

YAHWEH

— AND THE —

GODS AND GODDESSES OF CANAAN



John Day



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PREFACE

Ever since I started doctoral research under Professor John Emerton at Cambridge in 1973 much of my time has been devoted to studying the impact, both positive and negative, of Canaanite mythology and religion on ancient Israel and the Old Testament. Although I have written various books and articles on the subject over the years, I have long harboured the ambition of completing a more thoroughgoing and comprehensive investigation of the relationship between Yahweh and the gods and goddesses of Canaan, and this is what now appears before the reader.

Unfortunately, various other projects have delayed the appearance of this work. I should therefore express my thanks to those who have helped speed the book on its way. First of all I must express my deep gratitude to the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust for the honour of awarding me a British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship for a year, which enabled me to make considerable progress on the work that would not otherwise have been possible. Next, I am once again greatly indebted to Carol Smith, who over the years and even in the midst of adversity has cheerfully word processed countless drafts of the various chapters which appear in this book. Finally, I am grateful to Sheffield Academic Press for accepting this work into their Old Testament Supplement Series and to all those who work for the Press for the careful attention they have bestowed on the work.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcOr	<i>Acta orientalia</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AION	<i>Annali dell'istituto orientale di Napoli</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANEP	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954)
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
AP	A. Cowley (ed.), <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923)
ArOr	<i>Archiv orientální</i>
ARW	<i>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AulOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
AulOr Sup	Aula Orientalis Supplement
AV	Authorized Version
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BARev	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Iovaniensium
BH ³	<i>Biblia hebraica</i> , 3rd edition
BHS	<i>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>

BibInt Series	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BR</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
<i>BSO(A)S</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
<i>CAD</i>	Ignace I. Gelb et al. (eds.), <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1964–)
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Monograph Series
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, &c in the British Museum
<i>DBSup</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément</i>
<i>DDD</i>	K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, P.W. van der Horst, <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons</i> (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995; 2nd edn, 1999)
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
EPROER	Etudes Préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>EstBtb</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
ET	English Translation
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>

<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	George Arthur Buttrick (ed.), <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962)
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>IDB</i> , Supplementary Volume
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
<i>JANESCU</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> , Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KAI</i>	H. Donner and W. Röllig, <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962–64)
<i>KAT</i>	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>KTU²</i>	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartín, <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU: Second Enlarged Edition)</i> (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995) (2nd edn of M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartín, <i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976])
<i>MIO</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts Orientforschung</i>
<i>MT</i>	Masoretic Text
<i>MVAG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>NAB</i>	<i>New American Bible</i>
<i>NCB</i>	<i>New Century Bible</i>
<i>NEB</i>	<i>New English Bible</i>
<i>NICOT</i>	<i>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</i>
<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>New Series</i>
<i>OBO</i>	<i>Orbis biblicus et orientalis</i>
<i>OLP</i>	<i>Orientalia lovaniensia periodica</i>

<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
<i>OrAnt</i>	<i>Oriens antiquus</i>
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia cursus completa...</i> <i>Series graeca</i> (166 vols.; Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1857–83)
<i>PJ</i>	<i>Palästina-Jahrbuch</i>
PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia cursus completus...</i> <i>Series prima [latina]</i> (221 vols.; Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844–65)
PSBA	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>
RA	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
REB	Revised English Bible
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RIH	Ras Ibn Hani
<i>RivBib</i>	<i>Rivista biblica</i>
RLA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i>
RS	Ras Shamra
RSF	<i>Rivista di Studi Fenici</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SKPAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
StudOr	<i>Studia orientalia</i>
TDOT	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
THAT	Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (eds.), <i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1971–76)
ThWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970–)
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch–Biblische Literatur

UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UUÅ	Uppsala universitetsårsskrift
<i>VD</i>	<i>Verbum domini</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebraistik</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Chapter 1

YAHWEH AND EL

Were Yahweh and El originally the same Deity or not?

What was the relationship between Yahweh and the Canaanite god El? In the Old Testament Yahweh is frequently called El. The question is raised whether Yahweh was a form of the god El from the beginning or whether they were separate deities who only became equated later. The Old Testament itself indicates some sense of discontinuity as well as continuity, in that both the E and P sources imply that the patriarchs did not know the name Yahweh and that this was first revealed to Moses (Exod. 3.13-15, E; 6.2-3, P), in contrast to the J source, where the name Yahweh was already known in primaeval times (Gen. 4.26). The P source specifically states that the patriarchs had previously known God under the name El-Shaddai (Exod. 6.3).

In the nineteenth century J. Wellhausen¹ believed Yahweh to be the same as El, and more recently this has been particularly argued by F.M. Cross and J.C. de Moor.² However, the following arguments may be brought against this. First, in the Ugaritic texts the god El is revealed to be wholly benevolent in nature, whereas Yahweh has a fierce as well as a kind side.³ Secondly, as T.N.D. Mettinger⁴ has rightly emphasized,

1. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J.S. Black and A. Menzies; Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1885), p. 433 n. 1 (not in German original).

2. F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 60-75; J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism* (BETL, 91: Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1990), pp. 223-60 (2nd edn, 1997, pp. 310-69).

