

The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Interpretation of the Old Testament

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IN 1928 a Syrian peasant, while digging on his land, discovered a vaulted tomb containing some objects of gold. In this accidental manner was initiated the archaeological discovery which has proved to be the most significant for Biblical study since 1887, when a native Egyptian woman happened upon the first Amarna tablets. The discoveries at the Syrian sites of Ras Shamra and adjoining Minet el-Beida have indeed proved a most valuable supplement to the Egyptian discovery in that they give us priceless information concerning the religion and literature of Syria-Palestine for what is frequently called the "Amarna Age" (around 1400 B. C.), just as the Amarna tablets contained information concerning the political situation of the same period.

The basic importance of these Ras Shamra discoveries, especially of the clay tablets which have been uncovered, lies in the fact that they have given to the student of the Old Testament genuine, first-hand material for the study of the culture of the people whom we may conveniently (if not with entire accuracy) call "Canaanites." Previously we have had to rely almost entirely upon late writers such as Philo of Byblos, Damascius, and Lucian; upon fragmentary or brief Phoenician inscriptions; upon the Bible itself, which could

rightly be considered somewhat prejudiced even if frequently authentic; upon Arabic analogies; and upon the so-called "primitive survivals" in modern Syria and Palestine. It is no exaggeration to say that we are now in a better position for the study of early Canaanite culture than we are for the study of the culture of the early Hebrews, especially before the time of Moses.

It is necessary at this point, however, to issue a warning concerning the use of these Ras Shamra tablets. Our difficulties are manifold in dealing with them, and we are far from finality in discussing their significance for Biblical study. For one thing, the tablets have not all been published, and in the present state of the world it is impossible to say when they will be entirely published, if ever. Again, of those which have been published perhaps only about half have been satisfactorily translated. Also, it is frequently true that when we can translate a tablet in whole or in part, the connections are obscure, either because of the fragmentary nature of the texts or because of the lacunae in our knowledge. Nevertheless, the point has been reached at which it has been possible to publish a grammar of the Ugaritic language,¹ and several books and many articles have been written discussing the Ras Shamra inscriptions and their significance for Biblical research. Exorbitant

claims are sometimes made. I shall try to confine my own remarks to claims that seem to be substantially certain. Also, my discussion will center wholly about their importance for understanding the Old Testament (with an occasional remark touching upon the New Testament). The discoveries, including both the epigraphic and the anepigraphic, have great importance for the history of Syrian culture in many of its phases, for the origin of a number of Greek ideas,² and other fields of study, but it is impossible to touch upon all of these here.

I. *The Language of the Old Testament.* Ugaritic, the language of the Ras Shamra tablets, is difficult to classify. A. Goetze has recently suggested that its closest relationship is to Amorite.³ Whatever its precise classification, there can be no question that Ugaritic has many affinities with Hebrew, perhaps more in vocabulary than in grammar. It is true, of course, that Hebrew has been much more helpful in the translation of Ugaritic than the reverse, but there are a few points at which Ugaritic has now contributed to the understanding or translation of Hebrew. Some of these points may seem quite trivial, but it is only by the clearing up of many trivial matters that we arrive at perfection in the translation and understanding of the language of the Old Testament.

In Isaiah 3:18 occurs the word *shēvisim*, in the catalogue of ornaments and finery worn by ancient Hebrew belles (probably the prose passage, 3:18-23, is secondary to the original poem). The King James and American Revised Versions translate this as "cauls," with "networks" in the margin; the American Translation has "fillets." Now at Ras Shamra the word *shpsh* (*shapshu* or *shapash*) is used for the sun or the sun-god-dess. It seems entirely plausible to translate the Hebrew word as "sun-discs" as a type of ornament (for which archaeological illustrations may be found), especially since the next word means "crescents" (King

James Version, "round tires like the moon").

A more significant passage is II Kings 15:5. There we learn that Jehovah smote king Azariah (Uzziah) so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, "and he dwelt in *bêt ha-hofshîit*." This word is translated in the King James Version as "a several house," and in the American Revised as "a separate house," with "infirmary" in the margin. The clue to the meaning is given by a passage which occurs twice in the Ras Shamra texts, II AB viii 7f and I*AB v 14-16, where it is said, apparently to Baal:

"Descend to the *bî hptht* of the earth,
Count yourself among those who descend
into the earth."

