**The Ugaritic Myth of Baal’s Love for the Heifer : Its Development in Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Literature**

**A. *Scientific Background***

The myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, his intimacy with her, and the birth of their calf is included in two independent Ugaritic works, echoed in additional Ugaritic writings. Like the two central episodes of the Baal cycle—Baal’s battle with Sea and Baal’s descent into the netherworld—this myth too has precedents, parallels, and echoes in the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean, which point to its centrality in ancient literature. Nevertheless, to date no comprehensive research has been undertaken to examine the development of this myth in its Ugaritic context and in light of its precedents and contemporary parallels in the ancient Near Eastern literature. The goal of the proposed research is, thus, to survey the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, its local features, and its origins through a philological and literary-historical examination of the relevant Ugaritic and extra-Ugaritic texts.

The principal Ugaritic sources on which the research will focus are *KTU* 1.10 and *KTU* 1.5 V, in which the myth in question is included. *KTU* 1.10 appears to be entirely devoted to this topic; its beginning (column I), however, is quite broken, and some lines in the middle (the end of column II and the beginning of column III) are broken too. The second text, *KTU* 1.5 V—its beginning and end are also broken—is set in the second part of the Baal cycle that refers to Baal’s struggle with Mot. Those two texts, accompanied by a short commentary, are part of many modern anthologies (e.g., Virolleaud 1936; Caquot and Sznycer 1974: 248-249, 273-289; Gibson [Driver] 1978: 15-16, 72-73; de Moor 1987: 74-79, 110-116; Dietrich and Loretz 1997: 1180-1182; Smith 1997: 147-148; Parker 1997; Pardee 1997: 266-267; Wyatt 2002: 123-125; 155–160; Coogan and Smith 2012, PP; Garbini 2014: 138-139, 162-167). In most, however, the discussions related to these texts examine the question of the relationship between Baal and Anat (see also, in addition to those listed above, Kapelrud 1969: 42-44; Day 1992; Walls 1992: 131-134) or the reasons for Baal to have an offspring before descending into the netherworld (see also de Moor 1971: 183-189; Margalit 1980: 117-124; walls 1992: 127-130; Herr 1995: 45; Schwemer 2001: 539-541). Thus, since no studies have yet been conducted examining the myth of Baal’s love and the heifer on its own, little attention has been paid to the questions of the myth’s origins, its development in Ugarit, and its relation to the vast extra-Ugaritic literature.

Outside of Ugarit, among the ancient Near Eastern cultures, the greatest number of textual finds have been discovered in Mesopotamia (see the table below); consequently, those have received the greatest attention from scholars (see, e.g., Lambert 1965; 1969; Van Dijk 1972; Röllig 1985; Veldhuis 1991; Stol 2000: 63-64, 66-70; Farber 1987: 274-277; Bergmann 2008, 17-28; Zomer 3013; Scurlock 2014a, 2014b; Márquez Rowe 2015; Streck and Wasserman https://seal.huji.ac.il/node/7059; Ayali-Darshan 2020, forthcoming). The myth’s protagonist in Mesopotamia is usually the moon god Sîn, who is considered the patron god of cows in many Sumerian and Akkadian texts, some of which predate the first occurrences of the myth (for most of the occurrences, see Hall 1985). In contrast to the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, the Mesopotamian myth of the moon god’s love for the heifer is included only in incantations for a women experiencing difficulty in labor (and therefore it is frequently labeled in modern research as historiola). Accordingly, for example, the Mesopotamian texts emphasize the pregnant heifer’s pain and her weeping, which are absent in the Ugaritic narrative, while the latter elaborates the sexual relations of the god with the heifer, which are missing from the former.

