

ent *er-Rām* at the head of W. Fāra, cf. HALAT 908; J. J. SIMONS, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the OT* [Leiden 1959] § 327.1.8), confirms Rachel's connection to the early Israelite tribes of Joseph and Benjamin. The location south of Ramat Rachel near Bethlehem—where a mediaeval *qubbet Rāhil* is still shown—may reflect a secondary Judaeon location (JEREMIAS 1958:75-76, *pace* SIMONS, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the OT* §§ 383, 666-668), which gained prominence in later Jewish and Christian tradition (Matt 2:16-18). Two explicit references from the monarchic period (1 Sam 10:2; Jer 31:15) and the ancient blessing, preserved in Ruth 4:11, present limited but clear evidence of a living ancestral cult around Rachel's tomb in OT times (TSEVAT 1962). It is not surprising to find evidence for more than one tomb. Also in modern times Muslim and Christian saints sometimes have more than one *maqām* with a shrine or a cenotaph (E. W. LANE, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* [London 1836; repr. 1978]). The existence of a younger rival tradition near Bethlehem cannot be excluded (examples in JEREMIAS 1958:114-117). The bold personification of mother Rachel in Jer 31:15-16 is more than prophetic imagination or figurative speech. Even if the historical reference is to the Exile of 587 BCE, the underlying tradition is that of the barren Rachel crying for children she cannot conceive (Gen 30:1-2; 1 Sam 1:7-8). It is only in the interpretation of the prophet and in the midrash of Matt 2:18 that the barren Rachel also becomes the bereft mother of Israel (cf. the role of Ephraim in 1 Chr 7:22). Her cry may refer to a ritual performed by women at her tomb, venerating her as the ancestral mother. These women, having experienced barrenness and bereavement, may have honoured her as their patroness, and may have asked for her intercession (Gen 35:16-20; Ruth 4:11; Jer 31:16). Part of the folklore was also the application of Mandragora as an aphrodisiac stimulating sexual desire and fertility (Gen 30:14-15; Cant 7:14; J. G. FRAZER, *Folk-*

lore in the Old Testament, Vol 2 [London 1918] 372-397; G. DALMAN, *Arbeit und Sitte*, Vol. I [Gütersloh 1928] 250-251), a phenomenon which is quite well attested in other ancient fertility and modern saint cults.

IV. Bibliography

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M. DIJKSTRA

RAHAB רָהַב

I. Rahab is one of the names in the OT of the chaos monster(s) (cf. also →Leviathan, →Tannin, Tehom [→Tiamat], and Yam). Although there are in the neighbouring cultures many parallels to this phenomenon of chaos monsters, the name Rahab seems to have no cognates. The only exception is in an Akkadian text about a chaos monster usually called Labbu. The first syllable in this name is written with the sign KAL which can be read as *lab* as well as *reb*; so the reading Rebbu (<*reb-bu) is possible too (LAMBERT 1986:55 n.1). The Hebrew name is probably related to Heb RHB, 'assail', 'press', and Akk *ra'ābu(m)*, 'tremble (with fear or rage)' and especially with its derivate *rūbu*, 'overflow', because this is not only said of rage but also of water, whereas Rahab is usually related to the →sea. It occurs as a divine name in Isa 51:9; Ps 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12; and Sir 43:25; and as a reference to Egypt in Isa 30:7 and Ps 87:4. The plural *rēhābīm* in Ps 40:5 can be interpreted as a reference to related →demons.

II. The reference to Rahab in the OT

should be read against the background of ancient Near Eastern mythology describing creation as based on victory over the powers of chaos, viz. the primordial oceans. These powers are represented as monsters. The best known example is the Babylonian myth *Enūma eliš* describing →Marduk's creation of the kosmos by defeating the chaos monster Tiamat with her helpers. In the Ugaritic myth of →Baal there are references to a primordial battle between Baal or his consort Anat against the god of the Sea Yam and other chaos monsters (*KTU*² 1.2 iv; 1.3 iii; 1.5 i). The same myth tells us that this battle did not stop with the creation of the world: the powers of chaos remain a threat which has to be confronted again and again. A ritual text (*KTU*² 1.82) describes how these forces can afflict human life and how they can be exorcized.

A clear picture of such a watery chaos monster can be found on an Assyrian cylinder seal (KEEL 1977:43, pl.48) which shows a →dragon with a body of waves. The dragon is attacked by a warrior with two helpers. On a Hittite cylinder seal (ANEP 670 and KEEL 1977:44, pl.50) we see two gods fighting a dragon pictured as waves curling over.

III. In the OT texts relating Rahab to the sea its original character of chaos monster is preserved. They also point to a conception of a battle between →Yahweh and →chaos preceding the creation of →heaven and →earth. Job 26 describes the steadfast order of the universe preserved by God after having struck down Rahab (cf. also Ps 89:7-13). Job 9:13 mentions Rahab's helpers. This has a parallel in the army of monsters siding with Tiamat according to *Enūma eliš* I 125ff and also in 'the Big Ones', monsters supporting the sea god Yam, the adversary of Baal and Anat in *KTU*² 1.3 iii:38ff. And the ritual text *KTU*² 1.109:21 mentions helper-gods among a number of gods residing in the netherworld (*TUAT* II/3, 317).