3. This has been especially emphasized by F. Løkkegaard, 'A Plea for El, the Bull, and other Ugaritic Miscellanies', in F.F. Hvidberg (ed.), *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen septuagenario dicata* (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1953), pp. 219-35. P.D. Miller, 'El the Warrior', *HTR* 60 (1967), pp. 411-33, tries to find evidence of an earlier concept of El as a warrior in Philo of Byblos. However, though

the earliest evidence, such as that found in Judg. 5.4-5, associates Yahweh with the storm, which was not something with which El was connected at all. Rather, this is reminiscent of Baal. Thirdly, as for F.M. Cross's view⁵ that Yahweh was originally a part of El's cultic title, 'El who creates hosts' ('*il dū yahwī šaba'ōt*), this is pure speculation. The formula in question is nowhere attested, whether inside or outside the Bible. Cross's reasons for thinking that *yhwh šb't* cannot simply mean 'Lord of hosts', namely, that a proper name should not appear in the construct, is incorrect.⁶ Further, *hyh* (*hwh*) is not attested in Hebrew in the hiphil ('cause to be', 'create'), though this is the case in Aramaic and Syriac. Yahweh in any case more likely means 'he is' (qal) rather than 'he causes to be/creates' (hiphil): to suppose otherwise requires emendation of the Hebrew text in Exod. 3.14 ('*ehyeh*, 'I am'), which explains the name Yahweh. I conclude, therefore, that El and Yahweh were originally distinct deities that became amalgamated. This view was held as long ago as F.K. Movers,⁷ and has been argued since by scholars such as O. Eissfeldt and T.N.D. Mettinger.⁸

It is interesting that the Old Testament has no qualms in equating Yahweh with El, something which stands in marked contrast to its vehement opposition to Baal, let alone the equation of Yahweh with Baal (cf. Hos. 2.18 [ET 16]).⁹ This must reflect a favourable judgment

the late Philo of Byblos (c. 100 CE) does preserve some genuinely ancient traditions, it would be most surprising for his picture of a warlike El to antedate the second-millennium BCE Ugaritic texts.

4. T.N.D. Mettinger, 'The Elusive Essence: YHWH, El and Baal and the Distinctiveness of Israelite Faith', in E. Blum, C. Macholz and E.W. Stegemann (eds.), *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), pp. 393-417 (409-10).

5. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 60-75.

6. The closest parallels are the references to 'Yahweh of Teman' (*yhwh tmn*) and 'Yahweh of Samaria' (*yhwh šmrn*) at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, as J.A. Emerton has pointed out, who also notes other instances of proper names in the construct. See J.A. Emerton, 'New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud', *ZAW* 94 (1982), pp. 2-20 (3-9).

7. F.K. Movers, *Die Phönizier*, I (2 vols. in 4 parts; Bonn: E. Weber, 1841), pp. 312-16.

8. O. Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh', *JSS* (1956), pp. 25-37; reprinted in German as 'El und Jahwe', in O. Eissfeldt, *Kleine Schriften*, III (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1966), pp. 386-97; Mettinger, 'The Elusive Essence'.

9. This contrast in attitude was noted by Eissfeldt, 'El and Yahweh'.

on El's characteristic attributes: as supreme deity, creator god and one possessed of wisdom, El was deemed wholly fit to be equated with Yahweh.¹⁰ Baal, on the other hand, was not only subordinate to the chief god El,¹¹ but was also considered to be dead in the underworld for half the year, something hardly compatible with Yahweh, who 'will neither slumber nor sleep' (Ps. 121.4).

Since Yahweh and El were originally separate deities, the question is raised where Yahweh originated. Yahweh himself does not appear to have been a Canaanite god in origin: for example, he does not appear in the Ugaritic pantheon lists. Most scholars who have written on the subject during recent decades support the idea that Yahweh had his origins outside the land of Israel to the south, in the area of Midian (cf. Judg. 5.4-5; Deut. 33.2; Hab. 3.3, 7)¹² and there has been an increasing tendency to locate Mt Sinai and Kadesh in N.W. Arabia rather than the Sinai peninsula itself.¹³ The former view, long held by German scholars,

10. One may compare the fact that the name of an ancient Chinese god, Shang Ti, is used to denote the God of the Bible in one of the translations of the Bible into Chinese, Shang Ti being regarded as a worthy deity.

11. This certainly holds true of the Ugaritic texts. Cf. C. L'Heureux, *Rank among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al, and the Repha'im* (HSM, 21; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979). H. Niehr, however, in *Der höchste Gott* (BZAW, 190; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990), maintains that, by way of contrast, in first-millennium BCE Syria-Palestine Baal-Shamem had decisively overtaken El as the chief god. Though there is some evidence for this, K. Engelkern, 'Ba'alšamem: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Monographie von H. Niehr', *ZAW* 108 (1996), pp. 233-48, 391-407, shows that this was not universally so—cf. Ahiqar, where El is much more prominent than Baal, and the Deir 'Allā text, where El seems to be supreme. More particularly I would note that Niehr's extra-biblical evidence is drawn from Phoenicia and Syria, not Palestine, and I believe that in the latter there was much greater continuity with the older Canaanite mythology from Ugarit. Only thus can we explain the origin of the imagery in Dan. 7, where the Ancient of Days and the one like a son of man reflect the nature and positions of El and Baal in the Ugaritic texts. Moreover, unlike in Phoenicia and Syria, Baal was not worshipped under the specific name Baal-Shamem in Palestine, except when foreign influence intervened (Jezebel, Antiochus IV Epiphanes).

12. Even the arch-'minimalist' N.P. Lemche feels confident about this, in 'The Development of Israelite Religion in the Light of Recent Studies on the Early History of Israel', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Leuven 1989* (VTSup, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 97-115 (113-15).

13. E.g. F.M. Cross, 'Reuben, First-born of Jacob', *ZAW* 100 Supplement (1988), pp. 46-65.

has been supported by evidence of a civilization in the Hejaz area in N. W. Arabia (Midian) in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, in contrast to the general lack of this in this period in the Sinai peninsula. Also, the epithet 'Yahweh of Teman' in one of the Kuntilet 'Ajrud inscriptions fits in with this. References to the Shasu Yahweh in Egyptian texts alongside the Shasu Seir may also be cited in support. Though M.C. Astour¹⁴ has questioned this, claiming that the reference was not to Seir in Edom but to Šarara in Syria, on balance, however, the Egyptian Šꜥrr still seems more likely to be a slip for Šꜥr (Seir) than the name Šarara.

