

PROVIDENCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**GODS IN CONFLICT:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE BAAL CYCLE AND 1 KINGS 17-18**

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## **Introduction**

In what follows, a brief analysis of the Baal Cycle will be offered in order to better understand the various divine conflicts described within this text. There will then follow a brief analysis of the divine conflict in 1 Kings 17-18. The primary shared motif concerns not simply divine conflict, but specifically conflict between Baal and other deities. A brief comparison and contrast between these two accounts will provide a glimpse into both the wider culture of conflict in the ancient near east and the use of texts in preserving and proclaiming the victory of the national deity in conflict with other deities. Finally, an appendix will offer and interact with several interpretations of the connection between El and Dagan as this relates to the specific context of Ugarit.

### **1.0 Conflict In The Baal Cycle**

The Baal Cycle is filled with conflict (as are the other literary texts of Ugarit) between the gods themselves and even between people and the gods.<sup>1</sup> The Cycle opens with Yamm (“sea”) demanding Baal be handed over to him by the assembly of the gods. El assents to this demand as Baal has apparently already sought kingship over all the gods (against El?). Baal, however, does not agree to go peacefully and instead engages Yamm in battle with two clubs fashioned by the craftsman god, Kothar-and-Hassis, where he emerges victorious over Yamm.

The second major episode in the Cycle then describes Anat (consort of Baal) as begging her father El to grant Baal a house like the other gods all have. Athirat (wife of El and mother of Anat) is bribed by Baal to give her own assent to the house-building project and to herself entreat El for this to proceed. El relents and Kothar-and-Hassis is employed to build the house for Baal

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<sup>1</sup> Only a cursory description of the pertinent portions of the Baal Cycle are provided in what follows without noting many of the particularities, such as the battles of Anat, the question of a window in Baal's house, or the attempt to enthrone one of Anat's sons on Baal's throne.

which serves as “the climax of Baal's ascent to the kingship.”<sup>2</sup> It is finished in seven days, and Baal celebrates his enthronement.

The final major episode of the Baal Cycle describes Mot's (“death”) revenge upon Baal for the defeat of his brother Yamm. Mot is victorious over Baal (leading to famine in the world) and holds him in the grave until El discovers the defeat of Baal and mourns the loss by lacerating himself repeatedly. Anat likewise cuts herself and makes multitudinous sacrifices in mourning over Baal. She then successfully seeks out Mot to free Baal by defeating Mot. Baal is delivered from the grave and fruitfulness is restored to the world.

It is undeniable that the motif of conflict is central to the Baal Cycle. What is debatable is the exact nature of the conflict (as well as explanations for the conflict). Who is actually engaged in this conflict? The obvious deities involved are Baal, Yamm and Mot (as well as Anat, but her role will not be specifically discussed), but the less obvious is El. What role does El play in the conflict motif of the Baal Cycle? Is he only condoning one side or another, or is there a sense in which he is somehow engaged in a conflict against Baal. This will be examined in the first section, followed by an interpretation of the kingship of Baal and the relationship of El to Baal's kingship.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.1 Conflict Between El and Baal**

El's relation to Baal plays a more significant role in the conflict motifs than has been traditionally understood. If Baal is believed to be the genuine son of El, then it is a conflict among brothers. It would therefore be a conflict between the gods for supremacy within the pantheon of Ugarit. If Baal is believed to be only a “son of El” by marriage to Anath, then this is

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2 Michael David Coogan, ed. and trans. *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1978), 80.

3 Several interpretations of the exact relationship within the divine family will be discussed in the Appendix.

still a family conflict, but not one among brothers.<sup>4</sup> It would therefore be a conflict between a foreign deity and the gods of Ugarit, who, once victorious, replaced the gods of Ugarit as the chief and ruling deity. Several possible ways of understanding the textual data are discussed in the Appendix.

Most interpreters view El's conflict with Baal as only by proxy. After all, El is described as giving blessing to Baal by granting him a "house" right in the middle of the two larger conflict portions of the Cycle. El is also described as mourning over the death of Baal which would not seem, *per se*, to be the action of one who was in conflict with another. However, it may still be the action of one who carries out proxy conflict with Baal, but is either remorseful for what finally occurs or is simply moved by the mourning of his family for Baal.

