

CHAPTER 5: KEY THEOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN MOSAIC HISTORY

A) EDEN, THE HOLY MOUNTAINS, AND THE ETERNAL NOW

Three basic theological motifs are important for understanding Israel's history. These are: the eternal character of Israel's faith and its echoes in Near Eastern holy mountain theology, the polemical aspect of Biblical history as illustrated in the creation narratives, and the treaty/covenantal character of Biblical religion as expressed in the Eden account. These ideas are important because they dominate Biblical theology from beginning to end. While the importance of these ideas can not be overstated, they have not been appreciated adequately within the "conservative" wing of Biblical studies. The polemical theme behind Biblical history writing can be understood by looking carefully at the meaning and purpose of the Genesis creation account.

One of the most basic elements of Biblical faith was its eternal character. Biblical history constantly pointed both backward and forward. The Bible often referred to creation, Eden, the flood, the Patriarchs, the exodus, David, the exile, and Christ's earthly ministry. Biblical history continually pointed forward to Christ's return, the resurrection, and the eschaton. Each generation saw its relationship with Yahweh in the historical context of earlier and later events. Each generation also saw itself as a part of these events. They were the people of the Patriarchs, the exodus, and the promise. This historical concern can be seen immediately in the Bible's frequent inclusion of genealogical records dating back to Adam in Eden. The Biblical genealogies were more than simple history. They were theological statements. For example, Genesis 11 traced Abraham's genealogy back to Shem in order to demonstrate that Abraham inherited Noah's decree of Genesis 9:26-27. Noah had decreed that the descendants of Canaan should serve the descendants of Shem, while the descendants of Japheth should dwell in Shem's tents. These verses gave spiritual and religious authority to the West Semitic population and eventually to Abraham.

Adam and his fall remained a context for faith throughout the history of the believing community.¹ Perhaps before Moses was born, Eliphaz mentioned Adam in Job 15:7. Then Job asked in Job 31:33 if he had hidden his transgressions as Adam had hidden his in Eden. In the New Testament, Paul used the account of Adam in Romans 5:14, I Corinthians 15:22-45, and I Timothy 2:13-14. Adam's descendant Enoch was used for theological purposes in Hebrews 11:5 and Jude 14. In Job 22:16, Job mentioned the pre-flood world's rebellion against El Shaddai. Noah and his flood were mentioned in Isaiah 54:9 and in five New Testament passages.² Sodom and Gomorrah were used in a theological context twenty times in the rest of the Bible.³ Israel's exodus from Egypt remained a constant theme throughout the Bible.⁴ Israel was often referred to "Jacob," and Israel's kings were associated with "David."⁵

Biblical faith has also always been placed in the context of the future.⁶ As early as Genesis 3:15, Yahweh promised that a future descendant of Eve would remove God's curse on the earth. In Genesis 8:21, Yahweh promised Noah that a great flood would never again strike the earth as long as history remained. In Genesis 12:7, Yahweh promised Abraham that his descendants would be given the land. In Genesis 15:13 Yahweh warned Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land for 400

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Is. 51:3 looked forward to the restoration and promised that Yahweh would comfort Zion and make her wilderness like the Garden of Eden.

² Matt. 24:38-39; Lk. 6:48; 17:27; Heb. 11:7; I Pet. 3:20 and II Pet. 2:5.

³ Deut. 29:23; 32:32; Is. 1:9-10; 3:9; 13:19; Jer. 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lam. 4:6; Ezek. 16:46-56; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; Matt. 10:15; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 10:12; 17:29; II Pet. 2:6; Jude 17, and Rev. 11:8.

⁴ Is. 43:2, 16 looked forward to the restoration and promised that when they walked through the water and fire, God would be with them. He was the One who made a path through the sea. Is. 51:9-10 reassured Israel because Yahweh was the One who had defeated Rahab, and had turned the sea into a pathway.

⁵ Jer. 30:9

⁶ For the eschatological character of Biblical faith, see Jeong Koo Jeon, "Covenant Theology and Old Testament Ethics: Meredith G. Kline's Intrusion Ethics," *Kerux* 16 (2001).

years before Yahweh brought them back to the Promised Land. In Genesis 49:1, Jacob warned his sons of the events that would occur to their descendants in the distant future. In Genesis 49:8-12, Jacob promised that the ruler's staff would not depart from Judah's descendants until He came to Whom it belonged. Before the exodus, Job claimed in Job 19:23-29 that he knew that His Redeemer lived, and that He would take His stand on the earth. Job knew that He would see God even after his own flesh was destroyed. In Numbers 24:17, Balaam promised that in the distant future, a star would come from Jacob and a scepter would rise in Israel. Balaam claimed that this promised One would dominate the region. Again and again throughout Israel's history, Yahweh pointed His people to the distant future and encouraged them to view their lives in the context of later events.

Israel not only saw itself in a past and future historical context, but Israel also recognized on some level that the eternal promises pointed to a reality that was already present. Despite the appearance of the world around them, Yahweh's people always recognized that He was God of heaven and earth. He was ultimately in control of His whole creation and of everyone in it. So no power on earth could lift a hand against Him or His people without His sufferance. In Job 37:5-7, Elihu claimed that God did great things which they could not comprehend. He sealed the hand of every man so that all men may know His work. In Exodus 15:18, Moses sang that Yahweh would reign forever and ever. In Deuteronomy 32:39, Yahweh declared that there was no god beside Him. Psalm 47:2 declared Yahweh to be a great King over all the earth. Lamentations 5:19 declared that Yahweh ruled forever and His throne was from generation to generation. In Daniel 4:34-36, even Nebuchadnezzar was forced to confess that the Most High's dominion was an everlasting dominion. The Most High did His will in heaven and on earth. No one could ward off His hand. His works were true. His ways were just, and He was able to humble the proud. From the standpoint of Scripture, Yahweh's promised future eschatological reign was already a reality throughout the history of His people.

Israel also constantly saw its own spiritual life in the context of heaven. Israelites knew that they stood in God's presence, and that their sanctuaries were manifestations of heaven on earth. A basic part of the "heaven on earth" motif can be called "holy mountain theology." This was an ancient and pervasive theme. Some of the earliest surviving texts from the ancient Near East demonstrated the presence of holy mountain theology, and the motif was found in a surprisingly wide region. Holy mountain theology began in the Garden of Eden which was God's dwelling place on earth. When God created a garden in the land of Eden, He created an earthly place that was a manifestation of a heavenly reality.⁷ Perhaps the best Biblical evidence for this comes from Ezekiel 28:11-19. This passage combined Satan's revolt in heaven, Adam's revolt in the garden, and apostasy in the city of Tyre. The striking aspect of this prophecy was that it depicted the Garden of Eden as heaven on earth. Ezekiel described Eden as the "garden of God," the "holy mountain of God," and the place of "stones of fire."⁸ Meredith Kline understood this passage as evidence that the original Garden of Eden was a sanctuary for Yahweh.⁹ The holy mountain was the place where God walked with man. The region around the garden in Eden retained its role as a sanctuary even after Adam and Eve were driven from the Tree of Life. Adam's sons continued to have immediate access to God's presence. In Genesis 4:1-5, Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord. In Genesis 4:14-16, Cain complained that he would be hidden from God's face by becoming a vagrant and wanderer on the earth. Then Cain went out from the Lord's presence and settled east of Eden. This suggested that God's special presence remained in Eden even after the fall, and that men could meet with Him there. The holy mountain was also the place where laws and decrees were issued that affected the human race. The opening chapters of Genesis contained a number of divine decrees that would structure human history for all time. So the most important features of ancient Near Eastern holy mountain theology were already present in Moses' description of the Garden of Eden. Genesis depicted Eden as a mountain top site. Genesis 2:10-14 noted that the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowed out of Eden. These rivers flowed through the mountains north of Mesopotamia for the first third of their course. So Eden was located somewhere in these mountains. After its beginning in Eden, holy mountain theology was present almost everywhere in the ancient world. Wherever it was found, holy mountain motifs included descriptions of rivers flowing from the holy mountains.

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For a discussion of Eden as the primal sanctuary, see Robert Starke, "The Tree of Life: Protological to Eschatological," *Kerux* 11 (1996).

⁸Ezek. 28 described heaven, Eden, and God's holy mountain as places with "stones of fire."

Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, (Hamilton: Meredith G. Kline, 1993), 31.

Noah's descendants retained Eden's holy mountain theology as Mesopotamia and the Levant were resettled after Noah's flood. Noah's sons formed a wide spread culture of small farm villages in western Mesopotamia. Small worship sites were built in these villages that gradually became places of idolatry. At their earliest levels, these idolatrous worship sites were built on mounds of earth that were elevated above ground level. These elevated temples retained the tradition that God, or at least the gods, should be worshiped on high ground. These elevated temples in turn gave rise to the ziqqurats of Mesopotamia with their written holy mountain theology.¹⁰

Holy mountain theology gained a constant importance both in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. Within the Scriptural tradition, Abraham and the Patriarchs worshiped at holy mountain shrines like Bethel which was "the house of God." In Exodus 15:17, Yahweh promised to bring Israel to His holy dwelling place, the mountain of His inheritance. Exodus 3:1 noted that Sinai was the holy mountain of God. In the Pentateuch, Mount Sinai burned and quaked as Yahweh descended on His holy mountain at Sinai. After Joshua's conquest, Israel would worship Yahweh at holy mountain shrines like Shiloh and Bethel. After David's time, Jerusalem and its temple became Zion, the greatest of Yahweh's holy mountain. Zion was also heaven on earth. The Biblical history can only be understood with an appreciation of the importance of holy mountain/heaven on earth theology for Israel's worship. The holy mountain motif will remain a consistent theme throughout this study.

B) MOSES AND SINAI

1) CANAANITE HOLY MOUNTAIN IMAGERY

During the Ptolemaic era, one of Egypt's border fortresses was named the Migdol of Baal Zaphon.¹¹ While this border fortress was in use a thousand years after the Mosaic Age, it reflected an ancient tradition. Exodus 14:2 noted that a millennium earlier, there had also been a migdol fortress on Egypt's eastern border that was located beside a Canaanite worship center called Baal Zaphon. Such Baal shrines had been not uncommon in Egypt.¹² While the location of this Baal Zaphon shrine can no longer be determined, it may have been a small temple complex associated with a border fortress. As a Baal shrine, it may have been used by Canaanite sailors and other West Semitic people in the northeastern Nile delta. Exodus 14:1-2 described how God had led Israel out of Egypt. This passage recorded that God had intentionally led Israel to a place where they were forced to camp in front of this Baal Zaphon shrine. God may have led Israel to this place partly to teach Israel the difference between false worship sites and God's holy mountain.

2) SINAI AS A HOLY MOUNTAIN

After leading Israel across the *yam sūph*, Yahweh led Israel through the wilderness to Mount Sinai which was His holy mountain. It is no longer possible to determine with any certainty where this holy mountain was located, although the region around St. Catherine's monastery may be the most likely

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¹¹ The ziqqurats will be discussed later in reference to the Tower of Babel.

G. I. Davies noted one of these from the Ptolemaic Age. Cairo Papyrus 31169 included a section at 3.20-3 which listed four migdols located near Wadi Tumilat. One of these fortresses was probably called a migdol "of Baal-Zaphon." Davies, *The Way of the Wilderness*, 81, 116.

¹² The Egyptian texts mention several temples for Baal in Egypt. Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), 480-514. Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten im Ägypten*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967). While the Baal Zaphon shrine mentioned in Ex. 14:2 can not be located, there are two possible references to it in the Egyptian texts. Another possible reference is a stela of Rameses II. This stela was found at the migdol at Gebel-abu-Hasah. It mentions Baal among other gods. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament*, 249. However, Rameses II referred to Baal many times. So finding a reference by him to Baal is rather poor evidence that a given site should be identified as Migdol Baal Zaphon.

candidate.¹³ While Moses was still hiding from Pharaoh in the wilderness, he had led his flocks to this mountain. Exodus 3:1 described it as Mount Horeb and located it in the back of the wilderness. It is striking that the location of Sinai seems to have been known by the Israelites in Egypt. Exodus 4:27 noted that God sent Aaron to meet Moses at the mountain of God. Aaron seemed to have known where to go. Along the same lines, Exodus 18:5 noted that Jethro brought Moses' family to Sinai. This suggested that Jethro knew where Sinai was located. It is not impossible that knowledge of God's holy Mount Sinai was preserved and popularized by West Semitic peoples who worked periodically in the Egyptian mines in the Sinai Peninsula.

While the evidence is not clear enough for certainty, it seems likely that Mount Sinai was an ancient worship place similar to the holy mountain worship site at Bethel. The holy mountain worship site at Sinai may have been founded in the Early Bronze Age, although the region would not have been populated during the Mosaic Age. The traditional location for Sinai was the mountain at St. Catherine's monastery. If Sinai was at least somewhere in this area, it is striking that around 50 Early Bronze Age settlement sites have been identified in the southern Sinai peninsula scattered around the area that contains St. Catherine's monastery. The presence of these settlements in the Sinai should not be too surprising. The mountains around St. Catherine's monastery are the highest regions of the Sinai Massif at the south end of the Peninsula. Temperatures in this region average between ten and twenty degrees lower than the rest of the Sinai because of the region's elevation. While the area around St. Catherine's monastery is still an arid zone, the region does receive roughly three times as much rainfall as the rest of the Sinai.¹⁴ Even today, small agricultural settlements remain in the area and permanent streams can be found in the region.

It is not difficult to understand why a West Semitic population scattered through the southern Sinai Peninsula during the Early Bronze Age would have chosen a holy mountain worship site just as the West Semitic population in the Levant had chosen holy mountain sites like Bethel. The antiquity and importance of Mount Sinai may be implied by the fact that Elijah still knew the mountain's location more than a half millennium later. I Kings 19:8-14 noted that Elijah walked without food and water for 40 days before he arrived at Sinai. This suggested both that he knew how to find Mount Sinai and that the mountain was far south of Israel's border. Perhaps the best recent Evangelical study of Sinai was James Hoffmeier's book *Ancient Israel in Sinai*.¹⁵

There could hardly have been a greater contrast than the difference between Baal's shrine on the Egyptian frontier and Yahweh's holy mountain. Mount Sinai was everything that Baal Zaphon only claimed to be. That contrast was clearly intentional. Israel had fallen into Baal worship in Egypt. Now they saw clearly the foolishness of Baal worship in the light of Yahweh's burning glory.¹⁶ Mount Sinai had all of the

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Between the Tih Plateau and the Sinai Massif, a broad band of low wadis and valleys would have given the Israelites access to the center of the Peninsula. They could then have traveled south through the Watia Pass to the region around St. Catherine's monastery. The wadis and valleys in this band stretched across the whole Peninsula. This was a well known route through the region in antiquity. If Mount Sinai was located near St. Catherine's monastery, both Aaron and later Elijah would have been able to follow this well known route to find Sinai.

For a discussion of temperature and rainfall figures across the Sinai, see Ned Greenwood, *The Sinai: A Physical Geography*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 51-69. On p. 58, Greenwood noted that the area around St. Catherine averages around 75 mm of rainfall per year. In the Sinai Peninsula, that is exceeded only by El Arish near the Mediterranean Sea coast. The region around Tor receives 13 mm, Abu Rudeis 23 mm, Nahki 26 mm, and Bir Gefgafa 33 mm. Even the city of Suez at the mouth of the Suez Canal receives only 27 mm of rainfall per year.

James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Traditions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Hoffmeier defended a location for Sinai at Ras Safsafeh near St. Catherine's Monastery. Hoffmeier is an Egyptologist and the director of the North Sinai Archaeological Project. He founded the Egyptology Sectional for SBL.

Richard Clifford discussed the similarities between Sinai and Baal's Mount Zaphon. Clifford noted that Yahweh appeared in the cloud and fire of a storm theophany just as the storm god Baal appeared on Zaphon. Clifford noted that Moses and Israel's elders climbed Sinai and "worshiped." Clifford argued that the Hebrew verb "worshiped" was the same word used in the Ugaritic Baal texts to describe a worshiper who approached a god's dwelling. Clifford noted that the Israelites saw a brick pavement of lapis lazuli as clear as the heavens beneath Yahweh's feet on Sinai. He noted that Baal's temple contained both bricks and clear lapis lazuli. Clifford also noted that Moses and the elders "ate and drank" in Yahweh's presence, just as there was eating and drinking in the presence of Baal and El. Clifford noted that decrees were issued on Sinai, just as they were issued on Baal's holy mountain. He noted that the Exodus traditions described Yahweh's law

basic characteristics of holy mountain theology across the Near East. It was the mountain of God.¹⁷ It burned with supernatural fire to the heart of the heavens. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 4:11 and 5:22-26,

You approached and stood below the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire to the heart of the heavens, darkness, cloud and thick cloud.

Yahweh spoke these words to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud and the thick cloud, a great voice. He did not add them. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. As you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness and the mountain burned with fire, all the heads of your tribes and your elders approached me. You said, Behold, Yahweh our God has shown us His glory and His greatness. We heard His voice from the midst of the fire. This day, we have seen that God speaks with man and yet he lives. Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If again we hear the voice of Yahweh our God any more, we shall die. Who of all flesh has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire as we (have) and has survived?

It was probably a place where the heavenly tabernacle was seen. Yahweh commanded Moses to build the wilderness tabernacle according to the pattern that he had seen on Sinai. Moses wrote in Exodus 25:8-9, 25:40, "Make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in your midst. According to all that I will show you, make the tabernacle and all of the vessels. See that you make them according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."

Mount Sinai was a place where Israel encountered Yahweh, and heard His great voice thunder from the heart of heaven.¹⁸ It was the place where divine decrees were issued.¹⁹ Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 4:12, "Yahweh spoke to you from the midst of the fire; a sound of words you were hearing, but a form you were not seeing, only a voice." Sinai was also the source of life giving water. In Exodus 17:6, Moses struck the rock so that water flowed from it. In Deuteronomy 9:21, Moses recorded that a brook then flowed down from Mount Sinai.²⁰

3) THE TABERNACLE AS HEAVEN ON EARTH

Yahweh commanded Moses to build a tabernacle so that He could dwell among the wilderness community.²¹ The tabernacle was to be modeled after the heavenly temple that he had seen on the top of

being given on "the mountain," "Sinai," and "Horeb." Clifford concluded that the account of Mount Sinai borrowed motifs from the sacred mountain theology of Palestine. Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1972.

David Noel Freedman, "Temple without Hands," in *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*, (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, 1977), 21-30.

¹⁷Ex. 19:9; 19:16-21; 24:9-18; Deut. 4:32-36.

¹⁸Deut. 4:10; 5:9-21.

¹⁹Perevolotsky and Finkelstein noted that the mountains in southern Sinai were made from volcanic rock. They were impermeable to water. So the limited amount of rain that fell in the region did not sink into limestone and disappear. The rain flowed down the mountain sides and collected beneath the soil in the valleys. Bedouin in the region sank wells and irrigated crops with this rain water. Airam Perevolotsky and Israel Finkelstein, "The Southern Sinai Exodus Route in Ecological Perspective," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9 (1985):26-41. While a limited amount of ground water would have been available at Sinai, it is difficult to explain a stream flowing from Mount Sinai that contained enough water for up to two million people (if that number is correct). This life giving water from Sinai was probably a miracle instead of a natural occurrence. It was also a polemical event. The Pharaohs had claimed to be able to summon the primal deep to rise into their wells. Yahweh actually did what Pharaoh only claimed to be able to do. Ps. 105:41 claimed that the water from Sinai flowed like a river. This suggests a great deal of water instead of a trickle.

²⁰William Shea suggested that one of the Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions in the Sinai actually recorded the construction of the tabernacle. The Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions were found in 1960 by Georg Gerster. They were written on the rock at Egypt's Sinai mines. The inscriptions are difficult to translate and several interpretations have been offered for them. Shea suggested that one of the inscriptions should be translated as "And for the congregation and Hobab, a mighty furnace." Shea suggested that this should be interpreted to mean, "A mighty furnace (or smelter) (was supplied) for the

Sinai. In Hebrews 8:5, the author of Hebrews interpreted Exodus 25:40 to prove that Israel's earthly sanctuary was a copy and shadow of the heavenly reality.²² It is striking how similar Israel's tabernacle was to motifs associated with Canaanite worship. There were surprising similarities between Yahweh's tabernacle at Sinai and an older form of Canaanite religion than Baal worship. While Israel was in Egypt, Baal rose to a dominant position in Canaanite religion. Baal's rise to power was recorded in Canaanite mythology in a number of ways. One of these was the fact the Baal replaced the old father god El as the god of Mount Zaphon.²³ El moved his holy mountain to Mount Amanus instead of Zaphon. El lived on Mount Amanus in a mountain top tent that was located at the source of the cosmic waters. Mount Amanus was the place where men and gods could meet with El, and it was a place where authoritative decrees were issued. Even Baal was forced to seek El's permission on Amanus before Baal could build his temple on Mount Zaphon. A few words used in Exodus to describe Yahweh's tabernacle were also used in the Ugaritic texts to describe El's mountain top tent dwelling. Richard Clifford noted that both tents were constructed with "tent-frames." The same West Semitic word was used for these "tent frames" in the Hebrew and Ugaritic texts. Clifford noted that both tents were also described as being made by divinely commissioned craftsmen. Clifford noted the hanging pomegranates on Aaron's garments resembled the hanging pomegranates on a pedestal at Ugarit.²⁴ When Baal first reigned on Mount Zaphon instead of El, Baal was forced to live in the same kind of mountain top tent that El had used. Only Baal's conquests gave him the right to construct a temple for himself on his holy mountain.

Yahweh's tabernacle at Sinai was even consecrated by spiritual fire within the tent, just as Baal's temple on Mount Zaphon had been constructed by spiritual fire.²⁵ In Exodus 29:43, Yahweh promised that

congregation (of Israel) and Habab (the Kenite from Midian)." Shea suggested that the text referred to the Hobab mentioned in Num. 10:29 and Judg. 4:11. He suggested that the text recorded the construction of the bronze articles for the Sinai tabernacle. Shea argued that the inscriptions were written either during the 12th Dynasty or the 18th Dynasty. If the later date was accepted, the texts were written close to the time of the exodus. William H. Shea, "New Light on the Exodus and on Construction of the Tabernacle: Gerster's Proto-Sinaitic Inscription No. 1," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 25 (1987): 73-96. Shea's position is controversial. The standard work on the subject is Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet*, (Wiesbaden: Kommission beto Harrassowitz, 1988). For an earlier discussion, see Albright, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and their Decipherment*. Cornfeld argued that the Egyptian Sinai mines were destroyed by an earthquake. He claimed that the mines were then taken over by Midianites. Cornfeld argued that this new population built a worship site at the mines that included a holy of holies. In the worship place, a bronze serpent with a gilded head was found. Cornfeld argued for a relationship of some kind between this serpent and Num. 21:9. Gaalyah Cornfeld, *Archaeology of the Bible: Book by Book*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 43. Cornfeld's position was also controversial. There has been a lot of debate about how the archaeological evidence at Serabit el-Khadim should be understood and whether it contained high places. For a summary of the discussion, see W. Boyd Barrick, "The Funerary Character of "High Places" in Ancient Palestine: A Reassessment," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975): 565-95. Kitchen raised another interesting point about the tabernacle. He noted that the tabernacle was placed in the center of a rectangular camp made up of Israel's tribes. Kitchen noted that this resembled the encampment pattern used by Ramesses II in his Syrian campaign. Ramesses II erected a tent shrine in the center of a rectangular encampment of his army divisions. Kitchen suggested that Moses used his Egyptian military training as he led Israel. K. A. Kitchen, "Some Egyptian Background to the Old Testament," *The Tyndale House Bulletin* 5-6 (1960): 11. This parallel is stronger if a 19th Dynasty exodus date is assumed, but it is not clear how long Egypt used this encampment pattern.

²²Ex. 25:8-9; 26:30.

²³The word El was both the West Semitic name for a specific deity and a generic name for god. In the Old Testament, Israel's God was often called El or names derived from it. Israel's Patriarchal name for God had been El Shaddai, the "God of the Mountains." This suggests that Baal worship may have been an apostasy against an earlier correct believing tradition.

²⁴Clifford noted that the tabernacle was built by the craftsman Bezalel in Ex. 31:3. Baal's temple was built by the Ugaritic craftsman god. Ex. 28:33-4 noted that the priest's garment was to be decorated with pomegranates suspended from the edge. Clifford noted that a circular pedestal at Ugarit was decorated with pomegranates in a similar way. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 126. Richard Clifford, "The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971): 226. G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 143.

