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The Ugaritic Divine Epithet *ybmt limm* and the Biblical *'ēmîm* [1]

Joshua Fox, Aderet

The phrase *ybmt limm*, used of Anat in Ugaritic epic, has always defied a simple explanation. It is generally vocalized as */yabamatu li'mīma/*, meaning, approximately, 'Sister-in-Law of the Peoples'; [2] a construct chain, where *ybmt* refers to a family relationship, and *limm* (√*l'm*), is plural 'peoples'. This interpretation, while based on well-known cognates for the two words, does not fully explain the phrase. This article will propose a different analysis of the second word: instead of */li'mīma/* 'of the peoples', we will propose */li-'êmīma/*, 'to the Terrible Ones (= gods)'. This analysis is suggested by the close syntactic, morphological, and lexical similarity between *ybmt limm* and *ybm lilm*, a phrase used of Baal. [3] Further important evidence for the comparison of *limm* and *lilm* comes from the comparative sphere, where the cognate Hebrew *'ēmîm* is used for a supernatural race. While the reading *li'mīma* cannot be ruled out, there are strong grounds for *li-'êmīma*.

1. The meaning of *ybm(t)*

Although this article will be devoted to the explanation of *limm*, the meaning of *ybmt* and its masculine equivalent *ybm* should be considered as well. These words are generally explained on the basis of Hebrew *yābām*, Syriac *yāḇmā* 'husband's brother', fem. Hebrew *yᵉbāmā*, [4] Syriac *iḇamtā* 'sister-in-law',

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[1] My thanks to Chaim Cohen, Edward Greenstein, Jo Ann Hackett, John Huehnergard, Eugen Pentiuc, Daniel Sivan, Henrietta Wiley, and an anonymous reviewer for their important comments, which contributed significantly to the development of this paper. Responsibility for any faults remains with the author. I acknowledge the support of a Hebrew University Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

[2] Concerning this and similar interpretations of *ybmt limm*, see N. H. Walls, Jr., *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth* (SBL Diss. Series 135; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 94-96; M. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* Vol. I: *Introduction with Text, Translation, and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2.* (Suppl. to VT 55; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 196, nn. 148, 149.

[3] KTU 1.6 I:31. KTU = M. Dietrich *et al.*, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places* (*KTU: Second, enlarged edition*). Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien Palästinas und Mesopotamiens 8 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

[4] *Yābām* and *yᵉbāmā* are attested in the Bible only with suffixes: *yᵉbimtô* Deut 25:7, 9, *yᵉbimtēk* Ruth 1:15, *yᵉbāmāh* Deut 25:5, and *yᵉbāmî* Deut 25:7. There is also the D verb from √*ybm*, attested in Gen 38:8 and Deut 25:7. The absolute singular of *yᵉbimtô* could,

referring particularly to the participants in a Levirate marriage, in which a brother, or in some cases another relative, of a man who has died without progeny marries his widow.

Since it seems that Anat cannot be primarily defined by her status as a sister-in-law, [5] alternative family-relations, such as 'progenitress (of heroes)' have been suggested for *ybmt*. [6] This is supported by the fact that a relative other than the brother-in-law marries the widow in Biblical accounts of specific Levirate marriages. The statement of the legal requirements assigns the responsibility to the *yābām*, who is the *'āḥ* of the deceased-*'āḥ* is basically 'brother', but can refer more generally to other relatives. [7] On the other hand, the Akkadian use of *ya-ba-mi-ša* 'her brother-in-law' in a legal text [8] supports the more specific interpretation of **yabam* as 'brother-in-law'

In Ugaritic, *ybm*, masculine of *ybmt*, occurs twice in the Ugaritic texts, once in the divine epithet *ybm lilm* (discussed below, p. 6), while *ybmt* occurs ten times, always in the phrase *ybmt limm*. [9] The only use of *ybm(t)* outside of one of the epithets is in the Kirta epic, [10] where *ybm* refers to a relative of one of Kirta's daughters. The *ybm* here may be Kirta himself. Since Kirta is also described as *ab* 'father', this may be a link between *ybm* and the 'progenitor' semantics suggested for *ybmt*. Alternately, the *ybm* may be *ilḥu* (PN), the brother of Kirta's daughter. While the exact relationship cannot be determined, this passage supports the interpretation of *ybm* as a family relative.

