not even be sure of the encounter being permitted once one arrived. A cylinder seal or its impression could travel to you, and there were rarely if ever social barriers to viewing a seal itself in a market or its impression on a commercial product.

This is not to say that the material and other production techniques of cylinder seals do not

²⁵⁶ Notably, the conference that gave rise to the volume Uehlinger 2000 was originally called “Images as Mass Media and Sources for the Cultural and Religious History of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East (1st Millennium BCE)” (Fribourg; November 25–29, 1997), with primary reference to cylinder and stamp seals. The volume, however, is titled simply *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. Uehlinger (2000: xvi) explains that the emphasis on “mass media” was dropped following repeated questions as to whether this characterization of cylinder seals could be sustained for the majority of periods with which the conference presenters were concerned, especially the first millennium B.C.E. Several of the participants, e.g. Winter 2000: 53, 60, 77 = eadem 2010: 111, 120, 141), do retain the “mass media” framework as both faithful to the ancient social situation and a useful heuristic stressing the contrast between the cultural restrictedness of palace reliefs and ivories, for example, versus the broad distribution of cylinder and stamp seals. For a partial answer to whether such terminology is appropriate for this period, consider the cheap material and execution, geographic spread, and stylistic consistency of the snake-combat seals collected in Subsection 3.2.1, below.

witness substantial variety suggesting social stratification, elite differentiation, and conspicuous consumption.²⁵⁷ The two primary ways in which the seals of elite individuals were differentiated from the seals of commoners—to simplify the social situation for the moment—were through the use of more expensive materials and more elaborate carving. The former were usually more expensive because they were harder to access, as was true of lapis lazuli that had to be imported all the way from the Badakhshan mines in modern-day Afghanistan.²⁵⁸ It seems appropriate to assume that it was more costly to purchase seals whose carving techniques involved more labor-intensive, precise, and sophisticated use of tools; the purchaser would be paying for the expertise of the seal-carver.

This expertise would have encompassed both artistic convention—on which see further throughout Section 3.2—and technical know-how, i.e. the ownership and use of particular tools. The process of creating even the simplest cylinder seal was hardly easy or quick, and both the difficulty involved and time required grew with harder stones, more detailed iconography, and the inclusion of inscriptions. Most of the seals discussed below are actually made from relatively soft stones, such as serpentine, or from even softer materials such as frit and quartz or similar composites. Once the stone or other material that was to serve as the core medium was selected and ground down, the cutting of designs proceeded using flint, copper, and later iron tools with the assistance of an abrasive, possibly emery (Heimpel, Gorelick, and Gwinett 1988). The rise of

²⁵⁷ Summaries of raw materials used include Feingold 2014: 7–22, with a focus on the Old Babylonian period but also general application; Sax 2016, on the second millennium; and eadem 1991, on the first millennium, especially composite materials.

²⁵⁸ The mining context is recently explored in Thomalsky et al. 2013 and the trade networks in Laursen and Steinkeller 2017 and Feingold 2014: 20–22.

wheel-cutting and drill-cutting allowed more efficient cutting,²⁵⁹ but handheld tools such as the burin were used for the more precise aspects of most designs even through the first millennium.²⁶⁰ The seals were drilled from either end to minimize the chance of the drill overheating or the stone splitting. This was done either before or after the carving of design and/or inscription; Collon (1987: 103) notes that many “drilled blanks” are known—suggesting that for whatever reason, a seal carver did not complete the manufacture of the seal—but so are undrilled or incompletely drilled seals with fully carved designs. The recarving of cylinder seals was not an uncommon practice and speaks to the derivation of authority that could be claimed through possession of an authentically archaic seal.²⁶¹

The professional context in which seal manufacture took place can often be difficult to reconstruct. Seal-cutters and even workshops are occasionally named in texts, but most of these tell the modern scholar little beyond the fact that such workshops and their individual professional constituents existed. Workshops are almost always extrapolated from commonalities of material and style rather than from explicit textual evidence.²⁶² Remains of seal-cutters’ workshops do occasionally arise in the archaeological record, but this data is still somewhat minimal.²⁶³ Because

²⁵⁹ The engraving wheel is studied in detail in Sax, Meeks, and Collon 2000a; 2000b; and Sax and Meeks 1994. Drills and their materials are discussed by Gwinnett and Gorelick 1987. Experimental carving studies is undertaken in Sax, McNabb, and Meeks 1998.

²⁶⁰ Summaries of the relevant processes, along with illustrative graphics, are available at Bahrani 2017: 105–6 and Collon 1987: 100–4.

²⁶¹ A recent discussion of this phenomenon is J. S. Smith 2018.

²⁶² E.g. for the Old Babylonian Sippar workshop Al Gailani Werr 1986; for the Middle Bronze Aleppo workshop Collon 1981; and for the “Green Jasper” workshop of the Bronze Age possibly centered at Byblos, Collon 1986. The question of whether stamp seal workshops can be isolated in the southern Levant for the second millennium is discussed by Keel 1995b.

²⁶³ For examples, see R. S. Merrillees 2006, on a Late Bronze cylinder seal workshop at Enkomi on Cyprus; and comments therein (*ibid.*: esp. 240–41) and in Amiet 1992 and Elliott 1991 on a ground stone workshop including

inscriptions are often found on cylinder seals, seal-cutters must have worked in proximity to, and/or in coordination with, and/or as literate individuals who could author and/or copy texts. Most scholars hold that the skills of iconographic carving and textual composition or copying were so specialized that they were enacted by different groups of professionals, but this is an assumption that is based on little direct data and may be an outgrowth of contemporary presuppositions regarding the separability of art and text.²⁶⁴

I have already alluded to the fact that cylinder seals would have been, by virtue of their portability and accessibility, frequently encountered artefacts in many ancient Near Eastern contexts. It is worth stressing, though, that this frequency of encounter was balanced to some extent by the diminutive size of these cylinder seals. Most of the seals considered in the following section are no taller than 5 centimeters, shorter than a golf tee, and many are no more than half that height. This leads to some version of the provocative question recently posed by Ameri et al. (2018: 4), “If a picture is worth a thousand words, then is a miniature picture worth fewer?”²⁶⁵ In what follows, the authors reveal that they do not believe that to be the case. A robust theoretical model

cylinder seal finds at Late Bronze Ugarit. Additional lapidary workshops relevant to cylinder seal manufacture are discussed in Hussein 2018: 393–95.

²⁶⁴ For the hypothesis that early literate professionals were themselves former seal carvers, see Ross 2014, based on correlations of visual art and text in Late Uruk glyptic and early writing. Scott (2018: 43) appears to agree with this determination in citing Ross and noting that “It is likely that this [the Late Uruk period] is the very moment when both seal-iconography generation and script invention are being undertaken by the same individuals.”

²⁶⁵ This question takes on a particular urgency given a contrast in size with the monumental art explored in the following chapter. In this connection, it is worth also noting Winter’s (2000 = 2010: 109–62) classic article departing from the *Bas-reliefs imaginaires* exhibit mounted by Pierre Amiet at the Hotel de la Monnaie, Paris, in 1973 that exhibited drastically enlarged photographs of cylinder seals alongside palace reliefs and similar monumental visual art. Winter asks to what extent and purpose this elides the scale of the ancient Near Eastern cylinder seal and cogently concludes that what is lost in this elision is the effect of the cylinder seal as a referential object, reflecting but not confined to loci of royal power.

for this analytical posture can be founded along the lines that Stephanie Langin-Hooper explores in her ongoing work on miniature terracotta figurines in Hellenistic Babylonian contexts.²⁶⁶ Langin-Hooper posits that the miniaturization of cultural forms renders their content non-threatening in a way that is much more difficult in other media. This miniaturization allows the illusion of personal authority over the artefact and its artistic motifs. In other words, relative size allows the subject to assume a controlling position with relation to the object, and this position is potentially “alluring” or even “seductive.”²⁶⁷ The increased possibility of close encounter with a miniature object means that detailed visual inspection and tactile engagement become important elements of interaction.²⁶⁸ The latter, especially, can be posited to foster a level of intimacy that might draw the viewer into the world of visual art in a way that is less possible or even impossible when the artefact is an overwhelming monumental piece. With these broad postulates in place even if not empirically demonstrated, one can begin to appreciate the particular contribution of miniature monsters to the ancient Near Eastern discourse of divine combat, a task to which I now turn.

²⁶⁶ This work is a development of Langin-Hooper’s 2011 dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, and will be published in a monograph as *Figurines in Hellenistic Babylonia: Miniaturization and Cultural Hybridity*. As the second half of the subtitle suggests, Langin-Hooper’s work is also important for showing that Hellenistic Babylonian cultural hybridity is reflected in the hybrid anatomies—and sometimes specifically gendered hybrid anatomies—of the figurines she studies; for this phenomenon, see Langin-Hooper 2018; 2014. Other reflections on the ways in which miniature and fragmented objects can contribute in outsize ways to histories of ancient eastern Mediterranean art and broader culture are now published in the edited volume Martin and Langin-Hooper 2018.

²⁶⁷ The quotations here are from Langin-Hooper 2015: 68–70. The context, notably, is a discussion of ways in which interaction with tiny objects representing “animal, human or supernatural beings that are usually more powerful—physically, cosmically, politically or socially—than the human user” (ibid.: 68), in other words, a set of representations that is particularly apposite for discussions of the miniature gods and monsters on cylinder seals.

²⁶⁸ Tactile interactions with figurines are explored in prehistoric contexts by Bailey 2014.

3.2 Divine Combat in First-Millennium Cylinder Seals²⁶⁹

One achieves a deeper understanding of the manifold ways in which cylinder seal iconography depicts divine combat if one studies select themes and motifs²⁷⁰ in all of their internal diversity and extent rather than a broad range of disparate and disconnected materials. When a producer of cylinder seal iconography created a seal, they did so with implicit conceptual input both from the totality of iconographic motifs and within the relatively narrow conventions of a given motif. Cylinder seal carvers likely imagined that their consumers or communities would competently interpret these motifs and therefore participate productively in the visual art-focused discourse. The subsections that follow explore in detail themes that depict a particular element of that visual art-focused discourse, namely outright opposition between anthropomorphic figures and hybrid, theriomorphic opponents, or monsters following the definition outlined in Section 2.2. As has been mentioned above, cylinder seals are most common in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the northern and eastern provinces of present-day Syria. This technology was used in southern Syria and further into the southern Levant, but the archaeological record suggests that this use was much more sporadic in all periods. In chronological terms, one could in theory study the cylinder seal

²⁶⁹ All images provided are of modern impressions rather than the seals themselves. The following descriptions are therefore oriented to those impressions, i.e. “right” is an item that is at right on the impression, not at right on the seal itself.

²⁷⁰ In what follows, I use “theme” for the total and/or focal content of a given work of visual art and “motif” for an element of that content. The latter is employed in essentially this way in visual art studies more broadly, whereas the former is adopted here to provide a way of speaking concisely about the totality of motifs shared across numerous tokens or pieces of visual art. An element of visual art content can be either a theme or a motif, e.g. combat with a snake can either constitute the entire and/or focal content of the Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals that form the main analytical object in Subsection 3.2.1, below, or it can occur as one among many motifs on the more complex cylinder seals of Middle Bronze Age Syria that are discussed in an ancillary way in that same subsection. “Composition” is used throughout, as in broader visual art studies, for the placement of motifs or elements relative to one another and to the margins of the work.

record from the entirety of the pre-Hellenistic Near East for representations of divine combat, but this is both impractical for the scope of the present chapter and unnecessary for developing productive hypotheses regarding the representation of divine combat in particular historical contexts. For the purposes of the present chapter, I largely restrict the inquiry to cylinder seals from the first millennium B.C.E. This both focuses the discussion on visual art material contemporary or nearly contemporary with the textual evidence with which combat myth studies is broadly concerned, namely the Hebrew Bible and the first-millennium versions of such Akkadian texts as *Enūma eliš* and *Anzû*, and it allows the close analysis of several highly interesting themes that are surprisingly under-studied.

For the purposes of this chapter, these interesting themes are three in number, each explored in one of the subsections that follows. All are attested primarily or exclusively in the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. but have a relatively broad geographic range for Mesopotamian-style cylinder seals, namely from lower Mesopotamia through the upper Ḥabur and Euphrates basins and, in the case of the motif discussed in Subsection 3.2.1, down into the southern Levant. This first subsection explores a set of often crudely engraved but highly stereotyped seals depicting the battle of a humanoid figure, often with divine accoutrements, against a rearing, upright snake, who often has horns. I show that these seals were widely distributed especially in the Assyrian imperial periphery and attest to broad reception and awareness of god-vs.-snake combat as a delineable and desirable iconographic theme.

The second and third subsections explore more restricted but also more elaborately manufactured sets of cylinder seals. The first theme (Subsection 3.2.2) shows a warrior god—frequently identified as Ninurta—aiming his bow and other weapons at a (usually) rampant lion-griffin. I focus on tokens of this motif in which the warrior god not only opposes one lion-griffin

but stands atop and therefore appears to mount a second lion-griffin, which has only slight anatomical differences from the pursued antagonist. I argue that this composition is a means of iconologically²⁷¹ predicting the outcome of the depicted combat and establishing that the divine figure is the sort of god who habitually conquers monsters; he can therefore be relied upon and trusted to communicate terrestrial authority and a victorious habitus. The second theme (Subsection 3.2.3) shows a warrior god, who usually carries trident-forked lightning, running atop a long draconic monster with horns and, somewhat frequently, forelimbs. I argue that the way in which the monster fills compositional space both enhances its own potency and that of the god who is able to dominate it by his superior position and unrivaled instrumentalization of meteorological phenomena. In both cases, all known tokens of a given motif are collected and discussed to avoid basing the discussion on a select few or even one example of a given theme, as this can often yield only constrained and even inaccurate art historical analyses. In all three themes, the connection of the monsters to the wilderness is established by their juxtaposition with trees, mountains, and other natural features. This connection is pursued differently in each theme, as will be explored below.

The three themes discussed in a detailed way in what follows naturally participate in a broader set of conventions and iconographic allusions. The most important such convention to note at the outset is that common to the “contest” or “master of animals” theme, tokens of which have been extensively studied especially in their cylinder seal manifestations.²⁷² The master of

²⁷¹ “Iconology” and its derivations are used following Panofsky (1939) to refer to the (more) interpretative functions served by and created in conversation with a given work of art. The contrast with iconography involves this latter term being more closely tied to the concrete content or the work, i.e. motifs in the sense elaborated in n. 270.

²⁷² Collon 1987: 193–97 is perhaps the most concise and accessible introduction to the motif, and see also Collon 2001: 154–66, with discussion of the first millennium Mesopotamian cylinder seal manifestations of this motif and a focus on tokens in the British Museum. Ornan (2005: 70 n. 200) briefly summarizes the history of the motif.

animals theme depicts an anthropomorphic divine or royal figure in the posture of seizing one, two, or even three other figures. These figures are almost always theriomorphic and sometimes monstrous. As is broadly recognized, such scenes illustrate and inscribe fundamental preconceptions regarding the ways in which civilized society—inclusive of and represented by such artistic productions as cylinder seals themselves—is opposed to, surrounded by, and ultimately superior to the animal and the monstrous.

In addition to these, there are hundreds if not thousands of cylinder seals in which deities and other anthropomorphic figures are depicted actively battling both threatening terrestrial animals, such as the lion, and imaginary hybrid creatures of various types. Naturally, not all of these can be catalogued here, nor should they be. It is nevertheless worth noting that the motif of a masculine anthropomorphic figure aiming his bow, swinging his sword, or using his hand to grab at a beast or monster is exceedingly common both on cylinder seals and, notably, on stamp seals even in the southern Levant.²⁷³ A study taking a more global view might attempt to collect all of these seals and analyze commonalities and disjunctions, but it was felt that such a sprawling project would, at least for the present, detract from focused analysis of a few significant themes. The broader context and especially the fact that these motifs had broader resonances and intertexts than is suggested solely by the data that follow should nevertheless be kept in mind. The focus on

Rakic 2003 is a dissertation that comprehensively studies the earliest instantiation of the motif, namely that of the “contest scene” in the Early Dynastic period; thus far, Rakic 2014 is the major published outgrowth from that dissertation. A recent edited volume, Counts and Arnold 2010, explores manifestations of the motif in the ancient Near East, Mediterranean basin, Northern Europe, and beyond.

²⁷³ Ornan’s (1993: esp. 54–56) studies such motifs briefly in the context of defining the relationship between Mesopotamian and Levantine glyptic; for more on this, see n. 297 and its immediate context. The motif can be found throughout the catalogue Keel et al. 1997–, e.g. in the first volume at Achsib 109–10, Afek 19, 24, ṣAğul 118, 158–59, etc. “Tierkampfszenen” are regrettably not discussed in any systematic way in the introduction to that corpus, Keel 1995a.

horned snakes, doubled lion-griffins, and sprawling draconic monsters is that of the present study, not—so far as empirical evidence suggests, at least—that of first-millennium seal-carvers or consumers themselves.

3.2.1 Theme 1: Snake Combat on Mass-Produced Neo-Assyrian Seals

Within the theme of anthropomorphic combat with a monstrous snake, several distinct types of composition are attested, of which two are most stereotyped and therefore prominent in the iconographic record. The basic distinction between these two has to do with the positioning of the ophidian creature and its anatomical elaboration. In the first type (Register 1a, below), the humanoid and snake face one another in direct confrontation. In what follows, this type is labeled the “Antagonistic Type.” The scenes depicted are elaborated in precise ways and follow certain clear iconographic conventions. The humanoid usually has a floor-length tunic and wields a bow and arrow. He wears a cap and has a long beard. In a prominent example from Gezer (no. **1a.36**, below), he appears to even have wings and therefore to be transparently marked as supernatural. Notably for distinction between the two types, the snake in these scenes is just as large as the human. It has ribbing or visible scaling along some or all of its length, and it has a curled tail. Sometimes, the creature has horns, which has led several scholars to identify it with the horned snake *bašmu*,²⁷⁴ attested in texts as an opponent of both Ninurta and Marduk.²⁷⁵ Between these

²⁷⁴ Identification of this horned snake in one or more of the cylinder seals registered below as a *bašmu* is forwarded in e.g. Ornan et al. 2013: 15; Uehlinger 1995: 75. What is known of the *bašmu* from texts is summarized in the following note. An extremely brief summary of the horned-snake in Mesopotamian art is Green 1994: 258 (previously and less usefully Unger 1926: 212–13), with direction to more extensive literature. Appearances of horned snakes on Kassite *kudurrus* are summarized by Seidl 1989: 154–56 and among clay apotropaic figurines by Rittig 1977: 122–23 (cf. Keel 1992: 196–98).

²⁷⁵ In addition to the register in CAD B [1965] 141–42, see Annus 2002: 111–13; Wiggermann 1992: 166–68.

two figures appears, on a large number of the seals,²⁷⁶ the image of a tree. This tree sets the scene for the confrontation of the two figures and establishes that the giant snake is encountered in wooded, external areas beyond the civilized center. If the tree was imagined without visual perspective, then both the anthropomorphic and the ophidian figures are very large, but it is possible that the trees are meant to function as backgrounding elements.

The Antagonistic Type is distributed throughout the Assyrian heartland (e.g. at Aššur, Nimrud, and Khorsabad; see nos. **1a.1–20** in the register, below), but tokens have also been found as far west and south as Gezer and as far east as the Urartian frontier (e.g. at Hasanlu and Teišebaini; see nos. **1a.21–36** in the register, below). Nearly all of these seals can be dated, whether on stratigraphic or stylistic grounds, to the same ca. three-hundred year range (9th–7th centuries B.C.E.). They are made of the same materials (either faience or a limestone composite), and most are of approximately the same size (between 2.0 and 2.5 cm in height). Such consistency may suggest stereotyped processes of production and certainly attests to the broad spread of this theme across a wide geographic area within a short range of time.²⁷⁷ Both the simplicity of the theme, which would have been easy and not time-consuming for seal carvers to reproduce, and the widely available and cheap nature of the materials—usually frit or other composite materials—would have meant that the seals were likely to have been relatively accessibly priced and therefore more broadly available, likely across many social strata.²⁷⁸ On the level of theme, these seals show that

²⁷⁶ This element occurs on nos. 1a.1, 1a.4(?), 1a.5, 1a.6, 1a.8, 1a.10, 1a.11, 1a.21, 1a.22, 1a.24, 1a.25, 1a.28, 1a.29, 1a.30 (both very schematic), 1a.31, a.32, 1a.34. 1a.35, 1a.39, 1a.41, 1a.42, 1a.43, and 1a.44. For the unidentified object on 1a.36 (from Gezer), see the description of that seal, below.

²⁷⁷ Similarly Klengel-Brandt 2014: 80, “Die Siegel weisen untereinander so große Übereinstimmungen auf, dass man sie für das Produkt einer gemeinsamen Werkstatt halten könnte.”

²⁷⁸ This point is made e.g. by Fügert (2015: I.163), “[der] Materialwert sehr niedrig ist und Siegel mit dieser Thematik in Massen produziert wurden”; Keel and Uehlinger (1990: 46), “hat es stets auch billigere aus verschiedenen Kompositmaterialien gegeben, deren Bearbeitung einfacher und weniger kostspielig war. Ein beliebtes Thema dieser

a highly schematized depiction of combat was a common and standardized topic of first-millennium seals. This fact has gone underappreciated due to a scholarly tendency to cite only one or a few of these seals in isolation when executing comparative work, especially work that spans iconography and text.²⁷⁹ Assuming that viewers and owners of this seal could competently interpret the divine protagonist as such based on his sometimes schematic dress and symbols, they would reach the conclusion that the motif on the seal depicted divine combat. But a viewer's understanding of the temporal, cosmographical, and narrative context of this combat would have been open to widely varying interpretations. These might in some ways recapitulate such divine combat narratives as are known from contemporary texts, but they might also have been divergent or vague in conceptualization.

A second type (Register 1b, below) depicts a less explicitly confrontational and therefore more ambiguous relationship between humanoid and snake. Because of the tendency for the humanoid and snake figures to face the same direction, I have called this type the "Seriated Type." Other iconographic tendencies follow from this compositional standard. The humanoid still holds

Siegel am Ende des 8. und im 7. Jhrs. war der Kampf des Wettergottes mit dem Bogen gegen die gehörnte Schlange"; and similarly Uehlinger (1995: 75) alone, "Siegel des letzteren [the present first] Typs sind im. 8./7. Jh. aus Fritte, einem billigen Kompositmaterial, massenweise aus Modeln produziert und im Zuge der Expansion des assyrischen Reiches über den ganzen Vorderen Orient verstreut worden. Wir kennen Dutzende von Exemplaren aus Ausgrabungen in Palästina, Libanon, Syrien, Anatolien, Armenien, Iraq und Iran." Frankfort (1939: 191) perceptively included one seal of this type, Ass.18898 (= VA 7951, no. **1a.4**, below), among "seals of the ordinary man" and would likely have placed the whole type in this category.

²⁷⁹ The most extensive discussion of both the Antagonistic and Seriated types, with the largest number of parallels cited, is Collon 2001: 40–41. Klengel-Brandt (2014: 10, sub no. 37, Ass.12543c), Keel-Leu et al. (2004: 177), and Herboldt (1992: 212, sub "Ninive 24," 230 sub "Ninive 99"; cf. *ibid.*: 254, sub "Sonstige 4") also give good lists of parallels, though none as comprehensive or detailed as that presented here. Cf. e.g. Keel 1992: esp. 218–19 who merely lists a few seemingly random tokens without explaining the particular significance of these seals in particular.

a weapon, apparently always still a bow—and usually with a nocked arrow—but the figure is drawn more schematically and with less dynamism suggesting immediate confrontation. The snake itself is still always upright, but there is less detail and more variability in its anatomical features; some of the snakes are horned, and some are not. Certain similar seals actually render the snake as a uraeus and are therefore class as “Egyptianizing”; these are not documented below.²⁸⁰ Despite the internal variation, general tendencies are enough to establish that those who created these seals were likely not conceptualizing their subject as an ordinary snake. Size, hybrid features, and deviance from terrestrial norms continue to suggest the monstrosity of these figures. This style appears to be less well-attested overall and in the Assyrian heartland, but it is distributed across an extremely wide geographical range that extends eastward to Urartu (Adilcevaz, see no. **1b.1**, below) and westward into the Greco-Roman world (e.g. Rhodes and Tharros in Sardinia, for which see nos. **1b.4–5**, below).

Unlike in the following two sections, detailed descriptions of each and every seal are not offered here. This is because the theme is extremely simple and consistent; only anomalies and special observations are noted.

Register 1a: The Antagonistic Type

Assyrian Heartland and Lower Mesopotamia

(1a.1) Aššur (Ass.10170). VA Ass.1617. Green frit, 2.3 x 1.0 cm.

•²⁸¹ Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 689), pl. 82 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 (no. 246), pl.47 (photo).

²⁸⁰ Examples included AN 1889.895, published in Buchanan 1966: 113 (no. 627), pl. 41 (photo), and a seal from Perachora accessibly illustrated by Keel (1992: 219, 256 no. 253 [drawing]).

²⁸¹ In the following registers, a bullet point (•) appears before the major catalogue entry, which in all cases will communicate the most thorough information (findspot, find number, museum number, material, measurements, and—usually—verbal description) about a given artefact. Other sources cited usually include at least a description

- (1a.2)** Aššur (Ass.12152). VA Ass.1812. White frit, 2.6 x 1.2 cm.
 • Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 693), pl. 82 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 (no. 243), pl. 47 (photo).
- (1a.3)** Aššur (Ass.12543c). VA Ass.6020. Composite, 2.3 x 0.8 cm.
 • Klengel-Brandt 2014: 10 (no. 37), pl. 10 (photo, drawing).
- (1a.4)** Aššur (Ass.18187). VA 3998. Yellow frit, 2.2 x 1.2 cm.
 • Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 690), pl. 82 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 (no. 245), pl.47 (photo).
- (1a.5)** Aššur (Ass.18898). VA 7951. Yellow frit, 2.5 x 1.0 cm.
 O. Weber 1920: 94 (no. 349; photo); Frankfort 1939: 191, 193, 198, pl. 34g (photo); • Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 691), pl. 82 (photo); Keel 1972: 43 and fig. 47 (drawing); 1992: 218 (no. 247), 255 (drawing); Marcus 1994: pl. 45 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 (no. 247), pl.47 (photo).
- (1a.6)** Aššur (Ass.19467). VA Ass.2302. Frit, 2.6 x 1.1 cm.
 • Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 692), pl. 82 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 (no. 244), pl.47 (photo).
- (1a.7)** Aššur (Ass.21180). VA 7961. Composite, 1.5 x 1.2 cm.
 • Klengel-Brandt 2014: 10 (no. 38), pl. 10 (photo, drawing).
- (1a.8)** Dur-Šarrukin (Khorsabad) (DS1.B). IM 18415. Faience, no measurements given.
 • Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 57 (no. 83; photo).
- (1a.9)** Dur-Šarrukin (DS82.C). Probably IM, but present whereabouts unspecified.
 “Paste,” no measurements given.
 • Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 57 (no. 86; photo).

and a visual representation such as a drawing or photograph but often scholars—especially those of the Fribourg school—will only cite a convenient earlier publication rather than detailed and useful information about the piece itself.

- (1a.10)** Nimrud (ND.1007). BM WA 140386. Faience, 2.1 x 0.9 cm.
B. Parker 1955: 103, pl. 15.1 (photo); • Collon 2001: 46–47 (no. 42), pl. 4 (photo).
- (1a.11)** Nimrud (ND.1009). BM or IM, present whereabouts unspecified. Faience, 2.5 cm x unspecified width.
B. Parker 1955: 104 pl. 15.3 (photo).
- (1a.12)** Nimrud (ND.3303). IM, number unspecified. Material and measurements not given.
– unpublished (?)

This item is mentioned by both B. Parker (1955: 104) and Collon (2001: 40) as having a scene similar to ND.1009 (see no. **1a.11**, immediately above), but does not appear to have ever been illustrated or otherwise documented.

- (1a.13)** Nimrud (ND.6023). BM or IM, presented whereabouts unspecified. Glazed limestone, 2.2 cm x unspecified width.
B. Parker 1962: 34, pl. 16.5 (photo).

This token is significantly different from most others in the present register in that the humanoid figure is drawn in a much more rounded, molded style. His posture is also unusual; he appears to hold the hand drawing the bow far too high, and it grasps an object of uncertain identification. The snake is also carved in the rounded, molded style and has two drilled holes behind him. The significance of all of these features is unclear to me, and they have never been commented upon (cf. B. Parker 1962: 34, simply “a debased rendering”).

- (1a.14)** Nimrud (ND.6029). BM or IM, present whereabouts unspecified. Limestone, 1.7 cm x unspecified width.
B. Parker 1962: 34, pl. 16.4 (photo).
- (1a.15)** Nimrud (ND number unspecified). BM WA 141752. Faience, 2.6 x 1.0 cm.
• Collon 2001: 47 (no. 43), pl. 4 (photo).
- (1a.16)** Nineveh. BM 1883,0118.406. Impression on clay tablet.
Kwasman and Parpola 1991: 65 (no. 70; drawing); • Herbordt 1992: 212 (no. Ninive 24), pl. 5.12 (drawing).
- (1a.17)** Nineveh. BM 1904,1009.21. Impression on clay tablet.
Kwasman and Parpola 1991: 266–67 (no. 328, drawing)²⁸²; • Herbordt 1992: 230 (no. Ninive 99), pl. 5.9 (drawing).
- (1a.18)** Nippur (1894 campaign, Hill VIII). CBS 14354. Glazed ceramic, 2.2 x 0.8 cm.
• Legrain 1925: 313 (no. 646),²⁸³ pl. 33 (photo).
- (1a.19)** Nippur (1894 campaign, Hill VIII). CBS 14359. Glazed ceramic, 1.7 x 0.7 cm.
• Legrain 1925: 313 (no. 644), pl. 33 (photo).
- (1a.20)** Ur (U. 16124). Frit, 2.8 x 0.8 cm.

²⁸² Kwasman and Parpola's (1991: 266–67) drawing misunderstands the snake half of the motif in question and depicts the object of the archer's shooting as little more than two vertical lines, the latter forked at the bottom. This is rectified in Herbordt 1992: pl. 5.9.

²⁸³ Several other immediately adjacent Legrain-numbers depict essentially the same motif, but in a highly schematic fashion that is less likely to have been transparently understood as a confrontation of any sort. Nos. 640, 645, and 648 are perhaps the closest but not worth registering here. See further references at Legrain 1925: 313, pl. 33 (photos).

- Legrain 1951: 43 (no. 613), pl. 36 (photo).

Eastern Frontier (Urartu and Iran)

Like those seals from the western frontier, seals from the eastern frontier attest to a broad spread of cylinder seals displaying this theme. For more details on the conclusions that can be drawn from this, see below under “Western Frontier I.”

- (1a.21)** Hasanlu (HAS 64-1084). UM 65-31-402. Beige unglazed composite, 2.4 x 2.0 cm.
• Marcus 1994: 116–17 (no. 60; drawing), pl. 19 (photo); Höpflinger 2010: 210 fig. 18 (drawing).
- (1a.22)** Nush-i Jan (NU 77/20). Tehran (?). Impression on clay jar sealing, 4.8 x 3.6 cm.
Stronach and Roaf 1978: 9, pl. 4d (photo); • Curtis 1984: 25 (no. 236), fig. 4 (drawing), pl. 11 (photo); Collon 1987: 84–85 (no. 387; drawing).
- (1a.23)** Teishebaini (Karmir Blur). Armenian Historical Museum, Erevan (unspecified number). Unspecified material, unspecified measurements.
Piotrovsky 1969: 175, 211, pl. 43 (photo).²⁸⁴
- (1a.24)** Tepe Giyan (?).²⁸⁵ MMA 56.81.27. Faience, 2.5 cm x unspecified width.

²⁸⁴ This publication presents only an illustration and minimal description of the item in question, so that most details about its findspot, find circumstances, manufacture, and size remain unpublished.

²⁸⁵ Marcus (1994: 117) attributes MMA 56.81.27 to Tepe Giyan, but it is unspecified on what basis. The object’s entry in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s online catalogue (www.metmuseum.org/art/collection) gives the provenance as “1920s–1930s, acquired by Ernst Herzfeld [1879–1948] at Harin, Iran” but does also note that Herzfeld kept papers (dated 1904–46) documenting “Prehistoric Cylinder Seals from the Village of Nihavand (Iran), the Mound of Tepe Giyan (Iran), and from Harsin (Iran).” These are among the Ernst Herzfeld Papers at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Washington, D.C. (collection ID FSA.A.06); a description is online at <https://sova.si.edu/record/FSA.A.06?s=0&n=10&t=C&q=ernst+herzfeld&i=0>, but it remains unclear to me from these sources whether Herzfeld purchased the item at or near Tepe Giyan, was otherwise assured that the seal *came*

– unpublished²⁸⁶

This unpublished seal is completely typical for its type. An archer standing at left aims a composite bow at an upright snake rearing at right. Four horns or other vertical protrusions rise from the back of the snake's head, and he has a clearly defined mouth. His body is ribbed, as usual. Between the two figures sit a bush, schematically rendered. A crescent moon and some other object made up of six drill overlapping drill holes sit above the archer's drawing arm.

Western Frontier I: Syrian Sites

The most significant geographical and historico-political conclusion that can be made regarding the spread of the present motif is that makers and/or purchasers of cylinder seals in Assyria's western provinces had a predilection for cheap, easily manufactured products. This ease of manufacture on the one hand allowed inhabitants of western cities and towns to signal their awareness of certain glyptic motifs and thus their participation in the Assyrian cultural milieu. But, on the other hand, this participation and display of cultural competence would have been somewhat mitigated by the visibly coarse and uncomplicated nature of the artistic product. A dialectic would therefore have been in play with every manufacture, purchase, display, and use of a seal of this type or of any other type imperfectly participating in Assyrian iconographic praxis. Geographical and historico-political conclusions regarding cylinder seal use in the Assyrian west have been

from Tepe Giyan, or simply noted his own purchase of this seal together with other items that he knew or suspected to come from that site.

²⁸⁶ Both Marcus (1994: 117) and Collon (2001: 40) mention this item as unpublished.

enabled, especially for the present motif, only in recent years; the past fifteen years have seen the publication of new glyptic finds from Tall Knēdiġ (Klengel-Brandt, Kulemann-Ossen, and Martin 2005), Tell Afis (esp. Mazzone 2008) and Tell Šēḥ Ḥamad (Dūr-Katlimmu) (Fügert 2015). Prior to this expansion of the evidence, only the single seal from Tell Abou Danné (no. **1a.25**, below) and the three seals from Tell Ḥalaf (nos. **1a.28–30**, below) were known from the western periphery and provinces. This obscured the true scale and range of this significant motif, which can now be appreciated.

(1a.25) Tell Abou Danné (TAD 845).²⁸⁷ Present whereabouts unspecified. No material or measurements specified.

Tefnin 1980: 162–63 and fig. 22.2 (drawing; depicted at full size).

Unusually, the elaborated snake faces away from rather than towards the archer. Every other aspect of the motif is, however, identical, down to the stylized tree. For the possible implications of the compositional difference, see the following entry (on no. **1a.26**). A similar composition is the unprovenanced item no. **1a.43**, below.

(1a.26) Tell Afis (TA 72.232).²⁸⁸ National Museum of Aleppo M 2347. Light blue glaze, 1.8 x 0.7 cm.

²⁸⁷ Tell Abou Danné (Tall Abū Danna), ca. 25 km east of Aleppo, north of the Jabbūl lake, was excavated by a team from the Université Libre de Bruxelles directed by Roland Tefnin in cooperation with the Syrian Service des Antiquités from 1975–81. A final report on the ceramics of the Iron Age appeared (Lebeau 1983), but for most other finds one is dependent on the preliminary reports (e.g. Tefnin 1980).

²⁸⁸ Tell Afis is a large, multi-period site ca. 55 km south of Aleppo and almost certainly in the orbit of nearby Ḥama during the Iron Age. The site was excavated by an Italian team from 1986 until 2007 (accessible summary

Mazzoni 1990: 217–18, 224 pl. 59a (photo); Hammade 1994: 158 (no. 526; photo)²⁸⁹; Mazzoni 2008: 155–56, 161 fig. 1 (photo); Soldi 2009: 113, 116, 117 fig. 14a (photo).

Although this seal does not elaborate the features of the snake in the same fashion as do most other seals grouped here under the Antagonistic Type, the direct confrontation of the archer and snake is notable. In truth, this particular seal straddles the two types in the same way as do those seals with elaborated snakes fleeing (rather than confronting) the archer despite their detailed anatomy (see e.g. the immediately preceding no. **1a.25**). Deviations from the norm could be understood as imperfect provincial approximation of the majority composition as is attested exclusively at such core sites as Aššur, Khorsabad, and Nineveh.²⁹⁰

(1a.27) Tell Afis (TA 97.G.450). Present whereabouts unspecified. Frit, no measurements specified.

Mazzoni 2008: 156–57, 161 fig. 2a–b (photo, drawing); Soldi 2009: 113, 116, 117 fig. 4c–d (photo, drawing).

Mazzoni 2013a; 2014). Several notable early Aramaic inscriptions were found at the site (summary Amadasi Guzzo 2014). A final report on the acropolis excavations of 1988–92 appeared as Cecchini and Mazzoni 1998, but for most finds and all other areas, one is dependent on scattered reports. The Assyrian-style seals are published in Mazzoni 2008, with contextualization in eadem 2013b and consideration among other finds from the site emblematic of Assyrian—Aramean interaction in Soldi 2009. It is worth noting that Mazzoni (2008: 155) writes in publishing TA 72.232 (no. **1a.26**, here), TA 97.G.450 (no. **1a.27**, below), and TA 03.A.186 that “[t]he three seals belong to the same standardized class of small frit seals, with an archer attacking a serpent with a horn.” The last of these three seals is very effaced, but it is certainly not of the same type as the first two, as Mazzoni (2008: 156) actually goes on to describe: “Although the poor state of the third seal, TA.03.A.186, prevents us from providing a definitive reading, it is possible to make out the head and torso of a male figure, possibly shown in the act of seizing the hoof of a sphinx or other animal.”

²⁸⁹ Hammade (1994: 158) mistakenly gives the date as “1300–1200 BC” and the type as “Middle Syrian.”

²⁹⁰ Somewhat more subjectively, Mazzoni (1990: 217) suggests that several elements have been “reduced to a geometric motif,” but without elaboration on what broader cultural processes could be at work here.

- (1a.28)** Tell Ḥalaf. BM 138129. Glazed composite, 2.6 x 1.1 cm.
Hrouda 1962: 35 (no. 27), pl. 25 (photo); Collon 1987: 79–80 (no. 353; photo); • eadem 2001: 46 (no. 41), pl. 4 (photo).
- (1a.29)** Tell Ḥalaf. VA 12846. Yellow frit, 2.2 x 1.1 cm.
• Moortgat 1940: 147 (no. 695), pl. 82 (photo); Hrouda 1962: 35 (no. 26), pl. 25 (photo); Keel 1992: 218, 255 fig. 248 (drawing).
- (1a.30)** Tell Ḥalaf. Orientalisches Seminar der Universität Köln. Frit, 2.4 x 0.7 cm.
Hrouda 1962: 35 (no. 25), pl. 25 (photo).
- (1a.31)** Tall Knēdiḡ (TK 21.2).²⁹¹ Present whereabouts unspecified (formerly Deir ez-Zor Museum?). Composite, 2.2 x 0.8 cm.
Klengel-Brandt et al. 1996: 59–60 and fig. 18 (drawing); Kulemann-Ossen and Martin 2000: 487–88, 500 fig. 16 (photo); • Klengel-Brandt, Kulemann-Ossen, and Martin 2005: 298 (no. 1067), pl. 192 (photo, drawing).
- (1a.32)** Tell Sheikh Ḥamad²⁹² (SH 86/8977/0051). (formerly?) Deir ez-Zor Museum.
Glazed composite,²⁹³ 2.0 x 1.1 cm.

²⁹¹ Tall Knēdiḡ is ca. 20 km south of al-Hasaka in the al-Hasaka governorate (northeast Syria); it was largely an Early Bronze site that was resettled briefly in the Neo-Assyrian period. The tell was excavated by a German team from 1993 to 1997 as part of a rescue effort prior to construction of the Bassel al-Assad Dam on the lower Habur. The single-volume final report is Klengel-Brandt, Kulemann-Ossen, and Martin 2005, with an accessible summary in Kulemann-Ossen and Martin 2000.

²⁹² Fügert (2015: 163–64) accessibly summarizes the Tell Šēḡ Ḥamad snake-combat seals, with small illustrations. In addition to the relatively complete seals listed and illustrated here, there are three additional seals that are broken but preserve enough of this motif to be identified as likely or possible tokens of it: no. 104, 105, 106 (all drawings at Fügert 2015: II.431).

²⁹³ This is not noted in the catalogue entry but rather in Fügert’s (2015: I.56–57) summary of materials used for seals at Tell Šēḡ Ḥamad: “Bei etwa einem Drittel der vorhandenen Rollsegele [einschließlich 100–102 ...] kann

Fügert 2015: I.163 (no. 100; drawing), II.431 (drawing), 463 (photo).

(1a.33) Tell Sheikh Ḥamad (SH 86/9177/0035). (formerly?) Deir ez-Zor Museum. Glazed composite, 2.2 x 1.1 cm.

Fügert 2015: I.163 (no. 101; drawing), II.431 (drawing), 463 (photo).

(1a.34) Tell Sheikh Ḥamad (SH 86/9179/0032). (formerly?) Deir ez-Zor Museum. Glazed composite, 2.7 x 1.2 cm.

Fügert 2015: I.163 (no. 102; drawing), II.431 (drawing), 463 (photo).

(1a.35) Tell Sheikh Ḥamad (SH 98/6949/0310). (formerly?) Deir ez-Zor Museum. Impression on clay tablet.

Fügert 2015: I.163 (no. 103; drawing), II.431 (drawing).

Western Frontier II: Southern Levantine Sites

The attestation of this motif in the southern Levant is far more restricted than in the northern Levant.²⁹⁴ As already mentioned above, this is a microcosm of the situation regarding cylinder seals in general; very few such items are known from southern Levantine sites especially in the Iron Age, and this can be set against an ever-increasing profusion of such artefacts from modern-day Syrian sites. These, of course, came under earlier and more direct Assyrian control in the ninth

über die ursprüngliche Farbe keine sichere Aussage getroffen werden, denn diese wurden aus Kompositmaterialien gefertigt und waren glasiert.”

²⁹⁴ This is true even if one includes in the count such unprovenanced seals as BLMJ 445a and BLMJ 445b (nos. **1a.37–38**, below; both first published in Westenholz et al. 2004: 190 [nos. 158–59; photos]). Even though the museum at which these are currently held is in Israel, it is unclear whether they were purchased in that country or, furthermore, illicitly excavated in that country. Westenholz et al. (2004: 190) hypothesize, presumably on the basis of the distribution described in the present section, that the source of these two seals is “Northern Syria or Mesopotamia.”

and eighth centuries B.C.E.,²⁹⁵ and it is in the terms of that historical contrast that the dearth of southern Levantine cylinder seal attestation should be understood. The absence of cylinder seals in this region and period is also tied to the absence of other writing technologies. As discussed in Section 3.1, above, cylinder seals are by far most useful for impression on clay tablets. This medium was far less common in the southern than in the northern Levant during the Iron Age. As a result, stamp seals—which were by size and application more appropriate for impression on bullae sealing rolled papyrus—are far more prevalent than cylinder seals in the southern Levant.²⁹⁶ These often employed Assyrianizing iconographies, but in a cropped and inexact fashion due to the differences in medium and production aegis.²⁹⁷ Even among these adapted motifs, however, one finds no tokens of the snake-battle theme under consideration in the present section nor of the doubled-griffin or god-atop-dragon themes discussed in what follows. Representations of two-figure hand-to-hand combat with other hybrid creatures or of isolated hybrid creatures are occasionally found, but even these subjects are far less frequent in the southern Levant than in contemporary Neo-Assyrian seal iconographies from both core sites, i.e. those on the upper Tigris, and sites in the western provinces (Ornan 1993: 54–56).

Nevertheless, there is a single occurrence of the snake-combat theme on a cylinder seal from Gezer. This item was discovered in Macalister’s early excavations and is frequently republished (see references below), with the potential unintended effect that it and/or cylinder seals as a phenomenon might be mistaken as representative of southern Levantine glyptic in the Neo-

²⁹⁵ For recent summaries, see e.g. Younger (2016) and Lipiński’s (2000) histories of the Aramaean or Syro-Hittite states, Yamada’s (2000) study of Shalmaneser III’s (r. 859–24 B.C.E.) western campaigns, and Siddall’s (2013) history of Adad-nīrārī III’s reign (810–783 B.C.E.).

²⁹⁶ I discuss technological specifications and important bullae finds in a forthcoming volume contribution, Richey *fc. b*, esp. section 2, “Land of Lost Paypri.”

²⁹⁷ The most concise summary of this phenomenon is Ornan 1993.

Assyrian period. It should therefore be stressed that this item, no. **1a.36**, below, is highly atypical and attests only the one-time spread of a particular Assyrianizing motif to a far-flung hinterland or even enemy territory, depending on the period in which this cylinder seal made its way to Gezer.²⁹⁸

(1a.36) Gezer. Istanbul Archaeological Museum 91.10. Unglazed composite, 2.9 x ~1.2 cm.²⁹⁹

Macalister 1912 II.347 (no. 42); III pl. 214.19 (drawing); Reich and Brandl 1985: 46 (no. 1) and fig. 1 (drawing); Keel 1992: 218, 255 fig. 249 (drawing); Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 331–32, 333 fig. 284b (drawing); Klingbeil 1999: 182–83 and fig. 15 (drawing); Ornan et al. 2013: 15–16 and fig. 17 (partial photo, drawing); Schroer 2018: 786–87 (no. 1865; drawing).

The leftmost figure here probably has wings,³⁰⁰ but this determination is based solely on published drawings and other descriptions, since no published photograph shows the anthropomorphic figure. It would, however, establish that this is likely to be a divine figure. The rearing snake has, as usual, multiple horns and a ribbed body. The complex of elements between the two main figures occupies the same space as the tree generally does. The shape that scholars have drawn, though, does not look like a tree and has not been described in any clear way by previous studies.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ The historical situation and relevant finds are summarized most readily by Reich and Brandl 1985, with reference to this seal at *ibid.*: 46.

²⁹⁹ This width measurement, taken from Schroer 2018: 786, appears to be an estimate on the basis of published photographs. The immediately preceding material designation is also from Schroer's listing (*ibid.*); cf. e.g. Reich and Brandl (1985: 46), who hypothesize that the seal is frit or limestone on the basis of the parallels listed in the present register.

³⁰⁰ Similarly e.g. Schroer 2018: 786; Ornan et al. 2013: 15; Klingbeil 1999: 182; Keel 1992: 218.

³⁰¹ Klingbeil (1999: 182–83) has the lengthiest description of this object, but his conclusions are unconvincing. After first wondering whether the object might be “a distorted depiction of a rhomb,” he suggests

Unknown Findspots

The present section makes no claim to collect every unprovenanced token of the snake-combat motif, but it is more comprehensive than any previous attempt of which I am aware. Because their findspots are unknown, these seals make less of a contribution to the historical and geographical conclusions offered above, but they can be marshalled as a group to demonstrate the popularity of the present theme and the consistency of its manufacture. Items in the following register are organized alphabetically by museum siglum.³⁰²

(1a.37) Unknown findspot (former Borowski collection). BLMJ 445a. Quartz, 2.6 x 1.1 cm.

Westenholz et al. 2004: 190 (no. 158; photo).

(1a.38) Unknown findspot (former Borowski collection). BLMJ 445b. “Green stone,” 1.8 x 1.1 cm.

Westenholz et al. 2004: 190 (no. 159; photo).

(1a.39) Unknown findspot (purchased 1952). (Aleppo) M 976. Faience, 3.2 x 1.0 cm.

Hammade 1987: 116–17 (no. 226; photo).

instead that it is “a depiction of the horned dragon on which the war-god Ninurta is standing, and which is a second representation of the god himself.” He compares this to such representations of the doubled lion-griffin as are discussed in Subsection 3.2.2, below. The problem with this hypothesis is that the composition posited by Klingbeil is never actually attested; out of the many dozens of seals documented in the present section, none involve a doubled horned dragon. Keel (1992: 218) attributes lack of clarity to the fact that the piece “nur noch durch eine Zeichnung dokumentiert ist,” but a photograph of the seal itself can be seen at Ornan et al. 2013: 16 fig. 17[a], where the museum number is given as above. It is not clear how Keel came to his conclusion.

³⁰² For items from the former Lambert collection now in the British Museum, see nos. **1a.46–49**, below.

- (1a.40) Unknown findspot. Münzkabinett des Kunsthistorischen Museums (Vienna).
Green-brown frit, 2.0 x 1.5 cm.
Bleibtreu 1981: 82 (no. 100; photo).
- (1a.41) Unknown findspot. O.3687. Impression on clay tablet, unspecified measurements.
• Herbordt 1992: 254 (no. Sonstige 4), pl. 5.13 (drawing); Ornan 2005: 107 (no. 141), 264 (drawing).³⁰³
- (1a.42) Unknown findspot (purchased in Damascus). VR 1984.2. Composite material, 2.5 x 1.5 cm.
Keel and Uehlinger 1990: 47 fig. 53 (photo); • Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 177 (no. 173), 440 (photo).
- (1a.43) Unknown findspot (former Lúcia collection). VR 1992.6. Composite material, 2.8 x 1.1 cm.
• Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 177 (no. 174), 440 (photo).
- (1a.44) Unknown findspot (purchased in Jerusalem). VR 1995.29. Composite material, 2.6 x 1.1 cm.
• Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 177 (no. 175), 441 (photo).

Unusually, the elaborated (ribbed and horned) snake faces away from the archer. For a similar composition, see no. **1a.25**, above, from Tell Abou Danné.

- (1a.45) Unknown findspot (purchased in Jerusalem). VR 1996.4. Composite material, 2.6 x 1.1 cm.
• Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 178 (no. 177), 441 (photo).

³⁰³ Ornan (2005: 107, 264) erroneously claims that this item is from Aššur.

Like no. **1a.26**, above, from Tell Afis, this seal opposes the upright snake and archer without elaborating the features of the former. See the former entry for the logic of including this under the present register and not under Register 1b, below.

The following four unprovenanced faience cylinder seals from the former W. G. Lambert collection, held in the British Museum since Lambert's death in 2013, should be included among these items of unknown origin, as they are almost certainly tokens of this type. They remain, however, unpublished and with no photographs accessible through the British Museum's online catalogue.

- (1a.46)** Unknown findspot. BM 2013,6001.2069 (Lambert Collection no. 1714). Faience, 2.5 x 1.0 cm.
- (1a.47)** Unknown findspot. BM 2013,6001.2089 (Lambert Collection no. 3337). Faience, measurements not given.
- (1a.48)** Unknown findspot. BM 2013,6001.2090 (Lambert Collection no. 3338). Faience, 2.3 x 0.9 cm.
- (1a.49)** Unknown findspot. BM 2013,6001.2293 (Lambert Collection no. 887).
Faience, 2.2 x 1.0 cm.

Importantly, there are also a number of seals in which anatomically identical snakes appear without a facing archer.³⁰⁴ Such seals show that even the present simple theme was subject to further simplification should time, funds, space, and/or whim require or encourage this. Given the range and frequency of the fuller theme, it seems likely that producers and commissioners of even these simpler snake seals would have grasped that their seals participated in a broader discourse that dramatized and assumed a basic antagonism between humanoid and monster. Such seals therefore suggest that the iconic potential of the monstrous horned snake exceeded its compositional context. These figures might imply and produce agonistic tension even where no such relation was explicitly represented.

The following register includes examples of the Seriated Type as discussed in the introduction to the present section. As already mentioned, this type is both less common and more widely distributed geographically than the Antagonistic Type. The extension of the motif to the Mediterranean islands of Rhodes and Sardinia (Tharros, specifically; see nos. **1b.4–5**, below) is especially notable. This may suggest a broader cultural translatability and/or ease of motif replication across a wide area. It is unclear if these seals would have been so readily appreciated as images of divine combat as those seals documented in the previous register, but the size and anatomy of the ophidian creature are generally similar enough that these are worth including here.

Register 1b: The Seriated Type³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Examples include Ass.1203 (Aššur) = VA 3961 (O. Weber 1920: 128 [no. 539, photo]; • Moortgat 1940: 147 [no. 694], pl. 82 [photo]; Klengel-Brandt 2014: 81 [no. 248], pl. 47 [photo]) and many others.

³⁰⁵ Although it has some compositional similarities to the group that follows, the seal from Tell al-Rimah TR 4423 (*e.p.* B. Parker 1975: 38 [no. 55], pl. 16 [photo]; further references under Register 3 no. **3b.1**, below) is considered in Subsection 3.2.3, below, on the basis of formal similarities to seals from that group, specifically the elaborated head and legs of the ophidian (or there, better, draconic) figure and the lightning wielded by the divine figure.

Known Findspots

- (1b.1)** Adilcevaz (Urartu, on Lake Van; now Bitlis province, Turkey). Ankara Anatolian Civilizations Museum 148.59,74. Frit, 2.1 x 0.8 cm.
Işık 1976–77, incl. 92, unnumbered figures (photo; drawing).
- (1b.2)** Al Mina. (Ashmolean Museum) AN 1937.776. Glazed composite, 2.4 x 0.9 cm.
• Buchanan 1966: 113 (no. 624), pl. 41; Keel 1992: 219, 256 no. 250 (drawing).

Uniquely, the archer seems to look back over his right shoulder, where his hand is raised too high to draw the bow he aims at the oncoming snake. Several of the other seals documented in the present section involve exaggerated raising of the hand one expects to draw the bow and no explicit connection between this hand and any part of the bow. Scholars have not previously commented on this phenomenon, but it is perhaps a formal combination of the archer style with the mace-wielding style. Two unprovenanced tokens—nos. **1b.6** and **1b.8**, below—actually seem to depict the mace, i.e. a separate vertical incision rising from the left hand of the archer. Of course, no actual warrior would wield two weapons in this way. If the two unprovenanced seals are not forgeries, this would reinforce the principle that one should not always attempt to derive ancient praxis from visual art depictions.

- (1b.3)** Nimrud (ND.2153). BM WA 140388. Faience, 2.3 x 0.8 cm.
B. Parker 1955: 103, pl. 15.2; Keel 1992: 219 (no. 251), 256 (drawing); • Collon 2001: 47 (no. 44), pl. 4 (photo).
- (1b.4)** Rhodes (Acropolis). BM GR 1861,0425.5. Faience, 2.0 x 0.8 cm.

- Walters 1926: no. 263; Collon 1987: 84–85 (no. 388; photo).

The snake is doubled on this seal, perhaps to enhance the threat of an enemy that otherwise is just a large terrestrial creature.

- (1b.5)** Tharros on Sardinia (find no. 14/13). BM WA 133612 (1856,1223.1040). Steatite, 1.7 x 0.6 cm.
- Barnett and Mendleson 1987: 96, 179, pl. 51 no. 30 (photo); Keel 1992: 219 (no. 252), 256 (drawing).

Unknown Findspots

- (1b.6)** Unknown findspot (purchased in Aleppo by Woolley). (Ashmolean Museum) AN 1914.575. Glazed composite, 2.5 x 1.0 cm.
- Buchanan 1966: 113 (no. 625), pl. 41 (photo).
- (1b.7)** Unknown findspot. VR 1981.99. Composite material, 3.0 x 1.2 cm.
- Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 178 (no. 176), 441 (photo).
- (1b.8)** Unknown findspot (purchased in Jerusalem). VR 1995.30. Composite material, 2.1 x 0.7 cm.
- Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 178 (no. 178), 441 (photo).

The overarching theme documented by the preceding two registers has notable precursors that date to the second and third millennia B.C.E. These are less useful for the question of how divine combat was depicted in the first millennium, but they are important for understanding that

this theme did not manifest suddenly and without iconographic anticipation in the first millennium B.C.E. Artists working in this period instead simplified and centered a motif that was already common in ancient Near East art. One group of representations comes from the first millennium and stresses the monstrous character of the ophidian antagonist through clear differentiation from terrestrial snakes. The antagonist’s heads are, in Carroll’s terms, “massified” (i.e. made numerous). The fact that three of the four visual art representations shown below (nos. **1c.1**, **1c.3**, and **1c.4**) have seven heads and that several ancient Near Eastern texts involve that number suggests that this number of heads called up definable and significant associations for the producer and consumer of these images. It is well established that many ancient Near Eastern texts and images use “seven” as a literary conceit to define groups that are all-encompassing or particularly potent.³⁰⁶ Many scholars have related these figures to the multi-headed dragons that are well known both from ancient Near Eastern texts and from the texts and visual art of neighboring regions.³⁰⁷ Notable ancient Near Eastern texts in which draconic figures have multiple heads include Psalm 74.14, אַתָּה רָצַצְתָּ רֵאשֵׁי לַיָּתוֹן “You (Yahweh) crushed the heads of Leviathan,” the Ugaritic allusion to {šlyt . d . šb’t . rāšm} *ŠLYT* of the seven heads” in the list of ‘Anatu’s conquests at *Ba’lu* 3 iii:42’ (RS 2.[014]+3.363; *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.3). When one depicts a deity defeating an entity that embodies the power of this “seven”-centered conceit, one is making an especially strong claim for that deity’s dominance even in the face of maximal opposition. In several of these representations, the creature is also made visibly hybrid by the attachment of legs. The result is a being whose conquest by a deity is even more viscerally impressive.

³⁰⁶ The importance of the number seven in the ancient Near East is documented most comprehensively in the edited volume Reinhold 2008. No. 1c.4 is actually depicted on the cover of this volume.

³⁰⁷ A brief summary of the seven-headed snake as known from text and visual art is Green 1994: 260. Connections with the Greco-Roman hydra are posited in Bisi 1964–65 and more recently throughout Höpflinger 2010.

So far as the combat itself is concerned, in two of the depictions presented below, nos. **1c.1** and **1c.4**, there is an actual confrontation of one or two deities and a seven-headed monster with both ophidian and other theriomorphic features. The latter of these is not a cylinder seal but is rather another type of miniature art—incised on a small (3.9 x 6.4 cm) shell plaque—that would, if authentic, have been as portable and accessible as cylinder seals themselves. Two additional depictions, nos. **1c.2** and **1c.3**, represent a multi-headed snake without legs and that is not interacting with any other iconographic figure. One of these, no. **1c.2**, is on a cylinder seal impression, and the other, no. **1c.3**, is on a mace head, again a relatively portable and accessible object. Despite not depicting combat, both interact with and enact the broader range of iconographic motifs associated with the multi-headed snake. They are therefore productively considered together with images of actual combat as playing upon and eliciting in the viewer divine combat associations. Finally, the fact that two of these items, nos. **1c.1–2**, are certainly from Tell Asmar (Ešnunna) has led to hypotheses that the two unprovenanced items are also from that site.³⁰⁸ This is speculative and assumes that the seven-headed dragon was popular only at a particular site. The unlikelihood of this assumption is suggested by the frequency of the seven-head motif in texts, as already noted above.

Register 1c: The Seven-Headed Snake or Dragon

³⁰⁸ See e.g. Uehlinger 1995: 60, “das ursprünglich wie die Siegelabrollung von Abb. 7 aus Eschnunna stammen dürfte.” This sort of reasoning around unprovenanced objects has the potential to become circular, since it is possible that a given, if inauthentic, was modeled on the piece that is then used to place it and even to ensure its authenticity.

(1c.1)³⁰⁹ Tell Asmar (Ešnunna; AS 32:738). Formerly IM 15618.³¹⁰ Gray stone, 3.2 x 2.2 cm.

Frankfort 1939: 122 and pl. 23j (photo); Heidel 1942: fig. 16 (photo); • Frankfort 1955 no. 478, pl. 45 (photo); Bisi 1964–65: 27–28, 31 fig. 5 (drawing); Rendsburg 1984, with pl. 46 (photo); Collon 1987: 178–79 (no. 840; photo); Uehlinger 1995: 61, 90 fig. 10 (drawing); Schroer and Keel 2005: 328 (no. 234), 329 (drawing); Korpel and de Moor 2017: 5 and fig. 1.2 (drawing).

A seven-headed dragon with four limbs is flanked by two anthropomorphic figures stabbing its neck and haunches with what appear to be long spears. The two figures have been interpreted as different gods or as a doubled representation of the same god, perhaps a narrative progression. There are parallels for such doubled depictions to suggest progression elsewhere in Mesopotamian art.³¹¹ The identity of the two figures' horned headdress, weapons, costume, and posture in the present seal makes this a plausible interpretation of the present seal (similarly Rendsburg 1984). Two additional anthropomorphic figures stand behind the left antagonist.

³⁰⁹ This seal is very frequently depicted, but often with minimal or no discussion. For this and the other frequently depicted items registered in the present section, I have restricted citations to art historical studies, especially those that discuss the present item in some detail, but see also e.g. Greene 2017: 94 n. 34, 95 figs. 1–2 (drawing and photo); Korpel and de Moor 2017: 5 fig. 1.2 (drawing); Jones 2011: 676 fig. 5 (drawing); Lewis 1996: 29 fig. 1 (photo). Jones (2011) and Lewis (1996) both discuss a number of the visual art pieces engaged in the present chapter, albeit to different ends.

³¹⁰ Schroer and Keel (2005 : 328) write that this seal was looted from the Iraq Museum during the Iraq War (“Im zweiten Golfkrieg gestohlen”). The source for this is likely the Oriental Institute’s (Chicago) tracking of stolen Iraqi antiquities, for this object in particular at <http://oi-archive.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/dbfiles/objects/1065.htm>, last updated April 14, 2008; this is made explicit by e.g. Greene 2017: 94 n. 34 and Trimm 2017: 562 n. 41.

³¹¹ This is discussed in e.g. Ataç 2018: 176–77; Ornan 2005: 52; Winter 1985 (= eadem 2010: II.3–51).

The wavy lines rising from the dragon's back both here³¹² and on BLMJ 2051³¹³ (no. **1c.4**, below) have almost always been interpreted as flames issuing from the monster itself. They therefore allegedly constitute emblems of the monster's power. There is one Neo-Hittite monumental representation of divine combat in which vertical lines incised above the combatted monster are clearly hail and rain trajectories.³¹⁴ Despite the chronological, geographical, and formal gap separating that monument from the items under present consideration, it seems better to interpret all of these vertical lines as representing the weaponized elements of the gods, as there is precisely no clear iconographic evidence for such lines being fire or some other attribute of the monster. Furthermore, there is at least one contemporary cylinder seal—Vatican Museo Profano 6184³¹⁵—on which eight very similar vertical lines rise from the back of a terrestrial animal, specifically a

³¹² For this interpretation, see e.g. Korpel and de Moor 2017: 5; Schroer and Keel 2005: 326; Uehlinger 1995: 61.

³¹³ Muscarella et al. 1981: 76, "What look like flames rise from the monster's back." Cf. Westenholz et al. 2004: 191, "from his back flames seem to rise or rain seems to fall depending on scholarly interpretations."

³¹⁴ The Neo-Hittite monumental representation in question is the Malatya A/8 stele, ed. Orthmann 1971: 437.

³¹⁵ This seal was published in Van Buren 1942: 361–63 (no. 4; photo) and has apparently gone unmentioned thereafter. The item was plausibly dated by Van Buren to the Akkadian period and is one of a small group of seals held in the Vatican Library's "Museo Profano" collection; they were collected by one Maximilian Ryllo, S.J., who traveled to the Middle East before 1838. As noted by Van Buren (1942: 363), the lines rising from the back of the bull are similar to those that appear above another creature, perhaps also a bull (?), on a relief from Mari (no. 1416; Parrot 1939: 18–19; pl. 5.3 [photo]). The relief is broken above and to the left of the creature, and to his right are a crouching figure (described in several publications as an atlantid) and a standing figure who holds an instrument of some type. Parrot (1939: 19) hypothesized that the lines above the creature were "un autel (?) cannelé" (a fluted altar). Porada (1939: 96–97) instead—and in agreement with the interpretation offered here—suggested that these lines were rain by comparison with Akkadian cylinder seals bearing a somewhat rare motif in which a hovering divine figure sheds rain upon the overall scene (e.g. BM 89089; for further tokens, see Van Buren 1959 and van Loon 1990). This understanding appears to have been accepted by Parrot (1960), and see also the discussion in Trokay 1984.

bull. Interestingly, no scholar has understood *these* lines to represent fire, perhaps due to a (correct) assumption that a fiery bull would be both illogical and iconographically unparalleled.

(1c.2) Tell Asmar (Ešnunna; AS 32:992), Oriental Institute (Chicago) A34753. Seal impression on clay, 4.5 x 9.0 cm.

Frankfort 1935: 120–21 and fig. 19 (drawing); 1939: 72 fig. 27 (drawing); • idem 1955: pl. 47 (no. 497; drawing); Bisi 1964–65: 25 fig. 2 (drawing), 28–29; Uehlinger 1995: 59–60, 88 fig. 7 (drawing); Lewis 1996: 29 fig. 2 (drawing); Schroer and Keel 2005: 326 (no. 232), 327 (drawing).³¹⁶

The present representation is found on a cylinder seal impression that has three visible registers, all filled with animals of various types. Scorpions are very prominent and make up the entirety of animals depicted in the middle register. The bottom register includes a five-headed snake with a dotted body. This snake does not appear to interact in any way with the figures around it.

(1c.3) Unknown provenance. Copenhagen National Museum 5413 Alabaster mace-head, 10.0 x 13.5 (diameter) cm.

Frankfort 1935: esp. 105–9 (photographs and drawings *passim*); Heidel 1942: fig. 15 (drawing); Frankfort 1954: 68 fig. 71 (drawing); • Fuhr-Jaepfelt 1972: 50–53, figs. 32a–c (photos); Uehlinger 1995: 59–60, 88 fig. 8 (drawing).

³¹⁶ It is unclear to me why only drawings of this impression have been published and no photograph is publicly available.

The main part of this mace-head shows three lion-headed eagles with their wings contacting one another.³¹⁷ Below each of the pairs of wings are pairs of gazelles whose heads are turned towards the grasping claws of these lion-headed eagles. Above the entirety is a snake wrapped around the circumference of the mace-head. The snake has seven heads.

(1c.4) Unknown provenance (former Borowski collection). BLMJ 2051. Shell, 3.9 x 6.4 cm.

Muscarella et al. 1981: 75–76 (no. 28; photo); Merhav 1987: no. 16 (photo, no pagination); Bible Lands Museum (no author) 1992: 45 (photo); Uehlinger 1995: 60–61, 90 fig. 9 (drawing); Westenholz et al. 2004: 191 (no. 160; photo); Schroer and Keel 2005: 326 (no. 233), 327 (drawing).

Although not a cylinder seal, it is worth considering this other token of miniature art depicting a seven-headed monster here precisely because its imagery and composition are so similar to that of IM 15618. Several scholars have claimed a very early date for this plaque, but this is solely on the basis of comparison with the other items documented in this register.³¹⁸ To the left, a bearded and long-haired god wearing nothing but a skirt and a strange crown—on which see below—takes one knee before a monster with seven heads on long necks. This god also holds a mace-like weapon, perhaps a throwing stick,³¹⁹ that is crooked and not completely differentiated from the lines of his limbs. The lowest of the monster’s heads is

³¹⁷ For the art of the lion-headed eagle in general, see Fuhr-Jaepfelt 1972.

³¹⁸ E.g. Korpel and de Moor 2017: 4, “around 2300 BCE”; Jones 2011: 677 “ca. 2500–2400”; Schroer and Keel 2005: 326, “FD III (2550–2350a)”; Uehlinger 1995: 90, “um 2500 vuz.”