It is clear that in this passage the *bî hptht* is an underground or underworld place of some nature. Most scholars have concluded that the cognate Hebrew word in II Kings 15:5 means "grotto, basement of a house" or the like, in which the king was isolated because of his leprosy. It seems to me just possible, however, that *bêt ha-hofshîit* is to be taken as a synonym for Sheol as the underworld. The meaning of the passage is hardly that the king immediately died and his soul went to Sheol. But the idea seems to have been held by the Hebrews that in time of sickness the soul began its journey to Sheol, or actually went to Sheol, and revival from sickness is sometimes represented as rescuing the soul from Sheol. The closest parallel to the Ras Shamra passage and one of the clearest expressions of the idea is to be found in Psalm 88:3f.:

"For my soul is sated with troubles,
And my life draweth near unto Sheol.
I am counted among those who go down
to the Pit,
I have become as a man without help."⁴

The idea is found also in Job 33:19-22, Isaiah 29:4 and elsewhere.⁵ It appears also among the Babylonians.

A third passage in which aid is gained from Ugaritic is Zech. 13:6. Here it is not a matter of translation but rather of understanding an idiom. A literal rendering of this verse is: "And one will say unto him, 'What are these wounds between thy hands?' And he will reply, 'Those with which I was smitten in the house of my friends.'" The meaning of the idiom is clearly given by III AB 14, 16, in which "between the hands" (*bn ydm*) is parallel with "back" (*ktp*). Smiting between the hands—probably between the outstretched hands and arms—is therefore equivalent to smiting upon the back.

A Ras Shamra text has suggested to an ingenious modern scholar a textual emendation which is very convincing. In II Sam. 1:21, in David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, occurs the following:

"Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
Neither fields of offerings."

The last phrase is strange, not to say nonsensical. On the basis of I D 44, H. L. Ginsberg suggests emendation to read "up-surg-ing of the Deep."⁶ The change from the Masoretic Text *wsdy trmt* to *wshr' thmt* is very simple in the Hebrew square characters.

For the benefit of New Testament scholars it may be pointed out that Ugaritic uses several times the verb (*bshr*) which is the equivalent of the Hebrew verb "to tell good news," the latter having an obvious relationship to the Greek word for "gospel." One passage is of special interest because the word is used in connection with the revelation to El in a dream that Baal had been revived (I AB iii 4ff.). In another the word is used in connection with the birth of a son (a bull!) to Baal and Anat. (IV AB iii 34ff.).

II. *The Literary Forms of the Old Testament.* A few of the Ras Shamra texts are in prose, but the great majority of them are in poetry. The Ugaritic poems are very similar in form to those of the Old Testament. There is not space to give illustrative examples here, but many will be found in Gordon's *Ugaritic Grammar*, ch. xii. Parallelism of lines is a very frequent feature, of the various types—synonymous, climactic, chiasitic, the so-called "synthetic" (which is hardly true parallelism at all), and so on. As for meter, the 3:3 type is most common, but 3:2 and other patterns appear. The poetry is often grouped in stichoi (verses), of which couplets are the most frequent form, and also in strophes (stanzas). It has even been suggested by one scholar⁷ that two cases of rhyme occur (I* AB vi 17-21; I AB i 2-5), but these may be accidental, as in Hebrew.

An important warning may be drawn from the study of Ugaritic poetry for the student of Hebrew poetry. Considerable variety is found in the Ras Shamra poems in meter and in arrangement of verses and strophes. We are probably, therefore, not justified in expecting as great uniformity and regularity in Old Testament poetry as many critics have tried to impose upon it. We should be more wary of emendations and excisions, and not be so quick to assign the various parts of a single poem to various dates simply upon the basis of poetic criteria.

The actual borrowing of the Old Testament from Ugaritic literature is probably not very great. H. L. Ginsberg has sought to prove that Psalm 29 is descended from a North Canaanite hymn to the storm-god Baal or Hadad.⁸ This is not based, however, upon the finding of the Canaanite original, but upon similarity of ideas in Psalm 29 with ideas occurring in the Ras Shamra literature, such as that of the "sons of God" and of the thunder as the voice of Yahweh; upon the appearance of Sy-

rian place-names, Lebanon, Siryon (Hermon), and the desert of Qadesh; upon the usage of a type of meter that occurs in Ugaritic (*abc, abd*); and similar criteria.

