

beste Klaas,

hijstij en overdruk van een wat uit-
voerder besprekingsartikel van "Praktische After-
life". Ik hoop dat de zakelijke kritiek je
het zicht niet scheemt op de bewondering
die ik voor je werk heb.

En vriendelijke groet,
Kaul

Funerary Rituals and Beatific Afterlife in Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible¹⁾

In 1980, a sample of the papers read at the XXVI^e Rencontre assyriologique internationale was published under the title *Death in Mesopotamia*²⁾. One observes, retrospectively, that these studies signalled and stimulated a renewal of interest in ancient Near Eastern conceptions of death and the afterlife. The Eighties have witnessed the publication of a number of monographs and collected essays on this topic. The dissertation of Klaas Spronk, published in 1986, is a prime example. It is an important and often original study of the ideas concerning the possibility of a beatific afterlife as they are found in — primarily — the Ugaritic and the Biblical texts. Spronk raises some fundamental issues and reaches some remarkable conclusions. They deserve careful consideration.

In order to prepare the way for a balanced assessment, I shall first offer a summary of Spronk's study. The second and main part of this article consists of a discussion of seven Ugaritic texts upon which Spronk has built his reconstruction of the Ugaritic version of "beatific afterlife". A short section concerning the biblical material followed by an evaluation will conclude the present contribution.

Spronk's book is divided in three parts. The author first sketches "the history of interpretation" of the Old Testament data dealing with or alluding to death and the afterlife (pp. 3-85). This is a useful and well-documented survey. The author discusses early Jewish and Christian traditions about the afterlife, takes stock of the various revisions of OT texts in the versions and describes the history of

¹⁾ The present article reviews and discusses Klaas Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, Kevelaer, Butzon & Bercker, 1986 (22 cm., ix + 398 pp.) = *Alter Orient und Altes Testament*, Band 219. ISBN 3 7887 1114 0 (Neukirchener Verlag), 3 7666 9454 5 (Butzon & Bercker). DM 129,-. I have profited from a number of discussions with Prof. J. Hoftijzer (Leiden), though the responsibility for the views here expressed lies entirely with me.

²⁾ B. Alster (ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (CRRAI 26; Mesopotamia 8; Copenhagen, 1980).

modern research (since about 1850) on the subject. He has no difficulty demonstrating that the majority of modern interpreters find only marginal references to beatific afterlife in the OT, beatific afterlife being defined as "being forever with God (or the gods) in heaven" (p. 85). Accordingly, there would be "a tension in this matter between the OT and the later Jewish and Christian belief in beatific afterlife" (p. 2). The Ugaritic texts show, however, that more positive ideas about the afterlife were not absent in the milieu that surrounded early Israel. Various scholars (such as Dahood, Eaton, Healey) claim to find influences of these Canaanite conceptions on Israelite beliefs, which would consequently be more hopeful than is generally assumed (pp. 72-81). Spronk wishes to assess the validity of such claims. In order to reach his objective he first studies the conceptions of beatific afterlife in the ancient Near East (excluding Israel) and subsequently confronts these with the Old Testament data.

The second part, then, takes stock of the ideas about future life in the religions of Egypt (pp. 86-95), Mesopotamia (pp. 96-125), Persia (pp. 125-129), Anatolia (pp. 130-131), Greece (pp. 132-138) and, last but certainly not least, Syria and Palestine (pp. 139-233). Apart from the discussion of the Ugaritic evidence, this survey is largely a summary of the secondary literature on the subject. Though the belief in some form of afterlife and the practice of making offerings for the ancestors are common to the ancient Near East, Spronk stresses that the hope for a *beatific* afterlife was rarely entertained.

Neither the Sumerians nor the Babylonians shared the optimistic views of the Egyptians, who believed that beatific afterlife was within reach of everybody who had taken the necessary precautions. According to Mesopotamian conceptions, the best one could hope for was an afterlife made tolerable by regular offerings and pleasant memories. Only some of the antediluvian sages had been granted immortality by the gods. Though some kings and heroes attained divine status and functions in the netherworld, this was of more profit to the living than to the dead themselves.

The data from Asia Minor and Greece offer a comparable picture. The idea of a general resurrection, followed by a happy afterlife for some, is disseminated in the second part of the first millennium BC as the Persians conquer the East. This eschatological perspective, characteristic of Zoroastrian doctrine, was engrafted upon the older belief in the Fravashi's or spirits of the dead, represented as birds or horsemen.

Up till this point, Spronk draws a picture that will be familiar to many of his readers. Things change when he deals with the Ugaritic evidence. He clearly has a first-hand knowledge of the material, and it is in this area that his main contribution to the scientific debate lies. Archaeological and literary data show that the people of Ugarit brought offerings to their dead in a fashion similar to the Mesopotamians. They differ from the latter, however, in their views on what Spronk calls the "privileged dead". In practice, membership of this exclusive club seems to have been reserved to members of the royal family, though Spronk allows for the possibility that others might have received a similar status. These privileged dead or "Healers" (*rp'm*, see p. 161) were lower deities who could be called, amongst other things, "Sons of El" (*bn il*, KTU 1.17.vi:29, see p. 153) and "star-gods" (*ilm kbkbm*, KTU 1.43:3, see p. 157).

At least once a year, they were revived with Baal and returned to real life. The main occasion for their resurrection was the New Year Festival in autumn, when Baal came up from the netherworld (pp. 164, 170, 180, 185, 201 etc.). At this time Baal "healed" (*rp*) the dead and brought them back to life (*hwy D*), according to the — restored — "Rephaim texts" (KTU 1.21:5-6, see pp. 169-170). According to Spronk's interpretation, another passage intimates that El is responsible for "resurrecting" (*qym D*) and "revivifying" (*tbš, Š of bašū*) the dead (KTU 1.22.i.5-7, see pp. 171-173).

Though an act of the gods, the revivification of the dead depended to some degree on the piety of one's offspring. The ritual of the ancestor cult, one of the traditional "Duties of a Son", enabled "the spirit of the deceased to leave the world of the dead" (p. 154). The relationship between this ancestor cult and the institution of the "Marzeah" is not explicitly dealt with by Spronk. He gathers from the texts that the *mrzḥ* or *mrz'* was a male club which gathered for orgiastic symposia during which communion with the dead could be practised (pp. 196ff.). The principal meeting-time of the "Marzeah" was the New Year Festival (p. 201), but reunions may have been a monthly event if the analogy with the Mesopotamian *kispu* holds good (pp. 201-202, 205, cf. p. 154 n. 3). The physical form in which the dead manifested themselves at these occasions was thought to be that of birds (p. 167), in some cases more specifically birds of prey (p. 185). The *rp'm* can also be pictured, though, as travelling on horse-drawn carriages (KTU 1.20.ii:2-4, see p. 167), which befits their qualification as "warriors" (*mhr*, KTU 1.22.i:8-9) of Baal and Anat (pp. 173-174).

The cyclical return of the privileged dead in the company of Baal, the "Healer" (*rpu*, KTU 1.22.i:8; KTU 1.108:1, see pp. 173-174, 180) *par excellence*, "can be called a form of beatific afterlife", according to Spronk (p. 205). An echo of this conception outside Ugarit might be heard in the Panammu inscription (KAI 214), which speaks of the "soul" (*nbš*) of the deceased king as eating and drinking with Hadad" (pp. 207-208). Otherwise there is little evidence, outside the Ugaritic and the Hebrew texts, for the belief in a periodical resurrection of the dead. The dead were deified at times and ascribed powers of healing, but they hardly enjoyed a beatific afterlife (pp. 210, 234-235).

The third and concluding part of Spronk's study is concerned with the conceptions of beatific afterlife in Israel (pp. 237-346). The author wishes to demonstrate that the ancient Israelites were quite familiar with the Canaanite conceptions of afterlife as reflected in the Ugaritic texts. He urges that the Canaanite fertility cult was for a long time a serious threat to Yahwism. Consequently, the biblical authors had to be very cautious when speaking about the possibility of a beatific afterlife, for fear of being misunderstood. Only in post-exilic times, when Canaanite religion had lost its persuasive power, could sages and poets speak freely of the future life of the faithful.

References to the "Marzeah" (Jer 16:5; Amos 6:7) and the cult of Baal Peor (Num 25:1-5, etc.) provide evidence of an Israelite cult of the dead with a distinctly "Canaanite" character (pp. 248-249). Also the surviving traces of necromancy betray affinity with practices known from Ugarit (pp. 256-257). A careful analysis of the biblical texts, Spronk argues, shows that the Canaanite conceptions were

known in detail. The story of Elijah's ascent (2 Kgs 2) is based on the Canaanite idea that the dead may rise up to heaven as warriors of Baal and Anat, which explains the designation of the prophet as "chariots of Israel and its horses" (pp. 258-264). The divine name "YHWH of Hosts" is perhaps even to be understood as a reference to the host of the privileged dead (p. 261). Psalm 88 combats the Canaanite idea that the Rephaim (*rp'm*) would experience resurrection (p. 272), while Hos 6:1-3 rejects "the cyclical conception of beatific afterlife" known from Ugaritic texts (pp. 276-277). All this does not mean, so the author stresses, that Yahweh had no power over death or that the deceased were condemned to a miserable fate. On the contrary, "confronted with the beliefs on [sic] the Egyptians and Canaanites the Israelites would probably always have affirmed that YHWH could do the same as Re and Baal. (...) The prime reason for emphasizing some and disregarding other aspects of YHWH's limitless power must have been the wish to safeguard the distinctness of Yahwism" (pp. 282-283).

As Baalism lost its force, however, the biblical writers could express their convictions about the afterlife more freely. They did so in terms and images that remind one of the Ugaritic idiom. By saying that YHWH "heals" (*rp*), Ps 103:3 plays on Baal's title of Rāpi'u, just as the rejuvenation "like an eagle" (Ps 103:5) denotes victory over death in terms known from Egypt and Canaan (pp. 285-289). Isa 26:7-19 bristles with Canaanite images, though they are set in an eschatological — not a cyclical — frame-work (pp. 297ff.).

Though clear references to the hope for a beatific afterlife occur only in the younger texts of the OT, such as Pss 73 (pp. 315ff.), 49 (pp. 327ff.), 16 (pp. 334ff.) and Dan 12:1-3 (pp. 338ff.), the belief itself is pre-exilic. The crown witness for this thesis is the well-known but difficult inscription of Uriyahu found in Khirbet el-Qom (pp. 307-310). In Spronk's translation, Uriyahu asks YHWH that He might deliver him (*hwš' lh*) "from the distress as much as comes to him over there", "over there" (*hl*) being a designation of the netherworld (p. 308 n. 5).

In his conclusions (pp. 344-346) Spronk displays a modesty that is hardly in keeping with his earlier statements. He judges that "it is possible now to trace some elements of the Jewish and Christian conceptions of beatific afterlife back to Canaanite influence upon the religion of ancient Israel" (p. 346). If he is right, however, the problems of the origins of the Israelite belief in the resurrection of the dead and of Israelite eschatology in a more general way appear in a new and different light. Whereas it has commonly been held that speculations on a beatific afterlife were late and influenced by Persian doctrines, Spronk has made a case for an early date (at least on the level of folk religion), pointing to the Canaanite heritage as the main source of influence. He also offers an explanation of the paucity concerning the prospect of a happy afterlife in the older strands of the OT. Both Christian and Jewish apologetics might find here ammunition.