As will be seen at various points later on in this chapter, a plausible case can be made that several of the El epithets referred to in Genesis in connection with patriarchal religion do indeed derive from the worship of the Canaanite god El (El-Shaddai, El-Olam, El-Bethel, and possibly El-Elyon). As Eissfeldt and others¹⁵ have also noted, the promises of progeny to the patriarchs bear comparison with the promise of progeny by the god El to Keret and Aqhat in the Ugaritic texts. Although no one can today maintain that the patriarchal narratives are historical accounts, there are grounds for believing that their depiction of an El religion does at least in part reflect something of pre-monarchical religion, however much it has been overlaid by later accretions. In favour of a pre-monarchic El religion amongst the Hebrews one may first of all note the very name Israel, meaning probably 'El will rule', a name already attested in the late thirteenth century BCE on the stele of the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah. It is surely an indication of El's early importance that the very name of the people incorporates the name of the god El. Secondly, as various scholars have noted,¹⁶ prior to the rise

14. M.C. Astour, 'Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Texts', in M. Görg and E. Pusch (eds.), *Festschrift Elmar Edel* (Ägypten und Altes Testament, 1; Bamberg: M. Görg, 1979), pp. 17-34.

15. O. Eissfeldt, 'Der kanaanäische El als Geber der den israelitischen Ervätern geltenden Nachkommenschaft- und Landbesitzverheissungen', in *Studia Orientalia in memoriam Caroli Brockelmann* (Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe 17; 1968), vols. 2-3, pp. 45-53; reprinted in O. Eissfeldt, *Kleine Schriften*, V (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1973), pp. 50-62; C. Westermann, *Die Verheissungen an die Väter* (FRLANT, 116; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), pp. 151-67; ET *The Promises to the Fathers* (trans. D. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 165-84.

16. E.g. M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT, 3.10; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1928),

of the monarchy theophoric personal names including the name 'ēl are very common, whereas explicitly Yahwistic personal names are very rare (apart from Joshua only five from the Judges period).

El's Influence on Yahweh Accepted by the Old Testament

Granted that El and Yahweh were originally separate deities who became equated, the question now arises what was the nature of El's influence on the depiction of Yahweh. Here several points emerge which will be discussed under the following headings.

Yahweh as an Aged God

One instance where a strong case can be made for the influence of El symbolism on Yahweh concerns those few places where Yahweh is represented as an aged God with many years. In the Ugaritic texts El is frequently given the epithet 'ab šnm, 'Father of Years'¹⁷ (e.g. *KTU*²

pp. 90, 107; Mettinger, 'The Elusive Essence', p. 402.

17. This is now the standard rendering: first suggested by C. Virolleaud, it has been accepted by many scholars, including Cassuto, Emerton, Hvidberg, Cross and Caquot. It fully coheres with the reference to El's grey hair. (The aged El is often thought to be depicted on the Ugaritic stele, *ANEP*, pl. 493.) That šnm as well as šnt should mean 'years' in Ugaritic agrees with the fact that Hebrew has a plural construct form š'nôt (besides š'nē) as well as the absolute plural form šānīm (cf. variant Ugaritic plural forms r'ašm, r'ašt and r'išt, from r'iš 'head'). None of the various alternative proposals is compelling. Thus, O. Eissfeldt, *El im ugaritischen Pantheon* (Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Phil. Hist. Klasse, 98.4; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1951), p. 30 n. 4, translated 'ab šnm as 'Father of mortals', connecting šnm with Hebrew šānā 'to change', Syriac š'nā 'to depart', but the Ugaritic equivalent has a ʔ, not š, i.e. tn(y). M.H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup, 2; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955), p. 33, translated 'Father of Exalted Ones', comparing Arabic snw, sny 'shine, be exalted, eminent' or sanima 'be tall, prominent', but it is not certain that this root is otherwise attested in Ugaritic. U. Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), pp. 17-18, renders 'Father of Luminaries', but this epithet is found elsewhere only in the New Testament (Jas 1.17). J. Aistleitner also appealed to the same basic root in comparing Arabic sanām 'elevation' and seeing a reference to El's heavenly abode (*Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* [ed. O. Eissfeldt; Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologische-Historische Klasse, 106.3; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1965], p. 312, no. 2651). Finally, various scholars have seen in šnm the name of a god. S. and S. Rin, 'alilôt hā'ēlīm

1.4.IV.24), a concept reinforced by the references to his grey hair (e.g. *KTU*² 1.3.V.2, 24-25; 1.4.V.4). In the Old Testament there are just three places where Yahweh's 'years' are alluded to, and it is therefore particularly striking that in two of these he is specifically called by the name El.¹⁸ The first of these is in Job 36.26, where Elihu declares, 'Behold, God ('ēl) is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable'. Clearly Yahweh is being represented as a supremely aged deity. The second occurrence is in Ps. 102.25 (ET 24), where the Psalmist prays, "'O my God ('ēlī)", I say, "take me not hence in the midst of my days, thou whose years endure throughout all generations!"' The fact that Yahweh is here referred to as 'my God' (literally, 'my El') is all the more striking in that it is the one place in the whole Psalm in which God is not addressed as Yahweh (cf. vv. 2, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23 [ET 1, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22]). The only other instance in the Old Testament where Yahweh's 'years' are mentioned is Job 10.5, where Job asks God, 'Are thy days as the days of man, or thy years as man's years?' (This is part of a section in which God is called 'elôah, a term related to 'ēl, e.g. in Job 10.2.)

