

An incantation against nightmares The Ugaritic text KTU 1.180 (RIH 98/02)

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Only the first five lines of the Ugaritic text 1.180 (RIH 98/02) were given in KTU³, whereas the complete text comprises 41' lines.¹ An interpretation of the text is presented here, with a possible lexical and stichometrical layout, based on the transcription in the *editio princeps*.²

In that *editio princeps*, the text has been presented as a “Hymne en l’honneur de ‘Attartu”, but in fact according to its textual structure – as far as its fragmentary condition allows – it will be argued in this paper that it is a text with magical-medical significance. The scribe has arranged it into two parts, separated by a ruled line across the tablet: a) the main text (lines 1-38’); and b) a colophon (lines 39’-41’).³

The first problem we face is the determination of the literary-religious sub-genre of the main text. The first five lines form a sort of hymnal *introitum* celebrating ‘Attartu’s name as the divine power from which the efficacy of the magic power emanates in this case. We are already at a stage in which both powers, divine and magic, are in step.⁴ From the formal point of view, the lines on the tablet are laid out stichometrically (except for line 2), with each line of the text forming a distich.

Lines 6-18 may be taken as the second poetic-thematic unit, initially descriptive (lines 6-7) but then with pronominal references in the second (-k) and first (?) (-i) person, which implies a dialogue of some kind. To begin with, “darkness” and “rain” are mentioned, and coldness is implied. The first bad effect of this situation is the “darkening of the dream”, whose *hbl*, “damage” this conjuration aims to eliminate and that consequently is singled out at the very beginning (see the colophon, line 41’: *pn lyhbl*). To cope with the situation someone is sent to “kindle a fire”. This will bring the opportune “heat” which in turn will be offered in the first place to ‘Attartu, so that she may “heat her feet” (lines 8-9).⁵

1. The whole text, with photo, transcription and version, is now provided in P. Bordreuil, D. Pardee, C. Roche-Hawley, *RAS IBN HANI II. Les textes en écritures cunéiformes de l’âge du Bronze récent* (fouilles de 1977 à 2002) (BAH 214), Beyrouth 2019, pp. 221-231. The authors have also provided an excellent pioneering linguistic analysis.

2. *RAS IBN HANI II*, pp. 221-231.

3. See KTU 1.114: a mythical-magical remedy against a “hangover”, in G. del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (AOAT 408), Münster 2014, pp. 335ff. This time the remedy depends on the remembrance of a mythical scene of *Thu*’s drunkenness. Also G. del Olmo Lete, *Incantation and Anti-Witchcraft Texts from Ugarit* (SANER 4), Berlin 2014, pp. 14f. (“Magic and Medicine”).

4. See Del Olmo Lete, *op. cit.*, pp. 16ff. (“The Ugaritic Gods and Magic”), 205ff. (“Conclusion. *il* and *hrrn*: Divine Power versus Magic”).

5. Keeping this context in mind, *mhlb* should be taken as a reference to a source of heat of some kind.

The discourse turns now to the goddess' abode as a sign of her power in terms that are reminiscent of the description of *ʿAnatu*'s palace in KTU 1.13:9-18.⁶ This power reveals itself in the magic spell (*mnt*), here plainly quoted as a textual certification of the assumed literary genre of the text. In this new section (lines 10-16) the goddess' "palace" becomes the main reference point. The meaning of this topic within Ugaritic mythology is well known (cf. KTU 1.3-4).

With line 19, a new sub-section seems to be introduced, an invitation to celebrate the divine name anew, referring back to line 1. In this sense, lines 19-30 constitute a new sub-section that begins with "singing" (**dmr*) and ends with "crying" (**dm^c*). But the fragmentary state of the text does not allow any closer definition of either its contents or its sense.

In the final two sub-sections, lines 31-35 refer to *Môtu*, while in lines 36-38 *ʿIlu* is the main subject, apparently accompanied by a goddess. But neither the subject nor the development of these two scenes can be guessed from such a fragmentary text.

¹ <i>š[m] ʿttrt ql yšr</i>	Let <i>ʿAttartu</i> 's name be loudly sung, ⁷
² <i>idmr šm lbi</i>	let me (also) celebrate the lioness' name.
<i>šm [t]kšd l[-][...]</i>	[By her] name she pesters (the enemy), ⁸
³ <i>tšpq lht dgr il</i>	she smashes the jaws of the divine lion-cub.
⁴ <i>nmr htrt ʿttrt</i>	(Like) a vigorous panther <i>ʿAttartu</i> ,
⁵ <i>nmr htrt trqs</i>	(like) a vigorous panther she jumps.

