


## *Canaanite/Ugaritic Mythology*

### I. Who do we mean by 'Canaanites'?

Linguistically, the ancient Semites have been broadly classified into Eastern and Western groups. The Eastern group is *represented most* prominently by Akkadian, the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians, who inhabited the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. The Western group is further broken down into the Southern and Northern groups. The South Western Semites inhabited Arabia and Ethiopia while the North Western Semites occupied the Levant - the regions that used to be Palestine as well as what is now Syria, Israel and Lebanon, the regions often referred to in the Bible as Canaan.

Recent archaeological finds indicate that the inhabitants of the region themselves referred to the land as 'ca-na-na-um' as early as the mid-third millennium B.C.E. (Aubet p. 9) Variations on that name in reference to the country and its inhabitants continue through the first millennium B.C.E. The word appears to have two etymologies. On one end, represented by the Hebrew cana'ani the word meant merchant, an occupation for which the Canaanites were well known. On the other end, as represented by the Akkadian kinahhu, the word referred to the red-colored wool which was a key export of the region. When the Greeks encountered the Canaanites, it may have been this aspect of the term which they latched onto as they renamed the Canaanites the Phoinikes or Phoenicians, which may derive from a word meaning red or purple, and descriptive of the cloth for which the Greeks too traded. The Romans in turn transcribed the Greek phoinix to poenus, thus calling the descendants of the Canaanite emigrants to Carthage 'Punic'. However, while both Phoenician and Canaanite refer to approximately the same culture, archaeologists and historians commonly refer to the pre-1200 or 1000 B.C.E. Levantines as Canaanites and their descendants, who left the bronze age for the iron, as Phoenicians.

It has been somewhat frustrating that so little outside of the Bible and less than a handful of secondary and tertiary Greek sources (Lucian of Samosata's *De Syria Dea* (The Syrian Goddess), fragments of the Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, and the writings of Damasacius remain to describe the beliefs of the people of the area. Unlike in Mesopotamia, papyrus was readily available so that most of the records simply deteriorated. A cross-roads of foreign empires, the region never truly had the chance to unify under a single native rule; thus scattered statues and conflicting listings of deities carved in shrines of the neighboring city-

states of Gubla (Byblos), Siduna (Sidon), and Zaar (Tyre) were all the primary sources known until the uncovering of the city of Ugarit in 1928 and the digs there in the late 1930's. The Canaanite myth cycle recovered from the city of Ugarit in what is now Ras Shoumra, Syria dates back to at least 1400 B.C.E. in its written form, while the deity lists and statues from other cities, particularly Gubla date back as far as the third millennium B.C.E. Gubla, during that time, maintained a thriving trade with Egypt and was described as the capital during the third millennium B.C.E. Despite this title, like Siduna (Sidon), and Zaar (Tyre), the city and the whole region was lorded over and colonized by the Egyptians. Between 2300 and 1900 B.C.E., many of the coastal Canaanite cities were abandoned, sacked by the Amorites, with the inland cities of Aleppo and Mari lost to them completely. The second millennium B.C.E. saw a resurgence of Canaanite activity and trade, particularly noticed in Gubla and Ugarit. By the 14th century B.C.E., their trade extended from Egypt, to Mesopotamia and to Crete. All of this was under the patronage and dominance of the 18th dynasty of Egypt. Zaar managed to maintain an independent kingdom, but the rest of the soon fell into unrest, while Egypt lost power and interest. In 1230, the Israelites began their invasion and during this time the possibly Achaean "Sea Peoples" raided much of the Eastern Mediterranean, working their way from Anatolia to Egypt. They led to the abandonment of Ugarit in 1200 B.C.E., and in 1180, a group of them established the country of Philistia, i.e. Palestine, along Canaan's southern coast.

Over the next three or four hundred years, the Canaanites gradually recovered. Now they occupied little more than a chain of cities along the coast, with rival city-states of Sidon and Tyre vying for control over larger sections of what the Greeks began to call Phoenicia. Tyre won out for a time and the unified state of Tyre-Sidon expanded its trade through the Mediterranean and was even able to establish colonies as far away as Spain. The most successful of these colonies was undoubtedly Carthage, said in the Tyrian annals to have been established in 814 B.C.E. by Pygmalion's sister Ellisa. She was named Dido, 'the wandering one', by the Lybian natives and escaped an unwelcome marriage to their king by immolating herself, a story which Virgil also recounts in the Aeneid. Her dramatic death brought about her deification while the colonists continued to practice the Canaanite religion, spreading it under Carthage's auspices while that state expanded during sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. Carthage outlasted its patron state as Tyre and Sidon were crushed under Assyrian expansion beginning during the reign of Sennacherib around 724 B.C.E. and ending under Nebuchadnezzar around 572 B.C.E.