But these specific references to Yahweh's years are not the only places where he is depicted as an aged God. As J.A. Emerton¹⁹ was the first to note, Dan. 7.9 also has this concept and has appropriated it from El. In Daniel's apocalyptic vision God is there entitled the 'Ancient of

(Jerusalem: Israel Society for Biblical Research and 'Inbal, 1968), p. 39, consider *šnm* as a variant of *šlm* (Shalem), but there is no evidence elsewhere of this variant spelling of that divine name in Ugaritic. A Jirku, 'Šnm (Schunama), der Sohn des Gottes 'Il', *ZAW* 82 (1970), pp. 278-79 and C.H. Gordon, 'El, Father of Šnm', *JNES* 35 (1976), pp. 261-62 (who makes no mention of Jirku), noted that the gods *Tkmm* and *Šnm* are represented as carrying El when he is drunk (*KTU*² 1.114.15-19), and elsewhere this is represented as a service that a model son should provide for his father (*KTU*² 1.17.I.30-31, 1.17.II.5-6, 19-20), and therefore proposed that *Šnm* was the son of El. Although this is ingenious, one wonders, if it were correct, why this son of all El's many sons should be singled out for special mention in El's epithet.

18. J.C. Greenfield was the first to note this so far as I am aware, in 'The Hebrew Bible and Canaanite Literature', in R. Alter and F. Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 545-60 (555).

19. J.A. Emerton, 'The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery', *JTS* NS 9 (1958), pp. 225-42. See also, J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (UCOP, 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 151-78.

Days', a term reminiscent of 'Father of Years', and we read that 'the hair of his head was like pure wool', which likewise reminds one of El. In keeping with this, the one like a son of man who comes with the clouds of heaven and reigns for ever after being enthroned by the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7.13-14) derives ultimately from Baal, 'the rider of the clouds', and the beasts of the sea, whose rule is succeeded by that of the one like a son of man, reflect Yam, Leviathan, and others, who were defeated by Baal. (See below, Chapter 4.)

It seems inherently plausible that we have an Old Testament allusion related to El's being an aged deity in Gen. 21.33, where the patriarchal deity at Beer-sheba is called El-Olam, 'El, the Eternal One', which may possibly have meant originally 'El, the Ancient One', as F.M. Cross has noted.²⁰ However, the proposal of F.M. Cross²¹ to find an allusion to 'El (god) of eternity' (*'l d 'lm*) in the Proto-Sinaitic text 358 has proved to be unfounded, since M. Dijkstra,²² having examined the text at first hand, has shown that this reading is invalid. Probably El-Olam was the local Canaanite god of Beer-sheba, but as we know from archaeology that Beer-sheba was not settled before c. 1200 BCE, the cult there will not antedate that time.

Yahweh as Wise

It was the god El who was especially noted for his wisdom according to the Ugaritic texts (*KTU*² 1.4.V.65, etc.). It seems that the author of Ezekiel 28 was familiar with this notion, since the king of Tyre's wisdom is emphasized in vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, and elsewhere in the very same context he claims to be God (*'ēl*). As will be seen below, El traditions lie behind the notion of the garden of Eden, so it is striking that the divine wisdom is connected with the story of the first man in Gen. 3.5, 6, 22; Ezek. 28.12, 17, and Job 15.7-8. In my opinion it is probable that it was from the god El that the notion of Yahweh's wisdom was appropriated. Plausibility is added to this view by the fact that wisdom and old age were traditionally associated, and, as noted already, it was from the god El that the notion of Yahweh as an aged deity with many years was derived.

20. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 50.

21. F.M. Cross, 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs', *HTR* 55 (1962), pp. 225-59 (238), and *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 19, 50.

22. M. Dijkstra, 'El 'Olam in the Sinai?', *ZAW* 99 (1987), pp. 249-50.

Yahweh as Creator

We do not know whether Yahweh was conceived of as a creator god from the beginning or not. One cannot presuppose this from the name itself, for it is more likely that it means ‘he is’ rather than ‘he causes to be’ (i.e. creates); certainly the former sense is how the Old Testament itself understands it (cf. Exod. 3.14). Anyhow, whether Yahweh was conceived to be a creator god from the beginning or not, there is some evidence that there are occasions on which the Old Testament has appropriated El language when it speaks of Yahweh as creator. Thus, it can hardly be a coincidence that Gen. 14. 19, 22 speaks of ‘El-Elyon, creator (*qōnēh*) of heaven and earth’, and Deut. 32.6 declares, ‘Is not he your father, who created you (*qānekā*)’. This is so because not only is it the case that the verb *qnh* is used outside the Bible to speak of El’s creative activity,²³ but in both cases cited above we have other evidence supporting El influence: Gen. 14.19 and 22 specifically refer to *El(-Elyon)*, and Deut. 32.8 also refers to the ‘sons of God’ (implicitly seventy, deriving from the seventy sons of El) as well as the name Elyon. (We should also note the personal name Elkanah [*’elqānā*], ‘God [El] has created’, 1 Sam. 1.1, etc.) It is therefore possible that it is not merely a coincidence when we find the concept of God as creator and the name El together elsewhere in the Old Testament. Psalm 19.2 (ET 1) proclaims, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God (*’ēl*)’, and Ps. 102.26-27 (ET 25-26), which speaks of God’s work as creator, is not only sandwiched between two verses referring to God’s years (cf. El; vv. 25, 28, ET 24, 27), but following the only verse in the Psalm (v. 25, ET 24) to refer to God as *’ēlī*, ‘my God (lit. El)’, rather than Yahweh.

