



The
CONFLICT
MYTH
& *the*
BIBLICAL
TRADITION

DEBRA
SCOGGINS
BALLENTINE

*The Conflict Myth and the
Biblical Tradition*

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With love, for Dan and Doris Scoggins

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I

Theorizing Myth in Ancient West Asian Studies

THERE ARE SEVERAL ancient West Asian stories that describe combat between a warrior deity and an enemy, most often the sea or a sea dragon, in which the warrior deity is victorious and rises to kingship. These stories are extant in whole narratives from the literature of Babylonia, Assyria, and Ugarit. We also have epitomes and references to such a conflict in the corpora of Mari, Judah, and Elephantine. Scholars often refer to this ancient West Asian narrative topos as the “combat myth” or “conflict myth.” This study explores how the theme of divine combat was meaningful for particular authors in particular contexts, that is, how it was useful for saying things about, responding to, portraying, and shaping socio-political realities. The conflict topos was employed in part for ideological purposes in various historical situations, as the following chapters demonstrate through analysis of both whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos and examples of the conflict motif used outside of a narrative context. Ancient West Asian stories of divine combat generate a narrative hierarchical relationship among their characters, and the taxonomy of those mythical characters was consciously projected onto historical persons and polities for ideological purposes. Those aligned with the victorious deity are validated and endorsed by association with that deity. Those aligned with the sea or dragons are, the authors hope, destined for defeat, invalidated, and delegitimized.

Before delving into specific ancient texts, two methodological issues should be central within scholarship on the conflict topos: myth theory and the comparison of ancient West Asian traditions. Study of the conflict

topos necessitates engagement with theories of myth as well as examination of debates about myth and the Hebrew Bible.¹ The study of myth in relation to biblical literature was obfuscated in past generations of scholarship, and the consequences thereof must be recognized.² The comparative aspect of scholarship on the conflict topos requires particular attention to how the relationship between biblical and Canaanite traditions is often construed. Israelite and Judean traditions should be included among Canaanite traditions. This disputes the portrayal of Israelite and Judean traditions as being opposed to, completely other than, or superior to Canaanite traditions. Such evaluations are detrimental to our reconstructions of ancient West Semitic phenomena.

Myth Theory

Most discussions of myth, whether of a particular myth or myth as a genre, begin with a definition of the word *myth*. When authors define myth they implicitly or explicitly articulate a theory of myth or rely on inherited myth theories. The definitions are usually drawn from ideas formulated over the past few hundred years of scholarly discussion of myth, some of which have been useful. Such definitions usually focus on the content of stories that are generally regarded as myths, such as the early and influential definition articulated by the Grimm brothers who said, “*den Kern aller Mythologie bilden die Gottheiten,*” that is, “divinities form the core of all mythology”; in other words, myths are stories about gods.³ Content-based definitions describe features of a variety of particular stories and types of stories that at some point have been labeled “myth.” Hans H. Penner offers an updated and widely accepted descriptive definition of myth: “A myth is a story with a beginning, middle, and end that was or is transmitted orally about the deeds of superhuman agents.”⁴ Such a content-based definition is useful for delimiting the category of myth within the larger categories “narrative” or “story,” as long as we agree that the boundaries of the category should be flexible and that the limits of the category should not get in the way of comparative analysis. For the purposes of the present study, every analyzed text involves superhuman agents. However, they are not all “stories”; they include poems, proverbs, prophecy, letters, epitomes, inscriptions, and monumental iconography as well. My analysis, therefore, is more broad in scope than what Penner’s definition describes; focus on the conflict topos extends beyond the particular whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos that have survived.

Beyond the issue of content, scholarly treatments of myth also focus on function, that is, *what myth does*, or better, *what people do with myth*. The general consensus in recent theorization is that myth validates things (things such as social and political institutions), or rather, people attempt to legitimize, validate, and render things normative through myth. Of course, people may also offer entertainment,⁵ explanation, and even existential or psychological catharsis⁶ through mythmaking, as with any sort of story-telling.⁷ These functions, along with ideological use, are dynamics in the survival and transmission of mythic traditions. Among these complementary dynamics, this study is interested in how people use myth, as well as mythic motifs and imagery outside of a narrative context, in service of particular ideologies. Storytellers and authors, as mythmakers, may adapt traditional or familiar narratives or motifs to suit their specific historical, social, political, and/or cultic contexts.

Myths elaborate sets of relationships among characters, including, but not exclusively, superhuman characters. The significance and connotations of these relationships change as mythic stories are repeatedly retold and reshaped when various individuals, groups, and generations create new meaning with those stories. These sets of relationships may be described as fluid taxonomies that are available for innovative interpretation. A myth exhibits a taxonomy of characters in narrative form. A taxonomic classification system is inherently hierarchical in that it organizes items in relation to one another according to characteristics that are considered to be markers of difference. Likewise, any set of relationships of characters in a myth is hierarchical because the narrative organizes characters in relation to one another according to characteristics that the myth presents as signifying some status, such as a dominant or subservient position, or a behavior understood as errant or appropriate. A taxonomy, whether scientific or narrative, presents its hierarchical classification as if it were a “natural” organization, that is, it presents a culturally constructed system of relationships as a given, universal, and organic system of relationships.

In a mythic narrative, the taxonomy of relationships serves as a template for people to create and express meaning, that is, to express something about their world. This *something* may have ideological, explanatory, entertainment, and/or cathartic value. For example, a myth relating events involving a fertility deity and a chthonic deity might explain something about how crops work in various seasons.⁸ Ideological value pertains to the ways in which the myth performs social and/or political work in support of or in opposition to a (dominant or

nondominant, real or imagined) power structure.⁹ John B. Thompson's definition of ideology is useful: "the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination."¹⁰ I would add that ideology may sustain *or challenge* hegemonic powers, and that these may be dominant or nondominant, real or imagined power structures. Terry Eagleton rightly emphasizes, "the term [ideology] is forceful and informative only if it helps us to distinguish between those interests and power conflicts which at any given time are fairly central to a whole social order, and those which are not."¹¹ Any telling of any myth may be more or less ideological. Every myth can be described as explaining "how things are" or "how things came to be," but the more ideological a particular telling of a myth is, the more this explanation serves the interests of some group, individual, or institution. Regarding the conflict topos in particular, the ideologies thereby promoted are certainly central. These ideologies are concerned with asserting which deity is the most powerful as well as what person and/or group is endorsed by that most powerful deity.

Myths are particularly useful for ideology production, that is, for presenting culturally constructed phenomena as if they were given, universal, and organic phenomena, because they focus on foundational moments and primarily, though not exclusively, superhuman characters. In myths, socially and historically contingent human ideas and institutions are presented as the decrees and works of divine beings, who are often characterized as having universal import and influence. We cannot overstate what a substantial narrative claim this mythic framework carries, and it is important to recognize how authors use this mythic framework for ideological purposes within their socio-historical contexts.

My views on myth are informed by the works of Bruce Lincoln, Russell T. McCutcheon, and Jonathan Z. Smith, who all emphasize the ideological functions and uses of myth. Lincoln's notion of myth as taxonomy and ideology in narrative form is useful for illuminating the conflict topos in ancient West Asian, including biblical, traditions. Lincoln, McCutcheon, and J. Z. Smith have described myth as ideological, hierarchical, political, and even propagandistic.¹² Lincoln, in *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship*, describes myth as "ideology in narrative form." Building on the structuralist concept of myth as "taxonomy in narrative form," Lincoln quotes Durkheim in order to highlight the inherently hierarchical nature of all taxonomies:

A classification is also a system whose parts are arranged in a hierarchical order. Some are dominant features, and others are subordinated to those. . . . The purpose of a classification is to establish relations of subordination and coordination.¹³

Here, J. Z. Smith's use of taxonomy as a rubric for classification is useful. J. Z. Smith frequently cites botanical and biological classification systems, or taxonomies, to critique and improve upon how we classify, define, and order our evidence.¹⁴ Taxonomies present hierarchical classifications as if they were natural. They do this by organizing items according to select features that indicate, according to the logic of the specific taxonomy, difference. As J. Z. Smith explains:

When properly constructed, its [a taxonomy's] central feature is hierarchy. Taxa at the same level differ from and exclude one another. Taxa at a higher level include the lower taxa as being similar. . . . Biological taxonomies enumerate a graded series of hierarchical categories . . . which are related and distinguished on the basis of morphological and/or genetic features.¹⁵

Mythic taxonomies also present hierarchical classification as if it were natural. The narrative organizes characters in relation to one another according to characteristics that are privileged in the myth as markers of difference and significance. However, the differences and relationships among the characters—such as occupying a dominant or subservient position, or displaying behavior understood as errant or appropriate—are presented as if they were “natural” and given. That is, the culturally constructed system of relationships is displayed as if it were a universal and organic system of relationships. As J. Z. Smith indicates with the notion *map is not territory*, the texts we have are not historical realia, nor an exact replica of historical realia, but rather depictions or maps that describe territory from a particular elite point of view.¹⁶ The map, however, presents itself as if it were an accurate picture of the actual territory. Lincoln describes this characteristic of texts when he suggests that myths represent culture as if it were nature.¹⁷

One way that myths represent culture as if it were nature is by linking a phenomenon that is particular to the current context with phenomena that are portrayed as universal, primordial, or foundational. J. Z. Smith fore-fronts the significance of how myth relates the contemporary *Now* to the

Then of the mythic narrative when he proposes that we identify the setting of a particular myth as “here and now” rather than “once upon a time.”¹⁸ Going further, McCutcheon describes myths as political, as validating and legitimating new or contemporary institutions by locating their establishment in the distant past.¹⁹ People develop and use myths for ideological purposes and engineer their realities through myths. McCutcheon theorizes myth as a process, “technique,” and “strategy” of “social argumentation”²⁰ and “ideology production”:

Mythmaking is a species of ideology production, of ideal-making, where “ideal” is conceived not as an abstract, absolute value but as a contingent, localized construct that comes to represent and simultaneously reproduce certain specific social values *as if* they were inevitable and universal. . . . Myths present *one particular* and therefore contestable viewpoint as if it were an “agreement that has been reached” by “we the people.” . . . Mythmaking takes place in a specific socio-political moment and supports a specific judgment about the here and now.²¹

Myths may be reworked and updated, rearticulated, to accommodate and legitimize new or changed social structures. As Lincoln emphasizes, a narrative taxonomy is malleable and dynamic and therefore can accommodate play within its categorization:

Myths are not snapshot representations of stable taxonomies and hierarchies, as functionalists would have it. Rather, the loose fit creates possibilities for rival narrators, who modify aspects of the established order as depicted in prior variants, with consequences that can be far-reaching if and when audiences come to perceive these innovative representations as reality. . . . [Narrators] use instruments that most often assist in the reproduction of the sociotaxonomic order to recalibrate that order by introducing new categories, eliminating old ones, or revising both categories and the hierarchic orders in which they are organized.²²

Lincoln moves from myth as “taxonomy in narrative form” to myth as “ideology in narrative form” by emphasizing that the classification system is naturalized and legitimated through myth:

[W]hen a taxonomy is encoded in mythic form, the narrative packages a specific, contingent system of discrimination in a particularly attractive and memorable form. What is more, it naturalizes and legitimates it. Myth, then, is not just taxonomy, but *ideology* in narrative form.²³

People create meaning by reformulating and recasting the taxonomy of relationships in a mythic narrative, which serves as a template for people to express something about their world. The myth relates “how things are” and explains “how things came to be,” and it may do so in such a way that supports or challenges existing (dominant or nondominant, real or imagined) power structures. Each version or retelling of a myth may be more or less ideological, and each may accomplish conservative or innovative social or political work.

It is helpful to emphasize that there are degrees of ideological value, because this allows for greater sensitivity to the various contexts of myths. Michael Satlow has criticized Lincoln’s work in *Theorizing Myth* for appearing “to pick ‘myths’ at random only to show that they encapsulate ideology in narrative form.”²⁴ While the specific examples that Lincoln analyzes seem to be the result of extreme ideologies, not every myth originates from or survives within such obvious political contexts. Though Lincoln admits that his “protocol designed for students of myth” “may not be appropriate for every mythic text,”²⁵ his preferred examples raise the question of how useful the theory is for myths in general. To address this problem, we may allow for an overlapping of explanatory, ideological, as well as aesthetic or entertainment, and cathartic values. As any given telling of a particular myth processes and explains *something*, we may gauge the degree to which its explanation serves the interests of some group, individual, or institution. However, if our extant version of a myth cannot be shown to be associated with any plausible socio-political phenomenon, it is not useful to fabricate one merely to fulfill the expectations of the theory that myth encapsulates ideology.

Our extant examples of the conflict topos exhibit how people may use mythic motifs to do ideological work in support of or in opposition to powers (which may be hegemonic, marginal, imagined, or actual), institutions, and constructions of divine hierarchies. This study presents two specific ways that people do ideological work with myths. One method is recasting the taxonomy of characters in an inherited narrative, for

example, substituting a preferred deity for the dominant deity in the narrative. A second method of doing ideological work with myths is projecting the hierarchical relationships among mythic characters onto historical persons and polities, for example, associating a king with the dominant deity in the narrative or associating a political enemy with the defeated foe in the narrative. Such ideological use of mythic narrative depends specifically on the taxonomy of characters in the myth and makes use of the hierarchy that the myth encodes to communicate a social or political perspective. Authors adapt mythic narratives and motifs in order to shape, challenge, reinscribe, or generate ideological schemas.

Biblical Scholarship and the Category of Myth

Alongside discussion of what myth *is* (descriptive definitions) or *does* (functional uses), we must also reflect upon what scholars do with the category of myth. We tend to define myth based on narrative characteristics shared among some set of stories that we have already categorized as myth. This somewhat circular logic produces a definition that describes the contents of a preconceived category, increasing the risk that the limits of the category might hinder comparative analysis. This approach was especially problematic when the Grimm brothers' definition of myth was used by biblical scholars who concluded that there could be no myths in the Bible since they thought that there were certainly no "gods," but only one "God," in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Because of the limits of the definition of myth in currency, biblical scholars eschewed the topic of myth.

Hermann Gunkel worked extensively with ancient West Asian myth and mythic imagery in the Hebrew Bible. At the same time, he upheld the Grimm brothers' definition and, in his influential commentary on Genesis from 1901, denied that there were "actual unadulterated myths" (*eigentliche unverfälschte Mythen*) in the Hebrew Bible. He explains that the "monotheism of Israel" would only tolerate myths in which the biblical god acts alone. Thus he excludes the very biblical stories he analyzes *as myth* from the category of myth as he has defined it. Additionally, he projects "a dislike of myth" and an "aversion to mythology" (*Abneigung gegen den Mythos; Scheu gegen die Mythologie*) onto ancient Israelites and biblical authors in particular.²⁶

Prior to this, in his 1895 publication, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, Gunkel identifies mythic material throughout the biblical corpus,

and even occasionally uses phrases such as “Hebrew myth” (*hebräischen Mythus*), “old Israelite myth” (*altisraelitischer Mythus*), and “Yahweh myth” (*Jahvemythus*).²⁷ While Gunkel’s comfort with these phrases shows that he was not dismissive of myth, he still privileged biblical traditions over the comparative materials. For example, speaking in particular about creation traditions, Gunkel posits that the “Yahweh myth” (*Jahvemythus*) became less mythological and less “polytheistic” as it was “Judaized” (*judaisiert*), with “a higher concept of God in place of a more ancient naïveté” (*höhere Gottesanschauung an stelle antiker Naïvetät*).²⁸ Gunkel does not hide the fact that his devaluing of ancient West Asian nonbiblical literature and religion is motivated by apologetic interests. This is clear as he concludes his reconstruction of Babylonian influence on Israelite creation traditions: “On Israel’s faith rests our own” (*auf Israels Glauben aber ruht der unsrige*).²⁹ Steven Lundström has recently discussed the intersections of Gunkel’s personal theology and scholarship within his early twentieth-century intellectual milieu.³⁰ There are obvious problems with Gunkel’s apologetic evaluations of biblical over nonbiblical traditions, but at least the explicit articulation of his apologetic stance allows us to beware that his personal biases influenced his theorization of myth. John Rogerson and Robert Oden each critique Gunkel’s categorization of myth, and Rogerson discusses how Gunkel’s use of the category is inconsistent among his works; the references above certainly exhibit Rogerson’s and Oden’s observations.³¹

Gunkel’s influential and excluding categorization of myth persisted through most of twentieth-century biblical scholarship. Despite the fact that scholars outside of biblical studies had moved beyond a definition of myth that limited the category to “polytheistic” contexts, many biblical scholars propagated a *sine qua non* definition of myth: without gods there is no myth. As a result, the Hebrew Bible was categorically excluded.³² As Oden points out, the consequences of this exclusion were twofold:

[F]or many decades the clear majority of biblical scholars displayed a noteworthy hesitance either to admit the presence of complete myths within the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament or to investigate fully the resources of other disciplines that might aid them in their attempts to interpret biblical myths.³³

This “hesitance” resulted in a lapse of engagement with current myth theory in biblical studies from which we are still recovering.³⁴

In the 1960s–1970s, however, some biblical scholars criticized the obfuscation of myth in studies of the Hebrew Bible, most significantly, Brevard S. Childs, Frank M. Cross, and John W. Rogerson. Childs, in his 1960 publication *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, argued against use of the Grimm brothers' definition of myth, which he said led scholars to overlook the "problem of myth in the Old Testament."³⁵ Cross produced important work on Ugaritic materials and dealt extensively with the centrality of mythic motifs throughout the biblical anthology. His 1973 publication *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* is essential reading for scholars of biblical studies to this day. Cross and Childs, unlike others, did not avoid the topic of myth or deny the presence of mythical elements in the Hebrew Bible. Though Childs and Cross were progressive for their time, we see in their discussions of myth that they still found the category to be problematic when applied to biblical materials. Childs posited a "conflict" in which myth as "the foreign understanding of reality" intruded upon and opposed biblical understanding of reality.³⁶ Cross proposed that "historical and mythologically derived elements were interwoven or blended in the [early Israelite] cult," yet maintained that "In Israel, myth and history always stood in strong tension."³⁷ Though Cross made groundbreaking progress with his treatment of biblical mythology, subsequent scholars have tended to magnify the "tension" and minimize the "blending." As Carola Kloos observed in 1986, biblical scholars have typically characterized "history" and even "historicized" myth (signifying biblical materials) as superior to "myth."³⁸ Over the last thirty years, this latent devaluing of and prejudice against myth among some scholars of biblical studies has been lamented and critiqued by many others, especially Oden, Simon B. Parker, Nick Wyatt, and J. J. M. Roberts.³⁹ Most recently, the majority of contributors to the 2014 volume *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination*, explicitly agree that negative effects of this bias still linger within biblical scholarship.⁴⁰

The lasting and troubling effect of the characterization of a "tension" between myth and history *within* the biblical anthology itself is that any mythic elements or imagery in biblical texts are labeled as foreign, "Canaanite," or "Canaanizing," a scholarly tendency critiqued below. In addition to potentially misrepresenting biblical traditions by asserting a "tension" with myth in biblical texts, which in retrospect was actually discomfort regarding myth within biblical scholarship, biblical scholars did not interact with myth theory as it developed within other fields. We should not assert or assume a "tension" between "mythical" and "biblical,"

or “myth” and “history.” Rather, any “mythical” or “mythic” elements that are in the Hebrew Bible should be treated as “genuinely” biblical, that is, as representing concepts, notions, or imagery from which we can learn something about Israelite and Judean traditions. In other words, a modern reader’s discomfort with a particular biblical (mythological or otherwise) notion does not mean that this notion was not “part of the living creed of Israel,” to use Kloos’s phrase.⁴¹ Furthermore, biblical myths should be examined and elucidated using the same myth theory that scholars outside of biblical studies use, and biblical scholars should engage in theorizing myth as well.

Two additional categories that have been used by scholars wrestling with the analogy mythical:biblical::myth:history are “legend” and “epic.” Recall that Gunkel ultimately categorizes the Hebrew Bible’s versions of particular myths as “legends” (*die Sagen*), arguing that due to “monotheism” they could not be categorized as “myth.” Similarly, but without the biased overtones, Cross distinguishes among the categories “myth,” “epic,” and “history” according to the degree to which deities play a part in the narrative. He limits “history” to narrative that has only human characters with no appeal to things divine. He considers mythic narrative to be primarily concerned with “primordial events” beyond historical time. “Epic,” according to Cross, is an intersection of historical and mythic narrative, characterized by interaction between human and divine characters:

Epic, in interpreting historical events, combines mythic and historical features in various ways and proportions. . . . The epic form, designed to recreate and give meaning to the historical experiences of a people or nation, is not merely or simply historical. In epic narrative, a people and their god or gods interact in the temporal course of events. In historical narrative only human actors have parts. Appeal to divine agency is illegitimate. . . . By contrast myth in its purest form is concerned with “primordial events” and seeks static structures of meaning behind or beyond the historical flux.⁴²

These definitions contribute to his categorizations of “Canaanite myth,” “Canaanite epic,” and “Hebrew epic.” He proposes that Israel’s early epic sources were used in the composition of the Pentateuch and elaborated in the work of the Deuteronomists and Chronicler. “Israel’s choice of the epic form,” Cross explains, displays both the link between Israelite tradition and “its Canaanite past” as well as “the appearance of novelty” in

Israelite tradition.⁴³ According to Cross's definitions, most of the Hebrew Bible would be "epic."

Oden prefers a definition of myth that was first articulated by Joseph Fontenrose: "myths are 'the traditional tales of the deeds of *daimones*: gods, spirits, and all sorts of supernatural or superhuman beings.'"⁴⁴ He criticizes attempts to distinguish between myths, legends, and sagas by biblical scholars as theological and apologetic attempts to protect the Bible from the category of myth.⁴⁵ He prefers the opposite approach, and applies the category of myth to all biblical narratives in which *daimones* of any sort play a part, thus categorizing practically the entire Hebrew Bible and New Testament as myth.⁴⁶ I appreciate his challenge to traditional, and especially apologetic, tendencies in biblical scholarship and fully embrace his call for biblical scholars to make use of developments within other fields for analyzing biblical materials. The potential critique is that his broad framing of the category of myth threatens to dissolve any distinction that the category might connote within ancient West Asian and ancient Mediterranean literature, the majority of which features *daimones*.

Both Cross and Oden hinge their definitions of myth on the presence of divine beings, though their categorizations of the biblical anthology are substantially different. For the purposes of this study, it is not my goal to apply the labels "history," "epic," or "myth," to texts, but rather to identify how mythological themes are used in various sorts of contexts, regardless of how scholars classify those contexts by genre or form, including any combination of primordial tale, legendary tale, historiography, epistle, prose, poetry, proverb, prophecy, ritual prescription,⁴⁷ iconography, or architecture. In a similar vein, Wyatt uses a "working definition" of myth as "narrative theology," which may be present across genre demarcations and regardless of whether the characters are gods exclusively, gods and humans, or one god alone.⁴⁸ At this point scholars across the disciplines have recognized that strict categorizations of history, epic, and myth as genres do not hold for any existing corpora.⁴⁹

In the conclusion to his 1974 publication *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*, Rogerson expresses hope that his theorization of myth will facilitate recognition of myth within the Hebrew Bible. He engages the myth theory work of his contemporary Geoffrey S. Kirk, adopting a functional view of myth centered on how "deliberately" a story "express[es] the faith and world view of a people."⁵⁰ While I do not replicate Rogerson's definitions of myth, fairy tale, and saga, I share his and Walter Burkert's

preference for focusing on the functions of myth: “the specific character of myth seems to lie neither in the structure nor in the content of a tale, but in the use to which it is put.”⁵¹ Rogerson’s most recent articulation is worth quoting at length, since he has spent decades on the topic of myth and the Hebrew Bible.

. . . the question of whether there are myths in the Old Testament is entirely dependent on how one defines the term *myth*. . . . The view of myth that I presuppose is as follows: all people, modern as well as ancient, possess charter myths, that is narratives that attempt to account for the creation of the world, or of a nation, or other features of daily life. In today’s world, scientific explanations of the origin of the world have made charter myths dealing with creation redundant, so that modern charter myths are more concerned with social conditions. I must add, however, that ancient myths about the creation are as much concerned to answer the question *why* as the question *how*. That scientific theories are not concerned with the question *why* has spawned in today’s world grotesque mythical narratives that feature aliens or other otherworldly beings. The mythical imagination is not dead!

In sum, there is agreement that biblical scholars have had long-term difficulty using myth as a category. Despite progress made since the 1970s, many biblical scholars, as well as our colleagues in related fields, and especially general readers, continue to presume the ill-conceived “myth versus bible” model. Dexter Callender recently identified four “perennial and overlapping issues” that “the future direction of myth and biblical studies” must engage: “myth and history”; “myth and ritual”; “myth’s relation to experience”; and “its place with respect to ideology.”⁵² It is with this fourth issue that my study engages. To encapsulate the view of myth elaborated above and the particular aspect of myth that undergirds this study: myth involves narrative presentation of a perceptual social and “natural” world order, exhibiting inherently hierarchical taxonomies with which humans communicate contingent ideologies as if they were universal or “given”; myth, as such, can be operative within a variety of literary, spatial, and social contexts. It is vital, at least for those interested in (or averse to) myth, to recognize that most scholars who theorize myth issue the caveat that however one distinguishes between various narrative forms, most data will exhibit a blending of the neat categories one has attempted to parse.⁵³

Terminology

The present study frequently uses the following terminology: “topos,” “whole narrative,” and “motif.” Herein, “topos” is the broad, umbrella term for all occurrences of a theme. Accordingly, a topos includes “whole narrative” as well as “motif” examples, which may be distinguished according to the nature of our evidence. A “whole narrative” is a story with a beginning, middle, and end that is narrated as a unit. Of course, our extant whole narratives of the conflict topos do not survive in single texts that contain the whole story, but there is sufficient agreement among scholars as to the content and order of these stories for us to read them as whole narratives. In our extant literature from Mari and Judah, we do not have lengthy stories about a battle between the warrior deity and sea deity or dragons. Rather, we have references to such a battle in abbreviated form, epitomes or summaries of the conflict and allusions to it, that is, the “conflict motif.” A motif serves as a “compressed” form of a fuller (even if non-extant) narrative and has potential for conservative or innovative expansion within other literary or visual products.⁵⁴ As explained below, other words that might be used along with “motif” are the delightful but less accessible terms: *alloform*,⁵⁵ *mytheme*,⁵⁶ and *minimyth*,⁵⁷ as well as the slightly problematic term: *echo*.⁵⁸ The present study consistently uses “motif,” which means “a recurrent theme, subject, or image”⁵⁹ outside of a whole narrative; and “topos” when discussing “motif” and whole narrative examples inclusively.

Cross uses the term “*alloform*” to designate variant forms of the conflict myth in Ugaritic literature, which contains a whole narrative articulation of the conflict topos and various instances of the motif.⁶⁰ The term “*alloform*” is mainly used in discussions of chemistry and grammar for distinct forms of something treated as a type. It is a relatively neutral term in that it does not have connotations that imply a great deal about the relationships of the particular variants. However, I prefer the term “motif” to refer to variants that occur outside of a whole narrative context because the term “*alloform*” would denote both these and variants of the conflict myth that occur in the form of whole narratives.

The structuralist term “*mytheme*” denotes a constituent unit of a myth. Claude Lévi-Strauss explains myth by comparison with language, and he theorizes that just as phonemes are combined to make meaningful speech, *mythèmes* are combined to produce a myth’s meaning.⁶¹

I appreciate the observation that parts of a myth attain meaning only in relation to other parts. However, I find less compelling Lévi-Strauss's idea that the relationships among mythemes are universal or inherent in human thought and that the "true" meaning of a myth lies only below the surface level of the narrative. This diminishes the roles of authors, redactors, and/or transmitters of myths, and neglects the relevance of the surface level of a narrative.

Wendy Doniger proposes the notions of minimyth and maximyth to assist us in cross-cultural comparisons of myth. Neither the minimyth nor maximyth actually exist in realia; rather, they are metamyths that one constructs in order to examine variants of a myth.⁶² The minimyth is the simplest "core that still retains some intrinsic meaning" within a set of myths.⁶³ The maximyth is an accumulation of all the details of all the variants of a myth, and this may be used "to note the particular spin that each individual telling (not merely each individual culture) puts on the basic tale."⁶⁴ One risk of any comparative study of myths is the projection of details amassed from the set onto every particular occurrence, and Doniger guards against that risk by emphasizing that mini- and maximyths are non-occurring theoretical constructs. All whole narratives and occurrences of the conflict motif would be used to build the maximyth of the conflict myth, and the minimyth, or minimal core, would be the basis for gathering texts to compare.

John Day uses the term "echo" to refer to occurrences of the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁵ The figurative sense of an echo is a repetition, reproduction, or weakened imitation, "an affect that continues after its cause has ceased."⁶⁶ Use of "echo" suggests a diminished meaning or efficacy compared to an original. For Day, as his subtitle, "Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament," suggests, the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible is derivative of "a Canaanite myth," by which he means the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle*.⁶⁷ Day's study is requisite for any scholar interested in biblical conflict traditions, as he contributed significantly to our understanding of biblical references to a combat between Yahweh and the dragon or the sea. However, I prefer not to use the term "echo" because I do not want to suggest that the meaning or efficacy of the conflict topos is diminished when it appears outside of a whole narrative. I argue, rather, that the motif survives because authors made it meaningful in their contemporary circumstances. I would also avoid the suggestion that occurrences of the conflict motif are echoing, or resulting from, one original or particular conflict myth.

*The Ancient West Asian Milieu
and the Comparative Enterprise*

Extant whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos come from Babylonian, Assyrian, and Ugaritic corpora. On account of this, studies of the conflict topos have always been comparative. Scholars focusing on the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible have used the Babylonian and Ugaritic traditions in particular to illuminate the biblical traditions. Because of the availability and richness of the comparative evidence, the conflict topos is typically offered as an example of the “Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context.” By viewing biblical traditions in their contemporary cultural milieu, we may better understand particular ideas and practices. Volumes such as *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*⁶⁸ and *The Context of Scripture*⁶⁹ assume this approach, and it is clear that comparative evidence is essential for studies of the Hebrew Bible and for reconstructing Israelite and Judean history and religion. Furthermore, modern critical scholars view the Hebrew Bible as one source among ancient West Asian literary corpora, inscriptional evidence, and archeological data. By using all of the available evidence, we may see continuities and innovations among ancient West Asian, including Israelite and Judean, traditions.

Within ancient West Asian comparative studies, I am particularly interested in how my project intersects with discussion of the relationship between biblical and Canaanite traditions. As mentioned above, there is a history in biblical scholarship of characterizing things Canaanite in negative terms and validating things Israelite. Though by the 1970s some scholars were attempting to avoid this type of polarity, there remained an apologetic valence in their descriptions of Israelite traditions. Every study of the conflict topos in the Hebrew Bible addresses the relationship of Canaanite traditions with Israelite and Judean cultures, but that relationship has typically been described in a manner that privileges biblical traditions over Canaanite traditions. Such apologetic and theological tendencies hinder our reconstructions of West Semitic histories, literature, societies, and cults.⁷⁰ Rather, Israelite and Judean traditions should be included among Canaanite traditions, not portrayed as being opposed to, completely other than, or superior to Canaanite traditions.

Scholarship on the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible began with Gunkel’s *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* in 1895. In Gunkel’s day, the only available comparative evidence relevant to the conflict motif came from Mesopotamia. However, in the 1920s and the 1930s, the

discovery of ancient Ugarit brought to light a corpus of material and literary evidence that exhibited much closer affinity to biblical language and traditions. Despite the surprising amount of similarity between Ugaritic and biblical traditions, most scholars interpreted and reconstructed Ugaritic society and cult through the lens of biblical ideology that insisted upon the separateness of Israel among her neighbors and the absolute “otherness” of Canaanite society and cult.⁷¹ Some of the older instances of derogatory characterization of Canaanite traditions seem quite ridiculous now. Examples include characterizations of Canaanite cult and pantheon as “utter depravity and wickedness,”⁷² “seductive nature worship,”⁷³ “full of hate, violence, . . . drinking-bouts, and orgies.”⁷⁴

Cross worked extensively with Ugaritic materials, and to date his essays in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, published in 1973, are a necessary starting point for any study of the conflict topos. In the early 1970s, he criticized “the tendency of scholars to overlook or suppress continuities between the early religion of Israel and the Canaanite (or Northwest Semitic) culture from which it emerged,” and to conceive the cult of Israel “as a unique or isolated phenomenon, radically or wholly discontinuous with its environment.”⁷⁵ He offered a corrective to theological biases against all things Canaanite. For example, in a concluding statement about continuity between Canaanite and biblical traditions, he states, “There must have been a suitable matrix into which Canaanite lore could be grafted and in which it could remain alive.” He then notes that the “old Canaanite myth remained alive,” and that “myths stemming from old Israelite sources . . . break out anew in transformed but vigorous modes of life.”⁷⁶ What follows, from his observation that “old Canaanite myth” and “myths stemming from old Israelite sources” are vibrant dynamics within biblical literature, is that throughout the production of the biblical anthology there were Israelite and Judean mythological traditions that biblical authors used, developed, and transmitted.

Despite how progressive Cross’s reconstruction of the Canaanite milieu of Israelite traditions was at the time, many scholars have minimized the continuity Cross elucidated.⁷⁷ Scholars treating Cross’s “Canaanite myth” and “Hebrew epic” as completely distinct categories tend to label anything “mythic” that is present in the Hebrew Bible as “Canaanite” or “Canaanizing,” as if there can be no “genuine” Israelite myth. For example, Bernhard W. Anderson’s introductory work on the Hebrew Bible uses the category “myth” when he identifies “mythical views” in Exodus 15. However, the “mythical views” are “Canaanite mythical views” reflecting a

“Canaanite mythic pattern,” rather than “Israelite,” “Judean,” or “biblical” “mythical views.”⁷⁸ This is a prevalent tendency that subtly reproduces a theological apologetic and prevents us from fully exploring how myth is used and generated within biblical traditions. Anderson’s fuller discussion of ancient West Asian motifs and “mythological symbolism” is more explicit in its theological stance: “Israel transformed what she borrowed by baptizing it into her own faith.”⁷⁹ Such statements, as well as labels such as “Canaanite mythic pattern,” presume that ancient Israelite and Judean religion emerged from its environment at the beginning of Israel and Judah’s history and thereafter was distinct from that environment, whereas I would argue that Israelite and Judean religions as well as all other cultural products continuously drew from and contributed to the cultural milieu.

Day, a major contributor to the study of the conflict motif in the Hebrew Bible, exhibits a similar tendency. In his 2000 publication, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, which reproduces much of his 1985 study *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, he states in his 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.⁸⁰

There is an apologetic valence to the notion that we may evaluate the impact of Canaanite mythology or religion on ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible in terms of “positive and negative,” or as a one-way influence. I would like to redirect our focus away from such a teleological viewpoint when analyzing ancient West Semitic data.

There has been a shift in scholarship toward a more critical stance in the study of Israelite and Judean religions as a whole.⁸¹ Thus, it is necessary to question why scholarship focusing on the conflict motif has lagged behind this shift. When scholars betray a reverence toward “biblical Israel,” it skews our understanding of the cultural milieu of the historical Israel.⁸² The cultural milieu of ancient Israel was Canaanite, and archeological evidence indicates material and cultural continuity during the time that ancient Israel became a distinct polity.⁸³ Of our available textual and material evidence, the Hebrew Bible is our largest source of Canaanite material. Playing upon Cross’s title, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew*

Epic, we can represent current critical thinking on this issue with the formula *Canaanite Literature* \supset *Hebrew Literature*, the \supset symbol indicating that Hebrew literature, whether myth, epic, or otherwise, is a subset of Canaanite literature. Of course, we may resolve the fictional polarity of Israelite and Canaanite by using the phrase “ancient West Semitic,” which includes Israelite, Judean, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, Aramean, and Edomite. However, since studies of the conflict topos are so laden with the older terminology we must address directly the assumptions undergirding it and its continued impact.

At the intersection of study of the conflict topos with the two outdated dichotomies mythical versus biblical and Canaanite versus biblical, we come across another concept that has been used problematically but now (mostly) reconceived: mythopoeic. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl formulated a theory of the “mythopoeic” in the 1920s, according to which “mythopoeic thought” is a different kind of thinking that is expressive, poetic, and mystical rather than logical and rational.⁸⁴ This theory differed from previous theories that considered myth to have developed from “primitive” attempts to explain phenomena. Rather than using myths to explain phenomena, the “pre-logical,” “mythopoeic mind” used myth to participate in phenomena. However, this theory of myth is highly problematic and has been mainly abandoned, because there is no support for the existence of “mythopoeic thought” or any “pre-logical” mode of thinking among modern or ancient peoples.⁸⁵

Rogerson devotes a chapter of his 1974 publication, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*, to challenging those who would place in opposition “The Old Testament versus Mythopoeic Thought.”⁸⁶ While Cross never defines the term mythopoeic, he uses the term seven times throughout *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, in a neutral sense, describing the religious milieu of ancient Israelite cultus.⁸⁷ While he reserves the term for “Canaanite” and “non-Israelite” activities, he does not use the term in a derogatory fashion. Bernard F. Batto, in *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in Biblical Tradition*, reclaims the term and rearticulates the theory of the “mythopoeic mind,” redefining “mythopoeic” as strictly “mythmaking,” the literal meaning of the Greek roots. He labels the activity of ancient scribes who use inherited myths in creative ways as “mythopoeic.”⁸⁸ In current critical works on the conflict topos, or other mythological topoi within ancient West Asian and ancient Mediterranean corpora, the majority of scholars who use the terms “mythopoeic” and/or “mythmaking” are doing so in this literal and positive sense.

In his 1996 study that includes the conflict topos, Wyatt develops the concept of “the mythological mind.”⁸⁹ On the one hand, Wyatt critiques the authors of *The Intellectual Adventure of the Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East*, whom Anderson had cited positively by the way, for employing notions of “primitive” and “irrational,” when characterizing “the mythical world of the peoples of the ancient Near East.” Wyatt identifies these notions with “the long-discredited theories of Lévy-Bruhl.”⁹⁰ On the other hand, he still contrasts modern “logic” with ancient “mythologic,” and he describes the “ancient” “view of the world” as “infantile.” To be fair, Wyatt identifies surviving “infantile” and “barbaric” notions within “modern religious structures” as well.⁹¹ Regardless, his characterization of “the mythological mind” is qualitative, not neutral.

Moreover, those still wishing to make biased distinctions between biblical and nonbiblical perceptual world orders reproduce the older, discredited idea of “mythopoeic thought” in notions such as “biblical thought.” For example, “biblical Israel had discriminated between pagan mythological thought and historical thought.”⁹² There has been a tendency to characterize “biblical thought” as something that is “unique,” peculiar, and uniform. Whether “biblical thought” is then contrasted with ancient Mesopotamian and Canaanite “thought” or with “modern” “scientific” “thought,” the assertion of any substantial or essential difference in the “minds” of the authors of biblical texts is problematic.

To be clear, I would not suggest that there is nothing peculiar or innovative in the Hebrew Bible or among Israelite and Judean traditions—quite the opposite is true. Biblical texts show highly innovative uses of the conflict motif. However, we must not suggest that the authors of biblical texts were innovative in ways that were distinct from the capacities or general perceptual world order of any other ancient authors. Two of Lincoln’s “Theses on Method” are particularly relevant here. First, “The same destabilizing and irreverent questions one might ask of any speech act ought be posed of religious discourse.” Second, and more generally, “Reverence is a religious, and not a scholarly virtue.”⁹³ There are several problems that may result when scholars treat the Hebrew Bible or Israelite and Judean traditions with reverence. Primarily, we mistake the interested stance of particular biblical authors as a descriptive view. Following that, we misunderstand the relationships between the Self and Other (or the Us and Them) of the texts (there are many Them/Others in the biblical anthology),⁹⁴ and we misunderstand hegemonic positions as universal.

Our approach to biblical texts should be the same as our approach to other ancient texts. Individuals, groups, and communities responsible for authoring and transmitting texts were interested in their socio-political contexts. Imagery, allusions, and motifs that they employed to say things about, respond to, portray, or shape their socio-political contexts were meaningful, not accidental. Mythic taxonomies, as such, may be used to generate ideology in narrative form. Likewise, a mythic taxonomy can be reinterpreted to create innovative meanings and can be referenced outside of a narrative context to make statements about various individuals, groups, and institutions. As demonstrated in the following chapters, the conflict topos was meaningful for particular authors. That is, authors utilized the conflict topos for ideological purposes, for saying things about, responding to, portraying, and shaping socio-political realities in various historical contexts over the span of several millennia, from the second millennium BCE into the middle ages of the Common Era.

II

The Conflict Topos in Extant Narratives

*Let them recite the song of Marduk,
Who bound Tiamat and took kingship.*

(ENUMA ELISH VII 161–162)

THESE LINES CONCLUDE *Enuma Elish*, summarizing the main events of the story: Marduk defeated Tiamat and became king. These two events are inextricably linked: by defeating Tiamat, Marduk was elevated to kingship. The full story of how these events unfolded is narrated in the seven tablets of *Enuma Elish*, a Babylonian text conventionally dated to ca. 1100 BCE.¹ We have two other Mesopotamian traditions related to *Enuma Elish*: *Anzu*, an older story about Ninurta defeating Anzu, dating to the Old Babylonian period, and a later Assyrian story about Aššur defeating Tiamat dating to the reign of Sennacherib (705–681 BCE).² From the other side of the fertile crescent, dating between ca. 1400–1350 BCE, we have the *Ba'lu Cycle*, found in the city of Ugarit, that narrates Ba'lu's victory over Yammu and his attainment of kingship.³

These four narratives represent distinct articulations of the conflict topos. Each narrates how a warrior deity (Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, or Ba'lu) secures kingship after defeating a rival for authority (Anzu, Tiamat, or Yammu).⁴ Each narrative employs the conflict topos in order to make claims about the legitimacy of a particular deity. These deities are elevated within their respective pantheons in relation to other deities who are complicit in the warrior deity's rise to power and at the expense of the rival figures they defeat. The narratives describe the authority of these deities as kingship, a human political institution. In doing so, they promote the institution of kingship by presenting it as the normative construction of authority among the gods. In the cases of the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*, the narrative not only promotes a particular deity

but also a specific city and cult location. These versions of *Enuma Elish* perform ideological work in support of particular socio-political arrangements by promoting a specific deity, city, and temple, bolstering the interests of authority figures associated with Babylon and Aššur, respectively. Similarly, *Anzu* highlights Nippur and promotes Enlil's temple there by claiming that Ninurta's cult will enter the temple of Enlil, Ekur, located in Nippur. We may speculate about how the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle* may have served to further the interests of Ugarit's ruling authorities as well.

The concluding lines from the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, cited above, encapsulate its plot and illustrate a primary aspect of the conflict topos. However, it is vital to stress that we must not use the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* as the “standard example” or exemplary “pattern” for the conflict topos. Rather, each extant whole narrative articulation of the topos is particular in the details of its story and contingent upon its social, historical, political, and cultic context.⁵ This chapter analyzes the conflict topos within *Anzu*, the two versions of *Enuma Elish*, and the *Ba'lu Cycle* and where possible examines the socio-political contexts in which these narratives were employed to legitimate certain kings, dynasties, cities, and temples. These examples of whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos also serve to establish the parameters of the conflict topos within the ancient West Asian milieu, providing a framework for analyzing uses of the conflict motif outside of a narrative context, which are discussed in the following two chapters.

Anzu

Anzu relates Ninurta's victory over Anzu, a bird-like composite figure who stole the Tablet of Destinies (*šimātu*)⁶ from Enlil. After several other deities refuse to challenge Anzu, Ninurta is chosen to fight him. As a reward for his victory the gods grant him kingship. This story survives in two versions, an Old Babylonian version (ca. 1850–1500 BCE) and a Standard Babylonian version (ca. 1500–600 BCE).⁷ Though no Sumerian version of *Anzu* is known, Anzu is included in lists of foes Ninurta has already slain in the Sumerian narratives “Ninurta's Exploits” (Ninurta's Exploits, ll. 131–134) and “Ninurta's Return to Nibru” (Ninurta's Return to Nibru, ll. 34–40).⁸ “Ninurta's Exploits” enumerates those he has defeated as he faces yet another enemy:

The Mermaid, the Dragon, the Gypsum, the Strong Copper, the hero Six-headed Wild Ram, the Magilum Barge, Lord Samanana,

the Bison, the Palm-tree King, the Anzu bird, the Seven-headed serpent⁹—Ninurta, you slew them in the Mountains.

(Ninurta's Exploits, 131–134)¹⁰

The narrative of *Anzu* employs the conflict topos to promote Ninurta, in that his victory over Anzu leads to his attainment of authority among the gods, and to promote the political institution of kingship, the concept used to characterize Ninurta's divine authority. After analyzing the narrative of *Anzu*, possible historical contexts in which its ideology may have been relevant are discussed.

The plot of *Anzu* follows the possession of the Tablet of Destinies, originally belonging to Enlil, but stolen by Anzu and retrieved by Ninurta. It is the loss of the Tablet of Destinies that drives the plot toward combat. This element is similar to the role of the Tablet of Destinies in *Enuma Elish*, described below. In *Anzu*, Enlil and the gods become upset and unsettled once Anzu has the Tablet, and they discuss at length who should retrieve it. What is at stake in the possession of the Tablet is “Enlil-power” (*illilūtu*) that is, the rank of the preeminent god of the Nippur pantheon, which implied control over the orders (*parṣu*) of the gods. This power is the focus of the narrative throughout, and the power in question moves through three stages: possession of power by Enlil, usurpation of power by Anzu, and restoration of legitimate power by (and to) Ninurta.¹¹

Anzu had access to the Tablet from his position as the guard of Enlil's bath chamber, where, “[Anzu's] eyes stare at the performance of Enlil-power” (*Anzu* SB I 66), specifically his crown, “attire of divinity,” and the Tablet.

*(The desire) to usurp Enlil-power seized his heart.
 “Let me take the gods’ Tablet of Destinies for myself,
 So that I may possess command of all the gods.
 I shall abolish the throne, I shall end the rites!
 I shall direct the totality of all the Igigi!”*

(*Anzu* SB I 72–76)

When Anzu accomplishes his plan and flees with the Tablet of Destinies, the rites of the gods are abandoned and they desperately seek a solution (*Anzu* SB I 80–87). Possession of the Tablet, and the power-potential that it apparently confers, is so important to the gods that when they seek a

warrior to challenge Anzu they promise the victorious warrior honor, prominence, and wide-spread cultic recognition:

*Your name will be great in the assembly of the great gods.
Among the gods your brothers, you shall have no rival.
Then shrines may be created.
In the four corners, establish your cult centers.
Your cult centers shall enter Ekur.
Display your prowess before the gods, and your name will be great!*

(Anzu SB I 98–103, and parallels 119–124, 140–145)

They summon three candidates to slay Anzu: “Adad, the canal-controller,” “Girra, Anunitu’s son,” and “Shara, Ishtar’s son.” However, each responds in fear of Anzu’s newly gained power (Anzu SB I 89–157). The feature of other deities cowering before the enemy prior to the hero’s battle is shared with *Enuma Elish*; this feature is also similar to the hesitancy and fear shown by other deities when facing Yammu’s embassy (KTU 1.2 I 21–24) or Leviathan (Job 41:17), as contrasted with the prowess of Ba’lu and Yahweh, respectively. After the gods despair for a while, Ea decides to choose Anzu’s conqueror himself, and Anu and the Igigi agree to this plan. He calls Belet-ili, who has a distinct relationship to the power that is the focus of the text, praising her as supreme in the assembly. He requests that her son Ninurta subdue Anzu in exchange for greatness and popularity among the gods and lands, and she agrees. She complains that:

*Anzu has taken the kingship that I engineered.
The Tablet of Destinies that was in [. . .]
He has deprived Enlil; he rejected your father,
He took away the rites; he subverted (them) to his own control.*

(Anzu SB I 207–210)

Her summary of the situation, specifically the disruption of kingship and rejection of the divine father Enlil, indicates the magnitude of the destabilizing threat that Anzu presents to these deities. She charges Ninurta with capturing Anzu and gives him a plan with strategic details for his attack (Anzu SB II 1–27). It is clear that power and specifically kingship are at stake: “Slit the throat of wicked Anzu, so that kingship may enter Ekur (again)” (Anzu SB II 21–22).

Ninurta prepares for battle and meets Anzu on the mountainside. He initially fails because the Tablet disables his weapons. After a message of encouragement and further strategy arrives from Ea, Ninurta cuts Anzu's wings, shoots him with arrows, and seizes and slits his throat. Ninurta regains the Tablet of Destinies, and the wind brings the wings of Anzu back to the gods, who rejoice. When Ninurta returns, Enlil declares, "You have complete dominion, all the totality of rites," and thus Ninurta receives kingship (*Anzu* III 124). The text concludes by giving Ninurta a series of names and honoring him as incomparable among the gods, another feature shared with *Enuma Elish*. We see that the text begins and ends with clear indications of its focus on power as well as its purpose, which is to glorify Ninurta specifically by telling the story of how he gained power through this combat with Anzu.¹² It begins:

*Listen to the praise of the powerful and strong one,
Who, in a rage, seized and bound the Stone Mountain,
Conqueror of winged Anzu, with his weapon,
(Slayer of) roaring Bull-Man in the midst of the sea.*

(*Anzu* SB I 9–12)

And similarly, before the pronouncement of names for Ninurta, the narrative ends:

*The gods have heard the news—
In the mountains you bound wicked Anzu.
...
[In gr]eatness, with his power, let him stare at wicked Anzu.
Warrior, in your powerfulness you slew the mountain.
You bound Anzu, slew him (despite) his powerfulness.
Winged Anzu, you slew (despite) his powerfulness.*

*...
You have complete dominion, all the totality of rites.
Who has been created like you?!*

(*Anzu* SB III 61–62, 116–119, 124–125)

The conclusion of the text after the pronouncement of names is fragmentary. The words "[. . .] battle and combat, he granted to you [. . .]"

are legible, so it appears that the combat is explicitly mentioned again in the final lines. While we cannot be sure exactly what is said in this conclusion, the clear focus of the narrative is power and restoration of legitimate authority by and therefore to Ninurta. The restoration of power involves a reconfiguration of authority among the deities: Enlil's power is recovered by Ninurta, and Ninurta retains this power. The new configuration of divine authority is portrayed as the legitimate configuration. The justification for the reconfiguration is Ninurta's victory; this is the ideological work accomplished through the conflict topos in *Anzu*. The narrative offers an explanation and justification for the primacy and authority of Ninurta among the gods. Moreover, by characterizing Ninurta's authority as kingship, the narrative legitimates the human political institution of kingship. The narrative implicitly suggests that the human political arrangement (here specifically kingship) reflects the political arrangement that functions in the divine sphere and is accepted by the gods.

We can only speculate about how *Anzu* might have been utilized in the historical contexts in which the Old Babylonian or Standard Babylonian versions circulated. The Old Babylonian version of *Anzu* identifies its protagonist as Ningirsu. Ningirsu was identified as a local form of Ninurta in Lagaš, though originally he may have developed as an independent deity.¹³ Ningirsu was the patron god of Girsu, a city within Lagaš in southern Mesopotamia. The "Stele of the Vultures," found in Girsu and dating ca. 2460 BCE, depicts Ningirsu holding a mace, a net full of captives, and a composite lion-bird figure that may be Anzu. Though we cannot be certain, it appears that the defeated Anzu was employed as an emblem for the victorious warrior Ningirsu.¹⁴ Additional evidence for Ningirsu-centered combat traditions may be found in the inscriptions of Gudea, which date to the late third millennium BCE. Gudea was a Sumerian governor of Girsu who rebuilt Eninnu, the temple of Ningirsu. He commissioned an inscription in honor of this building project, which mentions Anzu and repeatedly calls Ningirsu the warrior "who has no opponent."¹⁵ Gudea's inscription indicates that the victories of Ningirsu were cited to justify the building of his temple. Our earliest surviving copy of *Anzu*, the Old Babylonian version, is much later than Gudea's building of Eninnu in Girsu, so we cannot tie *Anzu* specifically to this historical context. However, Gudea's inscription and the much earlier "Stele of the Vultures" suggest that the motif of Ningirsu's victories predates our extant narratives of Ningirsu's (or Ninurta's) combats.¹⁶

The Standard Babylonian text of *Anzu* does not focus on one location for Ninurta's cult centers, but rather indicates that they will be in "all four corners" (*Anzu* SB I 101 and parallels) and will enter Ekur (*Anzu* SB I 102 and parallels), which was Enlil's temple in Nippur.¹⁷ The text (both versions) underscores an association of Ninurta's cult with Nippur. The presence of Ninurta's cult within the temple of another deity, especially Enlil, would indicate that Ninurta was a highly prominent deity.¹⁸ In turn, the deity's presence in the temple Ekur and the city of Nippur, asserted in the text, might serve to promote cultic activity there. This would further the interests of local authorities who would benefit from these cultic activities and the related status of the city. Other than Ekur, however, the narrative emphasizes a wider spread of Ninurta's prominence and cultic recognition to "all four corners." The text does not mention Kalḫu, an Assyrian cult center of Ninurta in the 9th and 8th centuries. However, limestone reliefs adorning the interior walls of Ninurta's temple there illustrate divine combat, portraying a deity (most likely Ninurta, since it is his temple) battling a composite lion-eagle-dragon figure, possibly Anzu.¹⁹ The illustration of the conflict motif at Ninurta's temple in Kalḫu would serve to legitimate this temple by linking it to the deity's victories, whereby, according to the narrative of *Anzu*, he attained divine kingship and earned cultic prominence. Aššurnasirpal II (883–859 bce), after a successful military program of expansion, moved his capital to Kalḫu. His royal inscriptions indicate that he drew upon Ninurta-centered combat traditions to promote his own kingship, so the illustration of Ninurta's battle in his monumental art complements his royal ideology.²⁰ The association of Ninurta's victories, such as that narrated in *Anzu*, with these specific sites and temples likely served to promote these locations, though here I speculate. We can be more certain about the use of Ninurta-centered combat traditions to promote particular kings and to attack their enemies, based on Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions that identify the king with Ninurta and the king's enemies with Ninurta's enemies. We also have Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts that identify the king with Ninurta in various ritual activities.

In Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions the conflict between Ninurta and Anzu is referenced in order to validate particular kings. Kings are depicted as the counterpart of Ninurta, and furthermore kings' rivalries with political enemies are compared with Ninurta's battles against Anzu and Asakku.²¹ The legitimating ideology used to promote Ninurta's divine kingship within *Anzu* is extended to human kings when those kings are compared to Ninurta and their enemies are compared to Ninurta's enemies.

Specifically, Shalmaneser III and Aššurnasirpal II were described with the titles “Vice-regent of Enlil” and “Avenger of Assyria,” both epithets of Ninurta (*RIM* A.o.101.40; A.o.101.41).²² The phrase “to annihilate like a flood,” an expression that characterized Ninurta’s power in particular and represents the flood as his weapon, was used to describe Shalmaneser III and Adad-nīrārī III’s power over foreign enemies (A.o.102.14; A.o.104.1).²³ Shalmaneser I is said “to trample” (*dâšū*) on his enemies (A.o.77.4), as Ninurta does in *Anzu* (*Anzu* II 47).²⁴ An inscription describing a campaign of Shalmaneser III states that the king is a “vigorous hero, who is supported by the god Ninurta” (A.o.102.5).²⁵ An inscription of Aššurnasirpal II contains a hymn to Ninurta that is followed by a series of praises of the king, and the same vocabulary is used to describe Ninurta and the king (A.o.101.1).²⁶ These inscriptions show that composers of Neo-Assyrian royal ideology adapted traditions of divine combat, specifically stories about Ninurta as a victorious warrior deity and divine king, to promote their kings. The identification of the king with the deity appears to be a Neo-Assyrian innovation. This innovation is highly significant for our understanding of the development and application of the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos within the ancient West Asian milieu.

Various Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts identify the king with Ninurta as well. These explanatory texts comment on specific objects and actors within descriptions of rituals by interweaving details from literary traditions. The ritual and literary elements combined in these texts may or may not have been associated with one another prior to these compositions. Those that mention Ninurta and the king include the following. A text describing the crowned king being carried to his palace equates him with Ninurta being set on his throne by the gods, given royal accoutrements, and adorned with the “splendor of kingship,” while the incense burning in front of the king is equated with the “sloughing flesh of the evil gods,” Ninurta’s enemies (KAR 307 rev. 20–25 [VAT 8917] = SAA 3, 39). The king standing in his chariot is equated with “the warrior king, the lord Ninurta,” while the horses of the chariot are the “ghost of Anzu” whose tongues are the reins (KAR 307 obv. 24–9 [VAT 8917] = SAA 3, 39). A longer text, which weaves together images from Ninurta and Marduk traditions, references Ninurta in its fragmentary conclusion. It states that Anzu and Asakku, enemies of Ninurta, were defeated in the midst of “relentless arrows” that are equated with torches that the king uses in the ritual (CT 15, 43–44 [K 3476 obv.] = SAA 3, 37). While the function and nature of these explanatory texts is somewhat opaque, they show that Ninurta-centered combat traditions, including *Anzu*, were

adapted beyond their original narrative forms. These combat traditions were utilized to expound upon and interpret ritual activities involving the king in a manner that elevates the king by identifying him with Ninurta. The equation of the king with Ninurta serves to legitimate the king by placing him in Ninurta's role as a victorious warrior, acting out the defeat of his enemies and reaffirming through ritual his attainment of kingship.

Anzu and related traditions represent a distinct articulation of the conflict topos in which Ninurta is the victorious deity and Anzu is the defeated enemy. *Anzu* and related traditions legitimate a specific divine arrangement through this narrative hierarchy: Ninurta is elevated to kingship, and divine power is recovered from a figure who is portrayed as illegitimate. Authority is reconfigured within a divine hierarchy that the narrative presents as preferable and legitimate. In addition to promoting Ninurta, the narrative promotes cultic activity at Ekur in Nippur by claiming that Ninurta's cult would be present there. Monumental art at Ninurta's temple in Kalḫu suggests that Aššurnasirpal II utilized the conflict motif not only to promote his own kingship but to promote the site of his new capital. Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and explanatory texts show that Ninurta-centered combat traditions were employed in royal ideology to make substantial claims about the status of kings; this is consistent with the promotion of the institution of kingship in *Anzu*. These royal inscriptions and explanatory texts identify the king with Ninurta specifically and represent him as a victorious warrior. Just as Ninurta attains kingship and prominence among the gods by defeating Anzu, the particular king's authority is portrayed as validated by the gods while his political enemies are portrayed as destined for defeat, on the model of Anzu and Ninurta's other enemies. The legitimating work accomplished through the conflict topos within *Anzu* and other Ninurta-centered traditions is comparable to a broader set of phenomena that also utilize the conflict topos to promote particular deities, the institution of kingship, particular kings, dynasties, cities, and temples. Most closely related to *Anzu* is *Enuma Elish*, in which we see that Ninurta-centered combat traditions were adapted to promote the deity Marduk.

Enuma Elish

Enuma Elish celebrates Marduk's victory over Tiamat, his elevation to kingship, and the subsequent building of Babylon and his temple Esagil within the city (*EE* V, 117–130). The narrative presents the city of Babylon as a central locus of divine activity (*EE* V, 129–138), which suggests that

the text originates from a time in which Babylon flourished, such as during the reigns of Hammurabi (1792–1750 BCE),²⁷ Agum-kakrime in the sixteenth century BCE,²⁸ or Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BCE).²⁹ Though we have no firm evidence, the language and ideological content of the narrative make the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I a plausible context for the composition.³⁰ The narrative promotes a hierarchy in which Marduk is elevated above other deities and becomes king of the gods (*EE* V, 109, 116).³¹ The gods authorize his kingship and agree to all of his decrees, including the building of Babylon as a cult center for all the gods (*EE* V, 113–139).³² This divine legitimization of Babylon and the elevation of Babylon's patron deity within the pantheon would fit within a broader effort of Nebuchadnezzar I to promote "nationalistic revival" within the Babylonian state.³³

The story of *Enuma Elish*, as summarized in its closing lines, focuses on Marduk's rise to authority among the gods, specifically by defeating the goddess Tiamat, the primordial sea, who birthed the gods. Their battle arises from a series of conflicts among the gods, before Marduk's birth. The narrative begins as Tiamat and Apsu generate the gods, whose noise aggravates Apsu so much that he wants to kill them all. Tiamat objects to Apsu's anger, but he is urged on by his vizier Mummu. Ea kills Apsu to protect the gods, binds Mummu, and builds his abode upon Apsu (*EE* I, 63–78). Next, Marduk is born, exceptional from birth, and his play disturbs Tiamat (*EE* I, 79–110). Tiamat's allies, also unable to rest due to Marduk's play, urge her to take revenge for Apsu's death (*EE* I, 111–128), so she creates an army for battle (*EE* I, 129–146). She selects Qingu from her new brood to lead the army and be her husband, and she grants him "kingship of all the gods" (*EE* I, 147–162). Ea, Anšar, the Igigi gods, and the Anunnaki gods are terrified of Tiamat's army and Qingu's possession of the Tablet of Destinies (*EE* II, 1–126). In response, Ea summons Marduk in secret, asking him to subdue Tiamat (*EE* II, 127–162). Marduk demands that in exchange he be given the power to confer destinies:

*Lord of the gods, of the destiny of the great gods,
If I indeed avenge you,
If I bind Tiamat and rescue you,
Arrange an assembly, ordain my supreme destiny.
Gladly convene together in the court of assembly.
Let my decree determine destinies instead of you.*

*Anything that I myself establish, let it not be changed.
Neither reverse nor negate the command of my lips.*

(EE II, 155–162)

In Tablet III, the gods discuss Tiamat's threat and hear that both Anu and Nudimmud were too afraid to confront her, but that Marduk has offered to fight. As in *Anzu*, where Ninurta is selected after a series of potential warriors have demurred, in *Enuma Elish* Marduk is selected to challenge Tiamat, and his willingness to do so stands in contrast with the fear of two other potential warriors. In both narratives, this feature serves to highlight how daunting the battle is, even to warrior deities, and how Ninurta and Marduk, respectively, are exceptional among the gods. In *Anzu*, three warriors are sought out before Ninurta is chosen, whereas in *Enuma Elish*, only two other potential warriors are mentioned. This tablet ends with a scene in which the gods are so relieved that Marduk is willing to challenge Tiamat that they are filled with joy; they feast and drink, and with elevated spirits, "To Marduk their avenger they confer destiny" (EE III, 137–138).

In the fourth tablet, Marduk is crowned king (EE IV, 1–28) and given supremacy among the gods:

*"You are prominent among the great gods,
Your destiny is not equaled, your command is (like that of) Anu.*

...

From this day forth, your command shall not be negated.

...

No one among gods shall transgress your limits.

...

*Marduk, you indeed are our avenger,
We grant you kingship over all of everything."*

...

They rejoiced, they acclaimed, "Marduk is king!"

(EE IV, 3–4; 7; 10; 13–14; 28)

Following this, Marduk prepares for battle (EE IV, 29–64). After he fights Tiamat and her army (EE IV, 65–120), he regains the Tablet of Destinies (EE IV, 121–122), which he seals for himself.³⁴ He then mutilates Tiamat's body, uses her body parts to construct the heavens, and compartmentalizes her

waters (*EE IV*, 123–140). Finally, he constructs abodes for Ea, Enlil, and Anu (*EE IV*, 141–146). In the fifth tablet, Marduk organizes the cosmos by positioning the stars, planets, calendar, weather, and waters, including using the remaining parts of Tiamat’s body to form clouds, mist, springs, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, mountains, and “the Great Bond” that holds heaven and earth together, as well as to secure heaven and earth (*EE V*, 1–66).³⁵

Elsewhere, it seems that Tiamat is not dead but that Marduk keeps her subdued. In the list of names attributed to Marduk in Tablet VII, the elaboration of the name Nēberu includes the following:

The course of the stars of heaven, may he maintain.

Like sheep, may he tend all the gods.

May he bind Tiamat, may her life be narrow and short.

In the future of humanity, in days to come,

May she depart, may she not return, may she be distant forever.

(*EE VII*, 130–134)

This passage implies that Tiamat remains a potential threat, which Marduk must address. The notion of a continually subdued enemy is discussed further in Chapter 4, specifically with regard to traditions about Leviathan and Behemoth.

After setting up “the Great Bond,” Marduk places images of his defeated enemies at his temple in Babylon as a memorial of his victory (*EE V*, 67–76). Upon seeing these, the gods rejoice, bring gifts, and proclaim in unison “This is the king!” (*EE V*, 77–88). The gods anoint him, and as he takes his royal garments, implements, and throne, they again swear allegiance to him (*EE V*, 89–116). Marduk announces that he shall build a temple on the earth for himself, in which he will establish his kingship. He names it Babylon, “House of the great gods,” where all the gods are to visit regularly. The gods agree to his wishes and once again affirm his kingship: “Before, the lord was [our beloved] son; but now, (he is) our king” (*EE V*, 117–156). The narrative of *Enuma Elish* concludes in Tablet VI in which Marduk deals with the last of his defeated enemies. He kills Qingu, his political rival whom the text repeatedly condemns as illegitimate, using Qingu’s blood to create humans (*EE VI*, 1–38). The Anunnaki gods are ordered to build Babylon, where the Igigi gods then celebrate, and the great gods take their thrones (*EE VI*, 39–81). The rest of this tablet and the whole of the final tablet are dedicated to still more praise of

Marduk, additional confirmation of his kingship, and the pronouncement of his names,³⁶ whereby he is proclaimed to be exalted above everything imaginable (*EE VI*, 92–166, VII).

The destiny of Marduk was utmost, they prostrated themselves.

...

They granted him the execution of kingship over the gods.

...

May his rule be supreme, he will have no rival.

(*EE VI*, 96; 99; 106)

The text ends: “Let them recite the song of Marduk, who bound Tiamat and took kingship,” summarizing and reiterating the purpose of the narrative.

Enuma Elish promotes Marduk, Babylon, and Marduk’s temple through the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos. The narrative throughout is focused on the elevation of Marduk, which is justified through his victory in combat. His divine kingship is portrayed as legitimate and preferable to an alternative power structure represented by Qingu and Tiamat. The centrality of Babylon, the presence of deities there, and the establishment of Marduk’s temple are portrayed as being determined by Marduk himself and agreed upon by all the gods. The elevation of Marduk and the centrality of Babylon and Marduk’s temple are justified in the narrative through the conflict topos; that is, the promotion of the deity and his temple and city is presented as a given result of Marduk’s victory. The text presents a distinctly Marduk-centered divine hierarchy and a distinctly Babylon-centered cosmology.³⁷

Wilfred G. Lambert has analyzed the elevation of Marduk in *Enuma Elish*. He argues that though Marduk achieved a prominent status within the pantheon at the time of Hammurabi, *Enuma Elish* elevates Marduk beyond prominence to preeminence within the pantheon. The prologue to Hammurabi’s law code states that Anu, “king of the Anunnaki,” and Enlil, “lord of heaven and earth,” granted power over all people to Marduk and elevated him among the Igigi gods.³⁸ This reflects the elevation of Marduk by the other gods and his authority over people and the Igigi. Anu and Enlil retain their superior status and divine roles. Lambert compares the theogony at the beginning of the narrative with mid-third- and mid-second-millennium BCE god lists and a first-millennium BCE copy of an incantation in order to show how *Enuma Elish* asserts a divine genealogy

in which Marduk's status threatens that of Enlil and Anu, the traditional head Sumerian deities.³⁹ He finds the ultimate expression of Marduk's new status in a Sumerian and Akkadian bilingual incantation, which lacks any sort of theogony of paired divinities and rather claims that Marduk created everything, even all the great gods.⁴⁰ Within *Enuma Elish*, Lambert argues that Marduk clearly assumes absolute power over the gods.⁴¹ Control over the destinies indicates supreme authority, and Marduk attains this control: "Let my decree determine destinies instead of you" (*EE* II, 160, and parallels III, 62, 120). In Tablet VI, when Marduk assigns the gods their positions and orders the cosmos, they accept his decrees without objection or consultation. Likewise emphasizing the theological ideology of *Enuma Elish*, Karen Sonik has shown that the story not only makes the case that Marduk is the rightful ruler in contrast with Qingu or Tiamat but also in contrast with Apsû, with whom the story's problems begin. Moreover, Marduk's predecessors Anu, Ea, and Anšar, who do possess legitimate power, confer power to Marduk.⁴²

Enuma Elish thus exhibits an innovative characterization of Marduk's relationships to other deities, both friend and foe, which raises him above the familiar pantheon. At the same time, the legitimating ideology used to promote Marduk characterizes a widespread body of combat traditions that promote specific deities, institutions, polities, and agents. The narrative configuration of *Enuma Elish* was not new; rather, Marduk's exploits in battle were based on Ninurta's exploits. Especially convincing is Lambert's discussion of how the eleven figures faced by Marduk are patterned after a list of Ninurta's enemies.⁴³ Dina Katz argues that the appropriation of Ninurta themes for Marduk is tied to attempts at redirecting religious activity from Nippur to Babylon.⁴⁴ The adaptation of Ninurta-centered traditions for the purposes of promoting Marduk and Babylon shows that there was a conscious flexibility in the taxonomy of the conflict topos that allowed authors to promote an innovative characterization of Marduk through the already familiar roles associated with Ninurta. This flexibility is again evident when the defeat of Anzu and perhaps Tiamat is attributed to Nabû (SAA 3, 38; KAR 360 [VAT 10060]). Alasdair Livingstone explains that as Marduk took Enlil's place, his vizier Nabû became identified as his son. Thereafter, Nabû was described with characteristics of Enlil's son Ninurta and attributed with Ninurta's victories.⁴⁵

The plot of *Enuma Elish* focuses on the establishment of Marduk's power and kingship. In his authoritative position, Marduk establishes Babylon and his temple within it as divinely sanctioned locations. Thus,

the narrative implicitly furthers the claims of the human authorities who would benefit from the prominence of Babylon and cultic activity at the temple of Marduk. We may reasonably speculate that the reigning king of Babylon would have benefited from the narrative's Babylon-centered and pro-kingship ideology, in that the stability of his state and reign would be tied to divine activities. In Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts and later Seleucid era descriptions of the annual Babylonian New Year festival, we have evidence for the explicit identification of the king with Marduk.

