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The Deification and Demonization of *Těhôm*:

From Deity to Deep

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

by

Rosanna Ann Lu

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Deification and Demonization of *Těhôm*:

From Deity to Deep

by

Rosanna Ann Lu

Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor William Schniedewind, Chair

The concept of primeval waters (*Těhôm*) in the Hebrew Bible has been difficult to define, resulting in speculation over its identity as a deity, place, or monster. Previous scholarship has focused heavily on *Těhôm*'s creation context to the exclusion of its ritual context. As a result, *Těhôm* has been unduly linked to the Mesopotamian *Tiamat* and interpreted as the embodiment of chaos and conflict. This research addresses the limitations of previous scholarship by examining all contexts of the Hebrew Bible's Deep and comparing them with references in ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite (Ugaritic) texts. Comparative methodology combined with a history of religions approach places the concept of primeval Deep in its ancient Near Eastern context as a source of deified power; this concept transforms into a demonized place of judgment in biblical tradition. Beginning with the ANE context for *Těhôm*,

each chapter analyzes occurrences of primeval Deep under the following categories—Deification (2), Personification (3), Subjugation (4), and Demonization (5)—to show *Těhôm*'s development from deity to deep (abyss).

Těhôm appears as a source of power and blessing in early texts of the Hebrew Bible, and its personification distinctly deifies ancient Israel's deity Yahweh rather than itself. Next, *Těhôm*'s personification as subjugated monster symbolically represents ancient Israel's enemies and justifies Yahweh's power to judge or deliver. The motif of a subjugated Deep legitimates a subjugator's rule, justifies conquest, confers power to human representatives, and empowers ancient people to face their fears. Lastly, in subsequent text-communities of the DSS, LXX, and Targums, *Těhôm* becomes a demonized place of evil. Rabbinic literature expands traditions of *Těhôm*'s origins and end time purposes to reflect apocalyptic interpretations of Jewish eschatology. *Těhôm*'s fluidity as a concept allows it to grow and change according to the needs of its religious community. Despite its interpretive development, it remains a constant reminder and expression of ancient Israel's relationship to Yahweh. Ultimately, *Těhôm*'s evolution from deity to deep reflects the creation of a distinct religious identity centered on Yahweh—the deity who transcends phenomena, situation, time, and place.

The dissertation of Rosanna Ann Lu is approved.

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In loving memory of 李陳素華
whose love of scripture & family is an enduring legacy
[3.10.1931—8.10.2018]
Isaiah 55:12

For 爸 + 媽
my steadfast inspirations

and P.—
for the years
the locusts have eaten
the golden ones
& for always
—all my love

vast, unmeasured, boundless, free
-STF

שיר למעלות
אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי
עזרי מעם יהוה עשה שמים וארץ
(תהלים קכא א-ב)

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANE</i>	Ancient Near East
<i>CAD</i>	<i>Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i>
<i>CAT</i>	<i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</i>
<i>CTH</i>	<i>Catalogue des Textes Hittites</i>
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons</i>
<i>DULAT</i>	<i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Enūma Eliš</i>
<i>ETCSL</i>	<i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature – University of Oxford</i>
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>HB</i>	Hebrew Bible
<i>ISET</i>	Sumerian Literary Tablets and Fragments, Archaeological Museum of Istanbul
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>KAI</i>	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> , eds. H. Donner and W. Röllig.
<i>KTU</i>	<i>Keil-alphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i>
<i>LSAWS</i>	<i>Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic</i>

<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
<i>OMRO</i>	<i>Oudeheikundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Publications de la Mission archéologique française des Ras Shamra-Ougarit</i>
<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
<i>Tg. Ps-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>UDB</i>	<i>Ugaritic Data Bank</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>

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I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. *The Deep: Person, Place, or Thing?*

In the Hebrew Bible, the primeval Deep is a profoundly complex concept that functions in the foreground as a powerful presence and in the background as a passing reference. This concept is foundational to ancient understandings of both the world and human existence particularly as primeval waters pre-exist creation (Gen 1:1-2). The separation of *Těhôm* (תְּהוֹם), the primary Hebrew word used for “Deep,”¹ into upper and lower waters results in the creation of the world. When these same waters are released in the flood narrative (Gen 7:11), creation becomes undone. In the ancient world, life exists within the bounds of these upper and lower waters.

Consequently, *Tehom’s* waters symbolize many contrasting concepts and functions. Its waters are connected with blessing (Gen 49:25, Deut 8:7) but also with judgment (Ezek 26:19). *Tehom’s* depths are contrasted with the heights of mountains and heavens. It is the natural source of all rivers, streams, mighty waters, and the sea (Ezek 31:4), while also personified as a living creature. *Tehom* is like a womb (Gen 49:25); it crouches and lurks below (Deut 33:13); it has a roaring voice and hands (Hab 3:10); and it is a power that trembles under Yahweh’s command (Ps 77:17). In addition to its natural and personified appearances *Tehom* plays a significant role in ancient Israel’s national identity (Exod 15). Historical

¹ HALOT: תְּהוֹם. Other definitions of *Tehom* include: “watery abyss, primeval ocean, flood, depths and waters of the ocean.”

psalms recall *Tehom* in the formative event of the exodus and invoke Yahweh to act again (Isa 51:10, 61:13; Pss 77:17, 78:15, 106:9).

These varied functions and disparate portrayals of *Tehom* raise the question, what exactly is *Tehom*? Is it a powerful ocean deity or the deepest depth of natural waters? A symbolic place or a literal one? A figurative representation of distress or a corporeal sea monster? My research seeks answers to these questions by examining the historical context of comparative traditions in the ancient Near East. Comparative traditions share common cultural conceptions of the world and provide glimpses of ancient human experiences and emotions surrounding the concept of primeval Deep. In particular, the Deep's roles in ancient Near Eastern religious literature contextualize the development of the Hebrew Bible's *Tehom*. In other words, the comparative context provides the framework for drawing out specific implications of *Tehom* for ancient Israelite religion and its subsequent traditions.

1.2. Ancient Near Eastern Deities and Dragons of the Deep

Religions of the ancient Near East commonly conceived of primordial waters, oceans, seas, and other geographic bodies of water as deities. The comparative contexts for the Hebrew Bible's *Tehom* are the deified conceptions of the Deep in ancient Israel's neighboring realms: ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. While some of the texts from these ancient civilizations pre-date the emergence of organized religious practices of ancient Israel, the collective uses of primeval Deep in religious literature emphasize its importance and influence in the ANE. The purpose of this section is not to provide a comprehensive list of ANE water deities, but to mention deities relevant to the Deep from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. Chapter 2 examines relevant passages of ANE deities in greater detail.

Ancient Egyptian conception of the Deep takes the form of *Nun*, deity of primeval ocean and father of the gods.² *Nun*'s primordial beginnings are similar to *Tehom*'s, but there is greater emphasis on *Nun* as the progenitor of all things—*Nun* is “the primary substance, the sum of virtualities, from which all life emerged.”³ Similarly, ancient Mesopotamia's *Nammu*, goddess of subterranean waters, is the “primeval mother” who gives birth to the cosmos and all the gods.⁴ Later Akkadian texts mention *Apsu*, the freshwater ocean deity, and *Tiamat*, the saltwater sea deity; the mixing and mingling of their waters bring forth life. *Tiamat* is etymologically connected with *Tehom* through the common Semitic root *tiham* for “sea.”

The sea in ancient Canaan, however, is *Yammu*, the powerful sea deity known from ancient Ugarit. The same word for sea(s) in the Hebrew Bible, *yam(im)*, flow from the lower waters of *Tehom* that are gathered together at creation (Gen 1:9-10). *Thmt(m)* also appears in Ugaritic literature as the cognate to *Tehom* for Deep or Depths. Although *Yam* appears more frequently in Ugaritic literature and the Hebrew Bible, it is not the primary etymological or conceptual focus of this research. Rather, the focus will be on words and names in ANE literature that specifically reference the primeval Deep's cosmic waters.

Additionally, ancient Near Eastern water deities take the form of sea serpents, which can be

² Cf. Nun, in Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 117-18.

³ DDD: "Atum", 119

⁴ ETCSL: 1.1.2, Line 17.

understood as manifestations and extensions of the watery realm. Serpentine monsters and dragons serve as representations or representatives of water deities and some develop into deities of their own repute. The Egyptian *Apep* (or *Apophis*) is the great serpent of the Nile whose waters flow from the primordial *Nun*. The Mesopotamian *Tiamat* takes the form of a sea dragon and creates an army of sea monsters;⁵ Ugarit's *TNN* dragon⁶ and *LTN*,⁷ the seven-headed dragon of the sea god *Yammu*,⁸ parallel the Hebrew Bible's sea dragons *Tannin* and *Leviathan*.

Sea monsters also appear as antagonizing forces of chaos in ancient narratives. *Apep*, the serpentine Egyptian deity known as "the Lord of Chaos"⁹ is the great enemy of the Egyptian sun god, *Ra*.

⁵ EE: Tablet II, Lines 27-30. Cf. W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, ed. Jerrald S. Cooper, Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 64-65.

⁶ Ugaritic literature describes *TNN* as *Yammu*'s primordial ally or double, cf. DULAT: "tnn", 873-74.

⁷ Note: *LTN* can be vocalized in different ways and translations vary in their usage of *LTN* as *Lotan/u*, *Litan/u*. I use *LTN* except when referencing a translation that includes the translator's vocalization.

⁸ *TNN* can be understood as an epithet for *LTN*, the monster that collaborates with or personifies *Yammu*, cf. DULAT: "ltn", 507.

⁹ In later times, the overthrowing of *Apep* is connected with Seth, the Egyptian god of chaos. Cf. Egyptian text: *The Book of Overthrowing Apep* and selected translations in James B. Pritchard, ed. *Ancient*

Mesopotamia's *Tiamat* epitomizes chaos¹⁰ and fights for power with her army of sea monsters. Ugarit's *LTN* and *Yammu* fight against the storm god *Baal* for control of the seas. In each of these traditions, sea monsters battle deities or their representatives for power and authority. These battles are so prevalent in ancient literature that they have been categorized under the genre of conflict or combat myth. This genre consists of narratives that "promote distinct arrangements of divine characters, elevate a particular deity within the divine hierarchy and portray the political institution of kingship as a natural or given model of legitimate authority."¹¹ As a result, the conflict motif is important and key to understanding ancient etiologies and portrayals of power.

The prevalence of conflict between deities and chaos-monsters, however, has resulted in an assumed genre for origin stories and creation narratives. This can be problematic for creation narratives that do not fit this genre. Not all conflict narratives are creation stories, nor do all creation stories contain conflict. Conflict is an important motif for interpreting *Tehom*, just as creation is an important part of its context, however, the primary focus of this study is not conflict or creation. Rather, this research analyzes all of *Tehom*'s references, even ones outside of creation, and examines conflict as one

Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3rd, with supplement ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 6-7, 11-12.

¹⁰ Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others*, Revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 329.

¹¹ Debra Scoggins Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 72.

characteristic of *Tehom's* power (chapter 4). Reading *Tehom* exclusively as conflict in the Hebrew Bible's creation accounts obscures and limits a holistic understanding of *Tehom's* importance and relevance for ancient Israel. Consequently, the history of scholarship has failed to include a comprehensive and comparative study of *Tehom's* significance for the history of ancient Israelite religion.

1.3. *The Problem of Conflict*

Since Hermann Gunkel's *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton*,¹² scholars have connected *Tehom* with the chaos of the Babylonian ocean goddess, *Tiamat*. They draw the conclusion that the similarities between creation accounts point to *Enuma Elish* as the source behind Genesis. Others have critiqued this argument by claiming that there is no direct connection between *Tehom* and *Tiamat* other than a common Semitic origin for both words: *tiham(at)*,¹³ the natural word for sea and ocean depths. This argument, held by scholars such as David Toshio Tsumura and E.J. Young, completely denies that *Tehom* undergoes any de-mythologization or de-personalization process in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ As opposing arguments to Gunkel, this position remains focused on *Tehom's* creation

¹² Originally published in German as *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895).

¹³ HALOT: תהום.

¹⁴ David Toshio Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and the Flood," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 31. E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1964), 29. Another scholar, G.R. Driver also argued for

context and does not consider the comparative Ugaritic evidence.

Other scholars choose a combination of approaches that continue reacting or responding to Gunkel's theory—highlighting similarities, differences, or both, in understanding *Tehom*.¹⁵ Young (1964) and Tsumura (1989) address the similarities in a common etymology but emphasize that there is no myth background for *Tehom*'s creation context.¹⁶ On the other hand, W.F. Albright (1968), John Day (1985), R.J. Clifford and JJ Collins (1992), and Nahum Sarna (1970) focus on the similarities of myth, but they argue that in the Hebrew Bible myth transforms into motif.¹⁷ Albright specifically interprets

naturalization of mythic elements in the Hebrew Bible by attempts to naturalize mythical monsters in the Hebrew Bible (ie. identifying Behemoth as a crocodile and Leviathan as a whale or dolphin), cf. G.R. Driver, "Mythical monsters in the Old Testament," *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* 1 (1956). These connections have been discounted etymologically.

¹⁵ This section analyzes a selection of scholarly interpretations, specifically ones that explain the implications of *Tehom*'s etymology and relationship to conflict myth.

¹⁶ Young, *Studies in Genesis One*; David Toshio Tsumura, "The Earth and Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation," *JSOT Supplement* no. 83 (1989): 65.

¹⁷ J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); R.J. Clifford, and J.J. Collins, *Creation in the Biblical Traditions*, CBQ Monograph Series (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992); Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1970).

conflict with the dragon and the Sea as a Canaanite motif.¹⁸ Wensinck (1918) focuses on *Tehom* as part of a common ANE worldview and Lambert (1965) builds on this commonality in water cosmogonies to state that any etymological equivalence between *Tehom* and *Tiamat* is of no consequence.¹⁹ Focusing on etymology and replacing myth with motif, however, still confines research on *Tehom* to providing evidence for or against the conflict genre.

Other scholars hold loosely to a mythic or combat background but focus on *Tehom* as a poetic term for natural phenomena in the Hebrew Bible's context. German scholar Kurt Galling (1950) supposes that at one time *Tehom* was *Tiamat* in mythical conception, but its appearance in Genesis is all demythologized vocabulary referencing nature.²⁰ Jack M. Sasson acknowledges that *Tehom* appears as part of combat metaphor but interprets *Tehom* in Genesis and other non-combat references of *Tehom*

¹⁸ William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Eisenbrauns, 1968), 98-99. For more on Canaanite combat myth tradition in ANE literature cf. Albright, "Zebul Yam and Thapit Nahar in the Combat between Baal and the Sea," *JPOS* 16 (1936).

¹⁹ James E. Atwell, "An Egyptian Source for Genesis," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 51, no. 2 (2000): 446. Cf. *"I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*. vol. 4, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 103.

²⁰ Kurt Galling, "Der Charakter der Chaosschilderung in Gen. 1,2," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 47, no. 2 (1950): 150-51.

as “a poetic term for bodies of water.”²¹ The analysis of *Tehom* as a poetic term expands its references beyond creation contexts, however, its use in poetry should not assume a “cover up” of *Tehom*’s ANE context.²²

Additional scholars explain conflict as part of a common creation motif in the ancient Near East that was suppressed as a threat to ancient Israel’s monotheism.²³ In particular, Umberto Cassuto argues that the Genesis creation account was a polemic against common conflict myths of the ancient Near

²¹ Jack Sasson, ed. *Time...to Begin*, Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 189; A. Caquot, "Brèves remarques exégétiques sur Genèse 1, 1–2," in *In principio, interprétations des premiers versets de la Genèse* (Paris: 1973), 17-18.

²² Blair identifies *Tehom* as a mythological motif that is used poetically in the Hebrew Bible. Her argument focuses on ANE demons in the Hebrew Bible, however, she correctly concludes that biblical authors skillfully employed poetic devices to convey a powerful message that cannot be adequately designated as a “cover up” of mythological names (ie. demythologization or de-demonization). Cf. Judit M. Blair, *De-demonising the Old Testament: An Investigation of Azazel, Lilith, Deber, Qeteb and Reshef in the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 108, 216.

²³ Avigdor and Yair Zakovitch Shinan, *From Gods to God: How the Bible Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths and Legends*, trans. Valerie Zakovitch (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2012), 11.

East, and he connects Ugaritic material with the Hebrew Bible.²⁴ This approach explains the emergence of the conflict motif in later biblical references and interpretations, when it is no longer a threat to an established religion. Day, Clifford, and JJ Collins also highlight that differences in *Tehom* point to the development of a unique religion, with Sarna emphasizing that Yahwism breaks the matrix of the conflict myth tradition.²⁵ While elements of these positions are persuasive, they do not fully explain *Tehom*'s "unsuppressed" appearances in poetic passages where other mythological names are removed.²⁶

JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal's edited volume (2013) reconsiders Hermann Gunkel's *chaoskampf* theory with Scurlock separating combat motif from creation to explain it as a common feature to all "Monster-Bashing Myths" of the ancient world. Scurlock makes the distinction that "the combat mytheme"²⁷ in the biblical text has to do, not with the original creation, but with the un-creation

²⁴ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: From Adam to Noah*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 49-50.

²⁵ Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*, 28.

²⁶ See chapter 3 for a comparison between the sources of blessing in Gen 49 and Deut 13.

²⁷ Mytheme is a structuralist term referring to a narrative unit that connects the ideas and themes found in myth. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1963), 211-12.

and re-creation of the divine community.”²⁸ This volume provides many helpful articles in understanding Gunkel’s context, erroneous elements of his theory, and various scholarly approaches to interpreting the commonalities and the distinctives among ANE literatures and cultures.²⁹ Although Scurlock and Beal’s edited volume contains references to *Tehom*, they are brief and only in reference to Gunkel’s positions on *Tehom*’s etymological connections and Genesis context. Most recently, Debra Scoggins Ballentine (2015) analyzes conflict myth as a shared method for producing a legitimate and powerful ideology in ancient narratives and in the biblical tradition.³⁰ Ballentine comes the closest to a comprehensive approach in her comparative analysis of the use of conflict as a shaping ideology in the ANE; however, she overlooks the word *Tehom* and its particular significance for ancient Israelite religion.

Alternatively, a scholar of feminist constructionist theology, Catherine Keller (2003), removes *Tehom* from an ancient Near Eastern lens to argue for a more universal way to understand *Tehom* as the

²⁸ JoAnn Scurlock, and Richard H. Beal, ed. *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaokampf Hypothesis* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), xiv. Also cf. JoAnn Scurlock, “*Chaokampf* Lost—*Chaokampf* Regained: The Gunkel Hypothesis Revisited,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Herman Gunkel’s Chaokampf Hypothesis*, ed. JoAnn Scurlock, and Richard H. Beal (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013).

²⁹ Scurlock, *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaokampf Hypothesis*.

³⁰ Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*.

womb of God.³¹ She deconstructs “tehomophobic” or negative biases of chaos that she claims results from a culture of male dominance and fixation with order.³² While this approach provides a unique perspective, removing *Tehom* from its original context also removes its significance for ancient Israel’s religious development.

Previous scholarship on *Tehom* has been varied and confusing, mostly due to a lack of properly defined terms and conflating positions. Additionally, these approaches focus on *Tehom* only in the creation context of Genesis, as a reaction to Gunkel’s leading interpretation. The following table (Table 1) summarizes the selected positions analyzed in this chapter around *Tehom*’s etymology and relationship to conflict. The positions are grouped by their main emphasis, whether it is a focus on *Tehom*’s similarities (1-3), commonalities (4), or differences (5) in relation to other ANE deeps. More recent and modern interpretations (6-7) are included at the end.

³¹ Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep* (London: Routledge, 2003), 12.

³² *Ibid.*, 20, 31, 95. *Tehom* and *Tiamat* and possible other representations of chaos are in the feminine, understood to be dominated and subjugated by the masculine hero or savior.

TABLE 1. SELECTED APPROACHES TO TEHOM AND CONFLICT MYTH

Focus	Etymology of <i>Tehom</i>	Conflict Myth
1. Similarities between HB and the Babylonian <i>Enuma Elish</i>	Derived from <i>Tiamat</i>	Yes: Yahweh vs <i>Tehom</i> (HB) parallels Marduk vs Tiamat (EE)
2. Similar etymology but no myth background	Derived from Semitic term <i>Tiamtum</i> , meaning ocean	No: Any mythic language in HB describes natural phenomena
3. Similar mythic ideas but demythologized into motif	Connected to <i>Tiamtum</i> but has a demythologized influence	Yes: ANE literature No: HB uses motifs, poetic language
4. Common ANE worldview results in common water terms	Etymological connections are irrelevant	No: Poetic usage of water-terms are common to ANE literature
5. Differences show ancient Israel's unique religion or polemic against mythic threat	N/A	No: Yahwism is a complete breakaway from common ancient myth matrix or suppresses myth
6. Ancient Israel's use of <i>Tehom</i> is innovative but not distinct	Unimportant (no mention) Seas, waters, deeps used interchangeably to represent oppressive forces	Yes: all ancient narratives use "monster bashing" or the conflict "topos" (theme) for shaping ideology of ancient communities
7. Relevance for modern day interpretation (feminist deconstructionist theory)	Derives from Tiamat, but redefines <i>Tehom</i> as "the womb of becoming"	No: Conflict is patriarchal and has to do with male obsession with order

Each approach varies in its focus on understanding *Tehom*'s creation context, its etymology, and its association with conflict myth. As a result, there is no one approach that comprehensively incorporates *Tehom*'s role in shaping the identity of ancient Israelite religion. It is important to understand the commonalities of the Hebrew Bible's ANE context—a common worldview, common

creation narratives, common poetic water terminology, and common motifs—but it is also important to acknowledge the different ways each ancient religion contextualized its understanding of the world for their distinct identity. The literature of ancient Ugarit, for instance, is a comparative parallel to the Hebrew Bible, but contains distinctly different religious experiences.

1.4. *The Ugaritic Evidence*

The 1928 discovery of Ugaritic tablets at an ancient Canaanite city (near modern day Syria) has been instrumental to understanding enigmatic words and phrases in biblical Hebrew. Ugaritic is a closely related Semitic language to Hebrew that uses similar phrases and even identical words.

Close parallels are especially seen in the names of deities and poetic structures, since the names of greater Canaanite deities have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible (*El, Baal, Asherah* and etc.), and many of the lesser-known deities can be found as deified forms of nature (*Yam: Sea, Mot: Death, Tehom/Thmt: Deep/s, and etc.*). *Tehom* in particular does not appear with the definite article in the Hebrew Bible.³³ This hints at the original background of a deified *Tehom* and provides a deified context

³³ Gunkel notes that there is no article with *Tehom* or *Tehom Rabba* because it was originally a personal name. Cf. Hermann Gunkel, with Heinrich Zimmern, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 375 (Note to p. 237, footnote 339). *Tehom* appears with the definite article in the later texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, translations of Targums (Aramaic) and LXX (Greek) and in the Mishnah, which perhaps indicates a deliberate distancing and shift in understanding.

for other “naturalized” word-pairs in the Hebrew Bible. Mountains and Deeps, Heavens and Earth, Light and Darkness, and Pestilence and Plague are examples of some deity pairs in the Canaanite pantheon.³⁴ The existence of Canaanite deities on cosmic, human, and natural levels of reality provide a comparative framework for the Hebrew Bible’s use of *Tehom* and other cosmological terms.

Additionally, there is no origin story or creation narrative in the discovered corpus of Ugaritic literature.³⁵ This allows for a more balanced comparison between *Tehom*’s non-creation references and *THMT*’s references in ancient Ugarit’s literature. It also allows conflict to be considered independently, outside of the conflict genre, as a characteristic of the Deep’s legitimating power to shape ideological and religious beliefs for ritual practices. Separating conflict from creation and acknowledging a common ancient Near Eastern understanding of the cosmos allows similarities between ancient Near Eastern narratives to reflect this understanding without unduly attributing influence and imitation. This also allows the differences to reflect distinct religious beliefs.

My dissertation fills the gaps in previous scholarship on *Tehom* by including the Ugaritic evidence and the broader context of the Deep in a comparative approach. The similarities in the

³⁴ DDD: “Tehom”, 605. “Tehom has retained traces of a deity...connected with ‘mountains’ as a divine pair at Hab 3:10.” Additional divine pairs in Hab 3 include: *harim* and *Tehom*, *deber* and *resheph*, river and sea, sun and moon.

³⁵ JoAnn Scurlock, however, reads KTU 1.23 *The Birth of the Beautiful Gods* as Ugarit’s missing creation narrative. Cf. JoAnn Scurlock, “Death and the Maidens: A New Interpretive Framework for KTU 1.23,” *UF* 43 (2011).

Hebrew Bible's creation narrative and other creation narratives reveal a common cultural view of the ancient world. Considering all of *Tehom's* references in light of its deified background, however, provides a comparison for understanding how the Hebrew Bible processes *Tehom* for its particular context. In using a comparative approach, I am interested in the implications of *Tehom's* personifications and subjugations for the development of Yahwism and the religious identity of ancient Israel. It is unfortunate that there has been no previous scholarly research in this direction, as there are powerful implications for understanding *Tehom* as an identity-shaping concept for ancient Israel.

1.5. Methodological Approach

Primarily, the methodology for this research is comparative. The comparative aspect focuses on *Tehom's* context in the ancient Near East by analyzing how "Deep" or "depths" are conceptualized and personified in the religious texts found in the surrounding nations of the ancient Near East (Canaan, Mesopotamia and Egypt). The Deep was valued as a deity and power in the Canaanite pantheon, and Mesopotamian and Egyptian pantheons also include deities of ocean and primordial waters. The Hebrew Bible's use of *Tehom* shows ancient Israel's interaction and integration of deities and deified concepts that were valued by surrounding religious communities. Analyzing the Hebrew Bible's expressions of *Tehom* as a response to the deified Deep of the ancient Near East provides insight to the formation of ancient Israel's religion under Yahweh.³⁶

³⁶ Ziony Zevit writes that "Israelite religions are the varied, symbolic expressions of, and appropriate responses to the deities and powers that groups or communities deliberately affirmed as

The comparative methodology of this research references Calvert Watkins' methodology of "inherited formulae" or set phrases from the ancient Near East to show that the Hebrew Bible draws upon the conflict-narrative vocabulary of its context to speak to its audience.³⁷ This research proposes that the writers of the Hebrew Bible used words and phrases known from the surrounding Canaanite religious context and repurposed them to claim Yahweh's supremacy. Additionally, the absorption of deities and other powers into the natural order of the world under Yahweh re-emerges in later traditions. Ancient Israel remythologizes *Tehom* in its cultural memory,³⁸ where *Tehom* is expressed as an evil threat in the textual communities of Qumran Hebrew, LXX Greek, Targumic Aramaic, and Rabbinic Hebrew.

Secondly, this methodology takes a diachronic approach to examine what historical events shaped the expressions of *Tehom* throughout the Hebrew Bible. From individuals called by Yahweh, to the emergence of the nation of Israel, and later diaspora communities, *Tehom* is continually remembered and referenced in prayers, liturgies, and prophecies. The poetic language of *Tehom*'s role in the Exodus 15 deliverance becomes a hopeful reminder in the exilic period, as ancient Israel recalls

being of unrestricted value to them within their worldview." Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 15.

³⁷ Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁸ Jan Assman, *Religion and Cultural Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 77. Also cf. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Yahweh's great deliverance and invokes him to act again:

The rise of the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian empires issued in a serious religious reflection on Yahweh's power over the nations. The loss of identity as a nation changed Israel's understanding of the national god...This shift involves a most crucial change in different Judean presentations of the relationship between the mundane and cosmic levels of reality (or, put differently, between the immanence and transcendence of divinity). As Judah's situation on the mundane level deteriorated in history, the cosmic status of its deity soared in its literature.³⁹

Under exile and oppression, the people of ancient Israel (re)solidify and (re)establish their identity as Yahweh's people. While Mark Smith maintains that Israel's Yahwism or monotheism emerged in the late Iron Age and exilic period, other scholars attribute the monotheistic shift to the Persian period.⁴⁰ This study focuses on what can be known of Yahwism as ancient Israel's religion by analyzing the evocations of *Tehom* in the collective memory of ancient Israel's traditions.⁴¹ Embedded in the geography of ancient Israel's religion and mentioned in prayers and prophecies, *Tehom* functions physically and symbolically as a reminder of ancient Israelite identity. In other words, it provides an

³⁹ Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 165.

⁴⁰ For an analysis of possible Persian influences on ancient Israel's monotheism, cf. Thomas Römer, *The Invention of God*, trans. Raymond Geuss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 227-30.

⁴¹ For critical discussion on collective memory and amnesia in biblical scholarship see "The Formation of Israel's Concepts of God" in Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 124-31.

image of ancient Israel's self-conception and place in the world.⁴² How the Hebrew Bible shapes the memory of the Deep's roles within a Yahwistic worldview provides unique insight into the beliefs and practices of Yahweh's people.

Lastly, the methodology for this research is historical and linguistic, tracing the development of *Tehom's* form and meaning in later interpretative traditions and translations such as the DSS, LXX, Targums, and later Jewish texts. Analyzing the occurrences of related words and phrases in the texts of Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible show how Canaanite mythological characters were personified and embedded as subjugated motifs of power in the Hebrew Bible. Later on, this context re-emerges in the demonization of *Tehom* in the DSS, LXX, Targums, and Rabbinic material, with these later traditions rewriting *Tehom's* origins as the source of evil.

1.6. Chapter Summaries

This chapter introduced the etymology and linguistic aspects of *Tehom*, presented a history of scholarship on how *Tehom* has been interpreted in light of Gunkel's *chaoskampf* theory, and

⁴² Cf. Armin Werner Schwarzenbach, *Die geographische Terminologie im Hebräischen des Alten Testaments* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), and *Enlarge the Site of Your Tent: The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99-100. "...wilderness, desert, rivers, hills, mountains etc were experienced not only and in the first place as geographic items or architectural entities but as road-signs for the religious and social identity. They show individuals and groups where they are, what position they occupy in their own world."

emphasized the need for a better and more comprehensive comparative methodology.

Chapter 2 analyzes how *Tehom* is understood as a deified concept in the literature and iconography of ancient Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia, and ancient Canaan (Ugarit). While each one of these regions had its own manifestations of the watery abyss, the similarities in creation and origin narratives show that the concept of the primeval Deep functioned as part of a common ancient understanding of the cosmos.⁴³ Invocations of the primeval Deep in ritual sacrifices, purification, protection, and witness lists provide the context for a deified conception of the Deep in ancient Near Eastern religions.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyze *Tehom's* 36 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. Chapter 3 studies the significance of *Tehom's* personifications for creation and ritual in the development and expression of Yahwism. The use of the common ANE concept of the Deep in Exodus 15 reiterates that *Tehom's* personifications serve to deify Yahweh and reveal his power for the people of Israel.

Chapter 4 explores *Tehom's* subjugations as a motif of empowerment. Additional comparisons to the subjugated Deep motif in ancient Near Eastern literature also confirm the idea that anyone who slays or subjugates the Deep possess its power and legitimacy. Consequently, Yahweh's subjugation of *Tehom* reminds and empowers individuals to perform rituals and act with authority in times of trouble.

Chapter 5 focuses on the demonization of *Tehom* as it takes on negative attributes and associations in later translations and interpretations of biblical traditions (DSS, LXX, Targums, rabbinic

⁴³ Morton Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71, no. 3 (1952): 146.

literature). Tracing the transformation of *Tehom* from its deified background to a demonized abyss demonstrates how ancient Israel absorbed its ancient Near Eastern context and repurposed a powerful concept to continually affirm their identity as Yahweh's people.

Chapter 6 summarizes and synthesizes the ideas developed in chapters 2-5 by reflecting on the fluidity and consistency of *Tehom's* conceptual power for ancient Israel's purposes. This study of *Tehom's* roles from deity to abyss concludes with implications for religious identity and further research.

II

DEIFICATION


2.1. Introduction

Heaven, earth, and waters⁴⁴ are the three main divisions of the ancient Near Eastern world. Waters represent the primeval ocean, sea depths, or the Deep, and are the source for life literally and symbolically. It is well known that water sustains life, but in ancient religions water is also the starting point of life. Deities and events differ from time and place, but creation from primeval waters is common to all creation accounts. Whether creator deities emerge from waters or pre-exist waters, their role in the separation of waters creates heaven (sky) and earth, with waters surrounding the earth. Ancient Near Eastern deities often take the form of physical elements as an explanation of natural phenomena, and primeval waters are commonly deified to explain their existence before, during, and after creation.

⁴⁴ The ancient world has been described as bipartite (heaven and earth) as well as tripartite or multipartite (heaven, earth, and sea, with various divisions of waters). Each ancient religion emphasizes different water regions. Ancient Egyptian religion focuses on *Duat*, the watery world of the dead; ancient Mesopotamian religion focuses on *Apsu*, the primeval ocean is the realm of the deity *Enki/Ea*; ancient Canaanite religion focuses on the sea, *Yamm*. Cf. Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 35-47.

The Deep, however, is often overlooked in compilations of ancient Near Eastern pantheons. Its ancient origins and functions do not translate into a deity of location or life situation. As a result, the practice of ancient Near Eastern deity worship—a means to secure divine protection or favor—does not seem applicable to the Deep. Furthermore, vague and limited references to the Deep outside of creation contexts perpetuate the Deep as a distant mythic memory. This chapter connects the Deep's references in ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Ugaritic texts and shows deification not only in creation texts but also in ritual worship. By deification I mean that inherent worship of the Deep can be traced to invocations of its name in offerings, incantations and treaties. These ritual practices, initiated by creation, demonstrate the Deep's significance as a deity in the ancient Near East.

2.2. Ancient Egypt

In the ancient Egyptian world, *Nun* (or *Nu*)  is the deity of primordial waters. As ancient Egyptian religion spans millennia, its literature shows that religious beliefs concerning creation and creator deities differ from city to city and from one dynasty to the next.

The Old Kingdom literature of Hermopolis (3rd millennium BCE) focuses on four primeval deity pairs (Ogdoad: *Nu/t*, *Hehu/t*, *Kekui/t*, *Qerh/et*) as creators of the world. At Heliopolis, *Atum* is the creator god who emerges from *Nun*'s waters and creates other deities who assist him in ordering the world. At Memphis, *Ptah* is the craftsman deity who creates *Atum*; and at Thebes, *Amun* is the force behind everything, causing the formation of Ogdoad (eight-deity) and Ennead (nine-deity) pantheons. In the New Kingdom period, *Amun* and the sun god *Ra* fuses to become *Amun-Ra*, the chief creator deity of

ancient Egypt.⁴⁵ All of these creation traditions, however, share the same foundation or overarching concept:

Deep within Nun (the limitless dark ocean) a god awakened, or conceived of creation. Through his power, he, or his manifestations, divided into the many aspects of the created world, creating the first gods and the first mound of earth to emerge from the water.⁴⁶

While *Nun* is not the primary “creator deity” in a direct sense, he is the deified background for understanding ancient origins. His existence before creation is explained as the “undifferentiated unity of the precreation state”; his title is “the Eldest One and father of the gods.”⁴⁷ In essence, he is the primordial setting and substance for created gods and the world.