In conformity with the emphasis of Spronk's study, the present review will focus on his treatment and use of the Ugaritic material. Where this seems useful, I shall refer to more recent discussions of the Ugaritic texts as well. Two monographs, both published in 1989, deserve particular mention, since they are concerned with closely connected

topics: Th. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in ancient Israel and Ugarit* (Atlanta, 1989) and J. Tropper, *Nekromantie. Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*. (AOAT 223; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1989). Thus, the present contribution will be a reasoned *Forschungsbericht* rather than a detailed critique of Spronk's book, though the latter will serve throughout as my point of departure.

The cornerstone of Spronk's reconstruction is the periodical return and revivification of the privileged dead, allegedly referred to in the Ugaritic texts. This is what makes the Ugaritic afterlife "beatific", at least to some of the dead. Let us pass in review the main texts on which Spronk has built his case.

1. *KTU* 1.17.i:26-28. This much-debated passage contains several problems. First, there is the expression *skn ilibh*, which Spronk translates "the stelae of his ancestral gods" (p. 146). The word *skn* means "stela" (not necessarily funerary), as now conclusively proved by the term *sikkanum* attested in texts from Emar and Mari³). Though *skn* might be singular or plural, the main difficulty concerns *ilibh*. Since *ilib* carries a pronominal suffix, it must be considered a generic term. Assuming that the Hurrian equivalent "the god, the father" is correct, *ilib* does not refer to the "god of the father" but to the ancestral spirit(s). This interpretation of the term seems to underly its Akkadian equivalent "the god of the father" (= "the ghost of the father") as well. The identification of *ilib* with Ilaba, suggested by W.G. Lambert⁴), is not beyond doubt. In the "god lists" too, *ilib* seems to function as a generic designation of the Ancestor of the Gods, judging by the Hurrian and Akkadian equivalents. In the Aqhat passages, the "stela of his ancestral spirit" has *ztr 'mh* as its parallel, the latter being a designation of "the emblem⁵) of his paternal clan". Both objects were to be placed "in the holy place (*bqds*)⁶)". If correctly understood, then, the first bicolon refers to the funerary obligations of the oldest son. His role is to keep the name of his father alive (cf. 2 Sam 18:18) and to ensure the continuity of the lineage.

³) See J.-M. Durand, Le culte des bētyles en Syrie, in: *Miscellanea Babylonica. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot* (eds. J.-M. Durand & J.R. Kupper; Paris, 1985), 79-84; see also, e.g., D. Arnaud, *Emar VI.3 Textes sumériens et accadiens* (Paris, 1986), nos. 125:35-41; 369:35; 373:23.27 etc. The interpretation of *skn* as "storage-place" > "tomb" proposed by B. Margalit [*The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat* (Berlin/New York, 1989), 268] disregards the evidence from Mari and Emar; for "tomb" one would, of course, expect *qbr*.

⁴) W.G. Lambert, Old Akkadian Ilaba = Ugaritic Ilib?, *UF* 13 (1981), 299-301. N.B. the occurrence of *l'b* (next to *šmš*?) in a proto-Canaanite inscription from Lachish, see E. Puech, The Canaanite Inscriptions of Lachish and their Religious Background, *TA* 13-14 (1986-87), 20-22.

⁵) Spronk translates "marjoram", following J.C. de Moor, The Ancestral Cult in *KTU* 1.17:1.26-28, *UF* 17 (1986), 407-409. Cf. the translation "thyme" by M.H. Pope, Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit, in: *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Hamden, 1977), 164; id., The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit, in: *Ugarit in Retrospect* (ed. G.D. Young; Winona Lake, 1981). A variant form *z'tr* would allegedly occur in *KTU* 1.43:3, according to De Moor (op. cit.) and Spronk (p. 157 and n. 5); collation by D. Pardee shows, however, that "the scribe intended the line to read ... {kbkm. trmt}"; D. Pardee, *UF* 19 (1987), 199. This leaves us with *ztr* as a *hapax legomenon*; a connection with Akkadian *zateru* is possible (see *CAD* Z [1961], p. 74a), but less likely than that with Hittite *sitar(i)*, "votive (sun) disk" (thus Lewis, pp. 59-60 and n. 32; Tropper, p. 131 and n. 51; further lit. ad loc. cit.), considering the parallel with *skn*.

⁶) B. Margalit [*AQHT* (1989), 271] understands *qdš* to mean "sacred precinct" > "cemetery", an interpretation which he finds corroborated by *RIH* 78/20:7-8.

Perhaps more problematic still is the next bicolon. Spronk renders the first half as "who makes come out his smoke from the earth" (p. 146) and explains that "his smoke" (*qtrh*) refers to the spirit of the deceased, who was made to leave the world of the dead (p. 154). The interpretation is based on a comparison with *KTU* 1.18.iv:25-26, 37, where it is said that, upon death, the spirit leaves the body "like smoke" (*km qtr*). The comparison has led A. Caquot and M. Szyner to translate *qtr* as "âme" (*Textes ougaritiques*, tome 1 [LAPO 7; Paris, 1974], p. 422 and note q; see also A. Caquot, *Semitica* 37 [1987], 8-10), a translation accepted by Th. Lewis ("One who delivers his life from the Underworld", *Cults*, pp. 54, 60-65) and B. Margalit ("his smoke" = "his ghost", see *AQHT* [1989], 272). Spronk sticks to the primary meaning "smoke", but understands it as a simile for the soul. In *KTU* 1.18.iv:25-26 and 27, however, the simile describes the movement of the spirit, not the spirit itself, as J. Tropper rightly stresses (*Nekromantie*, pp. 132-133). Tropper's own solution to the problem is hardly more satisfying, however. He regards *qtr* as a poetic designation of the spirit of the dead, on the assumption that this spirit could be called "an incensed one", i.e., one to whom incense offerings were made, or "a dark/somber one" (*Nekromantie*, p. 133).

Though based on different reasonings, all authors quoted above reach the same conclusion, viz. that the phrase refers to the release of the ancestral spirit from the nether world. At least two objections can be raised. If this line refers to a release of the dead, whether for a funerary banquet or a necromantic session, one would expect *mš'ly* instead of *mš'u*, as Th. Lewis rightly observes (*Cults*, p. 65). Depending on the context, *yš'* can be translated as "to rise", but this nuance does not occur (neither in the G-stem nor in the Š-stem) in connection with the dead. More seriously, though, the word *qtr* simply means "smoke"; all ingenuity spent in arguing that it refers to the spirit or soul of the dead does not carry conviction.

The background of the expression, I would suggest, is the ancient Near Eastern metaphor of the hearth to designate the family. We know that the classical authors put the extinction of the hearth on a par with the extinction of the family⁷). It is less known that Mesopotamians and Israelites used the same symbol. In Old Babylonian parlance, a man "whose brazier is extinguished" (*ša kinūnšu belū*) is a man without male descendants⁸). In 2 Sam 14:7 we find a similar image ("Thus they would quench my coal which is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant upon the face of the earth", *RSV*)⁹). The expression "his smoke" in *KTU* 1.17.i:27, then, has semantic parallels in "his brazier" (*kinūnšu*) and "my coal" (*gehalti*); the line refers, in a *pars pro toto* fashion, to the care for the domestic fire-place as a symbol of male posterity. Only "on earth" (*larš/l'pr*, cf. *KTU* 1.2.iv:5) would such a presence

of descendants be useful (cf. 2 Sam 14:7 "upon the face of the earth"). I propose to translate this colon: "On earth, one who makes his smoke go up".

The second part of the bicolon can be translated, quite simply and straightforwardly, as "On the dust, one who protects his place". Spronk's "Protector of his place" as an epithet of the ancestor (p. 146) follows from his interpretation of the previous colon. Retaining the interpretation of *dmr* as an active participle, we had better connect it with the earnestly desired son. Perhaps *atr* has cultic connotations, but that would not lead to a radically different interpretation. The bicolon expresses the idea that Daniel's son will keep the family alive. The term *qtr* does not designate the spirit of the dead, which would be made to go out from the underworld. This first passage, then, says nothing about a possible release of the ancestor nor, it would seem, about his veneration.

2. *KTU* 1.17.vi:27-33. This second passage from the Epic of Aqhat presents us with difficulties both of translation and interpretation. Up till line 30 the translation is more or less assured: "Ask for life, o Aqhat, you hero, ask for life, and I shall give (it) to you, immortality, and I shall bestow (it) on you; I will let you count (your) years with Baal, with the son(s) of El you will count the months".

Translators part company in the following section. The principal difficulty concerns the beginning of line 30: *kb'l kyhwy*. Because *hwy* is clearly a factitive (D) in line 32 (*ap ank ahwy aqht [g'z]r*), Spronk understands it as a factitive in line 30 as well. He translates "Just as Baal when he brings to life..." (pp. 151, 155). The verb is without an object, however, and the link with what follows is misty. Spronk's translation ("Just as Baal when he brings to life is served, did he bring to life, then one serves him and gives him to drink") is awkward English and suggests that the author of the epic possessed a rather erratic mind. It is true that line 32, especially with its *ap ank*, might lead one to expect that the reference to Baal in line 30 would concern his ability to give life everlasting. This is not the parallel the writer wished to explore, it seems. In contrast to Spronk, I do not think that *ap* and *ank* are as closely connected as his translation suggests. It is equally possible to understand "Thus I, for my part, shall give life...". In the first part of our passage, Anat holds out a promise of immortality which would make Aqhat compare to Baal and the other gods. Lines 30ff. elaborate upon this parallel between Baal and Aqhat, not on a supposed analogy between Baal and Anat¹⁰).

Assuming that lines 30-32a continue the train of thought of the preceding bicolon, *yhwy* can be interpreted as a Dp or a G. Because so far no Dp of *hwy* is attested in Ugaritic, the second possibility is preferable. Taking *hwy y'sr* as a textual corruption due to dittography, I propose to translate: "Like Baal, when he comes to life (again): one serves him and refreshes him with drink, one plays and sings to him, a graceful la[d] responds to him — thus I, for my part, shall make Aqhat the hero enjoy life". Anat, then, embroiders on the idea she has expressed earlier: not only will Aqhat enjoy

⁷) See the material collected by F. de Coulanges, *La cité antique* (Paris, 1864; re-issued 1984), 21 and n. 2; See also s.v. "Hestia", in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Neue Bearbeitung*, VIII (ed. W. Kroll; Stuttgart, 1913), 1257-1304, esp. 1277-1283.

⁸) R. Frankena, *Briefe aus dem British Museum* (AbB 2; Leiden, 1966), no. 111:15-16. See also B. Landsberger, *OLZ* 19 (1916): 39; *CAD B* (1965) s.v. *balū* 1a and *belū* [p. 191b].

⁹) Cf. the observations by J. Hoftijzer, David and the Tekoite Woman, *VT* 20 (1970), 442 and n. 2.

¹⁰) If it were a comparison between Baal and Anat ("Just as Baal ... so I too", Spronk, p. 151), one would expect the protasis to begin with *km* and the apodosis with *kmt*, rather than with *k* and *ap*, see C.H. Gordon, *UT* (1965), § 10.9; cf. Hebrew *ka'āšer ... kēn* and *k ... k*, see P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hébreu biblique* (Rome, 1923), § 174.

longevity similar to Baal and the "son(s) of El", he will equally experience the pleasures that characterize the life of the gods. Only thus interpreted does Anat's proposal make sense¹¹).

