

THE CANAANITE BACKGROUND OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

E.C.B. MacLaurin

Many scholars have examined the close resemblances between the thought and cultus of Ugarit and that of the OT. I would especially mention J.H. Patton: *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1944), Loren Fisher (ed.): *Ras Shamra Parallels*, 2 vols., P.I.B., Roma, 1975, Rene Dussaud: *Les origines cananéennes du sacrifice israelite*, Paris, 1921, and my own *The Origins of the Hebrew Sacrificial System*, Sydney, 1947. It seems that Hebrew religion should perhaps be regarded as Canaanite religion reformed through the influence of the revelation given at Sinai; however, the monotheistic reformers were unable to eliminate completely the non-Yahwistic elements in the religion of the Canaanites who still formed the bulk of the population of the land. Consequently it is not surprising to find Canaanite culture, especially thought-forms, widely distributed throughout the OT.

The NT has not yet been subjected to this type of study but it is reasonable to expect that some strands of the ancient folk-religion which were not incorporated into Judaism should have survived in popular religion, especially in such areas as Galilee, and to have come to the surface again in Christianity. In the following remarks the abbreviations RSP will denote Fisher: *Ras Shamra Parallels*, and CML will denote G.R. Driver: *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1956) whose translations I quote, with certain alterations where I think they can be improved.

The Virgin Birth of Jesus

The best discussion of the Virgin Birth is still, in my opinion, that of J. Gresham Machen: *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, Clark, London, reprinted 1958, but as the last edition of this book was brought out in 1932 it contains no references to Ugaritic myth. It is necessary to realize that the gospel story records the surge into historicity of a hope expressed in the form of myth for at least a millenium and a half, so we are not unreasonable in seeking its original relevance in more ancient material.

The Ugaritic epics contain a very large number of references to the btl't Anat. Btl't is the Ugaritic equivalent of BH btl'h *virgin*, usually (but not always, of Joel 1:8 where it is applied to a young widow) in the sense of *virgo intacta*, the plural abstract form btl'm meaning *tokens of virginity* as in Deut. 22:15,17 etc.¹ However, btl'h does not appear to be the Hebrew word in the background of the evangelists' thinking, for the key

NT text, Mtt. 1:23, quotes Is. 7:14 where *btlh* is not used. The Isaianic word is *ḡlmh*, which means *a young nubile woman* who is not necessarily *virgo intacta*. A passage in the epic *Nikkal and the Kathirat* (Driver, op.cit., p.124-5, which RSP I p.46, no. 36 refers to as 77:7) should be read in parallel with Is. 7:14:

NK 1:7 hl ḡlmt tld b(n lmt)
 behold a lass shall bear a son to a man

Is. 7:14 hnh hḡlmh hrh wyldh bn
 behold the lass shall conceive and bear a son.

Cyrus Herzl Gordon, quoted by RSP, claims that the *ḡlmt* is called a *btlh* in line 5, but line 5 is so defective that one cannot read it with any confidence. The definitive edition (André Herdner: *Corpus des Tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques*, Librairie Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1963) reads *bt. (-)* which Driver restores as *bn l(n)h*, so I cannot accept Gordon's suggestion as quoted by RSP "the *ḡlmt* of l. 7 is called *btlh* in l. 5 so the LXX and NT interpretation of Is. 7:14 has even pre-Mosaic antecedents". The NK text appears to describe the marriage of the Moon Prince Yarikh to Nikkal-Eb daughter of King Summer. There is perhaps some sort of literary and mythological connection between the Canaanite and Hebrew uses of the line quoted; it probably represents adoption by Isaiah of some traditional prayer or hymn used at a marriage ceremony, *ḡlmt* bearing its usual meaning *young nubile woman*.

The LXX translators were responsible for Christian difficulties in this matter, for Matthew relied upon their translation of *ḡlmh* by *parthenos*. *Parthenos* itself does not always mean *virgo intacta* in ordinary use, but takes that meaning when used as a divine epithet in Greek religion. Thus the goddess Athena at Athens was so described, and the designation was applied to the Vestal Virgins.² Their purity and chastity was held to be beyond reproach so *parthenos*, whilst used by the LXX to translate *ḡlmh*, really has the nuances of meaning usually associated with *btlh*.³ The orthodox Christian position seems, then, to have arisen from the cultic meaning of *parthenos*, which it perpetuated in the Creeds, but this argument does not imply that this tradition is to be rejected. The gospel-writers, like many rabbis, associated the statements of Is. 7:14 with those of Is. 9:6ff, and made the fulfillment of the OT texts, as they understood them, as part of the evidences of their Christology.

