

Over the years some scholars have alleged that, in addition to those usages which are commonly accepted,¹ there is a further use of the infinitive absolute in Ugaritic, namely to indicate past time with either a noun or a pronoun.²

These scholars, having taken cognizance of the fact that sometimes a verbal form does not agree with its following noun subject in gender and number, assert that the preceding verbal form must be infinitive absolute. The same is true when the subject which follows is a pronoun, and parallels for this latter construction, they claim, are to be found in Phoenician and Hebrew.

As we shall attempt to show here, we believe that this theory is open to serious objections. Moreover, it is our contention that the forms said to be infinitive absolutes can be otherwise explained.

The first point mentioned is that of the lack of agreement between the verb and its noun subject. This can be explained simply as being due to the fact that the

¹ The infinitive absolute serves in Ugaritic (1) to strengthen a finite verb (e.g. bt krt bu tbu "into Keret's house she surely enters" IIK VI:3), (2) as a substitute for a finite verb either (a) as an imperative (e.g. lhm hm šty "eat, pray, yet drink" IIAB IV-V:35), or (b) as an infinitive consecutive (e.g. bm nšq whr "by 'kissing' they conceive" SS: 51,56).

² See, for example, Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Rome, 1965), #9.29, 13.57, hereafter = Textbook, and see list of scholars referred to in note 19 below.

verb involved is a stative (i.e. qatila or qatula),³ or because congruence is not necessary when the predicate precedes the subject.⁴ For either of these reasons the verb before the subject can stand in its simplest form - that of the third masculine singular.⁵

Thus, we take the following forms not as infinitive absolutes but as third masculine singular perfects:

<u>šmh</u> :	<u>šmh</u> <u>rbt</u> <u>a</u> [<u>trt</u>] <u>ym</u>	(IIAB II:28-29)	"Lady Asherah of the Sea rejoices"
	<u>šmh</u> <u>btlt</u> <u>cnt</u>	(ibid. IV-V:82)	"The Maiden Anath rejoices"
<u>šhq</u> :	<u>šhq</u> <u>btlt</u> <u>cnt</u>	(ibid. 87; IIID 1:22)	"The Maiden Anath laughs"

Additional support for our interpretation is to be found in the forms t^{Cr}r (VAB B:20) and ark (SS:34).

<u>t^{Cr}r</u> :	<u>t^{Cr}r</u> ⁶ <u>ksat</u> <u>lmhr</u> [<u>m</u>] <u>t^{Cr}r</u> <u>tlhnt</u> <u>lšbm</u> <u>hdmm</u> <u>lgzrm</u>	(VAB B:20-22)	"She <u>imagines</u> that the chairs are heroes, <u>imagines</u> that the tables are warriors and that the footstools are troops"
<u>ark</u> :	<u>tirkm</u> ⁷ <u>yd</u> <u>il</u> <u>kym</u> <u>wyd</u> <u>il</u> <u>kmdb</u> <u>ark</u> <u>yd</u> <u>il</u> <u>kym</u> <u>wyd</u> <u>il</u> <u>kmdb</u>	(SS:33-35)	"The 'hand' of El is long as the sea, long as the flowing water; the 'hand' of El is long as the sea, long as the flowing water"

³ E.g. verbs like šmh, šhq and ark: cf. E. Hammershaimb, Das Verbum im Dialekt von Ras Schamra (Kopenhagen, 1941), p. 74, hereafter = Das Verbum.

⁴ W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, Hebrew Grammar (Oxford, 1960), #1450, hereafter = Ges.-Kau.-Cow.; H. L. Ginsberg, JRAS 1935, p. 55; The Ugarit Texts (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 23; C. Brockelmann, Orientalia 10 (1941), p. 237; G. R. Driver, JRAS 1948, p. 166; JBL 73 (1954), p. 130; Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh, 1956), p. 130, hereafter = CML.

⁵ G. R. Driver, JBL 73 (1954), p. 130.