According to Spronk, "in her offer to Aqhat Anat refers to the yearly revivification of Baal. (...) Aqhat should regard this as a guarantee" (pp. 152-153). Spronk bases his interpretation of the passage on a rather literal understanding of "counting the years with Baal, counting the months with the sons of El". He implies that Baal was counting the years because he was eagerly awaiting the moment of his release from the netherworld. Also "counting the months" is taken literally. There was a "regular return to real life" of some of the dead, perhaps on a monthly basis, since funerary rituals were often monthly events in neighbouring cultures (p. 154). In my opinion, here Spronk is reading something into his text that really is not there. The idiom "counting the years, counting the months with the gods" is merely a poetical way of saying that Aqhat will enjoy immortality. For ordinary mortals, the number of God's years is beyond counting (cf. Job 36:26). The couple "years/months" stands for time generally. One might compare the following message from the gods to their sister, taken from the Akkadian myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal: "You are unable to come up, during your year you do not come up to us; we are unable to go down, in our month we do not go down to you"¹²).

I am unable to find in lines 30-32 a description of "the revivification of the dead during the New Year Festival" (p. 155). The corroborating evidence adduced by Spronk is meagre. *KTU* 1.113, referred to on p. 155, gives no explicit clue about its ritual Sitz im Leben (rightly so Th. Lewis, *Cults*, 47-52; for a detailed study of this text see D. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24e compagne* (1961) [Ras Shamra-Ugarit IV; Paris, 1988], 165-178). Lewis concludes that "perhaps we have an invocation of the deified kings by means of music" (*Cults*, p. 52), but stresses that we cannot be sure that obverse and reverse constitute a meaningful unity (ibid.). No probative value can be ascribed to this text, then. The support of the second passage quoted by Spronk is even more precarious. Two badly damaged lines from the Rephaim texts (*KTU* 1.21.ii:5-6) are boldly restored so as to make them say that "the Shepherd" (an epithet of Baal, according to Spronk) will "hea[l]" and "[give life]" to the privileged dead, presumably at the New Year Festival (p. 156). In anticipation of a more detailed discussion of the Rephaim texts we can say that it is unsound procedure to elucidate one obscure passage by a conjecturally restored parallel, such as *[yḥwh]km* (sic), in another one. The restoration *yrp[ukm]* in 1.21.ii:5-6, which

has to justify the reconstruction proposed for the parallel line, is a mere guess. Various alternative readings might be suggested: *y-* might serve as an interjection introducing a vocative "O, rap(i/a)ūma"; in case of a verbal form, one could equally think of *rp̄y*, *rp̄*, or *rp̄š*.

To sum up, there is no valid reason to abandon the traditional interpretation of Anat's proposal to Aqhat as an offer of god-like immortality in return for his bow. One also has to concur with J.F. Healey, that "Baal is put forward as an example of immortality rather than of life-giving"¹³). The passage, and Aqhat's answer in the lines that immediately follow, show that the prospect of immortality, enticing though it may be, is irredeemably beyond human reach.

3. *KTU* 1.91:13-15. Spronk assumes that ll. 13-15 are to be taken as a "mythical allusion" to the ritual practice of making the privileged dead come out from the netherworld. The indication *ḥd̄m* in l. 13, translated as "New Moon", is understood as an introduction to ll. 14-15, which Spronk renders: "the sacrificial meal of Baal, when the Mistress of the Mansion (= Anat) chases from the pit of Reshep of the Army" (p. 157). The reconstruction hinges on the interpretation of the verb *n̄dd* (*tdd* in l. 14) and the noun *ḡb* in l. 15. According to Spronk, the verb *n̄dd/n̄wd* (II) — distinguished from *n̄dd* (I) "to stand" — means "to fly up, to hasten" (p. 165 n. 2); in *KTU* 1.91:14 we would have it in the D-stem: "she causes to fly up", "she chases" (pp. 156-157). Neither philology nor context support this view. The lack of an object (whom or what does the Mistress of the Mansion chase?) militates against a transitive meaning of *n̄dd*. Moreover, it is methodologically unsatisfying to posit a different acceptance of an otherwise known verb, such as *n̄dd*, unless the context demand it. In the present case, the traditional meaning "to stand (up)"¹⁴ makes perfect sense¹⁵).

The term *ḡb* is unexplained as yet. It occurs in genitival constructions, usually in relation with a deity (*KTU* 1.91:15; 1.105:7; 1.105:14; 4.149:13), but once connected with the month name *ḥiyyāru* (*KTU* 1.105:16)¹⁶). Apparently it denotes either an occasion (a festival?) or a locality. If indeed a locality, *ḡb* may as well have been a "(sacrificial) pit" as a "porch", the etymological link with Akkadian *ḥuppu*, "pit"¹⁷), not being more solid than the one with Hebrew *ʾāb*, the designation of a wooden con-

¹¹) Cf. the translation by J.C. de Moor (*The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu* [AOAT 16; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971], 56-57): "Like Ba'lu when he comes to life again — the minstrel makes preparations to give him to drink, improvises poems and sings before him — I repeat it, so too I shall make the youth Aqhat live!" [abandoned in J.C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden, 1987), 238-239]. A different understanding of the passage has been proposed by J. Tropper (Ugaritisch *sqy* "trinken" oder "tränken"? *Or* 58 [1989], 239). In his translation Baal brings to life and serves "the living one" (*ḥwy*). Baal "singing something pleasant to him" is at odds, however, with the parallel in *KTU* 1.3.i:18ff.

¹²) O.R. Gurney, *The Sultantepe Tablets VII. The Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal*, *AnSt* 10 (1960), 110:31-34. Cf. *CAD* A/2 (1968), 261-262 for other references. See also Job 3:6.

¹³) J.F. Healey, *Death, Underworld and Afterlife in the Ugaritic Texts* (London, 1977), p. 284, quoted by Spronk, p. 156 n. 1.

¹⁴) See M.H. Pope, A Note on Ugaritic *n̄dd-ydd*, *JCS* 1 (1947), 337-341; C.E. L'Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al and the Repha'im* (Missoula, 1979), 134; J. Tropper & E. Verreet, *UF* 20 (1988), 346-347.

¹⁵) Cf. J. Tropper & E. Verreet, *UF* 20 (1988), 347: "Wenn sich die Herrin des Tempel (zur Prozession) hinstellt".

¹⁶) Cf. J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* (HSM 32; Atlanta, 1987), 128-129. The proposal to understand *ḥyr* here as the otherwise unknown god *Ḥiari* can marshal no corroborative data (cf. A. Herdner, *Nouveaux textes alphabétiques de Ras Shamra — XXIV^e Campagne*, 1961, *Ugaritica* 7 [Paris/Leiden, 1978], 15; P. Xella, *Sul nome punico 'bdkrr*, *RSF* 12 (1984), 23; *pace* De Moor, *UF* 2 [1970], 320). From the occurrence of "the *ḥi-ia-rū* of Baal" (Arnaud, *Emar VI.3* [1986], no. 446:115', cf. 99') and "on the day of the *ḥi-ia-ri* [...]" (Arnaud, *Emar VI.3* [1986], no. 463:17') one may conclude, it seems, that the month took its name from an as yet obscure ceremony. For the latter ceremony see J.-M. Durand, *Archives Epistolaires de Mari I/1* (Paris, 1988), 121-122.

¹⁷) See P. Xella, *RSF* 12 (1984), 23 n. 19, cf. *AHW* 356b s.v. *ḥuppu* II.

struction in the temple¹⁸). No confirmation of the meaning "pit" can be derived from the assertion that *gb* and *gb* were used next to each other (p. 157 n. 4), since the proposed etymology for *gb*/Hebrew **gēb*, "cistern, pit"¹⁹), does not apply in the case of *gb*. Though it is not impossible for a statue of a goddess to "stand" in "the pit", be it sacrificial or not, of another god or his temple, it is unlikely. A translation such as "porch" or "canopy", based on the possible connection with Hebrew *ʾāb*, fits the present context better. The meaning of the ritual here referred to still eludes us. However, an allusion to Anat's chasing up the souls of the privileged dead from the netherworld is extremely unlikely if not simply impossible.

4. *KTU* 1.43:1-6. Spronk connects "Anat's chase in the pit" with the beginning of a ritual described in *KTU* 1.43. Unfortunately, this text is slightly damaged in a number of places. The last signs of the opening line are difficult to establish with certainty. Spronk follows *KTU* and reads *kt'rb. ʾtrt. hr. gb/bt mlk*, "When Athtart of Khurri enters the pit of the house of the king" (p. 157). In note 2 on p. 184, he seems to suggest that this "pit" is near by or even identical with the royal tomb. K. Aartun, referring to the photograph in *CTA*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1963), Pl. XXXVIII, wishes to read *kt'rb. ʾtrt. hrst/bt mlk*, "wenn ʾTrt des Ausbesserung, Wiederherstellung u. dgl. das Haus des Königs betritt"²⁰). Earlier studies usually indicate a break after *hr* (thus *UT* no. 5 and *CTA* no. 33). If we must dismiss Aartun's interpretation for being too fanciful, the reading *gb* is not beyond doubt either²¹). Still, it stands a fair chance of being correct²²). How, then, are we to interpret *gb*, assuming this is what the scribe wrote?

The opening line of *KTU* 1.43 has well known parallels in *KTU* 1.91:10-11; 1.148:18, which speak about a goddess or gods "entering the house of the king", without specifying that a *gb* is involved. The parallel between *KTU* 1.43 and *KTU* 1.91 is particularly instructive, since in both texts the entry of Astarte (Astarte-of-the-Plain in *KTU* 1.91, the "Astarte-of-Khurru"²³) in *KTU* 1.43) entails the subsequent entry into the palace of "the Rashap-gods" (*KTU* 1.91:11) or "the Gathru-gods" (*KTU* 1.43:9-10). In view of the parallelism and the absence of *gb* in *KTU* 1.43:9-10, the constructions *ʾrb ... bt mlk* and *ʾrb ... gb bt mlk* are apparently more or less free variants, comparable to our choice between "to enter the palace" and "to enter into the palace". One would expect *gb* to serve as an intensifier, rather than as a modifier. When pressed to make a choice, I consider a circumlocution such as "central part" (< "back",

cf. Hebr. *gab*, or alternatively < "internal part", cf. Akk. *gabbu*) more likely, in the passage under discussion, than translations such as "cavern"²⁴), "(sacrificial) pit"²⁵), "couch, high seat"²⁶), or "cavity"²⁷). Since the possibility of a scribal error cannot be ruled out, however, attempts at a translation may well prove to have been futile.

The parallel observed between *KTU* 1.43:1-2, 9-10 on the one hand and *KTU* 1.91:10-11 on the other, invalidates Spronk's claim that "the first line of this text [= *KTU* 1.43] probably refers to the same event as described in *KTU* 1.91:14-15, because Athtart is closely related to Anat" (p. 157). We have seen that *KTU* 1.43:1ff. speaks of a procession of Astarte into the royal palace in terms which compare with line 10 of *KTU* 1.91; *KTU* 1.91:14-15, on the other hand, mentions the Mistress of the Mansion, uses a different verb, and does not mention the "house of the king". In fact, the only link between the two passages is the highly doubtful equivalence between *gb* in *KTU* 1.91:15 and *gb* (?) in *KTU* 1.43:1. So tenuous a link cannot bear the weight of Spronk's statement.

