Philip J. Senter

Article

# Leviathan, Behemoth, and Other Biblical *Tannînim*: Serpents, Not Dinosaurs

*Philip J. Senter*

*An extensive and growing body of young-earth creationist literature treats the Bible as a science textbook and claims that the Bible mentions dinosaurs and other Mesozoic reptiles. Such literature equates the Hebrew term tannîn (often translated "dragon") with dinosaurs and/or Mesozoic marine reptiles. Accordingly, it misidentifies the tannîn Leviathan as a literal fire-breathing dinosaur or marine reptile. It also misidentifies the monster Behemoth as a dinosaur. These misidentifications have been incorporated into grade-school science textbooks that teach students that ancient reptiles breathed fire.*

*Numerous clues from the Bible and other ancient sources falsify those misidentifications. Such clues reveal that tannîn means "serpent," that the ancient Hebrews envisioned Leviathan (and possibly Behemoth) metaphorically as a serpent, and that Leviathan's fire-breathing is not literal but metaphorical. Leviathan and Behemoth are not natural animals, but rather supernatural entities with important roles in ancient Hebrew eschatology.*

The Bible is not a science textbook. Nevertheless, advocates of the young-earth creationist (YEC) worldview treat it as one. According to the YEC view, the biblical book of Genesis is an accurate record of past events that took place exactly as Genesis describes them, so its descriptions of events can be treated as scientific data. This view rejects the abundant physical evidence that organic evolution has occurred and that billions of years have passed.[1] It claims that the earth was created approximately 6,000 years ago in accordance with the biblical timeline, and that all kinds of organisms were independently created during a single week at the beginning of that time span, in accordance with the wording of Genesis.[2]

**Philip J. Senter** *holds a PhD in biological sciences and a Master of Theology in Applied Orthodox Christian Theology. The son of Southern Baptist missionaries, he grew up on the mission field in Liberia and was chrismated into the Eastern Orthodox Church in 2013. He has worked as a zoology professor at Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, North Carolina since 2007.*

A corollary of the YEC view is that humans and dinosaurs once coexisted, because they were created during the same week. To support that corollary, an enormous and ever-growing body of YEC literature claims that the Bible mentions dinosaurs, pterosaurs, and other reptiles that are known today only from Mesozoic fossils. Below, for concision, that position is called the DIBV (the Dinosaurs-In-the-Bible View) and the authors of literature promoting it are called DIBV authors. DIBV literature has existed since the nineteenth century, but its publications have exploded in number and popularity in the most recent five decades. In the current century, the DIBV has even been incorporated into some grade-school science textbooks.[3]

DIBV authors frequently cite Job 40 and 41, which respectively describe the monstrous beings named בְּהֵמוֹת (*Bᵉhēmōth*, anglicized as "Behemoth") and לִוְיָתָן (*Livyāthān*, anglicized as "Leviathan").

Elsewhere, the Hebrew scriptures identify Leviathan as a תַּנִּין (*tannîn*) (Ps. 74:13–14; Isa. 27:1), a word that the King James Version of the Bible usually translates as "dragon."[4] Most DIBV literature proposes that Behemoth is a dinosaur and that Leviathan and other biblical *tannînim* (the plural of *tannîn*) are dinosaurs, plesiosaurs, or mosasaurs. The plesiosaurs were Mesozoic marine reptiles that included long-necked, small-headed forms and short-necked, large-headed forms. The mosasaurs were large marine lizards of the Mesozoic Era, with elongate bodies. Both groups had limbs that were modified into flippers.

In contrast to DIBV authors, many other past and present commentators consider Behemoth a hippopotamus or elephant.[5] They consider *tannîn* to be the ancient Hebrew word for a species of mythical sea monster,[6] or for crocodiles or whales, and identify Leviathan as such.[7] As I will show below, all of the above interpretations of Behemoth, Leviathan and the word *tannîn* are incorrect. The word *tannîn* means "serpent," and Behemoth and Leviathan are malevolent supernatural entities whom the ancient Hebrews envisioned as a pair of serpents, much as the devil is envisioned as a serpent in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2.

## DIBV Conceptions of Behemoth, Leviathan, and the *Tannîn*

The misidentification of Behemoth and Leviathan as dinosaurs began even before the word "dinosaur" was coined. In 1824, William Buckland published the earliest scientific description of a dinosaur, the carnivore *Megalosaurus*.[8] Gideon Mantell described the teeth of the herbivorous dinosaur *Iguanodon* in 1825.[9] In 1833, Mantell described more of its skeleton,[10] in addition to the skeleton of the armored dinosaur *Hylaeosaurus*.[11] In 1842, Sir Richard Owen gave the name Dinosauria to the group of animals that the reptilian trio represented.[12] By then, in an 1835 article, the English politician Thomas Thompson had already misidentified *Megalosaurus* and *Iguanodon* as the biblical Leviathan and Behemoth.[13] Soon thereafter, the surgeon Charles Burnett endorsed Thompson's misidentifications in publications of his own.[14] After that, the DIBV was quiescent for several decades. A few YEC authors argued that humans and Mesozoic reptiles were contemporaries, but they did so without claiming that such reptiles were mentioned in the Bible.[15]

The DIBV awakened with great vigor after the 1961 publication of *The Genesis Flood* by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris.[16] Whitcomb and Morris suggested that after the Flood, dinosaurs "may have persisted for a long time, possibly accounting for the universal occurrence of 'dragons' in ancient mythologies."[17] Subsequent YEC authors also suggested that human encounters with dinosaurs were the inspiration for dragon legends, but at first they did so without making the connection with biblical dragons.[18]

Frederick Beierle made that connection in his 1974 book *Giant Man Tracks*. Therein, he suggested that Behemoth was a dinosaur and that Leviathan was a "swimming dinosaur,"[19] possibly a reference to plesiosaurs and/or other Mesozoic marine reptiles, which nonspecialists often mistake for dinosaurs. In the 1975 book *The Great Dinosaur Mistake*, Kelly Segraves also suggested that Behemoth and Leviathan were dinosaurs, without specifying what kind.[20]

In the 1976 book *In Six Days*, Charles McGowen went further, specifying that Behemoth was most likely a sauropod.[21] Sauropods, herbivores with small heads on long necks, were the largest dinosaurs. After McGowen's assertion, the YEC literature exploded in publications claiming that the description of Behemoth in Job 40 indicated a sauropod. That explosion included children's books,[22] in addition to books and journal articles written for adults,[23] and it now includes seventh-grade biology textbooks from Bob Jones University Press.[24]

The identification of Behemoth as a dinosaur is founded mainly on misinterpretations of the Hebrew text of Job 40. The most oft-repeated of those misinterpretations is that the tail of Behemoth is "like a cedar,"[25] a misconception that began with Thomas Thompson's 1835 article. A second misinterpretation that began with that article is that the phrase "chief of the ways of God" (Job 40:19) means "the largest land animal that God created."[26] As I will show below, the Hebrew text of Job 40 implies neither that Behemoth's tail is like a cedar nor that he is a large animal.

Behemoth is associated with watery habitats (Job 40:20–23), which several DIBV authors mistake for the typical habitat of sauropods.[27] This is understandable, because for decades sauropods were mistakenly thought to have been too heavy to support their own

weight on land. However, it is now known that sauropod dinosaurs were terrestrial, not aquatic. Their skeletons are constructed to support weight out of water,[28] their footprints are found only in sediments that were emergent or under very shallow water,[29] and their skeletons, nests, and tracks are often found in sediments that indicate semi-arid environments.[30]

Job 41 locates Leviathan in water. Accordingly, in his 1977 children's book *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards*, Duane Gish identified Leviathan as a lambeosaurine.[31] The lambeosaurines were crested members of the Hadrosauridae, the family of wide-snouted herbivorous dinosaurs that are commonly nicknamed duckbills. The duckbills were once thought to be aquatic, because a specimen with mineralized soft tissues appeared to have webbed fingers.[32] Every other aspect of duckbill anatomy indicates terrestrial habits, and in 1986 the "web" was finally recognized as a digital pad, such as terrestrial animals have beneath their palms.[33] However, the view of the duckbills as aquatic dinosaurs was still predominant in 1977. Taking the biblical description of Leviathan's fire-breathing (Job 41:18–21) literally, Gish proposed that the hollow crests of lambeosaurines housed a fire-production mechanism.[34] DIBV authors in each subsequent decade followed Gish's lead, asserting that lambeosaurine crests may have been involved in producing fire.[35] In the twenty-first century, that assertion made its way into seventh-grade biology textbooks from Bob Jones University Press.[36]

