

Atiratu's Entreaty and the Order of the Ugaritic Tablets KTU 1.3/4

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[The sequence of KTU 1.3/4 has always created difficulties, because the two tablets deal with the same theme, although the protagonists are different. Nowadays they have been taken by many an author to be two variant versions of the same mytheme. Nevertheless, there are reasons to claim that *Atiratu's* personal intervention is unavoidably requested in order to proclaim the candidate to the gods' throne. Support to this opinion comes from both the Ugaritic mythology itself and from other oriental testimonies. In this regard the role of the Hittite Tawananna may be a social and historical model of the marital and "dynastic" pattern at work in the Ugaritic Pantheon.]

The repetition of the same mytheme is frequently put forward as an objection against the immediate sequence of tablets KTU 1.3 and 1.4 within *Ba'lu's* cycle, viz., the mytheme of the entreaty of the female deities *'Anatu* and *Atiratu* in favour of *Ba'lu* and the building of his palace (cf. KTU 1.3 V 29-34 // 1.4 IV 40-46)¹. This difficulty has induced some authors either to take both tablets as two "variant versions" of the same mytheme² or to consider KTU 1.3 as an independent myth within *Ba'lu's* cycle³; even to displace it to another position in the sequence of its tablets⁴.

On the other hand, different explanations have been suggested to vindicate such a repetition and tablet

1. Cf. J.C. de Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu* (= SP). Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971, pp. 38ss.; for the discussion of this and other objections cf. G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaán según la tradición de Ugarit* (= MLC). Madrid 1981, pp. 93-94.

2. In this way Obermann, Herdner, Gaster, Vine, Van Zijl; cf. Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 94, n. 58; also C.H. Bowman, *The Goddess 'Anatu in the Ancient Near East* (= GANE). Dis. 1978, pp. 2-4, 49ss.; C.E. L'Heureux, *Rank among the Gods: El, Ba'al, and the Repha'im* (= RG). Missoula, Mt., 1979, p. 17; R.J. Clifford, "The Temple in The Ugaritic Myth of Ba'al", in F.M. Cross, ed., *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)*. Cambridge, Mas., 1979, p. 138; B. Margalit, *A Matter of 'Life' and 'Death'*. Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980, pp. 10-11, 209.

3. Cf. L.R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", *VT* 15(1965)316, n. 4; F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (= CMHE). Cambridge, Mas., 1973, pp. 113-118; S. Rummel, *The 'NT Text: A Critical Translation* (= TCT). Dis. 1978, pp. 29-32; 114-130.

4. Cf. De Moor, *SP*, pp. 37-43; Bowman, *GANE*, p. 3, n. 8; K.H. Bernhardt, "Ugaritische Texte", en W. Beyerlin, ed., *Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (= RTAT). Göttingen 1975, p. 210, n. 2; contrarily Rummel, *TCT*, pp. 31-32, 124-125; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 93ss.

sequence: 'Anatu's intervention would have met with *Ilu*'s negative answer to her request or at least with the later withdrawal of the permission given in principle for the building of *Ba'lu*'s palace⁵; a new request would be necessary, in this case *Aṭiratu*'s. On the other hand, if we assume that the first request was accepted and the permission/order for such building was given and maintained, the resorting to *Aṭiratu* would be aimed at getting her compliance and at avoiding complications, since this goddess was angry with *Ba'lu* and 'Anatu (cf. KTU 1.4 II 12-26). Her intervention would be of the greatest value in order to avoid any subsequent attack by *Yammu* (cf. KTU 1.4 II 30ss.) or his claim to divine kingship⁶. We must bear in mind anyway that 'Anatu's request, as Gese makes it clear⁷, refers in the first place to this kingship over the gods and not to the granting of a palace. Relating to this mytheme, and according to the law of epic repetition, a second request would be also awaited, surely repetitive but far more conclusive, like the one offered in KTU 1.4. That would guarantee the sequence of both tablets. The "choir" (cf. KTU 1.3 IV 46-53 // V 35-44 // 1.4 IV 47-57) obtains in this way the distinctive mark of a "personal request" now "actually" pronounced by *Aṭiratu* before *Ilu*, as may be concluded from her being delighted with his decision in this regard and from his commanding that the news of such a decision should be brought to *Ba'lu* (KTU 1.4 V 2-19).

