

The Birth of Sacrifice:
Ritualized Deities in Eastern Mediterranean Mythology

Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation explores myths from cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean that depict gods performing sacrifice and gods as the victims of sacrifice. The author investigates how the motif of divine sacrifice or ritualized deities is connected to aetiologies of sacrifice and the typology of dying and rising gods. The author situates the myths within a historical framework of cultural exchange in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean to show how different cultures in contact adapted and creatively reworked myths about gods involved in sacrifice. The author begins with a new reading of the Mesopotamian story of *Atrahasis* and shows through an analysis of Mesopotamian ritual texts that the slaughter of the god Ilawela in *Atrahasis* should be interpreted as the first sacrifice, which results in the creation of humans who then provide offerings to the gods. The author then uses the Hebrew Bible as a case study to show how the theme of sacrifice and anthropogeny was adapted by a neighboring culture. Then, with a close reading of Hesiod's myth of Prometheus and Pandora and the Greek story of the flood preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros, the author argues that Greek authors borrowed the Mesopotamian motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny and adapted it to fit Greek theology. Next, in an investigation of the fragmentary Phoenician myth of Melqart, the author offers a new reading of the myth about the attempted sacrifice of Herakles recorded by Herodotos and argues that the historian preserves a Greek adaptation of the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart, who was syncretized with Herakles by the fifth-century BCE. The

author then reads the Phoenician myth of the sacrifice of the infant god Ieoud, preserved by the Roman period author Philo of Byblos, as an adaptation of the pattern of a dying and rising god known from the Ugaritic myth of Baal, the historical antecedent of Melqart. Accordingly, the author shows how Philo's myth of Ieoud provides crucial information for reconstructing the myth of Melqart. Finally, the author explores how the sixth-century BCE Orphic myth about the sacrifice of the infant god Dionysos and anthropogeny adapts various elements from the traditions underlying the myth of the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*, the Phoenician myths of Melqart and the sacrifice of the infant god Ieoud, and the Egyptian myth of Osiris.

Dedication

For Hero

ἀνάθημα μὲν Ἔρωτι καὶ Νύμφαις καὶ Πανί
- Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 1.3.2

Ἔρος δ' ἐτίναξέ μοι φρένας, ὥς ἄνεμος κατ' ὄρος δρύσιν ἐμπέτων.
-Sappho, fr. 47

τὸν δὲ μέτ' εἰσενόησα βίην Ἡρακληεῖην,
εἶδωλον· αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
-Homer, *Odyssey* 11.601-602

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Introduction

δῆσε δ' ἀλυκτοπέδησι Προμηθεά ποικιλόβουλον,
δεσμοῖς ἀργαλέοισι, μέσον διὰ κίον' ἐλάσσας·
καὶ οἱ ἐπ' αἰετὸν ὥρσε τανύπτερον· αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἦπαρ
ἥσθιεν ἀθάνατον, τὸ δ' ἀέξετο ἴσον ἀπάντη
νυκτός, ὅσον πρόπαν ἦμαρ ἔδοι τανυσίπτερος ὄρνις.
τὸν μὲν ἄρ' Ἀλκμήνης καλλισφύρου ἄλκιμος υἱὸς
Ἡρακλῆς ἐκτείνει, κακὴν δ' ἀπὸ νοῦσον ἄλαλκεν
Ἰαπετιονίδη καὶ ἐλύσατο δυσφροσυνάων,
οὐκ ἀέκητι Ζηνὸς Ὀλυμπίου ὕψι μέδοντος.

Zeus bound wily Prometheus in unbreakable, cruel bonds, he drove a column through the middle of him, and he set upon him a long-winged eagle, which used to eat his immortal liver during the day but at night would grow back equally as much in every way as the long-winged bird ate during the whole day. Then Herakles, the brave son of beautiful-ankled Alkmenē, slew that bird and warded off the evil anguish for the son of Iapetos and released him from anxiety, not without the will of Zeus, who reigns on high.

—Hes. *Theog.* 521-529¹

In the seventh-century BCE in his *Theogony* the Greek poet Hesiod relates the punishment of Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from Zeus for the benefit of humans and then performed the first sacrifice. Prometheus offered Zeus the inedible thigh bones of the slaughtered bull and disguised them with guile in glistening fat. Because of this deceit, Zeus chained Prometheus to a column where his immortal liver was devoured

¹ All translations of the Greek are my own unless otherwise stated.

each day by the eagle of Zeus, but eventually the hero Herakles liberated Prometheus.

The myth of Prometheus is an aitiology of sacrifice, a story which explains the origins of the Greek practice of *thusia* “burnt offering.” We typically do not think of divinities, such as Prometheus, offering sacrifice. As Socrates states in Plato’s *Euthyphro* (14c8): τὸ θύειν δωρεῖσθαι ἐστὶ τοῖς θεοῖς, “sacrifice is giving gifts *to the gods*.” Indeed, divinities are typically the recipients of burnt offerings, not the ones who perform the ritual. This is the first theme of this dissertation: the myths from the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean that depict *gods performing sacrifice*. The subtitle of this dissertation takes its inspiration from the work of Kimberley Christine Patton who has already demonstrated how “ritualizing deities” (deities who perform rituals) are not as paradoxical as scholars once believed (discussion below).² Although Patton focused primarily on the iconography of “libating gods” (gods pouring libations), she did briefly discuss the Homeric hymns and the myth of Prometheus, and she analyzed other Indo-European cultures, such as Norse and Vedic, as well as Semitic cultures, such as the Israelite one.³ This dissertation, on the other hand, focuses exclusively on “sacrificing gods” and uses the framework of cultural exchange and adaptation of stories to better understand the connections between these types of myths. There are also several Mediterranean myths that Patton did not explore, in particular, she did not examine myths that also depict a god as *the victim of sacrifice* (thus my term ritualized deities), such as

² Patton 2009.

³ For her treatment of Greek literature, see Patton 2009: 101-119. For her discussion of “libating gods,” see *ibid.*, 57-99. For an image of an Attic red-figure kantharos by the Nikosthenes Painter from c. 520-510 BCE of Dionysos pouring a libation over an altar, see *ibid.*, 72 (= fig. 35).

the myths of the Phoenician god Ieoud and the Greek god Dionysos.⁴ This is the second theme of this dissertation: I explore myths from a variety of Mediterranean cultures in contact that depict the gods as victims of sacrifice performed by other gods. In this regard, the motif of a sacrificed god is linked to the larger question of dying and rising gods (see discussion below).

A closer look at these myths reveals that the leitmotif of *sacrificing* and *sacrificed* gods belongs to a broader Mediterranean tradition of stories where gods are directly engaged in sacrifice, a motif that Patton conveniently terms “divine sacrifice.”⁵ As I explore in this dissertation, myths about divine sacrifice or ritualized deities are connected by the dynamics of cultural exchange between the civilizations of the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean. In particular, I focus on the cultures which were in close contact along the ancient Phoenician trade routes between Egypt, the Levant, and the Aegean. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to orient readers in the sea of scholarship on a range of topics that underlie my specific topic of inquiry: cultural exchange and the mythological *koinē* of the ancient Mediterranean world; aitiologies of sacrifice; Patton’s “ritualizing deities”; Frazer’s dying and rising gods; definitions and current approaches to sacrifice; and points of convergence and divergence between Near Eastern and Greek sacrificial practices. In what follows, I briefly discuss the advancements of scholarship from the past century on the interactions between Greece and the Near East.

⁴ She did, however, discuss the Norse myth in which Odin sacrifices himself to himself, which Patton calls “autosacrifice” (Patton 2009: 213-238).

⁵ See e.g., Patton 2009: 112.

Near Eastern and Greek Cultural Exchange

It is well established that Greek myths contain traces of Near Eastern motifs; these are particularly evident in Hesiod's myths, such as in the Myth of the Ages in the *Works and Days*, the succession myth in the *Theogony*, and the myth of Prometheus, told differently in each of Hesiod's poems.⁶ In 1984 Walter Burkert advanced scholarly inquiry into the relationship between Greek and Near Eastern myths with his *Orientalizing Revolution* (originally published in German as *Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur*).⁷ Burkert observed the similarity between the tripartite division of the world in the beginning of the Mesopotamian epic *Atrahasis* and the division of the world between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades described in the Greek epic *Iliad*.⁸ Burkert also pointed out the shared motif of the gods' annoyance at the overpopulation of the earth in the *Atrahasis* and the *Cypria* from the epic cycle.⁹

⁶ For the Myth of Ages, see Hes. *Op.* 110-201. For the first generation of gods (Earth and Ouranos), the birth of the Titans, and the castration of Ouranos by his son Kronos, see Hes. *Theog.* 112-189. For the birth of the Olympians and Zeus and the Kronos' swallowing of his children, see Hes. *Theog.* 453-506. For the Titanomachy and the ascension of Zeus as king of the cosmos, see Hes. *Theog.* 617-735. For the Prometheus myth, see Hes. *Op.* 47-105 and *Theog.* 534-616. For the Myth of Ages, see West 1978: 29-30; 176-177. The Greek succession myth from Hesiod has been compared to the succession motifs in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* and the Hurrite-Hittite *Song of Kumarbi* (see recent discussion in López-Ruiz 2010: 90-94). For the succession myth in the Hittite *Kumarbi Cycle* and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, see Pritchard 1969a. For Near Eastern parallels to Prometheus, see Duchemin 1974: 33-46. For early studies on the correspondences between Hesiod and the Near East, see West 1966 and Walcot 1966, 1969, 1970, 1972. For the succession myth in the Phoenician texts, see the fragments of Philo of Byblos preserved by Eusebius in the commentary by Baumgarten 1981. For an introduction to the methods and problems of the comparative study of Greek and Near Eastern myths, see López-Ruiz 2014: 154-199. For an exploration between the parallels in the various succession myths, see López-Ruiz 2010: 84-129. There are also parallels between Greek and Near Eastern cosmology in the Derveni Papyrus (West 1983: 100-107). For the parallels between Orphic and Phoenician cosmologies, see López-Ruiz 2010: 130-170.

⁷ Republished as Burkert 1992. The first attempt at this type of comparative scholarship was carried out by Robert Brown's 1898 *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*. His views were at first rejected, but have now been substantiated. Cf. Astour 1967; Walcot 1966, 1969, 1970, 1972; Gordon 1966.

⁸ Burkert 1992: 90. *Atrahasis*, I.11-18 (Lambert and Millard); Hom. *Il.* 15.187-193.

⁹ *Atrahasis*, I.352-359 = Dalley 2000: 18; *Cypria* fr. 1 Bernabé = Schol. ad *Il.* 1.5. Burkert 1992: 100-106. The *Cypria* is highly fragmentary; for a discussion of its contents, see Davies 1989: 32-50. For parallels

Burkert borrowed the term “Orientalizing,” originally used to designate a style of Greek and Etruscan art inspired by the Near East and expanded the term to other areas of cultural influence.¹⁰ In particular, Burkert drew attention to the interaction and assimilation between the cultures of the Near East and Aegean in the period between c.750-650 BCE during the Iron Age, the so-called “Orientalizing” period, after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean palaces.¹¹ More recent evidence, however, has pushed back the chronology for cultural contact into the Late Bronze Age, and thus, transmission between Near Eastern and Aegean traditions was possible during both periods (Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age).¹² The famous Uluburun shipwreck off the

between Greek epic poetry and the epics of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Syro-Canaa, see e.g., Bachvarova 2005, 2016; Langdon 1990; Marinatos 2001; Noegel 2002, 2005a.

¹⁰ The term “Orientalizing” was coined by Alexander Conze in 1870 in his *Zur Geschichte der Anfänge griechischer Kunst* (see Riva and Vella 2006: 4).

¹¹ For the Orientalizing period, see Burkert 1992: 6. For the main phases of communication between Greece and the Near East, see West 1997a: 4-9. For more recent studies on the intercultural contacts and impact of ancient Near Eastern literary models on Homer and Hesiod, see Rollinger 2011 and 2012. For a brief survey of the historical context that facilitated this influence, see Rollinger 2017. For the classic study on the Mycenaean palaces, see Mylonas 1966. For the archaeological evidence of the palaces Minos, Crete, see Evans 1921. Evidence for Mycenae’s international contacts comes from Mesopotamian cylinder seals discovered at Thebes (Porada 1981). For a more recent study on the collapse of the Mycenaean economy, see Murray 2017. For a history of this period, see Broodbank 2013: 345-444. For the traditional argument of collapse due to the so-called “Sea Peoples” and for an alternative argument that the period’s political fragmentation was due to boom-bust economic cycles, see Broodbank 2013: 461-472.

¹² For a recent study emphasizing oral vectors and the role of West Anatolia for transmission, see Bachvarova 2016. In particular, Bachvarova examines festivals as a milieu for cultural contact (ibid., 219-265). The Greeks and Anatolians were in contact during the Late Bronze Age, as is especially well attested at the Greek city of Miletos, which most scholars agree is the town known as *Millawanda* in Hittite texts (for discussion, see Hawkins 1998: 30-31; Niemeier 1999: 144 and 2005; Bryce 2005: 58). Diplomatic letters from the Hittites attest to the connections between Anatolia and the Mycenaeans referred to as *Ahiyawa* (for a translation of the diplomatic texts, see Beckman 1996; for an edition and study of the *Ahiyawa* texts, see Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011; for discussion of scholarship, see Bryce 2005: 57-60). For a concise history of the Hittite civilization, see Bryce 2019; For an in depth study of the history of the Hittites, see Bryce 2005. The Amarna Letters also record diplomatic relations between the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age, including Hittite and Levantine Canaanite (for edition and translation, see Rainey 2015). For discussion of the Amarna letters and Bronze Age contact, see Noegel 2007: 23. The Story of Wenuman, preserved on a papyrus from the eleventh-century BCE, also depicts these diplomatic and trading relations between Egypt and the Phoenicians (see Galán 2005: 134-173; Baines 1999; Broodbank 2013: Ch.9). A New Kingdom tomb of an Egyptian official contains a portrayal and narrative of the fifteenth-century BCE embassy from the Aegean (see de Garis Davies 1944: 20-

coast of Turkey provides an extraordinary window into this world of Mediterranean cultural exchange during the fourteenth-century BCE. Possibly en route from copper-rich Cyprus, in addition to its 10 tons of copper, the ship carried a mixed cargo of Mediterranean luxury goods and a diverse crew of Canaanites, Cypriots, and Aegeans.¹³

While Burkert focused on the Near Eastern influence on both Greek material culture and literature, scholars have more recently debated these topics individually.¹⁴

Martin West later published his study, *The East Face of Helicon* which catalogued numerous parallels between the texts and traditions of Greece and the Near East.¹⁵ Since

21). The text mentions the island of Keftiu, the Egyptian term for Crete, and the Aegean region, as well as many distinctively Aegean cultural artifacts (rhytons, copper ingots from Crete, kraters). Additionally, wall paintings from Qatna in Syria demonstrate cultural interchange of artists during the Late Bronze Age (see von Rüden 2014). The artists who worked at Knossos in the Aegean were working at Qatna and also at Tell ed-Dab'a in the Egyptian delta in the Minoan period in a shared palace artistic culture. For a study of art from Theban tombs that depict foreigners presenting Aegean and Cretan gifts, see Wachsmann 1987. For a study about the circulation of ivories between the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, see Fitton 1993. There is also archaeological evidence that the ritual of burnt sacrifice was transmitted from the Levant to the Aegean during this period (see Bergquist 1993 and López-Ruiz 2013). For an in depth study of the history of the Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age, see Broodbank 2013. For the classic study on the interactions between the Greeks and the Near East evident in artwork, see Boardman 1999 [first edition 1964]; For more recent studies, see Morris 1992, 1997a, 1997b; Riva and Vella 2006; Gunter 2009; Ulf 2009; Brisart 2011. For an early study that attempted to prove the Egyptian and Semitic origins of Greek culture, see Bernal 1987. The methods of this study were later much-disputed and eventually the theory was discredited (see Lefkowitz and Rogers 1996).

¹³ For the shipwreck, see Pulak 2001. For a discussion of the circumstances of the wreck and a list of the cargo, see Broodbank 2013: Ch.8.

¹⁴ For the problems with the term “Orientalizing,” in the sphere of material culture, see the edited volume by Riva and Vella 2006, and in particular, Purcell 2006 and Osborne 2006. Nicholas Purcell (2006) points out that the term is misleading because of the influence of the Etruscans on Latin culture during this period, moreover, he argues that the term is a scholarly construct because there was not a unified process of cultural exchange during this period. Robin Osborne (2006), on the other hand, advocates for the term Orientalizing rather than hybridization. I agree with many of the conclusions of Purcell and Osborne and maintain that the term Orientalizing remains a useful term for designating the period between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. On the myth and literature side of the debate, Adrian Kelly (2008, 2014) and Christopher Metcalf (2015), although they do not deny some degree of contact between the Near East and Aegean, are more skeptical about the amount of contact in the Mediterranean and hence the degree to which scholars can safely identify parallels between the different cultures.

¹⁵ West 1997a. West and Burkert have argued for direct transmission from the Near East to Greece, whereas other scholars (e.g., Burgess 1999; Bakker 2001) have argued that literary forms and motifs arrived in Greece through the mediation of other cultures. For a critique of West’s model, see Metcalf 2015.

the ground-breaking studies of those scholars, Carolina López-Ruiz has situated the parallels between Greek and Near Eastern cosmogonies within their historical context to propose how the Phoenicians were the likely mediators of these cosmogonic traditions.¹⁶ As early as Homer (*Od.* 15.415), the Phoenicians are known as ναυσίγλυτοι “famed for their ships.”¹⁷ Generally speaking, scholars have observed three different possible cultural streams of transmission for motifs from the Near East, namely the Mesopotamian connection,¹⁸ the Anatolian connection,¹⁹ and the Syro-Phoenician connection.²⁰

¹⁶ López-Ruiz 2010. The Phoenicians may have reestablished the trading links between the Aegean and the East as early as the twelfth-century BCE (Frankenstein 1979). For an edited volume on the topic of Phoenician expansion in the eastern Mediterranean during the first millennium BCE, see Lipiński 1987. For a study on how the Phoenicians were involved in the transportation of Attic pottery throughout the Mediterranean, see Gill 1988. For a detailed analysis of the archeological and epigraphical evidence for the Phoenician trade empire, see Lipiński 2004. For a study on the influence of the Phoenicians due to their maritime, mercantile, and colonial activities, see Noegel 2005b. For a recent study on how trade networks fostered cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean, see Malkin 2011. For a study of the Tyrian trade network, see Aubet 2001; for the latest archaeological evidence for Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean, see Aubet 2019. For a recent study on how Herodotos depicts the Phoenicians as mediators in cultural exchange between the cultures of Egypt and Greece, see Hütwohl (forthcoming).

¹⁷ The Phoenicians are represented in Homer for their skill in artistry, sailing, and abductions, see *Hom. Il.* 6.290-92, 23.740-45; *Od.* 4.615-19, 14.288, 15.415-19.

¹⁸ E.g., Lord 1960; Burkert 1983b; West 1997a: 336-347, 401-417; Abusch 2001; Currie 2012. Scholars have remarked on the parallels between the epics of Homer and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and specifically, between the Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh and the Greek heroes Achilles and Odysseus. For example, the heroes Achilles and Gilgamesh are both demigods whose arrogance leads to the death of their closest companion (Patroclus and Enkidu, respectively), both mourn their companions and refuse to bury them, and both try to embrace the shade of his companion. Odysseus and Gilgamesh are both heroes who confront monsters on their journey around the world in pursuit of wisdom and regaining their position in the world. For the context of exchange between royal courts for the influence of Akkadian literature on Homeric texts, see Rollinger 1996. For a succinct summary of the Mesopotamian connections with references, see López-Ruiz 2014: 168-171.

¹⁹ E.g., Collins, Bachvarova, and Rutherford 2008; Bachvarova 2005, 2016. Scholars typically draw parallels between the Hurro-Hittite poem *The Song of Release* and the epics of Homer. Hittite words for ethnic groups called *Ahiyawa* and *Danuniyim* are attested epigraphically, and scholars have compared these terms to the Greek Achaeans and Danaans (see Astour 1967: Ch.1; Öttinger 2008; Niemeier 2005). For a succinct summary of the Anatolian connections with references, see López-Ruiz 2014: 171-174.

²⁰ E.g., West 1997a: 276-305; Mondi 19990; López-Ruiz 2010. Some of the Greek and biblical connections include the universal Flood motif (borrowed from the Mesopotamian tradition) and myths of cataclysm; Additionally, Hesiod's Myth of Ages that describes five races of humans, each linked to a different metal (Gold, Silver, Bronze-Heroic, and Iron) has been compared to the vision of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar of a statue made of various metals, which Daniel interprets as the present and future world kingdoms (Daniel 2.31-35; West 1997a: 312-319). Greek, Phoenician, and Israelite cosmogonies are

Moreover, as Ian Rutherford observes, the transmission of traditions may have occurred in either the Early Iron Age or the Late Bronze Age.²¹

It is well established, then, that some Greek myths have Near Eastern counterparts, and that the Phoenicians, with their widespread trading and colonial networks, likely mediated between them. Burkert and others suggest, further, that because the island of Cyprus often acted as the physical meeting point of trade between Eastern and Western peoples, it likely acted as a key meeting point of their mythical traditions, as we will see.²² The island, areas of which were colonized by the Phoenicians already in the ninth-century BCE, may even be a potential candidate for the transmission of the alphabet.²³ Likewise, the island may also be a candidate for the transmission of the Akkadian story *Atrahasis*, a myth I discuss in Chapter 1.

If the Phoenician trade routes that intersected on Cyprus and Phoenician settlements side by side Greek-speaking Cypriots were efficient avenues by which Near

rich with parallels (López-Ruiz 2010: ch. 2-4 with references). For comparison of Ugaritic and Homeric heroes, see Astour 1967; Walcot 1966, 1969, 1970, 1972. For a comparison of Greek heroes and giants in the Hebrew Bible, see Doak 2013. For a succinct summary of the Syro-Phoenician connections with references, see López-Ruiz 2014: 174-181

²¹ Rutherford 2011.

²² Burkert 1992: 5; West 1997a: 2-6. For a general study on the history of archaic Cyprus, see Reyes 1994. For an edited volume on the topic of amphorae and trade at Cyprus, see Lawall and Lund 2013. Cyprus (along with Sardinia) was heavily exploited for its vast copper deposits, a necessary ingredient for bronze (see Sabatini and Lo Schiavo 2020). For a study of recent metallurgical analysis of Levantine silver hoards that suggests Phoenicians were mixing Iberian silver with Cypriot silver, which ultimately points to the importance of Cyprus as an intermediary in Mediterranean trade, see Wood, Bell, and Montero-Ruiz 2020.

²³ For Phoenician colonization at Cyprus, see Kourou 1990-1991: 277-279 and Aubet 2001: 42. For the transmission of the alphabet from East to West, see Burkert 1992: 26 and 2004: 18; Bourogiannis 2018a: 252. The technology of the alphabet was perhaps first adapted for the purpose of writing down epic poetry, or alternately, for commercial and administrative purposes (Powell 2001; López-Ruiz 2014: 185). However, scholars generally believe that the transmission of the alphabet occurred elsewhere, perhaps Crete, Euboea, or Pithekoussai in Italy where we find earlier epigraphical examples of the Greek alphabet (see Bourogiannis 2018a: 249-252). The earliest examples of the Greek alphabet occur in the eighth-century BCE, however, Willemijn Waal (2018) has recently argued for an earlier date for the adoption of the alphabet (c. eleventh-century BCE) based on the epigraphic, archaeological, and linguistic data (cf. Naveh 1973).

Eastern myths were transmitted, then the plausible time period for that transmission was during the Iron Age in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE—that is, during Burkert’s “Orientalizing” period.²⁴ At this time, the Assyrian empire expanded westward, and the Phoenician city state of Tyre, likewise, increased its mercantile exploits due to the high demand for silver by the Assyrian empire.²⁵ However, the latest archaeological evidence has demonstrated that the Phoenicians were actively pursuing overseas trade long before the influence of the Assyrian empire and independently expanded into the western Mediterranean in search of precious metals, especially silver deposits in southern Spain, as early as the ninth-tenth centuries BCE.²⁶ The increased use of trade networks during the period of Phoenician expansion during these earlier periods also seems a tenable time period for the transmission of Near Eastern and Mesopotamian traditions. Beyond trade, López-Ruiz explains, traveling religious experts, migrant craftsmen, multicultural families, and bilingual communities all may have helped spread the myths of the Near East westward.²⁷ In other words, transmission occurred in multiple eras and contexts.

²⁴ Some scholars see Near Eastern influence only in the late archaic and classical periods (Burkert 1992, 2004; Scheid 2004), while others have argued for earlier dates (e.g., Walcot 1966; Naveh 1973; Redford 1992; Morris 1992, 2001; West 1995, 1997a; Burstein 1996; Dalley and Reyes 1998; Talon 2001).

²⁵ Aubet 2001: 45-49. Assyria made its mark on the island of Cyprus when Sargon II erected a stele of himself at the Phoenician city of Kition (See image 10.4 in Broodbank 2013: 511). Although Phoenicians were harnessing Spain’s vast silver deposits long before Tyre was annexed to Assyria, Assyrian demand for silver intensified Phoenician exploitation of the silver-rich Iberian Peninsula (Markoe 2000: 182-186; Aubet 2001: 74). For studies on the history of Assyria, see Saggs 1984; Grayson 1982, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Machinist 2018; Liverani 2017. For Sargon II, see Luukko 2012 and Melville 2016.

²⁶ See Aubet 2019 with references.

²⁷ López-Ruiz 2010: 35-36. The transmission by travelling craftsmen and religious experts is Burkert’s model. The island of Cyprus continued contact with Phoenicia as early as the eleventh-century BCE (Aubet 2001: 42). Cyprus was not the only possible venue for cultural exchange during this period, the Greek settlement of Al-Mina on the Levantine coast may also have been a likely juncture for the transmission of myths (Bourogiannis 2018a: 250); Cf. Boardman 1999 and Lane-Fox 2008. The Egyptian cities of Naukratis and Memphis probably acted as venues for transmission of myths (see Malkin 2011: 65-96). For a study of Naukratis, see Möller 2000. For Egypt as part of the Mediterranean *koinē*, see Rutherford 2011b. For a succinct summary of the question of transmission with references, see López-Ruiz 2014: 185-186.

The mythical traditions we have preserved in the Mesopotamian poem *Atrahasis* were among the stories transmitted from the East to the Aegean. Although the text of *Atrahasis* was known primarily in Mesopotamia from several exemplars discovered in the Assyrian king Assurbanipal's (seventh-century BCE) library, one variation was discovered at Ugarit, suggesting more widespread awareness of the text during the Late Bronze Age.²⁸ Thus, it is possible that the cultures of the Aegean were aware of this and other Mesopotamian traditions even earlier than Burkert's Orientalizing period. For example, the story of the flood from the Mesopotamian myth *Atrahasis* was well known throughout the Near East during the Bronze Age, as reflected in the Hittite variation of the epic of *Gilgamesh* and in the tradition of the Book of Genesis.²⁹ Moreover, the Greek flood story preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros and Near Eastern flood stories share many similarities that indicate the author of the Greek myths had knowledge of the Near Eastern traditions, either directly or indirectly. Most recently, Mary R. Bachvarova has argued that transmission of Syro-Anatolian traditions, such as the Kumarbi cycle, and Mesopotamian traditions, such as the *Atrahasis*, occurred via bilingual bards in an oral festival context during the Late Bronze Age.³⁰ Archaeological and textual evidence from cultures of the Aegean and Near East also indicates a *koinē* of burnt sacrifice in the Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age.³¹ For my purposes, I assume that Near Eastern traditions, such as myths and rituals, would have been transmitted during both the

²⁸ Lambert and Millard 1999: 131-133.

²⁹ There may also have been Phoenician and Aramaic versions (George 2003: 56-57).

³⁰ Bachvarova 2016.

³¹ Bergquist 1993 and Lopez-Ruiz 2013: 69. Cf. Burkert 1976.

Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age and that the Phoenicians or their coastal Canaanite ancestors helped mediate these traditions back and forth during both eras.

The “transmission” of myth, however, does not imply that myths like those contained in the *Atrahasis* arrived as exact duplicates in Greek communities. To illustrate: following Burkert’s observations about the motif of the division of the world common to Near Eastern and Greek mythology, Richard Janko drew parallels between the account of Pseudo-Apollodoros and a fragment from an Orphic theogony to theorize that the division of the world described in the *Iliad* was derived from the *Titanomachy* in the eighth-century BCE.³² The *Titanomachy*, in Jan Bremmer’s estimation, is the “missing link” for the transmission of the Mesopotamian story of the flood.³³ Thus, the Greek authors of the epic cycle likely had indirect knowledge of the Mesopotamian mythical traditions underlying the *Atrahasis*, yet the myths probably arrived in Greece in a different format than the Near Eastern texts that we possess.³⁴ As Fritz Graf points out, “The many differences of detail between the Greek myths and their Near Eastern sources suggest that the Greeks were introducing orally transmitted material into their own oral tradition.”³⁵

³² Apollodoros 1.2.1; *OF* 56 Kern; Janko 1994: 247.

³³ Bremmer 1994.

³⁴ The scribal tradition in Mesopotamia preserved the main myths and epics as part of the scribal curriculum in which Akkadian literature was copied and edited over the centuries. For Mesopotamian scribal traditions, see West 1997a: 590-592 and Foster 2009: 138. The Amarna letters from fourteenth-century BCE provide evidence that the Egyptian scribes were familiar with Mesopotamian mythological traditions (for the edition of these texts, see Rainey 2015). Moreover, the Amarna letters provide evidence for Bronze Age contact between Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, Cyprus, Anatolia, Tyre, and Ugarit (Noegel 2007: 23).

³⁵ Graf 1993: 94. West (1997a: 593) also agrees that the myths were transmitted orally.

Burkert first theorized the transmission of Near Eastern material by way of travelling craftsmen and “religious specialists,” such as priests, healers, magicians, and cult initiators.³⁶ More recently, López-Ruiz has argued that myths were not primarily transmitted textually but rather orally: “The new model needs to be one of mainly oral and intimate transmission of stories and beliefs not *from* ‘foreigners’ *to* ‘Greeks,’ *from* the ‘informant’ *to* the ‘adaptor,’ but between mothers and sons, nannies and children...”³⁷ In that vein, just as Burkert used the story of the swineherd Eumaios in the *Odyssey* as a starting point for his idea about transmission via travelling craftsmen and priests, likewise, I utilize the Eumaios story as an example of how knowledge about characteristically Near Eastern rituals, such as offering cooked food to the gods, could have been transmitted by way of private oral tradition, such as a Phoenician nanny, or other interlocutors, such as Phoenician traders.³⁸

Taking inspiration from the Homeric worldview, Burkert postulated that wandering craftsmen and religious experts were likely vectors for the transmission of Near Eastern traditions during the “Orientalizing” period. Specifically, Burkert drew his inspiration from the words of the swine-herder Eumaios in the *Odyssey*.³⁹ Following the lead of Burkert, I suggest we can also utilize the story of Eumaios to understand how rituals and myths were transmitted not only by craftsmen and religious experts but also by foreign sailors (such as those from the Uluburun shipwreck) in either the Late Bronze

³⁶ Burkert 1983c, 1992.

³⁷ López-Ruiz 2010: 5.

³⁸ For the migrant craftsmen and priests, see Hom. *Od.* 17.383-386. For the story about Eumaios’ Phoenician nanny, see Hom. *Od.* 15.435-480.

³⁹ *Od.* 17.383-385.

Age or Early Iron Age. In the *Odyssey*, the swineherd Eumaios is represented performing a foreign practice when he prepares a pig for Odysseus and sets aside a portion of cooked meat as an offering for Hermes and the Nymphs.⁴⁰ Gunnel Ekroth has convincingly argued that, although this early Homeric scene depicting offerings of cooked meat for the gods is consonant with later classical period practices, the tradition is unique in the Homeric poems and probably originated in the Near East.⁴¹ The Greek culture represented in the Homeric poems typically offered the Promethean *thusia*, that is, “burnt offering,” for the gods, while the practice of setting aside meat as an offering was more typical of Mesopotamian society (see discussion of practices below). Homer does not tell us where Eumaios learned this practice, but he is depicted as a foreigner, and we can imagine one possibility is that he learned it from his Phoenician nanny with whom Eumaios himself was kidnapped by Phoenician sailors before he returned to Ithaca.⁴² Thus, we can imagine a scenario where Eumaios learns of foreign sacrificial traditions and then incorporates them into his own native Greek practices. But Mediterranean people did not just share their practices: when Eumaios prepares the meal and sacrifice, Odysseus and the swine-herder also share stories with each other, such as his journey across the Mediterranean as a captive of the Phoenicians. Thus, to the degree that

⁴⁰ Hom. *Od.* 14.435.

⁴¹ Ekroth 2011. As Ekroth (2011) demonstrates, the instances of meat offerings in Homer are part of an established system that honored kings and distinguished guests with choice portions of meat, a system that was likely influenced by Near Eastern traditions of honoring kings with meat. Agamemnon honors Ajax with the back of an ox (Hom. *Il.* 7.315); Menelaos takes the back of the ox, with which he was honored as the king, and gives it to his guests Telemachos and Peisistratos (Hom. *Od.* 4.65); Eumaios gives the back of the pig to his guest (and disguised king of Ithaca) Odysseus (Hom. *Od.* 14.437-438). For the possibility that Greek burnt sacrifice was inherited from the Levant in the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age, see Bergquist 1993.

⁴² Hom. *Od.* 15.415-455.

Eumaios represents an easterner, the story of Eumaios helps us envision a context in which cultural exchange can facilitate the transmission of rituals, myths, and *myths about rituals*.

The important takeaway is that there is a broad range of possibilities for transmission of stories, and the most likely scenario is a combination of all of them. Because Near Eastern myths probably arrived in Greece by both written and oral channels, it is quite possible that they began arriving in the Aegean much earlier than the “Orientalizing” period.⁴³ In my view, Phoenician traders could have disseminated both written and oral versions of myths, such as those represented in the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*, by at least the tenth-ninth centuries BCE when the city of Tyre was actively pursuing an expansionist policy into the Mediterranean and beyond the Pillars of Herakles.⁴⁴ With the westward expansion of the Phoenicians, the Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and Canaanite myths would have become better known in the Aegean, giving Greek poets the mythological material to adapt and merge with their own traditions at an early date.

Within this framework of cultural exchange, I attempt to understand the streams of transmission of myths about sacrifice and how motifs were adapted across cultures or reworked by the adapting culture in response to the myths and practices of other cultures.

⁴³ See West’s discussion (1997a: 590-619).

⁴⁴ Hiram I initiated this period of expansion in the tenth-century BCE and his policies were continued by Ithobaal I (Aubet 2001: 35-41). For the latest archaeological evidence for Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean, see Aubet 2019. Graf (1993: 95) also views the ninth-century BCE as the probable time period for the transmission of these stories. The Phoenician god Bel mentioned in a fragment from Hesiod (F 137.2 MW) points to early integration of a Levantine god into Greek myth. West (1997a: 588) also affirms that the Phoenicians played a leading role in the transmission of myths. For an alternative argument suggesting that the Euboeans were primarily responsible for the transmission of myths during the eighth and seventh centuries, see Lane Fox 2008. For the archaeological evidence of Phoenicians in Greece in the ninth-century BCE, see Bourogiannis 2018b.

I argue that not only stories about divine sacrifice and ritualized deities but also aitiologies of sacrifice were a distinctive part of the Mediterranean mythological *koinē*. I situate these stories within a historical framework of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean, and I explore how these myths can be traced to the interaction between Greek and Near Eastern cultures by way of the Phoenician milieu. As López-Ruiz remarks:

We should assume that these cultures shared a very old and complex common ground, a matrix of creativity in which exchange is made possible by the existence of shared taxonomies at many levels. We no longer need to prove the case for contact but instead need to explore the mechanisms and specific relevance of particular cases.⁴⁵

My particular case of study are the taxonomies of gods involved in sacrifice, namely myths about gods who perform sacrifice or are the victims of sacrifice. As we will see with the story of the sacrifice performed by Prometheus and the Phoenician god El's sacrifice of his son Ieoud, many of these myths about divine sacrifices are aitiologies for a specific practice. Another way to think of this is that in most myths gods do not typically perform sacrifice, but in aitiologies of sacrifice gods are the primary if not only performers of sacrifice. By systematically comparing these types of stories, I aim to understand how thematic threads are transmitted and reworked to accommodate cultural differences.

⁴⁵ López-Ruiz 2010: 180. For the concept of “shared taxonomies,” see Raaflaub 2000: 60-64 and Noegel 2007.

Aitiologies of Sacrifice

This project began as a study of different aitiologies of sacrifice, but I soon discovered that the myths about first sacrifices typically involved gods performing the rituals. Although the primary focus of this project has expanded from aitiologies of sacrifice to stories about gods involved in sacrifice, the two are inextricably connected, as we shall see. According to Robin Lane Fox an aitiology is “the telling of a story of how something came to be,” in other words, an aitiology is a story about the cause or reason for the origins of something.⁴⁶ Etymologically, the word “aitiology” is derived from the Greek words *aition* “cause, rational” and *logos* “account,” and thus, the word “aitiology” literally means “an account about causes.” More specifically, aitiologies explain the reason for a specific belief, institution, or practice, and this explanation often implies an account of the origins of the practice. I define an aitiology of sacrifice as a myth explaining the reason why a sacrificial practice is performed by humans. These myths can describe the first time a sacrifice was performed or they can explain the origins and rational for a specific practice. Lane Fox’s observation about the widespread presence of aitiologies circulating around the Mediterranean in the eighth-century BCE originally prompted me to investigate the various relationships between aitiologies of sacrifice among the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean, including Assyrian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Israelite, and Greek.⁴⁷ In general, Lane-Fox argues that the Euboeans took their myths with them on their travels across the Mediterranean and applied these stories to understand the physical world and rituals of foreign cultures that they encountered.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 351.

⁴⁷ Lane Fox 2008: 352-353. (See Genesis 4, 8, 22).

According to Lane-Fox, “The first known Greek authors of aetiologies are travelling Euboeans, from c. 780 to 720 BC.”⁴⁸ As we shall see, however, aitiologies were not just limited to the Greeks, in fact, many cultures of the eastern Mediterranean engaged in aitiological speculation about the origins of sacrifice. Moreover, Lane-Fox downplays the importance of the Phoenicians in this process of cultural exchange, despite the fact that the Euboeans were relying on the far more ancient Phoenician trade routes.⁴⁹ This dissertation helps re-establish the Phoenicians to their rightful position as intermediaries in cultural exchange, in particular, as transmitters of myths, rituals, and myths about rituals, between the various cultures of the ancient Mediterranean.

Scholars have long commented on the significance of specific aitiologies of sacrifice in isolation, but as yet no one has comprehensively and systematically studied aitiologies of sacrifice. A great amount of scholarship has been devoted to theories of the origins of sacrificial practices, of course, but that is not the topic of my inquiry. For instance, Burkert attempted to connect different types of sacrificial practices with different types of societies, but he focused on practice and not myth.⁵⁰ Burkert showed how food-offerings were characteristic of Mesopotamian societies because they form the

⁴⁸ Lane Fox 2008: 352. He continues his discussion about the Euboeans and origin stories, “They also inferred the origins of this or that from its name or physical appearance. In Greek literature and religious writings, we know this practice as ‘aetiology,’ the telling of a story of how something came to be, what we know nowadays a ‘just so story.’ The origin described in the story might be the origin of a name or religious practice, a settlement or a people, a social custom, an object or even a feature of the visible world” (ibid., 351); as Lane Fox argues, “Aetiologies were a very much older feature of Near Eastern texts and in the eighth century BC they were teeming in one of the texts which underlies our edited book of Genesis. Far from Hesiod, far from these Euboeans’ trail, a way of thinking in terms of origins characterized the Genesis author whom biblical scholars now know as the Yahwist” (ibid., 353).

⁴⁹ López-Ruiz 2010: 23-47; Malkin 2011; Aubet 2019.

⁵⁰ Burkert 1976.

basis of a palatial redistribution system, and importantly, how the similarities between Greek and West Semitic sacrifice are indicative of the cultural exchange via Cyprus.⁵¹

The first, most basic, goal of this study is to compile myths about gods involved in sacrifice among Mediterranean societies spanning from the Bronze Age Near East through the Roman Imperial period. Going farther, I show how the comparative evidence can elucidate the function of myths about ritualized deities within the religious imagination of these societies and how common themes appear in these types of myths. One of those common themes is that aitiologies of sacrifice are linked with stories about gods involved in these cultic practices, either as performers or victims of the rites. A broad comparative study of divine sacrifices, moreover, has the potential of advancing our understanding of cultural contact in the Mediterranean, which leaned upon and promoted the existence of shared taxonomies.

In general, I follow the definition of *aition* by Gregory Nagy:

I use **aition** in the sense of ‘a myth that *traditionally* motivates an institution, such as a ritual.’ I stress ‘traditionally’ because the myth may be a tradition *parallel to* the ritual, not *derivative from* it. Unless we have evidence otherwise, we cannot assume in any particular instance that an aetiological myth was an *untraditional* fabrication intended simply to explain a given ritual. The factor of *motivating*--as distinct from *explaining*--is itself a traditional function in religion, parallel to the traditional function of ritual. It is only when the traditions of religion become obsolescent that rituals may become so obscure as to invite explanations of a purely literary nature.⁵²

Thus, I understand **aitiology of sacrifice** as a story that contains an implicit or explicit explanation about a traditional rite, which may or may not have actually been practiced in

⁵¹ Ibid., 168-187.

⁵² Nagy 1979: 16§2n2.

the form portrayed in the story. As Nagy emphasizes, these myths *traditionally motivate* certain practices, in other words, the myths along with the rituals brought to life the world of the gods and the place of humans within it. Expressed in a different way, the performance of an everyday *thusia* “burnt offering” becomes that much more powerful when the worshippers can recall the myth of the primordial sacrifice performed by Prometheus. I agree with Nagy that myths and rituals developed in parallel traditions, but I believe he overemphasizes the factor of “*motivating*.” In my view, ancient people did not necessarily need “motivation” to worship their gods. Instead, ritual and myth were both central mechanisms that reinforced the cult of the god. Along with rituals and myths, *myth about ritual* was simply another mechanism that emphasized and perpetuated the cult of the gods and shaped the form in which that cult was practiced.

The study of *aitia* is tangled up in the scholarship of the so-called “Cambridge Ritualists” who attempted to link practices to specific myths or vice versa.⁵³ As Sarah

⁵³ For the chief examples of the “ritualist” approach, see James George Frazer 1911-1915 [first edition 1890]; Jane Ellen Harrison 1922 [first edition 1903], 1927 [first edition 1912], 1921; Gilbert Murray 1927 [first edition 1912], 1925. Classicists took up the myth-ritual debate in the later half of the 20th century and called into question the connections between myth and ritual; Joseph Fontenrose (1959) argued that certain myths became attached to rituals at a later period, and in particular, discussed the connections between the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* and the sanctuary at Delphi; Geoffrey Kirk (1970, 1974) pointed out that some Greek myths, such as Hesiod’s *Theogony*, were never dramatized as rituals; Walter Burkert (1979, 1983) argued that myths and rituals arose independently. The structuralist approach to myth focused instead on the myths themselves, and in particular, attempted to excise an original myth from different versions or show how a myth was an ensemble of other versions. The main proponent of this method was Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958), who emphasized how mythemes communicate a culturally determined system of binaries; Jean-Pierre Vernant (2004) [Original publication, 1974] focused on the myths within the historical and social setting; Vernant’s student Marcel Detienne (1981) attempted to dismantle the category of “myth” by arguing that it had been invented in the fifth-century BCE by authors such as Plato. The trend of Detienne was then taken up by Luc Brisson (1982), Paul Veyne (1979), and Fritz Graf (1993); Finally, Claude Calame (1996) developed the “semionarrative” approach in which each “version” of a myth arose from a particular historical and social context. Calame also argued against the myth-ritual connection and claimed instead that myths were instruments for affecting the emotions. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty (1988) understood myth as story that is sacred to and shared by a group of people and that can be interpreted by a number of different ways that are not mutually exclusive, which she calls “the mythical roundhouse.” For full discussion of the history of scholarship and problems with the “Cambridge Ritualist” reading of myth, see Versnel 2014 and Johnston 2018: 35-58.

Johnston comments, “Born out of the comparative method, the ritualist approach was susceptible to essentializing the myths it treated, since comparison itself had a long history of stripping myths down to what was perceived to be their cores and either ignoring or explaining away inconvenient details.”⁵⁴ Johnston, in particular, takes issue with the tendency of the ritualist approach to stress the aitiological role of certain myths without questioning “*when* and *why* these aitiological myths were narrated or performed.”⁵⁵ This trend in scholarship was especially problematic because it led to the speculative recreation of myths and rituals.

The more recent approach of Johnston, on the other hand, has linked myths and rituals *thematically*. For example, Johnston focused on the theme of the cattle-raid myth and Indo-European male coming-of-age ceremonies in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* and argued that the hymn was performed at a boys’ athletic festival.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Johnston points out that there is rarely any reliable way to link myths and rituals as the ritualists had claimed.⁵⁷ Instead, Johnston argues that there were numerous ways in which *aitia* might be transmitted, not exclusively by performance alongside rituals. Aitiological material could be transmitted orally, by sharing stories through conversation, but also by historians, mythographers, and scholiasts, in other words, outside of any performative

⁵⁴ Johnston 2018: 54.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁶ Johnston 2002.

⁵⁷ Johnston 2018: 61.

context.⁵⁸ The important takeaway is that aitiological myths were frequently transmitted outside of the cultic context that the myth might have explained.

“Ritualizing Deities”

Patton drew attention to a paradox within Greek religion reflected in vases depicting gods pouring out libations, an action typical of human worshippers. As a scholar of Greek religion and archaeology, Patton first became interested in what she called “libating gods” in Greek vase paintings, and she utilized a cross-cultural comparative approach to understand these remarkable Greek images in light of literary evidence from Indo-European and Semitic cultures.⁵⁹ She coined the term “ritualizing deities” to describe the capacity for the gods to perform rituals.⁶⁰ Patton’s study challenged the “projectionist theory” of Ludwig Feuerbach who argued that humans simply project their image of worship onto the gods.⁶¹ Patton, on the other hand, argued that projectionist theory fails to describe “*how the phenomenon of the ritualizing god manifests itself, functions, and is understood from within the tradition.*”⁶² In other words, how can we understand these representations from an emic point of view? As Patton

⁵⁸ Ibid., 62. For example, Johnston notes that Socrates, strolling with Phaedrus, points out the spot where the wind Boreas had kidnapped the princess Oreithyia, that *aitia* were often incorporated into tragedies, such as the establishment of Hera’s cult at the end of Euripides’ *Medea*, and that the Hellenistic scholar Callimachus preserved an entire catalogue of aitiological myths in his *Aitia*.

⁵⁹ Patton 2009: 9.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Feuerbach 1967, 1989, 2004; For Patton’s discussion, see Patton 2009: 9-12.

⁶² Patton 2009: 11; her emphasis.

pointed out, the projectionist theory fails to explain the phenomenon of ritualizing deities because the motif does not exactly replicate human rituals.

In Patton's view, these types of representations are not anomalies in Greek religion, nor do they simply reproduce human rituals, instead, they are "a paradigmatic intensification of its categories of theological thought."⁶³ In other words, imagery of gods performing ritual reinforces how ancient cultures believed that gods, not humans, were the ultimate source of rituals and religion. Patton's main question was: if the gods are performing ritual in these representations, then *for whom* are they performing the ritual? To solve this problem, Patton coined the term "divine reflexivity," which she defined as "the ritual performance by a deity of an action known as belonging to the sphere of that deity's human cult worship."⁶⁴ The important point is that the gods are not imitating mortals by performing rituals, but instead, they are "acting religiously through, on behalf of, and because of themselves."⁶⁵ In other words, these rituals are "reflected" back on to the gods since they are the source of religion. Ultimately, Patton's idea of divine reflexivity is an emic view of ancient religion since it presupposes that ancient cultures believed in the existence of their gods by depicting them as autonomous and "ritually self-sufficient."⁶⁶ I apply Patton's idea of divine reflexivity throughout this dissertation in my interpretations of the myths.

⁶³ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 315.

Mircea Eliade held a similar view of sacrifice as Patton when he stated, “A sacrifice, for example, not only exactly reproduces the initial sacrifice revealed by a god *ab origine*, at the beginning of time, it also takes place at the same primordial mythical moment; in other words, every sacrifice repeats the initial sacrifice and coincides with it. All sacrifices are performed at the same mythical instant of the beginning.”⁶⁷ Patton built upon Eliade’s idea of the divine paradigm and argued that these divine sacrifices “intensify” the human cult, in her words, “They originate, perform, and thus ratify their own cults.”⁶⁸ Patton, however, did not emphasize the aitiological function of these types of myths, as I will do in this dissertation.

Patton primarily analyzed Greek vases from the archaic, classical, and Hellenistic periods, and secondarily she presented Greek literary texts that describe ritualizing deities. Patton then considered other Indo-European cultures such as Vedic, Zoroastrian, and Norse cultures, as well as Israelite, Christian, and Islamic cultures. In sum, Patton attempted to show how the issue of ritualizing deities is not confined to a single religion but is part of the grand history of religions. In her conclusions, Patton emphasized how the gods are self-referential and that all modes of religion begin and end with the gods.⁶⁹ Her study challenged our understanding not only of the capacity of the gods to perform rituals but also our modern conceptions of religion and the place of humans within those systems. Again, in her view, gods are not imitating mortals when they perform rites, nor are their actions “paradigmatic,” but rather divine reflexivity maintains and emphasizes

⁶⁷ Eliade 1974: 35.

⁶⁸ Patton 2009: 16.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 308-316.

the religion of the gods; nor do gods sacrifice *to* themselves, instead they sacrifice *about* or *because of* themselves.

Patton alluded to the fact that the religious traditions in her study were historically linked, but she did not emphasize or provide any analytical framework for these connections as I will do in this dissertation.⁷⁰ My study builds upon her conclusions and shows how myths about ritualized deities are historically linked by the process of cultural exchange in the eastern Mediterranean and that aitiologies of sacrifice often contain stories about divine sacrifice.⁷¹ My study uses a comparative method that is anchored to the historical processes in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean from as early as the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. I maintain that the Phoenicians were one of the primary mediators of myths and that stories were transmitted along Phoenician trade routes. These myths, including myths about gods performing sacrifice, were then adapted by different cultures. Moreover, in addition to Greek and Israelite myths, this dissertation treats myths that were not examined by Patton, including Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Akkadian myths, whose cultures were all in contact.

Dying and Rising Gods

People in the Mediterranean shared not only myths about the origins of sacrifice and myths about gods who offer sacrifice but also myths about gods who die and return

⁷⁰ Ibid., 308.

⁷¹ Not all aitiologies of sacrifice contain ritualizing deities. For example, Pseudo-Apollodoros (*Bibl.* 3.15.7) records a myth that explains why the Cretans sacrifice to the Graces at Paros without garlands and music, namely because Minos, king of Crete, cast off his garland while performing a sacrifice when he heard that his son had died. (cf. Callim. *Aet.* 7a Harder). This myth is an aitiology of sacrifice because it provides a mythical explanation for sacrificial rites but it is a human who performs these rites. On the other hand, all the myths about ritualized deities explain a practice or initiate some kind of worship of the deity.

to life. In this dissertation, I will explore how these motifs overlap in interesting, so far unexplored ways. The category of “dying and rising gods” was first proposed by James George Frazer in his magnum opus *The Golden Bough*. In his words, “Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead.”⁷² Frazer compiled comparative evidence from many of these cultures to show a consistent pattern of myths about dying and rising gods that were connected to fertility rites.⁷³ Additionally, Frazer claimed that underlying the dying god is a divine king who would be sacrificed when fertility dwindled.⁷⁴ One of the main criticisms of Frazer’s approach was his essentialist comparative method, which attributed the typology of dying and rising gods to a broad

⁷² Frazer 1914: 6. For Osiris, see my Chapter 7. Adonis is a Greek word translating the Semitic term for “Lord” used to describe the Mesopotamian god Dumuzi (Tammuz). For ancient Greek references to Dumuzi/Tammuz/Adonis, see Theoc. *Id.* 15 and Lucian *Syr. D.* 6-7. Tammuz is the Akkadian form of the Sumerian god Dumuzi (see Cook 2018: 69 n.79 with references). One of the most obvious connections between the god Adonis/Tammuz/ and fertility rites are the so-called “Adonis gardens,” pots filled with earth, in which different plants were grown (see Goff 2004: 58). The Assyrian poem *Ishtar’s Descent to the Netherworld* is followed with an epilogue that describes the mourning of Tammuz and his “rising” (*el-la-an-ni*) from the Underworld (see Borger 1979: 95-104 for the Akkadian text). For a recent translation, see Dalley 2001: 154-162. Scholars, however, have debated whether the passage mentioning the rising of Tammuz is a late addition to the tradition (see e.g., Gurney 1962; Yamauchi 1966). For scholarship on the Greek god Adonis, see Lambrechts 1955; de Vaux 1967: 379-405; Colpe 1969; Will 1975; Burkert 1979: 101; Ribichini 1981; Detienne 1993. Ribichini (1981), in particular, argues that the Greek god Adonis is a *heros* rather than a god and that the god is a mixture of different Near Eastern traditions and not a genealogical descendant of Tammuz. For a general introduction to the god Tammuz and the scholarship, see *DDD*: 828-834. For Adonis, see *DDD*: 7-10.

⁷³ Another early work dedicated to the idea of dying and rising gods is Wolf Wilhelm Baudissin 1911. As a Semitist, Baudissin’s goal was to understand the dynamics between the ancient Israelite religion and Phoenician and Canaanite religions. The scholar focused on the gods Adonis, Melqart, Eshmun, as well as Old Testament ideas of resurrection. Other gods were also drawn into Frazer’s typology, such as the Mesopotamian god Marduk (see Zimmern 1918: 2-3). For an introduction to Marduk with scholarship, see *DDD*: 543-549.

⁷⁴ Frazer 1914: 13-30.

spectrum of different cultures. Thus, the succeeding generations of scholars have advocated the need for a more culturally specific methodology.⁷⁵

The most ardent critic of Frazer's theory was Jonathan Z. Smith who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the topic.⁷⁶ According to J. Z. Smith, "The category of dying and rising deities is exceedingly dubious. It has been based largely on Christian interest and tenuous evidence."⁷⁷ Smith, who redefines these gods under the category of "disappearing gods," argues, "All the deities that have been identified as belonging to the class of dying and rising deities can be subsumed under the two larger classes of disappearing deities or dying deities. In the first case, the deities return but have not died; in the second case, the gods die but do not return. There is no unambiguous instance in the history of religions of a dying and rising deity."⁷⁸ With the work of J. Z. Smith, Frazer's theory was systematically dismantled, at least among scholars of the history of religion.

Following the conclusions of J. Z. Smith, Mark S. Smith, in his provocatively titled "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods' in the Biblical World," attempted to deconstruct the typology of dying and rising gods by reexamining the various gods from the standpoint of biblical studies.⁷⁹ In particular, Smith identified four markers of a dying and rising god according to the Frazerian model: 1. The divine status of the figures; 2.

⁷⁵ E.g., Malinowski 1913; Evans-Pritchard 1965.

⁷⁶ Smith 1987a.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2539.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 2535. For "dying and rising gods" in the Near East and the problems with this category of myth, see Smith 1969: 366-375; Smith 1987a; Smith 1998: 257-313. For a general survey of the different dying and rising gods, see Cook 2018: 69-143.

⁷⁹ Smith 1998.

Their death and return to life; 3. A correspondence of this thematic cycle to the seasonal cycle; 4. A series of rituals which provides a cultic context for the recitation of the former and corresponds to the latter.⁸⁰ Smith attempted to verify the evidence for each deity based on this criteria. He argued that the god Tammuz/Dumuzi was only a semi-divine figure and that there is no ritual text celebrating his rebirth.⁸¹ Thus, according to Smith, Tammuz cannot be considered a dying and rising god. For Melqart/Herakles, one of the main characters of my investigation, Smith conceded that there is not enough evidence to prove or reject the case.⁸² Other scholars, however, have convincingly demonstrated that Melqart can be considered a dying and rising god, as I explain below.

One of the most important contributions of Mark Smith's article was to bring fresh scholarly attention to the Ugaritic god Baal, whom scholars had previously identified as a dying and rising god after the discovery of the Ugaritic texts.⁸³ According to Smith, out of the numerous Ugaritic ritual texts, none contain any reference to the death and rebirth of Baal.⁸⁴ Moreover, as Smith pointed out, the Baal Cycle is chiefly a literary text. Thus, the presumed connections between a dying and rising god and fertility rituals is absent in the case of Baal.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the connections between Baal and

⁸⁰ Ibid., 262.

⁸¹ Ibid., 272-277.

⁸² Ibid., 279. I discuss the identification between Melqart and Herakles at length in Chapter 3.

⁸³ E.g., Gaster 1961: 87, 324; Widengren 1955: 62-79.

⁸⁴ Smith 1998: 290.

⁸⁵ Robertson Smith (1889: 393), however, did attribute the death of a god to fertility rites in the Baal-worship represented in the Hebrew Bible. Mettinger (2001: 66-71) has also argued that there are two Ugaritic texts (*KTU* 1.12 and 1.17.vi.26-33) which relate the death and rebirth of Baal to cultic practices, although he admits that this evidence is tenuous at best. *KTU* 1.12 describes ritual libations of water that are prompted by Baal's death. A passage from the *Aqhat Epic* (*KTU* 1.17.vi.26-33) describes Baal's rebirth as a paradigm for Anat's revival of Aqhat in a possible allusion to a ritual.

fertility are well established, and his status as a dying and rising god is undeniable, as I explore in Chapter 5. Instead, Smith suggested that the literary representation of Baal is modelled on the Ugaritic cult of deceased kings.⁸⁶ In his own words, “Baal’s death reflects the demise of Ugaritic kings, but his return to life heralds the role of the living king to provide peace for the world.”⁸⁷ In this regard, Smith considered Baal as one of J. Z. Smith’s “disappearing deities.”

Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, however, defended the typology of dying and rising gods with his reexamination of the issue among Northwest Semitic cults, in particular.⁸⁸ Mettinger included the minimum requisite for a dying and rising god as: 1. That the god is a real god; 2. That the god is represented as dying and returning in some capacity.⁸⁹ In his approach, Mettinger did not include the god’s connections with seasonal changes or rites (i.e., fertility rites) as part of the minimum requirements. The scholar focused first on the god Baal and then the gods Melqart, Adonis, and Eshmun.⁹⁰ In the final sections of his book, Mettinger conducted a comparative analysis of the Mesopotamian god Dumuzi/Tammuz with Northwest Semitic deities, on the one hand, and the Egyptian god Osiris with the Northwest Semitic gods, on the other.⁹¹ Finally, Mettinger established in

⁸⁶ Smith 1998: 296.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 307-308. The text Smith cites for Ugaritic funerary beliefs is *KTU* 1.161. For an introduction to Ugaritic funerary cult, see Lewis 1989.

⁸⁸ Mettinger 2001. Mettinger’s work includes the most recent and thorough review of the scholarship of the twentieth-century from Frazer to the present *status quaestionis* (See Mettinger 2001: 15-53 with references).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁰ For Baal, see Mettinger 2001: 55-81; For Melqart, see *ibid.*, 83-111; For Adonis, see *ibid.*, 113-154; For Eshmun, see *ibid.*, 155-165.

⁹¹ For the comparative analysis, see Mettinger 2001: 167-215.

his introduction that Greek views of life and death were more well-defined than in the Near East where the boundaries between life and death were more ambiguous.⁹² From this observation, Mettinger argued that the typology of dying and rising gods is more appropriate for Near Eastern gods than Greek gods. With regards to the issue of myth and ritual, Mettinger stated, “A ritual is not necessarily a parallel version of a myth. There are myths without ritual and rituals without myth.”⁹³ Nevertheless, Mettinger did not discount the possibility of the connections between *drōmena*, what is performed (i.e., rituals), and *legomena*, what is said (i.e., myths).⁹⁴

In his epilogue, Mettinger concluded that cultures of the ancient Near East were aware of several gods who can, in fact, be accurately classified as dying and rising gods.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Mettinger admitted that these gods cannot be grouped together as a specific typology in the way that Frazer proposed because each god displays a culturally specific type. For example, according to Mettinger, the Ugaritic god Baal is a storm god who clearly fits the criteria of a dying and rising god, and the Phoenician god Melqart also fits this criteria, but Melqart is not described as a storm god in the sources.⁹⁶

⁹² Mettinger 2001: 45-46. For evidence, Mettinger notes the Greek word *athanatoi* “gods,” which literally means “not-dying” with the alpha-privative. In the Near Eastern realm, Mettinger mentions that among the Mesopotamians the dead continued to “live” with the family and the bones of the dead were the focus of care by rituals of “feeding” the dead (*kispu*).

⁹³ Mettinger 2001: 49.

⁹⁴ For a discussion of the relationship between myth and ritual, see Bremmer 2005. Bremmer (ibid., 28) argues that our concept of ritual is a recent phenomenon which the Greeks had no conception of. Moreover, Bremmer (ibid., 32-43) considers three possibilities about the relationship between myth and ritual: 1. Myth is derived from ritual. 2. Ritual dramatizes myth. 3. Both ritual and myth arose at the same time. *Pace* Bremmer, the Greeks performed rituals and had concepts and terminology for sacrifices, thus it is probable that they did, in fact, have a concept of ritual.

⁹⁵ Mettinger 2001: 217.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 218-219.

Mettinger does not, however, discount the well-recognized genealogical relationship between the Ugaritic storm god Baal and Melqart.⁹⁷ With regards to the issue of fertility rites, Mettinger showed that each of the gods studied in his analysis (Dumuzi, Baal, Adonis, Adonis, Melqart, Osiris) was linked to the seasonal cycle of plant life, and in most cases, a specific fertility festival.⁹⁸ I follow Mettinger's lead by accepting the viability of the term dying and rising god and analyzing the cultural specifics of each case.

Published in the same year as Mettinger's study, an Italian volume edited by Paolo Xella explored the issue of dying and rising gods from the Mediterranean context.⁹⁹ In this volume, individual cases of dying and rising gods were each treated by an expert in the field. As Xella stated in the preface, the essays deal with cases of belief in "divine deaths" in the ancient world.¹⁰⁰ Unlike the early approach of the Cambridge Ritualists, which viewed dying and rising gods as a universal category of religion, the studies in Xella's volume utilized a historical framework to understand particular myths, in a similar approach as Mettinger.¹⁰¹ In particular, the authors reassessed the evidence for dying and rising gods on a case by case basis. With this approach, the scholars have confronted one of the most persistent criticisms of Frazer's methodology, namely his tendency to broadly essentialize distinct cultures.

⁹⁷ For the relationship between Baal and Melqart, see Ribichini 1985: 41-73; Bonnet 1988: 431-433; Mettinger 2001: 83; Xella 2001c.

⁹⁸ Mettinger 2001: 219-220. The only god that does not have an explicit festival associated with his death and rebirth is Baal.

⁹⁹ Xella 2001a.

¹⁰⁰ Xella 2001b: 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 2-3.

In their introductory chapter, written by all the contributors of the volume, the authors stated that the category of dying and rising gods was taken for granted by scholars and over the years other gods were added to the typology, most notably, the Ugaritic god Baal.¹⁰² The authors explained that scholars now generally agree that the typology is outdated because the differences between the different gods are more pronounced than the similarities.¹⁰³ In particular, the authors took issue with categorizing such a diverse cast of gods under a single typology, especially considering that the fertility model has also been called into question. Moreover, the authors emphasized the problem of defining fertility cult in general.¹⁰⁴ The authors also pointed to the problem of a general model for interpreting a diverse set of cultures and religions.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the scholars reexamined the issue by utilizing a strict historical methodology, by viewing each god under the lens of the particular religious and historical context.¹⁰⁶ Other scholars have suggested that the typology of dying and rising gods was influenced by the soteriological beliefs of Christianity.¹⁰⁷ But, as the authors of Xella's volume have pointed out, the Bronze Age story of Baal cannot be attributed to the influence of Christianity, thus, the authors examined each case with this awareness in mind.¹⁰⁸ In the conclusion chapter, Ileana Chirassi Colombo reviewed the evidence for each case and

¹⁰² Ibid., 5.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., Prüm 1958; Smith 1987a.

¹⁰⁸ Xella 2001b: 11.

stated that the Ugaritic god Baal does, in fact, fit the category of dying and rising gods but is the only one of the gods examined to truly be “reborn.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, the study of the god Baal has revived the category of a dying and rising god.

In his examination of the god Baal, Xella also discussed Melqart as a Baal figure, but he did not devote a full study to the Phoenician evidence of Melqart as a dying and rising god.¹¹⁰ My study contributes to the conversation and fills in some gaps by investigating the myth and ritual for the Phoenician god Melqart by adding two new cases to the Northwest Semitic background of Melqart: the myths of Herodotos and Philo of Byblos. Moreover, my approach focuses on the impact of cultural exchange in the adaptation of myths. Thus, I treat each case individually but show how the stories of these gods were adapted by cultures in contact. Although most scholars have generally discounted the connections between dying and rising gods and the fertility pattern, my study revives the fertility component on a case by case basis. In particular, I point out that fertility would have been an important focus of any agrarian society, but that the myths of dying and rising gods do not necessarily need to be linked to a specific vegetation rite and can convey the importance of fertility for the specific culture.

Most recently, John Granger Cook, following the work of Mettinger, argues that the category of dying and rising gods is still viable today. As Cook states, “The category ‘dying and rising gods’ is still useful to describe the vicissitudes of a number of ancient divinities. One does not need to adopt Frazer’s approach using the concept of an annual

¹⁰⁹ Colombo 2001: 206.

¹¹⁰ Xella 2001c: 83. For an analysis dedicated to Melqart as a dying and rising god, see Mettinger 2001: 83-111.

dying and rising vegetation deity.”¹¹¹ Cook’s study focuses specifically on what he calls “resurrection language” in the New Testament. In particular, Cook examines accounts of resurrection in Greek and Latin literature and hypothesizes that these stories “help explain the willingness of Mediterranean people to gradually accept the Gospel of a crucified and risen savior.”¹¹² Among other things, Cook’s study is important for its analysis of the semantics of the primary terms used in Greek and Hebrew to describe physical resurrection, namely ἀνίστημι, “to rise,” ἐγείρω, “to awaken,” *yqs/qys*, “to awaken,” *qûm*, “to rise,” *hyh*, “to be alive.”¹¹³ With his analysis of these terms in pagan and Christian authors, Cook demonstrates how the pagan authors of antiquity were clearly aware of the concept of resurrection after death, and therefore, probably influenced the concept of resurrection in later Christian theology.¹¹⁴ Cook reads the accounts of resurrection in pagan and biblical literature as *analogies* rather than *genealogies*. In other words, Cook does not assert a pagan influence on the Christian texts, instead, he reads them as comparative narrative patterns.¹¹⁵ Although I do not focus on Christian beliefs in this dissertation, Cook’s analysis of the terms ἀνίστημι and ἐγείρω is critical for my understanding of the myths of Melqart and Dionysos in Chapters 4 and 7. Moreover, his succinct survey of the sources for Greek and Latin

¹¹¹ Cook 2018: 62.

¹¹² Ibid., 2.

¹¹³ Ibid., 7-45.

¹¹⁴ For example, the term ἐγείρω is used by Josephos (A. J. 8.145-146 and C. Ap. 1.118-119) to describe the rebirth of the god Melqart, and the verb occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 to describe the resurrection of Christ. For detailed analysis, see Cook 2018: 572-587.

¹¹⁵ Cook’s methodology is based on J. Z. Smith’s (1990: 47-51, 114, 118) distinction between analogy and genealogy in the history of religions.

accounts of dying and rising god is valuable to both scholars in the studies of classics and the New Testament.¹¹⁶

A New Approach

In this dissertation, I examine myths about sacrifice that engage with the three topics discussed above, namely aitiologies of sacrifice, ritualizing deities, and dying and rising gods. In my exploration, I show how aitiologies are closely linked to stories about gods who perform rituals or are the victims of rites. In general, my approach follows the observations of Johnston that there is no reliable (or simple, or single) way to link myths and rituals. Nevertheless, I do not dismiss the possibility that some specific myths and rituals were connected in one way or another, but that the present state of the evidence usually prevents us from any indisputable proof for these links in most cases. In some cases, however, there are myths that clearly give a mythological explanation for a specific practice, such as Philo of Byblos' myth of child sacrifice, yet there is no need to imagine that these myths were performed to accompany the ritual that it describes, such as we see with other types of myths that accompanied rituals (e.g., *hieroi logoi*, *historiolai*, or hymns). Thus, my study focuses primarily on the myths as representations of the rituals. Following the lead of Hendrik S. Versnel, I acknowledge that some rituals may in fact have been intricately connected to a myth, such as the Mesopotamian myth of the dying and rising god-king, which was linked to the New Year celebration, as we know specifically from the Babylonian *akitu* festival; but certainly not all myths and

¹¹⁶ For the resurrection of divinities, such as Dumuzi, Baal, Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Melqart, Dionysos, and Mithras, see Chapter 1 in Cook 2018: 56-143.

rituals were connected in that way.¹¹⁷ I also do not investigate what Semitist Dennis Pardee calls para-mythological texts (or *historiolae*), that is, a brief text with a mythological form and a practical function.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, I acknowledge that ancient myths were probably connected to rituals in ways which we cannot fully understand, but I do not doubt the possibilities for these connections. Nevertheless, my focus is fundamentally on myths about sacrifice.

In her review of Patton's work, Kathryn T. McClymond remarked that Patton explored different cultures without giving a thorough or nuanced discussion of the individual cases.¹¹⁹ I aim to provide a more methodologically sound comparative study of the myths by focusing on a smaller geographical area and providing a detailed discussion of each myth within its historical and cultural context.¹²⁰ Specifically, I focus on the civilizations of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean, namely Greece, Phoenicia, Israel, Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, and I utilize the framework of cultural exchange to better understand how the motif of ritualized deities was adapted by cultures in contact. Moreover, I add a new dimension to Patton's study of ritualizing deities; In particular, if gods can perform rituals, and if this phenomenon should not be viewed as a paradox, as Patton has convincingly shown, how are we to understand representations of gods as the *victims* of sacrifice? Building from Patton's work, I consider how her concept of "divine

¹¹⁷ Versnel 2014. See also López-Ruiz's discussion of the ritual functions of Near Eastern Texts (2010: 182). For the *akitu*-festival under the Sargonids, see Barcina 2017.

¹¹⁸ Pardee 2003b: 302.

¹¹⁹ McClymond 2012: 282.

¹²⁰ For similar methods of comparison, see Hughes 2017 and Lincoln 2018. For the issue of sacrifice and cultural comparison, see Lincoln 1981. For the approach of comparative Indo-European mythology, see Dumézil 1952.

reflexivity” can also be applied to understanding myths about gods as victims of sacrifice. In this respect, the sacrifice of a god functions to emphasize and perpetuate the “religion of the gods” (Patton’s phrase) in a broader mode than simply the performance of a ritual. Rather than simple animal sacrifice, *god sacrifice* conveys the idea that all cultic activity participates in the divine sphere. What is more, as we will see in the myths of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod, a deity sparks the first sacrifice in a cosmological setting, which reinforces the idea that sacred rites begin in the world of the gods and humans simply participate in the divine hierarchy. Although ritualized deities are rare in myth, they do exist in most of the cultures examined in this dissertation. Thus, this study employs Patton’s model of divine reflexivity to study myths about divine sacrifice that are connected genealogically by the dynamics of cultural exchange in the eastern Mediterranean.

As for the “dying and rising god” model, despite its limitations (discussed above), it still provides a valuable tool for comparison today if we take into account the specifics of each culture, as Xella et al. and Mettinger have convincingly demonstrated. My frame of comparison relies on the dynamics of cultural exchange to understand the genealogical connections between these different myths. In fact, from this fresh perspective, the typology of dying and rising gods has once again been reborn. Thus, I follow Mettinger and Cook and take the position that the category of dying and rising gods is still useful for understanding many ancient myths. Accordingly, I do not maintain the Frazerian theory of the direct and absolute relationship between these myths and fertility rites. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge that because these ancient societies were essentially agrarian, there were probably some connections between fertility beliefs/rites and the myths about dying and rising gods, especially those that were connected to vegetation,

such as Baal. Moreover, as modern scholars living in advanced societies and a globalized world where the mechanisms for producing food have become increasingly disconnected from everyday life and the natural cycles of life and death have become more easily regulated via technological and medical sophistication, it is important to retune our scholarly endeavors with the specific circumstances of the past in which food production was much more localized and humans were more dependent on the fertility cycle. I do not claim to fully understand the extent of the ancient connections between gods, myths, and fertility; instead, I attempt to show how those connections help us better appreciate the various dimensions in each particular case and hence better understand it on its own.

Patton's book pointed out the numerous places in Indo-European literature where gods perform rituals, and Xella's volume contained essays about dying and rising gods in the Mediterranean with attention to the specific historical context. This dissertation contributes to the conversation and fills in some of the gaps between the studies of Patton and Xella. In particular, I do not focus broadly on Indo-European and Semitic religions, as Patton did, but rather on the cultures of the geographical area of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean where cultural contact was particularly strong. Nevertheless, I do analyze both Indo-European and Semitic cultures from this region. I also do not focus simply on Mediterranean myths about gods who die and are reborn, as Xella et. al. did, but rather I study myths about gods who perform the first sacrifice and gods who are sacrificed and reborn, or at the very least, their myths of death and rebirth are explicitly connected to cult practices. My study employs the methods of the study of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean, and therefore, this study is deeply committed to the approaches of Old Historicism, by which literary texts are situated within a historical

framework, to understand the dynamics that facilitated the merging and adaptation of myths and rituals.¹²¹

My comparative approach, on the other hand, focuses on a relatively smaller, yet equally as vibrant, geographical area in the eastern Mediterranean than Patton's study. Within this region I concentrate on the cultures that were in close contact along the important trade networks of the eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, instead of organizing my case studies by culture (as Patton did), this dissertation, on the other hand, is organized thematically and following the threads of specific myths. Xella's volume focused on cultures from the Mediterranean with a discerning eye toward the specific historical circumstances. Similarly, I focus on the historical dynamics of cultural exchange as the framework for my comparison of myths. Instead of looking at these myths through the lens of dying and rising gods, however, I examine myths about gods who not only perform sacrifice but whose death is "ritualized," that is to say, whose death is described as a sacrifice. Thus, as victims of sacrifice, many of the gods I study intersect with the gods examined in Xella's volume and other studies of dying and rising gods.

In general, I follow the methodological principles for investigating cultural exchange outlined by López-Ruiz in her chapter "Greek and Near Eastern Mythologies: A *Study of Mediterranean Encounters*," in the edited volume *Approaches to Greek Myth*: 1. Similarity does not mean simple borrowing; 2. It is not the primary goal of comparison to ascertain "origins"; 3. Not everything comes from the East; 4. The "Near East" is not unitary and uniform; 5. Myths are not texts, but they are in texts; 6. Dates of texts can be

¹²¹ For an introduction to the method of historicism and the problems with the approach of the so-called New Historicism, see Hamilton 1996.

misleading; 7. Language is not culture; 8. Authors are not necessarily mouthpieces for their cultures.¹²²

This dissertation is primarily a philological study of myths of sacrifice represented in literary texts; my primary objective, therefore, is to conduct close readings of those sources, and, leaning on those readings, perform a literary and cultural-historical study of the myths. In order to contextualize the discussion of these myths about sacrifice, I also incorporate some of the latest epigraphical, archeological, and even osteological evidence that help us reconstruct ancient sacrificial practices, since the rituals are part of the cultural background that the people creating the myths were aware of and helped shape the stories as well. Although I bring in the physical evidence for ritual practice as a compliment to the myths, my goal is not to revive the myth-ritual argument of the Cambridge Ritualists, that is, I do not make claims that specific practices are based on specific myths or vice versa (although in certain instances this is certainly the case).

Another idea that informs my interpretive framework is that myths can form “oppositional identities” (Jonathon Hall’s term).¹²³ In the case of myths about the origin of a sacrificial practice, some of the narratives help define the culture that produces them *in opposition* to the sacrificial practices of another culture. For example, the Phoenician aitiology according to Philo of Byblos seemingly provides a rationale for the practice of child sacrifice among Phoenicians (or more broadly their Canaanite ancestors), while the Israelite aitiology in Genesis 22 emphasizes that the Israelites do not perform child

¹²² López-Ruiz 2014: 159-165.

¹²³ Hall 2002: 179, 198.

sacrifice, in opposition to the Canaanite practice (see Chapter 5). Another case comes from the Roman world and explains how Aeneas offered the first fruits of the vineyard to Zeus in opposition to the Etruscan king who wanted to keep all the grapes for himself.¹²⁴

An important methodological pillar of my comparative work is that it stays away from a simple diffusionist interpretation of the evidence, which would posit the transmission of mythological features from more advanced cultures to less advanced cultures. Following López-Ruiz, I look at how, “the diffusion of cultural traits must allow room for the active appropriation and creative adaptation of those traits.”¹²⁵ Moreover, I do not view the cultural exchange in the Mediterranean as unidirectional (from the Near East to Greece), but instead I read myths about divine sacrifice as part of a trail of “shared taxonomies” within the ancient eastern Mediterranean cultures of the Aegean and Near East.¹²⁶ Indeed, as we will see, myths *circulated* throughout the shared traditions of the ancient Mediterranean. I bring together all the myths about divine sacrifice from various eastern Mediterranean cultures, specifically Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Israelite, and Greek, and group them according to themes in order to understand how different cultures adapt and innovate motifs.

¹²⁴ The story is an aition for the Roman Vinalia festival and is preserved by several sources: Cato *Origines* fr. 12; Ovid *Fasti*, 4.885-900; Dionysius Hal. *Ant. Rom.* I.65.5. John Scheid (2012: 90-95) argues that the Romans considered this myth as an equivalent to the myth of Prometheus used to explain Greek sacrifice. For a study on the sacrifices of the Arval Brotherhood attested epigraphically in ancient Rome, see Scheid 1990 and 2005. For Roman sacrifice more broadly, see Scheid 2005.

¹²⁵ López-Ruiz 2010: 21.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

The Sources

One of the main challenges of this study is that I compare myths from several cultures of the Mediterranean and from a broad diachronic and linguistic range. For example, I compare the thematic connections between the origins of sacrifice and creation of humanity from the second millennium BCE Babylonian story *Atrahasis* (written in Akkadian) with Hesiod's first millennium BCE Greek story of the sacrifice offered by Prometheus and the creation of Pandora. In another broad chronological, geographical, and linguistic range, I compare myths and rituals involving the Egyptian god Osiris, the Tyrian god Melqart, and the Greek god Dionysos. As we will see, these myths all intersected (in unknown times and place) partly thanks to the high degree of connectivity in the ancient Mediterranean. I also compare cultures that are geographically adjacent, such as the Israelite story of the binding of Isaac in the Book of Genesis and the Phoenician myth about child sacrifice preserved by Philo of Byblos, written in Roman times, but are attested many centuries apart from each other. Along these lines, I also consider how myths about sacrifice differ between societies that worshipped many gods (polytheism) and a society that recognized the existence of many gods but worshipped only one god (monolatry). By grouping these sources thematically rather than chronologically or culturally, I aim to understand the thematic threads running through these types of myths, what makes stories about divine sacrifice unique, as well as any possible streams of transmission. Furthermore, I examine myths that preserve earlier attestations of myths that are now lost, such as the myths of Philo of Byblos, which preserve earlier Phoenician and even Canaanite and Ugaritic mythology.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ López-Ruiz 2010: 86.

One way of dealing with the variety of culturally diverse and chronologically broad sources is by framing these stories within a Mediterranean cultural and mythological *koinē*, as hypothesized by López-Ruiz,¹²⁸ or similarly within a network of myths or “story world,” as most recently articulated by Johnston.¹²⁹ The intertwining of Greek myths, as Johnston proposes, lent credibility to the stories because they were part of single Greek story universe in which different myths were all interconnected.¹³⁰ More specifically, Johnston explains how Greek myths are part of a myth network, in so far as characters are always related to other characters from other myths in a sort of complex “family tree.”¹³¹ I suggest we can deploy Johnston’s model more broadly to analyze interconnected Mediterranean myth traditions. Thus, I merge the insights of both López-Ruiz and Johnston but apply them to a comparative framework that fits within the eastern Mediterranean *koinē*. Specifically, I propose that we can read myths about divine sacrifice not only as part of the eastern Mediterranean mythological *koinē* but also as part of a Mediterranean cross-cultural, myth-network or story world. Moreover, I contextualize this mythic network within the historical trade-networks of the Phoenicians

¹²⁸ For the concept of a mythological *koinē* in the ancient Mediterranean, see López-Ruiz 2014: 187-188.

¹²⁹ Johnston 2018: 131-146. According to Johnston (ibid., 122), Greek mythology consists in a “tightly woven story world that was cumulatively created, on a continuous basis, by the myths that were narrated. This story world validated not only each individual myth that was part of it, but also *ta palaia* more generally—all the stories about what had happened in the mythic past, the characters who had lived then and the entire world view on which the stories rested.”

¹³⁰ Ibid., 137.

¹³¹ Ibid., 131. In one example (ibid., 131-132), Johnston explains how the myths of the heroes Herakles, Perseus, Bellerophon, and Theseus are all interconnected. In other example (ibid.), Johnston explains how the Python (*HHAp.* 353-354) may have been a new monster in the Greek mythological story world when the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* was first told, but the poet of the hymn linked the monster to older, more familiar stories, by mentioning that she was the nursemaid of Typhon (known from Hes. *Th.* 304-325) and a friend of the Chimaera (known from *Il.* 6.179-182). Johnston (ibid., 93-94) also uses the example of modern television episodes to explain how Greek myths are part of a “series” of episodes in which self-contained myths are connected to the stories of other myths.

to explore how the Phoenicians were one of the likely mediators of the myths. From this framework, I show how motifs were adapted and redeployed to represent specific cultures.

Definitions and Modern Theories of Sacrifice

This is a study primarily of *mythical* representations of sacrifice. Furthermore, in every case I study, the sacrifice is either performed by a divinity or a divinity is the victim. Thus, for the purpose of this study, my understanding of sacrifice involves an offering by either a human or divine agent. Although this is primarily a study of myth, and hence the mythical *representation* of sacrifice, it is impossible to isolate mythical representations of sacrifice from the historical practices of sacrifice. Thus, throughout this study I incorporate the latest advancements in our knowledge of ritual practices when relevant in order to inform our understanding of the myths. Moreover, I present the various types and categories of sacrifice and their terminology in the cultures involved to show how different cultures adapted and reworked representations of different practices.

I understand the term “sacrifice” broadly and literally, namely “An act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to God or to a divine or supernatural figure.”¹³² Nevertheless, because I am focusing on divine sacrifices, the term “sacrifice” is not confined to simply animal or human slaughter but covers a broader semantic field including the possibility of a god as the victim. The etymology of our English word “sacrifice” proceeds from Old French and Middle English

¹³² OED.

from the Latin *sacrificium*, which is a compound derived from *sacer* “sacred,” + *facere* “to make.”¹³³ Thus, although the term broadly speaking could include any ritual process of making something sacred, I reserve the term “sacrifice” for representations of the ritual slaughter of an animal or other living victim (i.e., human or god) and its burnt offering. For other cases of ritual practices, I employ the term “offering,” which covers a wider semantic field than “sacrifice” and consists in vegetal offerings and libations but also carries the connotation of “making sacred.” Along these lines, it is important to also state my definition of “ritual,” which has eluded scholars for generations.¹³⁴ Our English term “ritual” proceeds from Middle French from the Latin word *ritualis* “relating to rites,” an adjective derived from the Latin noun *ritus* “the form and manner of religious observances.”¹³⁵ In general, I use our English term “ritual” in the same way as the Romans used it, namely as a term denoting a culturally specific ancestral custom or practice.¹³⁶

¹³³ Our English word “sacred” is cognate with Latin *sacer*, and both words are derived from PIE **sh₂k-ro-* ‘sacred,’ and **seh₂k-r-i-*, **sh₂-n-k-* ‘to make sacred, sanctify.’ There are two IE cognates in Hittite: *šaklāi-* [c.] ‘custom, rites’ (< **seh₂k-lōi-*) and *zankilaⁱ- / zankil-* ‘to fine, punish’ (< **sh₂nk-i* + **l(o)h₁-?*) (de Vaan 2008: 532).

¹³⁴ For the most comprehensive study of ritualism, see Bell 1997 and 2009. In her seminal work, Bell (2009) re-evaluates the issues, methods, and implications of scholarly interest in ritual by focusing on anthropology, sociology, and the history of religions. Bell (1997) provides an introduction to the study of ritual practice. She surveys the major theories of ritual, the primary categories of ritual activity, and the discussions that have formed our understanding of ritual. For example, Bell (ibid., 1-22) succinctly explains the various interpretations of the Babylonian *Akitu* festival, from Frazer’s theory of a universal dying and rising vegetable god, Gastor’s emphasis on purification and atonement of sin, Eliade’s hypothesis that a creation myth, such as the *Enuma Elish*, was recited during the ritual, and J. Z. Smith’s shift from universal paradigms to focus on the historical details, namely that the text for the festival is preserved late, only as early as the eighth-century BCE (for a critique of Smith demonstrating the antiquity of the *akitu* festival, see Sommer 2000). In the end, Bell does not settle on a single definition of ritual, instead, she shows how definitions have evolved and changed through the scholarly study of religion and ritualism.

¹³⁵ The Latin word *ritus*, *-ūs* is derived from the PIE root **h₂r-(e)i-* “to count, observe carefully,” and it is cognate with Greek ἀριθμός “number, payment” (de Vaan 2008: 524).

¹³⁶ As Scheid states about the word *ritus*: “This [*ritus*] did not define the content of a divine service, but only the general custom, the rule followed in celebrating this service. *Ritus* is not equivalent to *sacra*,

The process of “making sacred” is typically accomplished by symbolically transferring the vegetal, animal, or human victim into the divine realm by a variety of rituals that are culturally determined but also typically share features with other societies. Most notably, in Greek and Israelite religion, the primary means of transferring a substance to the divine realm was by burning. Thus, the predominant Greek term for sacrifice is θυσία “burnt offering,” which is derived from the Greek verb θύω, “to make smoke.”¹³⁷ In Hebrew, the predominant term for a burnt offering was ‘*ôlāh*, derived from the root ‘*lh* “to ascend,” which conveys the act of the smoke ascending to YHWH. In Greek religion, there are also practices where raw or cooked meat is offered to the gods (*trapezōmata* and *theoxenia*).¹³⁸ Although the meat is not incinerated, it is symbolically

caerimoniae, or *religiones*, but to *mos*, the way of doing something, the τρόπος or the νόμος,” he states, “In short, the *ritus* was the special posture and prescription which gave all public celebrations a special, recognizable tonality—I would compare it to the musical modes: you had the *ritus* of the Romans, the *ritus* of the Greeks, the *ritus* of the barbarians, and so on” (Scheid 1995: 18).

¹³⁷ Cf. Casabona 1966. The Greek verb θύω ‘to make smoke’ is cognate with Latin *suffiō*, *īre* ‘to fumigate’ (de Vaan 2008: 597). Both θύω and *suffiō* are derived from PIE *d^huh₂-ie-. Notable IE cognates include Hittite *tuhhae*-^{zi} ‘to produce smoke’ (used of volcanoes) and Tocharian *twasastār* [3sg.med.] ‘to ignite’ (Beekes 2010: 568).

¹³⁸ For the basic studies on these practices, see Puttkammer 1912; Gill 1974, 1991; Bruit 1984, 1989; Jameson 1994; Ekroth 2002: 136-140, 177-179, 276-286 and 2011; Bettinetti 2001. For the distinction between raw and cooked meat, see Jameson 1994: 56 n. 83; Gill 1991: 11-15. For the practices of *trapezōmata* and *theoxenia* and Near Eastern connections, see Ekroth 2011. As Ekroth notes (2011: 16 n.6), possible instances of *theoxenia* visible in the osteological record can be found at the sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia in the archaic and classical periods (see Gebhard and Reese 2005: 144, 149-152, Table 1) and the Archaic Altar U at the Greek sanctuary of Kommos (see Reese, Rose, Ruscillo 2000: 422, Table 6.1, 441, Table 6.2 and pl. 6.3-6.4). The cultic calendar from Athens (*LSCG* 1 A, 18-19) mentions a *trapeza* “table” for Semele in connection with a goat sacrifice to Dionysos. A *trapeza* “table” is also mentioned on the Thorikos calendar (lines 17, 19 in Lupu 2009: 117). For the frequent depictions of Herakles at a banquet and their possible reflections of contemporary cult practices of *theoxenia*, see Verbank-Piérard 1992. The practice also seems to be depicted in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* when the young god performs a sacrifice (see Jaillard 2007: 114-118 who argues that the myth depicts an aitiology for *trapezōmata* and *theoxenia*). For more images and sources of *theoxenia*, see Ekroth 2011: 32 n. 65. For the frequent depictions of Herakles at a banquet and their possible reflections of contemporary cult practices, see Verbank-Piérard 1992. For Hittite practices of offering meat on a table for the gods, see Delaporte 1936: 259-262; Haas 1994: 640-642, 669, 673; Mouton 2004: no. 5, 14, 15; and Mouton 2007: 88-89.

transferred to the divine realm by sacralization. In this regard, I also utilize the concept of Greek sacrifice discussed by Ekroth as “sacred meat.”¹³⁹

Phoenician and Israelite sacrifice also involved the ritual killing of an animal and the burning of its body. For this reason, Burkert, followed by West, considered Greek and Levantine types of sacrifices as part of a Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē*.¹⁴⁰ It is important, however, to point out some significant differences from the outset. In particular, in addition to regular offerings of animals, west Phoenician sacrificial practice may have involved human sacrifice (*molka*) as a part of their “normal” religious world-view, compared to the Greek world where this type of ritual was taboo in myth and not attested archaeologically.¹⁴¹ Moreover, in two Levantine myths gods are depicted as the victim of burnt sacrifice (Melqart and Ieoud). In fact, the one place where a god is depicted in Greek myth as a successful victim of sacrifice is in the Orphic myth of Dionysos, which exhibits the influence of Near Eastern motifs, as I argue in Chapter 7.

Previous generations of scholars have often sought the ‘origins’ of Greek sacrifice and attempted to explain the function of sacrifice through a universal theory. Burkert used an anthropological approach in his quest for the origins of sacrifice in the neo-lithic hunt.¹⁴² Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne used a sociological approach to situate the origins of Greek *thusia* in the egalitarian division of meat among citizens.¹⁴³ J. Z. Smith, on the other hand, sought the origins of sacrifice in the history of animal

¹³⁹ Ekroth 2007: 252.

¹⁴⁰ Burkert 1976; West 1997a: 38-42. Cf. Bergquist 1993; López-Ruiz 2013: 68-69.

¹⁴¹ See my Chapter 5 for scholarship and discussion.

¹⁴² Burkert 1983a.

¹⁴³ Vernant and Detienne 1989.

domestication because the animals used for sacrifice were for the most part domesticated animals.¹⁴⁴ As much as each theory brings to the fore interesting aspects of sacrifice from an anthropological, sociological, or religious point of view, these attempts have either been partly discredited or have not succeeded to provide an accurate and holistic understanding of sacrifice.¹⁴⁵ I take up the “quest for origins” in a new direction by analyzing the mythical narratives of the origins of sacrifice, in particular those involving gods. In the world of myth, the creators of aitiologies situate the origin of a specific sacrificial practice within a cosmogonic context in order to locate sacrifice within the birth and establishment of laws and religious beliefs. Moreover, since most of the myths about the origins of sacrifice studied in the dissertation involve gods performing the rites, aitiologies of sacrifice are part of the representations of the gods’ perpetuation and amplification of their own cult.

¹⁴⁴ According to J. Z. Smith, “Sacrifice, in its agrarian or pastoral context, is the artificial (i.e., ritualized) killing of an artificial (i.e., domesticated) animal.” (1987b: 201).

¹⁴⁵ Other influential “theories of sacrifice” include the following: William Robertson Smith (1889) viewed sacrifice as an act of social solidarity and stressed the sacrificial meal as a communion between the worshipers and divine; Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1899) incorporated the sociological distinction between sacred and profane discussed by Émile Durkheim to describe the different stages of communication between the worshipper and the divine, namely the *sacralization* and *desacrilization*. In *sacralization*, the worshiper moves from a profane to a sacred state, and in *desacrilization*, the worshiper loses his sacred quality, which is transferred onto the victim; Karl Meuli (1946) first argued that Greek sacrifice was derived from the Paleolithic and Mesolithic hunters and coined the term *Unschuldskomödie* (comedy of innocence) in which the worshippers hide the slaughter of the victim through the staging of the ritual; Rene Girard (1972) attributed sacrifice to violent feelings, not from the remote human past as Meuli and Burkert argued, but from society; Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne (1989) argued that the focus of sacrifice was on the act of eating. These scholars rejected Hubert and Mauss’s idea of the distinction between sacred and profane, and instead, they assert the communal and profane function of sacrifice. For a succinct summary and critical analysis of these theories, see Naiden 2013: 4-14. A recent approach to understanding Greek sacrifice is by Maria-Zoe Petropoulou (2008: 28), who argues that “sacrifice is a composite of beliefs, gestures, objects, and materials, which are defined by both the *vertical* and *horizontal* lines, as these have been described above: that is, *vertical* is the line linking offerer and recipient, and *horizontal* is the one linking the offerer with the objective reality.”

My method shifts the focus from theories about sacrifice, namely *our stories* about sacrifice, towards *their stories* about sacrifice. With this shift in method, I expect to better understand how these cultures understood their own beliefs in sacrifice rather than attempting to impose our own interpretations of how sacrifice functioned or how it originated. Instead of rationalizing their beliefs from a modern perspective, I attempt to understand how these myths functioned within their own religious views and how they reveal what these cultures themselves thought about sacrifice. Normally, we do not have such self-reflection or meta-narrative in the texts, but occasionally we do. For instance, in Chapter 6 I use an ancient theory of sacrifice preserved by Philo of Byblos to interpret his own myths about Phoenician child sacrifice.

The study of Mediterranean practices of sacrifice has been greatly augmented in recent years by new approaches and new perspectives. In particular, edited volumes on sacrifice have highlighted not only the depth of our current understanding of Greek sacrifice but also the diversity of sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean world.¹⁴⁶ The earlier theorists, moreover, have recently been challenged by the work of Fred Naiden who has shown how sacrifices were not as egalitarian as Vernant and Detienne had argued and that the animal did not go willingly to the altar as Burkert had claimed.¹⁴⁷ Naiden demonstrates how sacrifices are part of a narrative sequence where the implications of the sacrifice extend into the future but also how sacrifices aimed to please

¹⁴⁶ E.g., Knust and Várhelyi 2011; Faraone and Naiden 2012; Hitch and Rutherford 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Naiden 2013: 9-15. Naiden builds from the work of Christian Grottanelli and Nicola Parise (1988), who showed that the distribution of sacrificial meat was not egalitarian, Folkert van Straten (1987, 1995), who demonstrated through his presentation of Greek vase paintings that the killing phase was only one of many phases of the ritual process, and Ekroth (2007, 2008a, 2008b), who has pointed out that much of the meat in ancient Greece was not from an act of sacrifice. For a systematic analysis of the production of both secular and sacred meat in ancient Greek cities, such as Athens and Sparta, see Naiden 2013: 232-275.

the gods and could be rejected by the gods. I adopt Naiden's method of interpreting sacrifice throughout my study by reading representations of sacrifice as part of a narrative sequence.¹⁴⁸ For example, Naiden traces a trail of failed sacrifices performed by Odysseus in the *Odyssey* that eventually allow him to return home.¹⁴⁹ As Naiden shows, the sequence of failed sacrifices have implications in the narrative that leads from one sacrifice to another. Naiden's approach has contributed greatly to my overall understanding of how sacrifice functioned within the ancient cultures I study, namely that sacrifice was primarily aimed at pleasing the gods and that it was not always successful in doing so. This is an emic reading of the practice of sacrifice and justifies the categorization of sacrifice as a gift, as Socrates explains in the quotation above (Pl. *Euthphr.* 14c8). Likewise, the Latin concept of *do ut des* "I give so that you may give" also exemplifies the gift-ideology of sacrifice. According to Greek theology, these gift-offerings provide honor (*timē*) to the gods.¹⁵⁰ In Homeric society, gift-giving is how honor is displayed and reinforced. The greatest heroes of the Trojan war receive the greatest gifts and the greatest honor.¹⁵¹ Likewise, the ideology of gift-giving as a display of honor is an integral part of the *thusia* offering, and in general, Greek offerings aimed

¹⁴⁸ "The relation of the act to the context was like the relation of a word to the rest of a sentence. Just as a word gains meaning from the sentence in which it appears, the act of sacrifice became comprehensible as part of a sequence—as an episode, not a self-contained event." (Naiden 2013: 25).

¹⁴⁹ The first is the sacrifice at Troy for safe passage home (Hom. *Od.* 1.60-67), next is the sacrifice at Tenedos (Hom. *Od.* 3.159-161), then the sacrifice to Zeus after departing the island of the Cyclops (Hom. *Od.* 9.550-555). These failures to please the gods eventually cause Odysseus to take advice from religious experts Circe and Tiresias, which provides Odysseus with the success to return home. The final sacrifice extends beyond the limits of the narrative of the *Odyssey* since the religious advice from Tiresias demands that Odysseus perform a sacrifice to Poseidon after he returns home (Naiden 2013: 29-30).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Pl. *Symp.* 190c; Hom. *Hymn Dem.* 310-312; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 170-173, *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 170-173.

¹⁵¹ For sacrifice, gift-giving, and reciprocity, see Seaford 1994 and 2004: 23-67.

to please the divinity.¹⁵² Examples from other cultures studied in this dissertation indicate that the gift-ideology aspect of sacrifice was a common idea among the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, and I apply this premise not only to the Greek myths I study but also more broadly to the Near Eastern myths.¹⁵³

The Culture-Specific Features of Mediterranean Sacrifice

Because this study deals with myths that involve gods engaged in sacrifice, it is important from a methodological standpoint to justify my reading of each myth as a sacrifice *per se*. In other words, there are myths that depict gods performing “slaughter,” but it is vital to always establish whether it is “cultic slaughter.” I accomplish this by isolating cultic terminology and demonstrating the cultic context of the narrative. With this goal in mind, it is useful from the outset of this project to briefly survey the distinguishing features and specific terminology of sacrifice for three different cultures studied in this dissertation, namely Greek, Israelite, and Mesopotamian. The purpose of this survey is to present my understanding of the practices of sacrifice by referring to literary and ritual texts that describe the rituals, as well as present a general understanding of the similarities and differences between the practices of these cultures. I offer more detailed explanations of the rituals of these cultures in the pertinent chapters. Additionally, in the relevant chapters, I discuss the ritual practices of the other cultures I

¹⁵² Naiden 2013.

¹⁵³ In the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis* (I.397), offerings are identified as “presents” for the gods. In Ugaritic texts, the verb *ytn* “to give” can have a cultic meaning, as in “to give a sacrifice” (e.g., RS 13.006.5; RS 15.072.2; RS 24.248.12; RS 24.277.5; see Pardee 1989 for the texts). In the Hebrew Bible, the verb *ntn* “to give” occurs with a cultic meaning “to give offerings” (e.g., Numbers 18:12; Exodus 30:15).

study in this dissertation, but not mentioned below, namely Phoenician (especially the issue of infant or human sacrifice attributed to Phoenicians), Ugaritic, and Egyptian.

a. Greek Sacrifice

In the Greek language, the typical word for animal sacrifice is θυσία, “burnt offering,” a noun derived from the verb θύω “to offer by burning.”¹⁵⁴ The essential characteristic of Greek sacrifice was the creation of smoke by burning animal thigh bones wrapped in fat in order to create a thick smoke called κνίση, “savor,” which the gods smelled and enjoyed.¹⁵⁵ In a typical *thusia* humans would eat the edible portions of the animal, whereas the gods would be satisfied with the κνίση. Our understanding of Greek sacrifice comes from a combination of epigraphical, literary, and iconographical sources, as well as archaeological data.¹⁵⁶ We can piece together many of the important phases of a Greek sacrifice from the earliest literary description of a sacrifice in Book 1 of Homer’s

¹⁵⁴ Casabona 1966: 69-76. For epigraphical evidence of Greek sacrifice in the Greek cultic calendars, see Lupu 2009. While the most common word for sacrifice is θύειν, “to make smoke,” the verb σφάζειν, “to slit the neck” is also used (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.459; *Od.* 10.532; Eur. *El.* 813).

¹⁵⁵ See Hom. *Il.* 1.317; 4.48-49. On *knise*, see Naiden 2013: 111-113.

¹⁵⁶ For the Greek sacred laws attested epigraphically, see Sokolowski 1955, 1962, 1969; Hägg 1994; Lupu 2009. The references to sacrifice in the literary sources are extensive. Classic examples from Homer include the hecatomb sacrifice to Apollo (Hom. *Il.* 1.434-456), Odysseus’ sacrifice of a ram to Zeus after escaping from the Cyclops (Hom. *Od.* 9.551-555), Nestor’s sacrifice to Athena (Hom. *Od.* 3.380-475), the offering of the *peplos* for Athena (Hom. *Il.* 6.286-311). For a full exploration of literary sources, see Naiden 2013. For a study on sacrifice in the genre of tragedy, see Henrichs 2012; for comedy, see Horn 1970. For iconography, see Schefold 1959; van Straten 1987, 1988, 1995; Hägg 1992. Archaeology has uncovered, among other important finds, votives and altars, which are instrumental for our understanding of sacrifice. The classic study on Greek votives is Rouse 1902; for the catalogue of all the votives uncovered at Athens, see Lawton 2017. For altars, see Burkert 1985: 87-88. The altar to Herakles at Thasos is a good example of a Greek raised *bomos* “altar” (see Bergquist 1973). The excavations for the temple of Hera on Samos indicated seven different states of the altar before its monumental form (Gruben 1966: 317). Much of our knowledge of Greek altars comes from literary descriptions (see Mare 1961). For an edited volume surveying archaeological evidence for Greek cults, see Hägg 1998. For a general introduction to Greek cults, see Burkert 1985 and Larson 2007.

Iliad and the descriptions in Homer reflect the earlier evidence of burnt sacrifice from the Bronze Age Mycenaean cultures. In the *Iliad*, after the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, the god Apollo sends a plague to decimate the Achaean ranks, for which the Greeks make restitution by returning the girl Chryseis to her father Chryses and by offering a sacrifice to the god Apollo:

᾽Ως ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' εὔξαντο καὶ οὐλοχύτας προβάλοντο,
 αὐέρυσαν μὲν πρῶτα καὶ **ἔσφαξαν** καὶ ἔδειραν,
μηρούς τ' ἐξέταμον κατὰ τε κνίσῃ ἐκάλυψαν 1.460
 δίπτυχα ποιήσαντες, ἐπ' αὐτῶν δ' ὠμοθέτησαν·
 καίε δ' ἐπὶ σχίζῃς ὁ γέρον, ἐπὶ δ' αἶθοπα οἶνον
 λείβε· νέοι δὲ παρ' αὐτὸν ἔχον πεμπώβολα χερσίν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μῆρε κἀη καὶ **σπλάγχνα** πάσαντο,
 μίστυλλον τ' ἄρα τάλλα καὶ ἄμφ' ὀβελοῖσιν ἔπειραν, 1.465
ῥῶπτησάν τε περιφραδέως, ἐρύσαντό τε πάντα.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ παύσαντο πόνου τετύκοντό τε δαῖτα
δαίνυντ', οὐδέ τι θυμὸς ἐδεύετο δαιτὸς εἵσης.

So he spoke praying, and Phoebos Apollo heard his prayer. Then after they prayed and sprinkled the barley grains, first they drew back the victim's head, **slit its throat** and flayed it, and **they cut out the thigh bones and covered them with fat** by making a double-fold, and they put the raw flesh on top. The old man burned them on the fire wood, and he poured fiery-looking wine on top. The young men beside him held five-pronged forks in their hands. Then when the thigh bones were completely burned, and they had tasted **the entrails**, they cut up the rest and put it on spits, and **they roasted it** very skillfully and drew it all off the spits. But when they ceased from their labor they prepared a feast and feasted, nor was any *thumos* lacking from its equal feast. (Hom. *Il.* 1.457-468)

Note that the prayer is emphasized from the outset (εὐχόμενος... εὔξαντο). According to Naiden, the prayer is the most important part of a sacrifice.¹⁵⁷ The animal was then sprinkled with barley grains and water (οὐλοχύτας προβάλοντο) and killed by slitting

¹⁵⁷ For Naiden's summary of a Greek sacrifice and the importance of the prayer, see Naiden 2013: 15. For the prayer in general, see *ibid.*, 99-147. For Greek praying attitudes, see Neumann 1965: 78-82 and Aubriot-Sévin 1992. See also Ekroth's reconstruction of the entire sacrificial process (2008a: 88).

the throat (ἔσφαξαν). Next, the animal would be butchered to remove the vital portions for human consumption.¹⁵⁸ The non-edible portions, primarily the thigh bones wrapped in fat (μηρούς τ' ἐξέταμον κατὰ τε κνίση ἐκάλυψαν), would be burned on the altar for the god.¹⁵⁹ The word κνίση “with fat” is here used to describe the fat that creates the savor, and the verb ἐκάλυψαν to describe the wrapping of that fat around the animal’s thigh bones. The entrails (σπλάγχνα) would then be consumed on the spot by human participants based on rank, and the rest of the meat would be roasted (ὥπτησάν) and divided in a feast (δαίτα... δαίνυντ’... δαιτὸς).¹⁶⁰ In Homer, the earliest scenes of sacrifice describe some of the phases of sacrifice, but not all, yet what they all typically emphasize is the attractiveness of the offerings, especially the attractive fat that creates the savor, as argued by Naiden.¹⁶¹ Thus, a common phrase used in Homer to describe a sacrifice is *hiera kala*, “attractive offerings.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ For Greek butchering and consumption practices, see Ekroth 2008 and 2017.

¹⁵⁹ The practice of burning thigh bones goes back to at least the Early Iron Age. At Ephesos, burnt thigh bones have been recovered from the Protogeometric layer, and at eighth-seventh century BCE altar debris from Kommos and Eretria consisted mostly of burnt thighbones (Reese, Rose, and Ruscillo 2000; Studer, Chenal-Velarde 2003; Forstenpointner and Weissengruber 2008; Ekroth 2009). These practices probably go back even earlier to the Bronze Age where we have unearthed burnt thighbones from the Palace of Nestor at Pylos (Isaakidou et al. 2002; Halstead and Isaakidou 2004). For an introduction to some of the earliest sacrificial feasting in the Linear B tablets, see Palaima 2004. For a succinct summary of the evidence and controversies surrounding Mycenaean sacrifice, see Bergquist 1993 and López-Ruiz 2013: 61-68. The famous Minoan-Mycenaean Hagia Triada sarcophagus from the fourteenth-century BCE depicts the sacrifice of a bull, possible ritual bleeding, purification vessels, and worshippers in a funerary context (Heraklion, Archaeological Museum). For Greek *thusia* in the Bronze Age and the Levantine connections, see Bergquist 1993 and López-Ruiz 2013.

¹⁶⁰ Naiden explains how the choice portions of meat were given to the priest and assistants (2013: 201-209; 2012: 55-95). For the epigraphical evidence describing the divine and priestly portions, see Carbon 2017: 151-177. For the osteological evidence of the god’s portion, see Ekroth 2008b and 2017. Aristotle (*Part. an.* 667b and 673b) lists the organs considered to be entrails (liver, lungs, spleen, kidneys, heart). As Aristotle explains, the entrails are formed from blood and constitute the most vital portions of the animal.

¹⁶¹ Naiden 2013.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 20. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 11.727; 23.195; *Od.* 7.191; 11.130. In the first scene of sacrifice in the *Odyssey*, Homer emphasizes the beauty of the bull with its gilded horns (Hom. *Od.* 3.430-439). See Naiden’s comments on this passage (2013: 16).

The beginning of the sacrifice is marked by the repetitive use of different forms of the verb εὔχομαι “to pray” and the ending of the sacrifice is marked by the repetitive use of the word δαίς “feast,” both of which seem to highlight the most important parts of the ritual process. The word θυσία, however, does not occur in our sources until the classical period.¹⁶³ Unlike Homer, the verb θύω does not occur anywhere in Hesiod’s corpus, and the root only shows up in an adjective once in Hesiod—in Prometheus’ aitiology of sacrifice, as we shall see in Chapter 2.¹⁶⁴ The markedness of this term in Hesiod’s narrative points to the importance of the story of Prometheus for the origins of burnt sacrifice among the Greeks.

In recent years, the integration of literary, iconographical, zooarchaeological, and osteological evidence has greatly expanded our understanding of Greek sacrifice.¹⁶⁵ Based on these interdisciplinary approaches we can reconstruct most of the other details of a Greek sacrifice with greater accuracy. Besides the process described above, we know that the worshippers were also purified and the animal was led to the altar of the god in a

¹⁶³ The earliest references are in Pindar (*Pythian* 5.86) and Herodotos (1.50). The noun θῦμα, derived from the verb θύω, occurs in a fragment of Empedocles (fr.128.6 DK). The infinitive θῦσαι occurs once in the *Iliad* (9.219). The verb θύω and its derivatives occur rarely in Homer, such as in the adjective θυήεις meaning “smoking” as an epithet for the altar (*Il.* 8.48 and *Od.* 8.363), and the diminutive noun θυηλή meaning “parts of a victim offered in a burnt sacrifice” (*Il.* 9.219-220): τοίχου τοῦ ἐτέρουιο, θεοῖσι δὲ **θῦσαι** ἀνώγει Πάτροκλον ὃν ἐταῖρον· ὃ δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε **θυηλάς**. This is the only place in Homer where the infinitive θῦσαι is used. There is also the adjective θυώδης “smelling of incense” (*Odyssey* 4.121; 5.264; 21.52).

¹⁶⁴ Sacrifice does occur in Hesiod, but the verb used is typically ἔρδειν, whose basic meaning is “to do” but also “to offer sacrifice,” cf. ἔρδειν μακάρων ἱεροῖς ἐπὶ βωμοῖς, “performing sacrifice upon the holy altars of the gods” (Hes. *Op.* 136). The word ἔρδειν meaning “to sacrifice” first occurs in Homer (*Il.* 2.306). The word ἔρδειν also occurs in conjunction with the noun θυσία, “to perform a *thusia*” (e.g., Herodotus, 1.131).

¹⁶⁵ See especially the edited volumes combining these approaches (Faraone and Naiden 2012; Hitch and Rutherford 2017). For literary evidence, see Naiden 2013; For zooarchaeology evidence, see Ekroth and Wallensten 2013; For iconographical evidence, see van Straten 1995. For osteological evidence, see Ekroth 2007, 2008a, 2008b.

procession.¹⁶⁶ During the slaughter by cutting the throat, the blood would immediately be collected, some of it would be splashed on the altar, and the rest would be used to make sausages.¹⁶⁷ In addition to the thigh bones, the ὀσφῦς, “tailbone,” would be burned on the altar for the god.¹⁶⁸ I discuss more details of this process in the relevant chapters, but for now two things are important to understand: First, the characteristic Greek sacrifice was a ritualized animal slaughter followed by a burnt offering of the thigh bones; second, the animal was ritually divided between the worshippers and the god;¹⁶⁹ third, our reconstruction of Greek sacrifice indicates that the slaying of the sacrificial animal was not the sole focus of the rite; rather, sacrifice involved several key components, such as the prayer, the burning of the thigh bones, the roasting of meat, and the feast.

¹⁶⁶ For an example of preliminary purification by hand washing, see e.g., Hom. *Od.* 3.445. In Greek temples, *perirrhanteria*, “lustral basins” functioned as boundary markers for shrines (Wycheley 1974: 65). For the classic study of Greek notions of pollution or *miasma*, see Parker 1996. For a more recent study on purity and pollution, see Petrovic and Petrovic 2016. For the Greek procession, see e.g., Hom. *Il.* 6.297-300. A Boeotian *lekanis* or pot from the sixth-century BCE depicts a procession of worshippers in a semicircle leading to Athena (see fig. 1.1 in Naiden 2013).

¹⁶⁷ For the treatment of blood, see Ekroth 2005.

¹⁶⁸ The tail vertebrae called the *osphys* would be burned and its curling from the heat would indicate acceptance of the sacrifice by the god (see Ekroth 2008a: 88). For iconographical representations of the burning of the *osphys*, see van Straten 1988 and 1995: 128-130.

¹⁶⁹ See Ekroth 2008a: 89.

b. Israelite Sacrifice

As scholars have pointed out, the ritual of cultic animal slaughter among the West Semitic people, such as Phoenician¹⁷⁰ and Ugaritic¹⁷¹, was similar to that of the Greeks, namely as the focus fell on the ritual slaughter and burning of the victim, such that we can classify Greek and Levantine sacrifice as part of an eastern Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē*.¹⁷² Moreover, Édward Lipiński has argued that there was little difference between

¹⁷⁰ Evidence for Phoenician feast days, such as a new moon festival and ploughing festival, comes from the eighth-seventh centuries BCE Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Hittite Karatepe inscriptions (*KAI* 26). In particular, the text provides us early terminology for Phoenician animal sacrifice (*zbh*). Cf. D’Andrea 2020: 152. A text from Cyprus gives evidence for a full-moon festival (*KAI* 43). For further evidence of Phoenician festivals, see Lipiński 1993: 257-261. Sacrificial tariffs from the third-century BCE from Carthage also provide additional information about the types of offerings, such as cattle, rams, sheep, goats, lambs, birds, milk, oil, and cakes, and the taxes in money on the part of the priest and the offerer. See the Marseilles Tariff: *KAI* 69 and Carthage Tariffs: *KAI* 74 and 75 discovered in the temple of Baal Saphon. I use the edition and translation of Lupu 2009: 391-396. These texts describe three different types of sacrifice: *kl*, *šw’t*, and *šlm kl*, all of which seem to have been a holocaust of some sort or partially eaten by the priest (Lipiński 1993: 261-263; cf. D’Andrea 2020: 153). Most infamously, the western Phoenicians of Carthage may have practiced child sacrifice called *molk*, a topic I discuss at length in Chapters 5 and 6. For discussion of *molk*, see Lipiński 1993: 275-281; McCarty 2019; Xella 2019. See further discussion of Phoenician and Punic sacrifice in Lipiński 1993 and D’Andrea 2020.

¹⁷⁰ For a commentary on the Book of Leviticus, see Milgrom 1991

¹⁷¹ For a general overview of Ugaritic sacrifice, see del Olmo Lete 1999: 34-42 and Pardee 2002. For the ritual texts describing sacrifice, see Pardee 2000a. The generic term for sacrifice in the Ugaritic texts is *dbḥ*. According to Pardee (2002: 237), “It may be assumed from the use of the verb *DBḤ* in Ugaritic that the shedding of sacrificial blood had ideological importance and must, therefore, have been regaled. But, because of the silence of the Ugaritic texts on these details, we have no way of determining the concrete facts and *a fortiori* the ideology behind them. Based on other points of contact with Palestinian and Arabian religious beliefs, one may speculate that the importance of blood in Ugaritic ritual practice was somewhere between the Mesopotamian and Israelite views, viz., that the sacrificial system was essentially one of ‘care and feeding’ of the gods, but the proper disposal of the blood may also have had a role.” The term *šrp* occurs as a common type of offering and its root meaning “to burn” suggests that it was a burnt offering (see e.g., RS 1001:3, 16; RS 1.003:12, 27, 32, 51; RS 1.009:1, 7, 14, 17; for a complete list where the term occurs, see Pardee 2000a: 1170). For an example of a prayer following a sacrificial ritual, see RS 24.266:26’-36’. A cultic feast (*šrt* or *šr*) probably also followed the sacrifice, see e.g., RS 1.009.10-11; 19.015:2; RS 24.258. For a mythological text in which the god El commands an animal sacrifice to be performed by King Kirta, see *KTU* 1.14.ii.6-26.