Other DIBV authors disagreed with Gish's equation of Leviathan with lambeosaurines. Some considered Leviathan a fire-breathing reptile without specifying what kind.[37] Others proposed that Leviathan was a fire-breathing dinosaur without specifying that it was a lambeosaurine.[38] One proposed that it was a marine member of the Theropoda, the carnivorous dinosaur taxon that includes *Megalosaurus* and the famous *Tyrannosaurus rex*[39]—and which has no known marine members. Another specified that Leviathan was *T. rex* itself,[40] despite the lack of any known evidence of aquatic habits in *T. rex* or any other non-avian dinosaur at the time of the publication. Soon after a 2014 study by mainstream paleontologists interpreted the anatomy of the theropod dinosaur *Spinosaurus* as indicative of semiaquatic habits,[41] one DIBV author proposed that Leviathan was *Spinosaurus*.[42]

Various DIBV authors also suggested nondinosaurian Mesozoic reptiles as candidates for Leviathan. Some, without suggesting literal fire-breathing, proposed that Leviathan may have been a plesiosaur[43] or a mosasaur.[44] Others proposed that Leviathan was a fire-breathing plesiosaur[45] or a fire-breathing mosasaur.[46] In 2005, one author identified *Sarcosuchus*, a gigantic Cretaceous relative of crocodilians, as Leviathan and proposed that its enlarged nostrils housed a fire-production mechanism.[47] Several subsequent DIBV authors repeated that suggestion.[48] The authors of one children's book identified Leviathan as a possible mosasaur but then inexplicably extended Leviathan's fire-breathing to terrestrial dinosaurs: "So it is possible that some dinosaurs like *Dilophosaurus* could spit venom or even some type of 'fire.'"[49]

Leviathan's fire-breathing (Job 41:18–21) should not be taken literally.[50] Fire-breathing or fire-spitting is an ancient Hebrew idiom that was used as a figure of speech for intent to harm. An angry God emits fire from his mouth and smoke from his nostrils in Psalm 18:8, and in verse 3 his angry voice is fire and hailstones. Military aggression by the nation of Judah is described as fire-breathing in Isaiah 33:11. In Revelation 11:5, two human witnesses consume their enemies with fire from their mouths. Proverbs 16:27 and 26:23 describe insincere words as fire from one's mouth or lips.

The late twentieth-century explosion of DIBV literature began incorporating discussion of the Hebrew term *tannîn* in the 1980s. Opinions differed among DIBV authors as to what sort of reptile the *tannîn* is. Noting that various biblical passages speak of *tannînim* in the sea,[51] some DIBV authors identified *tannînim* as marine reptiles,[52] often specifically plesiosaurs[53] or mosasaurs.[54] Others noted that some biblical passages speak of *tannînim* in terrestrial environments[55] and proposed that the term includes both marine reptiles and terrestrial dinosaurs.[56] One author proposed that the *tannînim* additionally included the pterosaurs,[57] the flying reptiles of the Mesozoic.

## *Tannîn*: Evidence That It Means "Serpent"

The Hebrew scriptures provide ample evidence that *tannîn* is one of several ancient Hebrew words for snakes. As shown in the next sections, objections to

*tannîn* as a word for "serpent" are easily answered, and biblical references to a *tannîn* or *tannînim* in the sea are references not to literal sea creatures but to supernatural entities that were metaphorically envisioned as serpents imprisoned beneath the waters.

The Hebrew scriptures use both *tannîn* and *nāḥāsh* as a general term for snakes, rather than for a particular category or species of snake. In contrast, ancient Hebrew terms such as אֶפְעֶה (*ʾephʿeh*), פֶּתֶן (*pethen*), and צֶפַע (*tsephaʿ*) refer specifically to venomous species.[58] In most prose passages, the word נָחָשׁ (*nāḥāsh*) is used instead of *tannîn*,[59] whereas the word *tannîn* is used about as often as *nāḥāsh* in poetic (including prophetic) passages[60] and is rarely used in prose passages.[61] *Nāḥāsh* is therefore roughly equivalent to the English word "snake" and *tannîn* to the English word "serpent."

One of the many lines of evidence that point to *tannîn* as a term for serpents is the wording of Exodus 7. In verses 8–12, Aaron's staff becomes a *tannîn*, and in verses 15–21, God calls Aaron's staff "the staff that had become a *nāḥāsh*," which indicates that the words *nāḥāsh* (snake) and *tannîn* are equivalent. Similarly, Isaiah 27:1 calls Leviathan a *tannîn* and a *nāḥāsh*, further indicating that the two terms are equivalent.

A second line of evidence that *tannîn* is equivalent to "serpent" is that it is usually translated as *drakōn* in the Septuagint[62] and *draco* in the Vulgate.[63] *Drakōn* is "serpent" in ancient Greek, and *draco* is "serpent" in Latin. A *drakōn*/*draco* is present in a plethora of ancient Greek and Roman myths, and the creature is depicted as a snake in all ancient Greek and Roman art that depicts such myths.[64] In ancient Greek literature, *drakōn* was often used interchangeably with ὄφις (*ophis*), the generic ancient Greek term for "snake." Some ancient authors even called a serpent a *drakōn* on one line and an *ophis* on the next. For example, this occurs in Homer's *Iliad*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Apollodorus' *Library*, and the New Testament book of Revelation.[65] After the time of Aristotle, there was a general tendency among Greek-speakers to use the term *ophis* for snakes in ordinary contexts and to use *drakōn* for snakes in religious or mythical contexts.[66] Much ancient Greek usage of *ophis* versus *drakōn* was therefore analogous to the English usage of "snake" versus "serpent."

In Isaiah 27:1, the Septuagint twice translates *tannîn* as *ophis*, the generic ancient Greek word for "snake." In both cases in the same verse, the Vulgate translates *tannîn* as *serpens*, a generic Latin word for "snake." Likewise, in Exodus 7:9 and 7:10, the Vulgate translates *tannîn* as *coluber*, another generic Latin word for "snake."

The foregoing is sufficient to confirm that *tannîn* means "serpent," but other lines of evidence provide further support for that confirmation. The *tannîn* is described as venomous (Deut. 32:33) and scaly (Ezek. 29:3–4), attributes that are consistent with snakes. En-Rogel, the spring near Jerusalem that was associated with the local landmark called the "Stone of the Snake (Zoheleth)" (1 Kings 1:9), was also called the "Spring of the *Tannîn*" (Neh. 2:13).[67]

Further confirmation of the equivalence of *tannîn* with "serpent" is found in the pairing of *tannîn* with other Hebrew terms for snakes in poetic couplets. Ancient Hebrew literature frequently contains couplets in which the author makes a statement and then repeats it with different words for things in the same category. For example, to say "the teeth of lions" twice, the couplet "the *shen* of an *ʾărî*, the *məthallaʿah* of a *labî*" (Joel 1:6) pairs two words for teeth (*shen*, *məthallaʿah*) and two words for lions (*ʾărî*, *labî*). Similarly, the couplet "rise like a *labî* and lift himself like an *ʾărî*" (Num. 23:24) pairs "rise" with "lift" and *labî* (lion) with *ʾărî* (lion). Such couplets do not always pair two words for exactly the same thing, but they usually pair words for things that are in the same category. For example, some couplets and triplets pair wolves with lions and/or leopards (members of the large, mammalian predator category) and pair sheep with goats and/or cattle (members of the hoofed mammal category) (Isa. 11:6, 65:25; Jer. 5:6). The couplet "you shall tread upon the lion and the *pethen*, the young lion and the *tannîn* you shall trample underfoot" (Ps. 91:13) pairs *tannîn* with *pethen*. So does the couplet "the poison of *tannînim*, the cruel venom of *pethenim*" (Deut. 32:33). Biblical references show that the *pethen* was venomous (Deut. 32:33; Job 20:14, 20:16; Isa. 11:8) and was used by snake charmers (Ps. 58:4); these references suggest cobras (members of the genus *Naja*). A triplet in Isaiah 27:1 pairs *tannîn* with *nāḥāsh* (snake): "In that day, the Lord … shall punish Leviathan the crooked *nāḥāsh*, Leviathan the twisted *nāḥāsh*, and shall slay the *tannîn* that is in the sea." These examples show that the *tannîn* was considered to belong to the same category of thing as a *pethen* or a *nāḥāsh*. That is, a *tannîn* is a snake.

