

The Epithets of the Kôtarātu Goddesses at Ugarit*

Aicha Rahmouni – Wien, Austria

[This article considers the epithets of the Kôtarātu (ktrt) group of goddesses. Its main objective is to compare the epithet *bnt hll snnt*, "the luminaries, the radiant ones", with other related epithets referring to the same goddesses and others referring to different gods and goddesses but using the same components of the epithet under discussion. This paper proposes a new interpretation for *bnt hll snnt* based essentially on its immediate and general contexts within the Ugaritic alphabetic cuneiform texts from Ras Shamra and Ras Ibn Hani. This new interpretation is followed by comparisons with Mesopotamian, Hebrew and Arabic parallels.]

Keywords: Comparative Semitics, Ugaritic and Akkadian Religion and Literature, biblical Studies, etc.

1. Introduction and Contexts

The purpose of this article is to study the epithets of the group of goddesses called Kôtarātu (*ktrt*). The occurrence of these deities in the Ugaritic alphabetical corpus is limited and they are among the least studied Ugaritic divinities.¹ They normally appear only as a group acting in unison with no clear information regarding the individual deities. The only text where each goddess may be mentioned individually is the highly debated context KTU² 1.24, 46-50, where the identity of each goddess is uncertain. The Ugaritic religious system seems to attribute more importance to individual female deities, such as 'nt, 'Atrt and to a lesser degree Špš and 'trt, relegating the Kôtarātu to a secondary level.

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Abbreviations follow those of A. L. Oppenheim et al. (eds), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956~) [henceforth: CAD] and G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (HdO I/67. Tr. by W. G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2004) [henceforth: DULAT]. Additional abbreviations are as follows: DEUAT: A. Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*. HdO I/93. Tr. by J. N. Ford. Leiden: Brill, 2008. *Lisān al-'arab*: J-D. M. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, Vol. I-XV. Beyrouth: Dar-Sader, 2000. *Tāğ al-'arūs*: M. M. Al-Ḥusaini Al-Zabīdī Al-Ḥanaftī, *Tāğ al-'arūs*. Vols I-XX, Beyrouth: Dar al-fikr, 1994. WKAS: M. Ullmann, *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*. Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1970~.

1. The goddesses Kôtarātu appear in the following Ugaritic contexts: KTU² 1.10 II, 30; 1.11, 6; 1.17 II, 26, 29-30, 30, 33, 35, 37, 40; 1.24, 5-6: [k]trt, 11 (concerning this line see n. 3 below), 15 (concerning this line see n. 3 below), 40, 50; 1.47, 13: [ktr]t; 1.118, 12; 1.130, 20: kt[] (contrast Pardee [2000], 729, 730, 735); 1.148, 5, 25; 4.412 II, 5. The major studies of these deities are Herrmann (1974), 104-108; idem (1968) in his study of KTU² 1.24; Margalit (1972), 53-61; and Pardee, (1999), 491-492, which I have used as a starting point in the elaboration of this article.

The epithet *bnt hll snnt* occurs a total of eight times: six times in KTU² 1.17² and twice in KTU² 1.24.³ In KTU² 1.24, 41-42 the Kôtarātu are also referred to as *bnt hll b l gml*, which many scholars take to be a variant of *bnt hll snnt*. The consistent occurrence of the epithet *bnt hll snnt* in the Ug. literary texts in almost every context in which the Kôtarātu are mentioned indicates that it is a stereotypical epithet and suggests that their role remains constant as well. The relevant Ugaritic contexts are as follows:

1. KTU² 1.17 II, 26-27a:

ʿrb . b bth . ktrt . The Kôtarātu entered his house,
bnt hll . snnt . **The luminaries, the radiant ones.**

2. KTU² 1.17 II, 29-31 (= 1.17 II, 34, 36, 38)

ʿalp . yṯbh . l ktrt He slaughtered a bull for the Kôtarātu,
yšlhm . ktrt . He fed the Kôtarātu,
w yššq . bnt . hll . snnt He gave a drink to **the luminaries, the radiant ones.**

3. KTU² 1.17 II, 39-40

tb ʿ . b bth ktrt . The Kôtarātu left his house,
bnt . hll . snnt **The luminaries, the radiant ones.**

4. KTU² 1.24, 5-6:

[k]trt . [Kô]tarātu!⁴
l bnt . hll . [snnt] **O luminaries, [the radiant ones]!**

5. KTU² 1.24, 40-42:

ʿašr ʿilh[t] ktr[t] I shall sing of the Kôtarātu goddesses,
[bn]t hll . snnt . The luminaries, [the radiant ones],
bnt hll b l gml **The daughters of Hll, possessor of the gamlu-staff.**

2. KTU² 1.17 II, 27, 31(= 34, 36, 38), 40.

3. KTU² 1.24, 6, 40-42. Almost all scholars restore this epithet in KTU² 1.24, 15 as well (so KTU²). See Virolleaud (1936), 215; Herrmann (1968), 10, 11; Caquot et al. (1974), 393; Gordon (1977), 65; del Olmo Lete (1981), 458; de Moor (1987), 143; Marcus (1997), 216; Wyatt (2002), 338; Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 159. In a personal written communication after his new collation of this text, Professor Pardee wrote as follows: "... there are traces of writing after {hl} and the reading of a second {l} is not at all certain: one sees a small vertical, more like a word divider than a full vertical wedge, followed by what appears to be the head of a horizontal wedge. These traces are somewhat damaged, however, and I propose no certain reading, i.e., do not absolutely rule out the reading {hll} though I must say that it does not appear likely." In light of these remarks and given the fact that <bnt> is indicated as missing in KTU², the present author prefers not to restore the epithet in this context. Concerning the first sign of this line, which KTU² transcribes as { }, Professor Pardee writes that "The first sign of line 15, though damaged, appears to be a {t} rather than { }." –

In line 11, KTU² reads šm ʿ ilht . ktr[t . xxx]mm. Wyatt (2002), 338 is the only scholar who suggests restoring this epithet here. Prof. Pardee writes that "CAT's [= KTU² - AR] reading of two {m}s at the end of this line is correct and the space between {kaf-tha-resh} and the first of these {m}s allows for the reconstruction of only three signs in all, i.e., including the {t} of Kotharot (I [Pardee] would judge the indication in CAT of a space before a word-divider followed by three x's to be too generous though one could always claim that four signs were squeezed in if there is a plausible restoration consisting of four signs)."

4. This restoration follows Prof. Pardee's collation. In a private communication, he writes as follows: "Line 6 certainly begins with the signs {tha-resh-tav} and restoring anything before these signs is out of the question. Keep in mind that, perhaps with the exception of line 1, all lines extend well onto the right edge of the tablet and these three signs may stand alone or they may be the end of a word that began on line 5 ... if in need of restoration perhaps read just {k} at the end of the line to produce Kotharot." Most scholars suggest the restoration of the vocative *l + ktrt*, in parallel with *l + bnt hll snnt*; see recently Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 159. For the vocative with personal names without the addition of prefix or suffix, see especially Tropper (2000), 313, §54.212a; Singer (1948), 1-10. Marcus (1997), 215 takes *l* as the preposition 'to'.

2. Parallels to the Epithet

From the parallelistic structure of these passages it is clear that the epithet *bnt hll snnt* refers to a group of female deities called the Kôṭarātu.⁵ The plurality of the goddesses is clearly indicated by the element *bnt*, lit. ‘daughters’ in the epithet, as well as the expression *hbl ktrt* ‘band of the Kôṭarātu’ (KTU² 1.10 II, 30, 40).⁶ However, there is no consensus regarding the role of these goddesses. According to the two most widely accepted theories, the Kôṭarātu are either songstresses, bridesmaids and professional wailers,⁷ or procreation goddesses, birth assistants and midwives.⁸ Some scholars suggest that they perform both roles.⁹

3. The Goddesses Kôṭarātu

The role of these goddesses as deities of conception is evident from their presence in Dan’ilu’s house immediately before the conception of his son in KTU² 1.17.¹⁰ They appear in an account of a sequence of events marked by the mention of consecutive days: *hn ym w tn ... tlt rb ym ... hms tdt ym ... b šb ymm ...* ‘Behold a day and a second one ... a third and a fourth day ... a fifth and a sixth day ... on the seventh day ...’ (KTU² 1.17 II, 32-39). This repetition suggests a possible ritual aspect to the text and a role of the Kôṭarātu in a fertility rite of some sort.¹¹ After the Kôṭarātu leave Dan’ilu’s home (lines 39-40), the latter begins to count his wife’s months of pregnancy (lines 43-46), which would indicate the successful completion of the ritual. In KTU² 1.24, as well, the goddesses seem to function specifically as patronesses of conception and wedlock. They appear in lines 5-6, before the advance birth announcement in line 7, and in lines 40-42, in the context of a marriage ceremony and after the reference to the birth process.¹² KTU² 1.10 contains the account of the conception and birth of a bovine child to Ba’lu. The immediate context

5. The epithet appears as a ‘B-word’ to *ktrt* ‘Kôṭarātu’ in almost every context, except for the last context in which it parallels the similar phrase *ilht ktrt* ‘the Kôṭarātu goddesses’. In most early studies researchers thought that the Kôṭarātu were a human group, the female friends of the bride. See, for example, Ginsberg (1938), 13; idem, (1939), 325; Gray (1965), 246-247, n. 1. Today, there appears to be a scholarly consensus rejecting this position. The most obvious argument highlights the fact that the term *ilht* meaning ‘goddesses’ occurs once before the divine name *ktrt* in KTU² 1.24, 40 (see Smith [1985], 466). In addition, the *ktrt* occur in the god-lists KTU² 1.47, 13; 1.118, 12 and as recipients in the sacrifice list KTU² 1.148, 5, 25 (for these texts see Pardee [2000], 291-319, 659-60, 779-806, esp. 292, 305, 799). They were nevertheless most likely patterned after human midwives. See Jacobsen (1973), 289, 294-295.