¹⁷² Burkert (1976) suggested that the Greeks obtained the practice of burnt sacrifice from the Near Eastern milieu via Cyprus. Bergquist (1993) argues that burnt sacrifice was developed by the Israelites, in contrast to the practices of Mesopotamia in which food was presented to the gods, and passed on to the Greeks via the Phoenicians. López-Ruiz (2013: 69) points out, “given the evidence for burnt animal sacrifice in Bronze Age Canaanite cultures, like Emar and clearly Ugarit, this seems to be a Canaanite feature inherited by both Phoenicians and Israelites and *shared by* the Greeks since the Late Bronze Age” (her emphasis). Cf. West (1997a: 39) who notes the similarities between Greek and Levantine practices but does not speculate on the

the cultic practices of the Phoenicians and Israelites, as represented in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷³ As we would expect, however, there are also significant differences between the practices of the Greeks and Levantine cultures, such as the Canaanites, Phoenicians, and Israelites. We know much less about the Phoenician cult, but I provide further details about the general characteristics of Phoenician sacrifice in Chapter 3 and the more specific issues of child sacrifice in Chapter 5. Our documentation for Israelite sacrifice comes primarily from literary sources, namely the Old Testament, but archaeological data has also helped us reconstruct the early cult of ancient Israel.¹⁷⁴ The Book of Leviticus in the Hebrew Bible is the earliest prescriptive text for sacrifice among the Israelites.¹⁷⁵ The stipulations contained there show an important difference from Greek culture, where we do not have prescriptive texts. Instead, the demes and city-states of Greece composed their own sacred laws and regulations for each cult, such that each community sacrificed in a particular way. This is partly due to the difference between the polytheism of the Greeks and the monolatry of the Israelites.¹⁷⁶

genealogy. For an introduction to the history and genres of Canaanite literature, see Pitard 2009; for Hebrew and Israelite literature, see Ehrlich 2009.

¹⁷³ Lipiński 1993. E.g., 1 Kings 18: 20-40; Exodus 18:12, 34: 15.

¹⁷⁴ For archaeological evidence, see Zevit 2001. The four-horned altar from the sanctuary at Beer Sheba is an excellent example of a typical Israelite *bāmāh* “raised altar” with horns (see fig. 4.3 in Zevit 2001). The issue of the possible connection between the Greek *bomos* and the west Semitic *bāmāh* has yet to be solved (for the Greek etymology, see Burkert 1975: 77-79).

¹⁷⁵ For a commentary on the Book of Leviticus, see Milgrom 1991.

¹⁷⁶ Although ancient Israel is typically regarded as a monotheistic cult, scholars have shown that ancient Israel was in fact a polytheistic society that practiced monolatry, the worship of one god. In other words, the Israelites believed in the existence of many gods but worshipped only one (Rendsburg 1995; Zevit 2001).

For the Israelites, on the other hand, early sources stipulate the exact procedure for sacrificing to YHWH.¹⁷⁷ In fact, the text of Leviticus presents these requirements dictated directly from YHWH and only mediated by Moses (Leviticus 1.1-2). In the Semitic languages, the primary root meaning “to sacrifice,” with the specific meaning of cultic animal slaughter, is *zbh* (Hebrew and Phoenician), *dbh* (Ugaritic and Aramaic), *ḍbh* (Arabic), *zbh* (Akkadian), all reflecting the proto-Semitic **ḍbh*.¹⁷⁸ In the following, I present the distinguishing features of the Israelite ritual of burnt sacrifice with the caveat that, although the Levantine cultures shared similar features, each culture had distinct practices. The following text from Leviticus 1 provides us a general idea about how the primary Israelite ritual ‘*ôlāh* “burnt offering” was performed, and I point out the similarities and differences between Israelite and Greek sacrifice. As with the description of Greek sacrifice above, I cannot account for all the different types of sacrifice in this survey, instead, the following review highlights some of the distinguishing features:¹⁷⁹

When any of you presents an offering of cattle to the LORD, he shall choose his **offering from the herd or from the flock**. If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall make his offering **a male without blemish**. He shall bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, for acceptance in his behalf before the LORD. He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, that it may be acceptable in his behalf, in expiation for him. The bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD; and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall offer the blood, **dashing the blood against**

¹⁷⁷ The correct performance of the ritual is indicated when YHWH appears as a flame within the sanctuary (see e.g., Exodus 49: 34-35; Leviticus 9: 22-24; 1 Kings 18:38).

¹⁷⁸ The Hebrew word *qorbān* is the more general term for “offering,” encompassing grain offerings, animal offerings, dedication of objects, etc (e.g., Leviticus 1:2, 3; Leviticus 2:1; Numbers 31:50). Cf. Akkadian *kurbannu* “lump (of salt, stone, metal, or slag)” (*CAD* 8:401 *kirbānu*).

¹⁷⁹ For an introduction to Israelite sacrifice, see Olyan 2004b. For general studies of sacrifice in ancient Israel, see Levine 1974 and Anderson 1987. In addition to the ‘*ôlāh* there were several other distinct types of sacrifice also related in Leviticus 1-7, such as the cereal offering (*minḥā*), the purification sacrifice (*ḥaṭṭā’t*), the reparation sacrifice (‘*āšām*), the well-being sacrifice (*šēlāmīm*).

all sides of the altar which is at the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting. **The burnt offering shall be flayed and cut up into sections.** The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and lay out wood upon the fire; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall lay out the sections, with the head and the suet, on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar. Its entrails and legs shall be washed with water, and the priest shall turn the whole into smoke on the altar as a burnt offering ('ôlāh), an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the LORD. (Leviticus 1.2-9)¹⁸⁰

Let us begin with some of the notable similarities with Greek sacrifice (bolded in the text above): 1. Unblemished oxen and sheep were the choice victims; 2. Blood manipulation, or the dashing of blood on the altar;¹⁸¹ 3. The careful butchering of the animal; 4. The transference of the animal by burning; 4. The deity enjoys the savor of the burnt victim.¹⁸² There are also other important similarities that are not indicated in the text of Leviticus 1, namely ritual purification and prayer.

Rituals of purification are described in Numbers 19 with the purification ritual of the Red Heifer and in Leviticus 16 with the annual ritual purification of the sanctuary. There are also certain conditions that render the worshipper ritually impure and require special sacrifice to cleanse the impurity (Leviticus 11-15). As Jacob Milgrom comments, “the common denominator” between the different types of impurity is the association with death.¹⁸³ This is also similar to the Greek view of ritual impurity where murderers

¹⁸⁰ I use the translation of the NJPS everywhere.

¹⁸¹ For the importance of blood in Israelite sacrifice, see McCarthy 1969 and Gilders 2004.

¹⁸² Gary Anderson (1992: 875) distinguishes six different steps in the process of Israelite sacrifice: 1. Bringing the animal into the sanctuary; 2. Laying of the hands on the animal; 3. Slaughtering and butchering; 4. Blood manipulation; 5. Burning the animal in parts or as a holocaust; 6. Disposal of animal remains. Many scholars, on the other hand, have argued that the Hebrew Bible cannot be read to reconstruct the ritual of sacrifice (see e.g., J. Z. Smith 2002; Knierim 1992: 17-22, 98-101).

¹⁸³ Milgrom 1992: 766-768, 1000-1004.

and family of the recently deceased were considered ritually impure.¹⁸⁴ Jonathon Klawans argues that the concept of *imitatio dei* can help explain the intimate connection between ritual purity and the sacrificial process.¹⁸⁵ Specifically, only by rendering the worshiper in a god-like condition, free from death, can the Israelite worshiper approach and attract the divine.¹⁸⁶ With regards to prayer, as West comments, the attitudes of prayer were also similar between the Greeks and Semites, namely the raising of the arms with the hands open, for example: “I lift up my hands, invoking Your name” (Psalms 63:5).¹⁸⁷

The main characteristics that set apart Israelite sacrifice from the Greek ritual (underlined in the text above) are the general function of sacrifice to expiate sin and the complete burning of the animal (i.e., holocaust). Although among the Greeks there were purification sacrifices that removed impurities, such as from a murder, the primary function of Greek sacrifice was to give *timē* “honor” to the gods, as discussed above. Moreover, the holocaust type of sacrifice was not typical in ancient Greece. Israelite sacrifice, on the other hand, focused on the removal or expiation of sin.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, unlike Greece, where only the thigh bones and *osphys* “tail-bone” were burned for the god and the other portions were consumed by the priests, the typical Israelite *’ôlāh* “burnt offering” was burned completely (i.e., holocaust).

¹⁸⁴ Parker 1996: 32-73.

¹⁸⁵ Klawans (2006) reads purity and sacrifice as two related ritual structures, whereas earlier scholarship tended to separate the two (see discussion of this scholarship in *ibid.*, 17-48).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 56-66. Exodus 29:42-46 describes how the daily burnt offering attracts YHWH to dwell with the Israelites.

¹⁸⁷ West 1997a: 42-43.

¹⁸⁸ For general studies of purity and sin in the cult of ancient Israel, see Klawans 2000 and 2006.

In the literary representation of the Israelite system of sacrifice described throughout the Hebrew Bible, the rituals were performed earlier on in the portable Tabernacle of the Meeting Place. After the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem by Solomon, however, all sacrifices were offered in the Temple. These sacrifices continued during the period of the Second Temple (built at the end of the sixth-century BCE) after the destruction of Solomon's temple and the Babylonian exile in 587 BCE.¹⁸⁹ Later Jewish literature, especially the fifth division of the Mishnah called *Kodashim* "Holy Things," deals with Israelite animal sacrifice and the sanctuary.¹⁹⁰ This dissertation, however, does not explore these later commentaries on Israelite practices, but instead focuses exclusively on the biblical representations of sacrifice, such as the passage quoted above from Leviticus, and primarily from the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

c. Mesopotamian Sacrifice

Generally speaking, the Mesopotamians worshipped their gods by offering them food in the temple, which ultimately would be consumed by the attendants of the temple.¹⁹¹ In this regard, scholars rely on a definition of Mesopotamian worship that typically does not include ritual slaughter or burnt offerings (i.e., animal sacrifice), like we have seen in Greece and Israel. Scholarly consensus tends to contrast the

¹⁸⁹ The main narrative is 2 Kings 25: 8-10. For the history of this period, see Kuhrt 1995: 2.417-472.

¹⁹⁰ The fifth division, material dating to the period of 70-170 CE contains eleven tractates dealing with different types of offerings (see Neusner 1978-1980: 6.49-214).

¹⁹¹ Sigrist 1984 and 2002: 330-331. For Mesopotamian offerings, see Oppenheim 2013: 187-193; Joannés 2001: 601-603, s. v. 'offrandes,' 717-718, s. v. 'repas'; Joannés: 2000: 335; Maul 2008; Glassner 2009.

Mesopotamian practices of worshipping the gods with the Israelite practices of worshipping YHWH, and some scholars have claimed that sacrifice involving ritual slaughter did not exist in Mesopotamia at all. For instance, Tzvi Abusch argued that the Mesopotamians did not focus their offerings to the gods on the slaughter of animals but rather on the presentation of food.¹⁹² Marcel Sigrist followed the arguments of Abusch and maintained that the Mesopotamians did not offer their gods sacrifice as we understand the practice from the Greek and Semitic cultures, namely the ritual slaughter and burning of the victim.¹⁹³ Sigrist claimed that “the Mesopotamians practiced no ritual killing or special killing of animals and no ritualized draining of blood.”¹⁹⁴

The debate whether or not the Mesopotamian cultic practices involved ritualized killing was first seriously taken up by scholars in 1991 at a conference on sacrifice in the Near East.¹⁹⁵ The arguments for and against ritualized killing (i.e., sacrifice) among the Mesopotamians were divided between Wilfred G. Lambert on the one hand, and Henri Limet and André Finet on the other. Lambert proposed that scholars should not use the term “sacrifice” to describe the characteristically Mesopotamian practice of worshipping the gods by offering them food and drink.¹⁹⁶ Lambert examined the Babylonian terms for

¹⁹² “When we think of sacrifice we tend to think of slaughtering animals or consuming an offering by means of fire. But we must imagine sacrifice a bit differently when we approach the topic in Mesopotamia. For our Mesopotamian sources emphasize neither the slaughter of animals nor the process of consumption. Rather, they usually focus on presentation” (Abusch 2002: 39).

¹⁹³ “...within the biblical word, sacrifice more typically connotes a specific type of offering in which blood is poured out. Connected with this, usually is the idea that blood is endowed with a special power. Although this idea is common to most of the Semitic world, it is unknown in Mesopotamia, because sacrifice in the strict sense did not exist in Mesopotamia” (Sigrist 2002: 330).

¹⁹⁴ Sigrist 2002: 330.

¹⁹⁵ See the proceedings in Quaegebeur 1993.

¹⁹⁶ Lambert 1993: 191.

offerings and concluded that these terms refer to the presentation of food and that a specific term for “meat-offerings” did not exist.¹⁹⁷ The most common Akkadian term to describe these offerings is the noun *niqû*, which is derived from a root meaning “to pour out” and has the basic meaning of “libation” but is usually translated as “flour-offering.”¹⁹⁸

Limet, on the other hand, analyzed the Sumerian term *siskur*, normally translated as “offering,” and insisted on translating the word as “sacrifice.”¹⁹⁹ Limet argued that the term *siskur* designated a system of gift-exchange between humans and the gods, which he defined as “sacrifice.”²⁰⁰ Likewise, Finet presented evidence for possible ritual slaughter in Mesopotamia by examining the ritual immolation of a donkey described in the Mari letters from the third millennium BCE.²⁰¹ More specifically, Limet noted that Akkadian texts use the Sumerian logogram for *siskur* as an equivalent term for the typical Babylonian term *niqû* “offering.”²⁰² He then cited Babylonian ritual texts that describe a variety of offerings defined with the term *siskur*, including flour and sheep (*UET* III,

¹⁹⁷ Lambert 1993: 195-197. The most common Babylonian term for offerings of food is the verb *naqû*, which is usually equated with the Sumerian term *siskur*, “offerings, rites, sacrifice” (Halloran 2012: 65). The verb *naqû* and its nouns *niqû/nīqu* mean “to pour out” either a libation or blood (*CAD* N.1:336). Lambert connects his conclusions to the Sumerian myth *Enki and Ninmah* and the Babylonian *Atrahasis*, both of which explain the creation of humans as a way of feeding the gods.

¹⁹⁸ *CAD* N.2:252 *niqû*. Lambert 1993: 195. For an introduction to the history and genres of Akkadian literature, see Foster 2009.

¹⁹⁹ For *siskur*, see Halloran 2012: 65 and Limet 1993: 243. For an introduction to the history and genres of Sumerian literature, see Rubio 2009.

²⁰⁰ Limet 1993: 248.

²⁰¹ *ARM* II 37 mentions the killing of donkey as a pact, and *ARM* XXIII 55 mentions the term *ni-qum* “offering” with a donkey victim. Finet 1993: 135-142. The word *niqû* (*CAD* N.2:252) is the noun form of the verb *naqû* (*CAD* N.1:336).

²⁰² Limet 1993: 243; Cf. *CAD* N.2:252; Lambert 1993: 195.

147)²⁰³ and beer and cakes (*UET III*, 174).²⁰⁴ In a text from the archives of Puzriš-Dagan (*BIN III*, 221), animal offerings, including sheep and oxen, are included as a *siskur*. The following text (*UET III*, 193) from the Ur III period (22nd-21st century BCE) offers us an early example of these common types of ritual texts:

2 trained lambs, for the ...
 1 ox, 2 trained lambs, 1 kid
 for the temple of Nanna;
 [] trained kids []
 at Ur.
 1 sheep, 1 trained lamb
 for Nanna, in the evening;
 2 trained lambs
 for Nanna, in the morning;
 1 two-year-old cow, 1 sheep, 1 trained lamb,
 from the house of the festivals.
 1 pig from the field, coming from N.
 As the great *siskur* (offering) in the night,
 Nanna, in (or during) the *Akitu*
 (*UET III*, 193)²⁰⁵

This text enumerates several animal offerings, which are qualified by the Sumerian logogram *siskur* “offering,” but there are no details about *how* the animals were ritually treated, such as by slaughtering or burning. Nevertheless, a literary text cited by Lambert from the second millennium BCE describes a banquet for the god Marduk and relates the slaughter of animals as offerings to the gods: “Lambs were slaughtered (*tu-ub-bu-ḫu*), bullocks in abundance, offerings were proliferated, incense was burnt, *armannu*-incense gave off pleasant smells.”²⁰⁶ The word here used to describe the slaughter of the animals

²⁰³ For other examples of this type, see *UET III*, 142; 147; 211; 214; 215; 216; 219; 227.

²⁰⁴ For other examples of this type, see *UET III*, 159; 167; 172; 196; 197; 198; 199; 200; 202; 208; 217.

²⁰⁵ My translation of Limet’s French translation of the Sumerian (Limet 1993: 251).

²⁰⁶ IV rev. 20 no. 1 and dupls. (collated) 13-14) in Lambert 1993: 199. Unfortunately, Lambert does provide further reference for the text. Cf. “Bulls were slaughtered (*tubbuḫu*), lambs slain, holy *armannu* was scattered on the censer” (Borger 1956: 92 § 61:14).

is the Akkadian root *ṭbh*, “to slaughter,” a word which can have cultic connotations.²⁰⁷ I discuss this verbal root in detail in Chapter 1, but for now what is important is that the Mesopotamian ritual texts typically only list the offerings, although, there are literary sources that suggest we can possibly interpret the animals offered as ritually slaughtered animals.²⁰⁸

In his synthesis of the arguments from the conference, Antoon Schoors discussed the opposing positions of Lambert, on the one hand, and Limet and Finet, on the other. Schoors steered a middle course and suggested: “the idea of sacrifice should probably not be altogether excluded,” he argued, “but, nevertheless, we should avoid too rash a use of the term ‘sacrifice’ and explore each case on its own merits.”²⁰⁹ In my analysis of Mesopotamian myths, I adopt Schoors’ prudence toward the texts and reserve our English term “sacrifice” for clear instances of ritual slaughter and the term “offering” for libations and other food items. Rather than viewing Mesopotamian practice as an exact

²⁰⁷ CAD T:2 *ṭabāḫū*

²⁰⁸ A ritual text copied during the Hellenistic Seleucid period (AO. 6451), however, does explicitly refer to the slaughter of animals as part of the daily offerings. The text describes the daily offerings for the temple of the god Anu at the Sumerian city of Uruk. The obverse side of the text details the list of meal offerings for the gods of the temple, consisting of vessels of beer, milk, wine, loaves of bread, and cakes. These are the types of offerings enumerated by Lambert and defined with the term *niqū*. The reverse side of the text details a list of extensive animal offerings and specifies ritual slaughter: “**While slaughtering the bull(s) and the ram(s), the slaughterer shall recite** the (composition beginning with the word?) “*Mār Šamaš bēlu būli ina šēri ušabša ri’iti*.” **Similarly, while slaughtering the bull(s) and ram(s), the chief slaughterer shall speak (a prayer for?) life to the deities** Anu, Antu, the Great Star, and the planet Venus; he shall recite (it) to no other god” (AO. 6451 reverse; translation by Sachs 1969: 344. Sachs uses the edition by Thureau-Dangin 1971: 74-86). The importance of this text is the mention of animal slaughter in a cultic context. The Akkadian word used in the text to describe the slaughter of the animals is *nakāsu*, which covers a wide semantic field, but its primary use is a generic term meaning “to cut” (CAD 11.1:171 *nakāsu*). One of its meanings is “to slaughter” in a ritual context, and the CAD quotes the text as an example of this usage (CAD 11.1:177 *nakāsu*). The word *nakāsu* is not the standard word for sacrifice in Semitic (**ḏbh*), but it can have the meaning of “sacrifice” in a clear cultic context. Evidence from the cultic texts from Emar suggest that offerings were burnt (see Emar 373.62-63: “[In front] of the great gate of battle they perform the lesser sacrificial homage. They burn for all the gods one ewe, one jar, and [two] pair of (barley-) mash loaves provide by the king” (translation by Flemin 2000: 241).

²⁰⁹ Schoors 1993: 502.

antithesis to its Semitic counterpart, in my view, the term “sacrifice” is appropriate to describe the rituals of animal slaughter in certain Mesopotamian texts.²¹⁰

Chapter Outline

In **Chapter 1**, I begin my study with the Old Babylonian version (seventeenth-century BCE) of the Akkadian myth *Atrahasis* that depicts the slaughter of the god Ilawela to create the first humans. I offer a new reading of the myth by arguing that the story portrays the slaughter of the god as a sacrifice performed by the gods. To establish that, I analyze the Akkadian term *ṭbh* “to slaughter,” used in the narrative and show through analysis of Akkadian texts, as well as comparative evidence with other Semitic languages, that the term can mean “to sacrifice” in a cultic context. I argue that the cultic context for this passage is established in the narrative of the slaughter of the god by the reference to the purification bath and the reference to the sacred lunar dates of the 1st, 7th,

²¹⁰ The Babylonian *akitu*-festival also describes the slaughter of an animal and the use of its blood for a purification rite (for cuneiform text with transliteration, see Thureau-Dangin 1971: 127-154; for the recent translation, see Cohen 1993: 441-447). See also animal slaughter in the ritual for covering the temple kettle-drum (Sachs 1969: 335) and the ritual for the repair of the temple (Sachs 1969: 340). The ritual texts from Ugarit, on the other hand, do not describe blood-manipulation, nevertheless, they do refer to ritual slaughter of animals. As Pardee (2002: 3) points out, the lack of mention of blood-manipulation in the Ugaritic texts may be due to the genre of the texts. Ritual texts from the Greek world offer a useful corollary for an alternative to the strict definition of Mesopotamian practice proposed by Lambert, Abusch, and Sigrist. In the ritual texts from the classical Greek period, we do not find emphasis on the slaughter of animals, but instead we simply find lists of the animals offered to the divinities (see the Attic deme calendars in Lupu 2009). In the iconography depicting Greek sacrifice we also rarely see the kill-stage of the sacrifice, as Folkert van Straten showed (the depiction of the kill-stage of the sacrifice is rare in both Greek and Roman art. For Rome, see Elsner 2012: 120-163. For Greece, see van Straten 1995: 187). Moreover, the primary Greek word for sacrifice, *θύειν*, means “to offer by burning,” and the Latin term for sacrifice, *sacrificare*, means “to make sacred,” neither of which convey any connotation of slaughter. Nevertheless, the slaughter of an animal was clearly a part of Greek and Roman sacrifice. As Naiden has pointed out (2013: 23), just as it is inaccurate to claim that the kill-phase was the primary act of sacrifice, it is equally inaccurate to claim that any other phase of the ritual was the primary phase. In Naiden’s view, sacrifice was a process that included many distinct phases. From this view, the presentation phase of Mesopotamian animal sacrifice was not the primary phase, nor was the killing phase, but both were important parts of the process of making offerings to the gods, just as they were for the Greeks and Romans. To use Ekroth’s concept of sacrifice, the Mesopotamians presented “sacred meat.”

and 15th. I then highlight how the *Atrahasis* narrative of humanity's origins is linked with the origin of sacrifice. In the remainder of the chapter, I use the Hebrew Bible as a test case to show how the Israelite culture adapted elements about the origins of sacrifice from the Mesopotamian background underlying the *Atrahasis*, but that the differences in the stories articulate cultural distinctions between the polytheistic theology of the Mesopotamians and the monolatry of the Israelites.

In **Chapter 2**, I explore the Greek myth of Prometheus from the poems of Hesiod. I show how Hesiod adapts the Mesopotamian tradition of sacrifice and anthropogeny in his depiction of the first sacrifice that leads to the creation of the first woman, Pandora. I build upon well established scholarship that has shown how Greek myths adapt themes from the Mesopotamian traditions, and I contribute to the discussion by demonstrating how the depiction of the first sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus is an adaptation of the story of the sacrifice of Ilawela performed by Enki and the other gods from the *Atrahasis*. I then bring in Pseudo-Apollodoros' Greek version of the story of the first sacrifice performed by Deukalion, son of Prometheus, after the flood. I show how the Greek story of the flood and first sacrifice reflects the process of cultural exchange and adaptation of stories. In my conclusion, I explain how the differences between the stories of *Atrahasis*, the Hebrew Bible, and Hesiod express important distinctions between the religious theologies of these cultures.

In **Chapter 3**, I explore the myths of the Tyrian god Melqart (lit. "king of the city") and the Greek hero-god Herakles. Using the latest research in Phoenician studies, I investigate the evidence for the rites and mythology of Tyrian Melqart, who was immolated and symbolically reborn in an annual festival called in Greek the *egersis* or

“awakening.” In my analysis, I interpret the death of Melqart as a burnt sacrifice characteristic of the Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē*. Although our knowledge of Phoenician religion and of Melqart is extremely fragmentary, it is well established that Melqart’s rites and myth were known throughout the Mediterranean in areas of Phoenician colonization. By the fifth-century BCE Melqart was identified with the Greek hero-god Herakles and much of our evidence for the Phoenician god must be uncovered from Greek interpretations of the god. I discuss the historical dynamics that facilitated the identification between Melqart and Herakles during this period.

In **Chapter 4**, I build upon the historical context introduced in Chapter 3 and offer a new reading of the myth of the attempted sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos 2.45. In the myth, the Egyptians attempt to sacrifice Herakles, but he resists and slaughters his sacrificers instead. I argue that the myth should be interpreted through the lens of syncretism and as a Greek adaptation of the lost Phoenician myth about the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. I anchor my argument to the historical dynamics in the fifth-century BCE Mediterranean when Melqart and Herakles were identified in an environment in which Phoenician and Egyptian cultures were conflated by the Greeks (explained in Chapter 3). My close reading of the Herakles myth in Herodotos shows how it adapts the Melqart mythology and at the same time how the myth of Herakles articulates cultural differences between the theologies of the Greeks and Phoenicians.

In **Chapter 5**, I continue the exploration of the myth of Melqart through an analysis of Levantine myths and ritual texts, and especially through the work of the Roman author Philo of Byblos who preserves Phoenician myths. In one of these myths the god El (Kronos) sacrifices his only-son Ieoud. The myth is typically understood as an

aitiology for the type of ritual practiced among the Punic colonies called *molk* sacrifice. I begin by discussing the difficulties in using Philo as a source and then present his “theory of sacrifice,” which I use in Chapter 6 to interpret Philo’s myth of child sacrifice. I present Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Biblical texts to situate the Levantine background of Philo’s myths. In particular, I introduce the evidence for child sacrifice among the Phoenicians, then I focus on the themes of kingship, fertility, and the pattern of life and death in the Baal myth and how they relate to the stories of divine and human sacrifice in Philo. Moreover, I elucidate how the myth of the death and rebirth of Baal becomes a prototype for Melqart, the Baal of Tyre. I build upon the work of Jon Levenson and explain how the stories of Baal and Genesis 22 (the near-sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham) draw from a Levantine pattern of myth involving death, rebirth, and fertility beliefs. Finally, I show how different stories about death and rebirth point to the fruitful adaptation of motifs through cultural exchange in the Levant.

In **Chapter 6**, I offer a new reading of the myth of child sacrifice in Philo of Byblos based on the Levantine background presented in Chapter 5. I argue, in particular, that the myth of Ieoud is related to and provides us deeper insights into the myth of Melqart. Moreover, I claim that we cannot fully understand the Carthaginian practice of child sacrifice without contextualizing it within the cult of Melqart. With a close reading of Philo, I point out how Philo’s foundation myth of Tyre connects kingship with child sacrifice. I draw attention to Philo’s use of the Greek term for “king,” used to describe the child Ieoud who is sacrificed by his father El. Additionally, I show how the myth of child sacrifice is connected to Philo’s “theory of sacrifice” (as laid out in Chapter 5), which is based on the worship of deities associated with the fertility cycle. Using the myth of Baal

as a prototype, I then argue that the myth of Ieoud relates not only his death by sacrifice but also, metaphorically, his rebirth, such that we can compare the myth of Ieoud to the myth of Melqart, who is also sacrificed and reborn. Finally, I hypothesize about the Tyrian origins of the Carthaginian practices of child sacrifice, which I connect to the Tyrian myth of the sacrifice of Melqart.

In **Chapter 7**, I return to several themes from the previous chapters by exploring a Greek myth that depicts the sacrifice of a child god to create humans, who is then reborn, namely the ‘Orphic’ myth of Dionysos. I build upon the work of Johnston, who shows how the *bricoleur* of the myth drew from a variety of myths to construct his story. I contribute to the discussion by arguing that the *bricoleur* also drew from the Near Eastern traditions underlying the *Atrahasis* and the myths of Ieoud and Melqart. Along these lines I also build upon the idea of “triangularity” of Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian myths developed by López-Ruiz in order to gain a deeper understanding of the myth of Dionysos. Finally, I show how the myths of Dionysos, Melqart, and Osiris intersect due to the dynamics of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean.

Chapter 1: The First Sacrifice and the Origins of Humanity: Mesopotamian and Biblical Traditions

“They bound him and held him in front of Ea, imposed the penalty on him and cut off his blood. He created mankind from his blood, imposed the toil of the gods (on humanity) and released the gods from it.”
-*Enuma Elish*, Tab. VI.²¹¹

Ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.²¹²
-Matthew 6:10

Introduction

The story of the birth of sacrifice in Semitic and Aegean cultures begins in the second millennium BCE with clay tablets inscribed in Akkadian that preserve the Old Babylonian version of the Mesopotamian epic *Atrahasis*.²¹³ These ancient tablets describe the creation of humans by the god of crafts, Enki, and the birth goddess Mami, then the cosmic flood sent by the gods to wipe out their creation, and the building of the ark by the eponymous hero Atrahasis.²¹⁴ Ever since the discovery of the tablets and George Smith’s publication of *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, Near Eastern

²¹¹ Translation by Dalley 2000: 261 with minor modifications.

²¹² “On earth as it is in heaven.”

²¹³ The first discovered tablets were reconstructed by George Smith and subsequently published in 1876 in his book *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (Lambert and Millard: 1999: 3). For a comprehensive introduction to the discovery and different recensions of the text, see Chen 2013: 1-26; Lambert and Millard 1999: 1-39; Kvanvig 2011: 13-19.

²¹⁴ We can date the tablets more securely to around 1700 BCE based on the colophon of the author of the text, Ipiq-Aya, who lived during the reign of Ammi-šaduqa, king of Babylon from 1702-1682 BCE. Ipiq-Aya compiled the Old Babylonian version of the story and arranged the text in the version that comes down to us. See Stephanie Dalley’s introduction to the text (2000: 3-4). In 1969 Wilfred G. Lambert and Alan Ralph Millard published the critical edition of the text, which remains the standard edition to this day (republished as Lambert and Millard 1999). See also Wolfram von Soden’s 1978 edition of Tablet I.

scholarship on the *Atrahasis* has focused on the motif of the flood and its connections to other flood stories from the Near East, such as the story of Utnapishtim in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the story of Noah in the Book of Genesis.²¹⁵

Since the publication of Burkerts' *Orientalizing Revolution*, classical scholarship has observed parallels between the *Atrahasis* and Greek myths such that scholars now agree that the Greek poets had indirect knowledge of the *Atrahasis*.²¹⁶ In particular, Jacqueline Duchemin and Charles Penglase have both observed numerous similarities between the stories of the *Atrahasis* and Hesiod's myth of Prometheus and Pandora, specifically between the trickster gods Enki and Prometheus, and between the birth goddess Mami and the first woman Pandora, each of whom are involved in the creation of the first humans.²¹⁷ In a nutshell, in *Atrahasis*, Enki slaughters the rebel god Ilawela,

²¹⁵ See Smith 1876. For scholarship on the *Atrahasis* and the flood, see e.g., Wolde 1994; Dalley 2000: 4-8; Kvanvig 2011. Helge Kvanvig's (2011) study focuses on the intertextuality between the Babylonian and biblical sources referring to the flood and is one of the most comprehensive and important philological studies of the flood motif. For an important study on the dating of the flood motif, see Chen 2013. Joshua Chen (2013: 2-3; 254) explores the development of the cosmic flood motif in Mesopotamian literature, and he argues the flood motif originated and developed in the second millennium BCE. See especially his Ch. 2 (ibid., 67-128). Stephanie Dalley (2016: 70), however, has doubts about the conclusions of Chen's study, and she draws attention to the third millennium royal hymn of Shulgi which mentions the cosmic flood. For the flood, see Tablet XI of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (Dalley 2000: 109-125) and Genesis 6-9. For correspondences between Mesopotamian flood motifs and the Book of Genesis, see Heidel 1963: 224-269; Parrot 1955: 15-53; Sarna 1989: 48-49; Lambert 1994: 96-113; Tsumura 1994: 44f; Rendsburg 2007: 115-127; Kvanvig 2011: 211-233.

²¹⁶ Burkert 1992, published originally in German as *Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur* in 1931. The first attempt at this type of comparative scholarship was carried out in Robert Brown's 1898 *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*. His views were at first rejected, but have now been substantiated. Burkert (1992: 90) observed the similarity between the tripartite division of the world in the beginning of the *Atrahasis*, I.11-18 (Lambert and Millard 1999) and the division of the world between Zeus, Poseidon and Hades described in *Il.* 15.187-193.

²¹⁷ Duchemin 1974 and 1975; Penglase 1994: 182-192. Both Prometheus and Enki are gods of wisdom who help create the first humans. Enki is god of wisdom and crafts who created humanity with the help of the birth goddess Mami. Prometheus is also a god of wisdom and crafts since he provided humans with fire and was the progenitor of the first humans according to different traditions. Prometheus affirms the use of fire for crafts as one of the benefits he gave to humans (Aesch. *PV*, 256). In Hesiod, Prometheus' trickery with the first sacrifice is the catalyst for the creation of Pandora. In the tradition of Pseudo-Apollodoros, Prometheus was the father of the first man, Deukalion. In Hesiod fr. 5 MW, Deukalion is the father of Pandora. For the variations in these traditions, see Penglase 1994: 191. Stephanie West (1994: 129-149) has

helps create humans, and rebels against the plans of the gods to destroy them by giving instructions to Atrahasis on how to survive the destruction.²¹⁸ In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Prometheus rebels against Zeus with his tricky sacrifice and his theft of fire on behalf of humans, and in the *Works and Days*, because of Prometheus' rebellion, Zeus gives the first woman Pandora to Epimetheus and the human race ensues.²¹⁹ In a later Greek version of the flood, Prometheus even warns his son, the first man Deukalion, to build an ark, thereby saving humans from destruction.²²⁰ In both *Atrahasis* and Hesiod, therefore, the motif of rebellion against the supreme god leads to the creation of humans.²²¹ Moreover, in *Atrahasis*, the birth goddess Mami creates the first humans from clay, and in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Pandora mirrors the goddess Mami because she displays features of an earth goddess.²²²

As discussed in the Introduction to this study, the interconnectedness between the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and the coexistence of shared taxonomies fostered an environment of cultural translation between their literary-mythical traditions.²²³ The ease with which motifs and even names could be translated from one culture to another

shown how the development of Hesiod's trickster-god Prometheus into the culture-hero Prometheus depicted in the fifth-century BCE tragedy *Prometheus Bound* arose from the assimilation of the god Prometheus with the Mesopotamian god Ea/Enki. But the assimilation between Prometheus and Enki probably occurred much earlier than the fifth-century. For culture heroes in the Near East and Greece, see López-Ruiz 2017a: 272-275.

²¹⁸ Penglase 1994: 187-188.

²¹⁹ Hes. *Op.* 535-590 and *Op.* 48-89.

²²⁰ Hes. *Op.* 521-516; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.46.3-1.48.10.

²²¹ Penglase 1994: 186-189.

²²² *Ibid.*, 176. This is evident both from the pottery depictions of her rising out of the ground, like the goddesses Persephone, Gaia and Aphrodite, as well from her name, which is an epithet of the goddess Gaia (Γῆ πάνδωρε), see Homeric epigram 7.1. Moreover, Pandora's connection with the jar seems to be evocative of her role as an earth goddess.

²²³ For the idea of shared taxonomies, see Raaflaub 2000: 60-64 and Noegel 2007.

can be grasped in the Greek name Prometheus, which is possibly a rough translation of the Akkadian name “Atrahasis.”²²⁴ Prometheus’ name may be derived from the Greek compound $\pi\rho\acute{o}$ + $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$, “to learn beforehand,” highlighting his divine wisdom.²²⁵ Atrahasis’ name is composed of the Akkadian words *atru*, “foremost,” and *ḥasīsu*, “ear, understanding.”²²⁶ It is likely, then, that Hesiod either knew an oral version of the myth of *Atrahasis* or knew the stories that went into that myth without necessarily knowing the myth itself as it is preserved.²²⁷

The aim of this chapter is to explore the relationship between ideas that connect the origins of sacrifice and the creation of humans, an area of the *Atrahasis* and Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days* that has received little scholarly attention. The overarching argument of this chapter is that there was a motif circulating in the

²²⁴ According to Dalley (2000: 2), “Prometheus, Deucalion’s father, may possibly be an approximate Greek translation of Atrahasis, and it is just possible that an abbreviation of (Uta)-na’ish(tim) was pronounced ‘Noah’ in Palestine from very early times.” For a similar argument, see Duchemin 1974: 38.

²²⁵ Beekes 2010: 1237. Analysis in Indo-European linguistics, on the other hand, has suggested the name Prometheus is derived from the Greek verb $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ by way of the PIE root *–math* “to steal.” To steal something can be understood as “to apprehend” which leads to the meaning “to learn.” Martin West (2007: 273) provides a succinct summary of the scholarship first pioneered by Adalbert Kuhn’s [1859: 12-18] analysis of the Vedas and later developed further by Volkmar Schmidt and others [Schmidt 1975: 183-190; Narten 1960: 135 n. 40]: “The verb for ‘drill’ in the Vedic verse and elsewhere is *manth*. In a later Sutra the fire-drill is called a *pramantha*-. Kuhn proposed to find here the origin of Promātheus, Prometheus, the god who in Greek myth stole fire from heaven and gave it to mankind. According to a later construction he actually invented fire-sticks (Diod. 5. 67.2). The Greeks understood his name to mean ‘foresighted’, in line with the verb $\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\mu\eta\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ and noun $\pi\rho\omicron\mu\eta\theta\acute{\epsilon}\iota\alpha$. Kuhn supposed that it had originally meant ‘the Fire-driller’, and was reinterpreted when the related words fell out of use. When Kuhn wrote, *manth* (with zero grade *math*) had not been distinguished from the similar-looking verb *math* ‘seize’,” as West says, “Volkmar Schmidt has shown how these can be related to $\mu\alpha\theta$, the root of $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$. As words meaning grasp, apprehend are readily transferred to the mental sphere.” Ignaz Goldziher (1967: 374-375) also provides further explanation about the etymology of Prometheus’ name: “the answer to the question of the nature of the etymology of the name Prometheus must be this: Prometheus comes from a root *pra* + *math*, which had the same meaning as the simple verb $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$. But the formation of the name from the verb is older than the appearance of any specific Hellenism; For Prometheus was not formed by the Greeks.”

²²⁶ CAD 1.2:501; Kvanvig 2011: 65.

²²⁷ Nagy (2009) has contested whether Hesiod was a historical figure or rather a representation of an oral tradition. If the biographical details in his poems are authentic, then it is possible Hesiod heard the story of *Atrahasis* from his father whom the *Works and Days* (636) makes an immigrant from Kyme in Asia Minor.

mythological *koinē* of the eastern Mediterranean that connected the creation of humans with the origins of sacrifice.²²⁸ This motif, I will argue, was developed in Mesopotamia with the epic *Atrahasis* but circulated throughout the Near East and eventually arrived in Greece where it was combined with local traditions and adapted into Hesiod's myth of Prometheus. I analyze the Near Eastern material in Chapter 1 and the Greek material in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I first demonstrate that the *Atrahasis* connects the creation of humanity to sacrifice by depicting the former as a consequence of the latter. I argue that the slaughter of the god Ilawela (Aw-Ila), resulting in the advent of humanity, should be interpreted as the first sacrifice, and hence the myth provides an aitiology of sacrifice. I then turn to the Book of Genesis as a case study for adaptation of this motif, in particular to the stories of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first sacrifice, and the flood. Although the Israelite story of the flood surely adapts elements from the Mesopotamian tradition, I specifically focus on how Genesis adapts the motif of creation and sacrifice and show how the biblical account distinguishes itself in opposition to the Mesopotamian tradition through its unique representation of sacrifice. My analysis of the biblical material will show how the Israelites adapted the motif to fit their cultural differences and elevate the prestige of YHWH.

I then turn to Greece in Chapter 2 and argue that the connection between the first sacrifice and the creation of humans circulated as part of the mythological *koinē* of the eastern Mediterranean. I show how Hesiod adapts this Near Eastern motif for a Greek

²²⁸ For the Mediterranean *koinē*, see Rutherford 2011a. For the mythological *koinē*, see López-Ruiz 2014: 187.

audience with his myth of Prometheus which describes the first sacrifice and the origins of the first Greek woman, Pandora. I explore how Hesiod's deviations from the motif illuminate the cultural differences between the Greeks and Mesopotamians. Finally, I analyze the flood story preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros by way of exploring the extent to which the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny circulated and was adapted.

1. Mesopotamia

In this section, I will argue that the *Atrahasis* renders the creation of humanity a direct consequence of the first sacrifice: the slaughter of the god Ilawela. First, I will argue that despite his divine status, Ilawela's slaughter should indeed be read as a sacrifice, hence as the original and first sacrifice, a rite typically practiced by humans on animals for the benefit of the gods.

The first sacrifice occurs in the antediluvian time when only the gods existed and humanity was yet to be created, a mythological time when gods *were* humans, when some gods served other gods. The *Atrahasis* begins:

When the gods like men
Bore the work and suffered the toil.²²⁹
(*Atrahasis* I.i.1-2)

The opening lines of the myth, perhaps because they identify the divine with humanity, have been the focus of much scholarly disagreement and variation in translation.²³⁰ As

²²⁹ Translation by Lambert and Millard 1999: 43. Elsewhere I prefer the translation of Dalley (2000).

²³⁰ See Kvanvig (2011: 39-44) for a full discussion of the scholarly arguments. The difficulty for translating the opening line is in how to interpret the ending *-um* affixed to the word *a-wi-lum*, "humans." Lambert and Millard (1999: 146 n.1) interpreted the ending *-um* as a comparative ending in place of the usual Akkadian comparative *-iš*. Lambert and von Soden (1969: 416-417) opposed this reading on the grounds that *-um* could not function as a comparative. Instead, von Soden translated the clause with the

Helge Kvanvig points out, the opening line is programmatic for interpreting the rest of the poem.²³¹ He translates the opening clause as a metaphor, not as a simile: “When gods were human.”²³² Kvanvig argues that by translating the line as a metaphor, the first clause creates an enigma: “It is the story as a whole,” he explains, “that unfolds this enigma: the interplay between gods and humankind, the changing of roles between gods and humankind, and the fusion of the divine and humankind.”²³³ Stephanie Dalley circumvents the philological issues in the text (see note 230) and translates the first two lines as follows: “When the gods instead of man did the work.”²³⁴ Despite various scholarly approaches, it is clear that the opening lines state that in a primordial time without humans as they are today the gods had to perform what would become the fundamental human activity of work.

Hence, in the course of the *Atrahasis*, the gods create the first humans to work instead of them. Thus, this is an aitiology of why humans labor and why humans were even created at all. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the *Atrahasis* is also an aitiology of sacrifice because the gods created humans not only to work for them but also to feed them with sacrifice. In fact, work and sacrifice are fundamentally connected because the food offerings that were given to the gods in Mesopotamian societies were a product of

word *a-wi-lum* as predicate to the word *i-lu*: “When the gods (still also) were human” (Ibid.). See also his edition of the text (1978: 55).

²³¹ Kvanvig 2011: 39.

²³² Ibid. Kvanig follows the interpretations of William L. Moran (1987: 247) and Claus Wilcke (1999: 73-74). Benjamin Foster (1993: 159) also chose to translate the clause as a metaphor, “When gods were man.” Foster interpreted the line as a metaphor literally meaning, “when gods were (like) men” (Ibid., 159 n.1).

²³³ Kvanvig 2011: 43.

²³⁴ Dalley 2000: 9. I use Dalley’s translation everywhere unless otherwise stated. Dalley uses the edition by Lambert and Millard 1969, reprinted in 1999.

manual labor. Moreover, it was by offering these sacrifices to the gods that humans ensured that the rains would fall and the crops would grow (and produce further offerings).²³⁵ Most crucially for my argument, however, the *Atrahasis* is an aitiology of sacrifice because it depicts the ritual slaughter of the god Ilawela as an origin story for the human practice of offering food to the gods, as I will explain below.

Leading up to this momentous occasion, the gods were exhausted by work. Thus, the superior Anunnaki gods delegated the work to the inferior Igigi gods.²³⁶ The gods Anu, Enlil (Ellil), and Enki (Ea) then cast lots to divide the domains of the universe between themselves. The Igigi gods carry out the labor of building canals and the riverbeds of the Tigris and Euphrates. After years of labor, the Igigi gods rebel against the other gods. Anu comes down from the sky, convenes with the other gods to decide how to quell the rebellion and agrees that the work is too much for the (lesser) gods to endure.²³⁷ The god Enki suggests that humans be created in order to relieve the burden of the gods. The gods accept this decision and request that the mother goddess, Mami, create humans with the assistance of Enki.²³⁸

It is at this point in the myth that the first sacrifice occurs. With the help of the birth goddess Mami, the trickster god of crafts Enki describes how he will create humanity by slaughtering one of the rebel gods and mixing his blood with clay:

Enki made his voice heard
And spoke to the great gods,

²³⁵ This idea is evident on Tablet II of the *Atrahasis* when the gods withhold rain from the land in the second attempt to annihilate humanity, but an offering to the god Adad returns the rains (Dalley 2000: 21).

²³⁶ Summary from the translation by Dalley (2000: 9-14).

²³⁷ The Old Babylonian Version (OBV) breaks off here and the Standard Babylonian Version (SBV) is used to fill in the lacuna.

²³⁸ The OBV resumes here. Mami is also called Mama, Nintu and Bēlet-ilī (Lambert and Millard 1999: 9).

‘On the first, seventh, and fifteenth of the month
I shall make a purification by washing.
Then one god should be slaughtered.
 And the gods can be purified by immersion.
 Nintu shall mix clay
 With his flesh and his blood.
 Then a god and a man
 Will be mixed together in clay.
 ...
On the first, seventh, and fifteenth of the month
He made a purification by washing.
 Ilawela who had intelligence,
They slaughtered in their assembly.
 Nintu mixed clay
 With his flesh and blood.
 They heard the drumbeat forever after.
 (Atrahasis I.204-227)²³⁹

This passage is paralleled in another text, the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, in which the gods condemn the rebel god Qingu to capital punishment and use his blood to create humans.²⁴⁰ In that text, it is clear from the cosmic battle between the gods that has preceded the punishment of Qingu that gods are capable of slaughtering each other. The passage quoted above from the *Atrahasis*, however, does not simply describe the punitive slaughter of a god, as scholarship up to this point has indicated, but rather the first sacrifice. In other words, the scene from *Atrahasis* is a variation of the theme of the slaughter of a god and creation of humans from the *Enuma Elish*. Kvanvig mentions incidentally that the god Ilawela is sacrificed, but he does not emphasize this point in his translation, nor does he justify his use of the term sacrifice to describe the act of slaughter.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Translation by Dalley 2000: 15 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 57-59). My emphasis for the key lines.

²⁴⁰ Tablet VI = Dalley 2000: 261.

²⁴¹ “The report of the actual creation comes next. This closely follows to the design given by Enki, adding the name of **the sacrificed god** in 223” (Kvanvig 2011: 44). “Special for *Atrahasis* are three enigmatic

In the following analysis, I offer a defense of Kvanvig's reference to the slaughter in *Atrahasis* as a sacrifice. As I will argue, the scene is represented as a sacrifice by the grouping of three key expressions: the sacred time of the slaughter, the preliminary purification, and the term (*ṭabāḥu*) used to describe the slaughter. As Benjamin R. Foster notes in his translation of the *Atrahasis*, the reference to the first, seventh, and fifteenth of the month alludes to the sacred times of the monthly new moon, first quarter, and full moon when most rituals were performed by Near Eastern cultures.²⁴² The slaughter is then prefaced by an act of purification ("I shall make a purification by washing"). Finally, the verb *ṭabāḥu* used for slaughter can mean generally the slaughter of an animal, but it is can also be used specifically to describe the ritual slaughter of an animal (i.e., a sacrifice) in a cultic context.²⁴³ Although each of these elements do not independently imply a sacrifice, each is a crucial aspect of Mesopotamian sacrifice, and their simultaneous inclusion in the description of Ilawela's slaughter indicates that we may interpret it as a sacrifice. I make this argument with all due caution because sacred days were used not only for rituals but also for any other important event, such as going to war or constructing a building.²⁴⁴ Likewise, purification was used in a variety of contexts that do not exclusively imply a sacrifice.²⁴⁵ My argument is that the occurrence of these three

expressions *ṭemu*, *eṭemmu*, and *uppu*, connected with **the sacrifice of the god**" (ibid., 49). My emphasis added.

²⁴² Foster 2003: 451 n.5. For the moon rituals among Near Eastern societies in general, see Fleming 2000: 159.

²⁴³ *CAD* T:2 *ṭabāḥu* 1.4'

²⁴⁴ For the differences between the cultic calendar and the administrative calendar, see Brack-Bernsen 2007.

²⁴⁵ As Herodotos (1.198) famously reported back to his Aegean audience, the Babylonians purified themselves after sexual intercourse.

elements together (sacred days, purification, slaughter) evokes a cultic context in which the entire scene can be interpreted as a sacrifice.

According to the Mesopotamian creation myth *Enuma Elish*, the god Marduk assigned the moon to mark the important days of the lunar cycle:

He made the crescent moon appear, entrusted night (to it) and designated it the jewel of night to mark out the days. 'Go forth every month without fail in a corona, at the beginning of the month, to glow over the land. You shine with horns to mark out six days; on the seventh day the crown is half. The fifteenth day shall always be the mid-point, the half of each month. (*Enuma Elish*, Tab. 5)²⁴⁶

In the *Atrahasis*, the slaughter of the god is set within a sacred time of lunar days, just as were typical sacrifices in Mesopotamia. Most Mediterranean societies used a lunar-solar calendar to keep track of the seasons for agricultural and cultic purposes.²⁴⁷ Each new month was marked by the appearance of the new moon and further delineated by the different phases of the lunar cycle. The Sumerians were already celebrating the new moon, first quarter, and full moon by the second millennium BCE or Ur III period.²⁴⁸

According to Lis Brack-Bernsen, "Ur III texts tell that cultic offerings took place on the 7th, 15th and new moon days. Evidently, the moon phases first quarter, full moon and new moon are meant here."²⁴⁹ According to Walther Sallaberger, "A month is further divided according to lunar phases (new moon on day 1, first quarter on day 6/7, full moon on day

²⁴⁶ Translation by Dalley 1999: 256.

²⁴⁷ The major problem with these calendars was the incompatibility of the lunar cycle with the solar cycle, because the solar year is longer than the twelve lunar months. This problem was solved by "intercalation," which involved a variety of ways to add months or years on to the calendar in order to keep it in sync with the seasons (Graf 2004: 243). The Mesopotamians did not have a standardized method of intercalation until the Babylonian astronomers in the fourth-century BCE (Cohen: 2015: 3).

²⁴⁸ Sallaberger 1993: 37-38. For the Babylonian and Assyrian calendars, see also Hallo 2003 and Landsberger 1915.

²⁴⁹ Brack-Bernsen 2007: 88-89.

the sacred time of the full moon for offering a sacrifice, as well as the preliminary purification of the king who offers the sacrifice: “On the fourteenth day the king washes (remaining) purified. On the day of the full moon two month-old head of cattle are felled as a banquet offering to *Ba’lu* of *Šapānu*.”²⁵⁴ The regular use, however, of the 1st, 7th and 15th is most evident for the Mesopotamians. In other words, in the *Atrahasis*, the fact that the slaughter of Ilawela is framed within the temporal framework of the Mesopotamian cultic lunar calendar encourages us to interpret it as a sacrificial ritual.

After designating the sacred time for the sacrifice, the *Atrahasis* mentions the preliminary purification before the sacrifice: “I shall make a purification by washing,” further indicating the sacrificial nature of Ilawela’s death. The Akkadian term for the purification in *Atrahasis* is *te-li-il-tam*, from the word *tēliltu*, “ritual cleaning, purification.”²⁵⁵ Purification was a preliminary requirement for sacrifice among most Near Eastern and Mediterranean societies in order to remove pollution before

From the city of Emar the calendars describe the full moon ritual of the month of Zarati (See Fleming 2000: 160). As Daniel Fleming has shown, the majority of the texts of the calendar system at Emar describe the *zukru* festival, which was performed annually but also every seven years with a larger version of the festival lasting for seven days at the full moon (Fleming 2000: 9-10). For the septennial festival, the appearance of the full moon on the 15th was anticipated by sacrifices of a sheep to every god on the 14th day (Ibid., 57). During the evening of the full moon of the *zukru* an effigy of the god Dagan would pass through the sacred stones standing outside of the city (Ibid., 97). The fragmentary text Emar 446 describes a series of offerings made to the god Dagan on the full moon (Emar 446.6-18). Like their other Near Eastern neighbors, the Israelite cultic calendars sanctify the new moon, first quarter and full moon. The Book of Numbers (28:11-15; 10:10) records special sacrifices to YHWH on the new moon. The seventh day of the month, or the first crescent moon, was sanctified as the Sabbath where no work was to be performed. See Exodus 23:12; 34:21 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. As Hallo (1977) discusses, the Hebrew word *šabbat* (Sabbath) may be related to the Akkadian term for the full moon (*šapattu*). In the first month of the Israelite calendar the full moon was used to mark the Passover offering and the feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-8). For a general introduction to the Israelite calendar, see Olyan 2004a.

²⁵⁴ *KTU* 1.109 = del Olmo Lete 1999: 273.

²⁵⁵ See line 207 and 222 in Lambert and Millard’s edition (1999: 57; 59). For the Akkadian term, see *CAD* T:328-329 *tēliltu*.hû

approaching the gods.²⁵⁶ As David Wright remarks, “Pollution generally threatens what is sacred—what is defined as belonging to the gods—be it a sanctuary, sacrifices, or the holiness of persons,” and Mesopotamian society was not exempted from this general rule.²⁵⁷

Several rituals speak to the importance of purification in Mesopotamia. For instance, the *Mīs Pī* “washing of the mouth” ritual involved the cleansing of the mouth of the image of the divinity in order to prepare the object for contact with the divine.²⁵⁸ This ritual was also used to cleanse the priest before approaching the divinity.²⁵⁹ In a ritual text for the sixteenth and seventeenth days of an unknown month in the city of Uruk, the priest purifies “the Scepter” before entering the temple, after which the priest makes libations and sacrifices a bull and ram to the gods.²⁶⁰ In another text for the repair of a temple, the king purifies himself before the sacrifice of sheep.²⁶¹ A prescriptive text recites the details for the purification of a statue before offering sacrifice:

Incantation for [washing?] the mouth of anything. The ritual for this: you **take water out of the trough**; and into it carnelian, lapis-lazuli, silver, gold, juniper, fine oil pressed oil you place. You set up an offering arrangement for Ea, Shamash, and Asalluḫi. You lift up cedar in your hand, and with syrup and ghee **you wash its mouth**; you then recite the incantation “Asalluḫi son of Eridu’ seven times. When you have recited it, you **sprinkle it (the statue) with water from the trough**, and you place the accessories for the god before it. You sprinkle a censer before him

²⁵⁶ For Mesopotamian purification, see Wilson 1994. For Mesopotamian and Israelite purification, see van der Toorn 1985; For Hittite purification, see Feder 2011. For Greek purification in general, see Parker 1996. For Greek preliminary purification before a sacrifice, see Naiden 2013: 15-17.

²⁵⁷ Wright 2004: 496.

²⁵⁸ Walker and Dick 2001: 12.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ ANET 338.1-14.

²⁶¹ ANET 339.15-19.

with juniper and meal. **You offer a sacrifice** (*siskur*); take down the offering arrangement, and then prostrate yourself.

(*Mīs Pī* Tablet 5.c.19-29)²⁶²

These examples represent evidence for the importance of purification before a sacrifice in Mesopotamian ritual, but ritual purity was also important throughout the cults of the Near East.²⁶³ Such evidence indicates again that the slaughter of Ilawela in the *Atrahasis*, which occurs within a window of sacred time and only after the agents have been purified, ought to be considered a sacrifice.

After the preliminary purification, the god is slaughtered, and the terminology employed to describe the killing points to its ritualized nature. The phrase used in the *Atrahasis* is *li-iṭ-bu-ḫu-ma*, “let one god be slaughtered.”²⁶⁴ The word for “slaughter” is a

²⁶² Walker and Dick 2001: 206. My emphasis added. For other descriptions of Babylonian purification, see *ibid.*, 56, 111.

²⁶³ The texts from Ugarit describe a purity system which required the king, who was also the chief priest, to wash and become “pure” (*brr*) before he commences the sacrifice (see e.g., *KTU* 1.41; 1.46; 1.87; 1.105; 1.106; 1.112). For purity at Ugarit in general, see also Tarragon 1980. The texts from Emar require preliminary purification before sacrifices at different phases of the ritual for the installation of Baal’s high priestess. The annual *zukru* festival required purification rites before the *kubadu* offering; See lines 31A and 36g in Fleming’s edition of the text (1999: 52). The *zukru* festival held every seven years stipulated the purification of herds and flocks during the year before the festival (Fleming 2000: 64). The cult represented in the Hebrew Bible employed a detailed and complex purity system. The dichotomy between pure and unpure is first mentioned in Genesis after the flood when Noah is commanded by YHWH to take seven pairs of pure animals and a single pair of unpure animals (Genesis 7:2). This specific selection of animals is directly connected to Noah’s first sacrifice after the flood because he can only offer pure animals at the altar (Genesis 8:20). These verses are from the J source of the Pentateuch. The P source, however, does not mention a distinction between pure and unpure animals (Genesis 6.19). Israel Knohl (2004: 503) comments on this disagreement between the two sources: “we see here a debate about the scope for the cultic system: according to J this is a universalistic system that existed from the dawn of humanity; according to P it was ordained only for Moses and Israel.” In the Book of Exodus, YHWH commands Moses to set up the Tabernacle with all the furniture needed for sacrifice, including the altar for burnt offerings and the wash basin for purification of the priests (Exodus 40:6-7). In Leviticus 1, immediately following Exodus 40, YHWH commands Moses to offer animals without blemish (Leviticus 1:3). The ritual of Leviticus 16, the rite of the Day of Atonement, shows us the importance of ritual purity in the Israelite cult system. During this yearly ritual the sanctuary where YHWH dwells is cleansed from all the sin of the previous year. Special attention is also paid to washing the body before dressing in the sacred vestments worn while performing sacrifice (Leviticus 16:4). The blood of sacrificial animals is then used to cleanse and soak up the sin of the altar, especially the horns of the altar (Leviticus 16:18). For general studies of purity and sin in the cult of ancient Israel, see Klawans 2000 and 2006.

²⁶⁴ Lambert and Millard’s translation (1999: 59).

form of the Akkadian verb *ṭabāḫū*, which generally describes the slaughter of an animal, but it can also be used to describe the act of sacrifice in a cultic context.²⁶⁵ The Semitic root used here in the *Atrahasis* is *ṭbh*, “to slaughter,” but the Semitic root *dbḥ* is the more common root that means “to sacrifice.”²⁶⁶ The root *dbḥ* occurs in Akkadian as *zḃḥ* in the verb *zebû*, “to sacrifice,” but is not commonly used in Akkadian texts.²⁶⁷ The noun derivative *zību*, however, is common in the first-second millenniums BCE and covers a wider semantic field than *ṭbh*, including not only slaughtered animals but also food offerings, libations, and incense.²⁶⁸ The core meaning of *ṭabāḫū* is “to slaughter by slitting the throat,” an action that can be applied to animals, humans, or the gods. It is not a technical term for sacrifice, but it is a term used for a common action employed in a sacrifice, namely the slitting of the throat of an animal. Although it is not the standard cultic term, it is commonly applicable in a wide variety of contexts where the cutting of the throat is the primary method of slaughter, including a sacrifice.

Although the primary definition of *ṭabāḫū* means “to slaughter,” the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (*CAD*) lists three instances where the verb means “to sacrifice” in a cultic context. In Old Babylonian, at the city of Mari, a text mentions the word *ṭabāḫū* in a cultic context: “*kišād SILA₄ asakki maḫar PN... ṭa-bi-iḫ* the throat of the sacrificial

²⁶⁵ *CAD* T:2 *ṭabāḫū*

²⁶⁶ The Semitic root *dbḥ* occurs in Hebrew as *zḃḥ* and is the common term for sacrifice at the altar in the Hebrew Bible. The word in Hebrew for altar, *mizbeaḥ*, is derived from the verb *zḃḥ*, “to ritually-slaughter.” “The Heb. *zābaḥ*, Aram. *dʿbaḥ*, Ugar. *dbḥ*, which refer only to slaughtered animals as sacrifices, may represent, if the etymology is correct, a specialization of the meaning different from what it was in Akkadian” (*CAD*: Z:106) citing: Weidner AOB 1 111 n.9.

²⁶⁷ *CAD* Z:84 *zebû*

²⁶⁸ *CAD* Z:105-106 *zību*

lamb was cut in the presence of PN.”²⁶⁹ The adjective *asakku* means “something set apart for a god” and indicates the cultic context of the verb.²⁷⁰ In another example, the word *ṭabāḫū* occurs in the same context as the word *nīqum*, the standard Akkadian word for a food offering: “One cow *nīqum ana Šamaš...ana Šamaš ṭà-ab-ḫa-at* a sacrifice for Šamaš, has been sacrificed to Šamaš.”²⁷¹ It is clear from these examples that the word *ṭabāḫū* is entirely appropriate, indeed, expected in a sacrificial context. Moreover, the CAD includes a section of occurrences of the word *ṭabāḫū* in literary, ritual, and medical contexts. This section demonstrates that the word is a generic term for slitting the throat and can occur in a wide variety of contexts where slitting the neck is applicable, including a ritual context. For example, an omen text cites the behavior of a sacrificial lamb: “*šumma [immerum] ina ṭa-ab-ḫi-šu damūšu summu* if when the sheep is slaughtered its blood is deep red.”²⁷² Although the word *ṭabāḫū* is not a cultic term, it can be used to refer to the ritual slaughter of an animal in a sacrifice.

Cognates in other Near Eastern languages may offer us further insight into the semantic range of the root Semitic root *ṭbh*. I begin with the languages where the Semitic root *ṭbh* does not mean “to sacrifice.” In Hebrew the root *ṭbh*, cognate with Akkadian *ṭabāḫū*, means “to slaughter, to slay” and does not occur in any cultic contexts.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ CAD T:1 *ṭabāḫū* 1.2’ citing: Wiseman Alalakh 54:18, see Kienast, *Die Welt des Orients* 11 53.

²⁷⁰ CAD A2:326 *asakku*

²⁷¹ CAD T:1 *ṭabāḫū* 1.2’ citing: AOAT (Alter Orient und Altes Testament) 1 216.

²⁷² CAD T:2 *ṭabāḫū* 1.4’ citing: YOS (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts) 10 47:22.

²⁷³ BDB

Likewise, in Syriac the verb *ṭbaḥ* means “to slay,” and in Arabic the verb *ṭabaḥa* means “to cook.”²⁷⁴ These examples show that the word is not a widespread cultic term.

On the other hand, there are Semitic languages where the root *ṭbh* can mean “to sacrifice,” namely Ethiopic and Ugaritic. The dictionary of Ethiopic by Wolf Leslau lists the word *ṭabḥa*, cognate with Akkadian *ṭabāḥu*, as “slaughter, slay, kill, cut up, sacrifice, skin.” The dictionary entry also lists derivatives of this verb such as the noun form *ṭabḥ*, “slaughter, sacrifice, sacrificial victim.”²⁷⁵ The dictionary of Ugaritic by Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín lists the verb *ṭbh*, cognate with Akkadian *ṭabāḥu*, as “to sacrifice, butcher, slaughter.”²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, del Olmo Lete does not list any uses of the verb *ṭbh* meaning sacrifice in his book on Canaanite religion because it is not a cultic term found in prescriptive ritual texts.²⁷⁷ The entry in the *Comparative Dictionary of Ugaritic and Canaanite* also lists the definition of ṬBH as “to sacrifice, butcher.”²⁷⁸ Despite these definitions, the verb *dbḥ* in Ugaritic is the primary verb for sacrifice and occurs throughout ritual texts describing sacrifice.²⁷⁹

In his edition of Ugaritic ritual texts, Pardee presents two documents which demonstrate the difference between *dbḥ* and *ṭbh*. The texts describe rural sacrifices that take place outside of the city of Ugarit, as Pardee comments, “Both texts refer to a man

²⁷⁴ For *ṭbaḥ* in Syriac, see Sokoloff 2009: 509. For *ṭabaḥa* in Arabic, see Lane and Lane-Pool 1978: 1821-1822.

²⁷⁵ Leslau 1991: 585.

²⁷⁶ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 873-874.

²⁷⁷ Del Olmo Lete 1999.

²⁷⁸ Halayqa 2008: 341.

²⁷⁹ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 259-260.

named *Šitqānu* as slaughtering animals, the act expressed by DBḤ, “to sacrifice,” in this text, by ṬBḤ, “to slaughter,” in the other.”²⁸⁰ The first text mentions, “at the house of QBS and [at] the *Gittu’Ilišdami*‘ he, *Šitqānu*, sacrificed (*dbḥ*) to Rašap.”²⁸¹ The second text mentions, “*Šitqānu* slaughtered (*ṭbḥ*) a ewe.”²⁸² Pardee comments further about the second text, “Because the verb denoting the slaughter of the animals is here not DBḤ but ṬBḤ and because no divinity is named as recipient of the animals, it appears that *Šitqānu*’s role here is not so much that of a rural priest as that of one ritually empowered to slaughter animals outside a cultic context,” as Pardee explains, “The interpretation of ṬBḤ as denoting noncultic but ritually ordained slaughter is only an extrapolation by contrast with the preceding text, but it appears at least plausible.”²⁸³ These two texts demonstrate that there is a marked difference between the roots *dbḥ* and *ṭbḥ* in Ugaritic, but nevertheless, the verb *ṭbḥ* does have connotations of sacrifice depending on the context. Pardee also comments in his earlier edition of the ritual texts from Ugarit that this passage (*KTU* 1.80.3) is the only place outside of poetry where the verb ṬBḤ occurs.²⁸⁴ In the index of words, Pardee translates the verb *ṭbḥ* as “égorger,” in French, “to slit the throat.”²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ Pardee 2002: 19.

²⁸¹ RS 13.006. Lines 7-8 (Pardee 2002: 119-120).

²⁸² RS 15.072.3 = *KTU* 1.80.3. Cf. Pardee 2002: 121.

²⁸³ Pardee 2002: 120.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 437.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1151.

The Ugaritic verb *ṭbh* is found primarily in poetic narratives. In the *Baal Epic*, El slaughters animals for a feast,²⁸⁶ and the goddess Anat slaughters animals as a funerary sacrifice for Baal (see Chapter 5).²⁸⁷ In a different Ugaritic myth, King Keret commands the slaughter of animals for a feast.²⁸⁸ The verb also occurs once in the passive voice in the *Story of Aqhat* when Danel slaughters an ox for the daughters of Ellil in order to feed them: “Then Danel the man of healing, at once the hero, the devotee of *Hrnm* slaughtered an ox for the skillful goddesses: he fed the skillful goddesses and the daughters of Elli, the Bright Ones, to drink.”²⁸⁹ Nicolas Wyatt notes the use of the verb *ṭbh* here, and he says “though we might have expected *dbh*.”²⁹⁰ If I am reading Wyatt correctly, Danel’s slaughtering of an ox for the goddesses should be interpreted as a sacrifice, despite the use of the verb *ṭbh* instead of *dbh*. In two other examples, on the other hand, Wyatt argues that the use of the verb *dbh* can have the non-cultic meaning of “feast.”²⁹¹ King Keret gives a banquet (*krtn dbh dbh*),²⁹² and in the myth of El’s banquet, “In his house El gave a feast (*dbh*).”²⁹³ The word *dbh*, it seems, does not always have a cultic connotation, and likewise, the word *ṭbh* sometimes does have a cultic connotation. Therefore, the way

²⁸⁶ *KTU* 1.1.4.30.

²⁸⁷ *KTU* 1.6.1.19.

²⁸⁸ *KTU* 1.15.4.5.

²⁸⁹ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 265. *KTU* 1.17.2.30.

²⁹⁰ Wyatt 2002: 265 n.64.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 225 n.222.

²⁹² *KTU* 1.16.1.40.

²⁹³ *KTU* 1.114.R.1.

to determine whether the word is being used to describe a sacrifice is contingent on the context.

The mention of sacred days and preliminary purification in *Atrahasis* is the context in which the slaughter takes place. Although each of these elements do not independently imply a sacrifice, the occurrence of them all together indicates a sacrifice. To the best of my knowledge, in no other context do these three actions (sacred days, purification, slaughter) occur except a sacrifice. What we have is a verb that by itself does not mean to sacrifice but can be used in sacrificial contexts, and special days, and a purification, which by themselves are not indicative of a sacrifice, but are important for sacrifices. Because these three elements appear together, there is every reason to affirm that this scene is a sacrifice. I suggest this “slaughter” takes place in a cultic context as indicated by the sacred time with the requisite purification, and thus I argue the scene may be understood as a sacrifice.

The use of the root *ṭbh* (*ṭabāḥu*) in the *Atrahasis*, and my argument that the scene should be interpreted as a sacrifice, is exceptional for two reasons: first, gods do not typically perform sacrifice, and second, the victim here is not an animal (or even a human) but rather a divinity. But as Patton has shown with her study, gods are depicted performing certain ritual activities in many Indo-European and Semitic cultures.²⁹⁴ Moreover, regarding the first point, it is not unexpected that the gods would here perform the characteristically human activity of sacrifice since the gods are also carrying out human labor at this time.²⁹⁵ Further, from a comparative perspective, a god also performs

²⁹⁴ Patton 2009.

²⁹⁵ Dalley 2000: 10.

what seems to be a sacrifice in the Ugaritic *Baal Cycle*. There, the goddess Anat slaughters animals as part of the funeral rites for her deceased brother Baal.²⁹⁶ The verb employed to describe Anat's sacrifice is the Semitic root *ṭbh*, "to slaughter," the same root used in the sacrifice of the god in the *Atrahasis*. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín cite this passage as an example of the verb *ṭbh* meaning "to sacrifice."²⁹⁷ This interpretation hinges on the word *kgmn*, a word which does not occur in any other texts so its precise meaning is unclear, but del Olmo Lete suggests it means "funeral offering."²⁹⁸ The action probably characterizes a sacrifice because Baal is dead, and thus Anat is not slaughtering animals for a feast for the living but rather for the dead god Baal (see further analysis of this myth in Chapter 5). Offerings of food for the dead were common among the Babylonians, as Dina Katz explains, "From the administrative texts that record regular deliveries of food for the funerary chapels of the Ur III kings, we can safely conclude that the dead were provided with a daily meal."²⁹⁹ Although the mortuary context of this scene is different from the slaughter of the god in *Atrahasis*, and it belongs to a different culture and language, the example does at least provide evidence that a divinity may use the root *ṭbh* in a situation that could be interpreted as a sacrifice.

²⁹⁶ "(There) she weeps for him and buries him, places him down amongst the gods of the underworld. She slaughters seventy wild bulls as a GMN (for) Mighty Ba'lu; She slaughters seventy domesticated bovids [as] a GMN (for) Mighty Ba'lu; [She] slaughters seventy domesticated caprovids [as a] GMN (for) Mighty Ba'lu; [She] slaughters seventy deer [as a GMN] (for) Mighty Ba'lu; [She slaughters] seventy wild goats [as a GMN] (for) Mighty Ba'lu; [She slaughters seventy] asses [as a] GMN (for) Mighty Ba'lu" (Pardee 2003a: 268-269 = *KTU* 1.6.1.19-29).

²⁹⁷ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 874.

²⁹⁸ Del Olmo Lete 1981: 533.

²⁹⁹ Katz 2007: 171. For the Akkadian term *kispu* "funerary offering," see *CAD* K:425-427 *kispu*. For food offerings to the dead in Near Eastern texts, see also Tsukimoto 1985 and Theodore Lewis 1989.

Not only do gods not typically perform sacrifice in myths from the cultures of the Mediterranean, but they are also not typically the victim of a sacrifice. In the mythical context of the *Atrahasis*, at least, it is not surprising that a god is sacrificed because the myth is set in a primordial time before humans and animals existed.³⁰⁰ In other words, if the gods were to perform a sacrifice in a primeval time when only the gods existed, who else could be the victim besides another god? In a certain respect, the sacrifice of a fellow god is the equivalent of human sacrifice (a topic I discuss at length in Chapters 3-6). The perversion of such an act mirrors another common feature in cosmogonies, namely incest. A regular problem in cosmogonies is the lack of genetic variation necessary for creation, which therefore leads to the perversion of incest as a necessity. Likewise, because the action of the first sacrifice takes place in the antediluvian period of the cosmogony, there is a lack of animals necessary for a sacrifice, and thus the gods must sacrifice another god. There is, however, another Near Eastern myth describing the sacrifice of a god that also may have circulated in the second millennium BCE. This myth is attributed to the Phoenician historian Sanchuniathon (thirteenth-century BCE) and preserved in Greek by Philo of Byblos (first/second centuries CE).³⁰¹ In the myth, Kronos (identified with El) sacrifices his son Ieoud (Baal). The Greek verb used by Philo is the compound καταθύω, “to sacrifice,” the standard Greek root denoting sacrifice. Although it is difficult to know

³⁰⁰ The creation of animals is not described in the OBV of the *Atrahasis*, however, in the Sumerian version of the flood animals are created after the creation of humans (Lambert and Millard 1999: 141).

³⁰¹ See text and commentary in Attridge and Oden 1981: 61-63. For Sanchuniathon, see introduction in Baumgarten 1981 as well as my discussion of the dating of Sanchuniathon in Chapter 5. Despite the chronological gaps between these sources, there are cases of proven threads of transmission for other cosmological myths, such as the continuity between the myths preserved by Philo of Byblos and Ugaritic myths which suggests we rely on Philo as a credible source for these ancient Phoenician myths (López-Ruiz 2010: 86).

what the original Phoenician root would have been, we can postulate based on the complementary eastern Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē* that it was the common Semitic root *dbḥ*. Philo's myth is an aitiology of child sacrifice, a topic I discuss at length in Chapters 5 and 6.

But how, exactly, ought we to interpret the sacrifice of Ilawela as an offering, since all sacrifices imply an offering to a divinity? The god who is selected as the victim is slaughtered in order to create humans to both relieve the burden of the gods and provide them with sustenance through food-offerings. Taking this intended goal into account, the slaughter of the god can be interpreted as an offering the gods make *because of themselves* (to use Patton's phrasing) in order to provide themselves with offerings in the future and define their cult on the cosmic level. In other words, the gods must create the institution of sacrifice *ex nihilo* by taking the initiative to slaughter one of their own in the first act of sacrifice. This first sacrifice will then become a paradigm for humans to follow when giving thanks and sustaining their creators by providing offerings within a framework of sacred days and purification. As Patton has argued, "The actions of the gods express divine motivations, strategems, and nature, and are the basis for any human constructions, institutions, or actions, including religious ones."³⁰² Moreover, it is possible to use Patton's idea of "divine reflexivity," to interpret the sacrifice in *Atrahasis*, in her words, "A ritual performed by a god is not aimed outside the god's self as a human ritual would be. Instead, it refers back only to the god."³⁰³ Thus, the slaughter of Ilawela is not only a sacrifice but constitutes the aitiology for sacrifice. It is important to point out

³⁰² Patton 2009: 14.

³⁰³ Ibid., 12-13.

that, although I interpret the slaughter as the first sacrifice, I do not claim that the scene is an aitiology for a specific type of sacrifice that was actually performed in Mesopotamia. The slaughter is a literary construct used to imagine the beginnings of the general belief that one serves the gods through food offerings. Indeed, following the work of Patton, the belief that gods are the ultimate source of all human rituals.

The choice of the victim establishes a hierarchy for the practice of sacrifice since Enki sacrifices one of the inferior gods, and thus, in turn, humans will eventually sacrifice the life form inferior to them, namely animals. The god selected as the victim in the *Atrahasis* is one of the rebel Igigu gods called *Wē-ila* (also called *Aw-ila* or *Ilawela*).³⁰⁴ Joshua Chen elaborates on the wordplay between the Akkadian terms for human (*awīlu*) and god (*ilū*) as well as the wordplay in the name of the god *Aw-ila* who is slaughtered to create the first humans.³⁰⁵ In Kvanvig's explanation of the wordplay, "Humans were created from the substance of a slaughtered god, whose name was a signal of the nature of the new creatures, *ila-we-e-i-la*. In the name we see *ilu* two times and *awīlu* one time."³⁰⁶ The fact that humans have two parts god and one part human encapsulates the connection between the first sacrifice by the gods and the creation of humans from the sacrificed god. The idea seems to be that humans are imbued with intelligence, the divine portion, from the sacrificed god.

³⁰⁴ *Atrahasis* I. 223 in Lambert and Millard (1999: 59).

³⁰⁵ "This close affinity between the gods and humankind is hinted at with the wordplay between *ilū* and *awīlum* in the opening line of the epic *inūma ilū awīlum* 'when gods were (like) men' (*Atra-hasīs* I i 1); in the creation of human beings *ilumma u awīlum libtalilū l puḥur ina ṭiṭṭi* 'That god and human may be mixed together in the clay' (OB *Atra-hasīs* I iv 212-13); and in the name of the god *Aw-ila* who was slaughtered for the creation of humankind (*Atra-hasīs* I vii 223)" (Chen 2012: 248-249). For the Akkadian word for human being (*amīlu* or *awīlu*), see CAD I.2:48.

³⁰⁶ Kvanvig 2011: 259-260. Kvanvig (ibid., 260) draws a parallel to the Book of Genesis where YHWH creates humans in his image (Genesis 1:26-27).

Ilawela who had intelligence (*tēmu*),
They slaughtered in their assembly.
Nintu mixed clay
With his flesh and blood (*da-mi-šu*).
 They heard the drumbeat forever after.
 A ghost (*eṭemmu*) came into existence from the god's flesh,
 And she (Nintu) proclaimed it as his living (*balṭu*) sign.
 The ghost existed so as not to forget (the slain god).
 (*Atrahasis* I.223-230)³⁰⁷

Humans are created from clay mixed with the blood (*da-mi-šu*) of the god. Other Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures also imagined that humans were created from clay or blood.³⁰⁸ In the *Atrahasis*, the trickster god Enki sacrifices Ilawela with the help of the other gods and gives Mami the clay for the creation. Mami, however, carries out the actual mixing of the blood and clay.³⁰⁹ The goddess Mami pinches off fourteen pieces of the clay and separates them into two pairs of seven. She next summons the fourteen womb goddesses, and they create seven males and seven females. The text then describes the method of creation like the forming of mud bricks, the building block *par excellence* in Mesopotamia.³¹⁰ Finally, the text describes how Mami establishes the gestation time

³⁰⁷ Translation by Dalley 2000: 15-16 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 59).

³⁰⁸ In the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninmah the god Enki creates humans from clay (Klein 2003: 517). In the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* the rebellious god Qingu is slaughtered to create humans from his blood. See Tablet VI (Dalley 2000: 261). In the Ugaritic *Kirta Epic*, the god Ilu creates a healer out of clay (*KTU* 1.16.v = Pardee 2003c: 341). In Genesis 2:7 YHWH uses earth (*ādāmāh*) to create the first man (Adam), whose name literally means "earth." Adam's name might also be related to the Hebrew word for blood (*dām*) whose Semitic root we see in the *Atrahasis* above (*da-mi-šu*). YHWH created man and woman from the earth *in his own image* (Genesis 1:26-27). The correlation between Adam and the word for blood is then alluded to in the prohibition against eating meat with blood in it because the blood is the life force (Genesis 9:4); The correlation is extended to the prohibition against murder: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image did God make man" (Genesis 9:6). In Hesiod's *Theogony* (571), the god Hephaistos creates the first woman, Pandora, out of clay.

³⁰⁹ Dalley 2000: 16.

³¹⁰ As Dalley notes (2000: 37 n.15), one of the epithets of the mother goddess Belet-ili, is "lapis lazuli brick." Dalley comments (ibid.), "The bun shaped 'plano-convex' brick used in early dynastic Mesopotamia resembles the bulge of pregnancy and was widely used for building despite its inappropriate shape." See Woolley 1982: 45-46.

for babies, the practice of midwifery, as well as special worship for Mami herself whenever a woman gives birth.³¹¹ Moreover, Mami appoints Ishtar, the goddess of love, as the goddess of marriage. The tablet does appear to enumerate the duties of males, but the text is highly fragmentary at this point.³¹² Nevertheless, in terms of the number of verses dedicated to the description, the text clearly emphasizes the role of Mami in the creation of humans as well as the biological and social roles of women. As Marten Stol points out, “The Mother Goddess is the most important goddess present at birth. She had a high position in the pantheon.”³¹³ This importance is also evident in the epithets of Mami. Before Mami creates humans she is invoked with the epithet “midwife of the gods, wise Mami,” but after she creates humanity the gods kiss her feet and grant her a new epithet: “Mistress of All Gods.”³¹⁴ With the new epithet, and the focus on the pregnancy process, the myth of *Atrahasis* spotlights the essential importance of fertility and the divine feminine in the process of creation.³¹⁵

After Mami mixes the blood with the clay, a ghost (*eṭemmu*) comes into existence, and Mami proclaims it as the living sign (*ṭēmu*) of the sacrificed god. The words *eṭemmu*, “ghost,” and *ṭēmu*, “intelligence,” have been the subject of much scholarly discussion.³¹⁶ As Kvanvig explains, “The *eṭemmu* is the aspect of humans that

³¹¹ Dalley 2000: 16-17.

³¹² Ibid., 18.

³¹³ Stol 2000: 74. For a history of the development of the goddess figure in ancient Israel, see Keel and Uelinger 1998.

³¹⁴ Dalley 2000: 15-16 = *Atrahasis* I.193 and I.246-247 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 57-61).

³¹⁵ O’Brian (1983: 39), on the other hand, argues that Mami is subservient to the role of Enki and that there is no indication of hierarchy in the title.

³¹⁶ The word *eṭemmu* refers to “spirits of the dead,” and is an Akkadian borrowing of the Sumerian term for “ghost,” *gidim* (*CAD* E:397; Halloran 2012: 56). The word *gidim* may be from a root which means

continues to live on when humans in death are transformed to clay again.”³¹⁷ A text from Berossos, the third-century BCE Babylonian who wrote in Greek, provides more insight into the idea of the divine portion inherited from the gods. According to his account of the creation of humans, a god cuts off his own head and the other gods collect the blood and mix it with earth to form humans, and “For this reason men are intelligent and have a share of divine wisdom.”³¹⁸ Berossos and the *Atrahasis* appear to be drawing from a similar Mesopotamian tradition where humans share a portion of divinity from their creation by the gods.³¹⁹

Once humans are created through the sacrifice of the rebel god, not only do they take on the work of the gods, but they also offer sacrifices to sustain the gods, reinforcing the notion that the slaughter of Ilawela constitutes an aitiology for sacrifice:

They took hold of ...,
 Made new picks and spades,
 Made big canals
To feed people and sustain the gods.
 (*Atrahasis* I.337-339)³²⁰

“black” (ibid.). The difficulty is in how to interpret the word *eṭemmu*, “ghost,” in relationship to *balṭu* “his living sign.” Kvanvig (2011: 50) agrees with Wilcke’s (2005: 244) interpretation of *eṭemmu* as the immortal portion (*balṭu*) inherited from the god. Lambert and Millard (1999: 153 n.223) note, “the general drift of the narrative is that something special was passed on to man from the slain god.” Dalley (1999: 36 n.11) observes how the term for ghost (*eṭemmu*) may be a play on the word for the intelligence (*ṭēmu*) of the rebel god. Kvanvig (2011: 49) follows von Soden’s (1973: 352) analysis and connects the word *ṭēmu* with the god’s ability to plan, “the rebel god is depicted as the one god who had the initiative and the capacity to plan and to lead in the rebellion.”

³¹⁷ Kvanvig 2011: 50.

³¹⁸ See the edition by Burstein 1978: 15.

³¹⁹ The origins of humans containing a divine and human portion is reminiscent of the Orphic story of Dionysos, whose death by the Titans leads to the creation of humans who have both a divine and mortal portion (Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 1.3 = 41 Westerink = *OF* 304 I, 318 III, 320 I). This Orphic creation myth also describes a sacrifice of the god (for the myth, see Chapter 7).

³²⁰ Translation by Dalley 2000: 18 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 65-67).

The creation of human beings is innately linked with sacrifice, since their purpose is expressly to feed the gods, one of whose means was through sacrifice.³²¹ From this perspective, not only is the slaughter of the god an aitiology of sacrifice, but Tablet I of the *Atrahasis* as a whole is also an aitiology of sacrifice since the reason humans offer the gods sacrifice is because the gods created them to take on the burden of their work and sustain them with offerings. Not only does the interpretation of the scene as a sacrifice fit more closely with the ritual context indicated by the sacred time and purification, but it also begins a thematic ring-composition in the myth based around the motif of sacrifice: a god is sacrificed in order to create humans and relieve the burden of the gods, and humans then work to sustain the gods with food-offerings.

As we will see, the act of worshipping the gods with offerings develops in different ways in *Atrahasis* after the first sacrifice performed by the gods. Once humans take up the practice, sacrifice proves itself to be not only the normal mode of communication between the gods and humanity by way of offering the gods food, but also a way to mediate a crisis between humans and the gods, and also as a ritual to ask for a divinely inspired dream. As we will see, the eponymous hero of the *Atrahasis* will also use the institution of sacrifice as a “bargaining chip” to save humans from the wrath of the divine; later, he will use it as a tool to ask for a divine dream; and finally, to reestablish amicability between gods and humans after the flood. As I elucidate below,

³²¹ In their edition of the text Lambert and Millard include an additional statement: “With picks and spades they built the shrines” (*Atrahasis* I.337 = Lambert and Millard 1999: 65). This statement emphasizes the dual purpose of creating humans: to relieve the burden of the gods but also to worship and feed them with sacrifice.

The remainder of the story of *Atrahasis* from the end of Tablet I through Tablet III essentially describes a dispute between the two gods Ellil and Enki, the former who attempts to destroy the newly-created humans and the latter who conspires with Atrahasis to save humans. The *Atrahasis* describes how humans became burdensome to the gods because of their great number and noise with the result that the god Ellil decides to diminish their number:

Kvanvig mentions that the passage about the noise and increase of people is repeated three times in the story, and each time it initiates a destruction.³²³ In their first act of destruction, the gods send a disease to diminish the number of humans. At this point in the narrative, the eponymous hero Atrahasis enters the story:

³²² Translation by Dalley 2000: 18 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 67).

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Will they make us suffer illness forever?
(*Atrahasis* I.364-371)³²⁴

The phrase “Whose ear was open (to) his god Enki,” essentially translates the meaning of the name Atrahasis. The etymology of the name Atrahasis is composed of the Akkadian words *atru*, “foremost,” and *hasīsu*, “ear, understanding.”³²⁵ The hero is the one human who has the ear of the gods, and he speaks on behalf of humanity which is afflicted by the disease sent by the gods.

Enki instructs Atrahasis to stop worshipping the gods, a “sacrificial strike,” as Bremmer called it, and instead, bring an offering exclusively to the god Namtara who sent the disease:³²⁶

Enki made his voice heard
And spoke to his servant:
‘Call the elders, the senior men!
Start [an uprising] in your own house,
Let heralds proclaim . . .
Let them make a loud noise in the land:
Do not revere your gods,
Do not pray to your goddesses,
But search out the door of Namtara.
Bring a baked loaf into his presence.
May the flour-offering (*ni-q[ú-ú]*) reach him,
May he be shamed by the presents
And wipe away his “hand”.’
(*Atrahasis* I.372-398)³²⁷

Enki commands Atrahasis not to worship the gods and goddesses but rather to present a flour-offering (*ni-q[ú-ú]*) to Namtara. Dalley explains the reference to the gods and goddesses as, “the concept which was prevalent in Mesopotamia of a personal god and

³²⁴ Translation by Dalley 2000: 19 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 67-69).

³²⁵ *CAD* 1.2:501. See Kvanvig 2011: 65.

³²⁶ Bremmer 1998: 52.

³²⁷ Translation by Dalley 2000: 19 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 69).

goddess for each person.”³²⁸ This is the first instance of the word *niqû* in the *Atrahasis*, and the word is repeated two more times on Tablet I.³²⁹ Although the word *niqû* here clearly refers to some sort of food offering, because the word primarily means “to pour out (a libation or blood),” one wonders if, to an ancient Mesopotamian, the verb *niqû* in this myth would allude to the shedding of the god Ilawela’s blood at the first sacrifice.³³⁰ Thus, the first sacrifice offered by humans in the myth echoes the first sacrifice performed by the gods since both sacrifices were performed as the result of a crisis.

Tablet I ends with Atrahasis’ offering to the god Namtara who is pleased by the gift and removes the affliction:

The **flour-offering** (*niqû*) reached him.
 And he was shamed by the **presents**.
 And wiped away his ‘hand’.
 The *šuruppu*-disease left them,
 [The gods] went back to their [(regular) offerings].
 (*Atrahasis* I.407-413)³³¹

Here we can see with the word “presents” how sacrifice is inserted into the gift-ideology. This passage also relates important information about the newly-established institution of sacrifice: the gods can be swayed by offerings in a time of crisis. Moreover, these offerings are essential for maintaining relations between mortals and gods—in fact, sacrifice explicitly connects humans and gods since humans were created from the first sacrifice of a god. Furthermore, offerings are also essential for maintaining the symbiotic

³²⁸ Dalley 2000: 37 n.24.

³²⁹ *Atrahasis* I.382; 397; 409 (Lambert and Millard 1999). The word occurs again at *Atrahasis* II.ii.13;27 and III.v.35-36. For a full explanation of the word *niqû*, see my section on Mesopotamian sacrifice in the Introduction chapter.

³³⁰ *CAD* N.1:336. The word *niqû* is the noun form of the verb *naqû*.

³³¹ Translation by Dalley 2000: 20 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 71).

equilibrium within the cosmos: if the gods do not receive sustenance, then humans will perish; but at the same time, the gods need humans to provide them with these offerings. In fact, if Dalley's reconstruction of the text is correct, the offering to Namtara is not part of the usual offerings to the gods but is instead a special type of sacrifice offered during a crisis. However, this is not indicated in the terminology of the offering, since the word is still the typical Akkadian term for an offering (*niqû*).

Just as the crisis of the dispute between the gods gave rise to the institution of sacrifice, this new crisis of the disease then leads to the establishment of the first temple for a deity in the city. The god Enki gives instructions to Atrahasis to build a temple which he then relays to the people: "The elders listened to his speech; they built a temple for Namtara in the city."³³² Before the first destruction these temples did not exist, but now Atrahasis must build a temple for the god before he can provide him with an offering. In this way, the crisis of destruction paves the way for the establishment of religious institutions. During the second destruction, a temple is built for the rain god Adad in order to beseech him to send rains. The gods require not only offerings, it seems, they also require a house in which to eat their food.³³³ By the end of Tablet I of the *Atrahasis*, the gods have instituted the practice of providing offerings to the gods, and this practice has proved to be the defining way of appeasing the gods and maintaining cosmic equilibrium and stability, including establishing their houses (temples).

In the final paragraphs of section 1 of this chapter, I explore the links between sacrifice and the cosmic flood in Tablet III. Although my main focus for this chapter is

³³² Dalley 2000: 19.

³³³ Othmar Keel (1997: 151-163) explains how Israelite temples were modeled as house (*byt*) for YHWH.

on the aitiology of sacrifice in Tablet I, the flood is an important consequence of the first sacrifice instituted in Tablet I, and Atrahasis' sacrifice after the flood perfectly exemplifies the Mesopotamian view of sacrifice as food for the gods. Additionally, we will see how Israelite and Greek traditions adapt the theme of the flood and its connections to sacrifice and creation. The gods initially create humans to feed them, but when humans procreate out of control and become too "annoying," as we saw in Tablet I, the gods then decide to annihilate their creation. At the end of Tablet I, the gods send the first of four destructions intended to kill humanity (the plague). This destruction is impeded by the god Enki and his human disciple Atrahasis. On Tablet II, the gods then attempt two more destructions (a drought/food shortage, and more extensive drought/famine). After the fourth and final attempt at destruction (the cosmic flood) on Tablet III, as we shall see, the hero Atrahasis must reinstitute the symbiotic relationship with the gods by providing the gods an offering.

Kvanvig has shown how the second destruction-attempt repeats the pattern from the first one: the gods attempt a destruction, Atrahasis appeals to Enki on behalf of humanity, Enki tells Atrahasis how to avert the destruction, and the god is swayed by the offering.³³⁴ Just as the god Namtara is swayed by an offering to avert the plague, during the second destruction, the god Adad is swayed by the offering to avert the drought. But as Kvanvig notes, the third destruction deviates from the pattern of the first two attempts.³³⁵

³³⁴ See Kvanvig's useful outline of the patterns (2011: 23).

³³⁵ Ibid.

For the third attempt to annihilate humans the gods block all the seas and avenues for water. In response, Atrahasis gives an offering to Ea (Enki) so that he can see him in a dream:

Then the very wise man Atra-hasis
Wept daily.
He would carry **a *maššakku*-offering** along the riverside pasture,
Although the irrigation-water was silent.
Half-way through the night **he offered a sacrifice (*ni-qú-ú*)**.³³⁶
As sleep began to overtake him (?)
He addressed the irrigation-water:
‘May the irrigation-water take it, may the river carry it,
May the gift be placed in front of Ea my lord.
May Ea see it and think of me!
So may I see a dream in the night.’
(*Atrahasis* II.iii.5-28)³³⁷

This scene is important for two reasons: first, it establishes a new utility for the offering whereby humans may pray to the gods and receive messages through dreams, and second, it foreshadows Atrahasis’ dream wherein Ea instructs him to build the ark. This is the first offering that Atrahasis gives to his personal god Ea (the second offering will take place after the flood). In this passage, Atrahasis offers Ea a “*maššakku*-offering.”

Lambert and Millard translate this offering as “oblations.”³³⁸ The Akkadian word *maššakku* (*muššakku*) is defined by the lexicon as “incense used for libanomancy.”³³⁹ In his study of Near Eastern dream interpretation, Leo Oppenheim noted that the exact meaning of *maššakku*, “remains obscure—it possibly denotes some kind of incense ... It

³³⁶ The text in Dalley’s edition (2000) is from new texts discovered at the Sippar Library VI. Tablet V. 63 = George and Al-Rawi 1996: 182-183.

³³⁷ Translation by Dalley 2000: 22 (= Lambert and Millard 1999: 77-79). The text of the OBV is highly fragmented for II.iii. Dalley uses the text of the SBV to reconstruct the text. For the text, see George and Al-Wadi 1996.

³³⁸ Lambert and Millard 1999: 77.

³³⁹ CAD M.2:279.

is possible that they divined by means of the form, color, and drift of the smoke rising from the censer on which the *maššakku* was scattered. We know of this technique from Old Babylonian omen texts.”³⁴⁰ As we can see from this passage, the menu of sacrificial offerings has diversified from the first sacrifice of the god (*tbl*) and the offerings (*niqû*) to the gods during a time of crisis as evidenced by the offerings to Namtara and Adad. Here we have the first act of divination, an important practice among the Mesopotamians.³⁴¹ Two lines following the *maššakku* offering, Atrahasis then provides a standard *niqû* offering. The use of both types of offerings emphasizes that the *maššakku* offering is a special type of offering but also highlights the precarious situation as Atrahasis uses all possible ritual methods of appealing to the gods.

Despite Atrahasis’ appeal to Enki, the drought intensifies. We do not know how the third disaster ends because all of the versions of the text have a lacuna, but we do know based on what follows next that Enki has once again intervened on behalf of humanity.³⁴² After the lacuna Ellil assembles the gods and they deliberate about the failures of the previous three attempts to destroy humanity.³⁴³ This divine assembly leads to the climax of the *Atrahasis*: the decision to unleash the cosmic flood.

³⁴⁰ Oppenheim 1956: 222. See also Lambert and Millard (1999: 156 n. iii.5) who comment that Oppenheim’s suggestion is “neither proved nor disproved by this line.” As George and Al-Wadi comment (1996: 174), the etymology of the word remains uncertain.

³⁴¹ The most important type of divination, called extispicy, used the viscera of sacrificed animals to divine the future. For divination in the ancient world, see Annus 2010. For a brief introduction to divination in Mesopotamia, see Guinan 2004: 273-276. For the correspondence between Assyrian and Etruscan liver-models, see Burkert 1992: 46-50. For Mesopotamian celestial divination, see Koch-Westenholz 1995.

³⁴² Kvanvig 2011: 23-24.

³⁴³ Dalley 2000: 24-29.

The Mesopotamian flood story from *Atrahasis* elaborates further on the motif of sacrifice and creation. Specifically, Atrahasis gives an offering to the gods after the flood whose cleansing waters function as a sort of new creation, a creation out of destruction, just as the first sacrifice of the god facilitates the creation of humans. In other words, the flood is new creation; a blank slate from which to bring in the primordial element of water. The cosmos started with the primordial waters in the creation myths of Mesopotamia,³⁴⁴ Genesis³⁴⁵ and the Greek Epic cycle.³⁴⁶ From this perspective, the flood mirrors the antediluvian creation and sacrifice when the hero Atrahasis provides offerings to the gods after the new creation instigated by the flood. Moreover, the flood elaborates on the theme of purification established with the first sacrifice of Ilawela. In fact, as part of the elaborate Mesopotamian ritual purification ceremony called *M̄s Pî* “Mouth-Washing” (discussed above), the idea of the cosmic flood is explicitly connected to the process of purification and sacrifice in the liturgy: “You recite the incantation, “The flood, its divine task is unique, is holy”, and you libate.....; you sprinkle on a censer; you place *mashatu*-flour on the forehead of a ram and sacrifice (it).”³⁴⁷ Thus, the Mesopotamian tradition connects the ideas of sacrifice, creation, and the flood in both the myths and ritual texts.

³⁴⁴ Tablet I of the Babylonian creation myth the *Enuma Elish* begins: “When skies above were not yet named, nor earth below pronounced by name, Apsu, the first one, their begetter and Tiamat, who bore them all, had mixed their waters together” (Dalley 2000: 233).

³⁴⁵ The creation story in Genesis begins: “When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water” (Genesis 1:1-2)

³⁴⁶ An alternate Greek creation myth from Hesiod’s version is preserved in Homer’s *Iliad* (14. 200-201). Speaking to Aphrodite, Hera says: “I am intending to see the boundaries of bountiful Gaia, and Oceanos, the origin of the gods, and mother Tethys.” Burkert (1992: 91-92) connected this version to the *Enuma Elish*. See also West’s discussion of this cosmogony. epic cosmogony.

³⁴⁷ Tablet BM 45749. 43-45 = Walker and Dick 2001: 80.

the offerings on which they depended. The fact that humans were the source of nourishment for the gods is highlighted after the flood when Atrahasis gives food offerings to the gods, and the starved deities immediately crowd around the offering in hunger like flies. By offering sacrifice, Atrahasis reestablishes the symbiotic relationship with the gods whereby the gods depend on humans for food and humans depend on the gods for life. Moreover, the birth goddess Mami, here called Nintu, rebukes the gods for attempting to destroy her creation and deprive them of their necessary food offerings.

At the end of Tablet III the gods once again summon the birth goddess Mami, who helped create humanity from the blood of the sacrificed god, to establish various forms of birth-control.³⁵² This is the final attempt by the gods to diminish the number of humans without resorting to total destruction. One form of birth-control is the establishment of three types of women (*ugbaltu*, *entu*, *egišītu*-women) who are assigned to temples as priestesses and forbidden to bear children.³⁵³ Once again a crisis precipitates the establishment of religious institutions. It is unclear exactly what the other method of birth-control is because the text is fragmentary: “You are the womb-goddess who decrees destinies. [...] to the people.”³⁵⁴ Lambert restored these lines based on a passage from the epic of *Gilgamesh* in the following way: “[You], birth-goddess, creatress of destinies, [assign death] to the people.”³⁵⁵ According to Lambert, the myth of

³⁵² Dalley 2000: 35.

³⁵³ Ibid., 38 n. 45.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 34.

³⁵⁵ Lambert 1980: 54-58; *Gilgamesh* X.296-322. George (2003: 507-508) agrees with Lambert’s restoration based on a Sumerian version of the death of Bilgamesh. George argues that there were two traditions in Mesopotamia about humanity’s mortality: one with mortality decreed at their creation, another with mortality as the result after the flood. See also Kvanvig’s discussion of the restoration (2011: 33-39).

Atrahasis ends here with death bestowed on humankind as the ultimate remedy for excessive reproduction. If Lambert's reading is correct, then it implies humans previously did not die, or as Kvanvig suggests, simply lived very long lives.³⁵⁶ In this case, the reconstructed text reiterates the close connection between humans and the gods.

In my reading, the *Atrahasis* is more than a story of the creation of humans and the flood. It is a story about the innately linked origins of sacrifice and the origins of humanity. The first sacrifice is performed by the gods themselves with a god as the victim, with the purpose of creating humans. Once the practice of sacrifice is established, humans are meant to perform it, and they develop it to help themselves in specific situations. In the *Atrahasis*, there are examples of regular food-offerings to the gods, as special offerings in a time of crisis, and in order to communicate with the gods in dreams. Finally, the hero Atrahasis provides the first offering after the flood in order to reestablish amicable relations with the gods. Thus, the gods need humans as much as humans need the gods.

This final use for which Atrahasis employs sacrifice is mirrored in two other Near Eastern stories which stem from the Mesopotamian account of the flood. In the epic of *Gilgamesh*, the hero Ut-napishtim also gives an offering after the cosmic flood.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ Kvanvig (2011: 37) bases his assertion on the Antediluvian King List that mention kings who lived for thousands of years. For the King List see, Finkelstein 1963. See also Chen's (2013: 7; 188-189) discussion of the King Lists.

³⁵⁷ Tablet XI of the *Gilgamesh* epic:
"Then I put (everything?) out to the four winds, and I made a sacrifice,
Set out a *surqinnu*-offering upon the mountain peak,
Arranged the jars seven and seven;
Into the bottom of them I poured (essences of ?) reeds, pine, and myrtle.
The gods smelt the fragrance,
The gods smelt the pleasant fragrance,
The gods like flies gathered over the sacrifice" (Dalley 2000: 114).
For a discussion of the manuscripts with pictures of Tablet XI, see George 2003: 411-415.

Likewise, in the biblical tradition Noah offers a sacrifice immediately after the flood (see full discussion below).³⁵⁸ The parallels between these texts point to a common Near Eastern tradition (stemming from Mesopotamia) featuring the first sacrifice after the cosmic flood. The motif that associates the creation and destruction of humans with the origins of sacrifice, therefore, was well known throughout the Near East and was adapted by other cultures, even beyond the Near East. As we will see in the next chapter, this theme was also developed by the Greek tradition in the Greek story of the flood preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros. In the following section, I analyze texts from the Israelite culture as a case study to show how the Hebrew Bible adapted themes of sacrifice and creation from the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*. Then, in the following chapter, I show how Hesiod adapted the themes of sacrifice in his depiction of Prometheus and Pandora.

2. Israel

Ever since Smith's publication of *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* in 1876 there has been general scholarly agreement that the Mesopotamian stories of the flood formed the model for the biblical story of the flood.³⁵⁹ Over the years scholars have attempted to

The word for offering (*ni-qa-a*) in Tablet XI is the same as in *Atrahasis* (see line 157 in George 2003: 712)
³⁵⁸ Genesis 8:20-22

³⁵⁹ For scholarship comparing the Hebrew Bible with the Mesopotamian traditions, see e.g., Heidel 1963: 224-269; Parrot 1955: 15-53; Sarna 1989: 48-49; Lambert 1994: 96-113; Tsumura 1994: 44ff.; Rendsburg 2007: 115-127; Kvanvig 2011: 211-233. Scholars have also compared the Hebrew Bible with the texts from Ugarit, see e.g., Hvidberg 1960; Cross 1973; Craigie 1983. According to Sarna (1989: xv-xviii) the Book of Genesis seems to combine numerous traditions that were combined into a unified narrative, but we have no information about the transmission of individual stories. This theory is known as the "documentary hypothesis" whereby scholars have attempted to isolate different streams of tradition. The seven-day creation narrative (Genesis 1-2:4) is attributed to the P (Priestly) source and is probably older than the longer story about the creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:5-4) which is attributed to the J (Jahwist) source. As Sarna comments, "Whatever the merits or demerits of this type of analysis, it is beyond doubt

draw parallels between the biblical story of the creation and Mesopotamian accounts of creation, however, many of these conclusions have been disputed.³⁶⁰ Despite these attempts, the most apparent and accepted parallel between Mesopotamian and biblical stories is the account of the flood from *Atrahasis*.³⁶¹ In this section, I contribute to the scholarly discussion by an investigation of the origins of sacrifice in Genesis. I argue that a close connection in Genesis between the origins of sacrifice and the origins of humankind is apparent, although not as direct as that in the *Atrahasis*. I show how Genesis plays on the motifs of the *Atrahasis* that relate the creation and destruction of humanity to their performance of sacrifice for the gods. The biblical account, however, alters the motifs in significant ways in order to distinguish itself from its Mesopotamian predecessor. In short, although I agree with the scholarly consensus that Mesopotamian stories influenced the Israelites, I focus on their deviations from each other. What is more, the deviations in the Israelite representations of the creation of humans and the first sacrifices articulate an essential difference between the Israelite and Mesopotamian cultures, namely that the Israelites were a society that worshipped only one god (monolatry) and the Mesopotamians worshipped many gods (polytheism).

that the Book of Genesis came down to us, not as a composite of disparate elements but as a unified document with a life, coherence, and integrity of its own" (1989: xviii). See also Kvanvig 2011: 185-187 for a general introduction to the documentary hypothesis. For the Book of Leviticus, the P source corresponds roughly to Leviticus 1-16, and the H source corresponds to Leviticus 17-26. The H source was first identified as distinct by August Klostermann in 1877. In his reconstruction, Julius Wellhausen (2008: 376-384) situated the H source earlier than the P source. Scholars who have questioned this dating of the sources are Israel Knohl (1995) and Jacob Milgrom (1991: 2440-2446). For a brief history of the criticism of the documentary hypothesis, see Klawans 2005: 50-52.

³⁶⁰ Scholars have attempted to connect the creation in the *Enuma Elish* with the creation in Genesis, which Tsumura (1994: 31) has invalidated. See his discussion of scholarship, its problems, and useful bibliography (Tsumura 1994: 31-34).

³⁶¹ As Lambert (1994: 101) explains, the flood is the clearest case of borrowing from the Mesopotamian tradition. Tsumura (1994: 54-55) lists the similarities and differences between these stories, as well as the three approaches to dependency on a Mesopotamian model.

Nevertheless, this sort of adaptation of Mesopotamian motifs was possible because, although the Israelites worshipped only one god, they believed in the existence of many gods (i.e., monolatry).³⁶² Although the Book of Genesis draws on the Mesopotamian traditions, it deviates from those stories in significant ways in order to emphasize the omnipotence of YHWH as the one true god.

The story of Genesis tells the account of the creation of humans twice, once in Genesis 1 and again in Genesis 2.³⁶³ Unlike the Mesopotamian tradition, the anthropogeny comes before the first sacrifice, as I will explain below. Each version of the creation appears to be derived from a different source and the second account in Genesis 2, traditionally attributed to the J source, is probably the older redaction.³⁶⁴ In Genesis 2, YHWH creates the first man Adam from the earth and breathes life into him: “The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.”³⁶⁵ With the creation of man from earth Genesis draws on the tradition of creation from clay in *Atrahasis*, but the Israelite god has no need for help from other gods or goddesses in the creation as the Mesopotamian gods did.³⁶⁶ Adam’s name bears some phonetic correspondence with the Hebrew term for blood (*dām*), and thus it may reflect the Mesopotamian tradition of creation from the blood of a

³⁶² See Rendsburg 1995 and Zevit 2001.

³⁶³ In the first version of Genesis 1:27, God creates both man and woman in his image. This version is long attributed to the P source. The older version in Genesis 2 is traditionally attributed to the J source. As Tsumura (1994: 28) argues, although the two versions might have different origins, they nonetheless reflect the same cosmology.

³⁶⁴ For the J source as the older version, see Hendel 2012: 51-81.

³⁶⁵ Genesis 2:7. I use everywhere the translation of the NJPS Hebrew-English Tanakh.

³⁶⁶ For Adam in the Mesopotamian traditions, see Shea 1977.

god from *Atrahasis* (*da-mi-šu*). After YHWH places Adam in the garden of Eden, he creates woman from Adam's rib as a companion for the first man.³⁶⁷

According to Genesis, Adam calls his wife *Ḥawwāh* (Eve), which is derived from a root meaning "life," because Eve was the mother of all living things, an epithet which, according to Joan O'Brian, recalls the title of the birth goddess Mami.³⁶⁸ Nahum M.

Sarna comments, however, that although Eve's name parallels the mother goddess of Near Eastern mythology, it is "demythologized."³⁶⁹ Sarna also notes the Israelite account of the creation of the primordial woman is unique among Near Eastern literatures because it offers more detail to the creation of woman than man.³⁷⁰ In the depiction of Eve, the biblical account combines both the mother goddess figure and the first woman. By emphasizing the creation of woman, the Israelite story distinguishes itself from the account of creation in *Atrahasis* where man and woman were both created from the same piece of clay. After Eve and Adam disobey the command of YHWH and eat from the tree of knowledge of good and bad, the first humans become aware of their nakedness and feel shame.³⁷¹ Just as in the *Atrahasis*, humans were created by YHWH to work and tend his garden (Genesis 2:15). In punishment for disobeying his will, however, YHWH curses man with the task of working ground that is resistant to his labor in the form of

³⁶⁷ "He took of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. And the Lord God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:21-22). For a comparison of Eden with Mesopotamian traditions with useful bibliography, see Tsumura 1994: 37-44.

³⁶⁸ Genesis 3:20. The word *ḥawwāh* is an archaic form of the word *ḥayyāh*, from the root ḤYH "to live." The Septuagint understood it this way when it translates her name as Ζῶε "living." (Sarna 1989: 29 n.20). O'Brian 1983: 39.

³⁶⁹ Sarna 1989: 29 n. 20.

³⁷⁰ The creation of woman is described in six verses compared to one verse for the creation of man (Sarna 1989: 21).

³⁷¹ The command: Genesis 2:16-17; the shame: Genesis 3:7.

thorns and thistles, as well as punishing woman with labor pains (Genesis 3:16-19). The punishment of difficult labor is another important deviation from the Mesopotamian model where humans were created with the intention of laboring to provide sustenance for the gods. The Israelite god, on the other hand, has no need for food and humans are now cursed to work for their own sustenance, whereas the Mesopotamian gods need humans to feed them. Thus, the account in Genesis emphasizes the omnipotence of the Israelite god, in so far as YHWH is not dependent on food offerings.

Finally, YHWH clothes Adam and Eve with garments of skins from slaughtered animals (Genesis 3:21) and drives them out of the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23).³⁷² YHWH himself performs the first slaughter of animals, and although the text does not explicitly state that YHWH kills the animals, it is implied as a necessity for providing the animal skins.³⁷³ In the biblical story, animals that previously lived in harmony with the first humans are killed to make the first garments for Adam and Eve as a consequence of their primal sin. This act is not much different from the Israelite practice of sacrifice by which animals are killed to expiate the sin of humans—not, as in the *Atrahasis*, to feed the gods.³⁷⁴ Thus, I interpret this first biblical animal slaughter as adjacent to the practice of Israelite sacrifice. However, sacrifice is established by YHWH after the creation of humans, not *vice versa* as in the *Atrahasis*, where the first sacrifice facilitates the creation

³⁷² Nahum Sarna (1989: 29) notes that the Targum Psuedo-Jonathan relates a tradition that the skins were fashioned from the skin of the serpent. Sarna also notes that Genesis Rabba (20:12) and Sotah (14a) mention that the Hebrew can also be translated as “garments for the skin,” which would leave the material of the skin ambiguous.

³⁷³ In this verse (Genesis 3:21), YHWH is the subject of the verb *‘sh* ‘to do/make.’ This verb is used in a wide variety of semantic contexts, including “to make a sacrifice” (Leviticus 9:22; 17:9).

³⁷⁴ See the elaborate ritual of purification of sin for the entire year in Leviticus 16. See the commentary of Leviticus 16 by Jacob Milgrom (1991: 1009-1084).

of humans. Although this first slaughter of animals is not presented as the first sacrifice, it does foreshadow the actual first, foundational sacrifice, performed by Cain and Abel (children of Adam and Eve) six verses later.³⁷⁵ Just as in *Atrahasis*, the first slaughter is performed by a god, but the account in Genesis deviates from the Mesopotamian story in many ways, not only because humans were already created before the first act of sacrifice, but also because the function of the first slaughter is to clothe humans.³⁷⁶ In my reading, this deviation points to the omnipotence of YHWH, who does not need humans to provide him offerings, nor does he require other gods to help him create humans. Moreover, the focus on animal slaughter highlights the importance of animal sacrifice, in particular, for the cult of YHWH.

Later, in Genesis 4 the sons of Adam and Eve offer the first sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: “In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil; and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord paid heed to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed” (Genesis 4:3-4).³⁷⁷ Although this is the first sacrifice proper narrated in Genesis, the

³⁷⁵ Although the Book of Genesis does not describe Adam performing sacrifice, there is a tradition that Adam built an altar for burnt offerings. This tradition is preserved by the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (on *Genesis* 22:9) in an expanded version of the story of the binding of Isaac, a biblical aitiology of sacrifice (see my discussion in Chapter 5).

³⁷⁶ While YHWH does not perform sacrifice in the biblical texts, as Patton (2009: 250) has pointed out, “At certain points in the Talmud, God also seems to practice Judaism: He observes *miṣvot* (religious commandments), wears consecrated accoutrements, and performs ritual actions.” Patton analyzes evidence from later Jewish sources in the Talmud and cites examples where YHWH bathes in a ritual bath of fire (ibid., 250), and even prays (ibid., 265). A passage not studied by Patton seems to depict YHWH manipulating blood in the performance of a sacrifice: “The Lord has a sword; it is sated with blood, it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys and rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in the land of Edom” (Isaiah 34:6-7). In a similar vein as Patton, Francesca Stavrakopoulou (2004: 201) comments on a poem describing child sacrifice from the Book of Isaiah (30:27-33), which she suggests “depicts YHWH as the divine sacrificer participating in the ritual.”

