

The Opening Clauses of the Lament over King Keret*

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The author considers it a great honour to be asked to contribute to the *Festschrift* for one of the leading Ugaritologists of this time. The subject of this article is the interpretation of one of the much discussed passages from Ugaritic literature. The author gladly submits the results of his considerations to Prof. del Olmo Lete's judgement.

In the Keret text one finds three times a lament over the mortally ill King Keret. The second time, the lament is uttered by Keret's son *ilh'u* (cf. KTU 1.16 i 14ff.; that *ilh'u* is involved, is clear from KTU 1.16 i 46), the third time by Keret's daughter *tmnt* (KTU 1.16 ii 36ff.). The first time (KTU 1.16 i 1ff.) the lament is probably also uttered by *ilh'u*, rehearsing it «in a speech in which he tells himself to deliver it».¹ One may compare this with *ilh'u*'s brother *yšb*, who, before speaking his words to his father, rehearses them (cf. KTU 1.16 v 29ff., vi 42ff.). Nevertheless, it remains possible that someone else was instructing *ilh'u* what he should say to Keret.²

The first lament text starts with a clause (*kklb bbt n'tq*), which in both other lament texts (KTU 1.16 i 15f., ii 36f.) is preceded by the clauses *bhyk abn a/nšmh blmtk nglh*. Most probably, these clauses were originally also the opening clauses of the first lament and stood at the end of KTU 1.15 vi, though are now lost.

First, we will discuss the fifth clause of the lament *ap ab kmtm tmtn* (KTU 1.16 i 17f.; ii 40; the first lament text [KTU 1.16 i 3] reads *ikmtm* instead of *kmtm*).³ This clause confronts us with some problems, the first of which is the interpretation of the word *tmtn*.

Many scholars regard *tmtn* as a plural absolute of a nominal form *mt*. They translate this nominal form either as "mortal" or as "man".⁴ In his publication of the Ugaritic myths and legends, del Olmo Lete

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KTU is quoted after the second (English) edition: M. Dietrich - O. Loretz - J. Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other Places*, Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens 8, Münster, 1995.

1. Cf. S.B. Parker, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition, Essays on the Ugaritic Poems Keret and Aqhat*, Society of Biblical Literature, Resources for Biblical Study 24, Atlanta, 1989, p. 179.

2. Cf. D. Pardee, "The Kirta Epic", W.W. Hallo, a.o. (eds.), *The Context of Scripture, Volume I, Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, Leiden - New York - Köln 1997, pp. 333-343 (esp. p. 339 n. 65). Cf. also E.L. Greenstein, "Kirta", S.B. Parker (ed.), *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, Society of Biblical Literature, Writings from the Ancient World 9, Atlanta 1997, pp. 9-48 (esp. p. 30).

3. For other text variants in the laments, cf., e.g., *ntm* in the first and second lament (KTU 1.16 i 4, 18) against *bky* in the third lament (KTU 1.16 ii 41).

has rightly put a question mark after the translation "mortal".⁵ The nominal form *mt*, derived from the root *mwt*, has in Ugaritic the meaning of "dead", cf., e.g., KTU 1.2 iv 32 (or = G Pf. 3psm?); 1.5 vi 9, 23 (or = G Pf. 3psm?); 1.6 i 6, 41 (or = G Pf. 3psm?), vi 48; 1.15 v 14; 1.19 ii 42 (or = G Pf. 3psm?). The etymological parallels in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew normally have the same meaning, but they can also refer semantically to "being at the verge of death", for whatever reason.⁶ They are never used to refer to "being subject to death" as such. For this reason, the author considers a translation with "mortal (one)", which also includes living beings not on the verge of death, to be less appropriate.⁷

The interpretation of *mtm* as the plural absolute of a nominal form *mt* referring to "man" also presents us with problems. The question is whether the *mtm* in the laments can refer to "men" in the broader sense of "human beings". In that case the meaning of the clause would be: "... like human beings you will die" / "will you die like human beings?". Such an interpretation would, as such, fit into a context where the question is asked, how someone considered to be (semi-)divine could die (cf. KTU 1.16 i 9ff., 20ff., ii 43f.). In Biblical Hebrew such an interpretation would be possible. There the lexeme in question (only attested in the plural) refers in some contexts to full-grown male human beings: Deut. 2:34; 3:6 (*mtm* (*w*)*hnšym whtp*); Is. 3:25 (*mtyk*, parallel with *gbwrtk*);⁸ however, in other contexts, it does not refer *expressis verbis* specifically to male human beings, cf., e.g., the expressions *mty mspr* (Gen. 34:30, Deut. 4:27; Jer. 44:28; Ps. 105:12 [= 1 Chr. 16:19]; cf. also Deut. 33:6), *mty m'ṭ* (Deut. 26:5; 28:62), *mty yšr'ḷ* (Is. 41:14), *mty-šyw* (Ps. 26:4, Job 11:11), *mty 'wn* (Job 22:15); cf. also Job 11:3. (The plural form *'nšym* can be used in a comparable way.)⁹ In the other instances where this nominal form is attested in Ugaritic,