Most of scholarly discussions regarding those Mesopotamian historiolas have focused on lower criticism, namely, searching for the original version(s) of the text (see mainly Lambert 1965; 1969; Röllig 1985; Zomer 2013; Márquez Rowe 2015). Nevertheless, questions of literary theory and the relationship between myth and healing practice have also been discussed (see, e.g., Veldhuis 1991; Wasserman 2013: 17-19; Couto-Ferreira 2014). Regarding the manuscripts’ dating, the earliest is dated to the Old Babylonian period, while the latest to the Neo-Assyrian period, as the following table shows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Provenance** | **Edition/Copy (Mus. Num.)** |  |
| Late Bronze | Ḫattuša | *KUB* 4.13:6'-13' (CTH 810) | Tale-Type A |
| Late Bronze | Ugarit | RS 25.436:1'-10' |
| Middle Assyrian | Assyria | Lambert 1969, Pl. VI.:51-62 (Ligabue private coll.) |
| Middle Assyrian | Kalhu | Lambert 1965, obv. 19-36 (Rm. 376) |
| Neo-Assyrian | Aššur | *BAM* 3 248: III 10-35/ *KAR* 196 (VAT 8869) |
| Nineveh | *AMT* 67.1: III 1-25 (K2413 +) |
| Neo-Assyrian | Aššur | *BAM* 3 248: III 36-43 (VAT 8869) |
| Nineveh | *AMT* 67.1 III 26-29 (K2413 +) |
| Old Babylonian | Babylonia | VS 17.34 1-10 (VAT 8593) | Tale-Type B |
| Late Bronze | Ḫattuša | *KUB* 4.13: 15’-22 (CTH 810) |
| Neo-Assyrian | Aššur | *BAM* 3 248: I 37-51 (VAT 8869) |
| Nineveh | Veldhuis 1989: 255 (K8210: I 10'-14') |
| Neo-Assyrian | Aššur | *BAM* 3 248: III 54 – VI 1 (VAT 8869) |

Scholars have suggested further increasing the Mesopotamian finds by including additonal historiolas that refer solely to the crying of a pregnant woman to the moon god, or sexual relations between a bull and a woman (see Van Dijk 1973; 1975; Krebernik 1992: 83, n. 7; Sanders 2001; Bergmann 2008). However, those bear no evidence of familiarity with the story of the god’s love for the heifer, and while they may help us in tracing the development of certain motifs, they do not contribute to our understanding of the myth as a whole.

Outside Mesopotamia, as the table above shows, one fragmentary manuscript of the Mesopotamian historiola arrived at Ugarit, where it served as part of the curriculum of the scribal school(s) (Arnaud 2007: 75–77; Márquez Rowe 2014: 77-78; 2015), and two fragmentary versions arrived at Hatti, where they served the same purpose (see below). Despite that evidence, which might be indicative of a transmission of the myth from Mesopotamia to the periphery, its significance in relation to the aforementioned Ugaritic texts, as well as the possible contribution of the Mesopotamian historiola to the development of the Ugaritic myth, have yet to be examined (cf., West 1997: 443-444; Schwemer 2001: 541). In contrast, it has long been suggested that two other Ugaritic texts—*KTU* 1.24 and *KTU* 1.12—reflect the influence of that Mesopotamian historiola. While the suggestion regarding *KTU* 1.24 (Caquot and Sznycer 1974; Watson 1977: 281-283) disappeared over time from scholarly literature, that regarding *KTU* 1.12, which depends on a reference at the beginning of the text to the minor god *Tlš* , the Maid of Moon God (*ˀamt Yrḫ*), who suffering difficulties in pregnancy, continues to be discussed in various studies (Dahood in van Dijk 1972: 340-341; Watson 1977: 282; Haas 1988: 134 and n. 62; Dietrich and Loretz 1997: 1204, n. 24; Stol 2000: 68, n. 121; Sanders 2001: 436-439). Nonetheless, since those texts too do not mention the story of the god’s love for the heifer, they provide no assistance in understanding the development of the myth of Baai’s love for the heifer. Instead, they may testify to the Ugaritic scribes’ familiarity with certain components of that Mesopotamian historiola.

At Hatti, a fragmentary Hittite work—CTH 363, known today as *The Sun-god, the Cow, and the Fisherman* (E. Rieken et al. [ed.] hethiter.net/: CTH 363.2 [INTR 2009-08-12] and see there for further translations; Bauer et al. 2015: 173-176)—which opens with a description of the sun-god’s lust for the heifer and the birth of their offspring (apparently in a human form) was unearthed. Similar to Ugarit, at Hatti were also unearthed versions of the Mesopotamian historiola, one of each tale-type (Zomer 2013; Márquez Rowe 2015; Ayali-Darshan 2020). The first modern commentaries to the Hittite composition did mention its affinities with similar tales in Mesopotamia, Ugarit, and Greece (cf. Friedrich 1950: 250). However, upon the publication of a certain version of the Mesopotamian historiola that exceptionally refers to the sun god as its protagonist (VS 17.34 1–10), many have argued for Mesopotamian influence on the Hittite material, leaving everything else aside as “folkloristic motifs” (Röllig 1985: 273; Haas 1988: 134; 2006: 204–205; cf. Stol 2000: 68). An additional Hittite-Luwian incantation for a woman in childbirth with references to the moon god (CTH 767.7) and Hurrian incantations/prayers of pregnant women to the moon god (CTH 790, CTH 788) were presented by scholars (such as Beckman 1983: 187–188; Haas 1988: 132–134; Bachvarova 2016: 214) as further evidence of the Mesopotamian historiola’s influence upon Hittite literature. However, as in the instances cited above, here too these texts do not contain the central motifs of the myth in question (cf. Giorgieri 2004: 419–420), and therefore they are insufficient for the examination of the development of this myth among the Hittites. Nevertheless, since they imply a connection between the moon god and a pregnant woman, some of them may be indicative of a familiarity with the Mesopotamian historiola, and they should be discussed in this context.