³⁷⁷ Although the first sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible is performed by Cain and Abel, according to a later Jewish tradition from one of the Minor Tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, known as *’Abot dē-Rabbi*

narrative reads as if the practice had already been established.³⁷⁸ With the first biblical sacrifice performed by Cain and Abel, YHWH chooses between meat and grain offerings and indicates his preference for meat by listening to Abel. Grain offerings (*minḥāh*) were frequently offered by the Israelite cult, but the meat offering is shown here to take precedence.³⁷⁹ With the choice between the two offerings, YHWH establishes the institution of sacrifice by indicating his preference for certain offerings. Thus, although YHWH does not perform sacrifice himself, he is depicted establishing and regulating his cult. Moreover, the first sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible defines its sacrificial practice in opposition to the practice of sacrifice in the *Atrahasis* where grain offerings are preferred. Thus, the first sacrifice intentionally elevates the cult of YHWH in opposition to his Mesopotamian neighbors by depicting his preference for meat offerings. The Israelite god deliberately chooses his preference, whereas the Mesopotamian gods do not get a choice and are dependent on offerings for sustenance, “like flies.” Moreover, just as with the first animal slaughter by YHWH in the garden, the first sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible highlights the importance of cultic animal slaughter. The next sacrifice is not described

Naṭan, “The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan,” it is Adam who performs the first sacrifice after his banishment from the garden of Eden. The Talmud says of Adam: “The following morning when he saw the world grow light and the sun rising in the east, he rejoiced exceedingly. He arose and built altars and brought an ox whose horns extended beyond its hoofs; and he offered it up as a burnt offering; as it is said, *And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock whose horns extend beyond its hoofs* (Ps. 69:32)” (*’Aḇot dē-Rabbi Naṭan* Ch. 1; Translation by Goldin 1990: 14). According to this late Jewish tradition, it is actually Adam who performs the first burnt offering (*’ōlāh*), rather than Noah (see Genesis 8:20-21).

³⁷⁸ In fact, the version of the flood story from the second-century CE Aramaic Targum Pseudo-Jonathan states that Cain and Abel offered their sacrifice on the same altar on which Adam performed the first sacrifice after his banishment from Eden, and in turn, Noah offers sacrifice on the same altar as Cain and Abel. “Then Noah built an altar before the Lord—it is the altar which Adam built at the time he was banished from the garden of Eden and on which he offered an offering, and upon which Cain and Abel offered their offerings” (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan for *Genesis* 9.20 = Maher 1992: 43-44).

³⁷⁹ We can see this precedence in the Book of Leviticus where Chapter 1 describes burnt animal offerings, and Chapter 2 describes burnt grain offerings. Cain and Abel offer a *minkhah*, “offering, gift.” The word is derived from the root *mnkh* “to give a gift” (BDB).

until Genesis 8 when Noah offers the first explicit burnt offering after the flood, indicated by the use of the term *‘ôlāh* “burnt offering.”

After the world becomes over-populated with humans and corruption runs rampant, YHWH decides to destroy his creation with the flood. Just as Enki warned Atrahasis, the Israelite God instructs Noah about his plan to destroy his creation and commands him to build the ark (Genesis 6:17-22). But whereas in the polytheistic culture of the *Atrahasis* the god Ellil proposes the destruction of humans and the god Enki attempts to save humans, in the culture of the Israelites, YHWH both destroys his creation and saves his chosen Israelites. The importance of animal sacrifice is highlighted in the first verses of Genesis 7 when YHWH instructs Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals: “Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and female, to keep seed alive upon all the earth” (Genesis 7:2-3). As Sarna notes of these verses, “This division cannot be referring to criteria of human consumption after the Flood, when man was permitted to eat flesh, for no such distinctions are made in 9:2-3. The categories refer only to suitability for sacrifice.”³⁸⁰ In other words, the importance of sacrifice is linked with the new creation established by the flood waters, just as we have seen with the flood and sacrifice motif in *Atrahasis*. Moreover, the emphasis on different kinds of animals highlights the importance of animal sacrifice for the Israelites, whereas

³⁸⁰ Sarna 1989: 54 n.2.

the Mesopotamian gods are pleased by any food offerings. Noah preserves not only humanity but also the practice of sacrifice, just as Atrahasis in his eponymous epic.³⁸¹

Thus, after the flood waters retreat, Noah is commanded by YHWH to disembark from the ark with his family and the animals (Genesis 8:15-16). This is a significant difference from the Mesopotamian flood stories where the hero disembarks on his own accord. The deviation highlights YHWH as the supreme god in contrast to the Mesopotamian gods who are dependent on humans for sacrifice as food. Nevertheless, the hero immediately offers a sacrifice after the flood, just as Atrahasis did. Noah first builds an altar and then offers the first explicit burnt offering in the Hebrew Bible as indicated by the term *‘ôlāh* “burnt offering”:

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking of every clean animal and of every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the pleasing odor, and the LORD said to Himself: “Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the devisings of man’s mind are evil from his youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done.” (Genesis 8:20-21)

Sarna explains this sacrifice as both an act of worship in gratitude for surviving the flood but also as an act of expiation of sin: “Now that the earth has been purged of its evil, sacrifice symbolizes the restoration of harmony between God and humanity.”³⁸² In this sacrifice, in contrast to the sacrifice offered by Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-5), Noah offers an *‘ôlāh*, “burnt offering.” This was the most common Israelite sacrifice offered in

³⁸¹ There is, however, a discrepancy with the instructions provided here in Genesis 7 and the instructions previously provided in Genesis 6 where YHWH commands Noah to take only one pair of each species (Genesis 6:19-20). Some scholars explain the discrepancy as two different traditions, whereas other scholars explain the verses in Genesis 6 as the basic requirement for reproduction and the verses in Genesis 7 as the additional animals needed for sacrifice (see Sarna 1989: 54 n.2).

³⁸² See Sarna 1989: 59.

the official cult to YHWH, once in the morning and once in the evening.³⁸³ The word ‘*ôlāh* is derived from the Hebrew verb ‘*lh*, “to ascend.” The typical Israelite burnt offering is literally an offering consumed by the fire where the smoke ascends to YHWH.³⁸⁴ This type of offering is similar to the Greek burnt offering called *thusia* which is derived from a root literally meaning, “to make smoke.” YHWH then smells the “pleasing savor” from the burnt offering, and the word *niḥoaḥ* “pleasing,” is a clever pun on the name “Noah.”³⁸⁵ This verse highlights some of the defining features of Israelite sacrifice: the slaughter of an animal at the altar and the burning of its flesh to create smoke for a pleasing savor for YHWH.

The “pleasing savor” invites comparison with the other Near Eastern stories I have discussed so far. In both the *Gilgamesh* epic and *Atrahasis*, the gods also smell the “savor” of the sacrifice offered after the flood. However, Sarna notes that in contrast to Utnapishtim and *Atrahasis*, Noah does not offer a libation. According to Sarna, the omission of a libation “points up the fact that sacrifice is not food for God.”³⁸⁶ In Sarna’s view, in contrast to the Mesopotamian traditions, the phrase “the Lord smelled the pleasing odor” is deprived of its literal meaning connected to offerings of food for the divinity and used in the biblical verses only as a technical formula signifying God’s acceptance of the offering.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ See Leviticus 1 and the commentary by Milgrom (1991: 133-177).

³⁸⁴ Sarna 1989: 59. The equivalent of a burnt offering in the Ugaritic texts is the term *šurpu* (Pardee 2002: 225 and del Olmo Lete 1999: 36).

³⁸⁵ Sarna 1989: 59 n. 21.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., n. 20-21.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. This technical formula for God’s acceptance of the sacrifice is employed frequently in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Exodus 29:18, 25, 41; Leviticus 26:31; Amos 5:21).

Although the biblical flood story relies on the Mesopotamian model, the account in Genesis uses the theme of the first sacrifice to define the Israelite culture in opposition to its Mesopotamian neighbors. Whereas the *Atrahasis* describes sacrifice as an institution created by the gods to provide them with food, the Israelite God has no need for food, and as such humanity was not created for that purpose. As an aitiology of sacrifice, the story of Noah and his first sacrifice explains why humans offer sacrifice: as thanksgiving for surviving the flood and for beginning a new phase of human existence free from the moral corruption of the past. The re-institution of sacrifice begun by Noah highlights the expiatory function of Israelite sacrifice to remove sin.³⁸⁸ Moreover, this expiatory function of sacrifice begins with the first “sacrifice” in the Garden of Eden when YHWH slaughters animals because of the primal sin of the first humans, Adam and Eve. The Book of Genesis draws on the motif of sacrifice and creation but separates its belief system from those of the Mesopotamians by its unique representation of sacrifice and the creation of Adam and Eve, as well as in the deviations in the re-institution of sacrifice by Noah. The significant differences in the Israelite stories show how the Mesopotamian motif that connects the creation (and destruction) of humans to the origins of sacrifice was susceptible to adaptation by a different culture. By observing how the framework of the *Atrahasis* was remodeled to fit the culture of the Israelites we can better understand how Greek traditions will modify the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny to fit Greek theology, as I will show in the next chapter.

³⁸⁸ For the expiatory function of Israelite sacrifice, see Gray 1971; Levine 1974. Levine (1971) views sacrifice as primarily a gift for YHWH. For sacrifice as a purification offering, see Milgrom 1971. For a general introduction to cultic terminology, see Levine 1974 and Eberhart 2011.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I have argued that in the Mesopotamian myth *Atrahasis* the slaughter of the god Ilawela in order to create humans should be interpreted as a sacrifice. The episode is set up with a cultic context by the preliminary purification and the sacred days. From this context it is then possible to interpret the verb used to describe the slaughter of the god, *tbl* “to slaughter by slitting the throat,” with the meaning “to sacrifice.” I also explained how this myth is an aitiology of sacrifice because humans are created from the act of sacrifice with the very purpose of providing food offerings to the gods. I then turned to the biblical texts as a case study to explore how the motif of sacrifice and creation could be adapted by a neighboring culture, in this case, the Israelites. I explained how these adaptations highlight the distinctions in the Israelite cult, namely that YHWH does not require food offerings nor the assistance of other gods, and thus, his omnipotence is accentuated.

In the next chapter, I turn to the Greek traditions and use the Near Eastern material presented in this chapter for a comparative analysis. In particular, I analyze the Greek myths of Hesiod and Pseudo-Apollodoros to show how the Greek tradition adapted the Near Eastern themes of sacrifice and anthropogeny and the flood in the depictions of Prometheus, Pandora, and Deukalion. After my comparative study of the Greek myths in Chapter 2, I then provide a more comprehensive conclusion about the differences between Greek and Near Eastern theologies, as depicted in their cosmogenic myths about divine sacrifice.

Chapter 2: The First Sacrifice and the Origins of Humanity: Greek Traditions

πρῶτον Πανδώρα θύσαι λευκότριχα κριόν·
-Ar. Av. 971.³⁸⁹

Introduction

In this chapter, I contribute to our understanding of the interactions of the cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean by exploring how Greek traditions adapted the motif of the origins of sacrifice and the creation of humans underlying the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*. In particular, I focus on the myth of the first sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus and the creation of the first woman Pandora in the works of the Greek poet Hesiod. As discussed in the Introduction chapter, the manifold intercultural contacts between Greece, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Assyrian empire facilitated the borrowing of the Mesopotamian literary traditions by the Greeks.³⁹⁰ The earliest tablets inscribed with the Mesopotamian myth of *Atrahasis* are from the eighteenth-century BCE. Hence, the Mesopotamian traditions could have been transmitted either during the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. As Rutherford discusses, the Near Eastern stories may have been transmitted during the Late Bronze Age through the Hurrian-Hittite milieu or an intermediary culture, such as the Cretans, or during the Iron Age when the trade networks were established in the eighth-century BCE, roughly contemporary with

³⁸⁹ “You should first sacrifice a white ram to Pandora (the goddess who gives gifts).”

³⁹⁰ See especially Burkert 1992 and 2004; West 1997; Rollinger 1996, 2011, 2012.

Hesiod.³⁹¹ At the very latest, the Assyrians probably brought the stories underlying the Mesopotamian myths to the Levant and the shore of the Mediterranean when they conquered the region by the eighth-century BCE, but the stories probably arrived even earlier via merchants and other travelers.³⁹² The Phoenicians were already in contact with the Assyrians and paying tribute to their expanding empire during the ninth and eighth centuries BCE and, just as they traded their wares, they could have traded the stories of the Assyrians with Greeks, who, in turn, disseminated and merged the stories with their own mythology.³⁹³

Just as he does for the *Theogony*'s myth of the separation of heaven and earth, Graf argues that the myth of the first sacrifice was derived from an earlier source, possibly Near Eastern, and reinterpreted by Hesiod: "The passage is manifestly a revision," he says, "that is, a reinterpretation of an already existing tale. Although there is no way of knowing what his sources were or to what extent he diverged from them, similar tales explaining the distribution of the slaughtered animal are known from

³⁹¹ Rutherford 2011. Cf. López-Ruiz 2014. Assyrian trade routes were first established with the Hittites in Anatolia during the reign of the Babylonian king Erišum I in the 20th century BCE (Beal 2011: 579).

³⁹² The Greeks were first in contact with the Assyrian empire during the eighth-century BCE under the reigns of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. In cuneiform sources from this period, the ethnic term "Yamnāya" for Ionian Greeks first occurs (Rollinger 2017: 275). In the same period, Sargon II (722-705 BCE) conquered the island Cyprus, a vibrant meeting place for Greek and Near Eastern contact, and he established the famous "Kition stele" (for the text, see Malbran-Labat 2004). Greek mercenaries were fighting in the Assyrian army from as early as the ninth-century BCE (Luraghi 2006). For a brief survey of the historical context in which Assyrians and Greeks were in contact, see Rollinger 2011; 2017 and Ziemann 2019: 81-99. On the routes of contact, see Wiesehöfer 2011.

³⁹³ The Assyrians gained supremacy over the Phoenician coast beginning in the ninth-century BCE, and the treaty between Assyrian king Esarhaddon and Baal, king of Tyre, gives us a glimpse of the power Assyria exerted over the city (for the text, see Parpola ad Watanabe 1988: 24-27). Around the year 640 BCE Tyre was made into a province of Assyria (Aubet 2001: 49). The Phoenicians were already in contact with the Greeks by at least the ninth-century BCE (ibid., 43). For Phoenician tribute to the Assyrians, see ibid., 45-49.

ethnology.”³⁹⁴ In this chapter, I argue we can isolate at least one of Hesiod’s main sources for Prometheus’ sacrifice, namely the Mesopotamian tradition behind the *Atrahasis*.

The myth of Prometheus and its Greek aitiology of sacrifice contains some of the same key features as the *Atrahasis* myth. In the *Atrahasis*, gods perform the first sacrifice in order to create humans. In Hesiod’s myth, Prometheus offers the first sacrifice that eventually results in the creation of the first woman (Pandora) and the subsequent human race. It is important to note, however, that Hesiod’s account of the first sacrifice mentions the existence of humans, although the first woman Pandora has not yet been created. In the myth, Prometheus both sacrifices and steals fire on behalf of humans, which leads to the creation of the first woman, Pandora. This suggests that we may be dealing with the merging of two different traditions or perhaps Hesiod refers to a previous race of humans (such as the ones described in the Myth of Ages).³⁹⁵ Regardless of how we are to interpret the existence of humans during the first sacrifice, Hesiod’s myth clearly attributes the origins of the first woman Pandora to the origins of sacrifice in a similar way, I argue, as the *Atrahasis* connects the origins of humans with the origins of sacrifice.

Despite the similarity between *Atrahasis* and Hesiod, the differences are sharply defined. In the *Atrahasis*, the gods perform the first sacrifice with the sole intention of creating humanity. In the *Theogony*, on the other hand, the creation of the first female, Pandora and with her the race of women, is the final punishment for males because of

³⁹⁴ Graf 1993: 86.

³⁹⁵ For the Myth of Ages, see Hes. *Op.* 110-201.

Prometheus' deception of the first sacrifice.³⁹⁶ Moreover, the theme of labor is important in both stories and connected to the first sacrifice, but again the differences are striking. In *Atrahasis*, humans are created from the first sacrifice in order to take on the work of the gods. In Hesiod's myth, the gods never need to work and humans are burdened by work as a punishment for Prometheus' *tricky sacrifice*.³⁹⁷ The trick of the sacrifice is a visual sleight-of-hand: Prometheus conceals the true contents of the sacrificial offerings from the sight of Zeus and asks him to choose a portion for himself.

The differences between the Mesopotamian and Greek stories can help us understand the extent to which Hesiod deviated from the Mesopotamian tradition and integrated local Greek traditions with the motif of sacrifice and creation. As we saw with the Book of Genesis, the deviations from the Mesopotamian story of sacrifice and creation illuminate how the culture of the Israelites, which worshipped only one god, depicted their divinity as omnipotent because YHWH does not depend on sacrifice for sustenance (i.e., the dependence is unidirectional, whereas in Mesopotamia the dependence is symbiotic). In turn, although both the Mesopotamians and the Greeks were polytheistic cultures, the former depicted their gods as dependent on sacrifices for food, whereas the latter depicted their gods as dependent on sacrifices for τιμαί "honors," and

³⁹⁶ It is difficult to know how males were created, but there are clues in Hesiod's *Myth of the Ages* (*Op.* 109-201) where the gods created the first golden race of mortal humans. Hesiod mentions the ash-tree nymphs in the account of the theft of fire (*Theog.* 562-564). According to Hesiod's *Myth of the Ages*, the third race, or bronze-race, was born from ash-trees (*Op.* 144-145). This may suggest that the Prometheus myth takes place during the third race of humans before the age of heroes who sacked Troy. See Clay's (2009: 108-109) discussion of the Melian nymphs in the Prometheus story.

³⁹⁷ Hes. *Op.* 42-49.

as such they were satisfied simply with the κνίση, “savor,” of the offering.³⁹⁸ For example, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (310-312) depicts a crisis after the rape of Persephone when her mother Demeter prevents the growth of crops and almost destroys the human race, and thus, the gods are deprived of the τιμή “honor” of their sacrifices.³⁹⁹ The Prometheus myth, in particular, dramatizes the first division of honors between the gods and humans and connects those honors to the first sacrifice.⁴⁰⁰ The Greek gods, however, are never depicted as starved by the lack of offerings as the Mesopotamian gods are.⁴⁰¹ Moreover, the Mesopotamian gods had to work for their sustenance at the beginning of time, and thus, they created humans to take over that burden, whereas the Greek gods never had to work, so in this sense the Greek god is more similar to YHWH.⁴⁰² As I will argue below, this key difference between the representations of the Mesopotamian and Greek gods is conveyed in the myth of Prometheus by the focus on the attractiveness of the offerings. As we shall see, because the Greek gods do not require sacrifice for sustenance, they must be enticed by an attractive offering (*hiera kala*). In the following two sections, I analyze Greek traditions that depict the connections between sacrifice and the creation of humans. In the first section, I offer a close reading of Hesiod’s myth of the first sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus. In particular, I

³⁹⁸ Hom. *Il.* 4.48-49: οὐ γάρ μοί ποτε βωμὸς ἐδεύετο δαιτὸς εἵσης | λουβῆς τε κνίσης τε· τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς, “For never was my altar lacking from an equal share of the drink offering and the savor of the burnt offering, for we have that share.” Cf. The Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* 170-173.

³⁹⁹ Cf. Pl. *Symp.* 190c; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 170-173, *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 170-173.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Clay 2009: 107.

⁴⁰¹ *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 310-312.

⁴⁰² Greek and West Semitic sacrifices are similar in other respects, as West (1997a: 39-42) pointed out. For example, the burning of incense, holocausts, sacrifice with a communal feast, preference for oxen and sheep, the ceremony begins with a procession, water is poured over the participants’ hands, the victim’s hide was given to the priest, etc. Cf. Bergquist 1993 and Burkert 1976.

interpret the myth as an adaptation of the Mesopotamian motif and show how the sacrifice leads to the creation of the first woman, Pandora. In the second section, I provide a close reading of the Greek myth of the flood preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros and show how the Hesiod's story about the first sacrifice and the origins of humans continues with the myth of Prometheus' son Deukalion. Moreover, I explain how the story works as an adaptation of the Near Eastern motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny. In the conclusion, I discuss how Greek myths about sacrifice articulate a different theology from the Near Eastern myths about sacrifice studied in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.⁴⁰³

1. Hesiod

Over the years scholars have examined the myth of Prometheus with a variety of useful approaches.⁴⁰⁴ West argued that the Prometheus myth in *Theogony* combines traditions from three different aitiologies into one narrative: the origins of sacrifice, the origins of fire, and the origins of marriage.⁴⁰⁵ Vernant, Jenny Strauss Clay, and Charles H. Stocking, on the other hand, have argued that the Prometheus myth, as it is presented in both the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, constitutes one coherent narrative.⁴⁰⁶ By

⁴⁰³ Naiden 2013.

⁴⁰⁴ See Carol Dougherty's review of the scholarship (2006: 21-22). For a Jungian approach to the myth, see Kerényi 1963; For a structuralist approach, see Vernant and Detienne 1989: 21-86 and Vernant 1980. For the cohesiveness of the Prometheus story in both the *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, see Vernant 1990: 183-202. See also the treatment of the myth by Jenny Strauss Clay (2009: 100-128), who builds on the arguments of Vernant 1980 but reads the *Works and Days* and *Theogony* separately. For a reading of the Near Eastern elements in the Prometheus myth, see West 1997a: 310-311. For the critical editions and commentaries of Hesiod's *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, see West 1966 and 1978. Most recently, Stocking (2017) has argued the myth of Prometheus is connected to a discourse of the "politics of the belly" which perpetuates patriarchal ideology.

⁴⁰⁵ West 1966: 305-307.

⁴⁰⁶ Vernant (1980: 183-201) shows how the myth of Prometheus depicts a series of deceptions that begin with the first sacrifice and end with the creation of Pandora. Clay (2009: 100-128) builds on Vernant's

looking at the myth through the lens of cultural interaction and the adaptation of myths, I account for both of these readings. I show that the myth of Prometheus must be, as Vernant, Clay, and Stocking claim, a coherent narrative, one that Hesiod borrowed from the Mesopotamian tradition behind the *Atrahasis*. The creative process of combining these narrative motifs with elements from local traditions, meanwhile, accounts for West's argument that the story seems to exhibit three different aitiologies.

In order to understand how Hesiod combined local Greek beliefs regarding sacrifice with the motifs borrowed from the *Atrahasis*, I draw primarily on the recent work of Naiden. He has elucidated how the Greek god was fundamentally conceived as a divine spectator of sacrifice (*theōros*) and how Greek sacrifices as well as the worshipers needed to be visually and morally appealing (*kalos*) in order to attract the god and gain his approval.⁴⁰⁷ Naiden discerns two key differences that differentiated Greek sacrifice from the sacrifice of the Levant: first, the requirement that sacrifices be *ta kallista*, “the most beautiful,” and second, that there be a performance for the divinity, which included singing, dancing, incense, and other ways of gaining the approval of the divinity.⁴⁰⁸

reading but she demonstrates how the narratives of the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are different, especially how the version in *Works and Days* begins with the theft of fire. Stocking (2017: 23-24; 55-89) also builds on Vernant and argues the creation of Pandora comes second after the sacrifice because the sacrifice establishes Zeus patriarchal rule with his status as “father of gods and men,” (*Theog.* 542). Moreover, he shows how the concept of *cholos* “anger” is a key narrative marker throughout the episode.

⁴⁰⁷ Naiden (2013: 322-323) demonstrates from literary and epigraphical evidence that the Greek god was conceived as a *theōros*, “a spectator,” of sacrifices because of the focus on the attractiveness of the offerings. As Plato explains, a man should devote himself to sacrifice, song, and dance to gain the approval of a god (*Leg.* 8.803e). Sacrificial dancing appears in the *Hymn to Apollo* 149-150. As Naiden explains, the aesthetic element is found in the worshiper and the animal, and the moral element is found in the prayer and the purification of the celebrants (2013: 21).

⁴⁰⁸ Naiden 2013: 325-326. The earliest sacrifice represented in Greek literature, from Homer, is shown to be accepted by Athena by the phrase *hiera kala*, “beautiful sacrifice” (*Hom. Od.* 4.474-476). The semantic field of the word *kalos*, “beautiful/noble,” and its related verb *kallierein*, “to have favorable signs in a sacrifice,” designate the acceptability of sacrifices, namely that the worshiper and victim must be both visually beautiful as well as morally acceptable. The visual element was accomplished by a garland, white clothes, song and dance. The moral element was accomplished by purification (Naiden 2013: 33, 110).

These features of the performance all contributed to the visual appeal of the sacrifice (*kala hiera*) which then helped to attract the divinity to the worshipers resulting in a successful sacrifice. Moreover, the Greek worshiper must also be *kalos* in a moral sense, accomplished by purification and the avoidance of wrongdoing.⁴⁰⁹ Another important feature was that the Greeks delegated the performance of sacrifices to priests who sacrificed on behalf of the people (*huper tinos*, “on behalf of someone”).⁴¹⁰ Naiden does not compare Greek sacrifice with Mesopotamian practice, but I extend his contrast to Mesopotamia as well, as I will explain in this chapter. At the end of his book, Naiden begins to apply his analysis of Greek sacrifice to an interpretation of the Prometheus myth:

In myth, the Greek belief in a divine spectator asserted itself in the chief story of the origin of sacrifice, in Hesiod. Before this time, gods and mortals dined together, but now they separated,⁴¹¹ and on humankind’s behalf Prometheus made Zeus an offering meant to deceive him. Underneath the shiny and attractive fat lay not innards or meat but bones. In this, the first act of sacrifice *huper tinos*, the delegate tried to keep the

According to Plato, sacrifices were required to be *kalliston* (*Leg.* 4.716d). Epigraphical evidence (e.g., *Agora* 16.75.5-7) shows that the Athenian polis wrote directives for sacrifices to be *hōs kallista*, “as beautiful as possible” (for references, see Naiden 2013: 210-219).

⁴⁰⁹ Naiden 2013: 33; 82. For *kalos* in the sense of moral beauty/virtue, see Pl. *Symp.* 183d. For Greek ideas of purification, see Parker 1996.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-193.

⁴¹¹ It is uncertain what happened at Mekone. The question is whether the verb *krinein* “to separate” refers to the situation before the trick or to what happens because of the trick. The *scholia vetera* for ἐν τῇ Μηκώνῃ says: τίνες θεοὶ ποίους ἀνθρώπους λάχοιεν μετὰ τὸν πόλεμον, “What gods obtained lots with respect to what kind of humans after the war?” The *scholia* may be drawing from a similar tradition in Callimachos (fr.119): Μηκώνην μακάρων ἔδρανον. . . ἦχι πά λους ἐβάλοντο, διεκρίναντο δὲ τιμάς, “Mekone is the seat of the immortals where they cast lots and divided the honors.” West (1966: 318) comments, “But Hesiod clearly has a different ‘division’ in mind, for mortal men are involved in it. It must be the one that took place at the end of the period when men and gods ate together (cf. on 507-616), for Prometheus’ trick establishes the sacrificial relations which now obtain between the two orders.” Other scholars suggest Prometheus serves as a judge between humans and gods over the division of the victim (Mair 1908: 50; Brown 1953: 68; Kirk 1974: 137). Eliot Wirshbo (1983: 103) argues “Before the chain of events initiated by Prometheus’ fateful act, the great distinction between men and gods had not yet come about. That is, until this moment in cosmic history, the only difference between the two groups was their disparate life spans.”

god from seeing what he would get—not only a trick, but an insult to divine powers of observation.⁴¹²

I build upon the remarks of Naiden in this chapter but point out how Hesiod uses terminology of visual perception, what linguists call *verba sentiendi*, to highlight the importance of the visual attractiveness of the Greek sacrifice in the myth of Prometheus and then later even in the representation of Pandora.⁴¹³ In short, this analysis illustrates that, although Hesiod borrows the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny from the Mesopotamian tradition, he adapts it to a Greek cultic worldview by emphasizing the attractiveness of the offerings, a feature absent in its Near Eastern precedent.

Hesiod tells the myth of Prometheus in both the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, but we can see the narrative sequence most clearly in the *Theogony*, and for that reason I focus my analysis on the *Theogony* with supplements from the *Works and*

⁴¹² Naiden 2013: 326; Naiden continues (ibid.): “In contrast, the first sacrifice of both Christianity and Judaism was not a trick played by a delegate. God received Cain and Abel, viewed their offerings, and made his choice of meat rather than cereal. The worshippers not only could not trick him, but had no chance to perform for him. The Greek worshipper found performance indispensable. The divine spectator expected it. But the god also expected a performance in which he or she could watch himself or herself.”

⁴¹³ Historical linguists classify words of seeing, and learning as *verba sentiendi*, ‘words of perception’: ὁράω, ‘to see,’ δέχομαι, ‘to look, to see,’ μανθάνω, ‘to learn,’ and οἶδα, ‘to know.’ From the perspective of historical linguistics, many verbs of perception began from a root ‘to perceive,’ and then gained a specific sense such as ‘to see.’ Some verbs even developed from physical perception toward mental perception, as we can see from the verb οἶδα which developed from the verb ‘to see.’ As Rose elucidates, “Historically, many have an original general meaning of ‘perceive, apprehend by the senses’, later moving toward specialization to a specific sense. Thus, from Proto-Indo-European root **h₄eu/h₄eyis* ‘perceive’ (with a questionable fourth laryngeal) come Greek *aisthánomai* ‘perceive’, Latin *audiō* ‘hear’, Hittite *ūhhi* ‘see’ and Vedic *uvé* ‘see’” (Rose 2013). Moreover, “A verb with a meaning referring literally to the physical senses may be extended metaphorically to refer to mental perception. Such alternations may be seen in the ancient root **ueid-* ‘know’ or ‘see’, with cognates alternating between meanings, or showing both. The Greek verb *eídon* (< **é-wid-o-n*) ‘I saw’ comes from this root, as does Vedic *véda* ‘know(s)’ and Latin *videre* ‘to see.’ In Homer, the middle form of this verb, *eídomai*, has the meaning ‘appear, seem to be’, while *oída*, though perfect in form, is present in meaning: ‘I (now) know (having seen)’” (Rose 2013). For development and meaning of οἶδα, see Beekes 2010: 1053; Smyth 794–799. For development of ὁράω, see Beekes 2010: 1095. For the Linear B verb *vi-de*, preserving the original digamma, and thus cognate with Latin *videre*, see Bartoněk 2003: 99.

Days.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, as Clay argues, the version in *Works and Days* begins with the theft of fire rather than the sacrifice.⁴¹⁵ In *Theogony*, the story begins with the trick of the sacrifice, then Zeus responds by hiding fire from humans, and in turn, Prometheus steals fire for humans, and finally Hephaistos creates Pandora and Zeus gives her as a punishment for men and binds Prometheus as a punishment.⁴¹⁶ In *Works and Days*, Prometheus deceives Zeus, and Hesiod does not identify the reason, but it probably alludes to the sacrifice; In response, Zeus hides both fire and the means of life for which humans must labor, then Prometheus steals fire, and in turn, Zeus commands Hephaistos to create Pandora as a gift for Prometheus' brother Epimetheus.⁴¹⁷ In short, the creation of Pandora is the indirect result of the first sacrifice performed by Prometheus.

The story of the first sacrifice in *Atrahasis* follows a linear narrative sequence that begins with the sacrifice of Ilawela and ends in the creation of humans who then, in turn, sustain the gods with sacrifice. Hesiod's narrative of Prometheus, on the other hand, begins after the events of the first sacrifice with his famous punishment for deceiving Zeus with the contents of the offerings. Before Hesiod tells us the story of Prometheus he recounts the lineage of Prometheus' father Iapetos and describes Prometheus' binding as a punishment for the trick of the sacrifice. In a linear sequence, however, the story of Prometheus begins when the Titan performs the first sacrifice by giving Zeus a choice between two offerings: one with meat concealed in an ox-stomach and one with bones

⁴¹⁴ Hes. *Op.* 47-105. As Clay (2009: 175) argues, the *Theogony* is told from a divine perspective, whereas the *Works and Days* is told from a human perspective.

⁴¹⁵ Clay 2009: 104.

⁴¹⁶ *Theog.* 535-592.

⁴¹⁷ Hes. *Op.* 42-89. Although Hesiod does not explicitly state the first deception (line 48) *pace* Clay, the unnamed deception could easily refer to the trick of the sacrifice.

disguised in attractive fat, and the story ends with the creation of Pandora. Hesiod then frames this central story about the first sacrifice and the creation of Pandora with a ring composition that highlights the punishment of Prometheus (δήσε, 521... δεσμός, 616):

δήσε δ' ἄλυσκτοπέδῃσι Προμηθέα ποικιλόβουλον 521
δεσμοῖς ἀργαλέοισι, μέσον διὰ κίον' ἐλάσσας·

...
οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἰαπετιονίδης ἀκάκητα Προμηθεὺς
τοῖό γ' ὑπεξήλυξε βαρὺν χόλον, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης 615
καὶ πολὺιδριν ἐόντα μέγας κατὰ δεσμός ἐρύκει.

(Zeus) **bound** wily Prometheus in unbreakable, cruel **bonds**, and he drove a pillar through the middle of him.

...
For not even Prometheus, the guileless son of Iapetos, escaped the heavy wrath of Zeus, but from necessity a great **bond** restrained him, although he had much wisdom. (Hes. *Theog.* 521-616)

Hesiod uses the aorist form of the verb δέω, “to bind,” at the first line of the episode, and he uses the noun derived from this verb, δεσμοῖς “in bonds,” in the following line. The word δεσμός is then echoed in the final line of the story in a ring composition that frames the entire myth. Hesiod elaborates on the punishment of Prometheus by explaining how Zeus sent an eagle everyday to eat the Titan’s immortal liver which would grow back at night and how Zeus finally allowed Herakles to kill the eagle and free Prometheus from his punishment (lines 523-532). Although Hesiod begins and ends his narrative about Prometheus with his punishment (the final element of the narrative), in a linear sequence the myth actually begins with the sacrifice and ends with the creation of Pandora, a sequence similar to that of the *Atrahasis*.⁴¹⁸ The following tables illustrate the myth in both the narrative and linear sequence in the *Theogony*:

⁴¹⁸ Vernant (1980: 193-197) showed how the first deception of the sacrifice leads to the final deception of Pandora.

Table 1. Narrative order of the myth of Prometheus:

Binding of Prometheus	First Sacrifice	Theft of Fire	Creation of Pandora	Binding of Prometheus
521-522	535-557	565-567	570-572	615-616

Tablet 2. Linear order of the myth of Melqart:

First Sacrifice	Theft of Fire	Creation of Pandora	Binding of Prometheus
535-557	565-567	570-572	521-522 and 615-616

The mention of Prometheus' punishment merely frames the episode, and in this way Hesiod conceals the true order of the events of the story (i.e., the sacrifice that leads to the creation of Pandora). Hesiod explains at the beginning of the sequence at line 533 and following why he punished Prometheus, namely because Prometheus tricked him with the first sacrifice.

In the *Atrahasis*, the first sacrifice of the god Ilawela to create humans emphasizes the close connection between gods and mortals. This connection is evident on many levels: in the opening lines "when gods were like men," in the genetic makeup of the first humans who share a portion of the sacrificed god, in the name of Ilawela, which combines the Akkadian terms for god and human, and finally in the symbiotic relationship of sacrifice whereby the gods depend on humans for food and humans depend on the gods for their very existence. In Hesiod, on the other hand, the over-

arching theme of the sacrifice of Prometheus is that of division, between mortal and immortal, ignorance and knowledge, and seen and unseen.⁴¹⁹ Moreover, it is the institution of *thusia* that will ultimately bridge this divide between humans and the gods. Hesiod uses the verb ἐκρίνοντο (line 535 below) to draw attention to the division between gods and men at the first sacrifice. The poet then emphasizes the dynamic between seen and unseen that will be a theme throughout the myth with the visibility of the first sacrifice. Hesiod highlights Zeus in his role as the divine spectator by focusing on the visibility and attractiveness of the first sacrifice:

καί περ χωόμενος παύθη χόλου, ὃν πρὶν ἔχεσκεν,
οὔνεκ' ἐρίζετο βουλάς ὑπερμενεί Κρονίωνι.
καὶ γὰρ ὅτ' ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἄνθρωποι 535
Μηκῶνῃ, τότε ἔπειτα μέγαν βούν πρόφρονι θυμῷ
δασσάμενος προύθηκε, Διὸς νόον ἐξαπαφίσκων.
τοῖς μὲν γὰρ σάρκας τε καὶ ἔγκατα πίονα δημῷ
ἐν ῥινῷ κατέθηκε, καλύψας γαστρὶ βοεῖῃ,
τῷ δ' αὖτ' ὅστέα λευκὰ βοὸς δολίῃ ἐπὶ τέχνῃ 540
εὐθετίσας κατέθηκε, καλύψας ἀργέτι δημῷ.

And although he was angry, he ceased from the wrath which he previously held, because (Prometheus) challenged plots against the mighty son of Kronos. For when gods and mortal humans **were separated** at Mekone, then at that time Prometheus **divided** a great bull and set it before Zeus with a willing mind, deceiving the mind of Zeus. Since he set down for the rest both the flesh and the entrails rich with fat in an ox-hide, **concealing it** with an ox-stomach, and for Zeus, in turn, the white bones of a bull he arranged and set down with a tricky craft, **by concealing them with shining fat**. (Hes. *Theog.* 535-541)

The different sacrificial portions articulate the division between gods and mortals (a division linguistically marked by the μὲν/δὲ contrast (lines 538-540), and likewise, the interplay between visual sight and concealment of knowledge emphasizes this division.

⁴¹⁹ As Vernant argues (1989: 21-86), the myth defines the distinctions between gods and humans through the division of the animal. The gods receive the *knise* because they are immortal and have no need for food, whereas the humans consume the meat because of their mortality.

The focus on the visual attractiveness of the offerings highlights the importance of *kala hiera* in the Greek tradition: both portions are disguised by the attractive and savory fat of the animal (πίονα; ἀργέτι δημῶ). Yet, the repetitive use of the aorist participle καλύψας “concealing” underscores the deception by hiding the contents of the sacrifice from Zeus’ sight. Moreover, the word καλύψας echoes a different form of the same verb (καλύπτω) in the phrase κνίσῃ ἐκάλυσαν, “they concealed with fat,” from the earliest description of a sacrifice in Homer (*Il.* 1.460). Thus, Hesiod uses the term to link the origins of wrapping the thigh bones in fat, a formulaic part of Greek sacrificial practice, to the first sacrifice offered by Prometheus.⁴²⁰

The Greek poet Hesiod draws from the Mesopotamian tradition where the trickster god Enki performs the first sacrifice of a *god*, but in contrast to the *Atrahasis*, the trickster god Prometheus sacrifices an *animal*. In fact, in myth Greek gods do not typically sacrifice other gods, as we will see in Chapter 7. Moreover, the first sacrifice in the Akkadian myth emphasizes the close relationship between gods and humans. In Hesiod’s adaptation, however, humans do not share in divinity, and instead, the practice of sacrifice expresses the division between them. Finally, Prometheus intentionally tricks Zeus with a visually attractive offering (*kala hiera*), and yet, the sacrifice is doomed to fail because Prometheus is not morally *kalos*. These differences illuminate how two different polytheistic cultures conceived of the relationship between human and divine, as well as how the practice of sacrifice articulates that distinction.

⁴²⁰ Note that although the offering is not explicitly a feast Hesiod does use the participle δασσάμενος to describe the division of portions, which is derived from the same root as the word for feast (δαίς) used in the description of sacrifice from the *Iliad* (1.466). The participle δασσάμενος is from the verb δατέομαι, “to divide” which shares a root (the zero grade δα-) with the verb δαίομαι “to divide, feast”, the root of the noun δαίς (Beekes 2010: 306). According to Clay (2009: 107) the participle “...alludes to Zeus’ supreme function as apportioner in the final distribution of honors that inaugurates his reign.”

Another relevant issue is why Prometheus sacrifices on behalf of humans. Clay points out that later versions of the myth attribute the creation of humans in general (not just Pandora) to Prometheus.⁴²¹ In those versions, Prometheus more clearly parallels the god Enki who both performed the first sacrifice and provided the clay for the creation of humanity. Thus, Prometheus' role as a benefactor and even progenitor of the human race fits with his other portrayals as a god of crafts who is also instrumental in the creation of Pandora in Hesiod. In Naiden's view, Prometheus acts like a priest at the first sacrifice when he offers on behalf of humans (*hyper tinos*), a key feature of Greek sacrifice in which the *demos* delegated the practice of sacrifice to priests and other religious experts with hieratic knowledge.⁴²² In my reading, Hesiod borrows the Near Eastern motif of the tricky, philanthropic god of crafts who offers the first sacrifice, but to accentuate the Greek view of sacrifice Hesiod frames Prometheus as a priest figure when he sacrifices on behalf of humans as a priest does.

Although the myth of Prometheus describes the first sacrifice, and Hesiod stresses some of the major features of a typical Greek sacrifice, the myth does not describe a complete Greek *thusia*, but rather it establishes the conditions for the introduction of the

⁴²¹ Clay 2009: 106. This version might be from Protagoras (Robert 1905: 362-365). According to Heitsch (1963: 425), Hesiod excluded Prometheus' creation of humans from his version of the myth. Prometheus is also the grandfather of the human race by his son Deukalion (see discussion in section 2 below).

⁴²² According to Naiden's reading of the myth Prometheus' sacrifice on behalf of the people (*hyper tinos*) might be connected to the Athenian religious law of delegating the responsibility of sacrifice to the priest (Naiden 2013: 185-190). This correlation is problematic, however, because Hesiod was a Boeotian living in the seventh-century BCE, and the majority of our evidence for sacrifice *hyper tinos* is from the classical period at Athens. Nevertheless, Naiden does cite evidence for this practice from the islands of Andros and Kos, the town of Telmissos at Caria in Anatolia, and Sparta, which suggests that the practice was more widespread among Greece. See *ibid.*, 188-189; Andros: *IG* xii 5.721.15-17; Cos: *Insc. Di Cos* 215.24-25; Telmissos: *Halikarnassos* 15.5-7; Sparta: Xen. *Cyr.* 8.5.26. Plato in the *Statesman* explains how priests understand how, by means of sacrifice, to give gifts to the gods, and how, by means of prayers to get good things from the gods, which is what custom and the law provide (*Pol.* 1290a).

full ritual of *thusia* by Prometheus' son Deukalion after the flood.⁴²³ In fact, despite the focus on division in Hesiod's myth of the first sacrifice, the practice of *thusia* actually involved burning the entrails (*splanchna*) in order to bridge the divide between gods and humans, as Ekroth explains. By burning the entrails and consuming the meat on the spot of the sacrifice, the worshipers share a meal with the gods, but in the Prometheus myth this important practice is left out to emphasize the separation between gods and humans.⁴²⁴ Following the work of Johnston, I read Greek myths as part of an elaborate and interconnected story world, and therefore, as I will show below, the story of Deukalion elaborates on the myth of the first sacrifice performed by Prometheus.⁴²⁵

Three other vital components of a *thusia* are also absent from Prometheus' sacrifice, namely the moral purity of the worshiper, the prayer, and the ritual act of burning the god's portion (the thigh bone and *osphys*), although the portion itself is mentioned in the myth.⁴²⁶ In the myth of Prometheus, the practice of *thusia* was still in its nascent form, what we might characterize as proto-*thusia*. And yet, the prepositional phrase ἐκ τοῦ, "since that time" (see line 556 below) declares the myth as an aitiology of

⁴²³ Ekroth (2008a: 95) follows the conclusions of Rudhardt 1970.

⁴²⁴ Ekroth 2008a: 95. Stocking (2017: 59), on the other hand, argues that by picking up the portion Zeus intended to consume the *splanchna*. The priest received the meat from the thigh bone that was burned for the divinity, and thus the priest was conceived as closest to the god (Carbon 2017). The so-called *parasitioi*, the assistants of the priest, received the *splanchna*, and thus they were conceived as also enjoying the meal with the gods, but not as close to the gods as the priest (Naiden 2012). The distribution of meat was hierarchical *pace* Vernant and Detienne (1989: 13) who argued that the ritual marks the equality of the participants.

⁴²⁵ Johnston 2018. See also my Introduction chapter.

⁴²⁶ For Naiden's summary of a Greek sacrifice and the importance of the prayer, see Naiden 2013: 15. For the prayer in general, see *ibid.*, 99-147. See also Ekroth's reconstruction of the process of sacrifice (2008a: 88). The burning and curling of the *osphys*, the tail-bone of the animal, indicated a successful sacrifice (Naiden 2013: 114). For a detailed explanation of this practice see, Ekroth 2017. Prometheus claims to have also introduced this practice in the earliest literary use of the term *osphys* in Aesch. *PV*. 497.

sacrifice—the reason the Greeks offer the gods the thigh bone wrapped in fat is because of Prometheus’ trick at the first sacrifice.⁴²⁷ Although the word *thusia* does not occur in the narrative, the idea of a burnt offering is conveyed by the line about humans burning white bones on the *smoking* altars from the time of Prometheus (καίουσ' ὅστέα λευκά **θυθέντων** ἐπὶ βωμῶν, “they burn white bones on the **smoking** altars,” 557). The adjective θυθέντων “smoking with incense” alludes to the *thusia* through their shared verbal root (θύω).⁴²⁸ Similar to the *Atrahasis*, the first sacrifice is only prototypical in that it provides a paradigm for the first humans to follow. Hesiod’s myth, however, differs sharply from the *Atrahasis* because it deliberately attributes the *human* practice of sacrifice to the first sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus, unlike the *Atrahasis* where the first divine sacrifice does not reflect an actual human practice.

Despite Prometheus’ attempt at deceiving Zeus, the god is a divine spectator and sees through the tricky sacrifice.⁴²⁹ Hesiod continues the theme of visual attractiveness and deception by emphasizing Zeus’ optical superiority with verbs of perception, first in the epithet of Zeus: ἄφθιτα μῆδεα εἰδῶς, “knowing imperishable counsels,” which employs the verb οἶδα “to know,” itself derived from a root that means “to see.”⁴³⁰ As

⁴²⁷ For an explanation of the myth and the importance of the marrow in the thigh bones, see Pötscher 1995. For a theory about the importance of thighbones as fuel during the Palaeolithic era, see Specht 1995.

⁴²⁸ The adjective θυήεις is used only here by Hesiod but occurs frequently in Homer as an epithet for the altar (*bomos*). Cf. Homer *Il.* 8.363; 23.148.

⁴²⁹ For the traditions where Zeus really was deceived by the sacrifice, see West 1966: 321 n. 551 and West 1961: 138.

⁴³⁰ For the verb οἶδα derived from a root ‘to see,’ see note 413 above.

Clay points out, the formula ἄφθιτα μήδεα εἰδὼς occurs three times in this passage in Hesiod and highlights “Zeus’ unerring insight and long-range planning.”⁴³¹

— Ζεὺς δ' ἄφθιτα μήδεα εἰδὼς 550
γνῶ ὅ' οὐδ' ἠγνοίησε δόλον· **κακὰ δ' ὅσσετο** θυμῷ
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισι, τὰ καὶ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλε.
χερσὶ δ' ὃ γ' ἀμφοτέρησιν ἀνείλετο λευκὸν ἄλειφαρ,
χώσατο δὲ φρένας ἀμφί, χόλος δέ μιν ἵκετο θυμόν,
ὥς **ἶδεν ὅστέα λευκὰ** βοὸς δολίῃ ἐπὶ τέχῃ. 555
ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἀθανάτοισιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων
καίουσ' ὅστέα λευκὰ θυηέντων ἐπὶ βομῶν.

But Zeus **who knows** imperishable councils perceived and was not ignorant of the trick. And **he foresaw bad things** in his heart for mortal humans, things that indeed were going to pass. But he seized the white fat with both hands, and he was enraged in his mind, and anger came to him in his heart when **he saw the white bones** of the bull in a tricky-craft. **And from that time**, the tribes of humans upon the earth **burn white bones for the gods upon the smoking altars**. (Hes. *Theog.* 550-555)

The different uses of verbs of sight highlight Zeus as the divine spectator of sacrifice. In addition to the formula ἄφθιτα μήδεα εἰδὼς, the litotes in the phrase οὐδ' ἠγνοίησε emphasizes Zeus’ all-knowing perception. The verb ὄσσομαι has the basic sense “to see,” but with the word κακὰ it is usually translated as “to foresee.”⁴³² In other words, Zeus’ capacity as the divine spectator stretches far into the future. Finally, Hesiod uses the aorist tense of ὁράω, the basic term for seeing, when Zeus views the offering (ἶδεν ὅστέα λευκὰ). These verbs of perception characterize Zeus as having not only superior knowledge but also panoptic foresight, and they emphasize Zeus as the divine spectator *par excellence*.⁴³³ Moreover, I interpret the aorist tense of the verb ἶδεν “he saw” as a gnomic-aorist, expressing the timelessness of Zeus’ capacity to see, in other words, Zeus

⁴³¹ Clay 2009: 111.

⁴³² See LSJ. Cf. κακὰ δ' ὅσσετο θυμός, (*Od.* 10.374, 18.154); ὄσσοντο γὰρ ἄλγεα θυμῷ, (*Il.* 18.224).

⁴³³ As Hesiod relates in the *Works and Days* (267), “the eye of Zeus sees all and understands all.”

“sees the white bones (and he always will).” By accentuating Zeus as the divine spectator at the sacrifice, Hesiod focuses on the importance of the visual attractiveness of Greek offerings (*hiera kala*). Thus, the poet distinguishes his Greek myth from the Mesopotamian tradition and creates a unique Greek story about the first sacrifice. For the Greek gods, the attractiveness of the offerings was paramount for a successful sacrifice; Since the gods do not need the sacrifice for sustenance, they had to be enticed by an attractive offering, whereas the Mesopotamians gods do need sacrifice for food, and as such there is no need to focus on the attractiveness of the offerings. Furthermore, as Naiden observes, the Greek god is a divine spectator of a beautiful performance, and therefore, he could be tricked in contrast to the Israelite god who knows and chooses for himself.

Hesiod then applies the themes of sight and knowledge to the next phase of the narrative: Prometheus’ theft of fire. In retaliation for the trick—the “insult to divine powers of observation,” as Naiden described it, Zeus deprives humans of fire, a practical tool not only for sight but also for the sacrifice of a burnt offering. In response to Zeus, Prometheus steals the far-seeing flame of fire on behalf of humans:

ἀλλά μιν ἐξαπάτησεν ἐὺς πάϊς Ἰαπετοῖο 565
κλέψας ἀκαμάτοιο πυρὸς τηλέσκοπον αὐγὴν
 ἐν κοίλῳ νάρθηκι· δάκεν δ' ἄρα νειόθι θυμὸν
 Ζῆν' ὑψιβρεμέτην, ἐχόλωσε δέ μιν φίλον ἦτορ,
 ὥς ἴδ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισι πυρὸς τηλέσκοπον αὐγὴν.

But the noble son of Iapetos deceived him, and **he stole** the far-seeing flame of weariless fire, in hollow fennel. And it stung Zeus, the thunderer on high, down in his *thumos*, and it angered him in his heart when he **saw** the **far-seeing flame** of fire among humanity. (Hes. *Theog.* 565-569)

Hesiod again describes Zeus’ wrath as a consequence of visual perception: “when he saw the far-seeing flame of fire among men.” The word for theft, κλέψας, plays on the word

καλύψας and the theme of concealment from the offering scene quoted above because both words (κλέψας and καλύψας) are subtly homophonic and synonymous (concealment is a sort of theft of the visual senses), thereby linking the story of the theft of fire to the trick of the sacrifice. Moreover, the theft of fire is an intrinsic part of the Greek myth of the origins of the first burnt offering. As Graf remarks, “The fire that Prometheus brought to men was a part of the sacrifice (the offerings were, after all, roasted on the altar).”⁴³⁴ From this perspective, Vernant is correct in reading the Prometheus myth as a coherent story in contrast to West’s reading of the myth as three separate aitiologies. But the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. The theft of fire is linked to the sacrifice both thematically and linguistically, and the entire sequence of events from the sacrifice to the creation of Pandora is part of one and the same story, one whose model was derived from a Mesopotamian tradition. At the same time, West is also correct because the story still preserves different Greek aitiologies intertwined with the Mesopotamian motif: the origins of fire as a necessary component of the Greek story about the origins of *thusia* and the creation of Pandora.

The interplay of visibility in the deceptive sacrifice and the theft of fire is then applied to the final element of the story: Pandora, who is created as a final punishment for the sacrifice and the theft.⁴³⁵ As Vernant explains, Pandora, like the sacrifice, is attractive on the outside but conceals a hidden deception:⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Graf 1993: 85.

⁴³⁵ Pandora remains nameless in *Theogony*, and she is first called Pandora in the dressing scene of *Works and Days* (82).

⁴³⁶ Vernant 1980: 193-194. The word δαιδαλέην, which literally means “cunningly made,” alludes to the trick of the veil.

αὐτίκα δ' ἀντὶ πυρὸς τεύξεν κακὸν ἀνθρώποισι· 570
 γαίης γὰρ **σύμπλασσε** περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
 παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ Ἴκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλᾶς·
 ζῶσε δὲ καὶ **κόσμησε** θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
ἀργυφῇ ἐσθήτι· κατὰ κρήθεν δὲ **καλύπτρην**
δαιδαλέην χεῖρεσσι κατέσχεθε, **θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι**· 575

Immediately, (Zeus) made an evil thing for humans in return for the fire. For the famous lame-god Hephaistos **formed from earth** the likeness of a modest maiden through the plans of the son of Kronos. The gleaming-eyed goddess Athena girdled her and **adorned** her in a **silver-shining clothing**; (Athena) covered her head with a **bride's veil**, **crafted** by hand, **a wonder to behold**. (Hes. *Theog.* 570-575)

In this dressing scene, Pandora is concealed by a marriage veil, καλύπτρην, which recalls the use of καλύψας at the sacrifice and functions as a linguistic marker connecting the creation of Pandora to the first sacrifice; Both words are derived from the verb καλύπτω, “to conceal.” The marriage veil too, like Pandora herself, is θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, “a wonder to behold.”⁴³⁷ Thus, Hesiod frames Pandora, who is attractive on the outside, but deceptive on the inside, as Zeus’ reciprocal offering in revenge for Prometheus’ tricky sacrifice. Although Hephaistos forms her from clay, Hesiod emphasizes the visual attractiveness of Pandora when Athena beautifies the first woman with clothing (κόσμησε... ἀργυφῇ ἐσθήτι). In both the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Hesiod depicts Hephaistos forming Pandora and the female goddesses giving her physical attractiveness. In *Theogony*, the creation is shared by Hephaistos and Athena; In *Works and Days*, the creation is shared by Hephaistos, Athena, Aphrodite, and Hermes.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ Hephaistos also makes a crown for her head containing cunningly made images (δαίδαλα, 581), which is also a wonder to behold (θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, 581).

⁴³⁸ In the *Works and Days* (59-82), Hesiod summarizes the myth of Pandora and provides further information about how the gods adorned Pandora. The goddess Athena taught her the craft of weaving, Aphrodite gave her charming beauty, Hermes gave her the mind of a bitch, and the Graces gave her

Just as in the *Atrahasis* and many other creation stories, Pandora is created from earth (γαίης...σύμπλασσε). In the *Atrahasis*, male and female are created from the same piece of clay, but in his adaptation of the Mesopotamian motif, Hesiod focuses only on the creation of woman and highlights her attractiveness. Penglase shows how Hesiod's representation of Pandora parallels both the birth goddess Mami and the goddess of love Ishtar, both of whom are present during the creation in *Atrahasis*.⁴³⁹ Pandora is depicted in pottery representations rising from the earth, as are other female goddesses such as the mother goddess Gaia, and the name Pandora even appears as an epithet for Gaia, the earth mother who bestows all the gifts of life.⁴⁴⁰ Pandora also parallels the Mesopotamian goddess of love Ishtar, both in her power of attractiveness and in the motif of the dressing scene. The dressing motif and the image of the goddess rising out of the Underworld are characteristically associated with Ishtar in Mesopotamian poetry.⁴⁴¹ Hesiod draws on the Mesopotamian tradition where both Mami and Ishtar are described in the scene of creation, but he also combines elements from other Near Eastern depictions of Ishtar to craft the Greek Pandora. Although Pandora is not a goddess *per se*, Hesiod imbues her

necklaces of gold and garland her with flowers. Hesiod explains the name Pandora as "All-gifts," because the gods gave her all these gifts.

⁴³⁹ Penglase 1994: 176.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. This is evident both from the pottery depictions of her rising out of the ground, like the goddesses Persephone, Gaia and Aphrodite, as well as from her name, which is an epithet of the goddess Gaia (Γῆ πάνδωρε), see Homeric epigram 7.1. Moreover, Pandora's connection with the jar seems to be evocative of her role as an earth goddess. For the many depictions of Pandora in classical art, see Reeder 1995: 277-286. In a certain respect, Pandora is representation of the Great Mother archetype, she is a chthonic goddess figure like Demeter who bestows fertility but also destruction (see Neumann 1963: 172).

⁴⁴¹ Penglase 1994: 180-181. Penglase draws attention to a Babylonian hymn describing the dressing of Ishtar. Eisenfeld (2015) also shows how the *Hymn to Aphrodite* contains features derived from the Near Eastern story of the goddess Ishtar. The dressing of Aphrodite at the opening of the *Hymn to Aphrodite* (6-17) clearly borrows the motif from the representations of Ishtar.

with the features of one and forms Pandora as a compound of a mother goddess, a goddess of love, and the first woman.

In his adaptation, Hesiod diminishes the role of the goddess in the creation and the process of pregnancy and motherhood that was highlighted in the *Atrahasis*, and instead, he emphasizes the visual attractiveness and deception of Pandora as reflection of the first sacrifice. Froma I. Zeitlin, following the conclusions of Nicole Loraux, argues Hesiod elides not only the concept of motherhood and children but also the concept of fatherhood and sexual union between husband and wife in the myth of Pandora.⁴⁴²

Moreover, Hesiod reduces the union of male and female to a purely economic relationship. One possible way of accounting for this stark variation of the motif of creation in *Atrahasis* is by viewing it from the context of Greek attitudes of sexuality, which generally regarded female sexuality as something to be feared.⁴⁴³ As James Davidson more recently discusses, according to Greeks women posed a threat to the vital forces of men.⁴⁴⁴ Moreover, as Laura McClure has most recently explained, the myth of Pandora exemplifies the dilemma that women were irresistible but also brought with them the potential for problems.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Zeitlin 1995: 55. Loraux 1981: 88-89.

⁴⁴³ For Greek fears of female sexuality, see Zeitlin 1995: 51. These fears are evident in the representations of Helen in Homer, who was an archetype of adultery (see McClure 2019: 100-101), as well as females in Attic tragedy, such as the figure of Medea. Euripides' *Hippolytus* (405-409) depicts women as sexually unrestrained. Hippolytus, echoing Hesiod, says that women are a beautiful evil (Eur. *Hipp.* 627-633). The power of female sexuality is also depicted in Arisophanes' *Lysistrata* where the women hold a sex strike to persuade the men end the war between Athens and Sparta. Eva Keuls (1993: 3-4) argues that the depictions of Amazons encapsulate the Greek fear of women. For male Greek fears that women threatened the family line through their uncontrollable sexual desires, see McClure 2019: 100.

⁴⁴⁴ Davidson 2007: 508-509. As Laura McClure explains (2019: 96), the highest virtue of a Greek wife was self-control and sexual fidelity. Women like Penelope and Alcestis were the paradigms of female virtue.

⁴⁴⁵ As McClure explains (2019: 100), women were believed to have less ability to control their sexual desires, which was a threat to the purity of the family's geneology.

Furthermore, I suggest the poet Hesiod deviates from the Mesopotamian creation motif for several other possible reasons. From the perspective of Vernant’s approach, Pandora is the final part of a series of deceptions that begins with the sacrifice, and thus, Hesiod focuses on Pandora’s power of attraction in her capacity to deceive. From Stocking’s approach, by giving the power of creation exclusively to the male god Hephaistos and downplaying the features of Pandora as a mother goddess figure, Hesiod depicts Zeus further solidifying his patriarchal rule. Finally, from the perspective of Naiden’s approach, by prioritizing Pandora’s attractiveness and diminishing her role as an earth goddess, Hesiod correlates Pandora’s representation to the attractiveness of the sacrificial offerings in a logical progression and thus highlights the role of the gods as divine spectators of beautiful offerings.

The role of the gods as “people watchers,” and spectators of enticing offerings is made clear in the following lines when both gods and humans see the attractive

Pandora:⁴⁴⁶

θαύμα δ' ἔχ' ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητούς τ' ἀνθρώπους
ὥς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν.
ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων, 590
[τῆς γὰρ ὀλοῖόν ἐστι γένος καὶ φύλα γυναικῶν,]
πῆμα μέγα θνητοῖσι, σὺν ἀνδράσι ναιετάουσai,

Wonder possessed both the immortal gods and mortal humans when **they** **saw** the steep trick, inescapable for humans. For **from her** (Pandora) comes the race of female-women, [For from her is the destructive race and the tribe of women], a great misery for mortal men are women who dwell with men. (Hes. *Theog.* 588-589)⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ For the gods as “people watchers,” see Naiden 2013: 321.

⁴⁴⁷ The bracketed line belongs to a different recension of the text and was included by Schoemann from the anthology of Stobaeus (see Solmsen’s 1990 edition of the text). Stocking (2017: 64) argues Hesiod’s myth shows Zeus trying to control the modes of consumption through the sacrifice and the creation of woman. Hesiod compares women to the drone bees (*Theog.* 596-599) who consume all the food while the worker bees labor during the day.

Both the words θαῦμα and εἶδον emphasize the visual attractiveness of Pandora, like the sacrifice.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, the verb εἶδον “they looked” highlights the gods as divine spectators. Additionally with the prepositional phrase ἐκ τῆς “from her” Hesiod creates an aitiology for the female gender and thus links the representation of Pandora to the aitiology of the sacrifice (ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἀθανάτοισιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων | καίουσ' ὅστέα λευκὰ θυθέντων ἐπὶ βωμῶν, “**Since this time** the tribes of humans upon the earth burn white bones for the immortals upon the smoking altars,” 556-557). Hesiod applies the theme of seen and unseen to the sacrifice, to the theft of fire, and finally, to the creation of the first woman who brings unseen death and misery to men.

Hesiod then presents the evil of women as a contradiction where both the married and unmarried man suffers.⁴⁴⁹ On the one hand, Hesiod frames wives as an economic destruction for men with a simile relating wives and husbands to drones (women) who stay in the hive and reap the toil of the worker bees (men).⁴⁵⁰ On the other hand, an unmarried man ends his life in loneliness without anyone to take care of him. Moreover, the *Works and Days* embellishes this negative portrayal of Pandora and female-kind by explaining how men once lived without misery and all the evils of the world such as disease were contained in a jar which Pandora opened and unleashed upon the world.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ The word θαῦμα is derived from a root meaning “to see” (Beekes 2010: 535).

⁴⁴⁹ Hes. *Th.* 596-612.

⁴⁵⁰ The simile is an example of gender inversion because drones are actually male. For a discussion of the simile and gender inversion, see Loraux 1978. See also Stocking’s (2017: 65) discussion of the connection between the bee simile and the sacrifice.

⁴⁵¹ Hes. *Op.* 90-105. Clay (2009: 103) argues the jar is stand-in for Pandora, attractive on the outside, with evil on the inside. Thus, both Pandora and her jar recall the sacrifice of Prometheus (attractive on the outside, deceptive on the inside). The jar may also refer to a tradition in Homer where Zeus has two jars that give two different gifts: one jar gives evils and the other blessings. In Hesiod’s account, Pandora

This characterization of the first woman as the source of economic and physical destruction for men is similar to the biblical description of Eve who leads Adam to betray the commandment of YHWH.⁴⁵² In the *Atrahasis*, on the other hand, the female divinity is highlighted in the scene of creation, but women are not explicitly said to be the origin of destruction, instead the gods are the source of destruction. In both *Atrahasis* and Hesiod, the role of women is emphasized in the creation scenes, but whereas pregnancy and motherhood are highlighted in *Atrahasis*, Hesiod focuses on the first woman in her capacity to lead to the economic and physical devastation of men. With this variation of the motif, Hesiod depicts a mortal woman as the source of both economic and physical destruction for men instead of the gods.

In both the myths of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod, the creation of humans eventually leads to their own destruction or diminishment. In *Atrahasis*, the destruction is a result of unmanageable procreation that leads to an abundance of humans who annoy the gods with incessant noise. In Hesiod, on the other hand, the economic and physical destruction is attributed to the first woman, Pandora. Moreover, it is her jar, itself an image of the female womb, that unleashes this destruction.⁴⁵³ Immediately after the description of Pandora's jar in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod tells the Myth of the Five Ages. In this myth, Hesiod describes how each previous race of humans was destroyed by the gods. As Clay shows, Hesiod connects the Prometheus myth in *Theogony* with the story of

received the jar of evils (*Il.* 24.527-528). In other accounts, the jar full of blessings was unleashed (*Theognis*, 1.1135 Young).

⁴⁵² For scholarship comparing the figures of Eve and Pandora, see Lachs 1974; Glenn 1977; O'Brian 1983.

⁴⁵³ For the womb as a jar, see Faraone 2011: 7.

destruction in *Works and Days*.⁴⁵⁴ In the account of the theft of fire, Hesiod mentions humans born from the ash-tree Nymphs. According to Hesiod's myth of the Five Ages, the third race, or bronze-race, was born from ash-trees.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, Hesiod links his myth of the first sacrifice and the creation of Pandora to a larger narrative about the destruction of humans, just as we saw in a similar way with the *Atrahasis*. In the next section, I present a later Greek source that also borrows from the Mesopotamian motif underlying the *Atrahasis* and connects Prometheus with the destruction of humans, this time by a flood.

2. Pseudo-Apollodoros

The story of Prometheus and Pandora does not end with Hesiod. According to a later source (first/second century CE) by Pseudo-Apollodoros, Prometheus had a son named Deukalion, who married Pyrrha, the daughter of Pandora.⁴⁵⁶ When Zeus decided to send a flood to wipe out humanity, Prometheus warned his son to build an ark. After the flood, Deukalion offered sacrifice to Zeus Phyxios ("God of Escape")—the first act of *thusia* (strictly speaking) in the mythological representation of the cosmos. Just as we saw with the myth of *Atrahasis* and the account in Genesis, sacrifice is first offered to the gods after the flood. Moreover, just as Noah offered the first burnt sacrifice after the flood in Genesis, so too does the first act of *thusia* also occur after the flood. As I show below, the Greek myth of the flood preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros elaborates further on the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny.

⁴⁵⁴ See Clay's (2009: 108-109) discussion of the Melian nymphs in the Prometheus story.

⁴⁵⁵ Hes. *Op.* 144-145.

⁴⁵⁶ For an in-depth study of the various Greek sources mentioning Deukalion, as well as his role in the formation of Greek identity, see Lipp 2014: 34-111.

The Greeks of the Hellenistic period were aware of the parallels between the story of Deukalion and the biblical story of Noah which was noted by Philo of Alexandria writing in Greek in the first-century CE.⁴⁵⁷ Although our source for the Greek flood story is late, the major details of the myth were also known to Pindar in the fifth-century BCE, suggesting an earlier source for the myth.⁴⁵⁸ The Roman poet Ovid writing in the first-century CE was also aware of the Greek story of the flood, and he translated it into a Latin version.⁴⁵⁹ The earliest Greek flood myth is preserved in the *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodoros, a first-second century BCE collection of older Greek traditions.⁴⁶⁰ According to Bremmer, Pseudo-Apollodoros relied on the *Titanomachy* from the epic cycle.⁴⁶¹ However, Pseudo-Apollodoros probably used other sources as well, such as Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* where Pandora and Deukalion are also mentioned.⁴⁶² The lost Greek epic *Titanomachy* might have detailed the first sacrifice offered by the Titan Prometheus and the sacrifice offered by his son Deukalion after the flood.⁴⁶³ In any case, I read these stories as part of the same Greek mythological universe or story-world, following the recent work of Johnston. In other words, I read the myths of Prometheus

⁴⁵⁷ Philo the Jew, *De praemiis et poenis* 23. See Caduff 1986: 31-35. For an argument about whether the Greeks of the Hellenistic period had knowledge of the biblical Noah story, see Hilhorst 1998.

⁴⁵⁸ Pind. *Ol.* 9.41-55. Pindar even claims there are earlier versions of the story but his is new (*ibid.*, 48-49).

⁴⁵⁹ Ovid. *Met.* 199-415. Ovid also plays on the motif of sacrifice and creation, but he attributes the origins of the flood to the perverted human sacrifice performed by Lycaon. After the flood, Deukalion and Pyrrha pray to the goddess Themis who tells them to recreate the human race from the bones of the earth (i.e. stones).

⁴⁶⁰ The author of the work is unknown, although some manuscripts of the text mention Apollodoros as the author, see Diller 1935.

⁴⁶¹ Bremmer 1998: 41.

⁴⁶² Hes. *Katalogoi*. F 5.2 MW.

⁴⁶³ For a more detailed description of the myths contained in the *Titanomachy*, see Davies 2001: 13-18.

and Deukalion as part of an interconnected story world. Pseudo-Apollodoros reports the Greek flood story as follows:

Προμηθέως δὲ παῖς Δευκαλίων ἐγένετο. Οὗτος βασιλεύων τῶν περὶ τὴν Φθίαν τόπων γαμεί Πύρραν τὴν Ἐπιμηθέως καὶ Πανδώρας, ἣν ἔπλασαν θεοὶ πρώτην γυναῖκα. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀφανίσαι Ζεὺς τὸ χαλκοῦν ἠθέλησε γένος, **ὑποθεμένου Προμηθέως Δευκαλίων τεκτηνόμενος λάρνακα, καὶ τὰ ἐπιτήδεια ἐνθέμενος, εἰς ταύτην μετὰ Πύρρας εἰσέβη.** Ζεὺς δὲ πολλὴν ὑετὸν ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ χέας τὰ πλείστα μέρη τῆς Ἑλλάδος κατέκλυσεν, ὥστε διαφθαρῆναι πάντας ἀνθρώπους, ὀλίγων χωρὶς οἱ συνέφυγον εἰς τὰ πλησίον ὑψηλὰ ὄρη. Τότε δὲ καὶ τὰ κατὰ Θεσσαλίαν ὄρη διέστη, καὶ τὰ ἐκτὸς Ἰσθμοῦ καὶ Πελοποννήσου συνεχύθη πάντα. Δευκαλίων δὲ ἐν τῇ λάρνακι διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης φερόμενος <ἐφ'> ἡμέρας ἐννέα καὶ νύκτας <τὰς> ἴσας τῷ Παρνασῷ προσίσχει, **κἀκεῖ τῶν ὄμβρων παύλαν λαβόντων ἐκβὰς θύει Διὶ φυξίῳ.** Ζεὺς δὲ πέμψας Ἑρμῆν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπέτρεψεν αἰρεῖσθαι ὅ τι βούλεται· **ὁ δὲ αἰρεῖται ἀνθρώπους αὐτῷ γενέσθαι. Καὶ Διὸς εἰπόντος ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἔβαλλεν αἶρων λίθους, καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔβαλε Δευκαλίων, ἄνδρες ἐγένοντο, οὓς δὲ Πύρρα, γυναῖκες.** ὅθεν καὶ λαοὶ μεταφορικῶς ὠνομάσθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ λάας ὁ λίθος.

Deukalion was the son of Prometheus. He ruled over the regions around Phthia and married Pyrrha, the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora, whom they gods formed as the first woman. But when Zeus wished to destroy the bronze race, **on the advice of Prometheus Deukalion built an ark, and after loading up his provisions, he embarked on it with Pyrrha.** Zeus poured a great deal of rain from the sky and overwhelmed most parts of Greece with the result that all humans were destroyed, except for a few who fled to the high mountain tops near by. Then the mountains in Thessaly were separated and everything outside the Isthmos and Peloponnese was demolished. But after Deukalion was carried in the ark across the sea for nine days and just as many nights, he landed on Parnassos, and there, when the rains stopped, he disembarked and **sacrificed to Zeus Phyxios.** And Zeus sent Hermes to him and allowed him to choose whatever he desired. **Deukalion chose to have humans with him. And as Zeus commanded, he picked up stones and threw them over his head, and the ones which Deukalion threw became men, and the ones which Pyrrha threw became women.** For this reason people were metaphorically called *laoi* from *laas*, a stone.

(Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.46.3-1.48.10)

Like his father Prometheus, Deukalion offers the first sacrifice in a primordial time-period. Unlike his father, Deukalion is not a god, and thus, for the first time in the

Greek mythological cosmos a human (or semi-divine figure) performs a sacrifice. Also unlike his father, Deukalion does not offer the sacrifice as a trick, but rather he sacrifices to Zeus as genuine thanks for his survival after the flood. This difference in the purpose of the sacrifice highlights the mortality of Deukalion, the first Greek human. Joey Lipp has recently explored how Greek myths about Deukalion functioned to help form a narrative about Hellenic identity.⁴⁶⁴ Lipp also argues Deukalion is not a culture-hero, a conclusion with which I disagree.⁴⁶⁵ Deukalion is an important culture-hero because Greeks believed that he introduced the shared Greek cult practice of *thusia*.

While Prometheus offers the first proto-sacrifice on behalf of humans, his son offers the first complete *thusia*, as indicated by the terminology in the passage (θύει Διὶ), and he established it as a way to give thanks to the gods. As already noted, following the suggestion of Ekroth, a major difference between the sacrifice of Prometheus and the sacrifice of Deukalion is that Prometheus does not grill the entrails.⁴⁶⁶ In fact, Hesiod does not use the verb θύω to describe Prometheus' sacrifice. In the passage of Pseudo-Apollodoros, on the other hand, Deukalion does offer a *thusia*, as indicated by the verb θύω, which implies that, in addition to burning the thigh bones, Deukalion must also be imagined butchering the animal, removing its entrails and grilling them, and making a prayer. The prayer is also implied by the direct connection between sacrifice and the creation of humans: after Deukalion offers the first sacrifice, Zeus sends Hermes to grant him whatever he prayed for and the hero wishes for humans to be born (ἀνθρώπους ...

⁴⁶⁴ Lipp 2014: 51.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁶⁶ For the specific ritual treatment of the entrails in a sacrifice, see Ekroth 2008: 93-95.

γενέσθαι). Again, and just as in Hesiod and the *Atrahasis*, there is a direct correlation between the first sacrifice and the creation of humans. This correlation suggests that the motif connecting sacrifice and the creation of humans was widespread throughout the Mediterranean and adapted to fit cultural differences.

Based on the many parallels between the stories, scholars agree that the Greek flood story by Pseudo-Apollodoros was based indirectly on the *Atrahasis*.⁴⁶⁷ For example, just as Enki warns Atrahasis to build the ark, likewise Prometheus warns Deukalion to build an ark. The perplexing question is what the intermediary source was between Pseudo-Apollodoros and the Akkadian myth. According to Bremmer, Pseudo-Apollodoros' story relied on some of the earliest accounts of the flood in Archaic Greece, such as the *Titanomachy* from the epic cycle.⁴⁶⁸ Bremmer argues the author of the *Titanomachy* must have been familiar with the *Atrahasis*, *Gilgamesh*, and *Enuma elish*.⁴⁶⁹ Moreover, Bremmer maintains that Deukalion's sacrifice after the flood derives from the Near Eastern flood traditions depicted in *Atrahasis*, *Gilgamesh*, and the Book of Genesis, in each of which the hero performs a sacrifice immediately after the flood.⁴⁷⁰

One important detail that Pseudo-Apollodoros' story does not emphasize in the same way as compared to the Near Eastern accounts is how the gods' acceptance of the sacrifice is represented. In the Near Eastern stories, the acceptance of the sacrifice is indicated when the gods smell its savor. Jean Rudhardt, however, argued that the

⁴⁶⁷ Kirk 1974: 262-263; Duchemin 1975; Penglase 1994: 192. There is also an allusion to the Mesopotamian story of the flood in the opening lines of Hom. *Il.* 12.1-62. Ruth Scodel (1980) argues the story in the *Iliad* contains echoes to the Mesopotamian story.

⁴⁶⁸ Bremmer 1998: 41-42.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 51.

acceptance of the sacrifice in the Greek myth is indicated by Zeus sending Hermes to Deukalion to grant him whatever he wanted.⁴⁷¹ In Greek representations, the acceptance of the offering is indicated by an epiphany, the appearance of the divinity at the sacrifice, such as the appearance of Athena at the sacrifice in *Odyssey* 3.435 or her noticeable absence at the offering of the *peplos* by the Trojan priestesses in *Iliad* 6.300-311 (when she is instead fighting beside Diomedes). Likewise, the acceptance of Deukalion's sacrifice is indicated by the epiphany of Hermes, the messenger to Zeus.

In the Greek variation of the Near Eastern myths, we can see how the process of adaptation works by borrowing the motif of the flood and combining local beliefs in sacrifice to create a unique Greek version of the myth. Although both the myths of *Atrahasis* and Pseudo-Apollodoros are from polytheistic cultures, the different systems of sacrifice are exemplified by the sacrifice after the flood. In *Atrahasis*, the gods are depicted as starving after the flood because of their need for the sustenance of sacrifice, whereas in the Greek version, the presence of the god Hermes is indicative of the successful performance of an attractive *thusia* by Deukalion. In Genesis, on the other hand, YHWH's acceptance of the sacrifice is indicated when he smells the pleasing savor of the sacrifice and states that he will never again destroy the human race.

Rudhardt points out that in other Greek versions of the flood story, Deukalion first established the institution of sacrifice after the flood.⁴⁷² Bremmer views the institution of

⁴⁷¹ Rudhardt 1981: 219-220. Rudhardt's main arguments were first published in Rudhardt 1970 and republished with revisions in Rudhardt 1981.

⁴⁷² Rudhardt 1981: 220. In the other versions, the hero sacrifices to different gods. In the Argive tradition, Deukalion sacrifices to Zeus Aphesios (Arrian *FGrH* 156 F 16). In the traditions of Hellanicus of Lesbos, the hero sacrifices at an altar for the Twelve Gods (*FGrH* 4 F 6). In the Athenian tradition, the hero sacrifices to Zeus Olympios (*Marmor Parium* 239 A 4 = IG XII 5, 444, 1. 4.). The belief that Deukalion, like his father, was one of the founders of sacrifice is also attested in a papyrus from the first or second

sacrifice after the flood as a Greek innovation, and he claims “in Near Eastern traditions the sacrifice after the Flood had no institutional character, since *Atrahasis* mentions a sacrificial strike before the Flood.”⁴⁷³ Bremmer refers to Enki’s advice to humans to refrain from sacrifice in order to prevent their destruction by the gods, and he does not read the slaughter of the god Ilawela as the establishment of sacrifice. Based on my reading of the *Atrahasis*, however, sacrifice is first established as an institution in the act of slaughtering the god to create humankind. Likewise, in Genesis, sacrifice is first established by the connection between the sin of Adam and Eve and the first animal slaughter performed by YHWH and then formally practiced by Cain and Abel before the flood and later re-instituted after the flood by Noah. In other words, the act of sacrifice after the flood in the Near Eastern narratives is a reiteration of the institution that had already been established by the gods in the antediluvian period. Moreover, there cannot be “a sacrificial strike” if the institution had not already been established. The fact that humans sacrifice immediately after the flood highlights that sacrifice is the most important institution for maintaining relations between humans and the gods. Thus, according to my reading of the Greek myths, Pseudo-Apollodoros also borrows the idea of re-instituting sacrifice after the flood (already proto-instituted by Prometheus) from the Near Eastern traditions.

Just as with the *Atrahasis*, in the Greek story of the flood (as transmitted by Pseudo-Apollodoros), the first sacrifice is also connected to the birth of humans.

century CE which gives a list of the first humans to construct altars to the gods. Deukalion is mentioned second in the list: *P.Oxy.* 62, 4306 i.19-32 (reprinted in van Rossum-Steenbeek 1997: 328-329). This belief is also preserved in the claim of descent from Deukalion by the Hosioi, the leading sacrificial family at Delphi (Caduff 1986: 78).

⁴⁷³ Bremmer 1998: 52.

Deukalion offers a sacrifice, and Zeus send Hermes to answer his prayer (implied in the performance of a *thusia*), and Deukalion asks that humans be born (ἀνθρώπους αὐτῷ γενέσθαι). Based on my reading of the myths, the antecedent for the connection between sacrifice and anthropogeny described in Pseudo-Apollodoros' myth is the Mesopotamian tradition behind the *Atrahasis*. In the Akkadian myth, I argued that the first sacrifice relates directly to the creation of humans. Likewise, in Pseudo-Apollodoros' story, the first sacrifice after the flood precipitates the creation of the first humans. It is possible that the *Titanomachy*, which Pseudo-Apollodoros most likely used, also contained a myth about the connection between the origins of sacrifice and humanity from the author's knowledge of the Mesopotamian traditions. Moreover, if we also take into account Hesiod's myth of the first sacrifice that results in the creation of the first woman, it becomes more probable that both Hesiod and the *Titanomachy* used the Mesopotamian tradition of sacrifice and anthropogeny for inspiration.

Bremmer, on the other hand, connects Deukalion's creation of humans from stones to the Greek traditions of anthropogeny from oak and rock described in Homer and a fragment of the *Katalogoi*.⁴⁷⁴ As Bremmer points out, "The sacrifice connects the Near Eastern tradition of the Flood with the indigenous Greek tradition of anthropogeny."⁴⁷⁵ But these traditions were not just located in Greece. López-Ruiz has elucidated the intricate connections between the Greek proverbial saying about the sacred oak and rock and similar Levantine traditions describing a sacred tree and sacred stone.⁴⁷⁶ Moreover,

⁴⁷⁴ Bremmer 1998: 52. Hom. *Od.* 19.162-163; Hes. *Katalogoi* F 234 MW.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁷⁶ López-Ruiz 2010: 56-83.

in the Levantine traditions these proverbs are also connected to anthropogeny. The Book of Jeremiah, for example, describes anthropogeny from a sacred stone.⁴⁷⁷ As López-Ruiz remarks, “The motif of ‘the tree and the stone’ seems to have been a productive expression or cliché particularly characteristic of Archaic Greek and Northwest Semitic literatures (in Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Gnostic Syrian sources).”⁴⁷⁸ So it seems the symbolism of sacred stones and trees in Greek religion is connected to the Levantine traditions, and in Greece mainly tied to human origins.⁴⁷⁹ With the incorporation of the Mesopotamian motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny and the Levantine motif of anthropogeny from a stone, we have evidence for the adaptation and creative assimilation of Near Eastern elements in the Greek flood story. Moreover, this Levantine connection embedded in the myth offers tantalizing evidence that the Phoenicians were one of the mediators in the Mediterranean of the traditions behind the *Atrahasis*. In other words, it is likely that the Mesopotamian and Israelite traditions were mediated by the Phoenicians to the Greek Aegean.

What we appear to have in the Greek story of the flood is a creative adaptation of several different Near Eastern motifs mixed with local Greek traditions. Many elements converge into a single myth: the motifs of the first sacrifice and creation of humans and the first sacrifice after the flood, and even Levantine traditions about sacred stones and

⁴⁷⁷ “As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and their prophets, as they say to the tree: ‘you are my father’ and to the stone: ‘you gave birth to me’ (Jeremiah 2:26-27).

⁴⁷⁸ López-Ruiz 2010: 62. In her appendix (ibid., 205), López-Ruiz explains in further detail the dual cult of the sacred tree and stone, which was exemplified in the Hebrew literature by the *mazzeboth* “sacred stones,” and the *asherah* “sacred tree,” both of which were associated with YHWH.

⁴⁷⁹ López-Ruiz (ibid., 207-209) points to such notable examples in Greek religion as the *omphalos* at Delphi and the sacred olive tree of Athena.

anthropogeny, all of which are recast and merged with local Greek traditions about sacrifice and anthropogeny. Pseudo-Apollodoros' story, therefore, also exhibits the extent and the complexity of the circulation of shared motifs in the mythological *koinē* of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean.

Conclusion

The parallels between Greek epic literature and the Akkadian myths have long been noted. More recently, these parallels have been attributed to the extensive and dynamic interactions between the cultures of the Mediterranean. Chapters 1 and 2 have contributed to our understanding of these interactions by pointing out the connection between aitiologies of sacrifice and the creation of humanity depicted in *Atrahasis*, the Book of Genesis, Hesiod's myth of Prometheus, and the Greek flood story preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros. Hesiod draws from the myth underlying *Atrahasis* that was known throughout the Near East and then circulated throughout the Mediterranean in an oral form. The Greek poet borrows the idea that the first sacrifice is originally connected with humans, not only in its function, but also in the act of creating humanity. Moreover, the poet borrows the idea that the first sacrifice is performed by a divinity. Thus, my analysis has shown how aitiologies of sacrifice are connected to "ritualizing deities," and more specifically, to gods who perform sacrifice.⁴⁸⁰ The poet Hesiod then creatively reworks the Mesopotamian motif with local Greek traditions about the god as a divine spectator of an attractive sacrifice in order to create a unique Greek aitiology of sacrifice. In isolating the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny and its aitiological dimension, I have argued that

⁴⁸⁰ Patton 2009: 32.

aitiologies of sacrifice were one of the many types of myths circulating within the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean, and I have shown how aitiologies of sacrifice are yet another indication of the vibrant assimilation and adaptation of myths that took place in the Mediterranean during the Iron Age. Aitiologies of sacrifice were an important part of the mythological *koinē* in the eastern Mediterranean because of the central importance of sacrifice for the religious life of these cultures. Moreover, the importance of this practice for all the cultures of this geographical region provided easy transmission for the myths about sacrifice from one culture to another. We can account for the numerous differences between the stories by the process of translating an oral motif between cultures, as well as by the creative process of synthesizing local traditions with the Mesopotamian motif to create a unique Greek myth.

As aitiologies, both the myths of *Atrahasis* and the *Theogony* attempt to explain why the respective culture performs its unique style of sacrifice or at least how it was imagined to have first begun. Moreover, beginnings are typically set in the cosmogonic realm of the gods, which helps explain why divinities perform the first sacrifice in *Atrahasis* and Hesiod. Although both traditions (Mesopotamian and Greek) are about the origins of sacrifice, which is the primary means of worshipping the gods for both cultures, the religious ideology conveyed behind the myth is distinct in each case. As Burkert argued, it might be possible to attribute the differences in these aitiologies of sacrifice to the different political and religious ideologies of the respective culture.⁴⁸¹ For the Mesopotamians, the myth of *Atrahasis* clearly conveys the original intent of sacrifice as a means to feed the gods. The god Enki sacrifices one of the rebels for the purpose of

⁴⁸¹ Burkert 1976.

creating humans to feed the gods. The gods' dependence on humans is highlighted with Atrahasis' sacrifice after the flood when the hero must feed the starved gods. In the Mesopotamian cult, we can see this practice carried out in the ritual texts where the word *niqû* primarily denotes the daily food-offering presented to the gods. The myth of *Atrahasis* explains the creation of humans as a result of the first sacrifice but also as the motive to provide the gods with food.

Hesiod used the Mesopotamian motif of the first sacrifice and creation of humanity as the basic framework for his story, but he integrated local Greek beliefs that the god was a divine spectator in order to create a distinctive Greek myth about the origins of sacrifice and the creation of Pandora, the first woman. By framing Pandora as a representation of the sacrifice (attractive on the outside but deceptive on the inside), Hesiod more intimately connects the creation of the first woman to the first sacrifice. By describing Pandora as Zeus' offering in retribution for the tricky first sacrifice, Hesiod connects the first woman to the first sacrifice in a way that reflects the *Atrahasis* where the creation of humans is a direct result of the first sacrifice. Moreover, Hesiod's focus on the attractiveness and viscosity of all elements of the story (the sacrifice, the fire, Pandora) emphasizes the importance of *kala hiera* for the Greeks. Furthermore, by highlighting Prometheus' lack of moral purity implied by the deception, Hesiod stresses the importance of moral integrity (*kalos*) for the success of a sacrifice, and more importantly, the grave consequences for failing to do so.

Despite the fact that the myths of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod function as aitiologies for the actual practice of sacrifice, the purpose of the first sacrifice in both aitiologies is nonetheless different from the actual practice of sacrifice in these cultures. Neither the

sacrifice in *Atrahasis* nor in Hesiod is aimed at pleasing the gods, the ultimate goal of a typical human performance of the rite. The sacrifice in *Atrahasis* is aimed at creating humans to whom the gods can unload the burden of work. In Hesiod, on the other hand, although Prometheus' offering resembles a typical sacrifice, it also does not aim at pleasing Zeus, instead, Prometheus intends to trick Zeus. Yet, in both aitiologies, the original sacrifice sets the stage for the human practice of worshipping the gods. Moreover, the intended goal of the sacrifice is different in each myth. In *Atrahasis*, the goal of the first sacrifice is to create humans, whereas in Hesiod the creation of humans is an unintentional consequence of the first sacrifice. The difference helps explain the function of the actual practice of sacrifice in each society. Because humans were explicitly created to feed the gods by means of a sacrifice, the actual practice of providing the gods daily meals reflects the original act of creation. Whereas in Hesiod, the intention of the first sacrifice as a trick of the visual senses reflects the Greek emphasis on a *kalos* sacrifice, namely that it be visually appealing but also morally acceptable. From the perspective of Greek theology, Prometheus' sacrifice was not accepted by Zeus because Prometheus was not morally pure: he intended to deceive Zeus. Yet, the actual Greek practice nonetheless reflects the trick by offering the gods the inedible portions. The differences between *Atrahasis* and Hesiod's myth illuminate a fundamental distinction between these two polytheistic societies: the Mesopotamian gods need sacrifice for sustenance, and thus, they will always be expected "like flies" to be present for the offerings, whereas the Greek gods do not need sacrifice for food, and therefore, they must be enticed by an attractive offering.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the stories of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod is the choice of victim. In *Atrahasis*, the victim is one of the rebel gods, an act which is commensurate with human sacrifice, a topic I discuss at length in Chapters 5 and 6. In Hesiod, on the other hand, the victim is a bull, the sacrificial victim *par excellence*. One way of explaining this major variation is in the temporal context of the narratives. In *Atrahasis*, the first sacrifice is performed at an early stage in the cosmology. As discussed in Chapter 1, a general feature of cosmologies is the problem of genetic variation necessary for creation, and thus, the gods must resort to incest at the beginning of creation myths. In fact, incest is at the beginning of many polytheistic cosmologies in the cultures of the Mediterranean. From this perspective, the sacrifice of a god mirrors the perversion of incest inherent in cosmogonies. Thus, in a primordial time without animals and humans, there is a necessity for a god as the sacrificial victim at the beginning of the creation myth. In Hesiod, on the other hand, Prometheus sacrifices a bull on behalf of men, which implies both that men (in some form) and animals had already been created. Indeed, as we will see, Greeks were generally resistant to the idea of a dying god, much less a sacrificed god. Nonetheless, in both myths, a god performs the first sacrifice, which highlights the primordial time of the act. Even in Genesis, YHWH must slaughter the first animals, thus setting the stage for the first ritual-animal slaughter by Abel. This is perhaps the most important conclusion about the myths studied in Chapters 1 and 2: only the gods can perform the first sacrifice. Moreover, in these traditions the idea of a god offering the first sacrifice magnifies and exalts the importance of the human practice. On the other hand, the idea of a god as a victim of sacrifice complicates our understanding of divinity and sacrifice. As we will see in the following chapters, depictions of gods as the

victims of sacrifice are involved in the long-standing question of dying and rising gods and intertwined by the dynamics of cultural exchange in the eastern Mediterranean.

Chapter 3: The Sacrifice of Melqart, the Tyrian Herakles: The *Egersis* Rites in the Mediterranean Context

Τοὺς πρῶτους τῶν Φοινίκων ἐπὶ Ταρτησσὸν πλεύσαντας λέγεται τοσοῦτον ἀργύριον ἀντιφορτίσασθαι, ἔλαιον καὶ ἄλλον ναυτικὸν ῥῶπον εἰσαγαγόντας, ὥστε μηκέτι ἔχειν δύνασθαι μήτε ἐπιδέξασθαι τὸν ἄργυρον, ἀλλ' ἀναγκασθῆναι ἀποπλέοντας ἐκ τῶν τόπων τά τε ἄλλα πάντα ἀργυρᾷ οἷς ἐχρῶντο κατασκευάσασθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας πάσας.

“It is said that the Phoenicians were the first to sail to Tartessos and that they were importing so much silver—and since they were also importing olive-oil and other sea-faring wares—that they were not able to hold nor to display the silver, but rather, they were forced when sailing away from places to equip all things which they used out of silver, and, indeed, even all their anchors were of silver.”

—Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Mirabilis Auscultationibus* 844a (Bekker).⁴⁸²

Introduction

Gods are depicted performing sacrifices in several myths from the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean. In Chapter 1, I argued that in the Mesopotamian myth of *Atrahasis* the god Enki performs the first sacrifice, a story which I argued in Chapter 2 is adapted by Hesiod in his representation of the first Greek sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus. I also showed how each of these myths functions as an origin story about the practice of sacrifice which humans then perform. In another Greek myth, the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, the young messenger god Hermes performs one of the first sacrifices, and in the Orphic myth of Dionysos, the Titans sacrifice Dionysos (see

⁴⁸² This legend about the Phoenician appetite for silver is also reported by Diodorus (5.35.4). For Tartessos in Iberia and the Phoenicians, see Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016. For the latest archaeological evidence of Tyrian expansion into the Mediterranean in search of metals, see Aubet 2019.

Chapter 7).⁴⁸³ In the Near East, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the god El and the goddess Anat each perform a sacrifice on one occasion in Ugaritic myths,⁴⁸⁴ and in a Phoenician myth preserved by Philo of Byblos, the god El sacrifices his only-born son Ieoud.⁴⁸⁵ I will discuss these myths in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

Myths depicting a divinity as the *victim* of a sacrifice, on the other hand, are even more rarely represented in the myths of eastern Mediterranean cultures. The examples of this motif in Near Eastern literature include the slaughter of Ilawela in the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*, as I argued in Chapter 1, and the sacrifice of Ieoud, the son of the Phoenician

⁴⁸³ I do not discuss the *Hymn to Hermes* in detail. See Patton (2009: 111-113) for a reading of the myth. Scholars date the hymn to the late sixth or early fifth-century BCE based on a variety of factors. Athanassios Vergados notes that the vocabulary of the hymn gives a dating of the late sixth or early fifth-century BCE (see Vergados 2013: 40; 109). Other factors include the influence of the *Hymn to Apollo* and the possible reference to the cult of the Twelve Gods at Olympia (Richardson 2010: 23-24). Hermes' division of the meat into twelve shares may be an aitiology for the cult of the Twelve Gods at Olympia. The cult is mentioned by Pindar (*Olympian*, 5.5; 10.48-49). The earliest evidence is from the sixth-century BCE in Athens (Richardson 2010: 176). For the cult of the Twelve Gods, see Long 1987: 154-157; Georgoudi 1996; Johnston 2002: 125-126. Some scholars date the hymn to the fifth-century BCE based on legal terminology and parallels with rhetorical practice in Hermes' speech (see e.g., Görgemanns 1976). Richardson (2010: 24) notes vases from the sixth-century BCE depicting Hermes in his cradle and with cattle. Johnston (2002: 116-119) argues that the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* was performed at one of the athletic festivals called Hermaia at which Hermes was the patron god. In the hymn (Hom. *Herm.* 115-132), the child god Hermes slaughters the sacred cattle of Apollo, divides the meat into twelve portions, and enjoys the savor of the roasting meat. Scholars have long argued whether or not to interpret this mythical episode as a sacrifice. Laurence Kahn (1978: 41-73) argued that the scene is a perverted form of standard Olympian sacrifice that allows Hermes to create a rift in the separation between mortals and gods and thereby act as the mediator between the two realms. Burkert (1984: 835-845), on the other hand, argued that the scene is an aitiology for the local ritual at Olympia in honor of Hermes and the twelve gods. Clay (1989: 119), however, argued that the episode is not a sacrifice at all but rather a *dais* "a feast," in her words, "the operative model is a different institution, one, to be sure, closely associated with sacrifice, but nevertheless sufficiently distinct to have its own set of rules and norms: the *dais* or feast." For a discussion of the arguments of Kahn and Burkert, see Clay 1989: 118-119. For other interpretations of the episode as a sacrifice, see Clay 1989: 119 n. 82 with references.

⁴⁸⁴ In the *Myth of El's Banquet*, (KTU 1.114.R.1 = RS 24.258.1), El gives a sacrificial feast and uses the standard Ugaritic verb for sacrifice (*dbḥ*). In the *Baal Epic*, the goddess Anat slaughters animals as a funeral offering for Baal (KTU 1.6.119-131). In that passage, the goddess Anat uses the verb *ṭbh* (to slaughter), rather than the standard verb for sacrifice. Pardee (2003a: 269 n. 242) suggests that the use of this verb may be indicative of the funerary nature of the sacrifices.

⁴⁸⁵ The Phoenician myths of Philo of Byblos preserved in the works of Eusebios (*Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.33; 1.10.44).

god El, both of which are acts commensurate with human sacrifice. In a more elusive myth, the Tyrian god Melqart is sacrificed by immolation on a pyre. The Greeks, on the other hand, do not typically depict their gods as victims of sacrifice, with one notable exception being the sacrifice of Dionysos by the Titans in the Orphic myth, which I explore in Chapter 7.⁴⁸⁶ As Dirk Obbink and George Harrison explained, there was a resistance to the idea of a dying god in Greek literature.⁴⁸⁷ There is, however, a myth recorded in the fifth-century BCE by Herodotos (2.45.1-3) where the hero-god Herakles is depicted as the victim of the Egyptians but *unsuccessfully* sacrificed.⁴⁸⁸ The fact that Herakles was unsuccessfully sacrificed highlights how rare this motif is in Greek literature, as I will explore below.

In the following chapters, I analyze two previously unconsidered sources of evidence for the sacrifice of Melqart: the attempted sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos (Ch. 3 and 4) and El's sacrifice of his son Ieoud in Philo of Byblos (Ch. 5 and 6). In his

⁴⁸⁶ The Greeks do, on the other hand, depict human sacrifice in myth as a perversion of normal sacrifice. The most famous example is Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to appease the wrath of Artemis, but in the *Cypria* and other versions of the story Artemis substitutes a deer for the girl (Proclus, *Chrest.* 1; Hesiod fr. 23 M-W). Human sacrifice was reputed in the cult of Artemis (Eur. *IT.* 1458-1461). The Greeks also sacrifice Polyxena at the grave of Achilles (Eur. *Hec.* 35-44). For an early depiction of the sacrifice of Polyxena on a sarcophagus, see Sevinç 1996 and Reinsberg 2001. The cult of Zeus at Mt. Lykaion was also reputed to engage in human sacrifice (Pl. *Resp.* 8.565D-E). More recently, in 2016 the discovery of a human skeleton at the altar at Mt. Lykaion has reopened the question as to whether to Greeks actually performed human sacrifice. In the *Minos* of Pseudo-Plato (Pl. *Minos* 315B-C), the interlocutor of Socrates argues that the Greeks do not practice human sacrifice compared to the Carthaginians who offer human sacrifice to Kronos. For a study of the literary and archaeological evidence for human sacrifice in Greece, see Hughes 1991. Human sacrifice, at any rate, is normally regarded as a barbarian practice: see, for example, Herodotos' ethnographic descriptions of human sacrifice among barbarians, such as the Massagetae (1.216.2), Padaean Indians (3.99), Scythians (4.62, 71-72), Taurians (4.103), Thracians (4.94, 5.5, 9.119). See also, Plut. *De superst.* 171B-E and Nikolaidis 1986: 138.

⁴⁸⁷ Obbink and Harrison 1985. The Greek word itself for "god" (ἄθανατος) literally means "death-less" with the alpha-privative.

⁴⁸⁸ See Pindar's (*Nem.* 3.22) designation of Herakles as *heros-theos*, "hero-god." Hdt. 2.45.1. Herakles himself is also involved in human sacrifice when, in madness, he slaughters his children at the altar (Eur. *HF* 922-1116).

discussion of Egyptian and Phoenician religious beliefs, Herodotos identifies the temple of Herakles at Tyre (i.e., Melqart) and then presents a myth about the unsuccessful sacrifice of Herakles. As I will explain below, Herakles was identified or syncretized with the Phoenician god Melqart by Greeks beginning in at least the fifth-century BCE. My main argument is that Herodotos' myth of the sacrifice of Herakles should be interpreted from the context of Melqart-Herakles syncretism, and accordingly, should be regarded as the oldest Greek literary allusion to a lost Phoenician myth that described the immolation of Melqart and his subsequent awakening.

In this chapter, I introduce the sources for the myth and ritual that depicted the god Melqart, the first king and chief god of the Phoenician city of Tyre, as the victim of a burnt offering. I survey the sources that attest to the death of Melqart and the yearly festival at Tyre celebrating the immolation of the god and his rebirth in the rites called *egersis*, “awakening.”⁴⁸⁹ I discuss recent scholarship that has shown how the sources for the cult of Melqart are mapped onto Phoenician centers of cult worship of Melqart at Tyre, Gades, and Thasos.⁴⁹⁰ Additional settlements at Cyprus, Carthage, and Pyrgi connected the network even further, and accordingly, each node on the cult network of Melqart provides crucial information for reconstructing his cult and mythology. Reports about Melqart's grave at Tyre, Gades, and Pyrgi show how his cult biography was mapped on to Phoenician settlements. Moreover, later reports of Phoenician ambassadors

⁴⁸⁹ Josephos (*AJ* 8.146) attests to the performance of the *egersis* at Tyre under the reign of Hiram I. A myth preserved by Athenaios (9. 47. 30-36) provides evidence for the death and rebirth of Melqart by the smell of fire. Pausanias (10.4.6) provides evidence for the use of an effigy for the rites. Various other ancient sources attest to the cremation, burial, or grave of Melqart, see pseudo-Clement (*Recognitions* 10.24), Pomponius Mela (3.46), and Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 1.36.5).

⁴⁹⁰ Lipiński 1970: 56. Cf. Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018 and 2019 and López-Ruiz: forthcoming 1.

from the colonies of Gades and Carthage at the rites of the metropolis of Tyre and epigraphical evidence throughout the Mediterranean for the cult title “resuscitator of the god” demonstrate how the network of Melqart was interconnected by the Gadir-Tyre axis.⁴⁹¹ In sum, as I will explain in detail below, the evidence indicates that Melqart’s *egersis* rites were performed throughout the Tyrian empire and that the myth of Melqart’s sacrifice and rebirth was renowned throughout the Mediterranean. The connectivity of this cult network in the Mediterranean and the malleability of polytheism allowed the god to then be syncretized with Herakles by Greeks, such as Herodotos. The syncretism between the two gods illuminates how Melqart’s mythology was well known throughout the Mediterranean from at least the fifth-century BCE. The legend that the god Melqart died on the pyre via self-immolation or was sacrificed by the city of Tyre, after which he “awakened,” was well known by the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean, and as I will show in the next chapter, the mythology and rites associated with Melqart were reinterpreted to fit Greek religious theology.

In the next chapter, I build from the historical context discussed in this chapter and offer a new reading of the myth of the sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos. I will argue that the myth recorded by Herodotos is a creative Greek adaptation of a lost Tyrian myth that probably described the sacrifice and rebirth of their god Melqart, but the Greek author of the myth changes the outcome of the story to fit a Greek religious context so that Herakles is unsuccessfully sacrificed. In this way, the myth explains an important cultural difference between the theologies of the Phoenicians and Greeks: the Tyrians depict the sacrifice of their god Melqart in myth, and reenact it in practice with the

⁴⁹¹ Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2019.

egersis, whereas the Greeks do not typically represent their gods as the victims of sacrifice nor celebrate their death.⁴⁹² Moreover, the myth preserved by Herodotos disassociates the Greek hero-god Herakles from the Tyrian god Melqart with regards to the specific ritual performed for each divinity. As a consequence of Herodotos' contribution to the syncretism between the two gods, I argue we can gain new insight into the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth. Finally, I show how my analysis of Herodotos' myth of Herakles has important implications for interpreting other Greek myths about Herakles's death from the fifth-century BCE.

1. The Sacrifice of Melqart

As scholars have shown, the trope of a dying and rising god was common throughout the ancient Near East. In the Mesopotamian tradition, there are myths about the goddess Inanna and the god Dumuzi, who descend to the Underworld and return to life.⁴⁹³ The most famous case from the Near East is the Ugaritic god Baal, whose myth I analyze in detail in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I investigate a Phoenician myth about the death and “awakening” of the god Melqart, the first king and chief god of the Phoenician city of Tyre.⁴⁹⁴ The name Melqart, “king of the city (Tyre)” is composed of the Semitic

⁴⁹² In a parallel example, the story of the sacrifice of Issac in Genesis 22 seems to be an adaptation of a common Levantine pattern of myth that described the sacrifice of the beloved son (see Levenson 1993). I discuss these stories in further detail in Chapter 5.

⁴⁹³ For the sources, see Mettinger 2001: 23-25 and Cook 2018: 69-73.

⁴⁹⁴ Melqart is an example of James Frazer's “Slain King” (Frazer 1911: 120-133; 160-195). For Melqart as the first king, see Bonnet 1988: 399-415; Xella 2019: 279. For the connections between Melqart, the royal line of Tyre, and ancestor worship, see Bonnet 1988: 417-419; Miles 2010: 33. For the classic study on divine kingship in the Near East, see Engnell 1967. The name of Tyre, *Šr*, means “the rock,” because it was an island off the Levantine coast. There are two important foundation myths of Tyre, one recorded by Philo of Byblos (Eusebius, *Prep. Ev.* 1.10.10-11), and another by Nonnos (*Dion.* 40.465-500). For a discussion of these myths, see Bonnet and Bricault 2016: 24-31 and Grottanelli 1972. For a comprehensive history of the

words *mlk* “king,” and *qrt*, “city,” and the etymology points to his prominence at the city of Tyre.⁴⁹⁵ According to Maria Eugenia Aubet’s assessment of the extant sources, an

city of Tyre from the second millennium to the sixth-century BCE, see Katzenstein 1997. The Phoenicians appear in literary works as early as Homer where they are represented for their skill in artistry, sailing, and abductions, see Hom *Il.* 6.290-92, 23.740-45; *Od.* 4.615-19, 14.288, 15.415-19. The term Phoenician is derived from the Greek term *Phoinix*, which describes the civilization that settled on the coast of the Levant and colonized throughout the Mediterranean. The term *Phoinix* means “purple-red,” or “palm-tree.” The term “Phoenicians” was used by the Greeks to describe the Levantine people. For the usage of the terms *Phoinix* and *Poenus* (the Latin translation of *Phoinix*), see Prag 2014: 11-23. Philo (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.39) mentions the brother of *Chna* (Canaanite) who invented the “three scripts” and changed his name to *Phoenix* (Phoenician). As Josephine Quinn has discussed most recently (2018: 25-43) these inhabitants of the Levantine coast did not identify themselves with the collective term “Phoenicians,” which is an exonym. The Phoenicians themselves, however, like the Greeks, identified themselves by their city-state, such as Sidon, Byblos, Tyre (e.g., discussion in López-Ruiz 2010: 24-26). The Phoenician cities were not unified under a political arch until the first century of the Roman period under the province of Syria, and it is in Roman times that we have testimony of their collective identity as Phoenicians (Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018: 114). Until then, each Phoenician city state remained autonomous and maintained some dialectal features within the Phoenician language (one of the Northwest Semitic languages of Canaanite descent) and their distinctive pantheon of preferred gods. Nevertheless, the city-states shared similar urban characteristics, gods, language, and iconography (see Markoe 2000). There are linguistic, religious, institutional, and material/artistic markers, therefore, that show a common culture for the people of the Levantine coast, while lack of political unity among the Phoenician city-states is not a requisite for such an ethnic or cultural identity. For example, the Greeks themselves did not meet that standard and were identified with each other as sharing the elements of language, religion, and customs. A strong sense of shared “Greek” identity was probably only formed in the fifth-century BCE (see Hall 2002), and it was not based on territorial or political unity, which, as for the Phoenicians, only came with imperial domination, first by Macedonians, then by Romans (Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018: 114). In this chapter, I focus exclusively on the Tyrians, but I use the interchangeable term Phoenicians. For a discussion of the different Phoenician city-states, see Malkin 2011: 124-125. For scholarship on the role of civic gods, such as Melqart, in the forming of ethnicities, see Álvarez and Ferrer 2009; Bonnet 2009; Chaves 2009; Delgado and Ferrer 2007; López Castro 2004; Mora 2013; Mora and Cruz 2012; Sommer 2010. For a general survey of the history of the Phoenicians, see Moscati 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Harden 1962; Markoe 2000. For the catalogue to the original Phoenician exhibit curated by Moscati in Venice, which established the field of Phoenician studies, see Moscati 1997b. For a recent history of Phoenicia, see Elayi 2018. For the extent of Phoenician and Punic expansion in the Mediterranean, see Niemeyer 1995.

⁴⁹⁵ Bonnet: 1988: 19. Cf. Pardee (1991) who clarifies further that the final kaf of the word *mlk* assimilates to the initial qaf of the word *qrt*. The vocalization *Melqart* is a result of the Hebraization of the Phoenician form *Mi-il-qar-tu*, found in the seventh-century BCE treaty of Asarhaddon (see Borger 1956 for the edition of the treaty). For an inscription with the name Melqart, see *KAI* 43.3, 15. While scholars now generally agree that Melqart’s name, meaning “king of the city,” refers to the city of Tyre, William F. Albright (1994: 145 n. 95) argued that the “city” is a reference to the Underworld, called the “great city” in Mesopotamian traditions. “The city” could be a euphemism for the Underworld, known as the “great city,” *iri.gal*, Akk. *Irkallu*, in Mesopotamian traditions, see *DDD*: 563. Scholars have argued that Melqart is connected the Mesopotamian Underworld deity Nergal or Eragal (see Albright 1994: 145 n. 95 with references). For Melqart as Nergal, see also *DDD*: 622. The Mesopotamian god Nergal was represented with a lion and club, reminiscent of Herakles, who was later identified with Melqart. Manfred K. Schretter (1974: 170) even proposed that the Greek name Herakles was a corruption of the name Eragal. Scholars have long doubted the traditional etymology of Herakles, see references in Burkert 1979: 179 n.17. Pötscher (1971: 169-184) defends the traditional etymology of Herakles as “the fame of Hera.” Mettinger (2001: 110), on the other hand, argues against the hypothesis of Albright because of the fact that Melqart is

effigy of the god Melqart was immolated each year at Tyre in the festival called in Greek the *egersis* “awakening”:

The festival commemorates the resurrection of the awakening of the god. This annual feast day, the *egersis*, was very similar to that of other eastern gods who died and rose again, like Adonis. The festival was celebrated in the month of the Peritia (February-March) and consisted of a genuine immolation of the god through ritual cremation. The intention was, logically, to revive him and make him immortal by virtue of fire.⁴⁹⁶

As Richard Miles explains, “Each spring, in a carefully choreographed festival called the *egersis*, an effigy of the god was placed on a giant raft before being ritually burnt as it drifted out to sea.”⁴⁹⁷ These rites guaranteed the fertility of the living king of Tyre and legitimated his authority through the annual death and rebirth (*egersis*) of the god.⁴⁹⁸ According to the records preserved by Josephos, the *egersis* was celebrated in mid-February to mid-March.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, Corinne Bonnet connected the *egersis* rites with fertility worship and with the Ugaritic god Baal who ensures the fertility cycles with his

god who is reborn: “Melqart is hardly a chthonic deity. His death in flames and his only temporary absence from the earth (note the ritual of awakening in the spring) militate against a chthonic interpretation.”

⁴⁹⁶ Josephos (*AJ* 8.146) attests to the performance of the *egersis* at Tyre under the reign of Hiram I. A myth preserved by Athenaios (9. 47. 30-36) provides evidence for the death and rebirth of Melqart by the smell of sacrificed quails. Pausanias (10.4.6) provides evidence for the use of an effigy for the rites. Various other ancient sources attest to the cremation, burial, or grave of Melqart, see pseudo-Clement (*Recognitions* 10.24), Pomponius Mela (3.46), and Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 1.36.5). Aubet (2001: 128) continues the statement as follows, “The belief in resurrection by fire, already known in Ugaritic myths, explains the fact that Melqart is also called ‘fire of heaven.’ . . . Probably the god was burned in effigy on a pyre and the myth assures us that he revived at the smell of fire. Then he was buried and subsequently came the resurrection and manifestation of the god.” Aubet’s interpretation of the sources relies on the interpretation of Frazer (1914: 110-116). Bonnet (1988: 37; 104-112) also follows Frazer in interpreting Melqart as a dying and rising god. Markoe (2000: 119-120), in turn, follows Bonnet and Aubet with a Frazerian interpretation of the sources.

⁴⁹⁷ Miles 2010: 33.

⁴⁹⁸ Bonnet 1988: 109.

⁴⁹⁹ Joseph. *AJ* 8.146.

rebirth.⁵⁰⁰ As Wolfgang Herrmann explains, “Baal’s rule guarantees the annual return of the vegetation; as the god disappears in the underworld and returns in the autumn, so the vegetation dies and resuscitates with him.”⁵⁰¹ Melqart was the local Tyrian variant of the Canaanite god Baal, who was worshipped throughout the Canaanite world as a god of fertility.⁵⁰² From the earliest evidence Melqart appears to be associated with a milieu of Canaanite gods connected with the Underworld and fertility, and these associations with fertility can be further identified with the pattern of Frazer’s dying and rising god.⁵⁰³ In turn, Mettinger states, “the celebration of the resurrection of Melqart probably had some

⁵⁰⁰ Bonnet 1988: 108-109. Baal, like Melqart, is also a king (*KTU* 1.2.iv.35). Anat calls her brother Baal, a king: “Our king is Valiant, Baal is our ruler” (*KTU* 1.3.v.33-34). In the *Baal Epic*, the god Baal is killed by Mot “death” (*KTU* 1.5.vi.9). The lines wherein he is revived are missing, but later in the story, his sister Anat exclaims that he is alive (*KTU* 1.6.iii.20).

⁵⁰¹ *DDD*: 134. The texts from Ugarit say Baal was the son of Dagan, the god of fertility (*KTU* 1.5 vi:23-24; 1.10 iii:12, 14; 1.14 ii:25; iv:7). Baal is also the attendant of the fertility of the soil (*KTU* 1.3 ii:39; 1.6 iii:6-7, 12-13). Moreover, in the Baal epic, the god Baal dies and is reborn, which fits into the pattern of dying and rising gods mentioned by Frazer. In the *Epic of Baal* (*KTU* 1.2), the god is killed by the god Mot “death,” but he is then revived. Baal is also connected to the Underworld through the epithet *rpū* “healer” as a leader of the Rephaim, the ghosts of dead ancestors of the royal family (*KTU* 1.108:1-2; 113), see Dietrich and Loretz 1980: 171-182.

⁵⁰² Among the Tyrians the god Melqart was known through his epithet Baal Šōr “Master of Tyre,” known from an inscription discovered in Malta (*CIS* I.122). Some scholars also agree that the Baal worshiped by Queen Jezebel in the Hebrew Bible was Melqart (1 Kings 16-18); In particular, Roland de Vaux (1971: 238-251) interpreted the rites celebrated at Mt. Carmel as part of the cult of Melqart (1 Kings 18:20-40). Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet (1992: 303-313), on the other hand, argues these are rites for the god of Mt. Carmel, a localized deity. As Xella (2019: 275) explains, Melqart was a “paradigmatic model” for the death and rebirth of Melqart (see also Xella 2001c).