Several Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts, which interpret and explain various ritual actions, reference Marduk's conflict with Tiamat and Qingu. CT 15, 43–44 (K 03476) = SAA 3, 37 is a particularly interesting example. It begins with a reference to Bēl (here referring to Marduk) defeating his enemies and then describes the king performing ritual actions. At each step of the ritual, the text states that the king is Marduk and that the king's ritual action represents some accomplishment of Marduk in battle (ll. 3, 5, 7, 11, etc.). The other participants in the ritual are equated with the gods, Marduk's siblings (l. 6) who observe Marduk's victories (l. 11). Along with the equation of Marduk and the king, the sacrificial items are compared to Marduk's defeated enemies, including Qingu, represented by the sheep (l. 9), Anzu and Asakku, traditionally defeated by Ninurta (l. 15), and a "defeated and crushed Anu" (ll. 19–20). The notion that Anu, one of the older generation of gods, is defeated does not appear explicitly in *Anzu* or *Enuma Elish*. Perhaps the elevation of Marduk was portrayed with fuller extent in this tradition. When the king opens a container, he is compared to Marduk doing something with his penis to Tiamat, but the line is fragmentary (l. 18). Possibly, "he bound/fettered" her, ^rik'-[mu-u₂], though this is difficult to understand; this verb, *kamû*, occurs in *EE* VII, 132 and 162, describing Marduk as the one who binds/fetters Tiamat. Someone—perhaps the king, but the antecedent is not clear—shows his weapon to Marduk, who blesses him (l. 14). The last few lines of text on the obverse are fragmentary, but the name Ninurta is legible (l. 16), and the reverse side (damaged and quite fragmentary) mentions Enlil-ship and Ea-ship (rev. l. 9). This is a remarkable text in that it weaves together events from *Enuma Elish* with traditions related to enemies associated with Ninurta in *Anzu* and Sumerian sources. It assigns significance to details of a ritual by proposing that the ritual actions of the king mirror Marduk's victories.

A few other fragmentary explanatory texts feature the same type of interweaving of ritual actors and mythic characters, and likewise

intersperse, line by line, a ritual action of a human with a narrative action of a deity. For example, LKA 73 (VAT 9947) = SAA 3, 40 obverse, lists a series of days beginning in the middle of the month of Šabatu (XI) that are associated, one by one, with single episodes in which Marduk defeats his enemies. Unfortunately the first line is slightly damaged, but it begins with the king going somewhere, and this line is associated with Marduk defeating Anu. Here again, we see an extended elevation of Marduk that is not known from *Enuma Elish*. In the middle of the text, there is reference to the king wearing a crown and assuming kingship, and after some fragmentary lines, it mentions the “throne of Bēl.” Despite how fragmentary and opaque this text is, it at least associates Marduk’s series of victories with a series of days that includes a day “when the king wears a crown.”

As in the text from Nineveh described above (SAA 3, 37), in SAA 3, 39, an explanatory text from Aššur, animals (a dove and sheep) that are ritually manipulated in particularly destructive or violent ways are identified with Marduk’s defeated enemies, specifically Tiamat and Qingu (KAR 307 rev. 17–19 [VAT 8917] = SAA 3, 39). These Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts, as those discussed above that mention Ninurta, are somewhat opaque in their nature and function. They indicate that the characters and narrative hierarchy of *Enuma Elish* were adapted within another genre to elevate the status of the king, at least in the context of the ritual being explained, by comparing him to Marduk. The king is portrayed in the position of Marduk relative to his defeated enemies, represented by ritual objects slain and mutilated by the king. By claiming that the king’s ritual actions are representative of Marduk’s victories, the explanatory text recasts the ritual as a reenactment of the elevation of Marduk through his combat. We have no way of knowing whether the association of these specific rituals with *Enuma Elish* was limited to these explanatory texts or whether this presents a shared understanding of these rituals. However, the explanatory texts at least indicate that such associations, including the explicit identification of the king with Marduk, were developed within Neo-Assyrian scholarly literature. Later Seleucid period copies of texts that describe the annual Babylonian New Year festival also identify the king, as he engages in ritual actions, with Marduk.

Descriptions of the annual Babylonian New Year festival incorporate images based upon Marduk’s combat with Tiamat. Our evidence for the association of *Enuma Elish* with the Babylonian *akītu* festival comes from Seleucid period copies of ritual texts. These copies postdate the Greek destruction of Babylonian temples by about two hundred years, so we

cannot establish how accurate these texts are or the precise dates of the rituals they describe.⁴⁶ We do see that the ritual prescription specifies that a priest would “raise” (*i-na-áš-ši*) *Enuma Elish*, most likely indicating that he recited *Enuma Elish* (*RAcc.*, 127–154, 1.282).⁴⁷ Earlier reconstructions of the ritual, influenced by “Myth-Ritual” theories, proposed that *Enuma Elish* was not only recited but reenacted by the king. This is no longer a defensible reconstruction.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, this festival was an occasion at which the narrative and its legitimating ideology were used for political purposes to renew the king’s authority. The king led a procession in which Marduk’s statue was carried to the *akītu* house and placed on top of a platform representing Tiamat.⁴⁹ *Enuma Elish* and ritual activities related to Marduk’s battle with Tiamat were used to frame the king’s authority in a legitimizing discourse. The position and authority of Marduk were exhibited, and his elevation to kingship, specifically through combat, was rehearsed.

Similarly, the promotion of the king to power is reenacted: a ritual humiliation of the king serves to provoke the king to reaffirm his loyalty to the gods, Babylon, the temple Esagil, and his subjects, and this is followed by the priest assuring the king that Marduk will endorse his kingship and defeat his enemies (*RAcc.*, 127–154, 413–452).⁵⁰ The association of the king with Marduk was physically displayed through the king’s role of “taking the hands” of Marduk and leading the divine statue in procession. Julye Bidmead speculates that “taking the hands” of Marduk had a symbolic legal meaning during the *akītu* festival, indicating that Marduk and the king ritually renewed their contractual agreement.⁵¹ M. J. H. Linszen rejects Bidmead’s proposal that (the phrase or act of) *qātē DN šabātu* had such a legal meaning in this context, because other ritual texts use the phrase to indicate leading a divine statue in procession as well, without legal connotations.⁵² Still, physical contact between the king and Marduk’s statue in the *akītu* procession suggests that the close association between the king and Marduk was a focus of the ritual. In other words, even if we reject Bidmead’s speculation about a legal meaning for *qātē DN šabātu* in the *akītu* festival, the role of leading the god in procession still has symbolic value. The *akītu* festival is an example of how the ideology of *Enuma Elish*, a particular Babylonian articulation of the conflict topos, was used for political purposes, and it offers a view of the legitimizing connotations of the conflict topos in Babylonian traditions.

Enuma Elish promotes the deity Marduk to a preeminent status within the divine hierarchy, a status justified through his victories in combat. The narrative portrays the establishment of Babylon and Marduk’s temple

as being the result of divine decrees and promotes these locations by claiming that they are sites of divine activity. The narrative exhibits a distinctly Marduk-centered and Babylon-centered ideology, which would have served the interests of ruling authorities in Babylon by tying the city's stability to cosmic events. We have evidence from Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts and later Seleucid period copies of Babylonian ritual texts that the combat traditions recorded in *Enuma Elish* were adapted within other genres. These texts identify the king with Marduk; as the king interacts with ritual objects, the activities and ritual movement recall the elevation of Marduk to kingship through his victories. This, in turn, elevates the status of the king, at least during these rituals, by suggesting a parallel between the human king and divine king. Though our understanding of the explanatory texts is limited by their obscure nature, and our interpretation of the New Year festival ritual texts is complicated by their late provenance, both literary corpora attest to the spread and reuse of the narrative hierarchy exhibited in *Enuma Elish*. The legitimating ideology, used explicitly in the text to promote Marduk, his temple, Babylon, and kingship, was employed to promote kings as well.

Aššur Version of Enuma Elish

Enuma Elish is a Babylonian text celebrating Babylonian places in honor of a Babylonian god, Marduk. The ideological work performed with the text was apparently so successful that the combat with Tiamat and every other detail were appropriated by an Assyrian editor to produce a version of *Enuma Elish* that celebrated Assyrian places and honored the Assyrian god, Aššur.⁵³ This Assyrian recension is only found in late fragments, dating ca. 700–612 BCE, from Aššur and Nineveh.⁵⁴ It is widely accepted that the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* is secondary to the Babylonian version because there are no traces of Assyrian dialect in the version that celebrates Aššur.⁵⁵

Lambert has compiled the alterations present in the Assyrian text, and they are remarkably few and limited to city names and divine names.⁵⁶ In place of the name Marduk, the Assyrian editor inserted AN.ŠĀR, which is how Aššur's name came to be written in many Late Assyrian texts. Anšar is actually the name of Marduk's great-grandfather in the opening of *Enuma Elish* (*EE*, I, 12). However, the names Anšar and Aššur were merged at some point, as can be seen in royal inscriptions of Sargon II.⁵⁷ As a result,

the deity Anšar is left out of Aššur's lineage in the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* and the rest of Marduk's lineage is shuffled a bit to account for this.⁵⁸ Primarily, Marduk's parents Ea and Damkina are replaced by Lahmu and Lahamu. The two times that the city Babylon is mentioned, the location is changed to the city Aššur. With these few substitutions the entire focus of *Enuma Elish* and its ideology are shifted to serve Assyrian interests. Lambert finds the revisionist effort "ill-conceived" and "amateurish," however, and notes that the revisions are little attested in late Assyrian copies of *Enuma Elish*; there is even a copy in which the revisions are incomplete. We do have at least one external quotation of the Assyrian recension in a badly damaged Late Assyrian letter that maintains the substitution of Aššur for the title Bēl in Tablet IV, 17.⁵⁹

The way that the Assyrian *Enuma Elish* promotes Aššur, and the exact nature of its pro-Aššur ideology is more apparent, however, when we look at other texts that claim Aššur's preeminence over the other gods. There are two effective techniques used to elevate Aššur within the existing hierarchy of the pantheon. One technique is to portray Marduk and Ninurta as agents of Aššur. Rather than a strategy of equating Aššur with Marduk or Ninurta, these deities are reimagined as subordinate to Aššur. As with all hierarchies, position is relative, so the explicit subordination simultaneously detracts from the status of Marduk and Ninurta while elevating that of Aššur. Moreover, this strategy rhetorically prevents the possibility of understanding Aššur as interchangeable with Marduk or Ninurta by asserting that his status surpasses theirs in the pantheon. Another technique is to extend Aššur's new role beyond ruling over the rest of the gods such that he takes over the roles of older gods in creation. Through this technique Aššur supersedes the older deities. This not only widens the scope of Aššur's divine activities but also denies the status of the preceding deities in the previously conceived pantheon.

Assyrian redactors did not hide the fact that they were using Marduk and Ninurta traditions to characterize Aššur's rule. Rather than ignoring Marduk and Ninurta, they are treated as existing warrior gods who have achieved prominence. However, they are demoted from kingship and portrayed as acting on Aššur's behalf. The "Marduk Ordeal," a fragmentary and opaque text, describes the captivity of Marduk (KAR 143 and duplicates = SAA 3, 34 [Aššur] and 35 [Nineveh]).⁶⁰ Marduk is said to be guarded as a prisoner by a son of Aššur (l. 19), and Aššur brings lawsuits against Marduk (l. 18). The text mentions *Enuma Elish* several times, stating that it is recited in front of Bēl, and that it "concerns the

prisoner” Marduk (l.34). After a fragmentary line, in which something is sung, Marduk pleads his innocence before Šamaš, stating “Only what was good for Aššur, those things I did. What then is [my] crime?” (l. 36). It follows, from the reference to the recitation and chanting of *Enuma Elish*, that what is sung in the fragmentary line is *Enuma Elish*. If so, the text portrays Marduk himself stating that his actions as the victorious protagonist of *Enuma Elish* were actually favors for Aššur. As Alasdair Livingstone points out, this shift in Marduk’s agency cleverly plays upon the narrative detail of *Enuma Elish* in which Marduk’s victories are said to benefit the older deity Anšar (*EE IV*, 125).⁶¹ It is not in tension with the rise of Marduk that his victory also benefits Anšar and other deities. On the contrary, his elevation is justified by the fact that he successfully quells a threat that the other deities are unwilling to face. However, subsequent to the merging of Aššur’s name with Anšar’s name, the meaning of the notion that Marduk acts for the benefit of Anšar changes substantially. In the “Marduk Ordeal” this notion is elaborated in order to legitimate a preference for Aššur over Marduk. Similarly, the text recalls Ninurta’s victory over Anzu, but makes Ninurta an agent of Aššur:

When Aššur sent Ninurta to defeat Anzu. Nergal [. . .] sent word before Aššur, “Indeed, Anzu is defeated.” Aššur [said] to the god [. . .]: “Go now, tell the news to all the gods”.

(“Marduk Ordeal,” SAA 3, 34: 58–60)

This passage preserves the tradition of Ninurta’s victory over Anzu, but rather than replacing Ninurta with Aššur, it presents Aššur as superior to Ninurta, who here appears to defeat Anzu on Aššur’s behalf. Another version of this text from Nineveh includes Qingu and Asakku as enemies whom Ninurta defeats for Aššur as well (SAA 3, 35). This text offers a fascinating display of how composers reshaped the combat traditions of *Anzu* and *Enuma Elish* to serve their interests. By manipulating the taxonomy of characters, they promote highly innovative views of their preferred deity. Marduk and Ninurta are subordinated to Aššur such that the victories through which they attained kingship become acts of service to Aššur, who is now king. Moreover, their explicit subordination eliminates the possibility of understanding Aššur as interchangeable with Marduk or Ninurta.

A second technique used to elevate the status of Aššur was to portray him as superseding the older generation of gods who participated in creation. This strategy developed from the merging of Anšar’s name with Aššur’s name,

which we see in the Assyrian recension of *Enuma Elish* and in earlier texts as well. Aššur is elevated to Anšar's position in the pantheon and becomes part of the primeval generation. He thereby becomes older and more prominent than Marduk in the divine genealogy (*EE* I, 1–16). Peter Machinist emphasizes that as the son of Lahmu and Lahamu, Aššur precedes Anu as well as Marduk's parents Ea and Damkina, who were all prominent Babylonian gods. Thus the only deities remaining above Aššur are "cultically otiose deities, Apsu, Tiamat, Lahmu, and Lahamu."⁶² When Aššur supersedes the prominent primeval deities, he achieves a greater status than he would have if they were to retain their roles in creation and the honor of their antiquity.

This new role for Aššur is explored in several texts besides the Assyrian recension of *Enuma Elish*. A hymn to Aššur ascribes to him the power to ordain destinies, calls him father and creator of the heavens and earth as well as creator of the gods, and states that his sovereignty was acknowledged by Anu, Enlil, Ea, Belet-ili, and Ninlil (*SAA* 3, 1).⁶³ A text describing the dedication of cultic specialists for the Assyrian *akitu* festival calls Aššur "the king of all the gods, creator of himself, the father of the great gods" (*SAA* 12, 86, 7).⁶⁴ Inscriptions regarding the Assyrian reconstruction of Babylonian temples and the reinstatement of Babylonian divine statues state that these statues are returned only after they have been refashioned and "born" (*im-ma-al-du*) in Aššur's temple (*RINAP* 4.48:1–2, 87).⁶⁵ Steles portraying Aššurbanipal participating physically in the labor of temple reconstruction state that Marduk returns to Babylon reconfigured as a deity who has been created by "the father" Aššur (*RIM* B.6.32.14, 25–26; B.6.32.2, 36–37). By claiming that Aššur created Marduk, the authors of these inscriptions lower Marduk's status relative to Aššur and deny that Marduk is a rival deity. This heightens Aššur's authority and subsumes Marduk under Aššur's dominion and paternity. The "Marduk Ordeal" text introduces the new divine genealogy by attributing it to *Enuma Elish*:

That which is said in *Enuma Elish*: When heaven and earth were not created, Anšar emerged.

("Marduk Ordeal," *SAA* 3, 34, 54)

The text here substitutes the name Anšar, indicating the deity Aššur, for Apsu and Tiamat, the very first generation of primeval gods. Thus, Aššur not only replaces Marduk as the victorious warrior elevated to kingship among the gods but also reaches unprecedented heights in the pantheon. By assuming Anšar's place in traditional genealogies, he joins the primeval

generation of gods, takes on roles in creation, and becomes “father” and “creator” of the gods.

In addition to the innovative portrayal of Aššur’s position in the pantheon, Assyrian traditions also make use of the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos to support its kings. Aššur’s authority is extended to kings in texts that associate the king with Aššur and claim that he has given the king authority. The hymn to Aššur ends by claiming that Aššurbanipal is the vice-regent of Aššur who has delivered sovereignty into the king’s hands (SAA 3, 1 [K 3258], rev. 8 and 12). Aššurbanipal’s coronation hymn claims that Aššur has given him his scepter (SAA 3, 11 [VAT 13831], 2), symbolic of Aššur’s kingship and authority (which the hymn explicitly asserts in l. 15), while Ninurta is merely a warrior deity who gives him his weapon (rev. 5). As discussed above, Assyrian texts blend traditions associated with Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur, in such a way that emphasizes the superiority of Aššur and his status of supreme divine authority. These two texts promote the kingship of Aššurbanipal, the last of the Sargonid kings: Sargon II (721–705 BCE), Sennacherib (705–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), and Aššurbanipal (668–627 BCE). Machinist identifies a series of “ideological actions and expressions” during the reigns of the Sargonid kings that promoted Assyria as “the new center of Mesopotamian culture.”⁶⁶ Several phenomena that exhibit this ideological tendency center on the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*, and may date to the reign of Sennacherib.

Sennacherib destroyed Babylon and carried away the cult statue of Marduk (689 BCE). He brought the throne and bed of Marduk to Assyria and placed them in Aššur’s temple, and he instituted an Assyrian *akītu* festival that promoted Aššur as “king of the gods.”⁶⁷ An inscription of Sennacherib describes a scene from *Enuma Elish* that was depicted on the doors of his *akītu* house, showing Aššur approaching Tiamat and her army in battle; Aššur wields his bow and flood-weapon and rides in his chariot (K 1356).⁶⁸ The inscription clearly describes Aššur in combat with Tiamat, providing evidence for a visual representation of the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*. Furthermore, the inscription emphasizes that Sennacherib was responsible for the illustration of the great battle scene (K 1356, l. 26). Sennacherib’s reputation is explicitly linked to the production of this monument, which suggests that the content of the picture was also significant for Sennacherib’s legitimacy. The choice of this combat scene is particularly fitting because it was through victory against Tiamat that Aššur attained his kingship. Sennacherib’s production of the monument, emphasized in the inscription, implies that the illustration of this pivotal

moment in the story of *Enuma Elish* would serve to promote Sennacherib's kingship by suggesting that his status is linked to Aššur's victory as well.

The relationship between Sennacherib's kingship and Aššur's authority, implied in K 1356, is made explicit in K 6177 + 8869, which describes an illustration of Aššur, the Tablet of Destinies, and Sennacherib as well as an accompanying prayer to Aššur regarding Sennacherib's kingship.⁶⁹ The picture shows the Tablet of Destinies with Aššur's image on it, and the inscription repeatedly states that Aššur possesses the Tablet of Destinies. It also lists the powers that the Tablet of Destinies represents and asserts that Aššur wields this authority because he possesses the tablet. The implications of Aššur's possession of the Tablet of Destinies for his authority, as described in K 6177 + 8869, is entirely consistent with the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*. The picture (described in K 6177 + 8869) also includes Sennacherib in a posture of obeisance before Aššur, and in his prayer (which was presumably inscribed with the picture, and copied in K 6177 + 8869) Sennacherib requests that Aššur protect his reign, destine kingship for him, exalt him above other royal figures, and make his throne as secure as a long-standing mountain. Though in the form of a request, Sennacherib's prayer implies that Aššur does in fact endorse Sennacherib's authority. In sum, K 6177 + 8869 (and the picture it describes) claims that Aššur's authority is legitimate, physically juxtaposes Sennacherib and Aššur, and explicitly links Sennacherib's kingship to Aššur. As noted above, our interpretation of iconographic data must bear in mind questions of "visual literacy" and polysemy. Even so, I propose that the same legitimating ideology is at work in K 1356 and K 6177 + 8869: these texts, and the visual media they describe, promote Sennacherib's kingship specifically by making references to the story of Aššur's rise to power through his defeat of Tiamat, after which he attained the Tablet of Destinies and divine kingship.

Sennacherib's annals may also allude to *Enuma Elish* in the account of the battle of Halule (691 BCE). Elnathan Weissert has proposed that there are five allusions to the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* in Sennacherib's account of this battle.⁷⁰ There are instances of specific and peculiar shared vocabulary that suggest correspondences between characters and scenes from *Enuma Elish* and Sennacherib's campaign. Sennacherib is compared to Aššur in several ways, and the inhabitants of Babylon are characterized as "wicked demons," a description used for Tiamat's army.⁷¹ The Babylonian king Mushezib-Marduk is accused of possessing illegitimate power, and the inscription uses the same phrase (*ana lā simātišu*) that characterizes

Qingu's inappropriate power in *Enuma Elish*.⁷² This simultaneously promotes Sennacherib as a legitimate possessor of power while attacking the legitimacy of his rival. The anxious and hurried manner in which the gods attend to Sennacherib's situation is described with the same adverb (*urruḫiṣ*) as the manner in which the gods send Marduk into battle.⁷³ When describing Sennacherib putting on his battle helmet, the inscription uses an archaic form of the word "head" (*rāṣu*), which is also used in the description of Aššur's head being crowned with terrifying radiance before battle.⁷⁴ Finally, the most compelling correlation occurs between the weapon of Sennacherib and that of Aššur. Sennacherib is armed with a bow that Aššur himself has provided. Furthermore, his arrow "cuts off life," a description that recalls Aššur's charge upon receiving his weapon to end Tiamat's life.⁷⁵ The same vocabulary (forms of the verb *parāsu*, "to cut off," and the noun *napšatu*, "life, throat," an Assyrian vocalization of Babylonian *napištu*) is used in the inscription and *Enuma Elish* IV 31. Even if one is not convinced by all five of the allusions that Weissert proposes, this last correspondence regarding the weapon is sufficient to find a direct link between Sennacherib's inscription and the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*. When Aššur gives Sennacherib a bow and arrow, he confers his prowess in battle upon Sennacherib. This foreshadows Sennacherib defeating his enemy, gaining power in the very manner that Aššur has won dominion. The structure and taxonomy of the conflict topos, in this case based on the Assyrian articulation, is invoked by Aššur's presence. The text of the inscription portrays Sennacherib in Aššur's position by having Aššur give him weapons; this legitimates Sennacherib by associating him with Aššur's position in the mythic hierarchy. Sennacherib's account of the battle of Halule and his descriptions of monumental art depicting images from *Enuma Elish* (described in K 1356 and K 6177 + 8869) exhibit application of the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos for the purposes of promoting a specific royal figure.

Hayim Tadmor discusses the royal ideology of Assyrian inscriptions and the relationship between scribes and kings.⁷⁶ Several of his observations and hypotheses are helpful for our understanding of the production and audience of the types of ideological texts here discussed. He identifies two layers of ideological work within Assyrian royal inscriptions: first, the promotion of the king as the ultimate warrior who obliterates his enemy, and second, the claim that Aššur commanded and therefore endorsed the king's war activities and determined that enemies be conquered.⁷⁷ Tadmor suggests that Assyrian court composers

drew from a reservoir of heroic imagery drawn from oral and written epics, first-hand accounts of events and military campaigns, and campaign itineraries.⁷⁸ While the inscriptions are mostly anonymous, and the narrators of their contents are the kings themselves, Tadmor reasons that they were produced by royal scribes who “mirrored and created the political attitudes of the king.”⁷⁹ Therefore, the king, in relation to his royal scribes, was both the official author and the primary audience of his scribes’ compositions.⁸⁰ Tadmor cautions that beyond the king and scribes, we do not know the audience of royal ideology since “the very existence of public opinion and the public audience in Assyrian society is yet to be demonstrated.”⁸¹ However, he proposes that the (imagined or actual) audience would have included the gods, the future heir, and the state elite.

For whomever the audience, external references to the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* employ a particular articulation of the conflict topos, with Aššur defeating Tiamat to become “king of the gods,” in order to legitimate Assyrian kings and empire. Sennacherib’s authority as king was displayed by associating him with the victorious Aššur and portraying him in Aššur’s position. Aššurbanipal’s authority was conferred to him directly by Aššur. The authors and redactors responsible for these Assyrian traditions use the legitimizing ideology of the conflict topos, directly from *Enuma Elish*, to place Aššur in the position of Marduk as the victorious, legitimate king with authority over the gods. However, Assyrian texts go beyond substituting Aššur for Marduk and subordinate both Marduk and Ninurta under Aššur’s authority. The texts do not deny or ignore that Marduk and Ninurta are also successful warrior deities; rather they acknowledge Marduk and Ninurta and explicitly place Aššur above them in the pantheon.

Machinist situates the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* within a series of phenomena related to the elevation of Aššur, the promotion of Assyrian kings, and the centrality of Assyria (rather than Babylonia) in the socio-political realm of Mesopotamia during the reigns of the Sargonid kings. Machinist concludes his discussion by comparing the Sargonid ideology of Assyrian centrality to the earlier thirteenth-century exaltation of Aššur under Tukulti-Ninurta I. At that time, Aššur was identified with Enlil and so elevated over Marduk. Tukulti-Ninurta I also sacked Babylon, compiled a library from stolen Babylonian collections, removed the statue of Marduk, and instituted *akītu* rites in Aššur, though still in honor of Marduk. Machinist proposes that at both of these

times, Babylonian traditions were rearticulated as Assyrian traditions. Furthermore, he considers the resemblance of these two data sets to indicate a “continuum of confrontation” between Assyria and Babylonia. He proposes that this continuum was recognized by Sennacherib himself, who claims to have taken from Babylon a royal seal that had been taken by Tukulti-Ninurta I when he sacked the city six hundred years prior.⁸² If we accept Machinist’s interpretation of these phenomena and their ideological import, then the Assyrian articulation and application of the conflict topos fits within a broader political effort to assert Assyrian centrality and prominence.

Assyrian authors, redactors, and copyists adapted Babylonian literary traditions as they generated Assyrian royal ideology. The political relationship between Assyria and Babylon was constantly changing, and we have evidence for a range of Assyrian attitudes toward Babylonian traditions. The totalizing claims that some authors, redactors, and copyists made about Aššur are balanced by Aššurbanipal’s acrostic hymn to Marduk (SAA 3, 2). This text exhibits the complexity of the Assyrian adaptation of Babylonian traditions. The acrostic clearly indicates that the hymn was composed for Aššurbanipal: “I am Aššurbanipal, who has called out to you; give me life Marduk, so that I might praise you.” Yet within this piece of Assyrian royal ideology, Marduk maintains his roles and status in the pantheon. The hymn celebrates Marduk as the preeminent god and divine king who possesses the Tablet of Destinies (SAA 3, 2, 1–11; 24–27). Marduk is said to have defeated a series of enemies, including Anzu (traditionally defeated by Ninurta), Tiamat, and Qingu (SAA 3, 2, 15–20). In the hymn, the king entreats Marduk for his favor (SAA 3, 2, rev. 12–13, 20–21). The Marduk-centered ideology is consistent with the Babylonian version of *Enuma Elish*: victories in battle are cited in conjunction with the assertion of Marduk’s dominion, incomparability, and possession of the Tablet of Destinies. Thus, among Assyrian combat traditions, we see varying levels of play with the identification of the victorious warrior deity. At the same time, use of the theme of combat for royal ideological purposes is consistent: the deity has achieved divine kingship through victories in battle, and from his preeminent position he may grant favor to the human king. Literature associated with Aššurbanipal in particular may indicate that within (at least, his) royal ideology the rhetorical priority was promoting the king, regardless of which victorious warrior deity was invoked: Marduk, the incomparable king of the gods (SAA 3, 2); Aššur as divine king, and Ninurta as

divine warrior (SAA 3, 1); Aššur, explicitly elevated above Marduk (*RIM* B 6.32.14, 25–26; 6.32.2, 36–37); or Aššur, the incomparable king of the gods (SAA 3, 1).

Ba'lu Cycle

The Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle* narrates the rise of the storm deity Ba'lu Haddu to kingship after he defeats the sea deity Yammu (literally, “Sea”). The first generation of scholars to interpret the *Ba'lu Cycle* considered the purpose of the text to be explanatory, particularly of regular seasonal changes. However, there is now general agreement that the narrative is about Ba'lu's rise to power. The most recent treatments emphasize how Ba'lu's rise is full of difficulties and explore the implications thereof for our understanding of Ugarit's political circumstances. Mark S. Smith acknowledges seasonal, agricultural, and ritual themes, but finds the kingship of Ba'lu to be at the forefront of the narrative. Older interpretations include: (1) a cosmogonic narrative, concerned with “cosmos” versus “chaos” and the ordering of society around kingship, temple, and Ba'lu (Sigmund Mowinckel, Umberto Cassuto, Loren Fisher, Frank Cross, Richard Clifford); (2) a ritual text of enthronement for Ba'lu (Mowinckel, Theodor Gaster, Arvid Kapelrud); (3) a reflection on seasonal cycles in the Ugaritic environment (Gaster, Johannes De Moor, Hartmut Gese, Dirk Kinet, Lester Grabbe); (4) an agrarian myth about the struggle of life over death (André Caquot); (5) a story responding to historical and political events such as the conflict with Sea Peoples (Julian Obermann), the rise of metallurgy (Charles Vroilleaud), the influx of Hurrians (Marvin Pope), or the rise of the Amorites (Kenneth Vine).⁸³

The text's two surviving colophons identify 'Ilīmalku (or possibly vocalized 'Ilīmilkku) as the scribe who produced the tablets and indicate that he was associated with King Niqmaddu, most likely Niqmaddu III who reigned ca. 1380–1346 BCE.⁸⁴ Cross, William J. Horwitz, and M. S. Smith have each proposed that 'Ilīmalku recorded the extant narrative from existing oral or written traditions. Cross speculates that the text was based on oral tradition that was dictated to a scribe.⁸⁵ William J. Horwitz agrees that the text was based on oral tradition but cautions that our extant version is not necessarily the first time the narrative was recorded in writing.⁸⁶ M. S. Smith offers a hypothetical reconstruction of four stages in the development of the *Ba'lu Cycle*: First, stories and

episodes about Ba'lu circulated independently. This stage would be a fitting context for the development of variants (Cross's "alloforms") of Ba'lu's conflict with an enemy. Second, some stories were written down separately from one another, and various episodes were incorporated into others. Third, 'Ilī Malku copied the available stories, connecting them into a larger narrative. Finally, copies were made of the composition, including our extant tablets.⁸⁷

Our extant portions of the *Ba'lu Cycle* consist of six tablets and various fragments that were found over the course of three years (1930–1933) in Ugarit. The surviving text contains approximately 1,820 lines of a series of episodes related to Ba'lu, though the length of the original text is estimated to be about 5,000 lines. The tablets were found in a house situated between two temples, often called the "House of the High Priest." The tablets were not all found in the same spot, which suggests that they do not belong to one copy of the text. Furthermore, we cannot be certain whether the tablets contain a continuous narrative or a series of loosely related episodes. The extant tablets of the *Ba'lu Cycle* are conventionally ordered as follows: Tablets I and II narrate Ba'lu's conflict with Yammu, Tablets III and IV narrate his attainment of a temple, and Tablets V and VI narrate the conflict with Mōtu.⁸⁸ As M. S. Smith explains, this reconstruction of the order of the tablets makes the most sense in terms of the flow of the narrative: Ba'lu attains kingship and a temple after he defeats a foe, and then his conflict with Mōtu is provoked by Ba'lu sending a message to Mōtu about his new palace. According to this reconstruction, the plot includes two conflicts in succession, first between Ba'lu and Yammu and second between Ba'lu and Mōtu.

Discussions about the relationship between the two conflicts are concerned with the "narrative arc" of the six tablets as a whole. The repeated challenge to Ba'lu's kingship as well as his death and return to life in the Mōtu episode have been used to support seasonal interpretations of the text. While seasonal elements may be present, explanation of seasonal phenomena is not the primary focus. Rather, the focus is Ba'lu's dominion. My arguments about how the text develops and promotes his dominion do not depend upon arguments about the "narrative arc" of the six tablets as a whole nor upon hypotheses about how the Yammu and Mōtu episodes relate to each other. That being said, I agree with M. S. Smith that the Mōtu episode likely developed as a bi-form of Ba'lu's conflict with Yammu.⁸⁹ In both episodes Ba'lu's authority is challenged and affirmed through conflict and victory. Both conflicts involve

a challenge and threat to Ba'lu's rising authority from another deity, and both end in confirmation of Ba'lu's dominion. How the explanation of Ba'lu's rise to power relates to the political circumstances of Ugarit and the Ugaritic king is a nontransparent matter, to which we shall return below.

The *Ba'lu Cycle* presents a particular articulation of the conflict topos in which the authority of Ba'lu is repeatedly challenged but ultimately affirmed. Each of the main characters challenges or furthers Ba'lu's authority in some way. Kingship and dominion are the central concerns throughout the text. The *Ba'lu Cycle* begins with a fragmentary dialogue between 'Ilu and Yammu in which Yammu plans to attack Ba'lu (*KTU* 1.1 V 1–28). 'Ilu requests that Yammu, his “beloved,” drive Ba'lu from his throne (*KTU* 1.1 IV 13–27), and 'Ilu sends messengers to prepare for the construction of a palace for Yammu (*KTU* 1.1 III—1.2 III 11). Šapšu informs 'Aṭtaru of 'Ilu's plan and support of Yammu, and explains that this constitutes a threat to 'Aṭtaru's authority (*KTU* 1.2 III 15–24):

*[How the]n, will he hear you,
Bull ['I]lu, your Father?
Surely he will uproot the [ba]se of your seat,
Surely he will [overturn the throne] of your kingship,
Surely he will shatter the scepter of your jurisdiction.*

(*KTU* 1.2 III 17–18)⁹⁰

'Aṭtaru responds that he has no palace or court like the other gods, but the rest of his response is fragmentary (*KTU* 1.2 III 19–24). At this point in the narrative, 'Aṭtaru's position is not clear because the text is so fragmentary. It appears that the news of 'Ilu's plans in support of Yammu was also threatening to Ba'lu, because we next hear about Ba'lu sending a threatening message to Yammu (*KTU* 1.2 I 3–10). Yammu responds by sending messengers to the divine assembly, requesting that they turn Ba'lu over to him (*KTU* 1.2 I 11–19). When the gods perceive Yammu's delegation they bow their heads (*KTU* 1.2 I 21–24). Ba'lu rebukes them for being unwilling to answer Yammu's messengers and asserts that he will answer them himself, at which point the gods raise their heads again (*KTU* 1.2 I 24–29). Yammu's messengers arrive and report Yammu's decree while standing; they do not bow to 'Ilu or the assembly (*KTU* 1.2

I 30–32). They demand that the gods give Ba‘lu over to Yammu, and ‘Ilu complies:

*Ba‘lu is your servant, O Yammu.
Ba‘lu is your slave, [O River.]
The Son of Dagan is your prisoner.
He himself will bring you tribute,
Like the gods, he will bring [your gifts],
Like the holy ones, your offerings.*

(KTU 1.2 I 36–38)

Ba‘lu is disturbed, but proclaims:

*I myself say to Yammu, your master,
[Your lord, [Judge River]:
“[. . .] the word of Haddu [. . .].”*

(KTU 1.2 I 45–46)

Presumably, Ba‘lu’s proclamation is a threat, because the next legible scene narrates Ba‘lu preparing for battle (KTU 1.2 IV 1–23). Kôtaru-wahasīsu, the gods’ artisan, assists Ba‘lu by fashioning his weapons and encouraging him (KTU 1.2 IV 7–23). He explicitly articulates a causal connection between Ba‘lu’s battle and his attainment of kingship:

*Now your enemy, O Ba‘lu,
Now you will crush your enemy,
Now you will destroy your foe.
You will take your eternal kingship,
Your everlasting dominion.*

(KTU 1.2 IV 7–10)

Furthermore, as he names Ba‘lu’s weapons, Yagarriš and ‘Ayyamarri, probably meaning “may he drive out” and “may he expel” respectively, Kôtaru explicitly states that Ba‘lu’s goal is to drive and expel Yammu from his throne (KTU 1.2 IV 11–23). In this conflict the text states that what is at stake for both gods is kingship and dominion. Ba‘lu and his weapons are successful against Yammu, and after Yammu falls, Ba‘lu drags,

dismembers,⁹¹ and scatters Yammu's body (*KTU* 1.2 IV 23–31). The scene ends with a proclamation of Yammu's death and Ba'lu's rule:

Yammu is surely dead!

Ba'lu rei[gns]!

He surely rules!

(*KTU* 1.2 IV

32–33; 34–35)

Ba'lu then enjoys a victory feast (*KTU* 1.3 I 1–28), while 'Anatu massacres a few towns (*KTU* 1.3 II 1–41). Ba'lu sends messengers to 'Anatu (*KTU* 1.3 III 8–31), and she fears that they have come to report a threat to Ba'lu. Trembling with sweat, she asks the messengers, "What enemy rises against Ba'lu? What foe against the Rider of Clouds?" (*KTU* 1.3 III 36–38; IV 4). 'Anatu proclaims that she would be ready to face any threat to Ba'lu by recounting her previous victories, discussed in Chapter 3, over enemies including Yammu, Tunnanu, the multi-headed serpent, the Calf of 'Ilu, and the Dog of 'Ilu (*KTU* 1.3 III 38–47). The messengers assure her that Ba'lu is not under threat, then they relate Ba'lu's message, inviting her to Ba'lu's mountain (*KTU* 1.3 IV 5–20). 'Anatu visits Ba'lu, where he requests that 'Anatu appeal to 'Ilu for Ba'lu to have a palace (*KTU* 1.3 IV 21–53). 'Anatu agrees to Ba'lu's request and travels to 'Ilu's residence where she greets him with threats, warning him that she will strike his crown and make his beard drip with blood and gore if he rejoices that he has a palace (*KTU* 1.3 IV 53–V 25). After emphasizing that 'Ilu has a palace, she communicates Ba'lu's desire for a palace:

Ba'lu most high is our king,

Our judge, there are none above him.

...

Groaning, he (Ba'lu) indeed exclaims to Bull 'Ilu, his father,

To 'Ilu, the king who established him.

...

"But there is no house for Ba'lu like the gods,

No court like the so[ns] of 'A[ti]ratu."

(*KTU* 1.3 V 32–33, 35–36, 38–39)

Unfortunately, we are missing 'Ilu's response to 'Anatu. Ba'lu also sends messengers to Kôtaru, reiterating his desire for a palace and requesting

that Kôtaru make a gift for 'Aṭiratu (KTU 1.3 VI-1.4 I 1-22). Kôtaru produces gifts for 'Aṭiratu (KTU 1.4 I 23-43), which 'Anatu and Ba'lu take to her. 'Aṭiratu is terribly afraid of 'Anatu and Ba'lu as they arrive, as she assumes that they have come to kill her or her sons (KTU 1.4 II 12-26). She is relieved when she notices their gifts (KTU 1.4 II 26-31). 'Anatu and Ba'lu ask 'Aṭiratu to speak with 'Ilu on Ba'lu's behalf regarding a palace (KTU 1.4 III). She subsequently visits 'Ilu and repeats the same request that 'Anatu made to 'Ilu regarding Ba'lu's lack of a palace (KTU 1.4 IV). 'Ilu finally agrees to Ba'lu's request: "Let a house be built for Ba'lu like the gods, a court like the sons of 'Aṭiratu" (KTU 1.4. V 1). However, his initial response to 'Aṭiratu suggests that he is less than enthusiastic and perhaps even annoyed by Ba'lu's request:

*Benevolent 'Ilu the Compassionate answers:
 "Am I in fact a servant, 'Aṭiratu a slave-girl?
 Am I indeed a slave who wields tools,
 Or 'Aṭiratu a maidservant? Does she make bricks?"*
 (KTU 1.4 IV 58-62)

'Ilu does not celebrate Ba'lu's kingship or his attainment of a palace, though it cannot be built without his approval. 'Ilu's bland attitude toward Ba'lu is consistent with his preference for Yammu whom Ba'lu has defeated.

'Anatu reports the good news to Ba'lu, he and Kôtaru consult about construction, Kôtaru builds the palace, and Ba'lu holds a banquet for the gods in his new home (KTU 1.4 V 20-VI 59). Ba'lu celebrates his kingship by taking a victory tour (KTU 1.4 VII 7-14), and all of his enemies flee in fear (KTU 1.4 VII 35-41). This indicates that his dominion is widespread and recognized by potential rivals. Ba'lu proclaims his authority over gods and humans:

*It is I alone who rules over the gods,
 Indeed, who fattens gods and people,
 Who satis[ifies] the multitudes of the earth.*
 (KTU 1.4 VII 49-52)

Ba'lu has defeated the primary threat to his authority, Yammu, and all of his other enemies flee and quake even at the sound of Ba'lu's voice. With

the enthusiastic support of 'Anatu and Kôtaru, he has attained a palace where he sits enthroned as king. Though 'Ilu and 'Aṭiratu were not initially supportive of Ba'lu's desire for a palace because of their relationship with Yammu, they eventually acquiesce. Despite the fact that Ba'lu is not the god whom 'Ilu preferred to win the battle or receive a palace, Ba'lu's victory in combat legitimates his power.

In the scene at the end of Tablet IV, Ba'lu appears to be without enemies, and he is confident in his unequalled dominion. However, he decides to send a message to Môtu, another of 'Ilu's "beloved" sons, announcing the building of his new palace (*KTU* 1.4 VII 45–49; VIII 1–37). Môtu responds to Ba'lu's message by suggesting that Ba'lu invite Môtu to a feast at which Môtu would eat Ba'lu (*KTU* 1.5 I 1–II 6). Imbedded in Môtu's message is a reference to Ba'lu killing Lôtanu (or possibly vocalized Litanu) the multi-headed, twisty serpent (*KTU* 1.5 I 27–31), though rhetorically the reference strengthens Môtu's threat, as discussed in Chapter 3. He claims that despite Ba'lu's victory over a previous enemy, he will rip Ba'lu apart and devour him (*KTU* 1.5 I 31–35). Ba'lu gives in to Môtu and declares himself to be Môtu's servant (*KTU* 1.5 II 6–12). The following two columns are too fragmentary to interpret, but in the next legible scene Ba'lu is told he will die (*KTU* 1.5 V 17).⁹² In one of the most beautiful passages of the story, Ba'lu's death is announced:

*[W]e went through to [the end of the earth.]
As far as the edge of the meadows.
We [r]eached the pleasance of the land of pestilence,
To the beauty of the field of the underworld.⁹³
We came to Ba'lu fallen to earth.
Ba'lu most high is dead,
The prince, lord of the earth perished.*

(*KTU* 1.5 VI 3–10)

Upon hearing the news, 'Ilu mourns (*KTU* 1.5 VI 11–25). 'Anatu finds Ba'lu's body and mourns (*KTU* 1.5 VI 26–1.6 I 8). With the help of Šapšu, 'Anatu carries Ba'lu's body to his mountain, buries him, and makes offerings for Ba'lu (*KTU* 1.6 I 8–31). 'Anatu then goes to 'Ilu and 'Aṭiratu, and greeting 'Ilu with deference (*KTU* 1.6 I 32–38), she cries:

*'Aṭiratu and her sons now rejoice,
The goddess and the clan of her kin,*

*Because Ba'lu most high is dead,
For the prince, lord of the earth perished.*

(KTU 1.6 I 39–43)

'Ilu tells 'Aṭiratu to choose one of her sons for 'Ilu to make king (KTU 1.6 I 43–46). She chooses *Yd'-yln*, but 'Ilu objects that he is too weak to match Ba'lu's physical capabilities (KTU 1.6 I 50–52). 'Aṭiratu then chooses 'Aṭtaru, who ascends to Ba'lu's throne, but, “His feet do not reach the footstool, his head does not reach its top.” 'Aṭtaru admits that he cannot be king on Mount Šapanu, so he descends from Ba'lu's throne, but still reigns over the earth (KTU 1.6 I 53–65). These alternative kings pale in comparison to Ba'lu and are unable to serve as adequate substitutes. This emphasizes Ba'lu's “rightful” position as king. Thematically, the feature of characterizing a series of alternative kings as inadequate when compared to Ba'lu is parallel to the series of divine warriors who are inadequate in comparison to Ninurta or Marduk (*Anzu* SB I 89–157; *EE* III, 111–112). By emphasizing the relative lack among even the best of potential alternatives, the narrative asserts that Ba'lu's kingship is legitimate.

Elsewhere, 'Anatu searches for Ba'lu and accosts Mōtu, demanding that he give up Ba'lu. Mōtu instead tells her how he devoured Ba'lu, and the second time 'Anatu accosts Mōtu she splits him, burns him, grinds him, and sows him in a field where birds eat him (KTU 1.6 II). Meanwhile, 'Ilu dreams that rain will return as a sign that Ba'lu is alive, and he is greatly relieved (KTU 1.6 III 1–21):

*He relaxes (lit., releases the brow) and laughs,
He lifts his voice and exclaims:
“I shall sit, as for me, I shall rest,
The breath in my chest shall calm down,
Because Ba'lu most high is alive,
For the prince, lord of the earth is here.”*

(KTU 1.6 III 16–21)

'Ilu sends a message to Šapšu urging her to search for Ba'lu (KTU 1.6 IV). We are missing the rest of that column, but in the next scene Ba'lu is alive. He attacks 'Aṭiratu's sons and retakes his throne:

*Ba'lu grabs the sons of 'Aṭiratu,
As for the great ones, he beats (them) on the shoulder.*

*As for the crushers of Yammu, he beats (them) with a double axe,
 As for the young of Yammu, he beats (them) to the earth.
 Then B[a'lu [sits] on his royal throne,
 [On the divan], on the seat of his dominion.*

(KTU 1.6 V 1–6)

Here we see that within the Môtû episode, Ba'lu's death occasions additional challenges to his authority from 'Aṭiratu's sons. Ba'lu's attack upon them, as he reasserts his kingship, recalls 'Aṭiratu's prior fear (in the Yammu episode) that Ba'lu intends to kill her sons:

*Why has Ba [lu] most high come?
 Why has adof[les]cent 'Anatu come?
 To crush me or [be]at my sons?
 Or [finish off the c]lan of my kin?*

(KTU 1.4 II 21–26)

'Aṭiratu's sons are potential legitimate rulers, as we see when 'Ilu and she choose a son to take the throne.⁹⁴ Therefore, they pose a threat to Ba'lu with which he must contend. This is implied in 'Aṭiratu's statement and confirmed in the scene where Ba'lu attacks them as he reasserts his dominion. Ba'lu reigns without incident for seven years, but then Môtû sends a complaint to Ba'lu about being shamed and pulverized. By shaming and mutilating Môtû, 'Anatu challenged his authority.⁹⁵ When Môtû demands restitution for the shaming and mutilation, he is asking that Ba'lu recognize and confirm his legitimacy. He demands that Ba'lu appease his anger by giving him one of his brothers to eat (KTU 1.6 V 7–25). While Ba'lu pretends to offer restitution, we learn that he actually insults Môtû further, refusing to acknowledge Môtû as a legitimate authority figure. After a gap in the text, we see Môtû charge Mount Şapanu, complaining that Ba'lu gave him one of his own brothers to eat, and they do battle (KTU 1.6 VI 9–22).

*They attack like fighters,
 Môtû is strong, Ba'lu is strong.
 They butt heads like wild bulls,
 Môtû is strong, Ba'lu is strong.
 They bite each other like serpents,
 Môtû is strong, Ba'lu is strong.*

*They pull each other like steeds,
Môtu falls, Ba 'lu falls.*

(KTU 1.6 VI 16–22)

In this fight, Ba 'lu and Môtu appear as equal contenders until Šapšu declares to Môtu that he cannot possibly succeed:

*“Take heed, divine Môtu:
How will you cont[en]d with Ba 'lu most high?
How then will Bull 'Ilu your father, hea[r] you?
Surely he will uproot the [ba]se of your seat,
Surely he will [overturn the throne] of your kingship,
Surely he will shatter the scepter of your jurisdiction.”
Divine [M]ôtu is frightened,
The beloved of 'Ilu, the noble, is scared.
Môtu is disturbed by her voice,
He [. . .]
“May Ba 'lu be seated on his royal [throne],
On [the divan, on the seat] of his dominion.”*

(KTU 1.6 VI 23–35)

This passage is key for several reasons. First, the extant text concludes Ba 'lu's conflict with Môtu proclaiming Ba 'lu's dominion. Second, the passage shows that Môtu cannot defeat Ba 'lu and maintain his own kingship without 'Ilu's support. Though we have no passages where 'Ilu himself declares Ba 'lu's legitimacy, in this scene he implicitly affirms Ba 'lu's legitimacy by undermining Môtu. In this conflict, victory is only possible with the support of 'Ilu. This differs from the battle in the Yammu episode, where 'Ilu's favored contender is defeated. In both episodes, 'Ilu retains his authority to support potential divine kings and to grant permission to other deities for various activities.

Throughout the six tablets, each main character has a particular relationship to Ba 'lu's authority. Ba 'lu himself declares his kingship (KTU 1.4 VII 42–52). 'Anatu enthusiastically supports Ba 'lu and declares his reign to 'Ilu (KTU 1.3 V 32–33). Kôtaru also enthusiastically supports Ba 'lu's dominion and assists him in defeating Yammu and constructing his palace. Though 'Aṭiratu's sons pose a threat to Ba 'lu, 'Anatu and Ba 'lu compel her to further Ba 'lu's interests, and she declares his rule (KTU

1.4 IV 43–44). Yammu, ‘Aṭṭaru, and Môtû threaten Ba‘lu’s authority, but each is overcome. ‘Aṭṭaru declares himself unfit to sit on Ba‘lu’s throne, and once defeated, Môtû declares Ba‘lu’s kingship (*KTU* 1.6 VI 33–35). In the end, Ba‘lu’s dominion is recognized by the other deities, but, as discussed below, he is not celebrated to the extent that *Enuma Elish* celebrates Marduk or Aššur, nor even to the extent that *Anzu* celebrates Ninurta.

M. S. Smith discusses the spatial organization of the characters who compete for authority, in relation to their beneficence, cult, and cosmic realms:

A further divine mapping involves realms, a feature confined to the second tier of competing males and their enemies. The *Baal Cycle* includes and builds on this divine topography of mountains and cult sites by organizing divine space additionally according to realms ruled by the second tier of the pantheon held by the males, Baal, Yamm, and Mot. In other words, realms are attributed only to Baal (sky), Yamm (sea), and Mot (underworld), and possibly Athtar (earth?). Space therefore is used in two different ways, mountains to mark proximity of deities enjoying cult and bestowing blessing of various sorts, realms to mark cosmic competition.⁹⁶

’Ilu, however, never declares Ba‘lu’s rule explicitly. This is consistent with ’Ilu’s relationship with Ba‘lu’s enemies Yammu and Môtû, who are both called ’Ilu’s “beloved” (*mdd/ydd*).⁹⁷ Three figures in the *Ba‘lu Cycle* are described with the epithet “beloved of ’Ilu”: Yammu, ’Aršu (Desire), and Môtû. This is not simply a term of endearment or expression of preference but a title with legal connotations that indicates status as designated successors. In contexts related to adoption, matrimony, inheritance, and succession, the designation “beloved” indicates valid transfer of property and position.⁹⁸ Thus, as an epithet for Yammu and Môtû it marks their legitimacy as potential kings and heirs to ’Ilu. This makes Ba‘lu’s success against them all the more remarkable and curious.

In the Yammu episode, ’Ilu supports Yammu rather than Ba‘lu, and even after Ba‘lu’s victory he is hesitant to approve of Ba‘lu’s palace. In the Môtû episode, however, ’Ilu implicitly supports Ba‘lu: after Ba‘lu is killed by Môtû, ’Ilu displays appropriate mourning behavior that matches ’Anatu’s mourning; he rejoices when he dreams that Ba‘lu may be alive; and though Môtû is another “beloved of ’Ilu,” ’Ilu does not support Môtû in his second battle with Ba‘lu. ’Ilu’s display of

appropriate mourning when Baʿlu is dead as well as his subsequent rejoicing that Baʿlu may be alive constitute acts of political affiliation with Baʿlu.⁹⁹ The narrative does not elaborate on ʾIlu’s final acceptance of Baʿlu’s authority over that of his two “beloveds.” However, considering the lack of rain and subsequent demise of croplands suffered during Baʿlu’s absence (*KTU* 1.6 IV 1–5, 12–16), we may speculate that ʾIlu’s eventual acceptance of Baʿlu’s authority conforms to human need. The fruits of Baʿlu’s dominion are necessary for the survival of humans and human society, including cultic activities that are framed as beneficial for the gods. M. S. Smith makes this point in his discussion of “monstrous,” anthropomorphic, and theriomorphic deities: “In contrast, monstrous powers constitute no benefit, but only a threat to human well-being from the periphery. Yamm, for example, is connected with the demise of Kirta’s household (*CAT* 1.14 I 19–20). Mot is known for his destruction as well (1.127.30–32).”¹⁰⁰

The *Baʿlu Cycle* exhibits an articulation of the conflict topos that is particular to Ugaritic traditions, and we have a limited corpus from which to reconstruct Ugaritic social, political, and cultic ideologies. Glyptic and monumental art from Ugarit attests to an anthropomorphic warrior-god who may be identified as Baʿlu.¹⁰¹ God lists and ritual texts attest to Baʿlu-related cultic activities. These texts indicate that various manifestations of Baʿlu were recognized, including Baʿlu Şapanu, Baʿlu of Ugarit, Baʿlu of Aleppo, and unnamed manifestations of Baʿlu, with several or all of these deities occurring within single god lists (for example, *KTU* 1.47; *KTU* 1.74; *KTU* 1.65) or ritual prescriptions (for example, *KTU* 1.46; *KTU* 1.109; *KTU* 1.130). At the same time, god lists and ritual texts also attest to Yammu-related cultic activities.¹⁰² So we cannot correlate the conflicts in the *Baʿlu Cycle* with Ugaritic cultic preferences.

Moreover, among surviving cultic texts there are no references to events in the *Baʿlu Cycle*, and ritual texts that involve the king do not exhibit any obvious identification between Baʿlu and the king. One text that appears to be a divine blessing involving the king and “Rāpiʾu, eternal king” mentions Baʿlu, but it is fragmentary at this point, so our understanding of Baʿlu’s role is unclear (*KTU* 1.108). Dennis Pardee suggests that Baʿlu may be acting as an intermediary for the king, but he recognizes that his restoration of the relevant lines is hypothetical.¹⁰³ Wyatt considers this text to indicate that Baʿlu intercedes for the ancestral kings to ensure stability for Ugarit.¹⁰⁴ A prayer to Baʿlu indicates that when a warrior attacks one’s gate, Baʿlu is the appropriate deity to

ask to drive away such a threat (*KTU* 1.119 rev. 26–36). This is consistent with the characterization of Baʿlu as a warrior. However, these texts do not further our understanding of political ideology potentially associated with Baʿlu.

Other narrative texts add depth to our characterizations of various deities, but do not relate to the conflict topos in particular. *Kirta*, a narrative about the demise and restoration of king Kirta's royal family, portrays the king making sacrifices to ʾIlu as well as Baʿlu (*KTU* 1.14 II 6–27), and Baʿlu successfully intercedes on behalf of king Kirta with ʾIlu (*KTU* 1.15 II 11–28). It is possible that Baʿlu's role as intermediary for Kirta reflects a more widespread understanding of Baʿlu's relationship to Ugaritic kings, but we cannot be certain. Daniel Schwemer generalizes from *KTU* 1.15 II 11–28 that it was Baʿlu's role to represent the interests of the earthly king to ʾIlu.¹⁰⁵ This is possible, but speculative; the scene from *Kirta* is our only clear indication of such a relationship between Baʿlu and the king.

Discussing interpretation of the *Baʿlu Cycle*, Wyatt states:

The theological dimension is always a function of the real world, whether it offers a validation or a critique of it. It has no other conceivable purpose. So it should be seen in any event as reflecting on the issue of royal legitimacy and power in the real world of Ugarit.¹⁰⁶

I agree completely that we must entertain the possibility that the *Baʿlu Cycle* offers validation *or* critique, pertaining to issues of legitimacy and power in the real world. The question is, validation or critique of *what* or *whom* within the political world of Ugarit? Aaron Tugendhaft rightly cautions that we do not have Ugaritic evidence for the explicit use of the conflict motif to endorse human kings, as we have for Mesopotamian and biblical traditions.¹⁰⁷ Still, considering ʾIlimalku's association with the king, it seems reasonable to speculate that he would have produced a narrative that would please the king and perhaps even endorse the claims of the ruling family. Alternatively, if we imagine that the story offers critique of the Ugaritic king himself, then we may have misconstrued the relationship between the scribe and king. While this is possible, it seems more likely that whatever validation or critique the *Baʿlu Cycle* offers, its commentary on Ugaritic political circumstances were sympathetic to the Ugaritic king, even if critical of some notions of power.

M. S. Smith and Wayne Pitard have examined the *Baʿlu Cycle* as a succession narrative, which employs the conflict topos within a story about

contention among brotherly rivals for succession within a royal family.¹⁰⁸ 'Ilu as the old patriarch has appointed Yammu his successor. However, when Ba'lu refuses to recognize Yammu's power, Yammu arrogantly challenges 'Ilu and the divine council, constituting "a usurpation of ['Ilu's] power by the younger ruler." Ba'lu overthrows Yammu, whose arrogance and defeat have proven him to be unsuitable for rulership. Once Ba'lu attains kingship, 'Ilu, as the old but still living patriarch, retains his status as co-regent.¹⁰⁹ Brendon Benz and David Schloen take up this line of thinking as well.¹¹⁰ While this interpretation does not include speculation tying the story of royal succession to particular kings at Ugarit, it would imply validation of the individual who ends up on the throne (a human king identified with Ba'lu), at the expense of the initially appointed heir (another royal son identified with Yammu).¹¹¹ Tugendhaft critiques this interpretation, countering that Ba'lu does not attempt to elevate himself above the other gods, but rather to become their equal.¹¹² Considering Ba'lu's status as an outsider, M. S. Smith and Pitard compare Ba'lu to a member of the "extended family," who must overcome contenders for power who are closer to the patriarch.¹¹³ A succession narrative about an outsider to the family line gaining entry to the royal household would have all the more intrigue.

Two additional scholarly interpretations feature Ba'lu's outsider status more prominently. Wyatt explores the possibility that the *Ba'lu Cycle* expounds upon the vassal-suzerain relationship between Ugarit and Hatti.¹¹⁴ He identifies the poem as a wedding song, celebrating the marriage of the Ugaritic king to a Hittite princess, offering a mythological rendering of the vassal treaty that accompanied the marriage. In this interpretation Ba'lu would be identified with the Hittite king, whereas the Ugaritic king would be identified with 'Aṭtaru, accepting his subordination to his suzerain Ba'lu.¹¹⁵ M. S. Smith has criticized Wyatt's interpretation due to lack of evidence and an over-emphasis on the notion that 'Ilimalku composed the narrative first-hand within a specific historical context.¹¹⁶ Tugendhaft critiques Wyatt's interpretive starting point, that is, Wyatt's characterization of the conflict motif in ancient West Asian, including Ugaritic, royal propaganda as "a cliché for legitimacy."¹¹⁷ Tugendhaft rejects this as a scholarly projection onto Ugaritic traditions: "Wyatt's conclusion flattens out the differences between the various attestations of the combat motif."¹¹⁸ While Wyatt's specific identifications are speculative, his creativity in entertaining the possibility that Ba'lu could conceivably represent the Hittite king rather than the

Ugaritic king challenges typical assumptions. If Wyatt's speculation at all approximates 'Ilīmallu's motivations, this version of the story would serve the Ugaritic king's ideological purposes while not affording him the highest rank in the narrative taxonomy.

Alternatively, Tugendhaft argues that the narrative challenges the validity of the suzerain-vassal relationship, which was prominent throughout the contemporary political milieu.¹¹⁹ He emphasizes that the *Ba'lu Cycle* portrays "a present characterized by continuous conflict."¹²⁰ He draws out the significance of Ba'lu's change in status from outsider to "brother," that is, an equal and recognized treaty partner. He further argues that the plot reflects real events in the political world. Specifically, Ba'lu is "a regicide who yet succeeds in his ambitions," killing the rightful king Yammu, but then needing the recognition of his peers and 'Ilu. As such, Ba'lu would represent Niqmaddu of Kadesh, who killed his predecessor but then required recognition from local peer kings as well as the more powerful Hittite king Mursili II, represented by 'Ilu.¹²¹ In this interpretation, the Ugaritic king would be among the peers whose validation Niqmaddu of Kadesh required, perhaps, in the world of the story, among the sons of 'Ilu and 'Aṭiratu with whom Ba'lu seeks to be equal. If this interpretation is accurate, the *Ba'lu Cycle* would offer critique of a specific king, though not the Ugaritic king. Thus, we would maintain the notion that the scribe's work was sympathetic to the king, but we would have to explore the implications of the negative portrayal of Ba'lu for scholarly reconstructions of Ugaritic theology.

Elsewhere, Tugendhaft makes a more general argument about the "poem's representation of political rank as unstable and ambiguous," along with critique of suzerain-vassal politics.¹²² M. S. Smith, speaking about Ba'lu's status as a vassal to Yammu, remarks that this notion may correlate to "Ugarit's limited political situation lying between the great powers of the ancient Near East."¹²³ Tugendhaft cites this observation then builds on it, arguing that the *Ba'lu Cycle* does more than offer "reflection of terrestrial realities, but critical reflection on the foundational claims of Late Bronze Age political institutions by calling into question the hierarchical principle that justifies them."¹²⁴ After presenting evidence for how the *Ba'lu Cycle* portrays the suzerain-vassal system negatively, he draws out the implication: "neither the kingship of Baal's human devotee (the king of Ugarit) nor the suzerainty of that king's overlord (the king of Hatti) enjoys cosmic grounding."¹²⁵ Here, he implies that Ba'lu's role in the text would possibly pertain to the king of Ugarit's political position. If we push that

association further, this version of the story would be unflattering for the king of Ugarit himself. Tugendhaft does not press this association, rather, he concludes that the producers of the *Ba'lu Cycle* resisted the naturalization of political hierarchies and developed a “critical form of political wisdom.”¹²⁶ If Tugendhaft has accurately uncovered the tone of the *Ba'lu Cycle*, this general critique of suzerain-vassal politics could have served the interests of the Ugaritic king by questioning the political system to which he was subject.

According to the *Ba'lu Cycle*, the kingship of Ba'lu is central to human survival and beneficial to the gods, and Ba'lu ultimately defeats his divine political rivals and achieves dominion. We may infer from this that some parties in Ugarit, at least the scribe Ilīmalku, king Niqmaddu, and presumably their associates, wanted to emphasize Ba'lu's rise to divine royal authority. Though we do not have further evidence from Ugarit as to how Ba'lu's kingship might have been associated with Niqmaddu's dynasty, the scribe's affiliation with the king suggest that Ba'lu's authority was of interest with regard to Niqmaddu's own political legitimacy. Throughout the various possibilities offered in the literary and political interpretations just described, it would remain the case that the producers of the *Ba'lu Cycle* built upon and furthered the currency of the conflict topos by utilizing it in such innovative ways.

From a comparative perspective the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle* shows that the conflict topos was adaptable even within a theological context in which the deity rising to power had limited dominion and faced repeated threats to his authority. In this sense the depiction of Ba'lu's authority and the characterization of Ba'lu's relationships with other deities through the notions of combat and alliance more closely resemble actual human kingship than do our Mesopotamian or biblical depictions of divine kingship. Ba'lu's authority, like human royal authority, is always limited in scope, reliant upon allies, and subject to potential threats and contingencies.

Comparisons and Narrative Taxonomy

The narratives discussed above represent distinct articulations of the conflict topos that propose specific hierarchies in which certain gods are elevated, achieving a new position in their respective pantheons. We can further appreciate how these narratives articulate the conflict topos by

comparing specific details from each tradition. This both strengthens our understanding of how the conflict topos works in each text and highlights how each context and literary tradition is particular. The purpose of comparing these texts, however, is not to suggest that they resulted from literary dependence. Of the four texts discussed, the Aššur version of *Enuma Elish* is the only one that clearly depends upon another. Otherwise, there is no reason to assume or propose that these texts exhibit direct dependence. Rather, they each draw on a common stock of topoi generated and circulated within the ancient West Asian milieu in which these narrative traditions were produced.

Each narrative adapts the legitimating/delegitimizing ideology of the conflict topos in service of a particular deity; in each narrative the authority of the prominent deity is described as kingship; and this kingship is justified through victory in combat. Once the shared topos and ideological import is recognized, we can better appreciate how each exemplary text is distinct and serves to legitimate particular institutions or socio-political arrangements, that is, specific cults, cities, temples, or kings. I maintain that conflict myths exhibit a taxonomy of characters that authors and redactors manipulate in various historical and political contexts in order to promote their preferred deities, institutions, polities, and royal figures, and to attack disfavored divine and human entities. The primary relationship in conflict myths is that of the victorious god to his defeated enemy. Any god in the role of victorious deity is portrayed as becoming a possessor of legitimate power, and any defeated god is portrayed as losing power; in the case of Yammu, his lost power had been previously legitimated and approved by the hierarchy of gods, whereas Anzu, Tiamat, and Qingu are would-be possessors of illegitimate power. The secondary relationships, however, both between the victorious deity and the other deities and between the defeated deity and pantheon, offer more space for the composers of these narratives to play. These relationships are adjusted in order to position the victorious and defeated gods relative to the other gods who, in the divine world of the text, represent the existing, traditional, and hegemonic authorities. Over the course of each narrative, the elevation of the victorious god, and whatever other events may surround that aspect of the plot, affect the existing order of gods. The texts just discussed differ in how they portray the relationship of the victorious god to the existing hierarchy of gods and the relationship of the defeated enemy to the existing order.

The victorious gods each have distinct relationships to the existing pantheon, and their elevation to kingship affects the existing hierarchy of gods. In *Anzu* and the two versions of *Enuma Elish*, Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur are chosen by the gods to face a threat that all the gods fear. They are endorsed by the gods before battle. Marduk and Aššur are recruited for battle by Ea, and Ninurta is recruited by his mother Belet-ili at Ea's request. In contrast, Ba'lu responds to a threat to his own authority of his own accord. He is not endorsed by 'Ilu and 'Aṭiratu in his battle against Yammu. Rather, he defeats the figure to whom 'Ilu has granted kingship. This makes Ba'lu's rise to power all the more remarkable, yet shows that his kingship was initially (and repeatedly) contested.

The endorsement that other gods give to Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, or Ba'lu, within their respective traditions, correlates to the level of threat perceived by members of the existing divine hierarchy, as does the relative degree of praise heaped on the victor after battle. The greater the threat perceived by members of the existing divine hierarchy, the more the gods endorse and subsequently praise the victorious warrior who quells that threat. For Ba'lu, it appears that he is the only party actually threatened by Yammu. 'Aṭtaru is also threatened by 'Ilu's support of Yammu, but this part of the text is too fragmentary to understand how 'Aṭtaru deals with this threat. The other gods are hesitant to respond to Yammu's messengers, possibly out of fear (*KTU* 1.2 I 21–24), but 'Ilu and 'Aṭiratu are not threatened at all. Rather, 'Ilu endorses Yammu, and 'Aṭiratu is threatened by Ba'lu. In *Anzu*, all the gods are threatened by Anzu's possession of power. Three candidates are recruited to slay Anzu, but they are all too afraid. Ninurta's willingness to fight stands in contrast to the fear of the other gods, and they support Ninurta fully and praise him afterward. In *Enuma Elish*, the level of threat to the gods and the eventual praise of Marduk and Aššur for nullifying the threat is paramount. Tiamat and Qingu are more ominous opponents than Anzu. While Anzu is a sole rogue usurper of power, Tiamat and Qingu have a vast army. We see again that the hero's willingness to do battle, even with some trepidation, stands in contrast to other gods who are unable to face the threat. Likewise, the praise resulting from Marduk and Aššur's respective victories extends beyond that of Ninurta, and certainly beyond that of Ba'lu.