One of the very closest parallels of an Old Testament poem with a Ras Shamra poem is to be seen in comparison of Ps. 92:10:

"For lo, thy enemies, O Yahweh,
For lo, thy enemies shall perish!
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered!"

with III AB 8-9:

"Lo, thy enemies, O Baal,
Lo, thy enemies wilt thou smite!
Lo, thou wilt cut off thy adversaries!"⁹

It has frequently been pointed out that the majority of the cases of real borrowing of the Old Testament from Ugaritic literature occur in exilic and early post-exilic writings. The reason for this apparently is that by the time of the exile Hebrew religion had definitely won the battle against Canaanite Baalism and did not need to fear the borrowing or imitation of "pagan" ideas or literature; also, there seems to have been a renaissance of Phoenician or Canaanite literature in about the seventh century B.C., which influenced Hebrew-Jewish writers either directly or indirectly.¹⁰

III. *The History of the Hebrews.* It has been claimed that the Ras Shamra texts throw a flood of light upon the history of the Hebrews, especially for the pre-Mosaic period. This is to be seen in the so-called "Negebite theory" held particularly by certain French scholars (Virolleaud, Dussaud *et al.*), according to which the ancestors of the Phoenicians and Israelites lived side by side in the Negeb (southern Palestine) in the second millennium and later were separated after a war. This theory is based, however, upon doubtful translations of

Ugaritic poems, such as the Legend of Keret and the "Birth of the Gracious and Beautiful Gods," and dubious interpretations of Biblical passages. For criticism and refutation of this theory one should consult Albright, *BASOR* 71 (Oct. 1938) pp. 35-40; R. de Vaux, *Revue Biblique* XLVI (1937) pp. 535-545; and W. Baumgartner, *Theologische Rundschau* 1941, pp. 12-20.

A more serious bearing upon the early history of the Hebrews is brought by the discovery that at Ras Shamra the equivalent of the cuneiform *amēlūti* SAG.GAZ (which is usually equated with *khābirā*) is '*prīm*, not '*brm* as would be expected. This fact has been interpreted by E. G. Kraeling as supporting his denial that the Biblical "Hebrews" are identical with, or connected in some very close way with, the *khābirā* of the Amarna tablets.¹¹ The question is one which involves many considerations, but I believe that the proper linguistic explanation is that made by J. Lewy,—namely, that under the influence of Hurrian, which did not distinguish between voiced and voiceless stops, the Ugaritic '*prīm* is a secondary form for which the Biblical '*brm* and cuneiform *khābirā* are more primary.¹² This does not necessarily settle the matter, but this single discovery at Ras Shamra does not absolutely upset the far-reaching historical conclusions which have been drawn from the occurrence of the *khābirā* in the Amarna tablets and elsewhere.

IV. *The Religion of the Old Testament.* It is extremely fortunate that the Ras Shamra tablets consist largely of poetic myths and legends that give much information concerning the religion of the people of Ugarit, and not simply business and commercial documents of the type so frequently found in lands where cuneiform was used. Secular documents have been found at Ras Shamra, but they are not very numerous.

Several characteristics of Canaanite religion stand out in any study of the Ras

Shamra material. For one thing, the religion was largely a fertility religion, centering around the desire for fertility of the soil. This may be demonstrated not only from the texts but also from some of the objects uncovered. For example, a large baked clay pipe was found buried upright in the ground, with holes at various levels; this pipe was doubtless used for pouring libations deep into the earth. Also, many plaques of the nude fertility goddess were found. Because of this concern with fertility, the conflict of the seasons was represented in the mythology and ritual, and the deities associated with fertility were the most important. Because of the proximity of the city to the sea, the conflict between the dry land and the sea also appears in the mythology.

Furthermore, the gods and goddesses of Ugarit are largely anthropomorphic, and the religion was clearly polytheistic. The claim has been made that there was a tendency towards monotheism in the Ugaritic religion. This is extremely doubtful; if there was any tendency in this direction at all it was in the direction of the sole worship of Baal rather than of El. Any theory of monotheism in Canaanite religion at this time plays very loosely with the term.