⁶ Our translation of this difficult verb follows Ginsberg, ANET, p. 136 ("she pictures" "pretending"), and Gaster, Thespis (New York, 1961), p. 237. U. Cassuto, The Goddess Anath (Jerusalem, 1951), p. 64, hereafter = Anath, and M. Held, Leshonenu 18 (1953), p. 51 translate "she casts the chairs on heroes, etc." Driver, CML, p. 85, renders "she smashed seats over the warriors."

⁷ The form is third person feminine imperfect with aleph i written to indicate the silent aleph (ta'ruku), see Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society I (1968), p. 55, n. 76. Our identification of the yqtl-qtl sequence here explains the use of the two forms of the same verb which M. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts (Leiden, 1955), p. 39, calls "puzzling."

The forms tt^Cr - t^Cr and tirk - ark clearly belong to the yqtl-qtl sequence of identical verbs studied by both Cassuto and Held.⁸ Thus, t^Cr and ark must be taken as perfects and not as infinitives.

Similarly, the yqtl-qtl construction can be extended into non-identical verbs as well,⁹ which is how we take the forms yru - tt^C (IAB VI:30) and yraun - tt^C (1*AB II:6-7) usually taken as infinitive absolutes.

yru bn il[m] mt
tt^C ydd il g^zr

(IAB VI:30-31)

"Sore afraid was Godly Mot
Filled with dread El's Belov-
ed Ghazir"

yraun¹⁰ aliyn bcl
tt^Cnn¹¹ rkb crpt

(1*AB II:6-7)

"Aliyan Baal fears him
The Rider of the Clouds is
afraid of him"

⁸ Cassuto, *Anath*, p. 37; M. Held, "The yqtl-qtl (qtl-yqtl) sequence of identical verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic" in M. Ben-Horin et al., edit., *Studies in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 281-290. Both Cassuto, *Anath*, p. 64; Tarbiz 12 (1941), p. 171 and Held, *Leshonenu* 18 (1953), p. 51b, have already identified tt^Cr - t^Cr as belonging to the yqtl - qtl sequence. S. A. Loewenstamm, *Leshonenu* 27-28 (1954), p. 117, n. 15, rejects this view on the grounds that since tt^Cr is a feminine imperfect form, a corresponding feminine perfect form (t^Crt) is needed for a yqtl - qtl sequence. But, as we have noted above, congruence is not necessary in stative verbs (ta^Ccira), so t^Cr is not necessarily an infinitive absolute as Loewenstamm maintains. It is difficult to understand Loewenstamm's reluctance to accept the yqtl - qtl sequence even in such cases where there are no congruence problems, e.g. cdbt bht [h b^C] l y^Cdb hd cd^b [cd^b] t hklh "Baal made preparations for his house; Haddu made preparations for his palace" (IIAB VI:38-40), or kn^p n^rm bcl y^tbr bcl t^br diy hmt "The wings of the vultures may Baal break; may Baal break the pinions of them" (ID: 114-115). According to Loewenstamm, the form cd^b and t^br can be either perfect or infinitive absolute, in spite of the fact (as he himself is forced to admit) that, unlike the well-known yqtl-qtl sequence, there is no evidence at all in biblical Hebrew for a yqtl-infinitive absolute sequence.

⁹ Gordon, *Textbook*, #13.58.

¹⁰ A. Herdner, *Comptes rendus du Groupe linguistique d'Étude chamito-sémitiques* V (1948-51), p. 62; *Syria* 29 (1952), p. 170, claims that yraun can only be vocalized as an infinitive absolute yarā'u - na/u. Although it is true that in the other cases when the alephs serve as matres lectionis they indicate long vowels e.g. mria (marī'a) VAB D:85, šbia (šabī'a) IIAB VI:41, the paucity of evidence makes this point less than conclusive. A reading of yira'u (with mater lectionis a) is equally possible even though this is the only example. For the latest discussion on matres lectionis in Ugaritic, see Loewenstamm, *Leshonenu* 32 (1968), pp. 369-73, who denies that the aleph can be a mater lectionis at all.

