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Filial Duties in the Ugaritic Epic of Danilu and Aqhatu[1]

Abstract: The list of filial duties from the Aqhatu story constitutes a passage unique to the literature of the ancient Near East, emphasized in the epic by its fourfold repetition in close proximity. This is why the list has attracted much attention of scholars, who are particularly interested in the wisdom nature of the list, the ancestor worship in Ugarit and in the Ancient East, the family ritual and the responsibilities of children towards their parents, as well as the *Sitz im Leben* of the list, considered by some to be part of a larger and independent work, which has been included in the Aqhatu story because of loose connections with the topic of son and heir. As the current translation and interpretation efforts seem insufficient, the article proposes a new translation and a new attempt to highlight the meaning and the context of both individual duties and the entire list.

Keywords: list of filial duties, poem of Aqhatu, Danilu and Aqhatu epic, ancestor worship

Introduction

The discovery in 1929 of the ancient capital city of Ugarit on the eastern Mediterranean coast opened a new stage of research into ancient Syro-Palestine (biblical Canaan) and the entire ancient Middle East. The city's literary archives represent the only collection of prose and poetry from Syro-Palestine of the pre-Biblical period (14th–13th centuries BC) that has been found to date. It is a collection of unique value for the study of Canaanite culture and religion,

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and as such also represents very important material for the study of the background of the origin and meaning of the Hebrew Bible. In the Ugaritic literature we will find narrative and poetic topoi, which in a new form and a different religious message will be found in the historical, prophetic and sapiential literature of the Old Testament.

In the second millennium BC, Ugarit was a place of trade, commerce and the meeting point of cultures of various parts of the Middle East (Syria, Canaan, the Hurites, Mesopotamia, Cyprus and the Aegean islands, Egypt and the Hittites). This small kingdom had a rich and significant capital. Militarily weak, it nevertheless played an important cultural role and exerted a strong influence especially in the Levant, of which it was a part. The previous excavations at Ras Shamra (the modern name of the site) revealed a vast city with its palaces, temples, libraries and archives, houses, tombs, warehouses and outbuildings. Tombs, temples, statues of gods and steles, weapons and tools, vessels and ivory carvings have been discovered. Of greatest significance, however, are the tablets. Political and religious texts in Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian and Hittite, written in cuneiform script and Egyptian and Hittite hieroglyphs, and above all, Ugaritic historical texts in the hitherto unknown cuneiform alphabet have been brought to light.[2] Their deciphering opened a large library of records to researchers. Most of the texts are non-literary (documents, inventories, contracts), but there is also a quite large group of liturgical and religious texts, such as rituals and oracles or great mythological poems. The discoveries at Ras Shamra were hailed as the most sensational archaeological finds of the 20th century; practically until the discoveries at Qumran in 1947, they were considered the largest and most important.[3] The entire compiled scribal material was published in 1976[4] and has since been

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[2] In total, texts written in seven different languages (confirming the cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic nature of the city) have been discovered: Egyptian, Cypriot-Minoan Linear B, Hittite, Hurrian, Sumerian, Akkadian and Ugaritic. The tablets contain three or even four types of writing: cuneiform (syllabic and alphabetic), hieroglyphic and linear.

[3] See Majewski, *Ugarit*.

[4] Dietrich – Loretz – Sanmartín, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte* (= KTU or KTU[1]). Earlier, the classic edition of the Ugarit texts was the work of Herdner,

designated KTU or KTU[1]. Now, after reassembling the shattered tablets and a fuller reconstruction of the texts, the most recent edition of the cuneiform texts from Ugarit is the KTU[3] publication, more than 800-page long, from 2013.[5]

Of the mythological texts, three are regarded as the most important literary compositions of the city and the region. These include: the cycle of myths about Baʿlu[6] (KTU[3] 1.1–1.6), the epic about Kirta[7] (KTU[3] 1.14–1.16) and the epic about Danilu and Aqhatu, also known as the legend or poem about Aqhatu (KTU[3] 1.17–1.19). The first work, or rather the collection, describes Baʿl's struggle for power – his struggles with the sea god Jammu, his efforts to maintain his own palace, and his fight with the death god Mot. The poem about King Kirta tells the adventures of the initially childless king, who eventually, with the blessing of the gods, obtains numerous offspring. The poem about Aqhatu, on the other hand, is a poem about the righteous Danilu, who implored the gods to be able to have a son, Aqhatu, but lost him due to the envy of the goddess ʿAnata (the poem in several places clearly resembles the story of Abraham and the adventures of Job).[8]

Corpus des tablettes (= CTA). The second, expanded edition of KTU is: Dietrich – Loretz – Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts* (= KTU[2] or CAT).

[5] Dietrich – Loretz – Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places. Third, Enlarged Edition* (= KTU[3]).

[6] In the article, I use a spelling that reflects the reconstruction of Ugaritic onomastics that is accepted today, and that is somewhat different from the Hebrew to which Bible scholars and readers are accustomed. Hence "Baʿlu" instead of "Baal," "Ilu" instead of "El," "Danilu" instead of "Daniel," "Aqhatu" instead of "Aqhat," or "Jammu" instead of "Jam." See for example: Janowski – Wilhelm – Schwemer, *Texte aus der Umwelt* (passim).

[7] In Poland formerly as Keret, a poem about Keret. Since the Ugaritic script is consonantal, the vocalization of proper names remains hypothetical. The vocalization of *Keret* was proposed by Charles Virolleaud, publishing a significant portion of the poem: Virolleaud, *La légende de Keret*. However, the more likely vocalization of this king's name seems to be the *Kirta* form, as the sound of *Keret* resembles a noun of the segol type, linguistically later and characteristic of Hebrew, but not of Ugaritic.

[8] Majewski, "Ugarycki epos."

A list of special duties a son has to his own father appears as many as four times in the Aqhatu poem. Since the beginning of the Ugaritic discoveries, this list has caused many difficulties for researchers, both as regards interpreting the passage and interpreting the son's particular tasks. The son's duties are presented briefly, without detailed elaboration or explanation – as if the narrator assumes knowledge of the subject matter or specific practices in the reader. Their correct understanding is also hampered by the fact that not all the phrases in the list are clear; moreover, "the text abounds in intricacies"[9] and *hapax legomena*. On the other hand, even where the text is clear and the words are comprehensible, the obligation itself is sometimes interpreted very differently. These difficulties make the solutions proposed by researchers often seem hasty and unjustified.

As previous translation and interpretation efforts seem unsatisfactory, in this article I want to propose my own translation and a new analysis of the list, with the aim of identifying the meaning of both individual obligations and the list as a whole. After analyzing the collection as a whole, I will translate each obligation with a philological justification of the proposed translation solution and a historical and cultural commentary. This method of work will allow for a better understanding of the list as a whole and to bring out its meaning for the poem as a whole.

The Context of the List of Filial Duties

The beginning of the epic about Danil and Aqhat is illegible,[10] but from a further passage (KTU^3 1.17 I 18–19) we learn that Danilu, a respected patriarch and city judge, has no son, and cannot wait for a descendant. The absence of a son in Danilu's story gives rise to a series of events until a breakthrough: Danilu will live to see a descendant. A change in the situation is achieved through a series of

[9] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 49.

[10] Missing are approx. 10 lines of the first column on the first of the three tables of the epic (KTU^3 1.17–1.19).

supplicatory rituals.[11] The first and last themes in this part of the poem form an inclusion: Danilu does not have the desired son – Danilu has the desired son. The centre between this literary frame is filled with a ritual performed like the practice of incubation, most likely taking place at a shrine. Its finale is the revelation of Baʿlu[12] – the entry of the deity and his supernatural power into the protagonist's life. With it, hope for a positive solution to the problem of Danilu's family grows significantly. The epic then depicts Baʿlu talking to Ilu, the father of gods and men,[13] and his request for the blessing of fertility for his worshipper. Ilu agrees and blesses Danilu. Divine intervention leads to the birth of the main character, Aqhatu. The entirety of this section can be put into a concentric structure:

A) Danilu has no son
  B) Danilu asks gods for an intervention
    C) Ilu's blessing
  B') gods intervene for Danilu
A') Danilu has a son

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[11] See: Aitken, *Aqhat Narrative*, 83.