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on the basis of the Biblically attested forms, be *yᶜbēmet* (thus F. Brown, et. al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1907] 386), but on the basis of extensive Mishnaic attestations, *yᶜbāmā* is to be preferred.

[5] Anat is understood variously as the sister or consort of Baal, and Baal may be the brother of Mot or Yamm (although Il is described as the father of Mot and Yamm, while Baal is *bn dgn* 'son of Dagan'). Baal's death is a part of the mythological cycle. Thus, the complex and uncertain family relations allow the possibility of an interpretation of Anat as a widowed sister-in-law of Mot or Yamm. This possibility, however, is not well-supported by the textual evidence, and sheds little light on Anat's status.

[6] C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (AnOr 38; Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1965) 408. See also Walls, *Baal Cycle*, 94-96, 157, concerning the more general interpretation of *ybmt*.

[7] The Biblical passages that depict this custom are Gen 38, Deut 25:5-10, and Ruth 4 *et passim*.

[8] See W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965-81), 1565 (in Nachträge).

[9] Some of these passages include reconstruction (following KTU) of part of the phrase *ybmt limm*. If the reconstructed passages are disregarded, the argument of this paper is not significantly altered. The passages with *ybmt limm* are KTU 1.3 II:33, 1.3 III:12 (with *ymmt. limm*, emended to *ybmt. limm*), 1.3 IV:22, 1.4 II:16, 1.10 I:15, 1.10 I:16, 1.10 III:3, 1.17 VI:19, 1.101:16.

[10] *ybm*h. *šb'*. x[xxx]/ *ġzr. ilḥu* (KTU 1.16 II:32-33).

2. Ugaritic *li'mu* 'people'

The common interpretation of *limm* derives it from *li'mu* 'people'. This word undoubtedly exists in Ugaritic, and its presence in the lexicon must be accepted even if we do interpret *ybmt limm* as */yabamatu li-'êmīma/*.

Parallelism and context in Ugaritic myth support the translation 'clan(s), people(s)'. *Lim* (singular or plural) is in parallel with *adm* 'people', [11] *hmlt* 'multitude', [12] or *arṣ* 'earth'. [13]The construct chain with *ḫp* [ym] 'sea-coast' [14] further supports this interpretation. In some cases, [15] morphological evidence supports the translation 'people(s)': *limm* and its parallel term *arṣ* are both preceded by a preposition *l*, indicating that the *limm* in these citations is */li'mīma/* and not */li-'êmīma/*.

The cognates of Ugaritic *lim* are widespread among the Semitic languages. In Akkadian, *līmu* means 'thousand'. This has led to the suggested interpretation of *ybmt limm* as 'Sister-in-Law of the Thousands (of gods)'. [16] The phrase, however, is found in native Ugaritic context, which renders problematic a translation on the basis of a strictly Akkadian lexeme. The concepts 'thousand' and 'clan' are closely related, [17] however, so a diachronic semantic transition between the two is not problematic.

Northwest Semitic words in Akkadian cuneiform texts give ample evidence for a second-millennium Northwest Semitic *li'mu* 'people, clan'. The phrase *Šamaš* (^{d}UTU) *li-mi-ma* in the El-Amarna tablets (EA 205:6 and similarly in 195:13) [18] is structurally close to */yabamatu li'mīma/*, as both are construct chains [19] serving as epithets for a deity. The Northwest Semitic origin of the term is guaranteed by the plural ending *-īma* rather than the Akkadian *-ī*. Also, the word *līmu* has the meaning 'family, clan' in Northwest Semitic words

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[11] *tmḫṣ. lim. ḫp* y[m]/ *tṣmt. adm. ṣat špš* 'she smites the people of the seacoast, kills the population of the East' (KTU 1.3 II:7-8), where *adm* has cognates in Hebrew (as well as Tigre) in the meaning 'person, people'. A similar parallelism —*'ādām* and *l^{e}'ummîm* — appears in Isa 43:4 *w^{e}'ettēn 'ādām taḥté(y)kā ul'ummîm táḥat napšékā*. (My thanks to Ch. Cohen for comments on this point.)

[12] *b'l. mt. my. lim. bn/ dgn. my. hmlt* (KTU 1.5 VI:23-24 =1.6 I:6-7).