In any case it is clear that *Ilu*'s answer to the first request (lacuna of some 24 lines) does not correspond to that given to the second one and to its unfolding (KTU 1.4 IV 58ss.). On the other hand, a previous sending of messengers to *Kōṭaru* (KTU 1.4 V 42) is to be supposed here, that fits in well with the one attested in KTU 1.3 VI - 1.4 I. The first request, even if favourably admitted by *Ilu*, is still subject to a last requirement that *Aṭiratu*'s entreaty will settle.

But are we only dealing here with courteous behaviour towards the Mother-Goddess, a gesture of reconciliation, the search for a more affective pleader than 'Anatu and her threats⁸, the driving away of the opposition on the part of any other antagonist⁹ or is this simply a case of epic repetition? A clarifying answer could be gathered maybe from the comparison of this mythical situation with other similar ones in *Ba'lu*'s cycle. We are dealing here with *Ba'lu*'s proclamation and acknowledgement as "King of the gods" (and with the ensuing construction of his palace), as is the case also on behalf of *Yammu* (cf. KTU 1.1 IV 13ss.) and 'Aṭtaru (cf. KTU 1.6 I 43ss.). The procedure is very clear in this last case: *Ilu* requests *Aṭiratu* to propose a candidate. Her proposal, after the pertinent discussion by the divine couple, falls upon 'Aṭtaru, who is accepted as *Aṭiratu*'s candidate, but falls short as a consequence of his manifest inability for the task¹⁰.

In *Yammu*'s case (KTU 1.1 IV 13ss.) the procedure is not so apparent, but it may be seen also here that *Ilu*'s decision to appoint *Yammu* "Lord" of the gods and to promise him a palace (providing he overcomes *Ba'lu*) has been preceded by the "complaint/proposal" of a goddess in favour of the former. She is called

5. Cf. E.T. Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (= DC). Chico, Ca., 1980, pp. 142, 145; Rummel, *TCT*, p. 120; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 94, n. 59.

6. Cf. Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 94-95; for the different opinions cf. Rummel, *TCT*, pp. 119-122; the resorting to *Aṭiratu* may have many a motive *pace* Margalit, *loc. cit.*

7. Cf. H. Gese et al., *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer* (= RAAM). Stuttgart 1970, pp. 68-70; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 120, n. 140.

8. This hypothesis is not valid any longer, if we assume that *Ilu* agrees to her request. It is possible also to suppose that *Ilu* himself suggests such a resorting to *Aṭiratu* (cf. Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 94-95, 120, n. 142, 124, n. 150); but why? *Ilu* seems anyway to surrender to 'Anatu's threats (cf. KTU 1.18 I 6-12). On the other hand, it seems to me unfitting to qualify *Aṭiratu* as "corruptible", because she lets herself be persuaded by means of gifts (cf. A. Caquot-M. Szyner, *Ugaritic Religion* (= UR). Leiden 1980, p. 14).

9. It must be taken into account, nevertheless, that the only valid opponent in this mythological context, *Yammu*, has been already overcome by *Ba'lu*. Cf. K.L. Vine, *The Establishment of Baal at Ugarit* (= EBU). Dis. 1965, p. 30: "there must have been some reason for Baal and Anat appealing to Asherah".

10. Cf. A. van Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature* (= MFL). London 1954, pp. 63ss., 67-68 ("from the scene... it would seem that a wife has authority over the children..."); A.L. Perlman, *Asherah and Astarte in the Old Testament and Ugaritic Literature* (= AA). Dis. 1978, pp. 39, 83-88 ("it was entirely appropriate to appoint a replacement for Baal...", p. 85); Caquot-Szyner, *UR*, p. 8.

simply *ilt*, but this is also *Aṭiratu*'s denomination (cf. KTU 1.6 I 40; 1.14 V 35)¹¹. Therefore, it is very likely that we have here also the intervention of this goddess and her attendants in favour of her most loved son¹², whose name she bears attached to her own, *aṭrt ym*¹³.

