

DICTIONARY OF DEITIES AND DEMONS IN THE BIBLE DDD

Edited by

Karel van der Toorn
Bob Becking
Pieter W. van der Horst

SECOND
EXTENSIVELY REVISED
EDITION



BRILL
LEIDEN • BOSTON • KÖLN

WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN / CAMBRIDGE, U.K.

1999

SPICQ, *Notes de lexicographie néotestamentaire. Supplément* (OBO 22,3; Fribourg 1982) 636-641; L. VIDMANN, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae*, (RGVV 28; Berlin 1969); P. WENDLAND, *ΣΩTHP*, *ZNW* 5 (1904) 335-353.

J. DEN BOEFT

SEA □

I. As a geographical entity, the sea delimits both cultural and political areas. On the one hand, it provides connections: since the third millennium there has been shipping along the coast of the Persian Gulf (in the direction of Bahrein and India) and the Mediterranean region. The sea is a threatening power which annihilates life by drowning it. On the other hand, the sea is the inexhaustible reservoir of water, the source of life. These multiple and ambivalent relations are represented in the various symbolic systems. The relationship between the sea and other forms of water (→river, →source) is not consistent: not even within one and the same symbol system. There is never an absolute difference between these forms. Water is a particularly shapeless element. It is associated with the shapelessness of the →serpent, which participates in the ambivalence of both sea and water. The different cultural areas of the ancient Near East developed variations on similar themes which have mutually influenced each other. Just how these influences occurred historically is not easy to discern.

II. In Egypt, the designation for the sea, 'the great green' or 'the great black', is more geographical, while that for the primeval sea, *Nun*, is more mythological. *Nun* surrounds the world. The rising of the sun god from *Nun* is therefore an everyday cosmological event. Another elementary manifestation of *Nun* is the annual inundation of the →Nile. The appearance of the fertile →earth (symbolically shaped as the 'primeval hill') is also an elementary cosmological event. *Nun* is occasionally conceived as a pair: *Nun* and *Naunet*; but the gender of the figure does not matter at all.

The primeval water is associated with a serpent. A text from the Book of the Dead presents an image of the end of the universe which corresponds to its beginning: "Further, I shall destroy all I have made, and this land will return into *Nun*, into the floodwaters, as (in) its first state. I (alone) am a survivor together with →Osiris, when I have made my form in another state, serpents which men do not know and gods do not see" (*ANET* 9). In the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor, a benevolent serpent deity is lord of the sea; and the paradise-like island where the shipwrecked mariner is saved is a product of water and returns to water. Sometimes the dangerous mythical power of the sea is stressed. Already the instructions of King Merikare (*ANET* 417) say: "Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster" (*snk n mw*, lit. 'submerger of the water', marked by the determinative of a crocodile, an animal which, according to the iconography, belongs to the chaotic powers). Later, →Seth is the typical overwheeler of this enemy. One of Seth's roles consists in accompanying the sun god →Re in his daily fight against Apophis, a coiled serpent with destructive power. The sea, and the serpent correlated to it, have thus an ambivalent character. Since the time of the New Kingdom, there has been a distinct Canaanite influence, and Seth became identified with →Baal (the mythical opposition in the Asarte Papyrus—the sea on one side, Astarte and Seth-Baal on the other—is a Canaanite constellation).

An early Mesopotamian concept of the sea is found in the notion of *abzu*, the 'hidden', subterranean ocean (→Ends of the earth). Associated with the god Enki/Ea (→Aya), it appears as overflowing water fertilizing the dry land. The marshes in south Mesopotamia, abounding in fish, are another manifestation of *abzu*. Enki and his gifts are essential for life in general. Originally, the goddess Nammu might have been a female personification of the primeval water (the sign for her name is *ENGUR*, an expression

for water). The texts call Nammu "Mother who gave birth to heaven and earth", who "bore all the gods". According to the Sumerian tradition, Nammu is the mother of Enki and the creatrix of men. In the Akkadian literature, Nammu is no longer important.