⁶ <i>bip l bll ymzr[...]</i>	In the darkness, during the night, the rain falls,
⁷ <i>hlm ll yápl</i>	the night dream becomes dark
<i>ulákm yšq^r</i>	and someone is sent to kindle a fire.
⁸ <i>hm l[-][(-)]r</i>	Heat ...
<i>p^cnk^ll^r ʿttrt</i>	thy feet, oh ... <i>ʿAttartu</i> !
⁹ <i>p^cn[k b]l[-(-)]^l tzbq</i>	Thy feet to ... move closer,
<i>[-(-)]^lštk lmh^lb</i>	thy ... to the
¹⁰ <i>ánp h^ltk [-t]mnny</i>	Since thy plank is our image (?),
	<i>y[--(-)]l-] wmnⁿny</i> yes, (thy) ... is our magic spell.
¹¹ <i>[-]n^lb^lhtⁱ l^l[-]^l</i>	To my palace, of course
<i>bhkl^li^ll[-(-)]bl</i>	to my sanctuary they will bring. ⁹
¹² <i>[-]hlmy^ll^ly</i>	
<i>wnly [h^b]l ktrd</i>	
¹³ <i>[-(-)]rd km m^lp^lh</i>	
<i>wš[-]rt štql</i>	
¹⁴ <i>m^ll^l[-]rh hth</i>	
<i>w^c[-]^l[-]</i>	

6. See G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaán según la tradición de Ugarit* (Fuentes de la Ciencia Bíblica, 1), Madrid 1981, pp. 487-494.

7. See *šr ʿttrt*, "singer of *ʿAttartu*" (KTU 4.168:4). On the other hand, the "name" (*šm*) is a definitive attribute of *ʿAttartu*, called *šm b^cl* (KTU 1.16 VI 56 and par.); see in this regard G. del Olmo Lete, *El continuum cultural cananeo. Pervivencias cananeas en el mundo fenicio-púnico* (AuOrSupl. 14), Sabadell-Barcelona 1996, pp. 44f.

8. Alternatively, *šm [t]kšd l[-][...]* // "[By her] name she pesters (the enemy)".

9. See KTU 1.119:18-19 (**cly*/**hlk*).

15[š?]š[---]h wbt il	and the divine palace /temple?
	[...] qm tqm ... will stand up.
16ml ^l [-]hh thw[t-]	
[...] ^l rm	
17šzr[...] ^l št zdn[-]t	
[...] ^l p ^l bn	
18[-] ^l [-] ^l [...] ^l l ^l [-]h ^l n	
š[t] ^l [...]	
19[... š]m il	[Let us celebrate the na]me divine,
d ^l mr[...]	let us sing [.....]. ¹⁰
20[...] ^l rs [...] ^l l	
[...] ^l [-] ^l [...]	
21[-] ^l hb ^l [-] ^l [...]	
22b ^l [-] ^l [...]	
.....	
.....	
23 ^l q ^l [...]	
24 ^l yš ^l [-] ^l [...]	
25 ^l hyš ^l [-] ^l [...]	
26[-] ^l sp ^l m ^l [...]	
šmr y ^l [...]	
27 ^l [][-] ^l [-] ^l [...] ^l p	
[-]t ^l h ^l d ^l l ^l udn[...]	
28 ^l [-] ^l šb	
[...]	
29 ^l [-] ^l lp ^l [-] ^l mr[-] ^l [...] ^l t	
lhm r ^l hmt b ^l k ^l [-] ^l [...]	
30 ^l [-] ^l dm ^c lsk ^l t ^l [...] ^l [^l]	crying on the cloak ...,
lskt ū ^l pt wqš ^l t ^l	on the coverlet of the quiver and the bow
31 ^l [l]mt lšnt ^l [-] ^l [...]	To Mot
^l lmšth k ^l pt ^l r ^l iš	at her banquet with the headdress
32 ^l t ^l tmr ^l [-] ^l [...] ^l [...]	She saw
[-]n ^l n ^c l ^l t ^l r ^l t ^l ^c Attartu
33 ^l r ^l t ^l r ^l t ^l ym ^l n ⁻ - ^l	
[...] ^l [-] ^l š ^l [-] ^l [...]	
34 ^l k y ^c ny lmt ly ^l [-] ^l q ^l [-] ^l So he answered to Mot ...	
[.....]	
35 ^l ykl ^l yn lql nbl[-] ended it to the sound of the harp	
[.....] ^l [-] ^l šq ^l t ^l [-] ^l qr	
36 ^l šmm yšm ^c tr il In the sky, 'Ilu, the Bull, heard,	
[.....] ^l [-] ^l n qlh [gave e]ar to his voice	

10. See lines 1-2.

³⁷[-]l^lh k[----]

[...]l^lhw lql nblh he to the sound of her harp.

³⁸[-]y^lrt l[-] She...

[... bn y]l^dm wktp [... on bre]ast(?) and shoulder.

³⁹[...]h^llmy lly [When] the nightmare

⁴⁰[...]h^drt^y mšyt [and also] the evening vision,

⁴¹pn lyhbl ktrd so that no damage occurs when it comes down.