In Egypt we have no occurrences of a local myth telling of the god’s love for a heifer in the pattern of those found at Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Hatti. (For the affinities between the first millennium BCE cult of Apis and the classic compositions of Io, which are not part of this study, see West 1997: 444-445; Bachvarova 2001: 64.) Similarly, no evidence has been found of local use of any of the versions of the Mesopotamian historiola, as was found at Hatti and Ugarit. (For the Babylonian curriculum at Amarna, see Izre’el 1997.) Nevertheless, as with many instances from the Late Bronze Age, Egyptian literature may be useful as a significant witness to the sparse Levantine literature, due to transmission of motifs and mythologems from the Levant into the land of the Nile during the New Kingdom period (see, e.g., Stadelmann 1967; te-Velde 1967: 109-133;Helck 1971; Redford 1992: 231–237; Cornelius 1994; Quack 1994: 207-212; Tazawa 2009; Ayali-Darshan 2017). Thus, Egyptian texts which clarify—directly and implicitly—perspectives that relate to the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, might be in assistance in this study. It includes, for example, Egyptian texts comprising the epithet of Anat as “Seth/Baal’s Big Heifer (*ˁmr.yt ˁ3.t*)” (pLeiden I 343 + I 345, r. 6.11; oLeipzig 1906 r. 5.1; Beck 2018: 51-55; 2015: 129-138) which parallels her epithet “Baal’s Heifer (*ˀrḫ*)” in a Ugaritic text relating to the infertility of a woman (*KTU* 1.13:30; Cf. Herr 1995: 49); and Egyptian texts describing Anat (along with Astarte) as the consort of Seth/Baal (*The Contendings of Horus and Seth* 3.5; the Harris Magical Papyrus 3.5–10; cf. Leitz 1999: 34-35 and nn. 25-26), in one of which she is defined (along with Astarte) as having been “pregnant but unable to give birth.” The symbolizing of Seth/Baal by a bull (Cornelius 1994: 165 *et passim*), paralleling the storm gods in Phoenicia, Syria, Anatolia and Mesopotamia, and a unique description of Baal in a few texts from Ugarit (mainly in *KTU* 1.12 I 30–33, 39, 53–55), will be examined too in this context. The occurrence of these and other Levantine motifs in Egyptian literature appears to reveal that their dispersion in Western Asia was much greater than is testified by the Ugaritic texts alone.

Scholars have also drawn a connection between the Egyptian historiola in pChester Beatty VII v. 1.5–2.4 and parallels and the Ugaritic myth discussed here, following the reconstruction of the first lines by Gardiner (1935: 61–63), according to which Seth allegedly copulates with Anat in the form of a bull (Helck 1971: 461; Albright 1968: 129: 112-113; Stadelmann 1967: 131-133). With the publication of additional manuscripts, it became evident that Anat functions in this historiola only as an intermediary between the wounded Seth (who copulates with the poison-girl) and the sun god (van Dijk 1986). Therefore, most scholars dismissed that notion (see Walls 1992: 146-149, but cf. Schneider 2003: 619-622). Nevertheless, since this historiola is replete with Levantine motifs that might parallel other aspects of Baal and Anat in the Ugaritic texts under consideration, this text is still significant for this study, especially in light of additional manuscripts that have recently been published (cf. Silverman and Houser Wegner 2007).