Later on, in a Semitic milieu, the *abzu* concept is differentiated. The beginning of *Enūma eliš* tells us that the waters of →Tiamat (salt water) and Apsu (fresh water) were originally mixed. The separation of the two types of water is the first cosmogonical stage. Ea's (= Enki's) victory over Apsu initiates the development of life. However, the difference between the two types of water is not absolute. When Tiamat is subdued by →Marduk, the eyes of this being become the springs of the rivers →Euphrates and →Tigris. Ea and Tiamat are surrounded by →Lahmu, →dragons, serpents and different kinds of 'mixed beings' marking a state of 'primitive', undifferentiated being. These monsters are not only attested by textual evidence, there are also iconographical representations. The description of Gudea's temple shows that the conception of the primeval sea is essential for temple symbolism. There is an architectural representation of *abzu* and many monsters belonging to it. The temple, the link between →heaven and earth, has its roots in the primeval sea: and thus comprises the whole of the universe. The earth is not only based upon, but also surrounded by, the sea. This is confirmed, too, by a 'map' on which the earth, a circular shape, has a 'bitter stream' flowing around it. According to the Gilgamesh epic, the 'end' of the world is marked successively by the desert, a mountain range and the ocean of death's water. ('Paradise', the island of eternal life, lies paradoxically within this ocean.) The path of the sun-god starts in this area.

Cosmogonies make use of these concepts. A late text speaks of a time when "the Apsu had not been made, ... all the lands were sea" (HEIDEL 1951:62:8.10). The plot of *Enūma eliš*, the New Year myth of Babylon, has already been mentioned. Creation begins

with the separation of the waters: it is completed by cutting Tiamat into two parts and making a space within the flood. The earth is erected on the lower part of Tiamat. Similar combat tales were told in places other than Babylon, and with other protagonists (e.g., the fight of Inanna against Ebiḫ). Chaotic power is not necessarily related to the sea, but the structural parallel is quite clear. Other cosmogonies combine the theme of the primeval water with the other model of Mesopotamian cosmogony: i.e. the separation of heaven and earth. The combat pattern is well represented in Mesopotamian iconography: especially on seals (representations of the battle, see, e.g., KEEL 1972: 39-47) and on boundary stones (*kudurru*). The elements of cosmic order are based upon or framed by serpents (examples in ANEP 519-521).

Exorcisms sometimes entail this type of cosmogony: Evil is seen as a manifestation of Tiamat's chaotic power; whilst →demons connected with her are driven out by spells (one is supplied with a very instructive enumeration of *utukku*-demon types: *utukku*'s of the desert, of the mountains, and of the sea—all regions beyond the civilised world).

The power of the sea is not subdued forever; the idea that it might increase again is the theme of the flood story. There is a badly preserved Sumerian version. In the Akkadian Atrahasis epic, the function of the flood is clear: i.e. to end the overpopulation of primeval humankind and balance it with excessive destruction. Thereafter, a more reasonable balancing mechanism takes over. The best-known version of this story belongs to the Gilgamesh epic, within the context of Gilgamesh's search for eternal life.

As to biblical traditions, the (fragmentary) Eridu Genesis is especially interesting. Its themes include the creation and humanization of human beings, the antediluvial kings (with extremely long lives) and the flood. The antediluvial →apkallu's are the subject of another tradition. They came from the sea in order to teach humankind cultural achievements such as the cuneiform script.

In Anatolia, there is above all Hittite evidence for religious conceptions of the sea; but mythologies of various origins (especially Hurrian) also strongly influenced these conceptions. The Hittites knew a male sea deity with decidedly anthropomorphic characteristics. The sea god is able to travel on the earth and in the netherworld; and he shows emotions like anger and pain. He does not belong to the primeval gods; but his mother was a healing goddess. In the conflict between the ruling weather god and the displaced king of the gods, Kumarbi, he belongs to the partisans of the latter. In the Ullikummi myth, the role of the sea is very significant. This tale tells how Kumarbi tried to recover his dominion over the universe. He created a monster called Ullikummi and placed it in the realm of the sea on a shoulder of an Atlas-like deity. Ullikummi has the form of a rock and steadily grows upwards toward heaven. The gods were not able to prevent this growth. The symbolism of this scene is clear: the separation of heaven and earth, the starting point of the cosmogony, is threatened. The two themes 'sea' and 'unification of heaven and earth' are associated in one and the same myth. The solution offered by Ea (the Babylonian deity!) is quite simple: the saw which once separated heaven and earth is borrowed from the primeval dieties and Ullikummi is cut away. The action takes place near the mountain Hazzi—the →Zaphon of the Ugaritians (known also in Israel and there identified with →Zion). This region is well represented in the mythology of the Syro-Canaanite traditions.

As to the Syro-Phoenician area, economical and cultural exchange with Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor and the Aegaeis is reflected in mythological and cultic data. The area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea is essential, and so the cult of a sea god protecting the sailors is obvious. A deity comparable to the Greek god →Poseidon is attested to archaeologically in various places.