Consequently, I believe that we can interpret with a high degree of verisimilitude the resorting to *Aṭiratu* in KTU 1.3 VI - 1.4 IV as being occasioned by a mythological structural motivation that requires *the Mother-Goddess to put forward the candidate to the kingship over the gods*. It is not enough, then, that *'Anatu* request and claim it; *Aṭiratu*'s explicit proposal has to be obtained. Naturally, it will relate to "one of her sons", as is explicitly stated in KTU 1.6 I 45-46 and implied in KTU 1.1 IV 14. This state of affairs would explain, better maybe than the "epic repetition", the thematic unfolding in our present case. *Aṭiratu*'s proposal/entreaty would equal *Ba'lu*'s acknowledgement as her son (cf. KTU 1.4 IV 48-52; IV 62 - V 1), allowing him to let in her own "family" and enjoy his new position. In fact, nowhere is *Ba'lu* mentioned as *Aṭiratu*'s son¹⁴, but the consolidate mythological system of Ugarit requires it. On account of *Aṭiratu*'s intervention/adoption, *Ba'lu* is turned from an "outsider" into an "equal" to the gods, and even into their "King"¹⁵. Naturally, the rest of the above-mentioned motives may be seen at work here along with this basic one in the literary shaping of the myth.

This mythological datum reminds us of Batsheba's intervention (1 Kgs. 1:11ss.) in favour of her son Solomon, as well as that of Sarah (Gen. 21:9ss.), Rebecca (Gen. 27:6ss.) and even Rachel (Gen. 30:1ss.) in favour of their own sons as "family heirs". The theme strikes roots maybe in the decisive role the Queen-Mother carried out in Oriental Antiquity at the moment of appointing a candidate to kingship, leaving aside the one of "regent" (for instance, *Semiramis/Sammuramat*) or "usurper" (*Athalia*)¹⁶. The references we possess are not many, but they support our assumption.

This institutional use seems to have enjoyed special relevance in the Hittite court. It was embodied in the figure of the *Tawananna*, sister of the ruling king and mother of his successor; and consequently mother of the new king. This institution seems to have been inherited from the pre-Hittite Hattian-Palaic substratum, bound to the brother-sister royal marriage in force among Anatolian people as well as in Elam and other countries of the Ancient Near East; marriage that was forbidden by the Hittite law. Such a wedding system also existed in the Ugaritic Pantheon as can be seen from the "brotherly" relation between *Ba'lu* and *'Anatu*. Even if nowhere

11. Cf. M. Pope - W. Röllig, "Die Mythologie der Ugariter und Phönizier", in H.W. Hausig, ed., *Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Götter und Mythen im vorderen Orient* (= MUP). Stuttgart 1961, p. 247; Gese, *RAAM*, p. 149; Vine, *EBU*, p. 30; Perlman, *AA*, p. 80; E. Lipiński, "The Goddess ATIRAT in Ancient Arabia, in Babylon, and in Ugarit. Her Relation to the Moon-God and the Sun-Goddess", *OLP* 3(1972)110, n. 64.

12. Cf. R. Dussaud, *Les découvertes de Ras Shamra (Ugarit) et l'Ancien Testament* (= DRS). Paris 1941², p. 171; U. Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath. Canaanite Epics of the Patriarchal Age* (= GA). Jerusalem 1971, p. 172; S./S. Rin, *'Alilot ha'elim* (= AE). Jerusalem 1968, p. 127; R. Caquot - M. Szyner, *Textes Ougaritiques. Tome I. Mythes et Légendes* (= TOU). Paris 1974, p. 309, n. n'; J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (= CML). Edinburgh 1978², pp. 4, 39.