The Hebrew scriptures make much mention of *tannînim* in the sea (Gen. 1:21; Ps. 74:13; Isa. 27:1, 51:9–10; Ezek. 32:2), which has led some authors to conclude that the term refers to a species of mythical sea monster.[68] However, that conclusion is mistaken.[69] As shown in the next section, ancient Hebrew writings speak of a pair of supernatural entities that are imprisoned beneath the waters, and it metaphorically calls them "serpents" (*tannînim*) in the same way that the author of the biblical book of Revelation metaphorically calls the devil a *drakōn* (serpent) and an *ophis* (snake) (Rev. 12:9, 20:2).

The Hebrew word for "jackal" (תַּן: *tan*) is similar to *tannîn*. It is therefore possible that some overlap exists in the usage of the two words in the Hebrew scriptures. Accordingly, some authors accept "jackal" as an alternate translation for *tannîn* in some passages.[70] For example, Micah 1:8 characterizes the *tannîn* as an animal that howls, which is more consistent with jackals than serpents, because the latter lack vocal cords and therefore cannot howl. Similarly, Lamentations 4:3 characterizes the *tannîn* as an animal that suckles its young, which is more consistent with jackals than serpents. However, some of the alleged jackal passages are consistent with serpents. For example, according to English translations of Isaiah 13:22, *tannînim* will "cry" or "howl" in the houses of Babylon after its impending destruction. The verb that Isaiah uses here is עָנָה (ʿanah), which means to reply to a question or to provide testimony.[71] Isaiah is therefore not saying that *tannînim* vocally howl but that their presence in Babylon's houses will testify to its destruction. It is also worth considering that the *tannîn* that suckles its young in Lamentations 4:3 is part of a list of ways in which the world has been turned topsy-turvy (Lam. 4:1–8): gold has stopped being shiny, neatly collected gems have been scattered, mothers do not feed their children, the rich are starving, and consecrated Nazarites have become impure.[72] The context of the statement that the *tannîn* suckles its young is therefore consistent with *tannînim* as creatures that did not normally suckle their young. However, even if the word *tannîn* does mean "jackal" in those passages, it should be noted that jackals are not dinosaurs. It should further be noted that even if the *tannîn* in Lamentations 4:3 is not a serpent, it is also not a dinosaur, because as reptiles, dinosaurs did not suckle their young.[73]

Some of the alleged jackal passages use *tannîm* instead of *tannînim* as the plural of *tannîn*,[74] and some scholars accept *tannîm* as the plural of "jackal" in such passages.[75] However, some of the passages that use the word *tannîm* are clearly referring to serpents. For example, Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2 figuratively refer to Egypt as *tannîm* in the waters. That figure of speech does not apply to jackals, and it echoes the characterization in other passages (Isa. 27:1, 51:9) of Egypt as a *tannîn* in the waters, with context that clearly shows that *tannîn* means "serpent" in those passages. Moreover, the Septuagint and Vulgate usually[76] translate *tannîm* as *drakōn* and *draco*. It therefore stands to reason that *tannîm* is a short version of *tannînim* and can mean "serpents." Even if it can also mean "jackals," it is worth repeating that jackals are not dinosaurs.

In Job 41:12, in reference to the *tannîn* Leviathan, the narrator states, "I will not conceal his *bad* (בַּד), his strength and comely form." The Hebrew word *bad* in Job 41:12 is often mistranslated "limbs" in English-language Bibles; this seems to contradict the interpretation of Leviathan as a serpent. However, *bad* is a broader term than "limbs." It refers to body parts in general. "I will not conceal …" is a poetic way to say "I shall proclaim …" Verse 12 is therefore a poetic way for the narrator to announce that he is about to expound upon Leviathan's body parts and his strength. After completing the couplet, the narrator does exactly that. In verse 13, the couplet is completed by coupling verse 12's "I will not conceal his body parts" (which speaks of a figurative nonconcealing of the body) with "Who can see his clothing?" (speaking of a literal nonconcealing of his body), and then by coupling "his strength and comely form" with "Who can approach him with a bridle?" (which brings strength into the nonclothing theme by implying that Leviathan is too strong to be clothed with an item that suggests he can be subdued). The following verses expound upon Leviathan's body parts: teeth (verse 14), scales (verses 15–17), eyes (verse 18), mouth (verse 19), nostrils (verse 20), mouth again (verse 21), neck (verse 22), flakes of muscle (מַפָּל: *mappāl*: flakes of flesh, as in the flaky muscle units of fishes and reptiles) (verse 23), and heart (verse 24). This exposition on Leviathan's body parts is consistent with "I will not conceal his *bad*" as a reference to an upcoming exposition on body parts in general. It is inconsistent with "I will not conceal his *bad*" as a reference to an upcoming exposition on limbs, because the narrator's exposition on body parts does not include limbs. Furthermore, the conspicuous lack

of limbs in this list of body parts supports the interpretation of Leviathan as a serpent.

As will be shown below, Leviathan is a supernatural being who is metaphorically described as a serpent. That Leviathan was represented as a serpent is confirmed by Isaiah 27:1, which calls Leviathan not only a *tannîn* (serpent) but also a *nāḥāsh* (snake). It is further confirmed by the rendering of the name "Leviathan" as *drakōn* (serpent) in the Septuagint[77] and *draco* (serpent) in the Vulgate,[78] and by the probable identity of the *nāḥāsh* of Amos 9:3 as Leviathan (see below). Leviathan is described as covered in scales (Job 41:15) and having a toothy mouth (Job 41:14), attributes that are consistent with a serpent.

## Pre-DIBV Conceptions of Leviathan and Behemoth

Leviathan is a Hebrew cognate of *Ltn* (Litan or Lotan), the name of a being mentioned in a Canaanite myth recorded on tablets from Ugarit. The inscriptions on the tablets were written between 1400 and 1200 BC.[79] According to the myth, an assembly of gods offered the god Baal to Yam (the sea) as a prisoner, but Baal fought and defeated Yam. Anat, Baal's sister, also fought and defeated Yam. As punishment for defeating the sea, Baal was swallowed by Death, but Anat later defeated Death to rescue Baal.[80] *Ltn* is mentioned in two parts of the myth. In a speech to emissaries of Baal after the defeat of the sea, Anat mentions that she had defeated *Ltn*. When Death summons Baal to be swallowed, Death mentions that Baal had defeated *Ltn*. In those speeches, *Ltn* is described as a *btn* (snake) and a *tnn* (serpent),[81] which are cognates of the Hebrew *pethen* and *tannîn*. *Ltn* is further described in those speeches as seven-headed and is called a twisting/coiling/writhing serpent, a fleeing serpent,[82] and an encircler.[83]

It is sometimes presumed that *Ltn* is an entity other than the sea, a mere henchman of Yam.[84] However, as previous authors have noted,[85] it is more likely that *Ltn* the serpent is an epithet of the sea itself, a name interchangeable with Yam. The epithet "encircler" supports this idea, for it appears to refer to the ancient concept of the sea as a river that encircles the globe.[86] In numerous passages elsewhere in the myth, the sea is called Yam (Sea) on one line and River on the next.[87] In Anat's speech to the emissaries of Baal, she says that she has defeated the Sea, the River, the *tnn*, the coiling *btn*, the encircler with the seven heads.[88] The structure of that passage suggests that all those epithets refer to a single entity: the sea. *Ltn* the serpent, therefore, was originally a metaphor for the sea.

Ancient Hebrew literature retains *Ltn,* the multi-headed *tnn,* as Leviathan the multi-headed *tannîn*, but the Hebrews changed the story.[89] Scholars have long recognized that Hebrew cosmology incorporates elements of other Near Eastern cosmologies in such a way as to turn them on their heads. The creation narrative of Genesis 1 presents the earth, sea, and heavenly bodies as nondivine entities created by a single God, in contradistinction to other Near Eastern cosmologies that present the earth, sea, heavenly bodies, and forces of nature as deities that emanate from each other.[90] Hebrew kings are listed as nondivine descendants of a nondivine human that the one God created, in contradistinction to other Near Eastern genealogies that list kings as divine heirs or manifestations of gods.[91] The general theme in Hebrew alterations of other nations' narratives is that there is but one God, who rules over everything, and the other entities that other nations consider divine are not divine. Accordingly, the Hebrews altered the *Ltn* myth along similar lines. Whereas the Canaanite myth represents the sea as a deity in the form of the serpent *Ltn*, the Hebrews described the sea as a nondivine container for the nondivine serpent Leviathan. Whereas the Canaanite myth portrays the sea and his slayer as deities and brothers whose father is another deity, the Hebrews portrayed Leviathan as both created and slain by the one God. Whereas Canaanite myth portrays the slaying of *Ltn* as part of the story of the annual fertility cycle, the Hebrews portrayed the slaying of Leviathan as an eschatological event.