After the destruction of Ugarit and Hatti at the end of the second millennium BCE, the literary traditions regarding the god’s love for a heifer did not cease to exist. They can be found in first millennium BCE texts as well, both in the Mesopotamian incantations (Veldhuis 1989; Civil 1974; Jiménez 2014) and in classical literature (West 1994: 443, 451; Bachvarova 2001). Few motifs may even have made their way into the Hebrew Bible (de Moor 1987: 114, n. 31, but see Smith 2002: 203). A discussion of those, however, goes beyond the aim of the proposed research regarding the Ugaritic finds in light of contemporary texts; they will therefore be discussed only in case they may support second millennium BCE finds (such as the Assyrian Compendium of the first millennium BCE [https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-3/BAM-3\_-248], which contains a version identical to that found in Ugarit and Hatti, or pLeiden T32 [*The Book of Traversing Eternity*] of the first century CE, which refers to the figure of Anat as a cow [Smith 2009: 413]).

**B. *Research Objectives and Expected Significance***

The present study seeks to explore the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, its origins, and its relation to the ancient Near Eastern cultures by means of a philological and literary-historical examination of the relevant Ugaritic texts and the contemporary and earlier extra-Ugaritic sources. To accomplish this, the study will be divided into four parts: (1) a preliminary examination of the Ugaritic texts and related literature (such as Egyptian New Kingdom texts); (2) examination of the Mesopotamian material; (3) examination of the Hittite material; (4) examination of the Ugaritic material in light of the extra-Ugaritic material: origins and influences.

**1. Preliminary Examination of the Ugaritic Literature and Related Literatures**

At this part, the Ugaritic texts testifying to the story of Baal’s love for the heifer will be examined, and a preliminary inquiry into the central motifs of the story will be conducted. As stated above, the two texts that will stand at the *centre* of this part are *KTU* 1.10 and *KTU* 1.5 V. The former text is an independent literary work, the last two columns of which tell about Baal’s lust for the heifer and the birth of their calf. An additional protagonist in this text is Anat, to whom the text relates occasionally as Baal’s lover in terms reminiscent of Mesopotamian and biblical love songs, including the absence of the male lover and the search for him, the use of euphemism to describe their intimate relations, and the like. The second text, which tells about Baal’s love for the heifer employing terms characteristic of animals (cf. Paul 1982) and about the birth of their offspring, is integrated into the myth of Baal’s descent into the netherworld, with no reference to Anat. This text constitutes an independent, distinct tradition (cf., Herr 1995:45, 49; Schwemer 2001: 540), which contradicts other traditions within the Baal cycle. The present study will first examine each text on its own, using both philological and historical-literary tools, and then sketch out the shared motifs that underlie those two texts, in order to establish a kind of a “standard” Ugaritic version, if possible.

Three additional Ugaritic texts will be examined at this preliminary stage: the fragmentary *KTU* 1.1, the few remnants of which indicate a close similarity to *KTU* 1.10, suggesting it might be another version of *KTU* 1.10 (alternatively, some argue that it fits the missing lines in the third column of *KTU* 1.10; cf. Walls 1992: 134-139; Wyatt 2002: 161); *KTU* 1.93, of which only the beginning is extant, containing a dialogue between Baal and a heifer without sexual context (for attempt to establish the text’s genre, see Caquot 1979; de Moor 1979: 648-649; Margalit 1984; Dijkstra 1986; Mazzini 2004); and *KTU* 1.12, which refers to the Maid of the Moon God (*ˀamt Yrḫ*) and her difficulties in pregnancy. This work, as stated above, may indicate a familiarity with the Mesopotamian historiola, which calls the heifer experiencing difficulty in giving birth by the same epithet, “the maid of the moon god” (*amat Sîn*). Aside from the Ugaritic sources, use will be made of the contemporary Egyptian sources, in which the Levantine influence is evident (such as the aforementioned pLeiden I 343 + I 345 and pChester Beatty VII v. 1.5-2.4 and their parallels), and biblical sources that share common motifs with the Ugaritic sources.

In the absence of prior research dealing with the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, this preliminary part of the project is necessary to gain familiarity with the characteristics of the narrative at Ugarit. However, in order to examine its origins and development, one must consult with extra-Ugaritic texts referring to the myth of the god’s love for a heifer, before turning back to the Ugaritic material.