¹¹ A. Jirku's argument, *JKA* 3 (1955), p. 113, that tt^Cnn can not

The form Cn which occurs five times¹² in the epics is difficult. Most scholars follow Ginsberg in taking it as a contraction from the infinitive absolute (Canâwu > Canô).¹³ Hammershaimb, however, takes Cn to be an infinitive construct,¹⁴ while Driver¹⁵ regards the form as a third person masculine singular perfect and explains its sole occurrence with a feminine subject¹⁶ according to the above observation. The difficulty with all three explanations is that we would expect in these texts the regular narrative forms wyCn and wtCn which occur with great frequency in the epics.¹⁷

The second point mentioned by scholars to show that the infinitive absolute can be used with a subject in Ugaritic to indicate past time is that evidence for such a construction with a pronoun is said to be found in Phoenician and Hebrew. Thus, for example, in the Karatepe inscription, a verbal form akin to the third masculine singular is followed sixteen times by a first person singular pronoun (e.g. פּעַל אֲנִי).¹⁸ Since this same construction is found in Ugaritic (e.g. ngš ank) and in Hebrew (e.g. וַשָּׁח אֲנִי), the Masoretic pointing of the latter form as an infinitive ab-

be a perfect because the energetic nun and/or suffix can not be attached to the perfect is not valid, for the very examples that he cites to support his theory disproves his case e.g. hlmm "he smites him" (IIID IV:33), grnn crm "he did attack the villages" (IK:212) and šrnn pdrm "he harassed the towns" (ibid. 213).

¹² wCn ktr whss (IIIAB A:7), wCn rbt ašrt ym (IAB I:53), wCn bn ilm mt (ibid. II:13), wCn aliyn bc1 (IIAB VI:7)[wCn glmm yCnyn (VAB D: 49)].

¹³ Tarbiz IV (1932), pp. 112 & 387; JPOS 14-15 (1934-5), p. 331, n. 8; *Orientalia* 5 (1936), pp. 176 & 177 n. 3; *The Ugarit Texts*, p. 35.

¹⁴ *Das Verbum*, p. 130.

¹⁵ *CML*, p. 131.

¹⁶ IAB I:53.

¹⁷ wyCn occurs thirty one times and wtCn seventeen times. For exact references see G. Douglas Young, *Concordance of Ugaritic*, *An. Or.* (Rome, 1956) sub cny and add ID:180 to his list under yCn.

¹⁸ This construction is found mainly in the Karatepe inscription (Azitawadda) *KAI* 26 I:3,4,6,7,10,11,13,17,18,20; II:9-10,11. It is also found in Kilamuwa, *KAI* 24:7-8, in Yehawmilk, *KAI* 10:2,3, and in other inscriptions quoted by J. M. Solà-Solà, *L'infinitif sémitique* (Paris, 1961), p. 116 #113. In Azitawadda the construction occurs in the qal (e.g. פּעַל אֲנִי ll. 6-7), in the piel (e.g. פּעַל אֲנִי l. 18), and in the yiphil (e.g. פּעַל אֲנִי l. 3).

solute led many scholars¹⁹ to regard both the Phoenician and Ugaritic forms as being infinitive absolutes also.

In our opinion, this point, like the first one, is open to serious objections. In the first place, there is no certainty that the Hebrew forms are infinitive absolutes.²⁰ Secondly, a major objection to treating either the Phoenician or the Ugaritic forms as infinitive absolutes is that some of these forms have pronominal suffixes (e.g. Cdbnn ank, ירר, אַנְךְ), and in spite of the opinion of some scholars,²¹ infinitive absolutes can not take suffixes.²² Thirdly, what-

¹⁹ A. M. Honeyman, Le Muséon 61 (1948), p. 50; PEQ 81 (1949), p. 31; J. Wevers, ZAW 62 (1949-50), p. 316; C. H. Gordon, JNES 8 (1949), pp. 108-15; Orientalia 20 (1951), p. 499; Textbook, #9.29 & 13.57; U. Cassuto, Anath, p. 83; A. Herdner, Syria 29 (1952), pp. 170-1; A. Jirku, JKF 3 (1955), pp. 111-15; J. Huesman, Biblica 37 (1956), pp. 271-95; J. Aro, Die akkadischen Infinitivkonstruktionen (Helsinki, 1961), #29.1; Solà-Solé, op. cit., p. 110ff.; M. Dahood, Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology (Rome, 1965), p. 23. W. L. Moran's contention, JCS IV (1950), pp. 169ff., that there is evidence for such a construction in Amarna has been seriously questioned by J. Obermann, JCS V (1951), p. 58ff., and, notwithstanding Moran's reply, JCS VI (1952), p. 76ff., it appears that Obermann is right in treating these Amarna infinitives as occurring only in conditional or temporal sentences with the preposition omitted. The Amarna evidence, though, it must be admitted, is in need of further study.

