

## New Readings in *Aqht*

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### 1. KTU 1.17 ii 46-47

It is generally acknowledged that the text forms the conclusion of the gestation “countdown”, beginning with line 43: (...) *yṭb. dnīl* // [*ys*] *pr. yrḥh*.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the second edition of KTU<sup>2</sup> (1995), no serious attempt was made to read beyond the middle of line 46 (*yrḥm. ymgy*). KTU<sup>2</sup> was unable to improve on the continuation of line 46 ([xxxx]), but it reads *rḥm* (in roman type) as the first word of line 47.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Manfred Dietrich of Münster, one of the editors of UF and KTU, kindly collated the text in question at my request. In a letter dated 12.21.96 he writes as follows: «Am Zeilenanfang [line 47] steht kaum *rḥm*, weil der Platz für R nicht reicht. Ich meine *bṛnh* erkennen zu können, woran sich ziemlich sicher *bq* ‘t... anschließt.»

The foregoing collation, based on new photographs, paves the way, I believe, for a highly plausible reconstruction of lines 45(end)-47:

[‘š] <i>r. yrḥm. ymgy</i>	3
[bdqt(. )] <sup>47</sup> <i>bṛnh</i>	2
<i>bq</i> ‘t(.) [t‘rth.]	2

“[The te]nth month arrived,  
Her abdomen [rifted],  
[Her vagina] sundered”.

√*bdq* (*WUS*, s.v. 503) is known from the literary texts (1.4 vii 19,28) where it is used to designate the “aperture(s)” of the clouds, corresponding to *ḥln* “window” in *par. mem.* construction. It is cognate with Hebrew *bedeq* (cf. *HAL*, 106), etc.

Ug. *bṛn* = (Heb. *beṭen* [fem.]) “abdomen” is here attested for the first time.<sup>3</sup>

1. See most recently M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, *TUAT* III/6, Gütersloh 1997, 1267; S.B. Parker (ed.), *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, Atlanta 1997, p. 57, and D. Pardee’s translation in W.W. Hallo *et al.* (eds.), *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 1, Leiden - Köln - New York 1997, p. 345. For an equally recent dissent from the majority view, see N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Sheffield 1998, p. 266.

2. This reading forms the basis for the recent translation of the passage by Dietrich and Loretz (*TUAT* III/6), p. 1267: “[und es wurde geöffnet] <sup>47</sup>der Sch[o]ss [der Danatiya]”.

3. KTU<sup>2</sup> (1995) restores [b] *nm* in KTU 15 vi 1 but without any apparent material or contextual support. Contrast my discussion of this passage in *UF* 27 (1995) 249-60.

√*bq* ‘split’ is well known in the Ugaritic literary texts (*WUS* s.v. 567), serving also as the root in the DN *Bq*’*t*, one of the Kosharoth. But a reference to the latter is here precluded since we are informed in lines 39-42 of their departure from Danel’s house.<sup>4</sup> Supporting the restoration \**bdqt* is the threefold word-initial B: *Bdqt* (.) *Bṭnh*. *Bq*’*t*.

Ug. *t*’*rt* ‘sheath’ (Latin: vagina) is attested in Ugaritic in the sense of ‘pouch’ (= a receptacle for an object the size of a bird) and ‘scabbard’ (= the receptacle for a dagger), cf. *WUS* s.v. 2097. It is cognate with Heb. *ta’ar* (II) ‘scabbard’. But if Aistleitner is correct in deriving the word from √*ry* ‘naked’, it seems likely that the basic meaning of *t*’*rt* is (Eng.) ‘vagina’. The word in this sense should be restored here as well as in *Krt* (1.15 v 23); cf. *UF* 27 (1995) 256-60. In the passage at hand, note the alliterating sequence *bq*’*T* [*T*’*rT*].

## 2. *KTU* 1.17 vi 14

The text in question, [--]*nh*. *km*. *bṭn*. *yqr*, is part of a lengthy description (beginning line 11) of Anat’s bodily reaction from the moment she spies the marvellous bow given *Aqht* by Kothar-Hasis on the occasion of his *Coming-of-Age / Bar-Mitzvah*. It occurs immediately after the reference to her ‘coveting the bow’ (*ṭsb*. *qṣṭ*) and immediately prior to the description of her wine-cup (*ksh*) falling to the ground, from a hand gone limp from consternation (lines 15-16).