³¹⁹ Thus Schroer and Keel 2005: 326, “Wurfholz.” This weapon is similar to that visible on the god-on-dragon cylinder seal no. **3a.1**, below (VA 5188), and some other representations documented there.

overlaid by a curved and hatched object of an indeterminate nature.³²⁰ The monster has four legs positioned so as to suggest movement, i.e. with the right foreleg advancing and the left foreleg lagging momentarily. Its tail is thick, upright, and covered with the same leopard-like spots that dot its flank. For the wavy lines above the monster's back, see the discussion of IM 15618 (no **1a.c**), above.

It is surprising how rarely the issue of this piece's unprovenanced nature has been raised, especially in light of the fact that it depicts a highly significant and imaginative motif but does so in a way with few iconographic parallels and some surprising but explicable idiosyncrasies. For example, the vegetation crown of this figure is not broadly paralleled but has nevertheless received seasonal interpretations that hark back to Frazerian myth ritualism; according to Schroer and Keel (2005: 326), for example, the god is "eine Art Vegetationsgott" while the supposedly flaming (see n. 315) dragon is "die lebensbedrohliche Dürre."³²¹ The curved and hatched object lying across the lowest of the dragon's necks has already been mentioned above, and the absence of parallels for this object do not speak in favor of the authenticity of the present piece.

The other group of precursors depicting divine combat with an ophidian creature involves the integration of such scenes into broader compositions, most of which are discussed by Williams-

³²⁰ Schroer and Keel (2005: 326) interpret this item as somehow an indication that the god's weapon has already struck the monster's neck ("Sein Wurfholz hat den untersten Kopf eines siebenköpfigen Monsters bereits getroffen"), but do not specify exactly what they understand the hatched object to signify. One finds something similar in Uehlinger (1995: 61), "Ein Kopf des Untiers ist bereits getroffen – noch aber ist seine Macht nicht gebrochen."

³²¹ A similar hypothesis may be found in Uehlinger 1995: 60–61.

Forte (1983) in a synthetic article. Like depictions of the seven-headed snake, all tokens of this group are earlier than the Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals. Regrettably, most are not provenanced, but all are exempla of the Late Syrian style and so can be geographically affiliated and dated with some accuracy.³²² So far as can be determined from archaeology and art history, they are confined to the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1550 B.C.E.). In these complex and crowded cylinder seals, the question arises to what extent juxtaposed motifs should be interpreted together with one another and to what extent these motifs are essentially independent entities that can be mixed and matched at will. There are few if any cases in which the juxtaposition of motifs produces either a mutually reinforcing iconographic program or, much less, a linear narrative (cf. n. 311, above). Rather, the motif of divine-monster combat on these cylinder seals seems to be just one motif among many, no more or less significant than those others with which it shares space. In this capacity, the motif of divine-monster combat might aim, along with the other motifs, to display the seal carver's mastery over a particular defined set of iconographic potentialities. At the same time, juxtaposed motifs could serve to communicate multiple important identity-related aspects for the owner and/or commissioner of a given seal,³²³ in much the same ways that a person's tattoos might when juxtaposed but conceptually independent of one another.

All of these seals depict the storm god, with his characteristic lightning and mace, as the snake's belligerent. The morphology of the combatted entity is always basic; the theriomorphic

³²² This group is discussed in some detail in Williams-Forte's (1983) article, and her conclusions are not recapitulated here. I have found no additional appearances of the motif in Topçuoğlu's (2016) recent dissertation on Late Old Assyrian glyptic (from ca. 1847–1728 B.C.E., provenanced finds from Tell Bi'a, Tell Leilan, Tell al-Rimah, and Mari), despite the somewhat regular occurrence of martial deities who are otherwise very similar to the storm god on the seals under present consideration (see e.g. *ibid.*: 434, Cat. #142, from Tell Leilan [field no. L87-302, 372a] and *ibid.*: 456, Cat. #230, from Mari [field no. TH82.245])

³²³ Similarly Topçuoğlu 2016: 1–2 for slightly earlier and geographically proximate seals.

antagonist is never anything more than a simple snake. That this figure is nevertheless to be identified as divine-monster combat can be founded on the consistent antagonistic posture of the warrior god and especially his use, in most exempla,³²⁴ of lightning to smite the mouth of the enemy. This natural phenomenon can be instrumentalized as a weapon only in the supernatural realm, and use of it would be excessive against a mere snake. The subordinate status of the snake is conveyed by its consistently lower positioning and its seeming inability to pose much of any threat to the storm god. In context, the depiction of combat often appears almost as an afterthought, an additional adjunct to the storm god's power but hardly the focus of the scene. The smitten snake is more of an iconological prop than an active participant in narrative. Some seals even depict the snake as no longer involved in direct combat but rather tucked tidily underneath the arm of the storm god that holds the lightning.³²⁵ The combat is depicted as a *fait accompli*, revealing more directly the logic animating the other representations.

As the following section will show, this is not the only visual art representation that predicts the outcome of the divine combat that constitutes the central motif. The cylinder seals that have been discussed in the present section show that dragon and snake combat was an extremely widespread motif in cylinder seal art from an early period. In the Neo-Assyrian period, this motif was codified as a theme distributed broadly on cylinder seals whose materials suggest that they

³²⁴ One can contrast the Nuzi impression published by Porada (1945: no. 738 *passim*, pl. 37 [photo]), where the god aims what appear to be two daggers at the head of the snake. Porada (1945: 64) identified this snake's head as "the head of a bull" (similarly *ibid.*: 81 n. 152, 122). The head in question, however, appears to just be horned, and there is nothing about these horns that makes them particularly bovine. As is documented by the sources cited in n. 275, above, there is some textual support for the *bašmu* as being a horned snake. Whether that snake's horns were understood to be bovine is also not certain, and one can also not be sure that all (including iconographically depicted) horned snakes were understood to be *bašmus* or that all *bašmus* were imagined to be horned.

³²⁵ The seal in question is from Kaneš (Kültepe, level 1b), *e.p.* Özgüç 1968: pl. 22.2 (photo); republished in e.g. Williams-Forte 1983: 40 fig. 6 (drawing).

would have been cheap and therefore accessible to individuals across many strata of society. Such distribution begins to show that the motif of divine combat was likely well-known and widely appreciated, particularly in the first millennium B.C.E.

3.2.2 Theme 2: The God and the Doubled Lion-Griffin

A second group of significant Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals are those that depict a warrior god who spreads his running legs over one prostrate hybrid creature and aims his bow at a second, rampant hybrid creature. There is one consistent anatomical distinction between the two monsters, namely that the one mounted by the deity has a scorpion tail and the one actively combatted has an avian tail. Otherwise, they are identical. Both have four limbs, and it is generally clear that the front or upper limbs of both creatures are leonine and the hind or lower limbs are avian. Both creatures have wings but a leonine head. The rampant creature always looks back over his shoulder with his mouth open and raises both hands, albeit in slightly different configurations on the various known seals. The prostrate creature also has an open mouth from which lightning is emitted on certain seals.

Despite the facts that scholars have frequently illustrated some or one of these seals in general works on ancient Near Eastern art history and that they clearly constitute a stereotyped motif with consistent and sophisticated conventions, these seals have never been the subject of close attention as a group.³²⁶ Scholars have instead been content to describe, often in exhaustive

³²⁶ Notably for the history of scholarship, seven of the cylinder seals registered above were already collected by W. H. Ward in his 1898 article “Bel and the Dragon.” This is in fact the most complete previous catalogue of this motif, but the material was cited mostly according to previous publications—themselves not often clear on provenance and/or collection—and with sometimes poor drawings only. Van Buren (1946: 41 n. 1) has, as often, the most thorough register. Several scholars have, on the other hand, neglected to note the range of attestation for this motif—from which broader conclusions might have been drawn and are drawn, below—by citing only a few, seemingly random parallels

detail, the figures and the scene on individual exemplars of this motif, to debate identifications of the deity and his associated monsters, and to speculate on whether the images reveal a lost myth to which we now have access only through these images. While description, identification, and textual correlation are all important tasks, scholarly discussion of these seals has seemed to assume that little will be gained without a focus on texts. The god, for example, is identified as Ninurta on the iconographic basis of his sickle but also by the mostly textual phenomenon according to which he is the warrior god *par excellence*.³²⁷ The Ninurta identification is ostensibly strengthened by the opposed, rampant creature, who has been identified as Anzû on the basis of his lion-griffin anatomy.³²⁸ Working from these identifications, scholars often recognize in these seals a narrative that is similar to that found in the *Anzû* epic, particularly its climactic movement in which Ninurta confronts and slays Anzû using his bow—but notably without the explicit assistance of any other hybrid creature.

This use of texts as a key to the visual art remains, however, both under-theorized and, at least in the present case, not strictly necessary for a deeper understanding of the artefacts in question.³²⁹ I would argue, moreover, that a preoccupation with finding a textual correlate has hampered direct art historical exposition of these scenes and that more intriguing insights can be gained by concentrating on aspects of motif and composition in the visual art encountered

in publishing any individual token. This has been true even when the scholar in question has personally published multiple seals in this group, e.g. Collon 1995: 35, publishing no. **2a.4** (BLMJ seal 487a) but strangely citing only no. **2a.15** (PML 689) as parallel (and compare similarly Collon 2007b: esp. 69). Cf. also briefly Winter 2000: 74 = eadem 2010: I.136–37. Uehlinger (1995: 68) refers to “Dutzende” von Siegelbilder, but does not actually enumerate these and only discusses nos. **2a.15** (PML 689) and **2a.16** (CBS L-29-494A).

³²⁷ For the iconography of Ninurta, see esp. Collon 2006 and Braun-Holzinger 1998. The god is discussed in a synthetic work by Annus 2002.

³²⁸ For this identification, see esp. Fuhr-Jaepfelt 1972 and Hruška 1975.

³²⁹ Scholarship discussing this problem is cited in Chapter 2, n. 205.

autonomously. The motif of greatest import for such an analysis is the striking anatomical similarity of the mounted, prostrate monster and the combatted, rampant one. The near complete identity of the two monsters' features results in a virtual doubling that has the potential to convey several overlapping messages. As with most monsters, the merging of several animal types into individual creatures points to a power that draws on theriomorphic associations but goes beyond these into the realm of the fantastic. The implications of the precise merging visible in the present theme are twofold. First, the combination of legged mammalian bodies with avian wings implies potential to move in multiple different ways and extends the monster's proper habitat to include both land and sky. As will be seen from the descriptions below, the land habitat is often specified by the presence of a mountain³³⁰—usually rendered through drilled holes and cross-hatched platforms on which the rampant lion-griffin stands—and small trees as in Theme 1.³³¹ Both of these features establish that the combat takes place in the wilderness area, that is, a locale at the periphery and therefore both mysterious and dangerous.³³² The fact that the combatted monster is depicted as rampant—i.e. on two legs—may imply a further enhancement of land-based locomotion. This is a creature who can move upright and like a human, increasing its threatening

³³⁰ Mountains of one sort or another occur on nos. 2a.8, 2a.13, 2a.16, and 2a.18. For more details on the individual representations, see the entries below.

³³¹ This is less common, but such a motif is employed in nos. 2a.15 and 2b.1. One wonders if the fish that appears on nos. 2a.13 and 2a.15 and which is often emblematic of watery peripheries should be taken as also suggesting the peripheral location of the combat. Something similar might be said of the individual supporting the winged sun-disc in no. 2a.14.

³³² Feldt 2006 explores ways in which this principle applies to various Anzû myths and is thus of particular relevance here. Compare J. J. Cohen's (1996b) thesis (V.) "The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible"—discussed briefly in Subsection 2.2.1, above, and note recently the contributions to *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 4.1–2 (2017), esp. Konstantopoulos 2017b.

potential. The fact that the mounted monster has a scorpion tail adds an element of substantial danger to that creature.

Importantly, the fact that the god already mounts this latter threatening creature predicts the outcome of the depicted battle. The two monsters are so similar that the fact that the god can mount one of them suggests that he is not outmatched in his current struggle and indeed has a good chance of being victorious. But the slight difference between the two creatures could also introduce a measure of tension. The positioning of the god relative to his mount suggests that he is capable of dominating this creature, but it remains possible that a difference in tail anatomy hints at a difference in potency that will make this new battle more difficult. Through the introduction of this tension, the viewer is drawn into the miniature narrative and becomes invested in its ultimate outcome. One could go further and say that the viewer might be tempted to identify the only anthropomorphic creature in the scene with powerful humans such as the king or other local authority and the pointing worshipper that occurs on several of the seals³³³ with oneself. Through this manner of isomorphism, the seals discussed in the present section might serve to deepen the theological and political commitments of a viewer and incline them towards belief in and support of the power of whatever human—self, monarch, etc.—is accorded the subject (rather than object or Other) position in a given implied narrative.

Unfortunately, only three seals of the classical type have a known findspot, and all are from the German excavations at Aššur. The rest have been purchased by museums or private collectors

³³³ See nos. 2a.1, 2a.4, 2a.5, 2a.6 (pointing instead at the seated goddess), 2a.9, 2a.13, 2a.14, 2a.16, and 2a.18 (pointing instead at the standing goddess). For this gesture, see e.g. Ornan 2005: 37–38, 135. Chavel (2012: 27–28 n. 91) discusses this gesture in a footnote with extensive bibliography and concludes that “the extended index finger is the indication *par excellence* of the visual encounter and of visualization.” This observation has been elaborated in several subsequent presentations (most recently at the University of Texas, Austin, on March 5, 2019 and the University of Chicago on January 16, 2019), currently unpublished.

since the middle of the nineteenth century and up until the present day. The fact that so few of these seals have been found *in situ* probably has something to do with their transparently mythological content and palpable similarity to widely known images of divine combat, such as that on the Ninurta Temple relief (BM 124571–2; see the beginning of Subsection 4.2.3). These items, once found by whatever means, can therefore be expected to fetch a relatively high price, as they have for example in Christie’s sales from the Surena Collection (June 11, 2001, Sale 9828). A serpentine seal similar to those listed under “Register 2a,” below, sold for \$2,820,³³⁴ and a chalcedony seal similar to those listed under “Register 2b,” below, sold for the even higher price of \$4,700.³³⁵

The following register begins with items that have known findspots, alphabetized by site, and continues with items that have unknown findspots, alphabetized by the museum or collection in which they are currently held.

Register 2a: The “Classical” Neo-Assyrian Type

Known Findspots

(2a.1) Aššur (Ass.9451). VA 5180. Chalcedony, 4.2 x 1.7 cm.

Unger 1926: pl. 61d (photo); 1927: 28, 78 no. 45, 110 pl. 45 (photo) • Moortgat 1940: 139 (no. 595), pl. 71 (photo); Porada 1993: 578–80 and fig. 45 (photo); K. Watanabe 1993a: 115–16 (no. 6.4), 133 p. 4 (photo); 1999: 324 (no. 1.1.1), 355 fig. 10 (photo); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 78–79 (no. 219), pl. 44 (photo); Niederreiter 2015: 145–46.

³³⁴ Christie’s Sale 9828, Lot 505 (June 11, 2001). An online listing with photograph is available at <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-neo-assyrian-brown-serpentine-cylinder-seal-circa-2067276-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=2067276&sid=30afb81c-2724-4d00-ba58-d94e5107635d>.

³³⁵ Christie’s Sale 9828, Lot 523 (June 11, 2001). An online listing with photograph is available at <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-western-iranian-chalcedony-cylinder-seal-circa-2067294-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=2067294&sid=30afb81c-2724-4d00-ba58-d94e5107635d>. No cylinder seals from auction catalogues or sales have been included in the present study.

The inscription on this seal reads {⁽¹⁾ šá^{Ld}MAŠ–EN–PAB / ⁽²⁾ LÚ.SAG / ⁽³⁾ [šá^{Ld}M]AŠ–SAG} “Belonging to Ninurta-bēlu-ušur, *ša rēši* of Ninurta-ašarēd.”³³⁶

The latter official is the eponym of 812 B.C.E.,³³⁷ so that this seal can be dated to roughly the late 9th century B.C.E. A god with a sickle aims his star-studded bow right at a rampant lion-griffin. A second lion-griffin, with scorpion tail, is mounted by this god. At right—unusually for seals of this theme—a second warrior god raises a mace in his left hand and grasps two bolts of lightning with his right hand (compare nos. **2a.2**, **2a.11**, and **2a.19**, below). At left, a worshipper—whose head is obliterated by the break—points at the scene. Above the combatants are, from left to right, an eight-pointed star, a winged sun-disc, and a crescent moon.

(2a.2) Aššur (Ass.10281). VA Ass.1695. Soapstone, 3.0 x 1.3 cm.
Klengel-Brandt 2014: 6–7 (no. 17), pl. 5 (photo, drawing).

The seal is very abraded, but Klengel-Brandt (2014: 6–7, pl. 5) was able to observe a sufficient number of traces to delineate the theme. A god, whose head is obliterated, aims his bow towards the left at a rampant lion-griffin, only one of whose arms is preserved. The main god, as usual, strides atop a second lion-griffin-like creature, whose precise features are incompletely preserved on the present seal.

³³⁶ This reading is from K. Watanabe 1993a: 115–16 (no. 6.4) and pl. 4; and Niederreiter 2015: 146, among other cylinder seals of Neo-Assyrian *ša rēši* “eunuchs.” Cf. the analysis of Moortgat (1940: 139), who omits line 3 and gives *ša rēši* as “des ‘Großen’” (cf. esp. Niederreiter 2015: 128 n. 21).

³³⁷ Millard 1994: 32, 57, 111; see application to this seal by Niederreiter 2015: 128 and K. Watanabe 1993a: 115.

To the left of this scene, another god wielding a sickle (?) appears to stand ready for assistance in the battle. Similar helping gods can be seen on nos. **2a.1**, **2a.11**, and **2a.19** if correctly illustrated (see that entry).

(2a.3) Aššur (no Ass. number specified). Istanbul Archaeological Museum, unspecified number. Quartz, 4.1 cm x unspecified width.

Herzfeld 1938: 35 fig. 201 (photo); Boehmer 1975: 356 (no. 273i); Digard 1975: no. 3502 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1993a: 121 (no. 8.3), 136 pl. 6 (photo); 1999: 340 (no. 9.1.1).

The inscription on this seal reads {⁽¹⁾ na⁴KIŠIB / IEN-IGI-an-ni} “Seal of Bēl-ēmuranni.”³³⁸ K. Watanabe (1993a: 121) discusses the options for identifying this individual with homonyms in the eponym lists, all of which date to between 737 and 686 B.C.E. If any of these identifications can be further supported, the present seal would date to the late 8th or early 7th century B.C.E. The god and his mount face left. Unusually, the rampant griffin actually confronts these enemies, with both front paws raised in opposition, rather than fleeing from them; the closest parallel for this posture is no. **(2a.10)**, below (Musée Guimet no. 100).

Unknown Findspots

(2a.4) Unknown findspot (formerly Borowski collection). BLMJ 2611 (formerly BLMJ 487a).³³⁹ Chalcedony, 2.8 x 1.4 cm.

Muscarella et al. 1981: 130–32 (no. 88; photo); K. Watanabe 1993b: 308 (no. 3.5.33/no. 30.) pl. 119 (photo); Collon 1995: 35, 37 fig. 28 (photo); K. Watanabe 1999: 324 (no. 1.1.2), 355 fig. 11 (photo);

³³⁸ This reading is from K. Watanabe 1993a: 121 (no. 8.3) and pl. 6.

³³⁹ The latter is the number given in all publications other than Oshima 2015 *passim*, an online publication. BLMJ 2611 seems to be an updated catalogue number.

Westenholz et al. 2004: 192 (no. 161; photo); Konstantopoulos 2015: 328 (no. 22)³⁴⁰; Oshima 2015: 2, 5, 14 fig. 3 (photo).

A god striding over a scorpion-tailed lion-griffin aims his bow to the left, at a rampant lion griffin who raises both arms. To the left—as on no. **2a.1**, above—a worshipper points at the scene. Between this worshipper and the rampant lion-griffin is a small bird. Above the worshipper are the seven drilled holes of the Pleiades.

(2a.5) Unknown findspot (purchased 1846; formerly R. Stuart Collection). BM WA 89533. Chalcedony, 3.0 x 1.9 cm.

Lajard 1847: pl. 25.5 (image); Lenormant 1878: 30 (drawing); Ménant 1886: 45 and fig. 24 (drawing); Jeremias 1904: 53 fig. 23 (drawing), 58; Ward 1910: 199–200 (no. 570; drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 332 (no. 5.1.3); Collon 2001: 150 (no. 288), pl. 24 (photo); 2007b: 69, 84 fig. 25 (photo).

Only the top half of the seal survives, but enough is preserved to suggest that this seal involves the same composition as the others registered in this section. A god aims his bow at a rampant lion-griffin, both of whose arms are raised. To the right, a worshipper points at the scene, in a mirror image of the composition on nos. **2a.1** and **2a.4**, above.

³⁴⁰ This item is included among items having the seven drilled dots for the Pleiades. Many of the items registered here and throughout the present chapter also have this symbol (cf. e.g. Van Buren 1939–41). Konstantopoulos (2015: 328) mistakenly identifies this piece as “Middle Assyrian.”

(2a.6) Unknown findspot (former Gėjou Collection). BM 119426. Chalcedony, 3.5 x 1.5 cm.

Gadd 1928 (photo); Wiseman 1959: pl. 75 (photographs); Digard 1975: nos. 1148–49 (photo); Albenda 1978: 18 and fig. 1 (photo); Collon 1994, no. 4 *passim*, 47 (photo); K. Watanabe 1999: 335 (no. 7.1.1), 364 fig. 42 (photo); • Collon 2001: 123 (no. 232), pls. 19, 24, 35 (all photos); 2007b: 69, 84 (photo); Konstantopoulos 2015: 300 (photo), 337 (no. 64); Pace 2019: cover photo.

In this frequently reproduced seal, a god with a star-studded bow and a sickle dangling from his right elbow strides over a lion-griffin with a scorpion tail and three bolts of lightning emerging from his mouth. The god aims his bow rightward at a rampant lion-griffin. A second group of motifs on the seal shows a goddess holding a sickle and ring on a throne mounted on a dog,³⁴¹ at which a worshipper points. Above the main motif of divine combat are the seven drilled holes of the Pleiades and a crescent moon.

(2a.7) Unknown findspot (former William Talbot Ready Collection and, by 1894, Southesk Collection no. Qc/γ.23). BM WA 129560. Chalcedony, 3.0 x 1.1 cm.

• Carnegie 1908³⁴²: 101–2 (no. Cc/γ.23), pl. 8 (photo); Frankfort 1939: 191, 198, 215, 217, 221, pl. 35b (photo); Van Buren 1946: 41, fig. 32 (photo); K. Watanabe 1993a: 125 (no. 8.23), 138 pl. 8

³⁴¹ The fact that the goddess is mounted on a dog has led to her identification with Gula, e.g. K. Watanabe 1999: 335. For a brief exposition of Gula's iconography on cylinder seals, see Collon 1994. For an overarching recent monograph treating the goddess, see Böck 2014.

³⁴² This catalogue is naturally a product of its time, but it is surprisingly good for a catalogue prepared by someone who had, so far as I have been able to find, any formal training or even extensive experience with Mesopotamian art, namely Lady Helena Mariota Carnegie (1865–1943). Carnegie does acknowledge the assistance of Cecil Smith and T. G. Pinches in her preface (Carnegie 1908: xiii–xiv), but it seems that most of the publication is her own. I have been able to discover very little about Lady Carnegie, but she was also responsible, not five years earlier, for a volume of rhyming politeness instructions called *The Infant Moralist* (1903). This volume includes such helpful expositions as: “It grieves me, Emma, much to see / How Pert and Rude you are; / Sure, everybody must agree

(photo); 1999: 340 (no. 9.1.2), 366 fig. 52 (photo) • Collon 2001: 152 (no. 292), pls. 24, 35 (both photos); 2003: 13*–14* (no. 3) and fig. 3 (photo); 2007: 69, 84 fig. 26 (photo).

The inscription on this seal has proven very difficult to read, since it is extremely sketchy and perhaps incised by an individual who was less than robustly literate. K. Watanabe (1993: 125) identifies only {šá ᵀX ḤAL X}. Kwasman (apud Collon 2001: 152) suggests the fuller reading {šá ᵀU-ḤAL-ni(!)} “Belonging to Adad-šimani,” but this may be overly optimistic.

The motif itself is more isolated than on other tokens but still drawn with substantial attention to detail. The god aims his star-studded bow right, and a sickle hangs from his right elbow. Both monsters have anatomies as on the other seals, here with their body and wing feathers meticulously elaborated. The rampant monster raises both hands to the sky; this sky field is occupied only by a crescent moon, with no additional signs as on several of the other tokens.

(2a.8) Unknown findspot (purchased 1972). BM WA 135752. Chalcedony, 4.1 x 1.6 cm.
K. Watanabe 1995: 292–93 (no. 3.1), 295 (photo); 1999: 340 (no. 9.1.3); • Collon 2001: 151–52 (no. 291), pl. 24 (photo).

This seal is unusual in many respects. First, the god and his lion-griffin mount face left, and the pursued lion-griffin is fully horizontal, with legs splayed, rather than rampant as on other seals. He looks back over his shoulder. The lower lion-griffin has one (?) bolt of lightning emerging from his mouth. The entirety is

/ From Courtesy you're far. / What wicked Rudeness thus to jest / On Mister Barton's Toes : / Poor Gentleman, he's Uncle's Guest, / and Gout gives painful Throes.”

very schematically drawn. As on other seals—nos. **2a.13** and **2a.16**, below—there is a schematically drawn mountain below the pursued lion-griffin, but here that creature does not stand atop it. The connection between the pursued lion-griffin and his mountainous habitat is therefore less direct. Furthermore, a surprisingly horizontal cuneiform inscription intervenes between the monster and his mountain. This long, four-line inscription reads {⁽¹⁾ na⁴KIŠIB / ⁽²⁾ L^d15–TI–KAM / ⁽³⁾ GAL URU^{meš}-ni / ⁽⁴⁾ šá^{uru}kàl-zi} “Seal of Ištar-balāṭu-ēreš, city-chief from Kalzi” (K. Watanabe 1995: 292–93); this seal-owner is otherwise unknown, so that it does not assist the precise dating of the seal in any way.

(2a.9) Unknown findspot (former Ishiguro Collection). Middle Eastern Culture Center (Tokyo) 1993, no. 16.³⁴³ Chalcedony, 3.7 x 1.2 cm.

K. Watanabe 1999: 324 (no. 1.1.4), fig. 12 (photo).

This item is very similar to no. **2a.14** in the composition of its main elements but shows some differences in the ancillary motifs that fill the field around the central scene. At right, a worshipper points at the scene. Between him and the rampant lion-griffin is a small goat. Above the worshipper are the seven drilled

³⁴³ This is the information for the museum catalogue in which the seal in question first appeared rather than its place in the overall catalogue for the Middle Eastern Culture Center, Tokyo. I have not directly examined this catalogue, whose full title and information appear to be 古く美しきもの：石黒孝次郎氏遺贈品展 Kojiro Ishiguro, *Furuku utsukushiki mono: Ishiguro fusai korekushon / The Mr. and Mrs. Ishiguro Collection of Ancient Art* (Tokyo: Mikazuki, 1993).

holes of the Pleiades and a winged sun-disk. Above the rampant lion-griffin is a crescent moon. Behind the shooting deity is a spade on an animal.³⁴⁴

(2a.10) Unknown findspot. Musée Guimet (Paris) no. 100. Unspecified material, 2.8 x 1.3 cm.

Delaporte 1909: 74–75 (no. 100), pl. 7 (image); K. Watanabe 1999: 340 (no. 9.1.5).

This seal appears to be somewhat schematically drawn, but it has also been only poorly photographed (?) to date. As was noted already above, the rampant lion-griffin—whose features are very unclear in the only published photograph—appears to face the god and his mount, and his arms are stretched out toward those aggressors. The god aims his bow to the left. Taken altogether, the closest parallel for the overall composition is no. **2a.3**, above. Lightning is emitted from the lower lion-griffin’s mouth. An eight-pointed star and crescent moon fill the space above the combatants. It is possible that there is a (pseudo-?) inscription in the space below the star.

(2a.11) Unknown findspot. De Clercq Collection (now Louvre), Cylindre orientale no. 331. Carnelian, 1.7 x 1.5 cm. (broken below).

• de Clercq 1888: 185 (no. 331), pl. 31 (photo); Ward 1898: 98–99, 100 fig. 11 (drawing); 1910: 199–200 (no. 569; drawing).

³⁴⁴ One expects a *mušhuššu* dragon for the usual combinatory symbol of Nabû, but the animal in question does not appear to have any fantastic features. K. Watanabe (1999: 324) identifies the animal as a “bull(?)”

This seal is broken on its lower half and shows some other peculiarities that separate it somewhat from the other items considered here. The rampant lion-griffin has the same posture as on several other seals, and the Pleiades appear above the scene. But two humanoids oppose the monster, one from the left, with a bow, and the other from the right, with less transparent weaponry.³⁴⁵ The latter is marked more explicitly as a god by his surrounding *melammu*. Given this distinction, it seems unlikely that the seal represents a narrative scene in which both humanoids are the same individual at progressive moments of action.³⁴⁶ Because the bottom of the seal is broken, one cannot be certain that one of the humanoids—probably the god on the right, whose posture mirrors that of the main divinity in the other seals considered here—strode atop a second, scorpion-tailed lion-griffin. The reconstruction is merely suggested, not assured, by the parallels collected here.

(2a.12) Unknown findspot (purchased 1893–1910, former Kelekian Collection). MMA 1999.325.69. Quartz, 2.0 x 1.7 cm (broken above).

—unpublished³⁴⁷

This unpublished seal, broken on its upper half, was absorbed into the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection along with the bulk of the Dikran

³⁴⁵ De Clercq (1888: 185) considered the item in the god’s left hand (at right on the cylinder seal impression) to be a “glaive” and that in his right hand to be “une arme en forme de trident.” Ward (1898: 99) suggests that the right figure “thrusts a double thunderbolt in the dragon’s face” (cf. idem 1910: 199–200, with no comment).

³⁴⁶ Cf. this option briefly contemplated by Ward (1898: 98–99), “another deity, or the same deity represented a second time.”

³⁴⁷ The source for the following description is the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s online catalogue at <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection>.

Kelekian (1867–1951) Collection in 1999. Despite the breakage, this seal certainly belongs with the others considered here, since the anatomy of the horizontal, scorpion-tail lion-griffin is completely preserved, he appears to be mounted by a humanoid of some sort, and the avian legs, tail, lower torso, and one wing of the rampant lion-griffin are visible at left.

(2a.13) Unknown findspot (previously W. Harding Smith Collection, ca. 1893–1910 purchased for former Kelekian Collection). MMA 1999.325.72. Quartz or chalcedony, 3.3 x 1.5 cm.

Ward 1910: 200–1 (no. 575; drawing)³⁴⁸; K. Watanabe 1999: 325 (no. 1.1.5).

A striding god facing right aims his star-studded bow and mounts a scorpion-tailed lion-griffin. His prey is the rampant lion-griffin at right, both of whose forearms are splayed rightward. This lion-griffin stands atop a cross-hatched platform that may signify a mountain, as in other representations (nos. **2a.8** and **2a.16**; cf. **2a.18**). Between the two main figures are, from top to bottom, a crescent moon, a rhomb, and what appears to be a fish. There is another object, perhaps

³⁴⁸ The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s online catalogue does not list previous publication information for this seal, presumably because it is not known that Ward (1910: 200–1 [no. 575; drawing]) already documented this seal in his general work on cylinder seals, specifically under the heading “Bel and the Dragon.” In his index of illustrations, Ward (1910: xvii) gives the source of his drawing as “Cylinder belonging to W. Harding Smith.” W. Harding Smith was William Harding Smith (1848–1922), a British painter and art collector. Internal records suggest that the cylinder seal was acquired, along with the rest of Dikran Kelekian’s (1867–1951) cylinder seal collection, between 1893 and 1910. This would mean that by the time Ward published the cylinder seal as belonging to Smith, it actually had a new owner, but this reconstruction is uncertain. As mentioned above, Kelekian’s collection was absorbed into the MMA’s holdings by donation from his daughter Nanette Kelekian; the elder Kelekian was an Armenian art collector and dealer with extensive holdings in antiquities and textiles.

another fish, to the right of the rampant lion-griffin. At left, a worshipper points at the scene.

(2a.14) Unknown findspot. Pierpont Morgan Library (PML), Morgan Seal 690. Chalcedony, 2.0 x 1.1 cm.

Lajard 1867: pl. 37 fig. 4 (image); G. Smith 1880: 114 (drawing); Ménant 1886: 45 and fig. 23 (drawing); Ward 1898: 97, 98 fig. 7 (drawing); • idem 1910: 199 (no. 566; drawing); Casanowicz 1926: 10, pl. 3.5 (photo?)³⁴⁹ • Porada 1948: 85 (no. 690), pl. 102 (photo); K. Watanabe 1999: 324 (no. 1.1.3).

A striding god facing left aims his bow and mounts a scorpion-tailed lion-griffin. The arrow from this bow extends apparently into the mouth of the rampant lion-griffin. Between these two main figures is a rhomb. At left, a worshipper points at the scene. At right are a winged sun disk, the seven drilled holes of the Pleiades, and a kneeling humanoid who appears to support the sun-disk with his arms.

(2a.15) Unknown findspot (purchased 1885–1908). Pierpont Morgan Library (PML), Morgan Seal 689. Steatite, 3.7 x 1.5 cm.

Ward 1890: 292, pl. 18 (no. 3; photo); 1898: 98–99 and fig. 10 (drawing); • idem 1910: 197, 199 (no. 565, drawing); Jastrow 1912: pl. 52 (no. 193; drawing); Casanowicz 1926: 10, pl. 3.3 (photograph?)³⁵⁰ • Porada 1948: 83 (no. 689), pl. 101 (photo); Collon 1987: 167–68 (no. 783; photo);

³⁴⁹ Casanowicz, (1926: 10) appears for this and item **2a.13**, below, to have photographed the impressions held in the United States National Museum (now the Smithsonian), inventory no. in this case U.S.N.M 130287. He explicitly claims that the originals of both items are in the “Metropolitan Museum of Art,” which seems to reflect general lack of clarity in the early twentieth century about which seals were owned by the museum proper versus which seals were part of the specific Morgan Library collection (cf. similarly Ward’s repeated references to this seal as “Metropolitan Museum 403”; e.g. idem 1898: 98 fig. 7).

³⁵⁰ See n. 349; the U.S.N.M. number that Casanowicz (1926: 10) gives for the impression is U.S.N.M. 130285.

Uehlinger 1995: 68–69, 92 fig. 18 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 340 (no. 9.1.4); Ornan 2005: 105–6 (no. 139), 264 (drawing).

In one of the most famous instances of this scene, a striding god facing left aims his star-studded bow and mounts a scorpion-tailed lion-griffin. The tip of the god's arrow is trident-forked, possibly to represent lightning. Fire or lightning spews from the mouths of both the lower lion-griffin and the rampant lion-griffin. Above the two main figures is a crescent moon. A six- (possibly seven-, with damage) pointed star, a winged sun-disk, a fish, and two rhombs fill the field behind the god. Below the lower arm of the rampant lion-griffin is a stylized tree.

(2a.16) Unknown findspot (perhaps Nippur?³⁵¹). University of Pennsylvania CBS L-29-494A (formerly[?] Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena³⁵²). Chalcedony, unspecified measurements.

³⁵¹ This is the site given by the University of Pennsylvania's online catalogue (<https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/117874>), but it is not clear to me what the source of this claim is. It is perhaps posited merely by association with Hilprecht (see the following note) and his participation in the excavations at Nippur in 1889–1900.

³⁵² This is the place of conservation given by Galling 1941: 196, "Jena (Sg Hilprecht der Universität)." No place of conservation is named in Bordreuil 1993 or K. Watanabe 1999; 1993a. Uehlinger (1995: 96) cites the item only from its publication by Bordreuil (1993: 80–81 and fig. 8). My own searches through museum catalogues led to the discovery that the seal itself—not just an impression—is currently held in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, object number L-29-494A (presently [March 21, 2019] in Collections Storage, with alternate numbers F-29-6-188-135 and HIL.CAST.66, the latter referring to Hilprecht, but note that the seal itself does not look from the catalogue photo to be a cast, nor is it otherwise marked as such). This trajectory or confusion is probably to be explained in connection with Hermann V. Hilprecht's employment at Penn from 1887 until his death in 1925. The bulk of his personal collection of antiquities was donated after his death by his wife to Jena, where it makes up the Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection, but some items appear to have been retained at Penn. It is nevertheless unclear to me what constituted Galling's source for the (earlier?) conservation of this seal at Jena.

O. Weber 1920: no. 311 (photo); Galling 1941: 163, 196 (no. 160), pl. 10 (drawing); Bordreuil 1993: 80–81 and fig. 8 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1993a: 124 (no. 8.18), 137 pl. 7 (drawing); Uehlinger 1995: 68–69, 92 fig. 19 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 331–32 (no. 5.1.1), 362 fig. 34 (photo).

The inscription on the seal is in Aramaic and reads in the positive {⁽¹⁾ ḥtm³⁵³ yp^hhd / ⁽²⁾ . mpšr} “Seal of Yapa^h-haddu, the dream-interpreter.”³⁵⁴ Several authors have attempted to palaeographically date this inscription and, therefore, the seal itself. The five-stroke forms of {m} in particular speak for an 8th- or even 9th-century B.C.E. date, and all other graphemic morphologies admit of this dating.³⁵⁵

The scene itself shows a god with a star-studded bow shooting a trident-tipped arrow rightward at a rampant lion-griffin. The lower lion-griffin breathes fire or lightning from its mouth and has, as usual, a scorpion tail. The rampant lion-

³⁵³ A cross-shaped incision just below the {m} of {ḥtm} looks very similar to what one would expect of {t} in this script but is perhaps more equilateral than is strictly likely. Scholars have not tended to read this first lexeme as **{ḥtmt} (cf. e.g. Bordreuil 1993: 80; K. Watanabe 1993: 124; Galling 1941: 196, all as {ḥtm}), both because this would be, for Aramaic rather than Phoenician, unusual orthographically and/or morphologically—a feminine singular noun in *-at in which aphaeresis has not occurred in the absolute state or lacking orthographic representation of a definite article *-ā—and, for earlier Aramaic, unusual lexically, i.e. feminine nominal instantiations of √ḥtm become common only in later dialects such as Syriac (Sokoloff 2009: 505a) and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Sokoloff 2002: 490b).

³⁵⁴ For the Aramaic root √pšr in the D-stem (necessitated here by the *m*-preformative for the participle) having the semantics of dream-interpretation, see e.g. BDB 1109a (citing אֲשַׁר at Dan 5.12) for Biblical Aramaic, Hofstijzer and Jongeling 1995: 946–47 for all dialects of Aramaic attested in epigraphic sources, and Sokoloff 2009: 1263 for Syriac. For similar interpretations of the present seal, occasionally with some of the same lexical documentation, see Bordreuil 1993: 80; K. Watanabe 1993: 124; Galling 1941: 196 esp. n. 1. A recent edited volume—Hamori and Stökl 2018—summarizes what is known of dream divination in the ancient Near East.

³⁵⁵ Galling (1941: 163) does not invoke palaeography but rather similarity to the motif on Aššur (Ass.9451) = VA 5180, no. **2a.1**, above, and the fact that that seal has an eponym. Galling (ibid.), however, writes that that eponym dates the seal to around 875 B.C.E., when it is in fact from 812 B.C.E., thus suggestive that the date for both seals could be restricted to the later rather than the earlier 9th century B.C.E. This would perhaps make more sense, too, for the use of Aramaic on a cylinder seal, but the absence of a findspot for the present item remains an issue in making such a determination.

griffin stands atop a domed, cross-hatched platform that likely signifies a mountain, as is clearer in the irregular, rocky platform of no. **2a.16**, below, and similar to the flat platform in no. **2a.11**, above. Between the god and the rampant lion-griffin are a crescent moon and what appears to be the head of a gazelle or a similar creature. To the right, a worshipper holds at least one hand in front of himself.

(2a.17) Unknown provenance. Former Foroughi Collection, unspecified present location. Chalcedony, 3.5 x 1.7 cm.

Porada 1993: 578–80 and fig. 46 (photo); Collon 2003: 12*–13* and fig. 2 (photo); Ornan 2005: 104, 244 fig. 78 (drawing, without inscription!); Collon 2007b: 111, 115 fig. 7.28 (photo).

The main inscription, incised in the positive, was read for Porada and Collon by I. Finkel as follows: {⁽¹⁾ ana ^dPA UMUN-[<]šú[>] / ⁽²⁾ m.dPA-KIR-ir / ⁽³⁾ A m.d.ARAD-^dé-a / ⁽⁴⁾ LÚ pa-qid KUR^{meš} / ⁽⁵⁾ ana DIN ZI^{meš}-[<]šú[>] / ⁽⁶⁾ BA-šú} “Nabû-ētir, son of Warad-Ea, the *paqdu* of the lands, presented this to Nabû, his lord, for the sake of his life.” A line written along the lower margin of the seal is of uncertain interpretation and placement.³⁵⁶ A second inscription in a different, larger hand was apparently added secondarily, since it gives the seal over to a new owner: ⁽⁷⁾ ʾGAR^{ʾ1} eri₄-ba-AMAR.UTU / ⁽⁸⁾ LUGAL} “Property of (?) Eriba-Marduk, the King.”³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ The first sign is probably {IM}, broken at the very end. The last sign is either {BA} or {MA} (similarly Finkel apud Porada 1993: 579; idem apud Collon 2003: 13*). Between these there is a broken sign with a final vertical and three visible preceding horizontals. Both just-cited articles record Finkel’s suggestion that {IM} be read *pālihu* “fearless,” referring to Nabû. Finkel apud Porada 1993: 579 suggests inserting it between ll. 4 and 5. Collon (2003: 13*) numbers it line 7 but writes that “it might be better inserted between lines 1 and 2.”

³⁵⁷ Finkel (apud Porada 1993: 579; idem apud Collon 2003: 13*) summarizes the difficulties with the interpretation of this second legend, especially regarding the interpretation of {GAR}.

The Neo-Babylonian king Erība-Marduk ruled in the 770s and 760s B.C.E.³⁵⁸ This suggests that the seal was manufactured by the ninth or early eighth century, which is in line with the chronological determinations that have been made regarding other seals showing this theme. In addition to this attribution, both palaeography (Finkel apud Porada 1993: 579)³⁵⁹ and the costume of the main god³⁶⁰ point to a Babylonian rather than Assyrian area of manufacture for this seal.³⁶¹ These factors show that the seals under consideration in the present section were popular beyond Assyria, so much so that they were not only reappropriated by the king but even reinscribed for such new ownership.

The detail of the figures on the seal is perhaps the most elaborate of any of those considered in the present section. The main god's lower garment and mantel are exquisitely detailed, down to the "gold appliqués in the border of rectangles" noted explicitly by Porada (1993: 579). This god launches an arrow and seems to swing an axe behind him. His mount, as usual the scorpion-tailed lion griffin, has drilled scales covering his body, as does the rampant lion-griffin whom they are

³⁵⁸ His reign is summarized in Brinkman 1968: 220–24. Contra Collon (2003: 13*), there is no reason to assume that "the name of Eriba-Marduk must have been added to this seal in the time of Merodach-Baladan, who had great admiration for his father."

³⁵⁹ Unfortunately, no details regarding this palaeographic determination are given in any of the publications of this seal.

³⁶⁰ The feather-topped headdress (briefly mentioned by Collon [2003: 13*] but not discussed as geographically diagnostic) should connect the main god to this Babylonian tradition. Brief comments regarding the overall distribution may be found in Collon 1987: 83, and note also that none of the other cylinder seals considered in this section show gods that certainly have this type of headdress.

³⁶¹ As noted by Collon (2007b: 111), though, inscribed Neo-Babylonian seals are relatively uncommon. Most of the then-known corpus was edited by K. Watanabe (1995); for Aramaic-inscribed Neo-Babylonian seals, see Oelsner 2007.

pursuing. The mounted lion-griffin does have something protruding from his mouth, but in this seal it looks more like a forked tongue and less like a trident-lightning or flaming fire as in other tokens. Behind the main god is an additional divinity in a “radiant circle” (Porada 1993: 579). He has wings and what appears to be a skirt and holds the rod in his raised hand and ring in his lowered hand.

(2a.18) Unknown Provenance. Formerly Robert Stanton Williams (Utica, NY) collection.³⁶² Chalcedony, 3.4 x 1.5 cm.

³⁶² In earlier publications, Robert Stanton Williams (1828–99) has generally been cited only by his initials (e.g. C. Adler 1889: ccci; Ménant 1886: 247; Ward 1890: 292). This individual and his associated collection appears to be poorly understood in Assyriological and Near Eastern art historical scholarship. In the “Bel and the Dragon” article that is most useful for assessing early understanding of the motif under current consideration, Ward (1898: 98) actually gives his name as “R. I. Williams.” When Ménant (1886) published several seals from the Williams collection, he gave as the name of its originator only “Rev. Dr. Williams,” whom he notes to have collected the cylinder seals in question while traveling in the Middle East.

Based on a later announcement by Adler (1889; see below) and other historical considerations, this “Rev. Dr.” is William Frederic(k) Williams (1818–71). Adler (1889) writes that after William Frederick’s death, the collection was partially loaned to the National Museum of Washington D.C. (later the Smithsonian); some of the seals that were not loaned were represented by facsimiles and modern impressions. Casanowicz (1926) catalogued the collection; that catalogue’s inclusions of relevant seals are cited in the body of the text, but the Williams double-griffin seal is not among them. A search (March 7, 2019) of the Smithsonian’s Anthropology collections database suggests that only casts and impressions of these seals are still in the Smithsonian’s possession, so that the present whereabouts of the seals that once made up the Williams collection are unknown.

More on the history of William Frederick’s collection should be available from two collections of largely unpublished manuscript holdings, first the University of Michigan’s “William Williams Family Collection, 1808–1851” (1999.M-4043; information at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clementsmss/umich-wcl-M-4043wil?view=text>). This collection is centered around letters from William Frederick’s father, the printer William Williams (1787–1850; for whom see Stern 1951; Camp 1906); the elder William Williams sent to William Frederick and his other sons several letters between 1808 and 1839. William Frederick reciprocated with a “59-page composite letter while working in Beirut” (1850) and “similar letters [...] totaling over 40 pages” dated April and May 1851. Second, William Frederick’s own journals and letters and the papers of several family members are held in Amherst College’s “Williams-Chambers-Seelye Family Papers, circa 1832-1985” (MA.00321; information at

Ménant 1886: 256–58, pl. 5 (no. 8; photo); Ward 1898: 98, 99 fig. 9 (drawing); • idem 1910: 199 (no. 567; drawing); Digard 1975: no. 29–30 (photo); K. Watanabe 1993a: 122 (no. 8.7), 136 pl. 6 (photo); 1999: 336 (no. 7.2.1).

For the complicated conservation history of this seal, see n. 362, above. A three-line inscription reads {⁽¹⁾ na⁴KIŠIB / ⁽²⁾ m.dAMAR.UTU–MU–DÙ / ⁽³⁾ A m.dIM–A–rSUM^{?1363}} “Seal of Marduk-šumu-ibni, son of Adad-aplu-iddina(?).” The main scene is elaborate, with the central god striding over his scorpion-tailed lion-griffin and aiming his bow right at a rampant lion-griffin. This rampant lion-griffin stands atop an irregular dome of large drilled holes that appear to signify a mountain; cf. the more schematic representations of a similar mountain on nos. **2a.8**, **2a.13**, and **2a.16**. Both monsters have either lightning or fire emanating from their mouths. A second scene depicts an armed goddess in a *melammu* and standing on a platform; a worshipper faces her and points at her.

<http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma00321.html>). It is conceivable that the contents of these archives would reveal something about William Frederick’s cylinder seal acquisitions and/or—and perhaps even more importantly—other antiquities transportation with which William Frederick was involved, including the Neo-Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud now held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and by Hamilton and Dartmouth Colleges (Franck 1980). It is association with William Frederick in several census and genealogical records that reveal scholarship’s “R. S. Williams” to be William Frederick’s brother Robert Stanton Williams, a bookbinder who was involved in founding the Utica Public Library in 1893. There are no mentions of the cylinder seal collection in an anonymous memorial booklet privately printed after Robert Stanton’s death, *Robert Stanton Williams (1828–1899), A Memorial for Friends* (1900).

³⁶³ Thus also K. Watanabe 1993a: 122, noting that the reading of l. 3 is uncertain. Radner et al. (1998: 23) suggest that, as there “are no other names attested beginning with these two elements,” restoration of the final sign as {SUM} for *iddina* is likely.

Very Poorly Documented Seals

- (2a.19)** Unknown provenance. Unspecified current location. Unspecified material and measurements.

Lajard 1847: pl. 33.4 (image); Ward 1898: 98 and fig. 8 (drawing); 1910: 199 (no. 568; drawing).

Lajard (1847: pl. 33.4) and Ward (1910: 199; 98 and fig. 8) both illustrate this seal, but without discussing the origin of the image that they analyze. The scene is not dissimilar from other seals, and it is difficult to know to what extent the apparent idiosyncrasies of the iconography are due to poor imaging techniques and the illustrators' inadequate understanding of the motif they drew. Nevertheless, a god facing left and aiming his bow at a rampant lion-griffin is visible atop a second lion-griffin, who appears to spew trident-shaped lightning from his mouth. The strange item in the sky field above the rampant lion-griffin may be a crescent-moon, as on many other seals. Somewhat unusually (compare nos. **2a.1**, **2a.2**, and **2a.11**, above), the main warrior god is assisted by a second individual who wields lightning in the manner of the seals discussed in Subsection 3.2.3, below.

- (2a.20)** Unknown provenance. Unspecified current location. Unspecified material and measurements.

Jeremias 1913: 273–74 and fig. 173 (photo); Meissner 1925: fig. 29 (photo).

The two cited authors illustrate this broken seal without any additional bibliographic information, both in relatively popular and general works. Jeremias

(1913: xiv) cites this seal only as “Siegelzylinder: Kampf mit dem Drachen.”³⁶⁴ Meissner (1925: fig. 29) cites Jeremias as his source. Given the nationality of the authors and particularly the fact that Jeremias was working in Zingst-Darß (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; Jeremias 1913: viii), it seems likely that the seal was then to be found in a German collection. I have found, however, no later or more detailed description of the seal and its whereabouts; it is possible that this seal, like many other artefacts, has been lost in World War II and its aftermath.

As for the theme itself, its surviving half is very similar to no. **2a.18**, above, with the absence of an inscription and a worshipper standing before the goddess. The position of the rampant lion-griffin’s arms is also reversed, with the left one raised and the right one lowered. The goddess stands somewhat higher in the composition, perhaps on a raised platform, but any surface on which she or the rampant-lion griffin are standing has been lost along with the bottom of the seal; the mount of the warrior god has also been lost.

As with the snake-combat seals discussed in Section 3.2.1, there are some similar compositions that, for various reasons, fall outside the group described here as the “classical Neo-Assyrian” type. These additional seals in the present case involve just two relatively large cylinder seals now in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. They depict a very similar combat to that found on the seals discussed immediately above.³⁶⁵ A god, rendered with minimal accoutrements,

³⁶⁴ For other illustrations, Jeremias (1913: xi–xv) gives in his “Verzeichnis der Abbildungen” findspot and even occasionally museum information, e.g. for the succeeding no. 175, “Babyl. Siegelzylinder aus dem Louvre.”

³⁶⁵ Several additional seals that display a similar logic—god with creature pursuing or battling a similar creature—have not been included in the present survey for reasons of space; for examples, note especially the southern

pursues a winged, lion- or canine-headed creature and again stands above or just behind what are in both cases very aggressive hybrid beasts. These again mirror the pursued creature, in these seals without differentiation of the tails as in the classical Neo-Assyrian type. In other words, these renderings bring the two figures—the mount of the god and his prey—closer to one another and result in an even more exact monstrous doubling. On the first of the two seals discussed below, no **2b.1**, this doubling is even more striking due to the nearly identical postures of pursued and pursuing creatures. Both are on all fours, with legs splayed and wings furled out behind.

Register 2b: The “Schematic” Type

(2b.1) Unknown findspot. VA 3885. Chalcedony, 4.0 x 1.8 cm.

Unger 1926: pl. 62b (photo) • Moortgat 1940: 141 (no. 615), pl. 74 (photo); K. Watanabe 1999: 341 (no. 9.1.7).

Executed in the filed style (see notes to no. 3a.7, below), this seal is unusual in that the pursued lion-griffin flees on all fours and in no way confronts his aggressors. Even so, he is much larger than both his divine and monstrous enemies. The tails of the two creatures are here *not* distinguished; both are constituted simply of three near-parallel incisions. The god’s weapon is unclear; it is perhaps lightning rather than a bow, and he seems to hold a mace in his rightmost hand. A seven-pointed star and crescent moon occupy the field above.

(2b.2) Babylon (VA Bab.47159). VA 7544. Chalcedony, 4.6 x 1.6 cm.

Levantine seal Megiddo M.2682 (OI A 18772), olivine, published in e.g. Ornan et al. 2013: 11 and fig. 5 (drawing) and a seal in which a god in a chariot pulled by a sphinx fends off an anatomically similar sphinx, MMA 1986.311.58, carnelian, 2.5 x 1.1 cm; published in Pittman and Aruz 1987: 75 (no. 82; photo).

Unger 1926: pl. 62d (photo); Frankfort 1939: 215 and pl. 34a (photo); • Moortgat 1940: 141 (no. 616), pl. 74 (photo); Winckler-Horaček 2015: 224 fig. 179 (photo).

Executed in a more molded style than the seal just described, this token is nevertheless very different in its composition from most of those listed under Register 2a, above. The shooting god lags behind his mount, who leaps enthusiastically at the legs of his quarry. Both monsters are again not truly differentiated by their tails; the pursued creature has a tail made up of two parallel lines, the pursuer of one curved line. The pursued creature leaps over a schematically drawn tree, which localizes this conflict in the wilderness. A five- (?) pointed star and crescent moon occupy the field above the combatants. The god wears the feathered headdress of the Babylonian type rather than the horned headdress found on nearly all other seals; cf. no. **2a.17**, above and n. 360 there.

What can be seen from these two brief descriptions is that not all precise elements of the “classical” style are carried over in all similar depictions. Most crucially, there is a breakdown between the stereotyped opposition of tail type that yielded the tense iconology described in the introduction to the present section. The narrative implied by these seals is therefore much more straightforward and much less nuanced. The god has a monster on his side, and he might reasonably be expected, on the basis of this testimony, to habitually kill, capture, or subdue monsters such as that which he presently pursues.

In sum, this seal type has a relatively broad distribution and attests to common iconographic representation of and therefore visual engagement with the motif of a god who has both subjugated a lion-griffin and is now pursuing and battling a second monster of a similar morphology. The next section surveys a motif of similar composition and with a similar chronological and geographical

range that adds further to our understanding of how ancient Near Eastern seal carvers represented divine combat on cylinder seals and how these would have been received by their consumers or audiences.

3.2.3 Theme 3: The Deity atop the Dragon

The cylinder seals discussed in the previous section clarify, after a fashion, why ancient Near Eastern art historians have long been comfortable describing a final group of cylinder seals as showing “one of the episodes in the Epic of Creation in which the forces of chaos led by Tiamat are defeated by a god representing cosmic order – generally Marduk” (Collon 1987: 178). These seals, of which just eleven are presently known, are nevertheless very famous and often republished due to that very textual correlation and the fact that it was privileged in the early days of ancient Near Eastern scholarship.³⁶⁶ Most will therefore be familiar with the image of a lightning-wielding god seeming to stride or run across the long back of an ophidian creature. On seals whose lower halves are preserved, this creature almost always (except no. 3a.11, the “Williams Cylinder”) has forelimbs that claw out at the available space and who might therefore be productively called a dragon.³⁶⁷ In fact, the entire compositional principle of this creature

³⁶⁶ Note, for example, the fact that no. 3a.11 was published as an illustration to Smith’s (1880) *Chaldaean Genesis*. The trend continues, with no. 3a.9 republished as an illustration to Heidel’s (1942) translation of *Enūma eliš* and both of these republished with virtually no comment in Ayali-Darshan’s (2016) recent study of the combat myth. In all such cases, the visual art is apparently intended to simply illustrate the text, and it is implied if not argued that the images on these seals are substantially those that the ancient audience would have envisioned in hearing the text. The layers of manufacture and reception that intervene in both textual and visual artistic production make the situation much more complex than this, and this should be more widely recognized.

³⁶⁷ Insofar as the anatomy of this figure aligns with that known for the δράκων of Greece (for which see the comprehensive monograph of Ogden 2013) and with what most English-speaking audiences imagine the term “dragon” to connote.

involves filling the space available on the cylinder seal. Unlike most other creature in ancient Mesopotamian glyptic, this long dragon reaches across multiple vertical fields. He pushes into the space of other figures and constitutes the very platform on which anthropomorphic figures—not only the god but also his adjuncts and/or worshippers—stand or move. By this compositional move, the dragon could be said to be transformed from a terrestrial creature into a cosmic actor, encompassing the visible world and both occupying and pushing to its margins. The fact that the anthropomorphic god can therefore contend with him is awe-inspiring and intriguing for the viewer.

The basic interpretation that these seals invoke divine combat is also supported by the singular depiction of outright antagonism on one seal showing this theme, no. **3a.11**, below. This seal has the striding deity hold a pointed weapon, presumably a knife of some sort,³⁶⁸ to the muzzle of the dragon, who looks back over its shoulder in direct challenge. This posture both enables and resists the antagonism of the deity. Such explicit dramatization of combat shows that at least some seal carvers and/or commissioners conceptualized the god-over-dragon scene as signifying this combat. Such occasional disambiguation also makes it less likely that any contemporary individual would have interpreted these images as signifying that “both horned snake and god are attacking an imaginary enemy together” (Klingbeil 1999: 251), i.e. that they are on the same team, as it were.³⁶⁹ The present seal group is a clear case in which analyzing in isolation just one or two tokens

³⁶⁸ The identification of the object in the god’s hand as a weapon occurs already in Ward’s (1898: 102) discussion, “a weapon like a spear, or, rather, a sword with a curved handle that is thrust into the serpent’s mouth.”

³⁶⁹ Cf. also Van Buren 1946: 42, “The subject is obscure, for in spite of his threatening attitude the god does not seem to wish to attack the dragon, but rather to use its sinuous body as a viaduct to facilitate his rapid course.” For her immediately succeeding observation that the Pierpont Morgan Library seal published by Porada (1948: no. 688), listed as no. **3a.11**, below, involves seizure of the dragon’s tongue rather than attack with a weapon, compare the illustration and note that *both* the dragon’s tongue and a weapon in the hand of the god are visible. This weapon does not actually contact the dragon’s snout.

of a delineable compositional group renders interpretation of a motif more difficult and less likely to conform to what ancient audiences would have deduced when they viewed these visual art products.

There is some possibility that the dragon, like the horned snake and lion-griffin combatted in the other themes, was a creature of the wilderness, but this determination is dependent only on an uncertain interpretation of the branched shafts that intersect the dragon's tail on nos. **3a.4**, **3a.5** (one shaft?), and **3a.11** as vegetation. I find this interpretation plausible but not exclusively so; for more details, see the description to **3a.11** and n. 379, below.

Register 3a: The "Classical" Neo-Assyrian Type

Known Findspots

(3a.1) Aššur (Ass.7084). VA 5188. Limestone, 2.8 x 1.3 cm.

- Moortgat 1940: 146 (no. 680), pl. 80 (photo); Uehlinger 1995: 74–75, 94 fig. 27 (drawing); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 78–79 (no. 221), pl. 44 (photo).

A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand and a throwing stick or similar weapon in his left hand. There is a rhomb underneath the god's outstretched right arm and a stylus on the dragon's back. Several other objects, most of which cannot be made out with any clarity, fill the surrounding field. The dragon has horns but does not appear to have limbs.

(3a.2) Aššur (Ass.9384). VA 7828. Soapstone, 2.3 x 1.5 cm (broken slightly below).³⁷⁰

• Moortgat 1940: 146 (no. 681), pl. 80 (photo); K. Watanabe 1999: 341 (no. 9.2.2); Klengel-Brandt 2014: 78–79 (no. 220), pl. 44 (photo).

A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand, as on no. **3a.1**, above. Additional bolts seem to emerge leftward from between his knuckles. The god's left hand is empty. A seven-pointed star (behind the god's left hand) and a crescent moon (above the dragon's head) fill the field. The dragon has forward-facing horns and a prominent, trident-forked tongue. One of this creature's forelimbs appears to be visible just above the breakage of the seal.

(3a.3) Carchemish. BM 116142. Serpentine, 1.8 x 1.4 cm (broken below).

• Collon 2001: 150 (no. 286), pl. 24 (photo).

A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand, as on the two preceding items. His left hand is empty, as on no. **3a.2**, above. An eight-pointed star and a crescent moon have the same position as the star and moon on no. **3a.2**; they are joined by five drilled holes, perhaps a partial representation of the Pleiades, to the immediate left of the seven-

³⁷⁰ Notably, several of these seals—nos. **3a.1**, **3a.2**, etc.—are broken and only their upper half survives. Collon (2001: 149) observes this phenomenon and suggests two possible causes: (1.) the seals “may have been broken as part of a ritual,” but she seems to think this is less likely; (2.) “they might have belonged to men, such as charioteers, with an active lifestyle which led to breakage. [...] since Ninurta was revered for his warlike nature [...] many of the seal-owners may have been soldiers.” I find this a cogent explanation, but it is also worth noting that Collon (2001: 149) seems to represent breakage of seals of the present type as a more inclusive phenomenon than it actually is. Several of the items she cites as broken (e.g. “a seal from Tell Halaf,” no. **3a.4**, below) are not actually broken.

pointed star and above the break. The head of the dragon, horned, is visible just above the breakage of the seal. The upper margin of the seal is hatched, and the lower margin may have been as well (see no. **3a.4**, below).

(3a.4) Tell Ḥalaf. Formerly Tell Ḥalaf Museum, Berlin.³⁷¹ Unknown or unspecified material,³⁷² 3.7 cm. x unspecified width.

• Hrouda 1962: 34 (no. 10), pl. 23 (photo); Keel 1992: 217 (no. 243), 254 (drawing).

This is the only seal of the group in which both the striding god and the dragon face right rather than left. This peculiarity of manufacture might suggest a different locus—perhaps a provincial locus given the findspot at Tell Ḥalaf—for manufacture. The god carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched hand, as on the three preceding items. His other hand grasps an unidentified object, perhaps a throwing stick as in no. **3a.1**, above. An eight-pointed star appears above the dragon’s head, and two feathered or branched shafts—as on nos. **3a.5** (one shaft?) and **3a.11**, below—emerge from his tail; for the interpretation of these items, see the entry to **3a.11**. The dragon has forward-pointing horns and two forelimbs. The margins of the seal are hatched, as is true for the upper margin on no. **3a.3**, above.

³⁷¹ Keel (1992: 217 n. 498) notes explicitly that the piece “ist verloren” (similarly Schroer 2018: 610).

³⁷² Hrouda (1962: 34) specifies “unbekannt.” Keel (1992: 217 n. 498) elaborates that the material was never documented, but that it is likely to have been serpentine due to the material of known finds. This, however, simplifies the material situation significantly, since several of the seals registered in the present section are made not of serpentine but of chalcedony, steatite, or other materials.

Unknown Findspots

(3a.5) Unknown findspot (purchased 1972). Adana Museum no. 890. Steatite, 2.5 x 1.1 cm (slightly broken below).

• Tünca 1979: pl. 8 (photo), 20 (no. 77); K. Watanabe 1999: 341 (no. 9.2.1).

A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand, as on most of the items in the present register. He may hold an additional weapon in his left hand (compare esp. no. **3a.9**, below). From left to right, a rhomb, the Pleiades, and an eight-pointed star fill the available spaces. The dragon tilts his chin upward and has two clear horns. His forelimbs are relatively slack by comparison with other tokens. As on nos. **3a.4** and **3a.11**, at least one branched shaft emerges near the dragon's tail; see the entry to no. **3a.11** for the interpretation of this item.

(3a.6) Unknown findspot. Former V. E. Bailey Collection no. 98(?).³⁷³ Steatite, 3.8 x 1.4 cm.

• Glock and Bull 1987: no. 98 (photo; unnumbered page); Klingbeil 1999: 250 and fig. 81 (drawing).

A deity with lightning forked above and below—somewhat more elongated, rounded, and schematic than on no. **3a.1**, above; similar to **3a.9**, below—stands

³⁷³ It is unclear if the numbers used in the catalogue Glock and Bull 1987 correspond to a numbering system used in the Bailey collection itself. This catalogue was executed during a period of loan to the New Jersey Museum of Archaeology, and descriptions in the volume were executed by Nancy W. Leinwand and several students (Glock and Bull 1987, "Preface" [unnumbered page]). Bailey collected her seals in Iran and possibly other countries in the Middle East during the 1970s (*ibid.*). Based on the auction catalogue Boisgirard and Kevorkian 1992, these seals were sold through Drouot (Paris) in December 1992.

atop a dragon. Lines (lightning or fire) emerge from the dragon's mouth, and he has two front limbs and a clear horn. A tiny kneeling worshipper faces the back of the god. A second, female worshipper stands on the back of the dragon's tail (as on nos. **3a.7**, **3a.9**, and **3a.11**) and faces backwards (as on nos. **3a.7** and **3a.9**). She holds a disc (a drum or other percussive instrument?) as on no. **3a.11**. The overall composition of the human figures is very similar to no. **3a.11**. A rhomb fills the field below the dragon's head, and the Pleiades and a crescent moon the field above the human figures.

(3a.7) Unknown findspot. BIF (Fribourg) VR 1981.126. Chalcedony, 2.2 x 1.7 cm.

Keel and Uehlinger 1990: 43 and fig. 46 (photo); Keel 1992: 217 (no. 246), 254 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 325 (no. 1.1.7), 355 fig. 14 (photo); Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 147 (no. 153), 404 (drawing), 437 (photo).

Uniquely of the seals considered in the present section, this item has been filed rather than cut and drilled (Collon 2001: 150).³⁷⁴ A god strides atop a dragon and holds lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his right hand, as on most of the preceding items, and what appears to be a throwing stick in his left hand (as on no. **3a.1**, above). An awkwardly angled crescent moon³⁷⁵ is cut immediately to the right of this weapon, and a rhomb occupies the space in front of the dragon's

³⁷⁴ This technique is described very briefly and illustrated by Collon 1987: 80–81, 102.

³⁷⁵ By comparison with the occurrence of a crescent moon in precisely this position on nearly all of the other seals considered here, this item is certainly not a bird, as suggested hesitantly by Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 147, “ein undefinierbares Gebilde (Vogel?).”

two fore-limbs. A second humanoid figure stands³⁷⁶ on the back of the dragon's tail and faces left, so that when the cylinder seal is rolled in certain ways, they appear to be facing the striding god. This figure is perhaps a woman, as is somewhat clearer from her dress and absence of beard on the other tokens on which such a left-facing figure occurs (no. **3a.6**, above and no. **3a.9**, below).

(3a.8) Unknown findspot (former Marcopoli Collection). BIF (Fribourg) VR 1993.6. Chalcedony, 3.2 x 1.5 cm.

• Teissier 1984: 168–69 (no. 224; photo); Klingbeil 1999: 250–51 and fig. 82 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 325 (no. 9.2.3); • Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 179 (no. 179), 405 (drawing), 441 (photo).

