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WEAPONS OF THE STORM GOD IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND BIBLICAL TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

References to divine weapons are found in several mythological texts from the ancient Near East. The most significant of such weapons are the weapons of the storm god, featured famously in the textual traditions of the *Chaoskampf* mythos and examples of which are found in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* and the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle. The weapons of the storm god are also a staple of ancient Near Eastern iconography. In addition, actual "divine weapons" have been discovered in archaeological excavations. Divine weapons were housed in temples and used for specific functions, such as witnessing oaths and rendering judgements. The city of Aleppo was the most prominent cult centre for the storm god in the ancient Near East, and the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo were regarded as the most important divine weapons. The existence of these weapons is seen not only in reliefs in the Aleppo temple, but also in letters sent to King Zimri-Lim of Mari in the Old Babylonian period. It may also be possible to find references to the weapons in the texts of the Old Testament.

1. INTRODUCTION

The worship of divine weapons was practiced all over the ancient Near East. These weapons, often forged of precious metals and encrusted with jewels, were viewed especially during the Old Babylonian period as magical objects imbued with divine power. Several weapons attributed to deities have been discovered in archaeological excavations over the last century. There are indications that from the Old Babylonian period onwards, divine weapons were kept in temples and leased out by the clergy for various purposes. The main uses of divine weapons, which served as agents of divine judgement, were oath-taking and the settling

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of disputes.[1] (Postgate 1994: 136, 280; Harris 1965) While special weapons of various different divinities are known in ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography, the weapons of the storm god in particular were cult objects. The mythological and ideological foundation for the reverence of the storm god's weapons is found in the conflict myth, or the *Chaoskampf* mythos. (Schwemer 2008b: 24) Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic epics, with the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* and the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle being foremost among them, relate the story of how the storm god defeated the monstrous sea using special weapons and thereby became the king of the gods. The weapons with which the storm god defeated the sea are in fact the most characteristic of the deity's attributes. (Bunnens 2006: 65; Holloway 2002: 167)

A letter (Letter 1, see page 180) discovered in the archives of ancient Mari (*Tell Hariri*) from an Aleppan ambassador (Malamat 1998: 27) to his king, Zimri-Lim, making mention of the weapons of the storm god, conveys to the king the ownership of the items with which the deity boasts to have struck his enemy, the sea. The same weapons are also mentioned in another Mari text (Letter 2, see page 180), heralding their arrival in Mari territory. The second letter suggests that the weapons were not merely mythological symbols and their conveyance was not merely a symbolic act, but that they were actual cultic objects.[2] In the two Mari texts, we are dealing with non-mythological accounts of divine weapons, which make use of mythological concepts. Iconographic motifs from a wide geographic area also bear witness to this politicized mythology. The Mari texts were later connected by Kohlmeyer (Gonnella, Khayyata & Kohlmeyer 2005: 99) to an orthostat relief discovered in the temple of the storm god in the Aleppo citadel. The relief features an image of the storm god bearing a weapon and an inscription naming the weapon.

The city of Aleppo, capital of the kingdom of Yamkhad, was the central cultic site for the weather god in the ancient Near East. The city served as a cult centre for a storm god from Early Bronze age onwards. (Schwemer 2008a: 162) The pre-eminence of the Aleppan storm god in the ancient Near East is evidenced by the fact that, while storm or weather gods were worshiped by different names in different areas, temples and shrines in several cities were dedicated specifically to the Aleppan or Halabean storm god.[3] There also seems to have been a

1 See Spaey (1993: 411) for a bibliography of discussions concerning the judicial use of the divine weapon.
2 A literal understanding of the weapons of the letters was suggested already by Schwemer (2001: 216) and Nissinen (2003: 22, n. d).
3 Hawkins (2011: 35–36) is of the opinion that the Hurrians and the Hittites adopted the Aleppan storm god, and that the Aleppan god's cult remained popular in Hattusa throughout the period of the Hittite Empire. See also Weippert (1997: 118) and Schwemer (2008a: 162–163, 165).

connection between the royal houses of Aleppo and Mari, which was based on similar onomastic elements in the names of the monarchs of these two cities. A. Malamat (1965: 370) has suggested that the very origins of the Mari dynasty might have been in Northern Syria. Mari and Aleppo were also connected by the political significance of their reverence to the storm god, which set them apart from the rest of the Mesopotamian area.[4]

In recent years, two very thorough syntheses of textual, iconographic, and archaeological evidence pertaining to storm gods in the ancient Near East have been published: D. Schwemer's *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen* (2001),[5] which offers a comprehensive study of the textual evidence for the storm god outside of the Anatolian area, and A.R.W. Green's *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (2003), which discusses the textual and iconographic evidence for the storm god in the areas of Mesopotamia, Syria-Anatolia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Both works touch upon the issue of the weapons of the storm god, but do not focus on the topic. The author proposes that a closer examination of the weapons portrayed in various traditions of the conflict myth is needed, as such weapons are referred to in almost all ancient Near Eastern forms of the narrative. Weapons, especially the bow and the sword, can also be found in connection with the god Yahweh in the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

In this article, I intend to discuss both the symbolic and the actual functions of the divine weapon of the storm god, and the physical manifestation of the concept in the form of the cultic weapon housed in the temple in the city of Aleppo. I will begin by examining the textual evidence for the storm god's weapons, both in mythological texts and in administrative documents and letters. An overview of the archaeological and iconographic evidence for the divine weapons follows, focusing especially on the Syrian area and the attributes of the storm god of Aleppo. I also include a few Biblical passages, which seem to at least allude to a later use of the motif of the storm god and his special weapons, some of which may even have been influenced by the mythology surrounding the weapons of the Aleppan storm god.

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4 Green (2003: 59) emphasizes that the power of the storm god in the area is not a mere mythical projection of natural elements, but its importance is "highlighted time and again as the Warrior-god of the kings of the region in their conquests around the kingdom of Mari and in the neighbouring regions".

5 Schwemer also wrote a follow-up to the study, which was published in two parts in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 7(2) and 8(1) (2008).

2. WEAPONS OF THE STORM GOD IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTUAL SOURCES

2.1 The weapons of the storm god of Aleppo

The letter of the Mari prophet Nur-Sin to King Zimri-Lim (Letter 1), published by J.-M. Durand in *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisclipinaires 7*, makes mention of the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo. This letter has been at centre stage of a political interpretation of the conflict myth, the most complete version of which can be found in the epic poetry of the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle.[6] The letter has been associated with the tradition of the *Chaoskampf* ever since its publication, when Durand already made the connection between the sea mentioned in the letter and the storm god's monstrous enemy Yamm,[7] featured in the first two tablets of the Baal-Cycle. The storm god's weapons, presumably the very same as in Letter 1, are also mentioned in another Mari letter (Letter 2), which records their advent in one of the three major urban centres in the kingdom of Mari. According to Letter 2, the weapons were placed in the temple of Dagan in the Mariote city of Terqa.[8]

While some bold interpretations of the meaning of the texts have been made,[9] we do not have full insight as to their actual purpose. Malamat (1998: 34) was convinced that the myth of the battle between the two deities, originally reflecting the furious character of the Mediterranean, is mentioned for the first time in the Mari period and, one assumes, in these particular Mari texts. Letter 1 was of great significance to him, insomuch as it treated the concept of the Mediterranean as a sacred sea. He went so far as to call it – along with the Yahdun-Lim "Foundation Inscription of the Shamash Temple", discovered in the foundation bricks of the temple of Shamash at Mari and published by Dossin in 1955 – "overt witnesses attesting to the conceptualization of the Mediterranean as a religious-mythological entity" (Malamat 1998: 27, 33).

Letter 2 suggests that the weapons mentioned in Letter 1 were not merely mythological symbols, but that the letter references actual cultic objects. According to Malamat (1998), the weapons of the storm god were presented as a coronation

6 Schwemer (2001: 213–216), for example, suggests that the letters, which speak in the voice of the storm god of Aleppo, were an attempt by Yamkhad to exert political influence over the king of Mari.

7 The name Yamm means 'the sea'.

8 On Dagan as the pre-eminent storm god in the Upper and Middle Euphrates area, see Green (2003: 68–72).

9 Malamat (1998: 27) writes, "Adad, the great god of Aleppo, was engaged in a battle with the sea, wielding weapons against the rebellious Mediterranean". The most thorough and sensible examination of the letters is offered by Schwemer (2001: 211–237).

gift to Zimri-Lim upon his visit to Aleppo (mentioned in M.8806, published in Dossin 1970: 97),[10] where the weapons had also been fashioned. This is somewhat contradicted by Letter 2, which implies that the weapons were transported to Mari later, during his reign; however, it is by no means impossible that the weapons were involved in his coronation.[11] Malamat also speculates whether all of Aleppo's vassals were awarded such weapons.[12] There is little textual evidence to warrant such speculations. Schwemer (2001: 212, 226) connected the weapons of Letter 1 to a letter of Yarim-Lim (of Yamkhad) to Yashub-Yakhad, the prince of Dēr (A.1314, published in Dossin 1956: 63–69), in which the weapons are mentioned as having been used to quell a revolt. Most likely these were the very weapons mentioned in Letters 1 and 2, which were used by Yamkhad to symbolically assert its authority over the vassal kings. But according to Spaey (1993: 413), during the Old Babylonian period, the use of divine weapons were integrated into concrete acts, most of which related to judicial procedures. The witnessing of oaths and contracts seems indeed to have been the main function of divine weapons, according to the textual sources.[13]

But what other functions did these weapons have? According to J. Vidal (2011: 251), within the Amorite culture, jewelled prestige weapons – among which divine weapons can be counted – were used as parade weapons, votive offerings, and funerary objects. Certainly these were all valid uses for special weapons, but quite apart from these, divine weapons also had very specific functions in and of themselves, such as witnessing promissory oaths and testimonies, meting out divine judgements and settling disputes, and sanctioning military undertak-

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10 Heimpel (2003: 54, 58) claims that during his 8th or 9th regnal year, Zimri-Lim and his father-in-law Yarim-Lim (of the kingdom of Aleppo) travelled together to the shores of the Mediterranean. See also Schwemer (2001: 215), who contends that Zimri-Lim made it to Ugarit.