[12] Baʿlu (Ugar. *bʿl*, Hebr. *baʿal*) is a central figure in Ugaritic literature, the god of storm, rain, harvest and male fertility, depicted either with lightning in his hand or as riding a bull. The name of this god would have to be considered a titulature, since in Semitic languages it is a *de facto* common noun (like the name Ila, Jamma, Mota, etc.), meaning "lord, owner, husband," and could have been used to refer to various gods. The proper name of the Ugaritic storm god was written *hd* (and vocalized probably *Haddu*) or *hdd* (and vocalized *Hadadu*). It seems that he did not originally belong to the pantheon of the city, as he was not considered the son of Ila, but the son of Dagan (*bn dgn*). He is the impetuous, full of youthful enthusiasm (the opposite of the old, wise and dignified El) god of life-giving rain and harvest, ruler of the world. See: Cinal, *Baal z Ugarit*; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 276–277; Green, *The storm-god*, especially chapter III: *Syria*, 153–218; Mrozek, *Baal – bóg-wojownik*, 12–14.

[13] Ilu (Ugar. *ʾl*, Hebr. *ʾēl*) is the president of the "gathering of gods" (*phr ʾilm*) in the Ugaritic pantheon, the father of gods and creator of creatures (*bny bnwt*), called the Bull Il (*ṯr il*). He is depicted as an old man with a beard, often seated on a throne. Although he was the most important Canaanite god, in Ugaritic mythology this is not so clear. His position gives way to the very active role of Baʿlu, to whom the old Ilu probably delegated authority. See: Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*; Naumczyk, "Ważniejsze bóstwa"; Rendtorff, "El, Baʿal und Jahwe"; Parker, "Historical Composition"; Hermann, "Ps 19 und der kananäische Gott," 75–78.

External elements – A) Danilu has no son, A') Danilu has a son – tie this part of the story to the internal elements – B) Danilu asks gods for an intervention, B') gods intervene for Danilu. The central element of such presented structure is Ilu's blessing passed on to Danilu through Baʿlu (C).

This intervention of the supernatural world at the beginning of Aqhatu's life, resulting in the solution of the painful problem of infertility, fits into the well-known topos of ancient literature of the intervention of a deity who grants a legitimate heir. In the Bible, the story of Israel's beginnings already abounds in this literary motif. Abraham and Sarah cannot have a son; then the same happens to Isaac and Rebecca, then to Jacob and Rachel. In each of these situations, God intervenes and bestows upon the couple the blessing of fertility – the desired offspring. The anonymous mother of Samson, Anna, mother of Samuel, Anna, mother of Mary (according to apocryphal tradition) or Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, also struggled with the problem of infertility. In each of these situations, the pattern of the story is similar.

The motif of the god/gods remedying the childlessness of the hero is also widely attested to outside the Bible in the literature of the Ancient East. In Ugaritic literature outside the poem in question, it is developed in the epic of Kirta. We also meet it in the "Tale of the Doomed Prince"[14] or in the fragmentary surviving Hurrian myth of Appu.[15] Its classic elements are: 1. introduction of the protagonist and marking his difficult situation of childlessness; 2. request to the god; 3. divine intervention; 4. conception and birth of a child. The motif of childlessness blessed is thus a typical topos similar to one of Robert Alter's "type-scene" from his important book "The Art of Biblical Narrative,"[16] which can be reused and creatively incorporated into various narratives. The authors in their work use this narrative scheme to indicate that a child (always male) born under special circumstances will be someone special in the subsequent

[14] In the Polish version of Tadeusz Andrzejewski: „…zaklętym księciu," see: Andrzejewski, *Opowiadania egipskie*, 124–130.

[15] Popko, *Mitologia hetyckiej Anatolii*, 165–168.

[16] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 47–62.

history. Through a story composed in this way, ancient writers bring "on stage" heroes who will play an important role, will be special envoys of a deity or the main characters of a given story.

In the poem under consideration, the protective Baʿlu, in response to Danilu's requests, intercedes for him with the supreme god Ilu: "O bless him, O Ila the Bull, my Father, strengthen him, O Creator of creatures!" (KTU^3 1.17 I 23–24).[17] His intercession includes first a general request for a blessing on Danilu (23–24), and then a specific supplication to grant him a descendant, an heir: "May he have his son in his house, a descendant in the interior of his palace…" (25–26a). It is here, in the mouth of Baʿlu, that the list of a son's duties towards his father first appears (KTU^3 1.17 I 26b–33). Let us quote it in its entirety in our own translation, so that later, after analyzing the entire collection, we can address each of the duties in turn.

> (Who) shall erect a stele to his divinized forefathers,
> in a holy place a monument to his ancestors.
> To the underworld he will lead his spirit,
> to the earth (as) the guardian of his tomb.
> He will shut the mouth of the one who insults him,
> he will drive away the one who offends him.
> He will support his arm when he is drunk,
> will carry him when he is drunk with wine.
> He will consume his allotment in the temple of Baʿlu
> and his portion in the temple of Ilu.
> He will plaster his roof on a muddy day,
> he will wash his clothes on a rainy day.

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[17] Both lines of Baʿlu's request can also be interpreted as rhetorical questions: "Will you not bless him, O Bull of Ilu, my Father? (Will you not) strengthen him, O Creator of creatures?" – depending on whether we treat the first in the *lamed* line as a vocative or negation participle. The second and its parallel third *lamed* can act as a preposition "to, for, by," in line with the function of the preposition *le* in the phrase *brk l-*, as for example in Gen 14:19: ברוך אברם לאל עליון "May Abram be blessed by the Most High God" or in w 1 Sam 15:13: ברוך אתה ליהוה "be blessed by YHWH"; similarly in Judg 17:2 or 1 Sam 23:21. Here, however, the best seems to be the translation *le* as a call, an exclamation: "oh!" because the verbs occur in the second, not the third person.

The List of Duties in the Poem

This "litany" of the son's duties to his father is formalized and constitutes a closed literary unit; it will recur three more times in the poem, only with a change of person and minor, insignificant modifications. It is repeated a second time by Ilu, who blesses Danilu (KTU[3] 1.17 I 42–47), then appears again in the mouth of Baʿlu when he delivers the good news to Danilu (KTU[3] 1.17 II 1–8), and finally it is repeated by Danilu himself when he reacts joyfully to the news he has received (KTU[3] 1.17 II 14–23). As for subtle modifications, in Baʿlu's speech to Danilu, the order of two requests is switched: the fifth appears before the fourth; the scribe omits one line in the last enumeration (Danilu's speech); and finally Danilu begins his list using different words of introduction. The sequence of these four enumerations indicates the happy ending of the series of events: from Baʿlu's request to Danilu's words, who confirms his acceptance of the joyful news. The protagonist's repetition of the list in the first person for the fourth time ("he will erect a stele to my divinized ancestors… etc." – so far in 2nd and 3rd person) is a sign of internalization and personal acceptance of this hitherto general list; Danilu shows how he personally accepts the news.

As concerns the structure, here we have a list of six duties of a son to his father, each of which is described with the same literary technique: a two-part parallelism (distich). Three of the six distichs (the 3rd, 4th and 6th) each have two verbs instead of one, leading some scholars to conclude that the list has more than six duties (Margalit, for example, on the basis of the verbs occurring in the list, assumed that there were eight duties[18]). However, the two lines (stichs) in the third duty are about defending the father's reputation, in the fourth duty they order to help the father when he is drunk, and in the sixth duty they talk about helping him during bad weather. Each distich is a self-contained and thematically coherent unit, at the same time unrelated to the other distichs. Therefore, it is best to consider that the list contains six basic duties, rather than twelve, nine or eight – depending on the number of verbs that actually occur or are considered present by default. Duties 1–4 have three words

[18] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 267–280.

per line (counting prepositions as part of the words that follow), and duties 5 and 6 have four words (except for the 2nd line of the fifth one).

There are different attempts to categorize or group them. Wright sees in the list four ritual duties and two belonging to everyday life; he divides the whole into halves of three duties each, the first two of which, in his view, are ritual duties (1st and 2nd and 4th and 5th respectively), while the last two of each half are everyday duties (3rd and 6th).[19] However, this division is the result of the unjustified, as it seems, restriction of the fourth duty to the ritual sphere only (see analysis below). Moreover, the division of rights and duties into ritual and everyday ones may be an anachronistic view, imposing our way of categorizing reality (see, for example, the Covenant Code of Exodus 21–23, where the biblical legislator quite freely and arbitrarily combines ritual and everyday laws; similarly in other ancient codes). Wyatt, on the other hand, sees in the duties an a-a-b-b--a-b pattern, depending on whether the father is dead (a) or alive (b) at the time when they are performed by the son.[20] Here, too, the issue is contentious, and there is much in favour of an alternative view of whether the father is alive or dead in specific cases (see analysis below). It seems that the list of filial duties naturally combines spiritual (religious and ritual) obligations with such mundane ones as fixing the roof or bringing home a drunken father. In turn, they are all of a family nature, and even the ritual ones are for private worship. It seems that the first two are related to worship, the next two – to the family, especially paternal reverence, while the last two are similarly divided: first the cultic duty, then the family duty.

