UGARITIC POETRY AND HABAKKUK 3*

David Toshio Tsumura

A major methodological problem confronts anyone wishing to relate the Ancient Near Eastern texts to the Old Testament. control needs to be established over matters such as genre and the material's purpose. Unfortunately, there is some evidence that scholars have tended to 'biblicize ancient Near Eastern documents before they are compared with OT materials'.[1] The Assyriologist H. W. F. Saggs claimed 'Old Testament form critics, from Gunkel himself to the present time, have made quite considerable use. . . of Assyro-Babylonian and other ancient Near Eastern material, without prior form-critical study of these sources',[2] while the Egyptologist K. A. Kitchen attempted to present a 'genuine' form-critical study of the Old Testament Book of Proverbs in the context of Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature.[3]

J. M. Sasson has suggested that 'it is imperative that the literature of each culture be appreciated on its own merits' before it is compared with the biblical material.[4] Whenever 'relationship', 'connection', 'association', 'correspondence', 'parallelism', 'similarity' etc. are discussed between them, as Kitchen notes, 'it is necessary to deal individually and on its own merits with each possible or alleged case of relationship or borrowing by making a detailed comparison of the full available data from both the Old Testament and the Ancient Orient and by noting the results'.[5]

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[1] J. M. Sasson, 'On Relating "Religious" Texts to the Old Testament', *MAARAV* 3/2 (1982) 223.

[2] H. W. F. Saggs, *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London, 1978) 12.

[3] K. A. Kitchen, 'Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: the Factual History of a Literary Form', *TynB* 28 (1977) 69-114; 'The Basic Literary Forms and Formulations of Ancient Instructional Writings in Egypt and Western Asia', in E. Hornung, O. Keel (edd.), *Studien zu Altägyptischen Lebenslehren* (Fribourg/Göttingen, 1979) 23682.

[4] Sasson, 'On Relating "Religious" Texts' 224.

[5] K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago, 1966) 87f.

However, when we come to the matter of the relationship between Ugaritic literature and the Old Testament, the comparison is basically between different genres of literature. As the late Ugaritologist P. C. Craigie noted,

Ugaritic has provided no prophetic poetry. It has left us no unambiguous examples of psalmody, with the exception of those passages which might be identified as originally hymnic, but have survived only through integration within different and larger literary forms (myth or legend), and it has no extensive examples of literary narrative prose. This observation is important, for it means that virtually all Hebrew—Ugaritic comparative studies involve the comparison of *different* literary forms.[6]

Consequently, in assessing the relationship between Ugaritic poetry and Habakkuk, the same literary problem exists. It has become almost customary in modern scholarship to hold that Habakkuk 3 was *influenced* by Ugaritic poetry.[7] It may be questioned whether this pays due attention to the difference in their literary genre.

While Gunkel's line of argument from the viewpoint of the Mesopotamian Marduk—Tiamat myth was developed by W. A. Irwin,[8] a majority of scholars see in Habakkuk 3 a *Canaanite—Ugaritic* influence. For example, Cassuto suggests that Habakkuk contains reminiscences of the myth of the conflict between Yahweh and the primordial dragon Sea or River.[9] He says, 'despite the successive changes of thought, the literary tradition is preserved in all its details'.[10] Thus, he finds an allusion to Baal's club *aymr*, with which he

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[6] P. C. Craigie, 'Ugarit and the Bible: Progress and Regress in 50 Years of Literary Study', in G. D. Young (ed.), *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, 1981) 107.

[7] The history of research on the so-called *Chaoskampf*-motif in Habakkuk 3 has been thoroughly surveyed by P. Jöcken: *Das Buch Habakuk: Darstellung der Geschichte seiner kritischen Erforschung mit einer eigenen Beurteilung* (Köln-Bonn, 1977) 290-313.

[8] W. A. Irwin, 'The Psalm of Habakkuk', *JNES* 1 (1942) 10-40.

[9] U. Cassuto, 'Chapter III of Habakkuk and the Ras Shamra Texts', *Biblical & Oriental Studies II: Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts* (Jerusalem, 1975) 3-15. Cf. W. F. Albright, 'The Psalm of Habakkuk,' in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (Edinburgh, 1950) 2f.

[10] Cassuto, 'Chapter III of Habakkuk' 13.

defeated Yam in KTU 1.2 in the word *'ōmer* end of the
problematic Habakkuk 3:9. H. G. May recognizes in the ex-
pression 'many waters' (v.15) 'the "rivers" and the "sea" which
Yahweh fights and conquers, even as Baal struggled with Sea
and River in the Ugaritic myth'.[11] Wakeman, after altering
the term *nhrym* into *nhr-m*, holds the view that 'only Hab iii 8
reflects the myth *directly'*,[12] although she admits that *ym* and
nhr appear frequently as a poetic cliché.

     J. Day in his recent book also argues that the imagery of
the divine conflict with the dragon and the sea is Canaanite
and not Babylonian in origin.[13] He suggests that Habakkuk 3
contains a number of mythological allusions which have their
background in Baal mythology. For example, according to him,
Habakkuk 3:9 makes an 'allusion/reference to Yahweh's seven
arrows'[14] and thus Yahweh's seven thunders and lightnings are
attested there, like Baal's seven lightnings in KTU 1.101[UT
603]: 3b-4 (RS 24.245 lines 3b-4).[15] He also holds that 'the allu-
sion to Resheph's participation in the conflict with chaos has
its ultimate background in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.82.1-3'.[16]

     It is important to note here that J. Day uses terms like
'allusion' and 'reference' not just on the matter of literary ex-
pressions, but for the phenomena which he claims to be behind
the expressions. Thus, he uses the term 'reference' for a natural
phenomenon in the phrase such as 'reference to Yahweh's seven
shafts or arrows of lightning, comparable to his seven thunders
depicted in Psalm 29'.[17] On the other hand, M. H. Pope, for
example, uses the term 'reference' in an entirely different way

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[11] H. G. May, 'Some Cosmic Connotations of *MAYIM RABIMM*, "Many Waters"',
JBL 74 (1955) 10. Cf. S. Rummel (ed.), *Ras Shamra Parallels* [=RSP] III (Rome,
1981) 376.

[12] M. K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical
Imagery* (Leiden, 1973) 93 (italics by the present writer).

[13] J . Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite
myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, 1985) 1.

[14] Day, *God's Conflict* 146.

[15] Day, *God's Conflict* 106f.

[16] J. Day, 'New Light on the Mythological Background of the Allusion to
Resheph in Habakkuk III 5', *VT* 29 (1979) 353-5.

[17] Day, *God's Conflict* 106f.

for a literary phenomenon, as in the phrase 'a reference to the myth of the victory of Baal over the sea-god Yamm.'.[18]

At this stage, it may be helpful to note the fact that scholars have seen the reflection of two or three different versions of the Baal Myth in Habakkuk 3. For example, Habakkuk 3:8-10, 15 has been said to reflect one version of the Baal myth, the 'Baal-Yam myth', while Habakkuk 3:5 has been taken as reflecting the other version, the 'Baal-Tnn myth', based on a rather broken text. And those who accept Albright's emendation of the text in v. 13 find a third version, the 'Baal-Mot myth' as the background of Habakkuk 3.[19] Therefore what scholars have done in terms of comparative study of Ugaritic texts and Habakkuk 3 is not really a comparison of two literary wholes from two cultures, but an *ad hoc* comparison of several fragments of Ugaritic myths and a part of the Old Testament prophetic literature.