13. On the meaning of this name cf. W.F. Albright, *Archeology and the Religion of Israel* (= ARI). Baltimore 1968⁴, pp. 77-78; id., *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (= YGC). London 1968, p. 108; Pope-Röllig, *MUP*, p. 247; Gese, *RAAM*, p. 150; Perlman, *AA*, pp. 73-78; Caquot-Szyner, *UR*, p. 14; K.H. Bernhardt, "Ashera in Ugarit und im Alten Testament", *MIO* 13(1967)163ss.; Lipiński, *OLP* 3(1972)110-111.

14. Cf. in this regard Vine, *EBU*, p. 13; Perlman, *AA*, p. 39; and the authors quoted by Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 68, n. 116, 143. This would mean a unification of the *dr il* with the *phr b'l*; cf. L'Heureux, *RG*, pp. 12-18; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 68, n. 118.

15. In this regard we should have to understand that the other gods possess *no palace* either, since they are not "kings" (this would be the meaning of *in bt lb'l km ilm*, KTU 1.3 V 38 and par.); only *Dagāmu/Ilu* and *Ba'lu* had a temple at Ugarit. But texts like KTU 1.4 IV 62-V 1, 27-29 forbid such an understanding (*ybn bt lb'l km ilm/ahk*). That implies that the other gods have their own palace.

16. Cf. H. Donner, "Art and Herkunft des Amtes der Königinmutter im Alten Testament", in *Festschrift Friedrich*. Heidelberg 1959, pp. 104-145; S.R. Bin-Nun, *The Tawananna in the Hittite Kingdom* (= THK). Heidelberg 1975; R. de Vaux, *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament I* (= IAT). Paris 1961, pp. 180-182. Notice, please, the placing side by side of the Queen-Mother and her son that 1 Kgs. 1:21 implies.

in this mythology it is asserted that *Aṭiratu* was *Ilu's* sister¹⁷, nevertheless it is sure that the successive "couples" in Ancient Theogonies appear as son/daughter of the preceding one, and consequently as brother-sister and mates. On the other hand, the office of the *Tawananna* had priestly functions from the very beginning and the late Hurrian influence enhanced them, according to its own royal tradition.

This institution seems to have experienced an evolution from the Old to the New Hittite Empire: being the title/office of the king's sister (mother), it became the title/office of the Queen (not necessarily the king's wife), passing through a period in which such a function was abolished. The role of the *Tawananna* in the Hittite court was bound basically to her function as pursuer of the dynastic line through her son. Her intervention in this sense was institutional. But on the other hand, it turns out to be perfectly reasonable to assume that this institutional right and claim granted her bearer the power of intervening in singling out the son who would succeed to the throne, since this right was not determined in Hittite law in favour of the "first-born". Kings *Telepinu* and *Ḫattušili III* would set up different succession orders to meet this problem. A prayer of king *Muršili II* makes clear the importance of such a function: "I did not in any way [wrong Tawa]nanna [or humili]ate her in any way. As she had ruled over the palace and the land of Ḫatti [in the lifetime of my father and in the lifeti]me of my brother then she [likewise ruled]"¹⁸.

The existence of two different succession systems (the traditional one warranting the right of the *Tawananna*-king's sister and of her sons, and the other one by which the king had the right to appoint his successor among his sons, which was what the Hittite rulers tried to maintain), called for an agreement in order to guarantee a peaceful succession that would stop the frequent fights and murders carried out in the Hittite court on account of it. No doubt this state of affairs moved *Arnuwanda*, *Ḫattušili III* and *Suppiluliuma* to associate their *Tawananna*-wives *Ašmunikal*, *Puduḫepa* and *Ḫinti* in the government. But at the same time, this continuous struggle of the Hittite kings in order to ensure their right to appoint the successor implies an ancient custom moving in the opposite sense, that can point only in the *Tawananna's* direction.