An observant reader will notice that the literary unit containing filial duties may be secondary to the poem itself. Perhaps it was included at the editing stage, as it fitted (in general terms) with the scene about the descendant. Closer analysis reveals its separateness and lack of connection to the context and message of the poem. First, although it appears as many as four times in the poem, the list of filial duties is clearly on the sidelines of the epic's plot. In the work, none of the characters, including the obligated

[19] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 68.
[20] Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [1998], 258 n. 37.

one himself, Aqhatu, undertakes a single one of them. Nor is there any reference or even allusion to them in his story. After they are mentioned in the first part of the poem, they disappear completely. This gives the irresistible impression that the list does not integrate well with the content of the whole, and it was only generally fitted into the context of the father and son story. After taking away these four passages, despite the loss of a large portion of the text of the first part of the epic, the work remains coherent and logical.[21] The duties differ from the narrative in that they do not describe what actually happens during the narrative, but instead depict ideal behaviour. Aqhatu appears as someone different from the obedient son presented to his father and the gods in the list: he jeers at the goddess ʿAnata, taunts her demand, which will ultimately contribute to his being killed. Thus, he will not be a support to his father in his old age and will not fulfil the role of heir and worshiper after his death.

Secondly, in one of the duties Baʿlu is mentioned before Ilu, as the first of the gods, indicating his supremacy – the opposite of the epic, where Ilu is the main god. It is the father of the gods who is the final authority, blessing and authorizing vengeance, and it is to him that the other gods – Baʿlu, ʿAnata – turn when they want to take some action. Thirdly, the vocabulary and language of the unit on filial duties stands out from that of the poem. There is an overrepresentation of terms and phrases that are difficult to translate and interpret. Many of them do not appear in the poem outside the list and are often translated only by conjecture. Some of them – eight according to Avishur,[22] although the terms *ḏmr* and *ʿšy* mentioned by him are also attested today outside the list – are *hapax legomena*, appearing nowhere else in all the rich Ugaritic literature. Finally, the repetition of the list as many as four times in a very short interval is a literary procedure not found anywhere else in the poem. Granted, the work has repetitions, but always double or triple once,

[21] This was pointed out by Margalit, writing that "the lengthy repetitions of the list thus appear to lack any literary justification and indeed tend to disturb the tight internal unity of the poem and to mar its structural compactness"; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 280.

[22] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 58.

and always with significant variations and changes – e.g., the three passages about the search for the son's body, or Danilu's cursing the cities three times (where we observe significant changes which are not only linguistic, but also the introduction of new characters, names or different endings according to the 2+1 scheme).

Thus, we are dealing with a passus probably secondarily attached to the text of Aqhat, on the sidelines of the main plot.[23] On the other hand, this poetic text is quoted as many as four times, which is a rarity in ancient literature and undoubtedly emphasizes the importance of this particular list; it also provokes the question of its origin and the reason for its inclusion in the poem. Avishur not unreasonably identifies the genre of this unit as didactic literature and suggests that it was created in the educational environment of a school or palace.[24] Margalit, on the other hand, believes that "priestly tradents" are responsible for the inclusion of the list in the poem. These, less interested in the subtle irony and iconoclastic message of the poem, wanted to emphasize filial duties by the didactic method of repeatedly instilling in children obedience and respect for the religious establishment.[25] The dominant interpretation remains a cultist one that sees in the letter a series of ritual duties performed by the descendant especially towards the deceased ancestors of the family.

The First Duty (KTU³ 1.17 I 26–27 parr.)

nṣb skn ilibh	He shall erect a stele to his divinized forefathers
b qdš ztr ʿmh	in a holy place a monument to his ancestors.

Similarly, as in other duties, this one is depicted with a poetic bi-colon (distich), creating a synonymous parallelism. The verb *nṣb* means "to erect, build, set up, raise,"[26] and its form in the text can be interpreted as a participle, infinitive or a perfect form of verb. In

[23] Of a different opinion is Boda, concluding without detailed argumentation that the list is not a later interpolation, but part of the original composition incorporated into the poem from the beginning by the author; see: Boda, "Ideal Sonship," 11.

[24] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 58; por. Healey, "Pietas," 356.

[25] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 280.

[26] *DUL* 637.

the context of listing the son's subsequent duties, the *participium activum* fits best, analogous to the other verb forms in the list, with a preformative active participle *mem*, such as *mšṣu or mʿms*.[27]

The noun *skn*, which is the direct object of the verb *nṣb*, is understood variously, such as "pole, stake,"[28] "stele"[29] or tomb.[30] Lipinski is the only one who treats the term *skn* as an active participle meaning "steward."[31] Researchers overwhelmingly see in this poem the actions of erecting some kind of monument, stele, a large stone on which an inscription is carved.[32] The term also appears in the inscription on the Dagan stele: "The stele that ⌜Sha⌝rielli[33] erected for Dagan" (KTU[3] 6.13), which confirms its meaning in the text of the Aqhatu epic as a monument. It seems that the best correlated with the Ugaritic *skn* is the Akkadian *sikkānu* "form, image." According to Lewis, this Akkadian term was first used metonymically to refer to a "stele with an image" and then simply a "stele."[34] The Mari and Emar texts use the term *sikkānu* as the primary term for "stele." The *sikkānu* steles in these texts can be dedicated to various gods, and even – as representations of the gods – can receive offerings and be anointed.[35] Stone *sikkānu* monuments from Emar also play a key role in the ritual of establishing the high priestess of the storm god Baʿlu. The high priestess (NIN.DINGIR) is first anointed herself, and then anoints the stele.

In the religions of the region, stone steles represented the gods or indicated their divine presence. Some examples are the stone boulders of Tel Arad, the cultic pillars of Hazor, or the biblical *matzevot* (as

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[27] See: Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 175 n. 39; Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 50; Sivan, *Grammar*, 143; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 49.

[28] For example Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 51.

[29] For example Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 421; Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [1998], 250; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 48.

[30] For example Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 268.

[31] Lipinski, *'skn' et 'sgn'*, 197–199.

[32] Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary*, 157; Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 175; especially see: de Moor, "Standing Stones," 7–10.

[33] Sharielli is the queen-mother, wife of the king of Ibiran.

[34] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 55; earlier so: Albright, *Archaeology*, 201.

[35] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 51.

monuments erected to God/gods, Gen 31:13; 35:14, 20; Exod 34:13; etc.). Significantly, the latter, Hebrew term – *maṣṣēbâ* – is derived from the stem *nṣb*, the same stem that appears in the verb form in the first obligation. In the Bible, the stem *nṣb* – like in this place – forms a verb that is used to express the erection of a stele (Gen 35:14, 20; 2 Sam 18:18; 2 Kgs 17:10), as well as the erection of an altar (Gen 32:20), stone pillars (2 Sam 18:17) or other monuments (1 Sam 15:12; 1 Chr 18:3; Jer 31:21). Another Hebrew derivative of the stem *nṣb* – *nĕṣîb* means "pillar" (Gen 19:26 – pillar of salt). All this makes us understand *skn* as "stele" (with a cultic meaning).

The term *ilib* refers to some form of a supernatural being, and while it often appears in the lists of gods, it never occurs in Ugaritic epic texts outside the present context. It is a compound noun, consisting of the components *il* (deity, god) and *ib* (father).[36] Whereas the first *il* component caused no trouble, the second one used here, *ib*, perplexed many scholars until its Akkadian equivalent (DINGIR-a-*bi*) was discovered, where the second noun stands in the genitive. It is therefore most often assumed to indicate the genitive of "father."[37] The compound, interpreted as a *status constructus* relation, can be translated as "god of the father." In such interpretation, it would refer either to the ancestor of all gods, the father of the supreme *Ilu*, or to a god worshipped by an earthly father, a family deity or a god of one's own clan, such as Baʿlu worshipped by Danilu.[38]

However, the term can be interpreted in a different way, by treating the first part as a description of the second: "divine father." Such an interpretation, possible and probable in the context of the entire list, points not so much to a god worshipped by the father, but to a divinized father or ancestor in accordance with the often attested use of the term "father" in Semitic languages referring also to grandfather, great-grandfather and all ancestors in the ascending line; cf. Gen 32:10: "God of my father Abraham, God of my father

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[36] Dietrich – Loretz – Sanmartín, "Ugaritisch ilib".

[37] Kim, "List of filial duties," 14.

[38] This interpretation is assumed, for example, by Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, 104 n. 3, Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 51 or Pardee, "The 'Aqhatu Legend," 344 n. 6.