**2. Examination of the Mesopotamian Material**

The myth of the love of the moon god Sîn for a heifer, the latter’s pregnancy, and the birth of her calf is mentioned in many scholarly studies as one of the most widespread and old myths in Mesopotamia (some date it as early as the period of the third dynasty of Ur or even the pre-Sargonic period: see Van Dijk 1975: 71–72; Stol 2000: 65–68; Sanders 2001; Bergmann 2008: 18) and as the first of the stories that spread around the Near East and the Mediterranean basin about the mating of an astral god – in the figure of a bull – with a heifer (cf., Lambert 1965: 284; 1969: 33; Van Dijk 1972: 340; Veldhuis 1989: 250; 1991, 1; Cunningham 1997: 108; Sanders 2001; Bergmann 2008: 17). However, a preliminary study I have undertaken on this topic (Ayali-Darshan 2020) has shown that we have no evidence for this narrative prior to the Old Babylonian period (but only for isolated motifs that later found their way into the myth). It also revealed that no evidence exists for the widespread dissemination of this narrative in Mesopotamia; all ten versions of the historiola originated with only two tale-types sharing one tradition, and no familiarity with this story is shown in other Mesopotamian texts. Moreover, none of the extant Mesopotamian texts refers to a god who impregnates a heifer, who bears their shared offspring. The first explicit narrative in which a heifer mates with a god and gives birth to their offspring occurs in the extra-Mesopotamian literature of Hatti and Ugarit of the Late Bronze age.

As expected, the examination of the Mesopotamian versions of the myth in question—all belonging to the incantation *genre*—is naturally based on the written sources that are extant. However, since an incantation is meant to be used outside the scribal circles, the narrative embodied within it might be developed in oral paths independent of the written texts. The proposed study will attempt to determine whether there are indications of such an oral development, that point to a greater affinity with the findings from Hatti and Ugarit than the ten manuscripts of the aforementioned historiola. To make that determination, we will explore additional Mesopotamian (and Eblaite) texts that include one or more of the myth’s motifs (such as UM 29-15-367 [Van Dijk 1975; Cunningham 1997: 19-75], Kt 90/k 178 [Michel 2004]; H 72 and Maqlû VII 23-30 [Cooper 1996: 49-50; Cavigneaux 1999: 258-271]; Ni 12501 [Schwemer 2001: 179-180]; ARET 5, 6 [Krebernick 1992], among others), along with visual materials (such as those referred to by Hall 1985, and cf., e.g., Ornan 2001; Rochberg 2010: 352–354, among others) that may be ascribed to one or more motifs from the myth. These findings will be joined with my previous study of the literary development of the Mesopotamian historiola of the moon god’s love for the heifer (Ayali-Darshan 2020), and together they may be able to provide a more extensive and well-founded answer regarding the dissemination and the development of the myth of the moon god’s love for the heifer in Mesopotamia.

**3. Examination of the Hittite Material**

As has been stated, the principal find from Hatti is the fragmentary work *The Sun-god, the Cow, and the Fisherman* (CTH 363). This work belongs to a small group of folktales whose protagonist is a childless praying for an offspring. Beside this, this group includes also the Hittite work *Appu and His Two Sons* (CTH 360), in which, as in *The Sun-god, the Cow, and the Fisherman*, the hero supplicates the sun god for offspring. Haas (1988:134; 2005) additionally counts in this group the very fragmentary *The Hunter Kešši and his Beautiful Wife* (CTH 361), which refers to the protagonist’s long separation from his wife. (The fragmentary work *The Deeds of Gurparanzah* [CTH 362], telling about the protagonist’s rejection by the woman who had been promised to him, may also belongs in this group.) In the case of *The Sun-god, the Cow, and the Fisherman*, the fisherman’s desire for offspring is recounted following the Sun god’s desire for the heifer and the birth of their offspring, with which the story opens. After the newborn was found by his heifer-mother to be damaged (apparently due to his human form) , his father the sun god brought him into the vicinity of the fisherman, as a response to the latter’s prayer, and the fisherman and his wife adopted the youngster. The rest of the story is broken.