Whether El was actually involved in the conflict by proxy or not, El is certainly regarded as having sufficient reason for conflict with Baal. He is thought to have been castrated by Baal and thereafter remained impotent as progenitor and as direct ruler over creation.<sup>5</sup> This castrating of El would seem to be sufficient reason for El to seek revenge against Baal and it may also explain the use proxy fighting (since he seems impotent to fight) through his "beloved" sons, Yamm and Mot.

Further, once El has agreed to permit Baal to have a house of his own, this only serves to establish Baal as enthroned king of the earth in place of El. El is the distant sovereign who gives approval for the building, but is far removed from the immediate seat of power. He created, but is now the "*deus otiosus*."<sup>6</sup> Bernard Batto's proposal is illustrative of an amalgamated

perspective on the kingship of El and Baal:

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4 Mark S. Smith cites Schloen as holding the view that this is a "sibling rivalry between Baal, the son only indirectly related to El, and the two 'beloved' of El, Yamm and Mot," *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle Vol. 1: Introduction with Text, Translation, and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 94.

5 Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict Between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 112.

6 André Caquot and Maurice Sznycer reject this view as explicative of the conflict motif in *Ugaritic Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 12.

Baal does not so much supplant the older god, as the older king god El makes the younger and more vigorous storm god Baal his associate in divine rule. Together El and Baal form a united rule, the transcendent father of the gods from his mountain sanctuary in the distant recesses of the cosmos, and the immanent young warrior god from his temple-palace installed on nearby Mount Zaphon.<sup>7</sup>

Caquot and Sznycer have proposed that the conflicts of the Baal Cycle actually pertain to a struggle of Baal on behalf of humanity's survival rather than as a struggle with El.<sup>8</sup> This proposal maintains a mostly positive relationship between El and Baal as represented in the Cycle. The difficulty of such an approach is that it conceives of Yamm and Mot as only figures representing the powers of chaos and death at work in the world, rather than as actual gods who have sovereignty over the chaotic waters and death.

Perhaps the view of a proxy conflict occurring between El and Baal is not far from the truth. It is not uncommon to conceive of the capriciousness of the ANE gods and their constant shifting of allegiances. El may justly have sought the punishment of Baal who brings about so much turmoil in El's family, yet El may also regret any permanent punishment of Baal who is beloved by some of El's family. Yamm and Mot suffer defeat (though the “beloved” of El), yet El does not seem to mourn their loss. Perhaps this is because he believes their defeat is never permanent. They appear to always rise again though defeated by Baal and his company. While conflict is a major motif of the Baal Cycle, one must ask what is its primary purpose or theme?

## **1.2 Baal is King (But What About El?)**

There seems to be a definite consensus view about the primary purpose or theme of the Baal Cycle. The kingship of Baal is the “main theme of the cycle.”<sup>9</sup> If Baal is the king, then one

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7 Bernard F. Batto, *Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition: Slaying the Dragon* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992), 131. Oldenburg (pp. 144-145) also seems to hold this view and believes it was the result of the cultural 'invasion' of the east Semitic immigrants beginning some time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

8 Caquot and Sznycer, 12-13.

9 Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, xxiv; Coogan, 75; and Oldenburg 26. See such repeated epithets and similar acclamations as “the Mightiest Baal is our king” KTU 1.3:V:32-33; 1.4:IV:43-46.

wonders why El is entreated for permission to build Baal a house throughout the Cycle? El is depicted as weak and removed, while Baal is depicted as strong and near and reigning among the gods. “The reason,” according to Oldenburg, “seems to be that, although El is no more the actual head of the pantheon, he has still retained a function for which Ba'al has no substitute. El has the creative word, and what he speaks is right and law.”<sup>10</sup> In such a view, El is retained as the originator, but not as the supreme sovereign.

However, del Olmo Lete rejects the notion of Baal's supremacy over El by appealing to the “literary texts” which are typically regarded as later developments than the mythological texts.<sup>11</sup> He also argues that even if the literary texts are not conclusive evidence that the “onomasticon explicitly excludes” the notion of Baal's supplanting of El as supreme deity.<sup>12</sup> Gordon and Rendsburg seem to agree with this notion and regard the textual evidence as simply demonstrating Baal's eclipsing, but not replacing, El as supreme sovereign.<sup>13</sup> Caquot and Sznycer helpfully argue that

El and Baal represent different functions or different powers, which are not opposed but complimentary. Externally, El is old and wise and Baal is young and strong. At a deeper level, however, El represents the principle of preservation and balance and Baal that of action and progress. Without the first principle, the world would return to chaos and power would be uncontrollably unleashed. Without the second, life would wither away in torpor and stagnation.<sup>14</sup>

## **2.0 Conflict in 1 Kings 17-18**

Baal is not only considered a god who is involved in conflict in the Baal Cycle of Ugarit, but also in the Hebrew Bible, specifically in the conflict among the prophets of Baal and

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10 Oldenburg 26-27.