Isaac"; or 2 Sam 9:7: "your father Jonathan… of your father Saul" (literal translation). In such a view, the term *ilib* can be understood as "divinized ancestor," "ancestral spirit," or "shadow of the fathers." During the young days of a son, when he is instilled with these rules, his father is most often still alive; subsequent duties, especially the third, fourth and sixth, also assume that the father is alive. Here, then, it is most likely a matter of reverence towards the (most) distant ancestor or ancestors in the father's line – who are somehow divinized.[39] I mentioned above that erecting a stele is associated with deities, but a more important argument is the occurrence of the term *ilib* in lists of divine beings (KTU[3] 1.47:2; 1.118:1) and sacrificial and festive lists (KTU[3] 1.41:35; 1.46:2; 1.56:3; 1.74:1; 1.87:38; 1.91:5; 1.109:12, 15, 19, 35; 1.138:2; 1.139:1; 1.148:10, 23; 1.164:3, 6). In the latter, *ilib*, the idolized ancestor, is always offered sacrifices of a bull, cow or ram. This confirms that the term *ilib* is associated with the process of deification of the family ancestor/progenitor, and more broadly of all the long-buried dead of one's own dynasty or one's own clan.

The term occurs here in the singular, but it does not necessarily indicate one particular ancestor, but a whole group of them, as evidenced by the synonymous use in the second stich of the term *ʾm*, clan, family, relatives (see below). Hence the proposed translation as a plural.[40] As I mentioned above, the term *ilib* could also be a proper name, referring to the first ancestor of the heavenly lineage of the gods – the father of Ilu or Ilu himself. However, this word in the list of filial duties is a common noun, given that a pronominal suffix is attached to it.

The phrase *b qdš* undoubtedly refers to some holy place, shrine or other special place dedicated to the honour of divine beings (cf. Hebrew *qōdeš* or *miqdāš* as terms for sanctuary or temple; the two terms differ grammatically only in the noun preformative *mem*, but

[39] Cf. van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 154–168.

[40] Similarly de Moor, *Anthology*, 228; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 53–59; different: Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 48, who sees here a single "ancestral spirit" or Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 58–59, proposing a "divine ancestor"). More on the *ilib* term and the reality it denotes see: Lipiński, "*skn* et *sgn*," 198–199; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 268–270; van der Toorn, "Ilib and 'God of the Father.'"

they can mean the same thing: a holy place). Margalit, who translates *skn* as tomb, consistently translates *qdš* as cemetery,[41] however, this is an unconvincing proposition – the duty is not about burying ancestors; those are long dead and buried, but about paying homage to them. Since the context of all filial duties is familial, domestic, here too it is probably not about a public temple, but a local, clan shrine in honour of dynastic ancestors.

The term *ztr* is unclear. In the bicolon it is juxtaposed in parallel with the term *skn* (stele). So, it would denote some object resembling a stele or more broadly some object of worship. Researchers have put forward many hypotheses and searched for the meaning of the term *ztr* in various directions in related languages. The term was sometimes interpreted as a verb, parallel to *nṣb*, but the only seemingly related stem then proposed in the reading of *ztr* was Hebrew *str* "to cover, protect."[42] In this interpretation, a son is a protector (of the honour) of ancestors.[43] Healey proposed the translation "will take care of" (a divine member of the clan), seeking for the parallel term *skn* the verb stem "to take care of."[44] This and other interpretations are unreliable and remain isolated hypotheses. Since Tsevat noted the affinity of the term *ztr* with the Hittite *šittar*, which is defined as a monument in the form of an emblem/solar disk, usually made of gold, silver or bronze and associated with a deity,[45] scholars have rightly followed this interpretive path. Such an affinity is accepted by Caquot and Sznycer,[46] Gibson,[47] del Olmo Lete,[48] Dijkstra and de Moor,[49] Avishur (juxtaposing the term with Hebrew *ḥmn*, a cultic

[41] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 268.

[42] Apparently, because in Hebrew and Ugaritic there is no confirmation of the interchangeability of consonants *z* and *s*.

[43] So: Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, 104 and *ANET* 150.

[44] Healey, "Pietas," 355–356.

[45] Tsevat, "Traces of Hittite".

[46] Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 421.

[47] Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, 104.

[48] Del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y leyendas*, 370.

[49] Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 175.

object used for burning incense)[50] and Wright.[51] Wyatt[52] as well as del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín[53] propose a translation of "cippus," so they see here a low, round or rectangular pedestal set up by the ancients for purposes such as a milestone or boundary post, which is merely a derivative of Tsevat's interpretation. His analysis and the pairing of the terms *ztr* and *skn* indicate that what is meant is a type of memorial, a monument erected in memory of the dead and deified ancestors.

The term *ʾm* is a parallelism to *ilib* from the first stich. It is related to the Hebrew *ʾm* – "clan, family, ancestral relations" (secondarily also "people, nation") – and denotes a compact, related group. This is also how it appears in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 25:8; 35:29; 49:33; Lev 20:24). In the context under discussion, it means the dead of a clan, the ancestral dead.[54] Avishur translates "(gods) of his family" with the rationale that the term *ʾm* appears in the onomasticon of Semitic languages to denote ancestral deities and as a theophoric element in names.[55]

In the first duty – as the above analysis has shown – the worship of the deified ancestors of one's own ancestral branch (possibly the gods of one's own clan), passed down from father to son, is mandated. This is certainly an obligation of a ritual nature, involving the erection of a monument/stele in honour of deified great-grandparents, although this is not necessarily directly related to the funeral and grave monument (as Margalit believed). The purpose of the ritual was, among other things, to perpetuate the memory of the ancestors. The patriarch Jacob fulfils such a Ugaritic-like duty to God: "Jacob set up a stele in the place where God spoke to him, a stone stele" (Gen 35:14: ויצב יעקב מצבה). Similarly, Absalom puts up a *matzevah* as his memorial, having no children to do so (2 Sam 18:18: ויצב לו… מצבת). The parallel between the Ugaritic obligation and the cited Hebrew passages is

[50] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 51.
[51] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 54.
[52] Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [2002], 256.
[53] *DUL* 985.
[54] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 271; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 52.
[55] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 51.

not just based on the juxtaposition of similar vocabulary, but on the similarity of purpose. In both situations, the context is the erection of a monument by a son in memory of his father (Absalom, who has no son, erects a monument to himself).

Antoni Tronina surmises that what is meant here – as throughout the list – is the duty of a royal descendant to the deceased king: "the old king needs above all the ritual activities that only a male descendant can fulfil during the funeral."[56] However, in my opinion, the interpretation that sees Danilu as a king and the history of the royal family in the epic should be rejected. While it is true that in the poem Danilu is called a king once (KTU^3 1.19 III 46) – and hence is hastily referred to as such by scholars – but it should be noted that this happens near the end of the work and in an ambiguous context. His portrait in the poem and his activities in no way resemble the image of the king. On the contrary, they present him as a wise leader of a clan or village, similarly to a judge or patriarch. Noticeable in the epic is the complete absence of the atmosphere of the capital city and city institutions, the absence of a court, advisors, armies and all that is associated with stories about kings – as is the case, for example, in the epic about King Kirta. This contrast between Kirta and Danilu is distinct. Danilu asks the gods for a son, but not an heir to the throne, but one who will help him in his old age, support a drunk or repair the hole in the roof of his house. His daughter Puġata takes care of collecting and carrying water, works in the fields, helps her father to mount a donkey and accompanies him on foot, and finally personally undertakes the task of avenging her brother. This is not a picture of a princess who enjoys the respect and help of servants. In the figure of Danilu and his way of life – pious, close to the gods, family, nature, the farmlands and his own community – we encounter not so much a ruler as a Canaanite patriarch from the folk tales, one who, along with Noah and Job, will be among the outstanding heroes of the old stories (see Ezek 14:14, 20). I assume, therefore, that the duty to honour the "family deity" and erect a monument to him rests, according to the list-maker, not only on the young prince.

[56] Tronina, "Eposy ugaryckie," 598.

The stele erected for the ancestors is also the place where sacrifices are offered, and probably implicit in this obligation is the idea of offering sacrifices simultaneously for and to them. This is confirmed, for example, by the aforementioned KTU[3] 6.13 text written on the stone stele that Queen Sharielli erected for Dagan, "(commemorating) an offering for the dead and a bull to eat." Similarly, KTU[3] 6.14 describes a stele erected for the dead, which was immediately accompanied by a sacrifice: "A sacrifice for the dead, which ʿUzzinu erected for Dagan, his lord, [moreover (offered) b] ull from the plough." Both texts engraved on a stele erected for the deceased mention an animal sacrifice. The same ritual custom is described in adoption texts from Mesopotamia: when a married couple had no child (i.e., someone to make sacrifices for and to their parents), the couple adopted a person who in return was obligated to make sacrifices to them after their death. This observation brings us to the subject of the second obligation.

The Second Duty (KTU[3] 1.17 I 27–28 parr.)

l arṣ mšṣu qṭrh	To the underworld he will lead his spirit,
l ʿpr ḏmr aṯrh	to the earth (as) the guardian of his tomb.