The religion of Ugarit was highly ritualistic and involved many sacrifices. We certainly are not far wrong in supposing that the myths were designed to be enacted in ritual; their terminology often makes this quite certain.

For the sake of systematic study, we may point out the probable influence of Canaanite religion, as revealed in the Ras Shamra texts, upon Old Testament religion in three important spheres — Sacrifices, Theology, and Mythology.

A. The Sacrificial System. The religion of Ugarit was undoubtedly one which involved an elaborate system of ritual, including many sacrifices. For example, some of the texts are little more than lists of sacri-

fices, and at one point in the myth of Baal and Anat, after Anat had buried Baal she made a great sacrifice of seventy each of six kinds of animals (I AB i 18-29).

It has been pointed out that at Ras Shamra the following types of offerings were made, all of which appear also in the Old Testament, the names of the offerings being cognate or very similar in the two languages: peace-offerings, whole offerings, trespass-offerings, first-fruits, wave-offerings, tithes, and possibly others.¹³ Also, many of the kinds of animals used in sacrifices at Ras Shamra were the same as those used by the Hebrews. It is not possible, however, to set up an exact correspondence between Ugaritic and Hebrew religion in the matter of offerings and sacrifices, either in the names of the offerings or the animals or other materials offered. It is probably too extreme to say that the Israelite system of sacrifices is of Canaanite origin. There is some evidence that they may be of common Semitic origin.¹⁴

However, the information from the Ugaritic texts helps us to understand, I believe, the opposition of the great eighth- and seventh-century prophets to elaborate ritualism, including sacrifice. Much ink has been wasted in trying to prove that these prophets did not really mean what they said about ritualism. It seems to me beyond doubt that they were absolutely opposed to elaborate ritualism and sacrifice, and that their religion excluded the worship of Yahweh in such manner. They seem to have believed that in the early nomadic period of pure Yahwism sacrifice was not practiced (see especially Amos 5:25; Jer. 7:21f.), and they probably believed that Yahwism had been corrupted by the taking over of the Canaanite sacrificial system. They may not have been absolutely correct in this view (although we have practically no means of ascertaining just what sacrifices were used in the nomadic period, if any), but they could see in their own day the similarity

between Israelite and Canaanite ritual. To them similarity suggested origin, and they may well have been in large part correct.

Furthermore, it is very probable that some of the elements in the Hebrew ritualistic system which do not appear until exilic or post-exilic times, so far as the literature now indicates, were actually of very ancient origin. For example, the trespass-offering appears first in Ezekiel and P, but we have seen that it was used in Ras Shamra almost a thousand years before. It may well have been a kind of offering used by the Hebrews also in the earlier period, but does not happen to appear in early literature.¹⁵

The Ras Shamra texts have shown that some of the ritualistic prohibitions of the Hebrews had their origin in the fact that they were ritualistic practices of the Canaanites. The best example of this is the prohibition against boiling a kid in its mother's milk (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21), which was apparently a ritualistic practice at Ugarit (SS 14).

B. *Theology*. It has long been known that the Hebrews were greatly influenced in their ideas of God by the Canaanites. This is based not only on a *a priori* assumption, but also upon a number of Biblical passages. The nature of this influence can be much more clearly seen now that we have first-hand knowledge of the Canaanite theology.¹⁶

The idea of God held by the patriarchs was doubtless very similar to that of the contemporary Canaanites. This subject has recently been discussed very ably by H. G. May in *JBL* LX (1941) pp. 113-128 and this *Journal* IX (August 1941) pp. 155-158. The patriarchs worshipped El and other divinities known from the Ras Shamra texts, and indeed their theology differed little from that of the Canaanites, with the possible exception of the worship of the "God of My (Thy, etc.) Father." Also, it seems much more correct now to describe the patriarchal religion as polytheistic rather

than dynamistic, animistic, or the like. The latter terms should be used of even earlier (pre-patriarchal!) stages of religion. Furthermore the description in Gen. 14:19, 22 of El Elyon as "creator" (*qôneh*) of heaven and earth is of much significance. The verb used here is the same one used of El and Ashirtu in the Ras Shamra texts, and is not the usual Hebrew word (*br'*). The idea of a creator-god was apparently prevalent in Hebrew religion at a very early stage, earlier than has generally been thought.