11 Bunnens (2006: 65) also writes that the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo were held at Terqa in order to play a role in Zimri-Lim's investiture. See also Schwemer (2001: 226).

Although the Egyptian Pharaoh was presented with weapons upon his coronation, and the Akkadian Naram-Sin had received divine weapons upon his accession to the throne, we have no evidence of this having been a widespread custom in Syria during the Old Babylonian period. Ricks & Sroka (1994) have made a synthesis of the "more widely attested features" of the coronation ceremony in the ancient Near East, featuring a ritual combat and the receiving of symbolic regalia, including a sword, during the installation. However, their reconstruction is altogether too general (a caveat they readily admit) to be applied to the Old Babylonian period, where such features find little textual support. Furthermore, the evidence of mythological or propagandistic texts, like royal inscriptions, is not on par with the evidence of administrative or private letters, such as found from Mari and Uruk (in Holma 1914).

12 While leasing the weapons of the storm god seems to have been a business venture for the clergy, extending the weapons to all vassals seems unlikely on the basis of Zimri-Lim's close familial relationship with Yarim-Lim of Aleppo-Yamkhad. Furthermore, we lack evidence for such a practice.

13 Already in 1917 Walther connected divine weapons with the taking of oaths and making contracts; on pp. 192–194, he lists Babylonian texts that make mention of divine weapons.

ings. According to textual sources, divine weapons were also used to witness the creation and sealing of documents, as well as to ensure the fair distribution and storage of the harvest yield. (Holloway 2002: 168; Spaey 1993: 415; Walther 1917: 191–210) In fact, the texts of the Old Babylonian period seem to contain quite a lot of information on ways in which divine weapons were used.

2.2 "The Journey of the Divine Weapon"

It is quite possible that the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo made the so-called "Journey of the Divine Weapon", the first mentions of which R. Harris dated to the Old Babylonian period. According to Harris (1965: 217–220, 224), divine weapons could be carried forth in processions and used in religious ceremonies during the harvest. They could also function as the object or symbol of (promissory) oaths usually taken in temples or other sacred precincts. Spaey (1993: 418) cites a text (CBS 1513)[14] in which the divine weapon of Adad in particular is used. According to him, the divine weapon is involved in the traditional enumeration of fields and division of goods between heirs. He submits that the divine weapon was used for an oath-taking ceremony to prevent heirs from making future claims against one another. What makes this short text interesting is its mention that the act involving the weapon of the storm god took place in the "sanctuary of the house of their father" (*i-na* É *i-še-er-tim ša* É *a-bi-šu*[*-nu*]), paralleling the mostly restored reference to the "throne of the house of your father" in Letter 1. Perhaps it has been too readily assumed that a palace or a royal lineage was meant by the term in Letter 1, as this text seems to suggest that the "house of the father" was simply a place in which the divine weapon could be used.[15]

There are also textual reasons for associating the weapons in the Mari letters with the "Journey of the Divine Weapon". The cuneiform term used for the weapons in Letter 1 is ^{giš}tukul.meš, which refers merely to a non-specified weapon.[16] In two Alalakh texts (AT 1: 17, 456: 26–27), we also find the Sumerian term ^{giš}tukul and the Akkadian term *kakkum rabûm*, which has been rendered as 'weapon of the storm god', without any reference to a specific weapon. (Bunnens 2006: 65) While ^{giš}tukul.meš does broadly refer to a weapon, arguments have been made for understanding and translating the term as 'divine weapon'. Yet the weapon of the

14 *Catalogue of the Babylonian Section*. Philadelphia, PA: University Museum of Philadelphia.

15 Note, however, the use of the term in a letter (A.1121+A.2731) dated to the later years of Zimri-Lim's reign, which does at least suggest inheritance of the realm (Schwemer 2001: 213–214).

16 Fronzaroli (1997: 285) has drawn attention to a text from Ebla describing the storm god's weapon as ^{giš}uš. This probably corresponds to ^{giš}bar.uš, which has been rendered unto Akkadian with *ù-tum*, and which Fronzaroli translated as 'bâton'.

storm god, ^{giš}tukul *ša* ^{d}IM, is specifically mentioned in a text from Sippar, TCL I no. 140 (= TD 140, AO 1924). Dating to the end of the eighteenth century BCE, it makes reference to the "Journey of the Divine Weapon".[17] Lines 1–3 read:

gi-ir-ri EBUR *ša* ^{giš}tukul *ša* ^{d}IM	Harvest journey of the weapon of the storm god
iš-tu ša a-ru-[*m*]*a-lik*	from (that) of Aru-Malik
a-di ša ma-ri-a-nu-um[18]	to (that) of Mari

The weapon of the storm god, ^{giš}tukul *ša* ^{d}IM, is also mentioned, together with the weapon of Marduk, ^{giš}tukul *ša* ^{d}AMAR.UTU, in the oath of ZAT 9 18.[19] According to Harris (1965: 220), the weapons of the two gods may have been used together to increase an oath's coercive power.

Discussing the "Journey of the Divine Weapon", Harris (1965: 217–220, 224) mentions the practice of transporting the divine weapon, when the weapon of the chief god of the city could be taken out of the temple to be used for the purposes of oath-taking or settling disputes at a location outside of the sacred precincts. Harris does, however, point out that the texts that mention these divine weapons reveal very little about the way in which the weapons would have been released by the temples for such purposes. Spaey (1993: 413) suggests that the divine weapon functioned on one hand as a visual medium for the taking of oaths, which would have been taken in front of the god's symbol. On the other hand, he proposes a practical use for the weapon, such as when the credibility of opponents in litigation was physically tested by carrying the weapon from the temple to a field and circumambulating the field three times, or tearing the weapon out of the soil in a feat of both physical and mental strength. Although I have come across no textual

17 The 22nd year of Hammurapi's son Šamšu-iluna. The last mention of a temple leasing a divine weapon is from the time of Šamšu-ditana at the beginning of the 16th century BCE (Harris 1965: 221–223). However, this is not the last that we hear of divine weapons being housed in temples.

18 The suffix *-ānu* was used to form geographical names in Sippar texts (Harris 1965: 221). Yet Harris does not seem to connect "ša-Mariānum" with Mari. If the dating of the text is correct, it would have been written after the destruction of Mari (although it would not be the only such instance, as the name of Mari continued to be featured in texts long after its destruction). If the place name indeed refers to Mari, it would indicate that Mari was associated with the weapon of the storm god even after the city ceased to exist.

19 Holma (1914: 27) transliterated rather cautiously "[i?-n]a(?) ku(?) ma(?) ša ilMarduk i!-na! ku(?) ma(?) ša ilAdad". Holma himself confesses that he could make no sense of the line (p. 29), interpreting these as the names of "offizieller Geldprüfungbureaus". Walther (1917: 192), however, already interpreted them as "die Waffe Marduks und die Waffe Adads". The letter concerns silver delivered to the barracks of soldiers, which the weapons of Marduk and Adad were apparently used to investigate (*bi-ir-ra-nim*, which Holma translates as 'untersuchen'). Of course the fashion in which the weapons might have been used to execute this task eludes us.

evidence for it, one wonders whether a divine weapon could also have been used for an "ordeal by combat".

2.3 The storm god's weapons as a coronation gift?

While it has been assumed with rather minimal textual support that the weapons of the Mari texts were somehow connected to Zimri-Lim's coronation, following the Old Babylonian textual evidence divine weapons seem most connected with the taking and confirming of oaths.[20] It appears that in later times, divine weapons were indeed presented to the king – not during coronation, but during the Akitu festival. There is a Late Babylonian text published by Thureau-Dangin in *Rituels Accadiens* (RAcc. 447–449), in which the high priest (*šešgallu*) brings out the sceptre, the ring, and the crown – along with the divine weapon – and presents them to the king before ritually slapping him to see if Bel (i.e. the East Semitic Baal) is favourable to the monarch. While this ritual is not a ritual of coronation, it can be seen as an annual re-establishment and granting of earthly kingship by its divine counterpart. (Ricks & Sroka 1994: 247–248) It could be postulated that if the ritual in the Akitu festival emulated or recreated a coronation ceremony, then surely the weapons would have been presented to the king during the actual enthronement. However, the textual evidence for this remains scarce. We do find mention of Naram-Sin being presented with the weapons of Enlil, Dagan, and Nergal upon his coronation (Hamblin 2006: 99), but this appears to have been a special case of amassing as much symbolic patronage of the gods for his kingship as he could muster.[21]

It is coronation, however, that seems to be the most popular function for the weapons of the Mari letters, followed by some sort of unspecified ceremony.[22] Ricks and Sroka (1994: 236) have defined a coronation ceremony as a series of acts performed in a temple or a sacred precinct, through which the king succeeds to the throne and is endowed with sovereign power and authority.[23] The theory that the Mari weapons were used in a coronation ceremony is well accepted, but

20 "the establishing of the truth by means of the divine symbol seems to be its proper function" (Spaey 1993: 416).

21 See Hallo (1987) for changes over the centuries in the propagandistic justification of Mesopotamian kingship.

22 See Vidal (2011: 248), according to whom it is "attested" in Letter 2 that the weapons were "used during ceremonies, possibly parades". However, the only thing the text actually attests is that the weapons of the storm god had arrived in Terqa and were housed in the temple of Dagan for the time being. Cf. the appendix for the text. See also Durand 1993.

