

has a gory thirst for blood. In the New Kingdom Egyptian sources Astarte appears as a nude and ferocious cavalry warrior, sporting shield and lance.¹¹

In the KJV the name "Asherah" was erroneously translated "grove" following the Septuagint. Her name does not mean "grove" but she seems to have been represented by some kind of wooden cult object set up in high places beside incense altars and stone pillars.¹²

The Canaanites worshipped many other deities. Surprisingly few are mentioned in the Old Testament. Some appear only in proper names of places or people. Others entered the Hebrew vocabulary as a way to refer to the phenomena associated with that deity. Such is the case with Resheph in Hab 3:5. This deity was widely known as a god of war and pestilence. A name not mentioned in the Old Testament is Shulman-Eshmun, the god of healing. About 1300 B.C. this deity was identified with Resheph and together they became the composite deity, Rashap-Shalmon.¹³ Apparently, the ancients believed that the one who caused disease was best able to heal it. Such polarities were common (cf. Baal, the dying and reviving deity). At Tyre the ancient god Hammon was worshipped as Melcarth (the king of the city) who curiously was also king of the underworld and as Baal, lord of fertile ground. Kathir was the master craftsman, inventor of tools, weapons, and the arts. He came from Crete and had a dual name Kathir-and-Hasis, meaning the Skillful and Clever One. The sun goddess and moon god play a very small part in Canaanite religion in comparison with Egypt and Mesopotamia. Athtar, who as the god of irrigation futilely aspires to succeed Baal the storm-god, is also the morning star and appears in the Bible (Isa 14:12) as Helel, "Shining One" or "Son of Dawn." He is also identified with the Moabite national god, Chemosh, in the Mesha Inscription (9th century B.C.). Sometimes he is called "the terrible" or "the king." He may be the god to whom human sacrifice was made, a practice the Hebrews used the root *mlk* to describe. This was a verb describing the rite and not as was thought formerly a god called Moloch (cf. Lev 18:21).¹⁴

The great Baal Epic of Ugarit concerns itself with the death and resurrection of Baal and other unrelated minor myths. One episode deals with Baal and his sister, Anath. While hunting, Baal mates with Anath who in the form of a wild cow bears a wild bull for Baal. In another episode, Baal is killed by ferocious monsters born of his bitter enemy, Athirat (Asherah). His death was to a certain extent vicarious. Athirat makes a vain attempt to nominate Athtar, god of the morning star, as Baal's successor. But "irrigation" cannot take the place of "rain." Overpowered by grief and jealous for revenge, Baal's consort Anath slays Mot, god of Death, and thus resurrects Baal. Another episode describes the victory of Anath over a series of monsters, including Yam (Sea), Tannin, and Leviathan, all mentioned in Scripture (Job 7:12; Ps 74:13-14; Isa 27:21).

In examining the character of Anath we find her to be exceptionally violent. Through her seduction of Baal, nature blossoms and comes to its fullness. The primary function of the goddesses was to have sexual relationship with Baal on a continual yearly cycle yet they never lose their