²⁵Spiritual fire was often associated with temples and deities in the ancient Near East. Versnel noted that Zeus defended his temple with spiritual fire. Hecate demonstrated his presence by a fire that over the city. Later texts depicted Hecate as a formless fire. See the discussion in H. S. Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God? Some Reflections on Greco-Roman Epiphany," in Dirk van der Plas, ed. *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions*, (Leiden:

the tabernacle would be consecrated by His glory.²⁶ Moses recorded in Exodus 40:34-38 that the cloud of fire filled the wilderness tabernacle when it was dedicated. Even Moses was unable to enter the tent because Yahweh's glory filled it. Throughout Israel's wilderness journey, Yahweh's cloud of fire and smoke was on Yahweh's tabernacle. Sinai very visibly was the kind of place that Baal Zaphon should have been if it was really Baal's holy mountain.²⁷ The Israelites had seen that Baal's temple was just a small building in the dust and that its god could not deliver them. Now they saw the fire, thunder, voice, life giving water and glory of a real holy mountain, Yahweh's ancient dwelling place.

Mount Sinai was a deeply impressive holy mountain and its story would be handed down through Israel's history. Yet Sinai was also Israel's past and not its future. Other than Elijah's brief trip to Sinai, the mountain itself would play little direct role in Israel's faith after the close of the Pentateuch. Sinai's future significance would be limited largely to the application of revelations that had been received there in the past. Israel was about to enter the Promised Land. In God's land, Israel would worship Yahweh at a variety of ancient holy mountain sites like Bethel and Gilgal. After king David's reign, these ancient holy mountain sites would be replaced at least in theory by one central worship site. The great mountain for Israel's future would be Zion. Jerusalem and its temple would come to be both a physical and spiritual reality. It would be God's heavenly holy mountain dwelling place manifested on earth.

4) LAW FROM THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

When Yahweh revealed His law to Israel from Sinai, God expressed it in a specific historical context. God's law was given to the wilderness generation in a way that was appropriate to their historical and theological setting. God expressed His law with the context of covenant or treaty concepts which were common in the Mosaic Age. Several authors have noted that the Exodus account of the Sinai covenant contained features that resembled the international treaty pattern.²⁸ Sarna suggested that the treaty pattern could be seen within the Decalogue itself. Sarna suggested that the words, "I am Yahweh your God," constituted the treaty preamble. Sarna suggested that the historical prologue could be seen behind the words, "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage." Sarna noted that the list of commandments then constituted the treaty stipulations. Sarna noted that the other treaty features were not included in the Decalogue but were incorporated elsewhere in the Pentateuch. Sarna noted that the treaty requirement that the treaty text be deposited was followed in Exodus 25:16. This verse required that the tablets of the covenant be placed within the ark. The treaty requirement of periodic reading was followed when Yahweh required that the treaty be read to Israel at the Feast of Booths every seventh year. Sarna noted that the treaty witnesses were included when heaven and earth were called as

E. J. Brill, 1987), 51. After Baal built his temple on Mount Zaphon, spiritual fire burned within the temple for a week forming the temple articles.

Divine glory fire was a common element of ancient Near Eastern religions. Sargon the Great's daughter Enheduana recorded a hymn to the goddess Inana around 2300 BC. In this text, Inana was described as resplendent light clothed in radiance. The hymn of Inana claimed that people who came into the presence of the goddess were awed into silence by her terrifying radiance. Jeremy Black, et al, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 315-16. The strength found in any idolatrous system comes from the degree that it imitates the truth.

F. Charles Fensham, "Thunder-Stones in Ugaritic," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 18 (1959): 273-74. Patrick D. Miller, Jr. "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 27 (1965): 256-61.

Sarna described the relationship between Israel's covenant and the international treaty form in these words, "When we state that the national covenant between God and Israel, the *b'rit* at Sinai, is inspired by the ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties, we refer to the concept and the outward form. That is to say, this kind of solemn treaty as the accepted instrument by which desired relationships were effectuated and regulated served as the conceptual model; and the conventional, formal, written expression of these arrangements influenced the biblical narration. We do not mean to suggest, however, that the biblical *b'rit* is a slavish imitation of contemporary Near Eastern norms. On the contrary, it displays an originality and independence that transforms it into a wholly new creation, the innovative nature of which can only be adequately appreciated against the background of the classical model." Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 136. Beyerlin argued that the Hittite international treaty pattern stood behind parts of Exodus. He argued that there were so many strong parallels between the Hittite treaties and the Decalogue that the Decalogue must have been modeled on the international treaties of the day. He further noted that the Hittite treaties were not valid until they were written, so the Decalogue must have existed in written form from a very early time as well. Walter Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965).

witnesses against Israel if they rebelled against the covenant. Finally, the blessings and curses of the covenant were included in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.²⁹

The Ten Commandments formed the heart of the Sinai covenant.³⁰ These commandments were first written on two stone tablets by Yahweh Himself.³¹ These original treaty documents were smashed as Moses descended from Sinai to deal with Israel's sin. Moses may have smashed them in anger to demonstrate that the covenant was being broken even as it was being formed. When Israel repented of the golden calf sin, Moses returned to Sinai. God told Moses to carve for himself a replacement pair of tablets. These were preserved within or beside the Ark of the Covenant.³² There has been a lot of debate about why there were two tablets. Some authors suggest that one table contained commandments that centered on the believer's relationship with God, while the other tablet contained commandments that centered on interpersonal relationships. Kline suggested instead that all ten commands appeared on both tablets. In treaties, the sovereign and the vassal each kept a copy of a treaty in their temples. Kline suggested that Moses carried two tablets because God lived among His people.³³

There has also been a debate about why some of the Ten Commandments were so short while others were so long. D. W. Buck noted an interesting possibility. Buck noted that some commandments like "thou shalt not steal" were very short. Other commandments were quite long, like the Sabbath commandment and the first commandment. Buck noted that some authors have seen the short commands as ideas that were well known from Israel's culture, while the long commands were new ideas that God was teaching Israel for the first time.³⁴ It is interesting that there was no reference to the Sabbath command in Scripture after the creation account. Most other commands were recorded as being kept already in the Patriarchal Age.³⁵

The commandments given by Yahweh were expressions of eternal truth, but they were also highly appropriate for a West Semitic community that had recently lived in Egypt. The Ten Commandments echoed legal traditions found both in Egypt and in a Semitic context in Mesopotamia. Exodus 20:3

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³⁰ Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 137-38.

³¹ Gilchrist argued that the key idea behind *torah* in the Old Testament was not "law," but rather "instruction" or "direction." He argued that Israel's ritual system was "shot through with strands of gospel and grace." Gilchrist argued that reducing "torah" to "law" stripped the word of its theological and personal meaning for Israel. Torah was given to teach believers how to live a life of faith by grace. P. R. Gilchrist, "Toward a Covenantal Definition of TORA," 93-108 in *Interpretation and History*, (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986). Traditionally, this would be called the "third use of the law." It was proposed first by Melancthon who was a supporter of Martin Luther. Gilchrist differed from traditional Reformation theology in the degree of emphasis that he placed on this use of the law.

³² The Israelites were quite familiar with such stone tablets, or "stele," from Egypt where they were widely used for religious and historical purposes. The inhabitants of Palestine had also used "standing stones," although not as widely. The tablets may also have drawn on an ancient Mesopotamian tradition. The Sumerians and Akkadians believed in the existence of "tablets of destiny" in the spiritual realm. These possibly clay tablets were made and controlled by the gods. The *Enuma Elish* is a Babylonian creation account. It claimed that Marduk had built a shrine. Marduk had placed in the shrine the Tablets of Destiny. The Babylonian Myth of Zu declared that these Tablets of Destiny were divine. They contained the decrees of the gods. Any god or man who owned these tablets gained sovereignty by possessing them. Possession of the Tablets of Destiny could also make a man immune from the dangers of battle. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. The motif of a stone tablet written by God was not unknown in Egypt. An Old Kingdom text written in Sinai by Pharaoh Dedkere-Isesi described a stela written by a god. That stela mentioned a secret mine in the Sinai. Breasted noted that the phrase "writing of the god himself" was the common designation for an ancient text. So a very old text from Sinai had led them to the mine. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, I:120.

³³ 1 Kings 8:9 noted that these stone tablets were still contained within the Ark of the Covenant in Solomon's time.

Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963).

³⁴ D. W. Buck, "Exodus 20:1-17," *Lutheran Theological Journal*, 16.2 (1982): 65-75.

³⁵ Kaiser argued that the Ten Commandments were not new revelation. Instead, the basic principle behind the Ten Commandments had always been known by God's people. Kaiser pointed to Gen. 26:5 which claimed that Abraham had kept God's charge, commandments, statutes, and ordinances. This implies that Abraham knew a lot about God's law. Kaiser argued that all of the Ten Commandments were implied in the book of Genesis. He suggested that God had held people responsible to obey His law for thousands of years before He wrote them in stone on Sinai. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "God's Promise, Plan, and His Gracious Law," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 33 (1990): 289-302.

commanded that Israel have no other god "before," or "in defiance of," Yahweh.³⁶ Exodus 20:4 commanded that Israel make no idols. This verse demanded that the nation make no image as an idol of anything in heaven above, the earth beneath, or the water under the earth. This prohibition demanded that the ancient Egyptian world view be rejected. The Egyptians believed that the earth was an island floating on the primal sea. They believed that there were indeed many gods in the heavens above the earth, on the earth itself, and in the primal sea beneath the earth. None of these Egyptian deities were to be allowed in Israel in the future. Edward Curtis argued that the Egyptian gods had all made their presence known through images, but Yahweh never did so. Yahweh was sovereign, and was not subject to the work of a craftsman or to the kind of magic that made wooden images into idols.³⁷

Exodus 20:8-12 demanded that Israel keep Yahweh's Sabbaths and these verses grounded the Sabbath in creation itself.³⁸ The idea of a "week" was an ancient motif in Moses' day although it took several forms.³⁹ The ancient Near East as a whole had structured time in a seven day week for many centuries, but this motif had been linked to the four quarters of the lunar month.⁴⁰ Like the ancient Near East as a whole, the Egyptians had used a seven day chronological system that was tied to the quarters of the moon. An Egyptian hymn to the sun god Amon-Re mentioned the New Moon feast, the Sixth Day feast, and the Quarter Month feast.⁴¹ This hymn was written half way through Israel's period of the Judges. George Hughes argued that the ancient Egyptians celebrated the New Moon day, the New Crescent day, the First Quarter day, and the Full Moon day. Hughes also noted that one of the most important days in the lunar cycle in Egypt was the sixth day of the lunar cycle. This day completed the reconstruction of the

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J. J. Stamm and M. E. Andrew note that it has become popular to translate the first command as forbidding the worship of another god "in defiance of Me" instead of "beside Me." They noted that there has been a lot of debate about whether this command really required a belief in monotheism, or whether it just required the sole worship of Yahweh among all of the other gods. J. J. Stamm and M. E. Andrew, *The Ten Commandments in Recent Research*. London: SCM Press, 1967.

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Edward Curtis, "The Theological Basis for the Prohibition of Images in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28 (1985): 277-88.

³⁸

The Sabbath has been the topic of substantial academic discussion. Recent studies of the Sabbath include the following. W. A. M. Beuken, "Exodus 16.5, 23 A Rule Regarding the Keeping of the Sabbath?" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32 (1985): 3-14. Jon Paulien, "Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9.1-2 (1998): 179-186. Robert G. Rayburn, "Should Christians Observe the Sabbath?" *Presbyterion* 10 (1984): 72-86. George W. Reid, "Faith under Pressure: The Sabbath as Case Study," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9.1-2 (1998): 141-49. Robert L. Reymond, "Lord's Day Observance: Man's Proper Response to the Fourth Commandment." *Presbyterion* 13 (1987): 7-23. Matitiah Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84 (1972): 447-59. Robert I. Vasholz, "Amusements on the Sabbath: a Puritan Response." *Presbyterion* 13 (1987): 24-8. Harold Weiss, "The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 311-21.

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Several suggestions have been made for ancient Near Eastern parallels to the Sabbath. Clark argued that the name *shapat-tum* in Mesopotamia referred to a day of rest and appeasement of the gods. It was a day when actions were unlucky. Clay, *Amurru*, 55.

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Ringgren noted that in Mesopotamia, the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th day of the lunar month were thought to be unlucky. During these days, men refrained from some activities because these were evil days. Ringgren noted that this contrasts sharply with the Sabbath in Israel. Ringgren noted that certain days of the month were feast days in Mesopotamia like the new moon on the first day of the month and the full moon on the 15th day of the month. The full moon was called the *sapattu*. Ringgren noted that the Mesopotamian *sapattu* maybe related to the Israelite Sabbath since the Old Testament was also interested in "the new moons and Sabbaths." Helmer Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973). Cyrus Gordon noted that seven day periods were common in the mythologies of the ancient Near East. The observance of seven day time periods was also common as a reflection of the phases of the lunar month. Gordon noted that the Babylonians had special religious days on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th day of the lunar cycle. The 15th day of this lunar cycle was called the *shapattu*. Yet no nation emphasized the Sabbath as much as Israel. He noted that Israel demythologized the Sabbath by grounding it in Yahweh's creative activity. He also noted that in Israel, the "week of weeks" pattern resulted in the dates for both Passover and the year of Jubilee. Cyrus Gordon, "The Biblical Sabbath: Its Origin and Observance in the Ancient Near East," *Judaism* 31 (1982): 12-6. Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," 447-59.

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Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 366.

Eye of Horus.⁴² The importance of this can be seen when it is remembered that Israel fell into idolatry in Egypt. Many of the people who were gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai had once celebrated the quarters of the lunar cycle, and would be tempted to do so in the future. After all, in Egypt the moon was associated with Hathor. She was also goddess of the Sinai wilderness. To fight this form of idolatry, Moses preserved the New Moon festival when the moon could not be seen at all. It was rather unlikely that anyone would worship the moon on a night when it could not be seen. Moses preserved the New Moon festival to provide a chronological anchor for Israel's Sabbaths. The Sabbath always fell nine days after the New Moon. So the Sabbaths could never fall on a day that was being used to worship the moon.⁴³

Moses stressed that the Sabbath was a holy day.⁴⁴ Exodus 16:29 stressed that Yahweh had given His Sabbaths to Israel. Ezekiel 20:12 added not only that the Sabbath had been given to the nation but also that the Sabbath had been a "sign" that Israel may know that Yahweh sanctified them. Meredith Kline argued that Exodus 31:15-17 called the Sabbath the "sign" of God's covenant with Israel. Kline suggested that the Sabbath served as a parallel to the sovereign's seal placed on the back of a treaty document. He suggested that the creator placed on world history the Sabbath seal as a sign of His ownership and authority.⁴⁵ If the Sabbath was a sign, it may have paralleled the rainbow which served as a covenant sign for Noah's covenant and circumcision which served as the covenant sign of Abraham's covenant. This may explain why those who violated the Sabbath commands were to be executed for blasphemy against Yahweh's character instead of just rebellion.⁴⁶

Yahweh's fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12 required that the Israelites honor their parents that they may remain in Yahweh's land for a long time.⁴⁷ Moses recorded in Exodus 4:18 that he had obeyed this command himself before he had led Israel from Egypt. This verse noted that Moses had requested Jethro's permission to return to Egypt. As Moses' father in law and employer, Jethro had authority over Moses who respected that authority. The ancient Near East recognized the practical value of respecting parents.⁴⁸ The ancient Egyptians also recognized the importance of honoring one's parents. An Egyptian Wisdom text called *The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-Hotep* noted that a son who listened to his father would have success in life. Sons who honored their fathers would learn how to be accepted by the government officials who would employ them in the future. They would have learned obedience and respect in the home, and those qualities would be very important life skills in the future.

Yahweh's fifth commandment was far more than a requirement that children should obey their parents. The Israelites had extended families. Children, parents, and grandparents often lived together in large households. The fifth commandment required families to live together in peace, righteousness, and order. In this way, family values and religious beliefs would be handed down to successive generations.

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George R. Hughes, "The Sixth Day of the Lunar Month and the Demotic Word for 'Cult Guild,'" *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archeologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 16 (1958): 146-60.

⁴³ Yahweh's fourth commandment grounded Israel's seven day week in His own creation activity instead of the phases of the lunar cycle. Yahweh claimed that He had created the whole world in six days, and had rested on the seventh day. So Yahweh commanded Israel to rest on the seventh day as well. The fourth commandment might have been a new ordinance given at Sinai for the first time. While evangelical scholarship has often branded it a "creation ordinance," it is striking that the word "Sabbath" never appeared in Genesis. Instead Yahweh frequently stressed to the wilderness community that He had given them the Sabbaths. It is unlikely that Israel would have been able to celebrate the Sabbath in Egypt other than the Egyptian celebrations to honor the moon.

⁴⁴ Ex. 16:23, 20:11, and 35:2

⁴⁵ Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*.

⁴⁶ Num. 15:30.

⁴⁷ Stamm and Andrew interpreted this commandment in terms of Prov. 19:26 and 20:20. They noted that aged parents were often treated with cruelty after their capacity for work was diminished. They noted that this command required the Israelites to provide the necessities of life to their aged parents. Stamm and Andrew noted Reventlow's view that this command required respect for the aged parents' paterfamilias, or family authority. Stamm and Andrew also noted Harrelson's view that this commandment served as a bridge between the two tablets of the law since it involved obligations to both God and man. Stamm and Andrew, *The Ten Commandments in Recent Research*.

⁴⁸ Currid noted that the Code of Hammurabi's law 192 declared that a son's tongue must be cut off if he repudiated his parents. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Volume 2: Exodus 19-40*, (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2001), 75.

This can be seen in Genesis 18:17-19. Yahweh Himself claimed that He had chosen Abraham so that Abraham would command his household to obey the Lord. Yahweh declared that by the obedience of future generations, His promises to Abraham would be fulfilled. As fathers in Israel commanded their children to fear Yahweh, the Israelites would live long in the land that He had given them. When rebellion shook the family, the nation as a whole departed from God, and was driven from the land.

Yahweh's sixth commandment was that the Israelites should not commit murder. It did not forbid warfare or public executions of convicts. The prohibition of murder was recognized in every culture. The same was true to a lesser extent of Yahweh's seventh commandment against adultery. The ancient Near East did not worry very much about immorality by unmarried people. Immorality was even at times incorporated into fertility cult worship like Baalism. Yet even here, it was regulated and structured. Adultery by married people caused social unrest and was not tolerated. In Mesopotamia, the *Code of Hammurabi* required couples caught in adultery to be tied up and thrown into the river. The *Code* did contain a provision allowing the guilty wife's husband to spare the couple's life with the king's permission. While no law codes have survived from ancient Egypt the Egyptians viewed adultery in a similar way. Immorality by unmarried people was only punished inconsistently in Egypt. Adultery by married people was a different matter. An 18th Dynasty Egyptian Wisdom text called *The Teaching of Ani* warned Ani's son to guard himself against foreign women who would tempt him into adultery. Such women may be pretty, but they were a trap that led to great crime and death. In Egypt, adultery by married people was punished by legal prosecution, public humiliation, and at times even death. C. J. Eyre noted several examples of Egyptian prohibitions against adultery. He noted the Salt Papyrus #124 which included accusations against a man named Paneb. He was a 19th Dynasty foreman who worked in the Valley of the Kings. Paneb's son went to the royal court and accused him of having committed adultery with the wives of several men.⁴⁹ Martin Noth noted a key difference between Israel's view of adultery and the perspective of other nations in the ancient Near East. In other nations, adultery was punished if someone complained. Noth argued that adultery was a matter of public concern in Israel. The whole community was involved in maintaining the purity of family life.⁵⁰

Yahweh's eighth commandment was that the Israelites should not steal. Theft in Israel was not punished by confining people in prison. Theft was punished by requiring the thieves to repay the victim multiples of the amount stolen.⁵¹ Frank Eakin argued that the Israelites were a very poor people. So theft would often deprive people of their livelihood. Eakin also argued that all possessions in Israel were perceived as coming ultimately from God. So any theft in Israel could be perceived as stealing from God Himself.⁵² Like the commandments against adultery and murder, this commandment was a basic principle of cultures across the whole ancient Near East. The *Code of Hammurabi* in Mesopotamia ordered that anyone caught stealing should be put to death.⁵³ An Egyptian example of the concern over robbery can be seen in an Egyptian wisdom text called *The Teaching of Amenemope* warned people not to use property fraudulently.⁵⁴

Yahweh's ninth commandment required the Israelites not to bear false witness. This was also a common concern in the ancient Near East. *The Code of Hammurabi* decreed that a witness be put to death if he gave false testimony in a court case that involved the death penalty. False testimony involving

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⁵⁰ C. J. Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 92-105.

⁵¹ Martin Noth, *The Laws of the Pentateuch and Other Studies*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966).

⁵² Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," 92-105. Recently, the ancient Egyptian view of immorality and adultery was examined by Galpaz-Feller who arrived at similar conclusions. Pnina Galpaz-Feller, "Private Lives and Public Censure-Adultery in Ancient Egypt and Biblical Israel," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2004): 153-161. Galpaz-Feller gave a number of examples from ancient Egyptian texts. Than Galpaz-Feller concluded that adultery was not a capital offense in Egypt, it was viewed as a moral failure that deserved public censure.

⁵³ Frank E. Eakin, Jr., *The Religion and Culture of Israel*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), 72-3.

⁵⁴ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 163-77.

The name Amenemope is also often spelled Amenemapt, or Amen-em-apt.

grain or money would carry a lesser penalty.⁵⁵ Along the same line, the Egyptian wisdom text *The Teaching of Amenemope* warned the Egyptians not to testify in court with false words.⁵⁶

Yahweh's tenth commandment in Exodus 20:17 was that the Israelites should not covet. This command also had an Egyptian parallel. *The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-Hotep* warned people not to be greedy or covetous. It warned that people became angry and contentious when they received even a little of what they coveted.⁵⁷ Along the same lines, *The Teaching of Amenemope* warned that it would be better to live off only five *apts* of land than to live off five thousand *apts* of land obtained by fraud or violence. Land obtained with covetousness did not really profit.⁵⁸

The laws that Yahweh gave Israel on Sinai were much deeper and more profound than the laws of other nations. Yahweh required obedience from the heart that transcended simple actions. However, Yahweh's law was also given within the context of the ancient Near East, and would have been understood by anyone in that culture.⁵⁹

5) THUTMOSE III AND YAHWEH'S GLORY

After spending many days on Sinai, and after seeing Yahweh's theophanic presence many times, Moses made a strange request in Exodus 33:18-23. As Moses returned to the glory fire of Sinai, Moses asked to see God's glory. That seems at first sight to be rather odd. Exodus 24:9-10 recorded that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and Israel's 70 elders had seen God on Sinai.⁶⁰ Exodus 33:11 claimed that Moses spoke with God face to face. If Moses had seen Yahweh's theophanic presence several times before this, why would he ask to see God's glory in a more complete way? Moses may have made this request because of his background in the Egyptian court. Thutmose III had made an interesting claim in his coronation inscription.

Ascent to Heaven

He opened for] me the doors of heaven; he opened the portals of the horizon of Re. I flew to heaven as a divine hawk, beholding his form in heaven; I adored his majesty _____ feast. I saw the glorious forms of the Horizon-God upon his mysterious ways in heaven.

Coronation in Heaven

Re himself established me, I was dignified with the diadems which [we]re upon his head, his serpent-diadem, rested upon [my forehead] ---- [he satisfied] me with all his glories; I was sated with the counsels of the gods, like Horus, when he counted his body at the house of my father, Amon-Re. I was [present]ed with the dignities of a god, with ----- my diadems.⁶¹

The supporters of Thutmose III claimed that Re gave him a series of new names when he was crowned in heaven by the sun god. These new names were accompanied by decrees that were intended to shape his future. These claims included the following promises.

First Name

He fixed my Horus upon the standard; he made me mighty as a mighty bull. He caused that I should shine in the midst of Thebes [in this my name, Horus: "Mighty Bull, Shining in Thebes"].

Fifth Name

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⁵⁶ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 166-177.

⁵⁷ Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*.

⁵⁸ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 414.

⁵⁹ E. A. W. Budge, *The Teaching of Amen-em-Apt: Son of Kanekht*, (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1924).

⁶⁰ Moses had argued in Gen. 26:5 that God's law was not a new thing. It had already been known to some degree by Israel's Patriarchs.

⁶¹ John Hilber argued that this was a formal covenant ratification ceremony. John W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 177-90.

Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:61.

I am his' son who came forth from him, a likeness fashioned like the presider over Hesret; he beautified all my forms, in this my name, Son of Re: "Thutmose, Beautiful of Form," living forever and ever.⁶²

Thutmose III claimed to have seen the true form of the sun god in his heavenly sphere. He claimed that he had already received all of Re's glory.