A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand. His left hand appears to hold a throwing stick or something similar. An eight-pointed star and a crescent moon have the same position as the star and moon on nos. **3a.2** and **3a.3**; they are joined by several wedges and a rhomb in the field. The head of the dragon is horned, and his fearsome clawed hand occupies substantial space underneath this space.

(3a.9) Unknown findspot. BM WA 89589. Serpentine, 3.4 x 1.8 cm.

*Selected*³⁷⁷: King 1899: 102 (photograph); Ward 1910: 201 (no. 579; drawing); Jastrow 1912: pl. 52 (no. 199; drawing); Jeremias 1913: 273–74 and fig. 174 (photo); Heidel 1942: fig. 8 (photo);

³⁷⁶ Keel-Leu et al. (2004: 147) suggests that this figure kneels, but I cannot tell that the lines cut behind the torso are in fact intended to be bent legs. One the other seals of this motif showing a backwards facing figure (nos. **3a.6** and **3a.9**), this figure is somewhat smaller than the main god, so that relative size is no help in determining posture.

³⁷⁷ The present seal is depicted very frequently. The present bibliography is representative rather than exhaustive and focuses on places in which the seal is discussed substantively or correlated with particular texts.

Fontenrose 1959: fig. 18 (photo, after p. 148); Collon 1987: 180–81 (no. 850; photo); Keel 1992: 217 (no. 244), 254 (drawing); Uehlinger 1995: 74–75, 94 fig. 26 (drawing); K. Watanabe 1999: 325 (no. 1.1.6), 355 fig. 13 (photo); • Collon 2001: 149–50 (no. 285), pl. 24, 35 (both photos); Ornan 2005: 106–7 (no. 143), 264 (drawing); Ayali-Darshan 2016: 294 fig. 11[a] (drawing); Korpel and de Moor 2017: 10 and fig. 1.7 (photo); Schroer 2018: 610–11 (no. 1639; drawing).

This is the most commonly reproduced seal of the present type. A god strides atop a dragon. He carries lightning, trident-forked above and below, in his outstretched right hand, and his left hand uniquely appears to hold two additional weapons. He is joined on the dragon by not one but two full-size anthropomorphic figures, one of whom holds a large mace or scepter with two hands and the other of whom is female and faces backwards (as on nos. **3a.6** and **3a.7**). The dragon's horns curled back like those of a goat, and he has two clearly articulated forelimbs. An eight-pointed star occupies the field between the two subsidiary anthropomorphic figures.

(3a.10) Unknown findspot (purchased from H. E. Rauibach, 1909). BM WA 103018. Serpentine, 2.4 x 1.4 cm (broken below).

• Collon 2001: 150 (no. 287), pl. 24 (photo).

This partially broken and not very well-known seal is executed in a much less detailed fashion than other seals of this theme and shows several compositional peculiarities. Uniquely, the god's left hand is lowered, and he holds a long weapon in it. The trident-forked lightning in his right hand is rather small. He appears, on the whole, less active than in most other tokens of this theme. The dragon, by contrast, appears to have a wide-open mouth and, uniquely, raises one of his arms

back behind his neck. He has caprid horns as on no. **3a.9**, above. An eight-pointed star, rhomb, and—again uniquely—a winged sun-disc occupy the sky field.

(3a.11) Unknown findspot (former Samuel Wells Williams, later Frederick Wells Williams [New Haven] Collection, the “Williams Cylinder”).³⁷⁸ Pierpont Morgan Library (PML), Morgan Seal 688. Serpentine, 1.7 x 1.1 cm.

G. Smith 1880: 90 (drawing); Ward 1881: 224 fig. 2 (drawing); 1890: 291 (no. 2), pl. 18 (photo); 1898: 102 and fig. 14 (drawing); 1909: 76 (no. 156), pl. 22 (photo); 1910: 201 (no. 578; drawing); Jastrow 1912: pl. 52 (no. 198; drawing); • Porada 1948: 83 (no. 688), pl. 101 (photo); Bisi 1964–65: 26, 35 fig. 7 (drawing); Amiet 1965: 244–45 and fig. 5 (drawing); Keel 1992: 217 (no. 245), 254 (drawing); Ornan 2005: 106–7 (no. 142), 264 (drawing); Ayali-Darshan 2016: 294 fig. 11[b] (drawing).

The composition of the human figures is very similar to that of no. 3a.6, above, with the difference that the female figure carrying a disc faces forward. There are otherwise several notable features of this long-known seal. The dragon, uniquely, faces backwards and confronts the god, who is thrusting a knife or other pointed object towards his snout. This makes explicit the confrontation only hinted

³⁷⁸ Samuel Well(e)s Williams (1812–84) was a missionary and Sinologist, the first professor of Chinese at Yale University and, notably for present purposes, another son of William Williams (1787–1850) and older brother of William Frederic(k) Williams (1818–71) and Robert Stanton Williams (1828–99; see n. 362). Frederick Wells Williams (1857–1928) is Samuel Wells’s son, also a Sinologist at Yale. As should be expected but perhaps contributing to later confusion as to the seal’s ownership, Ward originally attributes the cylinder seal collection to Samuel Williams (“Hon. S. Wells Williams”; Ward 1881: 224) and, after the father’s death, to “F. Wells Williams” (Ward 1898: 102). Even later, Ward (1910: 201) explains that Samuel Wells received the seal from his younger brother, William Frederick, when William Frederick learned that Samuel had named his son after William Frederick (thus Frederick Wells). William Frederick had apparently purchased this seal during his travels in the Near East (see n. 362), reportedly “from an Arab, who had just come over the river from Layard’s diggings near Mosul [i.e. at Nineveh] in 1857” (Ward 1910: 201). Frederick Wells later gave the seal to Ward, who gave it to the Metropolitan Museum, where it became part of the Pierpont Morgan collection (*ibid.*).

at in all of the other seals and is a key to understanding the implied dynamics of the theme as a whole. Furthermore, two branched or feathered shafts can be seen underneath the third figure and towards the end of the dragon's tail. These have been variously interpreted, most often as vegetal³⁷⁹; one wonders if they might instead be arrows, but they do appear to emerge from the lower margin of the seal (the ground?) rather than the back of the snake on this particular seal. It does not appear to have been previously noted that one of the seals listed in Register 1a., above, namely no. 1a.38 (BLMJ 445b), has a very similar item just to the right of the snake. This does not help decide the question of whether the item is vegetation or weaponry. The archer on that seal is armed with an appropriately sized bow that might have loosed such an arrow, but the association of all of these monsters with wilderness areas has already been stressed throughout.

Finally, there is an additional provenanced seal that does not fit neatly into either the present section or those seals considered under Register 1. This item is described immediately below.

³⁷⁹ The only detailed description of these items seems to be Keel's (1992: 217), where he writes that these are "Ährenbaumchen"; I have found neither this word nor "Ährenbaum" to be in common German use, but Keel appears to intend a sort of grain-tree. He goes on to explicate these as fertility threatened by the snake ("das von der Schlange bedrohte Gut, dei fruchtbare Erde"). This interpretation is hard to dispute but does not seem to be necessitated by the iconography. Ward (1881: 224) attempted to forestall any fanciful interpretation by saying that these were merely "two smaller branches, which it would be hazardous to regard as representing the two trees of the garden of Eden." Later he writes only that these are "two small trees" (Ward 1910: 201). Ward's other publications (idem 1909: 76; 1898: 103; 1890: 291) do not have any comment on these items. Porada (1948: 83) calls these a "plant growing through serpent's tail," but does not elaborate on what the iconological significance of this would be.

Register 3b: Seals of a Similar Type to (3a.)

(3b.1) Tell al-Rimah (TR.4423). UCL Institute of Archaeology. Serpentine or steatite, 1.8 x 0.8 cm.

• B. Parker 1975: 38 (no. 55), pl. 16 (photo); Uehlinger 1995: 75, 95 fig. 28 (drawing); Klingbeil 1999: 251–52 and fig. 83 (drawing).

The present seal is considered to be of a slightly different type than those described above only because the main warrior god stands behind the dragon rather than on top of him. Additionally, there is a pointing worshipper before the scene, an element that was much more common in seals described in Section 3.2.2, above, rather than in the present section. Otherwise, the theme is very similar to that in the seals described in the preceding register. The god holds lightning that is trident-forked (albeit only above, rather than both above and below), there is an eight-pointed star in the field above the dragon, and the anatomy of the dragon himself is very similar, down to his forelimbs, snout, horns, and ribbing. The seal has the overall appearance of an approximation or adaptation of the seals considered above. Given its findspot at Tell al-Rimah, it is unlikely to be a provincial product but rather constitutes a geographically and chronologically proximate variation on the main theme.

The present chapter has focused on three cylinder-seal iconographic themes known primarily or exclusively from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. in order to establish that iconography of divine combat in miniature art was both very common and highly complex. As was discussed in Section 3.1, this miniature art was produced at and available throughout

Mesopotamia and upper Syria, with occasional extension to the southern Levant and beyond. Cylinder seals were also available, through the use of differentiated materials and carving techniques, to several levels of society, so that the basic medium was not restricted to a given social class or group. Although most if not all of the seals discussed in Subsections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 are probably best understood as luxury products, this is certainly not the case for the seals of Theme 1 (Subsection 3.2.1). Shoppers at each price point, as it were, could access cylinder seals depicting divine combat and appropriate it to signify their own cultural competence or theological and/or political beliefs.

The ways in which these beliefs were rendered iconographically have proven to be surprisingly complex. The dominance of the divine over difference and peripheries is suggested not only by the theriomorphic and hybrid—i.e. monstrous—anatomies of his antagonists but also by the forested and mountainous environments with which these figures were associated. The impressiveness of the conquest is signified by the large size of these creatures, which usually approaches or—especially in the case of Theme 3—even surpasses the size of the god himself. Although the moment of conquest is never depicted, artists conceived of several ways in which the outcome could be iconologically predicted. The most notable of these is that attested throughout Theme 2, i.e. the fact that the god is provided with a monstrous mount mirroring in most significant ways the creature he presently pursues.

Even as ancient Near Eastern individuals were encountering miniature iconography on seals that were worn, used daily, and impressed on common goods, they were also encountering images of divine combat in other media. One notable subset of these are monumental representations such as were certainly visible, given the archaeological record, or were described to have been visible, in texts, especially royal building and other inscriptions. The next chapter

considers those representations such as they are known from Mesopotamia. These stand at the other extreme of size but were likely just as significant as were cylinder seals in reinforcing divine combat imagery as a normative discourse of power.

Chapter 4

The Petrified Foe:

The Monstrous in Mesopotamian Monumental Representations

Revenons à la façade de Notre-Dame, telle qu'elle nous apparaît encore à présent, quand nous allons pieusement admirer la grave et puissante cathédrale, qui terrifie, au dire de ses chroniqueurs: *quæ mole sua terrorem incutit spectantibus* [...] Cette église centrale et génératrice est parmi les vieilles églises de Paris une sorte de chimère; elle a la tête de l'une, les membres de celle-là, la croupe de l'autre; quelque chose de toutes. (Hugo 1832: 126, 132)

From a distance the two rows of gargoyles on two levels of the nave chapels appear uniform [...], and indeed part of their uncanny effect is this serene ordering of animality into obedient ranks of regimented monstrosity. (Camille 2009: 12, 14).

Many are surprised to learn that when Victor Hugo describes the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris as a monstrous “sorte de chimère,” incorporating various elements from disparate architectural styles, the addition of the building’s own most famous monsters—the fifty-four

chimeras³⁸⁰ lining the balustrade of its great façade—was still over a decade in the future.³⁸¹ Hugo’s 1832 novel anticipated by eleven years the 1843 restoration proposal of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus and by thirty-two years Viollet-le-Duc’s solo completion of the project.³⁸² It is difficult to know how much Viollet-le-Duc was himself inspired by the above and similar passages from *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Camille 2009: 71–72). But chimeras and gargoyles had by the 19th century long been elements of Europe’s monumental sacred places, to the extent that Viollet-le-Duc’s project was often understood as a medievalizing restoration. In light of this general tendency, Hugo’s hybrid cathedral, and Camille’s ranks of regimented gargoyles, one finds oneself noticing that the monumental and the monstrous find themselves associated throughout numerous contexts and configurations, and one begins to look for explanations as to this seeming coincidence.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Typical art-historical usage employs “chimera” for non-functional sculptural elements evoking hybrid creatures (monsters) and/or for animals and other grotesques, especially so far as these are associated with items of the former category. Gargoyles are specifically those sculptural elements that serve as spouts to convey runoff from gutters; these are often also sculpted as monsters, grotesques, etc., but in some usage need not be so.

³⁸¹ Since 1996, one can attribute this misconception at least in part to the Walt Disney film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, in which Quasimodo is great friends with three animate chimeras, called “gargoyles” throughout. Their names are Victor, Hugo, and Laverne. The first two are, of course, named after the author of the novel. It appears that director Kirk Wise named the third after LaVerne Andrews of the Andrews Sisters, the 1940s swing and boogie-woogie group (Hill 2004). Already much earlier than 1996, though, it was common to illustrate editions of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and its translations with Viollet-le-Duc’s chimeras; for some examples—as early as 1877—and discussion, see Camille 2009: 72–81.

³⁸² An exhaustive study of the chimeras—their conception, context, significance, and reception—was undertaken by Camille (2009), who, however, did not live to see his volume published. As noted by the editors, the author’s death in 2002 “left a number of bibliographic questions unanswered”; with this minor caveat, this study is an incredible resource with excellent photographs and other illustrations. Other resources I have found useful for understanding Viollet-le-Duc’s sculpture and particularly the chimeras include Michon 2000 and Leniaud 1997, the latter on the architect’s work at Saint-Denis in 1846–51.

³⁸³ Basic summaries of this phenomenon or related ones include Fudgé 2016: 89–117; Dale 2006; Dinzlacher 1999; Kanaan-Kedar 1995 (general, on medieval French marginal sculpture, including gargoyles, with

Given the vast literary output of the Middle Ages and this period's relative proximity to the present day, one might hope for both greater preservation of explanatory material and comprehensibility for the modern reader than in the case of the ancient Near East. Any insights derived from this complex could not, of course, be simply imported to explain much more ancient and geographically distant data, but it can often be helpful to have frameworks in mind. Camille, for example, offers a few hypotheses as to the logic behind the motif, e.g. that "in the Middle Ages gargoyles had been signs of the spiritual control and subjugation of demonic forces" (2009: 17) and that they were "invented to express the control and subjugation of evil in the working of God's overall plan" (ibid.: 94).³⁸⁴ In a more recent and somewhat more systematic discussion, Fudgé (2016: 108) also alludes to the hypothesis that "the gargoyle had been consigned to the exterior of churches, to perform menial labour as water spouts." But both explanations lean heavily on just a few 19th-century sources, such as the *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme religieux* of Auber (1870–72: III.376–77):

Tel [the chimera etc.] vous le verrez au tour extérieur des églises, soutenant, courbé et accablé de fatigue, le poids des colonnés qu'il voudrait vainement ébranler; d'autres, obligés à faire l'office de gargouilles, rejettent au loin sur le pavé

numerous images and helpful catalogues). A number of somewhat frequently cited works in this field are actually books of images with minimal commentary, e.g. Sheridan and Ross 1975 and Bridaham 1930.

³⁸⁴ In both places, Camille is contrasting these expressions with what was allegedly intended by Viollet-le-Duc by his own sculpture, e.g. "in Viollet-le-Duc's system they become signs that stave off decay, elements of salvation, not for the soul but for the building's body. They are in this sense inbuilt elements of restoration, preserving and protecting the structure" (Camille 2009: 17). This seems to me rather a leap from Viollet-le-Duc's (1868) rather minimalist published description of his own and other gargoyles in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture*, but Camille has seized on the architect's assertion that the Notre-Dame gargoyles are uniquely beautiful and sculptural even as they divert erosive water from the structure.

de la place, comme d’horribles chiens *revenus à leurs vomissements*, les eaux pluviales qui nuiraient à la maison de Dieu.

This and other sources like it rarely cite medieval predecessors and thus only reliably reflect academic or popular understandings broadly contemporary with Viollet-le-Duc.

Things only become more complicated as one attempts to find explanatory material from the periods of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture (ca. 10th–16th CC. C.E.), in which chimeras and gargoyles are most popular.³⁸⁵ Often with reference Bernard of Clairvaux’s (1090–1153 C.E.) fanciful meditations in his *Apologia*, art historians have argued that petrified monsters represent popular belief over against official dogma or that they are simply frivolous fantasies.³⁸⁶ Against these hypotheses, Dinzelbacher (1999: 119) cites a ca. 1500 B.C.E. German charm book that casts gargoyles as apotropaic and goes on to suggest that this was generally understood to be their function. Other authors have pointed instead to the negative theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (5th–6th CC. C.E.) to claim that “hybrid monsters reveal the unknowable God by showing that which He is not” (thus Dale 2006: 261, summarizing Williams 1996). Finally, there are those who bypass Late Antique and medieval theologians entirely and suggest psychoanalytic explanations for the monstrous presences. Chimeras represent, according to Schapiro (1977:10) “projected emotions [...] of force, play, aggressiveness, anxiety, self-torment and fear.” If the goal is to describe how viewers represented their responses to chimeras and similar iconography, then

³⁸⁵ For the present paragraph, I have relied in large part on the recent discussions of Fudgé 2016: 89–117, Dale 2006, and Dinzelbacher 1999. Additional bibliography can be found in all of these studies.

³⁸⁶ For the marginal sculptures as expressions of popular religion, see throughout Kenaan-Kedar 1995; Dale (2006: 263–65) summarizes similar approaches and notes the theoretical reliance of many of these on Bakhtin’s (1968) articulation of the role of the grotesque. Summaries of this line of thinking with reference to Bernard of Clairvaux may be found in Fudgé 2016: 97–102 and Dale 2006: 253–58.

at least the first three approaches have hit the mark. If the goal is to go beyond the always tendentious rationalizations, one finds the game of asserting meaning difficult to adjudicate.

The present chapter explores monumental monstrous representations of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires as possible participants in combat myth discourse, much as Chapter 3 has focused on cylinder seal representations of divine combat and as Chapter 5 will focus on Hebrew Bible participation in this discursive complex. This is not the place to trace the fully history of medieval chimeras, and the foregoing discussion by no means exhausts the interpretative options suggested by art historians and medievalists.³⁸⁷ What has preceded merely serves to introduce two overarching principles. First, the representation of the monstrous in architecture and sculpture is a widespread phenomenon. It is not limited to the ancient Near East, and any truly productive conversations regarding its historical import are likely to take place on an interdisciplinary level. Second, determining the valence of these representations is never straightforward and is complicated both with and without contemporary rationalizing descriptions. No one of these descriptions certainly reflects consensus popular opinion, nor do they always represent the intent of those who commissioned or created chimera statues. It is best, then, to take all explanations together to represent a diversity of emic witnesses. One should be transparent when one privileges certain lines of thought over others for heuristic purposes, i.e. with the goal of exploring possible connections rather than claiming exclusive significance.

All this and more is true for the situation in Mesopotamia and the Levant, where one finds a number of architectural representations of monstrous entities that plausibly draw their power from their implication of conflict and, more importantly, control over this conflict by the ruling

³⁸⁷ For some references, see nn. 384–86, above. As just one example of an additional understanding, Heslop (2001) has suggested that the oldest chimeras had a basically positive valence, since they constituted a means by which artists could approach (without superseding!) God’s creative impulse.

deity or king. I argue below that it is possible to understand this control as exemplified chiefly by the static presentation of these monstrous figures. Their positions and structural incorporation convey their subordination to dominant powers. In addition to visual representations that have been excavated and that are therefore known to have existed as truly architectural for the ancient observer, there exist plenty of textual materials that describe analogous representations. These categories of evidence are best considered together, since archaeological remains are generally more revealing of figures' morphology and sheer size, whereas textual descriptions are generally more explicit about a representation's context and motivations. As for the gargoyles, it seems clear that combat association was not the only or even the dominant valence of all of the representations that will be considered in the present chapter. But especially the tendency in later Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian monumental art towards coherent iconographic programs suggests that it was *a* meaning intended and understood in various ancient contexts.

The present chapter begins by reviewing aspects and effects of “monumentality,” especially as this term has been defined in archaeology and history of the ancient Near East (Section 4.1). Several lines of thought from modern architectural theory and the study of other monumentalities, both ancient and modern, are incorporated throughout. The second longer section (Section 4.2) reviews in four parts monumental monstrosities from Mesopotamia, mostly first millennium Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian contexts, namely (Subsection 4.2.1) the *nāḥiru* and *burṭiš* in late second millennium and early first millennium sources; (Subsection 4.2.2) the *aladlammû* statues; (Subsection 4.2.3) relief representations of Tiamat's brood, including its individual constituents; and (Subsection 4.2.4) the *mušḫuššu* dragon in Neo-Babylonian monumental iconography and text. The succeeding and final chapter turns to the Levant and putative allusions to monumental monstrous antagonist representation in the Hebrew Bible.

4.1 Theorizing the Monumental

Both architectural and fixtural elements have long been called “monuments” and “monumental” by archaeologists, textual scholars, and others engaged in studying the culture and iconography of Mesopotamia and the Levant. Scholars in this field and others have increasingly theorized about what the monumental is and does. Studies that focus on Mesopotamia are relatively numerous,³⁸⁸ in large part because this geographic area has yielded a surfeit of architectural remains that are large, permanent, and significant. All of these are claimed to be features of monumentality, as will be explored in more depth below. In recent years, Anatolia and the northern Levant have been incorporated more frequently into such studies, again because there survive from these regions at least sporadic physical remains of temples, palaces, statuary, and other features one might reasonably call “monumental.”³⁸⁹ It has, however, seemed more difficult to investigate the southern Levant along similar lines; the reasons for this will be explored in Chapter 5.

³⁸⁸ Pollock 1999: 174–85 is a concise introduction to the concept of monumentality in the Mesopotamian context, with particular focus on the Early Dynastic period. Pollock (*ibid.*) engages much of the theoretical literature then available but found minimal studies of monumentality as such in Assyriology itself; at the risk of oversimplifying, Mesopotamian archaeologists tended to publish reports on large buildings and to speculate on their practical functions but spent less time on the ideological implications peculiar to monumental structures (but cf. e.g. Childe 1950 and in n. 389). One nevertheless finds a few exceptions in, for example, the proceedings of the famous “City Invincible” symposium on early Mesopotamian urbanization held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on December 4–7, 1958, e.g. “During the succeeding Early Dynastic period, however, city walls and palaces also became prominent features; both were intimately associated with the rise of new patterns of dynastic authority. Beyond these limited observations it is difficult to generalize with any confidence” (R. M. Adams 1960: 33) This gap has since been closed by a number of more recent publications. Two edited volumes, Osborne 2014a and Bretschneider, Dreissen, and van Lerberghe 2007, are worth highlighting; both include substantial bibliography throughout. Additional relevant items are the dissertation of Yan 2015 and throughout Kertai 2015a.

³⁸⁹ Gilibert’s (2011) monograph on Syro-Hittite stone reliefs at Carchemish and Zincirli is recent and full of useful bibliography (see esp. *ibid.*: 1 n. 3). The general article of Harmanşah 2011 is a useful overview of Anatolian monumentality. Osborne 2017a offers comparisons with Assyrian monumentality. For Syro-Hittite and Aramaean statuary in particular, see Osborne 2017b: 173–87. Other recent contributions treating this region include Liverani

The primary concern of the present section, though, is to provide a brief overview of scholarship on monumentality so that concepts arising therefrom can be profitably engaged in the study of particular Mesopotamian and Levantine manifestations in Section 4.2 and Chapter 5, respectively. Some scholars have thought that the definition of “monument” is relatively straightforward. For example, in the editorial to a volume of *The Harvard Architecture Review* focused on “Monumentality and the City,” the authors plan to “use the word *monument* to mean ‘significant building or space’” (1984: 9).³⁹⁰ This, of course, only pushes the discussion back on the term “significant.” If by this word one intends something like having meaning, importance, and/or consequence, most buildings and spaces are significant for someone. In fact, public significance is often what one is after in pursuing monumentality.³⁹¹ Those items one calls monuments are usually those that had or have significance for large numbers of individuals, e.g.

2012—Arslantepe as maintaining monumentality through Hittite and Neo-Hittite levels—and Glatz and Plourde 2011—LB Anatolian stone monuments as moderating territorial contests. The discovery and publication of the KTMW stela from Zincirli (ed. Pardee 2009) led to a spate of reflections on the Iron Age Levantine use of inscribed monuments to commemorate the dead, e.g. Suriano 2018a: esp. 163–70; 2018b: 188–91; 2014, all with bibliography. Substantial differences in the context and likely aims of these monuments have resulted in most such reflections being less useful for understanding the cases examined below.

³⁹⁰ Neither the editorial nor the volume (*The Harvard Architecture Review* 4 [Spring 1984]) as a whole are attributed to any particular editor (numerous articles, some cited below, are attributed). The copyright page lists Jeffrey Horowitz, Michael Lauber, Couper Gardiner, and John Buchanan as President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Legal Counsel—respectively—for the *Review* at the time of publication. A much more extensive history of the term “monumentality” is undertaken by Thomas (2007: 2–3).

³⁹¹ This public nature is noted by, e.g., Osborne (2014: 4), “A monument, then, should be considered an object, or suite of objects, that possesses an agreed-upon special meaning to a *community of people*” (my emphasis), and also by most of the studies cited in the following notes. An early comment in general agreement is Reilly 1912: 11–12 (see also Moore 2005: 13–22, with particular focus on space and social sound; Collins and Collins 1984: 19–22). There is an intimation of all this in Lefebvre’s (1974: 256–57) aphorism, “Le bâtiment a le même rapport au monumental que la quotidienneté à la fête”; of course, the second elements of each pair have many features in common (e.g. irregular occurrence), but one such feature is their public nature. Festivals and monuments happen in the open. The public view is also suggested by Lefebvre’s general conception of all spaces as produced socially.

the majority of the inhabitants of the city, nation, or—increasingly, in the modern context—the world at large. Once one has realized this, one can interrogate what factors tend to make buildings and spaces publicly significant in their contexts and move from here.

A building that is publicly significant needs to be public in some way. This does not necessarily mean that all or some of its elements are accessible in the sense that one can walk inside uninhibited or even after undergoing a security check. Indeed, authorities have often restricted access to monumental buildings. This is an important consideration in connection with both temples and royal palaces and will be engaged in greater detail below.³⁹² But a building or other object that is monumental must at least be accessible through visibility; this can be

³⁹² The most extensive overview of Neo-Assyrian palace relief audiences is Russell 1991: 223–40, wherein twelve audiences are identified from study of artistic depictions and administrative texts: (1.) the king; (2.) the royal family; (3.) courtiers; (4.) servants; (5.) foreign employees; (6.) foreign prisoners; (7.) future kings; (8.) gods (imagined, naturally); (9.–12.) (invited common) Assyrians, provincials, subject foreigners, and independent foreigners. The precise bounds and size of groups (9.–12.) are difficult to determine from the sources mentioned. Aster (2007) has noted that the inclusion of provincials and foreigners in these audiences opens the possibility of both iconographic and textual ideologies having traveled to such distant areas as Israel and Judah. A recent overview of access to the Neo-Assyrian palaces is Kertai 2015a: 5–7, who stresses that one should not reconstruct an atemporal “Oriental” seclusion on the basis of much later practices, especially those of Ottoman courts. He instead focuses on the distinction between *bābānu* “outside” and *bētānu* “inside” occasionally made with regard to areas of the palace in Neo-Assyrian textual sources, but ultimately concludes (so also idem 2013) that these do *not* reflect the public/private distinction they are sometimes hypothesized to demarcate. The general conclusion is still, though, that “[i]t can hardly be disputed that Assyrian palaces were inaccessible to the majority of Assyrians” (Kertai 2015a: 5).

For similar comments on the inaccessibility of Chinese temples, see Wu 1995: 85–88. Formal “access analysis” has a methodology and, naturally, relevant publications; Osborne 2012: 45–47, Osborne and Summers 2014: 297, and Fisher 2014b: 169–70 are accessible overviews with bibliography. Moore (1996: 188–219) applies the method at some length to an understanding of ancient Andean temples and the social control implied by these. In the Mesopotamian context, Pollock (1999: 178) summarizes the potential for contrast between accessibility and visibility explicitly: “The very largest constructions, especially the towering ziggurats, were visible many kilometers away. The internal portions of monumental buildings are, however, another matter.”

understood as a first morphological feature of the monument.³⁹³ Many of the inhabitants of both Levantine and Mesopotamian states likely never saw the interiors of large palace and/or temple complexes (see n. 392), but their exteriors would have been broadly visible. Various further morphological features thus visibly accessible would then have contributed to the effects of monumentality. These further features can include (1.) size, i.e. large buildings and spaces tend to acquire monumental character by virtue of their physical dominance³⁹⁴; (2.) material use, e.g. the incorporation of raw materials not generally employed can contribute to the impression that a building is somehow special³⁹⁵; and (3.) permanency, i.e. by the incorporation of certain

³⁹³ Formal approaches to visibility analysis include methodologies derived from space syntax, such as proxemics (Fisher 2014b: 170–72) and visibility graph analysis (Osborne and Summers 2014: esp. 297–99 for a description of the method; Osborne 2012: 54–60). These are generally difficult to implement without painstaking quantitative analysis, here particularly the analysis of measurements for each and every space in, say, a Neo-Assyrian temple; given this barrier and the fact that many items engaged below occur only literarily rather than archaeologically, I avoid these lines of inquiry at present. More helpfully, Thomas (2007: 4–5) notes that the bridge over the Danube erected in 103/5, during Trajan’s Dacian Wars, attained far-flung visibility by means of its inclusion on Trajan’s coinage. This publication of monumentality is of value for understanding certain of the literary representations described below; one has the feeling that the coinage would have had a similar effect minus or absent certainty of the existence of the bridge itself. Moore (1996: 98–101) summarizes earlier works on landscapes and visibility and concludes generally that “[t]he communicative potential of a monument is partly shaped by the intersection of dimensions like visibility and imageability, which in turn can be specific based on what we know about the properties of human vision,” with numerous examples thereafter (*ibid.*: 104–20); the same author (*idem* 2005: 113–17) later offers additional comments on monumentality, “ubiquity,” and visibility in the ancient Andean context.

³⁹⁴ For size as a feature of monumentality, see L. R. Ford 2008: 241–44; Thomas 2007: 4; Pollock 1999: 174; Trigger 1990: 120–22 (with the further claim that monuments are characterized in particular by exceeding the size necessary to perform their function); Reilly 1912: 13 (“A minimum of mass is required for impressiveness”). Collins and Collins (1984: 15) describe size as the particular obsession of 19th-century art critics and architects in their discussions of the monumental.

³⁹⁵ This petrification of conspicuous consumption (for the term, first Veblen 1899) is a less-frequently-noted constituent of monumentality, but see e.g. Pollock (1999: 175), “they publicly display [...] massive quantities of raw materials, often special varieties not used for other constructions.” Agnew (1998: 231–32) also repeatedly dwells on the marble and white limestone construction of the Vittoriano in Rome. Similar is the conspicuous consumption *at* pre-contact Hawai’ian temples noted by Kolb 1994: 533, “tribute was characteristically durable goods rather than

materials—e.g. concrete, sandstone, etc.—or architectural styles, the impression is conveyed or created that a structure or fixture has occupied its space from time immemorial.³⁹⁶ Whether or not this impression is true, monuments acquire by this feature a temporal dominance to accompany their size-based spatial dominance.

The ways in which individuals interact with and are affected by monuments is usefully considered separately as involving the function of these entities, separate from their form but certainly in dialogue with it. Osborne (2014b: 8) has recently noted that older studies of monumentality “concentrate too closely on the nature of the monument itself and not enough on the monumentality created in its interaction with people and things around it.”³⁹⁷ In the targeted studies below, then, it will be useful to ask in what ways individuals were likely to have interacted with the monuments described. Studies of monumentality already undertaken can, furthermore, give one specific ideas as to what one might expect. The monument can evoke many things, some more explicitly and some more implicitly. The function of memorialization of some person, group,

staple foods [...] and included domestic pigs and bird feathers, the two most valuable items and, by no coincidence, the two most labor-intensive to produce.”

³⁹⁶ Permanence as connected with monumentality is described already by Lefebvre (1974: 254), “Les plus beaux monuments s’imposent par leur aspect durable; une muraille cyclopéenne atteint la beauté monumentale parce qu’elle semble éternelle: échapper au temps.” See also Thomas 2007: 4; Pollock 1999: 179; Bradley 1998: 71; Sert, Leger, and Giedion 1984: 62 (“They are intended to outlive the period which originated them”). Osborne (2014: 12) includes some references, nevertheless, to discussions of items that were or have come to be remembered as monumental despite—or, perhaps, because of—their impermanence, such as the student-constructed Goddess of Democracy statue that stood in Tiananmen Square from May 30 through June 4, 1989.

³⁹⁷ For a similar focus on function, see e.g. Thomas (2007: 11), “Monumentality, then, was not only a quality of ruins, memorials, and disused structures, but also of buildings that had an active function in the life of a community”; and Fisher 2014b, with inspiration from the work of Giddens, “it is through practice, or the routinized actions of knowledgeable agents, that the structural properties of societies are produced and, at the same time, reproduced or transformed”; see also Fisher 2009.

or event is often most explicit.³⁹⁸ The almost ubiquitous statues, stelae, and tomb inscriptions of ancient Mesopotamia and the Levant often name in their inscriptions the memorialized individual and follow this with some narrative or instructions as to the inscription's maintenance.³⁹⁹

Implicit evocations are harder to track but have been studied in some detail by scholars in various fields. They are also most important for present concerns, since few of the iconographic examples surveyed below carry inscriptions that explicitly identify them and their purpose. Scholars have often argued that, in addition to the recollection explicitly intended by the monument, a monument also recollects—sometimes explicitly, but more often implicitly—the process of its creation.⁴⁰⁰ Elements involved in this process, such as the employment of many laborers or the procurement of extensive materials, not only implies the power of the ruler or ruling

³⁹⁸ An extensive recent bibliography on monuments and memory may be found at Osborne 2017b: 165. The connection of the monument to memory is conveyed already in the etymology of the word, from Latin *monēre* “to remind” plus the nominalizing suffix *-mentum* (usually > English *-ment*). This is noted by e.g. Osborne (2014: 3), Thomas (2007: 2), and, at greatest length, Meyers (2012: 7–14). For other comments as to the monuments having memorialization as an explicit intent, see Thomas 2007: 3–5, with substantial previous bibliography; also J. S. Adams 2008: 295–97; Pollock 1999: 174; Agnew 1998: 229; Bradley 1998: 85–100; and Wu 1995: 3.

³⁹⁹ Examples of this in the Levant include the Samʿalian KTMW stele (see n. 389), the Byblian Phoenician ʿAḥirom inscription (*KAI* 1), and in Judah the Royal Steward epitaphs in Silwan (Avigad 1953; 1955; more recent summaries in Suriano 2018a: 100–12; Hays 2011: 232–49; 2010; Aḥituv 2008: 44–49). Pollock (1999: 181–85) considers a number of relevant Early Dynastic Mesopotamian monuments in connection with monumentality generally. Osborne (2017a) surveys Anatolian and Assyrian statuary from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

⁴⁰⁰ Observations to this effect are found already in Childe's (1950: 12) seminal article on the Urban Revolution: “[t]ruly monumental public buildings not only distinguish each known city from any village but also symbolize the concentration of the social surplus.” An attempt to quantify the personal and material expenditure required to create a truly monumental structure animates the article of Trigger (1990); this “thermodynamic” approach has been influential, but it has also drawn criticism for focusing on only the scale feature of monumentality (discussion and resources at Osborne 2014b: 5). Similar comments as to the tendency of monuments to recollect their creation may be found in Fisher 2006; Pollock 1999: 174; Bradley 1998: 71.

group to control human bodies,⁴⁰¹ but it also reinscribes that power and thus contributes to its creation.⁴⁰² This can in theory produce various effects for the observer, from the feeling of being dominated or subordinated to the feeling of belonging to some larger project (esp. Pollock 1999: 181).⁴⁰³ The process resulting from the latter has been termed “social integration.”⁴⁰⁴ People can also re-use and re-interpret monuments in a number of ways that diverge from or even run directly

⁴⁰¹ The following authors are in agreement with the basic claim that a monument evokes the power of the ruler: J. S. Adams 2008: 287–88, 291–94 (Soviet and post-Soviet Russia); Fisher 2006 (ancient Cyprus); Moore 1995 (ancient Andes); Kolb 1994: 533 (pre-contact Hawai’i); Trigger 1990: 121 (in general). Many of the authors cited in n. 403 will also concur with this assessment.

⁴⁰² Pauketat (2000), in a study of Mississippian platform mound construction, outlines nicely how original social cohesion could produce monuments that eventually inhibit the same sorts of cohesion in later periods. The same author (idem 2014) also draws attention to ways in which monuments serving as memorials can nevertheless point to future imaginaries, especially through processes of renovation. Similar hypotheses may be found in Fisher 2014a; 2014b: esp. 168 (both on Protohistoric Cyprus); Joyce 2004 (Mesoamerican pyramids); and Moore 1995. Finally, Kolb (1994) documents a dialectical process by which, in pre-contact Hawai’i, temple architecture grew gradually more complex as chiefs gained greater religious authority.

⁴⁰³ For processes of social integration, see the next note. The tendency of a monument to provoke feelings of domination is noted by Fisher 2006; Pollock 1999: 175; Kolb 1994: 533; Collins and Collins 1984: 22. Osborne (2014: 5) rightly notes the dependence of this line of thought on Marxist philosophy, especially Gramsci’s (1975) description of a cultural hegemony according to which the social values of the bourgeoisie were imposed upon the proletariat. One of the more notable and severe contexts in which monumental architecture was clearly intended to convey political domination was Third Reich Germany; this context is described in B. M. Lane 1985: 147–216 (briefly also Trigger 1990: 127), and one notes especially Hitler’s early (April 4, 1929) promise: “Aus unserer neuen Ideologie und unserem politischen Machtwillen heraus werden wir steinerne Dokumente hervorbringen” (O. Dietrich 1933: 473). The Fascist program in early 20th-century Italy was similar and is summarized by Agnew (1998: 233–39).

⁴⁰⁴ This function is stressed by Kolb 1994: 531. Some theorists, especially those who deal primarily with modern architecture, have suggested the ability of a people to express meaning by the building of a monument, but this seems to lose sight of the fact that monuments are usually initiated by the powerful, even in allegedly democratic contexts; cf. e.g. Sert, Leger, and Giedion 1984: 62, “Monuments are the expression of man’s highest cultural needs. They have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people for translation of their collective force into symbols.” In the Mesopotamian context and in view of the limited accessibility of many monumental structures in that context, emphasis has fallen on the likelihood of social integration having occurred mostly among elites. This is expressed by Pollock 1999: 178–79 and at much greater length in Ataç 2010.

counter to those intended by the powers behind their creation.⁴⁰⁵ On the whole, though, theorists appear to have found it either unnecessary or infeasible to document these feelings and interpretations sociologically, e.g. through surveys. Furthermore, a sociological approach is impossible for ancient populations. As was already suggested above for Romanesque and Gothic gargoyles, the result is that many of the hypotheses broached here and in the broader theoretical literature regarding social interaction with monuments must rest on reasonable inference from written discourse about these structures and fixtures.

Since the present chapter deals not with Mesopotamian and Levantine monuments in general but rather with those monuments that memorialize the combat myth and therefore make this present for some public, it is worth paying some attention to how conflict is memorialized in other geographical and chronological contexts. Most comparanda involve terrestrial and human rather than celestial or cosmological and divine combat, but there are exceptions, especially in medieval religious art. One notes, for example, the monsters and men wrestling up and down the trumeau of Sainte Marie de Souillac (Lot, France; 12th C. C.E.; Reeve 2017: 163–64; Baschet

⁴⁰⁵ Agnew (1998: 238–39) describes, for example, the reactions to the Vittoriano in Rome in the decades after its creation: “[o]n the one hand, there was the apathy or indifference of most ‘Italians’ [...] The monument was the subject of jokes and barbed nicknames [...] from the moment of its inauguration. On the other hand, there was the active hostility of the papacy,” etc. (The general phenomenon is suggested more briefly by Pollock 1999: 175.) This demonstrable variety in modern responses cautions one against being too positivistic in delineating the likely receptions of ancient monuments such as those described below. In a recent article, Osborne (2017b) describes ways in which modifications and additions to monuments themselves enact a counter-monumentality; I find the description of “the great irony of monuments” at *ibid.*: 167 to be another useful caution: “in the process of materializing a specific celebrated memory in a physical object [...], monuments simultaneously render that memory vulnerable to contestation and reinterpretation.” As Osborne notes in this article, current battles for the significance of Confederate monuments in Baltimore, Charlottesville, and other American cities are powerful contemporary analogues. No particular example of similar processes from among Near Eastern cosmic-antagonist representations is studied below (contrast Osborne 2017b, with discussion of destruction, defacement, and burial of Syro-Hittite monumental statuary), but the possibility of developing meaning is always worth keeping in mind.

2010). Furthermore, even comparanda evoking terrestrial combat can be usefully incorporated in making general observations. Certain configurations and poses for victorious gods or kings and their defeated enemies are common to both categories. One finds these groups represented as, for example, upright as opposed to prostrate, central as opposed to marginal, and composed as opposed to distressed. It will be seen below that there is often some debate as to whether a particular Mesopotamian or Levantine representation is to be understood as a monument memorializing a defeated enemy and thereby some combat myth. One cannot simply use the above dichotomies as a sort of checklist for determining whether a given monstrous icon was intended or received along these lines. That a given artistic tradition would have unique conventions for such representations is virtually certain. One must also allow for substantial variety in the range of structural and figural items that artisans, viewers, and others would have understood as participant in combat-myth discourse. It is in the interest of beginning to explore this variety that one turns to the representations themselves.

4.2 The Monsters of Mesopotamian Monuments

Mesopotamian empires of the first millennium B.C.E. were the inheritors of a long tradition of both monumental construction and meditation on monstrous cosmic antagonists. It is in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires that one finds the most prevalent combinations of these traditions, as well as literary descriptions and sculptural arrangements that allow deep interpretation.⁴⁰⁶ As already intimated, these iconographic representations (and the literary

⁴⁰⁶ A very thorough survey of textual descriptions of Neo-Assyrian temple and palace depictions of animals and “Dämonen” is Engel 1987. An archaeological survey is undertaken in Kolbe 1981. The summary of Ataç (2010: 172–83) is mostly relevant for Subsection 4.2.3 (see further references there). An ideological angle was recently taken by Maul (2000). In treating some of the texts cited below—chiefly those having to do with Tiglath-pileser I’s *nāhiru*

descriptions of them) are, with some frequency, of those same creatures that are elsewhere identified as foes of the deity or king. Because of this, it is possible to argue that these depictions present antagonists in their subordination to a victorious and ruling figure. By their positions and deportment, they model liminal functions and their threatening powers are implied to serve the interests of god or king. It was the visual encounter with such monuments that reinforced observers' sense of antagonists as not only defeated by but also subservient to the deity or king glorified by a given structure. Literary descriptions allowed no such direct encounter, but the very presentation of this motif in literature presupposes its comprehensibility for an ancient audience. Interaction with a literary source would have produced a similar experience, but perhaps one that was mitigated and restricted by the absence of a directly perceived visual art object.

These preliminary comments apply equally to whatever Mesopotamian and Levantine exempla surveyed below are understood to be viable participants in the combat myth discourse. The following discussion will begin with Mesopotamian data and move thereafter to such alleged participants as have been claimed for the Levant (Chapter 5), generally on the basis of the literary medium of the Hebrew Bible. This order is adopted because the Mesopotamian exempla discussed more transparently reflect intentions and understandings affiliated with the combat myth. Most of the data will be drawn from Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian contexts, because the primary goal of this study is first-millennium historical phenomena.

and *burhiš* statues and those mentioning bound Arabian kings—he concludes that, in general, textual and iconographic portrayals in this category are aimed at “der Verherrlichung des siegreichen Königs” (ibid.: 25). This is a conclusion with which I generally agree but would like to expand significantly with closer attention to what sorts of creatures are most frequent in these representations. Annus's (2002: 113–19) recent coverage of the same theme is largely a summary of Maul's article, generally without direct references to relevant texts and reliefs.

4.2.1 The Hunt for the *nāḥiru* and *burṭiš*

One can begin with a set of representations for which one can trace a progression of combat, capture, and mimetic representation of one or more imaginary or quasi-imaginary animals. Tiglath-pileser I (r. 1114–1076 B.C.E.), in a summary of his military campaigns and other royal activities (*RIMA* 2 A.0.87.4),⁴⁰⁷ alludes to an expedition to the West, described in another inscription,⁴⁰⁸ during which he killed an animal called the *nāḥiru*. Later, in a campaign to Lumaš beyond Ḥabḫu in the Caucasus (for location, see Weidner 1957–8: 356) he or his men captured a *burṭiš balṭa* “live *burṭiš*.” The text then describes⁴⁰⁹:

⁴⁰⁷ This composite text is edited at Grayson 1991 (= *RIMA* 2): 38–45. Twenty-six exemplars of the text are listed at *ibid.*: 39–40; six manuscripts (Ass. 977; Ass. 4212b+; Ass. 4312; Sm.1874; VAT 9540; and VAT 10749) include the present passage. A partitur of these may be found at Engel 1987: 136–37. The fragment Ass. 4212b+(Ass. 4193v+Ass. 4184) was recently re-edited by Lundström and Orlamünde 2011: pl. 9 and Lundström 2012: 324–25.

Two similar texts of Tiglath-pileser I, *RIMA* 2 A.0.87.5 and A.0.87.11, have parallel passages that are less well-preserved. *RIMA* 2 A.0.87.5 is VAT 9540 = Ass 18723, a small tablet fragment, copy at Schroeder 1922 [*KAH* 2]: 39 (no. 67). Additional bibliography and an up-to-date edition is given in Grayson 1991: 46–47. The order of the feat descriptions is reversed; the transport of a live *burṭiš* is described in ll. 11'–12', with the description of the *nāḥiru* following. *RIMA* 2 A.0.87.11 is Sm 1874, another tablet fragment, copy and edition at King 1902: 113–16, (minimal) additional bibliography and up-to-date edition in Grayson 1991: 56–57. Insofar as the fragmentary state of the tablet allows, the description of the *nāḥiru* and *burṭiš* appears to be largely identical to that in *RIMA* 2 A.0.87.4.

⁴⁰⁸ *RIMA* 2 A.0.87.3 describes the *nāḥiru* hunt, but with no mention of the *burṭiš* or of the statues erected at Tiglath-pileser I's palace. This text is extant in seven exemplars: VAT 9360; 9422; 9624; 13564; and 13565, with two tablets now or formerly in private possession (see commentary at Grayson 1991: 36). This text does have the benefit of more precisely locating the *nāḥiru* hunt at {^{umu}ša-mu-ri} *Šamur*- (l. 23) near Arvad. One is tempted to identify this city with Şumur (Tell Kazel and/or Tell Simiriyan?), well known from the Amarna letters and elsewhere—thus e.g. Singer 1991: 179 (= *idem* 2011: 230) and Stieglitz 1991: 48—but the reported distance {3 DANNA A.ŠÀ} “three double hours” between this city and Arvad needs to be accounted for. For the similar *nāḥiru* hunt undertaken by Aššur-bēl-kala and contextualized among other deeds involving wild animals and control of these, see *RIMA* 2 A.0.89.7 iv:1–34 and the analysis below.

⁴⁰⁹ The text given here is composite on the basis of Engel 1987: 136–37 and differs only slightly from the rendering in Grayson 1991: 44.

- 67 na-ḥi-ra ša ANŠE.KUR.RA ša A.AB.BA i-qa-bi-ú-šú-ni⁴¹⁰ pa-ri-an-gi ep-
 šet qa-ti-ia
- 68 šá i-na siq-ri ^dMAŠ ù ^dIGI.DU DINGIR^{meš} GAL^{meš} EN^{meš}-ia i-na A.AB.BA
- 69 [GAL] ša KUR a-mur-ri a-du-ku-ni bur-ṭi⁴¹¹-iš ba-al-ṭa ša iš-tu KUR lu-ma-
 áš
- 70 [ša bat]-te am-mi-te ša KUR ḥab-ḥi na-ṣu-ú-ni tam-ši-li-šu-nu ša
 NA₄.AD.BAR⁴¹² e-pu-uš
- 71 ina né-r[é-bi] LUGAL-ti-ia im-na ù šu-me-la ú-ša-zi-iz

*naḥira ša sīsû ša tâmti iqabbi(?û)šuni pariangi epšet qātiya ša ina siqri Ninurta u
 Nergal ilāni rabûti bēlīya ina tâmti rabīti ša māt Amurri adūkuni burṭiš balṭa ša
 ištu māt Lumaš ša batte ammite ša māt Ḥabḥi naššūni tamšīlīšunu ša atbāri ēpuš
 ina nērib šarrūtiya imna u šumēla ušazziz*

“As for the *nāḥiru*—which is called the horse of the sea and which I killed with a
pariangu-weapon⁴¹³ of my own making at the command of Ninurta and Nergal, the

⁴¹⁰ This is the reading of Ass. 4312, the only exemplar in which the verb survives. It is either a metathetic error for *{i-qa-bi-šú-ú-ni} or reflective of an uncontracted 3.c.p. impersonal verb (literally “they call” *iqabbi?ūšuni* rather than “one calls” **iqabbišuni*). Support for the latter analysis may be found in all exemplars of *RIMA 2 A.0.87.3* for which l. 25 is extant: {i-qa-bi-ú-šū-ni} *iqabbi?ūšuni* (see the composite copy with variants noted at Schroeder 1922 [*KAH 2*]: 40 [no. 68] and the edition in Weidner 1957–58: 344); cf. Grayson’s (1991: 37) “*i-qab-bi-ú-šū-ni*,” despite the absence of {qab} in any exemplar. In either case, the signs should be reproduced to reflect the actual text (cf. Grayson 1991: 44, “*i-qa-bi-šū-ú-ni*”).

⁴¹¹ For this value for {ḤI} in this lexeme (usually *burḥiš*, e.g. *CAD B* [1965]: 329), see below on the orthography {bur-ṭiš} in Ass 13955g:4 (ed. Donbaz and Parpola 2001: 12 [no. 12]).

⁴¹² Sm.1874 has instead {NA₄.pa-ru-ú-[ti]} *parūti* “marble.”

⁴¹³ The precise character of this weapon is unknown. Only two other occurrences were known to *CAD P* [2005] 185, and one of these was unpublished: Ass. 13058gf (quoted by Weidner 1957–8: 355); *VAS 19 10:7*, 10 was available, but the context is under-determined. Thus *CAD P* 184 gives only “(a weapon); MA; foreign word(?)” Von Soden (*AHw* 883a), Engel (1987: 138), Grayson (1991: 44), and many others assume “Harpune/harpoon” from the present passage. Elayi and Voisin (2014: 74) suggest that the word is of Phoenician origin; while this is possible, one can point to no source lexeme actually attested in Phoenician (or another West Semitic language). In a recent article,

great gods, my lords, in the great sea of the land of Amurru—and the live *burtiš*—which was brought from the land of Lumaš on the far side of Ḫabḫu—I made their likenesses (*tamšīlu*) in basalt. I stationed them on the right and left of my royal entrance.”

The identification of both animals is disputed, but a survey of proposals and the most likely solutions will help one envision the statues the text describes. The *nāḫiru* can be approached from both contextual and etymological points.⁴¹⁴ Contextually, the designation {ANŠE.KUR.RA ša A.AB.BA} *sīsū ša tāmti* “horse of the sea” in the present text and others seems promising. Incorporating this point, scholars have argued for taxonomic identification with animals that are horselike in one or multiple senses (see below). Another contextual datum from inscriptions of Aššurnāṣirpal II (r. 883–59 B.C.E.) helps further shrink the roster of possible identifications. Twice, the {ZÚ^{meš} na-ḫi-ri} *šinnē/āt nāḫiri* “teeth of the *nāḫiru*” (*RIMA* A.0.101.1 iii:88⁴¹⁵; A.0.101.2:30⁴¹⁶) are listed among tribute items from cities on the Lebanese coast. Since the “teeth”

Llop (2016: 211–12) does not add much to the solution of this problem in noting only that since “Tiglath-pileser I adds that he made this weapon himself (*epšet qātīya*) [... this] may indicate a relative [sic] simple construction.”

⁴¹⁴ The most thorough study of the *nāḫiru* to date is in the unpublished dissertation of Wapnish (1985: 214–72), who examines the available data and history of interpretation exhaustively in the context of a discussion of Mesopotamian folk taxonomy. More recent contributions are valuable for their collection of additional data and subsequent scholarship but are nowhere near as deep; see Saporetti 1996; Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet 2000; Caubet 2008; Lundström 2012; and Elayi and Voisin 2014.

⁴¹⁵ *RIMA* A.0.101.1 (ed. Grayson 1991: 191–223) is the primary annalistic text of Aššurnāṣirpal II (r. 883–59 B.C.E.). The text was inscribed on giant stone reliefs at the Kalḫu Ninurta temple. Layard excavated the text in the mid-19th century and made squeezes that were deposited in the British Museum for only a short time before they were purposefully destroyed (summary Grayson 1991: 192). Lacking the original text, one is generally reliant on the earlier editions, i.e. those of Rawlinson (1861: pls. 17–26), King (1902: 254–387), and Le Gac (1907: 1–122), all of whom at least had access to the British Museum squeezes.

⁴¹⁶ The situation of *RIMA* A.0.101.2 (ed. Grayson 1991: 223–28), also an annalistic text of Aššurnāṣirpal II, is better than that of the inscription described in the previous note. Eight exemplars are extant, mostly on winged lion

in question are likely those that can produce the desirable commodity ivory, one may eliminate from consideration baleen whales (parvorder *Mysticeti*, including the *Megaptera novaeangliae* “humpback whale” [cf. Salonen 1976: 218]) and non-ivory-producing animals such as dolphins, seals, and sharks (cf. Wyatt 1998a/2002: 177).⁴¹⁷ One must also prefer an animal that could be reliably located and hunted in accessible areas; most cetaceans begin to seem unlikely candidates given this further consideration.

On the etymological side, Akkadian has a verb *naḥāru* “to snort,” which is rare but seems likely to be related,⁴¹⁸ as would be a few other nominal instantiations of the root $\sqrt{\text{nh}r}$, notably

and bull colossi; two exemplars in the Iraq Museum (IM 26472; 26473) have never been edited. Most (not BM 118801; 118802) include the present line.

⁴¹⁷ Similarly Wapnish 1985: 236; Weidner 1957–58: 356. There has been some confusion on these points, perhaps due to the fuzzy taxonomic terminology that Semitists often employ. This is especially the case with hypotheses involving “whales.” Certain whales (all included in the infraorder *Cetacea*) have teeth (parvorder *Odontoceti*), while others do not (parvorder *Mysticeti*) (discussion in Wapnish 1985: 238). If “ivory” is intended by {ZÚ} in the present instance—and this seems likely in the context of a tribute list (see further CAD Š.3 [1992] 51–52; good summary of ivory and the present problem in Wapnish 1985: 251–59)—only toothed whales are viable candidates (among whales) for the *nāḥiru*. Ivory is generally distinguishable from bone, so *pace* Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet (2000: 119; similarly Salonen 1976: 218), I think it unlikely that whale bones of any type could have been “assimilés à des dents.” There is no indication that ZÚ or *šinnu* was ever used for “bone(s)” (generally *ešemtu/ešentu*).

⁴¹⁸ Most scholars have argued this despite the rarity of the verb. Both *AHw* 713a and *CAD* N.1 [1980]: 128a could cite contextual occurrences of this verb from only one text, the sleep-omen K.9739+, with parallels (copy Smith 1923 [*CT* 37] pls. 49–50; edition Köcher and Oppenheim 1957–58: 73–74), particularly l. 18: {DIŠ i-na-aḥ-ḥu-ur sa-di-ir[} *šumma inaḥḥur sadir* “if one snores regularly.” Two entries in lexical texts expand the data set somewhat (*Erimḥuš* V 180–81. *Sag Bil. B* 120–21). There is a second verb *naḥāru* whose meaning is debated. Von Soden (*AHw* 713a) suggests “verdorr sein”; *CAD* N.1 [1980]: 127b offers no hypotheses. This problem cannot be solved here, and it is probably irrelevant; I am not aware of any scholars who attempt to connect *nāḥiru* to this verb.

The major exception to derivation from *naḥāru* “to snort” is the argument of Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet (2000: 123; “possible” in Elayi and Voisin 2014: 75), who suggest that the transcription {na-ḥi-rV} reflects *nahir-* “river-dwelling one” from West Semitic $\sqrt{\text{nh}r}$, the most prominent nominal instantiation of which is **nahar-* “river.” (Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet consistently transcribe *nahir-* without vocalic length and presumably intend a *qaṭil-* [stative] adjective, but this is never specified.) One possible objection to this hypothesis is

naḥīru “nostril” (*AHw* 714b; *CAD* N.1 [1980]: 136–37) and *nuḥḥuru*, used among the Kassites as a name for horses.⁴¹⁹ The verb *naḥāru* has cognates in other Semitic languages.⁴²⁰ Furthermore, a reflex of the Proto-Semitic root * $\sqrt{\text{nh̄r}}$ was employed for an animal in at least one other language: Ugaritic { ānh̄r } occurs in the *Baʿlu* cycle (RS 2.[022]+ i:15 [= *KTU*³ 1.5]) and a smaller tablet with parallel content, RS 24.293:5 (= *KTU*³ 1.133) (see notes below for additional bibliography). These exempla are potentially as little as a century older than the Tiglath-pileser I text considered here and originate very near the geographic region in which the Assyrian king encountered the animal. If their context reveals anything about the animal and its associations, these occurrences would thus be of central importance for understanding the *nāḥīru* itself:

RS 2.[022] i:12–16 (= *KTU*³ 1.5)⁴²¹

12	(...) tḥm . bnīl m̄	<i>taḥmu bini ʾilima</i>
13	mt . hwt . ydd . bnīl	<i>môti huwātu yadīdi bini ʾili</i>
14	ḡzr . pnp.š . npš . lbi m̄	<i>ḡazru panapšī napšu labi ʾima</i>

that the present and other texts clearly associate the *nāḥīru* with the {A.AB.BA} *tāmtu* “sea” rather than rivers of any sort. Another possible objection involves the transcription of West Semitic *h* by { ḥ }; the authors suggest that one expects “un hiatus” (i.e. { ʔ }-signs or vowel signs), but the data are sparse and variable. In the Amarna letters, for example, one finds both { : ḥa-ar-ri } *harri* “mountains” (EA 74:20 [Byblos]) and { : ba-di-ú } *badihu* “in his hand” (EA 245:35 [Megiddo]). The situation perhaps became more consistent as time went on; Huehnergard (2008: 244) cites no instances of *h* transcribed by { ḥ }-signs at Ugarit.

⁴¹⁹ Such names occur at CBM 6604:4, 27, 31 (ed. Clay 1906 [*BE* 14]: pl. 8 [no. 12] and Balkan 1954: no. 16:13. (These are cited by both *CAD* N.2 [1980] 318a and *AHw* 801a.)

⁴²⁰ For example, Syriac نَحَا “to breathe heavily, snort” (e.g. Sokoloff 2009: 908b) and Arabic نَحَرَ “to snort” (e.g. Lane 1863–93: 2777a).

⁴²¹ RS 2.[002]+3.[565] (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.5) is AO 16641+16642, the fifth tablet of the *Baʿlu* cycle. The *editio princeps* is Virolleaud 1934 (text I* AB = Gordon *UT* 67). Dozens of editions and studies of this tablet and, of course, the broader *Baʿlu* cycle, have been published. Of central importance are (with page numbers for the present passage cited) Ginsberg 1936: 45; Driver 1956: 103; Herdner 1963: 31–33 (with all previous bibliography); Caquot, Sznycer, and Herdner 1974: 241–42; Gibson 1978: 68; del Olmo Lete 1981: 214; Xella 1982: 132; Pardee 1997: 265; M. S. Smith 1997: 142; and Wyatt 1998a/2002: 116–17. The most recent treatment of the text is Garbini 2014: 135.

⁴²² The employment of this conjunction may suggest that the present passage involves a series of rhetorical questions, as this is generally the environment in which {hm} appears; a summary of occurrences may be found in Tropper 2000/2012: 793–94 (§83.142). Such an interpretation of the present passage may be found in, for example, M. S. Smith 1997: 142 and Tropper 2000/2012: 794. Cf. interpretation of these sentences as indicative in Driver 1956: 103; Caquot, Szyner, and Herdner 1974: 241–42; del Olmo Lete 1981: 214; Xella 1982: 132; Pardee 1997: 265; and Garbini 2014: 135. There is no support in any other text for Gibson’s (1978: 68) implied analysis and Wyatt’s (1998a/2002: 117 n. 12) explicit suggestion that {hm} marks comparison, “as ... so”

⁴²³ {brlt} occurs somewhat frequently in Ugaritic, but its etymology (including possible cognates) and precise semantics are a matter of some debate. Aside from the present passage, the noun occurs multiple times in *Kirta* and *ʾAqhātu*. Leaving aside a passage posing an epigraphic difficulty (RS 3.325+ i:42 [= *KTU*³ 1.16]), {brlt} always occurs as the “B” term in parallel with {npš} ({brlt} is also replaced by {npš} in RS 24.293 [see below]). Taken together, the most important point that these passages illustrate is that {brlt} is somehow involved in food intake. Most determinative for this is RS 3.325+ vi:11–12 (= *KTU*³ 1.16) (⁽¹¹⁾ npšh . llhm . tpth / ⁽¹²⁾ brlth . ltrm . napšahu lēlahāmi tiptaḥu / BRLTahu lētarāmi “She opens his throat for eating, his BRLT for feeding.” This and the above-noted parallelism implies that {brlt} is a less common synonym for {npš}. It perhaps had greater anatomical specificity, but exactly what semantic restriction this involves is not recoverable from the texts presently available.

In theory, one should be able to gain additional insight into the history of {brlt} by examination of cognates or loan sources, but there is no secure etymology for this lexeme. *√brl is not a well-attested root in Semitic. (Various words designating a gemstone, e.g. Neo-Assyrian *burallu*, appear to be loanwords from Indo-European, e.g. Greek βηρυλλος, probably originally Indic [D. Cohen et al. 1970–: 85a]). The only apparent direct reflex of such a root is Old South Arabian √brl “to hold possession of” (usually with √qny). This verb is not listed as such in any of the dictionaries (Beeston et al. 1982; Biella 1982; Ricks 1989), but occurs in Sabaic (BM 102600:1 [= *RÉS* 852+3356+4815; for the reading, Mazzini 2011: 130–31; Şanʿāʾ University Museum A-20-1020:2 [unpublished except online at *CSAI*]; and München Mon.script.sab.1:7 [wooden stick, ed. Stein 2010: 233–38 and pls. 64–65]) and Minaic (M.240:1'; M.241:2'; many of the preceding have been read **{brg} by earlier editors; see e.g. Beeston et al. 1982: 31); it has recently turned up in Qatabanic (Ḥinū az-Zurayr-Maraqten 1 [1st C. C.E.]:2, ed. Maraqten 2013, with brief lexical comment at *ibid.*: 75). The gap between the semantics of this verb and Ugaritic {brlt} seems, however, awfully large, so that neither previous studies nor the present author regard as likely an etymological connection between these two lexemes.

The most likely alternative option (summary at del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 235) seems to me that forwarded by Pope (1981); he suggested as cognates the rare poetic Arabic lexemes -بُرَالُ- *burāʾil-* and -بُرْأُولَةُ- *burʾūlat-*, cited by the *Lisān* as referring to the neck-feathers of various birds. Problems include the rarity of the term, its semantic specification in Arabic, and the presence of the glottal stop (cf. Pope 1981: 306, who asserts that this ʾ is simply “late”). Less likely are Rendsburg’s (1987: 626) comparison with Modern South Arabian √brt “desire to weep”—the “expan[sion] by l” hypothesized is very rare in roots that already have a resonant—Cutler and Macdonald’s (1973)

“Message of the son of ʔIlu, Môtû. Word of the beloved, the son of ʔIlu, the hero:
‘Is my throat the throat of the lion of the desert⁴²⁴ or the gullet(?) of the ʔanḫaru in
the sea (...)?’”

RS 24.293:1–5 (= *KTU*³ 1.133)⁴²⁵

1	wy ^ḥ ny . bn	waya ^ḥ niyu binu
2	ilm . mt . npš	ʔilima môtû napšī
3	npš . lbim	napšu libaʔima
4	thw . wnpš	tuhwi wanapšu
5	anḫr . bym	ʔanḫari biyammi

“The son of ʔIlu, Môtû, answered: ‘My throat is the throat of the lion of the desert
and the throat of the ʔanḫaru in the sea.’”

comparison with Akkadian *mēreltu* “desire, wish,” which is certainly from *erēšu*, Watson’s (2007: 127) comparison with Hurrian *par(i)li* “push,” the semantics of which are quite different, and Criscuolo’s (2007) suggestion of a root \sqrt{wrr} , which requires numerous unparalleled phonetic deformations. Even if Pope’s etymology is correct, this does not help much with the present question—the semantics of Ugaritic {brlt}—since it seems likely that the putative Arabic cognate underwent extreme specification.

⁴²⁴ This interpretation of {thw} *tuhw*- as cognate with Hebrew אָהַב, etc. (e.g. Tsumura 1987: 310 n. 6; Pardee 1988: 157) is, by context and especially parallelism with {bym} *biyammi*, more likely than interpretation as a verb from $\sqrt{hw(y)}$ “to desire” or something similar. The latter opinion that can be traced to Greenstein (1973: 158–59). A recent survey of opinion on this point was undertaken by Tsumura (2005: 10–11; similarly already idem 1987: 310 n. 6), who unfortunately does not provide precise references for many of the earlier works cited.

⁴²⁵ RS 24.293 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.133) is DO 6624. The *editio princeps* is Virolleaud 1968: 559–61 (with copy). The most extensive subsequent study (also with bibliography, copy, and photo) is Pardee 1988: 153–64. The character of this text is much debated. Dietrich and Loretz (1991) have claimed that it is a school text, but there is really minimal rationale for this; Wyatt (1998a/2002: 426) similarly suggests that it is a “scribal exercise.” Pardee (1988: 164) speaks instead of a “scribe” executing one of various functions, perhaps “‘composait’ de mémoire un texte” such as that preserved in *Baʕlu*. In another recent translation, M. S. Smith (1997: 177–79) is noncommittal and calls this merely a “variant version of a passage well known from the Baal Cycle.”

From these passages, one confirms that the *ʾanḥaru* lives in the sea, and, more importantly, one also learns that it has a voracity comparable to that of the lion. Helpfully for the understanding of Tiglath-pileser I's *nāḥiru*, this establishes that the animal in question was paradigmatically large and presumably fearsome. One is perhaps justified in looking particularly for a carnivore and/or an animal whose mouth and associated digestive organs were large enough to inspire proverbial reflections on its gluttony.

Most Assyriologists and Ugaritologists⁴²⁶ have left unmentioned the fact that some scholars have argued for the existence of a cognate noun *nuḥer*⁴²⁷ in Phoenician on the basis of the reading {nḥr} at *KAI* 165:3, a Neopunic-Latin bilingual from Qalat Abis-Siba (= “Guelaat bou Sba”), Algeria.⁴²⁸ The text consists of an eight-line Neo-Punic inscription—the first four lines of which are very difficult—followed by a much more straightforward Latin benediction in five lines (including the *O[ssa] T[ibi] B[ene] Q[uiescant]* rubric). The inscription is given in full below because epigraphic, lexicographical, and syntactic issues plague the first half of the text. These must be at least considered if a satisfactory understanding of any one lexeme is to be achieved.