It is with Yahwism, however, that most of the Old Testament is concerned. The development of Yahweh into an agricultural deity, with some of the features of Baal, is documented in part in the Old Testament,—e.g. in Hosea and in the accounts of Elijah. At Ras Shamra, Baal (or Aleyan Baal) was the weather-god, the storm-god, associated especially with the seasons of the year when it rained and crops were growing. One of the best demonstrations of this fact is to be seen in I AB iii 4ff. El is told the "good news" in a dream that Baal has been revived. He then says:

"The skies rained oil,
The creeks flowed with honey;
And so I knew that Aleyan Baal is alive,
That Zebul, the lord of the earth,
exists."

In the Old Testament Yahweh gradually became a deity who could control the weather and give fertility to crops. In one instance a Psalm (68:5) uses of Yahweh an epithet which is frequently used of Baal—"Rider of the Clouds" (*rkb 'rpt* I* AB ii 7; II AB iii 18 etc. The Hebrew text must be slightly emended to yield this meaning.)

The Hebrew deity acquired not only some of the attributes of Baal, but also some of El. At Ras Shamra El was the father and king of the gods, but a somewhat remote deity who was kindly and even humorous, since we read occasionally of El laughing.



BRONZE STATUETTE OF BAAL FOUND AT RAS SHAMRA



RELIEF OF EL FOUND AT RAS SHAMRA

A stele found at Ras Shamra represents him as a bearded old man sitting upon a throne, receiving the homage and offering of a suppliant.¹⁷ He is described in the texts as "father of years."¹⁸ All of this reminds us of the description of Yahweh in Daniel 7 (where he is called "ancient of days"), and also of the throne-scenes in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1. It is possible that the development in the direction of transcendence in the idea of Yahweh was influenced in part by Canaanite theology; perhaps we may say that as El Yahweh was remote and transcendent, but as Baal he was immanent and personal.

Yahweh not only acquired some of the attributes of these two gods, but, since Hebrew religion had no female deity, he acquired also some of the attributes of the fertility goddesses, Anat and Ashirtu (or Asherah). This is strongly suggested by Hosea 14:8, as translated by The American Translation on the basis of a slightly revised Hebrew text:

"What more has Ephraim any need of idols?

I am his Anath and his Asherah;

I am like a green fir-tree;

From me is his fruit found."

It should be said, of course, that Yahweh did not merely become another Canaanite deity. Perhaps we can put it best by saying that the Hebrews came to ascribe to Yahweh the functions and the attributes of the Canaanite deities which were most necessary to them in their new life after the conquest of Palestine, and which did not conflict with their most fundamental notions of his nature. An ethical norm must always have been used in deciding (consciously or unconsciously) what could be absorbed from Canaanite religion and what could only be rejected.

At Ras Shamra Mot is the deity associated with the hot, dry season when vegetation appeared to die, the opponent of Baal, and

the personification of "Death", which is the literal meaning of his name. Now, it is possible that in a number of passages in which Death is highly personified in the Old Testament we have to do with a deity who was thought of as the god or guardian of the underworld. One of the clearest expressions of this is in Ps. 49:14:

"They are appointed as a flock for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd."

Other examples might be given. They suggest that the Hebrews may have thought of *Māwet* (Death) as the god of the underworld, as the Babylonians thought of Aralu as in the care of Nergal and Ereshkigal.¹⁹ This is possible at least before the time that Yahweh's sway was thought of as extending to Sheol.

There is one case in which the name of a Canaanite deity eventually became among the Jews an epithet for the devil. One of the titles for Baal which occurs frequently in the texts is "Zabul (Prince), Lord of the Earth." This explains the name in II Kings 1:2 of a Philistine deity, Baal-zebul, apparently a Semitic deity adopted by the Philistines. Eventually this name was used as a title for Satan, Beelzebul in the New Testament. (The name apparently occurs in the personal name, Jezebel, Ahab's wife.)