6. Cf. Pardee (1999), 491.

7. Ginsberg (1938), 13; Baumgartner (1941), 94; Held (1957), 101-102; Gaster (1961), 339-340; Gordon (1966), 26; idem (1998), 424-425; Engnell (1967), 134, n. 1; Loewenstamm (1980), 193-194, n. 3.

8. Nielsen (1938), 534-535; Dussaud (1941), 142-143; Spiegel (1945), 312-313, n. 5; van Selms (1954), 35, 85-87; idem (1979), 743-744; Albright (1964), 52; Astour (1966), 280, n. 32a; idem (1987), 56, n. 405; Herrmann (1968), 5-6, z.5f., 27, 34-36; idem (1974), 105; Gese et al. (1970), 82-84; Lichtenstein (1972), 104; Priebatsch (1976), 327-328; Caquot (1979), 1398-1399; Rendtorff and Stolz (1979), 711-712; Baumgarten (1981), 204; del Olmo Lete (1981), 452; idem (1991), 74-75; Margalit (1983), 74-75; idem (1989), 285-286; Healey (1985), 118, 120, 124, n. 20; Becking (1999), 858-859; Pardee (1999), 491; idem (2000), 305; Wyatt (2002), 340, n. 26, 336; Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 171.

9. Virolleaud (1934), 239-240, n. 3; idem (1936), 214; Herdner (1942-43), 284-285; Obermann (1946), 26; Gray (1965), 246; Gröndahl (1967), 152; Nougayrol (1968), 51; Margalit (1972a), 54-57; idem (1972b), 113-117; Smith (1985), 469; Marcus (1997), 215; Koitabashi (1998), 386-387; Pasquali (2006), 61-62.

10. KTU² 1.17 II, 27, 31 (= 34, 36, 38), 40. See Pardee (1999), 491. For more references see n. 8 above.

11. For the combination of myth and ritual genres in the Aqht text and KTU² 1.24, see Wright (2001), 81-86; Korpel (2005), 141-142 and the references there.

12. See for example Obermann (1946), 26; del Olmo Lete (1981), 451-452; Marcus (1997), 215. For more references see n. 8 and 9 above.

is fragmentary, but column II, lines 30 and 40 likely contain references to *ḥbl ktrt* ‘the band of the Kôtarātu’ at a stage of the story leading to the conception.¹³

The only possible extant explicit reference to a role of the Kôtarātu as midwives is found in KTU² 1.11, 5-6: [...]q . hry . w yld [...]xm . ḥbl . ktrt ‘... conception and birth [...] the band of the Kôtarātu’.¹⁴ The text is unfortunately fragmentary and the exact role of the Kôtarātu can only be surmised.¹⁵ A reference to a role of the Kôtarātu as midwives could have conceivably once existed in KTU² 1.17 III-IV, but the columns are lost.¹⁶ The interpretation of the Kôtarātu as divine midwives is based mainly on the unambiguous correspondence provided by god-lists and ritual texts from Ugarit between the West Semitic Kôtarātu and the Mesopotamian *šassūrātu*, a group of (seven) birth goddesses.¹⁷ A god-list from Mari similarly mentions both (sets of) deities together: ^dšen-sú-ru-um ú ^dkà-wa₆-šu-ra-tum ‘the birth goddess Š. (singular of *šassūrātu*) and the Kôtarātu’.¹⁸

Almost all scholars accept the etymological relationship between the masculine divine name *ktr* ‘Kôtaru’ and the feminine divine group name *ktrt* ‘the Kôtarātu’.¹⁹ Although I find no evidence for a direct relationship in Ug. mythology between the god Kôtaru and the Kôtarātu goddesses,²⁰ the etymological relationship between the two divine names is apparent and helps explain how the latter group fulfills its role as goddesses of conception and divine midwives.²¹ I have shown in my previous study of the Ug. divine epithets that the alternate names of Kôtaru, *ḥss* ‘the wise one’ and *hyn* ‘the skillful’, together with the epithets *hyn d ḥrš yd(m)* ‘Hayyānu, the one of the dexterous hand(s)’²² and *ḥrš* ‘the dexterous one’²³, all reveal the deity’s true role and professional qualities.²⁴ These data provide adequate precedents to

13. Reading with KTU² Parker (1997b), 184 reads *ḥ[] k[]t* in line 30 and does not transcribe line 40 (cf. p. 186, n. 3).

14. See Parker (1997c), 187, who restores [*nš*]q.

15. Other Ugaritic texts that seem to include the birth theme are KTU² 1.12, where *Tlš* and *Dmgy* give birth to ‘*qmm* and ‘*aklm*, and KTU² 1.23, where anonymous goddesses give birth to the deities *šhr* and *šlm*. In both cases, the birth process is not described and the Kôtarātu are not mentioned. The only description that can be related to the act of childbirth is when *Tlš* and *Dmgy* complain to ‘Ilu their father of the pain that precedes the moment of birth (KTU² 1.12, 9-11).

16. Pardee (2003), 345, n. 20. If so, the structure of KTU² 1.17 II-IV may have been similar to the structure of the Hittite mythological birth *topos* that Hoffner (1968), 199 outlined as follows: (1) the statement of conception [cf. KTU² 1.17 II, 41-42 (immediately after the departure of the Kôtarātu)], (2) the counting of the months of gestation [cf. KTU² 1.17 II, 43-46], (3) the statement of birth, (4) the activity of the nurse [here the Kôtarātu -AR], (5) the father’s first holding and fondling of the child, and (6) the bestowal of the name. For more on the birth *topos*, see Beckman (1983), 6-7. Concerning the counting of the months in the Aqht poem, see Dijkstra and de Moor (1975), 180; Loewenstamm (1980), 193-194, 204; and for the theme of birth in the Aqht poem, see Husser (1996), 85-98, esp. 89-91.

17. See Pardee (1999), 491; idem (2000), 292, 305, n. 68, 796, 799; idem (2002), 11-19, 21. The Akk. term is written either syllabically (^dsa-sú-ra-tu₆) or with an ideogram (^dNIN.MAḤ).

18. See Pardee (2000), 304, n. 63, 305; Durand (1995), 167, 184-185; and the bibliography cited there. See also ARM XXIV, 263, discussed by both Pardee and Durand.

19. Ginsberg (1938), 13; Spiegel (1945), 312-313, n. 5; van Selms (1954), 85-86; Held (1957), 102; Gray (1965), 246; idem (1978), 101; Albright (1968), 118-119, n. 67; Herrmann (1968), 35; Lichtenstein (1972), 104, n. 57, 105; Margalit (1983), 74; idem (1989), 286; Smith (1985), 466; Pardee (1999), 492; idem (2000), 304. An exception is Pope (see below, n. 20).

20. Cf. Pope (in Cooper [1981], 387-388), who has appropriately noted that both divine names never appear together in Ugaritic literature. Pope’s rejection of an etymological relationship between the two names, however, does not seem justified.

21. I follow the position adopted in my study of the divine epithets, and refrain from attempting to determine the meaning of proper names except in such cases where the etymology of the name is apparent and its analysis may shed light on the character and role of the deity to which the epithet refers (see DEUAT, xix-xx). Such is the case in the present names. The relationship between *ktr* and *ktrt* may resemble that between *gtr* and *gtrm*, rather than that between *rp’u* and *rp’um*. Whereas the god *rp’u* is associated with the *rp’um* (e.g., KTU² 1.108), there is no conclusive evidence to prove a connection between the god *gtr* and the *gtrm*, in spite of the obvious etymological identity of the names. For the latter, see especially Pardee (2000), 239-240.