Nun's feminine form, *Nut* (or *Naunet*), refers to the primordial waters that are separated above the sky, forming a heavenly ocean. In the Ogdoad (eight-deity) pantheon of Hermopolis, the *Nun-Nut* deity pair is indistinguishable in essence except at Heliopolis; there *Nut* is distinctly recognized as the

⁴⁵ From the 16th to 11th century BCE, *Amun* the creator deity at Thebes fuses with Ra to become the creator deity *Amun-Ra*. Cf. J. Zandee, *De Hymnen aan Amon von papyrus Leiden I 350* (Leiden: OMRO 28, 1947), 66-75, 112-20.

⁴⁶ Garry Shaw, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2014), 17-18.

⁴⁷ This title is found in the *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* VI 343-j-334-g, cf. DDD: "Atum", 119. “Atum and Nun were both absolute gods and they both could claim the priority which is characteristic of a creator god.” For more on Nun, cf. DDD: "Yam", 737.

ancient sky (or heaven) goddess of the Ennead (nine-deity) pantheon.⁴⁸ The sky, however, is still linked to *Nun* as a heavenly waterway or channel: “[i]n the Egyptian conception, the sky is not so much a solid ‘ceiling’ as a kind of interface between the surface of the Waters and the dry atmosphere.”⁴⁹ Whether upper and lower waters are indistinguishable *Nun* or differentiated *Nut* and *Nun*, these waters are essential to Egyptian beliefs concerning life and death.

Nun’s primordial waters flow through *Duat*, the realm of the dead, but *Duat* overshadows and replaces *Nun* as cosmic waters in funerary rituals.⁵⁰ The Egyptian focus on the afterlife brings *Duat* to the forefront of burial rituals and beliefs concerning death; consequently, there are more frequent references in Egyptian rituals to the world of the dead than primordial waters. Even in the background, it is clear that *Nun*’s role and significance at creation are not forgotten. Ritual references confirm and reiterate the importance of *Nun*’s waters in ancient Egyptian worship.

2.2.1. Ancient Egyptian Ritual

Nun, as the progenitor of all life, retains spiritual significance in ritual memory even without a dedicated cult of worship. As T. Oestigaard writes, “[w]ater rituals, libations and purifications were fundamental

⁴⁸ The Ennead pantheon consists of *Atum*, *Shu*, *Tefnut*, *Geb*, *Nut*, *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Nephthys*, and *Seth*.

⁴⁹ James P. Allen, "The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, ed. W.K. Simpson, Yale Egyptological Studies (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 5.

⁵⁰ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, 35.

and crucial throughout the history of ancient Egypt”;⁵¹ and these rituals are based on belief in the power of *Nun*’s waters to rejuvenate and renew life. In the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200BCE), temple inscriptions at Karnak and Luxor from the New Kingdom period record daily offerings to local deities that use libation and incense “to purify the space, or intensify its purity.” These rituals proceed with the heading, “*offering list of Nun, the primeval waters*”⁵² and venerate *Nun* as the the source of all things.

Nun’s purifying and healing capabilities are also inscribed on the Horus Cycle panels in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (New Kingdom period). There, inscriptions above ritual vessels record the heading “with these libations which come forth from Nun, your purification.”⁵³ The earliest texts from the Early Bronze Age (3400-2000BCE) that mention *Nun* in ritual are “Greetings with a *nmst*-vessel” and

⁵¹ Terje Oestigaard, "Osiris and the Egyptian Civilization of Inundation: The Pyramids, the Pharaohs and their Water World," in *A History of Water: From Early Civilizations to Modern Times*, ed. T. Tvedt and R. Coopey (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 91.

⁵² Particularly, “[t]emple inscriptions of around 1450 BC record the daily offerings to a statue of Amun-Ra, main deity at Karnak (Barta 1968, offering list Type E), with similar lists for the god Min and, a century later, for the goddess Mut at Luxor.” *Nun* is referenced “presumably here as source of all life and so of all material to be offered.” Stephen Quirke, *Exploring Religion in Ancient Egypt*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 91.

⁵³ Katherine Eaton, *Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Patterns and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

healing eye rituals, which emphasize “the healing and rejuvenating powers of the waters of Nun”⁵⁴ poured from libation ritual jars. *Nemset*⁵⁵ jars were also used in the mortuary spells of the Pyramid Texts (2400-2300 BCE), to purify the dead. One such spell reads, “May Nun purify you, may cool water come forth for you from Elephantine, may you be greeted with the *nemset-jar*.”⁵⁶

Additionally, ancient Egyptians believe that *Nun* is the source of the Nile river and that the Nile’s yearly flooding is a literal and symbolic ritual rejuvenation.⁵⁷ As Assmann notes, “[t]o the Egyptians, all water entering the world came from *Nun*, and the Nile was no different.”⁵⁸ In funerary rituals, the Nile’s waters also provide new life to a deceased pharaoh⁵⁹: “[a] great Nile inundation has come to you, its

⁵⁴ Ibid., 98.

⁵⁵ The Egyptian *nmst* is connected with *namsu* in Akkadian, meaning a washbowl used in rituals such as the *mis pi* ritual (washing of the mouth), cf. CAD: “namsu”, 245.

⁵⁶ Oestigaard, “Osiris and the Egyptian Civilization of Inundation: The Pyramids, the Pharaohs and their Water World,” 92.

⁵⁷ Egyptologist Jan Assmann describes the Nile as the main symbol of cyclical time and water as the most important part of libations because water “did not flow irreversibly toward a goal but rather ran back into itself in a cycle, thus enabling renewal, repetition, and regeneration.” Jan Assman, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 359.

⁵⁸ Shaw, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends*, 135.

⁵⁹ Anthony P. Sakovich, “Explaining the Shafts in Khufu’s Pyramid at Giza,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 42 (2005/2006): 4.

arms filled with rejuvenated water, to bring you gifts of all fresh things.”⁶⁰ Ancient Egyptians believe that the king is born in the Deep or the sky, from deities Nun, Nut, the zḥt, and the Duat.⁶¹ At death, he returns to these waters (*Nun/Duat*) by means of the Nile.⁶² The cycle of rebirth is also based on the belief that primeval waters continue to surround the earth after creation. The Nile is an analogy for *Nun* as its flooding reverts the Nile valley into watery formlessness of pre-creation.⁶³ As the water subsides, the created mound of the world re-emerges with life.

Lastly, *Nun*'s waters are symbolically significant to temple structure. An architectural component of every major temple throughout ancient Egyptian history is a sacred lake. These lakes are reproductions of *Nun*'s primordial waters as “all temples served as models of the inundated and emergent cosmos, the primeval mound, and the world at night.”⁶⁴ Each day reflects the world newly emerging from the darkness of precreation. Sacred lakes were used in morning rising rituals, baptizing

⁶⁰ Assman, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, 360.

⁶¹ Allen, "The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," 11-15.

⁶² This refers to libations poured out from the Nile, and originating from *Nun*, as well as the journey through the heavenly Nile to *Duat*.

⁶³ Atwell, "An Egyptian Source for Genesis," 449.

⁶⁴ Specifically, the innermost part of temples reflected *Nun*'s watery chaos in “darkness and the use of aquatic motifs in the architectural and decorative programs”; moving outwards reflects (re)creation, the rising sun, and rebirth. Eaton, *Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Patterns and Practice*, 15.

pharaohs of local temples. As a pharaoh rises from the waters each morning, he re-enacts the creation of the cosmos from *Nun*'s waters, just like the Nile's waters.⁶⁵ In short, everyday rituals oriented ancient Egyptians around *Nun*'s waters and reminded them of *Nun*'s life-giving powers. Given this importance, it is unsurprising that ritual re-enactment of creation also appears in treaty language.

2.2.1.1. *Treaty of Kadesh*

One of the oldest treaties preserved in history is the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty of 1278BCE.⁶⁶ "The Eternal Treaty", also known as the "The Silver Treaty" or "the Treaty of Kadesh", is written in Egyptian and Akkadian translations for the agreement of both parties. The treaty concludes with an oath before "a thousand gods, male gods and female gods" of the land of Egypt and Hatti. Listed after the names of major Egyptian deities are "the mountains and rivers of the land of Egypt, the sky, the earth, the *great sea*, the winds, the clouds."⁶⁷ Treaties incorporated deified natural elements as divine witnesses because

⁶⁵ This daily rebirth is also replicated in beliefs about the sun god Ra, who travels through *Nun*'s waters in the sky to the underworld each day.

⁶⁶ The Treaty of Mesilim or the Treaty of Delimitation between Umma and Lagash (2550BCE) is earlier than the Treaty of Kadesh, but is considered a treaty of boundaries and borders rather than one of peace.

⁶⁷ The Akkadian word used is *A.AB.BA GAL* (*tamtu rabitu*) and the Egyptian hieroglyph is *p3-ym 3* (*ium*), presumably the Semitic *yam*. For the Akkadian version, cf. Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, ed. Simon B. Parker, 2nd ed., SBL Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 92; Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. For the Egyptian version, cf.

treaties were understood as ritual agreements involving human and deified parties. In other words, it was customary to call upon the major deities of the pantheon and the deified created cosmos (heaven, earth, waters) to witness an agreement.⁶⁸

Consequently, treaties were often placed in temples so that the words were set before the deities they invoked, ensuring that the deities would keep account of them. The Egyptian version of this treaty is inscribed at the temple precinct of *Amun-Ra* (the great creator deity) in Karnak. The waters of “the great sea” are those of the primeval Deep, and their inclusion in the divine witness list reiterates the Deep’s significance as a venerated deity in the ancient Egyptian pantheon.

2.2.2. *The Continuous Cycle of Life and Death*

Nun’s importance at the beginning of time is also sustained in his role at the end of time. *The Book of the Dead* (New Kingdom period), Spell 175 declares that *Nun* will reclaim the world in the last days when

Elmar Edel, *Der Vertrag Zwischen Ramses II Von Ägypten und Hattušili III Von Hatti* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1997), 71. Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, “ium,” in *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary* (London: J. Murray, 1920), 142.

⁶⁸ This witness list also appears in the 8th century BCE Sefire treaty (KAI 222) between Barga’yah of KTK and Mati’-ilu of Arpad. where deified natural elements are listed under the deity witnesses to the treaty: “and in the presence of Heaven and Earth and in the presence of Abyss and Springs, and in the presence of Day and Night...” Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, “The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire I and II,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 81, no. 3 (1961): 185.

“this world is going to return to the Water [Nun] and the Flood, like its first state.”⁶⁹ An older reference from the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts (Teta 86) also records: “Hail to thee, great deep,⁷⁰ moulder of the gods, creator of men.”⁷¹ These invocations show the primeval deep embedded in ancient formulas, rituals, and incantations that frame the beginning and end of life. *Nun*’s ritual importance, though referenced in the background or as the Nile or *Duat*, is part of the continuous cycle of life and death; as we have seen, this is evident in ancient Egyptian religious beliefs concerning temple purification, healing spells,⁷² agricultural life (Nile flooding), ruling succession (pharaoh/king rebirth), treaty-

⁶⁹ Shaw, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends*, 207.

⁷⁰ Another name for the great deep: *Aḳeb / Ageb*, deity of primeval waters. *Agb* is also referenced as the flood or inundation in Pyramid Text Spell 249 and Coffin Text Spell 334. Cf. Images from the Berlin Museum. "The Altaegypt Pyramid Texts," http://www3.lib.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/eos/eos_page.pl?DPI=100&callnum=PJ1553.A1_1908_cop3&object=87.

⁷¹ Interestingly, this is the language of the great deluge of Gen 7, and in the 1900s, British Assyriologist Archibald Henry Sayce claimed that the great deep is a Babylonian tradition and not of Egyptian origin. Cf. Archibald Henry Sayce, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia* (T&T Clark, 1902), 86.

⁷² Even into the Ptolemaic Period (305-30BCE), belief in *Nun*’s healing powers are found in magic spells. Cf. Adolf Klasens, *A Magical Statue Base (Socle Behague)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952), 101. Spell IX: *Nun*’s cool waters extinguish the poison – “Nun, his name is great flood, he extinguishes (the fire)”; “they bring the great Nun against it (the poison)”.

accountability, and the end times.

2.3. *Ancient Mesopotamia*

In ancient Mesopotamia, there are many creation traditions dating as far back as the Early Bronze Age that emphasize different aspects of the world. God lists, rituals, prayers and myths all describe and allude to creation, but these texts do not produce a single coherent account; rather, ancient peoples tolerated many different versions of the beginning of the world.⁷³

One way to classify Mesopotamian cosmogonies is separating them under cosmic and chthonic systems. The cosmic motif explains creation of gods, humans, and vegetation as the result of a union between heaven (*An*) and earth (*Ki*).⁷⁴ The chthonic motif attributes creation of the earth to the deity, *Enki* (Sumerian)/*Ea* (Akkadian), who floods the earth through rivers and canals.⁷⁵ Since there is no clear delineation between creation and ritual references to the deep in Mesopotamian literature, this section examines texts that allude to both.

⁷³ Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, ed. Michael L. Barré, CBQ Monograph Series (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 15.

⁷⁴ J. Van Dijk, "Le motif cosmique dans la pensée sumérienne," *Acta Orientalia* 28, no. 1-2 (1964).

This description is part of the Nippur tradition.

⁷⁵ Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 16. This is part of the Eridu tradition.

The precreation state when “all the lands were sea”⁷⁶ appears in the creation texts of the *Chaldean Cosmogony* (from Sippar) and the *Foundation of Eridu*.⁷⁷ This description affirms the common ancient Near Eastern cosmology of creation from waters. In another tradition, two creator gods *Anu* and *Ea* create all things in their respective domains of heaven and earth; *Ea* creates the *apsû*-ocean where he dwells. In the much later Namburbi ritual texts,⁷⁸ the great gods create the River (which is the cosmic water *apsû*) by digging its channel, but the invocation calls the River the creator of everything.⁷⁹ In these varied creation traditions, primeval waters take the form of rivers, canals, sea, and *apsu*; in other words, *apsu*-waters are significant in the creative process, but are not described in deified form until the Late Bronze Age Akkadian text of the *Enūma elish*. Another deity of primeval waters, however, is found in Sumerian texts.

2.3.1. Sumerian Texts

Nammu, the Sumerian goddess of the watery deep has a few, brief occurrences in Sumerian texts dating to the Old Babylonian Period (2000-1600BCE). Her title is “the primeval mother who gave birth to the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 62-63. The description, “All the land was sea”, is found in *Creation of the World by Marduk* from Neo-Babylonian period, cf. David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 40.

⁷⁷ The earliest Sumerian cosmogonies referencing *Ea/Enki* date to c. 2600BCE.

⁷⁸ Namburbi texts date to 8th-6th century BCE. Cf. R. Caplice, "Namburbi Texts in the British Museum," *Orientalia* 34 (1965): 106.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 130.

senior gods”⁸⁰ in the godlist *An-Anum* (tablet I line 28)⁸¹ and in the creation tradition of *Enki and Ninmah*.⁸² She is also described as the mother of *Enki* who gives birth to “the clay that is above the *apsu*.”⁸³ This clay above the primeval waters, but below the earth, is used to create mankind.

Additionally, *Nammu* appears briefly in incantations concerning reeds, but her ritual function there is uncertain.⁸⁴ Most creation traditions do not reference *Nammu*, but rather *Enki*, her son, who is the main deity connected with *apsu*-cosmic waters. *Nammu*’s name is written with the Sumerian sign *ENGUR*, which is the same sign used for *apsu*.⁸⁵ In other words, *Nammu* can be understood as the

⁸⁰ ETCSL: 1.1.2, Line 17. Black.

⁸¹ R.L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists, An: dA-nu-um and An: Anu šá amēli* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1998).

⁸² Jacob Klein, "Enki and Ninmah (1.159)," in *The Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. and K. Lawson Younger Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 516-18. Cf. Lines 17, 24-37. *Enki* is deity of sweet waters and *Ninmah* is deity of the earth. ETCSL: 1.1.2

⁸³ Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 162.

⁸⁴ Graham Cunningham, *'Deliver Me From Evil': Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, Studia Pohl: Series Maior (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1997), 77, 131-32.

⁸⁵ Ewa Wasilewska, *Creation Stories of the Middle East* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), 46. Note: *apsû* describes deep water, sea, or cosmic subterranean water and *Apsû* refers to the

deification of *apsu* cosmic waters. The Sumerian tradition does not preserve a creation account concerning *apsu*, but references to *apsu* alongside heaven and earth,⁸⁶ paralleled with heaven, and in connection with *Enki* identify *apsu* as a cosmic region in Sumerian literature.⁸⁷ *Apsu* is not personified or deified until the later Babylonian creation tradition. In the *Enuma Elish*, primordial waters are deified as *Apsu* and *Tiamat*, and *Tiamat* absorbs *Nammu's* role as the goddess of watery deep.⁸⁸

Nammu is first attested in ritual in the Neo-Sumerian period (22nd to 21st century BCE), also known as the Third Dynasty of Ur.⁸⁹ Particularly, the dynasty founder's name, *Urnamma* (Man of *Nammu*) suggests *Nammu's* greater significance⁹⁰ in the divine sphere and in legitimacy of power. Ritual Text 53 invokes the deities *Enki* and *Nammu* to open the mouths of divine statues with praises of "reed-

name of a personified mythological figure/deity. From the OB on *apsû* (also spelled *ABZU*) also has the meaning of temple water basin, cf. CAD: "apsû", 193.

⁸⁶ Sumerian hymn STLN 61 i 12-16 Cf. Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 309.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 336.

⁸⁸ Nicole Brisch, "'Namma (goddess),' Oracc and the UK Higher Education Academy, <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/namma/>.

⁸⁹ Cunningham, *'Deliver Me From Evil': Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, 96.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77. "Her association with Enki is expressed in two ways: by the writing of her name with the sign ENGUR, a divine domain which she possibly personifies, and by her role in the pantheon as his mother."

standard as divine purifier”.⁹¹ While the ritual function of reed-standard purification is uncertain, the “opening of the mouth” refers to the Assyrian ritual⁹² of consecrating and installing divine statues in shrines. The cosmic waters of *Nammu* and *Enki* were presumably used in washing and purifying these statues.

Another ritual, Text 60, invokes *Nammu* as therapy for a neck problem, and as protection against the evil *ala* (night bird demon) and the *udug* demons.⁹³ Continuing in the Old Babylonian period (20th to 16th century BCE), a Sumerian divine oath against the evil *udug* invokes a list of deities that includes *Nammu*.⁹⁴ An Akkadian incantation against all illness, again invokes *Nammu* in a list of

⁹¹ S. Kramer, M. Çig, and H. Kizilyay, "Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde bulunan Sumer edebi tablet ve parçaları (Sumerian Literary Tablets and Fragments in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul), I/II," (Ankara 1976), 1p217. Also in Text 151, *Nammu* is praised but for an uncertain function. According to Leick, *Nammu* is both fertile and fertilizing waters, representing spontaneous creation of the female sex. Cf. Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994), 13-14.

⁹² In Neo-Babylonian rituals, the opening of the mouth is omitted and only the washing of the mouth ritual is mentioned.

⁹³ J. van Dijk, et al, *Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals*, Yale Oriental Series (YOS 11) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), no 81.

⁹⁴ Cunningham, *'Deliver Me From Evil': Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, 132. This oath is recorded under text numbers. Cf. Text 85 in Markham Geller, *Forerunners to Uduĝ-hul: Sumerian*

deities.⁹⁵ These combined references show that Mesopotamians invoked *Nammu* in rituals that called upon her power to purify, consecrate, and protect against sickness and evil. While Sumerian ritual texts provide a background for the deity *Nammu* as primeval waters, Akkadian literary texts record a creation narrative of deified waters, *Apsu* and *Tiamat*.

2.3.2. Babylonian/Akkadian Texts

In the Babylonian tradition, the main text that describes the deification of primordial waters is the *Enuma Elish* (c. 1200 BCE).⁹⁶ The three primordial water deities in this creation text are *Apsu* (freshwater deity), *Tiamat* (ocean/salt water deity), and *Mummu*, possibly the deity of mist or rain.⁹⁷ While some scholars see *Tiamat* and *Mummu* as extensions of *Apsu*, others consider them separate beings.

Exorcistic Incantations, Freiburger Altorientalische Studien (FAOS 12) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985), 209-33A. Cf. Text 242 in J. Van Dijk, *Nicht-kanonische Beschwörungen und sonstige literarische Texte*, Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der (Königlichen) Museen zu Berlin (VS 17) (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1971).

⁹⁵ Text 350 from "Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets British Museum," (London 1896), 42 23. cf. Cunningham, *'Deliver Me From Evil': Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, 152.

⁹⁶ An earlier proto-version of the Creation Epic may be depicted in the iconography of the 'Ain Samiya Cup. Cf. Y. Yadin, "A Note on the Scenes Depicted on the 'Ain-Samiya Cup," *Israel Exploration Journal* 21, no. 2/3 (1971): 84.

⁹⁷ Arie S. Issar, *Water Shall Flow from the Rock: Hydrogeology and Climate in the Lands of the Bible* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1990), 32.

Nonetheless, the rest of the Babylonian deities come from the waters of *Apsu* and *Tiamat* and the disturbance of these younger gods causes a destructive battle. *Enki* (*Ea* in Akkadian) kills *Apsu* and builds his dwelling on top of him. This angers *Tiamat* which results in successive battles between *Tiamat's* forces and the other deities.⁹⁸ Ultimately it is the deity *Marduk* who slays *Tiamat* and uses her corpse to cover waters above and below to create heaven and earth:

He split her up like a flat fish into two halves.
One half of her he established as a covering for heaven. He fixed a blot;
he stationed watchmen and bade them not to let her waters come forth...
and over against the Deep he set the dwelling of Nudimmud.⁹⁹

Nudimmud is another name for *Enki-Ea*, the deity who is given the title "Lord of the Earth" as well as "*šar apsû*, 'Lord of the Deep'".¹⁰⁰

The ancient Near Eastern pattern of creation shows that the separation of primeval waters, peaceably or forcibly, brings about the creation and order of the world. Bounded and separated primeval waters allows for the beginning and continued protection of life. While *Nammu* of Sumerian literature is not considered a destructive and chaotic force, *Tiamat* of Babylonian literature comes to represent an evil and antagonistic power. The battle against *Tiamat* becomes the "war between protector and destructive gods"¹⁰¹ as *Tiamat's* army consists of horned serpents and dragons:

She bore giant snakes, sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang. She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood. She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays... 'Whoever

⁹⁸ EE: Tablet II. For English translation cf. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 61-73.

⁹⁹ EE: Tablet IV. For English translation cf. *Ibid.*, 84-95.

¹⁰⁰ DDD: "King", 484.

¹⁰¹ Issar, *Water Shall Flow from the Rock: Hydrogeology and Climate in the Lands of the Bible*, 34.

looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror!¹⁰²

As a result, ritual worship of the Deep is not associated with *Tiamat* (or *Apsu*), but with *Marduk* the victor against *Tiamat*; or *Ea*, who takes over the realm of the Deep.¹⁰³

There are a few references, however, that predate the *Enuma Elish* and establish a more positive description of *Tiamat* as the deified Deep. An Old Akkadian school tablet (22nd century BCE) mentions a warrior *Tišpak*, as the steward of *Tiamat* (*abarak tiāmtim*).¹⁰⁴ *Tiamat* is also used in Old Assyrian personal name, *Puzur-Tiāmtim*, 'Protected-by-Tiāmat'.¹⁰⁵ The use of *Tiamat* in these titles and names venerates and invokes the deity's power and protection. Another text calls *Tiamat* "mother of the

¹⁰² Translation from Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others*, 239-40.

¹⁰³ Taking precautions against harmful deities means excluding them from sacrificial offerings (ie. *Motu*). Cf. Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, trans. W.G.E. Watson, 2nd ed., *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 53.

¹⁰⁴ Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 237, Postscript, 110. Cf. A. Westenholz, "Old Akkadian School Texts: Some Goals of Sargonic Scribal Education," *AfO* 25 (1974): 102., and Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Religion and Ideology in Assyria* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 235.

¹⁰⁵ Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, 39-40. Cf. Westenholz, "Old Akkadian School Texts: Some Goals of Sargonic Scribal Education," 102.

gods,¹⁰⁶ a title not explicitly stated in the *Enuma Elish*. Additionally, a text found in the State Archives of Assyria (SAA 3 39) equates *Ishtar* of Nineveh with *Tiamat* as primordial goddess “in order to prove that she outranks *Marduk* in Assyria.”¹⁰⁷ In this example, *Tiamat*’s name and position is used as a legitimizing concept. Together, these references portray *Tiamat* as a powerful, non-threatening deity prior to the *Enuma Elish*.

Recitations of *Marduk*’s victory from the *Enuma Elish* in the New Year *akitu* festivals, however, turn the creation reference of *Tiamat* into a yearly ritual.¹⁰⁸ This ritual was the central cultic event for ancient Mesopotamians that expressed their religious thoughts and beliefs. Every spring, the festival served as a reminder of order over chaos, the proper cosmic order, and affirmed the roles of gods, kings, and subjects in the Mesopotamian world.¹⁰⁹ Aside from ritual praises of *Marduk*’s victory over *Tiamat*,

¹⁰⁶ a-ab-ba ama dingir-re-e-ne-ke₄ = ta-am-tú um-mi ilāni^{mes} = Sea/*Tiāmat*, mother of the gods
W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood*", ed. Richard S. and David Toshio Tsumura Hess (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), Second Postscript, 112. Cf. E. von Weiher, *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk II* (Berlin, 1983), no. 57, p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Spencer L. Allen, *The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Gonzalo Rubio, vol. 5, Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 156-57.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 130-31.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen D. Ricks, "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the ANE,"

prayers are also directed to *Ea*, the deity who defeats *Apsu* and takes up residence in the primeval waters of *Apsu*. *Shuilla prayer Ea 1A* parallels heavens (AN) with *apsu*-waters (ZU.AB): AN-ú liḫ-du-ka ZU.AB li-riš-ka “May the heavens rejoice, may the Apsu be glad on your account.”¹¹⁰ This merism calls worshippers to praise *Ea* for his beneficence and control over the waters.¹¹¹

The Akkadian text, “Enki’s Journey to Nippur,” also explains that the foundations of Mesopotamian temples are built upon *Apsu*’s waters; this is analogous to the sacred lakes of ancient Egyptian temple structure. Interestingly, the name of a cultic installation in Mesopotamian temples is also *apsu*,¹¹² and it functions as a basin for holy water.¹¹³ Whether as the deities *Apsu* and Tiamat in the ritual re-enactment of yearly festivals, or as *apsu*, the foundation and water basin of temples, these references all emphasize the Deep’s significance in the many creation and ritual contexts of the ancient Mesopotamian world. Finally, we turn to descriptions of the deified Deep in the texts of ancient Canaan, which emerge from the Late Bronze Age sea-port city of Ugarit (1400-1200BCE).

in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Deseret Book Company, 1994), 118-19.

¹¹⁰ *Reading Akkadian Prayers and Hymns: A Reader*, vol. 3, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 231-41.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹¹² Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 217.

¹¹³ CAD: “apsu”, 197.

2.4. Ancient Canaan: Ugarit

In ancient Ugarit's literature, the word for deep or abyss is found in singular, plural, and dual forms as *thm*, *thmt*, and *thmtm*.¹¹⁴ While there is no clear creation account found in the corpus of religious literature,¹¹⁵ the Deep is described as a mythological place in literary texts and invoked as a deity in ritual practice. In mythic texts, the Deep also whispers and converses with the stars,¹¹⁶ seethes (upsurges or boils),¹¹⁷ and is moved by lightning¹¹⁸—these descriptions personify the Deep as an active and powerful force.

In the literary texts, *thmtm* is the place where deities go to find El, the main deity of the Canaanite pantheon. El dwells at the source of the Deeps, where two rivers converge.¹¹⁹ The dual *thmtm* Deeps presumably refer to the Upper and Lower Deeps that are separated in ancient Near Eastern

¹¹⁴ DULAT: "Thmtm", 864.

¹¹⁵ Scurlock creatively reads KTU 1.23 as cosmological myth and the missing creation narrative piece in Scurlock, "Death and the Maidens: A New Interpretive Framework for KTU 1.23."

¹¹⁶ KTU 1.1 iii 14; 1.3 iii 25; 1.3 iv 17

¹¹⁷ KTU 1.92 5

¹¹⁸ KTU 1.17 vi 12 (Aqhat)

¹¹⁹ KTU 1.4 IV 20-24 "Then she sets her face towards El at the source of the two rivers, the core of the source of the abyss. She makes her way to El's cave and enters the dwelling of the king, the Father of Years." This wording is repeated throughout the Baal Cycle: KTU 1.2 III 4-5, KTU 1.3 5:6-7 and KTU 1.6 1:32-37 as well in an incantation against a snakebite KTU 1.100 3.

creation accounts.¹²⁰ The texts of *The Birth of the Beautiful Gods* (1.23 30), *The Baal Cycle*, and *Aqhat* (1.17 vi 12, 48; 1.19 i 45) repeat the same description of *thmt* as “the convergence of two deeps.” Just as ancient Mesopotamia’s deity Ea/Enki builds his dwelling above the *apsu*, (after defeat of the deity *Apsu* in the *Enuma Elish* tradition), so we can understand El’s dwelling above the convergence of the Deeps as his enthronement or rule over the waters.

2.4.1. Ritual Texts

In Ugaritic ritual, deity lists record ram sacrifices to each of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon (RS 24.643 / KTU 1.148) including *thmt*. Deity lists at Ugarit reveal “a process of systematization which combines profession of faith in the divine person with the invocation of his name, elements basic to all ancient Near Eastern religions.”¹²¹ As in ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian religions, ritual practice focuses on invoking the deity’s name to act according to their divine ability. Ugaritic deity lists also help identify “the gods actively worshipped at Ugarit, and, to an extent, their relative positions in relation to one another.”¹²² Some deities appear repeatedly as a pair and are preserved formulaically in Canaanite literature. Multiple deity lists (RS 1992.2004, RS 26.142, KTU 1.148 lines 40-42) pair the deity of the

¹²⁰ DDD: “Creation of all”, 209. This is similar to *Marduk* separating *Tiamat* into Upper and Lower parts.

¹²¹ WGE Watson & N Wyatt, ed. *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 307.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 55.

Mountains with the deity of Deep Waters.¹²³ The pairing of the heights of Mountains and the depths of Deep Waters is a significant description of deified power that symbolically encompasses the entirety of the cosmos.¹²⁴

The Deeps are also paired with the Sky in a magic incantation text against a snake bite (KTU 1.100 / RS 24.244). This incantation calls upon different deities in the Ugaritic pantheon to expel the venom from the “Daughter of spring, daughter of stone, daughter of Sky and Deep.” Again, the spatial contrast between Sky and Deeps references the heights and depths of the created cosmos, and we have

¹²³ It is strange then, that *THMT* is omitted from the otherwise thorough compilation of deities in Sang Youl Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007). Also, previous readings of “Mountains and Valleys” instead of “Mountains and Deeps” are based on a misreading of a reconstructed word, cf. DDD: “Mountains-and-Valleys”, 604.

¹²⁴ Though the pair “Mountains and Deeps” seems significant, the only reference outside of Ugaritic literature is found in the Sumerian King List (col iii, lines 4-5). The ruler, King Meskiaggasher, an ancestor of Gilgamesh, is described as entering the Deep and coming out from the Mountains: “Meskiaggasher went into the *ab-ba* and came out to the *hur-sag-se*.” Cf. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List, AS 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 86-87, 3.4-5. It is unclear, however, if this refers to a divine pairing or is simply a symbolic description likening the king to the sun setting in the waters and rising up again above the mountains. This reference possibly attributes solar-deity qualities to the king or refers to the king’s conquest over other lands (with the water and mountain referencing a specific territory).

seen this merism in ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts as well. In sum, whether paired with Sky, Stars or Mountains, the Deep is portrayed as a divine power and deified place where waters surround the cosmos and represent the heights and depths of the world.

2.4.2. *Divine Witness*

Fittingly, formulaic messages and treaties also invoke the Deep to provide accountability in words and agreements. This formulaic phrase: “I will repeat to you, a message of wood, a whisper of stone, a conversation between the heavens and earth, (between) *the deep* and the stars ...”¹²⁵ invokes the deities of heavens, earth, deep, and stars, as part of a protective ritual, to keep the word or message secret until delivered to the appropriate recipient.

Additionally, an Akkadian treaty text (RS 17.33 obv 4) between Hittite king Mursilis and Ugaritic vassal Niqmepa, records “the great deep” *tamtu rabitu* as a divine witness, which is the same phrase found in the Egyptian-Hittite treaty at Karnak. This treaty concludes with the full list of divine witnesses and the standard curse and blessing formulae (unlike the Niqmaddu treaty’s abbreviated list).¹²⁶ Spencer Allen notes that “invoking or addressing more deities – which also includes ensuring that the deities were present in statue form at the treaty or oath ceremony – gave a blessing more effective power than invoking fewer deities.”¹²⁷ Consequently, the inclusion of the Deep in the divine witness list

¹²⁵ KTU 1.3 III:22-26, (repeated in KTU 1.1 III 13-14, KTU 1.3 IV:14-17).

¹²⁶ Wyatt, *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, 639.

¹²⁷ Allen, *The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East*, 5, 117-18.

here and in other ancient Near Eastern treaties reiterates the extent of the Deep's power, as a witness to the heights and depths—which contain everything in the world.¹²⁸

2.5. Summary of Creation and Ritual Texts

Creation and ritual texts of ancient Near Eastern Deeps provide a comparative framework for the Hebrew Bible's Deep. Particularly, the creation contexts of ANE Deeps are very similar, namely, in the emergence of an ordered world from watery beginnings. Sometimes creation is even formed out of the Deep's substance or essence. While the Deep's function in rituals and incantations vary, the Deep exists on cosmic, human, and natural levels of reality. Ritual contexts reveal the power of the Deep's waters to heal, purify, protect, renew, witness, and legitimate rule (see Table 2).

¹²⁸ Additional Hittite treaties that include Deep as a divine witness include the treaties between Šuppiluliuma I and Ḫuqqana of Ḫayasa (*CTH* 42), Muršili II of Ḫatti and Manapa- Tarḫund of the Land of the Seḫa River (*CTH* 69), Wuwattalli II of Ḫatti and Alaksandu of Wilusa (*CTH* 76), Ḫattušili III of Ḫatti and Ulmi-Teššup of Tarḫund (*CTH* 106), and between Tudḫaliya IV of Ḫatti and Kurunta of Tarḫund (*CTH* 106). Cf. English translations in Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*.