23 The problem with Ricks & Sroka's approach is its extremely generalizing nature, as they submit that such features were shared by "numerous and often widely separated cultures", from ancient Egypt to pre-Colombian Mexico.

the notion seems to be based on little else than conjecture. Based on evidence from Letter 2, the weapons had arrived in Terqa and were stored in the temple. The address of Letter 2 suggests that Zimri-Lim was already king at this time.[24] The letter offers no evidence that the weapons ever reached Zimri-Lim in person, or indeed that they were meant to do so. Nor do we have textual evidence of them having been in the Mari capital during his reign. Terqa had certainly been a power base of the kingdom of Zimri-Lim's predecessor Yahun-Lim, but his seat of power seems to have been in the city of Mari; this is where one would expect a coronation to have taken place.[25] (Fleming 2004: 154) The evidence of Letter 1, on the other hand, is unfortunately obscured by a lacuna at a rather critical juncture in the text, which makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions based on it. Was the restoration of Zimri-Lim to the throne of his father and the handing over of the weapons a concurrent act?

2.4 The divine weapon as a standard

Another use for divine weapons was as a standard carried before the troops on military campaigns, which is what Zimri-Lim's predecessor may have used them for. Based on the Old Babylonian evidence examined in this article, the settling of a dispute, the rendering of judgement, or the resolving of a conflict seem to be more likely reasons for the transporting of the weapons to Mari than an

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24 It may be erroneous and anachronistic to assume that the (re-)conqueror Zimri-Lim became king only once. See Fleming (2004: 156) for a discussion of Zimri-Lim's separate kingship over the Yaminites and the Akkadians. On p. 159, he also mentions an unpublished text in which Zimri-Lim is separately titled as the king of the Amorites and the Akkadians.

25 Yahdun-Lim's capitals were in Mari and Tuttul. Terqa was situated halfway between the cities of Mari and Tuttul, however, so perhaps a coronation could have taken place at the home of the Mari dynasty for political reasons. It must also be borne in mind that Terqa was a cult centre for the older Upper-Euphratean storm god Dagan, the patron of the Mari monarchy.

But this is all speculation, as we have precious little textual evidence for ceremonies of coronation (or indeed for how commonplace such ceremonies even were) among the Semitic peoples of the Old Babylonian period. There are some texts that describe rites for the proclamation of vassal kings, but in an ideological sense these correspond poorly to the installation of sovereigns. Nor do the texts mention divine weapons. See Fleming 2004: 101.

Engnell (1967: 77) has suggested that a text (published by Dossin 1938: 1–13) connected to the Ishtar cult at Mari may have belonged to an enthronement festival. But again it must be impressed that an annual calendrical ritual is discussed there, not the symbolic coronation of a monarch upon his accession to sovereign power (which may even be an anachronistic notion). We also have no textual evidence suggesting that the Aleppan weapons would have been included in an annual enthronement festival in the Mari kingdom. Nor do we have evidence of a ritual battle having taken place in a ceremony of coronation, such as envisioned by Ricks & Sroka (1994: 249–253). Furthermore, Schwemer (2001: 278) suggests that the weapons might indeed have been brought to Terqa for a specific cultic function.

unprecedented symbolic coronation ceremony. It is well-known that in the Old Babylonian period, administering justice was the king's duty and prerogative, and most of the texts that mention divine weapons have judicial contexts. In this article, however, I would submit that, based on the precedent of this earlier Mari monarch, the use of the weapons to sacralize Zimri-Lim's military undertakings was even more probable.

Yahdun-Lim, a Mari king some generations before Zimri-Lim, may or may not have been the ancestor of that later king.[26] Most of what is known of Yahdun-Lim comes from letters dating to the time of Zimri-Lim, where his name is mentioned several times. In the Foundation Inscription of the Shamash Temple, which is dated to the time of Yahdun-Lim, the king records the procession of his military campaign to the Mediterranean sea (*tâmtum*). The Foundation Inscription shows that the Mediterranean was regarded in Mari as a "divine-mythological entity" hundreds of years earlier than previously thought. According to Malamat (1998: 25, 32, 34), this campaign to the Mediterranean – "a high point of Yahdun-Lim's feats" – was accompanied by cultic ceremonies and the offering of sacrifices to the sea. He suggests that this practice was of Northwest Semitic origin, being Amorite or Canaanite, and only later adopted by the Mesopotamians,[27] a vague term with which he most likely refers to the Sumero-Akkadian culture (as Mariotes were as surely Mesopotamian as any people living along the Euphrates).[28] He also interprets the text of the inscription to mean that the king's troops bathed in the Mediterranean in what was "surely a cultic ritual, a sort of baptism".

It is possible that the cleansing of the men did have ritual or cultic dimensions, as the regular washing of soldiers would hardly warrant mention in a royal inscription. But we have no way of knowing what sort of rituals these consisted of, or what they ultimately signified. Malamat (1998: 25) submits that the significance of the act is indicated by the use of the Akkadian word *ramākum*, which, as he admits, actually merely denotes washing, but may also occasionally take on a ritualistic sense of "cleansing the entire body in water in a ritualistic context".[29] While the noun may carry these connotations, the verb (which is what we find in the inscription) is seldom used in this fashion. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the Foundation Inscription, Malamat (1965: 367) associates the washing of the

26 According to Malamat (1998: 33), he was "the first true ruler of Mari in the Old Babylonian period".

27 Malamat (1965: 365) seems to believe that practice started with Yahdun-Lim.

28 Budin (2004: 105) likewise calls Mari "a natural melting pot between Mesopotamian and west Semitic cultures", which I take to mean Northwest Semitic and Sumero-Babylonian cultures.

29 Langdon (1909: xxii) refers to a Babylonian liturgy of baptism called *bit rimki*, 'the house of baptism'.

military troops with the washing of the weapons, as an act in which "the purificatory washing is combined with the sacrificial act". However, stronger textual evidence is needed. Schwemer (2008a: 154) mentions texts from Ebla, which indicate that in Eblaite incantations evil was magically bound to the weapon of the storm god Hadda, possibly to draw it away from somewhere else. This suggests that the weapon of the storm god was thought to have purificatory aspects.

The questions that merit asking in this context are, why was reaching the sea so important to this Mari king that it would warrant a ritualistic act at its shore, and was there a reason for it other than a purely political desire for expansion?[30] It seems that among the Mesopotamian cultures, the Mariotes among them, making a tour of or a campaign to the Upper Sea (the Mediterranean) was a mark of successful kingship from Sargonic times (*c.*24th century BCE) onwards.[31] In his first article on the topic of the campaigns of Mesopotamian rulers to the Mediterranean, Malamat (1965: 365) writes the following:

> It was not until the days of the Assyrian Empire that Mesopotamian rulers began to maintain an almost continuous domination over the Levantine coast and to extract great political and economic advantages therefrom. However, centuries before, the Mediterranean had fired the imagination and challenged the energies of mighty conquerors from the lands of the Twin Rivers who occasionally succeeded in leading their armies to its shores.

There are several legends pertaining to Sargon of Agade that connect the monarch with water. In one of the legends, Sargon makes the campaign to the Mediterranean, and it seems that he was indeed the first Mesopotamian king to have made the journey (Malamat 1965: 365, 367).[32] In another legend, he is also found washing his weapon in the sea (Malamat 1998: 25–26). In the text AfO 20, 40 vii 31, we find the line *kakkīšu ina tâmtim* Ì.LUH, 'his weapon in the sea he washed'. In the same text, it is mentioned that it was the storm god Enlil that gave Sargon the Upper Sea and the Lower Sea as his dominion. While the historical basis of these narratives is somewhat questionable, it does remain that

30 Malamat (1965: 373) points out that in addition to military expeditions, there are strong political and economic contacts between Mari and the Eastern Mediterranean areas reflected in the Mari documents. He also notes that the international situation of the Old Babylonian period was favourable toward a westward expansion for Assyria and Mari, as Egypt's influence was on the decline from the end of the 12th dynasty onward.

31 The persistence of the tradition of the monarch conquering the sea (starting from Sargon of Agade) has recently been discussed by Rollinger (2012). I have had the privilege of discussing the matter with Professor Rollinger, but the views expressed in this and the following paragraphs were formulated before I had the chance to read the article.

32 Yahdun-Lim's campaign is, however, the first of which we have direct testimony.

in later times these legendary tales were connected to Sargon, who was considered an exemplary king – a model on which later kings could base their kingships. This is evidenced by the fact that Sargonic legends were popular hundreds upon hundreds of years after his death.[33]

It does appear that Sargon did make the campaign to the Mediterranean coast (Malamat 1965: 366).[34] According to Malamat, the text of the so-called Sargon Chronicle "doubtless indicates the sacred and purifying aspect of such a great body of water". And during his voyage, Sargon also appears to have made a stop at Tuttul in Mari territory, to honour the storm god of the area (Green 2003: 68). Malamat remarks on how the Neo-Assyrian kings of the first millennium BCE also often recorded their arrival to the Mediterranean coast and their offering of sacrifices on the seashore, undoubtedly fashioning this propagandistic practice on Sargon's precedent. We find similar notions in the Cyrus cylinder, suggesting that the tradition was alive and well even in Achemenid times. (Rollinger 2012: 733) The troops of the Neo-Assyrian kings dipped their weapons in the water of the sea, according to Malamat (1998: 25), thus symbolically purifying them "with no further ceremony".

Based on the evidence of the Foundation Inscription, Zimri-Lim's predecessor Yahdun-Lim appears to have made the same journey as these other Mesopotamian monarchs. But in addition to Yahdun-Lim, one of his contemporaries also appears to have done it as well. There are records of the Babylonian king Šamši-Adad, mentioned by name in Letter 1, making a campaign to the West, apparently following Yahdun-Lim's example. (Malamat 1965: 370–372; Malamat 1998: 26)[35] Both kings, it would seem, were tapping into the same

33 Malamat (1965: 373) writes that the expeditions of the rulers of the Old Babylonian period were "doubtless" a source of inspiration for poets and narrators.

34 Malamat (1965: 366) entertains the notion that Sargon and his successors may even have ruled the coasts of the Mediterranean and Cyprus, even maintaining a possible commercial relationship with Crete: "In any case, there seems to be no doubt concerning the historicity of the expedition."

