

Made in the Image of God: The Creation of מלך: the Commissioning of the King and the Chaokampf of YHWH

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Abstract

This article suggests that Genesis 1 and Psalms 8, 18 and 89 reflect a mythological tradition which described the creation of the human king as YHWH's counterpart in the divine battle against chaos. The residual royal features of the narrative of the creation of מלך in Genesis 1—the creation of the מלך in the image of god, to exercise dominion—appear in a context of a polemical revision of YHWH's Chaokampf and are suggestive of the older tradition's inclusion of the king's commissioning as YHWH's representative and earthly counterpart in these activities. Psalm 8 similarly associates the creation of a royal figure with the exertion of authority and dominion over chaos, using the same image of god language as Genesis 1 to describe this figure and to articulate his special relationship with YHWH. Psalm 18 and especially Psalm 89 affirm the location of the king's Chaokampf commission in the midst of YHWH's own Chaokampf activities, with the latter's use of parental language echoing the image of god language in Genesis 1.

Keywords

Kingship – Genesis – Psalms – Chaokampf – Image of God

1 Introduction

It is well known that the Hebrew Bible presents the relationship between YHWH and the Davidic king as particularly intimate.¹ The Davidic king was viewed as the representative of YHWH on earth as well as a principal mediator of YHWH's relationship with the people. Texts such as Psalm 72 speak of the king as the instrument of YHWH's justice, while passages like 2 Kings 8 cast him in the central intercessory role between YHWH and the people. Perhaps most vividly, however, the intimacy of this relationship is expressed by the cohesion of the joint efforts of god and king against their enemies in war. Perpetuating YHWH's struggle against the chaotic sea, the battles of YHWH and the king are articulated in terms of an ongoing fight against chaos.² The king, as YHWH's representative on earth, is responsible for leading the terrestrial fight against forces which threaten to undermine YHWH's created order, the earthly counterpart to YHWH's efforts against such forces in the wider cosmic realm.

Despite the paralleled activity of YHWH and the king in combating chaos, the Hebrew Bible has preserved very little of an explicit nature which might explain how the human king was commissioned as YHWH's earthly counterpart in this battle: when and how, in other words, the human king became responsible for an earthly version of the cosmic Chaokampf. (Or, more cynically, how the depiction of the human king's enemies in terms of chaos was ideologically and mythologically grounded.)

Although the lack of a full narrative concerning the king's Chaokampf commission makes providing an answer to these questions difficult, the extant literature of the Hebrew Bible preserves a small number of texts which may prove useful in imagining the mythological possibilities. The key texts are Genesis 1, in its current form a monotheistic and heavily polemical rewriting of a Judahite version of the Chaokampf; Psalm 8, the only passage other than Genesis 1 to preserve the idea that

¹ That many biblical texts are ambivalent if not outright polemical regarding the institution of kingship in Judah and Israel is not to be denied. Nevertheless, the Hebrew Bible also preserves other, more positive depictions of kingship; it is among these that the majority of the material relevant to the following discussion may be found.

² The tradition of the deity who goes out to battle against the forces of chaos is commonly referred to as the Chaokampf. For a more detailed discussion of this motif and its use to articulate the military actions of the human kings in Judah, Israel and Assyria, see C.L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, vol. 407 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 29–32, 68–76; S.M. Maul, “Der assyrische König—Hüter der Weltordnung,” in *Gerechtigkeit: Richten und Retten in der abendländischen Tradition und ihrer altorientalischen Ursprüngen*, ed. J. Assmann, B. Janowski and M. Welker (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998), 65–77; S.M. Maul, “‘Wenn der Held (zum Kampfe) auszieht . . .’ Ein Ninurta-Eršemma,” *Orientalia* (NS) 60 (1991): 312–334.

humanity was created in the divine image; and Psalms 18 and 89, in which the joint efforts of the divine and human kings against chaotic enemies are most clearly articulated. Read together and in light of other biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts, this material contains echoes of an otherwise-obscured tradition describing the creation of the human king, in the divine image, as YHWH's counterpart in his battle against chaos.

2 YHWH and the King as Joint Forces against Chaos

Before attempting to discern the mechanics of the king's Chaoskampf commission it is necessary to examine in greater detail the evidence which suggests that the king did, in fact, have a role alongside YHWH in fighting against chaos. Preliminary even to this is the establishment of YHWH's own Chaoskampf tradition.³

2.1 *The Chaoskampf of YHWH*

Undoubtedly the most famous and most familiar witnesses to the ancient Near Eastern conflict traditions are the battles between Baal and Yam preserved in the Ugaritic material and between Marduk and Tiamat preserved in the Mesopotamian tradition. In the latter Tiamat—a personification of cosmic chaos—threatens to destroy the universe; she is prevented from doing so by Marduk, who claims kingship over the other gods as a reward for his victory. Thanks to its familiarity and the Judahite exile in Babylonia, allusions to a conflict tradition in the Hebrew Bible have often been presumed to derive from this Mesopotamian tradition.