Ninurta receives kingship and prominence among the gods, and the other gods promise that he will have no rival, but he is not explicitly exalted above all the other deities. Enlil retains his position at the top of the pantheon; this is indicated in the narrative detail that Ninurta will be

incorporated into Enlil's temple at Nippur, but Ninurta in no way supersedes Enlil. As for Ba'lu, 'Ilu never even mentions Ba'lu's kingship directly, whereas all the gods repeatedly heap praise upon Marduk and Aššur, and all the gods affirm Ninurta's rise to power from the start. 'Ilu, like Enlil relative to Ninurta, retains his status within the pantheon. Ba'lu receives kingship and prominence, and he enjoys a period of peaceful reign without rivals. The narrative portrays him as greater than his defeated rivals and the alternative rulers who are inadequate to take his throne, but he is never explicitly elevated above the other gods. Marduk and Aššur, in contrast, are exalted above the other deities and even take on the names and roles of other deities. In this regard, the Aššur version of *Enuma Elish* exceeds the Babylonian version by incorporating the merger of Aššur's name with the name of the older god Anšar, such that Aššur becomes both the victorious warrior deity and the creator deity. As such, Aššur's final position incorporates two roles: warrior deity and father creator deity. As discussed in Chapter 3, these two roles are also combined in biblical characterizations of Yahweh. In sum, the way that each narrative positions the victorious deity with respect to the other gods before and after battle is distinct. The degree of endorsement each rising deity receives before battle and the amount of praise heaped on the deity after his victory correlates positively to the level of the threat that the other gods face. By contrasting these aspects we see how these texts differ with regard to characterizations of changing power dynamics among the gods.

Likewise, the relationship of the defeated enemy to the other gods is distinct in each narrative. Once we identify differences in how the narratives construe this relationship, we see that these stories exhibit varying characterizations of illegitimate power structures. Throughout this chapter, Anzu, Tiamat, Qingu, Yammu, and Môtu are described with terms such as "enemies," "defeated," "illegitimate," and "usurpers." This reflects the perspective of the texts. However, in each narrative these characters are potential rulers who possess power given to them from some divine source. Were this not the case, they would not be considered threats to the divine hierarchy.

Anzu is the only usurper who is not allied with any other deity in the narrative. He steals the Tablet of Destinies from Enlil; no one supports Anzu's possession of power. The other enemy figures each have allies who endorse their claims to power. These claims are "proven" illegitimate, according to the ideology of the narratives, through defeat of each usurper and reclamation of legitimate authority by the victorious god. Tiamat supports

Qingu; she selects him from her new brood to lead her army and be her husband, and she grants him “kingship of all the gods” (*EE I*, 147–162). It is significant that Tiamat possesses power to do so, because this reflects her position in the pantheon. Though she becomes an enemy and endorses a divine king whom the other gods consider illegitimate, at the beginning of the narrative she functions within the existing divine hierarchy and has prominent power within the pantheon. It is only after Apsu’s death that she becomes a threat to the other gods, producing an army and a usurper with whom she plans to overhaul the entire existing hierarchy. As mentioned above, this threat dwarfs the threat of Anzu, who works alone.

Tiamat’s power to confer kingship is comparable to Belet-ilī’s power in *Anzu*, though their relationships to the existing order and victorious deities are opposite. Belet-ilī endowed Enlil and Anu with their respective powers. She is the deity who established the divine order and hierarchy that Anzu threatens: “Anzu has taken away the kingship that I engineered” (*Anzu SB I* 207). She works toward restoration of legitimate power through her son Ninurta. Thus, Tiamat’s relationship with Qingu is similar to Belet-ilī’s relationship to Ninurta, but Tiamat and Qingu work to disrupt the status quo whereas Belet-ilī and Ninurta work to restore the established order, only with Ninurta in an elevated position. ’Aṭīratu’s relationship to power and legitimate rule in the *Ba’lu Cycle* is much more complex than that of Tiamat or Belet-ilī, though her position as matriarch affords her a similar prerogative to choose kings.

Tiamat and the offspring she endorses are both portrayed as wielding illegitimate power. Belet-ilī and the son she endorses are both portrayed as legitimate. ’Aṭīratu, like Belet-ilī, holds a stable and legitimate position within the pantheon but, in contrast, the sons she endorses are portrayed as inadequate pretenders to Ba’lu’s throne.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the two “beloveds” of ’Ilu, Yammu and Mōtu, are ultimately portrayed losing power as Ba’lu gains authority. This relationship between the defeated foes and the existing divine hierarchy is quite distinct from and more complex than what we see in *Anzu* and *Enuma Elish*. ’Aṭīratu is afraid of Ba’lu and considers him a threat to her sons as potential rulers. The reciprocal threat that Ba’lu and ’Aṭīratu’s sons present to one another is realized when ’Aṭīratu and ’Ilu choose a replacement for Ba’lu from her sons and again when Ba’lu attacks her sons before retaking his throne. ’Ilu, the father and creator god, endorses Yammu in his conflict with Ba’lu, and though he does not endorse Mōtu in his final battle with Ba’lu, he does not explicitly endorse Ba’lu either.

Each extant narrative articulation of the conflict topos exhibits a relationship between the victorious deity and his defeated enemy, and this relationship serves to legitimate the authority of the victorious deity at the expense of the defeated foe's potential power. The nature of this relationship is consistent throughout instances of the conflict topos, whether in whole narrative articulations or instances of the conflict motif external to these narratives. At the same time, there is flexibility in the adaptation of this taxonomy of characters, indicated by the fact that different gods can be placed in the roles of victor or defeated challenger, and different historical agents and polities can be identified with these figures. However, victory is always indicative of legitimacy in that victory justifies possession of authority, and likewise the portrayal of defeat brings into question the defeated figure's legitimacy and leads to loss of power in the world of the narrative. The taxonomy of relationships surrounding the two primary characters, however, varies among our extant narratives of the conflict topos. By comparing the relationships of the victorious deities and defeated deities with the existing divine power structures, we see that these relationships represent varying portrayals of how legitimate power may be conferred from the status quo to a new divine hierarchy. With each narrative, we only realize the distinctness and significance of its particular arrangement of relationships by viewing alternatives to that arrangement.

Each narrative treated in this chapter promotes a particular deity at the expense of another deity and validates the institution of kingship. Beyond this ideological work, we have differing amounts of evidence for use of these narrative traditions to promote the institution of temple, specific localities, and individuals. Among Mesopotamian data, we see that Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur-centered combat traditions were employed to promote particular cult locations and cities. *Anzu* emphasizes a relationship between Ninurta and Nippur; specifically the text claims that the cult of Ninurta will enter Enlil's temple Ekur in Nippur. Otherwise, Ninurta's cult is to spread to the "four corners," indicating general widespread prominence. Monumental art from Ninurta's temple in Kalḫu shows that Aššurnasirpal II alluded to Ninurta's victories, and the visual linking of the building to the deity's victory possibly served to promote the temple and new capital city as well.¹²⁸ The Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish* exhibit strong Babylon-centered and Aššur-centered cosmologies, respectively. *Enuma Elish* portrays the establishment of the city Babylon and Marduk's temple there as divinely sanctioned activities, and all the gods agree to frequent the location. Likewise, the Assyrian version

of *Enuma Elish* claims the same for the city Aššur and the god Aššur's temple there. In each case, the claim that the deity would be present at a specific location (temple and city) promotes this location by associating it with divine activity and presence. The resulting honor and status afforded to the temple and city would then benefit cultic and administrative authorities there, through the activity of cult-related material and symbolic economy.

In the *Ba'lu Cycle*, Ba'lu's home and palace is on Mount Šapanu, located about 40 kilometers north of Ugarit. After he defeats Yammu and attains his palace he goes on a victory tour that emphasizes widespread rule (*KTU* 1.4 VII 7–14). This detail is similar to the notion in *Anzu* that the cult of Ninurta would be spread to the “four corners.” Both narratives indicate general widespread prominence of the deity, but neither emphasize the establishment of a specific city as the locus of the deity's presence, as does *Enuma Elish*. In the *Ba'lu Cycle*, the city of Ugarit is only mentioned in the two legible colophons (to Tablets IV and VI) in references to Niqmaddu, the king of Ugarit. The *Ba'lu Cycle* does not make any explicit claims about Ugarit or Ba'lu's temple there, though it seems reasonable that the pro-Ba'lu ideology of the text would also promote Ba'lu-related cult activity within Ugarit. This possibility is not mutually exclusive with the fact that Yammu's loss of power within the world of the narrative does not correlate to lack of veneration in Ugarit. In sum, in the case of the *Ba'lu Cycle*, we may speculate that the narrative would implicitly promote Ba'lu-related cult activity in Ugarit, but the text itself characterizes Ba'lu's reign and presence in more general terms; *Anzu* also emphasizes general widespread prominence of Ninurta's cult, though it highlights Ninurta's association with Nippur and Enlil's temple there; the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*, by contrast, exhibit bold claims about the establishment of the cities Babylon and Aššur, respectively, and temples of Marduk and Aššur, respectively, within these cities.

Regarding use of the conflict topos within royal ideology, our best evidence comes from Neo-Assyrian inscriptions and explanatory texts in which kings are identified with Ninurta, Marduk, or Aššur. Among these inscriptions, the enemies of kings are also identified with Ninurta's enemies Anzu and Asakku and Marduk/Aššur's enemy Qingu. In the explanatory texts, the king's actions in ritual are identified as Ninurta or Marduk's actions in combat while the objects manipulated or mutilated in the ritual are identified as the deity's weapons and enemies, including

Anzu, Asakku, Tiamat, and Qingu. These texts, as well as others discussed above, show that the legitimating/delegitimizing ideology developed within combat traditions was employed to promote specific kings and the office of the king more generally by portraying the king in the role of victorious deity.

Though we do not have similar evidence for use of Ba‘lu imagery to promote the king among surviving Ugaritic materials, the scribe who produced the *Ba‘lu Cycle* was associated with the king. It is plausible that the narrative would have promoted the interests of his dynasty—and those interests may have included “critical reflection” on standard notions of power.¹²⁹ According to the narrative, the success of Ba‘lu’s hard-won royal dominion benefited the gods (*KTU* 1.4 VI 38–59; VII 49–52; 1.6 III 1–21). Perhaps the notion of royal dominion that is secured despite repeated opposition was significant within Ugarit’s political ideology. At minimum, the notion that the reigning divine king’s presence is beneficial to his associates and subjects would involve a positive claim on behalf of the reigning human king, suggesting that his dominion would benefit his associates and subjects as well.

Within each tradition, of course, the conflict topos would have functioned along with other modes of legitimating royal authority.¹³⁰ We have evidence among various ancient West Asian traditions that kings might claim to have divine approval and endorsement through the notions of divine parentage, divine adoption, possession of divine qualities such as “radiance” (*melammu*, *namurratu*, or *puluḥtu*), being the “image” (*šalmu*) of the deity, divination, intercession, and “sacred marriage.”¹³¹ In each case, including instances of the conflict motif within royal ideology, the king is portrayed as having special proximity to the divine, through a distinct relationship with, quality of, mode of access to, or identification with the divine. Among the variety of tactics used for promoting kings, combat traditions might have been especially useful for mitigating concerns about a king rising to power, quelling potential rivals, engaging in battle, and constructing temples and palaces.

Conclusion

The narratives of *Anzu*, the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*, and the Ugaritic *Ba‘lu Cycle* each exhibit a distinct articulation of the conflict topos. Through comparison we can better see how these texts

share broad narrative components, certain specific narrative details, and interest in the issue of legitimated power. At the same time, the process of comparison allows us to appreciate how each narrative is distinct and to reconstruct how the legitimating/delegitimizing ideology may have operated within each context and literary tradition. The taxonomy of primary characters, that is, the relationship between the combating deities within each narrative, serves to elevate the victorious deities and to manage any rivals by portraying them as defeated and, therefore, losing power. The taxonomy of secondary characters, including the relationship between the victor and existing divine hierarchy, the relationship between the defeated rival(s) and existing divine hierarchy, and the relationships among the other deities within the pantheon, exhibits variation. This variation indicates that there was a range of ways that change among hegemonic power structures could be conceived—whether it be a divine power structure, as in these narratives, or a human power structure.

The narratives discussed in this chapter were produced by authors, redactors, and copyists who utilized the conflict topos to accomplish ideological work, primarily to promote a specific deity: Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, or (despite opposition) Baʿlu. These deities are portrayed as victorious warrior deities, and their victories justify their rise to power and resulting dominion. The authority of each of these deities is described as kingship, which is portrayed in each text as a natural or given form of authority. In Mesopotamian traditions, the legitimating ideology employed in service of favored deities and the institution of kingship was also extended to promote particular cosmic and earthly locations and royal individuals. We have explicit evidence for promotion of specific cities and temples from *Anzu* and the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*. It is possible, though speculative, that the *Baʿlu Cycle* would have promoted Baʿlu-related cultic activity in Ugarit as well, by celebrating Baʿlu's rise to power and prominence within the pantheon.

In the cases of Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur, external evidence from inscripational, ritual, and explanatory texts (while admittedly sometimes obscure) shows that the legitimating ideology developed within combat traditions was employed to promote specific kings. We have no direct evidence for the political use of the *Baʿlu Cycle* in Ugaritic royal ideology, but we may speculate that the scribe's association with the king suggests that the narrative was at least agreeable to the king. It is plausible that the text furthered the interests of the king, whether those interests involved royal propaganda, or critique of international political turmoil, or both.

These whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos represent the type of story that instances of the conflict motif invoke and recall. As such, the traditions just discussed serve as background for the following chapter because they illustrate a range of connotations for the conflict topos in the ancient West Asian milieu. However, I would not suggest that instances of the conflict motif depend on these texts. In fact, our earliest example of the conflict motif, a letter from Mari, is contemporary with the Old Babylonian version of *Anzu* and predates the other texts just discussed, so dependence is impossible. Nor do I want to suggest that instances of the conflict motif are extracted from narratives and subsequently used for ideological purposes. Rather, whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos already accomplish ideological work. These narratives promote distinct arrangements of divine characters, elevate a particular deity within the divine hierarchy, and portray the political institution of kingship as a natural or given model of legitimate authority. *Anzu* and *Enuma Elish* also explicitly highlight specific cities and temples. Moreover, the characters and events of *Anzu* and both versions of *Enuma Elish* are referenced in Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian royal ideology. The conflict topos was an ideological tool, and we have examples of the topos being used in the form of whole narratives and in shorter forms of the motif in epitomes, allusions, and imagery. It is such digest expressions of the topos that the next chapter treats.

III

The Conflict Motif

*I restored you to the th[rone of your ancestors]. Those
weapon[s] with which I crushed Sea (têmtum), I gave you.*

(MARI LETTER A.1968, 1'-4')

NUR-SÎN, THE SERVANT of king Zimri-Lim of Mari, sends a letter to Zimri-Lim in order to convey a message from the god Adad of Aleppo, as reported by Abiya, a prophet of Adad. In the message, Adad takes credit for the king's reign and says that he gave his weapons to the king. Specifically, these are the weapons that he had used to fight Sea. They represent the authority of the god exhibited by his victory in battle, and he shares this power with the king by giving him the weapons. The transfer of the weapons occurs as Adad restores Zimri-Lim to kingship. The prophet Abiya claims that the stability of Zimri-Lim's rule is contingent upon Adad's endorsement, which is physically represented by the weapons that exemplify Adad's own power. This letter, dating to the eighteenth century BCE, contains our earliest example of the conflict motif. It exhibits political use of the motif for legitimating divine and human royal authority: the warrior god has defeated his enemy, and that victory attests to his authority; the victorious deity then has the prerogative to endorse the authority of particular human kings, and likewise to withdraw divine support; and here the prophet Abiya asserts that Adad does so by placing Zimri-Lim on the throne and giving his weapons to Zimri-Lim. We shall return to the case of Zimri-Lim below. For now, this letter provides an example, exhibiting that the conflict motif transmits ideology. In this case, it transmits an ideology whereby human agents describe and comment on socio-political relationships through claims that the victorious warrior deity endorses and controls the fates of particular royal figures and polities.

Whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos serve to legitimate certain gods, temples, cities, kings, and the institution of kingship. The conflict motif—that is, epitomes, allusions, references, and imagery pertaining to the victory of a divine warrior over the sea or dragons—likewise has ideological import. The motif occurs in several genres, including epistolary, poetic, proverbial, historiographic, and prophetic texts, which we have from diverse sources: texts discovered through archeology as well as the biblical anthology. In all cases, we must give attention to how our data has been transmitted and possibly reworked over time. Though these texts do not narrate a battle between deities, they contain allusions, epitomes, and imagery pertaining to such a battle. These references are not simply flourishes that enrich the letters, poems, proverbs, historiography, or prophecies. Rather, authors use the conflict motif to accomplish ideological work by relating contemporary contexts and concerns to divine events. Specifically, the hierarchic taxonomy of the conflict topos—that is, the relationship between the victorious deity and his enemy—is employed outside of a narrative context in order to communicate culturally-contingent assertions about the authority of specific divine beings and human agents, as well as the legitimacy of certain temples, the institution of kingship, and particular polities. Additionally, the motif is employed to attack the legitimacy of disfavored agents and polities and to summon the victorious warrior deity to act against these human enemies. Use of the motif for delegitimizing purposes is further evidence for the political import of the motif. In other words, the motif would only be effective for attacking the legitimacy of particular (disfavored) agents and polities if its implicit ideological connotations were clear. Likewise, every instance of the conflict motif, whether used to bolster or attack a divine or human figure or polity, would reinforce its connotations within political and theological discourse and further its ideological currency.

While I do not maintain that examples of the conflict motif depend upon the specific whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos discussed above, they are closely related. They exhibit parallel imagery; the same or similar divine characters; similar relationships among divine characters; a shared concern with divine authority particularly articulated through the political concept of kingship; and the potential for making comparisons between divine figures and human agents for legitimizing or delegitimizing purposes. The motif references or summarizes a conflict between a warrior deity and sea deity/dragon that the

warrior deity has won. We can only speculate about the specific details of the story in traditions where no full narrative survives. In these cases, there may have been full narratives of divine combat among oral traditions and/or written materials that did not survive. Nevertheless, we can identify a constellation of divine characters, their relationships and actions, and various narrative details, which indicate that the conflict topos was known and the motif was employed in literature from Mari, Ugarit, and Judah. The texts discussed in this chapter range in date from the eighteenth century to the sixth century BCE. In the following chapter, we see that the motif continues to appear after this time, in late-biblical texts, as well as first- and early second-century CE Judean texts, including those interested in the figure of Jesus/*Christos*, and in late antique and medieval Jewish texts.¹ In sum, the conflict topos serves as a foundation for discourse about what deities, humans, and/or polities are favored and disfavored. Such preferences are specifically articulated through ideological claims about the relative legitimacy or illegitimacy of the subject's power, which is indicated by their corresponding association with the victorious warrior deity or a defeated divine enemy. This discourse is exhibited in both whole narratives and examples of the motif; both bear out the legitimizing/delegitimizing function of the conflict topos.

Ugaritic and biblical texts feature epitomes in which a warrior god defeats the sea and/or rules over the sea or sea-based entities. Several Ugaritic texts promote the prowess of Ba'lu and 'Anatu through the conflict motif, and many biblical texts employ the motif to promote Yahweh. Biblical texts also employ the conflict motif to portray disfavored agents and polities negatively by comparing them to or identifying them with Yahweh's defeated enemies. Additionally, the conflict motif is employed to invoke Yahweh to intervene on behalf of humans in particular socio-political affairs. Pertaining to royal figures, the motif serves to make claims about the legitimacy of kingship and of particular kings, such as Zimri-Lim and David. The king's political power and military success depends upon his divine endorsement, which is articulated with specific reference to the deity's defeat of the sea/dragon. The victorious warrior god has the prerogative to grant or withdraw his support of the king. In the case of David, the motif contributes to royal ideology that exalts David above other humans, especially rival royal figures. In the case of Zimri-Lim, the patron god of a neighboring polity endorses the king but also threatens to withdraw his favor should Zimri-Lim not abide by his stipulations.

*Victorious Warrior Deities: 'Anatu, Ba'lu,
and Yahweh*

Passages from the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle*, the fragmentary Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.83, and many books of the Hebrew Bible include epitomes of a battle between a warrior deity and a series of defeated enemies. Ba'lu, 'Anatu, and Yahweh are each attributed victory over the sea, a multi-headed serpentine figure, and/or draconic figures. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ninurta defeats a similar list of foes, and the gods Marduk and Aššur each defeat the sea deity Tiamat, along with her army of serpentine, draconic, and composite figures. These warrior gods are said to have defeated a series of foes, and this shows their superiority in battle. In the cases of Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, and Ba'lu, a particular battle is singled out as the event that secures kingship for the victorious god. *Anzu* narrates Ninurta's pivotal battle with Anzu, the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish* narrate Marduk and Aššur's respective victories over Tiamat, and the *Ba'lu Cycle* narrates Ba'lu's victory over Yammu. In surviving biblical traditions, we do not have a whole narrative articulation of Yahweh's combat with the sea or related enemies, but his victory and subsequent rule is referenced throughout the biblical anthology. In the case of Yahweh, we have examples that primarily emphasize his royal status; passages in which the conflict motif is intertwined with creation themes; instances in which the conflict motif is combined with the exodus motif; and examples in which Yahweh's past victories are invoked in order to summon Yahweh to intervene in the contemporary socio-political situation and/or to portray human enemies as destined for defeat. In each case, references to battle between a warrior deity and his/her defeated enemy serve to exhibit the prowess of the warrior deity.

Among the defeated foes of 'Anatu, Ba'lu, and Yahweh are the sea, the multi-headed serpent, and draconic figures. These vanquished enemies are sometimes, but not always, identified with one another, and there is fluidity among their specific characteristics, which must be analyzed with each example.² The sea is characterized in Ugaritic texts as the deity Yammu/Naharu (Sea/River). The Hebrew cognate *yām* is also the sea, which in some passages has agency. Ugaritic *tunnanu* and the Hebrew cognate *tannîn* (sometimes also *tannîm*), meaning "dragon," occur in Ugaritic and biblical passages alongside the sea or within the sea. Sometimes the draconic figure is identified with Ugaritic Yammu, Lōtanu, Hebrew *Yām* (Sea), Leviathan, or Rahab. In Ba'lu and Yahweh traditions, the multi-headed serpent is identified specifically as Lōtanu and Leviathan, whereas passage relating 'Anatu's

killing of this figure does not name him. In some passages the sea seems to have a serpentine or draconic form, but in others there appears to be two or more separate enemies, including the sea and various serpentine or dragon figures. Our understanding of how these figures are identified with each other largely depends on our interpretation of parallel lines and adjacent stanzas in poetic passages.³ In some passages, it is unclear whether we have, for example, a couplet or a triplet set of parallel lines, and this can lead to ambiguity, which must be considered in each case.

Victories over such defeated enemies are recounted to show the capabilities of the warrior deity and, in the cases of Ba'lu and Yahweh, the dominion gained through their victories that is made explicit through the conflict motif. The goddess 'Anatu never attains royal authority, but she is portrayed as a capable warrior who engages in gruesome massacres (KTU 1.3 II). In the *Ba'lu Cycle* she is Ba'lu's constant ally and her actions are essential to Ba'lu's success. After Ba'lu defeats Yammu, he sends messengers to 'Anatu to request that she assist him in attaining a palace. When Ba'lu's messengers arrive, however, she fears that they have come to tell her that Ba'lu is under threat. She shows her readiness to confront any enemy of Ba'lu by recounting her previous victories:

She lifts her voice and cries out:

Why have Vine (Gapnu) and Field ('Ugaru) come?

What enemy appears against Ba'lu,

What adversary against the Rider of Clouds?

Surely I crushed the beloved of 'Ilu, Yammu,

Surely I drained River (Naharu), the great god,

Surely I muzzled Dragon (Tunnanu), I harnessed him.⁴

I crushed the twisting serpent,

The powerful one with seven heads.

I crushed the beloved of 'Ilu, Desi[re] ('Ar[šu]),

I destroyed the calf of 'Ilu, Rebel ('Ataku).

I crushed the dog of 'Ilu, Fire ('Ištu),

I extinguished the daughter of 'Ilu, Flame (Dabibu),

That I might fight for silver, inherit gold.

(KTU 1.3 III 35-47)

We do not know when or in what context these battles occurred. Without further context, we only learn that 'Anatu is a successful warrior who has

defeated many enemies. In the current context this shows her capabilities in battle and confidence in facing any of Ba'lu's potential enemies. Several of her foes in this passage are associated with 'Ilu. This is significant with respect to the power dynamics in the *Ba'lu Cycle* regarding 'Ilu's patriarchal authority and Ba'lu's rise to authority.⁵ 'Anatu's actions throughout further Ba'lu's rise to authority, and by defeating figures favored by 'Ilu she detracts from and challenges 'Ilu's authority. This passage seems to list four separate enemies: Yammu, the multi-headed serpent, 'Aršu (Desire), and 'Išitu (Fire). According to the structure of the parallel lines, we may understand that the last two enemies are 'Aršu (Desire)/'Ataku (Rebel) and 'Išitu (Fire)/*Dabibu* (Flame).⁶ The second figure is "the twisting serpent, the powerful one with seven heads." These parallel lines describe one figure that is serpentine and multi-headed. This exact phrase occurs in a passage recounting Ba'lu's defeated foes (*KTU* 1.5 I 2–3), where the multi-headed serpent is identified as Lōtanu, and a similar phrase occurs in *Isa* 27:1, where he is identified as Leviathan.⁷ In the list of 'Anatu's defeated enemies, it is possible that the multi-headed serpent is identified with Yammu, but this reading is not certain because the passage is ambiguous.⁸ The first enemy 'Anatu names is Yammu (Sea)/Naharu (River)/Tunnanu (Dragon). Yammu/Naharu is consistently the name for Yammu, but elsewhere in the *Ba'lu Cycle*, he is not identified or described as a dragon (*tunnanu*). When Ba'lu fights Yammu, several of his body parts are mentioned: his joints, form, torso, arms, head, and eyes; but there is nothing to suggest he has a draconic form (*KTU* 1.2 IV 1–41). In this passage, however, Yammu/Naharu is described as a dragon (*tunnanu*) and is either associated with the multi-headed serpent or identified as the multi-headed serpent.

In the context of the *Ba'lu Cycle*, 'Anatu's defeat of Yammu and the multi-headed serpent presents a difficulty, because Ba'lu is said to have faced the same enemies. Tablet II of the *Ba'lu Cycle* narrates Ba'lu's victory over Yammu, and Tablet V references Ba'lu's combat with the multi-headed serpent. There is no attempt to reconcile this apparent contradiction, and perhaps there was no need to do so because 'Anatu was an essential and constant ally of Ba'lu. She also battles Mōtu directly and is pivotal in Ba'lu's ultimate victory over Mōtu. Perhaps the references to 'Anatu battling Ba'lu's other enemies were interpreted in a similar manner, but we have no explicit data with which to elucidate how her victories were understood.⁹

Ba'lu's victory over the multi-headed serpent occurs in the episode of Mōtu's challenges to Ba'lu (*KTU* 1.5–1.6). The reference is embedded

in a message from Môtu to Ba‘lu. Môtu sends a threatening message in which he references Ba‘lu killing the multi-headed serpent, here identified as Lôtanu. If Yammu/Naharu is identified as “the twisting serpent, the powerful one with seven heads” in ‘Anatu’s speech (*KTU* 1.3 III 35–47, discussed above) and if these figures are consistently identified within the *Ba‘lu Cycle*, then Môtu is here (*KTU* 1.5 I 1–4, 27–31) directly referencing Ba‘lu’s conflict with Yammu, rather than some other combat with Lôtanu. The rhetorical effect of the reference within the context of Môtu’s message is to strengthen Môtu’s threat. Môtu knows that Ba‘lu has killed enemies in previous battles, but nonetheless Môtu expects to utterly defeat Ba‘lu:

*When you crushed Lôtanu, the fleeing serpent,
Annihilated the twisting serpent,
The powerful one with seven heads,
The heavens were bare, they relaxed.
But I myself will crumble you like a morsel,
I will devour (you) in lumps portion by portion.
Surely you will descend into the throat of divine Môtu,
Into the maw of the beloved of ‘Ilu, the noble.*

(*KTU* 1.5 I 1–8)

In this passage the conflict motif does triple duty. Firstly, the reference to Ba‘lu killing Lôtanu the multi-headed serpent shows Ba‘lu’s superiority as a warrior. Presumably, this reference initially existed independently of this scene, though we do not have a full narrative of this particular battle, unless we view Lôtanu and Yammu/Naharu to be the same figure. Mark S. Smith speculates that this reference fits an early stage in the development of *Ba‘lu Cycle* traditions, during which various stories about Ba‘lu as a warrior circulated independently.¹⁰ Secondly, we see a twist on how the conflict motif is usually employed. Typically, the motif serves to bolster the prowess of the victorious warrior, in this case Ba‘lu. In a hypothetical original story, this passage too would promote Ba‘lu’s legitimacy. However, in its current context within Môtu’s message, Ba‘lu’s victories are referenced by Môtu in order to flaunt his own power: Môtu claims that he is so powerful he will defeat even the victorious Ba‘lu; the exaltation of Môtu after defeating the known victor Ba‘lu would be greater than if he defeated some weaker enemy. It appears that the ideology of the motif is subverted in service of Môtu. Môtu appropriates the motif for his own benefit. However, in this

episode of combat, Ba‘lu eventually defeats Môtû, and Ba‘lu’s authority is ultimately affirmed over Môtû’s authority. Thus, thirdly, this particular occurrence of the motif contributes to the ideological force of the episode and narrative as a whole. Just as Ba‘lu defeated Lôtanu, he overcomes all of his enemies in this narrative, including Yammu, Môtû, and potential usurpers among ‘Aṭiratu’s sons. This passage uses the conflict motif in a sophisticated way that plays with the application of its legitimating ideology. It is assumed in Môtû’s message that the reference to Ba‘lu’s previous victory bolsters Ba‘lu’s status as a warrior, and Môtû inverts that connotation to assert his own power. In the scope of the episode and whole narrative, however, Ba‘lu’s authority over Môtû is reaffirmed when Ba‘lu defeats him.

An additional Ugaritic reference to the defeat of Yammu/Naharu is contained in a small fragmentary text, *KTU* 1.83.¹¹ The fragmentary nature of the text prevents us from determining whether it is only narrative or an incantation or ritual text that employs narrative detail. Furthermore, it is unclear who defeats Yammu/Naharu in this conflict. As in the list of ‘Anatu’s defeated foes, Yammu/Naharu is here described as Tunnanu (dragon), and in both passages Yammu/Naharu/Tunnanu is bound. However, the scattering and possible desiccation of Yammu’s body in *KTU* 1.83 is similar to Ba‘lu’s actions toward Yammu’s body in the battle scene of the *Ba‘lu Cycle* (*KTU* 1.2 IV 1–41). Grammatically, it is possible that the figure binding Yammu in this text is ‘Anatu, Ba‘lu, or an unknown plurality.¹² Based on the surviving texts in which ‘Anatu and Ba‘lu contend with Yammu, translators prefer either ‘Anatu or Ba‘lu as the agent:

[. . .] on the earth. [or, In the land of] Mahanaim,

(do something *trp* to) Yammu!¹³

Tongues lick the heavens.¹⁴

The two tails (do something *trp* to) Yammu.

She (‘Anatu) [or, You (Ba‘lu)] puts a muzzle on Tunnanu.

She binds [or, You bind] (him) on the heights of Lebanon.

Dried up [or, to the desert], you will be scattered, O Yammu!

To the multitude of ḥt, O Naharu!

You will not see [or, Indeed, you will see),

Then you shall foam up! [or, you will be parched!].

(*KTU* 1.83)¹⁵

Regardless of whether Ba'lu or 'Anatu binds Yammu in this passage, the combat event is consistent with the defeat(s) of Yammu in the *Ba'lu Cycle*, and this text testifies to use of the conflict motif in Ugaritic traditions outside of the narrative of the *Ba'lu Cycle*.¹⁶ Unfortunately, we do not have enough information to discern how the motif was used in this text.

Several books within the biblical anthology include references to a battle in which Yahweh defeated enemies, including Sea (*Yām*) or the sea (with the definite article), an unnamed dragon (*tannîn*) or dragons (*tannînîm*), or dragon figures identified as Rahab or Leviathan. We have seen thus far that the hierarchic taxonomy of the conflict topos was flexible: among and even within various ancient West Asian societies, different gods were portrayed as the victorious warrior deity. In biblical traditions, Yahweh is characterized as the victorious warrior deity. Yahweh's past victories against superhuman figures are often (but not always) cited in conjunction with statements about his status as divine king and/or acts of creation. Victory and divine kingship are causally related; the warrior deity attains, secures, and defends his throne through victory. Divine kingship and acts of creation are thematically related within biblical traditions; the political idea of kingship is used to assert Yahweh's authority and dominion, and acts of creation are cited in order to characterize his dominion as universal. There are also several passages in which the conflict motif is combined with the exodus motif, and this combination is significant because Yahweh's combat is placed within a narrative that purports to be historical. This shift in temporal location for Yahweh's combat establishes the narrative possibility that Yahweh will intervene within human time against human enemies. Passages that reference Yahweh's victories over superhuman entities, such as the sea, Leviathan, and Rahab, provide background for examples of the conflict motif that focus on human enemies. Overall, references to Yahweh's past victories exhibit four rhetorical functions: to assert Yahweh's dominion; to claim that his dominion is universal; to portray present enemies as destined for defeat; and to invoke Yahweh to intervene against contemporary enemies. These notions are overlapping and may occur simultaneously.

Several passages assert Yahweh's dominion particularly by claiming that he has authority over the sea, emphasizing the superiority of Yahweh's voice over the sea's voice. Psalm 93 describes Yahweh as a king from olden times who is greater than the floods/waters that raise up their waves and voice (Ps 93:1-5). In Ps 29, Yahweh's thunder and voice is over the waters/flood, and he is enthroned over the flood (Ps

29:3, 10). Yahweh silences the roaring of the seas and their waves (Ps 65:7–8). In a storm theophany, he rebukes and dries up the sea/rivers (Nah 1:3b–5). These passages reference a conflict between Yahweh and the sea: the sea lifts up and raises its voice and its uproar, and Yahweh rebukes and silences the sea. The features of the sea are consistent with physical characteristics of a sea: it has waves that rise and produce sound. However, the sea also has agency: it raises and lifts its voice. Moreover, the sound of the waves constitutes something that Yahweh needs to rebuke and silence, possibly a threat. Among these passages, Ps 93 and Ps 29 explicitly describe Yahweh’s superiority over the sea in royal terms: he is a king, enthroned over the flood. His authority to rebuke and silence the sea is presented as evidence of his dominion. We gain further insight into this notion from passages in which Yahweh’s conflict with the sea occurs alongside references to Yahweh’s conflict with other superhuman entities, such as Leviathan or Rahab, for example Ps 89:6–15 and Ps 74:12–17, discussed below.

All instances of the conflict motif within the biblical anthology pertain to the authority and dominion of Yahweh, often explicitly characterized as divine kingship, as seen in Pss 29 and 93. Some texts also interweave themes of creation with the conflict motif in order to bolster the claim that Yahweh’s dominion is universal. Throughout the biblical anthology, Yahweh is characterized as the creator and father god. His two roles, that of the warrior god and the father creator god, which can be distinct in more extensive pantheons, are subsumed under one figure in biblical traditions. This is similar to some texts in Assyrian and Babylonian traditions in which Aššur and Marduk take on the role of creator deity in addition to their characterization as victorious warriors. In Marduk and Aššur traditions we have enough evidence to identify Marduk and Aššur as warrior gods who (over time and in select texts) take on roles of creator gods (*EE* IV–VI; *SAA* 3, 1; *SVAT* 4–5: 7–8). Though ’Ilu does not act as a warrior in the *Ba’lu Cycle*, his epithets indicate that he also had warrior characteristics: “bull” (*tr*), “hero” (*g̃zr*), and “mighty” (*gbr*); Patrick Miller also cites many names that combine warrior appropriate terms (strength, attacks, strikes, etc.) with the divine element ’Ilu, including a Ugaritic name *’ilmhr* “’Ilu is a warrior.”¹⁷ Yahweh shares characteristics and roles of both Ugaritic ’Ilu (creator and father), which is cognate with Hebrew *’El*, and *Ba’lu* (victorious warrior). The combination of these roles in characterizations of Yahweh-Elohim seems to have occurred early within Israelite and Judean traditions.¹⁸ Thus, interweaving of the conflict motif

and themes of creation is consistent with Yahweh's dual roles as warrior and creator. The ideological effect of juxtaposing these motifs is that Yahweh's dominion, won through combat, is characterized as universal because he has created everything, examples of this include Ps 89:6–15, Ps 74:12–17, and Ps 104.

Psalm 89:6–15 describes Yahweh defeating an enemy, alongside references to Yahweh “founding” and “creating” things, especially the heavens and earth. His authority is related to both his victories over enemies and his establishment of the heavens and earth:

*(In) the heavens they praise your wonders,¹⁹ O Yahweh,
 Indeed, your fidelity in the assembly of the holy ones.
 For who in the clouds is comparable to Yahweh?
 (Who) among the divine ones²⁰ (is like) Yahweh?
 El, terrifying in the council of the holy ones,
 Great²¹ and feared above all those around him!
 O Yahweh, god of hosts, who is like you?
 Strong Yah, your fidelity surrounds you.²²
 You indeed rule over the swelling of the sea,
 When its waves rise, you still them.
 You indeed crushed Rahab like a corpse,
 With your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
 Yours are the heavens, yes yours is the earth,
 The world and all that fills it, you have founded them.
 North and south, you created them,
 Tabor and Hermon ring out your name.²³
 You have a mighty arm,
 Your hand is strong, your right hand is raised.
 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne,
 Covenant loyalty and fidelity come before you.*

(Ps 89:6–15)²⁴

This passage begins by claiming that Yahweh is incomparable among divine beings (Ps 89:6–9). The claim of incomparability is then justified through references to Yahweh's victories and acts of creation. Yahweh rules the sea's raging and stills the sea's rising waves. He controls the sea, and this is related to a battle (or various battles) in which Yahweh crushed Rahab and scattered his enemies.²⁵ Yahweh's authority follows

from his victories in battle. The reference to Yahweh's throne indicates that his authority is royal (Ps 89:15). His current royal dominion is also associated with his possession and founding of the heavens and earth, and this theme serves to portray his dominion as universal. In the flow of the passage, creation occurs subsequent to Yahweh's victory. This sequence is comparable to that in *Enuma Elish* where Marduk defeats his enemies and then reorders the cosmos and creates geophysical features; we see this sequence in Ps 74:12–17 as well. The passage continues with reference to Yahweh's mighty arm and strong hand, reiterating his superiority as a warrior. By describing acts of creation between references to his formidability in combat, this passage associates Yahweh's foundation and possession of created order with his role as victorious warrior.

Psalm 74:12–17 also interweaves themes of authority, combat, and creation:²⁶

*It is Elohim, king of old,
 Accomplishing victories in the midst of the earth.
 It was you who divided Yām (Sea) by your might,
 You broke the heads of the dragons on the waters.
 It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan,
 You made him food for the people of the wilderness.²⁷
 It was you who cleaved open springs and streams,
 You indeed dried up ever-flowing rivers.
 Yours is the day, yes yours is the night,
 You indeed established the moon and the sun.
 It was you who fixed all the boundaries of earth,
 The summer and winter, you indeed devised them.*

(Ps 74:12–17)

In Ps 74, Yahweh's authority is explicitly royal authority. He is a victorious king whose authority has been established in the distant past (Ps 74:12). This authority was gained specifically through violence toward and mutilation of Sea, Leviathan, and various water-ways (Ps 74:13–15).²⁸ Such violence and mutilation is characteristic of actions we have seen toward defeated enemies after divine combat in Ugaritic texts (*KTU* 1.2 IV 21–27; *KTU* 1.6 II 30–37 and V 11–19; *KTU* 1.83), *Enuma Elish* (IV 123–140, V 1–66), and Ps 89:11. The narrative theme of a divine warrior mutilating and exposing the corpse of his/her defeated divine enemy is consistent with the broader ancient West Asian literary trope and historical practice of mutilating and/

or exposing the corpses of defeated enemies and/or disfavored icons. Within ancient West Asian cultures and literature, mutilation of (living or dead) enemies and icons served to bring shame upon the defeated and to emphasize the power of the victor.²⁹

As in Ps 89:6–15 and *Enuma Elish*, acts of creation occur after the deity defeats his enemies. Here, Yahweh manipulates waterways and stations heavenly bodies in order to establish daily and seasonal temporal order (Ps 74:15–17). This is similar to Marduk's creation of waterways through the manipulation of Tiamat's body, followed by his stationing of heavenly bodies (*EE* IV, 123–140; V 1–66). While Ps 74:15 does not indicate that Yahweh used Leviathan's body to create waterways, this does occur immediately after he cleaves Sea and crushes the heads of Leviathan (Ps 74:13–14). Moreover, he gives Leviathan's corpse to the "people of the wilderness" as food, suggesting that the corpse was exposed rather than disposed of properly. These thematic and specific parallels indicate that the articulation of the conflict motif within Ps 74:12–17 is quite intricate. Through comparison with fuller articulations of the conflict topos, we may accentuate the ideological significance of the set of details that Ps 74:12–17 contains.

Both Ps 74:12–17 and Ps 89:6–15 begin with claims about Yahweh: he is king of old and he is incomparable, respectively. Both psalms then justify these claims through references to Yahweh's victory over Leviathan and Rahab, respectively, his defeat or authority over the sea, and his subsequent acts of creation. We may infer that Yahweh's royal dominion and incomparability follow from his victories—this is the ideological work accomplished through the conflict motif within these passages. The logic joining these notions (kingship, victory over the sea/dragons, creation, and incomparability) is implicit in Ps 89:6–15, Ps 74:12–17, and other biblical instances of the conflict motif. We may compare the implied connections between these aspects to those in fuller articulations of the conflict topos, such as the *Ba'lu Cycle* and *Enuma Elish*, which elaborate the narrative movement of the warrior deity from facing a rival, through victory, to kingship, (and for Marduk, Aššur, and Yahweh, but not Ba'lu) creation and incomparability among divine beings.

Psalm 104 exhibits a similar structure to Ps 89:6–15 and Ps 74:12–17, in that it begins by declaring that Yahweh is great and then justifies this claim by listing his various achievements, including acts of creation; conflict with the sea, though this conflict is less violent than that in Ps 74:13; and the formation of Leviathan, who here is a living plaything rather than a slain, mutilated enemy as are Leviathan in Ps 74:14 and Rahab in Ps 89:11. Psalm 104:1–5 lists some of Yahweh's creative acts: he has stretched the heavens

like a tent (Ps 104:2b), constructed an abode on the waters (Ps 104:3a), made a cloud chariot (Ps 104:3b),³⁰ and set the earth on its foundation (Ps 104:5). The act of securing the earth on its foundation is then elaborated as follows:

*He set the earth on its fixed place,
It will never ever be shaken.
Deep covered it like clothing,
Over the mountains stood waters.
They fled from your rebuke,
From the sound of your thunder they hurried away.
They went up the mountains, they went down the valleys,
To this place you established for them.
The boundary you set, they will not cross,
They will not return to cover the earth.*

(Ps 104:5–9)

Control over the deep/waters is integral in founding the earth, and Yahweh enacts his control with his roar/thunder. Once the deep/waters have fled, he sets boundaries for them (Ps 104:9). The psalm continues with Yahweh further controlling water-ways to provide for animals and agriculture (Ps 104:10–18). Yahweh's rebuke of the waters in Ps 104 is not as violent as his manipulation of water-ways in Ps 74:12–17. Rather, it resembles descriptions in Pss 93, 29, and 65, which refer to Yahweh's voice being superior to the sea's voice or waves, and especially Nah 1:3b–5, in which Yahweh rebukes the sea during a storm theophany. The description of Yahweh gathering and placing boundaries for the waters closely resembles activity within the summary of creation in Ps 33:

*By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made,
By the breath of his mouth, all their hosts.
He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap,
He puts the deeps into chambers.*

(Ps 33:6–7)

Psalm 33:6–7 (among other passages) includes setting boundaries for the waters as an aspect of creation, and Ps 104:6–9 associates this act with Yahweh rebuking the deep/waters, maintaining the notion of conflict and the agency of the waters. Psalm 104:25–26 continues by pointing to the sea as an exhibit of Yahweh's great works:

*This is the sea,
 Great and wide reaching,
 There—the innumerable creeping things,
 Living creatures, small and great.
 There—the ships go,
 Leviathan, this one you fashioned to play in it.*

(Ps 104:25–26)

The sea is great and wide, but as the psalm narrates, Yahweh overcame the deep/waters. It currently houses “creeping things” and “living things,” which elsewhere are things Yahweh has created (Gen 1:20–21; 6:7). Finally, the psalm points to “Leviathan, this one you fashioned to play in it,” who is characterized as a pet, rather than an enemy who ever posed a threat to Yahweh. Overall, we are presented with a list of creative acts that aims to exhibit Yahweh’s greatness. The list of creative acts includes rebuking the deep/waters, and the psalm offers both the great sea and Leviathan as entities that visually display Yahweh’s great works. These details are representative of the conflict motif. The psalm claims that Yahweh is superior to the deep/waters, as indicated by his authority to rebuke and set boundaries for them, and portrays the great sea and Leviathan as non-threatening displays of his works. The inclusion of the conflict motif within this creation account simultaneously increases the magnitude of Yahweh’s accomplishments and deflates the status of the sea and Leviathan, which elsewhere are formidable enemies. Job 40–41 preserves a similar characterization of Leviathan, though without incorporating an elaborate creation theme.³¹

Job 40–41, like Ps 104:26, characterizes Leviathan as a plaything, and details Yahweh’s taming of Leviathan, presenting this feat as an example of Yahweh’s superiority. Both Leviathan and Behemoth are tamed by Yahweh:

*He (Behemoth) is the first of the ways of El.
 Only he who made him can draw his sword.*

...

*(Who) will take him by the eyes,
 Or pierce his nose with snares?
 Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook,
 Or press down his tongue with a cord?
 Can you put a line in his nose,
 Or pierce his jaw with a hook?
 Will he multiply supplications to you,*

*Or speak gentle words to you?
 Will he make a covenant with you,
 Will you take him as your perpetual servant?
 Will you play with him as with a bird,
 Or leash him for your maidens?*

(Job 40:19; 24-30)

This is followed by reference to battling and capturing Leviathan, who frightened “even the gods” with his strength, indestructible physique, and ominous appearance (Job 40:32–41:22). The fright of divine beings at the sight of Leviathan stands in contrast to Yahweh’s ability to tame him, and this contrast serves to bolster the claim that Yahweh is incomparable among divine beings. The rhetorical effect of the fear of divine beings at the sight of Leviathan is comparable to the rhetorical effect of the demur of the divine council at the arrival of Yammu in the Ugaritic *Ba‘lu Cycle* (KTU 1.2 I 21–24). In both cases, the intimidation of other divine beings stands in contrast to the ability of the victorious divine warrior (Ba‘lu or Yahweh) to face the terrifying opponent. Furthermore, the superiority of the divine warrior (Ba‘lu or Yahweh) over his foe (Yammu or Leviathan) indicates that he (Ba‘lu or Yahweh) is also superior to all the divine beings who feared the foe (Yammu or Leviathan).

The passage concludes by comparing Leviathan to the sea/deep, stating that he is incomparable among earthly creatures, and calling Leviathan “king over all the proud”:

*He (Leviathan) makes Deep boil like a pot,
 He makes Sea like a pot of ointment.
 He leaves behind a shining wake,
 One would think Deep to be grey-haired.
 On earth he has no equal,
 A creature without fear.
 He surveys everything that is lofty,
 He is king over all the proud.*

(Job 41:23–26)

Leviathan is unequaled, a king of sorts, and even upsets Sea/Deep, elsewhere described as a powerful entity.³² The rhetorical force of boasting about Leviathan’s greatness, however, is to draw out the implications of

Yahweh taming and binding this tremendous creature. Leviathan frightens the gods, disturbs Sea/Deep, and has no equal on earth, yet Yahweh can make him his plaything and servant. According to the logic of the text, Yahweh is thus greater than all of these entities: Leviathan, Behemoth, the gods, Sea/Deep, and all earthly beings.

The rhetorical effect of the conflict motif in Job 40–41 is similar to the inversion of the conflict motif in Môtû's speech in the *Ba'lu Cycle* (KTU 1.5 I 1–8). Môtû enumerates Ba'lu's victories to buttress his own claims to power: even though Ba'lu is a great warrior Môtû still expects to defeat him. Likewise, in Job 40–41, Yahweh emphasizes Leviathan's fierce appearance and the gods' fear of Leviathan in order to heighten the implications of his victory over and taming of Leviathan. In both passages, authors play with the legitimating ideology of the conflict motif: within speeches delivered by divine characters, the authors invert the legitimating ideology in favor of an enemy in order to bolster the claims of the speaker. In the *Ba'lu Cycle*, this appears to increase Môtû's threat to Ba'lu, though Ba'lu ultimately overcomes this threat. In Job 40–41, Yahweh provides his victory over Leviathan as exemplary of his own incomparability in response to the character Job's challenge.

Several other passages in Job reference Yahweh's conflict with the sea and associated creatures (the dragon, Rahab, and the serpent). These passages serve to show that Yahweh is incomparable, in response to the rhetorical question "Who can contend with Yahweh?"³³ As evidence of Yahweh's incomparability, the various passages imply that Yahweh set a guard over Sea and dragon (Job 7:12); trampled the waves of Sea (Job 9:8); subdued the "helpers of Rahab" (Job 9:13); stilled the sea, struck down Rahab, and pierced the serpent (Job 26:10–13); shut Sea, set its boundary, and said, "Thus far you may come, but no further, here it (the boundary) will be set against your majestic waves!" (Job 38:8–11). These passages, like the psalms discussed above, promote Yahweh by exhibiting his victories over the sea and associated creatures. The victory over the sea includes both combat against water-based enemies and, as in Ps 104, setting boundaries for bodies of water. The latter feature is also associated with acts of creation in Pss 104:9 and 33:6–7, and according to Ps 89:6–15; Ps 74:12–17; Ps 104; and Job 26; 38:4–41; and 40–41, both creation and victory over the sea and water-based enemies display Yahweh's dominion and incomparability. The promotion of Yahweh through both the conflict motif and creation theme is comparable to the elevation of Marduk in *Enuma Elish*.

Enuma Elish narrates Marduk's rise to power including the defeat of his rivals (Tiamat, the sea and her associates), his enthronement, his ordering of the cosmos, and his creation of geophysical and cosmological features (out of Tiamat's mutilated corpse). During his enthronement and throughout the account of his ordering of the cosmos and creative acts, the other gods declare him to be incomparable among all the divine beings. Though Ps 89:6–15, Ps 74:12–17, Ps 104, and Job do not provide a full narrative of Yahweh's rise to power, they share these narrative elements in various combinations: Yahweh is incomparable (Ps 89:7–9; Job 41:2–3) or at minimum great and majestic (Ps 104:1; Job 40:10); he has defeated superhuman enemies (including specifically Rahab, the sea or Sea, sea-dragons, and Leviathan) (Ps 89:11; Ps 74:13–14; Job 7:12; 9:8; 9:13; 26:12–13) or is otherwise superior to them (Ps 104:25–26; Job 40:15–41:26); he is a formidable warrior (Ps 89:14; Ps 74:13; Job 40:9); he rules over the sea (Ps 89:10) and has rebuked, stilled, bound, or dried up the sea/rivers/waters (Ps 89:10; Ps 74:15; Ps 104:7–9; Job 38:8–11; Job 26:10); he is king (Ps 89:15; Ps 74:12); and his authority is enacted through and exhibited by his acts of creation, including founding the entire heavens and earth (Ps 89:12–13; Ps 74:16–17; Ps 104:2–6; Job 38:4). Through the conflict motif authors of various biblical texts promoted their preferred deity Yahweh. By making references to his past victories and authority over the sea and dragons, authors portrayed Yahweh as the incomparable deity, victorious divine warrior, divine king, and creator with universal dominion. In addition to promoting Yahweh through combat traditions, biblical authors also developed the conflict motif to promote and to attack particular human individuals, groups, polities, and institutions.

Yahweh's Combat Against the Sea/Dragon and Its Relevance for Humans

The examples just discussed primarily focus on promoting Yahweh through references to his past victories over superhuman entities and his current position of authority over defeated enemies. This is the ideological foundation of the conflict motif within biblical traditions. From this ideological basis, we see secondary application of motif, that is, instances in which the status of Yahweh or his divine and royal prerogatives (these being derived from his victories) are purported to have implications for human figures. In distinguishing between so-called primary and

secondary application of the conflict motif, I do not suggest that “primary” application developed before “secondary.” Rather, secondary application (making statements about humans) depends upon the ideological basis of primary application (making statements about deities). That is, statements made about the authority or legitimacy of humans assume or claim that the authority of the god is relevant to humans. One could argue that these applications developed simultaneously or that secondary application developed first, especially for instances in which the humans are royal individuals.³⁴ We have explicit evidence for secondary application of the motif within Mesopotamian, biblical, and Mari literature, but not Ugaritic traditions.

In the biblical anthology, such secondary application includes use of the motif to promote particular individuals or groups and to attack disfavored individuals or groups. The efficacy of secondary application of the conflict motif depends upon the claim that Yahweh can act on behalf of or against humans within the current temporal framework, in the contemporary present or immediate future. This broader range of temporal settings for Yahweh’s divine combat is assumed when authors use the conflict motif to make statements about contemporary polities and agents, whether to portray disfavored polities or agents as destined for defeat or to invoke Yahweh to act on behalf of a favored group or individual. Authors portray entities within the narrative present as comparable to characters from combat traditions, and in doing so they link the narrative present to cosmic time and events.

Perhaps the most widely cited example of divine combat being used to describe the narrative present is the Reed Sea event. John J. Collins identifies the exodus narrative as a “paradigmatic story” for the notion of Yahweh intervening on behalf of the people “Israel” within a human temporal and socio-political circumstance.³⁵ Events from the narrative of exodus are referenced as examples of Yahweh’s past actions on behalf of the people in order to suggest that he can and will act on behalf of the people in a current situation. This use of the exodus motif is analogous to use of the conflict motif for the same purposes—to make statements about particular human groups, individuals, and/or their contemporary circumstances.³⁶ In addition to this rhetorical parallel, there are also several passages in which the exodus motif and conflict motif are combined in descriptions of the Reed Sea event. Moreover, these motifs were used in tandem to portray disfavored polities as destined for defeat and/or to invoke Yahweh to intervene on behalf of the people.

Divine Combat within Historiography: Combined Conflict and Exodus Motifs

The story of exodus, including the Reed Sea event, describes Yahweh acting on behalf of the people (*hā'ām*), identified as "Israel" and the "children of Israel," against the Egyptian king and people. References to this story, however, sometimes show that the event was reconceived as a conflict between Yahweh and the Reed Sea, rather than Yahweh and only the Egyptian king and his army. The incorporation of the conflict motif within depictions of the Reed Sea event adds to the portrayal of Yahweh as victorious warrior and enhances the portrayal of the Egyptian king and army as illegitimate. The most significant effect of combination of the conflict and exodus motifs, however, is that the temporal location of Yahweh's combat with the sea changes. The exodus narrative sits within the beginning of biblical historiography, which purports to be the foundational history of the Israelites and Judeans.³⁷ Through combination of the conflict and exodus motifs, Yahweh's combat with the sea is placed within this foundational story. As a result, additional layers of temporal possibility and historiographic significance develop within biblical combat traditions: the Reed Sea event may be cited to bolster the claim that Yahweh's divine combat may reoccur within a human chronological and spatial framework.

To evaluate this aspect of biblical combat traditions, we may consider the chronological and spatial frameworks of *Enuma Elish* and the *Ba'lu Cycle*. Marduk's victory occurs in the divine realm, and only afterward are humans and the earthly geography of Babylon formed. The story asserts that Marduk's victory has important implications for humans and their world, but the combat does not occur in human time or space. In Babylonian and Assyrian royal propaganda, when ties are drawn between the divine warrior king and human kings, the defeat of Tiamat remains a primordial event. In contrast, the *Ba'lu Cycle* does reference human society within the plot, for example 'Anatu slays and feasts upon human warriors (*KTU* 1.3 II 3–30); Ba'lu's reign has positive implications for humans (*KTU* 1.4 VII 49–52); Ba'lu's absence has negative repercussions for agricultural land (*KTU* 1.6 IV 1–16); and Môtu seeks and later threatens to eat multitudes of humans (*KTU* 1.6 II 17–19, V 21–25). These references to humans indicate that the plot of divine conflict occurs within a human chronological framework and that the gods' actions effect humans. However, the plot does not explicitly reference a specific historical context. Regarding the spatial framework, 'Anatu, Môtu, and Ba'lu each seize humans, thus acting

within human space, but conflict between divine beings occurs either in the realm of Môtû or an unspecified, but presumably, divine spatial context. In comparison, biblical examples that refigure Yahweh's conflict with the sea within the chronological framework of the exodus story, or within a contemporary historical context, exhibit interchange between divine and human spheres similar to that the in *Ba 'lu Cycle*. However, among surviving texts, the biblical materials are distinct (and possibly innovative) in pinning divine combat to a specific moment, in the exodus story or contemporary context. Of course, not every biblical example has this feature; those discussed above place Yahweh's divine combat in primordial time, which is in line with the chronological framework of Marduk's battles.

Let us now consider passages that exhibit the conflict motif intertwined with the exodus motif: Ps 77:14–21; Ps 106:7–12; and Ps 114.³⁸ These passages describe the event at the Reed Sea with conflict between Yahweh and the sea:

*O Elohim, your dominion is in holiness,
 Who is a great god like Elohim?
 You indeed are the god who accomplished a wonder,
 You made your strength known among the peoples.
 With your arm you redeemed your people,
 The descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
 The waters saw you, O Elohim, the waters saw you, they writhed,
 Even the deeps trembled.
 Storm clouds poured out water,
 Clouds thundered,
 Indeed your arrows went back and forth.
 The sound of your thunder was in the whirlwind,
 Your lightning illuminated the world,
 The earth trembled and quaked.
 Your way was through the sea,
 Indeed your path through the great waters,
 But your footprints were not evident.
 You led your people like a flock
 By the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

(Ps 77:14–21)

The passage begins by asserting the incomparability of Elohim, then offers the event at the Reed Sea as an example of his formidability in battle. The exodus motif is indicated by the following: the verb “redeem”;³⁹ reference

to the people as the descendants of Jacob and Joseph, the primary narrative figures who relocate the people to Egypt before exodus; reference to the path through the sea/waters; and finally, reference to Moses and Aaron. The conflict motif shapes the description of the interaction between Elohim and the waters/deep, which are afraid and tremble in response to Elohim's storm theophany. The Reed Sea event, described as a conflict between Yahweh and the sea, is given as an example that proves the deity's incomparability and formidability. Similarly, Ps 106:7–12 summarizes the event at the Reed Sea and casts the interaction between Yahweh and the Reed Sea in terms similar to passages discussed above (Pss 93, 29, 65, Nah 1) in which Yahweh rebukes the sea:

*Our ancestors in Egypt did not pay attention to your wonders;
 They did not remember the abundance of your covenant loyalty,
 They were rebellious at the sea, at the Reed Sea.
 But he saved them for the sake of his name,
 To make his might known.
 He rebuked the Reed Sea and it became dry,
 He led them through the deep as through a desert.
 Thus, he saved them from the hand of the foe,
 He redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
 The waters covered their adversaries,
 Not even one of them remained.
 Then they believed his words;
 They sang his praise.*

(Ps 106:7–12)

While the enemy of the people is still the Egyptians who were covered by waters, the way in which Yahweh rebukes and dries the sea indicates an adversarial manipulation and command of the sea/deep/waters. Such an adversarial relationship is consistent with instances of the conflict motif that feature Yahweh rebuking or commanding the sea. These actions serve to assert that Yahweh has authority over the sea and that he can quell its threatening waves. Here, the conflict motif adds to the portrayal of the “mighty power” of Yahweh: he not only defeated human enemies by drowning them, he rebuked and dried the sea/deep itself.

Psalm 114 features both the sea and the Jordan river fleeing from Elohim, portraying these waterways as fearful of the deity: “The sea saw and fled; the Jordan turned back” (Ps 114:3); “What is wrong with you,

Sea, that you flee? With you Jordan, that you turn back?” (Ps 114:5). It is noteworthy that the sea and Jordan river are featured together. Like the pairing of the sea and rivers in Ps 89:26, this pairing is similar to Ugaritic Yammu’s two-fold epithet Sea/River. While Ugaritic poetic lines refer to one figure, Yammu, with the two-fold epithet, biblical examples preserve the pairing but modify the referents. The agency of the sea and Jordan, particularly the characterization of these figures as intimidated by Elohim, suggest divine combat. As Gerstenberger observes, the rhetorical question posed to the sea and Jordan river is a taunt of the sort made by warriors to emphasize their prowess. For example, Goliath ridicules David before they fight (1 Sam 17:41–47), and newly enthroned Ba’lu taunts his enemies who have fled (*KTU* 1.4 VII 35–39).⁴⁰ In Ps 114, the conflict motif serves to cast the narrative events of exodus and entry into the land as moments of divine victory, specifically victory over water-based entities.⁴¹ The focus is Elohim’s victory over superhuman figures, here without reference to the human enemies featured in the narratives in Exodus, Joshua, and Judges. Moreover, the territory of Israel explicitly becomes the deity’s dominion (*memšālâ*), fitting the pattern of the victorious warrior attaining his realm.

To gauge the rhetorical effect of combination of the exodus motif and conflict motif in these psalms, we may turn to narrations of the Reed Sea event in Exod 14 and 15. The prose account in Exod 14 contains JE material that has been substantially supplemented by P.⁴² The P portion states that Moses divides the sea and the Israelites pass through the sea on dry ground, between two walls of water (Exod 14:16, 21c–22, 26, 29).⁴³ Yahweh manipulates the sea, which is divided, dried up, and then allowed to return to its normal state. Thus, the P revision of Exod 14 portrays Yahweh acting violently toward the sea as well as human enemies. This is evident when we compare the prose account with the poetic account in the “Song of Moses” (Exod 15:1b–18), in which Yahweh casts/throws Pharaoh’s chariots, horses, and riders into the sea, and they sink (Exod 15:1, 4–5, 10, and 21). In the “Song of Moses,” the sea is not divided or dried up, and the people do not cross through it. Rather, Yahweh throws the Egyptian enemy into the sea, and the sea/deeps cover them (Exod 15:4–5, 10). There is no violence toward the sea, only toward the Egyptian enemy, and Yahweh uses the waters as a tool to kill the Egyptians.⁴⁴ Exodus 15:19, when the narrative returns to prose after the poetic account, is consistent with the P revision in Exod 14: “For Pharaoh’s horse, with his chariot and riders, went into the

sea, and Yahweh brought the waters of the sea back over them; but the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea.” Thus, Exod 15:19 reiterates P’s description from Exod 14:16, 21c–22, 26, 29, assuming that the sea has been divided and dried up for the people to walk through it. The placement of the poetic account (Exod 15:1b–18) within the prose account (which itself contains P and JE versions) privileges the retelling of the event in which Yahweh divides and dries up the sea. The second description of the Reed Sea event (Exod 15:1b–18) is read in light of the first (combined) description, the prose account that precedes and frames the poetic account.

Similarly, Ps 78 foregrounds details from the telling of the Reed Sea story that features violence against the sea. This psalm recounts the demise of the northern kingdom of Israel and provides a poetic overview of the foundational narrative of Israel and Judah, including the Reed Sea event:

*They (Ephraim) forgot his deeds,
and his wonders which he had shown them.
Before their ancestors he accomplished a wonder
in the land of Egypt, the plain of Zoan:
He divided Yām (Sea) and brought them through it,
He caused waters to stand like a heap.*

(Ps 78:11–13)

Psalm 78 explicitly cites details from both Exod 14 and 15. Psalm 78:13a states that Yahweh divided Sea and that the people passed through it, details from Exod 14:21c–22; whereas Ps 78:13b states that Yahweh made waters stand as a heap, a detail from Exod 15:8, where the floods stand as a heap, churning and covering the enemy so that they sink (Exod 15:8, 10). However, within the single verse, Ps 78:13, these differing versions are referenced as if there is no discrepancy between the two. The detail that Yahweh made waters stand as a heap is read as an additional description of what happened when Yahweh divided Sea. Furthermore, even when the Reed Sea event is referenced without the conflict motif, the image of the deity dividing the sea is prominent. Psalm 66:6 features a divided sea, and both Ps 136:13–15 and Neh 9:11 emphasize Yahweh dividing the sea as well as defeating human enemies.

Frank M. Cross argued that passages in which Yahweh divides the Reed Sea exhibit that the “old mythic pattern of Canaan” reshaped the “epic memories” of the Reed Sea event, and he considered the absence

of the division of and walking through the sea in Exod 15 to indicate its antiquity.⁴⁵ When discussing passages that include the deity splitting or dividing the sea, using the verb *bāqa* ‘, he suggests that this detail, the deity splitting the sea, indicates the “old mythic pattern.” In other words, every description of the Reed Sea event that incorporates “splitting,” he maintains, exhibits the “reshaping” he describes. This implies that “splitting,” even as a singular detail, is sufficient to categorize the example within the conflict topos. While I find Cross’s analysis of this development convincing, some have not. I would rephrase his comments about the “old mythic pattern” to emphasize that the prevalence and creativity that biblical conflict traditions display indicate that Israelite and Judean storytellers developed distinct articulations of the conflict topos. Moreover, use of the conflict motif in conjunction with the exodus motif furthered its currency within biblical traditions. In response to those unconvinced by Cross’s interpretation, I would also add a distinction between passages that feature division of the sea without further conflict with, violence toward, or characterization of the sea, and those sharing more of the constellation of features attested elsewhere. We might consider cases in which “splitting” would be the sole indicator of the conflict motif apart from those in which the sea is characterized as rebellious or fearful of Yahweh as well. Perhaps those unconvinced by Cross’s analysis could offer explanation for the “splitting” that is common among examples both with and without additional indications of conflict.

In sum, Ps 77:14–21; Ps 106:7–12; and Ps 114 each feature Yahweh acting against the sea as an adversary. The Reed Sea event is reimagined with violence against the sea, though according to Exod 15:1b–18, the original enemy was the Egyptian king and his armies whom Yahweh defeated at the sea and even by means of the sea. The conflict motif adds a superhuman element to the Reed Sea event, in that Yahweh not only faces human enemies, but also the sea. In turn, Yahweh’s conflict with the sea is situated within narrative that is developed and presented as the foundational story of the Israelites and Judeans. This represents an innovative interpretation of both the conflict motif and the Reed Sea event within Israelite/Judean historiography that is comparable to use of the conflict motif in Assyrian royal inscriptions describing historical battles. As discussed in Chapter 2, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions depict kings’ battles with political enemies as comparable to Ninurta’s battles against Anzu and Asakku; and Sennacherib’s account of his battle against Halule may be shaped by the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*. In both traditions, human enemies

are associated with the victorious warrior deity's enemies. However, in biblical references to the Reed Sea event, there is no king who is equated or compared with the victorious warrior deity. Rather, Yahweh fights against human and superhuman enemies on behalf of the people.

The notion that Yahweh has intervened on behalf of the people in the past, specifically in the paradigmatic story of exodus, contributed to the thematic possibility that Yahweh would do so again. We have several examples where present enemies are compared to or identified with Yahweh's past defeated enemies (Isa 30:7; Ps 87:4; Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; and Hab 3), and thus portrayed as destined for defeat, as well as examples in which Yahweh's victories against superhuman enemies are invoked in order to provoke Yahweh to intervene in the present (Isa 51:9–15; Ps 89; and Ps 74).

Yahweh versus Human Enemies: Combat with Contemporary “Dragons”

Many instances of the conflict motif within the biblical anthology show that Judean authors used the motif in order to make statements about their current socio-political contexts. Among these examples the conflict motif functions in two ways: to portray present enemies as destined for defeat, and to invoke Yahweh to intervene in the contemporary situation on behalf of the people. These two functions represent secondary application of the motif: the writer assumes that Yahweh's past divine victories have import for humans in the narrative present, and so the motif is used to make (positive or negative) statements about humans. Such secondary application of the motif depends upon the ideological basis of primary application of the motif: to make statements about the preferred deity, here specifically to assert Yahweh's universal dominion and incomparability. According to the implicit logic, if Yahweh was victorious in the past, he can be victorious in the present; the defeat of Rahab, Leviathan, and/or sea-dragons proves that he was victorious in the past, and therefore he will be victorious in the present. This logic is applied in two ways: current enemies are compared to or identified with Yahweh's past defeated enemies in order to portray them as destined for defeat, and Yahweh's past victories are invoked in order to provoke Yahweh to act on behalf of the people in the present.