4. For the interpretation as "mortal", cf. already the first editor of KTU 1.16, Ch. Virolleaud, "Le Roi Kéret et son fils (II K), 1re Partie, poème de Ras-Shamra", *Syria* 22 (1941) 105-136 (esp. pp. 107, 109, 113). Cf. also, e.g., H.L. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret, a Canaanite Epic of the Bronze Age*, BASOR, Supplementary Series 2-3, New York 1946, p. 26; K.H. Bernhardt, "Anmerkungen zur Interpretation des Krt-Textes von Ras Shamra-Ugarit", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst Moritz Arndt-Universität Greifswald, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 5 (1955/6) 101-121 (esp. p. 112 [n. 131]); J. Gray, *The KRT Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra, a social Myth of ancient Canaan* (2nd ed.), Leiden 1964, p. 22; J.F.A. Sawyer - J. Strange, "Notes on the Keret-Text", *IEJ* 14 (1964) 96-98 (esp. p. 97); H. Sauren - G. Kestemont, "Keret, Roi de Hubur", *UF* 3 (1971) 181-221 (esp. pp. 209f.); P. Xella, *Gli Antenati di Dio, Divinità e miti della Tradizione de Canaan*, Verona 1982, p. 172; J.C. de Moor, *An Anthology of religious Texts from Ugarit*, Religious Texts Translation Series NISABA 16, Leiden - New York - København - Köln 1987, p. 211; S. Rin - Sh. Rin, *'Alilot ha'Elim, Kol Shirot Ugarit* (2nd ed.), Philadelphia 1996, p. 502 (*bny tmwih*; cf. also p. 510 = *'nšym*).

For the interpretation as "man", cf., e.g., G.R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, Old Testament Studies 3, Edinburgh 1956, pp. 41, 161; A. Caquot - M. Sznycer - A. Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, Tome 1, *Mythes et Légendes, Introduction, Traduction, Commentaire*, Paris 1974, pp. 549, 551; J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (2nd ed.), Edinburgh 1978, pp. 94f., 152; T. Kleven, "Kingship in Ugarit (KTU 1.16 i 1-23)", L. Eslinger - G. Taylor (eds.), *Ascribe to the Lord, Biblical and other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, JSOT Supplement Series 67, Sheffield 1988, pp. 29-53 (esp. p. 35). Cf. also A.v. Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature*, London 1954, p. 126 n. 8, who says that the words *kmtm tmti* contain a play on words with *mt* "man" and *mt* "to die".

5. Cf. G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan, según la Tradición de Ugarit, Textos, Versión y Estudio*, Madrid, 1981, p. 585.

6. For Akkadian, cf. CAD s.v. *mitu* ("dying", "deathly ill"). For Biblical Hebrew, cf., for the meaning "dying", Numb. 6:9 (*ky ymwt mt 'lyw*); Ezek. 18:32 (*bmwt hmt*); Zech. 11:9 (*whmth tmwt*), cf. also Gen. 48:21, 50:5, 24. For texts like Numb. 6:9; Ezek. 18:32; Zech. 11:9, one may compare *mitu imat* in Akkadian. For the use of *mt* to indicate persons who are doomed to die, cf. Gen. 20:3; Ex. 12:33. Cf. also Deut. 17:6 where *mt* indicates someone who is condemned to death. Here belong, probably, also the *mtym* of Job 24:12: the parallelism with *hllym* supports a contextual interpretation as "the wounded who are left to die after the battle".

7. For this reason Virolleaud's reference to the Akkadian *mitu imat* (art. cit. [cf. n. 4], *Syria* 22, p. 108), to support a translation with "mortal", is not convincing; cf. also n. 6.

8. Cf. probably also the *mtym* in Ps. 17:14 (cf. the *bnym* in the context).

9. This plural can refer to specifically full-grown male human beings (cf., e.g., Gen. 13:8; 47:2; Ex. 17:9; Numb. 11:26; 13:2; Deut. 1:13; 25:11; Josh. 10:18; Judg. 6:27; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 4:2; 1 Kings 11:24; 2 Kings 25:25; Jer. 26:17; 29:6; Ezek.

it refers only to a fullgrown male human being, cf. the epithets of Danel *mt rpi* and *g̃zr mt hrnmy* (cf., e.g., KTU 1.17 i 17f., ii 28f., v 4f., 14f.; 1.19 i 36f., 38f., 47f., iv 13). Cf. in these texts also its combination with *g̃zr* (cf. also the parallelism *mtm* with *g̃zrm* in KTU 1.22 i 6f. and cf. *g̃zr* in KTU 1.17 vi 34 besides *mt* in KTU 1.17 vi 35, 36). In KTU 1.3 i 13f. it is used in opposition to *att*. Moreover, it can have the meaning "husband" (KTU 1.23:40 [twice], 46 [twice]). The Akkadian etymological parallel *mutu* means only "husband" and "man" / "warrior".¹⁰ Consequently, notwithstanding the Biblical Hebrew material, an interpretation of the relevant *mtm* with "men" / "human beings", as contrasted to divine beings, seems less probable.