At least two other corrections to Spronk's treatment of this text must be made. In line 3, Spronk finds a reference to "marjoram of death" (*z'tr mt*), which odoriferous plant he had discovered earlier in the passage dealing, in his opinion, with the ancestor cult (*KTU* 1.17.i:26-28, see above). D. Pardee's collation of the text indicates, however, that the reading proposed by *KTU* is to be maintained²⁸). We thus have, in lines 2-3: *ʾsr. ʾsr. b.bt. ilm/kbkbm. trmt*. I propose to translate these lines: "Serve a banquet²⁹) in the chapel (lit.: house of the gods); two stars (as) a gift (for Astarte)". Not only does this translation dispose of the "marjoram of death", also "the house of the star-gods" has disappeared. Spronk, who takes *kbkbm* as an apposition to *ilm*, writes that the term "star-gods" here designates the deified dead, in analogy with the Egyptian conception of the state of the dead (p. 157). Despite the occurrence of *é-mul* in Eblaite texts³⁰), it is unlikely that *kbkbm* is a specification of *ilm* of line 2. If the two terms belonged together, one would expect *kbkbm* to re-appear as an apposition to *ilm* in lines 8 and 23 — which it does not. Since we know from Akkadian texts that the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, according to the Ugaritic god lists the equivalent of Astarte, frequently received (jewellery in the shape of) stars (see *CAD* K [1971], 45a, 49a), the possibility that *kbkbm* refers to star-shaped objects offered as a gift (*trmt*, cf. Hebr. *terûmâ* and Akk. *tarîmtu*) deserves serious consideration. A similar use of the term *kbkbm* is perhaps attested in *RIH* 77/2B(+6+19+26A+78/31), Rev. 3'³¹).

¹⁸) See A. Herdner, *Nouveaux textes alphabétiques...*, Ugaritica 7 (Paris/Leiden, 1978), 14; cf. *HAL* 730a s.v. *ʾāb* I.

¹⁹) Spronk, p. 157 n. 4, cf. *HAL* 163b s.v. *gēb** I and *Gesenius HAT* 18th ed. (1987) 191a s.v. *gēb** 1.

²⁰) K. Aartun, *UF* 17 (1986 [1985!]), 29; cf. K. Aartun, *UF* 16 (1984), 31-32.

²¹) Cf. H. and M. Weippert, *ZDPV* 98 (1982), 90 n. 57, who suggest that *gb* stands in fact for a poorly written *bt*, repeated correctly in the following line.

²²) Cf. the discussion in J.-M. de Tarragon, *Le culte à Ugarit* (Paris, 1980), 100.

²³) The question whether we have to interpret this name as the "Hurrian Astarte" (= Šauška, thus I. Wegener, *Gestalt und Kult der Istar-Šauška in Kleinasien* [AOAT 36; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981], 200) or as "Astarte-of-the-Cavern" (= Istar Khurri, thus S. Lackenbacher, *Une nouvelle attestation d'Istar hurri dans un contrat trouvée à Baniyas (Syrie)*, in: *Miscellanea Babylonica. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot* [eds. J.-M. Durand & J.R. Kupper; Paris, 1985], 153-160) has not been conclusively settled.

²⁴) Tarragon, *Culte*, 100 (& lit.).

²⁵) P. Xella, *Le dieu Rashap à Ugarit*, *AAAS* 29-30 (1979-80), 151.

²⁶) K.J. Cathcart/W.G.E. Watson, *Weathering a Wake: A Cure for Carousal*, *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 4 (1980), 39.

²⁷) J.-M. de Tarragon, in: A. Caquot, J.-M. de Tarragon & J.-L. Cunchillos, *Textes ougaritiques*, tome II (LAPO 14; Paris, 1989), 161-162 and n. 70.

²⁸) D. Pardee, *UF* 19 (1987), 199 [cf. n. 5].

²⁹) For the alternative "ten (and) ten", see J.-M. de Tarragon, in A. Caquot et al., *Textes ougaritiques*, tome II (LAPO 14; Paris 1989), 162 n. 71.

³⁰) See G. Pettinato, *Il calendario semitico del 3. millennio ricostruito sulla base dei testi di Ebla*, *OA* 16 (1977), 270.

³¹) See P. Bordreuil/A. Caquot, *Les textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découverts en 1977 à Ibn Hani, Syrie* 56 (1979), 298. For a recent translation and commentary, see J.-M. de Tarragon, *Textes Ougaritiques*, II (LAPO 14; Paris, 1989), 229-231.

The interpretation of *kbkbm* as votive stars invalidates Spronk's supposition that *ilm* refers to "the statues of the ancestors" (p. 184 n. 2).

The nature and purpose of the procession of Astarte-of-Khurru and the Gathru-gods are still subjects of speculation. Assuming that *bt mlk* refers to the palace and not to the temple of Milku, one might point out the parallel with the Assyrian custom of bringing statues of the gods to the royal palace at the occasion of festivals³². The Gathru-gods (*KTU* 1.43) and the Rashap-gods (*KTU* 1.91) are infernal deities, it seems. The polyglot god-list identifies Gathru with Tishpak and Milku (= Malik = Molek), both known as chthonic deities³³. The equation of Rashap with Nergal is well known, and shows the former to be connected with the netherworld³⁴. The chthonic connection of these gods does not imply, as a matter of course, that the rituals described or alluded to in *KTU* 1.43 and *KTU* 1.91:10-11 are funerary or necromantic in nature. They may just as well have had a military significance, since the death-dealing gods are also martial gods, as the name *ršp šbi*, "Rashap-of-the-Army" (*KTU* 1.91:15) indicates³⁵.

5. *KTU* 1.20-22. The so-called Rephaim-texts play an important role in Spronk's thesis. He urges that they are connected with the Epic of Aqhat; they are the latter's sequel and conclusion (pp. 160-161). For epigraphical and contextual reasons, their order runs 1.21-1.22.ii-1.22.i, 1.20 being largely a duplicate of 1.22 (pp. 160-161). Though the texts are badly damaged, Spronk feels that they allow one to restore a plausible plot. We must assume, so he argues, that Daniel, faced with the death of his son and a relentless drought, was advised to call up the *rp'm* (1.21.ii:1*, p. 169). Daniel does so, knowing that Baal is able to revivify these dead, one of which is Aqhat, his son (1.21:5-6, p. 169). He invokes the *rp'm* and makes a vow, the content of which has been lost (1.22.ii, pp. 176-177). In reply, he receives an oracle which promises that he shall embrace his son once again (1.22.i:1-4, p. 171, cf. p. 177). This presumably comes to pass as the dead have been revivified and partake of a banquet for seven days (1.22.i:5ff., pp. 171-172), though the text does not speak of an encounter between Daniel and his resurrected son. Thus interpreted, the Rephaim texts attest to the belief in a possible resurrection of the *rp'm* by El

and/or Baal. Their temporary return to the world of the living occurs primarily at the occasion of the New Year Festival in autumn, since the chronological hints of the text all refer to the end of the summer (see p. 164).

J. Tropper, who discusses this text in his study on necromancy, takes a slightly different view. He agrees with Spronk that the New Year Festival in autumn is a likely setting of the banquet of the *rp'm*. As Baal's return to life was celebrated, the royal dead returned with him (Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 139). The crucial difference of opinion concerns the meaning and function of 1.22.i:1-4 within the framework of the Rephaim texts or, beyond them, the Epic of Aqhat. Tropper regards these lines as a birth oracle, a promise of offspring spoken by El. The invocation of the *rp'm* did not lead to a temporary reunion of Daniel with Aqhat; it enabled the former to beseech the dead for another heir. Tropper does not hesitate to say that Daniel "pursues a specifically necromantic purpose by the evocation of the ancestors" (*Nekromantie*, p. 141).

Due to their poor state of preservation and the often obscure terminology they use, the Rephaim-texts are notoriously difficult. It is hazardous to build on such uncertain grounds. Though the reconstructions and restorations Spronk proposes are often possible, they need remain provisional. Other reconstructions can and have been proposed, and it is not always easy to choose. But instead of merely striking a note of caution, let us examine the plausibility of Spronk's translations and conjectures in some more detail.

Since the interpretation of the text should rest on its better preserved parts, the first column of *KTU* 1.22 has a key position. Its remains can be divided in four sections, each having a distinct subject-matter (a) 1-4: promise of offspring; (b) 4-11: the company of the *rp'm*; (c) 12-20: preparations of the banquet; (d) 21-25: the *rp'm* wine and dine for seven days. Though lines 1-4 are too fragmentary for translation, they seem to consist of a rather general promise of male descendants. There is no hint at a reunion between Daniel and Aqhat (neither of them are mentioned in this column), and such a meeting is not alluded to elsewhere in the texts. Apart from a reference to "your son", there is also a "grandson" of whom mention is made. The few lines look like a dynastic oracle, assuming they are addressed to Daniel, rather than a prediction of Aqhat's return to life.

Though the next section has suffered little to no damage, its interpretation presents considerable difficulties. Much depends on the translation of the first bicolon (ll. 5-7), which Spronk renders: "There, shoulder to shoulder, were the brothers, whom El made to stand up in haste" (p. 171). The element *qym* is interpreted as a finite form of the verb *q-w-m* in the D-stem, which implies, so Spronk suggests, the idea of resurrection. One can object, however, as Tropper judiciously does (*Nekromantie*, p. 137 note 78), that the factitive of *q-w-m* would presumably be formed according to the L-pattern (cf. *trmm*, factitive of *r-w-m*). What we have looks more like a *qattāl*-form, and the meaning "attendants" or "assistants" would make good sense³⁶.

³² See E. Weidner, *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurtas I. und seiner Nachfolger* (AfO Beiheft 12; Graz, 1959), 6 v 13-16; 13 iv 101-v 105, etc.; J.-M. Durand, *Archives Epistolaires de Mari* 1/1 (Paris, 1988), no. 162.

³³ J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary* (1987), 117. For Tishpak, see F.A.M. Wiggerman, Tishpak, His Seal, and the Dragon mušhuššu, in: *To the Euphrates and Beyond. Archaeological Studies in Honour of Maurits N. van Loon* (eds. O.M.C. Haex et al.; Rotterdam/Brookfield, 1989), 117-133. For Milku and Molech see H.-P. Müller, Religionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu der Texte von Ebla, *ZDPV* 96 (1980), 11-14; G.C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek* (JSOT SS 43; Sheffield, 1985); J. Day, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, 1989).

³⁴ On Rashap, see H.-P. Müller, *ZDPV* 96 (1980), 7-10; Y. Yadin, New Gleanings on Resheph from Ugarit, in: *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (eds. A. Kort/S. Morschauer; Winona Lake, 1985), 259-274; D. Charpin, *M.A.R.I.* 5 (1987), 92-93; P. Xella, D'Ugarit à la Phénicie: Sur les traces de Rashap, Horon, Eshmun, *WdO* 19 (1988), 49ff. [& lit.]. See also P. Steinkeller, The Name of Nergal, *ZA* 77 (1987), 161-168. In Emar texts we sometimes find a reference to "the Nergal-gods" (Arnaud, *Emar VI.3* [1986], no. 378:34'; 520:5'), not unlike the plural "the Rashap-gods".