Turning back to the Ugaritic texts, we find that the title *btlh* is used exclusively (of R.E. Whitaker: *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1972) of the goddess Anat in much the way that Christians speak of the Virgin Mary.⁴ The term, with its implications of perpetual virginity, occurs also in Aramaic titles; in Arabic

it is an honorific title applied to the mother of Hasan and Hussein within Islam.⁵

We shall now consider certain Ugaritic passages and those OT and NT passages which are to some extent reminiscent of them. Ba'al VI ii tells of mlkm *angels, messengers* sent by El to Anat:

“at the feet of Anat

they bowed and spoke, they prostrated themselves, and they lifted up their voices and cried”. A message of Tr thy father, a word of Lutpan (*Hidden-of-Face?*) who begot thee.

“War on earth is opposition to me. Pour into the dust mandrakes,
Pour slmm (peace-offerings) to honour the earth,

Multiply love to honour the fields.

Restrain your club and your sling.

Unto me on your feet you shall hurry.”

There are no OT passages showing similar concepts, but the NT offers Mtt. 1:20-23; Lk. 1:26-38, where an angel from El/YHWH proclaims the coming birth of the Son of God from the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary.

The differences between these interviews are important — the messengers of El do homage to Anat, who is generally aggressive as befits a goddess of sexual love and war, but when the angel salutes Mary she is shy, reserved and obedient (Lk. 1:29-30, 38). El summons Anat to lay aside the insignia of her office and run to him whereas the NT angel, having delivered his message to Mary departs. There is however, a possible parallel in thought between the Ugaritic passage which proclaims El's opposition to war and his instructions for averting it and the angel's announcement in Mtt. 1:21 “thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins”; Lk. 1:31-3 “and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”. Both of these NT texts have the establishment of God's peace as the background of their thinking, and to this extent Is. 9:6 is relevant “the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called ‘The Prince of Peace’”. It is probably not presuming too much to trace, through all these literatures, a belief that El/YHWH's basic plan is peace, under the government of God's appointee.

The next passages to be considered are Ba'al IV ii 13ff; iii 1ff. In Ba'al IV ii 13ff. Ba'al greets his sister-wife, the btl Anat, who is about to bear him a son — himself reborn — with the following manner:

“And the Victorious Ba'al lifted up his eyes,

He lifted up his eyes and looked

And he gazed upon the btl Anat,

The most beautiful among the sisters of Ba'al.
 At her presence he fell-in-love and rose up,
 At her feet he bowed and did obedience (cf Jud. 5:27)
 And he lifted up his voice and cried
 "Thou dost live, O sister, and 'arm (*I shall exalt* — see below)
 The horn of thy serenity, O Virgin Anat
 The horn of thy serenity (cf Exod. 29:12) shall ba'al msh (*anoint*)"

Ba'al describes Anat in this passage as "the most gracious of the sisters of Ba'al", with which should be compared Lk. 1:28 "Hail, thou that art kecharitōmenē, the Lord is with thee". The Greek kecharitōmenē means *full of grace*, but translators often render it *highly exalted*, a translation possibly influenced by the name Mary, derived from the Hebrew root *rwm* *raise up, exalt*, the root also used in the Ba'al text to describe Anat as exalted. So the English version preserves faithfully a tradition of association between *full of grace* and *highly exalted* which apparently existed in Ugaritic over a millenium before. The OT tradition contain no comparable laudatory passages referring to the child's mother, except that implied in Is. 7:14. The reverence paid to Anat by Ba'al is logical when considered in the light of this tribute of respect, it will be shown later that there is an echo of this in the OT, but in the NT the greeting of the angel implies the same degree of reverence from a super-natural visitant.

Ba'al IV iii 1ff, in describing the status and function of Anat's son, Ba'al reborn, incorporates the names of various animals as titles of rank,⁶ a usage found in both the Testaments.