The second existing here pair of words *arṣ* and *ʿpr* appear as a parallelism 11 times in the Ugaritic texts and 13 times in the Hebrew Bible. The term *arṣ* originally means earth (Hebrew *ereṣ*), and similarly the term *ʿpr* (Hebrew *ʿāfār*; secondarily also "dust," Gens 2:7; 3:19). Here it refers not so much to the earth, but to the land of the underworld, in accordance with the division of the world into the earthly (the living) and the underworld (the dead). The terms *arṣ* and *ʿpr* function as a metonymy of the underworld of the dead – this is the case in many Semitic languages, apart from Ugaritic, also in Akkadian and Hebrew, among others.[57] As such, they can also refer to a tomb.

The text of the duty poses many difficulties for researchers, due in part to the ambiguity of the other words used here. As in

[57] See: Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions*, 23–45.

the preceding and following obligation, the verb *mšṣu* should be understood here as an active participle (*mem* as a participle preformative). It is the causative conjugation Š of the verb *yṣʾ* – "to go out, to leave" (cf. Hebrew *yṣʾ*), thus: "one who leads out, ushers." In contrast, the term *qṭr* – here with the possessive suffix *h* "his" – means literally "smoke, shadows, vapour," analogous to the Arabic *qṭr* "smoke." One group of scholars sees here a metaphorical term for the "spirit" of the father,[58] arguing that there is a very close semantic transition from "smoke" to "spirit" and that "smoke" and "spirit" are a well-known Middle Eastern pair of words used synonymously. In this understanding, *qṭr* is a metaphor for the human spirit after death; it refers to the "spirit of the father" who is already in the other world (a similar text is found in KTU[3] 1.169:2–3). Others interpret the term *qṭr* as "life" (analogous to Ug. *npš*, *brlt*). They argue that since other obligations assume that the father is still alive, the same should be assumed here as well.[59] Finally, some see the analogy of *qṭr* with Hebrew *qṭwrt* "incense" and see in this obligation a kind of ritual (e.g., funeral) using incense.[60] Those who do not want to resolve the above dilemma leave the literal and ambiguous term "smoke" in translation.[61] The most important translational solutions are grouped together below, and the author's own proposal is presented.

The term *ḏmr* seems to be parallel to the verb *mšṣu* from the previous verse. As a verb it means either 1) "to guard, watch over, protect", cf. Amor. *ḏmr*, Heb. and Phoen. *šmr*, or 2) "to sing, praise", cf. Akkad. *zamāru*, Hebrew: *zmr*, Arabic: *zamara*.[62] The first possibility is accepted more often;[63] the second rarely.[64] As a noun, on the other hand, analogous to the first verb meaning, *ḏmr* means

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[58] Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 422 n. q; Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, 104; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 61; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 55.

[59] See: Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 422 n. p; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 56.

[60] See: Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 52; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 49.

[61] So: de Moor, *Anthology*, 228; Parker, "Aqhat," 53; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 145 – with the term in quotation marks.

[62] *DUL* 284.

[63] For example Parker, "Aqhat," 53.

[64] Pope, "Notes," 164.

"guard, warrior" or "defense, fortress,"[65] while analogous to the second verb meaning it is a "song."[66] Avishur is an the only one who sees here a connection with the Hebrew *zmrh*, which in the Bible means a type of perfume (Gen 43:11). The scholar bases this on the parallel of *ḏmr* and *qṭr*, translated as incense. In his view, the role of the son is to offer incense and perfume – and this incense and perfume cloud are seen here as rising from the ground.[67]

The term *aṯr* can be 1) a preposition meaning "behind, after," here: "behind it, after it";[68] 2) a noun: "remnants, what is left" → "remains, traces";[69] 3) a question adverb "where," a derivative of the noun "place in which" (cf. Akkad. *ašru*). Most researchers, starting from Akkad. *ašru* and Phoen. and Pun. *ʾšr* ("place"), see here precisely a noun pointing to a place, whether in general or specifically to a holy place. For example, Dietrich and Loretz translate "a holy place (of deities)";[70] de Moor and Dijkstra have "a place of worship";[71] Avishur and Wright have "a place," both with the annotation that this may refer to a cultic or sacred place.[72] Gordon indicates that the term refers to the temple of Baʿlu in KTU[3] 1.6 I 7.[73] Gibson and Lewis translate it: "a tomb";[74] according to Healey, it may be a reference to a family chapel or a local one.[75] Finally, some translate it simply as "a place," without specification.[76]

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[65] So, for example: de Moor, *Anthology*, 228; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 145; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 60 followed by Kim, "List of filial duties," 16.

[66] So, for example: Pardee, "Emendation," 53; Dietrich – Loretz, "Ugaritisch ʿṯr," 60 and Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 49.

[67] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 52–53.

[68] Such interpretation: van Selms, *Marriage and Family*, 100 and Pope, "Notes," 163.

[69] So translated by: *DUL* 124; earlier: Albright, "Natural Force," 35; *ANET* 150; Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 422.

[70] Dietrich – Loretz, "Ugaritisch ʿṯr," 60.

[71] De Moor, *Seasonal Pattern*, 194; Dijkstra, de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 175–176.

[72] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 53; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 49.

[73] Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, § 424.

[74] Gibson, *Canaanite Myths*, 104; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 64.

[75] Healey, "Pietas," 356.

[76] Gaster, *Thespis, Ritual*, 304.

Therefore, even though the meaning of this bicolon – perhaps except for *dmr* – is known and clear, it is one of the most difficult filial obligations to interpret. Many translations and various interpretations have been proposed, which can basically be grouped into four approaches.

The first one is a "traditional" one. It originates with Albright, who saw here the cult of the dead, translating: "Who frees his spirit from the underworld…" To support this interpretation a passus about raising the spirit of Samuel from 1 Sam 28 or a ritual of revering the ancestors from KTU[3] 1.161 is quoted. Healey also links the duty to ancestor worship: "From the earth to make go forth his incense, from the dust someone to protect his chapel"[77] Some scholars interpret the obligation as a post-funeral worship of the father.[78] Margalit, in a similar vein, translates, "To draw out his (father's) 'smoke' from the ground, The protector of his 'place' (as spirit) from the earth,"[79] while del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín propose a translation: "to the 'earth / underworld' leads out his smoke / spirit, who protects his remains (?) in the dust"[80] All of these translations, while interpreting individual words differently, suggest a traditional interpretation.

In another approach, scholars link the duty to ritual funeral rites, often treating the *qṭr* literally, as incense smoke. Oberman translates, "to make his incense go forth from the ground [*ʿpr*]. To guard his path,"[81] and understands duty in a funeral context, the burial of a dead father. Van Selm translates, "who sends out to the earth his incense, to the dust wine after him,"[82] explaining that these two acts are one and are performed at the grave of the deceased during the burial. Wyatt also links this duty to the funeral rite, but understands the *qṭr* as a metaphor for the last breath, he translates, "into the earth sending forth his dying breath, into the dust protecting his progress."[83] In his

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77 Healey, "Pietas," 356.
78 Pardee, "The 'Aqhatu Legend," 344 n. 8.
79 Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 200.
80 *DUL* 124, 248 and 587.
81 Obermann, *How Daniel*, 6, 16.
82 Van Selms, *Marriage and Family*, 100.
83 Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [2002], 256–257.

view, "sending" the last breath of the deceased "into the ground" is intended to deal with the dead by firmly sealing them in the underworld, "thus freeing the world above from their continued (and now baneful and unwelcome) presence."[84] Also Kim notes that "it is not impossible to see a funeral rite in this bicolon, as long as we assume that the term *qṭr* refers to incense placed at the tomb for olfactory purposes and that the funeral rite was accompanied by music."[85]

Whereas in the first two approaches the father is dead – long since buried or just buried – in the newer, "non-ritual" one, scholars such as Gaster, Caquot and Lewis attempt an interpretation unrelated to the worship of the dead. Gaster understands *qṭr* as the smoke of a homestead fire and sees here an analogy to the biblical custom of not extinguishing such fires (Exod 12:8–10; 35:3; Isa 47:14), which is supposed to be a symbol of the survival of the family. For him, this duty is "nothing else than the equivalent of our keeping the home fires burning, i.e. the persistence of the home and family."[86] Caquot and Lewis interpret the *qṭr* as a metaphor for life's vitality and understand filial duty as a mandate to protect the living father from harm or misfortune.[87] In such understanding, the "underworld" is a metaphor for the problems that have fallen on the father, and the son's duty is to extricate him from them.[88] To support this thesis, scholars cite biblical passages about liberating the psalmist from the trouble and unjust persecution into which he fell (Ps 25:15; 30:4; 31:5; 40:3; 107:14; 142:8). However, let us note at once that in the psalms it is always God who is the subject of the calls and the author of the rescue, not man (the son of the afflicted). Therefore, the situations are not analogous. In the Bible, God's action in favour of the downtrodden orant is perceived as a supernatural, miraculous intervention, and it is difficult to assume that in Ugarit it should belong to the ordinary duties of the son.