35 According to Malamat (1965: 370–372), Šamši-Adad's campaign took place only a few years after Yahdun-Lim's and was likely influenced by the prior campaign. Šamši-Adad undertook the journey only after having conquered Mari, and Malamat suggests he had a hand in the rebellion through which Yahdun-Lim was deposed, so it is entirely possible that the campaign was conducted as an act of legitimation for Šamši-Adad's new kingship. Šamši-Adad's campaign warranted only a short mention in his temple inscription in the city of Ashur (IAK VIII Rs. 4, 12–18), which reads *šu-mi ra-b i-e-im ù na-ri-ia i-na ma-a-at la-ab-a-an*^{ki} *i-na a-aḫ tâmtim ra-bi-i-tim lu-ú áš-ku-un*, 'My great name and my stele in the land of Laban on the shore of the Great Sea surely I placed.' Since Ebeling, Meissner & Weidner (1926: 23) and Luckenbill (1912: 170) have chosen to render the word for sea with *tâmtim* rather than to transcribe it syllabically, one must assume that the Sumerian A.AB.BA underlies it.

Luckenbill (1912: 158–159), commenting on the inscription, writes: "This [reaching the Mediterranean] had been the goal of the great conquerors since Sargon, and perhaps Lugal-

Sargonic well of royal legitimation. It seems plausible that the historic practice would have been mythicized eventually, and the myth could well have persisted in the scribal curriculum. Therefore, one of the most obvious reasons for bringing the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo to Zimri-Lim would have been the staging of a similar cultic ritual as practised during Yahdun-Lim's campaign to the Mediterranean coast. Malamat (1998: 27, 34) connected the text of Letter 1 with the subjugation of the sea mentioned in the Foundation Inscription.[36] Washing of the storm god's weapons in the sea would have carried much more political significance vis-à-vis the Northwest Semitic conflict myth than simply presenting them to the king during a presumed coronation ceremony – assuming that such ceremonies in fact took place.

It must, however, be noted that there is no reference to the Mediterranean campaign in Yahdum-Lim's year formulas, which is what one might expect from a feat of such magnitude. Nor does Yahdun-Lim's inscription expressly mention the name of the conquered land or region, which may be considered a reason to challenge the historicity of the inscription. (Malamat 1965: 369) Whether or not the inscription details Yahdun-Lim's actual military campaign to an actual location on the Mediterranean coast, the function of the inscription is still undoubtedly propagandistic, even if what the inscription depicts is a completely fictional account of such a campaign. It is not relevant to the present inquiry whether Yahdun-Lim or Zimri-Lim, or indeed Sargon himself, physically made a campaign to the Mediterranean shore, or dipped their weapons or washed their troops in the water. What is relevant is that they – and several other Mesopotamian monarchs – presented and portrayed themselves as having accomplished this feat.

A symbolic journey of this kind, fashioned after a pre-existing model of a propagandistic military campaign, might offer a reason why Zimri-Lim concerned himself with the weapons of the storm god. In fact, it is known that Zimri-Lim had a close familial relationship with the king of Yamkhad, who was called the "Beloved of Adad", and who seems to have used this special relationship with

zaggisi, as it was of the great successors of Shamshi-Adad. The campaigns of Tiglath-pileser I, Ashur-nasir-pal, and the kings of the later Assyrian empire regularly proceeded along the semi-circular curve from Ashur, Calah or Nineveh, northward into the mountains of the 'upper country', Nairi-Urartu, then westward through Kummuh to Musri and the other Hatti-lands, across the Euphrates at Karkamish and thence to the Mediterranean and the Syrian coast. Shamshi-Adad probably followed the same curve."

36 "The other, recent evidence from Mari, touching on the mythological character of the Mediterranean, is to be found in a letter sent to King Zimri-Lim at Mari (the son of the aforementioned Yahdun-Lim and the last king of Old Babylonian Mari) by his ambassador to Aleppo in the days of its King Yarim-Lim." (Malamat 1998: 34)

the god to exert political influence. (Schwemer 2001: 211–237) Therefore, the simplest explanation for sending the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo to Mari is that they were symbolic of the patronage of Yarim-Lim that accompanied them (Schwemer 2008a: 163). Yet this does not entail a coronation or enthronement ceremony. The most likely function for the weapons that were brought from Aleppo to Mari territory would have been the sanctioning of a military campaign, promising divine protection and victory not only from the storm god of Aleppo, but also from the king of Yamkhad.[37]

2.5 Summary of the textual witness to the storm god's weapons

The most important textual witnesses to the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo are found in the Old Babylonian letters from the Mari archives.[38] From these letters we learn that the weapons that were housed in the temple of the storm god in Aleppo were brought to the Mariote city of Terqa during Zimri-Lim's reign. While the letters seem to allude to the conflict myth that we find in fuller form later on in the Baal-Cycle from Ugarit, the weapons in the letters appear to be real weapons used as cultic objects. Such divine weapons had many practical uses in the Old Babylonian period, many of which had a judicial aspect. The most textual evidence surrounds the witnessing of oaths and testimonies, as well as the settling of disputes. Many Old Babylonian texts also make mention of the "Journey of the Divine Weapon" – a symbolic journey in which the weapon was taken by clerics to apply its judicial function outside of the temple where it was stationed.

The specific weapons of the storm god of Aleppo that are mentioned in the Mari letters have often been assumed to have been used in the coronation of Zimri-Lim. The author finds this unlikely, although not impossible, based on the lack of textual evidence of such a practice in the period in question – and the wealth of evidence for other uses of divine weapons. While most of these indeed seem to have had judicial aspects, there are also symbolic and even political functions for the weapons which do not require imagination or reading between the lines of

37 Holloway (2002: 173) also mentions loyalty oaths taken before the "gods of the king", and the marching of the divine standard before the army in connection with the "weapons that Asshur gave" the king. Schwemer (2008a: 164) also submits that the weapons of the Storm god of Aleppo could be taken into battle as "a kind of field standard".

38 In addition to the weapons of the storm god, there are several Cretan or Cretan-style ceremonial weapons mentioned in the Mari texts (ARMT XXI 231:1–4, 15–16, XXIII 104:30, XXIV 98:10, XXV 601:10–13, and possibly XXV 39:10). See Malamat (1998: 37–38). Among the weapons is also featured a golden lance (*imittum*), found in the temple of Ishtar at Mari. CAD VII 126 and YOS VIII no. 76 suggest that *imittum* was considered the symbol of Ishtar. See also Vidal (2011: 247–248) for a list of precious weapons mentioned in Mari texts.

the Mari letters for a coronation ceremony. For example, divine weapons could be employed as standards before military troops. The fact that the quenching of a revolt is actually mentioned as one of the uses for the weapons of the Aleppan storm god specifically allows us to postulate such a use for the weapons during Zimri-Lim's campaigns to the West. Carrying symbolic weapons to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea may also have had a mytho-historical precedent in the figure of Sargon.

Thus far I have concentrated on the textual evidence for the storm god's weapons, but evidence for divine weapons can also be found in archaeological records and iconographic sources. In the following section, I will attempt to relate the weapons in the texts to portrayals of the storm god's weapons, both in iconography and in relation to actual ancient Near Eastern divine weapons.

3. WEAPONS OF THE STORM GOD IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ICONOGRAPHIC SOURCES

While it was well-known that a temple of the storm god must have once stood in Aleppo, it was not until 1996 that such a temple was discovered on the Aleppo citadel by a Syrian-German team of archaeologists. The temple had been functional for a long time, from the Early Bronze Age all the way down to Late Antiquity. The temple, under the aegis of the kingdom of Yamkhad, had indeed been one of the most famous cult centres in the ancient Near East, on par with the centres for Ishtar in Niniveh and Arbela and the moon god in Harran. Arguably the most significant findings in the temple of the storm god were the orthostat reliefs, some of which date back to the Bronze Age.[39]

The most important orthostat reliefs are the two reliefs on the east side of the temple cella, depicting the weather god and the king (Gonnella, Khayyata & Kohlmeyer 2005: Abb. 124 & 126. The final report has not been published.). In one relief, the storm god is seen alone, brandishing a club and riding a wagon, while another relief depicts the king mimicking the storm god's position with empty hands. The image of the storm god shows him in the classic smiting position found in Syrian iconography (Williams-Forte 1983: 39–43; Moortgat-Correns 1986), only without the weapons that would usually be found in his hands. This relief of the storm god brandishing weapons that are absent from his hands was the focal point of the entire temple (Hawkins 2011: 36).[40] The symbolism of the

39 See Schwemer (2001: 211–219) for primary textual evidence on the temple.

40 At the very least, the figure of the storm god dates from the Hittite Empire period, while the image of the king was replaced by King Taita in the 11th century with his own image. It may be assumed that the image of an earlier king stood there prior to this. Note that according to one of

invisible weapons shared by the storm god and the king facing him in mirror image makes perfect sense, if one considers that according to the Mari letters, the actual physical weapons of the storm god were manifest in that very temple. The weapons are absent from the divine sphere depicted by the relief because they were manifest in the mortal sphere in the form of the cultic weapons. And while the weapons apparently did serve as cultic objects, the weapons were not purely symbolic. They were actual weapons, probably fashioned of precious or otherwise special materials.[41]

It seems quite unclear what distinguished a divine weapon from an ordinary weapon (Hamblin 2006: 99).[42] In this chapter, I suggest four possible – but not in and of themselves sufficient – conditions for interpreting a weapon from the archaeological records as a divine weapon:

1. weapons made of precious materials,[43]
2. weapons with inscriptions dedicating them to deities,[44]
3. weapons found *in situ* in temple complexes and other cultic sites,[45]
4. weapons otherwise unsuitable for human use (e.g. due to their size).[46]

There are several weapons found in various excavations that fulfil one or more of the conditions, but it is still difficult to ascertain whether any one of them was factually used as a divine weapon in the sense described by Old Babylonian

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Zimri-Lim's year formulas, he himself offered his own statue to Adad of Aleppo, and he raised an image of Adad in the temple. (Green 2003: 171–172)

41 Schwemer (2001: 298–299) quotes a fragmentary text (ARM VIII 91), which may suggest that the weapons were made of gold. The term for "weapon" is reconstructed, however.