⁵⁰³ The Syro-Canaanite evidence known from Bronze Age Ugarit (1550-1200 BCE) suggests that Melqart was originally a god associated with deified kings and dead ancestors as the source of fertility. Bonnet (1988: 417-433) explores the historical antecedents of Melqart in a milieu of Canaanite gods related to fertility and dead ancestors as kings. As she has argued (*ibid.*, 428), the origins of Melqart are to be found in the relationship between the Semitic root *MLK* “king” and the deified dead kings known from Ugarit as *mlkm*. Bonnet builds from the earlier scholarship of George C. Heider (1985), who identified an Underworld deity from the Ugaritic texts known as *Mlk* (vocalized as *Milku*), who was associated in the Ugaritic pantheon lists with the divinized ancestors known as *mlkm*. The theonym *Milku* occurs in two texts from Ugarit (RS. 24.244:15; 24.251). For the *mlkm* as dead kings, see RS 24.257, 34.126, and 94.2518. The dead kings also correspond to the *mlkm* mentioned in the deity lists (RS 1.017:33 and 92.2004:42). For Melqart as the *Mlk* of Tyre, a localized variation of the Syro-Canaanite god *Mlk*, see Bonnet 1988: 426-431.

seasonal connection with the rebirth of the vegetation.”⁵⁰⁴ I elaborate further on the connections between Baal, Melqart, and fertility rites in my analysis of the myths of Philo of Byblos in Chapter 6.

The festival celebrating the death of the god and his rebirth was also connected to a myth known from Greek sources. The second to third-century CE Greek author Athenaios cites an aitiological myth reported by Eudoxos of Knidos from the fourth-century BCE that explains why the Phoenicians sacrifice quails to Melqart because the god was brought back to life by the smell of the sacrificed bird after he was killed by Typhon.⁵⁰⁵ Thus, the aitiology links the smell of burnt sacrifice with the rebirth of the god. An important preliminary question of this chapter is how to interpret the death of Melqart celebrated at the *egersis* festival. Aubet and Miles understand the ritual as an immolation, and Bonnet describes the *egersis* as, “a sort of sacrifice of the god with the intention of reviving him by fire.”⁵⁰⁶ In this regard, the ritualized death of Melqart can be interpreted as a burnt sacrifice characteristic of the eastern Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē*, but the rite is also analogous to human sacrifice, a practice attributed to the

⁵⁰⁴ Mettinger 2001: 108.

⁵⁰⁵ Ath. 9. 47. 30-36. Little is known for certain about the animal offerings to Melqart, but we have some scattered literary and epigraphical texts. A rare Phoenician inscription (*KAI* 43) from Larnaka-tes-Lapethou on Cyprus commemorates in the third-century BCE a sacrifice of “many cattle” to Melqart (cf. Lipiński 1985 and D’Andrea 2020: 160). As discussed above Athenaios (Ath. 9. 47. 30-36) describes the sacrifice of quail to Melqart. Strabo (*Geography* 3.5.5) records the oracle of founding Gades and says the Tyrians offered sacrifice on an island sacred to Melqart, near the Pillars of Melqart. Silius (*Pun.* 3.1-16) mentions that the Carthaginian general Hannibal offered sacrifice to the god on his campaign in Spain. Alexander the Great also sacrificed to Melqart at Tyre (Arr. *Anab.* 2.15-16). The fact that pork was prohibited as an offering to Melqart implies that it was a traditional burnt offering performed by Semitic cultures. For a discussion of sacrifice to Melqart, see Bonnet 1988: 300-301. For Punic offerings in general, see the sacrificial tariffs from Carthage that record the different types of offerings (*KAI* 74, 75). For an introduction to Phoenician and Punic practices of sacrifice, see Lipiński 1993. For a more recent analysis of the evidence with the inclusion of the latest archaeological evidence, see D’Andrea 2020.

⁵⁰⁶ Bonnet 1988: 106.

Phoenicians in the western Mediterranean at Carthage (see Chapters 5 and 6). Mettinger, on the other hand, connects Melqart's death not to sacrifice but to cremation and Phoenician funeral practices.⁵⁰⁷ Whether we interpret the rites as a sacrifice of the god or as a cremation of the god, what is certain is that, according to the myth of Eudoxos, Melqart's death and rebirth is directly related to Tyrian cult practices. Thus, following Bonnet, I interpret the death of Melqart as a cultic death or a burnt sacrifice characteristic of the west Levantine sacrificial *koinē*. The little information we do have about Phoenician practice indicates that the typical sacrifice consisted primarily in holocaust offerings, (i.e., the total burning of the victim).⁵⁰⁸ The essential characteristic of a Phoenician sacrifice was a burnt offering on an altar, and the practice was not much different from the neighboring Israelite practices.⁵⁰⁹ The sources that describe Melqart's death upon a pyre do not diminish the sacrificial nature of Melqart's death since the Greek word πυρά "pyre" is also used to describe an altar for burnt offerings.⁵¹⁰ Moreover, these sources might be influenced by the Greek syncretism between Melqart and the Greek hero-god Herakles, whose death was depicted upon a funeral pyre, as I explain below.

⁵⁰⁷ Mettinger 2001: 111.

⁵⁰⁸ The eighth-seventh centuries BCE Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Hittite Karatepe inscription (KAI 26) relates the standard Phoenician term for animal sacrifice (*zḥ*). See the Marseilles Tariff: discovered in the temple of Baal Saphon; I use the edition and translation of Lupu 2009: 391-396. The Marseilles and Carthage Tariffs (KAI 69, 74, 75) describe three different types of sacrifice: *kll*, *šw't*, and *šlm kll*, all of which seem to have been a holocaust of some sort (*kll*, *šlm kll*) or partially eaten (*šw't*) by the priest (Lipiński 1993: 261-263; D'Andrea 2020: 152-154).

⁵⁰⁹ Lipiński 1993. For archaeological evidence for burnt remains of animals, see D'Andrea 2020: 157-158; For archaeological evidence of Phoenician altars, see *ibid.*, 160-161.

⁵¹⁰ E.g., Pseudo-Clement of Rome, *Recognitions* 10.24; Hdt. 7.167; Eur. *Ion.* 1258; *Tro.* 483.

A related question is how to understand the effect of the fire of sacrifice and Melqart's subsequent "awakening." Bonnet and Aubet suggest that the fire "revived" Melqart after his immolation.⁵¹¹ It is possible to compare the revivifying effects of fire in other myths with that of Melqart to gain a better understanding. The most relevant example for comparison is the death of Herakles, with whom Melqart was identified, as I will explain below. In Ovid's Latin version, the fire immortalizes the demigod Hercules by burning off the mortal portion and preserving the immortal portion.⁵¹² In the older Greek version (Hom. *Od.* 11.601-602), the Homeric poet says that only the ghost of Herakles is in Hades but that Herakles himself is at Olympos. In another Greek myth, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess Demeter attempts to immortalize the mortal child Demophoön by placing him in fire.⁵¹³ Scholarship on the hymn has also connected the idea of fire with purification rites.⁵¹⁴ As a corollary, in the Levant, in Jewish literature, there is the idea that fire works as a sort of purification, and in a dialogue from the Babylonian Talmud, YHWH himself is ritually purified by fire, an impressive example of divine reflexivity.⁵¹⁵ Another idea, closer to the interpretation of Melqart's

⁵¹¹ The revivifying idea of fire seen in the *egersis* contrasts with Egyptian beliefs, according to Herodotos (3.16), who says that the Egyptians believe fire is a living beast that dies along with the meal on which it feeds.

⁵¹² Ov. *Met.* 9.211-272. Foley (1994: 45) notes that fire purges the mortality of Hercules when he is burned on the pyre and that fire is also used to prepare the body for transition to the Underworld.

⁵¹³ Hom. *Hymn Dem.* 236-249.

⁵¹⁴ Richardson (1974: 231-233) notes the possibility that the story is connected to purification rites at Eleusis. Felson-Rubin and Deal (1994: 194) also discuss this myth in the context of fire purification. Fire is also called πῦρ καθάρσιον "purifying fire" in the context of sacrifice (Eur. *HF* 937; *IA* 1112). In a parallel construction, we find the phrase καθαροῖσι φλογί "with purifying flame" in the context of cleansing a space (Eur. *Hel.* 869).

⁵¹⁵ Numbers 31:23: "any article that can withstand fire—these you shall pass through fire and they shall be clean." A dialogue from the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sanhedrin* 39a) says that YHWH is purified by fire: "A certain Min said to Rabbi Abbahu: Your God is a priest, since it is written, That they take for me Terumah

death as a burnt sacrifice, is that fire transforms the sacrificial offering into a higher substance that the gods can enjoy.⁵¹⁶ In any case, whether we understand the effects of the fire from the perspective of immortalization after death, ritual purification, or sacrificial transformation, what is certain is that each of these ideas is connected to cult practices. As I will show, however, in the following chapters with my analysis of Herodotos and Philo of Byblos, Melqart's death is best interpreted as a sort of burnt offering.

2. Phoenician Sources and General Methodological Considerations

In the following three sections, I discuss the sources that attest to the sacrifice of Melqart with special attention to their problems and scholarly approaches.⁵¹⁷ The main difficulty for investigating the myth and cult of Melqart is that all the Phoenician literary sources have vanished.⁵¹⁸ Thus, scholars are left to uncover information about Phoenician

[wave offering]. Now, when He had buried Moses, wherein did He bathe [after contact with the corpse]? Should you reply, 'In water': is it not written, *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand?* — 'He bathed in fire,' he answered, 'for it is written, *Behold the Lord will come in fire.*' Is then purification by fire effective? 'On the contrary,' he replied, 'bathing for [purposes of purification] should essentially be in fire, for it is written, *And all that abideth not the fire ye shall make to go through the water*'" (translation by Jacob Schachter 1935).

⁵¹⁶ Detienne and Vernant (1989: 7) succinctly explain this idea: "the gods enjoy the privilege of perfumed smoke—the incorruptible substances that the flames of the sacrificial fire have transformed into superior food reserved for the divine power." For further elaboration of the idea that fire transforms meat into smoke that the gods can enjoy, see Svenbro 2005.

⁵¹⁷ See also the methodological discussion by Bonnet (1988: 1-17). Bonnet draws from the approach of Sznycer (1981) who distinguished between direct and indirect sources among both the written and unwritten sources. Sznycer cautioned against the use of biblical material for interpreting Phoenician religion, whereas Xella (1981) distinguished between objective and ideological sources. Bonnet presented the sources in the first part of her book (1988: 1-390), then used a historico-religious approach in part two (399-416) to understand the assimilation of Melqart and Herakles, as well as the historical antecedents of Melqart (417-440).

⁵¹⁸ Unlike Egypt, the humid climate of the Levant was not conducive for the survival of Phoenician papyri. Menander of Ephesos (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.116-119), however, claims to have translated the vast archives of Tyre, and King Zakarbaal of Byblos also refers to papyri scrolls according to the Report of Wenamun (Markoe 2000: 110). For a general survey of the remains of Phoenician literature, see López-Ruiz 2019.

mythology mediated by Greek and Roman literary sources and some Phoenician inscriptions. Moreover, the classical and biblical references are built on a negative bias against the Phoenicians, and therefore, it can be difficult for us to use them as historical sources.⁵¹⁹ Fortunately, the field of Phoenician studies has been greatly expanded in recent years, and our knowledge of these mysterious people is becoming more coherent. All the literary and epigraphical sources for the cult and myth of Melqart are found in the seminal study of Melqart by Bonnet, and I rely substantially on her work.⁵²⁰ Most recently, the publication of the edited volume *The Oxford Handbook of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean* has augmented the field of Phoenician studies with an essential resource for investigating the direct and indirect sources of Phoenician history and religion.⁵²¹

A further difficulty is that the sources describe both the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth and the festival celebrating the *egersis* "awakening" of the god Melqart. The former are probably references to a lost Phoenician myth about Melqart, whereas the latter are probably best interpreted as historical accounts. Whether the ritual was based on a myth of his sacrifice, whether the myth was based on the annual *egersis* rites, or whether both the myth and the rites developed at the same time is currently impossible to demonstrate.⁵²² What is certain is that the myth and ritual were somehow connected in unknown ways. My interest, however, is primarily in the mythology of Melqart, but due

⁵¹⁹ For negative stereotyping of the Phoenicians, see Prag 2014: 18.

⁵²⁰ Bonnet 1988.

⁵²¹ López-Ruiz and Doak 2019.

⁵²² For the myth-ritual problem, see my discussion in the Introduction chapter. I take the position that there is some connection between the myth and ritual, but I do not claim to understand what that connection is.

to the scarcity of sources, I utilize all literary, epigraphical, and iconographical references to Melqart's cult to reconstruct the myth. As discussed above, the sources consistently refer to Melqart's death and rebirth in cultic terms as part of a yearly rite. I survey these sources and the methods for their interpretation in the sections below.

3. Syncretism and *Interpretatio*

Another problem for interpretation is that the references to the mythology of Melqart are scattered throughout different sources and no detailed account of the myth is found in a single text. Thus, scholars reconstruct the myth of his sacrifice by piecing together a variety of sources from a broad diachronic range. Moreover, the classical sources do not explicitly make reference to the god Melqart, instead, they refer to the hero-god Herakles, with whom Melqart was identified by the Greeks in a process scholars called syncretism or *interpretatio*.⁵²³ Robert Parker has most recently described *interpretatio* as a two-way avenue for bridging ideas and names from different cultures.⁵²⁴ According to Parker, "*Interpretatio* had several forms, more than one of which might be applied to the same god. The simplest and most drastic was the simple

⁵²³ The syncretism between these gods is well-attested. Philo of Byblos (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.28) mentions, "Melqart, that is Herakles." A second-century BCE bilingual inscription from Malta mentions Melqart and Herakles, the Phoenician MLQRT B'L ŠR, "Melqart, Baal of Tyre" is rendered in Greek as "Herakles *archēgetēs*" (see Bonnet 1988: 245). The title B'L ŠR is also found on a weight dedicated to Melqart (LMLQRT BŠR), see KAI 47. The syncretism between Melqart and Herakles probably occurred at Cyprus in the fifth-century BCE (see Bonnet 1988: 10-17 and 212-214; Karageorghis 1982: 144; Van Berchem 1967: 73-109). Miles (2010: 103), on the other hand, says that the gods were syncretized as early as the seventh-century BCE. Burkert (1979: 78-98) argued that Herakles was originally a prototypical "master of animals," who tames wild animals, and whose labors may have iconographical antecedents in the Near Eastern myths of Ninurta, Marduk, and Enkidu. The dynamics of syncretism between Herakles and Melqart also provided a cultural "middle ground," as Malkin (2011: 119-142) demonstrates in his case study of the two gods.

⁵²⁴ Parker 2017: 74.

substitution of one theonym for another.”⁵²⁵ For example, Herodotos provides the equivalents Demeter for Isis and Dionysos for Osiris.⁵²⁶ As Parker explains, the most common form is the use of a divine name in combination with a geographical epithet, such as Thebaian Zeus for the Egyptian god Amun-Re.⁵²⁷ In this study, I explore the substitutions Egyptian Herakles or Tyrian Herakles for the god Melqart.⁵²⁸ Therefore, to recover traces of the Phoenician myth of the death of Melqart, we must interpret the evidence mediated by the Greek myths describing Herakles’ death and immortalization.⁵²⁹ As a result, I typically refer to the god Melqart where the Greek source uses the name Herakles or the Latin source uses the name Hercules, but it is clear that they refer to the Tyrian god Melqart.

Despite the scarcity of informative sources, the pronounced syncretism between the Tyrian god Melqart and the Greek hero-god Herakles allows us to piece together the mythology and the ritual related to Melqart as best as possible. The concept of syncretism, or the merging of mythological characters from different cultures, was common in the ancient world and especially indicative of the impact of cultural contact. As Josephine Quinn has most recently put it, three prominent similarities between Herakles and Melqart allowed them to be easily equated: both “straddled the divide between human and divine,” both died and were reborn in fire, and both were associated

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 42-43.

⁵²⁶ Demeter: Hdt. 2.156.5; Dionysos: Hdt. 2.144.

⁵²⁷ Parker 2017: 44.

⁵²⁸ For the Egyptian Herakles, see Diod. Sic. 3.74; For the Tyrian Herakles, see Zenobius, *Epit.* 5.56.

⁵²⁹ Mettinger (2001: 86-88) summarizes the references for the death of Herakles-Melqart. Ringgren (1969: 205), on the other hand, was skeptical of using Greek testimonia to reconstruct Phoenician religion.

with colonization.⁵³⁰ Xella states that Melqart's identification with Herakles attests to a syncretism between Semitic and Indo-European cultures in the ancient Mediterranean.⁵³¹

In general, I follow Bonnet's historico-religious approach which aims to understand the historical processes that contributed to the formation of the divine figure Melqart, including his syncretism with Herakles.⁵³² I contribute to her findings with my analysis of Herodotos in the next chapter. Bonnet argues that the iconographical assimilation between Herakles and Melqart occurred at Cyprus between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE when Herakles' iconography of the lion-skin was applied to depictions of the god Melqart.⁵³³ Cyprus, which Bonnet calls "le théâtre d'une fusion," was an important meeting place along the Mediterranean network between Greeks and Phoenicians since at least the ninth-century BCE when the Phoenicians established the colony of Kition and Greeks also began settling parts of Cyprus.⁵³⁴ The island was an

⁵³⁰ Quinn 2018: 120-121. Herakles was a semi-divine human who became an immortal god. In a similar way, Melqart was not only a god but also the mythical ancestor of the royal lineage (Miles 2010: 105). Melqart is associated with foundation stories for colonies and his cult unified the Phoenician trade network. Likewise, Herakles conquered many lands and founded dynasties that then established colonies. For the relationship between Herakles and Melqart, see Bonnet 1988: 346-371; Malkin 2011: 119-141; Jourdain-Annequin 1989.

⁵³¹ Xella 2001c: 88.

⁵³² Bonnet 1988: 7-9.

⁵³³ Ibid., 412-414. Cf. Karageorghis 1982: 144; Van Berchem 1967: 73-109; Demetriou 2001: 138-139. Miles (2010:103) says the gods were syncretized as early as the seventh-century BCE. The Egyptian city of Naukratis, with its Panhellenic temple called the Hellenion, was also an important center for contact between Greeks and non-Greeks (see Malkin 2011: 65-96). In the seventh-century BCE, Greek traders settled at the Egyptian city of Naukratis and lived among Egyptians. Later in the sixth-century BCE, these Greeks settled adopted local customs and settled in Memphis where they were called Hellenomemphites (Hdt. 2.153-154, 163; Cf. Diod. 1.66, 12). Herodotos (2.178.2-3) describes how the Ionians, Dorians, and Aiolians collaborated in the founding of a sanctuary named the 'Hellenion' at Naukratis during the reign of the Pharaoh Amasis (ca. 569-525 BCE). Sherds of pottery from the site of the sanctuary testify to the dedication "to the gods of the Hellenes" (Hall 2002: 130). For a study of Naukratis, see Möller 2000.

⁵³⁴ Bonnet 1988: 414. For the evidence of the cult of Melqart at Cyprus, see Bonnet 1988: 313-342. Bonnet (2019: 105) calls Cyprus a "vast, cross-cultural experimental space," where cultic practices were mediated. For the importance of Cyprus in the context of Mediterranean trade, see West 1997a: 8.

important meeting place of cultural contact between Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian gods as well.⁵³⁵ This symbiosis of cultures is also reflected in the “Egyptianizing style” of Cypriote art. According to the recent study by Fanni Faegersten, the Cypriote art style was transferred from Egypt to Cyprus via Phoenician artisans from the Levant such that it can be more accurately described as a “Phoenicianizing” style.⁵³⁶ Building upon this historical context, I focus on the dynamics of syncretism between Melqart and Herakles in the fifth-century BCE when for the first time in a literary source Herodotos identified the divine figures as equivalent. More recently, Bonnet and Laurent Bricault, who call Melqart *le dieu des origines*, “the god of origins,” have emphasized the role of Melqart as a tutelary god in the foundation of Tyrian colonies.⁵³⁷ In their study of the modalities and effects of the movement of gods, myths, and rituals in the Mediterranean space, the scholars point out how the gods Melqart and Herakles intersect at Phoenician and Greek points of contact.⁵³⁸ These points of contact, where myths and rites were syncretized, are crucial for our exploration of the myth.

⁵³⁵ In one important inscription from Cyprus, the god Osiris is worshipped by a priest of Melqart, and in another inscription from Cyprus, the Egyptian god’s name is used in a theophoric element of a Phoenician name. For the the inscription from the cult of Melqart at Larnaka-tès-Lapethou, see Honeyman 1938. Honeyman’s (ibid., 297) translation of the text: “(1) I, Param, son of Ger’aštart, cult-supervisor (*mqm ’lm*) and sacrificer of the sin-offering, who am in charge of Lapethos...in the territory of... (2) offered this statue-image **in the presence of my lord Melqart** in Narnaka on the thirteenth (13th) day of the month .RM in the year 13 of king ... (3) –ippos, king of Lapethos and royal offspring of king Demonikos, as a memorial among the living; may **Melqart** bless my stock! And in the month Mattan of the 3rd year of king Berekšemeš king of Lapethos, (4) I, Param, offered **to my lord Melqart** cups of silver numbering 6 and weighing a half-*mina* or fifty-five and a quarter *drachmae*, ½ *mina*, 50 (5) and 5 1/4. In the month Karar of the same year, in his temple, I, Param, offered **to my lord Osiris** in Lapethos a lamp of gold...” Another inscription from Cyprus (CIS no. 46) mentions a married couple, the man is called ‘*bd ’sr*, with the theophoric for Osiris, and the woman is called ‘*mt’štrt*, with the theophoric for Astarte.

⁵³⁶ Faegersten 2003: 264-265.

⁵³⁷ Bonnet and Bricault 2016: 35.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 42.

4. Network Theory, Syncretism, and Ethnic Identity

As Lipiński first illuminated, the evidence for Melqart's rites is mapped geographically onto the locations of Tyrian colonization.⁵³⁹ Thus, the origins of Tyrian expansion are symbolically rooted in the cult of Melqart. Likewise, the hero-god Herakles, with whom Melqart was identified, is also involved in the origins of Greek colonies, as well as the origins of specific rites and altars.⁵⁴⁰ In his study of Greek colonization, Irad Malkin employs network theory to understand the connectivity of the Greek world,⁵⁴¹ and he explains the syncretism between the Greeks and Phoenicians as follows:

Several modalities of syncretism between Greeks and Phoenicians seem to have existed. First, there was the Mediterranean network in which the ports and shores relate to each other in a maritime network of connections that was present from the eighth century on and prominent by the sixth. Second, Greeks and Phoenicians developed, more or less simultaneously, a political culture of city-states. Third, they had similar experiences of founding new, mostly maritime city-states in new, sometimes overseas

⁵³⁹ Lipiński 1970: 56. The evidence for the rites come from Tyre, Philadelphia-Ammon, Cyprus, Rhodes, Thasos, Delos, Rome, Northern Africa, and Gades.

⁵⁴⁰ For Herakles as an originator of Greek colonies, see Miles 2010: 96-101. Herakles was also a popular figure for aitiologies of sacrifice. In the writings of the second-century CE author Pausanias, Herakles performs many first sacrifices. According to Petropoulou, "Pausanias describes many sacrificial rites as practiced in different places in Greece, and conscientiously defines their characteristics often by evoking an *aition* for them."⁵⁴⁰ Pausanias uses the formula *θῦσαι πρῶτον*, 'first to offer sacrifice' to indicate narratives relating aitiological information about sacrifice. In these narrative Herakles is the most common founder of specific rites or altars: The reason why Heracles sacrificed goats (3.15.9), Heracles establishes the first rites for Pelops (5.13.2), Heracles establishes the altar at Olympia (5.13.8), Heracles establishes the altar at Didyma (5.13.11), the Eleans sacrifice to Zeus Averter of flies because Heracles did first (5.14), Heracles first sacrificed at Olympia on white poplar (5.14.2).

⁵⁴¹ For Malkin's approach to Greek colonization through the lens of network theory, see his introduction (2011: 3-64). In particular, Malkin (2011: 34) argues that "Greek networks emphasized Hellenic identity not in spite of distance but often because of it." His model of "the back-ripple" whereby Hellenic identity emerges through the effects of colonization is especially useful; see his Chapter 2 (2011: 65-96). Syncretism is also indicative of the early contact between the Greeks and Phoenicians. By the tenth-century BCE, or earlier, the Greeks were in regular contact with the Levantine populations whom they called "Phoenicians" (Muhly 1970; Moscati 1997a: 24; Röllig 1992: 93). The excavations at Kommos, Crete have revealed Phoenician sherds and a Levantine shrine from the tenth-century BCE (Shaw 1984; 1989).

lands. Finally, they had in common the malleable and interchangeable context of polytheistic religion.⁵⁴²

My analysis of the myths of Melqart and Herakles relies on Malkin's approach, and I focus primarily on how the network of connections and the interchangeability of polytheistic religion fostered syncretism between myths and rites. Greek sources mention an "Egyptian Herakles" or the temple of Herakles at the Phoenician settlements of Gades and Tyre, all of which refer to the god Melqart.⁵⁴³ In the earliest literary reference to this syncretism between the two gods in the fifth-century BCE, Herodotos mentions how he saw the temple of Herakles at Tyre, in other words, the temple of the Tyrian god Melqart.⁵⁴⁴ The syncretism between Herakles and Melqart can also be utilized to recover traces of a myth about the sacrifice of Melqart. As Malkin states, "Greeks may have also linked the annual death and rejuvenation of Melqart with the ambiguous nature of Herakles' own death and apotheosis, a hero turned into a god."⁵⁴⁵ Thus, immortalization by fire is one of the fundamental similarities between Melqart and Herakles.

In tandem with the approach of network theory pioneered by Malkin, I also utilize recent approaches to ethnography and historiography. Over the years scholars approaching Herodotos' historiography have explored how Herodotos uses his

⁵⁴² Malkin 2011: 130.

⁵⁴³ Diodorus Siculus (3.74) speaks of an "Egyptian Herakles," (i.e., Melqart). For the temple of Herakles at Gades, see *Paus.* 10.4.6. For the temple of Melqart at Tyre, see *Hdt.* 2.44 and my analysis in Chapter 4.

⁵⁴⁴ The temple of Herakles is the temple of Melqart and several sources identify it as such. Herodotos and Lucian both report seeing the temple of Herakles at Tyre (*Hdt.* 2.43-44; Lucian, *Syr. D.* 3). According to Arrian (*Anab.* 2.15-16), Alexander the Great claimed to be descended from Herakles, and when he besieged Tyre he desired to sacrifice to Herakles at the temple in Tyre.

⁵⁴⁵ Malkin 2011: 132.

descriptions of Egypt as a mirror for Greek self-definition.⁵⁴⁶ In particular, I build upon the work of Hall, who has argued that Greeks formed a subjective idea of Hellenic identity, and he uses the term Hellenicity instead of the term Hellenism to describe Greek identity.⁵⁴⁷ In particular, Hall shows how a concept of Hellenicity was formed in the fifth-century BCE through oppositional self-identification with a barbarian group. In Hall's words, "perceived differences served as a basis for the construction of a specifically Hellenic identity."⁵⁴⁸ Herodotos' formation of Hellenic identity coincides with his identification of Herakles and Melqart. Thus, the dynamics of syncretism are directly relevant to the issue of Hellenic identity because Greek and Phoenician identities were associated through syncretism but also disassociated through the definition of Hellenic identity. Although I rely on Hall's work, I also acknowledge the problems with this type of approach, as Ian S. Moyer has most recently pointed out. In particular, Moyer finds evidence in Egyptian king-lists and genealogies to corroborate some of the information from Herodotos.⁵⁴⁹ Thus, Moyer argues that Herodotos is not simply constructing an 'Other' and that the Egyptians had more agency in Herodotos'

⁵⁴⁶ This approach to Herodotos' historiography was first established by the work of François Hartog (1980, 1988), but Froidefond (1971) anticipated Hartog's major points with a focus primarily on Egypt and not Scythia. Christian Froidefond (1971: 115-201) developed the idea that Herodotos constructed *le mirage égyptien*. Hartog (1980, 1988) argues that Herodotos' ethnographic descriptions act as a mirror for Greek culture and that the descriptions of Egypt provide more information about Greek self-definition than Egyptian culture. Edith Hall (1989, 2006) continued this line of scholarship and examined Greek self-definition through depictions of the barbarian in Athenian tragedy. For a history of this scholarship, see Moyer 2011: 46. Even Lloyd (2002: 432-435), who first attempted to fact-check the Egyptian customs in book two, later acknowledged the role of literary technique.

⁵⁴⁷ Hall 2002: xix. The term appears first in the work of Edith Hall (1989: 177). As Hall argues (2002: 189-205), in his description of the events before the battle of Plataia, Herodotos (8.144.2) provides a definition of Hellenicity, which relates Greek kinship with cultural traits.

⁵⁴⁸ Hall 2002: 179.

⁵⁴⁹ Moyer 2011: 68.

representations than has been previously acknowledged.⁵⁵⁰ In fact, according to Moyer, the Egyptian priests were well aware of the historical significance of their past and equally concerned with their self-representation of Egyptian history and identity.⁵⁵¹ In other words, the differences between Greeks, Phoenician, and Egyptians were not simply subjective but also based on various objective differences between the cultures, such as art styles, language, practices, and history.

More recent scholarship, building on the work of Malkin and Hall, has deepened our understanding of how the Tyrian colonization network in the Mediterranean was connected by a common ethnic identity centered around the mother city of Tyre and her patron god Melqart. In particular, Manuel Álvarez Martí-Aguilar argues that with the “network of Melqart,” the god facilitated the links between the other Tyrian colonies, or nodes on the network, by uniting the different colonies under a protective umbrella of collective origins from Tyre.⁵⁵² Recently, Álvarez Martí-Aguilar has explained how the cult network of Melqart was connected via the different Tyrian colonization sites, such as Gades in the western Mediterranean, and provided a framework for “the Gadir-Tyre axis” in the Mediterranean from the ninth to the fourth centuries BCE.⁵⁵³ Along similar lines, López-Ruiz has most recently traced the cult biographies of dying and rising storm gods,

⁵⁵⁰ “In Herodotus’ description of Egypt, the Greek encounter with another culture is not purely a textual mirage constructed from the elaboration of Greek cultural ideas and oppositional self-definitions. Herodotus confronted not only the vast antiquity of an Egyptian Other, but also – through the mediation of the Egyptian priests – the Egyptian historicity of a particular moment, a characteristic set of relations with the past” (Moyer 2011: 50). For other examples of this approach, see Lateiner (1989), Benardete (2009), Munson (2005).

⁵⁵¹ Moyer 2011: 71.

⁵⁵² Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018: 141.

⁵⁵³ Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2019.

such as Zeus, Baal, and Herakles-Melqart, throughout their Mediterranean context.⁵⁵⁴

Included in these biographies are stories about the birth, travels, and death of the god, and López-Ruiz explains how the tradition about a tomb for the storm god Zeus occurs at the important junction of Phoenician and Greek contact at Crete.⁵⁵⁵ Crete was an important node for the Tyrian trade network and, as López-Ruiz points out, helped facilitate the overlapping of Levantine traditions about a tomb for Baal and Melqart and the Cretan tradition about a tomb for Zeus. Most importantly for my research, we can trace the traditions about the deaths of these interconnected Mediterranean gods by following the trail of trade and colonization networks, as I will explain further below.

Building on the previous scholarship, I assume the following in my analysis of the myths. The evidence for the dying and rising god Melqart is mapped on to a cult network in the Mediterranean. The connectivity of the Mediterranean functioned with several modalities: the Tyrian maritime trade network supported the cult network of Melqart, which, in turn, promoted a network of myths. These networks and the malleability of polytheism provided a framework that was convenient for syncretism between gods and myths but also for creative adaptation of myths. In my analysis of the myth of Melqart, I primarily utilize Mettinger's reconstruction of the ritual based on the available evidence

⁵⁵⁴ López-Ruiz: forthcoming 1.

⁵⁵⁵ The excavations at Kommos, Crete have revealed Phoenician sherds and burials and a Levantine shrine from the tenth-century BCE that all point to Phoenician presence on the island (Shaw 1984; 1989). For the tradition about the burial of Zeus on Crete, see the fragments of Euhemerios in Winiarczyk 2002: 40, ns. 51–3 (tombs of other gods listed in 197–8), also see id. 2013: 33–41. Eusebios also attests to the tomb of Zeus (*Praep. Evang.* 3.10.20–2). There are ancient folk tradition about the tomb of Zeus at Crete at Mt. Yuktas/ Juktas (Burkert 1985: 23, and 355 n. 21, cf. Evans 1921: 153–9; Winiarczyk 2013: 39–40; Karetsou 1981. The sacred Mt. Yuktas also includes a peak sanctuary at the top where there might be evidence of human sacrifice (Sakellarakis and Sarpouna-Sakellaraki 1997, cf. Hughes 1991: 13–17). Near Mt. Juktas, the remains of the city of Knossos have also produced Phoenician and orientalising materials, including tombstone to Zeus (Kourou and Karetsou 1998).

(summary below). I also combine the approaches of Malkin and Hall to show how the cult network of the Tyrian god Melqart, which is mapped onto to the Tyrian colonization network, helped facilitate a syncretistic environment in the Mediterranean conducive for the assimilation of Melqart and Herakles in the fifth-century BCE. These Tyrian colonies, or nodes on the Mediterranean network, were also points of contact between Mediterranean cultures, such as Greek, Etruscan, and Roman. These networks allowed not just the colonies to be connected but also the myths. The contact between cultures in the Mediterranean and the malleability of polytheistic religious facilitated syncretism between the mythologies of Melqart and Herakles through a middle ground of cultural exchange. At the same time, a distinct identity of Hellenic Herakles was formed in opposition to Tyrian Melqart by Herodotos in the fifth-century BCE as a result of the contact between Phoenicians and Greeks. Below, in the final section of this chapter, I survey the sources that attest to the myth and rites of Melqart.

5. The Rites of *Egersis* in the Mediterranean Context

In the following discussion, I survey some of the most important pieces of evidence for the myths and rites that celebrated the death and rebirth of Melqart. The scholarly process of reconstructing a lost myth using a variety of sources has been employed for other fragmented mythologies, such as the ‘Orphic’ myth of Dionysos.⁵⁵⁶ With his analysis of Phoenician inscriptions, Lipiński laid the ground work for subsequent scholarship that reconstructs the myth and ritual of Melqart’s death and

⁵⁵⁶ See the reconstruction of the myth by Graf and Johnston (2013: 66-93). I analyze this myth in further detail in Chapter 7 of this study. For a skeptical critique of modern reconstructions of the Orphic Dionysos myth, see Edmonds 1999, 2008, and 2013.

rebirth.⁵⁵⁷ I rely substantially on the most recent reconstruction of the myth and ritual of Melqart by Mettinger.⁵⁵⁸ Additionally, I incorporate some of the more recent scholarly approaches to the study of Melqart since the publication of Mettinger's analysis by situating the evidence for the rites of Melqart within the framework of Tyrian colonization in the Mediterranean.

A Greek myth attributed to the fourth-century BCE clearly describes both the death and rebirth of Melqart, and the rebirth of the god is related directly to the savor of a burnt offering. Our source for the myth is Eudoxos of Knidos, a fourth-century BCE Greek author who is quoted in the *Deipnosophistai* by Athenaios in the third-century CE.⁵⁵⁹ Eudoxos attributes the origins of the practice of sacrificing quails to Melqart to a myth about the death and rebirth of the god. According to this myth, Melqart is killed by Typhon and then resuscitated by the smell of a sacrifice. The quotation of Eudoxos is important because it is one of the only sources to reference both the death and rebirth of the god in the same myth. We do not know for sure what sources Eudoxos used for this myth, possibly lost Tyrian archives and other vanished sources or even earlier Greek versions. A later quotation of Eudoxos' myth by the second-century CE sophist Zenobius specifies that it was specifically *Tyrian* Herakles (i.e., Melqart) who was killed and

⁵⁵⁷ Lipiński 1970.

⁵⁵⁸ Mettinger 2001: 83-111.

⁵⁵⁹ Εὐδοξὸς δ' ὁ Κνίδιος ἐν πρώτῳ γῆς περιόδου τοὺς Φοίνικας λέγει θύειν τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ ὄρνυγας διὰ τὸ τὸν Ἡρακλέα τὸν Ἀστερίας καὶ Διὸς πορευόμενον εἰς Λιβύην ἀναιρεθῆναι μὲν ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος, Ἰολάου δ' αὐτῷ προσενέγκαντος ὄρνυγα καὶ προσαγαγόντος ὁσφρανθέντα ἀναβιῶναι. "Eudoxos of Knidos in the first book of his *Description of the Earth* says that the Phoenicians sacrifice quails to Herakles (Melqart), because Herakles, the son of Zeus and Asteria, journeyed to Libya and **was killed** by Typhon, but Iolaos brought a (sacrificed) quail to him and having brought it close, he (Melqart) smelled it, and **he came back to life again**" (Ath. 9. 47. 30-36).

resuscitated by the smell of the savor of sacrifice.⁵⁶⁰ The twelfth-century CE Byzantine scholar Eustathius reports another version of the myth, but attributes the story to the “ancients,” more generally.⁵⁶¹ I offer a closer reading of the myth in the next chapter, but for now, what is important is that these sources demonstrate how the myth of the death and rebirth of Tyrian Melqart and its connection to sacrifice was well known in the ancient Mediterranean.

In his reconstruction of the myth and ritual, Mettinger combines the literary attestations of Melqart’s death and rebirth with an important piece of iconographical evidence for the rites. The artifact known as the Sidon vase is dated between the fourth and fifth centuries BCE, the same period as the literary syncretism between Melqart and Herakles in the myths recorded by Herodotos and Eudoxos. The artifact was kept in the Berlin Museum but was later lost.⁵⁶² Fortunately, several photographs and drawings of the item have provided scholars with images of the vase.⁵⁶³ The vase seems to depict a ritual sequence of the immolation and rebirth of a god, and most scholars have identified

⁵⁶⁰ Zenobius (*Epit.* 5.56) quotes Eudoxos: “Φησὶ δὲ Εὐδοξὸς **Ἡρακλέα τὸν Τύριον** ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος διαφθαρῆναι· τὸν Ἰόλαον δὲ ἅπαντα πράττοντα διὰ τὸ ἀναστήσαι τὸν Ἡρακλέα, τὸν ὄρνυγα, ᾧ ἔχαιρεν Ἡρακλῆς, ζῶντα καῦσαι· ἐκ δὲ τῆς κνίσσης ἀναβιώναι τὸν Ἡρακλέα, “Eudoxos says that **Tyrian Herakles** was killed by Typhon; and Iolaos, who did everything to revive Herakles, burned a living quail, which was pleasing to Herakles, and from the savor Herakles was brought back to life.”

⁵⁶¹ Eustathius (*ad Od.* 11.600 = 1.400 Stallbaum): Σημειοῦνται δὲ οἱ παλαιοὶ, ὅτι τε διάφοροι Ἡρακλεῖς, ὥς καὶ ἀλλάχοῦ ἐρῶρέθη, ὧν εἰς καὶ ὁ Διὸς καὶ Ἀστερίας, ὅς φασι πορευόμενος εἰς Λιβύην **ἀνηγέθη** μὲν ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος, Ἰολάου δ' αὐτῷ προσενεγκόντος ὄρνυγα ὀσφρανθεὶς ἀνεβίω. “The ancients say that there are different Herakles, as has been said elsewhere, one of these was the son of Zeus and Asteria, who, they say, journeyed to Libya and **was killed** by Typhon, but when Iolaos brought a (sacrificed) quail to him, he smelled it and **he revived**.”

⁵⁶² Sidon vase: VA 569. See Mettinger 2001: 98.

⁵⁶³ For photographs, see Bonnet 1988: pl. 1 fig. 1. For drawings, see Pietschmann 1889: 225; reproduced in Mettinger 2001: 100.

the deity as Melqart.⁵⁶⁴ Following Lipiński, Mettinger reads the images from right to left according to the same order as one reads Phoenician script, and I follow their readings below. Taken together, the images depict the ritual immolation of the god upon an altar (Figure 1), the burial of the god (Figure 2), the mourning for the god (Figure 3), and finally his rebirth or “awakening” (Figure 4). Figure 1 depicts a god, presumably Melqart, burning atop an altar structure. On the panel depicting the “awakening” or rebirth (Fig. 4), an image of what appears to be a man holding birds might even refer to the resuscitating effects of the sacrifice of quails to Melqart mentioned by Eudoxos. Finally, Mettinger argues that an image of the moon on the first panel (Fig. 1) and an image of the morning star on the final panel (Fig. 4) depicts a ritual sequence over a series of days.⁵⁶⁵ Just as we saw with the sacrifice of Ilawela in *Atrahasis*, the sacrifice of Melqart takes place under a sacred time indicated by the moon and other heavenly bodies.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁴ Lipiński 1970: 43-46; Delcor 1976: 62-66; Bonnet 1988: 78-80. Garbini (1994: 61), on the other hand, identifies the god as Eshmun because of the provenance of the vase as well as prominent snake iconography on the vase which is typical of Eshmun. *Pace* Garbini, the final image of the vase says in Phoenician *b'l kr*, “Baal of the Furnace,” which probably identifies the god as Melqart, who was known as the “Baal of Tyre” and whose rites of immolation were well known (cf. the description of Melqart in Nonnos [*Dion.* 40.369] as “Lord of the Pyre”). For other interpretations of the inscription, see citations in Mettinger 2001: 101. Moreover, the snake is not only connected to Eshmun but was also connected to the cult of Melqart in the foundation myth of Tyre (Nonnos, *Dion.* 40. 469-492). Mettinger (2001: 103) proposes the possibility that the vase is a case of Melqart-Eshmun syncretism.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. Spiegel (1967: 112), who remarks on the ritual sequence of stories about death and rebirth: “This three-day season between the death and resurrection of the gods was well known to many nations in the ancient Near East. The Babylonian Tammuz and Osiris, the god of the Egyptians—among others—go down to the nether world and come up again on the third day.”

⁵⁶⁶ For the Phoenician feasts and calendar, see Lipinski 1993: 257-261 and D’Andrea 2020. The oldest evidence for the Phoenician calendar is from the inscriptions of Karatepe (*KAI* 26).



Figure 1. “Immolation of Melqart.” Photograph reproduced from Bonnet 1988: pl. 1 fig. 1.



Figure 2. “Burial of Melqart.” Photograph reproduced from Bonnet 1988: pl. 1 fig. 1.



Figure 3. “Mourning for Melqart.” Photograph reproduced from Bonnet 1988: pl. 1 fig. 1.



Figure 4. “Awakening of Melqart.” Photograph reproduced from Bonnet 1988: pl. 1 fig. 1.

As we can see from the Greek interpretation of the Phoenician myth of Melqart mentioned above, combined with the iconographical evidence from the Sidon vase, there is good reason to believe that Melqart can be categorized as a dying and rising god. Moreover, the depiction of the god upon a burning altar structure suggests we can interpret his death as a burnt sacrifice. In addition to the iconographical evidence, there is also literary evidence for the annual rites of Melqart, known as the ἔγερσις, “the awakening,” at the Phoenician city of Tyre on the Levantine coast. According to local

Tyrian traditions transmitted by Menander of Ephesos, a second-century BCE author whose lost history of Tyre was quoted by Josephos in the first-century CE, Melqart was an innovation of Hiram I.⁵⁶⁷ In the tenth-century BCE, King Hiram I of Tyre united the other Phoenician cities of Byblos and Sidon and established a mercantile empire with Tyre's monopoly over the sea routes of the Mediterranean.⁵⁶⁸ Hiram I also tore down the older temples and founded a temple to Tyre's new god Melqart and his consort Astarte.⁵⁶⁹ Melqart, the "king of the city," was the mythical first king of Tyre and a manifestation of the power of the living king of the city.⁵⁷⁰

According to the testimony of Josephos, King Hiram I was the first to perform the *egersis* "awakening" of Melqart in the month of Peritios (February-March) at Tyre.⁵⁷¹ Josephos probably refers to a yearly ritual that celebrated the rebirth of Melqart, such as

⁵⁶⁷ Menander of Ephesos in Josephos (*Ap.* 1.18). Melqart does not appear in any records of the second millennium BCE. The earliest epigraphical and iconographical attestation of Melqart is from the Bar-Hadad inscription (*KAI* 201) of the ninth-century BCE from the city of Aleppo in northern Syria. On the stele, the god Melqart is depicted with the horned helmet and battle-ax of the war-god Baal. Bonnet (1988: 132-136) suggests that the god Melqart was adopted by the Arameans in Northern Syria for political reasons and the inscription testifies to the renown of the god's cult. Gotthard Reinhold (1986: 126) suggests the stele offers evidence for the contacts between the Arameans and Tyrians. Pardee (1991: 303-304), on the other hand, has doubts about the Tyrian origins of Melqart and suggests the possibility that the divinity was adopted by Tyre. Pardee (1988: 55-68) points to the non-Tyrian origin of the name Milkashtart and the later coupling of the Tyrian deities Melqart and Astarte: *mlk* 'trrt= (the god) Milku of (the Transjordanian city) of Athtartu. While it is difficult to reconcile the literary and epigraphical sources about the origins of Melqart, I take the position that Melqart was a Tyrian innovation, nevertheless, we should not discount the possibility that he was imported to Tyre from elsewhere in the Near East.

⁵⁶⁸ Aubet 2001: 35.

⁵⁶⁹ Menander of Ephesos quoted by Josephos (*Ap.* 1.18). For a study of the iconography of the goddess Astarte in the second millennium BCE, see Cornelius 2004. For a comprehensive study of the goddess Astarte, see Bonnet 1996. Gibson (2002: 146), on the other hand, doubts Astarte was the wife of Melqart, but rather a lover. For Astarte as the consort of Melqart, see Bonnet 1988: 35. For Astarte as the mother of Melqart, see Bonnet 1988: 20-21. At Carthage there was a temple dedicated to *Milkashtart*, a compound cult of Melqart and Astarte, which clearly demonstrates the close connection between the deities (Marín Ceballos 1999: 66-67).

⁵⁷⁰ Bonnet 1988: 399-415; Xella 2019: 279.

⁵⁷¹ Joseph. *AJ* 8.146. For the semantics and usage of the verb ἐγείρω "to awaken," in Homer and Jewish texts, see Cook 2018: 13-20. For the word *egersis* meaning "resurrection," see Bonnet 1988: 36.

we see on the Sidon vase. This ritual reenactment of his rebirth likely concluded a reenactment of the death of the god via immolation, although Josephos only mentions the *egersis* “awakening.”⁵⁷² Pausanias, a Greek geographer writing in the second century CE, reports a story about an effigy of Herakles burnt at his sanctuary at Gades in southern Iberia, which suggests that the Tyrians may have burned an effigy of the god.⁵⁷³ The immolation of the god is probably depicted in the first panel of the Sidon vase (Fig.1), and Pseudo-Clement of Rome in the fourth-century CE records that Melqart was burned on a pyre and immortalized at Tyre.⁵⁷⁴ An important component of the ritual also seems to have been the involvement of the king and queen who were the high priest and priestess of the cult.⁵⁷⁵ In a *hieros gamos*, “sacred marriage,” the king and queen may

⁵⁷² The awakening of the god might also be alluded to in the biblical descriptions of the rites of Baal in the Book of Kings. When the prophet Elijah chastises the prophets of Baal for their unsuccessful sacrifice he says, “Shout louder! After all, he is a god. But he may be in conversation, he may be detained, or he may be on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and will wake up.” (1 Kings 18:27). For the identity of the god Baal worshipped by Queen Jezebel as the god Melqart, see de Vaux 1971: 238-251. According to Arrian (2.24.5), when Alexander besieged Tyre the Carthaginian envoys were present to attend a religious festival, possibly the *egersis*.

⁵⁷³ Paus. 10.4.6. Pausanias mentions a man named Kleon who was commanded by Herakles (i.e. Melqart) to leave the sanctuary, and upon returning Kleon found an effigy of an ἄνδρα θαλάσσιον “sea-man,” which had been burned by a lightning bolt from a god (κεραυνωθέντα δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καίεσθαι). The “sea-man” is a reference to the god Melqart whose domain over the sea and sailing is well-attested. According to Édouard Paul Dhorme and René Dussaud, was a fusion of the gods Baal Hadad and the sea god Yam (Dussaud 1947: 215-224; Dhorme and Dussaud 1945 II: 366). Aubet (2001: 127) describes how Melqart was originally a fertility god who was eventually eclipsed as a sea god. A Greek inscription from Delos renders the name Melqart as *Herakles Halios*, “Herakles of the sea” (Bonnet 1988: 482). A decree from the Tyrian Herakleistai on Delos (*IDelos* 1519) asks the Athenian *demos* to grant a site for the foundation of a temple to Herakles who was the founder of their homeland (i.e. Melqart). Another decree from a religious institution at Delos known as the Poseidoniasts of Beyrouth describes sacrifices to the sea god Poseidon during the religious festivities for the patron god Herakles (Bonnet 1988: 373-375). Melqart also invented the first ship according to the foundation myth of Tyre preserved by Nonnos (*Dion.* 40.423-538). The god was promoted by the Tyrians during the expansion of their maritime endeavors as the patron of over-seas trade. Melqart also appears as a sea god, mounted on a hippocampus, on Tyrian coins (see Aubet 2001: 128).

⁵⁷⁴ Pseudo-Clement of Rome, *Recognitions* 10.24.

⁵⁷⁵ The clearest evidence for the king as a priest comes from Sidon. The dynasty of Eshmunazar were priests of Astarte. The sarcophagus of king Tabnit (*KAI* 13.1) attests to the dual-role of the king as both a sovereign and high-priest. The sarcophagus of Eshmunazar (*KAI* 14.14-15) provides evidence for the role

have played the role of Melqart and Astarte.⁵⁷⁶ Melqart's connection with Astarte is important because she appears with other reports of the *egersis* throughout the Mediterranean, as we shall see.

Epigraphical evidence attests to widespread knowledge of the *egersis* of Melqart and the sacred marriage to Astarte in the ancient Mediterranean. The Greek abstract noun *egersis* “awakening” used by Josephos to describe the rites of Melqart is found in an agent noun form in the Amman inscription in the cultic title ἐγερσε[ίτην τοῦ] Ἡρακλέου[ς] “resuscitator of Herakles.”⁵⁷⁷ In a parallel construction, the Semitic word *mqm* “to raise up” is used in the Phoenician formula *mqm 'lm*, “resuscitator of the god.” According to Cook, the Greek term ἐγερσείτην “resuscitator” and the parallel Semitic term *mqm 'lm*, “resuscitator of the god,” refer to a “sacerdotal function.”⁵⁷⁸ According to Xella, the “resuscitator of the divinity” known from Phoenician inscriptions was the king himself who performed the awakening of Melqart, thus pointing to the role of the king as a priest in the cult of Melqart.⁵⁷⁹ The formula *mqm 'lm* is found earliest in the fourth-century BCE inscription from Larnaka-tès-Lapethou on Cyprus, the important Phoenician colony and “theatre of fusion” between Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian gods.⁵⁸⁰ The

of the queen as a high-priestess. For a study of the cultic role of the queen as a priestess of Astarte, see Ackerman 2013. Josephos (*Ap.* 1.123) says that King Itto-Baal was a priest of Astarte.

⁵⁷⁶ Aubet 2001: 128; Miles 2010: 34. It is possible that the *hieros gamos* is depicted on panel C of the Sidon vase.

⁵⁷⁷ Text: Abel 1908: 570-573; For translation, see Bonnet 1988: 146. The Greek inscription from the Roman period was discovered near the Roman city of Philadelphia (modern day Amman, Jordan).

⁵⁷⁸ Cook 2018: 126. For a survey of the inscriptional evidence of this term, see Ferron 1972: 206.

⁵⁷⁹ Xella 2001c: 89.

⁵⁸⁰ For the text and translation, see Honeyman 1938 and note 535 above. The text describes how the priest worships both Melqart and Osiris. For discussion, see Bonnet 1988: 333- 336; Mettinger 2001: 91. For the most recent study of the epigraphical evidence for the “awakening” of the god and the term *mqm 'lm*, see Zamora (in press). Mettinger (2001: 180-183) argues that the resurrection language, and specifically the

inscription reports the cult title *mqm 'lm* “resuscitator of the god,” and it is possibly used in conjunction with an abbreviation for Melqart: *mqm 'lm ml(qr)t*, “the resuscitator of the god Melqart.”⁵⁸¹ If this reading can be maintained, then, taking into account the syncretism between Melqart and Herakles, the Greek formula ἐγερσε[ίτην τοῦ] Ἡρακλέου[ς] “resuscitator of Herakles” would be an almost direct translation of the Phoenician formula, *mqm 'lm ml(qr)t*, “the resuscitator of the god Melqart.”

There is no epigraphical evidence for the rites of *egersis* between the tenth-century BCE when they were allegedly established by Hiram I and the fourth-century BCE when the earliest inscription with this formula is found at Cyprus. Nevertheless, Bonnet has argued that the concept of the “awakening” of the god is firmly rooted in the beliefs of the Semites from the second millennium BCE.⁵⁸² Thus, the late attestation of these inscriptions might be a result of the change in epigraphical habits from the fourth-century BCE into the Hellenistic and Punic periods in which there is higher production of inscriptions than because of a change in the religious practices.⁵⁸³ The term *mqm 'lm* is found throughout the Mediterranean from the fourth-century BCE to the Punic period.⁵⁸⁴

formula *mqm 'lm*, “the resuscitator of the god” is derived from the syncretism between Melqart and the cult of Osiris.

⁵⁸¹ In the inscription from Larnaka-tès-Lapethou (Honeyman 1938: 3, lines 2-6), the cultic official, who carried the title *mqm 'lm*, tells how he set up votive offerings on different occasions to the gods Melqart, Astarte, and Osiris. For the abbreviation of Melqart, see Mettinger 2001: 91. n. 61. This analysis was first proposed by Clermont-Ganneau (1924: 164) and taken up by Mettinger (2001: 95).

⁵⁸² Bonnet (1988: 177-178) cites examples of the term *mekim* “awakening” in texts from Ebla. Additionally, a neo-Assyrian list from Ninevah contains the anthroponym *GAM Mil-qar-te* “Melqart is risen.” The root here is probably *qwm*, the same root used with the formula *mqm 'lm* (Lipiński 1995: 230). See the most recent discussion in Mettinger 2001: 97.

⁵⁸³ For Phoenician and Punic inscriptions in the western colonies, see Amadasi Guzzo 1967.

⁵⁸⁴ A Phoenician inscription (KAI 44) from the second-century BCE from Rhodes attests to the “awakening” of Melqart and the marriage to Astarte: B 'l Mlk bn mlkytn, **mqm 'lm** mtrh 'štrnŷ bn, “Baal Milik, son of Milkiyaton, **the raiser of the deity** (who is) the husband of **Astarte**.” Transcription based on the reading of Fraser 1970: 32. There is a Greek version of the text written above the Phoenician, but the

The formula occurs on over twenty five inscriptions during the Hellenistic period, which suggests that the ritual was well known throughout the Mediterranean, and in particular, the formula is found in many Punic inscriptions.⁵⁸⁵ The preponderance of this formula in Punic inscriptions demonstrates that the Tyrian colony of Carthage was linked to the mother city through the *egersis* rites of Melqart, as the literary sources also attest.⁵⁸⁶ Moving to other points of Phoenician colonization along the Mediterranean network we find further evidence for Melqart's *egersis* rites.

When the Phoenicians established a new colony in the Mediterranean they would build a temple to Melqart and transfer sacred remains from the temple of Melqart at Tyre to the new colony.⁵⁸⁷ By founding a temple to Melqart, the Tyrians established a cult network that unified the Phoenician colonies with the mother city of Tyre.⁵⁸⁸ The Tyrians established temples to Melqart in all of their colonies as a way to legitimize the

Greek is fragmented beyond being of assistance for reading the Phoenician. Although the Phoenician text presents difficulties in translation, many scholars read this inscription as a reference to the *egersis* of Melqart (see Lipiński 1970; Delcor 1974; Gibson 2002: 145). Lipiński and Delcor have interpreted this inscription in conjunction with the Bilingual Phoenician-Etruscan Pyrgi inscriptions as clear evidence for the ritual reenacting of Melqart's death and rebirth throughout the Phoenician world. Lipiński (1970: 30-58) explained the spelling of the word *'štrny*, with the additional two endings, as an adjective meaning "having to do with Astarte," or "Astartean." De Vaux (1941) translated the phrase as "awakener of the god (who is) husband of Astarte." Gibson (2002: 147) followed previous scholars and suggested it is an epithet for Astarte. The inscription also identifies King Baal Milik, who probably acted as the priest and awakener of the deity (*mqm 'lm*). The fact that the king is involved with the ritual and the mention of the *egersis* of the deity in conjunction with Astarte is evidence for the familiarity of the practice of the *egersis* in the Phoenician world.

⁵⁸⁵ See Bonnet 1988: 174-179. *CIS* I, 227, 260-262, 377, 3351-3352, 3788, 4863-4872, 5903, 5950, 5953, 5979, 5980, 6000 bis, and *KAI* 70. For discussion of Punic materials, see Bonnet 1988: 165-186.

⁵⁸⁶ E.g., Diod. Sic. 20.14; Polyb. 31.12; Ar. *Anab.* 2.24.5.

⁵⁸⁷ Elissa (Dido) brought the sacred remains with her from Tyre to Carthage (Just. *Epit.* 18.4.3-9). The Carthaginians continued this practice with their colonization of Spain (Just. *Epit.* 44.5.1-4).

⁵⁸⁸ Quinn 2018: 120. The Tyrian colonies also sent a yearly tithe to the temple of Melqart at Tyre (Diod. Sic. 20.14; Polyb. 31.12). The Phoenician communities of the Tyrian diaspora were linked in a network by the cult of Melqart who was the founding god of the cities of Tyre, Carthage, and Gades, see Alvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018 and 2019.

foundation and to promote trading relations.⁵⁸⁹ As Aubet comments, “Tyrian expansion to the west coincides with the gradual introduction of the worship of Melqart.”⁵⁹⁰

According to the historian Arrian in the first-century CE, envoys from the Tyrian colony of Carthage were present in celebration of the *egersis* rites when Alexander the Great besieged Tyre in 332 BCE.⁵⁹¹ As Xella comments, the participation of Carthaginians in the *egersis* rites is an example of how practices surrounding the god Melqart linked the Tyrian colonies in a cult network.⁵⁹² The Carthaginians also sent yearly offerings to Tyre as another way of maintaining this link with the mother city.⁵⁹³ I will return to the issues of sacrifice among the Carthaginians with my discussion of child sacrifice in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the western Mediterranean, the Phoenicians founded the colony of Gades on the Iberian peninsula as early as the twelve-century BCE according to some ancient sources.⁵⁹⁴ The most recent archaeological evidence, however, has concluded that the

⁵⁸⁹ Aubet 2001: 130-131. Melqart symbolized the power of the monarchy, and his temple by extension symbolized the realm of Tyre. The god was fundamentally a god of foundations, as indicated by the etymology of his name “king of the city.” Moreover, in the bilingual inscription from Malta mentioning Melqart and Herakles, the Phoenician MLQRT B’L ŠR, “Melqart, Baal of Tyre” is rendered in Greek as “Herakles *archēgetēs*.” The epithet *archēgetēs* meaning “founder of a city” attests to Melqart’s tutelary function. For the inscription from Malta, see Bonnet 1988: 245. For a discussion of the Malta inscription in the context of syncretism and trade networks, see Malkin 2011: 128-129.

⁵⁹⁰ Aubet 2001: 130.

⁵⁹¹ Ar. *Anab.* 2.24.5.

⁵⁹² Xella 2019: 625.

⁵⁹³ Polyb. 31.12.11-12.

⁵⁹⁴ Velleius Paterculus (1.2.3; 1.8.4) says Gades was founded eighty years after the fall of Troy. This testimony is also corroborated by the chronology of Strabo (1.3.2), Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 19.216), and Pomponius Mela (3.6.46). “According to the chronology of attributed to the Trojan war (1190 or 1184 BC), the date for the founding of Gadir or Gadeira lies round about 1110 or 1104 BC” (Aubet 2001: 135).

Phoenicians were active at Gades by the tenth-ninth centuries BCE.⁵⁹⁵ Roman sources report that the Phoenicians built a temple to Melqart at Gades.⁵⁹⁶ The temple was flanked by twin columns that mirrored the temple of Melqart at Tyre described by Herodotos.⁵⁹⁷ Although no physical evidence of the sanctuary of Melqart at Gades has yet been discovered, scholars have attempted to reconstruct the appearance of the temple with the available sources.⁵⁹⁸ The only source to mention the cult practices of Melqart's temple at Gades is the first-century CE Roman author Silius Italicus.⁵⁹⁹ He describes in his work *Punica* how the Carthaginian general Hannibal offered sacrifice at the temple of Melqart in southern Spain before campaigning against Rome in the Second Punic War.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁵ See Aubet 2019 for general introduction and Gener Basallote and Núñez Guerrero 2015 for the latest archaeological evidence from Huelva, Spain.

⁵⁹⁶ The colonial outpost of Gadir served as a trading emporium for the exploitation of the local silver deposits (Escacena 1985-1985: 39-58; Moscati 1997a, 1997b; Aubet 2001). The temple is reported by Julius Caesar in his own writings (*De Bello Civili*, 2.21.4), as well as by Suetonius (*Caesar* 7) and Cassius Dio (37.52; 43.39.4). The route from East to West went via Sardinia, Ibiza, and the coast of Andalusia (Aubet 2001: 163-165). For a second-century BCE coin from Gades depicting Herakles-Melqart, see Bonnet and Bricault 2016: 42.

⁵⁹⁷ The Tyrians were ordered to found the colony of Gades by an oracle which described the place of settlement as the Pillars of Herakles (i.e., the Pillars of Melqart) (Strabo 3.5.5; Porphyry, *Abst.* 1.25).

⁵⁹⁸ Antonio García y Bellido (1963) first attempted to reconstruct the location and appearance of the temple by comparing the literary sources describing Melqart's temple with the literary descriptions in the Hebrew Bible of the temple of Solomon built by Phoenician craftsmen. For Solomon's temple built by Phoenicians, see 1 Kings 7, 15. Since the foundational work of García y Bellido, the archaeologist William Edwin Mierse (2004) has once again attempted to reconstruct the appearance of the temple based on the literary sources, but now in comparison with the abundance of new archaeological excavations of Levantine temples. Mierse (2004: 572) concludes the temple must have begun as a small shrine similar to the Phoenician shrine at Kommos on Crete and eventually began to resemble the design of the great temple of Astarte at Kition. For the iconography of the temple of Melqart and images of Melqart discovered at Gades, see Jiménez Flores, et al. 2011. The earliest literary sources attesting to the sanctuary are in the writings of the first-century BCE geographer Strabo (3.5.3). Although Strabo never visited the temple himself, he did draw from earlier sources, especially the first-hand accounts of the second-century BCE authors Polybios and Poseidonios. For Strabo's use of the sources, see the discussion of Mierse 2004: 547-551. For the temple of Melqart, see also Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016: 233.

⁵⁹⁹ For a discussion of the priests at the temple of Gades using comparative evidence from other Phoenician sanctuaries, see Marín Ceballos and Jiménez Flores 2011.

⁶⁰⁰ Sil. *Pun.* 3.1-16.

According to Silius, Melqart's sanctuary included a perpetual fire at the altar and pigs were forbidden to enter the sanctuary, a characteristically Semitic practice.⁶⁰¹

More recently, Maria Cruz Marín Ceballos and Ana María Jiménez Flores have argued based on parallel evidence with other temples in the Mediterranean that the sanctuary of Melqart at Gades was probably an archive of mythological and ritual texts, and moreover, that the priests of the temple would have maintained relations with Tyre by sending *theoroi* "ambassadors," to Tyre each year for the festival of the *egersis*.⁶⁰²

This corresponds with the report of Arrian that Carthaginian envoys were present for the *egersis* rites at Tyre. Just as there are reports about Melqart's death at Tyre, there are also later Roman reports of the death or burial of Melqart at Gades.⁶⁰³ These accounts suggest that the *egersis* rites were performed at both Tyre and Gades. As Diodoros of Sicily states in the first-century BCE, the Phoenicians at Gades instituted rites in the manner of those at Tyre.⁶⁰⁴ Moreover, Álvarez Martí-Aguilar points to the reports of a tomb of Melqart at both Tyre and Gades as part of the religious beliefs that formed the "Gadir-Tyre axis" in

⁶⁰¹ For the prohibition of pork at Phoenician temples, see Bonnet 1988: 22-224; 360-361. Pigs are conspicuously absent from the list of possible victims in the extant Carthaginian sacrificial tariffs (Marseilles Tariff: *KAI* 69; Carthage Tariffs: *KAI* 74 and 75; Latin Tariffs: *CIL VIII*, 8246, 8247, and 27763). Cf. Lipiński 1994: 261-264. New zooarchaeological evidence, however, suggests that pigs may have been sacrificed among western Phoenician colonies as part of a secondary rite during a later period when nutritional habits began to change (see D'Andrea 2020: 158). For the Israelite prohibition against swine, see Leviticus 11:7-8. Pigs are also not sacrificed at Ugarit (Pardee 2002: 233).

⁶⁰² Marín Ceballos and Jiménez Flores 2004: 234. See also the edited volume exploring the rites and cults of Phoenician Gades (Marín Ceballos 2011).

⁶⁰³ Pomponius Mela (3.46), a native of Gades, who refers to Melqart as "Egyptian Heracles," says the god founded the temple and that the bones of Heracles were buried there. Pomponius Mela proclaims his Hispano-Phoenician origins (2.96; Batty 2000). Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 1.36.5) says Tyrian Heracles was buried at Hispania. Sallust (*Jug.* 18.3) reports a belief that Heracles died at Hispania.

⁶⁰⁴ Diodorus of Sicily, 5.20.1-3.

the Mediterranean.⁶⁰⁵ Thus, the nodes or colonies linking this Tyrian axis supported the connectivity of the myths of Melqart and the performance of his rites, as well as the eventual syncretism between the gods Melqart and Herakles.

Besides ancient testimony to the rites at Gades, the *egersis* rites also seem to have been reflected in the mythological depictions of the labors of Herakles portrayed on the temple at Gades. In his account, Silius (*Pun.* 3.21-40) includes an *ekphrasis* of the labors depicted on the temple, which provides important information for reconstructing a myth about the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. The temple of Melqart was originally dedicated to Melqart, then rededicated to Herakles in the fifth-century BCE.⁶⁰⁶ The temple was later rebuilt in Roman times when Melqart's mythology was syncretized with the labors of Hercules portrayed on the temple.⁶⁰⁷ J. B. Tsirkin argued that these images of Herakles' labors provide insight into the Phoenician mythology of Melqart.⁶⁰⁸ Tsirkin suggested that the first nine labors depicted on the temple reiterate the god's fight against chthonian creatures, which culminates in the final labor, his triumph over death when he

⁶⁰⁵ Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2019: 620.

⁶⁰⁶ García y Bellido 1963: 72-74.

⁶⁰⁷ Both Silius Italicus and Strabo are drawing from a lost eye-witness account of the temple by Poseidonios in the first-century BCE (see Mierse 2004: 547).

⁶⁰⁸ Tsirkin (1981: 22) notes that only ten of the twelve labors known to the Greeks are mentioned in the *ekphrasis*. Following the work of García y Bellido (1963: 104-105), Tsirkin (1981: 24) argues that the depictions of the labors on the temple were earlier than the labors of the Greek hero-god Herakles. Silius mentions the following nine labors: Lernaean Hydra, the Nemean lion, Cerberus, the horses of Diomedes, the Erymanthian boar, the sacred stags of Artemis, the giant Antaeos, the centaurs, the river Achelous. Absent from the temple are the theft of the Hesperian apples, Atlas bearing the heavens, and the fight with Geryon. The earliest depiction of the labors of Herakles is his theft of Cerberos (*Il.* 8.363-369; *Od.* 11.623-626). Hesiod enumerates some of Herakles' other victims: Geryonos (*Theog.* 287-294), Hesperides (*Theog.* 275), Cerberos (*Theog.* 310), the Hydra (*Theog.* 313-315), the Nemean lion, (*Theog.* 327-333). The first clear use of the canon of twelve labors occurs on the temple of Olympian Zeus in the fifth-century BCE. For the development of the canon, see Stafford 2012: 24-30. For the literary and artistic sources of the twelve labors, see Gantz 1993: 381-415.

is reborn in the flames as a god.⁶⁰⁹ Thus, the syncretized images of Herakles highlight the hero-god's mythical immolation and immortalization, but behind these images is also the Tyrian myth of the immolation and "awakening" of Melqart.

The original Phoenician temple probably did not depict Melqart's mythology, as is the custom of Levantine temples, but during the period of syncretism between Herakles and Melqart the two mythologies would have been assimilated and then reproduced on the temple in the Greek and later Roman style. Silius describes Melqart's death on the temple as follows: *inter quae fulget sacratis ignibus Oete / ingentemque animam rapiunt ad sidera flammae*, "amid these images Mt. Oeta shines **with sacred fires**, and the flames carry off his magnanimous soul to the stars."⁶¹⁰ Within the context of syncretism, the phrase *sacratis ignibus* "sacred fires," which clearly refers to the annual fire rites at Mt.Oita in honor of Herakles, might also allude to the yearly ritual at Tyre where Melqart was immolated and then reborn via the *egersis*. This remark by Silius is indicative of the syncretism between Melqart's immolation and the self-immolation of the Greek god Herakles. Thus, the depictions on the temple of Herakles' conquest over chthonic creatures, his death on the pyre, and his apotheosis all point back to a Tyrian myth about Melqart's sacrifice and *egersis*.

The immolation of Melqart is depicted on the Sidon vase with the god burning on an altar (Fig.1), the first day of the festival. There is also testimony from Pausanias for the use of an effigy of the god during the rites of Melqart at Gades. The reference to the

⁶⁰⁹ Tsirkin 1981: 25-26.

⁶¹⁰ Sil. *Pun.* 3.43-44. Nonnos (*Dion.* 40.369) calls Herakles the "lord of the pyre." Ovid (*Met.* 9.262-272) also mentions Herakles' apotheosis on the pyre after he is burned by the tunic of Nessus. Oita, Oeta, or Oetē is the mountain range between Thessaly and Aetolia where Herakles was cremated and immortalized.

burning of the effigy seems to refer to a ritual reenactment of Melqart's death by symbolically offering the god as a burnt sacrifice. In a similar vein, Tertullian, a Roman living in Carthage between the second and third centuries CE, reports that he saw a man dressed like Hercules who was burned alive.⁶¹¹ These *testimonia* suggests that there was a link between the immolation of Melqart and human sacrifice, a practice attributed to the Phoenicians and attested archaeologically at Carthage (see Chapter 5).⁶¹² These accounts all point to an interpretation of Melqart's death as a burnt offering characteristic of the eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, in the myth recorded by Herodotos, Herakles is almost sacrificed at the altar of the Egyptians, a myth which I will argue in the next chapter is an adaptation of the Melqart mythology.

Besides the scattered testimony to the *egersis* in Greek and Roman literary sources and Phoenician epigraphical sources attesting to the title "resuscitator of the god," there is a sixth-century BCE Phoenician inscription from the Etruscan coastal city of Pyrgi that provides direct Phoenician evidence for cult practices related to the death of an unnamed god, who is most likely Melqart.⁶¹³ The set of three gold inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary, two written in Etruscan and one in Phoenician, most notably

⁶¹¹ Tert. *Apol.* 15.5; *Ad Nat.* 1.10.47.

⁶¹² For evidence of human sacrifice among the Phoenicians, see my Chapter 5.

⁶¹³ "To the lady Astarte. This holy place
Is that which was made and which was given by
TBRY' WLNŠ, king over
KYŠRY', in the month of the sacrifice
To the sun-god, as a gift (and) as a temple. I built
It, **because Astarte requested (it) of me**
In the third year of my reign, in
The month of KRR, **on the day of the burial**
Of the deity (*bym qbr 'lm*). So (may) the years (granted) to the statue of the deity
In her temple (be) years like **the stars**
Above!" (Text: *KAI 277*; translation by Gibson 2002: 154). For the dating of the tablets, see Gibson 2002: 151.

attest to the syncretism between the goddess Uni and Astarte.⁶¹⁴ The Phoenician inscription also provides evidence for the possibility of a festival celebrating the death of Melqart. If this interpretation is correct, then the Pyrgi tablets would be the earliest epigraphical evidence (sixth-century BCE) for the death of Melqart in the context of Phoenician, Etruscan, and Greek contact.

Although the name Melqart is not mentioned in the tablet, the phrase “on the day of the burial of the god” (*bym qbr ’lm*) most likely refers to Melqart based on several factors noted by Mettinger.⁶¹⁵ First, the archeological context of the area where the tablets were found is from the same period as Temple B where there is also iconography of Herakles.⁶¹⁶ Second, the dialect of the inscription is closely linked to the dialect of the inscription from Larnaka-tès-Lapethou at Cyprus where Melqart is the main deity and where we find the earliest attestation to the formula *mqm ’lm* (see discussion above).⁶¹⁷ Moreover, the Phoenicians that lived at Pyrgi were Carthaginians, the Tyrian colonists that colonized the western Mediterranean. Considering this context of the sanctuary, the best candidate is Melqart, the Phoenician dying and rising god *par excellence* whose cult

⁶¹⁴ The inscriptions are not bilingual translations *per se*, but rather two sets of texts composed for the same occasion, the Etruscan inscriptions intended for Etruscan speaking community and the Phoenician inscription for the Phoenicians living among the Etruscans (Gibson 2002: 151). The dialect of the inscription is Carthaginian, but Gibson has also suggested the possibility that the community represented by the inscription was from Cyprus (Gibson 2002: 152-153). In my view, it seems most likely that the inscription refers to a Carthaginian community. The Carthaginians had a military alliance with the Etruscans in the sixth-century BCE, and Etruria was the oldest trading partner of Carthage. The silver deposits of Etruria were especially enticing to the Carthaginians (Markoe 2000: 84; 102-103). For a brief history of the relationship between the Carthaginians and Etruscans, see Hoyos 2010: 43-44.

⁶¹⁵ Lipiński (1970) and Delcor (1968: 241-254) first used this inscription in conjunction with the inscription from Rhodes to reconstruct the evidence for the rites of Melqart (cf. Mettinger 2001: 104).

⁶¹⁶ For the iconography, see Bonnet 1988: 287. For the publication of the archeological reports, see Colonna 1966 and Colonna et al. 1972.

⁶¹⁷ See Gibson 2002: 152.

flourished throughout the Mediterranean and whose tomb was reported at other places, such as Gades.

As noted above, Roman sources mention the grave of Melqart at Gades and Tyre. Those reports of a grave of the god Melqart correspond with the ritual context of the Pyrgi tablets. The phrase “on the day of the burial of the god” from the Pyrgi tablets would correspond with the second day of the ritual sequence depicted on the Sidon vase (Fig. 2). The dedication to the goddess Astarte on the Pyrgi tablets also emphasizes the link with the cult of Melqart. Sergio Ribichini connected the reference on the tablet to the “stars above” to Melqart, who is described by Nonnos (*Dion.* 40.367) as ἀστροχίτων “star-clad.”⁶¹⁸ It is also possible that the phrase is an allusion to Astarte who was associated with stars and the heavens.⁶¹⁹ In this case, we can possibly understand the star in the last image of the Sidon vase as part of this tradition (Fig.4). In any case, the archaeological context, the dialect of the inscription, the dedication to Astarte, and the phrase “on the day of the burial of the deity,” cumulatively point to the celebration of Melqart’s death by the Carthaginian community at Pyrgi.

In sum, the earliest epigraphical source for the rites would be the sixth-century BCE Pyrgi tablets, then the fourth-century BCE inscription from Cyprus attesting to the title “resuscitator of the god” in the cult of Melqart. Epigraphical sources provide

⁶¹⁸ Ribichini 1975.

⁶¹⁹ Astarte consecrated a star at Tyre according to Philo of Byblos (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.31-32). Astarte was also known as the “Queen of Heaven.” From Byblos there is a tenth-century BCE inscription mentioning the paired divinities Baal Shamem “Baal of Heaven,” and B’L<T> GBL, “Mistress of Byblos” (Bonnet 1996: 23). The Mesopotamian goddess Ištar is called in Sumerian nin.anna(k) “mistress of heaven,” which is the origin of the name of the goddess Inanna (Weinfeld 1972: 148 n.120). The title “king and queen of heaven” is also evident at Tyre, Byblos, and Carthage (Weinfeld 1972: 148). Herodotos (1.105) mentions the temple of “Heavenly Aphrodite,” in Syria which he claims to be the oldest temple of the Phoenician goddess Astarte.

evidence for this cultic official at Phoenician colonies such as Cyprus, Rhodes, and Carthage. Literary sources (i.e., Greek and Roman sources), on the other hand, occur as early as the fifth-century BCE with Herodotos and continue well into the Roman period and describe the performance of the rites throughout the Phoenician colonies of the ancient Mediterranean. Moreover, several Greek and Latin literary sources refer to the death/grave and the rebirth of Melqart at Tyre and Gades. Thus, the evidence for Melqart's rites is mapped onto the Tyrian trade and colonization network. In turn, this network supported a network of myths that were easily adaptable into Greek versions, as I will show with the myth of Herakles in Herodotos in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Sacrifice of Melqart, the Tyrian Herakles: A New Reading of Herodotos 2.44-45

ἀπὸ φλογεροῖο δὲ δένδρου
θαμβαλέους σπινθήρας ἐρεύγεται αὐτόματον πῦρ
καὶ σέλας ἀφλεγέος περιβόσκειται ἔρνος ἐλαίης·

(Herakles): “And from the flaming tree a self-made fire discharges astonishing sparks,
and all around, the flame devours the young-shoot of the olive tree,
but the tree is not burnt.”
— Nonnus, *Dion.* 40.473-475

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, the ancient *testimonia* indicate that Melqart’s immolation and the performance of the *egersis*, “awakening,” were well known throughout the Mediterranean world. The Mediterranean trade networks where Greeks and Phoenicians were in contact and the polytheistic frameworks of neighboring religions promoted a fertile environment conducive for syncretism.⁶²⁰ Writing in the fifth-century BCE, the historian Herodotos traveled along these ancient trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean and provided some invaluable first-hand observations of the cities of Egypt and the Levant, as well as the religious beliefs and myths of these ancient cultures. In particular, Herodotos visited the temple of Herakles (i.e., Melqart) at Tyre and claims to have conversed with the priests of the sanctuary.⁶²¹ The dynamics of syncretism

⁶²⁰ Malkin 2011: 119-142.

⁶²¹ Hdt. 2.44.1-3. Herodotos’ statement is trustworthy because Tyre appears in the Amarna letters of the fourteenth-century BCE; See letters EA 77; 89; 114; 146-148; 152; 154-155 295 (Rainey 2015).

between Herakles and Melqart were already in full force during Herodotos' era, and he is our earliest literary source for the syncretism between Hellenic Herakles and Tyrian Melqart. Herodotos' project of assimilation is a result of the association between Melqart and Herakles already in play during the fifth-century BCE, most evident in the iconographical assimilation between the two divinities at Cyprus during the same period.⁶²² Cyprus was "the theatre of fusion," to use Bonnet's phrase, for the syncretism between Mediterranean gods and myths, most famously Astarte and Aphrodite.⁶²³ Moreover, Cyprus was also a hot-spot for the fusion of Egyptian and Phoenician art styles.⁶²⁴ As Fanni Faegersten has illuminated, the Phoenicians were the mediators for the Egyptianizing style of Cypriote art.⁶²⁵ The Phoenicians were famous for their skill in sailing and trade, and accordingly, as mediators of art and culture between the people of the ancient Mediterranean.⁶²⁶ Moreover, Herodotos depicts the Phoenicians throughout his *Histories* as mediators of religious traditions between the cultures of Egypt and

⁶²² Bonnet 1988: 412-414.

⁶²³ The priest of Melqart on Cyprus worships Melqart and Osiris (see Honeyman 1938 and note 535 above). For the Cypriote origins of Aphrodite, see López-Ruiz 2016: 178-180. The name Aphrodite is not originally Greek. Her affinity with Cyprus is evident in her epithet *Cypris*. For an exploration of the north-west Semitic origins of Aphrodite, see López-Ruiz (forthcoming 2). Herodotos (1.105) identifies Aphrodite with Astarte. The popular Greek etymology for the name is from the Indo-European root for "foam" (Greek **aphros* and Indic **abrha*) and the suffix *dj-* (cf. Greek *dios/dia*), see Cyrino 2010: 23-26. Scholars have also postulated a Semitic origin for her name (see Cyrino 2010: 26 and West 2000 135-136). For parallels between the Near Eastern goddess Inanna/Ishtar and the Greek goddess Aphrodite in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, see Eisenfeld 2015 (cf. Penglase 1994: 180-181).

⁶²⁴ See Faegersten 2003.

⁶²⁵ According to Fanni Faegersten (2003: 264-265), the distinctive "Egyptianizing" Cypriote style of limestone statuary was transferred to the island via Phoenicia. Thus Faegersten concludes that the style could also be called "Phoenicianizing."

⁶²⁶ The Phoenicians carried Egyptian and Assyrian merchandise (Hdt. 1.1). The Phoenician alphabet was also a vital modality for the transfer of culture between Mediterranean cultures (Hdt. 5.58).

Greece.⁶²⁷ My analysis of the myth of Melqart and Herakles builds upon this historical context.

Along with the process of assimilating different Mediterranean gods is also the process of distinguishing these gods in opposition to each other. Hall has explained how Herodotos helped define Hellenic identity by delineating the differences between Greeks and other cultures.⁶²⁸ In particular, Herodotos uses ethnographic excursuses, “to highlight what it is that makes the Greeks culturally distinct.”⁶²⁹ It is significant, however, that Herodotos does not offer a separate ethnography of the Phoenicians as he does with other cultures, such as the Egyptians.⁶³⁰ Instead, the historian reports on Phoenician customs within his discussion of the Egyptians, whose culture influenced the Phoenicians in administration, art, and religion.⁶³¹ As I show in my analysis, the close relationship

⁶²⁷ Hütwohl (forthcoming).

⁶²⁸ Hall 2002: 189-205. The phrase “the Greek tongue” first appears in Herodotos (2.154.2) in the fifth-century BCE. The term *Hellenes* appears once in Homer (*Il.* 2.681-685) as a general designation for the population of Hellas. Pausanias (10.7.5-6) cites an inscription at Delphi from the sixth-century BCE that mentions the term “Hellenes.” For a full discussion of these terms, see Hall 2002: 125-171. For Hall’s discussion of “oppositional identity,” see *ibid.*, 179. The derogatory use of the term *barbaros* probably first occurred at Athens after the Persian wars (*ibid.*, 186).

⁶²⁹ Hall 2002: 193.

⁶³⁰ The ethnography of the Egyptians is the subject of Book 2 of Herodotos’ *Histories*. For a study of ethnographic and writing and historiography in archaic and classical Greece, see Skinner 2012. According to Joseph Skinner (2012: 86), the notable absence of a Phoenician ethnography in Herodotus contradicts with the material record that shows sustained contact between Greek and Phoenicians.

⁶³¹ The Amarna letters attest to Egyptian administrative control over the Phoenician coastal cities in the fourteenth-century BCE. For the edition of the Amarna letters, see Rainey 2015. The city of Byblos is especially highlighted within the sphere of Egyptian political hierarchy (Markoe 2000: 15-17). During the thirteenth-century BCE Egyptian control over Phoenicia was divided with the Hittites, who gained control over the northern city-states. Nevertheless, Egyptian influence in Phoenician trade is evidenced in amphorae discovered at Egyptian cities such as Memphis where shrines to Baal and Astarte also suggest a Phoenician presence (Markoe 2000:19-20). According to Herodotos (2.112), Phoenicians from Tyre lived at the Egyptian city of Memphis where there was a temple to Aphrodite, as well as to Herakles. Tyre became a province of Assyria in the seventh-century BCE, but after the collapse of the Assyrian empire, the Egyptians again regained control over the Phoenician cities (Markoe 2000: 46-47). Phoenician art also borrowed iconography such as the lotus flower and winged solar disk. The Tabnit sarcophagus (fifth-century BCE) is a notable example of Phoenician borrowing of Egyptian iconography since the

between the cultures of Egypt and Phoenicia is critical for interpreting Herodotos' myth of Herakles.

In my analysis, I show how Herodotos contributes to the definition of Hellenicity by constructing a distinctive Greek portrait of Herakles in the syncretistic environment where the gods Herakles and Melqart had become closely identified. Herodotos accomplishes this by defining his portrait of Herakles, son of Amphytron, *in opposition to* Melqart, specifically by the difference in their worship. Herodotos reports a Greek myth about the sacrifice of Herakles that is usually read as the earliest reference to the Bousiris myth, but that I will argue also adapts themes from the well known myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart and redeploys it for a Greek audience in order to disassociate the two gods.⁶³²

1. The Mythical Origins of Herakles

In the following discussion, I offer a brief overview of the context of Herodotos' story about Herakles before my close reading of the myth. In Book Two of the *Histories*, Herodotos presents his inquiry into the beliefs and practices of the Egyptians. Within this investigation, the historian records an aitiology for an Egyptian ritual related to

sarcophagus was originally used by Egyptians but then reused by the Phoenician king. Moreover, the sarcophagus is inscribed with both Egyptian hieroglyphics and Phoenician script (KAI 13). The sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II also originated in Egypt (KAI 14). For "Egyptianizing" influence in Phoenician art, see Markoe 1990: 16-23. Phoenicians used Egyptian motifs such as the eye of Horus, the scarab beetle and the solar disk (Miles 2010: 30). For a more recent and general survey of Phoenician art, see Gubel 2019. For the influence of Egyptian and Phoenician art on Cypriote statues, see Faegersten 2003. For the transmission of Egyptian style funerary amulets to Greece via Phoenicia, see López-Ruiz 2015. For the evidence of contact between the cults of Osiris and Melqart at Cyprus and Malta, see Mettinger 2001: 180-182. For the classic studies of the influence of Egyptian culture on Phoenicia, see Hölb 1981, 1986, 2000.

⁶³² For the Bousiris myth, see Apollod. *Biblio.* 2.116-117; Diod. Sic. 4.18.1; Ov. *Met.* 9.180ff.

Herakles.⁶³³ Herodotos provides a mythical explanation for why the Thebans of Egypt do not sacrifice sheep, an aitiology for why the Egyptians do not practice this type of sacrifice.⁶³⁴ According to Herodotos, Herakles desired to see Zeus in all his glory, and thus, Zeus contrived a means to show himself by wearing the head and fleece of a ram. The myth functions as an aitiology explaining why once a year at the festival of Zeus (Amun) the Egyptians flay a ram, display its fleece on the image of Zeus, and bring an image of Herakles next to it.⁶³⁵ This mythical explanation for Egyptian practices sets up Herodotos' following discussion of Tyre and the origins of the cult of Herakles-Melqart. Herodotos is on a quest for origins, not only for specific rites but also for the origins of the hero-god Herakles.

⁶³³ Bernhard van Groningen (1953: 26) described the history of Herodotos as “particularly rich in aetiological elements.” Robin Lane-Fox (2008: 355), on the other hand, claims there are no aitiologies in Herodotos.

⁶³⁴ Θηβαῖοι μὲν νυν καὶ ὅσοι διὰ τούτους οἷων ἀπέχονται, διὰ τὰδε λέγουσι τὸν νόμον τόνδε σφίσι τεθῆναι· Ἡρακλέα θελῆσαι πάντως ιδέσθαι τὸν Δία καὶ τὸν οὐκ ἐθέλειν ὁφθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, τέλος δέ, ἐπεῖτε λιπαρέειν τὸν Ἡρακλέα, τὸν Δία μηχανήσασθαι τοιόνδε· κριὸν ἐκδείραντα προσχέσθαι τε τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποταμόντα τοῦ κριοῦ καὶ ἐνδύντα τὸ νάκος οὕτω οἱ ἑωυτὸν ἐπιδέξει. Ἀπὸ τούτου κριοπρόσωπον τοῦ Διὸς τῷγαλμα ποιεῦσι Αἰγύπτιοι, ἀπὸ δὲ Αἰγυπτίων Ἀμμώνιοι, ἐόντες Αἰγυπτίων τε καὶ Αἰθιοπῶν ἄποικοι καὶ φωνὴν μεταξὺ ἀμφοτέρων νομίζοντες. Δοκέειν δέ μοι, καὶ τὸ οὔνομα Ἀμμώνιοι ἀπὸ τούδε σφίσι τὴν ἐπωνυμίην ἐποιήσαντο· Ἀμὺν γάρ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τὸν Δία. Τοὺς δὲ κριοὺς οὐ θύουσι Θηβαῖοι, ἀλλ' εἰσὶ σφι ἱεροὶ διὰ τοῦτο. Μὴ δὲ ἡμέρη τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, ἐν ᾗ τῇ τοῦ Διὸς, κριὸν ἓνα κατακόψαντες καὶ ἀποδείξαντες κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸ ἐνδύουσι τῷγαλμα τοῦ Διὸς καὶ ἔπειτα ἄλλο ἄγαλμα Ἡρακλέος προσάγουσι πρὸς αὐτό· ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντες τύπονται οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἅπαντες τὸν κριὸν καὶ ἔπειτα ἐν ἱερῇ θήκῃ θάπτουσι αὐτόν. “The Thebans, and those who by the Theban example will not touch sheep give the following reason for their ordinance: Heracles (they say) would by all means look upon Zeus, and Zeus would not be seen by him. At last, being earnestly entreated by Heracles, Zeus contrived a device, whereby he showed himself displaying the head and wearing the fleece of a ram which he had flayed and beheaded. It is from this that the Egyptian images of Zeus have a ram's head; and in this the Egyptians are imitated by the Ammonians, who are colonists from Egypt and Ethiopia and speak a language compounded of the tongues of both countries. It was from this, I think, that the Ammonians got their name too; for Amun is the Egyptian name for Zeus. The Thebans, then, hold rams sacred for this reason, and do not sacrifice them. But on one day in the year, at the festival of Zeus, they cut in pieces and flay a single ram and put the fleece on the image of Zeus, as in the story; then they bring an image of Heracles near to it. Having done this, all that are about the temple mourn for the ram, and presently bury it in a sacred coffer” (Hdt. 2.42. Trans. by Godley).

⁶³⁵ Cf. Pausanias (7.5.5-8) who notes that the image of Herakles at the Greek city of Erythrai was Egyptian and that it arrived on a raft from Tyre.

Herodotos differentiates between the earlier born Melqart and the later born Greek hero Herakles by both chronology and genealogy but also by cult practices, as we shall see. His discussion of the origins of a specific Egyptian rite involving Herakles and a ram sacrifice leads Herodotos to seek out the origins of the Greek god Herakles, whose name he claims does not originate in Greece but in Egypt. Herodotos says that Herakles originated in Egypt and that the parents of the Herakles from Hellas, Amphytron and Alcmene, were Egyptian by birth.⁶³⁶ Herodotos states later that the temple of Herakles at Tyre was founded 2,300 years before his time and the temple to Melqart at Tyre was built five generations before the birth of the son of Amphytron in Greece.⁶³⁷

His inquiry about the antiquity of Herakles then leads him to claim that the Greeks are most correct by establishing two different types of sacrifices to Herakles, one to Herakles the immortal Olympian who came from Egypt and another to Herakles, son of Amphytron the dead hero.⁶³⁸ Following this explanation of ritual, Herodotos then records a myth about an Egyptian king who attempted to sacrifice Herakles to Zeus but the hero resisted and slaughtered them instead.⁶³⁹ Herodotos goes on to say how the myth exemplifies that the Greeks are ignorant of Egyptian customs because the Egyptians would not sacrifice men when they are forbidden from even sacrificing certain animals. In other words, Herodotos frames the myth with Greek ignorance of Egyptian customs, and thus, as I explore below, the story becomes more coherent when viewed as an

⁶³⁶ Hdt. 2.43.2

⁶³⁷ Hdt. 2.44.3

⁶³⁸ Hdt. 2.44.5

⁶³⁹ Hdt. 2.45.

adaptation of the Phoenician myth of Melqart, whose culture was often confused with the Egyptian. In the following analysis, I argue that Herodotos employs this myth in order to separate the Greek way of worshiping the Greek hero Herakles from the Phoenician way of worshiping Melqart, which involved not only animal offerings for the god but also depicting the god as the victim of sacrifice through the burning of an effigy of the god at the annual rites of *egersis* (see Chapter 3).

2. The Death and Rebirth of Melqart according to Eudoxos of Knidos

In my close reading of Herodotos' story of the sacrifice of Herakles, I will make parallels with the most complete reference to the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth from Eudoxos of Knidos in order to show how Herodotos' account is a Greek adaptation of the Melqart myth. As I introduced in the previous chapter, a different Greek adaptation of the Melqart myth attributed to Eudoxos of Knidos, a fourth-century BCE author, is quoted in the *Deipnosophistai* by Athenaios in the third-century CE:

Εὐδοξος δ' ὁ Κνίδιος ἐν πρώτῳ γῆς περιόδου τοὺς Φοίνικας λέγει
θύειν τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ ὄρνυγας διὰ τὸ τὸν Ἡρακλέα τὸν Ἀστερίας καὶ
Διὸς πορευόμενον εἰς Λιβύην ἀναιρεθῆναι μὲν ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος,
Ἰολάου δ' αὐτῷ προσενέγκαντος ὄρνυγα καὶ προσαγαγόντος
ὀσφρανθέντα ἀναβιώναι.

Eudoxos of Knidos in the first book of his *Description of the Earth* says that the Phoenicians sacrifice quails to Herakles (i.e., Melqart), because Herakles, the son of Zeus and Asteria, journeyed to Libya and **was killed by Typhon**, but Iolaos brought a (sacrificed) quail to him and having brought it close, he (Melqart) smelled it, and **he came back to life again**.

(Ath. 9. 47. 30-36)

This myth is a rare example of a Phoenician aitiology of sacrifice and the only aitiology explaining rites for the god Melqart.⁶⁴⁰ Eudoxos attributes the origins of the practice of sacrificing quails to Melqart to a Phoenician myth about the death and rebirth of Melqart. In this myth, the god is killed and reborn, and his rebirth is connected to the sacrifice of quails. Thus, the myth explains a rite for Melqart, probably the *egersis*, as alluded to by other ancient sources.⁶⁴¹ Miles even argues that this passage is a Greek interpretation of the Phoenician rites of *egersis*.⁶⁴² The quotation of Eudoxos is important because it is one of the only sources to reference both the death and rebirth of the god in the same narrative. It is also significant as one of the few attestations to the genealogy of Melqart, who is here described as the son of Zeus and Asteria, the latter who is identified with the Phoenician goddess Astarte.⁶⁴³ In Eudoxos' Greek interpretation of the Phoenician myth, Melqart, the son of Zeus (Baal) and Asteria (Astarte), goes on a journey (πορευόμενον), just as the Phoenicians and Herakles were famous for. On his journey, Melqart is killed by Typhon and resurrected (ἀναιρεθῆναι... ἀναβιώναι) from the smell of a quail-sacrifice (ὀσφρανθέντα). This passage relates important information about Melqart's mythology, namely that his death and rebirth are associated with cult practices. The monster Typhon is also known from Philo of Byblos' account of the history of Kronos, in

⁶⁴⁰ There is another Phoenician aitiology of sacrifice preserved by Porphyry of Tyre (*Abst.* 4.15), who states that the Phoenicians first practiced vegetal sacrifice and then moved to animal sacrifice.

⁶⁴¹ Ath. 9.7; Diogenian. 3.49; Zenobius, *Epit.* 5.56.

⁶⁴² Miles 2010: 144.

⁶⁴³ According to Philo of Byblos, in the history of Kronos, Melqart is the son of Zeus Demarous (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.27), and in the account of the rule of Tyre, Zeus Demarous is married to Astarte (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.31). I discuss Melqart's genealogy in further detail in Chapter 6 with my analysis of the accounts of Philo of Byblos.

the story Typhon is one of the divine beings from the generation that precedes Melqart.⁶⁴⁴

In Hesiod, the monster Typhon is depicted with a hundred heads of a snake that burn with fire (ἐκ κεφαλῶν πῦρ καίετο).⁶⁴⁵ According to Philo, the Egyptians and Phoenicians also regarded the nature of the serpent as πυρῶδες “fiery.”⁶⁴⁶ Thus, the account of Melqart’s death by Typhon associates his demise with a fiery monster, a perfect foe for the god whose death is associated with immolation rites in other sources. For example, we can point to the iconographical description of his death on the Sidon vase, as well as the literary sources that describe his death on the pyre.⁶⁴⁷

With the figure of Typhon, this Greek version of the myth of Melqart’s death and rebirth is also linked to the story of the Egyptian god Osiris, another dying and rising god associated with Melqart (see Chapter 7).⁶⁴⁸ According to Plutarch, the Greek philosopher of the first-second centuries CE, Typhon, whom Plutarch identifies with the Egyptian god Seth, dismembered Osiris’ body.⁶⁴⁹ In the myth quoted above, Melqart, like Osiris, is killed by Typhon. We should recall that during roughly the same period that Eudoxos tells this myth in the fourth-century BCE the priest of Melqart, who was the “resuscitator

⁶⁴⁴ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.26-27.

⁶⁴⁵ Hes. *Theog.* 824-828.

⁶⁴⁶ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.46.

⁶⁴⁷ Paus. 10.4.6; Sil. *Pun.* 3.43-44; Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.369; Psuedo-Clement of Rome, *Recognitions* 10.24.

⁶⁴⁸ For Osiris as dying and rising god, see Cook 2018: 74-87 and Mettinger 2001: 172-175. For the evidence of contact between the cults of Osiris and Melqart at Cyprus and Malta, see Mettinger 2001: 180-182.

⁶⁴⁹ Plutarch *Is. Os.* 18.358A. Plutarch (*ibid.* 41.367D) identifies Seth with Typhon. Herodotos (2.156.4) also mentions a story that Typhon hunts the children of Osiris. Diodorus of Sicily (1.88.4-5) reports that the Egyptians sacrifice red bulls (πυρρὸν βόυν), because red was the color of Seth (Typhon), who killed Osiris. According to Diodorus (*ibid.*), the Egyptian kings also sacrifice red men at the tomb of Osiris. For a recent article discussing Typhon, Red Men, and the tomb of Osiris, see Matić 2020. In fact, more literally, the word πυρρὸν designates the victims as *flame* colored.

of the god” at Larnaka-tès-Lapethou on Cyprus, was worshipping both Melqart and Osiris side by side.⁶⁵⁰ We do not know which Phoenician god may have been syncretized with Typhon in this Greek version of the myth or if this part of the story was simply borrowed from the Osiris myth, but Yam “the Sea,” the enemy of the Ugaritic god Baal in the *Baal Cycle*, is also described as a serpent (*KTU* 1.3.iii.40-43) and might provide us a clue since Baal was the historical antecedent to Melqart (see Chapters 5 and 6).⁶⁵¹ In any case, the myth from Eudoxos exhibits how Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian gods were assimilated in a triangulation of mythology (a topic I discuss at length in Chapter 7).⁶⁵² Finally, Iolaos performs the sacrifice of quails to resuscitate the god. Iolaos, the charioteer of Herakles, accompanies Herakles in a Carthaginian oath from the treaty of Hannibal preserved by the Roman-era author Polybios, and according to Bonnet, the identity of Iolaos may be a god associated with Melqart, such as Šid or Eshmun.⁶⁵³ Iolaos might also be equivalent to the figure holding birds at the awakening of Melqart on the Sidon vase (Fig. 4). As we can see from the myth attested by Eudoxos, the major themes of the Melqart mythology include the travels of the god, his death by the fiery serpent-god Typhon, and the connection between his rebirth/awakening and sacrificial rites.

⁶⁵⁰ For the text, see Honeyman 1938 and note 535 above.

⁶⁵¹ For Baal and Melqart, see Xella 2001c and my Chapter 5.

⁶⁵² For the idea of triangularity in Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian myths and rituals, see López-Ruiz 2015 and my Chapter 7.

⁶⁵³ Bonnet 1988: 180. The treaty (Polyb. 6.9.2-3) mentions a group of Carthaginian gods, Zeus (=Baal Hammon), Hera (=Tannit) and Apollo (=Resheph), the *daimon* of the Carthaginians (=?), Herakles and Iolaos (=Melqart and Sid?), Ares, Triton, and Poseidon. There is also a myth preserved by a scholiast of Pindar (Schol. in Pindar Pyth. 9.137a) that Iolaus died and was reborn. See translation of the myth in Cook 2018: 184-185.

The second-century CE sophist Zenobius also quotes the myth of Eudoxos, but he includes more information. In particular, he identifies Herakles as the *Tyrian* Herakles (i.e., Melqart) and attributes his rebirth to the savor (τῆς κνίσσης) of the sacrifice of quails, further highlighting the connection between Melqart's myth and the sacrificial rites of Tyre.⁶⁵⁴ Therefore, Eudoxos' myth is probably referring specifically to the *egersis* rites. Moreover, his death by the fiery serpent Typhon also conveys the idea of a death by fire. The twelfth-century CE Byzantine scholar Eustathius tells the same version as Eudoxos, but he attributes it to ancient belief more generally (Σημειοῦνται δὲ οἱ παλαιοί).⁶⁵⁵ In sum, these sources demonstrate that not only was the myth of the death and rebirth of Melqart connected to sacrificial rites, but the myth was also well known in the ancient Mediterranean from at least the fourth-century BCE and syncretized with Greek and Egyptian gods. In my analysis of Herodotos below, I use the narrative framework of Eudoxos' myth as a schematic for interpreting the myth of the attempted sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos and argue that the myth of Melqart's sacrifice was known by Greeks even earlier in the fifth-century BCE.

⁶⁵⁴ The second-century CE sophist Zenobius (*Epit.* 5.56) quotes Eudoxos: Φησὶ δὲ Εὐδοξὸς Ἡρακλέα τὸν Τύριον ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος διαφθαρῆναι· τὸν Ἰόλαον δὲ ἅπαντα πράττοντα διὰ τὸ ἀναστήσαι τὸν Ἡρακλέα, τὸν ὄρνυγα, ᾧ ἔχαιρεν Ἡρακλῆς, ζῶντα καῦσαι· ἐκ δὲ τῆς κνίσσης ἀναβιῶναι τὸν Ἡρακλέα, “Eudoxos says that Tyrian Herakles was killed by Typhon; and Iolaos, who did everything to revive Herakles, burned a living quail, which was pleasing to Herakles, and from the savor Herakles was brought back to life.”

⁶⁵⁵ Eustathius (*ad Od.* 11.600 = 1.400 Stallbaum): Σημειοῦνται δὲ οἱ παλαιοί, ὅτι τε διάφοροι Ἡρακλεῖς, ὡς καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ ἐρρέθη, ὧν εἷς καὶ ὁ Διὸς καὶ Ἀστερίας, ὃς φασὶ πορευόμενος εἰς Λιβύην **ἀνιέρχεται** μὲν ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος, Ἰολάου δ' αὐτῷ προσενεγκόντος ὄρνυγα ὀσφρανθεὶς **ἀνεβίω**. “The ancients say that there are different Herakles, as has been said elsewhere, one of these was the son of Zeus and Asteria, who, they say, journeyed to Libya and **was killed** by Typhon, but when Iolaos brought a (sacrificed) quail to him, he smelled it and **he revived**.”

3. The Temples of Melqart-Herakles and Cult Practices

As we have seen, the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth was well known throughout the Mediterranean and was promoted by the cult network of Melqart. It is from this context that I now turn to a close reading of the passages of Herodotos introduced above. In Book Two, Herodotos begins an inquiry into the origins of the hero-god Herakles, thus setting out the aitiological theme of his investigation. Herodotos claims to have information that Herakles is originally from Egypt.⁶⁵⁶ In pursuit of further insight about Herakles' origins Herodotos sails to Tyre where he had learned there was a temple dedicated to Herakles:

Θέλων δὲ τούτων πέρι σαφές τι εἰδέναι ἐξ ὧν οἶόν τε ἦν, ἔπλωσα καὶ ἐς Τύρον τῆς Φοινίκης, πυνθανόμενος αὐτόθι εἶναι ἱερὸν Ἡρακλέος ἅγιον. Καὶ εἶδον πλουσίως κατεσκευασμένον ἄλλοισί τε πολλοῖσι ἀναθήμασι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἦσαν στήλαι δύο, ἡ μὲν χρυσοῦ ἀπέφθου, ἡ δὲ σμαράγδου λίθου λάμποντος τὰς νύκτας μεγάλως. **Ἐς λόγους δὲ ἐλθὼν τοῖσι ἱερεῦσι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰρόμην ὁκόσος χρόνος εἴη ἐξ οὗ σφι τὸ ἱερὸν ἵδρυται·** εὗρον δὲ οὐδὲ τούτους τοῖσι Ἕλλησι συμφερομένους· ἔφασαν γὰρ ἅμα Τύρῳ οἰκίζομένη καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἵδρυθῆναι, εἶναι δὲ ἕτεα ἀπ' οὗ Τύρον οἰκέουσι τριηκόσια καὶ δισχίλια. Εἶδον δὲ ἐν τῇ Τύρῳ καὶ ἄλλο ἱερὸν Ἡρακλέος ἐπωνυμίην ἔχοντος Θασίου εἶναι.

Wishing to get clarity about these matters from those whom it was possible, I sailed to Tyre in Phoenicia, where I had learned there was a sacred temple of Herakles. Indeed, I saw the temple richly furnished with many other offerings, and on the temple there were two columns, one of refined gold, and another of emerald that shines greatly during the night. **When I came into conversation with the priests of the god I asked how long it was since their temple was built.** I discovered their account did not agree with those of the Greeks. For they said the temple was built at the same time as the founding of the city and it was 2300 years since they founded Tyre. I also saw at Tyre another temple of the god called Thasian Herakles. (Hdt. 2.44.1-3)

⁶⁵⁶ Hdt. 2.43.2

Herodotos seeks details about the antiquity of Herakles from the god's most reliable religious authority of the day, namely the priests of the Tyrian god Melqart, who was identified with the Greek hero-god Herakles in the fifth-century BCE. In other words, Herodotos does not cite an Egyptian priest because he is investigating the Phoenician god Melqart. Thus, when Herodotos speaks about a temple of Herakles at Tyre in this passage, he means the temple of Melqart of Tyre.⁶⁵⁷ Limited archeological excavations of Tyre, however, have yet to reveal the foundations of the sanctuary of Melqart.⁶⁵⁸ It is impossible at this point to carry out a complete excavation because the city is still inhabited, but the numerous literary references to the temple suggest that Herodotos is a credible source.⁶⁵⁹ Herodotos also claims to have spoken directly with the Tyrian priests, and although he does not say so, we can presume that he not only learned about the origins of the temple and its god but also about the sacred rites of *egersis* performed each year. Herodotos concludes this paragraph with another important piece of information: there are two temples to two different Herakleis at Tyre, the oldest one to Melqart, and another one to "Thasian Herakles." Therefore, Herodotos travels to Thasos to gain further information about this cult and the origins of the god.

According to Bonnet, the temple to Thasian Herakles at Thasos is a branch of the temple of Melqart at Tyre, and therefore, the existence of a temple to Thasian Herakles at

⁶⁵⁷ For discussion, see Bonnet and Bricault 2016: 24-25.

⁶⁵⁸ For the earliest excavations at Tyre, see Aubet 2001: 290. For the most recent excavations, see Aubet et al., 2016. A temple dating to the Persian period was recently discovered at Tyre (Badre 2015: 59-82), yet scholars still await the discovery of Melqart's sanctuary. It is also possible that the temple was not in Tyre but in the city known as "ancient Tyre," which was located inland (see Aubet 2001: 30).

⁶⁵⁹ See for example the accounts of Lucian (*Syr. D.* 3), Arrian (*Anab.* 2.15-16), and Josephos (*AJ* 8.146). A relief from the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh shows King Luli of Tyre fleeing the city, and a building depicted with two prominent columns is usually interpreted as the Temple of Melqart (see Markoe 2000: fig. 6).

Tyre is indicative that the Tyrians adopted a foreign (i.e., Greek) cult.⁶⁶⁰ Thus, the two temples at Tyre demonstrate that syncretism is a two-way process (from Phoenician to Greek and Greek back to Phoenician) but also that ancient Mediterranean cultures were well-aware of these dynamics. After his inquiry into the Tyrian cult of Herakles at Tyre and Thasos he makes some conclusions about the Greek worship of Herakles:

Ἀπκόμην δὲ καὶ ἐς Θάσον, ἐν τῇ εὐρον ἱρὸν Ἑρακλέος ὑπὸ
Φοινίκων ἰδρυμένον, οἱ κατ' Εὐρώπης ζήτησιν ἐκπλώσαντες Θάσον
ἐκτισαν· καὶ ταῦτα καὶ πέντε γενεῇσι ἀνδρῶν πρότερά ἐστι ἢ τὸν
Ἀμφιτρύωνος Ἑρακλέα ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι γενέσθαι. Τὰ μὲν νυν
ἱστορημένα δηλοῖ σαφέως παλαιὸν θεὸν Ἑρακλέα ἐόντα· καὶ
δοκέουσι δέ μοι οὗτοι ὀρθότατα Ἑλλήνων ποιεῖν, οἱ **διὰ**
Ἑράκλεια ἰδρυσάμενοι ἔκτηνται, **καὶ τῷ μὲν ὡς ἀθανάτῳ,**
Ὀλυμπίῳ δὲ ἐπωνυμίην θύουσι, τῷ δὲ ἐτέρῳ ὡς ἥρῳι ἐναγίζουσι.

I also went to Thasos at which I discovered **a temple of Herakles established by the Phoenicians**, who established Thasos when they sailed in search of Europa. And they did these things at least five generations of men earlier than the birth of Herakles son of Amphitryon in Greece. Therefore, my inquiries clearly demonstrate that Herakles is an ancient god. And they seem to me to represent him most correctly, those Greeks who have established and procure **two cults of Herakles, sacrificing to one as god, the one called Olympian, and to the other they offer sacrifices (to the dead) as to a dead hero.** (Hdt. 2.44.4-5)

Both Herodotos and Pausanias attest to the Phoenician origins of the temple of Herakles at Thasos.⁶⁶¹ Pausanias, in particular, specifies the Tyrian origins of the Phoenicians at Thasos.⁶⁶² Archeological excavations, however, have not uncovered any indisputable

⁶⁶⁰ Bonnet 1988: 49, 347.

⁶⁶¹ Paus. 5.25.12. Bonnet also cites a name found at Thasos from the fourth-century BCE that attests to the syncretism between Phoenicians and Greeks, the name Ἑρακλείδης is a theophoric and is qualified as φοῖνιξ. (Bonnet 1988: 352).

⁶⁶² According to Pausanias (5.25.12) the Thasian Phoenicians were from Tyre.

Phoenician remains.⁶⁶³ Scholars have dated the excavated remains of the temple between the sixth and fifth-centuries BCE, but the foundations probably go back to the seventh-century BCE.⁶⁶⁴ A sacred law forbids pigs and women at the temple of Herakles at Thasos.⁶⁶⁵ This law is important because the prohibition of pigs for sacrifice is a characteristic of several cultures of the Canaanite milieu, and furthermore, these laws are identical to Silius' description of the cult at the temple of Melqart at Gades.⁶⁶⁶ Moreover, according to Denis van Berchem, the festival in honor of Herakles at Thasos took place at the same time as the *egersis* rites of Melqart at Tyre, which points to the continued links between Phoenician cities on the network of Melqart.⁶⁶⁷ Birgitta Bergquist, in the most recent study of the evidence, also acknowledges that the Phoenicians were the first colonists at Thasos and the cult of Melqart may have been assimilated with the later Greek colonists.⁶⁶⁸ Although the sanctuary has not yielded any physical evidence of the Phoenicians, there is evidence for Phoenicians in the place names Ainyra and Koinyra on Thasos where the Phoenician mines mentioned by Herodotos were discovered, as well as

⁶⁶³ For the earliest study of the cult of Herakles-Melqart at Thasos, see van Berchem 1967: 88-109. For the report of the first excavations by the French School at Athens, see Launey 1944. Marcel Launey (1944: 194) suggested there is evidence of Phoenicians in the sanctuary based on ash found in the *bothros*. Charles Picard (1949: 125), on the other hand, saw no evidence of Phoenicians at the sanctuary. Jean Pouilloux (1954) also rejected the Phoenician origins of the sanctuary but instead argued for a mixed Greek and Thracian cult.

⁶⁶⁴ Bergquist 1973: 19.

⁶⁶⁵ Bonnet 1988: 359.

⁶⁶⁶ Sil. *Pun.* 3.21-40. For pork prohibition in Levantine cults, see note 601 above.

⁶⁶⁷ Van Berchem 1967: 102.

⁶⁶⁸ Bergquist 1973: 35. Bergquist (*ibid.*) comments that the Phoenician origins are "confirmed by the Semitic stem of the place-names Ainyra and Koinyra."

in the Semitic style of the rites of the sanctuary.⁶⁶⁹ Thus, according to Malkin's model, it is likely that the Phoenicians were living together with Greeks at Thasos in a middle ground of cultural exchange.⁶⁷⁰

Within this environment of cultural exchange and interconnected myths and rituals, Herodotos defines the worship of the later-born Greek hero Herakles in opposition to the worship of Melqart by the way in which the Greeks perform sacrifice to the respective deity. According to Herodotos (as quoted above), the Greeks are most correct in worshipping Herakles because they offer two types of sacrifice to two different gods: a typical *θύσῖα* to Herakles the Olympian (*θύουσι*), and a special type of sacrifice to the dead called *ἐνάγισμα* to Herakles the hero who died (*ἐναγίζουσι*). The *ἐνάγισμα* sacrifice is distinct from the *θύσῖα* because it utilizes a lower and smaller altar (*ἐσχάρα*) or a ritual-pit (*βόθρος*), and it is a term specifically denoting the offerings to the dead.⁶⁷¹ Alan B. Lloyd states that the phrase *διξὰ Ἡράκλεια* "is an ambiguous expression," and it may refer to "two temples of Herakles," or perhaps "a double temple in honor of Herakles."⁶⁷² Bonnet, on the other hand, argues that scholars have misread this passage and that Herodotos is speaking about the chronology of Herakles and not the nature of Herakles. Moreover, she argues that with the phrase *διξὰ Ἡράκλεια* Herodotos is referring to the two temples at Tyre, not to two different cults at Thasos.⁶⁷³ In Bonnet's

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. Cf. van Berchem 1967: 106. For the Phoenician mines on Thasos, see Hdt. 6.46-47. In a parallel case, there is also no physical evidence for Astarte's temple at Ascalon mentioned by Herodotos (1.105).

⁶⁷⁰ Malkin 2011: 124, 133. Malkin follows the observations of van Berchem (1967: 106-107).

⁶⁷¹ For the *eschara* in literary and epigraphical sources, see Ekroth 2002: 25-59. For *enagizein* and *enagisma* in epigraphical and literary sources, see Ekroth 2002: 74-120.

⁶⁷² Lloyd 1976: 211.

⁶⁷³ Bonnet 1988: 347.

interpretation, the two types of sacrifice, articulated by two different terms in Greek, correspond to the cults of the two different temples: the temple of Melqart at Tyre and the temple of Thasian Herakles at Tyre.

According to Bonnet, the misreading of Herodotos has caused scholars to misrepresent the archeological record of the sanctuary.⁶⁷⁴ The claim of two different types of sacrifice to two different Herakleis had once encouraged archaeologists to identify the respective altars at the sanctuary. Marcel Launey and Jean Pouilloux claimed that both the god and the hero Herakles were worshipped separately on Thasos. Launey assumed both the divine and heroic Herakles were worshipped at the Herakleion: the divine cult concentrated on the rock altar and pits and the heroic cult centered at the hearth in the polygonal *oikos* and the masonry well, which was identified as a *bothros*, a “ritual-pit,” for hero-worship.⁶⁷⁵ In turn, Pouilloux argued that one inscription from the sanctuary refers to the divine cult (*IG XII, Suppl.* 414) and another inscription refers to the heroic cult (*IG XII, Suppl.* 353).⁶⁷⁶ More recently, however, Bergquist reevaluated the archeological evidence and disputed the arguments of Launey and Pouilloux.⁶⁷⁷ According to her analysis, there is only conclusive evidence for a divine cult of Herakles.⁶⁷⁸ Moreover, she argues, “If two distinct and opposed Herakles cults existed in

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 247-348.