22. DEUAT, 156-158.

23. DEUAT, 178-179.

24. DEUAT, 342-343.

justify the hypothesis that the masculine divine name *ktr* and the feminine divine group name *ktrt* are both etymologically related to BH כִּשְׂרוֹן 'skillfulness', Aram. כִּשְׂר 'industrious',²⁵ and Akk. *kašāru* 'to accomplish successfully' (in spite of the apparent phonological difficulty),²⁶ and were intended in both cases to be a semantically transparent indication of the divine skillful performance of their respective professions.²⁷

The extant internal Ug. data do not provide an epithet or alternative appellation that would confirm this hypothesis with respect to the Kôṭarātu, but supporting evidence can be adduced from Mesopotamian literature. In particular, as noted above the Ugaritians themselves identified the Kôṭarātu with the Akk. *šassurātu* 'birth goddesses' who, significantly, are depicted as being under the tutelage of the skillful god

25. Sokoloff (1992), 271. Note the frequent use of the verb KŠR 'to do well, succeed' in hendiadys with ABD 'to work, to do' in Mandaic (Drower & Macuch [1963], 225).

26. The correspondence between Ug. *ṭ* and Aram. *š* is irregular. Both Kutscher (quoted by Kellerman [1995], 367) and McKane (1976), 151 have explained the phonological discrepancy by positing a loanword in Aramaic from Akkadian or Canaanite. The frequent comparison of Ug. *ktrt* with BH כִּשְׂרוֹת in Ps. 68, 7 should be rejected, as it is based solely on the fact that both words share a common etymology. For this comparison, see for example Albright (1968), 119; Cooper (1981), 387-388; de Moor (1997), 173. Lichtenstein (1972), 97-112 rightly rejects the comparison and proposes translating the Biblical term as "in prosperity, in good health, unscathed", arguing that the Biblical context includes no reference to birth or conception that would suggest a relationship with the Ug. *ktrt*. In the present study, we have adopted his alternate translation "deftly, with prowess" in accordance with the meaning of the root in Ug. and with some of the usages in BH. Note especially Lichtenstein's many important semantic and contextual parallels (Lichtenstein [1972], 108-112). As opposed to the usual understanding of the BH term as a plural feminine noun (e.g. HALOT, 467), we also accept Lichtenstein's suggestion to analyze כִּשְׂרוֹת as an abstract noun with archaic suffix *-ot* (rather than the regular abstract nominal suffix *-ut*), which is well attested in Ps. 68. (For four other similar forms in verses 10, 21, and 25, see Lichtenstein [1972], 108, n. 81; see further Cohen [1996], 306-308).

27. A relationship with the Arab. root کثر *ktr* 'to be abundant, numerous' must be rejected on semantic grounds, since neither Kôṭaru nor the Kôṭarātu are ever associated with such a quality. Some scholars (e.g., Pope *apud* Cooper [1981], 386; Smith [1994], 254-256) have suggested a relationship between Ug. *ktr* /kôṭaru/ and the Qur'ānic کَوْتَر *kawtar* in *Sūratu l-Kawtari* (*Sūrah* 108): إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكُوْتَرَ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَخْرِجْ إِنَّا شَانِيكَ هُوَ الْاَبْتَرُ: *'innā 'a ṭaynāka l-kawtara fa-ṣalli li-rabbika wa-nḥar inna šāni'aka huwa l-'abtaru* 'We have surely bestowed upon you the *kawtar*, so pray to your lord and offer sacrifice. Indeed he who hates you is the one who is deprived (lit. cut off)'. Muslim tradition is divided over the meaning of *kawtar* in the Qur'ān. Some interpreters consider it to be the name of a river in paradise: الكوْتَر: نهر في الجنة حافظه من الذهب، ومجره على الدرّ والياقوت، وماؤه أشدّ بياضاً من الثلج وأشدّ *al-kawtaru: nahrūn fī l-jannati ḥāfatāhu mina d-ḍahabi wa-majrāhu 'alā d-durri wa-l-yāqūti wa-mā'uhu 'ašaddu bayāḍan mina t-ṭalji wa-'ašaddu ḥalāwatan mina l-'asali wa-turbatuhu 'aṭyabu min rīḥi l-miski* 'Kawtar: a river in Paradise whose banks are of gold, whose flowing is upon pearls and rubies, whose water surpasses snow in whiteness and surpasses honey in sweetness, and whose soil is more fragrant than the smell of musk'; others understand it abstractly as الخير الكثير *al-ḥayru l-katīru* 'abundant goodness/virtue' or metaphorically as النبوة والحكمة والقرآن والإسلام *al-nubuwwatu wa-l-ḥikmatu wa-l-qur'ānu wa-al-'islāmu* 'prophecy, wisdom, the Qur'ān and Islam' (see Al-Ṭabarī [2001], vol. XV, 360-64). The phonological correspondence between the Ug. and Ar. terms is impeccable; but the semantic evidence usually adduced in support of the comparison (KTU² 1.2 III, 20 [Pope, Smith]; KTU² 1.4 VII, 15-16 [Smith]), in particular to prove a relationship between Kôṭaru and water (and therefore, supposedly, the river in Paradise), is tenuous at best (for a different interpretation of both Ug. contexts, see Pardee [1997], 248 and n. 52, 262 and n. 182). All the interpretations of Qur'ānic کَوْتَر *kawtar*, moreover, can be understood to derive from the basic meaning 'abundance' (with Pardee [2000], 304), which is inappropriate for a comparison with the Ug. divine name *ktr*. In the Qur'ānic passage, کَوْتَر *kawtar* is contrasted with اَبْتَر *'abtar* 'cut off'. The latter is often understood to refer to childlessness, in accordance with the traditional 'occasion of revelation' of the *sūrah*, according to which it is the divine response to derision of the Prophet by an opponent after the death of his son. Whatever the original reference may be, a contrast between 'abundance' of some sort and 'cut off, deprived' is clearly appropriate. It thus seems most likely that Qur'ānic کَوْتَر *kawtar* is to be identified with the native Arabic word کَوْتَر *kawtar*, attested in pre-Islamic poetry with various meanings all derived from the basic meaning 'abundance' (see WKAS I, 66; Horovitz and Gardet [1978]). For example, Hud. 92, 44 / II 11, 8: كَوْتَرُ كَالْجَلالِ يَحْمِي خِيَامَهُ إِذَا مَا احْتَدَمَتْ // وَحَمَمَتْ فِي كَوْتَرِ كَالْجَلالِ *yuhāmī l-ḥaqīqa 'iḍā mā ḥtadamna wa-ḥamḥamna fī kawṭarin ka-l-jilāl* 'It (the wild ass) protects what is rightly its own (jennies) when they are in heat, and they bray (covered) in an abundance (of dust) like saddle blankets' (see *Lisān al-'arab*, XIII, 27). Horovitz and Gardet [1978], 805-806 note that the pattern *qawtal* is otherwise attested in Classical Arabic (citing Brokelmann - read: 'p. 344'). The phonetic similarity to the Ug. divine name Kôṭaru (< *Kawṭaru) must thus be coincidental.

Enki (= Ug. Kôtaru).²⁸ The Mesopotamian group of goddesses is referred to by the epithets *eršu* ‘wise’ (<*hrš) and *mūdû* ‘learned.’²⁹ The same epithets were frequently applied to the Babylonian mother goddess Mami as well. Note especially the following context, which explicitly relates the epithet *eršu* ‘wise’ to the goddess’s role as a midwife: *tabsût ilî erištam Mami* ‘the midwife among the gods, the wise goddess Mami’.³⁰ The birth goddess Nintur/Ninhursagā, in her role as a midwife, is similarly sometimes referred to by the Sumerian name ^dŠu-gal-an-zu ‘the expert hand’.³¹ Finally, in Rabbinic Hebrew human חכמות ‘skilled women’ are involved in the birth process and act as midwives.³² This comparative evidence provides the semantic precedent lacking from the Ugaritic data that is needed to establish a relationship between the divine names *ktr* and *ktrt*. Although their roles were distinct, both names were intended to highlight the bearer’s skillful performance and successful fulfillment of his or their respective divine roles and professions.³³

The function of the birth goddess in Mesopotamian literature surpasses the apparent role of the Ugaritic Kôtarātu. According to the Mesopotamian texts, the birth goddess Nintur/Ninhursagā is not only a midwife but also the actual creatress of gods and humans³⁴: she is referred to as ^dŠag₄-zu-diġir-e-ne ‘the midwife of the gods’³⁵ and ^dŠag₄-zu-kalam-ma ‘midwife of the nation’³⁶, but also bears epithets which point to her role as a creatress, such as ^dnin-tu ama-diġir-re-ne-ke₄ ‘Nintu, mother of the gods’³⁷ and ^dnin-tur₅ ama maḥ kur-kur-ra-[ka] ‘Nintur, supreme mother of all lands’.³⁸ At Ugarit, in contrast, there is no indication of any role of the Kôtarātu in creation. The creator role is reserved for ’Ilu, the head of the pantheon and the father of all gods, and his consort ’Atrt, neither of whom are described as midwives. Although no Ugaritic creation epic has survived, the role of the divine pair in creation is evident in their epithets. ’Ilu is termed *’ab ’adm* ‘father of mankind’, *’ab bn ’il* ‘father of the children of ’Ilu’, and *bn*

28. *Atra-Ḥasīs* I, 200ff.; see Lambert (1964), 101-102; Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs*, 56-60. For the correspondence between Kôtaru and Ea (Enki) at Ugarit, see Ugaritica V, 51, 15; Stol (2000), 80-83.