42 What separates a ceremonial weapon from an ordinary weapon could, for instance, be the precious material used in its fashioning. A weapon made of precious but soft material such as gold could never have been intended as a real weapon contra Vidal (2011: 249–250), who suggests that such ceremonial weapons were actually employed by officers on the battlefield as sceptres. He cites texts from Mari (e.g. ARM 25 735) which list silver and bronze spears given to Mari lieutenants. The fact that one lieutenant could be awarded up to 16 silver spears at one time – which he most likely would not have distributed to his men – suggests that the weapons were most likely given to the officers as wages or spoils of war, as sceptres or symbols of command, not as weapons to be used. The variance in the number and material of the weapons given to individual officers would also seem to indicate their use as rewards.

43 See Parrot (1956: pl. LXII, Figs 1097, 1098) for golden spears from the temple of Ishtar at Mari; Dunand (1939) for golden fenestrated axes from the temple of Astarte at Byblos; and Callot (2011: Fig. 158) for an alabaster dagger handle from the temple of Dagan at Ugarit.

44 See Güterbock (1965) for weapons dedicated to Nergal, Price (1905) for weapons dedicated to Shamash, and Budge (1912: pl. 50) for mace heads dedicated to Nergal and Ishtar.

45 See Biran (1989) for a description of the altar at Tel Dan and RS 9.250 from the Hurrian temple at Ugarit. Cf. also n. 45.

46 For the weight of the sword, see Güterbock (1965); the rarity of materials is also mentioned by Bloch-Smith (2003).

texts. Furthermore, in order for such a weapon to be interpreted specifically as the weapon of the storm god, it should either be in the form of a mace or have a dedication to the storm god inscribed on it.

In the cult pedestal (*Symbolsockel*) of Tukulti-Ninurta I, we also have an iconographic representation of a king and a divine weapon – not a weapon wielded by a deity, but a weapon of divine power as the object of worship. The cult pedestal shows the king kneeling before a cult pedestal or a throne on which the weapon of Nabu has been placed. The king himself is not holding the divine weapon, but has a sceptre in his left hand, suggesting that while the king's sceptre may have been a symbolic representation of the divine weapon, it was not the divine weapon per se. It is possible that a weapon similar to the one depicted in the cult pedestal was once actually placed on top of the cult pedestal, although no trace of the weapon has been found. (Kühne & Röllig 1989: 296, pl. 51,3; Orthmann 1975: Abb. 195) What the cult pedestal suggests is that the king did not handle the weapon. This is in line with evidence from Elam suggesting that litigants who touched the divine emblem lost their divine protection and texts from Sippar suggesting that only temple personnel were permitted to engage with the weapons. (Spaey 1993: 412, 416)

According to Hamblin (2006: 99), weapons in the ancient Near East were viewed as magical objects of divine power, which would have been considered as the real source of military victories. Hamblin theorizes that the divine weapons housed in temples may have factually been either ancestral weapons, ritually consecrated weapons, or even weapons worked from meteoric iron. While we know next to nothing about the physical characteristics of the weapons in the texts, Malamat (1998: 27) remarks that it is likely that they were similar to the ones illustrated on Syrian seals of the Old Babylonian period. He disabuses the reader of the notion that the weapons would have resembled the club and spear of Ugaritic myth, which "were depicted four or five hundred years later on the stele of 'Baal and the thunderbolt!'".[47]

I would not be so quick to dismiss the possibility of at least one of the weapons having been a club or a mace, insofar as a club seems to have been wielded by the Aleppan storm god, as depicted in the orthostat reliefs in the temple of Adad (ALEPPO 4).[48] After the discovery of the reliefs in the Aleppo temple, we have a rather accurate iconographic representation of the weapons. As the weapons

47 Bunnens (2006: 65), following Fonzaroli (1997: 284–285), points out that during the time of the Ebla archives (*c.*23rd century BCE) – and one might assume at Ebla as well – the divine weapons consisted of "one or more spears".

48 Popko (1998: 76) also submits that the idea for the weapons of Ugaritic myth and the local Ugaritic weather god came from Aleppo.

were physically manifest in the temple, it does not make sense for the reliefs to have pictured weapons that were radically different from the ones that at least some of the temple personnel bore witness to every day.[49] If the temple of Adad indeed housed the storm god's weapons prior to their delivery to Mari territory, why would the walls of the temple have depicted other types of weapons? Furthermore, we do find textual evidence that, among the Hittites, the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo were specifically known to be a mace and a spear.[50] The weather god of Aleppo had a great deal of influence on the Anatolian Teššub. And, according to Popko (1998: 75–76), among the elements that Teššub adopted from the North Syrian area were the weapons featured in the "legend of the weather god of Halab".

The weapons of the storm god portrayed in the bulk of the Syrian iconographic material, as well as in the stele from Ugarit, are a club and a "lightning-tree", the concept of which has been researched relatively little. The so-called lightning-tree – a weapon resembling a tree or a tree branch wielded by a god of storm or weather – first appears in Early Bronze Age Syria. In an article (Williams-Forte 1983) based on her unpublished dissertation, E. Williams-Forte traces the evolution of the motif ("complex cycle of images"), beginning with the weather god wielding the tree-weapon to a weather god and the king ("worshiper") flanking the tree, to the king alone flanking the tree, to a depiction of the tree ("the victorious tree-standard") – the symbol of the storm god as a warrior – on its own. She suggests that the iconography developed in such a way that the weather god first became associated with the symbol of the weapon he wielded – lightning depicted in the form of a tree – and the deity later became one iconic entity with it. This succession of motifs represents a pictorial narrative of how the weather god granted the king, through his weapon, the use of his divine power and authority.[51] The cedar (*arz.b ymnh*, 'the cedar in his right hand') is also mentioned in the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle (KTU 1.4 VII 41), which refers to the lightning-tree weapon of Baal.[52] The club and the vegetal weapon of the storm god can also be

49 According to Schwemer (2001: 226–227), the temple of Adad in Aleppo was where the weapons were ordinarily kept.

50 This is according to Bunnens (2006: 65). See Williams-Forte (1983: 25), who lists as the storm god's attributes in the Syrian and Anatolian area weapons like the mace or the axe in one hand and a spear-like lightning weapon in the other. See also Kang (1989: 55) for an overview of the kinds of weapons found on the stelae of the Hittite storm god.

51 According to Schwemer (2001: 226), the same held true for the Mari weapons. On the blurred lines between the weather god and the king, see Müller (2008: 244–248).

52 Lambert (1985: 442) accepts this association, but wonders why a weapon made of wood rather than the whole tree is meant by the term. I see no reason why the lightning-tree and cedar could not refer to actual lightning, which may well have been manifested as a physical weapon (spear,

found in a Hittite cylinder seal impression from Ugarit. (Schaeffer 1956: xx, Fig. 68) Williams-Forte (1983: 39) attributes the portrayal of the storm god's weapon in the form of a tree to the idea of fertility associated with the deity, calling it "virtually a 'tree of life'".[53]

I would like to submit a simpler solution for the portrayal of the weapon in tree form: branched lightning resembles a tree, and the lightning could have been conceived of, and certainly represented in iconography, as a tree of light or a tree of divine power.[54] The obvious way of portraying the "heavenly tree" in the mortal world was as an ordinary tree. But since a tree or vegetal staff symbolizing the power of lightning is not a weapon per se, how then would a tree made of lightning manifest as a ordinary weapon? We get a hint with the sharp tip of the vegetal staff seen on the stele of the Ugaritic *Baal au foudre*. The weapon on the stele is half-tree, but it is also clearly half-weapon, with its lower half representing a lance or a spear. Both aspects of the storm god's divine power – thunder (auditory) and lightning (visual) – seem to be represented in the visual media of the Northwest Semitic cultural area. The sound of thunder is represented by striking weapons of hewn stone or metal: clubs, maces, hammers, and axes. The flash of lightning manifests as long wooden throwing or thrusting weapons with a sharpened tip: lances, spears, and staffs.[55] In Syrian-Anatolian iconography, the storm god also often has a sword or a dagger of some kind,[56] but rather than a

lance, trident – or even the kind of vegetal sceptre we find in later Phoenician iconography and supported by archaeological finds, which was fashioned at least partially of wood and dubbed the "staff of judgement" or "sceptre of his judiciary" in the Ahiram inscription). See also P. Leiden 345 (r. IV, 12–V, 2) for an incantation that reads, "Baal smites you with the cedar tree which is in his hand". The Leiden Magical Papyrus is from the Memphian cult centre of Baal, so clearly the association of tree and lightning as the storm god's weapon was widespread in the ancient Near East. There are also allusions to this motif in certain Biblical texts, most prominently in *Ps.* 80:11, in which mention is made of the "cedars of god" (אַרְזֵי-אֵל), usually translated as 'mighty cedars'.

53 "the 'cedar' weapon symbolizes, as well, the lightning source of the weather god's fertility" (Williams-Forte 1983: 39).

54 See also Schwemer (2008b: 36), according to whom the vegetal lance of the Ugaritic stele "may rather be a pictorial representation of the rolling thunder".

55 See Green (2003: 154–165) for examples of the storm god's lance as lightning. He also calls the spears of the Ugaritic stele a "stylized thunderbolt".