⁴²⁶ The suggestion that follows is mentioned in Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 725—but in none of the other Phoenician/Punic lexica (cf. Tomback 1978; Krahmalkov 2000)—and is taken thence by Watson (2013: 335) for uncertain inclusion in a list of loanwords (in this case from Akkadian) in Phoenician and Punic. I have found no other citation of this putative datum in Assyriological or Ugaritological work.

⁴²⁷ This vocalization as such is not given by any of the scholars so arguing (see below) but can be suggested for a Phoenician cognate {nḥr} of Akkadian *nāḥiru* on the following grounds: (1.) the development of *u* < proto-Semitic **ā* in Punic is documented by *PPG* §79; Fox 1996: 40–41; and Kerr 2010: 53 n. 120; and (2.) the development of *e* < proto-Semitic **i*—especially before resonants (here *r*)—is documented by *PPG* §82.

⁴²⁸ The *editio princeps* is Chabot 1917: 23–29. Subsequent studies include Février 1954; Levi Della Vida 1965: 52–54; Teixidor 1967: 176; Donner and Röllig 1968: 154 (*KAI* no. 165); van den Branden 1974: 145–46 (ll. 1–4 only); Jongeling 1996: 74–77; Jongeling and Kerr 2005: 52–54; Jongeling 2008: 249–51; and Kerr 2010: 18.

KAI 165 Punic

1	sbq y [?] ?lk yqr [?]	Stop, o passerby, and read ⁴²⁹
2	t p [?] s ?š [?] ?l hmnsbt	the text ⁴³⁰ which is on this stele.
3	st t k l b n [?] d m k n n ḥ r	[see below]
4	w [?] l k l k t m m [?] š [?] l [?] q m t	[see below]
5	tsdt bn mt [?] t bn gwt [?] l	TSDT son of MT [?] T son of GWT [?] L
6	hngry dl [?] t [?] rt wdl šm	the Nagarite, with a crown and with a heroic
7	t [?] šmt [?] w [?] š [?] nt [?] mšm sk [?] r	name, lived fifty years. Memorial of
8	dr [?] l [?] Im	his family forever.

KAI 165 Latin

1	RVFO . METATIS . F[ilius] .	Rufo, son of Metat
2	NUM[idae] . HONOR[ato]	the Numidean, honored,
3	VIX[it] . ANNI[s] L . FECER[unt]	lived fifty years.
4	FILI[i] . H[oc] . L[oco] . S[epultus] . E[st] .	His sons buried him here.
(5)	O[ssa] T[ibi] B[ene] Q[ui]escant]	May your bones rest well.

⁴²⁹ An interpretation along these broad lines—{sbq} as G Impv 3.m.s. √sbq; {y[?]} as vocative exponent; {?lk} as G Ptc m.s. *√hlk; and {yqr[?]} as G PC 3.m.s. √qr[?]—goes back to Levi Della Vida 1965: 65 and is recently adopted by Jongeling and Kerr in various publications (idem 2005: 52–54; Jongeling 2008: 249–51; and Kerr 2010: 18). It involves at least two difficult lexicographic identifications, i.e. both √sbq and {y[?]} as a vocative exponent are not otherwise attested in Phoenician or Punic (this is admitted in the studies cited above; for √sbq, see also Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 775; for {y[?]}, see also PPG §259). The possible parallel with the widespread Latin inscriptions that begin *Resta viator et lege...* (Levi Della Vida 1965: 64–65; Jongeling 1996: 75–76; 2008: 250) is perhaps better served, however, by an alternative reading {tbq(y)} at the beginning of l. 1 (Donner and Röllig 1968: 154; van den Branden 1974: 145; Krahmalkov 2000: 124). Scholars adopting this reading argue for the same “remain”—though of course G PC 2.m.s. √bq(y)—on the basis of Arabic بقی *baqiya* “to stay” (e.g. 21 times in Qur[?]ānic: Badawi and Abdel-Haleem 2008: 107–8). A reading {t} was not considered by Chabot (1917: 25), who appears to have been the only scholar to actually view this inscription, but the grapheme is certainly damaged at its head (thus also *ibid.*), and {t} and {s} are very similar in this text.

⁴³⁰ The lexeme {p[?]s} is often instead spelled {ps} (references at Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 921) and does seem in all occurrences, mostly (Late) Punic, to refer to inscriptions (thus all editors of this text; e.g. Jongeling 2008: 250), but the etymology is obscure. It may be from the same source as Aramaic {ps} “small part, strip” and Hebrew פס as in פסיים פסיים (Gen 37.3, 23, 32; 2 Sam 13.18, 19), but the semantic developments involved are difficult.

After the *editio princeps* of Chabot (1917), who offered no interpretation of ll. 3–4, two more or less viable modes of word division and thence interpretation have emerged for this opaque section. On the one hand, one can divide the two lines as {t kl bn ᶜd mkn nḥr / ⁴ wᶜl kl ktmm ᶜᶜʳl ʳqmt} “everything on it, to the *nḥr*-pedestal and on all the inscription/covering(?) on the top.” This is basically the understanding of Février (1954: 41–42) and van den Branden (1974: 145–46); these authors disagree on a few lexicographic points,⁴³¹ but most importantly, for present purposes, in their understanding of {nḥr}. While Février (1954: 41) suggested that this was from √ḥ(w)r “to be white,” van den Branden (1974: 145; 1979: 203a) hypothesized that the lexeme was instead *nuḥer* “dolphin.”

Alternatively, it has been suggested that one can divide the two lines in question as {tkl bn ᶜdm kn nḥr / ⁴ wᶜlk lktm mᶜᶜʳʳ lʳqmt} “Man trusts when he is young [see below], and he goes his way, but he finds opposition.”⁴³² But not only is the pithy proverb that results unparalleled in such a funerary inscription, almost every word is a *hapax legomenon* in Phoenician/Punic or involves major orthographic difficulties.⁴³³ This is not to say that van den Branden’s (1974; 1979) interpretation of {nḥr} as *nuḥer* “dolphin” is best. This understanding is based chiefly on iconographic representations of dolphins in other Punic contexts, and it therefore assumes with

⁴³¹ For example with regard to {ktmm} as either from √ktm “to cover” or to be compared with the biblical Hebrew Psalmic מִכְתָּמִּים title, itself of uncertain interpretation but likely designating a sort of text. Jongeling (2008: 250–51) has summarized the discussion very well and recently, so it has not been felt necessary to repeat all minor points here.

⁴³² Kerr 2010: 18; Jongeling 2008: 249–51; Jongeling and Kerr 2005: 52–54; Jongeling 1996: 74–77; and similarly Levi Della Vida 1965: 65.

⁴³³ One case of the latter is the key word {nḥr}, interpreted by the above-cited authors as an orthographic variant of {n(ʳ)r} *nar* (< **naʳr-*) “youth.” Examples of {ḥ} for (Late) Punic *a* are rare or nonexistent (summaries in *PPG* §36; Kerr 2010: 66), so that this orthography can hardly be considered a keystone here.

some circularity a taxonomic identification of the **nāḥir-* demonstrated above to be problematic from the view of the Akkadian evidence. Most likely of all is the analysis, following Février (1964), of both {nḥr} and {ktmm} as color and/or material words.⁴³⁴ This analysis yields an understanding along the following lines: “(read...) everything on it, as far as the white(washed?) pedestal and on all the gold near the top.” This would be, on the whole, a logical continuation of line 2. By this global understanding, one can eliminate the very late putative cognate of Akkadian *nāḥiru* and Ugaritic *ʿanḥaru* and grounds for any lingering suspicion that **nāḥir-* might have designated the “dolphin.”

From the above, one thus knows that the *nāḥiru* likely or possibly had the following characteristics: (1.) it lived in the water, either all or part of the time; (2.) it could nevertheless be reliably located and hunted, which implies that no very deep water was involved; (3.) it could be compared to a horse; (4.) it produced ivory; (5.) assuming identity with the Ugaritic *ʿanḥaru*, it perhaps had a voracious appetite and/or a physically large mouth; and (6.) assuming etymological connection with √nḥr “to snort,” it perhaps was characterized by such activity and/or large nostrils. Taking all of these points into consideration, I agree with several recent authors who have argued that the most likely taxonomic identification is with the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus*

⁴³⁴ The former lexeme would be a substantivized N-stem participle from √ḥ-r “to be white,” and the latter a cognate to Hebrew ‏זָהָב‏ “gold.”

amphibius).⁴³⁵ This animal fits all of the above requirements,⁴³⁶ has an intriguing parallel horse-like identification in Greek ἵπποπόταμος,⁴³⁷ and was certainly to be found along the Late Bronze and Iron Age eastern Mediterranean coast (Elayi and Voisin 2014: 75–76; Caubet 2008: 130–31; Wapnish 1985: 249–50; Haas 1953). It would also have made an impressive statue for the entrance to Tiglath-pileser I’s royal palace, a point to which I will return below.

The *burṭiš* is, if anything, even more obscure. This is both because the etymology of its name is undecided and because it is mentioned only rarely and within a limited geographical and chronological period, mostly in texts from Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Upper Mesopotamia. The phonology of the lexeme can at least be decided more easily than in the past, thanks to a less

⁴³⁵ Elayi and Voisin 2014: 74–77; Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet 2000: 119–24; and Caubet and Poplin 1987: 294–95 n. 22. In her short contribution to the Bordreuil *Festschrift*, Caubet (2008) is more hesitant as to identification of the *nāḫiru* with the hippopotamus, but does not rule out the suggestion. These authors all defend the identification at some length, but the hypothesis is, in fact, rather old. Hommel (1888: 532 n. 4) wonders in his early general history of Mesopotamia whether by “Nāchiru” “ist etwa eine Hippopotamus-art gemeint?” (this was cited somewhat derisively by Haupt [1907: 157 n. 3]).

⁴³⁶ Most alternative identifications fail on one or more grounds. The issue of whale, dolphin, and shark identifications—by far the most common—has already been engaged above. The best surveys of previous opinions are Elayi and Voisin 2014: 73; Lundström 2012: 326–32; and especially Wapnish 1985: 232–37.

⁴³⁷ Of course, Greek ἵπποπόταμος is a compound noun from ἵππος “horse” and ποταμός “river.” This was loaned into Latin as *hippopotamus* and thence into most European languages, sometimes as a calque (e.g. German *Nilpferd* and Dutch *nijlpaard*); such items as Arabic فرس النهر are presumably taken directly from Greek. The parallel between the Akkadian designation {ANŠE.KUR.RA ša A.AB.BA} *sīšū ša tāmti* “horse of the sea” and the Greek lexeme is indeed noted by Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet (2000: 120), who cite the explanation of the term in Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* I 35.8). But no source for the commonality is pursued in any of the hippopotamus-supporting publications cited above (but see Wapnish 1985: 250–51, with a brief discussion), nor do I do so here. Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet (2000: 120) do point out a possible motive for the hippopotamus—horse connection on the basis of anatomical similarity: “la partie visible de la tête d’un hippopotame immergé évoque fortement les oreilles et le chanfrein d’un équidé.” One wonders, though, if the Greek and Akkadian traditions cited are homological rather than merely analogical. The water-horse designation, which seems to the present author far from anatomically obvious, could have simply originated in the Levant, whence it spread both east and west. It must be admitted, however, that there is currently no proof for this.

ambiguous orthography in the latest text to mention the *burṭiš*, the Aššur N4 Archive receipt Ass 13955g (= A [Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzereli] 2496; 634 B.C.E.; ed. Donbaz and Parpola 2001: 12 [no. 10]):

Ass 13955g

1	4 A GAL GUD	4 large ox-calves.
2	ITI.SIG ₄ UD.11.KÁM	Sivan 11,
3	lim-mu ¹ aš-šur-ŠU-GUR	eponym of Aššur-gimilli-tere.
<hr/>		
4	6 bur-ṭiš TA ŠU ^{II} ¹ pa-lal-ku	6 <i>burṭiš</i> in the care of Palalku;
5	7 dâ-ri-aš-šur ¹ DUMU- ^d rMES ^r	7 (of the same) Dari-Aššur and Mar-Marduk;
6	1 ri-pa ^{kuur} man-na-a ^r UŠ ^r -ÁB 1	Ripa, Mannean, a cow-driver;
7	1 ½ ¹ ARAD-i SANGA ^d MAŠ 1.5	Urdî, priest of Ninurta.
8	PAB 16 ¹ ub-ku	total 16 (!), (now belonging to) Ubbuku.

The orthography here is unambiguous,⁴³⁸ and the association with {4 A GAL GUD} “4 large ox-calves” establishes that at least the first half of the text deals with livestock. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the latter half does, too. Furthermore, {bur-ṭiš} is very likely the same noun as occurs in Aššur-bēl-kala’s “Broken Obelisk” iv:26 (BM 118898; ed. Grayson 1991 as *RIMA 2 A.0.89.7*)⁴³⁹:

⁴³⁸ Thus Donbaz and Parpola 2001: 12. Cf. Lundström 2012: 325 n. 3, “we prefer to retain the old reading since the evidence for *burḥiš* / *burṭiš* has not yet been reviewed and it remains possible that the animal named *burṭiš* is of a different species.” As suggested above, I regard the similar livestock and hunting contexts as making this rather unlikely.

⁴³⁹ The “Broken Obelisk” is BM 118898 (56-9-9,59). The text is edited, with all previous bibliography given, at Grayson 1991: 99–105 (= *RIMA 2 A.0.89.7*). Ornan 2007 is a recent study of the relief, but one should keep in mind

BM 118898 iv:26–27

26 (...) bur-ĤI-iš ud-ra-a-te^{meš} te-še-ni^{meš} lúDAM.GÀR^{meš}

27 iš-pur il-qe-ú-ni (...)

He sent merchants to get (a?) *burṭiš*, dromedaries, and bison(?).⁴⁴⁰

Once again, one likely has a list of large hoofed mammals that are wholly or partially domesticated. In addition to the Tiglath-pileser I texts quoted above—in which {bur-ṭi-iš} should then also be read—this animal is mentioned as a source for decorative imagery in two Late Bronze texts, EA 29:182 (letter of Tušratta of Mitanni) and VAT 16462 ii:5, iii:12 (inventory from Kār-Tukulti-Ninurta; ed. Köcher 1957–58). The former text merely catalogues {1 GA.RÍG KÙ.GI tam-lu-ú KUR SAG bu-ur-ṭi-iš} *I muštu hurāši tamlû {KUR} rēš burṭiš* “One gold comb inlaid with

the cautions of Curtis 2007 regarding damage done to both relief and inscription during cleaning in the 1960s. Both of these articles include some further bibliography on the obelisk.

⁴⁴⁰ Neither dictionary has a certain gloss for the lexeme *tešēnu* (*AHw* 1352a; *CAD* T [2006]: 373); both list only the present occurrence and two others, all Middle- or Neo-Assyrian: {tu-še-ni^{meš}} is attested in a variant of the Aššurnāširpal II inscription now edited by Grayson 1991: 223–28 as *RIMA* 2 A.0.101.2:37; the variant in question (ex. 8 in *RIMA* 2) is known only through the squeeze consulted by Le Gac (1907) but since destroyed. The *tušēnū* (sic) would there be named together with all varieties of other animals, but most proximately *nimrū* “panthers” and *senkurrū* “wild cats(?)”. The other text is the Middle-Assyrian economic document VAT 8236:3 (copy Weidner 1959: pl. 6), which names {te-še-ni} as part of the decoration on a *hullānu*-textile.

But one may be able to move beyond von Soden’s (*AHw* 1352a) inability to offer an etymology. I am tempted to propose that this lexeme is cognate with biblical Hebrew *hapax legomenon* (Deut 14.5) יָשָׁן, of disputed meaning; the irregular dental correspondence can be explained by the hypothesis that both are loans from Hittite {ti-ša-nu-uš} *tišānuš*, which renders Sumerian {ALIM} in the S^a vocabulary from Boğazköy (see *CAD* D [1959]: 165a). It is possible that *ditānu*, occurring in lexical lists and *Etana*, is likewise to be connected with these, but this is a more complicated question than can be engaged in a footnote. If the basic taxonomic identification is correct, this would mean that all three of the animals named in BM 118898 iv:26 are hoofed animals of a large size.

{KUR}⁴⁴¹ (and?) the head of a *burṭiš*” among Tušratta’s greeting gift for the pharaoh. This tells one that the animal has a head, but of course this is hardly helpful for taxonomic identification. The latter text offers more information in listing {⁵ 13 SAG.DU^{meš} bur-ṭi-iš kám-ṣu-tu X / ⁶ qi-im-ma-tu-šu-nu ^{na4}ZA.GÎN qar-na-šu-nu [] 13 *rēšū burṭiš kamṣūtu* [...] *qimmātušunu uqnū qarnašunu* [...] “Thirteen heads of kneeling *burṭiš* [...], whose manes are made of lapis lazuli and whose horns are made of [...] .” The information that the *burṭiš* has *qimmātu* “(head) hair” and *qarnū* “horns” narrows the field of inquiry significantly and begins to make such suggestions as “(a foreign wild ox [...])” (*CAD* B [1965] 329a) and “etwa ‘Büffel’” (*AHw* 139b) seem likely if not certain.

Etymologizing the noun remains difficult. First, it is far from clear that this animal name is Semitic as opposed to drawn from one among a group of Near Eastern languages that have -š terminations in the nominal system.⁴⁴² If the name is Semitic, the new reading *burṭiš* lends itself most easily to analysis as rhotically-expanded or -dissimilated **bVṭ(t)iš* > **burṭiš*—thus a root

⁴⁴¹ There is no consensus on how to understand {KUR} here. The most reasonable suggestion is that of Liverani (1999: 404), according to whom {KUR} is *šaddānu* “hematite” here, even though {KUR} is usually provided with a phonetic complement {-nu} in such instances (citations at *CAD* Š.1 [1989] 36b; sign listing at Borger 2010: 373). Knudtzon (1915: 268–69) suggested reading {KUR SAG} as a single noun {kur-riš} *kurriš*, presumably to be understood as an animal alongside the *burṭiš*. I cannot locate, however, any other likely occurrence of such a noun. Rainey (2015: 323) has “inlaid, genuine,” but with no justification of this. Adler (1976: 250–51, 351) does not translate and gives for “KUR.SAG” only “Bed[eutung] unbek[annt].” Moran (1992: 97) and Cochavi-Rainey (2005: 86) do not translate.

⁴⁴² The morpheme {-š} -š is a common nominal ending in Hittite and related Anatolian languages (Hoffner and Melchert 2008: 70 [§3.15]), but a search through the relevant dictionaries has yielded no likely source. Similarly, Hurrian has an ergative morpheme {-š} =š (Campbell 2015: 15), but again no likely loan source. Kassite probably also had a š-termination in its nominal system (cp. such names as Burnaburiaš), but this language’s morphology and lexicon are so poorly known that a search along these lines is certainly futile. Contemporary animal nouns that show sporadic -š are *mindinaš* “tiger” (thus only in *RIMA* 2 A.0.101.2:35; elsewhere with ordinary case endings; see *CAD* M.2 [1977]: 85) and the possible source of Assyrian *tešēnu* “bison(?),” Hittite *tišānuš* (see n. 440).

*√bṭs(1)—as *-iš is not a core case-marking morpheme in Semitic.⁴⁴³ The root *√bṭs(1) turns out to be quite rare in Semitic. One finds reflexes only in various Late Antique Aramaic dialects meaning “to kick, stomp.”⁴⁴⁴ Such an etymology of *burṭiš*, some sort of wild bovid, as “the kicking and/or stomping animal” is conceivable⁴⁴⁵ but difficult to verify due to the daunting chronological gap separating the above verbal lexemes from the cuneiform occurrences of the noun.

One can therefore propose a tentative taxonomic identification for the *burṭiš*. The most common wild bovid in Mesopotamia—and beyond into the Caucasus—during the Late Bronze was *Bos primigenius primigenius*, the Eurasian aurochs.⁴⁴⁶ If the above analysis of contextual and

⁴⁴³ For a summary of Akkadian attestations of this case-marker, see von Soden 1995: 109–12 (§67). Hasselbach (2013: 21) discusses the distribution across the Semitic languages.

⁴⁴⁴ Jewish Babylonian Aramaic בִּט"ש is scarce but illuminating (summary in Sokoloff 2002: 198a). It occurs as a variant of בע"ט “to kick” (all other exemplars) in Ms. Paris 671 at *b Ber* 61a ובטשא ודא חזינא דנכתא ובטשא “don’t we see that (an animal) bites and kicks?” It is employed consistently in the various manuscripts of *b Šab* 116b אַתָּא חֲמַרָּא וּבִטְשָׁא לִשְׂרָא “the donkey came and kicked the lamp.” Despite the rarity of attestation, it is perhaps notable that both of these occurrences involve animals as subjects. For a summary of occurrences in Mandaic—apparently fairly frequent—see at present Drower and Macuch 1963: 59a; from a cursory examination, most occurrences appear to involve “kicking” rather than “treading,” but Mandaic lexicography remains a hazardous endeavor poorly supported by what few reliable text editions exist. No verb *√bṭ is attested in Syriac, but one does find the nominal instantiation כִּיקָּ “kicking” catalogued in Bar Bahlul’s lexicon (ed. Duval 1898–1901 at 371:10; Brockelmann 1928: 68a; ed. Sokoloff 2009: 125b).

Arabic *bataša* has plausibly related semantics—“to seize violently, assault”—but these are perhaps not so close as to render the affiliation necessary (cf. D. Cohen et al. 1970–II.61a), and Arabic š as a reflex of proto-Semitic *s (= s₁) is unexpected. (Similarly, later Aramaic {š} š is never the reflex of *l [= s₂].) Ethiopic *batasa* “break, detach, cut off” (Leslau 1987: 114a) does show the expected reflex of *s and seems likely to be cognate with the Aramaic verb documented above. But usage of Ethiopic throughout its linguistic history is so distant chronologically and geographically from the areas in which *burṭiš* is attested that it is regarded here as less useful than its Aramaic cognate.

⁴⁴⁵ Typologically, one could compare German “Trampeltier” for the Bactrian camel.

⁴⁴⁶ Von den Dreisch 2007 provides a recent summary of archaeozoological evidence with citation of older studies and data on the domestication of this species. A comment on the frequent preference for “yak”—i.e. probably *Bos mutus*, the wild yak, as opposed to *Bos grunniens*, the domesticated yak—is necessary here. One finds numerous authors mentioning or even preferring such a taxonomic identification, sometimes explicitly because the yak simply

etymological data regarding the *burṭiš* is broadly correct, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the second animal depicted by Tiglath-pileser was some gigantic bovid. Even if the taxonomic identifications proposed here are tentative and uncertain, it has been thought helpful to suggest an image of what visitors to Tiglath-pileser I's palace would have seen upon their arrival. Two statues of quadrupedal mammals of tremendous bulk and similar morphology would have made an impressive tableau.⁴⁴⁷ It is also significant that the *nāḥiru* would have symbolized the sea and the *burṭiš* the mountainous land. The animals' morphological and habitat symmetry might have further served to accentuate the core message articulated in Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions describing the spectacle's background: the king is lord over both the landlocked East (the *burṭiš* from Lumaš) and the watery West (the *nāḥiru* from the Mediterranean). His power extends, by this merism, with imposing impartiality in all directions.⁴⁴⁸

One can understand the purposes involved even more exactly by expanding consideration to slightly later material produced by the scribes of Tiglath-pileser I's son, Aššur-bēl-kala (r. 1073–56 B.C.E.). According to his claims in the Broken Obelisk (*RIMA* 2 A.0.89.7), Aššur-bēl-kala also

seems exotic (e.g. *CAD* B [1965] 329a; Engel 1987: 73, “verdient der im Hochland von Tibet und den angrenzenden Gebieten beheimatete Yak oder Grunzochse besondere Bedeutung”). But the wild yak's range appears to have been restricted to the Tibetan plateau (Schaller and Liu 1996). The sheer distance to this plateau from the Assyrian core—some 2,600 miles, around four times the distance from Aššur to the Mediterranean coast—general difficulty of access, and the utter absence of evidence for large-scale royal, military, and/or commercial campaigns to the area render the *burṭiš* = “yak” hypothesis very unlikely.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. Lundström's (2012) recent reconstruction on the basis of putative archaeological correlates. These are completely speculative and produce the hypothesis of two statues: a large bovid (as here), but juxtaposed with a very small eel. One has a hard time imagining how this would have been an effective monumental display.

⁴⁴⁸ Similar points are made by Engel (1987: 74).

went on a hunt for the *nāḫiru*. This is described among a number of other deeds involving wild animals and particularly illustrations of the king's control over these creatures⁴⁴⁹:

RIMA 2 A.0.89.7 iv:1–9a

- 1 ^dnin-urta ù ^dIGI.DU šá SANGA-su i-ra-bu bu-[?]ur EDIN
- 2 ú-šá-at-li-mu-šu-ma ina ^{giš}MÁ^{meš} šá KUR ar-ma-da-a-ia
- 3 ir-kab na-ḫi-ra ina A.AB.BA GAL-te i-du-uk
- 4 AM^{meš} SÚN^{meš} šu-tu-ru-te ina URU a-ra-zi-qi
- 5 šá pa-an KUR ḫa-at-te ù ina GÌR ^{kur}lab-na-a-ni i-duk
- 6 mu-ri^{meš} bal-ṭu-te šá AM^{meš} ú-ša-ab-bi-ta
- 7 su-gul-la-a-te-šu-nu ik-ṣur AM.SI^{meš} ina ^{giš}BAN-šu
- 8 ú-šam-qit AM.SI^{meš} bal-ṭu-te ú-ša-ab-bi-ta
- 9 a-na URU-šu ^da-šur ub-la (...)

*Ninurta u Nergal ša šangûssu irabbū bu[?]ur šēri / ušatlimūšu-ma ina elippāti ša māt
Aramadayya / irkab nāḫira ina tâmti rabûte idūk / rīmī rīmāti šūtūrūte ina āli
Araziqi / ša pān māt Ḫatte u ina šēp Labnāni idūk / mūrī balṭūte ša rīmī ušabbita /
sugullātešunu ikṣur pīrī ina qaštišu / ušamqit pīrī balṭūte ušabbita / ana ālišu Aššur
ubla*

⁽¹⁾ Ninurta and Nergal, who love his priesthood, granted the hunt to him. He rode in boats of the land of Arvad. He killed a *nāḫiru* in the great sea. ⁽⁴⁾ He killed exceptional wild bulls and cows in Araziqi, which is opposite Ḫatti and at the foot of Mount Lebanon. ⁽⁶⁾ He captured live calves of wild bulls. He formed herds of them. He felled elephants with his bow. He captured live elephants. He brought them to his city, Aššur.

⁴⁴⁹ This passage has similarities with other royal narratives of animal collection. Contextualization of that element of the rhetoric may be found in Thomason 2005: 187–99.

The text goes on to describe additional hunts and animal acquisitions—even a large female monkey dispatched from the King of Egypt himself (*ibid.* iv 29–30)—all of which cast the king as lord of the natural world and especially of its extremities and exotica. More importantly for present purposes, though, this description of animal conquests is followed by a description of Aššur-bēl-kala’s building activity. The walls and gates of Aššur itself are rebuilt, and Aššur-bēl-kala surpasses his father’s statuary by commissioning figures as follows:

RIMA 2 A.0.89.7 v:16–19

- 16 (...) 2 na-ḫi-re^{meš} 4 bur-ṭi-iš^{meš}
 17 4 UR.MAḪ^{meš} šá^{na4} AD.BAR 2^d ALAD.^d LAMMA
 18 šá^{na4} pa-ru-te 2 bur-ṭi-iš^{meš} šá^{na4} pi-li BABB^{ER}-e
 19 ab-ni-ma ina KÁ.MEŠ-šu-nu ú-še-zi-iz

*šinā nāḫirē erbet burṭiš / erbet nēšī ša atbari šinā aladlammî / ša parūte šinā burṭiš
 ša pīli pešê / abnīma ina bābātišunu ušezziz*

I constructed two *nāḫiru*, four *burṭiš*, and four lions from basalt, two *aladlammû* from *parūtu*-alabaster, and two *burṭiš* from white limestone. I stationed them at their gates.

Again here there are no internal indications as to the form and size of the *nāḫiru* and *burṭiš* sculptures. But they are at least now accompanied by figures more broadly attested in both textual and iconographic corpora, namely monumental gate lions and the *aladlammû*. The former are certainly demonstrative of the king’s power over the natural world. This is suggested not only by broad cross-cultural traditions involving the lion as king of beasts and facing it as a superlative

activity undertaken by royalty to prove their mettle,⁴⁵⁰ but also by the particularly Neo-Assyrian practice of staged lion combat—the so-called “lion hunt”—described often in text and iconography.⁴⁵¹ The {^dALAD.^dLAMMA} *aladlammû* are a more complicated case, but it is certainly possible to say more about their significations than has usually been attempted.

4.2.2 The *aladlammû* and Royal Power

The compound logogram {^dALAD.^dLAMMA} is common especially in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and letters, and a number of studies have both catalogued occurrences and examined two particular problems: (1.) the Akkadian reading of the logogram; and (2.) the morphology of the figures in question, with particular attention to possible iconographic correlates of the term.⁴⁵² Both of these problems must be treated briefly before a consideration of the figures’

⁴⁵⁰ This general phenomenon is noted from within Near Eastern studies by Strawn 2005: 54–58 (focus on the Hebrew Bible), 131–34 (focus on Mesopotamia); and Watanabe 2002: 42–56 (focus on Mesopotamia). The broad motif and the psychological explications and ramifications of persistent beast-and-sovereign associations—chiefly the existence of both outside law—were explored by Derrida in his lectures of 2001–3, now published as Derrida 2008–10. Pyper (2014) engages Derrida’s observations in his recent discussion of Yahweh as lion in the Hebrew Bible, but much more could certainly be done.

⁴⁵¹ The reliefs—most from the North Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh (668–27 B.C.E.), ed. Barnett 1976; for relevant Aššurnaširpal II reliefs, see most conveniently Albenda 1972— and texts describing the Neo-Assyrian lion hunt have been much discussed. Watanabe 2002: 76–88 (= idem 1998) discusses symbolism allegedly associated with Ninurta mythology. Strawn 2005: 164–74 is a more balanced overview of the phenomenon with more extensive references. Dick (2006) argues that Yahweh in Job occupies essentially the same position *vis-à-vis* wild evil as does the Neo-Assyrian king *vis-à-vis* the lion in the lion hunt; this claim is rather general, but the article is valuable for engagement of the Neo-Assyrian royal hunt from a Levantine perspective. Royal hunts in general were, somewhat recently, the subject of a monograph by Allsen (2006).

⁴⁵² Studies of central importance for understanding {^dALAD.^dLAMMA} and related topics are von Soden 1964; Kolbe 1981: 1–14, 170–72, 210–12; Foxvog et al. 1983; Spycket 1983; Engel 1987: 1–49; Green 1993–97: 255–56; Danrey 2004; and Ritter *fc.* All of these and other treatments are engaged in more detail below.

functions is engaged, primarily so that false or uncertain equivalences do not lead one to argue for ultimately unconvincing interpretations of either textual or iconographic items.

Both of the major modern dictionaries of Akkadian agree on the reading of {^dALAD.^dLAMMA} as *aladlam(m)û* (*AHw* 31a, but “uns[icher]”; *CAD* A.1 [1964]: 286–87), but it must be admitted that the reading remains unproven. Landsberger (Landsberger and Bauer 1927: 218–19 n. 2) appears to have been the first to claim that {^dALAD.^dLAMMA} should be understood as a compound logogram, rather than ^dALAD *šēdu* followed by ^dLAMMA *lamassu*.⁴⁵³ Landsberger’s argument was built on two points: (1.) the Sumerographic plural morpheme {MEŠ} is generally added to the end of the compound, not also after {^dALAD}. (There are, however, exceptions to this general observation.⁴⁵⁴) (2.) Such writings and the resultant understanding fit a known category in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions: “learned compounds” (*CAD* A.1 [1964]: 287b) taken over from Sumerian to designate hybrid or otherwise fantastical creatures, e.g. *pirigallû*, *urmahlullû*, etc. Given these points, Landsberger suggested the Akkadian reading was *aladlamû* (sic), even though an Akkadographic orthography proving the case was not then and is still not attested. Outside of the dictionaries, this hypothesis has been adopted by a number of scholars, including Engel (1987: 9, “als Lesung möglich”), Danrey (2004: 135), and Ritter (fc.: 1a).⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Both of these equivalences are well established from lexical lists. For (^d)ALAD (= KALxBAD) = *šēdu*, see the lexical references at *CAD* Š.2 [1992]: 256b. For (^d)LAMMA = *lamassu*, see the lexical references at *CAD* L [1971]: 61 and Foxvog et al. 1983: 447. These lists of references will also illustrate the frequent juxtaposition of the two types. Both are generally protective figures, even though the *šēdu* is occasionally enumerated among evil forces (references at *CAD* Š.2 [1992]: 258b–59a; popularizing summary in Oppenheim 1977: 199–200).

⁴⁵⁴ See already Landsberger and Bauer 1927: 218–19 n. 2. Exceptions are also catalogued by Engel (1987: 4–8). As he points out (ibid.: 3), later treatments have tended to rely on only the former point, despite the obvious exceptions that Landsberger spent some time explicating. For reliance on the inconsistent plural markers, see *AHw* 31a; von Soden 1964: 155; and *CAD* A.1 [1964]: 287b.

⁴⁵⁵ Strangely, neither Kolbe (1981: 1–14) nor Wiggermann (1993–97a: 243b) allude to the possibility of a compound name or to the above problem at all.

The identification of the *aladlammû* with the human-headed winged bulls is suggested by correspondence of size, material (*pīlu pešû* “limestone), and number (thus Engel 1987: 13–14). Most determinative, though, is the fact that now-lost reliefs⁴⁵⁶ from the Central Courtyard (= Court 6) of the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh depict the quarrying and transport of a winged bull colossus (slabs 53, 54 and 56, and 63–64); these are adjacent to slabs that appear to depict the transport of the same monument and either certainly (slab 60) or perhaps (slab 62; see n. 457) bear the following epigraph:

RINAP 3.2 Sennacherib 73 (BM 124824 = Court 6, slab 60)⁴⁵⁷

- 1 m.^d30-PAP.MEŠ-SU MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR aš-šur ^dALAD.^dLAMMA^{meš}
- 2 GAL.MEŠ ša i-na er-še-et ^{uru}ba-la-ṭa-a-a
- 3 ib-ba-nu-ú a-na É.GAL be-lu-ti-šú
- 4 ʾšáʾ qé-reb NINA^{ki} ḥa-di-iš ú-šal-da-da

⁴⁵⁶ The lost relief depicting the quarrying of the statue occupied slabs 63–64 of Court 6. The drawing thereof is conserved as BM Or.Dr. I.57 (reproduced at Reade 1978: fig. 5a and Russell 1991: 106–7 fig. 54). The other drawings of (also now lost) slabs in which a bull colossus being transported is visible are BM Or.Dr. I.55, of slabs 54 and 56 from Court 6 (reproduced at Russell 1991: 111 fig. 59) and BM (Or.Dr. IV.49, of slab 53 from Court 6 (reproduced at Russell 1991: 111 fig. 60). In both, the features of the monument itself are drawn quite clearly. None of these have epigraphs describing the activity but are certainly to be associated with those slabs that do bear epigraphs (see below).

⁴⁵⁷ The epigraph of BM 124824 (= Court 6, slab 60) is most recently edited at Grayson and Novotny 2014 (*RINAP* 3.2): 116–17 (no. Sennacherib 73). All previous bibliography is listed at *ibid.*: 116 (key are Frahm 1997: 126 [no. T 47] and Russell 1991: 274; 1999: 286). Russell (1991: 295 n. 45; 1999: 286) has argued that the epigraph cited here is that which was copied by Layard as “Over king superintending removal of bull” but erroneously labeled “No. 62.” Slab 62 is known only from a drawing—BM Or.Dr. IV.51—which includes two illegible four line epigraphs. It has been suggested that these are the same as that of slab 60 (Russell 1991: 274; 1999: 286), but of course this can hardly be confirmed from the mere fact that they appear to be of about the same length (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 116; Frahm 1997: 126).

*Sîn-aḥḥê-ēriba šar kiššāti šar māt Aššur aladlammî / rabûti ša ina eršet Balātāyya
/ ibbanû ana ekal bēlūtišu / ša qereb Ninua ḥadîš ušaldada*

Sennacherib, King of the World, King of the land of Aššur, joyfully has large *aladlammû*, made in the land of Balātāyya, dragged to his lordly palace in Nineveh.

The winged bull colossus depicted in this relief series is thus certainly to be identified with the *aladlammû* (Engel 1987: 13). Such statues were indeed excavated at Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh, and they have also been recovered from numerous other monumental sites, with the earliest items from Aššurnāširpal II's (r. 883–59 B.C.E.) Northwest Palace at Kalḫu and the latest from Esarhaddon's (681–68 B.C.E.) Southwest Palace at the same site.⁴⁵⁸

The morphology of the *aladlammû* is remarkably consistent through the Neo-Assyrian period and even beyond, not only in its monumental instantiations but also in representations in cylinder seals and other media (Ritter *fc.*: 1a). All have quadruped bodies and humanoid heads, bearded, mustached, and topped by a headdress—itsself of variable type—over shoulder-length hair. Beyond these generalities, distinctions among subtypes may be observed (with Kolbe 1981: 2–3): (1.) bull body, legs, and ears, with wings and chest-feathers; (2.) like (1.), but with a stomach covered in fish scales; (3.) lion body and legs, with wings and chest-feathers, but human ears; and (4.) like (3.), but with the addition of human arms. All of these wear horned caps, but the cap of type (2.) is styled like a fish, perhaps in imitation of the garb of the *apkallû* sages. According to the count of Kolbe (1981: 4–5),⁴⁵⁹ type (1.) is by far the most common—105–8 of 135 colossi

⁴⁵⁸ Comprehensive references are given in Kolbe 1981: 212–14.

⁴⁵⁹ It should be stressed that Kolbe's (1981) study is nevertheless now almost forty years old. No attempt has been made here to update it with inclusion of new finds, which have been somewhat numerous (some additions in e.g. Danrey 2004). The relative proportions of various subtypes seem unlikely to be severely altered by new finds.

total— and persists throughout the Neo-Assyrian period and is employed exclusively (55 exemplars) at Sargon II's (722–05 B.C.E.) palace at Dūr-Šarrukin (Khorsabad). The next most common is type (3.), 15–21 exemplars, followed by type (4.), 4 exemplars, and type (2.), 2–5 exemplars. All of the certain attestations of these last two types are from the earliest monumental Neo-Assyrian palace, that of Aššurnāṣirpal II at Nimrud, with the result that one can hypothesize gradual standardization of monumental form as this sculptural tradition matured (Kolbe 1981: 3).

These two preliminaries considered, one can move to a more direct consideration of the likely intentions and receptions involved in *aladlammû* depictions. Although this is not often noted, there is some indication that the *aladlammû* was occasionally understood to represent a hostile force. It should be stressed that this observation does not involve minimizing or ignoring the status of the *aladlammû* as apotropaic figures (for which Danrey 2004: 135; Maul 2000: 28; Engel 1987: 29; Kolbe 1981: 7–8; von Soden 1964); this function is generally assumed for them from their frequent liminal positions and can be grounded in texts such as the following:

RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 2 v 27–32⁴⁶⁰
 27 ^dALAD^{meš} u ^dLAMMA^{meš} šá NA₄^{meš}
 28 šá ki-i pi-i šik-ni-šú-nu
 29 ir-ti lem-ni ú-tar-ru

Furthermore, while I think it likely that the subtypes were both intended and received with moderately distinct significations, a full study of these is not possible here.

⁴⁶⁰ The seven known exemplars of this text, often also called Nineveh (Prism B), is most recently edited at Leichty 2011 (*RINAP* 4): 27–35, where the manuscripts and all previous bibliography are listed. Most important in this latter category is the oft-cited earlier edition of Borger 1956: 37–64. There are no significant variants in this section (Leichty 2011: 329), so I quote from the majority text of *RINAP* 4 (ibid.: 33–34). This text has been cited in connection with the function of the *aladlammû* in e.g. Engel 1987: 29 and Kolbe 1981: 7–8. One might note that this is a text in which the Sumerographic plural {MEŠ} is appended to both {^dALAD} and {^dLAMMA} (discussion at n. 454).

30 na-šir kib-si mu-šal-li-mu
 31 tal-lak-ti LUGAL ba-ni-šú-nu
 32 ZAG u GÛB ú-šá-aš-bi-ta SI.GAR-ši-in

aladlammû (? see n. 453) *ša abnāti / ša kî pî šiknišunu / irti lemni utarrû / nāšir
 kibsi mušallimû / tallakti šarri bānišunu / imitta u šumēla ušašbita sigaršin*

I set up stone *aladlammû*, whose appearance turns back the evil one, to the right and left of their gate(s) as guardian(s) of the path (*nāšir kibsi*) and protectors of the passage (*mušallimû tallakti*) of the king, their creator.

Thus the *aladlammû* have an architecturally-bound protective function and the king has earned their particular attendance by his creative activity, at least according to whatever power directed those scribes of Esarhaddon who produced the royal inscription from which the above is excerpted.

Scholars have often alluded to the fact that one might reasonably inquire as to how the human-headed winged bulls acquired such an important and intimidating function, but few have gone beyond general statements to begin establishing histories of *aladlammû* signification.⁴⁶¹ As

⁴⁶¹ For example, even though Danrey (2004) endeavors to “clarify the origin and development of the winged human-headed bull figures” (ibid.: 138), no hypothesis to this effect is offered; combat with these figures is, at least, described and depicted (ibid.: 136–37), but it is unclear how Danrey relates this motif to the *aladlammû*’s appearance in monumental art. Cf. also Engel (1987: 29), who is right to note that “Die Ausstattung des Palastes [in general] hatte zum Ziel, den Besuchern die Macht des assyrischen Königs zu veranschaulichen.” Similarly, Maul (2000: 28) draws attention to the fact that “Unbekannt ist freilich, worauf sich die schützende und Böses abwendende Kraft der Torgenie gründet,” before going on to hypothesize that the major impetus is understanding of the *aladlammû* (his “*lamassu*”) as representative of the extreme geographical periphery. Incorporation of this figure thus illustrates—as with the *nāhīru* and *burtiš*, studied in Subsection 4.2.1, above—the world-encompassing extension of the Assyrian king’s power. Evidence for the *aladlammû*’s association with the periphery is, unfortunately, rather scarce; Maul (2000: 28–34) relies heavily on the Sargon relief from Dūr-Šarrukin (Khorsabad) AO 19889, in which the *aladlammû* is shown with the *kullullû* and a winged (bull-headed) bull escorting ships westward. (The original location of this slab was Façade n, Slabs 1–2 [Albenda 1986: 162; ibid.: 21–22 for a reproduction of Flandin’s drawing; see also Maul 2000: 29 fig. 2 and Ataç 2010: 176 fig. 122–23].) The orientation of the scene, though, of course implies movement

a first step in this direction, I would like to point to certain tendencies in *aladlammû* representation on cylinder seals.⁴⁶² Those considered below span multiple geographic regions but are mostly from the 8th-century B.C.E. and later. They usually belong to the general category of “Contest-Scene” seals, in which a king or otherwise heroic figure is depicted facing off against or grasping one or multiple (usually rampant) enemies. The following references do not constitute an exhaustive catalogue, but they serve as signposts towards some of the more explicit and interesting combat scenes involving human-headed winged bulls⁴⁶³:

- (1.) BM 89305 (chalcedony), purchased 1867; Middle Assyrian (cat. Collon 2001: 159 and pl. 25 [no. 302]).⁴⁶⁴ The seal depicts at left a striding figure who holds, in his right hand, a sword and steps with his left foot on the back of a couchant goat. The

towards the periphery and *aladlammû* protection thereof (Kolbe 1981: 8–9); one errs in assuming that the *aladlammû* necessarily acquired its sea-protective powers from having this realm as its homeland (cf. Maul 2000: 33–34).

⁴⁶² Oddly enough, attention to these representations on cylinder seals has been quite limited in more general discussions of the monumental human-headed winged bull. Ritter (fc.: 4) is one of the few who has considered them and briefly concluded “Apart from this apotropaic and prophylactic aspect, the h[uman-headed winged bull] can assume in scenes of combat or heroic encounter the role of the dangerous creature to be overcome by the royal Persian [cf. below] hero, similar to other hybrid beings.” I think this to be a correct observation, but Ritter stops short of drawing any conclusions therefrom for the colossi. The relevant articles in the *Reallexikon* both (Foxvog et al. 1983; Spycket 1983) appear to have been hampered by the commitment to considering the human-headed winged bull under “*lamassu*,” with the result that no non-protective iconographic representations of human-headed winged bulls were covered there. Green (1993–97) also avoids mention of non-monumental depictions in the apposite subsection of his “Mischwesen” article.

⁴⁶³ There exist similar scenes that involve simple winged bulls, in both the animal and archer scene (e.g. BM 89419, cat. Collon 2001: 44 and pl. 3 [no. 29]) and the contest scene (e.g. BM 89145; 129098; 129554; 89318, cat. [all] Collon 2001: 187–89 and pl. 32 [nos. 381–84]). These are not considered here because the present main goal is to elucidate the likely associations of the *aladlammû* particularly.

⁴⁶⁴ BM 89305: The British Museum purchased this seal from one J. H. Armstrong on November 11, 1867 (acq. no. 1857-11-15, 10). It has no reported provenance. Previous publications include Wiseman 1959: pl. 72.

striding figure grasps with his left hand the front right hoof of a rampant human-headed winged bull, who faces his aggressor.

- (2.) BM 134768 (serpentine), purchased 1966; Neo-Assyrian (cat. Collon 2001: 44 and pl. 3 [no. 27]).⁴⁶⁵ The seal depicts at left an archer aiming his arrow at the forehead of a human-headed winged goat(?),⁴⁶⁶ who is rampant and faces the archer over a short bush.
- (3.) BM 89781 (quartz, chalcedony), purchased 1772; Persian-period (cat. Merrillees 2005: 67–68 and pl. 24 [no. 62]).⁴⁶⁷ Merrillees (2005: 64) catalogues this as Achaemenid. The seal depicts at left a crowned figure in combat with a rampant human-headed winged bull, at center. The former holds the latter by the neck with his left hand and wields a dagger in his right hand. The monster faces backwards towards a tree, on the other side of which stands a goat in mirror position.

⁴⁶⁵ BM 134768: The British Museum purchased this seal from the estate of Edward G. Spencer-Churchill on February 18, 1966 (acq. no. 1966-2-18, 29). Collon 2001 is the *editio princeps*.

⁴⁶⁶ The figure does have backwards-sweeping, ribbed horns such as are generally more characteristic of goats (genus *Capra*), perhaps a variety of ibex. Collon (2001: 44) thus describes this as a “human-headed goat or [sic] ibex.” The figure is, though, quite heavy and broad in its body, which is unexpected if this is a straightforward “human-headed goat” rather than simply a fantastic creature that combines elements of multiple animal morphologies.

⁴⁶⁷ BM 89781: The British Museum purchased this seal from Sir William Hamilton as part of a large lot on March 15, 1772 (acq. no. 1772-3-15, 419). As noted by Merrillees (2005: 67–68), “[a] belief that the provenance of this seal was the Plain of Marathon may have been due to its illustration with other seals in an unpublished manuscript by John Cullum [ca. 1834, kept at the British Library, General Reference Collection C.119.e.3], together with remarks about their possible origin, including Marathon”; but there is no more precise information to suggest that this was the geographical origin of the seal, and of course it might have been conveyed there from its point of manufacture. Merrillees (2005: 68) lists many previous publications; of note are Wiseman 1959 no. 104 and Collon 1987 no. 421.

This is suggestive, naturally, for the logic behind the erection of *aladlammû* colossi at the gates of Neo-Assyrian palaces and elsewhere. This logic was certainly complex rather than one-dimensional. These and other representations considered in the present chapter were not *only* apotropaic or *only* reflective of Assyrian hegemony or *only* mnemonic for royal combat. There survive from Assyria fewer explicit meditations on the significance of, for example, the *aladlammû* than survive from the European Middle Ages on Romanesque and Gothic chimeras. This, though, should make one more, rather than less, cautious about asserting a single signification or “function” (cf. e.g. Engel 1987: 29; Kolbe 1981: 7–8; von Soden 1964). Such assertions imply that there existed some consensus shared by the creators and receivers of monumental sculpture as to its fundamental or predominant implications; this is unlikely both given the parallels surveyed in the introduction to this chapter and the modalities by which individuals relate to art (and text) generally.⁴⁶⁸ These claims also imply that this consensus is recoverable, usually on the basis of just one or two descriptors in royal inscriptions (see e.g. the citation from *RINAP* 4 Esarhaddon 2 [= Nineveh Prism B], above). Even when it is not assumed that these descriptors exhaust the range of significations assigned to the *aladlammû* and similar categories, it is often implied or lamented that lacking additional descriptive texts, one will not be able to expand our present knowledge of ancient meanings. Like Maul (2000: 28–34), I have endeavored here to suggest, on the basis of iconographic material, additional associations for the human-headed winged bull: like the *nāḥiru* and *burṭiš*, their incorporation in the Neo-Assyrian monumental program symbolized in part the

⁴⁶⁸ Feldman (2014) is an excellent recent overview of social processes of meaning-making in an Eastern Mediterranean context. Crawford (2009: 64–82) examines the tendency to ascribe singular meaning to Solomonic temple architecture, fixtures, and iconography at greater length and pushes back against this trend throughout his dissertation. For further reflections on diversities of meaning, based especially on processes of recontextualization, see also Osborne 2017b and Feldman 2009.

king's domination of chaotic elements and his unique ability to subordinate and repurpose fearsome monsters.

4.2.3 Tiamat's Offspring

Explicit representations of combat between the gods and monsters are very rare in Mesopotamian reliefs. There are a few exceptions to this rule. A relief from the temple of Ninurta at Nimrud (BM 124571 and BM 124572; figs. 4.1 and 4.2, below)⁴⁶⁹ depicts on a monumental scale the violent combat between Ninurta and Anzû.

⁴⁶⁹ BM 124571 and 124572 are often illustrated and discussed, first in Layard 1853: pl. 5 and most comprehensively in Moortgat-Correns 1988, who comprehensively discusses the context of the relief. Recent art historical literature includes Schroer 2018: 612 (no. 1640); Kertai 2015b: 346–47; Ataç 2010: 194–95 and fig. 130; Collon 2006: esp. 101; Ornan 2005: 34, 87, 254 fig. 105; Keel 2001: 16, 18 fig. 12; Winter 2000: 74 (= eadem 2010: 137); and Uehlinger 1995: 68, 91 fig. 17. A summary of older literature may be found in Fuhr-Jaepfelt 1972: 147 n. 373 (with fig. 136). In recent *Combat Myth Studies*, this relief is discussed briefly by Ballentine 2015: 68 (very similarly *ibid.* 190), “Monumental art from Ninurta’s temple in Kalḫu shows that Aššurnasirpal II alluded to Ninurta’s victories, and the visual linking of the building to the deity’s victory possibly served to promote the temple and new capital city as well.” Batto (2013: 34 and fig. 16) simply illustrates the relief.

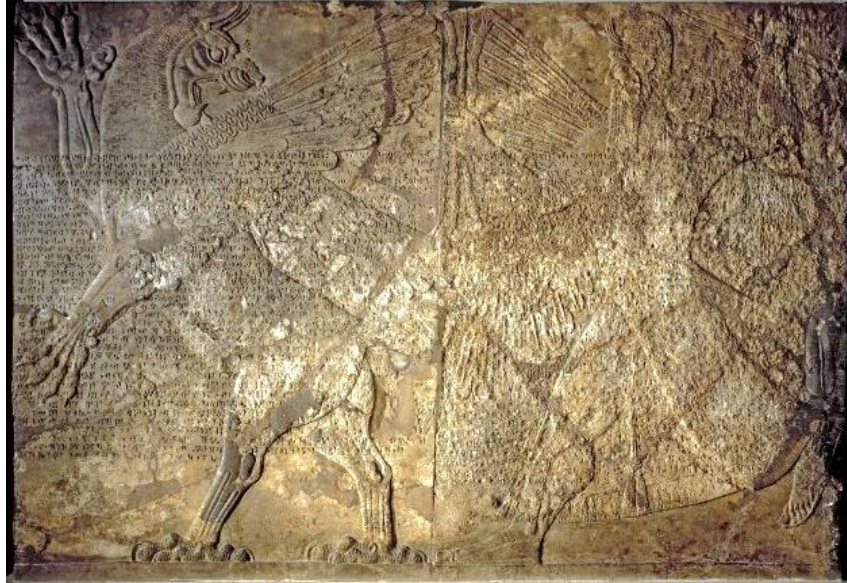


Fig. 4.1

BM 124571 and BM 124572, Temple of Ninurta Relief at Nimrud

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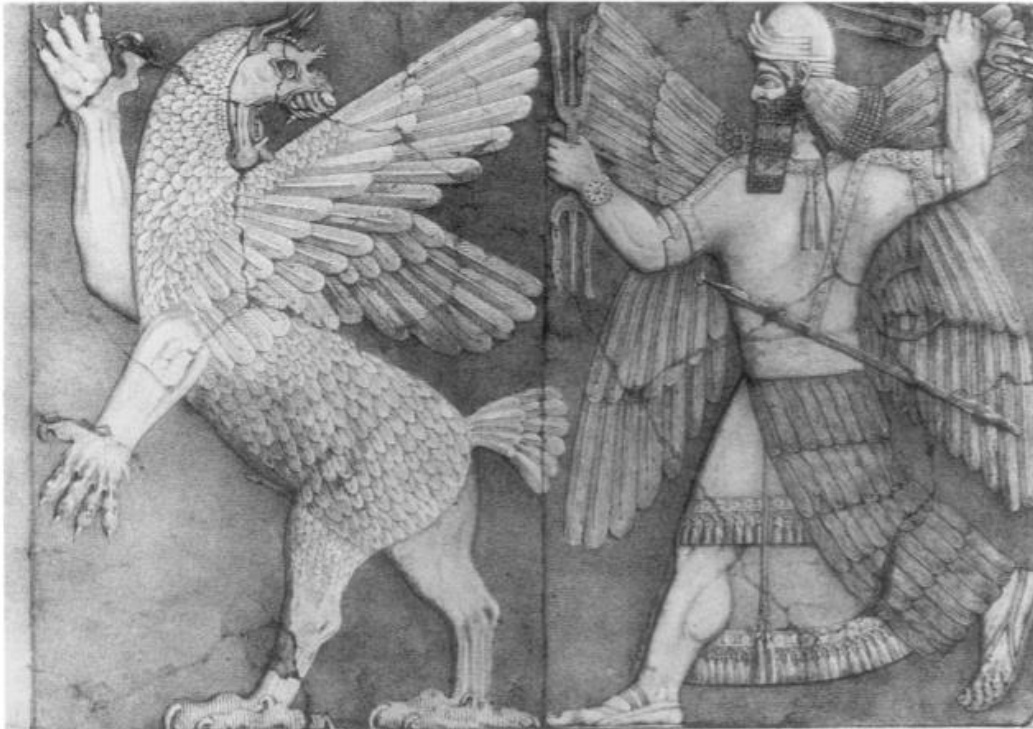


Fig. 4.2

Drawing of BM 124571 and BM 124572 (Layard 1853: pl. 5)

This conflict is, of course, described or alluded to in numerous textual sources.⁴⁷⁰ In the relief itself, Ninurta is clearly victorious or nearly so. He seems to advance towards the monster and to be on the offensive, lightning bolts at the ready. Anzû, meanwhile, flees leftward; a perhaps final act of defiance, his great roar, is suggested by his open muzzle aimed back over his shoulder. The isomorphic but slightly divergent hybrid features shared by these two beings may suggest a significant distinction between them, as recently suggested by Noegel (2017: 37 n. 136). While Ninurta here has four wings,⁴⁷¹ Anzû has only two, which may “mark him as less equipped to escape Ninurta.”

This, though, is the only surviving Neo-Assyrian monumental representation of divine combat. While the terrestrial king is elsewhere shown in battle or mock approximations thereof against armies, cities, and wild beasts (see esp. Ataç 2010: 14–60; Bahrani 2008), one looks in vain for further monumental representations of the gods engaged in such activity. This first impression perhaps explains the general avoidance of iconography when it comes to assessing the prevalence of combat myth motifs in Mesopotamia and the failure to appreciate ways in which monumental representations could have assisted the spread of public awareness of this mythic complex. This is not to say the neglect has been total. When iconography has been engaged, authors

⁴⁷⁰ The Neo-Assyrian epic of *Anzû* was last edited in partitur by Vogelzang 1988; this volume included as comparanda the Old Babylonian witnesses to the epic Sb 9470 and Sb 14683 (Vogelzang’s [1988: 7] mss. Aa and Ab, re-edited and re-copied from the originals. Vogelzang was unable to use the large manuscript GM 1 edited in Saggs 1986 and now generally known by the siglum R. Moran (1988) offers numerous important corrections to Saggs 1986. Two additional small manuscripts have since come to light: Di 2258, a tiny fragment (Van Lerberghe 1991: 74; Cavigneaux 2000: 20) and A[ntakya Museum] 11000 (Lauinger 2004). Annus (2001) is a recent study edition of the text. Numerous other texts describe or allude to the Anzû bird and/or the conquest thereof by various deities, especially Ninurta. Hruška (1975) summarizes most of these. It is worth mentioning here the Converse Tablet (ed. Lambert 1971) and the Sumerian epics *Angim dimma* (ed. Cooper 1978).

⁴⁷¹ For the oddity of this feature, see e.g. Ornan 2005: 87. Noegel’s (2017) article is a discussion of winged supernatural figures in Mesopotamian art.

have often pointed to monumental representations of monsters enumerated in *Enūma eliš* as among Tiamat's offspring and have favored or at least allowed the hypothesis that such representations were intended and/or understood as evocative of combat against and/or victory over these figures.

Early in *Enūma eliš*, Tiamat creates eleven monstrous offspring (I:141–43; II:27–29; III:31–33) that are eventually defeated—along with their mother—by Marduk (IV:105ff.). After dealing with Tiamat's corpse, Marduk does something surprising with the creatures themselves:

Enūma eliš V⁴⁷²

73 ù iš-ten-eš-ret nab-nit-sa šá ti-amat ib-nu-u ú-x-x

74 [kak-k]i-šu-un iḫ-te-pa-a i-sír še-pu-uš-šu

75 ib-ni-ma šal-mi-š[u-nu K]Á ap-si-i ú-šá-aš-[bit]

76 [aḫ]-ra-taš la im-ma-šá-ṛa ši`-i lu it-tu

⁽⁷³⁾ *u ištēnešret nabnissa ša Tiāmat ibnū ... / ⁽⁷⁴⁾ kakkīšun iḫtepâ īsir šēpuššu*

⁽⁷⁵⁾ *ibni-ma šalmīšunu bāb apsī ušašbit / ⁽⁷⁶⁾ aḫrātaš lā immašâ šī lu ittu*

“As for the eleven creatures that Tiamat made ... / He broke their weapons and bound them at his feet. / He made and installed their images at the Gate of the Apsû / that in the future it might be an enduring sign.”

⁴⁷² Only one manuscript is extant at this juncture: SU (Sultantepe) 51/98. Copy: Gurney and Finkelstein 1957 [STT I]: pls. 15–16 (no. 12). For up-to-date editions in context, see Lambert 2013: 100–3 (the manuscript in question is ms. “H”) and Kämmerer and Metzler 2012: 236–37 (ms. “G”). Brief recent comments on this passage may also be found in Gabriel 2014: 156 and n. 192, but these are not relevant for present purposes.

The author of *Enūma eliš* describes here a particular act and location of image construction. Agency is attributed to the Babylonian high god, Marduk, and a definite motive—*aḥrâtaš lā immašâ šī lu ittu* “that in the future it [the complex of images] might be an enduring sign”—is reported.⁴⁷³ The topographical text *Tintir* IV:3⁴⁷⁴ does identify the “Gate of the Apsû” with a particular terrestrial location: the shrine of Ea named Ekarzaginna, inside the Esagil temple in Babylon; this might have been “imagined as a cosmic quay” (George 1992: 300), the port by which Ea’s subterranean water realm could be accessed. Still, there is no guarantee that the author of *Enūma eliš* was envisioning this particular earthly sanctuary as the location at which Marduk fixed the monsters’ images. For example, Astrolabe B⁴⁷⁵ construes {<KÁ>.AB.ZU.TA} / {ba-ab ap-si-i} *bāb apsî* “the Gate of the Apsû” as “simply a cosmic locality” (George 1992: 301); this text has nothing to do with terrestrial locations in general or Esagil in particular. The author of *Enūma eliš*, then, might have imagined just an untethered cosmic location for Marduk’s act, and one could not necessarily search particular temple remains or texts about temples to locate a real image to which this author alluded.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ For *la mašû* as “not to be forgotten” > “enduring,” see *CAD* M.1 [1977] 399–400. (Neither of the editions cited in the previous note comment on this line or formulation.) I have found no other occurrences of *ittu* in such a formulation, but the intent is clear, especially by comparison with the building and legal formulae cited.

⁴⁷⁴ Edited by George 1992: 58–59, with seven manuscripts extant at this juncture. Most read {É.KAR.ZA.GÌN.NA KÁ AB.ZU} at this line (variants noted at George 1992: 58 n. 3). Comments to this line may be found at *ibid.*: 300–3. Lambert’s (2013: 229–30) characterization of the topographical text situation (on which see the next note) are reliant on George here. Both Lambert (1994: 589 n. 75a) and Gabriel (2014: 156) note the “Gate of the Apsû” as “Heiligtum Eas in Babylon”/“Eas Tempel in Babylon,” but do not go beyond this.

⁴⁷⁵ “Astrolabe B” is VAT 9416. The quoted lines are col. ii 27, 35 (Sumerian and Akkadian, respectively). For a copy of the text, see Schroeder 1920a [KAV]: 120 (no. 218) (all cited also at George 1992: 301). The most recent edition of this text is Horowitz 2014: 33–42.

⁴⁷⁶ This appears to be the position of George (1992: 301) on this passage, which he cites. Lambert (2013: 229–30), on the other hand, seems confident that “[t]he Epic is explaining aetiologically images that were known to the author, and the lists show that similar images existed elsewhere within the Esagil complex.” He goes on to cite

This potentially cosmic literary representation does find, however, an interesting parallel in a building inscription of Sennacherib (r. 705–681 B.C.E.), K.1356.⁴⁷⁷ (This is perhaps the earliest such parallel, but the date and aegis of the Agum-Kakrime inscription, which does include a list of Tiamat’s monsters as depicted on the bronze bands of Esagila’s cedar gates, are still debated.⁴⁷⁸) Probably composed after Sennacherib’s conquest of Babylon in 689 B.C.E., this text describes the construction of an *akītu*-house outside Aššur. This structure had as its most prominent feature a

two texts that associate the *kusarikku* with Ea or even Ea’s house, but these hardly prove the point, nor does the general observation that many of the monsters have an “aquatic habitat” (ibid.: 230).

⁴⁷⁷ This text has been most recently edited as *RINAP* 3.2 Sennacherib [no.] 160 (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 222–25). All previous bibliography is listed at ibid.: 222–23. The precise textual notes of Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 209 [text no. 2]) and Frahm (1997: 224 [text T 184]) have proven most helpful.

⁴⁷⁸ The Agum-kakrime inscription is extant in two Neo-Assyrian copies from Nineveh, (1.) K.4149+4203+4348+Sm 27 (copy Rawlinson 1884: pl. 33) and (2.) Rm 505 (copy 200Thompson 1930: pl. 36). Both have been re-edited by Oshima (2012), with previous bibliography. The inscription is presented as the first-person narration of a Kassite king {Jum-ka-ak-ri-me / ‘DUMU taz-ši’-gu-ru-maš} (i:1–2), who occurs nowhere else in cuneiform sources (recently Oshima 2012: 228). This, the late date of the manuscripts, and peculiarities of form (e.g. first-person narration) and ideology (e.g. focus on the return of the Marduk statue to Babylon) led a number of scholars, beginning with Landsberger (1928–29: 312), to question whether the inscription was truly Kassite in origin; to the opinions registered by Oshima (2012: 226–27 n. 7), add e.g. Brinkman 2015: 20 (“purportedly early”) and Tenney 2016: 155 (“potentially fraudulent”), but also Lambert (2013: 225), “[the text] contains genuine Cassite-period information on religious matters and can thus be used as evidence of a Cassite-period group of monsters.” Paulus (2018) has recently re-evaluated this question of authenticity with comprehensive bibliography.

The relevant passage for present purposes is iv:46–v:6: {ba-aš-me ‘lāh’-me / ⁴⁷ ku-sa-rik-kum / ⁴⁸ U₄.GAL-la / ⁴⁹ UR.IDIM / ⁵⁰ [K]U₆.LÚ.U₁₇.LU / v:1 [SU]ḪUR.MÁŠ^{ku6} / ² [i-n]a na⁴ZA.GÌN / ³ [n]^{a4}DUḪ.ŠI.A / ⁴ [n]^{a4}GUG / ⁵ [n]^{a4}GÍŠ.NU₁₁.GAL / ⁶ lu ú-šá-am-lu-ši-na-a-ti} “I indeed filled them (the doors) with *bašmū*, *laḫmū*, the *kusarikku*, *ugallū*, *urdimmu*, *kulullū*, and *suḫurmāšu* made from lapis lazuli, *duḫšū*-stone, carnelian, and alabaster.” This list of depicted monsters is, of course, very similar to that encountered in *Enūma eliš*; it is considered together with other monster lists below. By the same logic as that offered above for Neo-Assyrian exempla, the gate-bands thus described by the Agum-kakrime inscription probably reflect an intention to depict defeated monsters and thereby glorify the victorious Marduk. There is simply, in this case, the added question of whether the entity so described ever existed (as that described, for example, in K.1356) or not (as that described, for example, in *Enūma eliš*), so that incorporation into the historical picture forwarded above quickly becomes complicated.

reddish-bronze gate—{^ʿKÁ.GAL ZABAR ḤUŠ.A} *abulla siparri ḥušši* (l. 5)—on which were depicted various scenes from *Enūma eliš*, particularly in its Assyrian version, i.e. as featuring Aššur (not Marduk) as the god victorious over Tiamat. Included among these was the following image:

K.1356:9b–12

- 9 (...) DINGIR^{meš} ma-la] ina IGI-šú DU-ku
 10 ù EGIR-šú DU-ku šá ru-ku-bu rak-bu šá ina GĪR^{II}-šú-<nu> DU-ku
 ʿmanʿ-[zal-tu-šú]-ʿnuʿ ki-i šá ina IGI AN.ŠÁR
 11 si-id-ru u EGIR AN.ŠÁR si-id-ru ti-amat <EN> nab-ʿnitʿ [qer-bi]-ʿšúʿ šá
 AN.ŠÁR MAN DINGIR^{meš}
 12 a-na lib-bi-šú šal-ti il-la-ku ana ʿUGU piʿ-i šá ^dUTU u ^dIŠKUR še-er
 KÁ.GAL šá-a-šú e-šir

*ilāni mala in maḥrišu illakû u arkišu illakû / ša rukûbû rakkû ina šēpīšunu illakû
 manzaltūšunu kī ša in maḥri Aššur / sidrû Tiāmat adi nabbīt qerbīšu ša Aššur šar
 ilāni / ana libbišu šalti illaku ana muḥḥi pī ša Šamaš u Adad šēr abulli šāšu ēšir*

“Following the command of Šamaš and Adad, I depicted on that gate the gods going before him (Aššur) and going behind him, who ride chariots and who go on foot—their positions being such as they arranged before Aššur and arranged behind Aššur—Tiamat <with> the creatures of her womb⁴⁷⁹ whom Aššur, king of the gods, goes to fight.”