The word ending [ ]*nh* was restored by CTA as [*’nh*], presumably ‘her [ey]es’, following a suggestion by Ginsberg.<sup>5</sup> The issue was seemingly resolved by *KTU* (1976) which read the *’ayin* with an asterisk, indicating ‘damaged but certain’. I followed this lead in my *Aqht* Commentary (1982), rendering ‘Her eyes are like (those of) a staring snake’ (*yqr* < √*nqr* ‘pierce’). To be sure, it would have been more natural for the poet to predicate the verb of Anat’s eyes by using the feminine form *tqr*. This circumstance led some scholars, including Ginsberg himself, to leave *yqr* untranslated, while others either disputed the restoration (prior to *KTU*) or proposed a meaning for *yqr* other than ‘pierce’.<sup>6</sup>

4. This fact in turn bears significantly on the role of the Kosharot in *Aqht*. They are evidently not conceived or portrayed here as (divine) midwives, but rather as goddesses who ensure conception at the time of coitus. As such they are the ‘patron-saints’ of womankind, for it is the women who were generally blamed for the failure of coitus to result in pregnancy (‘closure of the womb’). Women thus worshipped the Kosharot to ensure fecundity. This explains why the Kosharot are lavishly feasted at the beginning of the episode (*KTU* 1.17 ii 26-42), before Dan’el begins to count the months of gestation (cf. my *Aqht* Commentary [BZAW 182], pp. 285ff., and contrast J.M. Husser, *Le Songe et la Parole*, BZAW 210 (Berlin 1994), pp. 51-54. The text as read and restored above also tells decisively against the interpretation of Husser –endorsed now by N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, p. 264 – of the phrase *kyld. bn. ḥy* (1.17 ii 14) as describing the accomplished birth of baby *Aqht*.

5. *BASOR* 98 (1945) 16.

6. Cf. G.R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, Edinburgh, 1956, p. 53: ‘its horns ([*qr*]*nh*, seq. Vir.) were twisted like a serpent’ (similarly J.C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Leiden 1987, p. 237; M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, *TUAT* III/6, 1267; N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts...*, p. 272 –see *KTU*<sup>2</sup> (1995) *ad loc.*); A. Caquot - M. Sznycer, *Textes Ougaritiques*, t.I, Paris 1974, p. 431: ‘... comme un serpent qui se replie’, with notation: ‘il est très douteux qu’il faille lire [*’nh*] “son oeil”’; C.H. Gordon, ‘Poetic Legends and Myths from Ugarit’, *Berytus* XXV (1977) 15: ‘[...] like a serpent that hisses’; J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed., Edinburgh 1978, p. 108: ‘her eyes like a snake that hisses’; G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaán*, Madrid 1981, p. 376: ‘... al verlo (?), como una serpiente silbó’; S.B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, p. 60: ‘her eye(s) like a snake...’. A quite original proposal is that of S. and Sh. Rin, *Acts of the Gods*, 2nd revised edition, Narberth, PA 1996, p. 569: [*ṭṣ*]*nh*... ‘her [ton]gue... hisses’, a restoration which is consistent with the new collation (see immediately below). However, Ug. *ṭṣn* is presumably feminine (like Hebrew for the most part), cf. *KTU* 1.83:5: *ṭṣnm. ṭḥk. ṣnm*. ‘The (forked-) tongue (of the Dragon-snake [*ṭn:n*]) licks the heavens’. Moreover, since Anat has not yet begun to speak, it would be odd for her to be hissing at this point; and her manner of speech when she does begin to speak is cajoling rather than threatening.