29. Lambert-Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs* 62 iii 8. For the relationship between the root *ktr* (: BH כשר) and the adjectives *eršu* ‘wise’ (: BH חכם ‘wise’) and *mūdû* ‘learned’ (: BH ידע ‘to know’), compare Qoh. 2, 21a: אדם שעמלו בקהמה וקדעת וקבשרון ‘a person whose (profit from) work was (made) with wisdom, knowledge, and skill’.

30. TuL, 172, 3f.; von Soden (1957-1958), 119. See also Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs*, 56 I 193; CAD, Š/1, 16; CAD, E, 314, a); Moran (1970), 49. For additional examples, see Jacobsen (1973), 286-295; Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs*, 56-63.

31. CT XXIV 12, 30; CT XXIV 25, 90. See Jacobsen (1973), 292, n. 74. For the identification of [Šu]-gal-an-zu with Akk. *eršu* ‘wise’ and *mūdû* ‘learned,’ see CAD, M/2, 164; Suter (2000), 98, 110.

32. See Spiegel (1945), 312-313, n. 5; Lichtenstein (1972), 108-109, n. 95. In BH, however, אשה חכמה ‘skilled woman,’ does not refer to midwives. In particular, in Jer. 9, 16 חכמות ‘skilled women’ appears in parallelism with מקוננות ‘(professional) mourning women’ in a context of death. See the discussion by Lichtenstein (1972), 108-109 and the literature cited there. See also Cohen (1978), 36 and 58, n. 50.

33. ‘Skill’ is the required character trait when dealing with the birth process or the healing of a fetus and newborn. See for example Elman (1972), 18, n. 23: *nadâte ša ina nēmeqi uballaḫā rēmu* ‘the *nadītu*-priestesses who heal the fetus with skill’ (KAR 321, 7). Cf. von Soden (1957-58), 120: “Von dem sprachlichen Ertrag abgesehen, hat unsere Untersuchung bereits jetzt für die Tätigkeit und Stellung der babylonischen Hebammen einige wichtige Erkenntnisse erbracht ... die an das Wort a-zu <<Wasser-, Säfte-kundiger>> für den Arzt erinnernde Bezeichnung ^{mi}šáb-zu <<Frau, die das Innere kennt>> läßt vermuten, das die Hebamme eine gewisse Ausbildung durchmachen mußte, die ihr das damalige Wissen um den Körper der Frau und des Kindes und den Vorgang der Geburt vermittelte.”

34. Lambert (1964), 101-02; idem (1987), 125-130. It is well documented that the Mesopotamian and Hittite birth goddesses give the name and decide the fate of the newborns; see for example Hoffner (1968), 198-203 and the references there. For a possible role in birth and marriage of the Eblaite goddesses ^dgu-ša-ra-tum, see Pasquali (2006), 62.

35. CT XXIV, 25 ii, 88. For ^dŠag₄-zu see PSD (electronic version); Jacobsen (1973), 289, n. 54.

36. Enki and World Order, 339. Cf. also [^dnin-tur₅] X ḫi-li-a tud ki us₂-sa ‘[Nintur,] who has established giving birth in joy’ (See ETCSL [electronic version]).

37. Edzard (1997), 30.

38. ETCSL (electronic version). See further Tallqvist, AG, 70, 413; Jacobsen (1973), 287, n. 44; RLA 9, 462-463; Suter (2000), 101, 107.

bnwt ‘the creator of creatures’,³⁹ whereas *’Aṣrt* bears the epithets *qnyt ’ilm* ‘the creatress of the gods’ and *’um ’ilm* ‘the mother of the gods’.⁴⁰

There is no doubt that *kṛrt*, lit. ‘the skilled ones (f. pl.)’, is a divine appellation referring to a group of goddesses (see above). This is corroborated by the correspondence in the god lists between the Ug. *kṛrt*, the (seven) Mesopotamian *šassūrātu* ‘(divine) midwives’,⁴¹ and the Hurrian group of goddesses *ḫutena* or *ḫutellura*.⁴² The Eblaite *ḡu-ša-ra-tum* also appear to be plural.⁴³ Comparisons have also been made with the Greek *Titanids* and *Artemids*,⁴⁴ the Egyptian *Hathors*,⁴⁵ and the Hittite *Gulšeš/ ḡGUL-aššeš*,⁴⁶ all known to be groups of female deities with a connection to birth and midwifery.⁴⁷ These correspondences and comparisons lead to the conclusion that the Kôṭarātu are a group of (most likely seven) female deities functioning as midwives and birth helpers, each possibly exercising a particular role, in addition to their role in conception. Nevertheless, little can be said about the individual members of the group. The only text that may possibly enumerate them is the enigmatic passage KTU² 1.24, 47-50; but it is the opinion of the present author that the various proposals along this line published to date are all based on dubious etymologies without sufficient contextual evidence or precedents.⁴⁸ Hopefully new textual discoveries will someday shed additional light on this crucial passage.

4. The Discussion of the Epithet *bnt hll snnt*

We may now turn our attention to the epithet *bnt hll snnt*. The epithet is composed of two components, *bnt hll* and *snnt*. With respect to the first component, there is a scholarly consensus that *bnt* is the plural of *bt* ‘daughter’ and serves as the nomen regens in the construct chain *bnt hll* (lit. ‘daughters of *hll*’). The meaning of second element, *hll*, is disputed. The following interpretations have been proposed: (a) a divine name based on Ar. هلال *hilāl* ‘crescent moon’ and/or BH הילל;⁴⁹ (b) Lucifer (BH הילל);⁵⁰ (c) the

39. See DEUAT, 8-13, 98-101, 331. Contrast Smith (1985), 468-469.

40. See DEUAT, 72-73, 275-277.

41. For the seven *šassūrātu* goddesses, see especially Lambert-Millard, *Atra-hasīs*, 62 iii 9-10 (cf. CAD, Š/2, 145-146; Lambert [1964], 101-102).

42. Otherwise written *ḫudena* and *ḫudellura*. See Pardee (2000), 305, 653, 655, 658. In a written communication, Professor G. Wilhelm of Universität Würzburg kindly informed me as follows: “Both *ḫude=na* and *ḫudellur(i)=*na* are Hurrian Plural in *-na*, in the latter case with the regular assimilation after drop of vowel in the sequence *-r/l/nV* plus the relator sg./pl. *-ne/a*. The plural is particularly evident in Hurrian ergative forms such as *ḡḫu-u-te-na-šu-uš* *ḡḫ-u-te-el-lu-ur-ra-šu-uš*. ... In ChD Ergänzungsheft 1, Vs. I 30’ they as well as ‘all female goddesses’ are invoked; this suggests they are female deities. Characterizing them as *Schicksalsgöttinnen* does not result from contexts but only from the identification with the Hittite *gulšeš* and *ḡMAḫ-goddesses*.”

43. See Pasquali (2006), 61-62; idem (2005), 134-135.

44. Gaster (1938), 82; Goetze (1941), 360, n. 56; Albright (1964), 52; du Mesnil du Buisson (1973), 102-103; Baumgarten (1981), 72-73, n. 30, 166-168, n. 51, 203-204.

45. Albright (1964), 52; Lipiński (1965), 66-67; Herrmann (1974), 104-108; Ebach (1979), 61-62, 70, n. 38. Effectively one of the functions of these Egyptian goddesses, the seven Hathors, is childbirth. These same divinities determine the destiny of a child at birth and are charged with healing. Each Hathor has her own name (see for example Hart [1986], 79-80.)

46. Laroche (1948), 125; idem (1968), 526; idem (1976-77), 111. See n. 42 above.

47. The suggestion of Albright (1964), 52-53 that the name Košarōtu ‘birth goddesses’ be read in the Beth Shemesh tablet has been definitively refuted. See, for example, Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 207 and the bibliography cited there in n. 127. Contrast Puech (1991).

48. For a recent survey of the interpretation of KTU² 1. 24, 47-50, see Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 199-204.