³⁵ Cf. the martial character of Nergal in Mesopotamian tradition, see E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (AOAT 11; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971), 15-20.29-30.70-73.

³⁶ Cf., e.g., G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y leyendas de Canaan* (Madrid, 1981), 422: "los que asisten a Ilu".

In Spronk's translation, the idea of resurrection plays a role in the next lines as well. Following J.C. de Moor, he interprets *yībš* as a 3rd p.s. Š-stem. of the verb *bašû*, an Akkadian loan, meaning "to call into existence" and hence "to revivify" (p. 171 and note 3); in line 8, *imq*, another *hapax legomenon*, is explained as a finite verbal form related to Arab. *samaqa*, and translated as "[he] rose up" (p. 171 and note 5). Piled upon each other, these conjectures, instead of increasing the likelihood of his interpretation of the passage, inspire the reader with a fair amount of skepticism. In order to accept the explanation of *yībš*, for one thing, we have to assume that (a) the Akkadian verb *bašû*, for which Ugaritic has its proper alternatives, had been accepted into the literary language — though it occurs in no other Ugaritic text; (b) the causative of *bašû* developed the meaning "to recreate", "to revivify" — which it never has in Akkadian, *šubšû* being used to refer to the production or creation of something or someone not previously existing; (c) the causative marker -š- changed into -t- under the influence of the root consonant -š-, — although so far we only have attestations of the assimilation *š>t* under the influence of *t*³⁷). To these difficulties one might add the fact that Spronk makes *šm il*, "the name of El", the subject of the action. When the Mesopotamian texts and the Old Testament use a similar expression, it usually functions as the object of action³⁸). To have the "Name of El" perform the act of revivification seems quite out of context in Ugarit, despite the occurrence of *'irt šm b'l* in *KTU* 1.16.vi:56 (cf. *KAI* 14:18).

It is easier, of course, to point out the problems inherent in Spronk's reconstruction than it is to come up with a solution to the riddle. Until new data become available, one can probably only venture suggestions³⁹). The section, punctuated by the recurrent *im*, "there", deals with the guests of the banquet, whom lines 21 and 23 show to be the *rp'm*. They are here designated as "brothers" (*aḥm*), "men" (*mtm*), "young men" (*g'zrm*), "warriors of Baal and Anat" (*mhr b'l w'mhr 'nt*), "armed forces" (*hyl*) and, perhaps, "rap(i/a)'ū of Baal" (*rpū b'l*). Clearly, then, the *rp'm* are pictured here as strong warriors, which agrees with the reference to their use of chariots and horses in 1.20.i and 1.22.ii. From 1.22.ii:24 one gathers that the *rp'm* have come from "their city" (*rhm*, not to be translated as "their stallions", pace K. Spronk, since the texts speak about the *sswm*), which suggests a journey along a horizontal rather than a vertical axe⁴⁰). These considerations do not compel us to conclude, with L'Heureux, that the *rp'm* here con-

stitute an elite group of chariot warriors⁴¹). The imagery merely underscores that we are moving in the realm of mythology. The author speaks of the *rp'm* not as dead persons, but as though they were heroes living in a distant city. They are not in need of revivification; at El's behest, they simply mount their chariots and come⁴²).

The mythological perspective, which obeys rules of its own, must constantly be taken into account. At various points in the Rephaim-texts, the words of the following invitation addressed to the *rp'm*, are given: "Come into the house of my *marzaḥu*⁴³), come into my house, *rp'm*! Into my house I do invite you, I call you into my palace!" Spronk understands the text to say that Daniel either speaks this invitation, or is instructed to pronounce it. In order to obtain a text consistent with this view, he supplies the phrase "then Daniel should say" in 1.21.ii:1* and changes *il* into *<dn>il* in line 8 of the same column (p. 169). If we do not alter the text, however, it is El who extends the invitation, at least in 1.21.ii:9ff. Due to the lacunae in the text, we do not know whether the address is always put into his mouth; perhaps we have a series of invitations spoken by different persons. The only passage in which Daniel does figure is 1.20.ii:7ff., where he orders the *rp'm* who have reached the threshing-floors and the plantations to be fed. These threshing-floors and plantations cannot simply be identified with "the house of my *marzaḥu*", respectively "my house" and "my palace", however. We notice, moreover, that the prospective host refers to "my *marzaḥu*". In the texts found at Ugarit we only hear of the *marzaḥu* of a certain city or of a god (Shatrana, Ishtar-of-Khurru, An[at] and El), never of a human individual⁴⁴). This may be due to the accidental nature of our information, yet it enhances the likelihood of the possibility of a deity addressing the invitation to the *rp'm*. The existence of a "para-mythological" text about the *marzaḥu* of El (*KTU* 1.114) corroborates the assumption.

The above observations allow us to conclude that (a) the Rephaim-texts do not speak about the revivification or resurrection of the dead. In this respect, neither philology nor context can be adduced in support of Spronk's reconstruction; (b) although the texts describe a meeting between Daniel and the *rp'm*, it is unwarranted speculation to say that the institution of the *marzaḥu* was its setting.

A broader issue concerns the alleged correspondence between myth and ritual practice. Spronk finds in these texts the general outline of the New Year Festival in autumn, or rather: of one of its aspects. Tropper follows him in this analysis, with the restriction that the festival did not bring a resurrection of the privileged dead, but furnished the occasion of necromantic seances. The underlying line

³⁷) See S. Segert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1984), § 38.21.

³⁸) Cf. the Akkadian expressions: *šum DN šulū* (B. Landsberger, *ZA* 39 [1930], 289); *šum DN eli NN šakānu* (e.g., AbB 10 [1985], no. 158 r. 17); *šum ša ili ... sullū* (see S. Parpola, *LAS* II [AOAT 5/2; Kevlaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1983], 113 ad no. 125 r. 3ff.).

³⁹) The main difficulty is that none of the three verbs used in this section (if they are indeed verbs, and not proper names, as G. del Olmo Lete suggests in two instances, see his *Mitos y leyendas*, p. 423) has been satisfactorily explained.

⁴⁰) I do not exclude the possibility that the town in question is Hahhu(m), assuming that the expression *hyl hḥ* (1.22.i:9-10) contains a geographical reference (since the other designation all have a positive content, one would not expect a negative description such as "host of the filth"). On the importance and localization of Hahhu(m), see K.R. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology* (Leiden, 1972), 129, 243 (with lit.).

⁴¹) See, chiefly, C.E. L'Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al and the Rephaim* (HSM 21; Missoula, 1979), 129-159, 221-223.

⁴²) For a brief discussion of *KTU* 1.21.ii:5-6, the second bicolon which Spronk claims to be referring to the annual revivification of the *rp'm*, see above, under the treatment of *KTU* 1.17.vi:27-33.

⁴³) D. Pardee (*Textes para-mythologiques*, 176-177 and note 48) expresses some doubt as to the identity of *mrzḥ* and *mrz'*. Despite his call to caution, I consider it virtually certain that the two terms are variants. The vocalization of *mrzḥ* as reconstructed by J. Huehnergard (*Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* [HSS 32; Atlanta, 1987], 178) is corroborated by the month name (ITI). *Mar-za-ḥa-ni* in Emar (Arnaud, *Emar VI.3* [1986], no. 446:85').

⁴⁴) See the survey of the pertinent material given by Th. Lewis, *Cults*, 81-88 [with indications of further references].

of reasoning is questionable, however. Are we entitled to assume that the events in the mythological universe are subject to the rules and patterns which obtain in everyday reality, be it cultic or not? It is true, of course, that myths find their source in human imagination, and that the imagination takes its raw material from the surrounding world. Yet it transforms the ideas and images it feeds on into a reality that is no longer completely of this world. In this mythic reality, man converses with the gods and receives them into his company. Kirtu invites the gods to his wedding, Daniel entertains the birth goddesses and caters to the *rp'm*. The latter reward him with a birth oracle, not unlike the LORD who, hosted by Abraham, announces the birth of a son (Gen 18:1-15). Although such stories reflect human customs and preoccupations, they are not the embellished transcript of current realities. They speak about a world that lies beyond ordinary experience, in which things happen that mere mortals can only dream of.

From these principles it follows that we should not conclude from the social intercourse between Daniel and the *rp'm* in the Rephaim-texts, that there was an annual meeting between the dead and the living. The *marzahu* as a banquet where men gather to eat and to drink is a human institution, here and in *KTU* 1.114 projected onto the world of the gods. This does not imply, however, that the gods or the *rp'm* are currently participating, under some form or other, in *marzahu* reunions. Likewise, a conversation between Daniel and the *rp'm* cannot be adduced as proof of the existence of necromancy in ancient Ugarit. If it is hazardous to deduce actual beliefs from mythological tales, it more hazardous still to read them as a blue-print of ritual practice.

6. *KTU* 1.108. According to Spronk, *KTU* 1.108 is a ritual of the royal cult of the dead (p. 184) which had its "Sitz im Leben" in the feast celebrating the resurrection of Baal (p. 186) at the occasion of the New Year Festival (p. 180). The central figures of the ritual are *rpu mlk 'lm* (1.1) and *'nt gtr* (1. 6), which Spronk takes to be Baal (pp. 180-181) and "Anat (the spouse) of (the god) Gathar", apparently a manifestation of Anat the sister of Baal (p. 183). By means of a bold restoration of lines 16-17, Spronk succeeds in finding a reference to the annual return of the *rp'm*: "[When the *rp'um*] arrive, [say to the king and] his family..." (p. 179). The form under which these privileged dead appear is that of kites or falcons, perhaps specially trained birds, descending on the sacrifices in the temple (pp. 184-185). These sacrifices consist particularly of foaming new wine (p. 180, cf. restoration of 1.10 on p. 178), the characteristic produce of the New Year Festival in autumn. In response to the food and drink they are provided with, Baal, Anat and, in their train, the dead are to bless the king of Ugarit.

Our discussion of this text will take into account the new edition and commentary by D. Pardee, in: *Textes para-mythologiques de la 24e campagne (1961)* (Paris, 1988), 75-118, and the observations made by J. Tropper, *Nekromantie* (1989), 142-144. A new translation with commentary has, moreover, been given by A. Caquot, *Textes ougaritiques, II: Textes religieux, rituels, correspondance* (LAPO 14; Paris, 1989), 111-118.

The first issue we have to consider concerns the genre and the purpose of *KTU* 1.108. Tropper agrees with Spronk and speaks of "ein Ritualtext" (*Nekromantie*, 142). Pardee,

however, writes that "les éléments fortement mythologiques de ce rituel ou récit et la bénédiction au verso font que le texte ne participe pas du genre des rituels de la pratique" (*Textes para-mythologiques*, 118; cf. already L'Heureux, Rank [1979], 186). Pardee's arguments fail to carry conviction. Though the verbal forms of the obverse can be understood as indicative imperfects, they can equally be interpreted as jussives. The latter possibility is preferable, in my opinion, since the obverse contains nothing but a presentation of several deities, qualified by their appropriate epithets. If this were a narrative, there is little action indeed. The elaborate introduction of the deities is fitting in a liturgical context, where it is important to stress the honorific titles of the divine participants. Though the obverse is not a prayer or hymn in the narrow sense of the term perhaps, it is an address to various gods with hymnic elements. The reverse is a benediction apparently directed at an anonymous king. The solemn language is quite appropriate at a liturgical occasion. Pardee characterizes the text as a para-mythological precedent story, showing the king how he was to make his prayers known to Baal (*Textes para-mythologiques*, 118). The assumed difference with an actual piece of liturgy is so subtle, however, as to evaporate when one tries to define it.