The absence of the putative *‘ayin* in KTU<sup>2</sup> (1995) re-opens the problem of the line’s restoration and interpretation. Already in UF 26, 281 –and subsequently in UF 27, 304– I suggested that instead of *\*‘nh* one should restore [iš]nh “her [pup]ils”, an otherwise unattested Ugaritic cognate of Hebrew יָשׁוּן, Arabic *‘insān* (see HAL, 43, s.v.). Since *\*išn* is presumably masculine as in Hebrew –by virtue of the component “man” (אִישׁ)– this would solve the gender problem of *yqr* while supporting the “snake-eyes” imagery which so effectively describes Anat’s fixated gaze. However, the restoration remained conjectural; and without additional attestation of *\*išn*, it was unlikely to command widespread assent.

At my request, and cognizant of my proposal, M. Dietrich collated the passage in question. In a communication dated 04.22.99, he writes as follows: «In der Tat könnte ich ein š vor -nh ... bestens unterbringen: Der Bruch ist flach und bietet Reste eines Zeichens, das mit einem Winkelhaken auf halber Höhe und einem davor, tieferstehenden Ende eines Senkrechten zu etwa einem Drittel nur erhalten ist. Die Umrisse lassen aber ohne weiteres auf ein š schliessen.»

### 3. KTU 1.18 i 25-27

The poor state of the tablet’s preservation at this point has deterred most scholars from a thorough treatment of KTU 1.18 i 23-27, the “hottest” episode in the poem of AQHT, viz., the sexual seduction of the adolescent by the goddess with the view of enticing him to a hunting expedition in the vicinity of Kh. Kerak.<sup>7</sup>

Neither CTA nor KTU (1976) attempted to read the beginning of line 25 preceding the plainly visible word-divider. The new edition of KTU however reads a *b* prior to the word-divider, and suggests restoring [...qr]b “midst”. M. Dietrich’s collation of the text, at my request,<sup>8</sup> confirms the reading.

The restoration proposed by KTU<sup>2</sup> however is problematic in two respects: (1) it leaves a space, equivalent to two signs, which cannot be accounted for even by way of conjecture; (2) it does not come to terms with the immediate context, given that šb‘ *tirk* means “the fullness of thy ‘passion’” (with reference to the arousal of the male genitalia),<sup>9</sup> an interpretation supported by the B-line of the bicolon introduced by line 25, which must certainly have contained an allusion to KTU 1.23:33-35.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of line 25, KTU<sup>2</sup> resolves the ambiguous (š/l) of CTA and KTU (1976) in favor of *l*, and in line 26, its text is identical with that of KTU (1976) and CTA. But at the beginning of line 27 KTU<sup>2</sup> not only confirms the reading ]lt. first proposed by KTU (1976) –contrast CTA: ]l. *mlk*– it ventures the reading of a *q* prior to the *l*: [xxxx. ]qlt.

In his collation of line 27, again at my request, M. Dietrich writes as follows:<sup>11</sup> «]qlt. von KTU<sup>2</sup> ist kaum zu halten. Der Schreiber hat sich hier korrigiert: offensichtlich hat er der Trenner ursprünglich zu früh gesetzt, diesen dann durchgestrichen und hinter das hinzugefügte T nachgetragen. Anstelle des Q steht von den Spuren her ein halbes eingekreistes t (vgl. UF 25 [1993] 137ff.). Über das damit postulierte ]lt. habe ich noch keine Gedanken gemacht.»

In light of the foregoing I now propose the following restoration and prosodic reconstruction of the strophe beginning with line 23<sup>b</sup>:

7. Hellenistic *Bêt-Yerah* / Sennabris [= Sin + ἀβραϊς], on the southwestern shore of Lake Kinnereth (= Ug. *knrt* [KTU 1.19 iii 41]), camouflaged in the poem as “Abil(uma), the city of His-Majesty Yarih” (*ablm. qrt. zbl. yrh* [= Heb. אביל ביה ירה]).