Since the composition under review is preceded by a Hurro-Hittite hymn to Ištar, and in light of its similarity to three additional works of Hurrian origin (*Appu*, *Kešši* and *Gurparanza*), some have argued for its Hurrian origin (Friedrich 1950; Güterbock 1946: 120-121; Hoffner 1981; 8; its similarity to *Appu* even led to the view that the two legends belong to one literary unit. See Güterbock, ibid.). This suggestion has been rejected by others, who dismiss any connection between the Hurro-Hittite hymn and the work that follows it (arguing that the tablet should be seen as a *sammeltaffel*), and any Hurrian features in that work (cf. Siegelova 1971: 33-35; Güterbock 1983: 155). Nevertheless, the disagreement remained (cf. Popko 1995: 127-128; Haas 2006:199-202; Taracha 2009:15; Bauer et al. 2015: 174). As noted, scholars have also long noted the affinity between the work under consideration and the Mesopotamian historiola of the love of the moon/sun god for the heifer and argued for the latter’s influence upon the former. (Hass 2006 even suggested that the choice of a fisherman – instead of a hunter – as the protagonist of the Hittite composition, may stem from a defective transmission of the Akkadian *ur*-form.) However, the close similarity of the Hittite work to the Ugaritic literature, in regard both to the god’s mating with the heifer and to the childless protagonist who plays a salient role in further Ugaritic works , such as Kirta and Aqhat and additional biblical stories, requires a re-examination of the traditions and motifs embodied in the Hittite composition being discussed, both in light of the local literature and in relation to its parallels in Mesopotamia and Ugarit.

**4. Examination of the Ugaritic Material in Light of the Extra-Ugaritic Material: Origins and Influences**

In this part, a comparative examination of the findings discussed in the three earlier sections of the study will be taken up. According to the data above, in both Hatti and Ugarit the Mesopotamian historiola regarding the god’s love for the heifer was unearthed—so we are not dealing with merely speculated transmission of that mythologeme. Nevertheless, various literary relations between the Hittite and Ugaritic local compositions, regarding the same topic, have no antecedent in the extant Mesopotamian historiola. Likewise, local material in each culture creates links between the moon god and difficulties in pregnancy, alongside ascription of all the components of the myth in question to a local divinity, which is not necessarily the moon god. These findings and others may provide evidence for various stages in the transmission and reception of the myth in each place. The conclusions that emerge from this part, which are dependent on the findings in the previous three parts, will thus hopefully assist in exploring the development of the traditions that compose the myth of the god’s love for the heifer at Ugarit from its origin to its final setting in the Ugaritic texts . Those conclusions may further form a broad, solid basis for follow-up research on the transmission of the traditions from the ancient Near East to classical Greece, which goes beyond the scope of this study.

**C. *Detailed Description of the Proposed Research***

1. **Working Hypothesis and Preliminary Results**

Most of the Ugaritic works that have been unearthed at Ras Shamra since 1928, despite their unique final form, contain only relatively few motifs or traditions that were completely unfamiliar to modern scholars prior to their discovery. Not only the names of the gods and heroes, which were already known from biblical, Egyptian (mainly of the New-Kingdom period), and epigraphic material, but also some of the tales themselves. The best example is the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, both of whose topics—the conflict of Baal with Sea and the descent of Baal to the netherworld—were already familiar to us thanks to the Mesopotamian and Egyptian materials that were unearthed some decades before (the Hittite material was joined later to this list as well) and due to the biblical and classical texts that were transmitted through generations.

## This close similarity of the Ugaritic myth to its cognates in the neighboring cultures is actually unsurprising in light of the location of Ugarit in the *centre* of the ancient Near Eastern trade routes and caravans: the Syrian and coastal-Levantine cities and the Egyptian kingdom to the south, Hatti and Asia Minor to the north, the great Mesopotamian kingdoms to the east, and, because Ugarit is located just opposite the north-eastern coast of Cyprus, all the Aegean islands spread out to the west. This location appears to contribute to the discovery of scripts and languages in the city of Ugarit from all over the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean cultures, including Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Aegean (cf. Vita 1999), but first and foremost the cuneiform syllabic Akkadian—which served the scribes as a *lingua franca* (cf. Hawley, Pardee and Roche-Hawley 2015; van Soldt 2016). The central location of Ugarit also made it a destination of mass migrations, such as that of the Hurrians in the beginning of the second millennium (see Vita 2009; Giorgieri 2013), as well as of military occupations, such as that of the Hittite kingdom toward the end of that millennium (Singer 1999; Cohen 2017, esp. pp. 301-302). The mark of all these on the social and culture life of Ugarit can be expected to be discerned.

My research on the two parts of the Baal Cycle—the combat of Baal vs. Yamm (Ayali-Darshan 2020) and vs. Mot (Ayali-Darshan 2018)—revealed that the central location of Ugarit, its international relationships, and the creative literacy of its scribes (to date Ugarit is the sole periphery kingdom known to us that maintained its own script) are reflected well in this literary work. It appears that this will also prove true regarding the myth of the god’s love for the heifer, which was inscribed upon tablets in Mesopotamia, Hatti, and Ugarit, and is known from classical manuscripts as well.