This leaves us with the interpretation of *mtm* as G Inf. abs. of the root *mwt* with enclitic *-m*.¹¹ Moreover, also outside of the laments, one finds an instance of a G prefix conjugation form of the root *mwt* with a G Inf. abs. with enclitic ending *-m*: KTU 1.17 vi 38 (*wan mtm amt*). This last-mentioned clause occurs as well in a context in which divine immortality (cf. KTU 1.17 vi 28f.) is contrasted with human mortality (cf. KTU 1.17 vi 38: *mt kl amt*). It seems probable that the so-called energetic ending of the form *mtm* serves to underscore what is expressed by the verbal form.¹² As a parallel case, one may quote KTU 1.17 vi 40: *ht t̃sdn t̃int̃t* ("will womankind be hunting?"), a question expressing disbelief and amazement.¹³ The use of both the absolute infinitive and the energetic ending gives a double emphasis.¹⁴

The interpretation of *mtm* as a G Inf. abs. with enclitic ending rules out interpreting the preceding *k* and *ik* as prepositions. We have to ask ourselves whether the variant readings *ik* in KTU 1.16 i 3 and *k* in KTU 1.16 i 17, ii 40, can be explained without taking recourse to an explanation of one of them as a

14:1; Ruth 4:2; Esr. 10:16; 1 Chr. 5:18). Cf. also the expressions *'nšym wnšym w̃p* (Jer. 40:7), *'nšym wnšym w̃ldym* (Esr. 10:1), cf. also Neh. 8:3. However, this lexeme is also used to refer to not specifically male human beings, cf. expressions like, e.g., *'nšy m̃spr* (Ezek. 12:16); *'nšy r'c* (Prov. 28:5); *'nšy r'h* (Prov. 24:1); *'nšy r̃c'* (Job 34:8); *'nšy 'wn* (Job 34:36; cf. also *'yšym p'ly 'wn*, Ps. 141:4), cf. also Qoh. 9:14. Very interesting in this connection are the following parallels: *kl 'dm // kl-'nšy m'šhw* (Job 37:7); *bšbt 'nšym // bng 'y bny 'dm* (2 Sam. 7:14); *'dm // 'nšym* (Is. 2:11); *h'dm // 'nšym* (Is. 2:17), as well as the contrastive use of *'lhy* and *'nšym* in Gen. 32:29; 1 Sam. 2:16; Judg. 9:9, 13; Is. 7:13. Driver, *Canaanite Myths* (cf. n. 4), p. 41 n. 1, and Gibson, *Canaanite Myths* (cf. n. 4), p. 94 n. 6, refer in this connection to Ps. 82:7, where the Psalmist says to beings, considered to be gods (cf. v. 6): *'kn k'dm m̃w̃twn*, which would be a good parallel to our lament text, if the interpretation of *mtm* as "human beings" were possible (for this reference to Ps. 82:7, cf. already Virolleaud, art. cit. [cf. n. 4], Syria 22, p. 109). Gibson, *ibid.*, refers also to Numb. 16:29 (*'m-kmwt kl-h'dm ymtwn 'lh*). This reference is less convincing because the text speaks of human beings dying a natural death, as opposed to an untimely death.

10. Cf. CAD s.v.

11. For verbal forms preceded by an absolute infinitive with or without enclitic *-m*, cf. D. Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language*, Leiden - New York - Köln 1997, pp. 123f. (cf. also p. 158), who also interprets the *mtm* in question in this way. (Cf. already J. Aistleitner, *Untersuchungen zur Grammatik des Ugaritischen*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse, Band 100 Heft 6, Berlin 1954, p. 128.) For translations which presuppose such an interpretation, cf., e.g., J. Aistleitner, *Die mythologischen und kultischen Texte aus Ras Schamra*, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica VIII, Budapest 1959, pp. 98f.; A. Jirku, *Kanaanäische Mythen und Epen aus Ras-Schamra-Ugarit*, Gütersloh 1962, p. 104; M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, *Mythen und Epen IV*, TUAT, Band III, Lief. 6, Gütersloh 1997, p. 1241; N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit, the Words of Ilmilku and his Colleagues*, The Biblical Seminar 53, Sheffield 1998, pp. 220, 222; T. Zewi, *A syntactical Study of verbal Forms affixed by -n(n) Endings in Classical Arabic, Biblical Hebrew, El-Amarna Akkadian and Ugaritic*, AOAT 260, Münster 1999, p. 184.