The Hebrew scriptures preserve fragments of the Hebrew version of the Leviathan story. In Isaiah 27:1, God slays Leviathan, who is described as a *tannîn* within the sea (not a *tannîn* who is the sea). In Psalm 104:26, the psalmist says that Leviathan is within the sea and is mocked by God (a way to express that God defeats Leviathan). In Psalm 74:14, the psalmist mentions God's breaking of the plural heads of Leviathan (cf. the seven-headed *Ltn*), using it as a metaphor for the drowning of the Egyptian army after the parting of the sea during the exodus. In Amos 9:3, God says poetically that if the wicked flee even to the bottom of the sea, God will command

"the snake" (*ha-nnāḥāsh*) there to bite them. The use of the definite article suggests that God has in mind a specific snake in the abyss, plausibly Leviathan.

The *tannînim* in the waters in Genesis 1:21 and Psalm 74:13 may be Leviathan alone, in which case the plural noun "*tannînim*" is an intensive plural: a way to call Leviathan a mighty "Serpent" rather than a mere "serpent" (just as the intensive plural Ĕlōhîm is used in Genesis 1 to call the deity "God" rather than a mere "god"). Another possibility is that the plural *tannînim* in the waters in Genesis 1:21 and Psalm 74:13 are meant as Leviathan and a second serpent, the former in the sea and the latter beneath the fresh water on land (cf. Job 40:21–22). If the word *tannînim* in those two passages was originally meant as an intensive plural reference to Leviathan alone, then the understanding of its meaning as a reference to two serpents is a later development.

Three post-Septuagint works (Enoch 60:4–23; 4 Esd. 6:38–52; 2 Bar. 29:1–30:5)[92] record a later version of the Leviathan story in which there are ornate elaborations, including the imprisonment and subsequent slaying of two serpents instead of one. Those writings name Behemoth and Leviathan as two *tannînim* that God made and imprisoned on the fifth day of creation (cf. Gen. 1:21, in which God creates the *tannînim* on the fifth day). According to those writings, God imprisoned Leviathan in the sea and Behemoth in the wilderness on land, and both will remain hidden until he releases them at the end of time, upon which he will defeat them and feed them to the faithful in an eschatological banquet (cf. Ps. 74:14). The book of Job contains some of the roots of this later version of the story. Job speaks of being under guard like an imprisoned *tannîn* or the sea (7:12). He mentions the rousing of Leviathan as a means to erase a day in the past (3:8), a reference to the eschatological erasure of time when Leviathan will be released to be defeated. Job 40 and 41 describe Leviathan as in the sea and Behemoth as in the wilderness on land. Also, it is in Job 40 that Behemoth, who has no antecedents in Canaanite mythology, makes his first literary appearance.

According to Levitical regulations, reptile meat is unclean (Lev. 11:29–31, 11:41–44). Accordingly, the Rabbis of the Christian Era portrayed Leviathan as a fish and Behemoth as an ox-like creature, in an apparent attempt to identify them as kosher, to make the eschatological banquet consistent with Mosaic Law.[93] The idea of Leviathan as a fish may have led, in turn, to his later identification as a whale, the biggest "fish."

Non-Jewish scholars of the seventeenth century treated Behemoth and Leviathan as natural animals. They debated whether Leviathan and other biblical *tannînim* were whales or crocodiles[94] and whether Behemoth was the elephant or the hippopotamus.[95] Subsequent scholars have continued such debates to this day.[96] However, such debates are moot for four important reasons.

1. Job portrays Behemoth and Leviathan as creatures that humans cannot capture (Job 40:24, 41:1–8, 41:26–29), whereas the ancients did capture and slaughter hippos and crocodiles.[97]
2. Behemoth and Leviathan are names of individuals, not species.
3. Leviathan and Behemoth are not natural animals but supernatural beings. This is evident in the story of God's slaying of Leviathan, because it would make little sense for God to slay an ordinary snake. It is also evident in the post-Septuagint version of the story, in that the lifespans of Leviathan and Behemoth—made at the beginning of creation and kept alive until the end of time—are unrealistic for natural animals.
4. According to the post-Septuagint version of the story, Leviathan and Behemoth are not creatures that any human has ever seen. They have been hidden since their creation on the fifth day (the day before God made humans) and will remain hidden from human sight until the end of time (Enoch 60:7–8, 60:20; 2 Bar. 29:3–5; 4 Esd. 6:47–52). Job 40:15 begins "Behold now Behemoth," but the Hebrew word that is translated "behold" (הִנֵּה) (*hinneh*) does not imply that Job was granted to see Behemoth. Rather, *hinneh* means "Listen! I am about to say something important!"

## Behemoth's Anatomy

Some DIBV authors have misinterpreted Job 40:16 as implying that Behemoth has a bulbous midsection and powerful hindlimbs.[98] The verse says nothing of the kind. Instead, the series of couplets that begins in verse 16 and continues through verse 18 quite possibly describe the opposite: a limbless being with a narrow, wreath-like shape.

The first part of the couplet in verse 16 says that Behemoth's strength (כֹּחַ: *ko-aḥ*) is in his waist (מָתְנָיו: *mothen*). That is a striking statement, because it is at odds with the ancient Hebrew conception of *ko-aḥ*. The Hebrew scriptures describe *ko-aḥ* (strength) as located in the arms and hands—literally, in the case of a blacksmith (Isa. 44:12) or a strong man (Deut. 8:17; Job 26:2, 30:2; Eccles. 9:10), and figuratively, in the case of a ruler or a deity (Exod. 15:6, 32:11; Deut. 9:29; 1 Chron. 29:12, 20:6; Neh. 1:10; Isa. 10:13; Dan. 11:6; Jer. 32:17). The *mothen* is the slender section of the body above the hips, between the arms and the legs.[99] What, then, is so unusual about Behemoth's arms and legs that they do not contain his *ko-aḥ*? There is a possible answer that is worth considering but has not dawned upon postmedieval scholars before now: Behemoth has no arms or legs in which to store his *ko-aḥ*.

The second part of the couplet in verse 16 is another revealing turn of phrase that is consistent with a limbless creature. It says that Behemoth's power (אוֹן: *ʾōn*) is "in the muscles" (בִּשְׁרִירֵי: *bi-shərirei*) "of his belly" (בִּטְנוֹ: *bithənō*). The *ʾōn* is the virile, generative power of the loins or an individual's power to produce creative work,[100] that is, to accomplish deeds. As with the first part of the couplet, the second part emphasizes that Behemoth's ability to accomplish deeds lies not in limbs but in his midsection, between where limbs normally are.[101] That a creature's power is in its belly muscles (as opposed to its limbs) is a curious thing to say of a limb-propelled creature, but it is a natural thing to say of a serpentiform creature that propels itself upon its belly.

In the couplet of verse 17, the themes "tail" and "cedar" are consistent with a serpentiform creature. The first part of the couplet says יַחְפֹּץ זְנָבוֹ כְּמוֹ־אָרֶז (*yaḥəpōts zənāvō ḥəmō-ʾārez*): "He delights in [is pleased by, cherishes, admires, prizes] his tail, like a cedar." A creature with limbs is more likely to be said to prize its arms or legs or talons or hooves, the sources of its *ko-aḥ* and its *ʾōn*. Like the other parts of verses 16–17, this part of verse 17 is consistent with Behemoth as limbless.