Reference was made above to Gen. 14.19, 22, ‘El-Elyon, creator of heaven and earth’, where this deity is depicted as the pre-Israelite, Jebusite god of Jerusalem. Elyon also occurs elsewhere as a divine

23. The words *’l qn ’rš*, ‘El creator of the earth’, occur in the Phoenician inscription of Azitawadda from Karatepe (*KAI* 26.A.III.18) and in a neo-Punic inscription from Leptis Magna in Tripolitania (*KAI* 129.1). Further, the form *’lqwnr* appears in a bilingual text from Palmyra, where he is equated with Poseidon (J. Cantineau, ‘Tadmorea (*suite*)’, *Syria* 19 (1938), pp. 72-82 [78-79]). N. Avigad, ‘Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, 1971’, *IEJ* 22 (1972), pp. 193-200 (195-96), alludes to a seventh-century BCE inscription which he restores as [*’l*] *qn ’rš*, but there is no certainty that this reconstruction is correct. However, there is no doubt that this form underlies the name of the god Elkunirša, whose wife is Ašertu (Asherah) in a Hittite–Canaanite mythological text (*ANET*, p. 519).

name or epithet a number of other times in the Old Testament (e.g. Num. 24.16; Deut. 32.8; Ps. 18.14 [ET 13], 46.5 [ET 4], 78.17, 35, 56, 82.6, 87.5; Isa. 14.14; Dan. 7.22, 25, 27). There is dispute as to whether Elyon was originally the same deity as El or not. Philo of Byblos (c. 100 CE) depicts Elioun, as he calls him, as a separate god from El. Interestingly, he refers to Elioun (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.10.15) as the father of Heaven (Ouranos) and Earth (Ge), which is reminiscent of the creator god El, and also strongly supports the idea that the reference to El-Elyon as 'Creator of heaven and earth' in Gen. 14.19. 22 is an authentic reminiscence of the Canaanite deity, and not simply invention.²⁴ *Prima facie* the eighth-century BCE Aramaic Sefire treaty also represents Elyon as a distinct deity from El, since 'El and Elyon' occur together (*KAI* 222.A.11).²⁵ This is one of a number of cases of paired deities in the treaty, some of whom are god and consort, whilst some others represent two parts of a whole. It is difficult to see how the pairing of El and Elyon fits into either of these categories. It has sometimes been suggested that 'El and Elyon' here might be a compound divine name, analogous to Kothar-and-Ḥasis, for example, in the Ugaritic texts.²⁶ Whether or not they are the same deity, since Elyon was apparently the creator, which was also the case with El, it would appear that these two gods were functionally equivalent. Some other language associated with the name Elyon in the Old Testament is also El-like, for example, the association of Elyon with the mount of assembly (Isa. 14.13-14), with the sons of God or Elyon (Deut. 32.8; Ps. 82.6), and with the mythical river and streams (Ps. 46.5 [ET 4]).²⁷

24. Philo's evidence also serves to reject the idea that 'El-Elyon, creator of heaven and earth' (Gen. 14.19, 22) involves a conflation of Elyon, lord of heaven, and El, lord of earth, as suggested by G. Levi della Vida, 'El 'Elyon in Genesis 14 18-20', *JBL* 63 (1944), pp. 1-9; R. Lack, 'Les origines de *Elyon*, le très-haut, dans la tradition culturelle d'Israël', *CBQ* 24 (1962), pp. 44-64; R. Rendtorff, 'El, Ba'al und Jahwe', *ZAW* 78 (1966), pp. 277-92.

25. On the Sefire treaty see further J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (BibOr, 19; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967).

26. E.g. E.E. Elnes and P.D. Miller, 'Elyon', *DDD*, cols. 560-71 (562-63) (2nd edn, pp. 293-99 [294-85]). They hold that *šmš. wnr* in line 9 similarly constitute one deity.

27. However, there are occasions when the name Elyon in the Old Testament is used in association with Baalistic imagery; cf. Ps. 18.14 (ET 13), where Elyon thundered ('uttered his voice') and Isa. 14.13-14, where Elyon's dwelling is on Zaphon. Possibly we are to assume that Elyon had absorbed some Baalistic fea-

The Sons of El (God)

In the Old Testament there appears the concept of Yahweh's having a heavenly court, the sons of God. They are referred to variously as the 'sons of God' (*b^enê hā'elōhîm*, Gen. 6.2, 4; Job 1.6, 2.2; or *b^enê 'elōhîm*, Job 38.7), the 'sons of gods' (*b^enê 'ēlîm*, Pss. 29.1, 89.7 [ET 6]), or the 'sons of the Most High' (*b^enê 'elyôn*, Ps. 82.6). It is also generally agreed that we should read 'sons of God' (*b^enê 'elōhîm*) for 'sons of Israel' in Deut. 32.8 (see below).

There are further numerous places where the heavenly court is referred to without specific use of the expressions 'sons of God(s)' or 'sons of the Most High'. Thus, the heavenly court is mentioned in connection with the first human(s) (Gen. 1.26, 3.22; Job 15.7-8) or elsewhere in the primaeval history (Gen. 11.7; cf. Gen. 6.2 above), and in the context of the divine call or commission to prophesy (1 Kgs 22.19-22; Isa. 40.3, 6; Jer. 23.18, 22; cf. Amos 3.7). We also find it referred to in connection with the guardian gods or angels of the nations (Isa. 24.21; Ps. 82.1; Ecclus 17.17; *Jub.* 15.31-32; cf. Deut. 32.8 and Ps. 82.6 above; implied in Dan. 10.13, 20; 12.1). Apart from isolated references to the divine assembly on the sacred mountain in Isa. 14.13 and to personified Wisdom in the divine assembly in Ecclus 24.2, the other references to the heavenly court are more general (Zech. 1.10-11, 3.7, 14.5; Ps. 89.6-8 [ET 5-7]; Dan. 4.14 [ET 17], 7.10, 21, 25, 27, 8.10-13; cf. Job 1.6, 2.2, 38.7 and Pss. 29.1, 89.7 [ET 6] above). Just as an earthly king is supported by a body of courtiers, so Yahweh has a heavenly court. Originally, these were gods, but as monotheism became absolute, so these were demoted to the status of angels.