Nevertheless, a similar yet independent tradition was well-known in Judah.⁴ Though deliberately obscured in the creation narrative in Genesis 1, other texts witness to a Judahite mythological tradition in which the protagonist against the chaotic, watery sea creatures was YHWH, whose victory enabled the establishment of an ordered world and his own acclamation as king.⁵ The strongest evidence for this tradition occurs in the psalms, where the depiction of YHWH as the one who battles against the sea is firmly associated with statements of YHWH's kingship. Thus, for example, in Psalm 93 the proclamation that "YHWH is king/YHWH rules" (93:1) is followed by language alluding to creation (93:1) and a battle against the sea (93:3). In Psalm 89, references to a battle against chaos at creation (89:10–11) are preceded by language suggesting YHWH's kingship over other gods (89:7–8). Psalm 18, in the context of a lengthy description of the joint efforts of the human and divine kings, speaks of YHWH's weapons in meteorological terms (18:11–15): his chariot is the wind, he is clothed in clouds and his actions culminate with "then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare" (18:16). Psalm 24 similarly links YHWH's kingship to a battle with the sea.⁶

2.2 *The Chaoskampf of the King*

Given the close connection of YHWH's kingship to his victory over the chaotic forces of the universe, it is unsurprising that Judah's ideology of human kingship also linked the human king's responsibilities to his military endeavors and, more specifically, to his role as YHWH's counterpart in an ongoing struggle against disorder. Human kingship, like divine kingship, was characterized by the

³ One of the persistent difficulties in identifying allusions to a Yahwistic Chaoskampf in the Hebrew Bible is the lack of a standard Hebrew version. In the absence of such a version the identification of fragments of or allusions to such a tradition usually relies on the accumulation of terms and phrases suggestive of Chaoskampf concepts, often with reference to particularities known from the non-Hebrew versions. Against this approach is R.S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, vol. 341 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), who rejects the idea of a biblical Chaoskampf because of the lack of a standard version, without allowing that many biblical texts presuppose such a tradition, working within it (especially the Psalms) or actively engaged in creating revisionist versions (e.g., Genesis 1, Ezekiel, on the latter see C.L. Crouch and C.A. Strine, "YHWH's Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel: The Transformation of Judahite Mythology for a New Situation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* [2013]: 883–903; C.L. Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 [2011]: 473–492).

⁴ J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, Cambridge Oriental Publications, vol. 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵ For a more detailed exposition, see Crouch, *War and Ethics*, 29–32, 65–79. Note that Day argued that the Judahite version was most similar to the version found at Ugarit, in which kingship is not involved; however, given the evidence noted here, the division of YHWH's Chaoskampf from his acclamation as king cannot be upheld.

⁶ See Day, *Conflict*, 37–38 on the identification of Chaoskampf imagery in Psalm 24.

king's obligation to engage in combat against his enemies, depicted as the earthly manifestations of chaos. Both divine and human king fulfilled the royal role by going forth to fight and defeat chaos, thereby ensuring an orderly creation. In these endeavors the human king was portrayed as the earthly counterpart to the divine king.

The clearest examples of this occur in the psalms, probably due to the provenance of many of these in the royally-orientated temple. The psalms in question reveal an intimate synergy between YHWH and the king, expressed most explicitly in the parallelism of their respective military endeavors. Given their importance in what follows, here it will serve to mention Psalms 18 and 89 in particular.

In Psalm 18, evidence for the parallel roles of YHWH and the king of Judah ranges from the duplicative use of royal military imagery to the use of specific terms and phrases with reference to both parties.⁷ YHWH's responsibility for the king's warfaring abilities and the king's accountability to YHWH for his use of those abilities is expressed in the ascription of divine origin to all of the king's military skills: YHWH is the one who has girded the king with might and trained his hands for battle (18:33, 34). Descriptions of YHWH's acts frame the description of the king's own exploits, rendering the king's deeds a specific, historically contextualized expression of YHWH's own. In Psalm 18 YHWH appears as the divine king who defeats the chaotic waters, then conveys his knowledge of warfare to the king. On the basis of these correspondences, K.-P. Adam writes: "Den wörtlichen Parallelen liegt eine sachliche Entsprechung zwischen irdischem König und JHWH zugrunde: Beide üben die königliche Handlungsrolle des Helden aus."⁸

The joint military efforts of YHWH and the king are also evident elsewhere.⁹ In Psalm 89 the king receives his military weapons and his military training directly from the deity, acquiring with them YHWH's own purpose in engaging in combat; the unified purpose of both god and human king in the fight to defeat chaos is stressed by the psalm's close paralleling of its descriptions of each (89:14, cf. 89:11, 22, 26). The king's reliance on YHWH for his military accoutrements, as well as their mutual military endeavors, render the king unique among men: singled out for the special role of YHWH's human counterpart and earthly representative.

The broad ideological background of this conception of the human king as YHWH's counterpart lies in the mythology of YHWH's battles against chaos, most famously at the creation of the world but, as indicated by the earthly king's involvement, part of an ongoing process of creative violence against continuing chaotic threats, namely, the king's enemies. The creation of an ordered world was the result of YHWH's successful action against chaotic forces, manifest as water or sea; this universe is preserved through the successful collaborative actions of YHWH and the king against the latter's historical enemies.

3 Reconstructing the King's Chaokampf Commission

Despite the evidence that the relationship between and mutual purposes of YHWH and the king were understood in terms of a joint mission against chaos, there remains very little of an explicit nature in the biblical text to indicate how the human king's role as YHWH's earthly counterpart in this endeavor was supposed to have originated: how the human king was commissioned to fight alongside and on YHWH's behalf in this ongoing version of the divine Chaokampf. The texts are clear that the king's weaponry and military skills were understood to have been given to him by YHWH, but no

⁷ K.-P. Adam, *Der Königliche Held: Die Entsprechung von kämpfendem Gott und kämpfendem König in Psalm 18*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, vol. 91 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 2001). On the shared weaponry of divine and human kings, see also N. Wyatt, "Degrees of Divinity: Some Mythical and Ritual Aspects of West Semitic Kingship," in *There's Such Divinity Doth Hedge a King': Selected Essays of Nicholas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature*, Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 151–189.

⁸ Adam, *Königliche Held*, 125.