8. Letter of 12.21.96.

9. Cf. BZAW 182:323-28. The Arabic cognate of Ugaritic *tir* denotes “blood-feud; vendetta”.

10. Restoring ...<sup>26</sup> [ktr(.) il.] *aby*. “[like (that of) Bull-El] my father”.

11. Letter of 12.21.96.

<i>šm</i> <sup>c</sup> . <i>m</i> [ <sup>c</sup> . <i>laq</i> <sup>24</sup> <i>ht. g</i> ] <i>zr</i>	3
<i>at. aḥ.</i>	2
<i>wan. a</i> [ <i>h</i> tk]	2
<sup>25</sup> [ <i>lyt</i> ( <i>y</i> ) <i>š</i> ] <i>b. šb</i> <sup>c</sup> . <i>tirk</i>	3
<i>l</i> [ <i>yirk</i> <sup>26</sup> <i>ktr</i> (.) <i>il.</i> ] <i>aby</i>	3
<i>ndt. ank</i> [. <i>lk</i> ]	3
<sup>27</sup> [ <i>mṭt. m</i> ] <i>tlt. lk</i>	3
<i>tlk. bšd</i> [ <i>y. mt</i> ]	3

In translation:

"Hearken [O] Hero [Aqht]:  
Thou art my brother,  
And I [thy sis]ter.

[Let] thy "passion" in (its) fullness e[rect],<sup>a</sup>  
Let [it lengthen<sup>b</sup> like (that of) Bull-El], my father.

I'll be thy *naditu*,  
[I'll sha]re [my bed] with thee;<sup>c</sup>  
Thou shalt walk at [my] side<sup>d</sup> [(O) my man].<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $\sqrt{n}šb$  "be(come) erect", used (as here) verbally in the list of filial duties (KTU 1.17 i-ii) with reference to a "tomb" (*skn* <  $\sqrt{skn}$  "store"; cf. Heb. עֲרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת "store-cities"). "Stelae" are erected only on special occasions and for special people, like kings and high priests. Normal people are buried in tombs, with or without epitaphs. The filial duty is to care for the "place" (*aḥr*) of the father's interment, to see that it is kept tidy and undisturbed. Cf. the enlightening conclusion of KAI 214 [*apud UF* 27 (1995) 197-99.] –Alliteration: ... a[*h*tk]:[*lyt*(*y*)*š*] *b* ... *tirk*. L[...]; [*lyt*(*y*)*š*] *B. šb*<sup>c</sup>.... 'By; [*lyt*(*y*)*š*] *b* ... L[*yirk* ...] *abY*.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. KTU 1.23:33: *tirkm. yd. il. kym*. –Alliteration: ...*tirk* // 1[*yirk*...]; ...*tirk* //... [KTR.II]...

<sup>c</sup> Lit., "[my bed: a ha]lf (of it) is yours" –cf. Akk. *mišlu* [AHw, 661; CAD, M-2, 126-29] – or, "[my bed is ha]lved unto you" (cf. Akk. *mašālu* [AHw, 623; CAD, M-1, 355-58]). It is not clear what if any connection exists between (putative) Ug. *mṭl* "half" and the object designated *mtl* in the "hippiatric" texts (KTU 1.85:25, etc.) –see the tentative comments by Pardee, *RSO* II, 66. –Alliteration: [MṭT. M]ṭIT ... // ... [MT].

<sup>d</sup> Heb. צֶדֶד "side". Ug. *šd* "side" probably forms the basis of the much discussed *šdynm* (KTU 1.14 iv 36,39), allegedly "Sidon" but more likely a synonymous variant of "Tyrians" (*šrm*), meaning "coastliners" or the like (cf. discussion in *UF* 28 [1996] 453-55).

<sup>e</sup> For discussion of this restoration as well as other aspects of the text, cf. *UPA* (BZAW 182) 201f., 324-26.

#### 4. KTU 1.19 i 17

The reading *wbmth* now read by KTU<sup>2</sup> was anticipated by the present writer, working on the basis of context and prosodic structure, in *UF* 8 (1976) 172 (*wbmt*[h]). The restored suffix was taken to be a locative referring to an object behind the serpent-sentinel (*ʿp*<sup>c</sup>. *il* "giant / divine viper") who greeted the

lad Aqht on his arrival in the Netherworld, described (1.12) as “the heart of darkness”.<sup>12</sup> The following word, *hms*, read already by Virolleaud, can only mean “rise, loom”, cognate with Heb. מָנִיץ “leaven”. The grammatical subject of this verb is the object first read by KTU (1976) as *srr[-]*, which I subsequently (*UF* 16, 127f.) proposed to restore as *srr[h]*, cognate with Arabic *ṣarḥ* and Heb. צִרְיָה “tower”. However, KTU<sup>2</sup> now reads this word as *srr* (both R’s in roman type) of which Dietrich (*loc. cit.*) writes:<sup>13</sup> «Der Lesung ... geht in Ordnung, obwohl die Tafeloberfläche erodiert ist».