Now, the Ugaritic Pantheon mirrors this elective system, according to which the pretender to the divine throne must be of course "god", viz., *Aṭiratu's* son (cf. KTU 1.6 I 46). But this divine ascendancy is not enough; the pretender must also be elected by the supreme couple and has to demonstrate his superiority over his opponents (cf. KTU 1.6 I 50-52), in this way gaining the acceptance of the divine assembly. The Ancient Hittite succession laws mentioned above also contemplated the case of the son-in-law married to the heiress who is adopted into the family and becomes prince and legitimate successor. Such an adoption turns him into "brother" of his wife. That would be also the case of *Ba'lu's* situation in the Ugaritic Mythology as husband-brother of *Anatu*, once he was recognized by *Ilu* and *Aṭiratu* as their son¹⁹.

Some hints of this use can be observed also in Mesopotamia²⁰ and in Ebla²¹. At Ugarit the case of the Queen-Mother of *Ammištamru II*, daughter of *Bentešina*, King of *Amurru*, is very significant. Her son keeps the right to the throne (he is the *tartenu* = *ušriyanu*) despite her mother's adultery, a right the Hittite Emperor ratifies, at the same time according the King of Ugarit the privilege of appointing another heir, wanted

17. Cf. Bin-Nun, *THK*, p. 144; nor does Gordon assert that in his *Ugaritic Literature*.

18. Cf. Bin-Nun, *THK*, p. 177 ("The most outstanding characteristic of the *Tawananna* in the Old Kingdom is her traditional role in the succession to the throne", p. 105; "The *Tawananna's* claim in the succession was an ancient right, probably based on earlier brother-sister marriage, when local ruler's sister had been both *Tawananna* and his wife", p. 158).

19. Cf. Bin-Nun, *THK*, pp. 228ss., 235, 292s.; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 68ss., n. 118; G. Conteneau, *La Civilisation des Hittites et des Hurrites du Mitanni*. Paris 1948⁴, pp. 109ss.; L. Delaporte, *Los Hititas* (vr.). México 1957, pp. 132-133 ("...(*Ḫattušili I*) juzga preferible sustituirle... pide la aprobación de su esposa (*Ḫaštayar*)..."); De Vaux, *IAT I*, p. 181; J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (= LC). Leiden 1965², p. 132, n. 6; G. Pettinato, *Ebla, un impero inciso nell'argilla* (= Ebla). Milano 1979, p. 85.

20. Cf. A.L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*. Chicago 1977², p. 104.

21. Cf. Pettinato, *Ebla*, pp. 83-85; "...non è escluso che alla loro designazione come successori al trono non abbia partecipato in maniera determinante la regina-madre".

Utri-šarruma to follow his mother. This was seemingly the case, since *Ammištamru*'s successor was *Ibiranu*²². The fact is significant in as much as it brings into relief the bonds linking the heir or successor to the throne to his mother at the Ugaritic court.

Within the Ugaritic Epic the resorting of *Kirta* to *Aṭiratu* (KTU 1.14 IV 36-43), in order to guarantee the success of his undertaking, already assured by *Ilu*'s word, stands out. We are dealing here with an enterprise of dynastic overtones aiming at the acquisition of an "heir" (cf. KTU 1.14 III 48-49 // VI 33-35), born of a "legitimate spouse" (cf. KTU 1.14 I 12-13) and as such "suckled by *Aṭiratu*" (cf. KTU 1.15 II 26) as her own son (cf. KTU 1.16 I 11,22 (?))²³. It is possible that we have here an echo of the above-quoted intervention of the Mother-Goddess in the appointment of the candidate to the throne of the gods. Nevertheless, this theme obtains, within the Legend of *Kirta*, the meaning of an epic prolepsis that anticipates the later literary unfolding.

22. Cf. A. Rainey, *The Social Stratification of Ugarit*. Dis. 1962, pp. 12, 52-53, 56, 59-60, 62-63, 67-68 (= *Mibneh haḥbrah b'ugarit*. Jerusalem 1967, pp. 38ss.); Perlman, *AA*, pp. 84-85; M. Heltzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit*. Wiesbaden 1982, pp. 181-185; for the Akkadian text cf. J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais royal d'Ugarit IV*. Paris 1956, pp. 126-127.

23. Cf. Van Selms, *MFL*, pp. 67, 114; Gray, *LC*, p. 132, n. 6; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, pp. 255, 260, n. 76.