Finally, in the discussion of theology we may include an observation made by A. Lods.²⁰ He has pointed out that the religion revealed in the Ras Shamra texts is largely a religion of conflict, "une religion de combat." There is conflict between the seasons, between day and night, between sea and land, represented in various ways in the mythology. Man assists and tries to profit from the victory of one side or the other. This can hardly be called an "ethical dualism", a conflict between good and evil, since the Canaanites worshipped the deities on both sides of the conflicts. However, there is a type of dualism here which

may have entered into Hebrew religion and set the stage for the more thoroughgoing dualism which appeared in post-exilic times, with the possible influence or stimulus of Persian religion.

C. *Mythology*. The Ras Shamra texts are largely concerned with the mythology of the Canaanites. The most important myth is that of Baal and Anat, which represents the Canaanite version of the fundamental vegetation myth known in various forms all over the Ancient Near East. The Old Testament does not contain much mythology as such. We may suppose that most of the mythological elements in Hebrew religion were consciously suppressed before the final edition of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, there are many places in the Old Testament in which may be seen echoes of ancient Oriental myths and mythological patterns, or the use of mythological terms and ideas.²¹ A few of these may be pointed out which have been illumined by the Ras Shamra texts.

One of the most pervasive myths was that of a primeval combat between a deity and a dragon, the deity and the dragon bearing various names in various countries. Perhaps the most familiar is that of the creation myth in which the combatants are Marduk and Tiamat. In the Old Testament the dragon is known under the titles Rahab, Leviathan, and Yam (Sea). In Hebrew thought there was apparently the notion that there was a primeval combat between Yahweh and Leviathan (Ps. 74:14; cf. Ps. 104:26; Job 41:1), and that in the final struggle on the Day of Yahweh, the deity would conquer this monster (Is. 27:1). There is no need to seek for consistency in this kind of thought, but there are many evidences that the Hebrews thought the end of time would in many ways resemble the beginning of time.

Leviathan is a monster figuring in Canaanite mythology, most clearly in the following passage: (I* AB i 1-3)

"When thou dost smite Lotàn, the swift²²
serpent,
Dost destroy the winding serpent,
Shlyt of the seven heads."

It has usually been thought that the one who fights against Leviathan here is Baal, but Albright has recently shown that it is more likely Anat.²³ In this passage the same adjectives are used to describe the serpent that are used in Is. 27:1 (*brh* and *'qltn*). There is a reference to the heads of this dragon in Ps. 74:14.

The Ras Shamra literature also contained a myth of a combat between Baal and "Prince Sea" (*sbl ym*), between the dry land and the sea.²⁴ Albright suggests that there is a reference to this myth in Job 3:8; 9:8.²⁵ The former he would translate, with slight change in the Hebrew, as follows:

"Let them curse it who cursed *Yam*,
Who made ready to challenge Leviathan."

The myth of the dying-rising god was undoubtedly known to the Hebrews, and there are many passages in which it is possible to see echoes or influences of the various elements in this myth. The following passages are offered as possibilities: (a) the death of the god, Hos. 5:6-7; 5:13-6:3; 13:1ff.; (b) the mourning rites, Hos. 7:14-16; I Ki. 18:28; Jer. 6:26; 16:6; Ezek. 8:14; Amos 8:10; Joel 1:8; Zech. 12:10f.; Judges 11:38ff.; (c) the search for the god, Hos. 2:7f.; 10:12; and (d) the resurrection of the god, Hos. 6:2; 11:7; 13:14.

The negative influence of this myth is perhaps to be seen in the frequent emphasis upon the fact that Yahweh is a "living God." The most striking passage is Habakkuk 1:12, which is to be translated: "Art thou not from everlasting, O Yahweh my God, my Holy One, thou diest not." Also, the similarity in phraseology between Job 19:25 and I AB iii 8-9, translated above, has frequently been pointed out.

It has recently been suggested by W. A. Irwin²⁸ that the motif of the dying god influenced the conception of the Suffering Servant in II Isaiah. It does seem entirely plausible to suppose that this was one of the notions which influenced II Isaiah and which he transmuted to one of the highest religious ideas ever conceived. I would point out that the idea of the *people* dying and rising again appears in Hos. 5:14-6:3, and that the terminology of 6:3 suggests very clearly a derivation from the fertility myth. Also, a possible influence in terminology of the Baal myth upon II Isaiah's 'Ebed Yahweh' idea is suggested by the fact that Baal is represented as saying to Mot in the myth: "Thy servant am I, and thy bondsman" ('bdk 'an wd'lmk I*AB ii 12, 19-20; cf. II AB iv 44). The transition from Baal, the dying-rising god in Canaanite mythology, as the "servant" of Mot, to the people or an individual as the "servant" of Yahweh is not an impossible one in the framework of Hebrew monotheism.