It was H. Wheeler Robinson²⁸ who first drew attention to this concept

tures. On Elyon and the Old Testament cf. too J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, pp. 129-36.

28. H.W. Robinson, 'The Council of Yahweh', *JTS* 45 (1944), pp. 151-57. Subsequent studies of this theme include: F.M. Cross, 'The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah', *JNES* 12 (1953), pp. 274-77; G. Cooke, 'The Sons of (the) Gods', *ZAW* 76 (1964), pp. 22-47; H.-W. Jüngling, *Der Tod der Götter: Eine Untersuchung zu Psalm 82* (SBS, 38; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969); J.L. Cunchillos Ylari, 'Los b^ene ha'elohîm en Gen. 6, 1-4', *EstBib* 28 (1969), pp. 5-31; A. Ohler, *Mythologische Elemente im Alten Testament* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969), esp. pp. 204-12; W. Schlisske, *Gottessöhne und Gottessohn im Alten Testament: Phasen der Entmythisierung im Alten Testament* (BWANT, 97; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973), esp. pp. 15-78; E.T. Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (HSM, 24; Chico, CA;

in the Old Testament, though he cited only Babylonian parallels and so concluded that the origin of the Israelite notion was Babylonian, overlooking the more recently discovered Ugaritic parallels concerning the sons of El. It is in connection with the Canaanite god El and his pantheon of gods, known as 'the sons of El', that a direct relationship with the Old Testament is to be found. That this is certain can be established from the fact that both were seventy in number. At Ugarit we read in the Baal myth of 'the seventy sons of Asherah (Athirat)' (*šb'm. bn. 'atrt, KTU² 1.4.VI.46*). Since Asherah was El's consort, this therefore implies that El's sons were seventy in number. Now Deut. 32.8, which is clearly dependent on this concept,²⁹ declares, 'When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God'. The reading 'sons of God' (*b^enê 'elōhîm*) has the support of the Qumran fragment, 4QDeut,³⁰ the LXX, Symmachus, Old Latin and the Syro-Hexaplaric manuscript, Cambr. Or. 929.³¹ This is clearly the original reading, to be preferred to the MT's 'sons of Israel' (*b^enê yiśrā' ēl*), which must have arisen as a deliberate alteration on the part of a scribe who did not approve of the polytheistic overtones of the phrase 'sons of God'.³² Interestingly, it is known that the Jews believed

Scholars Press, 1980); M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, '*Jahwe und seine Aschera*' (UBL, 9; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1992), pp. 134-57.

29. This was first proposed as a possibility by R. Tournay, '*Les Psaumes complexes (Suite)*', *RB* 56 (1949), pp. 37-60 (53), and then put forward more confidently by W.F. Albright, '*Some remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII*', *VT* 9 (1959), pp. 339-46 (343-44).

30. See E. Ulrich, F.M. Cross, S.W. Crawford, J.A. Duncan, P.W. Skehan, E. Tov, J. Trebolle Barrera, *Qumran Cave 4. IX. Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings* (DJD, 14; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 90 (= plate XXIII, col. XII, no. 34).

31. With regard to the Cambr. Or. reading (*ml'kwh d'lh'*), cf. M.H. Gottstein, '*Eine Cambriger Syrohexaplahandschrift*', *Le Muséon* 67 (1954), pp. 291-96 (293), and J. Hempel, '*Zu IVQ Deut 32 8*', *ZAW* 74 (1962), p. 70.

32. As D. Barthélemy argues, in '*Les tiqquné sopherim et la critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*', in *Congress Volume, Bonn 1962* (VTSup, 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), pp. 285-304 (297 n.1), *b^enê yiśrā' ēl* is not simply a scribal slip. The latter was proposed by J.B. Lightfoot and H.L. Ginsberg. Lightfoot, in *The Apostolic Fathers, Part I. St Clement of Rome*, II (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1890), p. 94, followed by NAB (cf. *BH³* and *BHS*) suggested that 'Israel' in Deut. 32.8 accidentally came into the text from the end of the following verse (v. 9), where it is found in the LXX and Samaritan versions. H.L. Ginsberg, '*A Strand in the Cord of Hebraic Hymnody*', *Eretz-Israel* 9 (W.F. Albright volume; Jerusalem:

there to be seventy nations on earth, so that the sons of God were accordingly also seventy in number. This emerges from the table of the nations in Genesis 10, where there are seventy nations, and from the later Jewish apocalyptic concept according to which there were seventy guardian angels of the nations (*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Deut. 32.8; *1 En.* 89.59-77, 90.22-27). This view, which I have defended previously,³³ seems eminently reasonable. The criticisms that it has received seem unconvincing. Thus, first, R.N. Whybray³⁴ claims that it is illegitimate to argue from the number seventy, since this is merely a conventional way of referring to a large, but indeterminate, number. But this does not seem to be the case here, since Genesis 10 lists precisely seventy nations on earth. Secondly, D.I. Block³⁵ has claimed that the seventy gods of the nations implied in Deut. 32.8 are rather to be seen as a back projection from the notion of seventy nations on earth, such as is found in Genesis 10. Since, however, the idea of seventy sons of God (El) is already attested prior to Deut. 32.8, as the Ugaritic texts prove, Block's theory seems strained.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the Old Testament never refers to the heavenly court as 'the sons of Yahweh'. As we have seen above, apart from one instance of *b^enê 'elyôn*, we always find 'sons of God', with words for God containing the letters 'l (*b^enê hā'elōhîm*, *b^enê 'elōhîm*, *b^enê 'ēlîm*). This finds a ready explanation in their origin in the sons of the Canaanite god El.