11 Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, Trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1999), 324.

12 *Ibid.*, 339.

13 Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, fourth ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 308.

14 Caquot and Sznycer 12.

Yahweh. 1 Kings 17-18 describes a famine that is brought about as the result of the prophetic denunciation of idolatry present in Israel. The people of Israel (and therefore the land they lived on) were in covenant with Yahweh and yet had firmly established worship of Baal (and Asherah) during the reign of Ahab. The worship of Yahweh had been denounced and severely persecuted until Elijah (“My god is Yahweh”) the prophet of Yahweh was sent by Yahweh to withhold the rains. During the ensuing famine, he was miraculously preserved by Yahweh by ravens feeding him. Then the account states that he proceeded to one of the primary centers of Phoenician Baal worship at Zarephath and miraculously increased the flour and oil of a destitute widow.

Some time later, the widow's son died suddenly and Elijah (through a repeated entreaty of Yahweh as god) raised the boy back to life. He then challenged the prophets of Baal (and Ashtoreth, even though the latter are curiously absent from the greater narrative) to a contest on Mount Carmel. He called all Israel to observe the conflict, which was not really between the prophets, but between the gods, Baal and Yahweh. The prophets will only serve as proxy representatives of the gods themselves and will provide evidence of the power of the respective god over the power of the other prophet's respective god. This conflict is actually a demonstration of the very existence of each god.

The stage is set in the midst of the prolonged drought and famine. The god Baal was thought to be the god of rain and fruitfulness and was allowed the first demonstration in the conflict. The prophets of Baal entreated their god to act on their behalf by sending down fire to consume an offering on a stone altar that had been prepared for this occasion. As it turned out Baal was unable to answer in any manner. So the prophets danced and shouted to Baal until midday when Elijah began to taunt them concerning the failure of Baal to answer. The prophets of Baal then proceeded to cut themselves and cry out all the more for Baal to answer, but nothing

happened.

By the time of the evening sacrifice Elijah finally took his opportunity to demonstrate that Yahweh is indeed god and Baal is not. Elijah had the altar which he had constructed (including the surrounding trench), the wood and the sacrifice completely saturated in water, and then he called on Yahweh to answer. Fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice, wood, altar and water entirely. Upon seeing the clear demonstration of which god was indeed god, the people repeatedly cried “Yahweh is God!” and Elijah had them execute the prophets of Baal. Shortly thereafter, Yahweh provided rain by the entreaty of Elijah.

### **2.1 Conflict Between Yahweh and Baal**

The conflict between Yahweh and Baal in 1 Kings 17-18 is intended to depict which god has the actual power of life and fruitfulness as well as to ultimately depict which god is truly God. Yahweh is declared the winner in this particular contest against Baal, though the victory is only temporary in the religious life of Israel. The prophets of Baal (as his proxy representatives) are made lifeless just as Baal is shown to be lifeless. They are powerless over life and death and Elijah demonstrates the absolute power of Yahweh to give both life and death. The conflict motif of 1 Kings 17-18 is intended as a reminder of the sovereignty of Yahweh against every other god, but especially the preferred god of the Canaanites (and of rebellious Israel), Baal.

### **2.2 Yahweh is God**

The reason for the conflict in 1 Kings 17-18 must be understood as specifically a polemic against Baal and his perceived powers.<sup>15</sup> Baal was supposed to have authority over the rains (and dew), but it was Yahweh that gave and withheld the rain. Baal was supposed to have the power of provision, fruitfulness and life, but it was Yahweh who miraculously fed and gave life.

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<sup>15</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, “בַּעַל” TWOT 1:120.

Baal was supposed to be able to answer the earnest pleas of his worshipers, but it was Yahweh that heard and answered. Baal was thought to have power to protect his prophets, but Yahweh has them put to death and preserves Elijah.

