

THE UGARITIC CULT OF THE DEAD

THE UGARITIC CULT OF THE DEAD
A STUDY OF SOME BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
THAT PERTAIN TO
THE UGARITIANS' TREATMENT OF THE DEAD

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This work attempts to deal with the
results of the excavations of the tombs
at Ras Shamra, and with the Ugaritic
literary material that has relevance
for the treatment of the dead at Ugarit.
The investigation has shown that an
important aspect of the religion at
Ugarit centred around the reverencing
of the family dead.

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Abbreviations

<u>ANET</u>	<u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</u> , J. B. Fritchard, editor.
<u>BJRL</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u> .
<u>CML</u>	<u>Canaanite Myths and Legends</u> , G. R. Driver.
<u>JACS</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society</u> .
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u> .
<u>JNES</u>	<u>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</u> .
<u>PEQ</u>	<u>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</u> .
<u>RS</u>	<u>Ras Shamra</u> , designation of texts, according to C. Virolleaud, and the <u>Ugaritica</u> series.
<u>UF</u>	<u>Ugarit-Forschungen</u> .
<u>UL</u>	<u>Ugaritic Literature</u> , C. H. Gordon.
<u>UT</u>	<u>Ugaritic Textbook</u> , C. H. Gordon.
<u>VT</u>	<u>Vetus Testamentum</u> .
<u>WUS</u>	<u>Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache</u> , J. Aistleitner.
<u>ZAW</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</u> .

Introduction

This thesis purports to show that in Ugarit all men, when they died, became the object of worship, that the remaining family were responsible for maintaining the cult of the family dead, and that, in exchange for the devotion to the dead, the dead functioned primarily to ensure the health and protection of the family and their crops. The study will concern itself with the religious thought and practice that pertain to the Ugaritians' treatment of the dead.

The source material can be classified broadly as "archaeological". Within this broad classification, it is important to distinguish two different, but not necessarily exclusive, types: (1) the written archaeological material, and (2) the unwritten archaeological material. For the purposes of this study, the sources can be defined more specifically as (1) the Ugaritic religious literature, and (2) the tombs of the ancient city of Ugarit. Although these two sources are different, in the sense that each may have its own particular referent, they both nonetheless depict aspects of the culture of Ugarit. In other words, one basic assumption of this thesis is that the Ugaritic religious texts and the excavated tombs of Ras Shamra are indigenous to the ancient city of Ugarit. Neither are

the direct products of outside peoples, even though the texts and tombs may have been influenced by ideas and art forms of other foreign cultures.

Of all the cities that have been excavated, it appears that the results of the excavations at Ugarit have yielded the most data for a re-construction of the culture that both preceded and flourished concomitantly with the early Hebrew settlement in Palestine. Since 1928 when a section of the mound of Ras Shamra was unearthed for the first time, attention has been concentrated in two basic areas: the further excavation of the site, and the interpretation of the archaeological material already uncovered. In no way, however, can it be said that these areas have been exhausted yet.

One of the main deficiencies in Ugaritic scholarship has been the attempt to delineate the religious beliefs of Ugarit solely on the basis of the written archaeological material. This is the case especially with regard to the Ugaritians' thoughts on death. The scholarship is not extensive and appears to encompass only what can be gleaned from the Ugaritic religious texts.

The work of A. van Selms, Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature (London, 1954), provides the one secondary source that has dealt directly with the theme of death. His procedure consists in an orderly compilation of relevant data taken straight from the texts, "Baal", "Aqhat", and "Keret". He makes no attempt whatever to

substantiate whether, in actual fact, the thoughts and practices mirrored in the texts have any degree of probability. Moreover, as the title of his book suggests, the theme of death is a minor consideration.

On the other hand, the largest corpus of scholarship has approached the subject indirectly. The "myth-ritual" school of interpretation claims that the man of Ugarit understood death to be deprivation. The scholars of this school contend that the religion of this city centred around the god, Baal. Evidence of the worship of this deity can be validated by the artifacts found depicting him,² by the large temple dedicated to him,³ and by the text, "Baal". To a great extent, moreover, this text, "Baal", has provided the fundamental basis for their reconstruction of the religion of Ugarit. In essence, the following is their interpretation of the text.

The Baal mythology, according to the myth-ritual school, concerns itself basically with two motifs: the struggle between cosmos and chaos, characterized in the combat

¹
Cf. S. H. Hooke, editor, Myth, Ritual and Kingship (London, 1958). In general, scholars, such as T. H. Gaster, John Gray, and A. S. Kapelrud, agree with this approach.

²
Numerous other artifacts were found too, notably pendants depicting a goddess of fertility.

³
There were two other temples discovered at Ras Shamra. One was dedicated to Dagon; to whom the other was dedicated is not known. The Ugaritic texts have very little extensive evidence to elucidate the role of Dagon in the religion of Ugarit. However, only two stelae, with inscriptions, have been found. Both were dedicated to this god.

of Baal and Yam, and the struggle between life and death, or fertility and sterility, characterized in the combat of Baal and Mot. This latter motif has provided the basis for the understanding of death as a state of deprivation.

Baal's episode with Mot is intimately connected with the crisis in the agricultural season when the hot, dry summer months threaten to prevent the transition to the rainy, autumn months. The tension is depicted, therefore, between Baal, the giver of rain and fertility to the soil, and Mot, his antagonist, the representative of death and sterility. Initially, Mot ousts Baal from his position of authority to the underworld. Subsequent to his demise, the earth languishes because Baal is unable to provide the rain necessary to mitigate the hot rays of the sun. Meanwhile, Baal is thought to be dead. Consequent upon the harvest of the crops, Baal re-emerges and engages Mot in a struggle for dominion over the natural realm. Baal proves victorious and assumes rule. It is thought, therefore, that this whole encounter between Baal and Mot refers to the great autumnal festival celebrated yearly in many parts of the ancient Near East. At this festival, the events of the myth are ritually enacted by the king-priest of the community and his temple officials, while the common people congregate to witness corporately the sorrow and mourning at Baal's disappearance and the jubilation at his rising to dominion over the chaotic forces of the natural

realm.

The above mentioned studies on the theme of death incorporate one common factor: each of the respective theses relies predominantly on the written archaeological material. As far as is known, no work has attempted yet to show how the unwritten archaeological material might relate to the Ugaritians' thoughts on death. This thesis, however, will include some of the unwritten material, not only to satisfy a noticeable lack in Ugaritic scholarship, but moreover to balance a one-sided interpretation of the view of death among the inhabitants of Ugarit.

Although a complete study of the theme of death at Ugarit would warrant a closer examination of the Baal-Mot struggle, the limitations of the present study will not allow such an investigation. However, although the assumption of the myth-ritual school's interpretation of the Baal-Mot conflict is that death can be characterized by deprivation, the results of the work to be presented appear to point towards a different understanding. Far from being weak, shadowy, almost non-existent, the dead appear to have been worshipped at their burial site by the surviving family, and moreover, seem to have functioned primarily to promote the health and welfare of the family and their crops. Nonetheless, the investigations and results of this research need not invalidate necessarily the results of the previous studies. It is believed, though,

that this work will adjust in some small way the undue emphasis that has marked Ugaritic scholarship in the past.

The method adopted for this pursuit can be best designated by the words, "religious science". To be clearer, the term "religious science" refers, not to one particular methodology, but to several methodologies, each of which helps to elucidate what the word "religiousness" may mean in relation to a given set of phenomena. In the case of this study, the phenomenon to be investigated is death. Because of the nature of the evidence available, that is, because it is both literary and physical, it is necessary, therefore, to employ more than one method in order to explicate and understand what death may have meant to the Ugaritian of the second millennium B. C. In treating the two basic sources, the Ugaritic literature and the excavated tombs, several methods will be utilized, but only in a second-hand manner. That is to say, specialization in any one of the methods is lacking and the work of specialists from various disciplines is relied upon to a great extent, but is not accepted in toto uncritically.

The first part of the investigation (Chapter II) attempts to delineate the mourning customs of the Canaanites so that the meaning that may have been associated with them will become clearer. In consequence, the aim of the chapter is to uncover the thought that could lie beneath the description of mourning scenes in the Ugaritic

texts, particularly the description of Lutpan's mourning over the dead Baal ("Baal" l* vi 11-25). On the other hand, the first section of the next chapter (Chapter III) examines the reports of C. F. A. Schaeffer's excavation of the Ugaritic tombs in order to establish what practices the people of Ugarit may have performed for their dead, and, further, what thoughts may have prompted the practices. An examination of the Ugaritic words, designating burial places, follows the discussion of the tombs. Their importance lies in their function, not only as a check for the interpretation of the unwritten material, but also as a potential aid to an understanding of Ugaritic thought on death.

A number of topics which could prove productive for the study of the Ugaritic dead have not been considered. One need mention only two very important ones: the Ugaritic ⁴rpum and the ⁵eléb. In addition to a closer analysis of

⁴ Ugaritic ³rpum occurs several places in the Ugaritic texts. The text, "Rephaim", is probably the most important for a study of ³rpum. For an understanding of the debate, see A. Caquot, "Les Rephaim Ougaritique", *Syria*, XXXVII, 1960, pp. 75-93; A. Jirku, "Rapa'u, Der Fürst der Rapa'uma-Rephaim", *ZAW*, 70, 1965, pp. 82-83; John Gray, "The Rephaim", *PEQ*, 84, 1949, pp. 127-139, and "DTN and RPUM in Ancient Ugarit", *PEQ*, 1952, pp. 39-41; B. Margulís, "An Ugaritic Psalm", *JBL*, 89, 1970, pp. 292-304.

⁵ Cf. *CML*, "Aqhat" II i 27, 45; ii 12, 16; RS 1929 no. 17. For a brief discussion, cf. W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore, 1956) p. 203, note 31; also, John Gray, "Sacral Kingship in Ugarit", *Ugaritica VI* (Paris, 1969) pp. 299-300; and, J. Nougayrol, "Pantheon d'Ugarit", *Ugaritica V* (Paris, 1968) pp. 42-64.

the Baal-Mot struggle, these two subjects must be reserved for future study.

Several translations of the Ugaritic religious texts have been published; however, G. R. Driver's Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh, 1956) has been used as the basic one. Nonetheless, variant translations have been incorporated at the relevant junctures, either in the body of the text or in the footnotes.

II

Canaanite Mourning Customs

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to collect and attempt to understand the meaning of various practices concerned with mourning in the Ugaritic religious texts.

Although a great number of scholars find the best expression of the religious literature from Ugarit in its cultic function, this hypothesis should not deter the investigator from examining passages that may reflect the mourning rites practised by the Canaanites on the occasion of a death in the family or social unit. The data recorded in myths^{probably} do have their origin in the daily life of the people in general.

The religious literature from Ras Shamra furnishes much information regarding mourning rites in Canaan. The pertinent sections of the texts, "Baal", "Keret", and "Aqhat", will be specially considered. For the sake of an order to the discussion, the lengthy description of Lutpan's mourning over the dead Baal ("Baal" 1* vi 11-25) will provide

⁶ Cf. especially T. H. Gaster, Thespis (New York, 1966). For slight variations, see John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957); A. S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen, 1952). For a general discussion of the relation of myth and ritual in the ancient Near East, see S. H. Hooke, editor, Myth, Ritual and Kingship (London, 1958).

the initial outline; at appropriate junctures, selections from "Keret" and "Aqhat" will be incorporated. Rites not mentioned in "Baal" 1* vi 11-25 will follow (3. i-iii).

In addition to these Ugaritic texts, evidences from anthropological studies in the Semitic field will be included to document similar practices that occur in relatively modern periods, and to act as a control for interpretations of the Ugaritic material.

2. Rites of Mourning

At the news of Baal's death, El initiates mourning proceedings.

Thereupon Lutpan kindly
 god came down from (his) throne, he sat
 on a stool, and (coming down) from the stool he sat
 on the ground; he strewed straw
 of mourning on his head, dust in which a man wallows
 on his pate; he tore the clothing
 of his folded loin-cloth; he set up a bloody pillar
 on a stone, two pillars in the forest;
 he gashed his (two) cheeks and (his) chin,
 thrice harrowed the upper part of his arm, ploughed
 (his) chest like a garden, thrice harrowed (his) belly
 like a vale. He lifted up his voice and cried:
 'Baal is dead. What (will become of) the people of Dagon's
 'son, what of the multitudes belonging
 'to Baal? I will go down into the earth.' 7

7

CML, "Baal" 1* vi 11-25.

āpnk. ltpn. ēl
 d pēd. yrd. lksē. ytb
 lhdm(.) wl. hdm. ytb
 lārṣ. ysq. <mr
 ūn. lrēšh. <pr. plēt
 lqdqdh. lpš. yks
 mizrtm. ḡr. bābn
 ydy. psltm. by'r
 yhdy. lhm. wdqn

ytlē. qn. ṣr'h(.) yhrē
 kgn. āp lb. k'mq. ytlē
 bmt. yšū. gh. wyṣh
 b'l. mt. my. lem. bn
 dgn. my. hmlt. ātr
 b'l. ārd. bārṣ.

8

Anat's behaviour closely parallels this action; however, it differs slightly from El's rites. After she has mourned for him, she carries out a search with the aid of Shapash to find his corpse. When she finds his body, she weeps again and then buries him. Furthermore, she performs sacrifices for Baal and proceeds to avenge his death.⁹

An individual discussion of each of the above rites follows below.

i. The Earth as the Place of Mourning (lines 11-14)

In the ancient Near East, the use of the ground as the place for mourning rites can be attested from various sources. Hvidberg, in stating that all lamentations associated with death, illness, and distress take place either sitting or lying upon the ground, cites some examples: the Sumerian "Ishtar's Descent to the Nether World", and Ezekiel 8:14.¹⁰

The earth has clear associations with agricultural proceedings and consequently is generally understood to represent the coalescence of the forces of life and death. Eliade writes:

As the foundation, in a sense, of the

⁸ CML, "Baal" 1* vi 26-31 - 1 i 1-8.