In comparative studies of Ugaritic mythology and Old Testament literature in general too much emphasis has been given to similarity or 'fact' of sameness[20] in form and no clear distinction has been made between the synchronic and the comparative-diachronic is approach. For example, G. E. Wright says:

The vocabulary of the nature myths of Canaan was used extensively but it was set in a historical context.'[21] 'Here [Ps. 74:12-14] the old Canaanite myth of creation has been transferred to Yahweh. . . the

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[18] Cf. M. H. Pope, *Job* (Anchor Bible; New York, 1973) 70 for Job 9:8.

[19] Thus Wakeman says, 'Should this [Albright's] reading be accepted, it [Habakkuk 3:13] would be the only *direct* reference to a conflict between Yahweh and Mot' (italics by the present writer). Cf. Wakeman, *God's Battle* 108.

[20] Whenever we talk about the sameness of two items in a certain language, we must, ask the question: in what sense and why(?) for in many cases the 'sameness' is only superficial and even 'fictional'. It is meaningful to talk about the sameness between X and Y only when their differences are clearly identified. In this aspect, the degree of sameness or dissimilarity (difference) is more important than the fact that sameness exists. This is all the more true when we try to identify the same expressions in two languages. For there is no reason why the same form should always have the same meaning even in two cognate languages. Cf. Arthur Gibson, *Biblical Semantic Logic* (Oxford, 1981) 140 and 24.

[21] G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts* (London, 1952) 48.

myth was historicized and used metaphorically to describe Yahweh's great victories in history.[22]

However, there is no evidence that the entire myth of ancient Canaan was transfered to the Bible by means of the so-called historicization. It is virtually only in the poetical texts that those 'similar' materials appear and they usually constitute a group of words or phrases, never sentences or discourses.

It is a general rule that synchronic study should precede diachronic one in any linguistic or literary study. For example, the nature of metaphor[23] in a poetic language should be considered on a synchronic basis before a literature is treated comparatively. In the following, I try to deal contextually with the verses which are often said to have their background in Ugaritic mythology.

I. Yhwh versus the Sea (Habakkuk 3:8)

It has long been suggested by many Old Testament scholars that this passage reflects the Hebrew counterpart of the Canaanite *Chaos-kampf* motif in the Ugaritic Baal—Yamm myth. For example, Cassuto finds in this verse 'an echo of the ancient Canaanite concepts, although indirect': '"River" and "sea" remind us of "the Prince of the Sea" and of "the Judge of the River" against whom Baal fought.'[24] While Wakeman admits that *ym* and *nhr* appear frequently as a poetic cliché, she holds the view that only Habakkuk 3:8 'reflects the myth directly, mentioning the wrath of God and his preparations for battle.'[25] Albright, in order to recognize here a personified 'River', emends MT *hbnhrym* to *hbnhrm* [habnāhārem]. Thus, he

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[22] G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament Against its Environment* (London, 1957) 27.
[23] According to Gibson, 'Metaphor is (roughly) the transference of an expression from one semantic domain to another, which involves the preservation of words but a change in their value(s)', *Biblical Semantic Logic* 27.
[24] Cassuto, 'Chapter III of Habakkuk' 11.
[25] Wakeman, *God's Battle* 93. Also Caster, May, Reymond, Habel, Schmidt, and Cross. Cf. *RSP* III 375.

finds here the direct Hebrew counterpart of the Ugaritic myth of Baal against *nhr* (iver) and *ym* (Sea).[26]
         Eaton seem to go one step further and recognize here the actual beginning of storm. Thus he says:

The storm has broken, and it is as though the heavenly power with cloud and rain and thunder-bolts fights against rivers and seas which for their part leap and rage against their ancient adversary. As often in Hebrew poetry, the angry waters here represent all opposition to God while the unleashing of heaven's tempest signals God's power and will to subdue such opposition that there may be salvation, the victory of life.[27]

Eaton assumes here the actual storm and personifies the storm and the water (rivers and seas), the natural phenomena and describes them as the opposing powers which fight against each other. But his assumption has no support from the text. Moreover he uses metaphors, 'angry waters' and 'heaven's tempest', to refer to the supernatural powers. However, unlike Psalm 46, in Habakkuk 3 it is Yahweh who gets angry, not the waters. Furthermore, Habakkuk 3:8-10, seems to represent not just 'God's power and will to subdue' but the actual and once for all subjection.
         Let us examine the Hebrew text:

nəhārîm // yām

         The 'sea' (*ym*) and the 'river' (*nhr*) is a well known word pair common to Hebrew and Ugarit, which M. Dahood discusses in *Ras Shamra Parallels* 1.[28] It is significant to note, however, that out of 18 biblical references cited, only Habakkuk 3:8 (*nəhārîm // yām*) and Isaiah 50:2 (*yām // nəhārôt*) have a motif of salvation or destruction. Moreover, only Habakkuk 3:8 has *nəhārîm* (m.pl.); others are either in singular (*nāhār*) or feminine

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[26] Albright, 'The Psalm of Habakkuk' 11. Cf. page 15 note y: 'This word stands for older *ha-ba-n h(a)ri-mi*.'

[27] J . H. Eaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (London, 1961) 113.

[28] M. Dahood, 'Ugaritic—Hebrew Parallel Pairs', *RSP* I (Rome, 1972) 203.

plural form (*nəhārôt*).[29] As for the Ugaritic pair, *ym // nhr*,
all but one of the examples cited refer to Baal's enemy, the god
Sea and River (in sg.). However, the lone pair *ym // nhrm*
(KTU 1.3 [ᶜnt]:VI:5-6 [broken text], KTU 1.4 [UT 51]:11:6-7 [on
Asherah]), which is the exact counterpart, in form, of the pair
in Habakkuk 3:8, though in reverse order, does not appear in
the conflict scene.

Hence if Habakkuk 3:8 is a *direct* transfer of the
Ugaritic pair of the conflict scene, *yām // nāhār* would have been
expected. The fact that Habakkuk has a rather unusual pair
nəhārîm //yām—which corresponds to the Ugaritic word pair *ym
nhrm* of the non-conflict scene—may suggest that the author
used it on purpose for describing an entirely different reality
from the Baal-Yamm mythology. It may be that Habakkuk
borrowed not from the Ugaritic thought-world but from a south
Canaanite centre unknown to us and the words may have been
used there in the way that is assumed. Or, 'sea' and 'river' had
been a traditional pair in the ancient Semitic languages[30] and
Habakkuk may have simply used this word pair
metaphorically for describing the 'enemy' of Yahweh and his
people without direct association with the *Chaoskampf* motif.