While this polemic may suggest “a real struggle between rival deities...Elijah's lofty conception of God virtually excludes all other objects of worship and makes all the gods idols.”<sup>16</sup>

Baal (and Asherah and by implication all other gods) are without life or power. “Despite what some scholars argue, Elijah does not accept the existence of many gods, thinking that Yahweh is the strongest.”<sup>17</sup> Instead, Elijah believes Yahweh is the only god and all others (including Baal) are nothing more than lifeless creations of the nations. Yahweh is conceived as the only sovereign over all.

### **3.0 Comparisons and Contrasts**

Several striking comparisons and contrasts may be noted between the two accounts described above. The following are offered as only three examples of comparison followed by three examples of contrast. The comparisons and contrasts are by no means equally helpful for understanding the two accounts and their respective use of the conflict motif, but they are offered as several introductory and cursory examples of some of the types of comparisons and contrasts one might encounter between the texts of Ugarit and Israel.

#### **3.1 Three Comparisons**

The first comparison to be discussed concerns the notion of some level of conflict already present prior to the opening text of the account. One encounters the conflict as already engaged, though apparently through more subversive means. The accounts actually describe the conflict

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16 Leah Bronner, *The Stories of Elijah and Elisha as Polemics against Baal Worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 25.

17 Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, Vol 8 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 219.

that takes on more concrete form in the destruction of those opposed to the sovereignty of the anticipatory king. In the Cycle, Yamm and Mot are both defeated in order to demonstrate Baal's sovereignty over the gods; and in Kings, the prophets of Baal are defeated in order to demonstrate the sovereignty of Yahweh over Baal.

The second comparison of note is the use of proxies in carrying on the conflict. El appears (if this interpretation is correct) to have used Yamm and Mot as proxy fighters against Baal in the Cycle. Whereas in Kings, Yahweh used his prophet, Elijah, to engage the prophets of Baal who one might assume understood themselves to be the proxy combatants for Baal. What happens to the proxies are representative of what happened to the one they represented. El was essentially stripped of any ability to oppose the rule of Baal in the Cycle, and Baal was shown to be impotent (and actually non-existent) against Yahweh in Kings.

One final comparison is the use of similar motifs of crying on behalf of Baal as the fallen god. In both accounts Baal is mourned through cries for his restoration and even through self-mutilation. In the Cycle (KTU 1.5.VI.17-26; 1.6.I.1-10) El and Anat both lacerate themselves as they mourn for Baal and long for his restoration and in Kings (18:28) the prophets of Baal also lacerate themselves in hopes of Baal's restoration.

### **3.2 Three Contrasts**

The first notable contrast between the two accounts concerns the *being-ness* of gods. In the Cycle, the existence of many gods is assumed and their actions are described in considerable detail; whereas in Kings, only the *being-ness* of Yahweh is specifically affirmed and the existence of Baal is treated as little more than a construct of rebellion against the living covenant Lord of all. The deaths of the prophets of Baal are to demonstrate that Baal is not actually alive, because Baal is not “God,” but Yahweh *is* God. Their lives will therefore match the “life” of

Baal. In the Cycle, the defeat of Yamm and Mot does not mean their existence is denied, because they continue to exist (though now they exist as the defeated).

Another contrast between the two accounts involves the use of proxies. Though both accounts (if it is accepted that El is fighting against Baal with proxies) utilize proxies for conflict, the use of the proxies differs significantly. In the Cycle, the gods act as proxies for one another against one another. In Kings, the proxies are all human representatives of the gods, but only one god acts demonstrably. Therefore the actions involved in the Cycle entail things which were not directly witnessed as such by humans and then recorded, whereas in Kings the account seems to record what happened in the earthly sphere that demonstrated the power and existence of who was sovereign and therefore “God.”

One final contrast worth being mentioned is the notion of the house-building as central to the Cycle. Baal was forced to beg (through others) for a house in order to firmly be established as king. Then, once his house was actually built, this still did not preclude his being defeated (even if only temporarily) by Mot. Baal was victorious, but he reigned at the leisure of the other gods. Technically, the account from Kings being examined does not even mention the house of Yahweh (though it is implied by the mention of the “evening sacrifices”), but this is not essential to the account in order to establish the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh for the writer. In Kings, the odds are stacked against Yahweh being able to provide (e.g., food in famine without lifting the famine, all-consuming fire on a water-soaked sacrifice and altar), yet Yahweh provides anyway. Yahweh acts without the consent (even against such) by the representatives of the other gods. For the writer of Kings, Yahweh is indeed the only God and King.