⁹ Note that most additional examples are in the first three books of the psalter, probably reflecting its redactional history; see G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, vol. 76 (Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1985); J.C. McCann, *Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 159 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993).

explicit indication of how this gift might have been located within a mythological framework survives.¹⁰

What does remain are fragments of a narrative tradition which suggests the creation of the human king, in the divine image, as YHWH's earthly counterpart in the creation and maintenance of an ordered world through combat. The key texts are Genesis 1, a deliberately polemical rewriting of a Judahite Chaokampf tradition; Psalm 8, which reiterates aspects of a royal tradition suggested by Genesis 1; and Psalms 18 and 89, which—as already discussed—preserve crucial elements of the Judahite conception of YHWH's and the king's battles against chaos.¹¹

3.1 Genesis 1

Several features of the extant narrative of creation in Genesis 1 suggest that the chapter's antecedent tradition was royally oriented, providing critical glimpses of the story of the king's Chaokampf commission. Most obvious among the chapter's royal features is the language of dominion used to commission אדם upon its creation in 1:26–28; equally significant is the description of אדם as having been made in the image of god.

The text's description of אדם as made “in the image of god” (בצלם אלהים) employs language usually found in descriptions of ancient Near Eastern kings. The Assyrian king Esarhaddon is repeatedly described in such terms, with texts referring to him as the image of Bel (an epithet for Marduk) and as the image of the deity Šamaš, as well as the image of a god in a general sense.¹² In the first of these the writer declares that “the father of the king, my lord, was the very image of Bel, and the king, my lord, is likewise the very image of Bel.”¹³ The last text, in which Esarhaddon is described as the image of a god in a general sense, especially contrasts the king, who is in the image of a god, with commoners, who are not: “The well-known proverb says: ‘Man is a shadow of god.’ [But] is man a shadow of man too? The king is the perfect likeness of the god.”¹⁴ To be in the image of a deity was, for Esarhaddon, a sign of his uniqueness as king. A fourth text refers to an unnamed king as the image of Marduk, and again relates it to the king's role vis-à-vis those who are not king: “You, o king of the world, are an image of Marduk; when you were angry with your servants, we suffered the anger of the king our lord.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Contrast, for example, the Mesopotamian myth of the creation of humanity, which reveals that it is the function of the human king as a military leader in particular which distinguishes him from other humans. This special role is symbolized by the gods' gift of weaponry to the king: “They gave the king the battle of the [great] gods / Anu gave him his crown, Ellil ga[ve him his throne] / Nergal gave him his weapons / Ninurta g[ave him his shining splendour] / Bēlet-ilī gave [him his beautiful appearance...].” The *editio princeps* is W.R. Mayer, “Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs,” *Orientalia* (NS) 56 (1987): 55–68, here 56:37–40, in my translation; for discussion see Maul, “Der assyrische König”; Adam, *Königliche Held*. For further discussion of the Assyrian king's self-conception as the divine warrior's earthly counterpart, see Crouch, *War and Ethics*, 21–28, 35–64, 119–155.

¹¹ On Genesis 1 see originally H. Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, transl. K.W. Whitney, Jr. (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006); for recent discussion see K. Möller, “Images of God and Creation in Genesis 1–2,” in *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on His 60th Birthday*, ed. J.A. Grant, A. Lo and G.J. Wenham (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 14–24, with further references. Although Gunkel's original proposal to identify תהום as the Hebrew version of the Akkadian Tiamat has been cast into doubt by subsequent linguistic analysis, the basic theory remains widely accepted: the narrative of Genesis 1 reflects an attempt to counter a mythological account of creation in which YHWH achieved his power through combat with and defeat of a chaotic opponent in the form of the sea—an account for which evidence remains visible in other biblical texts. See especially Day, *God's Conflict*; Crouch, *War and Ethics*, 29–32, 65–96, 156–173. For several attempts to nuance the thesis in light of more recent research, see J. Scurlock and R.H. Beal (eds.), *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's Chaokampf Hypothesis* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013).

¹² See D.J.A. Clines, “Humanity as the Image of God,” in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays, 1967–1998*, vol. 2, ed. D.J.A. Clines, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 293 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 478–479 for the relevant excerpts; all appear in R.H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Assyrian Letters Dating from the Sargonid Period (722–625 BC)*, American Oriental Series, vol. 6 (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1935), nos. 161, 264 and 345. The first two have been re-edited in S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, State Archives of Assyria 10 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1993) as SAA 10 228 and 196, respectively; the third is SAA 10 207.

¹³ SAA 10 228:18–19. See also S.E. Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament, vol. 204 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 48.

¹⁴ SAA 10 207 r. 9.

¹⁵ See Clines, “Humanity,” 479, with reference to R. Campbell Thompson, *The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum: The Original Texts, Printed in Cuneiform Characters, Luzac's Semitic Text*

The same terminology occurs in Egyptian texts relating to the pharaohs, with the pharaoh described as “the shining image of the lord of all and a creation of the gods of Heliopolis . . . he has begotten him, in order to create a shining seed on earth, for salvation for men, as his living image.” The pharaoh is also called “a prince like Re, the child of Qeb, his heir, the image of Re” and described by the gods as “my living image, creation of my members, whom Mut bare to me” and “my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth.”¹⁶ The Egyptian witness to this type of terminology for the pharaoh and his relationship to the gods is abundant, with references including statements that the pharaoh is the son of a deity as well as made in that deity’s image.¹⁷

The royal background of the image of god language in Genesis 1 has been suggested to reflect a deliberate attempt by the text’s author to apply this language to humanity as a whole, in the form of דָּא .¹⁸ Clines, for example, has argued that the Genesis text represents a democratization of the royal image of god ideology and a reapplication of that ideology to all of humanity.¹⁹ Similarly, Kraus has argued that the authors of Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 have appropriated language and terminology previously associated with the king in order to exalt the primal דָּא .²⁰

Although the present rendering of Genesis 1 does not restrict the divine image and its attendant royal relationship with YHWH to the king alone, the background of the concept is clearly in the sphere of royal ideology. Both the Assyrian and the Egyptian texts refer specifically to the king when they speak of a human being in the image of the deity; Clines rightly concludes that in the normal conception of the divine image “it is the king who is the image of god, not humankind generally.”²¹ The rationale for the appearance of this distinctively royal language in the context of a narrative about the creation of the universe and, more specifically, the creation of דָּא , will be returned to below. Before doing so, two more specific aspects of this terminology are worth note.