If this reading is accepted, it can only be understood as the hitherto unattested singular of *srrt* as in *srrt. spn* “heights (or the like) of Saphon”. According to *UT* §19.2199, this word is cognate with Akk. *serrêti*; but in this meaning the word is unknown to the modern Assyrian dictionaries. Be this as it may, the evidence of the noun *srr* in the present context points to the notion of “loftiness”, with reference to a tower or citadel. The common semantic denominator of *srr* and *srrt spn* would be something “tall” and/or “pointed”, like a mountain-peak or a tapered edifice.

The proposed interpretation of *srr* will render invalid the interpretation of *išr* (KTU 1.101:4) as “peak” (thus *DLU*, 1, 56a). It also precludes a connection with Heb. √*srr* “roll up, wrap, pocket” (*HAL*, 990), with its implication of “roundness” rather than “pointed”. On the other hand, there are grounds for taking Ugaritic *srr(t)* as cognate with Heb. צֶרֶף “flint-stone”; literally “pointed(-flint)”.

#### 5. KTU 1.19 ii 34

The line in question occurs as part of the “messengers-of-woe” -scene in which two of Aqht’s comrades are depicted on their way to informing Dan’el of his son’s murder at the hands of Anat.<sup>14</sup> The problem at hand is the third word of line of line 34. In *UPA* (226-27) I followed CTA and KTU (1976) in reading *tṭp[ ]* provisionally and tentatively restored as *tṭp[n]* and interpreted as cognate with Ar. *ṭafana* “cling, hold fast (to)”. The presumed object was *šptm* “lips” restored in the continuation. I commented as follows: «The “covering-of-the-mouth” (or brow of the lip) is a sign of mourning ... or shame ... as well as a natural response to coughing induced by excessive weeping». Citing Ez. 24:16f. and Mic. 3:7, I noted that in both texts the verb used for “cover” is √*ṭh*, a vestiary metaphor.

KTU<sup>2</sup> however has a quite different reading at this point: <sup>34</sup>*rb ʿt. tqlm. tgx[xxxx]*. In reply to my query and request for a collation, M. Dietrich wrote to me as follows:<sup>15</sup> «*tg* ist sicher ein *m* (so auch Z. 31 geschrieben), das nachfolgende Zeichen ist wohl ein *z*».

The reading *mz[ ]* provides, I believe, a plausible solution based on the foregoing interpretation of the passage. Ug. *mzll* (*WUS*, 2371) derives from √*zll* “provide shade”, and is used as a synonym for “house, domicile”, i.e., “a place of cover”. Hebrew similarly uses the verb √*hph* to denote “head-cover” (essentially identical with √*ṭh*) but also “canopy” (for a wedding). Like √*ṭh*, √*hph* is commonly used in the Bible to describe the covering of the face or head in sorrow or shame (2 Sam. 15:30; Jer. 13:3-4, etc.).

12. *kmr. kmrm*, lit., “dark of darkness” = the superlative degree of comparison; cf. Heb. קָדַשׁ קְדָשִׁים. It should be noted, and indeed underscored, that both the restoration and the wider interpretation were predicated on the assumption that lines 14-17<sup>a</sup> (*imḥsh. kd. ʿl. qšth.. qšth. ltm. 17ly.*) are an intrusion (from KTU 1.18 iv) and must be deleted for the surrounding text to become intelligible. The failure (or refusal) to recognize this fact is, I believe, one of the main reasons for the difficulty which scholars have experienced with this text.

13. Letter of 12.21.96.

14. *Sic!* Cf. lines 42-44, with no mention of the Sutean accomplice. For detailed discussion of this episode and suggested readings and restorations, cf. *UF* 15 (1983) 105-107.

15. Letter of 12.21.1996.

I therefore suggest reading and restoring line 34b-35 as follows:

mz[ll. šp(t)m] bm<sup>35</sup>yd

"Cove[ring the (brow of) the lips] with the hand".