49. Virolleaud (1936), 213: “les Filles de Hêlal, les Hirondelles”; Gordon (1937), 31-33: “the daughter(s) of Hilâl, the swallow(s)”; Goetze (1941), 360: “daughters of Hilâl, swallows!”; Dussaud (1941), 142: “Filles de Hêlal, les Hirondelles”; Jirku (1962), 77: “die/ihr Töchter des Helal, die/ihr Schwalben”; Aistleitner (1964), 63-64 “(die) Töchter *Hll*-s, die/ihr Bildnerinnen”; Herrmann (1968), 7: “die/ihr Töchter des Hll, die/ihr Bildnerinnen”; Caquot et al. (1974), 392: “(ô/les) filles de Hilâl, (les)

divine name Enlil (Akk. Enlil);⁵¹ (d) the (new/crescent) moon (Ar. هلال *hilāl* ‘crescent moon’),⁵² (e) shouting, joyful noise (Akk. *alālu* [Gt] ‘to sing a joyful song’; BH הלל [pi.] ‘to praise; to give praise’;⁵³ (f) brightness (BH הלל [hi.] ‘to shine; to cause to shine’; Ar. اهتّل and تهلّل ‘to shine, gleam, be radiant’).⁵⁴ Pardee suggests a double interpretation, taking *bnt* to imply *the possession of or characterization by* the attribute *hll* when the latter is considered to be an abstract noun, and as an expression of filiation when *hll* is classified as a divine name.⁵⁵ In my opinion, the term *hll* is an abstract noun ‘luminosity, brightness’ in all the contexts cited above, with the sole exception of KTU² 1.24:41-42, where it occurs as a divine name of a minor deity with its own internal epithet (see below). I would propose the following translation: ‘the ones associated with brightness’ or ‘the luminaries’. In KTU² 1.24, 41-42, the proper name *hll* serves as a word-play on the abstract noun *hll* ‘brightness’ in lines 40-41.

The interpretation of *hll* as an abstract noun ‘brightness’ was first proposed by Watson.⁵⁶ He based his interpretation on the apparent etymological correspondence between the BH הלל (hi.) ‘to shine; to cause to shine’⁵⁷ and Ug. *hll*. This claim can be supported with contextual evidence. The BH verb consistently appears in collocation with אור ‘light’.⁵⁸ The key semantic evidence, however, is that when thus interpreted, the epithet component *bnt hll* ‘the luminaries, i.e. the ones associated with brightness’, parallels another well-documented Ug. divine epithet, namely, *bt 'ar*, ‘the luminary, i.e. the one associated with light’, likewise a construct chain composed of the word *bt* ‘daughter’ and a word for ‘light’.⁵⁹ The latter epithet likewise occurs in KTU² 1.24 (line 26 [partially reconstructed]).⁶⁰

hirondelles!”; de Moor (1987), 142: “the daughters of Hilalu, the swallows(!)”; Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 159: “leuchtende Töchter des Hilāl” and “die Töchter Hilāls, die hehren.”

50. Del Olmo Lete (1981), 372, 457: “(Oh/las) hijas del Lucero, las golondrinas.”

51. Wyatt (2002), 264: “daughters of Ellil, the Bright Ones”; Watson (2007), 325: “Daughters of Enlil, the Bright ones.”

52. Gaster (1938), 38: “daughters of the New Moon, swallows”; Driver (1956), 51: “shining daughters of the crescent moon”; Gordon (1977), 65: “Daughters of the New Moon The swallows”; Gibson (1978), 107: “swallow-like daughters of the crescent-moon”; Parker (1997a), 57: “the moon’s radiant daughters”; Marcus (1997), 215: “the radiant daughters of the new moon”; Koitabashi (1998), 386-387: “Daughters of the New Moon, Swallows.”

53. Ginsberg (1938), 14-15; idem (1939), 323: “the/o songstresses//the daughters of joyful noise, the/o swallows”; Gaster (1961), 338-340, n. 6: “the artistes // the daughters of melody, the swallows”; Brown (1965), 215 “daughter of joyful noise, the swallows”; Loewenstamm (1965), 122-123: “the daughters of joyful sound, the swallows”; Gordon (1966), 99: “Daughters of shouting Swallows.”

54. Watson (1999), 393: “daughters of Brightness, swallows (or perhaps ‘Shining Ones’)”; Pardee (2003), 345: “the daughters of brightness, the pure ones.”

55. Pardee (2003), 345, n. 21; idem (1999), 492; see Pardee *apud* DEUAT, p. 103, n. 3.

56. Watson (1999), 393 (see above, n. 51). Watson (2007), 325, however, interprets *hll* as the divine name Enlil.

57. HALOT, 248; DCH, vol. II, 562; BDB, 237.

58. Isa. 13, 10; Job 29, 3; Job 31, 26; Job 41, 10.

59. For *bt 'ar*, see DEUAT 120-125. Cf. the related epithets *bt rb* ‘the one associated with showers’ and *bt y' bdr* ‘the one associated with / daughter of y' bdr’ (DEUAT, 126-131). A similar usage of *bt* ‘daughter’ is found in the epithet *bt 'n 'abn bt šmm w'arš* ‘the one associated with (lit. daughter of) spring(s), the one associated with (lit. daughter of) stone(s), the one associated with (lit. daughter of) the heavens and the earth’ (KTU² 1.100:1); see DEUAT, 123-124, n. 12. As indicated in DEUAT, 124, n. 12, such a usage of בַּת / בִּן in BH is also well-attested, for which see BDB, 121 (meaning 8) and 123 (meaning 5). Note especially הַיָּלִד (בְּנֵי) ‘the one(s) associated with (military) might’ [= בְּנֵי עֹלָה]; גְּבוּרִים ‘the one(s) associated with wickedness’ [= רְשָׁעִים]; בְּנֵי מִרְיָ ‘the ones associated with rebellion’ [= מְרֹדִים]. In the same way in Ugaritic, *bt / bnt 'ar / hll* ‘the one(s) associated with light, luminosity’ [= BH מְאֹרֹת ‘luminaries’]. Such a usage of بنت / ابن in Classical Arabic is also well-attested, for which see *Lisān al-‘arab*, II, 159-160; Lane, *Lexicon*, 262. Note for example [وهو الضحّ] [ابن إلهة وألهة ضوء الشمس] ‘The burning sunshine (?) and 'a/i/ulāhata the light of the sun [= the sun/sunshine]’. Note finally that the translation of Ug. *bt / bnt* here as ‘the one(s) associated with’ in all the above expressions and throughout the present article with respect to *bnt hll* ‘the ones associated with brightness, luminosity’ [= ‘the luminaries’] is a correction to my previous translation of *bt / bnt* in all these contexts in DEUAT as ‘dispenser/s’. For the three relevant Ug. epithets, see DEUAT, 365 (xxxiii: 2, 3, 4).

60. There is no consensus among scholars concerning the restoration of the epithet *bt 'ar* in this context; see DEUAT, 121-

BH הלל 'to shine' is not attested in a divine epithet, but the verbal expression תִּהַל אֹר 'causes light to flash' is used with respect to (the sneezings of) a demonic dragon (Job 41, 10). Furthermore, a number of (etymologically unrelated) nouns from the semantic field of 'brightness' are attested in BH as divine attributes. See, for example, זָהַר 'to shine' (Isa. 60, 1-3); נִגְהָ 'radiance' (Ezek. 1, 28; 10, 4); הוֹד 'splendor' (Ps. 96, 6; 1Chr. 16, 27); הִדְרָ 'splendor, splendid' (Isa. 2, 10; 19, 21; 35, 2).⁶¹ Akkadian texts also provide such semantic precedents as *šarūru* 'radiance, brilliance, sunlight';⁶² *melammu* 'radiance, supernatural awe inspiring sheen (inherent in things divine and royal)';⁶³ *namru* 'bright, shiny, brilliant, luminous, radiant';⁶⁴ *šalummatu* 'awesome radiance';⁶⁵ and *birbirrū* 'luminosity, light, sheen,'⁶⁶ all well attested as components of epithets of deities and demons and in royal titles. In particular, the divine midwives and birth goddesses Ištar and Ninmah are qualified by such epithets and descriptions as: *Ištar kakkabī namirtu* 'brilliant Ištar of the stars',⁶⁷ *namirti bēlet dadmī* '(Ištar) brilliant queen of all settlements'⁶⁸ and *Ninmah bānāt ilāni šalummata [uḥallipka]* 'Ninmah the creatress of the gods [wrapped you (Adad)] in awe-inspiring radiance'.⁶⁹ Eblaite *nabḥu* 'the radiant' likewise occurs as an epithet of deities of various nature.⁷⁰

As opposed to the other attestations of *bnt hll*, in KTU² 1.24:41-42 the expression would appear to indicate a familial relationship, namely, 'the daughters of the (minor deity) Hll'. The Ugaritic data offer a considerable number of precedents for a divine epithet expressing a relationship of filiation.⁷¹ This same structure is also used in Akk. epithets. Note especially *mārāt dEa* 'the daughters of Ea', which refers to a group of seven minor goddesses.⁷² However, in my previous study, I found that in all cases in which a Ug. divine epithet expresses a filial relationship of the sort *bn X* or *bt X*, without further qualification of the

122, n. 5. For this epithet in general, see DEUAT, 120-125. In the context of KTU² 1.24, cf. also the epithet *nyr šmm* 'the luminary of the heavens' (DEUAT, 244-245) with reference to Yariḥu in lines 16 and 31 and the general association of Yariḥu with light in lines 37-39.