TABLE 2. CREATION AND RITUAL TEXTS OF ANE DEEPS

	Egypt	Mesopotamia	Canaan (Ugarit)
Creation	<p>c.2700-1750 BCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nun in <i>Pyramid Texts</i> Nun in <i>Coffin Texts</i> 	<p>c.2600-2000 BCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nippur & Eridu traditions of Ea/Enki Nammu reference in <i>Enki & Ninmah</i> <p>c.1250 BCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiamat & Apsu in <i>Enuma Elish</i> 	<p>c.1400-1200 BCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No known creation text found (though <i>THMTM</i> in <i>Birth of the Beautiful Gods</i> references the location of the creator deity)
<i>Context:</i>	<i>Pre-existing deity (Nun) is the substance for all deities of creation and creation</i>	<i>Pre-existing deity (Nammu) births all deities and creation; (Tiamat) representing chaos is defeated and used in creation</i>	<i>The place (THMTM) where the creator deity (El) dwells and mates with goddesses (?)</i>
Ritual	<p>c. 2200-1750</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nun rituals in Coffin Texts <p>c. 1550, 1450</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luxor and Karnak offering inscriptions <p>c. 1550</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book of the Dead, Horus Cycle Panels at Abydos 	<p>c. 2500-1500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nammu incantations <p>c. 2200</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiamat in school text and personal names <p>c. 1250</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> akitu festivals, apsu basin rituals <p>c. 800-600</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Namburbi rituals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baal Cycle Aqhat Deity lists Snake bite incantation Protective ritual
Treaty Formulae	<p>c. 1278</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egyptian-Hittite Treaty of Kadesh 		<p>c. 1350</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hittite-Ugaritic treaty (RS 17.33 obv 4)
<i>Context:</i>	<i>Powers of healing, purifying, protection, agricultural flooding, royal rebirth, legitimating rule, and treaty witness</i>	<i>Powers of healing, protection, purifying, and legitimating rule</i>	<i>Powers of protection, healing, treaty witness, and legitimating rule</i>

2.6. Conclusion

In the millennia of ancient Near Eastern religious literature (3rd millennium-6th century BCE), while there has been no specified or developed cult of the Deep, its record in literary, ritual, and treaty texts shows itself to be an integral part of the divine sphere.

The earliest creation accounts in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia deify the Deep at creation, explaining it as the source and substance of all life. This significance undoubtedly impacted ancient beliefs concerning life, death, and everything in between. Ancient Egyptian purification rituals, Sumerian incantations against sickness and evil, explanations of Babylonian theogony, and the Ugaritic convergence of Upper and Lower Deeps—these all reveal the Deep as the powerful source behind the spiritual and physical spheres of the ancient world. Its existence above and below encompasses everything, which is why the Deep is often described in relation to the heights of mountains and starry skies, and called upon as a witness. With this context and background of deified ANE Deeps, we turn to an analysis of the Hebrew Bible's Deep.

III

PERSONIFICATION

3.1. Introduction

The Hebrew Bible's Deep, *Těhôm*, functions similarly to deified Deeps of the ancient Near East. For instance, the role of primeval waters in ancient cosmology and in establishing a deity's power also describes the creation of ancient Israel's world and religious identity. The difference, however, is that Tehom never occurs as an independent actor or source of unrestrained power. Its 36 appearances, examined in this chapter and the next, are connected with the actions of ancient Israel's deity, Yahweh, even when personified as a sea monster (Leviathan, Rahab, tannin).¹²⁹ Additionally, Yahweh, who is identified as creator deity, is not limited or bound to the realms of his creation. Rather, he has the power to control Tehom and all of creation while existing outside of its phenomena.

3.1.1. Deification and Personification in the Hebrew Bible

As seen in the previous chapter, personification and deification are used interchangeably to describe forces in the ancient world. They are, however, distinct in the context of religious belief as “means to two very different ends—personification is a form of expression whereas deification is a form of

¹²⁹ Chapter 4 interprets personifications of Tehom as sea monsters and in other cosmic imagery as part of a subjugated Deep motif. Cf. Appendix A and B for a complete list of references to Tehom in the Hebrew Bible.

belief.”¹³⁰ In other words, the Hebrew Bible distinctly personifies the waters of Tehom to express and maintain the belief system of ancient Israel. Consequently, this chapter frames any deification or development of religious belief around Yahweh.¹³¹

The difficulty in analyzing Tehom as a personification lies in its deified conception in every ancient Near Eastern religion, which has influenced previous interpretations of the Hebrew Bible’s Deep. Additionally, “[a]ll deifications, too, are personifications, but the reverse statement is not true. It is therefore, impossible dogmatically to determine whether a personified abstraction is also a deity in the author’s mind.”¹³² Regardless of the possible deified allusions in the minds of the ancient Israelites, I approach references to Tehom as the personification of primeval waters. This approach frames the shift from the deified Deeps of the ancient Near East to the personified Deep of the Hebrew Bible as

¹³⁰ Amy C. Smith, *Polis and Personification in Classical Athenian Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91.

¹³¹ This is not to say that Yahweh is the only deity mentioned or worshipped in ancient Israel, but rather describes how the Hebrew Bible distinctly creates an identity and belief system around Yahweh. For a concise portrayal of the distinctives of ancient Israel’s deity in comparison to deities of Egypt or Mesopotamia. See Peter Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel: An Essay," in *Ah, Assyria...Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, and Israel Eph'al, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991).

¹³² Harold Lucius Axtell, *The Deification of Abstract Ideas in Roman Literature and Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 67-68.

strategic and foundational to Yahweh's deification. To put it another way, the concept of the deified Deep appears as the personified Deep in the Hebrew Bible in order to develop a distinct deity and identity for ancient Israel.

3.1.2. *Yahweh as Transcendent Deity*

In analyzing the development and exclusive deification of Yahweh, however, "the point is not simply unique existence or the integration of power; it is that the deity transcends—stands outside of and dominates—the phenomenon or phenomena he represents instead of being their mere personification."¹³³ In other words, the deities of ancient Near Eastern Deeps frequently personify natural phenomena, such as bodies of water that are tied to geographic locations or local cult sites. The Hebrew Bible, on the other hand, depicts Yahweh existing outside of—and transcending—personifications, phenomena, and geographic location.

While current scholarly consensus states that Yahweh originated as a warrior deity from a southern region associated with Seir, Edom, Paran and Teman, the identity of the original deity of Israel remains inconclusive.¹³⁴ That is to say, some scholars argue that Yahweh's development as a deity is an

¹³³ Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel: An Essay," 199; Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 60.

¹³⁴ Mark S. Smith, "YHWH's Original Character: Questions about an Unknown God," in *The Origins of Yahwism* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2017), 42. According to Smith, Yahweh was not originally

amalgam or appropriation of the powers of other ancient Near Eastern deities, such as El or Baal (both referenced in the Hebrew Bible), though none would consider the Deep as one of these deities. Yahweh's characteristics of creator, ritual purifier, healer, protector, deliverer, and sustainer, however, parallel many creative and ritual functions of deified Deeps in the ancient Near East. The Deep's deified significance in ancient Near Eastern religions is the basis for the argument that Tehom's origins substantiate Yahweh's legitimacy as a powerful deity (the legitimating nature of Tehom is examined further in chapter 4).

3.1.3. Ancient Israel's Identity in Creation and Ritual

In addition to creation, Tehom's role in Yahweh's deification spans the development of ancient Israel's history—from chosen individuals and tribes (patriarchal/tribal period) to nationhood and dynastic kingship (monarchic period). Tehom is also remembered in the prophecies and prayers of exilic and post-exilic times. To show this development, I group Tehom's references into three categories:

1. Tehom's role in the creation of the cosmos and in the ritual of cosmic blessing (3.2-3),
2. Tehom's role in the creation of the people ancient Israel and in their rituals (3.4-6); and
3. Tehom's roles in 1 & 2 as depicted in wisdom literature and symbolic representation (3.7-8).

Each iteration reflects or builds upon the creation of the world, however, with a growing significance on the identity of Yahweh as the creator and deity of a distinct people. In the translation of the Hebrew passages provided, *bold italics* are used for Tehom, *italics* are used for the transliteration of Hebrew

identified with El, and even in comparison to Baal there are differences. Similarities to Baal may also be considered secondary attributes of Yahweh.

words (such as deity names), and **bold** is used to emphasize parallel water terms. English translations and line divisions emphasized are my own.

In a way, the organization of this chapter aims at providing an overview of ancient Israel's history—what can be known of it—through the framework of Tehom's descriptions in the Hebrew Bible. The purpose is not to argue for the historicity or dating of texts that mention Tehom, but to show how references to Tehom are related and remembered in Israel's traditions.¹³⁵ This analysis shows the significance of Tehom's role in the creation of the world and in the formation of ancient Israel's identity as Tehom is preserved even in contexts where deified or mythic terms are omitted.¹³⁶ Ultimately, this chapter provides an explanation for Tehom's importance as a concept—it continually reveals Yahweh to ancient Israel by enacting, recalling, and perpetuating the ritual practices of Yahwism throughout ancient Israel's history.

¹³⁵ Ancient Israel's early traditions began as oral sayings that were recorded in written form much later. David Carr explains that the written tradition came from an “oral-performative” and “communal” context; traditions were memorized, performed, and adapted for its religious communities or sub-communities. David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

¹³⁶ For instance, the preservation of Tehom personified in the Yahwistic version of the blessing to Joseph (Deut 33:13) and in other poetic references is curious when the Hebrew Bible uses many naturalistic terms for depths or deeps that do not have any mythic or deified associations.

3.2. *Tehom in Creation*

The creation accounts of Genesis and Psalms (Gen 1:2, 7:11, 8:2; Pss 104:6, 135:6, 148:7, and 33:7) differ from ancient Near Eastern creation narratives in that Tehom's primeval waters are not a creator deity nor are they the source of a creator deity. Additionally, there is no battle or struggle for power as depicted in all other ancient Near Eastern creation stories. Rather, "there are no other powers in the universe" to contravene the commands that God speaks into reality.¹³⁷ At the very beginning of creation, there is darkness and the spirit of Elohim¹³⁸ hovering *over* the face of Tehom (Gen 1:2):

וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תְהוֹם וּבְהוֹ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם
And the earth was *tohu* and *bohu*,
and darkness was over the face of *Tehom*,
and the spirit of *Elohim* was hovering over the face of the waters.

Elohim does not emerge from these waters and neither is he described with characteristics of water imagery. Rather, this creator deity exists before creation in the same manner that ancient Near Eastern Deeps exist. While there is only one reference to Tehom in the Genesis creation account, the use of synonymous parallelism repeats על פני (over the face of) to indicate that the following references to המים (the waters) are Tehom's waters. Genesis 1 describes Elohim as the primary actor and Tehom as a passive or depersonalized force that responds to his commands.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 108.

¹³⁸ The Genesis 2 creation account uses Yahweh-Elohim as the title for God.

¹³⁹ While some scholars argue that Tehom represents P's primary symbol as the primordial archfoe of God in Gen 1 (see Bernard Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 212-13 n19.), this is not apparent in the text.

Though the Hebrew Bible's creator deity exists outside of the substance and phenomena of primeval waters, it is still the separation of Tehom's waters that brings forth the ordered conception of the world. This separation and the setting of boundaries for primeval waters is common in ancient Near Eastern cosmological frameworks, though in Genesis there are no enemies or battles; Tehom simply becomes part of Yahweh's good order.¹⁴⁰ For ancient Israel's cosmology, "[c]reation is a process in which water is contained in heaven (*mabul*), on earth (sea), and below the earth (deep or *tehom*)."¹⁴¹ When Tehom's boundaries are removed, this results in the great flood:

ביום הזה נבקעו כל מעינת תהום רבה וארבת השמים נפתחו Genesis 7:11b
And on that day, all the fountains of *Tehom Rabbah* burst and the windows of the heavens were opened.

ויסכרו מעינת תהום וארבת השמים ויכלא הגשם מן השמים Genesis 8:2
And the fountains of *Tehom* and the windows of the heavens were shut, and the rain from the heavens were restrained.

In the flood narrative of Gen 6-9, Tehom's waters burst from above and below the earth, returning the world to its pre-creation state. The upper waters flood the earth from opened windows (or floodgates) and the lower waters erupt from fountains below. In this destruction of all life, Tehom's waters cleanse

¹⁴⁰ Chapter 4 (4.2.1. *Leviathan and Yahweh*) interprets the more active creation account of Yahweh crushing the heads of *tanninim* (Ps 74) within the framework of a subjugated Tehom. See also Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 108-09.

¹⁴¹ Thomas B. Dozeman, *Pentateuch: Introducing the Torah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 220.

the physical and spiritual corruption of the world.¹⁴² When the waters are held back, life resumes again through the preservation of Noah's family (Gen 7:11; 8:2). These Genesis references define the spheres of Tehom's waters and their purpose in the creation, purification, and recreation of the world. Genesis also describes Yahweh as the deity who has the power to create, destroy, and specially choose individuals (such as Noah) as his own. These ideas are reiterated in creation psalms, which identify Yahweh as the maintainer of Tehom's upper and lower parameters.

Descriptions of Tehom in creation psalms (likely used in liturgy) provide personal insight to ancient Israelite perception of the world. Psalm 104, for example, describes the cosmic ordering of the world and how it is maintained by Yahweh. This psalm has been linked to the Egyptian *Hymn to Aten* for its similarities in poetic descriptions of the cosmos and in its praises to the deity who maintains life.

Psalm 104:6-9 **תהום** כלבוש כסיתו על הרים יעמדו מים
 מן גערתך ינוסון מן קול רעמך יחפזון
 יעלו הרים ירדו בקעות אל מקום זה יסדת להם
 גבול שמת בל יעברון בל ישובון לכסות הארץ

With *Tehom* as a garment You covered it [the earth], over mountains stood waters¹⁴³
 From your rebuke they fled, from the sound of your thunder they hurried away,
 Mountains rose, valleys sank to this place you established for them,
 A boundary you placed, they may not cross, may not return to cover the earth.¹⁴⁴

Psalm 104:6-9 recounts how Yahweh sets Tehom's boundaries. As in the Genesis creation, there are only waters; Tehom's waters cover the foundations of the earth and stand over mountains. Then, when the

¹⁴² Gen 6:11-13.

¹⁴³ In the *Hymn to Aten*, "Darkness is a shroud, and the earth is in stillness..." –this phrase parallels Tehom as a garment, covering the foundations of the earth.

¹⁴⁴ Or: "A boundary you placed, lest they cross, lest they return..."

waters separate at creation, they are personified as fleeing from the sound of Yahweh's thunder. The receding waters provide the illusion of rising mountains and sinking valleys.¹⁴⁵ These verses could describe initial creation, but the emphasis on Yahweh setting boundaries to prevent Tehom's waters from returning to cover the earth more likely describes re-creation after the flood. The repetition of the word בל (not) has a modal meaning that focuses on negating the possibility of the waters covering the earth again. The focus of this psalm is not on Yahweh as the destroyer of the world, but on Yahweh as caretaker and nourisher as he waters the world through flowing springs (v. 10).

Similarly, in the *Hymn to Aten*, the Egyptian creator deity, Aten, sets the boundaries of the water above the earth and maintains life by watering the world.

All distant lands, you make them live,
You made a heavenly Nile (Hapy) descend from them;
He makes waves on the mountains like the sea
To drench their fields and their towns
How excellent are your ways, O lord of eternity!
A Nile (Hapy) from heaven for foreign peoples,
And all lands' creatures that walk on legs
For Egypt the Nile (Hapy) who comes from the underworld (Duat)¹⁴⁶

In this poem, the primeval Deep's heavenly waters (rain) nourish all of humanity and creatures of the

¹⁴⁵ Ugaritic poetry also contrasts Mountains with Deeps.

¹⁴⁶ Translation from Miriam Lichtheim, "The Great Hymn to the Aten (1.28)," in *The Context of Scripture, Volume 1: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Also cf. James K. Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 371.

land, but the Deep's waters under the earth are exclusively claimed for Egypt.¹⁴⁷ Aten's creation of the Deep for the people of Egypt also parallels Yahweh's use of Tehom in creation.

You made a Nile (Hapy) in the underworld (Duat),
You bring him when you will
To nourish the people (of Egypt)
For you made them for yourself

In the Exodus narrative, Yahweh similarly brings forth Tehom to make the ancient Israelites a people for himself (Ex 15). Some scholars attribute the motifs and language found in Psalm 104 to Egyptian, Canaanite, or even Phoenician influence. It is more plausible, however, that the common theology, cosmology, and ancient worldview contributed to the similarities in these hymns, which appropriately praise the respective creator (or maintainer) deity of each religion.¹⁴⁸

The Hebrew Bible's creation psalms are distinct from the *Hymn to Aten* in that they are not limited to a specific place (Egypt) or geographic feature (the Nile). Additionally, as seen in chapter 2, there are many creator deities in ancient Egyptian religion that differ for each Egyptian city and vary over time. In contrast, the Book of Psalms specifically praises Yahweh and continually emphasizes the relationship between him and his creation. For example, Ps 135:6 declares Yahweh's authority over all creation as he does what he pleases in all realms of heaven, earth, seas, and *Tehomot*:¹⁴⁹ כל אשר חפץ

¹⁴⁷ This exclusivity parallels the rabbinic analogy of the almond, which distinguishes between the protected and targeted areas of the plagues against Egypt (cf. Genesis Rabba 61.6).

¹⁴⁸ Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism*, 249-50. Hoffmeier cites the classic article by Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East."

¹⁴⁹ Tehom appears here in the plural, Tehomot, as well as in Ps 148:7 and Ps 33:6-7.

יהוה עשה בשמים ובארץ בימים וכל תהומות. The Book of Psalms often includes descriptions of humanity praising Yahweh, but the call for all of nature and every realm to praise Yahweh identifies him as the creator of the ordered world:

Psalm 148:3-7
הללוהו שמי השמים והמים אשר מעל השמים
יהללו את שם יהוה כי הוא צוה ונבראו
ויעמידם לעד לעולם חק נתן ולא יעבור
הללו את יהוה מן הארץ תנינים וכל תהומות

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all stars of light!
Praise him, heaven of heavens, and waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of *Yahweh*, for he commanded and they were created.
He established them forever and ever; he set a decree, which cannot be passed.
Praise *Yahweh* from the earth, *Tanninim* and all *Tehomot*.

This psalm reiterates Yahweh's actions of establishing the boundaries for the spheres of the world. The fixed bounds that cannot be passed are particularly directed at the arrangement of waters in their proper places. In other words, the waters of Tehom require a powerful deity to gather and contain. With this authority, Yahweh controls the power of sea monsters and all waters. In this psalm and the following one, Tehom appears in the plural as Tehomot. This may refer to Tehom's upper and lower waters, though most of its references (22 out of 36) are found in the singular and refer to the waters under the earth.

Lastly, Ps 33:6-7, while not a creation psalm, references Yahweh's creative acts as a spoken command:

בדבר יהוה שמים נעשו וברוח פיו כל צבאם
כנס כנדמי הים נתן באצרות תהומות

By word of *Yahweh*, heavens were made,
and by the wind (breath) of his mouth all their host.

He gathered the waters of the sea as a heap,¹⁵⁰
he put *Tehomot* in treasure houses (storerooms)

Here, the division of Tehom's waters suggests upper and lower storerooms. While this declaration describes passive or submissive waters, similar to the Genesis creation account, the active personifications of Tehom appear in other poetic imagery.

3.2.1. *Synonymous Terms*

In the Hebrew Bible, Tehom is a proper noun; it does not appear with the definite article ה like other elements of the created order (such as mountains, valleys, rivers, springs, the sun, the moon, the heavens, and the stars). Even the word for sea, *yam*, which is found in ancient Near Eastern literature as the Ugaritic sea deity Yammu, never appears as a proper noun in the Hebrew Bible. Many other deified elements in the ANE similarly only appear as natural descriptions in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵¹ The generality of all other natural elements makes Tehom's specificity curious and requires examining its relationship to Yahweh, the main deity connected with Tehom.

Other water terms describe deeps or depths and allude to Tehom's waters in poetic descriptions. The word most similar to Tehom is מצולה (deep/depth) or מצולות (deeps/depths), which appears 12

¹⁵⁰ The word נה (nd), translated as "heap", is used to describe the heap of waters in the parting of the Red Sea (Exod 15:8) and the parting of the Jordan River (Josh 3:13, 16).

¹⁵¹ That being said, there are 59 references to Heaven/s as a proper noun, but heaven appears more times as a common noun in the Hebrew Bible.

times in the Hebrew Bible (6 times in the singular and 6 in the plural).¹⁵² Other synonyms used less frequently (5 times) are מעמקי מים (depths of waters) and מעמקים (depths). Words that allude to the power of Tehom's waters include מים רבים (great waters, 28 times), מים אדירים (mighty waters, 1 time), שבלת מים (floodwaters/flooding channels, 1 time), and לב ים (heart of the sea, 3 times).¹⁵³ None of these terms appear as many times as Tehom does and all of them function as common terms without any proper noun connotations. Without consistent personified appearances these synonymous terms remain peripheral to the scope of this research.¹⁵⁴ Although it is not clear if these terms were used as a means of minimizing Tehom's mythic past (in the texts that exclude specific reference to Tehom), their appearances in water imagery frequently depict Yahweh's power in the world.

In sum, the Hebrew Bible's creation narratives and psalms show that Tehom is distinct from other ancient Near Eastern Deeps, as it is the only Deep that is not explicitly deified or even personified as the primary actor. Any personification seen in the aforementioned texts (Ps 104) reflects a response to Yahweh's actions as creator deity. This is also the case with the personification of Tehom in ritual contexts. The following section on ritual begins by examining the appearances of Yahweh to chosen

¹⁵² This is the word used in the Sefire treaty to reference the Deep as a divine witness, cf. Fitzmeyer, "The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire I and II."

¹⁵³ See appendix B for selected references of Tehom's synonymous terms.

¹⁵⁴ Some synonymous terms will be analyzed due to their relevance to the Exodus deliverance (chapter 3) and the language of distress (chapter 4). Later translations such as the Greek LXX equate these terms with Tehom by translating them all as "abyss."

individuals in the Hebrew Bible.

3.3. Tehom in Ritual

Tehom appears in the words of blessing to Joseph (Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13), and this blessing invokes various names and titles of known deities in the Canaanite pantheon. While much remains inconclusive about the history of ancient Israelite religion in the earliest periods of the Iron Age and about the identity of ancient Israel's original deity, it is clear in the biblical record that the name of Yahweh comes to represent all previously known and used names for ancient Israel's deity.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, a brief overview of titles associated with Yahweh demonstrate the origins of ancient Israel's developing religion.

3.3.1. The Names of Yahweh

In ancient Israel's early history, there are multiple names recorded for the primary deity that becomes identified with the deity Yahweh, such as El or Elohim. Early poetic biblical texts and inscriptions that supposedly reflect an old Yahwistic cult of worship¹⁵⁶ associate Yahweh with Edom, Midian, Teman,

¹⁵⁵ For example, while the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions (c. 800) as well as biblical theophany texts provide evidence for a southern provenance and origin of Yahweh in the Late Bronze Age these findings are fragmentary, cf. Martin Leuenberger, "YHWH's Provenance from the South," in *The Origins of Yahwism*, ed. Jürgen van Oorschot, and Markus Witte, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 178.

¹⁵⁶ Texts such as Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4-5; Ps 68:9, 18; Hab 3:3, and inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud

Paran, and Sinai. Yet, whether El becomes Yahweh or Yahweh becomes El, the biblical record indicates that these two names converge as one deity over all other deities.¹⁵⁷ This is seen in Genesis, which references Yahweh as the recipient of sacrificial offerings and as the one who fulfills promises to select individuals.¹⁵⁸

When Abraham's servant is tasked with finding a bride for Abraham's son, Yahweh is referenced in an oath as אלהי הארץ ואלהי השמים "God of the heaven and God of the earth" (Gen 24:3), and אלהי אדני אברהם "God of my master Abraham" (24:12, 27). Yahweh's titles as the God of specific patriarchs begin in Gen 28:13 אלהי אביך ואלהי יצחק "God of Abraham your father and God of Isaac" and Gen 32:9 אלהי אבי אברהם ואלהי אבי יצחק "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac. The full title appears in Exod 3:15 אלהי אבותיכם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב "God of your fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob".

In Exod 3:18, Yahweh is יהוה אלהי העבריים "Yahweh, God of the Hebrews"¹⁵⁹ as well as יהוה אלהי ישראל "Yahweh, God of Israel"—Aaron and Moses use both of these titles in their appeal to Pharaoh for the release of the Israelites (Exod 5:1, 3). Yahweh also identifies himself as אל שדי El Shaddai, the same

reference worship of Yahweh. Cf. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Text*, 140.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁵⁸ The ritual offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3) and Noah (Gen 8:20); promises made to Abraham (Gen 12:7, Gen 13:8) and his wife Sarah (Gen 21:1).

¹⁵⁹ This title only appears in Exodus.

God who previously appeared to the patriarchs, though he was not known to them as Yahweh (Exod 6:2-3). After this explanation, Yahweh declares to Moses that he will be the God of the Israelites and they will be his people (Exod 6:6-8). This is the foundational declaration for Yahwism, confirmed by the great act of delivering the Israelites from slavery and oppression in Egypt (Exod 15).

Besides ritual sacrifices and invocations of oaths, Yahweh's name also appears in ritual blessing. Yahweh and Tehom's invocations in the blessing to Joseph provide a glimpse of the Deep's roles in ancient Near Eastern rituals of sacrifice, abundance, fertility, and divine witness. Tehom's role in this blessing particularly preserves a chosen people and serves as a cautionary witness to Yahweh's character.

3.3.2. Tehom in Blessing

The divine names found in the blessings of Jacob (Gen 49) and Moses (Deut 33) shed light on the development of Yahweh's name and importance, specifically in connection with Tehom's role in these blessings.¹⁶⁰ In Genesis 49, the sources of blessing flow from the invocation of a deity with many names: "Mighty One of Jacob," "Shepherd," "Rock of Israel," and "the God of your father." These names indicate an earlier stage of ancient Israel's religion when Yahweh was known by other names (as discussed in *3.3.1. The Names of Yahweh*). In Deuteronomy 33, however, all of these names have been replaced with one: Yahweh. These differences may reflect

a stage of Hebrew religious development when the crude concepts of Canaan were being transmuted by the refining influence of Yahwism into a terminology applicable to a religion entirely above the aspirations of Canaan. This period represents very early theological thinking ... capable of digesting attributions which later Jewish thought had

¹⁶⁰ See Table 3 for a comparison and translation of Gen 49 and Deut 33.

to refine further or edit out of existence.¹⁶¹

Accordingly, Deut 33's deliberate replacement of all deity titles with Yahweh reflects a period of intentional (re)orientation of religious practice on Yahweh.

Tehom appears as a source of blessing along with שמים (Heavens), שדים (Breasts) and רחם (Womb) in Gen 49:25. The language used is unique and it is the only reference in the Hebrew Bible where Tehom is a blessing and directly named as a positive benefit to humans. Additionally, it is the only source of blessing that is personified as *rbšt* "crouching", even though the other sources of blessings are known deities in the Ugaritic pantheon. Some scholars interpret Womb as an epithet of the Canaanite deities Anat and Asherah,¹⁶² whereas Albright states that "there is no true mythology anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. What we have consists of vestiges—what may be called the 'débris' of a past religious culture."¹⁶³ While this may be the case, "vestiges" do not explain why Tehom appears personified in both versions of the blessing to Joseph as the words of Jacob and Moses, respectively (Gen

¹⁶¹ Bruce Vawter, "The Caananite Background of Genesis 49," *CBQ* 17, no. 1 (1955): 18.

¹⁶² DDD: "Breasts and womb", 177-178.

¹⁶³ Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*, 185.

For an study on the problem of myth and its relationship to biblical portrayals of reality, cf. Brevard Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009). Childs defines myth as "a form by which the existing structure of reality is understood and maintained. It concerns itself with showing how an action of a deity...determines a phase of contemporary world order." *Ibid.*, 29-30.

49:25; Deut 33:13).

In Deut 33:13, all the sources of blessing from Gen 49 are rephrased as gifts of nature coming from Yahweh alone. This reflects an emphasis on Yahweh as “the principal provider of the blessing”, with no misunderstanding remaining as “the elements of the ancestor cult in Gen. 49:22-6 have completely disappeared in the version of Deuteronomy 33.”¹⁶⁴ Following this logic, Deut 33 should have certainly removed *rbšt* and replaced Tehom with a natural term for waters or depths that had no deified associations or personification. Yet, the name Tehom and its personified action are preserved in both blessings because this crouching description is significant for the religious development of ancient Israel.

As we have seen in descriptions of creation, Yahweh sets bounds and restrains Tehom’s waters, however, Tehom’s “crouching” is not an image of lying down or resting. Rather, it describes a temporary position that awaits, lurks, and keeps watch.¹⁶⁵ In this blessing, Tehom is fulfilling Yahweh’s command

¹⁶⁴ Raymond De Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context*, ed. Johannes C. De Moor, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 535 n334.

¹⁶⁵In Hebrew, *rbš* can mean a position or posture of something lying in wait or about to come upon something or someone, cf. the descriptions of sin, curses and dragons in Gen 4:7, Deut 29:20(21), Ezek 29:3. Additionally, Sumerian texts use this verb to describe demons that ambush and destroy their victims, cf. Anne Marie Kitz, "Demons in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 135, no. 3 (2016): 453-58.

to provide a source of life to the people he has chosen for himself. At the same time, Tehom actively lurks as a warning or cautionary witness to Yahweh's power. Even without the explicit conditions of oaths or treaties, Tehom's waters can be used by Yahweh as a form of judgment, as seen in the flood narrative. The many names of Israel's deity and the invocation of deified powers in Gen 49 may have caused confusion in a time of centralizing worship around Yahweh. Even with the removal of deified associations and melding the many epithets of ancient Israel's deity under Yahweh, a Deuteronomist redactor preserved a personified Tehom in Deut 33:13 as a reminder of Yahweh's character. Bountiful blessings from Yahweh are not given to the wicked and righteous alike, and since Tehom's waters are connected with judgment elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, it is fittingly preserved as a warning within this blessing.

In both versions of these blessings, all aspects of the ancient world are incorporated—heaven above, deep below, and everything in between. The blessing of breast and womb in Genesis emphasizes a blessing of fertility by alluding to conditions for producing offspring. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, specifically frames the blessings in terms of yield from the land, and the imagery of bountiful produce is one of cosmic harmony. Tehom's blessings to ancient Israel are physical and tangible rather than spiritual or abstract, since the Hebrew Bible “does not relegate divine activity to some ‘spiritual’ realm, discontinuous with the physical world. Rather YHWH's influence is seen in the ordinary things of life: divine favour is expected to bring material reward.”¹⁶⁶ The language of this blessing describes a utopian

¹⁶⁶ Keith N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in its Narrative Context* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 99.

harmony where the whole of creation works toward the wellbeing and protection of generations. While this blessing focuses on the future implications of Joseph's lineage, these words are not just death-bed well-wishes or good luck charms. As Grüneberg states, "blessings are not pious wishes but respond to the realities of the world and of people. Thus we may reasonably conclude that Gen 49 is not just a prediction of what will be, but a performative utterance, seeking to establish it."¹⁶⁷ The words of blessing speak this reality into existence through the invocation of Yahweh's power.

3.3.3. Towards a Developing Identity

The bountiful blessing to Joseph and his descendants identifies ancient Israel's deity as Yahweh alone and provides an early description of what it means for Yahweh to be the deity of select individuals, families, and tribes. It also reveals Yahweh to be a deity that transcends patriarchal patrons or specific locations of ritual worship. Furthermore, Tehom's roles as abundant nourishment and personified warning reflect the conditional nature of Yahweh's relationship to Israel in the creation of their religious identity.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 25.

TABLE 3. TEXTUAL COMPARISON OF THE BLESSINGS TO JOSEPH

Genesis 49:24b-26a	Deuteronomy 33:13-16
<p>by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, by the God of your father, who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with</p> <p> blessings of Heaven above, blessings of <i>Tehom</i> that lies beneath, blessings of Breasts and of Womb</p> <p> blessings of your father are stronger than blessings of eternal Mountains, bounties of everlasting Hills;</p>	<p>Blessed by Yahweh be his land</p> <p>with the choice gifts of heaven above, and of <i>Tehom</i> that lies beneath; with the choice fruits of the sun; and the rich yield of the months;</p> <p>with the finest produce of the ancient mountains, and the abundance of the everlasting hills; with the choice gifts of the earth and its fullness, and the favor of the one who dwells on Sinai.</p>
<p>מידי אביר יעקב משם רעה אבן ישראל מאל אביך ויעזורך ואת שדי ויברכך</p> <p>ברכת שמים מעל ברכת תהום רבצת תחת ברכת שדים ורחם</p> <p>ברכת אביך גברו על ברכת הורי עד תאות גבעת עולם</p>	<p>מברכת יהוה ארצו</p> <p>ממגד שמים מטל ומתהום רבצת תחת וממגד תבואת שמש וממגד גרש ירחים</p> <p>ומראש הררי קדם וממגד גבעות עולם וממגד ארץ ומלאה ורצון שכני סנה</p>
<p><i>mydy 'byr y'qb mśm r'h 'bn yśr'l</i> <i>m'l 'byk wy'zrk w't śdy wybrkk</i> <i>brkt śmym m'l</i> <i>brkt thwm rbšt tht</i> <i>brkt śdym wrhm</i></p> <p><i>brkt 'byk gbrw</i> <i>'l brkt hwry</i> <i>'d t'wt gb't 'wlm</i></p>	<p><i>mbrkt yhw h 'rśw</i> <i>mmgd śmym mtl</i> <i>wmthwm rbšt tht</i> <i>wmmgd tbw't śmś</i> <i>wmmgd grś yrhym</i></p> <p><i>wmr'ś hrry qdm wmmgd gb'wt 'wlm</i> <i>wmmgd 'rś wml'h</i> <i>wrśwn śkny snh</i></p>

3.4. The Song of the Sea

One of the most unique and significant songs in the Hebrew Bible is the Song of the Sea (Exod 15). Analogous to Tehom's roles in creation and recreation of the cosmos, Tehom is Yahweh's tool in delivering (creating) the people of Israel and destroying their Egyptian oppressors. This event is echoed and remembered throughout the rest of ancient Israel's history as the definitive point in time when Yahweh called a people his own. In other words, the song of Exodus 15 memorializes Tehom in the creation story of the people of Israel.

In Exod 3 Yahweh reveals himself to Moses and charges him with the task of freeing the Israelites (literally: בני ישראל "the sons of Israel"). He reiterates that he is the same אלהי אביך אלהי אברהם "God of your fathers—of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob" (3:6) and that Yahweh is his eternal name (3:15). Exodus develops the character and power of Israel's deity against the Egyptians, and specifically emphasizes that there is none like Yahweh (Exod 8:6). Exodus 15 describes how Yahweh uses Tehom's waters to destroy the Egyptians:

Exodus 15:5, 8, 10

תהמת יכסימו ירדו במצולת כמו אבן
וברוח אפיך גערמו מים נצבו כמו גד נזלים קפאו תהמת בלב ים
נשפת ברוחך כסמו ים צללו כעופרת במים אדירים

(v. 5) *Tehomot* covered them; they went down into **the depths** like a stone.