⁹ CML, "Baal" 1 i 8-29.

¹⁰ F. F. Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament (Leiden, 1962) pp. 28, 113.

universe, the earth is endowed with manifold religious significance. It was adored because of its permanence, because all things came from it and all things returned to it. 11

For archaic man, the function of the earth is to sustain the manifold changes that occur within the realm of nature and to ensure that these processes will continue.

In connection with Semitic mourning rites, Wensinck maintains that the threshing-floor originally occupied the central location for mourning. He refers to Genesis 50:10 which recounts the mourning of Jacob on a threshing-floor, and also to present day Syrian practice. Moreover, he claims that instead of the threshing-floor, the square or market-place of a village often sufficed for the mourning of the dead, especially if the population of the place was too large to be accommodated on the threshing-floor. Significantly, he notes that marriage and other religious

11

Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (London, 1958) p. 240.

12

A. J. Wensinck, Some Semitic Rites of Mourning and Religion (Leiden, 1917) p. 1.

13

Ibid., p. 2. John Gray maintains that the primary meaning of the word grn, usually rendered "threshing-floor", is a "space rubbed by public concourse and so kept clear". He goes further to say that, "This is an apt description of the open space immediately within the city gate familiar from the excavations of various sites in Palestine and Syria". The Arabic root for the above meaning means "to fray, or rub". He cites an Arabic word from this same root which means "the worn track". See John Gray, op. cit., p. 74, and also his article "The Goren at the City Gate: Justice and the Royal Office in the Ugaritic Text 'Aqht'", PEQ, 1953, pp. 118-123.

rites were celebrated where the dead were mourned.¹⁴ In his estimation, the threshing-floor symbolizes the earth as the giver of fertility and also as the grave of the dead, for it was here, on the threshing-floor, that the harvest was brought after being gathered in the fields.¹⁵

Viewed in light of the important role of agriculture to the Canaanite, El's initial reaction to Baal's death is important.

It is natural that the senior god of the Canaanite pantheon, primarily responsible for the issues that concern society,¹⁶ should initiate the mourning for Baal. However, the significance of his rite lies in his descent. His movement is downward; from his throne, to his stool, to the ground. Baal's death has caused great grief to the worshippers of Baal and the earth has become sterile.

¹⁴ Wensinck, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7. Among the religious performances mentioned are: prostitution (Hosea 9:1), consultation of the oracle (I Kings 22:10), rearing of an altar (II Samuel 24:18), building of Solomon's temple (II Chronicles 3:1)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6, 10. The threshing-floor is mentioned in the Ras Shamra texts in two connections. Danel performs his function as judge "at the entrance of the gate beside the corn-heaps which were on the threshing-floor" (CML, "Aqhat" 1 i 22-23, 11 v 5-6). The celebrations with the *rupum* ultimately take place in the "threshing-floors of El" (CML, "Rephaim" 1 ii 9).

¹⁶ John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957) p. 116. Gray maintains that Baal's sphere of jurisdiction is nature, whereas El's interest lies in social matters.

El's responsibility, therefore, centres around leading the people in the mourning rites, and attempting to reinvigorate the powers of life. El's position on the ground thus puts him at the best point of all for effecting any results. He is not only among the people of Baal, self-degraded, but also at the most significant point for influencing the menacing forces unleashed by the death of Baal. His chances of securing a victory over the forces of drought and sterility are better on the ground, as close as possible to the source of life and death.

ii. Dust Poured on the Head (lines 14-16)

Dust conveys basically the same symbolism as does
¹⁷
the symbol of earth. In Biblical usage, it often connotes man's origin and destination:

In the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return. 18

This passage, however, should not be taken as representative of the thought of the Old Testament. N. J. Tromp, in citing Martin-Achard's work, agrees basically that dust, in its association with man's origin and destination, is a common

17

¹⁷ Supra, pp. 11-14.

18

Genesis 3:19; cf. also Genesis 2:7.

19

notion to the Semitic mind. Nonetheless, he still maintains that within the Old Testament dust has the fundamental notion of death.

21

In the context of the passage under discussion, the main idea projected by the act of pouring dust and straw on the head is death. Ugaritic ḥpr, "dust", and ḥmr, "straw", parallel one another. Both words have associations with agricultural activities, but "straw" elucidates the specific meaning of "dust". Straw and chaff are the 'dead' part of the plant once the threshing and winnowing have taken place. Presumably, this practice was employed to give notice to the fact that a death had occurred as well as to signify the sorrow of the mourner, to exhibit how one felt.

The rite of covering oneself with dust, soot and ashes appears to be an ancient custom in the ancient Near East, notably among the Babylonians, Assyrians and Hebrews. Even today this practice, although outlawed by the Islamic

19

N. J. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament (Rome, 1969) p. 91. Cf. R. Martin-Achard, From Death to Life (Edinburgh, 1960) p. 27.

20

For the Hebrew association of dust with death, see, Tromp, op. cit., pp. 85-91.

21

CML, "Baal" 1* vi 11-25. Supra, p. 10.

22

Cf. M. Jastrow, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston, 1898). See also, Joshua 7:6, Isaiah 47:1, Lamentations 3:29.

faith, receives strong support from some Arab Moslems. 23

iii. Rending of Garments (lines 16-17)

The translation of the Ugaritic, lpš. yks. mizrtm, "he tore the clothing of his folded loin-cloth", is not without its difficulties. ²⁴ Several scholars have proffered their ideas concerning what it means. Gaster mentions the Hebrew use of sackcloth for mourning purposes and explains that, like sackcloth, the mizrt was "girt about the loins". ²⁵ Hvidberg cites the Arabic expression, šadda l-miḏzara, "tie miḏzar firmly"; which is used "metonymically for abstinence from women"; and refers also to the Arabic šadadtu li-hāda l-amramiḏzari, "I tucked up my garment for that". Moreover, he notes the use of mizrt in "Aqhat". 26 The mizrt was worn by Danel during his rite of incubation. Consequently, he suggests that the mizrt is a garment of

23

Cf. E. Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Volume II (London, 1926) pp. 490-495; E. W. Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (London, 1954) pp. 520-522.

24

C. H. Gordon's translation is: "For clothing, he is covered with sackcloth" (UL, 67, VI, 16-17). A. Herdner's is: "He covered his loins with a garment" (Syria, XXIII, 1942-3, p. 135); F. F. Hvidberg's: "He rends his garment into two strips" (op. cit., p. 29); and Gray's: "He tears asunder the knot of his girdle" (op. cit., p. 52).

25

Gaster, op. cit., p. 213.

26

CML, "Aqhat" II i 6, 16.

knee length, tucked up for religious purposes and for work.²⁷

Wensinck contends that Semitic custom stipulated the wearing of two garments, the izār and the ridā.²⁸ The izār covers the lower half of the body to the knees, while the ridā clothes the upper part, exposing the arm and shoulder. Both of these garments were originally the dress of mourners and of the dead. Later, however, they came to be used by priests, laymen, and ascetics for most religious rites.²⁹

Hvidberg suggests that the Ugaritic, mizrtm,³⁰ in its dual form, should be rendered, "into two strips". However, Wensinck's contention concerning mourning apparel may be correct. Perhaps yks, "he tore", is implied with mizrtm, just as ydy, "he set up", is implied with psltm. by'r, "two pillars in the forest", in line 18 of this same text. That is, in terms of the metre of the passage, the following parallelism may be intentional:³¹

lpš. / yks. / mizrtm
 gr. bābn. / ydy. / psltm. by'r

27

Hvidberg, op. cit., p. 29.

28

It is suggested, therefore, that izār, the technical term for part of the mourning and religious dress, supplies a more explicit Arabic parallel for the Ugaritic mizrt.

29

Wensinck, op. cit., pp. 56-77.

30

Hvidberg, op. cit., p. 29.

31

Cf. Gordon, UT, pp. 131-144.

If this is the case, the above passage could be translated in this way:

he tore the clothing, the two pieces of clothing,
he set up a bloody pillar on a stone, two pillars
in the forest. 32

In any case, the passage is fraught with difficulties.

The general impression of one who has rent his clothes suggests a complete neglect for the outward appearance, an abstention from what is customary. No doubt the rent garments were a sign of deep grief, of bereavement. But the violent action that must have been attached to the tearing of the garments implies that this custom, originally and probably in the present context, signified something more than mere sorrow: perhaps fear or anger. In "Aqhat", the emotion attached to Danel's rending of his garments could be both: fear for the famine that might set in due to death, and anger due to the cause of the impending sterility. This rite is so well known and widely practised, in the ancient world and in contemporary primitive societies, that it may be but a mere social amenity with very little significance. However, one cannot underestimate the personal element that could have initiated the action in the first instance.

32

The translation is basically Driver's, though the second half of the passage has been modified in light of Hvidberg's and Wensinck's observations.

33

CML, "Aqhat" I i 36-37, 46-47.

iv. Erection of Stones (lines 17-18)³⁴

People in ancient times were awed by the appearance of stones and consequently believed that ordinary stones could transmit power and strength. Stones were erected often, therefore, to signify the presence of a particular source of strength.³⁵

The erection of pillar(s) by Lutpan and Anat may be understood possibly in one or both of the following ways.

(1) Among the various rites involving stones in religious and magical practice, a widespread custom exists of setting up stones on the place that marks the spot of an unexpected accident or murder.³⁶ Thus the stone is believed to put the dead man's 'soul' at rest, and to be the medium through which he will continue to manifest himself. Eliade claims that this practice is the original meaning of burial monuments:

for a violent death lets loose a soul

³⁴ Gordon translates gr. b'abn. ydy. psltm. bycr, "He roams the mountain in mourning, Yea through the forest in grief" (UL, 67, VI, 17-18); and Hvidberg, in this way, "On the mountain he throws stones, He carries a carved image into the wood" (op. cit., p. 29). Gray's translation is: "He makes the mountain re-echo with his lamentation, and with his clamour the forest to resound" (op. cit., p. 52).

³⁵ Cf. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 216-217; Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites (New York, 1889) pp. 183 ff. Also cf. Infra, pp. 69-72, for the dual meaning of npš.

³⁶ Cf. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 218-219; Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 558-559.

that is troubled and hostile, and full of resentment. When life is broken off suddenly, it is to be expected that the soul of the dead man will be inclined to carry on what remained to him of normal life near the community from which it has been cut off. 37

In consequence, Lutpan's and Anat's action in setting up a pillar could be interpreted in the above manner. The stone erected would ensure that Baal's source of power, his power of fertilization, would continue to be effective to the living community dependent upon him.

(2) In describing Semitic sanctuaries, Robertson Smith deals at length with the objects that mark off a place as sacred. These visible objects are primarily water, tree(s), and a pillar or heap of stones.³⁸ Clearly, water and trees suggest natural surroundings and perhaps could refer to the Ugaritic, lnemy. ars. dbr. lysmt. Šd. Šhl.³⁹ mmt, which according to Driver's translation, could mean where Baal died, or in Gray's translation, could refer to a sanctuary for Baal.⁴⁰ In any case, both renditions could

³⁷ Eliade, op. cit., p. 218.

³⁸ Smith, op. cit., pp. 150-195.

³⁹ CML, "Baal" 1* vi 6-7: "... from the pleasant tracts of the land of decease, ... from the fair tracts of the edge of the strand of death."

⁴⁰ Gray disagrees strongly with Driver's translation of this passage. Specifically he would like to translate dbr, "pasture", and Šhlmmt, in parallelism with dbr, "fat grazings". This rendering, he maintains, fits the context of "Baal" 1* v 18-19, in view of the fact that "the purpose of Baal's mating with the heifer was to leave progeny behind him in case he did

point possibly to the existence of Baal's sanctuary. If this is so, the artificial object designating Baal's actual presence would be a "pillar", ^εgr, "two pillars", psltm. Moreover, Driver and Dussaud translate the Ugaritic ^εgr, "blood-daubed stone"⁴¹. Ugaritic ^εgr would refer, consequently,⁴² to the stone on which the blood of sacrifice was poured. Robertson Smith maintains that the custom of pouring out the blood of an animal on a pillar refers to usage prior to the time when the altar and pillar had become differentiated. At that time, the erected stone functioned both as an altar and as the symbol of the god's presence.⁴³

Concluding from the above discussion, the least that can be known with some degree of certainty is that the pillar(s) represented the presence and guaranteed strength of Baal in the midst of the community; the most that can be conjectured is that the pillar(s) of Baal marked the spot, not only of his disappearance, but also

⁴⁰
 (continued) not survive his visit to the regions of death" (op. cit., p. 50). At this point, preference is given to Gray's translation.

Hvidberg describes typical Baal sanctuaries and attempts to locate one in north Canaan (op. cit., pp. 80 ff.). Cf. also note 38.

⁴¹
^εgr, "hide, skin"; "mountain"; "deception" (WUS, p. 250).

⁴²
 Smith, op. cit., p. 184, 188. He notes the Arabic, gharīy, "blood-daubed".

