

**HORN-MOTIFS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND RELATED ANCIENT
NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE AND ICONOGRAPHY**

Author: Margit L. Süring. Th.D., 1980.

Advisor: Gerhard F. Hasel.

(Margit L. Süring is currently director of the program in Religion at Toivonlinna, SF-21500 Piikkiö, Finland.)

This investigation studies the presence of the horn-motifs on a philological, literary, and iconographical basis in both the ancient Near Eastern context and the Hebrew Bible.

The first chapter is devoted to a review of prior studies, particularly those in the twentieth century. Throughout almost all of this century, the "history-of-religion" school and the "form-critical" school have taken the lead in archaeological and biblical interpretations. New trends of interpretation were developed in the late 1960s on some aspects, due to a scientifically and systematically improved archaeological approach. Prior individual studies focusing on fragmentary aspects did not sufficiently elucidate the horn-motif. A comprehensive study of the horn-motifs in the ancient Near Eastern and/or in biblical contexts has never been attempted, and a new assessment is therefore necessary.

In the second chapter, I have followed a philological approach, with the aim of discovering the meaning of the word "horn" in such ancient Near Eastern languages as Sumerian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, Aramaic, South-Arabian, and Hebrew. A complexity of meanings emerged as early as the ancient Sumerian compounds of signs. Many different meanings were reflected, in the respective language investigated, though new shades of meanings developed in the course of time, especially in Aramaic and South-Arabian. The morphological structures of the Hebrew word קַרְנֵי are especially scrutinized. The results are summarized in charts.

In the third chapter, I have attempted a close investigation of related ancient Near Eastern literature and iconographic materials relating to the horn-motif. Horn-motifs are present in both literature and iconography from earliest times, even prehistoric time in iconographic artifacts. Ancient Near Eastern literature substantiates several iconographic presentations. Horned headdresses on gods and goddesses appear in most of the ancient Near Eastern cultures. The Babylonian moon-god (Sin) became the symbol of power and fertility in astral worship. His two emblems were the "horns" of the moon and the horns of the bull.

The fourth chapter examines the morphological structure of the manifold occurrences of the word "horn" in its usages throughout the Hebrew Bible. Each biblical text in which the term *qeren*, "horn," appears

was investigated in its immediate and larger contexts. My inquiry into the contextual settings made it apparent that the horn-motifs have frequently been interpreted on too narrow a scale. This one-sided approach has caused the horn-motif to appear in an *a priori* set pattern where the animal horns, in a literal or metaphorical sense, dominate the origin and meaning of "horn" in nearly all the passages. My study indicates that the term *qeren* can mean (depending on its contexts): rays (of brightness), power, refuge, vengeance (of Yahweh), weapon, horn-pair, totality, wing, messiah, king, kingdom, etc.

The horn-motifs in biblical context differ from the general ancient Near Eastern pattern in several respects. First, Yahweh is never described as wearing horns. Second, the "horns" of the moon and the horns of the bull are unknown emblems in Israel and have no connection with Yahweh worship. The masks of the oracle-priests are unknown cult items in Israel. The horns of the altar have no animate concept attached to them.

This study reaches the conclusion that two diametrically opposed traditions embracing the horn-motif move parallel in human history but are displayed on two different planes and point to two different levels: (1) the horn-motif(s) in the ancient Near Eastern cultures on a horizontal level; (2) the horn-motif(s) in the Hebrew Bible on a vertical level. The struggle for supremacy in human history on a horizontal level is disclosed in apocalyptic writings. The competitive powers are presented as "horns." The horn-motif on the vertical level breaks into the horizontal drama and focuses on a power of cosmic and transcendent character that alone will be supreme and exalted.