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[29] *5 references to geographical terms such as the Euphrates.
*13 references which are to be analyzed as follows:

Dahood	Hebrew Texts
ym // nhr	*ymym // nhrwt* (Ps. 24: 2, Ezek. 32:2)
	ym // nhrwt (Ps. 89:26, Isa. 50:2, Ps. 98:7-8)
	ymym // nhr (Jon. 2:4)— cf. Ps. 46:3-5
	ym // nhr (Ps. 66:6, 72:8, 80:12, Isa. 11:15, 19:5)
nhr // ym	*nhr // gly hym* (Isa. 48:18)
	nhrym // ym (Hab. 3:8)

[30] Note an Akkadian equivalent of this pair, *ti-a-am-ta* 'sea' // *na-ra-am*
'river' (Atra-Hasis III:iv:5-6) in W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Ḥasis:
the Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969) 96-7. Cf. the Ugaritic
pantheon lists where the Ugaritic god ym corresponds to the Akkadian *tâmtum*
(ᵈA.AB.BA). Note also that the Sumerian term ab-a 'ocean, sea' corresponds to
ti-àma-tum /tihām(a)tum/ (MEE 4, 79:r.III:8'-9') 'sea' (cf. Heb. *thwm*) as well
as to *bù-la-tum /purattum/* (MEE 4, 63-64:v.III:18-19) 'river' (cf. Heb. *prt*) in the
Sumerian-Eblaite bilingual texts from Ebla. Cf. G. Pettinato, *Testi Lessicali
Bilingui della Biblioteca* L. 2769 (Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla 4; Napoli, 1982)
98 and 83. See my forthcoming article, 'Ugaritic *ym // nhr* in the Light of
Eblaite', *Orientalia*..

mrkbt 'chariots'

Day[31] finds 'a further mythological allusion' in Habakkuk 3:8, 15 where he reads of 'Yahweh's horses drawing his (cloud-) chariot in connection with his victory over the sea'. He says, 'since it is probably . . . Baal mythology which underlies the mythological allusions in Hab. 3, it is horses drawing his (cloud-) chariot'. Then Day refers to Apollodorus (*The Library* 1.6.3) who records the battle between Zeus and the serpent or dragon Typhon, in which 'Zeus . . . suddenly appeared in the sky on a chariot drawn by winged horses'. Since part of the battle takes place on Mt. Casius, i.e. Mt Zaphon,[32] he thinks that 'we here have to do with traditions going back ultimately to Baal' and he conjectures that 'Baal, like Zeus in the Typhon conflict, had winged horses drawing his cloud-chariot'. However, his evidence is rather thin. For one thing, a Greek myth is rather indirect proof of winged horses and the Song of Ullikummis (ANET 121-5), which Day says lies behind the Greek myth,[33] has no reference to wings on the horses. His evidence is not drawn from the Baal—Yamm myth itself, which does not mention Baal's chariot explicitly, but only refers to his epithet *rkb 'rpt* 'Rider of Clouds'.[34] Also, there is no description of Baal riding his chariots or horses in the extant Ugaritic corpus.[35]

Day goes on to say:

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[31] Day, *God's Conflict* 107.

[32] Where Baal's conflict with the dragon and the sea would have been localized (cf. KTU 1.3.III.46-IV.2). Cf. Day, *God's Conflict* 107.

[33] Day, *God's Conflict* 33 n. 92.

[34] Cf. A. Cooper, 'Divine Names and Epithets in the Ugaritic Texts', *RSP* III 458-60.

[35] *mdlk* (KTU 1.5 [UT 67]:V:6), which Day translates as 'your chariot team' ('Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI', VT 29 [1979] 147 and note 18), should be a term for the 'meteorological phenomena', since it appears between *rḥk* 'your wind' and *mṭrk* 'your rain'. Cf. C. H. Gordon, 'Poetic Legends and Myths from Ugarit (=PLMU)', *Berytus* 25 (1977) 107, who translates it, though with reservation, as 'thy *storm'*. Cf. a recent discussion on this term by W. G. E. Watson, 'Unravelling Ugaritic MDL', SEL 3 (1986) 73-8, esp. note 5 on page 75.

The reference to the winged horses is particularly interesting as a
parallel to Hab. 3:8, 15. Since the horses draw the cloud-chariot, it is
probable that they symbolize the winds. It is therefore extremely
interesting that Psalm 18:11 (ET 10) and 104:3 speak or Yahweh's riding
on the *wings* of the wind in the context of his conflict with the sea (cf.
Gen. 1:2).

However, his assumption that the winged horses drawing
Yahweh's cloud-chariot are reflected in Habakkuk 3:8, 15 has
no contextual support because there is no actual reference either
to the wings of the horses or to the clouds in Habakkuk 3:8 or 15.
Thus there is no proof so far that Baal's hypothesized horses
had wings, let alone that Yahweh's had.

However, it is certainly true that 'the concept that the
god rides in a chariot was prevalent' in the Ancient Near East
and has its root in Sumerian Hymns from the 20th century BC,
as has been discussed in detail by Weinfeld.[36] Thus, storm gods
such as Ninurta, Enlil and Adad ride in a chariot and the sound
of the wheels of the storm-god's chariot refers to thunder.
Therefore it would not be surprising if Baal the storm god of
Ugaritic mythology rode a chariot and the sound of his wheels
symbolized thunder. But there is nothing in the present texts
to suggest that this was the case.

In the Baal—Yamm myth (KTU 1.2:IV [UT 68]) where
the divine battle between Baal and Sea—River is described, no
reference is made to Baal's thunder, the sound of his wheels, or
lightnings[37] as assisting him in the battle. In this context it is
by Baal's two clubs, 'Expeller'[38] and 'Driver', that he defeats
his enemy. These clubs are described as being 'like an eagle'
which will swoop from his hands. The battle here is thus
described in terms of falconry and in the image of one-to-one
combat by two leaders of each group.

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[36] Cf. M. Weinfeld, H. Tadmor (edd.), *History, Historiography and
Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures* (Jerusalem, 1983)
142f. and note 119.

[37] On the famous stone relief of Baal, he is pictured with a spear in his left
hand which symbolizes his lightnings and with his club or staff in his lifted
right hand which is a sign of his authority as a king of gods. Cf. *ANEP* No. 490
(= *Ugaritica* II [1949] Plate XXIV).

[38] See below for Cassuto's view (which is no longer accepted) which reads *aymr*
in Hab. 3:9.

In Habakkuk 3:8 Yahweh is described metaphorically as a 'rider of horses and chariots', neither as a 'rider of clouds' as in Psalm 68:5 (*rkb b'rbwt*) nor one 'who rides on the heavens // on the clouds' a in Deuteronomy 33:26 (*rkb šmym // šḥqym*).[39] In the Habakkuk passage, the imagery seems to come from the metaphorization[40] of a normal usage of military activities of a human king in the Ancient Near East. Since Yahweh is not a storm god, his chariot and the sound of his wheels do not automatically represent or refer to thunder or cloud, though his divine action may be described as 'thunder-like' by metaphor.

mrkbtyk yšw'h 'your victorious chariot'

This is an example of AXB pattern[41] in which a pronominal suffix [your] (X) is inserted between the two elements of the construct chain [chariots of salvation/victory] (AB) and yet the suffix modifies the composite unit as a whole. Hence it is to be translated as 'Your victorious chariot' (lit. 'Your [chariots of Salvation/victory]').