[13] [ ]y*ġš. l limm/* [ ]x *yṯb. l arṣ* (KTU 1.10 I:8-9, see also 15-16).

[14] KTU 1.3 II:7-8, 1.7:38

[15] KTU 1.10 I:8-9, 15-16.

[16] C.L. Seow, "Lim". Col. 976-981 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, eds. K. van der Toorn *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

[17] Compare 1 Sam 10:19.

[18] EA = J.A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915; reprinted Aalen: Zeller, 1964). Concerning *Šamaš* (^{d}UTU) *li-mi-ma*, see W.L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992) 273, 279.

[19] The construct chain with a proper noun in the first position of *Šamaš* (^{d}UTU) *li-mi-ma* is problematic, but it must be recalled that 'sun' is a common noun as well as a divine name.

appearing in Akkadian lexical texts. [20]

The Northwest Semitic term *li'mu* is also used at Emar. Attested forms include ^{m}*le-em*, [21] *li-im*, and ^{d}*li-'-im*, [22] in some cases with the Northwest Semitic glottal stop explicitly marked. Some of the contexts show that this means 'peoples, clan' (not the Akkadian 'thousand'), and the word is usually written without the dingir determinative, unlike most DN's. However, the dingir determinative does appear in some cases, [23] indicating that *li'mu* can refer to a deity. [24] This may be the Northwest Semitic form of the Akkadian deity Lim. In Ugaritic, the god Li'mu appears only in the PN *yrgb lim*. [25] The application of this DN to *ybmt limm* 'Sister-in-Law of Li(')m' is difficult, however, given the final *-m* that always appears. One would not expect an enclitic *-m* to be used without exception.

Hebrew *l^{e}'ōm* 'nation', plural *l^{e}'ummîm*, from **lu'umm*, is also a cognate of Ugaritic *lim*. It is impossible to vocalize *lim* in accordance with the Hebrew [26] — the exact Ugaritic cognate would be /***lu'ummu*/, written ***lum* — but the other Northwest Semitic sources, as well as the Akkadian, support the vocalization */li'mu/*.

With a singular *li'mu*, we would expect /***li'amīma*/ [27] ***lamm* for the Ugaritic plural, since an infixed **a* is characteristic of Northwest Semitic plurals of **qVtl*. [28] However, Ugaritic has an optional syncope rule that allows

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[20] M. Civil et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago*, vol 9: L (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1973) 197-98.

[21] D. Arnaud, "La Syrie du moyen-Euphrate sous le protectorat hittite: contrats de droit privé," *Aula Orientalis* 5 (1987) 234, text 14, line 14. Arnaud translates ^{m}*le-em* A.ŠÀ in this line as "Les voisins du champ" (*ibid.*, 235).

[22] Emar 213:6-8, 373:163′, in D. Arnaud, *Recherches au Pays d'Aštata: Emar VI*, Tome 1: *Textes sumériens et accadiens, Planches* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985). Other attestations are *li-*<*im*> ⌜A.ŠÀ⌝ (J. Huehnergard, "Five Tablets from the Vicinity of Emar," *RA* 77 [1983] 20, tablet 3, line 19), and *li-im* A.ŠÀ (*ibid.*, 23, tablet 4, line 13), translated "the *people (?)* of the field" (*ibid.*, 21, 25). See also *idem.*, "Northwest Semitic Vocabulary in Akkadian Texts," *JAOS* 107 (1987) 724.

[23] See Seow, "Lim," 76.

[24] E. Pentiuc, p.c., November 1997.

[25] KTU 102.22. It must be recalled that components of PN's — including names of gods in theophoric PN's — may come from the vocabulary of a dialect other than that of the bearer of the name.

[26] In Ugaritic *lim* */li'mu/* and *limm* */li'mūma/* 'people(s)', the *i*-aleph represents a syllable-final glottal stop.

[27] Smith, *Baal Cycle*, 196 vocalizes *li'amīma*, using the Northwest Semitic **a* infix, but this does not agree with the orthography *limm*.

[28] J. Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages," in *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla Re-evaluated, Proceedings of The International Symposium Held at Leiden 21-24 August 1989* (ed. J. Hoftijzer and C. Van der Kooij; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 284; H. L. Ginsberg, "The Northwest Semitic Languages," in *The*

qVtlūma plurals as a variant of *qVtalūma*, [29] producing */li'mīma/ limm* 'peoples' (oblique).