⁴⁷⁹ This group is mentioned again in a syntactically isolated phrase on the left edge of the tablet (l. 33): {ʿtiʿ-amat a-di nab-nit qer-bi-šú} *Tiāmat adi nabbīt qerbīšu* “Tiamat with the creatures of her womb.” This appears to function as a sort of epigraph (thus e.g. Frahm 1997: 223).

The host of Tiamat is thus said to be depicted on this *akītu*-house gate in what one might imagine to be a similar fashion to that described in the poetry of *Enūma eliš*.⁴⁸⁰ Admittedly, the image of this group is not isolated in any notable way. It appears, as already mentioned, alongside many other scenes from the epic. In the case of this one motif, though, the continuity between depictions narrativized in both the divine and terrestrial realms is intriguing and demands further exploration.

Like any possible real-world referent of the “Gate of the Apsû” in *Enūma eliš*, the *akītu*-house gate of Sennacherib does not itself survive. There are a few other references to monster depictions—among which are both statues and reliefs—in Neo-Assyrian⁴⁸¹ and in later Neo-

⁴⁸⁰ This point has been made repeatedly in studies of K.1356 and of *Enūma eliš*. See e.g. Frahm 1997: 222–23; Thomason 2004: 156 n. 12, “It is essentially an epitome of the Babylonian creation epic.”

⁴⁸¹ Such additional texts are conveniently collected in Engel 1987: 85–86 (updated references are provided here). Among texts from the reign of Sennacherib, two are relevant here; both involve the construction of Eḫursaggalkurkurra, the *bīt suḫūri* of Ešarra, the temple of Aššur in Aššur. VA 8254 and its parallel (the latter known only from three fragments in Aššur excavation photographs) (copy of VA 8254, Schroeder 1922 [*KAH* 2]: 78–79 [no. 124]; up-to-date edition with previously bibliography, Grayson and Novotny 2014 [*RINAP* 3.2]: 239–44 [no. 166]) are eight-sided stone prisms from Aššur describing Sennacherib’s building of Ešarra in general and Eḫursaggalkurkurra in particular. Lines 17–22 narrate the erection of monster statues, some explicitly in bronze: {ina KÁ É šá-ḫu-ru⁷ / ¹⁸ šu-a-tu 4 GU₄ DUMU^dUTU-ši na-šu-ú / ¹⁹ ú-kal-lu šu-lu-lu šap-liš GÌR-šú-nu i-na UGU 2 BÁRA ZABAR / ²⁰ šá KU₆.LÚ.U₁₈.LU ZABAR šá SUḫUR.MÁŠ^{ku6} ZABAR šur-šu-du gis-gal-la / ²¹ ZAG u GÙB šá KÁ UR.IDIM ù GÍR.TAB.LÚ.U₁₈.LU kul-lu ši-ga-ri} “At that gate of the *bīt-suḫūru*, four bull-shaped son-of-Šamaš figures of reddish bronze raise up in their hands a sun disk (and) hold up the roof above, (while) below, their feet are firmly planted in place on two bronze daises, (one) of a bronze fish man (and one) of a bronze carp man. On the right and left of the gate, a lion-man figure and a scorpion-man figure hold the door bolt(s)” (translation from Grayson and Novotny 2014: 243). The particular figures depicted here—the *kusarikku*, *kulullû*, *suḫurmāšu*, *uridmmu*, and *girtablullû*—are mostly (excepting the *suḫurmāšu*) enumerated among Tiamat’s offspring in *Enūma eliš*. For the character of this list, general implications, and bibliography on particular figures, see below. VAT 9831 (copy Schroeder 1920a [*KAV*]: 59 [no. 74]; *e.p.* Schroeder 1920b: 243–44; up-to-date edition with previous bibliography, Grayson and Novotny 2014 [*RINAP* 3.2]: 287–88 [no. 209]) is a tablet fragment that largely parallels the text just cited in describing the Eḫursaggalkurkurra. The relevant section is fragmentary but appears to diverge towards its end, which has {⁹ ZAG u GÙB ša KÁ [...] / ¹⁰ 2 na-²-i-ri KÙ.BABBAR 2 U₄GAL-li KÙ.BABBAR [...] } “left and right

Babylonian⁴⁸² sources. But none of these explicitly associate the monsters with Tiamat or describe their defeat by Aššur (or Marduk) in the way that K.1356 does. Furthermore, archaeologists have

of the gate [...] 2 silver *nāʾiru*-figures and 2 silver *ugallû*.” The *nāʾirû* named here are either leonine “roarers” (CAD N.1 [1980]: 151a) or avian screechers (AHw 709a, “kreischenden Vögeln”; George 1988: 150, “vultures”). Perhaps the former is more likely given association with the *ugallû* here, assuming the now usual identification of this term with the lion-headed monster (e.g. Green 1986: 153–55; Wiggermann 1992: 169–72; cf. Thomsen 2000).

Sennacherib’s son Esarhaddon would later renovate the Ešarra; the military and building inscription EŠ 6262 l K.18096 (both exemplars edited recently with previous bibliography in Leichty 2011 [RINAP 4]: 134–37 [no. 60]) includes more descriptions of monster statues erected at various locations within this temple and at its gates: {²⁴ ʿlāḥ-me ʿku-ri-bi šá ša-ri-ri ru-uš-šú-u i-di ana i-di ul-ziz É pa-paḥ aššur EN-ia / ²⁵ ALAM^{meš} KÙ.GI bi-nu-ut ZU.AB ʿZAG ʿu GÙB ul-ziz} “I erected *lahmû* and *kurībû* of red *šāriru*-gold side-by-side. Right and left of the chapel of Aššur, my lord, I erected gold statues of creates of the Apsû” and {³⁰ 2 ku-sa-rik-ki ... / ³¹ ul-ziz 2 a-bu-bu nad-ru-tú ina ši-pir um-ma-nu-te nak-[liš] / ³² ú-še-piš-ʿma KÁ LUGAL-ti ZAG ʿ [u] GÙB ú-šá-aš-bi-ta ʿ SI.GAR-ru a-bu-bi maš-šé-e pi-ʿti ʿ-iq / ³³ za-ḥa-le-[e] ʿeb ʿ-bi [...] KÁ kam-ʿsu ʿ-ḏ-ḡ-gì-gì ul-ziz} “I erected 2 *kusarikku* ... and I had made 2 fierce deluge-monsters of skilled craftsmanship and placed them right and left of the Royal Gate. I also erected twin deluge-monsters of *zahalû*-silver in the Kamsu-Iḡigû Gate.” The explicit association of some of these monsters with the Apsû or the deluge (*abubu*) is intriguing and good support for the general hypothesis developed in the body of the argument, above, but none of the inscriptions cited here approach K.1356 for clarity of the iconography’s association with *Enūma eliš* and/or other traditions according to which these monsters are defeated enemies.

⁴⁸² Two Babylonian inscriptions are relevant in this context (see again Lambert 2013: 227 for brief summaries): (1.) BM 45619 (copy, ed. George 1988: 139–51; previously Berger 1973: 322) is a Neo-Babylonian building inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II. Its beginning describes renovation work undertaken on Esagil and includes the following passage (i:38ʹ–44ʹ): {[b]a-aš-mu la-aḥ-mu MUŠ.ḪUŠ^{meš} / ³⁹ U₄.GAL.LU U₄.GAL.LU UR.IDIM UR.IDIM / ⁴⁰ GU₄ DUMU ʿUTU GU₄ DUMU ʿUTU / ⁴¹ KÙ.LÚ.U₁₈.LU^{meš} MAŠ.DÀ^{meš} / ⁴² [a]n-za-a-am ù GÍR.TAB.LÚ.U₁₈.LU / ⁴³ [i]š-tu re-e-ši-šu / ⁴⁴ [a-d]i iš-di-šu}—followed by a gap of some twenty lines—“[lost verb, probably ‘I depicted’] *bašmû*, *lahmû*, *mušḫuššû*, *ugallû*, *urdimmû*, *kusarikkû*, *kullullû*, gazelles, Anzû, and *girtablullû* from the ceiling to the foundations.” As with the Neo-Assyrian texts cited in the previous note, one finds here only a list of monsters, without any explanation as to how they are related to one another or to Marduk. The inclusion of {MAŠ.DA^{meš}} *šabâti* “gazelles” is unique. (2.) BM 119282 (copy, ed. Lambert 1997: 74–78) is a Late Babylonian expository text that describes in ll. 23–30 statues of monsters that stand at the various gates of Esagil. The text is somewhat fragmentary in the relevant section, but it is clear that each line begins with {[2?] AM 2 MUŠ.ḪUŠ} “Two bulls, two dragons,” followed by a pair of other creatures, which varied from gate to gate. Many of these are unparalleled in other monster lists, e.g. the {UR.GI₇ ʿUTU} *kalab Šamaš* “dog of Šamaš” of l. 24. These exclusivities suggest that one is dealing here with a further developed tradition of monsters somehow arrayed opposite Marduk, but the origins of certain creatures remain obscure.

yet to recover any group representations of these monsters. Assyrian kings did, however, decorate their palaces with reliefs depicting individual or pairs of monsters who can be identified by their anatomy with certain of Tiamat’s offspring as listed in *Enūma eliš*. The question then becomes whether—and if so, in what ways, by whom, and when—these reliefs were conceived and received as representing antagonists subordinated by the victorious deity.

There are some substantial difficulties involved in answering this question. One is the nature of the monster list in *Enūma eliš*. There is general agreement that the list of eleven monsters borne by Tiamat and defeated by Marduk (or Aššur, in the Neo-Assyrian recension) represents both a response to earlier traditions of Ninurta’s having defeated eleven monsters and just one among numerous conceptions of the particular creatures to be included in such a list. The former point, the “keeping up with Ninurta” (Lambert 2013: 225) aspect, can be grounded in apparent lexical and conceptual allusions to Ninurta mythology throughout *Enūma eliš*.⁴⁸³ The latter point emerges from comparison of the list in *Enūma eliš* with other monster lists, which are never identical and often diverge substantially from that of present concern.⁴⁸⁴ Taken together, these

⁴⁸³ These have been recently collected by Lambert 2013: 450–52. In addition to the general image of Ninurta as monster-slayer (which can be founded on such narratives as *Angim dimma*, *Lugale*, and *Anzû*), Lambert cites a number of verbal parallels among weapons—GIŠ-GÍD-DA/*ariktu* “long wood/spear”—and garments—*apluhtu* “tunic”—shared by the two gods. The epithet *mutír gimilli-* “avenger” is also unique to Marduk, Ninurta, and Nergal (citations in Lambert 2013: 451–52 n. 33).

⁴⁸⁴ Some of these—e.g. from the Agum-kakrime inscription, building inscriptions of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, BM 45619 (Nebuchadnezzar II), and BM 119282—have been cited and described in the notes just preceding. Useful synopses of certain lists are available in George 1988: 151 and Lambert 2013: 227–28. Most commonly lacking in the other lists are the general terms *ušumgallu*, *mušmahḫu*, and *ūmu dabru* (also observed by Lambert 2013: 229), but the *mušḫuššu* is also lacking in numerous cases (in e.g. Agum-kakrime and VA 8254 [ed. *RINAP* 3.2 166]). Variable ordering of the monsters also suggests that no particular ordering was regarded as standard or “canonical.” The overall impression is of a relatively amorphous construction, with some monsters (e.g. the *urdimmu* and *laḫmu*) frequently or always included and others (e.g. the *suḫurmāšu*) only occasionally tacked on.

considerations disallow a simplistic search for textual or iconographic correlates—as well- or poorly-established as these might be—of the *Enūma eliš* monsters and assertion from these that kings, scholars, or craftsmen were alluding to the epic and its broader narrative arc.⁴⁸⁵ Any case for the likelihood that such individuals intended allusion or that hearers or viewers would have understood narratives or reliefs within a combat myth framework can be strengthened by a few controls, e.g. the likelihood of scholarly and/or public awareness of combat myth plots in various temporal and geographical contexts or the co-occurrence of numerous monsters in text or art (as opposed to, say, an isolated depiction of the *kusarikku* or *girtablullû*).

It is with these general principles in mind that one should proceed to a consideration of the Neo-Assyrian reliefs depicting one or more of the monsters named among Tiamat’s offspring in *Enūma eliš*. Such reliefs are found in four royal palaces or other buildings (here listed chronologically): (1.) Aššurnaširpal II’s “Central Building” at Nimrud (Meuszyński 1976); (2.) Sargon II’s palace at Khorsabad (Albenda 1986); (3.) Sennacherib’s Southwest Palace at Nineveh (Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998)⁴⁸⁶; and (4.) Aššurbanipal’s North Palace, also at Nineveh (Barnett 1976). Kertai (2015a) has recently published a thorough study of the architecture of these and other Neo-Assyrian palaces, but with minimal comments on the reliefs themselves. The

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. e.g. Ataç (2010: 172–83) who, throughout his chapter on the subject, seems to assume that if Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs depict figures identified in *Enūma eliš* as among Tiamat’s offspring, that is how they were both conceived and received as artistic representations. Here and below, I argue that one must account for the developing character of these figures rather than assuming that each (or all!) had a single fixed signification. According to Ataç (2010: 182), this signification involves recollection of a cosmogony that banishes monstrous figures to the margins. I agree that this is a likely valence of these creatures in reliefs. But in light of the benevolent functions served by many of these creatures in other literary and iconographic traditions, I argue that the “defeated monster” understanding is likely one that developed gradually and in conversation with an “apotropaic” understanding.

⁴⁸⁶ The recent article of Kertai (2015b) treats particularly the hybrid and other apotropaic reliefs of this palace and will be engaged as necessary below.

category of reliefs depicting Tiamat’s offspring is the topic of discussion in various chapters of Kolbe 1981, each of which are devoted to individual character types. Engel 1987, though focused on texts, also includes references to the iconographic material (esp. in *ibid.*: 85–97). Finally, Ataç’s (2010: 172–83) recent survey is a brief and accessible introduction to the data, if not to the interpretive issues involved (see n. 485, above).

If the reliefs—and drawings of lost reliefs—presently available are representative, the practice of depicting these hybrid creatures became more popular in the late 8th and early 7th century under Sennacherib and reached its apogee under Aššurbanipal. From the reign of Aššurnāširpal II, only one set of relevant images survive. These are a complete (AO 19850)⁴⁸⁷ and fragmentary (N-A 12/74)⁴⁸⁸ depiction of the *girtablullû* “scorpion man”⁴⁸⁹ from the Central Building at Nimrud, probably a temple. The reasonably well-preserved and thoroughly excavated Northwest Palace of Aššurnāširpal at Nimrud yielded no reliefs depicting these monsters,⁴⁹⁰ nor

⁴⁸⁷ AO 19850 was first published in Pottier 1924: 56–57 and pl. 4 and has since been reproduced in e.g. Meuszyński 1972: 32 n. 24, 48 fig. 15 (as “Louvre 6”); Kolbe 1981: 79–83 and pl. 9 fig. 3; Green 1985: pl. 8; and Ataç 2010: 172–74 and figs. 118–19 (the former of which is incorrectly labeled “AO 198.59”).

⁴⁸⁸ The discovery of this relief *in situ* by the Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology expedition (1974–76) confirmed the original location of both reliefs; see Meuszyński 1976: 37–39. The “Central Building” seems to have been previously excavated by both Layard and Rassam. Meuszyński (*ibid.*) argues from the character of the reliefs that the building is likely to have been a temple (similarly Russell 1998: 677, who further identifies Room 2—into which entrance “b” leads—as a “sanctuary”); for a brief overview of the building, see Postgate and Reade 1980: 314 [§18]. N-A 12/74 itself is pictured at Meuszyński 1976: 39 and pl. 9a (it is mentioned, but not illustrated, at Ataç 2010: 172).

⁴⁸⁹ The figure of the *girtablullû* is described by e.g. *AHw* 291a; Seidl 1968: 170–71; Rittig 1977: 78–79 (figural representations); Kolbe 1981: 79–83 (relief representations); Green 1985; Engel 1987: 90; Wiggermann 1992: 144, 180–81 (excellent general summary); and Green 1993–97: 250, 255.

⁴⁹⁰ The reliefs from this palace are published in three volumes of *Baghdader Forschungen*: Meuszyński 1981; Paley and Sobolewski 1987; 1992.

do any such depictions survive from the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III at the same site.⁴⁹¹ Sargon II's palace at Khorsabad does include two depictions (AO 19861; AO 19862) plausibly identified as the *lahmu* "hairy hero"⁴⁹² and one seascape (AO 19889) that depicts a *kullullû* "merman"⁴⁹³ alongside an *aladlammû* (discussed in Subsection 4.2.2) and winged bull accompanying ships.⁴⁹⁴

This meager level of representation is drastically superseded by the relief program of Sennacherib, in whose Southwest Palace at Nineveh the first Assyrian⁴⁹⁵ monumental representations of the lion-headed *ugallu* appear, already in substantial quantity. This figure is in at least two instances (BM 118932; BM Or.Dr. IV.30; = Green 1986: 197–98 [nos. 78–79]) accompanied by the "smiting hero," who is variously identified (but rarely as any of those creatures among Tiamat's offspring).⁴⁹⁶ At least two representations of the *lahmu* were also included among

⁴⁹¹ The reliefs from this palace—including those removed and reused by Esarhaddon in his Southwest Palace at Nimrud—are published in Barnett and Falkner 1962.

⁴⁹² Wiggermann 1981–82 gathers the most comprehensive collection of material on this iconographic figure and solidifies his identification with the *lahmu*. Subsequent work on this point includes Green 1983: 91–92; Lambert 1985; Engel 1987: 87–89; and Wiggermann 1992: 164–66.

⁴⁹³ The figure of the *kullullû* is described by e.g. *AHw* 501b; *CAD* K 526–27; Rittig 1977: 94–96 (figural representations); Lambert 1983: 324; and Wiggermann 1992: 182–83 (the last two both good general summaries).

⁴⁹⁴ For bibliography on AO 19889, see esp. Maul 2000: 29–34.

⁴⁹⁵ Green 1986: 193–96 (nos. 66–75) catalogues Anatolian and Syrian precursors. Those from Carchemish are recently illustrated in Gilibert 2011.

⁴⁹⁶ Overviews of this identification problem are presented in Wiggermann 1992: 63–64 and Green 1986: 155. Wiggermann's (1992: 63–64) identification of the figure as the well-known deity Lulal is based primarily on two figurines—[Louvre] N 3152 and Bab. 444000—showing traces of blue paint, just as VAT 8228 (copy Ebeling 1923 [KAR II]: pls. 236–240 [no. 298]) instructs at line rev.13 that statues of {^dLÚ.LÀL} be coated in {IM.SIG₇.SIG₇} *tīti da³māta* "dark (blue?) paste." Others now often assume Wiggermann's identification, e.g. Márquez Rowe 2009: 157; Kitz 2013: 317; and Kertai 2015b: 326, 329, 241. Previously, Green (1983: 92) had suggested an identification with the *il bīti*, here on the basis of descriptions of *this* figure in VAT 8228 in conjunction with the *ugallu* and *lahmu*. But both Kolbe (1981: 223) and Wiggermann (1992: 63) have suggested that this association is more or less accidental

the reliefs.⁴⁹⁷ Even this relative proliferation, though, pales in comparison to what representations were found in Aššurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh: dozens of depictions of the *ugallu* in various compositions—with the “smiting hero,”⁴⁹⁸ with the “smiting hero” and the *lahmu*,⁴⁹⁹ or with another *ugallu*, facing each other⁵⁰⁰—but also the first and only Assyrian monumental images

and the identification should thus be discarded. In older studies (summary Kolbe 1981: 120), it was common to identify the figure with Ninurta, but there is no basis for this other than the fact that Ninurta is a god of war.

In the course of my own epigraphic work on the 8th-century Aramaic-inscribed Pazuzu statuette at the Ashmolean Museum (AN1892.43; Moorey 1965; Heeßel 2002 no. 9; in preparation with Jessie DeGrado), it has become apparent that this smiting figure and/or Pazuzu himself were called {ssm} in both the aforementioned inscription and that on the first Arslan Tash amulet (*e.p.* du Mesnil du Buisson 1939; more recently Pardee 1998), on the reverse of which the smiting figure is depicted. This has led me to the tentative hypothesis that some individuals, perhaps only in the North Syrian geographic region and/or in West Semitic (or solely Aramaic) language, identified this smiting figure with the minor warrior god Šaššāmu (Krebernik 2009), listed in the prayer to Girra VAT 13624+13880:15 (ed. Schwemer 2007 [WVDOG 117]: 85–87, 186–87 [no. 33]) and in *An=Anum* VI:134 (ed. Litke 1998: 210) among netherworld gods. This figure's name is certainly related to Old and literary Babylonian *šašmu* (thus also Krebernik 2009: 87; for the lexeme, *AHw* 1198a; *CAD* Š.2 173), the etymology of which is obscure. This possibility bears exploring at greater length, but it should be stressed that it would not remove the likelihood of individuals in Assyria and/or elsewhere in Mesopotamia proper having known this smiting figure by another name, e.g. Wiggermann's Lulal.

⁴⁹⁷ The *lahmu* occurs in the relief BM 124792 (Barnett et al. 1998: pl. 90 [no. 113]) and that illustrated at *ibid.*: pls. 20–21. The item illustrated at *ibid.*: pl. 24 may also have originally contained a depiction of the *lahmu*. For a summary of the iconographic material, see Wiggermann 1981–82.

⁴⁹⁸ This and the following two footnotes do not present an exhaustive catalogue (cf. items cited in Green 1986), but should give some idea of the extent of the iconographic data: for the *ugallu* with the smiting hero alone, see BM Or.Dr. VII.7–8—originally Doorway (a), slabs 1 and 2—(Barnett 1976: pl. 21) and BM Or.Dr. VII.25–26—originally Room K, entrance (a), slabs 1–2—(Barnett 1976: pl. 31), Or.Dr. V.47, the right part of which is now BM 118911—originally Room S, entrance (d), slab 1—(Barnett 1976: pl. 45), and Or.Dr. V.48 (preserved as BM 118912)—originally Room T, entrance (b), slab 2—(Barnett 1976: pl. 55).

⁴⁹⁹ Depictions of all three figures together occur on BM 118917 (Barnett 1976: pl. 4) and on Or.Dr. VII 37–38 (upper part of left-facing smiting hero now Lyons, Musée de l'Oeuvre Pontificale), illustrated at Barnett 1976: pl. 37.

⁵⁰⁰ Images of crossed *ugallus* are Or.Dr. V.47 (right part BM 118911)—originally Room S, entrance (d), slab 1—(Barnett 1976: pl. 45), to the right of the left-facing smiting hero and *ugallu* catalogued in n. 498 and Or.Dr. V.48 (preserved as BM 118912)—originally Room T, entrance (b), slab 2—(Barnett 1976: pl. 55), to the right of the left-

of the *urdimmu* “mad dog,”⁵⁰¹ *mušhuššu* “dragon,”⁵⁰² and *urmaḥlullû* “lion-centaur.”⁵⁰³ (Although the last of these is not included among Tiamat’s offspring in *Enūma eliš* itself, it is affiliated with the other monsters in lists describing the manufacture of apotropaic figures (summary in Lambert 2013: 227–28.)

These representations of multiple monsters are most suggestive for there having existed an understanding of them not confined to mere vague apotropaism but rather drawing substantial significance from the lists of defeated enemies treated above. The mechanism by which this significance began to be incorporated is difficult to define exactly. But the facts (a.) that lists of defeated enemies appear by their prevalence and persistence to have constituted a reasonably well-known literary tradition among Mesopotamian scholars and (b.) that access to the Neo-Assyrian palaces in which these reliefs appear would have been restricted (see n. 392) support understanding

facing smiting hero and *ugallu* catalogued in n. 498, above, and above the left-facing *urmaḥlullû* catalogued in n. 503, below.

⁵⁰¹ See the drawings BM Or.Dr. VII.10—from Room I, entrance (a), slab 1—as illustrated in Barnett 1976: pl. 26 and (together with the *mušhuššu*; see the next note) BM Or.Dr. V.45—from Room S, entrance (a)—as illustrated in Barnett 1976: pl. 54. Bibliography on the *urdimmu* includes *AHw* 1429b; *CAD* U-W [2010]: 214–16; Engel 1987: 89; Beaulieu 1990; Wiggermann 1992: 172–74; Ehrenberg 1995; Beaulieu 2003: 355–67; Ellis 2006; J. N. Ford 2008: 587–88; and Kertai 2015b: 329–31, 339–41, 348–49. That the phonology of the name was—at least in Neo-Assyrian—/urdim(m)-/ rather than /uridim(m)-/ is established by orthographies with {ur-dim-} or {ur-dím-}, cited in Beaulieu 1990 and Wiggermann 1992: 172. This suggestion was anticipated by Lambert (1957–58: 112) in an edition of K.2600+ (fragment of the “Ritual for the Substitute King”). The identification of the *urdimmu* as a canid—rather than a lion—is a relatively recent development: Ellis (2006) demonstrated that both of the reliefs mentioned above showed canid features with respect to their tails and, possibly, genitals.

⁵⁰² This sole Neo-Assyrian relief representation of the *mušhuššu* occurs together with an *urdimmu* in the drawing BM Or.Dr. V.45—originally Room S, entrance (a)—illustrated at Barnett 1976: pl. 54.

⁵⁰³ At least two reliefs from the palace depicted the *urmaḥlullû*: these are now conserved as BM Or.Dr. VII.4 (lower part now Lyons, Musée de l’Oeuvre Pontificale, upper part lost[?]), illustrated at Barnett 1976: pl. 20 and BM Or.Dr. V.48 (preserved as BM 118912)—originally Room T, entrance (b), slab 2—below a group of other hybrid creatures. What is known about the *urmaḥlullû* is summarized in Wiggermann 1992: 181–82.

the reliefs as in-group communication contributing to the social integration of the Assyrian upper classes: scribes, priests, courtiers, etc. (n. 392, above, and similarly Ataç 2010: 187). It is possible that the list recurring throughout *Enūma eliš* became, as a result of the epic's emerging centrality to both Babylonian and Assyrian theologies, particularly well known and the basis for these reliefs. Finally, it seems likely that the monster-art program that emerges in Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh is connected to that same king's conquest of Babylon in 689 B.C.E. and the concomitant attempt to co-opt Babylonian culture. This, as well as the general observation that the practice of juxtaposing monsters emerged only gradually, so that agonal associations cannot be argued convincingly to have always inhered in monster-depicting reliefs, illustrate the importance of diachronic study that does not flatten the Mesopotamian data to satisfy a particular paradigm.

4.2.4 The Dragon in Neo-Babylonian Contexts

The fall of the Neo-Assyrian empire did not mark the end of representations of cosmic antagonists in architecture and statuary. Neo-Babylonian depictions of *mušḫuššu* “dragons,” both as attested in the archaeological record and as described in textual sources, constitute a major corpus of monstrous representations in late-7th- and 6th-century Mesopotamia.⁵⁰⁴ The morphology of the *mušḫuššu* and its primary associations have already been treated in Chapter 3, in which cylinder seal iconography depicting this dragon as a domesticate of various deities, especially Marduk and Nabû, was highlighted. It bears repeating that the name *mušḫuššu* seems to have

⁵⁰⁴ The most lengthy recent discussion of the *mušḫuššu* of which I am aware is in the dissertation of Gane (2012: 204–25), but Wiggermann 1993–97b is far more rigorous and precise. Other studies of the *mušḫuššu* and/or related issues, none of monograph length, are Unger 1938: 233–34; Rittig 1977: 114–16 (figural representations); Kolbe 1981: 125 (relief representations); Frayne 1982; Lambert 1984; Engel 1987: 87; Wiggermann 1989; 1992: 168–69; 1993–97a: esp. 227, 233, 44; 1997: 35–37; Green 1993–97: 258–59; Lewis 1996; Lambert 2013: 232–36; R. D. Miller 2014; and Watanabe 2015. The dictionaries treat the creature at *AHW* 683b and *CAD* M.2 [1977] 270–71.

usually referred to the particular ophidian monster characterized by leonine forelegs and avian hind legs.⁵⁰⁵ It is unlikely, though, that *mušḫuššu* significations developed as though in a bubble, sealed off from the influence of descriptions of other Mesopotamian snakes and dragons. Although a wide-ranging study of these figures cannot be undertaken in this context, it should therefore be remembered that the present section will not exhaust possible significations of the *mušḫuššu* and its kin⁵⁰⁶ and will instead focus on those that are most likely to illuminate architectural and fixtural representations of this creature.

When Mesopotamian art depicts⁵⁰⁷ or text describes the occurrence of the *mušḫuššu* in architectural contexts, scholars generally focus on this monster's having been “associated” with particular deities or as having been—like the *aladlammû* discussed in Subsection 4.2.2—

⁵⁰⁵ Among sources cited previously, see the summaries in Lambert 1984: 87; Wiggermann 1993–97b: 456; and Gane 2012: 205–6. The *mušḫuššu* seems to have been understood as distinct from the other major mythology dragons, the MUŠ-ŠÀ-TÛR/*bašmu* “horned snake” (itself frequently conflated with the UŠUM/*ušumgallu*; Wiggermann 1992: 166–68; 1993–97b: 462) and the *mušmaḫḫu* “seven-headed snake” (Wiggermann 1993–97a: 244).

⁵⁰⁶ Given scholarly focus on the combat myth, a widespread conviction that mythologies around dragon battles are particularly illuminating (classically Watkins 1995; similarly the recent wide-ranging and loose epic genealogy of R. D. Miller 2014), and substantial evidence for Mesopotamian dragons in particular, it is surprising that there yet exists no monograph-length study gathering the disparate artistic and textual data from Mesopotamia and attempting to understand it on its own terms and in broader Near Eastern context (see already Lambert 1984: 94, “The first step in such study [sic; of symbolic associations of the *mušḫuššu* and other dragons] must be to collect all the evidence, iconographic and written [...] When this has been completed for each one, it may then be possible to discern some patterns within the whole body of evidence which lead to certain conclusions about origins. So far that stage has not been reached”).

⁵⁰⁷ For somewhat rare architectural or fixtural representations other than the Ishtar Gate (see below)—none of which are Neo-Babylonian—see references in Engel 1987: 87; Lambert 1984: 90; Kolbe 1981: 125; Ritter 1977: 115 n. 2; and, at greatest length, Seidl 1968: 187–93. Gane (2012: 206) illustrates two Neo-Babylonian sculptural representations, a furniture decoration depicting a possible *mušḫuššu* head (AO 4106) and a figurine, BM 129388. Similar Neo-Assyrian figurines of the *mušḫuššu* or morphologically similar dragons are described and depicted in Ritter 1977: 114–16 and fig. 50.

“apotropaic” (e.g. Watanabe 2002: 122–23 for both terms).⁵⁰⁸ Again without denying the explanatory power of both paradigms, I argue that both descriptions elide a major signification of the *mušhuššu*: its character as an adversarial monster, demonstrated victory over which could contribute mightily to a god or king’s prestige. One very clear and oft-cited example of the *mušhuššu* functioning as cosmic enemy occurs in *Enūma eliš* (I:141, II:27, III:80), where the monster is one of Tiamat’s offspring, and another possibly occurs in the poorly-preserved *Labbu* myth, where an ophidian monster is opposed by a deity.⁵⁰⁹ To the extent that these and similar texts (oral and written) and images were known to creators and receivers of the representations described below, these representations could have been understood as participants in and mnemonics of a broader combat-myth discourse, with effects similar to those considered throughout the present chapter.

⁵⁰⁸ Divine associations are described at great length in Wiggermann 1993–97b: 457–60; the *mušhuššu* as apotropaic is described at *ibid.*: 460. The character of the *mušhuššu* as associated with Marduk and Aššur is pressed by Lambert (1984: 88–89), who does at least specify (*ibid.*: 94) that whereas he considers “the creature as a ‘symbol’ of the deities in question, following current terminology [, w]e have not thereby committed ourselves to any particular theory of these divine ‘symbols.’” Frayne (1982: 512) focuses on apotropaic aspects of the *mušhuššu* in older sources (see n. 509 for references to these), with some references also in Wiggermann 1992: 169. For the *mušhuššu* of the Ishtar Gate as particularly associated with Marduk or apotropaic, see n. 525, below. The language of “association” generally does not address the source or mechanics of this vague relationship. Understanding the creatures as “apotropaic” does indeed find some precedent in rationalizing sources from Neo-Babylonian inscriptions themselves; the contention of the present section is that this does not exhaust significations of the *mušhuššu* even in this limited context.

⁵⁰⁹ For more such contexts, see Lambert 2013: 224–32; Wiggermann 1992: 168–69; 1989: esp. 123–24; and 1993–97b: 461. A related speculation of Wiggermann (1989: 122; similarly 1992: 168; 1993–97b: 461) is less than convincing: “Tentatively [sic] the association of the *mušhuššu* with Ninazu may be explained with the assumption that the former was originally an angel of death, killing with his venom on the command of his master.” The restoration of {MUŠ[]} as {MUŠ.[HUŠ]} and of the victorious deity’s name as Tišpak (who perhaps refuses the challenge in *obv.*:24) in various lines of the *Labbu* myth (Rm.282; copy King 1901 [CT 13]: pls. 34–35); the restoration is defended most convincingly by Wiggermann 1989: 118, 120–24, 126. An up-to-date bibliography on and edition of the text is given in Lambert 2013: 363–65 (see also previously Lewis 1996: esp. 28–34).

While they have precedents,⁵¹⁰ the *mušḫuššu* statues described in royal inscriptions as having been erected by both Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 604–562 B.C.E.) and Neriglissar (r. 560–56 B.C.E.) are notable for their sheer number and the detailed nature of their descriptions.⁵¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar’s inscriptions do not dwell excessively on the functions of these statues, but they do describe sculptural placement, associations, and manufacture⁵¹²:

BM 91137 i:19–22 (ed. Langdon 1912: 72 [VAB 4 Neb1])⁵¹³

19 a-na sí-ip-pi KÁ.GAL.KÁ.GAL-šú
 20 AM.AM URUDU e-ik-du-ú-tim
 21 ù MUŠ.ḪUŠ.MUŠ.ḪUŠ še-zu-zu-ú-tim
 22 ú-uš-zi-iz

ana sippi abullātišu / rīmī erī ekdūtīm / u mušḫuššī šēzuzūtīm / ušziz

“I stationed fierce bronze bulls and furious *mušḫuššu* at the thresholds of its gates.”

⁵¹⁰ Some textually-described precedents are studied in Frayne 1982, e.g. a year formula of Naram-Suen of Ešnunna attested in numerous manuscripts describes the affixation of {MUŠ.ḪUŠ} “*mušḫuššu*” representations to the {KÁ.ḪUŠ^{hi.a}} “fearsome gates” and Gudea Cylinder A xxvi:24–25 describes the presence of both a *bašmu* and a *mušḫuššu* on the bolt of a temple door. Lambert (1984: 93) cites this latter text and the Neo-Babylonian material considered below to illustrate “continuity in ancient Mesopotamia of the use of these creatures.” The possibility that the Old Akkadian vase of Gudea depicts *mušḫuššu* supporting gate-posts is discussed by Lambert 1984: 92 (convenient image of this at Lewis 1996: 37 fig. 15). Some additional references are given in Wiggermann 1993–97b: 460.

⁵¹¹ Previous summaries of the practice of architectural and fixtural *mušḫuššu* representation as described by Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions may be found in Lambert 1984: 87; Watanabe 2002: 118, 123; 2015: 221–22; and Gane 2012: 214–20. I have endeavored to collect all of the relevant texts below, with the result that the present section should contain more detail than has been previously offered.

⁵¹² The contribution of the employment of rare raw materials—here, various precious stones, etc.—to a given structure or fixture’s monumental character is considered in n. 395 as a petrification of conspicuous consumption.

⁵¹³ Transliteration from the copy in Rawlinson 1884: pl. 34, taking subsequent corrections into account. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 285–86 (“Nebukadnezar Zylinder III, 3”).

BM 91135 ii:8–10 (ed. Langdon 1912: 86 [VAB 4 Neb7]), with parallels⁵¹⁴

8 ri-i-mu e-ri-i e-ik-du-ú-tim
9 ù MUŠ.ĤUŠ.MUŠ.ĤUŠ še-zu-zu-ú-tim
10 i-na KÁ.GAL.KÁ.GAL-šú ú-uš-zi-iz-ma

rīmū erī ekdūtīm / u mušḥuššī šēzuzūtīm / ina abullātišu ušziz-ma

“I stationed fierce bronze bulls and furious *mušḥuššu* at its gates.”

[Priv. Coll.] i:44–45 with parallels (ed. Langdon 1912: 90 [VAB 4 Neb9])⁵¹⁵

44 i-na ZAG.DU₈ KÁ.GAL KÁ.GAL AM.AM URUDU
45 e-ik-du-tim ù MUŠ.ĤUŠ.HUŠ [sic] še-zu-zu-ú-ti uš-zi-iz

ina sippī abullāti rīmī erī / ekdūtīm u mušḥuššī šēzuzūti ušziz

“I stationed fierce bronze bulls and furious *mušḥuššu* at the thresholds of its gates.”

BM 91114 i:59–61 with parallels (ed. Langdon 1912: 106 [VAB 4 Neb13])⁵¹⁶

59 i-na ZAG.DU₈ KÁ.GAL.KÁ.GAL-šú
60 AM.AM URUDU e-ik-du-tim ù MUŠ.ĤUŠ MUŠ.ĤUŠ še-zu-zu-tim
61 ab-ni-ma uš-zi-iz-ma

ina sippī abullātišu / rīmī erī ekdūtīm mušḥuššī šēzuzūtīm / abnī-ma ušziz-ma

⁵¹⁴ Transliteration from the copy in Rawlinson 1861: pl. 52 no. 3. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 254–55 (“Nebukadnezar Zylinder II,7”). For the parallels, see Berger 1973: 254.

⁵¹⁵ The present whereabouts of this text appear to be unknown (see Berger 1973: 287, “ehemals Middlehill [England], im Besitz des Sir Thomas Philipps, Baronet”). The present transliteration is from the copy in Rawlinson 1861: pl. 65. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 287–88 (“Nebukadnezar Zylinder III,4”).

⁵¹⁶ Transliteration from the copy in Ball 1888: pl. (the copy is after p. 378 in the 1888 volume of the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, not after p. 368 as reported by Berger 1973: 292). The line numeration here follows that of Ball’s copy rather than Langdon’s (1912: 106) transliteration. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 292 (“Nebukadnezar Zylinder III,7”).

“I built and stationed fierce bronze bulls and furious *mušhuššu* at the thresholds of its gates.”

BM 129397 vi:16–18 with parallels (ed. Langdon 1912: 132 [VAB 4 Neb15])⁵¹⁷

16 AM.AM URUDU e-ik-du-tum

17 ù MUŠ.ḪUŠ še-zu-zu-ti

18 i-na si-ip-pi-ši-na uš-zi-iz

rīmī erī ekdūtum u mušhuššī šēzuzūti ina sippīšina ušziz

“I stationed fierce bronze bulls and furious *mušhuššu* at their thresholds.”

All of these inscriptions are useful not only for illustrating the possibility of *mušhuššu*-statue presence, but also the centrality of these figures to the Neo-Babylonian sculptural program and certain architectural associations. But it is only with the very expansive narrative given in the “Royal Palace Inscription” of Neriglissar that one finds a description of the precise function imagined to have been served by these formidable dragons:

Neriglissar “Royal Palace Inscription” i:21–32 (ed. Langdon 1912: 210 [VAB 4 Ngl1]; Da Riva 2013: 129)⁵¹⁸

21 MUŠ.ḪUŠ e-ri-i ša i-na ki-sè-e KÁ.KÁ.E.SAG.ÍL

⁵¹⁷ BM 129397 is also known as the East India House Inscription, from its former place of residence at the headquarters of the East India Company, London. Transliteration from the copy in Rawlinson 1861: pl. 56. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 310–12 (“Nebukadnezar Stein-Tafel X”).

⁵¹⁸ Eight exemplars of this text are known; (listed also at Berger 1973: 338; Da Riva 2013: 125): (1.) ANE (Cambridge, Library of Trinity College/Fitzwilliam Museum) 39.1902; (2.) BM 40073; (3.) VA Bab. 620 (= Bab. 29614); (4.) VA Bab. 610 (= Bab. 29836); (the following are excavation numbers; the items are not presently kept in the Vorderasiatisches Museum) (5.) Bab. 46942; (6.) Bab. 47286; (7.) Bab. 47322; (8.) Bab. 30220. Then up-to-date bibliography in Berger 1973: 338–39 (“Neriglissar Zylinder II,3”) and a complete edition now in Da Riva 2013: 124–35 (§4.2.3 “C23”). The quote above is from exemplar (1.) (ANE 39.1902), checked against the copy in Rawlinson 1861: 67.

- 22 it-ti ri-i-mu KÙ.BABBAR ša sì-ip-pe-e na-an-zu-zu ka-a-a-nam
 23 i-na KÁ.ᵀUTU.È KÁ.dLAMMA.a-ra-bi KÁ.ḪÉ.GÁL ù
 KÁ.U₆.DE.BABBAR
 24 la uš-zi-zu LUGAL ma-aḫ-ri
 25 ia-ti áš-ru ša-aḫ-ṭu ša pa-la-ḫa DINGIR.DINGIR mu-du-ú
 26 e-ep-ti-iq-ma 8 MUŠ.ḪUŠ e-ri-i še-zu-zu-ú-ti
 27 šá le-em-nim ù a-a-bi i-za-an-nu i-ma-at mu-ú-ti
 28 ti-i-ri KÙ.BABBAR e-eb-bi ú-ša-al-bi-iš-ma
 29 i-na KÁ.ᵀUTU.È KÁ.dLAMMA.a-ra-bi KÁ.ḪÉ.GÁL ù
 KÁ.U₆.DE.<BABBAR>
 30 i-na ki-se-e KÁ.KÁ ši-na-a-ti ki-ma la-bi-ri-im-ma
 31 it-ti ri-i-mu KÙ.BABBAR ša sì-ip-pe-e
 32 ki-ma sì-ma-a-ti-šu re-eš-ta-a-ti ú-uš-zi-iz i-na ki-gal-lam

“As for the bronze *mušḫuššu* that stand constantly at the supporting wall of the Esagil, with the silver wild bulls of the door-sills at the Gate of the Sunrise, the Gate of the ‘Guardian Angel,’ the Gate of Abundance, and the Gate of Dazzling Wonder,⁵¹⁹ which a previous king did not set up—

“I—the humble, the pious, who fears the gods, the expert—cast eight bronze fierce *mušḫuššus*, who spatter⁵²⁰ the evil one and the enemy with deadly poison. I plated

⁵¹⁹ These gates are studied at length and in the context of other Esagil gate lists in George 1992: 85–88.

⁵²⁰ The etymology, phonology, and semantics of the present verb and possibly related instances are difficult. The present footnote does not solve the problem but rather summarizes some previous work and presents possible steps towards a solution. At the line in question, mss. 1 (ANE 39.1902:27) and 4 (Bab 29836:4) are extant. Both have {i-Za-an-nu} *iZannū* for the verb. Possibly related instances—places in which orthographically similar verbs occur together with descriptions of snakes and/or poison or disease—include the following. One can begin with texts that have Sumerian parallels and/or forerunners and which therefore have the benefit of preserving an alternative ancient rendering of the verb in question. These can thus address the semantic question first (throughout the following, {ZA} and other signs for which the articulation of the affricate is ambiguous—either *z* or *š* is generally possible—are transliterated and normalized with capital “Z/Z”): (A.) *Udug-ḫul* VII:5 {[lú-ùlu pap-hal-l]a u₄-gin₇ mu-un-da-ru-uš zé-na ba-ni-in-sù-eš / a-me-lu mut-tal-lik GIM u₄-mu iḫ-mu-šu-ma mar-tu₄ iZ-Za-nu-uš} *amēlu muttallik kīma ūmu iḫmūšu-ma martu iZZānūš* “As for the man who is restless, whom they, like a storm, paralyzed and whom they had

them with an overlay of pure silver, at the Gate of the Sunrise, the Gate of the ‘Guardian Angel,’ the Gate of Abundance, and the Gate of Dazzling Wonder, at the supporting wall of those gates, as in the past. With the silver wild bulls of the door-sills, according to their prior appearance, I set them up on a pedestal.”

Neriglissar’s description assumes the visibility of *mušhuššu* sculptures at the Esagil temple and proceeds to make a claim on them. He names himself responsible for their manufacture and

sprinkled with bile [...]” (thus ms. a = BM 55473 + K.4965 i:10–11 [copy CT 16 24]; early edition Thompson 1903: 116–17; study edition Geller 2007: 135; comprehensive edition now Geller 2016: 250). Only a portion of the line— not including the verb in question—is extant on the duplicate AN 1924.805:1’ (copy Gurney 1989: pl. 49 [no. 25]). The semantics “sprinkle” are assured here both (1.) by the Sumerian forerunners and parallel text; these have {ba-ni-in-sù-eš} (BM 55473+ i:10, as above), {ba-ni-in-ús} (ms. ob; this and the following quoted from Geller 2016: 250), and {ba-ni-in`-sù} (ms. oe), i.e. all with forms of {sù} or {ús}, both “to sprinkle, drip” (e.g. Geller 2007: 293, 299); and (2.) by the parallel use of *salāhu* “to spatter” in l. 3. (B.) *E Turgin Niginam* c+98 {uš₉-šà-tùr-ra mu-lu na-an-zé-è̄m / i-ma-at ba-aš-mi ša a-wi-lam i-Za-an-nu} *imat bašme ša awīlam iZannu* “(His word is) snake venom, which sprinkles a man.” The text given here is the composite from the edition of M. E. Cohen 1988: 79; mss. extant at this juncture are ms. A = BM 88288 (copy CT 42 8) and ms. C = K.5017 (copy Rawlinson 1884: 26 [no. 2]). Like in the case of the *Udug-ḫul* occurrences, the semantics of the parallel Sumerian verb {zé-è̄m} “to sprinkle” (M. E. Cohen 1988: 91; Oberhuber 1990: 537) can establish the thrust of the Akkadian verb. The semantics established from these contextual occurrences can be further solidified with reference to additional occurrences in lexical lists (references in CAD Z [1961]: 47).

It is certain, then, that there exists a verb with an initial affricate and medial weakness that signifies “to sprinkle.” The question that remains involves the precise phonological character of the initial affricate. Is this verb best understood as *šānu* (thus e.g. *AHw* 1081b–82a) or *zānu* (thus e.g. CAD Z [1961] 47–49)? The question can be approached in two ways: (1.) are there any unambiguous orthographies for the verb—i.e. instances in which signs for *š* and *z* are distinguished—in which the above semantics are required and affiliation to the present group thus certain? (2.) are there etymological grounds for preferring one or the other analysis? Probably the most useful orthography for point (1.) are those occurring in manuscripts of *Erra* I:38 {si-ba-a i-mat ba-áš-me **i-še-en-šú-ma** šum-qí-ta ‘na-piš’-tu} (thus Ms. B = VAT 9162:36’, copy Ebeling 1919 [*KAR I*] no. 168; var. {**i-ši-in-šu-ma**} in Ms. E = K.8571 i:4’, copy Harper 1894: 499), variously understood. The etymological question is too complex to be examined in the present footnote. In addition to the standard correspondences, one wonders if various occurrences show some semantic contamination from the geminate verb *zanānu* “to rain” (CAD Z [1961] 41–43; *AHw* 1509–10). This type of root confusion is, however, less common in Akkadian than in some other Semitic languages, primarily because there are fewer points of neutralization between II-weak and geminate roots (Kouwenberg 2010: 496).

placement and explicitly contrasts his own activity with the negligence of previous kings. The similar achievements of Nebuchadnezzar are conveniently elided.

Neriglissar's description is also more expansive in other respects. Unlike the Nebuchadnezzar texts cited above, the present inscription actually describes how the *mušhuššu* function and against whom their operations are directed: {šá le-em-nim ù a-a-bi i-za-an-nu i-ma-at mu-ú-ti} *ša lemnim u ayyābi izannū imat mūti* “who spatter the evil one and the enemy with deadly poison” (VAB 4 Ng11 i:27). The statues, then, are patently conceived as defensive in some sense.⁵²¹ The combination of this defensive posture and the insistence on personal origination produces a further observation that accords well with the general thesis of the present chapter. The *mušhuššu* are not just defensive creatures. They are defensive creatures created by and therefore belonging to a particular royal figure, here Neriglissar. This king asserts by his act of creation and his description of the dragons' intended activity a position of control over the monstrous and mythological. Like in cases already considered above, this position assures his hegemony not only in the center—as symbolized by the Esagil itself—but also the periphery and its wild associations.

A final example of similar significations is the Ištar Gate of Babylon⁵²²—constructed during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II—which famously preserves illustrations of *mušhuššu* dragons, depicted alongside bulls on the gate itself and near the approximately one hundred and twenty lions lining the Processional Way. That the monsters portrayed are indeed *mušhuššu* is

⁵²¹ Similar conclusions are reached in Lambert 1984: 87; Wiggermann 1993–97b: 460; and Gane 2012: 218. The general comment of Wiggermann (1992: 169) is also worth citing here: “Apotropaic use of representations of the *mušhuššu* can be understood from his function as a fearless warrior watching over the just rule of his masters and attacking evildoers.”

⁵²² The Ishtar Gate and a portion of the Processional Way leading to it are reconstructed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin as VA1408–1456. In addition to the bibliography in Watanabe 2015, a helpful summary of the Ishtar Gate is the museum catalogue Marzhan 1994. The classic study of Koldewey (1903) established the identities of the gate's figures, including the *mušhuššu*, and their divine associations (see also n. 524).

certain not only from their morphology—leonine forepaws, avian hind legs, ophidian head, tail, and body—but also from Nebuchadnezzar’s royal inscriptions, e.g.:

BM 129397 vi:4–7 with parallels (ed. Langdon 1912: 132 [VAB 4 Neb15])⁵²³

4 i-na a-gu-ri ^{na4}ZA.GÌN KÙ-tim

5 šá AM.AM ù MUŠ.ḪUŠ

6 ba-nu-ú qir-bu-uš-šá

7 na-ak-li-iš ú-še-piš

ina agurrī uqnī ellītim / ša rīmī u mušḫuššī / banū qirbušša / nakliš ušēpiš

“I embellished the palace with bright blue bricks, on which were depicted bulls and *mušḫuššu*.”

The Ishtar Gate functioned not only as a very public monument, blatantly visible to the community from its size and placement, but also as a monument palpably affiliated with sacred time, particularly the celebration of the *Akītu* festival.

The ways in which this festival was (and was not) understood as mnemonic of the combat myth have already been examined in Chapter 2, and the extensive scholarship on this question is surveyed in that section. In light of the positive evidence presented there, though, one can suggest that the *mušḫuššu* representations of the Ishtar Gate particularly might also have been conceived and received as emblematic of divine dominance over the monstrous realm. Once again, this architectural form shows the dragon to be static and subservient, a mere decorative accoutrement helping to constitute the glory of Marduk, Ishtar, and the other major deities. Even if the *mušḫuššu*

⁵²³ For basic bibliography on this text, see n. 517. Transliteration is again from the copy at Rawlinson 1861: pl. 56. This text is also quoted (in transliteration and translation, without lineation) as a description of the *mušḫuššu* etc. on the Ishtar Gate by Ritter 1977: 116 and n. 1; Lambert 1984: 87; and Watanabe 2015: 217.

is emblematic of Marduk—the “explanation” for its presence that is generally privileged⁵²⁴—the awareness that this association was at times conceptualized as agonal clarifies one mechanism by which the monster-symbol functioned. Furthermore, even if the *mušḫuššu* is apotropaic⁵²⁵—both on the Ishtar Gate and in the form of statuary—this protective status presupposes an inborn capacity for violence, an understanding of which is liable to have drawn the mind on to narratives and other depictions of it and other dragons challenging the gods themselves. The further reflection that the gods generally triumphed in these contests would plausibly follow immediately, again especially in light of the monsters’ now visible employment as doorkeepers.

Unlike the Neo-Assyrian relief iconography discussed in Subsection 4.2.3 and more in line with the monumental sculptures of the *nāḫiru*, *burīš*, and *aladlammû*, the Neo-Babylonian dragons were very public installations. They thus continue a trend of monumentality that spans first millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamia and involves numerous figures plausibly mnemonic of combat mythology involving victorious royal and divine figures. Throughout the present section, it has been emphasized that this was not likely the only nor even the dominant signification of the monuments studied. It has only been suggested that this is one understudied way in which these statues and reliefs could have been—and in some cases with textual rationalizations, demonstrably were—intended by their creators and understood by various audiences. These audiences were as small as the Neo-Assyrian palace elite and as large as the general populace participating in great festivals or simply entering a city. Attention to various modes of meaning, especially beyond

⁵²⁴ The Ishtar Gate *mušḫuššu* are held to be symbolic of Marduk (summary of evidence for this in Wiggermann 1993–97b: 458–59) by most treatments—alongside understanding of the bulls as symbolic of Adad and the lions as symbolic of Ishtar—e.g. Gane 2012: 204–5 and Watanabe 2015: 217.

⁵²⁵ For the Ishtar Gate *mušḫuššu* figures as apotropaic, see at greatest length Watanabe 2015, as well as Wiggermann 1993–97b: 460 and Gane 2012: 218–20.

simple apotropaism, has suggested that monumental fixtures of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian states participated in the combat myth discourse and reinscribed by their presence the power of god and king over monster and beast.

The present chapter has discussed the broad framework of monumentality before proceeding to explore the practice of depicting defeated cosmic enemies in the temples and palaces of divine and human ruling powers, particularly as this emerged as a coherent iconographic program in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian contexts. As has been shown, various figural and relief representations occur in recovered iconography as well as in texts descriptive of royal building activity. I have not, in the present survey, exhausted instances of this directly and indirectly known artistic impulse. I have instead pointed to four groups of Mesopotamian texts and images usefully understood according to the paradigm of cosmic antagonist representation: (Subsection 4.2.1) the *nāhiru* and *burtiš* as exotic representatives of the king's power at geographical limits; (Subsection 4.2.2) the *aladlammû* as a monstrous doorkeeper similarly subordinated to the king; (Subsection 4.2.3) monsters associated with Tiamat as juxtaposed to recall narratives of their conquest, particularly by Aššur in the Assyrian context; and (Subsection 4.2.4) the defensive *mušhuššu* as similarly emblematic of Marduk and both this deity and his sponsored king's ability to control this ophidian monster. The next and final chapter will first explore the paths by which scholars have claimed for certain Levantine fixtures similar motivation and mnemonic power as those of the Mesopotamian exempla surveyed above. I will then draw final conclusions and discuss broader implications of Chapters 4 and 5 considered together.

Chapter 5

Snakes, Lakes, and Giants:

The Monumentalized Antagonist in the Hebrew Bible

[F]or an explanation of Nehushtan we should look to Babylonia [...]. Now, it is certain from very early inscriptions [...] that Babylonian temples contained not only brazen oxen, but also brazen serpents. Some of these [...] may have been protective serpents, such as were worshipped in the larger Egyptian temples; but when, as in Solomon's temple, only a single one is mentioned, it is reasonable to suppose that it is the 'raging serpent' (*i.e.*, Tiāmat) that is meant, as in the inscription of king Agum-kakrimí [sic ...]. If so, the brazen serpent [...], which Solomon adopted with the brazen 'sea,' and the brazen oxen from Babylonia, was originally a trophy of the Creator's victory over the serpent of chaos.⁵²⁶

By contrast with Mesopotamia and most other areas of ancient southwestern Asia, the southern Levant is notable for its stunning absence of monumental sculpture and iconography. This is especially true of the territory occupied by the kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the Iron Age. This general situation has been alluded to already in Chapter 4. It was suggested there that, although scholars have frequently discussed Mesopotamia and even the Northern Levant in terms of the monumental, it has proven more difficult to investigate the southern Levant along similar lines. There are, of course, a few exceptions to this general rule. Some studies have indeed

⁵²⁶ This epigraph is taken from the encyclopedia article on *Nḥuštān* by Cheyne (1902: 3388), for which see also the extended analysis below.

investigated the Hebrew Bible—its composition or its concepts—in terms of spatial and/or praxis theories⁵²⁷ or have described texts within the Hebrew Bible as using the same rhetoric and serving the same function as monumental inscriptions.⁵²⁸ But it remains true that there are few treatments that explore monumentality as a category in the southern Levant and especially in Israel and Judah.⁵²⁹

This is in part because the number of truly large palaces and temples in this region can be counted on one’s fingers. Monumental sculpture is basically unattested inside the fuzzy borders of Israel and Judah. Large sculpture and stone reliefs are virtually absent from the southern Levant between ca. 1130 B.C.E. and the Persian period. Purported exceptions are underwhelming. Albright (1938: 67) touted the 9th- or 8th-century Tell Bēt Mirsīm limestone lion statue as “approaching monumental character more closely than does any comparable object from pre-Hellenistic

⁵²⁷ For example, throughout the (so far) five-volume *Constructions of Space* series (Berquist and Camp 2007; 2008; M. K. George 2013; Prinsloo and Maier 2013; Økland, de Vos, and Wenell 2016). Similarly, Pioske (2015: 1) writes in his introduction that he prefers a method that investigates “important causal factors [...] from the difficult terrain of a region to an ideology connected to a city’s monumental structures.” Sporadic reflections on ways in which monuments might have constructed memories (see also below) are then scattered throughout (e.g. *ibid.*: 3, 35, 47); similar emphases can be found in Pioske’s (2018) more recent monograph (e.g. *ibid.*: 76–77 on the localized nature of cultural memory). Waters (2015: 14–21) has also recently engaged spatial theory as useful for study of threshing floors as sacred spaces in the ancient Levant. The as-yet unpublished dissertation of Crawford (2009; see also *idem* 2011) is worth highlighting as an excellent and art-historically sophisticated study of significations in the imagined Solomonic temple.

⁵²⁸ This is the recently published hypothesis of Hogue (2019) regarding the Decalogue in Exod 20.1–17. Citing several of the works of monumentality theory that I engage in Section 4.1, Hogue suggests that “[m]onumentality, then, in the most general terms, is the potential for an object to materialize collective imagination.” This definition has the benefit of allowing Hogue to observe some intriguing lexical and structural parallels between Northwest Semitic monumental inscriptions and Exod 20.1–17. It would be interesting to explore in greater detail the ways in which the *differences* in the ways monumental inscriptions and Exod 20.1–17 were or are encountered by audiences result in divergent (or convergent?) impacts of the formal parallels recovered by Hogue.

⁵²⁹ One recent exception is Smoak’s (2017) discussion of the Ekron dedicatory text (ed. Gitin et al. 1997), in which he foregrounds analysis of monumental features in architectural context.

Palestine.”⁵³⁰ But the sculpture is only 21 inches long and 9.5 inches high (Albright 1938: 67; Amiran 1976: 31), and the style of carving is very rough. Amiran (1976: 31–32; similarly Strawn 2005: 88) is probably right to suggest that this was originally part of a double-lion statue base, rather than a gate orthostat on the order of what is known from Hazor, Zincirli, and Carchemish.⁵³¹ At Iron Age Tel ‘Eton, two figures barely identifiable as lions are carved to either side of the entrance to Tomb 1 (Ussishkin 1974: 112–14). To call these crude incisions relief carvings is very generous. Additional carvings of animal heads dot the walls of the back chamber of Tomb 1 (ibid.: 114). These few items seem very isolated when juxtaposed with relief- and statue corpora from the northern Levant, never mind with those of Assyria and other Mesopotamian centers.

One encounters a similar absence of evidence when one searches for southern Levantine monumental inscriptions. It is this lack, more than that of monumental art, that has occasioned substantial discussion among Hebrew Bible scholars and historians of the southern Levant. Only a few fragments of monumental inscriptions have been found in the Iron Age territories of Israel and Judah despite extensive excavation in major urban centers. By “monumental inscriptions” I refer to display inscriptions that were likely available to a regular public and most likely executed on the orders of a royal or other political power. In the Levant, such inscriptions are generally carved on basalt, either incised or in relief.⁵³² Fragments of precisely four such inscriptions survive

⁵³⁰ The lion is now held in the Rockefeller Museum, IAA I.9014. In addition to Albright’s treatment, see Schroer 2018: 612 (no. 1641), with bibliography cited there; and especially Amiran 1976: 31.

⁵³¹ Cf. Albright 1938: 66. For possible recently-published parallels from the southern Levant, see Weber 2017 [two slabs from the Karak Archaeological Museum]). Work on lions in Levantine sculpture is substantial. See recently Zenzen 2018 for a monograph-length summary of lions in Greek and Near Eastern sculptural contexts and Osborne 2014c: esp. 207–9.

⁵³² The “display” criterion disqualifies, for example, the Siloam Tunnel inscription, the location of which was certainly not accessible during Iron IIB–C. For some recent discussion of this useful distinction, see Mandell and Smoak 2016: 201 n. 23; Rendsburg and Schniedewind 2010: 191. It seems helpful, in general, to consider tomb

from Iron Age Israel and Judah: (1.) the Samaria stele fragment (ca. 8th-C. B.C.E.),⁵³³ (2.) the Ophel stele fragment (ca. 700–650 B.C.E.)⁵³⁴; (3.) the four-line City of David fragment (7th C. B.C.E.)⁵³⁵; and (4.) the two-line City of David fragment (8th C. B.C.E.).⁵³⁶ Again, when one contrasts these minimal fragments with what is available from the Aramean city-states to the north, not to mention Mesopotamia, it immediately seems strange to claim any extensive tradition of monumental inscription for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

But in some quarters, this evidentiary reality has led to the notion that the data are suggestive not only of political and social differences with other polities in the region, but even to so-called “Israelite” cultural, and theological distinctiveness. Apparent distinctions in visual art

inscriptions to constitute a separate category. For these, Suriano 2018a: 98–127 is a recent discussion that attends to similarities and differences between tomb and monumental inscriptions. Mandell and Smoak 2017; 2016 stress that it is precisely the subterranean inaccessibility of many tomb inscriptions that render them liminally powerful.

⁵³³ *Editio princeps* Birnbaum 1957: 33–34 and pl. 4.1; subsequently Renz and Röllig 1995: I.135 [Sam(8):14]; Gogel 1998: 438; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 497; and Ahituv 2008: 257. Three letters (cf. below) on what is—by the dressing of the stone—the top line of an inscription: { } ?šr . [] ; this is most likely the relative complementizer *ʔaθar(-), but since this is hardly certain given the broken context, one should avoid citing it as evidence against unattested { ?š } having been a more usual “Northern” form of the relative complementizer (cf. Pat-El 2017: 231; see Gogel 1998: 438, “Asher”). Rollston’s (2010: 55) hand copy appears to take the scratches between { š } and { r } for { z } ; it is not clear whether the rightmost grapheme is { t } or { ? } (with the lower horizontal damaged, but this not marked in any way). The extra grapheme is certainly incorrect on the basis of all published photographs (as already pointed out by Lehmann 2013: 229), and neither of the resultant readings ** { tšzr } or ** { ?šzr } can produce sense.

⁵³⁴ *Editio princeps* Naveh 1982; subsequently Ben-Dov 1984; Gogel 1998: 426–27; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 226–27; Ahituv 2008: 30–32). This is very broken (approx. six to seven graphemes on each of four lines) but appears to describe building activity involving waterworks.

⁵³⁵ *Editio princeps* Naveh 2000: 1–2; subsequently Cross 2001; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 227–29; Ahituv 2008: 25–26. Only thirteen full letters survive, and only a few words can be recognized; perhaps something about funds is involved (thus Naveh 2000: 2; Cross 2001: 46–47; cf. Ahituv 2008: 26), but this is all at least debatable given the fragmentary state of the text

⁵³⁶ *Editio princeps* Reich and Shukron 2008. Since only six letters survive, { }]qyh[/]kh . b[], it is difficult to say much of anything about this inscription. One only notes that, unlike the other fragments listed above, the fragmentary { }]qyh[} allows the presence of a royal name.

prevalence have been attributed to public adherence to image bans such as those found in various Pentateuchal sources (Exod 20:3; Lev 26:1; Deut 4:16; 27:15). It should be stressed, though, that this question of monumental statuary and reliefs is a separate problem from whether Israelites and Judeans were more inclined towards divine aniconism than were their neighbors.⁵³⁷ Some scholars have suggested that the absence of monumental statuary, reliefs, and inscriptions in particular are illuminating for “Israelite” theology. The comments of Rendsburg (2007: esp. 97–99) are characteristic of this trend: “I believe we will not find royal inscriptions [in Israel and Judah], because there were social, political, and theological controls that operated to prevent the kings from producing and displaying monumental stelae and other, lesser epigraphs.”⁵³⁸ Rendsburg essentially posits that the “humility” of Israelite and Judean kings had such “a special role in Israelite religion” that the creation of monumental art and inscriptions just never happened. This

⁵³⁷ Scholars have often attempted to demonstrate this, too, from the archeological record (e.g. Mettinger 1995; Hendel 1997; Miller 2000: 225). The bibliography in Levtow 2008: 9–11 and nn. 22–25 is the most extensive recent one of which I am aware. Doak’s (2015) new volume on Phoenician direct and indirect representations of divinities helpfully challenges the classical conception of a “Canaanite—Israelite” dichotomy. Chavel (2015: 195–96 n. 70) further problematizes the simplistic distinction between “iconic” and “aniconic” representations and endorses analyzing representations along a three-axis matrix charting (1) direct (or explicit) and indirect (or implicit) representations; (2) static and dramatic representations; and (3) artifactual and verbal representations.

⁵³⁸ A popularization of Rendsburg’s hypothesis has recently appeared in Burnett (2016: 40, 66), who stresses “Yet from Israel we do not have a single piece of monumental sculpture comparable to those from Ammon and Moab. When it comes to inscriptions, the disparity is even more dramatic”; he then wonders “Is there some cultural reason that Israel has not produced great visual Iron Age art? And why aren’t there long inscriptions? Is it simply the luck of the archaeological draw? Or is there some deeper cultural or historical distinction between the kingdoms west and east of the Jordan? Could it have something to do with the fact that we also have no Ammonite, Moabite or Edomite Bible?” (on this last, see also Cornell 2016, who has tried to define Yahweh as, unlike Moabite Kemosh, “inscripturated”). This manner of interrogative writing unfortunately implies a conclusion about Israel’s distinctiveness without taking on the burden of deeper investigation.

is certainly possible, but it elides a host of sociopolitical and economic factors that could easily have contributed just as dramatically to the observed evidentiary gap.⁵³⁹

Claims such as that of Rendsburg strike one as another manifestation of broader convictions about “Israelite” exceptionalism.⁵⁴⁰ In recent years, it has become less common to find scholars simply attributing the presence or lack of monumental art and inscriptions in Mesopotamia and the southern Levant, respectively, to basic cultural or theological differences. There are some natural pitfalls in both the attempt to distinguish the Iron Age southern Levant from its neighboring territories and the attempt to show substantial commonalities or continuities in the ancient Near East. The former project is reminiscent of ongoing attempts to portray putative ancestors of Judaism and Christianity as both unique and superior. The latter impulse, on the other hand, runs the risk of sliding into the fundamental thesis of the late-nineteenth- and early-

⁵³⁹ Several more judicious studies are available. Rollston (2010: 55) reasonably regards the four monumental fragments cited above as evidence that there were “monumental tradition[s]” in both Israel and Judah; and see similarly Pioske 2018: 37–38 with n. 93. Of course, there is also a substantial body of scholarship that argues for portions of the biblical text—especially the book of Kings—having been directly drawn from, influenced by, or composed in dialogue with actual Israelite or Judahite royal inscriptions. This view has been championed by Na’aman (1996: 23; 1998; 1999: 16; 2000: 96 [all reprinted in idem 2006]) in recent decades but has predecessors; these are cited in the survey of Parker (2000), who argues that current evidence does not support such claims.