⁶⁷⁵ Launey 1944: 130-135; 165-187. For the *bothros* in literary and epigraphical sources, see Ekroth 2002: 60-74.

⁶⁷⁶ Pouilloux 1954: 82-93; 98; 352-354; 264-368.

⁶⁷⁷ Bergquist 1973.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 36-39. Bergquist points to the epigraphical evidence for the cult of divine Herakles (*IG XII, Suppl.* 414; *IG XII, Suppl.* 353; *IG XII*, 8, 264).

the Herakleion, they were probably temporally, and not locally, distinguished.”⁶⁷⁹ In other words, the cults were not distinguished by different locations in the sanctuary.⁶⁸⁰ She concludes that the temple was multi-functional, “a sacrificial site of both a *bomos* for burnt offerings and *bothroi* for liquid and/or solid offerings (in other words, a sacrificial site suitable for any conceivable set of sacrificial rites).”⁶⁸¹ Bergquist shows that there was continuity with these features since the earliest period in the seventh-century BCE.⁶⁸² Thus, if Herodotos is correct that the temple was established by Phoenicians, then the archeological evidence seems to imply that one sanctuary was used continually for one god: Melqart, who was later worshipped by Greeks as Herakles, who is simultaneously both a hero and god.

Bergquist has also argued that there is no evidence for offerings at the pit identified as a *bothros*, a “ritual-pit” for chthonic offerings, such as to the dead-hero Herakles.⁶⁸³ However, archaeological evidence for chthonic offerings is notoriously difficult to determine because chthonic sacrifice consisted in a holocaust burnt in a *bothros*. The *bothros* is attested in epigraphical evidence only twice, both of which are

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁸⁰ According to Bergquist (1973: 25; 42-43), the polygonal oikos identified as the *eschara* for hero worship does not contain any animal bone remains, and the well identified as a *bothros* was used for obtaining water and not for performing sacrifice.

⁶⁸¹ Bergquist 1973: 62. Other Greek sanctuaries also hosted multiple gods. For example, Dionysos took over the sanctuary of Delphi during the winter when Apollo left (see Rainer 1983: 149-150). According to the third-century BCE source Philochorus (*FGrH* 328 7) and the fourth-century BCE source Dinarchus (*FGrH* 399 F I = *SH* 379 B), Dionysos was also reputed to have a tomb at Delphi.

⁶⁸² Bergquist 1973: 56.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 25; 42-43.

not connected to heroes.⁶⁸⁴ Furthermore, Ekroth has demonstrated from epigraphical sources that heroes, such as Herakles, were almost exclusively offered *thusia*.⁶⁸⁵ Even the rituals for the cult of Herakles on Mount Oita, where the hero died, focused on a *thusia*.⁶⁸⁶ Thus, Ekroth has convincingly established that the *bothros* is primarily a literary phenomenon, used in representations of chthonic or hero worship, most famously Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11.⁶⁸⁷

In addition to Herodotos' account of Egyptian Herakles being the earliest literary reference to Melqart-Herakles syncretism, the passage quoted above from Herodotos is also the earliest source, literary or epigraphical, for the term *enagizein*.⁶⁸⁸ The term *enagizein*, like *bothros*, is also infrequently attested in the epigraphic record and only after 200 BCE.⁶⁸⁹ In light of the preceeding evidence, Herodotos' description of cult worship for two different versions of Herakles might be better interpreted as a literary construction of cult worship. Thus, Herodotos is not recording actual cult practices, as far as we can tell. Unless new evidence is discovered to corroborate Herodotos' assertion, I suggest that we interpret this passage as an attempt to distinguish the worship of the

⁶⁸⁴ For the inscriptions, see Ekroth 2002: 60-61. The oldest inscription (*IG* XI:2 235, 3) is dated to the third-century BCE from Delos and mentions a piglet, possibly referring to a purification ritual. The second inscription (no. 11 and 25 in Krauss 1980) is Roman from the second-century CE, which describes a remedy for a plague, including a sacrifice to chthonic deities.

⁶⁸⁵ Ekroth 2002: 169.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁶⁸⁷ Ekroth 2018: 37-56. The earliest literary source for the *bothros* is Homer (*Od*, 10.517; 11.25; 11.36; 11.42; 11.95). For the *bothros* in post-300 BCE literary sources, see Ekroth 2002: 64.

⁶⁸⁸ Ekroth 2002: 82. Herodotos mentions the term *enagizein* twice in the *Histories*, once in reference to the fallen war dead of Phokaia (1.167), and second in the passage describing the ritual for the dual cult of Herakles (2.44).

⁶⁸⁹ Ekroth 2002: 75-82. The earliest source (*IG* II² 1006, 26 and 69) is the ephebic inscription describing the sacrifices to the war dead at Marathon (123/2 BCE).

Greek hero Herakles from the Olympian god Herakles (i.e., the Tyrian god Melqart) by means of a literary construct of cult worship.

Parker explains Herodotos' inquiry into the cult of Melqart through the lens of *interpretatio*, the process of identifying different gods together.⁶⁹⁰ According to Parker, Herodotos distinguishes between the Phoenician god Melqart and the later-born Greek hero Herakles, two different divinities, who were identified by the same name in Greek.⁶⁹¹ Thus, from Parker's interpretation, the two types of sacrifice are necessary for distinguishing between the two different gods. Along similar lines, the two types of sacrifice can also be interpreted from the dynamics of syncretism, which takes into account the historical context of Herodotos' inquiry. I argue that Herodotos attempts not to identify the two gods but rather to disassociate the Greek hero-god Herakles from the god Melqart. Herodotos accomplishes this not only through chronology and genealogy but also a distinctive set of cult practices. Thus, Herodotos separates the two gods as part of his agenda for defining Greek culture in opposition to the cultures of the east. Because the typical cult offerings to Herakles and Melqart were similar, namely a burnt offering on a high-altar, Herodotos differentiates between the two gods by representing the Olympian god Herakles (i.e., Melqart) and the Greek hero Herakles with two distinct types of sacrifice, articulated by two distinct terms in Greek. The chthonic features of Herakles' cult are well established, and his mythic biography was associated with overcoming death as early as Homer.⁶⁹² Thus, Herodotos differentiates between the

⁶⁹⁰ Parker 2017: 34.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁹² For the chthonic features of his cult, see Burkert 1985: 208-212. The earliest portrayals of the Greek hero Herakles in Homer highlight his victory over death. In fact, the only labor to be mentioned twice in

divine cult of Herakles-Melqart and the chthonic or hero cult of Herakles by extrapolating from the chthonic elements of Herakles' mythology and applying them to a literary construction of cult worship. In other words, the ritual described by Herodotos reflects Herakles' biography as a hero who died and was immortalized as a god.

However, as we have seen, this process of demarcation is not straightforward. Melqart and Herakles both received burnt offerings in a similar style of the eastern Mediterranean sacrificial *koinē*, and the actual practice of special chthonic ritual to the Greek hero Herakles is not well attested epigraphically or archaeologically. Moreover, the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth was identified with Herakles' own myth of his death as a hero and immortalization as a god. Despite Herodotos' attempt to distinguish between the two different gods, the two types of alleged sacrifice reflect the underlining mythology of both gods as dying and rising divinities; there is a chthonic offering for Herakles as the hero who died (ἐναγίζουσι) and an offering for Herakles the Olympian (i.e., Melqart) who was reborn as a god (θύουσι). Thus, this passage shows how syncretism is a complex and reciprocal process. In spite of Herodotos' attempt to delineate between the Phoenician god Melqart and the Greek hero-god Herakles, the fact that both are mythological figures who die and are reborn results in a closer identification between the two.

Homer, once in the *Iliad* (8.362-363 and 8.367-368) and once in the *Odyssey* (11.623-626), is the fetching of Kerberos. For a recent study exploring the connections between Herakles and Dionysos in archaic Greek literature, including their descents into the Underworld, see Huard 2018. For the artistic examples of Kerberos, see Gantz 1993: 414. As Emily Stafford (2012: 49) states, "It is not difficult to see why Herakles' journey to the Underworld might be read as such an allegory of the overcoming of death." Thus, with his *katabasis* and subsequent return to life, Herakles can be considered as one of J. Z. Smith's disappearing and reappearing divinities. For the classic study on the death of Herakles, see Stoessl 1945.

The archaeological record also confirms this close identity between Herakles and Melqart because the sanctuary at Thasos shows no physical separation between the original temple of Melqart and the sanctuary of Herakles, nor between altars for Herakles as a hero and Herakles as a god. On the other hand, Bonnet's argument that the phrase διξὰ Ἡράκλεια refers specifically to the two temples at Tyre does not solve the problem of terminology in this passage. Herodotos uses two different verbs to describe the sacrifice to the two different Herakleis. In light of this evidence, Herodotos' phrase διξὰ Ἡράκλεια might instead mean "the cult of the two-fold Herakles." The cult of the god Melqart-Herakles, who is both hero and god. Thus, the phrase refers more generally to the various branches of the Melqart cult, epitomized by the temple of Thasian Herakles at Tyre. In other words, the phrase exemplifies the dynamics of syncretism. Both Herakles and Melqart are dying and rising gods, both cross the boundary between human and divine, and both gods occupy the same physical space of the sanctuary at Thasos. It seems likely that Herodotos understood the dilemma of this two-fold character of both Melqart and Herakles and recognized the need for another means of demarcation between the gods. Accordingly, Herodotos appeals to a myth about sacrifice to further distinguish between the gods.

4. The Sacrifice and "Rebirth" of Herakles in Herodotos

The following section of Herodotos' inquiry continues with the theme of demarcating between the two gods via cult practices. This time, however, Herodotos delineates the differences between Herakles and Melqart through *a myth about sacrifice*,

which functions to distinguish Greek and Phoenician sacrificial practice in a stark way: the Phoenicians sacrifice their gods, whereas the Greeks do not:

Λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες: εὐήθης δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅδε ὁ μῦθος ἐστὶ τὸν περὶ τοῦ Ἡρακλέος λέγουσι, ὡς αὐτὸν ἀπικόμενον ἐς Αἴγυπτον στέψαντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ὑπὸ πομπῆς ἐξήγον ὡς θύσοντες τῷ Διί· τὸν δὲ τέως μὲν ἡσυχίην ἔχειν, ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τῷ βωμῷ κατάρχοντο, ἐς ἀλκὴν τραπόμενον πάντας σφέας καταφονεῦσαι.

But the Greeks say many other untrustworthy things as well. An absurdity of them is the following **myth** which they tell about Herakles, how when **he reached** Egypt, the Egyptians **crowned him** and led him out in a procession **as if to sacrifice him to Zeus**. And for awhile he kept **quiet**, but when they began the preliminary offerings there at the altar, he turned to resist and **slaughtered** them all. (Hdt. 2.45.1)

By the use of δὲ in the first line, rather than by beginning a new argument with μέν, Herodotos indicates that he is continuing the arguments from the previous passage where he distinguishes between the two types of sacrifice. Moreover, the myth is connected to the rituals in the previous argument because it is a variation of the same theme: the death and rebirth of Herakles-Melqart, as I argue below.

Herodotos' use of the word μῦθος here is marked. This is only one of two uses of the word μῦθος in all of Herodotos' work.⁶⁹³ As Moyer notes, the negative use of this word to describe a Greek myth is evident in the fact that Herodotos describes the myth as foolish and unbelievable.⁶⁹⁴ Herodotos records a myth about the sacrifice of Herakles that was already in circulation among the Greeks (Λέγουσι ... οἱ Ἕλληνες), but he says that this myth is ἀνεπισκέπτως "untrustworthy." The historian explains afterwards that the

⁶⁹³ The other use is in regard to the myth of the river ocean (Hdt. 2.23).

⁶⁹⁴ Moyer 2011: 78-79.

myth is untrustworthy because the Egyptians do not sacrifice most animals, much less humans.⁶⁹⁵ Furthermore, according to Herodotos, it is unbelievable that Herakles could have accomplished this feat of strength as a human, namely killing multiple attackers.⁶⁹⁶ In other words, Herodotos frames the entire myth by the acknowledgment of Greek ignorance of Egyptian beliefs. As noted previously, Egyptian culture was highly influential for Phoenician culture, and the “Egyptianizing” features of Phoenician art, in particular, are indicative of the close relationship between the two cultures. The Greek historian Pausanias records a tradition in the myth of Erythrai that perfectly exemplifies this phenomenon. Pausanias (7.5.5) says that an image of Herakles that looks Egyptian was set on a wooden raft from Tyre at Phoenicia.⁶⁹⁷ In other words, an image from Phoenicia that looks Egyptian is an accurate description of Phoenician art. We can also cite the example of archaic Greek *kouroi* figures of naked male youths that were influenced by Egyptian traditions.⁶⁹⁸ Thus, in my reading, the Greeks, whom Herodotos characterizes as ignorant, might actually be confusing the Egyptians with the Phoenicians, as I explain further below.

Although the Egyptians remain generic in Herodotos’ myth, the story is usually connected to the infamous king Bousiris who would sacrifice foreigners, nevertheless, the name Bousiris does not occur in the narrative and Herodotos attributes the practice to the Egyptians more generally. If Herodotos is recounting the same story, this would be the

⁶⁹⁵ Hdt. 2.45.2. For a discussion of Egyptian ritual practices, see my Chapter 7.

⁶⁹⁶ Hdt. 2.45.3

⁶⁹⁷ For discussion of the myth of Erythrai, see Graf 1985: 296-316.

⁶⁹⁸ For the basic study of these types of statues, see Richter and Richter 1970.

earliest complete reference to the myth of Bousiris and Herakles.⁶⁹⁹ On the other hand, the fifth-fourth century BCE Athenian orator Isocrates claims that the stories about Bousiris and Herakles recorded by historians such as Herodotos cannot be accurate because Herakles lived several generations later than Bousiris.⁷⁰⁰ In the most complete version of the Bousiris myth preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros, the Egyptian king Bousiris adopts the practice of human sacrifice in response to a disaster, namely the infertility of the land (ἀφορία).⁷⁰¹ Bousiris obtains his information for relieving the ἀφορία from a seer from the island of Cyprus—the important meeting place of Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian contact, and the “theatre of fusion” between the mythologies and rituals of those cultures. In other words, Bousiris is adopting a foreign practice via the intercultural hub of Cyprus. The context of the Bousiris myth bears a striking resemblance to the context of the myth of the Phoenician origins of human sacrifice

⁶⁹⁹ There are fragments that mention only Bousiris: Hesiod (fr. 378 MW) and Pherecydes (*FgrH* 3, F.17). Herodotos’ uncle, Panyassis of Halikarnassos (fr. 26 K), included the myth of Bousiris in his epic poem about Herakles (Matthews 1974: 71). Isocrates has an oration called *Busiris* (11.30-40). Pseudo-Apollodoros (*Bibl.* 2.116-117) summarizes the story (Cf. Diod. Sic. 4.18.1; Ov. *Met.* 9.180ff). The myth was also popular on vase paintings, see e.g., the Busiris Hydria from Caere (c. 520 BCE).

⁷⁰⁰ Isoc. *Bus.* 37.

⁷⁰¹ μετὰ Λιβύην δὲ Αἴγυπτον διεξήει. ταύτης ἐβασίλευε Βούσιρις Ποσειδῶνος παῖς καὶ Λυσιανάσσης τῆς Ἐπάφου. οὗτος τοὺς ξένους ἔθυεν ἐπὶ βωμῷ Διὸς κατὰ τι λόγιον· ἐννέα γὰρ ἔτη ἀφορία τὴν Αἴγυπτον κατέλαβε, Φρασίος δὲ ἐλθὼν ἐκ Κύπρου, μάντις τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἔφη τὴν ἀφορίαν παύσασθαι ἐὰν ξένον ἄνδρα τῷ Διὶ σφάξωσι κατ’ ἔτος. Βούσιρις δὲ ἐκείνον πρῶτον σφάξας τὸν μάντιν τοὺς κατιόντας ξένους ἔσφαζε. συλληφθεὶς οὖν καὶ Ἡρακλῆς τοῖς βωμοῖς προσεφέρετο τὰ δὲ δεσμὰ διαρρήξας τὸν τε Βούσιριν καὶ τὸν ἐκείνου παῖδα Ἀμφιδάμαντα ἀπέκτεινε.

After Libya Herakles traveled to Egypt. Bousiris, son of Poseidon and Lysianassa, daughter of Epaphos, was ruling that country. He used to sacrifice foreigners on the altar to Zeus according to some oracle. Since barrenness had taken hold of Egypt for nine years, and Phrasios, a skilled seer, who came from Kypros, said the barrenness would cease if they sacrifice a foreigner to Zeus every year. Bousiris first slaughtered that seer and slaughtered foreigners who came to Egypt. Then even Herakles was taken and brought to the altars, but he broke his bonds and killed both Bousiris and his son Amphidamas. (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.116-117).

described by Philo of Byblos.⁷⁰² According to Philo, El sacrifices his son Ieoud as a response to the infertility of the land, manifested by the murder of the previous king, as I will explain in Chapter 6. Thus, it seems possible that the story of Bousiris has its roots in other Phoenician myths about human sacrifice as a part of a fertility ritual in response to emergencies of the state.⁷⁰³ It is then possible that this tradition was transmitted via the syncretistic environment on Cyprus or at least that the origins of the practice of human sacrifice were imagined there, as the myth recorded by Pseudo-Apollodoros suggests.

The issue of the practice of human sacrifice at Egypt has long been controversial among Egyptologists.⁷⁰⁴ Lloyd, the commentator of the passage from Herodotos, claims there is no indisputable evidence for the practice of human sacrifice among the Egyptians, which Herodotos also affirms after his report of the myth.⁷⁰⁵ As Lloyd explains, the occurrence of human sacrifice at Egypt has been supported by Egyptian texts that describe the punishment of captives, as well as archaeological evidence from the 1st Dynasty Royal Cemetery at Abydos where servants were buried with kings in “retainer sacrifices.”⁷⁰⁶ Although Lloyd does not find the evidence credible, more recent studies have convincingly argued that the Egyptians did in fact practice a form of human

⁷⁰² Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.30-34.

⁷⁰³ In particular, see the myth reported by Philo of Byblos that El sacrificed his son Ieoud (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44 = 4.16.11) during war (see my Chapter 6 for analysis of the myth). Porphyry of Tyre (*de Abs.* 2.56) also states that the Phoenicians sacrifice their loved ones during calamities of war or pestilence.

⁷⁰⁴ For an introduction to the problems and evidence, see van Dijk 2007.

⁷⁰⁵ Hdt. 2.45.2. Cf. Diodorus of Sicily (1.88.4-5) who reports that the Egyptians sacrifice red-colored men to Osiris because Seth was red-colored. For discussion of this myth and the issues of Egyptian human sacrifice, see Matić 2020. For a discussion on the evidence of human sacrifice among the Egyptians with references, see Lloyd 1976: 213-214. For the classical evidence of human sacrifice in Egypt, see Griffiths 1948.

⁷⁰⁶ For Egyptian retainer sacrifice, see van Dijk 2007; Morris 2007 and 2014.

sacrifice.⁷⁰⁷ However, the Egyptian practices of “retainer sacrifice” involved the ritualized killing and burial of the servants, they did not involve the burnt offerings characteristic of Phoenician and Greek cultures (see Chapter 7 for discussion of Egyptian offerings).

In Herodotos’ myth quoted above, the Egyptians lead Herakles πρὸς τῷ βωμῷ “to an altar” and attempt to perform a *thusia* (burnt offering). Egyptian retainer offerings, on the other hand, did not involve an altar, which is an essential characteristic of burnt offerings. Additionally, in the Bousiris story preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros, the Greek word used to describe the sacrifice is σφάζω, which has the specific meaning of “to slaughter by cutting the throat.” The evidence for Egyptian practices of retainer sacrifice, however, indicates that the victims suffered cranial trauma followed by ritualized burial.⁷⁰⁸ Thus, the practices of sacrifice in the Bousiris myth and the myth recorded by Herodotos do not reflect native Egyptian practices. Therefore, I argue that Herodotos’ myth of the sacrifice of Herakles fits better with the Phoenician milieu of sacrifice. It is also possible, considering the Cypriot context of the origins of the practice, that the Bousiris story may be drawing from earlier Phoenician stories about the sacrifice of humans and divinities, such as the accounts preserved by Philo of Byblos (see Chapters 5 and 6). Furthermore, there is evidence for the practice of human sacrifice among the Phoenicians characteristic of burnt offerings, and there is evidence for the

⁷⁰⁷ E.g., van Dijk 2007. Most recently, Roselyn Campbell (2020) has argued based on a reevaluation of the crania of the deceased servants buried with the kings that the lethal perimortem cranial fractures are consistent with human sacrifice.

⁷⁰⁸ Campbell 2020.

sacrifice of the god Melqart, who was identified with Herakles.⁷⁰⁹ Thus, Herodotos' report of the Greek myth is the product of syncretistic gods, myths, and rituals in the Phoenician milieu of the ancient Mediterranean.

From this perspective, I argue that we can better understand the myth of Herakles' sacrifice within the context of Herakles-Melqart syncretism, the context in which Herodotos sets the myth. As I have explained, the cultures of Egypt and Phoenicia were easily conflated by the Greeks, probably because they were geographically adjacent, but also because Egypt influenced Phoenicia in administrative matters, iconography, and religion. Thus, it is reasonable to understand how Melqart was known as Egyptian Herakles, rather than Phoenician Herakles.⁷¹⁰ From the view of syncretism, I interpret Herodotos' myth of Herakles as a creative adaptation of a myth about the sacrifice of Melqart. Since an effigy of the Tyrian god Melqart was immolated and "awakened" in the rites of *egersis* each year, it is probable, even though Herodotos does not say so, that the historian learned of these rites when he visited Melqart's temple at Tyre. Moreover, the stories about Melqart and his sacrifice, such as the one attributed to Eudoxos, were widespread throughout the Mediterranean due to the connectivity of the Gades-Tyre axis centered around Melqart.⁷¹¹ Thus, it is reasonable to understand how the Greeks adapted the myth and associated it with their hero-god Herakles.

I read Herodotos' report of the myth within the environment of Melqart-Herakles syncretism as a continuation of his previous inquiry into the Egyptian and Phoenician

⁷⁰⁹ For evidence of the practice of human sacrifice among the Phoenicians, see my Chapter 5.

⁷¹⁰ Diod. Sic. 3.74. Arrian (*Anab.* 2.16.4), on the other hand, says that Egyptian Herakles is different from Phoenician Herakles.

⁷¹¹ Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2019.

origins of Herakles. From this perspective, the myth might be a Greek adaptation of a lost Tyrian myth that described the sacrifice of Melqart or possibly a Greek interpretation of the rites of *egersis*. Another possibility is that the myth is Herodotos' own creative adaptation of a well known story about the sacrifice of Melqart which he then attributes to Greeks more generally. Whatever the exact origin of the story may be, Herodotos redeploys the myth about the sacrifice of Herakles within the context of Phoenician and Egyptian religious beliefs. One possible interpretation is that the "Egyptians" stand for Phoenicians, who predictably mistake Herakles for the "Egyptian" Herakles (i.e., Melqart) who is traditionally sacrificed at the *egersis* rites. The Egyptians, or the Phoenicians, simply make an error of mistaken identity. Thus, by recording the myth in this context of Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian cultures, Herodotos provides commentary on the divine identity politics of his era. The subtext of the Herakles myth points out a pressing question of the fifth-century BCE: if Herakles and Melqart are to be syncretized, then how are we to know that they are different? Herodotos draws out the implications of this problem of identity through his report of a Greek adaptation of the Tyrian Melqart myth. Moreover, he uses the myth to distinguish between Melqart and Herakles, as I explain below.

In the version recorded by Herodotos, the Greeks telling the myth change the outcome of the story so that Herakles is not sacrificed. Yet the myth still includes, I argue, the major themes of the Melqart myth, namely Melqart's travels, and the association between his death and rebirth and sacrifice. According to Herodotos' report, Herakles journeys to Egypt (ἀπικόμενον ἐς Αἴγυπτον), a phrase which parallels the story of Eudoxos who says that Melqart journeyed to Libya (πορευόμενον εἰς Λιβύην).

Herakles is then crowned by the Egyptians as a sacrifice (στέψαντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι). The verb στέφω “to crown, to wreath” is used in cultic contexts where a sacrificial animal or altar is crowned or wreathed before sacrifice.⁷¹² The verb στέφω is the root of the Greek noun στέφανος, “crown,” which is applied to priests and athletic victors but also kings and royalty.⁷¹³ In one example, the noun στέφανος designates through metonymy the royal realm of Troy.⁷¹⁴ Thus, with the phrase στέψαντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι, “the Egyptians crowned him,” Herakles is not only crowned as the victim of sacrifice, but he also evokes Melqart, the king of Tyre, who is both the king and sacrificial victim. In Herodotos’ report, Herakles is then led in a procession to the altar for sacrifice to Zeus (θύσοντες τῷ Διί). But in this Greek version of the Melqart mythology, instead of being the victim of the rites, Herakles is metaphorically “reborn” by surviving the sacrifice and slaughtering the Egyptians instead (καταφονεύσαι). The expected (Phoenician) outcome of the story is for Herakles (Melqart) to die by sacrifice, but in the Greek version he survives and demonstrates the force of his vitality. In this version, Herakles does not die *per se*, but he “keeps quiet for awhile” (τὸν δὲ τέως μὲν ἡσυχίην ἔχειν). With this phrase, Herodotos alludes to the death of Melqart. Then the ending of the story is changed so that Herakles

⁷¹² E.g., στέψαντες τὰ ἱερία, “crowning the sacrificial victims” (Lucian *Syr. D.* 58.2); Ἡρακλέους βωμὸν καταστέψαντες, “crowning the altar of Herakles,” (Eur. *Heracl.* 124).

⁷¹³ For crowns as a reward to priests for performing sacrifice, see Naiden 2013: 202. A crown on the worshiper and sacrificial victim is part of what makes him *kalos* (ibid. 33). Pindar frequently refers to the crowns of Athletes (e.g., *Ol.* 2.74; 3.18; 6.57; 8.1).

⁷¹⁴ Ἑλληνικὸν συνήγαγ’ Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ ἰτὸν καλλίνικον στέφανον Ἰλίου θέλων ἰλαβεῖν, “Lord Agamemnon gathered an army of Greeks, wishing to take the crown of Troy” (Eur. *IT* 11-13). Helen laments that her beauty has ruined her instead of setting a crown (στέφανον) on her head (Eur. *Tro.* 937). In Euripides’ *Orestes* (924), the messenger reports that one citizen of Argos advocated that they should crown Orestes, son of Agamemnon (Ὀρέστην παῖδα τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος στεφανοῦν) for his willingness to avenge his father. Before his campaign against Greece, Xerxes has dream that he is crowned (ἐστεφανώσθαι) with an olive bough whose shoots spread all over the earth (Hdt. 7.19).

is not actually sacrificed but is instead metaphorically reborn by slaughtering his attackers and surviving the sacrifice. Although this version of the myth is altered to fit Greek religious ideology and provide a Greek adaptation of the Melqart myth, the myth still follows the pattern of death and rebirth. Thus, the themes of the myth and the context in which it is set indicate that it is an adaptation of the Melqart mythology.

In my reading, Herodotos uses the myth of the sacrifice of Herakles as a case of Hall's oppositional identity to show how Greek worship of Herakles is different from Phoenician worship of the Egyptian Herakles (i.e., Melqart), who is sacrificed. As Hall has demonstrated, Herodotos uses ethnicity to construct the idea of Hellenicity. Herodotos contrasts the gods of Greece with other cultures to define Greek culture, in this case, Hellenic Herakles and Phoenician Melqart. It is because of the prevalent syncretism between Herakles and Melqart during the fifth-century BCE that Herodotos deploys the story of Herakles' sacrifice in order to demonstrate how the two gods are, in fact, different and how Greek and Phoenician myths about divine sacrifice are distinct. The Greeks do not depict their gods as the victims of sacrifice. As Obbink and Harrison point out, the Greeks were resistant to the idea of a dying divinity, and as I will argue in Chapter 7, the only Greek myth about the *successful* sacrifice of a divinity (Dionysos) is influenced by Near Eastern traditions.⁷¹⁵ The Phoenicians, on the other hand, do describe the sacrifice of their gods in two myths: the sacrifice of Melqart and El's sacrifice of his son Ieoud in the works of Philo of Byblos (see Chapter 6). According to Herodotos, the Greek response to a mythical scenario where a divinity becomes a victim of sacrifice is to depict the Greek hero-god overcoming the priests. In my reading, the myth of the

⁷¹⁵ Obbink and Harrison 1985.

unsuccessful sacrifice of Herakles, therefore, becomes not only the earliest literary allusion to the rites of *egersis* but also one of the only complete literary accounts of the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth.

5. Herakles' Immolation in Other Greek Sources

Herodotos' adaptation of the Tyrian myth of the sacrifice of Melqart can also provide insights into other Greek stories about Herakles' death. As I have argued, Greek sources recorded by Herodotos during the fifth-century BCE adapt elements from the story of Melqart's sacrifice with the myth of Herakles. It is also during this period that the myth of the Greek hero Herakles' self-immolation on the pyre first occurs in Greek myths. Therefore, I argue that the addition of the self-immolation motif to the Greek Herakles myth was influenced by the Phoenician myth of Melqart's sacrifice and facilitated by the dynamics of syncretism between the two gods in the fifth-century BCE.

As we saw in the previous chapter, on the temple of Melqart at Gades, the sacrifice of Melqart was syncretized with Herakles' death on the pyre at Mount Oita. According to a scholium on the *Iliad*, the death of the Greek hero-god Herakles on Mount Oita was reenacted by the inhabitants of Mount Oita.⁷¹⁶ There is archaeological evidence for the cult of Herakles at Mt.Oita that goes back to the archaic period of the late sixth-century BCE.⁷¹⁷ Such a ritual reenactment of Herakles' death is a similar idea to the performance of the *egersis* at Tyre and Gades. Emma Stafford points to this similarity

⁷¹⁶ Scholia on *Iliad* 22.159. See also the mention of Mt.Oita in Herodotos (7.198).

⁷¹⁷ For the archaeological studies of the pyre of Herakles at Mt.Oita, see Pappadakis 1919 and Pantos 1990.

between the fire festivals at Mount Oita and the worship of Melqart, but she concludes that “no plausible link has been established.”⁷¹⁸ Xella, however, recently explained, “The link of Milqart’s tradition to the mythical-ritual cycle of the Greek hero is confirmed by the myth according to which Herakles immolated himself on a pyre, thereby attaining divine status.”⁷¹⁹ I argued in the previous section that Herodotos records an adapted version of the Melqart myth, and as I show below, the earliest Greek representations of Herakles’ self-immolation are also from the fifth-century BCE.⁷²⁰ Thus, it is likely that during this period Herakles’ death was first identified with sacrifice by other Greek sources as a result of the prominent syncretism between the two gods. Although archaeological evidence does point to the sixth-century BCE for cultic activity at Mt.Oita, which may even provide evidence for earlier syncretism between Herakles and Melqart, my focus below is on the literary syncretism between the two gods in Greek myths beginning in the fifth-century BCE.⁷²¹

According to the study of myth by Timothy Gantz, from the earliest sources in the eighth-century BCE Herakles is depicted as a hero who disappears into the Underworld, and by the sixth-century BCE Herakles is depicted as a hero who dies and is reborn as a god.⁷²² Although the Greek sources do not explicitly describe the Greek hero Herakles’

⁷¹⁸ Stafford 2012: 185.

⁷¹⁹ Xella 2019: 278.

⁷²⁰ Gantz (1993: 463) cites Soph. *Trach.* 1195-1255, Eur. *Herac.* 910-918, and vases.

⁷²¹ Miles (2010:103) says the syncretism occurred in the seventh-century BCE.

⁷²² Gantz (1993: 460) argues based on literary and vase representations that the earliest stories of Herakles in the eighth-century BCE depict the hero as a figure who dies, remains dead, and that his apotheosis was unknown during this period. Gantz cites *Il.* 18.117-119, where the hero is mentioned to have died. Herakles’ death was described in later sources as well, see especially Soph. *Trach.* 1191. Herakles wrestles Thanatos (Death) in Eur. *Alc.* 840-860. In Ovid (*Met.* 9.211-272), the pyre burns off the mortal part of Herakles and only the divine portion remains. Gantz argues (1993: 461-462) that the apotheosis was

death on a pyre as a sacrifice, beginning in the fifth-century BCE the sources do relate his self-immolation with the idea of sacrifice. For example, in Sophokles' *Trachiniai*, Herakles wears the poisoned cloak given to him by Deianeira as he begins to perform a sacrifice, but the sacrificial flames trigger the poison in the cloak, which then leads to his self-immolation on the pyre at Mt.Oita.⁷²³ The description in the *Trachiniai* makes clear that Herakles' death via the poisoned cloak is initially sparked by the flames of the sacrifice that he performs.⁷²⁴ In other words, the flames of the sacrifice lead directly to his self-immolation on the pyre. Therefore, by the fifth-century BCE we see not only the first depictions of Herakles' self-immolation but also the first associations between Herakles' death on the pyre and sacrificial rites. Later versions of the myth, which probably draw on earlier sources, also stress the link between Herakles' performance of a sacrifice and his death on the pyre.⁷²⁵ In the tradition from Pseudo-Apollodoros, for

widespread in the sixth-century BCE, but that it could not have taken shape earlier than the late seventh-century BCE. The passage from the *Odyssey* (11.601-604), however, does allude to Herakles' resurrection, albeit implicitly, because Odysseos sees only the *eidolon* of Herakles in Hades, but Herakles himself (αὐτὸς) is living among the gods and married to the goddess Hebe. Gantz (1993: 460) argues that the passage from the *Odyssey* (11.601-604) is added at a later period to fit with later representations of his apotheosis. According to Gantz (1993: 461), the myth of Herakles' apotheosis is probably first recorded in the sixth-century BCE *Catalogue of Women* (Hesiod Fr. 25. 25-28 MW) where Herakles is mentioned to have died, gone to Hades, but is now a god married to Hebe. His marriage and apotheosis are also mentioned in Pindar (*Nem.* 1.69-72, 10.17-18; *Is.* 4.55-60).

⁷²³ Soph. *Trach.* 750-780.

⁷²⁴ "And as he was about to slaughter the many beasts for sacrifice, there came from home his own herald, Lichas, bringing your gift, the robe of death. He put it on, as you had instructed, and slew twelve bulls without a blemish, as the first fruits of the spoils; but in all he was bringing up a hundred cattle of all kinds. At first, poor man, he spoke the prayer cheerfully, rejoicing in the fine attire. But when the bloodshot flame from the sacred offerings and from the resinous pine blazed up, the sweat came up upon his body, and the thing clung closely to his sides, as a carpenter's tunic might, at every joint; and biting pain came, tearing at his bones" (*Trach.* 756-770, trans. by Lloyd-Jones 1994).

⁷²⁵ Diod. Sic. 4.38; Ov. *Met.* 9.101-272; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.7; The only source that doesn't directly link the death to the sacrifice is Hyginus (*Fab.* 36).

example, Herakles wears the poisoned cloak as part of his sacrificial raiment,⁷²⁶ and Diodoros of Sicily says that the cloak is the one he customarily wears when performing a sacrifice.⁷²⁷ In Ovid's version, the venom of the cloak is warmed by the flames of the sacrifice and his body begins to burn before he even builds the pyre.⁷²⁸ Later sources also

⁷²⁶ "Intending to offer sacrifice, he sent the herald Lichas to Trachis to fetch fine raiment. From him Deianira learned about Iole, and fearing that Hercules might love that damsel more than herself, she supposed that the spilt blood of Nessus was in truth a love-charm, and with it she smeared the tunic. So Hercules put it on and proceeded to offer sacrifice. But no sooner was the tunic warmed than the poison of the hydra began to corrode his skin; and on that he lifted Lichas by the feet, hurled him down from the headland, and tore off the tunic, which clung to his body, so that his flesh was torn away with it. In such a sad plight he was carried on shipboard to Trachis: and Deianira, on learning what had happened, hanged herself. But Hercules, after charging Hyllus his elder son by Deianira, to marry Iole when he came of age, proceeded to Mount Oeta, in the Trachinian territory, and there constructed a pyre, mounted it, and gave orders to kindle it. When no one would do so, Poeas, passing by to look for his flocks, set a light to it. On him Hercules bestowed his bow. While the pyre was burning, it is said that a cloud passed under Hercules and with a peal of thunder wafted him up to heaven. Thereafter he obtained immortality, and being reconciled to Hera he married her daughter Hebe, by whom he had sons, Alexiares and Anicetus" (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.7, trans. by Frazer 1921).

⁷²⁷ "At Cenaeon Heracles, wishing to perform a sacrifice, dispatched his attendant Lichas to Deianeira his wife, commanding him to ask her for the shirt and robe which he customarily wore in the celebration of sacrifices. But when Deianeira learned from Lichas of the love which Heracles had for Iolê, she wished him to have a greater affection for herself and so anointed the shirt with the love-charm which had been given her by the Centaur, whose intention was to bring about the death of Heracles. Lichas, then, in ignorance of these matters, brought back the garments for the sacrifice; and Heracles put on the shirt which had been anointed, and as the strength of the toxic drug began slowly to work he met with the most terrible calamity. For the arrow's barb had carried the poison of the adder, and when the shirt for this reason, as it became heated, attacked the flesh of the body, Heracles was seized with such anguish that he slew Lichas, who had been his servant, and then, disbanding his army, returned to Trachis. As Heracles continued to suffer more and more from his malady he dispatched Licymnius and Iolaüs to Delphi to inquire of Apollo what he must do to heal the malady, but Deianeira was so stricken by the magnitude of Heracles' misfortune that, being conscious of her error, she ended her life by hanging herself. The god gave the reply that Heracles should be taken, and with him his armour and weapons of war, unto Oetê and that they should build a huge pyre near him; what remained to be done, he said, would rest with Zeus. Now when Iolaüs had carried out these orders and had withdrawn to a distance to see what would take place, Heracles, having abandoned hope for himself, ascended the pyre and asked each one who came up to him to put torch to the pyre. And when no one had the courage to obey him Philoctetes alone was prevailed upon; and he, having received in return for his compliance the gift of the bow and arrows of Heracles, lighted the pyre. And immediately lightning also fell from the heavens and the pyre was wholly consumed. After this, when the companions of Iolaüs came to gather up the bones of Heracles and found not a single bone anywhere, they assumed that, in accordance with the words of the oracle, he had passed from among men into the company of the gods" (Diod. Sic. 4.38, trans. by Oldfather 1967).

⁷²⁸ "Hercules, the hero, took it, without a thought, and put on the shirt of Nessus, soaked in the poison of the Lernean Hydra. He was making offerings of incense and reciting prayers over the first flames, and pouring a libation bowl of wine on to the marble altar. The power of the venom, warmed and released by the flames, dissolved, dispersing widely through the limbs of Hercules. With his usual courage, he repressed his groans while he could. When his strength to endure the venom was exhausted, he overturned

add the figure of Philoktetes, who lights the pyre for Herakles in exchange for his bow. This addition also goes back to the fifth-century BCE, and its inclusion in the myth is significant because it evokes the idea of someone actively performing a burnt offering of the god.⁷²⁹ Thus, the link between the festivals of Herakles at Mount Oita and the worship of Melqart at Tyre can be explained by the syncretism between the two gods during the fifth-century BCE. Due to the malleability of the polytheistic religions of the Greeks and Phoenicians, Herakles' death and apotheosis, and the ritual reenactment of his death at Mount Oita, were merged with Melqart's yearly immolation and awakening at Tyre.⁷³⁰

Moreover, because the Greeks were resistant to the idea of a sacrificed divinity, we can see how Greek poets distanced the hero from the idea of being a victim, and instead, represented him as the one performing the sacrifice. On the other hand, we can see clear indications that Herakles' death was identified with Melqart's death through the theme of sacrifice. The result is that Herakles' death is not depicted by Greek sources as an explicit sacrifice, but rather his death and the idea of sacrifice are set at a "safe

the altar, and filled woody Oeta with his shouts. He tries at once to tear off the fatal clothing: where it is pulled away, it pulls skin away with it, and, revolting to tell, it either sticks to the limbs from which he tries in vain to remove it, or reveals the lacerated limbs and his massive bones. His blood itself hisses and boils, with the virulence of the poison, like incandescent metal, dipped in a cold pool. There is no end to it: the consuming fires suck at the air in his chest: dark sweat pours from his whole body: his scorched sinews crackle. His marrow liquefying with the secret corruption, he raises his hands to the heavens, crying: 'Juno, Saturnia, feed on my ruin: feed, cruel one: gaze, from the heights, at this destruction, and sate your savage heart! Or if this suffering seems pitiable even to an enemy, even to you, take away this sorrowful and hateful life, with its fearful torments, that was only made for toil. Death would be a gift to me, a fitting offering from a stepmother' (Ov. *Met.* 9.157-181, trans. by Kline 2000). Hercules' death on the pyre and apotheosis is described at lines 9.211-272.

⁷²⁹ A psykter from the fifth-century BCE depicts Philoktetes with his bow (Gantz 1993: 459).

⁷³⁰ The syncretism between the ritual immolation of Herakles and Melqart also extends to other gods in the Near East. Stafford (2012: 192) notes that the Hittite god Sandon at Tarsos in Cilicia was also identified as Herakles and was ritually burned and immortalized.

distance” apart. Yet, just as the burning poison is triggered by the flames of sacrifice, so too does the theme of sacrifice permeate Herakles’ myth during the period of intense syncretism between the gods in the fifth-century BCE.

Conclusion

The testimony of Menander of Ephesos indicates that the *egersis* rites were instituted at Tyre in the tenth-century BCE, and Phoenician inscriptions from as early as the sixth-century BCE point to the celebration of these rites throughout the Mediterranean. The testimony of Pausanias suggests that in practice an effigy of Melqart was burned, after which he was symbolically “awakened,” in a rite whose procedure is still not well-understood. It is likely that we will never fully understand these rites, not only because of the fragmentary state of Phoenician sources but also because rites involving divine victims, as well as human, were unfamiliar to Greek theology and ritual and intentionally kept secret by the Phoenicians.⁷³¹

It is probable that in addition to these rites there was also a myth that described the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. The earliest evidence for this myth is from the Greek versions reported by Herodotos and Eudoxos of Knidos about Herakles-Melqart’s death and rebirth and from Silius’ descriptions of the representations of Melqart’s mythology on the temple at Gades, which was syncretized with Herakles’ labors. Herodotos’ report of the adapted myth of Melqart demonstrates that the story was well known in the Mediterranean from at least the fifth-century BCE. In the original

⁷³¹ Philo (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44) says that the rites of sacrificing children, which were modeled on the sacrifice of the divine child *Ieoud*, were performed according to a secret ritual.

Phoenician myth, now lost, it is possible that another god performed the sacrifice of Melqart, perhaps in a similar way as Enki sacrificing Ilawela in *Atrahasis* or El sacrificing his son in Philo (see Chapter 6). The fiery god Typhon who kills Melqart in Eudoxos' myth may be a Greek reinterpretation of this motif. On the other hand, Herodotos' version provides further evidence that the Tyrians performed a public sacrifice of their god Melqart by burning an effigy of the deity in a burnt sacrifice. This fits with the depictions of priests at the *egersis* rites portrayed on the Sidon vase and the image of the god on the altar. It is well established that Phoenician kings played the role of the high-priest, thus it is reasonable to conclude that the *egersis* rites were a public sacrifice of the god, in contrast to the myth, which may have described his sacrifice by another god. If this was the case, then the Greek depictions of Herakles' self-immolation, which first occur in the fifth-century BCE, must be a Greek innovation. Nevertheless, this new element of Hellenic Herakles' mythology must have also been drawn from the mythology of Melqart.

The Greek historian Herodotos travelled along Melqart's network from Tyre to Thasos in the fifth-century BCE, and he interviewed the priests of Melqart at Tyre. Herodotos observed first hand the various branches of the cult of Melqart. The most ancient temple of Melqart at Tyre was connected to the more recent temple of Herakles at Thasos via corresponding ritual practices and the celebration of the *egersis*. This connection was then amplified by the reciprocal adoption of the Thasian cult at Tyre. The priests of Melqart at Tyre may have even boasted about the other temple of Melqart, in the far western Mediterranean at the Pillars of Melqart, later called the Pillars of

Herakles, where an effigy of the god was also sacrificed and awakened.⁷³² Both the myth of the death of Melqart and the practice of his *egersis* rites must have been famous from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. The Tyrian priests may have also told Herodotos the foundation myth of Tyre, like the ones preserved by Nonnos and Philo of Byblos, which describe the burning tree of Tyre, the stelae dedicated to Wind and Fire, and the city ruled by Melqart, “king of the city.” The stelae may have been symbolically represented by the gold and emerald pillars of the temple of Melqart, who, in turn, burns and awakens each year.⁷³³ Moreover, the stelae of Melqart’s temple at Tyre were mirrored by the stelae at his sanctuary at Gades, thus linking the Tyrian cult network of Melqart at its farthest points.⁷³⁴ The evidence for Melqart’s myth and ritual is mapped on to major Phoenician settlements, such as Tyre, Gades, and Pyrgi. Thus, wherever Tyre colonized, there the flaming rites of Melqart legitimated Tyrian endeavors and contributed to the fame of his name. Thus, even with loss of Phoenician literary sources, the mythology of Melqart continues to shine through our Greek sources.

The fifth-century BCE was a period of dynamic cultural exchange and a hotbed of syncretism between the myths of Herakles and Melqart. By the fourth-century BCE the rites of *egersis* are still being performed when Alexander besieges Tyre, and the story of Melqart’s death and rebirth is syncretized with Herakles in a Greek myth reported by

⁷³² The pillars were originally called the Pillars of Melqart (Burkert 1985: 2010).

⁷³³ For the stelae in Philo’s myth (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10-9.11) as a reference to the pillars of the temple of Melqart described in Herodotos, see Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2019: 618.

⁷³⁴ Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2018, 2019.

Eudoxos of Knidos and others.⁷³⁵ Herodotos reports a Greek myth that adapts the storyline of the death and rebirth of Melqart, the “Egyptian Herakles,” and is reinterpreted for a Greek audience as a myth of the unsuccessful sacrifice of Herakles. In addition to chronology and genealogy, Herodotos uses this myth as a way to define Greek Herakles in opposition to Egyptian Herakles, and ultimately, to further define Hellenicity. The stark difference between Hellenic Herakles and Tyrian Herakles is that the Phoenicians sacrifice their god Melqart each year, whereas the Greeks do not tolerate the sacrifice of Herakles. During the same period, Greek representations of Herakles’ self-immolation first occur, and Sophokles connects Herakles’ death on the pyre with the performance of a sacrifice when the fire from the *thusia* triggers the poison in his cloak and leads to his own self-immolation.

In the following chapters, I will investigate further evidence that will further illuminate the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart by contextualizing the god’s mythology Melqart with other Levantine stories about death and rebirth, such as the Ugaritic *Baal Epic* and Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22. I will then present the testimony of Philo of Byblos, who records a Phoenician myth about El’s sacrifice of his son, a myth about *divine child sacrifice*, and I will demonstrate how Philo’s story offers a more holistic view to our understanding of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart.

⁷³⁵ The Sidonians had a community at the Athenian port of Piraios by at least the fourth-century BCE, and Greek and Phoenicians were in contact well before that period as well. See the Phoenician inscriptions from Piraios (*KAI* 53; 60).

Chapter 5: West Levantine Myths of Sacrifice and Rebirth: The Syro-Canaanite and Israelite Background

“From the head of the Holy One, blessed be He. And in the Age to Come He shakes the hair of His head, and thus brings down the reviving dew and revives the dead.”
-Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 34⁷³⁶

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I read the story of the sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos as a creative adaptation of a lost Phoenician myth about the sacrifice and awakening of the Tyrian god Melqart. The immolation of the god Melqart is analogous to human sacrifice, a practice attributed to the cult of Molech by biblical sources and attested archaeologically at the Tyrian colony of Carthage.⁷³⁷ In the following two chapters (5 and 6), I continue the exploration of the myth of Melqart by bringing in evidence from the Phoenician myths preserved in the work of the Roman-era author Philo of Byblos. In particular, I analyze Philo’s Phoenician myth that describes the god El’s sacrifice of his son Ieoud and show how the myth deepens our understanding of the myth of Melqart’s sacrifice.

My analysis builds on the original conclusions of George Heider, who reassessed the evidence for child sacrifice and the cult of Molech from the Hebrew Bible and

⁷³⁶ Midrash on Isaiah 26:19. Translation by Spiegel (1967: 32).

⁷³⁷ For the cult of Molech and human sacrifice among the Carthaginians, see my discussion in section 2 below. For a comprehensive history of Carthage, see Hoyos 2010.

connected the origins of the god Molech with the cult of the god Melqart.⁷³⁸ Heider reevaluated a long-standing question: is the biblical Molech the name of the deity whose cult was involved in child sacrifice or a misinterpretation of the *molk*-ritual known from Punic inscriptions?⁷³⁹ Heider approached the question by bringing in other Near Eastern sources that showed evidence for a Syro-Palestinian deity called Malik, Milku, or Molech, an underworld god who was connected to deified royal ancestors, and whose name originated from the Semitic root MLK, “to rule.”⁷⁴⁰ Heider concluded that the

⁷³⁸ Heider 1985. Eissfeldt (1935: 38) argued that the name Molech is a misunderstanding of the rendering *l'mōlek*, “as a *molk* sacrifice.” The form *l'mōlek* occurs in the oldest reference to Molech in Leviticus 18:21. The Greek Septuagint, however, transliterates the Hebrew word Molech variously as Μολοχ (4 Kingdoms 23:10), Μολοχ βασιλει (Jer 39:35), and ἀρχων (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-4). Heider (1985: 223-228), on the other hand, argued that the name Molech is a participial form from the root MLK “to rule,” vocalized as *mōlek*. Day (1989: 46-50) follows the arguments of Heider that the name Molech is derived from the Semitic root MLK “king.”

⁷³⁹ Otto Eissfeldt (1935) first argued that Molech in the Hebrew Bible was a reference to the *molk* sacrifice. His arguments were defended by Paul G. Mosca (1975). For a review of the scholarship, as well as Heider’s own approach, see Heider 1985: 1-94. For a more recent review of the history of scholarship on the question of Molech and *molk*, see Stavranopoulou 2004: 207-300. For a brief introduction to human sacrifice among the Punic colonies, see McCarty 2019.

⁷⁴⁰ See Heider’s extensive analysis of literary and epigraphical evidence from Ebla, Mari, Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Phoenicia (1985: 93-194). In particular, the most common theophoric element in personal names from the texts at Ebla is *ma-lik* from the root *mlk* “to rule” (ibid., 96-98). There is, however, no clear evidence for child sacrifice at Ebla (ibid. 100-101). At Mari, there is evidence for the divine name *Malik* (ibid., 102-107), also at Mari there is evidence in ritual texts for royal sacrifices (*kispum*) to the god *Malik*, and the sacrifices may be involved with dead royal ancestors (ibid., 108-110), but there is no evidence for child sacrifice at Mari (ibid., 113). At Ugarit (ibid., 113-133), we find the name *Milku* in two texts (RS 24.244 and 24.251), and in a text describing a ritual for deceased kings we find an epithet for *MLK*, the god of death: *rp'u mlk 'lm*, “Rāpi’u, King of Eternity” (RS. 24.252.1). In his review of Heider, Dennis Pardee (1990: 372) says that this text refers both to the status of *MLK* as an Underworld deity and to the healing powers associated with the chthonic deities known as *Rapa’ūma*. In the section of the book dedicated to Ugaritic evidence, Heider (1985: 115-128) builds on the arguments of John F. Healey (1975: 235-238 and 1977: 89), who associated the *rpum* with fertility. For *mlk* as a possible epithet for *Mot*, the Ugaritic god of death, see Cooper 1981: 446. In another text (RS 34.126), the *Rpum*, as the dead ancestors and source of fertility, are invited to share a meal with the kings (*mlkm*). The evidence suggests that the *Rpum* and *mlkm* are identical as “dead kings” or somehow related. There is also no convincing evidence of human sacrifice at Ugarit (Heider 1985: 142-147). In the Akkadian texts (ibid., 150-160), the name *Maliku* occurs, though with no connections to fertility, which Heider argues is consistent with a god borrowed from Syro-Palestinian sphere. The Phoenician and Punic evidence (ibid., 174-194) gives support for personal and divine names with the elements *MLK* “king” and *MLqrt*, the god Melqart. There is also evidence for the term *mlk* from the Punic stelae. The Punic archaeological evidence is the clearest for the practice of child sacrifice (see discussion in section 2 below). Heider also analyzes the Mesopotamian archaeological evidence for human sacrifice (ibid., 204-210). In particular, Heider reassesses the arguments

biblical Molech was, in fact, a Canaanite deity related to a milieu of Near Eastern underworld deities associated with the Semitic root MLK “to rule.” In a similar vein, Bonnet argued that the Tyrian god Melqart originated from this same milieu of gods.⁷⁴¹ Thus, Melqart’s etymology is related to his origins as a divinized king.⁷⁴² In his conclusions, Heider proposed the theory that the biblical Molech cult originated under the influence of Tyre and that Molech was the counterpart of Melqart. As he suggested, the Tyrian connection would point to a common origin for the biblical Molech cult and the *molk* sacrifice of the Punic colonies.⁷⁴³ If this hypothesis can be maintained, then the constellation of terms Molech, *molk*, and Melqart could all have been derived from the same Semitic root for “king,” or at least they could have been understood as such in antiquity.

Heider, however, later reconsidered his conclusion and stated that the equation between Melqart and Molech is unlikely.⁷⁴⁴ More recently, Francesca Stavrakopoulou has pointed out the uncertainty of Heider’s arguments and argued, “there is not sufficient

of Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green (1975: 57-58, 77-79), who presented compelling evidence of child burials near the altars of private homes called “chapel sacrifices” as support for the existence of child sacrifice in Mesopotamia. Heider concludes that although there is good reason to believe that child sacrifice was practiced, there is not sufficient evidence to be certain (ibid., 210). Finally, Heider presents the evidence for Molech from the biblical sources (ibid., 223-383). There is also evidence for the god *Milk* in the name *Milkashtart* mentioned in inscriptions, a composite of the gods *Milk* and *Ashtart* (see Pardee 1988b: 55-68). *Milkashtart* could also be interpreted as “King of (the city of) *Ashtart*” (Amadasi Guzzo 1991). For the possible etymologies of the Punic term *molk*, see Day 1989: 4-8. Eissfeldt (1935: 4) argued the term was related to Syriac *m^elak*, “to promise.” Day (1989: 8) follows the conclusions of von Soden (1936), who argued that *molk* is a performative noun derived from the root *hmk*, “to go.” More recent consensus is that the word *mlk* is a causal participle (Xella 2012-2013: 269). For a reassessment of the etymology, see Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 354.

⁷⁴¹ Bonnet 1988: 417-434.

⁷⁴² Ibid., 426-430. Melqart is composed of the Semitic roots *mlk*, “king” and *qrt*, “city” (ibid., 19).

⁷⁴³ Heider 1987: 404-405. John Day (1989), who builds upon the work of George Heider, provides a succinct summary of the sources and history of scholarship regarding the question of Molech. More recently, Stavrakopoulou (2004: 207-239) reviews in detail the scholarship of Day, Heider, and others.

⁷⁴⁴ Heider 1999: 583.

evidence of child sacrifice within Melqart-worship.”⁷⁴⁵ Classical sources, however, do attest to connections between Melqart and human sacrifice.⁷⁴⁶ In their review of Heider’s work, Saul M. Olyan and Mark S. Smith took specific issue with Heider’s lack of attention to the myth of child sacrifice in Philo of Byblos, which points to El as the patron god of child sacrifice.⁷⁴⁷ In the following two chapters, I follow the observations of Olyan and Smith by filling in the gap left by Heider and show how Philo’s myth of child sacrifice is an important piece of the puzzle for understanding the connections between Molech, *mol*k, and Melqart.⁷⁴⁸

Moreover, I add my analysis of Philo’s myth to the discussion of the attempted sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 and Levantine stories about death and rebirth. Jon D. Levenson had already attributed this episode and the motif of the death of Baal in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle to a common pattern of myth in the Near East that depicts the death and resurrection of the first-born son.⁷⁴⁹ Along similar lines, Xella states that the death and resurrection of Baal in the *Baal Epic* is a “paradigmatic model” for the death and

⁷⁴⁵ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 215.

⁷⁴⁶ Cicero (*Balb.* 43; *Ad. Fam.* 10.32.3) attests to human sacrifice at the Phoenician colony of Gades where there was a famous sanctuary to Melqart (see my Chapter 3). Pliny (*Natural History* 36.39) also records that human sacrifice was performed by the Carthaginians to Herakles (i.e., Melqart). Cf. Ribichini (2020: 247), who argues that the sacrifice to Herakles has nothing to do with the *mol*k rites.

⁷⁴⁷ Olyan and Smith 1987: 274. These scholars have argued against the conclusions of Heider that Molech is a deity, preferring the reading of Eissfeldt that *mōlek* is a sacrificial term and not a deity. More specifically, they contest Heider’s use of Ugaritic material and contend that in RS 24.252 the term *mlk* “king” can just as likely be an epithet for a god *rp’u* (i.e., “Rapi’u, king of eternity”), rather than Heider’s understanding of the text as “the Healer, the eternal king” (Heider 1985: 138). Cf. Pardee (2002: 193-194) who follows the lead of these scholars in his translation of the text. Additionally, Olyan and Smith dispute Heider’s argument (1985: 136) that the Ugaritic word *mūlik* corresponds to Hebrew *mōlek* as an instance of the Canaanite shift (*ā becomes ō).

⁷⁴⁸ The connections between this cluster of names was first explored by Dussaud 1904, before extensive research into Canaanite religion.

⁷⁴⁹ Levenson 1993, see especially pgs. 33-34 and 124. Omri Boehm (2007: 53-55) follow’s Levenson’s conclusions.

resurrection of the Baal of Tyre, Melqart.⁷⁵⁰ In the next chapter, I argue that both Philo's myth of the sacrifice of Ieoud and the myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart should also be attributed to this pattern of Levantine myth identified by Levenson. In particular, I show how Philo's story about child sacrifice should be interpreted as a story about divine sacrifice and immortalization. Thus, we can gain further insights about the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart by comparing the motif with extant testimonies of Near Eastern myth, such as the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Genesis 22, and Philo's myth of Ieoud. Despite the disagreement between Heider and Olyan and Smith, I build upon the original conclusions of Heider but fill in the gap with specific attention to Philo. Therefore, I aim to demonstrate how Philo's myth of the sacrifice of Ieoud provides important information for reconstructing the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart and the possible Tyrian origins of the Punic *molk* sacrifice. Moreover, I argue that we cannot fully understand the Punic *molk* ritual without contextualizing it with the Tyrian cult of Melqart and the Phoenician myths about divine sacrifice.

In the previous chapter, I showed how Herodotos adapts into Greek myth the themes of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. I situated this myth within the framework of cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean to show how popular stories were readily adaptable by neighboring cultures to conform to their particular theology. In these two chapters (5 and 6), I explore Levantine stories about sacrifice that adapt similar themes: the Ugaritic story of Baal in the Baal Cycle, the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in the Hebrew Bible, and the sacrifice of Ieoud in the fragmentary

⁷⁵⁰ Xella 2001c and 2019: 275. Cf. Bonnet 1988: 244-247. For the death of Baal and the funeral rites performed by Anat, see *KTU* 1.5.vi.8-1.6.i.29. For his return to life, see *KTU* 1.6.v.1ff.

Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos. I break up my analysis into two chapters (5 and 6). In Chapter 5, I survey the Syro-Canaanite and west Levantine background of the myth of child sacrifice preserved in Philo. I begin this chapter by introducing the fragments of Philo of Byblos and by a close reading of his theory of sacrifice. In my reading of Philo's text, I take his account of the origins of ritual practices as an ancient theory of sacrifice and use Philo's own "theory of sacrifice," which I show is based on the fertility cycle, to interpret his Phoenician myth about child sacrifice.⁷⁵¹ Next, I survey the literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence for child sacrifice among the Phoenicians and Punic colonies to provide a historical background to my analysis of the myths. Then I examine the texts from Bronze Age Ugarit and highlight the connections between fertility, sacrifice, and kingship. Moreover, I show how the Ugaritic myth of Baal relates the common pattern of death and rebirth identified by Levenson. Finally, I turn to a close reading of the biblical story of the sacrifice of Isaac and show how the story also relates this common Levantine pattern of death, and more specifically, sacrifice and rebirth.

Then in Chapter 6, I offer a close reading of Philo's two accounts of child sacrifice (a "short" and "long version") to show how the narrative of the sacrifice of Ieoud can be interpreted as a story about sacrifice and rebirth and thereby provides ancillary evidence, previously neglected by scholars, for understanding the myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. I conclude Chapter 6 by speculating on the possible Tyrian origins of the Punic rites of child sacrifice, which I connect to the yearly sacrifice of Tyrian Melqart at the *egersis* rites.

⁷⁵¹ Attridge and Oden (1981: 75 n.21) do identify Philo's origins of cult practices as a theory, but they do not identify it as a theory of sacrifice and they do not elaborate on the implications of the theory for Philo's accounts about sacrifice.

1. Philo of Byblos and the Phoenician Origins of Sacrifice

a. Introduction to Philo as a Source for Phoenician Mythology

As Levenson has argued, the story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac in Genesis 22 draws from a general story pattern in Levantine traditions where a father sacrifices his son (such as Ieoud) or he loses his son by enslavement or death (such as Baal), but the son is reborn (actually or metaphorically) with the promise of fertility.⁷⁵² As we shall see, fertility is an important theme in all these Levantine stories about death and rebirth. In the following section, I analyze Philo of Byblos' theory of sacrifice, which pertains to the origins of Phoenician rituals, and in particular, as I will argue, to child sacrifice. According to Philo, these origins are rooted in the worship of gods associated with fertility, the natural cycle of life and death, and I argue they are foundational for understanding Philo's accounts of child sacrifice.⁷⁵³ Rather than using modern theories of sacrifice as an interpretative framework, I deploy Philo's own "ancient" theory about the origins of sacrifice to interpret his own aitiological story about child sacrifice.

⁷⁵² Levenson 1993: 33.

⁷⁵³ For fertility cult in the ancient Near East, see Pope 1962. For fertility cult among the Canaanite peoples, see Gray 1964: 87-88, 119-138. For symbols of fertility, such as the sucking mother animal and the stylized tree, in the early iconography of the mother goddess in ancient Israel, see Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 128-131. In the early depictions of the naked mother goddess from the Middle Bronze Age IIB period, the goddess holds branches and the genitalia are frequently emphasized as a personification of the fertility of the earth (ibid., 1998: 26-29). For a recent study of fertility rites in Palestine during the early Bronze Age, see de Miroschedji 2011. The Phoenicians practiced sacred prostitution as part of the heirogamic rite during the celebrations of their dying and rising god Melqart, as well as to promote the fertility of nature (see Lipiński 1993: 272). Sacred prostitutes are known especially by the term *'mt* (*š*) *'štrt* "female servants of Astarte" (CIS I, 2632.3-4; 3776.4). Classical and Christian authors also attest to these practices at Cyprus (Hdt. 1.199; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 2.13.4; Just. *Epit.* 18.5.4). On the Greek side of things, Hesiod's *Works and Days* is a potent example of the importance of agriculture and fertility, and more specifically, Hesiod connects the myth of Pandora, herself an image of female fecundity with the origins of manual labor. For an edited volume dedicated to the issue of fertility cult in the Mediterranean, see Bonanno 1986.

The first to second-century CE Roman author Philo of Byblos recorded stories about Phoenician sacrifice in his *Phoenician History*, written in Greek, fragments of which are quoted in the works of the fourth-century CE Church Father, Eusebios of Caesarea.⁷⁵⁴ Philo's main sources for his history were the records of an elusive Phoenician author known as Sanchuniathon, who allegedly received his information from an ancient priest named Hierombalos, who Philo claims obtained his knowledge directly from the god Tautos (Thoth in Egyptian, Hermes in Greek).⁷⁵⁵ This tangled stream of transmission is complicated further by the fact that Philo's text is first quoted by Porphyry of Tyre in the third-century CE, whom Eusebios then quotes. Moreover, this line of transmission focused on the cosmogonic opening sections of Philo's *Phoenician History*, so the rest is lost.⁷⁵⁶ The authenticity and reliability of Philo and his source Sanchuniathon have been greatly disputed by scholars over the years, but thanks to the discovery and decipherment of the texts from Ugarit, which have provided comparative material, scholars now generally agree that Philo is an important source for Phoenician

⁷⁵⁴ Attridge and Oden 1981: 2 and Baumgarten 1981: 6-7. For the manuscript tradition of the text of Eusebios, see Baumgarten 1981: 7. Attridge and Oden use the edition of Karl Mras 1954 as the basis for their text of the fragments of Philo and the text of Felix Jakoby 1958 for other fragments and testimonia not quoted by Eusebios. Baumgarten uses the edition of Jakoby. For a review of Baumgarten 1981, see Edward Lipiński 1983. For a review of both Baumgarten 1981 and Attridge and Oden 1981, see Pardee 1988a.

⁷⁵⁵ For Sanchuniathon and Hierombalos, see Attridge and Oden 1981: 20-21 = Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.20-21. The name Hierombalos may be an invention, derived from the Greek words *hieros* and the Canaanite god Baal (Attridge and Oden 1981: 24 n.22). For Tautos, see *ibid.*, 28-29 = Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.24. Philo says that the first Phoenician hierophant preserved the words of Tautos, interpreted them allegorically, and then transmitted them to the priests (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.39).

⁷⁵⁶ West (1994: 294-296) argues Eusebios may have worked from the text of Philo as well as Porphyry's quotations of Philo, and Porphyry's version may have preserved an older variant of Philo's text. Porphyry claims that Sanchuniathon lived before the Trojan war in the time of Queen Semiramis of Assyria (Porphyry in Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.19-22).

religion.⁷⁵⁷ Next I discuss some of the problems and evidence in favor of the use of Philo as a source for older mythological traditions.

One of the obstacles is the disappearance of Phoenician literature, which makes it difficult to corroborate the myths in Philo. Also, Philo was a Roman writing in Greek and drawing from Greek literary traditions, such as Hesiod. Thus, Philo's work is highly Hellenized. But in fact, this cultural relationship is more complicated, since, by the period in which Philo was writing in, Greek and Phoenician mythological traditions were already intertwined, in such a way that it now remains the task of the scholar to disentangle the various strands of literary conventions.⁷⁵⁸

Along these lines, scholars debate whether Philo is an authentic source for Phoenician myths or whether he is simply a Roman author who constructs Phoenician identity for the purpose of a literary exercise. Anthony Kaldellis uses the sociological concept of "symbolic ethnicity" to describe the literary constructions of Phoenician identity typical among scholars in the Roman period.⁷⁵⁹ On the other hand, as Kaldellis argues, a more "durable" example of Phoenician identity does survive behind the

⁷⁵⁷ Attridge and Oden 1981: 5-6. Otto Gruppe (1887: 374) expressed doubts about the authenticity of Sanchuniathon. However, the name Sanchuniathon (*Sknytn*, "the god *Skn* has given") has been discovered at the Phoenician colony of Hadrumetum. For a discussion of the vocalization of the god *Skn* and his possible identification with the Greek god Hermes, see Baumgarten 1981: 42-45. Lipiński (1983: 307) notes that the name occurs on a cuneiform tablet from Kuyunjik from the seventh-century BCE in the form *Ab-di-si-ku[-ni] (?)*. Charles Virolleaud (1931: 22) first compared the divine names and myths from Philo with those of Ugarit to affirm the veracity of Philo. Albright (1956: 70-71) follows the conclusions of Virolleaud. For Philo's work as a source for Canaanite and Phoenician religion and culture, see the introductions in Baumgarten 1981; Attridge and Oden 1981; López-Ruiz 2010: 86-87. For an alternate view, that Philo's cosmogony can be dated no early than the period of the Achaemenids, see Edwards 1991. For the problems in using Ugaritic texts and Philo's work for reconstructing Phoenician religion, see Clifford 1990. For a general introduction to Phoenician religion, see Xella 2019.

⁷⁵⁸ For a discussion of these issues, see López-Ruiz 2010: 94-101 and Baumgarten 1981: 1-7.

⁷⁵⁹ Kaldellis 2019.

classical conventions of authors such as Pomponius Mela and Philo of Byblos.⁷⁶⁰ As scholars have long shown beyond doubt, Philo uses at least some theogonic material that could only be derived from Canaanite sources.⁷⁶¹ Moreover, Jordi Cors i Meya has examined Philo's work from a linguistic standpoint and shown that Philo uses Semitic elements in his writing style such that he is probably translating from a Northwest Semitic source.⁷⁶² Accordingly, in her study of Philo's cultural identity, López-Ruiz concludes that Philo's work is not simply a case of constructed identity, nor is it the outcome of a purely Phoenician tradition, but rather his intellectual identity draws from "a well-grounded sense of Phoenician pride," which was "built on the long-lasting dialogue between Greek and Phoenician cultures."⁷⁶³ Building upon this scholarship, I use Philo as a source for Phoenician myths, but I also acknowledge the problems in recovering the original shape of those myths.

Scholars also debate the time period and origins of Sanchuniathon, Philo's alleged source. William Foxwell Albright and Frede Løkkegaard argued that Sanchuniathon lived in the middle of the first millennium BCE.⁷⁶⁴ Albright argued, "Sanchuniathon was a refugee from Tyre who settled in Berytus about the second quarter of the sixth century

⁷⁶⁰ Kaldellis 2019: 688.

⁷⁶¹ Baumgarten 1981: 5; Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009. López-Ruiz (2010: 84-129) discusses many of these similarities, especially coming from Ugaritic mythological and ritual texts, and she provides a convenient table comparing the succession myths of Hesiod, Philo, the Hebrew Bible, the Ugaritic deity lists, and other Near Eastern theogonies (ibid. 88 = table 1).

⁷⁶² Cors i Meya 1997 and 2003: 63-65.

⁷⁶³ López-Ruiz 2017b: 386.

⁷⁶⁴ Albright 1956: 70; Løkkegaard 1954: 51. Scholars propose other dates: Eissfeldt (1952: 68) argues for the second millennium BCE (For other references see Attridge and Oden 1981: 6 n.26); West (1966: 26) argues for the Persian or Hellenistic period.

B.C.”⁷⁶⁵ More recently, Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden, Jr. have argued that Sanchuniathon lived during the Hellenistic or Roman periods.⁷⁶⁶ Nevertheless, other traditions who mention Sanchuniathon besides Philo attribute an earlier date.⁷⁶⁷ It is, however, difficult to know the time period of Sanchuniathon with certainty. The Tyrian association of Sanchuniathon (or whatever Philo’s original source was) is more certain. According to Albert I. Baumgarten, the fragments describing the first humans and discoverers of the necessities of human life are derived from a Tyrian source.⁷⁶⁸ Also, Philo records an origin story of Tyre in which the trees of Tyre rubbed against each other and burned down.⁷⁶⁹ The authenticity of this myth is corroborated by a different version of the founding of Tyre preserved by Nonnos, who mentions a flaming tree as well.⁷⁷⁰ Thus, I read Philo as a reliable source for not just Phoenician myths but Tyrian mythology in particular.

Based on the correspondences between Philo and other Near Eastern traditions, I read Philo as a reliable source for Phoenician myths and religion with the qualification that as scholars we must carefully excavate the authentic Phoenician traditions behind the strata of Greek and Roman literary conventions. Specifically, I argue that Philo presents

⁷⁶⁵ Albright 1968: 195. Porphyry says Sanchuniathon was from Beirut (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.21), but the Suda (*FGH* 794, F6b) says he was from Tyre. I follow the tradition of the Suda.

⁷⁶⁶ Attridge and Oden 1981: 9.

⁷⁶⁷ For a general view of the dating of Sanchuniathon, see the commentary on the new edition of the text of Philo in the BNJ 790 F 1 (Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009). It is also possible that Sanchuniathon was not a historical author, such as the case with the texts attributed to Orpheus, or if he was historical, he was legendary and little was known about him, as in the case of Homer.

⁷⁶⁸ Baumgarten 1981: 177-178.

⁷⁶⁹ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.

⁷⁷⁰ Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.469-492. For depictions of the tree on Tyrian coins, see Bonnet 1988: fig. 3. a-b.

an aitiology of child sacrifice that provides further insight into the Tyrian myth of the sacrifice of Melqart. I also rely on the possibility that Sanchuniathon was of Tyrian descent, and thus, he would have had extensive knowledge of the myths of Tyre's most important god, Melqart. In the following analysis, I present Philo's theory of sacrifice as a model for interpreting his accounts about sacrifice. After an analysis of comparative material from the Levant in Chapter 5, in the following chapter I identify contextual and linguistic clues in Philo's story of child sacrifice that provide further understanding for the fragmentary Phoenician myth of Melqart.

A central issue for the study of Philo's myths is his Euhemerist interpretation of Phoenician mythology.⁷⁷¹ Euhemerism employs a rationalization of mythology by reinterpreting myths as historical events.⁷⁷² Philo establishes in the preface of his work that the Phoenicians and Egyptians divinized the humans who made the greatest discoveries benefiting humanity.⁷⁷³ A noteworthy feature of Philo's work is the juxtaposition of the Phoenicians and Egyptians, a feature we also witnessed in Herodotos.⁷⁷⁴ According to Philo, the Phoenicians only considered gods to be the

⁷⁷¹ For Phoenician Euhemerism, see López-Ruiz 2017b.

⁷⁷² For a study of the history of Euhemerism from antiquity to the present, see Roubekas 2016.

⁷⁷³ This view of the gods is also attributed to Sanchoniathon by Theodoret of Kyrus, near Antioch, Syria, in the fifth century CE: Καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τὸν Κρόνον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι Σαγχωνιάθων ἔφησε καὶ γυναῖκα τὴν Ῥέαν τὴν ἐκείνου ὁμόζυγα καὶ τὸν Δία καὶ τὴν Ἥραν ἐκείνων γε παῖδας, εἴτα εὐεργεσιῶν τινῶν ἄρξαντας καὶ δεξαμένους τοῦ βίου τὸ τέλος, θείας παρὰ Φοινίκων ἀξιωθῆναι τιμῆς, καὶ θεοὺς ἀναγορευθῆναι καὶ βωμοῖς καὶ θυσίαις καὶ ἐτησίοις τιμηθῆναι δημοθοιναίαις. "For Sanchoniathon even said Kronos was a man and his wife Rhea was a woman and Zeus and Hera were their children, he then said that when they had begun certain public services and reached an end of life, they were considered worthy of divine honor by the Phoenicians, and they were called gods and honored with altars and sacrifices and yearly festivals" (Theodoret, *Graec. aff. cur.* 3.25-26).

⁷⁷⁴ Philo says that the rest of humanity received their traditions from the Phoenicians and Egyptians (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.29). In the fragments of his treatise on serpents (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.45-53), Philo discusses both the Egyptian and Phoenician traditions and names of snakes. López-Ruiz (2010: 158-159) discusses some of the Egyptianizing features of Philo's account.

manifestations of nature, such as the sun, moon, and planets. Philo explains how the first humans divinized the plants that sprouted from the earth and worshiped the plants by which humans were sustained. By rationalizing the worship of “the gods,” Philo develops an ancient theory of sacrifice that is based upon gods associated with fertility and the natural cycle of the seasons. An important implication of Philo’s Euhemerist approach is that the god El’s sacrifice of his son Ieoud is an act equivalent to human sacrifice, as we shall see.

b. Philo’s Theory of Sacrifice

In the following narrative, Philo sets out his theory of sacrifice:

ἀλλ' οὐτοί γε **πρῶτοι ἀφιέρωσαν τὰ τῆς γῆς βλαστήματα**, καὶ θεοὺς ἐνόμισαν, καὶ **προσεκύνουν** ταῦτα, ἀφ' ὧν αὐτοί τε **διεγένοντο** καὶ οἱ ἐπόμενοι καὶ οἱ πρὸ αὐτῶν πάντες, καὶ **χοὰς καὶ ἐπιθύσεις ἐποίουν**. <ἔλεον δὲ καὶ οἶκτον καὶ κλαυθμὸν βλαστήματι γῆς ἀπιόντι **καθιέρουν**, καὶ **γενέσει** ζώων ἐκ γῆς **πρώτῃ** καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἀλλήλων καὶ **τελευτῇ**, καθ' ἣν τοῦ ζῆν ἀπέρχοντο>

But these **first humans**, at least, **considered sacred the things which sprouted up from the earth** and recognized them as gods. **They worshiped** the things by means of which they and all their descendants and ancestors **were sustained**; and **they made libations and incense offerings**. [They established rituals of pity, lamentation and mourning for the vegetation when it departed from the earth, and for the birth of animals, both their **initial birth** from the earth and subsequently their birth from other animals, and also their **death**, when they departed from life.]”

(Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.5)⁷⁷⁵

Philo introduces his theory of sacrifice as an aitiology with the word *πρῶτοι*, “the first humans,” indicating that this type of ritual is the first of its kind. According to Philo, the

⁷⁷⁵ Text and Translation by Attridge and Oden 1981: 34-35. According to Attridge and Oden, “The material enclosed in brackets is omitted from the citation in *PE* 1.10.6” (1981: 75 n.21). Jacoby 1958 (*FGH*) and Mras 1954 leave this passage in their editions, as do Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009.

Phoenicians first consecrated the plants of the earth (ἀφιέρωσαν τὰ τῆς γῆς βλαστήματα) and worshiped them as gods (προσεκύνουν).⁷⁷⁶ The reason for doing so was because their ancestors subsisted on these plants for life (διεγένοντο). Philo links the practice of bringing offerings to the gods to the human awareness of, and dependence on, the cycle of nature and the plants that nature provides. Moreover, Philo uses the terms ἀφιέρωσαν “they considered sacred” and καθιέρουν “they established rituals,” whose Greek root, the noun ἱερός “sacred,” produces the common Greek word for offerings ἱερά, known from the formulaic term *hiera kala*, “beautiful offerings.”⁷⁷⁷

In worship of these gods, namely plants, the Phoenicians offered libations and incense (χοὰς καὶ ἐπιθύσεις). Although Attridge and Oden translate the word χοὰς simply as “libations,” the word technically describes libations made to the dead (i.e., funeral libations), as opposed to the terms λοιβή and σπονδή, which are libations poured out to the Olympian gods.⁷⁷⁸ Thus, the word is specifically associated with the worship of the dead. It is noteworthy that the first sacrifices were not animal sacrifices but rather non-bloody offerings of libations and incense. This view of the vegetal origins of sacrifice is also expressed by Porphyry of Tyre in his *On the Abstinence from Killing Animals*.⁷⁷⁹ The fact that these origins are attributed by two authors of “durable”

⁷⁷⁶ The verb προσκύνειω literally means “to fall down and kiss” but is defined by the *LSJ* as “to make obeisance to the gods or their images” and “to fall down and worship.” This meaning is attested as early as the classical period (e.g., Pl. *Resp.* 469a; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.18; Hdt. 2.121).

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 1.147; Hes. *Op.* 336.

⁷⁷⁸ For χοή to the dead, see Hom. *Od.* 10.518 and 11.26. For λοιβή as a libation in conjunction with a burnt offering, see Hom. *Il.* 9.500. For σπονδή as a libation of wine poured out to the gods, see Hes. *Op.* 338.

⁷⁷⁹ Porphyry, *De Abstentia* 4.5

Phoenician identity indicates that this theory of sacrifice is not a superficial feature of Phoenician theology.⁷⁸⁰

In Philo's discussion of sacrifice, the terms *χοῶς*, "libations," and *ἐπιθύσεις*, "incense" denote two types of worship, namely worship for the dead (*χοῶς*), which we can translate as "funerary libations," and all other types of sacrifice that involve the immolation of vegetal matter, namely incense (*ἐπιθύσεις*). Philo clarifies the meaning of these offerings by explaining how the Phoenicians established rites (*καθιέρουν*) to commemorate the decay of the vegetation and rites to celebrate the birth of animals. Thus, Philo links the origins of sacrifice to rituals in observance of the cycles of life. Moreover, Philo emphasizes that the worship of gods is based on the birth and death of plants and animals, a theoretical model that fits within a Frazerian interpretation of dying and rising gods as part of fertility rites, such as that of Melqart. In sum, the Phoenicians provide offerings in worship of deities associated with the cycles of life and death in nature.⁷⁸¹ The compound verbs *καθιερώω* "to consecrate" and *ἀφιερώνω* "to consecrate," which are both ultimately derived from the noun *ιερός* "sacred," are important verbs that Philo uses in his theory of sacrifice, but also, as I will show, in Philo's other accounts about the immortalization of deities, such as Ouranos and Kronos.

Philo's theory of sacrifice is then followed by a linear development about how those rites developed. In the edition by Attridge and Oden, the theory quoted above is followed by a Phoenician cosmogony and then a description of the history of the ascent

⁷⁸⁰ Porphyry was named "Malkos" at birth, and although he was born at Tyre he never claims to be a Phoenician. His name "Porphyry" is a nickname meaning "purple," which alludes to his Phoenician heritage (Clark 2000: 4).

⁷⁸¹ Eliade (1963: 414-415; 1959) discusses the worship of the cycles of life and death among ancient societies at length.

of Phoenician culture.⁷⁸² In the passage about the history of culture, Philo continues his Euhemerist approach of assigning the identity of the gods and primal forces to mortal beings. For example, Philo claims that the “gods” who are called Light, Fire, and Flame were really mortals.⁷⁸³ Moreover, they were given those names because they discovered fire by rubbing sticks together, a rational explanation for myth. In this way, Philo offers an account of the “first inventors” (*protoi heuretai*) of important aspects of Phoenician culture.⁷⁸⁴ Next, Philo describes the history of the founder of Tyre, Hypsouranios. The theme of fire is carried over to the foundation myth that describes the burning tree of Tyre. Philo then relates how the origins of animal sacrifice arose out of the origins of culture:

εἰτά φησι τὸν Ὑψουράνιον οἰκῆσαι Τύρον, καλύβας τε ἐπινοῆσαι ἀπὸ καλάμων καὶ θρύων καὶ παπύρου· στασιάσαι δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Οὔσων, ὃς σκέπην τῷ σώματι πρῶτος ἐκ δερμάτων ὧν ἴσχυσε συλλαβεῖν θηρίων εὖρε. ῥαγδαίων δὲ γενομένων ὄμβρων καὶ πνευμάτων, **παρατριβέντα τὰ ἐν τῇ Τύρῳ δένδρα πῦρ ἀνάψαι**, καὶ τὴν αὐτῶν ὕλην καταφλέξει· δένδρου δὲ λαβόμενον τὸν Οὔσων καὶ ἀποκλαδεύσαντα πρῶτον τολμήσαι εἰς θάλασσαν ἐμβῆναι· **ἀνιερώσαι δὲ δύο στήλας Πυρὶ καὶ Πνεύματι, καὶ προσκυνῆσαι αἷμά τε σπένδειν αὐταῖς ἐξ ὧν ἤγρευε θηρίων**. τούτων δὲ τελευτησάντων, τοὺς ἀπολειφθέντας φησὶ ῥάβδους αὐτοῖς ἀφιερώσαι, καὶ τὰς στήλας προσκυνεῖν, καὶ τούτοις ἐορτάς ἄγειν κατ' ἔτος.

Then he says that Hypsouranios settled Tyre and that he invented huts made of reeds, rushes, and papyrus. He quarreled with his brother, Ousōos, who first discovered how to gather a covering for the body from the hides of animals which he captured. Once, when there were fierce rainstorms and gales, **the trees in Tyre rubbed against one another and started a fire** and it burned down their woodland. Ousōos took part of a tree, cut off the branches and, for the first time ever, dared to travel on the

⁷⁸² See Attridge and Oden 1981: 34-47.

⁷⁸³ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.9.

⁷⁸⁴ For a discussion of the widespread tradition of first inventors in Near Eastern literature, see Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016: 109-110.

sea. **He dedicated two steles for Fire and Wind. He worshiped them and poured out to them libations of blood from the animals which he had hunted.** He says that when these men died, those who survived them dedicated staves to them. They worshiped the steles and conducted annual festival for them. (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10)⁷⁸⁵

As mentioned previously, this passage contains references that correspond with the Tyrian foundation story in Nonnos, namely the flaming tree and the invention of the ship.⁷⁸⁶ Therefore, we can be fairly certain that Philo is using a similar source as Nonnos for his account, and we can situate the story about the first sacrifices as part of the Tyrian mythology. In this passage, Philo explains the Tyrian origins of ritual animal slaughter. Moreover, Philo's Euhemerist approach to mythology as "muddled" and distorted history of chronologically remote events implies that we can read Philo's myths as a history, that is to say, linearly.

According to Philo's account, Ousōos, the first Phoenician at Tyre to build a ship and set sail, dedicated two stelae to the cosmic forces Fire and Wind. These stelae at Tyre, of course, recall the stelae of gold and emerald for the temple of Melqart at Tyre mentioned by Herodotos, and thus Philo's myth is situated within the same Tyrian mythology. After the Phoenician Ousōos deifies (ἀνιερώσαι) the stelae, he begins to slaughter animals as an offering to these deities. The words ἀνιερώσαι "he dedicated" and προσκυνῆσαι "he worshipped" recall other uses of these verbal stems from Philo's theory of sacrifice discussed above (ἀφιέρωσαν and προσεκύουν). Additionally, the word σπένδειν, "to pour a libation," recalls the reference to χοὰς "funeral libations" from Philo's theory of sacrifice. In other words, we can read this passage according to

⁷⁸⁵ Text and Translation by Attridge and Oden 1981: 42-43.

⁷⁸⁶ Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.469-520.

Philo's theory of sacrifice: Ousōos offers blood libations to two divine forces that are simultaneously destructive and creative: the Fire, escalated by the Wind, that destroyed the woods, but also led to the wood for the creation of the first ships that allowed them to establish a trading empire. The first ritual animal slaughter, however, does not include a burnt offering because Ousōos does not burn the animals, instead, he uses their blood for a libation.

The first explicit burnt offering (*thusia*) comes later in the *Phoenician History* when the children (Ouranos and Gaia) of the god Elioun (called "Most High") immortalize their father (ἀφιερώθη) after he dies in a violent encounter with wild animals, and they offer funeral libations (*choas*) and sacrifices (*thusias*) to the divinized Elioun.⁷⁸⁷ The passive form of the verb ἀφιερώθη "he was immortalized" used to describe the deification of Elioun recalls other uses of this verbal root we have already seen, but specifically it is parallel to the verb ἀφιερώσαν "they consecrated (the plants)" from Philo's theory of sacrifice. In other words, the first animal slaughter and the first *thusia* are both variations of the same theoretical framework established by Philo in his theory of sacrifice: the deification and worship of deities associated with the fertility cycle of life and death. I discuss the issue of immortalization in further detail in the next chapter with my analysis of the myth of Ieoud. Although this appears to be the first instance of a burnt offering in the fragments of Philo's *Phoenician History*, in the fragments that survive Philo does not specifically indicate the origins of the burnt offering as he did with the other first sacrifices described above, but the sequence is still

⁷⁸⁷ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.15.

important.⁷⁸⁸ Human sacrifice is then introduced into the *Phoenician History* as the third, final type of ritual (after plants and animals), as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Philo's Phoenician theory of sacrifice, therefore, begins from vegetal offerings and libations because it is fundamentally based around divinities associated with the cycles of life and death. In line with the Euhemerist approach, whereby mythology is reinterpreted through the prism of history, sacrifice then evolves to the slaughter of animals whose blood is used for libations, then to a traditional burnt offering, and eventually to the sacrifice of an infant god (Ieoud), an act which is commensurate with human sacrifice in Philo's Euhemerist approach, as we shall see. To sum up, the importance of Philo's account of sacrifice is that sacrificial offerings are predicated on the worship of the cycles of death and birth in the vegetal, animal, and human kingdoms. This theoretical origin for sacrifice has direct implications for interpreting the rites of child sacrifice described in the myths of Philo, as well as the sacrifice of Melqart, both of which are ultimately linked to fertility rites and the celebration and propitiation of the cycle of life and death, as I will argue in the next chapter.

2. Evidence for Child Sacrifice among the Phoenicians

In the following discussion, I briefly survey the evidence for the practice of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians before my analysis of the Levantine myths about sacrifice and rebirth.⁷⁸⁹ As I discussed in Chapter 5, a typical Phoenician sacrifice was

⁷⁸⁸ It is possible that this part of the mythology was included in the *Phoenician History*, but it is not extant since we only have the parts that later authors decided to quote.

⁷⁸⁹ For a recent survey of the evidence, see McCarty 2019. For the most thorough reassessment of the evidence and the scholarship, see Stavrakopoulou 2004: 207-300.

similar to the typical Israelite burnt offering and involved the ritual killing of a variety of possible animals upon an altar and the complete immolation of the victim.⁷⁹⁰ However, unlike Israelite practice, child sacrifice was also included as part of the extraordinary rites of the western Phoenicians. A cult centered around child sacrifice to the god Molech is found in legal, historical, and prophetic literature from the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁹¹

Archeological evidence, however, has not demonstrated any irrefutable evidence for child sacrifice in the Levant.⁷⁹² In the Punic colonies, however, there is literary, epigraphical, and archeological evidence for the practice of child sacrifice. Besides the literary references to Molech from the Hebrew Bible, we are reliant primarily on classical sources for the practice of human sacrifice among the Carthaginians.⁷⁹³ Although we must

⁷⁹⁰ Lipiński 1993; D’Andrea 2020.

⁷⁹¹ Leviticus 18:21 gives a commandment to the Israelites not to sacrifice their children to Molech: “Do not allow any of your offspring to be offered up to **Molech**, and do not profane the name of your God: I am the Lord” (cf. Leviticus 20:2-5). King Josiah, among his other reforms to the cult, eradicates the practices of Molech: “He also defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of Ben-hinnom so that no one might consign his son or daughter to the fire of **Molech**” (2 Kings 23:10). Jeremiah also mentions the god Baal in relation to Molech: “and they built shrines of Baal which are in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, where they offered up their sons and daughters to **Molech**—when I had never commanded, or even thought [of commanding], that they should do such an abominable thing, and so bring guilt on Judah” (Jeremiah 32:35). I use the translation of the NJPS throughout. Weinfeld (1972), however, argued that the biblical depictions of Molech do not reflect child sacrifice. Most recently, Stavrakopoulou (2004: 145-206) argues that the Hebrew Bible depicts several types of child sacrifice, which are not limited only to the cult of Molech, but are firmly within the boundaries of Yahwism. For example, the king of Israel, Ahaz “consigns his son to the fire” (2 Kings 16:3). This passage does not specifically mention the term Molech but does refer to child sacrifice.

⁷⁹² See Heider 1985: 210-222. For archaeological evidence of human sacrifice in Mesopotamia, see Green 1975.

⁷⁹³ For literary sources we are completely reliant on Greek and Latin informants. The earliest source (fifth-century BCE) describes human sacrifice to Kronos (Sophocles, *Andromeda* fr. 126). Socrates notes that the Carthaginians sacrificed humans, including their own children (Pseudo-Plato, *Minos* 315B-C). Ennius (*Annals* 7) also attributes child sacrifice to the Carthaginians. According to Silius Italicus (*Punica* 4.765-822), the Carthaginian general Hannibal sacrificed his only son. According to Diodorus of Sicily (13.86.3), the general Himilcar sacrificed a child to Kronos and when the Carthaginians were losing a war they sacrificed noble children (20.14). Kleitarchos (*scholia to Plato’s Republic*, 337a) says the Carthaginians promised one of their children to Kronos when they needed a favor. Cicero (*De Re Publica* 3.9.15) includes the Carthaginians among cultures who perform human sacrifice. Pliny (*Natural History* 36.39) describes human sacrifice by the Carthaginians to Herakles (Melqart). Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander* 4.3.23)

acknowledge that the classical sources present an etic view of the Punic culture, these literary sources can be corroborated by archeological and epigraphical evidence, and we can consider an emic view presented by Philo of Byblos, when he reports the Phoenician myth about El's sacrifice of his son Ieoud, as I explore in the next chapter.

Epigraphical evidence for child sacrifice comes from votive stelae that mention the god Baal Hammon and are also sometimes inscribed with the Phoenician term *mlk*, “offering” (vocalized as *molk*).⁷⁹⁴ Although most of the evidence for the *molk* sacrifice comes from the Punic world, there is a third-second centuries BCE inscription from Nebi-Yuni in the Levant that mentions a *molk* sacrifice to Eshmun.⁷⁹⁵ This is the only instance of the term attested in the Levant, but it is an important piece of evidence for the rite in the Phoenician homeland. I discuss the possible Tyrian origins of the *molk* practice in the final section of the next chapter. The first two stelae mentioning the term *molk* were discovered in Malta. The stelae are almost identical except for the name of the dedicant and the type of sacrifice (*mlk 'mr* vs. *mlk b'l*): “Stele of a (human) sacrifice of one promising (it), which [Arsh] set up for Baal-Hammon, lord, [because] he heard the voice

says the Tyrians proposed to renew the practice of child sacrifice to Kronos during the siege of Alexander the Great in 331 BCE.

⁷⁹⁴ For the most recent survey of the epigraphical evidence, see Amadasi Guzzo and Zamora López 2013. The fact that the inscriptions from the *tophets* are votive inscriptions rather than funerary inscriptions strongly suggests that the *tophets* were places of child sacrifice rather than burial. This is evident on the inscriptions by the use of the Semitic term *ndr*, “a vow” (Xella 2013: 268). For vows in the Hebrew Bible and Near East, see Cartledge 1992. The inscription CIS I.2.511 relates the typical formulations: “To Lady Tanit, face of Baal, and to Lord Baal Hammon: [that] which vowed Arisham, son of Bodashtart, son of Bodeshmun, because he (the god) heard his (the dedicant’s) voice, he blessed him” (translation by McCarty 2019: 317). Not all the inscriptions use the term *molk*; For the oldest inscriptions with the term *molk*, see KAI 61 A and B.

⁷⁹⁵ Delavault and Lemaire 1976. The term *mlk* also appears in a text from Ugarit (RS 19.015), which scholars have argued was evidence for the *molk* sacrifice at Ugarit (see scholarship and discussion in Albright 1994: 241).

of his [prayers].”⁷⁹⁶ This stele, along with the majority of these types of inscriptions, is dedicated to Baal Hammon, the chief god of the Carthaginians.⁷⁹⁷ Scholars have dated the stele from the eighth to the seventh-century BCE, before Carthaginian influence on the island of Malta, and thus it is possible that the practice mentioned in the stele was transported to Malta directly from Tyre.⁷⁹⁸

The Phoenician term *mol*k appears on inscriptions throughout the Punic Mediterranean in three different specializations: *mlk ’mr*, “sacrifice of a lamb,” *mlk ’dm*, “sacrifice of a human,” and *mlk b’l*, “sacrifice of a citizen,” each of which refers to a sacrifice with different victims (either human or a lamb substitution).⁷⁹⁹ The difficulty in translating the first type *mlk ’mr* was partially solved by the discovery of Latin dedications to Saturn (Kronos/El) from N’gaous in Algeria that transliterate the Punic term *mol*k as *molchomor* and describe an offering of a sheep in substitution for the health of a child (pro salu[te]...agnum).⁸⁰⁰ Based on this evidence scholars interpreted the Punic phrase *mlk ’mr* as “an offering of a sheep.”⁸⁰¹ Because the inscriptions relate three different types of sacrifice, the *mlk ’mr* has been interpreted as a substitution sacrifice for

⁷⁹⁶ KAI 61 B. Translation by Gibson (2002: 74).

⁷⁹⁷ For a study of Baal Hammon, see Xella 1991. Beginning in the sixth-century BCE, the majority of inscriptions invoke Baal Hammon and his consort Tinnit (Xella 2019: 282; McCarty 2019: 313).

⁷⁹⁸ McCarter (1975: 49) dated the stele to the late eighth-century BCE. Peckham (1968: 106) and Sznycer (1974-1975) dated the stele to the seventh-century BCE; Gibson (2002: 73) suggests early in the seventh-century BCE. Carthaginian influence is not attested archaeologically at Malta before the sixth-century BCE (Moscato 1999: 109).

⁷⁹⁹ The first type (*mlk ’mr*) is attested at Carthage, Cirta, Malta and N’gaous (Brown 1991: 30). The discovery of these first inscriptions prompted the translation of *mlk ’mr* as “King of Omar” (Chabot 1917: 49). For the translations of these terms, see Xella 2012-2013: 269 and Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008.

⁸⁰⁰ See the Latin inscriptions in Alquier 1931: 24 and Brown 1991: 31.

⁸⁰¹ Carcopino (1932) suggested the sheep is a substitute for the child. Chabot subsequently changed his translation to “a promise of a sheep” (see Alquier 1931).

the practice of human sacrifice indicated by the other two types (*mlk 'dm* and *mlk b'l*).⁸⁰²

The inscriptions with the term *mol* are dedicated to Baal Hammon, who was syncretized with Saturn in Latin inscriptions of the same type. Moreover, in Latin and Greek literary accounts of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians, the god Saturn or Kronos in Greek is the deity who receives the offering.⁸⁰³ Therefore, the epigraphical sources in conjunction with the literary sources provide us good evidence that the *mlk* practice was associated with child sacrifice.

Otto Eissfeldt first used the Punic inscriptions to argue that the word Molech from the Hebrew Bible referred not to a god but rather to the *mol* sacrifice referred to in the Punic inscriptions.⁸⁰⁴ Paul G. Mosca's dissertation defended and refined the arguments of Eissfeldt by attempting to show the consistency between the Punic *mol* sacrifice and the biblical cult of Molech.⁸⁰⁵ Heider and John Day, on the other hand, have expressed doubts about the conclusions of Eissfeldt and Mosca and argued based on evidence from

⁸⁰² E.g., Xella 2012-2013: 272; McCarty 2019: 315. Roland de Vaux argued (1964: 79), based on the study of the ratio of human child to animal bones by Jean Richard (1961), that substitution sacrifices increased over time.

⁸⁰³ E.g., Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* 4.3.23; Sophocles, *Andromeda* fr. 126; Pseudo-Plato, *Minos* 315B-C; Kleitarchos, *scholia to Plato's Republic*, 337a.

⁸⁰⁴ For Molech as a term referring to *mol* rather than a divinity, see Eissfeldt 1935: 66-71. For a summary of Eissfeldt's major contributions, see Heider 1985: 34-45. For scholarship supporting the thesis of Eissfeldt, see e.g., Dussaud 1935, 1936 and Mosca 1975. For early scholarship contesting the thesis of Eissfeldt, see e.g., Buber 1967, Charlier 1953, Février 1960, 1962, 1964. Buber (1967: 177-180) suggested the terms refer instead to cultic exclamations: *mlk 'mr* = "Malk is Lord"; *mlk 'dm* = "Malk announces good."

⁸⁰⁵ Mosca 1975. According to Mosca (1975: 76-77, 100-101), the different types of *mol* reflect social distinctions. The term *mlk 'dm*, "sacrifice of a man," designates an offering by a commoner, and the term *mlk b'l*, "sacrifice by a noble" designates an offering from a noble family. According to Stager (1980: 7), the conclusions of Mosca support the idea that nobles were the most active with child sacrifice. The term *mlk 'dm* only appears at Cirta and the term *mlk b'l* appears exclusively at Carthage (cf. Brown 1991: 32-33). More recent scholarship translates *mlk 'dm* and *mlk b'l* as "sacrifice of a person," and "sacrifice of a citizen," respectively (Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008; Xella 2012-2013: 269; McCarty 2019: 315).

other Near Eastern cultures that Molech should be regarded as the name of a divinity.⁸⁰⁶

In particular, Heider critiqued Mosca's dismissal of the evidence from Ugarit, which then became the impetus for Heider's comparative study of biblical Molech in light of the texts from Ugarit.⁸⁰⁷ Because of the work of Heider, there is more convincing evidence that Molech was a chthonic deity who received child sacrifice and whose cult may have originated from Canaanite people.⁸⁰⁸

More recently, Stavrakopoulou has reassessed the conclusions of Day and Heider.⁸⁰⁹ As she notes, both scholars attribute the etymology of biblical Molech to the MLK "king" etymology and attempt to show the connection between Molech and a west Semitic underworld god called *mlk*. Day equates biblical Molech with an Ugaritic god *mlk* and the Akkadian god Malik. Heider equates biblical Molech with Ugaritic *mlk* who is the Akkadian Malik, who is, in turn, Tyrian Melqart. But Stavrakopoulou maintains that the gods *mlk*, Malik, and Melqart have not been convincingly connected to child sacrifice.⁸¹⁰ She takes a different approach from Day and Heider and defends the arguments of Eissfeldt, who first claimed biblical Molech is a distortion of the *mlk* sacrifice. In her view, "'Molek' or 'Melek' is better understood as a biblical character, a

⁸⁰⁶ Heider 1985; Day 1989. Heider (1985: 187-188; 198-199) expressed caution with connecting the *molk* with Molech because of the late attestation of the inscriptions and the limited geographic restriction. Both Heider and Day utilize evidence from two Ugaritic snake-bite charms (*KTU* 1.100.41; 1.107.42) to argue instead for the existence of a west Levantine Underworld god called *mlk*. The evidence from the Septuagint also provides compelling evidence that Molech is a god and not simply a misinterpretation of the *molk* sacrifice. The Greek text transliterates the Hebrew word Molech variously as Μολοχ (4 Kingdoms 23:10), Μολοχ βασιλει (Jeremiah 39:35), and ἄρχων (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-4).

⁸⁰⁷ Heider 1985: 90.

⁸⁰⁸ Heider 1985: 32-34; Day 1989: 46-52; Levenson 1993: 18. For the Canaanite origins of Molech, see Heider 1985: 405.

⁸⁰⁹ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 210-215.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

character masking the probability that in reality, children were sacrificed to Yhwh.”⁸¹¹

She argues that three distinct cults of child sacrifice were practiced among the Israelites (first-born sacrifice, *mlk* sacrifice, and sacrifice to the *šadday* gods, who are attested in the Deir ‘Alla texts), and she suggests that the *mlk* ritual is a royal specialization of the firstborn fertility ritual.⁸¹² Stavrakopoulou argues further that the biblical writers purposely distort the *mlk* sacrifice into a foreign god called Molek in order to distance themselves from the practices of the original cult, nevertheless, the biblical texts depict child sacrifice as a part of Yahwism.⁸¹³ Whether “Molech” in the Hebrew Bible is a misunderstanding of the term for child sacrifice (*molk*) or a divinity is still a major point of disagreement among scholars. What is more certain is that the biblical representations of Molech and the Punic practice indicated in the *molk* inscriptions are both related to child sacrifice.

The connections between the terms Molech and *molk* are important when considering the etymology of the term *molk* as well as its possible connections with the cult of Melqart, as I discuss in the next chapter. Scholars first derived the term *molk* from the root MLK “king,” but now generally agree that the etymology is from the root HLK “to go.”⁸¹⁴ From the perspective of the HLK etymology, the term *molk* designates “what

⁸¹¹ Ibid., 261.

⁸¹² See Chapter 5 of Stavrakopoulou 2004, especially pgs. 240-282. For *mlk* as a royal specialization of first-born sacrifice, see *ibid.*, 296.

⁸¹³ Ibid., 301-316.

⁸¹⁴ Scholars originally derived *molk* from the root MLK “king” (see Charlier 1953; Buber 1967: 178; Weinfeld 1972: 135-140; Cooper 1981: 446). In particular, Buber translated the phrase *mlk ’mr* as “the king has spoken.” Mosca (1975: 60) contested this reading for being “awkward and wholly out of place: ‘Stela—the king has spoken!—which ’RŠ erected...’” The phrase *mlk ’dm* was originally translated “king of the earth,” and the phrase *mlk b’l* was originally translated as “baal is king” (see Mosca 1975: 63-64). See also the refutation of these translations by Day (1987: 4-5). Scholars now generally agree, following

is sent” to the gods.⁸¹⁵ More recent scholarship has clarified the use of the different specializations of the *mlk* sacrifice. According to Xella, “all three syntagms have to be interpreted as ‘*mlk*-sacrifice consisting of ...’”⁸¹⁶ In other words, the term following the word *mlk* is the object of the sacrifice. In sum, the epigraphical evidence indicates two types of sacrifice: human sacrifice (*mlk ’dm*, *mlk b’l*) and a lamb sacrifice (*mlk ’mr*) in substitution for the human sacrifice.

The archeological evidence for the practice of child sacrifice, on the other hand, comes from sanctuaries where burials of children are found with votive stelae, which scholars call *tophets*, a term based on a passage from the Book of Jeremiah, although we do not know what they were originally called by the Phoenicians.⁸¹⁷ The practice has been hotly debated over the years since the discovery of the Carthage *tophet* at Salammbô, some arguing that the *tophets* provide evidence for child sacrifice⁸¹⁸ and

von Soden (1936: col. 46), that the term *mlk* is a noun derived from the root HLK ‘to go.’ Albrecht Alt (1949: 282) supported the argument of von Soden by explaining that the *yiph’il* of *hlk* occurs in the Phoenician text from Karatepe (KAI 26A.II.19) meaning “to offer up (a sacrifice).” For a recent reassessment of the term *mlk*, see Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 354-362.

⁸¹⁵ Xella 2012-2013: 269. Xella identifies the form as a causal participle.

⁸¹⁶ Xella 2012-2013: 269.

⁸¹⁷ Jeremiah 19:3-6. The *tophets* may have been called *bt* “house,” or *qdš* “shrine” (Amadasi Guzzo and Zamora López 2013). For a useful summary of the archaeological evidence, see Brown 1991: 37-75.

⁸¹⁸ According to the study by Stager and Wolff 1984, the Carthaginian *tophet* contains clear evidence for child sacrifice. They argue that the evidence points to sacrifice because many of the urns contain not only one child but two, a newborn and another of two to four years of age. Thus, the older children probably did not die by natural causes. Moreover, they conclude that the remains of animal bones mixed in with the child bones are evidence for substitution sacrifices. Fedele and Foster 1988 analyzed urns with only animal bones and argued that the burial of the animal bones points to a regular seasonal ritual where animals were sacrificed; Their interpretation of the animal bones as sacrificial remains supports a similar treatment of human remains contained in other urns. The study by Docter, Smits, Hakbijl, Stuijts and van der Plicht 2003 showed that children up to nine years old are also included in some urns from the Carthage *tophet* which suggests that the *tophet* was not simply a child cemetery. The most recent study of the Carthage *tophet* by Xella, Quinn, Melchiorri, and Dommelen 2013 has concluded that the Carthaginians did practice child sacrifice. For the most recent overview of the evidence and secondary scholarship for child sacrifice, see Xella 2013. In particular, see the useful chronology of the various *tophets* ranging from the ninth-century BCE to the first-century CE (ibid., 261).

others arguing that the *tophets* were only cemeteries for children.⁸¹⁹ Several scholars have in recent years connected the Punic rites to the biblical evidence for springtime “first fruits” sacrificial rites.⁸²⁰ If this interpretation is correct, then Philo’s theory of sacrifice in fact provides literary evidence for this conclusion. Most recently, however, Sergio Ribichini has argued based on a reevaluation of the zooarchaeological data that the *molk* sacrifices could take place at any point in the year and did not correspond to the Phoenician calendar, instead, he argues that the rites were connected to the private circumstances of individuals.⁸²¹ Nevertheless, Ribichini maintains that the *molk* rites were connected to the risks of pregnancy, thus pointing to a fertility dimension of the rites. In any case, the archeological evidence combined with literary and epigraphical sources points overwhelmingly to the likelihood of child sacrifice among the Carthaginians. However, I maintain that to more fully understand the practice we should

⁸¹⁹ Gras, Rouillard, and Teixidor 1991, on the other hand, argue that the *tophets* were cemeteries for children who died of natural causes. This study of funerary remains from Phoenician and Carthaginian sites has revealed that the Phoenicians practiced inhumation and incineration from the ninth to sixth centuries BCE. From the eighth-century BCE inhumation dominated in the east, and incineration in the west. Incineration usually occurred away from settlements at places dubbed “*tophets*.” Those buried in *tophets* were predominantly premature and still born children. Gras *et al.* argue that the young children discovered in the *tophets* had not been integrated into society and so they were buried along with sacrificed animals, and moreover, they claim that although the practice of human sacrifice may have been practiced in Phoenicia, it ended in the early first millennium. For a more recent survey of Phoenician funerary practices, see López-Bertrán 2019. Paolo Benardini (1996) argued against Stager and Wolff (1984) that the *tophet* was used for the burial of children who died of natural causes. More recently, Schwartz, Houghton, Bondioli and Macchiarelli (2010: 9) argue based on an osteological analysis that 20 percent of the burials were prenatal at death. They concluded that the *tophet* was a necropolis and not a ritual site for child sacrifice. Their study was then disputed by Smith, Avishai, Greene and Stager (2011) who argued based on osteological analysis of the same evidence that the *tophet* was a ritual site for sacrifice. Schwartz *et al.* (2012) then responded to the arguments of Smith *et al.* 2011 and critiqued some of the methodological approaches of Smith *et al.* These arguments are all considered in Xella *et al.* 2013, who argue in favor of the *tophet* as a place of child sacrifice. For the most recent osteological analysis of the *tophet*, see Melchiorri 2013.

⁸²⁰ Stager 2014; Garnand, Stager, and Greene 2013. McCarty (2019: 319), on the other hand, points out that this theory is not entirely convincing because lambing occurs twice a year in North Africa (February-March and October-November). Cf. Ribichini 2020.

⁸²¹ Ribichini 2020.

contextualize the ritual within other aspects of Phoenician religion, such as the cult of Melqart. In the next section, I turn to the texts from Ugarit and the ways in which they can inform our understanding of the myth of child sacrifice from Philo of Byblos.

3. Fertility, Sacrifice, and Kingship in the Texts from Ugarit

As I explained above, Philo presents a theory of sacrifice that is based on deities associated with fertility and the cycles of nature, and which, I propose, provides the interpretive framework for his narrative about child sacrifice. In the following discussion, I explain how the connections between the king, sacrifice, and fertility in the cult of the Bronze Age city of Ugarit can further help elucidate our understanding of Philo's story of child sacrifice. The city of Ugarit on the Levantine coast in the eastern Mediterranean was destroyed around 1200-1190 BCE, and the extant texts preserved in the northwest Semitic language of Ugaritic provide us with the oldest material for understanding Syro-Canaanite religion.⁸²² To begin with, it is important to justify the use of Ugaritic material

⁸²² For a brief but concise overview of the importance of Ugarit as a cosmopolitan city at the center of Mediterranean trade in the Bronze Age, as well as the sort of texts that have been discovered at the modern city of Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), see West 1997a: 84-90. The texts from Ugarit are written in four different scripts and eight languages: Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite, Hurrian, west Anatolian Luwian, and Cypro-Minoan (Broodbank 2013: 393); The economic documents discovered at Ugarit provide valuable insights into the economy of the Late Bronze Age (ibid., 391-396). A tax-exemption document (RS 16.238.10) from the thirteenth-century BCE from Ugarit mentions a *tamkāru* named Sinarānu, a professional merchant under the service of the Ugaritic king Ammittamru II, who was trading with Crete. Mycenaean pottery discovered at Ugarit also attests to trade with Crete during the thirteenth-century BCE; For a brief overview of the Mycenaean pottery, see West 1997a: 4-6 and Curtis 1999: 6-7, 21; In particular, Adrian Curtis (ibid.) notes a small ivory box-lid that possibly depicts an image of the Mistress of Animals (AO 11.601; Caquot and Sznycer 1980: plates IV and V). Mycenaean imports have also been discovered at the Temple of the Rhytons at Ugarit (Yon 1996: 415; cf. Figs. 4e-f). Further evidence for trading relations between Crete and Ugarit comes from objects discovered at Ugarit that are inscribed in Cypro-Minoan characters (Bordreuil and Pardee 1989: 418). Additionally, the *Baal Cycle* mentions the island of Crete (*KTU* 1.3.vi.15). For trade between Ugarit and Crete, see Heltzer 1999: 443-444. For an in depth study on the connections between Ugarit and Minoan Crete, see Gordon 1966. The Uluburun shipwreck from the fourteenth-century BCE attests to the types of merchandise that was exchanged between the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean (see Broodbank 2013: 399-402). For the different theories about the collapse of the Bronze Age palatial societies, such as Crete and Ugarit, as well

for comparison by explaining some of the parallels between Phoenician and Ugaritic religion, both of which are fragmentary. In the following section, I discuss how corresponding sacrificial terminology, the priestly function of the king, and similar gods and mythological themes all point to a west Levantine religious *koinē*. In particular, I explore how the Baal Cycle depicts the death and rebirth of the fertility god Baal, and I point out the connections between fertility, the health of the king, and sacrifice in the Ugaritic myths of Keret and Aqhat.

Two Phoenician sacrificial tariffs provide comparative evidence for determining a common west Levantine milieu of sacrificial terminology attested in Ugaritic and Hebrew texts.⁸²³ The so-called Marseilles Tariff was discovered near the port of Marseilles and fragments of similar documents were later discovered at Carthage.⁸²⁴ The Phoenician text mentions one of the terms for the offering of an ox as *šlm kll* (line 3) which we can compare with the Israelite *š'lamim* “well-being/peace offering,” and the Ugaritic *šalamūma*, “peace-offering.”⁸²⁵ In the Ugaritic ritual texts, the *šalamūma* offering is the most frequent, along with the *šurpu* “burnt offering.”⁸²⁶ The Phoenician word *kll* “all” specifies the *šlm* offering as a holocaust and also occurs in Ugaritic and

as Broodbank’s thesis that the collapse was due to a shift from centrally organized economies to more freelance and decentralized economies, see Broodbank 2013: 460-472. For a recent study on the history of the Canaanites, see Buck 2019. For the ritual texts from Ugarit and their importance in reconstructing Canaanite religion, see del Olmo Lete 1999.

⁸²³ For the broader Mediterranean *koinē* of sacrificial practices, see West 1997a: 37-42.

⁸²⁴ Marseilles Tariff: *KAI* 69; Carthage Tariffs: *KAI* 74 and 75. I use the edition and translation of Lupu 2009: 391-396.

⁸²⁵ For the Israelite “well-being offering,” see Leviticus 3.

⁸²⁶ Pardee 2002: 225. The term *šlm* “peace-offering” occurs in the deity lists (RS 1.017.34; RS 24.264.33), texts for rituals of a single month (RS 1.009.7, 14; 24.253.15), and funerary texts (RS 34.126.34). For more examples, see Pardee 2002.

biblical references to sacrifice.⁸²⁷ The other document, the Kition Tariff from Lapethos on Cyprus, describes the expenses for the new-moon festival in the month of Etanim.⁸²⁸ The tariff does not mention specific sacrificial terminology, but it does mention the Phoenician term *zḃḥm* “sacrificers” (line 8). Likewise, the eighth-seventh centuries BCE Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Hittite Karatepe inscriptions (*KAI* 26) also provide us information for the word *zḃḥ* “to sacrifice” as a term for Phoenician animal sacrifice. The Phoenician term *zḃḥ* is the equivalent term to the Ugaritic word *dbḥ*, “to sacrifice.” Therefore, we can conclude with a fair degree of confidence that there was substantial overlap in Phoenician and Ugaritic sacrificial terminology. Thus, the parallel terms in the west Levantine traditions provide supporting evidence for the shared ritual and mythological features of Canaanite religion. In other words, we can utilize Ugaritic material as a heuristic parallel for understanding Phoenician mythology and ritual, such as in the work of Philo.

Ritual texts and myths from Ugarit indicate that the king was intimately involved in sacrificial rites, many of which are rites for Baal, the god of storms and fertility. The rites of the royal family at Ugarit are documented in the preserved tablets. The texts tell us that the king could function as a priest in the cult at Ugarit.⁸²⁹ Specifically, the king offers sacrifice to different manifestations of the god Baal (RS 24.266). One important text (RS 24.252) seems to describe a ritual which asks the god Baal to transmit the

⁸²⁷ For Ugaritic texts, see e.g., RIH 78/14:14'; RS 1.005:25; 15.072:4; 24.250:21; 24.255:6; 24.260:9; 24.277:1'; 24.277:4'. For biblical references, see e.g., Psalms 51:19 [Hebrews 21]; 1 Samuel 7:9.