(v. 8) At the blast of your nostrils waters piled up, floods stood up in a heap;

Tehomot congealed in the **heart of the sea**.

(v. 10) You blew with your wind, the sea covered them;

they sank like lead in **mighty waters**

The imagery captures how the Egyptians sink heavily down into the depths like a stone (v. 5, 10). Tehom's waters cover them but congeals and hardens to make a path for ancient Israel to walk through the heart of the sea (v. 8). This description parallels the flood narrative where all are destroyed save the

chosen family that Yahweh preserves through Tehom's waters. Just like Noah's family is able to safely pass through waters of destruction, so are Yahweh's people brought through Tehom's depths on dry land. Later invocations of Tehom in prophecy and prayer become synonymous with invoking Yahweh to act as he once did in the Exodus deliverance.

3.5. *The Promise of Land*

After Yahweh leads his people out of Egypt and through the wilderness, he promises them good land. Though there are few places in the Hebrew Bible where Tehom is explicitly described as good or positive besides the blessings of Gen 49 and Deut 33, Tehom appears in the description of good land for the people of Israel:

Deuteronomy 8:7 כי יהוה אלהיך מביאך אל ארץ טובה
ארץ נחלי מים עינת ותהמת יצאים בבקעה ובהר

For *Yahweh* your God is bringing you to a good land,
a land with streams of waters, springs
and *Tehomot* issuing forth from the valley and mountain.

Many English translations of this verse, such as the NRSV, deviate from the usual translation of Tehomot as “deeps” or “depths” and translate Tehomot as “underground waters.” It is important in this context, however, to translate the exact word used and explain its connection with the geographical features of this good land. Tehom is the source of these flowing streams and springs that come forth from the land's valleys and hills.

As described in the blessing to Joseph, Tehom's waters are a positive source of nourishment and sustain the lineage of Yahweh's people. Consequently, the creation of a new nation of Israel (Exod 15)—founded on the Yahweh's demonstrative act and through the use of Tehom—is actualized in the

conditions and promises of life and land. Tehom remains significant in the development of ancient Israelite identity, just like Tehom maintains the continued order of the cosmos after creation. As a result, it is fitting that the land promised to the newly established Israel references Tehom in its goodness. As seen in Deut 33:13, the blessing of Tehom is the blessing of watered land. For ancient Israel's context, the ability to grow and sustain produce is the promise of life.

Deuteronomy 8 also identifies this land as Canaan and specifies the produce of this good land as wheat, barley, vine, fig, pomegranate, olive oil, and honey. Yahweh's favor on the land and its choice gifts describes his favor on ancient Israel. The cosmic harmony of the creation works things bountifully for the good of its inhabitants, while Yahweh looks on from his dwelling on Sinai. The choice gifts from heaven above and Tehom below are the waters that nourish and grow life on earth. The promise of land and good things, however, are conditionally based on ancient Israel's faithful keeping of Yahweh's commands. Deuteronomy 8 concludes with this warning:

Deuteronomy 8:18-20 וזכרת את יהוה אלהיך כי הוא הנתן לך כח לעשות חיל
למען הקים את בריתו אשר נשבע לאבתך כיום הזה
והיה אם שכח תשכח את יהוה אלהיך
והלכת אחרי אלהים אחרים ועבדתם והשתחווית להם
העדתי בכם היום כי אבד תאבדון
כגוים אשר יהוה מאביד מפניכם כן תאבדון
עקב לא תשמעון בקול יהוה אלהיכם

Remember it is *Yahweh* your God who gives you the power to get wealth
According to his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as on this day.
If you indeed forget *Yahweh* your God
and go after other gods and serve them or bow down to them,
I warn you this day that you will certainly perish
like the nations that *Yahweh* will cause to perish before you, so you will perish—
because you did not obey the voice of *Yahweh* your God.

This passage connects the origins of Yahwism with the covenant promises that Yahweh made with ancient Israel's fathers. The book of Deuteronomy details the conditions of this covenant as blessings

for obedience and judgment for disobedience. Unfortunately, as the Hebrew Bible records, ancient Israel fails to keep the commands of Yahweh, which results in their judgment. Foreign nations take away the Israelites' good land and scatter their people in exile; this is directly linked to divine judgment for failing to obey the conditions of Yahweh's covenant.¹⁶⁸ During the suffering and oppression of the exile, however, the people of ancient Israel remember Tehom in the foundational deliverance of Exodus 15. They solidify their collective memory around this foundational deliverance and call upon Yahweh to act again according to his covenant promises. Jan Assmann perceptively articulates that

What holds this covenant together is not the natural and indissoluble bond between creator and created but God's fierce love for his people, which he demands that they reciprocate. The covenant is primarily an emotional, affect-based connection...¹⁶⁹ Entering the covenant requires first having exited something else; in this sense, exodus and divine covenant go together.¹⁷⁰

To put it another way, the basis for ancient Israel's religious identity and its endurance through historical memory is the connection between the Exodus deliverance and Yahweh's covenant promises.

¹⁶⁸ 2Kings 17:7-21 explicitly states that the exile took place because of Israel's rejection of Yahweh's covenant.

¹⁶⁹ The significance of Tehom as affect is further developed in chapter 4. In particular, affect theory helps explain how Tehom influences ancient Israel's emotions and experiences (see 4.4.4. *Emotions, Experiences, and Affect Theory*).

¹⁷⁰ Jan Assmann, *The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 336.

3.6. Exodus 15 in Prophecy and Prayers

There are many allusions to Exodus 15 throughout the Hebrew Bible; this section briefly examines the references that specifically mention Tehom in the context of the Exodus deliverance. These texts include Isa 51:10, 63:13, Pss 77:17, 78:15, and 106:9, which recount Yahweh's past actions in ancient Israel's historical memory. Through these retellings, which are set in the context of oppression and exile, ancient Israel hopes and calls on Yahweh to save them again. These references span pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic periods, as there are varying interpretations of when Yahwism becomes an established religion. In the Davidic period and during the Babylonian exile, frequent allusions and references to the Exodus deliverance in prophecy and prayer indicate either the codifying of Yahwism or a more fervent return to Yahwism.

Prophetic passages and prayers mention Tehom in Yahweh's historic acts and re-emphasize ancient Israel's national identity as "redeemed ones." Yahweh delivered them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness to the promised land. Historian Adrian Hastings describes the construction of national identity during times of crisis in this way:

The sort of ethnicity which is likely to develop nationalist identity in self-defence [sic] is one with control of a clear territorial core... [and]...the more [a people] have advanced towards a self-conscious separate identity, an identity of language or religion, the more likely they are to respond to intrusion by adopting the option of nationalism.¹⁷¹

As a result, the people of ancient Israel begin consciously (re)identifying themselves in relationship to Yahweh, whether in self-defense or self-preservation. Thus, the rhetoric found in these passages calls

¹⁷¹ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 31.

Yahweh to act, firstly by identifying him as the deity who delivered and redeemed ancient Israel from the Egyptians, and secondly because they identify themselves with the redeemed ones of the past.

Isaiah 51:10 הלוא את היא המחרבת ים מי תהום רבה השמה מעמקי ים דרך לעבר גאולים
Was it not you that dried up the sea, the waters of *Tehom Rabba*;
That made the **depths of the sea** a path for the redeemed ones to cross

Isaiah 63:13 מוליכם בתהמות כסוס במדבר לא יכשלו
Who led them through *Tehomot* as a horse in the desert, so that they did not stumble?

Isaiah 63:16-19 implores Yahweh to remember his people again even as their enemies have destroyed Yahweh's sanctuary. Specifically, this prayer asks Yahweh to remember his relationship to his people: "You O *Yahweh* are our Father and your name from of old is 'our Redeemer.'"

References to Tehom in historical retellings of the Exodus deliverance reinforce ancient Israel's identity by reminding them through that

Although there are many gods, there is only one God who delivered his people out of the hands of Pharaoh and who therefore has a legitimate claim on this people as his own. It is the exclusivity of belonging that is decisive, not the exclusivity of existence.¹⁷²

Gradually, Tehom's ability to represent Yahweh's judgment and salvation become equated with conditions and situations of distress in ancient Israel's memory. This distinction becomes more clear in analyzing Tehom as a subjugated power in the following chapter. Here, Tehom is personified as responding to Yahweh's actions of the past:

¹⁷² Jan Assman, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 4.

Psalm 77:17 ראוך מים אלהים ראוך מים יחילו אף ירגזו **תהמות**

(v.16) The waters saw you, *Elohim*,
the waters saw you and were convulsed,
indeed, *Tehomot* quaked.

The continuing verses of Ps 77 (18-21 or 17-20 in the English) use cosmic language to describe the battle scene of Yahweh's triumph, concluding with his people passing through the waters by the hand of Moses and Aaron. While some scholars argue that this is evidence of historicization or demythologizing,¹⁷³ others explain that the genres of history and myth were fluid in the ancient world. In other words, myth and history are two ways of expressing the one truth of the Exodus deliverance.¹⁷⁴

Psalm 78:12-16 and 106:9 reiterate similar descriptions of the Exodus deliverance and how Yahweh provided for them in the wilderness and led them to good land.

Psalm 78:12-16 נגד אבותם עשה פלא בארץ מצרים שדה צען

בקע ים ויעבירם ויצב מים כמו נד
וינחם בענן יומם וכל הלילה באור אש
יבקע צרים במדבר וישק **כתהמות רבה**
ויוצא נוזלים מסלע ויורד כנהרות מים

In front of their fathers, he did wonders, in the land of Egypt, the field of Zoan
He split the sea and took them through it and he made the waters stand as a heap
and he led them with a cloud by day, and all the night by the light of fire.
He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink from *Tehomot Rabbah*.
And he brought forth streams from a rock and made waters flow down like rivers.

¹⁷³ Craig C. Broyles, "Memories, Myths, and Historical Monuments: Yahweh's Developing Character in the Psalms," in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J. A. Clines*, ed. James K. Aitken, Jeremy M.S. Clines, and Christl M. Maier (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

¹⁷⁴ Alistair G. Hunter, *Psalms* (London: Routledge, 1999), 154.

ויגער בים סוף ויחרב ויוליכם בתהמות כמדבר Psalm 106:9

He sent His blast against the Sea of Reeds, and it became dry, and he led them through *Tehomot* as through a wilderness.

The recounting of these histories in later generations reiterates that Yahweh's identity is still the same as in ages past, regardless of time (generations removed from the wilderness wanderings), or place (exile). Unlike other patron deities limited to powers of natural phenomena or local cult temples, Yahweh's power transcends both Tehom's waters and his destroyed sanctuary. This transcendence is also developed in wisdom literature, which emphasizes Yahweh's distinctiveness and his relationship to Tehom particularly through the personified Wisdom's account of creation.

3.7. Wisdom's Relationship to Tehom

References to Tehom in Proverbs and Job personify Wisdom as pre-existing and preeminent to Tehom. Wisdom literature is often considered post-exilic, though its theological content and comparative ANE cultural context provide some probability of its pre-exilic roots.¹⁷⁵ The appearance of Wisdom personified in these texts "may have usurped imagery associated generally with goddesses...and applied it to the figure of Wisdom as a 'counter-advertisement' to the cults of Astarte and the Queen of

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Katharine J. Dell, "How Much Wisdom Literature Has its Roots in the Pre-exilic Period?," in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, ed. John Day, Old Testament Studies (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

Heaven.”¹⁷⁶ In other words, invoking Wisdom personified within the context of creation lends a measure of legitimacy and credibility to Wisdom as a witness to creation and Yahweh’s power:

יהוה בחכמה יסד ארץ כונן שמים בתבונה בדעתו תהומות נבקעו ושחקים ירעפו טל
Yahweh by wisdom founded the earth and he established heaven by understanding.
By his knowledge *Tehomot* broke open and clouds drop down dew.

Proverbs 8:22-31 sets Wisdom’s creation account at a specific time “when there were no *Tehomot*” (v. 24). Contrary to *Tehom*’s descriptions in all other Hebrew Bible creation references, this implies that *Tehom* was created rather than existing as primordial waters prior to creation. In this version of creation, Yahweh’s first act is to create Wisdom, who subsequently provides a first-hand account of the world’s creation (v. 27-30a):

Proverbs 8:24, 27-30a
באין תהמות חוללתי באין מעינות נכבדי מים
בהכינו שמים שם אני בחוקו חוג על פני תהום
באמצו שחקים ממעל בעזוז עינות תהום
בשומו לים חקו ומים לא יעברו פיו בחוקו מוסדי ארץ
ואהיה אצלו אמן

(v. 24) When there was no *Tehomot*, I was brought forth
when there were no springs heavy with water
(v. 27-) When *Yahweh* established heavens, there I was,
when he drew a circle on the face of *Tehom*,
when he made firm skies above, when he established fountains of *Tehom*,
when he assigned the sea its limits so that waters would not cross his command
when he marked foundations of earth
then I was beside him, like a master worker

Wisdom describes similar boundary-setting limits on *Tehom*’s waters as seen in creation psalms, but also emphasizes its own role in working beside Yahweh to bring the world to order.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic*

Text, 176.

Job 28 and 38 draw additional connections and associations between Wisdom, Tehom and Tehom's boundaries. Job 28:12 asks the question, "And from where does Wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?" This rhetorical question repeats again in verse 20,¹⁷⁷ with personified responses from Tehom, Sea, Abaddon, and Death:

Job 28:14, 22 תהום אמר לא בי היא וים אמר אין עמדי
אבדון ומות אמרו באזנינו שמענו שמעה

(v. 14) *Tehom* says, "It is not in me"; And *Yam* says, "It is not with me."

(v.22) *Abaddon* and *Death* say, "In our ears we have heard a report of it."

In Hebrew, Abaddon means "the place of destruction", and it only appears in wisdom literature as a parallel to the grave or death.¹⁷⁸ Along with Tehom and Yam, these personified elements are divisions of the world that exist beyond humanity's understanding; yet, even they do not know everything. The text continues along these rhetorical lines and emphasizes that Wisdom's value cannot be compared to the most precious jewels. Only God (Elohim) knows its source because he is Wisdom's creator:

Job 28:23-28 אלהים הבין דרכה והוא ידע את מקומה
כי הוא לקצות הארץ יביט תחת כל השמים יראה
לעשות לרוח משקל ומים תכן במדה
בעשתו למטר חק ודרך לחזיו קלות
אז ראה ויספרה הכינה וגם חקרה
ויאמר לאדם הן יראת אדני היא חכמה וסור מרע בינה

Elohim understands the way to it and he knows its place;
For he looks to the ends of the earth, he sees beneath all the heavens.
When he fixed the weight of the winds, set the measure of the waters;
When he made a rule for the rain and a course for the thunderstorms,
Then he saw it and gauged it; he measured it and probed it.

¹⁷⁷ Job 28:20: "but from where does wisdom come? And where is this place (or source) of understanding?"

¹⁷⁸ Chapter 5 analyzes the changing interpretation of Tehom as it becomes linked to Abaddon and Death in the Hodayot of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

He said to man, “See! Fear of the Lord is wisdom; to shun evil is understanding.”

Job 38 also describes Yahweh’s power in terms of the boundaries set for Tehom’s waters, while stressing humanity’s limited understanding the existence of the world.

Job 38:8-11
בשומי ענן לבשו וערפל חתלתו
ואשבר עליו חקי ואשים בריח ודלתים
ואמר עד פה תבוא ולא תסיף ופא ישית בגאון גליך

Or *who* enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;
When I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band,
And I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors,
And I said, this far you shall come, but no farther and here shall your proud waves stop

Yahweh addresses Job with a series of rhetorical questions about his limited and finite understanding:

Job 38:16
הבאת עד נבכי ים ובחקר תהום התהלכת
Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of *Tehom*?

This discourse includes many references to Yahweh’s creation and control of Tehom’s waters, including his ability to make Tehom’s waters harden or solidify:

Job 38:30
כאבן מים יתחבאו לפני תהום יתלכדו
Waters congeal as stone and the face of *Tehom* surges.

These passages in Job show that wisdom literature is particularly concerned with detailing Yahweh’s actions in fixing and setting the boundaries for the created realm and Tehom’s waters.

References to Tehom in Proverbs and Job reiterate Yahweh’s works at creation, and emphasize creation’s limitations in contrast to Yahweh’s infinite knowledge and power. As ancient Israel’s religion develops from Exodus 15 origins to organized worship of Yahweh, Tehom’s depictions may have been updated to reflect this context. Assman states that “[w]ith the rise of monotheism, the cosmos ceases

to appear as a ‘manifestation’ of divine presence and is seen as the ‘creation,’ the work of God.”¹⁷⁹ Whether this wisdom literature is reactionary or serves to eliminate the conception of Tehom as an independent power, the personifications of Tehom in Proverbs and Job clearly represent Tehom as a creation and declare Yahweh as the creator of both Wisdom and Tehom. This is a distinct religious development as ANE creator deities typically emerge from the primeval Deep and are limited to the phenomena of water. Yahweh’s power and primacy are such that he existed before the cosmos, and he transcends created realms and elements. Even as a created element, however, Tehom continues to symbolize Yahweh’s transcendent power in ancient Israel’s religious spaces.

3.8. *The Symbol of the Bronze Sea*

In the monarchic period of ancient Israel’s history, one symbol connected with Tehom is the Bronze Sea in Solomon’s Temple. Ritual wash basins were commonly found at temples and used for purification purposes. For example, the temple of Marduk in Babylon recreates scenes from Marduk’s victory over Tiamat; as a result, the defeated Apsu water deity becomes the de-deified term *apsu*, meaning ritual water basin.

Similarly, in the Hebrew Bible, King Solomon makes “the bronze sea” which appears as ים הנחשת (the sea of cast metal)¹⁸⁰ or הים מוצק (molten sea), and represents Tehom’s waters at creation (1Kgs 7:23-26; 2Chr 4:2-6). This bronze sea, also referenced as just “the sea”, is set at the right side of the house in

¹⁷⁹ Assman, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*, 26-27.

¹⁸⁰ This bronze is said to have been acquired as spoils from David’s conquests in 1Chr 18:8.

the southeast corner (1Kgs 7:39; 2Chr 4:10). 2Chronicles 4:6 specifies that among the wash basins, there were some used to wash offerings, but the sea was set apart for the washing of the priests. As priests had very specific purification rituals, the bronze sea likely alludes to the purifying powers of Deeps that were seen in chapter 2's ANE rituals.

Ritual purification aside, the immense dimensions of this bronze basin stand out as a visible symbol of Yahwism. Its foundational event references Yahweh's deliverance of ancient Israel from the sea and the Egyptians. Consequently, for a pre-literate society the bronze sea stands as a visible reminder not only of creation, but Yahweh's salvific acts. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith points out that the bronze sea "may have symbolized Yahweh's cosmic victories and extension of divine powers to the king. The Temple courtyard objects were designed to convey Yahweh's triumphant enthronement with its implicit endorsement of the monarchy."¹⁸¹ The idea of Tehom's waters conferring divine power to a human representative is further analyzed in the application of the subjugated Deep motif in human and divine relationships (chapter 4).

The memory of a subjugated Tehom preserves the symbolism of the bronze sea when it is altered¹⁸² and eventually destroyed. In the Babylonian destruction of Solomon's temple, the Chaldeans

¹⁸¹ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Solomon's Temple: The Politics of Ritual Space," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, ed. B. Gittlen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 84.

¹⁸² In 2Kgs 16:17 King Ahaz cuts down the bronze sea from the bronze oxen supporting it and puts it on a stone pavement. The parallel passage in 2Chr 28:24 mentions that Ahaz cuts the temple vessels into pieces without specifying or naming the bronze sea. The bronze was likely given as required

break the bronze sea into pieces and carry the bronze to Babylon (2Kgs 25:13, Jer 52:17). Nevertheless, Tehom remains conceptually important (or even more significant) in the exilic period after the physical space of Yahwism and the land of ancient Israel no longer exist. Peter Machinist describes how the crisis of exile demands a stronger definition of identity from a scattered people:

It was part, rather, of a wider struggle to articulate and propagate national-cultural identity during a period when such identity was threatened with major change and even extinction. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the traits and configurations presented in the Bible often appear in polemical, not neutral formulations. Indeed it is not unusual to find them joined to an explicit preoccupation with the question: how are we different, yes, unique among all groups we know.¹⁸³

Under oppression of foreign rule, the ancient Israelites (re)establish their distinct religious identity by using Tehom as a motif of subjugated power; Tehom's conceptual power reminds ancient Israel that Yahweh is a deity who transcends time and place.

3.9. Conclusion

Tehom's roles in the creation of the world and in the creation of ancient Israel are foundational to the belief system of Yahwism. As the nation of ancient Israel comes in contact with the deities of the ancient Near East, they come to know Tehom in its deified context: as life giver, sustainer, and cosmological divine witness. While Tehom is not explicitly deified in the Hebrew Bible, it is incorporated into creation and ritual texts (blessings, prayers, and psalms) in a way that uniquely focuses ancient Israel's

tribute to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser, cf. Marvin Alan Sweeney, *I & II Kings: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 385.

¹⁸³ Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel: An Essay," 202.

ritual worship. Instead of worshipping the created cosmos and its heights and depths, like other ancient Near Eastern religions, ancient Israelite religion centers their ritual practice around Yahweh.

Tehom's personifications reveal Yahweh to his people, create ancient Israel's identity, and continue to shape the beliefs and ritual practices of Yahwism. While depictions of Tehom in blessing, oaths, prophecies, prayers, and wisdom literature parallel some ANE religious texts, they also reveal Yahweh as a distinctly personal deity whose power is not limited by Tehom's characteristics, time, or location. In other words, the language of the Deep (chapter 2) retains its significance in the Hebrew Bible, but not to deify Tehom. Rather, invocations of Tehom describe Yahweh's control of the world and remind ancient Israel of Yahweh's transcendent power over every time, situation, and place.

IV

SUBJUGATION

4.1. Introduction

The personification chapter framed some of Tehom's main roles in the Hebrew Bible—at creation, in the flood, in identity formation, and in the conditions of blessing and promise. While personification describes Tehom's actions in the Hebrew Bible, the only explicitly personified action examined so far is Tehom's "crouching" description in the blessing of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33. In this chapter, the personification of Tehom as sea monster reflects a "subjugated Deep motif." This motif is common in ancient Near Eastern literature, and comparative examples reveal ancient Israel's distinct use of this motif to express their identity.

Framing the concept of the Deep in terms of subjugation results in a redistribution of its power. In other words, the defeat or control of cosmic waters (and its monstrous forms) empowers its subjugator with legitimacy. Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions employ this idea of subjugators possessing and conferring the authority of the Deep to justify conquest, succession of rule, and the decrees of patron deities. In contrast, the authors of the Hebrew Bible use the motif of Tehom's subjugation to portray Yahweh as the only all-powerful deity.

Concepts of subjugation and authority, however, ultimately reflect belief systems that attribute the power to maintain or destroy life to subjugators. Besides empowering its subjugator (and its representatives), the subjugated Deep also empowers individuals to call upon the subjugator to act according to his or her empowerment. This can be seen in the application of affect theory to the

predominant emotions reflected in ancient Israel's biblical record: distress/anguish and fear/terror.¹⁸⁴

In effect, the Hebrew Bible's subjugated Deep motif empowers individuals to perform rituals and act with authority in times of trouble by recalling their identity as Yahweh's people. Consequently, this chapter analyzes the implications of a subjugated Tehom as:

1. Subjugated sea monsters empowering subjugators (Leviathan and Yahweh)
2. Subjugated waters empowering conquest and rule (Yahweh's conditions)
3. Subjugated waters empowering emotional appeals (of ancient Israel to Yahweh).

4.2. Sea Monsters and Their Subjugators

Tehom's personification as a sea monster gives a more corporeal form to its waters, and by design, the appearance of a monster necessitates acts of subjugation. In other words, monsters—real or imagined—are threats that must be destroyed or subjugated. In ancient Near Eastern literature, the sea monsters Leviathan (Hebrew Bible) and LTN (Baal Cycle) are manifestations of cosmic waters and symbolize various fears: enemy leaders, enemy nations, distress, or death. Consequently, each monster's subjugator proves his legitimacy and power by destroying these sea monsters.

¹⁸⁴ Distress/anguish reflects the reaction to loss/impulse to mourn and fear/terror reflects the reaction to danger/impulse to run or hide. Silvan S. Tomkins categorized these emotions as “negative affects” within affect theory. Cf. Silvan S. Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness: The Complete Edition* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008).

4.2.1. *Leviathan and Yahweh*

Tehom's personification as Leviathan emphasizes Yahweh's power to destroy and subjugate threats to his people. There are six specific references to Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible—Isa 27:1 (twice); Ps 74:13-14, Ps 104:26; Job 3:8, and Job 40:25.¹⁸⁵ Each reference shows Yahweh's power over the sea monster or reflects an aspect of Yahweh's character. Isaiah 27:1 identifies Leviathan as “the fleeing serpent,” “the twisting serpent,” and “the *tannin* of the Sea” that Yahweh kills with his sword. This prophetic judgment references the day of final judgment when Yahweh will בלע המות לנצח “swallow up death forever” and יסיר “remove the disgrace of his people” (Isa 25:8).

Isaiah 27:1 ביום ההוא יפקד יהוה בחרבו הקשה והגדולה והחזקה
על לוייתן נחש ברה ועל לוייתן נחש עקלתון והרג את התנין אשר בים

In that day Yahweh will punish
Leviathan the fleeing serpent, *Leviathan* the twisting serpent
with his hard, great, strong sword,
and he will kill the *tannin* which is in the Sea

The death of Leviathan represents Yahweh's power over chaos and serves as a reminder that Yahweh's people will be saved from evil and wrongdoing when Leviathan is destroyed. This reminder draws out Leviathan's traditions from the past, and gives hope for present and future times of distress.

Since the beginning of time, when Yahweh broke Leviathan's many heads and left him as food (Ps 74:13-14), there has been no drawn-out battle or fear of defeat for Yahweh. Rather, Yahweh swiftly and decisively subjugates this mighty dragon under his rule, who is no more than a created plaything.

¹⁸⁵ Implicit references to Leviathan are also found in Job 7:12 (as the *tannin* dragon), in Job 26:13 (as “the fleeing serpent”), as well as in the lengthy description of his attributes in Job 40:26-41:26. See appendix B for a list of references to Leviathan.

While there is no explicit mention of Tehom's subjugation in the Genesis 1 creation account, Ps 74's creation descriptions record Yahweh's more active efforts against Leviathan:

אתה פוררת בעוז ים שברת ראשי תנינים על המים
אתה רצצת ראשי לויתן תתננו מאכל לעם לציים
אתה בקעת מעין ונחל אתה הובשת נהרות איתן
לך יום אף לך לילה אתה הכינות מאור ושמש
אתה הצבת כל גבולות ארץ קיץ וחרף אתה יצרתם

You divided the sea by your might, you broke the heads of the *tanninim*¹⁸⁶ in the waters
You crushed the heads of *Leviathan*, you gave him as food to the sea creatures
You split springs and brooks, you made the mighty rivers dry up
Day is yours, night is yours also, you established light and sun
You placed all boundaries of earth, summer and winter—you created them

Psalm 104:26 also reiterates that Leviathan is a formed creature set in the bounds of the sea:

שם אניות יהלכון לויתן זה יצרת לשחק בו
There ships go, (and) *Leviathan* that you created to play with

In ancient Israel's context, representations of Leviathan require subjugation until the final day of Yahweh's judgment upon the wicked.

Though biblical references describe Leviathan as a lesser creature with power unequal to Yahweh's, in Job 40-41 Leviathan is an untamable creature unlike any other on earth. He has fearsome strength, power, impenetrable armor, and fire-breathing nostrils (Job 40:25-41:26). The disturbing of Leviathan brings a chaotic darkness (Job 3:8) that even gods and divine beings dread (Job 41:17). There is also none on earth comparable to Leviathan as he was made without fear (Job 41:25). Job describes Leviathan's violent stirring in Tehom's waters in this way:

¹⁸⁶ The NRSV translates *tannin* as dragons, and the heads of the dragons is a reference to Leviathan's many heads.

ירתיח כסיר מצולה ים ישים כמרקחה אחריו יאיר נתיב יחשב תהום לשיבה Job 41:23-24

He makes *depths* boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a jar of ointment.
After him is a shining pathway
(That) one thinks *Tehom* to be gray-haired

All of these descriptions reveal Leviathan as a living threat and monster who symbolizes fear. Leviathan's indestructible features and his repeatedly being defeated by Yahweh are not contradictions, however, as the sea dragon's incomparability on earth reflects the incomparability of Yahweh's rule in heaven. Each appearance of Leviathan confirms Yahweh's supreme power over him through time from creation to present and future.

As a symbolic foe, Leviathan takes the form of human enemies, and the nation of Israel emerges from Leviathan's symbolic defeat. Exodus 5-11 tells of Egypt's enslavement of the people of Israel along with Pharaoh's refusal to let them go. Another name for the Pharaoh of Egypt is התנים הגדול "the great dragon" of the Nile, and he is the enemy of Yahweh (Ezek 29:3). This great dragon is cut into pieces and wounded as the רהב *rahab* 'surging monster' and the תנין *tannin* 'sea dragon' in Isa 51:9-10. Isaiah 51 refers to the Exodus 15 account of Pharaoh's defeat and uses epithets for Leviathan to represent Pharaoh.

Through ten plagues, Yahweh shows his power as creator over all elements and creatures on earth¹⁸⁷ and forces Pharaoh to let Israel go free. Although Pharaoh repeatedly changes his mind and tries to retain his power and jurisdiction over his captives, in the end, the great dragon Pharaoh is defeated.

¹⁸⁷ For more on the types of plagues that invoke the literary pattern of the Genesis creation cf. Archie C.C. Lee, "Genesis I and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm CV," *Vetus Testamentum* 40, no. 3 (1990): 257-63.

Interestingly, Tehom is both the medium of deliverance and a symbol of the oppressor, a metaphorical sea dragon. To put it another way, Yahweh uses Tehom to defeat the Egyptians and Pharaoh, who manifests as a great sea dragon. Tehom's fluidity as a concept allows it to represent the power of the victor, Yahweh, and the defeated monster, Egypt.

As the centrality of the Exodus deliverance in the creation and identity of Yahweh's people replaces the creation of the cosmos, it also becomes the central event that ancient Israel turns to in times of distress. Psalm 74, for example, describes Yahweh's creation acts in relation to Leviathan, while symbolically alluding to Yahweh's defeat of Pharaoh (the human representative of Leviathan), and his Egyptian army (sea monster associates).¹⁸⁸ Debra Scoggins Ballentine explains that the context for Psalm 74 is a national lament: "[T]he lament cites the deity's past feats in order to provoke him to action within the current dismal situation."¹⁸⁹ In other words, Leviathan's defeat empowers the laments of ancient Israel by reminding their subjugator and deliverer, Yahweh, to act again on their behalf (this empowerment is examined further in 4.4.).

As Leviathan symbolizes past, present, and future enemies, he also becomes defined as part of Tehom's subjugated Deep motif. In other words, the subjugation of Tehom and its corporeal monstrous

¹⁸⁸ In the Targum of Psalm 74, Leviathan and tanninim are replaced with Pharaoh and his army. Cf. Debra Scoggins Ballentine, "Revising a Myth: The Targum of Psalm 74 and the Exodus Tradition," in *The One Who Sows Bountifully: Essays in Honor of Stanley K. Stowers*, ed. Saul M. Olyan Caroline Johnson Hodge, Daniel Ullucci, Emma Wasserman (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

forms provide a framework for people to articulate and remember their belief system in changing circumstances. Leviathan is a monster fearsome enough to symbolize every kind of threat to the identity of Yahweh's people and in doing so, conceptually provides a way for them to address their fears. This symbolic representation of what people fear is also found in ancient Israel's Canaanite context, where battles against the sea monster of Ugarit¹⁹⁰ personify matters of life or death.

4.2.2. *LTN and Baal*

Leviathan's closest counterpart in the ancient world is LTN, the sea monster of Ugarit, and both monsters evoke the same motif of subjugated power. Like Leviathan, LTN also symbolizes fears of death and justifies its subjugator's maintenance of power.

Specifically, the Ugaritic *Baal Cycle* explains Baal's legitimate authority over the Sea (Yammu) and his representatives. This text does not describe "primordial events such as the creation of the cosmos, but rather its maintenance through the power of the storm god."¹⁹¹ Yammu (or Yamm), the Sea, takes the form of a sea monster, whose shifting and twisting shape reflects its environment. Serpents and dragons can be understood as shapeless because they do not appear in a bound form—just like the waters of the sea, they are constantly shifting their shape.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Ugarit was an ancient Canaanite sea-port city (modern day Syria) and its language (Ugaritic) is a close Northwest Semitic relative of biblical Hebrew.

¹⁹¹ Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation, and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2*, vol. 1, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 82.

¹⁹² DDD: "Sea", 737.

In this account of the struggle for power over the Sea, the sea monster LTN first appears when the warrior deity Anat's recounts her war victories to Baal's messengers (CAT 1.3 iii). Among Anat's defeated opponents are Yamm, River (Naharu), Dragon (TNN), and the Twisty Serpent, who is identified as the seven headed sea monster LTN:

38-40 *lmḥšt.mdd / ilym lkl.nhr.il.rbm / lištbm.tnn.ištm []h*
 Surely I fought Yamm, the Beloved of El
 Surely I finished off River, the Great God/God of the Great Waters
 Surely I bound TNN and destroyed him
 41-42 *mḥšt.bṭn. ḳltn/ šlyt.d.šb't.rašm*
 I fought the Twisty Serpent, The potentate with seven heads¹⁹³

These specific descriptions associate Yammu with Naharu, and TNN with a twisting seven-headed serpent—the defining characteristic of LTN. As the account of Anat's defeat of Yammu and all his representations describe a cyclical battle, it is not definitive or final. In the same way, when Baal defeats Yammu and all his representations, it is understood as a recurring battle for power and legitimacy.

Similar descriptions of LTN repeat again in lines 27-31 when Mot's messengers deliver a message to Baal:

1-4 *ktmḥš.ltn.bṭn.brḥ/ tkly.bṭn. ḳltn. []/*
šlyt.d. šb't.rašm/
ttkḥ.tfrp.šmm.
 When you killed Litan¹⁹⁴, the Fleeing Serpent,
 Annihilated the Twisty Serpent, The Potentate with Seven Heads,
 The heavens grew hot, they withered...¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Text and translation by Mark S. Smith, "The Baal Cycle," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker, SBL Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 111.