3. Epithets for deities relating them to humanity and other deities

If *ybmt limm* is interpreted as 'Sister-in-Law of the Peoples', Anat is described in relation to mortals, whereas if it is interpreted as 'Sister-in-Law to the Terrible Ones', she is described in relation to other gods. Both types of epithets occur in Ugarit.

Il's epithet *ab adm* [30] */'abū 'adami/* 'Father of Mankind' relates him to mortals. As mentioned above (p. 3), the term *adm* occurs in parallel with *lim*, strengthening the comparison between *ab adm* and *ybmt limm*. Il is also known as *bny bnwt* [31] */bāniyu banūwāti/* 'Creator of the Creatures', which also relates him to mortals, although not in terms of a familial relationship.

On the other hand, many divine epithets relate gods to other gods. [32] Mot is *bn ilm /binu 'ili-mi/* 'Son of Il'. He is also known as *ydd il* [33] */yadīdu 'ili/* 'Beloved of Il', while both Mot and Yamm are called *mdd il(m)* [34] */môdūdu 'ili(-mi)/* 'Beloved of Il' (with the same root as *ydd*). Il's epithet *ab šnm* [35] has been interpreted as 'father of (DN) Shunama'. [36] Baal's primary epithet is *bn dgn* [37] 'son of Dagan', while Ashera is known as *qnyt ilm* [38] */qāniyatu*

World History of the Jewish People, Vol. 2: *Patriarchs* (ed. B. Mazar; Givatayim: Jewish History Publications/Rutgers University, 1970) 102.

[29] J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* (Harvard Semitic Studies 32; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 282-83.

[30] *w b ḥlmh/ il. yrd. b ḏhrth/* ab. *adm* (KTU 1.14 I:35-37).

[31] *b ḥlm. ltpn. il d pid/ b ḏrt. bny. bnwt* (KTU 1.6 III:10-11).

[32] Walls, *Anat*, 94-96, 157, discusses divine epithets based on relationships.

[33] Both epithets, as well as the DN *mt*, appear in *l yrt/ b npš. bn ilm. mt. b mh/ mrt. ydd. il. ġzr* (KTU 1.5 I:6-8).

[34] *md/ d. ilm. mt* (KTU 1.4 VIII:23-24); *mdd/ il ym* (KTU 1.3 III:38-39).

[35] KTU 1.1 III:24, 1.4 IV:24, 1.17 VI:49.

[36] In addition to the phrase *ab šnm*, the DN *šnm* occurs in *ṯkmn w šnm* (KTU 1.65:4, 1.114:18-19). The interpretation of *ab šnm* as "father of (DN) Šunama" is supported by A. Jirku, "Šnm (Schunama), der Sohn des Gottes 'Il," *ZAW* 82 (1970) 278-79; C.H. Gordon, "Il, Father of Šnm," *JNES* 35 (1976) 261-62; D. Pardee "A New Datum for the Meaning of the Divine Name Milkashtart," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and other studies in memory of Peter C. Craigie*, (ed. L. Eslinger and G. Taylor, *JSOT* Supplement 67; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988) 59 n. 274; *idem.*,"Ṯukamuna wa Šunama," *UF* 20 (1988) 195-200 (with extensive bibliography). Another possibility — which would eliminate *ab šnm* as an example of a divine epithet in relation to another deity — is that *ab šnm* is */'abū šanīma/* 'father of years' = 'father of eternity', despite the usual */šanātu/* plural for 'year' in Ugaritic. This interpretation is supported by Smith, *Baal Cycle*, 185-86 and F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 1973) 16.

[37] KTU 1.5 VI:23-24 , 1.6 I:6-7.

'ilīma/ 'creator of the gods'. This last epithet shows that gods can be described by their relationship to a group of gods rather than to one specific god.

4. The parallels between *ybmt limm* and *ybm lilm*

Given that epithets relating gods to other gods are well-attested, the possibility that *ybmt limm* is to be read *yabamatu li-'êmīma* 'Sister-in-Law of the Terrible Ones (gods)' should be considered.

A striking parallel to the phrase *ybm lilm* strengthens the reading of *limm* as a prepositional phrase.