If the text can be characterized as a liturgical address (invitation to various gods, benediction of the king, both of them in direct speech), what were its purpose and Sitz im Leben? Spronk and Tropper suggest that the New Year festival in autumn was its setting, on the assumption that *rpu mlk 'lm* is identical with Baal (*Nekromantie*, 142). This identification is problematic. If I understand the obverse correctly, the invitation to drink is extended first of all to a god and a goddess, *rpu mlk 'lm* and *'nt gtr*. The former is the subject of ll. 1-5, the latter of ll. 6-10; from the end of line 10 onward a variety of other gods is invited to the symposium. If we want to establish the nature and the purpose of this ritual, we must first be clear on the identity of its central deities. Anat seems the lesser problem. It will be noted, however, that a string of epithets specifies the particular capacity in which Anat here figures. She is "Anat-of-Strength"⁴⁵, "Mistress of Kingship", "Mistress of Dominion" and also "[Ana]t-of-the-Diadem"⁴⁶. The notions of "kingship" (*mlk*), "dominion" (*drkt*)⁴⁷ and probably also "strength" (*gtr*) are related to the exercise of royal authority. This holds true as well of the designation Anat-of-the-Diadem, since the diadem (*kpt*), derived from Akkadian *kubšu* is known from Mesopotamian texts to have been a part of the royal insignia. It was a head band consisting of precious stones and gold threaded to a string and worn on the head at the occasion of official ceremo-

⁴⁵ Here I follow Pardee, *Textes para-mythologiques*, 101-102, though the solution urged by Spronk ("Anat of Gathar", p. 178) does not by itself lead to a radically different interpretation of the text. One may compare the Akkadian expression *bēlum abāri u dūnni*, "lord of strength and might", applied to Nergal, see CAD D (1959), 184b. A. Caquot prefers to read Gathar, "une entité liée au culte des morts" (*Textes ougaritiques*, II [LAPO 14; Paris, 1989], 114 n. 384).

⁴⁶ For a justification of the reading [']n't instead of [b]lt, see Pardee, *Textes para-mythologiques*, 79.

⁴⁷ See Pardee, *Textes para-mythologiques*, 103 and n. 124 on the relationship of this epithet with the goddess of Ashqelon known as Derceto.

nies⁴⁸). Anat, then, is here invoked primarily in her capacity as the goddess who appoints and protects the king.

The invitation of Anat in her role as protectress of kingship suggests that her male companion, the mysterious *rpu mlk 'lm* of lines 1-5, owes his prominent place in the liturgy to a similar function. The designation *rpu*, probably to be vocalized as either Rāpi'u or Rap'u, might be analyzed as an active participle meaning "healer"⁴⁹, or as a stative meaning "hale"⁵⁰. I am inclined to regard it as an adjective meaning "pure", on the basis of an — unfortunately damaged — entry in the polyglot lexical series Syllabary A, where Ugaritic *rap-ū* occurs in the immediate vicinity of *tu-ū-ru* (cf. Hebrew *tāhōr*) as a translation Sum. SIKIL = Akk. *ebbu*, "pure", "clean"⁵¹). Regardless of its precise meaning, the term *rpu* functions here as the designation of a deity who is further characterized as "King of Old" (*mlk 'lm*; cf. Caquot, *Textes ougaritiques*, II [1989] 114 n. 347). One notices that this title occurs four times in direct apposition to *rpu/i* (ll. 1; 19'-20'; 21'; 22'), which suggests that it served as a mandatory complement. The only occurrence of *r[p]i* without *mlk 'lm* (23'-24') refers to a different (group of) god(s). We learn from our text that this "King of Old" is "dwelling in Athtaroth" (l. 2) and "sitting in Edrei" (l. 3). The parallel with "Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei" (Josh 12:4) was noticed first by B. Margalit (Margulis) in 1970⁵², and is an important clue to the identity of *rpu mlk 'lm*. Another clue is the well-established connection between the god Milku and the place called Ashtaroth (KTU 1.100:41; 1.107:17; RS 86.2235⁵³). The geographical connection, then, links (a) the god *rpu mlk 'lm* with (b) the god *mlk* and (c) the legendary Og who is both a *mlk* and a *rp'*.

In a painstaking analysis, Pardee discusses the nature of the connection between *Rpu*, Milku and Og (*Textes paramythologiques*, 85-90). He argues that Rāpi'u is a title of Milku (closely affiliated with Gathru), but cannot and should not be identified with Og, whom the Bible places after the Heroic Age. While the identity of *Rpu* and Milku seems assured⁵⁴, the separation of Og is problematic. We know that the biblical writers have incorporated a number of mythological traditions, setting the divine actors within a

historical framework and reducing them to human proportions. The traditions about Nimrod, modelled after the Mesopotamia god Ninurta, can be quoted in example. We know from a Phoenician inscription from Byblos ("Byblos 13") that, at the beginning of the fifth century BC, Og was known as a deity who would punish violators of tombs⁵⁵). The epithet *'dn mlkm*, "Lord of the Kings" ("Byblos 13", l. 3) apparently applies to him, as does *h'dr*, "the mighty one" (l. 2). The fact that the biblical Og is said to be a "king" (*mlk*) and, belonging to the rest of the Rephaim, a *rp'*, is in favour of a connection with *rpu mlk 'lm*; the fact that he is a deity in disguise would seem to settle the matter.

We thus end up with the equation: *Rpu mlk 'lm* = Milku = Og. With Pardee we will provisionally assume that *rpu mlk 'lm* is a title of Milku. What about Og, then? The etymology of the name is obscure and might, if discovered, do little to further our understanding. A clue is found perhaps in his function as *melek* in the Bible and his characterization as "Lord of the Kings" in "Byblos 13". According to a tradition preserved in Deut 3:11, Og had a hugely proportioned "bed" (*'eres*) made of "iron" (*barzel*, probably basalt is meant⁵⁶), which was kept in Rabbah of the Ammonites. The "bed" is generally thought to have been a sarcophagus or a dolmen, venerated as cult-object by the Ammonites. Since both biblical and extra-biblical data mention Milkom as the chief god of the Ammonites⁵⁷, it is likely to have been part of his cult. We must therefore consider the possibility of "king" Og, the "Lord of the Kings", being identical with Milkom. Though one might be tempted to interpret *milkom* as a wrongly vocalized plural in the light of Ugaritic *mlkm* = Akk. *mālikū*, the Amman Citadel Inscription, if correctly restored, shows that the name is definitely a singular, the *-m* being an enclitic particle⁵⁸). The Ugaritic deity *MLK*, pronounced Malik as well as Milku⁵⁹) corresponds to the god Malik in Eblaite theophorous anthroponyms⁶⁰). In Mesopotamian texts we meet this deity under the names Mali/ak, Malku, Muluk⁶¹), Milik⁶²) and Milku⁶³). We cannot separate the Biblical form Melek (Isa 57:9) and the Ammonite deity Milkom from this complex.

Both *rpu mlk 'lm* and Og, then, are ultimately facets of Milku. The identity of *rpu mlk 'lm* having been established, we must now ask for the reason of his privileged place in KTU 1.108. The chthonic character of Milku, assimilated to Nergal (and Dagan?) in Mesopotamian texts⁶⁴), will not

⁴⁸) See CAD K (1971), 485b s.v. *kubšu* 1.b; O. Rouault, *Mukannišum. L'administration et l'économie palatiales à Mari* (ARM 18; Paris, 1977), no. 8 and p. 195; G. Bardet et al., *Archives Administratives de Mari 1* (ARM 23; Paris, 1984), p. 185 ad no. 202.

⁴⁹) See, e.g. J.C. de Moor, Rāpi'ūma — Rephaim, ZAW 88 (1980), 329; Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife*, 195.

⁵⁰) See, e.g., F.M. Cross, "El", in: TWAT I (1973), 263; Id., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, 1973), 20; C.E. L'Heureux, The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim, HThR 67 (1974), 265-274, esp. 269-270; E. Th. Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods* (alternatively called: *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*; HSM 24; Chico, 1980), 262; Th. J. Lewis, *Cults* (1989), 14.

⁵¹) See J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* (HSS 32; Atlanta, 1987), 58 ad 40.2.

⁵²) B. Margulis, The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered, Biblica 51 (1970), 344; id., A Ugaritic Psalm (RS 24.252), JBL 89 (1970), 293-294.

⁵³) See M. Yon/J. Gachet/P. Lomard, Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit 1984-1987 (44e-47e campagnes), Syria 64 (1987), 187.

⁵⁴) Cf. M. Pope, Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit, in: *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Hamden, 1977), 169-171, who refers to Act 7:43 (= Am 5:26 LXX) in support of the identification; G.C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek: A Reassessment* (Sheffield, 1985), 137.

⁵⁵) See R. Degen/W.W. Müller/W. Röllig, *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik 2* (Wiesbaden, 1974), 1-15, esp. pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶) Cf. Akk. *parzillu*, which frequently has the determinative NA₄, "stone", see W. von Soden, AHW 838a.

⁵⁷) See for the — scant — Ammonite evidence, G.C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek*, 169-170.

⁵⁸) Line 1 reads: [m]lkm. bnh. lk. mb't. sbbt[...]. See also K. Seybold, "Melek", TWAT IV (1984), 950.

⁵⁹) See G.C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek*, 135.

⁶⁰) See H.-P. Müller, Religionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu den Texten von Ebla, ZDPV 96 (1980), 11-14.

⁶¹) See J.M. Durand, M.A.R.I. 3 (1984), 277-278.

⁶²) See D. Arnaud, in: *Annuaire EPHE Ve section* 92 (1983-84), 235.

⁶³) Cf. the PN *Mi-il-ku-ma-il*, D.O. Edzard, *Altbabylonische Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurschriften aus Tell ed-Dēr im Iraq Museum, Baghdad* (München, 1970), no. 95:6.

⁶⁴) See R. Frankena, *Tāktulu. De sacrale maaltijd in het Assyrische ritueel* (Leiden, 1953), 102 no. 135; Ph. Talon, Les offrandes funéraires à Mari, AIPHOS 22 (1978), 71; cf. W.G. Lambert, The Pantheon of Mari, M.A.R.I. 4 (1985), 533 and n. 16.

suffice as an explication. The answer must probably be sought in the intricate link between Milku and the *mlkm* (probably pronounced *mālikūma*). In the Ugaritic texts *mlkm* is a plural as shown by the equation with *ma-lik*. MEŠ⁶⁵); they correspond with the *mālikū* from Mari texts, the shades of the deceased dignitaries and/or kings⁶⁶). Their analogue in the Emar texts are perhaps “the seven *imlikū*”, companions of Nergal⁶⁷). The Ugaritic texts do not specify the nature of the relationship between Milku and the *mlkm*. Scholars have assumed that Milku was the chief of the *mlkm*, which is corroborated perhaps by the title *’dn mlkm* — if this applies indeed to Og. What I have translated as “Lord of the Kings” could, of course, also be rendered as “Lord of the *māliku*-spirits”. We may then formulate the hypothesis that Milku is invoked as the main deity in the liturgy of *KTU* 1.108, because he reigns over and represent the group of trespassed kings. The king of Ugarit needed not only the blessing of Anat-of-the-Diadem, but also of the god who personified in a way the royal office.