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[84] Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [2002], 256 n. 30.

[85] Kim, "List of filial duties," 16 n. 20.

[86] Gaster, *Thespis, Ritual*, 335–336.

[87] Caquot – Sznycer – Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques*, 422; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 60–62.

[88] See, for example: Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 54, 60–65.

Finally, we have a group of interpretations also not connected with the death of the father, but seeing in the second duty a kind of a ritual. Dietrich and Loretz see here a cultic practice performed by the father, which the son takes over from him: "He who releases from the earth his (= *ilib*) incense, from the dust the song of his place/place of worship."[89] Wright translates: "who brings forth his incense/smoke from the earth, the song of his place from the dust" and believes that this refers to the living father, and the duty is to be understood in a ritual sense.[90]

The latter two approaches seem to downplay the fact that the *qṭr* "smoke" term in the Aqhatu epic is used to describe the escaping spirit of the hero: "His life has gone away like the breath… Like the breath from his nostrils" (1.18 IV 36–37). A similar use of the term *qṭr* is found in another Ugaritic text, KTU[3] 1.169:2–3. We know that language referring to the realm of death was euphemistic, symbolic and full of metaphors in the ancient Middle East, and the terms "smoke" and "spirit" are a well-known Middle Eastern pair of words used synonymously. Taking this into account, it seems that *qṭr* is a metaphor for the human spirit after death, the "father's spirit" which is already in the other world. The first two groups of approaches are therefore much more convincing. It is likely that this obligation refers to the ritual of bringing the father's spirit to its intended abode in the land of the dead – in the sense of the funeral ritual proposed by Wyatt. This is how Tronina also understands bicolon, narrowing it down to the duty of a ruler.[91] Alternatively, it could speak about the regular worship paid to the deceased father by the son in the family tomb, which in Ugarit was located under the house itself. The terms *arṣ* and *ʿpr*, which not infrequently indicate the "underworld," here may refer to a family tomb containing installations for regular offerings for deceased family members.[92]

It should be remembered that care for the dead played an important role in the piety of the ancient people of Ugarit. This is evidenced,

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[89] Dietrich – Loretz, "Ugaritisch ʿtr," 60; the same: Kim, "List of filial duties," 49.

[90] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 49, 56–58.

[91] Tronina, "Eposy ugaryckie," 598.

[92] More on this, see: Pitard, "Libation Installation."

among other things, by the specially dedicated *pgr* offering for the dead, present in lists and registers of offerings – not as an offering to the gods for the intentions of the dead, but as an offering to the dead themselves. One of the months in Ugarit was even called "the month of offerings to the dead" (*yrḫ pgrm*), suggesting that throughout this time the dead were remembered, and offerings were made to them. As a matter of fact, this cultic concern for the dead is confirmed by the epic of Danilu and Aqhatu itself: Danilu, having learned of the death of his son Aqhatu, sets out on a journey to find and bury his son's corpse, and makes considerable efforts – including involving the divine world – to fulfil this duty. Thus, there is much to suggest that the enigmatically expressed second filial duty is directly related to the previous one, perhaps as a consequence of it: after erecting a clan stele for his deceased ancestors, the son is obliged to remember his deceased parents, which is expressed by making offerings to them (especially when accompanying their passage to the "underworld").

The Third Duty (KTU³ 1.17 I 28–29 parr.)

ṭbq lḥt nišh	He will shut the mouth of the one who insults him,
gršd ʿšy lnh	he will drive away the one who offends him.

The term *ṭbq* is a *hapax* in Ugaritic literature and throughout the North-western branch of Semitic languages. It can be defined in relation to the Arabic *ṭbq* "to cover, overlay, put on a stack,"[93] which together with the interpretation of *lḥt* as tablets (cf. Hebrew *luḥôt* – "tablets") would give the image of laying tablets on top of each other, stacking tablets.[94] It is also possible to interpret the verb based on another meaning of the same stem in Arabic: "to surround on all sides, to enclose (the enemy in a trap)." Again, the verbs *ṭbq* and *gršd* should be understood here as participles.

[93] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 53; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 66; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 274.

[94] So translated by Dijkstra and de Moor: "puts on the cover"; Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 176.

The meaning of the *lḥt* term is uncertain. The word is sometimes juxtaposed with the Hebrew root *lḥḥ* "moisture," which would indicate "life force,"[95] or with the Hebrew *luḥôt* "tablets, plaques, plates."[96] It is also possible to see here a combination of *l* and the term *ḥt*, which may be derived from the stem *ḥwy/ḥyy* "vitality, liveliness, indispensability" and point to the "soul."[97] Some scholars link the term to Arabic *laḥā* "insult, offence, mocking" and Aram. *lḥy* "bad, to be bad" in the sense of "insult, slander."[98] In combination with the verb *ṭbq* and in the context of the second parallel line of the bicolon, by far the latter meaning fits best. The phrase *ṭbq lḥt* would thus literally mean "will cover insults" in the sense of "will silence insults…" or less literally "will shut the mouth (of the insulter)."[99]

The verb *niṣ* – here with the suffix *h* – means "to reject, despise, show contempt" (cf. Hebrew *nʾṣ*, in the Hebrew Bible only with the preformative *mem*: *mnʾṣ*, while in post-Biblical Hebrew also without it, as in Ugaritic). Like other verbs here, it has the meaning of an active participle, in view of which one can translate *niṣh* as "despising him, having contempt for him." The next verb, *grš*, "to expel, drive out, banish," is well attested in Ugaritic or Hebrew (*grš*), among others. Conversely, various etymologies are proposed for the verb *ʿšy*.[100] The one that seems most fitting to the context is the one linking it to the Hebrew root *ʿśh*, but not in the basic sense (עשה I) "to do, to make,"[101] but in the narrower sense (עשה II): "to crush, crumple, oppress, persecute" (cf. Ezek 23:3; 23:8).[102]

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[95] Albright, "Natural Force," 35; *ANET* 150.

[96] Van Selms, *Marriage and Family*, 100, 102.

[97] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 53.

[98] Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 176; Gaster, *Thespis, Ritual*, 334; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 274; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 66; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 61.

[99] Translation in this spirit by Wyatt (*Religious Texts* [2002], 257): "he shall shut the mouths of his…"

[100] Avishur, "Duties of the Son," 54; Dijkstra, de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 176–177.

[101] So: Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 61.

[102] See: *Wielki słownik hebrajsko-polski*, I, 829.

The basic meaning would indicate any action taken against the father; the narrower one points specifically to (verbal) persecution.

The term *lnh* is also translated in various ways, for example as the verb *ln* "to spend the night." Here it is most likely a preposition *l* with an *-n-* enclitic preceding a suffix indicating the third person, thus "towards him" or simply "his."[103] The syntagma of the verb *ʾśh* with the preposition *l* is frequently attested in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Gen 20:9; 22:12; 31:43; Exod 14:11; Deut 22:26; 1 Sam 3:17; 2 Sam 3:35; Mic 6:3; Ps 65:5; Job 35:6; etc.).

The third obligation is relatively comprehensible, although there again appear multiple translations and interpretations as regards details. Generally, they are about the defence of (the dignity of) the father from those who, in some manner, come against him. The question if the father is still alive or not is not fully clear. It is possible that in combination with the previous duty the reference here is to defend the honour of the deceased father against those who try to question his merits or profane his memory and good name after he passes away. Another possibility points to the obligation of defending the father against verbal or even physical assault during his lifetime. The specific context of this defence is unknown. Nothing indicates directly an obligation of a cultic nature, as was the case with the first two, as there is no mention of any sacred place or ritual act.

However, also the possibility needs to be considered that it is not just about ordinary slander or detraction, but about slander or curses addressing the father – during his lifetime and especially after his death. In that culture, every curse, like every blessing, had a ritual, religious value, involving spiritual power in the words of blessing or cursing. Blessings and curses were treated as performative utterances, producing certain real effects. These were not the words themselves, but the actions performed by the utterance (such as "I take thee to be my wife" or "I appoint thee captain"). So, in defence against curses, one had to undertake the religious-magical ritual to repel them. In such a view, the son would be obliged not only to take care of his

[103] So: Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 176; Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 276; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 62.

father's honour and good name, but also to annul any curses hurled at him or insult formulas uttered against him.