The Phoenician era saw a shift in Canaanite religion. The larger pantheon became pushed to the wayside in favor of previously less important, singular deities who became or, in the case of Baalat, already were the patron city-gods, born witness to by ruling priest-kings.

## **II. What Deities did they worship?**

As mentioned above, different cities had different concepts of not only which gods were ranked where in the pantheon, but also of which gods were included and what some of their basic attributes were. While El or Il, whose name means 'god', is commonly described as the creator of the earth, the Arameans ranked Hadad before him. Also, many city gods were named

Baal, meaning 'lord'. Baal-Sidon, the city god of Sidon was thus an entirely different deity than Baal-Hadad, the storm god. Given the dearth of material from outside of Ugarit, if other cities or regions are not mentioned in the entry, the details can be assumed to be particular to Ugarit.

### **A. Primarily beneficent and non-hostile gods:**

#### **El - (also called Latipan, and possibly Dagon)**

He is known as the Father of the gods, 'the father of mankind', the 'Bull', and 'the creator of creatures'. He is grey haired and bearded and lives at Mt. Lel. He is a heavy drinker and has gotten extremely drunk at his banquets.

As a young god, he went out to the sea and, spying two ladies, one of whom is presumably Athirat, becomes aroused, roasts a bird and asks the two to choose between being his daughters or his wives. They become his wives and in due course they give birth to Shachar, Shalim, and possibly other gracious gods, who could be Athirat's seventy children and/or much of the rest of the pantheon. The new family raises a sanctuary in the desert and lived there for eight years.

He orders that Yam be given kingship and sets Kothar-and-Khasis to build the new king a throne. The gods warn that Yam has been shamed and may wreck destruction, so El ameliorates him by renaming him mddil - 'beloved of El' and throws a feast for him. El warns though that this is contingent on his driving out of Baal, who may fight back. Following Yam's demise, he favors the god Mot.

While Baal is declared king and judge, he remains a resident of El and Athirat's palace as El refuses him permission to build an appropriate mansion, in spite of Shapash. When Baal-Hadad's monsters assail the handmaidens of Yarikh and Lady Athirat of the Sea, he advises them to give birth to beasts which will lure Baal-Hadad away on a hunt.

He favors King Keret, who may be his son, offering him riches upon the death of his many spouses and eventually promising him the princess Huray and many children, provided he make the proper sacrifices and follow his instructions. After Keret takes ill, El eventually convenes an assembly of the gods in order to ask one of them to rid Keret of his illness. Eventually, El dispatches the demoness Sha'taqat who cures Keret.

Anat brings her complaints of Aqhat before him and threatens to strike him in the head when he gives his response. He then replies that he knows how contemptuous she is and won't stand in her way.

#### **Athirat (Asherah, Ashtartian - 'the Lady of the Sea', Elat - 'the goddess')**

El's loving consort and is protective of her seventy children who may also be known as the gracious gods, to whom she is both mother and nursemaid. Her sons, unlike Baal initially, all have godly courts. She frequents the ocean shore. In the Syrian city of Qatra, she was considered Baal-Hadad's consort.

While washing clothing with a female companion by the sea, she is spied by El, who roasts a

bird and invites the two to choose between being his daughters or his wives. They choose to become his wives and in due course give birth to the gracious gods, the cleavers of the sea, including Shachar and Shalim. The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years.

Baal and Anat hope to use her to influence El on the issue of Baal's palace. Initially suspicious and fearful of them on behalf of her children, but she warms up when she see that they have brought gifts. She and Anat successfully intercede with El on Baal's behalf for permission for Baal to build a more suitable court.

When Baal is found dead, she advocates her son Athtar be made king. Her sons, the "'pounders' of the sea", apparently colluded with Mot and were smited by Baal with sword and mace upon his return. Baal-Hadad's creatures devour her handmaidens, so she sends them to El. El tells them to go into the wilderness and there birth horned buffalo, which will distract Baal-Hadad.