The Ugaritic texts give the clearest view of the mythological organization of powers associated with the sea. The 'father of the

gods', Il (→El), is situated "at the fountain-head of the two Rivers, in the middle of the bedding of the two Floods". This is a cosmological qualification; because Il's abode lies in a cosmic centre where the upper and lower waters come together. This centre is very remote; so the younger gods have to make a long journey in order to get to the high God. On the other hand, Il's residence is situated on a (cosmic) mountain. It seems that Shukamuna-wa-Shunama (→Shunama), probably an Atlas-like deity, is associated with Il (D. PARDEE, *Les textes para-mythologiques* [Paris 1988] 59-60). The two concepts cannot be harmonized—symbol systems do not strive after logical consistency. There are no mythical tales about Il's cosmological functions, but only short, formulaic descriptions.

In mythical contexts (*KTU* 1.1-6), the sea is represented by the anthropomorphically shaped Yam, the enemy of →Baal. Obviously Yam is not only the deity of the sea, but also of the rivers (he is often called *zbl ym tpt nhr*, 'prince Sea, ruler River'). In this context, the rivers are to be construed as destructive powers. Yam is closely connected with Il ('son of Il, beloved of Il'); but, whereas Il represents the cosmic aspect of the primeval water, Yam reflects its chaotic aspect (which parallels the situation in Anatolia where the sea god is correspondingly related to the old god Kumarbi). Various monsters occur together with Yam (and were possibly sometimes identified with him): Lotan (→Leviathan), a seven-headed serpent; Tunnan (→Tannin); Arishu and 'Atiqu. The conflict between Yam and Baal is complex. A crucial question is which of the two should be allowed to have a 'house'. This might reflect a historical conflation of the cults of two different gods (Baal seems to be a newcomer in Ugarit), with Yam representing the ousted deity. Furthermore, Yam represents the power of chaos which appears in the sea and the rivers. To what extent Yam represented a seasonal phenomenon is controversial. However, this is not a primary aim of the Baal-Yam constellation, in contrast to the

Baal-Mot constellation, which primarily represents the annual change of the wet and dry seasons. The destructive powers of Yam and →Mot are somehow connected. Both are called 'beloved of Il'. Baal's fight against Yam and Mot are also connected (cf. *KTU* 1.5—a very difficult text). Mot, though a representation of the summer heat, is located in subterranean mud which resembles the shapelessness of water.

Magical texts make use of the Baal-Yam constellation. In *KTU* 1.83, there is a spell which advises the destruction of Yam (depicted in the form of a →dragon with a fish tail) by binding him on the →Lebanon Mountains—obviously in order to dehydrate him. The difficult text *KTU* 1.82 contains a spell against Tunnan, serpents and associated beings. The threatening power of chaos appears thus in everyday experiences.

The Baal-Yam paradigm was popular in the Late Bronze Age not only in the Syrian and Anatolian area, but also in Egypt. In the Astarte Papyrus, the goddess Astarte and Seth (= Baal) fight against the sea-god. Baal Zaphon becomes the god of sailors and so succeeds previous deities of the sea. A famous sanctuary of Baal Zaphon is situated near the 'Bitter Lake' in Egypt.

III. The situation in Ancient Israel is in many respects comparable to that of Ugarit. Firstly, the sea is a cosmological element of the universe as a whole: along with other elements (a triadic concept consists of heaven, earth and sea [Ps 69:35; Exod 20:11]). This structure is also recognizable in formulas such as "animals of the field, birds of the heaven, fishes of the sea" (Ps 8:8-9)). The most detailed cosmogony (Gen 1, P) starts with the (uncreated) primeval sea (*tēhôm*, associated with the desert, *tōhū*). Then the heaven is created in order to delimit the upper part of the ocean. Finally, the earth comes into being, providing the possibility of further creations. This process resembles the cosmogony of *Enūma eliš* and, if one takes into consideration the further context of the primeval story, the Eridu Genesis. However, the elements of combat have disappeared completely: the sea has

become mere unstructured material to be brought into order. Other cosmogonical sketches of the beginning of the universe present less elaborated cosmogonies: The earth is founded upon the sea (Ps 24:2); it is determined by a limit (Jer 5:22; Job 38:1). Not only the earth in general, but in particular the sanctuary (of Jerusalem), is protected against the attack of the chaotic water (Ps 46:3).