¹⁹⁴ Some scholars vocalize *LTN* as *Litan/u* and *Lotan/u* in their translations.

¹⁹⁵ Text and translation from Mark S. Smith, "The Baal Cycle," 141-3.

Repetition emphasizes the characteristics of the slain and reminds the audience of the subjugator's actions—Baal has defeated Yammu/the Sea and his manifestations, Naharu/Judge River and TNN (*tunnanu* dragon), an epithet for the twisty seven headed sea monster, LTN. As LTN/Leviathan is the “mythical monster that collaborates with or personifies the god Yamm,”¹⁹⁶ Baal's defeat of Yammu includes the vanquishing of the sea monster whose twisting form reflects its realm of the sea. Cross also makes the connection that this seven-headed dragon, is the sea itself:

we can imagine that in Canaan as in Mesopotamia and Israel, Sea was portrayed as a seven-headed dragon, a dragon to be slain in order to establish the rule of the warrior-king of the gods.¹⁹⁷

Additional repetitions of epithets and synonymous parallelism show that Yammu's personifications and extensions as Naharu/River and LTN/Sea Monster ultimately represent Motu/Death.

While Baal's reign over the Sea represents his rule over life at Ugarit, a sea-port city, the cycle of

¹⁹⁶ DULAT: 507.

¹⁹⁷ Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 119-20. Elsewhere, the Hurrian god of the Sea, Kiyaši, is similarly equated with its serpent counterpart (*apši*), which also is closely identified with the Ugaritic Sea-dragon TNN (*tannin/tunnanu*), cf. Meindert Dijkstra, "The myth of apši 'the (sea)dragon' in the Hurrian tradition," *UF* 37 (2005): 320-21.

battles between Baal and the Sea describe an ongoing threat in reality.¹⁹⁸ W. Herrmann explains that “Baal is revered as the god who protects against the forces of destruction... particularly, however, his defeat of Yammu symbolizes the protection he can offer sailors and sea-faring merchants.”¹⁹⁹ In other words, the Baal Cycle explains why Baal is the patron deity of sailors, as praying to Baal helps seamen appeal to a legitimate power over the Sea and Death. Baal’s legitimacy, conferred by his repeated defeats of the Sea and Death in the Baal Cycle, empowers seamen and the inhabitants of Ugarit to face fears of the sea and death on a daily basis. While these interpretations and applications to life at Ugarit are not explicitly stated, Baal’s defeat of the Sea also implies his power to ensure stability for the human rulers of Ugarit.²⁰⁰

Additional sea monsters traditions are found in Mesopotamian literature (Tiamat, Labbu²⁰¹), Egyptian literature (Apep/Apophis), and Hittite/Hurrian literature (Hedammu,²⁰² Illuyanka, and to some extent Ullikummi the stone monster). These traditions reflect the manifestation or extension of

¹⁹⁸ For more texts describing Yamm as an ongoing threat in Ugaritic reality, cf. Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, 2nd ed. (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1997), 88-89.

¹⁹⁹ DDD: "Baal," 135.

²⁰⁰ Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*, 59.

²⁰¹ Cf. “The Slaying of Labbu” in Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 361-65.

²⁰² Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "The Song of Hedammu," in *Hittite Myths*, ed. Gary M. Beckman, SBL Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 51.

sea or ocean in their own ways, but in the context of cosmic power these waters ultimately represent the primeval Deep (see Table 4). Sea monsters serve as the Deep's manifestations, which give fears a corporeal and destructible form. Accordingly, the subjugated Deep motif empowers subjugators with legitimacy, and this symbolism empowers ancient people to face their deepest fears.

TABLE 4. SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF SEA DRAGONS AND SEA MONSTERS

	Sea Dragon / Monster	Deity
Ancient Israel	Leviathan Associates: Rahab, Tannim	Yahweh
<i>Symbolizing</i>	Pharaoh, Egypt, Exod 15	Legitimacy of deity's rule
Ancient Ugarit <i>Baal Cycle</i>	LTN Associates: YM, NHR, TNN	Baal (Storm deity) also known as Hadad (Ugaritic), Adad (Akkadian)
<i>Symbolizing</i>	Fear of Death, Sea, Combat myth	Legitimacy of deity's rule
Ancient Anatolia <i>Kumarbi Cycle</i>	Illuyanka Hedammu	Teshub (Hurrian storm deity) also known as Tarhunt (Luwian)
<i>Symbolizing</i>	Combat myth	Legitimacy & succession of rule
Ancient Mesopotamia	Tiamat Associates: Apsu, various monsters	Marduk (Storm deity)
<i>Symbolizing</i>	Labbu Chaos, Combat and creation myth	Tišpak (Eshnunna storm deity) Legitimacy of patron deity
Ancient Egypt	Apep / Apophis	Ra / Re (Sun deity) Amun-Ra (Creator deity)
<i>Symbolizing</i>	Chaos, Combat myth- cycles of death/life	Order, life, patron deity

4.3. The Subjugated Deep in Human-Divine Relationships

The previous section showed how the subjugated Deep motif symbolically reiterates the power and legitimacy of Yahweh in ancient Israel, and Baal in ancient Ugarit, in delivering people from threatening fears. Next we examine the use of the subjugated Deep motif to display Yahweh's destructive power in the Hebrew Bible and to divinely mandate conquest in Mesopotamian literature.

4.3.1. Enacting Judgment and Conferring Legitimacy

Yahweh as subjugator uses Tehom's waters to reveal himself as a legitimate power for his people. In the prophetic pronouncements of Ezek 26:19, Ezek 31:15, Amos 7:4, and Hab 3:10, Yahweh's power brings judgment against cities, nations, the great Tehom itself, and even his own people.

Ezekiel 26 prophesies that Yahweh's judgment will result in the complete and utter ruin of the city of Tyre. Tehom's overwhelming waters bring about this destruction:

Ezekiel 26:19-20 בתתי אתך עיר נחרבת כערים אשר לא נושבו
בהעלות עליך את תהום וכסוך המים הרבים
והורדתיך את יורדי בור אל עם עולם
והושבתיך בארץ תחתיות כחרבות מעולם את יורדי בור
למען לא תשבי ונתתי צבי בארץ חיים

When I make you a city laid waste, like cities that are not inhabited,
when I bring up *Tehom* over you, and the **great waters** cover you
then I will bring you down, with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old
I will install you in the lower land as those that go down to the pit, like the ruins of old,
so that you shall not be inhabited and shall not radiate splendor in the land of the
living.

This prophecy makes clear that this once radiant (prosperous) city will be inundated, bereft of its inhabitants.

Ezekiel 31 also uses Tehom's waters to judge the great nation of Egypt, but in a completely different way. Rather than drowning the city in Tehom's cosmic waters, judgment comes in the form of

removing Tehom's abundant life-giving waters. Yahweh uses Tehom's מים רבים "great waters" to make this tree (Egypt) grow more abundantly and beautiful than any tree:

Ezekiel 31:4-5 מים גדלוהו תהום רממתהו את נהרתיה הלך סביבות מטעה
ואת תעלתיה שלחה אל כל עצי השדה על כן גבהא קמתו מכל עצי השדה
ותרבינה סרעפתיו ותארכנה פארתו ממים רבים בשלחו

v.4 Waters raised it, *Tehom* made it grow tall,
making its rivers flow around the place it was planted,
sending forth its streams to all the trees of the field
therefore its stature was higher than that of all the trees of the field
its boughs were many and its branches were long
because of the **great waters** in its roots.²⁰³

Tehom's nourishing power to grow life, however, continues only as long as Yahweh allows it. The withholding of Tehom's waters under Yahweh's judgment results in the destruction of this great tree:

Ezekiel 31:15 ביום רדתו שאולה האבלתי כסתי עליו את תהום
ואמנע נהרותיה ויכלאו מים רבים ואקדר עליו לבנון וכל עצי השדה עליו עלפה

On the day it (the tree) went down to *Sheol*
I caused mourning and covered *Tehom* over it
I withheld its rivers and **great waters** were restrained.
I made Lebanon mourn for it,
and all the trees of the field fainted because of it."

Yahweh allows the tree to be destroyed because of Egypt's wickedness, and verses 6-18 list all those who were taken down with the great tree in judgment. This prophecy symbolizes how Yahweh's power can uproot and destroy even the greatest nations of the ancient world. Thus, these prophetic pronouncements reveal that Yahweh's authority and control over Tehom's power make him a deity that is to be feared by all, even Tehom.

²⁰³ Verse 7 repeats the same reason for the greatness of the tree: it is rooted in מים רבים (great waters).

In Amos 7:4, Yahweh's power extends to devouring and destroying Tehom itself:

Amos 7:4b
כה הראני אדני יהוה והנה קרא לרב באש אדני יהוה
ותאכל את תהום רבה ואכלה את החלק

This is what the Lord *Yahweh* showed me:

Behold, the Lord *Yahweh* was calling to contend (judge) by fire,
and it devoured *Tehom Rabba* and was devouring the portion (of the land)

And in Hab 3:10, all of creation trembles and fears in response to the terror of Yahweh's impending judgment:

ראוך יחילו הרים זרם מים עבר נתן תהום קולו רום ידיהו נשא
Mountains saw you and writhed, a torrent of water swept by
Tehom gave forth its voice and raised high its hands

This verse contains Tehom's most personified descriptions—having a voice and hands.²⁰⁴ Habakkuk 3 is a petition to Yahweh to bring judgment upon ancient Israel's oppressors and deliver Israel as he has done in the past. Undoubtedly, Habakkuk alludes here to Yahweh's deeds and actions in the foundational Exodus deliverance, which had replaced the creation of the cosmos for ancient Israel.²⁰⁵ In this situation, the upheaval of all creation reflects the despair and distress of Yahweh's people. This text petitions Yahweh to remember his people and revive his works of salvation in the present time.

²⁰⁴ The NRSV understands the hands that are raised high to be those of the Sun (appearing in the following verse) rather than to Tehom: "the deep gave forth its voice and the sun raised high its hands."

²⁰⁵ Verses 8-15 use specific cosmic imagery reminiscent of battle (see Table 5). For instance, crushing the head of the house of the wicked (v.15) could be interpreted as a description of crushing the great sea monster, Pharaoh, since the context is still set in the cosmic great waters of Tehom (v.15).

TABLE 5. HABAKKUK 3 TEXT & TRANSLATION

		Habakkuk 3:8-15
<i>hbnhrym hrh yhw</i>	הבנהרים חרה יהוה	8 Were you angry at the rivers, Yahweh?
<i>'m bnhrym 'pk</i>	אם בנהרים אפך	Or was your anger against the rivers
<i>'m bym 'brtk</i>	אם בים עברתך	Or your indignation against the sea
<i>ky trkb 'l swsyk</i>	כי תרכב על סוסך	When you rode on your horses
<i>mrkbt'yk ysw'h</i>	מרכבתיך ישועה	your chariots of salvation
<i>'ryh t'wr qst'k</i>	עריה תעור קשתך	9 Your bow was stripped bare
<i>sb'wt mtwt 'mr</i>	שבעות מטות אמר	(Your) staffs, the oaths of (your) speech (?)
<i>slh</i>	סלה	<i>Selah</i>
<i>nhrwt tbq' rš</i>	נהרות תבקע ארץ	(With) rivers you split the earth
<i>r'wk yhytw hrym</i>	ראוך יחילו הרים	10 The mountains saw you and writhed
<i>zrm mym 'br</i>	זרם מים עבר	Rainstorms of waters passed over
<i>ntn thwm qwlw</i>	נתן תהום קולו	<i>Tehom</i> gave forth its voice
<i>rwm ydyhw nš'</i>	רום ידיהו נשא	And raised high its hands
<i>šmš yrh 'md</i>	שמש ירה עמד	11 Sun, moon stood (still) in their lofty abode
<i>zblh l'wr hšyk yhlkw</i>	זבלה לאור חציד יהלכו	At the light of your arrows as they went by
<i>lgh brq hnytk</i>	לנגה ברק חניתך	At the brightness of your lightning (flashing) spear
<i>bz'm tš'd rš b'p tdws</i>	בזעם תצעד ארץ	12 You marched through the land in indignation
<i>gwym</i>	באף תדוש גוים	You trampled the nations in anger
<i>yš't lys' 'mk</i>	יצאת לישע עמך	13 You went out for the salvation of your people
<i>lys' t mšyhk</i>	לישע את משיחך	You went out for the salvation of your anointed
<i>mħšt r's mbyt rš'</i>	מחצת ראש מבית רשע	You crushed the head of the house of the wicked ²⁰⁶
<i>'rwt yswd 'd šw'r slh</i>	ערות יסוד עד צואר	Laying bare (its) foundation up to its neck
<i>nqbt bmt'w r's przw</i>	סלה	<i>Selah</i>
<i>ys'rw lhpysny</i>	נקבת במטיו ראש פרזו	14 You pierced with his staffs the head of his warriors
<i>'lyštm kmw l'kl 'ny</i>	יסערו להפיצני	They stormed to scatter me
<i>bmstr</i>	עליצתם כמו לאכל עני במסתר	Their exultation as if to devour the poor in a secret place
<i>drkt bym swsyk</i>	דרכת בים סוסך	15 You trampled the sea with your horses
<i>ħmr mym rbym</i>	חמר מים רבים	Foaming/churning <i>great waters</i>

²⁰⁶ In line with Gunkel's view of Babylonian influence on Genesis, Stephen argues that the imagery described in Hab 3 is not of the Exodus deliverance but that of creation, drawing parallels to the Mesopotamian creation myth describing Marduk's battle against Tiamat. Cf. Ferris J. Stephen, "The Babylonian Dragon Myth in Habakkuk 3," *JBL* 43, no. 3/4 (1924): 290-93.

The use of the subjugated Deep motif in the descriptions of these prophecies combines aspects of Yahweh's power and victory with the laments of destruction. For instance, Hab 3 addresses the prophecy of destruction with a lament, while refashioning a psalm of victory in order to resolve the conflict between Yahweh's present actions and the promises that are yet to be fulfilled. In this way, even in the distress of cosmic upheaval the subjugated Deep motif reminds people to trust Yahweh.

Finally, the use of Tehom's waters to describe Yahweh's judgment and power also extends to his chosen representative. Psalm 89 recounts Yahweh's covenant with King David first by legitimating Yahweh's divine authority over Tehom's waters:²⁰⁷

אתה מושל בגאות הים בשוא גליו אתה תשבחם Psalm 89:10

You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.

Then, Yahweh's endorses David's power to rule by sharing control of Tehom with David:

ישועתי ושמתי בים ידו ובנהרות ימינו הוא יקראני אבי אתה אלי וצור ישועתי Psalm 89:26-27

I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.

He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!

While Tehom is not explicitly named in Ps 89, these subjugated cosmic waters are identifiable with Tehom, a connection grounded in the use of the subjugated Deep motif. A subjugated Tehom both legitimates Yahweh's divine authority and justifies the authority of his chosen ruler.²⁰⁸ As we have seen,

²⁰⁷ Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*, 116-19.

²⁰⁸ For a comparison of the differing conceptions of legitimating divine kingship between Egyptian and Northwest Semitic texts, cf. Joanna Töyräänvuori, "The Northwest Semitic Conflict Myth and Egyptian Sources from the Middle and New Kingdoms," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration*

if Yahweh's people do not keep his commandments, his judgment comes upon them as well. In Ps 89, however, Yahweh reiterates that even if his people do not keep the conditions of his covenant, he will remain faithful and keep his eternal promises to them.²⁰⁹ This profound assurance, reflected in lament, empowers ancient Israel to return to Yahweh even after they have experienced his judgment.

4.3.2. Justifying Conquest and Conferring Legitimacy

Comparatively, ancient Mesopotamian literature uses the subjugated Deep motif to justify dominion and rule. When Assyrians reached major bodies of water, they would perform a set of rituals that included washing of weapons, making offerings, and celebratory feasting.²¹⁰ Ritual purification draws on belief in the Deep's power to cleanse weapons of conquest and battle, but more significantly, these rituals harness the Deep's power and justify its use.²¹¹ Additionally, after these conquests, rulers would often erect monuments or statues of themselves, representing their dominion over the land as well as

of Hermann Gunkel's Chaokampf Hypothesis, ed. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard H. Beal (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 125-26.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Psalm 89:29-38.

²¹⁰ Shigeo Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC) Relating to His Campaigns to the West* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 298. These are performed by Shalmaneser and Ashurnasirpal II, Mesopotamian rulers from the third and second millennia BCE; and Sargon, Naram-Sin, and Yahdun-Lim, the kings of Akkad.

²¹¹ CAD: "tamtu", 153. For example, in Assyrian accounts of conquest there are references such as "he washed his weapons in the sea" and "I purified my weapons in the Great Sea."

the sea.

Assyrian royal inscriptions use the language of the Deep to promote political agendas and describe conquest and power.²¹² Assyrian kings justify warfare and subjugation of other kingdoms by framing them as the god Assur's commands.²¹³ Offerings were primarily made to Assur, the supreme deity of the Mesopotamian pantheon, in recognition of Assur's divine authority in allowing them victory in their conquest. Assur's reign is based on the understanding of his victory over Tiamat in the Assyrian version of the *Enuma Elish* (the creation story that explains Marduk's reign in the Babylonian world).

The Mari letters²¹⁴ (Northern Mesopotamia) contain a specific explanation for how the language of the Deep is involved in the justification of human kingship. In Mari Letter A. 1968, the primeval Deep is mentioned in reference to a battle that authorizes the power granted to Zimri-Lim, the king of Mari. Addu (Hadad), the storm deity of Aleppo, reminds Zimri-Lim, "I have restored you to the throne of your

²¹² Keiko Yamada, "'From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea' - The Development of the Names of Seas in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *Orient* 40 (2005).

²¹³ Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, vol. 1, Records of the Ancient Near East (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1972), 121, 23. Section 175

²¹⁴ The Mari letters are considered Mesopotamian and Canaan religious literature, as the pantheon at Mari consists of Sumerian and Semitic deities.

father, and I have given you the weapons with which I vanquished the Sea."²¹⁵ The legitimacy of Zimri-Lim's power as king is derived from Addu's power over the Deep. This legitimate power is granted to a human ruler as long as he submits to the ritual demands of Addu.²¹⁶ Addu claims legitimate authority as the one who defeated the sea; Zimri-Lim's power to rule is derivative and based on ritual acts of loyalty to Addu. Additionally, the weapons of Addu given to the king can also be interpreted as physical evidence of the agreement between the deity and the king of Mari.²¹⁷

In both of these examples, the Deep implicitly functions as a power uncontainable by human strength and requiring divine (or divinely purified) weapons to subdue it. This idea is common to most ancient Near Eastern conceptions of the world and its beginnings. Mesopotamian religion conceives of the Deep as "the sea, the mother of the gods, in whose womb the water never runs out."²¹⁸ The Deep's legitimacy and power are derived from creation, so any deity who claims victory over the Deep's waters inherits the Deep's legitimacy and power to rule. Accordingly, these texts show Assur and Addu both employing the language of the Deep to reinforce their divine authority and legitimacy. This language, however, is also used to remind human rulers that the power of the Deep can be given and taken away, depending on an individual finding favor or not with the storm deity.

²¹⁵ Abraham Malamat, *Mari and the Bible*, vol. 12, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 18. Mari letter A. 1968 refers to conflict with the Sea (*temtum*).

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

²¹⁷ Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*, 113-15.

²¹⁸ CAD: "tamtu," 156. Cf. von Weiher, *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk II*, 5:7f.

4.4. The Significance of Subjugated Tehom for Ancient Israel

From the previous comparison, we can see that the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian texts use the subjugated Deep motif in similar ways to justify and confer legitimacy of rule. In the laments of ancient Israel, however, the use of subjugated Tehom distinctly articulates distress and empowers action in a way not seen in other ancient Near Eastern laments.

4.4.1. The Language of Distress

The control and legitimacy associated with the subjugated Deep motif have a particular application for ancient Israel evident in the use of Tehom in the language of distress. To put it another way, the articulation of suffering and trouble often connects to a plea for deliverance, and these articulations, found in psalms and prayers, describe Tehom's attributes and power. For example, Ps 69:2-3 begins:

הושיעני אלהים כי באו מים עד נפש
טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד
באתי במעמקי מים ושבלת שטפתני

Deliver me, *Elohim*, for waters have reached my soul.
I sink in **deep** mire, where there is no foothold;
I have come into **depths of waters** and the flood sweeps over me.

And:

Jonah 2:6 אפפוני מים עד נפש תהום יסבבני סוף חבוש לראשי

The waters closed in over me; *Tehom* surrounded me;
weeds were wrapped around my head

The lament equates the distressing situation with the figurative language of oppressive waters, which includes flooding, sinking, and overwhelming. Consequently, the plea for salvation encompasses deliverance not only from the enemies that Tehom represents, but specifically from the watery depths of Tehom as well (v.15):

הצילני מטיט ואל אטבעה אנצלה משנאי וממעמקי מים

Rescue me from sinking, let me not sink
Let me be delivered from my enemies and from **depths of waters**

On the other hand, Pss 42 and 71 state the situation of distress (judgment) in terms of waters with lesser emotional appeal and emphasize a hopeful expectation of Yahweh's deliverance.²¹⁹

קורא אל תהום אל תהום לקול צנורִיךְ כל משברִיךְ וגליךְ עלי עברו
Tehom calls to *Tehom* at the sound of your cataracts
all your breakers and waves have gone over me.

אשר הראיתנו צרות רבות ורעות תשוב תחינו ומתהמות הארץ תשוב תעלני
Psalm 71:20
You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again
from *Tehomot* of the earth you will bring me up again.

Psalm 42 concludes with the repeated affirmation, הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים “hope in God” in verse 11, and Ps 71 declares that God's acts powerfully to raise up those in the depths. The depths of despair and heights of deliverance described in these prayers mirror the realities of Yahweh's power.

יורדי הים באניות עשי מלאכה במים רבים
Psalm 107:23-26
המה ראו מעשי יהוה ונפלאותיו במצולה
ויאמר ויעמד רוח סערה ותרומם גליו
יעלו שמים ירדו תהומות נפשם ברעה תתמוגג
Others descend the sea in ships and make work in **great waters**
They have seen the works of *Yahweh* and his wonders in **the deep**
He spoke and the storm wind stood and its waves surged
They mounted up to heaven, descended to *Tehomot*, their courage melting in evil²²⁰

²¹⁹ Certain psalms can be grouped under themes; for example, Miller groups the Korahite collection of Psalms 42-49 under the key issue, “Where is your God?” Cf. Robert D. Miller, II, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations: An Old Testament Myth, Its Origins, and Its Afterlives*, ed. Grant Frame, Brent A Strawn and Niek Veldhuis, Explorations in ANE Civilizations (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), 162-63.

²²⁰ This has been interpreted as calamity or distress.

Verses 28-30 continue with a plea to Yahweh to save those in distress: ויצעקו אל יהוה בצר, “and they cried to Yahweh in distress.” Spatially, these descriptions articulate that trouble, distress, judgment, and oppression spiral downward. Additionally, when Yahweh does save his people from their troubles, it is described in terms of his power over the waters: יקם סערה לדממה ויחשו גליהם “he made the storm silent and stilled its waves.” In response, the plea concludes with praises of Yahweh’s works.

Another phrase that ancient Israel incorporates into the language of distress is מים רבים the “great waters” or “mighty waters”, which is yet another reference to Tehom. Psalms 18:17 (paralleled in 2Sam 22:7), 32:6, and 144:7 include pleas for deliverance from these great waters. Psalm 144:7 also equates the waters with enemies: פצני והצילני ממים רבים מיד בני נכר “rescue me, save me from *great waters*, from the hands of foreigners.” Deliverance is also described as being drawn out of these great waters.

4.4.2. A Comparative Example: Sumerian *balag*

The use of the subjugated Deep in descriptions of distress, which can be categorized under the genre of lament, is a common part of ancient Near Eastern liturgy; consequently, this section briefly compares the subjugated Deep motif in Sumerian lament with the Hebrew Bible’s language of distress.

In Sumerian literature, *balag* is a genre of lament that formalizes the expression of pain and grief by confronting deities over their role in the destruction and calamity of cities. The calamity is framed as a decree by deities or a deity and described as “a tremendous storm surge that cannot be

stopped or deflected but rather devastates everything in its path.”²²¹ These texts begin with *a-ab-ba hu-luh-ha*, meaning “oh angry sea,” referring to the waters of the primeval Deep. While *balag* may be more comparable to passages about the destruction of cities in the book of Lamentations, it too, like other laments we have seen, evokes the subjugated Deep motif when describing Tehom's overwhelming destructiveness.

The *balag* texts of *a-ab-ba hu-luh-ha* express grief over the destructive actions of deities and incorporate such expressions into a Sumerian liturgical framework. *Balag*-laments usually cite specific catastrophes that had “great and lasting impact upon the collective memory of the nation, and perhaps also upon the individual memories of those who had experienced it.”²²² This is similar to the development of the subjugated Deep motif in the Hebrew Bible as an expression of crisis and catastrophe (such as exile) profoundly affecting ancient Israel's sense of nationhood and religious identity. Additionally, recitation of *balag* also became an indispensable part of the ritual accompanying the demolition and rebuilding of temples.²²³ Eventually, *balag* as a liturgical chant was adjusted and

²²¹ P. Ferris, "The *Eršemma*, *Balag* and *Šuilla* Laments," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III, and Peter Enns (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press Academic, 2008), 412-13.

²²² Raphael Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea (a-ab-ba hu-luh-ha): The History of a Sumerian Congregational Lament*, ed. William W. Hallo, Yale Near Eastern Researches, 6 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 2.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

used by different cities to worship patron deities.

Likewise, the Hebrew Bible's laments became incorporated into the liturgy of ancient Israel. Though Sumerian *balag* does not resolve any conflict nor does it result in the personal deliverance that ancient Israel experiences and expects, it is an example of how distress can be incorporated into liturgical acts of worship. Appearances and use of the subjugated Tehom motif continually serve to emphasize belief in Yahweh's power. Even in desperation and distressing circumstances, the collective memory of ancient Israel is established in these liturgies of lament, which empowers individuals to invoke Yahweh's past faithfulness and to wait for his deliverance.

4.4.3. Distress Empowering Hope

The Hebrew Bible records many psalms and prayers that show Yahweh's people internalizing and personalizing the language of the Deep in various stages of distress. A few of these examples are provided to show how Tehom's overwhelming waters can bring individuals in distress to a situation of empowerment.

In Jonah 2, the prayer of Jonah begins with, קראתי מצרה לי אל יהוה ויענני "in my distress I called to Yahweh" (v. 3a), because Jonah knows Yahweh is not only the one who has cast him into his predicament, but also his potential deliverer from that predicament. As Tehom's waters close over him and surround him, he remembers Yahweh: זכרתי את יהוה זכרתי "While I was fainting, my soul remembered Yahweh" (v. 8a). So he calls out to Yahweh, offering sacrifice and exclaiming: בהתעטף עלי "Deliverance belongs to the Lord!" (v. 9). Jonah's distress amidst Tehom's waters empowers him to remember Yahweh's faithfulness and to expect deliverance. As seen in the use of subjugated Deep in the language of distress, even when judgment of Tehom falls upon Yahweh's people,

they cry out to Yahweh through ritual prayers, sacrifices, and actions. They assure themselves of his power and trust that he is able to deliver them from their present trouble, as he has done in the past.

Psalms 36:6-7 compares Yahweh's attributes of faithfulness, steadfastness, beneficence and justice to the heights of Heaven, Sky, Mountains, and the depths of Tehom Rabbah (great Deep); this description similarly inspires an empowering hope in its speaker(s). Yahweh's justice is manifested in his deliverance of human and animal alike, a possible reference to his preservation of both in the flood narrative:

יהוה בהשמים חסדך אמונתך עד שחקים
צדקתך כהררי אל משפטך תהום רבה אדם ובהמה תושיע יהוה

Yahweh, your loving-kindness is to the heavens,
your faithfulness is as far as the skies,
Your righteousness is like the mountains of *El*,
your judgments are (like) *Tehom Rabbah*
Man and beast you deliver, O *Yahweh*

Tehom is the symbolic reminder of Yahweh's power. In other words, the depths and distress of judgment, whether brought upon by internal (sin) or external factors (oppression), empower individuals to ask Yahweh for help. Many prayers implore Yahweh to act by remembering how he has acted on their behalf in the past.

As seen in the historical psalms and prophecies, the solidification of the Exodus deliverance in ancient Israel's collective memory results in his people invoking Yahweh for deliverance. The prayer of Isaiah 51:9-11 exemplifies this invocation and assures individuals that sorrow and sighing will be dispelled by the joy of being delivered by Yahweh:

עורי עורי לבשי עז זרוע יהוה Isaiah 51:9-11

עורי כימי קדם דרות עולמים הלוא את היא המחצבת רהב מחוללת תנין

הלוא את היא המחרכת ים מי תהום רבה השמה מעמקי ים דרך לעבר גאולים

ופדויי יהוה ישובון ובאו ציון ברנה ושמחת עולם על ראשם ששון ושמחה ישיגון נסו יגון ואנחה

Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with might, O arm of *Yahweh*!

Awake as in days of ancient times, in generations ago

Was it not you who hacked *Rahab* to pieces, that pierced *Tannin*

Was it not you who dried up the Sea, waters of *Tehom Rabba*

That made **the depths of the sea** a path for the redeemed to cross

So let the redeemed of *Yahweh* return and come to Zion with a shout

And everlasting joy on their heads, they obtain joy and gladness,

sorrow and sighing flee.

It is important to distinguish that while the rhetorical questions identify *Yahweh* as the one responsible for the mighty destructions against *Rahab* and *Tannin* dragons, the parallel descriptions of drying the waters of the Sea and *Tehom Rabba* remain separate. Here, the subjugated Deep motif refers to the subjugation of the personified dragons, which represent the oppressing enemy (Egypt). In this passage, as in Exodus 15, *Tehom's* waters, though often conflated with the enemy, are actually the means of ancient Israel's deliverance and symbolize *Yahweh's* power.

4.5. *Emotions, Experiences, and Affect Theory*

Throughout this chapter, we have explored how *Tehom's* roles as a poetic image and a part of ancient Israel's world help articulate a particular set of feelings which are described in affect theory as distress/anguish (reaction to loss/impulse to mourn) and fear/terror (reaction to danger/impulse to run or hide). Though there is no set definition of affect theory, aspects of it are used in many fields to analyze

emotions and human behavior.²²⁴ Affects are emotions or desires that influence behavior or action. Objects or concepts, such as the primeval Deep can also act as an affect. In other words, analyzing Tehom as an affect helps us better understand Tehom's connection to distress and how Tehom evokes this emotional value.

The value of reading Tehom as affect in the Hebrew Bible is simply that Tehom evokes certain emotions and behaviors in the context of ancient Israelite religion. Predominantly, Tehom triggers emotions of distress/anguish and fear/terror, which become incorporated in the actions and behaviors of ancient Israel's empowerment. Tehom is an affect that repeatedly moves ancient Israel to turn to Yahweh for deliverance from Tehom and its physical representation and emotional affect. This action is rooted in ancient Israel's conception of its people as belonging to Yahweh. Affect theory explains this action in the following way: "The 'rapture' of each feeling you act on exceeds and reconstellates your prior sense of who you are or what you are driven by."²²⁵ In other words, the religious identity of ancient Israel as the people of Yahweh provides the self-conscious motivation for persevering through difficulty.

The depth of feeling expressed in the Hebrew Bible is "a form of intellectual and emotional humility, a humility that seems similarly very much like knowledge, to admitting that one's boundaries

²²⁴ For the interdisciplinary use of affect theory in fields such as anthropology, cultural studies, geography, and psychology to philosophy, queer studies, and sociology, cf. and Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, ed. *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

²²⁵ Marta Figlerowicz, "Affect Theory Dossier: An Introduction," *Qui Parle* 20, no. 2 (2012): 4. Cf. Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

and experiences tend to return to the same simple core..."²²⁶ In affect theory, each person who is faced with his or her limits returns to a core set of beliefs to address these feelings. For the people of ancient Israel, the reality of suffering is what returns them to their belief in Yahweh. The belief system of Yahwism addresses suffering and provides a framework for working out this suffering in the presence of a personal and receptive deity. The emotional experience recorded in the Hebrew Bible is relatable for all who suffer, because suffering is the emotional experience of the human condition:

Because trouble is ubiquitous and because anticipation is perennial, man is forever courting suffering. Although the world might be made safe enough to minimize terror, it is inconceivable, give the inherent uncertainty of the world in which we live, that man's existence can be proofed against suffering....One of the central human needs fulfilled by religion is a recognition of the reality of suffering. Indeed it may well be that the recognition of suffering was a more critical function of religion than its promise of salvation.²²⁷

Tehom's fluidity allows for continual updating and rebirthing of concepts and emotions common to human experience.

Ultimately, the use of the subjugated Deep motif in the language of distress connects ancient Israel's relationship to Yahweh with internal emotional expression. The duality of the Deep reflects Yahweh's actions, which can either destroy or deliver. When Yahweh's people fail to keep his commands, the judgment of Yahweh symbolized by the Deep overwhelms them in conflict internally and externally. The difference in religious perspective compared to other ANE traditions, however, is the personal nature of Yahweh's actions toward the Israelites—the Hebrew Bible repeatedly records

²²⁶ Figlerowicz, "Affect Theory Dossier: An Introduction," 9.

²²⁷ Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness: The Complete Edition*, 313.

the failures of the Israelites and the faithfulness of Yahweh when they return to him by offering sacrifices and prayers. Ancient Israel distinguishes itself as Yahweh's chosen people, set apart from other nations in their confession of faith (Ps 106) and their attitude of worship. The psalms and prayers of the people are rooted in the belief that regardless of the level of their transgression or the severity of their circumstances, their status as the people of Yahweh gives them the authority to act with hope.

4.6. Conclusion

The subjugated Deep motif defines power in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East in terms of control and legitimacy. Control of the Deep means repeatedly slaying the necessary sea monsters to justify and maintain power, whereas conditions for legitimate rule are conferred through conditional human-divine agreements.

For ancient Near Eastern inhabitants, their place in the world was maintained through ritual actions or by making offerings to the appropriate deities. These rituals are enacted in order to address a threat or problem in the lives of individuals. Conflict and the language of the Deep are used to explain the rule of specific deities over specific realms, and instruct how to harness their power. On the other hand, for the ancient Israelites, their place in the world as Yahweh's people is based in their belief that Yahweh has power over all other powers and is able to deliver them from judgment. Judgment takes the form of both internal distress and external turmoil, and the language of the Deep is used to frame both the conflict and the solution. Prayers to Yahweh reflect ancient Israel's desire to maintain their position as a chosen nation in the midst of surrounding nations that were more powerful.