In Isa 30:7; Ps 87:4; Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; and Hab 3, specific polities and individuals are identified with or compared to superhuman characters whom Yahweh defeated in the past. In this way,

authors portray Egypt, the king of Egypt, Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar as enemies who are defeated or destined for defeat. These are disfavored within biblical historiography for political reasons, and the negative portrayal of them via the conflict motif is consistent with broader traditions of disfavor within this historiography. By utilizing the conflict motif in particular to portray these polities and individuals negatively, authors linked the unfavorable socio-political situations with which they were concerned with divine actions and cosmic events, specifically divine combat, whereby heavenly and earthly orders were established. Passages that identify a disfavored polity or individual with one of Yahweh's defeated superhuman enemies also implicitly or explicitly reference Yahweh's past victories and thereby suggest that the disfavored state or ruler is destined for defeat and that Yahweh will correct the current unfavorable socio-political situation.

Egypt is identified with Rahab in Isa 30:7 and Ps 87:4, and the king of Egypt is described as "the great dragon" and "a dragon in the seas" in Ezek 29:3 and 32:2, respectively. Isaiah 30:7 and Ps 87:4 read as follows:

*As for Egypt, it helps in vain and vacant,
therefore I named her Rahab, the destroyed one.*

(Isa 30:7)⁴⁶

*I will recall Rahab and Babylon among those who know me,
Here are Philistia and Tyre with Cush. . . .*

(Ps 87:4)

In Ps 77:14–21; Ps 106:7–12; and Ps 114:3 and 5, the Reed Sea event is described as, or assumed to have been, a conflict between Yahweh and the sea. These texts exhibit combination of the conflict and exodus motifs. The conflict motif serves to enhance the portrayal of Yahweh as divine warrior because he faces not only the Egyptian king and army but also the sea. However, none of these passages mention Rahab or a dragon. According to Ps 89:11, Yahweh crushed Rahab, an action parallel to scattering his enemies, and this is described immediately after a verse stating that Yahweh rules over the sea and stills its waves (Ps 89:10). Job 26:12 also states that Yahweh killed Rahab, and this is parallel to stirring up the seas; the following verse states that Yahweh killed the "fleeing serpent," a phrase also used to describe Leviathan in Isa 27:1. Similarly, Isa 51:9 indicates that Yahweh divided Rahab in pieces, an action parallel to Yahweh piercing the dragon,

and the following verse references Yahweh drying the sea. These verses clearly state that Yahweh killed Rahab, and this is associated with Yahweh's combat against a sea-dragon as well as his authority over the sea. In sum, Rahab appears to be the name of a sea-dragon whom Yahweh defeated in combat. Therefore, when Isa 30:7 gives Egypt the name Rahab, the passage characterizes Egypt as one of Yahweh's defeated enemies.

Isaiah 30:7 occurs within a critique of Egypt, which claims that its people cannot benefit Judeans who make the effort to travel there (Isa 30:6). This oracle is typically read as continuation of the political statement of the previous oracle, which criticizes Judeans for seeking help from Egypt/Pharaoh without Yahweh's consent, predicting that Egypt/Pharaoh will be of no help (Isa 30:1–5).⁴⁷ Isaiah 30:7a states that the political assistance of Egypt would be vain and empty, that is, ineffective. Isaiah 30:7b then begins, "therefore, I named her Rahab," a designation that might seem at odds with the description of Egypt as ineffective, since Rahab is elsewhere a threatening sea-dragon. However, Isa 30:7b continues, possibly describing Rahab as "the destroyed one." The oracle states that Egypt would be a useless political ally, and this stands in contrast with Egypt's former great power. This contrast plays upon the similar disparity between Rahab the once threatening sea-dragon and Rahab now powerless since defeated by Yahweh. The use of Rahab as a name for Egypt in Isa 30:7 contributes to characterization of Egypt as unable to help Judah by identifying Egypt with an entity that Yahweh has defeated, rendering it powerless. Psalm 87:4 indicates that this type of characterization of Egypt was sufficiently known, such that Rahab became a "poetic name" for Egypt.⁴⁸

The king of Egypt is also compared to a dragon in Ezek 29:3–5 and 32:2–6, which describe the Pharaoh as "the great dragon" and "a dragon in the seas," respectively, and state that Yahweh will hook or net and kill this dragon and leave his body exposed as carrion:

Speak and say: "Thus says Adonai Yahweh: Beware that I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon who lies stretched out in the midst of his streams, who has said, 'My river belongs to me, it is I who made it for myself.' But I will put hooks in your jaws, and I will make the fish of your streams cling to your scales. Then I will draw you up from the midst of your streams, and all the fish of your streams will cling to your scales. Then I will abandon you in the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams. You will fall on the field, you will not be collected, you will not be gathered. I have

given you as food to the creatures of the earth and to the birds of the heavens.

(Ezek 29:3–5)

This passage and the similar passage in Ezek 32:2–6 purport to contain statements directly from Yahweh to the king of Egypt that are threats. In Ezek 29:3, Yahweh says he is against the king of Egypt and in Ezek 32:2 the prophet is commanded to make a lament for the king of Egypt, suggesting the content of the oracle will be negative for the king.⁴⁹ In both passages Yahweh threatens the king, who is identified as a dragon, and Yahweh describes exactly how he will trap, kill, and expose the dragon's corpse. In Ezek 29:4, Yahweh says that he will hook the dragon and draw him out of the water, and in Ezek 32:3 he says he will draw him out with a net. These instruments, a net and hooks, were typical for drawing fish out of water, but the hooks (*ḥaḥîm*) in Ezek 29:4 are also reminiscent of Job 40:25–26, which indicates that only Yahweh can bore Leviathan's jaw with a hook (*ḥôah*). Both passages also portray the king of Egypt as maintaining a self-understanding characterized by hubris: Ezek 29:3 states that the king of Egypt claims to have created and to possess his river, which runs counter to the biblical claim that Yahweh has created everything and that all creation belongs to him (Ps 89:12; Deut 10:14; Isa 45:18; etc.); Ps 95:5a reads in a manner similar to this verse, speaking of Yahweh: "His is the sea, it is he who made it." Ezekiel 32:2 states that the king of Egypt seemed or imagined himself to be (*nîdmêṭā*)⁵⁰ like a lion, but that he is actually a dragon in the seas that has troubled the waters and fouled rivers. In both cases the king of Egypt is characterized as thinking positively of himself in a way that Yahweh directly counters in his statements. Both passages also describe Yahweh leaving the dragon's corpse exposed for animals or birds to feed upon it, and the exposure rather than proper disposal of the corpse would be particularly humiliating. Moreover, both passages state that after Yahweh kills the dragon, the people of Egypt will know "that I indeed am Yahweh" (*kî 'ānî YHWH*) (Ezek 29:6 and 32:15). That is, Yahweh's slaying of the dragon is narrative proof of his incomparable status and of the king of Egypt's weakness.

Theodore J. Lewis proposes an alternative interpretation of Ezek 32:2, though he accepts that reading the verse as exhibiting a contrast between the king of Egypt as a lion and dragon is possible. After reviewing Mesopotamian traditions of lion-dragon composite figures in literary and iconographic traditions, he proposes that Ezek 32:2 states: "You are like a lion among the

nations, You are like a dragon in the seas.” In his reading, the king of Egypt is identified as a lion-dragon figure similar to those in Mesopotamian traditions, including several combat traditions.⁵¹ This reading is certainly compatible with my analysis of Ezek 32:2–16. Though, it would nullify the hypothesis that Ezek 32:2 offers a contrast between the king’s self-understanding and his “actual” identity, which is comparable to other portrayals of disfavored agents as arrogant, including Ezek 29:2–6. Otherwise, the image of the king of Egypt as a composite lion-dragon figure heightens the mythological portrayal of the king, which in turn heightens the implications of Yahweh slaying him.

The identification of the king of Egypt as a dragon was probably bolstered by the association of Egypt with its prominent geographical feature, the Nile River, as well as Egyptian traditions portraying its king as a fierce crocodile.⁵² However, the notion of the Nile River as an emblem for Egypt and the portrayal of Egypt’s kings as crocodiles cannot account for the elaborate details in Ezek 29 and 32. Rather, these passages fit within the conflict topos. Representation of the king of Egypt as the dragon (and of Egypt as Rahab) of combat traditions was compatible with and possibly attracted by the identification of Egypt with a prominent body of water and the king of Egypt with the crocodile. Several specific narrative details of Ezek 29:2–6 and 32:2–16 are similar to earlier and later articulations of the conflict topos: the enemy is portrayed as arrogant (*KTU* 1.5 I 1–8; Job 41:26; Dan 7:8; 2 Macc 5:21, 9:8; Rev 13:3–8; 2 Thess 2:1–12); the enemy is portrayed as a sea-dragon (*KTU* 1.3 III 38–42; *KTU* 1.83; Ps 74:13–14; Isa 27:1; Rev 12, 13, 16, and 20); the deity uses hooks or nets to secure the enemy (*EE* IV; Job 40:25–26); the corpse of the slain enemy is left exposed (*EE* IV 129–140, V 53–63; *KTU* 1.2 IV 21–27; *KTU* 1.6 II 30–37; Ps 74:14); and defeat of the enemy indicates the victorious deity’s incomparability (*EE* V 133–136; Ps 89:6–15; Job 41:2–3). As these shared features demonstrate, Ezek 29:2–6 and 32:2–16 exhibit continuity with a wide range of conflict traditions. At the same time, Ezek 29:2–6 and 32:2–16 employ the motif in a way that suits the particular socio-political context of Ezekiel. According to the text, Ezekiel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and within this context Ezek 29:2–6 and 32:2–16 claim that Yahweh will punish the king of Egypt. The motivation for this punishment is that Egypt failed to adequately support Judah as an ally (Ezek 29:6–7), thus contributing to its destruction.⁵³ In order to criticize the king of Egypt within this socio-political setting, Ezekiel combined the identification of Egypt as the Nile River and its king as a crocodile with combat tradition in which Yahweh defeats a sea-dragon. The author used the conflict motif to invert pro-Egyptian imagery associated with Egypt’s abundance and its

king's power, claiming that Yahweh will capture, kill, and expose "the great dragon"/"dragon in the seas," the king of Egypt.

Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are also portrayed as Yahweh's enemies and compared to a dragon and a sea, respectively, in Jer 51:34–37. Jerusalem and her inhabitants summon Yahweh to avenge them against Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar is described as a dragon who has attacked Zion/Jerusalem, and Babylon is compared to a sea that Yahweh will "dry up" in defense of Zion/Jerusalem:

*He has devoured me,
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon has vexed me.
He made me an empty vessel,
He swallowed me like a dragon.
He filled his belly with my delicacies,
He has rinsed me out.⁵⁴
The inhabitant of Zion will say,
My violated flesh is on account of Babylon.
Jerusalem will say,
My blood is on account of the inhabitants of Chaldea.
Therefore thus says Yahweh:
Know that I will defend your cause,
I will avenge your enemies.
I will dry up her sea,
I will make her fountain dry.
Babylon will become a heap, a dwelling of jackals,
A horror, an object of hissing, without inhabitant.*

(Jer 51:34–37)

In their outcry, Jerusalem and "the inhabitant of Zion" describe their suffering as Nebuchadnezzar devouring them "like a dragon," and this elicits Yahweh's response. The enemies of Zion/Jerusalem are equated with Yahweh's superhuman enemies, the sea and dragon. By analogy, the enemies of Zion/Jerusalem will share the fate of Yahweh's enemies: defeat. The passage envisions destruction for Babylon and describes this with the metaphor of Yahweh "drying up" her sea. Comparison of Nebuchadnezzar with a dragon along with the metaphor of Yahweh drying up Babylon's sea suggest the conflict motif. While it is possible that both of these features developed independently from notions of divine combat, the combination of the two makes the conflict motif explicit. The passage associates

images of the sea and dragon with one another. The people complain about their enemy Nebuchadnezzar, who acts “like a dragon,” and Yahweh responds that he will destroy Babylon, clearly associated with its king Nebuchadnezzar, and “dry up her sea.” Just as Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are two representations of the same political enemy, the dragon and sea are two of Yahweh’s defeated superhuman enemies, or possibly two representations of one defeated enemy.

The statement that Yahweh will “dry up her sea” in Jer 51:36 may also suggest the exodus motif, but this is not certain. Exodus 14:16, 21c–22, 26, 29; Ps 66:6; Ps 106:9; Isa 51:10; and Neh 9:11 describe the Reed Sea event as Yahweh drying up the sea. It is possible that the notion of Yahweh “drying up” the sea in Jer 51:36 assumes such descriptions of the Reed Sea event, though this passage does not mention the Reed Sea or exodus. Ugaritic texts possibly describe Yammu being dried up as well (*KTU* 1.2 IV 27 and *KTU* 1.83),⁵⁵ which would further caution attributing the “dry up her sea” in Jer 51:36 to the exodus motif. Moreover, the notion of “drying up her sea” may be best explained by Jer 51:43, which uses drying as a metaphor for the desolation of Babylonian cities.⁵⁶ Ultimately, exodus traditions are so prominent within the biblical foundational narrative that it might be impossible to determine whether the notion of Yahweh drying up the sea in Jer 51:36 reflects the conflict motif or the combined conflict and exodus motifs. Regardless, Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar are portrayed as destined for defeat when they are identified with Yahweh’s past defeated enemies. Jeremiah 51:34–37 explicitly calls for Yahweh to intervene against a disfavored polity and its king on behalf of the people in order to improve their current situation, and Yahweh is said to respond affirmatively that he will take vengeance on Babylon.⁵⁷

Habakkuk 3, like Jer 51:34–37, employs the conflict motif to portray an enemy, possibly Babylon, as destined for defeat. The passage describes Yahweh in battle and interweaves divine warrior imagery with a description of Yahweh defending his anointed against an enemy polity. Habakkuk 3:8–10 indicates through rhetorical questions that Yahweh was enraged against the sea/river. The passage describes Yahweh’s weapons, and like several passages discussed above (Ps 93:1–5; 29:3, 10; 65:8; and Nah 1:3b–5) references the deep’s voice or Yahweh’s superior voice:

*Was your anger against the river,⁵⁸ O Yahweh,
Indeed your rage against the river,
Or your fury against the sea,
When you mounted your horses,*

Your chariots of victory?
 The nakedness of your bow was bared,⁵⁹
 Oaths, rods, saying⁶⁰
 With rivers you split the earth.
 The mountains saw you and writhed.
 A flood of water swept by,⁶¹
 Deep gave forth its voice, lifted its hands high.
 (Hab 3:8–10)

These verses refer to combat between Yahweh and the sea/ivers, and throughout the chapter, Yahweh is characterized as a divine warrior in battle. He has various battle implements: a chariot and horses (Hab 3:8, 15), bow and arrow (Hab 3:9, 11, 14), and spear (Hab 3:11). He acts violently against various geophysical entities: Yahweh shakes and tramples the earth (Hab 3:6), shatters the mountains (Hab 3:6), splits the earth (Hab 3:9), and treads over and churns the sea (Hab 3:15). These features, including the conflict motif, divine warrior imagery, and theophany, exhibit Yahweh's prowess in battle, which is exercised not only against the sea/deep but also against human enemies. In addition to affecting the earth, mountains, and sea, Yahweh also defeats human enemies who threaten his anointed:

He stood and shook⁶² the earth;
 He looked and startled the nations. . . .
 With indignation you paced the earth,
 In anger you trampled nations.
 You marched out to save your people,
 To save your anointed.⁶³
 You crushed the head from the wicked house,⁶⁴
 Stripping foundation to neck.⁶⁵
 With his rods you hammered the head of his warrior.⁶⁶
 They stormed in to scatter me,
 Gloating as if to devour the poor in secret.
 You trampled the sea with your horses,
 Churning the mighty waters.
 (Hab 3:6a, 12–15)

The human enemies are called "nations" and "the wicked house," but it is unclear throughout Habakkuk exactly who the enemy is or whether there are various enemies from various historical contexts.⁶⁷ The human

enemy is not explicitly identified with the sea/dragon; rather it is portrayed as comparable to Yahweh's superhuman foes. The description of Yahweh defeating the "wicked house" exhibits similar wording to passages in which he defeats superhuman enemies: "You crushed the head from the wicked house" (Hab 3:13b). This is similar to Yahweh crushing the heads of dragons/Leviathan (Ps 74:13-14). Moreover, the description of Yahweh defeating human enemies is framed by references to Yahweh defeating the deep/sea/waters. The juxtaposition of Yahweh acting violently against the deep/sea/waters with Yahweh defeating human enemies suggests that the former is relevant to the latter; this constitutes secondary application of the conflict motif, that is, Yahweh's past victory is assumed to have import for humans. This assumption is made explicit in the passage when Yahweh's defeat of human enemies is narrated as if it has already occurred, in conjunction with his defeat of superhuman enemies. In sum, Hab 3 utilizes the conflict motif to enhance its description of Yahweh in battle and to portray the enemy of the anointed as a defeated enemy.

In Jer 51:34-37, Yahweh is called to action against Babylon by the invocation of his enemy the dragon, and Yahweh responds that he will certainly defend the inhabitants of Zion. In Hab 3, Yahweh has defended his anointed, acting as a fierce warrior against both human and superhuman enemies. Similarly, Isa 51:9-11 recalls Yahweh's former victories over his enemies, Rahab/dragon and the sea/waters/deeps, as precedent for Yahweh to act on behalf of people in the present. Specifically, Isa 51:9-11 uses the combined motifs of combat and exodus to promote the process of restoration after Babylonian exile:⁶⁸

*Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of Yahweh!
 Awake, as in days of old, generations long past!
 Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced the dragon?
 Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep;
 Who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross?
 So the ransomed of Yahweh will return,
 They will come to Zion with joy,
 Perpetual gladness on their heads.
 Rejoicing and gladness will overtake (them),
 But grief and sighing will flee.⁶⁹*

(Isa 51:9-11)

The passage summons Yahweh to act in the current historical context of restoration as he acted in the past on behalf of the “redeemed” who crossed the Reed Sea. The passage describes the Reed Sea event as Yahweh drying up the sea and making a way within its depths for the people to safely cross. This manipulation of the sea occurs in parallel with Yahweh piercing the dragon and cutting Rahab into pieces. The conflict and exodus motifs are fully intertwined, and the combined motifs serve as a hermeneutic for restoration. The return of the people to Judah is portrayed as another exodus; just as Yahweh enabled the “redeemed” to cross the sea, he will facilitate the “ransomed” returning to Zion.⁷⁰ The passage continues, describing Yahweh as a comforter (Isa 51:12), who reassures the people as they face threat from an oppressor (Isa 51:13) by invoking his acts of creation (Isa 51:13) and victory over the sea:

*I, Yahweh, alone am your god,
who stirs up the sea,
so that its waves roar;
Yahweh of hosts is his name.*

(Isa 51:15)

The combined conflict and exodus motifs serve to establish Yahweh’s prowess in battle, and Yahweh’s past victories against Rahab/the dragon and the sea/deeps are given as precedent for Yahweh acting on behalf of the people. The “ransomed” returning to Zion are compared implicitly to the “redeemed” of the exodus story, such that Yahweh’s achievements in the past are cited as narrative guarantee that the contemporary process of restoration will be successful.

Ezekiel 29:2–6, Ezek 32:2–16, Jer 51:34–37, Hab 3, and Isa 51:9–11 utilize the conflict motif to promote the prowess of Yahweh in battle; to portray disfavored polities (Egypt, the king of Egypt, Babylon, or Nebuchadnezzar) negatively, as defeated or destined for defeat; and to claim that Yahweh has defeated human enemies in the present, will defeat them in the immediate future, or will otherwise intervene on behalf of the people in the present. Isaiah 51:9–11 (and possibly Jer 51:34–37) also uses the exodus motif, specifically citing the Reed Sea event as a paradigmatic instance of Yahweh intervening within a contemporary situation on behalf of the people. These passages identify or compare disfavored agents and polities with Yahweh’s defeated superhuman enemies, and also implicitly or explicitly reference Yahweh’s past victories. They suggest or explicitly claim that the disfavored

agent and/or polity is destined for defeat, and this implies that Yahweh will correct or has corrected the current unfavorable socio-political situation.

Psalms 89 and Ps 74 (discussed above) also employ the conflict motif to promote the prowess of Yahweh in battle and offer his past victories against superhuman enemies as a precedent for Yahweh acting against human enemies. However, these psalms exhibit less certainty about whether Yahweh will indeed intervene in the present than do Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; Hab 3; and Isa 51:9–11. Psalm 89:39–52 and Ps 74:1–11, 18–23 clearly indicate that the context of the conflict motif within the final forms of these two psalms is lamentation.⁷¹ The context of lamentation provides an additional layer of significance for the conflict motif within these psalms: Yahweh's past victories are cited in order to provoke Yahweh to act in the present.⁷² These lamentations hope for the sort of awaking to action described in Ps 78:65–66, which states that Yahweh awoke to engage in battle, and suggested in Isa 51:9–11, which calls for Yahweh to awake and engage in battle as in olden times and appears relatively confident that he will do so. However, Ps 89:47 accuses Yahweh of hiding, and Ps 74:22 asks that Yahweh arise to action but there is no certainty that he will. Psalm 89:39–52 accuses Yahweh of breaking his covenant with David (discussed below), not defending him in battle, making his enemies rejoice, and shaming him (Ps 89:39–46). Likewise, Ps 74:1–11, 18–23 asks Yahweh to abide by his covenant (Ps 74:20) and asks why Yahweh has not defended the people against enemies and shame (Ps 74:10–11). Both psalms implore Yahweh to remember the taunting/reproach of enemies (Ps 89:51; Ps 74:18). It appears that the editors of these psalms inserted poems describing Yahweh's divine victories within lamentations in order to contrast his past action with present inaction. Psalm 74:3–8 references the destruction of the temple, suggesting that the contemporary unfavorable situation is Babylonian oppression, which is also possibly the context of the final form of Ps 89.⁷³ The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the demise of the Davidic dynasty at this time provide suitable context for these psalms' accusation that Yahweh has abrogated his covenant with David and the people.⁷⁴ With respect to the Davidic covenant, the final section of this chapter discusses Ps 89 further. The following section focuses on the temple with respect to the conflict motif. There are several indications that Yahweh's temple was associated with his victories in divine combat, and this further elucidates why Ps 74 and Ps 89 would make reference to Yahweh's past victories at a time when the temple has been destroyed, an event that would call into question Yahweh's whereabouts and status.

The Temple

In traditions related to Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, and Ba‘lu, we have whole narratives that detail how the deity attained kingship after his victory in battle and feature the god enthroned and ruling over his dominion. In traditions related to Yahweh, however, we do not have narrative descriptions of Yahweh attaining his throne. Rather, we have multitude references to Yahweh—already and from olden times—enthroned as king, with royal accoutrements, ruling over the sea and all creation. As with other victorious warrior deities who attain kingship, Yahweh is proclaimed to be incomparable and potential rivals to his authority pale in comparison.

We have no surviving visual evidence pertaining to Yahweh’s battles and kingship. However, the description of Solomon’s temple complex in Jerusalem includes one feature that may have exhibited imagery associated with Yahweh’s victory over the sea: the “molten sea” (*hayyām mûšāq*). First Kings 7:13–40 describes several temple-related objects that Solomon commissioned Hiram of Tyre to build, and verses 23–26 describe a large water basin that is particularly interesting in light of passages discussed above about Yahweh ruling over the sea. The “sea” in the temple courtyard is described as round, 10 cubits in diameter, and 5 cubits deep.⁷⁵ Though 2 Chron 4:6 explains that priests used the “sea” for bathing, Carol L. Meyers, Abraham Malamat, and Elizabeth Bloch-Smith each argue that its large size suggests a symbolic meaning.⁷⁶ The “sea” in the temple courtyard sat upon twelve oxen (1 Kgs 7:25). Bloch-Smith discusses several archeological parallels, various large basins supported by oxen or bulls: a late eighth-century BCE Assyrian relief depicting two large basins supported by bull forelegs in front of a temple; two Cypriot stone bowls, two meters in diameter, with bulls on the handles; and oxen bases at Tell Halaf and Tell Tayinat. These basins attest to the common use of bull and oxen bases but do not fully clarify the meaning or function of the “sea” at Solomon’s temple. There was also a large basin in the temple courtyard at ‘Ain Dara, about two-thirds the size of the “sea” in Jerusalem. Bloch-Smith cites this among several elements at ‘Ain Dara and elsewhere that indicate the superhuman size of deities, but she does not speculate about the function or possible symbolic meaning of the ‘Ain Dara basin.⁷⁷ As with Mesopotamian iconographic data discussed in Chapter 2, we must keep in mind issues of “visual literacy” and polysemy when reconstructing potential symbolic meanings of such an object. It is possible that the artisans, kings, priests, and public held multiple impressions of the molten sea.

Bloch-Smith interprets the molten sea within the context of psalms such as those discussed above in which Yahweh defeats the sea and is enthroned in his temple for eternity. The molten sea within the temple courtyard, she proposes, symbolized Yahweh's triumphant enthronement.⁷⁸

In addition to the representation of the sea in the temple courtyard, the temple itself would have exhibited Yahweh's victories and functioned to establish Yahweh's authority. The temple was Yahweh's house and palace. The building narrative of Solomon's temple for Yahweh is consistent with the motif of the victorious temple builder in ancient West Asian literature.⁷⁹ The deities Ea, Marduk, Aššur, and Ba'lu each attain their divine palaces or temples after victory over their enemies. This pattern among deities mirrors the pattern of human kings building their own palaces after securing their kingdoms. The conception of Yahweh's authority (and the authority of other deities in other kingdoms) as kingship implied authorization of the institution of kingship. This would have been visible in the landscape of Jerusalem, because the temple displaying Yahweh's authority stood next door to the king's palace. First Kings 5 describes Solomon's dominion and prominence as an impetus for his decision to build Yahweh's temple, and the subsequent description of the building of the temple in 1 Kgs 6–7 includes the building of his own palace. The palace-temple complex was a common archeological feature in ancient West Asia, and the proximity of the temple and palace promoted, that is, it exhibited and functioned to establish, the legitimacy of the human king by displaying the deity's endorsement of the ruling dynasty.⁸⁰ This notion is clearly articulated in 2 Sam 7:13, which explicitly links the patron deity's establishment of the king's dynasty with the king's building of his patron deity's temple: "As for him, he will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

The conjunction of Yahweh's dominion and the king's dominion, exhibited by the palace-temple complex, was possibly recorded in inscriptions at the entrance of the temple as well. First Kings 7:15–22 describes two free-standing pillars that were placed on the porch of the temple, named "Jachin" (*yākhîn*) and "Boaz" (*bō'az*).⁸¹ Robert B. Y. Scott first proposed that Jachin and Boaz were not two elements of one inscription, "He establishes with strength," as many commentators had suggested before him.⁸² Rather, he proposed that the two names are the opening words of two separate inscriptions.⁸³ Based on frequent use of the verb "to establish" (*kûn*), from which "Jachin" (*yākhîn*) is derived, in passages about Yahweh establishing David's reign, Scott proposed that "Jachin" was the

first word of an inscription regarding the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, possibly: “He (Yahweh) will establish the throne of David, and his kingdom to his seed forever.” Similarly, based on frequent use of the noun “strength” (‘ōz) in psalms about the enthronement and sovereignty of Yahweh, he proposed that “Boaz” was the first word of an inscription about Yahweh performing some deed or being enthroned “in strength” or “with strength” (*bē’ōz*).⁸⁴ Such inscriptions, if present at the entrance of the temple on the two free-standing pillars, would have reflected the legitimating ideology displayed in the construction of the temple-palace complex. Alternatively, Julian Obermann proposed that the two names indicate two of Yahweh’s principle roles: “Establisher/Sustainer” and “Smiter.”⁸⁵ Thus, the pillars themselves would have been monuments to Yahweh’s dual roles as father-creator god and victorious warrior god.

Based on depictions in biblical texts, the visual landscape of Jerusalem displayed Solomon’s dominion, and bound up with that, it exhibited the authority of Yahweh, the deity who endorsed Solomon.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the temple and the “sea” in its courtyard may have displayed Yahweh’s control over the sea and alluded to this specific combat. Thus, the palace-temple complex, on a symbolic level, was a physical monument to Yahweh’s victories. The relationship between Yahweh’s dominion and the king’s authority, visible in Jerusalem’s layout, is explicit in Ps 2:6–9; Ps 18; Ps 21; Ps 72; Ps 78; Ps 89:2–38; Ps 110; Ps 132:11–18; Deut 17:14–15; and 2 Sam 7:8–9. Of these Ps 89:2–38 and Ps 78 specifically reference Yahweh’s combat with the sea, showing that the motif was a constituent aspect of Judean royal ideology.

The Conflict Motif and Royal Figures

The conflict motif was employed to make claims about the authority of royal figures within traditions from Mesopotamia (discussed in Chapter 2), Mari, Judah, and Elephantine. Mari Letter A.1968, Ps 89:2–38, Ps 78, and a proverb from the Elephantine text of *Ahiqar* each exhibit secondary application of the conflict motif. That is, the victory and dominion of the victorious warrior deity is claimed or assumed to have import for humans, here specifically with regard to their royal authority. Whole narrative examples of the conflict topos (*Anzu*, *Enuma Elish*, and the *Ba’lu Cycle*) and examples of the conflict motif that focus on the royal status of the victorious warrior deity (various psalms discussed above) implicitly legitimize the institution of kingship, because the deity’s power is conceived as kingship,

a human political institution. This implicit promotion of the institution of kingship is made explicit in instances of the conflict motif that focus on the rule of human kings.

In Mari Letter A.1968 and Ps 89:2–38, the victorious warrior deity (Adad and Yahweh, respectively) extends his authoritative prerogative to a particular human ruler. These texts first reference or summarize the deity's victory over his enemies, by which he secured his own authority. Second, they assert a relationship between the victorious deity and the king such that the king is endorsed by being associated with the deity's victory. In Mari Letter A.1968, Adad gives Zimri-Lim his weapons with which he fought Sea, and in Ps 89:26, Yahweh states that he will place David's hand on the sea/rivers. These actions show that the deity purportedly endorses the king explicitly through the conflict motif.

In an eighteenth-century BCE letter from Nur-Sîn of Aleppo to Zimri-Lim of Mari, Nur-Sîn reports a message that the prophet Abiya has articulated from the god Adad. The contents of prophetic messages throughout the ancient West Asian milieu are thoroughly political, and the process of encapsulating whatever oral message may be behind its literary attestation is complex.⁸⁷ Unlike biblical and Mesopotamian examples of the conflict topos, we know the intended audience for this text and its narrative subtext: Zimri-Lim. It is his political legitimacy that is the focus of this letter. According to the letter, the prophet asserts that Adad has restored Zimri-Lim to the throne of his fathers and has given to him the weapons with which he fought Sea (*têmtum*).

Speak to my lord:

Thus (says) Nur-Sîn your servant: Abiya, prophet of Adad, the lord of Alep[po], came as such and said:

Thus (says) Adad: "I gave the whole country to Yaḥdun-Lim. Because of my weapons, he never confronted his equal. But he abandoned me, so I g[av]e the land which I had given to him to Šamši-Adad. Šamši-Adad [. . .]

[. . .]let me re[st]ore you! I restored you to the th[ron]e of your ancestors]. Those weapon[s] with which I crushed Sea (*têmtum*), I gave you. I anointed you with the oil of my luminosity/victory. No one will stand to face you.

Hear my one command: When someone appeals to you for judgment, saying 'I have been robbed!' Be there and judge his case;

an[swer him fair]ly. [Th]is is what I wa[nt] from you. When you march [out] to war, do not march out [wi]thout an oracle. [W]hen I myself appear in [my] oracle, you may march out to war. If [not] so, do [not] march out of the city gate.”

This is what the prophet said to me. No[w I have sent the hair of the prophet] and a fri[n]ge of his garment to my lord].

(Mari Letter A. 1968)⁸⁸

Adad’s message to Zimri-Lim stipulates that the king must administer justice fairly and always have the god’s oracle before going to war. To encourage Zimri-Lim to abide by these terms, he offers previous kings as examples of rulers from whom he has withdrawn his endorsement for failing to uphold his wishes. In the past, Adad endorsed Yaḥdun-Lim, the previous king of Mari and possibly a relative of Zimri-Lim, and subsequently, Šamši-Adad, who controlled Mari from Aššur after Yaḥdun-Lim was killed. The letter describes Yaḥdun-Lim’s initial success as resulting from his possession of Adad’s weapons, and now Adad has transferred his endorsement and his weapons to Zimri-Lim. Another message, in letter A.1858, reports that the weapons of Adad have arrived and are being stored in the temple of Dagan at Terqa, the cultic center of Mari, indicating that actual weapons of some origin were associated with this tradition.⁸⁹ A summons for the deity to join Zimri-Lim in battle, “March, Adad, at his (Zimri-Lim’s) left side,” clearly anticipates the association of the king with Adad to result in success.⁹⁰

The victory of the deity Adad over Sea is referenced to assert Adad’s divine authority; his authority was won through divine combat. The Akkadian word for Sea, typically *tāmtum*, is the word from which the name Tiamat is derived. From a comparative perspective, the Mari data portrays the deity Adad as having legitimate authority by characterizing him as the warrior who defeated the sea. Within the hierarchic taxonomy of the conflict topos, he is comparable to Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, Ba’lu, and Yahweh in their respective combat traditions. As with Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, and Yahweh, Adad’s status as victorious warrior is used to endorse, and threaten withdrawal of endorsement from, particular human individuals. Specifically, Adad transfers his weapons to human kings in order to guarantee their success in war against human enemies: Yaḥdun-Lim “never confronted his equal” and Adad marches at Zimri-Lim’s side. In turn, the kings’ victories in war secure their earthly royal authority. The author of the letter employs the conflict motif to assert the authority of

Adad, which constitutes primary application of the conflict motif. Adad's dominion is presented as already having been established. That is, from the perspective promoted in the letter, Adad's authority is the basis for his demands on Zimri-Lim. Then the author comments on the legitimacy of Zimri-Lim as it derives from Adad's authority. This is secondary application of the conflict motif, claiming that the deity's victory has import for a human figure. Adad also states that he has anointed the king with his victory/luminosity oil, and this accompanying act of endorsement confirms the centrality of the issue of legitimation/delegitimation in this employment of the conflict motif.

Furthermore, in a context where Zimri-Lim is being "restored" to his throne, there would be palpable need to establish his legitimacy. There is a break in the letter just before the verb "let me restore you" (*lutêrka*), so we do not know if the letter expounded on this context. However, from other sources, we learn that Yaḥdun-Lim, the previous king of Mari, was assassinated during a coup, at which time Zimri-Lim fled Mari. Subsequently, Šamši-Adad, the king of Aššur, ruled Mari and passed control of Mari to his son Yasmah-Addu. When Šamši-Adad died, Yasmah-Addu lost control of Mari and Zimri-Lim succeeded him. The conditions under which Zimri-Lim took the throne are unclear. While many have assumed that he forcefully took power from Yasmah-Addu, Wolfgang Heimpel argues that surviving documents do not support this reconstruction. He shows that the king of Ešnunna Ibal-Pi-El, not Zimri-Lim, drove Yasmah-Addu from Mari in an effort to secure his own borders. Meanwhile, Zimri-Lim had taken control of Tuttul, another area controlled by Yasmah-Addu, but he only gained control of Mari with the help of the king of Aleppo, Yarim-Lim, more than three months after Yasmah-Addu had left Mari.⁹¹ Thus, Zimri-Lim gained his royal authority in Mari primarily through the exploits and assistance of other kings, not through his own victories. If this reconstruction is accurate, Zimri-Lim may have benefited from the legitimating ideology of the conflict motif, especially since he could not (or for some inexplicable reason, does not) boast of his own victories over Yasmah-Addu or retaking of Mari. The letters assert that he is endorsed by the deity's royal prerogative and claim that he possesses the same symbols of divine approval as the most recent king of Mari: Adad's weapons.

The letter states clearly that the king's authority is not absolute; rather, it is contingent on the god's favor, which may change depending on the king's behavior. The terms of exchange between Adad and the king are clearly stated: Adad gives his weapons and endorsement and in

exchange the king must administer justice fairly and consult the god's oracle before going into war. The weapons, therefore, are physical evidence of a contract between the god and king. The terms of exchange are explicit and there is no misrecognition of the exchange or reciprocal obligations between the god and king. As such, this exchange is not a "gift" in the Maussian sense. However, this example of exchange illustrates well Marcel Mauss's explanation of *le pouvoir* residing in a given object to embody and stand for the essence of the giver.⁹² The delivered weapons of Adad would remind Zimri-Lim that he is still the deity's subordinate and that the god exercises his authority over the king. The god can take away his weapons from the king, as he did with Yaḥdun-Lim. It is particularly fitting that Adad, according to the letter, is concerned with the king's behavior in war, since the means by which he gives him authority are weapons and both the god's authority and the king's authority are bound up in victory.

The conditional characterization of Adad's endorsement of Zimri-Lim, and of Yaḥdun-Lim before him, seems to fit the apparently insecure nature of Mari's autonomy and international relations: Yaḥdun-Lim had been assassinated in a coup; Mari was then controlled by a foreign ruler; and despite Zimri-Lim's successful twenty year reign, it ended when Hammurabi conquered and sacked Mari.⁹³ In light of this, it is especially significant that the letter explicitly credits Adad of Aleppo for securing Zimri-Lim's power. Among ancient West Asian traditions, it was typical for kings to attribute their victories to their patron deities. Aaron Tugendhaft rightly observes, however, that in Mari Letter A. 1968, the patron deity of Aleppo takes credit for the victories of Mari's rulers, while the royal seals of Zimri-Lim show that his patron deity was Dagan, not Adad. Tugendhaft emphasizes that Mari Letter A.1968 does not feature self-legitimation by a king but rather a foreign agent claiming that his patron deity is responsible for another king's authority and that this patron deity can remove his favor based on stipulated conditions. By highlighting the political and military interactions between Mari and Aleppo exhibited in various Mari letters, Tugendhaft challenges how Mari Letter A. 1968 is typically cited in discussions of the conflict topos within Ugaritic and biblical traditions.⁹⁴ It is possible that the letter's message, as well as the associated physical weapons, communicated the king of Aleppo's subordination of Zimri-Lim. If so, the Aleppan king, prophet, and/or scribe utilized the conflict motif to rhetorically subjugate Zimri-Lim under the guise of promoting his legitimacy.

Mari letter A.1968 is our earliest extant example of the conflict motif, and it predates most extant whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos as well. This letter establishes the early development of secondary application of the conflict motif, especially within royal ideology, whereby a deity's victory is assumed or claimed to have significance for humans. We have no full narrative articulation of Adad's victory over Sea from Mari or Aleppo. This may be due to the chance nature of archeological findings or because no such narrative was ever recorded. While it is reasonable to assume there was at least an oral story about Adad defeating Sea, to which the letter refers, we must admit that there is no way to be certain which came first—the notion of a deity establishing his authority through victory or the notion of a victorious warrior deity endorsing a human king. From a practical standpoint it is plausible that narratives of divine combat followed by divine kingship initially developed in service of particular kings, possibly drawing upon existing cosmological stories that employed divine combat to explain cosmic and natural phenomena. It is also important to recognize the complex nature of Mari letter A.1968 with regard to the conditionality of the relationship between the deity and kings, and especially with regard to the fact that Adad was not Zimri-Lim's patron deity. Wayne Pitard, concluding his discussion of the fluidity of motifs in the *Ba'lu Cycle*, states: "It issues a warning to interpreters, reminding them that the appearance of a similar motif in more than one story does not mean an identical function of the motif within the stories."⁹⁵ This is all the more so with Mari letter A.1968. As Tugendhaft has shown, the complexity of our earliest example of the conflict motif should serve as caution for interpreting particular instances of the conflict topos without adequately situating them in their particular socio-political and literary contexts.⁹⁶

Psalm 89:2–38 employs the conflict motif within Judean royal ideology. David's patron deity, Yahweh, shows his endorsement of David's royal authority by placing David's hand(s) on the sea/rivers. Psalm 89:2–38 exhibits some features that are similar to letter A.1968 from Mari. The letter first asserts the deity's authority by reference to his victory over Sea and then promotes the legitimacy of the king by associating him with the deity's victory. Likewise, Ps 89:2–38 first describes Yahweh ruling over the sea, having conquered his enemies (discussed in detail above):

*You indeed rule over the swelling of the sea,
When its waves rise, you still them.*

*You indeed crushed Rahab like a corpse,
With your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
(Ps 89:10–12)*

The psalm then claims that Yahweh has endorsed the Davidic dynasty by portraying Yahweh placing David in a position superior to the sea and rivers:

*I will set his (David's) hand on the sea,
His right hand on the rivers.
(Ps 89:26)*

The author promotes David by associating him with Yahweh's divine victories, particularly by claiming that the deity himself endorses the king by sharing with David his authority over the sea/rivers, Yahweh's defeated enemies over whom he rules. The establishment of David's royal authority is linked to the mythic past by being associated with Yahweh's foundational acts and divine combat. Likewise, David is portrayed as participating in the continued subjugation of the sea/rivers, thus sharing in Yahweh's authority won through past divine combat.

Psalm 89:6–19, the older hymn to Yahweh (discussed above), employs the conflict motif to claim the incomparability and dominion of Yahweh, but within Ps 89:2–38, a combined unit of the earlier hymn and pro-David material, the divine authority of Yahweh and the conflict motif primarily serve to promote the legitimacy of David.⁹⁷ The section focusing on Yahweh's dominion is framed by statements of Yahweh endorsing David. First, Yahweh makes a covenant with David that extends to his progeny for perpetuity:

*I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have made an oath with my servant David:
For perpetuity I will establish your seed,
I will build your throne for all generations.
(Ps 89:4–5)*

Following the description of Yahweh's dominion, the psalm continues to elaborate on Yahweh's covenant with David. Yahweh has chosen David and anointed him with oil:

*Then you spoke in a vision to your loyal ones,⁹⁸
You said, "I have placed a crown⁹⁹ over a warrior,
I have raised a chosen one from the people.*

*I have found my servant David
With my holy oil I have anointed him."*

(Ps 89:20–21)

The act of anointing with the deity's oil, here as in Mari letter A.1968, confers a substance belonging to the deity upon the king, displays the deity's endorsement of the king, and corroborates the legitimating effect of the conflict motif. The passage continues as Yahweh elaborates on his commitment to strengthen David and defeat David's enemies:

*On account of my hand he will be secure,
Indeed, my arm will strengthen him.
No enemy will rise against him,
No unjust one will afflict him.
I will crush his rivals from before him,
As for those who hate him, I will smite (them).*

(Ps 89:22–24)

The rhetorical effect of these verses, especially considering the reference to Yahweh's "arm," is to communicate that just as Yahweh crushed and scattered his own enemies with his mighty arm, he will beat and smite David's enemies. Yahweh promises to defeat David's human enemies just as he defeated divine enemies in the past. The psalm continues with additional affirmation of David's dominion, specifically the exaltation of David's "horn," indicating the attainment of power;¹⁰⁰ the conflict motif; and divine parentage, whereby David is said to be the foremost earthly king:

*Indeed my fidelity and covenant loyalty will be with him,
By my name his horn will rise.
I will set his hand on the sea,
His right hand on the rivers.
He indeed will call to me: "You are my father,
My god and the rock of my victory."
Moreover, I will make him the first-born,
The highest of earthly kings.*

(Ps 89:25–28)

The notion of divine parentage employs the concept of a father-son relationship to portray the king as having an intimate relationship with the deity.¹⁰¹ Moreover, here Yahweh makes David the first-born, a position of prominence within the patriarchal family hierarchy. David's status as first-born is then applied to the political sphere when Yahweh states that David is superior to all other earthly kings. This is consistent with broader ancient West Asian royal ideology in which the king is the son or first-born of his patron deity, and the father-son relationship is offered as a guarantee of the king's dynasty, for example SAA 9, 1.¹⁰² The notion that David is superior to all other earthly kings obviously complements the covenant ideology present throughout the psalm. The eternal covenant with David, Yahweh's promise that his dynasty will maintain the throne forever, would depend upon the Davidic king being able to defend his political autonomy against rival kings. Or, in theological language, the eternal covenant would depend upon Yahweh constantly defeating David's human rivals, just as Yahweh defeated his own rivals in past divine combat. Thus, the conflict motif is one of five complementary ways that the psalm articulates Yahweh's endorsement of David: covenant language, the act of anointing, exalting David's "horn," the conflict motif, and divine sonship. Each of these features contributes to the pro-Davidic ideology of Ps 89:2–38, which concludes with a reiteration of the unconditional nature of the Davidic covenant (Ps 89:29–38).

The lamentation portion of the psalm (Ps 89:39–52), however, accuses Yahweh of breaking this covenant, rejecting his anointed, not defending him in battle, making his enemies rejoice, and shaming him (Ps 89:39–46). It concludes with a call for Yahweh to respond to the taunting of his anointed by his enemies (Ps 89:47–52). It is likely that we have several layers of poetic material from various historical contexts joined in one psalm.¹⁰³ The final layer of lamentation (Ps 89:39–52) uses the conflict motif and Davidic covenant to summon Yahweh to act on behalf of his anointed. As discussed above, this is similar to Ps 74, another lament that invokes Yahweh's past victories to provoke Yahweh to intervene in the present unfavorable situation. Both Ps 89 and Ps 74 reference the covenant and suggest that Yahweh has not upheld the covenant. This runs counter to the notion that the Davidic covenant is eternal (Ps 89:4–5, 29–38; also 2 Sam 7:14–16) and attests to the ability of a patron god to remove his favor.¹⁰⁴ The notion that Yahweh may remove his favor from the Davidic dynasty, indicating a conditional covenant, is attested in 1 Kgs 2:2–4; 8:25; 9:4–9; and Ps 132:11–12.¹⁰⁵ Among examples of the conflict motif in particular,

Mari letter A.1968 exhibits a conditional covenant between Adad and the kings of Mari. As soon as Yaḥdun-Lim “abandoned me,” Adad withdrew his support of the king, and Zimri-Lim’s endorsement is contingent upon his agreement to consult Adad’s oracle before engaging in battles. Within Ps 89, the establishment of an eternal covenant with David contributes to the pro-David layer of the psalm, and the accusation that Yahweh has abrogated the covenant contributes to the lamentation layer of the psalm. This use of covenant ideology complements the conflict motif within both the pro-David portion of the psalm and the lamentation portion. As a whole, Ps 89 employs the conflict motif for three purposes: to exhibit the dominion of Yahweh, to promote the legitimacy of David, and to summon Yahweh to act on behalf of his anointed in a later historical context.

Psalm 78 also employs the conflict motif to endorse the royal authority of David as well as the site of Jerusalem for Yahweh’s temple. Psalm 78:11–13 is discussed above with reference to the combined conflict and exodus motifs, but here we focus on the portrayal of Yahweh as the victorious divine warrior and his choice of David as king subsequent to his victories. Psalm 78:65–66 portrays Yahweh as a warrior who wakes from a deep sleep to defeat his enemies:

*Then he awoke like one asleep,
Adonai like a drunk warrior.
He smote his adversaries (at their) rearguard;
He gave them perpetual shame.*

(Ps 78:65–66)

Throughout the summary of Israelite and Judean events within Ps 78, Yahweh acts as a violent warrior: against Sea/waters (Ps 78:13), rocks (Ps 78:15, 20), rebellious Israelites (Ps 78:31–34), and Egyptians (Ps 78:49–51). Even the fall of Israel is attributed to Yahweh’s actions and inactions as a warrior (Ps 78:59–64). Once he wakes and defeats his enemies (Ps 78:65–66), he builds his temple, reflecting the pattern of victorious temple builder. The building of the temple is also compared to Yahweh’s foundation of the earth (Ps 78:69). This endorsement of the temple utilizes the theme of creation in addition to the conflict motif to link the temple to Yahweh’s past actions and to portray the temple as an enduring structure and monument to Yahweh’s choice of Judah and Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the summary of the Judean foundational story culminates in Yahweh’s choice of David as king (Ps 78:70–72). David’s kingship is the final result

of Yahweh's victories against human and superhuman enemies. By suffusing the foundational story with divine warrior imagery, especially reference to the splitting of Sea and the image of Yahweh waking up to engage in battle, the author of Ps 78 employed the conflict motif to promote Judah (even at the expense of Israel), Jerusalem, the temple, and the Davidic dynasty.¹⁰⁷ Yahweh is portrayed as exercising his authoritative prerogative, attained through victories in combat, to choose a site for his temple and a ruler for his people. Thus, the Jerusalem temple and Davidic dynasty are linked to Yahweh's victories and dominion. These institutions are portrayed as divinely endorsed and therefore legitimate.

The final example is more brief and of a different character than those just discussed (Mari Letter A. 1968, Ps 89:2–38, and Ps 78). The story of *Ahiqar* offers a brief and generalized example of the conflict motif being used to promote the authority of a royal individual. *Ahiqar* is an Aramaic text found at Elephantine that contains a story about the wise scribe Ahiqar, followed by a series of proverbs.¹⁰⁸ Rather than assuming a specific significance for the Judeans in Elephantine, such proverbs, as part of ancient West Asian wisdom traditions, exhibit reflection on social norms developed over centuries and transmitted through multiple generations. One portion of the *Ahiqar* proverbs contains several sayings about the power of kings and the importance of executing royal commands diligently. It states: “the king's tongue is gentle but it breaks the ribs of a dragon; (it is) like death, which is not seen (*Ahiqar* col. 6 l.89b–90).”¹⁰⁹ Because this line is a proverb, it is a brief and generalized statement; “the king” is not any particular king. However, the proverb exhibits characterization of royal power and legitimate rule. It focuses on the high importance of the king's verbal orders and suggests the negative consequences of acting counter to his commands. Royal commands are represented as the king's word in a previous proverb (*Ahiqar* col. 6 l.84) and here as the king's tongue. The import and effectiveness of royal commands are communicated by comparing the king's word with a dagger (*Ahiqar* col. 6 l.84), by describing the king's tongue as a weapon that “breaks the ribs of a dragon,” and by comparing the king's tongue to death. This proverb employs the conflict motif to describe the severity of the king's commands, one aspect of the authority of the king.

A dragon figure is one of several enemies that victorious warrior gods defeat (*KTU* 1.3 III 38–42; *KTU* 1.83; Ps 74:13–14; Isa 27:1; Rev 20:2). The king's commands, represented by his tongue, are depicted as formidable and effective through comparison with a weapon used against the dragon. Other instances of the conflict topos do not mention breaking the dragon's

ribs specifically, though Baʿlu strikes Yammu in the torso and between the arms (*KTU* 1.2 IV 14–15, 16–17). Several later examples of the motif reflect the notion of the victor using his mouth or breath as a weapon (1 *Enoch* 62:2; 4 *Ezra* 13:9–11; 2 *Thess* 2:8; *Rev* 19:19–21), but we have no descriptions of a king or human figure doing so. Within wisdom traditions, the power of the tongue to break bones is referenced in *Prov* 25:15b, “as for a gentle tongue, it breaks bone,” and *Ben Sira* 28:17–18, “The stroke of a whip makes a mark, but the stroke of a tongue breaks bone; Many have fallen by the lip of daggers, but not as many as those who have fallen by the tongue.” These proverbs share the notion that words, represented by the tongue, are powerful, perhaps even more powerful than weapons. However, the figure of the dragon cannot be explained by reference to wisdom traditions. Rather, it is better understood as representing a formidable superhuman entity, functioning rhetorically to heighten the claim being made about the king’s authority. The notion that the king’s tongue breaks ribs would be less impressive than the notion that the king’s tongue breaks a dragon’s ribs. Likewise, if the proverb mentioned some formidable beast, such as a lion or bear, rather than the dragon, the claim about the king’s authority would be somewhat less. That being said, it is also possible that the *tannin* here is a serpent (as in *Deut* 32:33 and *Exod* 7:9, 10, 12) rather than a dragon.

The subsequent comparison of the king’s tongue with death is more difficult to interpret, specifically the description of death as invisible. In the Hebrew Bible, death is characterized as insatiable (*Hab* 2:5) and powerful (*Song* 8:6), but not invisible, so it seems that we do not fully understand this line of the proverb.¹⁰ Presumably, this comparison also serves to communicate the power of the king’s commands, which is the focus of several proverbs in this column. Another specific proverb that may be relevant occurs two sentences below this one: “A king is like the Merciful, indeed his voice is high; Who is there who can withstand him, but he with whom El is?” (*Ahiqar* col. 6 l.91). This proverb compares the king to the deity El, using El’s epithet “the Merciful”; states that the king has a superior voice; and portrays the king as somewhat incomparable due to his relationship with El. These claims are similar to those made in other instances of the conflict motif, for example passages that emphasize the superiority of Yahweh’s voice/rebuke over the sea (*Ps* 93:1–5; *Ps* 29:3, 10; *Ps* 65:8; *Nah* 1:3b–5), and statements of incomparability such as *Ps* 89:6–9, claiming that Yahweh is incomparable among the gods, and *Ps* 89:28, claiming that David is incomparable among earthly kings. The royal ideology in these

two proverbs of *Ahiqar* could have developed independently from combat traditions. However, presence of the dragon and death together, both serving to elevate claims about the king's authority, and also occurring in close proximity to a statement of incomparability, constitute a constellation of figures and legitimizing functions that fits the conflict topos.

In sum, Mari Letter A.1968, Ps 89:2–38, Ps 78, and *Ahiqar* col. 61.89b–91 each employ the conflict motif to make claims about the authority of human royal figures. Within these texts, the conflict motif works alongside other means of promoting kings and their dynasties, contributing to royal ideology specific to each literary tradition. These texts show that authors adapted the widespread ancient West Asian theme of divine combat against the sea/sea-dragon to promote the human political institution of kingship and to claim that specific victorious warrior deities endorse and can withdraw endorsement from select individual kings and their dynasties.

Conclusion

David Tsumura, in his 2005 publication *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament*, updates and expands his 1989 study of the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2, and the new material pertains to some of the biblical texts just discussed. Tsumura argues that passages making reference to the sea, Leviathan, Rahab, or dragons “could be paraphrased ‘just as you crushed your enemies of old, crush them now.’”¹⁰⁰ I agree that this would be fair paraphrase of some passages, and I appreciate his critique of former reconstructions of how conflict and creation motifs are related in ancient West Asian traditions. However, his treatment overlooks the ideological work that the conflict motif (as distinct from, but often occurring with, the creation motif) accomplishes. In downplaying the motif of combat, he misses the most interesting questions that arise from these passages: Why were these particular images or characters referenced? What do these characters connote? Why would an author who wanted to say (using Tsumura's words) “just as you crushed your enemies of old, crush them now,” do so by making reference to conflict with the sea, Leviathan, Rahab, or dragons, rather than some human enemy? The connotations of these figures determined the rhetorical weight of the various claims authors made about Yahweh.

Analysis of the conflict motif in the texts just discussed indicates that the motif was an effective tool that storytellers and authors employed in a variety of genres (poetry, historiography, lament, epistolary, prophecy, and

proverb) from the literature of several Middle Bronze and Iron age cities and states. These texts show that authors employed the conflict motif in order to make statements about the authority of particular preferred deities (Adad, Baʿlu, and Yahweh), particular kings (Yaḥdun-Lim, Zimri-Lim, David, and Solomon), the office of the king in general (*Ahiqar*), and select groups (“Israel,” the “inhabitants of Zion,” and “the redeemed”) and to portray disfavored agents and polities (Egypt, the king of Egypt, Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar) as destined for defeat, by referencing divine combat with the sea/sea-dragon outside of a full narrative articulation of this combat.

Ugaritic texts (*KTU* 1.3 III 38–42; *KTU* 1.5 I 1–8; and *KTU* 1.83) reference Baʿlu and ʿAnatu defeating Yammu and/or Lōtanu. Within the biblical anthology, many texts emphasize Yahweh’s authority over the sea (Ps 93:1–5; Ps 29:3; Ps 65:8; Nah 1:3b–5; Ps 104; Ps 33; Job 7:12 Job 9:8; Job 38:4a, 8–11, 16); some use the conflict motif to promote Yahweh’s royal authority (Ps 93 and Ps 29); several describe battles against Rahab, Leviathan, dragon/s, Sea, and/or the sea (Ps 89:6–15, Ps 74:12–17, Job 26:10–13), though we also have descriptions of Leviathan as Yahweh’s plaything (Ps 104 and Job 40–41); and many passages interweave the conflict motif with creation themes in order to portray Yahweh’s dominion as universal (Ps 89:6–15, Ps 74:12–17, Ps 104:2–6; Job 38). Ugaritic and biblical literatures promote the prowess of Baʿlu and Yahweh, respectively, through reference to their defeat of Lōtanu/Leviathan, a multi-headed serpent. Judean and Mesopotamian combat traditions share use of the conflict motif to support the claim that the victorious warrior deity is incomparable. Mari letter A.1968 preserves reference to Adad defeating the sea as well. Though we have no full narratives of Yahweh or Adad defeating divine enemies, these victorious warrior deities, along with Baʿlu, Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur, attained their kingship and dominion through combat with their enemies. I describe examples of the conflict motif that focus primarily on the status of the victorious deity as primary application of the motif.

Secondary application of the motif, that is, instances in which the conflict motif is claimed or assumed to have import for humans, occur in many biblical texts. Examples of the combined conflict and exodus motifs (Ps 77:14–21; Ps 106:7–12; Ps 114; Isa 51:9–11; and possibly Jer 51:36) are particularly relevant here. This combination of motifs constitutes a significant development within biblical historiography. Yahweh’s divine combat was inserted within the foundational story of Israel and Judah, specifically into the “paradigmatic story” of Yahweh intervening within a human socio-political circumstance on behalf of the people. In several texts disfavored

polities or rulers are compared to or identified with Yahweh's defeated enemies (Isa 30:7; Ps 87:4; Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; Hab 3) in order to portray them as defeated or destined for defeat. Despite the actual power these states or individuals have, the legitimacy of their power is attacked when they are equated with the deity's defeated enemies. Some of these texts (Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; Hab 3) as well as Isa 51:9–11 also claim that Yahweh can intervene in the narrative present on behalf of humans, and the final forms of Ps 89 and Ps 74 invoke the conflict motif to provoke Yahweh to do so. Yahweh's past victories are recalled and he is summoned to action in the narrative present.

In Babylonian, Assyrian, Mari, and Judean traditions, we have examples of the victorious warrior deity purportedly extending his divine royal prerogative to endorse particular kings. Mari Letter A.1968, Ps 89:2–38, Ps 78, and *Ahiqar* col. 6 l.89b–91 explicitly promote the human political institution of kingship through the conflict motif. Mari Letter A.1968, Ps 89:2–38, and Ps 78 claim that specific victorious warrior deities endorse select individual kings and their dynasties. We also have association of combat traditions with the Jerusalem temple, evident in Ps 78 as well as biblical depictions of various features of the palace-temple complex. Instances of the conflict motif within royal ideology show continuity with whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos as well as with instances of the conflict motif that promote the royal status of the victorious warrior deity, all of which imply that the institution of kingship is legitimate. These texts exhibit secondary application of the conflict motif, thus sharing a similar function with instances of the conflict motif that promote a specific group at the expense of its enemies, various disfavored polities or rulers. Likewise, many examples treated in the following chapter show continuity with Mari Letter A.1968, Ps 89:2–38, Ps 78, and the proverb from *Ahiqar*. Within first- and early second-century CE Judean traditions, authors adapted the conflict motif and biblical royal ideology to an eschatological narrative framework, and use of the conflict motif to assert divine endorsement of royal humans served as a paradigm for the endorsement of secondary divine figures.

The next chapter continues with biblical and postbiblical examples of the conflict motif that date ca. 500 BCE–1000 CE. The conflict motif continues to be employed to promote the legitimacy of particular favored deities and individuals and to attack the legitimacy of particular disfavored divine beings, polities, and individuals. Most of the texts from these later periods, however, describe divine combat within an eschatological framework, a development that builds upon the reconfiguring of

Yahweh's combat as an event that can happen in the narrative present or immediate future (exhibited in many examples above). The widespread and continued use of the conflict motif suggests that its legitimating ideology was effective. This efficacy would have depended on various authors and their perceived audiences recognizing the implications of the warrior deity's victory. This recognition involves understanding the hierarchic taxonomy of the primary relationship in any given example of the conflict topos: the victorious warrior defeats his enemy and thus gains his authority; his victory proves the legitimacy of his authority. The variety of ways that authors employed the conflict motif reflect the development of further implications of the deity's victory: the victorious warrior deity possesses legitimate authority that he may extend to whomever he favors, through royal endorsement and/or defending humans against threats. Likewise, the enemies of favored humans are also the deity's enemies, and therefore he will defeat human enemies now as he defeated his divine enemies in the past.

IV

Continued Adaptation: The Conflict Motif and the Eschaton

[. . .] until the Most High visits the earth, even coming as a human, eating and drinking with humans, and in quiet crushing the head of the dragon in the midst of [the] water. In this way he will save Israel and all the nations, Theos playing the part of a man.

(T. ASH. 7:3)

TESTAMENT OF ASHER 7:3 envisions a moment when a deity will come to earth, defeat a dragon, and save Israel.¹ This chapter treats passages such as this from late biblical texts, first- and early second-century CE Judean texts, including those focused on Jesus/*Christos*, and late antique Jewish texts. These examples feature description and anticipation of a victorious warrior deity saving Israel, or some other select group of people, through combat with an enemy, most often in the form of a sea dragon. The envisioned combat is similar to that referenced in texts discussed in Chapter 3, in that a victorious warrior deity defeats an enemy. However, the combat is recast as an event that will occur in an idealized future. These examples are distinct from those, such as Ps 89:10–11, in which the combat is an event that occurred in the past, and from passages such as Isa 51:9–11, which makes reference to past combat when framing the current process of restoration. Building on notions of combat as a past event or an immediate event that relates to the deity's past victories, the examples discussed below exhibit eschatological rendering of the conflict motif.² In some of these texts, combat is part of an overhaul of some world order that is portrayed as disadvantageous from the narrator's perspective. In other texts, the eschatological aspect of the motif is less explicit but still indicated by the future tense, temporal markers such as "in that day" and

other thematic elements, for example, various things somehow coming to an end. When the future combat appears integral to a greater reordering of the present world order, the new world order is often ushered in by a divine warrior figure. Various eschatological divine warrior figures include Yahweh, Michael, an unnamed angel, the Son of Man, Messiah, “my son,” Elect One, and Jesus/*Christos*. Various defeated enemies include the sea, Leviathan, Behemoth, Satan/Devil, Death, the serpent, the dragon, beasts from the sea, beasts from the earth, earthly rulers, and the Lawless One. Several texts identify two or more of these figures with one another (e.g., Jesus and the Messiah, Satan and the serpent).

Analysis of eschatological renderings of the conflict motif indicates that authors employed the motif to accomplish four legitimating functions, sometimes all exhibited within a single text. First, authors continued to use the conflict motif to promote the legitimacy of Yahweh/*Theos* throughout early and late antiquity. Second, authors continued to employ the motif to attack the legitimacy of disfavored divine beings, such as Satan/Devil, and antagonistic polities, such as Rome or “earthly powers” in general, by associating them with Yahweh’s defeated superhuman enemies. Third, the conflict motif served to promote secondary figures (such as the Messiah, Elect One, or Son of Man) through claims that Yahweh/*Theos* or the Ancient of Days endorses them and enthrones them, and/or through portrayals of these secondary figures as the eschatological divine warrior. Use of the conflict motif to promote a secondary divine figure is a substantial innovation. While this innovation builds upon older Davidic royal ideology, the claims made about these secondary figures go well beyond any statements made about David. Finally, several Judean texts employ the conflict motif to bolster some group by offering narrative guarantee that this group will have a reversal of fortunes, a positive outcome resulting from the efforts of divine beings on their behalf. This final ideological function is also an innovation. Earlier biblical texts utilize the motif (recalling Yahweh’s past victories) to invoke Yahweh to intervene within a current situation for the benefit of individuals and groups. However, texts exhibiting an eschatological rendering of the conflict motif exhibit the claim that Yahweh/*Theos* and/or a secondary figure will certainly intervene in the future and completely change the present socio-political circumstance.

Authors employed the conflict motif to make particular statements about their contemporary socio-political contexts and their preferred divine figures. Whether the victorious deity’s combat is envisioned as a past event, present event, or future eschatological event, the conflict

motif functions to validate the power of particular deities and to promote the legitimacy of particular individuals and groups associated with the victorious deity. Likewise, authors employed the motif to attack the legitimacy of disfavored divine beings, polities, and individuals. Because of the relatively late date of the examples treated in this chapter, compared to Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and early Judean examples, most previous treatments of the conflict topos only reference these later texts in footnotes, if at all.³ These examples are underrepresented in discussions of the conflict topos, and they have not been analyzed for their rich ideological significance. These texts show that authors continued to use the conflict motif to perform ideological work throughout late antiquity and into the medieval period, indicating that the motif was adapted within a variety of historical and literary contexts.⁴ The contemporary context of each example shaped how the motif was articulated, and exegetes recast earlier biblical passages to make statements about their contemporary concerns.⁵

Hebrew Bible Eschatological Battles

Isaiah 24–27, the so-called “Isaiah Apocalypse,” describes an overhaul of the existing world order in which Yahweh defeats divine and human enemies and then reigns in Zion/Jerusalem. The exact historical context and date of this section of the Isaiah anthology is uncertain. It appears to be a postexilic work, and is most likely a Persian period composition.⁶ It describes an upheaval of the earth (Isa 24:1, 3–4, 18–20), in which social norms will be overturned (Isa 24:2). Yahweh will punish and imprison the “host of the high on high and the kings of the earth on the earth” (Isa 24:21–22), and even the moon and sun will be confounded and ashamed (Isa 24:23). Yahweh will then reign in Zion/Jerusalem (Isa 24:23). He is praised for subduing “strangers”/“terrible ones” and destroying their city (Isa 25:1–5; 26:5). Yahweh will make a feast for the people (Isa 25:6), and those dispersed in Assyria and Egypt will return to Jerusalem (Isa 27:13).

This text is full of complex details, and it is particularly significant that Yahweh will defeat divine and human authorities and subsequently reign. Yahweh’s victory over rival authorities followed by his reign exhibits the pattern of the victorious warrior attaining his throne. The text promotes the legitimacy of the victorious deity’s royal power by exhibiting

Yahweh's prowess in battle, asserting his ultimate dominion, and portraying defeated rivals as inferior. The conflict motif is explicit in the description of Yahweh slaying Leviathan:

*On that day Yahweh will punish
with his sharp, great, and strong sword
Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent;
He will slay the dragon that is in the sea.*

(Isa 27:1)

Yahweh's enemy here is Leviathan, described as "the fleeing serpent"/"twisting serpent" and "dragon that is in the sea." Leviathan appears in Ps 74:13–14 (discussed in Chapter 3), where he is the multi-headed defeated enemy, mentioned directly after multi-headed "dragons in the waters" that occur in parallel with *Yām* (Sea). This figure is remarkably similar to the Ugaritic cognate figure *Lōtanu*, "the twisting serpent, the powerful one with seven heads," whom Ba'lu defeated, according to *KTU* 1.5 I 2–3, and whom 'Anatu defeated according to *KTU* 1.3 III 41–42. In the *Ba'lu Cycle* and Ps 74, the defeat of *Lōtanu*/Leviathan occurred in the past. However, in Isa 27:1, Yahweh will defeat him "on that day" in the future, as part of an eschatological reestablishment of Yahweh's royal authority and world order. Isaiah 24–27 uses the phrases "it shall be" or "it shall come to pass" seven times (Isa 24:2, 13, 18, 21; 25:9; 27:12, 13), and the phrase "on that day" seven times (Isa 24:21, 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13). These phrases emphasize the future setting of the imagined events and the repetition heightens the sense of expectation.

Since *Lōtanu*/Leviathan is typically an enemy whom the warrior deity has defeated in the past, references to him recall the deity's former victory, serving to assert the deity's current status as a victorious warrior and legitimate authority figure. In biblical passages that invoke Yahweh's past victories over defeated foes in order to promote Yahweh's divine royal status, Yahweh's victory is definite and certain (see examples discussed in Chapter 3, such as Ps 89:6–15). Likewise, passages that invoke his past victories in order to provoke him to act within the contemporary historical context also portray his victory as certain (see examples discussed in Chapter 3, such as Jer 51:34–37; Hab 3:12–15, and Isa 51:9–11). In Isa 27:1, the certainty of Yahweh's victory over Leviathan is used to characterize "that day" in the future. This reference to Leviathan is not random but rather furthers the author's ideological claim that Yahweh will defeat current divine and earthly authorities and take his throne.⁷ By relocating the defeat of Leviathan to a

future reorganization of social and political order, the author portrays his eschatological speculation as both certain and divinely sanctioned.