She and Anat serve as nursemaids for Keret's son Yassib, but remind Keret of his pledge of wealth for Huray, perhaps causing his decline in health because of its lack of fulfillment. (See also Gwen Saylor's commentary on ver. 0.3 - Asherah)

## **Qadshu**

A Syrian goddess, who has occasionally been tentatively, identified with nude fertility goddess statues. Also spelled Qodesh, meaning 'holy', and used as an epithet of Athirat. She had been identified with the Egyptian Qetesh

## **Qodesh-and-Amrur 'fisherman of Athirat'**

Baal's messenger to Kothar-and-Khasis. He is also Athirat's servant and dredges up provisions to entertain her guests from the sea with a net. It is interesting to note that in Dan 4:13(10) similar words appear to refer to an angel and have been translated as 'holy messenger' or 'holy sentinel'.

## **Kothar-and-Khasis ('skillful and clever', also called Chousor and Heyan (Ea) and identified with Ptah)**

He is the craftsman god and is identified with Memphis.

He is ordered by El to build Yam's throne. He upbraids Yam for rising against Baal and threatens him with a magic weapon. He gives Baal the magic weapons Yagrush (Chaser) and Aymur (Driver).

He crafts Baal's bribe for Athirat, a temple serving set of gold and silver. He build's Baal's second house and insists over Baal's objections on including a window.

He constructs a bow and arrows set for Aqhat, presenting them first to Daniel and staying for a feast.

## **Shachar 'Dawn'**

Shalim's twin and one of the first, if not only, pair of gracious gods, the children and cleavers of the sea. They were born of El and Athirat or her female companion. The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years. According to Isaiah 14:12, he is the father of Helel or Lucifer, the 'light-bringer', usually taken to mean the morning-star.

### **Shalim 'Sunset/Dusk'**

Shachar's twin and one of the first, if not only, pair of gracious gods, the children and cleavers of the sea. They were born of El and Athirat or her female companion. The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years.

### **Shamu (Baalshamem?)**

Not found in the Ugarit texts, this sky god was the chief of the pantheon at the Syrian city of Alalakh.

### **Baal (also called Baal-Zephon(Saphon), Hadad, Pidar and Rapiu (Rapha?) - 'the shade')**

The son of El, the god of fertility, 'rider of the clouds', and god of lightning and thunder. He is 'the Prince, the lord of earth', 'the mightiest of warriors', 'lord of the sky and the earth' (Alalakh). He has a palace on Mt. Zephon. He has a feud with Yam. His voice is thunder; his ship is a snow bearing cloud. He is known as Rapiu during his summer stay in the underworld.

He upbraids the gods for their cowardice when they intend to hand him over to Yam's messengers and attacks them but is restrained by Athtart and Anat. Kothar-and-Khasis gives him the magic weapons Yagrush (Chaser) and Aymur (Driver). He strikes Yam in chest and in the forehead, knocking him out. Athtart rebukes Baal and calls on him to 'scatter' his captive, which he does. In an alternate version of this episode, he slays Lotan (Leviathan), the seven-headed dragon. The battle may have been representative of rough winter sea-storms which calmed in the spring and which were preceded and accompanied by autumn rains which ended summer droughts and enabled crops to grow.

After his victory he holds a feast and remarks on his lack of a proper palace, instead retaining residence with El and Athirat. He sends messengers to Anat to ask her to perform a peace-offering that he might tell her the word which is the power of lightning and seek lightning on the holy Mt Zephon. She does so and he welcomes her. Hearing his complaints Anat leaves to petition El for a new palace for Baal. Rejected, Baal dispatches Qodesh-and-Amrur to Kothar-and-Khasis with a request to make a silver temple set with which to bribe Athirat. He and Anat view Athirat with trepidation keeping in mind past insults which he has suffered at the hands of the other gods. He and Anat ask Athirat to ask El for permission to build a more extravagant house and Athirat's request is granted. Gathering cedar, gold, silver, gems, and lapis at Mt. Zephon, he calls Kothar-and-Khasis, feeding him and instructing him on how to build the palace. He doesn't want a window, for fear of Yam breaking through or his daughters escaping, but Kothar-and-Khasis convinces him to allow its inclusion so that he might lightning, thunder, and rain through it.

At its completion he holds a feast, takes over scores of towns and allows the window to be

built. He threatens to ask Mot to invite any of Baal's remaining enemies to come for a visit and at night, binds the lightning, snow and rains. He sends Gupn and Ugar to Mot to invite him to acknowledge his sovereignty at his new palace. He sends messengers to Mot to carry this message to him and they return with a message of such weight that Baal declares himself Mot's slave. He hopes to ameliorate Mot by having Sheger and Ithm supply live sheep and cattle for the god to feast upon. Fearing Mot he seeks Shapshu's advice and sires a substitute on a cow. He (or possibly his substitute) dies and remains in the underworld for seven years. El dreams that he is alive again but he is absent. Ashtar attempts to take Baal's place, but can not. Shapshu searches for him. Baal returns and fights Mot's allies, the sons of Athirat and the yellow ones. After seven years, Mot returns, demanding one of Baal's brothers lest he consume mankind. Baal rebuffs him and they fight tooth and nail. Shapshu separates the two declaring that Baal has El's favor and Baal resumes his throne.