⁸²⁸ *KAI* 37A. See the text and translation in Gibson 2002: 124-125.

⁸²⁹ Pardee 2002: 2; RS. 24.266.13-14 says: “A flame-sacrifice and a presentation-offering the king must sacrifice at the temple of 'Ilū.” For other examples of texts where the king performs sacrifice, see RS 1.003; 1.009; 18.056; 19.013; 24.249, 253, 256, 260.

powers of the dead ancestors onto the dead king.⁸³⁰ In a related text (RS 34.126), the *Rapa'ūma* (*Rp'm*), the deified dead kings, are invited to share a meal and bless the ruling dynasty.⁸³¹ As Heider states, “the *Rpum* were conceived of as having considerable power, especially in the realm of fertility.”⁸³² A much-discussed text (RS 19.015) prescribes wine to be consumed during the royal sacrificial rites (*dbḥ mlk*, line 2), which include sacrifices to Baal (*dbḥ b'l*, line 14). Scholars used to believe that this text was evidence for the *molk* sacrifice known from the Punic texts at the city of Ugarit because the phrases *dbḥ mlk*, “royal sacrifice” and *dbḥ b'l*, “sacrifice to Baal,” are similar to the Punic iteration *mlk b'l*, “sacrifice by a noble.”⁸³³ But we now know more about the royal sacrifices of the Ugaritic cult and can probably refute the claim of human sacrifice at Ugarit.⁸³⁴ Nevertheless, the Ugaritic text does provide comparative evidence for better

⁸³⁰ For text, commentary, and interpretation, see Pardee 2002: 192-195.

⁸³¹ The Ugaritic King list (*KTU* 1.113) lists the name of each dead king with the divine determinative. For commentary on this text, see Lewis 1989: 47-52.

⁸³² Heider 1985: 125. The Ugaritic *Rapa'ūma* are typically expressed with the biblical vocalization *Rephaim*. The texts mentioning these deities are the so-called “Rephaim Texts” from Ugarit (*KTU* 20-22), the hymn to Shapash in the *Baal Epic* (*KTU* 6.6), and the Ugaritic funerary text (*KTU* 1.161). For commentary on *KTU* 1.161, see Lewis 1989: 5-46. As Marvin Pope (1977: 167) argued, the dead ancestors return to the earth and are thus conceived of as the source of fertility. In the text RS 34.126, the *Rpum* are summoned to share a ritual meal and bless the ruling king. In RS. 24.252, the Underworld deity Rapi'u is titled *rpu mlk 'lm* “king of eternity.” As Pardee (2002: 193) comments, RS. 24.252 could refer to a rite of passage for one king to another. The term *r'pm* also occurs on the sarcophagus of King Tabnit of Sidon (*KAI* 13.8).

⁸³³ See Albright 1994: 241 with references. See also Heider 1985: 142-143 with references.

⁸³⁴ See the analysis of this text by Heider 1985: 142-147. Eduard Dhorme (1956: 60) brought attention to the context of the text and argued that the term *dbḥ mlk* (line 2) was parallel to the term *dbḥ špn* “the sacrifices of *Šapunu*” (line 3), and thus, the word following *dbḥ* probably refers to the divine recipient of the offering. Xella (1979: 833) argued that the text is not a religious or liturgical text but rather an administrative text concerning the provision of wine used in the rites of the royal family. Some scholars have also argued that there is textual evidence at Ugarit for the sacrifice of the first-born son (see Herdner 1961: 31-39; Margalit 1981: 63-83). In a more speculative argument, Cristiano Grottanelli (1981: 194-195) connects the use of *Ieoud* in Philo and *yhyd* in Genesis 22 to the epithet *ydd il*, “beloved of El,” used to describe the Ugaritic god Mot and that Mot and the first-born son who was sacrificed may have been the same.

understanding the milieu of Syro-Canaanite sacrifices that are associated with the nobility at both Ugarit and the Punic colonies.

The Ugaritic ritual texts can offer us good parallels for understanding the more fragmented details of Phoenician religion since both cultures are in the milieu of Syro-Canaanite religion. There is evidence that the Phoenician kings were also the priests in their cults. The funerary sarcophagi of the royal dynasty of Eshmunazar of Sidon attest to the role of the king as priests of Astarte, as well as the connections between the royal dynasty and the dead ancestors (*Rp'm*).⁸³⁵ The literary record also indicates that the Tyrian kings were priests and performed the *egersis* rites.⁸³⁶ Moreover, as Bonnet has argued, Melqart, his rites, and the royal ideology of Tyre are probably historically connected to royal ancestor worship from the Syro-Palestinian milieu, and more specifically, to the royal cult of Ugarit and the rites for the deified dead kings (*mlkm*).⁸³⁷

⁸³⁵ The sarcophagus of king Tabnit (*KAI* 13.1) attests to the dual-role of the king as both a sovereign and priest. The term *Rephaim* occurs on line 8 of the Tabnit sarcophagus. The sarcophagus of Eshmunazar (*KAI* 14.14-15) provides evidence for the role of the queen as a priestess. For a study of the cultic role of the queen as a priestess of Astarte, see Ackerman 2013.

⁸³⁶ Josephos records that Hiram I first rebuilt the temples of Melqart and Astarte and performed the *egersis* (*Ap.* 1.119), and that King Itto-Baal of Tyre was a priest of Astarte (*Ap.* 1.123).

⁸³⁷ Bonnet 1988: 417-426. In particular, Bonnet (*ibid.*, 417) argues that Melqart is linked to the religious traditions of the Syrian milieu and related to deified royal ancestors. She uses a comparative method by looking at the specifics of each culture and focusing on their uses of the root *mlk* "king." According to Bonnet, Melqart is a god of the type inherited from the broad tradition of the god-king of a city (cf. Labat 1939: 33-35), such as we see with the Mesopotamian demi-god Gilgamesh and the Egyptian god-king Osiris (Bonnet 1988: 418-419). More specifically, from Ebla (*ibid.*, 420-421) Bonnet cites the use of the theonym ^dMa-lik (cf. Heider 1985: 94-101) as well as several texts that mention funeral lamentation and offerings for the dead king (TM.75.G.1764 r.III.1-12; TM.74.G.2238 r.IV.21-23; TM.74.G.2238 r.XII.21-26). From Mari (Bonnet 1988: 421-422) Bonnet cites evidence of the theophoric element *mlk* used in anthroponyms that are inserted into funeral ritual (cf. Heider 1985: 102-113). Additionally, Bonnet cites texts prescribing the offerings addressed to the *kispum* of the kings (*a-na kispim ša šarrāni*); For the texts, see Talon 1978: 53-75. In the texts, the term *a-na ma-li-ki(im)* "to the *malikū*" occurs, which Bonnet understands as a reference to the tradition related to the worship of deified kings. From Ugarit (Bonnet 1988: 422-425), Bonnet finds the most conclusive evidence. She cites the occurrence of the god *mlk* in texts for the deity's residence at *ṯrt* (Ashtarot), modern Tell Ashtarah (*KTU* 1.100; 1.107) (cf. Ribichini and Xella 1979). Parallel to this evidence, Bonnet cites the occurrence of the term *mlkm* (rendered in Akkadian as ^dMA.LIK.MEŠ) (*KTU* 1.47:33; *KTU* 1.118:32), which she understands as a reference to the

Thus, the connections between the priestly functions of Phoenician and Ugaritic kings are comparable. It is important to note, however, that the cultic function of kings was common to most Near Eastern cultures, not just the Canaanite, and the precise priestly duties of the king were specific to each culture.⁸³⁸ In addition to ritual texts, Ugaritic myths can also provide important comparative evidence for understanding Phoenician myths, such as Philo's narratives about child sacrifice, which connects the sacrifice to fertility beliefs, as I will show in the next chapter.

The Ugaritic Baal Cycle is partially preserved on six multicolumn tablets found at Ugarit.⁸³⁹ The temple of Baal, the storm and vegetation god and one of the principal deities of the Ugaritic pantheon, was situated at the highest point of the city.⁸⁴⁰ The Baal Cycle describes Baal's conflict with the sea god Yam (*KTU* 1.1-1.2), the acquisition of a "palace" (i.e., a temple) for Baal (*KTU* 1.3-1.4), and the fight between Baal and Mot, the

royal deified ancestors. Bonnet focuses on the evidence from two texts: *KTU* 1.113, which lists successive kings of Ugarit who are preceded by the divine determinative 'il, and *KTU* 1.161, which describes the ritual *dbḥ ṣlm* "sacrifice for the shadows" and summons the king Ammurapi to a long series of deceased kings. In the latter text, the *mlkm* (kings) are also called *rp'um*, the members of the Rephaim, at the head of which Bonnet notes that Baal was the leader. She comments further that this ideology is depicted in the fate of the mythical king Aqhat who is known as *mt rp'i* "the man of *rp'i*" (*KTU* 1.20, 21, 22) and joins the ranks of the deified kings after his death. Based on this evidence, Bonnet argues that Melqart was historically rooted in these traditions. For Melqart as the mythical first king of Tyre, see Bonnet 1988: 399-415; Xella 2019: 279.

⁸³⁸ West (1991: 15-16) identified the priestly function of kings as one of the shared features of the eastern Mediterranean *koinē*. He notes that the king had priestly functions in the cultures of the Israelites, Assyrians, Phoenicians, and in Greek epic poetry. The Mycenaean *wanax* as well as the Homeric *basileus* also performed sacrifice (ibid.). For the classic studies on divine kingship in the Near East, see Frankfort 1962 and Engnell 1967.

⁸³⁹ For introductions to the text, see Wyatt (2009: 11-24; 34-36) with relevant scholarship and Pardee 2003a: 241-242. For a critical edition of the Baal Cycle, see Smith 1994. I use the translation of Wyatt 2002. For a recent study on the Baal Cycle that argues the myth engaged with the contemporary politics of Ugarit, see Tugendhaft 2017.

⁸⁴⁰ Broodbank 2013: 393. As Xella (2001c: 73) points out, the library where the tablets were discovered was positioned between the temples of Baal and Dagan, and the scribe named Ilimilku (cf. *KTU* 1.6.vi.54), who wrote down the myth of Baal, was an important religious figure at Ugarit. A stele of the god Baal was discovered near his temple and depicts the god wielding a club and vegetation-sprouting spear. There is also a smaller figure on the stele that is probably the king of Ugarit (see fig. 8.38 in Broodbank 2013: 393).

god of death (*KTU* 1.5-1.6). In the latter part of the myth, the death and rebirth of Baal are described, but the text is highly fragmented in the parts that describe Baal's death. Levenson argues that the myth of Baal is part of the same milieu of stories about the death or sacrifice of a son and his subsequent rebirth with the return of fertility.⁸⁴¹ The Ugaritic god Baal's connection to fertility is exemplified when Baal's father El dreams that the wadis flow with honey upon the rebirth of Baal (*KTU* 1.6.iii.12-13) and by El's statement that "Baal has forsaken the furrows of the ploughland" (*KTU* 1.6.iv.3).⁸⁴² Moreover, as Xella points out, with the allusion to the parching of the land during the summer season (*KTU* 1.5.ii.4-6), there is an undeniable fertility aspect to the myth, and more generally, the myth is based on a "dialectic of life and death" and connected to natural cycles and the fertility of the earth.⁸⁴³ As Levenson shows, the Ugaritic Baal myth is part of a Levantine milieu of myth that also includes the stories of Genesis 22 and the sacrifice of El's son in Philo.⁸⁴⁴ Although Levenson does not explicitly attribute Philo's story of Ieoud to the pattern of death and rebirth, he does discuss the story as part of the same milieu of stories about sacrifice, but as I will show in my analysis of Philo in the next chapter, there is good reason to attribute Philo's account of child sacrifice to the same pattern of death and rebirth identified by Levenson.⁸⁴⁵

⁸⁴¹ Levenson 1993: 33.

⁸⁴² Translation by Wyatt 2002: 138. Baal is the son of El in the Ugaritic *Epic of Baal* (*KTU* 1.2). In another Ugaritic text Baal refers to El as "my father" (*KTU* 1.17.i:23). See also the entry in the *DDD*: 133. In the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.5-6), Baal is killed by the god Mot "death," but he then returns to life. Baal is also connected to the Underworld through the epithet *rpu* "healer" as a leader of the Rephaim, the ghosts of dead ancestors of the royal family (*KTU* 1.108:1-2; 113), see Dietrich and Loretz 1980: 171-182.

⁸⁴³ Xella 2001c: 77, 80.

⁸⁴⁴ Levenson 1993, see especially pgs. 33-34 and 124.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

Levenson argues that the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 and the Canaanite myth of Baal both belong to a common mythological pattern. He states, “The Ugaritic material does not speak of child sacrifice in the literal sense, but it does attest to the familiar pattern in which the loss of the son proves to be only temporary: in the end Father El rejoices as his enslaved offspring is freed or his dead son resurrected.”⁸⁴⁶

Although the Baal myth does not speak about child sacrifice *per se*, Wyatt understands one passage from the myth as a reference to Baal’s sacrifice by Mot (*KTU* 1.6.ii.18-23), nevertheless, as I will show below, the reference probably cannot be understood in this way.⁸⁴⁷ In the following, I present the story of Baal’s death and rebirth, point out the allusions to fertility, and explore how the myth possibly depicts the sacrifice of the god Baal.

The story of Mot and Baal begins with the god Mot (Death) proclaiming his hunger and appetite for Baal: “I shall devour (you)...My appetite is the appetite of the lion in the waste-land, as the desire of the shark is in the sea; as wild bulls yearn for pools, or the hind longs for the spring. Look, in truth does my throat devour clay, and with both my hands I devour them” (*KTU* 1.5.i.15-20).⁸⁴⁸ The word for appetite is *npš*, which can mean “soul,” or “life,” or as translated here “appetite.” Both Gibson and Wyatt translate the word *npš* here as “appetite.”⁸⁴⁹ The god Mot describes Baal as something than can be devoured, foreshadowing the fate of Baal. The text then says, “Baal must

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁴⁷ Wyatt 2002: 134.

⁸⁴⁸ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 116-118.

⁸⁴⁹ Gibson 1967: 68.

enter his belly, down into his mouth he must go” (*KTU* 1.5.ii.4-5), again emphasizing Baal’s impending death.⁸⁵⁰ Baal then gives himself up freely to Mot: “Greetings, O divine Mot, your servant am I, and forever so” (*KTU* 1.5.ii.12-13).⁸⁵¹ We can connect this reference to the parallel Ugaritic story in which the sea god Yam demands that El give over Baal as a slave. In the story about Baal’s dispute with Yam, the messenger of Yam demands that El “give up” his son Baal: “Give up the god whom you obey, the one whom you obey, [Tempe]st! Give up Baal and his retinue, the Son of Dagan, whose gold I shall seize!” (*KTU* 1.2.i.34-37).⁸⁵² Levenson connected this passage to the same mythical pattern of death and rebirth where the loss of a son is only temporary.⁸⁵³

After the references to Mot’s appetite quoted above, there are several lacunae in the parts of the tablet that follow. As the gods Mot and Baal draw near for battle, there are a few lines about the other gods eating and drinking (*KTU* 1.5.iv.10-18). Then, in a very fragmented passage, Mot seems to address Baal and make reference to a calf, which Wyatt understands as the son of Baal, but the text is too fragmented to be certain:

⁸⁵⁰ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 120.

⁸⁵¹ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 121.

⁸⁵² Translation by Wyatt 2002: 61.

⁸⁵³ Levenson 1993: 33. The phrase “give up” can also have a cultic connotation. In Ugaritic, the word translated as “give up” is *tinā*, from the Ugaritic root *ytn* “to give.” Although it is not the standard term for “sacrifice” (*dbḥ*), the verb *ytn* can mean “to offer sacrifice,” in a clear cultic context. Del Olmo Lete et Sanmartín (2015: 976) cite two examples: “to offer: *šh d ytn štn* his ram that PN **will offer**, 1.80:2;” and “**ytn** š qdš[a ram **will be offered** in the sanctuary (?), 1.104:12.” The cultic use of the term *ytn* “to offer,” occurs in numerous examples: RS 13.006:1, 4; 15.072:1; 24.248:11; 24.292:1; RIH 78/4:16'. The noun *ynt* is derived from this root and means “gift” but can also mean “offering” (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 977. RS. 24.277:4). By way of comparison, in Greek, the verb δίδωμι “to give” can also be used to mean “to give offerings to the gods” (e.g., *Il.* 12.6; *Od.* 1.67). In his myth of child sacrifice (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44 = 4.16.11), which I will analyze in the following chapter, Philo says that children were “given up” for sacrifice (εἰς σφαγὴν ἐπιδιδόναι λύτρον τοῖς τιμωροῖς δαίμοσι· κατεσφάττοντο δὲ οἱ διδόμενοι μυστικῶς, “as a propitiatory sacrifice to the avenging deities. The children thus **given up** were slaughtered according to a secret ritual”). However, in order to read the verb *ytn* in these passages as a reference to sacrifice, there must be a clear cultic context, which is not evident in the passage from the Baal myth.

“Valiant [Baal ...] [...] your torch [...] your right hand, your [so]n [will have?] the appetite of **a bull-calf** (*‘gl*). I shall place him in a hole of the earth-gods” (*KTU* 1.5.v.2-5).⁸⁵⁴ The word that Wyatt translates as “bull-calf” is *‘gl*, which literally means “calf” or “bullock.”⁸⁵⁵ Wyatt suggests comparing this passage with another fragmentary myth about Baal and his (unnamed) son (*KTU* 1.9).⁸⁵⁶ This text, however, is also too fragmented to provide any definitive information about the identity of Baal’s son. In a more complete text (*KTU* 1.10.iii.35), on the other hand, there is a reference to a bull as Baal’s son: “for a bull (*ibr*) is born to Baal.”⁸⁵⁷ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín define *ibr* as a general term meaning “of a stocky male animal,” which can refer to either a “bull” or a “horse.”⁸⁵⁸ The parallel line (*KTU* 1.10.iii. 36) directly after the mention of the word *ibr* uses the word *rum* “wild bull,” which suggests that the reading of *ibr* as “bull” is more likely.⁸⁵⁹

Mot then commands Baal: “take your clouds, your winds, your lightnings, your rains,” a reference to his role as the storm god, after which Baal impregnates a heifer who gives birth to a son: “Valiant Baal obeyed. He loved **a heifer** (*‘glt*) in the pastureland, a cow in the steppe by the shore of death, He lay with her seventy-seven times. And he [imp]regnated her as she bore **a young male** (*mt*)” (*KTU* 1.5.v.17-23).⁸⁶⁰ In these lines,

⁸⁵⁴ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 123.

⁸⁵⁵ For *‘gl* “calf” or “bullock,” see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 149.

⁸⁵⁶ Astour (1967: 200-201) connected *KTU* 1.9 to the myth of the sacrifice of Dionysos (cf. my Chapter 7).

⁸⁵⁷ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 160.

⁸⁵⁸ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 11. The more common term for “bull” is *ālp*.

⁸⁵⁹ For *rum* “wild-bull,” see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 712.

⁸⁶⁰ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 124-125.

Baal impregnates a heifer and fathers a son. Baal's virility is emphasized by the mention of his laying with the heifer "seventy-seven times," and his power over fertility is exemplified by the birth of his son. The main difficulty with this line is the word *mt*, translated by Wyatt as "young male." More literally, the word *mt* means "man," "husband," or "hero."⁸⁶¹ Scholars have attempted to explain this word in a variety of ways, but all interpretations are conjectural at this point.⁸⁶² What is clear is that in the lines leading up to Baal's death Mot proclaims his appetite for the god and Baal fathers a son with a heifer, who can probably be understood as a calf. Most importantly, the birth of the son is a manifestation of Baal's power over fertility.

Following the birth of Baal's son, there is a large lacuna of about 30 lines that probably described the details of Baal's death. Then after a few lines, Baal is suddenly described as dead: "dead (*mt*) was Valiant Baal, perished was the Prince, Lord of the earth!" (*KTU* 1.5.vi.9-10).⁸⁶³ Because of the lacuna it is unclear exactly how Baal dies, but it is clear based on the use of the Ugaritic verb *mt* "to die" at line 9 that the god is dead (cf. *KTU* 1.5.vi.23 and 1.6.i.7 and 42). As Xella points out, in the passage where Baal's death is described (quoted above), the verb used is the standard Semitic word *mt* "to die," and in the passage describing his return to life (*KTU* 1.6.iii.20), the adjective used is the standard Semitic word *hy* "alive," thus, there is no question about Baal's death and rebirth.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶¹ For *mt* "man," see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 591.

⁸⁶² E.g., Moor (1969: 106-107) suggested "twin" with comparison to Akk. *mašu* "twin-brother"; Gibson (1978: 72) translated as "boy." See Wyatt 2002: 125 n.49 for further discussion and references.

⁸⁶³ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 126.

⁸⁶⁴ Xella 2001c: 78-79.

When Baal's father El and his sister Anat learn that Baal is dead they go out to search for him (*KTU* 1.5.vi.25-32).⁸⁶⁵ Upon finding the dead Baal, Anat weeps for him and buries him (*KTU* 1.5.vi.17). The verb here for "she buried him" is *qbr*, the standard Semitic word meaning "to bury."⁸⁶⁶ As we saw in Chapter 3, this word is used in the Phoenician portion of the Pyrgi Tablets in mention of the day of the burial of the god (*bym qbr 'lm*), which may be a reference to the burial of Melqart, the Baal of Tyre, as Mettinger argued.⁸⁶⁷ Thus, the Baal Cycle is a prototype not only for Melqart as a dying and rising god but also for traditions of a tomb of the god Melqart. Anat then slaughters (*tḥḥ*) different animals, such as bulls, oxen, sheep, goats, and antelope, as a funeral offering (*kgmn*) for Baal (*KTU* 1.6.i.17-31). The terms *tḥḥ* and (*k*)*gmn* suggest that the goddess Anat is performing a sacrifice. More specifically, the verb *tḥḥ* from the root *tḥḥ* "to slaughter," although not the standard word for animal sacrifice (*dbḥ*), can have the specific meaning of "sacrifice" in a cultic context, as I discussed in Chapter 1. Combined with the word (*k*)*gmn*, which del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín define as "funeral offering," the context probably indicates a funeral sacrifice for the god Baal.⁸⁶⁸ Pardee, on the other hand, comments on these lines, "The use of *tḥḥ* here may be linked with the funerary nature of these sacrifices, though that can only be an hypothesis based on this passage,"

⁸⁶⁵ For a study of the goddess Anat in the Ugaritic texts, see Walls 1992.

⁸⁶⁶ For *qbr* "to bury," see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 682.

⁸⁶⁷ Mettinger 2001: 104.

⁸⁶⁸ Pardee (2002: 268 n.242) notes that the word *kgmn* is usually understood as the preposition *k* "like, as" with the word *gmn* (cf. Watson 1989). Del Olmo Lete (1981: 533) proposed the meaning "funeral offering." For *gmn* "funeral offering," see the lexical entry in del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 297. The etymology of this word is uncertain, but del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín compare it to the Akkadian word *kamānu* "cake" (cf. del Olmo Lete 1981: 55) and Hebrew *kwn* "sacrificial cake." Watson (1989) suggests the word *gmn* may mean "as mourning."

and he comments further that “the precise meaning of *(k)gmn* escapes us.”⁸⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Pardee does understand this scene as a sacrifice, albeit a sacrifice that incorporates different terminology than we find in the ritual texts from Ugarit.⁸⁷⁰

After performing the funeral sacrifice for Baal, Anat then confronts Mot: “Come, Mot, give (me) my brother!” (*KTU* 1.6.ii.13).⁸⁷¹ This line suggests that Baal’s death is only temporary and that his death is soon to be followed by a return to life. Mot then responds to Anat’s demands by again referring to his appetite and describing Baal’s death. Wyatt understands the passage as an allusion to sacrifice: “It was I who approached Valiant Baal: **it was I who offered him up (*‘dbnn*) <like> a lamb (*imr*) in my mouth**” (*KTU* 1.6.ii.22-23).⁸⁷² These lines echo the earlier references when Mot proclaims he will devour Baal: “Baal must enter his belly, down **into his mouth he must go**” (*KTU* 1.5.ii.4-5). Translators insert the word *k* “like” by reconstructing the text from a parallel passage that also describes Mot devouring Baal like a lamb (*KTU* 1.4.viii.19-20).⁸⁷³ Despite the tantalizing suggestion by Wyatt that Baal’s death can be understood as a sacrifice, a deeper analysis suggests that we probably cannot read the passage in this way. The Ugaritic word that Wyatt translates as “I who offered him up” is *‘dbnn* from the

⁸⁶⁹ Pardee 2003a: 269 n. 242.

⁸⁷⁰ “Finally, the verb *tbh*, rather than *dbh*, the verb characteristic of the prose ritual texts and which appears in some mythological passages where a divine meal is depicted. (*tbh* also appears in descriptions of divine feasts, though more rarely, e.g., *CTA* 4 vi 40.) This passage varies considerably, therefore, from the ritual texts, most of which emanate from the royal sacrificial cult as actually practiced at Ugarit in ca. 1200 BCE” (Pardee 2003a: 268-269 n.242). The main Ugaritic ritual funerary text is *KTU* 1.161; see the text and commentary in Lewis 1989: 5-52.

⁸⁷¹ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 134.

⁸⁷² Translation by Wyatt 2002: 134.

⁸⁷³ E.g., Gibson 1967: 76.

root ‘*db* “to prepare,” which is a general term meaning “to place” or “to prepare.”⁸⁷⁴ In

his own words, Wyatt comments:

The cultic use of the vb is to be understood here, as at KTU 1.4 viii 17. Cf. KTU 1.4 vi 39-40. There is no evidence from Ugarit of cult being offered to Mot. Perhaps this is part of the irony here, that Baal himself, recipient of so many offerings, will himself become the sacrificial victim of Mot, the unworshipped, the all-devourer. Here the sacrificial image is of course a metaphor for death.⁸⁷⁵

Other translations, however, do not understand the verb ‘*db* in this way.⁸⁷⁶ We do find the word ‘*db* as a term meaning “to prepare an offering,” but its use is not well-attested and is contingent on a clear cultic context.⁸⁷⁷ In fact, the Ugaritic word ‘*db* meaning “to prepare an offering” occurs only once in a ritual text (RS 1.023:11’).⁸⁷⁸ As Pardee comments on RS 1.023:11’, “The verb ‘DB is not a technical term in Ugaritic rituals.”⁸⁷⁹ Moreover, in that text the verb refers to an offering of silver (Ug. *ksp*), not an animal. This difficulty is further borne out by Mot’s poetic simile to Baal as a lamb (*imr*). According to Pardee’s study of the ritual texts from Ugarit, the word *imr* “lamb” occurs as a victim for sacrifice

⁸⁷⁴ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 144-145.

⁸⁷⁵ Wyatt 2002: 134 n.80. The word ‘*db* “to prepare” occurs elsewhere in the Baal epic (KTU 1.4.vi.40) to describe the preparation of Baal’s palace. Because the scene is followed by a description of animal slaughter for a feast for the gods, Wyatt interprets the verb ‘*db* with a cultic connotation, following the reading of Levine and de Tarragon 1993 who argue that the verb ‘*db* in that passage can be read in this way based on a parallel text (KTU 1.41.10) where the verb ‘*db* is used with an offering of a pigeon to Anat. Cf. Gibson (2004: 63) who interprets the verb ‘*db* at KTU 1.4.vi.40 without any cultic connotation.

⁸⁷⁶ Smith and Pitard (2009: 704) read the verb in a parallel passage (KTU 1.4.viii.17) simply as “to take” without any cultic connotations: “Lest he take you like a lamb in his mouth.” Gibson (1978: 76) translates the passage (KTU 1.6.ii.18-23) as “I who made him (like) a lamb in my mouth.”

⁸⁷⁷ Cf. the Hebrew verb ‘*sh* “to make,” which can also mean “to make a sacrifice” in a clear cultic context (e.g., Leviticus 4:20).

⁸⁷⁸ See the text in Pardee 2000a: 342-344, 1189.

⁸⁷⁹ Pardee 2000a: 348.

only once in all the texts.⁸⁸⁰ On the other hand, adult male ovids/caprids (Ug. *š*) and female ovids/caprids (Ug. *dqt*) occur much more frequently as victims in the ritual texts (672 times for male ovids/caprids and 197 times for female ovids/caprids).⁸⁸¹ Based on this evidence, it is difficult to see any cultic context in the scene describing Mot's death, and therefore, unlikely that the poet understood the scene as a sacrifice. Thus, if the poet had intended to describe Baal's death as a sacrifice, it is more likely that he would have used a more common term for sacrifice, such as *dbh*, as well as a more common sacrificial victim for the simile. Nevertheless, by following Patton's model, in which myths about gods performing sacrifice do not exactly replicate human rituals, then we might be able to see a possible allusion to the sacrifice of Baal in this passage.

In the lines that follow Mot's reference to Baal's death, Anat takes revenge and kills Mot by a variety of methods, such as cutting and burning (*KTU* 1.6.ii.27-38). There then follows another large lacuna of about 40 lines, after which El tells Anat about his dream that the skies rained oil and the wadis ran with honey, an indication that Baal is alive with the return of fertility: "For alive is Valiant Baal, for the Prince, Lord of the earth, exists" (*KTU* 1.6.iii.1-21).⁸⁸² After yet another large lacuna of about 38 lines, Baal returns to take up his throne of kingship (*KTU* 1.6.v.5). The fragmentary state of these portions of the tablets does not provide us enough information to know the specifics of

⁸⁸⁰ Pardee 2000b: 328.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid. Along with sheep and rams, bulls were the most common offerings in the Ugaritic ritual texts, see, for example, RS 1.009; 24.249; 24.253; 24.643. For Phoenician evidence of the offering of a bull, see the Marseilles Tariff (*KAI* 69.3). For the Israelite cult, in the Book of Leviticus (1:1-4), the bull is the first animal mentioned for sacrifice. The Canaanite god Baal is also frequently depicted as a bull (see Cornelius 1994).

⁸⁸² Translation by Wyatt 2002: 137.

Baal's rebirth. What is certain is that Baal is dead at one point, then alive at another point, and his return to life is accompanied by the return of fertility, and thus, Baal follows the pattern of a dying and rising god. But it remains only hypothetical based on the available evidence that Baal's death is described as a sacrifice. In sum, the Baal Cycle depicts the death and burial of the god Baal, as well as his rebirth with the return of fertility. As we will see in the following chapter, these features became a prototype for the death and rebirth of not only Melqart but also Ieoud. Moreover, in those myths we do find the motif of the sacrifice of the god.

The correspondences between the death of the king with a lack of fertility and rebirth with fertility is also a major theme in the Ugaritic *Aqhat Epic*. The fragmented story of Aqhat is preserved on three tablets, but the lacunae prevent a full understanding of the story.⁸⁸³ The epic recounts the story of king Danel and his son Aqhat. In particular, the text associates fertility with the virility of the king. In the epic, the plants wither after the death of young Aqhat: "and because of [his] death [the ... is] atrophied, the first-fruits of summer shr[ivelled], the ears of corn in their husks" (*KTU* 1.19.i.18-20).⁸⁸⁴ Learning of the death of his son, king Danel then curses the land with further infertility, "For seven years Baal shall fail, for eight, the Charioteer of the clouds! No dew, no rain, no welling up of the deeps, no goodness of Baal's voice!" (*KTU* 1.19.i.41-46).⁸⁸⁵ The *Aqhat Epic* tells us that the fertility of the land is directly connected to the health of the royal line and that the king was in direct communication with Baal, the god of fertility. This is

⁸⁸³ Pardee 2003c: 343.

⁸⁸⁴ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 293-294.

⁸⁸⁵ Translation by Wyatt 2002: 296.

congruent with the ritual texts from Ugarit where the king is the priest and offers sacrifice to Baal on behalf of the city.

Another myth, the *Keret Epic*, also partially preserved on three tablets, describes the difficulties of king Keret (also vocalized as Kirta) in obtaining an heir to the throne. The story is unique among Ugaritic myths because it mentions the cities of Tyre and Sidon, and thus, the story can be used to understand Canaanite myth and religion more broadly.⁸⁸⁶ In the *Keret Epic*, king Keret loses his entire family (*KTU* 1.14.i), after which he asks El for sons (1.14.ii). El tells the king that to acquire sons he must first offer a sacrifice and wage war against a neighboring city (1.14.ii). Later, Keret holds a banquet for the gods, and El, at the instigation of Baal, blesses Keret with a fruitful marriage:

“[T]hen Keret the votary served a feast in his house, a party in his [ho]use he gave, and excuses he would not accept. [After]wards there came the gods to the assembly, [and] Vali[ant Baal] spoke: ‘Come, O Wise One, perceptive [god], bless indeed [Keret] the votary, give a blessing indeed to the gracious one, [heir of] El’. [El] took a cup [in] (his) hand, a goblet in (his) [right] hand; He did indeed bless [his servant], he blessed Keret [the votary], [he gave a blessing] to the gracious [one], heir of El: ‘[Take] a wife, O Keret, take a wife to your house, bring a [sac]red bride into your dwelling: she will bear you seven sons, and multiply them eightfold for you’ (*Keret Epic* 1.15.ii.9-25).⁸⁸⁷

In addition to seven sons, Keret is also blessed with six daughters (*KTU* 1.15.iii.5-12). In the passage describing the blessings of Keret, the king is also associated with the *Rapa’ūma*, the dead ancestors and sources of fertility: ‘[Be greatly exalted,] Keret, [among the Saviours of] the underworld’ (*KTU* 1.15.iii.2-3).⁸⁸⁸ Thus, these lines correspond with ritual text RS 34.126 mentioned above that associates the living kings

⁸⁸⁶ Pardee 2003a: 333.

⁸⁸⁷ Translation by Wyatt 2009: 207-209.

⁸⁸⁸ Translation by Wyatt 2009: 210.

with the dead kings as the source of fertility. Later in the myth, king Keret becomes sick and his illness is mirrored in the infertility of the crops, and a sacrifice is offered to counteract the drought and famine (*KTU* 1.16.iii.14-15). The *Keret Epic* offers evidence not only for the belief that the sickness of the king is manifested by infertility, but also that cult practices performed by the king (in this case a banquet for the gods) are directly linked to restoring a lack of fertility. Thus, we can arguably utilize the evidence from the texts of Ugarit, the northern neighbor of Tyre, to gain a deeper understanding of Philo's account of child sacrifice, as I show in the next chapter. In the following sections, I discuss the issues of child sacrifice in the biblical texts and an Israelite story of sacrifice and rebirth, namely the story of the sacrifice of Isaac from Genesis 22.

4. Child Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible and Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac

In the previous sections, I introduced what I call Philo's theory of sacrifice, which relates the origins of sacrifice to fertility and the cycles of death and life in nature. I then surveyed the oldest Syro-Canaanite texts from Ugarit that attest to the special connections between the king and fertility. Moreover, I analyzed the story of the death and rebirth of Baal and pointed out the connections with fertility in Baal's return to life. In the following, I discuss a story from the Hebrew Bible where Abraham is commanded by YHWH to sacrifice his son Isaac, which offers key parallels not only to the death and rebirth of Baal but also to Philo's story of the sacrifice of Ieoud, as I will show in the next chapter.

According to Levenson, the Syro-Canaanite story of El's loss of his son Baal, "is clearly one with a rich set of reflexes in the Hebrew Bible."⁸⁸⁹ More recently, Omri Boehm, following the work of Levenson, has argued that there was a common origin for both the story of child sacrifice in Genesis 22 and Philo's account of child sacrifice.⁸⁹⁰ He bases this argument on the use of the Hebrew word *yāhîd*, "only-one/favored one," in Genesis 22 to describe the son of Abraham, which is the same word rendered into Greek as *leoud*, used for the name of the son of El in Philo's story and evidently a transliteration of *yāhîd* or a similar Phoenician form.⁸⁹¹ Although both stories depict a situation where a father sacrifices his son, the Israelite story recasts the outcome of the assumed common story so that Isaac is substituted with a ram, presumably to take an ideological stance against the practices of child sacrifice depicted in the story's archetype.⁸⁹² Thus, both stories would function as aitiologies of sacrifice: a Phoenician aitiology for human sacrifice, on the one hand, and an Israelite aitiology for the substitution of an animal for a human, on the other hand. It is important to reiterate, as we saw in Chapter 1, that this sort of creative adaptation of a culture's motif was possible not only because of the close contact between the cultures of the Levant but also because the Israelites did believe in the existence of many gods, but they worshipped only one god (monolatry).⁸⁹³

⁸⁸⁹ Levenson 1993: 33.

⁸⁹⁰ Boehm 2007: 54.

⁸⁹¹ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44 = 4.16.11.

⁸⁹² E.g., Baudissin 1911: 89-90; Spiegel 1967: 64; Weinfeld 1972: 134; Green 1975: 174, 158; Mosca 1975: 237.

⁸⁹³ Rendsburg 1995; Zevit 2001.

Before a close reading of the text of Genesis 22 it is important to briefly survey the evidence for human sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible because it informs our understanding of the narrative of Genesis 22. A much-debated question in biblical studies is whether or not the Israelites practiced child sacrifice, and scholars typically turn to a passage from Exodus 13 as evidence.⁸⁹⁴ In the Book of Exodus, YHWH relates to Moses an origin story for the law of offering first-born sons as a sacrifice: “The Lord spoke further to Moses, saying, ‘Consecrate to Me every first-born; man and beast, the first issue of every womb among the Israelites is Mine.’”⁸⁹⁵ This commandment refers to a requirement for the offering of animals to YHWH, but also, it seems, of humans. The Israelite god explains further that animals are to be sacrificed but humans are to be “redeemed,” for which YHWH narrates an aitiology behind the sacrifice, relating it to the sacrifice of first-born male sons in Egypt. Moses is then commanded to tell his children the following aitiology of sacrifice:

“You shall set apart (*h'byr*) for the Lord every **first issue of the womb**: every male firstling that your cattle drop shall be the Lord's. But every firstling ass you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. And you must redeem every first-born male among your children. And when, in time to come, your son asks you, saying, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, the first-born of both man and the beast. Therefore I sacrifice (*zbh*) to the Lord **every first male issue of the womb**, but redeem (*pdh*) every first-born among my sons.’” (Exodus 13:12-15)

⁸⁹⁴ For a discussion of this question with references, see Levenson 1993: 3-17 and Stavrakopoulou 2004: 240-300.

⁸⁹⁵ Exodus 13:1-2

Moses, therefore, is commanded by YHWH to “set apart” the first-born male animals. The Hebrew verb used here is *h’byr* “to devote.” This verb has given rise to much scholarly discussion for interpretation of the First-Born Laws because the verb is also used in the earliest reference to the biblical cult of Molech in Leviticus (18:21), which seemingly included child sacrifice. Several scholars have equated Molech sacrifice with the sacrifice of first-borns to YHWH mentioned in this passage from Exodus.⁸⁹⁶ More recently, however, scholars have maintained that Molech and YHWH must be distinct divinities.⁸⁹⁷ Although the Israelite god requires the dedication of all first-born males (*h’byr*), Exodus is clear that only the animals are actually sacrificed (*zblh*) whereas first-born sons are “redeemed” (*pdh*). The difference in terminology articulates this distinction. In other words, the aitiology explains a substitution sacrifice. Note also that the first-born laws are closely connected with ideas of fertility in the phrase “first issue of the womb.” As Stavrakopoulou states, “the biblical presentation of the firstborn-sacrifice is closely tied to issues of potential or divinely-promised fertility.”⁸⁹⁸ As we will see, the fertility of the Israelites is divinely-promised because of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his first-born son Isaac, who is then “redeemed.”

The question remains: how are we to interpret these sacred laws about the first-born in Exodus? Roland de Vaux argued against a literal reading of the law of the first-

⁸⁹⁶ E.g., Eichrodt 1961: 149; Buber 1967: 180; Irsigler 1977: 34. In three passages from the Book of Jeremiah (7:31; 19:5; 32:35), the prophet emphasizes that YHWH did not command the Molech sacrifices, implying that some thought that the Israelite god did originally command these types of sacrifice.

⁸⁹⁷ Day 1989: 71. Levenson 1993: 18-24. Cf. Stavrakopoulou 2004 who argues that Molech sacrifice is a royal specialization of first-born sacrifice.

⁸⁹⁸ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 285.

born sons and claimed instead that the Israelites never practiced child sacrifice.⁸⁹⁹

Levenson argues, in contrast, that child sacrifice was only forbidden by YHWH during a late phase in the history of Israel and later projected back into the Exodus command.⁹⁰⁰

The law is articulated again in Exodus 22:28-29: “you shall give Me the first-born among your sons. You shall do the same with your cattle and your flocks.”⁹⁰¹ According to

Levenson, “The theology underlying Exodus 22:28b is that the first-born sons, like the male first-born of animals and the first fruits of the soil, belong to YHWH; they are not the father’s, to do with as he sees fit.”⁹⁰² Moreover, as he explains, the fact that in the

same passage YHWH commands Abraham to sacrifice his son in Genesis 22, but YHWH does *not* command Abraham to sacrifice the ram in substitution for Isaac, is indicative of the potential for child sacrifice among the Israelites. Moreover, as Levenson points out, a passage from the Book of Ezekiel says that YHWH gave the Israelites laws that were not good as a way to test the devotion of the Israelites.⁹⁰³ Thus, we may see child sacrifice as

an option which YHWH could demand, and it is the potential requirements of this law that are exemplified in the story of the attempted-sacrifice of Abraham’s first-born son Isaac in Genesis 22.⁹⁰⁴

⁸⁹⁹ Vaux 1964: 71.

⁹⁰⁰ Levenson 1993: 5; Stavrakopoulou (2004) also argues that child sacrifice was a part of early Israelite history.

⁹⁰¹ Exodus 22:28-29

⁹⁰² Levenson 1993: 15-16.

⁹⁰³ Ezekiel 20:25-26. Levenson 1993: 5-6.

⁹⁰⁴ Genesis 22:1-19

In addition to Genesis 22, there is another famous story about a father sacrificing his son in the Hebrew Bible. In the Book of Kings, the Moabite king sacrifices his first-born son as the last attempt to divert destruction for his kingdom.⁹⁰⁵ This biblical example, in particular, is similar to Philo's story where the king of the gods sacrifices his son during a dangerous situation, as we will see, and these types of sacrifice were indeed done (or thought to be done) by worshipers of other gods, like the Moabites and the Canaanites. These biblical examples show that child sacrifice could be commanded by YHWH or performed in response to an extreme situation, but the practice was never institutional among the Israelites.⁹⁰⁶ In contrast, an established cult centered around child sacrifice to the god Molech is found in legal, historical, and prophetic literature from the Hebrew Bible, as discussed in section 2 above.

Scholarly discussion about the representations of Molech worship in the Hebrew Bible has focused on how to interpret the terminology in the descriptions of Molech, whether it denotes bloody sacrifice or the dedication of children to a foreign cult. The most common terms used in these texts to describe offerings to Molech are *h'byr* "to pass (in fire)" and *ntn* "to give, to present."⁹⁰⁷ As Ziony Zevit notes, these are not the standard terms for sacrifice in the Israelite cult.⁹⁰⁸ Moshe Weinfeld argued that the terminology denotes a dedication to an idolatrous priesthood and not the slaying or burning of children

⁹⁰⁵ "Seeing that the battle was going against him, the king of Moab led an attempt of seven hundred swordsmen to break a way through to the king of Edom; but they failed. So he took his first-born son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him up on the wall as a burnt offering. A great wrath came upon Israel, so they withdrew from him and went back to [their own] land" (2 Kings 3:26-27).

⁹⁰⁶ Stavrakopoulou (2004: 205-206), on the other hand, argues that the biblical depictions of child sacrifice firmly situate the practice within the boundaries of Yahweh-worship.

⁹⁰⁷ Leviticus 18:21; 20:2, 4. Deuteronomy 18: 10. 2 Kings 16:4, 17:7, 21:6, 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35.

⁹⁰⁸ Zevit 2001: 550.

as part of a sacrifice.⁹⁰⁹ Weinfeld maintained that Molech cult was influenced by the worship of the Assyrian god Baal Hadad, who was referred to by his epithet *Milki* “king,” and he cited Assyrian documents that describe children who are burned for *Adadmilki*.⁹¹⁰ According to Weinfeld, following Abraham Geiger, the vocalization of the Assyrian god *Milki* was altered to Molech to fit the pattern of the Hebrew word for shame (*bōšet*).⁹¹¹ Day, in contrast, argues that the Hebrew term *h‘byr* “to make pass” is synonymous with Hebrew *zbh* “to sacrifice.”⁹¹² Day cites the First-Born Laws in Exodus as evidence for the use of the verb *h‘byr* with the equivalent meaning of *zbh*, but in the passage the first-born sons are redeemed not sacrificed.⁹¹³ Day does, however, accept Geiger’s thesis about the pejorative vocalization of the Hebrew word Molech to reflect the word for “shame,” which Weinfeld follows, but Day connects Molech to a Canaanite Underworld god called *Mlk* known from Ugaritic texts rather than the Assyrian god *Adadmilki*.⁹¹⁴ As mentioned previously, Stavrakopoulou has argued against Day and Heider and takes the position of Eissfeldt, but she suggests that the *mlk* ritual was purposely distorted into a

⁹⁰⁹ Weinfeld 1972: 141-145. In Weinfeld’s words (1972: 145), “The burning of the children is not to be taken literally but rather figuratively, and denotes dedication to the idolatrous priesthood.”

⁹¹⁰ Weinfeld 1972: 145.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁹¹² Day 1989: 82-85.

⁹¹³ Exodus 13:12. Cf. Ezekiel 20:25-26.

⁹¹⁴ Day 1989: 46-57. As Day argues (1989: 84), it is clear from a passage from the Book of Isaiah (57:9) that *das Ende des Gottes Moloch* can not be maintained as Eissfeldt had originally argued, and moreover, that Molech is a probably an Underworld divinity and not a misinterpretation of the *mol*k ritual. Following Abraham Geiger (1857: 301), Day (1989: 56) maintains that the vocalization of the name Molech is a distortion of the word Melek “king,” in order to evoke the Hebrew word *bōšet*, “shame.” This argument was doubted by Karel Dronkert (1953: 12-21) and Matitahu Tsevet (1975: 71-87) who argue instead that Molech is the original vocalization. Day’s best evidence for the god *Mlk* is from two Ugaritic snake-bite charms (*KTU* 1.100.41; 1.107.42).

fictitious character called Molech in order to distance the Israelite cult from its early history when child sacrifice was acceptable.⁹¹⁵

In the end, the precise meaning of terminology in the biblical texts describing sacrifice to Molech is still uncertain. What is more certain is that there is some relationship between Molech and the Syro-Canaanite god Baal. The prophet Jeremiah mentions the valley of Hinnom, which he also calls the *tophet*, where children were given to the fire as burnt offerings to the god Baal. The Hebrew term *tophet* occurs in Jeremiah 19:3-6, which provides evidence for rites dedicated to Molech at the *bamot* “altar” of Baal.⁹¹⁶ Baal is of course the main Syro-Canaanite god and a shared god in the pantheons of the Phoenician cities under several hypostases (Baal Hammon, Baal Shamen, Baal Lebanon, Melqart himself, etc.). In the Hebrew Bible, some of the Canaanite worshipers of Baal were explicitly marked as Phoenicians, such as the infamous Queen Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre, and wife of Ahab, the king of Israel.⁹¹⁷ On the other hand, the rebellious Israelite king Ahaz is portrayed as a follower of Baal, so he is also said to have dedicated his children to the fire of Molech.⁹¹⁸ The Israelite god, however, denounces these practices in the Book of Jeremiah, and the Book of Leviticus forbids the

⁹¹⁵ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 301-316.

⁹¹⁶ The term *tophet* also occurs at Jeremiah 7:30-32; 2 Kings 23:10; Job 17:6; Isaiah 30:31-33. Child sacrifice is described in the Hebrew Bible with a variety of verbal roots, including the common verb *zbh*, the standard word in Semitic for sacrifice: Ezekiel 16:15-21; Ezekiel 20:28-29; Psalms 106:34-39. For a schematic of the different verbal forms used to describe child sacrifice in the Hebrew bible, see Xella 2013: 264. For a discussion of the etymology of *tophet*, see Day 1989: 24-28. William Robertson Smith (1889: 377 n.2) first proposed that the word *tophet* is cognate with Aramaic *tapyā* “stove, fireplace, pt.” Day (1989: 26) supports his analysis, but he disagrees that it is an Aramaic loan word since the Molech cult was Canaanite in origin. Jeremiah (32:35) equates Baal to Molech. Day (1989: 34-35), however, argues that Baal and Molech are not the same god.

⁹¹⁷ 1 Kings 16:31-33

⁹¹⁸ 2 Kings 23:10. The vocabulary used to describe the sacrifice of children is *ntn* + *l* “to give, present,” in Leviticus, and *h’byr* (*b’š*) + *l* in Jeremiah. For further discussion, see Zevit 2001: 550.

sacrifice of children to the god Molech.⁹¹⁹ In other words, the Hebrew Bible is blatant in its condemnation of the practices of both Molech and Baal, whether or not these practices denoted child sacrifice, and whether or not the two gods are related.⁹²⁰

However we are to interpret all the evidence, the biblical traditions of the sacrifice of the first-born sons, the depictions of Molech sacrifice, and the *molk* inscriptions on Carthaginian stelae are all in the background of the story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac, a story that is traditionally called the *aqedah*, "the binding" of Isaac.⁹²¹ At the command of YHWH, Abraham sets out to the land of Moriah to offer up his son Isaac as an 'ôlāh (burnt offering). After building an altar, laying out the wood, and setting Isaac on the altar, Abraham raises the knife to slay his son when suddenly an angel of YHWH stops him from carrying out the sacrifice and instead commands him to offer a ram in substitution. I quote the first part of the narrative below:

Some time afterward, **God put Abraham to the test.** He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." And He said, "Take your son, your **favored one** (*yāhîd*), Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and **offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the heights that I will point out to you." So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering and he set out for the place of which God told him. (Genesis 22:1-3)

Scholars have often interpreted the *aqedah* as an Israelite action *against* child sacrifice.⁹²² I use the term "against" generally since the story could be interpreted as an

⁹¹⁹ Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5

⁹²⁰ Day (1989: 34-37) argues that Baal and Molech are distinct, but related, deities.

⁹²¹ Genesis 22: 1-19

⁹²² E.g., Baudissin 1911: 89-90; Spiegel 1967: 64; Weinfeld 1972: 134; Green 1975: 174, 158; Mosca 1975: 237; Day 1989: 85.

ation for the permissibility of substituting an animal for human sacrifice, or for the prohibition against child sacrifice, or even to express cultural differences.⁹²³ As mentioned above, Levenson, on the other hand, points out that this is an unlikely reading since YHWH specifically commands Abraham to sacrifice his son, whereas he does not command him to sacrifice the animal as a substitution. Levenson argues that if Genesis 22 is an aitiology, then there would be an aitiological sign-post in the narrative indicating to the reader that the story should be interpreted in this way, such as “therefore the Israelites sacrifice rams and not first-born sons.”⁹²⁴ In Levenson’s interpretation, the story of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of Isaac implies that YHWH might exercise his claim over first-born sons, but he also might change his mind.⁹²⁵ According to Levenson, although the story displays “etiological features,” it is fundamentally about “the symbolic death and unexpected new life of the beloved son, a story of far more than mere etiological significance.”⁹²⁶ In my analysis of the story, I follow Levenson’s interpretation of the *aqedah* as a story fundamentally about the symbolic death and (metaphorical) rebirth of Isaac. Whether or not the story is an aitiology against child sacrifice or for the permissibility of substitution sacrifice, the narrative does draw from parallel stories from Near Eastern literature and adapts its themes to fit Israelite theology.

⁹²³ See Levenson’s (1993: 111-113) discussion of different interpretations.

⁹²⁴ Levenson 1993: 113. This sort of sign-posting is frequent with aitiologies in the Hebrew Bible; For example, after Moses sets out from the Sea of Reeds, the Israelites came to the wilderness of Shur, where “They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; that is why it was named Marah” (Exodus 15:23). Levenson (1993: 114) offers an alternate interpretation of Genesis 22 as an aitiology for the cult-site of Moriah. This sort of sign-posting is also common with Greek aitiologies, such as in the myth of Prometheus when Hesiod (*Theog.* 556-557) says “from that time humans burn white bones upon the smoking altars.”

⁹²⁵ Levenson 1993: 16.

⁹²⁶ Ibid., 118-119, 124.

My focus in this section, however, is on how Genesis 22 relates a common Levantine pattern of death/sacrifice and rebirth.

According to Levenson, the narrative of Genesis 22 clearly indicates that child sacrifice is permissible.⁹²⁷ The biblical text depicts Abraham's obedience to the command as unwavering. Nevertheless, the tension of the scene is immediately diminished in the first verse when the scene is described as a test. Abraham will not have to sacrifice his son after all. Moreover, in the previous chapter (Genesis 21) YHWH states that the lineage of Abraham will continue through Isaac, and thus it is clear from the outset of Genesis 22 that Isaac will not be sacrificed.⁹²⁸ Also in Genesis 21, Isaac is circumcised, a practice related to fertility and the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, as Stavrakopoulou states, "The close biblical association of circumcision and the firstborn-sacrifice is also suggestive of a fertility context for the sacrifice."⁹²⁹ As we will see in the next chapter, there is also a close connection between fertility, circumcision, and child sacrifice in Philo's myth.

In Genesis 22, Isaac is called in Hebrew *yāhîd* "the only" son, but the word is often translated as "favored," as in the NJPS translation above. Not only does Genesis 22 share the same themes as Philo's story of child sacrifice, but the Semitic word *yāhîd*

⁹²⁷ Ibid., 111-114.

⁹²⁸ Genesis 21:12. However, there are other Jewish traditions where Isaac was actually sacrificed and resurrected, see *Midrash Hagadol* on Genesis 22:19. For scholarship on this midrash, see Boehm 2007: 48; See also Spiegel (1967: 38-44) who argues that this midrash is an ancient tradition and did not originate in the Middle Ages; See also the midrash on the prayer in *Shibbole ha-Leket* (9a-b) which says, "When Father Isaac was bound on the altar and reduced to ashes and his sacrificial dust was cast on to Mount Moriah, the Holy One, blessed be He, immediately brought upon him dew and revived him" (trans. by Spiegel 1967: 33).

⁹²⁹ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 286. For circumcision as a substitution ritual, see Levenson 1993: 48-52.

occurs transliterated in Philo's Greek as *Ieoud*.⁹³⁰ Levenson argues that the word *Ieoud* is "a transcription of the Phoenician equivalent of the biblical Hebrew word *yāhîd*."⁹³¹ In Genesis 22, the word *yāhîd* occurs three times in the narrative, highlighting its importance for the episode.⁹³² Thus, the term is a linguistic marker which connects the story to an archetypal myth whose themes we can also discern in the Phoenician myth preserved by Philo. Moreover, as Levenson points out, the fact that biblical stories reflect Canaanite myth is evident in the fact that YHWH is often called El in the Hebrew Bible.⁹³³ Levenson does not suggest that the two divinities are to be equated, but rather that there are clear continuities between Canaanite and Israelite religion. From this perspective, El is involved in child sacrifice in both Levantine stories, as the recipient of the offering in the story of Isaac, and as the performer of the ritual in Philo's myth of *Ieoud*, as we shall see. Along these lines, Stavrakopoulou argues that child sacrifice is firmly within the bounds of the worship of YHWH, and she even suggests that a famous passage describing Molech worship in the Book of Isaiah (30:27-33), "depicts YHWH as the divine sacrificer participating in the ritual."⁹³⁴ In a similar way, YHWH participates in the sacrifice of Isaac by commanding the act. Unlike gods from the myths of the

⁹³⁰ Baudissin (1911: 89) first connected Philo's *Ieoud* to the Hebrew word *yhyd* in Genesis 22: 2, 12, 16. Attridge and Oden (1981: 94 n.150) comment, "The textual variants here (*PE* 4.16.11: *ἰεοῦδ* D, *ἰεδοῦδ* N; *PE* 1.10.44: *ἰδοῦδ* A) seem to be reflections of a vacillation between understanding this name as the Phoenician equivalent of Hebrew *yhyd*, 'only,' or as the Phoenician equivalent of Hebrew *ydyd*, 'beloved.'"

⁹³¹ Levenson 1993: 27.

⁹³² The term is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to describe the daughter of Jephthah, who is sacrificed by her father (Judg. 11:29-40).

⁹³³ Levenson 1993: 34. E.g., "How can I damn whom God (El) has not damned, How doom when the LORD (YHWH) has not doomed" (Numbers 23:8), and in Genesis 33:20: "He (Jacob) set up an altar there, and called it El-elohe-yisrael (El, God of Israel)." The parentheses are my addition. For the Canaanite background of the Yahwistic traditions, see Smith 2002 and Cross 1973, 1988.

⁹³⁴ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 201.

polytheistic religions we have seen, however, YHWH does not directly perform sacrifice, instead, he commands the act to his chosen Israelites.

After Abraham and Isaac arrive at the place for the sacrifice where YHWH has indicated, Abraham builds an altar for the sacrifice:

They arrived at the place of which God had told him. **Abraham built an altar there**; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. Then **an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven**: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, **your favored one** (*yāhîd*), from Me.” When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. **So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.**

(Genesis 22: 9-13)⁹³⁵

⁹³⁵ The Aramaic version of Genesis 22 in the late Jewish tradition (second-century CE) of the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan contains some significant additions to the biblical version quoted above. The Targum specifies that Abraham uses the same altar that Noah and Adam had used to perform their first sacrifices. Additionally, Isaac also tells his father to bind him well so as to be an unblemished offering: “They came to the place of which *the Lord* had told him, and there Abraham (re)built the altar *which Adam had built and (which) had been demolished by the waters of the Flood. Noah rebuilt it, but it was demolished in the generation of the Division.* He arranged the wood *upon it*, and tied Isaac his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham put forth his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. *Isaac spoke up and said to his father: ‘Tie me well lest I struggle because of the anguish of my soul, with the result that a blemish will be found in your offering, and I will be thrust into the pit of destruction’*” (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis 22:9; Translation by Maher 1992: 79). Italics are from Maher and indicate the additions to the biblical version. The Targum relates an important piece of information missing from the biblical version: Abraham sacrifices at the altar that Moses and Adam first built. Thus, the Targum situates the sacrifice of Isaac within a pedigree of aitiologies of sacrifice. Abraham sacrifices on the original altar where Noah first sacrificed after the flood, which was the same altar where Adam performed the first sacrifice after he was banished from Eden (see my Chapter 1). In other words, this is not just any altar, this is *the* altar of biblical theology. Or at least this is how it was understood in the time of the Targum. As a means of comparison, in a recent study of Roman altars used in Latium during the Republic, archaeologist Claudia Moser (2019) utilizes cognitive theory to understand the function of altars that were used repeatedly over long periods of time. In particular, she argues that “altars have a distinct sort of authority and can compel highly specific conscious responses in the behaviors of those humans with whom they might come into physical contact” (Moser 2019: 121). As she suggests, the authority of a specific altar increases over time through repetitive use. Moreover, the authority of the altar is exercised not in the explanation of the meaning of the ritual but rather in the supervision of the procedure (ibid., 124). Moser’s interpretation of Roman altars is useful for thinking about the altar described by the Targum (albeit on a literary level and for a different culture). Not only does the authority of this specific biblical altar increase over time as it is repeatedly used by prestigious biblical figures (Adam, Noah, Abraham), but also, because of the authority of the altar, the participant performing the ritual knows how to proceed with the sacrifice (a burnt offering in each story). The Aramaic Targum also recounts Isaac’s active participation in the sacrifice when he tells his father to bind him tightly so he will be an unblemished offering. Sacrificial animals had to be unblemished to be acceptable to YHWH, and thus, Isaac displays his devotion and willingness to

When Abraham is about to sacrifice his son, an angel of YHWH suddenly stops him, commands him not to sacrifice his son, and acknowledges his pious fear of YHWH. A ram then appears as Abraham gazes upward toward the divine commands. Then, on his own accord, Abraham sacrifices the ram as a burnt offering instead of his son, the first substitution sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the account of Genesis 22 shows how YHWH regulates his own cult: first he commands child sacrifice, then he sends an angel to stop it, and finally he provides the correct animal for Abraham to sacrifice in substitution. Moreover, Abraham proves himself a paradigm of piety by following through with each type of ritual.

At the end of the narrative of Genesis 22 YHWH rewards Abraham's devotion by preserving the life of his son Isaac but also with the promise of fertility for his descendants:

“By myself I swear, the Lord declares: because you have done this and have not withheld your son, **your favored one** (*yāhîd*), I will bestow My blessing upon you and **make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand on the sea-shore**; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command.”

(Genesis 22: 16-18)

The reason for the successful and bountiful reproduction of the Israelites is attributed to Abraham's original devotion to YHWH and willingness to sacrifice his only-son. As Levenson argues, the *aqedah* is not simply an aitiology, but rather it is a story about the

participate in the will of YHWH (cf. Leviticus 1:3: “If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall make his offering a male without blemish”). Moreover, Isaac's statement of active participation in the sacrifice further highlights the possibility that human sacrifices are, under certain circumstances, acceptable to and even demanded by YHWH.

symbolic death and rebirth of the beloved son.⁹³⁶ The rebirth is evident not only in Isaac's unexpected survival of the sacrifice but also in the promise of fertility inherent in the descendants of Isaac, the Israelites.⁹³⁷ Thus, the story functions as an aitiology on another level: the reason for the fertility of the Israelites is because of Abraham's unrelenting devotion to YHWH. By offering his only-son, the first fruit of his lineage, Abraham ensures the perpetual fertility of the Israelites. The story of Genesis 22 draws from a Levantine archetype where a father sacrifices his son during a crisis but the son is reborn. Moreover, his rebirth is connected to fertility, just as the rebirth of Baal is related to fertility. The Israelite version, however, changes the outcome of the story so that the son does not actually die (like Baal), instead, Isaac is almost sacrificed and metaphorically reborn (similar to Herakles' metaphorical rebirth in Chapter 4). This modification to the archetype offers a glimpse into the process of how stories were easily adaptable to fit a specific culture's theology. As we have seen, the biblical world is full of gods, and the Israelites believed in their existence, but they worshipped only one: YHWH. Thus, in this polytheistic background the Israelites adapted Levantine motifs, such as the death and rebirth of the first-born son, to reflect their unique beliefs.

⁹³⁶ Levenson 1993: 124.

⁹³⁷ The New Testament also describes the *aqedah* as a story about death and rebirth: "By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who received the promises was ready to slay his only son, of whom it was said, 'it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you.' He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Conclusion

As we have seen, Philo records a theory of sacrifice that is based on deities associated with the fertility cycle of life and death. In the next chapter, I will utilize this theory to interpret Philo's story about child sacrifice. We have also seen how the stories of Baal and Isaac relate a Levantine story pattern about the death and rebirth of a god or human victim and how the accounts are associated with fertility beliefs. More specifically, the story of Baal relates the death and rebirth of the god, but as I demonstrated, the god's death probably cannot be understood as a sacrifice. Nevertheless, not only does Baal's death and rebirth provide a paradigm for the sacrifice and rebirth of Melqart, but Baal's burial and funeral rites also provide a prototype for the beliefs in the burial of the god known from the Pyrgi tablets and the traditions of the tomb of Melqart. Accordingly, we can also include the myth of Melqart as part of the Levantine milieu of stories about death and resurrection, as I will explore in the next chapter. In this way, we can see how myths, such as that of Ugaritic Baal, were easily adaptable by neighboring cultures, such as the Phoenicians and Israelites. As we will see in the next chapter, the Phoenician milieu, in particular, adapted the pattern of the death and rebirth of the Ugaritic god Baal but described the death of the god as a burnt offering in the myths of Melqart and Ieoud. In a similar way, the Israelite story of Isaac also belongs to this Levantine pattern of death and rebirth and is connected to beliefs in the fertility of the Israelites, but the story adapts the pattern and focuses on substitution for child sacrifice. In the background of this story are ideas about child sacrifice attested by the Punic term *mlk* and the biblical Molech, and, as we will see, the story is related to the Phoenician story of the sacrifice of the child god Ieoud. The Isaac story, however, is unique from this

Levantine story pattern because the performer (Abraham) and victim (Isaac) are a mortal, unlike the stories of the gods Baal and Ieoud. This itself reflects the unique beliefs of the Israelites. Thus, although each Levantine story follows the pattern of death and rebirth, each story is also culturally specific in its depiction of that pattern. In the next chapter, I perform a close reading of Philo's account of the sacrifice of Ieoud and show how it also relates the pattern of sacrifice and rebirth and also displays features related both to the Baal myth and the Isaac story. Then I discuss the implications of my reading of Philo for understanding the myth of Melqart. Finally, I consider the possible Tyrian origins of the *molk* ritual.

Chapter 6: West Levantine Myths of Sacrifice and Rebirth: A New Reading of Philo of Byblos and the Sacrifice of Ieoud

sibi praesternat vivax altaria Phoenix
-Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.114.⁹³⁸

καὶ σοφὸν ἀγρεύσαντες ὁμόχρονον ὄρνιν ἐλαίης
αἰετὸν ὑψιπέτην ἱερεύσατε Κυανοχαίτη
-Nonnus, *Dion.* 40.493-494.⁹³⁹

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined Philo's theory of sacrifice that is predicated on the worship of divinities associated with fertility and the cycles of life and death. I will use Philo's theory as a framework for interpreting his narratives about child sacrifice in this chapter. I also surveyed the Canaanite and Israelite sources for evidence of child sacrifice, and I discussed the connections between the priestly function of kings, royal sacrifices, and fertility beliefs in Syro-Canaanite sources. Finally, building from the work of Levenson, I considered how the Baal Cycle in the Ugaritic texts depicts the death and rebirth of the fertility god Baal and how the story of the sacrifice of Isaac depicts the rebirth of Isaac in the perpetual fertility of the Israelites. I also pointed to the thematic

⁹³⁸ "The vivacious Phoenix prepares altars for himself." For the Phoenix, cf. Hdt. 2.73; Ov. *Met.* 15.385.

⁹³⁹ "And after you catch the wise bird, the age-mate of the olive tree, the high-flying eagle, sacrifice him to the dark-haired god (Poseidon)."

and verbal connections between the stories of Genesis 22 and Philo's account of child sacrifice.

In this chapter, I return to Philo's association of sacrifice and fertility cycles to interpret his account of child sacrifice in the *Phoenician History*. As we also saw with other Levantine myths about death/sacrifice and rebirth, namely the story of Baal and the story of Isaac, the rebirth or unexpected survival of the son is accompanied by the promise of fertility. In the following sections, I conduct a close reading of Philo's myth of divine child sacrifice, and by using comparative material from the Baal Cycle and Genesis 22, I show how Philo's account can also be interpreted as a story about sacrifice and rebirth. Finally, I demonstrate how Philo's Phoenician story about child sacrifice provides deeper insights into the Tyrian myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. As Xella has argued, Baal becomes a prototype for other Baal type figures in the Levant, and more specifically, Baal is historically and morphologically related to the Phoenician city gods, such as Melqart, the Baal of Tyre.⁹⁴⁰ In my analysis of Philo, I read the sacrificed god Ieoud as another Baal type god, like Melqart. Moreover, I will show how the myth of Ieoud can be interpreted from the pattern of a dying and rising god. Thus, if my reconstruction of Philo's story can be maintained, then the testimony of Philo of Byblos would provide evidence for the connections between child sacrifice and the cult of Melqart, which it turn would support the original conclusions of Heider that the origins of the *molk* sacrifice are connected to the cult of Melqart, as I discussed in the previous chapter.

⁹⁴⁰ Xella 2001c: 83.

1. The “Short Version” of El’s (Kronos) Sacrifice of Ieoud

Philo reports two different stories about El’s (Kronos) sacrifice of his only-son Ieoud. Baumgarten suggests that these are two different events or perhaps that Philo combines accounts from two different sources of the same story of Kronos’ sacrifice of his son.⁹⁴¹ Based on linguistic and contextual correspondences, I maintain that Philo, or the author quoting him (i.e., Porphyry or Eusebios), records two different versions of the same story about El’s sacrifice of his son. A parallel example of how this works is Hesiod’s two different versions of the Prometheus and Pandora myth, one in the *Theogony* (507-612) and another in the *Works and Days* (42-105), each of which contains different details but refer to the same story. In the case of Philo, we do not know whether Porphyry or Eusebios are summarizing one narrative or two, but for our purposes, I will refer to each version as the “short” and “long” version. In the “short version,” Philo describes the aftermath of Kronos’ ascent to power after the castration and murder of his father Ouranos and Kronos’ apportioning of the Phoenician kingdoms to his children. I argue that the “short version” is likely tied to a local Tyrian foundation myth, because of the focus on the city of Tyre and its rulers Astarte and Zeus Demarous (Baal Hadad), who are the parents of Melqart, as I argue below.⁹⁴² Philo will elaborate on the practice of sacrifice in a different fragment, which I term the “long version.” But in the following passage, which is the “short version,” Philo introduces the story of child sacrifice:

⁹⁴¹ Baumgarten 1981: 251.

⁹⁴² For Zeus identified with the god Baal Hadad, see Baumgarten 1981: 196. For Hadad, see *DDD*: 377-382. The god first appears in Old Akkadian texts as *Adad* and was used to describe a variety of storm gods in the Near East. The name probably means “thunderer,” a reference to his role as the storm god. For the name Hadad paired with Baal in Ugaritic texts, see *KTU* 1.101:1-4.

Ἀστάρτη δὲ ἡ μεγίστη καὶ Ζεὺς Δημαροῦ καὶ Ἄδωδος⁹⁴³ βασιλεὺς θεῶν ἐβασίλευον τῆς χώρας Κρόνου γνώμη. Ἡ δὲ Ἀστάρτη ἐπέθηκε τῇ ἰδίᾳ κεφαλῇ βασιλείας παράσημον κεφαλὴν ταύρου· περινοστοῦσα δὲ τὴν οἰκουμένην εὗρεν ἀεροπετὴ ἀστέρα, ὃν καὶ ἀνελομένη ἐν Τύρῳ τῇ ἁγίᾳ νήσῳ ἀφιέρωσε. Τὴν δὲ Ἀστάρτην Φοίνικες τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἶναι λέγουσι. Καὶ ὁ Κρόνος δὲ περιῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην Ἀθηνᾶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ θυγατρὶ δίδωσι τῆς Ἀττικῆς τὴν βασιλείαν. Λοιμοῦ δὲ γενομένου καὶ φθορᾶς, τὸν ἑαυτοῦ μονογενῆ υἱὸν Κρόνος Οὐρανῷ τῷ πατρὶ ὀλοκαρποῖ, καὶ τὰ αἰδοῖα περιτέμνεται, ταὐτὸ ποιῆσαι καὶ τοὺς ἅμ' αὐτῷ συμμάχους καταναγκάσας.

Greatest Astarte and Zeus, called both Demarous and Adodos, king of gods, were ruling over the land with the consent of Kronos. Astarte placed upon her own head a **bull's head** as an emblem of **kingship**. While traveling around the world, she discovered a star which had fallen from the sky. She took it up and consecrated it in **Tyre**, the holy island. The Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite. Also **when Kronos was traveling** around the world, **he gave the kingdom of Attica to his own daughter Athena. At the occurrence of a fatal plague, Kronos immolated his only son to his father Ouranos**, and circumcised himself, forcing the allies who were with him to do the same.

(Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.30-34)⁹⁴⁴

As Bonnet comments, Philo preserves a Phoenician mythology in this passage, but as I will show, specifically a Tyrian mythology.⁹⁴⁵ Both Astarte and Kronos are described as “traveling around the world” (περινοστοῦσα δὲ τὴν οἰκουμένην and περιῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην), the quintessential Phoenician activity. As we saw in the previous chapter, Melqart also travels in the Greek versions of his myth. In Philo, Kronos, king of the gods, distributes the realms of the Phoenician world to his children, establishing Astarte and Zeus at Tyre, Athena at Greece, and later Taautos at Egypt. The chief gods of Tyre, Astarte and Zeus, called both Demarous and Hadad, are mentioned as the rulers of

⁹⁴³ Otto Gruppe (1887: 356-360) emended the text so that it reads as two gods instead of three, namely Astarte and Zeus, who is both Demarous and Adad, instead of Astarte, Zeus Demarous, and Adad.

⁹⁴⁴ Text and Translation by Attridge and Oden 1981: 54-57.

⁹⁴⁵ Bonnet 1981: 22.

Tyre.⁹⁴⁶ Philo highlights the importance of the kingship at Tyre with three different iterations of the Greek word for king (βασιλεὺς ... ἐβασίλευον ... βασιλείας). Astarte assumes the emblem of royalty, the bull's head, the so-called Hathor horns known from portrayals of Phoenician goddesses.⁹⁴⁷ Scholars generally agree that Philo's Zeus Demarous, also called Hadad (Ζεὺς Δημαροῦ καὶ Ἄδωδος), is best identified with the god Baal Hadad.⁹⁴⁸ More pertinent to my analysis is that in his account of the life of Kronos Philo says that Zeus Demarous is the father of Melqart.⁹⁴⁹ Although Philo does not state who the mother is, other classical authors mention Melqart as the son of Zeus and *Asteria*, a Greek rendering of the Phoenician goddess Astarte.⁹⁵⁰ More specifically, Philo states earlier in the history of Kronos that Melqart is the son of Demarous: τῷ δὲ Δημαροῦντι γίνεται Μέλκαθρος, ὁ καὶ Ἡρακλῆς. "And to Demarous is born

⁹⁴⁶ Attridge and Oden (1981: 91 n.125) note that Philo's description of Astarte's epithet ἡ μεγίστη corresponds with Phoenician inscriptions where she is given the epithet 𐤍𐤁𐤏, "the great one" (see *KAI* 17, 33, 81). According to Baumgarten (1981: 220), Philo plays with etymologies by mentioning the star of Astarte. The Phoenician name *Astarte* is the counterpart of the Mesopotamian name *Ishtar* or *Inanna*, which is often translated as "Lady of Heaven" (*DDD*: 452) and one of her symbols was the eight-pointed star. Although the etymology of *Astarte* remains obscure, it is probably connected to the planet Venus, also called the morning and evening star (*DDD*: 109-110). The Greek equivalent of *Astarte* is *Asteria*, which means "starry."

⁹⁴⁷ Attridge and Oden 1981: 91 n.128. For pictures of the Hathor-horns, see Pritchard 1969b: nos. 474 and 477.

⁹⁴⁸ Cassuto (1975: 188-192) pointed to a parallelism in the Ugaritic texts of the epithet *dmrn* (*dimaranu* or the like) with the storm god Baal Hadad (*CAT* 1.4.vii.39). Cassuto also argued that Demarous fights Pontos, "the Sea," just as in the *Baal Epic* Baal fights Yam, the Ugaritic god of the sea (*KTU* 1.2.iv.15-27). Moreover, Demarous is described as the son of both Ouranos and Dagon, just as Baal is described as the son of both El and Dagon. For further discussion, see Baumgarten 1997: 196-197 and Bonnet 1981: 22. The parallel between Demarous and Ugaritic *dmrn* is one of the great examples of the deep Canaanite past of some of Philo's sources.

⁹⁴⁹ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.27.

⁹⁵⁰ Cicero, *De natura deorum* 3.42; Athenaeus 9.47.33 Kaibel; Eustathius. *Ad Od.* XI 600 = 1.440.3 Stallbaum. For the genealogy of Melqart, see Bonnet 1981: 20-22.

Melkathros, who is [called] Herakles.”⁹⁵¹ Thus, in the passage quoted above describing the Tyrian kingship we can safely assume that the gods Astarte and Demarous are the parents of Melqart.

In the “short version,” Philo highlights the importance of the kingship at Tyre with the crowning of Astarte and Demarous. Within the context of the kingship of the Tyrian gods, Philo then states that Kronos sacrificed his son because of “a plague and destruction” (Λοιμοῦ . . . φθορᾶς). Attridge and Oden translate these two nouns in a hendiadys as “fatal plague.” In response to the plague, Kronos sacrifices his son as an offering to the previous regent of the universe, the now deified Ouranos. Baumgarten suggests that the plague is the result of the castration and murder of Ouranos and that Kronos makes a substitutionary atonement for the death of Ouranos.⁹⁵² In the narrative directly preceding the “short version,” Kronos castrates his father Ouranos, after which Ouranos dies:

ὁ Ἥλος (τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὁ Κρόνος) Οὐρανὸν τὸν πατέρα λοχήσας ἐν τόποι τινὶ μεσογείῳ καὶ λαβὼν ὑποχείριον ἐκτέμνει αὐτοῦ τὰ αἰδοῖα σύνεγγυς πηγῶν τε καὶ ποταμῶν, ἔνθα ἀφιερώθη Οὐρανός, καὶ ἀπηρτίσθη αὐτοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα.

Elos, that is Kronos, trapped his father Ouranos in an inland location and, having him in his power, castrated him in the vicinity of some springs and rivers. This is where Ouranos was deified and his spirit was finished.⁹⁵³

⁹⁵¹ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.27. Note the spelling of the name Μέλκαθρος (Melqart) with the metathesis of the Phoenician letters resh and tav in the Greek rendering theta and rho (Melqart> Μέλκαθρος). This spelling is preserved in the oldest manuscript (A) from the 10th century CE, whereas later manuscripts (BONV) corrected the spelling to Μέλκαρος to reflect the correct Phoenician spelling. Plutarch (*On Isis and Osiris* 15) offers a possible variant of the name Melqart in the word Μάλκανδρος. For this variant, see discussion in Dussaud 1904: 167.

⁹⁵² Baumgarten 1981: 222.

⁹⁵³ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.29. Translation by Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009.

Although Philo does not explicitly state that Kronos murders his father, the fact that he dies after the castration implies that Kronos murdered him. In my analysis of Philo, I read both the castration and death of Ouranos as a part of the same act, which later gives rise to two different ritual practices (circumcision and child sacrifice). Thus, the myth of child sacrifice is directly linked to the Phoenician succession myth because Kronos sacrifices his son in response to the plague that occurs from the murder of Ouranos. Moreover, Philo links the origins of child sacrifice to the origins of the Tyrian kingship because the sacrifice of the child is done in response to the death of the previous king and the establishment of the new regents at Tyre, Astarte and Zeus Demarous (Baal Hadad). Furthermore, Ouranos is immortalized (ἀφιερώθη) after death, a verb used in Philo's theory of sacrifice for the deification of plants. Thus, we can situate his death and immortalization within the context of Philo's theory of sacrifice and the worship of deities associated with the cycles of life and death, as I will explain further in the next section.

In the "short version" of the myth quoted above, the phrase Λοιμοῦ δὲ γενομένου καὶ φθοράς, "At the occurrence of a fatal plague," attributes the sacrifice of the child to the murder of the previous king Ouranos, which manifests in a plague. Moreover, the phrase connects the child sacrifice to a fertility ritual. In Near Eastern and Greek myths, sickness, both physical and mental, and death are often connected with a lack of fertility. For example, in Near Eastern myth, the god Ellil sends a disease to depopulate the overly-fertile humans on the earth in the *Atrahasis*.⁹⁵⁴ In the Akkadian story *The Descent of Ishtar*, the animals and humans refrain from sexual activity when

⁹⁵⁴ Dalley 2000: 18.

Ishtar, the goddess of love and fertility, descends to the Underworld.⁹⁵⁵ In Greek myth, in the *Hymn to Demeter*, the mourning of the goddess Demeter, a sort of mental sickness, is manifested in the infertility of the fields.⁹⁵⁶ In the Oedipus cycle of Greek myths, the city of Thebes suffers a plague that manifests in both the infertility of the land and the barrenness of the women after Oedipus (unintentionally) murder his father.⁹⁵⁷ There are also Greek stories about human sacrifice as a remedy to plague or draught.⁹⁵⁸ The texts from Ugarit, however, can provide some of the strongest comparative evidence for the ancient Syro-Canaanite belief in sickness as a source of infertility and the special connection between the king, sacrifice, and fertility. Just as king Keret had to offer a sacrifice to counteract the lack of fertility and produce offspring, and just as Keret's sickness was manifested by the infertility of the fields, likewise the plague mentioned in Philo's story must be remedied by the most precious manifestation of fertility: the son of the king.

In Philo's myth, Kronos sacrifices his son as a remedy for a plague. Porphyry also attests to the use of human sacrifice during a war, plague, or famine.⁹⁵⁹ Thus, the remedy

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., 158.

⁹⁵⁶ *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 303-309. Thucydides (2.54.2-3), reporting on the Athenian plague during the Peloponnesian War, records an oracle that foretold the calamity. The oracle says a λοιμός "plague," will come during the war, but the Athenians argued whether the word was supposed to read λῆμος "hunger." This example shows the close association between the plague and the lack of fertility (i.e. hunger).

⁹⁵⁷ Soph. *OT* 1-110. For the Greeks, religious pollution (*miasma*) was manifested after death and murder. Pollution required special purification rituals to be removed. For a study of *miasma* in Greek religion, see Parker 1996.

⁹⁵⁸ In the region of Messenia, the daughters of Lyciscos were sacrificed as a remedy for a plague (Paus. 4.9.4). During a drought the people wanted to sacrifice Phrixos, the prince of the house of Athamas, but a god sends a ram in substitution (Apollod. *Biblio.* 1.9.1; Herod. 7.197; Plutarch, *De supers.* 5).

⁹⁵⁹ Φοίνικες δὲ ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις συμφοραῖς ἢ πολέμων ἢ λοιμῶν ἢ ἀνυχμῶν ἔθυσον τῶν φιλτάτων τινὰ ἐπιψηφίζοντες Κρόνον· "The Phoenicians, in times of great disaster, either in war, or plague, or

for a plague is the ultimate fertility ritual: sacrificing the first-born son, the manifestation of the fertility of the royal line. As Stavrakopoulou states, “As the sacrificial victim Isaac is thus a symbol of potential fertility,” in a parallel way Kronos’ son Ieoud is the symbol of fertility.⁹⁶⁰ In the “short version,” the verb ὀλοκαρποῖ, that we translate “to be offered as a whole burnt offering,” encapsulates the idea of the sacrifice as a fertility ritual because the verb is a compound of the nouns ὅλος, “whole,” and καρπός, “fruit.” Karl Mras, however, corrected the word to ὀλοκαυτοῖ, “Kronos performs a holocaust offering” (third person present active singular form of the contract verb ὀλοκαυτόω), but I prefer the reading of the manuscripts because it captures the sense of a fertility ritual. We can compare this idea to the connections between first-born sacrifice and fertility in the Hebrew Bible, as Stavrakopoulou points out, the description of the sacrificed first-born as the “fruit” of the womb in Micah 6:7 is connected with fertility.⁹⁶¹ Moreover, the use of the verb ὀλοκαρποῖ recalls the origins of sacrifice described by Philo in the preface, namely offering the plants or fruits, of the earth. Therefore, Philo’s theory of sacrifice, which is based on the fertility cycle, helps explain why the sacrifice was performed as a response to the plague from the murder of Ouranos: the lack of fertility induced by the murder requires a redemptive act of sacrifice to restore balance. In Philo’s account, it is the king, Kronos, who performs the sacrifice, exhibiting the priestly function of the king attested in the Ugaritic texts and Phoenician funerary inscriptions. Moreover, in a similar way to the Ugaritic stories of Aqhat and Keret, the plague is

famine, used to vote and sacrifice one of their dearest family members to Kronos” (*de abstin.* 2.56 = *Eusebius, Praepar. Evang.* 4.16.6)

⁹⁶⁰ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 286.

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 285.

manifested by the death of the previous king (Ouranos) and requires that a king offer a sacrifice to remedy the situation. In the case of Aqhat, the plague and infertility occurs after the death of the king's son, Aqhat. In the case of Keret, a sacrifice is offered to remedy the plague caused by the sickness of king Keret. Thus, in both Philo and the story of Aqhat the plague arises after the death of a member of the royal line, and in both Philo and the story of Keret a sacrifice is required to remedy the plague.

Philo states that Kronos sacrifices his son, circumcises himself, and forces his allies to do the same. Philo, therefore, is reporting the origins of child sacrifice, but he also reports the origins of circumcision.⁹⁶² As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the biblical texts the idea of first-born sacrifice is connected to circumcision and fertility, and there is a similar connection in the text of Philo.⁹⁶³ The practice of circumcision was a distinctive religious practice among the Egyptians, Phoenicians and Israelites, and the practice of child sacrifice played an important role among the Phoenicians at Carthage, as we have seen.⁹⁶⁴ The reason for the circumcision, Baumgarten suggests, is as a substitution ritual for the castration of Ouranos.⁹⁶⁵ Instead of receiving the compensatory punishment of castration, Kronos circumcises himself. Thus, Kronos sets a precedent for two rituals and forces his allies to emulate both actions: circumcision and child sacrifice. This interpretation places heavy reliance on the word *τὰὐτὸ*, “the same thing,” which clearly refers to the circumcision, but it can also refer to the sacrifice.

⁹⁶² Baumgarten 1981: 222.

⁹⁶³ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 200, 282, 321.

⁹⁶⁴ Herodotos (2.104) reports that the Phoenicians learned circumcision from the Egyptians. Among the Israelites the practice of circumcision is part of the covenant with YHWH, see Genesis 17:9-14 and Exodus 4:24-26.

⁹⁶⁵ Baumgarten 1981: 222.

The act of circumcision is only partial atonement for Kronos' castration and murder of his father, and this is the first time it is mentioned by Philo. Baumgarten notes that the plague is a result of Kronos' unatoned murder of his father, for which Kronos must sacrifice his son to atone for the crime.⁹⁶⁶ Just as circumcision becomes a ritual practice emulated by future generations, so is too child sacrifice emulated by future generations of Phoenicians. In other words, Kronos establishes a paradigm of child sacrifice, which other rulers, namely Astarte and Demarous, and by extension future ones, can emulate. Thus, Philo records the Tyrian aitiology of child sacrifice because he depicts the first of its kind and anchors it to the origins of the city of Tyre and its kingship. Moreover, as mentioned previously, Philo states elsewhere that Melqart is the son of Demarous. In other words, if Demarous is to practice the rites established by Kronos, such as circumcision and child sacrifice, then he would potentially sacrifice his only-son: Melqart.⁹⁶⁷ In fact, there may be an indirect reference to such a myth in the same passage because Philo states that during the war between Pontos and Demarous, when Demarous was routed, he "vowed to offer a sacrifice in return for his escape."⁹⁶⁸ As we have seen in the evidence from Carthage and the Hebrew Bible, this is exactly the sort of extreme situation that would require a child sacrifice, in this case, the sacrifice of his son, Melqart. In the following section, I analyze Philo's "long version" of the story of child sacrifice and its further implications for our understanding of the myth of Melqart.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.27.

⁹⁶⁸ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.28. Translation by Attridge and Oden 1981: 53-55.

2. The “Long Version” of the Sacrifice of Ieoud

In the “short version” of the story, Philo introduces the account of child sacrifice and connects it to the royal ideology of Tyre and fertility rites. Moreover, Philo’s account shows how Kronos establishes a ritual paradigm of sacrificing the royal child during extreme situations as part of a fertility ritual. In the “long version,” Philo produces further details about this ritual, and he identifies the name of the divine child, the victim of the sacrifice, as Ieoud:

ἔθος ἦν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις συμφοραῖς τῶν κινδύνων ἀντὶ τῆς πάντων φθορᾶς τὸ ἡγαπημένον τῶν τέκνων τοὺς κρατοῦντας ἢ πόλεως ἢ ἔθνους εἰς σφαγὴν ἐπιδιδόναι λύτρον τοῖς τιμωροῖς δαίμοσι· κατεσφάπτοντο δὲ οἱ διδόμενοι μυστικῶς. **Κρόνος τοίνυν, ὃν οἱ Φοίνικες Ἦλ προσαγορεύουσιν**, βασιλεύων τῆς χώρας καὶ ὕστερον μετὰ τὴν τοῦ βίου τελευτὴν εἰς τὸν τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστέρα καθιερωθεὶς, ἐξ ἐπιχωρίας νύμφης Ἀνωβρετ λεγομένης **υἱὸν ἔχων μονογενή**, ὃν διὰ τοῦτο **Ἰεοῦδ** ἐκάλουν (τοῦ μονογενοῦς οὕτως ἔτι καὶ νῦν καλουμένου παρὰ τοῖς Φοίνιξι) κινδύνων ἐκ πολέμου μεγίστων κατειληφότων τὴν χώραν, **βασιλικῶι κοσμήσας σχήματι τὸν υἱὸν βωμόν τε κατασκευασάμενος κατέθυσεν**.

Among ancient peoples in critically dangerous situations it was customary for the rulers of a city or nation, rather than lose everyone, to provide the dearest of their children as a propitiatory sacrifice to the avenging deities. The children thus given up were slaughtered according to a secret ritual. Now **Kronos, whom the Phoenicians call El**, who was in their land and who was later divinized after his death as the star of Kronos, **had an only son** by a local bride named **Anobret**, and therefore they called him **Ieoud**.—Even now among the Phoenicians the only son is given this name.—When war’s gravest dangers gripped the land, **Kronos dressed his son in royal attire**, prepared an altar and **sacrificed him**.

(Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44 = 4.16.11)⁹⁶⁹

With the phrase τοὺς κρατοῦντας “the rulers,” Philo begins by linking the ritual of child sacrifice to the practices of the royal line, just as he did in the “short version.” Philo claims that the practice was performed during “dangerous situations” (ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις

⁹⁶⁹ Text and Translation by Attridge and Oden 1981: 60-63.

συμφοραῖς τῶν κινδύνων), which is congruent with the plague from the “short version.” This is also the sort of situation that Demarous may have been forced to sacrifice his son Melqart. Moreover, the phrase ἀντὶ τῆς πάντων **φθοράς**, “rather than **lose** everyone,” in the “long version” echoes the use of Λοιμοῦ δὲ γενομένου καὶ **φθοράς**, “from a **destructive** plague” in the “short version.” Thus, the context of the “long version” is consistent with the context of the “short version.” As I will explain below, there are further indications that both versions are referring to the same story.

As an aitiology, Philo’s account alludes to some of the features of child sacrifice described in the literary and epigraphical sources for Phoenician sacrifice discussed in the previous chapter. First and foremost, Philo says that the father of the sacrificed god is Kronos (Saturn in Latin), whom the Phoenicians called El. The *tophet* at Carthage, where the remains of sacrificed children were buried, was dedicated to Baal Hammon and his consort Tannit known from votive stelae.⁹⁷⁰ In literary and epigraphic sources, the Carthaginian fertility god Baal Hammon was syncretized with the Greek god Kronos and his Latin equivalent Saturn.⁹⁷¹ Thus, we are dealing with a complex nexus of syncretized

⁹⁷⁰ E.g., Markoe 2000: 134; McCarty 2019: 313. A typical dedication: “To the lady, to Tanit ‘face of Baal’ and to the Lord, to Baal Hammon, which vowed Bodmilqart the son of Hanno the Son of ‘Dy the son of Milqart’ amos” (Mosca 1978: 186). The votive steles from Malta mentioning the *molk* sacrifice are dedicated to Baal Hammon (KAI 61 A and B). For further epigraphic testimony for Baal Hammon and the tophet, see Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008. The early (ninth-century BCE) Phoenician inscription of King Kilamuwa also mentions Baal Hammon (KAI 24.16).

⁹⁷¹ For the identification of Baal Hammon with Canaanite El, see Baumgarten (1981: 174), who says “How Ugaritic El came to be called (or identified with) Baal *hmn* is a puzzle which has not been resolved and for which I have no solution to offer.” For the definitive study of the identity and history of Baal Hammon, see Xella 1991. Hammon might be located near Tyre and the epithet was probably transferred to other Phoenician sites via Phoenician traders (Gibson 2002: 75 n. 3-4). Frank Moore Cross (1973: 24) argued that Hammon refers to Mt. Amanus, which was the sacred mountain of El. Other scholars, on the other hand, have argued that Baal Hammon means “Lord of the incense altar” (cf. Ingholt 1939: 799-801; Albright 1969: 216; Galling 1973: 65-70). For the evidence of Baal Hammon and Tinnit at Carthage, see Garbati 2013. For biblical representations of Canaanite religion, see Cross 1973 and 1988. For the ritual texts from Ugarit and their importance in reconstructing Canaanite religion, see del Olmo Lete 1999. For the votive stelae mentioning dedications to Saturn, see Alquier 1931. For the syncretism of El Hammon

gods in Greek, Latin, and Phoenician sources, and it is not always simple to make one to one correspondences. As Matthew M. McCarty explains, Baal Hammon was the recipient of *molk* offerings, and in the Roman period, “stelae related to tophet-like rites are mostly dedicated to Saturn as worshippers reimagined Baal Hammon within new systems of associations.”⁹⁷² Therefore, in the case of Philo, the Canaanite god El who sacrifices his son is probably best identified with the Carthaginian god Baal Hammon who received child sacrifice.

Day, on the other hand, argues that Baal Hammon is not to be identified with El, but rather with Baal, the son of El.⁹⁷³ He points out that Baal Hammon is never mentioned in inscriptions as El, but that he is often mentioned as simply Baal.⁹⁷⁴ Moreover, he points out that Baal Hammon is strongly connected with fertility, unlike El.⁹⁷⁵ It is possible that Baal Hammon was syncretized with Kronos (and then Saturn) because in Greek myth Kronos devoured his own children, an act evocative of child sacrifice.⁹⁷⁶ However, Kronos was also associated with fertility in Hesiod’s myth of the

with the Roman god Saturn, see Le Glay 1966 and McCarty 2016. Besides Philo, the third-century BCE Greek historian Kleitarchos (*FGrH* 1378fr9) mentions that the Carthaginians sacrifice children to Kronos. For a discussion of the etymology of the god El, see Pope 1955: 16-20.

⁹⁷² McCarty 2019: 313. Cf. McCarty 2016.

⁹⁷³ Day 1989: 37-40.

⁹⁷⁴ E.g., “To the lord to Baal and to Tinnit face of Baal” (*KAI* 137.1).

⁹⁷⁵ See the Neo-Punic inscription that mentions Baal Hammon as a bestower of pregnancy and offspring (*KAI* 162.1). Latin inscriptions mentioning Baal Hammon (Saturn) often use the epithets *frugifer*, “fruit-bearing,” and *deus frugum*, “god of fertility” (e.g., *CILat* 8.2666, 4581, 8711, 17677, 17720, 20710).

⁹⁷⁶ See Wolf Wilhelm Friedrich von Baudissin (1897: 333) and James Germain Février (1960: 173). There is also testimony that Kronos (Saturn) could be equated with Baal as well as El. Servius (*A.* 1.729) says “Saturn... in the Punic language is the god called Bal.” Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*Commentary on Psalms* 105.28-29) says “Baal . . . they say that he is called Kronos in the Greek language.” Damascius (*Isid.* 115) says further that “The Phoenicians and Syrians called Kronos El and Bel and Bolathen.” It is possible, however, that in these references Baal is a short form of Baal Hammon.

ages when humans lived under the reign of Kronos during a time of agricultural abundance: ὀλβιοὶ ἥρωες, τοῖσιν μελιθεῖα καρπὸν τοῖς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ξείδωρος ἄρουρα, “blessed are the heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit three times a year.”⁹⁷⁷ Moreover, the replacement of the cult of Saturn in places where Baal Hammon was worshiped after the fall of Carthage makes the equation between the two gods fairly certain.⁹⁷⁸

In any case, Philo makes clear that Kronos is El (Κρόνος τοίνυν, ὃν οἱ Φοίνικες Ἦλ προσαγορεύουσιν), and however we are to understand his identity, the god Kronos was associated with fertility and child sacrifice. Nevertheless, the precise correlation between El and Kronos in Philo’s myth, and the god who received child sacrifice in the Carthaginian realm, Baal Hammon, known from the inscriptions at Carthage, is still unclear. It is possible that the Carthaginians altered their theology from the original Tyrian mythology to create a distinct identity, which might explain the disparity; I elaborate on this premise in the final section below. The identity of Tannit known from inscriptions has also been debated, but it is possible that she should be identified with Astarte.⁹⁷⁹ This would also fit with the context of Philo’s myth since Astarte is mentioned

⁹⁷⁷ Hes. *Op.* 172-173. Cf. Diod. Sic. 5.66.4. The Roman equivalent of Kronos, Saturn, was also associated with fertility. According to Varro (*Ling.* 5.64) the name Saturn is derived from the Latin word *satus*, “sowing.” Saturn was also married to Ops, the goddess of plenty (Varro, *Ling.* 5.75.5). Vergil (*Aen.* 8.319-327) also refers to agricultural abundance during the golden age of Saturn. For the equation between the Greek god Kronos and the Canaanite god El/Ilu and their connections with fertility, see López-Ruiz 2010: 115-125. In particular, Kronos was connected to the Golden Race of humans, a time of abundant fertility, and festivals in his honor, called Kronia, were characterized by abundant feasting. López-Ruiz (*ibid.*, 123) compares the Kronia with an Ugaritic myth called “El’s divine feast,” which describes El’s drunkenness at a banquet (RS 24.258).

⁹⁷⁸ See Xella 2019. Latin votive inscriptions mention Saturn (Alquier 1931: 24). During the Roman period stelae are dedicated to Saturn (McCarty 2016) and tophets were replaced with temples to Saturn (McCarty 2019: 322). Quintus Curtius (4.3.23) mentions a human offering to Saturn.

⁹⁷⁹ A text from Sarepta mentions the deity Tinnit-Astarte (Pritchard 1978: 105).

in the “short version,” and it is implied, as I have argued, that she was the mother of Melqart, the Baal of Tyre. Philo mentions that the mother of Ieoud is a local nymph named Anobret. There is so far no scholarly consensus about her identification, but it would be tempting to connect her with Tannit or Astarte.⁹⁸⁰

The identity of the name of El’s only son Ieoud is one of the critical links between Philo’s myth and other Near Eastern myths about child sacrifice. Philo uses the Greek word *Ieoud* to transliterate the Semitic word *yāḥîd*, “only/favored,” which, as we saw, occurs in Genesis 22 as a term to describe Isaac.⁹⁸¹ Moreover, Philo says that El sacrificed his “only-born son” (υἷὸν μονογενῆ), which, in one possible interpretation of the Greek word μονογενῆ, is a direct translation of the Semitic term *yāḥîd* “only.” Moreover, the text says ὃν διὰ τοῦτο Ἰεοῦδ ἐκάλουν, “therefore, they called him Ieoud,” the phrase translated as “therefore” is leading from the mention that he was El’s only-son. This implies that the writer (either Philo, Porphyry, or Eusebios) understands (and thinks the reader will understand) that Ieoud means “only.” Thus, the parallel narrative context of a father sacrificing his son and the use of the terms *Ieoud* and μονογενῆ in Philo and *yāḥîd* in Genesis 22 points to a common Semitic source. Moreover, the focus on fertility in the stories of Isaac, Ieoud, and Baal can all be

⁹⁸⁰ The attempts to link the nymph Anobret to a Hebrew phrase meaning “over-flowing” seems unlikely (עין עברת, lit. “spring of out-pouring”), see Williams 1968: 190-191. Carl Clemen (1939: 71 n.2), on the other hand, interpreted Anobret as ‘Anat rabbat, “the Lady ‘Anat.” This formulation would imply a metathesis of the Phoenician letters resh and bet into Greek. The earliest manuscript of Eusebios (A), however, gives the reading Ἀνωβῆτιν instead of the Ἀνωβῆτε in the later manuscripts (BONV), making difficult the argument of Clemen.

⁹⁸¹ Baudissin (1911: 89) first connected Philo’s Ieoud to the Hebrew word *yḥyd* in Genesis 22: 2, 12, 16. Attridge and Oden (1981: 94 n.150) comment, “The textual variants here (*PE* 4.16.11: ἰεοῦδ D, ἰεδοδ N; *PE* 1.10.44: ἰδοῦδ A) seem to be reflections of a vacillation between understanding this name as the Phoenician equivalent of Hebrew *yḥyd*, “only,” or as the Phoenician equivalent of Hebrew *ydyd*, “beloved.”

attributed to a common pattern of Levantine myth where fertility returns with the rebirth of the sacrificed/murdered child.

As mentioned above, the context of the pestilence (λοιμοῦ . . . φθορᾶς) from the “short version” is parallel to the dangerous situation mentioned in the “long version” (ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις συμφοραῖς τῶν κινδύνων), and these are likely references to the same situation. Additionally, two important words link both versions. The first is the use of the word μονογενῆ and, as I will explain below, the second is the use of different iterations of the word denoting kingship (in the “short version”: βασιλεὺς, ἐβασίλευον, βασιλείας, βασιλικῶι). In the “short version” of the account of child sacrifice, Philo states that El (Kronos) sacrifices “his **only-born** son” (τὸν ἑαυτοῦ **μονογενῆ** υἱὸν). This is the same term used in the “long version” of the story (υἱὸν ἔχων **μονογενῆ**, “he had an only-born son”). The Greek word μονογενῆ also recalls the story of Isaac in Genesis 22, who is the only-son of Abraham. In both the stories of Philo and Genesis 22, the words μονογενῆ and *yāhîd*, respectively, highlight the extraordinary situation of a father sacrificing his only-son.

There is, however, a significant problem of interpretation with the word μονογενῆς, “only-born,” because Philo reports elsewhere that Kronos fathers multiple children. According to this part of the cosmogony, after Kronos drove out Ouranos and succeeded the kingship he killed his son Sadidos and his (unnamed) daughter.⁹⁸² Later in

⁹⁸² Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.21. Eissfeldt (1952: 19) equated Sadidos with Ieoud because Kronos kills him too, and he viewed the name Sadidos as a corruption of Ieoud, the name of the sacrificed child. Baumgarten (1981: 199), on the other hand, disagrees because in that passage Kronos kills two children (Sadidos and his sister), whereas in the account of child sacrifice (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.33) Kronos sacrifices his only-son (μονογενῆ). Attridge and Oden (1981: 88) also disagree with Eissfeldt because the murder of a son from suspicion is different from child sacrifice. Moreover, there is not a term denoting sacrifice in the passage describing the murder of Sadidos.

the myth, Kronos fathers seven daughters and two sons with Astarte and seven sons with Rhea (as we might expect with a god of fertility).⁹⁸³ Finally, Kronos sires three more children (Kronos Jr., Zeus Belos, and Apollo).⁹⁸⁴ This genealogy conflicts with the two accounts where Kronos sacrifices his “only-son,” whose name is explicitly mentioned in the longer version as *Ieoud*.

Baumgarten attempts to solve this conflict in the text by translating the word *μονογενής* as “beloved,” instead of “only-son,” since multiple children of Kronos are mentioned earlier.⁹⁸⁵ Hermann Büchsel, on the other hand, argued that the word *μονογενής* exclusively means “only-born.”⁹⁸⁶ I follow the assessment of Büchsel and maintain that the word should be translated as “only-born.” Instead, I argue that the use of *μονογενής* is both formulaic and proleptic. It is formulaic from Philo’s point of view because it refers to a broader Levantine tradition of sacrificing the only-born son: as already stated, the word *μονογενής* is a translation of the Semitic term *yāhîd* “the only” son, which occurs in Genesis 22.⁹⁸⁷ Thus, the context of Philo’s myths and both the transliterated name *Ieoud* and the word *μονογενής* connect Philo’s myth to a broader Levantine tradition about the sacrifice of the only-born son. Furthermore, *μονογενής* is proleptic in the sense that it points to the future practice of child sacrifice. More

⁹⁸³ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.24.

⁹⁸⁴ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.26.

⁹⁸⁵ According to Baumgarten (1981: 215 n.6), the word *μονογενής* is well-attested with the meaning of “beloved” and he cites the *Patristic Lexicon* for this reading (Lampe 1961: 881).

⁹⁸⁶ Büchsel 1967: 737-741. The translation “beloved,” derives from the Septuagint translation of *yāhîd* by both the Greek words *μονογενής*, “only-born” (e.g., Judges 11:34) and *ἀγαπητός*, “beloved” (e.g., Jeremiah 6:26) and the subsuming of the former under the category of the latter. Büchsel argues they should be kept as distinct Greek terms.

⁹⁸⁷ Levenson 1993: 30.

specifically, as I will argue in detail below, within the logic of Philo's account the use of the word *μονογενῆς* points forward chronologically to the Tyrian sacrifice of Melqart, who is the only-son of Astarte and Demarous, as a rite to be emulated by future generations of Phoenicians.⁹⁸⁸ Although Philo's account of the sacrifice of Ieoud does not constitute a direct aitiology for the sacrifice of Melqart, I argue that through its focus on the Tyrian kingship the story of child sacrifice is implicitly a mythical-historical precedent for the future practice of sacrificing Tyre's king of the city, Melqart, the child of Astarte and Demarous, who are the focus of the story. The etymology of Melqart's name provides a key clue, as it is clearly (and would be understood as) composed of the roots *mlk*, "king," and *qrt*, "city."⁹⁸⁹ Therefore, any mythology regarding Tyre and kingship, such as in Philo, has potential bearings for understanding Melqart's mythology. But there are also other indications that Philo's story can be read in this way, as I explain next.

As discussed above, before the narratives about child sacrifice Philo records in the history of the life of Kronos that Melqart is the son of Demarous.⁹⁹⁰ Although Philo does not explicitly use the term *μονογενῆς* to describe Melqart, in the genealogy recorded here by Philo, as well as Greek and Latin genealogies, Melqart is always the only-

⁹⁸⁸ Melqart (Herakles/Hercules) is mentioned as the son of Zeus and Asteria (Astarte) in classical sources (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.42; Athenaios 9.47.33 Kaibel; Eustathius. *Ad Od.* XI 600 = 1.440.3 Stallbaum).

⁹⁸⁹ Bonnet 1988: 19.

⁹⁹⁰ In turn, Demarous is the son of two fathers. Noga Ayali-Darshan (2013: 651-657) has recently shown how the storm-god in Near Eastern literature is typically represented with a two fathers. In the *Song of Kumarbi* the god Teššub is born from the seed of the god Anu which is deposited in the stomach of the god Kumarbi. In the *Baal Epic* the god Baal is the son of El, but also called "son of Dagon." In Philo, the god Demarous is the son of both Ouranos and Dagon. In the pattern which Ayali-Darshan identifies, the storm god is fathered by his rival and his ally. For example, Anu and Kumarbi are rivals, but Anu and Teššub are allies, and together Anu and Kumarbi give birth to Teššub. See the useful scheme of the different genealogies (ibid., 655).

mentioned son of Zeus (Demarous/Baal Hadad) and Asteria (Astarte).⁹⁹¹ This is, nevertheless, an argument *ex silentio* and it is possible that Demarous and Astarte produced other offspring in other stories, but we have no evidence of such myths. However, it seems logical that the Tyrian rites of sacrificing Melqart are related to the prototypical sacrifice of the only-son of Kronos in a myth about Tyrian kingship. Moreover, it is likely that the Melqart ritual would have been kept secret by the Phoenicians, and hence, only alluded to in Philo's Euhemeristic account of Tyre's mythology. In fact, Philo says as much about the practice of child sacrifice: κατεσφάπτοντο δὲ οἱ διδόμενοι **μυστικῶς** "the children thus given up were slaughtered **according to a secret ritual**."⁹⁹² Again, although Philo's account is not explicitly an aitiology for the sacrifice of Melqart, it is an aitiology for the *type of sacrifice* which the Tyrians seemed to practice (or were believed to have practiced and then passed to their offshoot, the Carthaginians), namely the sacrifice of a god, who is associated with kingship, as part of a fertility ritual. Moreover, to be clear, I do not argue that the sacrifice of Ieoud should necessarily be interpreted as a direct reference to the myth of Melqart, instead, because of the context of the myth, Ieoud should be interpreted as a Melqart-type god, as I explain further below.

There are other contextual and linguistic clues that Philo's myth refers not only to the sacrifice of children but also indirectly to the sacrifice and rebirth of Melqart, the only-child of the first monarchs of Tyre. As mentioned above, in addition to the use of

⁹⁹¹ Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.42; Athenaios 9.47.33 Kaibel; Eustathius. *Ad Od.* XI 600 = 1.440.3 Stallbaum. For the genealogy of Melqart, see Bonnet 1981: 20-22.

⁹⁹² Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44.

the word μονογενῇ “only-born,” there are also allusions to kingship. With the phrase βασιλικῶι κοσμήσας σχήματι, “Kronos (El) dressed his son **in royal attire**,” Philo provides a second important linguistic marker that associates the “long version” of the myth with the “short version” of the myth by linking the two stories with the theme of kingship. In the “short version,” Philo situates the sacrifice of the beloved son within the context of the kingship of Tyre. In the longer version, in the original Phoenician version that Philo was probably working from, we might imagine the phrase βασιλικῶι κοσμήσας σχήματι as “El dressed his son in the clothes of a *mlk* (a king).” In a comparable situation, the god Baal in Ugaritic myth rules as king after defeating Yam, and after his return to life Baal assumes the throne.⁹⁹³ As we have seen, the pattern of the myth of Baal has reflexes in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, but Levenson did not explicitly connect the story of Ieoud with this pattern because Ieoud is not specifically reborn. Boehm, however, more recently argued that the stories of Ieoud and Isaac draw from the same archetype. For my part, I suggest that all three stories (Baal, Isaac, and Ieoud) belong to that same Levantine archetype of death and rebirth, as I will explain further below. In a similar vein, Xella has argued that the Baal myth was a paradigm for the myth of the death of Melqart.⁹⁹⁴ Moreover, among the Tyrians, the god Melqart was known through his epithet *Baal Šōr* “Master of Tyre.”⁹⁹⁵ Thus, I read Ieoud in Philo as a Baal and Melqart-type figure (the Baal of Tyre, as Bonnet and Xella categorize him),

⁹⁹³ “Yam is indeed dead! Baal will rule” (*KTU* 1.2 iv 34-35). Translation by Wyatt 2002: 69. The *KTU* reconstructs the Ugaritic text as *bʿl ymlk*, “Baal reigns” (See discussion in Smith 1994: 358). After Baal returns to life he regains his throne (*KTU* 1.6.v.5).

⁹⁹⁴ Xella 2019: 275.

⁹⁹⁵ This title is known from an inscription discovered in Malta (*CIS* I.122). Cf. Bonnet 1988: 19.

because in the Tyrian context he is the god whose name evokes the “king of the city,” as I discuss further below.⁹⁹⁶

Baumgarten argued that the phrase βασιλικῶι κοσμήσας σχήματι, “he dressed his son in kingly attire” (in the “long version”) indicates that the sacrifice was a rite of substitution whereby the son of El (Kronos) dies instead of El dying for the murder of his father Ouranos.⁹⁹⁷ I agree that the sacrifice is performed as a substitution ritual, but I argue, on the other hand, that the son of El dies on behalf of the general population who would be afflicted by the plague. In this way, Philo’s myth also fits with the evidence for the *molk* rites from the epigraphical and literary testimonia that suggest the rite was performed as a substitution rite by noble families.⁹⁹⁸ As Mark S. Smith points out, the reference in Philo to Ieoud dressed in royal clothing is connected to the *molk* rites.⁹⁹⁹ The noble child was a substitute for the safety of the population. Philo explains after the story of the sacrifice of Ieoud that the rulers of the city sacrificed the most loved of their children (i.e., the noble children) to avert the destruction of all.¹⁰⁰⁰ As a corollary, Weinfeld connected Philo’s myth of child sacrifice with other Near Eastern substitution rites, such as the Assyrian *šar pūhi* rite where a surrogate king is substituted in place of

⁹⁹⁶ Bonnet 1988: 244-247. Xella 2019: 274.

⁹⁹⁷ Baumgarten 1981: 251-252.

⁹⁹⁸ Latin inscriptions describing the *mlk* ritual highlight the sacrifice as a substitution rite: “soul for soul, life for life, blood for blood” (Alquier 1931: 24). According to Diodorus of Sicily (20.14.4-7) the Carthaginians were accustomed to sacrifice the noblest of children. Dracontius (*Carmina* 5.148-150) attests to the yearly sacrifice of aristocratic children. The epigraphical evidence provides evidence for the *mlk b’l*, which, according to Mosca’s (1975: 76-77, 100-101) interpretation means “sacrifice of a noble citizen.”

⁹⁹⁹ Smith 2002: 135-136.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.10.44.

the legitimate king during a crisis, such as an eclipse.¹⁰⁰¹ This Assyrian ritual is parallel with the context of Philo's Phoenician myth where El dresses his son in the kingly attire to be a substitute during a crisis. Additionally, we can compare the myth with the biblical example of the Moabite king sacrificing his son during a war and with the Greek example of Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia during the Trojan war.¹⁰⁰²

Philo's use of the adjective βασιλικός "kingly" to describe the victim Ieoud links the "long version" of the myth of child sacrifice to the "short version," which is part of the account of the Tyrian kingship of Demarous and Astarte. More specifically, the phrase refers to the Tyrian practice of sacrificing the son of the king, in this case, the son of El/Kronos. El sacrifices his son as a fertility ritual after his murder of the previous king that caused a lack of fertility, which manifested in a plague. Like Ieoud, Melqart, "the king of the city," is also a king who is sacrificed to ensure the fertility of the seasons and the royal line. Thus, Ieoud is Philo's Euhemerist interpretation of the Syro-Canaanite Baal figure who is inducted as the king and sacrificed—Ieoud is both Baal and Malk.¹⁰⁰³ Moreover, El dresses Ieoud as a king first and then sacrifices him. In other words, Ieoud is a king when sacrificed, just like Melqart. In his Phoenician aitiology of child sacrifice, we can even interpret Philo's use of the adjective βασιλικός as an allusion to the *molk* sacrifice known from Punic inscriptions. Dressing one's son in regal attire and then sacrificing him is evocative of the Punic *molk* offering because the practice was probably

¹⁰⁰¹ Weinfeld 1972: 133-134. For the texts describing the *šar pūhi* ritual, see Labat 1945-1946; von Soden 1956; Kümmel 1968. For a discussion of royal substitute sacrifices in Sumerian texts, see Green 1975: 85-96.

¹⁰⁰² For Iphigenia, see the *Cypria* and Eur. *IA*. 90-95.

¹⁰⁰³ For the personal name Baal-malk, see Baudissin 1929: 44-51 and Buber 1967: 175 n.22.

performed primarily by the nobility.¹⁰⁰⁴ Moreover, if the term *mol*k is originally derived from the Semitic root MLK “king,” then Philo’s use of the word βασιλικός might provide a literary allusion for this etymology.¹⁰⁰⁵

In addition to the references to kingship, there are also connections with the pattern of Levantine myths about sacrifice, rebirth, and fertility. As discussed above, Levenson connects the story of the sacrifice of Isaac to a nexus of Near Eastern stories about the symbolic death and unexpected resurrection of the beloved son.¹⁰⁰⁶ Moreover, the verbal echoes between the stories of Isaac and Ieoud point to a Levantine milieu of myth. I argue that Philo’s myth of El, who sacrifices his son during a crisis, also belongs to this familiar pattern of death and rebirth within Levantine mythology. Thus, following the paradigm of the Baal Cycle, I argue that the son of El in Philo’s account is probably best identified with Baal, who is the son of El in the Baal Cycle.

I follow the conclusions of Levenson and Boehm and argue, in turn, that Philo’s myth of Ieoud, whom I identify as a Baal-Melqart type god, must have also concluded with his rebirth after his sacrifice or at the very least the myth would have been understood to conclude in this way. This rebirth might have been an actual return to life (as in the Baal myth), in which case that part of the myth is not extant, or a metaphorical rebirth (as in Genesis 22) standing in for the return of fertility in a similar way as the

¹⁰⁰⁴ Philo’s aitiology (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 4.16.11) shows that child sacrifice was performed by kings. According to Diodorus of Sicily (20.14.4-7) the Carthaginians were accustomed to sacrifice the noblest of children. Dracontius (*Carmina* 5.148-150) attests to the yearly sacrifice of aristocratic children. The epigraphical evidence provides testimony for the *mlk b’l* “sacrifice by a noble.”