#### 6. KTU 1.19 iii 41

Although some scholars still find it difficult to accept, the sixty-year old controversy surrounding the reading of the final word in this line is, or should be, terminated. Contrary to KTU (1976), KTU<sup>2</sup> (1995) reads unequivocally *bknrt*, all of the letters certified in italic print. This reading follows on, and fully endorses, the detailed epigraphic study of the passage carried out by W. Pitard, accompanied by photographs of remarkable resolution.<sup>16</sup>

However, Pitard –and in his wake, Parker<sup>17</sup>, Dietrich-Loretz<sup>18</sup>, and Wyatt<sup>19</sup>– rejects the seemingly obvious philological consequences and implications of the reading. The "Kinnereth Hypothesis" as elaborated in my *Aqht* Commentary (BZAW 182) is deemed "problematic" and "speculative". Pitard acknowledges the futility of the alternative explanations conjectured by the few scholars who adopted Barton's reading –actually, the reading of Virolleaud's own autographed facsimile– without mentioning however that even these conjectures predate the publication of the 'mini-mythological' texts of *Ugaritica* V (1968), and RS 24.252 / KTU 1.108 in particular, with their clear allusions to the Bashanite cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, one has the feeling from Pitard's article that he was rather surprised, not to say disappointed, by his own epigraphic finds. For it is difficult to understand why an American scholar would invest so much time, effort, and financial resources to verify a reading whose meaning from the outset is deemed moot, and then "to refrain from translating the word" on the grounds that "the context of the passage does not clearly indicate even whether the word is a common or proper noun".<sup>21</sup>

16. See *BASOR* 293 (1994) 31-38. Parenthetically, be it remarked that the photographs (actually, photographic negatives) held at the UF Institute in Münster (Westf.) in the mid-seventies showed the reading *bknrt* clearly enough –see my pre-KTU remarks in *UF* 8 (1976) 172-77, esp. p. 172. In informal discussions subsequently with members of the UF team, I was given to understand that KTU's compromise reading *bkn(k/r)t* was prompted more by "political" than by epigraphic considerations. My later collation of the tablet at the Louvre Museum in 1981 in effect confirmed what I already knew (see my AQHT Commentary [BZAW 182], p. 232f.). For me, Pitard's main contribution consisted in solving the riddle of the second upper-horizontal of the R, which could not be seen by the naked eye even under magnification and which appeared on no photograph or facsimile available prior thereto. For this he is to be commended.

17. *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, p. 74.

18. *TUAT* III/6, pp. 1298f.

19. N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts...*, p. 306. Pardee (*Context of Scripture*, I, p. 353) is still reserved on Pitard's study, presumably because he is on record as having inspected the tablet and pronouncing in favour of the reading *bknkt*: "The [second] K is certain; the sign never had more than three wedges" (*UF* 19 [1987] 200). See also *DLU*, p. 220, unaware, however, of either Pitard or KTU<sup>2</sup>.

20. See my publications in *JBL* 89 (1970) 292-304, and in *Biblica* 51 (1970) 343f. Here too, my interpretation of these allusions met with stiff-necked scholarly resistance for the better part of two decades, presumably for much the same reasons.

21. *Loc. cit.*, 38. Pitard further warns scholars, *a fortiori*, against «using the word as foundational evidence for interpretations of the *Aqhat* epic in general» (*ibid.*). After first reading Pitard's paper some years ago, I could not avoid the suspicion that, with Pardee's *ex cathedra* pronouncement securely in hand, Pitard went off to Paris expecting to prove photographically the impossibility of the KNRT reading, thus consigning the Kinnereth Hypothesis (and my Commentary...) to the proverbial dustbin of History. Such a consummation, one feels, would have been a cause for Champagne in Illinois no less than in Damascus.