As Baal-Hadad, he sends monstrous creatures to attack the handmaidens of Yarikh, and of Athirat of the Sea. He hunts the horned, buffalo-humped creatures which were birthed by the handmaidens at the advice of El. During the hunt he is stuck in a bog for seven years and things fall to pot. His kin recover him and there is much rejoicing.

Once when he was out hunting, Anat followed him. He spotted her, fell in love and copulated with her in the form of a cow. She gave birth to 'a wild ox' or a 'buffalo', telling him of the event on Mt. Zephon. This is probably not their only affair. (See also Theology 100 Online Glossary - Baal, Encyclopedia Mystica - Baal)

#### **Gapn (vine)**

Baal's page and messenger to both Anat and Mot.

#### **Radmanu (Pradmanu)**

A minor servitor of Baal.

#### **Ugar (cultivated field?)**

Baal's other page and messenger to both Anat and Mot. He is possibly the patron city-god of Ugarit.

#### **Pidray 'daughter of the mist', 'daughter of light(ning)'**

Baal's daughter. She is sometimes a love interest of Athtar.

#### **Tallay = 'she of dew', 'daughter of drizzle'**

Baal's daughter.

#### **Arsay = 'she of the earth', 'daughter of [ample flows]'**

Baal's daughter.

#### **Ybrdmy**

Baal's daughter.

#### **Athtart (Athtart-name-of-Baal, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Ashtart)**

She is a consort of Baal, and lesser goddess of war and the chase. Outside of Ugarit, many nude goddess statues have been tenuously identified with her as a goddess of fertility and sex. In Sidon she merited royal priests and priestesses. There she served as a goddess of fertility, love, war and sexual vitality and to that end had sacred prostitutes. She was the Phoenicians

great goddess and was identified with Aphrodite by the Greeks.

She restrains Baal when he intends to attack Yam's messengers. She rebukes Baal for holding Yam captive and calls on him to 'scatter' Yam, which he does.

Apparently she, along with Anat, is willing to become Baal's cupbearer once he achieves a proper palace. (See also Theology 100 Online Glossary - Astarte)

### **Anat (Anath, Rahmay - 'the merciful')**

She Baal's sister and the daughter of El. Goddess of war, the hunt, and savagery. She is an archer. Virgin, sister-in-law (progenitor?) of peoples (Li'mites?). She and Athirat are nursemaids to the gracious gods.

She restrains Baal when he intends to attack Yam's messengers. In missing texts, she killed Yam-Nahar, the dragon, the seven-headed serpent. She also destroyed Arsh, Atik, Ishat, and Zabib, all enemies of Baal.

She holds a feast at Baal's palace to celebrate his victory over Yam. After the guests arrive, she departs her abode and adorns herself in rouge and henna, closes the doors and slaughters the inhabitant of two nearby towns, possibly Baal's enemies. She makes a belt of their heads and hands and wades through the blood. She lures the towns' warriors inside to sit and joyfully massacres them. She then makes a ritual peace offering and cleans up. This is possibly related to a seasonal fertility ritual welcoming the autumn rains. Anat receives messengers from Baal thinking that some new foe has arisen, but they assure her that he only wishes that she make a peace offering that he might tell her the secret of lightning and seek it on Mt. Zephon. She does so, demanding first to see the lightning, and is welcomed by Baal from afar. Hearing him complain of lack of a proper mansion, she storms off to El, creating tremors. She threatens to mangle his face lest he heeds her and has Baal's court constructed, yet her plea is rejected. She is assisted in her petition, possibly by Athtart. She accompanies Baal to Athirat with a bribe and assists Athirat in her successful petition to El for Baal's court.

After Baal dies, she searches for him and, finding his body goes into a violent fit of mourning. She has Shapash take his body to Mt. Zephon, where she buries it and holds a feast in his honor. After seven years of drought, she finds Mot, and cuts, winnows, and sows him like corn.