This was a somewhat unusual claim for ancient Egypt. Similar claims were normally made about the deceased who would enter god's presence. It was unusual for someone to claim to see the sun god's true form in this life. The desire to see the sun god's true form can be seen already in a Middle Kingdom Egyptian text that was written during Israel's Patriarchal Age. Coffin Spell 491 claimed that a path would be opened for the deceased person's soul to enter Re's shrine in heaven. There the deceased would see Re in his true form. Coffin Spell 492 was rather similar. It claimed that the deceased person's spirit would enter the gates of heaven and see the true shape of Re in his shrine. This motif can be seen in a 13th century BC Semitic context in an Egyptian stela found in level 5 at Bethshean. This text read in part, "May my soul go to the place which it desires, without being imprisoned. May I see Ra in the lands of Bakjau (Mountains of Sunrise), while the gods adore him."⁶³ An 18th Dynasty example of this motif can be seen in the tomb of the Gardener Nakht at Thebes. The text promised the deceased gardener, "May he cause you to come and go to his temple to behold the beauty of his face, and to receive cakes from what his ka gives on the occasion of every feast in heaven and on earth."⁶⁴ Another 18th Dynasty example can be seen in a stela of Amenhotep who was an officer of chariotry and later a high priest. He claimed,

An offering which the king gives to Osiris, foremost of westerners, to Wepwawet, lord of the hallowed and to Wennefer in all his names, his images and his true forms, that they may grant transfiguration in heaven with Re', strength upon earth with Geb and justification in the necropolis with Osiris.⁶⁵

All of these claims were promises for the afterlife. The claims by Hatshepsut and Thutmose III were rather different.

Breasted argued that Thutmose III's claim should be understood within the context of his power struggle for control of Egypt. Thutmose I had claimed that he appeared like Re.⁶⁶ Hatshepsut had gone beyond this. She had made claims that went far beyond afterlife promises. Hatshepsut had claimed that her birth had been by divine decree and that she had been created to rule the land. Hatshepsut claimed that Amon-Re had appeared to her mother. She had seen him in the form of a God. He had intercourse with her, and Hatshepsut was born as the daughter of Amon-Re.⁶⁷ Thutmose III's supporters countered with the claim that he had already been taken to heaven. He had already seen the sun God in His true heavenly form and had already received Re's full glory.⁶⁸

Both Moses and the Israelites may have known these claims, although there has been a debate about whether the parts of the temples containing these texts were open to the public.⁶⁹ The coronation inscription of Thutmose III may have been written around the time that Moses fled to Sinai, and Thutmose III had only died a few years before the exodus. Moses may well have requested the same kind of experience that Thutmose III claimed to have received. While Moses' reasons for this request were not recorded, he may have been seeking a ratification of his own authority, or he may simply have been seeking a deeper knowledge of God.

⁶² Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:62.

⁶³ Thompson, *Mekal: The God of Beth-Shan*, 55.

⁶⁴ Lise Manniche, "The Tomb of Nakht, the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161) as Copied by Robert Hay," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 72 (1986): 61.

⁶⁵ Barbara Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1984), 306.

⁶⁶ Stewart, *Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings*, 1.

⁶⁷ Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:80.

⁶⁸ Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:58-61.

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Mia Rikalanoted in an EEF posting on 7/26/08 that most of what is known about cultic practices in Egypt actually comes from the later Greek period temples. It is not really known if the public would have seen the inscription that described Hatshepsut's birth. Hatshepsut's claim to divine birth was echoed in later New Kingdom birth room texts by Amenhotep III and Ramesses II.

Yahweh responded to Moses' request by declaring that Moses could not see God's face and live. Yet Yahweh agreed to show Moses as much of His glory as a man could see. The Lord hid Moses in a cleft of the rock while all of His glory passed before him. In Exodus 34:29-35, Moses came down from Sinai. He did not know that the skin of his face shone brightly because he had seen much of Yahweh's glory.⁷⁰ Moses put a veil before his face so that the Israelites would not be afraid to approach him. He removed this veil when he turned to God in prayer. The Jews may well have seen Moses' radiance as strong evidence that he had seen the face of God. Even Amenhotep II had claimed such radiance for himself.⁷¹ In his building inscription at Karnak, Amenhotep II claimed to be the likeness of Re incarnate. He claimed that Re made him shine at Thebes and Karnak. He claimed to be the splendid emanation of the god Atum.⁷² Having come out of this Egyptian context, the Israelites may have seen Moses' radiance as a divine affirmation of his right to rule the nation.

C) THE SEA CROSSING AND HYKSOS THEOLOGY

1) ISRAEL'S SEA CROSSING AND BAAL'S COMBAT MOTIFS

One of the more interesting questions involved in Israel's sea crossing has been the relationship between the exodus and Baal's mythological battle against the sea. Several mainstream authors have suggested that the sea crossing account should be understood as a reworked version of a mythical battle against either chaos or the great primal deep.⁷³ Such battle accounts were found from one end of the Fertile Crescent to the other. Theodore Gaster listed nine Near Eastern myths that he believes were variant forms of this story.⁷⁴ Several other mainstream authors have argued that the sea crossing should be understood as a reworked form of the Canaanite myth of Baal's battle against the sea god Yam.⁷⁵ They justified connecting the sea crossing with the Baal Yam myth by pointing to several parallels. 1) Both the Canaanite texts and some later Biblical texts personified the sea. 2) Israel was delivered by splitting Yam/Sea, while Baal conquered by cleaving Yam/Sea to the bottom. 3) The dried sea bed was attributed in Exodus to a strong east wind, while Baal was the storm god. 4) Moses lifted a special staff in the air and

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Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," 159-73 in W. Boyd Barrick and John Spencer, eds. *In the Shelter of Elyon*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

⁷¹ If Israel left Egypt in the 18th Dynasty, Amenhotep II would have been the Pharaoh of the exodus.

⁷² Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:317.

⁷³ A similar perspective was developed as recently as 1992 by Bernard Batto. He claimed that the sea crossing account was an Israelite myth that was presented as narrative. Then working on the basis of the documentary hypothesis, he tried to distinguish the ways that the exodus myth appeared in the J, E, and P redactors. Batto argued that the P material in the account most clearly interpreted the sea crossing as part of the divine combat myth and especially the myth of Baal and Yam. Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 102-134.

⁷⁴ Theodor Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 138. This material has been used to interpret Scripture ever since Herman Gunkel first drew the parallel in 1895. See Brevard S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," *Vetus Testamentum* 20 (1970): 412-13, who notes that Gunkel and Kaiser saw myth language in the Old Testament. Herman Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1921). Otto Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel*, (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1962). George W. Coats, "The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif," *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 254-55, and Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 728-37.

⁷⁵ Richard Clifford listed Ex. 15 as one of many Biblical examples of the Near Eastern creation myth. See Richard J. Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," *Orientalia* 53 (1984): 200. Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 320-23. For the parallels between Ex. 15 and the Baal Yam myth, see Theodor Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 9 (1952): 81-5. See also H. Daniel Beeby, "The Exodus against the Background of Mythology," *Southeast Asia Journal of Theology* 11 (1962): 96. Watson argues that the chaos motif has often been misapplied and that the slain dragon motif only entered Israel's literature after 587 B.C. Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible*, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005).

produced the split sea. Baal conquered Yam with a special club built by a god. 5) The Canaanite texts saw Baal's victory over Yam as being a victory over an entity who was both the Sea and the River. Biblical texts combined the sea crossing with Israel's later crossing of the Jordan. 6) Baal's defeat of Yam gained him a kingship, while Yahweh's defeat of Pharaoh gained Him sole rule over His people. 7) Both Baal and Yahweh were described as acting in wrath. 8) Baal's conquest led to the construction of his temple on his holy mountain. In Exodus 15, Yahweh led His people to His holy mountain, and the sanctuary which He had established. 9) In both Canaanite and Biblical texts, this mountain was the site of conflict. It was also the meeting place of man with God, and of the divine assembly.

Frank Eakin discussed the relationship between the sea crossing account and the Baal Yam myth. Eakin noted the presence of a Baal Zaphon sanctuary at Tahpanhes. Eakin argued that there are two possible conclusions that might follow from the presence of a Baal Zaphon shrine in the region. First, the Israelites in Goshen may have been aware of the Baal shrine. Eakin argued that the presence of this Baal shrine may have colored the exodus story as it was handed down in oral tradition and as it was later put into written form. Eakin suggested another possibility as well. Eakin suggested that the sea crossing event may originally have been associated with Baal instead of Yahweh. Eakin suggested that the sea crossing account may originally have recorded the Hyksos flight from Egypt instead of an Israelite exodus from the land. Eakin assumed that the Hyksos worshiped Baal, and he argued that the Hyksos would have interpreted their deliverance from the land in terms of Baal's deliverance. They may have seen the sea crossing event as historization of the Baal Yam myth.⁷⁶

Robert Chisholm argued that the sea crossing event was intended partly as a polemical argument against Baal worship. Chisholm noted that Yahweh revealed Himself in Moses' time as a great Warrior King.⁷⁷ Like Baal, Yahweh claimed to control the storm and to prove His ability to do so in the plague of thunder, hail, and lightning in Exodus 9:23-24. Chisholm argued that Yahweh proved Himself to be such a strong warrior that the population of Canaan trembled because of His victory. Chisholm noted that Baal's opponent in the Ugaritic myths had been the sea and death. At the sea crossing, Yahweh demonstrated His authority over the sea and the underworld. However, Yahweh did not defeat mythological enemies. He defeated real people in history. Chisholm then noted a number of details in the sea crossing account that resembled details in the Baal Yam myth.⁷⁸

Similarities between the sea crossing account and the Baal Yam myth suggest that Israel's sea crossing miracle may have been intended by Yahweh partly as a theological argument intended to refute Canaanite religion. However, there is a problem with this suggestion. The problem is that no texts or pictures prove that Baal was known in Egypt at this time. The earliest indisputable evidence for Baal in Egypt came from the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Baal was almost unknown in 18th Dynasty texts, but he became a common presence in the 19th Dynasty. Superficially at least, this would seem to suggest two possibilities. Either that Israel's sea crossing account was not intended to refute Baal worship or that Israel's sea crossing must have happened during the 19th Dynasty when Baal worship was an important force in Egypt. A possible answer to this problem was implied in Eakin's article. Eakin assumed that Egypt's Hyksos rulers worshiped Baal. This was a common assumption until rather recently. If the Hyksos worshiped Baal, then Baal worship would have been a powerful presence in the Northeast Delta, because the Hyksos ruled from Avaris in the Northeast Delta. A polemical event intended to refute Baal worship might then have been appropriate. The question is, did the Hyksos really worship Baal or are recent authors correct in denying the presence of Baal in Egypt during their reign?

2) EARLY EVIDENCE FOR BAAL WORSHIP

⁷⁶ Eakin, "The Reed Sea and Baalism," 382.

⁷⁷ On Baal and Yahweh as divine kings, see Gary V. Smith, "The Concept of God / the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible," *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982): 18-38.

⁷⁸ Chisholm argued that Moses celebrated Yahweh's victory in terms that resembled the Baal myth at Ugarit. Moses promised that Yahweh would lead Israel across the Jordan to His mountain inheritance, His dwelling place, and His sanctuary. There Yahweh would rule as King forever. Chisholm argued that the Hebrew words "mountain of inheritance" in Ex. 15:17 resembled closely the words *gr nhlt* in the Baal myth where it described Baal's mountain dwelling place. Chisholm noted that *ktw-w-ks* told Baal that his kingdom would last forever. Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "The Polemic against Baalism in Israel's Early History and Literature," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (1994): 271-83.

Circumstantial evidence may suggest that the Hyksos did worship Baal as has traditionally been claimed. There seems little doubt that Egypt was aware of the culture of the Levant, and that their knowledge of this region began early in Egyptian history. Large numbers of Egyptians lived in Canaan during the Proto-Dynastic Age.⁷⁹ As this early Egyptian presence in Palestine disappeared, sea trade began between Byblos and Egypt. There is no way to determine when Baal worship became a strong force among the Canaanites in Byblos and other cities of the Levant. Pettinato claimed that the earliest reference to a god named Baal has been found in a West Semitic context on a god list from Abu Salabikh. This list was written around 2600 BC. The name Baal also appeared in personal and place names at Ebla, and the city contained both a "Chapel of Ba'al" and a "Ba'al Quarter." During the Ur III period in Mesopotamia, a person lived who was named *baalili*. This name meant, "Ba'al is my god." The name Baal was also found as an element of four personal names at Mari.⁸⁰ Pettinato claimed that in these contexts, the name was spelled *ba'al* when it referred to a deity and *be-lu* when it was used as an appellation like "lord."⁸¹ Since Baal was worshiped over such a wide time and geographical area, it is not surprising that myths related to Baal took many forms.⁸² While Baal's name has been preserved in early texts, mythical Baal motifs earlier than the Ugaritic texts have largely not survived. Presumably there were myths about Baal if he was worshiped as a deity, but they can not be reconstructed. Albright argued that the myth of Baal and Mot was written sometime between 2100 BC and the 13th century BC.

By the Middle Kingdom, Canaanite sea trade had become both ancient and extensive. The Canaanites at Tyre later claimed that the Canaanites had invented sea travel when a man named Usoos sailed a tree into the sea.⁸³ Egypt's sea trade with the Canaanites in Byblos began at least by Egypt's Proto-Dynastic Age. Albright argued that Byblos was a center of Egyptian influence from the 2nd Dynasty through the Old Kingdom, and Egyptian influence on Byblos began again in the Middle Kingdom. Harold Liebowitz argued that figurines of deities at Byblos showed an Egyptian influence as early as the reign of Pharaoh Mentuhotep II who reigned from 2060 to 2010 BC.⁸⁴ Siegfried Horn argued that the Egyptians became aware of foreign gods by the Old Kingdom, but that there is no evidence that foreign gods entered

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Harry Frank argued that little is really known about the Canaanite culture during the Early Bronze Age. He noted that an Early Bronze sanctuary at Ai was already built in the three part structure that would be used to build Solomon's temple 1,500 years later. However, few firm conclusions can be drawn from this fact. Frank noted that this temple contained bowls that were manufactured in Egypt during the first two dynasties. Frank, *Bible Archaeology and Faith*, 51-2.

Many of the Ugaritic texts were probably written shortly before the Sea People destroyed the city near 1200 BC. The god Baal was worshiped substantially before this time. Albright noted two examples of the name Baal used as an appellation at Mari. These included *Bali-Erah*, "the moon god," and *Bahlu-gayum*, "the nation is lord." Albright noted that the name Baal was also seen at Alalakh in the names *Ba-li-e-pa*, "the god Yapu is (my) lord," and *u-ba'lu*, "X is lord." Albright pointed to an example of the name Baal from Megiddo during the Egyptian 12th Dynasty. This name was *B'3twm* which Albright associated with a name from Alalakh *Ba'(a)lat-ummu*, "Ba'alatis my mother." Albright argued that Baalat became an independent deity before Baal achieved this status. Albright noted that rather few Semitic names appeared in Egyptian texts from the Middle Kingdom. So it was difficult to determine how commonly the name Baal was used. Albright noted that the names Baal and Baalat did appear in Semitic names from a 13th Dynasty slave list in New York's Metropolitan Museum. Albright, "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," 231. For a discussion of this text, see also David, *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt*, 189-90.

⁸⁰ Pettinato, "Pre-Ugaritic Documentation of Ba'al," 203-09.

Caquot and Sznycer noted that Baal was linked with Anat at Ugarit, and that Athirath was linked with El. However, the Emar tablet linked Athirath with Yam. At Tell Ta'annek, Baal was linked with Athirath. Caquot and Sznycer argued that the Ugaritic texts of the New Kingdom did not reveal the nature of West Semitic religion. Instead, the Ugaritic texts only gave one variety of a diverse set of traditions. Caquot and Sznycer, *Ugaritic Religion*, 4-7. Caquot and Sznycer were observing the nature of West Semitic religion a millennium after the Old Kingdom, and they did not comment on when this diversity of tradition first appeared. However, religious diversity seems to be represented in texts across the ancient Near East from the earliest times. Albright argued that the 12th century BC Canaanite pantheon was remarkably fluid. He argued that little can be known about local Canaanite cults, so dogmatic claims about Canaanite religion are impossible. William F. Albright, "Baal-Zephon," 1-14 in Walter Baumgartner, et al, eds., *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag*, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 11.

⁸⁴ Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 24.

Harold Liebowitz, "The Impact of the Art of Egypt on the Art of Syria and Palestine," in Denise Schmandt-Besserat, ed. *Immortal Egypt*, (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1978), 30-1.

the Egyptian pantheon at this time.⁸⁵ Horn argued that by the Middle Kingdom, Egypt was so involved with northern cities like Byblos that Canaanite gods were understood to be manifestations of Egyptian gods. For example, the Canaanite goddess Baalat at Byblos was already associated with the Egyptian goddess Hathor before the Hyksos entered Egypt.⁸⁶ Steindorff and Seele noted that a sphinx of Sesostri II was found in the Baal temple at Ugarit that dated to the 12th Dynasty.⁸⁷ This at least suggests a Middle Kingdom Egyptian awareness of Baal.

The presence of a Baal temple at Byblos was important because Byblos was the greatest Canaanite port before Tyre rose to a dominant position in the Late Bronze and Iron Age. It is impossible to know when Canaanite sailors first ventured out on the sea. Sasson noted that by the Chalcolithic Age, mainland objects were already being used on Cyprus. This required maritime activity before 3000 BC. Sasson noted that the 5th Dynasty Palermo Stone mentioned 40 ships bringing cargoes to Egypt from Syria. The Palermo Stone was written around 2400 BC.⁸⁸ Sasson noted that Syrian sea trade at this time was also suggested by Pharaoh Sahure's 5th Dynasty depiction of *kbn* ships. Sasson noted that two ship models have been found at Byblos from the Middle Bronze Age. He noted that by the 12th century BC, ships from Ugarit would be able to carry 500 tons of goods.⁸⁹ The Egyptians were not just observers of this trade. Faulkner noted that Sahure in the 5th Dynasty was the first recorded Egyptian ruler to transport his troops to Syria by sea. His example was followed by the 6th Dynasty ruler Weni.⁹⁰ Egyptian involvement in maritime activity is significant because the Egyptians lacked a god of the sea per se. The Egyptian god Nun was the primal deep, and sailing on any river, lake, or sea was sailing on Nun. Yet Nun was almost a primal force. The Egyptians rarely prayed to Nun for assistance. Nibbi argued that since the Egyptians lacked a god of seafarers, they adopted Canaanite gods like Astarte for this role.⁹¹

While a number of deities were worshipped as sea gods in the Levant, the greatest of them was Baal. His status as the sailor's god has received quite a bit of academic attention. Baal was originally associated in some way with the storm god Hadad, although the nature of that association has been debated.⁹² Brody argued that the storm god Ba'l-Haddu controlled the winds that either benefited or devastated voyages at sea.⁹³ Baal's holy Mount Zaphon was a peak that rose to 1700 meters high. It was located on the Syrian coast about 40 kilometers north of Ugarit. Brody suggested that mount Zaphon might have served as a navigation aid for ships coming to Ugarit's port at Minet el-Beida.⁹⁴ Brody also

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Siegfried H. Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," 37-41 in *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 37.

Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," 37.

⁸⁷ Steindorff and Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East*, 22. See also the discussion in William A. Ward, "Remarks on Some Middle Kingdom Statuary Found at Ugarit," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 11 (1979): 802.

⁸⁸ Assmann noted that the Palermo Stone listed kings who ruled regions in Egypt before the rise of the 1st Dynasty. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt*, 37. The text of the Palermo Stone can be found in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*: 51-72.⁸⁹

Jack Sasson, "Canaanite Maritime Involvement in the Second Millennium B.C." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86 (1966): 126-30.

⁹⁰ R. O. Faulkner, "Egyptian Seagoing Ships," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 26 (1940): 3.

⁹¹ Alessandra Nibbi, "Egyptian Anchors," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 61 (1975): 38.

⁹² Gray noted that the storm god Hadad was mentioned in theophoric names in the Egyptian Execration Texts, but Baal was never mentioned. Gray argued from this that the storm god Hadad later became Baal. John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 153. Pettinato argued instead that Baal was not identified with Hadad. Pettinato, "Pre-Ugaritic Documentation of Ba'al." 203-09.⁹³

Brody noted that the threat to shipping was demonstrated by Esarhaddon's treaty with Ba'l the king of Tyre. The treaty stipulated that the goods recovered from any shipwreck belonged to the king of Assyria. The treaty included curses against breaking the treaty. These curses invoked the storm gods *Ba'l Shamêm*, *Ba'l Malagê*, and *Ba'l Sapon* or *Zaphon*. Aaron Jed Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God: The Specialized Religion of Canaanite and Phoenician Seafarers*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 10.⁹⁴

Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God*, 14. Caquot and Szyner also discussed Baal's role as a storm god. They argued that it is difficult to see how the Baal Yam myth could have been linked directly to the Baal Mot myth or to the building of Baal's temple. They suggested that the Baal Yam myth may have been originally written to reassure the sailors of Ugarit

suggested that sailors may have been comforted by Baal's victory over Yam. Yam was the Hebrew and West Semitic name for "sea," and Yam was the sea god. If Baal could defeat Yam, he could protect sailors who were threatened by the sea.⁹⁵

Recently, Cecilia Grave argued in similar terms. She noted sea captains at Ugarit must have prayed for a good north wind as they waited for a breeze that would allow them to sail south to Egypt. So *Ba'lu sapani*, the "Lord of the north wind" would have become the patron of mariners. The rain and storm god would also have been responsible for clear weather. Grave argued that Gebel al 'Aqra (Mount Zaphon) would have been a beacon for home-bound mariners.⁹⁶ It could also be argued that storms at sea were the greatest cause of shipwreck and death. So prayers to Baal as a storm god would not be at all surprising.⁹⁷ Storms were part of the "north, mountain, sailing" set of motifs. Coffin Spell 696 claimed that the deceased would be able to travel the air and to traverse the storm in the polar region of the sky.⁹⁸

If Baal was the god of Canaanite sailors, they could be expected to bring Baal worship to Egypt, and especially to Tell el-Dab'a.⁹⁹ Bietak argued that Stratum G at Tell el-Dab'a was occupied around 1740-1710 BC. It was a rapidly expanding settlement that represented an Egyptianized form of the Middle Bronze Age culture of the Levant.¹⁰⁰ Bietak argued that this culture probably come from the area around Byblos. Bietak noted that, "Neutron activation analysis shows very strong ties to southern Palestine, so that part of the population probably came from there."¹⁰¹ If an 18th Dynasty exodus is used to date Israel's Patriarchal Age, this may have placed Baal worship within Israel's environment in the northeast delta. If an 18th Dynasty exodus is used as the basis for Patriarchal chronology, the Canaanite settlement at Tell el-Dab'a may have been formed around the time that Jacob moved south to Egypt. Bietak suggested that from the 12th Dynasty forward, the settlement at Tell el-Dab'a was populated by a Phoenician or Canaanite colony from Byblos. Bietak argued that Tell el-Dab'a was on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. So it was a sea harbor, and it was the southern anchor of the Byblos sea trade. Bietak noted that there is pottery evidence for the presence of Canaanites in the eastern delta at this time. Tell el-Yehudiyeh ware has been found only in coastal Palestine down to Megiddo and in the northeast Nile delta.¹⁰²

It may be quite significant that Baal's mountain was called Zaphon. The name *zaphon* was also the Hebrew and West Semitic name for "north". To understand the significance of this name, it is important

by reminding them that Baal had overcome the sea. They noted that this aspect of Baalism was important enough that the Baal temple at Ras Shamra actually incorporated stone anchors into the walls of the building. If Caquot and Szynger were correct, the Baal Yam myth would have been important to sailors plying the ancient trade route between Memphis in Egypt and Canaanite ports like Byblos and Ugarit. Caquot and Szynger, *Ugaritic Religion*, 10. Peter C. Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan and Israel," *Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983): 151. For Zaphon's role as a lighthouse, see Te Velde who added that during the New Kingdom, Baal's maritime role would have been strengthened by Baal's association with Seth because Seth was tied closely to the travels of Re's solar ship. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 105-06, 122

⁹⁵ Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God*, 19.

⁹⁶ Cecilia Grave, "The Etymology of Northwest Semitic *sapanu*," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 12 (1980): 228.

⁹⁷ For Baal's role as a storm god, see Caquot and Szynger, *Ugaritic Religion*, 10.

⁹⁸ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:261.

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The settlement at Tell el-Dab'a was located on an elevation that would play a key role in Egypt's relationship with Semitic peoples from the 1st Intermediate Period through the 20th Dynasty. The region around Tell el-Dab'a saw the rise of Avaris which was the Hyksos capital. This general region later also gave rise to the store cities mentioned in Ex. 1:11. The Austrian excavation at Avaris argued that the site was still occupied by a non-Egyptian population as late as the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Bob Paartridge discussed the evidence for this in an EEF posting on April 9, 2004. Manfred Bietak's excavations of the site have rather radically changed the interpretation of Avaris. It was long argued that Tell el-Dab'a was not occupied in the 18th Dynasty, and that this fact required a 19th Dynasty exodus when the region was once more occupied. Bietak demonstrated that Minoan wall paintings were still being made at Avaris during the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. For Bietak's research, see Manfred Bietak, "The Setting of the Minoan Wall Paintings at Avaris," *Aegean Wall Painting: A Tribute to Mark Cameron*, (London: British School at Athens Studies, 2005), 83-90. For a recent discussion of Tell el-Dab'a, see Bryant G. Wood, "The Royal Precinct at Rameses," *Bible and Spade* 21 (2008): 21-7. "New Discoveries at Rameses," *Bible and Spade* 21 (2008): 28-32.