²⁰ In Hebrew the occurrence of the infinitive absolute with a subject is rare (see Ges.-Kau.-Cow. #113gg) and only two cases are found of an infinitive absolute plus a pronoun: וְשָׁחָ אֹנִי (Ecc. 4:2) and וְנִהְיֶה הוּא (Esther 9:1). In the latter passage a simple niphal perfect is expected, which is how the form should probably be pointed (וְנִהְיֶה). In the Ecclesiastes passage, however, repointing can not aid us. Although N. H. Tur Sinai has suggested that שָׁחָ is an error for the participle מְשַׁחָ (Hallashon we-Hassefer, I, Jerusalem, 1954, p. 74), it is likely though that it is rather an error for שֹׁחָחִי (cf. Targum שְׁבַחִיה אֵל and Peshitta שְׁבַחִי אֵל, and see H. L. Ginsberg, JNES 70 [1950], p. 159 and Koheleth [Tel Aviv, 1961], p. 79) since the construction first person singular perfect plus pronoun occurs no less than nineteen times in Ecclesiastes. Furthermore, this construction occurs with the very same verb שָׁחָ in chapter 8:15.

²¹ R. T. O'Callaghan, Orientalia 18 (1949), p. 184; J. Huesman, Biblica 37 (1956), p. 282; Gordon, Textbook, p. 121, n. 1.

²² Ges.-Kau.-Cow. #113 and especially note one. Some adherents of the "infinitive absolute" theory have tried to explain away this difficulty. Thus, Gordon explains the mem of יררם and יָשָׁם (KAI 26 I:20) "not as the suffix 'them' (which in this text is nm) but rather the Phoenician reflex of Accadian - umma attached to the adverbial infinitive, which occurs also in Ugaritic." However, he translates the text with suffixes "I, Azitawadda, subjugated them, bringing (them) down (and) settling (them)." -JNES 8 (1949), pp. 108-15.

ever the correct interpretation of the Phoenician forms may be,²³ the Ugaritic forms,²⁴ in our opinion, can be otherwise explained.²⁵

The key passage in which the construction infinitive absolute plus pronoun to indicate past time is alleged is LAB II:20-22 where Mot boasts to Anath of his prowess which is such that even Baal is powerless against him:

ngš²⁶ ank aliyn bcl
cdbnn²⁸ ank <k>imr bpy
klli bbrn q<n>y htu hu

"(If)²⁷ I encounter Aliyan Baal
 I make him like a lamb in my mouth
 Like a kid in my gullet is he crushed"

Gordon's interpretation is accepted by W. L. Moran in JCS IV (1950), p. 172. Others have simply recognized the difficulty but attach no special significance or weight to it (e.g. A. Dupont-Sommer, RA 42 [1948], p. 148; Oriens II [1949], p. 125; A. Herdner, Syria 29 [1952], p. 170). J. M. Sola-Sole's argument (op. cit., p. 115 #112) that the infinitive in South Arabic also has suffixes does not help one way or another since there is no distinction in South Arabic, as in Arabic in general, between infinitive absolute and infinitive construct (which can take suffixes); cf. W. Wright, Arabic Grammar, I, (Cambridge, 1962), #80.