The myth of the dying-rising god, with the various ideas and terms connected with it, was probably much better known to the Hebrews and the Jews than we have usually supposed. The transition to the ideas of the Hellenistic mystery cults was, therefore, easily made. There is, of course, a difference between a cult which aimed at securing fertility of the soil and one which aimed at personal salvation, but many notions and terms are common to both. The importance of this for students of the New Testament may be left for more competent hands.

It would be possible to add many other examples to those which have been given, but enough has been said to indicate the importance of the Ras Shamra discoveries for the interpretation of the Bible, and to point out the various ways in which the Canaanites influenced the Hebrews. There is no doubt that much more will be learned in the future from the patient translation and analysis of the Ugaritic texts.

NOTES

¹Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Grammar* (Analecta Orientalia 20), Rome, 1940.

²See, for example, Claude F. A. Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit* (Schweizer Lectures, 1936), pp. 53-55, 60-61.

³*Language* 17 (1941), pp. 127-138.

⁴It is of great significance that in vs. 5 (6 in Heb.) the word *hofschi* actually appears. The passage is considered as corrupt, and little is made of it by the translators. I would suggest that the first half of this verse may have read originally *kam-metim bet hofschi(t)* "Like the dead in the underworld", which is a good parallel to the second half of the verse, "Like the slain lying in the grave." What has dropped out is *bet*, and its restoration improves the meter.

⁵Cf. L. B. Paton, *Spiritism and the Cult of the Dead in Antiquity*, pp. 221f., 246, and the further OT passages there referred to. He also quotes from a Babylonian hymn.

⁶*JBL* LVII (1938) pp. 209-213.

⁷Ginsberg, *Orientalia* V (1936), p. 171.

⁸*Kitvé Ugarit*, pp. 129-131; *Orientalia* V (1936) p. 180.

⁹Cf. Ginsberg, *JPOS* XV (1935) p. 327.

¹⁰Cf. Burrows, *JBR* IX (1941) p. 14f. and Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 243f.

¹¹*BASOR* 77 (Feb. 1940) p. 32; *AJSL* LVIII (1941) pp. 237-253.

¹²*HUCA* XV (1940) p. 48, n. 7. To his bibliography add now Purves, *AJSL* LVIII (1941) pp. 378-404. Note also the variation between *b* and *p* in *shbh* (K 290) and *shph* (K 144).

¹³Cf. Gaster, *PEFQS* 1934, pp. 141-46; Hooke, *Origins of Early Semitic Ritual*, p. 66.

¹⁴Cf. Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* pp. 234f.

¹⁵The 'ashdm does appear in I Sam. 6:3ff. and II K. 12.16. In these passages it is not the same as that of P, but may give a clue as to its earlier nature.

¹⁶I have discussed the gods and goddesses of Ras Shamra briefly in *The Biblical Archaeologist* II (1939) pp. 4-6. This now requires some revision. El and Dagan are apparently identical, and Baal was identified with Hadad.

¹⁷See illustration.

¹⁸Gordon's objection that 'ab shnm (I AB i 36 II AB iv 24) does not mean "father of years" because the word in Ugaritic for "years" is regularly *shnt* (*op. cit.*, p. 150, n. 3) is ruled out by the fact that Hebrew uses both the masculine and the feminine plural endings for this word (e.g. *shanim* in Ex. 21:2 and *shenot* in Deut. 32:7).

¹⁹Cf. Paton, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 243f.

²⁰*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 1936, p. 120.

²¹Cf. H. G. May, "Pattern and Myth in the Old Testament," *JR* XXI (1941) pp. 285-299.

²²This is the usual translation. Albright suggests "primeval", *BASOR* 83 (Oct. 1941) p. 39.

²³On the basis of V AB D 32 ff., in the article just cited.

²⁴III AB, translated by Ginsberg, *JPOS* XV (1935) pp. 327-333.

²⁵*JBL* LVII (1938) p. 227.

²⁶Revised edition of Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times*, pp. 232-238.