"and, lo, thou shalt bear a 'arht (*calf*, preferable to Driver's *heifer*)
 to Ba'al,
 An 'alp to Dagon's son, O btl't Anat,
 And a ypt (*cow*), O daughter of rulers (or peoples)
 And the Victor Ba'al shall be praised
 As our master; he shall be king for ever,
 He shall be installed as our king for ever and ever,"

Comparing these passages with Is. 7:14ff; 9:6ff; Mtt. 1:20ff; Lk. 1:28-38 certain resemblances in thought emerge; it must be remembered that Ba'al, in begetting his son, is preparing to encounter Mwt, *Death* in a contest in which he is certain to die, just as the birth of Jesus, the point at which the Incarnation became a visible historical fact, was his first step towards his death on the Cross. Both events implied life for the world; Is. 9:2 states "they that dwelt in the land of šlmwt (*shadow-of-death* is the usual English translation based on the LXX oi katoikountes en chora skiai thanatou; but most modern scholars derive šlmwt from a

Semitic root *šlm* *thick darkness*. However, the traditional translation of the time of Jesus is the relevant one for us) have seen a great light"; Ba'al IV i 8-11 says

"El Hadad will come among (?) the peoples
And Ba'al will return to the earth,
Moreover, the *mtm* (?*dead*, ?*men*) shall come to life
And the herbs will be saved by the hands of the warrior."

Ba'al, using the very ancient designations of social rank mentioned above, then describes to Anat the child that she will bear (Ba'al IV iii 1ff). The epithets 'arht, 'alp, ypt imply the rank of a great monarch. Ba'al says about his coming child:

"He shall be king for ever,
He will be installed as our king for ever and ever."

These sentiments are reminiscent of Is. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:32-3. He will thus be immortal whereas other divine sons at Ugarit — such as the sons of Aterat (Ba'al III v 4) — die and descend into the earth for this child is in a different category, he is really Ba'al himself reborn.

The fact that he is to be "installed as our king for ever and ever" would in Hebrew society imply the ceremony of *mšḥ* *anointing*,⁷ a ritual which in Jewish and Christian expectation fathered the title Messiah. Rephaim III i 14ff puts the following words (my translation) into the mouth of El as he appoints Ba'al to his work:

"Hear, O souls of the dead. Understand, unsubstantial Shades. On to the head of the Victorious Ba'al (*Master*)
Oil measured out shall be poured, and a vow
Shall he vow. Behold, the Victorious Master shall rule
At my command and shall grasp the throne of sovereignty,
The place where the seat of authority abides."

Two points should be noticed about this passage:

- i. Ba'al is anointed as king by pouring oil on his head (although the verb *mšḥ* is not used).
- ii. He takes a vow, just as the ancient Hebrew kings did at their anointing, a traditional ceremony observed in the cases of Jesus' ancestor David.

With this idea of anointing compare Ba'al IV ii 21 where the root *mšḥ* is actually used in the phrase "Ba'al will anoint the horn of thy prowess"; the anointing indicated that the recipient had received the authority of God, cf Lk. 1:35 which although, like the Ba'al passage above, does not mention the ritual of anointing, conveys the same idea. The significant point for each study is that these three key epithets *virgin*, *exalted* (*full-*

of-grace), *anointed* are all associated with a divine birth in Ugaritic OT and NT; it should be noticed that whereas epithets which are in Ugaritic applied to the mother are in the OT and NT applied to the child, but later Christianity, with the greater emphasis which it laid on the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, tended to revert to the older concept.

Is. 7:14 states that “An ʿImh (*nubile young woman*) shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel (*El-with-us*)”. It is most significant that the divine element in this theophoric name is El rather than YHWH or Yahu, especially as Isaiah’s own name was a Yahu-name and Isaiah himself was the foremost Yahwist prophet. It seems probable that he was drawing upon some very ancient El tradition — such as we find preserved at Ugarit — which was so deeply established that he could not alter it to suit his own more advanced theological concepts. His use of material which seems to bear some literary relationship to Ugaritic myth (eg Is. 27:1 and its close verbal counter-part in Baʿal I* i 1-3) in which he substituted the name YHWH for EL (or Baʿal) shows that on occasions he was prepared to make this change; I think that, as a general rule, he made this change when the name he was replacing was Baʿal, but he left El — with whom he, like the rest of the Hebrews, seems to have identified YHWH — unchanged. The Hebrew tradition *El-with-us* seems to have little or no parallel in the Ugaritic passages under consideration, although there may be a suggestion of a similar idea in Baʿal VI ii 17-8 where El is described as “Tr El thy parent”. Mtt. 1:23 quotes the passage direct from LXX Isaiah whereas Lk. 1:28 says bluntly “the Lord (ie, YHWH) is with thee”. The implied change from Isaianic El to YHWH is due to LXX (which represents Hebrew YHWH by ὁ Κύριος *the Lord*), and is evidence of the gradual erosion of El-worship as such at the hands of the Yahwists. Baʿal III iii 4-9 reads:

“In a dream of Lutpan (*the Hidden-of-Face One*) the God of Mercy
 In a waking vision of the Creator of Creation,
 The heavens rained oil,
 The wadis ran with honey,
 And I knew that the Victorious Master was alive,
 That the noble Master of the earth (still) existed.”

A similar association of milk and honey is found in Cant. 4:11; both passages recall the ancient Egyptian description of Canaan as “a land flowing with milk and honey”. The description fitted Canaan several centuries before the Entry, but pre-Mosaic Egyptian records complain about the deterioration which had set in; so passages such as Exod. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3; Jer. 11:5; 32:22; Ezek. 20:6,15 may perhaps reflect conditions such as existed at the time of the promise to Abraham but

were entirely dependent upon tradition at the time of Joshua. Is. 7:15 reads "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good; OT scholars usually take this passage to refer to the food available in a devastated land — quite misguidedly, for butter is not left behind by a destroying enemy — but it is much more likely that Isaiah is saying in effect "the land will become as it was before the Hebrews entered it". The NT is less explicit, contenting itself with a general prophecy of a good time to come (Lk. 1:32-3). Another point should be noticed; this Ugaritic passage refers to Ba'al's reappearance. Ba'al had been brought from the depths (the womb) of the earth by the goddess Anat. Both he and she had adopted symbolically the forms of bull and cow respectively (the symbols of supreme might) before his death, and he had served her and begotten a "calf". In the OT and NT the references are, in both cases, to divinely-given newly born boys.

The next passage of relevance to our enquiry is Ba'al III IV 1-2 which says:

"The furrows in the field are cracked with drought, O Shaphash,
Crushed with drought are the furrows in the fields of El."

Ba'al III ii 17-18 reads:

"Life was failing amongst men, the life of the multitudes of the earth."

These two passages illustrate the effect upon the earth of the absence of Ba'al, the bringer of life, and should be compared with IS. 7:19 which describes in metaphorical language the effect upon Canaan of the coming of the enemies of Israel (cf Hab. 1:6ff; Jer. 25, and many similar passages). The desolation mentioned by Isaiah takes place after the birth of the child who is then present in the land. In the NT the only possible references to desolation after the birth of Jesus are Herod's slaughter of the children, Jesus' contemporaries (Matt. 2:16), and his extortionate taxation (Lk. 2:1ff).

The epithet *betulah* is in the OT often applied to cities and countries, as the following table shows:

<i>Sidon</i>	<i>Babylon</i>	<i>Zion</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Judah</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Is. 32:12	47:1	62:5	Jer. 46:11		18:13;
					31:4, 21
		14:17 (my People)			Amos 5:2
		37:22-2	Kings 19:21		
		Lam. 2:13		1:15	

It will be seen that they refer to the Hebrews on at least seven occasions, to El-worshipping Sidon once, and to Egypt and Babylon once each. In view of what has been said above the word *btlh* here appears to have a

theological significance which can be understood by reference to Krt. III ii 25-8:

“She shall bear Yaṣṣib, a boy
 Who shall suck the milk of Aṭerat,
 Suck dry the breasts of the btl Anat,
 She who gives suck to the gods.”

As evidence of their divine origins the Egyptian pharaohs were represented as suckled by goddesses.⁸ This symbolism was current throughout most of the ANE, including Ugarit and Phoenicia as their iconography shows. Is. 66:11-13 pictures Jerusalem — as the Ugaritic epic pictures Anat — as a mother-goddess who give suck. The universalism of this passage of Isaiah should be noted, it may partly be based on the wide distribution of the concept with which we are dealing; the divine city where God’s kingdom is established will nourish — and hence confer a share of her uniqueness and privileges upon — all who care to come to her. The woman who blessed the breasts which Jesus had sucked (Lk. 11:27) may have spoken with this myth of a mother-goddess, the suckling-nurse of the gods whose functions are symbolic of the divinity of their recipient, in mind. She may thus have expressed in specifically female terms her testimony that Jesus was Son, of God.