⁴³
Ibid., p. 188.

of the cult where worship was paid to him.⁴⁴

The last conjecture is not so far-fetched as it might appear at first. Rohde cites similar traditions in the Greek world. In particular, two individuals, Amphiaros and Trophonios, each became the object of worship at the place where they were believed to have been swallowed by the earth. Their individual cults were maintained because they were considered still to be alive at that spot and therefore could aid the nearby community.⁴⁵ Another tradition concerns Zeus. Zeus was thought to lay buried on Mount Ida, but, nonetheless was still alive.⁴⁶ This occurrence prompts Rohde to state:

It is, in fact, plain that in the legend of the Cretan Zeus' grave, the 'grave' ... is a paradoxical expression intended to signify his perpetual confinement to that place. 47

Rohde's observations apply equally well to the elaborate tombs discovered during the excavations of Ras Shamra.

⁴⁴ Cf. Infra, pp. 55-59, §1-§3. Albright's argument regarding the bamoth in Palestine is similar to this observation.

⁴⁵ Erwin Rohde, Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks, Volume I (New York, 1906) pp. 89-93.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁷ Rohde, op. cit., p. 97. It is also interesting to note that he does not see any necessary connection between the death of a god and the "death of nature".

The only other Ugaritic reference to stone monuments occurs in "Aqhat".⁴⁸ Among the duties of a son is one of setting up a stele to the elēb, probably an important ancestor. This monument, then, as in the case of the pillar to Baal, would represent the presence and support of the ancestor to the nearby family or community.⁴⁹

v. Self-Laceration (lines 19-22)

Self-laceration is described in the above passage as analogous to certain agricultural activities. According to Gaster, hrē, "plows", is synonymous poetically with ēlē, "plows three times over", and both are used in the present context to suggest the threefold ploughing familiar in the ancient world.⁵⁰ Gray contends though that "the reference is rather to three furrow-like scores drawn by the three fingers of a mourner in laceration".⁵¹ Nonetheless, a close association between this mourning practice and the ploughing of fields does exist.

For the Hebrews and Arabs, as well as for the Canaanites, the essence of life resides in the blood.⁵²

48

CML, "Aqhat" II i 27, 45; ii 12, 16.

49

John Gray, "Sacral Kingship in Ugarit", Ugaritica VI (Paris, 1969) pp. 299-300.

50

Gaster, op. cit., p. 213.

51

John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957) p. 52.

52

Cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, Immortality and the Unseen

Blood-letting, self-induced, is thought therefore to invigorate the forces of life. In consequence, self-laceration, practised especially during times of crisis, is an act of imitative magic. An extension of this rationale issues from the Old Testament account of the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel, where they gashed their flesh to invoke Baal to set fire to the sacrifice on the altar. Gray also interprets this Biblical passage as an act of imitative magic. However, he cites it to substantiate his interpretation of Anat's slaughter. But there is a basic difference between this latter passage and the other two! Anat's blood-letting is not self-induced; it is inflicted on the people gathered together in a house. Hence, one would be led to maintain that her action would cause the earth to languish, just as the vegetation died signifying the murder of Aqhat.

52

(continued) World (New York, 1921) pp. 19-20; also, Leviticus 17:11, Deuteronomy 12:23-24. To prove that the Canaanite believed that life resided in the blood would amount to another thesis. The following passage does reflect probably this belief: "I will make thee to beat him twice on the pate, / (and) a third time on the ears, to pour out (his) blood / like a stream(?), like emission of seed, on to his knees; his soul shall go forth / like wind, his ghost like a puff(?), like / a vapour from his nose, his ready courage from (his) nose ..." (CML, "Aqhat" III i 22-26).

53

Cf. John Gray, I & II Kings (Philadelphia, 1963) p. 255.

54

I Kings 18:28.

55a

John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957) pp. 36-37.

55

CML, "Aqhat" I i, ii. CML, "Baal" V iii 29 ff. should be understood as Anat's attempt to provide compensation for her killings. Baal says to her, "War upon earth/

A brief reference in "Aqhat" suggests that the practice of self-laceration had become established already as a necessary rite in mourning proceedings. "Men that gashed (their) flesh" came to Danel's home after Aqhat's death and there they remained for seven years. Indeed, self-laceration figures very highly in mourning among ancient peoples as well as among contemporary primitive societies.

Westermarck cites numerous instances among the Arabs of Morocco where self-laceration is an ancient but forbidden custom. Just as Islamic law prohibits Moslems to cover themselves with ashes as a sign of mourning, it forbids the people to gash their flesh. Nonetheless, Westermarck notes that the women, and sometimes the men, scratch themselves so violently that permanent scars remain on their faces. Moreover, abstention from this custom causes communal rebuke; the person who abstains is stigmatized forever by the society and in addition does not receive the neighbours' expression of grief when some- in the family dies. This ancient social custom cannot

55
(continued) is opposed to my will. Set mandrakes(?) in the ground,/ pour a peace-offering in the heart of the earth,/ honey from a pot in the heart of the fields;/ hold back thy stave (and) thy weapon". Cf. Infra, 63-64.

56
GML, "Aqhat" I iv 9-22.

57
Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 437 ff. Cf. also Wensinck, op. cit., pp. 24-25; Smith, op. cit., pp. 304-305.

58
Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 436-442.

59

be replaced; Islamic law is completely ignored.

vi. Lamentation (lines 23-25)

In form, the lament displays the use of short statements. This device is apt for it is the most natural and most effective means of conveying the feelings of tension and anxiety that usually accompany the mourner. Consider the following examples:

'Baal is dead. What (will become of) the people
of Dagon's
'son, what of the multitudes belonging
'to Baal? I will go down into the earth.' 60

'Are thy looks passed away like a dog's,
'thy lustiness too like a hound's (?);
'shalt thou then die, father, like men?
'Or is thy lustiness passed away into weeping
'on account of a woman, my glorious father?
'Or do gods die?
'Is Keret a son of [El],
'the offspring of Lutpan [and Kadesh]?' 61

How are the mighty fallen! 62

Should Abner die as a fool dies?
Your hands were not bound,
your feet were not fettered;
as one falls before the wicked
you have fallen. 63

All of the above citations contain short thought units.

59

Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 439-442, 494-495.

60

CML, "Baal" I* vi 23-25.

61

CML, "Keret" II ii 38-49.

62

II Samuel 1:19, 25, 27.

63

II Samuel 3:33-34.

What is to be noticed, moreover, is the occurrence of rhetorical questions. Their employment can be seen most clearly in the condolences of the Arab Moslems:

O my son, with whom have you left me?
Who will give me anything to-day? Whom
shall I see amidst the people? I do not
like to remain behind. 64

This form of expression has become stabilized. However, as Westermarck maintains, these statements are not the formal ones; they are informal. Islam has its own set form of condolence which contrasts remarkably to the ones laid down by tradition and social convention. 65

Kapelrud maintains that the Ugaritic, bcl. mt. my. lém. bn. dgn. my. hmlt. atr. bcl, "Baal is dead. What (will become of) the people of Dagon's son, what of the multitudes belonging to Baal?", was the "cult cry" of the worshippers of Baal and was "intended to be repeated by the audience", during the ritual enactment at the New Year's Festival. To substantiate this thesis he relies mainly on its repetition by Gupr and Ugar, and Anat, and on the "pathetic character" of "Baal" l* vi 5-31 and "Baal" l i 1-29, 66 67

64

Westermarck, op. cit., p. 436.

65

Ibid., p. 442. For instance, "May God make the reward great",

66

CML, "Baal" l* vi 9.

67

CML, "Baal" l i 6-7.

which culminates in "regular rhythmic form" of the description of Anat's sacrifice to Baal, the climax of the mourning rites.⁶⁸

Another lamentation occurs in "Keret".⁶⁹ Gray notes that much of the language in it reflects the role of the king in the cult and, in consequence, should not be taken literally.⁷⁰ In truth, the lament does centre around the belief that Keret was a "son of El", "the offspring of Lutpan and Kadesh". But the "extravagant" language in the lament over him should not act as a deterrent in investigating what it could mean.

It is a common feature of laments generally to employ bombastic language.⁷¹ Indeed, the eulogies in Athens, for instance, became so lavish that in the late sixth and early fifth centuries B. C. they were forbidden by law.⁷² Moreover, the custom prevailing among some Arab tribes condones the utterance of statements that may or may not be true. However, this practice is allowed only for those who have had a superficial acquaintance with the deceased; the close relatives and friends, on the other hand, accustom

68

Kapelrud, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

69

CML, "Keret" II i 2-11, 14-23; ii 36-49.

70

John Gray, The Keret Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra (Leiden, 1964) pp. 66, 66-67.

71

Cf. E. Jacob, "Mourning", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Volume 3, pp. 453.

72

Rohde, op. cit., p. 164, 189, note 44.

themselves to gross exaggeration of the dead man's qualities.⁷³

This frequent appearance of hyperbole in lamentations prompts the question "why?". Surely it has very little to profit the living directly. But the living must have believed in its efficacy. On the explanation of the use of exaggeration in funeral laments, most scholars agree that the high praise attributed to the dead or dying signifies that the living believed that the dead could and did exercise some influence over them.⁷⁴

3. Other Rites of Mourning

i. Weeping

In the Ras Shamra texts the occurrences of weeping can be arranged basically into three units: (1) weeping resulting from genuine human grief, (2) weeping as a rite, and (3) weeping as a combination of (1) and (2).

(1) Weeping as a consequence of sorrow needs no explanation. The following are some examples:

...she sated herself with weeping,
drank tears like wine ... 75

73

Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 437-438, 440-442. Cf. II Samuel 1: 19-27. This lament, attributed to David, makes use of hyperbole, too, especially verse 23: "They [Saul and Jonathan] were swifter than eagles, / They were stronger than lions."

74

Rohde, op. cit., p. 164, 190, note 48; Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Volume 4, p. 417.

75

CML, "Baal" I i 9-10.

76

CML, "Aqhat" I i 34-35.

Pughat wept from (her) heart,
she sobbed from (her) liver... 76

(2) The only reference to professional mourners occurs in "Aqhat". After Danel had duly buried his son, he called for "weeping women", "wailing women", to come to his home. These women stayed in his place performing the rites for "seven years", whereupon he sent them out, offered a sacrifice to the gods, and made preparations to avenge the murder of his son.⁷⁷ Weeping has become a fixed and regulated practice.

Gaster has noted why he thinks that weeping may be a rite of invigoration.⁷⁸ His reasons are the following:

a. Some deities who are mourned bear a name which is an "artificial" personification "of the wailings themselves".

b. Tears are not necessarily a sign of sorrow, but can be produced through excitement. Thus, in some cultures, tears are purposely forced to flow in order to effect natural processes. Gaster notes, in this context, that during the Akitu festival, the king was forced to weep because the tears were deemed to be "propitious".⁷⁹ Tears are a rite of imitative magic.

c. In a great number of ancient languages, the words meaning "howl of pain" and "cry of joy" are derived from the same root meaning "yell".

⁷⁷
CML, "Aqhat" I iv 9ff.

⁷⁸
Gaster, op. cit., pp. 32-34.

⁷⁹
Gaster, op. cit., p. 33.

Gaster's second reason should be specially noticed in respect of the Ras Shamra material. Baal's epithet, rkb. Crpt,⁸¹ "rider on the clouds", designates his main function. He is the giver of rain and, in consequence, responsible for the fertility of the fields. Perhaps the Canaanite believed tears would make the land fertile, just as Baal's rain makes it fertile. The following passage could be interpreted this way:

'do [thou] tell her (that) [she] lament; for I know
'that thy sister is pitiful.
'Let her of a truth set her waters in the fields,
'the issue of her throat in the highland (?).⁸²

In commenting on the practice of weeping, Wensinck illustrates Gaster's third point. He claims that among modern Semitic Egyptians weeping is a "distinct rite, consisting in elevating the voice and crying aloud, sometimes in uttering the zagharit".⁸³ "Uttering the zagharit" is a custom in which the women "rend the air with the shrill and quavering cries of joy".⁸⁴ It has its use at burials, births and weddings and according to Westermarck it is an attempt to drive off any evil spirits that may be hiding.⁸⁵ Van Selms brings this

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Cf. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 188-212.

81

Ugaritic rkb. Crpt, has been translated "cloud gatherer". Cf. S.P. Brock, "Νεφεληγενετα = rkb. Crpt", VT, volume 18, 1968, pp. 395-397; E. Ullendorf, "Ugaritic Studies within their Semitic and Eastern Mediterranean Setting", BJRL, Volume 46, 1963-64, pp. 243-4

82

CML, "Keret" II i 32-35. Cf. Infra, p. 33.

83

Wensinck, op. cit., p. 78.

84

Lane, op. cit., p. 523.

85

Westermarck, op. cit., p. 374.

interpretation to "Keret" II vi 2-5:

... And Sha'taqat departed,
 she indeed went into the house of Keret;
 she did weep (as) she penetrated and went in,
 she did shriek (as) she went in within. 86

Sha'taqat, whose name means literally "she who lets (bad luck)
 pass by",⁸⁷ is the sorceress responsible for driving out
 Keret's sickness.⁸⁸ Accordingly, her weeping does not stem from
 profound emotional attachment to Keret, but from her desire
 to heal him. Van Selms, therefore, explains her shrieking as
 an "apotropaic act" designed to expel the forces of sickness
 and death in Keret's home.⁸⁹

(3) When there is some basis for assuming an emotional
 basis to weeping, the ritual nature of the act becomes rather
 vague and may be absent entirely. This is the nature of the
 case in "Keret". Elhu and Thitmanat weep for Keret. They are
 his children; their action is initially the outcome expected.
 On the other hand, Keret asks Elhu specifically not to weep
 for him, but to call his daughter.

'son, weep not, lament not
 'for me; (and) exhaust not, son,
 'the well of thine eyes (and) the skull of thy head
 'with tears. Call thy sister

86

CML, "Keret" II vi 2-5.