In Isa 51:9-10 the reference to Yahweh as victor in the battle 'in the days of old' against the monsters of chaos is used, just as in the Ugaritic myth of Baal, as a reason for

hope in the present situation: this victory can be repeated in new situations of distress. The prophet has associated the creation of heaven and earth out of the oceans of chaos with the deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt through the waters of the Reed Sea. The god of Israel is called upon to repeat such an act of salvation on behalf of the people of Judah living in exile by the rivers of Babylon. The prophet appears to have been inspired by the prophecy in Isa 30:7 against Egypt. To the people looking for help against Assyria, Egypt is described as a worthless ally. This is expressed in what must have been intended to be a nickname: *rahāb hēm šābet*, 'You are Rahab? Inaction!' Because of its uncommon syntax this is usually emended to *rahāb ham-mošbāt*, 'Rahab who is brought to a standstill'. The problem of the best text can be left aside here, because the prophet's message is clear: Egypt is like one of the monsters of chaos, but lacks their power. When we take into account the etymology of the name of Rahab proposed above, the words of this text are in fact a *contradictio in terminis*. This can be compared to the mocking song on the king of Babylon in Isa 14, celebrating his downfall into the realm of death. Isa 14:4 also speaks of him being stopped (Heb *šbt*) and he seems to be denoted by a word derived from the stem *rhb* as well. Unfortunately, the Hebrew text is uncertain here too.

Ps 87:4 shows that this nickname for Egypt became more or less common, because it is used here without further comment. This may have been favoured by the fact that travelling from Israel to Egypt has always been called 'going down', using the same verb that denotes the journey from the land of the living to the world of the →dead, which is surrounded by the watery powers of chaos.

The plural *rēhābīm* in Ps 40:5 can be interpreted as referring to demonic forces related to Rahab. In this psalm they are opposed to Yahweh: 'Blessed is the one who trusts in Yahweh, who turns not to *rēhābīm* and becomes entangled in →false-

hood'. This last word (Heb *kāzāb*) is used in Isa 28:15 to describe a 'covenant with death' and in Amos 2:4 it denotes the false gods. All this makes it likely that Ps 40:5 refers, as was earlier suggested by GUNKEL and others, to the forbidden attempt to obtain help from divine forces in the netherworld. The OT leaves us in no doubt that this was incompatible with the worship of Yahweh as the one god, just as in Ps 40:5 the *rēhābīm* are opposed to Yahweh. The attestation of *rēhābīm* next to Rahab can be compared to the relation between *rpum* (→Rephaim) and the god Rapi'u in the religion of Ugarit. There may also be a connection with the 'helpers of Rahab' mentioned in Job 9:13. From Ugaritic ritual texts we learn that not only benign powers from the netherworld were invoked; evil forces were also called upon. In an incantation recited 'to cast out the flying demons which possess a young man' it is said of →Horon, master of black magic: 'let him be a friend' (KTU² 1.169:9-10; ARTU 185; differently DLU, I, 172). Apparently one hoped to persuade this dreadful god to use his powers in a favourable way. In this way a 'covenant with death' (Isa 28:15) could benefit the living. The same conception seems to be hinted at in Matt 12:25, "driving out the evil spirits by Beelzebul, the lord of the spirits".

IV. Bibliography

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K. SPRONK

RAKIB-EL

I. Rakib-El is known to have been the god of the kings of Sam'al, a Neo-Hittite dynasty in South-East Anatolia. It has been suggested that the Rechabites, a religious minority group in ancient Israel, were originally named after Rakib-El (RAMEY 1968). A variant proposal connects the name with the god *Rkb*, presumably short for Rakib-El or the epithet *rkb* 'rpt', 'Rider of the clouds' (BLENKINSOPP 1972).

II. Rakib-El is a poorly known deity whose name occurs a number of times in Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions from Zinjirli (KAI 24:16; 25:4.6; 214:2.3.11.18; 215:22; 216:5). He was worshipped by King Kilamuwa and his family as their divine patron (*b'l bt*, 'Lord of the Dynasty'). The character of Rakib-El has not been established beyond doubt. If LANDSBERGER is correct in his understanding of the name as 'Charioteer of →El' (1948), it is quite possible that Rakib-El has to be associated with the storm-god →Hadad. In Ugaritic texts Hadad (better known as →Baal) bears the epithet →'Rider of the clouds' (*rkb* 'rpt); Rakib-El could be another epithet of the same deity. Others have suggested that Rakib-El was a moon-god identical to the Ugaritic god Yarih, adducing in support of this identification the parallelism between Rakib-El and Baal Haran ('the lord of Haran'), an epithet of the moon-god →Sîn, and because of the lunar symbolism on the Zinjirli stela (e.g. F. M. CROSS, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* [Cambridge 1973] 10 n. 32; more cautiously LANDSBERGER 1948; DONNER & RÖLLIG 1964:237). The arguments in support of the lunar character of Rakib-El are not entirely convincing, however. The mere fact that 'the Lord of Haran' is also referred to as 'my lord' (*mr'y*) by Bar-Rakib (KAI 218) need not imply an identity for him and Rakib-El, since we cannot be sure that the title was used for one god exclusively.

III. Irrespective of the specific nature of Rakib-El, the hypothesis which links him with the Rechabites appears to be far-fetched. In the biblical tradition the Rechab-