The btl city is said in the following OT passages to be oppressed: Is. 23:12; 47:1; Jer. 14:17; Lam. 1:5; Amos 5:2. Some myth with a bearing on this concept probably lies behind the incomplete story in Ba’al V ii 1-35 where Anat shuts the gate of her bht *palace* and then starts fighting in the vale between the two cities against foes from the east and west just as Jerusalem did a Millenium later. Lines 25-8 read:

“She became excited and her heart was filled
 With laughter. Anat gave herself up
 To rejoicing when she plunged both her knees in the blood
 Of the guards, her skirts in the gore of the warriors.”

With this compare Jer. 18:13 which, referring to her apostasy from God’s ways, says “The Virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing”, and Is. 37:22 (= 2 Kings 19:21) “The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn, the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? Against whom hast thou exalted thy voice? Lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel.” This example was enacted in a commendable cause, as presumably was the warfare of Anat, but its importance for our current study lies in the evidence it gives that the btlh of Jerusalem was capable of violent or derisive action, characteristics not associated with the Blessed Virgin in Christian tradi-

tion. Similarly, in the Legend of Aqht Anat's character is shown to be unforgiving and murderous. Thus Aqht II vi 42-4 represents her as saying to Aqht who has offended her:

“Behold, I shall certainly meet you in the path (cf. Is. 59:8) of transgression (cf. Is. 58:1; 59:12),
I will find you in the path of pride (cf. Job 35:12; Ps. 59:13), I shall make you fall under

My feet, even mine, most pleasing and unfathomable of men.”
with the result that (Aqht III i 24-6)

“There went out, like the wind, his life, like a breath
His zest (for life), like a vapour from his nostrils.”

Anat was the West Semitic goddess of love and war as these passages indicate. Yet elsewhere she is represented as repeating as her own sentiment, the words attributed to El in what seems to be the earliest form of the myth: (see full quotation above)

“War is opposition to me on earth.”

On comparing this myth with the NT we find this strange paradox: Anat, goddess of war, demands peace, but Jesus, Prince of Peace, Son of the gentle Virgin, comes to bring, not peace but a sword, Mtt. 10:34.

The lamentation of Anat over Ba'al is given in Ba'al I i 2-10; III ii 6-9. Ba'al I i 2-10 reads:

“She set up a bloody pillar on a stone, two pillars in the forest
She gashed her two cheeks and her chin, thrice harrowed
The upper part of her arm, ploughed her chest
Like a garden, thrice harrowed her belly like a vale, etc.”⁹

Ba'al iii ii 6-9 reads:

“Like the heart of a young cow
For her calf, like the heart of an ewe
For her lamb, so is the heart of Anat yearning over Ba'al.”

This pattern of yearning for a dead husband may have influenced Joel 1:8 “Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth” where the word *btlh* *virgin*, since it applies to a widow, cannot mean *virgo intacta*, but may preserve a memory of Anat who also became a *btlt* mourning for the husband of her youth, the father of her child. In Christian tradition one thinks of the women mourning at the Empty Tomb, the body of Jesus, still in his youth, having disappeared with the promise of coming again.

Anat was also well-disposed towards earth-dwellers, for she says (Ba'al V iva 22) “I myself will provide the earth with good things to eat.” This perhaps reflects Anat in her capacity as goddess of love and fertility, the mate of fructifying Ba'al, and should be associated with her claim to seek

to establish peace (see above) and her reputation for gentleness (Ba'al V v 27-31) where El, in response to her blood-thirsty threats as to his fate if he does not give the goddess her own way,¹⁰ remarks:

“I know thee, daughter, that thou art gentle,
 And that there is no baseness in goddesses.
 What dost thou wish, O btl Anat?”
 And the Virgin Anat answered
 ‘Thy bidding, El, is wise, thy wisdom
 Everlasting; a life of good luck is thy bidding.’ ”

This conduct should be compared with the meek obedience of the Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:28-30,38) which has become traditional in the Christian Church. This concept of a female figure with divine associations seems to fill a need in the Canaanite/Hebrew/Christian tradition.¹¹ We cannot ignore the importance of the concept of the Blessed Virgin in the modern materialistic socialist world where the privileged position of women as the centre of the home is constantly under attack and subject to erosion in the interest of egalitarianism.