²³ Other major theories are to regard the forms before the pronouns as participles - J. Obermann, Oriens 3 (1950), pp. 20-30; JNES 9 (1950), pp. 94-100; JBL 68 (1950), p. 303, or as third masculine singular perfects - J. Friedrich, Forschungen und Fortschritte 7/8 (1948), p. 78; Phönizisch-punische Grammatik (Rome, 1951), p. 133, n.1; Orientalia 20 (1951), p. 203. The objections to Obermann's theory are threefold: (1) participles in the derived forms must have a preformative mem, and forms like ירדס or שנס are obviously not qals; (2) to offset this first objection Obermann is forced to assume a unique type of participle which is otherwise unknown in Semitic; (3) the use of participles is generally avoided when reference is to past time in a punctual sense, cf. S. R. Driver, Hebrew Tenses (Oxford, 1881), p. 194-196; G. R. Driver, JBL 73 (1954), pp. 128-9. In line with the above mentioned idiom that congruence is not necessary when the verb precedes the subject (but is necessary if the verb follows), we tend to agree with Friedrich that the form before the pronoun is the third masculine singular. Others holding this opinion are G. R. Driver, *ibid.* (this note) and E. Hammershaimb, "On the so-called Infinitivus Absolutus in Hebrew" in Hebrew and Semitic Studies presented to G. R. Driver (Oxford, 1963), p. 92.

²⁴ Not taken into consideration here are the forms in Gordon, Textbook, 1002 rgm hy (l. 41), wrgm ank (l. 38), mgy hy (l. 42), [r] gm ank (l. 50) as these are in broken or unclear passages.

²⁵ Thus, for example, ngš hm (SS:68), sh hm (SS:69) and crb hm (SS:71) are simply third person plural perfects plus the third person plural pronoun.

²⁶ The form ngš is a classical example of a verbal form in Ugar-

We treat the tense of this passage as present continuous²⁹ rather than past or preterite, and we take ngš as a participle.³⁰ The form Cdbnn, as Ginsberg first acutely observed,³¹ is a first person singular imperfect with dissimilation and ellision of the aleph before the ayin ('Cdb > Cdb > Cdb). The proof text for this phenomenon is in IIID IV:21-22 where Anath describes her plan of action against Aqhat to Yatpan, her henchman:

bn nšrm arhp an[k]
[C]l aqht Cdbk

"Among the vultures will I hover
Over Aqhat will I pose you"

That Cdbk in this passage is a first person singular imperfect is proved by its parallel to arhp and by the fact that both verbs appear in the third person singular feminine imperfect later on in the column (ll. 31ff.) when Anath puts her plan into effect:

[bn] nšrm trhp
cl [aqht] tCdbnh

"Among the vultures she hovers
And poses him over Aqhat"

This same observation explains the form Cny in IIIAB B:28 wank Cny mlak ym "and I will humble the messengers of Yam," and possibly also Cnn in ibid. 18-19,35 tn bC1 wCnnh bn dgn artm pdh "give Baal to me and I will humble him, Dagon's son and I will possess his gold."³²

itic which has been interpreted in three different ways - as an infinitive absolute, Gordon, Textbook, #13.57, - as a perfect, Driver, CML, p. 131 and as a participle, Hammershaimb, Das Verbum, p. 86; Brockelmann, Orientalia 10 (1941), p. 233.

²⁷ For the conditional without morphological indicator, see Gordon, Textbook, #13.79.

²⁸ J. Wevers, ZAW 62 (1950), p. 316, disputes C. Brockelmann's contention in Orientalia 10 (1941), p. 233 that the participle can take a third person suffix in nun. He claims that since the participle can only take the possessive suffix h (i.e. Cbdh) this form must be infinitive absolute!

²⁹ So T. H. Gaster, Thespis, p. 221. Ginsberg, who originally took this passage as present continuous (The Ugarit Texts, p. 62), translates it as a perfect in ANET "I did masticate Aliyan Baal" (< Aramaic 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤀 "to eat").

³⁰ So Brockelmann and Hammershaimb; see note 26.

³¹ Tarbiz 4 (1933), p. 164; ibid. 5(1933), p. 85; cf. especially Orientalia 7 (1938), p. 8, n. 32.

³² For the latest discussion of these passages in IIIAB B, see M. Held, W. F. Albright Festschrift, Eretz-Israel 9 (1969), n. 15.