She attends the feast where Daniel presents Aqhat with a bow and arrows set made by Kothar-and-Khasis. Desiring the bow, she offers Aqhat riches and immortality, for it. He refuses and so she promises vengeance upon him should he transgress and leaves for Mt. Lel to denounce him to El. Upset with El's response, she threatens to strike his head, sarcastically suggesting that Aqhat might save him. El remarks that he won't hinder her revenge, so she finds Aqhat, and taking the form of a kinswoman, lures him off to Qart-Abilim. Unsuccessful with her first attempt there, she calls her attendant warrior Yatpan to take the form of an eagle, and with a flock of similar birds pray strike Aqhat as he sits on the mountain. They do so and Aqhat is slain, unfortunately, the bow falls into the waters and is lost and Anat laments that her actions and Aqhat's death were in vain.

When Baal was out hunting, she followed after him and copulated with him in the form of a cow. She gave birth to 'a wild ox' or a 'buffalo', visiting Mt. Zephon to tell Baal of the good news. This is probably not their only affair.

### **Baalat**

The 'mistress' of Gubla she was not found in Ugarit. This great fertility goddess was the foremost deity of that city. She served as protector of the city and of the royal dynasty. She was associated with Baal-Shamen and she assimilated the characteristics of the Egyptian goddesses Hathor and Ast (Isis).

### **Tanit**

Known as the 'lady of Carthage' and the 'face of Baal', Tanit was the great goddess of the Carthaginians and, with Baal Hammon co-protector of that city. She is listed first of all deities in Carthage.

### **Shapshu (Shapash)**

She is the sun-goddess (Akkadian Shamash, a male deity) and is known as the torch of the gods and pale Shapshu. She often acts as messenger or representative on El's behalf. She has some dominion over the shades and ghosts of the nether-world. Kothar-and-Khasis may be her companion and protector.

She tells Athtar that he will lose kingship to Yam under El's auspice and rebuffs his complaints by recalling his lack of wife and children.

She is said to be under Mot's influence when Baal is preoccupied with his lack of a palace and not raining. The weather then is particularly hot.

When Mot's messenger seeks Baal, she advises the thunder-god to procure a substitute, to satisfy Mot and then take his servants and daughters and venture into the underworld. At the direction of Anat, she carries Baal's body back to Mt. Zephon. She is told by El that he dreamed Baal was alive and she searches for him. When Baal returns and fights with Mot, she separates them, declaring that Baal has El's favor.

### **Yarikh**

He is the moon god. 'The illuminator of myriads (of stars)', 'lamp of heaven', possibly also the crescent moon and 'lord of the sickle' and thereby the father of the Kotharat. He is patron of the city Qart-Abilim.

After sunset he embraces Nikkal-and-Ib and becomes determined to marry her. He seeks Khirkhib out to arbitrate the bride price, but instead Khirkhib tries suggests other potential mates in the daughters of Baal. Undaunted, Yarikh presents a lavish brideprice to Nikkal-and-Ib's family and the two are wed.

Baal-Hadad's creatures devour his handmaidens, so he sends them to El. El tells them to go into the wilderness and there birth horned buffalo, which will distract Baal-Hadad.

### **Kotharat (was thought to be Kathirat) 'skillful'**

They are a group of goddesses associated with conception and childbirth. '...The swallow-like daughters of the crescent moon.' (Gibson p. 106). They are also associated with the new moon. They attend Daniel for seven days to aid in the conception of Aqhat and receive his sacrifice.

### **Athtar (Ashtar, 'Athtar, Atra of the sky) 'the terrible'**

He is a son of Athirat, possibly a god of the desert or of artificial irrigation. He is sometimes a suitor of Pidray. As the great god of the Sabean and Himyar (both South Arabian states), he was identified with Venus and was sired by the moon on the sun. He loses his kingship to Yam at the behest of El and is warned off from an attack on Yam by Shapshu. He complains to her of his lack of status, palace and court.

He attempts to take Baal's place at his throne while Baal is dead, but he is too small for the seat and rejects it, becoming king of the earth instead.

### **Sheger ('offspring of cattle')**

He is the god of cattle

### **Ithm**

He is the god of sheep

### **Hirgab**

He is the father of the eagles.

### **S,umul**

She is the mother of the eagles. She ate the body of Aqhat.

### **Elsh**

He is the steward (carpenter?) of El and of Baal's house. His wife is the stewardess (carpenter?) of the goddesses.

### **Sha'taqat 'drives away'**

She is the flying demoness who drives away Keret's disease on behalf of El with a touch of her wand to his head.

'god(s) of the fathers'

They are ancestral or clan deities, commonly associated with one family or another, outside of the main pantheon.