87

Frauke Gröndahl, Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit (Rome, 1967) p. 114. "Sie, die (Unglück) vorbeigehen läßt".

88

Gray, op. cit., p. 74.

89

A. Van Selms, Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature (London, 1954) pp. 136-137.

'Thitmanat, (my) daughter whose affection (?)
'is strong, (that) she may weep and lament for me.

'hero, of a truth do thou tell thy sister,
'do [thou] tell her (that) [she] lament; for I know
' that thy sister is pitiful. 90

Why does he make this request? It is probably true that weeping was the job for women and not men; hence, Thitmanat would be the one to weep. However, Keret seems to think that she is more suited for her "affection is strong" and she is "pitiful". In addition to this internal evidence, the name "Thitmanat" means "eighth". Gray notes, as does Virolleaud, the magical significance for healing connected with the number eight. Perhaps the weeping Thitmanat was an attempt to expel the sickness and alternately to attract the forces of vitality. After all, it was by weeping at the loss of his family that Keret attracted El's attention and sympathy, and subsequently was able to re-establish himself! In any case, the emotional as well as the magical character of weeping seems to pervade the entire passage cited above.

ii. Sacrifice

Sacrifice is a religious phenomenon that occurs in nearly all ancient religions. The religion of Canaan was

90
CML, "Keret" II i 25-33.

91
CML, p. 151.

92
Gray, op. cit., p. 67.

93
Charles Virolleaud, "Le roi Kéret et son fils", Syria, XXII, 1941, p. 119.

94
Cf. Supra, p. 31.

no exception. Numerous offering lists, designating the kind of sacrifice and to whom the sacrifice was to be given, have been excavated from Ras Shamra.⁹⁶ The literary texts, too,⁹⁷ relate the occurrence of this practice in various circumstances. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine carefully all these occurrences of sacrifice. Consequently, the following remarks will be limited to sacrifice offered only in connection with death and burial.

The only two occurrences of sacrifice associated with death and burial are "Baal" I i 18-29 and "Aqhat" I iv 23-35. In both these instances, the sacrifice is presented after the mourning rites have been performed and the body has been buried.

Sacrifice occurs as the last mourning rite in Arab societies too. Customs differ from tribe to tribe, however. Often the family and close friends partake of the meal with the dead person who is thought to be present. Sometimes only the living eat. In other instances, the food intended for the deceased is distributed to the poor and needy.⁹⁸

Both Gray⁹⁹ and Westermarck¹⁰⁰ cite A. van Gennepe in their

⁹⁵
⁹⁶ CML, "Keret" I i 26-43.

Cf. Gordon, UL., pp. 107-115, in which he has translated a few of these texts.

⁹⁷
Cf. CML, "Keret" I iii 52-59 - iv 1-8; III iv 3 ff.; "Baal" V i 1 ff.; etc.

⁹⁸
⁹⁹ Cf. Westermarck, op. cit., 530-536.

John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1965) pp. 124, 253, 64(?).

interpretation of funeral sacrifice at Ugarit and among the Arabs of Morocco, respectively. Van Gennep writes:

Les repas consécutifs aux funérailles et ceux des fêtes commémoratives ... ont pour but de renouer entre tous les membres d'un groupement survivant, et parfois avec le défunt, la chaîne qui s'est trouvée brisée par la disparition d'un des chaînons. Souvent un repas de cet ordre a lieu aussi lors de la levée du deuil. 101

The sacrifice functions to re-unite the social unit that has been disjointed temporarily due to a death of one of their members and to mark, therefore, the end of the mourning period. However, Westermarck is quick to note that these sacrifices were originally intended for the deceased, but were supplemented later to incorporate new ideas. For instance, he states that in Islamic belief the deceased would be rewarded if his funeral meal were given to the poor.¹⁰² At the root of this fact lies the belief that the dead could and did appreciate the food offerings. This same belief probably explains the elaborate tomb out-fits, with libation channels, excavated at Ugarit.¹⁰³

In light of the above discussion, the understanding of Anat's sacrifice to Baal and perhaps Danel's sacrifice "to the stars in heaven (?)" and "to the gods" should be

100

Westermarck, op. cit., p. 536.

101

A. van Gennep, Les Rites de Passage (Paris, 1909) p. 235, quoted by Westermarck, op. cit., p. 536.

102

Westermarck, op. cit., p. 533.

103

Infra, pp. 48-51.

tempered by the significance of sacrifice not only for the living but also for the dead.

iii. Dancing

The literary texts from Ras Shamra furnish only one reference to dancing as a mourning rite. The passage occurs in "Aqhat" in connection with the rites performed after Aqhat's burial in Danel's home. It reads "when the dances were ended", ¹⁰⁴ ltm. mraqdm. Gaster draws attention to the Ugaritic mraqdm and points out the Biblical Hebrew, r-q-d, "to skip, leap", and the Arabic, r-q-ts, which, he maintains, denotes "a special kind of hopping or limping dance performed at funerals". ¹⁰⁵ In addition, Gray observes that the practice referred to in the Ugaritic is illustrated probably on the sarcophagus of Ahiiram of Byblos. The women depicted appear with "peculiar flouncing skirts", "loosened bodices", and "dishevelled hair". ¹⁰⁶ Lane similarly describes the female peasants of Upper Egypt in their mourning dance. He writes:

They daub their faces and bosoms, and part of their dress, with mud; and tie a rope girdle, generally made of the coarse grass called "halfà," round the waist. Each flourishes in her hand a palm-stick, or a

104

GML, "Aqhat" I iv 27.

105

Gaster, op. cit., p. 370. Cf. Wensinck, op. cit., pp. 42-44, also, Lane, op. cit., p. 533.

106

Gray, op. cit., pp. 252-253.

drawn sword; and dances with a slow movement, and in an irregular manner; generally pacing about, and raising and depressing the body. 107

Wensinck also notes that this kind of dancing is employed among the Semites. Moreover, he has offered evidence to show that religion adopted the rite of circumambulation from mourning practice. He questions why the rite in religious practice appears frequently with other rites which were originally performed for mourning. He cites I Kings 18:26-28, where the priests of Baal leapt about the altar and gashed themselves to invoke their god to send fire.¹⁰⁸ However, neither he, nor any other of the above scholars, proffer any interpretation.

4. Conclusions

There are two observations concerning the discussion of Canaanite mourning customs: (1) the rites are thought to have functioned on three levels: for the individual, for the social unit, and for the deceased, and (2) the rites intimate a thought association between life and death.

(1) Although the foregoing examination has concentrated on the mourning rites of the Canaanites, rites no doubt sanctioned by the larger community, one must not underestimate the initial human reactions that may have

107

Lane, op. cit., p. 533.

108

Wensinck, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

been at the base of the rites themselves. For the mourning customs to become rites at all, the behaviour of the people at the death of a family member or close friend must have exhibited deep personal emotion. The rites, once established, would give a formal outlet to these feelings, while at the same time, they could act as a means of restraint in extreme cases.

Gaster and Gray maintain that mourning rites have primarily a societal locus. However, these two men differ in their understanding of the basic objective of these customs.

Gaster labels these practices "rites of mortifi-
109 cation", in that they

express the fact that the demise of any single constituent member automatically impairs the corporate vitality of the entire group (or rather of the topocosm), so that all are in a state of temporary "death", or suspended animation. 110

For him, the aim of mourning rites would be not only to give man the appearance of death, but also to induce the feeling of death itself. Each individual in the community, therefore, as well as the community as a whole, is thought to have symbolically died.

Gray, on the other hand, calls the mourning prac-
111 tices "rites of separation". By this designation, he implies

109

Gaster, op. cit., pp. 26-34.

110

Gaster, op. cit., p. 30.

111

Gray, op. cit., pp. 44-45, 63.

that the act of mourning has as its main thrust the isolation of all that has been contaminated by the death from the areas not yet infected. The element of imitative magic has been noted above, especially with regard to weeping. This mourning rite and perhaps other ones, such as the gashing of flesh, the tearing of garments and the dance, would add weighted support to his interpretation. The "rites of separation", therefore, would function to safeguard the societal interests, and also to sustain the order that has been threatened by the death.

However, either of these explanations alone fails to take into account a distinct impression of the rites of mourning among the Semite peoples. It could be stated perhaps that these rites depict austerity. There is a definite excess and immoderation. But the excess and immoderation seems to excel what would be customary either within a prescribed religious framework or within the realm of 'normal human behaviour'. Particularly noticeable is the purposeful self-effacement, seen most clearly in the violent acts of self-laceration and the tearing of clothes. In relating similar customs among the Greeks, Rohde succinctly states:

It was not simple piety or natural human grief (never particularly given to violent or excessive demonstration) that caused these things. It was rather the ancient belief that the soul of the dead was still invisibly present, and would be pleased at the most violent expressions

of grief for its loss. 112

(2) If Rohde's interpretation of the mourning rites is accepted, the association of agricultural and vegetative motifs with the Ugaritian's depiction of his mourning rites becomes clearer.

A number of individual rites have been documented to show that the Canaanite has borrowed fertility motifs to describe their import. The most explicit reference occurs in lines 19-22 of "Baal" l* vi. This passage stands out particularly because of its length in proportion to the other rites mentioned. Not only is the simile of El's gashing taken from agricultural activities, but also the outpouring of blood which the action implies links this rite with the fertility cult of Canaan. The symbols of earth, dust, and straw and the significance of burial pillars, moreover, relate what the rhythms of nature conveyed to the ancient man of Canaan. In addition, tacit in the text "Baal" is the realization that the forces of nature repeat themselves and the hope that they will continue to do so. Baal represents the spirit of fertility, and like the changes in the vegetative realm, he undergoes these processes too, dying and yet coming back to life again. His vicissitudes are based on the recognition of the cyclical nature of phenomenal existence.

However, the reference to Baal and his dying and

rising is not meant to lay claim to the same significance for the dead at Ugarit. It cannot be stated that the Ugaritian thought that the dead would rise, but it can be stated, at least tentatively for the moment, that the man of Ugarit did not envisage death to be the end of his existence. The imagery employed in the description of the mourning customs and the customs themselves imply that life and death were not two radically inseparable states of being.

Ugaritic Burial Sites1. Introduction

Since the discovery of the mound of Ras Shamra, tombs have been excavated which reveal that the Ugaritian must have had a tacit understanding of the role and function of the dead. This chapter purports, therefore, to delineate the practice and thought that probably produced and nourished the construction of the tombs with their elaborate ritual outfit.

The evidence for this inquiry can be divided into two categories: (1) the Ugaritic tombs, and (2) the Ugaritic religious literature.

Initially, the reports of Claude F. A. Schaeffer, published in Syria and consolidated in Ugaritica I, will provide the relevant data necessary for a description of the two main types of tombs found: the Hyksos age tombs and the Cretan-styled tombs. Consequently, the treatment of the material at this juncture will be mainly a re-iteration of Schaeffer's results. However, it is hoped that a description of these tombs may yield some guide lines for attempting to understand the Ugaritian's thoughts concerning the role and function of their dead.

Although the results of archaeology can provide valuable insights into the practices and beliefs of ancient

man, one must not rely solely on its results. Just as archaeology has substantiated and modified scholars' views on the history and religion of ancient man, epigraphical evidence has helped often to elucidate the discoveries of the archaeologist. Therefore, to ensure the best possible interpretation of the tombs at Ugarit, the passages in the Ugaritic texts which seem to designate places of burial will be considered. Beliefs and practices of ancient peoples, as well as archeological finds from other excavated sites, will be incorporated to document similar occurrences to those known at Ugarit.

2. Archaeological Evidence

Although the excavations of the mound of Ras Shamra show that this spot was occupied from the neolithic age until the fourth century B.C., records of the ancient city's existence date from the early second millennium to its fall at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the twelfth century B.C.. The cause of Ugarit's prosperity, especially during the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C., centred around its critical geographical position at the cross-roads for trade among the people of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world. It was a large mercantile centre and consequently the archaeological digs have revealed that a large foreign element had taken up residence in the city.

In 1928 a Syrian peasant accidentally lifted a large stone slab with his plough. His action was brought to the notice of the authorities, for the ancient tomb that lay

beneath the slab soon revealed that it was one of many others associated with the ancient city of Ugarit and her sea-port, Minet-el-Beida.

113

i. Hyksos Age Tombs

In the north-eastern sector of the mound of Ras Shamra, tombs have been discovered which date back to the time of the Hyksos, that is, the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C..

Each of the homes of this period was constructed with a family burial vault beneath its foundation. Generally, a very short passage-way, or dromos, sometimes with steps, led to the door of the tomb. In tombs XXXVI¹¹⁴ and LIII¹¹⁵, the entrance was directly below the entrance to the house above. A large stone slab enclosed the dead with their grave-goods inside the vault. The chamber, square or rectangular in shape, had walls made of flat stones which were built so that they slanted slightly towards the ceiling. The ceiling was flat, made of large slabs of stone and supported by these gently sloping walls. Above the ceiling were the living quarters of the house.¹¹⁶ In all probability, the funeral chambers were built prior to the house, for the structure of

113

The following description is condensed from Schaeffer's report, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit", Syria, XIX, 1938, pp. 197-255.

114

Ibid., p. 199.

115

Ibid., p. 205.

116

Schaeffer, op. cit., figs. 3, 7, 24, 29.

the entire complex is such that the rooms of the house depended upon the tomb for their foundation.

A rich variety of grave-goods was found in these tombs. The pottery and ceramics indicate that the population of Ugarit was already cosmopolitan. Middle Minoan Cretan artifacts, Egyptian scarabs, characteristic Hyksos-period jugs, as well as daggers, spears, and axes, were among the material deposits.