The first part of verse 17 is consistently misunderstood and mistranslated. Translators usually treat it as if the phrase *ḥəmō-ʾārez* (like a cedar) refers to Behemoth's tail. However, it does not. It refers to Behemoth or to his delighting. It can therefore be correctly rendered "like a cedar, he prizes his tail." Behemoth's tail is the object, not the subject. Translators also tend to misunderstand the verb חָפֵץ (*ḥaphēts*), which means to be delighted or pleased by something or to prize it.[102] To translate *ḥaphēts* as "to move" (e.g., in the King James Version) or "to stiffen" (e.g., in the English Standard Version) is to force upon the verb an idiomatic meaning that the context neither suggests nor supports and which has no equivalent or precedent anywhere else in the Hebrew scriptures. Nor does the word for "tail" (זָנָב: *zānāv*) mean or imply "penis." There is no known ancient Hebrew passage in which *zānāv* is used as a euphemism for "penis," so the supposition that the phrase is a reference to penile erection[103] is without supporting evidence. The word *zānāv* refers to the hind end of something[104]—in an animal, the tail (Exod. 4:4, Judg. 15:4). However, it can also mean the tail-like tip of something, such as the stump of a spent firebrand (Isa. 7:4) or the frond or branch of a plant (Isa. 19:15). Verse 17 is therefore saying that Behemoth prizes (*yaḥəpōts*) his tail (*zənāvō*), just like (*ḥəmō*) a cedar (*ʾārez*) prizes (*yaḥəpōts*) its branches (*zənāvō*).[105]

The second part of the couplet in verse 17 repeats the themes of "tail" and "cedar" by saying גִּידֵי פַחֲדָו יְשֹׂרָגוּ (*gîdei paḥədāvō yəsōrāgō*): the sinews (*gîdei*) at the base of his tail (*paḥədāvō*: his pelvic region) are interwoven (*yəsōrāgō*). The use here of the verb שָׂרַג (*sārag*: interweave) is a pun on the concept of cedar branches, for it refers to the interweaving of branches to make a wreath.[106] This part of the couplet is therefore a play on words that incorporates a continuation of the cedar-branch theme with an image of a serpent's body: tightly woven into an elongate and narrow shape, like cedar branches that are interwoven to make a wreath. This second part of the couplet confirms that, in the first part of the couplet, it is not Behemoth's tail that is like a cedar. Rather, Behemoth is like a cedar, and his tail is like its branches after they have been interwoven into a wreath.

Verse 18 is a couplet that says that Behemoth's bones (עֲצָמָיו: *ʿetsem*) are like tubes of bronze, then says his bones (גְּרָמָיו: *gerem*) are like bars of iron. Some translators mistake the word *gerem* for a reference to limbs.[107] However, it is another word for "bone"[108] and is therefore not an indication that Behemoth has limbs.

## Behemoth as a Demonic Entity

Even if my interpretation of Job 40:16–18 as a description of serpentiform anatomy is incorrect, there is still no good reason to consider Behemoth a dinosaur. His "tail like a cedar" evaporates upon examination, and there are no other specifically dinosaurian traits in his description in Job 40. More importantly, Behemoth is not a natural animal. According to Job 40, he is a supernatural being of extraordinary power.

For centuries, scholars have mistaken the imagery in verses 15 and 19–24 of Job 40 for a description of an aquatic, herbivorous animal, because the ancient meaning of that imagery was long forgotten. However, tablets with Babylonian and Canaanite incantations against demons and diseases, discovered at the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit, have recently clarified its meaning. In the cultures that produced the tablets, demons were thought to be the causes of numerous diseases,[109] and disease was often described as a demon feeding on its victim.[110] The imagery in the incantations on the tablets from Ugarit describes an attacking demon as arising from the earth, often in mountains. Next, it may continue its progress by sickening and/or killing vegetation (grass, woods, reeds, etc.), which is described as its feeding upon the vegetation. Then, it culminates its assault by attacking livestock and people, sickening and/or killing them, which may be described as feeding on their blood or bones.[111] Its refusal to remain still is likened to the restless movement of a serpent.[112] The incantation to dispel it may request a deity to transplant it into the heavens or the netherworld, or may send it into the mountains to feed on the vegetation there.[113] The running water of a river was thought to aid in the dispelling of disease-causing evil. Some healing rituals involved immersing oneself or ritual implements in a river so that the river would carry away the evil,[114] and at least one incantation figuratively requests divine agents to carry away the evil with a flood.[115]

Using imagery that closely mirrors that in the tablets from Ugarit, Job 40 paints a verbal picture of Behemoth as a demon who has been dispelled to the mountains to feed on vegetation, which prevents him from attacking livestock, which rejoice that they are not his targets. Verse 15 states that Behemoth is eating grass like an ox (as a dispelled demon does), and verses 21–22 portray him as surrounded by vegetation to eat. Verse 20 says that the mountains produce food for Behemoth, and the beasts rejoice (שָׂחַק: *shāḥaq*: to rejoice or to express joy by laughter, derision, or play).[116] The Septuagint renders verse 20 as a statement that the quadrupeds in Tartarus rejoice when Behemoth ascends a mountain peak (to which he has presumably been dispelled). The quadrupeds in Tartarus may be his victims, rejoicing at his comeuppance, or they may be livestock that have been offered to Behemoth to consume, sacrificed as part of a ritual to attract the demon to the netherworld and rejoicing because Behemoth will now feed on mountain vegetation instead of feeding upon them in the netherworld.

Verses 22–23 state that Behemoth fears no river and that not even one as powerful as the Jordan can move him. That is a reference to the use of rivers to remove evil agents and an indication that, unlike ordinary demons, Behemoth is too powerful to be dispelled by human rituals that use rivers for exorcism. Verse 24 continues that theme by ridiculing the notion that any human effort can overcome Behemoth. Only God, his maker (verse 15) is powerful enough to "approach him with the sword" (i.e., to dispel him) (verse 19).

Verse 19 also refers to God's early creation of Behemoth by calling Behemoth the רֵאשִׁית (*reʾshîth*) of God's ways. The word *reʾshîth* refers to a beginning or something that happens first in a series. Its use here implies that Behemoth is one of the earliest things that God created. That is consistent with the elaborated versions in the post-Septuagint works that state that Behemoth was created on the fifth day and that God banished Behemoth soon thereafter, keeping him from human contact in a land east of Eden (Enoch 60:7–10; 2 Bar. 29:4; 2 Esd. 6:47–52). The rich imagery of Job 40 thus describes Behemoth not as a literal animal but as a dangerous supernatural entity who is too powerful for anyone but God to dispel and whom God fortunately did dispel shortly after making him.

## Behemoth's Name

*Bᵉhēmōth* is the plural of בְּהֵמָה (*bᵉhēmah*), the ancient Hebrew word for "beast." The common assertion that Behemoth's name is derived from an Egyptian term, *pꜣ-iḥ-hw*—which allegedly means "water ox" (i.e. hippopotamus)—is incorrect, because there is no such term in any ancient Egyptian language.[117] The Hebrew scriptures often use the word

*bᵉhēmah* specifically for cattle. They also use it as a more generic term that not only includes cloven-hoofed mammals but also carnivorous mammals (Prov. 30:30) and herbivorous mammals without cloven hooves (Lev. 11:26). It is used in contrast to fishes, birds, and "swarming/creeping creatures" (Gen. 1:20–25, 2:20, 6:20, 7:8–23, 8:20, 9:10; Lev. 11:46) and is therefore equivalent to "mammalian beast" when used in its generic sense. As an intensive plural, the name Behemoth can be translated "Great Bull," "Great Ox," or "Great Beast."[118] As an ordinary plural, "Behemoth" can be translated "Cattle," "Oxen," or "Beasts." Accordingly, in place of a transliteration of the name Behemoth, the Septuagint has θηρια (Beasts).

Even if Behemoth is named after mammals, this does not mean that he was originally envisioned as a mammal. "Behemoth" is not a species designation but a personal name. This is underscored by the fact that the verbs and possessive-case nouns that refer to Behemoth in Job 40 all do so in the masculine singular, even though his name is a feminine plural. As a personal name, the word "Behemoth" in this case does not identify its bearer's species any more than someone named Rachel (Hebrew for "female sheep"), Ariel (Hebrew for "lioness of God"), or Achsah (Hebrew for "ankle bracelet") is a sheep or a lioness or an ankle bracelet. Nonetheless, it is plausible that Behemoth's name was meant to suggest livestock, as a play on words, because both livestock and demons were thought to consume vegetation, including grass. This is emphasized by the wordplay at the beginning of the Behemoth passage, which introduces Behemoth by name and then immediately says that he "is eating grass like an ox." That is a poetic double entendre in reference to Behemoth's name and his demonic diet, not a description of a literally grass-eating mammal.