Ybm lilm is apparently an epithet for Baal. It occurs immediately following a passage concerning Baal, particularly in the context of his relation with Anat. Anat is mentioned throughout KTU 1.6 I, and, if the reconstruction is correct, is even mentioned in the line preceding *ybm lilm*. The word [ġ]*zrh* 'her hero', immediately preceding *ybm lilm*, also suggests Baal. [39] As Baal is in some ways the male counterpart of Anat, it is fitting that they should be called by similar epithets, and it is therefore likely that the *ybm lilm* is Baal.

Alternately, the *ybm lilm* may be Il, since immediately after the phrase *ybm lilm*, Anat sets out to find the god Il. Il's role as the father of the gods may support 'progenitor' as the meaning of *ybm*, following the interpretation of *ybmt* as 'progenitress'. [40] Still, the context makes it more likely that the epithet refers to Baal.

The epithets *yabamu li-'ilîma* and *yabamatu li-'êmîma* — if *ybmt limm* is to be so interpreted — have very similar syntax, morphology, and even phonetics.

On the syntactic level, both are nouns with modifying prepositional phrases. [41] This is admittedly rarer in epithets and in descriptions of family relations than a construct chain — the usual interpretation of *ybmt limm* — but the use of the prepositional phrase in *ybm lilm* shows that it is possible. [42]

On the morphological level, there is also a close similarity between the two epithets. Most of the morphemes are the same: *ybm* and *ybmt* are morphologi-

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[38] *tmgnn. rbt* [.] a*ṯ*rt *ym*/ *tġẓyn. qnyt ilm* (KTU 1.4 III:25-26).

[39] It may be noted that *ġzr* 'hero' also occurs in the context of the only other attestation of *ybm* (KTU 1.16 II:32), where it is an attribute of *ilḫu* (PN).

[40] See note 5.

[41] My thanks to H. Wiley for alerting me to the possibility of syntactic parallelism, which is essential to the argument of this article.

[42] The Hebrew idiom *(hāyāh lᵉ)'āb lᵉ-* (Isa 22:21, Jer 31:9, Job 29:16) means '(to become) a father to' in the sense of 'in the role of a father'. See also, in the Azitawada inscription *p'ln b'l ldnnym l'b wl'm* 'Baal made me a father and a mother to the Danunians' (H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramaische Inscriften* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966] text 26 A I 3. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.) We may also note ordinary expressions of familial relationships such as *wattēled hāgār lᵉ'abrām bēn* 'then Hagar bore a son for Abram' (Gen 16:15).

cally identical except for the gender marker, the same preposition is used for both *imm* and *ilm*, and both *imm* and *ilm* have the same plural marker. The main morphological difference, then, is between the nominal bases *im* and *il*, and the plausibility of */'êmu/* in the semantic field of */'ilu/* will be demonstrated below. [43]

We may note that */'êmīma/* and */'ilīma/* are very similar phonetically, although this similarity is not in itself proof of this vocalization. The stems of both these words are phonetically biconsonantal; they differ only in their stem-vowel (*ê* versus *i*, both front high vowels), [44] and in their second consonant (*m* versus *l*, both sonorants). This may be the result of poetic word-play designed to highlight the relationship between Anat and Baal.

5. The root √*'ym* 'terrible' and epithets for deities

For *yabamu li-'ilīma* and *yabamatu li-'êmīma* to be fully parallel, *'êmu* must be in the semantic field of *'ilu* 'god'. The root of the word */'êmu/*, √*'ym*, is known from Northwest Semitic cognates, including Biblical Hebrew *'āyōm* 'terrible' and *'ēmā* 'terror, dread', [45] and words in this semantic field are used extensively in Ugaritic for describing deities.