Other material deposits in and around these tombs suggest that a cult was associated with the tomb. Alongside the wall which leads to the entrance of tomb LIV, three huge jars stood upright in the earth, and at the door of the tomb and just inside the chamber, bones of animals, particularly sheep, were discovered with other deposits. Tomb LIII had a large jar placed in the centre of its doorway while a stone table or altar was found at tomb LV and at tomb LVI. In reference to the above mentioned finds, Schaeffer connects them with the tomb installations of the Cretan-styled tombs at Ugarit, which, although they are more elaborate, were used probably in the service of the cult of the dead.

117

C.F.A. Schaeffer, The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit (London, 1939) p. 14.

118

C.F.A. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit", Syria, XIX, 1933, pp. 213-215.

119

Ibid., pp. 206-207.

120

Ibid., p. 222.

121

Ibid., p. 228.

122

Schaeffer, op. cit., pp. 207, 213 n. 2, 222, 253.

The tombs of the Hyksos period were not used exclusive-
 ly during this time. In tomb XXXVI,¹²⁴ for instance, the
 excavations reveal that some early burials were covered over,
 while others seem to have been removed to make place for more
 recent ones of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C..
 The Mycenaean type ceramics found in tomb LIII date to the
 fourteenth century B.C.. Moreover, an opening in the ceiling
 of this funeral chamber points to the fact that a different
 family was occupying the home, for the original entrance to
 the tomb beneath the passage-way into the house above had been
 overlooked entirely.¹²⁵ In consequence, Schaeffer contends that¹²⁶
 these tombs must have been used for several hundred years.

ii. Cretan-Styled Tombs

The structure and style of the majority of the fifteenth
 and fourteenth century tombs show strong affinities with tombs
 discovered in Crete. In all probability, the Cretan ones
 provide their prototype.¹²⁷

Like the Hyksos age tombs, these tombs were built

123

Infra, pp. 48-51.

124

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 254.

125

Ibid., pp. 254-255.

126

Ibid., p. 254.

127

Cf. Infra, p. 51.

beneath the main floor or courtyard of the family residence. 128

Access to the tomb was allowed by a passage-way or dromos which led down a stone stairway to the entrance of the funeral chamber. 129

Continuity with the tombs of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C. is seen in the use of the dromos; however, it appears that the dromos was longer in the Cretan-
130

styled tombs. The interior of the vault showed that much care and planning had gone into its construction. Large stone slabs provided the pavement for the vault, while the walls of carefully hewn stone formed a corbelled vault. 131 The deceased members of the family were laid upon the pavement and surrounded

by pottery of various kinds, alabaster vessels, faiences and
132 ivories. Particularly noticeable in the tombs of this period is the absence of weapons which were a common feature of the

Hyksos age tombs. 133 The artifacts uncovered in the tombs show that the chambers were in use until Ugarit's destruction: the older burials appear to have been pushed aside into an ossuary
134 to make space for more recent bodies.

128

C.F.A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I (Paris, 1939) p. 77;
The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit (London, 1939) p. 18.

129

C.F.A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I (Paris, 1939) figs. 78,
79, 80, 82; plate XVI (3).

130

Ibid., p. 76; C.F.A. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles de Ras
Shamra-Ugarit", Syria, XIX, 1938, p. 248.

131

C.F.A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I (Paris, 1939) figs. 78,
79, 80, plate XVII; "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit", Syria,
XVI, 1935, plate XXXII (1).

132

C.F.A. Schaeffer, The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-
Ugarit (London, 1939) p. 18.

It has been noted above that the cult of the dead at Ugarit in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C. had probably been well established.¹³⁵ However, the ritual at the tomb becomes increasingly more evident in the elaborate tomb installations of the Cretan-styled tombs of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C..¹³⁶

By the side of each tomb, outside the house, was a pit which was covered below the level of the ground with a pierced stone slab. Often a pot with its base knocked out replaced the pit. A short distance from the pit, a pipe was buried upright in the ground. At the base of the pipe was a gutter made of stone that connected the pipe with the pit. Schaeffer suggests that the libations were poured into the pipe, carried along the gutter to the pierced stone slab where the liquids flowed through it and into the pit. The upright pipe acted often as an overflow in cases where too much had been offered.¹³⁷ Directly in front of the pit a window was built in the wall of the vault in order to allow the dead access to the supply of water. This was the general ritual outfit for the tombs of this period.

133

Cf. Supra, p. 45.

134

C.F.A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I (Paris, 1939) p. 86.

135

Supra, pp. 44-46.

136

Schaeffer's description of the ritual outfit can be found in The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit (London, 1939) pp. 49-54. The discussion following is a synopsis of this work mentioned. Only direct references to this work will be footnoted.

137

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 50.

Some tombs had a direct connection with the mouth of the pit. This was done by means of a channel built in the wall of the funeral chamber. Other tombs had a huge jar built into the wall of the tomb. In one tomb, a cup was discovered in this jar, apparently for the use of the inhabitants of the chamber. In the cases where a jar was built into the wall of the chamber, a window in the wall of the tomb afforded access to the contents of the jar.

The above description of the ritual outfit at the tomb did not necessitate entering the interior of the chamber where the dead lay. However, some tomb installations of this period did warrant entry into the tomb. In one tomb, a gutter on the pavement of the floor connected three cup marks in the stone just inside the entrance to the funerary pit in the tomb. The dead supposedly had access to the offerings through a hole in the stone slab that covered the pit.¹³⁸ In another tomb, a huge vessel was buried inside the tomb so that its mouth was level with the pavement of the vault. In these cases the rite of libation had to be done inside the vault.

The jars and pipes associated with these tombs have been linked tentatively with similar jars and pipes used in the service of the fertility cult. Near some of the tombs at Ugarit, pipes and jars stood upright in the ground. These pipes showed that the liquids were allowed to run off into the

138

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 52. (Tomb I of Ras Shamra, fig.11).

soil through holes at lower levels in the clay. Often, pots were buried in the earth at the base of the pipe. These pots, usually rhytons, functioned as a funnel so that the liquids would be assured of being absorbed into the soil. Huge jars with their bases missing stood upright in the earth also. The offerings poured into these deposits were meant to benefit the earth so that a more luxurious harvest would result. ¹³⁹

Schaeffer admits the difficulty of stating definitively the function of certain deposits; ^{because} the various devices used in the fertility cult and the ritual installations for the dead are often so similar and placed so close to one another.

Tomb IV of Ras Shamra is furnished with a jar and a pit by its wall. However, a pit about two yards north of this tomb seems to have functioned as a well, but only for religious purposes. Apparently, the water was taken from this well and "poured into a system of channels consisting of long stone gutters, sloping slightly, one end of each being buried in the earth". ¹⁴⁰ It appears that one of these gutters was used in the ritual at the tomb, for it leads toward the entrance of the tomb. The other gutter, however, was used probably in the fertility cult. Situated close to another tomb, a huge jar was found with its base knocked out. The upper portion of this jar covered an underground pit. Close by, an altar

139

Schaeffer, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

140

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 53; cf. pl. XXXVIII, fig. 1.

had been erected. In a similar instance, a knife was discovered lying on the ground beside a jar. Consequently, the ritual offerings consisted probably of the flesh of animals as well as their blood.¹⁴¹

The tombs of this period reflect more strongly the Cretan and Aegean influence on Ugarit's culture. Schaeffer cites the Cretan tomb of Isopata, which dates one hundred years earlier, as a parallel to the Cretan-styled tombs of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B. C. of Ugarit.¹⁴²

Features that are common with the Cretan tombs are the dromos, the corbelled vault, the chamber window offering access to libations, and the ritual deposits, such as the pits and bottomless jars. However, despite the similarities in style, the tombs of this period at Ugarit, even the Hyksos age tombs, differ in one basic respect from the Cretan ones: the Ugaritic ones, that is, both the Hyksos age tombs and the Cretan-styled tombs were enclosed beneath the living quarters of the house.¹⁴³

iii. Observations

From the above description of the two main styles of

¹⁴¹

Ibid., p. 89, n. 136. M. R. Dussaud maintains that wine, oil, water, blood and the flesh of animals constituted the offerings in the fertility cult and the cult of the dead; cf. "Le sacrifice ʿslm", Syria, XVII, 1936, p. 101. Cf. also supra, p. 45 and pp. 33-36.

¹⁴²

C. F. A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I (Paris, 1939) p. 92; cf. R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (London, 1962) pp. 292-293.

¹⁴³

C. F. A. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit", Syria, XIX, 1938, p. 253. Although it could be argued that the tombs of Ugarit are Cretan, one presupposition of this study is

the tombs at Ugarit, five aspects are worth noting.

(1) For at least six hundred years, that is, from the eighteenth to the twelfth century B. C., burial in family tombs seems to have been customary. The tombs excavated show that much thought and planning must have preceded their erection beneath the family quarters. Consequently, the burial of the dead, close to the family residence, or in a common spot, was practised in all probability long before the construction of the tombs that archaeology has revealed.

(2) The dead were interred beneath their homes. This fact seems to suggest that a relationship existed between the living and the dead, that the family dead were considered still to be part of the family unit. Moreover, the co-habitation of the living and the dead points to the absence of the Hebrew belief of the contaminating influence of the dead.¹⁴⁴ This need for ritual purification betrays at once the Hebrew separation of the living from the dead, and consequently its valuation of these respective states of "existence".¹⁴⁵

(3) From the above description of the tombs at Ugarit, it seems that no special distinction was conferred on any one deceased family member. No encasements for the dead nor any epigraphical evidence has been found in the tombs

¹⁴³
 (continued) that the tombs are in fact indigenous to the Ugaritians.

¹⁴⁴
 Cf. esp. Leviticus 22:4, Numbers 5:2.

¹⁴⁵
Infra, pp. 80-81.

to reveal that one particular person was revered more than another. By contrast, the sarcophagi of Tabnith and Eshmun-azar of Sidon (c. third century B.C.) bear inscriptions which allude to the importance of the body in the sarcophagus and invoke curses upon those who may disturb the body's resting spot.¹⁴⁶ Further, numerous Semitic mortuary inscriptions have been found lauding the deeds of great men, and adjuring future generations to safe-guard their burial spot.¹⁴⁷ This kind of evidence is absent completely in Ugarit.

The only evidence that may be counter to the above observation concerns (i) burial in jars and (ii) the discovery of two Ugaritic stelae.

(i) According to Schaeffer's report of the excavations, child burial in jars seems to have been a common practice at Ugarit.¹⁴⁸ These deposits were found buried beneath the foundation of houses. Similar occurrences of this practice in the Ancient Near East have prompted Graham and May to interpret them as sacrificial offerings made when the foundation of the house was being laid. The child sacrifices, they maintain, function to protect and ensure the prosperity

¹⁴⁶ Cf. G.A. Cooke, A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions (Cambridge, 1903) nos. 4, 5.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid., nos. 61, 62, 63.

¹⁴⁸ C.F.A. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit", Syria, XVI, 1935, p. 145; also, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra", Syria, XV, 1934, pp. 111, 123.

of the inhabitants of the house. ¹⁴⁹ Indeed, comparative anthropology documents the practice of ancient man sacrificing life in order to rejuvenate or repair the vital forces necessary for man's continued existence. ¹⁵⁰ However, no direct evidence from Ugarit seems to confirm that child sacrifice was practised; but, the possibility may exist that it did, especially in view of the Old Testament condemnation against ¹⁵¹ sacrificing children to Molech.

In the case of jar burial at Ugarit, though, one's attention is drawn to the fact that, in content, jar burial is not very dissimilar to burial in tombs. Both kinds of burial were found beneath the houses and in both the family had deposited dutifully the customary grave-goods. The only evident difference seems to concern the ritual at the tomb, for which the jar burials are not conspicuously intended. This difference, then, would seem to point to the decreased importance of deceased children and infants, and consequently, to a modification in the care taken for them.

On the other hand, jar burials, deposited as they were closer to the every-day life of the family, may signify, as it has in other archaic societies, that the child was to

149

W.C. Graham and H.G. May, Culture and Conscience (Chicago, 1936) pp. 75-81.

150

M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (London, 1958) p. 346.

151

Cf. Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-4; Jeremiah 32:35; II Kings 23:10

152

be reborn into the same family in the near future. This interpretation would explain in part why the children would not need the material sustenance that the adults buried in the tombs received. Nonetheless, neither kind of burial, that is, burial in jars or burial in tombs, seems to isolate one or a few persons for special mention by the living. The question of the significance of the two different kinds of interment, one for children, the other for adults, must be suspended, however, for the purposes of the present study.

(ii) The discovery of two Ugaritic stelae, dedicated to Dagon and found near his temple, has prompted Albright to associate them "with the prospective funerals of the persons whose names they bear".¹⁵³ His interpretation is adduced largely from other archaeological evidence uncovered in Palestine.¹⁵⁴ For instance, the stelae found in the Temple of Obelisks at Byblos and the ones found in a Late Bronze Age sanctuary at Hazor give substance to his contention that the dead were worshipped at these sites, spots separate from the actual place of burial, but nonetheless, relatively close by. In addition to the archaeological evidence brought forward, Albright notes the

152

Cf. Eliade, op. cit., p. 250.

153

W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, 1956) p. 203, note 30.

154

For his interpretation, see W. F. Albright, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine", VT, Supplement IV, 1957, pp. 242-258.

Biblical account of Absalom. According to II Samuel 18:18, Absalom had erected a monument to himself prior to his death, because he did not have a son to take care that he would be remembered. Moreover, when Absalom died, he was thrown into a pit in the forest; this fact validates Albright's contention, therefore, that the burial spot was often not the place to erect monuments for the dead. Consequently, the practice revealed by archaeology substantiates itself in this written account.