First, image of god language is associated not with kingship in general but with the role of a human king as the god’s representative to the people over whom the king rules. With regard to Genesis 1, numerous commentators have therefore suggested that the image language reflects an attempt to present the דָּא as YHWH’s representative: his vice-regent or viceroy, delegated by YHWH to represent YHWH on earth.²² Concerns over the apparent incongruity of such a concept in

and Translation, vols. 6–7 (London: Luzac, 1900), no. 170; translation here is as re-edited in SAA 8 333, in H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings*, State Archives of Assyria 8 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1992). Cf. the fragmentary SAA 13 046, reconstructed as “[The king, my lord], is the [ima]ge of Marduk. The word of [the king], my lord, [is] just as [final] as that of the gods . . .” (S.W. Cole and P. Machinist, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Priests to Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, State Archives of Assyria 13 [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998]).

¹⁶ See Clines, “Humanity,” 479–80.

¹⁷ Clines, “Humanity,” 479–480; also Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies*, 50; P. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1997), 135–136. Bird notes that the idea of the king as the image of a god is common in Egypt, but usually connected to the idea of the pharaoh as deity incarnate (*Missing Persons*, 134–135); on a similar basis, J. Abraham argues against relating the biblical concept to a royal Egyptian background (but allows the possibility of a link to Egyptian wisdom traditions) (*Eve: Accused or Acquitted? A Reconsideration of Feminist Readings of the Creation Narrative Texts in Genesis 1–3*, Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002], 195). The present analysis suggests that the extant text is undermining a native royal theology (which nevertheless had much in common with other ancient Near Eastern traditions).

¹⁸ For discussions see Clines, “Humanity,” 476–480; Bird, *Missing Persons*, 134–135. Loewenstamm traces the language to the court but argued that the logic was to exalt the king by comparison to the statue or image of the deity (*Comparative Studies*, 48–49).

¹⁹ Clines, “Humanity,” 480; cf. Abraham, *Eve*, 195; Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies*, 50; F. Horst, “Face to Face: The Biblical Doctrine of the Image of God,” *Interpretation* 4 (1950): 266.

²⁰ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Continental Commentary*, trans. H.C. Oswald (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1993), 183–184.

²¹ Clines, “Humanity,” 480.

²² The origins of the idea that YHWH created דָּא to be his earthly representative may be traced to the early part of the twentieth century and is connected especially with the idea that cultic statues (images) stood in the place of or to represent a deity; from this H. Hehn developed the idea that דָּא was the representative of YHWH on earth. See C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1994), 151; cf. Clines, “Humanity,” 480; J. Maxwell Miller, “In the ‘Image’ and ‘Likeness’ of God,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 294–295). The idea was given a broader background by W.H. Schmidt and H. Wildeberger, who were the first to note the language of image in reference to ancient Near Eastern kings; they have since been followed by many commentators on the text of Genesis 1 (see Abraham, *Eve*, 195; Bird, *Missing Persons*, 135–137).

the extant context, however, highlight the peculiarity of such imagery if manufactured de novo for a creation story meant to refer to all of humanity. There is an inherent awkwardness in using this language to cast אֱלֹהִים as YHWH's representative, in so far as the royal bearer of the divine image is always conceived as a deity's representative to the people over whom the king rules. Because the אֱלֹהִים of Genesis 1 stands for all of humanity, however, the אֱלֹהִים cannot very well be understood as representing YHWH to a particular group (or even the entirety) of human beings. The אֱלֹהִים tends, therefore, to be read as YHWH's representative to the rest of creation.²³ Although hardly an impossible reinterpretation of the image of god language, it is not an entirely natural one; it suggests that the image of the single royal figure, created to represent the deity to his particular people, has undergone a significant degree of refiguring in order to work in this context.

The awkwardness of the extant text is quite comprehensible, however, if it is a vestige of the fact that the imagery of Genesis 1 had its origins in another story about the creation of אֱלֹהִים: a story focused not on the universal אֱלֹהִים of Genesis 1 but on one specific, royal אֱלֹהִים. In this rendering the king stood in the place now taken by the universal אֱלֹהִים: created as YHWH's counterpart on earth and as YHWH's representative to other human beings. Though nearly obscured by the extant text's refiguring of the imagery, the royal origins of the image of god language remain visible—just enough to suggest the outlines of an older tradition about the creation of a human king.

In addition, the preservation of these remnants in a text which is widely acknowledged to be engaged in polemical revision of older creation traditions involving the divine Chaoskampf is highly suggestive: where would be a more natural location for the creation and commissioning of the human king as YHWH's counterpart in an ongoing struggle against chaos than at the climax of YHWH's own defeat of chaos? Despite the difficulties of adapting this tradition into a generalized story about the creation of humanity as a whole and the awkwardness of applying the image and its attendant consequences to a universalized אֱלֹהִים, the extant text clearly envisions its universal אֱלֹהִים in the role of its antecedent, the royal אֱלֹהִים: as YHWH's earthly counterpart, ruling over the created order and preventing its return to chaos.