### **Nikkal-and-Ib 'great lady and clear/bright/fruit' or 'Great goddess of fruit' (Ningal)**

She is possibly the daughter of Dagon of Tuttul, or Khirkihib. She is romanced by Yarikh and marries him after Yarikh arranges a bride price with Khirkihib and pays it to her parents.

### **Khirkhib (was thought to be Hiribi), king of summer, king of the raiding season (autumn)**

He is probably a Hurrian deity. He acts as a matchmaker between Yarikh and Nikkal-and-Ib, initially trying to dissuade Yarikh from pursuing her suggesting Pidray and Ybrdmy as alternative choices.

### **Dagon of Tuttul**

He is a Syrian version of Dagon, and the probable father of Nikkal-and-Ib. Ugarit's Dagon was the father of Baal and may have been identified with El. There were also temples to Dagon in Mari and Emar. To the Phoenicians, he was a god of wheat and the inventor of the plow. The Philistines adopted him as their own and depicted him with the upper torso of a man and the back half of a fish. (See also the Assyro-Babylonian Dagon and the Hittite Kumarbi)

### **Baal-Shamen (Baal-Shamain) 'lord of the skies'**

Lord of the Assembly of the gods at Gubla. He was the great god of the Aramaean kingdoms of Hama and Laash and the protector of their rulers.

### **Milqart (Melqart, Baal Tsur, Milkashtart?) - 'king of the city', the hunter, 'fire of heaven'.**

Patron god of Tyre, he was the god of the Metropolis and of the monarchy at Tyre and Carthage. His cult spread throughout the Mediterranean region, but has not been found at second millennium sites. As with the Babylonian Nergal/Erra, he has been identified with Heracles archetypes. Greek sources imply that he was a dying and rising vegetation god, and that he was associated with the sacred marriage like the Sumerian god, Dumuzi. He was ritually immolated in an annual festival. He was also a god of the sea and was pictured mounted on a hippocampus.

### **Eshmun 'the holy prince'**

He was a god of healing and the great god in Sidon. He was known in Tyre, Cyprus, and Carthage, but not in Ugarit. In the 5th century AD, Damascius identified him with the Greek god Asclepius.

## **B. Chaos gods, death gods and baneful gods.**

### **Yam (Nahar, Yaw, Lotan?, Leviathan?)**

He is god of sea and rivers; he dwells in a palace under the sea. He carries a feud with Baal. He may have had in his following a dragon (tnn) which lives in the sea, a serpent (btn), and/or Lotan/Leviathan, or may have been all of those creatures.

He is given kingship by El. He threatens vast destruction until El names him 'beloved of El' and sends him on his way to oust Baal. Upbraided by Kothar-and-Khasis, he dispatches messengers to El to demand the delivery of Baal. Baal strikes him with Yagrush and Chaser in the chest and forehead, knocking him down. He is slain and scattered at the urging of Athtart. The battle may have been representative of rough winter sea-storms which calmed in the spring

and which were preceded and accompanied by autumn rains which ended summer droughts and enabled crops to grow.

### **Arsh**

The 'darling of the gods', a monstrous attendant of Yam, slain by Anat. Arsh lives in the sea.

### **Atik**

The 'calf of El', an enemy of Baal. Slain by Anat.

### **Ishat (fire)**

The 'bitch of the gods', an enemy of Baal, slain by Anat.

### **Zabib (flame? flies?)**

The daughter of El, an enemy of Baal, slain by Anat.

### **Mot(-and-Shar) 'Death and Prince/Dissolution/Evil'**

'The beloved one'- Mot is the god of sterility, death, and the underworld. In one hand he holds the scepter of bereavement, and in the other the scepter of widowhood. His jaws and throat are described in cosmic proportions and serve as a euphemism for death.

When he has influence over Shapshu, it is unusually hot and dry. He sits on a pit for a throne in the city of Miry in the underworld.

Prior to the conception of the gracious gods, he is pruned and felled like a vine by the vine dressers.

He is favored by El following Baal's defeat of Yam and Baal refuses him tribute. When Baal's messengers deliver him an invitation to feast at Baal's new palace, he is insulted that he is offered bread and wine and not the flesh he hungers for. In fact, he threatens to defeat Baal as Baal did Leviathan, causing the sky to wilt and then eat Baal himself. Baal would then visit his palace in the underworld. He is pleased that Baal submits to him. Baal goes to the underworld and either he or his substitute is eaten by Mot. Presumably the sons of Athirat had some part in his death. After seven years of famine, Anat seizes Mot, splits, winnows, sows and grinds him like corn. Baal eventually returns and defeats Mot's allies. After seven years Mot returns and demands Baal's brother, lest he wipe out humanity. Baal rebuffs him and the two have a mighty battle, but are separated by Shapshu who declares Baal to have El's favor.