Manfred Bietak, "The Concept of Eternity in Ancient Egypt and the Bronze Age World: an Archaeological Approach," *Eretz-Israel* 21 (1990): 10*.

¹⁰¹ Bietak, "The Concept of Eternity in Ancient Egypt and the Bronze Age World," 11*.

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Bietak, "Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta," 43. This style of pottery was not uniquely Hyksos. It was in use both before and after the Hyksos rose to power. See the discussion in Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," 56-8.

to grasp first how the word north was used in ancient Near Eastern mythology. This is important because Baal's holy mountain was the supernatural north. Surprisingly often in the ancient Near East, the north was seen as a spiritual region.¹⁰³ R. E. Clements discussed the background of Baal's Mount Zaphon. Clements argued that Babylonian astronomical speculation was associated with a great mountain peak in the north. This northern spiritual mountain was then associated with the pole star and the realm of Anu. Clements argued that the original north, or *zaphon*, was a much older motif than the Ugaritic texts. Clements suggested that the original mountain of the north should be located somewhere in the Caucasus Mountains near the Black Sea.¹⁰⁴ Clements then noted Albright's suggestion that Baal's Mount Zaphon might be an earthly reflection of the idea that the holy mountain was in the northern heavens.¹⁰⁵

The spiritual north was an important motif in the Egyptian Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts.¹⁰⁶ Even though these texts were written a millennium before the Mosaic Age, this Egyptian motif was important for understanding Baal's Mount Zaphon. Like the early spiritual north in Mesopotamia, the Old Kingdom Egyptians located the realm of the blessed dead around the pole star. The North Star, or Polaris, was unique in the sky because it was exactly aligned with the earth's rotational axis. Consequently, it remained in the same place in the sky. All other stars spun around it. The North Star was only seen to fall below the horizon when a traveler went far enough south that the northern sky could no longer be seen. In the earth's northern hemisphere, Polaris never fell below the horizon. The stars that circled most closely to Polaris also did not fall below the horizon. Since the Egyptians associated the underworld with the death, the stars that never fell into the underworld were regarded as being the "imperishable" stars. The land of the blessed dead was then viewed as a marshland site located among the "imperishable" stars. For example, a text from the antechamber of Unis' pyramid claimed in part,

The portals will act for him, the (Red Crown's) coil will be tied on for him, and this Unis will lead the Imperishable Stars. He will cross to the Marshes of Reeds with those in the Akhet rowing him and those in the Cool Waters sailing him.¹⁰⁷

A text from the Serdab passage of Teti's pyramid reads in part,

Teti is a great one whose crown is sound. Teti will provide himself with his metal limbs, Teti will stride the sky to the Marsh of Reeds, Teti will make his abode in the Marsh of Offerings among the Imperishable Stars who follow Osiris.¹⁰⁸

These magic spells combined the ideas of a northern marshland site,¹⁰⁹ a watercraft, and the northern circumpolar stars.¹¹⁰

During Egypt's Middle Kingdom, ancient mortuary motifs were both preserved and altered. Most commonly, the region of the blessed dead was perceived as being below the western or eastern horizon. The land of the dead was generally thought to be in the underworld. Yet the older motifs were also

¹⁰³ This motif also appeared in the Bible in passages like Job 26:7; 37:22, and Ps. 48:2.

¹⁰⁴ It may not be a coincidence that the Garden of Eden was located in the mountains north of Mesopotamia. Seeing the "north" as a spiritual realm might possibly have had roots in Eden, although that can only be speculation. It is also striking that the mountains of Ararat north of Mesopotamia were the resting place of Noah's ark.

¹⁰⁵ Clements, *God and Temple*, 5-9.

¹⁰⁶ The Pyramid Texts reflected Egyptian mortuary traditions in the middle of the 3rd millennium BC. By this time, Egyptian theology was already both ancient and diverse. The spiritual "north" was only one of several rival motifs represented in these texts.

¹⁰⁷ James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 86.

¹⁰⁹ Cecilia Grave argued that the etymology of the Ugaritic name Saphon, "north," should be found in a root reflected in the Hebrew verb *sûp*, "to float, flow, flood." Grave argued that the Ugaritic name *sapanu* must have developed in a West Semitic environment that had either a sea coast or a coastal marsh to its north. Grave noted that the Egyptian word *mhyt*, "northwind," also came from an Egyptian verb *mhj*, "to float, flow, flood." Grave, "The Etymology of Northwest Semitic *šapanu*," 228.

¹¹⁰ Faulkner summarized the Pyramid Texts that discussed the Imperishable Stars. See his article, R. O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25 (1966): 153, 155.

preserved and copied. For example, Coffin Spell 62 promised that a ladder to the sky would be set up for the deceased. Then the spell promised,

You shall navigate on the Winding Waterway and sail in the eight-boat. These two crews of the Imperishable Stars and the Unwearying Stars shall navigate you, they shall pilot and tow you over the District of the Waters with ropes of iron.¹¹¹

Coffin Spell 517 added that the deceased would rule the Imperishable Stars. While the "Imperishable Stars" motif became less common as Egypt's history proceeded, it remained in use occasionally. Even in Moses' life time, Hatshepsut claimed to be one of the "Imperishables."¹¹² The Imperishable Stars motif may have been an Egyptian adaptation of the ancient Near Eastern "north" theme. This Near Eastern theme merged together ideas about the North Star, the primal north, a great holy mountain, a supernatural marshland, and a sailing theme. These elements also appeared in myths about Baal's mount Zaphon, the spiritual "north."

The Egyptian "north" theme interacted with the Canaanite north theme in several ways. Albright suggested that Baal may originally have been the god of the holy mountain in the northern heaven. Albright suggested that this may have led to an association of Baal with the great mountain north of Canaan. Albright argued that this mountain may have served as a beacon for sailors because it stood on the sea shore. So the lord of the north became also the god of sailors. Albright noted that as late as Roman times, this mountain was still associated with Zeus Casius, the god of sailors.¹¹³

Canaanites entered Egypt as sailors, as traders, as peaceful immigrants, and as military captives. When they did so, they brought their religions with them. The presence of Baal worship among these Canaanite servants can be seen in the names Baal and Baalat in Senebtisi's list of servants. Albright claimed that these names were spelled in the same manner used to transliterate Semitic words in the Old Kingdom. Albright claimed from this that these names had been known in Egypt long enough to have gained a fixed spelling. This suggested substantial contact between Baal worship and Egyptian theology.¹¹⁴ Albright also argued that 18th and 19th century administrative documents recorded Asiatics serving in Egyptian temples as porters and dancers.¹¹⁵ Asiatics who participated in Egyptian temple worship could easily have merged their own religious belief with those of the Egyptian temples. While such syncretism can not be proven, it is at least a credible possibility.

Brody noted that evidence for Baal worship in Egypt may have been found in a seal from the Egyptian 13th Dynasty. The seal was Canaanite, and it came from Tell el-Dab'a which was the southern anchor of the Byblos sea trade. Later, Tell el-Daba would become the Hyksos capital. E. Porada interpreted the depiction on the seal as the weather god striding across two mountains. The storm god had a helmet, curled hair, and weapons in his hands. A boat was inscribed on the seal in front of the weather god. So Porada suggested that the seal may have represented Baal Zaphon. Brody agreed with this identification.¹¹⁶

When Egypt's Hyksos rulers seized control of the land, they continued to rule from their fortress at Avaris, or Tell el-Dab'a. Since at least the bulk of the Hyksos were Canaanites,¹¹⁷ they could reasonably be expected to worship Canaanite gods as well as the gods of Egypt. This may also be suggested by the Hyksos involvement with Canaanite sea travel. Montet noted that one Hyksos ruler had 300 Byblos ships.¹¹⁸ While there is little clear evidence for the nature of Hyksos religion, Donald Redford made an

¹¹¹ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:58.

¹¹² Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:133.

¹¹³ Albright, "Baal-Zephon," 11-2.

Albright argued that the name Anat can be seen behind *'n-ti*, and that the name Baal can be seen behind *Ba'altûya*.
¹¹⁴ Albright, "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," 223-24, 231.

Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 78.

¹¹⁶ Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God*, 18.

¹¹⁷ Albright argued that the texts from Mari and Ugarit demonstrated that all recorded Hyksos names were Canaanite or Amorite. William F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," 328-62 in G. Ernest Wright, ed. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 335.

¹¹⁸ Pierre Montet, *Eternal Egypt*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 109.

interesting argument about Hyksos religion. Redford argued that the names of two Semitic gods were especially common in Hyksos names. These are the names of the Canaanite gods Anat and *hr*. Since this could be taken as the West Semitic word for mountain, Redford argued that this name could refer to the mountain deity. Redford connected this name with Baal's holy Mount Zaphon.¹¹⁹ While this argument is quite attractive, this interpretation of *hr* has not been accepted by everyone.¹²⁰

The Hyksos worshiped a form of Seth that was quite different from earlier depictions of Seth in Egypt. The Hyksos worshiped Seth of Avaris. Hayes noted that the Hyksos ruler Apopy II dedicated an altar to his father "Seth, Lord of Avaris."¹²¹ There has been quite a debate about whether "Seth of Avaris" was a compound of Seth and Baal. The most famous of these texts has been the 400 year stela. This text was written during the reign of Ramesses II in the 19th Dynasty. The stela celebrated the Seth cult at Tanis 400 years after the Hyksos seized control of Egypt. The 400 year stela contained an engraved picture of Seth, but the depiction was quite different from depictions of Seth in other Egyptian texts.¹²² On the 400 years stela, Seth of Avaris was depicted as an Asiatic deity instead of the Seth animal.. Seth resembled northern gods like Baal, Reshep, and Teshub more than an Egyptian Seth.¹²³

Another key later text used in the Hyksos debate has been Papyrus Sallier I. This text claimed that the Hyksos had worshiped only Sutekh, or Seth, and had despised the sun god Re. This text was at least partly incorrect reflecting later propaganda against the Hyksos. The names of Hyksos rulers were compounded with the name of Re too often for a complete Hyksos rejection of Re to be possible. Yet the text probably does reflect accurately the key role given to Seth by the Hyksos.¹²⁴

Did the Hyksos simply worship Seth of Avaris, or did they merge Seth with Baal? The evidence can be, and has been, interpreted either way. For example, Horn argued that Baal was brought into Egypt during the Hyksos era along with other Canaanite gods.¹²⁵ Henry Thompson argued that the similarity of Seth and Baal led to an assimilation of the deities.¹²⁶ Te Velde argued that the 18th Dynasty avoided mentioning the name Baal because of their anger against the Hyksos who had worshiped him. However, Te Velde argued that the 18th Dynasty was not able to keep the name of the main Semitic deity out of Egypt completely since Baal was worshiped in Egypt by traders and sailors. Te Velde noted a text that mentioned Baal in Egypt dated from the reign of Amenhotep II.¹²⁷ It spoke of a sacrifice that was offered to Baal in *Prw-nfr*, the harbor district of Memphis. Te Velde argued that there was a temple of Baal at Memphis during the 18th Dynasty. Since Memphis was a port, it was involved in international trade. Te Velde noted that the texts from Ugarit demonstrated that Baal could be the god of the seas, and that "no doubt" he was venerated as the god of the seas at Memphis since the early 18th Dynasty. Te Velde noted that the ship of Baal Zaphon was mentioned in a list of gods at Memphis on Papyrus Sallier IV. Te Velde

¹¹⁹ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 117. Albright noted two examples of this. One of the first Hyksos rulers was named *'Anat-har*. Another early Hyksos ruler was named *ya'qob-har* which combines the names Jacob and mountain. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," 335.

¹²⁰ T. Säve-Söderbergh argued that *hr* should be read as *hur* instead of *har*. He argued that this word should be translated as "noble" or "free born." Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," 66. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, II:8.

¹²¹ Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, II:11.

Seth was one of Egypt's most important gods. Seth was worshiped in the Pre-Dynastic age, and the struggle between Upper and Lower Egypt before the land was united may have been in part a struggle between the worshippers of Seth and Horus. Seth was also associated with all things foreign. Seth was even associated with ships in the earliest Egyptian texts. Hoffman noted a 1st Dynasty seal that was inscribed in 3000 BC by Pharaoh Den. This seal depicted Seth standing on an Egyptian boat. Michael A. Hoffman, *Egypt before the Pharaohs*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 245-47. Seth remained one of Egypt's most important deities throughout Egyptian history.

¹²³ Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," 64. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 123-24.

¹²⁴ Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," 64.

¹²⁵ Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," 37.

¹²⁶ Thompson, *Mekal: The God of Beth-Shan*, 129.

¹²⁷

Katzenstein argued that Amenhotep II had been in charge of the shipyards at *Prw-nfr* during the reign of Thutmose III. Katzenstein argued that the Canaanite gods Baal and Astarte were worshiped at *Prw-nfr*. Katzenstein argued from this that Phoenicians, or Canaanites, were employed in the Egyptian ship yards at *Prw-nfr*. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 25. If Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the exodus, he would have been well aware of Baal's claims.

argued that Baal may not have had the role of a sailors' god among the Hyksos, so Baal as god of the seas would have been more easily accepted by the 18th Dynasty than a Baal/Seth synthesis.¹²⁸

Baal's name may also appear early in the 18th Dynasty at the turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadem. Whether an 18th or a 19th Dynasty is defended for the exodus, these mines were in use as Israel entered the wilderness. The mines were guarded by a small force of Egyptian soldiers, although it is unclear whether they would have been a threat to a group the size of Israel. Albright noted that the names Baal and Baalat are inscribed on the mine walls along with a variety of other West Semitic names. Albright argued for a date between 1550 and 1450 BC for these inscriptions. If his dates are accepted, this would place both Baal and Baalat in an early 18th Dynasty context.¹²⁹

Albright noted another 18th Dynasty example of Baal in Egypt. He noted the stela of an Egyptian scribe and treasurer named Mami. Albright argued that his stela was written around 1365 BC, which would be near the reign of Akhenaten. On this stela, the name Baal was written with the Seth animal determinative. This name was followed by *Da-pu-na* which Albright claimed was a transliteration of the Canaanite *Spn* which was Mount Zaphon.¹³⁰

Te Velde argued that the first clear proof of a Seth/Baal synthesis came from the 19th Dynasty when Egyptians saw several foreign gods as being manifestations of Seth.¹³¹ Te Velde noted that the 18th Dynasty did associate several Semitic deities with Seth, but never Baal. Te Velde suggested that the 18th Dynasty authors did not mention Baal/Seth because out of hatred of the Hyksos and their religious system. Te Velde argued that a more liberal attitude toward other Asiatic gods developed during the 18th Dynasty, but not toward Baal.¹³²

The 18th Dynasty resentment of Baal ended at the close of the Dynasty. With the start of the 19th Dynasty, Baal became an important presence in Egypt. Pharaoh Horemhab served as the bridge between the 18th and 19th Dynasties. During his reign, the Amherst Papyrus was written. This text has also been called the Astarte Papyrus. This fragmentary text may have been a recension of the Baal Yam myth translated into hieroglyphic. The text spoke about Seth instead of Baal. It also depicted the Semitic goddess Astarte as the daughter of Ptah of Memphis. So the text may come from the Baal cult in Memphis.¹³³ After Horemhab, 19th Dynasty rulers like Seti I and Ramesses II frequently compared themselves to Baal.¹³⁴ These claims may have been intended partly as polemic to assist their northern wars. In an inscription at Kadesh, a Hittite soldier described Ramesses II with the words, "No man is he who is among us. It is Seth great-of-strength, Baal in person."¹³⁵ Baal was stressed in these texts because Seth was the patron deity of the 19th Dynasty. Albright noted that the name *Spn*, or "north," was

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Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 121-22. It does seem a little strange to argue that Baal would not have been a sea god during the Hyksos age. Seth was closely associated with Re's solarship, so Seth could easily have been associated with a foreign god of the seas. The Hyksos were closely linked to the Canaanite sea trade. Ahmose remarked on the ships that he saw in the Hyksos port at Avaris. So a Hyksos Seth/ Baal link to the sea would not be surprising.

William F. Albright, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and their Decipherment*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 12-7, 27. Albright's suggested date for the texts is somewhat controversial, and these names could have been written during the 19th Dynasty as well.

¹³⁰ Albright, "Baal-Zephon," 8.

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As evidence for this, Te Velde pointed to Ramesses II's treaty with the Hittites. The Hittite version of this treaty mentioned several Hittite gods who were unknown in Egypt. In Egypt, these gods were recorded as Seth. Te Velde noted that the 18th. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 120-22.

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Te Velde noted that the 18th. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 120-22.

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Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 123-24. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 17-8. A. H. Sayce, "The Astarte Papyrus and the Legend of the Sea," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 19 (1933): 56-9. Astarte had been accepted into Egyptian culture during the 18th Dynasty. Even Thutmose III was compared to Astarte. He was called, "valiant with his chariot team like Astarte." Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*, III:260. Alan H. Gardiner, "The Astarte Papyrus," *Studies Presented to F. L. Griffith*, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932), 745-85. Gardiner noted that Astarte was also named on the papyrus Chester Beatty I. In that papyrus, Anat and Astarte were called the daughters of the Egyptian god *Pr*. Both Anat and Astarte were given to Seth as compensation for his loss of a claim to Osiris' throne.

¹³⁴ Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III:59, 147, 155, 200.

¹³⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II:67.

also found on a stela of Ramesses II at Sheikh Sa'd. The name on this stela was 'Adôn-safôn, "lord of the north."¹³⁶

Many of the texts at Ugarit were written during the New Kingdom, and especially during the 19th Dynasty. Hoch noted that the name Baal Zephon was written twice on a stela at Ugarit transliterated into hieroglyphic. Zephon was also found transliterated into hieroglyphic on Papyrus Sallier IV and the Bashan Stela.¹³⁷ The texts from Ugarit preserved much of what is known about Canaanite theology. In a way, these texts are overvalued. During the New Kingdom, Baal motifs took a number of forms. The texts at Ugarit preserved only part of that broad and diverse tradition. Even at Ugarit, the texts were not completely consistent. It had been argued that the Baal Yam myth had only rather weak ties to the rest of the Baal cycle. In most Canaanite texts, Baal was a fertility god who controlled the storms and rain. He gave prosperity and abundant crops.¹³⁸ Various attempts have been made to reconcile the Baal Yam myth with the rest of Canaanite theology,¹³⁹ but the attempts have not been overwhelmingly successful.¹⁴⁰ The Baal Yam myth concerned the subjugation of the sea, and does not clearly mention fertility. André Caquot and Maurice Szyner recognized this in their book *Ugaritic Religion*. They noted that it is difficult to see how the Baal Yam myth could have been linked directly to the Baal Mot myth or to the building of Baal's temple. They suggested that the Baal Yam myth was originally written to reassure sailors of Ugarit by reminding them that Baal had overcome the sea.¹⁴¹ If Caquot and Szyner were correct, the Baal Yam myth would have been important to sailors plying the ancient trade route between Memphis and Byblos. This sea route was open more or less constantly from the 2nd Dynasty through the Mosaic Age. This may explain why the Baal Yam myth seems to have had close ties with Memphis and with Egyptian theology. Te Velde argued that this text may illustrate how the Baal cult was changing the Egyptian religion.¹⁴² Albright noted a text that was written during the reign of Ramesses II. It included the words, "to Baaltis, to Qudshu, to the Bark of Baal-zephon." Albright argued that these three Canaanite gods were all worshiped in the same temple at Memphis.¹⁴³

¹³⁶ Albright, "Baal-Zephon," 8.

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James E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 384.

On Baal's association with the rain, see Theodor Gaster, "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea: An Ancient Semitic Nature-Myth," *Iraq* 4 (1937): 21-32.

Gaster suggested that this myth reflected the natural rivalry between rain and river/sea as sources for irrigation. Gaster, "The Battle of Rain and the Sea," 21. Beyerlin tried to connect the cyclical pattern of the seasons with two aspects of this myth. Neither Yam nor Baal possessed a permanent abode when the myth began, and both were struggling for control of the earth. Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 202-03. Such a seasonal interpretation can be read more easily into the myth of Baal and Mot, though even that identification is not without significant difficulties.

Both Adrianus van Selms and Sam Meier have argued that tablets containing the Baal Yam myth were written in a different style than tablets containing the rest of the Baal cycle. Baal Yam tablets were written with significantly longer lines, and with a different number of columns per tablet. See Adrianus van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 2 (1970): 251, and Sam Meier, "Baal's Fight with Yam (KTU 1.2 I,IV): A Part of the Baal Myth as Known in KTU 1.1, 3-6?" *Ugarit-Forschungen* 18 (1986): 243.

André Caquot and Maurice Szyner, *Ugaritic Religion*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 10. This aspect of Baalism was important enough that the Baal temple at Ras Shamra actually incorporated stone anchors into the walls of the building. Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan and Israel," 151.

Theodor Gaster suggested that the Astarte Papyrus may have come originally from Memphis which had long been a center for Baal worship in Egypt. Gaster also gave rather strong evidence that the Astarte Papyrus had been translated into hieroglyphic from a Canaanite original. Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal." 83.

This text was Papyrus Sallier #IV. Albright noted that over a millennium later, Baal's Mount Zaphon became Zeus Casius, and that it still was the center for sea god worship in Roman times. Albright noted four references to the god Baal Zephon. For example, he noted a Egyptian stela from around 1365 BC included *B-'al Da-pu-na* with the Seth animal, throwstick, and foreign land determinatives. Albright also noted a reference to Baal Zephon in a curse formula by Esarhaddon that was dated around 675 BC. Albright, "Baal-Zephon," 8.

The link between the Canaanite Baal Yam myth and Egyptian theology can be seen in the dominant role played by the Canaanite craftsman god *ktr-w-hss*.¹⁴⁴ This god did not have his dwelling place in the Levant. Messengers had to be sent to summon him from far away. The location of his dwelling has generated substantial debate, with the main contenders being Crete, Cappadocia, and Memphis.¹⁴⁵ A good case can be made that *ktr-w-hss* came from Memphis. His dwelling was described in the Ugaritic texts as being at *hqkpt* and *kptr*. Albright suggested that *hqkpt* should be identified with Memphis, which the Egyptians called *hat-ka-ptah*, "the house of Ptah's ka." The southern location of *hqkpt* is supported by the fact that Baal's messengers to *ktr-w-hss* had to travel past Byblos, but not past Crete.¹⁴⁶ If this identification is accepted, then the common equation of *ktr-w-hss* with the Egyptian deity Ptah also probably follows. Like *ktr-w-hss*, Ptah was the Egyptian craftsman god. He was also the high god of Memphis where temples of Baal, Astarte, and other Semitic deities were once located.¹⁴⁷ If *ktr-w-hss* was Ptah in this myth, then Ptah's role in the Baal Yam myth may be quite important.¹⁴⁸ The conflict began with Yam's claims on Astarte who was described as being the daughter of Ptah.¹⁴⁹ Then Astarte addressed her complaint to Ptah before Baal even became involved in the conflict.¹⁵⁰ When Baal chose to struggle with the sea, Ptah created magical staffs for him. Ptah empowered these staffs by naming them, just as Ptah named all things which he had created by his word of power.¹⁵¹ When Baal was too weak to struggle against the sea, Ptah's magical power brought victory. Then Ptah decreed Baal's right to rule in Syria because of the victories that Ptah had provided. So if *ktr-w-hss* was Ptah in this myth, then the mindset suggested by this myth was not unlike Egypt's understanding of her relationship with the Levant. The Canaanites were given control of the sea and of the sea trade routes.¹⁵² Yet they could only claim this dominion with the sufferance and assistance of Memphis. With that practical and religious assistance, they could be assured of safe travel from the Baal shrine at Memphis to the Baal temples of Byblos and Ugarit or to Baal's holy mountain itself.

After all of this is said and done, it can not be proven that Baal was worshiped as a deity in Egypt during the Hyksos era. The history and culture of the age suggests quite strongly that Baal worship was an important force in the northeast delta. If Baal worship was largely absent during the 18th Dynasty, it is fair to ask if a Baal polemic would be a likely element of an 18th Dynasty exodus. Certainly by the 19th Dynasty, Baal worship was a virulent force in Egypt. While a Baal polemic may well have been needed during the 18th Dynasty, a Baal polemic would be easier to justify if Israel left Egypt during the 19th Dynasty.

3) THE SEA CROSSING POLEMIC AGAINST BAAL WORSHIP

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This name has been transliterated and translated in a confusing variety of ways. He was the foreign craftsman god who built Baal's temple.

¹⁴⁵ Caquot and Szynger thought Memphis unlikely and preferred Crete or Cappadocia. Caquot and Szynger, *Ugaritic Religion*, 14.

¹⁴⁶ See the discussion in Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 95-100.

¹⁴⁷ See the discussion in Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion*, 96. Gaster, *Thespis*, 161. Cyrus Gordon, "The Poetic Literature of Ugarit," *Orientalia* 12 (1963): 56, 65.