⁵⁴⁰ Machinist (1991), for example, argues that the scholarly discourse around “Israelite” distinctiveness has always been determined by claims in the Hebrew Bible itself regarding “Israel’s” uniqueness; he examines this tendency particularly with regard to claiming for “Israel” a revolutionary monotheism (see also further notes in Chapter 2; esp. Uehlinger 2015). In the realm of aniconism particularly, Feder (2013: 251–52) has recently wondered “if many of the fundamental ideas traditionally attributed to ancient Israel can be found in other Near Eastern cultures, why was it primarily the Hebrew Bible that succeeded in propagating them?”; he posits that this involved “the effect of successful rhetorical strategies for marking certain values as distinct and inviolable.” Of course, this sidesteps the most obvious explanation: sheer historical accident. Most would agree that the development of European history—and especially Judaism and Christianity in that environment—was determined by numerous political and social factors that had very little to do with the Hebrew Bible or any other text’s “successful rhetorical strategies.” It is this history that has dictated religious and academic questions for at least the last millennium and predisposed scholars to find distinctiveness in certain traditions and not others.

twentieth-century cultural historians: that all cultural expressions are basically tokens of the same underlying civilization, even if at different points in its evolutionary development.

Charting a middle course between these two unsatisfactory poles involves giving full attention to iconographic evidence, literary evidence, and any disjunctions between the two of these. Attention to these disjunctions can, especially for the Levant, highlight the likelihood that certain absences arose primarily from practical shortcomings—e.g. insufficiencies of materials and manpower—and not from ideological difference. One important point that I stress in the present chapter is that there exist, even in the oldest Levantine textual sources, intriguing literary representations that some scholars have already argued to betray similar thought processes as those items considered throughout Chapter 4. For example, in recent scholarship on combat mythologies from the ancient Levant and western Mesopotamia, some attention has been paid to an 18th-century B.C.E. Akkadian prophetic text from Mari, A.1968,⁵⁴¹ in which Adad is quoted as saying to Zimri-Lim (ll. 2'–4'): { ^{giš}TUKUL^[meš] / ša it-ti te-em-tim am-ta-aḥ-šú / ad-di-na-ak-kum } *kakkī ša itti tēmtim amtaḥṣu addinakkum* “I gave you the weapons with which I have struck the Sea (*tēmtum*).” Without dwelling here on the full implications of this aside—for which see the studies cited in n. 541—it bears noting that the assertion ascribed to Adad may imply the visibility of ceremonial or cultic weapons evocative of divine combat in some Mari palace or temple.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴¹ The *editio princeps*—copy, transliteration, translation—is Durand 1993. A normalization and translation are given in Nissinen 2003: 21–22 (no. 2), where an extensive bibliography to 2003 may also be found. Recent substantial considerations of this text in the context of combat myth studies are Töyräänvuori 2018: 141–57 (see also eadem 2012); Tugendhaft 2018: 47–61; Ayali-Darshan 2016: 262–68; and Ballentine 2015: 111–23; there is also a very brief mention of the text in R. D. Miller 2018: 138.

⁵⁴² This observation has been made already by numerous authors, namely Töyräänvuori 2018: 155–56; Ballentine 2015: 113, 229 n. 89; Nissinen 2003: 22 n. d.; van der Toorn 2000: 85; and Wyatt 1998: 843. These authors edit, cite, and/or discuss Old Babylonian texts attesting to the practice of divine and human weapon conveyance and veneration, e.g. in A.1858, a Mari letter of Sūmu-Ila to the king (Durand 2002: 15): { ^{giš}TUKUL^{bd} ša dIŠKUR / ša ḥa-

While this example lies outside the chronological bounds adopted in the present chapter, various fixtures described in the Hebrew Bible are themselves frequently argued to have combat myth connotations. I treat three in the present section: (1.) the depiction of a bronze snake נחש־בְּרֹזֶתֶן *Nḥuštān*, described as created by Moses (Num 21:4b–9) and destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4); (2.) the מַיִם מְצֻקִים *hayyōm mušōq* “molten sea” (see below) described as installed on the back of twelve bovid figures inside the Solmonic temple (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:2)⁵⁴³; and (3.) the severed head of Goliath taken by David to Jerusalem (1 Sam 17:54). The first has been compared to such Mesopotamian *mušḫuššu* dragons as were studied in Chapter 4 and understood as everything from a relic of Canaanite “pagan” religion to an imposition of Assyrian religion, in either case perhaps emblematic of the deity’s victory over a cosmic serpent monster. The second has been compared with representations of putative *apsû* basins in Mesopotamian temples; the use of both Hebrew מַיִם and Akkadian *apsû* for watery cosmic antagonists has then led to the further hypothesis that these temple fixtures also recalled combat myth significations. I regard neither of these hypotheses to be convincing, but the recurrence of such claims in scholarship demands a re-evaluation of the data and, more importantly, some discussion of why putative connections have proven so popular even when the foundations of comparison are tenuous.

la-ab^[ki] / ik-šu-du-nim-m[a] / i-na É^dda-gan / i-na ter-qa^{ki} / ka-le-ek-šu-nu-ti / a-na ki-ma be-lí i-ša-pa-ra-am / lu-pu-úš} “The weapons of Adad of Aleppo have arrived here. I am keeping them in the temple of Dagan in Terqa that I might do as I wrote to my lord.”

⁵⁴³ Those scholars who have posited one or the other of these installations to represent defeated cosmic antagonists will be cited in each subsection, below. Van der Toorn (2002: 56) has recently juxtaposed the two in a brief comment: “From Mesopotamian evidence we know that temples often harbored images of defeated divine adversaries demoted to guardian spirits: Humbaba and Anzu are examples [citing only Wiggermann 1992: 146]. In Jerusalem, Nehushtan and the Bronze Sea (*yam hannēḥōšet*; *yam hammûšāq*) may have been regarded as the trophies of Yahweh, the god being assimilated to Baal as the victor of Yam and Leviathan.”

Instead, the most likely place in which display rhetoric involving the defeated antagonist is actually employed in the Hebrew Bible is the claim that David took as a trophy and displayed the severed head of the giant Goliath (1 Sam 17:54). Perhaps because this battle and conquest is not considered to be representative of the “combat myth” narrowly conceived, scholars have only rarely noted its connection with defeat and display motifs as discussed here and in the previous chapter. In what follows, I compare the literarily imagined display of Goliath’s head to similar descriptions of severing and displaying the giant Hūmbaba’s head in various literary traditions about Gilgamesh and to the archaeologically attested practice of displaying Hūmbaba head representations outside temples, in houses, and elsewhere as an apotropaion emblematic of monster defeat and re-appropriation of the deadly gaze.

5.1 *Nḥuštōn* (Num 21:4b–9; 2 Kgs 18:4)

Embedded in the narratives of the Israelites’ desert wanderings is a strange episode, described in Numbers 21:4b–9,⁵⁴⁴ which often receives attention as having been influenced by conceptions of “sympathetic magic” (e.g. Joines 1974: 87; Milgrom 1990: 459; Levine 2000: 89):

⁵⁴⁴ Numbers 21:4b–9 is usually understood to be a unified narrative (Num 21:4a is a complex itinerary notice that has been argued [Baden 2014: 648–50] to reflect the Pentateuchal compiler’s combination of elements of P [וַיִּסְעֶיךָ מִקֵּדְרָתַיִם מִקֵּדְרָתַיִם הַקְּדָרִים], J [וַיִּסְעֶיךָ יַם-סוּפִיר], and E [לִסְבֹּב אֶת-אֶרֶץ אֲדוֹמִים]); similarly Gray 1903: 274, 277, in which וַיִּסְעֶיךָ מִקֵּדְרָתַיִם הַקְּדָרִים is P or the compiler and the rest of the verse is “JE”). Documentarian approaches tend to attribute Numbers 21.4b–9 to E (e.g. Wellhausen 1899: 108; Gray 1903: 274 [“from JE, and, probably, in particular from E”]; Procksch 1906: 107; Jaroš 1982: 159–60; most recently Baden 2014: 643–44; cf. Levine 2000: 79, “JE, except for Num 21:4 [! cf. *ibid.*: 86, only מִקֵּדְרָתַיִם הַקְּדָרִים], a priestly interpolation”; cf. assignation to J in Budd 1984: 233–34 [on the grounds that this is similar in “form and structure” to Num 11:1–3, but this is a poor argument]). Only rarely is this narrative divided into different strands (Beyerle 1999, who divides “Narratio” and “Diskurs” and then asserts a diachronic distinction between these, all for no clear reason). This exercise, though, does not appear to yield any true understanding of the compositional process. Up-to-date summaries of proposals may be found in Schmitt 2004: 194–95.

(4b) ותקצרו נפש-העם בדרך: (5) וידבר העם באלהים ובמשה למה העליתנו ממצרים למות במדבר כי אין להם ואין מים ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלקל: (6) וישלח יהוה בעם את הנחשים השרפים וינשכו את-העם וימת עם-רב מישראל: (7) ויבא העם אל-משה ויאמרו הטאנו כי-דברנו ביהוה נבך התפלל אל-יהוה ויטר מעלינו את-הנחש ויתפלל משה בעד העם: (8) ויאמר יהוה אל-משה עשה לה שרף ושים אתו על-גס והיה פל-הנשוף וראה אתו וחי: (9) ויעש משה נחש נחשת וישמהו על-הגס והיה אם-נשוף הנחש את-איש והביט אל-נחש הנחשת וחי:

(4b) The people became impatient on the way. (5) The people spoke against⁵⁴⁵ God and against Moses: “Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the desert, for there is no bread and there is no water. Our throats loathe the dungheap⁵⁴⁶ bread.”

⁵⁴⁵ Piel + -ב as “to speak against” is not an extremely common usage (also Num 12:1, 8b^{2x}; Ps 50:20; 78:19; Job 19:18) but it is generally understood as here. This interpretation is found already in Ewald 1855: 485 (§217f.1); Gray 1903: 120, 277; BDB 181b. More recent comments along these lines include Levine 2000: 86–87.

⁵⁴⁶ קלקל is a *hapax legomenon*. It has traditionally been understood as a nominal instantiation of the well-known root קל “to be light” and argued thence on etymological and contextual grounds to signify something like “worthless” food (e.g. BDB 887a; HALOT 1106b; Noth 1966: 136, “minderwertigen”). Two unlikely alternatives have also been suggested: (1.) comparison with Ugaritic {qlql} (RS 5.300:9 [= *KTU*³ 1.71]; 17.120:10 [= *KTU*³ 1.85], both hippiatric texts; lexical discussion in Cohen and Sivan 1983: 24; Pardee 1985: 57), but this is, from context, probably a plant (certainly not “horse fodder,” contra Milgrom 1990: 317 n. 6). The meaning thus seems inappropriate for the Num 21.5 phrase and context. (2.) Some have also suggested comparison with a putative Akkadian lexeme ***qalqalt*- (spelled with {kal} = {qal₄} = {gal₉} signs) “hunger(?)” frequent in the inscriptions of Aššurbanipal and other Neo-Assyrian kings. But this lexeme is probably to be read instead *laplapt*- “parching thirst(?)” (*CAD* L [1973] 94, where this reading suggestion is already found; Borger 1996: 64–65), with the result that the long-noted possible cognate (already Gray 1903: 27) disappears as a ghost word (for these two possibilities, see also Aster 2011: 344–46).

The possibility of a better interpretation in light of a broadly contemporary Old Aramaic inscription was offered first by Lipiński (1994: 71) and then explored at some length—apparently independently—by Aster (2011). A noun {qlqltʿ} “garbage-heap” is attested in a 9th-century inscription, the Tell Fekheriyeh bilingual l. 22 (= *KAF*⁵ 309; e.p. Abou-Assaf et al. 1982). Later Aramaic cognates—in Syriac, Mandaic, JPA, and JBA—are amply documented by Greenfield and Shaffer (1983b: 123–25; 1985: 56); for the syncopation of the first *l* in most forms, see already Nöldeke 1875: 78. (Andersen and Freedman [1988: 39] are the only scholars to directly dissent from the “garbage-heap” interpretation. They suggest the alternative “baskets,” but this ignores the Akkadian parallel text and the breadth of {qlqltʿ}-cognate attestations in later Aramaic; for a summary of scholarship on this lexeme to the early 1990s, see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 1012.) The Aramaic clause {wmn : qlqltʿ : llqtw : ʔnšwh : šʿrn : lʿklw} “and from the garbage-heaps may his men glean barley as food(?)” is paralleled by Neo-Assyrian {³⁶ UGU tub-ki-na-te

⁽⁶⁾ Yahweh sent *sarap*-snakes among the people. They bit the people. Many people from among the Israelites died. ⁽⁷⁾ The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we spoke against Yahweh and against you. Pray to Yahweh, that he might remove the snake(s) from upon us.” Moses prayed on behalf of the people. ⁽⁸⁾ Yahweh said to Moses, “Make a *sarap* and put it on a pole. So it will happen that every individual who was bitten will see it and live.” ⁽⁹⁾ Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. So it happened that if a snake had bitten a given man,⁵⁴⁷ he would look at the bronze snake and live.

The basic plot of the narrative is clear. The people speak out against Moses and Yahweh, so the deity punishes them by sending snakes into their midst. As these snakes wreak havoc, the people entreat Moses to pray for them. Moses does so, Yahweh conveys instructions, and Moses follows them.

The content of the instructions, however, has struck some as odd, in that Yahweh here commands Moses to erect the sort of image elsewhere prohibited or at least not approved.

la-qi-te / ⁽³⁷⁾ lil-qu-te } *eli tubkinnāte laqītē lilqute* “may they scavenge scraps on the *tubkinnu*.” This *tubkinnu* certainly denotes a heap of garbage; contexts supporting this understanding are well-documented by Greenfield and Shaffer (1983a: 116; 1983b: 125–26; in both articles, argued as from *tabāku* “to heap”; for the NA/NB nominal suffix *-enn*, see von Soden 1995: 70) and *CAD* T [2006] 446. In light of this parallel, it is possible that the meaning of Biblical Hebrew קלקל is “garbage heap,” so that וַנִּפְשְׁנוּ קֶצֶה בְּלִקְלָהּ would mean “our throats loathe the garbage-bread.” Lipiński (1994: 71) and Aster’s (2011) good suggestion seems to have gone largely unnoticed thus far. I have found it cited only in Ziegert 2015: 219 n. 42, but this author nevertheless continues to assert that “Die Bedeutung des Hapaxlegomenons קלקל ist wohl ‘gering.’”

⁵⁴⁷ אֶת־אִישׁ is unusual but not unparalleled (see e.g. Exod 21:28 וְאֶת־אִשָּׁה וְאֶת־אִישׁ אוֹ אֶת־אִישׁ). Of course, אֶת־אִישׁ generally marks only definite direct objects. Many grammarians agree, however, that אִישׁ in numerous cases acquired a “quasi-pronominal” status (so Gray 1903: 278; see similarly Davidson 1901: 104 [§72 rem. 4]). This occasionally results in its being marked by אֶת־אִישׁ. Cf. GKC §107d, who hesitantly attribute the present case to avoidance of “cacophony” in the hypothetical *וְאֶת־אִישׁ אֶת־אִישׁ, and Joüon and Muraoka 2006: 416 (§125h), who claim that this and other uses with formally “indeterminate noun[s]” are simply “for the sake of clarity, to indicate the object clearly.” Waltke and O’Connor (1990: 180–81 [§10.3.1b]) argue similarly for the present case, Lev 26:5, and Job 13:25: “This anomalous use may be explained as due to an attempt to set off accusative function.”

Additional tension emerges when one looks to the other context in which a bronze serpent appears, in the description of Hezekiah's reforms as given in 2 Kings 18:4⁵⁴⁸:

הוא | הקיר את־הבָּמוֹת וְשָׁבַר אֶת־הַמִּצְבֹּת וְכָרַת אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה וְכָתַת נְחֹשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה כִּי עָד־
הַיָּמִים הַהֵמָּה הָיוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְטְרִים לֹו וַיִּקְרָא־לֹו נְחֹשֶׁתֹן:

He removed the high places and broke the pillars. He cut down the Asherah. He crushed the bronze snake that Moses had made, because until those days, the Israelites were making incense offerings to it. It was called *Nḥuštōn*.⁵⁴⁹

The basic observation to be made about this passage is that the implied theological evaluation of this bronze snake is negative. It is worthy of removal and/or destruction by treatment similar to those effected towards the high places, pillars, and Asherah. The author of 2 Kings 18:4bβ does spend a bit more time rationalizing this act, but the end result is still the elimination of the statue and thus the implication of its basic impropriety.

⁵⁴⁸ The parallel Chronicles narrative (2 Chr 31:1a) makes no mention of *Nḥuštōn*: וַיִּכְלֹת כָּל־אֹת יָצָאוּ כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּהְיוּ הַיְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁבְּרוּ הַמִּצְבֹּת וַיִּגְדְּעוּ הָאֲשֵׁרִים וַיִּנְתְּצוּ אֶת־הַבָּמוֹת וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבְּחֹת מִכָּל־יְהוּדָה. This omission and the possible motivations for it are the topic of an excellent article by Jonker (2008); his conclusion is that the absence can be ascribed to a complex of mutually reinforcing concerns, including motivations to present Jerusalem as a pure cult center and to present both Moses and the Zadokite priesthood as blameless (ibid.: 130–32). The further hypothesis (ibid.: 133–34) that the elaboration of priestly duties in 2 Chr 31:2–19 functions as a replacement for the Piel offerings to *Nḥuštōn* described in 2 Kgs 18.4 is intriguing but not strictly necessary. Much less successful is the similarly focused and recent article of Evans (2013), who attempts to connect נְחֹשֶׁתֹן to Ezekiel's תְּשֻׁמָּה (Ezek 1:4, 27; 8:2), etymologically (*√ḥš[!]) and conceptually, and to suggest that both have interlocking magical associations that would have made the Chronicler uncomfortable.

⁵⁴⁹ Contra some scholars, the singular verb of the Masoretic Text does not require that Hezekiah be the subject of the verb (cf. Jaroš 1982: 161 n. 6; Schroer 1987: 108 n. 173; Jonker 2008: 120); this construction can also intend an impersonal subject (e.g. Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 71 [§4.4.2]). I understand the verb thus here. Rather than the awkward "One called it *Nḥuštōn*," I translate with a semantically similar passive voice verb.

There exists no scholarly consensus on the relationship of the two narratives to one another. Three broad considerations, though, are important. First, many scholars have argued that both Numbers 21:4b–9 and 2 Kings 18:4 independently respond to (and/or even faithfully describe) historical events, i.e. Moses’s actual response to the appearance of snakes in the desert and Hezekiah’s reforming activity. This could be called the “conservative” position.⁵⁵⁰ For example, Hall suggests, in his general history of the ancient Near East (1932: 485), that the bronze serpent was “actually a very ancient image that had been brought by the ancestors of the Israelites from Egypt.” A similar historicizing spirit animates the work of Joines (1974: 90), who attempts to prove a historical distinction between these two serpents by appealing to how a historical Hezekiah, faced with an actual Mosaic artifact, might be expected to act—“Hezekiah also would probably not have destroyed the serpent, but instead have attempted to redirect the popular conceptions of it”—and what biblical authors, faced with an actual temple serpent, might be expected to write—“some mention of the bronze serpent would have appeared in the Old Testament sometime in the intervening five hundred years between Moses and Hezekiah.”⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ In addition to the contributions highlighted in the present paragraph, see e.g. Gressmann 1913: 457. Hendel (1999: 616) speaks of “the prophetic critique of ritual symbols, in which a number of traditional Yahwistic concepts and symbols came to be reinterpreted as idolatrous or ‘Canaanite’ [...] This reevaluation of traditional symbols, evidenced in the eighth century prophets and in Deuteronomy, may be the motivation for Hezekiah’s destruction of Nehushtan”; this all makes it sound as though Hendel assumes the basic historicity of both a pre-Hezekian symbol and a Hezekian reform. Contra Lufrani and Cervera (2015: 28), the polemicization against *Nḥuštān* hardly “confirms the likelihood of the existence of this object”; one cannot prove that the author of such a polemic is above fabricating foils—even if perhaps based on oral and/or textual traditions—for Hezekiah’s reformation.

⁵⁵¹ Joines includes many other comments along similar lines: “[a] bronze serpent had a place in the cultic practices of old Israel for perhaps as long as two hundred years” (Joines 1974: 61) and “[t]he serpent probably had stood in the temple since its beginning” (ibid.: 74). Throughout, the historicity of the text’s narrative is simplistically assumed. Joines’s general approach is confessed towards the conclusion of her monograph (1974: 91): “[T]here is neither evidence nor adequate reason to doubt that in reality Moses constructed and displayed a bronze serpent in the wilderness.”

Although the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms remains a contested issue, there are few who still assume that everything described in the text reflects historical reality and attempt to deduce a history of Israelite religion from this starting point.⁵⁵²

Another group of scholars holds that Numbers 21:4b–9 responds to 2 Kings 18:4 and/or (some part of) the historical situation described therein—i.e. the existence of a venerated snake representation and/or Hezekiah's destruction of the same. By this hypothesis, Numbers 21:4b–9 is called “etiological,” but scholars vary substantially in the precise character of the situation or story to which the Numbers narrative purportedly responds. Consequently, datings of this narrative also vary quite widely. On the one hand, Schroer (1987: 109–11) follows Rowley (1939: 132–41) and Jaroš (1982: 163) in the following hypothesis, which assumes the essential historicity of the Kings narrative but not that of the Numbers narrative:

Vorläufig scheint mir die Annahme, dass der Nehuschtan in Jerusalem kanaanäischer Herkunft war, aber mit einer alten israelitischen Ueberlieferung (Mose – Schlange – Stab) behaftet und bis zur Zeit Hiskijas toleriert war, plausibler. Grund für die Abschaffung des Kultsymbols sind nach 2Kön 18,4 die Rauchopfer, woraus zu schliessen ist, das die Bronzeschlange Gegenstand der Verehrung war oder geworden war, was von gewissen Kreisen als unvereinbar mit dem JHWH-Glauben angesehen wurde. (Schroer 1987: 110–11)⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² This is, of course, a huge topic with substantial bibliography. The characterization above is well-documented by the dissertation of Swanson (1999; see also idem 2002), a study of the Hezekian reform and *Nḥuštān* particularly. This dissertation is engaged directly below. Regarding the historicity of the Hezekian reform in general, two major recent discussions are Thomas 2014: 320–42 and Young 2012: 91–122. Older essential studies include Fried 2002; Na'aman 1995; Lowery 1991; and Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 218–22.

⁵⁵³ Similar hypotheses—all including something like the notion that Numbers 21:4b–9 responds to the presence of a serpent representation in the temple by attributing that representation to Moses—include Rowley 1939: 132; Gray 1970: 670; Jaroš 1982: 163; Budd 1984: 233–35; Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 217; Schmitt 2004: 193–96. Already Gray (1903: 275) characterized as “very generally adopted” the hypothesis that “Nu. 21⁴⁻⁹ is an etiological

Since the Kings passage both attributes the fashioning of *Nḥuštān* to Moses himself *and* appears to approve Hezekiah's destruction of the figure, something like the religious-historical development summarized by Schroer here is generally assumed by those taking 2 Kings 18:4 to be historical (classically Rowley 1939: 136–41): first, a Canaanite fertility-cult image, the *Nḥuštān*-snake, was taken over by Israelites, allegedly after the conquest of Jerusalem. Embarrassed by this Canaanite connection, the Israelites fashioned a narrative according to which *Nḥuštān* was actually made by Moses; this narrative was formulated in the early Iron Age (Jaroš 1982: 162 “zur Zeit Davids”; Schroer 1987: 110). Finally, *Nḥuštān* was delegitimized by the Jerusalem priesthood and/or scribes when these saw that actual offerings to it were impinging on monotheistic worship of Yahweh. Of course, this line of thinking involves many assumptions based narrowly in the tendentious biblical text. These include a view of “Canaanite cult” as uniform, fertility-focused, and totally different from the religion of early “Israel”⁵⁵⁴; a historical conquest of Jerusalem by David; and an uncritical adoption of the assessment of the putative statue-worship and its problems in the Kings narrative.

story told to explain a symbol that actually owed its origin to other than Yahwistic belief.” Joines (1974: 90) allows that Num 21 “could be a mere aetiological justification of Israel’s cultic acceptance,” but is too uncertain about the identity of the items and too certain about the historical nature of both narratives to decide for the etiological hypothesis. The conclusion reached by Knierim and Coats (2005: 239)—that the “story [...] has an etiological dimension. But the primary intention of the tradition is to connect the bronze serpent with its healing role to Moses, the hero who heals his people”—is illustrative of the limits imposed on authors who attempt to understand (“form-critically”) individual narratives in isolation and without close consideration of other potentially illuminating texts (in this case, 2 Kings 18.4).

⁵⁵⁴ For the classic response to this narrow and untenable view, see Hillers 1985.

A recognition of these difficulties has resulted in hypotheses that are more comfortable with both narratives being essentially fictional.⁵⁵⁵ Levine (2000: 90) leans in this direction when he counters the notion that Num 21:4b–9 responds to a real “snake cult of Hezekiah’s time” with the suggestion that “[m]ore likely, the notation in 2 Kings 18:4 was polemical in tone, expressing the attitude of zealous monotheists of that period.” This language implies that Levine refuses to take 2 Kgs 18:4 as straightforward evidence for the presence of a snake figure and snake cult in 8th-century Judah.

A final point is not necessarily incompatible with either of the two broad hypotheses outlined above. Many scholars suggest that the two narratives are concerned with ophidian representations—real or imagined—that had nothing to do with one another originally and were identified with one another only quite late in the history of tradition.⁵⁵⁶ The implications of this possibility will be engaged at greater length, below, after a summary of some more basic issues bearing on *Nḥuštān*.

Because arguments regarding the morphology and materiality of *Nḥuštān* have often proceeded from an etymological basis, it is useful to summarize what one can say about :נְחֻשְׁתָּן

⁵⁵⁵ Schmidt (2004: 103–4) is also fairly negative about the historical value of both narratives; in exploring the connection of the two, though, he offers little better than that the Mosaic attribution in Kings is among the biblical text’s unsolved riddles (“Warum der Nehushtan gerade auf Mose zurückgeführt wurde, gehört m.E. zu den bisher nicht gelösten Rätseln”). Although he does appear to regard both narratives as fictional, Noth’s opinion (1966: 137) does not quite fit here, since he regards Num 21:4b–9 as not “exactly” an etiology because it provides no narrative about the bronze serpent’s conveyance to Jerusalem (“Dieses Stück gibt nun nicht gerade eine Ätiologie des ‘Nehusthan’ von 2.Kön 18,4; denn sie läuft nicht darauf hinaus, daß die Israeliten die von Mose angefertigte ‘bronzene Schlange’ etwa mitgenommen hätten”).

⁵⁵⁶ For example, already Procksch (1906: 108 n. 5), “Unsere Erzählung [= Num 21:4b–9] ist älter als 2. Reg. 18,4; und 2. Reg. 18,4 hat das Mißverständnis verschuldet, als bestehe irgendein ursprünglicher Zusammenhang zwischen dem heidnischen Idol im Tempel und unserer Erzählung.”

from a lexicographical perspective. Formally, the lexeme is a *quṭult-* base noun⁵⁵⁷ with an **-ān*⁵⁵⁸ affix from the root $\sqrt{\text{nhš}}$. This root is well attested in Biblical Hebrew, but its etymology is debated and various possibly interrelated semantic fields so denoted are differently connected by scholars. Three main complexes are visible: (1.) נח"ש for “snake” (including related PNs), (2.) נח"ש for “divination” of some sort (always Piel; also noun נחש at Num 23.23; 24.1), and (3.) נח"ש for the metal “bronze,” chiefly in the nouns נחשת (< **nuḥušt-*) and נחשושה (< **nuḥūšat-*). It has long been common to claim that the second complex of usages are denominative from the first, i.e. that this particular variety of divination originally involved or invoked snakes of some sort.⁵⁵⁹ Both the first

⁵⁵⁷ There is no need to posit a “mixed formation from I נחש and I נחשושה” (cf. GKC §86; Schroer 1987: 108 n. 173; *HALOT* 692a), unless the authors mean this in a semantic rather than a morphological sense (see below). Scholars have often argued that this lexeme was somehow a compound, but none of these proposals are convincing. For example, Nöldeke (1888: 482 n. 1) wondered “Ob נחשתן nicht vielleicht in נחש+תן aufzulösen und letzteres = תנין ist?” But {tn} does not occur for intended תנין, and (as noted by Cheyne 1902: 3387 n. 1) the combination of the two serpent terms is unparalleled. Klostermann (1887: 457) suggested that the lexeme is from “נחש יתן d.h. die (ewige oder die) urzeitl. Schlange”; the phonology is, however, difficult (**naḥasV-yati'nV* > [??] *nḥuštōn*, with many vocalic problems), and $\sqrt{\text{ytn}}$ has no adjectival instantiation in Biblical Hebrew. Cheyne (1902: 3387 n. 1) nevertheless characterized both of these suggestions as “on the right track.” He supported, though, the unprovable theory that לוייתן “Leviathan” was original to the text; this was either replaced “out of a[n unexplained] religious scruple” or “לוייתן in לוי” fell out owing to the preceding לו, and נחש was inserted by conjecture for the missing letters.” These suggestions are both unconvincing in that they rely on, respectively, *ad hoc* textual change and strange mechanical error and attempted amelioration.

⁵⁵⁸ The apparent non-operation of the “Canaanite shift” (**ā > o*) in such cases is attributed by Bauer and Leander (1922: 499–500)—following their general theory of Biblical Hebrew being essentially a chronologically “mixed” language (esp. *ibid.*: 19)—to all such words being loanwords from Aramaic or otherwise unexplained “late” developments. Some authors explain this noun (Hendel 1999: 615) or most such nouns with *-on* (Blau 2010: 275) to be the result of dissimilation from preceding *o* or *u* vowels; this is not impossible, but it cannot account for other cases, e.g. לוייתן and, as Blau (*ibid.*) notes, כבשן “kiln” (Gen 19:28; Exod 9:8; 19:18). One probably does best to simply posit the existence of an additional nominal sufformative **-an* (i.e. not **-ān*; as e.g. Brockelmann 1908: 395–96), which has the advantage of explaining apparent reflexes of a sufform **-an* also in Arabic and Syriac (documented at *ibid.*).

⁵⁵⁹ For basic references on this point, see the lexica; Schmitt 2004: 110–12; Swanson 1999: 66–68; and Jeffers 1996: 74–78.

and the third complexes—those denoting “snake” and “bronze,” respectively—have cognate sets that require both to be reflexes of proto-Semitic $*\sqrt{nhš}$, e.g. for “snake” Ugaritic {nhš} *naḥaš-* (RS 24.244 *passim*, etc.) and for “bronze” Arabic *nuḥās-* “copper, bronze” (E. W. Lane 1863–93: 2775b–c). This suggests that the consonants of **naḥas-* “snake” and **nuḥust-* “bronze” were likely identical in proto-Semitic; the two semantic sets appear to have been differentiated by their vocalic patterns. The question of whether these two lexemes somehow developed from an older and uniform point of origin is at present unanswerable, in large part because the two semantic fields are distinct in each of the attested Semitic languages. Most attempts to find such a connection strike one as rather speculative. Although both lexemes are widespread in Semitic already by the time of the Ugaritic texts (ca. 13th century BCE), it is not impossible that one, the other, or both are loanwords.⁵⁶⁰

These observations are important for two reasons: first, there can exist no phonological or orthographical grounds on which one might argue that נחשׁ was originally either “snake-like item” or “bronze item” exclusively. For example, one might have hoped to argue from the Septuagint orthographies Νεσθαν and Νεεσθαν for a proto-Semitic root $*\sqrt{nhš}$ (with $*h$ represented by {Ø}, as is usual in the Septuagint). But since the two semantic fields “snake” and “bronze” share this root, such orthographies are of no assistance. Second, because the lexemes **naḥas-* and **nuḥust-* were phonologically similar and thus both potentially assigned to a conceptual root $*\sqrt{nhš}$, one cannot guarantee that any individual who actually spoke, wrote, heard, or read the word **nuḥustān-* would have assigned it to an exclusive root-based semantic category—“snake” or “bronze”—and thus always have perceived it as related to certain lexemes

⁵⁶⁰ These general observations do not come close to exhausting what can be said about both lexemes, but the present context is not ideal for a full lexicographical study. Some older studies are cited in n. 559, but otherwise see the lexica.

but not others. Put a different way, it is unlikely that the first users of a lexeme **nuḥustān-* coined it only in response to its referent’s snake-ness or its bronze-ness. The first receivers of the lexeme would likewise probably have perceived both valences as operative. Statements in the well-used lexica like “prob. = *bronze-god*” (BDB 639a) and “? really ‘bronze sculpture’” (HALOT 692a)⁵⁶¹ are thus somewhat misleading, in that they suggest that one or another meaning was prior—and even *demonstrably* prior—and thus revealing of the lexeme’s true import. It is far more likely that the lexeme inherently refers to an entity at the confluence of these fields. This was perhaps understood to be clever, and the name could thus be called, as it often is, a “play on words” (e.g. Joines 1974: 62; Handy 1992: 1117a).

With this in mind, one may consider whether the snake representation(s) described in Numbers 21:4b–9 and 2 Kings 18:4 can actually have had anything to do with the present topic—cosmic enemies represented in monumental architecture. Some scholars have argued that a connection does exist, even if the range of connections conceptualized is broad. Representative of such approaches is Cheyne’s (1902: 3388) old encyclopedia entry, already cited in the epigraph of the present chapter:

⁵⁶¹ Similarly Joines (1974: 62), citing BDB and KBL, but then leaving open the possible that it is “the development of a play on words” (see below). Clines 1993–2011: V.670a suggests that one “cf.” תַּחַשׁ, שִׁחַשׁ, and הַשְּׁחַשׁ—all words for “bronze”—but not, for whatever reason, שִׁחַשׁ. Worth mentioning is a widespread assumption that, since תַּחַשׁ “bronze” and הַשְּׁחַשׁ share a base (*quṭul-*) and feminine singular morpheme (*-t-*), the latter must be an expansion of the former (Hendel 1999: 615; Donner 2013: 808); indeed, this is probably the assumption behind many of the more laconic etymological arguments cited above. The hypothesis is, however, unnecessary. Lexemes can, of course, be developed from other lexemes by the simple addition of morphemes, in this case *-ān*. But especially in the case of a poorly-attested language like Biblical Hebrew, one cannot assume that there did not exist a morphologically identical but semantically differentiated noun **nuḥust-* “serpent,” simply unattested in our corpus. One can also not assume that the form of **nuḥustān-* itself was actually based on any other lexeme; the co-occurrence of its *-t-* and *-ān* morphemes may have been original.

[F]or an explanation of Nehushtan we should look to Babylonia [...]. Now, it is certain from very early inscriptions [...] that Babylonian temples contained not only brazen oxen, but also brazen serpents. Some of these [...] may have been protective serpents, such as were worshipped in the larger Egyptian temples; but when, as in Solomon's temple, only a single one is mentioned, it is reasonable to suppose that it is the 'raging serpent' (*i.e.*, Tiāmat) that is meant, as in the inscription of king Agum-kakrimí [sic ...]. If so, the brazen serpent (more properly called LEVIATHAN, see above, §I), which Solomon adopted with the brazen 'sea,' and the brazen oxen from Babylonia, was originally a trophy of the Creator's victory over the serpent of chaos.

Lest one assume that this sort of pan-Babylonian view is no longer held, the following quote from Schmitt's (2004: 198) recent volume on magic in the Hebrew Bible should illustrate the persistence of similar concepts, if not identical language⁵⁶²:

n^eḥuštān und *n^eḥaš (han)n^eḥōšet* bezeichnen hierbei ein Ritualobjekt in Gestalt eines Sarafen, eines Jahwe untergeordneten Schutzgenius, von dessen Anblick (ursprünglich wohl seiner Anrufung) Hilfe und Rettung im Falle von Schlangenbissen erwartet worden ist. Die Zerstörung des *n^eḥuštān* durch Hiskjia war wohl dadurch begründet, daß dem Jahwe untergeordneten Schutzgenius—wie in 2 Kön 18,4 berichtet—unberechtigte Opfer dargebracht worden sind.

The language of "Schutzgenius" is somewhat ambiguous here, but the use of this particular terminology for the *aladlammû* and functionally similar figures in Assyriological scholarship seems unlikely to have been beyond Schmitt's awareness and intention. Something similar might be said regarding Münnich's (2005: 45*) recent description of *Nḥuštān*:

⁵⁶² See also the brief comment in van der Toorn 2002: 56, cited in n. 543.

[I]t can be supposed that both the bronze serpent of the desert and the Jebusite serpent in the Temple [following Rowley 1939] were connected with the healing aspect of the pertinent deity. In this manner, *Nehushtan* [sic] was subordinated to the victorious God of Israel, and was perhaps even treated as symbolizing one of YHWH's attributes. Under the influence of the monolatry propagated by the prophets (which eventually led towards monotheism), the Jerusalem Temple began to lack a place for any other gods except YHWH, even those previously accepted by the Hebrews.

From this paragraph and its context, it is clear that Münnich views *Nhuštōn* as having been a deity worshipped by “non-Yahwists,” perhaps (following Rowley 1939) particularly Jebusites. Münnich then hypothesizes that Judahite authors observed a statue of *Nhuštōn* in the Jerusalemite temple and constructed an (ahistorical) Mosaic etiology for it. Hezekiah's reform, particularly the destruction of *Nhuštōn*, then allegedly required the basically revisionist narrative of 2 Kings 18. More importantly, Münnich continues to see *Nhuštōn* as “subordinated to the victorious god of Israel.” The relationship between this figure and Yahweh is therefore again suggested to be one of combat and conquest, as in the older and more explicit treatments cited above.⁵⁶³

It would be misleading to suggest that such a position is widely adopted in the scholarly literature. Nevertheless, it requires consideration, since—if the suggestions of scholars like Cheyne, Schmitt, and Münnich have merit—the putative *Nhuštōn* statue would represent direct evidence for the monumental display of defeated cosmic antagonists. Factors complicating a

⁵⁶³ Cf. recently Ornan (2012: 18*), who suggests that the $\eta\eta\psi$ erected by Moses involved “[a] transformation of an evil creature into a protective being, which in turn becomes a servant of a major deity or a member in its entourage [. This] is a well-known ancient Near Eastern trope expressed in both text and image.”

straightforward allocation of *Nḥuštḥn* to the “Schutzgenius” category can be filed under two broad headings: (1.) the physical appearance of *Nḥuštḥn*; and (2.) the location of *Nḥuštḥn*.

First, again due to the dearth of monumental iconography from the southern Levant, those arguing or assuming the presence of a serpent statue in the Jerusalem temple are generally unable to cite close parallels in the archaeological record.⁵⁶⁴ Scholars arguing both for and against the existence of a snake cult or similar in the “Canaanite” or “Israelite” southern Levant often expend substantial energy on cataloguing all serpent representations known from these periods and places.⁵⁶⁵ This is not, of course, an inherently futile enterprise. On the one hand, the existence of tiny bronze snake figurines may suggest that there existed some veneration of snakes in this region at these times. They do very little to corroborate, however, the suggestion that larger serpent representations were well-known features of Levantine temple or other monumental architecture.

A related point has been stressed especially by those drawing connections between the description of the bronze serpent in Numbers 21:8–9 and Egyptian and Egyptianizing imagery.

⁵⁶⁴ In arguing that “(1) the bronze serpent was common to Canaanite Palestine and to neighboring territories, (2) the bronze serpent was a cultic symbol, and (3) its use dated from at least the end of the Chalcolithic Age to the Persian Period,” Joines (1974: 63) cites small (certainly not monumental) exempla of bronze serpent *figurines*. Only much later (and in an endnote) is it admitted that “Jerusalem may have been the only Israelite city to have had a bronze serpent so far as this writer can determine from archaeology, but other Israelite cities had the symbol in other forms.” See also the next note.

⁵⁶⁵ One representation that is not frequently engaged is the early Iron Age (ca. 10th–9th century) Terqa (Tell Ašḥara, Syrian lower Euphrates) stele depicting actual combat between a storm god and an ophidian creature (Tournay and Saouaf 1952; recent discussions in Bonatz 2014: 229–31; Masetti-Rouault 2009: 143–46; 2001: 89–114). In general, there has been very little engagement from the biblical side with the extensive monumental iconographic repertoire of *Mischwesen* and similar motifs in the northern Levant (at e.g. Carchemish, Zincirli, Tell Ḥalaf, and now the Aleppo storm god temple), and this gap is not yet redressed by the present work. Cataloguing of ophidian creatures from the southern Levant is a feature of the discussions of Joines (1974: 62–84); Hendel (1999: 615); Swanson (1999: 122–40); Schmitt (2004: 196–98); and Münnich (2005). Rowley (1939), on the other hand, largely eschews citing archaeological evidence for his putative “serpent worship,” but yet claims (without references) at *ibid.*: 140 n. 71 that “There is ample archaeological evidence of the association of the serpent with fertility rites.”

The attachment of a snake to a 𐎗 “pole” (rather than as a free-standing sculpture) does have clear parallels, but these are not in Mesopotamian iconography. Before moving to the more likely comparanda, it is worth noting that a purported parallel in the Ugaritic incantation RS 24.244 (= *KTU*³ 1.100) is almost certainly illusory. This text uses—ten times, at lines 6, 11, 17, 22, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 54—a verb {yqt}, always with the {nhš} *naḥaš*- “snake” as object. Some scholars have argued that this verb is to be parsed as D PC 3.m.s. from the root $\sqrt{tq(y)}$ and construed as cognate with Akkadian *šaqû* “to rise; [D] to raise” (*AHW* 1180–81; *CAD* Š.2 [1992]: 19; both then from Proto-Semitic $\sqrt{\theta q(y)}$). The result of this would be that the text describes “raising” a snake as a curative for serpent bite.⁵⁶⁶ It is not, however, certain that Akkadian *šaqû* is actually from $\sqrt{\theta q(y)}$,⁵⁶⁷ and the hypothesis also appears less likely when faced with an interpretation that attends to the types of verbs actually attested in other magical texts. Many scholars have, indeed, parsed this verb as G PC 3.m.s. \sqrt{yqt} and have understood it to be cognate with Arabic *wataqa* “to bind” (Lane 1863–93: 3049a).⁵⁶⁸ “Binding” is, after all, an extraordinarily common activity in

⁵⁶⁶ This was suggested first by Dietrich and Loretz (1980: 160; followed by Kottsieper 1984: 106) and recently furnished with evidence for the use of *šaqû* in Ras Shamra Akkadian and with comparison to Num 21.4b–9 by Bordreuil (2007). The hypothesis is accepted by Dietrich and Loretz (2009: 95–99) del Olmo Lete (2013: 47; 2014: 199); and del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín (2015: 916; cf. 2003: 996). The most complete catalogue of this and other scholarly opinions is Dietrich and Loretz 2000: 328.

⁵⁶⁷ Those supporting the $\sqrt{\theta q}$ - etymology have not been able to furnish any proof that Akkadian *šaqû* truly is the reflex of Proto-Semitic $\sqrt{\theta q}$ -. Akkadian *š* could be the reflex of not only $\sqrt{\theta}$ but also of \sqrt{s} or \sqrt{l} . The global loss of glottal and pharyngeal (“guttural”) phonemes in Akkadian allows etymologies from roots with non-*e*-coloring third radicals like $\sqrt{ʔ}$ and \sqrt{h} . Pardee (2003–4: 306 n. 1125) has claimed that the etymology is “ruled out by the fact that the arabic equivalent of the Akkadian verb is ŠQY rather than TQY.” This is perhaps based on E. W. Lane’s (1863–93: 1582b) citation of a certain *šaqaya* as meaning “it grew forth” and a noun *šāq*- as meaning “a long prominence, or projecting portion.” Before this can become a certain “rul[ing] out,” though, one might like to pursue a closer semantic study of the Arabic verb to decide whether it is certainly cognate.

⁵⁶⁸ It is worth mentioning that these semantics usually occur in the Arabic stem IV [= C], but the connection still looks very compelling. This hypothesis goes back to Virolleaud 1968: 569 and was recently endorsed by Bordreuil and Pardee (2009: 187–94, 319) in their Ugaritic manual.

Mesopotamian serpent and other pest incantations; this is usually expressed in Akkadian using the verbs *kašāru* or *rakāsu*. “Raising up” is essentially unattested, and one almost gets the impression that some who prefer this etymology are mainly intrigued by the possibility of a Ugaritic parallel to the Numbers 21:8–9 description.

A much more likely parallel occurs, rather, in two pieces of iconography. The first of these, a Phoenician bronze bowl recovered at Nimrud, has been mentioned repeatedly in connection with Numbers 21:8–9.⁵⁶⁹ The first published reference to and illustration of this bowl occurs in the report of Layard (1853: pl. 68, top row, center drawing). Scholars paid increased attention to this artifact primarily after the bowl was re-published by Barnett (1967: 3*):

Less convincing options include comparing with Gəʿəz *wasāqa* (Leslau 1987: 620a) to arrive at “to straighten up” (Tropper 2002: 224; 2012: 635 [§75.512]), but this is difficult in context. An ephemeral proposal (Dietrich and Loretz 2000: 328; Tropper 2000: 635 [§75.512]) involved construing as cognate with the poorly-attested and possibly illusory Akkadian verb *wasāqu* “stärken” (thus *AHw* 1474a). Regarding the existence of the Akkadian verb, *CAD* (W [2010] 405b) files the *MSL* 13 170 (= Izi B vi 9) form {a-sa-qu} under *asāqu* (*CAD* A.2 [1968]: 329b), but this does not seem to involve a different etymological or semantic interpretation. Meanwhile, the form {si-KE-en-šu} at *Afo* 19 53:162 (a hymn to Ištar) is simply “obscure” (the verb is also characterized by Kouwenberg 2010: 448 n. 1 as “too uncertain”). At any rate, this comparison must be set aside on phonological grounds (thus already Pardee 2003–4: 306 and n. 1125), as Akkadian *s* and Ugaritic *ṯ* are never reflexes of the same proto-Semitic consonant.

⁵⁶⁹ Barnett 1967: 3* files this under “*Sub-group 1c*” of Phoenician-style bronze bowls, “Group 1” being the “marsh pattern” group. These have “scenes engraved and slightly embossed, with extremely Egyptian-looking sphinxes, uraei, shrines or canopies, and in one case a winged snake on a pole (Fig. 2).” Barnett never gives a British Museum (BM) number for this particular bowl—the bowl’s residence in the British Museum is affirmed already by Layard 1853: 7—and I have found no more particular reference in subsequent literature, which tends merely to quote Barnett’s edition (see the next note; cf. Roberts 2006: 205, who has also checked Layard and searched for photographs, also to no avail). Multiple searches of the museum’s online catalogue have also been fruitless.

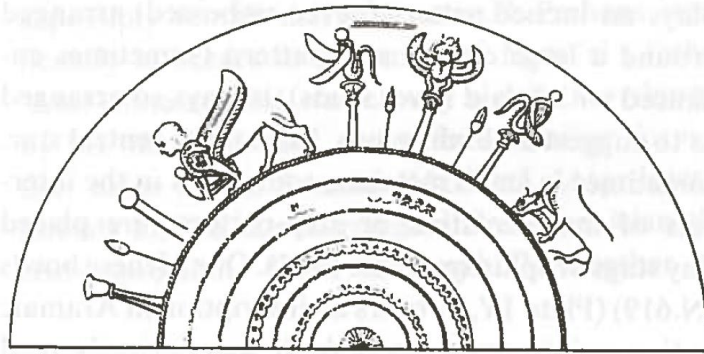


Figure 2. Sub-group 1c.

Fig. 5.1, Nimrud Phoenician Bronze Bowl (no BM number)
from Barnett 1967: 3* fig. 2

Among multiple images near the rim of this “marsh pattern” bowl are a human-headed winged sphinx and, more importantly for present purposes, winged snakes (uraei) and beetles atop poles. The fact that the rightmost snake does not have wings disassociates this creature from the standard uraeus pattern and invites explanation. Barnett (*ibid.*) himself wrote that he found it “tempting to identify this emblem with the biblical ‘*nehushtan*’, the pagan standard or totem pole, set up by Moses to cure the plague of snakes in the wilderness.” Subsequently, numerous scholars have agreed that this depiction provides a clear and likely parallel for the morphology of *Nḥuštān*.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁷⁰ See e.g. Schroer 1987: 50; Hendel 1999: 615; Schmitt 2004: 196 and n. 375; and Roberts 2006: 205. Strangely enough, Swanson (1999; 2002) does not cite this piece, despite extensive consideration of other Egyptian and Egyptianizing ophidian motifs (*idem* 1999: 155–71; 2002: 464–65). She focuses on the Egyptian uraeus as comparandum, which she says should be considered together with the Egyptianizing motifs—winged sun disk, winged scarab beetle—that occur on the Judaeian *lmlk* and personal seals at approximately this time. But this juxtaposition is not particularly illuminating, since the dominance of Egyptian(izing) iconography in one sphere does not require that all contemporary iconography be connected to the same cultural influence (*cf.* Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 353–54, followed by Swanson [1999: 155–59; 2002: 466] in tracing a general line from Egyptianizing motifs towards Assyrianizing motifs and even aniconicity, but there are many outliers). Without more direct evidence and parallels, the suggestions that “the removal of Egyptian symbolism as outlined above could be reflected in the report of the

Recently, J. J. M. Roberts (2013: 393) has published an additional Nimrud bowl, BM ME N25, that seems to depict similar seraphs erected on poles. In the image below, three such figures are visible—one in the lower right quadrant and two in the lower left quadrant:



Fig. 5.2, BM ME N.25

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The precise signification of these iconographic parallels is disputed. The snakes elevated on poles may represent symbols of Eshmun and therefore have medical associations. Alternatively, they could be apotropaic or be a symbol of royalty broadly conceived (for all of these see e.g. Roberts 2013: 393; 2006: 206). But noting that the iconographic parallels are primarily Egyptianizing rather than Mesopotamian at least suggests that one would do better pursuing these former significations rather than cosmic antagonist representations if one is to better understand the background of *Nḫuštān*. In doing so, one does well to bear in mind, as Jonker (2008: esp. 123) has

destruction of the serpent” (Swanson 2002: 467) and that this removal further “attests to Hezekiah’s complete submission to Assyrian domination” (ibid.: 469) is unproductive speculation.

recently stressed, that claiming a unitary origin for this and other “serpent symbolism” in the southern Levant is unwise. It is likely that various inheritances and inputs resulted in the complex of features visible in the Iron Age southern Levant.⁵⁷¹ In suggesting closer Egyptian(izing) connections than Mesopotamian connections here, I am not claiming that Judah (and perhaps also Israel) employed serpent symbolism *generally* in precisely the same way as did individuals in “Egypt” (itself of course a cover term for various people groups over multiple thousands of years). I am only claiming that the closest observable parallels to the Numbers 21:8–9 description *particularly* are in Egyptian and Egyptianizing depictions.

Second, the notion that *Nḥuštān* should be understood as a monumental serpent sculpture also usually assumes that this sculpture was positioned in the temple or even the adyton. Illustrative of this line of thinking is the “suggest[ion]” of Rowley (1939: 137), incorporating also his view that *Nḥuštān* traveled with the Jebusite Zadok from Shiloh to Jerusalem *before* David’s conquest of the city:

I therefore suggest that it [*Nḥuštān*] was housed in the shrine kept by Zadok, and that it was the principal sacred object of that shrine until the Ark was brought in to be beside it. If it were already in Jerusalem, there would naturally be no account of its being brought in, and if it were originally a non-Yahwistic symbol [as Rowley thinks], we should not expect any account of its transfer with the Ark and Zadok himself at the time of the construction of the Temple. (Rowley 1939: 137)⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ In particular, Jonker (2008: 123) writes cogently of difficulties in describing “the origin of serpent symbolism in the Israelite cult [...] when the symbolism was taken over in other geographical areas and cults, it was used in continuity and discontinuity with its context of origin.”

⁵⁷² Rowley has already noted, three pages earlier (1939: 134), that “it may be objected that it is not clearly stated that Nehushtan was in the Temple, or even in Jerusalem.” But the odd thing about Rowley’s rationale for the assertion that *Nḥuštān* was indeed located in the Jerusalem temple is that he predicates his argument on the assumption that the figure was “genuinely Mosaic in its origin,” a premise with which he eventually disagrees (ibid.: 137–41).

This suggestion was, at least in many circles, soon embraced as established fact.⁵⁷³ On the one hand, the location is not strictly necessary for the hypothesis that *Nḥuštān* was a monumental sculpture of some sort. Of the Mesopotamian serpent sculptures surveyed in the previous chapter, only some occupied temple areas; others were placed at city gates or elsewhere. On the other hand, it is worth stressing that there is minimal basis for assuming that *Nḥuštān* was ever resident in any temple, much less the Jerusalem temple. As is already clear from the citation of 2 Kings 18:4, above, this verse says nothing about the location of *Nḥuštān*, nor do the surrounding verses offer

From this eventually discarded premise, he argues that (1.) “it seems unlikely that the tribe of Judah belonged to the group that Moses led” (ibid.: 134, with reference to Rowley 1938). Since most biblical scholars are no longer inclined to posit a historical Moses, this is for them a moot point. (2.) Given the absence of a Moses-Judah association, “a Mosaic symbol would be unlikely to be found in Judah” (Rowley 1939: 134). (3.) Since Hezekiah destroyed *Nḥuštān*, it must have been in Judah by the time of that king’s reign (ibid.). (4.) Finally, “[t]he only conceivable time for the transfer of a Yahweh symbol from the northern district to the south would be during the reign of David or Solomon, and either of these kings would naturally have brought it into Jerusalem, and into the Temple, or whatever shrine preceded it” (ibid.: 134–35). Both of these claims are problematic. The first essentially assumes hermetic borders between Israel and Judah after the downfall of a putative United Monarchy, itself difficult to substantiate. The second takes for granted the Deuteronomistic historian’s tendentious portrait of centralized worship and official cult. Given all this and because—as already noted—Rowley himself will immediately discard the premise of a Mosaic connection, it is difficult to take seriously his continued assertions about “[t]he undeniable fact that Nehushtan was in the Temple” (ibid.: 138). Nevertheless, this location continues to be argued and assumed even in recent scholarship (see the previous note).

⁵⁷³ For the location of *Nḥuštān* in the Jerusalem temple, see e.g. Welten 1977: 280; Jaroš 1982: 161–62; Joines 1974: 61; Knierim and Coats 2005: 238. Noth (1966: 137) is at least honest about the limits of the evidence: “man denkt an Jerusalem und speziell an den Bereich des Jerusalemer Heiligtums, ohne daß das doch gesagt würde.” Hendel (1999: 615) locates *Nḥuštān* “in the Jerusalem Temple courtyard,” presumably because this is where incense offerings should be made. Even in very recent and responsible work, one finds the claim that “the DtrG [*Deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk*] version of Hezekiah’s history situates the destruction of the Neḥushtan *in Jerusalem*” (Jonker 2008: 125, emphasis original). This is simply not true. The only mention of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 18 is in the standard regnal formula at v. 2, וַיִּשְׁעַל שָׁמָּה מִלְכָּה בִּירוּשָׁלַם; this does not necessarily have anything to do with the location of the narrated action two verses later.

any further clues. Certain scholars have thus begun to point out that the assumption of *Nḥuštḥn*'s temple residence is precisely that—an assumption.⁵⁷⁴ The same scholars often make the further point that conclusions as to the character and most appropriate parallels for *Nḥuštḥn* should not be based on this presumed location.⁵⁷⁵

In sum, while some have argued that *Nḥuštḥn* is to be understood as a monumental sculpture symbolizing a defeated antagonist and as similar to the Mesopotamian ophidian sculptures described above, this goes beyond what one can responsibly assert. Numbers 21:4b–9 does convey some details about the appearance and function of an imagined bronze serpent. Since it is, however, unclear how this text is related to 2 Kings 18:4, it is also difficult to say precisely which realia, if any, this description reflects. Meanwhile, 2 Kings 18:4 itself says very little about the appearance, function, or location of *Nḥuštḥn*. If it did convey such information, one could say a bit more even without deciding whether the description accurately mirrored a historical situation. A hypothetical description would at least demonstrate that protective and/or mnemonic ophidian sculptures were conceivable and digestible by Judahite writers and hearers or readers, respectively.

But the presently available data demonstrate no such thing. Instead, it seems likely from the more precise description in Numbers 21:8–9 that this author's model was Egyptian or Egyptianizing rather than Mesopotamian. The only commonality shared by the entities described in the Mesopotamian sources and in 2 Kings 18:4 is broad ophidian morphology, which of course is hardly enough to claim either an analogical or a homological connection. The hypothesis that

⁵⁷⁴ This is observed also by e.g. Gray (1970: 670) and Schroer (1987: 108–9). Busink (1970: I.288) characterized the whole enterprise of locating *Nḥuštḥn* as somewhat useless: “Leider kommt man nicht über Vermutungen hinaus.”

⁵⁷⁵ See the previous note.

Nhušton represents in some demonstrable way a defeated cosmic antagonist of Yahweh appears very unlikely.

5.2 The Molten Sea and the *apsû* (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:6)

Included among the installations imagined to have occupied the Solomonic Temple is a vast basin called by the author of the temple description מוֹצֵק הַיָּם (1 Kgs 7:23) *hayyom muṣoq*. A sketch of this basin’s morphology is confined to two verses—1 Kings 7:23, 26—separated from one another by a description of the פְּקַעִים (v. 24) *pqo‘im* “gourds” to be constructed on the rim of the basin and the twelve בָּקָר (v. 25) *bqqr* “bovids” on which the basin is to be mounted:

(23) וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַיָּם מוֹצֵק עֵשׂר בְּאַמָּה מִשְׁפָּתוֹ עַד־שְׁפָתוֹ עֵגְלוֹ סָבִיב וְחָמֵשׁ בְּאַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וְקָנָה שְׁלֹשִׁים בְּאַמָּה יָסֹב אֹתוֹ סָבִיב: [...] (26) וְעָבְרוֹ טֹפַח וְשִׁפְתוֹ כְּמַעֲשֵׂה שְׁפַת־כֶּוס פָּרַח שׁוֹשָׁן אֶלְפִים בֵּת יָקִיל:

(23) He made מוֹצֵק הַיָּם *hayyom muṣoq*. It was ten cubits from its one lip to its other lip, a round circle. Its height was five cubits. A line of thirty cubits would run around it. [...] (26) Its thickness was a handbreadth, and its lip was, like the lip of a cup, worked like a lily flower. It could hold two thousand *bat*-measures.

The description of this installation in 2 Chronicles 4:2 is nearly identical⁵⁷⁶ to that in 1 Kings 7:23:

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַיָּם מוֹצֵק עֵשׂר בְּאַמָּה מִשְׁפָּתוֹ אֶל־שְׁפָתוֹ עֵגְלוֹ סָבִיב וְחָמֵשׁ בְּאַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וְקָנָה שְׁלֹשִׁים בְּאַמָּה יָסֹב אֹתוֹ סָבִיב:

⁵⁷⁶ The non-orthographic differences are: (1.) אֶל־שְׁפָתוֹ instead of Kgs עַד־שְׁפָתוֹ; (2.) קָנָה instead of Kgs קוֹנָה. There is more that could be said about both of these items, but neither impinge on the conclusions put forward below. The analogue of 1 Kgs 7:26 is 2 Chr 4:5, further consideration of which is not strictly necessary in the present context.

“He made הַיָּם מוֹצֵק *hayyom muṣṣaq*. It was ten cubits from its one lip to its other lip, a round circle. Its height was five cubits. A line of thirty cubits would run around it.”

After a two-verse (vv. 4–5) aside, though, the author of this Chronicles description makes a notable addition to the older depiction: he specifies the function of the basin and, in the process, makes הַיָּם *hayyom* the paragon of temple ablutionary vessels (2 Chr 4:6):

וַיַּעַשׂ כִּיּוֹרִים עֲשָׂרָה וַיִּתֵּן חֲמִשָּׁה מִיְמִין וְחֲמִשָּׁה מִשְּׂמאל לְרִחְצָה בָהֶם אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה הָעוֹלָה יְדִיחוּ בָּם וְהָיָם
לְרִחְצָה לַכֹּהֲנִים בָּו: ס

“He made ten basins and put five on the right and five on the left, for washing in them. They would rinse the articles for the burnt offering in them. But הַיָּם *hayyom* was for the priests to wash in.”

A הַיָּם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת *hayyom hannhošet* “sea of bronze” is mentioned three other times in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 25:13; Jer 52:17; 1 Chr 18:8); these and various mentions of simple הַיָּם *hayyom* in conjunction with the temple and/or other furnishings (e.g. 2 Kgs 16:17; Jer 52:20) are generally understood to refer to the same monumental basin.

At the surface, this הַיָּם מוֹצֵק *hayyom muṣṣaq* might look like just any other temple furnishing. Most scholars have treated it as though it is and have devoted substantial energy to defining its precise size (recently Hognesius 1994; Byl 1998; Hollenback 1998)⁵⁷⁷ and function in the context of the temple cult. On the latter point, it is often regarded as a washing basin for the priests, on the basis of the assertion in 2 Chr 4:6[b]: וְהָיָם לְרִחְצָה לַכֹּהֲנִים בָּו: “and the sea, so that the priests might

⁵⁷⁷ A survey of further attempts may be found in Crawford 2009: 134 and n. 108.

wash in it.” As many have pointed out, though, this virtually requires the presence of unmentioned stairs, as it would otherwise take a ten-foot-tall priest to wash his hands in a five-cubit-tall [~ 7.5 feet] “sea” (similarly Cogan 2000: 272). Given this, it is reasonable to suggest that the Chronicler’s statement is a late rationalization, and furthermore that the basin might have served some different—perhaps more iconic—function in the literary and/or actual temple.

Because scholars have occasionally based arguments as to the basin’s function on the syntax and semantics of the phrase *מִצְּקָה מִיָּזָק* *hayyom mušaq*, these grammatical points must be investigated. If *מִיָּזָק* *mušaq* is an attributive adjective, one expects for it to agree with the definite noun *מִצְּקָה* *hayyom* with respect to determination.⁵⁷⁸ There are certain broad categories within which exceptions to this rule of agreement are more common.⁵⁷⁹ Although the present case fits none of these categories precisely, writers of later stages of Hebrew did not apply the agreement rule so rigidly⁵⁸⁰; given this, such apparent exceptions could easily have arisen during dictation and/or

⁵⁷⁸ Often, this problem is simply not commented upon (see all of the references in n. 583, below). For others, the expectation goes so deep that they reproduce the expected form in citation, e.g. *BDB* 427b, “*Pt. = cast, molten* מִיָּזָק מִצְּקָה 1 K 7²³ = 2 Ch 4².”

⁵⁷⁹ For example, [1.] the adjective may not be marked for definiteness when it is one among certain count or number adjectives (Waltke and O’Connor 1990: 259–60 [§14.3.1c]; Joüon and Muraoka 2006: 483 [§138f]). Similarly, [2.] the *noun* may not be marked for definiteness “especially with numerals [...], quasi-technical terms referring to architectural features [...] and days [...] and with unique referents” (Waltke and O’Connor 1990: 260 [§14.3.1d]; similarly Joüon and Muraoka 2006: 481–82 [§138b–c]).

⁵⁸⁰ Joüon and Muraoka 2006: 482 (§138c) go so far as to call the unmarked noun + marked adjective pattern “the MH [Mishnaic Hebrew] type” (Joüon 1923: 429 [§138c]: “type néo-hébreu”). Bar-Asher (2003: 84–86) catalogues such usage in both Qumran and Mishnaic Hebrew. Though he draws attention to apparent apocopation of the definite article **haC-* before pharyngeals and therefore considers this to be at least in part a phonetic phenomenon, he cites many examples that fall outside these narrow phonological parameters.

At the other end of the chronological spectrum, it is important that the definite article was a relatively late development in the history of the Northwest Semitic dialects. The original syntax of the Northwest Semitic definite article is much disputed (sophisticated overview in Pat-El 2009; see also Gzella 2006; Tropper 2001; and a recent brief note on phonology at DeGrado and Richey 2017: 116 n. 39), but it is generally agreed that explicit marking of

copying processes. Because such sporadic exceptions do exist, one should not make too much of any particular anomaly.⁵⁸¹ The other possibility is that this two-word phrase simply includes an asyndetic (unmarked, or zero-) relative clause: “the sea (that was) cast.” Asyndetic relative clauses are indeed known in Biblical Hebrew; although the grammars give the impression that such clauses are primarily attested in poetry,⁵⁸² Holmstedt’s (2016: 305–24) recent collection of data shows that there are dozens of examples in prose.

The vast majority of ancient and modern interpreters have understood מוֹצֵק to be related to the root $\sqrt{y\dot{s}q}$ “to pour, cast” and have construed its semantics accordingly. The phrase is held to designate a “cast” basin. Translations like “the molten sea” are so common as to be nearly without exception.⁵⁸³ Kang (2008b)⁵⁸⁴ has, however, recently hypothesized that מוֹצֵק is in fact to be related to the root $\sqrt{w\dot{s}q}$ “to be constrained.” While this has copious and regular

determination as a species of agreement must have developed gradually; syntactic rules do not change overnight. Because of this, the “rule” is often more of a guideline in certain Northwest Semitic epigraphic corpora, e.g. in Phoenician and Punic (*PPG* §§299, 301). Determination of demonstrative adjectives represents a special case, for which see the summaries in Garr 1985: 170–71 and *PPG* §300. This is all to say that the present anomalous formulation could in theory represent an archaic syntactic situation. The likelihood that this would have survived into Biblical Hebrew and been consistently represented through copying strikes me as, however, less likely than the hypothesis of influence from post-Biblical Hebrew syntax.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. on this text Kang (2008b: 101, 103), “Since הים is definite, the indefinite Hophal participle מוֹצֵק cannot be translated attributively. It follows that הים מוֹצֵק must be interpreted as a complete sentence, and not as a phrase [...] I suggest that הים מוֹצֵק should be seen as one such cultic proclamation declared during the New Year festival.” See n. 585 for more comments on Kang’s interpretation of the derivation and semantics of מוֹצֵק *muṣṣaq*.

⁵⁸² This is the impression one gets from both Joüon and Muraoka 2006: 558–59 (approximately 25 examples, prose only 1 Sam 6:9) and Waltke and O’Connor 1990: 338 (§19.6, citing Isa 51:1; 65:1; Jer 2:8; Ps 5:8; 51:10; 90:15).

⁵⁸³ E.g. BDB 427b; *HALOT* 428b; Jeremiah 1916: 488; Wylie 1949; Myers 1965: 22–23; Albright 1968: 148; Bagnani 1964; Hognesius 1994; Byl 1998; Hollenback 1998; Bloch-Smith 2002: 83–84; Crawford 2009: 75–76, 134, 259–70.

⁵⁸⁴ This hypothesis does not appear in Kang’s (2008a) dissertation on the topic of Israelite and Judahite sacred space. I have not found that any scholars have adopted Kang’s understanding.

morphological parallels,⁵⁸⁵ his notion that this is “cultic proclamation declared during the New Year festival,” namely “The sea is constrained!” has no analogues and does not fit the sense or syntax of the passage. This is worth noting primarily because adoption of Kang’s hypothesis might lead directly to the assertion that cosmological combat with the sea was somehow conveyed by the very description of the basin. But because there are far more convincing options for semantic and syntactic analysis of the phrase, there is still no direct reference to cosmic antagonist defeat.