155

It was noted above that to archaic man, stones or pillars represented the presence of some power and thus conveyed to man the assurance of the efficacy of that power to the community nearby. As a result of this belief of archaic man, it is not difficult to understand why stelae, erected to prominent men of the community, would become the centre for both their worship and their source of support in times of crisis, such as, famine, drought, or sickness. Indeed, Albright insists that the places of commemorative stelae functioned exactly in this way: the dead received worship from the living and the living sought help from the dead.

156

In view of Albright's argument, it is understandable why he associates the two stelae from Ugarit with funeral

155

Supra, pp. 19-23.

156

The main point of Albright's article (op. cit.) is to show that the bāmāh of Palestine functioned similarly.

rites. Moreover, he sees in the Ugaritic written material a reference which elucidates the practice of erecting monuments to the ēlēb, that is, to the "(divine) shades of the dead", to the "divine ancestors".¹⁵⁷ Consequently, he translates the two stelae:

- A. Stela which Aryal(?) has offered to Dagon: a mortuary offering of a sheep and an ox for food.
- B. Mortuary offering which Uzzēnu offered to Dagon his lord; a sheep and an ox as an inviolable offering.¹⁵⁸

Albright's evidence, substantiating his interpretation of the above two Ugaritic stelae, is impressive indeed. However, certain other considerations must be dealt with. There are three: (a) the translation of the stelae, (b) the occurrences of Ugaritic stelae, and (c) the ritual installations at the tombs.

(a) The import of the above two inscriptions revolves about the meaning of the Ugaritic word, pgr, which Albright renders, "mortuary offering". Both Obermann and Neiman¹⁵⁹ have noted that this word, pgr, refers to a permanent part of the sanctuary, and on the basis of other Semitic parallels

¹⁵⁷

Cf. W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, 1956) p. 106, also p. 203, note 31.

¹⁵⁸

Albright, op. cit., p. 203, note 30. He translates skn, "stela", and pgr, "mortuary offering".

¹⁵⁹

In his article, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine", VT, Supplement IV, 1957, p. 247, Albright acknowledges the work of Neiman (footnote 46) and states that pgr can mean both "mortuary offering", and "stela".

160 161
 have translated it "altar" and "stela", respectively.

Hence, if one were to consider the translation alone, there is no direct reference to mortuary rites.

(b) These two Ugaritic stelae are the only two that have been discovered at Ugarit. The names on these stelae, Aryal(?) and ¹⁶²Uzzênu, appear in other documents too. Gordon notes that Tryl is the queen mother since the king of Ugarit addresses her in UT 2009:2 : "to my mother ¹⁶³Tryl". ¹⁶⁴Uzzênu, Czn, is definitely a personal name, but, his identity is not known. However, if the site of Dagon's temple was the centre of worship for the prominent dead, or "heroes", the evidence is lacking notably, that is, it would be natural to expect to find more stelae, addressed to other prominent people of Ugarit, among the ruins of this temple. This has not been the case.

(c) The ritual installations at the tombs of Ugarit suggest that the dead were worshipped where they were interred.

160
 J. Obermann, "Votive Inscriptions from Ras Shamra", JAOS, 1941, pp. 38-40.

161
 D. Neiman, "PGR: A Canaanite Cult-Object in the Old Testament", JBL, LXVII, 1948, p. 57.

162
 There is discrepancy in the transliteration of this name. The following accept "Tryl": R. Dussaud, "Deux stèles de Ras Shamra portant une dédicace au dieu Dagon", Syria, XVI, 1935, p. 177; Obermann, op. cit., p. 37; Neiman, op. cit., p. 55; Gordon, UT 69:2.

163
 Gordon, op. cit., p. 506.

164
 Gordon, ibid., p. 455.

If the place of these stelae was the centre for the worship of the dead, then the ritual outfits at the tombs have little or no significance. However, the archaeological finds are too impressive and extensive to allow such an interpretation.

In view of the difficulties involved with Albright's understanding of these two stelae, one is convinced that his interpretation must be tempered to some extent.¹⁶⁵

Thus, in general terms, one can maintain that the dead were treated alike. However, it remains to be shown what this may have signified to the Ugaritian.

(4) The tomb outfits reveal that the rite of libation to the dead was practised. André Parrot has collected both archaeological and textual evidence from the area of the ancient Near East to show that this practice was not an uncommon one.¹⁶⁶ In essence, his work aims to show that the object of watering the dead had a two-fold purpose: to quench the thirst of the dead and to confine the dead to their tomb. In illustrating this thesis, he draws on materials from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria to show that

165

It will be noted that the foundation that supports Albright's interpretation of these stelae differs radically from the thought structure that gives rise to the practice evidenced in the elaborate tomb outfits at Ugarit. Cf. infra, pp. 80-83.

166

Cf. André Parrot, Le "Refrigerium" dans l'au-delà (Paris, 1937).

during the fourteenth, thirteenth, and eighth centuries B. C. the rite of libation was prevalent. Moreover, John Gray notes that E. L. Sukenik has deduced that this rite functioned in Israelite Samaria. Gray adds that this practice was probably the cause of the prohibition implicit in Deuteronomy 26:14:

I have not eaten thereof in my mourning,
neither have I put away thereof, being
unclean, nor given thereof for the dead:
I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord
my God, I have done according to all that
thou hast commanded me.

It is understandable why the Deuteronomist would have invoked an injunction prohibiting the offering of first fruits to the dead, for the practice reveals the belief in the reality of the dead, and their ability to exercise some powers. Indeed, the archaeological discoveries at the tombs of Ras Shamra show that the dead were thought to be capable of receiving and benefitting from the attention paid to them. This is the significance that would be attached therefore to Gray's translation of "Aqhat" II i 27-29. Danel requests a son

One who may set up the stele of his ancestral god
In the sanctuary which enshrines his forefather,
Who may pour out his liquid-offering to the ground,

167

John Gray, "Ugarit", Archaeology and Old Testament Study, edited by D. W. Thomas (Oxford, 1967) p. 150. Gray cites the work of E. L. Sukenik in Kedem ii, 1945, pp. 42-58.

168

Supra, pp. 48-51.

Even to the dust wine after him. 169

Danel's comfort at death is dependent wholly upon his surviving family, that is, his son, carrying out this duty of offering libations. Moreover, Schaeffer maintains that if the dead were deprived of care, they wandered about as ghosts, harming the living. For the belief that it was an abomination to the dead not to care for them, he quotes the inscription of Assurbanipal describing the attack of Susa:

And I have broken up their kings' graves.
I have allowed their soul no rest, and I
have refused them the funeral offerings
and libations of water. 171

Thus, when the dead were properly attended, and received the libations, they remained content in their tomb and did not harm the living. 172

On the other hand, because the dead were sensitive to material needs, it seems likely that they were thought to be aware of the activities of the living nearby. Their interment beneath their family home would suggest that they could benefit the living. However, any discussion of the awareness of the dead regarding the actions of the

169
John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1965), pp. 109-110.

170
C. F. A. Schaeffer, The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit (London, 1939) p. 49.

171
Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 49.

172
Cf. supra, pp. 59-60.

living and their ability to exercise any influence on behalf
of the living must be suspended at present.¹⁷³

(5) The installations intended for the dead bear a marked similarity to the fertility cult deposits found at Ugarit. Schaeffer was the first to note their close structural association and maintained that, "In either cult the apparatus for the libations is arranged in the same fashion"¹⁷⁴.

The association of these two cults is not limited to the form of each however. They appear to be united at a much deeper level. Schaeffer cites the myth of the Danaids¹⁷⁵ which tradition has understood in two different ways.

The oldest tradition which issues from Hesiod refers to the Danaids as "water-bearing genii" who had discovered the art of digging wells and brought their skill to a land without water. In representations of these women, they are depicted pouring water into a bottomless jar.¹⁷⁶ A later tradition, however, claimed that their action was to be understood as punishment for a crime that they had committed. The myth relates that, on the command of their father,

173
Infra, pp. 82-83.

174
Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 49. Cf. also supra, 50-51.

175
Schaeffer, op. cit., pp. 54-56.

176
Ibid., pp. 54-55. He mentions especially the "black-figure vase of the Munich Antiquarium and the archaic Lekythos of Palermo" and also their representation on the altar at the Vatican.

Danaos, his daughters killed their husbands, the sons of Aegyptos, on the night of their marriage. Atonement for the crime of the Danaids required therefore that they be condemned to the fruitless task of pouring water into a bottomless jar. With the discovery of the tomb installations at Ugarit, Schaeffer has suggested that their action may be understood simply as the duty of the family to the dead, to ensure the comfort of the deceased in his burial spot.¹⁷⁷ The Danaids, then, may represent the focus around which the libation rites of the two cults pivot.

Schaeffer has noted an Ugaritic text which is vital in understanding the rite of libation at Ugarit.¹⁷⁸ The text reads:

... "War upon earth
 'is opposed to my will. Set mandrakes(?) in
 the ground,
 'pour a peace-offering in the heart of the
 earth,
 'honey from a pot in the heart of the fields;
 'hold back thy stave (and) thy weapon. 179

Schaeffer maintains that the context of the above passage suggests that the rite was observed to secure the aid of Baal so that the crops would flourish.¹⁸⁰ In the fuller context of the passage, however, the rite is understood best

177

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 54.

178

Ibid., p. 46.

179

CML, "Baal" V iva 8-11.

180

Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 46.

as a preventive measure against the earth's sterility.

It has been noted above¹⁸¹ that the essence of life was thought to reside in the blood. Consequently, blood, unnecessarily¹⁸² and innocently shed, would cause the earth to languish.

Moreover, the passage cited above follows directly upon Anat's admission of her "blood-bath" and immediately precedes Baal's contention that he has the power to create¹⁸³ rain. The instructions, given to her by Baal, must be understood then as an attempt to appease the forces that¹⁸⁴ have been damaged and upset due to her actions. This interpretation does not mean that the deposits of bottomless jars found near the tombs of Ugarit were not used to secure the fertility of the earth. They were used for this purpose; but, what use would this rite be to Baal, the deity who has the power par excellence for making the soil fertile, that is, rain?¹⁸⁵ The rite of libation must be seen therefore to function for the powers or deities of the earth.

But the excavations of the tombs at Ras Shamra show clearly that the rite of libation was intended for the

181

Supra, pp. 23-24.

182

Cf. ibid., also, Genesis 4: 8-12.

183

CML, "Baal" V iii 50- iva 1-20.

184

This interpretation makes evident the tension existing between the powers of the earth, the earth divinities, and Baal and the deities associated with him.

185

This statement does not imply that Baal was supreme, but that he had no jurisdiction over the fertility powers of the earth, or the chthonic deities.

dead also. Moreover, the rite functioned to quench the¹⁸⁶ thirst of the dead and to confine them to their tomb. In addition, on the basis of parallel practices in the ancient world, it can be shown that the materialistic cult of the dead evidenced at Ugarit functioned to promote fertility.

It has been mentioned already that Albright maintains that the bâmôth¹⁸⁷ of Palestine served two mutually dependent purposes: (1) to worship the dead, and (2) to seek comfort and support from the dead so that productivity would be bestowed on the "fields and garden crops, flocks and herds",¹⁸⁸ and protection and health upon the population of the land.

Another tradition which closely parallels the nature¹⁸⁹ of the bâmôth is the Greek hero cult. In general, this cult revolved about the worship of a man at the site of his grave or tomb. The heroes were men elevated to divine status, and, in consequence, capable of effecting the miraculous. Basically, the devotees of the hero attempted by various means, such as libation, to enlist the hero's support in times of crisis: to aid in the cultivation of crops, to heal sickness, and to foresee the outcome of

186

Cf. supra, pp. 59-62.

187

Supra, pp. 55-59.

188

W. F. Albright, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine", VT, Supplement IV, 1957, p. 253.

189

Albright mentions this cult in his article (op. cit., pp. 253-254). Cf. also supra, pp. 22-23.

190

certain events.

The two patterns displayed in these two traditions do not appear to be fortuitous. The worship of the dead at or near their burial site and the belief that this worship could bring health, success and fertility to the worshipping community seem to be two closely linked patterns of the ancient. In all probability, then, this pattern existed at Ugarit, for the following reasons: (1) the structural similarity of the fertility cult and the cult of the dead, (2) the burial of the dead beneath their family home, and (3) the material nature of the cult which suggests that the dead had powers of sense perception.

3. Textual Evidence

According to Driver's translation of the Ras Shamra material, a number of words and phrases seem to denote places of burial: ¹⁹¹gngn, "sepulchre", ¹⁹²npš, "grave", ¹⁹³knkny, "full of caves/graves", ¹⁹⁴qbr, "grave", ¹⁹⁵tn, "(sepulchral)

190

Cf. Erwin Rohde, Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks, Volume I, (New York, 1956) pp. 115-155; also Martin Nilsson, The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion (London, 1927) pp. 514-560.

191

CML, "Baal" II vii 49, and p. 146; cf. WUS, p. 67: gngn, "throat".

192

CML, "Baal" II vii 48, and p. 157; cf. WUS, p. 213: npš, "throat, appetite, soul, living being", and "abundance(?)".

193

CML, "Baal" I* v 13, and p. 145; cf. WUS, p. 152: knkny, "underworldly, that is, like the underworld".

chamber", hrt. ʔlm. ʔars, ¹⁹⁶ "hole of the earth-gods", and
¹⁹⁷ mdgt, "dark place". De Moor's recent translation of "Keret"
¹⁹⁸ II i 14-23 adds two more words to this list: bt, "tomb",
 and hšt, "vault".

i. qbr, tn, bt, hšt

Among the Ugaritic references to burial, two passages from "Keret" appear to document the use of the tomb as a place of interment.