Spronk would probably not object against the identification of *rpū mlk ’lm* with Milku, insofar as he considers Milku to be a title or aspect of Baal in his capacity as a chthonic god (see pp. 232-233)⁶⁸). I do not think that such a conflation of deities, each being distinguished by name and sphere of influence, is warranted by the texts. The only place in this text where Baal is mentioned (if *b’l* is used there as a proper name) is line 18; the context is too vague to allow a firm conclusion about his role (the restoration by Pardee is ingenious but conjectural, as he rightly stresses, *Textes para-mythologiques*, pp. 112-113). The other arguments to say that *KTU* 1.108 had its Sitz im Leben in the New Year Festival are the restoration *[k]mgy [rpum]* in ll. 16-17 and *[mmlat. h]mr. špr*, “she [= Anat] who fills the horn with new wine” in line 10. The first restoration is a guess inspired by Spronk’s conception of the nature of the New Year Festival, while l. 10 is rather more likely to have read [...]*h]mr. špr*, “lambs from the fold”, in view of the parallelism with l. 9 (cf. Pardee, *Textes para-mythologiques*, 108-109). Briefly, the text has at most one obscure reference to Baal, contains no mention of new wine, and does not speak about the arrival of the *rp’m*. This does not mean, of course, that the New Year Festival is excluded as its ritual setting; as it stands, however, the text does not demand such a context.

Judging by its finale, the liturgy has as its purpose the blessing of the king by *r[p]i arš* (ll. 23'-24'). Following M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, Tropper wishes to interpret *rpi* here as a singular, and argues that this “Rapiu der Unterwelt” is identical with *rpū mlk ’lm* = Baal (*Nekromantie*, p. 143). It would be surprising, to say the least, if the deity who is consistently referred to as *rp’ mlk ’lm* were now designated as *rp’ arš*. The majority of scholars interprets *rpi arš* as a plural, the “Rephaim of the Earth”; I gladly join their company. Paraphrasing the Ugaritic *rp’m* as “the com-

munity of the gods of the netherworld and the dead with a divine status” we can say that the liturgy aims at securing the support of this community for the king in office. The appropriate moment for doing so would coincide with the enthronement or the renewal of kingship. The latter ceremony may have been part of the New Year Festival, as was the case in Mesopotamia⁶⁹), but the textual data do not allow us to draw a firm conclusion.

7. *KTU* 1.124. The last text Spronk adduces in support of the theory of a periodical return of the privileged dead in the train of Baal is *KTU* 1.124, which he regards as “a description of a spiritualist session” (p. 194). After the publication of *Beatific Afterlife*, the text has been extensively dealt with by Pardee (*Textes para-mythologiques* [1988], 179-192) and Tropper (*Nekromantie* [1989], 151-156). A comparison of their conclusions lays bare the crucial and controversial points of the text⁷⁰).

First we have to establish the identity of the *dramatis personae*: the *adn ilm rbm* (ll. 1-2), Ditanu (ll. 2, 4, 11, 14), the “child” (l. 3) and “your messenger” (l. 11). Ditanu presents no problems; he is the well known and legendary ancestor of the Ugaritic dynasty. Spronk does not venture to identify the unnamed child, concerning whom Ditan is asked for a “decision” (*mtpt*, semantically equivalent with Akk. *purussū*, “[oracular] decision”, “judgment”). Pardee, interpreting our text as a mythological precedent, tentatively suggests that *yld* refers to the son of Kirtu (p. 186, see also *UF* 15 [1983], 134), while Tropper urges that this *yld* may have been a prince of the king in office (p. 155). The identity of “your messenger” depends on the referent of the possessive suffix, hardly the *adn ilm rbm*, but rather the person on whose account the “Lord of the Great [or: Numerous] Gods” acts (cf. Pardee, 189). The identity of the latter is, to quote Pardee, “a mystery” (p. 184). Pardee, unhappy with the identification of El as “the lord of the great gods”, suggests that it is a title of Yaqaru, the “great gods” being the recent members of the *rp’m* (p. 185). Spronk and Tropper also think the *ilm rbm* are (spirits of) the dead, but disagree about the identity of their “lord”. Spronk claims that this is the god Baal (p. 194), whereas Tropper thinks of a necromancer, a human functionary responsible of the “house of the great gods”, i.e. the palatial cult room of the *rp’m* (p. 154).

The suggestion that the *adn ilm rbm* is Baal can hardly be correct, since Ditan mentions “the temple of Baal” in his answer (l. 8, cf. Pardee, p. 186). Another objection concerns the unlikelihood of a god such as Baal consulting Ditan, who must have ranked lower as a deity. Spronk solves this problem by translating “When arrived the Lord of the Great Gods with Ditan and he [=messenger] asked a judgment of the child...” (p. 193). This is, in more than one respect, a confusing sentence. One can see why Spronk finds it attractive: the idea of Baal and Ditan arriving together (p. 194) fits his hypothesis of a regular return to life of the privileged dead (of which Ditan is a member) in the company of Baal. From a grammatical and stylistic

⁶⁵) See J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary* (1987), 147.

⁶⁶) See A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispum) im alten Mesopotamien* (AOAT 216; Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1985), 65 ff. (with lit.).

⁶⁷) See D. Arnaud, in: *Annuaire EPHE Ve section* 92 (1983-84), 235.

⁶⁸) Cf. J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Leuven, 1990), 72 n. 174.

⁶⁹) See J.A. Brinkmann, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158-722 BC* (Rome, 1968), 294; A. K. Grayson, *The Early Development of Assyrian Monarchy*, *UF* 3 (1971), 318-319 and n. 50; R. Caplice & W. Heimpel, *Investitur*, *RLA* 5 (1976-1980), 141a.

⁷⁰) See now also A. Caquot, *Textes ougaritiques*, II (LAPPO 14; Paris, 1989), 119-123.

point of view the translation "When the Lord of the Great Gods reached Ditan and asked him for a decision concerning the (or: a) child..." is certainly preferable, however.

The solution offered by Tropper must be dismissed as well. While it is legitimate to render *adn* as "Gebietler", in which respect it compares with *b'l*, the former term does not convey the notion of ownership in the way the latter does. A parallel with the biblical *ba'alat 'ôb* (1 Sam 28:7), then, cannot be used in corroboration of Tropper's interpretation (pp. 154-155). The title "Master of the Great Gods", applied to a priest, would be strangely at odds with the prevailing view of the relations between man and the gods. In relation to the gods, a priest is a servant. Also, the situation pictured in the introductory sentence is rather unusual, if *adn ilm rbm* were a human functionary. One does not expect a necromancer to journey to the netherworld in order to "reach" an ancestor, when it is much more convenient to bring the latter up.

The *adn ilm rbm*, then, is a deity, rather than a human. Of the possible candidates, Baal does not qualify for reasons outlined above, nor do the various goddesses. The last point is obvious, of course, but important, since it excludes Shapshu, a natural mediator between the dead and the living (on Shapshu in this capacity, see Lewis, *Cults*, 35ff.). Unfortunately, the title of "Lord of the Great Gods" is rather uninformative. Its semantic analogue in Akkadian, *bēl ilāni rabbūti*, is applied to whatever god was considered most important by the worshipper; the title does not denote an objective status⁷¹). In order to advance a reliable identification of the visitor of Ditan, we would need to know more about the literary and/or cultic context of *KTU* 1.124. For the time being, one can only suggest a few candidates that are more likely than others. Because of their connection with the underworld, where Ditan is presumably dwelling, Milku, Yarih and, possibly, Yaqaru might fit. Nevertheless, the god El remains a distinct possibility.

The divine identity of *adn ilm rbm* has implications for the genre of our text. One can hardly characterize it as a report on an oracular inquiry, as Tropper states ("Orakelprotokoll", p. 153, cf. p. 155), nor is it "a description of a spiritualist session", as Spronk writes (p. 194). The divine protagonists give this piece a mythological flavor, and its inclusion in the "textes para-mythologiques" seems fitting. The mythological account would have to serve, so Pardee suggests, as a model to be imitated (pp. 184, 191). It seems likely, indeed, that the prescriptions of Ditan (gifts [of myrrh?] for Horan [or Anat] and Baal, *bnt*⁷²) in the house of the patient, purification of "the house in question"⁷³) and abstention from fish and canine meat) were meant to be put into practice. Yet if this narrative served as a model, one would like to know the occasions on which it was used.

It is commonly taken for granted that the "decision concerning the/a child" (*mip̄t yld*) implies that the child in

question was ill (*hlh* in l. 10 is consequently rendered "his illness"). Yet not every illness demands the same therapy; one would therefore expect a description of the symptoms, so that the practitioner would be able to see whether the treatment applied to a particular case or not. Another interpretation of *mip̄t yld* can be suggested, however. It is possible that the expression refers to the problem of barrenness or a difficult birth, as argued by A. Caquot⁷⁴). In that case, the "decision concerning a child" would refer to offspring yet to be born, while *hlh* would have to be translated as "her illness" or, alternatively, "her labour (pains)". The two speeches of Ditan seem to correspond to two phases in the "therapy": the introduction of myrrh (?) in the temples of Horan (or Anat) and Baal and of *bnt* (tamarisk?, see n. 72) in the house will presumably bring about a break-through (*wpr [t] hy hlh*), after which purification measures⁷⁵) are to consolidate the new situation.

If the text is prescriptive rather than descriptive, the abrupt introduction presupposes knowledge of the broader context on the part of the reader or user. The short mythological narrative is taken from a larger whole, which must have been familiar to the original audience but can merely be guessed at by us. This particular section owes its selection to the practical prescriptions it contained. Apparently, these were held to be valid not only for the literary protagonist but for the common folk with analogous problems as well. In the light of these considerations, then, *KTU* 1.124 cannot be used as evidence of the belief in a regular return to life of Baal and the dead, nor as proof of the existence of necromancy in Ugarit. With regard to the subject of the afterlife, it only shows that some of the exceptional dead, in *casu* Ditan, were credited with superior therapeutic knowledge. In the universe of the myth the dead communicated this knowledge to the living by the intermediary of a god; whether or how they did in everyday life must be decided on the basis of other texts.

The seven texts and passages here discussed constitute the ground on which Spronk has built his theory of a periodical revivification of the *rp'm*, the privileged dead. A careful analysis of the adduced evidence reveals, I believe, the fragility of his interpretation. One can hardly speak of cumulative evidence, in this instance, as though the alleged meaning of each individual text were being supported by that of the others. We rather face an accumulation of speculations and conjectural restorations, frequently inspired by the very hypothesis which the texts are called upon to corroborate. The annual (or perhaps monthly) return of the dead has become the pattern on which the texts are laid down as if on a Procrustean bed.

⁷⁴) A. Caquot, *Remarques sur la tablette alphabétique R.S. 24.272*, in: *Studies in Bible and the Ancient Near East Presented to Samuel E. Loewenstamm* (eds. Y. Avishur/J. Blau; Jerusalem, 1978), 1-6, spec. p. 3; id., *Textes ougaritiques*, II (LAPO 14; Paris 1989), 119-123. Caquot's rendering of line 15 as "la non-prolifération et la privation d'enfants" (1978) or "la stérilité et la dénatalité" (1989) is ruled out by the collations of Pardee.