12. The author agrees with Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 102, that often «it is exceedingly difficult to identify such forms in Ugaritic». In Amarna Canaanite-Akkadian so-called energetic forms are used as «an optional means for strengthening the force of the verb», cf. A.F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets, a linguistic Analysis of the mixed Dialect used by the Scribes from Canaan*, Vol. II, *Morphosyntactic Analysis of the verbal System*, Leiden - New York - Köln 1996, p. 235.

13. This text is mentioned by E. Verreet, *Modi Ugaritici, eine morphosyntaktische Abhandlung über das Modalsystem im Ugaritischen*, OLA 27, Leuven 1988, p. 88, and Zewi, *A syntactical Study* (cf. n. 11), p. 184, as also being an interrogative clause with a prefix conjugation form with energetic ending.

14. For the function of the absolute infinitive, cf. Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 123.

scribal error. Some scholars explain *ik* as a combination of the emphatic particle *i* and *k*, this *i* not being repeated in the other two instances.¹⁵ If, however, the interpretation of *k* as a preposition is improbable, its only possible interpretation is that of an emphatic particle (*kī*).¹⁶ Seeing that we already have two morphemes emphasizing what is expressed by the verbal form (*k* and *-n*), it seems less probable that a third one would be added. Therefore, the only possible explanation of *ik* left to us is that of an interrogative adverbial.¹⁷ A question introduced by this adverbial can express amazement / disbelief (cf., e.g., KTU 1.6 vi 24f.; 1.18 iv 9). This would fit very well in the context of the lament, which expresses amazement / disbelief at the dying of a king considered to be (semi-)divine (see above). We have to ask ourselves now whether *ik* and *k* (as emphatic particle) can be used interchangeably in the relevant context. In my opinion this is possible if we interpret the clause *kmtm tmtn* in the second and third lament texts as interrogative clauses not introduced by an interrogative adverb.¹⁸ We find unintroduced interrogative clauses, expressing amazement / disbelief, in KTU 1.4 iv 59ff.; 1.17 vi 40. Therefore, it is well possible to interpret both the clause *kmtm tmtn* and the clause *ik mtm tmtn*, as questions expressing «unbelief and bewilderment». ¹⁹ Consequently it is, in the opinion of the author, unnecessary to emend the *ik* in KTU 1.16 i 3.

In the author's opinion, the best way to interpret the *ap* at the beginning of these questions (*ap ab (i)k* ...) is to take it as a particle modifying the relevant clause. A comparable use of this particle before a question, also expressing doubt and disbelief, is found in KTU 1.16 i 9, ii 48 (cf. the variant text in KTU 1.16 i 20, where this question is introduced by the words *ikm yrgm*). Cf. the *h'p* in Classical Hebrew in Gen. 18:23, 24; Amos 2:11, Job 34:17, introducing comparable questions (cf. also the *h'p 'mnm* in Gen. 18:13). Therefore, it seems right to interpret this use of *ap* before a question as an indication of the type of question involved: it is a question expressing doubt and disbelief.²⁰ In view of the fact that King Keret has not yet died when the laments are uttered (cf., e.g., KTU 1.16 i 24; vi 22, 54), the prefix conjugation form *tmtn* must be interpreted as referring to the future.²¹

In the third and fourth clause of the lament we find two parallel pairs *klb // inr* and *bt // hšt*.²² That in both instances we have to do with parallel pairs is confirmed by two other Ugaritic texts: for the first pair, cf. KTU 1.114:12f.,²³ for the second pair, cf. KTU 1.123:29f.²⁴

15. Cf., e.g., J.C. de Moor - K. Spronk, "Problematical Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (I)", *UF* 14 (1982) 153-171 (esp. p. 170); idem, "Problematical Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (II)", *UF* 14 (1982) 173-190 (esp. p. 181); Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 190.

16. On this emphatic particle in Ugaritic, cf. Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), pp. 190f. Cf. also G. del Olmo Lete - J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la Lengua Ugarítica*, Vol. I, Aula Orientalis-Supplementa 7, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1996, s.v. *k*(II) sub 1. That the *k* in KTU 1.16 i 17, ii 40 is a form of *ik*, the *aleph* being «lost between the adjacent *i*-vowels» does not seem to be very convincing, contra B. Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT, Text - Translation - Commentary*, BZAW 182, Berlin - New York 1989, p. 226.

17. For this adverbial in Ugaritic, cf. Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 182.

18. For interrogative clauses not introduced by interrogative adverbs, cf. Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 216.

19. Cf. Kleven, art. cit. (cf. n. 4), p. 40. Rainey, *Canaanite* (cf. n. 12), p. 236, mentions the fact that in Amarna Canaanite-Akkadian the majority of the instances, where so-called energetic forms are attested, are questions.

20. For a comparable interpretation, cf. H.L. Ginsberg, *The Legend* (cf. n. 4), p. 42.

21. Contra, e.g., Dietrich - Loretz, *Mythen und Epen* (cf. n. 11), p. 1241, who translate: «Du bist wirklich gestorben?». On the subject, cf. Parker, *The prebiblical narrative Tradition* (cf. n. 1), p. 179.