On the basis of our current knowledge, the assumption of a genetic relation between the Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Ugaritic myths telling of the god’s love for the heifer and the birth of their offspring seems assured. As a preliminary hypothesis, it can be suggested that the myth took on its initial form in Mesopotamia as a historiola, but it underwent two important developments during the Late Bronze age at Hatti and Ugarit. One is its disengagement from an incantation for a woman in childbirth, and the second is the removal of all references to difficulty in childbirth (characterizing the Mesopotamian historiola) and the emphasis on the god’s lust for the heifer (missing in the historiola). Interestingly, the extant texts from Mesopotamia reflect the opposite process, as they gradually focus the pain and crying of the heifer, leaving aside the narrative framing it. The different development in each culture can be further highlighted by comparing the Hittite work to those from Ugarit. While the former appears to preserve the ancient *Sitz im Lebe*n of the myth by integrating it into a work recounting the travails of a woman in childbirth and the birth of a damaged child, the latter are already severed from that background. On the other hand, unlike the Hittite composition, those from Ugarit, like the Mesopotamian historiola, refer to a birth of a calf. In the current proposed research I intend to deal with these and other aspects of the myth in order to better understand its origins and development.

**2. Research Design and Methods**

The definition of “myth” for the tale of the god’s love for the heifer, his mating with her, and the birth of their calf relates only to the identification of the protagonist as a divine being, and to the events as supernatural, without saying anything about the *genre* or its *Sitz im Leben*. Rather, the proposed study is devoted to the examination of certain traditions that are reflected in written texts and the links they exhibit with contemporaneous and earlier traditions prevalent in the same geographical region. Therefore, it will make use of the historical-philological approach. This method—which combines approaches originally designed to trace the genetic development of manuscripts with those dedicated to a genetic analysis of oral stories—enables identification of the features unique to the provenance of each tradition, and its adaptation and transformation in a different setting.

**3. Conditions for Conducting the Research**

The study requires close familiarity with various languages and literature. I believe that my acquaintance with the relevant ancient Near Eastern languages and my earlier studies that have examined ancient Near Eastern texts and their mutual relations (see Ayali-Darshan 2012, 2013a; 2013b, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020a, 2020b) provide me with the tools for direct access to the essential primary and secondary sources. In addition, since Israeli universities have a long and respected tradition of ancient Near Eastern research in all the related disciplines, I will be able to consult with local colleagues and find research assistants from among a range of M.A., Ph.D., or post-doctoral students. In recent years I have also established contacts with experts in these fields all around the globe, which allow me to consult with and become acquainted with new texts and forthcoming research.

The study requires extensive use of professional literature in diverse research fields. For some, the university libraries in Israel are more than adequate. For others, some of the primary materials and bibliographic resources are unavailable. They will thus need to be purchased, if possible, or photocopied at universities abroad. The budget includes funding for the purchase of books and photocopying.

**4. Expected Results and Pitfalls**

At the conclusion of the study, I intend to publish a monograph relating to the formation of the Ugaritic myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, from its origin to its final setting in the Ugaritic texts. This publication, which will include a detailed philological commentary on *KTU* 1.10 and 1.5 V and the related material from Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Hatti, is expected further to broaden available knowledge with respect to the complex traditions of the god’s love for the heifer in the ancient Near East in the second millennium BCE.

The difficulties anticipated are those that face all ancient historical and literary endeavors. The findings are dependent on archaeological discoveries on the one hand and ancient writing conventions on the other. Furthermore, the findings are based solely on the material that is extant and cannot be generalized to ancient cultures as a whole. The fragmentary state of many of the findings, their lost provenance in many cases, and the extinction/development of the languages in which they were written must also be considered, requiring meticulous and expert investigation. While these difficulties are common to all fields of antiquity, overcoming those by using philological, comparative, and literary-historical tools, as planned in this study, can lead to an unmediated acquaintance with the great cultures of ancient times.

Recent ISF grant:

**The Formation of the Ugaritic Account of Baal’s Conflict with Mot:**

**A Philological and Comparative Study (1393/18)**

In this study, I sought to trace the traditions embodied in the account of Baal’s conflict with Mot, which consists of the second part of the Ugaritic Baal cycle (*KTU* 1.4 VII 43-1.6). The study was divided into two asymmetrical parts. The first, which, as the basis for the entire study, demands the bulk of the resources, focuses on each tradition separately in light of Ugaritic and extra-Ugaritic sources. The second part, based on the findings in the first, is dedicated to the ways in which those traditions—which occasionally contrast and/or overlap with each other—have been woven into the final Ugaritic narrative we currently extant.