## **Conclusion**

Much can be gained through an examination of the texts of Ugarit for understanding particular texts in the Hebrew Bible. The motif of conflict between gods in the two texts provides interesting and provocative glimpses into the theologically oriented worldview of the respective writers (and redactors). Baal is considered a god in conflict in both accounts, but in the one he is the victorious sovereign amid the assembly of gods and in the other he is judged as unresponsive, powerless and even non-existent. Great benefit may be had in noting specific comparisons between the texts and therefore the possible borrowing by the Israelite writers from the traditions of Ugarit (or at least notions of the broader Canaanites). These comparisons demonstrate some similar background between the two accounts. Perhaps more helpful is to note the specific (intentional?) contrasts between the two texts. Baal is in conflict, but not as the ultimate king forever. His rule seems always only tentative at best (despite the many accolades of the Cycle) and non-existent at worst.

## **Appendix**

## El and Dagan

An intriguing question about the exact relationship between El and Dagan leads to some significantly different perspectives on interpreting Ugaritic religion in general, as well as understanding the wider historical and political context of Ugarit. This also suggests different ways of reading the Baal Cycle since Baal is understood specifically to be the “son of Dagan” (as stated in KTU 1.2.I.19, 35, 37; 1.5.VI.23-24; 1.616). However, Baal is also declared the “son of El” or El is declared his father (KTU 1.3V35; 1.4IV47; cf. 1.415).<sup>18</sup>

The great preponderance of scholars seem to believe Baal is the son of Dagan firstly and only through marriage (and adoption?) – or secondarily – Baal considered the son of El.<sup>19</sup> Mark Smith believes that Baal should only be considered the son of El in the wider sense of “son” rather than as a direct progeny.<sup>20</sup> While El is the father of the gods, in this interpretation of the relationship of El and Dagan, Dagan is viewed as somehow the father of another divine family of which Baal, his son, is the leading figure.

Often this interpretation is based upon the notion of two competing pantheons: one at Ugarit and another from Mesopotamia. Dagan is considered the father of the pantheon of Mesopotamia and El the father of the pantheon of Ugarit.<sup>21</sup> The pantheon of Mesopotamia through Dagan is then thought to have largely replaced the pantheon of Ugarit, or at least to have

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18 Pritchard, James B., ed., *The Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement* (Princeton University Press, 1969), 519.

19 Smith, “The Ugaritic Baal Cycle,” 91; see also an illustrative quote in Johannes C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 195fn19:

The weather-god Ba'lu was the son of Daganu of Tuttul and through his marriage to 'Anatu a son-in-law of Ilu. In the legend of Keret he is second to Ilu (Keret II (KTU 1.15):ii.1ff.; III (KTU 1.16):iv.10ff.), in the legend of Aqhat it is the other way around (Aqhat I (KTU 1.17):i.31f., etc.), in accordance with the fact that Kirtu's personal patron is Ilu whereas Ba'lu is the patron of Dani'ilu. At the time when these texts were written down there was a great deal of tension between the proponents of the two gods...and as a high-priest Ilimilku seems to have steered a middle course.

20 Smith, “The Ugaritic Baal Cycle,” xxiii fn 5.

21 Oldenburg 16.

absorbed portions of it and replaced others. Oldenburg, relying on the work of R. De Vaux, believes Dagan's family to be Mesopotamian and that it replaced the earlier Canaanite pantheon of El.<sup>22</sup> Under this interpretation, it may be argued that “the Baal Cycle reflects the rise of a new dynasty at Ugarit [which] may help to explain why Baal, although not a son of El and Athirat, is selected king of the cosmos.”<sup>23</sup> Coogan proposes that the great international turmoil of second millennial Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean region persuaded Ugarit to choose “Baal, son of Dagon and not of El” as their chief deity.<sup>24</sup> Further, according to this interpretation, it is assumed in Ugarit that “conceptual religious unity was expressed most strongly in the identification of the divine council as a divine family. This family has inner connectedness not by virtue of a single deity, but thanks to a single family of deities whose connectedness is marked by their familial relations.”<sup>25</sup>

This seems rather a curious appraisal given the two different families of deities represented in Ugarit by El and Dagan. Are they only conceived as one family existing through the union of Baal and Anat? It is strange that Dagan should play such a subsidiary role (only receiving mention as the father of Baal in a few places) since his temple is the only other temple known in Ugarit besides Baal's. El, however, plays a more significant role throughout the Baal Cycle, yet has no temple in Ugarit. If El is considered to be the primary god of Ugarit prior to Baal's rise, then what happened to his temple there? Why has Dagan completely replaced him for having a temple, yet why also does Dagan have a temple but only passing mention? What are we to make of the temple of Dagan, but the texts of El? The common link is to be found in Baal “son of Dagan” who struggled against Mot and Yamm “beloved of El”.