¹⁴⁸ It is possible that *ktr-w-hss* could have been associated with Ptah in this myth and still be a different deity in the main Baal cycle.

¹⁴⁹ Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," 81. Gaster suggested that the description "daughter of Ptah" might reflect a connection with Memphis, or it might be a misunderstood Canaanite term describing a singer.

¹⁵⁰ Gardiner, "The Astarte Papyrus," 81-3.

¹⁵¹ Finnestad, "Ptah, Creator of the Gods," 81, 84, 104, 106. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 4-6. Hasel, "The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," 90.

¹⁵² Gaster translated this myth in a way that stressed that Baal's victory produced a calm and gentle sea. Gaster, "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea," 31. His translation certainly fit well with the notion that Yam's defeat made sea travel possible. It is not clear how many Egyptians took part in this trade. Some writers have suggested that Egyptians and Canaanites both manned the Byblos ships. Others have claimed that all of the sailors were Canaanite.

How did Israel's sea crossing mimic and refute the Baal Yam myth? A few parallels are worth noting. The first can be seen in Exodus 14:21. While Baal was the storm god, and Baal controlled the winds, it was Yahweh's east wind that opened a path through the sea. The second can be seen in Exodus 15:16, 21. Moses raised the "staff of God," stretched out his arm over the *yam sūph*, and the waters parted.¹⁵³ Moses' staff created an interesting foil to two aspects of the Baal Yam myth, the clubs of *ktr-w-hss*, and the messengers' staffs. The first of these is the clearest and most obvious. Baal defeated Yam with the aid of two miraculous staffs created by *ktr-w-hss*. These staffs were named after their ability to drive out Sea from his throne.¹⁵⁴ By striking the Sea with these miraculous weapons, Baal split open the Sea to the ground. There was an obvious superficial similarity between this and the sea crossing account. Yet the differences are also striking. Baal had to wrestle with a stronger deity and only with miraculous assistance could he split Yam to the sea bottom. Moses was not struggling with a god of the seas. Nothing in the Exodus account even hinted that the *yam sūph* was personified. The *yam sūph* was simply a body of water under the control of its creator. Moses only raised God's staff, spoke God's Word, and the Sea obeyed.

The third parallel between the Baal Yam myth and Moses' staff is at best only a possibility. Adrianus van Selms explained that in the Ugaritic texts, messengers were not allowed to carry their own staffs. When on an errand, they carried their master's staff as a sign that they spoke with his authority. Van Selms offered an example from the tablet that Gordon numbered as 137.¹⁵⁵ This section described Yam's messengers carrying his staff on their collar bones. Moses' staff certainly had this function. Its purpose was not one of defeating Moses' enemies, but rather of validating God's Word. Exodus 4:5 stated clearly that Moses was to use it to authenticate his message from God.¹⁵⁶

The fourth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is that both victories were deliverances. The force of this parallel depends on how the texts are translated and interpreted. If Gaster's interpretation of the Astarte Papyrus is accepted, Yam had threatened the honor of the virgin war goddess Astarte. Baal's victory over the Sea had spared her from that humiliation.¹⁵⁷ If Gray's translation of Gordon's tablet UH 68, lines 28-32 is correct, Baal was urged to scatter Yam's body because Yam had held the other gods captive.¹⁵⁸ The parallel with Israel's sea crossing is rather obvious. The *yam sūph* had held Israel captive, and had threatened their freedom to serve God. Yahweh's victory over the sea freed Israel to serve Him, just as Baal's victory over Yam freed the gods to follow him.

The fifth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is that Yam was both Prince Sea and Judge River.¹⁵⁹ This fact has generated substantial discussion because in Joshua 3:16, a similar miracle allowed Israel to cross the Jordan River at flood stage. These two crossings are

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Moses' staff is called the "staff of God" in Ex. 4:20. An interesting allusion to Ex. 15 can be found in Is. 10:26. This verse seems to describe God Himself striking Yam with His rod of judgment.

Julian Oberman takes these weapons as staffs. He also noted the parallel between the staffs of Moses and Baal. Julian Oberman, "How Baal Destroyed a Rival," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 67 (1947), 195-208.

Van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," 262. According to Herdner's classification, this tablet would be CTA2.i. This translation is certainly not universally accepted. For example, Gibson's revision of Driver's translation understood this section as, "a messenger; between (his) shoulders is the word of his lord," Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 42.

An interesting parallel can also be drawn between Moses' staff and an Egyptian reference in Coffin Spell 469. In this text, Pharaoh claimed that Osiris and Orion had given to him a staff of rank. This staff enabled Pharaoh to be a god, and ensured that strong ones in the Field of Reeds would tremble before him. Moses' staff of rank made him a servant, not a god. Pharaoh and Egypt were forced to tremble before Yahweh when his servant held up God's staff and declared His Word.

Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," 83. It should be remembered that the Astarte papyrus could have represented a different recension of the story than that recorded in the Ugaritic texts.

Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, 28-9.

¹⁵⁹ William Albright noted that the Akkadian river god Naru appeared already at Mari, and was called "the Judge River." William F. Albright, "Zabūl Yam and Thāpit Nahar in the Combat between Baal and the Sea," *Journal of the Palestinian Oriental Society* 15 (1935): 19-20

surprisingly similar. In each, the waters stood up in a *ned*, a heap, or a wall.¹⁶⁰ With one exception, this word appears in Scripture only in descriptions of the sea crossing and the Jordan crossing.¹⁶¹ It is at least possible that the water crossing miracle was repeated in Joshua 3 in order to strengthen the polemic against Baal worship. As Israel stood on the threshold of entering Palestine, they were reassured that Yahweh, not Baal, was Lord of both river and sea.¹⁶²

The sixth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth was the central role played in each by holy mountains. Action in the Baal Yam myth traveled from El's holy mountain, into the great deep, and finally to Mount Zaphon.¹⁶³ The Exodus account travels from Egypt, to Baal-Zaphon and the sea, and then to the holy mountain of Yahweh. So the Baal myth leads to Baal's holy mountain, while the Exodus account leads away from Baal's shrine to Yahweh's holy mountain.¹⁶⁴ It goes without saying that Baal-Zaphon and God's holy mountain have generated a great debate because they are among the earliest clear Biblical examples of the cosmic mountain theme in the Old Testament.¹⁶⁵

The seventh parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is the fact that both victories ended in the establishment of an eternal kingdom. This can be seen in CTA 2,iv (Gordon's tablet 68), lines 9 and 10. In these lines, *ktr-w-hss* declared that Yam was dead and that Baal was king.¹⁶⁶ Wyatt translated part of the myth of Baal and Yam in KTY 1.2 as,

Indeed I say to you, O Prince Baal,
I repeat, O Charioteer of the Clouds,
now your foe, O Baal,
now your foe you must smite;
now you must destroy your adversary!
Take your everlasting kingdom,
your eternal dominion!¹⁶⁷

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The Jordan valley walls near Tell ed-Damieh collapsed in 1267 AD and 1927 AD. Both collapses formed a temporary dam across the river and blocked the riverflow. The 1927 collapse blocked the river for 21 hours. See the discussion in Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 167. Such a collapse may suggest the meaning of *ned*. II Kings 2:8, 14 could be used to argue against this interpretation of the miracle. Elijah and Elisha struck the waters of the Jordan with Elijah's mantle. The waters were divided and the prophets crossed on dry ground. This sounded like a miracle that happened immediately instead of a natural process, although the text does not really say how long it took for the Jordan's waters to divide.

¹⁶¹ Ned is used for "heaped" waters in Ex. 15:8; Josh. 3:13, 16; Ps. 33:7; and 78:13. The only exception to this usage is Is. 17:11 where it is used to describe harvested crops. See the discussion in Arlis J. Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea, Diversity and Unity in a Biblical Theme," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 44 (1973): 174.

¹⁶² Cross suggested that Ps. 114 paired the sea and Jordan crossings in a way that echoed Yam's identification as Prince Sea and Judge River. Frank Moore Cross, Jr. "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," 1-25 in Robert W. Funk, ed. *God and Christ: Existence and Province*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 22-3. However, it is fair to observe that such a pairing of two similar events requires neither cultic association nor Canaanite influence.

¹⁶³ The Baal Yam myth itself breaks off at the establishment of Baal's kingship and his eternal kingdom. It is possible that the missing ending of the myth described Baal's mountain, as the main Baal cycle does. The "Song of Ullikummi", a Hittite and Hurrian form of this myth, began at Mount Zaphon. Hans G. Güterbock, "The Song of Ullikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 6 (1952): 13.

¹⁶⁴ It was uncharacteristic of Moses to mention the name of an idolatrous worship site. He only did so when the action at that site had some theological importance. His primary reason for mentioning Baal-Zaphon in Exodus may have been the role that this site played in the sea crossing polemic.

¹⁶⁵ A few references include: Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 21-30. Baruch Margalit, "Weltbaum and Weltberg in Ugaritic Literature: Notes and Observations on RS 24.245," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86 (1974): 1-23. Baruch Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan*, (Chicago: Scholar's Press, 1983), 32-6. Gispén, *Exodus*, 150-51. Kalman Yaron, "The Dirge over the King of Tyre," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 3 (1964): 43-4.

¹⁶⁶ Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 43-5. See also the discussion in Van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," 267, and Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 134, 144-54.

¹⁶⁷ N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 65.

Other tablets in the Baal Cycle claim that Baal's new kingship was reflected in the establishment of his temple on Mount Zaphon. This temple was built by *ktr-w-hss*, and its creation was recorded on CTA 3 and 4.¹⁶⁸ The parallel in the Exodus account was rather clear. Exodus 15:13 stated that God has led Israel to His holy habitation. Exodus 15:17 stated that God would lead Israel to the mountain of his inheritance. Then Exodus 15:18 declared that the LORD would reign forever.

The last parallel between the Baal Yam myth and Israel's sea crossing is the fact that both gods are depicted as being divine warriors. Baal's role as a warrior is self-evident, since he was locked in combat with Yam. Exodus 15:3 declared that Yahweh was a warrior. Leonard Greenspoon called this the most succinct statement of the divine warrior theme in Scripture.¹⁶⁹ When Yahweh destroyed Pharaoh's army and split the sea to the ground, Yahweh proved that he was the warrior that Pharaoh and Baal only claimed to be. By proving Himself a warrior, God created a powerful polemic against both Canaanite and Egyptian theology.¹⁷⁰

It is fair to say that the similarities between Israel's sea crossing and Egyptian Field of Reeds theology are much stronger than the similarities with Baalism. The generation that left Egypt needed a strong polemic against Egyptian theology more than it needed a refutation of Baalism. Yet by the end of Moses' lifetime, Egyptian theology was already losing its theological importance for Israel. After Israel entered the land, Egyptian theology was rarely a great threat to their faith. Oh, the Egyptians did control the coastal plains for two centuries.¹⁷¹ They held fortresses like Beth-Shean to defend their interests, and there is some evidence that Egyptian theology was known in the Levant.¹⁷² Yet the Egyptians were not concerned about the highlands. They did not create settlements there, and made little attempt to impose their will in the highlands.¹⁷³ They certainly made few attempts to spread Egyptian culture to the mountains of Palestine. The issue for Israel's future was Baalism. When later Israelites used the sea crossing account as a polemic against idolatry, they aimed the polemic at Baalism because that was the battle being fought.

Yet even here, the academic debate has outstripped the Scriptural evidence. The clearest Scriptural examples of Baal Yam imagery being used to describe the Exodus come from Isaiah 51:9-10, Psalm 77:16-20, and 114:3. In Isaiah 51:9, 10, the prophet equated God's pathway in the *yam sūph* with His act of cutting Rahab in pieces and piercing the dragon. Psalm 77:16-20 personified the sea, stating that it saw God and was in anguish when God made His pathway through the sea.¹⁷⁴ Psalm 114:3 also personified the sea, stating that it looked and fled before the Lord. Several other Scripture passages used imagery drawn originally from mythology. Various passages described God's victory over Rahab, Leviathan, the sea monster, and related terms. These have generated substantial academic debate, and

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Umberto Cassuto, "The Palace of Baal," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 61 (1942), 51-6. Richard J. Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979), 137-45. F. Lokkegaard, "The House of Baal," *Acta Orientalia* 22 (1955): 10-27.

Leonard Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," in Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson, eds., *Tradition in Transformation*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 247-321.

Hoffmeier has pointed out that the divine warrior imagery in the Exodus account imitated standard Egyptian expressions, and formed an effective polemic against Pharaoh's claims. James K. Hoffmeier, "The Arm of God versus the Arm of Pharaoh," *Biblica* 67 (1986): 378-87.

If an early date for the Exodus is defended, all of the 19th Dynasty campaigns in Palestine occurred while Israel was in the land. If a late date is defended, Egyptian military activity in the Levant was near its end after the Exodus.

Two seals from Jordan depict a solar god seated in a boat. These could be based on Egyptian solar theology. A. D. Tushingham, "God in a Boat," *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1 (1971): 23-8. The temple at Beth-Shan also shows the presence of Egyptian theology.

See especially the following: Donald B. Redford, "The Relations between Egypt and Israel from El-Amarna to the Babylonian Conquest," *Biblical Archaeology Today*, (Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 193, 199. Givon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan*, 11-4, 23-5. Brian Peckham, "Israel and Phoenicia," 224-48 in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 228-29.

See Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," 186

have been suggested as examples of either the Baal Yam myth, or the Near Eastern creation account.¹⁷⁵ Most Biblical references to this primal monster appear either in descriptions of creation or in promises of judgment on Egypt.¹⁷⁶ The authors of Scripture almost seemed to have intentionally avoided describing the Exodus with mythological imagery in order to preserve the event's historical validity. Israel's response to Baalism was that while Baal cleaved a mythological Yam, Yahweh split a real historical sea.

Summing up all of this briefly, there can be little doubt that Israel's sea crossing was intended to teach Israel and the nations about God. The sea crossing also warned Israel to turn away from the mistaken concepts which some members of the community would have acquired in Egypt, both those based on traditional Egyptian motifs, and those based on Baalism in the Nile delta. However, this proved to be a lesson not easily learned.

4) BAAL'S HOLY MOUNTAIN IMAGERY

Baal worship clearly was a strong force in the Nile delta during the years of Israel's Egyptian sojourn. It was promoted especially by Egypt's Hyksos rulers, but it had also been present in Egypt for many centuries before this time. Israel clearly did fall into idolatry in Egypt, as is witnessed by passages like Joshua 24:14, Ezekiel 20:5-10, and Ezekiel 23:19. While Moses does not list the forms of idolatry which the Israelites practiced in Egypt, the Israelites probably served both Egyptian and Canaanite deities. In light of this, it is not surprising that Israel's sea crossing served as a polemic against both Egyptian and Canaanite gods.

The Baal polemic in the Sea Crossing account can be seen in Exodus 14:9. This verse noted that God had led the Israelites out of their way into a trap. They were closed in between the hills and the Red Sea. They camped near a border fortress,¹⁷⁷ at the mouth of a canal,¹⁷⁸ and at a site called Baal Zaphon. It may be more than a coincidence that God placed Israel right in front of Baal Zaphon. The name Baal Zaphon was well known across the ancient Near East. The name was drawn from Baal's holy mountain in Syria, Mount Zaphon. Baal worship sites were all perceived to be local manifestations of Baal's holy mountain. No matter where in the world Baal worshippers may have gathered, they believed that they entered Baal's holy mountain top dwelling place whenever they entered the local sanctuary.

It is important to understand the claims made by Baal worshippers about Baal's holy mountain. Baal's temple was claimed to have been formed by a great spiritual fire that burned within the temple for six days.¹⁷⁹ The mountain top temple was also thought to be the place of glory fire or lightning, and a place of fire like spiritual beings.¹⁸⁰ In his book *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, Richard Clifford traced out the theology of Baal's mountain dwelling.¹⁸¹ Clifford summarized the Baal theology preserved in the Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra. He noted that Baal's mountain was the meeting place of

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See Gaster, *Thespis*, 142. Gaster lists about a dozen passages which he places in this category. See also Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea," 175-80. Cyrus H. Gordon, "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil," in Alexander Altman, ed., *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1-9. For a discussion of a similar text from Gordon's UH 67, see Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, 56. Meredith G. Kline, "Death, Leviathan, and the Martyrs: Isaiah 24:1-27:1," in Walter C. Kaiser and Ronald F. Youngblood, eds., *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 229-49. John N. Day, "God and Leviathan in Isaiah 27:1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (1998): 423-35.

¹⁷⁷ Verses used in this context include: Ps. 74:12-17; Is. 27:1, and Ex. 29:3.

¹⁷⁸ The name Migdol is a Semitic word that was adopted into the Egyptian language. The name referred to a fortification. There were a series of border fortifications along Egypt's northeast frontier.

¹⁷⁹ The name Pi-hahiroth is commonly translated "the mouth of the canal," based on the article and a Semitic word preserved in Akkadian in the noun *hiritu* that means "ditch" or "canal." See for example: A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Assyrian Dictionary*, 21 vols. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1968), VI:176. Emmanuel Anati, *Har Karkom: The Mountain of God*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 176, 185. Currid supported this translation in Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Volume 1: Chapters 1-18*, 287. For other interpretations, see Henri Cazelles, "Les Localisations de l'Exode et la Critique Littéraire," *Revue Biblique* 62 (1955): 350-64.

¹⁸⁰ Samuel E. Lowenstamm, "The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf," *Biblica* 48 (1967): 481-90.

¹⁸¹ Fensham, "Thunder-Stones in Ugaritic," 273-74. Miller, "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel," 256-61.

Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*. 3.

the gods, and the meeting place of heaven and earth. It was the battlefield of conflicting natural forces. It was the source of water and fertility. It was the place where decrees were issued that affected history.

Since each local Baal shrine claimed to be a manifestation of Baal's mountain top dwelling, each shrine claimed to be a place of great spiritual power. When Israel camped before Baal Zaphon, they saw before them a site that made great claims. Yet the Israelites saw clearly that it was a very unimpressive site. The Baal Zaphon of Exodus 14:9 was so unimpressive that it is no longer possible to determine where it was. The Baal-Zaphon of Exodus 14:9 might have been a high place. It could have been a small worship place on a low hill. It could also have been a ship docked at the mouth of the canal. Brody argued that Baal's Mount Zaphon was sometimes compared to a ship.¹⁸² Brody noted that this could be seen in the myth of KRT at Ugarit. Brody translated part of this myth this way.

Ba'l's mountain weeps for you father,
Sapon, the holy fortification
The ship, the mighty fortification
The fortification wide of span.¹⁸³

Whether the Baal Zaphon of Exodus 14 was a high place or a ship used as a sanctuary, God may well have led the Israelites to this specific place so that they could see how unimpressive a Baal shrine really was.

As soon as Israel had crossed the sea, Moses promised Israel in Exodus 15:17 that Yahweh would bring Israel to His holy mountain, His dwelling, the place of His sanctuary, and the place where He would reign forever. This promise received its first fulfillment as Israel arrived at Sinai, the holy mountain of Yahweh.¹⁸⁴ A brook came down from Sinai, just as Zaphon claimed to be the source of life giving water.¹⁸⁵ If a southern Sinai location is defended for Mount Sinai, this brook was probably itself a miracle since Mount Sinai was a dry and barren volcanic mountain. Deuteronomy 4:11 described the glory fire that burned on Sinai to the heart of heaven. Deuteronomy 4:36 noted that Israel heard God's voice from heaven and saw His great fire burning on the mountain top. Sinai was the place where Israel heard God's decrees and where Israel's elders met God Himself. Mount Sinai was in a very visible way exactly the kind of place that Mount Zaphon claimed to be. The Israelites must have been struck strongly by the huge contrast between Sinai's glory fire and Baal Zaphon's dust.¹⁸⁶

5) BAAL WORSHIP AT SINAI

Yahweh's polemic against Baal worship was badly needed. As Israel still stood before Yahweh's glory fire, they fell into idolatry. When Moses remained on Sinai for 40 days, the Israelites lost hope that he could remain alive on the dry, barren, and blazing mountain.¹⁸⁷ Exodus 32:1 recorded their demand that Aaron make a god to go before the nation because they did not know what had happened to Moses. Exodus 32:4 noted that Aaron had obeyed their demands. He had collected the women's ear rings and had fashioned a molten calf. In ancient Israel, such images were formed by burying a wax figure in the

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Brody noted that Papyrus Sallier IV from the 13th century BC listed three Canaanite deities. One of these was the ship of Ba'l Sapon. This papyrus listed foreign and local gods near Memphis in Egypt. So it testifies to the existence of a ship of Baal Zaphon in Egypt. Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God*, 17.

¹⁸³ Brody, *Each Man Cried Out to His God*, 15.

¹⁸⁴ Ex. 3:1; 14:27, 1 Kngs. 19:8.

¹⁸⁵ Deut. 9:21.

¹⁸⁶ Kline argued that the Old Testament regarded heaven as the true Zaphon. Kline argued that this could be seen in passages like Ezek. 1:1; Is. 14:13, and Ps. 48:2 [3]. Kline added that the name Zaphon may have appeared in a magical text from Babylon. In that text, a city called Zabbon was a cosmic site. It marked the entrance into the world for those who lived either in heaven or in the underworld. Meredith G. Kline, "Marana Tha," *Kerux* 11 (1996).

¹⁸⁷ Deut. 9:9 noted that Moses neither ate nor drank for 40 days and nights on Sinai. This was only possible because Yahweh's presence had turned the mountain into heaven on earth. Walking in the heavenly reality, Moses did not require food or drink. Israel stood at the foot of the mountain and assumed that Moses could not have survived on the mountain top.

ground and pouring molten metal into it. So Aaron's explanation in Exodus 32:24 might not have been far from the truth. Aaron claimed that he had simply thrown the gold into the fire and the bull image had created itself. The gold may simply have flowed into a wax image that had been previously buried either by Aaron or someone else.¹⁸⁸ Yet Moses seemed to imply in Exodus 32:4 that Aaron had built the calf intentionally. If so, Aaron's explanation echoed the claim in Baal worship that the items in Baal's temple on Zaphon formed themselves when supernatural fire burned within Baal's temple. Aaron may have been mocking the claims of Baal worshipers, or perhaps leaning on Baal theology for an alibi. Israel's idolatry in the wilderness was a very serious issue. In Deuteronomy 32:17, Moses claimed that Israelites in the wilderness had worshiped demons. Then in verse 39, Yahweh declared that there was no god beside Him. This was a clear claim of monotheism. Moses taught that the idols were demons, not gods.

There has been a lot of academic discussion about exactly what deity was represented by the golden calf.¹⁸⁹ By far the most likely candidate was Baal since Baal was often depicted as a calf at Baal shrines. This interpretation may be reinforced by Exodus 32:17 which noted that Joshua heard the sound of war in the camp. Ritual combat was an important part of Baal worship at this time.¹⁹⁰ The cultic combat may have reenacted Baal's battles for kingship against the gods Anat, Mot, and Yam. Baal's battle against Anat occurred on Mount Zaphon so it may be the closest parallel.¹⁹¹ Exodus 32:20 described Moses' destruction of the golden calf in words that echoed closely Canaanite descriptions of how Anat destroyed the body of the god Mot. Exodus 32:20 noted that Moses burned the calf, ground it to powder, scattered it in the brook that came down from Sinai, and forced the Israelites to drink it. This is an odd claim since gold can neither be burned nor dissolved in water. The text may reflect the Canaanite method to destroy completely the body of a god. The Ugaritic texts describe Mot's body as being burned, ground to dust, and spread on the waters when Mot was killed.¹⁹² If the golden calf at Sinai is taken as a Baal image, this may give indirect witness to the presence of Baal worship in Egypt. In Exodus 32:4, those who had fashioned the calf declared it to be the god who had brought them out of Egypt. This might even represent an early witness to an interpretation of the sea crossing in terms of the Baal Yam myth. That is, of course, largely circular reasoning.

After God's judgment on Sinai, no more was heard of Baal worship in the wilderness community until the next generation approached the border of the Promised Land. Other gods were at times

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It is unclear whether Aaron was fooled by someone else or if he made the image intentionally. It is very striking that Aaron was never judged for the sin of making the calf even though his sons died for sins that seem at least somewhat less severe. Aaron might have been trying to make an image similar to a cherub with its bull or oxen head and calves legs. If so, Aaron may not have been trying to make an image per se. It has been argued that the bull of Baal worship was a similar kind of figure. The bull was the means of transport used by the unseen deity above it. It is interesting that Ps. 106:20 claimed that the golden calf at Sinai was an ox instead of a bull. Some of the Tannaim authors interpreted the golden calf as a figure for a cherub instead of the Baal bull. For a discussion of this option, see Deborah Dimant and John Strugnell, "The Merkabah Vision in *Second Ezekiel* (4Q385 4)," *Revue de Qumran* 14 (1990): 339-40. Dimant and Strugnell noted a Rabbinic legend that the face of an ox in Ezek. 1:10 was replaced by the face of a cherub in Ezek. 10:14 in order to wipe out all trace of the sin of the golden calf at Sinai. See also Rachel Eilior, "Merkabah Mysticism: A Critical Review," *Numen* 37 (1990): 239. It is interesting that the ten commandments forbid not only making an image of God but also making an image of anything in heaven or on earth as an object of worship. David J. Halperin, "Merkabah Midrash in the Septuagint," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982): 353, 362.