In addition to defeating Leviathan and other divine and human enemies, the “Isaiah Apocalypse” also envisions Yahweh defeating Death (*māwet*, cognate with Ugaritic *môtu*):

*He will swallow up Death forever;
Adonai Yahweh will wipe away tears from all faces;
Indeed, the reproach of his people will he take away from all the earth;
For Yahweh has spoken.*

(*Isa 25:8*)

It is particularly interesting that Isa 25:8 describes this act as “swallow up” because Ugaritic *Môtu* (Death) is characterized as swallowing his enemies, in particular, Ba’lu (*KTU* 1.6 II). Isaiah 25:8 reverses the motif of Death swallowing those he has defeated in order to assert Yahweh’s superiority over Death.⁸ The notion of Yahweh swallowing Death serves to validate Yahweh’s divine royal dominion: Yahweh’s defeat and punishment of divine and human authorities, including the sea-dragon Leviathan and Death, will lead to his reign in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Yahweh’s victories will lead to reestablishment of his authority, the downfall of disfavored authorities, and an improvement of the socio-political situation of “his people,” including a feast, an end to their suffering, and revenge on the “terrible ones.” The author innovatively recasts the victorious warrior’s combat as a future event in order to legitimate “his people” who are portrayed as experiencing social and political oppression. These people, according to the author, will benefit from Yahweh’s actions as divine warrior, their “reproach” shall be taken away and Yahweh will wipe away their tears.⁹ The removal of reproach and wiping away of tears indicates an end to mourning. The shift from a state of mourning to rejoicing, which results directly from Yahweh’s saving actions (*Isa 25:9*), suggests victory for Yahweh “on that day.”¹⁰ The author describes Yahweh acting on behalf of “his people,” which suggests that the deity favors this people in particular. Likewise, the human authorities portrayed as responsible for their suffering are characterized as enemies of Yahweh, and the author envisions Yahweh defeating and punishing them.

The characterization of Leviathan and Death as superhuman enemies of the divine warrior Yahweh in the eschatological setting of *Isa 27:1* and *Isa 25:8* is analogous to characterizations of divine enemies and the divine

warrior in other biblical and Ugaritic instances of the conflict motif. In addition to comparable figures and characterizations, Isaiah 24–27 exhibits the sequence of the victorious warrior defeating rival authorities then taking his throne. Thus, we see both strikingly similar imagery and also remarkably consistent notions of divine kingship among Isa 24–27, earlier biblical passages such as Ps 74, and the Ugaritic *Ba 'lu Cycle*. At the same time, authors and storytellers were creative in their reworkings of the motif. It follows that various authors found its legitimating/delegitimizing ideology particularly effective and highly adaptable within a variety of historical contexts. Such continuity and creativity, as well as the implied efficacy and adaptability, characterizes the following examples as well. The temporal shift to a future eschatological battle, first attested in Isa 27:1, is exhibited in the majority of later instances of the conflict motif. In fact many subsequent texts explicitly cite Isa 27:1 as an exegetical basis for their references to Leviathan and the defeat of the sea/waters.

Daniel 7 is a relatively late (second century BCE) biblical text that employs the conflict motif within an apocalyptic, eschatological framework.¹¹ The book of Daniel narrates a story about the character Daniel that is set in the context of Babylonian exile, and Dan 7 describes a vision that the character Daniel sees.¹² At the beginning of the vision, the “four winds of heaven” strike the “great sea” (Dan 7:2), and then four composite beasts rise from the sea (Dan 7:3–8).¹³ The vision continues, describing the Ancient of Days enthroned, with many thousands before him (Dan 7:9–10). The fourth beast from the sea, because of the “great words” its horn spoke, is slain and its body is destroyed and burned (Dan 7:11). The dominion of the remaining three beasts is taken away (Dan 7:12). No agent is identified in the slaying the fourth beast, but it is apparent that the Ancient of Days has secure authority. The Ancient of Days then gives eternal dominion to “one like a son of man” (Dan 7:13–14), who comes on the clouds of heaven. After seeing these things, Daniel asks for an interpretation of the visions, and he is told that the four beasts are four earthly kings, the last of which will be the worst, but he too will be destroyed in the end (Dan 7:16–28).

The rich imagery of Dan 7 has been discussed at length, with particular attention to similarities between certain aspects of this passage and features of the Ugaritic *Ba 'lu Cycle*.¹⁴ The Ancient of Days shares characteristics with Ugaritic 'Ilu, and the “one like a son of man” shares features with Ugaritic Ba 'lu.¹⁵ Furthermore, the conferral of authority from the Ancient of Days to the “one like a son of man” has been compared to the

enthronement of Ba'lu in the *Ba'lu Cycle*, in which 'Ilu (eventually) agrees to Ba'lu's kingship.¹⁶ Though this comparison is insightful, there are differences: as discussed in Chapter 2, Ba'lu is not 'Ilu's first choice for kingship, and Ba'lu's authority is declared by characters other than 'Ilu. Most previous scholarship that discusses such comparisons focuses primarily on how such "foreign" and "Canaanite" imagery made its way into the biblical book of Daniel. This approach assumes that elements associated with the conflict topos are not "genuinely" Israelite or Judean and therefore need explanation. However, many biblical texts show that Israelite and/or Judean authors employed the conflict motif in innovative ways. We have many examples of "genuine" descriptions of and references to Yahweh's combat with the sea and dragons as well as notions of divine endorsement. Once we recognize that the conflict motif was not only a "Canaanite"—by which most scholars mean Ugaritic—literary phenomenon, the burden of explaining how such "foreign" elements ended up in Dan 7, and elsewhere among biblical texts, dissipates. As a result, the goal of comparison shifts away from debate about how "Canaanite" this imagery is, toward a more nuanced discussion of how the conflict motif in Dan 7 exhibits both continuity with and innovative developments that are distinct from earlier examples, not limited to the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle*.

Daniel 7 is explicitly concerned with issues of royal authority, and its legitimating and delegitimizing functions exhibit continuity with earlier examples of the conflict motif. The four beasts in Dan 7 are identified as representing four earthly kings (Dan 7:17), and these kings are portrayed as illegitimate and destined for defeat when the beasts representing them are stripped of their dominion (Dan 7:12) and the fourth beast is killed (Dan 7:11). Once the final beast is defeated, the Ancient of Days grants royal authority to whom he chooses, the "one like a son of man." This is similar to Ps 89 (discussed in Chapter 3), where the victorious warrior deity has defeated divine rivals to secure his dominion then exerts his royal prerogative to endorse the authority of another figure. In Dan 7, the "one like a son of man" is also explicitly a royal figure, endorsed by the Ancient of Days:

To him was given dominion, honor and kingship, so that all peoples, nations, and languages would serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and as for his kingship, it will not be destroyed.

(Dan 7:14)

The description of an everlasting and universal earthly kingship builds upon Davidic royal ideology (as represented by Pss 89:37–38; 2:8; 18:51; 66:7, and elsewhere). However, the royal figure in Dan 7 is not explicitly identified with a historical person. Though he is “like a human,” his cloud-carriage suggests that he is a divine figure.¹⁷ Thus, the author of the vision in Dan 7:2–14 uses the conflict motif to promote the Ancient of Days as supreme divine royal figure, in that he is enthroned and defeats rival authorities, and also to promote the royal authority of the “one like a son of man” through his endorsement by the Ancient of Days. While the endorsement of the “one like a son of man” draws upon Davidic royal ideology, the historical context in which there was no autonomous political authority within Judea necessitated that the royal figure who will defeat disfavored earthly powers be a heavenly figure of some sort. There is ambiguity as to the human or divine nature of this figure. He is either a future human royal figure appearing in a heavenly vision or a divine figure who will act against earthly powers. Regardless, the political context provided opportunity for innovation, specifically the feature of promoting a secondary figure who is not a human king but rather an eschatological figure and future universal ruler. This innovation is highly influential in subsequent first- and early second-century CE combat traditions, in which the primary deity endorses a secondary figure by giving him a throne. In those later texts, however, the secondary figure also functions as the eschatological divine warrior, whereas in Dan 7 the “one like a son of man” does not himself engage in battle.

In the interpretation of Daniel’s vision in Dan 7:15–28, the legitimating ideology employed in the vision is extended to “the people of the holy ones of the Most High.” These people are associated with the “holy ones,” which is almost certainly a designation for angels, whose fate is interwoven with and homologous to the fate of the “people of the holy ones.”¹⁸ In this latter half of Dan 7, the conflict motif is used within an eschatological framework to promote these “people of the holy ones” and to delegitimize the earthly kingdom represented by the last beast, especially the last king of that kingdom, represented by the last horn. Daniel 7:15–28 alternates between further description of Daniel’s vision in the past and the interpretation of events and figures in the future. The last horn is said to make war against and prevail over the “holy ones” until the Ancient of Days intervenes and the “holy ones” gain possession of the kingdom (Dan 7:21–22). In further elaboration, the horn is accused

of speaking against the Most High, wearing out the “holy ones” and attempting “to change the sacred seasons and the law” (Dan 7:25). This horn will be successful until the divine court takes away his dominion and destroys him. When this occurs:

[T]he kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the entire heaven, these will be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High; their kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey them.

(Dan 7:27)

This conflict between the last horn and the “holy ones” represents a socio-political conflict between the last king of the kingdom represented by the fourth beast and the “people of the holy ones.” This conflict focuses specifically on the last king assuming authority that, from the narrator’s perspective, he does not rightly possess: authority “to change the sacred seasons and the law.” The actions of this king appear to be detrimental and threatening to the “holy ones” and people associated with them. He is said to “make war” against them, and the downfall of this horn/king leads to a positive change in the political status of the “holy ones” and associated people (Dan 7:26–27). The author describes a socio-political conflict between a disfavored earthly royal figure and some group of people (whether an actual group or a narrative construct), whom the author associates with a victorious and royal divine figure, the Ancient of Days, as well as with his “holy ones,” further privileging them by association with the characteristic of “holiness.” The association with the Ancient of Days serves to promote “the people of the holy ones,” and the author provides narrative assurance that these people will be vindicated. Furthermore, the interpretation given in Dan 7:15–28 equates the future dominion of “the people of the holy ones” with the dominion given to the “one like a son of man” in the vision. First, these kingdoms are described in similar terms of everlasting dominion. Second, the relationship of these people to the Ancient of Days in the interpretation of the vision is comparable to his relationship with the “one like a son of man” in the vision: both receive dominion from the Ancient of Days after rival powers are defeated. Finally, the rival powers in the vision, the four beasts are explicitly identified as four kings/kingdoms in the interpretation, and the final king is characterized as an enemy. Thus, “the people of the holy ones” are legitimated when they are equated with the “one like a son of man.” Like him, they are endorsed by the Ancient of

Days. Likewise, the final king and kingdom are portrayed as destined for defeat when they are identified with the slain fourth beast. The eschatological setting of Dan 7 enables the author to offer narrative guarantee of a positive fate for “the people of the holy ones,” a reversal of their current unfavorable narrative circumstance. In some earlier biblical instances of the conflict motif, past victories of Yahweh are invoked in order to provoke Yahweh to act in the present on behalf of the people, and an immediate future victory is hoped for (Jer 51:34–37, Hab 3, and Isa 51:9–15, for example). In Dan 7, divine victory is a future, eschatological certainty that assures a positive outcome for those currently suffering. This feature also appears in first-century CE Judean texts that offer narrative guarantee of the positive outcome and reversal of fortunes for some group characterized as suffering unjustly, yet preferred by the deity.

The historical context for Dan 7–12 is not the Babylonian exile, as the narrative purports, but rather the second century BCE, most likely the reign of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.¹⁹ Typically, the rulers of various provinces of the Greek empire did not interfere with ancestral religions. However, according to the narrative in 2 Maccabees, Antiochus IV Epiphanes disrupted Yahweh’s cult in Jerusalem. Second Maccabees presents an account of events that is particularly hostile to Antiochus, and we have no materials with which to balance this account from Judeans who were allied with him. Second Maccabees claims that Antiochus accepted bribes in return for appointing Jason as high priest and deposing Onias III and again for appointing Menelaus and deposing Jason. The deposed priest Jason attempted to expel his usurper Menelaus after he heard a false rumor that Antiochus IV Epiphanes had died in Egypt (2 Macc 5:5–10). However, Antiochus IV Epiphanes interfered in the local turmoil, and in 169 BCE he entered the temple in Jerusalem and took ornaments (2 Macc 5:11–16). Then in 167 BCE, he pillaged Jerusalem and outlawed Judean religion: there were to be no sacrifices, no Sabbath, and no circumcision; he dedicated Yahweh’s temple to Olympian Zeus (*Dios Olumpiou*) and sacrificed a pig on the altar (2 Macc 6:1–11). In 161 BCE, the Hasmonean family successfully recovered control of the temple.²⁰ While 2 Maccabees presents a pointedly interested account of events, it nonetheless reflects a socio-political context in which certain Judeans felt particularly dissatisfied with the Greco-Hellenistic empire and with Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This was, most likely, the historical context in which Dan 7–12 was written. Within this historical and political context, the fourth beast in Dan 7 may be understood as representing the Greek empire, which is explicitly

referenced elsewhere in Dan 7–12 (Dan 8:21; 10:20; and 11:2). Furthermore, the description of the final king exercising cultic authority that the author considered illegitimate would fit Antiochus IV Epiphanes's actions in Jerusalem. The author of Dan 7 employed the conflict motif to portray a series of human empires and kings, especially Greece and Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as illegitimate and destined for defeat, while affirming the legitimacy and authority of the Ancient of Days, “one like a son of man,” and “the people of the holy ones.”

Several later examples of the conflict motif share features with Dan 7. The eschatological speculation and vision-based political commentary characteristic of Dan 7 also occurs in *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *Revelation*. These texts portray Roman authorities as destined for defeat at the hands of divine warriors who are endorsed and enthroned by a primary deity. The narrative setting of Babylonian exile, featured in *Daniel*, appears to have been a useful generative template, as it also occurs in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. *Fourth Ezra* even specifically cites “the vision seen by your brother Daniel” (*4 Ezra* 12:11).

Revelation

Revelation 12–13, 17, and especially 19–21 exhibit eschatological rendering of the conflict motif. In *Revelation*, there are several divine warriors, though it is the figure of the “Lamb” and a figure similar to the Ancient of Days of Dan 7 who are enthroned (*Rev* 1:14; 4:1–11; 22:1–3). Throughout the narrative, the issue of legitimate divine and human authority is a concern, and the author employs the conflict motif to portray certain figures as illegitimate and destined for defeat. My analysis focuses on passages that employ the conflict motif to promote or attack various figures, and the primary political enemy represented in these passages is Rome. However, other passages within *Revelation* are more relevant to the immediate social context of the work, that is, the author's debates with his opponents who are fellow *Jesus/Christos* followers. While these opponents are not mentioned in the passages discussed below, *Rev* 2:9 and 3:9 identify them as a “synagogue of Satan.” Thus, the author associates his opponents with one of the superhuman enemies of *Theos* and *Christos*, with a figure who will ultimately be defeated along with his compatriots. This constitutes a substantial criticism and attack on the legitimacy of those within the *Jesus/Christos* movement of whom the author disapproves.²¹

Based on internal evidence, Revelation was written sometime after the death of Nero in 68 CE, and external references to the text indicate that it was written and known by the mid-second century CE. Typically, the text is dated more precisely to 68–70 CE, just after the death of Nero, or to the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE).²² In either case, the thinly veiled political commentary criticizes the Roman empire. The disfavored divine and human figures are associated with the sea and portrayed as a dragon and as beasts. Various favored divine figures are portrayed as victorious warriors and/or enthroned. In addition to the conflict motif, Revelation as a whole contains references to a variety of traditions available in its contemporary Judean and Greco-Roman milieu.

Revelation 12 describes a woman in the pangs of child birth being chased by a seven-headed, ten-horned dragon who wants to devour her infant son.²³ The son will “rule all the nations.” He is “snatched away” before the dragon can devour him and taken “to *Theos* and to his throne.” The woman flees to the wilderness, where she is nourished in a place prepared for her by *Theos* (Rev 12:1–6). The next scene describes a war between Michael and his angels against the dragon and associated angels, who are defeated and expelled from heaven to the earth.²⁴ The dragon is identified as “that ancient serpent, who is called Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev 12:7–9). The dragon figure in Revelation has seven heads. In Ps 74, there is a multi-headed dragon, but it is not stated how many heads are imagined; Hebrew biblical texts do not record a specific number of heads for this figure. However, in *KTU* 1.3 and 1.5, the comparable Ugaritic dragon/Lōtanu has seven heads. In Rev 12, the dragon is identified as “that ancient serpent,” Devil/Satan, and “deceiver.” These references incorporate biblical traditions from the J creation story, especially Gen 3:1, 4, as well as characterizations of Satan (Job 2:1–6; Zech 3:1–2). The conflation of these figures is developed in other apocalyptic literature as well, such as the *Life of Adam and Eve* and *2 Enoch*.²⁵

After the dragon is thrown down a voice in heaven proclaims “the deliverance and the power and the kingdom of our *Theos* and the authority of his anointed” have come because the “accuser” has been thrown down (Rev 12:10–12). The dragon/serpent, having been expelled to earth, then pursues the woman and tries to drown her with a river/flood of water from his mouth, but the earth helps the woman by swallowing the water (Rev 12:13–16). The dragon remains angry at the woman and makes war against the rest of her children (Rev 12:17). Finally, the dragon “takes his stand” on the seashore (Rev 12:18).

The conflict between the mother and dragon in Rev 12 most likely depends upon the Greek myth of Leto and Python or the parallel Egyptian myth of Isis and Seth-Typhon.²⁶ However, as a whole the conflict between the dragon and divine figures in Revelation is an articulation of the ancient West Asian conflict topos, and these traditions were obviously compatible. Greek, Egyptian, and ancient West Asian literatures all record stories that exhibit the motif of a child under threat who survives to become an important figure. Within Hebrew Bible and New Testament traditions, both Moses and Jesus survive threats of infanticide decreed by royal authorities. It is also striking that the two ways in which the dragon in Rev 12 threatens the woman and infant are the same as threats posed by enemies in earlier articulations of the conflict topos. Specifically, the dragon threatens to swallow the infant and to drown the woman with water spewed from his mouth. Both the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle* and "Isaiah Apocalypse" preserve traditions associating the enemy Môtû/Death with swallowing; Môtû swallows Ba'lu (*KTU* 1.6 II); Yahweh will swallow Death (*Isa* 25:8). Likewise, threatening waters are consistent with biblical descriptions of the sea as an enemy. While I would not argue that the author of Rev 12 knew first-hand Ugaritic traditions about Môtû, Yammu, or Lôtanu and the types of threats they posed, it is reasonable to speculate that the author of Rev 12 was familiar with similar imagery, both that preserved in the Hebrew Bible and from whatever wealth of Judean materials the biblical anthology does not preserve. The author drew upon and creatively interweaved compatible Greek/Egyptian and Judean mythic motifs. Throughout Rev 12, the issue of authority is a concern, and the statuses of the deities and infant son are described in terms of royalty and kingship. The dragon/serpent is portrayed as a threat to their authority, and as such he is shown to be illegitimate through his defeat. Michael defeats the dragon in heaven and expels him to earth. Unfortunately for the woman and her descendants, however, the dragon remains a threat on earth. The nature of this threat is elaborated in Rev 13, which continues the scene of the dragon on the seashore.

A seven-headed, ten-horned composite beast rises out of the sea, and the dragon gives this beast "his power and his throne and great authority" (Rev 13:1–2). The "whole earth" worships the dragon and the beast, saying "Who is like the beast, who can fight against him?" (Rev 13:3–4). These rhetorical questions serve to assert the incomparability of the beast, and as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the incomparability formula is a common feature of passages that employ the conflict

motif (for example, Ps 89:6–9). The beast speaks “haughty words and blasphemies”; wages war against and conquers the “holy ones” (*hagioi*); wields authority over the whole earth; and enjoys worship from all its inhabitants (Rev 13:5–8). A second beast rises out of the earth, who “speaks like a dragon,” “exercises the authority” of the first beast, and enforces social and economic strictures on the people (Rev 13:11–18). As with Rev 12, this passage focuses on the issue of authority: the dragon and beasts wield power, but it is illegitimate. The author attacks the legitimacy of the dragon and beasts by accusing them of arrogance and claiming that their political, social, and cultic activities are detrimental to the populace. The composite beast rising from the sea in Rev 12 is likely patterned after the composite beasts coming out of the sea in Dan 7, and both texts are engaged in political commentary, offering criticisms of reigning empires by portraying them as enemies who are destined for defeat.

Revelation 17 exhibits further concern with issues of legitimate authority. It describes a woman, “the great prostitute, who is enthroned on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have prostituted themselves” (Rev 17:1–2). She sits on a multi-headed and multi-horned beast (Rev 17:3). Though she is identified as “Babylon the great,” the text states that her name is a mystery, which suggests another meaning (Rev 17:5), such as the Roman empire. The heads and horns of the beast are said to represent kings and kingdoms whose authority and power they have given to the beast (Rev 17:9–13). They will all wage war against the Lamb who will defeat them (Rev 17:14). As in Rev 12–13, figures who are disfavored are associated with the composite beast, here the woman “Babylon” and various kings.²⁷ Likewise, the favored divine figure, here the Lamb, is portrayed as a warrior who will defeat his enemies and secure dominion. The portrayal of the Lamb as divine warrior constitutes a significant adaptation of the conflict motif. Elsewhere in Revelation, Michael and the Ancient of Days are portrayed as divine warriors, here the figure of the Lamb is exalted to this position as well. This is comparable to other contemporary first-century CE Judean texts (*2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra*, discussed below) that both portray the primary deity endorsing and enthroning a secondary figure and characterize this secondary figure as a divine warrior. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the conflict topos was adapted within varying socio-historical contexts as authors employed the motif to promote the legitimacy of favored divine beings by situating their preferred deity in

the position of the victorious warrior. In Revelation, it is remarkable that both the Ancient of Days and the Lamb are enthroned and both function as divine warriors.

The combat culminates in Rev 19–20, which describes a rider on a white horse leading heavenly armies. The rider is named “Word of *Theos*,” and his tongue is a sharp sword with which he is to strike down the nations.²⁸ He will rule/shepherd the nations with a rod of iron (Rev 19:11–16), recalling the rod of iron the Davidic king will use to punish other kings in Ps 2:9. This victorious warrior figure faces the beast and his armies, captures the beast and “false prophet,” and throws them into a lake of fire. He kills the rest of his enemies with his sword and the sword of his mouth (Rev 19:19–21). After the rider kills the beast, false prophet, and armies, an angel from heaven arrests “the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan” and binds him. The angel throws the dragon into a pit where he is locked for one thousand years (Rev 20:1–3). For that thousand years, *Christos* and the martyrs reign (Rev 20:4–6). However, Satan/Devil is released and amasses an army who surround the “beloved city,” but fire from heaven consumes them. Satan/Devil is then thrown into the lake of fire with the beast and “false prophet” (20:7–10). At this point, divine and human enemies are defeated, and an enthronement scene follows. Among our examples of the conflict motif, the battle in Revelation is the most complicated and drawn out, with multiple divine warriors, multiple enemies, and at least two enthroned figures. Regardless, the sequence of victory followed by enthronement is clear. Once all enemies are defeated by the various divine warriors, the Lamb and *Theos* (the designation Ancient of Days is not used in this portion) are enthroned and possess ultimate authority, according to Rev 20–22. While Revelation’s highly visible articulation of the conflict motif is similar to and draws from that in Dan 7, it presents many new features and adapts the motif to a different socio-political context.

The final enthronement scene includes several additional specific details that confirm both the presence of the conflict motif and its legitimating function. Revelation 20 describes a great white throne and “one seated on it,” who judges all the dead. Anyone whose name is not in the “book of life” is thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11–15). The sea (*thalassa*), Death (*thanatos*), and Hades (*hadēs*) give up their dead for judgment, and both Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:13–14). The sea also comes to an end—“the sea is no more”—before a new heaven,

new earth, and new Jerusalem are established (Rev 21:1–2). A voice from the throne says:

*See, the dwelling of Theos is with humans;
He will dwell with them, and the people will be his.
Theos himself will be with them, their god,
And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more,
Mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
For the first things have gone away.*

(Rev 21:3–4)

Several details are highly significant. The sea, Death, and Hades each cooperate with the enthroned judge, suggesting that these divine figures are subordinate to the enthroned judge. Furthermore, Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire, and the sea and Death are terminated. The language in Rev 21:3–4 is nearly identical to the language in Isa 25:8 (discussed above) in which Yahweh will swallow Death and wipe away tears from faces. The inclusion of Death, Hades, and the sea among those who are slain before the final enthronement in Rev 20–21 maintains the characterization of Death and the sea as enemies of the victorious warrior deity, as preserved most fully in the Ugaritic *Ba ʿlu Cycle*, where Môtu (Death) and Yammu (Sea) are rivals of Ba ʿlu, and in many Hebrew Bible texts that reference Yahweh overcoming the sea.

Revelation 21:1–4 exhibits the motif of victorious temple builder, here rendered as building a new heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and temple. However, the text explicitly states that there will be no actual physical temple, because “the Lord *Theos*, Ruler of All, and the Lamb” are the temple (Rev 21:22). There will be no sun or moon because the “splendor” of the deities provide sufficient light (Rev 21:23). Likewise, “night will be no more; so they will have no need for lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord *Theos* will be light for them, and they will reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:5). Both *Theos* and the Lamb are enthroned, their authority is described as royal and unending. Furthermore, these divine figures are described as being so great that there is no need for other heavenly bodies; the heavenly bodies created in Gen 1, the heavens, earth, sun, moon, luminaries, are not part of Revelation’s eschatological re-creation. This constitutes a reordered cosmology, which occurs in conjunction with the enthronement of *Theos* and the Lamb. The sequence of enthronement followed by cosmic ordering is

comparable to Marduk's organization of the cosmos after his succession to divine kingship. The acute contrast is that typical ancient West Asian accounts of creation involve differentiation and productive organization of phenomena, whereas here *Theos* and the Lamb render phenomena obsolete by taking their place. A physical temple and the sun, moon, and stars are replaced by the deities' light, but notice that the institution of kingship remains intact. Kingship is still the preferred expression of divine authority despite the fact that Judeans have not had an autonomous human king for quite some time.

The author of Revelation employs the conflict motif in several passages to promote the authority of preferred divine figures and to attack the legitimacy of disfavored divine and human figures. Throughout, enemies are portrayed as dragons or composite beasts associated with the sea, and each of these figures is portrayed as exercising illegitimate royal power. The victorious warrior figures defeat these enemies to secure divine royal authority for *Theos* and the Lamb, which also secures a favorable socio-political condition for "his people."²⁹

Jesus/Christos as the Divine Warrior

In several first- and early second-century CE texts, including Revelation, the conflict motif is employed to promote the figure of Jesus/*Christos*³⁰ as a legitimate wielder of authority, specifically royal and divine authority. In Revelation, the enthronement of the Lamb occurs alongside the enthronement of *Theos*, and the Lamb is traditionally interpreted as representing Jesus/*Christos*.³¹ Likewise, the authors of other texts associate *Christos*'s authority with *Theos*'s authority, and several do so particularly through the conflict motif. Though Revelation does not do so explicitly, elsewhere *Christos* is depicted engaging in future divine combat and/or as having been involved in past divine combat. When *Christos* is portrayed as the divine warrior, it follows, explicitly or implicitly, that he is a divine figure; his divine authority is endorsed by *Theos*; and within an eschatological framework, he will defeat divine and earthly enemies just as such enemies have been defeated in the past. *Christos*-centered combat traditions demonstrate that authors adapted the conflict motif within a newly developing ideological context to promote the legitimacy of the figure of *Christos*. First Corinthians 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; *Odes Sol.* 22:5; and *T. Ash.* 7:3 each portray *Christos* as the divine warrior in an eschatological context, and in

Odes of Solomon and *Testament of Asher*, *Christos's* combat is specifically against a dragon.

The figure of *Jesus/Christos* is promoted in New Testament and early Christian texts through a variety of rhetorical tools, including both Davidic royal ideology and the conflict motif, two strands of traditions that are themselves intertwined in many biblical texts. *Jesus* is promoted through Davidic royal ideology, for example, through the claim that he is in the line of David (Matt 1:1–17) and through divine sonship (2 Cor 1:19; Mark 15:39; John 1:49, for example). He is also validated through the conflict motif when he is characterized as a divine warrior. The portrayal of *Christos* as a divine warrior, and therefore a divine figure, asserts a higher status for *Jesus/Christos* than what was ever claimed for David. In Ps 110, for example, Yahweh promises David he will make his enemies his footstool and shatter rival kings. In contrast, according to 1 Cor 15:24–25, *Christos* places enemies under his own feet and destroys enemy kings. First Corinthians 15:24–25 inverts the roles of Yahweh and the figure whom he endorses; *Christos* defeats earthly enemies himself. This is consistent with other first-century CE Judean texts (2 *Baruch*, 1 *Enoch*, and 4 *Ezra*) in which secondary figures endorsed by the primary deity defeat earthly rulers in the eschaton. In Ps 89:26, the most elaborate case of the conflict motif serving to endorse David's royal authority, Yahweh states that he will place David's hand on the sea/rivers. Yahweh shares his own authority over defeated enemies, which he has won through combat (Ps 89:10–11). David's authority over these entities is derivative of Yahweh's authority over them. This is also the case in Dan 7, where the "one like a son of man" is enthroned after the Ancient of Days does battle. *Christos*, however, is portrayed as defeating not only earthly enemies but also divine enemies himself: in 1 Cor 15:26, *Odes Sol.* 22, *T. Ash.* 7, and possibly in Revelation (depending on the identification of the Lamb), he defeats Death, the dragon, and sea-beasts. In several gospel passages (discussed in Chapter 5), *Jesus* is characterized as enacting authority over the sea, leading to the narrative conclusion that he is a superhuman figure with divine authority. In sum, authors concerned with the figure of *Jesus/Christos* characterize him as a cosmic authority, and to varying degrees in various texts, the status of *Jesus/Christos* approaches that of Yahweh in the divine hierarchy.

Considering the characterization of *Jesus/Christos* as a divine figure, the relationship of *Christos* and *Theos* is comparable to the relationship between the Ugaritic Ba'lu and 'Ilu. *Theos* is complicit in the elevation

of *Christos*, just as 'Ilu is (eventually) complicit in Ba'lu's rise to power. Both Ba'lu and *Christos* defeat enemies on their own behalf, including sea and dragon figures and Death, before reigning as king. While both Ba'lu and *Christos* reign as king, 'Ilu and *Theos*, respectively, retain their roles as creator and father deities who also have dominion. In both Ugaritic and *Christos*-focused cosmologies, the topos of combat among deities is used to describe relationships among competing and cooperating divine figures, and the idea of human kingship is used to indicate preference for a particular deity within their respective pantheons.

First Corinthians 15:24–25³² describes *Christos* as a divine warrior who will defeat every ruler, authority, and power, and who will put all his enemies under his feet. The author alludes to Ps 110, in which Yahweh promises David that he will subjugate his enemies, making them like a footstool, and destroy rival kings. However, 1 Cor 15 reverses the roles ascribed to Yahweh and David in Ps 110, and has *Christos* subdue and destroy enemies, acting as the divine warrior himself. The following verse claims that *Christos* will also defeat Death: “The last enemy to be terminated is Death (*thanatos*)” (1 Cor 15:26). The defeat of Death preserves older conflict motif traditions, such as Isa 25:8 where Yahweh swallows Death forever, and the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle* in which Ba'lu defeats Môtû, the deity Death. This is also consistent with Rev 21–22, where the final enemies to be terminated before *Theos* and the Lamb are enthroned include the sea, Hades, and Death. In 1 Cor 15:26, the defeat of this divine enemy is incorporated into Paul's argument about the resurrection of the dead. He refutes the denial of future resurrection of dead *Christos*-followers, referenced in 1 Cor 15:12b, by arguing that because *Christos* was resurrected from the dead and will utterly defeat Death, then certainly, according to his claims, dead *Christos*-followers will also be resurrected (1 Cor 15:12–34).³³ Thus, he employs the conflict motif to portray *Christos* as a divine warrior against earthly and divine enemies, and he incorporates the divine figure Death in particular to further his specific claims about death and resurrection. This passage is consistent with other first-century CE Judean texts in which a secondary figure will defeat earthly kings in the eschaton and subsequently reign, though in those texts, the secondary figure does not also face a divine enemy.

Another remarkable feature of this passage is that while *Christos* will reign for some time, he ultimately hands the kingdom back over to *Theos*, “subjecting” himself to *Theos* (1 Cor 15:24, 28). The Greek of 1 Cor 15:24 is not explicit as to who is handing over the kingdom, but the kingdom is

given, literally “to *Theos* and to father,” understood as a hendiadys meaning, “to *Theos* the father.” Verse 28, however, clearly states that “the son” will subject himself to *Theos*.³⁴ This feature is distinct in that *Christos* as divine warrior wins his own kingdom, but then also gives the kingdom to *Theos*. This presents a further inversion of the typical relationship between Yahweh and the royal figure whom he endorses. Typically, Yahweh grants authority to David, the Davidic king, or in later Judean texts, to a secondary figure such as the Messiah or Elect One. However, in 1 Cor 15:24–28, *Theos* endorses the reign of *Christos*, but *Christos* in turn, after defeating all enemies and Death himself, gives the kingdom back to *Theos*, facilitating his ultimate reign.

Second Thessalonians 2:1–12³⁵ discusses the “Day of the Lord”³⁶ and assures its audience that this day has not yet arrived as some *Christos*-followers were claiming (2 Thess 2:2). This event, the author explains, will be preceded by a “rebellion” when “the Lawless One is made known” (2 Thess 2:3).³⁷ The Lawless One, “opposes and exalts himself above every known god or object of worship, so that he himself sits in the temple of *Theos*, declaring himself to be *Theos*” (2 Thess 2:4). The Lawless One is accused of claiming undeserved status. We see this feature among other divine and human enemies such as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the beasts in Revelation, the “son of the morning” in Isa 14:13–14, perhaps Yammu, and ’Aṭīratu’s sons in the Ugaritic *Ba’lu Cycle*. The Lawless One is currently being restrained (2 Thess 2:6) but will be released at some time.³⁸ The notion that the enemy will be restrained for some time and then released occurs in Rev 20 as well. This feature fits an eschatological framework in particular because the final defeat of the enemy is conceived as a future event. The idea of the enemy being restrained for a while provides an explanation for the current delay of the final battle. It also reflects a periodization of history, a construction frequently used in apocalyptic works and predictive texts.³⁹ Second Thessalonians 2:8 states that “the Lord Jesus will destroy/consume (the Lawless One) with the breath of his mouth, he will abolish him with the appearance of his presence.”⁴⁰ Use of the “breath of his mouth” as a weapon is similar to other references to divine warriors using their mouth, breath, and tongue as a weapon, such as 1 *Enoch* 62:2 and 4 *Ezra* 13:9–11.⁴¹

This passage portrays *Christos* as a divine warrior who will be victorious over an enemy who is exercising illegitimate power. The Lawless One is associated with Satan (2 Thess 2:9–10) but not otherwise identified.⁴² Their combat is an eschatological event, occurring in association

with the “Day of the Lord.” This passage exhibits several narrative details common to the conflict motif in order to characterize Lord Jesus (*kurios Iēsous*) as the divine warrior and the Lawless One as an enemy who will certainly be defeated. The purported success of Jesus/*Christos* as divine warrior validates his divine status, asserted throughout 2 Thessalonians, and the author develops a notion of the “Day of the Lord” that centers on Jesus/*Christos*.

The author of 2 Thess 2:1–12 uses biblical traditions of the conflict motif and apocalyptic speculation to develop particularly *Christos*-oriented interpretations of the eschaton and divine warrior.⁴³ By drawing upon traditional imagery, the author gives credence to his innovative eschatological speculation. The author’s use of the conflict motif in particular suggests that it was effective as an ideological tool, adaptable to the author’s *Christos*-centered interests, and useful for his *Christos*-centered mythmaking. This is evident in *Odes of Solomon* and *Testament of Asher* as well, which also use the conflict motif to characterize *Christos* as the divine warrior.⁴⁴

Odes of Solomon 22:5 states that *Theos* overthrew “the seven-headed dragon” by the hands of *Christos* and that *Theos* has positioned *Christos* to destroy the dragon’s seed.⁴⁵ The author’s claim that *Christos* participated in the past combat between *Theos* and the seven-headed dragon is highly innovative. The claim that *Christos* will defeat the “dragon’s seed” in the future is comparable and consistent with other texts that characterize *Christos* as the eschatological divine warrior. *Odes of Solomon* 22:5, like 1 Cor 15:20–28 and 2 Thess 2:1–12, exhibits a particular adaptation of the conflict motif that promotes *Christos* as a divine warrior figure, validating his divine status. However, the description of the relationship between *Theos* and *Christos* in *Odes Sol.* 22 follows Davidic royal ideology more closely than do 1 Cor 15:20–28 and 2 Thess 2:1–12. *Odes of Solomon* 22 states that *Theos* scattered *Christos*’s adversaries and gave him authority (*Odes Sol.* 22:3–4). The notion of *Theos* scattering *Christos*’s adversaries resembles notions of Yahweh battling on the king’s behalf in Ps 110, Yahweh assisting the king against enemies in Ps 2, and Yahweh scattering his own enemies in Ps 68 and Num 10:35. *Theos* is given credit for destroying the dragon’s “poison of evil,” and he has also leveled the way for “those who believe in thee” (*Odes Sol.* 22:7).⁴⁶ Victory over the dragon is also associated with an eschatological renewal: “thou hast brought thy world to destruction/corruption, that everything might be dissolved and renewed” (*Odes Sol.* 22:11). Thus, *Theos* is ultimately the warrior who destroys the dragon. However,

he does so by *Christos*'s hands. Use of the conflict motif in *Odes Sol.* 22:5 is comparable to that promoting David in Ps 89:26, but differs in a significant way. In Ps 89:26, Yahweh states that he will place David's hand over the sea/river, whom Yahweh has already defeated (Ps 89:10–11), and this signifies endorsement of David's authority. *Odes of Solomon* 22 claims that *Theos* gives *Christos* authority and also that *Christos* actually participated in the past combat against the dragon. This claim is never made of David in Psalm 89 or elsewhere. This innovation heightens the status of *Christos* relative to *Theos* within the theological hierarchy of the text. *Christos* is not only given authority, he is said to have participated in the original defeat of the dragon.

The defeated enemy in this passage is a "seven-headed dragon." We have seen a multi-headed serpent/dragon enemy in Ps 74:13–14 (a multi-headed dragon, identified as Leviathan) and a seven-headed dragon in Rev 12:3. The dragon in *Odes Sol.* also has venom, which suggests serpentine characteristics as well. While we have not seen venom associated with the dragon enemy, it is consistent with the serpentine characterization of the enemy in Isa 27:1 and Rev 12, as well as Ugaritic traditions of 'Anatu and Ba'lu facing the seven-headed serpent in *KTU* 1.3 III 38–42 and *KTU* 1.5 I 2–3, respectively. The detail that the dragon has specifically seven heads is preserved in the Ugaritic *Ba'lu Cycle*, Rev 12, and this text, but not any Hebrew Bible descriptions of the multi-headed dragon. If commentators are correct that the dragon here is a signifier for Satan, an identification proposed explicitly in Revelation, then it would be the case that Satan is portrayed as or identified with the dragon of conflict motif traditions.⁴⁷ Thus, Satan, according to *Odes of Solomon* and consistent with other examples of the conflict motif, has been defeated and will again be defeated. As a disfavored and rival divine figure, Satan is thus portrayed as destined for defeat and inferior to both *Theos* and *Christos*. The *terminus ante quem* for *Odes of Solomon* is the late second or early third century CE, at which point we have evidence for the circulation of a Greek version of the text.⁴⁸ Within this historical context, the articulation of the conflict motif in *Odes Sol.* 22 is consistent with Revelation with regard to portraying *Christos* (if the Lamb in Revelation is *Christos*) as the divine warrior who defeats the dragon. Because the authorship of *Odes of Solomon* is unknown, we cannot be more specific than to say that the poems fit within a second-century CE milieu of Judean (including *Christos*-centered) traditions.⁴⁹ This applies to the text's articulation and use of the conflict motif as well.

Testament of Asher 7:3 states that when *Christos* comes to the earth he will crush the dragon's head, and thereby save Israel and all the nations:

You will be scattered to the four corners of the earth [. . .] until the Most High visits the earth, even coming as a human, eating and drinking with humans, and in quiet crushing the head of the dragon in the midst of [the] water.⁵⁰ In this way he will save Israel and all the nations, *Theos* playing the part of a man.

(*T. Ash.* 7:3)⁵¹

The vocabulary of *T. Ash.* 7:3 suggests that the author drew upon LXX Ps 73:13; both passages use “crush” (*suntribō*), “head/s” (*kephalē*), “dragon/s” (*drakōn*), and “water” (*hudōr*).⁵² In the Greek psalm there are multiple heads and multiple dragons, whereas here there is one head and one dragon. Marc Philonenko speculates that this dragon represented Pompey.⁵³ If the dragon figure indeed represents a historical person (Pompey or someone else), the characterization of a disfavored foreign political figure as the dragon would fit within biblical traditions of identifying disfavored rulers with the dragon who is destined for defeat, as in Jer 51:34–37, which characterizes Nebuchadnezzar as a dragon.

The text equates *Christos* with *Theos* by claiming that he will defeat the dragon, as *Theos* is said to do in LXX Isa 27:1 and LXX Ps 73:13. Furthermore, *Christos* is identified as the Most High (*hupsistos*) and as *Theos* explicitly; these are substantial theological claims. *T. Ash.* 7:3 describes *Christos* as engaged in a future combat that is an eschatological event, a feature shared with 1 Cor 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; and *Odes Sol.* 22:5. The association of *Christos*'s victory with saving Israel is similar to first-century CE Judean texts (discussed below) in which the victory of an eschatological divine warrior benefits some group within the narrative. In those texts, however, the divine warrior defeats earthly kings, whereas here *Christos* defeats the dragon, a superhuman enemy. *Christos*'s defeat of the dragon is comparable to that in *Odes Sol.* 22 and the defeat of the dragon in Revelation. *Christos* occupies the role of divine warrior against the dragon. The author appropriated this role for *Christos*, and in doing so bolstered claims about his divine status.

First Corinthians 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; *Odes Sol.* 22; and *T. Ash.* 7:3 exhibit adaptations of the conflict motif that focus on the status of *Christos* as a divine warrior within an eschatological setting. First Corinthians 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; and *Odes Sol.* 22 draw on Davidic royal ideology

such as that in Ps 110 and Ps 89, but to varying degrees these texts heighten the status claimed for *Christos* beyond that claimed for David. *Odes of Solomon* 22 and *T. Ash.* 7:3 also draw upon Isa 27:1, specifically the notion of Yahweh defeating the sea-dragon in the eschaton. They exhibit the remarkable innovation of having *Christos* defeat the dragon in the future, and *Odes Sol.* 22 even claims that *Christos* participated in Yahweh's past conflict with the dragon. The authors of these texts adapted the conflict motif to suit their particular theological aims, specifically to bolster claims about the divine status and authority of Jesus/*Christos*. As eschatological divine warrior, *Christos* will defeat earthly and divine enemies and subsequently attain his throne. Within the divine hierarchy, *Christos* is elevated to a highly favored position, and his status approaches that of Yahweh/*Theos*.

Like the texts just discussed, which promote Jesus/*Christos* as a divine warrior, three first-century CE Judean texts, *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra*, and *1 Enoch*, employ the conflict motif to endorse a secondary figure who is characterized as an eschatological divine warrior in addition to claiming that Yahweh/*Theos* has universal dominion. When promoting the status of Yahweh/*Theos*, these texts share a specific focus on Leviathan and Behemoth as figures over whom Yahweh/*Theos* has control. Many Hebrew Bible texts refer to Leviathan and/or a sea-dragon whom Yahweh has defeated. Isaiah 27:1 renders Yahweh's defeat of this figure as an eschatological event. Conscripting this notion, several first- and second-century CE texts claim that Jesus/*Christos* will defeat such a figure in the future. However, *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra*, and *1 Enoch*, as well as two rabbinic texts *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* א"ד ה"ג preserve additional material about the eschatological purpose of Leviathan and Behemoth.

Leviathan and Behemoth in the Eschaton and More Eschatological Battles

There are several texts that discuss the role of Leviathan and Behemoth in the eschaton: *2 Baruch* 29:4, *1 Enoch* 60:7–25, *4 Ezra* 6:47–52, *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a, and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* א"ד ה"ג. These texts utilize the conflict motif to promote Yahweh/*Theos* by asserting that Leviathan and Behemoth never posed a threat to Yahweh/*Theos*. Rather, he created them and has preserved them for a specific purpose in the eschaton: an eschatological banquet. These narrative details contribute to the texts' shared claim that Yahweh/*Theos* has universal dominion by implying the following: first, he

is not threatened by any rival divine beings because he created everything, including Leviathan and Behemoth; and second, Yahweh/*Theos* has made preparations for the eschaton from the time of creation, which provides narrative proof that he controls the present.

The association of Leviathan with a banquet is consistent with Ps 74:14, where the defeated and dead Leviathan serves as a meal for some people in the wilderness: “It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan; You made him food for the people of the wilderness.”⁵⁴ However, in *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *b. Baba Batra*, and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו, Leviathan and Behemoth are not killed until the eschaton, and the meal in which they are involved is an eschatological banquet. The figures of Leviathan and Behemoth are described most extensively in Job 40–41 (discussed in Chapter 3), where they are presented as intimidating creatures whom only Yahweh can tame. As such, Leviathan and Behemoth testify to the incomparability of Yahweh. Subsequent references to Leviathan and Behemoth build upon the characterization of these figures in the book of Job, as well as references to Leviathan in Ps 74:14, Ps 104:26, and Isa 27:1.

The concept of an eschatological banquet may be traced to Isa 25:6:

On this mountain, Yahweh of hosts will make for all the peoples a feast of rich foods, a feast of vintage wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of vintage wines strained clear.

Here, the feast is a celebration, characterized by abundance, and enjoyed by “all the peoples.” Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible there are notions of feasting on defeated enemies by birds and animals (Ezek 39:1–21), animals (Isa 56:9; Jer 12:9), and Yahweh’s sword (Jer 46:10).⁵⁵ Based on *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *b. Baba Batra*, and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו, it appears that the notion of people feasting on the defeated Leviathan in Ps 74:14 was incorporated into the concept of an eschatological banquet. The notion of a celebratory banquet after victory coordinates thematically with the conflict motif, and the presence of a defeated and dead Leviathan is directly representative of it. Another key aspect of the notion of an eschatological banquet involving Leviathan is the temporal shift to a future setting for the combat. The assertion that this future celebration will occur functions as narrative guarantee of victory in the future combat.

Second Baruch 29:4, *1 Enoch* 60:7–25, *4 Ezra* 6:47–52, *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a, and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו each emphasize that Yahweh/*Theos* created Leviathan and Behemoth and that he has preserved

them for a specific purpose. Through these two details, the authors imply that the deity maintains control over these figures and that they pose no threat to him. Job 40–41 describes Leviathan and Behemoth as created and tamed by Yahweh, and these later texts develop this notion through exegesis of Gen 1:21. Specifically, the creation of “the great sea-dragons” (*hattannînim haggədōlîm*) in Gen 1:21 is elaborated as the creation of Leviathan and Behemoth. By asserting that Leviathan, traditionally an enemy to be defeated, never posed a threat to Yahweh/*Theos*, the authors promote his dominion and sovereignty. This legitimating ideological function shows continuity with previous examples of the conflict motif in that the preferred deity is promoted at the expense of his rivals, including Leviathan. However, these later texts show an intensification of the contrast between Yahweh and his rivals, since Leviathan and Behemoth are characterized as creatures over whom Yahweh/*Theos* has always exerted control.

We also see that the authors of 2 *Baruch* 29:4, 1 *Enoch* 60:7–25, 4 *Ezra* 6:47–52, *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו, and *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a incorporated Leviathan and Behemoth traditions that are not preserved in the Hebrew Bible but that they share in common. For example, they each include the detail that these figures were created on the fifth day of creation. The attestation of such shared Leviathan and Behemoth traditions suggests that these traditions existed independently of these particular works, and that the authors each incorporated them along with biblical materials.⁵⁶ *Second Baruch* 29:4, 1 *Enoch* 60:7–25, and 4 *Ezra* 6:47–52 share remarkably similar details and all possibly date to the first century CE, whereas the rabbinic passages that preserve elaborate Leviathan and Behemoth traditions, in *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו, date to ca. 500 CE and the early medieval period, respectively.

Second Baruch 29:4, 1 *Enoch* 60:7–25, and 4 *Ezra* 6:47–52 employ the conflict motif to claim that Yahweh has universal dominion, to endorse a secondary figure, and to promote a specific group. According to these texts, Yahweh’s dominion is displayed by his creation of the heavens, earth, and all that is in them, including Leviathan and Behemoth, as well as his preparations for the eschaton, particularly preservation of Leviathan and Behemoth for the eschatological banquet. William K. Whitney discusses these three textual traditions as examples of the “combat-banquet tradition,” and this seems to be a fitting term.⁵⁷ In addition to the combat-banquet tradition, itself a development of the conflict motif, 2 *Baruch*, 1 *Enoch*, and 4 *Ezra* exhibit the conflict motif in a manner

similar to Dan 7 and Revelation. That is, these three texts employ the conflict motif to promote a secondary figure (a Messiah, Elect One, or Son of Man figure), whom Yahweh is said to endorse. The secondary figure is portrayed in conflict with powerful earthly kings, and he will defeat them and attain power granted by the primary deity.⁵⁸ Based on these narrative details, I propose that *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* preserve and utilize two strands of the conflict motif: the combat-banquet tradition involving Leviathan and Behemoth and the eschatological battle featuring a secondary figure as divine warrior. Moreover, within the eschatological speculation, each of these texts promotes a specific group that is to be saved from punishment and rewarded in the eschaton through the efforts of the primary deity and secondary figure. Thus, the work accomplished through the conflict motif in these three texts is more extensive than previous studies have recognized. The conflict motif serves (1) to promote the universal dominion of the primary creator deity, (2) to support the claim that the secondary figure is endorsed by the primary deity and will reign in the eschaton, and finally, (3) to offer narrative guarantee of the positive fate of a select group⁵⁹ who will benefit from the actions (victory in combat and/or execution of judgment) of the primary deity and secondary figure in the eschaton.

Second Baruch 29:4 states that Leviathan and Behemoth will be eaten in an eschatological banquet:

And Behemoth will be revealed from his place, and Leviathan will arise from the sea, those two great dragons which I created on the fifth day of creation, and will have kept until that time. And then they will be food for all who remain.

(*2 Baruch* 29:4)⁶⁰

The passage states that Yahweh created these figures on the fifth day and that he has preserved them since then. While they are “great dragons” (Syriac, *tannînā’ rawrbā’*), the passage asserts that Yahweh is superior to them, in that he created them, maintained them, and decided their fate. The passage identifies the “great dragons” of the Syriac Peshitta of Gen 1:21 with Leviathan and Behemoth, who are not referenced in Gen 1:21, implying that Leviathan and Behemoth have been under Yahweh’s control since their conception.

The reference to Leviathan and Behemoth in *2 Baruch* 29:4 occurs within a list of things that will occur in the future, including reversal of

misfortunes, the return of heavenly manna, an abundance of vegetation (2 *Baruch* 29:5–8), and the revealing of the Messiah: “And it will be that when all is accomplished that was to come to pass in those parts, that the Messiah will then begin to be revealed (2 *Baruch* 29:3).”⁶¹ The passage does not state who is expected to kill Leviathan and Behemoth, and perhaps the primary deity maintains this role, as in 1 *Enoch*, 4 *Ezra*, *b. Baba Batra*, and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ג ה”ג. Regardless, the passage as a whole (2 *Baruch* 29:3–30:1) asserts the importance of the Messiah figure, and the statements about Leviathan and Behemoth serve to emphasize the creator deity’s dominion. The promotion of the deity’s dominion and status as creator, in turn, bolsters the validity of his endorsement of the messianic figure within the eschatological context.

First Enoch 60 promotes the dominion of the “Head of Days” in several ways: his enthronement, emphasis on the deity’s universal control, and his taming of the sea, Leviathan, and Behemoth. Each of these features is a constituent element of the conflict motif, and each contributes to the legitimating ideology of the text. In 1 *Enoch* 60, the angel Michael explains to Noah what will happen when “the day” of punishment and judgment comes, including the role of Leviathan and Behemoth, who will feast upon those being punished.⁶² The passage begins with Noah seeing the “Head of Days” (Ethiopic *rēsa mawā’ēl*) sitting on the “throne of his glory,” surrounded by angels and the righteous (1 *Enoch* 60:1–2). The sight of the enthroned “Head of Days” is so astounding that Noah trembles and faints (1 *Enoch* 60:3–4). An angel rouses Noah from his stupor (1 *Enoch* 60:4), and Michael then explains what will happen “when the day, and the power, and the punishment, and the judgment come, which the Lord of Spirits has prepared for those who worship not the righteous law” (1 *Enoch* 60:5–6). This day will include “a covenant for the elect, but an inquisition for sinners” (1 *Enoch* 60:6). The passage continues with discussion of the initial “divisions” and placement of various figures and phenomena, including Leviathan, Behemoth, winds, the moon, stars, thunder, lightning, the sea, dew, and rain. Throughout, the passage emphasizes that these figures and phenomena are carefully and fully controlled by various spirits. The sea in particular is controlled with reins and a bridle:

And the spirit of the sea is masculine and strong, and according to the might of his strength he draws it back with a rein, and in like manner it is driven forward and disperses amid all the mountains of the earth.

(1 *Enoch* 60:16)⁶³

The control of the sea is consistent with various psalms in which Yahweh controls the sea (for example Ps 65:8), though the use of reins and a bridle is a distinct detail. The notion of using reins and a bridle to control the sea is similar to the taming of Leviathan and Behemoth described in Job 40:24–26, where Yahweh snares and hooks these figures, though Job does not include a taming of the sea. *First Enoch* 60 presumes such a taming of Leviathan and Behemoth as well as the sea, and these figures are completely within the control of the creator deity. They are separated from one another such that Leviathan dwells in the water and Behemoth on the land. They are preserved for the purpose of feasting upon those being punished in the “great Day of the Lord”:

And on that day two monsters (*‘anābārt*)⁶⁴ will be⁶⁵ separated from one another, a female monster named Leviathan, to dwell in the abyss of the ocean over the fountains of the waters. But the male is named Behemoth, who covers with his belly an empty wilderness named Duidain. . . . And I besought the other angel that he should show me the might of those monsters, how they were separated in one day and cast, the one into the abysses of the sea, and the other into the dry land of the wilderness. . . . And the angel of peace who was with me said to me: “These two monsters are to be ready for the great Day of the Lord to be feasted, so that the punishment of the Lord of spirits may fall upon them and not come forth in vain”.

(1 *Enoch* 60:7–9, 24)

First Enoch 60 explicitly describes the “Head of Days” enthroned and fully controlling the sea, Leviathan, and Behemoth, along with the moon, stars, and various weather phenomena. While no combat is described, the passage presumes that the sea, Leviathan, and Behemoth have been tamed and pose no threat to the “Head of Days” or to his dominion. Furthermore, “the Lord of spirits” will use Leviathan and Behemoth on “the Day of the Lord” to punish people by allowing Leviathan and Behemoth to feast on them. This text is distinct in portraying Leviathan and Behemoth feasting on people in the eschaton, rather than people feasting on Leviathan and Behemoth as in the other examples of the combat-banquet tradition.⁶⁶ However, the notion that the “Head of Days” has preserved Leviathan and Behemoth for a purpose and that he will utilize them in some way is consistent with 2 *Baruch* 29:4, 4 *Ezra* 6, b. *Baba Batra*, and *Midrash Alpha*

Bethoth ג"ד ה"ו, and in all of these traditions, this notion implies that the deity has total dominion from the time of creation to the eschaton.

Fourth Ezra 6:38–54 presents a retelling of the six-day creation story in Gen 1:1–2:4a.⁶⁷ Verses 47–52 describe the production of “living creatures” in the water, including Leviathan and Behemoth:

But on the fifth day, you commanded the seventh part, where the water had been gathered, to generate living creatures (*animalia*), birds, and fishes; and so it was done. The mute and lifeless water, as it was commanded, produced living creatures (*animalia*), so that therefore the nations would recount your marvels. Then you preserved two living creatures (*duas animas*); the one you called Behemoth and the name of the other Leviathan. And you separated one from the other, for the seventh part where the water had been gathered was not able to take them both. Then you gave Behemoth one of the parts that had been dried up on the third day, where he should live, where there are a thousand mountains. However, you gave Leviathan the seventh part, the watery part. And you have guarded them so that they should be made into a feast for whomever you wish, whenever you wish.

(*4 Ezra* 6:47–52)⁶⁸

Fourth Ezra 6:47 elaborates Gen 1:21; both describe the fifth day of creation. The details that follow, contained in *4 Ezra* 6:48–52, however, are not present in Gen 1:21, and the categorization of creatures in *4 Ezra* 6:47–52 differs from that in Gen 1:21. The Genesis version of the fifth day of creation includes “living creatures” (*nepeš haḥayyāh*) in the water, fowl (‘ōp), and “the great sea-dragons” (*hattannīnīm haggēdōlīm*). The author of *4 Ezra* 6:47–52, however, includes “living creatures,” “birds,” and “fishes,” but does not provide an explicit equivalent to the category “great sea-dragons” of Gen 1:21. Whitney and Michael E. Stone describe the Leviathan and Behemoth tradition of *4 Ezra* as an expansion of the “great sea-dragons” of Gen 1:21.⁶⁹ It seems reasonable to infer that the notion of “great sea-dragons” in the Gen 1:1–2:4a creation account served as an opportunity to insert Leviathan and Behemoth. However, Whitney and Stone overlook the difference in how *4 Ezra* 6:47 categorizes those created on the fifth day. Specifically, *4 Ezra* 6:49 does not categorize Leviathan and Behemoth as “great sea-dragons,” but rather includes them within the category “living creatures” (*animalia*). There is no way to be certain, but it is possible that the author of *4 Ezra* 6:47–52 purposely avoided the category “great sea-dragons,” in

favor of the less ambiguous category “living creatures,” in order to emphasize that Leviathan and Behemoth were tamed from their inception, posing no threat to the creator god. This would be consistent with the rest of the passage, which assumes that Yahweh maintains control over Leviathan and Behemoth. Leviathan and Behemoth are “preserved” purposefully, according to a plan; thus, they pose no threat. Rather, he keeps them alive to be eaten at his whim by whomever he chooses. In addition to commenting on the status of Leviathan and Behemoth, this passage includes an interesting comment on the water. The description of the water as “mute and lifeless” reads counter to any characterization of the water as an agent, and the water produces creatures in obedience to the deity’s command. As in *1 Enoch* 60, the creator deity of *4 Ezra* has complete control over the sea/waters as well as Leviathan and Behemoth.

Second Baruch, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* assert that Leviathan and Behemoth were created by Yahweh and preserved by him for a feast in the eschaton, either as food or as devourers. Through these assertions the texts characterize Leviathan and Behemoth, as well as the sea/waters in *1 Enoch* and *4 Ezra*, as entities that pose no threat to Yahweh. Rather, he has complete control over them. These claims serve to validate the deity’s purported universal dominion. The logic of the legitimating ideology exhibited in these texts is fully grounded in the signification of Leviathan and the sea/waters within occurrences of the conflict motif such as those preserved in the Hebrew Bible, in which Leviathan and the sea/waters have been defeated and tamed by Yahweh.

In addition to exhibiting the combat-banquet tradition, *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* also utilize the conflict motif within an eschatological framework to promote a secondary figure. This secondary figure is said to be endorsed by the primary deity, and he is awarded power by the primary deity. Furthermore, these texts claim that the secondary figure will kill powerful enemy rulers, thus defeating disfavored, rival authority figures and validating his enthronement. The figures promoted in *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* are the “Messiah”; “Son of Man” and “Elect One”; and “my son” respectively.

Among the texts discussed above, those that focus on *Christos* (1 Cor 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; *Odes Sol.* 22:5; and *T. Ash.* 7:3) attribute the defeat and death of enemies to *Christos*, portrayed as a divine warrior figure. In Rev 12–22, many figures are portrayed as divine warriors: the Ancient of Days, Michael, the rider, the Lamb, and an angel. While the Lamb is traditionally understood as referring to Jesus, the figure designated “Jesus,”

Christos, and *Iēsous Christos* is never portrayed as a warrior figure in Revelation, though he clearly shares the dominion won through the various combats in the text (Rev 11:15; 20:4–6).⁷⁰ Likewise, in Dan 7–12, the “one like a son of man” receives dominion without having participated in combat (Dan 7:13–14). This appears to be a development of royal ideological uses of the conflict motif, such as that in Ps 89 where David is granted authority and given dominion over the sea/rivers without having actually engaged in conflict with them. Thus, among texts that promote both the dominion of a primary deity and a secondary figure, there are two modes in which the conflict motif may be utilized: through the primary deity’s past combat and through the secondary figure’s future combat. In some texts the endorsed figure is granted dominion that the primary deity has attained through a past or future combat. For example, Yahweh as a victorious divine warrior and king has the prerogative to endorse David (Ps 89), and the Ancient of Days/*Theos* has the prerogative to endorse the “one like a son of man” (Dan 7) and *Christos* (Rev 11:15; 20:4–6). Whereas, in some other texts the endorsed figure is said to participate in the past or future combat. Regardless of whether the primary deity or secondary figure is the divine warrior, the combat may be in the past or future. It is not the case that all traditions involving an eschatological battle assign the warrior role to a secondary figure. Also, both modes may be utilized in a single text: they are not mutually exclusive. *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* all feature a future conflict in which the secondary figure punishes and kills an enemy king or kings.

Second Baruch 39 describes the destruction of various kingdoms preceding the reign of the “Messiah.” The phrasing is passive, so it is unclear whether or not the “Messiah” has a direct role in the destruction of the series of kingdoms. In *2 Baruch* 40, however, it is explicit that the “Messiah” will convict and kill “the last leader” before his messianic reign begins. This follows the pattern of a victorious warrior attaining his throne after defeating rival powers, and the conflict is a future eschatological battle.

In *1 Enoch* the “Head of Days” endorses a “Son of Man” figure, also called the “Elect One.” This figure will dethrone and humiliate earthly kings and powerful land-owners (*1 Enoch* 46:4–6; 48:8–10), and he will sit on the throne of the “Head of Days” (*1 Enoch* 51:3). This resembles Ps 2, in which there is antagonism between earthly kings and the figure endorsed by the deity. The lengthy and drawn-out nature of the conflict between the powerful/wealthy people and the Elect One also closely resembles Revelation’s notion of divine figures acting on behalf of those oppressed by the powerful/wealthy (Rev 6:15–17; 19:17–21). The Son of Man passages

in *1 Enoch* 37–71 employ the conflict motif to promote the figure of the Son of Man/Elect One, whose authority is first based on the dominion of the “Head of Days.” The Son of Man/Elect One then exercises his authority against wealthy landowners and kings who oppress the “elect,” and he is subsequently enthroned.⁷¹

Fourth Ezra 11–13 narrates two visions that promote a figure called the “anointed” (*unctus*) (*4 Ezra* 12:32) and “my son” (*filius meus*) (*4 Ezra* 13:32, 37, 52).⁷² He is represented in the visions as a lion (*4 Ezra* 11–12) and a mighty man (*4 Ezra* 13). In both visions this figure rebukes reigning authority figures who are characterized as oppressive and proud. In the “eagle vision” of *4 Ezra* 11, these oppressive governing figures are portrayed as the feathers and wings of an eagle whom the lion rebukes, at which time the eagle burns completely. The interpretation of the “eagle vision” described in *4 Ezra* 12 identifies the feathers and wings as a series of kings with extensive dominion who are “impious” and oppressive. The lion is identified as the anointed, whom the “Most High” has kept, and who will rebuke, correct, and judge the kings (*4 Ezra* 12:31–33). Similarly, in *4 Ezra* 13, the mighty man appears and destroys a multitude. He has a burning voice, and his appearance causes everything to tremble (*4 Ezra* 13:3–4). When a multitude gathers to battle against the mighty man, he destroys them with the fire, flame, and tempest that comes from his mouth rather than with a sword (*4 Ezra* 13:8–11).⁷³ The interpretation states that the mighty man figure has been kept for a while (*4 Ezra* 13:26), and he will rebuke and destroy the “impious” (*4 Ezra* 13:37–38). This mighty man figure is portrayed as the victorious divine warrior, and the oppressive kings are portrayed as his enemies who are destined for defeat.

The passages just described within *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra*, each promote a secondary divine figure who receives endorsement from the primary deity. The primary deity is portrayed as the creator who has made specific preparations for the eschaton, at which time various oppressive and “wicked” rulers will be rebuked and destroyed. It is the secondary divine figure who accomplishes the final destruction of the earthly rulers, and in *2 Baruch* and *1 Enoch*, this figure then reigns. These texts contain a significant commentary on their contemporary political setting, portraying disfavored governing bodies as oppressive, wicked, and destined for defeat. We have seen throughout this study that the conflict motif was particularly useful for making political statements, by portraying disfavored polities negatively and asserting the certain victory of favored polities and favored divine figures.

In addition to asserting the universal dominion of the creator deity and promoting the endorsement of a secondary figure who engages in an eschatological conflict, *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* also utilize the conflict motif to bolster the claims of some group: “all who remain,” the “elect ones,” and “my people” “Israel,” respectively. The texts purport to guarantee the positive fate of these groups in the eschaton by claiming that they will be rescued from judgment/punishment and that they will benefit from the victory of the “Messiah,” “Elect One,” and “my son,” respectively, over those who oppress them. *Second Baruch* 29:4 endorses some select set of people called “all who remain,” and they enjoy the eschatological banquet with Leviathan and Behemoth on the menu. From the larger context of *2 Baruch* 27–30, we also learn that “all who remain” have survived a series of twelve periods of woes after which they feast on heavenly manna. It is likely, but not directly stated, that the “all who remain” are the same as those Yahweh says he will protect from the twelve woes on account of them being “in this land” (*2 Baruch* 29:2). Furthermore, these people will benefit from the actions of the “Messiah,” who will convict and kill the “last ruler” and protect these people (*2 Baruch* 40:2). Regardless of whom the author is imagining, some selection of people are affirmed, in that they are going to survive the coming misfortunes and then enjoy messianic prosperity. While we can only speculate about the actual or imagined audience of *2 Baruch*, it seems plausible that a late first-century CE audience would have identified with, or hoped to be included in, this group of survivors who will enjoy the reversal of fortunes.⁷⁴ Moreover, since the revelations to the character Baruch purport to have occurred about six hundred years earlier, a first-century CE author and audience might imagine that they were experiencing some of the difficult times (such as the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE) described in the text.⁷⁵ If so, they would be validated by eschatological speculation that includes prosperity for them in particular and by the notion that the creator deity and “Messiah” would act on their behalf.

In *1 Enoch*, the Elect One plays a prominent role in the reversal of fortunes for the “elect.” The destruction of kings and powerful people is tied directly to this reversal, in that the “elect” will no longer be “hindered” and will have relief from “oppression” (*1 Enoch* 53:3–7). *First Enoch* 60, which emphasizes the creator deity’s control over the sea, weather phenomena, and astral bodies in order to assert his universal dominion (*1 Enoch* 60:11–22), is also concerned with the “elect.” The “elect” will not be fed to Leviathan and Behemoth, and furthermore, the “worship” of the “elect”

is validated over that of “sinners” and those who “worship not the righteous law” (1 *Enoch* 60:6). The text does not identify the “elect” but specifies that they “will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked and godless are to be removed” (1 *Enoch* 1:2). Throughout, the text states that Yahweh will protect the “elect and righteous,” help them, and make them prosperous, to the exclusion of the “sinners” (1 *Enoch* 1:8; 5:7; 25:5–7; 38:2; 41:2; 45:5; 50:1–2; 58:3–4; 62:8–15). We cannot be certain exactly who the author might have identified as the “elect,” but it seems reasonable to assume that an audience, whether in the author’s day or later, would self-identify with the “elect” rather than the “sinners” who are punished. If the text is accurately dated to the late first century CE,⁷⁶ we may speculate that assertion of the deity’s ultimate dominion (1 *Enoch* 60:1–2), including making preparations for the “Day of the Lord” from the time of creation, would have been particularly useful in response to the political and social turmoil surrounding the Jewish revolts from 66–72 CE, including the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE. In other words, such social and cultic upheaval might bring into question the Judean deity’s dominion, and one way to respond to such a crisis would be to claim that the deity already has a plan to reverse the current state of affairs by punishing “sinners” and making the “elect” prosperous.

Fourth Ezra is concerned with the fate of “my people” (*populus/plebs meus*), who are also called “Israel” (*Israhel*). “Israel” is characterized as being distinct from other peoples specifically because they have obeyed the deity’s commands (4 *Ezra* 3:36). This claim clearly privileges the self-understanding of “my people” over other (real or constructed) groups that the author disfavors. Throughout the text, the term “Israel” is used to designate the people “Israel” within referenced biblical stories as well as Ezra’s narrative audience, the contemporary group being addressed. There is only one verse that admits the narrative-historical difference between these two “Israels”: the deity tells Ezra, “Declare to my people that I will give them the kingdom of Jerusalem, which I would have delivered to Israel” (4 *Ezra* 2:10). This verse suggests that Ezra’s narrative audience, his contemporary “my people” are inheriting the privileges and status of the “Israel” of biblical traditions, and certainly the rest of the text equates these two narrative entities.