'El' in the Old Testament as a Reflection of Canaanite El

Eventually, of course, the name El simply became a general word for 'God' in the Old Testament, and so it is found many times. For example, there is the well-known phrase about Yahweh's being 'a jealous God' (*'ēl qannâ'*), which clearly reflects the unique distinctiveness of Yahwism rather than anything to do with the Canaanite god El. Also, in

Israel Exploration Society, 1969), pp. 45-50 (45 n. 4), supposed that *yisrā'ēl* in the MT came about through a conflation of *b^enê 'ēl* and an explanatory gloss, *sārê*.

33. In several places, but first of all in J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, pp. 174-75.

34. R.N. Whybray, review of *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, by John Day, in *JTS* NS 36 (1985), pp. 402-407 (406).

35. D.I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Mythology* (Evangelical Theological Monograph Series, 2; Jackson, MI: Evangelical Theological Society; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1988), pp. 20-21.

many other instances throughout the Old Testament there is no doubt that 'ēl is simply a general name for God without any reflection of the Canaanite background. This has rightly been noted by R. Rendtorff.³⁶ However, there are several instances where the use of the word 'ēl does seem to reflect the Canaanite background. Where a strong case can be made for this is in those instances in which the Old Testament employs the word 'ēl in a context that is particularly suggestive of the Canaanite El, especially if such a usage occurs more than once. Thus, for example, just as El was the leader of the divine assembly (the sons of El), so the name 'ēl is twice found in this context. In Ps. 82.1 we read that 'God has taken his place in the divine council' ('*lōhīm niššāb ba'adat-ēl*; cf. Ugaritic '*dt. 'ilm*, 'assembly of the gods', in *KTU*² 1.15.II.7, 11). This divine council consists of the 'sons of the Most High' in v. 6, who are here sentenced to death, having previously had jurisdiction over the nations of the earth (v. 8), and in Jewish thought they were numbered as seventy. There can be detected here a connection with the seventy sons of God in Deut. 32.8, deriving from the seventy sons of El, discussed above.

The divine assembly is also referred to in Isa. 14.13 by means of a word from the same root as in Ps. 82.1, where the Shining One, son of the dawn boasts, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God ('ēl) I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly (*har mō'ēd*)'. It will be recalled that at Ugarit El's assembly of the gods did indeed meet on a mountain. It is also interesting that the name of 'ēl (God) is mentioned in the phrase 'stars of God', and that the stars and the sons of God are sometimes equated (Job 38.7; cf. *KTU*² 1.10.I.3-4). Ezekiel 28.2, 9 should also be recalled, since God is there three times referred to as 'ēl (a term used elsewhere in Ezekiel only in Ezek. 10.5), part of a passage that has multiple allusions characteristic of Ugaritic El: the emphasis on the divine wisdom (vv. 2-6), the watery nature of the dwelling (v. 2), and the expression *mōšab 'lōhīm* 'seat of God (or gods)' (v. 2). Another distinctively El characteristic that is twice referred to in the Old Testament in the context of the name 'ēl is the allusion to Yahweh's years (Ps. 102.25, 28 [ET 24, 27]; Job 36.26). The passage in the psalm also speaks of God as creator, another point characteristic of El (Ps. 102.26-27 [ET 25-26]). It may, therefore also be

36. R. Rendtorff, 'Some Observations on the Use of אֱל in the Hebrew Bible', in S. Ahituv and B. Levine (eds.), *Eretz-Israel* 24. (Jerusalem: Abraham Malamat volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), pp. 192*-96*.

significant that the first half of Psalm 19, which highlights God's role as creator, specifically refers to him as 'ēl (v. 2, ET 1).

Another possible instance of influence from El comes in the references to Yahweh as 'ēl ḥannûn w^erahûm (Jon. 4.2; Neh. 9.31), 'ēl rahûm w^eḥannûn (Exod. 34.6; Ps. 103.8) or 'ēl rahûm (Deut. 4.31), that is, 'a God gracious and merciful', 'a God merciful and gracious', or 'a merciful God'. In Ugaritic El is noted for these qualities and is frequently referred to as *ltpn 'il dp'id*, 'the kindly one, El, the compassionate', and these precise terms have survived in the epithets used of Allah in Arabic, *laṭîf* 'kind' and *ḍū fu'ād*, 'merciful'. One may also recall the frequent introductory allusions to Allah in the Koran: *bismi llāhi r-rahmāni r-rahimi*, 'In the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful'. It is possible that the Old Testament terminology is derived from El as, for example, H. Spieckermann³⁷ has argued, though R. Rendtorff³⁸ doubts it, as the words in the Old Testament, unlike those used in Arabic, are not identical to those in Ugaritic. Since Hebrew lacks forms corresponding precisely to those in Ugaritic, however, Rendtorff's objection is not a decisive argument.³⁹

In addition to the above points, it may be noted that throughout this chapter indications are given that various occurrences of the name El in the patriarchal narratives are a reflection of Canaanite El religion.

El's Dwelling Place: The Origin of Paradise

Does Ezekiel 28.2-10 Reflect El Traditions? Ezekiel 28.2-10 is an oracle of judgment against the king of Tyre, Ittobaal II. Because of his hubris in striving to be like God, he is cast down into the underworld. It has been debated whether traditions of the god El are reflected here. Among the points that may be appealed to in support of this view are the following:

37. H. Spieckermann, "Barmherzig und gnädig ist der Herr...", ZAW 102 (1990), pp. 1-18 (3).

38. Rendtorff, 'Some Observations on the Use of בָּלָא', p. 196* n. 9.

39. Cf. Løkkegaard, 'A Plea for El, the Bull', who sees influence from El on Yahweh as having contributed to the latter's kindness. On this theme see too now J.F. Healey, 'The Kindly and Merciful God: On Some Semitic Divine Epithets', in M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper, with H. Schaudig (eds.), 'Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf': Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Loretz (AOAT, 250; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), pp. 349-56.