Semantically, adjectives (including substantivized adjectives) in the semantic range of 'terrible, awesome, mighty, great', are used in Ugaritic as epithets for the gods. In one passage from the Baal Cycle, [46] *ul-ny* 'mighty one' (of the same root as *ul* 'army', cognate to the root of Hebrew *'ēl* 'strength'), is in parallel to *'ẓm-ny* 'terrible one' (cognate to Hebrew *'āṣûm* 'mighty' and Arabic *'aẓīm* 'great'). Other terms used are *adr* [47] */'aduru/* 'mighty' (cognate to Hebrew *'addîr*), *'rṣ* [48] (cognate to Hebrew *'ārîṣ* 'awe-inspiring, terror-striking'), and *rb* [49] 'great, chief' (with wide-spread Semitic cognates, often

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[43] Seow, "Lim," 978, recognizes the possibility of *semantic* parallelism between *ybm lilm* and *ybmt limm*: he uses this to compare *ybm lilm* "the *ybm* of the gods" with *ybmt limm* "the *ybmt* of the thousand (gods)" (where *limm* is interpreted on the basis of Akkadian *līmu* 'thousand'). He does not recognize a *syntactic* parallelism however, and analyzes *ybmt limm* as a construct chain rather than a noun with modifying prepositional phrase.

[44] The cuneiform evidence shows that the reduced diphthong **ay* and triphthong **ayi* were *ē* and not *ī* (Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary*, 257-59, 275-76).

[45] The biconsonantal *im /'êmu/*, like *ib /'êbu/* 'enemy' from the root √*'yb*, shows monophthongization, with the resulting *ê* vowel evident in the *i*-aleph. If the morphology of Hebrew *'ôyēb* is a guide, */'êbu/* is from */*'āyibu/*, but there can be no certainty that the noun patterns are the same in the two languages. In fact, a phonologically regular reconstruction would suggest that *'êmu* and *'êbu* are both **qatl* nouns.

[46] *l arṣ. ypl. ulny. w l. 'pr. 'ẓmny* (KTU 1.2 IV:5).

[47] E.g., *idm.. adr.* h[ ]/ *idm. 'rẓ. t'*r[rhm] (KTU 1.12 II:29-30).

[48] See previous note.

[49] E.g., *rbt aṯrt* ym (KTU 1.6 I:44), 'the great one, Ashera of the Sea' (or 'walker on the sea').

used for deities).

Not only are near-synonyms of 'terrible' used for deities in Ugarit, but a word from the cognate root of √*'ym* is used for the Israelite deity in the Hebrew Bible: *Yhwh* inspires *'êmā* 'terror' (e.g. Exod 15:16). [50] *Páḥad yiṣḥāq* [51] is an epithet for *Yhwh*, and the roots √*phd* and √*yr'* are often associated with fear of God. It is, therefore, reasonable for a Ugaritic substantivized adjective from the root √*'ym* to be used in parallel to *ilm* 'the gods'. [52]

6. Biblical *'êmîm*

Further support for the use of Ugaritic *'êmūma* is in the precise Biblical Hebrew cognate,*'ēmîm*. [53] The *'êmîm* are described in Gen 14:5 together with the *zûzîm* and the *rᵉpā'îm*, peoples with semi-mythological status in the Hebrew Bible.

> *wayyakkû 'et rᵉpā'îm bᵉ'ašṯᵉrōt qarnáyim wᵉ'et hazzûzîm bᵉhām wᵉ'et hā'êmîm bᵉšāwē qiryātāyim.*
> 'Then they struck the Rephaim in Ashterot Qarnayim and the Zuzim at Ham and the Emim at Shaweh Qiryatayim.'

Moreover, Deut 2:10-11 explicitly equates the *'ēmîm* with the *rᵉpā'îm* and *ʿᵃnāqîm*:

> *hā'ēmîm lepānîm yāšᵉbû bāh 'am gādôl wᵉrab wārām kaʿᵃnāqîm. rᵉpā'îm yēḥāšᵉbû 'ap hēm kāʿᵃnāqîm wᵉhammō'ābîm yiqrᵉ'û lāhem 'ēmîm.*
> 'The Emim had dwelt there beforehand, a great and mighty and high nation, like the Anaqim. The Rephaim too are considered Anaqim, and the Moabites call them Emim.'

Although the *'ēmîm*, *rᵉpā'îm*, [54] *zûzîm*, and *ʿᵃnāqîm* [55] are sometimes portrayed as human tribes, they are also accorded supernatural status. Thus, the

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[50] It is no more than coincidence that the adjective *'āyōm* 'terrible' is not used to describe *Yhwh*, as it is only attested twice in the Bible.

[51] Parallel to *ʿᵉlōhê 'abrāhām* (Gen 31:42, 53)

[52] Whether *'êmūma* refers to all the gods or to a specific sub-group is not clear.