'The yellow ones of Mot'

Mot's henchmen who are slain by Baal upon his return.

### **Horon**

He is probably a chthonic deity.

## **Resheph**

'Prince Resheph' is the god of pestilence.

## **aklm - 'the devourers'**

These are some creatures who fought Baal-Hadad in the desert, they remind some of grasshoppers.

## **Rephaim (Rpum) - 'shades'**

These are deities of the underworld whom Daniel meets in his journey there. They may have been involved in negotiations with him for the return of his son Aqhat. Eight of them led by Repu-Baal (Rapiu? Baal?) arrive at a feast given by El in chariots, on horseback, and on wild asses.

## **Molech (Melech, Malik, Milcom?, Milqart?)**

Not explicitly found in the Ugarit texts, Moloch is a bit of an enigma. He shows up in the Old Testament in Leviticus 18 and 20, 1 Kings 11, 2 Kings 23, and Jeremiah 32. From that he appears to be a god of the Ammonites - a region west of the Jordan - whose worshipers sacrificed children in fires at temples, some of which were in the Valley of Hinnom, i.e. Gehenna, just south of Jerusalem. The Old Testament also names the similarly spelt "Milcom" as a god of the Ammonites leading to the suspicion that they are the same god. Moloch is probably not the original name of the deity. There has been a good deal of argument as to whether Molech could be identified with another foreign deity and which deity that would be, or whether molech was simply a term which referred to child sacrifice of any sort. The Canaanite gods Mot and Milqart of Tyre, and the Mesopotamian god Nergal, whom I believe is somewhere referred to as Malik=king, are a couple of the prime candidates for being Molech.:

## **C. Demi-gods and Heroes**

### **Keret**

Keret was a king (of Khubur?) and possibly the son of El (this may be an expression for a fortunate person) who lost his estate and his successive eight wives to death, disease, and accident before any one of them could produce an heir. Having fallen asleep in tears, he is visited by El in a dream and offered kingship and riches to assuage his sorrow. This is ineffective as Keret only desires sons and heirs. El directs him to make an animal and wine sacrifice to El and Baal on the tower and then muster an army to lay siege to the city of Udm. There, Keret is to refuse offers from the Udm's king Pabil and demand his daughter, the fair Huray. Keret does as instructed, vowing to himself to give Huray an enormous sum of wealth upon his success.

Returning to his estate with Huray, Keret is blessed by El at Baal's behest and is promised eight sons, the first of which, Yassib, shall have Athirat and Anat as nursemaids. In addition,

Huray will bear eight daughters all of whom as blessed as a first-born child. Athirat calls attention to Keret's promise of wealth to Huray which he has yet to fulfill.

Later, Keret and Huray prepare a great feast for the lords of Khubur. Later still Keret has become deathly ill and Huray entertains guests at a feast to mourn for him and make sacrifices on his behalf.

The household is tense and Keret's son Elhu, despondently visits his father. Keret tells him not to sorrow, but to send for his sympathetic sister, Keret's daughter Thitmanat ('the eighth one'). Her sympathy, heightened Keret expects from her surprise at his state will evoke the attention of the gods during a sacrifice he intends to perform. Indeed she weeps readily when the truth is revealed. Meanwhile, the rains have ceased with Keret's illness, but return after a ceremony on Mt. Zephon. El convenes an assembly of the gods and dispatches the demoness Sha'taqat who cures Keret. Keret's son and heir Yassib, unaware of his father's cure entertains him to surrender his throne as he has been remiss in his duties, but Yassib is rebuffed and cursed.