In cultic literature, the cosmogony is clearly depicted as a fight between →Yahweh and the personified power of the sea. Yam (and *tēhôm*—contrary to Ugarit but analogous to Mesopotamia, this term plays a role in the context of cosmological combat) are again associated with other monsters: e.g. →Tannin, →Leviathan and a female being named →Rahab. While Ugaritic mythology seems to know only male powers of chaos, within the context of destructive powers Israel recognizes both sexes. The enemy is represented as a serpent or as a seven-headed dragon. It is difficult to know whether at an early time the cosmological battle was conveyed in a tale (a myth in a restricted sense of the word) or whether it was even enacted in a cultic drama. In the tradition as preserved, the battle concept is only a complex of mythological elements within the context of hymns, prayers, etc. The most detailed accounts of the fight can be found in Ps 74:13-14; Ps 89:10; Ps 18:16; Nah 1:4. Yahweh 'rebukes' the sea (possibly an anthropomorphic interpretation of the thunder emanating from the weather god); he smites the heads of the enemy; he delimits the realm of the sea or makes the water dry. Sometimes, the fighting god is depicted as one riding on a →Cherub or a chariot (Ps 18:11; 77:19). Very often, the battle against the sea consists of a mere allusion (Hab 3:8; Ps 46:3-4; Jer 31:35; Isa 51:15; Jer 5:22; Ps 29; the symbolism of Ezek 27:1-28:10 is characterized by the ambivalence of the sea theme). In theologically refined passages, the idea of the battle has nearly vanished (Ps 104:6-7; Job 38:8-10, and especially in the already mentioned cosmogony of P, Gen 1).

There is a strong association between the destructive power of the sea and other realms of destruction. The proximity of sea and desert has already been mentioned: the same can also be said about the sea and death (Ps 88:7). In Job 26:12-13, the fight against the serpent Rahab clears the heavens. The monster, normally located in the sea, seems to be associated with clouds: as is the case with the Egyptian serpent Apophis.

Temple symbolism (analogous to that of Mesopotamia) contains an iconic representation of the sea (the "brazen sea", 1 Kgs 7:23-26.44; 2 Chr 4:2-10; cf. KEEL 1972: 120-121), a round vessel with a diameter of about 4.5 m and a height of about 2.25 m. It was supported by twelve bulls (each of the four groups of three bulls corresponding to one of the four quarters of heaven), symbols of power and fertility. According to 2 Kgs 16:15-17, these bulls were, as a consequence of a cult reform, removed. The brazen serpent (→Nehushtan, originally an element of the temple in Jerusalem, 2 Kgs 18:4, then connected with the desert tradition, Num 21:9) belongs to the same symbolic context. Its prophylactic power against snakebites is congruent with the concept of sympathetic magic.

The cultic treatment of the power of chaos is present in a more private sphere as well. Black magic consists in "waking Leviathan" in order to cause evil on certain days (Job 3:8—the text must not be emended). On the other hand, there are apotropaic precautions taken against such activities of the evil powers (Job 7:12).

The Israelite versions of the flood story also found their place in the context of the cosmogony (Gen 6-8): The parallel between creation and destruction is obvious. The conclusion of both versions (J and P) emphasizes the uniqueness of the catastrophe (Gen 8:20-22; Gen 9:8-17) and the guarantee of an everlasting creation.

At a certain point in the tradition, the Exodus story was influenced by the motif of the battle against chaos (e.g., Ps 77:16-21; 66:5; 106:7-12; Exod 15:8-10). The remini-

scence of a military catastrophe of the Egyptian enemy caused by sea or water in general (whatever may have been the exact circumstances) gave rise to such an interpretation. Those waters were now understood to be a manifestation of the primeval water: Israel was able to cross the realm of destruction, whereas the Egyptians were annihilated. The 'cleaving' of the water, an element of some Exodus versions (Exod 14:6; 15:8, P and related material), reflects the 'splitting' of the hostile monster. 'Natural', 'historical' and 'mythical' qualities are inseparably conflated.

Not only the Exodus theme is interpreted in such a manner, but also the motif of the crossing of the Jordan. The Jordan water was cleaved and made to dry up: just like the water of the Sea of Reeds (cf. Josh 3-4; Ps 114). Fords, as places of danger, are often associated with cults. In this case, the memory of such a local cult is attached to the traditional complexes of Exodus, Conquest and cosmogony.

In a late stage of Israelite history, the battle against the sea was projected into the future. The final victory of God against his enemy then becomes a matter of hope: and the significance of 'chaos' and 'cosmos' is reinterpreted. Which means that the powers dominating history are offsprings of the sea; but their end is determined and realized when the eschatological rule of God arrives. This projective interpretation (a typical element of crisis cults) occurred first in the time of the exile (Deutero-Isaiah: Isa 51:9; 43:16-21). Apocalyptic conceptions develop these images (Dan 7:1-14). Leviathan will be eventually exterminated (Isa 27:1). The sea will dry up at the precise moment when heaven and earth are reconstructed (Rev 21:1). Such conceptions are elements of apocalyptic speculation. They are combined with other mythological themes without forming a coherent conceptual whole.