⁷⁵) The prohibition of fish consumption occurs in a number of ancient Near Eastern dietary codes in connection with the need of ritual purity, see K. van der Toorn, *La pureté rituelle au Proche-Orient ancien*, *RHR* 206 (1989), 351-353; for Egypt see H. Bonnet, *Speiseverbote*, *Reallexikon der Aegyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), 745. The dog is commonly regarded as an impure animal in the ancient Near East, cf. J.C. Moyer, *Hittite and Israelite Cultic Practices*, in: *Scripture in Context II* (eds. W.W. Hallo et al.; Winona Lake, 1983), 29-33.

⁷¹) See K.L. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Helsinki, 1938), 46 [applied to Assur, Marduk and Sin].

⁷²) Perhaps "tamarisk", as Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 151 & n. 147, suggests.

⁷³) The suffix *-n* in *bnt* stands for *-ān(a)*, see C.H. Gordon, *UT* (1965), p. 63 § 8.58-59. It corresponds with the Akkadian suffix *-ānu*, see W. von Soden, *GAG* (1969), p. 70 § 56r.

It is true that these criticisms focus on a relatively small section of Spronk's study. He has much more to say about the Ugaritic conceptions of the afterlife and the role of the ancestors, and often his conclusions are judicious and valuable. Moreover, the wealth of information on matters not Ugaritic but Egyptian, Mesopotamian and above all Biblical might seem to reduce the material here discussed to a minor part of the whole. Yet this impression would be false. It is because of the temporary revivification of the privileged dead that the afterlife conceived of in the Ugaritic texts can be qualified as "beatific" (p. 205), an adjective conspicuously figuring in the title of Spronk's book. Offering ceremonies to the dead, as evidenced by *KTU* 1.142, 1.161 (for which see the solid treatment by Lewis, *Cults*, 5-46; cf. Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 144-150) and, possibly, *KTU* 1.113 (see Pardee, *Textes para-mythologiques*, 164-178; Lewis, *Cults*, 47-52)⁷⁶, the (semi-)divine status of the ancestors (cf., e.g., *KTU* 1.6.vi:45ff; 1.113 Rev.), the special place of the ancestral cult in connection with dynastic claims (see *KTU* 1.113; 1.161) are part of the common heritage of the ancient Near East. Also the institution of the *marzahu* (only secondarily concerned with the ancestor cult, see Lewis, *Cults*, 80-94⁷⁷) does not make the people of Ugarit exceptional in their conceptions of the afterlife. The Ugaritic view of the dead and the afterlife, once the periodical revivification of the dead is acknowledged to be unattested, does not display incisive differences when compared with the Mesopotamian or Israelite conceptions.

The implications of Spronk's "revivification theory" become clear when one gets to the third part of the book. The author assumes that the ancient Israelites were cognizant of the Ugaritic conception of the afterlife (i.e., his reconstruction of it) and, particularly on the level of popular religion, were tempted to embrace it. In various places of the OT, Spronk finds reflections of, and reactions against, the revivification paradigm. As I have argued, the Ugaritic texts Spronk adduces as evidence admit of quite different and — in my opinion — likelier interpretations. Judged by the evidence available at present, the periodical revivification of the dead is not a Ugaritic belief, but a scholarly construct. A survey of the OT texts dealt with by Spronk does not yield evidence to the contrary. For all its polemics against "Baalism", the OT nowhere suggests that the "Canaanites" believed that their departed returned to life. The passage discussed by Spronk can be interpreted as well or better without reference to the idealized Ugaritic view of the afterlife.

Since an exhaustive discussion of all the pertinent texts would both be tedious and pointless, I shall limit myself to a few more or less random observations. Spronk wishes his readers to believe that "the Israelites would probably

always have affirmed that YHWH could do the same as Re and Baal", namely revivifying the dead (p. 282). At first sight, this is difficult to reconcile with the rhetorical question of Ps 88:11 ("Shall rephaim rise up and praise Thee?"), which clearly supposes a negative answer. Spronk suggests that the psalmist intended his utterance as a polemic against the presumed Canaanite belief in revivification (p. 272). Yet the situation depicted in the psalm is hardly conducive to a theological debate. The poet appeals to God's sense of interest: if his creatures die, the Creator is deprived of praise (vv. 11-13). More bluntly, Ps. 30:10 embroiders on the same idea: "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise Thee?" Similar tones are heard in an Akkadian prayer to Marduk: "The one who has turned to clay — what profit is in him? Only alive does a servant do reverence to his master. Dead dust, what profit will it bring to the god?"⁷⁸. The fact that Ps 88:11 uses the verb *qwm* does not turn it into an anti-Canaanite polemic. It rather echoes the traditional motif, known throughout the ancient Near East, of the gap between life and death which even the gods cannot overcome. In this view, God incurs a loss by the death of his servant.

The case of Hos 6:1-3 looks perhaps more convincing, but on closer examination it becomes unlikely that the author used a metaphor "derived from the belief in real liberation from the world of the dead as part of a cyclical conception of beatific afterlife" (p. 276). The metaphor is illness, not death (witness such verbs as *trp* and *hbs*, v. 1). Revivification (*hyh*, piel) and resurrection (*qwm*, hiphil) refer to the recovery of health, similar in this respect to the Akkadian verb *bullutu* "to revivify"⁷⁹. The sequence "after two days..., on the third day..." simply denotes a brief lapse of time. It should not be taken literally, as though it were an oblique allusion to the three day journey of the *rp'm* in *KTU* 1.20-22.

It is hard to believe that the OT authors were convinced of God's power to revivify the dead, as Spronk repeatedly suggests, and felt at the same time called upon to combat the very idea from fear of contagion by Baalism. The few textual witnesses to the belief in a beatific afterlife are all young, as Spronk admits (p. 334). This would lead one to conclude, in conformity with the *communis opinio* of OT scholars, that the extension of God's power over the realm of death was a late development in Israelite religion. The only evidence Spronk offers of the contrary view, viz. that the Israelites always claimed their God capable of raising the dead, is the Khirbet el-Qôm inscription of Uriyahu. Since the reconstruction rests on the epigraphical evidence from Khirbet el-Qôm, a brief comment on the interpretation of this text is in order.

Since the publication of *Beatific Afterlife*, the number of studies of the Khirbet el-Qôm inscription has only increased⁸⁰. Unfortunately, the clarity of its meaning has

⁷⁶ Spronk also finds evidence of funerary offerings in *KTU* 1.109 (see pp. 147-149), on the basis of his interpretation of *ilib* in ll. 19,34-35 as "ancestral god", distinguished from *ilib* = "El who is the father" in l. 11. He takes the expression *burbt* to refer to the opening in the grave. Both points are doubtful, in my opinion.

⁷⁷ I agree with Th. J. Lewis that the *marzahu* was primarily a "drinking-club", though I am less skeptical about the regular connection with offerings for the dead. If the Ugaritic *marzahu* is related to the MN Marzahani in Emar (see n. 43), and if Marzahani and Abu designate the same month (as a comparison of *Emar VI.3* [1986], no. 446:89' and no. 452:21' suggests), it is perhaps the funerary character of this month (attested by *Emar VI.3* no. 452:35'.53'-55') which explains its name.

⁷⁸ See W.R. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Rome, 1976), 313-315.

⁷⁹ Cf. H. Hirsch, "Den Toten zu beleben", *AfO* 22 (1968-69), 39-58.

⁸⁰ See J. Day, Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature, *JBL* 105 (1986), 394-395; J. M. Hadley, The Khirbet el-Qom inscription, *VT* 37 (1987), 50-62; M. O'Connor, The poetic inscription from Khirbet el-Qôm, *VT* 37 (1987), 224-230. See also A. Castaldi, Note di epigrafia ebraica I-II, *Henoch* 6 (1984), 129-135 [reference courtesy J. Hofstijzer, Leiden].

not increased in like manner. About the only thing all who have written on the subject agree on, is the fact that the inscription is extremely difficult to read and to interpret. So far, not even the original text has been established with certainty⁸¹). As Hadley writes, "suitable lines could be found to support almost any interpretation..." (VT 37 [1987], 50). The obscurity of the inscription reaches its highest grade in l. 3, and it is precisely this line which Spronk has selected to build his case around. He reads *wmmšr dyh hl' lšrth hwš' lh*, and translated: "and from the distress as much as comes to him over there may He deliver him" (p. 308). None of the other studies of this text has offered this reading. Insofar as a consensus is dawning, it favours the reading *wmmšryh l'šrt(h) hwšl' lh*, "and/for from his enemies ... (he has) save(d) him!", *l'šrt(h)* being understood as referring to the goddess Ashera. Epigraphically, then, the reading of Spronk is dubious. Matters are hardly better where the linguistic analysis is concerned. Neither the interpretation of *hl' = hālē'ā = "over there" = "the netherworld"* (p. 308 n. 5) nor that of *dyh = "his due" = "as much as comes to him"* (with *mšr* in the construct state; p. 308 n. 4) has a parallel in Biblical Hebrew. Under such circumstances, one should refrain from using the Khirbet el-Qom inscription as evidence of popular views in Israel on the afterlife, especially when such views are not attested in the pre-exilic texts of the Bible.

The Khirbet el-Qom inscription, with all its obscurity, serves as a point of departure for further speculation. By juxtaposing the following quotations, one notices the subtle shifts from possibility to point of fact. "We do not know what precisely Uriyahu expected of life after death (...). The text does not say whether ... he expected to be freed from there [=the netherworld] as the *rp'um* who are able to follow Baal on his return to the world of the living. The demonstrated fact that Canaanite belief in the revivification of the royal dead was familiar to the Israelites is an important argument for the ... possibility". (p. 310) "So we have to assume that it took a long time before the hope for afterlife as expressed in the tomb inscription of Uriyahu was accepted in the more official Yahwistic literature" (p. 334).

With his study on beatific afterlife in the ancient Near East, Spronk has accomplished no minor feat. He has digested a staggering amount of secondary literature, to which he has now made a major contribution himself. His style has not suffered from his erudition; the book is highly readable and will not fail to provoke further thought and study. For all these things, and the insights it contains, it is certainly to be recommended. This being said, though, it will be clear that the present writer cannot subscribe to its conclusions. I find no evidence in the Ugaritic texts of a belief in the revivification of the (privileged) dead. The social intercourse between the dead and the living occurred predominantly, it seems, in the setting of mortuary offerings. The Akkadian version of Ishtar's Descent (Niniveh recension, l. 138) speaks in this connection of the dead as "mounting" and "inhaling the incense", a terminology at home in the realm of Mesopotamian religion but not out of

place in connection with the care of the dead in Ugarit, it seems. Yet in neither case should we call this a resurrection or revivification, nor can we qualify the posited afterlife as "beatific". Judging by the extant texts, the ancient Israelites did not take a more optimistic view of the afterlife. They, too, regarded the existence of the dead as morose. Despite the offerings they received (Deut 26:14) and their superior knowledge, the dead did not enjoy the afterlife. Only in the Period of the Second Temple did a more positive evaluation of the future existence gain acceptance. The factors contributing to the birth of the belief in eternal salvation were probably internal as well as external. It is unlikely, however, that the Ugaritic conceptions had any formative influence.

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⁸¹) Cf. the readings proposed by Z. Zevit (The Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription Mentioning a Goddess, *BASOR* 255 [1984], 39-47) and J.M. Hadley (*op. cit.*, esp. pp. 61-62), who both had access to the original.