The second point of note with regard to Genesis 1's use of image of god language is that this language is, in the same texts which witness to its use regarding kings, also strongly associated with the idea that creation in the image of a deity is tantamount to a statement of divine parenthood. Revisiting the texts noted above with this in mind reveals quite clearly an association between a king being in the image of a god and assertions of the king's status as the son or offspring of that deity. In the extant text of Genesis 1, the use of this imagery has the effect of presenting the אֱלֹהִים as created in the role of child to YHWH's parent.²⁴ Although the royal background of this imagery is—like many of the traditions on which Genesis 1 draws—deliberately obscured, both image of god language and son of god language overwhelmingly derive from material describing the relationships of human kings and their deities. Both the language of the king as the son of the god and the language of the king being made in the image of the god are expressions of the intimate relationship between a human king and his god.

The intimacy of god and king which is conveyed by sonship imagery is evident also in other biblical texts, most famously Psalm 2. That psalm articulates the synergy between YHWH and his newly anointed king using a potent description of divine parenthood: "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (Ps. 2:7). This is immediately followed by an expression of the consequences of the king's sonship, namely, that the king's desire for military success is mirrored and effected by YHWH:

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (2:8–9).

A coronation hymn establishes the paradigm of the king's relationship with the deity for his newly-commenced reign. The paradigm established here is that the king's recognition as the son of YHWH expresses a special relationship between god and king and assures the support of YHWH in the king's

²³ Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 153; cf. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 183–184; see also n. 41, below, on this as a reflection of a less prominent aspect of royal ideology, namely, the king's dominion over the animal kingdom.

²⁴ C.L. Crouch, "Genesis 1:26–7 as a Statement of Humanity's Divine Parentage," *Journal of Theological Studies* 61 (2010): 1–15.

military pursuits. To this point and its implications for the king's Chaoskampf we will return in the discussion of Psalm 89.

Remaining for the present with Genesis 1: the creation of אדם in the divine image is not the only indication that the background of this story is in a mythological episode recounting the creation of human kingship. As others have noted, the language of dominion is also suggestive of a royal component to this part of the story.²⁵ The verbs used to describe the dominion of אדם are widely recognized as terminology reflecting the ideology of royal rule.²⁶ רדה, usually translated as to subdue or to rule over, has links to royal ideology: Psalm 72 uses it to describe the king's universal rule (72:8), while Psalm 110 uses it in reference to YHWH's involvement against the king's enemies (110:2).²⁷ It emphasizes the power and authority of its subject. Similarly כבש, to subjugate or to tread upon, is language powerful to the point of violent.²⁸ Wenham calls to rule and subdue "an obviously royal task."²⁹ As with the image of god language, these elements of the אדם's role derive from the expectations of kingship, consistent with the military emphasis of kingship as portrayed elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and in keeping with the image of god language inherited from depictions of kings' relationships with their gods. Psalm 2 connects the king's status as the son of YHWH directly to his commission to battle against and subdue their mutual enemies, while in Psalm 8 dominion over the created order is directly related to the אדם's creation in the image of the deity.

Before proceeding to an analysis of that psalm, a final note regarding the use of this royal material in Genesis 1. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the text's application of originally royal imagery to humanity as a whole is its wider context: it occurs in the midst of a narrative designed to eliminate any element of the Chaoskampf creation myth which might threaten YHWH's sole sovereignty. There is no battle with the sea; the תנינים are transformed into tame creations of YHWH rather than fearsome beasts with whom he must contend. The existence of other deities in any form is denied through the use of המאור הגדול and המאור הקטן for the sun and moon, rather than their proper names. Recalling that the portrayal of the human king as YHWH's earthly representative was closely connected to his role as the earthly proponent of the cosmological battle against chaos, it is perhaps unsurprising to see Genesis 1 eliminate the king also: it would have been self-defeating to have explicitly retained these implications of royal ideology in a text that the same author was valiantly attempting to purge of its Chaoskampf elements. Given his interests, we may readily understand why the author of Genesis 1 chose to rewrite an episode recounting the creation of the human king as YHWH's partner in battling against chaos, de-emphasizing the importance of the king by applying the image of god and the language of dominion to אדם as a whole. Just as Genesis 1 writes YHWH's Chaoskampf out of its rendering of creation, so too it writes out YHWH's human counterpart, the human king. If the general consensus of the text's origins in the exilic or post-exilic period is correct,

²⁵ E.g., Bird, *Missing Persons*, 148; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (Lund: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), 146; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1; Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 30; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 158–159. Note that dominion is usually seen as a consequence of the creation of אדם in the divine image, rather than constitutive of it. This is sometimes due to a desire to minimize the dominion aspect for environmental, feminist or other reasons; see G.A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26–28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988), 221–222; cf. e.g., Bird, *Missing Persons*, 132–138; Clines, "Humanity," 484, 489–490; Horst, "Face to Face," 262; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 154–155; among others. While the dominion with which אדם is commissioned is undoubtedly a consequence of creation in the divine image rather than constitutive of the image, the two remain difficult to distinguish: for the king to be made in the image of the deity implies the assumption of certain responsibilities associated with the deity, most especially the execution of justice and the conduct of warfare (itself an extension of the execution of justice). אדם being in the divine image validates its special status vis-à-vis the rest of creation in the same way that the king's special status vis-à-vis the rest of humanity is expressed in terms of him being the son and image of the god. Just as the king's dominion over earthly order is presented as a consequence of his creation in the divine image, that is, his creation as YHWH's son, the de-royalized rendering of Genesis 1 presents אדם as having dominion over earthly order as a consequence of creation in the divine image.

²⁶ Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 158–159; von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 146; Möller, "Images," 20. Note that Westermann concedes the possible echo of royal ideology in the reference to dominion while arguing that it remains unproven that royal ideology is likewise the source of the idea of the image (*Genesis 1–11*, 154).

²⁷ Bird, *Missing Persons*, 148.

²⁸ Möller, "Images," 20.

²⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30, referring to 1 Kgs. 5:4 [4:24] etc.

this elimination of the king also makes sense as a necessary concession to the absence of any Judahite king to act on YHWH's behalf.³⁰

3.2 Psalm 8

A similar revision of a royal Chaoskampf tradition appears to have occurred in Psalm 8, perhaps most famous for being the only text outside of Genesis 1 to refer to the idea that אדם was made in the image of god. Here as in Genesis 1, this language must be understood as deeply rooted in kingship ideology and in the conceptualization of the king as YHWH's son and counterpart. Like Genesis 1, the psalm uses coronation and dominion language to describe the אדם's status and role in creation.³¹ The texts are connected by the idea that אדם was made in the likeness of YHWH (or his heavenly associates) and the fact that both describe the consequences of this in terms of dominion over YHWH's created world, though the psalm's exact relationship with Genesis 1 is uncertain.³² Connected to this uncertainty is that the date of Psalm 8, like many of the psalms, is unknown, with the psalm's tradition-historical antecedents having been subject to significant debate. Suggestive of a late date for at least the extant version is the use of אדנינו in 8:2, 9, otherwise only used in postexilic material (Neh. 10:30; Pss. 135:5; 147:5).³³ Notably, however, this is isolated in the antiphonal verses which frame the main part of the psalm, perhaps suggesting that the current form of the text represents a post-exilic revision of an earlier tradition.³⁴ Whatever the history of Psalm 8 and whatever its exact relationship with Genesis 1, the psalm's language and allusions strongly suggest an originally royal subject and a mythological tradition akin to that observed in Genesis 1, in which the human king is created as the earthly counterpart of the divine king. As with Genesis 1, the attributes assigned to אדם in Psalm 8 are clearly royal, as remarked already by Bentzen.³⁵ More recently, Kraus has noted that the assignment to אדם of כבוד, glory, and הדר, honor, constitutes deliberate marks of kingship.³⁶ Wenham has highlighted that the psalm describes אדם as "crowned" (עטר) and implies that his primary function was to rule over the rest of YHWH's creation. The description of the world deposited at or under his feet is similarly a motif of royal domination.³⁷ As Wenham concludes, "[t]he allusions to the functions of royalty are quite clear."³⁸

³⁰ For discussions of Ezekiel's attempts to address this same issue, see Crouch and Strine, "YHWH's Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel"; Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations."

³¹ E.g., A.A. Anderson, *Introduction and Psalms 1–72*, vol. 1 of *The Book of Psalms*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1972), 100; Bird, *Missing Persons*, 138; E.A. Leslie, *The Psalms: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship* (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949), 132–133; Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 183–186; K. Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2001), 24–25; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 148.

³² See variously Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 179; Leslie, *Psalms*, 132; Schaefer, *Psalms*, 25; Anderson, *Introduction*, 100.

³³ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 180.

³⁴ Note Kraus's form-critical analysis (*Psalms 1–59*, 179).

³⁵ A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah*, 2nd edn., transl. G.W. Andersen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 12, 17, 41–43, who tied the language into a theory of sacral kingship.

³⁶ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 183. Cf. S. Mowinckel: "The 'godlikeness' of man in Ps. 8 consists above all in his sovereignty and power over all other beings, in his godlike 'honour and glory' compared to them" (*The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol. 1, trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas [Oxford: Blackwell, 1962], 57).

³⁷ Ps. 110:1: "YHWH said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand while I make your enemies your footstool'"; cf. descriptions of YHWH (e.g., Nah. 1:3) and various Assyrian texts, including prophetic oracles (SAA 9 1.1; 1.7:3–7, in S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, State Archives of Assyria 9 [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997]) and correspondence (SAA 16 126:17–18; 132:5–8, in M. Luukko and G. Van Buylaere, *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*, State Archives of Assyria 16 [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002]), as well as the representation of the subordinated enemy under the feet of the king (S. Smith, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum from Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib* [London: British Museum, 1938], Pl. VIII) and, perhaps with particular significance, the description in Enuma elish of Marduk treading upon the neck of the defeated Tiamat as a sign of her total defeat (En.el. II 146) (recent editions of Enuma elish include P. Talon, *Enūma Eliš: The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth*, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 4 [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005] and T.R. Kämmerer and K.A. Metzler, *Das babylonische Welterschöpfungsepos Enūma eliš*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 375 [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012]; English translations may be found in S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000] and B.R. Foster, "The Babylonian Epic of Creation," in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions, and Archival Documents from the Biblical World*, ed. W.W. Hallo [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 1.111.)

³⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–11*, 30.

More specifically significant is that these royal attributes are not merely elements of human kingship but are readily recognizable as attributes of YHWH and, in particular, attributes of YHWH which are associated with his kingship. Thus Schaefer has described the ideology of the psalm as one in which “[t]he universal sovereign went so far as to install humans as superintendents of creation and ‘crown’ them with the regalia of ‘glory and honor,’ God’s attributes.”³⁹ “God,” he writes, has “deputized humans as vice-regents who participate in the divine honor.” Kraus has made a significant point out of the fact that the language applied to מלך is applied also to YHWH (Pss. 29:1; 104:1), although in doing so he deliberately attempts to lessen its royal aspect and to draw a strong distinction between the rule of מלך and the rule of a king: “The king has peoples and enemies of the historical area subjected to him (Ps. 110:1); man has animals subordinated to him (Gen. 1:28ff.)”⁴⁰ This kind of adaptation of royal language of dominion has already been noted with reference to Genesis 1; here too it seems likely to have originated in ideas about the breadth of the human king’s responsibilities, adapted in the present context to refer to the מלך in royal terms.⁴¹ Regardless of the object of מלך’s rule, it is evident that the psalm views the מלך as acting in the divine stead, in receipt of the divine attributes as a means and symbol of his particular role as YHWH’s counterpart on earth. This, as has been described in detail above, is the definition of the king.⁴²