I shall not rehearse here the arguments and evidence presented in my AQHT Commentary in favour of the "Kinnereth Hypothesis". It may be appropriate however to quote at this time the sage comments of the late P.C. Craigie.<sup>22</sup>

«Margalit's various geographical hypotheses ... are in part a return to old evidence, but for the most part comprise an elaborate new set of arguments based on a variety of Ugaritic texts ... One does not wish to take Margalit's arguments lightly, but they seem to be like a precarious house of cards; *if the KNRT-card stands, the rest may stand with it...*» (Emphasis is mine)

Both Pitard's study and KTU<sup>2</sup> (1995) attest, independently, that the reading *bknrt* does indeed stand, and with it stands the "Kinnereth hypothesis" in all its ramifications for our understanding of the Ugaritic literary corpus as well as the Hebrew Bible.<sup>23</sup>

### 7. KTU 1.19 iv 60-61

The text at hand very nearly concludes the third and final tablet of the poem as extant. It describes the stage preliminary to the total intoxication of the Sutean "villain", a scene which surely culminated in his death at the hands of the Judith-like heroine, Pughat, utilizing the "sword" (*hrb*) or "dagger" (*hlpn*) concealed on her person (iv 44f.).

In my *Aqht* Commentary (BZAW 182), I restored and rendered as follows:

*p[mla.] km <sup>61</sup>ybl. lbh // km. bñn. y[mk.] lah*

"And as his chest [filled up (with wine)] like a rivulet,  
His strength [ebb]ed level with a snake".

The proposed restorations were consistent with both CTA and KTU (1976), and the interpretation drew inspiration both from KTU 1.17 vi 7-9 (describing Anat's intoxication [as reconstructed!]) and especially *Enuma Elish* (III, 136), where the inebriated gods are described as *ḥabašū zum[ra/ri]* "the(ir) bod[ies] swelled".<sup>24</sup>

KTU<sup>2</sup> confirms the readings *ybl* and *lah* (KTU (1976): (*l/šah*) = CTA), but elsewhere in the passage it proposes readings which are incompatible with the restorations proposed above. The first is the reading *ḥkm* at the end of line 60, the second is the reading (and restoration) *yn[. t]mlah* at the end of line 61.

22. "Ugarit, Canaan, and Israel", *The Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983) 162.

23. This much I am prepared to concede to my critics (see already *UF* 8 [1976] 172): Dan'el's actions in consigning his son's remains to "the fishery" (*bmdgt*) –or, "among the fish" (*bm(.)dgt*)– and the (watery) "house of El" (*bt il* [line 47]) contradict his stated intention (iii 6, 20-1, 34-5) of burying him in a terrestrial grave (*bḥrt. ilm. arš* "in the cavities of the chthonic deities"). So the "hero" changed his mind, a prerogative of men no less than of women; and we have not yet mentioned the considerable pains taken by the poet(ess)-author of *Aqht* to portray Dan'el as anything but wise, much less prescient. Furthermore, we should not forget how very little of Aqhat's remains his father has to bury. We have earlier been informed (KTU 1.19 i 1-11) that the bulk of Aqhat's cadaver was whisked off from the scene of the crime (*Beth-Yerah*) by Anat who, after quasi-Neolithic treatment (*ibid.*, lines 8-10), presumably buried it in an earthly grave on, or in the vicinity of, her (Bashanite) mountain residence, INBB. What Dan'el casts into the lake is an amount of "fat and bone" retrieved from the digestive tract of a single bird, the mother-bird ŠML, who participated in the airborne assault on the unsuspecting lad (KTU 1.18 iv. 29ff.).

24. Cf. *ANET*, 66: "As they (= the gods) drank the strong (= alcoholic) drink, [their] bodies swelled. They became languid..."; *AHW*, 303 (s.v. *ḥabāšu* I): "(...) schwellen sie am Leib". But see now B. Foster (in *Context of Scripture*, I, p. 396): "They felt good from drinking the beer. Most carefree, their spirits rose."

With respect to the first reading, M. Dietrich writes as follows:<sup>25</sup> «Nach der Lücke ist ein *h* wegen des Restes von zwei gestaffelten Winkelhacken kaum anzuzweifeln... [es gibt] kein Platz mehr für einen Trenner zum nächstfolgenden *km* ...».