The bull was the great symbol of power, virility and fertility in the ancient Near East. Many gods and rulers were described as being "bulls" metaphorically. The Egyptian goddess Hathor was a cow god. She was among other things the goddess of Sinai. She followed escaped slaves into the wilderness and destroyed them there. Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 8. See also Patrick D. Miller Jr., "El the Warrior," *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967): 411-31.

Ritual combat associated with Baal worship may be implied by passages like 1 Kngs. 18:28 and Zech. 13:6. Jack Sasson argued that dancing and ritual combat were a common feature of the worship of several gods in the ancient Near East. Jack M. Sasson, "The Worship of the Golden Calf," 151-59 in Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., ed. *Orient and Occident*, (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1973).

¹⁸⁹ See the discussion about this combat in Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," 137-46.

¹⁹⁰ Loewenstamm, "The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf," 481-90. Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," 137-46.

associated with the wilderness community, but not specifically Baal worship.¹⁹³ Baal worship would reappear in Israel at the instigation of Balaam, when the Israelites fell into sin with the temple prostitutes from Baal-Peor.¹⁹⁴ Israel's sea crossing at least opened the battle against Baalism which would continue for centuries thereafter.¹⁹⁵

D) THE SEA CROSSING AND EGYPTIAN UNDERWORLD THEOLOGY

1) POLEMICS AND THE EXODUS

As the exodus unfolded, God used signs and miracles to teach both the Egyptians and the Israelites about Himself. God expressed His polemical intent quite clearly. In Exodus 4:4-5, God gave Moses a serpent/staff sign so that the Israelites would know that God had appeared to him. In Exodus 6:7, Yahweh declared that the Israelites would know that He was God when He brought them out of Egypt. In Exodus 7:5, God declared that the Egyptians would know that He was the Lord when He stretched out His arm against Egypt and delivered Israel. In Exodus 8:22, Yahweh set apart the land of Goshen from the plague of insects so that the Israelites would know that He was in the land. In Exodus 9:14, Yahweh warned Pharaoh that He would send all of His plagues on Egypt so that the Egyptians would know that there was no one like Him in the earth. In Exodus 10:1-2, Yahweh told the Israelites that He would work His signs against the Egyptians so that the Israelites could tell their sons and grandsons what He had done. Yahweh declared that He would judge Egypt in order to teach both the Egyptians and the Israelites. God's actions in Egypt were polemical actions. While it is clear that God's miracles were intended polemically, the specific polemical message is somewhat less clear.¹⁹⁶ There has been an ongoing academic discussion about exactly how Egypt's ten plagues provided a polemic against Egyptian religion. Some plagues seem aimed at specific Egyptian deities, while other plagues seem to have a more general polemical intent.¹⁹⁷ However, the plagues left little doubt that Pharaoh as Horus incarnate was unable to oppose Yahweh's power. Equally unable to resist Yahweh's power were Egypt's wise men, Egypt's priests, and Egypt's magicians.

The polemical purpose of Yahweh's actions continued during Israel's sea crossing. In Exodus 14:18, Yahweh declared that the Egyptians would know that He was the Lord when He was honored through Pharaoh and his chariots. Exodus 14:31 also declared that the Israelites believed in the Lord and Moses after Yahweh had delivered them at the sea. Yahweh's polemical actions at the sea crossing may well be easier to understand than the exact polemical significance of the ten plagues. It is then ironic that so little academic attention has been given to the polemical significance of the events associated with Israel's sea crossing. This polemical significance was directly tied to Egypt's underworld motifs. The significance of these underworld motifs for Israel's sea crossing may have been overlooked in the evangelical world because so few authors have tried to sail the wide and deep waters of Egyptian language, culture, history, and religion.

2) THE EXODUS AND EGYPTIAN MORTUARY LITERATURE

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Amos 5:26-7; Acts 7:42-3; Josh. 24:20-3 Ezek. 20:7-8.

¹⁹⁴ Num. 25:3-5; Deut. 4:3; Ps. 106:28; Hos. 9:10. Ps. 106:28 claimed that the Israelites at Baal-Peor ate sacrifices that were offered to the dead.

¹⁹⁵ Judg. 2:11-2; 3:7; 6:25-32; 8:33; 9:4; 10:6-10; 1 Sam. 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kngs. 16:31-2; 18:19-40.

¹⁹⁶ It is not even impossible that a creation polemic might have stood in the background behind the account. Such a polemic might have been implied by Job 38:8-11, although that seems unlikely.

¹⁹⁷ For a survey of the issues related to the ten plagues, see: Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*. Dennis J. McCarthy, "Plagues and Sea of Reeds: Exodus 5-14," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 (1966): 137-58. John Van Seters, "The Plagues of Egypt: Ancient Tradition or Literary Invention?" *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 98 (1986): 30-9.

A good case can be made that Israel's sea crossing was intended to refute both Baal motifs and traditional Egyptian underworld motifs. While a Baal polemic in the sea crossing would be easier to justify with a 19th Dynasty exodus, the opposite is true of a polemic against Egyptian mortuary motifs. A transition in Egyptian underworld motifs was well underway during the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. The sea crossing events fit far better as a polemic against mortuary motifs that were written before this transition occurred. To understand this transition, it is important to gain an overview of the Egyptian texts.

The earliest extensive Egyptian religious literature can be found in the Pyramid Texts.¹⁹⁸ These texts were exactly what the name suggested. They were texts written on the inside walls of the Old Kingdom pyramids. As such, they were written roughly a thousand years before Israel's exodus from Egypt. The Pyramid Texts are a rather problematic source for understanding Egyptian theology in the Mosaic Age. Since they were written so much earlier, some religious motifs of the Pyramid Texts had disappeared from Egyptian thought by Moses' day. Many of the Pyramid Texts have also been difficult to translate and interpret. Since they are written in quite early Egyptian, often only half of the words in a text can be translated with confidence. Published translations of the Pyramid Texts often do not indicate how highly speculative the translations may be. With those limitations in mind, the Pyramid Texts are not completely useless for understanding Egyptian theology in the Mosaic Age. Quite a few religious motifs run in some form through all of Egyptian literature. These motifs reappear in some form from the Pyramid Texts down to the temple texts of the Greek period. The Pyramid Texts give the earliest recorded examples of these motifs.

The next important variety of Egyptian religious literature is the Coffin Text tradition.¹⁹⁹ These texts were written on coffins, and they gave the deceased the magic spells that he would need to face the underworld dangers. The Coffin Texts were primarily Middle Kingdom texts, although some of the Coffin Texts were still being used in the Mosaic Age. The Egyptian Middle Kingdom was roughly Israel's Patriarchal Age, so the Coffin Texts were used while the Israelites were in Egypt. The Coffin Texts were written in more modern Egyptian than the Pyramid texts. So translations of the Coffin Texts are generally more reliable than translations of the Pyramid Texts. The Coffin Texts included collections of spells like the *Book of Two Ways*. This collection included Coffin Spells 1029-1130. It was found as a single text at el-Barsha. It dated to the Egyptian 11th and 12th Dynasties, so Israel's Patriarchs could have encountered it.²⁰⁰

After the close of the Middle Kingdom, Egypt was ruled by the Hyksos for over a century. The Hyksos worshiped Canaanite gods, although they also preserved and respected traditional Egyptian deities to some degree. There has been quite a debate about the extent that the Hyksos opposed and oppressed traditional Egyptian motifs. The Hyksos era began a new direction in the Egyptian mortuary texts. Forman and Quirke argued that the priests at Thebes were cut off from the mortuary traditions at Memphis and Heliopolis, so they slowly began to move in a different direction. They revised and condensed the Coffin Text tradition. This new direction began perhaps as early as 1600 BC with the coffin of Mentuhotep.²⁰¹ When the Hyksos were driven from Egypt by Kahmose and Ahmose of Thebes, the Theban god Amun was given credit for the victory. Under Theban rule, Amun and Amen-Re were given a dominant role in Egyptian mortuary traditions. A. R. David noted that the worship of Amun incorporated earlier mortuary motifs, but it also stressed the new importance of Amun. David noted that new temples for Amun were built throughout Egypt. As the 18th Dynasty Pharaohs ruled from Thebes, they gave Amun

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The Pyramid Texts can be found in Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. The Pyramid Texts can also be found in Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*, 5 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952). Mercer's work has often been criticized by Egyptologists although his theology of the Pyramid Texts is useful. The most recent translation is Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*.

The Coffin Texts can be found in Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*. For those who read the language, a more recent translation of the Coffin Texts can be found in Claude Carrier, *Texts de Sarcophages du Moyen Empire*, 3 vols. (Monaco: Rocher, 2004).

Robinson noted in an EEF posting that 11th and 12th Dynasty examples of the *Book of Two Ways* was found in coffins of nomarchs and non-aristocratic people like scribes, generals, and physicians. Peter Robinson, "The Role of Physicians in the Middle Kingdom," EEF posting, 9/21/04.

Werner Forman and Stephen Quirke, *Hieroglyphs and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 111-14.

supremacy at the expense of the older gods. David noted that the priests of Amun were given the power to supervise all cult centers in Egypt.²⁰²

The new Theban mortuary motifs were represented in texts that were called "the books of dead men" when they were discovered. That name was shortened to *The Book of the Dead*. The Egyptians called the work *Chapters of Coming Forth by Day*. It drew on the older Pyramid Text and Coffin Spell traditions, but added a new Theban emphasis. *The Book of the Dead* was a collection of Theban spells that are generally written together in loose order. It was not a set document that was always written in the same way. It did not arrive at a relatively settled form until after 650 BC. When the Theban tradition did include older spells, it did not always transcribe them correctly. The Theban texts are easily distinguished from the earlier Pyramid Texts and Coffin Spells. Instead of being written on walls and coffins, they were often written on papyrus scrolls. They were also written with reliefs that pictured the ideas included in the spells.²⁰³ The first papyrus copies were prepared for Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. They began the dominance of the Theban mortuary tradition.²⁰⁴

This Theban tradition was preserved in two kinds of sources. Many texts were preserved on the walls of temples and tombs of Upper Egypt. A good example of this can be seen in the texts on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el Bahari. These texts were divided into twenty four sections representing the twelve chambers crossed by Re's solar bark daily and the twelve netherworld chambers crossed by the night bark. While much of the text has been destroyed, enough remains to see that the Field of Reeds motif was applied in several ways. Hatshepsut sailed the day bark to the islands of the Fields of *Aalu* in the ninth hour of the day, and the Field of Cranes in the tenth hour. In the twelfth hour of the day, Re set in the holy horizon of the west, setting in his fields in Mannu, and descending into the underworld. In the first night hour, Hatshepsut came from the fire, and was identified with Osiris of Roset.²⁰⁵

The *Book of the Dead*, or the Theban recension of the Egyptian mortuary texts, was also preserved in a large number of papyri. These papyri were placed either within or beside the coffins of most

²⁰² A. R. David, *The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs and Practices*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 124.

²⁰³ The Litany of Re was found in a wooden statue of Amenophis II which Piankoff dated between 1450 and 1425 BC. See Alexandre Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 42. Three mid-18th Dynasty papyri have also been found which contain chapters of the *Book of the Dead*. See Karol Mysliwiec, *Eighteenth Dynasty Before the Amarna Period*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 29. Hornung noted that the later versions of the Coffin Spells already took the form that they would later take in the Book of the Dead. These appeared first in tombs from the 17th Dynasty. These included the coffins of Mentuhotpe and Herunefer. However, the *Book of the Dead* only began to be used by Egyptian officials in the reign of Thutmose III. Hornung also noted that some Coffin Texts appeared in the New Kingdom tomb of Minnaichte. A few Coffin Spells continued to be used as late as the 25th and 26th Dynasties. Erik Hornung, *Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 7, 13.

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Szczudlowska argued that fragments from the Pyramid Texts were used to form a separate composition during the New Kingdom. This collection of texts was found in the tomb of an 18th Dynasty official named *Mnw-nht*. Szczudlowska argued that these fragments of the Pyramid Texts entered *The Book of the Dead* tradition in chapters 112 and 178. These fragments also appeared on a number of New Kingdom funeral monuments. Albertyna Szczudlowska, "Pyramid Texts Preserved on Sekowski Papyrus," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 99 (1973): 25. The *Book of the Dead* tradition included Nile delta traditions from the Coffin Texts, although the spells were rather poorly copied. The bulk of the material in The Book of the Dead represented a Theban tradition. De Buck argued that chapter 78 of the *Book of the Dead* simply copies a Coffin Spell, although it did so in a highly corrupted form. A. De Buck, "The Earliest Version of Book of the Dead 78," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 35 (1949): 87-97. However, the Theban and delta traditions were not unrelated. The Theban traditions saw the underworld as a great valley called the land of Rostau which could be traversed by water or land paths. However, the water paths resembled the northern Field of Reeds motifs much more closely than a river perse. Nile delta motifs did not disappear simply because Theban traditions rose to dominance while the 18th Dynasty Pharaohs ruled in Thebes. Minor texts from the New Kingdom demonstrated the continued presence of both northern and southern motifs in Egypt. Delta motifs may have been merged with Theban motifs in several texts recorded in Barbara Cumming's collection of 18th Dynasty texts. "The Great Funerary Text" included the following lines: "... that he may travel within the barque of the necropolis to the islands of the Field of Reeds, that he may open the way and that he may pass over the roads when he follows Sokar in Rosetau, without being turned back from the portal of the netherworld, being inundated there with wine and milk." Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*, II:199.

Rosetis presumably equivalent to Rostau. For the texts in question, see Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, n.d.), IV:10, 11.

wealthy Egyptians. On these papyri, scribes copied selected chapters from the mortuary material. These chapters were copied in little predictable order and with little attention to detail.²⁰⁶ The best papyrus copy of the Theban recension of the mortuary texts was the Papyrus of Ani. When translations of *The Book of the Dead* are printed, this papyrus generally stands behind the text.²⁰⁷ Papyrus Ani depicted the Field of Reeds as a subdivision of the Field of Offerings. The Field of Offerings was then limited to the fifth and sixth chambers where Osiris held court. The Field of Reeds itself contained seven halls or mansions which had to be crossed in order to enter the presence of Osiris.²⁰⁸ Egyptian religious literature also appeared engraved on temple walls.²⁰⁹

Four of the most important works in the Theban mortuary tradition were frequently carved into tomb and temple walls. These four works were: *The Book of Amduat*, *The Litany of Re*, *The Book of Caverns*, and *The Book of Gates*.²¹⁰ *The Book of Amduat* was properly, *The Book of what is in the Netherworld*. It was painted on tomb walls in the Valley of the Kings, on the Osireion at Abydos, and on papyrus. In *The Book of Amduat*, all twelve chambers of the netherworld were described in detail. Pharaoh sailed the night bark with Re along the underworld river through these chambers. The chambers were each quite different. Chambers six and seven were uniquely given to Osiris. Chamber ten was chiefly aquatic, and so forth. Yet one characteristic united them all. Each chamber was composed of fields which were given to Re's righteous servants as their eternal reward. *The Book of Amduat* depicted the whole netherworld as a vast Field of Reeds stretching from the western horizon to the east.

The tomb of Seti I also contained another major work called *The Book of Gates*. This book structured the *duat* along lines similar to those seen in *The Book of Amduat*, though with a few striking differences. *The Book of Gates* stressed man's judgment before Osiris. Righteous men who were judged to be such were allowed to work their fields in the sixth chamber. Those who were condemned were executed by fire and water in the eighth chamber. *The Book of Gates* also differed in another way. In *The Book of Gates*, the twelve chambers were guarded by entirely different beings, and the chambers were separated by river bends and fortresses instead of doors. These underworld caverns were also described in different ways in *The Litany of Re* and in *The Book of Caverns*. Both were engraved on the walls of the Osireion at Abydos. *The Litany of Re* depicted seventy-five forms of Re in his caverns. *The Book of Caverns* depicted Re meeting parts, or aspects, of himself in each of these underworld caverns.²¹¹

When exploring a sea crossing polemic against Egyptian mortuary motifs, it is important to remember the chronology of the texts. If Israel left Egypt during the 19th Dynasty, the Theban mortuary texts were the dominant underworld perspective in the culture. While the tradition represented in *The Book of the Dead* did have similarities to the sea crossing events, these similarities were somewhat limited and superficial. If Israel left Egypt after the death of Thutmose III, the Theban priests were only beginning to

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In the 26th Dynasty, the Saite Recension did finally regularize the text of the *Book of the Dead*.

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See the discussion in E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960 reprint), 136-37, and *Book of the Dead* chapters 107-10 and 145-50.

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Albertyna Dembska published a translation and commentary on ten chapters of the *Book of the Dead* contained on a different 21st Dynasty text. Albertyna Dembska, "Papyrus Berlin P 3051 A and C," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 116 (1989): 9-36.

²⁰⁹

One of the more important Greek era temples for religious literature was the great temple at Edfu. The temple was located in far southern Egypt in the Nile valley. The Edfu texts included a creation and flood account. Unfortunately these texts were written a millennium after the Mosaic Age. A very large and highly syncretistic Jewish population lived in the Nile valley of southern Egypt during the Greek period. It is impossible to know if the Jewish community influenced the creation and flood accounts at Edfu. Having noted that however, the creation and flood accounts at Edfu were very different from the Genesis accounts. Any possible Jewish influence on the texts would be at best very limited.

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For a discussion of these books, see: Andrzej Niwinski, *Studies on the Illustrated Theban Funerary Papyri of the 11th and 10th Centuries B.C.*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989). Peter Piccione, "Mehen, Mysteries, and Resurrection from the Coiled Serpent," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 43-52. Leonard Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 1-7.

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See the discussion in Alexandre Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri: Texts*, (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957), 15, and *The Wandering of the Soul*, 42. This general view of the underworld also has Mesopotamian parallels. See Wolfgang Heimpel, "The Sun at Night and the Doors of Heaven in Babylonian Texts," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 38 (1986): 127-51.

gain control of Egypt's temples. Since Thebes is located in the south, Israelites in the northeast delta would not yet have been as strongly influenced by it. To a large extent, the Israelites would still have been living in an Egyptian thought world that had been handed down through the Hyksos era from the Middle Kingdom. Unfortunately, the surviving texts largely represent the Theban tradition, and it is difficult to determine how much of the Middle Kingdom mortuary tradition was preserved through the Hyksos period.

3) THE SEA CROSSING AND EGYPTIAN FIELD OF REEDS MOTIFS

If Israel's sea crossing is understood in the context of a largely Middle Kingdom belief set that was handed down through the Hyksos era, Israel's sea crossing refuted one of the most ancient and pervasive aspects of Egyptian religion. The sea crossing refuted the solar cycle theology that justified Pharaoh's claims to divinity, and especially the various Field of Reeds motifs. The Field of Reeds motif was expressed by a variety of Egyptian terms, including: *sh.t 'i3rw*, the Field of Reeds, *sh.t htp*, the Field of Offerings, and *mr nh3*, the Winding Waterway.²¹² The origin of these motifs was lost in great antiquity, and only a limited amount of useful material about it comes from the archaeological record.²¹³ Even the earliest Egyptian texts show amazing diversity in their use of this motif. A thousand years before Moses was born, this motif can be seen in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 504. This spell read in part,

The reed-floats of the sky are set down for me, for I am Horus of the Gods and I will cross indeed to Re at the horizon. I take to myself my throne which is in the Field of Rushes, and I descend to the southern region of the Field of Offerings.²¹⁴

From Israel's Patriarchal Age, Coffin Spell 159 described the abundance which the blessed dead from Egypt hoped to find in the dwelling place of their god. This spell claimed that the Field of Rushes belonged to the sun god Re. The spell described a region of that Field of Reeds that was surrounded by an iron wall. Barley grew four cubits tall within that boundary. The barley ear was a cubit tall. The grain emmer also grew in Re's underworld dwelling place. It grew seven cubits tall, and its ear was two cubits long. A cubit was roughly 18 inches long. So that represented incredible abundance.²¹⁵ The Field of Reeds can also be seen *Book of the Dead* chapter 1. This spell included the words, "HE ENTERS IN PEACE INTO THE FIELD OF RUSHES."²¹⁶ Chapter 146 of the *Book of the Dead* added, "Beginning of the secret portals of the house of Osiris in the Field of Rushes."²¹⁷ A wide variety of similar texts could be quoted as well.²¹⁸

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On the relationship of the Field of Reeds to the Field of Offerings, see Leonard Lesko, "The Field of Hetep in Egyptian Coffin Texts," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 9 (1971-72): 89-101. The Field of Reeds and the Field of Offerings are different motifs, though they are interwoven. This can be seen in the "Great Funerary Text" translated by Barbara Cumming, "that I may plow my arable land in the Field of Reeds and that I may partake of my field of offerings." Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*, II:200.

Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, 28. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, I:21, 52. N. Rambova, "The Symbolism of the Papyri," in *Mythological Papyri: Texts*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 31. Murray, "Burial Customs and Beliefs in the Hereafter in Predynastic Graves," 87-9. On the pre-dynastic material in the texts, see Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, (London: British Museum Publications, 1985), 45.

²¹⁵ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 180.

²¹⁶ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:138.

²¹⁷ Thomas Georg Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in their Own Terms*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 6.

²¹⁸ Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, 133.

Field of Reeds motifs can be found in the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts, and to a lesser extent in the Book of the Dead texts. The Pyramid Texts were written around 2500 BC which was a thousand years before the exodus. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 254 claimed that the Serpent of Praise excavates a pool for the Pharaoh in the Field of Rushes, and she confirmed his land in the two Fields of Offerings. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 325 claimed that the doors of the sky were opened for the ruler as he went up into the Field of Rushes. The Coffin Texts were written during Israel's Patriarchal age, although they remained in use down to the Mosaic Age. Coffin Spell 260 claimed that the Great One had clothed the deceased with life in the midst of the Field of Rushes. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:199. Coffin Spell 279 claimed that the deceased would bathe in the basin of the Abyss; come to land in the West; come to land

The standard explanation for the origin of the Field of Reeds motif is that the Egyptian spiritual world was modeled after the pattern of the Nile valley ecosystem. Several authors have viewed the Field of Reeds in this light. E. A. W. Budge suggested that the original Field of Reeds was located in the northern delta. He even suggested that Tattu, near the capital of the Busirite nome of Lower Egypt, should be regarded as a prototype of this region.²¹⁹ I. E. S. Edwards suggested that the Field of Reeds originally grew from the Osiris cult. He suggested that the Field of Reeds below the western horizon was an idealized version of this world.²²⁰ E. O. James explained that the Field of Reeds seemed to be an idealization of the Nile valley with beautiful roads and winding lakes which were difficult to cross.²²¹ Henri Frankfort suggested that instead of being an idealization of the Nile valley, the Field of Reeds material pointed back to the era when the Nile valley was originally settled.²²²

These writers agreed in seeing the Nile valley as the prototype of the Field of Reeds. Yet they disagreed on several points. Was the Field of Reeds located in the northern delta? Was it beyond the western horizon? Was it in the East, or was it a primordial zone of some kind? Different Egyptian texts located this region in each place, and the Egyptians would have affirmed all of these locations. Field of Reeds texts can be grouped roughly into texts which imply astral, horizon, and underworld locations for the Field of Reeds. The astral texts placed the Field of Reeds either among the stars or in the sky. The horizon texts placed the Field of Reeds beyond the horizon, and the underworld texts placed the Field of Reeds either beneath or beside the earth.

The most important horizon regions were the eastern and western horizons. The eastern Field of Reeds was almost exclusively associated with the solar cult. The western horizon motifs were much more eclectic. Several different traditions located the realm of the dead in the west, though only some of these traditions used Field of Reeds imagery. A good example of this usage can be seen in a text from Deir el Bahari which praised Re with these words: "Hail to thee Re; thou settest in the holy horizon of the west, thou settest in thy fields in Mannu."²²³ Other western traditions which may have been originally independent include the realm of Osiris, the mountain of Anubis, and the mountain of Seth.²²⁴

The final location for the Field of Reeds is in the underworld. This underworld region is described in a variety of ways and with different names. Most commonly, this area is called either the *duat* or the land of Rostau.²²⁵ The texts showed a remarkable diversity in the location and character of these sites. E.

at the Field of Rushes, and divide the field-plots of the two Fields of Offerings. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:210. The earliest Book of the Dead texts were written in the Mosaic age. Kamose and Ahmose had ruled originally in Thebes, and Thebes remained Egypt's capital throughout the 18th Dynasty. The New Kingdom rulers did not revive Middle Kingdom mortuary material in its original form. After the initial phase of temple rebuilding, Egypt's theology became dominated by the southern mortuary motifs traditionally associated with Thebes. These Theban traditions gave rise to the *Book of the Dead*. The earliest fragments of this work appeared in New Kingdom tombs like the tomb of Senmut at Deir el-Bahri from Hatshepsut's reign. "My father Atum has made me a grant: He has established for me a house (as) of one who is on Earth. Northern corn and spelt are in it in unreckonable quantity, and my festivals are made for me therein by the son of my body. Give ye to me invocation, (consisting of) bread and beer, beef and fowl, incense and anointing oil, and all things good and pure on which a god lives. Then shall I endure to eternity in all the forms beloved of Akheperkare. He fares downstream in the fields of Yaru. He reaches the Feast Field. Akheperkare, the justified, is Ruty." William C. Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi of the XVIII Dynasty*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 95.