## Conclusions

It is a mistake to treat the Bible as a science text and its descriptions of supernatural entities as natural animals. The biblical word *tannîn* means "serpent," and the biblical Leviathan and Behemoth are supernatural entities of which at least Leviathan (and possibly Behemoth) was figuratively envisioned as a serpent. Leviathan's fire-breathing is not literal but metaphorical. Biblical references to Leviathan, Behemoth, and other *tannînim* are therefore not evidence that ancient humans encountered live, fire-breathing dinosaurs. ♥

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank five anonymous reviewers who provided helpful input on previous versions of this article.

## Notes

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[24]Batdorf and Porch, *Life Science*, 3rd ed., 133; and Lacy, *Life Science*, 4th ed., 160.

[25]Thompson, "An Attempt to Ascertain the Animals Designated in the Scriptures"; Burnett, *The Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God*, 67–70; Burnett, "On Some Circumstances in Zoology"; Beierle, *Man, Dinosaurs and History*, 63; Gish, *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards*, 16–17; Rouster, "The Footprints of Dragons"; Beierle, *Man, Dinosaur and History*, 97; J. D. Morris, *Tracking Those Incredible Dinosaurs*, 65; H. M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, 357; Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*, 138–40; Baugh, *Dinosaur*, 78–82; Mackal, *A Living Dinosaur?*, 6–7; Taylor, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*, 18–19; Ham et al., *The Answers Book*, 33; Unfred, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 6-8; Baker, *Dinosaurs*, 18; Gish, *Dinosaurs by Design*, 20; Niermann, "Dinosaurs and Dragons"; Phillips, *Dinosaurs: The Bible, Barney and Beyond*, 59–60; Ham, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!*, 66–67; J. D. Morris, *Dinosaurs, the Lost World, and You*, 36; Perloff, *Tornado in a Junkyard*, 189; DeYoung, *Dinosaurs and Creation*, 46; Ham, *Dinosaurs of Eden*, 38; McGowen, *In Six Days*, 110; Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation,* premier ed., 150–52; Gibbons, *Missionaries and Monsters*, 50–52; Ham, "What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?"; Batdorf and Porch, *Life Science*, 3rd ed., 133; Hamp, *The First Six Days*, 139–43; Helfinstine and Roth, *Texas Tracks and Artifacts*, 107; Wilson, Wilson, and Heffner, *The Paluxy River Dinosaur Controversy*, 27–28, 108; Dye, *Bible Dinosaurs Revealed*, 17; Lyons and Butt, *The Dinosaur Delusion*, 123–34; Ham, *Dinosaurs for Kids*, 48; Baker, *The Real History of Dinosaurs*, 49; Klenck, "Genesis and the Demise of the Dinosaurs"; Isaacs, *Dragons or Dinosaurs?*, 161; Paul, "Behemoth and Leviathan in the Book of Job"; Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 83–92; Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria*, 69; Gilmer, *The Bible Is Right!*, 12–23; Lacy, *Life Science*, 4th ed., 160; Thomas, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 47; McGlenn and McGlenn, *Mystery of the Indian Effigy Mounds and Petroglyphs*, 104; Clarey, *Dinosaurs: Marvels of God's Design*, 19; and Institute for Creation Research, *Guide to Dinosaurs,* 14, 113.

[26]Unfred, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 6–8; Niermann, "Dinosaurs and Dragons"; Phillips, *Dinosaurs: The Bible, Barney and Beyond*, 59–60; Ham, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!*, 66–67; J. D. Morris, *Dinosaurs, the Lost World, and You*, 36; Ham, *Dinosaurs of Eden*, 38; Ham, "What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?"; Batdorf and Porch, *Life Science*, 3rd ed., 133; Ham, *Dinosaurs for Kids*, 48; Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 83–92; Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria*, 69; Gilmer, *The Bible is Right!*, 12–23; Lacy, *Life Science*, 4th ed., 160; Thomas, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 47; and Institute for Creation Research, *Guide to Dinosaurs*, 14, 113.

[27]Thompson, "An Attempt to Ascertain the Animals Designated in the Scriptures"; Rouster, "The Footprints of Dragons"; J. D. Morris, *Tracking Those Incredible Dinosaurs*, 65; Mackal, *A Living Dinosaur?*, 6–7; Unfred, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 6-8; Niermann, "Dinosaurs and Dragons"; Phillips, *Dinosaurs: The Bible, Barney and Beyond*, 59–60; J. D. Morris, *Dinosaurs, the Lost World, and You*, 36; DeYoung, *Dinosaurs and Creation*, 46; Gibbons, *Missionaries and Monsters*, 50–52; Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 83–92; and Gilmer, *The Bible Is Right!*, 12–23.

[28]Robert T. Bakker, "Ecology of the Brontosaurs," *Nature* 229 (1971): 172–74; Paul Upchurch, Paul M. Barrett, and Peter Dodson, "Sauropoda," in *The Dinosauria*, 2nd ed., ed. David B. Weishampel, Peter Dodson, and Halszka Osmólska (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 259–322.

[29]Martin G. Lockley, *Tracking Dinosaurs. A New Look at an Ancient World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 6.

[30]Martin G. Lockley et al., "The Distribution of Sauropod Tracks and Trackmakers," *Gaia* 10 (1994): 233–48; Ashok Sahni and Ashu Khosla, "Paleobiological, Taphonomical and Paleoenvironmental Aspects of Indian Cretaceous Sauropod Nesting Sites," *Gaia* 10 (1994): 215–33; Upchurch, Barrett, and Dodson, "Sauropoda"; Dhananjay M. Mohabey, "Late Cretaceous (Maastrichtian) Nests, Eggs, and Dung Mass (Coprolites) of Sauropods (Titanosaurs) from India," in *Thunder-Lizards: The Sauropodomorph Dinosaurs,* ed. Virginia Tidwell and Kenneth Carpenter (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 466–89.

[31]Gish, *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards*, 55.

[32]Henry F. Osborn, "Integument of the Iguanodont Dinosaur *Trachodon*," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History* 1 (1912): 33–54.

[33]Robert T. Bakker, *The Dinosaur Heresies* (New York: Zebra, 1986), 157–59.

[34]Gish, *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards*, 55; Gish, *Dinosaurs by Design*, 82–83.

[35]Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*, 145; Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 118; and Niermann, "Dinosaurs and Dragons"; DeYoung, *Dinosaurs and Creation*, 118.

[36]Batdorf and Porch, *Life Science*, 3rd ed., 133; Lacy, *Life Science*, 4th ed., 161.

[37]J. D. Morris, *Tracking Those Incredible Dinosaurs*, 65; Baugh, *Dinosaur*, 89.

[38]H. M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, 358–59; Isaacs, *Dragons or Dinosaurs?,* 122, 131–34; and Dave Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria: The History and Mystery of Dinosaurs and Man* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012), 70.

[39]Niermann, "Dinosaurs and Dragons," 87.

[40]Chuck H. McGowen, *In Six Days: A Case for Intelligent Design*, new and rev. ed. (New Wilmington, PA: Son-Rise, 2002), 110–11.

[41]Nizar Ibrahim et al., "Semiaquatic Adaptations in a Giant Predatory Dinosaur," *Science* 345, no. 6204 (2014): 1613–16.

[42]Clarey, *Dinosaurs: Marvels of God's Design*, 71.

[43]Beierle, *Man, Dinosaurs and History*, 97–98; Beierle, *Man, Dinosaur and History*, 63; Taylor, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*, 46; Walt Brown, *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood* (Phoenix, AZ: Center for Scientific Creation, 1995), 249; Baker, *The Real History of Dinosaurs*, 98; and McGlenn and McGlenn, *Mystery of the Indian Effigy Mounds and Petroglyphs*, 104.

[44]Taylor, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*, 46; and Institute for Creation Research, *Guide to Dinosaurs*, 78.

[45]Baugh, *Dinosaur*, 92–94; Phillips, *Dinosaurs: The Bible, Barney and Beyond*, 55, 62–63; Ham, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!,* 43–46; Ham, "What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?"; Ham, *Dinosaurs for Kids*, 27; Isaacs, *Dragons or Dinosaurs?,* 162–63; and Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria*, 70.

[46]Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 92–95.