II. Yhwh's bow and mace (Habakkuk 3:9)

'ryh t'wr qštk
šb 'wt mṭwt 'mr

This is one of the most difficult passages in the entire Old Testament, 'a riddle which all the ingenuity of scholars

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[39] Also Ps. 104:3. In Hab. 3:15 Yahweh's horses are mentioned without reference to his chariots. Even if one accepts that the 'horses' here are a metonymy of the horse-drawn chariots, it seems that the horses, rather than the chariot, are referred to in this verse, since the verb drk is never used with the chariot.

[40] Metaphorization often results in the idiomatization of the normal expression. In other terms, a normal expression becomes fossilized to an idiomatic expression, or an idiomatic expression de-fossilized:
(1). fossilization: [normal —> metaphorical —> idiomatic]
(2). de-fossilization: [normal <— metaphorical <— idiomatic]
Cf. Gibson, *Biblical Semantic Logic* 28.

[41] Cf. D. T. Tsumura, 'Literary Insertion (AXB) Pattern in Biblical Hebrew', *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies Division a: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1982) 1-6; *idem*, 'Literary Insertion (AXB Pattern) in Biblical Hebrew', *VT* 33 (1983) 468-82; *idem*, 'Literary Insertion, AXB Pattern, in Hebrew and Ugaritic—a problem of adjacency and dependency in poetic parallelism', *UF* 18 (1986) 351-61.

has not been able to solve.'[42] The syntactical structure of 3:9a,
discussed in detail elsewhere by the present writer, can be
analysed as follows:

Internal Object ('ryh) + Niphal verb (t'wr) + Subject (qštk),
which is a 'niphal' (passive) transformation of the supposed
deep structure:

[Polel verb (t'rr) + Object (ryh)] + Object (qštk)
which would mean 'You uncover the nakedness of your bow' (lit.
'[You uncover the nakedness] your bow'). In the light of the
above, the following translation is proposed for the first half
of the verse:

'Your bow is uncovered (the nakedness).'[43]

As for the second part of v. 9, Day[44] sees another
mythological allusion. Altering the term *šəbū'ōt* to *šib'at* 'seven',
he assumes here 'a reference to Yahweh's seven shafts or
'arrows of lightning.' And he compares them to Yahweh's
seven thunders which he thinks are depicted in Psalm 29,[45]
'though in the latter only the phrase 'the voice of Yahweh' is
repeated seven times, without explicit mention of the word for
'thunder'. Then he suggests that 'Yahweh's seven thunders and
lightnings, attested in Psalm 29 and Habakkuk 3:9, have their
background in Baal mythology' in the light of KTU 1.101.3b-4
which he reads of Baal:

3b šbt. brqm. x[ ]   'Seven lightnings...
4 ṯmnt. 'iṣr r't. 'ṣ. brq. y[ ]   Eight storehouses of thunder.
                                           The shaft of lightning . . . '

However, the number parallelism of 'seven' // 'eight' is a
common practice both in Ugaritic and Hebrew and especially
the number 'seven' appears often in literary idioms. So even if
the Habakkuk passage should refer to 'seven arrows', it would
not necessarily be a reflection of the Baal myth. Moreover the
(term *mṭwt* in Habakkuk 3:9 does not mean 'arrows', as argued

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[42] Davidson, cited by G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* (London,
1898) 154.
[43] 'Niphal with an Internal Object in Hab 3, 9a', *JSS* 31 (1986) 11-16.
[44] Day, *God's Conflict* 106f.
[45] Cf. Day, 'Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings' 146-7; *God's
Conflict* 106f.

Cassuto[46] who also assumes the Ugaritic background in this chapter finds an allusion to Baal's club *aymr* in the word *'ōmer* in Habakkuk 3:9b. However it is very difficult to accept such a phonological change */'ayy-/ > /'ō-/. Furthermore he compares *mṭwt* with an etymologically unrelated term, *ṣmdm* '(Baal's) two clubs/rods' without justification. As for the problematic term *šəbū'ōt*, he emends it to be understood as a verbal form, with a meaning 'you brandish,' 'you grasp', 'you lower' or the like. Both Cassuto and Day make their assumptions on the basis of textual emendations.

Other attempts to explain the text based on emendation and different etymology include:
(1) *šib'at* 'seven': 'seven arrows with a word' (Day);
(2) *šibba'tā* 'thou hast sated with shafts thy quiver (*'šptk*)' (Nowack); 'and charge thy quiver with shafts' (NEB);[47] 'thy bow was satiated with shafts' (Marti); cf. BHS: G [Barb] ἐχόρτασας S *wnsb'wn*.
(3) 'and put the arrows to the string' (RSV).

Based on the unaltered Massoretic Text there have been at least four different views of its syntax, taking *šb'wt* either as the feminine plural form of *sb'h*] [*šəbū'āh*] 'oath' or 'heptad' or as Qal passive participle, feminine plural, of *šb 'sworn'. They are as follows:
[1]. NP(x of y) + NP(z): *'according* to the oaths of the tribes, *even thy* word' (KJV); cf. 'heptads of spears' (Ewald; cf. BDB)
[2]. NP(x) + NP(y of z): 'oaths, rods of the word' (Hitzig, Steiner; cf. BDB); cf. 'powerful shafts', i.e. 'shafts of power' (Dahood)[48]
[3]. VP + NP(y of z): 'sworn were the rods (=chastisements) of (thy) word' (Gesenius; Hitzig; RV margin; cf. BDB); 'Sworn are the rods of the word' (JPS)

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[46] Cassuto, *Biblical & Oriental Studies* 11.
[47] Cf. L. H. Brockington, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1973) 261.
[48] Dahood, *Psalms* III 21: *mrr* > *'mr* ('*emār* = Aleph-preformative noun from *mrr*). Cf. D. Pardee, 'The Semitic Root *mrr* and the Etymology of Ugaritic *mr(r)* / / *brk*', *UF* 10 (1978) 261f. note 78.

[4]. VP + NP(y) + NP(z): 'the shafts are adjured[49] . . . by the powerful divine utterance' (Eaton)[50]

However, views [3] and [4] might have a difficulty in gender agreement betwen *mṭwt*, which is masculine plural[51] and the feminine form *šb'wt*. Therefore it seems that a nominal view gives a better solution to this *crux*.

Unlike the other two terms in v. 9b, *mṭwt* is normally taken as it stands and is translated as 'tribes', 'rods', 'shafts', 'arrows' or 'spears'. Modern scholars, as noted above, tend to understand it as 'arrows' or the like, since the term seems to be in parallel with *qšt* 'bow' in v. 9a. However, it should be noted that in Habakkuk 3:11 the words for 'arrow' and 'spear' appear as *hṣyk* 'your arrows' and *hnytk* 'your spear'. Consequently it may be better to think that *qšt* in verse 9 includes in itself 'arrows' following the principle of *pars pro toto*.