22. The first editor of the text, Virolleaud, art. cit. (cf. n. 4), *Syria* 22, p. 108, already noticed the existence of both parallel pairs.

23. The text reads *rlb* instead of *klb*, but this is, most probably, a scribal error. Cf., e.g., del Olmo Lete - Sanmartín, *Diccionario* (cf. n. 16), s.v. *klb* (I), KTU a.1. For *k* and *r* as easily confused signs, cf. also Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 11.

24. KTU reads *hšm* in KTU 1.123:30. According to the photograph, however, the third consonant can as well be read as a *r*, cf., e.g., P. Xella, *I Testi rituali di Ugarit - I*, Studi Semitici 54, Roma 1981, pp. 217f.; G. del Olmo Lete, *La Religión Cananea*

The context of the *klb* and *inr* in KTU 1.114:12f. makes it clear that we have to do with animals: *klb* must, therefore, be a dog, and *inr* an animal somehow comparable with a dog, or a type of dog.²⁵ The context of *bt* and *hšt* in KTU 1.123:29f. makes it probable, that we have to do with two different, be it probably related, buildings.²⁶

The most probable interpretation of *n'tq* in KTU 1.16 i 2, 16, ii 38, is as a prefix conjugation form 1ppl. There can be no doubt that there are prefix conjugation forms 1ppl. in the preceding clauses in the second and third lament: *nšmḥ* and *ngln* (KTU 1.16 i 15, ii 37).²⁷ Moreover, the only other possible interpretation of *n'tq* would be as a N suffix conjugation form (3psm or 3pplm) or as a N participle form. These interpretations do not fit the context.²⁸

Of the second and third lament it is clear that they are spoken by one person (cf. KTU 1.16 i 13f., ii 35f.). The use of "we" indicates that these individual persons represent a group. These "we" compare themselves to a dog.²⁹ Because the second and third lament are uttered by persons weeping and gnashing teeth (KTU 1.16 i 12f., ii 35), it seems probable that this comparison with dogs (and dog-like animals) has an undertone of self-disparagement, which fits in with the well-known view of dogs.³⁰ The action of the

según la Liturgia de Ugarit, Estudio textual, Aula Orientalis-supplementa 3, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1992, p. 230. The parallel with *bt* makes the reading *hšt* the most probable one, cf. also del Olmo Lete - Sanmartín, *Diccionario* (cf. n. 16), s.v.

25. The etymology and the exact semantic definition of the lexeme *irn* remains, in the author's opinion, uncertain, cf. also the remarks of Pardee, *Les Textes para-mythologiques de la 24e Campagne (1961)*, Ras Shamra-Ugarit IV, Paris 1988, pp. 53f.

26. Wholly apart from the etymological problems, this makes interpretations of *bbt* and *hšt* as, e.g., "countenance" improbable, contra, e.g., Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (cf. n. 4), pp. 26, 43f.

27. The form *ašmḥ* in KTU 1.16 i 14 will be discussed below (n. 45). For the interpretation as prefix conjugation form 1ppl., cf., e.g., Caquot - Szymer - Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques* (cf. n. 4), p. 549 n. c.

28. An interpretation of *n'tq* as a N suffix conjugation form 3psm can only be defended if one interprets *bbt* as "countenance", "aspect", cf., e.g., Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (cf. n. 4), p. 43; Driver, *Canaanite Myths* (cf. n. 4), pp. 41, 140, but this interpretation is less probable, see above. An interpretation as N participle form is presupposed by S.E. Loewenstamm's translation in M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, "Berichtigungen und Nachträge zu UF 1, 1969", *UF* 2 (1970) 355-357 (esp. p. 357): «Wie ein Hund, der aus seinem Haus vertrieben worden ist, ja wie ein Köter ist dein jämmerlicher Zustand». However, the relevant translation of *hšt* is less probable, see above. Del Olmo Lete, *Mitos* (cf. n. 5), p. 309, also interprets *n'tq* as a N participle form, taking, respectively, *klb bbt n'tq* and *kinr ap hšk* as two prepositional phrases modifying the following clause. However, in view of the parallels, the author prefers to interpret the second *ap* of KTU 1.16 i 3 as an introductory particle modifying the following clause (see above).

29. It is unnecessary to consider *klb* (and *inr*) as broken plurals. A plural subject may be compared with a single object / being, cf., e.g., 2 Sam. 17:8 ("they" compared with *db škw*), Ps. 59:7, 15 ("they" compared with *klb*); Cant. 5:11 (locks compared with *wrb*); Lam. 2:12 ("they" compared with *hll*). Contra, e.g., Bernhardt, art. cit. (cf. n. 4), *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 5, p. 112 n. 130. Also contra Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (cf. n. 4), p. 43, who, arguing that a plural subject cannot be compared with a single being, denies that *n'tq* can be a prefix conjugation form 1ppl.