[53] Spelled *'mym* twice and *'ymym* once.

[54] The Ugaritic term *rpum* or *rpu arṣ*, cognate to Hebrew *rᵉpā'îm*, constitutes another link between the Ugaritic and the Hebrew terminology. For status of *rpum* and *rpu arṣ* as minor divine beings, see J. C. de Moor, "Rāpi'ūma – Rephaim," *ZAW* 88 (1976) 323-45; J. N. Ford, "The 'Living Rephaim' of Ugarit: Quick or Defunct?", *UF* 24 (1992) 90-92. De Moor, (*ibid*., 339 n. 100), suggests the possibility that the term *'ēmîm* originated as an epithet for the spirits of the dead, the "'terrifying ones.'"

[55] Another semi-mythological race is the *nᵉpîlîm*. The *'ēmîm*, *rᵉpā'îm*, *ʿᵃnāqîm*, and *zûzîm* (or *zamzummîm*) are often mentioned together in various combinations, compared, or even equated. (See the above-mentioned passages and Num 13:33.)

ancient Israelite mythology embedded in the Biblical text shows a connection to the Ugaritic use of *imm* for divine creatures.

7. The root √*'ym* in Ugaritic

If */'êmu/* is a Ugaritic word, we may look for it in contexts other than *ybmt limm*. There are a few possible attestations of *limm* without preceding *ybmt*. In one passage, [56] *limm* immediately follows *lil* (singular */li-'ili/*). [57] The text is broken, but if textual proximity can suggest semantic and syntactic similarity, then */li-'êmīma/* is the natural parallel for */li-'ili/*: [58] both are prepositional phrases, as in the divine epithets.

It would be more significant, however, to find *im*(*m*) without the preposition *l*-, or even to find other words from the root √*'ym*. The word *im* does occur once, in an epistle, [59] but the context indicates that this should be interpreted as a variant of *hm* 'if', and not a derivative of √*'ym*.

Thus, the only strong evidence for Ugaritic */'êmu/* is in the phrase *ybmt limm*. The absence of */'êmu/* elsewhere cannot exclude this interpretation of *limm*, however, since an argument from silence can have limited validity in the small Ugaritic corpus.

Particularly in an epithet for a deity, one may expect a specialized, often archaic, vocabulary. [60] Compare to this the Hebrew epithets *ze sînāy* [61] and *'ēl šadday* [62] for the Israelite deity.

8. Conclusion

Given the limited attestation of these words and the difficulty of interpreting some of the texts, the commonly accepted interpretation of *limm* cannot be

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[56] KTU 1.27:8. This broken text mentions *'nt* and *b'l* (KTU 1.27:2-4). The word *limm* in this text cannot be part of a *ybmt limm* phrase, as it immediately follows *lil*.

[57] In KTU 1.13:19-20, *limm* is followed by 'm. *il*, and, since *'m* can have a directional meaning in Ugaritic, a parallel may be sought between *limm* and 'm *il*. The context, however, does not seem to support such a parallel.

[58] Antonymic parallelism is possible as well as synonymic parallelism. 'God' could be parallel to 'people' as an antonym ('heaven and earth'); likewise, 'Terrible Ones (gods)' could be parallel to *arṣ* 'earth' and *hmlt* 'multitudes' mentioned above (p. 3). However, the use of the preposition *l*- in some of these passages, as well as contextual clues, allows us to distinguish *li-'êmīma* from *li'mīma*. The possibility that prepositions are dropped in a poetic ellipsis, or that adverbial *-a* fulfils the parallel role to the preposition, must be considered, but this seems unlikely in the above-mentioned passages.

[59] KTU 2.15:8.

[60] We may also mention, as a Ugaritic example of a divine epithet with archaic language, *ab šnm*, the epithet for Il, but only if it is to be interpreted 'father of years'. In that case, *šnm* is a frozen plural for 'year' (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 16). See note 36 above.

[61] Jud 5:5, Ps 68:9.

[62] E.g., Ps 68:15.

excluded. However, the close similarity between *ybmt limm* and *ybm lilm*, as well as the evidence of Israelite myth, suggest that we may read *ybmt limm* as *yabamatu li-'êmīma* 'Sister-in-Law to the Terrible Ones,' in the sense of 'to the gods'.