There is, however, an intentional and personal relationship between Yahweh and his people

that frames the subjugation of each distressing or fearful circumstance represented by Tehom. Every form of enemy and judgment is described in the language of cosmic power and destruction that Tehom brings about. There are many layers to these conceptual images. Yahweh uses Tehom to bring judgment on enemy nations and on Israel; Yahweh destroys Leviathan who represents enemy rulers and nations; ancient Israel describes distress and fear in terms of Tehom's waters; Tehom's blessings of the Deep are no longer remembered but feared as death. Inevitably, this leads to Tehom's transformation into a place of judgment.

In conclusion, the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature show that perceptions of the Deep empower individuals to act with authority and maintain beliefs about their place in the world. Human rituals and conceptions of divine power work together to maintain life in the world. Ritual actions, however, do not always guarantee power, and the success or failure of supplications are dependent on a deity's favor. The Deep does function as a powerful concept that allows individuals to deal with their present troubles. It represents both the articulation of distress and the power to destroy or deliver. Thus, the language of the Deep articulates the power of deities to control an individual's fate. Whether a belief system invokes the language of the Deep to justify or maintain conditions of power, the end result is the same—the assurance of a viable way of life in the ancient world.

In later interpretive traditions, and under crises in religious belief and identity, Tehom loses its personified characteristics and becomes the deepest place of judgment and death. The understanding of Tehom as a deity in the ancient Near East and its personified and subjugated roles in the Hebrew Bible ultimately give way to the concept of Tehom as a wicked place for end times judgment, as the abyss.

5.1. Introduction

Over time, destruction, evil, and death replace Tehom's connotations as a source of power, blessing, and life. In the same way that Tehom's origins justified the positive actions and ritual beliefs mentioned in chapter 2, they are reapplied to justify negative ones as well. In the Hebrew Bible, while Tehom's power varies as blessing or judgment, Yahweh's control over it remains constant. Later Jewish traditions emphasize Tehom independently from Yahweh, as the embodiment of ever-present danger against Yahweh's people. While Tehom has symbolized the threat of oppressive rulers and nations, the distinct removal of Tehom from any association with Yahweh's righteous judgment is a demotion. Interpretations of the primeval Deep in this chapter describe Tehom's shift away from Yahweh both spiritually and spatially. Separation from Yahweh inevitably leads to the demonization of Tehom, by which I mean its total transformation into an abominable evil.

DSS texts, the Septuagint (Greek), Targums (Aramaic), and rabbinic tradition interpret Tehom negatively, with rabbinic literature attributing Tehom (and Leviathan) with antagonistic origins. Tehom's fluidity as a concept allows for impurities, death, and destruction to replace its purifying, healing, and nourishing characteristics. Once demonization occurs, this negative association remains in all later traditions interpreting biblical references to Tehom. Demonizing Tehom's origins justifies and completes Tehom's transformation into the ultimate place of judgment—the abyss.

This chapter studies Tehom's references in the literature of the 2nd Temple Period (150BCE-70CE) and later in order to understand the implications of an evil Tehom for Jewish religious identity. In other words, this chapter addresses the question: How does Tehom continue its formative role in religious identity as a demonized concept? Each of these textual traditions starts with Tehom's biblical references and makes interpretive decisions in how it translates and comments. Comparing the biblical passages in their original contexts with how they are later understood provides us with insights to Tehom's reception history and evolving interpretation.

In this chapter, I argue that Tehom's demonization results from crises in religious identity, by which I mean a crisis in the belief system that makes sense of the world. As textual communities face different external and internal pressures, they must repurpose and reshape Tehom as a way to face the realities of evil, judgment, and ultimately death.

5.2. Textual Traditions

In the interpretations of biblical tradition, it is not always clear what Tehom signifies. Particularly, fragmentary references and uncertain sectarian identity, make it difficult to fully determine usage and understanding of Tehom. Greek and Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible reflect the changing vernacular of a text-community,²²⁸ but variations among different translations pose challenges to a

²²⁸ By text-community, I mean the primary community using translations or interpretations of the Hebrew Bible as the foundational text(s) of their religious practice.

conclusive portrayal of Tehom as well. Rabbinic material similarly reflects diversity, disagreement, and varied interpretive positions. Consequently, this chapter cannot present a clear or consistent picture of Tehom's evolution. To some degree, whether these textual traditions are contradictory or corroborative, aspects of Tehom's serpentine and amorphous waters will continually subvert human comprehension. This chapter focuses on what can be known from each textual tradition's portrayal of Tehom.

Each textual tradition reflects a religious community's need for interpretation or translation of the Hebrew Bible. The following criteria seek to address the different circumstances for these developments by identifying:

- The intended audience (when possible)
- The issue(s) requiring exegesis
- Diglossia or triglossia issues
- Non-literal translations or omissions
- Fixed or preserved forms

Texts that contain updated translations, omissions, or fixed Hebrew forms could point to the use of those texts in liturgical settings. In other words, a commonly used a manuscript would require extra explanation for the community's spiritual benefit. Ancient Israel's use of Tehom to shape religious identity provides a precedent for analyzing the needs of these identity-defining language communities. For example, the Dead Sea Scroll community "used language ideologically as a means of differentiating

and further insulating themselves."²²⁹ On the other hand, though rabbinic literature reflects a later form of Hebrew (Rabbinic Hebrew), the rabbis were more involved in a scholarly endeavor than communal worship or the development of a sectarian ideology.

Whether for practical or academic purposes, I propose, each textual tradition repurposes Tehom in order to (re)form the identity of their readership and/or spiritual community. Additionally, each textual tradition namely reflects a more established religion than the developing ancient Israelite religion (Yahwism) of the Hebrew Bible. In an established religion free of the ANE threat of polytheism, Tehom's personified context disappears in DSS literature and the LXX. Yet, the question of religious identity remains. Targums and rabbinic material take up oral traditions of the past, re-imagining and re-contextualizing them. As a whole, these interpretive traditions make the identity of Yahweh's people relevant to their religious needs by creating a new role for Tehom as the ancient place of judgment for the wicked.

5.3. *Dead Sea Scrolls*

The Qumran Caves Scrolls, also known as the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), are a corpus of Jewish manuscripts dating from 250BCE to 68CE that consist of biblical and non-biblical texts. Among the non-biblical texts of the DSS, some manuscripts identify a particular worldview of beliefs and practices held by the Yahad,

²²⁹ William M. Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *JBL* 118, no. 2 (1999): 235.

or “the community.”²³⁰ This community or group of evolving communities distinguish themselves as holding to the “correct” and “true” interpretations of biblical texts important to their community life. In this chapter, I refer to the DSS texts and communities as a single text-community in order to focus on this tradition’s interpretation and portrayal of the Hebrew Bible’s Tehom.

There are 50 references to Tehom in the non-biblical DSS texts²³¹ that shed light on the beliefs and practices of these exclusive communities. At first glance, Tehom’s appearances in the DSS show continuity with the Hebrew Bible’s descriptions of Tehom at creation, in the flood narrative, and in poetic and liturgical contexts. A closer look at Tehom’s connotations as a whole, however, shows divergence from biblical descriptions. In the fragmented apocalyptic, cryptic and mystery texts, and in texts that articulate distress as a form of engulfment,²³² the imagery of Tehom is darker and more sinister

²³⁰ While scholars categorize different texts found among the DSS under multiple genres, specific texts can be identified as sectarian literature. These include texts that specifically reference a “Yahad” community such as *The Community Rule* (Serekh HaYahad), *The War Scroll* (War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness), and *Pesher Habakkuk*. Cf. Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/learn-about-the-scrolls/scrolls-content> for a brief overview of the different categories of texts found.

²³¹ For a list of these references see appendix C: Tehom in DSS Non-Biblical Manuscripts.

²³² Claudia D. Bergmann describes Tehom’s role in depictions of distress and personal crisis by means of engulfment imagery. Cf. Claudia D. Bergmann, *Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1-18* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 178.

than in the Hebrew Bible. In other words, descriptions of Tehom no longer display Yahweh's power, whether for blessing or judgment. Instead, this primeval power disgorges hellish waters and wickedness.

Maintaining continuity with biblical tradition is an important part of the identity of the DSS community, so Tehom retains its creation context from the Hebrew Bible. Sectarian texts affirm Tehom's relevance to creation with mention of Yahweh's bringing about of תהומות, and נהרות, ימים – “circle of seas, sources of rivers, and division of Tehomot” (War Scroll 1 QM 10:13). Also, many passages pair seas and Tehom together (Hodayot 1QH^a 5:26, 9:16) in their account of how Yahweh created all that is in the seas and in Tehomot (בימים ובתהומות).

Other passages differ from biblical tradition in that they portray Tehom as a specific location. For example, Tehom appears in Jubilees with the definite article—התהומות “the tehomot”—while, as we have mentioned, the article is never used with the word in the Hebrew Bible.²³³ In the Jubilees creation account, the fifth day of creation specifies that God creates the great sea monsters (Tanninim rabbim) *in the midst of Tehom's waters* (4Q216 6:11-12). In the Hodayot, Tehom is a prison (1QH^a 13:40) connected to Sheol: “my groaning enters Tehom and searches out the chambers of Sheol” (1QH^a 18:35). While Sheol and Tehom are not equated in the Hebrew Bible, in DSS texts they both become associated with wickedness, destruction, and death.

²³³ Hodayot 5:26 also references Tehom with the definite article.

5.3.1. Distress and Engulfment in the Hodayot

Among the poetic and liturgical texts of the DSS, the Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms) is a collection of hymns that frequently mention Tehom in distress and engulfment imagery. As seen in chapter 4, psalms and prayers of distress record personal and communal expressions of religious identity and belief. As such, the Hodayot reflect the worldview and deepest emotions of the DSS community and reveal the community's interpretation and use of Tehom.

Although the origins and use of these psalms remain unclear, “they serve as an important resource for understanding the piety and religious devotion of those who composed them and those who continued to copy and recite them.”²³⁴ The religious ideas in the Hodayot and the collection's authority in the eyes of the community can be compared to what we find in regard to key texts such as the Community Rule and the War Scroll. To understand better the relevance of Tehom to this community's worldview, and to explore the Hodayot's use of the language of distress, we turn to some key descriptions of Tehom in these texts.

²³⁴ Eileen M. and Carol A. Newsom Schuller, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QH^a*, ed. Rodney A. Werline, vol. no. 36, *Early Judaism and Its Literature* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 1. Additionally, “some poems may have been composed by the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder of this sect.”

In the Hodayot, seven out of the ten occurrences of Tehom associate Tehom with images of death, wickedness, distress, devouring, or noisy uproar.²³⁵ These descriptions speak of distress mainly in terms of spatial and physical conceptions: “my prison is with Tehom” and the waters of Belial (13:40); “Tehom roars to my groaning” (14:27); “my groaning enters Tehom and searches out the chambers of Sheol” (18:35). The heights of heavens and the depths of Tehom encompass the extent of Yahweh’s reach: “as far as heavens and its roots to Tehom” (14:19). While this reference maintains the spatiality of Yahweh’s power from biblical tradition, it also depicts a future world of limitless seas and rivers that is from an unknown eschatological tradition.

Specifically, column xi contains the most extensive use of Tehom in imagery having to do with engulfment and demonic waters. Tehom is evoked in reference to springs of water that boil over (11:16), to a descent down to the gates of Sheol and the abode of wickedness (11:18), to the furthest limits of devouring (11:32), and to noisy uproar (11:33). Hodayot scholar Svend Holm-Nielsen interprets Tehomot in these contexts as meaning demons or devils: “תהומות is evidently thought of as a personification of infernal beings, who noisily set the seas in uproar.”²³⁶ He also proposes that references to the noise of the seas and clouds represent “every form of need in suffering,” such as that of a woman in the pangs of

²³⁵ The remaining three occurrences describe seas and tehomot as parts of Yahweh’s creation.

See appendix C for a list of references to Tehom in the Hodayot and other DSS manuscripts.

²³⁶ Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran*, ed. Torben Christensen, vol. II, Acta Theologica Danica (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960), 59 n33

painful labor, giving birth to her firstborn. According to Holm-Nielsen, the themes in column xi can be divided into three categories:

1. Deliverance from enemies (thanksgiving to God)
2. Torments from enemies (like that of a woman in childbirth)²³⁷
3. Suffering of the corrupt (like that of a woman in childbirth, or a shipwrecked seaman; the suffering is a pit of death and corruption).²³⁸

Tehom's waters are frequently described in this column and others as the condition and place where one is *במשברי מות* "in the breakers of death" and *בהבלי שאול* "in the cords of Sheol." Tehom roars noisily and causes confusion, tumult, and the surging of waters. Its waters open to Sheol and Abaddon, the pit, and are linked to wickedness, venomous vanity, "vile ones", judgment, wrath, torrents of Belial, and an endless devouring fire.

²³⁷ The motif of labor pains in the Hodayot are the earliest messianic motif of birth pangs that precede the coming of the messiah. Cf. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 71.

²³⁸ Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran*, II, 52.

TABLE 6. EXCERPTS FROM HODAYOT COL. XI

1 QHa 11	Translation ²³⁹
<p>ויושבי עפר כיורדי ימים נבעתים מהמון מים. וחכמיהם למו כמלחים במצולות כי תתבלע כול חכמתם בהמות ימים. ברתוח תהומות על נבוכי מים ויתרגשו לרום גלים ומשברי מים בהמון קולם. ובהתרגשם יפתחו שאול ואבדון. וכול חצי שחת עם מצעדם לתהום ישמיעו קולם. ויפתחו שערי עולם תחת מעשי אפעה. ויסגרו דלתי שחת בעד הרית עול ובריחי עולם בעד כול רוחי אפעה.</p> <p>אודכה אדוני כי פדיתה נפשי משחת. ומשאול אבדון העליתני לרום עולם ואתהלכה במישור לאין חקר.</p> <p>בהפתח כל פחי שחת ויפרשו כול מצודות רשעה ומכמרת חלכאים על פני מים. בהתעופף כול חצי שחת לאין השב ויורו לאין תקוה. בנפול קו על משפט וגורל אף על נעזבים ומתך חמה לכעל נעלמים וקץ חרון לכול בליעל וחבלי מות אפפו לאין פלט.</p> <p>וילכו נחלי בליעל על כול אגפי רום באש אוכלת בכול שנאביהם להתם כול עץ לח ויבש מפלגיהם. ותשוט בשביבי להוב עד אפס כול שותיהם. באושי חמר תאוכל וברקיע יבשה. יסודי הרים לשרפה ושורשי חלמיש לנחלי זפת. ותאוכל עד תהום רבה.</p>	<p>14b-21a The dwellers in the dust are like those who go down to the seas, terrified by the roar of waters. And their sages are for them like sailors on the deeps, for all their wisdom is reduced to confusion by the tumult of the seas. <i>When Tehomot boil up over the sources of the waters, the waves and breakers of the waters surge up on high with their noisy roar. And as they surge, Sheol and Abaddon open up and all the arrows of the pit together with their retinue. They make their sound heard to Tehom, and break open the eternal gates beneath the works of venomous vanity.</i> And the doors of the pit close behind the one who is pregnant with iniquity and the eternal bars behind all the spirits of venomous vanity.</p> <p>I thank you, Lord, that <i>you have redeemed my life from the pit and that from Sheol-Abaddon you have lifted me up to an eternal height, so that I walk about on a limitless plain.</i></p> <p>27-32 When all the snares of the pit are open, and all the nets of wickedness are spread, and the seine of the vile ones is upon the surface of the waters; when all the arrows of the pit fly without cease and are shot, leaving no hope; when the line is cast for judgment, and the lot of anger is upon the forsaken, and the outpouring of fury upon the hypocrites, and the time of wrath comes upon all devilishness, and <i>the cords of death encompass</i>, leaving no escape—</p> <p><i>Then the torrents of Belial pour over all the steep banks in a devouring fire on all their vegetation, destroying every tree, green and dry, from their channels. And it sweeps on with flaming fire until there is nothing left that drinks from them...It consumes as far as the Great Deep.</i></p>

²³⁹ English translation from Schuller, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of*

These evocations of Tehom emphasize its connotation as the place of destruction and ruin. In the Hebrew Bible, Sheol is paralleled with death or the place of death, but it is not directly connected to judgment of the dead.²⁴⁰ The waters that encompass Sheol—the chambers of death and the chambers of the dead are synonymous with Tehom’s waters.²⁴¹ In the DSS, Sheol and the Pit (שְׁחִית or שְׁחַת) refer to the place to which the wicked descend. These terms are used interchangeably, and redolent as they are of Abaddon,²⁴² the place of destruction and the underworld; Mastemah, an angel of persecution and death; and Belial, an abstract and personified term that means wickedness, worthlessness, swallower (demon), and abyss.²⁴³

Furthermore, the terms Belial, Mastemah, and Abaddon occur much more frequently in the DSS corpus than in the Hebrew Bible. Abaddon is “the place of destruction” connected with Sheol as the place of the dead; Mastemah means “accuser” and is a figure associated with evil and judgment. Fragmentary texts, such as the *Narrative and Poetic Composition* (4Q372 f2:3) and *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q503 fi_2Rvii:7) connect Tehom with Abaddon and the prince of Mastemah, furthering indicating Tehom’s fall from grace and identification with death and destruction.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Nicholas J. Tromp, "Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament," *Biblica Et Orientalia*, no. 21 (1969): 22.

²⁴¹ HALOT: שְׁאוּל

²⁴² HALOT: אַבְדּוֹן

²⁴³ HALOT: בְּלִיעַל

²⁴⁴ 1Qpsalms 11Q11 2:4-5

Other fragmentary manuscripts also reinforce the dismal descriptions of Tehom in the Hodayot. The end times feature an upheaval of creation that even seas and Tehomot fear the judgment that overwhelms every mortal spirit (4Q Instruction 416 1 11-12).²⁴⁵ Tehom Rabba and Sheol are the place of darkness prepared for the wicked (11Q11 4:7-9). Noting the apocalyptic eschatology found in the DSS scrolls, some scholars argue that the primordial elements, including Tehom, are thought in this tradition to have constituted the source of all evil.²⁴⁶ It is these negative images of Tehom, as a place of death and judgment in the DSS tradition, that prevail over ideas of Tehom as a source of blessing, life and deified power.

²⁴⁵ Miller, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations: An Old Testament Myth, Its Origins, and Its Afterlives*, 249.

²⁴⁶ Menahem Kister, "Tohu wa-Bohu, Primordial Elements and Creatio ex Nihilo," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (2007): 236. Scholars such as Moshe Weinfeld see night and darkness as characteristic of evil powers; and Israel Knohl equates primeval elements, including tehom, with the roots of evil in the world that existed before creation as recounted in Genesis 1. Cf. Moshe Weinfeld, "God the Creator in Genesis 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah," *Tarbiz* 37 (1968): 122; Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 13.

5.3.2. Spatial Separation in Exorcism Psalms

Lastly, in this survey of negative uses of Tehom in DSS literature, we turn to four exorcism texts found in the Apocryphal Psalms (11Q11). These psalms are incantations against demons and mention Tehom as the place connected with the dragon Tannin,²⁴⁷ darkness, and Mastemah.

Additionally, this place is where destruction and judgment come upon those “sent down to Tehom Rabba and lower Sheol” (11Q11 4:7, 9).²⁴⁸ The beginning of the third exorcism has the heading: “an incantation in the name of Yahweh. To be invoked at any time to the heavens.” This descriptive title indicates that Yahweh dwells above in the heavens and protects anyone who invokes his name against demons and evils that are below. Tehom, as a place “below,” is therefore perceived to be infested with demons and evils; and Yahweh’s name becomes part of a protective ritual.

The complete transformation of Tehom from protective and purifying rituals (previously mentioned in the Blessing to Joseph and the bronze washbasin of temple priests) to the realm of evil and death show how theological beliefs inform ritual actions. Tromp, a biblical scholar who writes on death and the netherworld, explains how this transformation happens through the example of Mot (Death), a previously worshipped deity at Ugarit who becomes unclean:

The dethronement of Death implies that his kingdom is reduced to chaos, which is dominated by demons...[in Ugarit] the “disappearance” of Mot would imply the degradation of both his domain and his former subjects: they became chaotic, withdrawn from the true Creator-God, or, in other words, not consecrated *ergo* unfit for cult.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ 11Q11 1:5 is a fragmented reference to תַּנִּינַי (tannin).

²⁴⁸ Tehom is cited with the definite article as “the depths” in column 3:1.

²⁴⁹ Tromp, “Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament,” 208.

In other words, in the dualism apocalyptic period, Yahweh's victory and power are wholly separated from Tehom, which becomes the place of judgment and wickedness. In a dualistic worldview, Tehom can no longer be a weapon of judgment against the wicked. It itself is wicked.

5.3.3. Identity and Ideology in the DSS

The DSS community's negative view of Tehom reveals the ideology behind their sectarian community and self-definition as the chosen community of God. In other words, the Hodayot's central theme rests on "[t]he emotional experience resulting from this [God's] election and from his affiliation with the congregation of the elect."²⁵⁰ DSS scholar John Collins identifies this sectarian community as a much larger movement than the "Qumran community." For him, the *Yahad* community is an "umbrella organization of communities" that he identifies with the Essenes, and other subgroups that formed a special holy community.²⁵¹

From other sectarian manuscripts, it becomes clear that the "community envisioned themselves as the true heirs of the biblical tradition. It is only natural that their use of language is heavily

²⁵⁰ Menahem Mansoor, "Studies in the New Hodayot (Thanksgiving Hymns) -- V: Some Theological Doctrines," *Biblical Research* V (1960): 12.

²⁵¹ Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yahad: A New Paradigm of Textual Development for The Community Rule*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 44-46; John Collins, "The Yahad and 'The Qumran Community'," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, ed. C. Hempel and J. Lieu (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 85, 88-89.

colored by biblical literature, since the community shaped its identity as the true 'root of Israel' (e.g., CD 1:7-8)."²⁵² Furthermore, these hymns enabled the sect to continue their liturgical practices, for "[t]he sectarians could no longer go to the temple to behold and praise the glory of God, but they could be transported in their hymns to the heavenly temple, to witness and participate in a more perfect liturgy."²⁵³ This practice of "true worship" reinforced their beliefs and made them distinct from other communities.

The text of the Hodayot contains repetitive doctrines around the theme of religious experience.²⁵⁴ Its dualistic conceptions also divide humanity into wicked and righteous—pre-determined by God.²⁵⁵ Sectarian communities defined themselves as sole heirs of the truth and traditions of biblical interpretation, "The community believed that it alone knew the Truth. This may be illustrated by the community's interpretation of Hab 2:2: 'its interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God made known all the mysteries of his servants the prophets' (1QpHab 7:3-

²⁵² Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," 245. cf. S. Talmon, "Qumran Studies: Past, Present and Future," *JQR* 85 (1994).

²⁵³ Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 148.

²⁵⁴ Mansoor, "Studies in the New Hodayot (Thanksgiving Hymns) -- V: Some Theological Doctrines," 4. "The deterministic view of human destiny is far reaching in Qumran. The destiny of the righteous as well as of the sinners is already determined by God from the womb."

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

59).²⁵⁶ As a result, the sectarian community used biblical symbols, motifs, concepts, and language to create an apocalyptic eschatology that would provide a solution to their present world. Relegating the wicked to Tehom allowed them to envision a righteous and supernatural world beyond space and time.²⁵⁷

In terms of the social function of the text in formation of self-identity, Carol Newsom describes language as one of the most important symbolic practices of identity construction:

A person's sense of self is not just given as a part of physical existence but is constructed through the symbolic practices of a person's culture. Language is by far the most important of these symbolic practices, though other nonlinguistic symbolic practices (e.g., class, ethnic, and gender specific systems of garments and body posture) also play significant roles in constructing subjectivity.²⁵⁸

Within the corpus of the DSS, Qumran Hebrew is the language of the sectarian literature, though there are also Greek and Aramaic manuscripts of other biblical texts. This indicates that the language of the community was Hebrew, and, as other scholars have intuited:

the writers of the DSS...employed a Hebrew which is much more like that of the Bible, and has only a few traits of the spoken language. This effort at purism was probably not a function of superior linguistic training, but part of the self-identification of that group

²⁵⁶ Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," 251.

²⁵⁷ Robert Wilson, "Israelite Religion," in *Anthropological Perspectives on OT Prophecy*, ed. Robert C. Culley and Thomas W. Overholt (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 85-86.

²⁵⁸ Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, vol. 52, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 192.

with the generation of the Exodus from Egypt and the will to imitate not only the latter's religious customs, but also their way of speaking.²⁵⁹

In sum, DSS sectarian identity construes Tehom as an evil place in order to distinguish themselves as the True and Pure community that properly interprets scripture. Separating Tehom from Yahweh means that theologically it also becomes associated with everything that Yahweh is not, and as the place where Yahweh is not. For Yahweh's people to keep their identity as his people, they must be delivered from their impurities and the place of the wicked. By setting this up as the "true" interpretation, they are able to define themselves as the true root of Israel, and the true people of Yahweh. This exclusive sense of identity is also evident in the changing language identities of the people of Yahweh, as represented by their need for the Greek and Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible.²⁶⁰

5.4. *Septuagint (LXX)*

As Greek became the lingua franca of the ancient Near East, Hellenized Jews required a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in order to maintain and understand their religion.²⁶¹ The earliest versions of the LXX have been found in the Judean desert (among the DSS corpus) and in Egypt (the Jewish diaspora). While it is uncertain if this translation emerged from a Greek or Jewish initiative, it is clear

²⁵⁹ Chaim Rabin, *A Short History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Alpha Press, 1973), 37.

²⁶⁰ The Aramaic Targums replaced the Greek LXX (translation of the Hebrew Bible) for the Jewish community, though the LXX continued to be used in the earliest Christian communities.

²⁶¹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated For the First Time into English* trans. Martin G. Abegg, Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999), xi-xii.

that the language identity of its community or communities necessitated it. In this section, “LXX” refers to the earliest translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (3rd century to 132 BCE).²⁶²

Translation choices made in the LXX reflect multiple translators and revisions as the Greek varies from literal equivalence to paraphrase of the original Hebrew. Fortunately, the LXX consistently translates Tehom as the bottomless and unbounded ἀβυσσος “abyss”. When Tehom is not translated as “the abyss”, the translators substitute descriptions of nature (such as the earth, winds, sea, waves) or choose not to take account of Tehom as it appears in the original Hebrew text. These translation choices seem to indicate a clear distancing of the concept of Tehom from any mythic or deified context of Canaanite religion.

Tehom appears as the abyss except in three passages: Gen 49:25; Exod 15:5, 8; and Prov 8:27-28.²⁶³ In the Hebrew Bible, each of these passages uniquely presents a personified Tehom in, respectively, a ritual blessing, an expression of collective identity, and an account of creation. While it is impossible

²⁶² The various stages of LXX translation include: “Pentateuch-only, Old Greek, Ur-Septuagint, Original Septuagint, Proto-Septuagint, Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Vaticanus (B) LXXA, LXXB, LXXAB.” Cf. Melvin K.H. Peters, “Septuagint,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman et. al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5: 1093. For an introductory overview of topics related to the LXX and its origins, see Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint*, ed. Michael A. Knibb, *Understanding the Bible and its World* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

²⁶³ See appendix D for a list of the LXX’s translations of Tehom. English translations of LXX passages are my own.

to know the exact reasons for a translator’s interpretive choices, given the consistent translation of Tehom as ἀβυσσος elsewhere, the distinctive rendering of the term in these three passages may indicate something important to the community that produced and used the LXX:

Texts that deal with issues of vital importance to the community attract redaction, supplementation, editorial glossing, commentary, and complete rewriting. Part of the measure of a text’s ongoing vitality is its ability to coax new readers into fresh interpretations.²⁶⁴

As analyzed in chapter 3, these three biblical passages have significant implications for Yahwism and the identity formation of ancient Israel as Yahweh’s people. As a result, they were commonly used in personal or communal liturgy and may have required special attention as to their proper interpretation.

5.4.1. “De-deifying” Tehom

Genesis 49, the blessing of Jacob, completely removes any connection with the Deep by replacing “the blessing of the deeps below” with a more generic phrase “the earth containing everything”. The original Hebrew’s sources of blessing—Heaven, Tehom, Breast and Womb—are also condensed:

and my God helped you,
and he blessed you with a blessing of heaven above
and a blessing of *earth containing everything*,
for the sake of a blessing of breasts and of womb,
και ευλογιαν γης εχουσης παντα· ενεκεν ευλογιας μαστων και μητρας,

The Greek incorporates everything on heaven and earth as a merism to indicate that the bountiful blessing’s purpose is to provide fertility and descendants. This is also made clear through the interpretive addition of father and mother in the following phrase of verse 26: ευλογιας πατρος σου και

²⁶⁴ William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17* (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1999), 168.

μητρος σου· “a blessing of your father and your mother.” In Deut 33:13, however, which contains the identical phrase of “Tehom crouching beneath” in the Hebrew, is ἀβυσσος “abyss” in the LXX. Perhaps the different contexts and purposes for Gen 49 and Deut 33 were clear to the translators, so they placed more emphasis on “de-deifying”²⁶⁵ or stripping away any vestigial connotations of divinity Tehom may still have had in Deut 33:13. Deuteronomy 8:7 uses Tehom to describe the source of natural waters flowing through the land, and the LXX translators may have been continuing this “de-deifying” of Tehom by reintroducing ἀβυσσος as a more neutral or natural term in the Greek.

The many titles and connotations of divinity in Gen 49 are not as easy to remove as in Deut 33, so the translation reflects a greater departure from the Hebrew to focus the blessing solely on fertility, land, descendants. The LXX removes Tehom as a source of power and explains the problematic sources of blessing that invoked Canaanite deity names (Shamayim, Shadayim, Raham, etc.) as common terms for nature and fertility. This translation indicates that the LXX defined the identity of its Hellenized Jewish community in terms of a continuation of Yahwism and of worshipping Yahweh alone.

5.4.2. *Tehom in Cultural Memory*

In Exodus 15, Tehom is translated as *buthon* and *thalassa*, the Greek words for “deep sea” and “sea”. *Buthos* occurs infrequently in the LXX,²⁶⁶ whereas *thalassa* is the LXX’s equivalent of יָם (*yam*) in the Hebrew. Since Exodus 15 has significance for later biblical passages, and the translator’s goal was to turn

²⁶⁵ Cf. Judith M. Hadley, “The De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy,” in *The God of Israel*, ed. Robert P. Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²⁶⁶ *Buthos* is the Greek equivalent of מְצֻלוֹת *meṣolot* in the Hebrew, occurring 7 times.

an authoritative Hebrew text into an authoritative Greek text,²⁶⁷ the use of terms other than “abyss” provides a way to for the Greek translation to preserve cultural memory. For example, Neh 9:11’s account of Yahweh’s defeat of the Egyptians²⁶⁸ uses entirely natural terms for the sea and the depths, which are translated in the LXX as *buthon* and *thalassa*. This is an intentional focus on removing any connotations of deified or personified power from a foundational text referencing the Hebrew Tehom.

LXX scholar Gurtner notes that where the LXX translator made changes “he did not often change meaning, but sought to give the proper interpretation of the meaning of the Heb. before him.”²⁶⁹ In the cultural memory of Yahweh’s people, and, by extension, the cultural memory interpreted by the LXX community, it is important that their foundational anthem of deliverance gives proper praise to the only deity worthy of their worship. Additionally, with Tehom’s demonization, this defining event and text must be free of any perceived wickedness, personification, or vestige of deity associated with Tehom.

5.4.3. Interpretive Omissions

Wisdom’s account of creation in Prov 8, as rendered in the LXX, removes Tehom from the story to which it alludes. In the Hebrew, this passage explicitly details Yahweh’s creation of Tehom to reiterate a Yahwistic worldview. The LXX interpretively omits two of the three references to Tehom in its

²⁶⁷ Daniel M. Gurtner, *Exodus: A Commentary on the Greek Text of Codex Vaticanus*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Richard S. Hess, and John Jarick, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 12.

²⁶⁸ Nehemiah 9:11 does not mention Tehom in the original Hebrew.

²⁶⁹ Gurtner, *Exodus: A Commentary on the Greek Text of Codex Vaticanus*, 25.

translation. There is no trace of the original Hebrew creation language; the LXX interprets Yahweh's act of inscribing a circle על פני תהום "on the face of Tehom" as referring to the division of ἀφωρίζεν τον εαυτου θρονον επ ανεμων. "his own seat on the winds" (v. 27), and πηγας της υπ ουρανον "springs beneath the sky" (v. 28) replace עינות תהום "springs of Tehom."

Throughout the creation account of Prov 8, narrated by Wisdom personified, the translator makes clear that Yahweh is creator of every sphere and category that Wisdom oversees. As a result, "[t]he most conspicuous difference between the MT and LXX in these verses is thus that God is made the explicit subject of creation."²⁷⁰ Some scholars attribute the tendency to avoid references to Tehom in verses 27-28, as the "result of internal harmonization."²⁷¹ In other words, the translators chose consistency in content and meaning over literal translation. Thus, Yahweh's creation acts are in no way associated with what has now become a demonic Tehom.

Unlike the DSS's demonic characterization of Tehom, the LXX's use of *abussos* to translate Tehom has no mythological overtones.²⁷² Though Qumran Hebrew and LXX Greek are languages used by communities emerging in the Hellenistic period, they are distinctly "independent witnesses to the

²⁷⁰ Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs*, ed. J.A. Emerton, vol. 69, Supplements to VT (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 224.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

²⁷² Susan A. Brayford, *Genesis*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Richard S. Hess, and John Jarick, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 208.

knowledge and practice of Hebrew during the Hellenistic period.”²⁷³ For example, the “sectarian vocabulary of the Qumran texts seems to be unknown to the Greek translators. Thus the typically Qumranic conception of בליעל as an angelic being has left no trace in the Septuagint.”²⁷⁴ In the same way that Greek translations remove Belial, they also clean up whatever is personified about Tehom and reduce it to a force of nature. The Christian New Testament also quotes the Greek LXX more frequently than the Hebrew MT,²⁷⁵ which completes Tehom’s transformation from a personified power into a place of judgment in the New Testament Apocalypse.

5.5. Targums

Targums are the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible when Aramaic was the common language of the Jews in Palestine and Babylonia. Like the LXX, the translation choices made in the Targums include interpretive paraphrase though Targum translations often include additional commentary that further elaborates or clarifies verses that are difficult to understand:

²⁷³ Jan Joosten, "The Knowledge and Practice of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period," in *Collected Studies on the Septuagint: From Language to Interpretation and Beyond*, ed. Bernd Janowski, Mark S. Smith, and Hermann Spieckermann, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 52.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁷⁵ Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G.E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 265.

Targums belonged more to the liturgy than the academy. The public performance of Aramaic translation formed part of the bet kneset, the synagogue, rather than the bet midrash, the study house. As such, they provide a window into the beliefs and theology of ordinary Jews rather than the highly educated.²⁷⁶

Targums also reveal the identity of the Aramaic community that required this translation:

They show how those who needed the Targum because they could not understand the Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible looked at their religious heritage. Targums provide their 'Jewish' knowledge and the understanding of their past, providing not just the history of the people Israel, but even defining the essence of the social group to which Jews belonged.²⁷⁷

In other words, the Jews that used Targums as their authoritative text in religious practice defined themselves as the people of Yahweh, continuing the religious identity of the ancient Israelites of the Hebrew Bible.