The dualistic vision of apocalyptic texts is sometimes directly contradicted. In Job 40-41, the hippopotamus (→Behemoth) and the crocodile are characterized as creatures of God. Thus they are not chaotic beings—

the creative power of God reaches even into the deep regions of the sea. The same conception occurs in the book of Jonah. The prophet tries to escape from Yahweh; but, even on the ship in the middle of the high seas, he was reached by God. Ultimately, it is the fish monster (servant of Yahweh!) who brings him back to land. This is congruent with the 'universalistic' view of the book as a whole.

IV. Bibliography

C. AUFFARTH, *Der drohende Untergang. "Schöpfung" in Mythos und Ritual im Alten Orient und Griechenland* (Berlin 1991); M. H. CARRE GATES, Casting Tiamat in another Sphere, *Levant* 18 (1986) 75-81; G. CASADIO, El and Cosmic Order: Is the Ugaritic Supreme God a deus otiosus?, *Studia Fennica* 32 (1987) 45-58; R. J. CLIFFORD, Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and the Bible, *Or* 53 (1984) 183-210; A. H. W. CURTIS, The "Subjugation of the Waters" Motif in the Psalms: Imagery or Polemic?, *JSS* 23 (1978) 245-256; J. DAY, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge 1985); M. DIETRICH & O. LORETZ, Baal vernichtet Jammu (*KTU* 1.2.IV 23-30), *UF* 17 (1986) 117-121; G. R. DRIVER, Mythical Monsters in the OT, *Festschrift für G. Levi della Vida* I (Rome 1956) 234-249; O. EISSFELDT, Gott und das Meer in der Bibel, *KS* III (Tübingen 1966) 256-264; H. GESE, Die Religionen Altsyriens, *RAAM* (1970); J. H. GRØNBAEK, Baal's Battle with Yam - a Canaanite Creation Fight, *JSOT* 33 (1985) 27-44; H. GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen 1895); A. HEIDEL, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago 1951); T. JACOBSEN, The Eridu Genesis, *JBL* 100 (1982) 513-529; JACOBSEN, *The Harab-Myth* (SANE; Malibu 1984); O. KAISER, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (BZAW 79; Berlin 1962); O. KEEL, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament* (Einsiedeln & Neukirchen-Vluyn 1972); C. KLOOS, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea* (Leiden 1986); S. E. LÖWENSTAMM, Die Wasser der biblischen Sintflut: Ihr Hereinbrechen und ihr Verschwinden, *VT* 34 (1984) 179-194; O.

LORETZ, *Ugarit und die Bibel. Kanaanäische Götter und Religion im Alten Testament* (Darmstadt 1990); S. NORIN, *Er spaltete das Meer* (ConB, OT Series 9; Lund 1977); J. C. DE MOOR, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden 1987); P. REYMOND, *L'eau, sa vie et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament* (VTSup 6; Leiden 1958); H. RINGGREN, Yahvé et Rahab-Léviatan, *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. Caquot & M. Delcor; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981) 387-393; RINGGREN, *jam*, *TWAT* 3 (1982) 645-657; W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. First Series. The Fundamental Institutions* (Edinburgh & New York 1889); F. STOLZ, *Strukturen und Figuren im Kult von Jerusalem* (BZAW 118; Berlin 1970); C. UEHLINGER, Drachen und Drachenkämpfe im Alten Vordern Orient und in der Bibel, *Auf Drachenspuren* (ed. B. Schmelz & R. Vossen; Bonn 1995) 55-101; M. WAKEMAN, *God's Battle with the Monster* (Leiden 1973); W. A. WARD, Notes on Some Semitic Loanwords and Personal Names in Late Egyptian, *OrNS* 32 (1963) 413-436; A. J. WENSINCK, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites* (Amsterdam 1918, repr. 1968).

F. STOLZ

SEIRIM → SATYRS

SELA → ROCK

ŞELEM → IMAGE

SENEH → THORNBUSH

SERAPHIM שֶׁרָפִים

I. The word 'Seraphim' is the name given to the beings singing the trishagion to →Yahweh as king in Isa 6:2-3 and carrying out an act of purification in vv 6-7. The Seraphim are now generally conceived as winged →serpents with certain human attributes. The word *šārāp* has three occurrences in the Pentateuch (Num 21:6.8; Deut 8:15) and four in Isa (6:2.6; 14:29; 30:6). It