It is of interest to note that in a Ugaritic mythological text the word pair *mṭ — qšt* appears; KTU 1.3 ['nt]: 11:15-16 reads:

mṭm. tšr / šbm .	'With a stick she drives out *foes*
bks1 qšth . mdnt	Her bow attacking in the back (i.e., of her fleeing foes).' (Gordon)[52]

Dahood has taken note of this word pair, 'staff' // 'bow', common to Ugaritic and Hebrew and comments: 'Though the line remains obscure any advance in its [Hab. 3:9] understanding must take this parallelism into account.'[53] J. Gibson also quotes Habakkuk 3:9 and 14 for explanation of this Ugaritic pair.[54]

The Akkadian cognate *mittu* appears as a weapon in a god's hand with the sense, 'mace', the Sumerian counterpart of

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[49] Or 'commissioned to their task' .

[50] J . H. Eaton, 'The Origin and Meaning of Habakkuk 3', *ZAW* 76 (1964) 152.

[51] Note that this word appears in this chapter in both masculine and feminine pIural forms, i.e. *mṭyw* (v. 14) and *mṭwt*. Cf. masculine plural forms in *nhrym* (v. 8) and *nhrwt* (v. 9).

[52] Gordon, *PLMU* 77.

[53] Dahood, *RSP* I 258.

[54] J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh, 21977) 47. Note that he translates them as 'shaft(s)' and 'bow', though the Ugaritic term *mṭ* normally means 'staff', as in Hebrew *mṭh 'lhym* 'the staff of God' (Ex. 4:20). Cf. C H. Gordon, *UT* 19.1642.

which is GIŠ.TUKUL.DINGIR ('a weapon of gods').[55] It is clearly
distinguished from 'arrow' or 'shaft'. Moreover in Akkadian
texts the god's majestic weapon is sometimes mentioned as 'a
fifty-headed mace'.[56] Therefore, the Hebrew term *mṭwt* in a
plural form may possibly refer to a divine majestic 'mace' or
'staff' in the present context, not to many 'staves' as Dahood
renders.

'Mace' and 'bow' appear also in Akkadian texts as a
word pair. For example, in Angim III 35-7:[57]

> (35) *šibba ša ana amēli iṭeḫḫû qaštu [abūbtja]*
> (I hold) the serpent which attacks man, the bow of my
>   *abūbu* weapon'
> (37) *abūb tāḫazi* [GIŠ.TUKULSAG.NINNU]
> '(I hold) *abūbu*-of-Battle, the mace with the fifty heads'

Here, 'bow' (*qaštu*) and 'the mace with the fifty heads' are not
only paired but also identified with the 'Deluge'(*abūbu*)-
weapon,[58] thus symbolizing the destructive power of a deity.

In AKA 84 vi 59[59] this pair of weapons are mentioned as
granted from the storm gods to a human king, Tiglathpileser I:

> Ninurta u Nergal GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-*šu-nu ezzūte u* GIŠ.BAN-*su-
> nu ṣirta ana idi bēlūtija išruku*
> 'Ninurta and Nergal granted me their fierce weapons and
> their sublime bow to be worn at my lordly side'

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[55] 'The divine weapon'(*CAD*, M/2 [1977] 148; also CAD, K [1971] 398). Cf. J. van
Dijk, LUGAL UD ME-LAM-bi NIR-GAL. *Le récit épique et didactique des
Travaux de Ninurta, du Déluge et de la Nouvelle Création* (Leiden, 1983) 52, line
5, which reads *be-lu šá ina qa-ti-šu el-le-tum me-eṭ-ṭa na-šu-ú* 'le Seigneur dont le
bras puissant fut prédestiné à (porter) l'arme meurtrière.'

[56] Cf. *CAD*, M/2 148. Note that an actual gold mace-head with twelve
mushroom-shaped knobs(heads) from the EB period has been excavated in
Alacahöyük in Central Anatolia. Cf. *Land of Civilizations, Turkey* (Tokyo,
1985) Plate 56.

[57] Cf. *CAD*, A/1 (1964) 79 and Q (1982) 147. Also note a phrase, *[mi]-it-ṭu-uk-ka
abū[bu]* 'your mace, *abūbu* weapon' in a hymn to Marduk (KAR 337:14), cited in
CAD, M/2 148.

[58] Note also: 'Nergal *šar tamhāri bēl abāri u dunni bēl a-bu-bi* king of the battle,
lord of strength and might, lord of the Deluge (weapon)', Streck, Asb. 178:2; cf.
CAD, A/₁80.

[59] Cf. *CAD*, K 54.

Here, 'their weapons' (GIŠ.TUKULMES-*šunu*) most likely refers
to 'maces' as Akkadian *miṭṭu*, 'mace', is often explained as
GIŠ.TUKUL.DINGIR ('a weapon of gods') in Sumerian, as noted
above. The same pair, 'bow' and 'mace', are also mentioned in
the context in which actual preparation for battle is
commanded. Thus, 2N-T343 r. 6:[60]

> *anantam kiṣṣar q[à-aš-t]am i-ši šar-[da]-pa tu-ru-[us]*
> *kak[ka] tumu[ḫ]*
> 'get ready for battle, take up the bow, pull taut the reins,
> grasp the mace'

Furthermore, the image of Yahweh in Habakkuk 3 may
be compared with 'an image of Assur, raising his bow, riding in
his chariot *a-bu-bu [ṣa]-an-du* girt with the Deluge' as described
in the Annals of Sennacherib.[61] Habakkuk also, in depicting
his God, uses here a metaphor based on a normal practice of a
human king in war time.[62] In the light of the above discussion,
the term *mṭwt* probably means Yahweh's 'majestic mace' which
is paired with his 'bow'.[63]

As for the word *šbʿwt*, the most natural translation
would be 'oaths'. While *qštk* ('your bow') is paralleled with
mṭwt ('a majestic mace') in a bicolon of v. 9, as noted above, it is
also closely associated with *šbʿwt* ('oaths'), not only in terms of
word order but also semantically. Because *qštk* also has the
meaning of 'your rainbow', this may imply God's 'oaths' to His
people, as the rainbow was a sign of 'eternal covenant' with
Noah and his family after the Deluge.[64] Thus the word *qšt*
here seems to be a polysemy and have a double function,

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[60] *CAD*, Q 147f. and K 51.

[61] OIP 2 140:7 (Senn.); cf. *CAD*, A/1 80; Q 150.

[62] The scene of a king riding in his horse-drawn chariot, with a bow in his
hand, is very common in the ancient Near East, both in Mesopotamia and in
Egypt. See, for example, *Ugaritica* II (1949) 10 and Plate VI as well as many
reliefs from Assyria and Egypt; cf. A. H. Layard, *Nineveh and its Palaces*
(London, 21853) 224-8 and 233 for Fig. 107-11 and 120. For Shalmaneser III's
escort holding a mace and a bow, one in each hand, see M. E. L. Mallowan,
Nimrud and its Remains II (London, 1966) 446ff. and ANEP Plate 821.

[63] For a more detailed discussion of this part see my forthcoming article, 'The
'word pair' *qšt and *mṭ in Hab 3:9 in the light of Ugaritic and Akkadian' in the
D. W. Young Festschrift.