Notes

1. Tokens of virginity were important in ancient cultures as well as in some modern ones, e.g. that of the Danakil.
2. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott: *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 8th Ed., OUP, 1953, p. 1339b.
3. However, it must be added that A. Lukyn Williams: *The Hebrew-Christian Messiah*, SPCK, London, 1916, p. 21-2, points out that although *ḡlmh* etymologically refers only to sexual maturity, in actual use in the OT it is “the only word in Hebrew that is consistently employed to denote a virgin;” presumably the LXX translators had this tradition in mind when they translated it by *parthenos*.
4. It seems probable that this tradition arose from the use of *ḡlmh* by Isaiah, and did not exist in Ugaritic days when the true etymological meaning was the more probable. It is illustrative of Christian thinking about the Virgin Mary that the highly-useful word *potnia* was never applied to her in the NT. *Potnia Lady* has a long and honourable tradition as a divine epithet. As early as Mycenaean times it was used to describe Athene, herself a pre-Greek goddess with a non-Greek name; it is possible that *potnia* was one of her original epithets and that a non-Indo-European etymology should be sought for it, linking it with Semitic *btn womb* rather than with an I-E root *potei* or the like meaning *power*. Liddell and Scott (op. cit. p. 1455b) quote it as an adjective describing Hebe, Circe, Calypso, Hera, and others, and it continued to be used throughout classical times to describe goddesses and women. R.A. Sophocles: *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods from BC 146 to AD 1100* (F. Unger, NY, vol. 2, p. 913) points out

- that *potniaomai* means *pray, invoke, implore, lament*, and quotes Philon I 391; 28. 478; 20. 678; 34; Jos.: *Antiq.* 19.1.17; Plut. II 507c.
5. Although the obsessive monotheism of Sinaitic Yahwism has led to the mangling of the original form of some OT stories, it seems likely that the narratives of the conception of Isaac (Gen. 18:9-15; 21:1ff cf Exod. 2:25); Samson (Jud. 13:2ff); and Samuel (I Sam. 1:1-20) once included a statement of divine male parentage just as the Greek legends do in the case of heroes whose deeds appear to be beyond the attainment of ordinary humans. This is particularly the case in the story in Gen. 21:1 where YHWH *pqd visits Sarah* — the word *pqd* has many meanings including sexual intercourse. There is no question as to *virgo intacta* here, the whole story demands that the girl be indeed *ḡlmh sexually mature* (but see note 3). The “virginity” implied in these cases — where it is implied — is the condition of the bride before YHWH takes her; thus Ezek. 16:8; Hos. 2:19,20 tells us that God takes Israel as a “virgin” bride, and Philo II xii xiv states that God has intercourse only with virgin wombs and even then never for his own benefit but only to confer a favour on the husband. The Lady Aṭerat of Yam, the mother of the seventy sons who were transferred to Amorite El, together with their mother, when the Semites took over the land-bridge and dispossessed Yam (the head of the pre-Semitic pantheon) is described as “the mistress of the gods”. Her sons had apparently been begotten by Yam, yet she became assimilated to the *btlt Anat*. Her sons were then regarded as sons of El, and presumably after the assimilation of El and YHWH at Sinai became the sons of God referred to in Gen. 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7.
 6. The writer has collected considerable material on this subject and hopes to publish on it shortly.
 7. Here Ba’al reborn is to be an anointed one, i.e. a Messiah (cf. Is. 40:1ff) for evidence of another non-Hebrew Messiah. The Hebrew word became *Messias* in Greek.
 8. For example Seti I; cf J.B. Pritchard: *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, Princeton U.P., 1954, plate 422.
 9. Compare I Kings 18:28 where the priests of Ba’al and Aṭerat (by this time coalesced with Anat) cut themselves. But Anat (Ba’al I i 2-10) was not taking in an act specifically of worship; rather she was carrying out the mourning rite expressly forbidden in Lev. 19:28; 21:25.
 10. There is probably a conflict of tradition here, and it may be possible to apply to the Ba’al and other epics a “documentary hypothesis” comparable with the modified form now used in OT scholarship.
 11. The Jews of Elephantine worshipped Anat, and the Hebrews in Palestine constantly adored a goddess outside the limits of Sinaitic monotheism (Jer. 44; 17,25,etc.), culminating in the depersonalized figure of *Ḥokmah Wisdom*.