

secondly, his victorious return from battle to his new temple on his newly-won mount, and his enthronement as king there<sup>355</sup>. Therefore, Yahweh is supreme over other divine beings<sup>356</sup>.

Wyatt suggests that the formula of Ps 29.1–2 has been altered from an “older text” in which the “gods”, rather than the “people” in a liturgical setting in the temple, were originally invoked to sing, as seen in Job 38.7 and Ps 8.3<sup>357</sup>.

From the evidence of these parallels, Holladay implies that “there was in Syria-Palestine a shared cultural tradition of poetry-building that included both the Canaanites in the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.E.) or earlier, from whom we have the Ugaritic texts, and the Israelites who had settled in the land of Canaan by a time just before 1200 B.C.E., from whom we have early Hebrew poetry, including early psalms”<sup>358</sup>. Thus it may be concluded that the psalm reflects the early theology of Syro-Palestinian religions in regard to the divine kingship and lesser deities.

#### 2.2.4. *Daniel 7.10b*

In the vision of Daniel the entities of lesser deities may be portrayed:

אלף אלפים ישמשוהו A thousand (upon) thousands<sup>359</sup> were serving<sup>360</sup> him;

<sup>355</sup> Cross (1973: 155–6).

<sup>356</sup> Cf. Exod 15.11; Deut 3.24; 1 Kgs 8.23; Ps 86.8; 95.3; 96.4; 97.7, 9; 103.20 and 21, etc. With a similar aspect, the Ugaritic god El appears also as the supreme king ruling over other lesser deities, who are represented as his “sons”.

<sup>357</sup> Wyatt (1996: 349).

<sup>358</sup> Holladay (1993: 21). Fensham (1963a: 96) interestingly suggests that it may be adopted for a missionary purpose: “there exists a possibility that this psalm was intended as a missionary poem to make proselytes of Canaanites or as an evangelizing psalm to convert an apostate Israelite from a servant of Baal to a worshipper of Yahweh”.

<sup>359</sup> Qere reads the text as a plural (אלפין), whilst Kethib takes it as a dual (אלפים).

<sup>360</sup> The tenses of ישמשוהו (pacl, impf.) and יקומו (peal, impf.) are suggested here as habitual; thus, translated as continuous actions: S. R. Driver (1900: 86

ורבו רבון קדמוהי יקומון and a myriad (upon) myriads were  
standing<sup>361</sup> before him.  
דינא יתב The court<sup>362</sup> was seated.

In these Aramaic passages the members of the divine assembly are described in a poetic device; thus, the countless number of divine beings denotes a cosmic multitude of the divine assembly<sup>363</sup>.

These numerous divine beings “stand” (יקומון, in v. 10b) before the “Ancient of Days” (עתיק יומין) who “sits” (יתב, in v. 9a) on “his throne” (כרסיה, in v. 9b). The Ancient of Days or Yahweh<sup>364</sup> is presid-

and cf. 49); and cf. NASB. It may express the constant service of the lesser deities to their master god.

<sup>361</sup> The יקומון represents their attendance in the council: S. R. Driver (1900: 86); NAB; NJPS; and NRSV.

<sup>362</sup> The Aram. דין denotes “judgment” (*CHALOT* 402; *HALOT* 1852). Yet it seems to be used here in a sense of *judges* with the יתב, to “sit, be seated”. LXX reads as κριτήριον, “court”. It may connote the other divine members of the court of judgement, held by Yahweh (cf. Ps 82.1).

<sup>363</sup> These numerous divine figures indicate the “vast angelic bureaucracy” which are related closely to the “ten thousands of holy ones” in Deut 33.2 (also cf. 1 Kgs 22.19; Jer 33.22; Zech 14.5), identified as other “gods” of the divine assembly and “later become the ‘angels’” (Jude 14): cf. Wyatt (1996: 395 n. 40). During the transformation of the polytheistic view into the theology of “monotheism”, their identity as the “gods” in the bureaucratic pantheon seems to have been replaced with that as the “angels” with their absolute master god.

<sup>364</sup> Whilst Persian influence has been suggested as to the עתיק יומין, Ugaritic reference has been linked also for evidence of its origin. Eissfeldt (1965: 525) suggests that the conception of the עתיק יומין is adopted from a Syrian mythological background. Hence it has been related to the Ugaritic phrase *mlk ab šnm* (KTU 1.1 iii 24; [1.2 iii 5]; [1.3 v 8]; 1.4 iv 24; [1.5 vi 2]; 1.6 i 36; 1.17 vi 49), translated as the “King, Father of years”: Porteous (1965: 107); Gibson (1978: 53). However, the phrase is best translated as the “King, Father of Bright Ones” (sc. Father of lesser deities; cf. Oldenburg, 1969: 17–8), whose meaning cultivates incongruence for a semantic comparison with the current Hebrew phrase. Further discussion of the *ab šnm* shall be made in Chapter II. Although the Ugaritic references are irrelevant, there are still many other possibilities in Dan 7 to admit the Ugaritic mythological influence (Emerton,

ing over the judicial assembly<sup>365</sup>. He sits on his own throne as the judge. Then other divine entities are portrayed as attending the court of judgement, held by their supreme god.

Whilst the members of the divine legal “court” (רִינָא) “sit” (יָתֵב, in v. 10b), other divine beings “stand” (קָאִמִּיאַ, in v. 16a; cf. Dan 7.16)<sup>366</sup>. The positions of “sitting” and “standing” explicitly act as nonverbal indications, designating the rank between the higher deities and the lesser<sup>367</sup>. The scene of the divine assembly is pictured very similarly to that of 1 Kgs 22.19. Thus, numberless servant deities of Yahweh in the text represent clearly the fact that they are the lesser deities of Yahweh.

### Summary

The rank of lesser deities in the divine assembly in the Hebrew Bible corroborates the hierarchical structure of the divine assembly, which consists of the supreme god and his lesser deities. As in the Ugaritic texts, the divine rank of lesser deities in the Hebrew Bible is distinguished also by non-verbal indicators: e.g., the lesser deities’ standing posture in the heavenly council (Deut 33.2–3; 1 Kgs 22.19–22 [= 2 Chr 18.18–21]; Ps 29; and Daniel 7.10b).

### CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER I

The Ugaritic conception that lesser deities are members of the divine assembly is also found in the Hebrew Bible. This apparent polytheistic setting of Ugaritic and Hebrew descriptions implies the fact that the divine assembly consists of the supreme god and other lesser gods and

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1958). Therefore, the עֲתִיק יוֹמִין is identified, most possibly, as “Yahweh”: Zevit (1968: 392).

<sup>365</sup> In v. 9, the phrase בָּרִסוֹן רַמְיָו, “thrones were placed” (the רַמְיָו: the Piel, pf. 3. masc. pl. form of the Aram. √רַמַּה, to “throw, place”: HALOT 1982. Cf. Heb. רָמוּה: BDB 941; GHLOTS 770; HALOT 431) indicates the judicial characteristic of the divine council.

<sup>366</sup> It may denote the fact that there are two levels of lesser deities: higher deities participating in the court as its members and other lesser deities serving Yahweh.

<sup>367</sup> The divine judge may arise only when he gives the sentence (cf. Ps 82.1).