[64] Cf. *qšt = ʿwt bryt* (Gen. 9:13); *lzkr bryt ʿwlm* (Gen. 9:16). Note that *bryt* is in
parallel with *šbwʾh* in Ps. 105:8-9 = I Ch. 16:15-16.

corresponding both to *mṭwt* and to *šbʿwt* in a poetic parallelism in v. 9.[65]

The syntax of verse 9b, however, still poses a problem according to the normal grammatical rules. However, while it may be taken like [2] (above),[66] it can also be understood as an another example of AXB pattern in the poetic parallelism, in which a composite unit [AB] still keeps its grammatical dependency within itself even if X is inserted between A and B, thus violating a normal grammatical rule of adjacency. Nevertheless, in this pattern, X holds a grammatical relationship with [A . . . B] *as a whole*.[67] Habakkuk 3:9b may be analyzed according to this poetical pattern:

[5]. NP(y) + NP(x of z): 'mace' *mṭwt* + 'the oaths of (your) word' *šbʿwt ... ʾmr*.

It should be noted that a noun phrase like *šbʿwt ʾmr* 'the oaths of (your) word' is neither peculiar nor improbable. Since *ʾmr* (m. sg.) is an archaic term which appears either in poetic texts[68] or in the exalted style (Jos. 24:27) only, the phrase *šbʿwt ʾmr* might well be compared with the following expressions:

šbʿwt 'sr 'binding oath' (lit. oath of bond) in Num. 30:14 (// *ndr*): 'vows' // 'pledges binding on (her)' (NW)

šbʿt šqr 'false oath (lit. oath of falsehood)' in Zech. 8:17

šbʾt h'lh 'curse of the oath' (NIV; lit. oath of the oath) in Num. 5:21.

This syntactical analysis is not only possible, but also probable especially when polysemy is recognized in *qštk* as suggested above. Thus the structure of parallelism in verse 9 as a whole would be as follows:

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[65] For a recent discussion of 'polysemy', see D. Grossberg, 'Pivotal Polysemy in Jeremiah 25:10-11 a', *VT* 36 (1986) 481-5. Cf. also D. T. Tsumura, 'Twofold Image of Wine in Ps. 46:4-5', *JQR* 71 (1981) 169 n. 13, where I discussed briefly a *polyseme* in Hab. 3:15, and M. Dahood, 'The Minor Prophets and Ebla' in C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (edd.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, 1983) 61.

[66] *mṭwt ʾmr* : 'mace of word'. For a similar association of 'word' with a weapon, see 'a king's word' // 'a double-edged dagger' (Ahiqar 7:95ff.) in J. M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* (Baltimore, 1983) 80.

[67] See note 41 above.

[68] Pss. 19:3,4; 68:12; 77:9; Job 20:29.

qštk   (1) 'your bow' // 'mace' *mṭwt*
                     [negative side destruction]
          (2) 'your rainbow' // 'the oaths of (your)
                       word' *šb'wt 'mr*
             [positive side—salvation][69]

The proposed translation would be as follows:
        'Your bow is uncovered (the nakedness),
        (your) mace is the oaths of (your) word.'[70]

III. Yhwh's Destroying the Evil One (Habakkuk 3:13b)

  mḥṣt r'š mbyt rš'
  'rwt yswd 'd-ṣw'r

This passage also presents great difficulty in interpretation and hence various translations have been suggested; for example,

      *'Thou didst crush the head of the wicked,[k]
      laying him bare from thigh to neck.[l]' (RSV)
      ([k] Cn: Heb *head from the house of the wicked;*[l] Heb obscure)
      *'You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness,
      you stripped him from head to foot.'(NIV)
      *'Thou dost crush the chief of the tribe of the wicked,
      Destroying from head to tail.'(Eaton)[71]
      *'you smote the top off the house of the wicked,
      laying bare the foundation as far as the *rock*.'(Day)[72]

Cassuto was the first person to recognize in verse 13 a literary relationship with the Ugaritic Baal-Yamm myth. He

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[69] Note that Yahweh's word *'mr* is contrasted with 'dumb idols' (2:18) and 'a dumb stone' (2:19); cf. R. Vuilleumier, C.-A. Keller, *Michée, Nahoum, Habacuc, Sophonie* (Neuchatel, 1971) 166.

[70] Another possible translation of the second half would be: 'the seven-headed mace is (your) word', taking *šb'wt* as 'heptad, sevenfold'. See note 56 above for the fifty-headed mace and the 'gold mace-head with twelve mushroom-shaped knobs (heads)'.

[71] Eaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* 115.

[72] *ṣūr* for MT *ṣawwā'r*; cf. Day, *God's Conflict* 108.

holds that 'despite the successive changes of thought, the literary tradition is preserved in all its details'. Thus he sees in Habakkuk 3:13f. two blows on the evil one by Yahweh: one on the head and one blow on the neck, just as Baal smites his enemies Yamm and Nahar, 'with his rods, two blows, one on the head and one between the shoulders and on the neck. With the rod *'aymr*, the blow is . . . on the back of the neck (*qdqd*) and on the forehead(*bn 'nm*). With the stick *ygrš* the blow is . . . on the shoulder (*ktp*) and on the front portion of the neck (*bn ydm*).'[73]

Albright emends MT *mbyt* to *mwt* on the basis of LXX θάνατον and takes the verse as referring to Yahweh's destruction of Death. Wakeman thinks that Habakkuk 3:13 'would be the only *direct* reference to a conflict between Yahweh and Mot,' if Albright's emendation is accepted.[74] Thus, Cassuto and Albright see here two different myths of Baal; the former recognizes here the Baal-Yamm myth, the latter the Baal-Mot myth of the ancient Ugarit.

In Habakkuk 3:13, Yahweh is certainly described as having crushed (*mbṣ*) the evil one (*rš'*). In Ugaritic texts, this verb is also employed to describe the slaying of Baal's enemies.[75] However, this similarity does not prove that this Biblical text has a literary connection with Ugaritic conflict myths. The verb *mḥṣ* appears in connection with 'head' frequently in the poetic texts of the Old Testament such as Psalm 68:22. Moreover, the expression 'strike/ smite the head of somebody' seems to appear in a context other than the *Chaoskampf* myth even in Ugaritic. Thus, in KTU 1.18:10f. the goddess Anat threatens her father god El with bodily violence, saying: [*amḥṣk lzr qdq*] *d*k* 'I will strike you on your skull.'[76] It seems that the expression 'strike/ smite the head of somebody' was already a literary cliché in the Ugaritic literature.

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[73] Cassuto, 'Chapter III of Habakkuk' 13 and note 21.

[74] See above note 19.

[75] Cf. RSP III 238.

[76] *mḥṣ+ qdqd* : Cf. KTU 1.3:V:23-4: a*m*x[/ qdqd; *mḥṣ* + qdqd (Num. 24:17). See M. Dijkstra, J. C. de Moor, 'Problematical Passages in the Legend of Aqhâtu', *UF* 7 (1975) 193.

Habakkuk simply used this ancient literary idiom for describing Yahweh's destruction of his enemy.