56 There is an actual ceremonial or votive weapon, dated to the time of Mari or to *c.*1800 BCE. This weapon is a sword containing an Old Assyrian inscription, which Güterbock (1965: 197–198) speculates was dedicated to Nergal (the inscription reads *ana bēlim ša Ḫutešalim*, 'to the lord of Ḫutešalim', a place of uncertain location). The sword weighed over 5 kg, with most of its weight in its ornate hilt, the end of which also featured a cavity that was probably used to set the sword in an upright position. It would seem that swords and daggers as ritual weapons were connected to netherworld deities and the cult of the dead, and therefore it would be somewhat unlikely that the weapons of the storm god would have featured a sword.

weapon that he wields against his enemies or to assert his authority, it is kept in its scabbard.[57]

It must be emphasized that the weapons mentioned in the textual sources from Ugarit do not correspond exactly to the ones found in Ugaritic iconographic sources, which feature the club and the spear.[58] While it is quite possible that the weapons portrayed on the stele of *Baal au foudre* served a specific iconographic function, it may also be that the weapons on the Ugaritic stele alluded to similar, if not the very same, cultic weapons as those mentioned in the Mari texts. In the text of the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle, the weapons forged by the smith Kothar-wa-Ḫasis, and wielded by Baal in the battle against Yamm, were clubs (or *ṣmd*-weapons)[59] called by the names *ygrš* and *aymr* and traslated as 'driver' and 'chaser', respectively. A club (or a hammer, also a smiting weapon) could certainly have been one of the storm god's weapons, as the association seems to have had a cross-cultural mythological foundation. Many Syrian and Anatolian reliefs depict the weather god (Adad or Tarhunt) holding a lightning weapon in one hand and a hammer or a smiting weapon in the other hand.[60] According to Gibson, the mace was not used as a weapon by humans in ancient Mesopotamia, but was rather a symbol of power, a weapon symbolic of weapons in general, and the symbol of the sanctioned use of power. (Gibson 1964: 181)[61] As such, it seems a prime

57 See examples of seal impressions in Williams-Forte (1983: 39–43); Moortgat-Correns (1986: 188); Green (2003: 154–165).

58 Bunnens (2006: 66) posits that the *ktp*, which is parallel to *ṣmd* (often translated as 'mace') as Baal's weapon in KTU 1.6 V 2–3, has the meaning of 'scimitar'. Bunnens, however, does not favour the interpretation of the term as a sword, since in the Ugaritic stele Baal's sword is still in its scabbard. The word originally denotes 'shoulder blade', so a bladed weapon of some sort may be in question. One should also consider the swords of Asshur and Yahweh: Kang (1989: 40) juxtaposes Asshur and Yahweh, "The weapon with which the king got victory was given from the god Aššur. So the war was the war of the god Aššur as the war of Israel was the war of Yahweh."

59 The specific meaning of the term has remained elusive. A bladed weapon of some kind (*ktp*) is also mentioned in KTU 1.6 V 2.

60 See Genze (1979: Abb. 15, 17, 18, 22); in Abb. 19 and 20, the weather god holds only the lightning weapon, and in Abb. 16 he holds the smiting weapon in one hand while throttling a serpent with the other hand. It must also be pointed out that an apparently ritual, ornamental axe-head (RS 9.250) was found in the Hurrian temple at Ugarit. The connection between thunder gods and smiting weapons such as the hammer is cross-cultural (perhaps even metacultural). One needs only to recall the weapon Mjölnir of the Nordic Thor. The Finno-Ugric smith-hero Ilmari/Inmar also seems to have originally been conceived of as a weather god. (Siikala 2002: 171) Perhaps the concept of the anthropomorphic weather god warrior followed in the wake of the spreading of smitheries.

61 Wyatt (1998: 284–285) writes that the worship of the weapons of the god was understood as transferring the divine power unto the king and legitimizing his rule (although it should be impressed that nowhere is it stated that the divine weapons given to kings could *be kept by them* indefinitely, as they constituted a business venture for the clerics). This concept is surely the same as that found in the Zimri-Lim text. According to Bunnens (2006: 65), this is also a part of the

candidate for a divine weapon. Based on the iconographic evidence, the weapons housed in the temple of Aleppo could well have featured a mace and spear. But as famous and significant as they were in the Syrian area in the Old Babylonian period, why should we find references to these weapons a millennium later in the texts of the Hebrew Bible?

4. WEAPONS OF THE STORM GOD IN BIBLICAL TEXTS

There are several different kinds of weapons mentioned in the Old Testament.[62] While it is possible to read of weapons in connection with Northwest Semitic divinities (such as Resheph)[63] in the texts of the Hebrew Bible, the weapons mentioned in connection with Yahweh seem most relevant with regard to the Old Babylonian narrative of the storm god's battle with the sea. There are a number of passages in which weapons are mentioned in connection to Yahweh, but none are more pertinent to the traditions discussed previously as the passages that describe Yahweh as a weather deity.[64] I present here some texts of the Old Testament which appear to be related to the tradition of the weapon of the storm god of Aleppo. Note, however, that this is by no means an exhaustive examination of the Biblical evidence.

The weapons that are most readily associated with Yahweh are the sword and the bow. The sword (חרב) is the weapon that is most often mentioned in connection with Yahweh, whereas the bow is usually alluded to through the mention of arrows (חץ).[65] The bow has also been connected with the seal of the covenant

process which led to kings being portrayed as storm gods. While kingship on earth was modelled after an ideal kingship in heaven, so was the kingship in heaven fashioned after kingship on earth.

62 For example, כלי ('weapon'), יד מקל, אלה, מפץ ('club'), חץ ('arrow'), מטה ('staff'), קשת ('bow'), חרב ('sword'), חנית, כידון, רמח ('spear, lance'), קין ('hammer'), שלח ('javelin'), דקר ('pick-axe'), שבט, שרביט ('sceptre, mace').

63 This is mentioned in *Cant.* 8:6, for example, with רִשְׁפֵּיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ being translated as 'its flashes are the flashes of fire'. Nissinen (2011: 279) renders this as 'its darts are darts of fire', paralleling "<its flames are> flames of Yah(weh)". The reconstructed line certainly seems to recall the weapons of Yahweh, the storm deity. According to Gerhard, Jr. (1966: 136), "fire" equals lightning, especially lightning with the power to strike with lethal fury. Note also that in Ugaritic texts Resheph has the designation *ṣb'i* (KTU 1.91:15), paralleling the epithet Yahweh Sebaot.

64 Aspects of the weather god or storm god have been noted in connection with Yahweh for a long time. For example, see Gerhard, Jr. (1966). For more recent discussions on the topic, see Green (2003: 219–280) and Müller (2008). Weippert (1997: 47–58) examines aspects of Yahweh as a weather deity, but also discusses various other elements from ancient Near Eastern cultures, traces of which can be found in the character of Yahweh.

65 A sword, which was made entirely of metal, was probably considered a more prestigious weapon than a spear or lance, which only included a minimal amount of metal. Few swords have been discovered in the area of Palestine; most finds consist of the projectile points of arrows, spears, javelins, and lances. (Bloch-Smith 2003: 419) If swords were too precious to be used by

that Yahweh made with mankind after the flood (*Gen.* 9:12–16), and it is perhaps reminiscent of the Babylonian epic of *Enuma Elish*, in which Marduk defeats Tiamat with his bow.[66] But in the passages where Yahweh is portrayed as a weather deity, we also find other weapons that are associated with the storm god of the Syrian area.

The weapons of the storm god were politically significant because of the storm god's position as the patron of kingship among the Semitic peoples and the central position of Aleppo – the international cult centre for the storm god for centuries – among the Syrian city states. While there can be no direct parallel between the Mari texts from the Old Babylonian period and Hebrew texts of the first millennium BCE, there are some texts that seem to indicate a shared cultural tradition. In particular, *Ps.* 2:7–9 presents the most striking parallel to Letter 1 from Mari:

יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי	Yahweh said unto me [the king]:
בְּנִי אַתָּה--אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלִדְתִּיךָ	You are my son, on this day I have begotten you.
שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי--וְאֶתְּנָה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתֶךָ	Ask of me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance,
וַאֲחֻזָּתְךָ אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ	And the ends of the earth as your possession.
תְּרֹעֵם בְּשֵׁבֶט בַּרְזֶל	You will break them with an iron rod.
כִּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תְּנַפְּצֵם	You will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. / You will dash them to pieces with a forged weapon.[67]

The battle between the storm god and the sea may also be alluded to in *Ps.* 89:14, 22, 26. These verses are especially fascinating in light of N. Wyatt's (1998) suggestion that the "hand and outstretched arm of Yahweh" could in some instances refer not simply to the extremities of the body, or to the symbolic use

men, it makes sense that one's god would be armed with such a weapon.

66 The sword, as well as the bow (Kang 1989: 41), was also heavily associated with Asshur. It may be that these examples betray Babylonian and Assyrian influence rather than Northwest Semitic influence. See Holloway (2002: 167) for a bibliography on the sword of Asshur.

See also Karner (2006), who associated the bow (תשק) of 2 Kgs 13:14–20 with a Neo-Assyrian ritual (K.3438a+9912//K.9923//K.10209). He calls this "König gegen Feind" ('King versus enemy'), in which the king performs a ritual ("Kriegsritual") involving a bow for the gods, ^{giš}*qassu*. In the passage of 2 Kings, the prophet Elisha performs a ritual in which the king is asked to lay his hand on a bow and the prophet lays his hand on the hand of the king. The bow may indeed be a strong contender for the divine weapon of the storm god in Iron Age Palestine. Note also that, according to Schwemer (2008a: 164), a bow was presented as a votive gift by the ruler of Elam to the storm god of Aleppo.

67 Cf. *Isa.* 54:17: כָּל-כְּלִי יוּצַר עָלַיִךְ לֹא יִצְלָח ('no weapon forged against you shall prosper'). Literally speaking, כְּלִי יוֹצֵר refers to an "item" of a "maker". In light of this passage, interpreting the term in the sense of a weapon in *Ps.* 2 as well makes a better parallelism to the "iron rod" of the previous line. The כ and ב -prepositions are notoriously easy to confuse. See *Isa.* 41:25–29 for a deconstruction of the motif. Translations of the Bible are based on the KJV.

of power, but to actual weapons.[68] The sea and the rivers of the passage certainly parallel the epithets of Baal's enemy "Prince Sea, Judge River" (*zbl ym, tpṭ nhr*) of the Ugaritic myth, over whom Yahweh here would allow the king to establish his weapons.[69]

לְךָ זְרוֹעַ עִם-גְּבוּרָה	Yours is an arm with might.
תָּעֹז יָדְךָ תָּרוּם יְמִינֶךָ	Your hand is strong, your right hand raised.
אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תְּכוֹן עִמּוֹ	With whom my hand is established,
אַף-זְרוֹעִי תְאַמְּצֶנּוּ	Also my arm shall strengthen him.
וְשַׂמְתִּי בַיָּם יָדוֹ	I will establish his hand on the sea
וּבַנְּהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ	And on the rivers his right hand.