61. BH הִדְרָ is etymologically and semantically related to Aram. הִדְרָ which is found with reference to kings in the proverbs of Ahiqar (26: 108): [שפיר מלך למחזה כשמש ויקיר הדרה לדרכי ארקא בניחא] 'A king is as splendid to see as Šamaš; and his majesty is glorious to them that tread the earth in peace'. The collocation with כשמש 'like Šamaš' indicates that the Aram. term here means 'radiance, shining'. For this context see Cohen (1999), 73, n. 36; Lindenberger (1983), 94. For more epithets containing הִדְרָ, see Cohen (1999), 73 (citing Weinfeld).

62. CAD, Š/2, 142-43, meanings c, d, e; AG, 231-32. For other many examples, see Cohen (1999), 73.

63. CAD, M/2, 9-11. This term is widely used as in divine epithets of Sîn, Ištar, Marduk and other deities and demons. For example, *Sîn bēl melammē* 'Sîn the radiant lord' (KAR 69, 22; see Biggs Šaziga 76). It is also used to refer to a quality of gods in general and in royal epithets. See the discussions by Oppenheim (1943) and Cassin (1968).

64. This term describes stars, celestial bodies, and other radiant phenomena, and is widely used as an epithet of divinities of light or fire, including the moon god Sîn; see CAD, N/1, 242-243, meanings 2' and 3'; AG, 140 and Cassin (1968). The term also appears in proper names with reference to Sîn, such as *Nimer-Sîn-Tuttul* 'Sîn of Tuttul is bright' *Niwer-Sîn* 'Sîn is bright' (cf. Streck [2000], 173-174).

65. CAD, Š/1, 283-284.

66. AG, 72; CAD, B, 245-246 (cf. VAS 10 214 iv, 1-6 and KAR 101 ii 4, quoted below).

67. Unger, Bel-harran-beli-ussur 7 (CAD N/1, 242). For more examples see AG, 336 and CAD, N/1, 242-243, 3'.

68. RA 22 58 i 5 (CAD N/1, 242); AG, 336 and CAD, N/1, 242-243, 3'. For many other epithets of this kind, see AG, 336 under Ištar als 'Licht- und astrale Erscheinung/Licht und Leuchte'. The divinity and demon Asalluhi, which sometimes acts as a midwife, is described as *ša šarūrūšu unammaru mātāti ... ša birbirrūšu ubbatu dūr abni* '(I am Asalluhi) whose radiance spreads light over all lands, whose luminosity penetrates a stone wall' (AfO 17 313 B 14) see CAD, B, 245.

69. BMS 21 r. 58 (CAD Š/1, 283). For more examples, see CAD, Š/1, 283-284. Other deities whose epithets frequently contain references to light or brilliance include Sîn, Šamaš, Ninurta, Enlil.

70. See Pomponio and Xella (1997), 471; Krebernik (1992), 73, 82.

71. Other Ug. epithets indicating filial relationships include: *'ab bn 'il* 'father of the children of 'Ilu' (DEUAT, 11-13); *bn 'il* 'the son of 'Ilu' (DEUAT, 88-89); *bn 'ilm mt* 'the son of 'Ilu, Mōtu' (DEUAT, 90-93); and *bn dgn* 'the son of Dagānu' (DEUAT, 94-97).

72. JNES 14, 17. See CAD, M/1, 304, meaning 4', where other examples referring to this group of goddesses are mentioned.

deity X, the connection is always with a well known major deity, such as *'il*, *'atrt*, *b'l*, *dgn*, *'nt*, or *yrh*.⁷³ On the other hand, the names of minor deities are normally qualified with an identifying epithet, even when they form part of an epithet qualifying another deity.⁷⁴ In the case of *bnt hll b'l gml* 'daughter of Hll, possessor of the *gamlu*-staff', the minor deity Hll is qualified by his own internal epithet, *b'l gml* 'possessor of the *gamlu*-staff',⁷⁵ thus according with the general pattern. The function of the title is to allow the reader to better identify the less familiar god. This rule speaks against taking *hll* in the parallel epithet *bnt hll snnt* as the name of the minor deity, since *snnt* certainly refers to the Kôtarātu. The collocation of the two epithets *bnt hll snnt* and *bnt hll b'l gml* thus involves the paronomasia *hll* 'brightness' : *hll* 'the minor deity Hll'.

There is as yet no scholarly consensus regarding the identity of the god Hll. The identification as the god of the crescent moon is based on a comparison with Arabic هلال *hilāl* 'crescent moon'.⁷⁶ As such he is sometimes equated with the biblical יהוה בן שחר (Isa. 14, 12).⁷⁷ Aistleitner considers *hll* to be a by-name of Yarihu.⁷⁸ Craigie and Du Mesnil du Buisson identify him with the Ug. deity 'Aṭṭaru.⁷⁹ Gallagher proposes an identification of Hll (and BH יהוה בן שחר) with the Sumero-Akkadian god Enlil/Ellil.⁸⁰ Pardee sees a possible relationship of Hll with the deity Hulēlu at Emar.⁸¹ Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín identify Hll as an "astral deity" without further elaboration.⁸² Recently van der Sluijs took Hll to be a comet.⁸³

It seems likely that Hll was originally an independent lunar deity that was at some stage identified with the moon god Yarihu.⁸⁴ Such an assumption explains the association of Hll with the *gamlu*-staff,

73. In DEUAT the expression *bnt hll snnt* was not taken into consideration because it is not an epithet of an independent deity, but of a group of goddesses. I now abandon the translation 'the brilliant daughters of Hll' that I proposed there (DEUAT, 102). The translation and understanding of the epithet *bnt hll b'l gml* (lines 41-42) is the same in both studies (DEUAT, 102).

74. For example, *hyn d hrš yd(m)* 'Hayyānu, the one of the dexterous hand(s)' (DEUAT, 156-58); *'ilš ngr bt b'l* 'Ilišu, the herald of the house of Ba'lu' (DEUAT, 64-66); *'amt 'atrt* 'maidservant of 'Aṭṭar' referring to the minor goddess *dmgy* (DEUAT, 78-80); and *bt 'il ḏbb* 'the daughter of 'Ilu, ḏbb (Flame)', which refers to ḏbb (DEUAT, 118-119). For more examples, see DEUAT, 380-384.

75. On this epithet, see DEUAT, 102-105.

76. See the discussion of this etymology by Renfroe (1992), 116. For more references, see n. 49 and 52 above. About the moon god in general and his connection with female fertility, see for example Green (1992), esp. 25-29 and Theuer (2000).

77. Gordon (1937), 31, n. 8a; Loretz (1976), 133-136; Spronk (1986), 220-224; de Moor (1987), 145, n. 33; Korpel (1990), 576, n. 363; Watson (1999), 393; Theuer, (2000), 158, 492-496. Van der Sluijs (2009), 269-281 interprets both the Ug. and BH names to refer to a comet. For a review of the various views on the biblical personage, see Day (2000), 166-179.

78. Aistleitner (1964), 63, n. b; quoted by Herrmann (1968), 6, Z. 6.

79. Craigie (1973), 223-225; du Mesnil du Buisson (1973), 103. The connection of these two gods with the morning star, based on the interpretation of the Ugaritic epithet *'ttr 'rṣ* 'mighty (?) 'Aṭṭaru' as if it denotes a luminous character and provides the background to יהוה בן שחר (Isa. 14:12), is dubious (see my commentary on this epithet in DEUAT, 263-265). Furthermore there is no textual data in the Ugaritic corpus connecting *'ttr* and *hll*. For more arguments rejecting this identification, see Spronk (1986), 220-224.

80. Gallagher (1994), esp. 135-138; followed by Wyatt (2002), 337, n. 6; and recently Watson (2007), 325, n. 74. According to Gallagher (1994), 137, "the association of the *kttr* with both *hll* and *'el* [in KTU² 1.24 - AR] may indicate that *hll* and *'el* were regarded identical in KTU² 1.24, just as Illil and *'el* were regarded as identical in the god list [Ug. V, p. 246, iii 35 - AR]." It is very difficult to sustain Gallagher's suggestions by textual attestations. For an attempt to harmonize the conflicting data of the god-lists and sacrificial texts, which appear to relate the Kôtarātu to either Yarihu or 'Ilu, see below p. 19, n. 88-93.

81. Pardee (1999), 492; idem (2003), 345, n. 21; citing Arnaud (1991), 38 who derives Hu-li-li and Hu-le-e-li from **hll* 'être brillant'.