[47]Peter Booker, "A New Candidate for Leviathan?," *Technical Journal* 19 (2005): 14–16.
[48]Carl Wieland, *Dragons of the Deep* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005), 46; Ham, "What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?," 159; Batdorf and Porch, *Life Science*, 3rd ed., 133; Isaacs, *Dragons or Dinosaurs?*, 162–63; Paul, "Behemoth and Leviathan in the Book of Job"; Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 95; Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria*, 70; and Lacy, *Life Science*, 4th ed., 161.
[49]Institute for Creation Research, *Guide to Dinosaurs*, 78.
[50]For a delineation of how data from physics, chemistry, biology, and paleontology refute every proposed mechanism of dinosaurian fire-breathing that creationist authors have suggested, see Philip J. Senter, *Fire-Breathing Dinosaurs? The Hilarious History of Creationist Pseudoscience at Its Silliest* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019).
[51]Gen. 1:21; Ps. 74:14; Isa. 27:1.
[52]Gilmer, *100-Year Cover-Up Revealed*, 38.
[53]Taylor, *Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*, 18; Lyons and Butt, *The Dinosaur Delusion*, 112; Woetzel, *Chronicles of Dinosauria*, 68; and Thomas, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 48.
[54]Thomas, *Dinosaurs and the Bible*, 48.
[55]Pss. 44:19, 148:7; Job 30:29; Isa. 13:22, 34:13, 35:7, 43:20; Jer. 9:11, 10:22, 49:33, 51:37.
[56]J. D. Morris, *Tracking Those Incredible Dinosaurs*, 64–65; H. M. Morris, *Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, 351–53; Charles V. Taylor, "Dinosaurs in the Bible," *Creation* ex nihilo *Technical Journal* 7 (1993): 169–71; Phillips, *Dinosaurs: The Bible, Barney and Beyond*, 55; Ham, *Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!*, 39, 47; Gibbons, *Missionaries and Monsters*, 49–50; Baker, *The Real History of Dinosaurs*, 39; Vance Nelson, *Untold Secrets of Planet Earth: Dire Dragons* (Red Deer, AB: Vance Nelson, 2011), 18; Glenn L. Wilson, *Behold Now Behemoth: Dinosaurs all over the Bible* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2011), 50–61; Vance Nelson, *Untold Secrets of Planet Earth: Dire Dragons*, 2nd ed. (Red Deer, AB: Vance Nelson, 2012), 18; Clarey, *Dinosaurs: Marvels of God's Design*, 21; and Institute for Creation Research, *Guide to Dinosaurs*, 14.
[57]Nelson, *Dire Dragons*, 18; and Nelson, *Dire Dragons*, 2nd ed., 18.
[58]Hart, *The Animals Mentioned in the Bible*; and Jeff A. Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible* (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm, 2005.
[59]Gen. 3:1, 3:2, 3:4, 3:13, 3:14; Exod. 4:3, 7:15; Num. 21:6, 21:7, 21:9; Deut. 8:15; 2 Kings 18:4.
[60]*Nāḥāsh*: 15 times (Gen. 49:17; Job 26:13; Pss. 58:4, 140:3; Prov. 23:32, 30:19; Eccles. 10:8, 10:11; Isa. 14:29, 27:1, 65:25; Jer. 46:22; Amos 5:19, 9:3; Micah 7:17). *Tannîn*: 12 times (Deut. 32:33; Job 7:12; Pss. 74:13, 91:13, 148:7; Isa. 27:1 (twice), 51:9, 51:34; Lam. 4:3; Ezek. 29:3, 32:2; the two verses in Ezek. use *tannîm* as an alternate form of *tannînim*).
[61]The Bible's only prose passages that use *tannîn* are Gen. 1:21, Exod. 7:9-12, and Neh. 2:13.
[62]Exod. 7:9-12; Deut. 32:33; Neh. 2:13; Job 7:12; Pss. 74:13, 91:13, 148:7; Isa. 27:1, 51:9; Lam. 4:3; Jer. 51:34.
[63]Exod. 7:12; Deut. 32:33; Neh. 2:13; Job 7:12; Pss. 74:13, 91:13, 148:7; Isa. 51:9; Jer. 51:34. The Vulgate is a translation that was produced centuries after the Septuagint and therefore further removed in time from the original Hebrew writing. It therefore may be less reliable as regards the meanings of the Hebrew words.
[64]Daniel Ogden, *Drakōn: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Phil Senter, "Dinosaurs and Pterosaurs in Greek and Roman Art and Literature? An Investigation of Young-Earth Creationist Claims," *Palaeontologia Electronica* 16, no. 3 (2013): 1–16.
[65]Phil Senter, Uta Mattox, and Eid E. Haddad, "Snake to Monster: Conrad Gessner's *Schlangenbuch* and the Evolution of the Dragon in the Literature of Natural History," *Journal of Folklore Research* 53 (2016): 67–124.
[66]Liliane Bodson, *Hiera Zoia. Contribution à l'Étude de la Place de l'Animal dans la Religion Grecque Ancienne* (Brussels, Belgium: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1975), 72 n. 94.
[67]Rudolf Kittel, *Studien zur Hebräischen Archäologie und Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908), 159–88; and Karen R. Joines, *Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament* (Haddonfield, NJ: Haddonfield House, 1974), 92.
[68]Kiessling, "Antecedents of the Medieval Dragon"; Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster*; Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*; and Heider, "Tannin."
[69]It is a mistake that I, too, made in a previous publication (Senter et al., "Snake to Monster," 80).
[70]Hart, *The Animals Mentioned in the Bible*, 80; Pinney, *The Animals in the Bible*, 120, 201; Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster*; Mark Ziese, "Jackal," in David N. Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 665–66; and Slifkin, *Sacred Monsters*, 165–66. In addition, one DIBV author (Baker, *The Real History of Dinosaurs*, 56) equated the "howling" of dragons in Isa. 13:22 with vocalization by lambeosaurine dinosaurs.
[71]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 298.
[72]It is also possible that this is a reference not to a literal *tannîn* but to Egypt, a way to scold Jerusalem by way of an unfavorable comparison to a traditional enemy nation. The Hebrew scriptures use "*tannîn*" as a derogatory figure of speech for Egypt and Egyptians in a number of places (Ps. 74:13–14; Isa. 27:1, 51:9; Ezek. 29:3, 31:2).
[73]One DIBV author claimed that Lam. 4:3 indicates that dinosaurs had mammary glands and suckled their young. For the rest of that story, see Philip J. Senter, "Dead Varmint Vision at Its Funniest. An Alleged Dinosaur with Breasts in a Medieval Carving," *Skeptical Inquirer* 42 no. 4 (2018): 53–55.
[74]Job 30:29; Ps. 44:19; Isa. 13:22, 34:13, 35:7, 43:20; Jer. 9:11, 10:22, 14:6, 49:33, 51:37; Ezek. 29:3, 32:2; Micah 1:8.
[75]For example, Slifkin, *Sacred Monsters*, 165–66.
[76]In some cases, in place of *tannîm* the Septuagint uses στρουθός (ostrich) (Jer. 10:22, 49:33) or σειρὴν (siren) (Job 30:29; Isa. 34:13, 43:20) and the Vulgate uses *siren* (siren) (Isa. 13:22). This makes it seem as though the term *tannîm* refers to some sort of bird. However, such cases represent substitutions, not translations, of the word *tannîm*. The creators of the Septuagint were more concerned with transmitting the spirit of the Hebrew scripture than with producing a literal translation. Accordingly, although much of the Septuagint is as nearly a word-for-word translation of the Hebrew as one can produce in Greek, the Septuagint contains some passages for which the wording has been altered so that its point does not get lost in translation. The substitution of "ostrich" or "siren" in place of *tannîm* emphasizes the point that the city or land that hosts such creatures has been devastated. The Near Eastern subspecies of ostrich (*Struthio camelus syri-*

*acus*) inhabited desert areas before its extinction in 1939 (Terence J. Robinson and Conrad A. Matthee, "Molecular Genetic Relationships of the Extinct Ostrich, *Struthio camelus syriacus*: Consequences for Ostrich Introductions into Saudi Arabia," *Animal Conservation* 2 (1999): 165–71), making it an appropriate symbol of an abandoned area, and the siren connoted death to the inhabitants of Hellenistic Egypt, the source of the Septuagint. The Egyptians depicted the human soul after its departure from the body as a human-headed bird called the *ba*. After the Greek conquest, the *ba* became integrated with the siren of Greek mythology, which was also depicted as a human-headed bird and was portrayed on Hellenistic Egyptian tombs. See Marjorie S. Venit, *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Thus, for the writers of the Septuagint, to say that a place was inhabited by sirens was to call it a place of death, an appropriate idiom in reference to desolation.