30. Cf., e.g., Gray, *The KRT Text* (cf. n. 4), p. 64; M.H. Pope, "A divine Banquet at Ugarit", J.M. Efrid (ed.), *The use of the Old Testament in the New and other Essays, Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, Durham, N.C. 1972, pp. 170-203 (esp. p. 183). For the attitude towards dogs in Ugarit, cf., e.g., KTU 1.19 i 13f. (*klb lhḥ*); on this phrase, cf. the author, "Zu einigen Stellen in KTU 1.19 I 2-19", A. Lange, a.o. (eds.), *Mythos im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt, Festschrift für Hans-Peter Müller zum 65. Geburtstag*, BZAW 278, Berlin - New York 1999, pp. 51-61 [esp. p. 56]. Contra C.H. Gordon, *Before the Bible, Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*, New York - London 1962, p. 140, who speaks of the «favoured position of the dog in Ugarit». For ancient Israel, cf., e.g., texts like 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:15; 2 Kings 8:13. For El-Amarna, cf., e.g., EA 76:12-16; 84:6-10, 16-18; 91:3-5; 108:25-28; 130:31-38; 138:95-97; 201:9-16; 320:16-25 (cf. also M.S. Smith, "Terms of Endearment; Dog (*klb*) and Calf (*g*) in KTU 1.3 iii 44-45", *Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf*, *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient, Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres*, AOAT 250, Münster 1998, pp. 713-716 [esp. p. 714]). For Akkadian texts, cf. CAD s.v. *kalbu* sub 1e. For the dog beaten with a stick (cf. above, KTU 1.19 i 13f. and CAD s.v. *kalbu* sub 1e), compare also the Sumerian proverb "she grumbles like a dog beaten with a throw-stick", cf. B. Alster, *Proverbs of ancient Sumer, the World's earliest Collection*, Vol. I, Bethesda Maryland 1997, pp. 97 (no. 3.95), 138 (no. 5.93). I wish to thank Drs. Th. Krispijn for drawing my attention to this publication.

"we", which is compared to an action of dogs, is expressed by the words *bbtk n'tq* and *ap ḥštk [n'tq]*, the second *n'tq* being deleted. Because *bt* and *ḥštk* probably indicate two different, be it, in all probability, related buildings, any interpretation of them as more or less synonymous lexemes seems less acceptable. (A number of scholars have proposed this last-mentioned interpretation, translating *bt* with "grave" and *ḥštk* with "tomb", "mausoleum".)³¹ Moreover, the interpretation of *ḥštk* remains difficult. The most probable suggestion is to relate it etymologically to Hittite *ḥeštā/i*. The interpretation of this word as "mausoleum" remains, however, highly uncertain, to say the least.³² The most probable interpretation is that it is a cultic building within the royal citadel.³³ This last fact would make an interpretation of the *bt* in Ugaritic, standing in parallelism to *ḥštk* as "palace", the most probable one.³⁴ The undertone of self-disparagement, of which we spoke, makes it probable that what is expressed by the words *bbtk n'tq* and *ap ḥštk [n'tq]* is a less pleasant prospect. Much depends on the interpretation of *n'tq*.³⁵

Pardee has suggested that the form *n'tq* is to be derived from a root *'tq* (G or N stem), with the meaning "to grow old or worn out".³⁶ Pardee remarks that, if «such an understanding is correct, the image involved» in KTU 1.16 i 2, 15f., ii 38 «is that of the dog as representing short life expectancy». ³⁷ This interpretation seems less than convincing, because «short-life span and mortality are not peculiar characteristics of dogs». ³⁸

Margalit has drawn attention to the fact that in Biblical Hebrew, derivatives of the root *'tq* can have the meaning "elevated speech". Because the «activity designated by *n'tq*» «is something especially appropriate for dogs», he proposes "to be howled" as the meaning of the root *'tq* (N stem). ³⁹ Although the

31. For this interpretation, cf., e.g., J.C. de Moor, "Studies in the new alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra", *UF* 1 (1969) 167-188 (esp. p. 171 [nn. 27, 29]), cf., however, De Moor - Spronk, art. cit., II (cf. n. 15), p. 180; Greenstein, *Ugaritic Narrative poetry* (cf. n. 2), p. 30; N.Wyatt, *Myths of Power, a Study of royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition*, Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur 13, Münster 1996, p. 108; Wyatt, *Religious Texts* (cf. n. 11), p. 219 (n. 195). It must be admitted that an interpretation of *bt* as "tomb", "grave" is in itself possible. For the interpretation of *bt*, cf. also the discussion below on *ḥštk*.