Aside from the remnants of royal terminology in this psalm, upon which many scholars have commented, vestiges of a Chaoskampf tradition connected with this royal figure have also persisted.⁴³ These references include the “enemy and avenger” of 8:3, associated with YHWH’s primeval opponent, and “that which wends the paths of the sea” in 8:9, thought to refer to the same—with reference especially to the sea monsters of Gen. 1:21 but bearing also in mind the innumerable references to YHWH’s watery opponent in similar terms.⁴⁴ The baffling 8:3 also makes its best sense as a reference to YHWH’s Chaoskampf. As Dahood, early in the years after the discovery of the Ugaritic material, already noted, “[t]he logical nexus between erecting a dwelling and the subduing of rivals is probably to be sought in Canaanite mythology,” i.e., the conflicts with the sea by Baal and YHWH, respectively: “Having disposed of his foes Rahab, Leviathan, et al., Yahweh set about fashioning and arranging heaven and earth” and building his עז, his strength or bulwark, perhaps alluding to his own dwelling.⁴⁵ Though some persist in confusion over the verse’s meaning, such a background makes sense within an overall emphasis on YHWH’s creative activities. As with Genesis 1, these now opaque allusions seem likely to reflect an earlier mythological tradition connecting the king, created as YHWH’s counterpart, and the battles against chaos.

In light of this combination of motifs, Psalm 8 should be recognized as having been once among the royal psalms, composed perhaps for the occasion of a king’s enthronement (cf. Psalm 2) or

³⁹ Schaefer, *Psalms*, 24.

⁴⁰ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 183. From the attention paid to the aforementioned work by Bentzen, this appears to be motivated by a desire to disprove the theory of sacral kingship: he goes so far as to claim that “every reference to the so-called ‘royal ideology’ has rightly been eliminated,” although at the same time he provides ample evidence to the contrary (Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 183–184). While the theories of the twentieth century with regard to ancient Near Eastern conceptions of kingship are in need of revision in light of more recent scholarship, the underlying argument of much of this work, that the king held a unique place in creation and enacted a special role as mediator between the god(s) and humanity, remains valid. (Kraus’s difficulties might well have been somewhat alleviated had the possibility that Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 reflect an [extensive] revision of royal Chaoskampf ideology occurred; he appears to be attempting to explain the presence of royal ideology in these texts as the “reception and integration of royal conceptions into the picture of the first-created human being,” rather than recognizing it as the vestige of an older creation tradition.)

⁴¹ Note especially the element of ancient Near Eastern kingship, much less remarked on, which saw the human king’s rule expressed in his successful defeat of threats from the animal kingdom. This is most clearly evident in the extensive Assyrian palace reliefs depicting the Assyrian kings’ lion hunts but is also apparent in biblical texts such as Jer. 27:6; 28:14; a similar concept seems to be signaled by the mention of the “beasts of the field” in Ps. 8:8.

⁴² On a grammatical point, it is perhaps also worth mention that every suffix and verb which refers to מלך in the psalm is masculine singular. While this is explicable by the grammatical gender of מלך, it seems somehow surprising that a psalm ostensibly referring to all of humanity never uses a plural reference (contrast Gen. 1:27–28). The persistence of a dominant masculine singular subject coheres nicely with the evidence that YHWH’s deputy was originally the king alone. (One wonders whether the emphasis on “male and female” in Gen. 1:27 is part of the attempt to undermine the associations with the single [male] king who is commissioned by YHWH; Genesis 1 would represent a much more thoroughgoing effort in this regard than Psalm 8, revised only lightly by comparison.)

⁴³ Already M. Dahood, *Psalms 1–50*, Anchor Bible, vol. 16 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 50–51.

⁴⁴ Anderson, Introduction, 102, 104.

⁴⁵ Dahood, *Psalms 1–50*, 50–51.

some similar occasion on which a declaration of the intimate relationship between the human king and YHWH and the delegation of the latter's royal responsibilities to the former would have been appropriate. The מלך in Psalm 8 began life as a royal figure, set against the background of a royal ideology in which the human king was created in the divine image and commissioned to be YHWH's earthly counterpart in combating chaos and ruling the created order.⁴⁶

3.3 *Psalm 18*

This brings us, finally, to Psalms 18 and 89. Both of these, it will be recalled, reflect the intimate relationship between YHWH and the human king, as well as the importance of the defeat of the sea to YHWH's kingship.⁴⁷ We turn to them now in an attempt to flesh out the hints regarding the king's Chaostkampf commission which have been observed in Genesis 1 and Psalm 8: a king created, in the context of YHWH's Chaostkampf triumph, in the divine image and as the son of god to serve as YHWH's partner in an ongoing battle against chaos.

In an extensive study devoted to Psalm 18, Adam highlighted the specific features of the psalm which mark the intimacy of YHWH's involvement in the king's military activities. A number of verbs which are associated with YHWH's military endeavors, for example, are used to correlate YHWH and the king, and the psalm specifies certain military imagery (bow, arrow, shield) as common to both. The presentation of YHWH as the military tutor to the king emphasizes "die besondere Nähe zwischen Gottheit und König im Kampf" (cf. Ps. 144:1).⁴⁸

What Adam does not note is the narrative context in which YHWH invests the king with these military skills. After a lengthy description of YHWH's military manifestation in Chaostkampf terms, the king is brought directly into this mythological picture:

He [YHWH] reached down from on high; he took me [the king]

He drew me out from the mighty waters

He saved me from my fierce enemy (18:17–18a).