The Fourth Duty (KTU³ 1.17 I 30–31 parr.)

aḫd ydh b škrn	He will support his arm when he is drunk,
mʿmsh k šbʿ yn	will carry him when he is drunk with wine.

This is the easiest to understand and translate obligation of all six. There are no serious disputes about any term of this bicolon, the meaning of the words does not raise any doubt. Differences arise in interpreting the scope of this duty. As throughout the list, the verbs *aḫd* and *mʿms* should be understood here as participles (which is confirmed by the *mem* prefix of the latter).

Scholars agree that the reference is to the duty of helping a drunken father, supporting him and bringing him home. The phrase *aḫd yd*, meaning to give support to one who needs it, has a parallel in the images of such support in the psalms: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my right hand" (Ps 73:23) or: "even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps 139:10). In studies concerning this duty, it is also juxtaposed with the image in Isa 51:17–18: "Rouse yourself, rouse yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl of staggering. There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up." The Isaiah's call speaks of a parent who, having gotten drunk, needs the hand (or help) of his son to support and guide him.

While there is no contention about the meaning of the text, there are different interpretations of the very situation to which the fourth obligation would apply. On the one hand, it could refer to any event in which a father would need his son's care, having abused alcohol. On the other, the technical vocabulary that appears here – *škr*, *ʿms, šbʿ, yn* – is reminiscent of the scene in KTU³ 1.114:15–19, from the so-called "Feast of Ilu," where Ṯukamuna-wa-Šunama, the sons of Ila, had to carry (*yʿmsnnn*) the intoxicated father of the gods home

after the *marziḥu* feast, carrying him on their shoulders. Numerous parallels link the duty in question to the cultic context of *marziḥu*.

What where the *marzihu* feasts? In the ancient world, feasts accompanying making offerings to honour the dead were an important element and they gathered male members of the family or clan. During these feasts, the common ancestor became a type of a keystone of such group and a factor that differentiated it from other communities. The veneration paid to the dead often resembled the worship of gods, and sometimes, as the first obligation attests, there was actual deification of the dead. The special admiration with which they were treated took various forms; one of its manifestations was the custom of holding lavish feasts in which the dead themselves were to participate.

A number of elements indicate that such ritual gatherings included the Hebrew *marzēaḥ*, the Ugaritic *marziḥu* and the Greek *symposium*. These were feasts whose most important element was the consumption of wine, a noble drink and intended in ancient times for crowned heads, aristocrats and gods. At the same time, they were events of a religious nature – during them various deities were invoked, who also attended the feasts, the material expression of which in the East was the presence of statues. In Ugarit, *rpum*, the biblical *rĕfāʾîm* (see Isa 26:14; Ps 88:11; etc.), or spirits of the dead, were invited to such a feast and they could eat and drink during such a gathering. In KTU[3] 1:21 II 1 and II 5 – passages belonging to *rpum* texts – we read about their invitation to a *marziḥu*. Also, a passage in the Book of Jeremiah mentions "the house of *marzēaḥ*" (Jer 16:5) as a place for mourning the dead, which clearly suggests connections between this institution and funerary customs. The prophet Amos, on the other hand, warns those who "drink wine bowls and anoint themselves with the best oil, and worry nothing about the fall of the house of Joseph," that "the revelry (*marzēaḥ*) of those who stretch themselves shall pass away" (Amos 6:7).

The available sources – in addition to Ugarit, ancient Israel and Greece, these include Phoenician texts, an ostracon from Elephantine and Nabataean inscriptions – give the impression that the main activity of the participants in such gatherings was drinking wine, sometimes to the point of total intoxication. The description

of the festivities in KTU[3] 1.114 suggests that although food was served, drinking – not to say excessive drinking – was the dominant feature of the festivities. A group of people (men, as women may participate exceptionally) would gather in a closed room and indulge in a drinking session in a ritualized manner, accompanied by procedures with religious significance.[104] An Akkadian economic text documenting the acquisition of a vineyard for a *marziḥu* group also shows that wine was a key element in the group's activities (RS 18.01 = PRU 4, 230, pl. 77; cf. also KTU[3] 4.642:3, where a vineyard is mentioned in connection with *marziḥu* of ʿAnata). Individual associations had their own property and finances in the form of contributions that allowed them to purchase or lease the building in which their members gathered (cf. e.g., KTU[3] 3.9 – contract to lease a house to a *marziḥu* association); they were also supported by municipal and state authorities. In this way meetings could be frequent or even regular. A wealthy citizen may have been a member of such an organization and on many occasions needed someone to take him home. It is therefore not implausible to link the fourth filial duty in particular to the tradition of *marziḥu* feasts.[105]

We should not assume a priori that all occasions for father's drunkenness were related to *marziḥu*. There were other feasts and celebrations where drinking and drunkenness were present. For example, further on in the epic of Danilu and Aqhatu, reference is made to Aqhatu's feast with Anata, at which "from cups they drank wine, from cups of gold the blood of grapes. They fill cup after cup…" (KTU[3] 1.17 VI 5–6) – and it is impossible to say that it was a gathering of *marziḥu*. Similarly, other Ugaritic texts about feasts speak of drinking wine in large quantities.[106] The text about obligations does not explicitly mention *marziḥu*, which suggests that it should not be limited to it inclusively. Arguably, the duty includes

[104] Tryl, *Semickie* marzēaḥ, 8–11.

[105] More on *marziḥu*, see: Miller, "The *MrzH* Text"; Dietrich – Loretz, "Der Vertrag eines mrzḥ-Klubs"; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 80–94; McLaughlin, "The *marzeaḥ* at Ugarit"; A. Tronina, "*Marzeah* w tekstach biblijnych"; Tryl, *Semickie* marzēaḥ, 8–11.

[106] KTU[3] 1.3 I 2–17; 1.4 III 40–44, IV 35–38, V 45–48, VI 40–59; 1.5 IV 10–21; 1.15 IV 4–28, VI 4; 1.23:6; 1.108:1–6.

marziḥu, but does not exclude other ceremonial gatherings to which the son goes with his father and can later bring him home, having taken care of his own sobriety beforehand.

The Fifth Duty (KTU³ 1.17 I 31–32 parr.)

spu ksmh bt bʿl He will consume his allotment in the temple of Baʿlu,
w mnth bt il and his portion in the temple of Ilu.

The verb *spʾ* means the action of eating or being eaten.[107] The related stem does not appear in the Bible, but instead occurs in Rabbinic, Hebrew and Aramaic literature to denote consuming/feeding – and, as in Ugaritic, is parallel to *aḵal* – "to eat." Here the term *spu* should be understood as a participle of the conjugation G (basic),[108] which means "eating, consuming," and not "feeding" in the sense of "offering to gods," since the syntax of the sentence does not allow it.[109] The noun *ksm* (here with the possessive suffix *h*) means 1) a "share, allotment, part or portion,"[110] or 2) a kind of grain, one of the wheat species.[111] The noun *ksm* as grain is used in worship (KTU³ 1.39:9; 1.41:19), listed in the registers alongside *ḥṭm* "wheat" and *šʿrm* "barley" (KTU³ 4.269:20, 30; 4.345:2, 4, 9), and the root itself is related to the Hebrew *kussemet* (כסמת), translated most often as spelt or another type of wheat. This grain appears in the Bible along with other flakes or grains, such as in Exod 9:32: "wheat and spelt," in Isa 28:25: "nigrum/dill, cumin, wheat, barley, millet, spelt." It is likely that this is the so-called emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccon*), a species of wheat native to the Middle East and still growing there in the wild. Primarily, however, the wheat is known there as a crop, classified

[107] *DUL* 754.

[108] From German: *Grundstamm*, conjugation expresses the basic lexical function, analogously to the Hebrew conjugation Qal.

[109] See: Tropper, *Der ugaritische Kausativstamm*, 389.

[110] So in this place: Margalit, "Lexicographical Notes (Part I)," 72; Wyatt, *Religious Texts* [2002], 259; *DUL* 457.

[111] So in this place: Dietrich – Loretz – Sanmartín, "Die ugaritischen Verben"; Dijkstra – de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 177; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 66; Kim, "List of filial duties," 18.

as an agricultural grain. Since the term *ksm* in the sense of grain occurred in the Ugaritic texts in a cultic context, some scholars also here prefer the translation "grain offering," "wheat offering." However, the clear parallelism with the very close synonym *mnt* "part, share, portion" (equivalent of Hebrew *mānah*) makes us see here with more likelihood the first meaning of *ksm* – "allotment."