'Keret assuredly is passing away,
 'and thou must fashion a grave (qbr), fashion
 'a grave (qbr) (and) construct a vault (tnm). .
 'like a treasury with a gate . . . :
 'like an enclosure (?) . . . : 199

How could we enter your tomb (bbtk) willingly,
 even your vault (hštk) on our own account?
 Even you father, how could you possibly die,
 or could moaning enter your vault (hštk),
 singing of a father's lamenting wife? 200

194

qbr, "grave, tomb". CML, "Keret" II ii 25, and p. 144; cf. WUS, p. 273:

195

tn, its meaning is not given although its parallelism with tsr/ trm/ tnn is. CML, "Keret" II ii 26, and p. 153; cf. WUS, p. 327:

196

and p. 139; cf. WUS, p. 116: hrt, "vault, tomb, grave". CML, "Baal" I i 17-18, "Aqhat" I iii 6, 20-21, 35,

197

mdgt, "darkness?". CML, "Aqhat" I iii 41, and p. 161; cf. WUS, p. 75:

198

Johannes C. de Moor, "Studies in the New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra I", Ugarit-Forschungen, Band I, (Verlag Butzon and Bercker Kevelaer, 1969) pp. 171-172.

199

CML, "Keret" II ii 24-28.

200

De Moor, op. cit., pp. 171-172. The Ugaritic reads:

Both of these passages from "Keret" are difficult to translate. In the case of "Keret" II ii 24-28, the text is broken and some of the words are obscure.²⁰¹ Although these problems exist, Gray agrees nonetheless with Driver's translation and sees in it a reference to the tombs excavated at Ugarit "with corridor and stone gateway of Cretan and Mycenaean inspiration".²⁰² "Keret" II i 15-19, on the other hand, is complete; but, as Gray states, "This passage bristles with difficulties by any interpretation".²⁰³ However, de Moor's rendition does seem to merit some attention. It may be noted that he understands Akkadian bītu as cognate to Ugaritic bt,²⁰⁴ and Akkadian ḥaštu, "pit, grave", and Syrian Arabic ḥaṣḥaṣe, "family-vault", as cognate to Ugaritic ḥšt.²⁰⁵ Moreover, he has cited Palestinian Arabic ḥuṣṣe, which T. Canaan describes in this way:

200

(continued)

... kklb
 bbtk. nctq. kēnr
 āp [.] ḥštq āp. āb. kmtm
 tmtn. ū ḥštq lntn
 ctq. bd. ātt āb. ṣrry

(CML, "Keret" II i 15-19)

For the complete substantiation of his translation, see his article cited above. Driver translates the passage in this way:

... Thy looks
 'are passed away like a dog's, thy lustiness too
 'like a hound's(?); shalt thou then die, father,
 'like men? Or is thy lustiness passed away
 'into stinking decay on account of a woman, my
 glorious father?

201

Cf. John Gray, The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra (Leiden, 1964) pp. 70-71.

202

Gray, op. cit., p. 71; also supra, pp. 46-47.

Some houses are built over a low room or over a vaulted cave. A few steps lead down to such a dark room which as a rule has no windows. They either serve as store rooms or for stabling animals and are known by the name ḥuṣṣeh ... 206

The above description of ḥuṣṣeh resemble the description of the tombs at Ugarit, built beneath the home and approached by a staircase and dromos. If de Moor's translation of "Keret" II i 15-19 is accurate, this passage depicts the tombs of Ras Shamra, or ones similar to them, which were spacious enough for a man to enter.

ii. npš, gngn

"Baal" II vii 45-49 reads:

'I will of a truth send a guide for Mot
'the son of El, a herald for the hero
'loved of El, that he may summon Mot
'to his grave (and) conceal the loved of El
'in his tomb ...

The Ugaritic words used in the above passage for "grave" and "tomb", that is, npš and gngn, respectively, have a variety of English equivalents. Furthermore, within Ugaritic, each of these words appear to denote at least two radically different things: an element of man and

203

Gray, op. cit., p. 63.

204

Cf. WUS, p. 53: bt, "daughter".

205

Cf. WUS, p. 118: ḥšt, "property, belongings".

206

De Moor, op. cit., p. 171, notes 27, 28, 29.

a place of interment and/or a funerary monument.

Ringgren maintains that the word, nep^hesh, in the Old Testament, means "man as a totality". ²⁰⁷ "Nep^hesh is the life, not in a theoretical sense but in its external and visible aspect, whilst heart and spirit denote life in its interior and hidden aspect". ²⁰⁸ For this reason, the various translations for Hebrew nep^hesh, such as, "life", "breath", "throat", "desire, aspiration", "person", "living being", "self", should be understood generally in terms of what is exhibited.

The source for the meaning of Ugaritic np^s is largely Hebraic; however, it is common to other Semitic languages, notably Akkadian napi^stu, "throat". ²⁰⁹ Consequently, Driver ²¹⁰ Gordon, and others have translated it "throat", "breath, spirit", "life", "appetite; desire", "person". ²¹¹

On the other hand, Driver has also rendered np^s, "grave". He cites the Aramaic nap^sa, "grave, tomb", and states that Ugaritic np^s, in the passage cited above, should

207

H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, translated by D. E. Green (Philadelphia, 1966) p. 122.

208

Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament (New York, 1958) p. 159.

209

A study of np^s in the several contexts in which it occurs in the Ugaritic material would prove valuable at this juncture; however, it would be outside the scope of the present work. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, secondary sources will be used.

210

GML, p. 157.

211

UT, p. 446.

be understood as analogous to the representation of the entrance to the netherworld as the throat of Mot. This explanation of npš, "grave", thus links a more common meaning of npš, that is, "throat", with a symbolic representation of death that occurs in "Baal".

On the basis of the same Aramaic word, napsā, Gordon has suggested that npš be rendered "funeral monument, stela". This is not an unusual translation for it is a well established fact that in post-biblical Hebrew, Palmyrene, and Syriac, the word meant "funeral monument". In the context of the Hebrew material, Jacob maintains that

the monument representing a person guarantees, at any rate for a limited time, the continuance of his presence.

He thus associates the funeral monument with the meaning inherent in the word, nephesh, which denotes life in "its external and visible aspect". This explanation accords with the understanding of the same phenomenon noted above, in that the stone is the medium through which a person's

212

CML, p. 157.

213

Cf. CML, "Baal" ¶i 6-8.

214

UT, p. 446.

215

Cf. Jacob, op. cit., p. 161; Albright, op. cit., p. 252; René Dussaud, La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam (Paris, 1955).

216

Jacob, op. cit., p. 161.

217

Ibid., p. 159.

218

Cf. supra, pp. 19-23; also, supra, pp. 55-59.

presence and strength is represented to the community.

René Dussaud has presented an interesting discussion of nepshesh in the Hebrew and Ugaritic material. He maintains that nepshesh is the "âme végétative" and is thought to reside in the entrails of man. For this reason, it has to be nourished even though the man may have died. In consequence, Dussaud explains the offerings of food and water at the grave-site or tomb as nourishment for the nepshesh which continues to inhabit its place of interment. This explanation, he contends, accounts for the name for the funeral stele, nepshesh.²¹⁹ It does not seem unusual, then, that in the Ugaritic, "grave" and "tomb" were designated npš also. Moreover, if this is the case, that "grave" or "tomb" meant npš in Ugaritic because the npš of the dead remained at that spot, one can more easily understand the elaborate tomb outfits found beneath the homes at Ugarit. The importance of the burial place of the dead, then, seems to revolve about the fact that the dead, or rather the "âme végétative" continued to be present in and around its burial spot.

In the Ugaritic passage cited above, "Baal" II vii 45-49, the word gnn is parallel to npš. Some cognates of gnn have been suggested which show that it too denotes

219

René Dussaud, "La Notion d'Ame chez les Israélites et les Phéniciens", Syria, XVI, 1935, pp. 267-277.

either an element of man or a place of interment.

In the context of the passage just mentioned, Driver translates gn̄gn, "tomb", and cites the Akkadian gannu, gangannu, "lid", ganī/ūnu, "sleeping chamber", and the Arabic jananu, "tomb", to substantiate his rendition. Moreover, he notes that the Ugaritic gn̄gn, "inward parts" or "conscience" may be cognate to gn̄gn and to Arabic ²²⁰ jinjīnu, "chest". However, Gordon and Hvidberg understand gn̄gn only in this latter sense. Gordon translates it "insides", noting its parallelism with noš and its affiliation with gn̄gn which he maintains is somehow "con-²²¹ nected with the intestines". Hvidberg translates it "individually", "with his breast", and cites the Arabic ²²² ganḡan, "breastbone".

In view of the parallelism of gn̄gn with npš both in the passage above, and in their respective meanings, it seems as though a case could be stated for positing a close association between gn̄gn, as an element of man,

220

CML, p. 146; W. A. Ward claims that Ugaritic gn̄gn=Egyptian gn̄n.w. The root of Ugaritic gn̄gn would therefore be gn̄n. In the Egyptian context gn̄n.w is used "in conjunction with intestines, perhaps 'the fat between and around them'". ("Comparative Studies in Egyptian and Ugaritic", JNES, XX, 1961, p. 33.)

221

UT, p. 380.

222

F. F. Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament (Leiden, 1962) p. 48. In a private communication from Dr. P. C. Craigie, he noted that in the Hebrew expression, mḡinnath-leb, (Lamentations 3:65), literally, "a covering of the heart, shell about the heart", mḡinnath is not unlike tomb. The root for this word is gn̄n, the same as Driver's cognate for "tomb".

and gngn, as a place of interment. Gngn may be, as noš is, the "âme végétative". However, because of lack of evidence, the hypothesis that gngn represents the "âme végétative" cannot be proved at present.

iii. hrt. elm. ars. mdgt. "knrt", knkny

In "Aqhat" I iii, two passages with similar word order occur. In his search for the bodily remains of Aqhat, Danel states what he plans to do with them:

' ... I shall weep and bury him, I shall
put him
'in a hole of the earth-gods.' 223

When he had found and gathered Aqhat's remains

... he wept and buried,
buried him in a dark chamber in a shroud. 224

Because the above two passages occur on the same tablet in "Aqhat", in all probability, they both refer to one means of burial.

In the latter passage just cited, Driver, Gray, Gordon, and Gaster concur that Ugaritic mdgt has as cognates the Arabic dajja and daja, which denote darkness. Hence, they translate mdgt so that the place of burial is characterized by it.

223

CML, "Aqhat" I iii 34-35:
...abky, waqbrnh. astn
bhrt. elm. ars. ...

This passage is repeated three times in "Aqhat" (I iii 5-6, 20-21, 34-35) and occurs once in "Baal" (I i 16-18).

224

CML, "Aqhat" I iii 40-41:
...ybky. wyqbr
yqbr. nn. bmdgt. bknrt

225
 Gray merely uses the English noun "darkness". whereas
 226
 Gaster and Driver 227 translate mdgt, "dark chamber". However,
 228
 Gordon maintains that it should be rendered "grave/coffin"
 or "senulchre". This translation seems to go beyond the
 literal meaning of the Arabic cognate; it is a "free"
 translation which appears to be based primarily on his
 understanding of "knrt" which he thinks is parallel to mdgt
 in the same passage.

Ugaritic knrt is open to several interpretations.
 The differences in interpretation stem initially from
 the reading of the cuneiform text. Three translitera-
 tions have been offered: (1) knrt, (2) knkn, and (3) knk.²²⁹

(1) knrt: In the first edition of The Legacy of
 Canaan, Gray noted that the cuneiform renderings, knrt,
 and knkn, were very similar. However, he preferred then
 to read knrt. The Arabic kinnâratu, "long strip of linen",
 has been suggested as a suitable cognate, and, in consequence,
 Driver has translated knrt, "in a shroud", and Gray has

225 John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957) p. 86.

226 Theodor Gaster, "The Story of Aqhat", Studi e Materiali
 di Storia delle Religioni, XIII, 1937, p. 51.

227 ChL, "Aqhat" I iii 41; cf. also p. 161.

228 UT, p. 430; cf. also UL, p. 98.

229 Cf. supra, p. 74, note 224.

rendered it, "in a linen shroud".²³⁰

(2) knkn: Gordon, Gaster, and Virolleaud have read the Ugaritic script, knkn.²³¹ Gray now proposes to read knkn also.²³²

Three translations have resulted from this reading.

(i) Gray cites the Arabic kanna and translates knkn, "concealment".²³³

(ii) Virolleaud and Gordon translate it, "great jar",²³⁴ and "urn",²³⁵ respectively. Gordon notes its Ugaritic cognate kknt, "jar"; but, he gives no derivation for his translation. In this connection, Driver cites the Akkadian kannu, "container" and kankannu, "barrel, cask".²³⁶ However, Driver completely dissociates kknt from knrt and knkny.

(iii) Gaster relates knkn with gngn and knkny.²³⁷ Like Driver,²³⁸ he maintains that knkn is a phonetic variant of gngn, "vault"; and, on the basis of other parallels,²³⁹ he translates knkn, "vault". Consequently, both he and

²³⁰ Cf. Gray, op. cit., p. 86; also, CML, "Aqhat" I iii 40-41, and p. 145.

²³¹ Gordon, UT, I Aqht 147; Gaster, op. cit., p. 51; Charles Virolleaud, "La Légende phénicienne de Danel," pp. 164-165, cited by Gray, op. cit., p. 86.