[77]Pss. 74(73):14, 104(103):26; Job 41:1 (40:20); Isa. 27:1.

[78]Pss. 74(73):14, 104(103):26.

[79]Johannes C. De Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1987), viii.

[80]De Moor, *Anthology of Religious Texts*; Nick Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002); and Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012).

[81]De Moor, *Anthology of Religious Texts*, 11.

[82]De Moor, *Anthology of Religious Texts*, 11, 69, 71; Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 79, 115, 120; Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 120, 139–40.

[83]Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 79, 115.

[84]For example, Christoph Uehlinger, "Leviathan," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. van der Toorn, Becking, and van der Horst, 956–64.

[85]Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 106.

[86]Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 88.

[87]Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 111–15, 127.

[88]De Moor, *Anthology of Religious Texts*, 11; Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 79; Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 120.

[89]That the Hebrews altered the Canaanite myth and not vice versa is demonstrated by the dates of the relevant biblical passages. All such passages were written centuries after the demise of Ugarit, which occurred about 1200 BC. Genesis 1:21 was written by the priestly author, no earlier than the eighth century BC. See Richard Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). Isaiah and Amos were written no earlier than the eighth-century BC reign of Uzziah of Judah (Isa. 1:1; Amos 1:1). Ezekiel was written after the sixth-century BC defeat of Jerusalem by Babylon (Ezek. 1:1). Psalm 104 was probably written during the sixth or seventh century BC (Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003], 718–19), and Psalm 74 is post-exilic (Terrien, *The Psalms*, 542). Job's references to iron tools (19:24, 20:24, 28:2) place its composition no earlier than the eleventh century BC (James D. Muhly, "Metalworking/Mining in the Levant," in *Near Eastern Archaeology. A Reader*, ed. Suzanne Richard [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 174–83), its references to domesticated camels (Job 1:3, 1:7, 42:12) place its composition no earlier than the tenth century BC. See Peter Rowley-Conwy, "The Camel in the Nile Valley: New Radiocarbon Accelerator (AMS) Dates from Qaṣr Ibrim," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 74 (1988): 245–48; Lidar Sapir-Hen and Erez Ben-Yosef, "The Introduction of Domestic Camels to the Southern Levant: Evidence from the Aravah Valley," *Tel Aviv* 40 (2013): 277–85). Its references to mounted cavalry (Job 39:18, 39:21–25) place its composition no earlier than the invention of mounted cavalry by the Assyrians in the ninth century BC and more likely after the Assyrians began to extensively use cavalry in the following century. See Robert Drews, *Early Riders: The Beginnings of Mounted Warfare in Asia and Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Robin Archer, "Chariotry to Cavalry: Developments in the Early First Millennium," in *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*, ed. Garrett G. Fagan and Matthew Trundle (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 57–79).

[90]George Hart, *Egyptian Myths* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 11–15, 20–21; Manfred Hutter, "Earth," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. van der Toorn, Becking, and van der Horst, 517–22; Fritz Stoltz, "Sea," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. van der Toorn, Becking, and van der Horst, 1390–1402; and Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 233, 278–80.

[91]Hart, *Egyptian Myths*, 28–40; and Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 51.

[92]See English translations in E. Isaac, trans., "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1. Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments,* ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 5–89; A. F. J. Klijn, trans., "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1,* ed. Charlesworth, 615–52; B. M. Metzger, trans., "The Fourth Book of Ezra," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1,* ed. Charlesworth, 517–59; John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Parallel Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Daniel M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009); and George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, trans., *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012).

[93]Jefim Schirmann, "The Battle between Behemoth and Leviathan According to an Ancient Hebrew *Piyyut*," *Proceedings of the Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities* 4 (1970): 327–69; and Slifkin, *Sacred Monsters*, 173–74, 184. Behemoth's identification as an ox-like creature may also have been at least partly inspired by his name (see the following section on Behemoth's name).

[94]For example, Diodati, *Sacra Bibbia*, 472; Kirchmeyer, *Disputationum zoologicarum*; and Bochart, *Hierozoici*, 49, 52, 136. In addition, *tannîn* is translated "whale" in a few passages in two seventeenth-century English translations of the Bible: Ezek. 32:2 in the King James Version, Isa. 27:1 in the Douay-Rheims Version, and Gen. 1:21 and Job 7:12 in both versions.

[95]For example, Diodati, *Sacra Bibbia*, 471; Kirchmeyer, *Disputationum zoologicarum*; and Bochart, *Hierozoici*, 49.

[96]For example, Pinney, *The Animals in the Bible*, 97; Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 771–73; Harris, "The Doctrine of God in the Book of Job"; Bright, *Beasts of the Field*, 28–29, 35–39; Habtu, "Job"; Habtu, "Ezekiel"; and Slifkin, *Sacred Monsters*, 185–90.

[97]Thompson, "An Attempt to Ascertain the Animals Designated in the Scriptures"; Day, *God's Conflict with the*

*Dragon and the Sea*, 65, 77; Dale J. Osborn, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt* (Warminster, UK: Aris and Phillips, 1998), 146; and Paul, "Behemoth and Leviathan in the Book of Job."

[98]J. D. Morris, *Tracking Those Incredible Dinosaurs*, 65; H. M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, 357; Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*, 138–40; J. D. Morris, *Dinosaurs, the Lost World, and You*, 36; and Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*, premier ed., 150–51.

[99]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 371.

[100]Ibid., 57.

[101]An alternate interpretation of the second part of the couplet in verse 16 is that it locates Behemoth's virile, generative power internal to his belly muscles—in other words, his testes are within his abdomen. This interpretation emphasizes Behemoth's reptilian nature, because reptilian testes are within the abdomen, unlike mammalian testes, which hang in an external scrotum. The interpretation in the previous paragraph is more likely to represent the author's intent, because it more closely parallels the meaning of the first part of the couplet, but either interpretation is consistent with Behemoth's anatomy as serpentiform and inconsistent with it as mammalian.

[102]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 340.

[103]For example, Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1987), 85.

[104]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 326.

[105]In other words, Behemoth thinks highly of his tail. The implication seems to be that he thinks so highly of his tail that he considers it sufficient, that is, he feels no need for limbs.

[106]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 396.

[107]For example, in the New International and New American Standard versions of the Bible.

[108]Benner, *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon*, 317.

[109]JoAnn Scurlock and Burton Anderson, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine. Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Walter Farber, "Lamaštu—Agent of a Specific Disease or a Generic Destroyer of Health?," in *Disease in Babylonia,* ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 137–45; J. V. Kinnier Wilson and E. H. Reynolds, "On Stroke and Facial Palsy in Babylonian Texts," in *Disease in Babylonia,* ed. Finkel and Geller, 67–99; and Marten Stol, "Fevers in Babylonia," in *Disease in Babylonia,* ed. Finkel and Geller, 1–39.

[110]Scurlock and Anderson, *Diagnoses*, 421, 472; and Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Incantations and Anti-Witchcraft Texts from Ugarit* (Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 55, 60.

[111]del Olmo Lete, *Incantations*, 43, 46, 53–56, 60.

[112]Ibid., 55.

[113]Ibid., 43, 53–56, 60.

[114]JoAnn Scurlock, *Sourcebook for Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 219, 220, 438, 688.

[115]del Olmo Lete, *Incantations*, 54.

[116]Misunderstanding a description of a demonic entity as that of a natural animal, a few DIBV authors have supported their identification of Behemoth as a sauropod by claiming that Job 40:20 implies that he is docile, for the beasts play near him. However, there is no fossil evidence that sauropods were docile. Nor does Job 40:20 imply docility or even the safety of animals in Behemoth's presence. Rather, it expresses the opposite: animals are unsafe in his presence. The Hebrew text says that they rejoice (often translated as "play") when he is fed, implying that they are happy that he is not feeding on them. The Septuagint says that they rejoice when he leaves them to go up a mountain, indicating that what makes them rejoice is Behemoth's departure, not his presence.

[117]Bernard F. Batto, "Behemoth," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. van der Toorn, Becking, and van der Horst, 315–22.

[118]Compare, Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 76–80.

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