In a similar vein, Lewis (2011) has suggested that the word "name" (*šēm*), in the sense of the divine name specifically, is employed as a weapon of ritual warfare in certain Biblical and Ugaritic texts. He presents as an example the passages from *Isa.* 30:27–33. In verse 27, we find the passage "Behold, the name of Yahweh (שֵׁם-יְהוָה) comes from afar, with burning nostrils (בֹּעֵר אַפּוֹ) and dense clouds of smoke (כֹּבֶד מַשָּׂאָה); his lips are full of wrath (שְׂפָתָיו מָלְאוּ זַעַם), and his tongue is a consuming fire (כְּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת)." Lewis (2011: 221) refers to this as a hypostatic use of the "Name of Yahweh".[70] While we clearly appear to be dealing with a theophany of the storm god,[71] the examples Lewis gives for interpreting שם־יהוה as a physical weapon, rather as an abstract or metaphoric notion of the power and authority inherent in the concept of the name (a "magic word" of sorts), seem somewhat less convincing than Wyatt's.[72]

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68 See also *Job* 26:13, where the word "hand" is paired with the verb חלל 'to pierce'. In this passage, the hand of Yahweh pierces the "fleeing serpent". *Isa.* 66:14–16 appears to use similar vocabulary. Verse 14 mentions the hand of Yahweh, verse 15 features a theophany of the storm god, and verse 16 mentions the sword of Yahweh (along with the verb for piercing, חלל).

69 Lewis (2011: 223) is also, with regard to the parallelism of sea and river in the Psalm, "reminded of Adad letting King Zimri-Lim use his divine weapons, the very weapons Adad used to defeat Tiamat".

70 Lewis also suggests that in the David and Goliath narrative (1 *Sam.* 17:45), for instance, the name is employed as a weapon per se. In this passage, the name of Yahweh is contrasted with sword (חרב), spear (חנית), and javelin (כידון). Cf. also *Ps.* 188:10–11, where the name of Yahweh is the used with the verb מלל 'to cut down'.

71 On Yahweh and the theophany of the storm god, see Müller (2008: 237–244).

72 This is not to say that his main thesis on the epithet 'Athtartu-Name-of-Ba'lu and the possibility of certain words containing effectual power when wielded by cultic functionaries or deities is not correct.

There are also allusions to the weapons of the storm god in many of the theophanies of the weather god in the Old Testament. For example, in *Isa.* 30:30 Yahweh is portrayed using thunder and lightning as his weapons:

וְהִשְׁמִיעַ יְהוָה אֵת-הוֹד קוֹלוֹ	And Yahweh will cause the majesty of his voice to be heard.[73]
וַנַּחַת זְרוֹעוֹ יֵרֵאָה בְּזַעַף אַף	And he will show the lightning down of his arm with furious anger
וְלַהַב אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה	and the flame of a devouring fire,
נָפֶץ וָזֶרֶם וְאֶבֶן בָּרָד	With a bursting of clouds, and a storm of rain, and hailstones.

The "word of fire", referring to the thunderous boom of the storm god's voice,[74] is depicted in various seals of the Syrian-Anatolian area as a vegetal outgrowth emanating from the god's mouth (Williams-Forte 1993: 187).[75] In iconography, in Biblical texts as well lightning sometimes proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh, while at other times it is described as his arm (Gerhard, Jr. 1966: 136). Other passages where Yahweh seems to be using thunder and lightning as weapons can be found (e.g. in 1 *Sam.* 7:10; 2 *Sam.* 22:14/*Ps.* 18:24;[76] and *Ps.* 29:3–5, in which the "voice of Yahweh" is upon the waters and in which Yahweh sits enthroned on the flood, reminiscent of the storm god's defeat of the monstrous sea in Ugaritic myth) (Müller 2008: 103–132). Williams-Forte (1993: 188) also makes a connection between the lightning-tree that the weather god is seen brandishing in Syrian iconography, and the "word of tree" (*rgm iṣ*) mentioned in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. KTU 1.3 III 22–23).[77] In the Baal-Cycle, the construction seems to

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73 Gerhard, Jr. (1966: 133) translates this as 'And the descent of his arm (?) shall be seen.' Contrast this with Wyatt's (1996) idea of Yahweh's outstretched arm as a weapon, but also with the iconographic motif of the god in the smiting position, as seen in the stele of *Baal au foudre*, where the weapon of the smiting storm god is the vegetal lightning-tree.

74 The Hebrew word קל ('voice') has also been connected with the sound of thunder and the theophany of the storm god by Gerhard, Jr. (1966: 133). On p. 134, he states that the poetic form (קל contra רעם) is used specifically to refer to thunder as the voice of the deity.

75 Williams-Forte (1993: 185) calls this the "tree breath".

76 This passage also makes mention of an actual weapon (e.g. arrows), juxtaposing them with lightning. According to Lewis (2011: 212), the word חץ designating both 'arrow' and 'lightning bolt' is a double entendre.

77 It is possible that the vegetal lightning-tree weapon is also referred to in a Kassite period Sumerian text (BM 6060:24) from the Nippur temple, which mentions ^{giš}*ku-ma-nu* 7 *û-mu ku* ^{d}AMAR.UTU-ak, 'the seven-pointed weapon of laurel wood, the storm of Marduk'. According to Langdon (1919: 340), the text displays clear Semitic influence. See also Kang (1989: 28) for discussion of the weapons of Ninurta, which also included a seven-bladed cutlass and a seven-headed mace (featured, for example, in the Gudea cylinder).

In another text, Marduk also fashions from the *kiškanu*-tree (date palm) and *e'ru*-wood a weapon to use against demons; this "mark of office, symbol of kingship, stands in the water-channel of a pure place, reaching to heaven with its arms" (UL 13–15, 124–126). See also Geller (2007: xv). In lines 249–251 of the incantation, a priest is told to hold the *e'ru*-wood sceptre in his left hand and the date palm in his right. Compare this to the UL 16 ritual for the king, where the

be used as a part of a message formula, with the messages between the deities Baal and Anat being prefaced by several lines of repeated text. Williams-Forte suggests that "the word of tree and whisper of stone"[78] may refer to thunder and lightning, and thereby to Baal's weapon.[79] The "word of fire" is mentioned in *Jer.* 23:29, which also seems to allude to the smiting weapon of the storm god:

הֲלוֹא כֹה דְבָרִי כָּאֵשׁ נְאֻם-יְהוָה Is not my word thus like fire? Said Yahweh,
וּכְפַטִּישׁ יְפֹצֵץ סָלַע And like a hammer that breaks the rock?

As to the archaeological evidence from the area of Palestine, no discernible discontinuity is seen between the material cultures of the Northwest Semitic "Canaanites" of the Bronze Age and the "Israelites" of the Iron Age.[80] It is also widely accepted that before the cultic centralisation, there were a lot of local shrines in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The question then remains whether any of these shrines or sanctuaries housed divine weapons in the way found in the Mesopotamian and Syrian traditions discussed above. Indeed, several prestige weapons have been discovered in excavations in the area of Palestine, some even

priest (and Marduk as his heavenly counterpart) is told to make noise with the *e'ru*-wood sceptre in order to cast out the storm demons.

78 Lewis (2011: 215) advocates translating *rgm iṣ* as 'incantation of stone', believing wood and stone to be "manipulatives". It is unclear from the context whether this means that they are being manipulated or they are used as a means to manipulate something. He also connects "word of wood" with incantation vocabulary, stating that it has a "magical quality to it".

79 Tree and stone are also found as a parallel pair in several Biblical texts (Watson 1972: 465). Cf. *Jer.* 2:27 ("Those who are saying to a tree, 'you are my father', and to a stone, 'you have brought me forth'"), *Isa.* 37:19 (2 *Kgs.* 19:18) and 60:17 ("Under the trees I will bring brass, under the stones I will bring iron."); 2. *Sam.* 5:11; *Ex.* 31:5; 35:33; *Ez.* 28:14; and *Hab.* 2:11, 19 ("Woe unto him that says to a tree 'Awake!', to a mute stone 'Arise!' Shall it teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all inside it."). In this curious passage, the "tree" and "stone" seem to be covered in precious metals and they are used for instruction of some sort. Considering the traditions discussed here, the passage may well refer to a practice of using the spear ("tree") and the mace ("stone") in litigation, with the prophet admonishing against the primitive practice. The context of most of the Biblical references seems to betray a pre-monotheistic animistic or polytheistic cultic setting, which is being criticized. Another reference for the use of this word pair might be in מַצֵּבָה and אֲשֵׁרָה. According to Archi (1998: 20), the stone stelae of 3rd millennium BCE Ebla were decorated with metals, and metal objects were used in the cult of the stelae. Of course, it must be admitted that tree and stone likely functioned as a simple poetic parallel pair and may allude to nothing but the elements.

80 See Bloch-Smith (2003) for discussion.

in cultic contexts.[81] The weapon finds include daggers, javelin points and spear heads, blades, and arrow heads.[82] (Bloch-Smith 2003: 418)

There is a passage in 1 *Sam.* 31:10 that suggests that the dedication of weapons to temples was not unheard of, and was thought to be practiced at least among the neighbouring peoples:[83]

וַיָּשִׂמוּ אֶת-כֵּלָיו בֵּית	And they set his [Saul's] weapons in the
עַשְׁתָּרוֹת	house of Astarte
וְאֶת-גְּוִיָּתוֹ תָּקְעוּ בְּחוֹמַת	And they fastened his body on the walls of
בֵּית שָׁן	Beth-Shean.