¹⁰⁰⁵ “If one were to follow the etymology of *mlk*, it might be supposed that the *mlk* perhaps originated either as a Canaanite royal sacrifice devoted to the main god of the locality or a sacrifice devoted to the deity considered in the locality as the king of the pantheon” (Smith 2002: 136).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Levenson 1993: 124.

promise of fertility after the unexpected survival of Isaac. The possibility that Ieoud was imagined to be reborn does not conflict with his being a substitution offering for the death of Ouranos when viewed from the perspective of Philo's theory of sacrifice. As the example of the substitution of the ram for Isaac from Genesis 22 exemplifies, a substitution offering can still result in the metaphorical "rebirth" of the offering and in the promise of fertility, another metaphor for rebirth. If my reconstruction of Philo is correct, then the connections with fertility in Philo's story about child sacrifice would provide support for the original arguments of archaeologist Lawrence E. Stager, who maintained that the *tophet* burials displayed evidence for first-fruit fertility offerings.¹⁰⁰⁷ Moreover, even if the rites were not seasonally related, as Ribichini has most recently argued, their connections with the concern for the risks of pregnancy and early childhood still signify a prevalent fertility aspect for the rites.¹⁰⁰⁸

Besides the connections with the broader pattern of Levantine stories about sacrifice and rebirth, Philo foreshadows the rebirth of Ieoud with the mention of the immortalization of Kronos after his death in the account of Ieoud's sacrifice: μετὰ τὴν τοῦ βίου τελευτὴν εἰς τὸν τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστέρα καθειερωθείς, "after his death he was divinized as the star Kronos" (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.44 = 4.16.11). Thus, we can also make the logical connection that Ieoud would be immortalized after his death. A parallel example of this is from the myth of Herakles who dies on the pyre and is symbolically reborn as a god with his deification.¹⁰⁰⁹ We can also compare the divination

¹⁰⁰⁷ Stager 2014. Cf. Garnand, Stager, and Greene 2013, and most recently, Ribichini 2020.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ribichini 2020.

¹⁰⁰⁹ See the example from Ovid (*Met.* 9.262-272) where the mortal part of Herakles is burned off and only the divine part remains, then after his death, Zeus sets the divinized Herakles in the stars.

of Kronos, who Philo makes a mortal king with his Euhemerist approach, with the deified dead kings mentioned in a ritual text from Ugarit (RS 94.2518). More specifically, in Philo's description of Kronos, the compound verb καθιερωθείς "he was divinized," from the verb καθιερόω, "to consecrate" reiterates Philo's first use of the verb in his theory of sacrifice: καθιέρουν "they established rites" (for the death of the vegetation and birth of the animals).

Likewise, we also find the verb ἀφιερóω "to consecrate," a different form of the verb from the same root, used in two other narratives. First, in the narrative preceding the "short version" of the account of child sacrifice when Ouranos is deified (ἀφιερóθη) after his murder by Kronos (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.29). In other words, there are three previous instances of kings becoming immortalized as gods (Elioun, Ouranos, and Kronos). Second, in Philo's theory of sacrifice, the word ἀφιερóω is used to describe the first ritual practices: ἀφιέρωσαν τὰ τῆς γῆς βλαστήματα, "they worshipped the plants of the earth."¹⁰¹⁰ Philo's corresponding use of the terms καθιερόω and ἀφιερóω both in his theory of sacrifice and his accounts of the immortalization of gods indicate that we can interpret the death and deification of Elioun, Ouranos, and Kronos as part of the worship of deities associated with the fertility cycle and cycles of life and death presented in Philo's theory of sacrifice. Thus, by interpreting the narratives about child sacrifice from Philo's own theoretical framework, whereby the death of a king is followed by the metaphorical return of life in his immortalization as a god, we have gained a vantage point to safely interpret the narrative of the infant king Ieoud's sacrifice as followed by his immortalization and metaphorical rebirth. Moreover, Philo uses these two terms

¹⁰¹⁰ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.9.5.

(καθιερώω and ἀφιερῶω) in his theory of sacrifice to describe the establishment of rituals, likewise, we can then apply the ritual meaning of these verbs when they are used to describe the immortalization of gods. In other words, the immortalized deities Kronos and Ouranos are *ritualized deities*.

If my reading is correct, then, Philo's account would relate not only the familiar Levantine pattern of the death and rebirth of the beloved son, but more specifically, the Tyrian version of the myth of the sacrifice and rebirth of the first-born son, which, as discussed above, is to be carried out by the monarchs of Tyre, Astarte and Demarous, the parents of Melqart. Therefore, Philo's account provides indirect evidence for the origins of the sacrifice of another Baal type god, namely Melqart, the Baal of Tyre. As we saw in the previous chapter, Xella states that the myth of Melqart is based on the paradigm of the Canaanite myth of Baal.¹⁰¹¹ If my reconstruction is correct, then the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart (in lieu of Baal of Tyre) is also parallel to the story of the sacrifice of Ieoud in Philo, which also contains the same elements and ties into the Baal cycle of death/sacrifice and fertility/regeneration: both myths (of Melqart and Ieoud, the sacrificed only-son) are part of the Tyrian ideology of Syro-Canaanite stock involving kingship and both stories involve the sacrifice of a divine king as a part of a fertility ritual. Thus, we can use Philo's myth of Ieoud to strengthen our understanding of the lost myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart. Furthermore, Philo's story exemplifies how the pattern of the death and rebirth of the Ugaritic god Baal was able to be adapted by different neighboring cultures to fit their theology, in this case, the Phoenician city-state of Tyre.

¹⁰¹¹ Xella 2019: 275.

If my reading of Philo is correct, then his account would also provide evidence for the sacrifice of Melqart and its connection with traditions about child sacrifice. In turn, this would provide evidence for Heider's original conclusions about possible genealogical connections between Molech and Melqart. Not only is the sacrifice of Melqart commensurate with human sacrifice but the god is also connected to the origins of the practice at Carthage. According to Carthage's foundation legend, the city was founded by the Tyrian Elissa (Dido), the wife of a priest of Melqart (Hercules in the Latin text), who brought with her the sacred remains of the temple of Melqart when she fled to Libya and then established the *tophet*.¹⁰¹² Votive dedications to Melqart discovered at Carthage and at the *tophet* in Sicily can corroborate the importance of the cult of Melqart for the Carthaginians and his connection to the *tophet*.¹⁰¹³ Moreover, the abundance of Carthaginian theonymns bearing the god's name also points to the lasting influence of Melqart at Carthage.¹⁰¹⁴ In particular, we can cite the use of the name Melqart in Carthaginian theonymns, such as Bodmelqart (Bomilkar in Latin), Henmelqart, and the Carthaginian general 'Abdmelqart (Hamilcar in Latin), whose suicide by fire (a death

¹⁰¹² Justinus, *Epit.* 18.4.3-9 and Verg. *Aen.* 4. Elissa was married to her uncle Zakarbaal, the high priest of Melqart (Aubet 2001: 129, 131). Each year the city of Carthage would send a tribute to the temple of Melqart at Tyre (Diodorus 20.4.2; Polybius 31.12; Arrianus 2.24.5). The word *tophet* is derived from the name of a place in the valley of Ben Hinnom where children were sacrificed to Baal (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:30-31).

¹⁰¹³ For the inscriptions at Carthage, see Bonnet 1988: 167-170. The name Melqart is found on inscriptions at the *tophet* of Sicily (Bonnet 1988: 267). Thucydides (6.2.6) offers a brief account of the eighth-century BCE colonization of Sicily by the Phoenicians. For the archeological excavations of Phoenicians at Sicily, see Markoe 2000: 175-176.

¹⁰¹⁴ For example, an inscription from Carthage describes a dedication to Tanit and Ba'al Hammon by a man named Bodmilqart the son of Hanno, the son of 'Dy, the son of Milqart'amos (Mosca 1978: 186). Names derived from the god Melqart occur in over 1,500 names (see Bonnet 1988: 170-171). The names Bodmelqart (Bomilcar) and Himilko were among the most common Carthaginian names. At Tyre, the king Abdi-Milki is attested in the Amarna letters (EA 148;203). An inscription from Rhodes (Fraser 1970: 31) includes the name Abdelmelqart. For personal names with the root *mlk* from Ebla, Mari and Ugarit, see Heider 1985: 409-419.

similar to Melqart's) also would have evoked the theology of Melqart at Carthage.¹⁰¹⁵

Like 'Abdmelqart, the founder of Carthage, Elissa, also immolated herself on a pyre.¹⁰¹⁶

As Aubet comments, it seems possible that both Hamilcar (a historical character) and Elissa (a legendary one, though perhaps based on a real character) reenacted or were imagined to reenact the sacrifice of the god Melqart, (i.e., the death and "awakening" by fire).¹⁰¹⁷ In a similar way, during the Roman siege of Carthage in the second-century CE, the wife of Hasdrubal (another historical character) threw herself and her children into the fire when defeat was imminent, an extraordinary situation demanding child sacrifice.¹⁰¹⁸ Finally, according to Roman sources, the Phoenicians at the Tyrian colonies of Carthage and Gades performed the practice of child sacrifice for Melqart, although there is no evidence of *tophet* precincts in Gades or in Phoenician colonies in Iberia in general.¹⁰¹⁹ Also, to date, there is no indisputable evidence for child sacrifice in the Levant, in the Phoenician homeland. All these examples show, however, the significance of human immolation for the Phoenicians, whether in ritual practice or at least in the theological-mythological realm. So on the one hand, as hypothesized by Heider in his conclusions, the biblical representations of the Canaanite cult of Molech may have been

¹⁰¹⁵ For personal names in Punic and Phoenician inscriptions, see Benz 1972. For the death of Hamilcar, see Hdt. 7.165-167. For the connections between Hamilcar's death by fire and the cult of Melqart, see Aubet 2001: 132.

¹⁰¹⁶ See Verg. *Aen.* 4.659ff.

¹⁰¹⁷ Aubet 2001: 132; Xella 2019: 282.

¹⁰¹⁸ App. *Pun.* 8.19.127-131.

¹⁰¹⁹ Pliny says the Carthaginians performed human sacrifice to Hercules (*HN* 36.39). Cicero (*Balb.* 43; *Ad. Fam.* 10.32.3) attests to human sacrifice at Gades. Nevertheless, no *tophet* has been discovered at Gades or elsewhere in Iberia. However, the name Melqart is found on inscriptions at the *tophet* of Sicily (Bonnet 1988: 267).

influenced by the historical cult of Melqart.¹⁰²⁰ On the other, however, it is important to acknowledge the bias of Greek, Roman, and biblical sources, which make the archaeological and epigraphical evidence more objective. In the final section of this chapter, I explore the possible mythological Tyrian origins of the Punic *molk* rites.

3. The Tyrian Origins of the Rites of *Molk*

In this section, I return to the broader problem introduced in Chapter 5 of how to understand the Phoenician practices of child sacrifice that are depicted in both the work of Philo and the Hebrew Bible. As scholars have discussed, there are possible connections between the biblical cult of Molech, Tyrian god Melqart, and the Punic practice of *molk*, but the exact correlation and significance between these connections is still a matter of debate. The Hebrew Bible indicates that the Israelites were well aware of the cults of their Phoenician neighbors. In one famous example, the prophet Elijah challenges the priests of Baal to a competition between Baal and YHWH in order to see whose god can cast fire upon the sacrifice.¹⁰²¹ When the prophets of Baal are unsuccessful, Elijah mocks them by suggesting that perhaps Baal is on a journey or asleep and will soon *wake up*.¹⁰²² Baal is usually identified with Melqart in this passage and the reference to Baal being asleep and waking up may be an allusion to the rites of

¹⁰²⁰ Heider 1987: 404.

¹⁰²¹ 1 Kings 18

¹⁰²² 1 Kings 18:27

egersis, “awakening.”¹⁰²³ In addition to the allusion to the rites in the Book of Kings, the prophet Ezekiel rebukes the king of Tyre for pretending to be a god, which Aubet argues is another allusion to the *egersis* rites.¹⁰²⁴ Commenting on the passage from Ezekiel, Aubet points to the cherub as a symbol for fire and immortality as an allusion to Melqart.¹⁰²⁵ These examples from the biblical literature show that the Israelites were well aware of the practices of their Phoenician neighbors, including possibly the rites of *egersis*.

The cluster of names Molech, Melqart, and *molk* all seem to be connected, although the extent of these connections is still not fully understood.¹⁰²⁶ The possible shared etymology from the root MLK “king” is possible but not certain. What is more certain is that Molech, Melqart, and *molk* are all connected to Phoenician myths and practices of human sacrifice: in the biblical cult of Molech, children were offered to the

¹⁰²³ Doak (2019) approaches the question about whether the Hebrew bible can be used as a primary source for the Phoenicians. He concludes that it can be used if done carefully, and he points out that archeological evidence has corroborated much of the information about the Phoenicians in the Bible.

¹⁰²⁴ In Chapters 27-28 of the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet describes the trading empire of Tyre and rebukes her king for pretending to be a god. Aubet (2001: 124) reads Ezekiel’s rebuke of the Tyrian king as a reference to the god Melqart. The king of Tyre was also the high priest of the cult of Melqart, and the cult was closely linked with the establishment and preservation of the kingship (Malkin 2011: 127. Aubet 2001: 127-128). The kings of other Phoenician cities were also priests, notably Tabnit and Eshmunazar were priests of Astarte (*KAI* 13.1-2). Ezekiel (28:11) calls the king *melek Šör*, “King of Tyre,” a title which is synonymous with both Melqart “king of the city (Tyre),” and his epithet Baal Šör “Master of Tyre” (*CIS* I.122).

¹⁰²⁵ “It is obvious that Ezekiel is ridiculing the king of Tyre for making himself a god and identifying himself with the emblem of the god of the city, its winged creature, the masculine sphinx. Like the cherub and like Melqart, the king considers himself to be immortal and revitalized by the fire” (Aubet 2001: 124). Fire is one of the divine agents of YHWH, and in Ugaritic and Akkadian texts, fire is sometimes conceived of as a divine being (Wood 2008: 53-55). Ezekiel (28:14-16) seems to allude to the ritualized death and rebirth of Melqart when the prophet says YHWH provided the king of Tyre with a guardian cherub, and the king walked on fire stones: “I created you as a cherub with outstretched shielding wings; And you resided on God’s holy mountain; You walked among stones of fire.”

¹⁰²⁶ For the cluster of names Melqart, Moloch, Malkandros, Zeus Meilichos all derived from a Phoenician god *Malk* or *Milk*, see Dussaud 1904.

flames, and in a similar way, Melqart was burned on the pyre. Following the work of Heider, Day also argues that the god Molech in the Hebrew Bible may in fact be the underworld deity Malik “King,” attested in god lists and personal names from Ebla, Mari, and Ugarit, who was equated with the Mesopotamian underworld god Nergal in a two texts.¹⁰²⁷ Furthermore, Day suggests the possibility that Molech is the same as Melqart, who was also equated with Nergal in a text from Palmyra.¹⁰²⁸ In turn, the names Malik and Melqart are derived from the Semitic root MLK, “king.” Moreover, independently of real etymology, there is abundant evidence in the Hebrew Bible that the god Molech was originally imagined as a king and his name was almost for certain understood as derived from the Semitic root MLK “king.”¹⁰²⁹ Therefore, the Hebrew Bible contains further evidence for situating the rite of child sacrifice within the milieu of Canaanite beliefs

¹⁰²⁷ Day 1989: 46-48. For Malik in a bilingual Akkadian-Ugaritic god list, see RS 20.24. For Malik in personal names, see Heider 1985: 409-419. For Nergal equated with Malik in a god list from the Old Babylonian period, see Langdon 1923: 31, text 9, ob. Col. 2, line 8. For Nergal as Malik in a late Assyrian text, see Tallqvist 1938: 359. See Day 1989: 48 n.73 for further citations. Note, however, that the standard equivalent of Nergal is Resheph (see, for example, KTU 1.47; 1.118).

¹⁰²⁸ Day 1989: 49. For Melqart equated with Nergal, see Seyrig 1944-1945: 62-80.

¹⁰²⁹ A passage from the Book of Isaiah (57:9) refers to human sacrifice and says: “You have approached the king with oil, you have provided many perfumes. And you have sent your envoys afar, even down to the netherworld.” This passage associates the practice of child sacrifice to Molech with the king and the Underworld. A passage from the Book of Zephaniah (1:4-7) also relates the god Molech to the Semitic root MLK “king”: “I will stretch out My arm against Judah and against all who dwell in Jerusalem; and I will wipe out from this place every vestige of Baal, and the name of the priestlings along with the priests; and those who bow down on the roofs to the host of heaven; and those who bow down and swear to the Lord but also swear by Malcam (*bmlkm*).” The NJPS translates the Hebrew word *bmlkm* as “by Malcam,” whereas Zevit (2001: 581) translates it as “by their king (or, by their Molech).” Zevit (2001: 581) comments on this passage that, “The cultic practices listed indicated worship of Baal, the host of heaven, and perhaps Molech.” Heider (1985: 334) and Day (1989: 69, 82) also acknowledged that there may be an allusion to Molech in this passage. In a passage from the Book of Isaiah (30:33) the Hebrew word *melek* “king” is associated with the Tophet: “The Topheth has long been ready for him; he too is destined for Melech—his firepit has been made both wide and deep, with plenty of fire and firewood, and with the breath of the Lord burning it like a stream of sulfur.” According to Mosca (1975: 212), this passage is the earliest reference in the Hebrew Bible to the rite of child sacrifice. Levenson (1996: 10) agrees that it seems logical to identify the god Melek associated with the Tophet here with the god Molech associated with the Tophet and child sacrifice elsewhere. Moreover, Levenson points out that the historical accuracy of the *o*-vowel in the word Molech has long been a matter of controversy.

associated with the Underworld deity *Mlk*, and by association, with the god Melqart. Although scholars have debated whether Melqart was originally an Underworld deity, there is at least one source, used by Pliny the Elder, that explicitly states Melqart was a god who received child sacrifice.¹⁰³⁰

As discussed previously, Heider connected the god Melqart to the less well known Syro-Palestinian god of death called *Mlk*, and Bonnet also connected Melqart to this same milieu of Underworld gods.¹⁰³¹ In his conclusions, Heider proposed the possibility that the biblical cult of Molech, which is typically understood as a cult of child sacrifice, originated under the influence of Tyre and her god Melqart.¹⁰³² As Heider hypothesized, the possible Tyrian origins of the cult of Molech might explain the specialization of the term *molk*, which may have emerged as a misunderstanding or re-purposing of the name of the Tyrian god for the ritual in the Tyrian colonies, in a Carthaginian context in which the focus of worship (and of child sacrifice) was Baal Hammon instead of Melqart. According to Heider, “the Punic specialization of *mol*k took place because El (Baal-Hammon) and Tanit, not Melqart, were the Punic recipients of the sacrifices, and the traditional ‘to the Ruler’ was misunderstood in time.”¹⁰³³ In other words, the *molk* sacrifice would have originally been a reference to the cult of Melqart, the king of Tyre, and known from the depictions of sacrifice to Molech (i.e., *l^emōlek*, = ‘to the Ruler’).¹⁰³⁴ In this case, the phrase *l^emōlek* “to the Ruler,” originally a possible

¹⁰³⁰ Pliny *HN* 36.39.

¹⁰³¹ Heider 1985: 175-179. Bonnet 1988: 417-434.

¹⁰³² Heider 1985: 404-405.

¹⁰³³ Heider 1987: 404 n. 799.

¹⁰³⁴ The form *l^emōlek* occurs in the oldest reference to Molech in Leviticus 18:21.

reference to Melqart, would have become associated instead with the Punic god El and eventually lost its original meaning. Therefore, the word would have become associated with the sacrifice itself and shortened to *molk* “offering.” This would imply that both Molech and *molk* are derived from the Semitic root for “king” (MLK).¹⁰³⁵ As I discussed in the previous chapter, Stavrakopoulou was not convinced by Heider’s connection between *mlk*, Molech, and Melqart because she claims there is no evidence connecting child sacrifice with the cult of Melqart. As I have attempted to show, on a mythological level at least, the myth of the sacrifice of Melqart is connected to child sacrifice through Philo’s Tyrian myth about kingship and the sacrifice of the infant god-king Ieoud.¹⁰³⁶

While scholars first hypothesized that the *molk* sacrifice is etymologically related to the Semitic root MLK “king,” a second hypothesis has gained favor lately, according to which the etymology is from the Semitic root HLK “to go.”¹⁰³⁷ For instance, Day (who had accepted the MLK “king” etymology for the Hebrew Bible god Molech) argued that the etymology of *molk* from MLK “should be decisively rejected, as there are a number of places where this meaning is unsuitable.”¹⁰³⁸ Day cites an example where the term *molk* appears after the name of the offerer rather than after the name of the divinity.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁵ In his conclusions, Mosca (1975: 271-274) reconstructed the term *molk* from the Semitic root MLK “king,” which he related to royal sacrifices of noble children.

¹⁰³⁶ Stavrakopoulou 2004: 215.

¹⁰³⁷ E.g., Charlier 1953; Buber 1967: 178; Weinfeld 1972: 135-140; Cooper 1981: 446. For a brief survey of the possible etymologies of the term *mlk*, see Day 1989: 4-8. Eissfeldt (1935: 4) argued the term was related to Syriac *m^elak*, “to promise.” Day (1989: 8) follows the conclusions of von Soden (1936), who argued that *mlk* is a performative noun derived from the root *hlk*, “to go.” More recent consensus is that the word *mlk* is a causal participle from the root *hlk* “to go” (Xella 2012-2013: 269). For a reassessment of the etymology, see Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 354.

¹⁰³⁸ Day 1989: 5.

¹⁰³⁹ l ‘dn lb’l ḥmn ndr ’š n’dr ’dnb’l bn ‘bd’šmn **mlk** ‘**dm** bšrm bn’ tm šm’ ql’ brk’, “To the lord, to Baal-ḥammon, a vow which Adonbaal son of Abdeshmun vowed, **an offering of a man**, his own child, his son

On the other hand, as Heider pointed out, the kingly aspect of the term *mol**k* may have been lost or misinterpreted in the Carthaginian realm by the time we have epigraphic testimony of its ritual use as the name of the sacrifice itself.

On the ritual side of things, recent scholarship has elucidated the connections between the *tophet* and the religious practices of Tyre. Xella argues that, even though there is no archeological evidence for *tophets* in the Levant, the practice probably has its origins there.¹⁰⁴⁰ As Xella points out, “religious conceptions originally borrowed from the homeland can be detected, even though subject to autonomous local developments and external influences.”¹⁰⁴¹ In other words, the Punic practice of child sacrifice might have its origins in other Phoenician practices, such as the Tyrian rites of *egersis* for Melqart. According to a Roman source from the first-century CE, Quintus Curtius Rufus, the sacrifice of children was handed down from the Carthaginian founders (i.e., Tyre) and performed until the destruction of the city.¹⁰⁴² This testimony suggests that child sacrifice may have been practiced at one point at Tyre or at least imagined to have been performed, but that it fell out of fashion with the dominant religious group. As a parallel, the Greeks also imagined that sacrifice took place in their mythical past, whether that was the case or not (which we cannot know).¹⁰⁴³ The epigraphical record for the *mol**k* ritual

in perfect condition. He heard his voice, blessed him” (*KAI* 107; trans. by Day 1989: 5). My emphasis added. Day implies that the term *mlk* 'dm would go after the name of the divinity (lb'1 ḥmn) if the word *mlk* meant king.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Xella 2013: 267. Stelae discovered at Tyre were originally thought to be evidence for a *tophet*, but have now been shown to be regular tomb markers (Moscato 1993).

¹⁰⁴¹ Xella 2019: 281.

¹⁰⁴² Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander* 4.3.23.

¹⁰⁴³ See, for example, the myths about child sacrifice by legendary kings, such as Agamemnon (*Cypria*, Eur. *IA*. 90-95), Erechtheus (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 98-101; Eur. *Erechtheus* = fr. 50 Austin), and Minos (Eur.

also supports this idea. The oldest inscriptions with the term *molk* (KAI 61 A and B) might attest to practices transferred to Malta directly from Tyre, before the Carthaginian influence on the island.¹⁰⁴⁴

Quinn argues that the settlers of Carthage from Tyre represented “a dissident religious tradition” who left Tyre because they practiced an unusual form of cult.¹⁰⁴⁵

According to Quinn, after founding Carthage these settlers then propagated their cult that then became the norm in the Punic west. In a similar vein, D’Andrea and Sara Giardino have argued that the foundation of *tophets* was a way for refugees from Tyre to promote an identity distinct from Tyre.¹⁰⁴⁶ Another possibility, if we are to believe the testimony of Curtius Rufius that human sacrifice originated at Tyre, is that the Carthaginians implemented traditional Tyrian practices, whether these were mythical or real or still practiced in their time. In other words, the Carthaginians used the *tophet* as a form of ultra-religious devotion to be more Tyrian than the metropolis of Tyre. Moreover, although the Carthaginians did create a distinct identity with the *tophet*, they still maintained a strong religious bond with Tyre.¹⁰⁴⁷ This is most evident in the Carthaginian custom of sending offerings to the temple of Melqart at Tyre and the presence of

Cretans = fr. 82.36-39 Austin). For the controversial archaeological evidence of human sacrifice among the Minoans, see Hughes 1991: 13-35.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Gibson (2002: 73) dates the inscriptions in the early seventh-century BCE on epigraphical grounds, although Carthaginian influence is not attested archaeologically at Malta before the sixth-century BCE (Moscato 1999: 109).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Quinn 2012-2013: 33.

¹⁰⁴⁶ D’Andrea and Giardino 2011.

¹⁰⁴⁷ As Álvarez Martí-Aguilar explains (2019: 622), “the colonies break their bonds of subordination with the metropolis in the political and economic sphere, but even so they do not lose the extremely strong religious and ethnic bond.”

Carthaginian envoys at the temple of Melqart for the festival of *egersis* (see Chapter 3).¹⁰⁴⁸

In short, the practice of child sacrifice known epigraphically as *molk* is connected to the god Molech in the Hebrew bible, and both are probably related to the god Melqart. The Punic *molk* sacrifice, as I have argued, is also mythologically explained by an origin story in Philo's account of El's sacrifice of his son Ieoud. Philo's myth connects the practice of child sacrifice to a substitution rite where the king assumes the burdens of a crisis instead of the population. Moreover, Philo's account is part of a broader narrative about fertility rites and the kingship at Tyre. From the perspective of Philo's account, the Carthaginian *molk* sacrifice could be originally connected to the Tyrian sacrifice of Melqart, the proto-typical kingly substitution sacrifice. Therefore, if my reading of Philo's account is correct, then Philo's story would provide a "missing-link" in the mythological realm between the cult of Melqart at Tyre and the *molk* practices in the Punic colonies or at least mythical ideas about child sacrifice. As discussed in the previous chapter, although Melqart was not as evidently prominent for the Carthaginians as for the Tyrians, there are indications that cumulatively demonstrate how Melqart remained an important god in the pantheon throughout the Phoenician world, such as the abundant Carthaginian theonymns based on Melqart's name, the religious links between Carthage and Tyre attested by literary sources, and the abundant Punic inscriptions with the cult title "resuscitator of the god" associated with the cult of Melqart.¹⁰⁴⁹

¹⁰⁴⁸ For the offerings, see Polyb. 31.12.11-12. For the Carthaginians present at the festival, see Arrian, *Anab.* 2.24.5.

¹⁰⁴⁹ A treaty between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedonia in 215 BCE, preserved by Polybios (7.9.2-3) provides rare insight into the Punic pantheon. The treaty mentions Zeus (Baal Hammon), Hera (Tannit), Apollo (Eshmun), and Herakles (Melqart). For discussion of this text, see Barré 1983. A Phoenician

Conclusion

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the evidence presented by Heider provides compelling support that the Punic *molk* rites were, at the very least, somehow connected to the Tyrian rites of Melqart. Stavrakopoulou, on the other hand, doubts the connections between *molk* and Melqart because of the lack of evidence of child sacrifice in the cult of Melqart. However, classical sources do attest to the connections between human sacrifice and Melqart. Furthermore, I have argued in this chapter that the Phoenician myth of child sacrifice in Philo provides support for the links between *molk* and Melqart, at least in terms of Phoenician mythology. Heider's hypothesis would mean that the term *molk* was originally derived from the Semitic root for "king," but that in time it became understood as a type of sacrifice because of its associations with the sacrifice of Melqart. So the "king" etymology remains a possibility. I theorize that the *molk* sacrifice was originally based on the type of fertility sacrifice associated with the king figure and his relationship with the main Syro-Canaanite god Baal, epitomized at Tyre by the sacrifice of Melqart in the *egersis* rites. We can then see resonances of this type of sacrifice in Philo's aitiology where the royal child is sacrificed. If *molk* is connected to Melqart, then the Carthaginians probably developed their own unique practice of child sacrifice, distinct from the Tyrian myth and practice of symbolically sacrificing Melqart at the *egersis* rites. This practice was possibly reflected in a Phoenician myth of child sacrifice, such as the one preserved in Philo. In any case, because the Carthaginian term *mlk* "offering" is

pantheon is also outlined in the famous seventh-century BCE treaty of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon with the king of Tyre, Baal I (*ANET* 533). The treaty mentions the gods Baal Shamim, Baal Malage, Baal Saphon, Eshmoun, Astarte, and Melqart under the form *Mi-il-qar-tu* (see Bonnet 1988: 40-42). For the literary sources attesting to the religious ties between Carthage and Tyre, see Ar. *Anab.* 2.24.5 and Polyb. 31.12.11-12. For the inscriptions, see *CIS* I, 227, 260-262, 377, 3351-3352, 3788, 4863-4872, 5903, 5950, 5953, 5979, 5980, 6000 bis, and *KAI* 70.

orthographically indistinguishable from the root for “king,” whatever the true etymology may be, the term may have still alluded to the practice of sacrificing Melqart in the minds of the Carthaginians. In this way, the practice connected the Carthaginians to their mother city of Tyre, while at the same distinguishing themselves from the Tyrians.

In Chapters 3-6, I have proposed two sources of previously unconsidered evidence for the myth of the sacrifice and awakening of Melqart: the attempted sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos and the sacrifice of Ieoud in Philo. Herodotos’ myth suggests that the story of Melqart’s sacrifice was well known in the Mediterranean and that it was easily adaptable to Greek theology. Thus, the differences in Herodotos’ myth highlight an important difference between Greek and Phoenician religious beliefs, namely that the Phoenicians depicted the sacrifice of their gods in myth (i.e., Melqart and Ieoud), but the Greeks, in general, did not. This difference also highlights the fact that the Greeks did not practice human sacrifice, but the Phoenicians did, at least in the west, under certain circumstances. By contextualizing the myth of Melqart’s sacrifice within the broader Levantine pattern of myth, which includes the myths of Ieoud, Baal, and Isaac, we have gained further insight into the origins of Melqart’s mythology. Additionally, we have gained deeper understanding into the possible Tyrian origins of the Punic practice of child sacrifice or at least the Punic association of the practice’s origins with Tyre as the metropolis they looked back to (and up to). Moreover, even if the practice did not take place, western and eastern Phoenicians alike (such as the Carthaginians and Philo) imagined that it did, and ultimately they situated its mythical origins at Tyre.

In the stories of child sacrifice in Genesis 22 and Philo, the parallel narrative situation of a father sacrificing his only-son, as well as the transliterated Greek form

Ieoud for the Semitic term “only” (*yhyd*), points to a common archetype for the stories that likely also contained a form *yhyd*. It is possible that both stories were drawn from an older Phoenician or Canaanite archetype that is now lost. Despite the similarities between the stories, there are major differences. The most pronounced is that in Philo’s myth a god sacrifices his son, whereas in Genesis 22 it is Abraham, a mortal, who is commanded by YHWH to sacrifice his son. In the Ugaritic Baal myth, on the other hand, the fragmented tablets describing Baal’s death by Mot do not indicate that the god was sacrificed. The difference in the stories of Ieoud, Baal, and Isaac articulate a striking difference between the theologies of the Syro-Canaanite peoples and the Israelites, namely that the god of the Israelites does not perform sacrifice, although he is indirectly involved in the practice because he commands Abraham to sacrifice his son. In any case, each of these stories is indicative of how narratives about sacrifice, and aitiologies, in particular, were involved in the process of cultural exchange and mythological adaptations. Besides the motif of sacrifice and rebirth inferred in these stories, the importance of fertility is highlighted in each of these myths about sacrifice.

As I explored, Philo develops a clear theory of sacrifice based on gods associated with the fertility cycle. In my reading, the myths of sacrifice that Philo describes all hinge on this theory. Thus, Philo connects the sacrifice of the divine child, who is dressed as a king, to fertility rituals because the sacrifice is a remedy for the lack of fertility manifested at Tyre by the murder of the previous king, Ouranos. We can compare Philo’s myth about Tyre to Ugaritic ritual texts that highlight the role of the king as the chief priest and the Ugaritic mythological texts that stress the connections between the king and fertility. In my analysis of Philo’s story of Ieoud, I have shown how the account can

be interpreted as a story about sacrifice and rebirth. Therefore, the Phoenician evidence, as presented by Philo, strengthens the reading of the myth of Melqart, the Baal of Tyre, as not only a dying and rising god, but specifically a sacrificed and awakened god. This view of Melqart's mythology has long been advocated by Aubet, Bonnet, Mettinger, and others, and the evidence presented in this chapter reinforces their scholarly reconstructions of the myth and rites of *egersis*.

From the perspective of Patton's model, the Phoenician myth about divine child sacrifice functions as a paradigm for understanding how the actual practice of child sacrifice, which was not an exact replica of the mythical representation, was attributed to the gods as the original source of ritual and religion. In Philo's Phoenician myth, El sacrifices his infant son, the god-king Ieoud, and in practice the Carthaginians sacrificed children to El. As Patton says, "the gods are as much the originators as the objects or recipients of cultic action."¹⁰⁵⁰ In this case, El is the originator and later recipient of child sacrifice, and his son is the original victim and prototype for future offerings. Thus, Philo's account of the origins of Phoenician sacrifice highlights that the gods are the supreme source of cultic activity. In other words, in offering his son, El defines his own cult, and the depiction of Ieoud as a victim is self-referential for El's cult of child sacrifice. Patton called the crucifixion of Christ a "powerful sacrificial circularity" because God sacrifices his son to himself.¹⁰⁵¹ In a similar way, in the Phoenician case, we see a sort of "sacrificial circularity" because in myth El sacrifices his own son, and in practice he is the recipient of these offerings. In the case of Philo, however, the short

¹⁰⁵⁰ Patton 2009: 20.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibid., 310.

version of the account clearly states that El sacrifices his son *to* Ouranos, not to himself (Οὐρανῷ τῷ πατρὶ ὀλοκαρποῖ, Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10.30-34). Nevertheless, Philo's account illustrates the belief that ritual practices are part of the original domain of the gods. However, Philo's Euhemerist approach also situates the world of the gods within a historical context. In my view, this does not problematize the idea of divine sacrifice, rather it reinforces the idea that Philo's Phoenician culture not only believed in but also rationalized the "historically accurate" (i.e., Euhemerist) existence of the gods.

To better understand the Punic practice of child sacrifice and its connections with Philo's account of the sacrifice of the infant god-king, I have contextualized the *molk* sacrifice within the broader Phoenician socio-religious world-view, however fragmentary it might be. I have argued that we cannot fully understand the ideology of child sacrifice represented in Philo's accounts without contextualizing the ritual with the annual sacrifice of the Phoenician god Melqart at Tyre. Moreover, the evidence shows that the myths of Melqart and child sacrifice are both ultimately derived from a nexus of Syro-Canaanite beliefs associated with deified dead kings, fertility, and the king's role as the priest. As Bonnet has shown, the sacrifice and immortalization of Melqart probably has its origins in Syro-Canaanite beliefs in deified kings.¹⁰⁵² Furthermore, as we have seen in Ugaritic myth and ritual texts, the king had a special connection to Baal in his cultic role as the priest. Therefore, the Syro-Canaanite evidence deepens our understanding of the mythology of Melqart and Ieoud. It is possible, then, that the representations of child sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible and in Philo are derived from a Tyrian source. If this was the case, then the practice of child sacrifice developed in a distinct way from the Tyrian

¹⁰⁵² Bonnet 1988: 417-434.

practice of sacrificing Melqart. Nevertheless, the practice was carried out primarily by the nobles of the Carthaginian cities, as evidenced by both the literary and epigraphical record. The fact that noble children were the primary offerings provides further support that these rites were connected to the Tyrian practice of sacrificing the king of the city, Melqart. Thus, both types of sacrifice are connected to the Syro-Canaanite funerary beliefs in deified kings.

The Tyrian context of the sacrifice of the divine king, Ieoud, and his hypothetical rebirth can help us understand the lost Phoenician myth about the sacrifice of Melqart. If my reading of Philo is correct, then we can posit that in a lost Phoenician myth Melqart's death was described as burnt sacrifice, like Ieoud and Isaac. We can understand the "rebirth" of Ieoud by comparing it to the other west Levantine myths of sacrifice and rebirth: as a return from death to life like Baal, or as the unexpected survival of Isaac, and thus, the perpetual fertility of the Israelites, or as Philo's Euhemerist sanctification and immortalization of Ouranos and El-Kronos, which is based on his theory of sacrifice, or finally, as the "awakening" of Melqart. Moreover, we can connect this lost myth of Melqart to the mythical origins of the practice of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians. A final question is why, if my reading is correct, does Philo not explicitly link his child sacrifice story with Melqart. My answer is that Philo himself says the practice of the first-born child (Ieoud's) sacrifice was intentionally a secret. Moreover, it is possible that Philo constructs a more general narrative about sacrificing gods through the story of Ieoud as part of his pan-Phoenician project. This fits with the context of Philo's story of the reign of Kronos as a primeval king who distributes the kingdoms of the Phoenician realm to his children.

By understanding the sacrifice of children from the broader context of Phoenician religion it is easier to understand how the Carthaginians believed that their ritual actions were pious. Finally, by contextualizing the story of the sacrifice of Melqart with the broader Near Eastern nexus of myths about sacrifice, and more specifically, with Philo's aitiology of child sacrifice, we have gained insight into the religious dynamics of the eastern Mediterranean. Just as the myth of Melqart was adapted by Greek speakers, the mythic traditions from the Syro-Canaanite milieu were also adapted by neighboring cultures and developed in distinct ways to express the individual culture's theology. Although Greek authors did not typically depict their gods as victims of sacrifice as we have seen with the Canaanite cultures, the extent of the influence of these myths can be detected in a Greek myth that draws from a wide-spectrum of Near Eastern motifs. In the next chapter, I discuss the Orphic myth of the sacrifice of the infant god Dionysos, which is the only Greek myth to depict the successful sacrifice of a god, and also one which displays a diverse variety of adaptations of Near Eastern mythological themes.

Chapter 7: The Sacrifice of the Infant God Dionysos and the “Mediterranean Triangle”

Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται]¹⁰⁵³
-The Derveni Papyrus, Col. 17.12

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I argued that the Mesopotamian myth *Atrahasis* depicts the slaughter of the god Ilawela as a sacrifice, an act which gives birth to the first humans who then provide offerings for the gods. In Chapter 2, I showed how the Greek tradition, represented by Hesiod and Pseudo-Apollodoros, adapted the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny underlying the *Atrahasis* in the stories surrounding Prometheus. In Chapter 4, I argued Herodotos records a Greek adaptation of the myth of the sacrifice and “awakening” of the Tyrian god Melqart, the dying and rising god whose cult was known throughout the Mediterranean. In Chapter 6, I explored how Philo’s myth of the sacrifice of the child god Ieoud by his father El offers us deeper insights into the myth of Melqart. In this chapter, I return to the themes of anthropogeny and child sacrifice from previous chapters with an exploration of a late sixth-century BCE Greek myth that depicts the infant god Dionysos as the victim of sacrifice and the consumption of his flesh by the

¹⁰⁵³ “Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, and from Zeus all things have been fashioned.”

Titans, who are then blasted by Zeus, out of which the first humans are born.¹⁰⁵⁴ The myth is understood by the majority of experts as part of a tradition associated with mystery cults that scholars call Orphism, which promised a blessed-afterlife for its initiates.¹⁰⁵⁵

The Orphic myth of Dionysos is unique for a number of reasons, most notable is that Greeks did not typically depict their gods as the victim of sacrifice. I attempt to explain this anomaly with the suggestion that the myth of Dionysos adapts Near Eastern motifs. As Johnston shows, the author of the Orphic Dionysos myth combined elements from various well known Greek myths in a process called *bricolage*.¹⁰⁵⁶ Johnston also discusses how the myth of Dionysos shares themes with the Egyptian myth of the dismemberment of Osiris.¹⁰⁵⁷ I expand on Johnston's analysis by suggesting some additional sources from which the *bricoleur* may have drawn. In particular, in addition to

¹⁰⁵⁴ Johnston (Graf and Johnston 2013: 69, 81) assigns the myth to the late sixth-century BCE. Detienne (1979: 69) also dates the myth to the sixth-century BCE. West (1983: 264), who reconstructs the myth as part of the Eudemian theogony, dates the myth to the fifth-century BCE.

¹⁰⁵⁵ For studies on mystery cults in the ancient world, see Mylonas 1961; Burkert 1987; Cosmopoulos 2003; Bowden 2010. For a history of the scholarship of Orphic studies, and the Gold Tablets in particular, see Graf and Johnston 2013: 50-59. For a more comprehensive introduction of the history of scholarship, see Edmonds 2013: 11-70. For the edited volume dealing with the Gold Tablets, new methodological approaches, and their implications for Greek religion, see Edmonds 2011. For epigraphical evidence of Orphic soteriological belief (life – death – life) in the fifth-century BCE, see the Olbian bone tablets (new edition by West 1982 reproduced in Graf and Johnston 2013: 214-215) and the Hipponion Tablet (1 Graf and Johnston). Scholars have traditionally assigned the myth of the Titans and Dionysos discussed by Olympiodoros to the Orphic discourse (see Olympiodoros *In Phd.* 1.3 (41 Westerink) = *OF* 304 I, 318 III, 320 I Bernabé). For scholarship supporting the antiquity of the Orphic myth of Dionysos and the Titans, see Bernabé 2002a; Bernabé and Jiménez 2008: 20 and 72; Bremmer 2002: 20-23, Graf and Johnston 2013: 157, Rose 1943 and 1967; Santamaría 2005: 397-405; Santamaría 2008: 1161-1184; West 1983: 137. West (1983) reconstructs a stemma for the Orphic texts. Radcliffe G. Edmonds (2013), however, argues that scholars have taken the Orphic fragments out of their original context in order to fabricate a doctrinal Orphism based on a modern fabrication of the Dionysos myth influenced by Christianity. This monumental study pursues his original argument from Edmonds 1999.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Graf and Johnston 2013: 91. The concept of *bricolage* was first proposed by Claude Levi-Strauss in his book *The Savage Mind* (1962).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Graf and Johnston 2013: 76-77.

well known Greek myths, the author of the Dionysos myth could have also adapted from Mesopotamian and Levantine traditions. Following Johnston, I use the term *bricoleur* for convenience, but the myth was probably not the creation of a single individual but rather a broader Mediterranean tradition, such as was likely the case with the Homeric tradition. Scholars have not previously investigated, however, the Phoenician influence on the Orphic myth of Dionysos. Thus, in this chapter I will explain how the Orphic *bricoleur* creates a unique Greek myth of divine child sacrifice and anthropogeny by drawing from Near Eastern sources that were mediated by the Phoenician milieu.

In the first part of this chapter (sections 1-3), I build upon my conclusions in previous chapters and argue that the Dionysos myth adapts the theme of sacrifice and anthropogeny from the Mesopotamian myth underlying *Atrahasis* and the Phoenician theme of child sacrifice underlying Philo's myth of Ieoud. In the second part of this chapter (section 4), I read the myths of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart side by side through the lens of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean and the adaptation and merging of mythologies. First, I bring in the Egyptian myth of Osiris and discuss the identification between Dionysos and Osiris by Greek authors such as Herodotos and Plutarch, and I support the claims of these Greek authors with Egyptian sources. I then discuss the different concept of "sacrifice" from the standpoint of Egyptian religion and how the myth of Osiris relates the death and rebirth of the god to Egyptian practices of mummification. Finally, I perform a close reading of Plutarch's account of Osiris and show how the myths and rituals of Dionysos, Osiris, and even Melqart are all in dialogue with each other.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁸ Plut. *De Is. et Os.*

A key concept for my reading of these myths is the idea of the “triangularity” between Egyptian, Phoenician, and Greek myths and rituals discussed by López-Ruiz.¹⁰⁵⁹ In her study of funerary texts from these cultures, she shows how “elements of the three cultures (construed as all but bounded entities) can simultaneously interface with each other in a multidirectional way, coalescing in a ‘culturally hybrid space’ created by centuries of contact.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Building upon this idea, I show how the myths of the death and rebirth of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart share similar themes, but that the elements specific to each story reflect each culture’s particular theology. In particular, each culture connects the myth of the death and rebirth of its deity to cult practices that are unique to its theology. In my approach, the “triangularity” between Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart is the product of a *cultural* triangulation, namely between Greek, Egyptian, and Phoenician cultures. Therefore, the potential for this type of overlapping of gods is not limited to just these three gods. For example, Dionysos is associated with Osiris, and Osiris with Melqart, but as we have seen, Melqart is also syncretized with Herakles. Ultimately, this may help explain some of the close connections between Dionysos and Herakles, but for the purposes of this chapter I focus primarily on the three dying and rising gods Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart.¹⁰⁶¹

The triangulation between myths and rituals of the Greeks, Phoenicians, and Egyptians was initially supported by an eastern Mediterranean “triangle of trade” between the Levantine coast and the island of Cyprus and an even larger triangle of trade

¹⁰⁵⁹ López-Ruiz 2015.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid., 83-84.

¹⁰⁶¹ For a recent study of Herakles and Dionysos in archaic Greece, see Huard 2018.

between the Levant and the Aegean.¹⁰⁶² The historical background that led to the transmission of these different myths and rituals helps us understand the mechanisms that facilitated the overlapping of these traditions. Both the Greeks and the Phoenicians settled at the cities of Memphis and Naukratis in Egypt between the seventh and sixth centuries BCE where they probably learned about the myth of Osiris, and in turn, shared the myths of their gods Dionysos and Melqart.¹⁰⁶³ We also find Greek pottery at the Egyptian city of Karnak, including a vase that depicts Dionysos being carried on a sacred ship in a procession.¹⁰⁶⁴ As John Boardman pointed, sacred processions like the one seen on the Greek vase were also well known in Egypt.¹⁰⁶⁵ We can then draw a parallel with the sacred processions of Osiris performed in Egypt (discussion below). The Phoenicians, as well, were not only living side by side with Egyptians, but the Greeks themselves acknowledged they were early on conveying merchandise, myths, and rituals between Egypt and Greece.¹⁰⁶⁶ Current research into Phoenician culture and the

¹⁰⁶² For the old Bronze Age triangle of trade, see Broodbank 2013: 487.

¹⁰⁶³ Hdt. 2.112.2: περιουικέουσι δὲ τὸ τέμενος τοῦτο Φοίνικες Τύριοι καλέεται δὲ ὁ χώρος οὗτος ὁ συνάπας Τυρίων στρατόπεδον. “Phoenicians from Tyre live around this precinct and this whole place is called the camp of the Tyrians.” This temple has not been securely identified, and Egyptian sources make no reference to such a Tyrian installation (Lloyd 2007: 322). In the seventh-century BCE, Greek traders settled at the Egyptian city of Naukratis and lived among Egyptians. Later in the sixth-century BCE these Greeks settled adopted local customs and settled in Memphis where they were called Hellenomemphites (Hdt. 2.153-154, 163; Cf. Diod. 1.66, 12). Herodotos (2.178.2-3) describes how the Ionians, Dorians, and Aiolians collaborated in the founding of a sanctuary named the ‘Hellenion’ at Naukratis during the reign of the Pharaoh Amasis (ca. 569-525 BCE). Sherds of pottery from the site of the sanctuary testify to the dedication “to the gods of the Hellenes” (Hall 2002: 130). For studies of Naukratis, see Boardman 1999: 118-132 and Möller 2000.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Boardman 1999: 137.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁶ It is significant that Herodotos (1.1.2) opens his *Histories* by reporting a Persian account according to which the Phoenicians were conveying Egyptian and Assyrian merchandise to the Greek island of Argos when they kidnapped the princess Io. For the Phoenicians as mediators between Egyptian and Greek religious ideas, see Hütwohl (forthcoming). Greeks traded at Naukratis, and the Phoenicians settled at Memphis, as noted by Herodotos (south of the temple of Hephaistos): “Phoenicians from Tyre live around

interconnectedness of the ancient Mediterranean has shown that the Phoenician trade networks were vital, not only for the exchange of merchandise between these cultures, but also for the transmission of art, myths, and other knowledge.¹⁰⁶⁷ That the Phoenicians acted as a middle-man for the transmission of knowledge between the cultures of the Near East and Greece is most notably exemplified by the Phoenician origins of the alphabet, which, in addition to oral transmission, was instrumental for the transmission of art and knowledge.¹⁰⁶⁸ Moreover, according to Herodotos, the Phoenicians were also mediators in the transmission of religious ideas, such as the rites of Dionysos from Egypt, as I explore below.¹⁰⁶⁹ Thus, it is reasonable to understand how the myths of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart would have overlapped and become entangled with each other during the centuries of contact between these cultures. In the following section, I begin by introducing some of the Orphic texts that utilized Near Eastern motifs before my close reading of the myth of Dionysos.

this precinct, and the whole place is called ‘The Tyrian Camp’ (*stratopedon*)” (Hdt. 2.112). The temple to foreign Aphrodite (i.e., Ashtart) there is a counterexample to the Greek Hellenion sanctuary and other temples around which Greeks from different areas merged at Naukratis (Hdt. 2.112, 178-79). Greeks had settled since at least the seventh century in unknown areas of the Delta, then in the mid sixth-century BCE Amasis II resettled Greek mercenaries and traders at Naukratis in the, after which the place was a city inhabited by Egyptians, Greeks, and probably Phoenicians (Fantalkin 2006). Greek and Phoenician mercenary garrisons occupied the Nile Delta, the Greeks at Pelusion and the Phoenicians at Heroönpolis/Pithon (Tell el-Maskhuta) (For Pelusion, see Hdt. 2.154; for Heroönpolis, see epigraphic evidence in Lutz 2001).

¹⁰⁶⁷ The study by Malkin (2011) has pointed out how trade networks fostered cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean. For a detailed analysis of the archeological and epigraphical evidence for the Phoenician trade empire, see Lipiński 2004. For a study of the Tyrian trade network, see Aubet 2001. A concrete good example of this sort of triangulation is how, according to Faegersten (2003: 264-265), the Cypriote art style was transferred from Egypt to Cyprus via Phoenician artisans from the Levant such that it can be more accurately described as a “Phoenicianizing” style. López-Ruiz (2010) emphasizes the role of the highly mobile Phoenicians for the transmission of Near Eastern myths and religion to Greece.

¹⁰⁶⁸ According to Herodotos (5.58.1) the alphabet was transmitted via the Phoenicians who came to Greece with Cadmus. For the transmission of the Phoenician alphabet to Greece, see Brixhe 2007 and Voutiras 2007.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hdt. 2.49. Cf. Hütwohl (forthcoming).

1. Near Eastern Elements in the Orphic Texts

It is now well acknowledged by scholars that Near Eastern motifs have permeated the Greek cosmogony known from Hesiod.¹⁰⁷⁰ It is not surprising then that the Orphic Dionysos myth could have adapted the motif of the sacrifice of a god from Near Eastern literature when we consider other texts that fall under the “Orphic” rubric. One of the most important Orphic texts that exhibits clear Near Eastern influence is the Derveni Papyrus.¹⁰⁷¹ The papyrus, a commentary on a hexameter poem attributed to the mythical Greek poet Orpheus, was discovered in 1962 but not officially published until 2006.¹⁰⁷² The papyrus it is not a simple sourcebook of Orphic dogma but rather a kind of commentary on Greek religious thought by a later “rationalist.”¹⁰⁷³ The editors of the edition of the papyrus, Theokritos Kouremenos, George Parássoglou, and Kyriakos Tsantsanoglou, date the manuscript between 340-320 BC, but the Orphic poem probably

¹⁰⁷⁰ E.g., Burkert 1992; West 1997a; López-Ruiz (2010: 84-129) for Hesiod’s cosmology, in which Ouranos is castrated by Zeus, as an adaptation of the myth of the castration of the Sky attested in Hurro-Hittite myth.

¹⁰⁷¹ Scholars have generally agreed that the papyrus is specifically part of an Orphic milieu. West (1983 and 1997b: 84) argued the Derveni Papyrus belonged to an Orphic discourse, and he focused on the evidence of column VI. Graf (1994: 32-33) proposed the μάγοι in column VI belongs to the group of Orphic initiators. The fact that in line VI.9 the μύσται “initiates” sacrifice in the same way as these μάγοι implies the commentator of the text is speaking about a rite associated with a mystery cult. Moreover, Betegh (2004: 76-79) points out that the *Magoi* offer not simply τὰ πόπανα “cakes” (VI.7), but specifically ἀνάριθμα [κα]ὶ πολυόμφαλα “numberless and knobbed cakes,” which “were used in the mystic cults of Demeter and Dionysos.” Edmonds (2013: 317-320), on the contrary, argues that the column belongs to a broader milieu of stories about appeasing the wrath of the dead. For a new edited volume on the Derveni Papyrus, see Santamaría Álvarez 2019.

¹⁰⁷² The papyrus is the only legible papyrus discovered in Greece. The papyrus survived because it was held in the hand of the deceased during cremation, like the image of Orpheus holding a scroll from the Basel Orpheus vase, and parts of the papyrus were carbonized by the heat. When the body is cremated, what is burnt is (a) the ends of the scroll that are sticking out from the fist, and (b) the top levels that are close to the hand (from discussion with Fritz Graf 2020). For the first edition, see Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006. For a new edition of the Derveni Papyrus with commentary, see Kotwick 2017.

¹⁰⁷³ See Janko’s (2006) review of Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou.

goes back to the fifth-century BCE.¹⁰⁷⁴ The papyrus has demonstrated the antiquity of the Orphic poems in the early fifth-century BCE, and, along with the Orphic Gold Tablets, has helped propel Orphic studies into new areas.¹⁰⁷⁵ Specifically, the papyrus is significant for its alternate version of the Greek succession myth.

In the succession myth known from Hesiod, Kronos castrates his father Ouranos and thereby ascends to supremacy over the cosmos.¹⁰⁷⁶ Zeus, in turn, defeats his father Kronos by rallying the strength of the other gods and then prevents any other attempts at succession. Scholars have explained how Hesiod adapts the motif of castration from a version attested in Hurro-Hittite myth.¹⁰⁷⁷ In column 13 of the Derveni Papyrus, the commentator quotes a line from the Orphic poem that describes an alternate version of the succession motif by castration. According to the Orphic poem, Zeus swallows the phallus (αἰδοῖον) of his father to obtain supremacy: αἰδοῖον κατέπνευεν, ὃς αἰθέρα ἔχθορε πρῶτος, “he swallowed the phallus of [...], who sprang from the aither first.”¹⁰⁷⁸ The commentator goes on to explain that the Orphic poem uses the word αἰδοῖον to speak enigmatically and that the author of the poem compares the phallus to the sun because both are responsible for generation.¹⁰⁷⁹ As López-Ruiz comments, this

¹⁰⁷⁴ Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006: 8-9; Cf. Betegh 2004: 61.

¹⁰⁷⁵ For the edition of the tablets, see Graf and Johnston 2013. For the critical edition of the Orphic texts, see Bernabé 2004 and 2005.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The succession myth takes up most of Hesiod’s *Theogony* (132-735), from the birth of the cosmos and the union between Gaia and Ouranos to the succession of Kronos and the final battle between Zeus and Titans.

¹⁰⁷⁷ E.g., López-Ruiz 2010: 84-129; Burkert 2004: 92; Cf. Burkert 2002: 117; Bernabé 1989, 2003: 37. For the episode where Kronos castrates his father Ouranos, see Hes. *Theog.* 155-185.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Col. 13.5. (trans. by Betegh 2004).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Col. 13.5-12. As López-Ruiz (2010: 139) comments, translators differ on the translation of αἰδοῖον. Some scholars (Laks and Most 1997b: 15; West 1983: 85) retain the Homeric rendering of αἰδοῖον as

allegorical explanation by the Derveni commentator makes sense when we think of the sun as part of the sky.¹⁰⁸⁰ In other words, Zeus swallows the genitals of the sky god—a motif drawn from Hurro-Hittite myth. The word αἰδοῖον, “phallus,” is an important verbal link between the Orphic and Phoenician traditions about sacrifice, as I will show.

Burkert pointed out that the version of the castration motif preserved in the Derveni Papyrus is actually more similar to the Anatolian myth than Hesiod’s version.¹⁰⁸¹ In the Anatolian myth, Kumarbi castrates the sky god Anu with his mouth after which he becomes pregnant with the next king, Teshub.¹⁰⁸² Likewise, in the Derveni Papyrus, Zeus swallows the genitals of the sky god and becomes pregnant with the cosmos.¹⁰⁸³ While the adaptation of the Anatolian castration motif is clear, López-Ruiz notes that “the perpetrator of the castration-swallowing is not the same. For the sequence to be identical, it would have to have been Kronos, the equivalent of Kumarbi as a grain deity, as in the Hesiodic version.”¹⁰⁸⁴ She explains the divergence between the different versions of the motif by the dynamics of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean: “we are dealing with reworkings of the same motif through the centuries and across languages, pantheons, and

“reverend,” while others (Bernabé 2003: 37) translate it as the prosaic “genital member.” López-Ruiz (2010: 139) notes, however, that the sexual sense of αἰδοῖον is supported by a statement by Diogenes Laertius (*Prooem.* 1.5) that Orpheus attributed to the gods “repugnant acts that also some men do, but rarely with the organ of the voice.” Bernabé (2003: 38) argues that Diogenes may in fact be referring specifically to the theogony attested in the Derveni Papyrus.

¹⁰⁸⁰ López-Ruiz 2010: 140.

¹⁰⁸¹ Burkert 2004: 92.

¹⁰⁸² “He fled, Anu did, and he tried to go to heaven. Kumarbi rushed after him and seized him, Anu, by the feet and pulled him from high heaven. He bites his loins; his manhood joined the entrails of Kumarbi like bronze” (trans. by Lebrun 1995: 1973).

¹⁰⁸³ Col. 16.

¹⁰⁸⁴ López-Ruiz 2010: 141. See also her schematic of the sequence of the different versions on the same page.

religious systems.”¹⁰⁸⁵ In other words, it is expected that there would be divergences from the original Anatolian myth due to the process of cultural exchange, but nevertheless the core motif is still evident in the Orphic poem. Similarly, I will show how the Near Eastern motifs of sacrifice and anthropogeny and child sacrifice were reworked by the Orphic *bricoleur*.

As López-Ruiz discusses further, Orphic literature adapts other Near Eastern motifs, such as setting Zeus at the center of the theogony from which everything is created, an idea which may have been influenced by the Egyptian god Atum.¹⁰⁸⁶ Another important motif in both Orphic and Phoenician literature is the prominence of the god Time. Unlike Hesiod, in the Orphic cosmogonies, Time is set at the beginning of the cosmos. According to scholars, both ancient and modern, the Greek god Time from the Orphic texts was specifically drawn from Phoenician cosmologies.¹⁰⁸⁷ In the conclusions to her study of these various Near Eastern motifs in the Orphic literature, López-Ruiz argues, “The evidence keeps pointing in the same direction, namely, that the cultural element more strongly represented in the Greek cosmogonies-theogonies is of Syro-Phoenician stock, while other parallels, Indo-Iranian, Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and

¹⁰⁸⁵ López-Ruiz 2010: 142. She also notes other traces of the castration motif in Orphic texts, such as the castration of Kronos by Zeus (*OF* 154 Kern = 187 F Bernabé), and the myth where Zeus swallows Phanes (*OF* 167 Kern = 241 F Bernabé).

¹⁰⁸⁶ López-Ruiz 2010: 145-148. The idea of Zeus at the center of the universe is expressed in cols. 17.12: Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται], “Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, and from Zeus all things have their being” (Betegh 2004: 37). Cf. Cols. 18, and 19. Burkert (2002: 118-119) argues this idea may be borrowed from Egypt. The Pyramid Text spell 213 says “Your arms are (those of) Atum, your shoulders are (those of) Atum, your stomach is (that of) Atum” (Guilhou 1997: 222). López-Ruiz (2010: 148-150) also compares the idea of Zeus as the center of the universe with the Israelite god YHWH, and she also compares Zeus with Marduk/Ashur in the *Enuma Elish* as recreator of the universe.

¹⁰⁸⁷ López-Ruiz 2010: 151-164 and West 1994: 290. Damascius (*De principiis* 125c) attributes the central place of Time in the Orphic cosmology to the Phoenicians. For a comparative chart of the different versions of Orphic and Phoenician cosmogonies with the central prominence of the god Time, see López-Ruiz 2010: 154 = table 3.

Egyptian, might have been independently transmitted or, more frequently, arrived through the syncretic Phoenician milieu.”¹⁰⁸⁸ In other words, the Phoenicians were the primary mediators of mythemes and motifs from the Near East to Greece, such as the motif of sacrifice and anthropogeny and the theme of child sacrifice.

Scholars have also noticed parallels between the Egyptian Book of the Dead and the Orphic Gold Tablets.¹⁰⁸⁹ The Egyptian Book of the Dead is a collection of funerary texts that prepared the deceased for continued life after death, as archaeologist Bojana Mojsov explains, “Spells and incantations were recited to bring the dead out into the day. ‘Stepping forth into Daylight’ was the name of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.”¹⁰⁹⁰ That is to say, Egyptian funeral texts were oriented toward the rebirth of the deceased. Likewise, the Gold Tablets, discovered in tombs throughout mainland Greece, southern Italy, and Crete, are engraved with directions for the afterlife that seem to have functioned as mnemonic devices for the deceased initiate of a mystery cult on their journey through the Underworld.¹⁰⁹¹ Since the discovery of the Hipponion tablet (fifth-century BCE), which mentions both μύσται “initiates,” and βάχχοι “worshippers of Bacchus” (Tab. 1.16 Graf and Johnston), experts have generally agreed that the tablets are part of the milieu of Orphic-Bacchic mystery cults.¹⁰⁹² Both the Orphic tablets and

¹⁰⁸⁸ López-Ruiz 2010: 169.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Zuntz 1971: 375-376; West 1971: 65; Morenz 1960: 204; Morenz 1970: 379; Merkelbach 1999; Assmann 2005: 238. For more references to previous scholarship, see Dousa 2011: 122 n.7 and 124-127.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Mojsov 2005: 19. For a recent translation of the texts, see Wallis Budge 2016.

¹⁰⁹¹ For a geographical map of the different tablets, see Graf and Johnston 2013: 2.

¹⁰⁹² For the fifth-century BCE Hipponion tablet (Tab. 1), see Graf and Johnston 2013: 4-5. I use the edition of Graf and Johnston everywhere. Before the discovery of the Hipponion tablet, scholars debated whether the tablets belonged to Pythagoreans (Zuntz 1971), or Orphic-Bacchic mysteries. For the Greek term βάχχος, see Santamaría Álvarez 2013.

the Egyptian Book of the Dead are functionally similar because they were buried with the deceased and offered directions for the afterlife, but there are also similarities in the content of the texts. Thomas M. Dousa has elaborated on both the functional and content similarities between these texts.¹⁰⁹³ In particular, both texts centralize the tree and water as sources of revitalization in the afterlife.¹⁰⁹⁴

Building upon the work of Dousa, López-Ruiz has pointed out the intersection of Greek, Egyptian, and Phoenician funerary amulet traditions.¹⁰⁹⁵ In particular, she identifies a triangulation of correspondences between the three traditions: 1. The Greek Gold Tablets contain parallels with the Egyptian Book of the Dead; 2. Phoenician funerary amulets deploy texts for the afterlife in which they utilize Egyptian iconography;¹⁰⁹⁶ 3. The Phoenician funerary amulets correspond with the use and technological format (gold *lamellae*) of the Gold Tablets, but they do not include the Egyptian and Greek motifs of the tree and water.¹⁰⁹⁷ López-Ruiz hypothesizes a “Phoenician missing-link” between these traditions, and she suggests that the Gold

¹⁰⁹³ Dousa 2011. López-Ruiz (2015: 59-62) summarizes the main points of Dousa.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Dousa 2011: 138-143. A text from the Book of the Dead (TT 218) says “Spell for drinking water beside the dom palm; beside the feet of Min, the god: Hail to you... [addressing the god] who gave water through your roots, moisten the heart of Osiris NN!” Text and Translation in Wallert 1962: 134; See further references in Dousa 2011: 130 n.32. The Gold Tablet from Hipponion (Tab. 1.1-4) says, “This is the work of Memory, when you are about to die down to the well-build house of Hades. There is a spring at the right side, and standing by it a white cypress. Descending to it, the souls of the dead refresh themselves...”

¹⁰⁹⁵ López-Ruiz 2015: 78.

¹⁰⁹⁶ López-Ruiz (ibid., 63-75) draws attention to the Egyptian-style of Phoenician amulets and argues. For Egyptian influence in Phoenician art, see Hölb 1981, 1986, 1989, 2000.

¹⁰⁹⁷ López-Ruiz (2015: 79) comments “It almost seems like the only missing combination possible, which would provide the proverbial “missing link,” would be a Phoenician *lamella* (or even a papyrus) containing images akin to those in the *Book of the Dead* (e.g. instructions for a safe passage, water and tree landmarks of the Underworld landscape).”

Tablets may in fact reflect the Phoenician missing-link.¹⁰⁹⁸ Moreover, López-Ruiz points out that some of the motifs from the Orphic cosmologies, such as Time and the “cosmic egg,” are only paralleled in Phoenician cosmologies.¹⁰⁹⁹

The model of triangulation, whereby Egyptian, Phoenician, and Greek texts interweave and merge in a “culturally hybrid space,” is useful, not only for understanding the origins of the Gold Tablets, but also, I suggest, the origins of other Orphic myths, such as the sacrifice and rebirth of the infant god Dionysos.¹¹⁰⁰ In my analysis below, I suggest two other motifs that were transmitted either independently, or more likely, via the Phoenicians, namely the Mesopotamian motif of the sacrifice of a god from which the human race is born and the Phoenician motif of the sacrifice of a divine child and the rebirth of the god. In the following (sections 2-3), I perform a close reading of some of the texts that depict the sacrifice of Dionysos and explore the places where Near Eastern and Greek ideas merge. In the second part of this chapter (section 4), I bring in the Egyptian myth of Osiris and show how the myths and rituals of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart all coalesce in a “culturally hybrid space.”

¹⁰⁹⁸ López-Ruiz 2015: 79.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid., 80. Damascius (*De principiis* 125c) attributes the cosmic egg in the Orphic cosmogonies specifically to Phoenician cosmogonies. Philo of Byblos (Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.2) also mentions the cosmic egg in his cosmogony. Cf. López-Ruiz 2010: 150-160; West 1994. López-Ruiz (2015: 83-85) postulates further that the Hellenic-Punic milieu of southern Italy may have been the focal point where these various traditions merged and coalesced into the tradition we know from the Gold Tablets.

¹¹⁰⁰ López-Ruiz 2015: 83-84.

2. The Sacrifice of Dionysos and Anthropogeny

As Marcel Detienne, West, and Johnston have discussed, the myth of Dionysos depicts the death of the god by means of sacrifice.¹¹⁰¹ As Johnston has most recently stated, “Near the center of the story of Dionysus’ death lies the theme of sacrifice. The Titans lure Dionysus away with toys to ensure that, like an animal at a sacrifice, he will go willingly to the slaughter. They disjoint their victim, cook him, and consume him, as one would a sacrificial animal.”¹¹⁰² As she notes further, in another version of the story, Zeus is enticed by the smell of burning flesh of his son as he would of a sacrificial animal.¹¹⁰³ In anger from the slaughter of his son, Zeus then blasts the Titans with lightning and from their ash humans are created with both a Dionysian and Titanic mixture.¹¹⁰⁴ The account according to Olympiodoros (discussion below) describes the sacrifice of Dionysos specifically as an act of *sparagmos*, “rending,” the imagined ritual performed by worshippers of Dionysos whereby the celebrants tore apart a living animal and consumed its raw flesh.¹¹⁰⁵ In this way, the author of the Dionysos myth constructs

¹¹⁰¹ Detienne (1979: 68-94 and 1989: 1-20) discusses the myth as an inversion of a typical Greek sacrificial model. He focuses on the myth’s discourse on dietary practices and cooking processes. West (1983: 160-161) examines the Orphic myth of Dionysos from the perspective of shamanism as a myth about initiatory death. Graf and Johnston (2013: 80-85) consider the myth with the idea of *bricolage* in which the story is a pastiche of other myths.

¹¹⁰² Graf and Johnston 2013: 80. For the different versions of the myth, see Diod. Sic. 5.75.4, Lucian *Salt.* 39, Olympiodoros *In Phd.* 1.3 (41 Westerink), Damascius *In Phd.* 1.4 (31 Westerink), and Proclus *In Prm.* 808.25, *In Cr.* 109.19, *In Alc.* 344.31. See also the Pseudo-Aristotle *Problems* 3.43, which is dedicated to the issues of the slaughter of Dionysos by the Titans.

¹¹⁰³ Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 5.19 and Clem. *Al. Protr.* 2.18.1-2.

¹¹⁰⁴ Olympiodoros *In Phd.* 1.3 (Westerink 40-43).

¹¹⁰⁵ Graf and Johnston 2013: 81. For a general introduction to the mythology of Dionysos and his cult, see Seaford 2006. For a study of the iconography of Dionysos in vases paintings, see Isler-Kerényi 2007. For the Linear B evidence of Dionysos (*di-wo-nu-so*), see Palaima 1998. The name Dionysos occurs as early as the Bronze Age in conjunction with the name Zeus on Linear B tablets from Khania, possibly in a cultic context (see Hallager, Vlasakis, and Hallager 1992). The fifth-century BCE Lenäenvasen depict scenes of Bacchic ritual and *possibly* the death and rebirth of Dionysos, as Seaford (1994: 164) contends, “the ritual

the story as an aitiology of sacrifice that explains the origins of the mythical practice of *sparagmos*.¹¹⁰⁶ It is important to observe, however, that this ritual belongs exclusively to myth and not to historical practice, as I explore below.¹¹⁰⁷

The Dionysos myth is peculiar not only because it depicts the sacrifice of a god, but also because it was the cardinal myth of the Orphic movement, which practiced vegetarianism, yet the myth describes the butchery and cannibalism of a god.¹¹⁰⁸ As Detienne comments, “This is a myth about the blood sacrifice, and it stands at the center of a system of thought that rejects this kind of sacrifice.”¹¹⁰⁹ In this regard, Detienne compares the Orphic myth to the myth of Prometheus, which exemplifies the links of communication between humans and the gods through the ritual performed by Prometheus.¹¹¹⁰ According to Detienne, the Orphic myth, unlike the myth of Prometheus,

depicted on the Lenäenvasen is likely to be of the dismemberment and rebirth of Dionysus.” Seaford (1994: 265) argues, “That the Lenäenvasen depict ritual is clear from the cult objects and image of Dionysus.” But the ritual death of Dionysos should not be surprising since *sparagmos* is a key feature of the cult as depicted by both the maenads and the character Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bakkhai*. I discuss the *sparagmos* sacrifice in more detail below. The earliest direct reference to the myth of Dionysos’ dismemberment goes back to Callimachus or Euphorion (Callimachus fr. 643 Pfeiffer, Euphorion fr. 13 Acosta-Hughes and Cusset). Although attributed to the third-century BCE authors Callimachus and Euphorion, the fragment is preserved by the tenth-century CE scholiast Tzetzes in his commentary on Lycophron’s *Alexander*. There is some evidence for the myth in Plato and his followers; In particular, Plato’s student Xenocrates probably refers to the myth of Dionysos’ death (Xenocrates fr. 20 Heinze). For Orphism and Plato, see Bernabé 1998, 2011; Uždavinys 2011; Hütwohl 2016.

¹¹⁰⁶ For an image of an Attic red-figure stamnos by the Hephaisteion Painter from 480-460 BCE that depicts Dionysos performing *sparagmos*, see Patton 2009: 46 = fig. 19.

¹¹⁰⁷ See Obbink 1983 and my discussion below.

¹¹⁰⁸ For vegetarianism among Orphics, see Ar. *Ran.* 1032; Plato, *Laws* 782c; Eur. *Hipp.* 952-953. Cf. Detienne 1979: 70-72.

¹¹⁰⁹ Detienne 1979: 72.

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid., 82-83.

is an illustration of the necessity for the Orphic way of life and the abstinence of blood sacrifice and murder.¹¹¹¹

In his discussion of the Orphic myth of Dionysos, West noted other stories that depict the slaughter of a god to create humans; in particular, he mentions the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*.¹¹¹² West, however, did not explicitly read the slaughter of the god as a sacrifice. More recently, Johnston suggests that the theme of sacrifice in the story of infant Dionysos' slaughter is analogous to human sacrifice and that the *bricoleur* drew from other Greek stories of human sacrifice.¹¹¹³ Building upon Johnston's approach, I argue there are two other related stories from which the *bricoleur* drew, namely the Mesopotamian tradition reflected in the story of the sacrifice of the god Ilawela to create humans and the Phoenician tradition represented by Philo in the story of the sacrifice of the child god Ieoud. In this regard, I maintain that the *bricoleur* drew from a broader repertoire of myths other than simply Greek stories. For example, the Akkadian story *Atrahasis* fits closely with the story of Dionysos because both stories describe the slaughter of a god as a victim of sacrifice from whom humans are then created. As we saw in Chapter 2, the differences between the stories of *Atrahasis* and of Prometheus' sacrifice in Hesiod highlight the distinctions in each culture's particular theology. If my reading is correct, the incorporation of the theme from *Atrahasis* in the sixth-century

¹¹¹¹ "This ritual, far from establishing relations with divinity, reproduces in disguise a crime in which mankind will never cease participating until it has realized once and for all its Titanic descent and undertaken by means of the so-called Orphic way of life to purify the divine element shut up inside it by the voracity of those who lately slew the young Dionysos" (Detienne 1979: 83).

¹¹¹² West 1983: 165.

¹¹¹³ Johnston points especially to the myths of Tanalos (Pind. *Ol.* 1.24-53, Bacch. Frg. 42 Snell-Maehler, Eur. *IT* 3860388 and *Hel.* 388-389), Lycaon (Eratosh. *Cat.* 8 = Hes. frg. 163 M-W, Lycoph. 480-481, Ov. *Met.* 1.199-243, Hyg. *Astr.* 2.4.1, Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.8.1), and Thyestes (Aesch. *Ag.* 1191-1193, 1219-1222, and 1583-1611, Accius 220-222, Sen. *Thy.* 749-788).

BCE Dionysos myth testifies to the influence of the Babylonian mythical tradition not only on Hesiod but later Greek authors as well. Moreover, it attests to the extent to which different aitiological myths about divine sacrifice are connected thematically as part of the mythological *koinē* of the Mediterranean.

In the previous section, I explained how Orphic texts, such as the Derveni Papyrus and the Gold Tablets, recast elements and motifs known from Near Eastern corpora. As scholars have observed, some of the quintessential elements of the Orphic cosmogonies are only shared with Phoenician cosmogonies, such as the cosmic-egg and the god Time. The Derveni Papyrus, in particular, describes a cosmogonical scheme that may have ended with the advent of Dionysos, but this is only hypothetical since that part of the text is not preserved. In other traditions, however, such as the one preserved by the sixth-century CE Platonist Olympiodoros of Alexandria, Dionysos does succeed Zeus, as I discuss below.

The succession myth from the Derveni Papyrus is only partially transmitted in the papyrus, so the details of the succession are unclear. There are, however, pieces of the motif in columns 14 and 15 of the papyrus where the commentator quotes the Orphic text: Οὐρανὸς Εὐφρονίδης, ὅς πρώτιστος βασιλευσεν, “Ouranos son of Night, who first ruled,”¹¹¹⁴ ἐκ τοῦ δὲ Κρόνου αὐτίς, ἔπειτα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς “From him, in turn, Kronos, and then wise Zeus.”¹¹¹⁵ The Derveni cosmogony ends with Zeus, who swallows the phallus of the Sky (αἰδοῖον) and encompasses the cosmos within himself: Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ’ ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται], “Zeus is the head, Zeus is the

¹¹¹⁴ Col. 14.6 (trans. by Betegh 2004).

¹¹¹⁵ Col. 15.6 (trans. by Betegh 2004).

middle, and from Zeus all things have been fashioned.”¹¹¹⁶ In a different version of an Orphic theogony preserved by Olympiodoros, Dionysos is intended to succeed Zeus before he is sacrificed by the Titans:

παρὰ τῷ Ὀρφεῖ [frg. 220] τέσσαρες βασιλείαι παραδίδονται. πρώτη μὲν ἡ τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ, ἣν ὁ Κρόνος διεδέξατο ἐκτεμών **τὰ αἰδοῖα** τοῦ πατρός· μετὰ δὲ τὸν Κρόνον ὁ Ζεὺς ἐβασίλευσεν καταταρατώσας τὸν πατέρα· **εἶτα τὸν Δία διεδέξατο ὁ Διόνυσος**, ὃν φασὶ κατ' ἐπιβουλήν τῆς Ἥρας τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν Τιτάνας **σπαράττειν καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπογεύεσθαι**. καὶ τούτους ὀργισθεὶς ὁ Ζεὺς ἐκεραύνωσε, **καὶ ἐκ τῆς αἰθάλης τῶν ἀτμῶν τῶν ἀναδοθέντων ἐξ αὐτῶν ὕλης γενομένης γενέσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους**.

In the Orphic tradition we hear of four reigns. The first is that of Ouranos, to which Kronos succeeds **after emasculating his father**; after Kronos Zeus becomes king having hurled down his father into Tartarus; then **Zeus is succeeded by Dionysus**, whom, they say, his retainers the Titans **tear to pieces** through Hera's plotting, **and they eat his flesh**. Zeus, angered, strikes them with his thunderbolts, and **the soot of the vapors that rise from them becomes the matter from which men are created**.
(Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 1.3.3-9)¹¹¹⁷

As we can see, the Orphic myth preserved by Olympiodoros follows the canonical version of the succession myth known from Hesiod, but instead of Zeus maintaining supremacy, Dionysos is meant to succeed Zeus (εἶτα τὸν Δία διεδέξατο ὁ Διόνυσος). The word τὰ αἰδοῖα “genitals” echoes the use of αἰδοῖον from the Derveni Papyrus, but rather than Zeus castrating his father (as in the papyrus), Kronos castrates his father Ouranos (as in the version from Hesiod). The word αἰδοῖον, however, does not occur in the version from Hesiod, but it does occur in both the Derveni Papyrus and the version recorded by Olympiodoros. The use of the word αἰδοῖον suggests the possibility that the

¹¹¹⁶ Col 17.12. This idea is also evident in a more complete form in the Orphic Hymn to Zeus: παντογένηθ', ἀρχὴ πάντων πάντων τε τελευτή, “Zeus, father of all, beginning and end of all things” (15.7 Quandt = 15.7 Athanassakis).

¹¹¹⁷ Text and Translation by Westerink (2009: 40-41) with minor modification.

term is specific to the Orphic tradition of the theogony. Moreover, it provides us evidence that both Olympiodoros and the author of the Derveni Papyrus may be drawing from a similar source for their Orphic theogony. In his reconstruction of the Orphic cosmogonies, however, West excludes the myth of Dionysos from the stemma of the Derveni Theogony, instead, he assigns the myth to the so-called Eudemian cosmogony.¹¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the word αἰδοῖον is an important verbal link among the various strands of the Orphic tradition, but also between the Orphic and Phoenician traditions, as I will explain below.

To my knowledge scholars have not previously noted that the word αἰδοῖον also occurs in a Phoenician version of the myth of the castration of Ouranos preserved in the fragments of the work of Philo of Byblos from the first-second centuries CE. As I discussed in the previous chapter, in Philo's Phoenician succession myth Kronos castrates and murders his father Ouranos:

ὁ Ἥλος (τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὁ Κρόνος) Οὐρανὸν τὸν πατέρα λοχήσας ἐν τόποι τινὶ μεσογείῳ καὶ λαβὼν ὑποχείριον ἐκτέμνει αὐτοῦ τὰ αἰδοῖα σύνεγγυς πηγῶν τε καὶ ποταμῶν, ἔνθα ἀφιερώθη Οὐρανός, καὶ ἀπηρτίσθη αὐτοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα.

Elos, that is Kronos, trapped his father Ouranos in an inland location and, having him in his power, **castrated him** (lit. “cut out his genitals”) in the vicinity of some springs and rivers. This is where Ouranos was deified and his spirit was finished. (Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.29)¹¹¹⁹

As I explained in the previous chapter, Philo's account shows a connection between the castration/murder of Ouranos and child sacrifice because Kronos sacrifices his only-son as a substitution ritual for the plague caused by the castration and murder of Ouranos.

¹¹¹⁸ West 1983: 96. For the myth of Dionysos and the Eudemian theogony, see West 1983: 140-175.

¹¹¹⁹ Translation by Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009 with minor modification.

Moreover, the narrative relates both the death and deification of Ouranos, a pattern that is then followed by the sacrifice and hypothetical deification of Ieoud. The word τὰ αἰδοῖα in Philo's account here to describe the castration is also used in the Orphic versions of the succession motif that we have seen, but not in the Hesiodic version, which suggests the possibility that Philo's version is drawing from the Orphic tradition (preserved in the Derveni Papyrus and Olympiodoros), which, in turn drew from the Hurro-Hittite tradition of castration that was mediated by the Phoenician milieu.¹¹²⁰ This reading is strengthened by the fact that both Philo's account of Kronos and the Orphic myth of Dionysos connect the theme of castration with a myth about the sacrifice of a child god, the Phoenician motif. As López-Ruiz has argued, the castration motif shows how Phoenician, Hurro-Hittite, and Greek traditions were all circulating in the eastern Mediterranean.¹¹²¹ In this case, Philo's use of the term τὰ αἰδοῖα shows how the Phoenician tradition that was absorbed into the Greek tradition has come full circle.

One possibility for transmission is that the word τὰ αἰδοῖα was first adapted into Greek from the Hurro-Hittite realm via the Phoenician milieu by at least the fifth-century BCE with its earliest usage in the Derveni Papyrus and then integrated into the Orphic traditions also known later by Olympiodoros. In turn, Philo must have had knowledge of these same Orphic traditions and integrated the word into his Greek translation of the Phoenician myth of child sacrifice from the *Phoenician History*. Finally, Olympiodoros, writing in the sixth-century CE, must have either been drawing from the Orphic tradition

¹¹²⁰ For the Hittite text, see CTH 344. The word for the castrated genitals in Hittite is *paršēna*- "cheek, genitals" (see CTH 344 §5.35). As yet, no one has offered a satisfactory etymology for the word (see Kloekhorst 2007: 642).

¹¹²¹ López-Ruiz 2010: 100-101.

or Philo's tradition or both when he used the word in his account of Dionysos. We know that other NeoPlatonists, such as Porphyry of Tyre, were also engaging with both Orphic and Phoenician traditions (as discussed in Chapter 5). This sort of back and forth exchange between traditions is even evident in the exchange of cults, as we saw with the temple of Thasian Herakles that was adopted at Tyre after the Thasians had originally adopted the cult of Tyrian Melqart (see Chapter 4). Thus, the use of τὰ αἰδοῖα is a remarkable example of how eastern Mediterranean traditions were overlapping and merging over centuries of contact to such an extent that it becomes difficult to isolate and identify the various strands. But the important point is that these cultures were in such close contact that it promoted a rich culturally hybrid space.

In Olympiodoros' version of the Dionysos myth quoted above, after Zeus becomes king of the cosmos, Dionysos succeeds him, after which the infant god is sacrificed. Unlike other succession motifs, Dionysos does not succeed Zeus by overthrowing him, instead, the transfer of power is amicable: τὸν Δία διεδέξατο ὁ Διόνυσος "Dionysos succeeded Zeus." The verb here διαδέχομαι "to succeed" does not suggest a violent overthrow, unlike Hesiod's version in the *Theogony*, which not only recounts the violent Titanomachy but also explicitly states that the succession is accomplished by force (βίῃφι) or as in Philo's account of the succession in which Kronos comes to power after murdering his father Ouranos.¹¹²² In the Orphic version, the

¹¹²² The word διαδέχομαι literally means "to receive one from another," and is used in Plato's dialogues to indicate someone speaking next (e.g., Pl. *Resp.* 576b), in other words, the word is not colored by hostility. Hesiod relates the violent overthrow of the Titans: αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥα πόνον μάκαρες θεοὶ ἐξετέλεσαν | Τιτῆνες δὲ τιμάτων κρίναντο βίῃφι | δὴ ῥα τότε ὤτρυνον βασιλευμένῃ δὲ ἀνάσσειν | Γαίης φραδμοσύνησιν Ὀλύμπιον εὐρύοπα Ζῆν | ἀθανάτων· ὁ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐν διεδάσσατο τιμὰς. "But when the blessed gods finished their toil, and settled by force the honors with the Titans, they encouraged far-seeing Olympian Zeus to rule and reign over the immortals by the cunning of Gaia, and so he divided well the honors among them" (Hes. *Theog.* 881-885).

necessity of this peaceful transfer of power for the narrative will become clear as the events unfold because Zeus then exacts vengeance for the slaughter of his son Dionysos. In this way, the succession motif known from Hesiod is inverted: Zeus avenges the murder of his son whom he willingly elevated to power. In Hesiod, Zeus overthrows his father Kronos to become king of the cosmos and then prevents any further succession by swallowing Metis, who was destined to give birth to a son who would succeed him; whereas in the Orphic scheme, Zeus overthrows Kronos, but then Dionysos succeeds Zeus and is slaughtered by the Titans, after which Zeus blasts the Titans in revenge.¹¹²³

In the Orphic myth according to Olympiodoros, after Dionysos ascends to power, the Titans tear the young god apart and devour his flesh (σπαράττειν καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπογεύεσθαι). The verb σπαράττειν “to tear apart” is the verbal root of the Greek noun σπαραγμός, “tearing,” which is used as a cultic term in mythical representations of the Bacchic cult to describe the ritual act of tearing apart a live animal.¹¹²⁴ We have seen a Titan performing a ritual in another Greek myth, namely

¹¹²³ Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν βασιλεὺς πρῶτην ἄλοχον θέτο Μῆτιν | πλείστα θεῶν εἰδυῖαν ἰδὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων. | ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ἄρ' ἔμελλε θεὰν γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην | τέξεσθαι, τότε ἔπειτα δόλῳ φρένας ἐξαπατήσας | αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισιν ἔην ἐσκάτθετο νηδύν | Γαίης φραδμοσύνησι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος. | τὼς γὰρ οἱ φρασάτην, ἵνα μὴ βασιληίδα τιμὴν | ἄλλος ἔχοι Διὸς ἀντὶ θεῶν αἰειγενετῶν. | ἐκ γὰρ τῆς εἵμαρτο περίφρονα τέκνα γενέσθαι. | πρῶτην μὲν κούρην γλαυκῶπιδα Τριτογένειαν | ἴσον ἔχουσαν πατρὶ μένος καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν | αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἄρα παῖδα θεῶν βασιλῆα καὶ ἀνδρῶν | ἤμελλεν τέξεσθαι, ὑπέρβιον ἦτορ ἔχοντα. | ἀλλ' ἄρα μιν Ζεὺς πρόσθεν ἔην ἐσκάτθετο νηδύν | ὥς οἱ συμφράσσαιτο θεὰ ἀγαθὸν τε κακὸν τε. “Zeus, king of the gods, married Metis first, and she was the wisest among gods and mortal humans. But when she was about to give birth to bright-eyed Athena, Zeus deceived her mind with a trick and with cunning words and deposited her into his belly, at the advice of Gaia and Ouranos. For they advised him so that no other should hold the royal honor over the eternal gods instead of Zeus. Since very wise children were fated to be born from her, first the girl bright-eyed Tritogeneia, equal to her father with respect to strength and wise counsel. But then (Metis) was to bear a son having an overbearing heart, a king of gods and men, but Zeus put her (Metis) into his belly first so that the goddess could devise both good and evil for him” (Hes. *Theog.* 886-900).

¹¹²⁴ Eur. *Bacch.* 735, 739, 1135. At line 1135, in particular, the maenads ritually tear apart Pentheus. For a brief introduction to Bacchic ritual, see the introduction in Dodds 1960: xi-xxvii. Firmicus Maternus (*Err. prof. rel.* 6.1-5) mentions that the Cretans celebrate the death and sufferings of the boy god by tearing apart a live bull.

Prometheus and the first sacrifice in Hesiod, but here the Titans perform a Bacchic rite. Thus, if my reading is correct, the Orphic *bricoleur* adapts the Phoenician theme of child sacrifice and merges it with the Hesiodic tradition in which a Titan performs a sacrifice. As mentioned above, the fifth-century BCE tragedy *Bakkhai* by the Athenian poet Euripides is the most unforgettable dramatization of the rituals of *sparagmos*.¹¹²⁵ The worshippers of Dionysos in the *Bakkhai* eat the raw flesh of the animal in an act called ὠμοφαγία (lit. “raw-eating”).¹¹²⁶ The act designated by the cult term ὠμοφαγία is evoked in Olympiodoros’ version of the myth by the phrase τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ

¹¹²⁵ There is a long history of scholarship on sacrifice in Greek tragedy and its association with the cult of Dionysos. René Girard (1972: 181) argued that Euripides’ *Bakkhai* depicts Dionysiac ritual sacrifice, and the play performs *la crise sacrificielle* in its portrayal of the sacrifice of Pentheus. Philippe Yzquier (2001: 155) notes that from its origins the performance of tragedy was linked to funerary practices and the rites of Dionysos, and moreover, that tragedy preserves a sacrificial value because of its context within the Greater Dionysia and the visible altar of Dionysos on the stage. Burkert (1966) surveyed the scholarly field concerning the etymological origins of tragedy through the word *tragos*, “goat,” and he discussed the much-debated ritual sacrifice of the goat to the god Dionysos. Burkert (2001: 9) also emphasized the broad context of sacrifice and tragedy and he remarked, “the memory of sacrifice stands in the center of the Dionysiac performance.” Although the external evidence of sacrifice in relation to tragedy is limited, the internal evidence is clear. Many of the plots of tragedies are based around sacrifice (*Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, *Bakkhai*). The word *thuein* “to make smoke, to sacrifice” is used more generally in tragedy to refer to any sort of killing (Burkert 2001: 18). More specifically, the theme of sacrifice, or rather the perversion of sacrifice, is prevalent in the *Oresteia*. The tragedy of *Agamemnon* begins with the sacrifice of his daughter, in response Clytaemestra invokes the Erinyes and slaughters her husband with language denoting ritual sacrifice of a bull, and finally Orestes is described as the sacrificial victim of the Erinyes. For Clytaemestra’s sacrifice to Erinyes, see *Agamemnon* 1433. Clytaemestra uses the technical term for sacrifice, σφάζω “to slit the throat” for a sacrifice. For Orestes as the victim of the Erinyes sacrifice, see *Eumenides* 328-333. We can also see this perversion of sacrifice through ritual language in Euripides’ *Bakkhai* where Pentheus is sacrificed by his own mother a maenad (Henrichs 1984 and 2012). Richard Seaford (1994: 257-275) has even contended that tragedy emerged out of the mystic initiation rituals of Dionysos. During both the festivals of the Lenaia and Anthesteria, the processional *thiasos* reenacted the mythology of Dionysos through ritual. At the Lenaia, the death and rebirth of Dionysos was reenacted, and during the Anthesteria the sacred marriage of Dionysos and Ariadne was depicted through the ritual marriage of the wife of the *arch basileus* to the figure of Dionysos. The dressing up and playing the parts of the *thiasos*, as maenads and satyrs, was a common feature of the ritual, as well as transvesticism, which, some think, eventually led to the birth of Athenian tragedy (Seaford 1994: 273).

¹¹²⁶ The ὠμοφαγία is referred to in the regulations of the Dionysiac cult of Miletus in a text from 276 BCE (*Milet.* vi. 22). On the inscription, see Henrichs 1978a: 148-152. Euripides refers to it twice (*Bacch.* 138 and *Cretans* fr. 472). Plutarch also attests to the term (*De. def. or.* 417C.4).

ἀπογεύεσθαι, “they tasted his flesh.”¹¹²⁷ Thus, the Orphic myth describes the death of Dionysos in cultic terms as a mythical Bacchic sacrifice. Later Christian authors even explained the ritual of ὁμοφαγία as a commemoration of the day that Dionysos himself was torn to pieces and devoured.¹¹²⁸ In this way, the myth could be interpreted as an aitiology of mythical Bacchic sacrifice, although to my knowledge there are no classical authors who understand the myth as an explanation of Bacchic sacrifice, but the parallels between the myth of the dismemberment and the mythical rites are clear enough. On the other hand, Dionysos is called *Omestes* “raw-eater,” as a reference to the cultic act of *sparagmos*.¹¹²⁹ As Patton comments, “Greek gods were often called by the cultic functions that human beings practice in their honor” (e.g., *Apollo Daphnephoros*, “laurel-bearing Apollo”).¹¹³⁰ From Patton’s approach, the Orphic Dionysos myth is another example of “divine reflexivity,” an intensification of theological thought about rituals associated with Dionysos, but instead of performing the ritual the god is depicted as the victim of his own rite.

Dirk Obbink points out that the Bacchic rituals described in the *Bacchae* are fundamentally in the realm of myth and not practice, that is to say, that the fantastical (and horrifying) rituals described in the *Bakchhai*, such as the tearing apart and raw-eating of animals, belong exclusively to the mythical past. Moreover, as Obbink argues, these

¹¹²⁷ The verb ἀπογεύεσθαι is not related to ὁμοφαγία, which is derived from the verb φαγεῖν, “to eat, consume, swallow” (Beekes 2010: 1544).

¹¹²⁸ Schol. Clem. Alex. 92 P = i.318 Stählin. Firm. Mat. *err. Prof. rel.* 6.5.

¹¹²⁹ For the epithet of Dionysos, see Plut. *Vit. Them.* 13.3.5 and Burkert 1988: 184.

¹¹³⁰ Patton 2009: 17.

rituals are not sacrifice at all but rather a perversion of normal sacrificial practice.¹¹³¹

According to the testimony of Diodorus Siculus (first-century BCE), historical maenads offered standard *thusia* to Dionysos every other year (τὰς τριετηρίδας θυσίας

Διονύσου).¹¹³² Thus, the ritual described in the Orphic myth was not part of everyday practice. Moreover, according to Albert Henrichs, the ancient Greek sacred laws

describing sacrifice to Dionysos do not mention the consumption of raw meat.¹¹³³ As

Henrichs states elsewhere, “Ritual tends to mitigate where myth is cruel.”¹¹³⁴ Moreover,

the one place where the term *ōmophagion* does occur epigraphically, in the Dionysiac cult inscription from Miletus (276/275 BCE), belongs to “highly marginal, unusual, and infrequent situations of ritual exception and dissolution.”¹¹³⁵ The inscription (*IG* Milet.

8.1-3) states: ὅταν δὲ ἡ ἱέρεια ἐπι[τελέσ]ῃ τὰ ἱερὰ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλ[εω]ς [ῥογια] μὴ

ἑξεῖναι ὠμοφάγιον ἐμβαλεῖν μηθενὶ πρότερον [ἢ ἡ ἱέρ]εια ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως

ἐμβάλῃ. “Whenever the priestess performs the rites of sacrifice on behalf of the city, it

is not permitted for anyone **to deposit a victim eaten raw** before the priestess has done

so on behalf of the city.” According to Henrichs, the term ὠμοφάγιον ἐμβαλεῖν “to

deposit a victim eaten raw,” might refer to a deposit of sacrificial meat in a ritual pit (i.e.,

bothros).¹¹³⁶

¹¹³¹ Obbink 1993: 68-72.

¹¹³² Diod. Sic. 4.3.2.

¹¹³³ Henrichs 1990: 258-264. See the calendar from the deme of Thorikos, which mentions the offering of a black goat in the month of Anthesterion (Lupu 2009: 122). See also the calendar of the deme of Erkhia, which prescribes a sacrifice of a goat, specifically by women (Maenads?), to Dionysos (Daux 1963).

¹¹³⁴ Henrichs 1978a: 148.

¹¹³⁵ Obbink 1993: 71. Cf. Porres Caballero 2013: 178-180.

¹¹³⁶ Henrichs 1978a: 150. For the *bothros* used for hero worship, see my Chapter 4.

As mentioned previously, the myth of Dionysos is the only attested Greek tradition where a god's death is described in cultic terms. As I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the Greeks were resistant to the idea of dying gods, let alone sacrificed gods. In some versions of the myth, the death of Dionysos via *sparagmos* emphasizes the rituals of the cult's mythical past, whereas in other versions of the myth, the post-slaughter treatment of the victim Dionysos is related not to *sparagmos* but more generally to standard Greek *thusia*. For example, in one version, Zeus is enticed to the slaughter by the savor of Dionysos' roasting flesh, which he thinks is a roasting lamb.¹¹³⁷ Thus, the scene evokes the Greek practice of *thusia* where the gods receive the savor of the incinerated victim. In the version preserved by Nonnos (fifth-century CE), the Titans use a μάχαιρα "sacrificial knife" to slaughter Dionysos.¹¹³⁸ In these versions, the death of Dionysos is connected to typical Greek sacrifice and the representations are more in harmony with historical Dionysiac practice, yet the act is still depicted as a perversion of normal sacrifice from the perspective of Greek theology because a god is not a normal victim. However, from the perspective of Patton's approach, this is explainable because the myths of divine sacrifice do not reflect actual practice but instead magnify the theological belief that gods are the ultimate source of rituals. In other words, Dionysos' death by *sparagmos* perpetuates his own mythical cult.

After Zeus becomes aware of the sacrilege, he blasts the Titans with lightning and humans are born out of the soot. According to Detienne, the earliest reference to the connection between the sacrifice of Dionysos and anthropogeny is in the orations of the

¹¹³⁷ Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 5.19 (273.9 Marchesi) and Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.18.1-2.

¹¹³⁸ Nonnus, *Dion.* 6.172.

first-century CE writer Dio Chrysostom.¹¹³⁹ Radcliffe G. Edmonds has more recently argued that the connection between the sacrifice of Dionysos and anthropogeny is an innovation of Olympiodoros only in the sixth-century CE.¹¹⁴⁰ Johnston, on the other hand, argues that the sixth-century BCE *bricoleur* of the Orphic myth could have borrowed from several early Greek myths that connect the birth of humans with a primal error, including the myth of Pandora.¹¹⁴¹ Moreover, there is evidence that the myth was attested earlier during the classical period from a veiled reference to the Dionysian-Titanic anthropogeny in the fragments of the fourth-century BCE author Xenokrates, a student of Plato.¹¹⁴² In Plato's *Phaedo* (62b), Socrates states how the myth that the soul is imprisoned in the body (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ ἔσμεν, "we are in a certain prison") is a part of a secret tradition (ὁ ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος, "the doctrine about these things that is taught in secret"). According to the Platonic scholiast Damascius (fifth-sixth centuries CE) on this passage from the *Phaedo*, Xenokrates explains the ἡ φρουρά "prison" as Titanic and related to Dionysos. R. S. Bluck, a respected commentator on Plato's works, notes that Plato's pupil Xenokrates "associated the body-prison idea with the Titans and with Dionysus."¹¹⁴³ In other words, humans are composed of both Titanic and Dionysiac portions. Scholars have long read the elusive reference by Xenokrates within the context of Orphic beliefs in the body as a prison for the soul and as

¹¹³⁹ Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.10. In the same period (first-century CE), Plutarch (*De esu carniū*, 996c) connects human consumption of meat with the devouring of Dionysos.

¹¹⁴⁰ Edmonds 2013: 374-391.

¹¹⁴¹ Graf and Johnston 2013: 85-91.

¹¹⁴² Xenokrates fr. 219 Isnardi Parente = Dam. *In Phd.* 1.2 (29 Westerink) (*OF* 38i B).

¹¹⁴³ Bluck 1961: 279.

evidence for the Dionysos myth by at least the fourth-century BCE.¹¹⁴⁴ Thus, there is testimony for the Orphic myth of the anthropogeny from the Titans at an early period.

I follow the conclusions of Johnston that the *bricoleur* borrowed material from an earlier period. I argue, in turn, that the sixth-century BCE Orphic *bricoleur* also could have adapted from the Mesopotamian tradition underlying the *Atrahasis*. The theme of the creation of humans from the death of a sacrificed god is reminiscent of the sacrifice of the god Ilawela and creation of humans in the *Atrahasis*. Thus, according to my reading, in both stories a god is sacrificed from which humans are then created. Additionally, in both myths divinities perform the sacrifice of a divinity. In the *Atrahasis*, it is Enki and the other gods who sacrifice Ilawela, and in the Orphic Dionysos myth, it is the Titans who sacrifice Dionysos. As I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the god Enki is one of the leading gods who suppresses the lesser gods into manual labor, and in Hesiod, Prometheus is the Titans whom the Olympian gods overthrew. The idea of a god performing sacrifice would not be unfamiliar to a Greek audience since both the Titan Prometheus and the god Hermes perform sacrifices (see Chapter 2 for Prometheus and the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*). Moreover, it makes sense that the gods perform the sacrifice in both the Mesopotamian and Orphic myths because humans have yet to be created in the cosmos. Furthermore, in both myths the sacrifice is represented as one of the events of the succession motif. In the *Atrahasis*, the gods sacrifice Ilawela, who was one of the gods that rebelled against the chief gods for forcing them into manual labor. In the Dionysos myth, the Titans, whom Zeus overthrew to become king of the cosmos,

¹¹⁴⁴ E.g., Dodds 2004: 155-156; West 1983: 21-23; Graf and Johnston 2013: 193. Cf. Edmonds 2013: 275, 381.

sacrifice Dionysos after he is set up to become the new king. Finally, in both traditions humans contain a portion of the divine lineage. In the *Atrahasis*, the god named Ilawela literally means “god-man” and the first humans contain a portion of the divine blood mixed with clay. In a similar way, in the Orphic tradition, humans contain a portion of both Dionysos and the Titans.

Although there are clear thematic parallels between the stories, the differences between them are unmistakable. In the *Atrahasis*, the god Ilawela is slaughtered with the sole intention of creating humans, whereas in the Orphic myth the creation of humans is an unintended consequence of Zeus’ revenge against the Titans for the infanticide. Moreover, in the Orphic myth both Dionysos and the Titans are killed (but only Dionysos is sacrificed), whereas in *Atrahasis* it is only the god Ilawela who is slaughtered. Additionally, in the *Atrahasis* the gods create humans from the *blood* of the god mixed with clay, whereas in the Orphic myth humans are created from the *ash* of the blasted Titans who devoured the sacrificed Dionysos.¹¹⁴⁵

These variations in the myths highlight not only the process of adaptation over centuries of contact between different cultures but also some of the differences between the theologies of the respective cultures. As I explored in Chapter 1, the ritual slaughter of the god Ilawela is instigated because of the gods’ need to create humans to provide them with food, which humans provide through offerings, a reflection of actual Mesopotamian practice. In the Orphic Dionysos myth, on the other hand, the distinctive act of tearing apart and consuming the raw flesh of Dionysos establishes a precedent for

¹¹⁴⁵ There are later traditions that humans were born from the drops of blood shed by the Titans during their battle with the gods (Dio Prus. 30.10; Opp. *H.5.9* with schol.). These stories are attested only in the Roman period, but West (1983: 165) suggests they may be older.

the mythologized practices of the Dionysiac cult. However, the traditions where Dionysos is dismembered, boiled, or roasted represent the sacrifice of the god according to the historical evidence of Dionysiac practice, namely typical practices associated with *thusia*, such as butchery and cooking of limbs.¹¹⁴⁶ Thus, each myth functions as a sort of aitiology for the cultures' unique cult practices (none of which involved the sacrifice of gods or people): the Mesopotamian practice of daily food offerings for the gods and the Dionysian (mythical) practice of *σπαργμός*, *ὠμοφαγία*, and standard (historical) *thusia*. It is important to remember, however, that the stories about sacrifice in *Atrahasis* and the Dionysos myth are operating at a different level (i.e., myth) than the actual practices of sacrifice, since these cultures did not perform human sacrifice. Moreover, we can potentially explain this irregularity (between myth and ritual) by the cosmogonical context of these myths, in which humans and animals have yet to be created, therefore, the only possible victim for a sacrifice is a divinity, or alternatively, from Patton's model whereby myths about ritualizing deities represent a mythical magnification of actual practice in order to highlight the gods as the ultimate source of rituals. In the next section, I explore the final element of the Orphic myth of Dionysos, his rebirth. Although this part of the story does not have antecedents in the *Atrahasis*, there are other Near Eastern myths from which the *bricoleur* could have adapted, specifically the Phoenician myths of child sacrifice and Melqart.

¹¹⁴⁶ See especially Detienne's (1979) reflections on the Dionysiac sacrifice.

3. The Rebirth of the Sacrificed Infant God Dionysos

In two fragments of the Orphic myth, the god Dionysos is specifically identified as a child, in one of these fragments he is lured to his death by children's toys, and in another fragment there is a reference to the limbs of the sacrificed child god:¹¹⁴⁷

ἡ δ' ἄρα δι' Ἑκάτη **παιδὸς** μέλη' αὔθι λιποῦσα
Λητοῦς εὐπλοκάμοιο κόρη προσεβήσατ' Ὀλυμπον

Straightaway divine Hecate, the daughter of lovely-haired Leto,
approached Olympus, leaving behind the limbs of **the child**.

(Procl. *in Cra.* 106.25 Pasquali)¹¹⁴⁸

Johnston connects the references to Dionysos as a child (παῖς) with the Greek myths about the cannibalism in the line of Tantalus.¹¹⁴⁹ But those myths do not describe the slaughter and butchering of the child as a sacrifice like the myth of Dionysos does. If my reading of the Orphic myth is correct that the *bricoleur* drew from not only Greek sources but Near Eastern ones as well, then the only possible source from which the *bricoleur* could have adapted is a version of an earlier Phoenician tradition, such as the one preserved in Philo's myth of Ieoud. Moreover, the well-attested connections between Orphic and Phoenician myths offer greater probability to this hypothesis. As we saw in Chapter 6, the infant god-king Ieoud was sacrificed by his father El (Kronos), king of the gods. In both the Dionysos and Ieoud myths, the child victim is designated as the heir to the throne and sacrificed. The difference, however, is that El sacrifices his own son, whereas Dionysos is sacrificed by the Titans. Nevertheless, as far as I know, there is no

¹¹⁴⁷ For the toys of Dionysos, see Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17.

¹¹⁴⁸ = *OF* 317 Bernabé. Translation by Johnston 2011: 124.

¹¹⁴⁹ Graf and Johnston 2013: 81. Tantalus: Pind. *Ol.* 1.24-53, Bacch. Frg. 42 Snell-Maehler, Eur. *IT* 386-388 and *Hel.* 388-389; Thyestes: Aesch. *Ag.* 1191-1193, 1219-1222, and 1583-1611, Accius 220-222, Sen. *Thy.* 749-788.

other myth from the ancient Mediterranean that specifically depicts the sacrifice of a child god except for Philo's Phoenician myth. Moreover, we can attribute the differences between the myths to the dynamic process of adaptation of the motif between cultures. Furthermore, if my argument from Chapter 6 is correct that Philo's Phoenician myth about the sacrifice of Ieoud is ultimately connected to the myth of the sacrifice and "awakening" of Melqart, then it is possible that the Orphic *bricoleur* integrated both the ideas of child sacrifice and the rebirth of the god in his depiction of Dionysos, as I will explain below.

As early as the sixth-century BCE, there was a tradition that Dionysos was born more than once, first from his mother Semele, then a second time from the thigh of his father Zeus.¹¹⁵⁰ The Orphic tradition then imbued this tradition with a soteriological dimension expressing the idea of rebirth.¹¹⁵¹ Olympiodoros does not mention the rebirth of Dionysos, but other traditions identified as Orphic do record this part of the myth. The final element of the story, Dionysos' rebirth after death, is described in four different traditions.¹¹⁵² In what Johnston calls the first element of the story of Dionysos' rebirth, according to Euphorion (third-century BCE) and quoted by Philodemus (second-first century BCE), the goddess Rhea reassembled and revived Dionysos after he was dismembered by the Titans:¹¹⁵³

¹¹⁵⁰ For the references to Dionysos' second birth from the thigh of Zeus, see Eur. *Bacch.* 90-104, 243-244, 289-295. Diodorus Siculus (3.62.5) states the Dionysos was called "twice-born" by the ancients.

¹¹⁵¹ In Orphic hymn 30. 2, Dionysos is called "thrice-born" (τρίγονον). There may be an allusion to this in Gold Tablet 26a/b.1 (Graf and Johnston) in the address to the deceased as "thrice-blessed" (τρισόλβιε).

¹¹⁵² Graf and Johnston 2013: 73-80.

¹¹⁵³ Euphorion fr. 53 De Cuenca = Philodemus, *On Piety*, 192-3 (ll. 4956-4969) ed. Obbink = OF 59 F Bernabé.

πρώτην τού||των τὴν ἐκ τῆς μητρός||, ἑτέραν δὲ τ[ὴν ἐκ] τοῦ μηροῦ
 [Διός, τρεῖς] τὴν δὲ τῇ|ν ὅτε δι|λασπασθεῖς ὑ[πὸ τῶν] Τιτάνων Ῥέ[ας
 τὰ] μέλη συνθε[ίσης] ἀνεβίω{ι}. κὰν [τῇ] Μοψοπία[ι] δ'
 Εὐ[φορί]ων [ὁ]μολογεῖ [τού]τοις, [οἱ] δ' Ὀρ[φικοὶ] καὶ
 παντά[πασιν] ἐνδιατρε[ίβουσιν]

The first of these (sc. births) is the one from his mother, the second from Zeus' thigh, the third when **he was torn apart** by the Titans, reassembled by Rhea, and **brought back to life**. In the Mopsopia Euphorion agrees on these matters (or, with these people); the Orphics as a whole dwell on (these myths).

(Euphorion Fr. 40 Lightfoot = Fr. 53 Acosta-Hughes and Cusset)¹¹⁵⁴

This quotation indicates that as early as Euphorion in the third-century BCE there was a tradition about Dionysos' multiple births, and in particular, his rebirth after the dismemberment. This belief is corroborated by later sources as well, which also attribute the story to the Orphics.¹¹⁵⁵ The author uses the passive participle δι|λασπασθεῖς, “he was torn apart,” from the compound verb σπαράσσω, which is the same verb used by Olympiodoros to describe the dismemberment of Dionysos. Again the verb reflects the mythical cult practice of *sparagmos*.

The use of the verb ἀνεβίω{ι}, “she (Rhea) brought him back to life” recalls another myth that we have explored, the rebirth of Melqart. In the account attributed to Eudoxos of Knidos, Iaolaos brings Melqart back to life with the savor of a roasted quail sacrifice and the same verb is used to reference his rebirth (ἀναβιῶναι).¹¹⁵⁶ This verb is part of the semantic field of what Cook calls “resurrection language” in myths from

¹¹⁵⁴ Text and Translation by Lightfoot 2010: 270-271.

¹¹⁵⁵ Cornutus *Nat. Deor.* 30 (58.6 Lang). Diodorus Siculus (3.62.8) says that Demeter revived him. Johnston (Graf and Johnston 2013: 76) notes that Demeter was sometimes equated with Rhea from as early as the fifth-century BCE (cf. Melanippides *PMG* 746; Eur. *Hel.* 1301, *Phoen.* 685, *Bacch.* 275; Telestes *PMG* 809). See West 1983: 81-82, 93, and 217 for their association in Orphic texts.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ath. 9. 47. 30-36.

around the Mediterranean, which also includes the verb ἐγείρω, “to awaken,” the verbal root of the word used to describe Melqart’s rites at Tyre (*egersis*).¹¹⁵⁷ Thus, the myths of Dionysos and Melqart both belong to a category of Mediterranean myths about the death and rebirth of a deity, and the shared Greek terminology reflects this Mediterranean *koinē* of myths, which also includes Osiris, as I will explain below. Moreover, these myths connect the death and rebirth of the god to cultic practices, as I explore further below.

In another of these traditions about Dionysos’ rebirth, preserved by the tenth-century CE scholiast Tzetzes in his commentary on Lycophron’s *Alexandra*, the god Apollo collects the dismembered pieces of Dionysos and buries them, after which Dionysos is reborn by the method of one of the other three traditions. The following story, in particular, is probably connected to the tradition of a tomb for Dionysos at Apollo’s sanctuary at Delphi, as I explain below:

ἐτιμάτο δὲ καὶ Διόνυσος ἐν Δελφοῖς σὺν Ἀπόλλωνι οὕτως· οἱ
Τιτάνες τὰ **Διονύσου μέλη σπαράξαντες** Ἀπόλλωνι ἀδελφῷ ὄντι
αὐτοῦ παρέθεντο **ἐμβalόντες λέβητι**, ὃ δὲ παρὰ τῷ τρίποδι **ἀπέθετο**,
ὥς φησι Καλλίμαχος καὶ Εὐφορίων λέγων· **ἐν πυρὶ** Βάκχον διὸν
ὑπερφίαλοι ἐβάλλοντο.

Dionysus, too, was honoured in Delphi together with Apollo, in the following way. The Titans **tore asunder Dionysus’ limbs, threw them into a cauldron**, and set it before his brother Apollo. Apollo **stowed it away** beside his tripod, as we learn from Callimachus and Euphorion, who says: **In(to) the fire** those arrogant beings cast divine Bacchus. (Tzetzes ad Lycoph. *Alex.* 208)¹¹⁵⁸

The tradition here attributed to the Hellenistic poets and grammarians Callimachus (fourth-third century BCE) and Euphorion (third-century BCE) also describes the death of

¹¹⁵⁷ For usage of these terms, see Cook 2018: 13.

¹¹⁵⁸ = Callimachus fr. 643 Pfeiffer, Euphorion fr. 13 Acosta-Hughes and Cusset. Text and Translation by Lightfoot 2010: 227. Damascius (*In Phd.* 1.129 = 81 Westerink) also reports a similar tradition that Apollo revived Dionysos after his dismemberment.

Dionysos in terms that evoke Greek sacrificial practices. The phrase Διονύσου μέλη σπαράξαντες “they tore apart the limbs of Dionysos” echoes Olympiodoros’ use of the verb σπαράττειν “to tear apart,” to describe the death of Dionysos as specifically Bacchic *sparagmos*. The chaotic dismemberment of Dionysos inherent in the practice of *sparagmos* is a perversion of the normal Greek practice of carefully dividing the limbs and apportioning them to the worshipers according to rank.¹¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the detail about the Titans throwing his limbs into a cauldron (ἐμβάλοντες λέβητι) also evokes the post-sacrificial treatment of the victim by cooking the meat.¹¹⁶⁰ As we have seen in literary descriptions, the worshippers of Dionysos did not cook their sacrificial animals but instead consumed them raw. In the majority of evidence for cult practice, however, normal *thusia* was offered to the god Dionysos. The final phrase of the fragment when the Titans cast Dionysos into the fire (ἐν πυρὶ) also evokes the idea of a *thusia*. Thus, the tradition situates the death of Dionysos within the mythic past where *sparagmos* was imagined to have been performed but also anchors the story to historical Greek sacrificial practice. Following Patton’s model, this suggests that there was a great deal of theological speculation about rites associated with Dionysos since no other Greek god is associated with myths about sacrifice as much as Dionysos. Moreover, there seems to be a tension between depicting him as a victim of traditional *thusia* practice or as a victim of *sparagmos*.