The two objects of the verb "will consume" are, respectively "allotment" (*ksm*) and "portion" (*mnt*) – close synonyms, which do not define a specific substance that is used as an offering. Therefore, it is not clear what precisely the son's fulfilment of the fifth duty consists in. It is certain that it is a cultic obligation. The ritual context of the *mnt* term can be deduced from 1 Sam 1:4, where the Hebrew equivalent of *mānâ* means "part of the offering made," that is a "portion" of the participants of the sacrificial meal. Even more important are the site designations – these are temples dedicated to Baʿlu and Ilu. While the first two duties, also ritualistic, refer generally to sacred places (cf. *qdš*, *arṣ*, *ʿpr, aṯr*), here the cultic context is highlighted by the designation of two temples dedicated to the most important gods of Ugarit: Baʿlu and Ilu – in that particular, unusual order. In the formula of this obligation, Baʿlu appears first, followed by Ilu, which is neither in accordance with the Ugaritic hierarchy of gods nor with that present in the epic itself. It is likely that we are dealing here with an alternative tradition, where the specified hierarchy reflects practical precedence, in the action attributed to a given deity and in the reverence that Baʿlu receives in Ugarit

As before, it is again unclear whether the father is alive or dead. According to Albright,[112] the context of the previous duties may point here to burial rites in which offerings made to the father, for the father or symbolically on the father's behalf, are then consumed by the son. However, the ritual of this duty is associated with the worship of Baʿlu and Ilu, and consequently appears to be part of the worship of these gods, rather than worship involving the father's spirit. Therefore, it can be assumed that the father is alive, and the son eats the portions offered to the gods in the temple as a representative or substitute of the father. Perhaps what is being referred to here is the granting

[112] Albright, "Natural Force," 35 n. 38.

to the son of the right to represent the father in family worship, as a ritual privilege. Margalit[113] compares such delegation of cultic powers to the biblical ritual of instituting one's own sons as priests (Judg 17:5; 1 Sam 7:1; 2 Sam 8:18), while Lewis[114] compares it to an institutionalized hereditary priesthood. If we take into account the fact that filial duties – at least some of them – concern a situation in which the father was already too weak to take care of himself (as is the case in the last, sixth duty, among others), there may be a reference here to replacing the father when he is too old to go to the temples and perform the duty of the patriarch of the family, which was to offer sacrifices to the great gods.[115] This would support the hypothesis of transferring (part of) the father's cultic duties to the son.

The Sixth Duty (KTU³ 1.17 I 32–33 parr.)

ṯḫ ggh b ym ṯiṯ	He will plaster his roof on a muddy day,
rḥṣ npṣh b ym rṯ	he will wash his clothes on a rainy day.

The verbs *ṯḫ* and *rḥṣ* should be understood here as participles. *ṯḫ* occurs only here in the Ugaritic texts, but there is no fundamental doubt that it indicates the activity of plastering or plaster-coating (cf. Hebrew *ṭḥ*). In the Bible, this verb and image of plastering/patching appears in Lev 14:42, among others: *they will take another mortar and plaster the house* (טח את הבית) and in Ezek 13:10: *they covered it (the wall) with plaster* (טחים אתו תפל). The term *ṯiṯ* means "mud" (cf. Hebrew *ṭîṭ*, Akkad. *ṭîṭu* or Arabic *ṭāṭh* – "mud") and here is in parallelism with *rṯ*. The word *rṯ* can be defined on the basis of Arab. *raṯṯa* "to be old and dirty" or Akkad. *rūšu* "mud, dirt."[116] Therefore, these are synonyms. The last term variously interpreted in the last duty is *npṣ*, which can mean either 1) "personal belongings,

[113] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 267.
[114] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 67.
[115] Kim, "List of filial duties," 19.
[116] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 68; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 67.

equipment, armament," or 2) "clothes, garments, parts of garments," or 3) "dowry, object, set."[117]

The final duties listed in the letter have the character of taking care of a parent, especially in his old age and infirmity. Although they speak of two different activities, they form a unity – both at the level of formal structure and content – and symbolize care for the home and parents. When juxtaposed with the preceding ritualistic ones, these appear typically mundane, although the fact that the father's clothes are washed by the son, rather than a female family member, may suggest some special context of duty, such as in a cult or war. Margalit, for example, suggests that the washing of *npṣ* by the son may have to do with "sacred" war garments (*npṣ ǵzr*, see KTU[3] 1.19 IV 44) that women were not allowed to use or wash.[118] This explanation, however, seems unlikely. The dirt being washed away, according to the text of the obligation, is mud, not blood, impurity or some symbolic, spiritual evil, so the activity looks absolutely ordinary, and it would be an overinterpretation to look for some elements of religious or military ritual here.

It is not clear whether the mention of mud in the context of the roof indicates the technique of covering thatch with it, or whether it is a synecdoche to describe stormy, rainy days that compromised the structure of the roofing. Researchers most often see in the term "muddy day" bad weather (storm, wind), and therefore a threat to the integrity of the roof. In this view, the obligation is for the son to repair the roof when the days of bad weather are over. However, a completely different picture may be referred to here. In the ancient Middle East and in Ugarit itself, the roof structure was essentially ceiling beams on which reeds – which grew abundantly in Ugarit – were laid, sealing them and then covering them with earth (mud or clay). The clay dried out in the sun and crumbled after some time. So it had to be mended and filled in, which is much simpler and more effective when that clay is wet, when the "mud days" set in. So when it rained and the water softened the ground, repairs were made to the roof – using roof rollers found in many Ugaritic houses

[117] *DUL* 627.
[118] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem*, 279–280.

to compact the clay.[119] In this understanding, a muddy day here is not so much a threat, but a time expected as an appropriate time to repair and strengthen the roof. This proposed interpretation is consistent with the preposition "on" used twice in the text ("on a muddy day," "on a rainy day") and does not require it to be corrected to "after" ("after a rainy day"), as those interpreters who adopt the traditional approach must do.

In this duty we are certain that the father is alive, since it is his house and his clothes that are repaired and cleaned. It is therefore necessary to reject those tempting interpretive approaches that see in the entire list the (ritual) duties of a son fulfilled after the death of his father, and treat the list as a post-funeral "decalogue" of necessary actions.

Summary

The list of filial duties is a passus unique to ancient Middle Eastern literature, in the poem on Danilu and Aqhatu further emphasized by repeating it four times in close proximity. It is for this reason that the list attracted and continues to attract the attention of scholars who are interested in the cult of ancestors present in Ugarit and the ancient East, family ritual and the duties of children to their parents, as well as the *Sitz im Leben* of the list, considered by some to be part of a whole that is larger and completely independent from the epic, which was included in Aqhatu's text because of its loose association with the son-heir theme.

In the article a new translation and a new attempt to illuminate the meaning and context of both the individual duties and the list as a whole was proposed. These steps have served to demonstrate that the list of filial duties from Ugarit is not merely a list of ritual duties performed towards deceased family members – as this puzzling text has often been attempted to be presented so far. Rather, the list is a sapiential collection of advice or recommendations to the heir, in which religious/ritual duties are quite naturally combined with such mundane ones as bringing home a drunken father or repairing the roof.

[119] Yon, "Ugarit," 32.

All the duties are familial and sapiential in nature. Characteristic of such literature are, similarly to the Bible, recommendations and proverbs that constitute life advice and delineate ways of behaviour appropriate to particular states and life situations. The purpose of including a list of filial duties in the poem about Danilu and Aqhatu was most likely a sapiential, educational instruction about the status of a son. The set seems to be a sapiential "decalogue" of the son's duties both during his father's lifetime (everyday duties) and after his father's death (ritual duties). It is a kind of a moral table, probably functioning in communal wisdom in the form of sayings and instructions addressed to adolescent and adult children as part of their education.

Obowiązki synowskie w ugaryckim eposie o Danilu i Aqhacie

Abstrakt: Lista synowskich obowiązków stanowi unikatowy dla literatury starożytnego Bliskiego Wschodu passus, w poemacie o Danilu i Aqhacie dodatkowo podkreślony przez jego czterokrotne powtórzenie w bliskim sąsiedztwie. To dlatego lista przyciągała i ciągle przyciąga uwagę badaczy, których interesuje zwłaszcza mądrościowy charakter wykazu synowskich powinności, kult przodków obecny w Ugarit i na starożytnym Wschodzie, rytuał rodzinny i obowiązki dzieci względem rodziców, a także *Sitz im Leben* listy, uważanej przez niektórych za część większej i zupełnie niezależnej od eposu całości, która to część została włączona do tekstu Aqhata z uwagi luźne skojarzenie z tematyką syna – dziedzica. Jako że dotychczasowe próby translacyjne i interpretacyjne wydają się niewystarczające, w artykule zaproponowano nowy przekład i nową próbę naświetlenia znaczenia i kontekstu tak poszczególnych obowiązków, jak i całej listy.

Słowa kluczowe: lista synowskich obowiązków, poemat o Aqhacie, epos o Danilu i Aqhacie, kult przodków

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