Keeping the MT as it is, Freedman[77] sees here an example of the so-called 'broken construct chain' or our 'AXB pattern' and translates *mḥṣt rš* mbyt *rš'*

'You crushed the head of the wicked one inwards'

(// 'You ripped him open from fundament to neck.')

This translation, however, seems to be influenced by his basic interpretation of this passage as a reflection of a dragon-myth. Moreover, the most natural way to understand MT *mbyt* is to take it as a preposition 'from' and a common noun 'house'.

I would like to present a new interpretation of this verse, while keeping MT as it stands. It has been customary to analyze v. 13b as a two-line parallelism as follows:

> *mhst r'š mbyt rš'*   4
> *'rwt yswd 'd - ṣw'r*   4/3

However, there seems to be enough reason to take it as a four-line parallelism.

> *mḥṣt rš'*   2
> *mbyt rš'*   2
> *'rwt yswd*   2
> *'d - ṣw'r*   2/1

First, there seems to exist an alliteration between the first and the second lines: *m - r - m - r* and another between the third and the fourth: '-'- . Secondly, when we take *mbyt* as having its most obvious sense 'from [the] house', the second line has a direct relationship with the third, which mentions the term *yswd* 'foundation'. Thus, the second and the third lines constitute a parallelism:

> *mbyt rš''*
> *'rwt yswd*

Thirdly, terms for a part of the body appear both in the first and the fourth lines: rš' 'head' and *ṣw'r* 'neck'. Hence, these two lines are related closely in a distant parallelism:

> *mḥṣt rš'*
> *'d - ṣw'r*

Finally, a four-line parallelism with a metre, 2:2:2:2/1, here serves as a kind of climax, as in Psalm 46:7; 9:6, 7, especially

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[77] D. N. Freedman, 'The Broken Construct Chain', *Bib* 53 (1972) 535.

after the bicolon in which the Yahweh's act of salvation for his people and his anointed is mentioned.[78]

If the above analysis of the parallel structure is correct, it is to be taken as an example of an 'inserted bicolon' (AXYB Pattern). Here a bicolon X//Y

> *mbyt rš'*
> *'rwt yswd*

is inserted between A-line and B-line, which still hold their 'grammatical' dependency and hence should be taken as a composite unit.[79] The idiom *'rwt yswd* 'to lay foundations bare',[80] though it can mean 'to destroy'[81] metaphorically, is used in a literal sense in connection with the word 'house' in the preceding line.[82] Thus the meaning of this 'inserted bicolon' would be as follows: 'From the house of the evil one (You) laid the foundation bare.'

The lines [AB] would also give an adequate solution for '*d - ṣw'r* as it stands.

> *mbst r'š*
> *'d - ṣw'r*

The most natural translation for this parallelism would be: 'You crushed the head // to the neck'. This would mean that Yahweh crushed the head of the evil one *down to* the neck. However, *'d - ṣw'r* in two other passages as well as a similar expression in Ugaritic ('nt:II:14 *ḫlqm*)[83] means '*up to* the neck'

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[78] Note that the term 'to save' (*yš'*) and its related forms are the key words, which appear five times (1:2; 3:8b, 13 [*bis*], 18) in the entire book. Habakkuk's appeal to Yahweh at the beginning of the book is thus contrasted with the confidence in God's saving act for his people and his anointed in the final chapter. Note that after 1:2 the root *yš'* does not appear until the third chapter.

[79] Cf. —Inserted Bicolon", the AXYB Pattern, in Amos i 5 and Ps. ix 7', VT 38 (1988) 234-6.

[80] Cf. also Ps. 137:7: *'rw 'rw hyswd bh* 'Tear it down, . . . tear it down to its foundations!' (NIV).

[81] Note that an Akkadian counterpart *nasāḫu išdu*, 'to remove the foundation (of a house)', means 'to uproot or destroy'; cf. *CAD*, N/$_2$ 4; *CAD*, I/J 236.

[82] See the comment by Badre *et al* on ']rwt (Krt:7) "[*rw "est dépouillé": qatal-type, f.sg.] "tu ... as mis à nu." — 'Si on / conserve le T.M. *mibēt*, le texte d'Habacuc parte du dépouillement d'une maison, situation comparable à celle que présentent les 11.6-8 de notre texte', 'Notes Ougaritiques I: Keret', *Syria* 53 (1976) 96f.

[83] 'Up to the neck', Gordon, *PLMU* 77.

(Is. 8:8, 30:28), never *'down to* the neck', as a figurative
description of the height. Of course, Habakkuk 3:13b could be
the only exception, thus meaning 'You crushed the head *down to*
the neck'.

However, the phrase *'d - ṣw'r* 'to the neck' might well
be a result clause/phrase which means 'to be "up to the neck"',
i.e. 'to become in the state of *up-to-the-neck*-ness'[84] —'to be
headless.' If this interpretation is correct, the proposed
translation would be as follows:

mḥṣt r'š	'You crushed the head to be headless;
mbyt rš'	from the house of the evil one
'rwt yswd	(You) laid bare the foundation'
'd- ṣw'r	

Another possible way to interpret the verse without
any emendation is to take it as a two-line parallelism in the
usual manner:

   mḥṣt r'š mbyt rš'

   'rwt yswd 'd - ṣw'r

and to recognize here three terms related to a (stone) statue, i.e.
r'š 'head', *ṣw'r* 'neck' and *yswd* 'base'. The last term can be
compared to its Akkadian cognate, *išdu* 'bottom (of the exterior
of an object)'.[85] In this interpretation, the second line would
mean that Yahweh destroyed the statue (of the evil one) from
its base to its neck.

As for the first line, the key is the interpretation of
mbyt. It is noteworthy that the preposition *min*, especially in
poetry with a noun alone, can express as a privative term 'the
non-existence of a thing not named in the principal clause'[86] as
in Isaiah 23:1

   ky šdd mbyt '*so that there is no* house',

or Psalm 49: 15

   mzbl -1w '*so that it has no* dwelling',

or Psalm 52:7

   yšḥk m'hl 'pluck thee up *tentless'*.

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[84] See Gordon, *UT* 58 n. 1 for the nominalization of a prepositional phrase in
Hebrew. T. Matsumoto suggested the possibility of taking *'d – ṣw'r* as 'up to the
neck' here.

[85] Cf. CAD, I/J 238-9. Also note the Ugaritic counterpart, *išd* (UT 19.394) 'leg'.

[86] BDB 583.

In the light of the above, I suggest another possible interpretation as follows:

mḥṣt r'š mbyt rš   'You crushed the head of the evil one[87]
                        so that there might be no house;
'rwt yswd 'd - ṣw'r (You) laid bare the base *up to* the neck.' With either interpretation above, it is impossible to assume any 'literary' connection between Habakkuk 3:13 and the so-called *Chaoskampf* myth of Ugarit. Habakkuk seems to use here the imagery of destroying a statue of the enemy king in battle to describe Yahweh's destructive action against *rš'*

As for *rš'* (the 'evil one') in Habakkuk 3:13, Eaton thinks that it is the great dragon, 'personification of the rebellious waters and representing for the poet the sum of chaos and death'.[88] However, in Habakkuk 3 no 'dragon' is mentioned explicitly and the 'rivers' and the 'sea' are not described as such dragons. *rš'* appears three times in the Book of Habakkuk and it is used in direct opposition to the 'righteous', Yahweh's 'people'//'His anointed':

    1:4   *rš' <—> hṣdyq*
    1:13   *rš' <—> ṣdyq*
            cf. *(npš)-w <—> ṣdyq* (2:4)
    3:13   *rš' <—> 'm*k / *mšyḥk*

Though Habakkuk could have used, as in the other poetical passages of the Old Testament, fossilized terms like Leviathan, Rahab or Taninim, a 'dragon', for describing metaphorically the evil power, i.e. the enemy of Yahweh and his people, he purposely did not use those terms here for he used a completely different imagery from the so-called *Chaoskampf*.