## **Daniel**

'He of Harnan', a devotee of Rapiu (Baal) and a patriarchal king. Like Keret, Daniel is in mourning because unlike his brothers he had no sons. So, for several days he sacrificed food and drink to the gods. On the seventh day, Baal takes notice and successfully petitions El to allow Daniel and his wife, Danatay, to have a child, citing, among other reasons, that the child will be able to continue the contributions and sacrifices to their temples. El informs Daniel of his impending change of fortune. He rejoices and slaughters an ox for the Kotharat, pouring sacrifices to them for six days and watching them depart on the seventh. During some missing columns, Danatay gives birth to Aqhat. Later, Kothar-and-Khasis arrives with a specially crafted bow and arrows set for Aqhat. Daniel and Danatay hold a feast, inviting the god, and Daniel presents Aqhat with the bow reminding him to sacrifice the choicest game to the gods. When Aqhat is slain, Daniel's daughter Pughat notices the eagles and the drought and becomes upset. Daniel prays that Baal might return the rains and travels among the fields coaxing the few living plants to grow and wishing that Aqhat were there to help harvest them. Pughat informs him of Aqhat's demise. Daniel then swears vengeance upon his son's slayer. In succession he spies some eagles, Hirgab, and Sumul. He calls upon Baal to break their wings and breast-bones, and then he searches their insides for Aqhat's remains. Initially not finding them, he asks Baal to restore the eagles and Hirgab. Finding Aqhat's remains within Sumul, he buries him and calls upon Baal to break the bones of any eagle that may disturb them and curses the lands near which his son was slain. His court goes into mourning for seven years, at which time Daniel dismisses the mourners and burns incense in sacrifice to the gods. Pughat prays to the gods to bless her in her venture and disguises herself as Anat, intending to wreck vengeance upon those who slew Aqhat.

## **Aqhat**

The much anticipated child of Daniel and Danatay, Aqhat is presented with a bow and arrows set made by Kothar-and-Khasis early in his life by his father at a feast. Daniel reminds him to

take the best of his kills to the temple for the gods. At the feast Anat offers Aqhat riches and eternal life if he would give her the bow. When he refuses, she promises to deliver vengeance upon him should he ever transgress. Presumably he fails to offer his best kills to the gods. Later he follows a disguised Anat to Qart-Abilim but presumably thwarts her new scheme to acquire his bow and lives there for a time, possibly under the favor of Yarikh. He is left on a mountain and while sitting for a meal is attacked by Anat's attendant Yatpan in the form of an eagle, along with other birds of prey, and is slain. Following his death, the land is poisoned and there is a period of famine and drought. Daniel recovers his son's remains from the eagle S,umul.

Later, Daniel visits the underworld, probably in hopes of recovering Aqhat, and there encounters the Rephaim.

### **Pughat**

She is one of Daniel and Danatay's daughters. When Aqhat is slain, She notices the eagles and the drought and becomes upset. Daniel prays that Baal might return the rains and travels among the fields coaxing the few living plants to grow and wishing that Aqhat were there to help harvest them. Pughat encounters Aqhat's servants and learns of his demise. After seven years of Daniel's court mourning, Daniel dismisses the mourners and burns incense in sacrifice to the gods. Pughat prays to the gods to bless her in her venture and disguises herself as Anat, intending to wreck vengeance upon those who slew Aqhat. She arrives and meets Yatpan, accepting his wine, and the rest is missing.

### **III. What about their cosmology? (Divine geography)**

Little is certain about the cosmology of the Canaanites. While the Ugaritic texts tell us of El, Athirat, and Rahmay's creation of the gracious gods, for the creation of the universe we must rely on the Greek sources of Philo of Byblos, Athenaeus, and Damascius, which are thoroughly drenched in Greek cosmology. In general they relate that from gods like chaos, ether, air, wind and desire was produced the egg Mot, which was probably not the same Mot as found in Ugarit. The egg was populated with creatures who remained motionless until it was opened, whence the sky and heavenly bodies were formed. Later the waters were separated from the sky, and gods of El's generation were formed. Additional hints about the divine geography gathered from the Ugarit texts are included below:

#### **Mt. Lel**

Where the assembly of the gods meet. It is El's abode and the source of the rivers and two oceans, as well as where those waters meet those of the firmament. It lies 'two layers beneath the wells of the earth, three spans beneath its marshes.' It had been thought to be a field and not a mountain. The mansion there has eight entrances and seven chambers.

#### **hmry 'Miry'**

Mot's city in the underworld, "where a pit is the throne on which he sits, filth the land of his heritage." (Gibson p. 66)

The underworld 'the place of freedom'. The Aramaeans believed that the souls of the blessed dead ate with Baal-Hadad.

### **Targhizizi and Tharumagi**

These are the twin mountains which hold the firmament up above the earth-circling ocean, thereby bounding the earth. The entrance to the underworld and Shapshu's 'grave'. It is entered by lifting up a rock to a wooded height. The entrance is bounded by a river-shore land of pasture and fields known ironically as "Pleasure" or "Delight".

### **Ughar or Inbab**

This is the location of Anat's mansion.

### **Mt. Zephon**

Either the mountain is deified and holy, godlike in proportion, or El has a pavilion there. It has recesses within which Baal holds his feast. Baal had his first house of cedar and brick there, as well as his second house of gold, silver, and lapis-lazuli.

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