82. DULAT, 339 and the bibliographical references there.

83. Van Der Sluijs (2009). Much of Van der Sluijs' argument is based on his understanding of *b'l gml* as "lord of the sickle." Against the translation of *gml* as 'sickle' see my comments in DEUAT, 102-105.

84. Cf. Aistleitner (1964), 63, n. b; Herrmann (1968), 6. Examples of such synchronisms are plentiful in Mesopotamia. Compare, for example, the identification of Ištar with other goddesses, such as Išhara and Inanna (see Abusch [1999], 425-456; RLA 5, 74-89). Note also the identification of Sîn with the Sumerian moon god Nanna. At Ugarit, the same general process is

which in Mesopotamia appears as the symbol of the deity Sîn-Amurru, himself a composite deity.⁸⁵ It also explains his relationship to the Kôṭarātu, since the Akk. *šassūrātu* ‘birth goddesses’,⁸⁶ such as Ištar for example is typically associated with Sîn.⁸⁷ This is corroborated by the Ug. god list KTU² 1.118, 12-13 (// the sacrificial list KTU² 1.148, 5) and its Akk. equivalent RS 20.024, 11-12. In the Ug. texts *ktrt* directly precedes *yrḥ*; whereas in the corresponding slots in the Akk. text, ^d*sa-sú-ra-tu*₄ directly precedes ^dEN.ZU (Sîn).⁸⁸ However, in a different section of the sacrificial list KTU² 1.148 (line 25) *ktrt* follows *’il* (without collocation with *yrḥ*), which corresponds to DINGIR^{lum} (*Ilum*) ^dNIN.MAḤ (*šassurātu*) in the god list RS 1992.2004, 3-4⁸⁹. Pardee⁹⁰ adduces Philo of Byblos’ report of the seven daughters of Elos = Kronos and concludes that the *ktrt* were the daughters of ’Ilu (although he does not identify Hll with ’Ilu)⁹¹. The Phoenician pantheon as described by Philo of Byblos does not always exactly correspond to that reflected in the Ug. texts. For example, *Baetylos* has no Ug. equivalent. Nevertheless, the apparent correspondence between RS 1992.2004:3-4 // KTU² 1.148, 25 and the Phoenician data is remarkable. Although we cannot offer a definitive explanation of the data, one may suggest the possibility that the Ugaritic data reflect two conflicting traditions, one making the Kôṭarātu the daughters of El (as in the tradition related by Philo of Byblos) and the other making them the daughters of Hll (and therefore associated with Yariḥu). Both traditions would be reflected in KTU² 1.148, 5 and 25 Cf. the epithets *bn ’il* ‘the son of El’ and *bn dgn* ‘the son of Dagānu’, both referring to Ba’lu⁹². In Mesopotamia, Ištar was similarly variously referred to as *mārat Sîn* ‘the daughter of Sîn’, *mārat Enlil* ‘the daughter of Enlil’, and *mārat Anim* ‘the daughter of Anu’⁹³. Alternatively, the epithet *bnt hll* ‘the daughters of Hll’ may merely indicate that Hll was responsible for the Kôṭarātu, without implying a biological relationship⁹⁴. Hll and Yariḥu are both mentioned in KTU² 1.24, but only Yariḥu plays an active role in the text; the reference to Hll is limited to its occurrence in the epithet under discussion. As a lunar deity, the name may well be etymologically related to Ar. هلال *hilāl* ‘crescent moon,’ but this remains to be proven.⁹⁵

The term *snnt* occurs in the Ug. corpus only as a component of the epithet under discussion. Most early interpreters translated ‘swallows,’ based on Akk. *sinuntu* ‘swallow’ and its cognates.⁹⁶ The most

evident with respect to *’ktrt* and *’nt* (see Pardee [1988], 49-50).

85. See DEUAT, 104-105, n. 16.

86. For Ištar as *šassūru* ‘Mutterleib’ (see AG, 331); 4R 61 iii 23 (NA oracles, coll.): *sabsūtāka rabītu* ‘I (Ištar) am your great midwife’ (see CAD, Š/1, 16). For more epithets of Ištar the mother goddess and the divine midwife see AG, 333, 334 under ‘Muttergöttin, Gebälerin, Geburtshelferin’.

87. Cf. ^dŠĀ^{ša-sa-rum}TÜR = *bēlet-ilī* ^dIštar ‘the lady of the gods, Ištar’ (CT 25 30 r. i 12f.) See for example the following epithets: *bukrat* ^dSîn ‘the child of Sîn’; *mārat* ^dSîn ‘the daughter of Sîn’; *mārtu rabītu* *ša* ^dSîn ‘the great daughter of Sîn’; *qaritta mārat* ^dSîn ‘the heroine, the daughter of Sîn’ for all these epithets see Tallqvist, AG, 332.

88. For *ktrt* in these texts, see Pardee (2000), 292-293, 304-305, 659-660; idem (2002), 12-16.

89. See Pardee (2000) 781, 795-799 and idem (2002) 17-18.

90. Pardee (2000), 799 and n. 92.

91. Cf. Pardee (1999), 492.

92. See the discussion of these epithets in DEUAT, 88-89 and 94-97, respectively.

93. See CAD M/1, 303 and Tallqvist, AG, 124, 125, 126.

94. For numerous examples in Akkadian of the term *māru* / *mārtu* with this semantic value, see AG, 119, 124; CAD, M/1, 313.

95. The association between birth rituals and astral deities is well known in Mesopotamia. For references see Lambert (1969), 32-34; Teixidor (1979), 42-46; Beckman (1983); Collon (1992), 22-28; Bernett and Keel (1998), 34-40; Schmidt (1999), 585-593; Stol (1999), 782-783; idem, (2000).

96. Virolleaud (1936), 213; Gordon (1937), 32, 33; Ginsberg (1938), 14, 15; Goetze (1941), 360; Dussaud (1941), 142; Gaster (1961), 339, 340, n. 6; Jirku (1962), 77; Brown (1965), 215; Loewenstamm (1965), 122-123; Gordon (1966), 99; Caquot et al. (1974), 392; Watson (1977), 282; Gordon (1977), 65; Gibson (1978), 107; del Olmo Lete (1981), 372; de Moor (1987), 142; Koitabashi (1998), 386 (see above, notes 49).

detailed argument in favor of such an interpretation has been laid out by Watson.⁹⁷ According to Watson, the appellation ‘swallows’ and the association of the Kôtarātu with the moon god *hll* can be explained by paronomasia of Sumerian *sín*^{mušen} ‘swallow’ and the name of the Mesopotamian moon god *Sîn*. The connection would be demonstrated by a Sum. hymn that contains a word-play on the Sum. DN *ga-ša-an-ì-si-in*^{ki} (= Ninisina ‘the Lady of Isin’) and *sín*^{mušen} ‘swallow’. The element *-sin* in the name Gašanisin, however, has absolutely no relation to the name of the Mesopotamian moon god, as it is a non-analyzable part of the toponym Isin. Nor does the deity in question have any relationship to the moon.⁹⁸ Furthermore, according to PSD (electronic version), the Sum. word for ‘swallow’ is *sim*^{mušen} or *še-en*^{mušen}/*še-na*^{mušen}. The corresponding logogram is usually transcribed SIM(.MU)^{mušen}, rather than SÍN^{mušen} in Akkadian.⁹⁹ Finally, in the numerous Akk. texts where *sinuntu* occurs, to the best of my knowledge no connection is ever explicitly made between *Sîn* and swallows, nor does the word *sinuntu* ‘swallow’ ever occur in a divine epithet.¹⁰⁰

Another interpretation by Aistleitner, based on classical Ar. *سَنَّ sanna* ‘to form, to depict, to shape’, also seems unlikely.¹⁰¹ *Lisān al-‘arab* cites *صَوَّرَ sawwara* ‘to form, shape’ as a synonym of *سَنَّ sanna*.¹⁰² However, the contexts in which this semantic value of the latter verb is reflected do not make reference to conception, birth or development of embryos, as claimed by Aistleitner.¹⁰³ The Quranic verses where this term indeed means ‘to shape, to form, to depict’¹⁰⁴ refer to the role of the Creator, who shapes mankind, rather than to the role of the midwife. In addition, this meaning does not accord well with the interpretation of *bnt hll* as ‘the luminaries’.