32. For this interpretation of the Hittite word (with a question mark: "Beinhaus = Mausoleum?"), cf. J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch, kurzgefasste kritische Sammlung der Deutung hethitischer Wörter*, Heidelberg 1952, p. 68. Against this interpretation, cf. V. Haas - M. Wäfler, "Bemerkungen zu *ḥeštā/i* (2. Teil)", *UF* 9 (1977) 87-122 (esp. p. 121: «Die Etymologie ... bleibt nach wie vor unklar»). J. Tischler, *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar ...*, Teil I, a-k, Innsbruck 1983, pp. 237f. («sachlich kaum zu begründen»). Cf. also H. Kronasser, *Etymologie der hethitischen Sprache*, Band I, Wiesbaden 1966 p. 249: «Anhaltspunkte, dass es sich um ein Mausoleum handle, bestehen im geringen Masse».

33. Cf. Haas - Wäfler, art. cit. (cf. n. 32), *UF* 9, p. 122. The fact that the *ḥeštā/i* has its «spezifisch nur hier verehrten Gottheiten» (cf. art. cit., p. 122) would fit in with the *il ḥštk* of KTU 1.123.30.

34. Del Olmo Lete, *La Religión* (cf. n. 24), p. 230, has correctly translated the *il bt* in KTU 1.123.29 with "gods of the palace".

35. The fact that the words *bbtk n'tq* indicate a less pleasant prospect makes the translation of *n'tq* by R.S. Sirat, "Une interprétation nouvelle de II Keret, 1-5", *Semitica* 15 (1965) 23-28 (esp. pp. 26f.), with "nous deviendrions prospères" less acceptable. The idea of Sirat, "Évolution sémantique de la Racine <<'TQ>> en Hébreu", *Revue de l'École nationale des Langues orientales ...*, 3 (1966) 35-62 (esp. p. 61), that the meaning of the root *'tq* in Biblical Hebrew is "déplacer" «avec une connotation supplémentaire: la supériorité de la situation nouvelle par rapport à l'ancienne», is somewhat forced, to say the least.

36. Cf. D. Pardee, "A Note on the Root *'tq* in CTA 16 I 2,5 (UT 125, KRT II)", *UF* 5 (1973) 229-234 (esp. pp. 229f., 233f.). Cf. also J. Sanmartín, "Lexikographisches zu Ug. *'tq* (KTU 1.16 i 2-5, 15-19, ii 38-42)", *UF* 10 (1978) 453-454 (esp. p. 454); del Olmo Lete, *Mitos* (cf. n. 5), pp. 309, 605 (cf. the remarks made by the author in n. 28); Pardee, *Context of Scripture* (cf. n. 2), p. 339. (Pardee's suggestion that the relevant verbal form were derived from the root *'tq* [G stem] meaning "to pass on = to die", is as Pardee himself says [art. cit., p. 233] «more proper to English but perhaps not to the Semitic languages», also contra Caquot - Sznycer - Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques* [cf. n. 4], p. 549 n. d.).

37. Cf. Pardee, art. cit. (cf. n. 36), *UF* 5, p. 234.

38. Cf. Kleven, *Ascribe to the Lord* (cf. n. 4), p. 39. Kleven also speaks in this connection of «a forceful metaphor».

39. Cf. B. Margalit, "Studia Ugaritica II, 'Studies in Krt and Aqht'", *UF* 8 (1976) 138-192 (esp. p. 148). Cf. also, e.g., M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, "Die Wehklage über Keret in KTU 1 2-23 (II 35-50), zur ugaritischen Lexikographie", *UF* 12 (1980) 189-192

Biblical Hebrew nominal form *'ātāq* can have the meaning "elevated speech", be it in the relevant contexts with a pejorative connotation (cf. 1 Sam. 2:3; Pss. 31:19; 75:6; 94:4), the etymological transition from this meaning to something like "howling", "lamenting" is, in the author's opinion, far from being self-evident.

Therefore, it seems best to interpret the relevant *n'tq* as a verbal form derived from a root *'tq* with a semantic feature of "moving". Derivatives of this root are attested in Biblical Hebrew, Ugaritic and Akkadian.⁴⁰ The features of, e.g., local-terminativity and / or local-separativity are indicated by contextual means.⁴¹ In the clause we are discussing, the verbal form is modified by a *b*-phrase (*bbtk*), which in itself is open to more than one interpretation. In the opinion of the author, a local-separative interpretation of this phrase is the most probable because of the comparison with a dog. The dog is the one chased away with a stick (cf., e.g., 1 Sam. 17:43, KTU 1.19 i 13f. [cf. n. 30] and both Sumerian proverbs quoted in n. 30), the one often not allowed in the house.⁴² The verbal form *n'tq* will have to be taken as a G (or possibly N) prefix conjugation form 1ppl.