In the first 2/3 of the grant period (which is to come to an end in the fall of 2021), I therefore concentrated on the first part of the research, i.e., on the examination of the distinct traditions comprised by the second half of the Baal cycle. The results were publicized in several articles and conference presentations (see below). In the remaining period, I intend to continue to the second part of the research. This part, which is based on the first, broad phase of the study and includes two additional traditions I had examined previously (the resurrection of Mot [published in 2019] and the rise and fall of Athtar [published in 2014]), is scheduled to appear as a separate monograph.

It is worth noting that exploring the topic of the struggle between Baal and Mot led me further to the discovery of a unique component of the Babylonian wisdom literature that was studied in the scribal school at Ugarit. An article on this topic has been accepted for publication (below, B3). In addition, as a result of my survey regarding the second half of the Baal cycle, I was invited to join the research group “*Stratifikationsanalysen mythischer Stoffe und Texte in der Antike*” headed by Prof. Dr. Annette Zgoll (of the University of Göttingen in Germany), to contribute on the topic of “The Formation of the Traditions Embedded in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal’s Conflict with Mot and their Traces in Later Syro-Lavantine Texts (Biblical, Phoenico-Punic, Graeco-Roman and Patristic Literature): A Philological and Comparative Mythological Study.”

**Budget**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** |  |  |
| (1) Examination of the Ugaritic material relating to the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer (including the cognate motifs and traditions of New Kingdom Egypt). |  |  |
| (2) Examination of the Mesopotamian material relating to the myth of the god’s love for the heifer (including an examination of the “building blocks” of the Mesopotamian historiola and their development outside of the standard versions of the historiola as well). |  |  |
| (3) Examination of the Hittite (and Hurrian) material relating to the myth of the god’s love for the heifer. |  |  |
| (4) A comparative study of the material gathered from Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Hatti in order to trace the formation of the myth of Baal’s love for the heifer from its origin to the final Ugaritic formation of the myth. |  |  |

**Explanatory Notes:**

Based on my preliminary research on the literary development of the myth of the moon god’s love for the heifer (Ayali-Darshan, forthcoming) and my familiarity with the comparative study of the traditions embodied in the Baal cycle and their cognate ancient Near Eastern traditions, I estimate that this comprehensive study will take four years. In the plan outlined above, the first three years will be dedicated to collecting and examining traditions found in Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Hatti. I expect to publish several articles regarding specific traditions and sources during the first three years. In the fourth year, I intend to collate my results and present them in a detailed monograph outlining and discussing the formation of the Ugaritic myth of Baal’s love for the heifer, from its origin to its final setting in the Ugaritic texts, in light of the Near Eastern material.

The equal distribution of the project over the four years is subject to circumstances. One sub-section may take longer than another to complete. Based on previous research experience and the vast amount of primary material and bibliographic resources from across several disciplines, however, my expectation is that the project will take four years to complete.

**Budget Justification**

1. **Personnel**

In order to keep to the schedule, I will require an advanced M.A./Ph.D. student with a strong background in one or more ancient Near Eastern disciplines as a research assistant (RA). The RA will assist me in gathering the massive primary and secondary materials at 50% of the RA’s time. Advanced students are preferable to undergraduates because of their mastery of the relevant ancient languages and proper philological method. The best candidates are those whose research coincides with their Ph.D. studies, such as Ugaritology, Hittitology, or Assyriology. I will also need to employ an M.A. student as an RA at 30% of their time over the three years to help scan and photocopy material (see section (e) below).

**B. Supplies, Materials and Services**

Computer equipment:

(a) A PC laptop for work in the university libraries, equipped with special programs and databases.

(b) A printer with photocopy and scanning functions will also be required.

Software:

(c) Accordance 13, which include the Ugaritic texts (tagged, with English translation and notes) and the Ugaritic Data Bank, as well as Hebrew Inscriptions (with Syntax and Index), in addition to the more common computerized tools for Biblical Hebrew and Old/classical Aramaic. This data base is essential today (even if not sufficient) in order to create the basic infrastructure for the study of the Ugaritic texts that are at the center of this study.  In addition, the software has various modules and requires annual upgrades (estimated around … NIS for the second to fourth year).