Most scholars have therefore based hypotheses of connection between the “sea” and various watery monsters on far less explicit evidence. With Assyriological discoveries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars encountered Akkadian texts in which two lexemes—*apsû* and *ti’āmtu/tāmtu/tēmtu*—that primarily designated natural bodies of water—respectively the subterranean water and any large (above-ground) body of water—seemed to be used both (1.) for artificial temple installations and (2.) as proper names for enemies of the gods (conventionalized below as Apsu and Tiamat). The latter usage is easily illustrated. Although Apsu

⁵⁸⁵ Kang (2008b: 101 n. 3) is in fact proposing a perfectly normal II-w/y verbal morphology but suggests that nouns of the BH *muqāl* pattern are only occasionally attested “from hollow roots” instead of “expected מצוק” (presumably **mōṣuq*?) for these and instead of *muqāl* being certainly from I-w/y roots. For the C-passive of II-w/y roots, one does actually expect reflexes of SC **huqāl-*, PC **yu(hv)qāl(-)*, and participle **mu(hv)qāl-* (e.g. Bauer and Leander 1922: 329–32). With the exception of the difficult stem vowel— which has variable reflexes (variously explained) in *a* and *o* here as throughout BH II-w/y verbs—attested forms like SC הוּצָלוּ (Jer 22:28; sic), PC יוּדָשׁ (Isa 28:27), and participle מוּצָק (Prov 21:31) are completely regular. The only potential oddity is orthography, i.e. the unusual writing of the reflex of **hu-*, **yuhv-*, and **muhv-* as {*h/y/muw*} (with “*mater lectionis*”). This can, however, be explained as a result of **yuhv-* and **muhv-* having long-vowel reflexes **yū-* and **mū-* after syncope of **-h-* and **hu-* forms showing thereafter analogous orthography. Furthermore, one does in fact find occasional Hophals of II-w/y verbs spelled without the *mater lectionis*, e.g. יִצָּק (Job 41:1) and נִהָכַן (Nah 2:6). There is thus no need to suggest that the reflex מוּצָק for a Hophal participial instantiation of צוּק as opposed to צָק would be at all unusual, and “מצוק” is certainly not “expected.”

does not elsewhere act as a character in mythological texts,⁵⁸⁶ he is the enemy of Ea in the first section of *Enūma eliš* (I:1–78).⁵⁸⁷ Apsu’s consort Tiamat, of course, is the major antagonist of the same epic. There is little evidence for her as a major force elsewhere in Sumerian or Akkadian mythological or related literature. The first of two possible exceptions is the description of Ninurta’s exploits in Sm.1875:5, {tam-tum ṣer-ra-at be-lu-tú ‘x’[} *tâmtum ṣerrat bēlūtu* “As for the sea, the nose-rope⁵⁸⁸ of lordship [...] .”⁵⁸⁹ The text is broken on its right side, so, Lambert rightly notes (2013: 237), this “evidence must be used with caution.” A second possible mention of battle with Tiamat can be found in the Gula Hymn of Bulluṣsa-rabi; this text lists various epithets of manifestations of Gula’s spouse. The relevant section (on Lugalbanda [l. 158]) begins with the epithet {ez-zu na-²-i-ru KUR-ú ra-ḫi-iṣ tam-tim} *ezzu nā²iru šadû rāḫiṣ tâmtim* “The fierce one, the killer, the mountain trampling the sea.”⁵⁹⁰ In neither this nor the previous case, though, can one

⁵⁸⁶ Lambert (2013: 217–18) recently and accessibly summarizes the data for Apsû as a deity who receives offerings, who appears as a theophoric element in personal names, and whose name occurs together with the names of (other) deities in expository and other texts. For additional secondary treatments, see the following note.

⁵⁸⁷ Sonik (2008) has recently described Apsu and his kingship as a sort of foil for Marduk and his rule (see esp. *ibid.*: 742). I agree that the question of whether Apsu is envisioned “as monster or personified or deified subterranean waters” does not seem particularly productive, since the two characterizations could easily have overlapped; cf. Livingstone 1986: 79, who speaks of Apsu as simply “a primeval monster”; and Horowitz 1998: 109, who describes Apsu as “the deified underground waters” and later (*ibid.*: 111) explains that *Enūma eliš* I:61–78 “illustrates three interrelated meanings of Apsu. First, the god Apsu is slain by Ea. Later, Apsu is a fresh water ocean, and then a residence of Ea.”

⁵⁸⁸ For *ṣerretu* A, both *CAD* Ṣ [1962]: 134b; *AHW* 1092b. This is the lexical interpretation of both Landsberger (1961: 11 n. 46) and Lambert (2013: 207), who does note “[c]oncubine and [female] ‘enemy’ are also theoretically possible translations of *ṣerrat*, but hardly preferable to ‘reins.’”

⁵⁸⁹ Sm.1875 (Neo-Assyrian). Catalogue: Bezold 1896: 1513 (with copy of first five lines). Photo: CDLI no. P426153. Copy: Lambert 2013: pl. 43. Transliteration and translation: Landsberger 1961: 10–11 n. 46; Lambert 2013: 206–7.

⁵⁹⁰ Lambert (1967) edits ten manuscripts of the tablet, all Neo-Assyrian or later: (a) Ashm 1937-620; (b) BM 33849; (c) BM 34655+45718; (d) [BM acc. no.] 81-7-27,202; (E) K 3225+6321; (F) K 13320; (G) K 7934; (H) K. 9258; (I) Sm 1420+; (J) BM 128029. The relevant line is edited at *ibid.*: 124–25. The text given above is Lambert’s

say much about whether Tiamat is personified and theriomorphized in the very detailed way found in *Enūma eliš* itself. Lambert's (2013: 236–38) collection of attestations of Tiamat as the theophoric element in personal names, as a divine name in ritual texts, etc. is more extensive than that which can be compiled for Apsu. The important thing, though, is that both figures *are* clearly cosmic antagonists in a major composition—*Enūma eliš*—as well as, potentially, some minor ones. The observation that certain bodies of water have their names applied to agentivized antagonists thus does hold.

It was not long before scholars were suggesting—in more and less precise formulations—that Biblical Hebrew ׀ had a similar semantic range and/or that in the particular instance of the molten sea, a cosmic enemy of Yahweh was once or always envisioned (e.g. Benzinger 1903: 4341; Jeremias 1916: 488). So already in 1932, Burrows could say that it was “usual” to compare the situation of the molten sea to that of putative Akkadian parallels; this author cautioned that although “[w]e have a much fuller description of the Jerusalem ‘sea’ than of any Babylonian apsū, [...] it seems risky to explain one by the other” (idem 1932: 239). As with *Nḥuštān*, lest one assume that this sort of conclusion is no longer generally adopted, the following cautious appraisal of Ballentine (2015: 109–10) is worth citing⁵⁹¹:

We have no surviving visual evidence pertaining to Yahweh's battles and kingship. However, the description of Solomon's temple complex in Jerusalem includes one feature that may have exhibited imagery associated with Yahweh's victory over the

composite; there are no variants that are not merely orthographic, e.g. b's {šá-du-ú} for {KUR-ú}. Two further exemplars, BM 54801 (Leichty 1986: 157) and 62744 (Leichty and Grayson 1987: 74), have been identified but not yet published. The line in question is transliterated/normalized and translated recently at e.g. *CAD R* [1999]: 72a and Lambert 2013: 207 (in connection with the present question of Tiamat's character).

⁵⁹¹ For Ballentine's sources—primarily Bloch-Smith 2002; 1994—see the following note. Others who have adopted this perspective since Albright 1968 include Frymer-Kensky 1992: 154 and Clifford 1972: 179.

sea: the “molten sea” [...] As with Mesopotamian iconographic data [...] we must keep in mind issues of “visual literacy” and polysemy when reconstructing potential symbolic meanings of such an object. It is possible that the artisans, kings, priests, and public held multiple impressions of the molten sea.⁵⁹²

Any similar caution was eschewed by Albright (1968: 148–49, 217) in his popular presentation of claimed commonalities between the molten sea and the Mesopotamian structures (Albright’s endnotes are reproduced here to facilitate reference-checking)⁵⁹³:

“The Sea (I Kings 7:23–26) has been universally recognized as having cosmic significance of some kind.⁽⁶⁶⁾ In function it cannot be separated from the Mesopotamian *apsû*, employed both as the name of the subterranean fresh-water ocean from which all life and all fertility were derived and as the name of a basin of holy water erected in the Temple.⁽⁶⁷⁾ All these cosmic sources of water were conceived in mythological imagery to be dragons, as we know from Accadian, where *ti’âmtu*, ‘sea,’ and *apsû* were both portrayed in art and myth as dragons,⁽⁶⁸⁾ from Canaanite, where the same is true of *yammu*, ‘sea,’ and *naharu*, ‘river,’⁽⁶⁹⁾ and from Biblical Hebrew, where we find *tehôm* (etymologically identical with *ti’âmtu*),⁽⁷⁰⁾ *yam*, ‘sea,’⁽⁷¹⁾ and *neharôth*, ‘rivers,’⁽⁷²⁾ all described as dragons.

⁵⁹² Ballentine (2015: 109–10) relies here primarily on the work of Bloch-Smith (1994: 18–21; 2002: 83–85). In both articles, she writes that “[t]he molten sea may have symbolized Yahweh’s cosmic victories and extension of divine powers to the king” and goes on to conclude “After defeating the chaotic forces of nature, symbolized by the molten sea, Yahweh extended his powers to the monarch (Ps 89:26) and designated Zion, the holy mountain won in battle, to be the seat of eternal divine (and human) sovereignty” (idem 1994: 21; 2002: 84–85). One finds this hypothesis also in the work of M. S. Smith (2016: 34), “The temple courtyard bore symbols conveying Yahweh’s triumphant entry. Upon defeating the chaotic forces of nature represented by ‘the molten sea’ (1 Kgs 7:20–26), the god of the Israelites accepts the sacrificial offerings placed on wheeled stands (1 Kgs 7:27–39).”

⁵⁹³ My own footnotes to Albright’s endnotes attempt to clarify the import of some of his various citations, but much more could still be said.

“(66) E. g., Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, 3rd ed. (1927), p. 329. For older discussions, cf. Benzinger in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 4341. (67) Cf. A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, 3rd ed. (1916), p. 488 and n. 1. His reference to the *apsû* is correct (cf. Albright, *AJSL* XXXV [1919], p. 185, etc.), but it is very unlikely that the *tâmtu* which was set up by the Cossaeen king Agum II (cir. 1500 B. C.) in the temple of Shamash, in connection with his celebration of the return of the images of Marduk and Šarpânî, had anything to do with a basin of water, even if the reading is correct, which is uncertain.⁵⁹⁴ (68) Even the Deluge, *abûbu*, was portrayed in art as a winged dragon; cf. Amarna, No. 22 (Kundtson edition), iii: 5, 25; ii: 51; iv: 4; Thureau-Dangin, *Huitième campagne de Sargon* (1912), lines 373, 379. (69) See JPOS, 1936, 18. (70) E. g., Gen. 49: 25; Deut. 33: 13, Psalms 42: 8 (7); 148: 7.⁵⁹⁵ (71) E. g., Isa. 51: 10; Job 3: 8 (JBL LVII, 227); 7: 12; 9: 8; 26: 12; Psalms 74: 13. (72) E. g., Psalms 74: 15; Hab. 3: 8–9 (cf. Cassuto, *Annuario di Studi Ebraichi* [sic] 1935–1937, Rome, 1938, pp. 17 ff.)”

Aside from certain misrepresentations and errors of fact, the chief problems here are vagueness of formulation and an assumption of universal or near-universal homology among comparable

⁵⁹⁴ The opinion of Jeremias (1916: 488) was already cited above. In full, he writes regarding the molten sea that “[w]ir werden es uns ähnlich vorstellen dürfen wie das große kosmisch symbolische Wasserbecken (apsû) der babylonischen Kultorte.” He then cites two occurrences of *apsû* with this putative function and one occurrence of *tâmtu*. Albright’s self-citation is to an early article ostensibly aimed at proving that Utnapištim’s *pî nārāti* “mouth of the rivers” was never envisioned as being in Spain (*pace* Jensen and Albright’s teacher Haupt) but was rather transferred from Armenia to (vaguely) “beyond the seas” (Albright 1919: 192). The particulars of this argument need not detain at present. But in the course of arguing that incantatory references to pure waters in temples somehow require reference to river sources (ibid.: 176–85), Albright mentions briefly “ceremonial lavers called *abzu* (*apsû*),” meanwhile asserting “the *tâmtu* constructed by Agum the Second (col. III, 33) is hardly lustrational in character” (ibid.: 185). Albright goes on to speculate on how water might have been conveyed to the Temple, and the discussion soon leads to a description of putative Mandaean lustral practices and even translations of Mandaean texts (ed. Ochser 1907: 160–61) into “Assyrian” (Albright 1919: 186). The point is that Albright’s self-reference is merely to an assertion that Mesopotamian *apsû* is lustrative and *tâmtu* is not, but without any additional information as to how he came to this conclusion. A logical difficulty is that the *tâmtu* not being lustrative hardly impinges on it being “a basin of water”; one might have done better to contest the reading and leave it at that.

⁵⁹⁵ In both Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13, the deep is described as $\sqrt{\text{rbš}}$ “crouching,” but of course one needs to examine precisely how naturalistic such a description must be (and it seems very bold to say that this is description “as a dragon,” since of course any number of things can crouch). In Ps 42:8, the deep simply has a voice. In Ps 148:7, the deeps are called upon to praise Yahweh, here in parallel with תְּנִינִים —again, suggestive, but it is difficult to get away from the suspicion that only an active imagination requires “dragon” semantics here.

entities. These are brought to the fore when one takes a closer look at the precise Mesopotamian parallels to which Albright and others have pointed.

Although it used to seem as though the presence of artificial pools in Mesopotamian temples was an assured fact, most if not all of the putative references are also open to interpretation as statues or other symbols of the deities involved. In 1968, *CAD* (A.2 197a) could suggest three texts or groups of texts in which *apsû* was in the editors' opinion a "water basin in the temple."⁵⁹⁶ One of these citations is very unconvincing. Both *Gilgamesh* (XI:31, ed. George 2003: 704–5) and *Atrahasis* (III i: 29, ed. Lambert and Millard 1969: 88) refer to roofing the ark "like the Apsu."⁵⁹⁷ This seems far more likely to refer to the hermetic seal over the deep (as a cosmological entity) than to some roofed architectural element. This is especially true if there is no other evidence for there having existed an architectural element named the Apsu.

Other putative references to the Apsu as a temple basin installation are unfortunately even more laconic, even if they do at least occur in texts discussing temples and rituals.⁵⁹⁸ The second

⁵⁹⁶ The above-cited article of Burrows (1932) enumerates many more putative references, most of which appear again and again in the older discussions of Assyriologists and biblicists on this matter. But most of Burrows's references are more dubious than the few texts listed in *CAD*. Burrows, moreover, was already of the opinion that the "abzu of the temples" was a "libation-pipe" by which the buried dead participated in temple rituals, rather than a basin as he understood "common" opinion to have it (*ibid.*: 232).

⁵⁹⁷ Only one manuscript of *Atrahasis* is extant at this line, namely Ms C (= BM 78942+78971+803885, ed. Lambert and Millard 1965: pl. 13 [no. 3]). It reads {ʽki¹-ma ap-s-i šu-a-ti šu-ul-li-il-ši} *kīma apsî šuāti šullilši* "Roof it (the ark) like the Apsu." Two manuscripts are extant for *Gilgamesh* at the relevant line XI:31, namely Mss T₂ (= Sm.2131+) and W₁ (= K.8517+). The latter reads {[k]i-ma ZU.AB šá-a-ši šu-ul-lil-ši} *kīma apsî šáši šullilši* "Roof it (the ark) like the Apsu." (T₁ simply has the phonetic spelling for "Apsu," namely {[a]p-si-i}; George 2003: 704–5).

⁵⁹⁸ Aside from the possible but unlikely case of the *tākultu* texts cited below, none of the references to the *apsû* throughout Parpola's (2017) new edition of Neo-Assyrian royal rituals and cultic texts involves an architectural entity called the *apsû*, much less a basin. This is significant because these are the sorts of texts in which one might expect references to basins located in temples, but of course this volume alone does not cover all the possibly relevant texts.

label to the “Sun God Tablet” (BM 91000) asserts that {^d30 ^dUTU u ^dIŠTAR ina pu-ut ZU.AB ina bi-rit ^dMUŠ ti-mi ŠUB^{meš}-ú} *Sin Šamaš u Ištar ina pūt apsî ina birīt Niraḥ timmī nadû* “Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar are set opposite the Apsu, between Niraḥ and the pillars.” The image to which this caption refers includes the symbols of the three named gods above the head of the anthropomorphic representation of Šamaš on the right. The text of the tablet deals with restorations to the Ebabbar temple, including the installation of a sun disk and the commissioning of a cult statue by Nabû-apla-iddina (r. 887–855 B.C.E.). It is generally accepted that the temple and its installations are themselves depicted in this scene.⁵⁹⁹

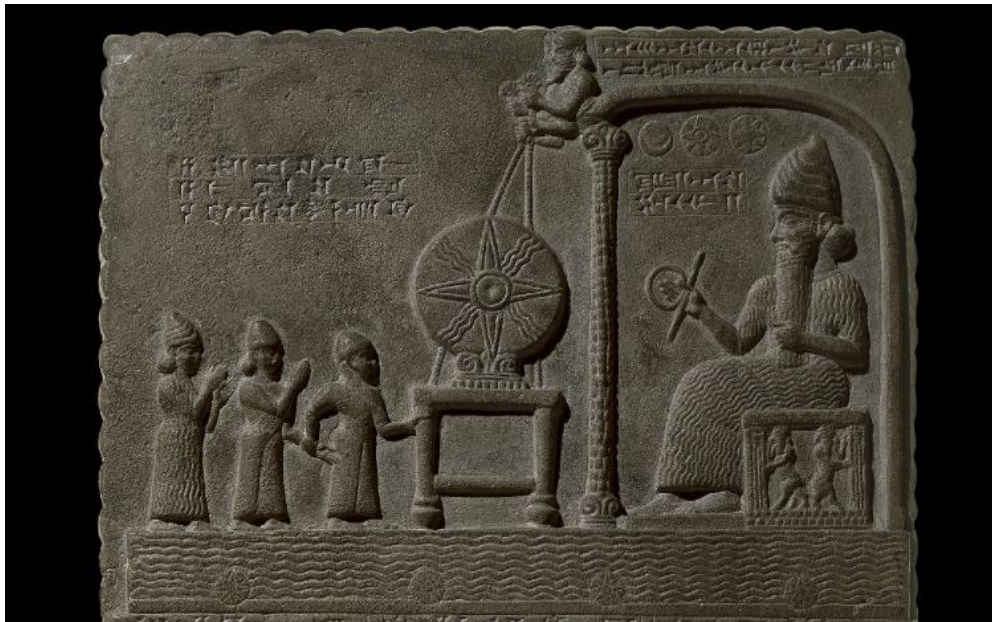


Fig. 5.3, BM 91000 Sun God Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina
© Trustees of the British Museum, BM Online Catalogue

It is not, however, necessarily true that the smaller divine symbols reflect the architectural reality directly. If such symbols were part of the decoration of the temple, it is not clear from the tablet

⁵⁹⁹ Woods (2004: 45–76) is a thorough discussion of the Sun God Tablet and its iconography in conjunction with its text. Ornan (2005: 63–66) has also discussed the iconography briefly.

iconography where they would have stood, as they are simply floating in the depiction. In most superficially similar *kudurru* representations, divine symbols probably do not index external artifactual realia but rather signify divine approval and witness (e.g. Ornan 2005: 111–12). In the present case, though, the reference to the aforementioned gods “standing” before Apsu suggests that they do reflect some architectural reality. Neither this nor the representation of the Apsu as wavy lines underneath Šamaš’s sanctuary requires, however, that the Apsu named in the caption be an actual water installation. One could interpret the depiction of the figures on BM 91000 as walking on top of the wavy lines to indicate that a dais with similar incised decoration is what is actually described by the Apsu-terminology.

A pair of Neo-Assyrian *tākultu* (“meal”) festival manuals are also cited by *CAD* (A.2 [1968] 197a) as attesting the presence of an Apsu basin installation.⁶⁰⁰ Both VAT 10126 i:32 (= *KAR* 214)⁶⁰¹ and the more fragmentary VAT 11727:7' (= *KAV* 83),⁶⁰² both *tākultus* for Aššur-etel-ilāni (r. 631–27 B.C.E.), mention {[ki-s]a-al A.BÁR ap-su-ú}, either “the Lead Courtyard (and) the Apsu” or “the Lead Courtyard of the Apsu.”⁶⁰³ Regardless of whether seriation or a construct relationship is preferred here—and either are possible in context, simply a list of locations within and around the temple—neither text says enough about the morphology or manufacture of the *apsû* to demonstrate that the named entity is indeed a basin.

⁶⁰⁰ These texts were long known primarily through the Dutch edition of Frankena 1954, but some relevant texts have been recently edited with minimal commentary by Parpola (2017: 99–128). Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 392–407) has useful comments regarding the textual development of the ritual(s), historical context, and political implications of performance.

⁶⁰¹ For the copy in *KAR*, see Ebeling 1922: 122–28. The most recent edition is Parpola 2017: 121–25.

⁶⁰² For the copy in *KAV*, see Schroeder 1920: 64. The most recent edition is Parpola 2017: 125.

⁶⁰³ The transliteration here represents the reading generally reached (e.g. *CAD* A.2 [1968]: 197a; Parpola 2017: 122) for VAT 10126 i:32. Ebeling (1922: 123) appears to have copied an {ÍD} instead of a {BÁR}, but this is unlikely in light of the clearer parallel text in VAT 11727:7': {[k]i-sa-al A.BÁR a[p-su-ú]}.

The “basin” interpretation is made even less likely by two further observations. First, as already observed by Lambert (1963), various descriptions of *tâmtu*-installations as that on which divine statues sat or rested their feet makes it more likely that this is a thoroughly solid piece of furniture, again perhaps a flat and solid dais. Although it is not certain that the same would apply to any *apsu* in a temple,⁶⁰⁴ this shows that not every temple element with a watery namesake need have involved water in reality. Second, there are plenty of good Akkadian words for “basin” that are never used in conjunction with any temple *apsû* or *tâmtu*. Such basins are also often interacted with in far more explicit ways than are the *apsû* or the *tâmtu*. For example, the *agubbû*-basin serves as a source of water for purification of the temple, sacrifices, etc. and as a receptacle in which various materials are purified (references sub *egubbû* in *CAD E* [1958]: 50–51). It would be strange if the *apsû* or *tâmtu* was of the same construction and was therefore available for similar functions but was never described as playing any ritual role.

The existence of Mesopotamian temple basins named after cosmic enemies is therefore doubtful, and old hypotheses rest on very liberal interpretations of ambiguous iconography and terse texts. By contrast and as seen above, many features of the Solomonic basin are described in substantial detail. Most notably, it is situated on the backs of twelve bulls and bears a “gourd”-like decorative pattern. If one focuses on the former point, it quickly becomes apparent that the Solomonic basin has—like *Nḥuštān* as considered previously—much closer morphological parallels than any Mesopotamian comparanda with allegedly cosmic significance. Lavers with bases sculpted as bovids have in fact been recovered from several Syro-Hittite sites.⁶⁰⁵ For

⁶⁰⁴ Despite the occasional direct identification of *apsû* and *tâmtu*, e.g. near the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian kettledrum ritual O.175 (ed. Livingstone 1986: 187–96, 201–4, esp. and 190–91 and 201).

⁶⁰⁵ Some authors appear to claim that both Tell Halaf and Tell Tayinat yielded laver bases sculpted to resemble bovids (e.g. Bloch-Smith 1994: 20; Gilibert 2011: 52 n. 110; Ballentine 2015: 109), but many of these

example, a massive (1.2 x 2.4 x 1.35 meter) 10th–9th-century basalt base from Carchemish depicts two bulls and has, unlike usual statue bases, a very deep square depression on its top; Woolley (1952: 168) and others have suggested that a basin formerly occupied this depression.⁶⁰⁶



Fig. 5.4, AMM Inv. 10103, Double Bull Laver from Carchemish
Gilibert 2011: Carchemish no. 93

formulations are somewhat ambiguous. Most if not all of these authors appear to be dependent on Busink's (1970: 332) discussion of "Das eherne Meer," in the course of which he does indeed draw attention to the fact that "Tierbasen aus dem Alten Orient zeigen das Tier in stehender (Tell Halaf, 9. Jahrh. v. Chr.), wie liegender (Tell Tainat, 8 Jahrh. v. Chr.) Haltung." But it is not at all clear whether Busink is referring to laver bases so sculpted or merely regular statue bases, which are indeed often sculpted to resemble animals, most commonly lions and bulls. I have not been able to find any laver bases from Halaf or Tayinat that accord with the morphology described by Busink. Syro-Hittite temple basins more generally are also a well-attested phenomenon that cannot be surveyed in full here. Not all basins are as likely to have had the same (or any) mythic significations. Ballentine (2015: 109) regrets that Bloch-Smith (1994; 2002) "does not speculate about the function or possible symbolic meaning of the 'Ain Dara basin," but the basin in question is simply a stone receptacle in that temple's courtyard (Novák 2012: 46) and should probably not receive the same attention as the examples cited here and in Bloch-Smith 1994; 2002.

⁶⁰⁶ The Carchemish exemplar is currently in Ankara, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Inv. 10103. Its first publication is Woolley 1952: 168 and pl. B.47. The base has subsequently been discussed by Orthmann (1971: 41) and recently by Gilibert 2011: 189 (as no. Carchemish 93), with discussion at *ibid.*: 51–52 and n. 110, where the Solomonic parallel is explicitly noted; and Mierse 2012: 110.

Additionally, a relief of Sargon II at Khorsabad⁶⁰⁷ depicts the sack of the temple of Mušašir in Urartu. In front of the temple are two lavers that appear to be supported by stands shaped like bovid legs.

It should be emphasized that these basins do not establish by their similarity to the “molten sea” that all such installations were symbolic of defeated watery monsters. Rather, the recurrent association of lavers with bovids suggests another conclusion. Bulls were, with surprising consistency throughout the ancient Near East, understood as emblems of high and/or storm gods such as Baʿlu and Adad.⁶⁰⁸ In the present case, it is far more likely that the animals depicted on the laver bases are simply symbolic of the deity to whom their temple contexts were dedicated than that an extensive narrative of combat was ever intended or understood. The real or imagined composition involving bulls physically supporting a large basin seems, in particular, unlikely to have resulted from or to have prompted an understanding of the surmounting object as subordinate to the deity symbolized in its support. In other words, as with *Nḫuštān*, attention to more geographically and chronologically proximate parallels suggests a hierarchy of significations quite different from that proposed by those preferring Mesopotamian comparanda, and another putative example of cosmic antagonist representation in temple architecture or installations has proven illusory.

⁶⁰⁷ The relief originally stood in Room 13 as slab 4. Only a drawing (Botta 1849–50: pl. 141) survives; this is often reproduced, notably in Albenda 1986: pl. 133.

⁶⁰⁸ A thorough compendium of references for bull epithets and imagery being ascribed to Haddu/Adad and Baʿlu is Schwemer 2001: 124–27. Rahmouni (2008: 318–30) catalogues the use of the {tr [...] } epithet for ʾIlu at Ugarit and includes some pointers to further literature. See also e.g. Fleming 1999.

5.3 The Head of Goliath (1 Sam 17:54)

In both of the previous sections, the emphasis has been on challenging previous constructions of the bronze snake *Nhuštan* and the bronze “sea” basin as emblematic of Yahweh’s cosmic enemies. This accent on disputing dominant hypotheses as to the presence of such defeated enemy rhetoric in the Hebrew Bible does not lead, however, to any necessary conclusion as to the general absence of this discourse mode in the Levantine corpus. In fact, there is at least one place in which a biblical author employs this motif according to which a positive regnant power—usually a god or king—defeats a monstrous enemy and then displays some representation of this monstrous enemy as an implicit threat to other would-be enemies, real or imagined. The place in question is the description in 1 Samuel 17:54 of King David, having defeated Goliath, bringing the head of the giant to Jerusalem and putting the giant’s weapons in his own tent. Most scholarship on 1 Samuel 17 has been preoccupied with the substantial text-critical, historical, and literary issues of the chapter as a whole and has thus paid little attention to this short verse.⁶⁰⁹ The defeat of Goliath and its aftermath is described in the following passage⁶¹⁰:

⁶⁰⁹ There are some exceptions to this rule. Hoffmeier (2011: 104–9) documents Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical beheadings and displays. All of his examples involve enemies of ordinary human stature. These are certainly not irrelevant, but they are less conceptually proximate than the beheading and display of Humbaba as discussed below. This verse gets only a brief mention in Frolov and Wright’s (2011: 465) comparison of the David and Goliath narrative with *Gilgamesh* and a number of other “intertext[s].” Levin’s (2016) recent article (earlier Hebrew version in *ibid.* 2013) is primarily concerned with suggesting that David brought the head of Goliath not to Jerusalem—since this is, as many scholars have written, anachronistic—but rather to a Saulide camp allegedly at Khirbet Qeiyafa. This is completely speculative and does not bypass the necessity of supposing that “to Jerusalem” is a redactional replacement for some lost destination or an addition (similarly Pioske 2018: 191 n. 51).

⁶¹⁰ As is well known, certain witnesses to the Septuagint lack large chunks of the narrative in 1 Sam 17–18 by comparison with the Masoretic text, namely 1 Sam 17:12–31, 41, 48b, 50, 55–58; 18:1–6a, 10–11, 12b, 17–19, 21b, 29b–30. The Septuagint manuscripts that lack these verses are hypothesized on this and other grounds to represent in 1 Samuel the Old Greek (OG) translation, i.e. the Greek translation that was *not* revised towards contemporary Hebrew texts (for an overview of this process, see Tov 2012: 141–47); the manuscripts in question are the uncial

(49) וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת־יָדוֹ אֶל־הַכְּלִי וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם אֶבֶן וַיִּקְלַע בָּהּ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶל־מִצְחֹו וַתִּטְבַּע הָאֶבֶן בְּמִצְחֹו וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו אֲרֻצָּה: (50) וַיַּחֲזֵק דָּוִד מִן־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי בַקֶּלֶע וּבָאֶבֶן בָּהּ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּמְתְּהוּ וַיַּחֲרַב אִין בְּיַד־דָּוִד: (51) וַיֵּרַץ דָּוִד וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּקַּח אֶת־חַרְבוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַפְהָ מִתַּעֲרָה וַיִּמְתְּהוּ וַיִּכְרַת־בָּהּ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּרְאֵהוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי־מַת גְּבוּרָם וַיִּגְסוּ: (52) וַיִּקְמוּ אַנְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּהוּדֶה וַיִּרְעוּ וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים עַד־בּוֹאֲהוּ גִיא וְעַד שַׁעֲרֵי עַקְרוֹן וַיִּפְּלוּ חִלְיֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים בְּדַרְדָּר שַׁעֲרָיִם וְעַד־גַּת וְעַד־עַקְרוֹן: (53) וַיָּשָׁבוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִדֶּלֶק אַחֲרֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּשְׁסוּ אֶת־מַחְנֵיהֶם: (54) וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת־רֹאשׁ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּבְאֶהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־פְּלִיּוֹ שָׁם בָּאֲהֶלוֹ: (55) וַיִּכְרְאוֹת שָׂאוֹל אֶת־דָּוִד יִצְאָ לַקְרָאת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֲמַר אֶל־אַבְנֵר שֶׁר הַצָּבָא בֶן־מִיִּנָה הַנֶּעַר אַבְנֵר וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְנֵר חִי־נַפְשֶׁךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־יִדְעָתִי: (56) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׂאֵל אֶתָּה בֶן־מִיִּנָה הַעֲלֵם: ס

(49) David reached for his kit. He took out a stone and flung it. He struck the Philistine in his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. [(50) David prevailed over the Philistine with his sling and stone. He smote the Philistine and killed him, even though David had no sword in his hand.] (51) David ran and stood over the Philistine. He took hold of his (Goliath's) sword, drew it from its scabbard, and killed him. With it, he cut off his head. The Philistines

Codices Vaticanus (= B; 4th C. CE, now Rome Cod.Vat.Gr.1209) and Venetus (= V; 8th C. CE, now Venice Bibl.Marc.Gr.1) and several minuscules (Tov 1985: 98 n. 1). (Of the four Samuel scrolls found at Qumran—1Q7 = 1QSam; 4Q51 = 4QSam^a; 4Q52 = 4QSam^b; 4Q53 = 4QSam^c—only 4QSam^a preserves part of 1 Sam 17 (namely vv. 3–6, for which see below, and vv. 40–41). Only this manuscript—by virtue of its including 17:41 and 18:4–5—and 1QSam—given its including 1 Sam 18:17–18—give any indication of having had the “long version” of the text (convenient transcriptions in Ulrich 2010: 277–78). Johnson 2012 (from the larger study idem 2015) is a recent study of this Qumran evidence, which has indeed been neglected. Driesbach’s notes on 4QSam^a in 1 Sam 17–18 (2016: 288–89) are even more recent but much less detailed.

Scholars who hypothesize the shorter Old Greek (or “LXX*”) to preserve a more original text generally point to the otherwise literal quality of the Greek translation, which would seem to make extensive expansion uncharacteristic (e.g. Tov 1985). I find this hypothesis to be more convincing and therefore bracket the relevant verse above and set it aside throughout the analysis below. Scholars who hypothesize the longer Masoretic Text to represent a more original text generally attempt to show that the Old Greek (“LXX*”) omissions harmonize contradictions or eliminate other difficulties present in the longer version (e.g. Rofé 1989: 119–23). There is an extensive list of opinions in Johnson 2012: 535–6 nn. 6–7. The classic treatment of the issue, with both major options defended, is Barthélemy et al. 1986.

saw that their hero was dead, and they fled. ⁽⁵²⁾ The men of Israel and Judah arose, rejoiced, and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath (?) and to the gates of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell on the road to Shaarayim, as far as Gath and Ekron. ⁽⁵³⁾ The Israelites returned from harrying the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem.⁶¹¹ He put his weapons in his⁶¹² tent.

The basic observation that the author of this verse interacts here with the broader motif of displaying the defeated enemy can be enhanced here by attention to three additional points: (1.) the gigantic and therefore monstrous character of Goliath's body renders David's control over it particularly impressive; (2.) the passage involves repeated reference to the "head" of Goliath and thereby figures this feature as the central index of the giant's power; and (3.) narratives of giant control that similarly emphasize the adversary's head and especially the display thereof may be

⁶¹¹ See n. 609 for discussion of Levin's (2016) recent article on this topic, which includes citation of older hypotheses as to why the later Davidic capital is named here. Many scholars have suggested that the phrase (or entire verse) is simply redactional (references in Levin 2016: 373). Given the series of *wayyiqtol* verbs here, it seems unlikely that the description is proleptic, i.e. that David was to bring the head of Goliath to Jerusalem only much later in the narrative continuity.

⁶¹² The sword of Goliath later ends up, by a route not specified in any narrative, at the priests' sanctuary at Nob (1 Sam 21:10). The question of whose tent is intended in the present instance remains difficult. As throughout the passage, there is minimal specification of pronominal antecedents, so that the "his" here might in theory refer to either David or Goliath. Hoffmeier (2011: 96–103) has recently defended at some length the view that the antecedent is Goliath (cf. e.g. the consensus as reflected in McCarter 1980: 286 "his own tent," with additional citations in Hoffmeier 2011). This is largely based on the observation that the Israelites are in the very act of plundering the *Philistine* camp when David is said to be accessing a tent. But certainly some motion is possible if not certain between v. 53 (or 54a?) and v. 54b. The notion that David would have wrapped Goliath's tent up with the giant's weapons so that all of these might serve together as a trophy (Hoffmeier 2011: 102–3) finds no direct parallel of dwelling appropriation and must therefore be regarded as less likely than that the movement of Goliath's weapons to David's own tent (however understood; see Hoffmeier 2011: 96) signifies an appropriation of potency.

found in Gilgamesh narratives, especially as alluded to in the depiction of monstrous Huwawa/Humbaba heads throughout Mesopotamia.

To begin such an analysis, it is necessary to look back at the earlier description of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:3–8, which establishes the Philistine foe as a giant and therefore, as is increasingly argued, monstrous.⁶¹³ The description of Goliath that accompanies his narrative introduction establishes that he is an individual of extraordinary size and strength:

(4) וַיֵּצֵא אִישׁ־הַבְּנִיִּים מִמִּחְנֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים גִּלְיָת שְׁמוֹ מִגַּת גְּבִיָּו שֵׁשׁ אַמּוֹת וָרֶת: (5) וְכֹבֵעַ נְהֻשֶׁת עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ
וְשַׁרְיוֹן קַשְׁקָשִׁים הוּא לְבוּשׁ וּמִשְׁקַל הַשַּׁרְיֹן חֲמֵשֶׁת־אַלְפִּים שְׁקָלִים נְהֻשֶׁת: (6) וּמִצָּתַת נְהֻשֶׁת עַל־רַגְלָיו
וְכִידּוֹן נְהֻשֶׁת בֵּין כַּתְפָּיו: (7) וַחֵץ⁶¹⁴ חֲנִיתוֹ כְּחַנִּיתוֹ וְלַהֲבַת חֲנִיתוֹ שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת שְׁקָלִים בְּרֹגֶל וְנֹשֵׂא
הַצָּנָה הַלֶּדֶה לְפָנָיו:

⁶¹³ Goliath is featured prominently in J. J. Cohen’s (1999: 65–66, 71) major scholarly study of the giant as literary trope; this author summarizes the battle narrative and some of the features it shares with other giant battle narratives, but he does not directly note the display of Goliath’s head. This is surprising primarily because Cohen elsewhere (ibid.: 29, 64, 72–73) documents at some length the display of the dismembered giant body as an important symbol by which kings were described as calcifying gigantic monstrosity and thereby consolidating power. This seems, however, to be simply an oversight in composition, because Cohen elsewhere alludes to the tradition that Goliath’s head was displayed and even regards this as an important influence on the early English narratives he discusses: “[f]ollowing the structure received from the David and Goliath story, the display of the conquered giant’s head is often in its simplest terms part of the rite de passage from boyhood to manhood, from mistakes and potential ambiguity into the certainties of a stable masculinity” (ibid.: 73).

⁶¹⁴ The *Qere* here is וַעַץ “and the wood (i.e. shaft).” For וַעַץ denoting the shaft or hilt of a metallic weapon, the closest parallel is Deut 19.5 וַיִּשָּׁל הַבְּרֹזֶל מִן־הָעֵץ “and the iron slips from the wood” (describing an axe), but only if the wood in question is indeed that of the weapon itself and not of the hewn tree (if Rashi can refrain from choosing one or the other option [Kearney 2010: 135–36], this can be left open here, too). This lexeme is not extant in 1QSam^a (in its frags. 12–14, the only Qumran scroll that covers 1 Sam 17:3–8; the edition is Cross et al. 2005: 78–79 and pl. 12a), but all ancient translations have “shaft” and “pole” lexemes, e.g. the Septuagint’s *kovtòc*. It is worth noting also that the parallel passage in 2 Sam 21:19 (discussed again below) has וַיִּדֹּף אֶלְתָּנֹן בְּרִיעֵרִי אַרְגָּיִם בַּיַּת הַלְחָמִי אֵת גִּלְיָת הַגִּתִּי וַעַץ חֲנִיתוֹ כְּחַנִּיתוֹ וְלַהֲבַת חֲנִיתוֹ שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אַרְגָּיִם: “Elhanan b. Yaraei-Orgim, the Bethlehemite, smote Goliath the Gittite, and the wood of his spear was like a weaver’s beam.” For more on this weaver’s beam and the recent article of Garfinkel (2016) on the subject, see n. 618, below.

⁽⁴⁾ The champion came out from the Philistine camps. His name was Goliath of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. ⁽⁵⁾ A bronze helmet was on his head, and he was clothed with armor of scales. The weight of the armor was five thousand shekels of bronze. ⁽⁶⁾ Bronze greaves were on his legs, and a bronze javelin was between his shoulders. ⁽⁷⁾ The shaft (see n. 614) of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the tip of his spear was six hundred shekels of iron. His shieldbearer went before him.

Goliath's armor has been much discussed in recent work on this narrative, primarily with an eye towards finding archaeological, art-historical, or literary parallels; this is mostly pursued so as to chronologically situate the image and—scholars often assume—the composition of the broader narrative.⁶¹⁵ Such datings of compositions on the basis of isolated images have come under increasing criticism, and with good reason. Knowledge of previous realia—in this case, weaponry and armor—is often demonstrably retained over centuries, and there is nothing to say that this vision of Goliath draws on the props of only one period or region.⁶¹⁶ If one can resist the impulse to focus only on armament comparanda, one can make the more basic and more revealing observation that the measurements and similes in this description have a clear central purpose: to hammer home Goliath's exceptional size. The champion's armor weighs five thousand bronze

⁶¹⁵ The most recent treatment is Hasegawa 2017: 608–11, and the most thorough summary of recent approaches is Zorn (2010: 1, to which add Frolov and Wright 2011: esp. 457–58 and Hoffmeier 2011: 89–94), who divides scholars into two groups: (A) those arguing that Goliath's armor is basically that of an LB/Iron I Mycenaean foot soldier, so that the text reflects an early (tenth-century?) period or memory thereof (e.g. Millard 2009); and (B) those arguing that Goliath's armor is basically that of an approximately seventh-century Greek hoplite, so that the text witnesses the authorial and/or editorial activity of a "late" Deuteronomistic redactor (e.g. Yadin 2004; Finkelstein 2002: 142–48). (Zorn's [2010] own argument is that Goliath's armor actually mirrors that of a Mycenaean charioteer, despite the battle here being on foot.) To adjudicate this debate would go beyond the purpose of the present treatment.

⁶¹⁶ This has been stressed recently by Hasegawa 2017: 612–22.

shekels, i.e. almost 125 pounds.⁶¹⁷ The tip of his spear weighs six hundred iron shekels (almost 15 pounds), and its shaft is כְּמִנְוֵרֶת אֶרְגָּיִם “like a weaver’s beam,” a very large implement.⁶¹⁸

Goliath’s height has, especially in the past century, been the object of some calumny. The Leningrad codex (and the Masoretic tradition in general) gives the giant’s stature as the astonishing שֵׁשׁ אַמּוֹת וְרֵבֵת: “six cubits and a span,” just about nine and a half feet.⁶¹⁹ Goliath thus stands nearly a head taller than Robert Pershing Wadlow (1918–40), who was at 8’11” the tallest human on record.⁶²⁰ If Wadlow was thus christened the “Giant of Illinois,” an over nine-foot Goliath has every claim to the title “Giant of Philistia.” The Philistine’s records are not, however, as unambiguous as he might like. It has long been observed that almost all Greek texts of 1 Samuel 17.4 have τεσσάρων πήχεων καὶ σπιθαμῆς “four cubits and a span.” Although this testimony used to be set aside as a libelous rationalizing deformation of the text, the discovery of a Qumran Samuel

⁶¹⁷ This and the subsequent calculations are based on Kletter’s (1998: 70–107) demonstration that the Iron Age Judaeon shekel weights average approximately 11.33 grams (x 5000 = 56650 grams ~ 124.89 pounds). As is generally recognized (e.g. Kletter 1998: 98), the material notations that follow are unlikely to denote different kinds of shekels (and therefore different standards of measure) but rather simply the material in which the shekel weight was instantiated.

⁶¹⁸ Cf. recently Garfinkel 2016, who suggests that this “weaver’s beam” is to be understood first as Elhanan’s improvised weapon in 2 Sam 21:19, then essentially misunderstood and taken over by the allegedly later narrative of 1 Sam 17. This is argued by comparison with other *ad hoc* weapons created throughout hero narratives of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Shamgar’s ox-goad in Judg 3:31 or Samson’s jawbone in Judg 15:15), but the reading does not take appropriate account of the overarching themes in 1 Sam 17. Here, the focus is certainly Goliath’s gigantic stature and implements.

⁶¹⁹ Following Scott (1958) and others, it is generally understood that the Hebrew אַמָּה “cubit” was standardized to 17.5 inches, and the רֵבֵת denoted the length between outstretched thumb and fifth finger and was therefore by physiological proportions approximately half of the (forearm-based) cubit. Goliath’s “six cubits and a span” height would therefore be 113.75 inches or just under 9.5 feet (2.8956 meters).

⁶²⁰ For Wadlow (1918–40), see the biography in Brannan 2003. Wadlow had—as in the case of many other extremely tall humans—pituitary hyperplasia, which in turn produced very high levels of human growth hormone. He generally used leg braces to walk and died of an ankle blister infection complicated by an autoimmune disorder (*ibid.*).

scroll (4Q51 = 4QSam^a) in which Goliath is likewise just ארבע [א] מות וזרת “four cubits and a span” now requires an asterisk next to the giant’s Guinness entry.⁶²¹ A “four cubit and a span” Goliath would stand only 6’6”.⁶²² This is still tall, especially by ancient standards,⁶²³ but—as some scholars have pointed out—is just approximately the height of the average NBA player.⁶²⁴

The numerical difference is substantial, and the divergent texts have been attributed to both purposeful and accidental modification.⁶²⁵ Only a few scholars, however, have succeeded in seeing that regardless of the precise measurements, *either* text involves size far enough outside the usual human dimensions that Goliath yet retains his gigantic significance (e.g. Doak 2012: 103). After

⁶²¹ The relevant fragment is 4QSam^a (= 4Q51) Frgs. 12–14, which is edited and commented upon by Cross et al. 2005: 78–79 and pl. 12a. Interestingly, Josephus (*Ant.* 6.171) agrees with both the Septuagint and 4QSam^a in giving Goliath’s height as πηχῶν τεσσάρων καὶ σπιθαμῆς “four cubits and a span.”

⁶²² More precisely, four cubits and a span equals 78.75 inches, i.e. 6.5625 feet, almost exactly 2 meters.

⁶²³ See nn. 626–27, below.

⁶²⁴ Cross (1979: 54) cites a letter of P. W. Skehan to this effect: “if I chose the [Masoretic Text]’s ‘nine and a half feet,’ it would be because on that reading every hearer would know the kind of story he was dealing with; now the villain couldn’t even play basketball”; the citation is repeated in the official edition, Cross et al. 2005: 79. Halpern (2001: 8) misquotes this opinion of Skehan slightly: “The eminent Dead Sea scroll scholar, Patrick Skehan, remarked on discovering from a scroll of Samuel that Goliath was ‘only’ 6 ft. 5 in. [sic] in height that the villain could not even play center in basketball.” There are, however, some coaches who might have given Goliath a shot: Chuck Hayes (6’6”) started at center for the Houston Rockets during the 2009 NBA playoffs and throughout the 2009–10 season after Yao Ming (7’5”) suffered a hairline fracture to his left foot and Dikembe Mutombo (7’2”) retired.

⁶²⁵ The apparent party line of the Harvard school—reflected in e.g. Cross 1979: 54 n. 2; McCarter 1980: 281; and Cross et al. 2005: 79, both times attributed to Michael D. Coogan, presumably by personal communication—was that a “conscious attempt to lower the height of Goliath on the part of a pious scribe appears to be out of the question, for reducing the height of Goliath would have one effect only—to reduce David’s glory” (*ibid.*), so that the “six” reading is by “anticipation” of שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת “six hundred (shekels in iron)” in v. 7 just below. Strangely, this completely ignores the possibility that—if “four” is original—“six” arose by an attempt to *magnify* both the giant and David’s glory. This and other options are all recently considered by both Driesbach (2016: 73) and Johnson (2015: 73–75; 2012: 539–41), the former of whom opts for the above-described theory of scribal error and the latter of whom suggests a purposeful reduction to encapsulate anti-Saulide polemics.

all, the height of the average adult man is, even in the modern United States, just 5'10",⁶²⁶ and people in earlier agrarian societies were almost certainly somewhat shorter.⁶²⁷ One should thus avoid becoming too distracted both by the text-critical issue and by modern height ranges, the extremes of which most of us rarely observe. As J. J. Cohen (1999: 38) points out, the giant is not necessarily monstrous by his radical alterity over against humanity, but rather as a result of incomplete feature overlap: "The giant is not quite *Homo sapiens*, but uncannily manlike [...] He is the male body writ large, but he must be killed because his spectacular form disturbingly suggests that there is something not fully human about that body, no matter what its actual size."

With Goliath's character as giant thus established, one can proceed to the question of what this size signifies in the narrative of 1 Samuel 17. Scholars who have looked at giant-slaying stories from a cross-cultural perspective have demonstrated that control over gigantic bodies was often understood as particularly impressive. This was not only because these bodies are larger tokens of ordinary bodies, but also because they are understood to exceed the boundaries of the naturally

⁶²⁶ Studies of growth among humans are conveniently cited and discussed throughout Eveleth and Tanner 1990. The average figure of roughly 5'10" is taken from *ibid.*: 251, Appendix Table 21, "Height of boys of European ancestry," which documents 18-year-old men fitting this description as averaging between 167.2 and 176.8 cm (i.e. between approximately 5'6" and 5'10"). Naturally, the literature on this subject—especially discussing variations among population groups over time—is huge and rather far afield from biblical studies.

⁶²⁷ The oft-stated gap between modern and premodern societies is less straightforward when one looks at the osteological data, but it is true that Levantine agrarians of the Iron Age are likely to have been somewhat shorter than modern Americans. Boix and Rosenbluth (2014) have recently summarized skeletal findings according to which the average male height in pre-agrarian (mostly Palaeolithic and Mesolithic) sites was indeed around 175 cm (i.e. nearly 5'9"), but agrarian societies (e.g. in Egypt) have yielded means of 166.2 cm (5'5") for elites and just 157 cm (5'2") for commoners (*ibid.*: 11). Finds fitting or even slightly exceeding the pre-agrarian average are known from the Levant; for example, Yiftahel (lower Galilee) has yielded a Neolithic male skeleton of 176 cm (Hershkovitz, Garfinkel, and Arensburg 1986: 78), but this is indeed a clear outlier (thus *ibid.*, "tall").

possible in grotesque and overwhelming fashion.⁶²⁸ When the god or king dominates the giant, his dominance extends to the hazy horizon of the imaginary or the just-possible. It extends as far as the ordinary imagination can easily conceive and begins to impress one as hegemonic.

Because other scholars have focused on the significance of the giant-battle in communicating these meanings, one can focus here on the ways in which the conquest and display of the giant's head in particular communicates a meaning beyond the "ordinary" display of severed heads and mutilated corpses. This latter is amply attested as a wartime practice in the ancient Near East, including in the southern Levant.⁶²⁹ That the giant's head communicates particular power is suggested not only by its great size—as already established—but also by the recurrent narrative focus on it, which is hardly paralleled in descriptions of overcoming ordinary human foes. Already in 1 Samuel 17:46, David menaces his enemy by threatening his head: הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִסְגְּרֶךָ הַיְהוָה בְּגִלְדִּי וְהַבִּיתָהּ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶת־רֹאשִׁי מֵעַלֶּיךָ וְנָתַתִּי פִּגְרִי מִתְּהַגָּה פְּלִשְׁתִּים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְחַיֵּת הָאָרֶץ וְגִדְעוּ כָל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים וְהִסֵּרְתִּי אֶת־רֹאשִׁי מֵעַלֶּיךָ וְנָתַתִּי פִּגְרִי מִתְּהַגָּה פְּלִשְׁתִּים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְחַיֵּת הָאָרֶץ וְגִדְעוּ כָל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים :לִישָׁרְאֵל: "Today Yahweh will hand you over to me. I will strike you **and I will remove your head from upon you.** Today I will give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the animals of the earth, so that all the earth will know that God is with Israel." The description of the battle then returns repeatedly to Goliath's head, with a marked concentration in the climactic v. 49b: וַיִּכּוֹת אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶל־מִצְחֹו וַתִּטְבַּע הָאֲבֶן בְּמִצְחוֹ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה: "He struck the Philistine in **his forehead.** The stone sank into **his forehead,** and he fell on **his face** to the ground." These

⁶²⁸ J. J. Cohen (1999: 67) has made similar comments regarding King Arthur's defeat of the giant of Mont Saint Michel (along with other depictions of gigantomachia): "The watchers stare finally at Arthur, in the realization that the monster's powers have been incorporated and re-encoded by the king. The giant's threat of anarchy (pure force [*vis*] without socialized direction), installed beneath the aegis of monarchy, becomes the king's power over individualism."

⁶²⁹ For examples, see e.g. Hoffmeier 2011: 104–9 and now the thorough study of decapitation in the ancient Near East, Dolce 2018. For one relevant Hebrew Bible narrative, 2 Kings 10:1–11, see immediately below.

references to features of the giant’s visage comprise a sort of refrain directed towards the ultimate victory in v. 51. Here, the description is first general—of the defeated body as a whole—and then specific to the privileged “head”: וַיִּקַּח אֶת-טֶרְבוֹן יִשְׁלָלָהּ מִתַּעֲרָהּ וַיִּמְתְּתֶהּ וַיִּכְרֹת-בָּהּ אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ “He took hold of his (Goliath’s) sword, drew it from its scabbard, and killed him. With it, he cut off his head” (v. 51aβ). It is this final act that serves as demonstrative of David’s preeminence for the foes of the Israelites. Immediately, וַיִּרְאוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי-מָת גִּבּוֹרָם וַיִּגָּסוּ: “the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, and they fled” (v. 51b).

It is not uncommon that biblical narratives establish contact with the head to be pivotal. Jael’s defeat of Sisera, for example, is described with primary reference to the enemy general’s head in both the prose and poetic depictions. In Judges 4:21aβ–b, וַתִּתְקַע אֶת-הַיַּתֵּד בְּרִקְתּוֹ וַתַּצֵּגָה בְּאַרְצוֹ, וְהָיָא-נִרְדָּם וַיִּצְרַף וַיָּמָת: “She sank the peg into **his temple** and it penetrated to the ground. He had been in a deep sleep, and he expired and died.” The peg in Sisera’s temple then serves as a direct demonstration of Jael’s act at the end of the following verse. Both head and temple are targeted in Judges 5:26b, וְהִלְמָה סִיסְרָא מִתְקָה רֹאשׁוֹ וּמַחֲצָה וְהִלְכָה רִקְתּוֹ: “She hammered Sisera. She struck **his head**. She struck and pierced **his temple**.” Even given such similar depictions, it is the utter fixation on Goliath’s head that sets the 1 Samuel 17 scene apart from similar narratives. The head of the Philistine or parts thereof are mentioned six times in nine verses (1 Sam 17:46–54).

It is also significant that Goliath’s head is completely isolated and comes across as therefore uniquely powerful throughout the narrative. Other similar scenes of decapitation usually stress the profusion of enemy heads separated from enemy shoulders, and by a sort of cumulative logic establish the vigor of the conqueror. For example, 2 Kings 10:1–11 indeed employs gruesome imagery to communicate political power on the intra- and extra-narrative planes. The usurper Jehu commands the nobles of Samaria to murder seventy members of Ahab’s house and to send their

heads in םיִןִיִן—“baskets” or “pots”—to Jehu in Jezreel (2 Kgs 10:7). They do so, and Jehu piles them in two heaps at the city gates (v. 8). Jehu’s total control of the Israelian political situation is thus conveyed to both his fellow characters and to the horrified readership.⁶³⁰ But because Jehu is working only with ordinary, human-sized heads, his propaganda requires two veritable piles of thirty-five heads each.⁶³¹ The head of a single giant accomplishes similar work all on its own.

The way in which this focus on and display of Goliath’s head functions on the intra- and extra-narrative levels can be further illuminated by reference to a similar Mesopotamian motif known from both literary narratives and, through archaeological discoveries, mundane praxis.⁶³² The hero Gilgamesh is said in various narratives and allusions to have slain, with his companion Enkidu, the giant Humbaba, guardian of the Cedar Forest. After the conclusion of the battle, Gilgamesh decapitates Humbaba and takes the giant’s head back to Nippur. The relevant text of the first-millennium BCE Standard Version of the Akkadian epic of *Ša naqba imuru* “He who saw the Deep” (usually “*Gilgamesh*”) reads as follows:

⁶³⁰ Indeed, it is surprising that this passage has not received a “horror theory” analysis before, e.g. Numbers 25 (as in Grafius 2018). Readers generally agree with such evaluations as Lamb’s (2007: 86) “shockingly gruesome” and “unusually brutal.”

⁶³¹ This discussion of piles of heads cannot help but recall ‘Anatu’s combats in the Ugaritic *Ba’lu* epic and related texts, in which the goddess’s dominance over her enemies is signified by their severed body parts: {tḥth . kkdrt . riš¹ / ‘lh . kirbym . kp . k . qšm¹ / ḡrm [- .] kp . mhr . ‘tk / rišt . lbmth . šnst / kpt . bḥbšh} (RS 2.[014]+ ii:9’–16’ [= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.3]) *taḥtaha ka-kaddurāti ra’šū / ‘alēha ka-’irbiyīma kappi ka-qašami / ḡarimā[nu] kappi mahīri ‘atakat / ra’šāti lê-bamatiha šannisat / kappāti bi-ḥabšiha* “Under her like balls, heads, / over her like grasshoppers, hands, / like locu[sts], heaps of warrior heads. / She binds heads to her back. / She girds hands on her belt” (cp. e.g. Smith and Pitard 2009: 153–55; Pardee 1997: 250). The power of the victorious ‘Anatu is transmitted not only by the narrative of the combat itself but by her appropriation of her enemies’ body parts as trophies. Similar Ugaritic passages are RS 5.180+5.198:2’ (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.7), a mythological fragment, and RS 1.006 (= *KTU*¹⁻³ 1.13), a hymn to ‘Anatu. Stahl 2016 contains a recent analysis of these texts.

⁶³² Frolov and Wright (2011: 464) also discuss images common to Goliath and Humbaba descriptions but mention the display of the decapitated head only briefly (ibid.: 465). The present section goes substantially beyond their short observations, especially with reference to iconographic parallels.

Gilgamesh V:262–67, 300–2⁶³³

dd	262	[iš-me ^d GIŠ-gím-maš zi-ki]r ib-ri-šú
dd	263	ṛiš-lu-upṛ [nam-ša-ra i-na] i-di-šú
dd	264	^d GIŠ-gím-ma[š i-nar] k[i-š]á-dam-ma
dd	265	{x} ^d en-[ki-dù x x x]-pu-tu a-di ḥa-še-e iš-tal-pu
dd	266	[...]-ṛla ^ṛ -nu i-šaḥ-ḥi-it
dd	267	[ul-t]u SAG.DU i-šal ^{!(ŠUL)} -lal šin-nu
[...]	⁶³⁴	
Hddff	300	ir-tak-su a-mu it-ta-du-ṛúṛ [...]
H	301 ⁶³⁵	[...-l]i [?] MIN uš-kèn/mat ^d en-ki-d[ù ...]

⁶³³ At the time of the publication of George’s (2003) major critical edition of *Gilgamesh*, the author considered only two manuscripts to be certainly representative of Tablet V: Ms H (K.3252+8561; Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian) and Ms dd (IM 76985; Uruk [W 22554/7], Neo-Babylonian). The discovery and publication by al-Rawi and George (2014) of a large tablet preserving substantial previously unknown portions of Tablet V (now Ms ff; Suleimaniyah Museum T.1447; unknown provenance, Neo-Babylonian) allowed both filling of the gaps left by breaks in these two manuscripts and the substantiation of older hypotheses that K.8591 (previously Ms AA; see George 2003: 586) was not only part of Tablet V (not Tablet IV) but also part of the same manuscript as Ms H = K.3252+8561 (al-Rawi and George 2014: 69–72); these two fragments should thus be known collectively as Ms H, individually as Mss H₁ and H₂ (al-Rawi and George 2014: 72). The filling of gaps in Tablet V by the new Suleimaniyah Museum manuscript necessitates a shift in line numbering. The section in which Gilgamesh kills Ḥumbaba is still extant in only Ms dd, and there fragmentarily; it would occur around ll. 285–87 in a composite edition; George’s (2003: 612–13) old numbering is retained here for convenience, because there is yet no publication incorporating the new manuscript and al-Rawi and George’s (2014) new publication does not include transliteration or translation of passages extant in only Mss H and/or dd. At the end of Tablet V, George’s (2003: 614–15) original ll. 300–2 are in the newer publication (al-Rawi and George 2014: 82–83) ll. 321–24. The only significant addition of the new manuscript in these lines is the verb {ra-kib-ma} “(Gilgamesh) rode along.” See the following notes for some complicating factors in these lines.

⁶³⁴ The intervening lines describe the aftermath of the battle with Ḥumbaba, including the felling of a cedar and the construction therefrom of a door. The new Suleimaniyah Museum manuscript also includes a section in which Gilgamesh and Enkidu are said to have slain the windy {DUMU^{mes}} “sons” of Ḥumbaba (ll. 307–8; note at al-Rawi and George 2014: 84).

⁶³⁵ The relationship of the three Mss H, dd, and ff between ll. 300/321 and 302/324 is difficult. First, both dd and ff have a line (301/323) beginning {^den-ki-dù ṛraṛ-kib [...]} (dd) // {^de[n-k]i-dù ra-k[ib ...]} (ff.) “Enkidu was

ff		[...] x uš-šá-ʿab [?] :
ddff		^d en-ki-dù ra-kib [...]
Hddff	302	u ^d GIŠ-ʿgím [?] -maš SAG.DU ^d ḥum-ba-ʿba [?] ra-kib-m[a ...]

išme Gilgimmaš zikir ibrīšu / išlup namšara ina idīšu / Gilgimmaš inār kišādam-ma

/ Enkidu [...] ... adi ḥašê ištalpu / [...] ... išahḥiṭ / ultu rēši išallal šinnu

[...]

irtaksū amu ittadû [...] / [...] ... / u Gilgimmaš rēša Ḥumbaba rakib-ma [...]

²⁶² Gilgamesh heard the word of his companion. ²⁶³ He drew a dagger from his side.

²⁶⁴ Gilgamesh struck him in the neck. ²⁶⁵ Enkidu [...] ... until he pulled out the

lungs. ²⁶⁶ [...] ... as he/it jumped up. ²⁶⁷ He plundered the teeth/tusks from the head.

[...]

³⁰⁰ They bound together a raft. They laid [...] ³⁰¹ Enkidu was steering/[...] ...

Enkidu [...] ³⁰² and Gilgamesh rode along [bearing?] the head of Ḥumbaba.

From this narrative, it is clear that the head of Ḥumbaba was regarded as uniquely valuable, presumably because it was uniquely representative of the monster’s persona and power. There is a similar emphasis on head-chopping as metonymic for the defeat of Ḥumbaba in a recently published early Neo-Assyrian fragment of Gilgamesh. This fragment describes preparations for

riding [...],” but ff precedes this with a line (322 in al-Rawi and George 2014: 82–83 and n. 19) that ends {...} x uš-šá-ʿab[?]:} “was sitting(?)”. There is no correlate for this in Ms dd. Before a line-ending break, Ms H clearly predicates something of Enkidu (either establishing [*kānu* Š] or killing [*mātu* Š]), but whether and how this would accord with someone’s sitting—and thus constitute the same line—is unclear.

the expedition to the Cedar Forest, and the passage cited below is the conclusion of Gilgamesh's boastful speech to Enkidu in the presence of the council of elders at Uruk:

VAT 10916 obv. 19'–22'⁶³⁶

- 19' ù ki-ma lab-be ḥu-ba-ba ú-x [a]k' ma šu x [...]
 20' ^{giš}a-ma-a-te^{meš} ú-rak-^ʾka-sa^ʾ ša ^{giš}EREN ^{giš}ŠUR.MÍN [...]
 21' i+na ŠÀ-bi ú-sa-naq [...]
 22' [q]aq-qa-^ʾad^ʾ ḥu-be-be a-na-ki-sa-ma aq-qa-^ʾla^ʾ-pa-^ʾa^ʾ [...]

u kīma labbe Ḥubbaba ... [...] / amāte urakkasa ša erēni šurmēni [...] / ina libbi usanaaq [...] / qaqqad Ḥubbebe anakkisamma aqqalappâ [...]

¹⁹ Like I lion I will [...] Ḥumbaba. ²⁰ I will bind together rafts of cedar, cypress [and ...] ²¹ In its midst I will fasten (?)⁶³⁷ [...] ²² I will cut off the head of Ḥumbaba and travel downstream.

⁶³⁶ This fragment is one of two pieces (also VAT 10585b), probably from the same manuscript. They originated at Aššur but are of uncertain date; palaeography places both fragments in the ninth or possibly tenth century BCE (George 2003: 353). It was identified and thereafter published by Maul (2001) and included by George (2003: 353–61).

⁶³⁷ In the *editio princeps*, Maul (2001: 22) reads {ú-sa-^ʾnap^ʾ-sa-[ak]}, which he interprets as the first attestation of *passuku* Š (CAD P [2005] 536, without this occurrence listed), with Assyrian *s* for *š in the verbal preformative (ibid.: 31). George (2003: 361) rightly critiques this on the grounds that the rarity of fully Assyrian words even in this Aššur fragment makes it “wiser not to introduce into an essentially Babylonian text a very specialized Assyrian verb in a previously unattested stem.” George (2003: 359) suggests “collect together,” which appears to be more commonly expressed by *sanāqu* G than by *sanāqu* D (CAD S [1984] 140) and perhaps even in that stem generally with animate objects like “people” or “soldiers.” Perhaps it would be better to understand something like “close” or “fasten” (some constitutive feature of or something to the raft[s]?) by parallelism with *rakāsu* D and on the basis of occurrences cited by CAD (S [1984] 143), but all of these do have types of portals (*daltu* “door”; *bābu* “gate”; *abullum* “large gate”) as their objects.

This fragment shares obvious terminological parallels with the end of Tablet V of the Standard Version as cited above, not only with reference to the head of H̄umbaba but also in the description of “binding together” (here *rakāsu* D, there *rakāsu* Gt) “rafts” (here plural, there *amu* singular). These consistencies suggest a stereotyped and coherent way in which defeat of the giant was figured predominantly as decapitation followed by transport of the trophy.

That the head of H̄umbaba was uniquely important can also be suggested by the way in which powers emanating from from his visage are foregrounded in Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s nervous descriptions of his potency. For example, prior to the giant’s death in the Sumerian versions of H̄uwawa’s defeat,⁶³⁸ Enkidu describes the giant on the basis of their previous encounters:

Gilgamesh and Huwawa A:93–96⁶³⁹

- 93 ur-saĝ ka-ka-ni ka ušumgal-la-kam
 94 igi-ni igi piriĝ-ĝa₂-kam
 95 GIŠ.GABA-ni a-ĝi₆ du₇-du₇-dam
 96 saĝ-ki-ni ĝiš-gi bi₂-ku₂-a lu₂ nu-mu-da-te-ĝe₂₆-da

⁹³ A warrior, his mouth is a dragon’s mouth, ⁹⁴ his eye is a lion’s eye,
⁹⁵ his chest is a raging flood. ⁹⁶ His head, which consumes the canebrake, none can approach.

⁶³⁸ There are two Sumerian versions of the battle between Gilgamesh and H̄uwawa. Version A is by far better attested (85 manuscripts) and better preserved. It is edited with a full score in Delnero’s (2006: 2395–2473) unpublished dissertation and by Edzard (1991; 1990) in successive articles. Version B is extant in only five manuscripts and is edited by Edzard 1993. Both texts are analyzed in Fleming and Milstein 2010: 182–205.

⁶³⁹ Numeration and transliteration from Delnero 2006: 2437–38, translation adapted slightly from Fleming and Milstein 2010: 186 to reflect repeated lexemes and original word order.