¹¹⁵⁹ Ekroth 2007 and 2011.

¹¹⁶⁰ The famous decree of the Molopoi from Miletus (*LSAM* 50.34-36) describes the privileges and duties of the Onitadai who roast the entrails, boil the meat portions, and dissect the *osphys*. For further discussion on the division and cooking of sacrificial meat, see Ekroth 2008a and Carbon 2017. For the cooking practices at Athens and Sparta, see Naiden’s Ch. 6 “Markets and Messes” (2013: 232-275).

We can begin to explain this intensified speculation about practices related to Dionysos from the unique features of the cult of Dionysos and the god's association with mystery cults. As Seaford states, in Dionysos and his mystery cult there is "a tendency to *destroy boundaries*."¹¹⁶¹ For instance, the intoxicating effects of wine distort one's perception, the rite of transvestitism crosses the gender boundaries, and the transcendent experience of mystic initiation blurs the limits between life and death. Likewise, the idea of sacrificing a god destroys the boundaries between human and divine. By at least the fifth-century BCE, Dionysos is already involved in alternative theological beliefs about eschatology from mystery cults, and the occult rites were guarded with secrecy (therefore motivating speculation). Thus, the Orphic-Bacchic milieu was especially conducive for the adaptation of this sort of unconventional theological idea (from a Greek view). The Orphic tradition easily incorporated the Near Eastern paradigm of a dying and rising vegetation god-king, and with it the motif of divine sacrifice, and redeployed it with the Greek god of wine and mystic initiation, Dionysos.

In yet another version of Dionysos' rebirth that reflects cult practices, Athena rescues his heart while it is still beating.¹¹⁶² As West points out, "The special treatment of the heart was a feature of some Greek sacrificial ritual."¹¹⁶³ More specifically, Johnston comments that the tradition reflects evidence for Dionysiac cult practice, such as in a second-century CE sacred law from Smyrna that prohibits placing the heart of the

¹¹⁶¹ Seaford 2006: 60.

¹¹⁶² *OF* 314-316 Kern = 701 T, 702 F, 703-704 T Bernabé; 326-327 Kern = 791 F, 797 F Bernabé. Hyginus (*Fab.* 167) adds further details, namely that the heart was chopped up, made into a soup, and that Zeus fed it to Semele to revive Dionysos. West (1983: 162) says that this version is not an Orphic story.

¹¹⁶³ West 1983: 162. For the treatment of the heart, see Henrichs 1972: 71.

sacrificial animal on the altar.¹¹⁶⁴ As we have seen elsewhere, the myth of Dionysos' sacrifice mirrors specific Greek practice, yet it does not simply pervert these practices when a god is depicted as the victim, but it also deepens the theological speculation about the Greek rites for the god (both mythical and historical). Although the myth of Dionysos' belongs to a *koinē* of eastern Mediterranean myths about the sacrifice and rebirth of a god, the *bricoleur* (re)constructs the myth to highlight Greek culture.

The myth quoted above also belongs to a related Mediterranean *koinē* of traditions about the tomb of a deity. The word ἀπέθετο from the verb ἀποτίθημι literally means “to put away” but can also mean “to bury,” and scholars interpret it as such.¹¹⁶⁵ In other words, Apollo entombs the boiled limbs of Dionysos at his sanctuary at Delphi. As Johnston suggests, the story of Dionysos' burial was probably modeled on an earlier tradition that Dionysos had a tomb at Delphi, the sacred precinct of Apollo.¹¹⁶⁶ There were reports of a tomb of Dionysos not only at Delphi but also at Thebes.¹¹⁶⁷ However, a tomb at the sanctuary of Delphi is much more unusual and marked than a tomb in the god's home-town. These traditions recall the burial of the god (probably Melqart) mentioned in the Pyrgi tablets and the reports of Melqart's grave at his home of Tyre but also at his sanctuary at Gades (as discussed in Chapter 3). Furthermore, according to Plutarch, there was a biennial practice of the “awakening” of Liknites, the child

¹¹⁶⁴ Graf and Johnston 2013: 79. Sokolowski 1955: no. 84 (= *I.Smyrna* 728 = SGOst 05/01/04), l. 13.

¹¹⁶⁵ For the verb having the meaning “to bury” see, IG 14.1974. For the burial of Dionysos, see also Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.81.1-2 and Proclus *In Ti.* II 197.24 and II 198.5.

¹¹⁶⁶ Graf and Johnston 2013: 77. The source is Philochoros = *FGrH* 328 7.

¹¹⁶⁷ The Byzantine historian Malala (*Chr.* 45.9 Bonn) reports an epitaph at Delphi that said “here lies Dionysos, son of Semele.” Pseudo-Clement of Rome (*Recogn.* 10.24.2.8-9) records a list of gods who have tombs, including Dionysos at Thebes and Herakles at Tyre.

Dionysos, at Delphi. Plutarch explicitly uses the verb ἐγείρω “to awaken,” in his reference to the awakening of Liknites, which is the verbal root of the term *egersis* used by Josephos to describe the awakening of Melqart.¹¹⁶⁸ Thus, the practice of “awakening” the god Dionysos is reminiscent of the *egersis* rites for Melqart after his cultic death, as I discuss in section 4 below. These connections might have been some of the reasons that brought these gods together. Moreover, these links would have been easily facilitated by the connectivity of myths and rituals in the ancient Mediterranean.

Thus, with the Orphic material and Philo’s account of child sacrifice we can isolate an eastern Mediterranean and Aegean motif about the sacrifice of the infant god-king. The Orphic myth of Dionysos works in a similar way to the myth of Ieoud but on an exclusively mythical level: Dionysos, the infant god-king, is sacrificed via *sparagmos*, and in myth worshippers of Dionysos honored the god through *sparagmos* of animals. In the Phoenician myth, the father (El) sacrifices his son Ieoud, dressed in regalia. In the Greek myth, on the other hand, the Titans, at the behest of the wife of the father (Zeus), sacrifice the father’s son and heir to the throne, Dionysos. Since I am reading the Dionysos myth as a creative adaptation of a Phoenician myth about child sacrifice, we can explain some of the differences between the stories by the process of adaptation of myths over centuries of contact. The Orphic tradition adapts the motif of a father’s sacrifice of his son but changes the storyline so that the Titans sacrifice the son. Moreover, it is likely that the Orphic myth adapted the Titan feature from the myth of Prometheus, the Titan who performs sacrifice. Thus, the Orphic tradition created a unique Greek myth about child sacrifice combined from local and foreign traditions.

¹¹⁶⁸ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 365A.

As I explored in previous chapters, the myth of Melqart's death and rebirth was widespread throughout the Mediterranean and the annual practice of the *egersis* extended throughout the Phoenician world, from the mother city of Tyre on the Levantine coast to the Tyrian colony of Gades on the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, the *bricoleur* of the Dionysos myth would have had ample sources at his disposal from which to construct his myth, including the myth of Melqart. It is also significant that according to Herodotos the rites of Dionysos were introduced to Greece by Kadmos of Tyre, the mythological character that functions as a shortcut for Phoenician cultural transmission.¹¹⁶⁹ The Phoenicians, however, are only part of the story of the transmission of the Dionysiac rites, since Herodotos says elsewhere that the rites are originally from Egypt.¹¹⁷⁰ Indeed, the accounts of Herodotos imply a Phoenician link for the transmission of the rites of Dionysos from Egypt to Greece. In this way, it is useful to think of the relationship between these cultures in a triangularity where the Phoenicians were the likely intermediary between Egyptian and Greek myths. In the following section, I present the myth of Osiris and read the traditions of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart as part of a culturally hybrid narrative in the work of Plutarch.

4. The Mediterranean Triangle: Dionysos, Osiris, Melqart

The myth of Dionysos' sacrifice and rebirth belongs to a *koinē* of Mediterranean myths about the death and rebirth of divinities, most notably Egyptian Osiris and Tyrian Melqart. As with the funerary texts and amulets of the Egyptians and Phoenicians, and

¹¹⁶⁹ Hdt. 2.49. Melampus taught the Greeks the name of Dionysos and the way of sacrificing to him, but Melampus learned the worship of Dionysos from Kadmos of Tyre.

¹¹⁷⁰ Hdt. 2.8.

the Bacchic-Orphic Gold Tablets discussed by López-Ruiz, the parallel mythologies of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart can also be understood through a triangulation of myths and rituals. As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, the association between Melqart and Osiris occurs as early as the fourth-century BCE at the important transcultural meeting place of Larnax-tēs-Lapēthou on Cyprus where the Phoenician god Melqart was worshipped alongside the Egyptian god Osiris.¹¹⁷¹ Additionally, a Greek myth from the same period, reported by Athenaios in the second-third century CE and attributed to Eudoxos of Knidos from the fourth-century BCE, describes Herakles-Melqart's death by Typhon (Seth), the same god who kills Osiris according to the account of Plutarch.¹¹⁷² This myth is a perfect example of the triangularity of Greek (Herakles), Phoenician (Melqart), and Egyptian (Typhon-Seth) mythologies.

Along with the parallel accounts of a tomb of Melqart and Dionysos mentioned previously, there are also Egyptian traditions about the tomb of Osiris. The Greek historian Plutarch (first-second centuries CE) records that both the Egyptians and Greeks have beliefs about the tombs of Osiris and Dionysos. Plutarch's report can be corroborated by native Egyptian customs about the tomb of Osiris.¹¹⁷³ Thus, traditions circulated about tombs of each of the three gods (Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart). Likewise, according to Plutarch, there are complementary stories about the dismemberment and rebirth of the gods Dionysos and Osiris.¹¹⁷⁴ In the previous sections,

¹¹⁷¹ For the Phoenician text and commentary, see Honeyman 1938.

¹¹⁷² For Melqart, see Ath. 9. 47. 30-36; For Osiris, see Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 18.358A.

¹¹⁷³ For the tomb of Osiris, see Mettinger 2001: 168 n.13 with references.

¹¹⁷⁴ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 35 364F-365A.

I showed how the death and rebirth of Dionysos were depicted in cult practices, both mythical (*sparagmos*) and historical (*thusia*). As we shall see, the Egyptian myth of the death and rebirth of the god Osiris was also related to cult practices, namely funerary rites. The differences, however, between the myths of Dionysos and Osiris articulate the specific theology of each culture.

In the following, first I present the parallels between the myths and rituals of Dionysos and Osiris, namely their dismemberment and rebirth, funerary beliefs, and phallic processions. I offer evidence for Osiris as a dying and rising god, discuss Egyptian ideas of “sacrifice,” and show how Osiris’ death and rebirth is related to the Egyptian funerary rite of mummification. I then consider how the myths of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart express cultural differences through the representation of the death and rebirth of each god. Finally, I read the accounts of Eudoxos and Plutarch as a product of a “culturally hybrid space,” to use the phrase of López-Ruiz, in which Greek, Egyptian, and Phoenician gods are all merged.

a. Dionysos, Osiris, and Dismemberment

According to Egyptologist Gabriella Scandone Matthiae, the god Osiris appears relatively late in the Egyptian pantheon, only in the 5th-6th dynasty (2500-2270 BCE).¹¹⁷⁵ The earliest (18th dynasty) and most complete account of the Osiris myth extant in Egyptian sources is the Great Hymn to Osiris known from the Stela of Amenmose.¹¹⁷⁶ According to Miriam Lichtheim, “Allusions to the Osiris myth are very frequent in

¹¹⁷⁵ Matthiae 2001: 15. For an edition and commentary on the text, see Griffiths 1970b.

¹¹⁷⁶ Louvre C 286. See Lichtheim 2003 for text and commentary.

Egyptian texts, but they are very brief. It seems that the slaying of Osiris at the hands of Seth was too awesome an event to be committed to writing.”¹¹⁷⁷ Therefore, scholars are mostly reliant on Greek sources for the dismemberment portion of the myth.¹¹⁷⁸ In her study of the cult of Osiris, Mojsov situates the myth of Osiris within a historical background and shows how the Osiris cult grew in popularity from the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BCE) and spread throughout the Mediterranean.¹¹⁷⁹ In particular, Mojsov utilizes the version of the myth of Osiris preserved by the Greek author Plutarch (first-second centuries CE), as she explains:

The myth of Osiris, judge of souls in the netherworld and shepherd to immortality, was at the heart of ancient Egypt. Yet, because of the peculiar nature of their religion, the Egyptians never took the trouble to write down or explain his myth. It was up to the Greek philosopher Plutarch, who visited Egypt in the first century AD, to record the first continuous account of the myth of Osiris. In Egypt, the death and resurrection of Osiris were matters not to be divulged – a Great Mystery.¹¹⁸⁰

Mojsov reads Plutarch as a reliable source for the myth of Osiris and shows how Plutarch’s account corroborates with Egyptian literary and archaeological sources. Hence, Plutarch’s account is a proven source for key elements of the myth, such as Osiris’ death by drowning at the hands of Seth and the recovery of his body by Isis, that go back to the Old Kingdom (2686-2160 BCE) and the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BCE). Likewise, in her essay on Osiris, Matthiae agrees that Plutarch faithfully

¹¹⁷⁷ Lichtheim 2003: 41.

¹¹⁷⁸ There are, however, Egyptian references to the dismembered Osiris (see e.g., *Coffin Texts*, Spell 80 II, 38, 41-42; Spell 830 VII, 31 and the *Book of the Dead*, Spell 1 S 3).

¹¹⁷⁹ Mojsov 2005. For the cult of Osiris, see Griffiths 1970a, and most recently, Roeten 2018.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

reproduces the Egyptian myth.¹¹⁸¹ In turn, I follow the approach of these scholars and read Plutarch as a credible source for understanding Egyptian myth. In the following survey of myths and rituals, I utilize accounts from the Greek historians Plutarch and Herodotos, but I corroborate their statements with Egyptian evidence whenever possible. Unlike the Greeks, however, the Egyptians did not record entire story sequences about their gods but rather the episodes relevant for their application.

According to Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 364F), both Dionysos and Osiris are dismembered. Earlier scholarship suggested that the story of the dismemberment of Dionysos was simply a Hellenistic adaptation of the story of Osiris.¹¹⁸² But as we have seen, other scholars insist that the myth was known earlier. West argues that the Orphic myth of Dionysos is attested in the fifth-century BCE (if his reconstruction of the stemma is correct), and Johnston maintains that the story was formed even earlier in the sixth-century BCE.¹¹⁸³ Johnston proposes that the dismemberment of Dionysos and the involvement of Rhea or Demeter, who in different traditions revive the dismembered Dionysos, were themes that linked Dionysos with Osiris, who was also dismembered and revived by Isis after his death.¹¹⁸⁴ Moreover, Demeter had been equated with Isis as early

¹¹⁸¹ Matthiae 2001: 18.

¹¹⁸² E.g., Festugière 1972: 44.

¹¹⁸³ West 1983: 141.

¹¹⁸⁴ Graf and Johnston 2013: 76. For Rhea's revival of Dionysos, see Euphorion frg. 53 De Cuenca = Philodemus *On Piety* (P. Hercul. 247 III 1 ff., p.16 Gomperz = *OF* 59 I); Philodemus *On Piety* (P. Hercul. 1088 XI 14 ff., p.47 Gomperz = *OF* 59 II); Cornutus *Nat. Deor.* 30 (58.6 Lang = *OF* 59 IV). For Demeter's revival of Dionysos, see Diod. Sic. 3.62.8 = *OF* 59 III). As Johnston notes (Graf and Johnston 2013: 76), Rhea and Demeter were identified with each other as early as the fifth-century BCE (Melanippides *PMG* 764; Eur. *Hel.* 1301, *Phoen.* 685, *Bacch.* 275; Telestes *PMG* 809). For the equation of Rhea and Demeter in Orphic contexts, see West 1983: 81-82, 93, 217.

as Herodotos.¹¹⁸⁵ In Johnston's words, "Even if Dionysus' dismemberment *per se* was not borrowed from Egyptian myth, however, details might have moved back and forth between the two stories."¹¹⁸⁶ We have also seen in the previous section, for example, how words such as *to aidioiv/ta aidioia* moved back and forth between traditions in the Mediterranean. Along these lines, it is useful to think about the relationship between the myths in terms of triangularity whereby cultural contact fostered a hybrid space conducive for the mutual interweaving of myths and rituals, such as the case with the myths of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart, as we shall see.

The identification between the gods Dionysos and Osiris begins by at least the fifth-century BCE when the gods were first identified with each other by Herodotos.¹¹⁸⁷ Hecataeus of Abdera in the fourth-century BCE claimed that Orpheus himself had introduced the mysteries of Dionysos and Demeter, modeled on the rites of Osiris and Isis, which the mythical poet had learned from Egypt.¹¹⁸⁸ As we have seen, one of the central myths of the mysteries of Dionysos was the dismemberment of the god via the cultic act of *sparagmos*. In his account of the myth of Osiris, Plutarch states that the myths of Osiris and Dionysos agree because both gods are dismembered. Egyptologist Susanne Bickel succinctly summarizes the Egyptian myth as follows, "Osiris was killed and dismembered by Seth, who wanted to usurp his kingship. After his death Isis

¹¹⁸⁵ Hdt. 2.59. Graf and Johnston 2013: 76.

¹¹⁸⁶ Graf and Johnston 2013: 76-77.

¹¹⁸⁷ Hdt. 2.42.2; 2.144.2. For the origins of the cult of Osiris, see Griffiths 1970a. For the proposed etymologies of the name Osiris and the different Egyptian determinatives used with the divine name Osiris, see Smith 2017: 125-126. According to Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 331), the name Osiris is made up of the Greek words *hosion* "holy" and *hieron* "sacred."

¹¹⁸⁸ Diod. 1.96.4 = *FGrHist* 264 F 25.

recovered the pieces of Osiris's body and used them to conceive his son Horus, whom she brought up to avenge his father, to tend his funerary cult, and to succeed him on the throne."¹¹⁸⁹ Additionally, according to Plutarch (*Mor.* 358A), the Egyptians understood the dismemberment of Osiris as an explanation for the various tombs of Osiris scattered throughout Egypt. In other words, as Jan Assmann discusses, the dismemberment of Osiris was an etiology for the spread of the cult of Osiris.¹¹⁹⁰

We have already seen the myths of the dismemberment of Dionysos by the Titans, and the dismemberment of Osiris is known from Greek accounts, but dismemberment more generally is well attested in Egyptian sources.¹¹⁹¹ In particular, Egyptologist Amgad Joseph has most recently studied accounts of the dismemberment of gods in Egyptian ritual and mythological texts.¹¹⁹² According to Joseph, all types of dismemberment and mutilation of Egyptian gods show that the Egyptian deities are indestructible because the gods are always restored, even when attacked by other gods. Joseph maintains that in the ritual texts the mutilation of gods reflects Egyptian beliefs in the afterlife: "The mutilation and dismemberment of the divine body symbolized its resurrection and rebirth.

¹¹⁸⁹ Bickel 2004: 578.

¹¹⁹⁰ Assmann 1989: 138.

¹¹⁹¹ Henri Frankfort (1962: 201, 292, 393 n. 72) insists that much of the evidence cited in support of dismemberment is circumstantial and that dismemberment traditions are emphasized in and influenced by late works of classical authors. See, however, G. R. H. Wright 1979, who argues that Old Kingdom funerary customs approached dismemberment as a necessary precursor to the restoration and resurrection. For a discussion about the connections between dismemberment, Osiris, and funeral beliefs, see Assmann 1989. In his study of a rare Egyptian judgment text known as Book of the Dead spell 194, Terence DuQuesne (1994: 54-57) discusses dismemberment and reintegration. For a discussion of "reserve heads," stone representations of decapitated heads set in Egyptian tombs as symbols of regeneration, see Picardo 2007. For a recent study investigating the myth of the goddess *dmd(y)t*, an Isis type figure who promotes rebirth by collecting the limbs of Osiris, see Diamond 2015. For dismemberment in Egyptian texts, see Joseph 2019: 246-250.

¹¹⁹² Joseph 2019.

In a similar way, the mutilation of the deceased may have implied his restoration to life and resurrection.”¹¹⁹³ Thus, the implication of Joseph’s study is that, although Osiris was dismembered, his “rebirth” was symbolized in the act of dismemberment. The important takeaway is that, although there are traditions of dismemberment for both Dionysos and Osiris, these traditions are related to distinct cultural practices. For Dionysos, the dismemberment is connected to cooking and other Greek sacrificial practices; for Osiris, the dismemberment anticipates his restoration via mummification. Additionally, the dismemberment of Osiris was connected to the spread of the cult of Osiris via the various tombs for the god corresponding to the different body parts.

b. The Rebirth of Osiris

As we have seen, several sources describe the myth of the death and rebirth of Dionysos, and the cultic death and “awakening” of Melqart is also attested in myth and practice (discussed in Chapter 3). According to Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 364F), the myth of Dionysos and the Titans is consonant with the dismemberment and rebirth (ταῖς ἀναβιώσεσι καὶ παλιγγενεσίαις) of Osiris. Nevertheless, the question whether Osiris can be classified as a dying and rising god has long perplexed scholars. Henri Frankfort, a notable Egyptologist, famously argued that Osiris was not a “dying” god but rather a “dead” god, in whatever way gods can be considered “dead.”¹¹⁹⁴ Moreover, he claimed

¹¹⁹³ Ibid., 252. The study of Joseph confirms the important observations of Egyptologist Erik Hornung about the nature of Egyptian gods: “Like men, the gods die, but they are not dead. Their existence—and all existence—is not unchanging endlessness, but rather constant renewal” (Hornung 1983: 160).

¹¹⁹⁴ Frankfort 1962: 289. West (1983: 141) and other scholars (e.g., Frankfort 1962: 185) have also argued that Osiris was not revived but rather remained dead (see discussion in Mettinger 2001: 173-175 with further references).

that Osiris was “reborn,” not to the land of the living but to a continued life in the land of the dead as king of the dead.¹¹⁹⁵ Mettinger, on the other hand, reassessed the evidence for Osiris as a dying and rising god, and, following the observation of biblical scholar Klaus Koch, argued that we cannot judge the Egyptian view of death with western notions about post-mortem existence because “Osiris was a most active character in his Netherworld life.”¹¹⁹⁶ Thus, Mettinger concluded his study that Osiris was a god who, indeed, died and was meaningfully reborn but his “rising” was a continued life in the Underworld as king of the dead.¹¹⁹⁷ In iconography, Osiris is always represented as a mummy and crowned as a king of Egypt with green or black skin, an indication of putrefaction and even his connection with the regeneration of plant life.¹¹⁹⁸

Mettinger assembled evidence for Egyptian beliefs in the rebirth of Osiris from ritual texts and festivals.¹¹⁹⁹ In one of the most important festivals to Osiris, during the procession at the city of Abydos, a statue of Osiris was brought to the necropolis of Poker where it stayed overnight in his tomb, and on the next day the statue was brought back to his temple in a symbolic act of rebirth.¹²⁰⁰ During this festival there were rituals for the burial of Osiris as well as the celebration of his return to the land of the living.¹²⁰¹ In another series of festivals conducted during the Egyptian month of Khoiak, which are

¹¹⁹⁵ Frankfort 1962: 185.

¹¹⁹⁶ Mettinger 2001: 174 with references.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 175.

¹¹⁹⁸ Pinch 2002: 178; Matthiae 2001: 16.

¹¹⁹⁹ Mettinger 2001: 167-179.

¹²⁰⁰ See Mettinger 2001: 168 with references.

¹²⁰¹ For the tomb of Osiris, see Mettinger 2001: 168 n.13 with references. For the return of Osiris, see Frankfort 1962: 204.

attested from a long inscription at the Temple of Dendera, the funeral of Osiris was dramatized, after which the Djed pillar was erected as a symbol of his rebirth.¹²⁰²

As Mettinger noted, there are two important characteristics of these festivals: the use of Osiris gardens that symbolized the resurrection of the deity and the so-called “Erhebe-dich-Litaneien” (raise-yourself litanies), known in Egyptian as *ts tw* “raise yourself.”¹²⁰³ The Osiris-gardens were small molds shaped in the figure of the mummified Osiris which would be filled with earth and grain seeds and then watered to produce a garden. The gardens, in particular, emphasize the connections between ideas of fertility, rebirth, and the afterlife in the cult of Osiris.

Mettinger also connected the chants known by scholars as the “raise-yourself litanies” with the evidence for the Phoenician cult title *mqm ’lm* “raiser of the deity” known from the cult of Melqart, a connection which I explore further below.¹²⁰⁴

Additionally, several inscriptions from the Chapel of Osiris at Dendera also describe the rebirth of Osiris, which involves Isis as the agent of resurrection by using water (I return to the theme of water below).¹²⁰⁵ Finally, the Pyramid Texts also contain references to

¹²⁰² Mettinger 2001: 169 with references; Smith 2017: 108. Cf. Koemoth 1993.

¹²⁰³ These gardens have been variously called “Osiris bed,” “Kornosiris,” “Osiris végétant,” or as Mettinger (2001: 170) calls them, “corn mummies.” For the gardens and an image from a temple, see Mettinger 2001: 169-171. For the gardens, see most recently, Roeten 2018. For the litanies, see Assmann 1984: 151-156. The Osiris gardens have also been compared to the gardens of Adonis (see Mettinger 2001: 177). For Adonis, a dying and rising god from Byblos, see *ibid.*, 113-154. For a comparison of Dumuzi (Tammuz/Adonis) with the other west Semitic gods, see *ibid.*, 185-215. For a later Roman summary of the myth of Adonis, see *Ov. Met.* 10.503-739.

¹²⁰⁴ Mettinger 2001: 180-181.

¹²⁰⁵ “(428) 1. O Osiris, receive my water, I am your sister Isis. 2. Take for yourself (the flood) *maâty* that makes your body young. 3. Take for yourself the fresh water of Elephantine. 5. Take for yourself the primordial water that floods from the First of Nomes. 6. Take for yourself the water of renewal that emerges from the primeval flood. 7. Take for yourself . . . that reinvigorates (your heart). 8. Take for yourself the water of the canal, you live (from it). 9. Take for yourself the water . . . to reinvigorate your body. 10. Take for yourself (the flood) *semanoun*, you have been made young from it for eternity. 11. Take

the rebirth of Osiris.¹²⁰⁶ Thus, the evidence from different periods marshalled by Mettinger clearly supports the idea of Osiris as a dying and rising type of god and corroborates the general lines of the traditions collected by Plutarch. The Egyptian festival at Abydos also confirms Plutarch's report of scattered tombs for the god Osiris.

c. Dionysos, Osiris, and Funeral Rites

Herodotos comments on the prohibition of burial in wool as a funeral belief shared between the Egyptian and the Orphic-Bacchic rituals, and he reports that the rites called "Orphic and Bacchic" were in reality "Egyptian and Pythagorean."¹²⁰⁷ The reference to Pythagoreanism situates these funerary beliefs within the spectrum of sixth and fifth-century BCE eschatological ideas about the immortality of the soul.¹²⁰⁸ The importance of this reference to my discussion, however, is that Herodotos interprets funeral beliefs in the cult of Dionysos through the cult of Osiris with the reference to Egyptian rites. In Egyptian sources, Osiris was the prototypical mummy characteristic of Egyptian funerary customs.¹²⁰⁹ As Egyptologist John Taylor explains, "The

for yourself the bread, perfect according to the rule . . . , its water is purified from impurity. 12. Take for yourself (the flood) *semanoun* that reinvigorates your heart. (429) 13. Take for yourself the primordial water that makes your bones young. 14. Take for yourself the sweet water that beautifies your body." (Cauville 1997: 428. 1-12, 429.14-14). I reproduce the text from Cook 2018: 76.

¹²⁰⁶ One text says: "Osiris awakes, the languid god wakes up, the god stands up, the god has power in his body. The King awakes, the languid god wakes up, the god stands up, the god has power over his body. Horus stands up and clothes this King in the woven fabric which went forth from him" (Pyramid Texts § 2092-2094). See references in Cook 2018: 79 n.141.

¹²⁰⁷ Hdt. 2.81.

¹²⁰⁸ See Graf and Johnston 2012: 51, 44-56, 69, 159-160. According to Graf and Johnston (*ibid.*), "the identification of Orphic with Pythagorean must mean that Herodotus, like Ion of Chios, regarded Pythagoras (or a Pythagorean) as the author of the ritual texts ascribed to Orpheus."

¹²⁰⁹ The Pyramid Texts, a collection of spells and hymns that were deposited with the deceased, frequently identify the deceased as Osiris (see Allen 2005: n. 205, 206, 327, 333, 366-368, etc.). For a recent study on Osiris and Egyptian beliefs in the afterlife, see Smith 2017.

mummification of Osiris provided an ideological model for the prescribed treatment of the human corpse, and texts identified each dead person as Osiris.”¹²¹⁰ Mummification involved the preservation and restoration of the body by an elaborate ritual process of embalming, first with evisceration by removing the organs into canopic jars and then by preserving the flesh by drying it with salt.¹²¹¹ Thus, one wonders if, to ancient Egyptian, the myth of Osiris’ dismemberment and rebirth may have reflected the funerary practices of removing the organs for preservation and mummification. In any case, the Osiris myth of dismemberment is related to the practice of mummification in so far as it is the mythical precedent for the practice of restoring and preserving the body after death.¹²¹² As Assmann has explained, “The rejoining of the limbs of Osiris, found only after a long search, became the prototype for the ‘overcoming’ of death and furnished the mythical precedent for embalmmment.”¹²¹³ Moreover, Osiris was depicted iconographically as a mummy and understood as the paradigm of the deceased.

Dionysos, like Osiris, is also connected to funerary beliefs in his early mythology. Homer mentions an urn, a gift of Dionysos, that contains the bones of Achilles and Patroclus.¹²¹⁴ Although the prestigious object as a container to honor the deceased friends

¹²¹⁰ Taylor 2004: 472.

¹²¹¹ The Greek historians Herodotos (2.85-89) and Diodoros of Sicily (91-92) record detailed descriptions of the mummification process. For the ritual of mummification, see Smith 2017: 262-264. For a layman’s introduction to mummification and Egyptian death rites, see Lace 2012. For a study of death and mummification from an expert in the field, see Ikram 2003.

¹²¹² Assmann 1989: 138.

¹²¹³ Ibid.

¹²¹⁴ ἦώθεν δὴ τοι λέγομεν λεύκ' ὅστέ', Ἀχιλλεὺς ἰοῖν ἔν ἀκρόῃ τῳ καὶ ἀλείφατι. δῶκε δὲ μήτηρ ἰοῖν **χρῦσεον ἀμφιφορῆα· Διωνύσοιο δὲ δῶρον** ἰοῖν φάσκει ἔμεναι, ἔργον δὲ περικλυτοῦ Ἡφαίστοιο. ἰοῖν τῳ τοι κείται λεύκ' ὅστέα, φαίδιμ' Ἀχιλλεὺς, ἰοῖν μίγδα δὲ Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο θανόντος, “We gathered your white bones at dawn, Achilles, in unmixed wine and unguents. Your mother, Thetis, gave us **a golden urn, a gift of Dionysos**, she said, made by Hephaistos. In it lie your white bones, shining Achilles, mixed with the bones of dead Patroklos, son of Menoitios” (*Od.* 24.73-77).

is reminiscent of typical containers from eighth-century BCE tombs, the mention of the Dionysiac urn in Homer is suggestive not only of a funerary urn but also of a *kratēr* “mixing vessel for wine” used at symposia, hence, the passage might associate Dionysos with both the afterlife and wine.¹²¹⁵ In the sixth-century BCE, the Greek philosopher Heraclitos of Ephesos mysteriously asserts that Dionysos and Hades are the same god.¹²¹⁶ In roughly the same period, the Orphic myth of Dionysos is primarily related to beliefs of the soul after death from mystery cults.¹²¹⁷ Then, as early as the fifth-century BCE, the Hipponion Gold Tablet relates the worshippers of Dionysos (*bakkhoi*) with the soteriological context of the funerary texts.¹²¹⁸ There are also ancient reports that Dionysos himself travelled to the Underworld (*katabasis*), in one tradition to retrieve his mother Semele and in another as the theme of Aristophanes’ fifth-century BCE comedy the *Frogs*.¹²¹⁹ Additionally, the famous “Toledo Vase” from c. 330 BCE depicts

¹²¹⁵ For archaeological evidence of urns used for the burial of the deceased in Greece, see Garland 2001. For the Greek institution of symposia, see Hobden 2013. The golden urn is also mentioned as a vessel for the bones of Patroclus in the *Iliad* (23.92) after the funeral of Patroclus. For *amphiphorea* used to store wine, see Hom. *Od.* 2.290, 349, 379; 9.204. The urn, a gift from Dionysos, mentioned in Homer reminds us of the exquisite “Derveni Krater,” discovered in Derveni grave A, which depicts the marriage of Dionysos and Ariadne (see Barr-Sharrar 2008).

¹²¹⁶ εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύσῳι πομπὴν ἐποιούντο καὶ ὕμνον αἰδοίοισιν, ἀναιδέστατα εἰργαστ’ ἄν· **οὗτος δὲ Αἰδης καὶ Διόνυσος**, ὅτεωι μαίνονται καὶ ληναΐζουσιν, “For if they were not making the procession to Dionysos and sang the shameful Phallic hymn, then they would be acting most shamefully. **But Hades and Dionysos are the same** to whom they rage and rave” (Heraclitus, fr. 15 D-K).

¹²¹⁷ For the connections with the myth of Dionysos to the Eleusinian mysteries, see Graf and Johnston 2013: 73-74. For the Neo-Platonic ideas about the myth of Dionysos and the immortality of the soul, see Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 1.3. According to Olympiodorus the soul is the Dionysiac portion, and the body is the Titanic portion. For Osiris as the prototypical mummy, see Mettinger 2001: 169-171.

¹²¹⁸ See Tabl. 1.16 Graf and Johnston (= Graf and Johnston 2013: 4-5)

¹²¹⁹ For the traditions about Semele, see the fragments of a play by Sophocles’ son Iophon (*TGF* 22 F 3); Diod. Sic. 4.25.4; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.3; Paus. 2.31.2 and 2.37.5; Plut. *De sera* 27 566a. There are also sixth and fifth-century BCE artistic representations of Dionysos retrieving a woman (most likely Semele) from Hades (see Carpenter 1997: 62-64).

Dionysos shaking the hand of Hades.¹²²⁰ Thus, from at least the sixth-century BCE Dionysos was a god related to funerary rites and even a god equated with the Greek king of the dead. Likewise, the myth of Osiris is connected to funerary practices of mummification and Osiris was king of the dead.¹²²¹ As Raquel Martín Hernández has most recently remarked, Herodotos' frequent religious silence about the name of the god Osiris reflects Greek taboos about the funerary rites of Dionysos.¹²²² Moreover, she concludes that it was their independent connection with funerary rites that fostered the assimilation between both gods. From this perspective, the Pythagorean and Orphic tradition about the death of Dionysos and the Egyptian tradition about the death of Osiris are both connected to funerary beliefs. Thus, it is not only the parallel traditions about the tomb of the god and their dismemberment and rebirth but also their connections with funeral beliefs that brought together Dionysos and Osiris.

As mentioned previously, one of the areas where the funerary rites of the cults of Dionysos and Osiris intersect is the motif of the tree and body of water that revitalize the deceased in the Orphic gold tablets and the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Moreover, the technological format of the gold tablets suggests that the Phoenicians were the mediators of the motif from Egyptian to Orphic traditions, as López-Ruiz has argued. In the Orphic tablets, the deceased is commanded not to drink from the water near the white cypress,

¹²²⁰ For the Orphic connections with this Apulian Volute Krater, see Johnston and McNiven 1996.

¹²²¹ For Osiris as the prototypical mummy and King of the Dead, see Taylor 2004.

¹²²² Martín Hernández 2013. Cf. Graf and Johnston 2013: 157. One example is Hdt. 2.171: 'Εν δὲ τῇ λίμνῃ ταύτῃ τὰ δείκνυλα τῶν παθέων Αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ποιεῦσι, τὰ καλέουσι μυστήρια Αἰγύπτιοι, "On this lake the Egyptians depict His (Osiris') sufferings, which the Egyptians call Mysteries."

which refreshes the dead, but rather from the Lake of Memory.¹²²³ Likewise, an Egyptian text from a tomb at Deir el-Medina identifies the date palm tree as the god Min, a god of fertility: “Spell for drinking water beside the dom palm, beside the feet of Min, the god: Hail to you, (o) you who come forth with your shade, unique god, as you grow upon the ground of the earth: you who give water through your roots, moisten the heart of Osiris NN!”¹²²⁴ Scholars have long acknowledged that the tree in the Egyptian funerary spell is associated with a god of fertility, in this case, the god Min.¹²²⁵ The “heart of Osiris NN” refers to the deceased, who would become “Osiris of NN” in the afterlife.¹²²⁶ Thus, the deceased is identified with the paradigmatic god Osiris who is reborn to eternal life.

d. Dionysos, Osiris, and Fertility

Greeks identified Dionysos and Osiris with each other not only because of their myths about dismemberment and rebirth and connections to funerary rites but also because of their link to the phallus and fertility beliefs. Herodotos records that the Greeks received from the Egyptians their tradition of the phallic procession in the cult of Dionysos, whom the historian identifies with the god Osiris.¹²²⁷ Both classicists and Egyptologists, however, have long debated whether Dionysos and Osiris were fertility

¹²²³ Tablets 1, 2, 8, 25 (Graf and Johnston). Other tablets, however, command the deceased to drink from the water near the cypress and do not mention the Lake of Memory, see Tablets 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 29 (Graf and Johnston).

¹²²⁴ Theban Tomb 218. I use the translation by Dousa, who uses the text and translations of Wallert 1962 and Fecht 1965. See citations in Dousa 2011: 130, n. 32.

¹²²⁵ E.g., López-Ruiz 2011: 59; Dousa 2011: 130. For the associations of Min and the palm tree with ideas of fertility and rebirth, see Wallert 1962: 108-109 and 134; Fecht 1965: 91, with n.52.

¹²²⁶ For Osiris and the rites of mummification, see Smith 2017: 262-264.

¹²²⁷ Hdt. 2.48-49. For the phallic procession in the cult of Dionysos, see also Heraclitus, fr. 15 D-K.

gods or in what sense they were so. Classicist Michael Jameson argues, “The Demeter cults in particular link the symbolism of human sexual vigor and fertility with that of agriculture. Dionysus, however, is not demonstrably concerned with fertility. Agricultural or human, except in Neoplatonic theory.”¹²²⁸ For Martin Nilsson, on the other hand, the association between Dionysos and the phallus was indicative of Dionysos as a fertility god.¹²²⁹

The only dismembered body part that Isis does not successfully recover is the phallus of Osiris.¹²³⁰ Elsewhere, Mojsov states that Egyptian festivals celebrated the phallus of Osiris, and figurines of the phallus were offered at Egyptian tombs.¹²³¹ Moreover, Mojsov reads the myth of Osiris as part of fertility beliefs.¹²³² Other scholars, however, both ancient and modern, have doubted the connections between fertility or agriculture and Osiris. Plutarch himself (*Is. et Os.* 377B) argues against “the many and tiresome (scholars)” (τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ φορτικοῖς) who connect the death and rebirth of Osiris with the agricultural cycle, but elsewhere he does acknowledge the connections, as we will see below. Most recently, Mark Smith has argued that the various origins for

¹²²⁸ Jameson 1993: 58-59. Iamblichus (*De mysteriis* 1.11) explains the phallus as a symbol of procreation.

¹²²⁹ Nilsson 1955: 119, 594. For Dionysos’ association with wine as a god of fertility, see *ibid.*, 585. In the Homeric *Hymn to Dionysos* (35-40), Dionysos is kidnapped by pirates, after which the ship overflows with wine and a vine entwines the mast and sails. Osiris is also connected to wine, yet less directly, for in his myth Isis invents the wine by watering the Eye of Horus, the son of Osiris (Pinch 2002: 132). For the use of wine for purification in the cult of Osiris, see Dils 1993.

¹²³⁰ Mojsov 2005: xx.

¹²³¹ *Ibid.*, xx, 19.

¹²³² Mojsov 2005: xii.

Osiris, as a god of agriculture or fertility, or as a personification of dead kings, etc., cannot be proved.¹²³³

Nevertheless, the Egyptian sources clearly associate Osiris with agriculture from at least the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BCE).¹²³⁴ The most distinctive examples, as discussed above, are the Osiris gardens at the festival of Khoiak, which symbolize the relationship between Osiris and the growth of grain. In Egyptian funerary texts, as well, Osiris is associated with barley as a god of life and death: “I live, I die, I am barley, I do not perish!” (Coffin Text 330).¹²³⁵ Osiris is also linked to fertility indirectly by his sacred marriage with Isis, whom Mojsov identifies as a Great Mother figure, an ancient symbol of fertility.¹²³⁶ As Mojsov explains, both Osiris and Isis were connected to stars that were critical for measuring the flooding of the Nile, which was the essential resource for fertilizing the fields for agriculture.¹²³⁷ More broadly, both Osiris and Isis are gods of life and life after death, not primarily agriculture, but rather agriculture as a logical extension of life in nature.

¹²³³ See Smith 2017: 127, n. 129 for scholarship on the different theories.

¹²³⁴ See Hart 2005: 119. The earliest reference is from the Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus (12th dynasty) which describes Osiris as threshed barley.

¹²³⁵ Coffin Text 330 identifies the deceased with Osiris who lives and dies like the barley grain: “I live, I die: I am Osiris. I have entered you, and have reappeared through you... I have grown in you. I have fallen upon my side [died]. The gods are living from me... The earth god has hidden me. **I live, I die, I am barley, I do not perish!**” (Translation by Mojsov 2005: 8). Coffin Text 269 includes a formula to make the deceased into barley like the life of Osiris.

¹²³⁶ Isis, as the mother of Horus, was believed to be the mother of every Egyptian king and, as a creator goddess, able to produce life on her own (Pinch 2002: 149-151 and Hart 2005: 80-81).

¹²³⁷ Mojsov 2005: 7. Isis was linked to the star Sirius, which would indicate the rise of the Nile in June; Osiris was linked to the constellation Orion, which would signal the peak and fall of the Nile during the months of August-November. For the Osireion star calendar at Abydos, which measured the rising of stars, see Symons 2007. Unlike their Near Eastern neighbors, the Egyptians utilized both a solar and lunar calendar. As assyriologist Leo Depuydt (2007: 40) explains, the Egyptians employed a dominant 365-day civil solar calendar and a marginal lunar calendar used for religious purposes.

The importance of astronomical calculations for the production of crops via the Nile river also extended to the phases of the moon, the heavenly body that was intimately connected with Osiris. For example, Herodotos (2.47) records that the Egyptians sacrifice a pig to the moon and to Dionysos (i.e., Osiris) on the day of the full moon. In turn, Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 34-36) records a myth that explains why the Egyptians sacrifice the pig on the full moon. According to the Greek writer, Seth discovered the sarcophagus of Osiris while chasing a pig under the light of the full moon, after which Seth dismembered and dispersed the corpse of Osiris.¹²³⁸ As Mojsov remarks, “It is the dismemberment of the body of Osiris and its scattering all over Egypt that conveys associations with ritual fertilizing of the land.”¹²³⁹ In the Egyptian sources, the link between Osiris and the moon is illustrated in Osiris’ epithet “Lord of blackened-out moon.”¹²⁴⁰

According to a recent study by Egyptologist Gyula Priskin, the Egyptian belief in the connection between the moon and fertility is well documented.¹²⁴¹ Priskin discusses, in particular, how Egyptian texts associate the death of Osiris with the waning phase of the moon.¹²⁴² As these examples show, Osiris is connected to fertility in several ways, through his link to the phallus, as a god who represents the dying and rising of the crops,

¹²³⁸ Cf. Griffiths 1970a: 126-129; Priskin 2019: 111. Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 43-44) goes into depth about the connections between Osiris and the myth and even links the ecliptic cycle with the death of Osiris.

¹²³⁹ Mojsov 2005: 7.

¹²⁴⁰ Priskin 2019: 10.

¹²⁴¹ Ibid., 100, 120. For the lunar cult of Osiris and the connections between the moon and the afterlife, see ibid., 16-18. The Coffin Texts 144-160, which Priskin (2019) calls “The Egyptian Book of the Moon,” attest to the oldest Egyptian observations on the moon. Priskin cites the following Egyptian text that exemplifies the connection between the moon and fertility: “(the moon) causes bulls to rut, impregnates cows, grows the egg in the womb” (ibid., 120, n. 649 for reference).

¹²⁴² Ibid., 119.

and through his connections with astronomical phenomena that are critical for calculating the agricultural cycle, such as the stars and moon. For the ancient agrarian societies of the Mediterranean, these connections were easily relatable to Dionysos and other gods associated with vegetation and fertility. Moreover, the castration motif from the Osiris myth is an important parallel between not only Egyptian and Greek traditions but also Philo's Phoenician tradition where the castration of Ouranos is connected to fertility beliefs as part of the succession motif and the account of child sacrifice. Thus, it seems castration and fertility cult are connections between Dionysos, Osiris, Ieoud, and if my reading of Philo is correct, even Melqart.

e. Osiris, the Sacrificial King, and Egyptian Sacrifice

As we have seen, ancient sources identified Dionysos and Osiris with each other because of their mutual traditions about dismemberment, rebirth, and a tomb of the god. Despite these similarities there are important distinctions between the traditions that articulate the specific theologies of each culture. Orphic traditions depicted Dionysos' dismemberment as part of mythical bacchic *sparagmos* and other Greek sacrificial practices. The dismemberment of Osiris, on the other hand, was linked to the beliefs in multiple tombs for Osiris and Egyptian practices of mummification as a funerary practice for preserving the body rather than practices which should be termed "sacrifice." Nevertheless, mummification was part of some Egyptian offerings, as I explain below.

According to Mojsov's reading of the evidence, the myth of Osiris was connected to the cycles of nature and the fertility of the Nile river. In other words, she takes a

Frazerian approach to the myth by connecting the fertility of the Nile with the “sacrifice” and rebirth of the divine king Osiris:

For millennia, the flood of the Nile had been of central importance to life in the valley – this area has some of the lowest rainfall in the world and people had always depended on the river to water their fields. *The sacrifice of the king*, Son of the Nile and Father of the Tribe, was linked with the life of the river. Osiris was buried when the flood abated, before the season of plowing. At harvest time at the spring equinox, his loving wife Isis breathed life into his body and he engendered a son. Theirs was the Savior Child of light, born at the winter solstice with the sun. From time immemorial *the myth of Osiris had explained the unfathomable cycles of nature*.¹²⁴³

Although I agree with Mojsov’s overall reading of the Egyptian evidence, I suggest that her designation of the death of Osiris as a sacrifice deserves some nuancing, namely because the Egyptians did not practice sacrifice in the same way as the Greeks and Phoenicians, as I will explain below. Nevertheless, her reading of the Osiris myth as a story about the death and rebirth of a divine king that explains the fertility cycle is particularly relevant for comparison with the Phoenician myths I have investigated so far, namely the myths of Melqart and Ieoud. Moreover, as explained above, Osiris was represented as a king of Egypt and was associated with the flood waters that brought fertility and renewal.¹²⁴⁴ In other words, we can classify Osiris within the milieu of myths about kings whose death and rebirth are connected to the cycles of nature. Comparably, Melqart and Osiris are both kings who die and return to life, and Dionysos, heir to the throne of Zeus, also dies and returns. Thus, the gods Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart can be studied together by comparing not only the correspondences between the myths but also

¹²⁴³ Mojsov 2005: xii. My emphasis. For further elaboration, see *ibid.*, 34-39.

¹²⁴⁴ Matthiae 2001: 21.

by comparing how the differences between the death of each god articulate distinct cultural practices.

A deeper understanding of Egyptian theology and ritual practices can illuminate these particular distinctions between the mythological death and rebirth of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart. In his analysis of Egyptian religion, David Frankfurter questions the term “sacrifice” as a viable category to describe Egyptian rites.¹²⁴⁵ As we saw in Chapter 4 with Herodotos’ myth of Herakles, the Egyptians did not engage in ritual practices that were entirely congruent with the Greek and Phoenician practices of burnt offerings. In particular, I discussed the evidence for “retainer sacrifices,” which involved the ritual killing and burial of slaves for the deceased Egyptian king. In other examples, some of the earliest evidence (second to first millennium BCE) for Egyptian offerings are depictions of offering tables for food, such as bread, fruit, and pre-butchered meat.¹²⁴⁶ The Egyptians did not burn sacrificial meat, but rather it was eaten by the worshippers.¹²⁴⁷ In this regard, Egyptian offerings were more similar to what we see in ancient Mesopotamia, in contrast with the custom of burnt animal sacrifice performed in the Aegean and the Levant.¹²⁴⁸ What is not commonly depicted in Egyptian texts and

¹²⁴⁵ Frankfurter 2011.

¹²⁴⁶ Ibid., 76-77. Another important mechanism for Egyptian offerings to the gods was the act of reading out a list of offerings, called *pr.tḥrw* “bringing forth the voice” (Willems 2004: 327).

¹²⁴⁷ For scholarship on Egyptian sacrifice, see also Barta 1963; Graefe 1993; Willems 2004: 326. For a broad study on the different types of offerings to the gods in Egyptian temples, see Cauville 2012.

¹²⁴⁸ For ritual slaughter in literary and epigraphical sources, see Burkert 1985: 4-7 and 346. According to Lipiński (1993), there is little difference between the cultic practices of the Canaanites and Israelites, as depicted by the Hebrew Bible (e.g., 1 Kings 18: 20-40; Exodus 18:12, 34: 15). For the distinctions between the eastern Mediterranean *koinē* of sacrifice and the practices of Mesopotamia and Egypt, see López-Ruiz 2013: 68-69 with references. See also my Introduction chapter with further discussion of the similarities and differences between the sacrificial practices.

iconography is the killing of the offered animals. According to Frankfurter, at pilgrimages during the later Ptolemaic and Roman periods, “Dogs, cats, ibises, and other animals would be killed on demand, mummified, and deposited for the god as a votive sign, allowing the pilgrim’s participation in the mythical transformation of the god into a potent Osiris being.”¹²⁴⁹ As Frankfurter points out, even in these cases the actual killing of animals was peripheral to the presentation of the mummified corpses.¹²⁵⁰ In other words, some offerings to the gods focused on the funerary practice of mummification.

Frankfurter also cites evidence for ritual immolation of animals, but in these cases the animals are all undomesticated and specifically represent the god Seth (such as crocodiles); therefore, the animal slaughters probably symbolize the vanquishing of Seth, the enemy of Osiris.¹²⁵¹ By the Roman period, there are ritual slaughters and immolations of animals that are more in agreement with Greek *thusia*, but this change in ritual seems to be influenced by Greek practice or its impact on local Egyptian religion after the Hellenistic period.¹²⁵² Frankfurter concludes that if there is a central Egyptian rite it is the appearance of the image of the god in a procession, such as the appearance of the image of Osiris as a symbol of rebirth at the festival of Abydos discussed above.¹²⁵³

The important takeaway from Frankfurter’s study is that one focus of Egyptian rites was the process of mummification and the presentation of the corpse of the animal as a sign of the eternal life of the god. When we then consider the case of Osiris, his

¹²⁴⁹ Frankfurter 2011: 77.

¹²⁵⁰ Ibid., 78.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid., 79. See also Yoyotte 1980-1981.

¹²⁵² Frankfurter 2011: 82-85.

¹²⁵³ Ibid., 83.

mythical mummification and rebirth in the afterlife are part of the theological beliefs of these cult practices. However, we cannot term Egyptian practices as “sacrifice” *per se*. Therefore, when comparing the mythology of the death of Osiris with that of other Mediterranean dying and rising gods, such as Dionysos and Melqart, it is important to acknowledge that Osiris’ death or “sacrifice,” to use Mojsov’s term, is not represented as a bloody or burnt offering as in the case of Dionysos or Melqart. More specifically, Dionysos is reborn after being dismembered in a bloody Bacchic sacrifice, and Melqart is immolated and immortalized by the smell of a burnt offering. Both of these myths relate the death and rebirth of the god to practices of burnt offerings typical of the eastern Mediterranean *koinē* but specific to each culture.

In the myth of Osiris, on the other hand, the god’s death is not depicted as a sacrifice (in the sense of a bloody or burnt offering) but rather a murder that provides the conditions necessary for the funerary practice of mummification. In other words, although Osiris’ death is not described as a sacrifice, his death and restoration are connected to cult practices that are unique to Egyptian theology, namely mummification, which was even a focus in some cases for the offerings of dead animals. Thus, both Osiris and Dionysos are gods that are dismembered. But as Maria Rocchi points out, unlike Osiris, Dionysos is a child who is dismembered and *cooked*.¹²⁵⁴ As we have seen, the cooking motif is part of the representation of Dionysos’ death as a sacrifice. From my approach, this difference between the dismemberment myths highlights a contrast between Greek and Egyptian theologies: the Greek focus on cooking as part of sacrificial rites versus Egyptian focus on mummification. Moreover, this difference also points to

¹²⁵⁴ Rocchi 2001: 190.

the Phoenician influence for the stream of transmission because of the focus on child sacrifice. Assuming the *bricoleur* of the Dionysos myth adapted elements from both the Egyptian myth of Osiris (dismemberment) and the Phoenician Melqart/child sacrifice myth, we can then consider these as two different streams of transmission, both of which were probably merged and mediated by the Phoenicians.

f. Plutarch's Myth of Osiris and the "Awakening" of Dionysos

As we have seen, there were many areas in which the ancient sources identified the gods Dionysos and Osiris, such as their traditions about dismemberment and funerary rites. In a similar way, at the important cultural crossroads of Cyprus in the fourth-century BCE, the priest of the cult, who identifies himself as "the awakener of the god" (*mqm 'lm*), worshipped both Osiris and Melqart side by side as two different divinities but identified both gods as "my Lord."¹²⁵⁵ Accordingly, Mettinger suggested that the "raise-yourself" (*ts tw*) litanies for Osiris, attested in the *Pyramid Texts* and the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, might be related to the "awakener of the god" (*mqm 'lm*) formula for the *egersis* rites of Melqart.¹²⁵⁶ So far we have only seen a one-to-one correspondence between the different gods, either Dionysos with Osiris or Osiris with Melqart. But by at least the fourth-century BCE, Eudoxos of Knidos transmits a Greek version of the Melqart myth that exemplifies the sort of syncretism between three different cultures (Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian) in the myth about Herakles-Melqart who is killed by

¹²⁵⁵ See line 1 of the text in Honeyman 1938 and note 535 above for the text and translation.

¹²⁵⁶ Mettinger 2001: 180. For the litanies in the *Pyramid Texts*, see Assmann 1984: 151-156; For the litanies in the *Book of the Dead*, see Burkard 1995: 23-46.

Typhon (Seth), the Egyptian god known for killing Osiris.¹²⁵⁷ Also, broadly speaking, the traditions about the death, rebirth, and a tomb of the god are common to Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart.

More specifically, however, each myth functions in a particular way within its culture, but to the degree that they share common features, as explained above, and that the ancients separately associated both Dionysos and Melqart with Osiris, there is also the potential that Dionysos and Melqart were identified or seen as overlapping to some degree (especially in a milieu of Greco-Phoenician interaction), and thus, opening the space for the cross-over of their mythologies. Although there are no extant sources that specifically identify Dionysos and Melqart, Plutarch's account of Osiris, whom he identifies with Dionysos, does provide a link between Dionysos and Melqart's *egersis* rites. In his account, Plutarch describes how Osiris and Dionysos both have traditions about a tomb and a myth about their dismemberment and rebirth. This context is important because there are also traditions about a tomb for Melqart, a god of the dying and rising type, who is identified with Osiris by at least the fourth-century BCE. In his account, Plutarch describes a ritual in which the priests "awaken" the child god Dionysos Liknites, and Plutarch uses the same term (ἐγείρω "to awaken") as Josephos in his description of the *egersis* rites for Melqart. Accordingly, Cook suggests that the celebration of the "awakening of the god" Dionysos Liknites may be similar to the *egersis* rites for Melqart.¹²⁵⁸

¹²⁵⁷ For Typhon as Seth, see Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 367D.

¹²⁵⁸ Cook 2018: 139.

In the following passage, Plutarch cites the tradition of a Hellenistic historian named “Socrates” for the connections between Dionysos and Osiris, namely their complementary traditions about dismemberments, rebirths, and tombs. Somehow related to the tomb of Dionysos at the sanctuary of Apollo is a *secret sacrifice* (θυσίαν ἀπόρρητον), namely the ritual “awakening” of the child god Dionysos Liknites (ἐγείρωσι τὸν Λικνίτην). Because Plutarch was a priest of the temple of Apollo at Delphi and initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos, I read him as a reliable source for this ritual in particular.¹²⁵⁹

ὁμολογεῖ δὲ καὶ τὰ Τιτανικὰ καὶ Νυκτέλια τοῖς λεγομένοις Ὀσίριδος **διασπασμοῖς** καὶ **ταῖς ἀναβιώσεσι** καὶ παλιγγενεσίαις· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ταφάς. Ἰ Αἰγύπτιοί τε γὰρ Ὀσίριδος πολλαχοῦ θήκας, ὥσπερ εἴρηται (358a 359a), δεικνύουσι, καὶ Δελφοὶ τὰ τοῦ Διονύσου λείψανα παρ' αὐτοῖς παρὰ τὸ χρηστήριον ἀποκεῖσθαι νομίζουσι, καὶ θύουσιν οἱ ὅσοι θυσίαν ἀπόρρητον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, ὅταν αἱ Θυιάδες **ἐγείρωσι τὸν Λικνίτην**. ὅτι δ' οὐ μόνον τοῦ οἴνου Διόνυσον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης ὑγρᾶς φύσεως Ἕλληνες ἡγοῦνται κύριον καὶ ἀρχηγόν, ἀρκεῖ Πίνδαρος μάρτυς εἶναι λέγων (fr. 153) ‘δενδρέων δὲ νομὸν Διόνυσος πολυγαθῆς αὐξάνοι, ἀγνὸν φέγγος ὀπώρας’ διὸ καὶ τοῖς τὸν Ὀσίριν σεβομένοις ἀπαγορεύεται δένδρον ἥμερον ἀπολλύναι καὶ πηγὴν ὕδατος ἐμφράττειν.

The stories of the Titans and the nightly rites agree with the **dismemberment** of Osiris and **his return to life** and rebirth. The stories about their tombs are also similar: for the Egyptians, as has been mentioned, indicate tombs of Osiris in many places, and the Delphians believe that the remains of Dionysos rest with them near the oracle, and the sacred ones perform a secret sacrifice in the temple of Apollo whenever the Thyades (female worshippers) **awaken Liknites**. But the fact that the Greeks believe Dionysos is lord and leader not only of wine but also of the whole nature of moisture, it is sufficient that Pindar be our testimony when he says “May much-gladdening Dionysos swell the fruit of the trees, the pure splendor of summer.” For that reason it is not permitted for those who worship Osiris to destroy a cultivated tree and block up a spring of water. (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 364F-365A)

¹²⁵⁹ Hirsch-Luipold 2014: 164. For Plutarch as an initiate, see also Coche de la Ferte 1980: 162. For an introduction to the life and works of Plutarch, see Beck 2014.

In general, scholars have read Plutarch's mention of the awakening of Liknites exclusively as a reference to the myth of the death and rebirth of Dionysos. Nilsson argued that the passage refers not to the awakening of a sleeping god but of raising a god from the dead, such as Dionysos known from the Orphic myth.¹²⁶⁰ In turn, Ana Jiménez San Cristóbal points to the reference to the Titans (τὰ Τιτανικά) and the dismemberment and rebirth of Osiris to argue that the passage pertains to the death of Dionysos after his dismemberment by the Titans.¹²⁶¹ According to the tradition attributed to Callimachus and Euphorion, Apollo buried the remains of the sacrificed god at Delphi. In light of this tradition, the awakening of the god Liknites probably refers to the rebirth of the child Dionysos after his sacrifice by the Titans. Moreover, according to the ancient scholiast Hesychius of Alexandria (fifth to sixth-century CE), the epithet "Liknites" refers specifically to the child god Dionysos.¹²⁶² The word Liknites is derived from the Greek noun λίκνον "winnowing-fan," a large basket used in agriculture after the threshing of the wheat to separate the grain from the chaff.¹²⁶³ For this reason, Nilsson connected the λίκνον with fertility beliefs in the cult of Dionysos.¹²⁶⁴ These connections are also apparent from the iconographical evidence from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii

¹²⁶⁰ Nilsson 1975: 39-40.

¹²⁶¹ Jiménez San Cristóbal 2007: 148.

¹²⁶² Hesychius (Lexikon A § 1016) explains it as an epithet of the child Dionysos from the baskets in which children sleep.

¹²⁶³ For the cult of Dionysus Liknites, see Dieterich 1958. See also the Orphic Hymns (46 and 52) that mention the epithet.

¹²⁶⁴ Nilsson 1941: 126-128.

where the *liknon* is depicted together with a phallus.¹²⁶⁵ Plutarch's citation of Pindar, who associates Dionysos with the fruit of the season, also brings the god into the domain of fertility. Moreover, after the passage quoted above, Plutarch goes on to discuss the associations between Osiris, the fecundity of the Nile river, and the phallus.¹²⁶⁶ In line with the explanation of Hesychius, the word *λίκνον* is also used in the *Hymn to Hermes* (e.g., lines 21, 63, 150, 254) to refer to the "cradle" in which the child god Hermes sneaks back into after his nightly escapades, and thus, the word further highlights the associations between the cult of Liknites and the sacrifice and rebirth of the infant god Dionysos.

According to Plutarch, as we read, the Thyades (priestesses of Dionysos) "awaken" Liknites (αἱ Θυιάδες ἐγείρωσι τὸν Λικνίτην). Recently, Cook has analyzed the semantic field of the term ἐγείρω in Mediterranean myths about dying and rising gods and argued that in the context of a god the term specifically means "returning to life after death."¹²⁶⁷ Therefore, as Cook shows, the verb ἐγείρω denotes "rebirth" after death, applied to Melqart and Dionysos. Additionally, pointing to the word ἐγείρω in Plutarch's text, Cook analyzes the term in other Greek literary and epigraphic texts from the Roman period that also refer to Dionysos.¹²⁶⁸ Although these are late sources, they do inform our understanding of Plutarch's account, which I read as a source for more ancient beliefs.

¹²⁶⁵ Hearnshaw 1999.

¹²⁶⁶ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 365.

¹²⁶⁷ Cook 2018: 22.

¹²⁶⁸ Ibid., 136-140.

In the literary sources, the word ἐγείρω occurs in one of the Orphic hymns, which are only dated to the third-second centuries CE but may preserve earlier traditions, in reference to the “trieteric revel” of Dionysos: τὸν τριετὴ πάλι κῶμον ἐγείρηι, “he awakens the trieteric revelry.”¹²⁶⁹ In this instance, the god Dionysos is the subject of the verb ἐγείρω and performs the “awakening” of the revelry. Another late source (fourth-century CE), from the orator Himerius, describes a different version of the Orphic myth in which the Titans desire to dismember Dionysos but only succeed in wounding him, after which Zeus “awakens” Dionysos (τὸν Διόνυσον ἐγείρας).¹²⁷⁰ As with the Orphic hymn, in this reference the god Zeus is actively performing the action of “awakening” the god. Finally, the term occurs epigraphically in a late (third-century CE) Dionysian inscription from Rhodes that mentions a priest charged with “awakening” the god (τῷ ἐπεγείροντι [τὸ]ν θεὸν).¹²⁷¹ Cook states that the awakening on this inscription refers to

¹²⁶⁹ Orphic hymn 53: Ἀμφιετὴ καλέω Βάκχον, χθόνιον Διόνυσον,
ἐγρόμενον κούραις ἅμα νύμφαις εὐπλοκάμοις<ιν>,
ὃς παρὰ Περσεφόνης ἱεροῖσι δόμοισιν ἰαύων
κοιμίζει τριετὴρα χρόνον, Βακχίον ἀγνόν.
αὐτὸς δ' ἡνίκα **τὸν τριετὴ πάλι κῶμον ἐγείρηι**,
εἰς ὕμνον τρέπεται σὺν ἐυζώνοισι τιθῆναις
εὐνάζων κινῶν τε χρόνους ἐνὶ κυκλάσιν ὥραις.
ἀλλὰ, μάκαρ, γλοόκαρπε, κερασφόρε, κάρπιμε Βάκχε,
βαῖν' ἐπὶ πάνθειον τελετὴν γανῶντι προσώπῳ
εὐιέροις καρποῖσι τελεσσιγόνοισι βρυάζων.

“I call upon Bacchos, appearing every second year, the chthonian Dionysos, aroused together with fair-haired nymphs, who, reposing in the holy house of Persephone, sleeps a holy Bacchic time of two years, but when he again **aroused the trieteric revel** he turns to hymn with his fair-girdled nurses, now lulling to sleep, now arousing the times as the seasons wheel by.” (Translation by Nilsson 1975: 40). For the dating of the Orphic hymns, see Athanassakis 1977: viii; Fayant 2014: xxix-xxx; Graf and Johnston 2013: 79.

¹²⁷⁰ Himerius Decl. 45 Colonna: ὁ γὰρ Ζεὺς ἐποπτεύων ἑώρα πάντα, καὶ **τὸν Διόνυσον ἐγείρας**, ὡς λόγος, Τιτᾶνας ἐποίησεν παρὰ τῶν μύθων ἐλαύνεσθαι. “For Zeus observing saw all these things, and **after raising Dionysus**, according to the story from the myths, he drove the Titans away.” Translation by Cook 2018: 140. For the dating of Himerius, s.v., Himerius by R. Browing in the ⁴OCD 685.

¹²⁷¹ REG 17 (1904) 203,1b. Cf. δόντα δὲ καὶ τῷ ὑδραύλῃ **τῷ ἐπεγείροντι [τὸ]ν θεὸν** * <τῷ>, καὶ τοῖς τὸν θεὸν ὑμνήσασιν κατὰ [μῆν]α * <μ>, καὶ ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δὲ καθόδοις δυοὶ τοῖς “having given to the hydraulic organist **who wakes the god** 360 drachmas, and to those who sing hymns to the god each

the return of Dionysos from Hades, in other words, after his death by the Titans from the Orphic myth. Jiménez San Cristóbal compares the reference to the awakening in the inscription with the reference to the trieteric revel from the Orphic hymn quoted above.¹²⁷² In both cases, a priest or Zeus himself is actively performing the ritual of “awakening” the god. Cook comments that “These ceremonies may be similar to the annual ‘awakening’ of Heracles, although in Heracles’ (and probably Dionysus’s) case the awakening is of a god who had died and not merely a ceremony designed to animate a statue.”¹²⁷³ Cook’s argument is more credible when we consider the syncretistic environment of the Mediterranean and the fact that rites of “awakening” are attested in both the cults of Osiris and Melqart, even if there would have been important cultural and ritual differences between the ceremonies of the Delphians, Egyptians, and Tyrians.

The milieu of terms employed to describe rebirth also includes the verb ἀναβιώναι, “to come back to life,” which Plutarch uses in the account above and which occurs in other accounts of the rebirth of Dionysos and Melqart. Specifically, Plutarch’s use of the word ταῖς ἀναβιώσει “return to life” echoes both ἀνεβίω{ι} from the fragment of Euphorius to describe the rebirth of Dionysos and ἀναβιώναι in the account of the death and rebirth of Melqart from Eudoxos. In other words, the word ἀναβιώναι refers to the “rebirth” of the gods Osiris, Dionysos, and Melqart in three different Greek

month 40, and for the two descents/returns of the god” (Translation by Cook 2018: 139). Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal 2007; Cook 2018: 139.

¹²⁷² Jiménez San Cristóbal 2007: 141-145.

¹²⁷³ Cook 2018: 139. A lead tablet or *defixio* (binding spell) from the third-century CE from Carthage includes a ritual to “awaken” Osiris: ἐξέγειρον τὸν μεγαλὸδοξον Ο[σιριν ΟΥ]/ΣΕΡΧΕΧΩΝ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ λεοντοπροσώπου θαπηρίου κατακείμενον καὶ / κοιμώμενον τὸν ἀέναον ὕπνον, “**Raise up** the great-glorious O[siris OU]/SERCHECHOCH who reclines upon the lion-faced bier and sleeps the everlasting sleep” (Cook 2018: 34 n.187).

accounts of the myths. This equivalent terminology in the Greek sources suggests that we can gain further information about the myths by comparing the traditions about Dionysos and Osiris recorded by Plutarch (which seem to have a common source) with the tradition about Melqart from Eudoxos in which the god is associated with the myth of Osiris. This is especially the case because both traditions (Plutarch and Eudoxos) are drawing from the same dynamics of syncretism between deities in the eastern Mediterranean.

As we saw in Chapter 3, the myth from Eudoxos exemplifies the complex syncretism between not only Melqart and Herakles but also Melqart and Osiris that began as early as the fourth-century BCE. In the myth, the god Typhon kills Herakles (Melqart) and Iolaos revives him with the sacrifice of a quail. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, we do not know what sources Eudoxos utilized for the myth, but we can postulate that he relied on Tyrian archives and other lost sources or even oral traditions about the god circulating in the Mediterranean. In a similar way to Eudoxos, Plutarch, in the first-century CE, correlates the gods Osiris and Dionysos in the passage quoted above. But as we know, these gods had been syncretized long before Plutarch, and therefore, he is relying on older sources (such as Herodotos), as well as his own occult knowledge of myths and rituals as a priest of Delphi. Contextually, in both Plutarch's account and Eudoxos' myth, we are dealing with stories about the death and rebirth of a god. Eudoxos' myth, which associates the myths of the death and rebirth of Melqart and Osiris, probably refers to the *egersis* rites celebrated at Tyre. Additionally, Melqart's *egersis* festival, celebrated in the lunar month of Peritios (February-March), was a spring fertility festival. Plutarch does not specify the season when the awakening of Liknites was performed; however, the

discussion of Osiris and Dionysos within the context of fertility beliefs implies that we can, as Nilsson thought, associate Liknites with some sort of fertility rites as well.

Although Plutarch does not mention Melqart, the context of dying and rising gods and his use of the word ἐγείρω to describe the ritual awakening of Dionysos Liknites draws us into the realm of Melqart's *egersis* rites. For instance, Josephos, who records the earliest usage of the term *egersis* for the rites of Melqart (see Chapter 3), was contemporary with Plutarch. This exemplifies that information about both Dionysos and Melqart was circulating among Roman easterners (Greeks and Jews) writing in Greek about traditions of the eastern Mediterranean. Thus, considering the context of dying and rising gods, it is difficult to know whether Plutarch is intentionally alluding to the awakening of Melqart, or perhaps more likely, whether the word ἐγείρω simply covers the same semantic field as the two distinct rites performed by Greeks at Delphi and by Phoenicians at Tyre and Gades. In either case, we are dealing with complementary traditions about the death of god who is then "awakened" by a ritual.

Furthermore, it is not simply that the references to the rites of Melqart and Dionysos Liknites both use the Greek verb ἐγείρω that connect these two gods but that both are gods associated elsewhere with Osiris. Thus, it is likely that a Greek speaker (at least those aware or involved in mysteries connected to the afterlife) would have recognized the parallels between Osiris and Dionysos, as well as between both of these and Melqart, whose *egersis* festival was well known in the Mediterranean. Because of the hybrid environment in the eastern Mediterranean, these sources indicate that the triangulation between these myths allowed *interpretatio* of deities and rituals (evident in Herodotos already) and made it possible for details from the stories of these different

gods to move back and forth between these cultures and for their mythologies to coalesce within Greek literature.

Finally, the ritual mentioned by Plutarch involves a *divine child*, in this case the child Dionysos called Liknites. As I argued in my discussion of the sacrifice of Dionysos above, the sixth-century BCE Orphic *bricoleur* probably adapted this motif from the Phoenician myth of child sacrifice that underlies Philo's myth of Ieoud. I also argued in the previous chapter that the myth of Ieoud was connected to the myth of Melqart since both are part of the Tyrian ideology of kingship. Moreover, Plutarch states that the Liknites ritual is a "secret sacrifice" (θυσίαν ἀπόρρητον), which we can compare to Philo's statement that the practice of child sacrifice was part of secret rites. For that very reason, we can only speculate about the Delphian rites, but because the epithet Liknites refers to the child Dionysos, then the rites performed at Delphi were probably somehow connected to the Orphic myth about the sacrifice and rebirth of the child Dionysos. Moreover, the priestesses of the ritual *egersis* of the child Dionysos recall the Bacchic maenads of Greek myth who performed *sparagmos* for the god. If my reading of the myth of Dionysos is correct, then the rites of *egersis* for Liknites might in some way allude to two Phoenician traditions: the *egersis* rites of Melqart and the myth of child sacrifice represented in the Ieoud myth. In any case, the account of Plutarch exemplifies the intricate level of merging between Greek, Egyptian, and Phoenician gods, even if there were significant differences between the underlying theologies. Moreover, it was probably the Phoenicians, who had incorporated the Egyptian aspects into their religion, that mediated these various motifs.

Conclusion

Scholars have long observed the numerous Near Eastern motifs in the Greek poetry of Hesiod and Homer. More recently, scholars have pointed out the Near Eastern antecedents of certain motifs in the Orphic literature. The historical circumstances that facilitated the creative adaptation and merging of Greek and Near Eastern myths are also well-documented. In the final chapter of this study, I have explored how the Orphic Dionysos myth adapts two Near Eastern motifs: the sacrifice of a god in order to create humanity and the sacrifice of a child god and his rebirth. As I have attempted to point out, the parallels in the Dionysos myth to Mesopotamian and Phoenician motifs point to the Phoenicians as the likely mediators between these more ancient cultures and the Orphic myth of Dionysos. I argued, in particular, that the sixth-century BCE Orphic *bricoleur* of the Dionysos myth adapted the idea of anthropogeny via sacrifice from the Mesopotamian tradition behind the *Atrahasis*. I discussed how the differences between the two myths highlight not only the process of adaptation of stories over centuries of contact between cultures in the ancient Mediterranean but also the differences between the theologies of the respective culture. In terms of transmission of this motif, it is possible that it independently informed the Greek tradition, or more likely, that it was also embedded with and mediated by the Phoenician tradition.

Additionally, I argued that the Orphic *bricoleur* adapted the idea of the sacrifice of a child god specifically from the Phoenician tradition underlying Philo's myth of Ieoud. Thus, the *bricoleur* created a unique Greek myth of child sacrifice, drawn from Phoenician traditions. The important verbal link between the Orphic tradition and Philo's tradition is the word *to aidoion/ta aidoia* used to describe the castration of a god in both

the Orphic texts and Philo's Greek translation of the Phoenician myth. Moreover, the myth of the castration of Ouranos is directly related to the sacrifice of the divine child Ieoud in the Phoenician version of the myths transmitted by Philo. If my reading is correct, then this implies that Philo was not simply engaging with Phoenician texts but also Orphic texts that had already assimilated the Hurro-Hittite castration motif via the Phoenician milieu. In other words, the castration motif was circulating throughout the Greek-Phoenician milieu and cycling back and forth between the different traditions to the point that it becomes difficult to isolate the individual strands of the various traditions. Ultimately, the word *ta aidolia* in Philo highlights the close contact between the Greek and Phoenician cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

The Orphic *bricoleur* not only adapted the infant god sacrifice motif but also drew from older Greek traditions about gods performing sacrifice, namely the first sacrifice performed by the Titan Prometheus known from Hesiod. As I argued in Chapters 1 and 2, this motif was first drawn from the Mesopotamian tradition. However, by the time the Orphic *bricoleur* was composing his myth (sixth-century BCE), the Greek tradition had already fully absorbed this motif. Thus, the *bricoleur* merged various Mediterranean traditions that had already gone through a process of adaption and created a unique Greek myth in which *the Titans perform a divine child sacrifice*, a pastiche of Mesopotamian, Greek, and Phoenician motifs. This intricate level of adaptation of motifs spotlights the close interactions between the cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean over centuries of contact, and in particular, underscores the role of the Phoenicians in this process of cultural exchange.

This chapter has also revealed some insights into what I call the “Mediterranean Triangle,” a geographical and literary space, where people were all in dialogue with each other through their myths, rituals, and *myths about rituals*. We can think of Herodotos, and other authors writing in Greek, such as Philo, Plutarch, and even the Orphic scholars, as literary nodal points between the traditions of the Greeks, Egyptians, and Phoenicians. In the example of Plutarch’s account, the gods Dionysos, Osiris, and even implicitly Melqart (as a foil to both Dionysos and Osiris as dying and rising gods), are related in a sort of ‘triangular identity.’ As I have shown in this dissertation, the connectivity in the eastern Mediterranean facilitated the transmission and merging of myths and rituals. The transmission of these motifs is not understood here as the result of straightforward diffusion of knowledge but rather as the result of the intersection between cultures with both shared and unique beliefs. Moreover, the transmission was part of the back and forth process of cultural exchange over centuries of contact. The study of the triangulation between these myths suggests a key Phoenician role in the transmission of the stories. Within this geographical and literary space, the traditions about divine sacrifices moved back and forth and coalesced into a cultural hybrid space. This explains why the Orphic Dionysos myth is so exceptional *vis-à-vis* Greek religion, while we can better understand it if we look outside Greek traditions to the Near Eastern milieu, namely because the myth is the creative product of centuries of cultural contact and merging of different literary and mythological traditions.

Orphic literature shares a cluster of characteristics exclusively with Phoenician literature, which suggests that the Phoenicians played a pivotal role in the transmission of these particular Near Eastern materials. Indeed, the Greeks themselves acknowledged the

general role of the Phoenicians as mediators for religious and mythological content, and in particular, in relation to the Mysteries. Herodotos records that the Orphic-Bacchic rites originated in Egypt and were transmitted to Greece via Kadmos and the Phoenicians. On the Orphic tablets, the prominence of the tree in the afterlife points to the Phoenician background of the Orphic texts. Trees were also symbols of fertility in Levantine traditions, which, as we have seen, borrowed Egyptian motifs.¹²⁷⁴ Thus, the tree was a symbol of fertility not only in Egyptian and Orphic funerary texts but more generally throughout the Levant. The olive tree was notably the symbol of Tyre and featured in the two attested myths of the origins of Tyre (Philo of Byblos and Nonnos), as well as in the iconography of Tyrian coins.¹²⁷⁵ It is possible that the tree of Tyre was related to the mother goddess, in the case of Tyre, the goddess Astarte. We can also postulate that the tree featured in the Orphic and Egyptian funeral texts was related to the same idea of fertility depicted by the stylized tree of the Levantine mother goddess' iconography. As López-Ruiz explains, although the Phoenicians utilized Egyptian funerary iconography, we do not see the tree associated specifically with Phoenician funerary texts (note that Phoenician texts, saving very formulaic inscriptions are mostly lost) as we do with the Egyptian and Greek texts.¹²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the tree is an iconographical link between the cultures of Greece, Egypt, and Phoenicia.

¹²⁷⁴ In their study of the iconography of the goddess in ancient Israel, biblical scholars Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger (1998: 26-29) explain that in the early depictions of the naked mother goddess from the Middle Bronze Age IIB period the goddess holds vegetation branches and the genitalia are frequently emphasized as a personification of the fertility of the earth. As the scholars explain (1998: 128-131), later during the Iron Age I period the idea of the fertility of the mother goddess was evoked through the symbols of the suckling mother animal or the stylized tree.

¹²⁷⁵ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.10. Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.469-492. For images of the coins, see Bonnet 1988:

Fig. 2.

¹²⁷⁶ López-Ruiz 2015: 76-77. For Phoenician-Punic literature, see López-Ruiz 2019.

An important outcome of viewing the intersecting mythologies of Dionysos, Osiris, and Melqart as forming a triangularity is the isolation of a unifying feature between the mythic traditions: the myth of the death and rebirth of each of these deities is connected to cult practices that are specific for that culture. Melqart is immolated in a way that reflects not only a standard burnt offering but also Phoenician practices of child sacrifice, and the “awakening” of Melqart-Herakles is stimulated by the savor of a burnt offering. Dionysos, on the other hand, is sacrificed in a uniquely Greek depiction of mythical Bacchic *sparagmos*, and in other traditions, his sacrifice is described as a typical Greek *thusia*. Moreover, the fact that he is sacrificed as a child points to Phoenician traditions about child sacrifice (*molk* ritual) that may have entered the Orphic texts along with other motifs.

Osiris, on the other hand, is not sacrificed at all, since the Egyptians did not perform sacrifice like the Greeks and Phoenicians did; instead, Osiris is represented as a mummy, as is fitting to some Egyptian animal offerings and more generally to funerary rites, yet the traditions of his death and rebirth are still intimately connected to cultic activity. For instance, at the festivals of Osiris the death and rebirth of the god were reflected in the practice of “Osiris gardens”: the gardens, shaped in the form of a mummy, embody the practice of mummification but also the belief in the continued life after death in the Underworld, symbolized in the growth of the grain. Additionally, Osiris’ dismemberment is connected to the different tombs for Osiris, such as the tomb at Pokier, where the statue of Osiris would stay overnight during an annual festival that culminated in the return of the image to the temple in a symbolic gesture of “rebirth.” Thus, within a Mediterranean mythological continuum where the theme of dying and

rising gods is shared, each god can be viewed from this perspective as a distinct cultural version of the dying and rising type.

Along these lines, it is possible that the two Greek gods Dionysos and Herakles were especially associated with each other because of the connections already established between Dionysos and Osiris, on the one hand, and Melqart and Herakles, on the other hand. In this case, the identification between Osiris and Melqart could have acted as a bridge between Dionysos and Herakles. We see a connection between Dionysos and Herakles-Melqart in the foundation story of Tyre according to Nonnos, in which Herakles-Melqart tells the story of the founding of Tyre to Dionysos.¹²⁷⁷ But this preliminary observation will require further research that is out of the scope of this dissertation.

An important similarity between these different Mediterranean traditions is that, although we are dealing with mythical interconnections, the motif of the death and rebirth of the god is mirrored by historical cult practices. For instance, in the cult of Osiris, besides the Osiris-gardens there is evidence for the “raise yourself” litanies, and in the cult of Melqart, the cultic term “resuscitator of the god” occurs in inscriptions throughout the Phoenician colonies. We also see a similar type of cultic terminology in the rites of the “awakening” of Dionysos Liknites mentioned by Plutarch, which may be related to the Dionysian ceremonies attested epigraphically at Rhodes. The *sparagmos* rites described in the Orphic myth of Dionysos, on the other hand, are purely mythical since Greek sources do not attest to the use of *sparagmos* in the historical cults of Dionysos. Nevertheless, the myth of Dionysos and the historical rites of the awakening of Liknites

¹²⁷⁷ Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.423-538.

at Delphi were probably related in some way, but our knowledge is limited since the myths and rites were, after all, part of the Mysteries.

Considering the triangulation between the rites of “awakening” in these cults, what then are the implications for the Orphic *bricolage* and the transmission of the Dionysos myth? It is likely that the Dionysos myth was simply part of a very ancient Mediterranean tradition of dying and rising gods that was exchanged back and forth between cultures and transformed by different communities in particular ways so as to reflect their own afterlife beliefs and their own practices of sacrifice. The Phoenician “water-mark” (e.g., Time, the cosmic egg, and child sacrifice) in the Orphic myths points to the Phoenicians as the primary transmitters of these traditions. Depictions of the death of a god by means of sacrifice were unfamiliar to Greek culture but long established in Phoenician myths (Melqart, Ieoud), which also linked fertility connotations to the god’s sacrifice and revival, all aspects we see in the Dionysiac mythology and rituals. For the sake of a better word, this type of representation is more “Eastern” or “Oriental,” what is more, they seem idiosyncratically Phoenician, given the importance of the Melqart figure in Phoenician-Punic culture. In this regard, the Orphic myth of the infant god Dionysos is unique for its various representation of the death of Dionysos as a blood-sacrifice and burnt offering of a god, and for this reason, its Phoenician influence is more apparent.

A major difference between the myth of Melqart and the myths of Dionysos and Osiris is the manner of the god’s death. In both the myths of Dionysos and Osiris, the gods are dismembered. In the myth of Dionysos, the dismemberment is depicted as part of the perversion of traditional Greek sacrifice or as an intensification of his cult. In the myth of Osiris, on the other hand, the dismemberment symbolizes the condition of death

that necessitates the restoration and preservation of the body via the ritual process of mummification and promotes the spread of the cult of Osiris via the different tombs of the god corresponding to the dismembered body. Melqart, on the other hand, is not dismembered but rather immolated as a sort of burnt offering. We admittedly know much less about Phoenician sacrifice and myths than we do about the myths and rituals of Greece and Egypt, but the available evidence does not seem to emphasize the careful butchering of sacrificial animals as we see in Greece. The best comparative evidence for butchering among west Semitic peoples comes from the Hebrew Bible in which the Book of Leviticus prescribes the butchering practices involved in sacrifice.¹²⁷⁸ Despite both being west Semitic cultures, it is problematic to apply the Israelite practices to understanding Phoenician sacrifice. In that regard, it might be better to understand Melqart's immolation more in line with cremation than burnt sacrifice, as Mettinger states, "Melqart's death upon the pyre reflects a society where incineration has become important."¹²⁷⁹ On the other hand, Lipiński has argued that the Phoenician and Israelite practices were fundamentally similar.¹²⁸⁰

At the level of afterlife beliefs, the Orphic myth of Dionysos is part of the literature of mystery cults that promised a blessed-afterlife for their initiates, and the Neo-Platonists later explained the myth of Dionysos as an allegory for the soul. Even earlier, in Homer's time, Dionysos was possibly associated with funerary practices and the god Hades. For the Egyptians, the myth of Osiris, king of the dead, functioned as a

¹²⁷⁸ See Leviticus 1.

¹²⁷⁹ Mettinger 2001: 111.

¹²⁸⁰ Lipiński 1993.

paradigmatic model for mummification practices and symbolized each deceased's revival in the afterlife. Melqart's immolation, finally, can also be interpreted as a cremation, as Mettinger has argued. Hence, we can also think about the historical antecedents of the cult of Melqart from the Canaanite realm of divinized royal ancestors, as Bonnet has discussed. For the Phoenicians, Melqart's immolation may be related to Phoenician beliefs in purification and regeneration, such as what we see in the Tyrian *egersis* rites, or Philo's account about the rejuvenation of "fiery" serpents, or the description of the serpent and the flaming tree of Tyre in Nonnos.¹²⁸¹ But regardless of whether we interpret the death of these gods as sacrificial or funerary, their death and rebirth are always related to cultic activity. Thus, through the lens of triangularity all three myths are deeply connected to not simply sacrifice and the cult of the dead but a *cult of the dying and rising god*. In the following concluding chapter of this dissertation, I discuss the overall results and implications of this study and offer some avenues for future research.

¹²⁸¹ Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 1.10.47; Nonnos, *Dion.* 40.469-492.

Conclusion

“A fire *of sacrifice*—that’s what the world up there is, Gautama. Its firewood is the sun; its smoke is the sunbeams; its flame is the day; its embers are the quarters; and its sparks are the intermediate quarters. In that very fire gods offer faith, and from that offering springs King Soma *the Moon*.”

—*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 6.2.10.¹²⁸²

In this dissertation, I have investigated the aitiological dimensions of myths about gods involved in sacrifice. My approach has filled in the gaps to previous scholarship by not only isolating the myths about gods who perform sacrifice or are the victims of sacrifice but also by investigating how myths about ritualized deities were involved in the dynamics of cultural exchange in the ancient Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. I have argued that we can gain deeper insights into this phenomenon by using the more methodologically rigorous approach of cultural exchange to understand how this motif was creatively reworked by cultures in contact. Moreover, I have contributed to the long-standing scholarship about dying and rising gods and the new interest in studying this motif from a more historically conscientious approach. I followed that approach but focused specifically on myths about gods whose death is described as a sacrifice.

Gods Performing Sacrifice

I investigated the theme of gods performing sacrifice in the stories of *Atrahasis*, Hesiod’s Prometheus, Philo’s Ieoud, and the Orphic Dionysos. I focused on strict

¹²⁸² Translation by Olivelle 1998: 147-149. My emendations in italics.

representations of sacrifice rather than the broader category of ritual investigated by Patton. In *Atrahasis*, Enki and the other gods perform the first sacrifice, indicated by the ritual context of purification and sacred days in conjunction with the Akkadian term *tbh*. In Hesiod, the Titan Prometheus performs the first act of *thusia*, indicated by the characteristic Greek tradition of offering thigh bones to the god and the aitiological reference to humans performing the rites on “smoking altars.” In Philo, the god El offers up his son Ieoud, and he uses a compound form of the technical term θύω “to sacrifice” to describe the act. Finally, in the Orphic myth, the Titans sacrifice Dionysos, and the different strands of this myth describe the mythical act as *sparagmos* or with other phases of typical Greek sacrifice, such as butchering and roasting the flesh. In each of these myths, I focused on the terminology and imagery used to describe the ritual in order to show how they are depicted as sacrifices. Following Patton’s approach, the ancient cultures studied in this dissertation understood that the origin of religion lay in their gods. In each of these myths, the gods establish a paradigm for sacrifice, and in so doing, they define and perpetuate their cult.

Gods as Victims

This dissertation has also shown that gods do not only amplify their cult by performing rites but also by posing as the victim of such rites, and hence, Patton’s idea of divine reflexivity should also be extended to myths about gods as victims. In fact, the same myths about gods offering sacrifice also typically include gods as the victim of sacrifice, with the only exception being the myth of Prometheus who offers an ox to Zeus. In this regard, Prometheus is more akin to the Ugaritic gods, such as El and Anat,

who slaughter animals for banquets of the gods. But gods are depicted as victims in the other myths studied here. In the *Atrahasis*, the rebel god Ilawela is selected as the victim of the first sacrifice. In Philo's story, the child god Ieoud is sacrificed by his father El-Kronos. In the Orphic myth, the god Dionysos is the victim of the type of sacrifice that his worshippers offered to him in mythical representations of the cult, namely *sparagmos*.

In the case of Melqart, the fragmentary state of the sources suggests that the god was depicted as a victim of burnt sacrifice during the historical rites of *egersis*, in which case the city-state and king of Tyre performed the rite. I connected the literary descriptions of Melqart's death via burning on a pyre with the Phoenician practice of burnt sacrifice; moreover, I connected these descriptions to the iconography of the Sidon vase, which I interpret as evidence of the Phoenician city-state offering the god on an altar. Whether or not the lost Phoenician *myth* of the god Melqart depicted his death as a sacrifice is more difficult to determine. I proposed two ways of answering this question by analyzing what I identified as Greek versions of the myth (Eudoxos and Herodotos), as well as Philo's Phoenician myths about child sacrifice. The Greek version of the myth attributed to Eudoxos of Knidos describes Melqart's death by the god Typhon and suggests that the original Phoenician myth may have described Melqart's death at the hands of another god. Moreover, his rebirth is directly connected to the performance of a sacrifice, implying the possibility that another god may have sacrificed Melqart in a lost Phoenician myth.

I also argued that the myth of the attempted sacrifice of Herakles in Herodotos was another Greek adaptation of the Melqart myth, which, if my reading is correct, suggests that the original Tyrian myth probably described the god's death as a sacrifice.

Lastly, I argued that the story of Ieoud can be understood as a paradigm for the myth of Melqart because of the Tyrian context in which the story is set and connections with parallel Levantine stories about sacrifice and rebirth. If my reading is correct, Philo's account provides further evidence that the lost Tyrian version of the myth may have described another god, who was identified with Typhon, performing the sacrifice of Melqart. It is also possible that there were different versions of his death and that the sacrifice motif was only one of several. In sum, the various myths about ritualized deities demonstrate that these ancient cultures believed that the gods were ritually self-sufficient not only for performing divine sacrifice but also for selecting a divine victim.

Sacrifice and Anthropogeny

In three different myths, I pointed to the theme of divine sacrifice and anthropogeny. In the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis*, the sacrifice of the god Ilawela facilitates the creation of the first humans. I argued that this theme is also evident in the works of the Greek poet Hesiod in his depiction of the first sacrifice that results in the creation of Pandora, the first woman. As I explained next, along with the theme of sacrifice, the theme of anthropogeny provides a link between the stories of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod. In Hesiod, the actions of the Titan Prometheus, the theft of fire and first sacrifice, provoke the creation of Pandora, the first woman, who is Zeus' tricky gift-offering in return. In the Orphic Dionysos myth, the first humans are created from the blasted bodies of the Titans who had sacrificed and devoured Dionysos. Only in the *Atrahasis*, however, is the connection between sacrifice and anthropogeny a deliberate one. In that myth, the god is sacrificed with the sole intention of creating the first humans. In the myths of Prometheus

and Dionysos, on the other hand, the anthropogeny is an unintended consequence of the sacrifice. This points to the poets' creative adaptation of the Near Eastern material and shows how the motif was reworked but still maintained the core theme. In Chapter 2, I explored these connections within the framework of the dynamics of Mediterranean cultural exchange that facilitated the creative adaptation of Near Eastern material by Greeks. I also explored traces of the Mesopotamian motif in the Greek story of the flood preserved by Pseudo-Apollodoros, in which Deukalion, the son of Prometheus, survives the flood, performs the first sacrifice, and prays that humans be created. This theme is also evident in the myth of Dionysos, in which the first humans are created from the blasted soot of the sacrificed Dionysos. Additionally, the Titans are connected to sacrifice and anthropogeny in both the myths of Prometheus and Dionysos. The relationship between myths about ritualized deities and stories about the creation of humans underscores that these ancient cultures believed the gods were the originators of not only human rituals but human life itself.

Aitiologies

Each of the myths about ritualized deities studied in this dissertation contain connections to aitiologies of sacrifice. Indeed, the aitiological component of myths about divine sacrifice is a gap that I aimed to fill from Patton's study. I argued that by interpreting the slaughter of Ilawela as a sacrifice the story can be understood as an aitiology for the reason why humans offer sacrifice, namely because they were created in order to relieve the gods from work and provide them food offerings. In the Greek tradition, Hesiod explicitly states that the myth of Prometheus explains the reason why

the Greeks offer thigh bones to the gods. In the story of the death and rebirth of Melqart preserved by Eudoxos of Knidos, the rebirth of the god via the savor of quails is explained as an aitiology for why the Phoenicians offer quails to Melqart. The story of the sacrifice of Ieoud can be interpreted as an aitiology for the west Phoenician practice of child sacrifice at Carthage, although Philo attributes the practice to ancient cultures more generally. The Israelite story of Isaac, on the other hand, can be interpreted as an aitiology for why the Israelites do not practice child sacrifice or, alternatively, as an aitiology for substitution sacrifice. Finally, the story of Dionysos depicts the god as the victim of *sparagmos*, and later Christian commentators interpreted the myth as an aitiology for this mythical practice. In Chapter 7, I triangulated the comparison between the cases of Melqart and Dionysos by bringing in the myth of the dismemberment and rebirth of Osiris. This story is also aitiological, in so far as the Egyptians believed that each person who dies becomes an Osiris figure and was dismembered after death as part of the funerary process and then reborn to an eternal life in the afterlife. The fact that these stories of ritualized gods are connected to aitiological ideas offers us a new understanding of the function of aitiologies of sacrifice. Specifically, aitiologies of sacrifice should be included as a key modality of Patton's "divine reflexivity" for the perpetuation of the cult of the god. In other words, all ritual begins and ends with the god, including gods as performers and victims of sacrifice, as well as the stories about *why* the rite was first performed. Moreover, this view about the divine origins of sacrifice underlines how these ancient cultures believed that the gods—not humans—established sacrifice.

Dying and Rising Gods—Death and Rebirth

All the ancient cultures studied in this dissertation believed in dying and rising gods or, in the case of ancient Israel, ideas about death and rebirth associated with fertility. This study has added a new dimension to the question of dying and rising gods by showing how the death of these gods is frequently depicted as a sacrifice or other cult practice (as in the case of funerary rites and Osiris). Even in the case of Israel, the death and symbolic rebirth of Isaac (via the fertility of the Israelites) hinges on a story about sacrifice. The major exception is the Ugaritic myth of Baal, whose death probably cannot be interpreted as a sacrifice. Nevertheless, in cognate myths of the Phoenicians, the Baal type gods Ieoud and Melqart are both sacrificed and reborn, as I have argued.

The Greeks, however, were more resistant to the idea of dying gods than their Near Eastern neighbors, and the only Greek myth about a god (Dionysos) as the *successful* victim of a sacrifice performed by other divinities (Titans) was influenced by Near Eastern traditions. Even in the myth of the *attempted* sacrifice of Herakles, the hero-god literally resists the potential to be a victim of sacrifice. Nevertheless, as I have argued, Near Eastern traditions influenced the myths of both Dionysos and Herakles. Moreover, Dionysos and Herakles are the only native Greek dying and rising gods. In the case of Dionysos, his rebirth is accomplished after he is sacrificed and devoured by the Titans; and in the case of Herakles, his rebirth is depicted by his immortalization as a god after his self-immolation. The representation of the rebirth of the god after his sacrifice is itself another dimension of Patton's idea of the perpetuation of cult through the ritual activity of the god. In the case of gods who are victims, the implicit idea is that the cult of the god can never die but is continually renewed by cult practice. For example, in the

mythical world of Dionysiac sacrifice, ancient commentators interpreted the performance of *sparagmos* by maenads as a commemoration of the death and rebirth of Dionysos; and in the Tyrian *egersis* rites, the yearly performance of the rites celebrates the death and “awakening” of the god by offering up the divinity as a burnt sacrifice.

Underlining all the myths about sacrifice explored in this dissertation is the archetypal theme of birth and death, the defining human experiences. The stories of *Atrahasis* and Hesiod depict the first sacrifice that leads to the birth of the first humans, who then perform sacrifice for the gods that created them. The stories of Melqart, Ieoud, Isaac, Osiris, and Dionysos all epitomize the cycle of life and death through the representation of the death of the god and his rebirth. More specifically, the myths of Melqart, Isaac, and Ieoud are connected to fertility beliefs, and the myths of Osiris and Dionysos are connected to funerary beliefs. In certain cases, there are even yearly rites celebrating these beliefs, such as the *egersis* rites for Melqart at Tyre and Gades and for Dionysos at Delphi and the fire festival at Mt. Oita for Herakles. Some of these traditions emphasize the god’s death as a sacrifice more than others, but all of them connect the cycle of death and rebirth to ritual practices. Thus, the focus on dying and rising gods in connection with sacrifice provides a different way of interpreting the practice of sacrifice from the typical view where we usually focus on the retribution aspect of pleasing or appeasing the gods (Greek and Levantine) or the act of sustaining them as if they were people who need food (Mesopotamian). The model of dying and rising ritualized deities, on the other hand, penetrates deeper into a more basic sense that, because we observe elements of nature that die and are reborn, by controlling the “dying” (sacrifice) perhaps

we can somewhat control and produce life (crops, fertility, etc.). Indeed, the stories of ritualized deities take us back to the primal origins of the cycles of nature.

Human Sacrifice

Because of the prominent anthropomorphism of the divinities of these ancient cultures, all the myths about ritualized deities evoke ideas about human sacrifice. This theme can be interpreted in at least two different ways depending on the theology of the culture. For the culture of Mesopotamia, where human sacrifice is not attested in practice archaeologically or iconographically, I offered one possible explanation for the idea of human sacrifice conveyed by the sacrifice of Ilawela as part of the cosmological context of the story. In other words, a god is depicted as a victim because other types of victims do not yet exist. A parallel way of thinking about this is that in other cosmologies, such as Hesiod's *Theogony*, divine siblings engage in the taboo of incest because of the lack of genetic variation needed for creation.

As for the Phoenician stories of Melqart and Ieoud, on the other hand, we have compelling archaeological and written (epigraphic, literary) evidence for the practice of human sacrifice among the west Phoenicians. Therefore, it is important to take this historical reality into consideration when interpreting the myth. From an aitiological standpoint, the myths about gods as victims of sacrifice provide a justification for the practice of child sacrifice. This is especially clear with the story of Ieoud and the Carthaginians because in both myth and practice the act was performed only during an extraordinary situation. This interpretation becomes even more conspicuous when we consider the Israelite story of Isaac, which seems to have been a deliberate ideological

reaction against the practices of their Canaanite neighbors. Although there is no archaeological evidence for human sacrifice in the Phoenician homeland in the Levant, we do have sources that point to its origins there.

As I have hoped to have shown, the practice of human sacrifice among the Carthaginians can be better understood by situating the *molk* offerings within the context of the cult of Melqart who was immolated and reborn during the *egersis* rites. Moreover, if my reading of the Ieoud story is correct, then the lost Tyrian myths about Melqart may have emphasized the connection between his immolation and child sacrifice. Furthermore, just as the Israelite story of Isaac is a reaction to neighboring practices, we can deduce that the story preserved by Herodotos depicts a Greek reaction to the theme of the sacrifice of a god underlying the myth of Melqart, making the point that Greeks do not engage in this sort of practice or that their Herakles-Melqart is not subject to sacrifice. Finally, in so far as the Dionysos myth adapts a variety of mythic strands, we can explain the connotations of the infant god's sacrifice through the cosmological context of the story, as with the *Atrahasis*, but also as an adaptation of a Phoenician mythic strand, such as the one represented in the story of the sacrifice of the child god Ieoud. As we know, gods and humans meet in a dialectic about life and death with the performance of a sacrifice. But the myths about ritualized dying and rising gods intensify the relationship between human and divine, and the rawness of life and death in nature, by evoking the idea of human sacrifice.

Polytheism and Monolatry

Most of the Mediterranean societies studied in this dissertation were polytheistic, which allowed their myths to be more easily adapted, since polytheistic theologies can be more flexible in reworking of myths from other polytheistic societies. For instance, we have seen how the poet Hesiod easily reworked the Mesopotamian theme of a god performing a sacrifice of another god by depicting Prometheus performing a sacrifice of an ox *to* another god, namely Zeus. The culture of the Israelites, on the other hand, adapted myths in a different way to account for their monolatry (the belief in many gods but worship of one god). In the traditions I have investigated, YHWH does not perform rites himself, instead, his chosen Israelites perform them at his direction, such as in the case of the sacrifice of Isaac that YHWH commands. In other words, there is not the possibility of “divine sacrifice” for YHWH because only gods can sacrifice other gods, and YHWH is the only god worshipped by the Israelites. Yet, YHWH defines and perpetuates his cult in other ways, for example, by commanding the performance of a sacrifice to Abraham and then regulating the procedures of the cult by prohibiting the same practice. Thus, as we have seen in several examples, YHWH is still described in terms that evoke his capability to perform sacrifice. Therefore, the idea of YHWH performing sacrifice was a theological possibility for the early Israelites because of the polytheistic milieu of the ancient Mediterranean. Moreover, in the Levantine background for the representations of YHWH is the fact that he is also identified with El, the Canaanite god who does sacrifice his son in Philo’s account.

The study of the Levantine myths and sacrifice also informs our understanding of later Christian depictions of the death of Christ. For example, the Gospel of John (3:16)

states, “For God so loved the world that *He gave his only son* (μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν).” As Levenson has argued, the Greek term here for only son (μονογενῆ) is clearly reminiscent of Isaac’s sacrifice in Genesis 22 and Philo’s myth of the “only son’s” (Ieoud) sacrifice and the Greek term ἔδωκεν “he gave” has a cultic connotation.¹²⁸³ As we saw in the study of Philo and the Ugaritic myth of Baal, the term “to give” has cultic connotations in both Ugaritic and Greek. In the story of Christ, the death and rebirth of the son of God is also connected to the idea of sacrifice, and to this day Catholics partake in the bloody sacrifice of Christ each Sunday. From Cook’s approach, in which pagan myths about dying and rising gods helped early Christians accept the doctrine of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, the pagan stories about sacrificed gods must have also helped them more readily accept the account of Christ’s sacrifice by his father. This can also help explain why Christianity spread so quickly, because it was able to utilize the trade and myth networks already well established in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean.

Transmission and Cultural Exchange

The picture that has emerged from this cross-cultural and diachronic investigation is a vibrant and dynamic Mediterranean network of myths about ritualized deities, a myth network that was supported by ancient trade networks. Along this journey we have encountered diverse people in contact and their myths that depict gods involved in sacrifice, as performers and as victims. These myths were part of a *koinē* of myths from the cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean that propagated their myths along

¹²⁸³ Levenson 1993: 31.

with the cult of the god. Each myth is a distinct and innovative representation of that culture, and each culture worshipped unique gods who are involved in cultic activity. As the Mediterranean people continued to exchange myths and motifs over centuries of contact, the stories from different cultures were adapted and merged in a variety of creative ways, and in other cases, the myths were defined in opposition to the theologies of neighboring cultures.

In very few cases, we can see clear indications of direct contact between different traditions. In most cases, however, we are dealing with themes passed down through very long diachronic oral traditions. The children's game of "telephone" is a useful way of thinking about this type transmission, in which the original message is transformed as it is received and retold by each person. Each successive interlocutor does not have direct access to the original message but only the adapted form. In the case of the Prometheus myth, it is unlikely that Hesiod had direct knowledge of the *Atrahasis*, although it is possible, but it is more likely that a version of the myth underlying the *Atrahasis* was transmitted in an oral form. In a similar way, in the case of the Greek version of the Melqart myth, we are again dealing with an oral form of the myth that was passed down over centuries of contact between Greeks and Phoenicians. It is unlikely that Herodotos or other Greek speakers had direct access to a Phoenician text of the myth of Melqart, although it cannot be completely ruled out. It is likely, however, that the Mesopotamian theme of sacrifice and anthropogeny was transmitted to Greeks via the Phoenicians, as the Orphic myth of Dionysos indicates. The case of the myth of Dionysos best exemplifies this sort of complex diachronic and cross-cultural oral transmission. As I argued, the Orphic myth adapts motifs from the Levantine, Mesopotamian, and even

Egyptian milieus. The ideas of child sacrifice and death and rebirth were probably borrowed from the Levantine strand, the idea of sacrifice and anthropogeny from the Mesopotamian, and the dismemberment from the Egyptian, but the Phoenicians likely helped mediate each of these strands.

In the case of the Levantine myths, such as the story of Isaac and the account of the sacrifice of Ieoud, there are clear indications that the traditions were in direct contact. From a geographical standpoint, the cultures of the Phoenicians and Israelites closely bordered each other, and the Phoenician culture impacted the Israelite culture with the alphabet, artistic motifs, and even cult practices. From a strictly textual standpoint, the use of the Hebrew term *yāhîd* in Genesis 22 suggests that the Israelite story may have directly adapted the original Phoenician story underlying Philo's account of Ieoud. As far as the connections between the Baal epic and the Ieoud myth, in this case we are dealing with a very ancient stream of diachronic oral transmission, but the cities of Phoenicia and Ugarit were also in close contact during the Late Bronze Age. We know that the Baal myth was used as a paradigm for the Tyrian myth of Melqart, and this mythology is reflected in the Phoenician myth of Ieoud preserved by Philo. Despite the prominence of oral transmission, textual transmission and reworking of motifs cannot be discounted, although our testimony is mostly lost. Philo, for example, explicitly states that his text is a Greek translation of a now lost Phoenician history written in Phoenician. Although the texts that we do have, such as Philo, are not exact copies of the originals, they do provide invaluable testimony to these ancient lost texts.

This dissertation has offered several new interpretations of myths that have important implications for our understanding of Aegean and eastern Mediterranean

cultural exchange. My new interpretations of mythological motifs and their adaptations illuminate specific aspects of the process of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean, and in particular, highlight the immense creativity and innovation of the Phoenician and Greek corridor in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. My new reading of the slaughter of Ilawela in *Atrahasis* as a sacrifice intended to create humans offered a new dimension of comparison to the myth of Prometheus and illuminated the underlying and dormant connection between the Greek narrative of the first sacrifice and Pandora. Scholars had long shown that Hesiod's adaptation of the Mesopotamian material exhibits how creative adaptation between two cultures that were far apart—linguistically, culturally, temporally, and geographically—was active by at least the seventh-century BCE. By adding the motif of divine sacrifice, this study has contributed to our understanding of the range of cultural adaptation during this period.

In turn, if my reading is correct, Herodotos' report of the myth of Herakles would be the earliest extant allusion to the Phoenician myth of Melqart. Herodotos not only traveled along the ancient trade networks to carry out his investigations, but he was also a literary nodal point between the cultures of the Greeks, Phoenicians, and Egyptians. Thus, my reading of the Herakles myth shows how creative adaptation of Phoenician myths by Greek speakers was active during the fifth-century BCE. Furthermore, we can now include Phoenician mythical traditions as part of Herodotos' repertoire as he shaped his defining narrative of Greek culture.¹²⁸⁴ Moreover, my reading of the myth helps us better appreciate how Herodotos' project of Hellenicity also utilized appropriation and creative redeployment of another culture's mythology.

¹²⁸⁴ Cf. Hütwohl (forthcoming).

Additionally, my reading of the myth of Ieoud in Philo of Byblos as a story of not just the sacrifice of the god but also his rebirth provides us with another strand of myth for reconstructing the lost Phoenician myth of Melqart. Just as Melqart is a Baal type god, likewise Ieoud is a Baal of Tyre type god (i.e., Melqart). Future discovery of Phoenician texts may confirm or refute my arguments. Finally, my interpretation of the myth of Dionysos demonstrates the extent to which cultural exchange provided poets with diverse material for creative adaptation and helps us account for the anomaly of the only Greek myth to depict a god as the successful victim of sacrifice. Furthermore, my reading of the Dionysos myth shows that creative adaptation between many different cultures was also active at an early period (sixth-century BCE).

In sum, these various themes and connections illuminate the dynamics of cultural exchange in the ancient Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. The flexible adaptability between the myths of the Greeks and Phoenicians (with the Mesopotamian tradition in the far background) suggests that the Phoenician and Greek cultures were, in fact, closer than we once thought. Moreover, this study has shown that the motif of ritualized deities was particularly dominant in the Greek-Phoenician milieu of the eastern Mediterranean. The circularity between the various traditions and the (re)adaptation of different motifs makes it difficult for scholars to know in which direction the various traditions are flowing. Nevertheless, this circularity also exhibits the extent to which the cultures of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean shared traditions. By tracing the fragmented evidence for these motifs, namely aitiologies, ritualized deities, and dying and rising gods, the patterns correlate with the trade routes and evidence for cultural contact between the Levant and Greece in the archaic period and beyond. Thus, these myths add a further

dimension to the comparison of cosmogonic and theological themes in Near Eastern and Greek traditions, long explored by scholars. By isolating the motif of divine sacrifice and following the threads of different traditions, which were transmitted in various texts, I have branched out from the well recognized connections between Greek and Near Eastern literature and begun to traverse new channels of cultural exchange. Indeed, the results of this study beg the question: how many other motifs have been left dormant in the texts waiting to be discovered?

Future Research

One culture that was not discussed in this study is ancient Rome. Although I have used Latin sources, such as Tertullian and Silius Italicus, and other Roman period authors writing in Greek, most importantly Philo of Byblos, to the best of my knowledge the Romans did not have any myths that describe a god performing sacrifice or as the victim of sacrifice. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, however, there is one well known Roman aitiology of sacrifice, namely, the story of the origins of the Vinalia festival. But in that myth it is not a god but Aeneas, a demigod, who offers the grape vine to Zeus. Moreover, this myth does not describe a sacrifice *per se* but rather libation rites. In any case, how are we to explain this apparent anomaly that there are no preserved native Roman myths dealing with divine sacrifice? Does this imply that the phenomenon of ritualized deities was more restricted to the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean because of the prominent connections between Greeks and Phoenicians? On the other hand, the Roman author Ovid does preserve an adaption of the Greek myth of Deukalion and

Pyrrha in which they pray to the gods for humans to be born.¹²⁸⁵ This seems to indicate that we are dealing with a Roman myth that was adapted from a Greek myth, which was, in turn, adapted from the Mesopotamians via the Phoenicians. Currently, I can offer no certain answers for these questions, but future research should thoroughly investigate the question of divine sacrifice and adaptation of motifs by the Roman culture.

Future research should also expand the boundaries from the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean to other cultures that were also in contact with the Mediterranean Basin, such as ancient Anatolia, Persia, and even as far as India. For example, in the eighth-century BCE Indian text, *Shatapatha Brahmana*, a commentary on the *Yajurveda* (a text on sacrifice), we find an intriguing myth that describes the first sacrifice, which is performed by the gods, but the first victim is a human, after which the “sacrificial quality” progressed into a horse, then a cow, then a ram, then a goat, and finally into the vegetal kingdom.¹²⁸⁶ Also, the oldest sacred texts of India, the Vedas, can help us better understand the motif of ritualized deities in ancient mythology and its connection to human sacrifice, rebirth, and even aitiologies. For example, *Rigveda* hymn 10.90 describes the “Cosmic Man,” the “master of immortality” (10.90.2), who faces death as the paradigmatic first victim of a sacrifice offered by the gods: “with the Man as the offering, the gods extended the sacrifice, spring was its melted butter, summer its firewood, autumn its offering. On the ritual grass they consecrated that sacrifice, the Man, born at the beginning” (*Rigveda* 10.90.6).¹²⁸⁷ The hymn is an origin story for the

¹²⁸⁵ Ov. *Met.* 1.375-415.

¹²⁸⁶ See discussion in Johnston 2018: 218. For the myth, see the *Shatapatha Brahmana* cited in O’Flaherty 1988: 84.

¹²⁸⁷ For translation and commentary, see Jamison and Brereton 2014: 1538-1540.

creation of humanity and the practice of sacrifice. The Vedic tradition is unique for the fact that the gods sacrifice a human, a motif not existent in the myths studied in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the human is himself divine and reborn after the sacrifice.

Moreover, the Vedic tradition and its linguistic and ritual cognate, the Zoroastrian texts of ancient Persia, were fire cults.¹²⁸⁸ The Phoenician and Greek cults, in turn, were also focused on fire through the burnt sacrifice. Thus, future work should push the boundaries of comparison and bridge the gaps between these more distant cultures of the east and the Mediterranean and investigate the possible connections between the myths about divine sacrifice in the cults of Greece, Phoenicia, Persia, and India. As a methodological framework for comparing these myths, I propose employing the work of Thomas McEvilley, who has convincingly shown how trade networks in Asia Minor facilitated the intermingling of philosophical and religious ideas from Indian, Persian, Egyptian, and Greek traditions.¹²⁸⁹

In the end, this project has offered a deeper appreciation of the creativity of these ancient societies and the Mediterranean networks that helped communicate the motif of ritualized deities. Ultimately, I hope this project has shed greater light on the ancient and extensive connections between the people of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. In our modern era, increasingly burdened by division, there is no better time than the present to remember the ancient interconnections between cultures and—“I prostrate myself beforeAdrasteia for what I am going to say” (Plato, *Res.* 451a)—even the divinity within all of humanity. Hesiod’s Myth of Ages shows the ancient connections between his

¹²⁸⁸ Heesterman 1993: 83-110.

¹²⁸⁹ McEvilley 2002.

generation of humans and their ancestors. Likewise, we should bear in mind the profound connections with our common ancestors and all of humanity. As the *Atrahasis* states after the sacrifice of the god and the birth of humans: “With his flesh and blood. They heard the drumbeat forever after” (*Atrahasis* I.227). Indeed, we continue to hear the echoes of the motif of ritualized deities.

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Abbreviations

ANET = Pritchard, J. B. 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

AO = Louvre Museum catalogue prefix: 'Antiquités Orientales.'

ARM = Dossin, G. ed. 1941. *Archives Royales de Mari (Textes)*. Paris: P. Geunthner.

BDB = Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds. 1907. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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CTA = Herdner, A. ed. 1963. *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939*. (BAH 79, MRS 10). 2 volumes. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, Geuthner.

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FGH = Jacoby, F. ed. 1954. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Brill: Leiden.

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LSAM = Sokolowski, F. ed. 1955. *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*. Paris: Boccard.

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OED = Simpson, J. A., and E. S. C. Weiner. eds. 1989. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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RS = Ras Shamra Tablet Inventory. Chicago: University of Chicago. Online.

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