How YHWH achieves this is unpacked in the subsequent verses, with a lengthy description of the various military skills which the king receives from YHWH: from his fighting physique to his talents with bow and arrow (18:33–40). In the midst of a threat from chaotic waters, YHWH seizes the king and equips him to combat those forces by bestowing upon him his own military skill. Many of the elements of the human king's military prowess are linked to YHWH's and in this psalm YHWH's military prowess is articulated specifically in terms of YHWH's triumph over chaos. Though not providing any great detail of the tradition of the human king's creation to fight alongside YHWH against chaos, Psalm 18 affirms the association between YHWH's Chaostkampf, the creation of the king and the king's Chaostkampf.

3.4 *Psalm 89*

Psalm 89 is, without doubt, one of the clearest texts in which the association between YHWH's struggle against chaos at creation and the king's military engagements may be seen. The psalm opens with a lengthy description of YHWH as the triumphant victor over chaos, including the declaration that

You [YHWH] rule the raging of the sea;
when its waves rise, you still them.

You crushed Rahab like a carcass;

you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm (89:11).

This culminates with the explicit identification of YHWH as king (89:19). The psalm contains close parallels between the description of the king and the description of YHWH, along much the same lines as the parallelism discussed with regard to Psalm 18: "You have a mighty arm", the psalm says of YHWH: "strong is your hand, high your right hand" (89:14). "My hand", YHWH responds, "shall always remain with him [the king]; my arm also shall strengthen him... I will set his hand on the sea

⁴⁶ The post-exilic frame of the psalm and the generic terminology of מלך may reflect an attempt to "democratize" (to use Clines' terminology) or otherwise diffuse the royal associations of this imagery in a similar historical setting to that which produced Genesis 1.

⁴⁷ Crouch, *War and Ethics*, 29–32. The consequences of this mythology continue to resonate even after the destruction of the monarchy; see Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations."

⁴⁸ Adam, *Königliche Held*, 206.

and his right hand on the rivers” (89:22, 26). The use of water imagery in the articulation of divine support for the king indicates the specific connection between the king’s military endeavors and YHWH’s creative battle against chaos, as it explicitly associates the king’s enemies with the chaotic forces which are the opponent of the divine Chaoskampf (89:23–26). Confirming this is the immediately following conclusion to the main part of the psalm, which concludes with a statement of the royal, covenant relationship between YHWH and the king that reiterates the convergence of divine and human activity in their joint battle against the chaotic forces threatening the universe (89:29–38).

Most informative regarding the as yet elusive tradition of the king’s Chaoskampf commission, however, is the mid-point of this text, in the midst of the transition from a focus on YHWH to a focus on the king. At this critical point, the text openly declares that “You [YHWH] spoke to your faithful in a vision / And said, ‘I have conferred power upon a warrior’” (89:20). Thereafter follows the description of the human, Davidic king as the earthly counterpart of YHWH, in terms which make clear that his commissioning—YHWH’s conferral of power—is for the purposes of the Davidic king’s involvement in an ongoing Chaoskampf against the earthly agents of chaos. Here appears the announcement that “I will set his hand upon the sea / his right hand upon the rivers” (89:26). In light of the preceding analysis of Genesis 1, Psalm 8 and Psalm 18, the next several verses become even more informative: immediately upon this declaration of the king’s power over chaos manifest comes the statement that

He will say to me,

“You are my father, my God, the rock of my deliverance.”

I will appoint him first-born,

Highest of the kings of the earth (89:27–29).

Precisely in the middle of YHWH’s commissioning of the king as a warrior against chaos appears language of YHWH’s parental role vis-à-vis the king (89:27). Hovering in the background of Genesis 1’s use of image of god language in the creation of the אֱלֹהִים , the use of the parental language here affirms that this psalm’s conception of the king’s Chaoskampf commissioning has in mind a tradition of the creation of the human king in the divine image, in the context of YHWH’s own Chaoskampf. The identification of the king as YHWH’s son is framed on either side by the dominion language associated in Psalm 8 and Genesis 1 with the creation of the (royal) אֱלֹהִים (89:26, 28); it comes immediately on the heels of a description of the king’s creation for the purpose of continuing YHWH’s battle against chaos (89:20–26). The final verses of this section (89:37–38) appeal to the sun and to the moon as witnesses to this commission, echoing the creation of these entities in Genesis 1.

4 Conclusions

The possibility that Genesis 1 is reworking an older tradition, one which gave an account of the creation (or perhaps installation, cf. Psalm 2) of the human king as YHWH’s earthly counterpart in the battle against chaos is intriguing; it certainly seems to be supported by the poetic material in Psalms 8, 18 and 89. The royal features of the narrative of the creation of אֱלֹהִים in Genesis 1—the creation of the אֱלֹהִים in the image of god, to exercise dominion—appear in a context of a polemical revision of YHWH’s Chaoskampf, suggesting that the older tradition included the king’s commissioning as YHWH’s representative and earthly counterpart in these activities. Psalm 8 similarly associates the creation of a royal figure with the exertion of authority and dominion over chaos, using the same image of god language as Genesis 1 to describe this figure and to articulate his special relationship with YHWH. Psalm 18 and especially Psalm 89 affirm the location of the king’s Chaoskampf commission in the midst of YHWH’s own Chaoskampf activities, with the latter’s use of parental language echoing the image of god language in Genesis 1.

Although inevitably speculative, taken together these elements suggest an antecedent tradition in which YHWH, in connection with his successful triumph over chaos, creates a human king in his own image and charges him with continuing the struggle against chaos in the human realm, for which purpose YHWH gifts his own Chaoskampf weaponry as the tools of the king’s dominion. This tradition provides the foundation for the presentation of the human king as YHWH’s earthly counterpart in the battle against the chaotic enemy, exemplified by Psalms 18 and 89 and witnessed also elsewhere. In Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 it provides a compelling explanation for the use of strongly

royal language with reference to humanity as a whole as well as an explanation for the necessity of eliminating the king himself.