E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life: Egyptian Religion*, (New York: University Books, 1959 reprint), 204, 211.

I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961), 30.

E. O. James, *The Tree of Life: An Archaeological Study*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 68.

Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1948, reprinted 1961), 110-11, 154.

Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, 4:11. The western horizon here was the doorway into the netherworld.

The Old Kingdom inscription of Pepyankheryib included the words, "An offering which the king and which Anubis, who is on his mountain, who dwells in the divine tent-shrine, who is in his wrappings, lord of the sacred land." Nigel Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 368. It is impossible to know if an early root stood behind both this motif and El's tent shrine on Amanus.

The name Duatis also transliterated as Dewat, Tuat, or Tat, though Duat is the most common form. Faulkner noted that Rostau was the necropolis of Memphis, but the name was used for the underworld in general. Faulkner also noted that Rostau was also the ramp used to move a sarcophagus into a tomb. He noted that there could be a Rostau at any

A. W. Budge implied a reason for this diversity in his discussion of Papyrus Ani. He suggested that in his night journey, Re crossed the *duat* of Thebes, the *duat* of Osiris of Abydos, the *duat* of Seker of Memphis, the *duat* of Neith of Sais, the *duat* of Bast of Bubastis, and the *duat* of *tem* of Anu, or Heliopolis. Budge noted that Re followed a course which first went from south to north, then to the east, and then finally toward the Mountain of the Sunrise.²²⁶ The implication of this was that the *Book of the Dead* tradition incorporated *duat* motifs from various sites, and each of these sites described the *duat* in a slightly different way.

In the Middle Kingdom texts, earlier themes were developed in more detail. Astral and horizon locations for the Field of Reeds continued to appear, but the Coffin Spells did see an increased tendency for the *duat* to be placed in the underworld. Earlier texts had often seen the underworld realm as a place which Pharaoh could avoid by traveling the solar bark to the Field of Reeds. Middle Kingdom texts were more likely to depict Pharaoh traveling through this region.²²⁷ One of the more interesting examples of this is Coffin Spell 317. In this spell, the deceased claimed that his seat was prominent in the Bark (or ship) of Re' in the midst of the lower Netherworld (the *duat*). In this text, Pharaoh is identifying himself as a manifestation of the Nile god, sailing on Re's bark through the lower *duat*. This lower *duat* is the underworld.²²⁸

The clearest references to this region are found in the 11th and 12th Dynasty texts from el-Barsha called *The Book of Two Ways*. These texts include Coffin Spells 1029-1130. Some of these texts describe a region called the Land of Rostau.²²⁹ This Land of Rostau was the domain of Osiris, though Re was also an influential force there.²³⁰ Rostau could be in the limit of the air, just as the Duat could be located in the sky. In other texts, Rostau was a horizon land, or was clearly in the underworld.²³¹ Rostau was a great river valley based on the prototype of the Nile valley.²³² The Rostau river valley had steep walls of flint and charcoal. Travel along this valley was possible only on paths which ran either through the dangerous river channels or along the equally dangerous and steep valley cliffs.²³³

The Rostau references in the Coffin Spells did give a fairly clear picture of a netherworld river valley. They did not describe this area with the clarity of the later texts which made up the *Book of the Dead* tradition. Yet scattered references in the Coffin Spells did demonstrate that most of the key concepts found in later texts were already in use in at least a simple form. In Coffin Spell 759, Pharaoh claimed to know the path of the solar bark. He demanded that the gates of that region be opened because he knew Re's foes in the gates. Coffin Spell 49 commanded the Wardens of those chambers to divide the hours. This could have referred to the twelve hours of the night which were divided by gates in later texts. Several

important cult center. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*. I:44, II:134.

²²⁶Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 149. Papyrus Ani is the best source for the Theban recension of the Egyptian mortuary texts.

²²⁷This can be seen in Pharaoh's determination that the notes of detestable things in the realm of the dead. These detestable things had sunk through the earth, and had become available in the underworld. Pharaoh was delivered from such a doom by traveling on the solar bark to the Field of Reeds. See Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 210, 409, and 493. Texts that seem to place the netherworld below ground include Coffin Spells 607, 619, and 703.

²²⁸See footnote 14 in Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:244.

²²⁹See the discussion in Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 3-35. Piankoff suggests on page 11 that two ways, by water and by land, led to Rostau, which was the gate of the necropolis, giving access to the Netherworld.

²³⁰See Coffin Spells 1087 and 1085. In the Pyramid Texts, Rostau occurred only in Faulkner's Utterance 300.

²³¹See Coffin Spells 1035, 1150, and 1080.

²³²Budge noted the influence of the Nile valley on the structure of the Duat. Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 136. For islands in the upper Nile, see also Montet, *Eternal Egypt*, 3.

²³³Coffin Spells that described the Land of Rostau included the following: 1034, 1035, 1072, 1079, 1086, 1087, 1150, 1182, and 1184. The two routes of Re-Atum are also mentioned in Coffin Spell 674 without reference to Rostau. Rostau was also mentioned in the tomb of Nakht at Thebes. See Manniche, "The Tomb of Nakht, The Gardener at Thebes (No. 161) as copied by Robert Hay," 69, 71. It was also mentioned in the first chapter of the *Book of the Dead*. Lesko suggested that these two ways are instead the paths through the sky (upper waterway) and through the underworld (land way). Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 43.

other Coffin Spells described the netherworld gates and their guardians.²³⁴ These paths could only be crossed with magic by one who knew the names of the paths. Without the aid of magic spells, they could not be crossed. Even Pharaoh faced dangers on every side in this region.²³⁵ Coffin Spell 991 claimed that Pharaoh had been given the Niles. The name was plural. There were in fact three Niles in the Egyptian myths. This can be seen in the *Hymn of Aten*, from Akenaton's reign in the 18th Dynasty.²³⁶ First, there was the visible Nile. Second, there was an underworld Nile which flowed through the *duat*, returning water to Upper Egypt. Finally, there was an upper Nile above the air which brought rain to foreign nations. The underworld Nile was the waterway in the valley of Rostau. Its bends were occupied by guards who tried to turn Pharaoh back from the gates of the Field of Reeds. Several of the Coffin Spells prevented these watchmen from stopping Pharaoh.²³⁷ For example, Coffin Spell 404 taught Pharaoh what to say to get past the guardian of the first portal of this Field of Reeds in the netherworld. The underworld Field of Reeds was described in at least two other texts. Coffin Spell 629 mentioned the two fields of offerings of Osiris, and Coffin Spell 619 spoke of the cultivator who dwells in the Netherworld, and of the Field of the Netherworld. The clearest descriptions of the underworld Field of Reeds came from the Theban recension of the mortuary material popularly called the *Book of the Dead*. Papyrus Ani and other "books of dead men" papyri often contained detailed pictures of the Field of Reeds, and of actions taken by men and gods in the Field of Reeds.

How important can an area really be if it is located beyond the horizon, in the air, or in the underworld? How much can it matter for life here and now? The ancient Egyptians would respond that it mattered a great deal because there was no clear distinction between the physical and spiritual realms. Men lived in both at the same time. The Field of Reeds was not just a promise of future blessing when life was past. Instead, the Field of Reeds was already a reality in the here and now, breaking into physical existence and manifesting its presence. How did the Field of Reeds manifest itself? The Field of Reeds broke into human experience in at least three ways, by Pharaoh's presence among men, by the presence of temples, and by the presence of geographical areas which manifested the eternal.

This immanence of the Field of Reeds can be seen first in Pharaoh's presence among men. Pharaoh was not a normal human being. Pharaoh was god incarnate, the earthly manifestation of the falcon god Horus.²³⁸ As such, he was the only son of god and the living image of god.²³⁹ Pharaoh's identification with Horus was important because this falcon god landed in the primal Field of Reeds, causing the primal hillock to appear, and beginning the process of creation.²⁴⁰ So Horus' throne was in the Field of Reeds from creation. This was the background behind Pharaoh's return to the Field of Reeds at his death. As Horus incarnate, Pharaoh was destined to rule over the Field of Reeds among his faithful servants. He was destined to be purified there with Re, and to sail there on Re's solar bark. Pharaoh's office served as a living witness to the reality of this region.²⁴¹

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These included Coffin Spells 673, 758, 1037, 1108-1111, and 1149. Some Coffin Spells continued the tradition of the Pyramid Texts. These saw the gates of the netherworld as a horizon entrance into the other world. Another interesting tradition was preserved in Coffin Spell 901 which saw various gates dividing rooms in Pharaoh's tomb.

²³⁵ See Coffin Spells 760 and 458.

²³⁶ William Kelly Simpson, ed., *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 293.

²³⁷ See Coffin Spell 1168, 1169, and 1175-1178.

²³⁸ As Pharaoh was progressively extolled in ever greater terms, he came to be seen as the manifestation of other gods as well. In later texts, he was described as the embodiment of Re. However, his identity as Horus was the underlying and pervasive motif.

²³⁹ See Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 376. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III:181, 121, IV:26.

²⁴⁰ See E. A. E. Reymond, "The Primeval Djeba," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 48 (1962): 85. Several gods were associated with creation, especially Re and Ptah, but only Horus landed on a shoot in the Field of Reeds. See also E. A. E. Reymond, "The Children of Tanen Part II: The-God-of-the-Temple in the Edfu Tradition," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 96 (1970): 37-41.

²⁴¹ For a more complete discussion of Pharaoh's claims to divinity, see Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 45. Rudolf Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 18 (1959): 185-86.

The Field of Reeds was also present in many Egyptian temples. These temples were local manifestations of the horizon Field of Reeds, and were each the site where ground first rose from chaos/sea.²⁴² A good example of this can be seen on a Karnak obelisk where Hatshepsut claimed that Ipet-sut was the lightland on earth, and the august hill of the beginning.²⁴³ In other words, the great Karnak temple was a manifestation in Egypt of the horizon Field of Reeds. Along similar lines, a 12th Dynasty stela from Abydos claimed that the builder had made its chapel into the sacred land of the western horizon.²⁴⁴

Egyptian temples demonstrated that they were understood as local manifestations of the Field of Reeds by their architecture. Temple floor levels often rose in imitation of the primal hillock. Temple columns and decorations often imitated swamp plants.²⁴⁵ As the horizon on earth, Egyptian temples frequently included pools of water constructed for their symbolic value. H. W. Fairman mentioned pools at Denderah which were called "pools of Horus."²⁴⁶ The pools of Pithom were made famous by the letter of Merenptah.²⁴⁷ This is especially significant since Israel labored at Pithom building a store city for the solar god Atum. The great temple at Abydos even contained a deep indoor pool with a large stone in its center.²⁴⁸ This center stone platform may have been related to solar theology since a shelf around the pool would have enabled a model of the solar bark to be towed around the platform, replicating the solar cycle.

It is all well and good to suggest that Egyptians would have seen Field of Reeds mythology reflected in Pharaoh's office and in various temples. However, Israel did not cross the sea at the site of an Egyptian temple.²⁴⁹ Can it be shown that the Egyptians would have seen a geographic region as a manifestation of the Field of Reeds? The answer is yes, though the evidence here is more complex. It should be remembered first that the Egyptians drew all three Field of Reeds motifs from geographical parallels. The *duat* Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the narrow Nile valley. In the *duat*, the Field of Reeds tended to be a limited area surrounded by other geography. The astral Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the Nile delta with its broad expanse of swamp and habitable areas. The horizon Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the islands which arose as the Nile's annual inundation subsided.²⁵⁰ This model gave rise to the creation myth of a primal hillock arising in the reeds of the primal deep. This hillock became the inhabited earth floating on chaos sea surrounded by a broad band of marshland. Since the Field of Reeds motifs were drawn from Egyptian geography, there was a natural link between these motifs and various geographical locations.²⁵¹

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For a discussion of this mound in the primal sea, see R. T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), 35-41.

²⁴³

See Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II:27.

²⁴⁴

Stewart, *Egyptian Stelae Reliefs and Paintings*, II:21. See also Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:27. Donald B. Redford, "New Light on Temple J at Karnak," *Orientalia* 55 (1986): 12, David, *The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 126-31. Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 229.

²⁴⁵

Harold H. Nelson, "The Egyptian Temple," *Biblical Archaeologist* 7 (1944): 44-53. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 153. A. J. Spencer, "The Brick Foundations of Late-Period Peripteral Temples and their Mythological Origin," in John Ruddle, G. A. Gaballe, and Kenneth A. Kitchen, eds., *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman*, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 132-33.

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H. W. Fairman, *The Triumph of Horus*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 42, 46.

²⁴⁷

Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III:273.

²⁴⁸

See Edouard Naville, "Excavations at Abydos: the Great Pool and the Tomb of Osiris," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 1 (1914): 164. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 153-54. J. M. Plumley, "The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt," in Carmen Blacker and Michael Loewe, eds., *Ancient Cosmologies*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), 28,-9.

²⁴⁹

Baal-Zephon may have been a Canaanite worship place, but there is no way to evaluate whether it also participated to some degree in Egyptian Field of Reeds theology.

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See F. L. Griffith, "A Stela of Tirhaqa of Kawa, Dongola Province, Sudan," *Mélanges Maspero I: Orient Ancien*, 2nd fascicule, (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1935-1938), 428.

²⁵¹

Frankfort saw Buto in the delta as the start of the Field of Reeds. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 114-15. Budge argued that the 14th Aat in Papyrus Ani was the celestial equivalent of the area between the Nile and Heliopolis. Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 141.

The Egyptians also applied Field of Reeds theology to their understanding of the world as a whole. The Egyptians saw the world as an island floating on Nun, surrounded by a band of reeds. The obvious question became, where really was this horizon boundary between earth and sea? The Reed Sea boundary could only be beyond the known territory. This placed the boundary at some distance since the Egyptians were normally competent geographers for their time. They knew their world fairly well from the Euphrates in the north,²⁵² to the Greek islands in the west,²⁵³ and from at least the horn of Africa in the south,²⁵⁴ to Arabia and the Persian Gulf.²⁵⁵ There is even some evidence that Pharaoh Necho II may have sent an expedition which circumnavigated Africa in three years.²⁵⁶ Herodotus' account of this expedition has been accepted by some recent authors.²⁵⁷ The Egyptians also recognized that unexplored regions of the earth lay beyond their knowledge.²⁵⁸ So within the bounds of their mental horizon, the Egyptians were as competent geographers as anyone else in their day, as would be expected of a great world power.²⁵⁹

While they knew the world around them fairly well, the Egyptians expected to find a Field of Reeds at its borders. Three key Egyptian geographical motifs showed the importance of horizon motifs and Field of Reeds theology. These three motifs were the Great Circle, Punt as God's Land, and the Great Green.²⁶⁰ These three motifs can be seen in many texts. For example, the Stela of Amenhotep II at Giza reads in part, "His portion is that on which Re shines, To him belongs what Ocean encircles."²⁶¹ Along the same lines, Thutmose I claimed on the Tombos Stela that he had conquered as far as the circuit of heaven, and the beginning of the under world, even the islands of the Great Circle. Thutmose III described his reign by claiming that his western boundary stretched to the mountains of Manu.²⁶² These inscriptions contained references to the Great Circle, God's Land, the Great Green, and other motifs.

²⁵²

Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:265, 317.

²⁵³

Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, IV:511

²⁵⁴

Already in the 6th Dynasty, the autobiography of Weni named six specific African tribes against which he waged war. See Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:18-23. Kamil noted that the southern city of Edfu served as a caravan stop for traffic between the Kharga Oasis and the Red Sea coast. This may imply knowledge of the south land. See Jill Kamil, *Upper Egypt*, (London: Longman, 1983), 152. On a southern location of Punt, see John A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), 127.

²⁵⁵

The question of trade between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea has been debated endlessly. Some scholars even claim that the Egyptians made no use of the Red Sea and knew little about it. See Alessandra Nibbi, *Ancient Egypt and Some Eastern Neighbors*, (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1981), 109. M. A. Drower gave a brief and useful summary of the arguments supporting the possibility of trade between the Persian Gulf and Wadi Hammamati. See M. A. Drower, "Early Connections between Sumer and Egypt," *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology* 8-9 (1970):243-47. Pierre Montet even suggested that the Egyptians sailed the length of the Euphrates, down the Persian Gulf, around Arabia, down to Punt, and back to Wadi Hammamati. (This may have been safer and cheaper than trading overland.) See Montet, *Eternal Egypt*, 124. The Mu Qedi reference of Papyrus Harris has also been interpreted in other ways.

²⁵⁶

The evidence comes entirely from Herodotus Book IV, Section 42. Herodotus claimed that Necho II sent Phoenician ships to circumnavigate Africa. The account has the ring of truth about it. It assumed that waters surrounded the continent, while Herodotus professed not to know if waters surrounded Europe. It noted the Phoenicians' claim that the sun shone on their right hand side during their trip. This assumed that their fundamental direction of travel was north/south. Herodotus' own map of the continent would have required an east/west route since it saw Africa as having a very large southern shore. This suggests that the Phoenicians' description of the trip was more accurate than Herodotus understood. See George Rowlinson, *The History of Herodotus*, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 131.

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John Ruffle, *The Egyptians: An Introduction to Egyptian Archaeology*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 95. Aly Bey Shaffei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch, the Red Sea Canal and the Route of the Exodus," *Bulletin de la Societe Royale de Geographie de l'Egypte* 21 (1946): 231-87.

²⁵⁸

See the inscription of Ptahwer in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, I:319.

²⁵⁹

It seems strange that anyone would even question this obvious truism, but several recent writers have questioned the extent of Egyptian geographical knowledge of regions to the south and east.

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The term Great Green was originally used for the Nile delta. Later it was also for the eastern Mediterranean basin. There has been some debate about its interpretation.

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Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II:41.

²⁶²

Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:30-1, 134-35.

How did Israel's sea crossing refute Egyptian Field of Reeds theology? The answer is that Israel's sea crossing mimicked key aspects of Egyptian theology. In each aspect, Yahweh actually did what Egyptian theology only claimed that Pharaoh could do. Israel's sea crossing mimicked and refuted Egyptian Field of Reeds theology in at least six ways. The first parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Egyptian theology can be seen in Exodus 13:18 and 15:4. Both Israel and Pharaoh crossed a Reed Sea. Much will be said later about Israel's journey across the *yam sūph*. The exact location of this crossing can not be determined. Manfred Bietak lists six different swamp areas which have been suggested as sites for Israel's crossing, but no one site has gained wide acceptance.²⁶³ Whatever its location might have been, it is quite significant that Israel should be able to cross such a sea. Pharaoh's claims to righteousness were bound up with such reeds. When Pharaoh's army could not follow Israel, God demonstrated that Pharaoh's claims were incorrect.

How did the Field of Reeds prove that Pharaoh was righteous before God? When Pharaoh died, he crossed the eastern Field of Reeds into Re's presence. There Pharaoh bathed in the waters of the Field of Reeds, making himself ready to join Re in his solar ship. He bathed in the reeds just as Re himself bathed, preparing for his daily ascent into heaven. Any number of texts demonstrated this bathing, including the Old Kingdom Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 567, 512, and Coffin Texts 44 and 279. These texts spoke about Pharaoh's purification in the afterlife, but they were also more than this. These texts were also probably used in the daily cultic ceremonies in Pharaoh's court. Every morning, Egyptian priests bathed Pharaoh in the house of morning as a symbol for his future purification, his future divinity, and his future participation with Re in the life of the Field of Reeds. The cultic character of this morning ablution seems to be suggested by Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 323 and Coffin Spell 439. In these texts, Pharaoh claimed that he had bathed with Re' in the Lake of Rushes. Then the priests who bathed Pharaoh addressed him as the gods Thoth, Shu and Nut. Since this was a normal part of Pharaoh's morning ritual, many Egyptians would have known that Pharaoh was justified and purified by the Field of Reeds waters. Yet when Pharaoh's army crossed into a real Field of Reeds, they were not justified by its waters. They were destroyed.

Interesting evidence for the Field of Reeds polemic comes from the Coptic translation of the Old Testament. The Coptic version translated the name Red Sea with either of two words which were each transliterations of Egyptian words. One word transliterated the Egyptian name *s i3rw*, "Sea of Reeds." The other transliterated *s-n-h3*, the "Sea of the Water Plant."²⁶⁴ So the Coptic version of the Old Testament implied a clear link between the Egyptian Field of Reeds and the Hebrew *yam sūph*.

4) THE SEA CROSSING AND PATHS THROUGH THE REEDS

A second parallel can be seen in Exodus 14:21, 22 with the motif of a miraculous pathway. Israel faced captivity and death sandwiched between Pharaoh's forces and the *yam sūph*. Escape was impossible until God opened a pathway before Israel so that they could cross the *sūph* on dry ground.²⁶⁵ This miraculous pathway paralleled closely one of the oldest aspects of Egyptian Field of Reeds theology, the motif of a miraculous path through the marsh.²⁶⁶ As Field of Reeds theology developed into several astral, horizon and underworld forms, each Field of Reeds location came equipped with its miraculous pathways through the marsh.²⁶⁷ Texts which placed the Field of Reeds in the sky also described a celestial

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²⁶⁴ *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), s.v. "Silfmeer," by Manfred Bietak.

²⁶⁵ John R. Towers, "The Red Sea," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 18 (1959): 152-53.

Several remarks have already been made about this pathway. Its cause has been debated endlessly. Recent discussions of it include the following: Shanks, "The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea according to Hans Goedicke," 45-6. Lewis Hay, "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 83 (1964): 397-403. George W. Coats, "History and Revelation: The Reed Sea Event," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 4 (1969): 22-7.

²⁶⁶ Coffin Spell 296 commanded the keepers of the gate to make a path for the deceased because he knew the secret ways and the portals of the Field of Rushes." Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:220. In Coffin Text 335, the deceased declared that he proceeded on the path to the Island of the Just and to the Field of Rushes. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:263. In Coffin Spell 790, the deceased declared that he was able to open all the paths in the skyland on earth. He opened all of the paths in the Netherworld. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:1.

²⁶⁷ This motif played a key role in burial ceremonies in the cult as Coffin Spell 1084 noted. When Pharaoh's body was transported to his mortuary temple, he was described as being ferried across the divine pathways to god's presence.

pathway which led to god's presence. The celestial pathway can be seen in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 437. This text claimed in part,

May you remove yourself to the sky, for the roads of the celestial expanses which lead up to Horus are cleared for you. Seth is brotherly toward you as the Great One of On, for you have traversed the Winding Waterway in the north of the sky as a star crossing the sea which is beneath the sky.²⁶⁸

Other texts located these pathways beyond the western horizon. These paths led through the Field of Reeds to the dawn, or to the mansion of eternity. Coffin Spell 148 depicted Pharaoh as claiming that he had used the roads of eternity to go to the dawn.²⁶⁹ A few texts associated these pathways with the West, since the western horizon was the entrance into the underworld. For example, Coffin Spell 30 portrayed Pharaoh traveling peacefully on the beautiful pathways of the west. Most texts located these pathways in the Netherworld. In Coffin Spell 619, Pharaoh demanded that the great cultivator of the Netherworld prepare a path for him. Coffin Spell 790 demanded that the guards of the Netherworld gates prepare a path for the deceased to enter the presence of Osiris and to become a god himself forever.²⁷⁰

Some of these pathways were clearly water routes which Pharaoh could traverse either on his reed floats, on the ferryman's craft, or on the solar bark. In Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 406, Pharaoh prayed to Re, asking that the deceased could act as the head of the Chaos gods when a waterway was prepared for Re's ship. Other texts describe crossing such pathways on dry ground. This is clearly true in Coffin Texts 1029 and 1130 which describe the land of Rostau. This underworld region was a narrow valley which could be crossed in two equally dangerous ways. Pharaoh could sail down a river on the valley floor, or he could walk along pathways lining the valley walls. Both pathways led to the Field of Reeds and to god's presence. These two pathways through Rostau can be seen in Coffin Spell 1035 where the deceased claimed to have passed over the paths of Rostau, whether on water or on land. These paths were described as the paths of Osiris that were in the limit of the sky.²⁷¹ Along the same lines, Coffin Spell 1074 described the paths of water and land which belonged to Rostau. Other texts also described dry land routes. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 518 describes the "Causeway of Happiness" in the Field of Offerings, and Coffin Spell 296 promised that the deceased would walk on his feet over the paths of the underworld because he knew the secret ways and portals of the Field of Rushes.²⁷²

It is very interesting that these miraculous pathways were often depicted as divine creations. They were made by the gods for Pharaoh. Coffin Spells 497,

O all you gods who are in sky and earth, in the waters and in the horizon, prepare a path for my soul, my spirit and my shade in the retinues of Re' and of Hathor for all eternity.²⁷³

Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 6. The pathway theme was also used in the cult of the great serpent god Mehen. The body of this god constituted a pathway with gates leading to Re's presence. See Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 332, Coffin Spells 493, 498, 758-760, 1103. Piccione, "Mehen, Mysteries, and Resurrection from the Coiled Serpent," 43-52.²⁶⁸

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 144. Thutmose III claimed to have been taken to heaven where he saw the horizon god on his heavenly ways. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:61. See also Coffin Spell 629 which described the sunbeam as a great causeway to the sky, and Coffin Spell 822 which described sky pathways in the Field of Reeds.²⁶⁹

For a discussion of this spell, see Robert H. O'Connell, "The Emergence of Horus: An Analysis of Coffin Spell 148," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 69 (1983): 66-87.²⁷⁰

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:1.²⁷¹

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:132.²⁷²

See also Coffin Spell 650.²⁷³

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:136.