²³² John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1965) p. 121.

²³³ Ibid., p. 121.

²³⁴ Virolleaud, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

²³⁵ UT, p. 421; also, UL, p. 98.

²³⁶ CML, p. 144.

Driver understand knkny to be an attributive. They thus translate knkny, "full of caves/graves", ²⁴⁰ "knkn-like". ²⁴¹

(3) knk: ²⁴² Andrée Herdner cites this reading for the Ugaritic cuneiform. ²⁴³ However, she does not translate it.

From the above discussion. it appears as though the majority of scholars are agreed on the transliteration, ²⁴⁴ knkn. This, nonetheless, does not help to clarify its meaning. While Gaster's suggestion of translating knkn, "vault", ²⁴⁵ recalls the tombs at Ugarit, Gray's rendition seems to depict burial places in general. Alternately, Gordon's and Virolleaud's translation of knkn could be substantiated from the discovery of jar burials not only ²⁴⁶ in Syria and Mesopotamia, ²⁴⁷ but also at Ugarit itself. Consequently, no conclusive position can be maintained concerning the meaning of Ugaritic knkn.

²³⁷ Gaster, op. cit., p. 51.

²³⁸ CML, p. 145; cf. also supra, pp. 72-73.

²³⁹ Gaster, op. cit., p. 51.

²⁴⁰ CML, "Baal" I v 13, and p. 145.

²⁴¹ Gaster, op. cit., p. 51.

²⁴² Andrée Herdner, Corpus des Tablettes en Cunéiformes Alphabétiques- Texte (Paris, 1963) p. 90.

²⁴³ Andrée Herdner, "La Légende Cananéenne d'Achat d'après les Travaux Récents", Syria, XXVI, 1949, p. 13.

²⁴⁴ Herdner's reading, knk, however, is probably the best and least biased reading.

The Ugaritic phrase, hrt. ʿlm. ʿrs, occurs several times in the texts from Ugarit. Syntactically, the expression can be understood in two different ways:

(1) Hvidberg concurs with Aistleitner:²⁴⁹ hrt is construct bound to its genitive ʿlm, and ʿrs is an accusative of place. Consequently, the phrase is translated, "the cave of the gods in the earth".²⁵⁰

(2) Gray,²⁵¹ Driver,²⁵² Ginsberg,²⁵³ and Gordon,²⁵⁴ however, understand ʿrs as genitive to the double construct, hrt. ʿlm.²⁵⁵

As a result, they translate the phrase, "the hole of the earth-gods",²⁵⁶ or "the niche of the divinities of the earth".²⁵⁷

Despite the fact that hrt. ʿlm. ʿrs can be treated syntactically in two ways, the meaning conveyed by the

245

Cf. supra, pp. 43-66.

246

Gray, op. cit., p. 121.

247

Cf. supra, pp. 53-55.

248

Cf. supra, p. 74, note 223.

249

Hvidberg, op. cit., p. 30, note 6.

250

Hvidberg, op. cit., p. 30, note 6.

251

John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1957) p. 53.

252

CML, "Aqhat" I iii 6, 20-21, 35, "Baal" I i 17-18.

253

ANET, p. 154 (Aqht C 112, 126-127, 141).

254

UL, pp. 96-98 (IAqht 112, 126-127, 141).

phrase remains fundamentally the same: that is, the burial spot, hrt, belongs to divine beings, either ēlm, or ēlm. arš.

It is difficult to know with certainty the nature and function of either the ēlm or the ēlm. arš. However, it would seem that ēlm is a generic term for a category of gods, in this context. In addition, the passage in question does seem to associate the gods with both the burial spot, hrt, and the earth, arš. Very little else can be ascertained directly.

The significance of the earth has been noted above, particularly in connection with Canaanite mourning practices.²⁵⁸ The earth symbolizes to ancient societies the continual process of life and death, for it is from the earth that life proceeds and to the earth that all life returns. The gods who rule over these processes, that is, the chthonic divinities, are believed therefore to be intimately related both to life and death, to the living and the dead. This relationship seems to be implicit

255

N. J. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament (Rome, 1969) p. 176. He writes: "As to ilm.arš, the combination apparently is the status constructus of plural ilm with enclitic -m, as often in construct chains...".

256

CML, "Aqhat" I iii 6, 20-21, 35, "Baal" I i 17-18; cf. also H. L. Ginsberg's translation ("the hollows of the earth-ghosts") in ANET, p. 154.

257

Gray, op. cit., p. 53; cf. also, Gordon's translation ("the niche of the ghosts of the earth") in UL, pp. 96-98 (I Aqht 112, 126-127, 141).

258

Cf. supra, pp. 11-14.

also in the Ugaritic phrase, hrt. ʔelm. ʔarṣ. Consequently, one would be led to assume that the dead who were buried in the hrt. ʔelm. ʔarṣ would receive protection from these divinities.

The nature and function of these chthonic deities, however, do not seem to be exhausted by the affiliation with the buried dead. On the contrary, the fertility cult installations at Ugarit²⁵⁹ probably functioned in the worship of gods such as these. Moreover, Anat's ritual, after her "blood-bath", can be understood best in the light of the chthonic deities' jurisdiction over the forces of life and death.²⁶⁰

4. Conclusions

In the foregoing pages, an attempt has been made wherever possible to suggest various beliefs and notions that may have provided an impetus for the construction of the tombs at Ugarit. During the discussion, it was noted that the worship at the high places, the bāmôth, in Palestine, and the worship of heroes in the Greek world seemed to parallel, in some respects, the worship of the dead at Ugarit.²⁶¹ However, on closer scrutiny, the worship of the dead at Ugarit is fundamentally very different from the other two cults.

259

Cf. supra, pp. 48-51, 63-66.

260

Cf. supra, pp. 63-65; also, supra, pp. 23-25.

261

Cf. supra, pp. 55-59; pp. 65-66.

The difference is a "theological" and not a practical one. The Greek cult of heroes and the cult at the bamoth in Palestine were traditionally ancestor cults. This does not mean that all ancestors were worshipped; but, that certain men of a community stood out from the others, and consequently, were revered by following generations. They were persons specially selected either because they had received the divine blessing, berakāh, or because they had performed miraculous deeds on behalf of the community. ²⁶² In the case of the Hebraic tradition, the worship of ancestors was controlled carefully and almost obliterated in the interests of a pure monotheism. ²⁶³ With the Greek hero cult, too, a similar situation was the case, for the Homeric view of man was adamant in maintaining that nothing existed after man's death. This view of man necessarily reacted to any belief in the existence of man beyond death. ²⁶⁴ Gods were the only ones who were "immortal".

At Ugarit, however, the nature of the burial places reveal that different beliefs concerning the dead were operative. Four points can be noted concerning these

262

Cf. John Gray, "Sacral Kingship in Ugarit", Ugaritica VI (Paris, 1969) pp. 299-300; Rohde, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

263

Tromp, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

264

Rohde, op. cit., pp. 118-120; Nilsson, op. cit., p. 516; Walter Otto, The Homeric Gods (Boston, 1964) pp. 127-131.

beliefs: (1) all men could be the object of worship after death, (2) the dead had some degree of consciousness, (3) the worship of the dead is aligned closely with the worship of chthonic deities, and (4) the family unit was necessary for the worship of the dead.

(1) The excavations of the tombs of Ugarit have revealed that the dead were buried modestly. The absence of sarcophagi or coffins and the paucity of commemorative stelae, so common in the Ancient Near East, prompts one to state that all the dead were equally revered and worshipped.

(2) The elaborate tomb outfits which allowed the dead to receive the material sustenance they needed points towards the fact that the dead were believed to have some degree of consciousness. Moreover, it has been noted that the Ugaritian believed that the npš, or "âme végétative", was a substance that survived death and remained at the spot where the body was interred. Consequently, this sentient part of man had to be cared for after death. This explains in more detail, moreover, why the mourning customs outlined in Chapter II were so extravagant.

(3) Two facts suggest a close affinity between the cult of the dead and the worship of chthonic deities: (i) the similarity of the fertility cult installations and the installations for the dead, and (ii) the designation of the burial spot in "Aqhat" and "Baal" as the

hrt. ʿelm. ʿars. It must be made clear at this juncture, however, that this similarity does not mean that the dead were chthonic deities; nonetheless, there is no reason for not identifying the function of both. The chthonic deities could influence the processes of life and death. Moreover, because the dead had some degree of consciousness, and because the living family felt it was necessary to provide for the dead, it is most probable that the dead functioned in the same sphere as these deities.

(4) From the above discussion, it is clear that the family unit was integral to the worship of the dead. Assuredly, the worship of the dead profitted the living too. This means that in the religious beliefs of the Ugaritian a great deal of emphasis must have been laid on the family unit. In all probability, the Ugaritic cult of the dead was the most immediate and most intimate, although not necessarily the most important, expression of the "religiousness" of the Ugaritian.

Conclusion

The religious thought and practices concerned with the treatment of the dead at Ugarit have provided the main focus of the foregoing study. The results of the investigation do indicate some guide lines that allow a tentative hypothesis of the Ugaritians' view of the dead. It is proposed that all men, at death, became the object of a cult, maintained by the surviving family, and that the worship of the dead functioned to promote the health and welfare of the family and the fertility of their crops. The summary of the inquiry into the Ugaritic dead will be categorized broadly into two parts: (1) what can be known from the Ugaritic tombs, and (2) what beliefs the religious literature reflects. A third category encompasses results issuing from both classifications. Potential areas of investigation for future scholarly research will follow the summary.

1. Summary

(1) The investigation of the reports of the tombs excavated at Ras Shamra reveal that an active cult for the dead was practised at Ugarit for at least six hundred years, from the eighteenth to the twelfth century B. C. The tombs indicate that all the family dead were worshipped, without

distinction, where they were buried, that is, beneath their homes, and that they were the recipients of libations, offered by the surviving members of the family.

(2) The textual material employed, however, has shown what thoughts may have prompted the practices evidenced by the tombs and what thoughts may have been the basis for the extravagant mourning customs depicted in the texts.

It has been noted that the Ugaritian believed that the npš or "âme végétative" was the sentient part of man that remained after the death of the body and thereafter resided in its place of interment. No doubt, the reason for the rite of libation was the belief that the npš or "âme végétative" survived the death of the body. Moreover, the meaning inherent in the extravagant mourning customs also signifies that the death of the body did not mean the death of the total person. As Rohde has maintained, the customs were not just the expression of bereavement or of ordinary religious sentiment. They were predominantly the expression of the belief that the "soul" was still present, and that it could, and, moreover, did appreciate such demonstrations.

(3) Because some of the fertility cult installations were so near and similar to the cult installations at the tombs, and because the dead were described as being buried bhrt. ʔlm. ʔrg, "in the hole of the earth-gods",

it was deduced that the dead probably functioned in a manner similar to the chthonic deities. In other words, the rite of libation to the dead had as its main motive the attempt to secure benefits from the forces residing over life and death. Generally, this would mean that the family would offer the libations so that their own welfare would be sustained and so that they would harvest a good crop. Conversely, if the dead had jurisdiction over the forces of life and death, they could effect harm as well as good. This is probably the underlying idea of Baal's command to Anat "to pour a peace-offering in the heart of the fields ...".²⁶⁵ If the rite of libation had not been carried out, sterility would have ensued. Libation, thus practised in times of extremity, would be an exceptional, but nonetheless valid, use of the rite. The permanent structures for the rite of libation, however, suggests that it was not performed only at periods of crisis. No doubt, there were prescribed periods when it was merely customary and appropriate, and not an emergency measure. Perhaps the great autumnal festival was one such occasion.

The worship of the dead at Ugarit must have been sustained with the full knowledge that the worshippers would become the worshipped when they died. The dead, although they are not designated "gods", are treated like

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CML, "Baal" V iva 9-10.

them and function in the same manner. There does not seem to be any sort of criterion that determined the fact that they would be revered when they died; no system of merit, nor political, social, or religious status within the community seems to have influenced the practice of worshipping the dead. It appears as though it was an accepted fact that if they belonged to the family they too would become the object of worship.

The dependence of the dead on the surviving family for the maintenance of the cult, and the dependence of the surviving family on the dead for the sustaining of the health of the family and the fertility of the fields, indicates a close association between the two states of existence, that is, between existence among the living, and existence among the dead. According to the evidence adduced, there does not appear to be a radical separation between the two states of being. In fact, the familial element of the cult of the dead suggests that the most intimate and most immediate form of religion at Ugarit centred around the family unit.

2. Areas of Future Research

The present study has very obvious implications which cannot be pursued in a limited project of this nature. In fact, the results of this work would seem to contradict the assumptions of the "myth-ritual" school of interpretation.

In other words, if one is to understand their position in its most extreme form, which radically dichotomizes the respective spheres of man and god(s), then this thesis seems to warrant a closer examination of some of their central issues, especially kingship and law.

The examination of the cult of the dead at Ugarit appears to suggest that the family unit was the basic socio-political structure. Assuming that this is the case, it could follow that the role of the king within the society was primarily an administrative one, that is, that his role could have been merely a regulative one among the several family units. Indeed, the absence of a law code, dictating the major principles upon which justice would be carried out, and, by contrast, the numerous legal tablets found recording the administration of the monarch, tablets dealing with such issues as land-grants, seem to imply that the king's jurisdiction resided in the realm of "secular", as opposed to "religious" or "ethical" matters. In such an instance, the authority legislating "morality" could be very probably the potent unwritten "morality" of the elemental instincts that form the basis of a cohesive family unit, and, as a result, bestow religious significance upon the family dead.

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