This section focuses on *Targum Onqelos* (*Tg. Onq.*) and *Pseudo-Jonathan* (*Tg. Ps.-J.*), two Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible. *Targum Onqelos* is the official Babylonian Aramaic targum that preserves a literal translation, while *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* reflects later Palestinian Aramaic and adds interpretive details to explain the meaning behind obscure verses. This additional commentary includes traditions concerning Tehom that are not included in the Hebrew Bible. In order to understand these distinct traditions and interpretations of Tehom, the following examples show how translators processed the concept of Tehom. This was done by

1. preserving Tehom's fixed Hebrew form,

²⁷⁶ Paul V.M. and Bruce Chilton Flesher, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Paul V.M Flesher, *Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), ix.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

2. omitting or replacing Tehom with synonymous terms, and
3. inserting Tehom in passages not found in the Hebrew.

These choices show Tehom's continued relevance to Jewish identity in Aramaic-language communities and illuminate the demonized traditions of Tehom. In the English translations²⁷⁸ provided, I have italicized the particular targumic phrases that preserve or replace Tehom in order to emphasize its differences from the original Hebrew. Related words are also put in bold.

5.5.1. Fixed Phrases

The Aramaic cognate for Tehom appears in the singular as *thwm'* and its two plural forms *thwmy'* and *thwmyn*. For some of the biblical references, the Targums preserve the Hebrew "Tehom Rabba" as a fixed phrase. Fixed forms retain the original Hebrew spelling of the word and indicate a commonly used or heard oral tradition passed on from previous Hebrew-speaking generations.

Targum Onqelos preserves "Tehom Rabba" in its Aramaic rendering of all four biblical passages in which the Hebrew term occurs: Gen 7:11 (the source of the great flood); Isa 51:10 (referencing the Exodus deliverance); Amos 7:4 (devouring judgment); and Ps 36:7 (describing Yahweh's characteristics).²⁷⁹ These passages portray Yahweh's power and use of Tehom in the flood, in the Exodus

²⁷⁸ English translations of the Targum passages follow Eldom Clem's translation in Accordance's TARG-E modules.

²⁷⁹ The Aramaic spelling of *Tehoma Rabba* is used for this reference. Psalm 78:15 also uses Aramaic spelling instead of the Hebrew fixed form to spell out *Tehom Rabba* as *thwmy' rbrbn* תהומיא

deliverance, in prophetic judgment, and in poetic praise. These significant traditions could have been preserved for use in liturgy.

5.5.2. Omissions and Replacements

Tehom and other descriptions of waters are removed in the judgment of Ezekiel 31:4 and 15. Instead of Yahweh closing and covering Sheol with Tehom, the Targums explain plainly that “misery covered the world and countries were ruined.” This description connects concepts of misery and ruin with Tehom. The Targums translations of the blessings of Tehom in Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 are also particularly interesting.

5.5.2.1. Blessings of Tehom

Targum Onqelos Gen 49:25 replaces Tehom with a synonymous term for depths to describe a natural source of blessing found in the cosmos: ברכן דנגדן ממעמקי ארעא מלרע “blessings that flow from the depths of the earth below”. In *Tg. Onq.* Deut 33:13, the translator clarifies that *thwmyn* flow from the “depths of the earth below” (מלרע ממעמקי ארעא), the same phrase from *Tg. Onq.* Gen 49:25. On the other hand, *Tg. Ps.-J.* chooses to keep Tehom but clarifies Tehom’s role in growing plants and as a fertile womb:

From the Memra of the God of your father will be your help, and He who is called Shaddai will bless you with blessings that come down from the dew of heaven above, and *from the best of the blessings of the springs of thwm’ that come up and grow plants from below.* May the breasts from which you suckled be blessed, as well as **the womb (the springs)** in which you lay down (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 49:25).

May the land of Joseph be blessed from before the Lord by the goodness of heaven. May it produce fine fruit from the dew and rain that comes down from above; (*may it be*

רברבן. In this psalm, Yahweh’s demonstrates his power to his people in the wilderness after the exodus deliverance. The fixed spelling could reflect preservation of a passage for liturgical uses.

blessed) by the goodness of the springs of the deep that rise up and flow from below and saturate the plants... (Tg. Ps.-J. Deut 33:13).

Both *Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 49:25* and *Tg. Ps.-J. Deut 33:13* emphasize and preserve the positive aspects of Tehom's waters, which nourish growing plants.

Targum Onqelos and *Fragmentary Targum (Frg. Tg.)*, along with the LXX, also revise the language here to clarify that the blessings of breast and womb are the blessings of father and mother. It is unclear why *Tg. Onq.*, the literal translation, removes Tehom from this significant blessing, unless Tehom is no longer a positive concept. Just as the LXX de-deifies Tehom, the Targums remove any personifiable element from the blessing of fertility and nourishment. Most translations of Gen 49:25, whether in the Greek or Aramaic, emphasize blessings from above and below as a way to encompass the full abundance of fertility for the descendants of Joseph. Additionally, the repeated emphasis on the location of deep waters under the earth become significant for the additions and insertions of Tehom in other biblical references.

5.5.3. Targum Onqelos Additions

Targum Onqelos adds Tehom to the following passages: *Tg. Onq. Jonah 2:3*, *Tg. Onq. Ps 104:8*; *Tg. Onq. Job 22:16*, *38:8*, *25*; *Tg. Onq. Eccl 1:5-7*; *Tg. Onq. 2 Chr 2:5*, and *6:18*. In *Jonah 2:3*, Jonah petitions Yahweh from the bottom of Tehom (מארעית תהומא בעית) rather than from the belly of Sheol (מבטן שאול שועת). This interpretive choice connects and equates the location of the dead, Sheol, with Tehom. *Psalm 104:8* specifies that the waters “go up from the abyss to the mountains and descend to the valleys” (יסלקון מן) (מבטן שאול שועת) rather than the vague but poetic “mountains rising, valleys sinking” of the Hebrew. This translation also clarifies that Yahweh established boundaries for Tehom's waters, not for mountains and valleys.

In wisdom literature, the addition of Tehom in certain passages connect foundations of evil and wickedness to Tehom as the source of watercourses in the world. Job 22:16 describes evil men who were shriveled up before their time and poured out like a river; the Targum explains that this refers to the tradition of 974 generations that sought to be created before (literally: “without”) their time. And when their evil deeds were revealed, they were washed out as a river, and their foundation was concealed in Tehom *thwm*’ (ותאסיהון בתהומא ואתכסי נהרא אשתטיפו ואתכסי בתהומא שתאסיהון). Job 38:8 also specifies that the sea bursts forth from Tehom as water from a womb and identifies the torrents as the torrents of Tehom (v. 25). Eccl 1:5-6 also describes the circuit of the sun and the blowing of the winds as circling the “path of Tehom” (אורה תהומא) and all flowing waters are specified as flowing to and “from the channels (tunnels) of Tehom” (למיזל מצינורי תהומא).

Lastly, the repeated inclusions of Tehom in descriptions of the cosmos reveal its significance in the targumic conception of the world. 2Chr 2:5 describes Solomon’s plans to build a house for God and declares that the uttermost reaches of the world are unable to contain God; the Targum specifies these uttermost reaches as heaven, earth and Tehom, with the spirit of God’s word carrying Tehom and the world (ותהומיא וכל עלמא מסתוברין ברוח מימריה). Similarly, 2Chr 6:18 addresses God and emphasizes that the uttermost reaches (heaven, earth, Tehomot) and all that are in them are sustained by Him (את הוא (אלהא סביל כולא שמיא וארעא ותהומיא וכל מה דאית בהון

5.5.4. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Additions

In *Tg. Ps.-J.*'s account of the world's primeval beginnings, Yahweh had to control overwhelming waters at creation by using a foundation stone to stop up the waters. This is an idea that recurs in other texts that mention Tehom's waters. For example, in the flood narrative, Nephilim (giants or warriors) stop up Tehom's flood waters so that they recede:

On that day all the fountains of the great deep were split open. *Then the sons of the giants put their children there and stopped them up*, so afterwards the windows of heaven were opened up (*Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 7:11*).

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Gen 50:1 describes Jacob as a tall cedar whose roots reach to Tehom:

after Jacob's blessing, Joseph prepares his father for burial: "Come and let us mourn over our father, a tall cedar whose top reached to heaven, but its branches shaded over all the inhabitants of the earth, and its roots reached to the *depths of the abyss*."

This description of a tall cedar is identical to the tree symbolizing the nation of Egypt in Ezekiel's prophecy that is destroyed (see analysis in chapter 4). The imagery of a tall and beautiful tree seems to foreshadow its own destruction and that of what it symbolizes, so that even Tehom's waters could come to be interpreted as harbingers of death and destruction.

Additionally, Exod 28:30 explains the tradition of the foundation stone and its connection with the Urim and Tumim stones of the priesthood of Aaron—these stones have the great and holy name inscribed on them. These inscribed stones symbolize the foundation stone, *'bn štyyh* (אבן שתייה) that was used to seal the mouth of Tehom Rabba (תהומא רבא) at the beginning of the world. The holy name inscribed in the foundation stone is Yahweh's, the same deity who saves his people from distress:

And you shall put the Urim in the breastpiece of judgment, that their words might light up and reveal the hidden things of the House of Israel, and the Tummim, which perfect their deeds for the high priest, who seeks teaching from before the Lord with them, in which are clearly inscribed the great and holy name by which the three hundred and

ten worlds were created, and it (this name) was clearly inscribed in *the foundation stone with which the Lord of the World sealed the mouth of Tehom Rabba from the beginning*. And all who would invoke that holy name in the hour of distress will be saved and hidden things will be revealed to him. אבן שתייה דבה חתם מריה עלמא פום תהומא רבא מן שירויה וכל מאן דמדכר ההוא שמא קדישא בשעת אניקי מישתיזב

The inscribed name and its invocation bring deliverance and revelation of things hidden within Tehom.

This also reiterates Tehom as a motif of empowerment from the biblical tradition.

The scribal corrections of Tehom's spelling in the interchange of the letter ה (heh) for ח (het) also have interesting implications. In Aramaic, תְּחֻמִּים *teḥum* is the word for border or boundary. In *Tg. Ps.-J Deut 2:4*, *tehom* is translated as *teḥum* territory or border. On the other hand, Deut 33:13 and 19 contain a scribal correction of *het* to *heh*. Deuteronomy 33:19 also mentions that the hidden things are treasures of the Deep revealed to those who offer true sacrifices:

Many peoples will pray at the mountain of the temple; there they will offer true sacrifices. Because they dwell by the shore of the Great Sea, so they will enjoy some of its salted fish.²⁸⁰ And they will take of the murex snail and dye blue purple from its blood for the threads of their cloaks, and from the sand they will produce mirrors and vessels of glass, for *the treasures of the deep will be revealed to them*.

Unless the interchange is an intentional play on words, this reflects a common scribal error²⁸¹ as there is no linguistic connection between the Deep (*tēhôm*) and boundary (*teḥum*). Conceptually, however,

²⁸⁰ This is a reference to Leviathan in the rabbinic tradition. cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 316.

²⁸¹ For more on common scribal traditions reflected in the DSS and rabbinic texts, see. Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 17-18.

defining boundaries for the Deep is a pressing concern of Targumic and Rabbinic tradition.

5.5.5. Other Targum Additions

Targum Esther Sheni 3:3 is one example where *těhôm* and *teḥum* both appear—this is added to Mordechai’s words explaining why he only worships the living and enduring God in heaven. His description of creation continues the targumic tradition of detailing God’s work of creating the world. When God created the sea with his wisdom, the targum explains, the sea was kept back with a wrathful rebuke.²⁸² The waters are bound in the storehouses of Tehom so that they will not rise up to the inhabited earth; Tehom rages but does not cross its boundary (סכרי' באוצרי תהומא בגין דלא יסק לארע (יתיבא רעיש ולא עביר תהומא). This tradition of rebuking the sea is expanded upon in Rabbinic literature as well.

Tehom is also added to *Targum Neofiti, Fragments* and *Cairo Geniza* translations of Exod 12:42. These translations all introduce Tehom and its associations with creation into the account of the night night of deliverance from the Exodus tradition. The plague of darkness is equated with “darkness spreading over the face of Tehom” (והשוכא פריס על אפי תהומא), which contrasts with the light of the word of the Lord. Additionally, *Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia* and *Fragments* add Tehom to Yahweh’s wilderness provisions in Numbers 21:6: manna from heaven, quail from the sea, and a well (of water) from Tehom

²⁸² “By His wisdom He has made the sea, fencing it in with sand, by His wrathful rebuke”

(בהכמתיה עבד ימא סגיתא כחלא במזופיתיי). From the Dost translation of *Targum Esther Sheni*.

(ואסקת להון בירא מן תהומא). *Targum Neofiti* also mentions these provisions in Deut 32:10, though the order is different: manna from heavens, water from Tehom, and quail from the sea.²⁸³

While some Targum translations replace Tehom with a natural term for depths, more often the translators insert Tehom into the text to clarify, remind, or draw attention to Tehom as an antagonistic concept. This contrasts with the LXX's translation choices to remove all traces of Tehom. Rabbinic tradition elaborates further on targumic traditions, as seen in the addition of Tehom to the Psalms of Ascent.

5.5.6. *Psalms of Ascents*

Targum to the Writings expands the headings of the Psalm of Ascents to explain the original function of this group of psalms: restraining the destructive chaos of a demonized Tehom. The Psalms of Ascents (Pss 120-134) are a collection of psalms that all begin with the heading שיר המעלות "A song of ascents". In the Aramaic, however, they appear with the heading: שירא דאתאמר על מסוקיין דתהומא "A psalm that was uttered on the ascents of Tehom." The Babylonian Talmud of rabbinic literature (Sukkah 53a:12)²⁸⁴ explains that when King David was making preparations for the temple in Jerusalem, he uttered the psalms to keep Tehom from causing overwhelming destruction. Thus, according to this tradition, the temple was built upon the restrained Tehom. Rabbinic literature elaborates on the location of the

²⁸³ Additionally, *Targum Neofiti* uses different spellings of the words for manna, Tehom, and sea in this verse, replacing א (*aleph*) with ה (*heh*): אסק להון באר' מן תהומה ואגיז להון סלוי מן ימה:

²⁸⁴ When David dug the foundation for the temple, Tehom rose up and threatened to submerge the world. David recited the fifteen Songs of Ascent and caused it to subside.

Jerusalem temple, claiming that it was the same place where the foundation stone suppressed Tehom at creation, the location of Eden,²⁸⁵ the place where the upper and lower deeps converge, where Jacob's pillar was built,²⁸⁶ the threshing floor of Araunah where the angel appeared,²⁸⁷ and the enthronement of Yahweh over Tehom.

5.6. Rabbinic Tradition

Rabbinic material often fills interpretive gaps in biblical texts that contain problematic issues or seeming contradictions. This is done by presenting a compilation of different interpretations and rabbinic perspectives. The commentary and explanation are not meant to reveal the ultimate truth or the most accurate interpretation. Rather, the rabbinic lens provides a reception history of views held by different rabbis through time, which collectively provide a richer understanding of the text.

The diverse interpretations, however, make the vast rabbinic material difficult to navigate, so this section focuses on rabbinic texts that expand on Tehom as an overwhelming threat of destruction. This tradition is written into the interpretation of ancient times to portray Tehom as having evil origins and containing impure forces threatening to burst forth. This demonization of Tehom also emerges in the Targumic translations of cosmic water references that rabbinic scholar Daniel Boyarin considers

²⁸⁵ See Lawrence E. Stager, "Jerusalem as Eden," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26, no. 3 (2000).

²⁸⁶ Genesis 28:10-22.

²⁸⁷ 2Samuel 24:10-25.

“repressed mythic intertext.”²⁸⁸ In particular, rabbinic tradition explains methods used to suppress Tehom’s malevolent waters in the flood narrative, in temple building, and in the maintenance of creation.

Rabbinic tradition connects the flood narrative with judgment upon wicked generations; in this explanation the wicked are equated with darkness and Tehom is equated with the wicked.²⁸⁹ Elsewhere, Tehom is linked to the kingdom of evil because depths and evildoers are incomparably sinister in the rabbinic mind.²⁹⁰ Rabbinic tradition also adds details to the suppression of Tehom’s waters in the flood. In *Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 7:14*, the giants end the flood by placing their sons over Tehom’s waters; *Genesis Rabbah 31:12* has the Nephilim put their feet over Tehom to stop it up and then cause a disturbance when they try to enter Noah’s ark. On the other hand, aside from direct quotations of the Hebrew Bible, Tehom frequently appears with the definite article as “the deep” in rabbinic texts.²⁹¹ This indicates the removal of proper noun or name associations with Tehom and develops the deep as a demonized place.

In the rabbinic account of the building of the Temple, Tehom’s waters threaten to overwhelm the foundations of the Temple, and David utters the Psalms of Ascent to quell them. Rabbinic literature supplies the additional detail that David writes the divine name on a potsherd and throws it into Tehom

²⁸⁸ Daniel Boyarin, "The Sea Resists: Midrash and the (Psycho)Dynamics of Intertextuality," *Poetics Today* 10, no. 4 (1989): 675.

²⁸⁹ *Genesis Rabbah* 33:1.

²⁹⁰ *Genesis Rabbah* 2:4.

²⁹¹ For example: כן הרשעים הזה היה הים הזה (Genesis Rabbah 2:4).

to make it subside (BT Sukkah 53a-b). The act of throwing a potsherd provides the paradigm for later rituals and magic formulas against a malevolent Tehom.²⁹² This becomes a part of ritual practice in later Aramaic incantations where demons and Tehom are suppressed by means of magic bowls.²⁹³

This final section of this chapter looks at rabbinic suppressions of demonized Tehom in the creation tradition, which includes the foundation stone, the rebuking of the sea, and Leviathan. In the Babylonian Talmud (BT) God creates the world from the foundation stone, which he casts into the waters to seal the mouth of Tehom (BT Yoma 54b). The foundation stone is not a biblical concept, but it becomes a significant part of understanding rabbinic interpretation of biblical texts. The rabbis weave traditions of the foundation stone and Tehom's overwhelming waters into their portrayal of biblical narrative so that "Jacob and the foundation stone cooperate with God in the suppression of the *tehom*, formation of the Temple site, and creation of the world."²⁹⁴

²⁹² Daniel Sperber, "On Sealing the Abysses," *JSS* 11, no. 2 (1966): 171. Also cf. *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature*, Bar Han Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1994), 47-59.

²⁹³ JBA 25 and AMB Bowl 5:2-3. See Shaul Shaked, James Nathan Ford, and Siam Bhayro, *Aramaic Bowl Spells: Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, ed. Shaul Shaked and Siam Bhayro, vol. 1, *Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 140.

²⁹⁴ Stephen D. Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 53. PRE is considered the link between classical and medieval periods of rabbinic interpretation. Also see "The Foundation Stone: Reflections on the

Rabbinic literature also provides a narrative about the rebuking of the sea. B. Bava Batra 74b recounts that at the time of creation God struck and killed the angel of the sea who refused to swallow its waters. This explanation provides the background for Job 26:12: "By His power He stilled the sea; by His skill He struck down Rahab." Exodus Rabba 15:22 has a similar tradition of God striking the waters and commanding them to go to the place of Leviathan, which clarifies the vague biblical reference "They fled at Your blast" (Ps 104:7). Additionally, B. Hagigah 12a explains that when God created the sea it kept on expanding until God rebuked it, and it dried up (Nah 1:4).²⁹⁵ Another source has Leviathan crouching on the mouth of Tehom to maintain the bounds of the overwhelming waters:

Were it not that he [Leviathan] lies over Tehom and presses down upon it, it would come up and destroy the world and flood it...He raises one of his fins and Tehom comes up, and he drinks, and after he drinks, he returns his fin to its place and it stops up Tehom.²⁹⁶

These examples show how rabbinic thought reworked key stories and how important Tehom was in the events recounted in these stories, including the Creation, the Flood, the building of the Temple, and the continued maintenance of the world. All of these rabbinic retellings feature Tehom as an ever-

Adoption and Transformation of 'Primordial Myth' in Rabbinic Literature," in *Interpretation, Religion and Culture in Midrash and Beyond*, ed. Lieve M. Teugels, and Rivka Ulmer (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), 25-38.

²⁹⁵ Shinan, *From Gods to God: How the Bible Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths and Legends*, 13.

²⁹⁶ Pesikta Rabbati 48.3

present threat in situations of judgment, combat, and suppression, and ultimately corroborate Tehom's association with wickedness and destruction.

Comparatively, the Hebrew Bible "records openly the conflict in its culture between paganism as the old religion of the people and the new religion of the Torah and the Prophets."²⁹⁷ This would explain why a developing Yahwism would seek to distance followers from the threat of surrounding religions. As polytheism becomes less of a threat to religious identity in established communities, the threat of Tehom re-emerges re-mythologized and repurposed. In other words, there is a "revivification of the mythic universe simultaneously with the neutralization of its polytheistic content."²⁹⁸ This may serve to identify more clearly the true identity of Yahweh's people from among the many sects and religious communities of later times.

Even with this re-mythologizing, however, Tehom remains a demonized creature, never a deity.

In the many traditions of the sea and cosmic waters, one constant is clear:

the rabbinic myths of combat against the sea remain monotheistic and limited throughout. For though there is an evident drama in the combats, and even a striking personification of the antagonistic serpents and of God Himself, these battles are no true theomachy against divine powers prior to acts of creation, but ultimately punishments enacted against rebellious, resistant, or impudent creatures *after* the creation.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of the Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 94.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁹⁹ Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 212.

Ultimately, rabbinic texts bring cultural consciousness to the history of biblical tradition, in order to theorize and concretize ideological and symbolic meaning for religious identity. In the tradition of Tehom, the mythic and demonic portrayal of its cosmic waters continues to serve as a symbol that its waters are still a threat—“that the world could be endangered by various means (like the natural spawning of the sea monsters; or Leviathan’s desire to drink fresh water; or human sin; or breaking the divine seal over the abyss), and these lead to a necessary repair of the situation (by God or a hero).”³⁰⁰ In other words, the more urgent the threat, the more pressing the need for deliverance.

5.7. Conclusion

As reality demands answers to oppression, suffering, and death, Tehom symbolically answers and reminds Yahweh’s people of meaning in life; so Tehom’s demonization results from crises in religious identity. The DSS community faced spiritual wars and undoubtedly physical ones as well, but their literature solidifies the identity of the true followers and interpreters of biblical tradition. Tehom’s wickedness and death, reflected in the Hodayot, provided a dualistic contrast between light and darkness, good and evil, righteousness and wickedness, and deliverance and judgment.

The LXX community, faced with the need for a Greek translation and contextualizing of the biblical tradition in a Hellenized world, explains simply and plainly Tehom as abyss, the holding place of judgment. The Greek translation choices strengthen the Yahwism (monotheism) of the Hebrew

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

text.³⁰¹ Whether for religious sects in the Judean desert or the diaspora in Egypt, this portrayal was necessary for Yahwism to remain a viable and meaningful religious identity in a changing world.

While there are centuries spanning Targums and rabbinic material, issues of translation and interpretation, such as contextualizing reality with the biblical tradition, remained the same as in the DSS and LXX contexts. Expectations of the future and the afterlife, questions of religious belief and identity—all were as important to God's people then, as they are today. Ultimately, questions of identity and the urgency of deliverance continue as long as (the distress of) life exists. And afterwards, perhaps, in the primordial abyss of death.

Text-communities interpreted Tehom as the Abyss through associations of wickedness and destruction (DSS Hodayot), de-deified distancing (LXX), and demonized origins (Targums and rabbinic tradition). Connected by biblical tradition, Qumran Hebrew and LXX Greek reflect one body of linguistic knowledge, and their texts illuminate one another.³⁰² Similarly, the Aramaic Targums and Rabbinic Hebrew expand on biblical references relevant to the DSS and LXX community's sense of identity. While language changes identity, making the Hebrew Bible meaningful and relevant is the primary concern for each of these religious communities. Subsequently, these ideas and interpretations develop further into the New Testament of Christianity and later rabbinic writings of Judaism. In the end, "[h]istory is not a one-way street. Older formations remain. They manifest themselves in the social body as dissident groups, in the individual as hidden and partly repressed desires, in the texts of the

³⁰¹ Gurtner, *Exodus: A Commentary on the Greek Text of Codex Vaticanus*, 20.

³⁰² Joosten, "The Knowledge and Practice of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period," 52.

culture as intertextuality.”³⁰³ In the many different interpretations of Tehom’s creation context, there is an emphasis on a suppressed myth or concealed tradition of the sea. Even with the Hebrew Bible’s personifications and subjugations of ANE deified combat traditions, mythic traces remain in the demonized traditions reflected in the 2nd Temple literature and afterwards.

In sum, the interpretive reception of the Hebrew Bible in the DSS, LXX, and Targum communities, as well as in the multiplicity of rabbinic interpretations, all repurpose and demonize Tehom in order to shape their communities’ various religious identities. As the place furthest from Yahweh and associated with depths of evil, wickedness, and suffering, Tehom’s existence requires a deliverance from the unfathomable. Even as a demonized abyss, Tehom reminds Yahweh’s people of their identity, that at the end of days, at the end of life—they are chosen people delivered from death.

³⁰³ Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of the Midrash*, 104.

VI CONCLUSION

6.1. The Power of a Fluid Concept

Each chapter of this research has focused on a thematic concept of the primeval Deep, showing its ability to symbolize many powerful ideas and emotions. While many of these symbols reflect physical and spiritual experiences common to ancient religious literature, this research has articulated and interpreted the Hebrew Bible's Tehom specifically through the processes of deification, personification, subjugation, and demonization. The fluidity of Tehom's characteristics within these processes constantly shaped the distinct identity and reality of ancient Israel.

In the Hebrew Bible, Tehom's roles encompass aspects of both the physical and the spiritual world. Its framework at creation is the conceptual pattern for the creation of Israel and its destructive judgment reveals Yahweh's power. Its descriptions as the heights and the depths of the world, and the source of life and death may seem contradictory, but they exemplify the ebb and flow of nature's realities. Tehom's continuing presence in ancient Israel's historical memory is a testimony to its conceptual power and symbolism in the ancient world. In other words, the concept and characteristics of Tehom expand to fill necessary functions in the minds of Yahweh's people—whether as the power used by Yahweh in deliverance (personification) or the representative threat that Yahweh defeats (subjugation). Inevitably, Tehom's association with ancient Israel's traditions concerning evil and judgment results in its final form as the place and situation apart from Yahweh (demonization).

6.2. Chapter Analyses

This research began with the question—What is the Deep? A person, place or thing?—and proceeded with introductory remarks concerning the Deep’s background and combat myth context. Comparisons to ANE deities and dragons of the Deep have produced varied scholarly positions on the Hebrew Bible’s Deep, especially in its relationship to conflict. Unfortunately, the conflation of cosmic waters and conflict has been problematic in a holistic understanding of Tehom.

The introduction chapter framed the discussion comparatively and linguistically, allowing similarities and differences to show common and distinct uses of Tehom in the Hebrew Bible, providing a comprehensive analysis in comparative evidence and non-creation contexts. The history of Tehom’s interpretation within biblical tradition shows its progression as an identity-building concept, navigating through its ancient Near Eastern context as deity to demonized deep.

The primeval Deep as a deity in the ANE—ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Ugaritic religious texts show the deification of primeval Deeps at creation and in ritual worship (offerings, incantations, treaties). Creation is the basis for rituals concerning Nun, the ancient Egyptian deity of primeval Deep. These rituals reiterate the importance of primeval Deep in purification, succession of leadership, and cycles of life and death for ancient Egyptian religion. Ancient Mesopotamian creation and ritual texts contain many Deeps. A focus on Nammu of Sumerian texts and Apsu and Tiamat of Akkadian texts confirm similar conceptions of primeval Deep as an important source of life, healing, protection, and temple purification. While there is no clear creation account concerning ancient Ugarit’s Deep, THMT, its inclusion in ritual texts reveal its deified status as a recipient of offerings and a divine witness. These creation and ritual contexts of ANE Deeps provide a comparative context for

the Hebrew Bible's Tehom, whereby we can see similarities reinforcing a common understanding of the cosmos, and where differences show distinct developments.

Familiar with the deified Deep's ancient Near Eastern context, the authors of the Hebrew Bible personify Tehom's roles in creation and ritual in order to establish the identity of Israel and deify Yahweh. Tehom's roles in creation parallel the Egyptian *Hymn to Aten*, though unlike other creator deities, the Hebrew Bible reveals Yahweh as a deity whose power and presence transcends the phenomena and characteristics of Tehom's waters. Tehom's inclusion in two ritual blessings center religious practice around Yahwism; and the memory of Tehom in the birth of ancient Israel and in Yahweh's promises further emphasize Tehom's significance in the historical memory of ancient Israel's religion. Additionally, Tehom's symbolic representation as the temple's bronze sea marks Yahweh's enthronement and validation of human kingship. As the people of Israel face threats on physical and spiritual levels, Tehom's personified waters become symbolic of power that must be subjugated.

Tehom's role as subjugated Deep takes the form of sea monsters, represents a legitimizing power in human-divine relationships, and becomes the expression of ancient Israel's distress and faith. This chapter returned to a comparative methodology to show examples of the subjugated Deep as a common legitimizing concept in Assyrian royal inscriptions, while showing ancient Israel's distinct use of a subjugated Tehom to re-establish their identity. Leviathan and Yahweh and ancient Ugarit's LTN and Baal show a common ANE personification of the Deep as sea monsters requiring subjugators. Yahweh's use of Tehom to enact judgment and confer legitimacy on human representatives finds its parallel in Mesopotamian use of Deep's waters to justify conquest and confer the power to rule. For ancient Israel, subjugated Tehom becomes incorporated in the language of distress—with affect theory

showing how troubling emotions found in prophecy, psalms, and prayers become expressions of faith and hope.

In the last stage of Tehom's evolution, post-biblical textual traditions associate Tehom with death, judgment and evil, rewriting Tehom origins in apocalyptic times to clearly distinguish Yahweh's people from those who are not. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, distress and engulfment imagery in the Hodayot, spatial separation in exorcism psalms, and the apocalyptic context for identity and ideology in the DSS substantiate the rise of Tehom's negative associations. In the LXX, Greek translations of Tehom de-deify and modify Tehom in cultural memory through contextualized translations and interpretive omissions, reducing Tehom's power to naturalistic descriptions of a bottomless abyss.

The Aramaic Targums connect Tehom's origins with wickedness and destruction through fixed phrases, omissions, replacements, and interpretive commentary. In Rabbinic literature, the oral tradition fills interpretive gaps and provides a narrative for Tehom's origins and appearances in the Hebrew Bible as an evil and impure force threatening destruction. As a result, Tehom becomes an ever-present threat and reminder for the righteous and the wicked—only God's power suppresses Tehom's hellish waters that will be unleashed upon the wicked.

In conclusion, Tehom's many roles as deity, power, monster, abyss work together to explain creation, judgment, life, death, and the afterlife in the ancient world. As a concept, it is often overshadowed by deities and monsters of the conflict motif and left out of ANE deity lists. But its fluidity and lasting conception in biblical tradition should not be overlooked. In each stage of its interpretation, Tehom continually symbolizes the problems at hand, while also pointing to the solution or hope found in a deliverer. The development of ancient Israel's religion, Yahwism, can be traced and remembered

by way of Tehom's personifications and subjugations, which legitimize the power and deification of Yahweh.

In its final apocalyptic context, Tehom's demonization as the Abyss brings to full circle the final judgment of the wicked for the people of Israel. Starkly contrasted with Tehom's personification in the creation of the world and the nation of Israel, its fluidity allows it one more symbolic transition, to remind Yahweh's people of the final day of Yahweh's victory over the Abyss of death. The narrative of Tehom is the story of life over death, and of Yahweh's supremacy over the personifications, subjugations, and demonizations of Tehom. These concepts are embedded into the narrative of the human condition, which constantly requires deliverance from distress and reassuringly endures for all who consider themselves Yahweh's people.

TABLE 7. FROM DEITY TO ABYSS

	Deification	Personification	Subjugation	Demonization ³⁰⁴
Chapters	ANE portrayals (Chapter 2)	HB portrayals (Chapter 3)	HB portrayals compared to ANE examples (Chapter 4)	Biblical tradition portrayals (Chapter 5)
Overview	The concept of the Deep in creation & ritual	Tehom in creation & ritual	Application of the Deep's power conferred from creation and ritual context	Reapplication of creation & ritual context to crisis in religious communities
Summary	Deified Deep explains origins of cosmos, deities, life, power to cleanse, heal, protect, witness in daily religious practice	Personified Tehom deifies Yahweh as creator and ritual protector, healer, deliverer and serves as a witness to & reminder of ancient Israelite origins	Subjugated Deep legitimates rule and relationship to deity Subjugated Tehom legitimates Yahweh's representative and Yahweh's power to save in crisis	Demonized Tehom as Abyss reflects the end-times conclusion to oppression and suffering for those identified as Yahweh's people

³⁰⁴ This also includes ANE and other biblical traditions' portrayals discussed in further research (chapter 6).

6.3. Directions for Further Research

This is by no means a comprehensive account of all the traditions of Tehom in the realm of biblical tradition. Extending this research to more inter-testamental literature, such as the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha could provide additional insight to the New Testament's incorporation of Leviathan and Tehom as Satan and Abyss. For example, the Jewish eschatology of the apocryphal Psalms of Solomon and other post-biblical texts from the 2nd Temple period provide context for New Testament interpretations of Jewish tradition.³⁰⁵ Additionally, the symbolism of Leviathan representing oppressive and wicked rulers continues in the narrative of Yahweh's people as "[t]he biblical narrative is not a narrative of contiguity but a narrative of substitution—Antiochus for Leviathan, or even Pompey for Leviathan in the Psalms of Solomon."³⁰⁶ Leviathan continues its representation of Tehom as overwhelming threat and evil as new oppressors replace past one within the same paradigm. The use of Leviathan as the symbolic representation of suffering becomes identified with the human condition:

No two dragons are the same. Some are dead, some are subdued, and others are very much alive and kicking. We are invited not only to sketch but also to color in our own dragons so that they reflect our own sufferings and challenges. The myth can be molded to fit our realities and yet the expectation is that the story will finally break the mold

³⁰⁵ Cf. František Ábel, *The Psalms of Solomon and the Messianic Ethics of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016); Eberhard Bons, and Patrick Pouchelle, ed. *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, *Early Judaism and Its Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015).