Along the same lines, Coffin Spell 1105 argued that the gods should prepare a path for Pharaoh so that he could set Ma'et (or justice, propriety) aright and split open the darkness.²⁷⁴

Divine help was not only needed to create these pathways, but also to find a way through them. The underworld pathways were often depicted as a frightful confusion of routes where men would become hopelessly lost without divine guidance.²⁷⁵ This confusion can be seen clearly in Coffin Spell 1072.

Spell for the paths of Rostau. These paths here are in confusion; every one of them is opposed to its fellow. It is those who know them who will find their paths. They are high on the flint walls which are <in> Rostau, which is both on water and land.²⁷⁶

In the Theban *Book of the Dead* tradition, Pharaoh requested this pathway because of his own integrity.²⁷⁷ This distinction between Pharaoh and lesser men can be seen most clearly in Coffin Spell 1035. Here Pharaoh claimed that he could pass the water and land paths of Rostau both because he was a god, and because he knew the right spells. Those who did not know the proper spells would die in the underworld and could never have righteousness. Pharaoh knew the magic spells. He was god incarnate. He was righteous. He could cross on god's pathway unharmed by fire or by threatening spiritual beings.²⁷⁸ He could cross the marshland Field of Reeds to live in god's presence forever. Pharaoh's theology did him little good when his chariots pursued Israel through a real field of reeds. By his own theology, Pharaoh should have been able to charge across this miraculous pathway, scattering Israel, and triumphantly entering god's presence. Instead, his armies were driven back in confusion, fled in terror, and were destroyed in the field of reeds. By Pharaoh's own theology, this testified to his wickedness, his ignorance, and his inability to stand in God's presence.

5) THE SEA CROSSING AND THE WINDS

The third parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology requires only a more brief comment. Exodus 14:21 stated that Israel's miraculous pathway was formed by a strong east wind.²⁷⁹ Then Exodus 15:10 noted that God blew with His wind from a different direction and drowned Pharaoh's soldiers.²⁸⁰ Coffin Spell 162 is very striking here. It read in part,

Such is the east wind which opens the celestial windows; the east wind is opened and a fair path is made for Re' that he may go forth on it. Re' grasps my hand and sets me in this field of his in the midst of rushes, . . . The east wind is the breath of life, and what it has granted to me is that I may live by means of it.²⁸¹

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The divine origin of these pathways is commonly assumed. See also Coffin Spells 296, 649, 686, 1029, 1063, 1071, and 1073.

²⁷⁵ The parallel here to delta swampland seems obvious. The delta swamps were full of small water pathways that led nowhere. Because of this, the Egyptians commonly called the Field of Reeds by the name Winding Waterway.

²⁷⁶ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:145. Divine guidance through these paths is described in passages like Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 442 and Coffin Spell 901. This divine help was given because Pharaoh was greater and more righteous than other man. For example, in Coffin Spell 489, Pharaoh asked Osiris to make a path for him through the Field of Reeds because he surpassed mortal men.

²⁷⁷ Spell 15 of the Book of the Dead. See Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 41. See also Coffin Spell 1139 which stresses the purity of this path, created by the Lord of eternity who is in righteousness.

²⁷⁸ See also Coffin Spells 650 and 1153.

²⁷⁹ Given the Egyptian theological significance of the *yam sūph*, the fact that God's east wind blew on the Red Sea makes an interesting parallel to Gen. 1:2 where God's *ruah* blew on the original primal deep.

²⁸⁰ Ex. 10:13, 19 recorded a similar miracle. God blew with an east wind, driving locusts on to the land. Then God reversed the wind, blowing the locusts into the *yam sūph*. This should have served as a warning for Pharaoh.

²⁸¹ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:140. A pre-Mosaic text often called *The Admonition of an Egyptian Sage* contained an example of such a pathway created by wind, heat and drought. This text describes how a drought dried the marsh and opened to public inspection all of the secret marshland places. The priests were aghast that common people

The east wind only has this role in Coffin Spell 162.

It is quite significant that Exodus 15:10 implied that the *yam sūph* was flooded by God's mighty wind, and that this wind apparently blew from a different direction. This is significant because in the Egyptian texts, the Field of Reeds was flooded by a wind from a different direction, the north wind.²⁸² This north wind was under Pharaoh's control and was his protector. This can be seen in Coffin Spell 1130 where the deceased king claimed for himself the words of his god. This spell included the following sections.

I have done four good deeds within the portal of the horizon. I made the four winds that everyone might breathe in his time. ... I will navigate aright in my bark, for I am the Lord of the waters when crossing the sky. ... I AM THE ... LORD OF THE WINDS WHO FORETELLS THE NORTH-WIND.²⁸³

When Pharaoh's army was drowned in the *yam sūph*, his claims to control the wind and water were refuted.²⁸⁴ In Exodus 14:26, 27, Moses stretched out his hand at God's command, and the *yam sūph* was inundated. This inundation was clearly beyond the control of Pharaoh's north-wind because it destroyed Pharaoh's army. It proved that Yahweh was the true God instead of pharaoh or the Egyptian gods. Pharaoh's role as lord of the winds did him little good when his army entered a real field of reeds.

6) THE EXODUS AND GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

The fourth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology can be seen in Exodus 15:13. After passing through the *yam sūph*, God led Israel to His holy dwelling place. Both this verse and its parallel in Exodus 15:17 have generated substantial academic discussion²⁸⁵ because they are among the earliest Scriptural examples of the holy mountain motif which is ubiquitous both in the Bible and the ancient Near East.²⁸⁶ This section is also a polemic against two aspects of Egyptian theology. The

could walk out and see their secret cult sites. Gardiner, *The Admonition of an Egyptian Sage*, 38.

A few Egyptian texts stressed the role of the winds. In Coffin Spell 162, the deceased claimed that he had been given the winds. The east wind opened the celestial windows and opened a fair path for Re in the Field of Rushes. The deceased claimed that the east-wind was the breath of life, and it had been granted to the deceased that he may live by it. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, I:140. In Coffin Spell 1071, the deceased claimed that his name was "High-of-winds" so he would be able to pass on the path. So he commanded that a path be prepared for him. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:144.

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:168.

The importance of this wind can also be seen in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 609. This text encouraged Pharaoh to extend his hands because they belonged to the north wind. When Pharaoh extended his hands, the lake of rushes would be filled with water so that he could cross to the horizon where he and the gods had been born. While the east wind appeared rarely in the Egyptian texts, the north wind appeared rather often, and it was an important theme. It can be seen in a text from the reign of Thutmose IV which encouraged the deceased to breathe the sweet breath of the north wind and the wind which came forth from the horizon. Doing so would allow him to partake of all the fine things in the field of reeds, and to take any form which he desired. Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*, III:312. Note also Nakhtamun's claim that Amun came to him as the north wind in a gentle breeze. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II:106. In other words, when Pharaoh arrived at the Field of Reeds, he could breathe the north wind and the wind from the horizon.

See for example, James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy of the Triumphs of Yahweh," in *Studia Biblica et Semitica*, (Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen, 1966), 244. Marc Rozelaar, "The Song of the Sea," *Vetus Testamentum* 2 (1952): 225. John D. W. Watts, "The Song of the Sea," *Vetus Testamentum* 7 (1957): 375.

The Holy Mountain motif appears from China and India, around the Fertile Crescent to Egypt, north into Europe, and scattered broadly throughout the world. It appears from the earliest recorded literature down to the present day. Perhaps the most significant comments in this discussion have been made by Frank M. Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, whose doctoral studies centered on Ex. 15. In 1955, they co-authored an article entitled "The Song of Miriam." In it, they noted that *nawe*, the word for "dwelling place" in Ex. 15:13, was an archaic designation for a divine sanctuary reflecting the term *nawe* strongly reflects the desert origin of Yahwism. Frank M. Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (1955): 248. See also David Noel Freedman, "Early Israelite History in the Light of Early Israelite Poetry," in Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts, eds., *Unity and Diversity*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 6, and Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 26. Cross and Freedman also noted

first is the motif of "God's Land" in Retenu. This motif has already been discussed at some length. The Egyptians viewed Palestine as a mountain land called "God's Land." With the promises of Exodus 15:13-17, Yahweh demonstrated that He was the God of "God's Land." not Ptah, Hathor, or Pharaoh. These verses are also a polemic against the Egyptian motif of god's mansion. This motif saw many temples as local manifestations of one of the god's temples in the *duat*.²⁸⁷ There were many such mythical temples. While the mansion motif occurred in many forms, several of these divine dwellings were located in the Field of Reeds. The texts often suggested that Pharaoh crossed the Field of Reeds on a miraculous pathway, and arrived at god's mansion. When Coffin Spell 491 described Pharaoh's trip across sky pathways, the spell read,

A path is opened for my soul, my spirit, my magic and my shade, and it will enter to Re' within his shrine ... Go, go, my soul, ... throw open the Great Mansion.²⁸⁸

Coffin Spell 383 contained a rather similar passage. This spell claimed that Pharaoh knew the paths of the sky and the Mansions contained in it. So he was able to float on the reed lakes of the Abyss.²⁸⁹ Some texts located god's mansion in the western horizon, like Coffin Spell 709 and 279. Other texts locate god's mansion in the underworld. The best example of this is the Theban recension of the mortuary texts preserved in Papyrus Ani. This copy of the *Book of the Dead* placed the mansion of Osiris/Re in the middle of the underworld Field of Reeds. This divine residence was actually composed of seven halls which had to be crossed before Pharaoh could stand in god's presence.²⁹⁰

The most popular location for Re's residence was the eastern horizon zone. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 359 and Coffin Spells 422, 571, 990, and 1145 are good examples of this. These texts called on the ferryman of the Winding Waterway to ferry the king across to the eastern side of the sky on the yonder side of the Winding Waterway. Examples like this can be multiplied at some length. Many of these examples associate the eastern mansion with crossing the Field of Reeds.²⁹¹

This motif is also very closely tied up with the formal Egyptian cult. Every temple was the earthly manifestation of a god's heavenly dwelling. Every mortuary temple was a local presence of the Field of Reeds. Perhaps the clearest statement of this principle was preserved in Faulkner's Pyramid Text

Albright's conclusions. Albright placed *nawûm* from Mari in the context of several Semitic examples, including the Ugaritic *nwyt*, "settlement," and the Hebrew words *nawé*, "pastoral or nomadic abode," and *nawa*, "range, pasture." In his article, "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," Cross noted that *nawé* designated a tent shrine because it properly meant a pastoral abode or encampment. Cross, "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," 15. Martin Noth rendered the same word as "abode," noting that it first described a pasturage, then a resting place in general. Martin Noth, *Exodus*, (London: SCM Press, 1962), 125. This is very interesting. Ex. 15:1, 20 implied that the songs of Moses and Miriam were first sung on the Red Sea shore following Israel's deliverance. While Cross, Freedman and Noth may not agree, their interpretation of *nawé* is certainly in keeping with the text's probable meaning. The verbs in Ex. 13 are perfects, while the verbs in Ex. 15:17 are imperfects. This may well have indicated a distinction in time between the verses. Having crossed the *yam sûph*, God brought Israel to His pasturage, His resting place, and His tent of meeting. God then promised in Ex. 15:17 that He would bring Israel safely to His mountain sanctuary, the chosen place of His dwelling. This pointed partly to Sinai, fulfilling God's promise in Ex. 3:12. However, Sinai was not Yahweh's only abode. Yahweh's home was also Bethel, Mount Moriah, and the highlands of Palestine. This was the land that God had promised to give to Abraham's descendants. Ex. 15:17 was partly a statement that God would keep His covenant promise and bring Israel into the land of Palestine. God's initial statement to Moses in Ex. 3:7, 8 promised that He was about to bring Israel to Palestine. Ex. 15:15 noted that Edom and Moab would fear to oppose Israel. This was fulfilled partially in Num. 22:3.

The texts mention: the "Mansion of Fire" in Coffin Spell 885, the "Mansion of Life" in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 390 and 385, the "Mansion of the Ibis" in Coffin Spells 215 and 395, and the "Mansion of the Soul" in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 614.

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:133.

Other texts placing god's mansion in the sky include Coffin Spell 571, and Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 485, 571, and 625.

See the discussion in Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 136-37, and *Book of the Dead* chapters 107-110 and 145-150. While the religions of Osiris and Re were originally distinct, later texts showed a tendency to merge them, seeing Osiris as an underworld form of Re.

See Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 268, 308, and 554.

Utterance 534.²⁹² This text warned that anyone who robbed the king's pyramid would have laid his hand on the Mansion of Horus in heaven. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 600 is also quite interesting. This text identified the king's pyramid with both the god Osiris and the Mansion of the Bitter Lakes. The name "Bitter Lakes" in this text is a translation of *km-wr*, the "Great Black." At least three delta sites were called by this name, and it is unclear whether the eastern *km-wr* was the Bitter Lakes or Lake Timsah.²⁹³ It is also unclear why Raymond Faulkner chose to locate this *km-wr* in the Bitter Lakes, instead of choosing a site closer to the pyramids. However, if his translation is accepted, Pharaoh's heavenly mansion in the Field of Reeds was associated in at least this tradition with both the pyramids and the marshland east of Wadi Tumilat.²⁹⁴

Why would Moses note that God had brought Israel to His holy dwelling place? The answer may be that Pharaoh expected to cross a Field of Reeds to Re's dwelling place. This eastern mansion was more than a holy health spa where Pharaoh prepared to embark on Re's solar ship. The eastern mansion was often seen as being the center of Pharaoh's rule over all righteous Egyptians who had faithfully served and worshiped him. This can be seen in several texts. Coffin Spell 571 calls on men, spirits and the dead to rejoice at seeing Pharaoh's mansion among the waters. Then this spell added that the mansions among the waters of the sky and earth must be opened for him.²⁹⁵ When Israel crossed a real field of reeds to approach God's dwelling place while the Egyptians were destroyed, Pharaoh's claim to occupy god's mansion was called into question. If a living Pharaoh could not bring a real army across a real sea of reeds, what confidence could anyone in either Egypt or Israel have in Pharaoh's ability to govern in the afterlife? Yahweh's servants were demonstrably the real inhabitants of His holy mansion.

7) THE SEA CROSSING AND A DAWN CROSSING

The fifth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology requires only a briefer discussion. Exodus 14:25 notes that Yahweh confounded Pharaoh's chariots in the morning watch. The time that this occurred is significant. S. R. Driver noted that the Hebrews divided the night into three watches of about four hours each. The morning watch was the period between two AM and six AM.²⁹⁶ If so, then Israel crossed the sea in the middle of the night. Exodus 14:27 adds that Moses stretched out his staff once more at dawn, and the sea returned to its place. These are strange verses. Israel had been traveling for three days. They were undoubtedly tired and afraid. Footing on the dried *yam sūph* bed could not have been very good, especially if it was able to entangle Pharaoh's chariot wheels. So why cross the seabed at night? The answer may come from the event's intended polemical theology. Dawn was an important time of day in Egyptian theology. Dawn was a time when Re was worshiped. This fact was noted in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 758. This text praised Re, the Lord of the Horizon who was worshiped at dawn.²⁹⁷ These dawn ceremonies were cultic re-enactments of Pharaoh's mythical bathing in

²⁹²

On this point, see E. A. E. Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 148, 154, 183, 232, 255 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 44-53.

See William A. Ward, "Egypt and the East Mediterranean in the Early 2nd Millennium BC," *Orientalia* 30 (1961): 31 and Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 204.

²⁹⁴ Gardiner wrote a valuable survey of the cultic aspects of the mansion theme in 1938. See A. H. Gardiner, "The Mansion of Life and the Master of the King's Largess," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24 (1938): 83-91. Cultic aspects of this theme can be seen behind several texts, including: Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterances 258, 570, and Coffin Spells 314, 837, and 888.

²⁹⁵ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:173. Similar motifs were ancient and common in Egypt. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 268 described Horus making courts for Pharaoh in the mansion. Coffin Spell 439 placed Pharaoh in god's mansion when rule and judgment were being exercised. Several other texts did not mention the mansion, but did stress that Pharaoh had a right to rule in the netherworld. Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 554 called on the deceased Pharaoh to smite and govern, for he was among those who surround Re. It stated that Pharaoh had crossed the lake and traversed the Netherworld so that he may rule towns, govern settlements, and give orders to those in the Abyss.

²⁹⁶ Driver, *The Book of Exodus*, 154.

²⁹⁷ Reymond described a ceremony of "Awakening the Spear at Dawn" from the Edfu texts. See E. A. E. Reymond, "The Cult of the Spear in the Temple at Edfu," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 51 (1965): 114. See also T. George Allen, "Some Egyptian Sun Hymns," *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 8 (1949): 352-53, and Sabatino Moscati, *The Face*

the Field of Reeds. Both Pharaoh and Re bathed in the reeds at dawn. In Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 510, Pharaoh described his morning bath as a bath in the Field of Rushes. Dawn was also the time when the deceased souls of Manu saw Re on his celestial bark.²⁹⁸ Dawn was the time when Re arose to destroy his enemies.²⁹⁹ Jan Zandee noted this fact in an article about the conflict between Horus and Seth.³⁰⁰ He noted that Re's primal victory in the Winding Waterway was reenacted every morning at sunrise. Finally, dawn was the time when people celebrated their own salvation with Re. This can be seen on Papyrus Chester Beatty IV from Thebes. This text praised Re for his rising on the horizon. It noted how a renewal of life had been received by entering Nun, the primal deep. By doing so, the worshippers were refreshed as in their youth.³⁰¹ Pharaoh's own theology should have given him every reason for confidence as he sent his chariots into the *yam sūph*. Not only were miraculous Reed Sea crossings his prerogative, but dawn was coming. Re was about to rise in the eastern horizon. His rising should reassure the Egyptian people that Pharaoh was their god both now and forever. Their faith would be vindicated by Israel's destruction. Yet this vindication never appeared. As dawn broke, Pharaoh's chariots drew near to the true God. They were driven back in confusion from His presence, and Egypt's army died in His judgment.³⁰²

8) THE SEA CROSSING AND UNDERWORLD FIRE MOTIFS

A sixth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology can be seen in Exodus 14:19, 20. These verses noted that Pharaoh's chariots were prevented from approaching Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire. The Egyptian forces simply could not penetrate this barrier. This fire barrier has polemical importance because supernatural fire played an important role in the Egyptian texts.³⁰³ While Egyptian mortuary texts used fire symbolically in several ways, three motifs were especially important. The first was closely associated with Field of Reeds theology. The Egyptian texts frequently described an Island of Fire in the Field of Reeds. This Island of Fire was mentioned in at least fifty texts, like Coffin Spell 402 which commanded that Pharaoh be ferried across to the Island of Fire. This Island of Fire seems to have been the original dwelling place of the gods. The evil serpent destroyed this original world leaving only a few reeds of the Field of Reeds in Nun. Then creation began again as the primal hillock arose in the Field of Reeds and recreated at least partly the Island of Fire.³⁰⁴ If this was true, Pharaoh should not have been surprised to find supernatural fire in the Field of Reeds. Coffin Spell 758 claimed,

²⁹⁸ of the *Ancient Orient*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 370-71.

²⁹⁹ See Ramesses III's prayer in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, IV:140.

³⁰⁰ Ps. 101:8 claimed this dawn judgment for Yahweh instead of Re.

³⁰¹ See Zandee, "A Site of the Conflict between Horus and Seth," 37, and Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 145 where Zandee noted that Re's rising was associated with the destruction of his enemies.

³⁰² Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 372.

³⁰³ Currid noted the significance of the dawn crossing in Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Volume 1: Chapters 1-18*, 305.

³⁰⁴ The Coffin Texts were written during Israel's Patriarchal Age, although they remained in use down to the Mosaic age. In Coffin Spell 482, the deceased claimed that he had removed the fire around Re by his power. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:127. Coffin Spell 758 commanded that the fire in the underworld be quenched and a path through the Field of Reeds be prepared for the deceased. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:290. Coffin Spell 1033 commanded that the underworld fire be quenched and a path be prepared so that he could travel to the circle of fire that surrounded the sun god. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, III:129. The first *Book of the Dead* texts were written in the Mosaic age. Chapter 146 declared the deceased to be the "Kindler of Flames," and the "Quencher of Embers, skilled in (use of) fire." Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, 134. Chapter 22 of the *Book of the Dead* declared that the deceased would speak before the gods. He would declare that he was Osiris. As such, the deceased declared that he had accomplished his heart's desire in the Isle of Flame. He had quenched any fire that had broken out. Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, 36.

Faulkner's Utterance 273-4 called the Island of Fire the god's original home. See Coffin Spells 629, 465.

The paths of fire go around about the seat of the Shining Sun, who guards the paths for the great bark of the Coiled One.³⁰⁵

This spell claimed that the pathways which led to Re's presence were composed of spiritual fire. Coffin Spell 428 promised that this supernatural fire could lead Pharaoh across a fair path to god's presence across the field of reeds.³⁰⁶ Coffin Spell 1129 added that the towns in the Winding Waterway were surrounded by such supernatural fire.

Fire also played a threatening role in descriptions of the *duat*. One of the most dangerous regions in the netherworld was named "The Lake of Fire."³⁰⁷ This lake was a road block in the *duat* which no one could cross. Only those like Pharaoh who knew the correct magical spells could pass through this consuming fire. This Lake of Fire was depicted on the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. In these texts, the second gateway of the *duat* is guarded by a god named "Swallower of Sinner," and beyond his gate was a lake of fire.³⁰⁸ This Lake of Fire in the underworld prevented anyone from arriving at the far shore of the Field of Reeds unless he knew the proper magic spells.

Supernatural fire was also associated with Pharaoh himself in the Egyptian texts. In later texts, Pharaoh was described not only as the incarnation of Horus, but also as the incarnation of his father, the sun god Re.³⁰⁹ As such, Pharaoh inherited his father's burning radiance. This can be seen in Faulkner's Pyramid Text Utterance 261. This text described the king's fierce brilliance. It claimed that the king was a flame moving before the wind to the end of the sky and the earth.³¹⁰ A similar idea can be seen in Coffin Spell 951 where the deceased claimed to be the great flame which shone over Nut. The king's burning radiance was not just a sign of Pharaoh's glory. It was proof of his divine ability to judge and destroy his enemies. Just as the desert sun killed anyone trapped beneath its rays, so also Pharaoh's radiance served as a metaphor for his ability to consume his enemies. Ramesses III described his own conquests by claiming to overwhelm his foes like a fire and like the sun's heat. Ramesses III claimed to turn his foes to ashes.³¹¹

If Pharaoh's own theology was correct, supernatural fire should have caused him no trouble. He knew the magic spells for surviving supernatural fire in the Field of Reeds, and Re's own fire belonged to him. When Pharaoh's chariots faced the pillar of cloud and fire, Pharaoh should have had power over the fire. Several texts stated quite clearly his power over such fire. In Coffin Spells 1116, Pharaoh claimed to be able to enter into the fire and split open the darkness.³¹² This claim did Pharaoh little good when he faced Yahweh's presence in a real pillar of cloud and fire. His chariots were unable to penetrate the dark cloud or to stand before the spiritual fire. Pharaoh had no power over real spiritual fire. So his claims had to be false.

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Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:290.

³⁰⁶

Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, II:72.

³⁰⁷

This Lake of Fire is described in texts like Coffin Spell 1054.

³⁰⁸

See George Hart, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 68. Other texts place this Lake of Fire in the 5th section of the Duat. See Manfred Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 51.

³⁰⁹

Currid discussed Pharaoh's identification with the sun god. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis: Volume 2: Genesis 25:19-50:26*, 270.

³¹⁰

See also Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III:57, IV:46, 54.

³¹¹

This inscription appears over the king's picture at Medinet Habu. See Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, IV:42. Coffin Spell 946 claimed that Pharaoh was a fire in the sky and on earth who had set all of his foes under his flame.

³¹²

See also Coffin Spells 1033 and 1094.