“My people” are also promoted through the text’s two uses of the conflict motif: the combat-banquet tradition and the eschatological battle. As in 2 *Baruch*, 4 *Ezra* 6:49–52 states that Leviathan and Behemoth will be eaten by whomever the deity chooses, suggesting that “my people” will

enjoy the eschatological banquet. Moreover, in the conclusion to his summary of creation, Ezra states that the whole project of creation was for this people's benefit, and he challenges the deity to justify the suffering of his people at the hands of those who now have power over them and "devour them" (4 *Ezra* 6:55–59).⁷⁷ This rhetorical challenge to the deity, specifically citing works of creation and defeated enemies such as Leviathan, fits within an ongoing tradition of "plaintive petition" speeches, such as we have seen in Job and various psalms in which the lament speaker cites the deity's past great works, typically creation and defeating enemies, in order to invoke the deity's response in the present unfortunate situation. In the deity's response, he affirms that creation was for the benefit of "my people" and reassures Ezra that he will correct the current unfortunate situation through the actions of "my son" and his own execution of judgment (4 *Ezra* 7:1–35). These actions will further benefit "my people" in that they will enjoy the temporary reign of "my son" as well as the postjudgment world (4 *Ezra* 7:28, 32–34). More specifically, in the description of "my son" judging and rebuking the powerful kings, "my son" will then "liberate" them and "make them joyful" (4 *Ezra* 12:33–34). Throughout the text, "my people" are guaranteed a positive fate despite their current suffering, and they are guaranteed that those who oppress them will be rebuked and judged by the deity and "my son." The deity is challenged to ameliorate their current suffering specifically by reference to the act of creation, including the preparation of Leviathan and Behemoth for an eschatological banquet, and by appealing to the deity's purported universal dominion (4 *Ezra* 6). He responds by assuring Ezra of his dominion as well as his preference and preparation for "my people" in the eschaton, including the actions of "my son." Thus, the deity's dominion, the endorsed and victorious status of "my son," the positive guarantee to "my people," and the negative fate of their oppressors are all articulated through the conflict motif.

Select groups in 2 *Baruch*, 1 *Enoch*, and 4 *Ezra* are privileged over other groups that are characterized as consisting of powerful, wealthy, and/or royal people who oppress the favored group and who are "wicked" or disobedient to the primary deity. The validation of the privileged group and criticism of others involves the normative claim that the behavior of the privileged group is "righteous" and "obedient" as opposed to the "wicked" and "unrighteous" acts of others. This normative claim is supported by the assertion that the deity will act on behalf of the privileged group and punish others. Within these narratives, this particular and interested point of view is presented as a given.

Second Baruch, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* share a substantial amount of biblical and extrabiblical traditions as well as contemporary setting and function. Their ideological claims depend on the texts' employment of the conflict motif. At the same time, they each characterize the primary deity, secondary figure, and privileged group as well as other narrative details in slightly different ways, developing the traditional materials to fit their specific narratives and ideologies. We gain additional insights into the development of relatively later (postbiblical) conflict traditions by comparing the traditions within *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* with references to divine combat within rabbinic texts that preserve remarkably similar narrative details. Two select rabbinic descriptions of Leviathan and Behemoth detail their creation and preservation for an eschatological banquet as well as a future slaying of Leviathan.⁷⁸ We also have rabbinic narratives of the "Holy One's" defeat of the Prince of the Sea. In these rabbinic traditions, we see an assertion of the deity's universal dominion that is similar to the legitimating claims made about Yahweh/*Theos* in the texts previously discussed. However, we also see direct negation of use of the conflict motif to legitimate secondary divine figures, and this stands in contrast to every text discussed in this chapter save Isa 27:1.

B. *Baba Batra* 74b–75a, *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג"ד ה"ו, *Midrash Tanhuma Huqqath* 1, and *Midrash Tanhuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 assert the distinct role of the "Holy One" as divine warrior. Rabbinic notions of divine combat run counter to the types of claims about secondary divine figures exhibited in first- and early second-century CE Judean articulations of the conflict motif. The tension between these traditions brings into greater relief the ideological claims being made within each. At the same time, the shared use of the conflict topos for making divergent ideological claims highlights a common exegetical interest in biblical texts as well as the utility of the conflict topos for making claims about divine authority.

B. *Baba Batra* 74b–75a describes the creation, preservation, and slaying of two Leviathans and two Behemoths:

"And Elohim created the great sea-dragons" (Gen 1:21). . . . R. Johanan said: This is Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, as it is written: "On that day the Lord will punish with his sharp, [great, and strong] sword [Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent]" (Isa 27:1). Rab Judah said that Rab said: All that the Holy One, blessed be he, created in his world, male

and female he created them. So too, Leviathan the fleeing serpent and Leviathan the tortuous serpent, male and female he created them; and if they had coupled with one another they would have destroyed the entire world. What did the Holy One, blessed be he, do? He castrated the male and killed the female, salting (preserving) her for the righteous for the coming future; as it is written: “And he will slay the dragon that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1). So too, Behemoth on a thousand hills, male and female he created them, and if they had coupled with one another they would have destroyed the entire world. What did the Holy One, blessed be he, do? He castrated the male and cooled the female, and he preserved her for the righteous for the coming future; as it is written: “Look, his strength is in his loins” (Job 40:16); this is the male; “and his strength is in the muscles of his belly” (Job 40:16); this is the female. . . .

(*b. Baba Batra 74b*)⁷⁹

The plural “great sea-dragons” of Gen 1:21 are identified as male and female Leviathans, reading the parallel lines in Isa 27:1 as referring to separate creatures rather than two synonymous descriptions of one Leviathan. R. Johanan reasons that the “Holy One” created a male and female Behemoth as well and that he castrated the males and preserved the females “for the righteous in the world to come.” *B. Baba Batra 75a* states that this preservation is specifically for a future banquet:

Rabbah said in the name of R. Johanan: “In the future, the Holy One, blessed be he, will make a feast for the righteous from the flesh of Leviathan; as it is said: ‘Companions will make a feast of him’ (Job 40:30)”.

(*b. Baba Batra 75a*)

Like the first-century CE Judean examples of combat-banquet tradition just discussed, *b. Baba Batra 74b–75a* characterizes Leviathan and Behemoth as created by the “Holy One,” such that they are not rival divine enemies, and preserves the idea that the creator deity has kept them from the time of creation for an eschatological banquet. However, the talmudic tradition maintains the notion that they posed a threat that the “Holy One” had to address. This is a threat to destroy the world, not a threat directly to the deity, but nonetheless he exerts his power to diffuse the threat, mutilating the males and killing the females.

B. Baba Batra 74b–75a also describes a future conflict in which the “Holy One” must defeat Leviathan and develops this scene in a highly significant manner:

When R. Dimi came, he said in the name of R. Jonathan: “In the future, Gabriel will prepare a hunt of Leviathan; as it is said: ‘Can you drag Leviathan with a fish hook? Or with a cord press down his tongue?’ (Job 40:25). Unless the Holy One, blessed be he, help him, it is impossible for him; for it is said: ‘He who made him, he can draw his sword near him’ (Job 40:19)”.

(*b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a)

The same narrative occurs in *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו, with remarkable further elaboration. This text also begins with references to both creation and Isa 27:1:

This is Leviathan, he who has been prepared since the six days of creation to provide a feast for the righteous in the world to come, as it is said, “On that day the Lord with his sharp [and great and strong] sword will punish [Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea (Isa 27:1)]”.

(*Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו)⁸⁰

The passage continues with description of an eschatological hunt for Leviathan in which the angel Gabriel attempts to subdue Leviathan. However, as in *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a, Gabriel is not able to subdue Leviathan, and the “Holy One” must intervene: “Leviathan’s strength swells over Gabriel, and swallows him, until the Holy One, blessed be he, rises over him as his aid.”⁸¹ The “Holy One” then brings Leviathan from the “great sea” before “the righteous” and slaughters him with “his own hand” (*Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו).⁸²

These passages make substantial claims about the status of the “Holy One,” that is, the Judean god Yahweh/*Theos*, particularly by employing the conflict motif. Moreover, they directly negate the type of ideological statements we see in *2 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra*, as well as in Revelation, 1 Cor 15:20–28, 2 Thess 2:1–12, *Odes Sol.* 22.5, and *T. Ash.* 7:3, in which the conflict motif is used to endorse a secondary figure by portraying him as the victorious eschatological warrior. *B. Baba Batra* 74b–75a and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו assert that no other divine being can subdue Leviathan, first

by portraying Gabriel as failing in his attempt to do so, second by emphasizing that the “Holy One” slaughters Leviathan “with his own hand,” and finally by citing Job 40:19 to explicitly state that only the creator of Leviathan can approach him in battle.

Rabbinic narratives of the “Holy One” defeating the Prince of the Sea are thematically related to the rabbinic descriptions of Leviathan and Behemoth just discussed. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, there are many biblical passages that characterize Leviathan and the sea/waters as enemies whom Yahweh defeats and subsequently controls. *B. Baba Batra* 74b, *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1, and *Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 each narrate the “Holy One” defeating the Prince of the Sea. Just as the passages from *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג”ד ה”ו preserve and develop traditions about Leviathan and Behemoth as entities whom the “Holy One” must control and whom he slaughters, *b. Baba Batra* 74b and *Midrash Tanḥuma* preserve and develop traditions about the “Holy One” attaining control over and slaying the sea, here portrayed with explicit agency and represented by the Prince of the Sea. These narratives assert Yahweh’s universal dominion through the conflict topos. Moreover, they do so in a tone that is even more vibrant than biblical instances of the conflict motif that they cite. The Prince of the Sea exhibits elaborate characterization and the slaughter of the Prince of the Sea is described explicitly as an attack. Like the rabbinic references to the “Holy One” slaughtering Leviathan and Behemoth, these narratives make ideological statements about the “Holy One” particularly through the theme of combat.

The “Holy One” versus the Prince of the Sea

There are several references to the Prince of the Sea in rabbinic texts. Most relevant for the current study are: *b. Hullin* 41b; *b. Baba Batra* 74b; *Midrash Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarai* 3; and *Midrash Tanḥuma, Huqqath* 1.⁸³ These passages associate the sea with a divine figure: the Prince of the Sea. The designation “Prince of the Sea” (*šar šel yām* in Hebrew and *šārā’ dēyammā’* in Aramaic) is strikingly similar to the Ugaritic epithet of the sea deity whom Ba’lu defeats: Prince Yammu (*zabūlu yammu*).⁸⁴ *B. Hullin* 41b proscribes slaughtering to the Prince of the Sea: “Do not slaughter into the seas. . . . Why not into the seas? Lest someone say it is for the Prince of the Sea.” This brief reference explains that one should not slaughter into the sea because this act might be mistaken

for sacrifice to a deity other than the “Holy One,” specifically the Prince of the Sea. The text implies that slaughtering to this divine being is not desirable; it is considered an illegitimate cultic act. Behind this cautionary statement lies the notion that the Prince of the Sea might be (wrongly) understood as a deity to whom it is suitable to sacrifice. The text reflects a preference for the “Holy One” over the Prince of the Sea. The rabbinic narratives of the “Holy One” attaining control over and slaying the Prince of the Sea provide a fuller picture of the relationship between these two figures.

Narratives regarding the Prince of the Sea occur in *b. Baba Batra* 74b, *Midrash Tanhuma Huqqath* 1, and *Midrash Tanhuma Hayyei Sarai* 3. These passages recount the “Holy One” defeating the Prince of the Sea and acting violently toward the sea/waters/ocean during creation. All three passages cite Job 26:12; *Midrash Tanhuma Huqqath* 1 also cites Job 9:8, Job 38:8 and 10, and Ps 33:7; and *Midrash Tanhuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 focuses on Ps 104 and Gen 1:9. Beginning with *b. Baba Batra* 74b:

R. Judah said that Rab further said: “When the Holy One, blessed be he, desired to create the world, he said to the Prince of the Sea, ‘Open your mouth and swallow all the waters in the world!’ He responded, ‘Lord of the universe, the continuous flow of my own is enough.’ Immediately he trampled on him and slew him, as it is said: ‘By his strength he disturbed the sea, and by his understanding he shattered Rahab (Job 26:12)’”.

(*b. Baba Batra* 74b)

The setting of the narrative is the time of creation, and the “Holy One” is organizing the waters. He commands the Prince of the Sea to swallow the waters, to contain them, but the Prince of the Sea objects. The “Holy One” then tramples the Prince of the Sea and slays him.⁸⁵ The notion of the “Holy One” slaying the Prince of the Sea during creation is remarkable. Many biblical passages juxtapose acts of creation with Yahweh killing sea-dragon figures, and creation accounts involve Yahweh containing and controlling the sea/waters. However, here the “Holy One” slays a divine being who corresponds to the entire sea. Specifically, the act of Yahweh killing Rahab, typically a sea-dragon figure, as cited from Job 26:12, is incorporated into the description of the “Holy One” apportioning the waters during creation. The most similar biblical descriptions of creation are those in Job 9:8, in which Yahweh treads on the sea, and Job 38:8–11, in

which Yahweh's apportioning of the sea/waters is described as a conflict. Neither of these passages in Job, however, involve Yahweh slaying another divine being.

The midrashic versions of this narrative present fuller accounts. *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1 incorporates several additional details.⁸⁶ It begins with an exegesis of Ps 33:7, relating the notion of Yahweh gathering the sea "as in a bottle (*nôd*)"⁸⁷ to the "Holy One's" command that the Prince of the Sea swallow all the waters of creation. It adds that the Prince of the Sea wept before the "Holy One" killed him. It incorporates Job 9:8 and 38:8 regarding Yahweh treading on the sea and containing the sea. Finally, this midrash includes an additional verb for the "Holy One" trampling on the Prince of the Sea. Both *b. Baba Batra* 74b and this account have "he trampled on him and slew him," using the root *b't* for trampling. However, *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1 also states: "He tread them down and trod on them, and thus the sea received [the waters]." Here, the verbs for treading are from the roots *kbs* and *drk*. While the root *drk* is used in Job 9:8 for Yahweh treading on the sea, *kbs* is not used in any biblical instances of the conflict motif (nor is *kbs*). However, Irving Jacobs makes the interesting point that this verb is cognate to the Akkadian *kabāsu*, used in *Enuma Elish* IV, 129 for Marduk trampling Tiamat. We can only speculate about the significance of this word choice. It is apparent from the other verbs used for treading/walking on the sea that the notion of the victorious warrior treading on his enemy was part of the constellation of available images associated with the conflict motif. It appears that the specific sense of *kbs*, pressing down by treading, as one would with grapes, utterly squishing, was useful for providing a more vivid description of how Yahweh tread down the waters so that they could fit into the sea.

Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai 3⁸⁸ discusses Ps 104 at length while expounding upon Gen 24:1. The discussion of Ps 104 elaborates on aspects of creation through a comparison of the "Holy One's" construction of the heavens and earth with a king's construction of his palace. The elaboration of creation through the metaphor of palace construction is significant considering the narrative topos of the victorious warrior deity attaining a palace after he defeats his enemies. Beyond this thematic innovation, *Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 adds several noteworthy details to the narrative, offering the most lengthy of the three accounts. It elaborates on the "Holy One's" conflict with the Prince of the Sea by adding characterization of all the waters and "ocean" (*'ôqyānôš*), who respond to the "Holy One's" violence against the Prince of the Sea and

waters. The “Holy One” tramples on the “ocean” and slays the Prince of the Sea, whereas *b. Baba Batra* 74b and *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1 have the “Holy One” trample and slay the Prince of the Sea only. In response to the slaughter of the Prince of the Sea, the seas are said to weep (*bôkîn*) even to the present day.⁸⁹ In response to the cries of the suffering waters, all other waters frantically flee in every direction. Finally, the “Holy One,” striking (*mišṭôr*) the fleeing waters, orders them to gather to their appropriate place. This vivid narrative characterizes the ocean and waters as a host of entities against whom Yahweh acts violently after he has killed the Prince of the Sea.

B. Baba Batra 74b, *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1, and *Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 provide whole narrative versions, not just epitomes, of the “Holy One’s” conflict with a divine being who corresponds to the sea. Jacobs’s 1977 study continues to be a starting point for investigating rabbinic combat traditions. He highlights similarities between the rabbinic narratives in *b. Baba Batra* 74b and *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1 (he does not discuss *Hayyei Sarai* 3) and select details of *Enuma Elish* and the *Ba’lu Cycle*. He concludes that the “Jewish version of the combat myth” indicates that the “early rabbinic exegetes” knew the “early myth presupposed by the biblical text,” both pertaining to Yahweh’s combat with the sea/waters and with Leviathan. I agree that our understanding of rabbinic combat traditions must begin with comparison of the relevant rabbinic passages and earlier sources. The thematic and specific similarities indicate continuity with other articulations of the conflict topos, as well as continuity between the rabbinic texts and the biblical passages around which these exegetical texts construct their narratives. I also appreciate Jacobs’s propositions regarding the “mythological heritage of Palestine,” in that he does not posit direct influence of Ugaritic or Babylonian combat narratives on these later sources, which would not make sense chronologically. Rather, biblical epitomes of Yahweh’s conflicts evidence distinctly Judean mythological traditions. Moreover, first- and early second-century CE Judean texts indicate that the conflict motif continued to be a useful and dynamic rhetorical tool for promoting favored deities and individuals as well as delegitimizing disfavored divine and human figures. The narratives in *b. Baba Batra* 74b and *Midrash Tanḥuma* indicate continued utility of the conflict topos into late antiquity, not simply knowledge of “early myth” as Jacobs concludes. In other words, I wish to emphasize the preservation of earlier traditions as well as the contemporary development of the conflict topos as a malleable tool of ideology production.

B. *Baba Batra* 74b–75a, *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג"ד ה"ו, and *Midrash Tanhuma* contain passages that focus on Leviathan, Behemoth, and the Prince of the Sea as entities over whom the “Holy One” must attain control and whom the “Holy One” kills. They assert the “Holy One’s” universal dominion and emphasize his sole role as divine warrior. These texts cite biblical examples of the conflict motif, but also develop distinct articulations of the “Holy One’s” conflict with enemy figures. There are ideological statements bound up in featuring the “Holy One” as sole slayer of Leviathan, Behemoth, and the Prince of the Sea. Such ideological statements may be clarified through comparison with first- and early second-century CE Judean texts that employ the conflict motif to endorse a secondary figure by portraying him as the divine warrior in addition to or instead of the Judean god *Theos*. The relevant passages in *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a, *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג"ד ה"ו, and *Midrash Tanhuma* assert the position of the Judean god, here called the “Holy One,” as divine warrior and as incomparable among divine beings. I propose that we may identify an ideological dialectic at work behind these differing portrayals of the “Holy One”/*Theos*’s relationship to secondary divine figures. Rabbinic combat traditions may be responding to the types of claims made about secondary divine figures that are furthered in first- and early second-century CE Judean texts, including those concerned with Jesus/*Christos* and propagated in late antique *Christos*-centered ideologies. Jesus/*Christos* is portrayed as the divine warrior who will defeat the dragon, Leviathan, and sea-beasts in the eschaton. However, according to rabbinic combat traditions even Gabriel is unable to defeat Leviathan. Previous treatments of these passages, whether in studies of the conflict topos or otherwise, have not brought this potential dynamic to light. The ideological work accomplished within the rabbinic traditions as well as the possible dialectic with competing ideologies is key to our understanding of rabbinic combat traditions as well as first- and early second-century CE Judean instances of the conflict motif.

Conclusion

Analysis of biblical and postbiblical articulations of the conflict topos that occur from ca. 500 BCE to ca. 1000 CE indicates that Judean authors adapted the motif to serve a broad range of ideological purposes. Isaiah 27:1; Dan 7; 2 *Baruch*; 1 *Enoch*; 4 *Ezra*; Revelation; 1 Cor 15; 2 Thess 2; *Odes of Solomon*; *Testament of Asher*; *b. Baba Batra*; and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth*

ג"ה ד"ג each exhibit eschatological rendering of the conflict motif. These texts describe a combat that occurs in the future that is part of an end of times scenario or an overhaul of the existing world order. The temporal shift that characterizes such eschatological speculation offers a new setting for divine combat. Moreover, it extends the connections proposed by mythological narratives between past and present to include the future. In addition to using the motif to promote favored divine beings and to delegitimize disfavored ones, authors adapted it to promote various secondary figures by characterizing them as future divine warriors endorsed by a primary deity. Furthermore, authors used the motif to bolster particular groups by claiming that divine figures would act on their behalf in the eschaton and that they would benefit from the divine warrior's future victory over their oppressors.

All of the texts discussed in this chapter draw upon preceding combat traditions while engaging in innovative mythmaking. The authors of Isa 27:1 and Dan 7 reconfigure earlier biblical notions of divine combat within eschatological speculation. Subsequent authors who employed the conflict motif engaged in extensive biblical exegesis, citing earlier biblical texts, especially Isa 27:1, in which Yahweh is the eschatological divine warrior. *Second Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, and *4 Ezra* use the conflict motif to assert Yahweh's universal dominion, including preparation for the eschaton, to promote secondary figures as eschatological divine warriors, to offer narrative guarantees to specific favored groups, and to attack disfavored earthly authorities. Texts focusing on the figure of Jesus/*Christos* portray him as a past and/or future divine warrior who is endorsed by Yahweh and who shares the heavenly throne. The authors who produced these texts employ imagery from biblical instances of the conflict motif, Davidic royal ideology, prophetic political commentary, and descriptions of creation. Likewise, within passages from *b. Baba Batra*, *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* ג"ה ד"ג, and *Midrash Tanhuma*, biblical verses are constantly cited and serve as a scaffolding upon which biblical themes of creation and combat are elaborated. These rabbinic combat traditions assert the role of the "Holy One" as the sole slayer of the Prince of the Sea, Leviathan, and Behemoth, and deny the possibility that any other divine figure could defeat them. I have proposed that we may identify an ideological dialectic behind these traditions, in which the status of preferred divine figures is asserted specifically through the theme of divine combat. The process of exegesis is generative within these traditions,

and authors developed and elaborated on biblical themes and imagery, adapting them to their particular socio-political situation and to suit their specific ideological aims.

Together with those in Chapters 2 and 3, the texts discussed above indicate that authors over a span of almost three millennia and over a wide geographical and political landscape developed the conflict topos for ideological purposes, to promote and attack various divine and human figures. These various authors adapted the mythic taxonomy to suit their contemporary needs by changing whom (what deity, individual, or group) they associated with the victorious divine warrior as well as whom they identified as enemies destined for defeat. Throughout, those associated with the victorious divine warrior are legitimated while the authority or status of those identified as enemies is attacked.

*The Motif of Yahweh's Authority
over the Sea and the Legitimacy
of Individuals: Claiming versus
Having Power over the Sea*

CONTROL OVER THE sea is a substantial power that, in Hebrew Bible texts, is the prerogative of Yahweh (Pss 29; 65:8; 89:6–15; 93; 107:29; Job 26; Isa 51:15; Jer 31:34; and Nah 1:1–11) and those whom he endorses (David in Ps 89:26). These passages describe or reference the relationship between Yahweh and the sea/waters as it relates to Yahweh's status among divine beings and his kingship. The motif of Yahweh's power over the sea is thematically related to the conflict motif: both entail claims of Yahweh's dominion over the sea/waters, and this power is cited as an example of his might and incomparability. Many scholars consider the notion of Yahweh's power over the sea to be derivative of the conflict motif.¹ That is, his authority over the sea was won through combat. Others reject this connection, considering the notion of Yahweh's authority over the sea to be constituent of his role as creator and/or divine king.² As discussed in Chapter 3, the link between themes of creation and combat in the Hebrew Bible is the notion of Yahweh's divine kingship. In Hebrew biblical traditions, divine kingship and victory are causally related; through victory the warrior deity attains, secures, and defends his throne. Whereas divine kingship and acts of creation are thematically related; the political idea of kingship is used to assert Yahweh's dominion, and acts of creation are cited in order to characterize that dominion as universal. Considering the connotations of Yahweh's authority over the sea within Hebrew biblical texts, the ascription of power

over the sea constitutes a substantial assertion for a human figure, because it entails a claim to divine power and divine endorsement.

The three traditions featured below each make a different claim about the particular human involved. They share use of the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea to comment on the legitimacy and authority of Jesus, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and Gamaliel, respectively. The gospel accounts of Jesus walking on the sea and calming the sea bolster Jesus's status and portray him as possessing divine power. Interestingly, among the six passages within this textual tradition, only one (Matt 14:22–33) even mentions *Theos*; that is, these passages are primarily focused on endorsing Jesus. This stands in sharp contrast to the story of Gamaliel invoking Yahweh to calm a storm, in that Gamaliel attributes all power and honor to the “Ruler of the Universe” (*b. Baba Meši'a* 59b).³ Second Maccabees uses the conflict motif twice to attack the legitimacy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The author accuses him of claiming to have power over the sea, which the text offers as a feature of his arrogance and illegitimate claims to power.

Use of the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea to portray select individuals as legitimate or illegitimate possessors of authority is similar to use of the conflict motif within royal ideology, discussed in Chapter 3. Authors made statements about the stability and contingency of the royal authority of individuals (Yaḥdun-Lim, Zimri-Lim, David, and “the king”) by claiming that victorious warrior deities endorsed them through enthronement, sharing their divine qualities or weapons with them, and/or granting them a position of authority over their defeated enemies. Despite the loss of autonomous political authority within Judea, authors continued to use motifs pertaining to Yahweh's dominion to make statements about the authority of individuals. The motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea is used to attack the legitimacy of a foreign royal individual and to claim authority for Jesus, who had no actual political authority. By comparing these three textual traditions, we may clarify their shared use of the motif for the purposes of legitimating or delegitimating a specific individual as well as how each tradition uses the motif distinctly, to suit their specific socio-political and theological aims.

Jesus

The accounts of Jesus calming the sea occur in Mark 4:35–41; Matt 8:23–27; and Luke 8:22–25. In these stories, Jesus and the disciples are in a boat, and when a dangerous storm comes Jesus remains asleep. The disciples wake Jesus and he speaks to the sea, which calms in response.

The disciples are awestruck and wonder about the implications of Jesus's ability to command the sea. The account in Mark reads as follows:

On that day, in the evening, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." So leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being filled. But he was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Be calm! Be silent!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have confidence?" And they were very terrified and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

(Mark 4:35-41)

Each account specifies that the storm was of such an intensity that the boat was in danger and the disciples were afraid. Mark and Matthew both describe the storm as "great," including waves that were breaking over and covering the boat, and Luke says that the windstorm caused the boat to fill with water. Mark uses the phrase *lailaps megalē anemou* (literally, a great storm of wind), and similarly, Luke uses *lailaps anemou*, while Matthew uses *seismos megos* (a great storm).

Jesus's action toward the wind/sea/waves is described as follows: "He . . . rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Be calm! Be silent! (*pephimōso*)'" (Mark 4:39); "He . . . rebuked the winds and the sea" (Matt 8:26); "He . . . rebuked the wind and the raging waves" (Luke 8:24). In each account Jesus rebukes (*epetimēsen*), and the objects of rebuke are the wind and sea/waves, though in Mark he rebukes the wind and speaks a command to the sea. The wind and sea respond as follows: "Then the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39); "and there was a great calm" (Matt 8:26); "they ceased, and there was a calm" (Luke 8:24). This interaction between Jesus and the wind/sea/waves serves to demonstrate that Jesus has power over the wind/sea/waves. Such power is comparable to Yahweh's ability to rebuke and still the sea in the various biblical passages mentioned above, which emphasize that such authority is Yahweh's sole prerogative.

In many Hebrew Bible passages, Yahweh rebukes various foes; most relevant here are Job 26:11, Ps 18:16 (LXX 17:16), and Ps 104:7 (LXX 103:7),

in which Yahweh's rebuke (*epitimēseōs*) makes the waters flee (LXX Ps 103:7), exposes the channels of the sea (LXX Ps 17:16), and astounds the heavens (Job 26:11). In three psalms Yahweh exerts his authority over the sea by stilling the waves/sea (Pss 65:8; 89:10; and 107:29). The gospel accounts draw on notions of Yahweh commanding the sea to portray Jesus as having divine authority. This purpose is made explicit in the disciples' response to the wind/sea calming: "And they were very terrified and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" (Mark 4:41); "They marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'" (Matt 8:27); "They were terrified and marveled, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'" (Luke 8:25). The disciples' rhetorical question suggests that it is a superhuman ability to successfully command the wind/sea/water, and this suggestion corresponds completely with the notion in the Hebrew Bible that this authority belongs to the divine. The gospel stories employ this concept in service of promoting Jesus as superhuman figure who wields divine power.

Commentators generally note a connection between these gospel stories and the relevant Hebrew Bible passages, but they do not fully explore the nuances of the claims made about Jesus. Richard T. France describes Matthew's story as showing "Jesus' control over the natural world." He cites biblical passages showing the "theme of God's control over the wind and waves," and accurately sums the function of the Matthean passage, which "reinforces the message that Jesus can do what normal human beings cannot do," specifically, "he wields the Creator's power."⁴ Craig S. Keener, also commenting on Matthew, concludes that the gospel accounts of Jesus calming the sea are distinct from Judean and Greco-Roman parallels in that they either center on characters who lived long ago or when featuring contemporary figures, attribute the ability to calm the sea to a deity directly.⁵ This conclusion is consistent with my argument that the gospel accounts claim that Jesus possesses divine authority over the sea himself. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, commenting on Luke, recognizes this, though his wording seems hesitant:

Jesus [is] being depicted in a manner not unlike Yahweh of the OT. Commentators have often thought that lurking behind this early Christian presentation of him was Yahweh's mastery over the seas and waters in such passages as Pss 18:16; 29:3-4; 65:7; 89:9;

104:6–7; 106:9; and especially 107:23–32. If this is true, then this miracle also has a symbolic value for the role of Jesus' power in human lives. As Yahweh established order over chaos and rescued his people from watery disasters, so now Jesus is presented as having a similar role in their destiny.⁶

While Fitzmyer accurately identifies the relevant Hebrew Bible passages, his brief comment about the implications for the status of Jesus is overly cautious. Furthermore, he shades into speculation about “symbolic” meanings of the account, as many commentators seem to do. Such abstract readings do not appear to be grounded in the text but rather reflect impressionistic notions of the “meaning” of gospel stories. Christopher S. Mann's older commentary on Mark 4:35–41 illustrates this tendency. He states:

Attempts to find parallels to the narrative, biblical and otherwise, are not convincing. . . . The narrative makes two assertions, one about Jesus and the other about faith. According to the first, the story declares the sovereignty of Jesus over the manifestation of Satan as epitomized in the chaos of a storm (and also at another level over the sea as signifying the place of darkness and death). Secondly, the narrative is a demand for faith—not faith in Jesus as a wonderworker, but faith in God as the creator and sustainer of nature.⁷

Mann ignores the relevant Hebrew Bible passages. While he describes the assertion about Jesus accurately with regard to sovereignty, there is no Satan in this passage; this is pure projection.⁸ His parenthetical comment about the sea “as signifying the place of darkness and death” is an impressionistic interpretation, which further ignores biblical notions of the relationship between Yahweh and the sea. Finally, he describes a second assertion of the passage as pertaining to “faith in God,” yet *Theos* is not mentioned in the passage at all. Rather, the text focuses solely on the status of Jesus.

Adela Y. Collins, in her more recent commentary to Mark, places the story of Jesus calming the sea in a broad literary context including the *Odyssey*, various psalms, the story of Jonah, stories of deities being roused from slumber, and stories of sailors in distress calling out for various gods' help. She notes the Hebrew Bible references to “God's power over the sea,” though she does not use these references to argue for her interpretation of

the gospel story. Rather, she focuses on comparison of Jesus with Jonah, concluding:

The narrative thus portrays Jesus behaving not like a devout human person but like God, who caused the sea to cease from its raging in the Jonah story. Thus, Jesus is portrayed not so much as a human being who has trust in God's power to save, but as a divine being. The amazement of the disciples is intelligible in light of the cultural context and parallel texts: they have God manifest in the boat with them!⁹

While my analysis of Mark 4:35–41 and the parallels in Matthew and Luke is more narrowly focused than A. Y. Collins's broad literary analysis, our conclusions about the function of the gospel stories' claim about the status of Jesus are similar. We both identify authority over the sea, within the relevant literary traditions, as a power that belongs to *Theos*. She considers the notion of Jesus wielding this authority to constitute the claim that Jesus is "God manifest," or that the power of *Theos* is manifest through Jesus. Whereas I contend that these stories portray Jesus possessing authority over the sea himself. They assert that he is incomparable among human figures and portray him as a superhuman figure with (some level of or some particular) divine power.

The notion that Jesus possesses authority over the sea stands in tension with the Hebrew biblical notion that this authority is a prerogative of Yahweh. There are several ways to account for this tension. The central question is: what are the implications of Jesus's authority over the sea? The possibilities include, among others: (1) Jesus is incomparable among humans, just as Yahweh is incomparable among divine figures. That is, there is a parallel posited between Jesus the human and Yahweh the deity. (2) *Theos* endorses Jesus by sharing his authority over the sea with Jesus, just as Yahweh endorsed David by stating that he would place David's hand over the sea/rivers (Ps 89:26). This would be consistent with the gospel notion, emphasized especially in Mark, that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah. David is never portrayed as actually wielding power over the sea, however, so the portrayal of Jesus actualizing this authority would be innovative. (3) Jesus is comparable to Yahweh; he possesses an authority that belongs to Yahweh and is therefore on par with Yahweh. Of course, we can only speculate about what the gospel authors intended or exactly what they thought the notion of authority over the sea implied. However, within the

context of the gospels, the first two options seem reasonable because they are consistent with and/or complementary to other characterizations of Jesus and his relationship to *Theos*. From a broader comparative perspective, if we read these passages as independent stories, apart from how they are incorporated into the gospels, I speculate that the implications of Jesus wielding authority over the sea could be greater. In their current context within the gospels, however, the notion that Jesus is on par with Yahweh does not fit.

The gospel accounts of Jesus walking on water accomplish the same purpose: to show that Jesus has superhuman abilities, again involving water. Mark 6:45–52, Matt 14:22–33, and John 6:16–21 each relate an episode of Jesus walking on water. Walking on water is not a typical human ability. The disciples in the boat think he is a ghost (*phantasma* in Mark 6:49 and Matt 14:26), and they are terrified (Mark 6:50; Matt 14:26; John 6:19). Matthew includes the detail that Peter is unable to walk on the water because he is afraid of the strong wind (Matt 14:28–30). Each account specifies that the water was particularly rough at the time: “the wind was opposing” them (Mark 6:48; Matt 14:24), “tormenting them” (Mark 6:48); the boat was “tormented by waves” (Matt 14:24); and “the lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing” (John 6:18). The wind “ceased” when Jesus entered the boat (Mark 6:51a; Matt 14:32). The Greek *ekopasen* (ceased) in Mark 6:51a and Matt 14:32 is the same form as that in Mark 4:39, when Jesus commands the sea. Like the episode when Jesus is portrayed calming the sea, this episode portrays Jesus having superhuman ability to walk on the water and to withstand rough wind and waters. This narrative conclusion is explicit in Matt 14:33: after the wind calms, the disciples conclude that Jesus is the “Son of *Theos*” (Matt 14:33), attributing to him a special relationship to the divine, possibly some level of divinity. Use of the title “Son of *Theos*” for Jesus, here and elsewhere, draws upon but extends Davidic royal adoption traditions (based on 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; and Ps 89:27). The term was used in Greek literature and royal ideology to indicate both divine endorsement and sometimes divinity or partial divinity.¹⁰ Otherwise, among the six accounts of Jesus commanding or walking on the water, there is no mention of *Theos*; these stories focus on promoting Jesus exclusively.

The book of Job twice references Yahweh walking on water, in the context of various acts of creation and examples of Yahweh’s purported incomparable might and knowledge. Job 9:8b describes Yahweh as “he

who treads on the back/waves of the sea,” and the Septuagint describes him as the one “who walks on the sea *as if on firm ground* (*hōs ep’ edaphous*).” In Job 38:16, Yahweh asks, “Have you entered the sources of the sea, or walked in the range (LXX, “track”) of the deep?” Though the Hebrew text uses two different verbs for treading and walking in Job 9:8 and 38:16, the Septuagint uses forms of one verb *peripateō*, which is the verb used in the gospel accounts of Jesus walking on the water.¹¹ In addition to these two verses, Ps 77:20 (LXX 76:20) may be relevant: “Your way was in the sea, your path in the great waters, yet your footsteps were not known.” The following verse, 21, indicates that the psalm is referring to the exodus story because it mentions Moses and Aaron. As discussed above, this psalm exhibits the combined motifs of exodus and combat with the sea. Job 9:8, Job 38:16, and Ps 77:20 each reference Yahweh walking in the sea, and the Septuagint version of Job 9:8 specifies that Yahweh walks on the sea as if on firm ground. The notion of Yahweh walking in/on the sea is thematically related to his authority over the sea in these biblical passages. The gospel episodes of Jesus walking on the water assume that this is a superhuman ability, and it is possible that they build upon the biblical notion of Yahweh walking in/on the sea/waters.¹²

Biblical passages that describe Yahweh’s authority over the sea associate this authority with the claim that Yahweh is incomparable among divine beings. Yahweh’s authority over the sea, according to the ideology of the texts, demonstrates that there is no one like Yahweh. In light of this, the portrayal of Jesus as having authority over the sea/waves constitutes a significant claim within the gospels: not only is Jesus incomparable among humans, he is a superhuman figure who wields divine authority.¹³

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

The significance and efficacy the motif of Yahweh commanding the sea and walking on the sea becomes more apparent when we analyze how 2 Maccabees uses this motif to attack the legitimacy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Though 2 Maccabees predates the gospels, it is more fruitful to discuss how the motif is used therein after discussing the gospel use. The legitimating function of the motif in the gospels and the delegitimizing function of the motif in 2 Maccabees play upon the same notions of Yahweh’s authority over sea. Second Maccabees inverts the legitimating

function in order to criticize Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This inversion and the delegitimizing function become more apparent when contrasted with the gospels examples.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is portrayed wielding illegitimate power when he is accused of imagining that he possesses authority over the sea:

So Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the temple, quickly to Antioch, thinking in his arrogance that he could sail on the land and walk on the sea, because his mind was elated.

(2 Macc 5:21)

Thus he who only a little while before had thought in his superhuman pretentiousness that he could command the waves of the sea, and had imagined that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, clearly displaying the power of *Theos* to everyone.

(2 Macc 9:8)

Both passages describe Antiochus having false pretenses about his importance and abilities. He is depicted as acting out of “arrogance” (*huperēphānias*) and “superhuman false pretension” (*huper anthrōpon alazoneian*). He is portrayed as mistakenly thinking that he has particular powers that he does not actually have. The attribution of delusional and arrogant thinking is unflattering. The passage also implies that Antiochus’s actions are illegitimate since they are motivated by his delusional thinking.

The specific powers 2 Maccabees cites are: sailing on land and walking on the sea (2 Macc 5:8) and commanding the sea and weighing the mountains (2 Macc 9:8). In 2 Macc 9:8, his imagined superhuman abilities contrast with his current status in the narrative: he is deceased. The carrying of his dead body in a litter is modified with the phrase: “clearly displaying the power of *Theos* to everyone” (*phaneran tou theou pasin tēn dunamin endeiknumenos*). How is it that Antiochus’s death indicates *Theos*’s powers to everyone (*tou theou pasin tēn dunamin endeiknumenos*)? This narrative claim requires explanation. First, his death makes apparent the gap between his purported self-understanding (he thinks he has superhuman powers) and reality (he does not have these powers). Second, the specific powers Antiochus purportedly thought he had are actually *Theos*’s powers; this is the claim that these passages suggest. The powers described are attributed to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible and to the Judean god, *Theos*,

in the Septuagint. As discussed above, command over the sea/waves/waters is the prerogative of Yahweh, and this power is typically cited as a marker of his incomparable status and universal authority. Thus, the commentary on Antiochus's status and powers in 2 Macc 5:21 and 9:8, using notions of commanding the sea and walking on the sea, is not random. Rather, the author utilizes the motif of authority over the sea to attack Antiochus's legitimacy by portraying him as falsely imagining that he possesses such power. The same applies to the notion of weighing the mountains, which in Isa 40:12 is an ability of Yahweh alone: "Who has . . . weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" The accusation that Antiochus thought he could weigh the mountains is equivalent to saying that he thought he had divine powers, specifically divine powers associated with the Judean god, which show the Judean god to be incomparable and to have universal dominion. The depiction of Antiochus aims to demonstrate that he did not in fact have these powers and that his claim to these powers was delusional. In this manner, the text attacks the legitimacy of Antiochus's royal dominion.

These two passages from 2 Maccabees exhibit an inversion of the legitimizing ideology of the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the conflict motif was also employed to attack the legitimacy of disfavored divine and human characters. While the motifs are put to similar use, 2 Maccabees attacks the authority and legitimacy of Antiochus in a distinct way. Typically, disfavored divine beings, such as Satan, are portrayed as exercising illegitimate power when they are depicted with characteristics of previously known defeated divine enemies, such as the dragon associated with the sea. Human enemies are typically delegitimized through comparison with defeated divine enemies. For example, in Ezek 29:3 and 32:2, the Egyptian Pharaoh is characterized as a dragon, and in Jer 51:34, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is described as a dragon (discussed in Chapter 3). According to the ideology developed in biblical examples of the conflict motif, if these figures are comparable to the dragon, then Yahweh can and will defeat them just as he has defeated the dragon. Unlike these other foreign royal figures, Antiochus IV Epiphanes is not identified with a defeated enemy. Rather he is portrayed claiming to have powers that belong to Yahweh, powers that are often presented in association with his victory over enemies, including the dragon and the sea.

This creative innovation accomplishes the goal of delegitimizing Antiochus's political dominion and serves to characterize him

as maintaining grandiose delusions. He thus appears as a foil for Yahweh/*Theos*. Such critique is especially fitting for the narrative context of 2 Maccabees, which focuses on Antiochus's social, political, and cultic attacks on Jerusalem, Judeans, and the temple.¹⁴ Within this context it would seem appropriate for a Judean author to reassert the dominion and incomparability of the Judean god after the Jerusalem cult had been disrupted as well as to attack the authority of the political agent blamed for this disruption.

Gamaliel

A final example that contributes to our understanding of the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea is the following story about Gamaliel:

Also, when R. Gamaliel was coming by boat, a crushing wind rose against it, [it was about] to drown him. He thought: It appears to me that this is only because of R. Eliezar b. Hyrcanus. He stood up and said: "Ruler of the Universe, it is apparent and known before you that it was not for my honor that I did this and not for the honor of my father's house, but for your honor, so that dissensions should not increase in Israel." The sea settled from its storm.

(*b. Baba Meši'a* 59b)

This story provides an excellent contrast to the gospel stories about Jesus calming the sea as well as use of the motif in 2 Maccabees, with regard to what sort of claim each tradition makes about the human character involved, while all three traditions are focused on issues of legitimacy.

The narrative setting of this brief story about Gamaliel in the boat is a longer narrative about Eliezar b. Hyrcanus.¹⁵ According to the story in *b. Baba Meši'a* 59a–59b, Eliezar disagreed with the majority opinion on various halakot. He successfully performed several miracles in order to prove the validity of his opinions, including calling down the heavenly voice, which affirmed Eliezar's stance. However, R. Joshua argued that "It is not in heaven," (*lō' baššāmayim hī'*) which is interpreted by R. Jeremiah as referring to the Torah. R. Jeremiah concludes that matters of halakah cannot be decided by the heavenly voice, because the Torah is no longer in heaven, and therefore, matters of halakah are to be decided by the majority. The story continues that Eliezar was excommunicated for dissenting

from the majority. Following this, there was great calamity: a third of various crops failed, and everything Eliezar looked at burned up. At this point in the narrative, the story of Gamaliel in the boat occurs.¹⁶

Gamaliel reasons that the dangerous and threatening storm was caused by Yahweh on account of Eliezar being excommunicated. In his reasoning, he reflects the assumption and claim that Yahweh controls the sea. This claim is best represented by Isa 51:15 and Jer 31:34, which describe Yahweh as the one “who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar”; Ps 65:8, which describes Yahweh as the one “who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves”; and Ps 107:29, which states that “he made the storm a calm, so that its waves were still.” I propose that the statement attributed to Gamaliel in this narrative, and thus the tradition contained in *b. Baba Meši’a* 59b, preserves the claim that Yahweh controls the sea and, moreover, utilizes this trope to tease out the aftermath of Eliezar’s excommunication, including Yahweh’s response and Gamaliel’s apology.

According to Gamaliel’s reasoning, Yahweh responds to Eliezar’s expulsion by causing the life-threatening storm. Gamaliel then defends Eliezar’s excommunication by saying that it was done for Yahweh’s honor (*kābôd*), not for his own or his ancestry’s honor. Then the sea calms. The implication is that Yahweh is satisfied with Gamaliel’s apology and thereafter calms the sea. The narrative maintains the notion that Yahweh controls (makes rise and makes calm) the sea.¹⁷ Gamaliel’s apology about the honor of Yahweh increases Gamaliel’s positive characterization, by portraying him as disinterested in his own authority and personal honor. However, in sharp contrast with the gospel stories about Jesus, which serve to bolster Jesus’s authority by attributing to him power over the sea, this passage maintains those powers for Yahweh and bolsters Gamaliel by having him deflect honor to Yahweh. Likewise, in contrast with 2 Macc 9:8, Gamaliel does not claim or attempt to exercise power, but ascribes all honor and authority to Yahweh. This furthers the positive characterization of Gamaliel, but through the qualities of deference and disinterestedness. I speculate that this story may be engaged in the same sort of ideological dialectic possibly reflected in rabbinic combat traditions. In both cases, we have literary traditions that incorporate biblical themes to promote Jesus/*Christos* as a royal and divine figure, while rabbinic passages utilize the same biblical themes to assert that the “Holy One” is distinct in his abilities and authority over divine enemies.

Conclusion

The tropes of calming the sea (as preserved in Matt 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25; 2 Macc 9:8; and *b. Baba Meši'a* 59b) and of walking on the sea (as preserved in Matt 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21; and 2 Macc 5:21) are used to make particular claims about the authority and legitimacy of Jesus, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and Gamaliel, respectively. The notions of calming the sea and walking on the sea are both variations of controlling the sea. To control the sea is a superhuman ability according to these texts as well as the biblical notions from which they draw. Passages from the Hebrew Bible attribute this ability to Yahweh, offering it as demonstration of his incomparability. Second Maccabees, the gospels, and *b. Baba Meši'a* each use the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea to characterize the authority and legitimacy of a certain individual. The gospel stories claim that Jesus can command the sea in order to portray him as having superhuman powers; 2 Macc 5:21 and 9:8 attack the legitimacy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes by accusing him of imagining that he can command the sea; and *b. Baba Meši'a* 59b both increases the positive characterization of Gamaliel by having him defer honor to Yahweh and insists that the ability to command the sea belongs to Yahweh. These traditions differ in their portrayals of the respective individual's authority, while sharing a concern for legitimacy that is articulated specifically through this motif. It is noteworthy that these texts use a motif that relates to the dominion of Yahweh in order to comment on the legitimacy of individuals despite the loss of political autonomy within Judea. In the cases of Jesus and Antiochus IV Epiphanes, royal ideology is particularly relevant, and perhaps the lack of political autonomy within Judea increased the interpretive value of motifs pertaining to Yahweh's dominion.

VI

Conclusion

Leave “Chaos” Out of It

Throughout this study I avoid the term “chaos” as well as *Chaoskampf*, except when directly quoting others. “Chaos” is not an accurate characterization of the various enemies featured across articulations of the ancient West Asian conflict topos. This point has been well argued by scholars specializing in the Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hebrew traditions, as noted below. There has been a tendency to lump together Tiamat, Yammu, Môtu, and Lōtanu/Leviathan as “agents of chaos” or “chaos embodied.” When scholars use “chaos” terminology to describe these figures, what they often mean is “cosmic evil” (some use the terms “cosmic evil” or “evil” explicitly), which is also a misleading notion within these traditions. The enemies defeated by the victorious warrior deities across ancient West Asian conflict traditions are not agents of “chaos” but rather agents of an alternative divine power structure.

The idea that these defeated enemies are agents of “chaos” stems from two factors. First, in line with the ideology furthered in the relevant stories, the alternative power structures represented by the divine enemy run counter to a preferred “legitimate” order. Thus, characterizing these figures negatively (as “cosmic evil” or “chaos” understood negatively) reflects the delegitimizing ideology of the texts. Second, there is slippage between “chaos” as “a state of disorder,” “chaos” as “primordial matter,” and the Greek deity “Chaos,” none of which are accurately described as “cosmic evil.”

Beginning with Hermann Gunkel, whose early studies of the ancient West Asian conflict topos focused on comparison between Mesopotamian and biblical traditions, the term *Chaoskampf* incorporates both “chaos”

as “primordial matter” and the notion of primordial divine enemies, patterned after Tiamat, who is “primordial matter,” a divine enemy, and a rival for authority among the gods. Tiamat, as well as her army and Qingu, represent an alternative divine order that is portrayed as illegitimate and threatening through various devices, mainly defeat in combat but also features such as her armies’ composite or hybrid forms. While some would consider composite form itself to be indicative of “chaos,” the biblical cherubim are an excellent counter example because their composite form is typically interpreted positively.

Moreover, the means by which the agents of alternative divine hierarchies wield power lie within the realm of accepted institutions. For example, when Tiamat possesses power she makes Qingu king and gives him the Tablet of Destinies. She institutes a divine hierarchy that the other gods fear and do not accept. However, this hierarchy still employs the same devices that the gods used before and use again once they have restored an order that they prefer: kingship and the Tablet of Destinies. Tiamat has been vindicated of the label “chaos” by scholars specializing in Mesopotamian traditions as well as biblical scholars. Karen Sonik shows that notions of “chaos” from Greek and Roman traditions do not fit the plot or conceptual world of *Enuma Elish*. She explains that the only understanding of “chaos” that might accurately describe Tiamat’s role is “kratogenic chaos,” which is an essential feature of Mesopotamian cosmic order, rather than something opposite of *cosmos*.¹ Dina Katz resists the characterization of Tiamat as chaos, explaining that descriptions and imagery of Tiamat imply that she was a closed body of water, understood as “a lake of amniotic water at the dawn of time.”² Similarly, Susan Niditch suggests “mother-chaos” to reflect Tiamat’s generative role, which is positive and vital, as well as the non-differentiation of elements at the beginning of *Enuma Elish*. Moreover, Niditch makes the important point that even when Tiamat is raging and threatening to destroy the gods she has birthed, she is angry for good reasons.³

We have literary, philological, conceptual, and methodological reasons to maintain, and even emphasize, the distinctions between Ugaritic Yammu and Akkadian Tiamat. Yammu has been vindicated of the label “chaos” by scholars specializing in the Ugaritic traditions, though usually with the aim of distancing Yammu from Tiamat as a representative of (negatively understood) “chaos.”⁴ The Ugaritic *Ba’lu Cycle* confirms that defeated enemies, here Yammu, Môtu, and the sons of ’Aṭiratu, are not “cosmic evil” and certainly not primordial matter. They are agents of alternative divine orders and, like Tiamat and Qingu, wield power using

accepted ancient West Asian institutions: kingship, the suzerain-vassal political structure, and the status of “beloved.” Moreover, the alternative divine power arrangement that is ultimately rejected in the *Ba’lu Cycle* is initially endorsed by the head, father, creator deity ’Ilu. What could be further from “cosmic evil” or “utter disorder”? Even if we highlight dangerous aspects of the physical sea and human fear of death that were possibly associated with Yammu and Môtû, there is still no basis for describing them as “agents of chaos” or “cosmic evil.”

Leviathan, *Yām* (Sea), and the sea in biblical traditions have more complex histories of interpretation than Tiamat and Yammu. Many scholars argue that these biblical figures are not representatives of “chaos,” deemphasizing similarities with Ugaritic Yammu and/or Tiamat, arguing that Leviathan and the sea never pose an actual threat to Yahweh.⁵ Alternatively, scholars who are more interested in theological or cathartic (psychological or existential) interpretations of Leviathan and the sea tend to describe these figures as agents of “chaos” (understood negatively) or “cosmic evil.”⁶ While it is evident that these figures have been interpreted as such in some later traditions, this development is best studied as part of the history of interpretation of the relevant biblical passages.⁷ In other words, “cosmic evil” and “chaos” (understood negatively) should not be used as objective descriptions of these figures. The Hebrew Bible contains passages in which Yahweh’s victories are associated with acts of creation as well as examples that do not incorporate the creation theme.⁸ Thus, even the neutral use of “chaos” as “primordial matter” is not fitting for Leviathan, *Yām* (Sea), or the sea. JoAnn Scurlock suggests that Leviathan would be comparable to the *mušḫušu* dragon rather than Tiamat in *Enuma Elish*.⁹

The rhetorical question in Job 40:28 (41:4 in English translations) indicates that Yahweh made a covenant with Leviathan and took him as his perpetual servant. One “cuts a covenant” with a social or political partner who may be considered superior, equal, or inferior to oneself. The text characterizes the relationship between Yahweh and Leviathan as a covenant relationship, with Yahweh as the superior partner. This only makes sense if Leviathan, the inferior partner, can participate in a structured relationship with the superior authority figure. It would not be accurate, but rather misleading, to project notions of “cosmic evil” or “chaos” as “utter disorder” here. When people imagine an entity that is “embodied chaos” or “cosmic evil,” such an entity would not operate within a covenant (or otherwise structured) relationship nor utilize normative devices for delegating authority. Biblical passages that assert Yahweh’s dominion over the

sea and/or rehearse his defeat of Leviathan or Rahab invoke these figures in order to bolster claims about the authority of the authors' favored deity.

Issues of legitimate(d) and delegitimate(d) power are at the heart of the conflict topos. Every example bears a legitimating/delegitimizing ideology, functioning to validate a particular divine and/or socio-political hierarchy. If we characterize Tiamat, Yammu, Môtû, Leviathan, or the sea as "chaos," we overlook the alternative divine hierarchy each story works so hard to reject; we adopt the interested stance of the text, reproducing its negative portrayal of these characters; and we apply anachronistic notions when interpreting these ancient West Asian stories, whether Greek *cháos* or modern "chaos" as "cosmic evil" or "utter disorder."

The Conflict Topos: Distinctions and Comparisons

The theme of combat among deities is prominent in ancient West Asian literature: a warrior deity defeats an enemy, most often the sea or sea-based superhuman figures, and attains kingship. The victory of the divine warrior is used to justify his dominion, that is, the divine warrior attains power that is proven via narrative to be legitimate through his success in combat. Within narratives and epitomes of the warrior deity's rise to power, the implications of victory for the god's authority (victory indicates legitimate and rightfully attained power) are asserted and naturalized. Any god portrayed in the role of the victorious warrior deity is thus shown to possess legitimate power—this is the primary ideological work accomplished through the conflict topos. Extant whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos promote the deities Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, and Ba'lu, respectively, and the conflict motif was employed to promote Adad of Aleppo, Yahweh, secondary divine figures such as the Elect One, and a divinized Jesus/*Christos*. Authors claim that these deities have legitimate divine authority by referencing or elaborating their victory over foes, prowess in battle, and/or superiority over the sea or sea-based figures.

The authority of the victorious warrior deities is described as kingship, a human political institution. Combat myths, as well as instances of the conflict motif that focus on the royal status of the victorious warrior, naturalize divine kingship by presenting it as the given form of legitimate power among the gods. Thus, examples of the conflict topos represent culture as if it were nature, both with regard to which deity rises to power and with regard to the form of his power: kingship.

In turn, from the perspectives privileged in the texts, potential rival authority figures present a challenge to the divine hierarchy. Authors reject alternative divine power structures by portraying them as illegitimate, misplaced, unsustainable, or wrongly attained. The victorious warrior deity rises to power among the existing divine hierarchy when he defeats the rival, who is rendered illegitimate through his defeat (Ugaritic Yammu being the possible exception). In this manner, the delegitimizing ideology of the conflict topos is evident in the negative characterizations of Anzu, Tiamat, Yammu, Mōtu, Lōtanu, as well as *Yām* (Sea) and the sea in various biblical texts, Leviathan, Rahab, along with various biblical composite beasts, and finally, Satan.

All extant whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos and every instance of the conflict motif involve a statement about the divine authority of the victorious warrior deity. I describe this as primary application of the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos. Secondary application of the legitimating ideology, then, describes instances in which authors assert that the warrior deity's victory has import for humans. The warrior deity's victory is referenced in order to promote the human institutions of kingship and temple, particular locations, select groups, and particular individuals. Likewise, specific polities and individuals are discredited when they are compared to or identified with the divine warrior's defeated enemies.

The following specific temple sites are promoted: *Anzu* asserts that Ninurta's cult will enter Ekur, Enlil's temple in Nippur. By claiming that the deity will be present at this particular cult location, the narrative underscores a relationship between Nippur and Ninurta. Aššurnasirpal II's monumental art at Kalḫu, depicting Ninurta in battle against a composite figure (possibly Anzu), links Ninurta's temple to his prowess in battle. I speculate that this association with Ninurta's victories would have served to promote the temple, as well as Aššurnasirpal II's new capital city. In the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*, the cities Babylon and Aššur, respectively, become locations of frequent divine activity. The temples of Marduk and Aššur within these cities are promoted through claims that their establishment was a divine decree, part of a series of cosmological events, and a monument to the warrior deity's newly won dominion. Sennacherib's inscription, describing the scene of battle between Aššur and Tiamat that was depicted on the doors of Aššur's *akītu* house, indicates that festival activity in Aššur was linked to the god's victory. In the Hebrew Bible, Ps 78:65–69 states that Yahweh established his temple

after defeating his enemies and suggests that the temple is a monument to Yahweh's choice of Judah and Jerusalem. The building narrative for Solomon's temple to Yahweh also fits the ancient West Asian pattern of the victorious temple builder, and the "molten sea" in the temple courtyard may have symbolized Yahweh's dominion over the sea. Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem was not only a monument to his divine authority but also to Solomon's political authority. The palace-temple complex, and possibly also inscriptions on the pillars "Jachin" and "Boaz" on the temple porch, would have served visually to reinforce the link between Yahweh's dominion and the king's authority, which is asserted explicitly in Ps 2:6–9; Ps 18; Ps 21; Ps 72; Ps 78; Ps 89:2–38; Ps 110; Ps 132:11–18; Deut 17:14–15; and 2 Sam 7:8–9. In sum, narratives, inscriptions, and monumental art suggest that combat traditions were employed to bolster the significance and status of particular temples and cities by visually or rhetorically linking them to the victories of particular warrior deities. More generally, the institution of temple—like kingship—is presented as requisite: Marduk, Aššur, Ba'lu, and Yahweh all receive temples after they defeat their enemies. The prescription and construction of the gods' temples in the divine realm validates the human institution of temple building.

We have widespread evidence for use of combat traditions within royal ideology. This is consistent with the naturalization of the institution of kingship in the divine realm, and constitutes secondary application of the conflict motif. The victories of Ninurta, Marduk, Aššur, Adad of Aleppo, and Yahweh are referenced to promote the office of the king and specific kings. Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions indicate that kings were described with epithets and characteristics of Ninurta (*RIM* A.o.101.41; A.o.101.40; A.o.102.14; A.o.104.1; A.o.77.4; A.o.102.5; A.o.101.1). The identification of the king with the deity in combat appears to be a Neo-Assyrian innovation. More common are constructions in which the victorious deity endorses the human king. The deity's dominion, won through combat, is asserted along with the claim that the deity endorses the political authority of the king. Just as the divine king attained his own throne through combat, he will secure the earthly king's throne by defending him against enemies and/or enabling him to defeat enemies. Within Neo-Assyrian royal ideology, scribes blend Ninurta, Marduk, and Aššur-centered combat traditions in a manner that elevates Aššur above Ninurta and Marduk as well as the older generation of deities, and they portray Aššur as the "king of the gods" who endorses the human king. Royal inscriptions describing Sennacherib's monumental art promote his kingship through references

to Aššur's defeat of Tiamat and attainment of the Tablet of Destinies (K 1356 and K 6177 + 8869). The account of Sennacherib's battle of Halule employs vocabulary from the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* that suggests parallels between Sennacherib and Aššur while negatively characterizing the king and inhabitants of Babylon (Chic. Pr. V). Most significant is the claim that Sennacherib possesses Aššur's bow. The king's possession of the god's weapon suggests that Aššur endorses Sennacherib and implies that the king will be victorious. Hymns asserting a relationship between the deity Aššur and Aššurbanipal state that Aššur granted sovereignty to the king directly (SAA 3, 1; SAA 3, 11), and that Aššurbanipal possesses Ninurta's weapons (SAA 3, 11). Aššurbanipal's acrostic hymn to Marduk (SAA 3, 2) demonstrates that the rhetorical priority of royal ideology was promoting the king, regardless of which warrior deity is invoked. In Mari Letter A. 1968, Nur-Sîn of Aleppo claims that Adad of Aleppo has given his weapons to Zimri-Lim of Mari. Furthermore, he asserts that the military success and secure dominion of Zimri-Lim, as well as that of past rulers of Mari, is contingent upon Adad's favor. In this case, as well as in the Neo-Assyrian parallels, it is fitting that the physical symbol of the god's endorsement of the king is the weapon with which he defeated Sea, because the warrior deity attains kingship through victory in combat. Psalm 89:2–38 and Ps 78 employ the conflict motif to promote David and the Davidic dynasty. In Ps 78, the culmination of Yahweh's acts as divine warrior is his choice of David as ruler. In Ps 89:2–38, the conflict motif is employed to assert Yahweh's endorsement of David and his dynasty. After reviewing Yahweh's authority over the sea/waves and his defeat of Rahab and enemies, the psalm states that Yahweh will defeat David's enemies, acting as the divine warrior on David's behalf. Moreover, Yahweh will place David's hand over the sea/rivers, indicating that Yahweh endorses David's rule. This is comparable to the Neo-Assyrian and Mari texts in which the warrior deity gives his weapon(s) to the king. The god's weapons are not only relevant to the context of the king's battle, they have greater significance because they are the weapons the deity used to defeat enemies (for Aššur and Adad, the sea-god in particular) while securing his own divine kingship. Likewise, Yahweh's authority over the sea/waves is associated with his defeat of superhuman figures and with his divine royal dominion. The notion that Yahweh will place David's hand over the sea/rivers constitutes a meaningful endorsement specifically because it references a divine prerogative (authority over the sea) that is bound up in Yahweh's divine kingship and defeat of enemies.

More generally, we have several examples in which the office of the king is promoted through the conflict motif. Neo-Assyrian explanatory texts propose parallels between the king's actions in various rituals and the combat and rise to power of Ninurta and Marduk, while objects manipulated in ritual are compared to Ninurta and Marduk's defeated enemies (SAA 3, 37; SAA 3, 39; SAA 3, 40). Seleucid period copies of ritual texts pertaining to the Babylonian New Year festival indicate that the king was identified with Marduk in various ritual actions that rehearsed Marduk's enthronement and defeat of Tiamat (*RAcc.*, 127–154). Select proverbial statements about royal authority within the Elephantine text *Ahiqar* compare the king's commands to a weapon that breaks the dragon's ribs, which may suggest that the king himself was imagined to have faced superhuman enemies. Extant Ugaritic materials do not attest to political use of the *Ba'lu Cycle* within royal ideology, however, we may speculate that the scribe's association with the king suggests that the narrative was at least agreeable to the king. Considering the widespread use of combat traditions within ancient West Asian royal ideology, it is plausible that the text furthered the interests of the king, even if those interests included critique of political norms.¹⁰

Focusing on the biblical anthology, Yahweh's past victories against superhuman figures (Sea/sea, dragon(s), Rahab, and Leviathan) exhibit six possible rhetorical functions: (1) to assert Yahweh's dominion; (2) to claim that his dominion is universal; (3) to endorse royal authority; (4) to promote select groups of people; (5) to portray human enemies as destined for defeat; (6) and to invoke Yahweh to intervene against contemporary enemies. Victory and dominion are causally related; the warrior deity attains, secures, and defends his throne through victory. Divine kingship and acts of creation are thematically related within biblical traditions; the political idea of kingship is used to assert Yahweh's authority, and acts of creation are cited in order to characterize his dominion as universal. The interweaving of the conflict motif and themes of creation within biblical traditions, as well as Yahweh's status relative to other divine beings, is most comparable to Neo-Assyrian traditions in which Aššur supersedes the older generation of gods and takes on their roles in creation, becoming the creator and father of the other gods (SAA 12, 86, 7; SAA 3, 34, 54). In addition to combining the conflict motif with themes of creation, we also see that biblical authors interweave the conflict motif and the exodus motif. The exodus story served as a paradigm for Yahweh intervening on behalf of "Israel" (however conceived in various texts). The interweaving of the conflict and exodus motifs involves a shift in the temporal location

for Yahweh's combat, establishing the narrative possibility that Yahweh, as divine warrior, will intervene within human time. Based on this notion, biblical authors adapted the conflict motif in order to make statements about their current socio-political contexts. Current enemies, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, Pharaoh, and Egypt, are portrayed as destined for defeat when authors compare them to or identify them with Yahweh's past defeated enemies (Isa 30:7; Ps 87:4; Ezek 29:2–6; Ezek 32:2–16; Jer 51:34–37; and Hab 3). Authors recall Yahweh's past victories in order to provoke him to act on behalf of the people in the present (Isa 51:9–15; Ps 89; and Ps 74). Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions also suggest comparisons between the king's enemies and the warrior god's defeated enemies. However, the invoking of the deity's past victories as a summons for the deity to act in the present appears to be a biblical innovation.

Within biblical apocalyptic traditions, we see a further shift in the temporal location of Yahweh's combat. Beyond reconfiguring divine combat as a present or immediate event, Isa 27:1 and Dan 7 both exhibit recasting of Yahweh's combat as a future, eschatological event. Many authors who employ the conflict motif within eschatological speculation quote and/or interpret Isa 27:1 specifically, and several authors incorporate imagery that appears to have been adapted from Dan 7. Daniel 7 exhibits an additional feature that was highly significant within subsequent conflict motif traditions: the endorsement of a secondary divine figure. The notion that the primary deity endorses a secondary divine figure is patterned after Davidic royal ideology. In general and with respect to the adaptation of combat traditions, Davidic royal ideology is consistent with other royal ideologies within the ancient West Asian milieu. However, after the demise of the Davidic dynasty and Judah's autonomous rule, the spatial and temporal location of Yahweh's chosen ruler for Judah became ambiguous. Within eschatological speculation, authors adapt rhetoric that had served to promote present human kings as they characterize a heavenly figure who would receive royal dominion in the future.

Apocalyptic traditions that describe an eschatological overhaul of the present world order exhibit many thematic ties with stories that narrate the establishment of divine and world order (*Anzu*, *Enuma Elish*, and the *Ba'lu Cycle*) and with biblical passages that refer to Yahweh founding cosmic and geophysical order. Within eschatological speculation, authors often reinterpret themes of creation, both physical creation and the structuring of divine order. The narratives of *Anzu*, the Babylonian and Assyrian versions of *Enuma Elish*, and the *Ba'lu Cycle* focus on a particular

god attaining kingship. The rise of a new deity to power constitutes a new divine hierarchy and a new world order. In these texts, the new divine king secures his authority through combat with enemies who represent alternative divine power structures. Likewise, in apocalyptic eschatology, the divine warrior ushers in a new world order by defeating enemies who represent alternative (divine and/or earthly) power structures. Speaking very generally, apocalyptic texts display an inversion of the sort of political ideology characteristic of ancient West Asian combat traditions. Rather than endorsing the claims of a ruling authority, pertaining to a divine hierarchy or to an earthly political structure, apocalyptic texts generally criticize current political authorities. It is noteworthy that apocalyptic literature flourished across the ancient Mediterranean world after the conquests of Alexander the Great, when polities in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Judea lost political autonomy.¹¹

Four features that are distinct to biblical combat traditions are especially prominent in subsequent literary traditions in which biblical exegesis is generative: (1) the combination of themes of creation and combat in order to portray Yahweh's dominion as universal; (2) the rendering of divine combat as an eschatological event; (3) the notion that Yahweh can intervene in the present/future on behalf of the people; (4) and the development of royal ideology for promoting a secondary divine figure. There is also continuity in primary application of the legitimating ideology of the conflict motif. Authors continue to use the theme of combat as they promote favored deities (Yahweh and Jesus/*Christos*) and negatively characterize disfavored divine figures (Satan, the dragon, beasts, and the Lawless One). Likewise, disfavored polities (Rome and "earthly powers") are accused of wielding illegitimate power and portrayed as destined for defeat in the eschaton. Authors adapt the conflict motif in creative ways, responding to changing social and political circumstances.