³⁰⁶ Miller, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations: An Old Testament Myth, Its Origins, and Its Afterlives*, 294.

when suffering is past.³⁰⁷

Besides the wider implications of the New Testament's use of Jewish eschatology, related topics for further study include:

1. **Sealing the Deep with a name**—Tehom's demonization in rabbinic tradition requires physical prevention of its evil waters from destroying everything. Two objects that suppress Tehom's waters are the foundation stone and a potsherd with Yahweh's divine name written on it. The tradition of sealing Tehom's demonic waters with a name also extends to the apocryphal Prayer of Manasseh and the Apocalypse of the New Testament:

You who made heaven and earth with all their order; who shackled the sea by your word of command, who confined the deep and sealed it with your terrible and glorious name (Prayer of Manasseh 2-3).³⁰⁸

An angel from heaven seized the dragon, that ancient serpent...and threw him into the deep and sealed it over him (Revelation 20:2-3).

This tradition connects demonized Tehom as the Abyss in later Jewish and Christian interpretation, particularly as Leviathan becomes identified with Satan, the dragon and ancient serpent that is thrown into the Abyss (Tehom).

³⁰⁷ Andrew R. Angel, *Playing with Dragons: Living with Suffering and God* (Cascade Books, 2014), 35-36.

³⁰⁸ Miller, *The Dragon, the Mountain, and the Nations: An Old Testament Myth, Its Origins, and Its Afterlives*, 246.

2. **Incantations against the Deep**—the incantatory tradition of the Deep can be found in the pseudepigraphic *Apocalypse of Abraham* 21:4 “where Leviathan still appears as a monster having the sea as his domain and aiming to destroy the earth, right up to modern times.”³⁰⁹ Additionally, the Aramaic Incantation Bowls provide insight into the daily ritual use of magic bowls and incantations to seal and protect from evil and demons of the abyss. The physical aspect of the bowls shows a circular direction of writing and inscribed images of demons and monsters such as *ouroboros*:

a common magical motif that appears on many artefacts, including bowls, amulet pendants and tablets. The dragon encircles the text, a feature that possibly symbolises a reinforcement of the incantation and the binding of any figures depicted on it.³¹⁰

Further research on incantations against the Deep expands Tehom’s demonization into the realm of magic, the application of religious beliefs in ritual practice, as well as the influences of non-Jewish iconography.

3. ***Ouroboros* imagery**—Greek for “tail-swallower”, *ouroboros* is an ancient circular symbol of a serpent or dragon devouring itself. In ancient Egypt, *ouroboros* is “the world-encircling snake who marks the boundary between the ordered cosmos and the endless chaos around it.”³¹¹ This image of perpetual and eternal destruction and recreation also appears in traditions and imagery of

³⁰⁹ DDD: Leviathan, 515.

³¹⁰ Shaked, *Aramaic Bowl Spells: Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, 1, 35.

³¹¹ DDD: Serpent, 745.

Leviathan in Jewish mythology of the Medieval Period.³¹² Interpreting Tehom in light of *ouroboros* imagery re-connects Tehom's circular and cyclical characteristics, to a demonized monstrous form, as a continual symbol for ancient Israel's cosmology and eschatology.

4. **Ancient Near Eastern Demonization**—this study could benefit from further examination of the evolving perceptions of ancient Near Eastern deities of the Deep mentioned in Chapter 2. An understanding of the context for these changes could also provide a better comparison for the evolution of Tehom from deity to abyss in biblical tradition. For example, Egyptian deities also went through similar demonizations due to external factors and influences:

It was probably about the Twenty-second Dynasty that the worship of Set began to decline, and that he took on the shape of an evil deity. The theory has been put forward that the Hyksos invaders identified him with certain of their gods, and that this sufficed to bring him into disrepute with the Egyptians.³¹³

Specifically, the Egyptian primeval Deep becomes associated with a place associated with death and judgment:

Nun, however, was considered to continue to exist outside the bounds of the created universe even after the world ceased to be. In this sense Nun as the hidden abyss and is referred to in this manner throughout the Pyramid Texts and in later literature more as a location than a deity. The only relationship between this world and the outlying waters of Nun is found in the fact that beings such as stillborn babies and condemned

³¹² Cf. "Jewish Myth and Mythmaking in the Middle Ages: The Primordial Serpent and the Secrets of Creation" in Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 273-92.

³¹³ Lewis Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1990),

souls who had no part in the afterlife were consigned to this area beyond existence.³¹⁴

The Pyramid Texts also depict Nun as a demonized place. The Serpent Spells record instances of venomous snakes coming from Nun the Abyss³¹⁵ (Pyramid Text 233). Nun, however, also seems to retain its deified power as it controls and repulses these snakes: “crawl away because of Nun!” (Pyramid Text 729). Richard C. Steiner maintains that these serpent spells originate from a Semitic context and connects the Egyptian world with Byblos.³¹⁶ Further study of this Semitic context could be fruitful for conceptual links between Nun and Tehom in their symbolic manifestation as serpents.

Additional negative associations include the use of primeval waters in curses. The Mesopotamian *Code of Hammurabi* uses the language of watery judgment to detail the curses that come upon any man who changes or fails to uphold the words of the inscription. The curse calls upon various deities to judge the perpetrator using physical and symbolic descriptions of water

the pouring out of his life like water into the mouth of Bel...
shut up his rivers at the sources...
may he be deprived of water above among the living, and his spirit below in the earth...
withhold from him rain from heaven, and the flood of water from the springs...³¹⁷

³¹⁴ Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 117.

³¹⁵ R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

³¹⁶ Richard C. Steiner, *Early Northwest Semitic Serpent Spells in the Pyramid Texts*, ed. W. Randall Garr, Jo Ann Hackett, and John Huehnergard, *Harvard Semitic Studies* 61 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 26-27.

³¹⁷ Curses appear in the epilogue after the law codes. Cf. Translation in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 178-80. For additional inscriptions from the Old Babylonian

While these descriptions emphasize the necessity of water for life in the ancient world, comparing negative descriptions of primeval waters could reveal a common progression of associating primeval waters with judgment and death.

Lastly, for further study, there are many more related traditions of sea monsters and cosmic waters in the ancient world. Calvert Watkins' *How to Kill a Dragon*³¹⁸ works in the linguistic realm of Indo-European traditions of dragon myth and deities. Further research on the poetics and formulae found in comparative traditions could prove insightful to the articulation of problems common to human identity and experience.

period cf. Douglas R. Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BC)*, vol. 4, *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia (RIME)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

³¹⁸ Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*. Particularly the chapters in sections VI-VII that analyze the development of the dragon-slaying formula in announcing death, proclaiming victory in song, and in healing charms connect to *Tehom's* roles in this study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TEHOM IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

תהום	deep (36)
Gen 1:2	תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים
Gen 7:11	לחדש ביום הזה נבקעו כל מעינת תהום רבה וארבת השמים נפתחו
Gen. 8:2	ויסכרו מעינת תהום וארבת השמים ויכלא הגשם מן השמים
Gen 49:25	שדי ויברכך ברכת שמים מעל ברכת תהום רבצת תחת ברכת שדים ורחם
Exod 15:5	תהמת יכסימו ירדו במצולת כמו אבן
Exod 15:8	וברוח אפיך נערמו מים נצבו כמו נד נזלים קפאו תהמת בלב ים
Deut 8:7	אל ארץ טובה ארץ נחלי מים עינת ו תהמת יצאים בבקעה ובהר
Deut 33:13	יהוה ארצו ממגד שמים מטל ומ תהום רבצת תחת
Isa 51:10	הלוא את היא המחרכת ים מי תהום רבה השמה מעמקי ים דרך
Isa 63:13	מוליכם בתהמות כסוס במדבר לא יכשלו
Ezek 26:19	לא נושבו בהעלות עליך את תהום וכסוך המים הרבים
Ezek 31:4	מים גדלוהו תהום רממתהו את נהרתיה הלך סביבות מטעה
Ezek 31:15	שאולה האבלתי כסתי עליו את תהום ואמנע נהרותיה ויכלאו מים
Amos 7:4	באש אדני יהוה ותאכל את תהום רבה ואכלה את החלק
Jonah 2:6	אפפוני מים עד נפש תהום יסבבני סוף חבוש לראשי
Hab 3:10	הרים זרם מים עבר נתן תהום קולו רום ידיהו
Ps 33:7	כנס כנד מי הים נתן באצרות תהומות
Ps 36:7	צדקתך כהררי אל משפטך תהום רבה אדם ובהמה תושיע יהוה
Ps 42:8	תהום אל תהום קורא לקול צנוריד כל משבריד וגליך עלי
	תהום אל תהום קורא לקול צנוריד כל משבריד וגליך עלי
Ps 71:20	צרות רבות ורעות תשוב תחיינו ומתהמות הארץ תשוב תעלני
Ps 77:17	ראוך מים אלהים ראוך מים יחילו אף ירגזו תהמות
Ps 78:15	יבקע צרים במדבר וישק כתהמות רבה
Ps 104:6	תהום כלבוש כסיתו על הרים יעמדו מים
Ps 106:9	ויגער בים סוף ויחרב ויוליכם בתהמות כמדבר
Ps 107:26	יעלו שמים ירדו תהומות נפשם ברעה תתמוגג
Ps 135:6	כל אשר חפץ יהוה עשה בשמים ובארץ בימים וכל תהומות
Ps 148:7	הללו את יהוה מן הארץ תנינים וכל תהמות
Job 28:14	תהום אמר לא בי היא וים אמר אין עמדי
Job 38:16	הבאת עד נבכי ים ובחקר תהום התהלכת
Job 38:30	כאבן מים יתחבאו לפני תהום יתלכדו
Job 41:24	אחריו יאיר נתיב יחשב תהום לשיבה
Prov 3:20	בדעתו תהומות נבקעו ושחקים ירעפו טל
Prov 8:24	באין תהמות חוללתי באין מעינות נכבדי מים
Prov 8:27	בהכינו שמים שם אני בחוקו חוג על פני תהום
Prov 8:28	באמצו שחקים ממעל בעזוז עינות תהום

Sea monster personifications

לויתן	leviathan (6)
Isa 27:1	על לויתן נחש ברה ועל לויתן נחש עקלתון והרג את התנין אשר בים
Ps 74:14	אתה רצצת ראשי לויתן תתננו מאכל לעם לציים
Ps 104:26	שם אניות יהלכון לויתן זה יצרת לשחק בו
Job 3:8	יקבהו אררי יום העתידים ערר לויתן
Job 40:25	תמשך לויתן בחכה ובחבל תשקיע לשנו
תנין	serpent, dragon, monster (14)
Gen 1:21	ויברא אלהים את ה תנינים הגדלים ואת כל נפש החיה הרמשת
Exod 7:9	ואמרת אל אהרן קח את מטך והשלך לפני פרעה יהי ל תנין
Exod 7:10	וישלך אהרן את מטהו לפני פרעה ולפני עבדיו ויהי ל תנין
Exod 7:12	וישליכו איש מטהו ויהיו ל תנינים ויבלע מטה אהרן את מטתם
Deut 32:33	חמת תנינים יינם וראש פתנים אכזר
Isa 27:1	נחש ברה ועל לויתן נחש עקלתון והרג את ה תנין אשר בים
Isa 51:9	עורי כימי קדם דרות עולמים הלוא את היא המחצבת רהב מחוללת תנין
Jer 51:34	כלי ריק בלענו כ תנין מלא כרשו מעדני
Ezek 29:3	עליך פרעה מלך מצרים ה תנינים הגדול הרביץ בתוך
Ezek 32:2	אליו כפיר גוים נדמית ואתה כ תנינים בימים ותגח בנהרותיך
Ps 74:13	אתה פוררת בעוזך ים שברת ראשי תנינים על המים
Ps 91:13	על שחל ופתן תדרך תרמס כפיר ו תנין
Ps 148:7	הללו את יהוה מן הארץ תנינים וכל תהמות
Job 7:12	קִים אני אם תנין כי תשים עלי משמר
רהב	Rahab (selected references)
Isa 51:9	עורי כימי קדם דרות עולמים הלוא את היא המחצבת רהב מחוללת תנין
Ps 87:4	אזכיר רהב ובבל לידעי הגה פלשת וצור עם כוש
Ps 89:11	אתה דכאת כחלל רהב בזרוע עזך פזרת אויביך
Job 9:13	אלוה לא ישיב אפו תחתו שחחו עזרי רהב
Job 26:12	בכחו רגע הים ובתובנתו מחץ רהב

Cosmic waters terms

מצולה	deep, depth (12)
Exod 15:5	תהמת יכסימו ירדו ב מצולת כמו אבן
Jonah 2:4	ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר יסבבני
Mic 7:19	ישוב ירחמנו יכבש עונתינו ותשליך ב מצלות ים כל חטאותם
Zech 1:8	עמד בין ההדסים אשר ב מצלה ואחריו סוסים אדמים
Zech 10:11	בים גלים והבישו כל מצולות יאר והורד גאון אשור ושבת
Ps 68:23	אמר אדני מבשן אשיב אשיב מ מצלות ים
Ps 69:3	טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד באתי במעמקי מים ושבלת שטפתי

Ps 69:16	אל תשטפני שבלת מים ואל תבלעני מצולה ואל תאטר עלי באר פיה
Ps 88:7	שתני בבור תחתיות במחשכים במצלות
Ps 107:24	המה ראו מעשי יהוה ונפלאותיו במצולה
Job 41:23	ירתיה כסיר מצולה ים ישים כמרקחה
Neh 9:11	בתוך הים ביבשה ואת רדפיהם השלכת במצולת כמו אבן במים עזים

מעמקים	depths (5)
Isa 51:10	המחרכת ים מי תהום רבה השמה מעמקי ים דרך לעבר גאולים
Ezek 27:34	נשברת מימים במעמקי מים מערבך וכל קהלך
Ps 69:3	טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד באתי במעמקי מים ושבלת שטפתי
Ps 69:15	הצילני מטיט ואל אטבעה אנצלה משנאי ומ מעמקי מים
Ps 130:1	שיר המעלות מעמקים קראתיך יהוה

מים רבים	great, many waters – (selected references)
Num 20:11	את הסלע במטהו פעמים ויצאו מים רבים ותשת העדה ובעירם
2Sam 22:17	ישלח ממרום יקחני ימשני ממים רבים
Ezek 1:24	ואשמע את קול כנפיהם כקול מים רבים כקול שדי בלכתם
Ezek 27:26	במים רבים הביאוך השטים אתך רוח הקדים שברך בלב
Ezek 31:5	סרעפתיו ותארכנה פארתו ממים רבים בשלחו
Ezek 31:7	וייף בגדלו בארך דליותיו כי היה שרשו אל מים רבים
Ezek 31:15	את תהום ואמנע נהרותיה ויכלאו מים רבים ואקדר עליו לבנון וכל עצי
Ezek 43:2	הקדים וקולו כקול מים רבים והארץ האירה מכבדו
Hab 3:15	דרכת בים סוסיך חמר מים רבים
Ps 18:17	ישלח ממרום יקחני ימשני ממים רבים
Ps 29:3	קול יהוה על המים אל הכבוד הרעים יהוה על מים רבים
Ps 32:6	כל חסיד אליך לעת מצא רק לשטף מים רבים אליו לא יגיעו
Ps 77:20	בים דרכך ושביליך במים רבים ועקבותיך לא נדעו
Ps 93:4	מקלות מים רבים אדירים משברי ים אדיר במרום יהוה
Ps 144:7	ממרום פצני והצילני ממים רבים מיד בני נכר
Song 8:7	מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה אם יתן

לב ים	heart of the sea – (selected references)
Exod 15:8	וברוח אפיך נערמו מים נצבו כמו נד נזלים קפאו תהמת בלב ים
Ezek 27:27	ובכל קהלך אשר בתוכך יפלו בלב ימים ביום מפלתך
Ezek 28:2	ותאמר אל אני מושב אלהים ישבתי בלב ימים ואתה אדם ולא אל ותתן לבך כלב אלהים
Ezek 28:8	לשחת יורדוך ומתה ממותי חלל בלב ימים
Ps 46:3	על כן לא נירא בהמיר ארץ ובמוט הרים בלב ימים
Prov 23:34	והיית כשכב בלב ים וכשכב בראש חבל
Prov 30:19	דרך נחש עלי צור דרך אניה בלב ים ודרך גבר בעלמה

מים אדירים	noble waters
Exod 15:10	כסמו ים צללו כעופרת במים אדירים

APPENDIX C: TEHOM IN DSS NON-BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

War Scroll

1QM 10:13 חוג ימים ומקוי נהרות ומבקע **תהומות** / מעשי חיה ובני כנף תבנית אדם

Hodayot / Thanksgiving Psalms – Cave 1

1QH^a 5:26 וכול צאצאיה בימים וב**תהומות** ככול מחשבותם לכול קצי
 1QH^a 9:16 ארץ בחכמותחכה / ימים ו**תהומות** עשיתה בעזוכה ומחשביהם
 1QH^a 11:16 חכמתם בהמות ימים. ברתוח **תהומות** על נבוכי מים ויתרגשו לרום
 1QH^a 11:18 וכול חצי שחת / עם מצעדם ל**תהום** ישמיעו קולם. ויפתחו שערי
 1QH^a 11:32 לנחלי זפת. ותאוכל עד **תהום** / רבה. ויבקעו לאבדון נחלי
 1QH^a 11:33 לאבדון נחלי בליעל ויהמו מחשבי **תהום** בהמון גורשי רפש. וארץ
 1QH^a 13:40 לאין / פתוח. כלאי עם **תהום** נחשבתי לאין -- ° --
 1QH^a 14:19 ודליותיו / עד שחקים ושרשיו עד **תהום**. וכול נהרות עדן תלחלחנה דליותיו
 1QH^a 14:27 דרך על פני מים. ויהם **תהום** לאנחתי ונגשו חיי
 1QH^a 18:35 ברעדה. ונהמתי עד **תהום** תבוא / ובחדרי שאול תחפש יחד.

Hodayot (4Q H^b, 4Q H^c, and 4Q papHodayot^f) – Cave 4

4Q428 f8:4 ודליותיו / עד שחקים ושרשיו עד **תהום** וכול נהרות עדן תלחלחנה / דליותיו
 4Q429 f3:12 לאין פתוח. כלאי עם **תהום** נחשב לאין מנוס -- .
 4Q429 f4i:1 / עד שחקים ושרשיו עד **תהום**. וכל נהרות / עדן תלחלחנה דליותיו
 4Q429 f4ii:4 דרך על פני מים. / ויהם **תהום** לאנחתי ונגשו חיי
 4Q432 f5:3 חוכמתמה בהמות ימים / ברתוח **תהומות** על נבוכי מים יתרגשו לרום גלים
 4Q432 f5:5 חצי / שחת עם מצעדם -- ל**תהום** ישמיעו קולם ויפתחו שערי / עולם

Mysteries (1Q Myst)

1Q27 f13:3 ות° -- / -- ם רוזי **תהום** וחקרי -- / -- °

Tobit

4Q200 f6:6 שאולה תחתיה והואה מעלה מ**תהום**. / -- גדולה ומה

Jubilees

4Q216 5:9 בארץ ובכל את ה**תהומות** / מאפלה ושחר ואור וערב
 4Q216 6:11 את התנינים הגדולים בתווך **תהומות** המים כי הם / מעשי ידיו
 4Q216 7:5 ובארץ ובימים וב**תהומות** ובאור ובחשך ובכל.

Pesher Genesis (4Q CommGen A)

4Q252 1:5 ביום ההוא / נבקעו כול מעינות **תהום** רבה וארבות השמים נפתחו.

Berakhot (4Q Bera)

4Q286 f5a_c:9 -- ומצור ימים מעיני **תהום** -- / -- ם וכול

Cryptic A Words of the Maskil to All Sons of Dawn (4Q CryptA)

4Q298 f2ii:2 -- ° התבונן / -- בתהום מתחת / -- שורשיה יצאו

Admonition Based on the Flood (4Q AdmonFlood)

4Q370 fii:4 כל / מוסדי ארץ ומים נבקעו מתהמות. כל ארבות השמים נפתחו ופצו
ארבות השמים נפתחו ופצו כל תהמות ממים אדרים. / וארבות השמים

Apocryphon of Joseph

4Q372 fi:30 והארץ וגם במעמקי תהום. הוד והדר -- / אני

4Q372 f2:3 / -- בתהמות ובכל אבדון -- / --

4QInstruction / Saptiential Work A

4Q416 fi:12 שמים יראו -- . / ימים ותהמות פחדו ויתערערו כל רוח בשר.

4Q418 f2+2a_c:4 ירא -- / -- ימים ותהום פחדו ויתר -- כול רוח בשר

4Q418b fi:3 °לנ° -- / יעלו הרים וירדו תהמות נפשם ברעה תתמוגג --

4Q418c fi:1 -- ח תהומות -- / -- °ם ומי

Ritual of Marriage (4Q papRitMar)

4Q502 f6_10:7 ומימינו -- עם ומי תהומיה כולנו / מברכים שם אל ישראל

Words of the Luminaries

4Q504 fi_2Rvii:7 הארץ וכול מחשביה -- תהום / רבה ואבדון והמים וכול

papFestival Prayers

4Q509 f7:2 ° -- / -- ובתהומות ובכול °. / כי

Songs of the Maskil

4Q511 f30:2 השמים ושמי השמים ותהומות ומחשכי ארץ -- . / אתה

4Q511 f37:6 ויחפזו -- / -- ה תהום -- . / -- תו

Messianic Apocalypse

4Q521 f7+5ii:12 וגי מות ב -- / וגשר תהומות -- / קפאו ארורים --

Hymnic Work?

4Q579 fi:4 לידועים מש -- / -- תהום ממשיטה ° -- / -- ל

Deuteronomy?

6Q20 fi:5 בית האו -- / התהמות -- / חדשה ו --

Apocryphal Psalms (11Q apocPs) – Exorcism Psalms

11Q11 1:5 -- תנין --

11Q11 2:5 המשטמה / -- אשר -- ל תהום ך / -- לש° -- הגדול

11Q11 3:1 -- / תה -- התהומות -- / הארץ ו' --
11Q11 4:7 על כול אלה אשר יורידוך לתהום רבה / ולשאול התחתיה.
11Q11 4:9 ומי -- ° כב וחשך / בתהום רבה מואדה לוא -- עוד בארץ

Cave 4 Unidentified Fragments

PAM43698 f23:2 ק° -- / תהום ? -- / בינו --

Aramaic Texts

Enoch (4Q EnGiants)

4Q206 f4i:13 להון בתהום ארעא. וחד מן ארבעתא על על חד מן תוריא

Apocryphon of Daniel (4Q apocrDan)

4Q246 fiii:9 ירמה קדמוהי. שלטנה שלטן עלם וכל תהומי.

Testament of Qahat (4Q TKohath)

4Q542 fiii:7 ובארעא ובתהומיא ובכול חלליא לבלמ --

Targum Job (11Q tgJob)

11Q10 30:6 התסוג בדשין ימא בהנגחותה מן רחם תהומא

APPENDIX D: LXX TRANSLATIONS³¹⁹ OF TEHOM

αβυσσος	abyss (49)
Gen 1:2	και σκοτος επανω της αβυσσου , και πνευμα θεου
Gen 7:11	πασαι αι πηγαι της αβυσσου , και οι καταρρακται
Gen 8:2	επεκαλυφθησαν αι πηγαι της αβυσσου και οι καταρρακται του
Gen 49:25	και ευλογιαν γης εχουσης παντα · ενεκεν ευλογιας μαστων και μητρας,
Exod 15:5	ποντω εκαλυψεν αυτους, κατεδυσαν εις βυθον ωσει λιθος.
Exod 15:8	επαγη τα κυματα εν μεσω της θαλασσης.
Deut 8:7	χειμαρροι υδατων και πηγαι αβυσσων εκπορευομεναι δια των πεδιων
Deut 33:13	ωρων ουρανου και δροσου και απο αβυσσων πηγων κατωθεν
Ps 32:7	υδατα θαλασσης, τιθεις εν θησαυροις αβυσσους .
Ps 35:7	τα κριματα σου αβυσσος πολλη· ανθρωπους
Ps 41:8	αβυσσος αβυσσον επικαλειται εις φωνην των καταρρακτων σου αβυσσος αβυσσον επικαλειται εις φωνην των καταρρακτων σου
Ps 70:20	και εκ των αβυσσων της γης παλιν ανηγαγες
Ps 76:17	εφοβηθησαν, και εταραχθησαν αβυσσοι , πληθος ηχους υδατων
Ps 77:15	εν ερημω και εποτισεν αυτους ως εν αβυσσω πολλη
Ps 103:6	αβυσσος ως ιματιον το περιβολαιον αυτου,
Ps 105:9	και ωδηγησεν αυτους εν αβυσσω ως εν ερημω·
Ps 106:26	και καταβαινουσιν εως των αβυσσων , η ψυχη
Ps 134:6	εν ταις θαλασσαις και εν πασαις ταις αβυσσοις ·
Ps 148:7	της γης, δρακοντες και πασαι αβυσσοι ·
Ode 4:10	πορειας· εδωκεν η αβυσσος φωνην αυτης·
Ode 6:6	ψυχης μου, αβυσσος εκυκλωσεν με εσχατη,
Ode 8:54	ει, ο βλεπων αβυσσους καθημενος επι χερουβιν,
Ode 12:3	ο κλεισας την αβυσσον και σφραγισαμενος τω φοβερω
Prov 3:20	εν αισθησει αβυσσοι ερραγησαν, νεφη δε
Prov 8:24	και προ του τας αβυσσους ποιησαι, προ
Prov 8:27	και οτε αφωριζεν τον εαυτου θρονον επ ανεμων . ³²⁰
Prov 8:28	και ως ασφαλεις ετιθει πηγας της υπ ουρανον . ³²¹

³¹⁹ LXX Rahlfs Edition: Odes, Wisdom, Sirach, and Solomon in the LXX have no known Hebrew manuscripts. (The Prayer of Manasseh also contains the Greek term αβυσσος).

³²⁰ Tehom omitted, translated as “the winds”

³²¹ Tehom translated as “fountains of the earth”

Job 28:14 * **αβυσσος** ειπεν Ουκ εστιν εν εμοι·
 Job 36:16 εχθρου· * **αβυσσος**, καταχυσις υποκατω αυτης³²²
 Job 38:16 θαλασσης, εν δε ιχνεσιν **αβυσσου** περιεπατησας;
 Job 38:30 ωσπερ υδωρ ρεον; προσωπον δε **αβυσσου** τις επηξεν;
 Job 41:23 αναζει την **αβυσσον** ωσπερ χαλκειον, ηγηται³²³
 Job 41:24 τον δε ταρταρον της **αβυσσου** ωσπερ αιχμαλωτον·
 αιχμαλωτον· * ελογισατο **αβυσσον** εις περιπατον.

 Wis 10:19 κατεκλυσεν και εκ βαθους **αβυσσου** ανεβρασεν αυτους.
 Sir 1:3 πλατος γης και **αβυσσον** και σοφιαν τις εξιχνιασει
 Sir 16:18 του ουρανου, **αβυσσος** και γη εν τη
 Sir 24:5 εκυκλωσα μονη και εν βαθει **αβυσσων** περιεπατησα·
 Sir 24:29 αυτης και η βουλη αυτης απο **αβυσσου** μεγαλης.
 Sir 42:18 **αβυσσον** και καρδιαν εξιχνευσεν και εν πανουργευμασιν
 Sir 43:23 ¶ Λογισμω αυτου εκοπασεν **αβυσσον** και εφυτευσεν εν
 Sol 17:19 πηγαι συνεσχεθησαν αιωνιοι εξ **αβυσσων** απο ορεων υψηλων,

 Amos 7:4 κυριος, και κατεφαγε την **αβυσσον** την πολλην και κατεφαγεν
 Jonah 2:6 εως ψυχης, **αβυσσος** εκυκλωσεν με εσχατη,
 Hab 3:10 αυτου· εδωκεν η **αβυσσος** φωνην αυτης,
 Isa 44:27 ο λεγων τη **αβυσσω** Ερημωθηση, και τους ποταμους³²⁴
 Isa 51:10 ερημουσα θαλασσαν, υδωρ **αβυσσου** πληθος; η θεισα
 Is. 63:13 ηγαγεν αυτους δια της **αβυσσου** ως ιππον δι ερημου
 Ezek 26:19 με επι σε την **αβυσσον** και κατακαλυψη σε υδωρ
 Ezek 31:4 εξεθρεψεν αυτον, η **αβυσσος** υψωσεν αυτον, τους
 Ezek 31:15 αδου, επενθησεν αυτον η **αβυσσος**, και επεστησα τους
 Dan 3:55 ει, ο βλεπων **αβυσσους** καθημενος επι χερουβιμ,³²⁵

³²² MT has רָצִי־יָמָה

³²³ MT has הַלְיָצִי־מָה

³²⁴ MT has הַלְיָצִי־לְ

³²⁵ There is no Hebrew or Aramaic version of the LXX translation of Daniel 3:24-90 (also known as *The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews*). Presumably Tehom is the word translated as

Abyss in v. 55.

APPENDIX E: TARGUM TRANSLATIONS OF TEHOM

תהום	deep, abyss (58)
Gen 1:2	ורוקניא וחשוכא על אפי תהומא ורוחא מן קדם יוי
Gen 7:11	ביומא הדין אתבזעו כל מבועי תהום רבה וכוי דשמיא אתפתחא
Gen 8:2	ואסתכרו מבועי תהומא וכוי דשמיא ואתכלי מטרא מן
Gen 49:25	ברכנ דנגדן ממעמקי ארעא מלרע ברכתא דאבוך ודאימך
Exod 15:5	תהומיא חפו עליהון נחתו לעומקיא כאבנא
Exod 15:8	פומך חכימו מיא קמו כשור אזליא קפו תהומי בליבא דימא
Deut 8:7	טבתא ארע נגדא נחלין דמיין מבועי עינון ו תהומין נפקין בבקען ובטורין
Deut 33:13	דשמיא מלעילא וממבועי עינוות תהומין דנגדן ממעמקי ארעא מלרע
Isa 51:10	כנשתא דישראל אחריבית ימא מי תהום רבה שויתי עומקי ימא אורח למגז
Isa 63:13	דברינן בין תהומיא כסוסיא דבמדברא לא מיתקיל כין
Ezek 26:19	באסקותי עלך משרית עממין דסגיאין כמי תהומא ויחפוניך עממין סגיאין
Ezek 31:4	--
Ezek 31:15	עלוהי חפת עקא ית עלמא וחרובא מדינתא
Amos 7:4	למדן באישתא יוי אלהים ואכלת ית תהום רבה ושיציאת ית אחסנתא
Jonah 2:3	לי קדם יוי וקביל צלותי מארעית תהומא בעיתי עבדתא בעותי
Jonah 2:6	אקפוני מיא עד מותא תהומא סחור סחור לי ימא דסוף
Hab 3:10	טוריא ענני מטרא עדו ארים תהומא קליה חילי מרומא תמהו
Ps 33:7	דמכניס היך זיקא מוי דימא יתבינן באפתיקי תהומיא
Ps 36:7	טוריא תקיפא דינך עמיקין היך תהומא רבא בני נשא ובעירא
Ps 42:8	תהומא עילאה לתהומא ארעאה קרי לקל זלחי מרזביין היכנא
	תהומא עילאה לתהומא ארעאה קרי לקל זלחי מרזביין היכנא
Ps 71:20	ובישן תתוב תחי יתנא ומתהומיא ארעיתא תתוב תסיק יתנא
Ps 77:17	ימא אלהא חמון גבורתך על ימא רתיתון עמיא לחוד יתרגוזן תהומיא
Ps 78:15	בחוטריה דמשה רבהון במדברא ואשקי כד ב תהומיא רברבן
Ps 104:6	תהומא כד בלבושא חפיתה ומבזעין על טוריא וקיימין
Ps 104:8	יסלקון מן תהומא לטוריא ונחתין בבקעתא לאתר דנן
Ps 106:9	בימא דסוף ואתנגיב והליכינון בתהומיא היך כבמדברא
Ps 107:26	סלקין צית שמיא נחתין עמקי תהומיא נפשתהון בבישא תתמוגג

Psalms of Ascent

Ps 120:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסוקיין ד תהומא קדם יהוה כד עיק לי
Ps 121:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא אזקוף עיני לטוריא
Ps 122:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא חדיתי באמרין לי בית
Ps 123:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא קדמך זקפית ית עיני
Ps 124:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא על יד דוד אילולי יהוה דהוה
Ps 125:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא צדיקיא דמתרחצין במימרא
Ps 126:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא כד יתיב יהוה ית גלוות ציון
Ps 127:1	שירא דאיתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא על יד שלמה אין מימרא
Ps 128:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא טוביהון דכל דחליא דיהוה

Ps 129:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא סגיעין דאעיקו לי מן
Ps 130:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא מן עומקיא קריתך יהוה
Ps 131:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא יהוה לא גבה ליבי ולא
Ps 132:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא אידכר יהוה לדוד ית כל
Ps 133:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא הא כמה טוב וכמא בסיים
Ps 134:1	שירא דאתאמר על מסיקיין ד תהומא הא בריכו ית יהוה כל עבדיא
Ps 135:6	די יתרעי יהוה עבד בשמיא ובארעא ביממיה וכל תהומיא
Ps 148:7	שבחון ית יהוה מן ארעא תניניא וכל תהומיא
Job 22:16	היך נהרא אשתטיפו ואתכסי בת הומא שתאסיהון ל"א דרא טובענא
Job 28:14	תהומא אמר לא גבי היא וימא אמר לית עמי
Job 38:8	כד ב דשיא ימא במגמיה מן תהומא כמין רחמא יפוק
Job 38:16	האיפשר דעלתא עד מערבלי סגור ימא ובפשפוש תהומא הליכתא
Job 38:25	מן פליג לשטפא ד תהומא חריצי מיא וקצתהון
Job 38:30	היך מיא קרישן ומטמרן ואפי תהומא מן קורא מתאחדין
Job 41:24	בתרוהי ינהר שבילא יחשב תהומא לשיבותא
Prov 3:20	בידיעותיה תהומי איתבזעו וענני רסו טלא
Prov 8:24	עד לא להוון תהומי איתקנית ועד לא נהוון מעיני עשוני דמיא
Prov 8:27	כד אתקין שמיא תמן הוית וכד חגל חוגתא על אפי תהומא
Prov 8:28	כד איגרים ענני שמיא מלעיל וכד אעשין מעייני ו תהומי
Ecc1 1:5	ולאתריה שחיף ואזיל אורח תהומא ודנח למחר מאתר דהוא
Ecc1 1:6	לסטר צפונא בליליא אורח תהומא מחזר מחזר ואזיל לרוח
Ecc1 1:7	ולאתרא דנחליא אזלין ונגדין תמן אינון תייבין למיזל מצינורי תהומא
2Chr 2:5	וארעא כיבש קדמוי ו תהומיא וכל עלמא מסתוברין ברוח
2Chr 6:18	כולא שמיא וארעא ו תהומיא וכל מה דאית בהון

Highlighted references indicate the addition of Tehom in Aramaic translations.

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