In view of the foregoing, I retract the restoration of [mla] in favour of [tp]h, deriving from the otherwise unattested  $\sqrt{tp}h$ . The identical root in Rabbinic Hebrew and Jewish-Aramaic denotes "swell, expand", and it describes the rise of the level of water in a ritual bath.<sup>26</sup> It was suggested long ago that this root underlies the BHeb. word for "apple", viz., תפוח.<sup>27</sup> The presence of a *p* in  $\sqrt{tp}h$  will explain the poet's choice of the conjunction *p* (= Arabic *fa*, Samalian *p*) rather than *w*.<sup>28</sup>

With respect to the second reading (and restoration) of KTU<sup>2</sup> (line 61), it must be rejected *a limine*: if *yn* "wine" is the subject, then the verb cannot be *\*tql*; and if Pughat is the subject, then the similitude "like a snake" is out of the question, given the unequivocally positive image of the heroine: the author of *Aqht* would never use this similitude for Pughat (in contrast to his treatment of Anat).<sup>29</sup>

Epigraphically too, the reading of an *n* before the lacuna, and an *m* thereafter, is very doubtful. Dietrich writes: «hinter *bṯn* ... kommt deutlich ein Trenner und ein *y*; vor dem Bruch ist, so meine ich, deutlich der Anfang eines *š* (Winkelhaken mit dem unteren Teil eines Senkrechten) zu erkennen; nach dem breiten Bruch sehe ich nur noch ein *l*; davor sind keine Spuren eines *m* erkennbar, allenfalls die eines *Trenners*; also würde ich die Verbform einer Wurzel *š[xx]* suchen.» (Emphasis is mine).

In light of this collation I now propose restoring *yš[pl]*, well-known in Ugaritic in the meaning "to be(come) lowly" (*WUS*, s.v. 2666). It occurs famously in KTU 1.23:32, where it describes the collapse of El's penile erection.

The restoration of  $\sqrt{špl}$  in line 61 requires no major alteration in the rendering of line 61 cited above; for  $\sqrt{špl}$  is for all intents and purposes semantically identical with  $\sqrt{m(w)k}$ . In terms of alliterative compatibility, it is no less satisfactory: the *p* is the third in the bicolon ("dominant letter") and the final *l* alliterates with the immediately following *l* of *lah*. Altogether, the resultant bicolon has 4 L's, 3 B's and P's respectively, and an adjacent -BL LB- sequence (*ybl. lbh*).

25. The first part of the quotation is from the letter of 12.21.1996, the latter from a letter of 03.25.1999.

26. TBab. *Miqva'ot*, VII,7: כרי שיחפחו המים ... כובש אפילו חבילי עצים ... one places even bundles of wood (on the bottom of the pool) ... so as to raise the level of the water".

27. Cf. Ges.-Bühl, *Heb.-Aram. Handwörterbuch* (17<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 886) s.v. תפוח, citing J. Levy, *Neuhebr. Wörterbuch*, IV, 658, and F. Perles, *Analekten z. Textkritik des AT* (1895). See also HAL, p. 1632.

28. See my "Alliteration in Ugaritic Poetry: Its Role in Composition and Analysis", *UF* 11 (1979) 537-57, esp. 546f. In Samalian, the regular conjunction is *w(a)* (KAI 214-15, *passim*) with *p(a)* used sporadically as a stylistic variant (in KAI 214 exclusively!). See my studies of these texts in *UF* 26 and 27, and contrast J. Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli*, Münster 1993, pp. 241-43.

29. See KTU 1.17 vi 14, and discussion above, §2. – De Moor (*ARTU*, 265), followed now by M. Dietrich and O. Loretz (*TUAT* III/6) takes *bṯn* as consisting of the preposition *b* and the numeral *ṯn* allegedly, "for a second time; again". This interpretation is difficult for several reasons: (1) no such numerical construction appears to be otherwise attested in Ugaritic, certainly not in poetry; (2) it requires taking *km* in the unusual adverbial sense of "when", *a fortiori* in the absence of a contiguous verb; (3) the allusion to Pughat serving wine "a second time" occurs immediately in line 62 in the (expected) form of *ṯnm* (*ṯn* + adverbial *m*); (4) it skews both the parallelism (... *km. ybl. lbh* // *km. bṯn.... lah*) and upsets the symmetrical prosodic pattern typical of epic verse (3 + 3).