Many texts produced within the Judean milieu of the first and early second centuries CE (2 *Baruch*, 1 *Enoch*, 4 *Ezra*, Revelation, 1 Cor 15, 2 Thess 2, *Odes of Solomon*, and *Testament of Asher*) exhibit an eschatological rendering of the conflict motif. While drawing on traditional images and motifs, the authors of these texts engaged in innovative mythmaking. They employed the conflict motif to promote various secondary divine figures (such as the Elect One, Messiah, Son of Man, my son, and *Christos*) by characterizing them as future divine warriors endorsed by a primary deity. Several of these texts also assert that divine figures act on behalf of particular groups (such as "Israel," the "inhabitants of Zion," and "the

redeemed”) who will be vindicated when the divine warrior punishes their oppressors in the eschaton. Rabbinic combat traditions preserved in *b. Baba Batra* and *Midrash Alpha Bethoth* also exhibit an eschatological rendering of the conflict motif, the combination of themes of creation and combat, as well as citation of Isa 27:1, and elaborate characterization of Leviathan and Behemoth. *B. Baba Batra* and *Midrash Tanhuma* narrate a conflict in which the “Holy One” slays the Prince of the Sea as he apportions the waters during creation. However, these rabbinic passages emphasize the “Holy One’s” sole role as divine warrior—even other divine figures cannot defeat the superhuman enemy Leviathan. I propose that we may identify an ideological dialectic at work behind these differing portrayals of Yahweh/*Theos*’s relationship to secondary divine figures. Rabbinic combat traditions might be responding to the types of claims made about secondary divine figures (i.e., Yahweh/*Theos* explicitly endorses them) that are furthered in first- and early second-century CE Judean texts (including those concerned with Jesus/*Christos*) and propagated in late antique *Christos*-centered ideology.

The producers of ancient West Asian royal ideology promoted kings through a variety of claims about their relationship to the divine, such as divine parentage, divine adoption, possession of divine qualities, being the “image” (*šalmu*) of the deity, divination, anointing, intercession, having gods’ possessions, and “sacred marriage.” For example, in Ps 89:2–38, five complementary elements assert Yahweh’s endorsement of David: covenant language, the act of anointing, exalting David’s “horn,” the conflict motif, and divine sonship. Ancient West Asian kings were portrayed as having special proximity to the divine, through a distinct relationship with, quality of, mode of access to, or identification with deities. In the same way that royal scribes promoted kings through a variety of distinct but complementary strategies, the authors of texts concerned with the figure of Jesus/*Christos* characterized him positively through a variety of distinct claims about his relationship to the divine. While such claims may occur simultaneously, the implied proximity of Jesus/*Christos* to the divine and the nature of his relationship to *Theos* in particular ranges from special human to divine co-regent (Rev 22:1). He is characterized as a teacher and *prophētēs*, that is, a human with special knowledge or access to divine messages. Authors adapted Davidic royal ideology, presenting Jesus/*Christos* as a royal figure endorsed by Yahweh, though Jesus had no actual political authority. Likewise, he was assigned divine sonship, in a manner similar to ancient West Asian and Greco-Roman royal figures. Through stories

portraying Jesus as a miracle-worker, authors characterized Jesus as having some divine power. Narratives that incorporate miracle-working, divine sonship, royal ideology, and/or access to special knowledge suggest a special relationship between Jesus/*Christos* and Yahweh/*Theos*. However, there are also bolder claims about the status of Jesus/*Christos*. The stories of Jesus commanding and walking on the sea draw upon the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea to depict Jesus as a superhuman figure who possesses divine authority. In order to elucidate the significance of the motif of Yahweh's authority over the sea, I compare the gospel stories of Jesus wielding power over the sea with 2 Macc 5:21; 9:8 and *b. Baba Meši'a* 59b. Second Maccabees 5:21 and 9:8 portray Antiochus IV Epiphanes as delusional for imagining that he possesses power over the sea. *B. Baba Meši'a* 59b employs the motif to characterize Gamaliel positively, while implying that authority over the sea is a prerogative of Yahweh. Likewise, in the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh's authority over the sea is bound up in his incomparability and universal dominion. Considering the significance of authority over the sea in 2 Macc 5:21; 9:8, *b. Baba Meši'a* 59b, and throughout the biblical anthology, the notion that Jesus successfully wields power over the sea constitutes a substantial assertion of Jesus's authority. The divinized *Christos* was promoted in a manner similar to secondary divine figures (such as the Elect One, Messiah, or Son of Man) whose authority is contingent upon that of the primary deity. However, Jesus/*Christos* is elevated further than other secondary divine figures. Not only is he portrayed as the divine warrior himself, he also shares other roles, epithets, and even a heavenly throne with Yahweh/*Theos* (*T. Asher* 7:3; *Odes Sol* 22:5; 1 Cor 15:24–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; Rev 22:1, 13). Overall, the relationship of Jesus/*Christos* and *Theos* is most comparable to the final co-regency of Ugaritic Ba'lu and 'Ilu. *Christos* and Ba'lu each attain authority and prominence, but an older deity (*Theos* and 'Ilu, respectively) retains power and status as well.

The texts analyzed in this study exhibit a constellation of divine characters, their relationships and actions, and various narrative details, demonstrating that the conflict topos was known and adapted within literature from Mari, Aleppo, Ugarit, Babylon, Assyria, Judah, and Elephantine; in the first- and early second-century CE Judean milieu (including traditions focused on Jesus/*Christos*); and in select rabbinic texts. The process of comparison allows us to appreciate how each articulation of the conflict topos is distinct. After analyzing shared features and distinct adaptations, we may attempt to reconstruct how legitimating and delegitimizing ideology may have operated within each context and literary tradition.

Throughout my comparative analysis, I develop the notion that myth encodes in narrative form taxonomy, the hierarchy of characters or roles. A mythic topos exhibits a taxonomy that is adaptable, yet consistent enough to be recognizable. In the case of the conflict topos, the taxonomy of primary characters, the relationship between the combating deities within each narrative, is consistent and serves to elevate the victorious deity as well as to manage any rivals by portraying them as defeated and, therefore, as losing power. Within whole narrative articulations of the conflict topos, there is a remarkable display of variation in the taxonomy of secondary characters (including the relationship between the victor and existing divine hierarchy, the relationship between defeated rivals and existing divine hierarchy, and the relationships among all the other deities within the pantheon). This variation indicates that there was a range of ways that change among hegemonic power structures could be conceived—whether it be divine power structures, as in these narratives, or human power structures. Regarding secondary application of the legitimating ideology of the conflict topos, those endorsed by or identified with the victorious deity are validated, while those compared to or identified with the defeated deity are portrayed as having illegitimate power and/or as being destined for defeat. In sum, the notion of myth as taxonomy in narrative form facilitates comparison and aids in the identification of continuity and innovation.

Considering the various applications of the conflict topos, the notion of myth as ideology production is apt throughout this study. Russell T. McCutcheon's statement, "myths present *one particular* and therefore contestable viewpoint as if it were an agreement,"¹² is well illustrated by the variety of particular divine hierarchies promoted among extant combat traditions. My analysis of the conflict topos corroborates Bruce Lincoln's general summation: "the [mythic] narrative packages a specific, contingent system of discrimination in a particularly attractive and memorable form. What is more, it naturalizes and legitimates it."¹³ The theme of combat was adapted within a variety of cultural and historical contexts, indicating that authors utilized the conflict topos as a dynamic rhetorical tool and that they found it to be (or rather, they made it) effective for a variety of legitimating and delegitimizing purposes. Narratives of divine combat and instances of the conflict motif naturalize socially and politically contingent phenomena, such as the institutions of kingship and temple, specific divine hierarchies, and the authority of particular individuals, by linking them to narrative events that purport to be universal and foundational.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. I have not found any study of the conflict topos that explicitly engages myth theory. Nick Wyatt, in his concluding chapter of *Myths of Power*, traces how biblical scholars have debated the status of the categories *myth* and *history* in the Hebrew Bible, but he does not otherwise engage myth theory (Nick Wyatt, *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996], 373–424). Carola Kloos, in a study focused on Ps 29 and the Song of the Sea, discusses myth theorization by Geoffrey Kirk and Walter Burkert and offers a refreshing view of ancient West Semitic mythology (Carola Kloos, “Mythicizing and Historicizing,” *Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* [Leiden: Brill, 1986], 158–190).
2. See Robert A. Oden’s discussion in Oden, “Interpreting Biblical Myths,” in *The Bible Without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 40–91.
3. Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1843), xvi; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (trans. James Steven Stallybrass; 3 vols.; London: George Bell & Sons, 1982–1983), 3: xvii.
4. He continues, “Explanation: no story, no superhuman being(s), no myth. The salience of ‘oral transmission’ places certain genres, such as novels and science fiction, out of bounds as myths.” His definition of myth coincides with his accompanying definitions of ritual and religion. He defines ritual as the ways that a community communicates with superhuman agents and religion as a set of propositional attitudes toward superhuman agents (Hans H. Penner, “You Don’t Read a Myth for Information,” in *Radical Interpretation in Religion* [ed. Nancy K. Frankenberry; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 153–170, 169).

5. Scholars of Greek and Roman literature have long recognized the aesthetic function of myth, among other types of narrative, as entertainment, see Geoffrey S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 253–254; Richard Caldwell, *The Origin of the Gods: A Psychoanalytic Study of Greek Theogonic Myth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11–14; Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 166–167; Bremmer, “mythology,” *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed.; ed. Simon Hornblower, Anthony Spawforth, and Esther Eidenow; New York: Oxford, 2005).
6. See discussion of existential and psychological functions of the conflict topos in the following: Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); Timothy K. Beal, *Religion and Its Monsters* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Gregory Mobley, *The Return of the Chaos Monsters—And Other Backstories of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 1–33.
7. The data available to us consists primarily of literary texts. In my view, we have good methodology with which to analyze explanatory and ideological functions of literature, whether it be myth or otherwise. While scholars of classical and ancient West Asian literature have commented on the entertainment value of ancient texts, we are not able to fully recover the plausible group settings in which ancient stories were developed, transmitted, and enjoyed. Biblical scholars have less frequently recognized the plausible entertainment value of ancient Israelite and Judean stories, preferring to focus on theological aspects and cathartic value. I am not convinced that we have adequate methodology for analyzing existential or psychological cathartic value of ancient literary topoi, unless the context is a genre with explicit emotive vocabulary such as lament, petition, and praise. I would not deny that ancient storytelling accomplished catharsis. However, due to the ongoing and complex history of interpretation of biblical traditions, the risk of retrojecting anachronous existential or psychological notions must be recognized.
8. The following myths feature some type of fertility deity and chthonic deity whose interactions have been interpreted as explaining seasonal vegetation patterns: Egyptian traditions about Isis and Osiris; Mesopotamian stories about Dumuzi/Tammuz; the Ugaritic *Ba’lu Cycle*; and Greek stories about Demeter, Persephone, and Hades. In each of these traditions a deity associated with vegetation or fertility dies or descends to a netherworld, and as a consequence crops suffer but then recover upon the return of the deity from the netherworld to life. An interesting myth for comparison is the Hittite myth of Telepinu, a vegetation deity who disappears, causing crops to suffer until he returns. The Hittite myth offers a similar explanation for seasonal phenomena, that is, the absence of an essential deity, but the specific reasons for the absence differ.

9. My understanding of “ideology” is informed by Terry Eagleton’s discussion of the range of meanings that “ideology” connotes, and I am sensitive to the problems he raises regarding most scholarly, and certainly popular, uses of the term (Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* [New York: Verso, 1991]). As Raymond Williams illustrates, most definitions have a negative valence, which may be traced back to Napoleon’s use of *idéologie*, as well as Marx and Engels’ influential use of the term (Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], 153–157). Émile Durkheim criticized the resulting notion that *others* have ideology but *we* do not and shifted the discussion of ideology to focus on power and domination (Émile Durkheim, *Les règles de la méthode sociologique* [Paris: University of France Press, 1907], 61).
10. John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 4, 63, 130–131, 134, 194, 198, 199, 230.
11. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 10.
12. Bruce Lincoln may have the strongest articulation of the propagandistic use of myth, to the point that some mythmakers are portrayed as having very ill intentions. This is a result of his focus on the misuse of myth as a category in the early modern study of myth. However, it should not detract from his development of myth as “ideology in narrative form.”
13. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 147; Lincoln quotes from Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (trans. Karen Fields; New York: Free Press, 1995), 149.
14. Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in *“To See Ourselves as Others See Us”: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 3–48.
15. J. Z. Smith, “Fences and Neighbors: Some Contours of Early Judaism,” *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jamestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–18, 2.
16. J. Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), xii.
17. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 147.
18. J. Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory*, 307.
19. Russell T. McCutcheon, “Myth,” in *Guide to the Study of Religion* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; New York: Cassell, 2000), 190–208, 204.
20. *Ibid.*, 199–200.
21. *Ibid.*, 204.
22. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 150.
23. *Ibid.*, 147.
24. Michael Satlow, “Disappearing Categories: Using Categories in the Study of Religion,” *MTSR* 17.4 (2005): 287–298, 292.
25. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 150.

26. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Handkommentar zum Alten Testament 1 Abt. 1 Bd.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), VII–VIII.
27. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), 112, 51, 114, 120; *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton* (trans. K. William Whitney Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 77, 33, 76, 82.
28. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 120.
29. *Ibid.*, 170.
30. Steven Lundström, “Chaos and Creation: Hermann Gunkel between Establishing the ‘History of Religions School’, Acknowledging Assyriology, and Defending the Faith,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaaskampf Hypothesis* (ed. Joann Scurlock and Richard H. Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 147–171.
31. John Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* (New York: de Gruyter, 1974), 57–65; Oden, “Interpreting Biblical Myths,” 46–47.
32. Oden, “Interpreting Biblical Myths,” 47–48, 176 nn.5, 6. Oden cites as examples: Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 35–37; Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development* (New York: Association, 1961), 57–59; Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 87; George E. Wright, *God Who Acts* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952), 38–48; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1962–1965), 87.
33. Oden, “Interpreting Biblical Myths,” 40.
34. My discussion is focused on the issue of myth in scholarship on the Hebrew Bible. For the analogous methodological issue in the study of the New Testament and early Christian origins, see Burton Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003); Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament: The Making of the Christian Myth* (New York: Harper One, 1996); Ron Cameron, “Mythmaking and Intertextuality in Early Christianity,” in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Hal Taussig; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 37–50.
35. Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1962), 95.
36. *Ibid.*, 31, 72.
37. Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 90. Hereafter, this title will be abbreviated *CMHE*.
38. Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 172.
39. Oden, “Myth and Mythology,” *ABD* 4: 946–960; Wyatt, “The Mythic Mind,” *SJOT* 15 (2001): 3–56; Wyatt, “The Mythic Mind Revisited: Myth and History, or Myth versus History, a Continuing Problem in Biblical Studies,” *SJOT* 22 (2008): 161–175; Jimmy J. M. Roberts, “Myth versus History: Relaying the

- Comparative Foundations," *CBQ* 38 (1986): 1–13; Simon B. Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
40. Dexter E. Callender, ed., *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014). The following contributions discuss the issue most fully: Rogerson, "‘Myth’ in the Old Testament," 15–26; Callender, "Myth and Scripture: Dissonance and Convergence," 27–50; M. S. Smith, "Is Genesis 1 a Creation Myth? Yes and No," 71–102; Hugh R. Page Jr., "Myth as Social Realia in Ancient Israel: Early Hebrew Poems as Folkloric Assemblage," 119–128; Amy C. Merrill Willis, "Myth and History in Daniel 8: The Apocalyptic Negotiation of Power," 149–175; Steven J. Kraftchick, "Recast, Reclaim, Reject: Myth and Validity," 179–200; James E. Miller, "Ancient Greek Demythologizing," 213–228; Robert A. Segal, "The Life of King Saul as Myth," 245–274; Segal, "Replies," 291–296; David L. Miller, "The Indispensability of Theories of Myth for Biblical Studies: A Response to Robert Segal," 285–289.
 41. Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 214.
 42. Cross, *CMHE*, viii.
 43. *Ibid.*, ix.
 44. Oden, "Interpreting Biblical Myths," 56; Oden cites Joseph Fontenrose, *The Ritual Theory of Myth* (Berkeley: University of California, 1966), 54–55.
 45. Oden, "Interpreting Biblical Myths," 57.
 46. *Ibid.*, 58.
 47. There is much literature aiming to theorize the relationship between myth and ritual. Generally, following M. S. Smith, it is not always clear that a text is *either* "myth" or "ritual," myths may refer to and describe rituals, and likewise ritual texts may refer to myths (M. S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, and Domination* [Atlanta: SBL, 2006], 3–8).
 48. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 117–118.
 49. For additional discussion of issues pertaining to the categories epic, legend, and oral tradition, see Simon B. Parker, "Some Methodological Principles in Ugaritic Philology," *Maarav* 2/1:7–41; Susan Niditch, "Epic and History Hebrew Bible: Definitions, 'Ethnic Genres', and the Challenges of Cultural Identity," in *Epic and History* (Kurt A. Raaflaub and David Konstan, ed.; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2014), 86–102; Dan Ben-Amos, "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres," in *Folklore Genres* (ed., Dan Ben-Amos; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 215–242; Dean Miller, "Comments on 'Epic and History'," in *Epic and History*, 411–424; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

50. Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*, 188–189.
51. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 22–23.
52. Dexter Callender, “Mythology and Biblical Interpretation,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2 (ed. Steven L. McKenzie; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 26–35, 34.
53. Nicholas J. Richardson, “Greek Myth and Ritual: Review of *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* by Walter Burkert,” *The Classical Review* n.s. 31.1 (1981): 63–64; Kirk, *Myth*, 28–34, 254–257; Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat*, 163–167; Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 1–27; William G. Doty, “Mythophiles’ Dyscrasia: A Comprehensive Definition of Myth,” *JAAR* 48.4 (1980): 531–562; Rogerson, “Slippery Words: Myth,” in *Sacred Narrative. Readings in the Theory of Myth* (ed. Alan Dundes; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 62–71; Oden, “Myth and Mythology,” *ABD* 4: 946–960.
54. For the notion of motifs as compressed forms with potential for expansion, see Michael Koortbojian, *Myth, Meaning, and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 69.
55. Cross, *CMHE*, 149.
56. Mark S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 83.
57. Wendy Doniger, “Minimyths and Maximyths and Political Points of View,” in *Myth and Method* (ed. Laurie L. Patton and Wendy Doniger; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 109–127.
58. John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), iii.
59. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Motif,” n.3.
60. Cross, *CMHE*, 149.
61. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958), 233; Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke G. Schoepf; New York: Basic Books, 1963), 211; Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 90.
62. Doniger, “Minimyths and Maximyths,” 116.
63. *Ibid.*, 117.
64. *Ibid.*, 118.
65. Day, *God’s Conflict*, iii; Day, “Echoes of Baal’s Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI,” *VT* 29.2 (1979): 143–151, 143, 151.
66. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Echo,” n.5.
67. Day, *God’s Conflict*, 1.
68. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
69. William W. Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture* (New York: Brill, 1997).

70. For discussion of the confessional background of the field of biblical studies, see *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (ed. Judith M Lieu and John W. Rogerson; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially parts I, VI, and VII. For analysis of the enduring influence of this background, see John J. Collins, "Faith, Scholarship, and the Society of Biblical Literature," in *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards* (ed. Frank Richtel Ames and Charles William Miller; Atlanta: SBL, 2010), 65–82; M. S. Smith, "Recent Study of Israelite Religion in Light of the Ugaritic Texts," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (ed. K. Lawson Younger; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 1–26; Hector Avalos, *The End of Biblical Studies* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007); and Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).
71. See the discussions of Lester Grabbe, "'Canaanite': Some Methodological Observations in Relation to Biblical Study," in *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible, Manchester, September 1992* (ed. George J. Brooke, Adrian Curtis, and John F. Healey; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1994), 113–122; Delbert R. Hillers, "Analyzing the Abominable: Our Understanding of Canaanite Religion," *JQR* 75 (1985): 253–269; and M. S. Smith, "Ugaritic Studies and Israelite Religion: A Retrospective View," *NEA* 65.1 (2002): 17–29.
72. Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), xi.
73. Leila L. Bronner, *The Stories of Elijah and Elisha as Polemics against Baal Worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 2.
74. Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (2nd ed.; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), 83–84.
75. Cross, *CMHE*, vii–viii.
76. *Ibid.*, 83 and n.10.
77. M. S. Smith, "Recent Study of Israelite Religion in Light of the Ugaritic Texts," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (ed. K. Lawson Younger; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 1–26, see critique of examples on p. 6.
78. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (4th ed.; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 81, see also 36, 188, 484–485.
79. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1967), 26.
80. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 7.
81. Peter Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel: An Essay," in *Ah, Assyria: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al; Jerusalem: Magness Press, 1991), 192–212; Robert P. Gordon, "'Comparativism'

- and the God of Israel," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 180–196; see also Day's own discussions of Asherah and bull symbolism, for example (Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 34, 36, 42, 48, 49).
82. We may distinguish between "biblical Israel," "ancient Israel," and the historical Israel. "Biblical Israel" is the ideal that texts of the Hebrew Bible portray, whereas the historical Israel is the more diverse social world in which the Hebrew Bible was produced. "Ancient Israel" is what we reconstruct based on the available material evidence that survived historical Israel along with the literary evidence in the Hebrew Bible, as well as archeological and literary evidence from neighboring areas. See discussion in Philip R. Davies, *In Search of "Ancient Israel"* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).
83. Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archeology of Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–36; see also discussions in Joseph A. Callaway, "The Settlement in Canaan: The Period of the Judges," in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple* (ed. Hershel Shanks; rev. and exp. ed.; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 55–90; Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael D. Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 123–175; John Bright, "Exodus and Conquest: The Formation of the People Israel," *A History of Israel* (4th ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 107–143; Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel, 1300–1100 B.C.E.* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005); Peter Machinist, "Outsiders or Insiders: The Biblical View of Emergent Israel and Its Contexts," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History* (ed. Robert L. Cohn and Laurence J. Silberstein; New York: New York University Press, 1994), 35–69.
84. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1923); Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think* (New York: Knopf, 1925).
85. Oden, "Interpreting Biblical Myths," 70–73; Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 78–99.
86. Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*, 85–100.
87. Cross, *CMHE*, viii; 87, 90, 105, 106, 135, 143.
88. Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).
89. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 117.
90. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 389–390 and n. 30; Henri Frankfort, Henriette A. Frankfort, John A. Wilson, Thorkild Jacobsen, and William A. Irwin, *The Intellectual Adventure of the Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos*, 32.
91. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 61, 121.

92. Étan Levine, *Heaven and Earth, Law and Love: Studies in Biblical Thought* (New York: de Gruyter, 2000), 39.
93. Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," *MTSR* 8.3 (1996): 225–227.
94. Various Others and Self/Other discourse are discussed in Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., "*To See Ourselves as Others See Us*": *Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); Saul M. Olyan, "Generating 'Self' and 'Other': The Polarity Israelite/Alien," *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 63–102.

CHAPTER 2

1. The Akkadian text of *Enuma Elish* (*EE*) is available in Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Corpus Project, 2005). All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. *EE* is extant only from Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian copies. Fragments of the text were found at a variety of sites (many were found in Aššur and Sultantepe, other locations include Nineveh, Kalḫu, Sippar, and Uruk), and they reflect a conservative scribal tradition in that they exhibit a lack of major textual variation (Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [rev. ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 228–229; Talon, *Enūma Eliš*, xiii–xviii).
2. *Anzu* is preserved in two versions: an Old Babylonian version containing tablets II and III, found at Sippar, and a Standard Babylonian version containing most of tablets I and II and parts of tablet III, which is reconstructed from various Middle and Late Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian manuscripts from Aššur, Nineveh, Sultantepe, Tarbiṣu, Sippar, and Borsippa (Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [3rd ed.; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2005], 556; Amar Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu* [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001], xxxv–xxxviii). The Assyrian version of *EE* is only found in Late Assyrian fragments, dating ca. 700–612 BCE, from Aššur and Nineveh (Wilfred G. Lambert, "The Assyrian Recension of Enūma Eliš," *CRRAI* 39 [1992]: 77–79, 77).
3. Our extant portions of the *Ba'lu Cycle* (*BC*) consist of six tablets and various fragments that were found over the course of three years (1930–1933) in Ugarit, which was rediscovered in 1928 and excavated beginning in 1929 (Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle Volume I, Introduction with Text, Translation, and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.1–1.2* [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 1–2; hereafter, *UBC* 1).
4. We see the same sequence of a god fighting an enemy and attaining kingship in the story of Tišpak battling Labbu. Unfortunately, our discussion of the text is limited due to its fragmentary nature, but the text clearly associates the act of defeating the foe, a dragon, with attaining kingship (CT 13.33–34, ll. 17–22).

- However, as Frans A. M. Wiggerman has argued, the kingship in question involves authority over the land Tišpak is saving, not over the gods (Frans A. M. Wiggerman, "Tišpak, His Seal, and the Dragon *mušhuššu*," in *To the Euphrates and Beyond: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Maurits N. van Loon* [ed. Odette M. C. Haex, Hans H. Carvers, and Peter M. M. G. Akkermans; Brookfield, VT: Balkema, 1989], 119). For comparison of this text with *Anzu* and *EE*, see Lambert, "Ninurta Mythology in the Babylonian Creation Epic," *Keilschriftliche Literaturen: Ausgewählte Vorträge der XXXII. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Münster, 8–12 Juli 1985* (Berlin: D. Weimer, 1986), 55–60; for discussion of the lion-dragon imagery of this text, see Theodore J. Lewis, "CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 28–47.
5. For fuller discussion of this methodological issue within studies of the conflict topos, see Aaron Tugendhaft, "Babel-Bible-Baal," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaoskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 190–198.
 6. The Mesopotamian concept of *šimtu*, usually translated "destiny" or "fate," is better understood as all that is fixed and determined by decree. For discussion, see Francesca Rochberg, "Fate and Divination in Mesopotamia," *AfO Beiheft* 19 (1982): 363–371; Jack N. Lawson, *The Concept of Fate in Ancient Mesopotamia of the First Millennium: Toward an Understanding of Šimtu* (OBC 7; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994).
 7. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 556; Dalley, *Myths*, 203; Annus, *Epic of Anzu*, xxxv–xxxviii.
 8. The Sumerian texts are available in Jan A. A. van Dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-GÁL: Le récit épique et didactique des Travaux de Ninurta, du Déluge et de la Nouvelle Creation Vol 1* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 51–88; and Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1978), 30–175.
 9. A multi-headed serpent appears as a defeated enemy of Ninurta, Ba'lu, 'Anatu, and Yahweh, as discussed in Chapter 3, as well as an enemy whom the angel Michael defeats, as discussed in Chapter 4. For summary of what Wolfgang Heimpel calls the "dragon slayer motif" in Mesopotamian traditions, see W. Heimpel, "Mythologie," *RIA*, 537–564, 561 fig.9. For Mesopotamian depictions of warrior deities battling serpent or dragon figures, see Anthony Green, "Mythologie. B. I.," *RIA*, 572–586, 575–576 and figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18.
 10. The Sumerian original is available in J. A. A. van Dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-GÁL*, 68–69; translation of the Sumerian is from Jeremy Black, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 167.
 11. The following plot summary and quotations of *Anzu* are from the more complete Standard Babylonian version. The Akkadian text is available in Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu*, 1–40.
 12. Dalley also compares the opening lines of *Anzu* with those of *Erra and Ishum*, and she and Foster discuss similarities between the characters Ninurta and

- Nergal, who is credited with defeating Anzu and Assaku in *Erra and Ishum* (Dalley, *Myths*, 204; Foster, *Before the Muses*, 579).
13. Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 138, 142–143.
 14. Irene J. Winter, “After the Battle is Over: The *Stele of the Vultures* and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” *On Art in the Ancient Near East, Volume 2: From the Third Millennium BCE* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3–52, 6–10.
 15. Gudea, Cylinders A and B; *ETCSL* 2.1.7; original text available in Dietz O. Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 68–101; Black, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 44–52.
 16. For any iconographic evidence considered, there are methodological issues of interpretation, audience, “visual literacy,” and polysemy that we must keep in mind. For discussion see Karen Sonik, “Pictorial Mythology and Narrative in the Ancient Near East,” in *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art* (ed. Marian Feldman and Brian Brown. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) 265–293.
 17. Andrew R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 116–117; E. Ebeling, “Ekur,” *RLA* II, 323.
 18. Dalley, *Myths*, 227 n.6.
 19. Dalley *Myths*, 203; Stefan Zawadzki, “Who was the Supreme God of Calah after 800 B.C.?,” *Folia Orientalia* 24 (1987): 23–28; Austen H. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh: From Drawings Made on the Spot* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004) ii, plate 5; Anthony Green, “Myths in Mesopotamian Art,” in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations* (ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller; Groningen: STYX Publications, 1997), 142, 156, fig. 17.
 20. Julian E. Reade, “Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art,” in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Morgan T. Larsen. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), 329–344; Reade, “Religious Ritual in Assyrian Sculpture,” in *Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2005), 7–61; Mehmet-Ali Ataç, *The Mythology of Kingship in Neo-Assyrian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
 21. Annus, *Anzu*, xxi; Stefan M. Maul, “Der assyrische König—Hüter der Weltordnung,” in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Kazuko Watanabe; Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1999), 201–214.
 22. Texts available in Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods Volume 1 (Toronto: University Press, 1986), 308; 311 (hereafter, *RIMA*); see also Annus, *Anzu*, xxi; Maul, “Der assyrische König,” 212.
 23. Grayson, *RIMA* 3 (1996), 64, 202; Annus, *Anzu*, xxi–xxii; Maul, “Der assyrische König,” 210.

24. Grayson, *RIMA* 1, 192.
25. Grayson, *RIMA* 3, 30; Annus, *Anzu*, xxi.
26. Grayson, *RIMA* 2, 191; Annus, *Anzu*, xxii.
27. Dalley, *Myths*, 228–231; Dalley, “Statues of Marduk and the Date of Enūma Eliš,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 24 (1997): 163–171.
28. Walter Sommerfeld, *Der Aufstieg Marduks* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 174–181.
29. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 436. For regnal dates, see John A. Brinkman’s chronological appendix in Adolf Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed.; ed. Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 335–346.
30. Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, “Enuma Elish as a Systematic Creed: An Essay,” *OLP* 23 (1992): 37–61, 48; Lambert, “Studies in Marduk,” *BSOAS* 47 (1984), 4–6; Lambert, “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion,” in *The Seed of Wisdom* (ed. William S. McCullough; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 3–13; Piotr Michalowski, “Presence at Creation,” in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, Piotr Steinkeller; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 381–396; Andrea Seri, “The Fifty Names of Marduk in Enūma eliš,” *JAOS* 126 (2006): 507–519; Dina Katz, “Reconstructing Babylon: Recycling Mythological Traditions Towards a New Theology,” in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident* (ed. Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess, Joachim Marzahn. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 123–134.
31. Vanstiphout characterizes *EE* as “a theological didactic poem about Marduk as the Supreme Being and his World Order” (Vanstiphout, “Enuma Elish as a Systematic Creed,” 52).
32. For discussion of Esagil as the center of the cosmos, see Andrew R. George, “The Bricks of E-sagil,” *Iraq* 57 (1995): 173–197.
33. Lambert, “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I,” 3–13; Foster, *Before the Muses*, 291–297, 376–377.
34. For discussion, see Karen Sonik, “The Tablet of Destinies and the Transmission of Power in Enūma eliš,” in *Organization, Representation, and Symbols of Power in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Gernot Wilhelm; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 387–395.
35. For discussion of the cosmographic features in this passage, see Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 107–125.
36. The names given to Marduk seem to reflect folk-etymology, with punning and word play being generative principles. For discussion see, David Danzig, “Name Word Play and Marduk’s Fifty Names in *Enūma Eliš*” (M.A. Thesis; Yale University, 2013).

37. For discussion of the shift from “Nippur theology” to Babylon-centered theology, see Dina Katz, “Reconstructing Babylon: Recycling Mythological Traditions Towards a New Theology,” in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident* (ed. Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess, Joachim Marzahn; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 123–134, esp. 133–134.
38. Martha Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 76.
39. Lambert, “Mesopotamian Creation Stories,” in *Imagining Creation* (ed. Markham J. Geller and Mineke Schipper; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 15–37, 26–29.
40. *Ibid.*, 35–36.
41. Lambert, “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I,” 4.
42. Karen Sonik, “Bad King, False King, True King: Apsù and His Heirs,” *JAOS* 128.4 (2008): 737–743.
43. Lambert, “Ninurta Mythology,” 56; see also Vanstiphout, “Enuma Elish as a Systematic Creed,” 44–45.
44. Dina Katz, “Reconstructing Babylon: Recycling Mythological Traditions Towards a New Theology,” in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident* (ed. Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess, Joachim Marzahn; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 123–134, esp. 133–134.
45. Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 155–156. For further discussion of the development of the relationship between Nabû and Marduk, see Barbara Nevling Porter, “What the Assyrians Thought the Babylonians Thought about the Relative Status of Nabû and Marduk in the Late Assyrian Period,” in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 253–260.
46. Porter, “What the Assyrians Thought the Babylonians Thought,” 253; Black, “The New Year Ceremonies in Ancient Babylon: ‘Taking Bēl by the Hand’ and a Cultic Picnic,” *Religion* 11 (1981): 39–59, 42.
47. The Akkadian text is available in Marc J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 215–224; see also 235 note to l.282.
48. See discussion in Benjamin D. Sommer, “The Babylonian Akitu Festival: Rectifying the King or Renewing the Cosmos?,” *JANES* 27 (2000), 81–95.
49. Lambert, “The Great Battle of the Mesopotamian Religious Year, The Conflict in the Akitu House,” *Iraq* 25 (1963), 189–190; see also Andrew R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1992), 268–269.
50. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon*, 82.
51. Julye Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 161–162.

52. Linssen, "Review of Bidmead, J.—*The Akītu Festival*," *BiOr* 61.1–2 (2004): 160–164, 162.
53. The Assyrian version was first discussed by Heinrich Zimmern in H. Zimmern, "Marduks (Ellils, Aššurs) Geburt im babylonischen Weltschöpfungsepos," *MVAG* 21 (1917): 213–225; and shortly thereafter, Daniel D. Luckenbill, "The Ashur Version of the Seven Tablets of Creation," *AJSL* 38 (1921): 12–35. See also Peter Machinist, "The Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem: Some Reflections," in *Jahrbuch des Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin* (Berlin: Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, 1984/85), 353–364, 359. On the multivalence of the designation "Aššur" for the deity, city, and territory, see Lambert, "The God Aššur," *Iraq* 45.1 (1983): 82–86.
54. Lambert, "The Assyrian Recension of Enūma Eliš," *CRRAI* 39 (1992): 77–79; 77.
55. Dalley, *Myths*, 228.
56. Lambert, "Assyrian Recension," 77.
57. Lambert, "Assyrian Recension," 78; Hayim Tadmor argues that the custom of writing Aššur's name as AN.ŠĀR did not occur before the reign of Sargon II (Hayim Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," *JCS* 12 [1958]: 22–40, 77–100, 82 n.231).
58. Lambert, "Assyrian Recension," 78.
59. Lambert, "Assyrian Recension," 78; ABL 1336 = S. Parpola, LAS 288 = SAA 10, 365.
60. For discussion of the challenges in interpreting the "Marduk Ordeal" and further bibliography, see Livingstone, *Works*, 208–221; Vanstiphout, "The nth Degree of Writing at Nineveh," *Iraq* 66 (2004): 51–54; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Tribulations of Marduk and the So-Called Marduk Ordeal Text," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 131–141; Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 151.
61. Livingstone, *Works*, 226.
62. Machinist, "The Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem," 359.
63. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 817–819; Livingstone, *Court Poetry*, xvii; Tadmor, "The Campaigns," 82.
64. SAA 12, 86 is also discussed in Machinist, "Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem," 356; 363 n.12.
65. For discussion of this text and the topic of cult statues being born, see Victor A. Hurowitz, "The Mesopotamian God Issue: From Womb to Womb," *JAOS* 123 (2003): 147–157; Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 284–285; Christopher Walker and Michael B. Dick, "The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian *mīš pi* Ritual," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 55–122, 64–66, 116–117; Porter, "Gods' Statues as a Tool of Assyrian Political Policy: Esarhaddon's Return of Marduk to Babylon," in *Religious Transformations and Socio-Political Change: Eastern Europe*

- and *Latin America* (ed. Luther H. Martin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 12; Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics: Figurative Aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian Policy* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993), 124–125, 152; Machinist, “Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem,” 357.
66. Machinist, “Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem,” 359.
67. Lambert, “Assyrian Recension,” 77; Machinist, “Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem,” 356, 363 n.10.
68. Eckart Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität, 1997), 222–224, text 184; Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1924), 139–142: 6-r.1; r.10-l.e.2; Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina šulmi īrub: Die Kulttopographische und Ideologische Programmatik der Akitu-Prozession in Babylonien und Assyrien im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994), 207–209.
69. The text is presented by Andrew R. George, “Sennacherib and the Tablet of Destinies,” *Iraq* 48 (1986): 133–146.
70. Elnathan Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate: Literary Allusions to Enuma Elish in Sennacherib's Account of the Battle of Halule,” in *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten: RAI* 39 (ed. Hartmut Waetzoldt and Harald Hauptmann; Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997), 191–202.
71. Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate,” 193 and notes 13, 14, citing *EE* IV, 116–117 and *Chic. Pr.* V 18–19. The prism text is available in Luckenbill, *Senn.*, 23–47; Frahm, *Sanherib*, 102–105, text 16.
72. Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate,” 193–194 and notes 16, 17, citing *EE* IV, 82 and *Chic. Pr.* V 28–29.
73. This is the weakest of Weissert's five allusions, but it is still based on specific and peculiar shared vocabulary; Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate,” 194 and notes 19–21, citing *EE* II, 113; *EE* III, 65; and *Chic. Pr.* V 66–67.
74. Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate,” 195 and notes 26, 27, citing *EE* IV, 58 and *Chic. Pr.* V 68–69.
75. Weissert prefers “piercer of throats,” where I translate “cuts off life,” but we are reading the same Akkadian here, and this does not affect his argument (Weissert, “Creating a Political Climate,” 194–195 and notes 22–24, citing *EE* IV, 30–31 and *Chic. Pr.* V 71–73 and VI 3).
76. Hayim Tadmor, “Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” in *Assyria* 1995, 325–338. For further discussion see, Frahm, “New Sources for Sennacherib's ‘First Campaign,’” *ISIMU* VI (2003): 129–164, “Appendix C,” 157–160; Mikko Luukko, “The Administrative Roles of the ‘Chief Scribe’ and the ‘Palace Scribe’ in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” *SAAB* 16 (2007): 227–256.
77. Tadmor, “Propaganda,” 326–327.
78. *Ibid.*, 327, 329.
79. *Ibid.*, 328.
80. *Ibid.*, 332.

81. Ibid.
82. Machinist, "Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem," 362, 364 n.34.
83. For discussion of these interpretations and full references, see M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 58–114. See also André Caquot and Maurice Sznycer, *Ugaritic Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1980); Wayne Pitard, "Canaanite Literature," in *From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (ed. Carl S. Ehrlich; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 255–312; John Gibson, "The Mythological Texts," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nick Wyatt; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 193–202; Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y leyendas de Canaan: Según la tradición de Ugarit* (Madrid: Ediciones Cristianidad; Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo, 1981); Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (ed. Theodore J. Lewis. Leiden: Brill, 2002).
84. M. S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle Volume II: Introduction with Text, Translation, and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–1.4* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 8, 728, 730; hereafter, *UBC 2*; *KTU 1.4 VIII* (end); *KTU 1.6 VI 54–58*.
85. Cross, *CMHE*, 112–113, 117 n.18, 127 n.50.
86. William J. Horwitz, "Our Ugaritic Mythological Texts: Copied or Dictated?" *UF* 9 (1977):123–130.
87. M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 33–36.
88. For full discussion of alternative arrangements of the tablets see M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 2–19; for the specific locations where the tablets were found in the house, see M. S. Smith, *UBC 2*, 10 n.4.
89. M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 15–16.
90. The full Ugaritic text of the *Ba'lu Cycle* is available in *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places* (ed. Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquin Sanmartin; *KTU*: 2nd enlarged ed.; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 2–160.
91. There are a variety of ways that the verbs in line 27 may be translated: *yqt* may be read as "he drags," "he ensnares," or "he strikes," and *yšt* may be read as "he dries up," "he sets," "he drinks," or "he separates," on which the translation "he dismembers Yammu" is based. For discussion of these possibilities, see M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 351–356.
92. After Ba'lu hears that he will indeed die, he makes love with a cow seventy-seven or eighty-eight times and produces a son (*KTU 1.5 V 17–25*). While some scholars have considered this event to be highly significant for the plot, I find it too fragmentary and opaque to interpret with any certainty, especially since the son is not mentioned again in the extant text.
93. The etymology of *šhlmmt*, which I translate here as "the field of the underworld," is uncertain. It is a topographical name associated with the dead (Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquin Sanmartín, "*šhlmmt*," *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language* [trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 812).

94. For detailed discussion of the sons of 'Aṭiratu and the sons of 'Ilu, see Sang Youl Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Study of Their Nature and Roles* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007).
95. On the rhetoric of honor and shame in the ancient West Asian milieu, the notion of honor as a commodity, and the relationship of shaming and the diminishing of social status, see Saul M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and its Environment," *JBL* 115 (1996): 201–218.
96. M. S. Smith, "The Structure of Divinity at Ugarit and Israel," *Text, Artifact, and Image* (ed. Gary M. Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), 45.
97. For a detailed discussion of these epithets, see Aicha Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 193–197, 212–218.
98. M. S. Smith, "Structure of Divinity," 55.
99. On mourning and rejoicing as acts that indicate (the creation, maintenance, or disruption of) affiliation, see Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52–56, 90–93, 106–108, 149–152.
100. M. S. Smith, "Structure of Divinity," 46.
101. Béatrice Muller, "Ougarit et la figure divine au Bronze Récent," in *Le Royaume d'Ougarit de la Crète à l'Euphrate* (ed. Jean-Marc Michaud; Sherbrooke, Québec: G.G.C. Editions, 2007), 501–544; Susan J. Sanders, "Baal au Foudre: The Iconography of Baal of Ugarit," in *He Unfurrowed his Brow and Laughed: Essays in Honor of Professor Nicolas Wyatt* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 249–266; Jürg Egger, "Baal," in *Iconography of Deities and Demons in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Christoph Uehlinger and Jürg Egger; Zürich: Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung, 2007); Izak Cornelius, "The Iconography of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 586–602; Margerite Yon, "Stèles de Pierre," *Arts et industries de la pierre* (RSOu 6; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur le Civilisations, 1991), 271–344.
102. *KTU* 1.47; 1.148; 1.118; 1.162; Olmo Lete, "The Offering Lists and the God Lists," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nick Wyatt; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 305–352; Olmo Lete, Gregorio del, *Canaanite Religion according to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1999); Olmo Lete, *Mythologie et Religion des Sémites Occidentaux, Vol. 2: Émar, Ougarit, Israël, Phénicie, Aram, Arabie* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2008).
103. Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (ed. T. J. Lewis; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 206 n.14.
104. Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (ed. K. Lawson Younger Jr.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 41–74, 65.
105. Daniel Schwemer, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, and Recent Studies, Part II," *JANER* 8.1 (2008): 1–44, 10.

106. Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," 47.
107. Tugendhaft, "Babel-Bible-Baal," 190–198, esp. 196–197.
108. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 17, 51–52, 55, 289.
109. Pitard, "The Combat Myth as a Succession Story at Ugarit," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaokampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 199–205.
110. David Schloen, *The House of the Father: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 353–354; Brendon C. Benz, "Yamm as the Personification of Chaos? A Linguistic and Literary Argument for a Case of Mistaken Identity," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaokampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 127–146.
111. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 17–18.
112. Tugendhaft, "How to Become a Brother in the Bronze Age: An Inquiry into the Representation of Politics in Ugaritic Myth," *Fragments* 2 (2012): 89–104, 100 n.8.
113. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 55.
114. Wyatt, "Ilmilku the Theologian: The Ideological Roles of Athtar and Baal in *KTU* 1.1 and 1.6," in *Ex Mesopotamia et Syria Lux: Festschrift für Manfred Dietrich zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 6.11.2000* (ed. Oswald Loretz, Kai Metzler, and Hanspeter Schaudig; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002), 845–856, 852–854.
115. Wyatt "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," 47.
116. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 12–13.
117. Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," 44–45.
118. Tugendhaft, "Babel-Bible-Baal," 196.
119. Tugendhaft, "Unsettling Sovereignty: Poetics and Politics in the Baal Cycle," *JAOS* 132.3 (2012): 367–384, 370.
120. Tugendhaft, "Babel-Bible-Baal," 190–198, 197.
121. Tugendhaft, "Politics and Time in the Baal Cycle," *JANER* 12 (2012): 145–157, 154–155.
122. Tugendhaft, "Unsettling Sovereignty," 368.
123. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 1, 105.
124. Tugendhaft, "Unsettling Sovereignty," 368–369.
125. *Ibid.*, 383.
126. *Ibid.*
127. Karen Sonik has explored gender issues relating to Tiamat's shifting roles throughout *EE* (Karen Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma eliš*," in *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky* [ed. Richard H. Beal, Steven W. Holloway, JoAnn Scurlock. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009], 85–101). My observations about the comparable but distinct positions of Tiamat, Belet-ili, and 'Aṭiratu in their respective conflict traditions indicate that a cross-tradition discussion of gender issues, along the lines of Sonik's treatment of Tiamat, would be productive.

128. For discussion of how Neo-Assyrian kings employed iconography in royal propaganda, see Zainab Bahrani, *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2008); Scott Noegel, “Dismemberment, Creation, and Ritual: Images of Divine Violence in the Ancient Near East,” in *Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence Across Time and Tradition* (ed. James Wellman; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 13–27; and the above cited Reade, “Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art.”
129. Here the term “critical reflection” refers to Tugendhaft’s interpretation of the BC: “critical reflection on the foundational claims of Late Bronze Age political institutions by calling into question the hierarchical principle that justifies them” (Tugendhaft, “Unsettling Sovereignty,” 368–369).
130. This applies to examples discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 as well. When the conflict motif is used to promote a specific individual, Zimri-Lim, King David, or Jesus, for example, this tactic for legitimating the individual occurs alongside other strategies such as claims to divine parentage, divine adoption, intercession, etc.
131. For discussion of various modes of divine legitimation, see Machinist, “Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria,” in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, 152–188; Winter, “Touched by the Gods: Visual Evidence for the Divine Status of Rulers in the Ancient Near East,” in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. Nicole Brisch; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 75–101; William W. Hallo, “Kingship,” *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 188–211.

CHAPTER 3

1. Because there are so many examples of the conflict motif, these texts are organized as two chapters. Chapter 3 includes texts dating from the Middle Bronze age to the late sixth century BCE, and Chapter 4 continues with texts that date from ca. 500 BCE to ca. 1000 CE. Within each chapter, texts are grouped according to how the authors utilize the conflict motif, as well as who is endorsed or delegitimated, while also highlighting features in common with examples discussed elsewhere in this study. Across the chronological and geographical span, we see innovation as well as continuity among our examples. Each example offers a distinct articulation of the conflict topos, with aspects that should not be eclipsed by the evident continuity.
2. For visual representations of multi-headed serpentine or draconic figures, which may or may not be identified with Lōtanu/Leviathan, see Wilfred G. Lambert, “Leviathan in Ancient Art,” in *Shlomo: Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archeology in Honor of Shlomo Moussaieff* (ed. Robert Deutsch; Tel Aviv: Archeological Center, 2003), 147–154; Douglas Frayne, “The

- Fifth Day of Creation in Ancient Syrian and Neo-Hittite Art,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaoskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 63–97.
3. Parallel lines with fixed word pairs have corresponding meanings that may repeat the same idea using different vocabulary or have an accumulative effect (James L. Kugel, “Fixed Pairs and Repetitive Parallelism,” in *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981], 27–39).
 4. The reading of the second verb is uncertain. For various options see Dennis Pardee, “Will the Dragon Ever Be Muzzled?” *UF* 16 (1984): 251–255. Mark Smith reads the verb as *ištm[d]h*, “I destroyed” (*UBC* 2, 198). I follow Jeremy Hutton’s reading of *ištm[d]h* as “I harnessed.” Among the possible reconstructions of this verb, the action of harnessing most suits the context, especially as it occurs in parallel with the action of muzzling (Jeremy Hutton, “Ugaritic */š/and the Roots ŠBM and ŠM[D] in *KTU* 1.3.III.40,” *MARAAV* 13.1 [2006]: 75–83, 80–81).
 5. M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 52–55.
 6. For the *hapax dabb*, see discussion and references in M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 263.
 7. I discuss Isa 27:1 in Chapter 4; in Isa 27:1, the “twisty serpent” is named Leviathan and occurs in parallel with the “dragon in the sea.” Similarly, in Ps 74:13 (discussed below) a multi-headed dragon occurs in parallel with the sea and the next line mentions Leviathan. We also see a multi-headed enemy in several later texts (discussed in Chapter 4): in Rev 12 the angel Michael defeats a seven-headed dragon, and in Rev 13:1–4 this seven-headed dragon gives power to a seven-headed beast that rises from the sea; in the *Odes Sol.* 22:5, *Theos* and *Christos* defeat a seven-headed dragon.
 8. Wayne T. Pitard considers all five lines to refer to one figure, Yammu, such that Lōtanu is a name for Yammu. He explains that the three lines, “Surely I fought Yammu. . . . Surely I finished off Naharu. . . . Surely I bound Tunnanu. . . .” each begin with a verb preceded by the particle *l*, which may suggest that this is a tricolon, followed by a bicolon about the multi-headed serpent (Wayne T. Pitard, “The Binding of Yamm: A New Edition of *KTU* 1.83,” *JNES* 57 no. 4 [1998]: 261–280, 280 n.38; Pitard, “Just How Many Monsters Did Anat Fight [*KTU* 1.3 III 38–47]? in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* [ed. K. Lawson Younger Jr. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 75–88.). M. S. Smith agrees that these five lines refer to one figure, and he considers this description of Yammu as a dragon (*tunnanu*) and multi-headed serpent to be an alternative to the anthropomorphic description of Yammu in *KTU* 1.2 IV (M. S. Smith, *UBC* 2, 53–55; 247–258).
 9. I discuss *KTU* 1.83 below, which is possibly relevant to ‘Anatu’s victories, but it does not resolve the remaining questions about how her victories were understood relative to Ba‘lu’s victories. For discussion of ‘Anatu’s full range of activities, see Neal Walls, *The Goddess Anat Ugaritic Myth* (Atlanta: SBL, 1992).
 10. As discussed in Chapter 2; M. S. Smith, *UBC* 1, 33–36.

11. The most updated presentation of the text is available in Pitard, "The Binding of Yamm: A New Edition of *KTU* 1.83," *JNES* 57 no. 4 (1998): 261–280. The text was found along with a few administrative texts scattered on the floor of Room 73 in the royal palace of Ugarit in 1952. It appeared that the room (possibly an archive) had been cleared out except for the few tablets left on the floor. *KTU* 1.83 was the only literary text among them. About half of the text is missing from the broken tablet. It was originally published as *PRU* II:3, but Pitard has made several corrections to the transliterations offered in *PRU* and *KTU* (Pitard, "The Binding of Yamm," 261–262).
12. That is, the grammatical forms may be, respectively: 3rd person, feminine, singular; 2nd person, masculine, singular; or 3rd person, masculine, plural.
13. Pitard concludes that the verb *ltp* here and below is unknown, having no known cognates. He rejects previous renderings based on grammatical and paleographic grounds, save Samuel E. Loewenstamm's proposal that the verb is a metathesis of *ptl*, "to split," which would fit the context quite well. For discussion of previous renderings and further references, see Pitard, "The Binding of Yamm," 275; Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (AOAT 204; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 357.
14. This line seems to fit Môtû's characteristics: "[One lip to ea]rth, one lip to the heavens, [. . .]ngue to the stars" (*KTU* 1.5 II 2–3). Perhaps we are seeing a blending of the characterizations of Ba'lu's various enemies, but we cannot be certain due to the fragmentary nature of this text.
15. Pitard presents all three possible translations, with the subject as a 3rd person, feminine, singular; 2nd person, masculine, singular; or 3rd person, masculine, plural (Pitard, "Binding of Yamm," 273–274). I include only the first two options since one of these is most likely.
16. Frank Cross considered these to be "‘alloforms’ of the basic cosmogonic myth," as I discuss in Chapter 1 (Cross, *CMHE*, 149).
17. Patrick Miller, "El the Warrior," *HTR*, 60 (1967): 411–431.
18. Cross argues that Yahweh was a form of El, citing the following: the name Israel uses El, not Yahweh; there are no biblical polemics against El; El and Yahweh are rarely distinguished; the name El becomes a generic noun; Yahweh shares characteristics and epithets of El (Cross, *CMHE*, 44–75). M. S. Smith, however, interprets these observations as indicating that Yahweh and El, originally distinct deities, were identified with one another at an early stage (M. S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 32–42). While both hypotheses are well developed and account for the evidence, I am compelled by M. S. Smith's interpretation of Deut 32:8–9, which "suggest[s] a literary vestige of the initial assimilation of Yahweh," that is, these verses characterize El and Yahweh as distinct deities (M. S. Smith, *The Early History of God*, 33). Regardless of which hypothesis one prefers, biblical texts indicate that the majority of biblical authors maintained

- that Yahweh-Elohim occupied the roles of father/creator (typically, 'Ilu roles) and warrior (typically, Ba'lu roles).
19. Reading the plural, “wonders” (*pēlā'êkā*), with several LXX, Syriac, and Targum mss, rather than the singular form of the MT.
 20. As Cross convincingly argues, the Hebrew phrase *bēnê 'ēlīm* is best understood as being comparable to the Ugaritic “sons of 'Ilu,” indicating the category “gods” or “divine ones.” The form *'lym* here, then, is singular with an enclitic *m* (Cross, *CMHE*, 45–46).
 21. Reading the masculine *rab*, rather than the feminine form *rabbā* of the MT.
 22. Cross and *BHS* propose to emend, reading: “Your strength and your fidelity surround you” (Cross, *CMHE*, 160 n.66; *BHS* Ps 89:9).
 23. Both Mitchell Dahood and Cross further the argument that this verse originally named four mountains: Šāpôn (also the designation for “north”), Amanus (requiring emendation of the MT), Tabor, and Hermon (Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 51-100* [AB 17; Garden City: Doubleday, 1968], 314; Cross, *CMHE*, 161 n.70). John Day rejects such renderings. He argues that the pairing “north and south” represents the extremities of created order and thus fits the rhetoric and imagery of the passage. He prefers to maintain the MT’s “north and south” as a “satisfactory parallel” to the mountains Tabor and Hermon (Day, *God's Conflict*, 25–28). While I find the four mountain proposal convincing, I agree with Day that maintaining the MT is preferable.
 24. Ps 89:6–15 is a hymn to Yahweh that has been incorporated into a composite poem, including the hymn, a portion expounding upon the Davidic covenant (vss. 4–5, 20–38), and a lamentation (vss. 39–52). I discuss below the other two sections and how the motif functions in each section. On the division and development of the psalm, see Nahum M. Sarna, “Psalm 89: A Study in Inner-Biblical Exegesis,” in *Biblical and Other Studies* (ed. Alexander Altman; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 29–46, 30–31; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 147–157; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 402; Knut M. Heim, “The (God-)Forsaken King of Psalm 89: A Historical and Intertextual Enquiry,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John Day; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 296–322, 296–297; Hans U. Steymans, *Psalm 89 und der Davidbund: Eine strukturelle und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), 302–319.
 25. The “enemies” in Ps 89:11 are not identified explicitly as being divine or human. In other passages where Yahweh “scatters” (*pzt*) humans or the bones of humans, as in Ps 53:6, the context requires that the enemies be human. Ps 89:11 may be referencing one battle in which Yahweh defeats Rahab and various divine enemies (whereby, perhaps, Yahweh secures his authority over the sea), or it may be referencing various victories of Yahweh, including a battle against

Rahab and battles against various human enemies (whereby Yahweh continually displays his sovereignty). If the latter interpretation is more accurate, the placement of human enemies in parallel with the divine enemy Rahab in Ps 89:11 is similar to passages in which specific human enemies are compared to or identified with defeated divine enemies (Ezek 29:3; Ezek 32:2; Jer 51:34–37).

26. Several of my comments on creation and the conflict motif in Ps 74 appear in my essay on the Targum of Ps 74, as background for analyzing innovations of the targumists (Debra Scoggins Ballentine, “Revising a Myth: The Targum of Psalm 74 and the Exodus Tradition,” in *The One Who Sows Bountifully: Essays in Honor of Stanley K. Stowers* [ed. Caroline Johnson-Hodge, Saul M. Olyan, Daniel Ulluci, Emma Wasserman; Atlanta: SBL, 2013], 107–117).
27. The term *lě’ām lěšiyyim* is difficult to interpret. Dahood proposed repointing the phrase to read “to be gathered by desert tribes” (*la’amōl šiyyim*), though he considered this reading dubious because it requires extending the semantic range of the verb *ml* (Dahood, *Psalms* 51–100, 199 and 206). BHS emends the text to read “to the sharks of the sea” (*lě’amlēšê yām*), originally proposed by I. Löw. Hossfeld and Zenger note the difficulty with the Hebrew phrase and translate, “to the crowd of desert creatures,” rendering *ām* as “crowd” (Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 240–241). Day suggests deleting the second *lě*, reading “to the people of the wild beasts,” as if the “people” are animals (Day, *God’s Conflict*, 21, 22, n.57). The word *šiyyim* occurs only six times in the MT, so it is somewhat obscure. It is the plural of *šî*, a wild beast, and four of the six occurrences are clearly references to animals. Ps 72:9 uses *šiyyim* to refer to people, though this text is usually considered corrupt and the word emended to better fit its parallel. The LXX translation shows that the word was unclear to ancient interpreters as well; it renders the phrase *laois tois Aithiopsin* (to the Ethiopian peoples) (LXX Ps 73:14). Much earlier than Day, Hermann Hupfeld also suggested deleting the second preposition, translating the phrase “Volk der Wüstentiere” (“the people of the desert animals”) (Hermann Hupfeld, *Die Psalmen*, Vol. 3 [Gotha: Perthes-Verlag, 1860], 313). I agree with Hupfeld and the LXX as far as maintaining the literal sense of the Hebrew “for the people.” However, *lěšiyyim* remains uncertain, and deleting this second *lě* seems to be the most simple solution to finding a readable phrase. William K. Whitney, however, chooses to delete *lě’ām* altogether, arguing that scribes inserted “to the people” in an attempt to clarify *šiyyim*. He thinks this insertion occurred relatively late, possibly under the influence of traditions about Leviathan being served as food to Yahweh’s people in an eschatological banquet (William K. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Judaism* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 170, n.53). His proposal is reasonable from a text critical perspective since it is more likely that someone would add the more common phrase “to the people” than the obscure phrase “to the wild beasts.” The insertion of “to the people,” however, predates the Targumic

- translation, which elaborates on the two phrases separately, as I discuss elsewhere (Ballentine, "Revising a Myth: The Targum of Psalm 74 and the Exodus Tradition," 113).
28. Ps 74:13–15 has also been considered a reference to the Reed Sea event; however this interpretation has been rejected within more recent scholarship (Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 78). The division of the sea, splitting and drying of waterways, and giving of Leviathan as food for people in the wilderness were each interpreted as pertaining to events from the exodus narrative in the Targumic exegetical translation of this psalm (Ballentine, "Revising a Myth: The Targum of Psalm 74 and the Exodus Tradition," 110–117). Subsequently, some early scholars followed this reading (Eduard König, *Die Psalmen* [Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1927], 485; Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms 2* [Dublin: Browne and Nolan Ltd., 1954], 89). Below I discuss instances of the conflict motif combined with the exodus motif, and it is possible that the Targumic reading of Ps 74 was influenced by such texts. Hossfeld and Zenger acknowledge the association of Ps 74:15 with exodus traditions as possible, but consider it more likely that the drying of rivers refers to the crossing of the Jordan in Josh 3 (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 248–249). My reading is closest to and elaborates on that of John Day, who also rejects the exodus interpretation for these verses and considers verse 15 to refer to the creation of springs and streams (Day, *God's Battle*, 23, 25).
29. Tracy Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 125 (2006): 225–241, 225–226; Saul M. Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences* (New York: Cambridge University, 2008), 38–45; Olyan, "The Ascription of Physical Disability as a Stigmatizing Strategy in Biblical Iconic Polemics," *JHS* 9 (2009): 1–15; Nathaniel B. Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 109.
30. The notion of Yahweh using the clouds as a chariot or riding on the clouds/heavens occurs in Isa 19:1; Ps 68:34; Deut 33:26; and probably Ps 68:5. The "one like a son of man" in Dan 7 is also said to arrive "with the clouds of heaven." This is comparable to the Ugaritic notion of Ba'lu as the "rider on the clouds" (*KTU* 1.2 IV 8, 29; 1.4 III 11, 18, V 60; 1.5 II 7), the Babylonian notion of Adad as the "cloud-rider" (*Enki and the World Order*, 1.313; CT xv 15–16: "Hymn to Iškur"), and the description of Marduk riding on a storm-chariot (*EE* II 151, IV 50). The characteristic of riding on the clouds/storms/heavens was a widespread and seemingly fitting description for ancient West Asian storm deities (Alberto Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 195; M. S. Smith, *Early History of God*, 80–82; Moshe Weinfeld, "'Rider of the Clouds' and 'Gatherer of the Clouds,'" *JANES* 5 [1973]: 421–426). For depiction of a storm god's chariot, see Antoine Vanel, *L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1965), 23, fig. 5.
31. For recent treatment of the characterization of Leviathan in Job, see C. Leong Seow's treatment of Job 40:25–41:26 in the forthcoming second volume of his

- commentary on Job, and more briefly, C. Leong Seow, *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 103–104.
32. The manner in which Leviathan disturbs the sea is similar to the stirring and churning that the younger gods and Marduk cause inside Tiamat (*EE I*, 21–28).
 33. This rhetorical question is suggested in many verses of Job, and most directly asked in Job 40:2, “Will a plaintiff bring suit against Shaddai? The one who convicts god will answer.”
 34. I discuss this further with regard to Mari Letter A.1968 below.
 35. John J. Collins, “The ‘Historical Character’ of the Old Testament in Recent Biblical Theology,” in *Israel’s Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (ed. V. Philips Long; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 150–169, 163.
 36. Likewise, the projection of divine combat into the present and immediate future, or alternatively the linking of the present to divine combat of the mythic past, is parallel to use of the exodus narrative tradition as a “paradigmatic story,” for example, the description of postexilic restoration as a new exodus in Second Isaiah, discussed below.
 37. The historicity of the exodus narrative is problematic, and the story is better understood as historiographic writing. There are no external references to the Israelites spending time in Egypt, nor to the exodus, and evidence used to support the hypothesis that the Raamasid period was the historical setting of these events is minimal (James M. Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Israel and Judah* [Westminster John Knox Press, 1986], 64, 67–68; Neils P. Lemche, “Is It Still Possible to Write a History of Ancient Israel?” in *Israel’s Past in Present Research*, 391–414, 398–399; Ron Hendel, “The Exodus in Biblical Memory,” *JBL* 120 [2001]: 601–622; though see also James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005]).
 38. On the combination of these motifs in Ps 77 and 114, see Oswald Loretz, “Theophanie von Baal-Jahwe am Schilfmeer nach Psalm 77,17–20 und Psalm 114,” *Ugarit-Texte und Thronbesteigungpsalmen: die Metamorphose des Regenspenders Baal-Jahwe: Ps 24, 7–10; 47; 93; 95–100 sowie Ps 77, 17–20; 114* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1988), 384–410.
 39. The verb “redeem” (*g’l*) is used regarding the exodus in Exod 6:6; 15:13; Pss 74:2; 77:16; 78:35; and 106:10.
 40. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 282–283.
 41. Gerstenberger, Cross, Hossfeld and Zenger, and Stephen Geller consider the sea in Ps 114 to be the Reed Sea, such that the psalm refers to the event at the Reed Sea as well as the crossing of the Jordan (Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 282–283; Cross, *CMHE*, 138–139; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 195; Stephen Geller, “The Language of Imagery in Psalm 114,” in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* [ed. Tzvi Abusch,

- John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990], 179–194). However, Dahood interpreted this psalm to refer only to the crossing of the Jordan, such that the sea must be the Dead Sea, as mentioned in Josh 3:16 (Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 135).
42. Cross, *CMHE*, 318; Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 105.
43. Cross identifies Exod 14:22, 26 as P and Exod 14:21, 27 as J (Cross, *CMHE*, 133). Of the verses with which I am most concerned (Exod 14:15–31), Noth identifies as P material Exod 14:15–18; 21a^ob; 22; 23; 26; 27a^o; 28; 29; he identifies as J Exod 14:19b, 20, 21a^β, 24, 25b, 27a^βb, 30, 31 (Noth, *A History of Pentateuch Traditions*, [trans. Bernard W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971], 18, 30). Similarly, among these verses Richard E. Friedman identifies as P material Exod 14:15–18; 21a; 21c–23; 26–27a; 28–29 (Richard Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* [San Francisco: Harper, 2003], 142–144).
44. Cross and David N. Freedman, “The Song of Miriam,” *JNES* 14 (1955): 237–250, 239; Cross, “The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth,” *CMHE*, 131–132. Alternatively, Nick Wyatt, Carola Kloos, and Bernard Batto consider the poem in Exod 15 to be an example of the conflict motif as well (Nick Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 172–186; Carola Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea*, 127–157; Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 113–118).
45. Cross, *CMHE*, 131–132; 140–141.
46. The Hebrew of the MT, *hēm šābet*, is a crux that does not make sense. Many modern translations read the verb as a form of *yšb*: “Rahab who sits still.” However, Blenkinsopp (and others) have proposed redividing the consonantal text to render the verb a *hop ‘al* participle of *šbt*: *hammošbāt* (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 1964], 413).
47. This critique fits the historical context of 705–701 BCE, when Hezekiah sought assistance from Egypt in his revolt against Assyria, and the contemporary prophet Isaiah disapproved of this political policy (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 411; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990], 134). Göran Eidevall, who is not convinced by the consensus view that this is an eighth-century oracle, adds that if it is an exilic or postexilic oracle, the critique of Egypt could refer to both Hezekiah’s failed reliance on Egypt and Zedekiah’s unsuccessful pro-Egyptian policies (Göran Eidevall, *Prophecy and Propaganda: Images of Enemies in the Book of Isaiah* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 98–101).
48. In Ps 87:4, Rahab is simply the name used for Egypt in a list of cities, and the denotation of Rahab as a sea-dragon has no significance for the rest of the psalm. It is not a psalm about combat or victory; rather it is concerned with the issue of foreigners participating the Jerusalem cult (Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 300; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 140). The issue of the participation of foreigners in the Jerusalem cult is also treated in Exod 12:43–51; Deut 23:2–9; and Isa 56:1–8.

49. As Moshe Greenberg explains, doom is followed by dirge, and here Yahweh is requesting a dirge that foretells the doom of the king of Egypt (Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997], 655).
50. I agree with Greenberg that the sense of the *nip'al* form of *dmh* here is passive or reflexive, emphasizing the contrast between how the king of Egypt seems or fashions himself and what he “actually” is (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 650).
51. Theodore Lewis, “CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32,” 40.
52. The Egyptian god Sobek had the form of a crocodile, and he represented the role of the Nile river in fertilizing the land; at least two literary representations of Egyptian royal ideology compare the king to a crocodile (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 612; ANET, 374b; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume I* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973], 40).
53. Within this specific historical context, Lewis identifies the king of Egypt in Ezek 29:2–6 and 32:2–16 specifically as Pharaoh Hophra (Lewis, “CT 13:33–34 and Ezekiel 32,” 38, 47). Zedekiah made an alliance with Hophra as part of his revolt against Assyria, and Hophra dispatched an army to relieve Jerusalem while it was besieged (Jer 37:5, 11), however, the Egyptian army was ultimately unsuccessful (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 608–609).
54. For the suffixed pronouns on these verbs, I follow the *qere*, reading a singular object, which fits the singular pronoun of “my delicacies” as well as the singular speakers “the inhabitant of Zion” and Jerusalem, rather than the *ketib*, which has plural pronouns.
55. M. S. Smith, *UBC 1*, 352–354; M. S. Smith, *UBC 2*, 254; Pitard, “The Binding of Yamm,” 277.
56. Jack Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 476.
57. The historical context for this oracle is sometime after Nebuchadnezzar has subjugated Jerusalem. Lundbom prefers a date closer to 597 BCE, the first instance of deportation to Babylon, rather than 586 BCE, the final destruction of Jerusalem, because in this oracle there are still “inhabitants” of Zion (Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, 469). Whereas, the city describes itself as “an empty vessel” and as “rinsed out,” and the “inhabitants of Zion” certainly lamented from Babylon as well.
58. Reading *nēhārīm* as a singular form with an enclitic *mem*. Here, I am persuaded by Theodore Hiebert, who supports his reading of *nēhārīm* as a singular with the observation that Hab 3:9 uses the more common plural form *nēhārôt* for “rivers” (Theodore Hiebert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986], 23).
59. Or possibly, “You laid bare your bow,” reading a *pi'el* infinitive absolute followed by a *pi'el* 2ms imperfect, rather than a noun followed by the *nip'al* 3fs imperfect (Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 25–26).