Recently Watson has speculated that (a) “... Ug. *snnt* may echo Akk. *sūnu*, ‘lap, sexual parts, etc.’ ... since the *ktrt* are goddesses of childbirth”; or (b) “Ug. *snnt* may derive from *sūnu* and denote those dealing with that region of a woman's anatomy, i.e. midwives.”¹⁰⁵ Against these proposals, which are based primarily on (a dubious) etymology,¹⁰⁶ stand a number of considerations. First, *sūnu* ‘lap, crotch (also euphemism for sexual parts)’¹⁰⁷ refers equally to male and female sexual parts, hence it is inappropriate as the basis for an epithet referring specifically to a goddess dealing specifically with a region of a woman's anatomy. Moreover, it is normally mentioned in contexts of sexual intercourse, not birth.¹⁰⁸ Second, *sūnu* does not appear in divine epithets with reference to any of the Mesopotamian female (or male) divinities. Third, no use of anatomical terms in divine epithets is attested at Ugarit.¹⁰⁹

97. Watson (1977), 282.

98. For Ninisina/Gašanisin, see Edzard in RLA 9, 387-388.

99. See CAD, S, 295, lexical section; Hübner and Reizammer (1985), 889; Borger (2004), 277.

100. See the ample documentation in CAD, S, s.v.

101. See Aistleitner (1964), 109, followed by Herrmann (1968), 7; idem (1974), 105, n. 8.

102. *Lisān al-‘arab*, VII, 279. See also Lane, *Lexicon*, 1435-1440, esp. 1438; *Tāğ al-‘arūs*, XVIII, 296-308, esp. 299-301.

103. Aistleitner (1964), 109: “*snnt*, vgl. arab. *sanna*: formen, bilden, dürfte sich auf die kunstvolle Bildung des Embryos beziehen, daher auch die Benennung *ktrt*.”

104. See *Āl-‘imrān* 3, 6; *al-A‘rāf* 7, 11; *al-Infīār* 82, 7-8.

105. Watson (2007), 325, n. 47.

106. Watson quotes Kogan and Miltarev (2002), 317-318, who discuss possible etymologies of Akk. *sūnu*. The latter scholars, however, find no connection with Ug. *snnt*.

107. CAD S, 386-388.

108. The derivation of *šassūru* ‘birth goddess’ from *šassūru* ‘womb’ (CAD Š/2, 145-146) does not provide a semantic precedent for the alleged derivation of *snnt* from *sūnu*, since *šassūru* ‘womb’ refers specifically to the part of the woman's anatomy involved in birth.

109. See the list of divine epithets in DEUAT, vii-x.

The most likely interpretation of *snnt* proposed to date is based on Arabic *sanā* ‘shining, gleaming, brightness and radiance (of fire and lightning)’.¹¹⁰ The interpretation was first suggested by Obermann.¹¹¹ The Ar. term appears in Surah 24, 43 (*Sūrat an-Nūr*) in the following context:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ
فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ
'a-lam tara anna llāha yuzjī saḥāban tumma yu'allifū baynahu tumma yaj'aluhu rukāman fa-tarā l-wadqa
yahruju min ḥilālihi wa yunazzilu mina s-samā'i min jibālin fihā min baradīn fa-yuṣību bihi man yašā'u wa-
yaṣrifuhu 'an man yašā'u yakādu sanā barqihī yaḏhabu bi-l-'absāri

Have you not seen that Allāh causes the clouds to move onward, then piles them up in masses, from which you can see raindrops coming forth. He brings mountainous masses (of clouds) charged with hail from the skies, striking with it whomever He wills and averting it from whomever He wills, (while) the brightness of His lightning nearly deprives them of their sight.¹¹²

The *sanā* ‘brightness’ of Allāh’s lightning may be compared with Akk. *birbirrū* ‘luminosity’, which is associated with *birqī* ‘lightnings’ as attributes of the goddess Ištar in VAS 10 214 iv, 1-6:

ḥa-aṭ-ṭi šar-ru-ti kussū (GIŠ.GU.ZA) a-gu-ú ša-ar-ku-ši ... i-di-iš-ši eṭ-lu-ta-am na-ar-bi-a-am da-na-na-am bi-
ir-qi bi-ir-bi-ir-ri ú-ši-ib šu-a-ti uš-ta-ás-ḥi-ir-ši

Scepter of kingship, throne, (and) crown were granted to her ... he gave her manliness, power, might, in addition he surrounded her with luminous lightning (lit. lightnings and luminosity).¹¹³

The blinding effect of the *sanā* ‘brightness’ of Allāh’s lightning, moreover, is equivalent to that of Marduk’s *birbirrū* in KAR 101 ii 4: *be-lu, šá bir-bir-ru-šu la in-nam-ma-rù* ‘the lord whose luminosity cannot be looked at’. For additional Akk. and BH terms for ‘brightness’ in divine epithets and as divine attributes, see the preceding discussion of *hll* ‘brightness’. The interpretation of the term *snnt* as ‘shining ones, radiant, brilliant’ also accords well with the interpretation of the first part of the epithet, *bnt hll*, as ‘The luminaries’, and, in the context of KTU² 1.24, with the other divine epithets involving notions of light in that text (as discussed above with respect to *bnt hll*).

110. Ibn-Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, VII, 283-284 defines *sanā* as *ضوء النار والبرق daw'u n-nāri wa-l-barqi* ‘the light of fire and lightning’ and defines the cognate verb in the expression *سنا البرق sanā l-barqu* as *أضاء 'aḏā'a* ‘(the lightning) illuminated’ or *سطع saṭa'a* ‘(the lightning) shone, gleamed’.

111. Obermann (1946), 26-7. Cf. Driver (1956), 51; Parker (1997a), 57; Marcus (1997), 215; Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 159; Watson (2007), 325; Wyatt (2002), 264 (see above, note 51). Van Selms (1954), 86, n. 24 compared the Rabbinic Hebrew root טנן in BeMidbar Rabba, 4:20. See also Gray (1965), 246, n. 2; Gallagher (1994), 138; Wyatt (2002), 337, n. 7; Dietrich and Loretz (2000), 171-172. The text demonstrates the dual meaning ‘pure, refined’ (טמון), referring to gold, and ‘glistening, gleaming’ (טנון), referring to gold-embroidered garments; but the Hebrew word appears etymologically distinct from Ar. *sanā* ‘brightness’. The Hebrew etymology seems less likely, as the basic meaning appears to be ‘to filter, refine’; cf. Jastrow (1950), 1007-1008. For the Aram. cognate, see Sokoloff (1992), 384 and idem (2009), 1024.

112. The reading *سنا sanā'u* also exists, but the Arabic root is nevertheless *snw*. See *Tāğ al-‘arūs*, XIX, 542 and Lane, *Lexicon*, 1448.

113. See Groneberg 1997: 77 and 89, notes 21-23. For the use of the cognate verb *barāru* with reference to *birqu* ‘lightning’, see CAD B, 106-107, 245, 258-259. I thank my friend and colleague Dr. J. N. Ford of Bar-Ilan University for adding this comparison and the references to the Akk. text quoted here.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the position of the Kôṭarātu in the Ugaritic religious universe can be well established, in spite of the relative lack of documentation about them. A possible reason for the poor documentation is the absence of explicit contexts in the extant Ugaritic corpus dealing with the two major cosmological themes of the birth of the gods and the creation of mankind, where references to the Kôṭarātu might be expected to occur. The Ug. texts indicate that the goddesses played a role in conception. Their role as midwives, on other hand, is suggested by the role of the corresponding Mesopotamian group of goddesses. In this paper we have attempted to demonstrate that the best translation of the fixed group epithet *bnt hll smnt* is ‘The luminaries, the radiant ones’, rather than the commonly accepted translation “the daughters of Hll, the swallows.” Our conclusion is supported by the convention in Ugaritic literature (suggested here for the first time) that minor deities (such as, for example, Hll and Hyn) will be mentioned as elements in Ugaritic divine epithets only if they themselves are identified by their own internal epithet, mentioned immediately after their name. Only in KTU² 1.24, 41-42, where the final line of a tricolon reads *bnt hll b’l gml*, should the translation ‘the daughters of Hll, the possessor of the *gamlu*-staff’ be accepted, since the line includes an internal epithet for Hll, namely *b’l gml* ‘the possessor of the *gamlu*-staff’. The phrase *bnt hll* ‘daughters of (the minor deity) Hll’ in this context should be analyzed as a play on words with the phrase *bnt hll* ‘dispersers of brightness’ in the preceding colon. This interpretation of the epithet *bnt hll smnt* as ‘the luminaries, the radiant ones’ attributes to these goddesses a dazzling divine aura. Similar epithets and descriptions are attested for Mesopotamian deities, including Ištar and the birth goddess Ninmah, but they do not appear to relate specifically to a role in conception and/or birth. Hopefully future textual and iconographic discoveries¹¹⁴ will shed additional light on this intriguing group of goddesses and on each of its individual members.

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114. To the best of my knowledge, no iconographical representations of these Ugaritic female deities are extant. Lipiński (1965), 67 speculates that the Kôṭarātu have the shape of a cow, like the seven Egyptian Hathors. Pasquali (2005), 60-61, 63-64; idem (2006), 61 mentions seven votive statues of the equivalent Eblaite female divinities *ḡu-ša-ra-tum*. For the representation of birth goddesses in Egypt and Mesopotamia in general, see Frankfort (1944), 198-200.

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