Three of the four lines in this short description concern ̤uwawa’s head and its features, and the last summarizes the stonewalling effect of the giant’s countenance by reference to the total {saĝ} “head.”⁶⁴⁰ The reference to multiple threatening beasts constitutes ̤uwawa as, in Carroll’s (1990: 43–46) terms, a “fusion” monster.⁶⁴¹ Similar concepts are given expression in a parallel passage in *Gilgamesh and Huwawa B*:85–88:

Gilgamesh and Huwawa B:85–88⁶⁴²

85 ur-saĝ-^re^r igi-ni igi piriĝ-ĝa₂-kam
 86 GIŠ.GABA-a-ni e₄-ĝi₆ du₇-du₇-dam
 87 saĝ-ki-ni ĝiš-gi bi₂-ku₂-e lu₂ nu-te[!]-ĝe₂₆[!]-da
 88 eme-a-ni ur-maḥ lu₂-ku₂-gim uš₂ nu-šar₂-ra-ge-dam

⁹³ A warrior, his eye is a lion’s eye, ⁹⁴ his chest is a raging flood.

⁹⁵ His head, which consumes the canebrake, none can approach.

⁶⁴⁰ Graff (2012a: 77) writes that “While evocative of a sense of majesty, fierceness and large size, these metaphorical descriptions do not add up to a visually coherent image of the demon. They are instead for the most part descriptions of his activities rather than his appearance.” The first sentence is more true than the second. The emphasis here is definitely on comparing ̤uwawa to fearsome beasts rather than delineating his appearance in more direct terms, but the reference to the {ka} “mouth” and {igi} “eye” here are as feature- (rather than activity-) focused as one can conceive.

⁶⁴¹ This citation covers Carroll’s (1990) total theorization of fusion monsters in the context of twentieth-century “art horror” (films, literature, etc.), with numerous examples. For the concept in brief, the following description on *ibid.*: 43 is representative: “One structure for the composition of horrific beings is *fusion*. On the simplest physical level, this often entails the construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions such as inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine, and so on. [...] A fusion figure is a composite that unites attributes held to be categorically distinct [...] in *unambiguously* one, spatio-temporally discrete entity.” Carroll (1990: 44–45) is explicitly influenced here by Freud’s conceptualization of the “condensatory” figure in Freud’s *Die Traumdeutung* (1899), interestingly one of the only times Carroll engages Freud beyond brief consideration of the *Unheimlich* (Carroll 1990: 174–75) as possibly a broader category than that with which Carroll is concerned.

⁶⁴² Numeration and transliteration modified slightly from Edzard 1993: 26 to reflect current preferred sign values, translation adapted slightly from Fleming and Milstein 2010: 198 to reflect word order and repeated lexemes.

⁹⁶ On his tongue, like that of a man-eating lion, the blood never dries.

The major difference is in the final line of this passage, where the {eme} “tongue” of ̕uwawa is described in graphic detail as constantly covered in still liquid blood. This reifies a characteristic act of ̕uwawa that is both threatening and disgusting, and therefore, in Carroll’s (1990: 42–43) theorization, monstrous. This and similar statements prepare the reader for the portrayal of ̕uwawa’s visage as a weapon on its own once Gilgamesh and Enkidu actually confront him, e.g. in version A:

*Gilgamesh and ̕uwawa A:116–17*⁶⁴³

116 igi mu-ši-in-bar igi uš₂-a-kam

117 saĝ mu-na-TUKU₄.TUKU₄ saĝ nam-tag-ga su₃-ga-am₃

¹¹⁶ He [̕uwawa] gives him the eye, and it is the eye of death.

¹¹⁷ He shakes his head at him, and it is the nod of condemnation.

The aggressive role of ̕uwawa’s head and eyes thus continues through the battle itself in the Sumerian epic. There are no similar references in Akkadian versions of the combat to ̕uwawa’s eye being like the {igi uš₂-a-kam} “the eye of death.” Nevertheless, the resonance of heads—and even particularly *severed* heads—in Gilgamesh mythology is suggested by a foreshadowing simile in one Old Babylonian manuscript describing the approach to the Cedar Forest. At the sight of the great cedars covering the mountains, Enkidu grows fearful and more:

⁶⁴³ Numeration and transliteration from Delnero 2006: 2444–45, translation adapted slightly from Fleming and Milstein 2010: 187 to reflect word order and repeated lexemes.

MS 3025⁶⁴⁴:61–64

61 [ḏen iš-ši] ḏi-ni-[šu] i-ta-mar e-re-nam
62 [me-lem-ma]-šu [k]a-ti-im hu-ur-sa-ni
63 k[i-ma n]a-ak-si-im i-ri-qu pa-[n]u-šu
64 i-r[u-ub a-d]i-ir-tum a-na [l]i-ib-[b]i-š[u]

*Enkidu išši inišu itamar erēnam / melemmašu kātīm ḥursāni / kīma naksim īriqū
pānūšu / īrub adirtum ana libbišu*

⁶¹ Enkidu raised his eyes and saw the cedar, ⁶² its splendor covering the mountains.

⁶³ His face turned pale, like a severed head. ⁶⁴ Terror entered his heart.

As already noted by George (2003: 240), Enkidu’s face does “pale” at the thought or sight of Humbaba elsewhere in the Gilgamesh tradition, but never so violently or evocatively as here. That the simile here occurs shortly before the two heroes will overcome the very cause of Enkidu’s fear, i.e. by severing the giant’s head, makes it likely that the intratextual repetition is no accident. The text places special emphasis on the act and its products by expanding use of the imagery beyond its necessary narrative bounds.

In the Standard Version of the Akkadian epic, though, the head goes unmentioned after the observation that Gilgamesh brought it with him on the boat to Nippur. It is not clear from this text alone what, if anything, Gilgamesh and Enkidu intended to do with their trophy. Because the epic proceeds at the beginning of Tablet VI directly into a description of Gilgamesh’s cleaning himself

⁶⁴⁴ This manuscript is a virtually complete Old Babylonian tablet of uncertain provenance but now held in the Martin Schøyen collection as MS 3025. The *editio princeps* is in George’s (2003: 224–40) critical edition of *Gilgamesh*—where the text was marked with the siglum OB Schøyen₂—and George (2009: 29–36 and pls. 13–16) also published a thorough re-edition after the tablet was cleaned. That the simile quoted above is somehow resonant for Humbaba’s severed head was suggested briefly by Minunno (2007: 19 n. 24), but without the hypothesis of likely purposeful foreshadowing.

before his audience with Ishtar, it cannot be suggested that any explicit utilization has been lost in transmission. Nevertheless, older Sumerian versions of the combat with *Ħuwawa* do specify that Gilgamesh and Enkidu put the giant's head in a sack and then presented the severed head to Enlil himself:

Gilgamesh and Ħuwawa A:165–70a⁶⁴⁵

- 165 ur₅-gin₇ ĥu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
 166 ^den-ki-du₁₀ ib₂-ba lipiš bala-a-ni gu₂-ni im-ma-an-ku₅
 167 ša₃ kuš-a-ĝa₂-la₂-še₃ mu-un-da-ĝar
 168 igi ^den-lil₂-la₂-še₃ i-ni-in-ku₄-re
 169 igi ^den-lil₂-la₂-še₃ [...] KA ki su-ub-ba-ni-ta
 169a tug₂ a₂-ĝa₂-la₂ bi₂-in-šub saĝ-du-ni bi₂-in-e₃-de₃
 170 ^den-lil₂-le saĝ-du ^dĥu-wa-wa igi ba-ni-in-du₈-a
 170a inim ^dGIŠ.BIL-^rga^r-meš ša₃ bi₂-in-dab₅

¹⁶⁵ While he was speaking this way, ¹⁶⁶ Enkidu, enraged and in a fury, sliced through his neck. ¹⁶⁷ In a leather sack they placed (the head). ¹⁶⁸ They brought it before Enlil [some mss. add “and Nihil”]. ¹⁶⁹ They kissed the ground before Enlil. ^{169a} They threw down the sack and removed his head. ¹⁷⁰ When Enlil saw the head of *Ħuwawa*, ^{170a} he grew angry at the story of Gilgamesh.

Enlil is not happy that the two heroes have slain the guardian of the Cedar Forest, but this changes little about the function of the acts of decapitation and presentation. Gilgamesh and Enkidu had thought to demonstrate their martial prowess with their trophy. Their display is contingent and directed, i.e. for only a moment, rather than in monumentalized perpetuity, and towards Enlil (and

⁶⁴⁵ Numeration and transliteration from Delnero 2006: 2467–69, translation slightly adapted from Fleming and Milstein 2010: 189.

sometimes Ninlil), rather than to a general populace. That there is here no narrativized monumentalization is, however, mitigated by the fact that the textualization of the trophy-presentation renders the scene and its values paradigmatically available for readers and listeners.

That the motif of H̄umbaba's head was indeed appropriated for use by these readers and listeners is amply attested in the Mesopotamian archaeological record. Representations of H̄umbaba's head are known in clay and numerous other materials from throughout Mesopotamia, primarily in the second millennium BCE. Alongside full-body images of H̄umbaba and portrayals of the combat between this monster and Gilgamesh and Enkidu, H̄umbaba heads constitute a major category of stereotyped artistic figuration connected with the epic.⁶⁴⁶ These heads, typically made from clay but also in some other materials, characteristically show the following set of features, according to Graff's (2012a) detailed iconographic study:

a broad, frontal face; a grimacing mouth or rictus; large eyes; a nose with broad, flat tip; and vertically striated locks or facial folds hanging from nose to chin. It often also appears with prominent brows, overall wrinkled visage, and caplike hairstyle. (Graff 2012a: 17)

Many of these features are broadly attested indices of the monstrous. Exaggerated facial features (eyes, nose, copious wrinkles) draw a figure into the realm of the grotesque (Bakhtin 1968: 316).⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁶ Several of the contributions to Steymans 2010 deal directly with representations of H̄umbaba among artistic products connected with the Gilgamesh epic, and these are engaged directly below. Graff's (2012a) dissertation contains a complete catalogue of all H̄umbaba depictions known to her at that time, with extensive discussion; a published summary of her major functional arguments is Graff 2012b.

⁶⁴⁷ In the translation (from Russian) of Iswolsky (Bakhtin 1968: 316): "Of all the features of the human face, the nose and mouth play the most important part in the grotesque image of the body; the head, ears, and nose also acquire a grotesque character when they adopt the animal form or that of inanimate objects. The eyes have no part in these comic images [...] The grotesque is interested only in protruding eyes." It is practically eerie how nearly this

Excess hair meanwhile blurs boundaries between anthropomorphism and theriomorphism, since hirsutism is frequently affiliated with the beastly.⁶⁴⁸ The identification of such representations with Humbaba is assured by one exemplar (BM 116624; Graff 2012a: 2 and cat. no. 127) bearing on its reverse an omen invoking the appearance of the giant: {BE ti-ra-nu SAG hu-wa-wa GAR BÀ šar-ru-ki-in ša KUR-ta i-be-lu} *šumma tīrānū rēš Hūwawa šakin amūt Šarrukin ša māta ibēlu* “If the intestines look like Hūwawa’s head, it is an omen of Sargon, who ruled the land” (George 2003: 146).

could simply be a description of Humbaba rather than of the giants in Rabelais’s *La vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel* (1532–64). Graff (2012a: 78) also notes the grotesque character of the face: “visual representations of Humbaba collected in this catalogue dating to the late third and early second millennium show a creature whose appearance is inhuman and grotesque.”

⁶⁴⁸ The popular association of hirsutism, especially female hirsutism, with the monstrous is well-documented in modern times by the ways in which “freak shows” capitalized on real individuals evincing such traits. For a historical perspective, Patterson (2014: 283–84 n. 6) has numerous references to the exploitation of “hairy(-faced)” individuals as “monsters” or “marvels” in 17th-century CE European traveling shows, and the monograph of Wiesner-Hanks (2009) studies a pair of such performers, the Gonzales “hairy sisters,” in some detail. The trope can also be found in literature: Idelson-Shein (2018) has recently called attention to the unique figuring of Till Eulenspiegel as having a monkey-face in an anonymous 1735 Yiddish *Eulenspiegel* chapbook (*Eyln shpigl*; Prague, 1734/5) and connects this, through the theoretical prism of monster studies, to other representation of hairy individuals as monstrous.

On the other hand—back in areas and times closer to those treated by the bulk of this chapter—there are some positive associations of even premature and excessive hair growth: in discussing a group of teratomantic omens from Middle Bronze Tigonānum (now in the Schøyen collection; *editio princeps* A. R. George 2013), de Zorzi (2017: 132–33) devotes a section to omens involving fetus hair growth and related motifs in literature more broadly; all of these are explicitly interpreted not as signs of despised monstrosity (and therefore negative) but as demonstrating “physical maturity and masculinity” (thus positive). Similarly, in discussing the characteristic beard of the female Saint Wilgefortis, Friesen (2001: 111–25) argues on the basis of multiple positive artistic and literary representations of saintly women with copious facial and body hair that the negative evaluation of female hirsutism is a particularly modern development. Nevertheless, the presence of hair above and beyond the *human* norm still seems likely to produce theriomorphic associations.

Many such heads have no archaeological provenance, but several of those that do are from private dwellings.⁶⁴⁹ These were conceivably displayed by individual families as apotropaic wardens (see below). A few notable Ḫumbaba heads were exhibited in more public contexts such as temples or palaces, similar to the bulk of Mesopotamian monster representations discussed in Chapter 4 and the literary positioning of the head of Goliath as described immediately above. Two gypsum alabaster impost blocks from Tell al-Rimaḥ (Karanā or Qaṭarā?⁶⁵⁰) represent Ḫumbaba's head, the first (IM 69731; Graff 2012a: cat. no. 220)⁶⁵¹ found in a 12th-century context outside a temple antechamber, but probably of Old Assyrian manufacture (Howard Carter 1983: 69; Graff

⁶⁴⁹ Examples include Graff 2012a no. 2 (Nippur, Ur III period; CBS 51-6-205); no. 3 (Nippur, Ur III period; IM 56466); no. 72 (Nippur, Isin-Larsa period; exc. no. 2N 790; IM no. unknown); no. 103 (Nippur, Isin-Larsa period; exc. no. 3N 461; IM no. unknown)

⁶⁵⁰ This identification of the site as Karanā was proposed by Dalley (e.g. 1980; 1984: 20) on the basis of her publication of tablets from the site (Dalley 1976), but most authors prefer an identification with Qaṭarā from the fact that a princess Iltani is known from over two hundred administrative documents to have resided at the site, and two of these documents refer to her residing at Qaṭarā (summary in Michel 2007, including the opposing views of Dalley et al.). Interestingly, Dalley's (2007) most recent summary of Tell al-Rimaḥ finds only alludes to her earlier preferred identification by brief reference to the earlier "Karanā" and makes no positive identification of the site.

⁶⁵¹ IM 69731 (exc. no. TR 225+3413; see below), sometimes called "Ḫumbaba I," was discovered in two halves: TR 225, the left half, in 1964 and TR 3413, the right half, in 1966. Its position in the Phase II temple is marked conveniently on the map in Oates 1966: pl. 28. Bibliography on the object includes discussions in the preliminary Tell al-Rimaḥ reports by Howard Carter (1965: 59–60 and fig. 10 [right half, TR 225]; 1967: 284 and fig. 2 [both halves]) and the site director Oates (1965: 72, pl. 16a [right half, TR 225]; 1967: 74–75, pl. 31 [both halves]). A later article by Howard Carter (1983: 69–70, pl. 4) contextualizes both heads in the sculptural programs of the successive temple phases. An earlier article by Barrelet (1968) discusses "Ḫumbaba I" among other depictions of the giant. The piece is briefly mentioned in Dalley 1984: 184; Green 1985: 77–78; Ataç 2010: 269; Seidl 2010: 212; and Steymans 2010: 7 (incorrectly numbered as IM 73921), 34 fig. 5 (incorrectly numbered as IM 73922). The Tell al-Rimaḥ sculpture and other monumental material has not so far been published in a comprehensive site report. (Not all of the sources cited by Graff 2012a *sub* cat. no. 220 [unnumbered page] actually deal with the Ḫumbaba heads as opposed to Tell al-Rimaḥ generally or in particular unrelated aspects, e.g. Oates 1963, a preliminary site report before the discovery of either face half, and idem 1973, on vault architecture at the site.)

2012a: 40) and the second (IM 73922; Graff 2012a: cat. no. 221)⁶⁵² in debris near the temple precinct’s east gate, probably from the Mitanni period (Howard Carter 1983: 69; Graff 2012a: 40–41). These are depicted immediately below (figs. 5.5–7).



Fig. 5.5, IM 69731
(Graff 2012a: cat. no. 220)⁶⁵³



Fig. 5.6, IM 73922
(Graff 2012a: cat. no. 221)⁶⁵⁴



Fig. 5.7, BM 123287
(Graff 2012a: cat. no. 110)⁶⁵⁵

Barrelet (1968) and Graff (2012a: 42–49) have also argued that almost thirty terracotta plaques (Graff 2012a: cat. nos. 94–121; e.g. BM 123287 [cat. no. 110], depicted above) may also include representations of Humbaba-head impost blocks at their outer edges. Interior figures would represent additional statuary or individuals associated with the myth, and the large figure overseeing the whole would be either a god (Barrett 1968) or a king (Seidl 2010: 220–22; Graff

⁶⁵² Other bibliography on IM 73922, sometimes called “Humbaba II,” includes Howard Carter (1983: 69–70, pl. 5); Dalley 1984: 204 n. 13 (brief mention); Maul 2005: 57 (drawing of N. Wrede); Steymans (2010: 37 fig. 6; the same drawing).

⁶⁵³ Image source: Oates 1967: pl. 31a.

⁶⁵⁴ Image source: Howard Carter 1983: pl. 5a.

⁶⁵⁵ Image © Trustees of the British Museum, British Museum Online Catalogue.

2012a: 46–48). If this is taken to be a convincing interpretation of these terracotta plaques, it would demonstrate that employing H̄umbaba’s head as an architectural motif may have been more common than currently attested in archaeology.⁶⁵⁶

In addition to these monumental H̄umbaba heads known directly from excavated stelae and possibly indirectly from terracotta illustrations, one can look to the west for clear public representations of divine and heroic power being constituted by decapitation of the monster. One 10th- or 9th-century basalt orthostat from Tell H̄alaf⁶⁵⁷ very likely depicts H̄umbaba between Gilgamesh and Enkidu (fig. 5.8, below). The central figure faces forward in the style of H̄umbaba heads. Such a posture is unusual in tripartite hero contest scenes generally (e.g. Collon 2001: 165–90). He also has the over-large skull, exaggeratedly wild beard, broad nose, and cheek wrinkles characteristic of H̄umbaba representations generally.⁶⁵⁸ Two other monumental combat scenes from the northern Levant are catalogued by Graff (2012a: cat. nos. 223–24) as portraying

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. recently Seidl (2010), who has proposed a narrative interpretation of these terracotta plaques according to which the outer figures are indeed (doubled!) H̄umbaba, but still in life and with motile feet. As argued by Graff (2012a: 45–46), though, the doubling of H̄umbaba and the fact that all characters in the scene—i.e. not just H̄umbaba—are facing forward would be unusually for a narrative depiction. Furthermore, it is not at all certain that the lower parts of the H̄umbaba representations have feet, as claimed by Seidl (2010: 222; cf. Graff 2012a: 44).

⁶⁵⁷ Basalt, relief in the Walter Art Museum (Baltimore) 21.18, catalogued among H̄umbaba representations by Graff (2012a) as no. 222. Other bibliography includes Moortgat 1955: pl. 102a [no. A3,176]; Orthmann 1971: 407–10 [no. T. Halaf A3/176]; Winter 1983: 180 n. 16; 1989: 328; Lambert 1987: 47, pl. 9 fig. 13; Collon 2002: 41; 2010: 125 no. 6.2; Ornan 2010: 249–53 (for the earlier Hebrew version of this article, see Ornan 2003); Steymans 2010: 301.

⁶⁵⁸ Collon (2002: 34–39; 2010: 116–23) enumerates a set of postures that seem to connote the H̄umbaba figure as gigantic even when he is not physically taller than Gilgamesh and/or Enkidu. These predominantly involve sagging, kneeling, or bending. Collon (2002: 39–41; 2010: 123–25) also notes that the figuration of H̄umbaba as “broader” than the heroes—rather than taller—has the same effect; she documents widening of the head and other features (e.g. here the nose) that contribute to this general impression. These features are not remarked upon in Collon’s (2002: 41; 2010: 125) brief treatment of the H̄alaf relief; there, she stresses the entwined legs and arms of H̄umbaba and his conquerors.

Ḫumbaba's defeat. These are an early 10th-century limestone relief from Carchemish (fig. 5.9, below)⁶⁵⁹ and the upper half of a ca. 8th-century basalt relief from Karatepe (fig. 5.10, below).⁶⁶⁰ In both of these, however, there are few if any features identifying the central figure as the giant Ḫumbaba. In both, the figure faces sideways—the more common posture in tripartite hero contest scenes (Collon 2001: 165)—and have no non-human features or features otherwise characteristic of the monster. As Collon (2010: 129) points out, it is particularly unlikely that the Karatepe relief represents Ḫumbaba, since the central figure “is so small that he stands on a block and places his left foot on the knee of the figure facing him.”⁶⁶¹ Both depictions are unlikely to have been intended or received as representations of the crucial scene from the Gilgamesh epic.

⁶⁵⁹ Limestone, relief in the Ankara, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi (Museum of Anatolian Civilizations) Inv.77, catalogued among Ḫumbaba representations by Graff (2012a) as no. 223 and among Carchemish reliefs by Gilibert (2011) as no. 41. Other bibliography includes Hogarth 1914: pl. B.15b; Orthmann 1971: 407–10 [no. Karkemis E/111]; Winter 1983: 180 n. 16; Lambert 1987: 47, pl. 9 fig. 14; Collon 2002: 34; 2010: 116–17 no. 1.3; Ornan 2010: 249–53; Steymans 2010: 301–2.

⁶⁶⁰ Basalt, relief *in situ* at Karatepe (SO-I-NO-4), catalogued among Ḫumbaba representations by Graff (2012a) as no. 224 and among Karatepe reliefs by Çambel and Özyar 2003 as SVI 5 (ibid.: 105, pls. 148–49). Other bibliography includes Bossert et al. 1950: pl. 13 fig. 64; Orthmann 1971: 407–10 [no. Karatepe B/4]; Collon 2010: 129 no. 8.4; Ornan 2010: 249–50 n. 91; Steymans 2010: 302.

⁶⁶¹ Cf. Ornan (2010: 249 n. 91), according to whom this relief “possibly betrays iconographic connections with the killing of Humbaba, as the two combatants on the relief hold the rival by its wrists, recalling the manner in which Humbaba is held on the Tell Halaf relief.” Collon (2002: 34; 2010: 116–17) similarly regards AMM Inv.77, the relief from Carchemish discussed and depicted above, to be “link[ed ...] with other presumed Humbaba representations” by virtue of the central figure’s crossed arms. Although Ḫumbaba is often depicted with this posture (Collon 2002: 41–42; 2010: 125–27), the reference is usually if not always clarified by further physical or sartorial features such as those described above.



Fig. 5.8, Walters 21.18⁶⁶²
Tell Halaf, 10th/9th C.



Fig. 5.9, AMM Inv.77⁶⁶³
Carchemish, 10th C.

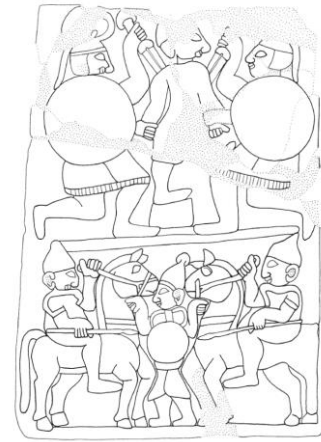


Fig. 5.10, Karatepe SVI 5.⁶⁶⁴
Karatepe, 8th C.

The ideological message of the sure monumental depiction of hero-giant combat from Tell Halaf is at any rate more direct and explicit than that of the decontextualized Humbaba heads. It is thus even more likely to represent a statement regarding proper hierarchies and constitution through ordering of the conceptual and geographical periphery, here symbolized by the grotesque monster.

Importantly for present purposes, a similar if not identical giant-combat motif was known not only in miniature but also in monumental art from the southern Levant. Excavations of the City of David revealed in Area G, Stratum 14 fragments of a cult stand clearly depicting a front-facing figure with bulging eyes grasped by two hands (Shiloh 1984: 17).⁶⁶⁵ Whereas Shiloh (*ibid.*)

⁶⁶² Photograph from entry in the Walters Museum online catalogue
<http://art.thewalters.org/detail/7441/relief-with-two-heroes/>

⁶⁶³ Photograph from Hogarth 1914: pl. B.15b.

⁶⁶⁴ Drawing from Çambel and Özyar 2003: pl. 148. There is a photograph of the same at *ibid.*: pl. 149.

⁶⁶⁵ This piece was registered as G.5689. A photograph appears on the title page of Shiloh 1984 and a drawing on *ibid.*: 59 fig. 23. In a footnote (*ibid.*: 33 n. 63), Shiloh notes that the stand is “being prepared for [more in-depth] publication by Jane Cahill,” but I have not found that this publication ever appeared. The size of the stand is not specified in the text, and there is no scale provided for the image.

originally described the figure as simply “a nude male figure with pointed beard and especially long hair,” Beck (1989)⁶⁶⁶ noted that the hands grasping this figure necessitated the presence of two flanking conquerors, just as in the Syro-Hittite reliefs shown above. The fragmentary depiction thus “recalls the scene of the ‘killing of Humbaba’” (“מזכיר את הסצנה של הריגת הומבבה”); Beck 1989: 147a); Beck further draws attention to the mixing of “monster” and “hero” features in later Humbaba depictions (ibid.: 148a), which allows the interpretation of the present individual as indeed Humbaba. Aspects of the figure’s posture—front-facing, arms crossed—and visage—bulging eyes, prominent beard—support the identification (ibid.: 148).⁶⁶⁷ The images below show the piece as recovered by Shiloh (fig. 5.11) and as reconstructed by Beck (fig. 5.12)⁶⁶⁸:

⁶⁶⁶ An English translation of this article is included in Beck 2002: 423–27. Beck repeats the hypothesis in another contribution (eadem 2000: 171–73).

⁶⁶⁷ Ornan (2010: 250 n. 92) has recently disputed this identification and cited some previous opinions to the same effect; Steymans (2010: 304–6) has a similar discussion with additional citations of dissenting voices, though he appears to side with Beck. These other authors mainly argue that the rounded protrusions at the center of the image seem less likely to be Humbaba’s elbows than the joints of an animal carried on the figure’s shoulders. This would interpret the visible hands as those of the central figure grasping the legs of the carried animal. But there does appear to be visible etching at the bottom left of the extant fragment and directly to the right of this (accurately shown on the drawing in Shiloh 1984: 59 fig. 23, from the photograph in Shiloh 1984: iii). These are most plausibly interpreted as two additional hands (thus requiring at least one other human) than as decorative marks or abrasions that just happen to mirror the depiction of the universally acknowledged hands just above.

⁶⁶⁸ These images are also reproduced in Steymans 2010: 443 figs. 13–14.



Fig. 5.11, City of David G.5689 Drawing
Shiloh 1984: 59 fig. 23.



Fig. 5.12, City of David G.5689 Reconstruction⁶⁶⁹
Beck 1989: 148b fig. 3.

If this is indeed a depiction of Humbaba and his conquerors, it is just one among several depictions of the giant in southern Levantine art, though these are mostly in miniature and/or unprovenanced (survey in Steymans 2010: 304).

Both in these monumental representations from the Levant and in the various other media in which similar motifs appear, this Humbaba tripartite contest scene is plausibly understood as a subtype of the contest type in which two heroes flank and defeat a central faunal or monstrous figure (Collon 2010: 115; 2002: 33; 2001: 165⁶⁷⁰; Ornan 2010: 237, 240–43). This is less common than the similar “Master of Animals” tripartite contest in which a central hero grasps and thereby

⁶⁶⁹ One problem with this reconstruction involves the left arm and dagger of the figure on the left, which should appear in the extant fragment if their position was actually as Beck reconstructs it. Possibly the daggers should be reconstructed as entering the central figure’s shoulders (as e.g. on the Karatepe relief depicted above), since the stone in this area is significantly more abraded than is the stone above the figure’s head.

⁶⁷⁰ The two seals to which Collon (2001: 165) draws attention in this volume are BM 105155 (Babylonian, 9th-C.[?]; no. 324), in which a hero and a scorpion-man flank a conquered winged beast, and BM 100674 (Babylonian, 9th/8th-C.[?]; no. 327), in which two winged heroes flank a conquered human-headed winged lion.

conquers two animals or monsters and is conceivably a reversal thereof. Collon (2002: 33; 2010: 115) suggests that the animal-centric subtype—with outnumbering hero figures on the compositional periphery and the animal threateningly at the center—“stress[es] the relative power of the animal kingdom.” This is conceivable, but of course the artistically simultaneous *defeat* of that impressive power resolves the conflict in favor of the heroes and thereby co-opts the animal/monster/giant’s fearful nature for anthropocentric ideologies.⁶⁷¹ This is a process that is similar (if not identical) to that termed by Agamben (2004: 37) the “anthropological machine,” i.e. the production of that which is human—here particularly sovereignty and purposeful martial human masculinity—as superior to that which is defined as animal by simultaneous exclusion and incorporation of border cases that would trouble the binary.

Even in recent years, the function of Humbaba heads has been analyzed chiefly if not solely with reference to their power as apotropaic objects.⁶⁷² The ways in which this single-significance interpretation must be nuanced and complicated will already be familiar from the discussions of supposedly solely “apotropaic” Mesopotamian monsters described throughout Chapter 4. Even in serving an apotropaic function, the positioning of a Humbaba head or other representation in a monumental context as, for example, at Tell Rimah, is likely to have evoked not only the giant’s

⁶⁷¹ Ornan (2010: 246) voices a similar hypothesis in arguing that imagery juxtaposing the stylized tree or the figure of a worshipper with the death of Humbaba on several Assyrian cylinder seals “marks the scene as a venerated icon imbued with divine powers,” i.e. as particularly demonstrate of divine beneficence and/or power and therefore worthy of theological contemplation.

⁶⁷² Graff 2012a: 121–27 contains a summary of previous opinions, with a shorter note at eadem 2012b: 132. Emblematic of the art historical consensus is Moorey 1975: 88–89, “These masks are pierced as if to be suspended from a wall, perhaps as protection against evil spirits in the manner of the later Neo-Assyrian Pazuzu and Lamaštu plaques.” Given the explicit Pazuzu and Lamaštu comparandum invoked here, it is appropriate for Graff 2012a: 116 to point to Braun-Holzinger’s (1999: 149) caution: “Only with great caution should information found in texts of the first millennium be applied to magical practices of the third and second millennia.”

apotropaic associations but also the entire complex of the Gilgamesh-involved narrative.⁶⁷³ Like the display of subordinated monsters, the display of a severed giant head appropriated for apotropaic use will both recall the mythologized conqueror (e.g. Marduk, Gilgamesh) and—perhaps more implicitly and less directly—glorify the patron (king, etc.) of a given structure.⁶⁷⁴ Humbaba heads could thus easily serve as apotropaia *and* mnemonics of power more generally, as at least one other scholar has recently mentioned.⁶⁷⁵ To mention just one comparandum from the preceding chapter, one will recall that the *mušhuššu* statues erected by Neo-Babylonian kings were in some cases explicitly said to spatter approaching enemies with deadly poison. It has been seen above that Humbaba’s head was also figured as not only dangerous but available for

⁶⁷³ Graff (2012b: 132) is thus certainly correct to note that “the head of Humbaba has a specific narrative resonance,” but this resonance also does more than just “play[ing] a crucial role in heightening its protective qualities.”

⁶⁷⁴ Even in discussing the monumental reliefs from the northern Levant, Ornan (2010: 253) begins by drawing attention to the reliefs’ communicative power by virtue of their placement “along main roads, passages or gates,” but then immediately falls back on the suggestion that “these architectural units had an apotropaic role [... They] were probably designed to grant protective powers and to ward off evil forces.” In other words, Ornan finds it difficult to ignore the conditions for ideological dissemination but spends no time on the content, purpose, or effects of this ideology. Similarly, Graff (2012a: 38) sees the monumental temple itself as “a dramatic statement of the ruler’s power,” so it is surprising that the Humbaba impost blocks themselves are seen only as “a common sight in temple gateposts throughout Assyria as well as southern Mesopotamia” (ibid.: 49).

⁶⁷⁵ Schwemer (2018: 173) has recently and briefly alluded to Humbaba head use as emblematic of display of the defeated enemy so as to instrumentalize its power. That the use of this monster representation is somehow appropriative is perhaps also suggested by Steymans’s (2010: 40) comparative formulation, “So wie Šamaš dem Gilgameš und dem Enkidu mit Rat und vor allem Tat bei ihrem Kampf gegen das übermenschlich Bedrohliche beistand, würde die Maske von der im Schrein von Tell Rimah verehrten Gottheit dieselbe Schutzfunktion für das Individuum herbeiwünschen, das sich heldenhaft seinem Schicksal stellt.” As will be seen from the formulations above, I agree with Graff (2012b: 138) that severed heads generally demonstrate “the power of the beheading conquerors” but not with her claim that “[t]he frontal orientation and grimacing faces of the Humbaba plaques, in contrast, signal that they were intended to function in a very different way.” The orientation and/or features of Humbaba’s grotesque visage might indeed only heighten the sorts of function of which Graff persuasively speaks with reference to other severed heads.

employment. The collective narrative regarding the giant and similar figures thus encapsulates their original status as antipathetic to god, king, and order, but their forms and powers are then harnessed towards the ends of their conquerors. They become thereby not just one additional trophy or appurtenance, but even a focalization of power.

The display of barbarian heads and other anatomical features continued to constitute a means by which individuals who perceived themselves members of a dominant society demonstrated their hegemony. As time went on, this dominance sometimes took on the guise of scientific rationalism containing and ordering “marvels” of the wild world. Among zoological, anatomical, and other wonders displayed in the 1870s by one Louis J. Jordan at the “Pacific Musuem of Anatomy and Natural Science,” resident at Eureka Theater in San Francisco were multiple heads, not only of giants and gorillas, but also of Mexican adversaries to the nascent American presence in California and the broader Southwest United States.⁶⁷⁶ No. 579 in Jordan’s catalogue was the

Head of a Mexican, who was a notorious malefactor. The fearful atrocities he committed during life are still a fruitful theme of horror in the neighborhood of their occurrence. The head was presented to Dr. Jordan when in Paris, by Mr. Abel Vauthier, who had returned from Caen, bringing with him a number of curious and interesting objects. (Jordan 1874: 45)

⁶⁷⁶ Berglund (2007: 80–94) discusses this “museum” and its historical context, with particular attention to Jordan’s genital displays and the ideologies of sexuality assumed by the displays and in the catalogue Jordan 1874. Sears (2015: 102–3) discusses dime museums and their gender-transgressive displays, including—interestingly for present purposes—the wax statue of Jefferson Davis displayed clothed in feminine garb by Barnum’s American Museum. Barnum’s and other late nineteenth and early twentieth century American anatomical museums and “freak shows” are discussed in greatest detail by Chemers 2008, Dennett 1997, and Bogdan 1988.

Towards the end of the catalogue are mentioned two similar items: “991—Head of Francisco Lazarini, one of the Haydee murderers. 992—Head of Carlos Magne, one of the Haydee murderers” (Jordan 1874: 59). As Sears (2015: 103) writes, the displays of Jordan and others like him “graphically dramatized a narrative of Anglo dominance and Mexican defeat against the backdrop of the Mexican-American War.” The victor appropriates the very body of his defeated foe and, by displaying it, re-contextualizes it as a witness to the everlasting supremacy of the displayer. The cultural circumstances and particular nuances of these exhibits certainly changed over time, but the basic outline is remarkably persistent.

As demonstrated throughout Chapter 4, the practice of depicting defeated cosmic enemies in the temples and palaces of divine and human ruling powers is best and most certainly attested within the bounds of the first-millennium B.C.E. Near East, in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires. But beginning in the heyday of Pan-Babylonianism, scholars identified biblical descriptions of two “Israelite” installations as invoking the same combat-myth associations involved in the Mesopotamian exempla surveyed in Chapter 4: (1.) the bronze snake Nehushtan, described as fashioned by Moses (Num 21:4b–9a) and destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4), and (2.) the “molten sea” described as installed by Solomon in the Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:1–6). I have discussed how numerous scholars held these items to represent—in their historical actuality and/or as literary devices—defeated enemies of Yahweh, respectively the ophidian dragon and the threatening sea. In breaking down this claim, I have focused on particulars of the descriptions of both installations in the Hebrew Bible itself that suggest closer iconographic parallels and therefore different conceptual associations for each fixture. None of these

observations ruled out the possibility that some individuals would have associated these fixtures—again, in any possible historically actual or literary representations—with the combat myth. But I hope to have demonstrated here that each fixture likely had quite different sets of associations that can be founded on more secure evidentiary grounds and that were plausibly both primary and dominant.

This is not to suggest, however, that no text in the Hebrew Bible evidences awareness of the practice of displaying defeated antagonists. In the final section of this chapter, I discussed the brief and seemingly anachronistic notice in 1 Samuel 17:54 that David, after defeating the monstrous Goliath, brought the giant’s head to Jerusalem. This notice was plausibly written by or transmitted from individuals with aware of the broader usage of enemy-body representations as displayed combat trophies of victorious royals. In the context of its particular strand in 1 Sam 16–18, this notice therefore foregrounds David’s martial prowess as proceeding from his (prospective) kingship. The ways in which this kingship and power was communicated by reference to the giant’s monstrous head in particular were examined with relationship to the narrative itself and by comparison with the narrative of Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s battle with Humbaba and its iconographic representations. These explorations clarify one compositional motivation behind the David and Goliath narrative and demonstrate that there do exist likely Judahite instantiations of monumentalized-defeated-enemy discourse such as is better attested elsewhere in the Near East.

It would be simplistic and misleading to deduce from Chapters 4 and 5 that there existed a basic difference between Mesopotamia and the Levant in the employment of monumental art to depict defeated cosmic antagonists. Furthermore, one certainly cannot extrapolate unitary theologies or ideologies from the cases studied. This is true for at least two reasons. First, neither “Mesopotamia” nor “the Levant” are themselves uniform or neatly-bounded entites, and even the

narrow bounds of the present topic are not here explored exhaustively with regard to either region. For facility of engagement, a chronological frame of the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. was generally adopted, with occasional forays into Late Bronze and early Iron Age topics. The diachronic dimension of this study could in theory be drastically expanded, with implications for any naïvely atemporal characterization of Mesopotamian empires having done things one way and Levantine states another. Second, the nature of the data that survive from these two regions is very different. This is often less a function of what certainly did or did not exist in the past and more the result of subsequent patterns of occupation, the character of archaeological excavations, and modalities of textual preservation. To take just one example, the situation in the southern Levant has had to be approached primarily through the lens of the Hebrew Bible, the theological biases of which perhaps impose at many turns an aniconic or demythologizing picture that inaccurately reflects how various phenomena were understood from other perspectives.

Therefore, this and the previous chapter have illuminated some significations of certain monumental representations and focuses on their ability to serve as mnemonic of the combat myth for various segments of ancient Near Eastern populations. It claims neither that this ability was a sole or dominant function nor that our data allow the unambiguous reconstruction of the posited intentions and receptions. As has already been claimed throughout the present work, though, studies of the combat myth in both Mesopotamia and the Levant have generally focused far too narrowly on textual and especially literary materials to the exclusion of other lines of inquiry. The mythic monuments imagined in these texts reveal to a much greater extent than previously the ways in which those ideologies encapsulated by narratives of divine combat might have been engaged by larger viewing audiences.

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ADDITIONAL FIGURES
to Chapter 3



(1a.1) Ass.10170 = VA Ass.1617
green frit cylinder seal, 2.3 x 1.0 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 689)



(1a.2) Ass.12152 = VA Ass.1812
white frit cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.2 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 693)



(1a.3) Ass.12543c = VA Ass.6020
composite cylinder seal, 2.3 x 0.8 cm
photograph from
Klengel-Brandt 2014: pl. 10 (no. 37)



(1a.4) Ass.18187 = VA 3998
yellow frit cylinder seal, 2.2 x 1.2 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 690)



(1a.5) Ass.18898 = VA 7951
yellow frit cylinder seal, 2.5 x 1.0 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 691)



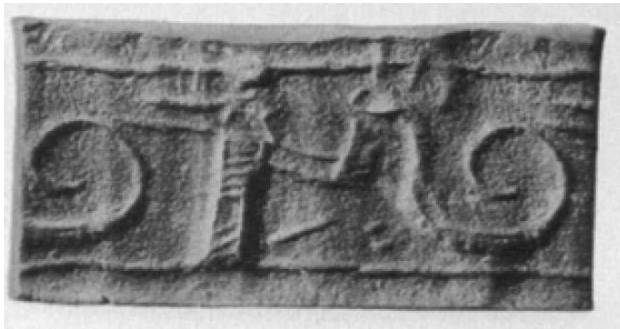
(1a.6) Ass.19467 = VA Ass.2302
frit cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 692)



(1a.7) Ass.21180 = VA 7961
composite cylinder seal, 1.5 x 1.2 cm
photograph from
Klengel-Brandt 2014: pl. 10 (no. 38)



(1a.8) DS1.B = IM 18415
faience cylinder seal
photograph from
Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 57 (no. 83)



(1a.9) DS82.C
cylinder seal
photograph from
Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 57 (no. 86)



(1a.10) ND.1007 = BM WA 140386
faience cylinder seal, 2.1 x 0.9 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 4 (no. 42)



(1a.11) ND.1009
faience cylinder seal, 2.5 x ? cm
photograph from Parker 1955: pl. 15.3

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

(1a.12) ND.3303
cylinder seal



(1a.13) ND.6023

limestone cylinder seal, 2.2 x ? cm
 photograph from Parker 1962: pl. 16.5



(1a.14) ND.6029

limestone cylinder seal, 1.7 x ? cm
 photograph from Parker 1962: pl. 16.4



(1a.15) ND ? = BM WA 141752

faience cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.0 cm
 photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 4 (no. 43)



(1a.16) Nineveh, BM 1883,0118.406

impression on clay tablet
 drawing from Herbordt 1992: pl. 5.12
 (no. Ninive 24)



(1a.17) Nineveh, BM 1904,1009.21

impression on clay tablet
 drawing from Herbordt 1992: pl. 5.9
 (no. Ninive 99)



(1a.18) Nippur, CBS 14359

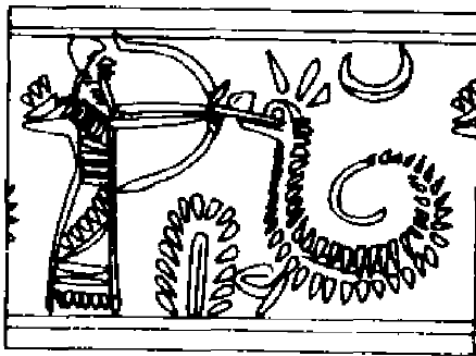
glazed ceramic cylinder seal, 1.7 x 0.7 cm
 photograph from Legrain 1925: pl. 33 (no. 646)



(1a.19) Nippur, CBS 14359
glazed ceramic cylinder seal, 1.7 x 0.7 cm
photograph from Legrain 1925: pl. 33 (no. 644)



(1a.20) U. 16124
frit cylinder seal, 2.8 x 0.8 cm
photograph from Legrain 1951: pl. 36 (no. 613)



(1a.21) HAS 64-1084 = UM 65-31-402
composite cylinder seal, 2.4 x 2.0 cm
drawing from Marcus 1994: 116–17 (no. 60)



(1a.22) Nush-i Jan NU 77/20
impression on clay jar sealing
photo from Curtis 1984: pl. 11 (no. 236)



(1a.23) Teishebaini
cylinder seal
(very poor) photograph from
Piotrovsky 1969: pl. 43



(1a.24) MMA 56.81.27
faience cylinder seal, 2.5 x ? cm
photograph © MMA online catalogue



(1a.25) TAD 845
cylinder seal
drawing from Tefnin 1980: 52 fig. 22.2



(1a.26) TA 72.232 = M 2347
glazed cylinder seal, 1.8 x 0.7 cm
photograph from Soldi 2009: 117 fig. 14a



(1a.27) TA 97.G.450
frit cylinder seal
drawing from Mazzoni 2008: 161 fig. 2a



(1a.28) Tell Ḥalaf, BM WA 138129
composite cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.1 cm
photograph © BM online catalogue



(1a.29) Tell Ḥalaf, VA 12846
yellow frit cylinder seal, 2.2 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 82 (no. 695)



(1a.30) Tell Ḥalaf
frit cylinder seal, 2.4 x 0.7 cm
photograph from Hrouda 1962: pl. 25 (no. 25)



(1a.31) TK 21.2
 composite cylinder seal, 2.2 x 0.8 cm
 photograph from Klengel-Brandt et al. 200:
 pl. 192 (no. 1067)



(1a.32) SH 86/8977/0051
 composite cylinder seal, 2.0 x 1.1 cm
 drawing from Fügert 2015: II.431 (no. 100)



(1a.33) SH 86/9177/0035
 composite cylinder seal, 2.2 x 1.1 cm
 drawing from Fügert 2015: II.431 (no. 101)



(1a.34) SH 86/9179/0032
 composite cylinder seal, 2.7 x 1.2 cm
 drawing from Fügert 2015: II.431 (no. 102)



(1a.35) SH 98/6949/0310
 impression on clay tablet
 drawing from Fügert 2015: II.431 (no. 103)



(1a.36) Gezer, Istanbul 91.10
 composite cylinder seal, 2.9 x 1.2 cm
 drawing from Reich and Brandl 1985:
 46 fig. 1



(1a.37) BLMJ 445a
 quartz cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.1 cm
 photograph from Westenholz et al. 2004:
 190 (no. 158)



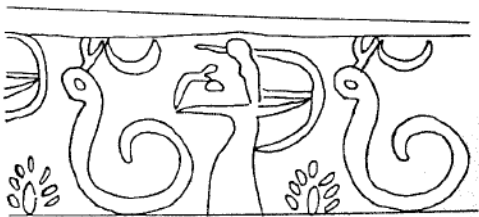
(1a.38) BLMJ 445b
 green stone cylinder seal, 1.8 x 1.1 cm
 photograph from Westenholz et al. 2004:
 190 (no. 159)



(1a.39) M 976
 faience cylinder seal, 3.2 x 1.0 cm
 photograph from Hammade 1987: 117 (no. 226)



(1a.40) Vienna Münzkabinett
 green-brown frit cylinder seal, 2.0 x 1.5 cm
 photograph from Bleibtreu 1981: 82 (no. 100)



(1a.41) O.3687
 impression on clay tablet
 drawing from Herbordt 1992: 254
 (no. Sonstige 4)



(1a.42) VR 1984.2
 composite cylinder seal, 2.5 x 1.5 cm
 photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
 440 (no. 173)



(1a.43) VR 1992.6
composite cylinder seal, 2.8 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
441 (no. 174)



(1a.44) VR 1995.29
composite cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
441 (no. 175)



(1a.45) VR 1996.4
composite cylinder seal, 2.6 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
441 (no. 177)

NO IMAGES AVAILABLE

(1a.46–49) seals from the
Lambert Collection,
now in the British Museum



(1b.1) Adilcevaz, Ankara 148..59,74
frit cylinder seal, 2.1 x 0.8 cm
photograph from Işık 1977: 92



(1b.2) Al Mina, AN 1937.776
composite cylinder seal, 2.4 x 0.9 cm
photograph from Buchanan 1966:
pl. 41 (no. 624)



(1b.3) ND.2153 = BM WA 140388
faience cylinder seal, 2.3 x 0.8 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 4 (no. 44)



(1b.4) Rhodes,
BM GR 1861,0425.5
faience cylinder seal, 2.0 x 0.8 cm
photo © BM online catalogue



(1b.5) Tharros, BM WA 133612
steatite cylinder seal, 1.7 x 0.6 cm
photograph from Barnett and Mendleson 1987:
pl. 51 no. 30



(1b.6) AN 1914.575
composite cylinder seal, 2.5 x 1.0 cm
photograph from Buchanan 1966:
pl. 41 (no. 625)



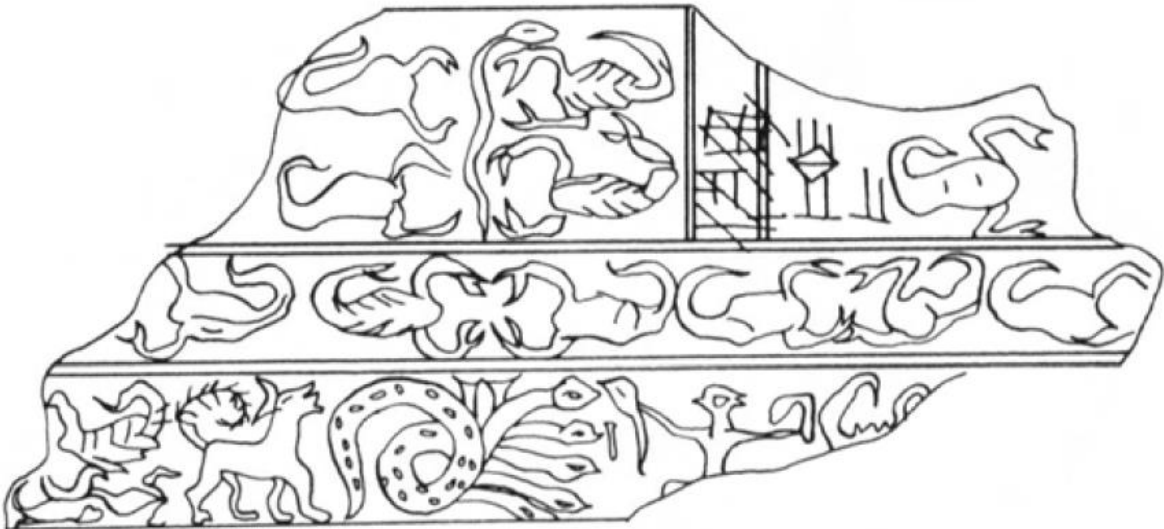
(1b.7) VR 1981.99
composite cylinder seal, 3.0 x 1.2 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
441 (no. 176)



(1b.8) VR 1995.30
composite cylinder seal, 2.1 x 0.7 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004:
441 (no. 178)



(1c.1) AS 32:738 = IM 15618
gray stone cylinder seal, 3.2 x 2.2 cm
photograph from Frankfort 1955: pl. 45 (no. 478)



(1c.2) AS 32:992 = OI A 34753
seal impression on clay, 4.5 x 9.0 cm
drawing from Frankfort 1955: pl. 47 (no. 497)



(1c.3) Copenhagen National Museum 5413
alabaster mace head, 10.0 x 13.5 cm
drawing from Frankfort 1935: 108 fig. 4



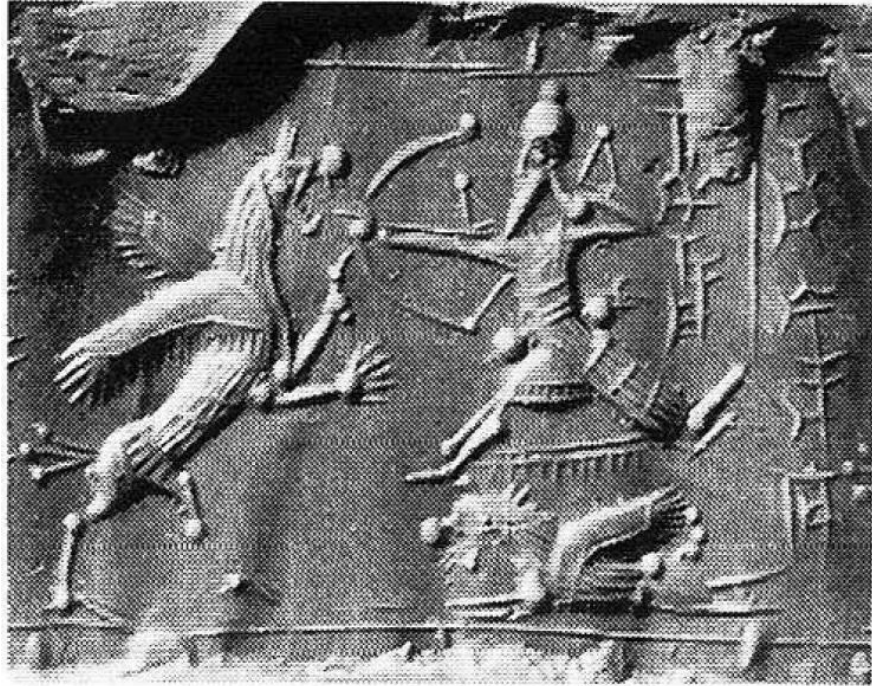
(1c.4) BLMJ 2051
shell plaque, 3.9 x 6.4 cm
photograph © Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem



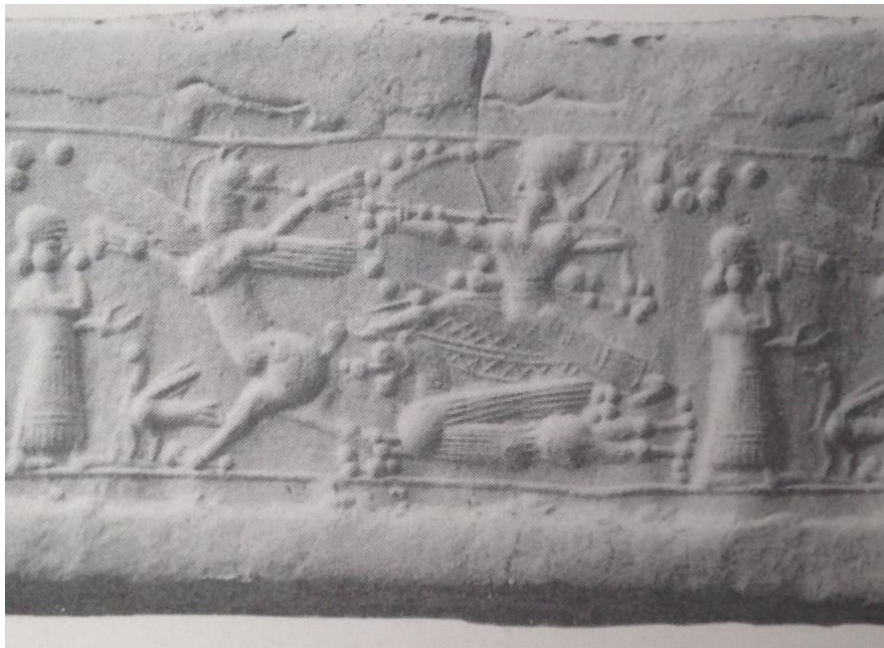
(2a.1) Ass.9451 = VA 5180
chalcedony cylinder seal, 4.2 x 1.7 cm
photograph from Porada 1993: 580 fig. 45



(2a.2) Ass.10281 = VA Ass.1695
soapstone cylinder seal, 3.0 x 1.3 cm
drawing from Klengel-Brandt 2014: pl. 5 (no. 17)



(2a.3) Aššur, now Istanbul
quartz cylinder seal, 4.1 x ? cm
photograph from K. Watanabe 1993: 136 pl. 6 (no. 8.3)



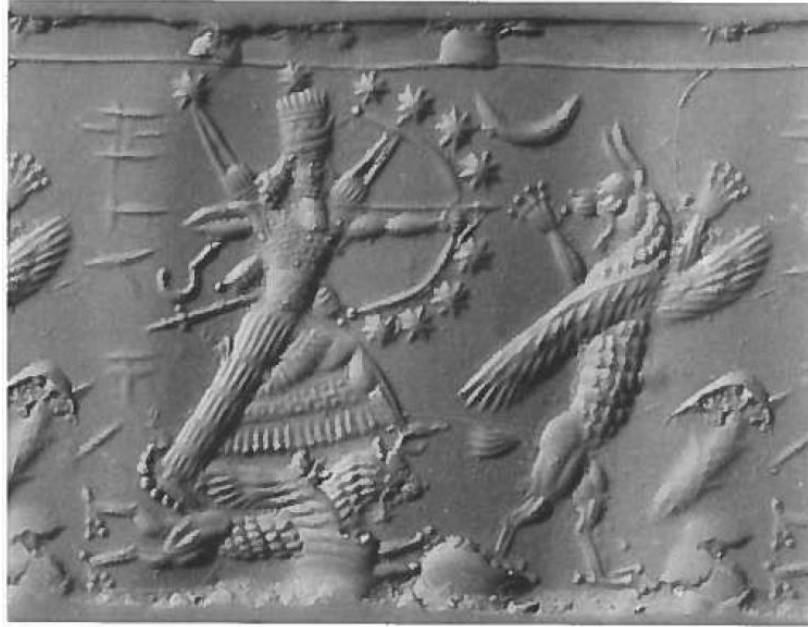
(2a.4) BLMJ 2611 (formerly BLMJ 487a)
chalcedony cylinder seal
photograph from Collon 1995: 37 fig. 28



(2a.5) BM WA 89533
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.0 x 1.9 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 24 (no. 288)



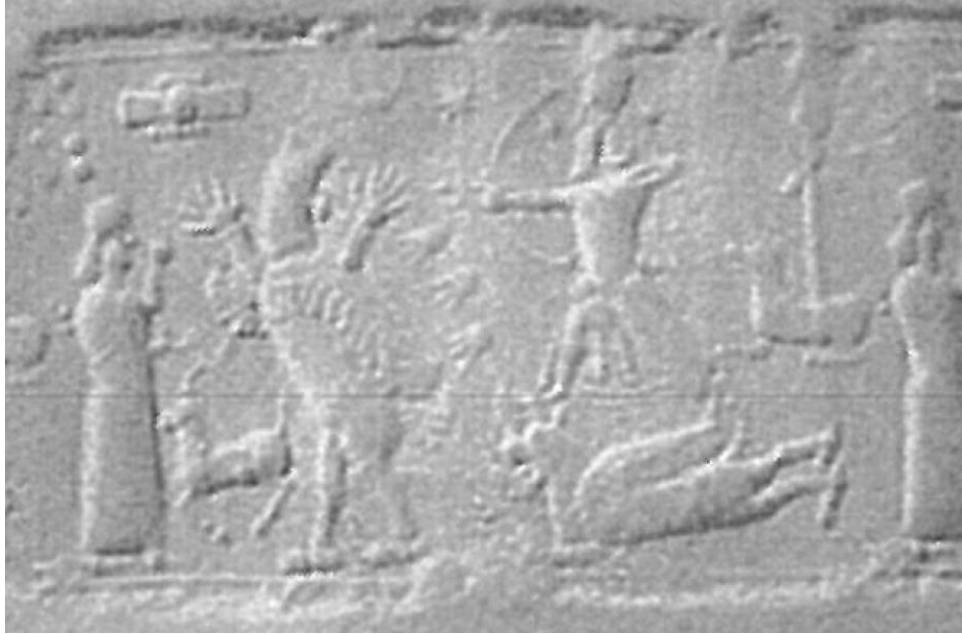
(2a.6) BM WA 119426
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.5 x 1.5 cm
photograph © BM online catalogue



(2a.7) BM WA 129560
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.0 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 35 (no. 292)



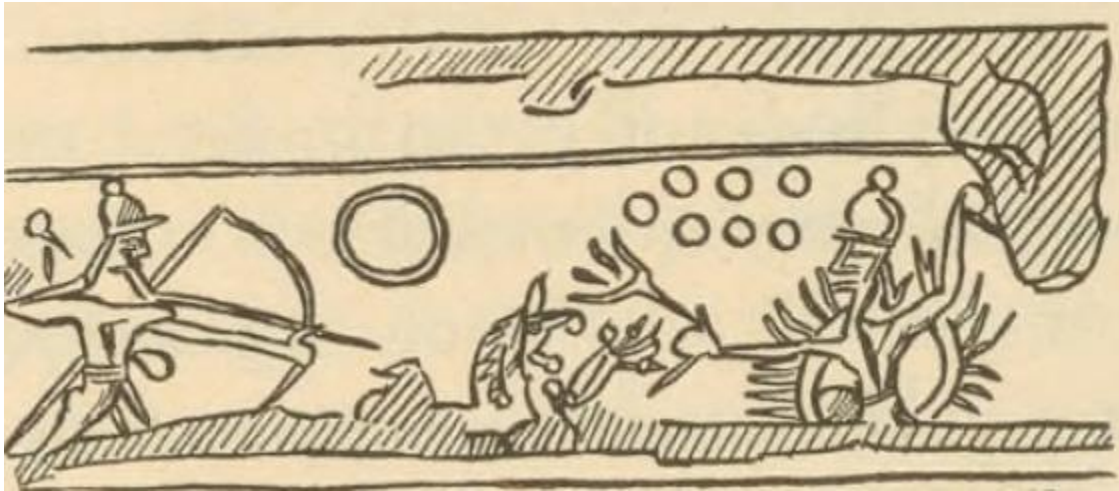
(2a.8) BM WA 135752
chalcedony cylinder seal, 4.1 x 1.6 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 24 (no. 291)



(2a.9) Former Ishiguro Collection
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.7 x 1.2 cm
photograph from K. Watanabe 1999: fig. 12 (no. 1.1.4)



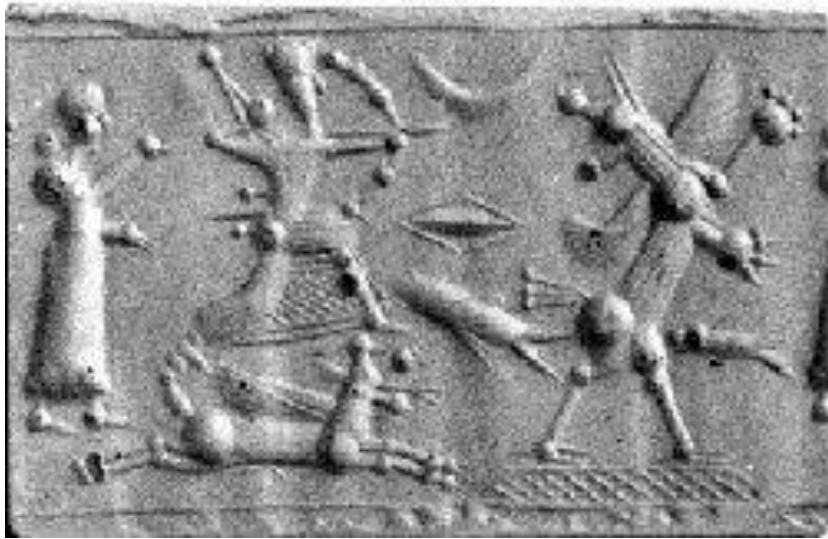
(2a.10) Musée Guimet no. 100
cylinder seal, 2.8 x 1.3 cm
image from Delaporte 1909: pl. 7



(2a.11) Former DeClercq collection 331
carnelian cylinder seal, 1.7 x 1.5 cm.
drawing from Ward 1910: 199 (no. 569)



(2a.12) MMA 1999.325.69
quartz cylinder seal, 2.0 x 1.7 cm.
photograph © MMA online catalogue



(2a.13) MMA 1999.325.72
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.3 x 1.5 cm.
photograph © MMA online catalogue



(2a.14) Morgan Seal 690
chalcedony cylinder seal, 2.0 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Porada 1948: pl. 102



(2a.15) Morgan Seal 689
steatite cylinder seal, 3.7 x 1.5 cm
photograph © Morgan Library online catalogue



(2a.16) CBS L-29-494A
chalcedony cylinder seal
photograph © Penn Museum online catalogue



(2a.17) Former Foroughi Collection
chalcidony cylinder seal, 3.5 x 1.7 cm
photograph from Collon 2009: 115 fig. 7.28



(2a.18) Former R. S. Williams Collection
chalcidony cylinder seal, 3.4 x 1.5 cm
photograph from K. Watanabe 1993: 136 pl. 6 (no. 8.7)



(2a.19) uncertain Lajard seal
drawing from Ward 1910: 199 (no. 568)



(2a.20) uncertain Jeremias seal
photograph from Jeremias 1913: 274 fig. 173



(2b.1) VA 3885
chalcedony cylinder seal, 4.0 x 1.8 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 74 (no. 615)



(2b.2) VA 7544
chalcedony cylinder seal, 4.6 x 1.6 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 74 (no. 616)



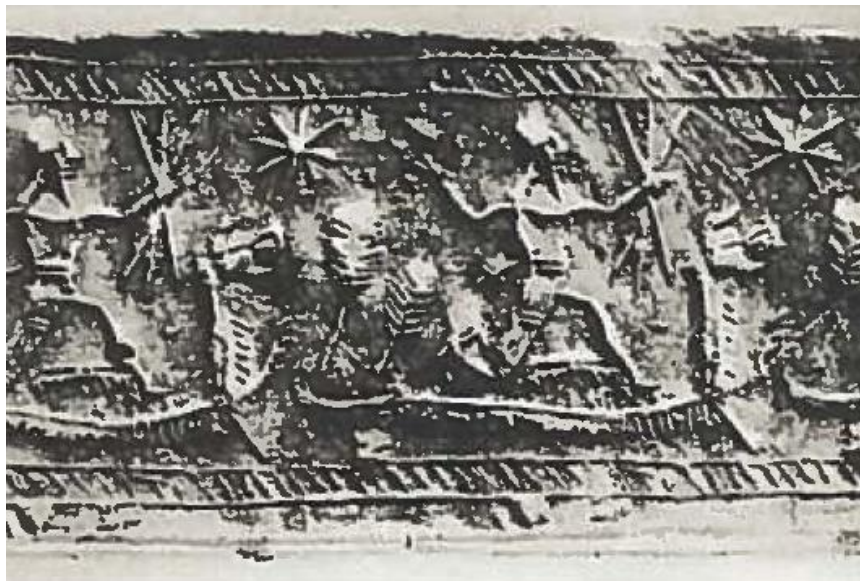
(3a.1) Ass.7084 = VA 5188
limestone cylinder seal, 2.8 x 1.3 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 80 (no. 680)



(3a.2) Ass.9384 = VA 7828
soapstone cylinder seal, 2.3 x 1.5 cm
photograph from Moortgat 1940: pl. 80 (no. 681)



(3a.3) Carchemish, BM WA 116142
serpentine cylinder seal, 1.8 x 1.4 cm
photograph from Collon 2001 pl. 24 (no. 286)



(3a.4) former Tell Halaf Museum
cylinder seal, 3.7 x ? cm
photograph from Hrouda 1962: pl. 23 (no. 10)



(3a.5) Adana Museum 890
steatite cylinder seal
photograph from Tünca 1979: pl. 8



(3a.6) former Bailey Collection
steatite cylinder seal
photograph from Glock and Bull 1987: no. 98



(3a.7) VR 1981.126
chalcedony cylinder seal, 2.2 x 1.7 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 437 (no. 153)



(3a.8) VR 1993.6 (former Marcopoli Collection)
chalcedony cylinder seal, 3.2 x 1.5 cm
photograph from Keel-Leu et al. 2004: 441 (no. 179)



(3a.9) BM WA 89589
serpentine cylinder seal, 3.4 x 1.8 cm
photograph © BM online catalogue



(3a.10) BM WA 103018
serpentine cylinder seal, 2.4 x 1.4 cm
photograph from Collon 2001: pl. 24 (no. 287)



(3a.11) Morgan Seal 688, former “Williams Cylinder”
serpentine cylinder seal, 1.7 x 1.1 cm
photograph from Ward 1890: pl. 18 (no. 2)



(3b.1) TR.4423
serpentine(?) cylinder seal, 1.8 x 0.8 cm
photograph from Parker 1975: pl. 16 (no. 55)