Whereas the "we" are described as moving from the palace, the interpretation of the *ap* in *ap ḥšt* as "entrance" is most likely.⁴³ Probably, the text indicates that the "we" have to go from the palace and from the entrance of a building (a cultic one?) closely related to the palace, also belonging to the royal buildings.⁴⁴

The first and second clauses of the lament (KTU 1.16 i 14f., ii 36f.) are normally considered to be declarative clauses referring to the past or present tense. In the author's opinion, however, one ought seriously to consider the possibility that they should be interpreted as questions. For a question not introduced by an interrogative adverb, cf. KTU 1.17 vi 40, a question discussed above expressing disbelief and amazement (for another unintroduced question, cf. KTU 1.4 iv 59ff., also discussed above). In the second clause of the lament we find also an energetic prefix conjugation form (*ngln*, KTU 1.16 i 15; ii 37), as in KTU 1.17 vi 40 (*tšdn*). Because those uttering the lament are weeping and gnashing their teeth, one

(esp. pp. 190f.); Xella, *Gli Antenati* (cf. n. 4), p. 172; Kleven, *Ascribe to the Lord* (cf. n. 4), pp. 35, 37f.; O. Loretz, *Ugarit und die Bibel, kanaänische Götter und Religion im Alten Testament*, Darmstadt 1990, pp. 37f.; Wyatt, *Religious Texts* (cf. n. 11), p. 219.

40. For Ugaritic, cf. KTU 2.36:17; 2.73:4 (cf. also its use in KTU 1.6 ii 26, where it indicates the passing of time). For Biblical Hebrew, cf. for the Qal Job 14:18; 18:4; for the Hiph'il, Gen. 12:8, 26:22. For Akkadian, cf. CAD s.v. *etēqu* A.

41. Cf., e.g., for Biblical Hebrew the use of a *l*-phrase in Gen. 12:8, and the use of a *mn*-phrase in Gen. 12:8, 26:22; Job 14:18; 18:4. In Akkadian forms of *etēqu* can be modified by *ana*-phrases and *ištu*-phrases (cf. CAD s.v. *etēqu* A sub 1c).

42. Cf. CAD s.v. *kalbu* 1a (not allowed in the house) and 1c (passing the night in the street) and also the Sumerian proverbs "A dog, its home is unknown" and "Like a dog you have no place to sleep" (cf. Alster, *Proverbs*, Vol. I [cf. n. 30], p. 68 [no. 2.114] and p. 141 [no. 5.111]). Cf. also the Wisdom text PBS i 135, ll. 32-25: "turn that dog out, chase that dog away ..." (cf. J.J.A. v. Dijk, *La Sagesse suméro-akkadienne. Recherches sur les Genres littéraires des Textes sapientiaux, avec Choix de Textes*, Leyden 1953, pp. 128f.; Drs.Th. Krispijn, who drew my attention to it, considers it to be a conversation between two dogs). For the use of the preposition *b* in cases of local-separativity, cf., e.g., Sivan, *Grammar* (cf. n. 11), p. 195. Most probably, the preposition *b* in these instances does not have the meaning "from", the lit. translation in our text being "at your house we move / are moved".

43. Cf. *ap tgr* (KTU 1.17 v 6), *ap sgrt* (KTU 1.3 v 27); cf. also *ap zd / dd / dd* (KTU 1.23:24, 59, 61) and *ap lb* (KTU 1.5 vi 21; 1.6 i 5). The first editor Virolleaud, art. cit. (n. 4), *Syria* 22, p. 107, already translated *ap* with "devant". For the translation with "entrance", cf., e.g., Gibson, *Canaanite Myths* (cf. n. 4), pp. 94, 142; del Olmo Lete, *Mitos* (cf. n. 5), p. 309, 517; Kleven, *Ascribe to the Lord* (cf. n. 4), pp. 35, 39; Wyatt, *Religious Texts* (cf. n. 11), p. 219. Cf. also del Olmo Lete - Sanmartín, *Diccionario* (cf. n. 16), s.v. *ap*(H) sub 4.

44. For comparable interpretations, cf., e.g., v. Selms, *Marriage* (cf. n. 4), p. 126 (n. 6); Bernhardt, art. cit., *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 5 (cf. n. 4), p. 112; Aistleitner, *Die mythologischen ... Texte* (cf. n. 11), pp. 98f.; M. Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Syntax and Style", *UF* 1 (1969) 15-36 (esp. p. 28). That there were many people at Keret's court whose position would be seriously threatened by the accession to the throne of the new king (*yšb*) is made probable by the, unfortunately heavily damaged, text KTU 1.15 v 20ff. Cf. also v. Selms, *Marriage* (cf. n. 4), p. 126 n. 6.

could, therefore, also interpret the first and second clauses of the lament as questions expressing disbelief and bewilderment.

The translation of the opening clauses of the relevant lament would thus be:

"Our father, can I / we (really) rejoice in your life, can we (really) exult in your immortality?
Like a dog, we will be moved from your palace, like an *inr* from the entrance of your *hšt*, ah,
father, how can you die / will you really die?"⁴⁵

45. Normally the *ašmḥ* of KTU 1.16 i 14 is considered to be a scribal error. Although this is quite possible, we also have to consider the possibility that someone, speaking for a group, may alternate the 1ppl. and the 1ps, cf., e.g., Judg. 19:18 ('*brym* 'nḥnw besides *mšm* 'nky, w'lk, 'ny hlk, 'wty).