IV. Yhwh and Resheph (Habakkuk 3:5)

lpnyw ylk dbr   'Before him went pestilence,
wyṣ' ršp lrglyw   and plague followed close behind.' (RSV)

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[87] Here, I follow Freedman's interpretation which takes *r'š. . . rš* as a 'broken construct chain'. See note 75.
[88] Eaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* 115.

According to Day,[89] Habakkuk 3:5 contains a mythological allusion 'not so explicitly expressed elsewhere.' He says, 'Plague and Pestilence are here clearly personified and behind the latter there certainly lies the Canaanite plague-god Resheph.' And he assumes here the 'allusion to Resheph's participation in the conflict with chaos' which he thinks has its ultimate background in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.82[UT1001].1-3.[90]

> (1) Baal smote ... the dragon and rejoiced and poured out . .
> (2) . . . on the earth . . . support . . . I have no support
> (3) . . . the archer Resheph(*b'l ḥz ršp*), son of *Km* shot his kidneys and his heart.

Even if he should be able to hold, based on this 'largely fragmentary and obscure' text, that in Ugaritic myth 'the god Resheph is represented alongside Baal in his conflict with the dragon',[91] it does not automatically lead us to the conclusion that in the Habakkuk passage too 'Resheph belongs with the *Chaoskampf*'.[92]

First, Day assumes that the background of the entire section of Habakkuk 3:3-15 is 'the Canaanite myth of Baal's conflict with the sea or dragon'. As discussed above, however, his argument for the suggested mythological allusions in verses 8 and 9, especially the latter, is not so convincing. Moreover, in the Habakkuk passage there is no actual description of Resheph's participating, say as an archer, in the 'conflict' described in vv. 8f. where Yahweh's 'bow' (v. 9) and 'arrows' (v. 11) are mentioned. The only description of *rešep* in the Habakkuk passage is about his marching after Yahweh (v. 5b).

Certainly the god Resheph served as a warrior and also as the god of plagues, like Apollo in the Greek world and the god Nergal[93] in the Mesopotamian world. They are all

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[89] Day, *God's Conflict* 105f.

[90] Day, New Light on the Mythological Background' 353-5. Cf. discussion of this text by W. J. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Rešep* (New Haven, 1976) 49-51.

[91] Day, 'New Light on the Mythological Background' 354.

[92] Day thinks that 'Albright is wrong in separating Hab. 3:3-7 (where Resheph occurs, v. 5) and 3:8-15 (where the *Chaoskampf* is described) as originally two separate poems'; cf. *God's Conflict* 106.

[93] In Mesopotamia Nergal is called 'king of the battle, lord of strength and might, lord of the Deluge (weapon)' (*šar tamḫāri bēl abāri u dunni bēl a-bu-bi*)

connected with heavenly bodies, mainly with falling stars (meteors) which shoot like arrows.[94] Therefore, it is no surprise if Resheph as a warrior god participates in the divine conflict as described in the Ugaritic myth cited above. However, in Habakkuk 3 *rešep* as well as *deber* are the symbols of Yahweh's destructive power rather than appearing as archers.

Assuming the existence of a specific Ugaritic myth as its parallel, Day thinks that in Habakkuk 3:5 'the god Resheph has been demoted to a kind of demon in Yahweh's entourage'.[95] Weinfeld, however, puts the present text in much a wider context of the ancient mythologies and explains as follows: 'if the source of the motif of the smiting star and arrow is rooted in the mythology of Resheph, Nergal and Apollo, . . . Resheph, Deber, Qeteb etc. in other Biblical passages ceased to be independent divine forces. These are not considered divine entities, but rather heavenly bodies which serve as God's emissaries and servants.'[96]

Thus it has been sometimes claimed that Resheph is an example of the ossification[97] of reference by means of demythologization in theological polemics. However, one cannot show exactly which 'Canaanite' mythology (or mythologies) if any stands behind the Habakkuk passage. Day simply assumes such a mythological background, by suggesting that Habakkuk 3:5 contains a mythological allusion 'not so explicitly expressed elsewhere'. But his argument seems to be circular when he says that 'the allusion to Resheph's

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Streck Asb. 178:2—cf. CAD, A/1 80—and he is 'carrying bow, arrow and quiver' ([*nāš*] *qašti uṣu u išpat*) Böhl, Bi. Or. 6 p. 166:4 (hymn to Nergal); cf. CAD, la 257. Cf. Weinfeld and Tadmor (edd.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation* 136.

[94] Weinfeld and Tadmor (edd.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation* 128 nn. 34-7

[95] Day, *God's Conflict* 106. Fulco too calls Resheph 'a lesser divinity in Habakkuk' and takes him as 'a quasi-demon accompanying Yahweh in a theophany,' but Fulco does not assume existence of any literary connection with Ugaritic myths. Cf. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Rešep* 61 and 70.

[96] Weinfeld and Tadmor (edd.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation* 130. Weinfeld takes Pestilence and Resheph in Hab. 3:5 as 'the pairs of destroying angels ... who accompany the god on his going out to battles', 135.

[97] Note that idiomatization does 'kill off' or ossify the purported reference in the first-level discourse. Cf. Gibson, *Biblical Semantic Logic* 28.

participation in the conflict with chaos has its ultimate background in the Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.82.1-3'. However, the phrase *wwṣ' ršp* as a whole might be better taken as a simple metaphorical expression like the English 'famine stalks the land'.

In conclusion, the often suggested connection between Habakkuk 3 and Ugaritic mythology does not seem to be well-founded. The mention of the traditional word-pair 'rivers' and the 'sea' in chapter 3:8 does not automatically justify presupposing the Ugaritic background: i.e. the Canaanite *Chaoskampf* motif of the Ugaritic Baal—Yamm myth. The 'chariots' (v. 8) and the 'bow' and 'mace' (v. 9) are to be compared with many ancient Near Eastern examples of victorious human kings riding a chariot with a bow and a mace in their hands. Habakkuk 3:13b also seems to reflect battle imagery, rather than a certain Canaanite myth. As for *rešep*, it should not be taken as an evidence for the existence of a specific Ugaritic myth as a parallel to Habakkuk 3. It is important that a metaphorization of an ordinary word should be carefully distinguished from a demythologization of a divine name.[98]

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[98] For discussion of Theodore Hiebert's book, *God of My Victory: the Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk* 3 (Harvard Semitic Monographs 38; Atlanta, 1986) see my review in *JSS* (forthcoming).