- (i) The name used for God in Ezek. 28.2 (x2) and 9 is El ('*ēl*). This is found in only one other place in the book of Ezekiel, in Ezek. 10.5 (El-Shaddai). Compare also Ps. 82.1, Job 36.26 and Ps. 102.25-28 (ET 24-27) for some other places in the Old Testament where the name '*ēl*' is used for God in association with ideas that actually pertain to El in the Ugaritic texts (divine assembly, aged deity, and creation).
- (ii) In saying, 'I am El (God)', the king of Tyre declares, 'I sit in the seat of God [or gods] (*mōšab 'elōhīm*) in the heart of the seas' (Ezek. 28.2). This is suggestive of El, whose dwelling is said in the Ugaritic texts to be 'at the source of rivers, in the midst of the double deep'. Although the location of Tyre itself was 'in the heart of the seas' (cf. Ezek. 27.4, 32), the association of this with the 'seat of God' clearly reflects El. (*Mtb 'il* actually occurs in Ugaritic, cf. *KTU*² 1.3.V.38, 1.4.I.12, 1.4.IV.52; *mṭbt. 'ilm* occurs in *KTU*² 1.23.19 and *KTU* 1.53.5.)
- (iii) Interestingly, the deity is associated especially with wisdom, as in Ezek. 28.2, 'though you consider yourself as wise as God' and 28.6, 'because you consider yourself as wise as God'. Now El was regarded as particularly wise (cf. *KTU*² 1.4.V.3, etc.).

The combination of these three features creates a good case for seeing El traditions reflected here.⁴⁰ Attempts such as those of Zimmerli and Van Dijk⁴¹ to avoid this conclusion are to be rejected. (Canaanite traditions are also present in the reference to Daniel in Ezek. 28.3.)⁴²

The scholar who first drew attention to El parallels in Ezekiel 28,

40. See, for example, R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM, 4; Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 169-71; H.N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (HSM, 32; Atlanta; Scholars Press, 1985), p. 79, though seeing '*ēl*' as generic, 'God', rightly in my view envisages a *double entendre* with regard to the god El.

41. H.J. Van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26,1-28,19)* (BibOr, 20; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), pp. 95-96. O. Loretz, 'Der Sturz des Fürsten von Tyrus (Ez 28, 1-19)', *UF* 8 (1976), pp 455-58 (456), accepts that the king of Tyre is here striving after the position of El, but rejects the view that El's watery dwelling has influenced Ezek. 28.2.

42. Cf. J. Day, 'The Daniel of Ugarit and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel', *VT* 30 (1980), pp. 174-84.

M.H. Pope,⁴³ however, was quite wrong in seeing the picture of the fallen figure in Ezek. 28.2-10 as itself being based on the fate of the god El. It is now widely recognized that there is no real evidence for the notion that El was ejected (by Baal) from his seat of authority.⁴⁴ In Ezekiel 28, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, El is equated with Yahweh himself, and it is clear that it is the king of Tyre's striving to be like El that leads to his downfall.

Does Ezekiel 28.12-19 belong to the same Mythic Circle as Ezekiel 28.1-10? Ezekiel 28.1-10 and 28.12-19 represent two separate oracles directed against the king of Tyre. However, there is a similarity of theme: in both the king's conceit of wisdom gets the better of him and he is cast down. I have argued above that El traditions are found in Ezek. 28.1-10. Is this the case also in 28.12-19? It would appear so. First, El in the Ugaritic texts dwells on a mountain at the source of the rivers. There is a reference to the waters in the first oracle, but no mountain; it is the second oracle that refers to the mountain of God (Ezek. 28.14, 16). Secondly, Ezek. 28.12-19 is a variant of the garden of Eden story in Genesis 2-3: note the references to Eden, cherub(im) and the casting out of the man in both instances.⁴⁵ In Gen. 2.10-14 the

43. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, pp. 97-104.

44. L'Heureux, *Rank among the Canaanite Gods*, pp. 3-108, offers a convincing and thorough refutation of this view.

45. As rightly stressed, for example by J.L. McKenzie, 'Mythological Allusions in Ezek 28 12-18', *JBL* 75 (1956), pp. 322-27. Various attempts to deny this are unsatisfactory. A.J. Williams, 'The Mythological Background of Ezekiel 28:12-19?', *BTB* 6 (1976), pp. 49-61, for example, does not think that Ezek. 28.12-19 refers back to the story of Gen. 2-3 or alludes to the myth of a primaevial man, but rather castigates the Tyrian ruler for his hubris in commercial activities and participation in the local sanctuary rites of sacral kingship. But Williams fails to explain why, on his view, the king is represented as initially dwelling in Eden. R.R. Wilson, 'The Death of the King of Tyre: The Editorial History of Ezekiel 28', in J.H. Marks and R.M. Good (eds.), *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (Guilford, CN; Four Quarters, 1987), pp. 211-18, believes that Ezek. 28.11-19 was originally a condemnation of the Israelite high priest in the Jerusalem temple, referred to obliquely under the imagery of the king of Tyre. He notes the parallel between the gem stones in v. 13 and those of the high priest in Exod. 28.17-20, 39.10-13, he connects the cherub and mountain of God (vv. 14, 16) with the cherubim of the Jerusalem temple and Mt Zion, and thinks the reference to profaning sanctuaries (v. 18) is more appropriate of the high priest than a pagan king. Wilson admits that, as it stands, the oracle is directed at the king of Tyre,