60. The three words in this phrase may be clear, but the meaning is unintelligible. For a range of proposed translations and discussions of each word, see Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 320–325; Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 26–28.
61. Hiebert emends to read “Clouds poured down water,” based on the parallel expression in Ps 77:18 and the Murabbaʿat manuscript (Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 6, 30).
62. Reading *yēnōded* from the root *nūd* rather than “he measured” from *mdd*. This offers a better parallel with the following line and is supported by the LXX and Targumic translations.
63. Hiebert emends the text to read, “for the victory of the militia of your anointed one” (Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 6, 33–36).
64. Hab 3:13c–15, especially v. 14, exhibits many textual difficulties and the ancient versions vary, indicating that the text was corrupt from an early stage. For discussion of the problems and possible translations, see Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 36–46.
65. This line refers to a violent action performed on either the “wicked house” or a person from the “wicked house,” and translations vary accordingly, stripping the “foundation” of a house or the “tail-end” of a person. Regardless, the poetic sense is that the object is stripped thoroughly.
66. The text and meaning of *przw* is uncertain (Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 338; “*prz*,” *BDB*, 826; Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 43).
67. Habakkuk is difficult to date as a book, and it appears that various portions of the text could have developed independently. Moreover, within the book, there is no certain proof of the date of any given portion. The specific detail with which most discussions of date are concerned is the identity of the “wicked,” typically thought to be either Assyria or Babylon (Brevard Childs, “The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition,” *JBL* 78.3 [1959]: 187–198, 191; Marvin A. Sweeney, “Habakkuk, Book of,” *ABD* 3:1–6). Hab 1 refers to the rise of the Babylonians to power, indicating the Neo-Babylonian period (Sweeney, “Structure, Genre, and Intent in the Book of Habakkuk,” *VT* 41.1 [1991]: 63–83, 64, 67–69; William L. Holladay, “Plausible Circumstances for the Prophecy of Habakkuk,” *JBL* 120.1 [2001]: 123–130, 125, 130). Andersen speculates that the oracles, if they are responding to the threat of Babylon’s power, may have been written between 605 BCE and 575 BCE (Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 24–27). Hiebert’s analysis focuses only on Hab 3, which he considers to be an early Israelite hymn that was incorporated into the later work; he maintains that the enemy in the original hymn is a superhuman figure, which is “historicized” over time but never explicitly identified (Hiebert, *God of My Victory*, 129, 107–108).
68. Olyan, “The Search for the Elusive Self in Texts of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Religion and the Self in Antiquity* (eds. David Brakke, Michael L. Satlow, and Steven Weitzman; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 42–43; Carroll

- Stuhlmueler, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), 59–98; Patricia T. Wiley, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 72–74, 132–137.
69. Reading *wēnāsû* for *nāsû* (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002], 330).
70. In Isa 51:11, the term “ransomed of Yahweh” (*pēdūyê yhw̄h*) is used to refer to those returning to Zion after Babylonian exile. This term is similar in meaning to the term “redeemed” (*gē’ûlîm*), which is used to refer to the Israelites in the context of exodus in Isa 51:10 as well as in Deut 7:8; 2 Sam 7:23; Micah 6:4 (Olyan, “The Search for the Elusive Self,” 43; Johann J. Stamm, “g’l to redeem,” *TLOT* [ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann; trans. Mark E. Biddle; 3 vols. Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 1997], 1:293).
71. On the development of the final forms of Ps 89 and Ps 74, see Sarna, “Psalm 89,” 30–31; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 26, 147–157; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 241–244, 402, 406–407.
72. On the genre of communal lament within the Psalms, see Paul Wayne Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 89–99, 109–135; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 9–14, 245–247. For a full discussion of the communal lament in Ps 89, see Hans Ulrich Steymans, “Traces of Liturgies in the Psalter: The Communal Laments, Psalms 79, 80, 83, 89 in Context,” in *Psalms and Liturgy* (ed. Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 168–234.
73. There is general consensus that the final form of Ps 74 as a national lament dates to the exile (Day, *God’s Conflict*, 22; Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 26; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 243). Gerstenberger, William M. Schniedewind, Heim, and Hossfeld and Zenger date the final form of Ps 89 to the exile or postexile (Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 154; William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1999], 41; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 406; Heim, “The (God-)Forsaken King of Psalm 89,” 297–298). Day and Dahood, however, maintain a preexilic date because the king appears to still be alive and concerned with the covenant (Day, *God’s Battle*, 26; Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 311).
74. For discussion of debates about the status of the covenant during the exile, see Olyan, “The Status of Covenant During the Exile,” in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt* (ed., Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt, and Jakob Wöhrle; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 333–344.
75. Using Asher S. Kaufman’s calculation of the cubit (42.8 cm) for this time, the “sea” measured 14 feet and ½ inch in diameter (Asher S. Kaufman, “Where the Ancient Temple in Jerusalem Stood,” *BAR* 9:2 [1983]: 40–59).
76. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, “Solomon’s Temple: The Politics of Ritual Space,” in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archeology and the Religion of Israel* (ed. Barry M.

- Gittlen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 83–94, 83; *ibid.*, “Who is the King of Glory?: Solomon’s Temple and Its Symbolism,” in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum; Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 18–31, 20; Carol L. Meyers, “Molten Sea,” *ABD*:5:1061–1062; Abraham Malamat, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 107.
77. Bloch-Smith, “Who is the King of Glory?,” 20, 23.
78. Bloch-Smith, “Solomon’s Temple,” 84; “Who is this King of Glory?,” 20.
79. Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 163–165; Bloch-Smith, “Who is the King of Glory?,” 27.
80. See Bloch-Smith’s discussion in “Who is this King of Glory?,” 26–27.
81. For descriptions of the physical nature of the pillars, see Carol Meyers, “Jachin and Boaz,” *ABD* 3:597–598, as well as the two classic articles that more recent works cite: William F. Albright, “Two Cressets from Marissa and the Pillars of Jachin and Boaz,” *BASOR* 85 (1942): 18–27; Herbert G. May, “The Two Pillars before the Temple of Solomon,” *BASOR* 88 (1942): 19–27.
82. For summaries of the various interpretations of the pillars, see Karel van der Toorn, “Boaz,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 176–177; Meyers, “Jachin and Boaz,” *ABD* 3:597–598; Theodor A. Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes. Band 1: Der Tempel Salomos* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 13–17. For the range of possible meanings of the names, see Martin J. Mulder, “Die Bedeutung von Jachin und Boaz in 1 Kön. 7:21 (2 Chr. 3:17),” in *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (ed. Jan W. van Henten and Jürgen-Christian Lebram; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 19–26; Robert B. Y. Scott, “The Pillars Jachin and Boaz,” *JBL* 58 2 (1939): 143–149.
83. Scott, “The Pillars Jachin and Boaz,” 148–149; and, in support of Scott’s hypothesis, see Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, 257–258.
84. Scott’s proposal, as well as the proposals of others before him who reconstructed a single inscription, presupposes that the vocalization *bō‘az* is a corruption of *bē‘ōz*, “in/with strength,” which is supported by select Greek and Latin versions (Scott, “The Pillars Jachin and Boaz,” 147–149).
85. Julian Obermann, “The Divine Name YHWH in Light of Recent Discoveries,” *JBL* 68.4 (1949): 301–323, 318.
86. Our reconstruction of the visual landscape of Jerusalem is primarily based on biblical texts, which have a complex relationship with archeological data from Jerusalem as well as the history of the archeology of Jerusalem. For discussion, see Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew, ed. *Jerusalem in Bible and Archeology, the First Temple Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

87. Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1–7, 13–17; Nissinen, ed., *Prophecy in its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives* (Atlanta: SBL, 2000); Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
88. The original text is available in Jean-Marie Durand, “Le mythologème du combat entre le dieu de l’orage et la mer en Mésopotamie,” *MARI* 7 (1993): 41–61, 45. I follow Durand’s restorations.
89. Objects associated with deities were objects of veneration in OB temples in general (Van der Toorn, “Mesopotamian Prophecy between Immanence and Transcendence,” in *Prophecy in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* [ed. Martti Nissinen; Atlanta: SBL, 2000], 71–88, 85). See also discussion in Wyatt, “Arms and the King: The Earliest Allusions to the Chaokampf Motif and Their Implications for the Interpretation of the Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions,” in “*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf*”: *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen* (ed. Manfred Dietrich and Ingo Kottsieper; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 833–882. The conveyance of physical objects that were thought to be a god’s weapons is more concrete than, but similar to, the notion that gods send their weapons before a king in battle, a notion also attested in the Mari corpus. For example, letter ARM 26 192 says that Eštar Ninet is sending her seven nets to assist Zimri-Lim against the Elamites.
90. The original text is presented by Dominique Charpin, “De la joie à l’Orage,” *MARI* 5 (1987): 661.
91. Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 37–41.
92. Marcel Mauss, “Essai sur la don. Forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques,” *l’Année Sociologique* (1923–1924), 16.
93. Heimpel, *Letters*, 3, 161–163. Hammurabi took the city in his thirty-third year and destroyed its walls in his thirty-fifth year, according to middle chronology, this would be 1760 and 1758 BCE, respectively. For additional discussion of Zimri-Lim’s difficult political circumstances, see Jack M. Sasson, “The King and I: A Mari King in Changing Perceptions,” *JAOS* 118.4 (1998): 453–470; Daniel Fleming, *Democracy’s Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
94. Aaron Tugendhaft, “Baal among the Storm-gods: Distinguishing Mythic Meaning from Mythic Motifs” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Atlanta, GA, November 20, 2010).
95. Pitard, “The Combat Myth as a Succession Story at Ugarit,” 205.
96. Tugendhaft, “Baal among the Storm-gods.”

97. On the possible ritual background of Ps 89:20–38, see Klaus Koch, “Königspsalmen und ihr ritueller Hintergrund; Erwägungen zu Ps 89,20–38 und Ps 20 und ihren Vorstufen,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 9–52. For a form-critical comparison of Ps 89:20–38 with the prophecy to Esarhaddon in SAA 9, 1, see Hans U. Steymans, “‘Deinen Thron habe ich unter den großen Himmeln festgemacht’. Die formgeschichtliche Nähe von Ps 89,4–5.20–38 zu Texten vom neuassyrischen Hof,” in *‘Mein Sohn bist du’ (Ps 2,7): Studien zu den Königspsalmen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 2002), 184–251.
98. Multiple mss read a singular, “loyal one,” which Cross prefers (Cross, *CMHE*, 258 n.172), though the LXX and Targum also have a plural.
99. Reading “crown” (*nēzer*), as *BHS* proposes, rather than “help” (*‘ēzer*). Cross, however, interprets *‘zr* as comparable to Ugaritic *ḡzr*, and translates: “I have made a stripling ruler over the warrior” (Cross, *CMHE*, 258).
100. Dahood considers the raising of David’s horn to denote victory (Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 317). Likewise, Hossfeld and Zenger consider the horn to represent the might of the king, which in Ps 89:18 and 25 is dependent upon Yahweh (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 410). This is consistent with broader ancient West Asian traditions of the horn as a symbol for power (Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, “*qeren, qāran*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978] 8:167–174; Margit L. Süring, *The Horn-Motif in the Hebrew Bible and Related Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Iconography* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1982]). Hossfeld and Zenger cite the following relevant biblical passages: horns symbolizing kingship, Pss 89:18, 25; 92:11; 132:17; 1 Sam 2:1, 10; the lifting of horns indicating attaining power or victory, Lam 2:17; Ps 112:9; Zech 2:2–4; cutting off the horn indicating loss of power, Lam 2:3; Jer 48:25; Ps 75:11 (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 256).
101. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 152. He also cites similar examples: 2 Sam 7:14 (regarding Solomon), “I will become his father, and he will become my son,” and Ps 2:7, “You are my son, today I have begotten you.” For broader ancient West Asian notions of divine sonship, parentage, and adoption pertaining to kingship, see William W. Hallo, “Kingship,” *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 188–211.
102. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 410.
103. On the development of the final form of Ps 89, see Sarna, “Psalm 89,” 30–31; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 147–157; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 402, 406–407; Heim, “The (God-)Forsaken King of Psalm 89,” 296–297; Steymans, *Psalm 89 und der Davidbund*, 302–319.
104. Abraham Malamat discusses the development of the literary notion of deities revoking kingship in Abraham Malamat, “Deity Revokes Kingship—Towards

- Intellectual Reasoning in Mari and the Bible,” *Mari and the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 157–164.
105. Ps 89:30–38 and 2 Sam 7:14–16 describe an unconditional covenant, whereas Ps 132:11–12; 1 Kgs 2:2–4; 8:25; 9:4–9; and 1 Chron 17 describe a conditional covenant with David. Cross proposes that the earliest notions of covenant were conditional, the monarchic (and Deuteronomistic) conception of covenant was unconditional, and the exilic Deuteronomist adopted the conditional covenant (Cross, *CMHE*, 232–237, 251–252, 259–260, 264–265). Gary N. Knoppers argues that there were competing notions of the Davidic covenant throughout biblical history (Gary N. Knoppers, “David’s Relation to Moses: The Contexts, Content and Conditions of the Davidic Promises,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* [ed. John Day; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 91–118, 116). For an overview of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel, 2 Kings, and Chronicles, see Steymans, *Psalm 89 und der Davidbund*, 367–421. On the relationship between the specific articulations of covenant in Ps 89 and 2 Sam 7, see Heim, “The (God-)Forsaken King of Psalm 89,” 299–306.
106. See also Adele Berlin’s discussion of Ps 78 as an exilic poem whose author aims to prove, through his historical overview, that the temple will be rebuilt and the line of David will continue (Adele Berlin, “Psalms and the Literature of Exile: Psalms 127, 44, 69, and 78,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* [ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; Leiden: Brill, 2005], 65–86, 65, 75–84).
107. The poetic narrative of Ps 78 promotes Judah at the expense of Israel. It states that Ephraim neglected its covenant with Yahweh and forgot his great deeds, including the splitting of the Reed Sea and other exodus events (exhibiting the combined exodus and conflict motifs) (Ps 78:9–16). It states further that Israel angered Yahweh, leading to his inaction as divine warrior, which resulted in Israel’s rejection and fall. This may indicate a date of composition around the fall of Israel in 721 BCE (Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 78; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 299).
108. The Aramaic version of *Ahiqar* is the oldest extant version of the story, and it survives in one papyrus manuscript (P. 13446) found in 1907 at Elephantine. The manuscript itself dates to the late fifth century BCE, but the composition most likely dates to the sixth century BCE. The manuscript was broken, but the five columns of narrative were easily reconstructed according to the story. The sequence of the fragmentary columns of proverbs, however, is uncertain. It is most likely that the proverbs and narrative developed independently (James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983], 8, 11, 19). On the relationship of *Ahiqar* with biblical wisdom literature, see Michael Weigl, *Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche aus Elephantine und die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

109. The Aramaic original is available in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986), text C 1.1.
110. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 91.
111. David Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 195.

CHAPTER 4

1. The Greek text of *T. Ash.* is available in Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).
2. The notion of an “eschaton” is derived from the Greek *eschatos*, meaning “last” or “last things.” Eschatology, then, is speculation about “last things” or about the end of the current state of affairs. Paul Hanson contrasts “prophetic eschatology” and “apocalyptic eschatology” as follows. In “prophetic eschatology” gods can reform and restore a desired situation within the current historical and political context by bringing a new king who will end current injustices. However, in “apocalyptic eschatology” the current state of affairs is so dismal that even the gods cannot fix it within the current political or historical framework. The present world order has to be transformed (Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 27, 30). Stephen Cook has criticized Hanson’s reconstruction of the development of prophetic eschatology into apocalyptic eschatology, and cautions biblical scholars against implicitly adopting deprivation theory as a cause for the emergence of apocalyptic traditions (Stephen Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Post-Exilic Social Setting* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995], 8, 34–35, 44). Acknowledging Cook’s critique of Hanson, we may still contrast prophetic and apocalyptic eschatologies without insisting that there was a trajectory from one to the other. Thus, by “eschatological rendering of the conflict motif,” I mean that authors make the conflict an integral part of the desired or imagined transformation of the current world order, and this transformation occurs outside of history. Here, I am influenced by John J. Collins’s many discussions of “apocalyptic” and “eschatology.” See for example his description of “apocalyptic eschatology” or “transcendent eschatology” (J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 11–12). However, I agree with Cook, in his criticism of Collins’s emphasis on “apocalypse” as a genre, that we should maintain distinctions between apocalypticism as a literary phenomenon, a worldview, and a social phenomenon, while defining each of these phenomena according to a set of loosely shared family resemblances (Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 21–23).
3. Generally, studies of the conflict motif briefly discuss or note Isa 24–27, Dan 7, and Rev 12, but do not discuss these texts fully or mention any later examples.

- John Day discusses Isa 24–27 and Dan 7 (Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 98–128; Day, *God's Conflict*, 112, 141–178). Bernard Batto mentions Isa 27:1, and his epilogue on “Mythopoeism in the New Testament,” discusses Dan 7, Revelation, and relevant gospel passages (Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 154, 217, 225, 229, 174–185). Nick Wyatt mentions Isa 27:1 several times (Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 90, 96, 97, 122, 159, 188, 194). He also mentions the composite beasts of Dan 7 but does not discuss Dan 7 with reference to the conflict motif (Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 212). He includes Mark 4:35–41 on 401 n.55, and mentions Rev 12 briefly (Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, 401 n.55; 90; 401). Mary K. Wakeman uses Isa 27:1 in her characterizations of Leviathan, the dragon, and Deep, and once mentions Rev 21:1 (Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* [Leiden: Brill, 1973], 56–105, 26 n.5). Frank Cross references Isa 27:1, Dan 7, and Rev 12 (Cross, *CMHE*, [Isa] 119 n.24, 120, 135; [Dan 7] 16, 17, 165 n. 86, 345 n.9; [Rev 12] 119, 119 n.24).
4. Andrew R. Angel offers a thorough treatment of examples of the “Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition” in texts dating from 515 BCE to 200 CE. He proposes the following criteria for evaluating possible instances of the “Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition” and for determining whether or not this was a “living” tradition in the period of 515 BCE to 200 CE: cultural provenance, geographical provenance, similarity (of imagery), reference, creativity, number (of texts), multiplicity of sources, and continuity (Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew *Chaoskampf* Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE* [New York: T&T Clark, 2006], 30–34, 191–200). I appreciate especially his criterion of creativity, since I emphasize that authors exhibited innovative interpretations of the conflict motif to serve their particular purposes. However, Angel's collection of “*Chaoskampf*” texts is broad. He includes many texts in which there is no reference, imagery, allusion, or presumption of divine combat. For example, he considers the metaphor of a sailor having a rough time on the sea, in 1QH 14.22–25, to reflect “chaos waters.” This imagery is not necessarily derived from or reflective of divine combat with a water-based enemy, even though it may be similar to HB passages in which Yahweh rebukes rough waters: in both cases there is rough water. However, not all rough water has mythological connotations; there was actual rough water with which sailors dealt. Moreover, the term “chaos waters” is misleading, as explained in Chapter 6.
 5. Even when specific Hebrew Bible verses are not quoted directly, it appears that the authors of these texts depended upon some form of the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and/or bible-based traditions.
 6. Opinions for the dating of Isa 24–27 range from the eighth century to the second century BCE, and typically depend on questions of genre (proto-apocalyptic, early apocalyptic, or apocalyptic) and on the identification of the destroyed city of Isa 27:10. Most recently, commentators prefer a wide date range, somewhere between 500/450–300 BCE (Willem Beuken, *Jesaja 13–27* [Freiburg: Herder, 2007], 198; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997],

- 462). However, Cross, Hanson, William Millar, and Joseph Blenkinsopp argue for a sixth century date based on their analysis of the genre (Cross, *CMHE*, 345; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 313–314; William Millar, *Isaiah 24–27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976], 114; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 348), while Otto Plöger argues for a third century date (Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* [Richmond: John Knox, 1968], 96–97). This text may be closer in date to the postexilic texts discussed in Chapter 3, and could very well be discussed along with them. However, the eschatological nature of Isa 24–27 makes it a better fit for the content of the present chapter.
7. Many scholars have attempted to identify a specific referent or several referents for which Leviathan/the dragon would be an allegory. As summarized by Donald Polaski: Duhm and Marti identify the referents as Egypt, the Seleucid empire, and the Parthians; Box and Cheyne list Babylon, Persia, and Egypt; Kessler and Eissfeldt argue for the Ptolemies and Seleucids; and Gesenius concludes that the referent is Babylon (Donald C. Polaski, *Authorizing an End: The Isaiah Apocalypse and Intertextuality* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 280–283, 281 n.4). I agree with Polaski’s criticisms of this sort of interpretation. First, most of these scholars propose multiple referents for Leviathan/the dragon, such that the allegorical interpretation requires the verse to describe two or three separate creatures: the serpent Leviathan and the dragon, or two serpents and a dragon. This runs counter to the synonymous parallelism of these poetic lines. For example, the verse describes Yahweh’s sword with three adjectives though it is only one sword; likewise, the verse describes one figure as a fleeing serpent, twisting serpent, and dragon in the sea. Second, most scholars propose the specific political referents in order to buttress their arguments for a specific dating of the text. Conversely, Anderson interprets Leviathan as a symbol for “powers of evil at work in human history” (Bernhard Anderson, “The Slaying of the Fleeing, Twisting Serpent: Isaiah 27:1 in Context,” in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson* [ed. Lewis M. Hopfe; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 7). However, I find this interpretation too generalizing; it detracts from the ideological significance of the figure of Leviathan. Rather than reading Leviathan in Isa 27:1 as an allegory for a specific polity or polities or for general “evil” or oppression, it is more fruitful to explore how the reference to Leviathan contributes to the description of Yahweh’s series of eschatological actions: it indicates that they are certainties.
 8. In *KTU* 1.2 IV 23–31, Ba’lu mutilates Yammu after defeating him, and he possibly “drinks” Yammu, though that reading is not certain because of the variety of ways the verb *yšt* may be interpreted (see Chapter 2, note 91). If Ba’lu drinks Yammu, then Yahweh swallowing Death would be analogous, both offering an inversion of the motif of Death swallowing his own enemies.
 9. The removal of “reproach” (*herpâ*) is here associated with the victory of a divine warrior, but it occurs frequently in other instances of the improvement of an

unfavorable situation that do not employ the conflict motif. Yahweh removes the “reproach of Egypt” from the people in Josh 5:9; in 1 Sam 17:26, David’s victory over Goliath will result in the removal of “reproach” for the people; in Isa 54:4; Ezek 36:15, 30; and Joel 2:19, descriptions of a future reversal of fortunes include the removal of “reproach.”

10. Shame and acts of mourning, such as that said to end in Isa 25:8, are often associated with individual and collective calamities (Saul Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 97–110). Rejoicing indicates an end of mourning (Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 114) and is the appropriate and expected response to victory (Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 54–55, 151).
11. J. J. Collins, “Daniel,” *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 85–115, 88.
12. The story of *Bel and the Dragon* also centers on Daniel. In this story he kills a dragon that the Babylonians are said to worship by feeding it cakes made out of pitch, fat, and hair. The cakes cause the dragon to burst open and die. Zimmerman compares Daniel killing this dragon to *EE*, and specifically proposes that the notion of cakes and hair result from misunderstanding and mistranslating the “winds” with which Marduk kills Tiamat (Frank Zimmerman, “Bel and the Dragon,” *VT* 8.4 [October, 1958]: 438–440). Marti Steussy, however, argues against this hypothesis (Marti J. Steussy, *Gardens in Babylon: Narrative and Faith in the Greek Legends of Daniel* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993], 55–100).
13. One is described as destructive, one is given dominion, and one is exceedingly strong. The descriptions of the beasts are not particular to the conflict topos. Rather, in ancient West Asian political oracles, use of animal imagery was widespread as was organization of a sequence of kingdoms. See examples in James C. VanderKam, “Prophecy and Apocalyptic in the Ancient Near East,” *CANE* 3:2083–2094, 2088, 2092.
14. Paul Mosca summarizes the development of this scholarship beginning with Aage Bentzen, whose work John Emerton used, and continuing with Cross and J. J. Collins (Paul G. Mosca, “Ugarit and Daniel 7: A Missing Link,” *Biblica* 67 [1986]: 496–517). Much of this scholarship, especially that of Bentzen and Emerton, is concerned with how “foreign,” “Canaanite” imagery found its way into the book of Daniel. Emerton followed Bentzen, who accepted Mowinckel’s problematic reconstruction of an Israelite autumn festival that included celebration of Yahweh’s victory over primordial enemies and subsequent enthronement. Bentzen considered this festival to be the occasion in which “Canaanite mythology” was preserved in Israelite tradition, as seen in Dan 7. Bentzen actually considered “the one like a son of man” to be the Davidic king, based on similarities between the conferral of power from the Ancient of Days to this figure and the endorsement of David in Ps 89. Emerton developed the idea that an Israelite enthronement festival was the vehicle for “Canaanite” mythological imagery. He speculated that the enthronement festival was an adaptation of a pre-Davidic Jebusite ritual. While Emerton’s speculation is creative, it depends

- on the survival of hypothetically reconstructed cultic events (John A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *JTS* n.s. 9 [1958]: 225–242). Likewise, Collins considers the descriptions of the Ancient of Days and "one like a son of man" to reflect Canaanite traditions. However, he concludes that Dan 7 preserves "independent mythological traditions" or represents "direct borrowing of extant Canaanite lore in the second century BCE" (J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977], 101).
15. Emerton, "The Origin," 225–242; Cross, *CMHE*, 17.
 16. Emerton was the first to argue for this similarity. Cross and J. J. Collins develop this interpretation and argue that the enthronement scene could not have been derived from royal psalms. Arthur J. Ferch argues against this comparison, criticizing it on several accounts. First, he argues that the beasts in Dan 7 are not comparable to Leviathan/Lōtanu or Rahab; second, he notes that "the one like the son of man" does not suffer a demise as does Ba'lu; third, he argues against the comparison of the Ancient of Days sitting in judgment with 'Ilu among the gods; and fourth, he questions whether Ba'lu even receives kingship in the *Ba'lu Cycle*. He states that "incidental correspondences are outweighed by significant differences" and cautions that "lone motifs must not be wrenched out of their contextual moorings" (Arthur J. Ferch, "Daniel 7 and Ugarit: A Reconsideration," *JBL* 99.1 [1980]: 75–86). While I appreciate his caution and agree that previous scholars may have overemphasized exact, one-for-one correspondences between Dan 7 and the *Ba'lu Cycle*, there are sufficient details to argue that Dan 7 employs the conflict motif. It exhibits concern with legitimate royal authority, using the conflict motif to portray the Ancient of Days, "one like a son of man," and "holy ones" as legitimate and the four earthly kingdoms as illegitimate.
 17. Emerton argued that the "one like a son of man" was Ba'lu reinterpreted and "democratized" as the "Jewish nation" (Emerton, "The Origin," 225–242). Cross accepts this interpretation and adds to comparison of the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7 with Ugaritic Ba'lu (Cross, *CMHE*, 17). This view is reasonable considering Dan 7:15–28, which allots the "holy ones" and people associated with them the kingdom and dominion that the "one like a son of man" received in Dan 7:1–14. However, it is possible that the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7:1–14 was not initially identified with "the people of the holy ones." Furthermore, it is by no means certain that the expression "people of the holy ones" would have meant the entire "Jewish nation," rather than some subset of Judeans. In later Jewish tradition a "son of man" figure is identified with an angel, such as Michael or Metatron. In Dan 7–12, however, Michael is not equated with the "one like a son of man," though he is still a prominent figure. He is described as "one of the chief princes" (Dan 10:13); "your prince" (Dan 10:21); "the great prince who stands for the children of your people"; and he faces the "prince of Greece" and the "prince of Persia" (Dan 12:1).

18. J. J. Collins reviews the philological evidence for the use of “holy ones.” In the HB, the majority of uses refer to angels, and in Daniel every other use of the term refers to angels. Their conflict with the last king is homologous to the socio-political situation of the “people of the holy ones” (J. J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 104–107). This is confirmed by the parallel descriptions of the “holy ones” and “people of the holy ones” receiving their everlasting kingdoms in Dan 7:18 and 7:27, respectively.
19. J. J. Collins notes that a second century BCE date is accepted for Dan 7–12 throughout critical scholarship. This date is based on the fact that Dan 7–12 purports to predict historical events and does so accurately up to the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but not afterward (J. J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 87–88). VanderKam concurs (VanderKam, “Prophecy and Apocalyptic,” 2090).
20. For concise summaries of the reconstructed chronology and events see Dov Gera, *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 223–240; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 113–123; and Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 3–15.
21. On the identification of these “intimate competitors,” see David Frankfurter, “Jews or Not? Reconstructing the ‘Other’ in Rev 2:9 and 3:9,” *HTR* 94.4 (2001): 403–425. As for the author, he identifies himself as John, but it is unclear which John this may be. For discussion of authorship, see Leonard Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 12–13.
22. Timothy Barnes argues for a precise date of composition during the winter of 68–69 CE, based on his interpretation of Rev 13:17–18 and 17:9–11 as referring to Nero (Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*, [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 36–41). John Marshall likewise argues for a date of 69–70 CE (John W. Marshall, *Parables of War: Reading John’s Jewish Apocalypse* [Toronto: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001], 88–97). Those who argue for a date during the reign of Domitian typically cite the following: first, the earliest reference to Revelation, made by Irenaeus in *Adv. Haer.* V, 30, 3, dates it to this period; second, the designation of Rome as “Babylon,” they argue, fits a post-70 context better than a pre-70 context, because in later Jewish literature Rome is called “Babylon” since both cities are associated with destructions of Jerusalem; third, the text’s description of the situation of *Christos*-followers fits the reign of Domitian (that is, accepting the alleged persecution under Domitian); fourth, a date during Nero’s reign is, perhaps, made less plausible by the text’s description of Laodicea in 3:17 as a prosperous city, when the city was recovering from an earthquake in the 60s CE (L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 1–10; Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 136–151; Adela Y. Collins, “Myth and History in the Book of Revelation: The Problem of its Date,” in

- Traditions in Transformation* [ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981], 402; Bert J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 118–119; Peerbolte, *The Book of Revelation*, 13–17]. For critique of speculation that Domitian persecuted *Christos*-followers, see L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 95–115; L. Thompson, “Social Location of Early Christian Apocalyptic,” *ANRW* II.26.3 (1996): 2615–2656, 2630–2631; J. Christian Wilson, “The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation,” *NTS* 39 (1993): 587–605; Paul Keresztes, “The Jews, the Christians, and Emperor Domitian,” *VigChr* 27 (1973): 1–28.
23. For detailed commentary, see Hermann Lichtenberger, “The Down-throw of the Dragon in Revelation 12 and the Down-fall of God’s Enemy,” in *The Fall of the Angels* (ed. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 119–147.
 24. This detail incorporates a tradition preserved in Isa 14, which describes the expulsion of a divine being who attempted to assume undue status. For a complete study of this tradition see Hugh Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).
 25. For the history of the development of this figure, see Peggy Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: SATAN in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); and Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
 26. The imagery of a mother being chased by a dragon in Rev 12 is generally thought to depend on the Greek/Egyptian myth of Leto/Isis versus Python/Seth-Typhon (Otto Böcher, *Die Johannesapokalypse* [Darmstadt: Buchgesellschaft, 1988], 68–76). Dieterich and Bousset first argued this, and more recently A. Y. Collins and Jan W. van Henten develop the hypothesis. A. Y. Collins has produced several studies of the conflict motif in Revelation, and she rightly emphasizes that the dragon figure in Rev 12 depends on both a Greek/Egyptian notion and biblical descriptions of a multi-headed dragon figure (A. Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976], 57–67).
 27. Composite beasts occur in conjunction with the conflict motif elsewhere, such as in Dan 7. Here Babylon, personified as a woman, is associated with a composite beast. In support of his argument that the tradition in Rev 12 is of Babylonian origins, Hermann Gunkel connected this woman and beast pair with Tiamat and her army of composite beasts (Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 366; *Creation and Chaos*, 231). Gunkel, of course, did not have access to subsequently discovered Ugaritic materials during his analysis of the conflict motif, so his conclusions have required revision.
 28. The description of a tongue as a sword also occurs in *Ahiqar* (discussed in Chapter 3), where the king’s tongue and command is compared to a dagger and to a weapon that breaks the ribs of a dragon. J. J. Collins traces the tongue as sword imagery in Rev 19 to Isa 11:4 in which a messiah is depicted using the

- “rod of his mouth” and “breath of his lips” as weapons. He explains that the LXX rendered the “rod of his mouth” as “the word of his mouth,” and that the notion of the messiah using his mouth as a weapon was developed further, as exemplified in 4 *Ezra* 13:9–11: “he sent forth from his mouth as it were a stream of fire and from his lips a flaming breath and from his tongue he shot forth a storm of sparks” (J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 277).
29. The favorable socio-political situation, according to Norman Cohn, is a desired overthrow of the Roman empire (Norman Cohn, “The Book of Revelation,” in *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001], 216). For discussion of the attitude toward Rome in Revelation, see Christopher A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); A. Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).
 30. I distinguish between the historical figure Jesus and the narrative figures Jesus, *Christos*, and “Jesus Christ.” We do not know what claims to authority or divinity the historical figure of Jesus may have made. We have a great deal of literature that reflects later Christological development in which “Jesus Christ” is divine and/or has a special relationship (sonship and/or other endorsement) to a deity. The examples discussed in this section (1 Cor 15:20–28; 2 Thess 2:1–12; *T. Ash.* 7:3; and *Odes Sol.* 22:5) characterize *Christos* as a divine warrior. In the narrative setting of these texts Jesus is not living as a human; he is a heavenly figure. I discuss elsewhere two gospel traditions in which the motif of Yahweh’s authority over the sea is used to promote the authority of Jesus within a narrative setting in which he is living as a human.
 31. For uses and connotations of “lamb” in NT literature, see Joachim Jeremias, “*amnos, arēn, arnion*,” in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 1:338–341.
 32. 1 Cor was likely written by Paul from Ephesus in 56–57 CE (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 48). For full discussion of Paul’s notions of apocalypse and combat, see Emma Wasserman, *Apocalypse as Holy War: Religious Polemic and Violence in the World of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, under contract).
 33. Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians*, 543, 558, 573.
 34. *Ibid.*, 568.
 35. Abraham Malherbe proposes that Paul wrote 2 Thess while in Corinth in 51 CE (Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000], 350, 364). A growing minority of scholars, however, regard 2 Thess as pseudonymous. Those who argue for its pseudonymity focus on the literary

- relationship between 1 and 2 Thess and discrepancies in the language, style, eschatology, and view of apostolic tradition of the two letters. For the history of this debate see, John A. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" *NTS* 25 (1979): 131–145. For the purposes of my argument, it is not necessary to settle this question.
36. The "Day of Yahweh" occurs in several HB prophetic texts as an event of punishment. Zeph 1:8 describes it as a time when princes and kings will be punished, when things will be utterly consumed (1:2–3), and a day of wrath (1:15); Joel 3:4 and Mal 3:23 reference the "great and terrible day of Yahweh" when, according to Joel 3:5–4:21, Yahweh judges and discerns between the righteous and wicked; Amos 5:18 describes the "the day of Yahweh" as a day of darkness not light.
 37. Various mss (aleph, B, various minuscules, and Church Fathers) read "person of lawlessness" (*anomia*), but more mss read "person of error" (*hamartia*) (A D, G, K, L, P, and many minuscules and Church Fathers). Bruce M. Metzger speculates that scribes replaced the more rare word *anomia* with the more common word *hamartia* (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [New York: United Bible Societies, 2002], 635).
 38. For an overview of various interpretations of the restraining force, see Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 432–433.
 39. For examples and discussion of the feature of periodization of history in apocalyptic and predictive texts, see VanderKam, "Prophecies and Apocalyptic," 2087–2093.
 40. Some mss lack "Jesus." Malherbe speculates that "Jesus" was dropped by later copyists in order to bring the original verse more in line with Isa 11:4 (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 424). Certainly the rest of the passage suggests that Jesus is the divine warrior being described. Also, some read "destroy" and others read "consume." Both verbs indicate termination, but "consume" would also resonate with Yahweh swallowing Death in Isa 25:8, which itself inverts the notion of Death swallowing his victims in order to emphasize Yahweh's victory over Death.
 41. As noted above, J. J. Collins traces this notion back to Isa 11:4.
 42. Malherbe evaluates hypotheses about the identity of the Lawless One, including Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Nero. Malherbe criticizes attempts to identify a historical person as the referent for the Lawless One on the grounds that 2 Thess imagines this figure within an eschatological framework (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 431–432). The author of 2 Thess 2:1–12 employs the conflict motif to portray this figure as an enemy whom Jesus as the divine warrior will defeat in the future.
 43. This text does not identify the enemy with a dragon or the sea/waters, nor does it mention specific divine enemies, Leviathan, Behemoth, a dragon, the sea/waters, or Death. However, it shares other narrative details that occur in

- conjunction with the conflict motif, such as characterizing the enemy as arrogant and the divine figure using his mouth/breath to defeat enemies.
44. While 2 Thess and 1 Cor date to the mid-first century CE, before the final form of Revelation, the final versions of *Odes Sol.* and *T. Ash.* postdate Revelation (see notes on dating these texts below). It is therefore possible that their descriptions of Jesus in combat with the dragon draw upon the conflict narrative in Revelation.
 45. *Odes Sol.* is a collection of anonymous poems, by tradition attributed to Solomon, and its origins and geographical location are unclear (Michael Lattke, *Odes of Solomon: A Commentary* [ed. Harold W. Attridge; trans. Marianne Ehrhardt; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009], 11–14). Select translations of *Odes Sol.* 22, which survives only in Syriac and Coptic, follow Lattke. The Syriac, Coptic, and Greek texts are available in Lattke, *Oden Salomos: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999). There are no complete mss of the *Odes*; rather they are reconstructed from two Syriac mss from the tenth and fifteenth centuries CE, one Greek mss from the third century CE, and one fourth century CE Coptic codex that quotes from the *Odes* (Lattke, *Odes of Solomon*, 3–4).
 46. The notion of Yahweh/*Theos* leveling a way for believers is an allusion to Isa 40:3, also cited by all four canonical gospels and the *Manual of Discipline*. *Odes Sol.* 22:7 associates *Theos* leveling a way for believers with reinvigorating them before the eschatological renewal.
 47. Lattke, *Odes of Solomon*, 315.
 48. *Ibid.*, 6–10.
 49. *Ibid.*, 11–14.
 50. I translate *di' hudatos* as “in the midst of [the] water” to indicate that the dragon is in the water. “In the midst of” is well within the semantic range for *dia*. Two mss variants read “dragon on the (*epi tou*) water,” which also suggests that the dragon is in the water. The alternative “through water” could be read in the sense that the dragon moves through water, following the spatial sense of *dia*. However, I want to avoid the sense “by means of water,” which does not fit the context.
 51. The Greek text is available in Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1978). *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* survives in fifteen Greek mss ranging in date from the tenth to the seventeenth century CE; over fifty Armenian mss that appear to be translated from Greek; and a few late Slavonic mss (Harm W. Hollander and Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* [Leiden: Brill, 1985], 10–14).
 52. Angel, *Chaos*, 114.
 53. Marc Philonenko, “Testaments des Douze Patriarches,” in *La Bible: Écrits intertestamentaires* (ed. André Dupont-Sommer and Marc Philonenko; Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 811–944, 919. The identification of the dragon with Pompey is speculative and depends on Philonenko’s dating of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

to the first or second century BCE (Philonenko, *Les interpolations chrétiennes des Testaments des Douze Patriarches et les manuscrits de Qumran* [Paris: Universitaires de France, 1960], 1–12). The text appears to have used the LXX, suggesting it was composed sometime after ca. 250 BCE. Philonenko and Dupont-Sommer have argued, based on the affinities between the *Testaments* and Qumran texts, for a date ca. 100–150 BCE (Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* [trans. Geza Vermes; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973], 301–305). The text itself is not preserved at Qumran, but there are fragments of texts that are similar to the *Testaments* containing traditions surrounding several of the sons of Jacob. Rather than providing certain evidence for an early composition date of the *Testaments*, this shows that the traditions from which the *Testaments* drew were available at Qumran as well (M. de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 107–123). Philonenko and others who prefer an early date for the *Testaments* consider the text to be an originally Judean document into which later Christian authors inserted statements about *Christos*, a hypothesis first proposed by Charles (Robert H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Twelve Patriarchs* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1908]). There are twelve passages in the *Testaments* that have been identified, speculatively, as Christian interpolations (Howard C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *OTP* 1:775–828). Among these are the phrases “even coming as a human, eating and drinking with humans,” and “*Theos* playing the part of a man,” in *T. Ash.* 7:3. Without these phrases, *T. Ash.* 7:3 would be similar to Isa 27:1, recasting Yahweh’s divine combat against the dragon as an eschatological event. However, de Jonge argues against the notion of Christian interpolations, and considers the whole text to be a Christian composition from the late second or early third century CE, which may or may not have substantially overhauled an earlier Judean document (Harm W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 82; de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature*, 98). For discussion of the larger methodological issues involved in identifying various pseudepigraphic texts as “Jewish” or “Christian,” see James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

54. See Chapter 3 note 27.

55. Peter-Ben Smit categorizes eschatological banquets (as referenced in the HB, NT, and noncanonical texts) into three types: “the celebratory banquet,” a victory feast for the divine warrior; the “destructive meal”; and “eschatological wedding celebrations” (Peter-Ben Smit, *Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom: Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian Abundance in the New Testament* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 22–28). The traditions treated here fall under the category of “destructive meal,” which is certainly related to the category of victory feasts for the divine warrior (the only HB example that is certain being Isa 25:6), but also

- include elements of combat and killing. In addition to Ezek 39:1–21; Jer 12:9; Isa 56:9; and Jer 46:10, in which defeated/punished corpses are feasted upon, Smit also lists HB instances in which Yahweh serves the carcass to those he wishes to punish: nations (Jer 25:15–34; 49:12; 51:7; Lam 4:21; Obad 16, Zech 12:2); Israel (Isa 51:17–22; Jer 8:14; 9:14; Ezek 23:31–34); and individuals (Hab 2:15–17; Ps 75:9). These examples share the notion of feasting upon carcasses, but differ in that those eating are being punished rather than sharing in utopian abundance.
56. The fact that these traditions about Leviathan and Behemoth are shared among these texts is sufficient to conclude that there was some body of Leviathan and Behemoth traditions beyond what is preserved in the biblical anthology. In other words, the authors of these texts did not independently make up these shared traditions. We do not have sufficient evidence to know whether or not these traditions were ever collected in a written source or if they only circulated orally. *Canticles Rabbah* 1:4 refers to something called “the secrets of Leviathan and Behemoth.” Irving Jacobs speculates that there were fuller collections of Leviathan and Behemoth stories and that *Canticles Rabbah* 1:4 might be referencing such a collection (Irving Jacobs, “Elements of Near Eastern Mythology in Rabbinic Aggadah,” *JJS* 28 [1977]: 1–11; 4 n.18). It is plausible that there was such a collection at some point. However, the date of *Canticles Rabbah* cannot be determined with accuracy, except to say that it existed by ca. 850 CE, when the text *Pesiqta Rabbati* quotes it extensively, and it postdates the Jerusalem Talmud (ca. late fourth or early fifth century CE). Therefore, if *Canticles Rabbah* refers to a written collection of Leviathan and Behemoth materials, we do not have sufficient evidence to conclude that such a collection was a source for the texts discussed here (2 *Baruch*, 4 *Ezra*, and 1 *Enoch*); rather, such a collection could just as well postdate these texts, and even draw from them.
 57. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 31.
 58. In 1 *Enoch*, the primary deity is called the “Head of Days,” *rē’sa mawā’ēl* in Ethiopic, rendering the sense of the Aramaic “Ancient of Days” in Dan 7:9. 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra* use “Lord,” “God,” and “Most High.” In the Syriac of 2 *Baruch*, that is *mr’*, *lh’*, and *mr̄ym’*, respectively. In the Latin of 4 *Ezra*, that is *Dominus*, *Deus*, and *Altissimum*. In my discussion of these texts, the designations Yahweh and *Theos* likewise refer to the primary Judean god.
 59. These select groups are termed “all who remain” in 2 *Baruch*; “elect ones” in 1 *Enoch*; and “my people” or “Israel” in 4 *Ezra*.
 60. Translation of the Syriac is from Daniel M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009). The short Greek (P. Oxy. 403) and Latin fragments (Cyprian, *Test.* 3.29) do not preserve this passage. The only complete mss of the text is the Syriac text 7a1. Consulting the Syriac original for select words, I translate *tnyn*’ as “dragons” rather than “monsters” as does Gurtner, because it is cognate with the Hebrew *tannīnīm*, which I translate elsewhere as dragons. The date and setting of the text are discussed below.

61. This verse (2 *Baruch* 29:3) about the Messiah immediately precedes the verse about Leviathan and Behemoth also being revealed in the eschatological moment or time being described. 2 *Baruch* 29:5 then, continues the eschatological speculation with a series of utopian images of abundance and rejoicing.
62. The passage states, “where my grandfather was taken up, the seventh from Adam” (1 *Enoch* 60:8). According to the genealogy in Gen 5, Enoch was born in the seventh generation from Adam and is the great-grandfather of Noah. Assuming 1 *Enoch* is following this genealogical tradition, the speaker here is Noah.
63. Translation of the Ethiopic is from Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch: A New English Edition with Commentary and Textual Notes* (Leiden; Brill: 1985). The text is preserved in its entirety only in Ethiopic. The verses with which I am concerned occur within the “The Parables of Enoch,” or “The Similitudes of Enoch” (1 *Enoch* 37:1–71:17). This portion of the text is delineated by introductory material, including the title “The Second Vision which he saw, a vision of wisdom, which Enoch saw, (Enoch) son of Jared” (1 *Enoch* 37:1), as well as an epilogue (1 *Enoch* 70:1–4). For further discussion of the five sections of 1 *Enoch*, as well as secondary literature on these divisions, see Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 45–46.
64. Though there is an Ethiopic word cognate with other Semitic lexemes that I have translated as dragon (*tnn*), it is not used here in the Ethiopic version, but rather ‘*anābārt*, plural of ‘*anbar*, meaning “whale” or “sea monster.”
65. Ms BM491 reads a past tense “were,” which is sometimes preferred, but M. Black and Michael Knibb both prefer the future tense and question the accuracy of BM491 (M. Black, *I Enoch*, 56; Michael Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1978], 143).
66. Many have followed Charles in emending 1 *Enoch* 60:24 to read that Leviathan and Behemoth are the feast rather than that they are fed (Robert H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1912], 119). This emendation is not necessary, but rather serves to bring 1 *Enoch* 60:24 in line with 4 *Ezra* 6:52 and 2 *Baruch* 29:4. However, the reading that they are to be fed/feasted, a passive form (*yessēsayu*) is firmly attested (M. Black, *I Enoch*, 230).
67. Whitney and Stone each discuss how 4 *Ezra*’s version of the six day creation story differs from that in Gen 1:1–2:4a (Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 32–38; Stone, 4 *Ezra* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990], 179–182).
68. Four Latin codexes of 4 *Ezra* from the ninth to eleventh centuries CE survive as well as various other Latin mss; there are versions in Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic; and fragments in Coptic (6th–8th cent. CE), Georgian (11th cent. CE), and Greek (4th cent. CE). Scholars have argued that the original composition was in Aramaic (L. Gry, C. C. Torrey, and J. Bloch) or Hebrew (G. H. Box, A. Kaminka, F. Zimmerman, and J. Licht). For these references see B. M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” *OTP* 1:520 n.12–13.

69. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 34; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 183. I agree with Whitney's conclusion that the Leviathan and Behemoth tradition preserved here originally existed independently from the creation narrative into which the author inserted it. The independence of this tradition is evidenced in *1 Enoch* 60 and *2 Baruch* 29, which both preserve the combat-banquet tradition and reference creation but do not narrate creation.
70. For uses and connotations of "lamb" in NT literature, see Jeremias, "amnos, arēn, arnion," *TDNT*, 1:338–341.
71. Identification of the Son of Man is not certain. Enoch is once called a "son of man" in the text (*1 Enoch* 60:10), and based on this, VanderKam, Leonhard Rost, and Knibb consider the Son of Man/Elect One to be Enoch (VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 110; Leonhard Rost, *Einleitung in die alttestamentlichen Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen einschliesslich der grossen Qumran-Handschriften* [Heidelberg: Quelle u. Meyer, 1971], 104; Michael Knibb, "The Ethiopic Book of Enoch," in *Outside the Old Testament* [ed. Marinus de Jonge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 26–55, 43). For my argument, it is not important whether the Son of Man is Enoch, an unnamed figure, or an imaginary future figure.
72. Throughout, the text calls this figure "my son." In the Latin text of *4 Ezra* 7:28, he is called "my son Jesus" and in 7:29 he is called "my son *Christus*"; in the Georgian of 7:29, he is called "my son the anointed," rendering the Latin *unctus*, attested elsewhere in the text, such as *4 Ezra* 12:32. However, the names Jesus and *Christus* are not used elsewhere in the text, and other versions of *4 Ezra* do not read "Jesus" or *Christus* in these verses. Stone identifies these as deliberate Christian alterations (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 208).
73. Ps 97:3–5 and Mic 1:4 describe entities melting from Yahweh's presence, and many passages attest to actions of Yahweh being accomplished by his words. Isa 11:4 describes Yahweh killing with the "rod of his mouth" and the "sword of his tongue." In Wis 12:9, Yahweh is able to destroy enemies with a single word. In *4 Ezra* 13, the mighty man destroys enemies with flames from his mouth, which are interpreted as words of rebuke. Thus, the vision and interpretation exhibit a blending of these notions from characterizations of Yahweh. As noted above, *Ahiqar*, Rev 19, and *2 Thess* 2:8 also describe breath, mouths, and tongues as weapons.
74. George Nickelsburg, Pierre Bogaert, Daniel Gurtner, Ian Scott, and Albertus Klijn agree that *2 Baruch* dates to after 70 CE, based on *2 Baruch* 32:2–4, which they reasonably interpret as reference to the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE: "For after a short time the building of Zion will be shaken so that it may be built again. But that building will not remain, but will be uprooted again after a time, and will remain desolate until a time. And afterward it must be renewed in glory and perfected forever." These scholars vary on a more precise dating: Bogaert argues 96 CE (Pierre Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch: Introduction*,

- traduction du syriaque et commentaire* [2 vols.; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969], 1:294–295); Nickelsburg concludes the late first century (George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005], 283); and Klijn argues for the first or second decade of the second century CE (Albertus Klijn, “2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch,” *OTP*, 617). For my purposes, the broader range accepted by Gurtner and Scott is sufficient: late first to early second century CE (Daniel Gurtner and Ian Scott, “2 *Baruch*,” Edition 2.0, *OCP*).
75. The text purports to be the work of Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch from the time of the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE. This pseudepigraphic framework gives the work a guise of antiquity and authority, and the purported historical setting at the time of the destruction of the first temple offers, thematically, a sense of shared crisis in the wake of the destruction of the second temple.
76. There is growing consensus that “The Similitudes of Enoch” (*1 Enoch* 37:1–71:17), which contains the passage discussed here (*1 Enoch* 60), dates to the first century CE. Greenfield and Stone date the final composition of this unit to the first century CE (Jonas C. Greenfield and M. Stone, “The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes,” *HTR* 70 [1977]: 60). They are followed by Nickelsburg and Whitney (Nickelsburg, “Review of J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*,” *CBQ* 40 [1978]: 411–419, 417–418; Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 46 n.51). Knibb argues for a more precise date, close to 100 CE (Knibb, “The Date of the Parables of Enoch: A Critical Review,” *NTS* 25 [1979]: 344–357), while Christopher Mearns dates it to 40–50 CE (Christopher Mearns, “Dating the Similitudes of Enoch” *NTS* 25 [1979]: 360–369). Józef Milik argued for a Greek Christian provenance for the “Similitudes,” dating this section (37–71) to the third century CE, but his argument has been rejected by the scholars just cited. The “Similitudes” is not present among the portions of *1 Enoch* found at Qumran, and Milik used this datum to support his late dating. However, since we cannot know what materials were destroyed or simply not found among Qumran collections, the apparent absence of the “Similitudes” at Qumran is insufficient as proof of a later date (Józef T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1976], 91–98). I have speculated about how the legitimating ideology in this text might have worked in a late first century CE context. However, regardless of the actual original historical context, an audience at any point thereafter could have self-identified with the “elect” and interpreted the text as validating themselves in comparison with whomever they might identify as the “sinners.” The text uses terms that are general and adaptable to different contexts. My argument that the text promotes the dominion of the “Head of Days” and subsequently the legitimacy of the “elect” would hold for an earlier or later dating as well.
77. As to the historical context of *4 Ezra* and the identity of the oppressing powers, the text was likely composed around 100 CE. The opening line claims that Ezra

received his visions in Babylon, “in the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city” (4 *Ezra* 3:1). This line likely refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, rather than its destruction in 586 BCE (Jacob M. Myers, *I and II Esdras* [AB 42; Garden City: Doubleday, 1974], 129–131). The narrative setting of 4 *Ezra* places Ezra in Babylon around 556 BCE, whereas a chronology based on the biblical accounts in Ezra-Nehemiah place Ezra’s activities a century or more later, during the reign of either Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE) or Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE) (Lester Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, Vol. 1 [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 291, 297, 324–329; Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* [New York: Routledge Press, 1998], 115). Thus, the internal dating of 4 *Ezra* appears to be based on events in the first century CE, rather than traditions it references from the sixth to fourth centuries BCE. The figure of Ezra and the setting of Babylonian exile were useful for commenting on the themes of temple destruction and the suffering of “Israel,” as conceived in this text. Similar to the narrative setting of 2 *Baruch* during the Babylonian exile, the narrative setting of 4 *Ezra* achieves thematic sympathy with a post-70 CE context. More specifically, Stone dates 4 *Ezra* to the latter part of the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE), and David A. DeSilva dates it to the brief reign of Nerva (96–98 CE), based on their interpretations of the eagle vision in 4 *Ezra* 11–12. The eagle representing Rome has three heads, which scholars identify as Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. The eagle is indicted by the messiah who rebukes the heads. Stone concludes that 4 *Ezra* was written toward the end of Domitian’s reign when his policies were most harsh toward Judeans (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 9–10). DeSilva disagrees, however, on account of the “two puny wings” that rule after the third head. He argues: “Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, an old senator whose reign was ‘puny’ (96–98 C.E.). Here the ‘prophecy’ fails, however, since the second puny wing, Trajan, turns out to be the most successful emperor since Augustus himself, reigning twenty years and expanding the empire’s boundaries to their furthest reach. It is therefore quite possible that the author wrote during Nerva’s reign or even at the beginning of Trajan’s, which would bring us up to 100 C.E., the ‘thirtieth year’ after Jerusalem’s destruction (4 *Ezra* 3:1). If this is true, then it would be quite significant that the author presents the indictment of Rome by God’s Messiah as an event already accomplished: the verdict had been rendered, and the sentence will soon be carried out” (David A. DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 331–332). Regardless of the exact year, “my people” are assured a positive outcome despite their present unfavorable circumstances, and are thus validated in the narrative.

78. For discussion of rabbinic traditions about Leviathan and Behemoth see, Reuven Kiperwasser and Dan D. Y. Shapira, “Irano-Talmudica II: Leviathan, Behemoth, and the ‘Domestication’ of Iranian Mythological Creatures in Eschatological Narratives of the Babylonian Talmud,” in *Shoshanat Yaakov: Ancient Jewish and Iranian Studies in Honor of Yaakov Elman* (ed. Steven Fine and Shai Secunda;

- Leiden: Brill, 2012): 203–235; Jefim Schirmann, *The Battle Between Behemot and Leviathan According to an Ancient Hebrew Piyyuṭ* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970); Binyamin Ish Shalom, “*tnyn lwytn wnhš lpšrw šl mwtyb ’gdy*,” *Da’at: A Journal of Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah* 19 (1987): 79–101.
79. *B. Baba Batra* is a tractate of *Nezikin*, which deals with civil matters, mostly land ownership. This section discusses regulations about measures, and the gemara expounds on measures, ships, and the sea. It includes a series of stories about impressive things people have seen at sea: “I saw an alligator . . .”; “a fish so big it destroyed a city”; and various sightings of Leviathan.
80. The Hebrew text is available in Abraham J. Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kuk, 1952–1955), 437–438. Wertheimer’s collection features texts from previously unpublished manuscripts found in genizot of Jerusalem and Egypt. Jacobs speculates that although this passage is preserved in a work of uncertain date, its language and style suggest that it may be based on early sources (Jacobs, “Elements,” 8–9).
81. Jacobs emphasized the resonance of some of these narrative details with *EE* and the *BC*, specifically the attempted swallowing of the warrior by an enemy (Tiamat and Mōtu) and the notion of the victorious warrior requiring divine support with his weaponry (Jacobs, “Elements,” 9). He argues that these details “clearly echo” *EE*, which is an overstatement. He compares Gabriel with Marduk, and interprets the talmudic version as indicating that Yahweh merely helps Gabriel with Gabriel’s sword. Whereas, the midrashic version “conforms to the biblical tradition” in which Yahweh kills Leviathan. However, his comparison of Gabriel’s status within the pantheon and Marduk’s status within the *EE* pantheon is faulty. Marduk is certainly not only the “hero of the pantheon” as Gabriel might be. Rather, *EE* narrates Marduk’s rise to ultimate dominion over all the other deities, a position much more comparable to Yahweh’s status than Gabriel’s. Rather, I interpret *b. Baba Batra* 74b–75a and the midrashic narrative as using Gabriel as a foil for Yahweh. Furthermore, the first- and early second-century CE texts discussed above offer a better and more interesting comparison than does *EE*. It is an ideological goal of those texts to promote the validity of a figure who is secondary to the primary deity; whereas, it is an ideological goal of the rabbinic narratives to assert the sole dominion of the “Holy One” as shown through his prerogative to subdue Leviathan.
82. The association of Leviathan and Behemoth with an eschatological banquet also survives in thirteenth to seventeenth century European Jewish art that depicts these figures along with a bird, Ziz, as part of a messianic banquet (Joseph Guttman, “Leviathan, Behemoth, and Ziz: Jewish Messianic Symbols in Art,” *HUCA* 39 [1968]: 219–230; Marc Michael Epstein, “Harnessing the Dragon: A Mythos Transformed in Medieval Jewish Literature and Art,” in *Myth and Method* [ed. Laurie L. Patton and Wendy Doniger; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996], 352–389).

83. An additional reference occurs at *j. Sanh* 7, 41a. This is further attestation for use of the epithet but does not provide additional characterization.
84. Other figures termed *šar šel* . . . , “Prince of (some region)” in rabbinic literature include Gabriel “prince of fire” and Jurqemi “prince of hail” (*Pes.* 118a); Gabriel and Michael, who are called princes of the “upper regions” (*ma ʾālāh*) (*Gen. Rab.* s.78); the prince/angel of the Egyptians whom Yahweh drowns first at the Reed Sea event (*Exod. Rab.* s. 22); and the “prince of the world (ʾōlām)” (*b. Yeb.* 16b, *b. Hull.* 60a, *b. Sanh.* 94a, *Exod. Rab.* 17:4). This indicates a rabbinic convention of applying such epithets to divine figures. The Prince of the Sea is identified with the “sea” of various biblical passages, and at least figuratively the Prince of the Sea has the capacity to be physically coextensive with the actual sea. *B. Baba Batra* 74b and *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1 do, however, propose identifying the Prince of the Sea with Rahab of Job 26:12, traditionally a sea-dragon figure. Among examples of the conflict topos, including biblical, Ugaritic, and Mesopotamian, there is fluidity between the characterized sea and various sea-dragons. The rabbinic narratives are the only instances in which these figures are explicitly identified with one another.
85. *B. Baba Batra* 74b, *Midrash Tanḥuma Huqqath* 1, and *Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 all use forms of the verb *b ʾṭ* “to trample, strike, kick” for Yahweh trampling the Prince of the Sea, and they all use forms of *hrg*, “to kill, execute, slay” for Yahweh slaying him. The root *b ʾṭ* only occurs twice in the MT, neither in verses relevant to the conflict motif nor in any material describing actions of Yahweh. The root *hrg* is common in the MT, and it is used with Yahweh as the subject. Among passages relevant to the conflict motif, *Isa* 27:1 uses *hrg* for Yahweh’s killing of the dragon in the sea.
86. I use the Hebrew text available in Shlomo Buber, *Midrash Tanḥuma* IV (Jerusalem: Ortsel, 1964), 97–98. There are two editions of *Midrash Tanḥuma*, the Standard edition and the Buber edition, based on two textual recensions, and these are further related to at least five other recensions of *Midrash Tanḥuma*. These midrashic collections may date, at the earliest, to the ninth century CE, though the texts purport to cite authorities from the fourth century CE. *Huqqath* 1 begins the midrash to *Num* 19:1; here, the standard edition and Buber edition do not significantly differ (John. T. Townsend, *Midrash Tanḥuma* [Hoboken: KTAV, 1989], xi–xii; Hermann Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* [trans. Markus Bockmuehl; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 303–305).
87. The MT of *Pis* 33:7 reads “as in a heap (*nēd*).” However, here and in several references to *Exod* 15:8, where the waters stand “as a heap (*nēd*),” *nēd* is read as *nôd*, a leather bottle or skin, which does not let water in or out (“*nôd*,” *Jast.*, 884).
88. The standard and Buber editions of *Midrash Tanḥuma* to Genesis and Exodus differ significantly. The standard edition of *Midrash Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarai* 3 preserves

the tradition of the “Holy One” slaying the Prince of the Sea. I use the Hebrew text printed in the edition *Midrash Tanhuma* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1971). A full translation is available in Samuel A. Berman, *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu* (Hoboken: KTAV, 1996).

89. The notion of continual suffering of the sea and Leviathan occurs in a late antique or early medieval bowl that records an incantation against “evil” enemies: “I will lay a spell upon you, the spell of the sea and the spell of Leviathan the dragon” (James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1913], 121, no. 2 ll. 3–4). This incantation is consistent with literary passages that associate the sea and Leviathan with one another and consider these figures to represent enemies. It also attests to the survival of extrabiblical traditions surrounding these figures throughout late antiquity.

CHAPTER 5

1. For example, F. M. Cross, *CMHE*, 151–163; Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea*, 15–126; Bernard Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 95, 147.
2. For example, Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated* (New York: de Gruyter, 2005), 24, 48–64; David Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 152–155.
3. When discussing specific rabbinic passages, I use the designation given in the text, such as “Holy One” and “Ruler of the Universe.” In my comparative discussion, I also refer to the primary Judean god as Yahweh/*Theos*. While rabbinic texts do not use the name Yahweh, they quote biblical passages about Yahweh and equate the “Holy One” with him. On various rabbinic designations for the deity, see Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, “Rabbinical Names of God,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* (ed. Cecil Roth and Geoffrey Wigoder; 16 vols.; Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 1971–1972), 7:677.
4. Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 344–377.
5. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 279–280.
6. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (AB 28; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 728.
7. Christopher S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; Garden City: Doubleday, 1986), 274.
8. France also argues against the “demonic interpretation” of the passage (France, *Matthew*, 377 n.23).
9. Adela Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 257–263, 260.
10. For uses of this term in Greek and Judean literature, see Wilhelm Bonn Schneemelcher, “*huiós*,” *TDNT*, 8:334–397. On the ideology of patrilineal descent

and the use of patrilineal descent as a mechanism for the construction of identities, see Caroline Johnson Hodge, “Patrilineal Descent and the Construction of Identities,” *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19–42.

11. The Hebrew text of Job 9:8 uses a *qal* masculine singular participle, *dōrek*, which the LXX translates with the masculine singular participle *peripatōn*. The Hebrew of Job 38:16 uses the second person masculine singular *hitpa ‘el* perfect of *hlk*: *hithallāktā*, which the LXX translates with the second person aorist active indicative *periepatēsas*. The *hitpa ‘el* of *hlk* carries an iterative or habitual meaning, which is accurately preserved with *peripateō*.
12. Commentaries to Mark 6:45–52 and the parallels in Matthew and John generally analyze these accounts as an alloform of the story of Jesus calming the sea, as I have. As with that story, scholars tend to cite the relevant HB passages, which describe Yahweh walking/treading on the sea, but they do not have the space to discuss fully the implications thereof. See Mann, *Mark*, 306; France, *Matthew*, 565–572; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2001), 2:321–322; and Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 673–674. For a focused study of the pericope see Patrick J. Madden, *Jesus Walking on the Sea* (New York: De Gruyter, 1997). Madden ultimately argues that the pericope was originally a post-resurrection story that has been displaced. Regardless, he offers a useful catalogue of potential parallels among non-Christian literature, though he concludes that there are “no real parallels” among them.
13. Batto discusses these traditions as examples of the conflict topos (Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 178–184).
14. 2 Macc offers a narrative of events in Jerusalem from ca. 175 BCE, when the high priest Jason instituted social and cultic innovations in the city (making Jerusalem a *polis* and building a gymnasium), to ca. 161 BCE, when the Maccabees successfully defeated the Seleucid general Nicanor. Judea had come under Seleucid rule ca. 200 BCE, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes became the Seleucid king in 175 BCE; he reigned until his death in 163 BCE. According to Judean sources, which present a biased account that is hostile to Antiochus, Antiochus deposed the high priest Onias III in favor of Jason, who paid for this endorsement. Menelaus, however, also sought Antiochus’s endorsement, and Antiochus deposed Jason. Controversy ensued when Menelaus and his brother Lysimachus took temple vessels to pay for political favors; Judeans objected, Jason attempted to depose Menelaus, and Antiochus intervened in support of Menelaus. In 169 BCE, Antiochus entered the temple and in 167 BCE, he pillaged Jerusalem and outlawed Judean cultic practices, including: sacrifices, Sabbath, and circumcision. Furthermore, he dedicated the Jerusalem temple to Olympian Zeus. The Hasmonean family began a revolt that was eventually successful in taking back the temple and region (Dov Gera, *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics*,

- 223–240; Jonathan Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 113–123; and Daniel Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 3–15).
15. This story is contained in a portion of gemara in the tractate *b. Baba Meši'a*, the second portion of the division of *Neziqin* (Damages). Within a discussion of civil law, this tractate focuses on the maintenance of equity in property relationships. The relevant gemara occurs in the fourth chapter, which deals with relationships between buyers and sellers, after a mishnah (4:10) about how the rules of fraud claims also apply to spoken words. This leads to discussion of wrongs committed by acts of speech. The story about Eliezar, also containing the brief story about Gamaliel, ends with a few statements that pertain to the topic of the mishnah, wrongs committed by words. Neusner speculates that these relevant concluding components account for the inclusion of the whole story of Eliezar within the treatment of this mishnah (Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia, An American Translation, XXIB: Tractate Bava Mesia, Chapters 3-4* [Brown Judaic Studies 214; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990], 157). I would add that Gamaliel's concern for "factions/dissensions" (*maḥālôqôt*) in his apology to Yahweh, as well as debate over the origins of acceptable halakic opinions throughout the story about Eliezar, are thematically related to the concern for communicating equitably with "proselytes" in the mishnah and its following discussion.
 16. There are several Tannaitic stories, with Babylonian and Palestinian parallels, that are set in the context of Gamaliel being on a ship, so we have several complementary motifs at work here. For treatment of this passage as well as discussion of the larger narrative about Eliezar in *b. Baba Meši'a* 59a–59b, see Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 35–63, esp. 55–56.
 17. Similarly, *y. Berakot* 9:1, 63b reserves the ability to control the sea for the "Holy One." In this story, a Judean boy successfully invokes the Judean god to calm a storm after his shipmates have unsuccessfully invoked their "idols" to do so. As in the various biblical examples of this motif, the ability to control the sea shows Yahweh to be incomparable among divine beings. Furthermore, the story emphasizes that human kings do not have sovereignty over the sea; rather, citing Ps 146:5–6, the text claims that this is the Judean god's prerogative as the creator of the heaven, earth, and seas.

CHAPTER 6

1. Karen Sonik, "From Hesiod's Abyss to Ovid's *rudis indigestaque moles*: Reading Chaos into the Babylonian 'Epic of Creation'," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaoskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 21–45.

2. Dina Katz, *Reconstructing Babylon*, 128.
3. Susan Niditch, *Ancient Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 52.
4. Brendon C. Benz, “Yamm as the Personification of Chaos? A Linguistic and Literary Argument for a Case of Mistaken Identity,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaaskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 127–146; Aaron Tugendhaft, “Unsettling Sovereignty”; “Politics and Time in the Baal Cycle”; “On *ym* and ^dA.AB.BA at Ugarit,” *UF* 42 (2011): 697–712.
5. For example, David Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*; Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*.
6. For example, Richard J. Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2011); Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible: Contents and Context* (New York: de Gruyter, 1988); Bernhard Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos*; Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*.
7. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*.
8. John Walton, “Creation in Gen 1:1-2:3 and the Ancient Near East: Order out of Disorder after *Chaaskampf*,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 43 (2008): 48–63; Wilfred G. Lambert, “Creation in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaaskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 44–47; Wayne Pitard, “Voices from the Dust: The Tablets from Ugarit and the Bible,” in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* (ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger Jr. New York: Sheffield, 2002), 251–275.
9. JoAnn Scurlock, “*Chaaskampf* Lost—*Chaaskampf* Regained: The Gunkel Hypothesis Revisited,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaaskampf Hypothesis* (ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 257–268, 268.
10. As discussed in Chapter 2, Tugendhaft explores the possibility that the *BC* contains a critique of the suzerain-vassal system (Tugendhaft, “Unsettling Sovereignty,” 368).
11. James VanderKam, “Prophecy and Apocalyptic,” 2090–2091.
12. Russel T. McCutcheon, “Myth,” 204.
13. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 147.

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