Kang (1989: 221) has connected the above passage to the Apology of Hattusili III (46–47), in which the king places his weapon in the sanctuary of a goddess.[84]

According to Vidal (2011: 248, 250), the placing of ordinary weapons in sanctuaries was one of the ways in which a weapon could become a prestige weapon. There are several weapons of this kind (votive weapons, which may have been regarded as divine weapons) that have actually been found on the Levantine littoral. For example, golden axes were discovered in the Bronze Age Temple of the Obelisks at Byblos. Prestige or votive weapons have also been found from the city of Ugarit, but it is difficult to ascertain whether an actual divine weapon is included among them. The Byblian temple was also dedicated to Astarte, giving the Biblical passage some archaeological context. Unfortunately, weapons – let alone prestige weapons – found in the area of Palestine have not been systematically catalogued so far, but information on them has to be extracted from individual excavation reports.[85] While weapons have also been found at virtually

81 See Biran (1989) and the sceptre of Tel Dan (IAA 2008-1840). The sceptre head is all the more interesting for the fact that it resembles forked lightning, while it has usually been interpreted as portraying a horned altar. Also relevant to this article is the vegetal sceptre head from Qiryat Shemona (IAA 2009-1461). There are also several sceptres from the Iron Age made either of bronze or bone, which are decorated with a pomegranate (i.e. vegetal) head. Such sceptres have been found from Achzib, Tel Sera, Lachish, and Tel Nami. See Avigad (1989) and Artzy (1990).

82 Waldbaum (1978) has tabulated weapons found in Palestine between the 12th and 10th centuries, but the work is unquestionably dated. She also categorizes as non-weapons objects that may have been used as weapons (such as axes, adzes, sickles, tridents, and picks).

83 See also David's taking of the sword of Goliath to the sanctuary of Mizpah in 1 *Sam.* 21:8–9. While it is difficult to ascertain the ethnicity of a weapon in archaeological records, Biblical and Egyptian accounts seem to impress the heavily armed nature of the Philistines (Bloch-Smith 2003: 416).

84 Kang (1989: 221) refers to it as II:46–47, which is probably the same as §7:42–44. He quotes Hoffner's translation in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (30: 224–226): "The weapon which I wielded then I (afterward) dedicated and I placed it before the goddess my lady (=in her sanctuary)." Moreover, the sign of the goddess Ishtar is employed in the cuneiform text.

85 See Bloch-Smith (2003: 417, n. 55) for a list of individual publications. On p. 419, she also of-

every site excavated, few have been published so far. (Bloch-Smith 2003: 418) In discussion of the weapons, the focus also seems to be on the question of ethnicity and distinguishing between Philistine and Israelite material remains. A reconsideration of extant evidence in light of the traditions discussed here could, however, yield some interesting results.

What can be deduced from the above examples is that few direct textual parallels exist between the Old Babylonian and Biblical texts when it comes to mention of the storm god's divine weapons, with regard to the ancient Near Eastern traditions discussed in this article. But the Biblical passages do seem to draw from similar mythic imagery as the earlier traditions, making use of shared iconic constellations of the storm god and his *Chaoskampf*, which is also the context where we find the storm god's divine weapons portrayed in the iconographic sources discussed above.

5. SUMMARY

Weapons feature prominently in ancient Near Eastern mythological texts in connection with various gods. The weapons of the storm god Baal play a pivotal role in his defeat of the sea god Yamm in the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle, and Marduk uses his bow to finish off the monster Tiamat. Texts from the Old Babylonian period onwards give us a rather clear picture of what divine weapons were used for. The weapons were housed in temples and their main function was to witness, for example, oaths, judgements, and the sealing of documents. They also had a number of symbolic functions, for which they could be paraded out of the temples either in celebration or before marching armies. The use of divine weapons in the coronation ceremonies of kings has also been proposed. Mentions of the divine weapons of the storm god of Aleppo in the two texts from the royal archives of the ancient city of Mari have especially been connected with the concept of a coronation ceremony. It is the opinion of the author that the other mundane uses for divine weapons in the Old Babylonian period should not be discarded out of hand when discussing the storm god's weapons in the Mari texts, especially since the textual evidence from the period seems overwhelmingly to favour these other uses for the weapons.

Divine weapons are also a standard feature of the iconographies of ancient Near Eastern deities. Indeed, they are one of the main clues by which we can

fers a table of 12th to 10th century weapon finds from Philistine and Israelite sites. While they do not focus on votive or prestige weapons, see Yadin (1963). For a more recent overview of weapons in the archaeological records in the area of Palestine, see Rodriquez (2010) and Emery (1999).

tell different divinities from one another. Iconographic evidence from the Syrian area, as well as from the temple of the storm god on the Aleppo citadel, seems to suggest that the weapons of the storm god in the Old Babylonian period were portrayed as a mace and a spear. Divine weapons, the weapons of the storm god among them, are not only featured in texts and iconography, but they are also witnessed in the archaeological record. There are inscribed weapons, precious weapons, and weapons discovered in temple compounds that present us with physical manifestations of what the divine weapons (mentioned in the texts and depicted in iconographies) actually represented in the real world. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a divine weapon and an ordinary weapon in the archaeological record. Not all prestige weapons made of precious materials were intended to be used as divine weapons. There also seem to have been ways in which quite ordinary seeming weapons could be consecrated as divine weapons. The author has proposed four conditions that a weapon should meet in order to be considered as a divine weapon. These include precious materials being used in the making of the weapons, their discovery in cultic sites, inscriptions on the weapons dedicating them to deities, and other features which might make the weapons unsuitable for normal human use. It is from the examination of divine weapons in general that we may be able to garner information on the actual weapons housed in the temple of the storm god in Aleppo, for which only textual and iconographic evidence remains.

Divine weapons are also mentioned in a number of Biblical texts. While some texts betray Babylonian and Assyrian influence, others also seem to borrow from a common Northwest Semitic cultural milieu, one of the central motifs of which was the storm god's battle with the sea. The storm god's *Chaoskampf* is the ideological foundation of these allusions to divine weapons in the Old Testament. But can a corresponding physical manifestation of the concept be found on the Levantine littoral in pre-exilic times? Prestige weapons have been found in the area of Palestine (with one such example even being located in a cultic context at Tel Dan). In light of the texts and the archaeological finds, both from the Old Babylonian era and the "Biblical" Iron Age, it seems quite possible that divine weapons could also have been used in a similar fashion (i.e. to witness oaths, to affect judicial authority, and even to sanction military undertakings) in the emergent monarchies in Israel and Judah.

This article has discussed the functions of the divine weapons of the storm god, which manifested both as symbolic uses and actual uses (e.g. as a military standard or as an object for the taking of oaths). I began by examining the textual evidence for the storm god's weapons, which has been preserved for us in the form of mythological texts, administrative documents, and letters. While it is mostly

through textual sources that we know of the functions of the divine weapons, they were real weapons, the most famous of which were the weapons of the storm god housed in the temple of Aleppo. While the weapons of the storm god of Aleppo themselves have not been found, archaeological and iconographic evidence for divine weapons has allowed us to speculate on their properties and characteristics. In this article, I have focused mostly on evidence from the Syrian area. Yet weapons are also found in connection with weather god imagery in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. I have examined several passages that seem to employ images of weaponry characteristic of the storm god of the Syrian area. I found no direct textual parallels between the Old Babylonian and Biblical texts, but there are enough similarities to warrant a suggestion that the Biblical passages may ultimately have been influenced by the rich and expansive mythology surrounding the storm god of Aleppo.

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APPENDIX

Letter 1 (A.1968:1–4')[86]

a-na be-lí-ia qí-bí-ma	To my lord say:
um-ma nu-úr-^{d}*su'en ìr-ka-a-ma*	"Thus Nur-Sin, your servant:
^{l}*a-bi-ia a-pí-lum ša* ^{d}IM *be-el ḫa-la-a*[*b*^{ki}]	Abiya, the prophet of Addu, the Lord of Alep[po],
il-li-kam-ma ki-a-am iq-bé-e-em	he came to me and thus he said:
um-ma-a-mi ^{d}IM-*ma ma-a-tam*4 (TUM)	'Says Adad: "The land, in its entirety
ka-la-ša	I had given to Yahdun-Lim,
a-na ia-aḫ-du-li-im ad-di-in	
ù i-na ^{giš}tukul.*meš-ia ma-ḫi-ra-am ú-ul ir-ši*	and with my weapons, an equal he did not encounter,
i-ia-tam i-zi-ib-ma ma-a-tam ša	(yet when) he abandoned me, the land
ad-di-nu-šu[*m*]	which I had given hi[m],
a-na sa-am-si-^{d}IM *ad-*[*di-i*]*n*	I g[av]e to Šamši-Adad
[...^{l}]*sa-am-si-*^{d}IM	[...] Šamši-Adad
(lacuna)	(lacuna)
lu-t[*e-e*]*r-ka a-na* ^{giš}[*gu.za* É *a-bi-ka*]	–let me r[e]store you! On the [throne of the house of your father]
ú-te-er-ka ^{giš}tukul.[*meš*]	I returned you, the weapon[s]
ša it-ti te-em-tim am-ta-aḫ-ṣú	with which I struck the sea
ad-di-na-ak-kum	I have given you"'"

Letter 2 (A.1858)[87]

a-na be-lí-ia	To my lord
qí-bí-ma	say:
um-ma su-mu-i-la	"Thus Sumuila,
ìr-ka-a-ma	your servant:
^{giš}*tukul-ḫi-a ša* ^{d}IM	'The weapons of Adad
ša ḫa-la-ab$^{[ki]}$	of Aleppo
ik-šu-du-nim-m[*a*]	have reached [me],
i-na É ^{d}*Da-gan*	in the temple of Dagan
i-na Ter-qa^{ki}	in Terqa
ka-le-ek-šu-nu-ti	I will keep them.
a-na ki-ma be-lí i-ša-pa-ra-am	As my lord writes to me,
lu-pu-uš	let it be done!'"

86 Only the pertinent lines have been translated. For a full transliteration, translation, and facsimile, see Durand (1993: 43– 45).

87 Published (as A.3597) by Durand (1995: 306).