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22 Ibid., 150-151.

23 Smith, “The Ugaritic Baal Cycle,” 91.

24 Coogan 81.

25 Mark S. Smith, “Ugaritic Studies and Israelite Religion: A Retrospective View” *Near Eastern Archeology* 65:1 (2002), 24.

Gregorio del Olmo Lete rejects the notion that the Ugaritic pantheon suggests “a period of replacement and elimination until the dominant god is reached, who rules the previous gods and eclipses them.”<sup>26</sup> Instead, he postulates a pantheon where a supreme god fathers and an immanent god rules.<sup>27</sup> He assumes this is such because it is reflective of the political realm of Ugarit in regard to the local king and the "distant or supreme" ruler – referencing the Egyptians or Hittites at varying times in the political history of Ugarit.<sup>28</sup> He further believes the evidence to be inconclusive concerning Baal's father – whether El or Dagan – and instead proposes through fairly cogent argumentation that El and Dagan may in fact be names of the same deity (as Baal and Hadad, Yamm and Nahar, Athirat and Ilat, etc.).<sup>29</sup> He goes on to claim, “There can be no doubt that the equation of *Ilu* and *Dagānu* expresses the process of cultural and cultic identification of two (Canaanite and Amorite) pantheons.”<sup>30</sup> He regards the temple of Dagan in Ugarit to be the temple of El citing the work of Gibson in this regard.<sup>31</sup> In support of this assertion he also cites the correlation in Mesopotamia and at Ebla between the supreme god and the god Dagan.

The apparent weaknesses of del Olmo Lete's interpretation involve the notion that the traditional interpretation (against his) offers the simpler explanation of the two. It also supposes that “Dagan” and “El” refer to the same ontological progenitor with only differing connotations. From a surface textual level there appears to be some distinction between the family of El and Dagan, but how far such a distinction is genuine does not seem to have been fully resolved. del Olmo Lete's proposal may still be a plausible interpretation, though it currently has not gained a

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26 Del Olmo Lete 46-47.

27 Ibid., 48.

28 Ibid., 45-46fn21.

29 Ibid., 46-56.

30 Ibid., 74.

31 Ibid., 74fn78.

wider acceptance. Perhaps a further development of del Olmo Lete's proposal will be forthcoming.

Certain questions remain that must be answered to come to any more definitive conclusions. Is the use of "El" in such instances (concerning Yamm, Mot and Baal) simply attributive rather than substantive?<sup>32</sup> How does one definitively make such a conclusion? Does it function as a divine epithet rather than an ontologically derivative proper name? Also, might one understand "son of Dagan" to be intended as a somewhat derisive title instead of a description of actual progeny?

Some of the texts that would bear strongly on any proposal would be at minimum the preceding texts cited and those that follow. There are a number of texts which seem to imply that Baal is (possibly?) numbered among the "sons" of El and Athirat (KTU 1.3.IV.48-49; V.4, 39; 1.4.IV.51-53; V.1-2; 1.8.II.5) and yet Athirat and her sons rejoice at Baal's demise (KTU 1.6.I.40-41) and consider themselves to be separate from Baal (KTU 1.6.V.1). Most of the uses of "son of Dagan" in the Baal Cycle are in the mouths of Baal's enemy Yamm and his emissaries (KTU 1.2.I.19, 35, 37). Though El (KTU 1.5.VI.24; 1.6.I.52) and Anat (?) (KTU 1.6.I.6) also refer to Baal as "son of Dagan." Do the latter two do so in a manner reminiscent of Yamm's use? It may be that del Olmo Lete's proposal exceeds what the texts of Ugarit warrant for such conclusions, but perhaps his suggested appraisal is helpful for considering an alternative interpretation of the relationship of El and Dagan and the glaring disjunction between the texts and temples of Ugarit.

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<sup>32</sup> There are many places in the Ugaritic texts where "El" is attributive rather than substantive. See for example KTU 1.4.I.31-42.

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