

A Philological and Prosodic Analysis of the Ugaritic Serpent Incantation UT 607

DENNIS PARDEE
University of Chicago

In another context¹ I have begun the study of the serpent incantation text from Ugarit.² The purpose of the present contribution is to complete some of the arguments undertaken there, to present a few minor changes, and, more important, to give a complete philological and prosodic analysis of the text. This further study was undertaken for two primary reasons: 1) In spite of many brilliant insights, I am not totally convinced by some of the details of previous interpretations, nor by the over-all interpretations of the meaning and purpose of the text;³ 2) I believe that it is important to demonstrate the prosodic structure of what must certainly be described as a sub-genre of Ugaritic literature (only two texts, this and the very fragmentary text 608, have been discovered which belong to the genre of serpent incantations). When I began my study of this text I did not expect anything approaching the prosodic regularity which a close analysis revealed.

A method of presentation is employed here which I hope will make the prosodic analysis clear to the reader. In the first column the text is given as it appears on the tablet, with my editorial changes indicated by the standard signs.⁴ Next comes a vocalized text arranged in poetic lines.⁵ There follows in parentheses a quantitative analysis of each poetic line. The first number indicates the number of words in a line, the second the number of syllables, and the third the cumulative quantitative value of the line.⁶ The next column contains an analysis of the parallelism of each poetic unit, using letters to indicate the semantically and/or positionally parallel words of phrases. An English translation takes up the final column. In the right-hand columns I use a discontinuous line to indicate the boundaries of each poetic unit and a full line to indicate the sectional boundaries as marked on the tablet by the Ugaritic scribe. Since much has already been written on this text, I have been able to severely curtail the philological commentary on points where somewhat of a consensus has been reached, reserving longer discussions for points where I disagree with the consensus or offer new lines of interpretation.

1 "m^erorāt-p^etanîm 'Venom' in Job 20:14," ZAW 91 (1979), forthcoming.

2 *Editio princeps* by C. Virolleaud, in *Ugaritica V*, Mission de Ras Shamra 16 (Paris, 1968), 564-74; cf. earlier references to this same text by Virolleaud: "Les nouveaux textes alphabétiques découverts à Ras-Shamra," *GLECS* 9 (1961), 41-42; "Les assesseurs de la déesse-soleil à Ras-Shamra," *GLECS* 9 (1962) 50-51; "Le dieu Ḥoron à Ugarit," *GLECS* 10 (1964), 64-66; "Les nouveaux textes mythologiques de Ras

1 'um . p̄hl . p̄hlt . bt . 'n . bt . 'abn . bt šmm wthm	'ummu puḫāli puḫālatu bittu 'ēni bittu 'abni bittu šamēma watihāmi
2 qr'it . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl . 'm	qārī'tu lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
3 'il . mbk nhrm . b'dt . thmtm	'imma 'ili mabbakē naharēma bi 'idati tihāmatēma
4 mnt . nt̄k . n̄š . šmrr . n̄š	minūtī nt̄ka naḫaši šamrira naḫaši 'aqšari
5 'qšr . lnh . ml̄š 'abd . lnh . ydy	lēnahu mulaḫḫiša 'abbid lēnahu yadayā ḫimata
6 ḫmt . hlm . ytq . n̄š . yšl̄hm . <n̄š .> 'qšr	halāma yaṭuqu naḫaša yašalḫimu naḫaša 'aqšara
7 y'db . ks'a . wytb	ya'dubu kussi' a wayaṭību
8 tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
9 'm b'l . mrym . špn . mnty . nt̄k	'imma ba'li maryama šapāni

Shamra," *CRAI* (1962), 105–13, esp. 105–8. In C. H. Gordon's numbering system (*UT Supplement* [Rome, 1967], 549) this text is number 607 and I will refer to it by that number. In the new collection of Ugaritic texts by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín it is §1.100 (*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit* [AOAT 24; Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976], 106–8 [= *KTU*]). It should be noted that there are several differences in the matter of word dividers between the hand copy in *Ugaritica V* and the transcription in *KTU*, but until photographs of the text are published it is impossible to say who is right. I have in these cases followed *Ugaritica V*. Where texts other than 607 are referred to in this article, I use the system of notation found in R. E. Whitaker, *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature* (Cambridge, 1972).

3 M. C. Astour, "Two Ugaritic Serpent Charms," *JNES* 27 (1968), 13–28; S. G. Brown, *The Serpent Charms of Ugarit* (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1974); A. Caquot, "Nouveaux documents ougaritiques," *Syria* 46 (1969), 241–65; H. Cazelles, Review [of *Ugaritica V*], *VT* 19 (1969), 499–505; M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartín, "Bemerkungen zur Schlangenbeschwörung RS 24.244 = Ug. 5, S.564ff. Nr. 7," *UF* 7 (1975), 121–25; T. H. Gaster, "Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth: A Canaanite Charm Against Snakebite," *JANES* 7 (1975), 33–51; E. Lipiński, "La légende sacrée de la conjuration des morsures de serpents," *UF* 6 (1974), 169–74; M. J. Mulder, "Hat man in Ugarit die Sonnenwende begangen?" *UF* 4 (1972), 79–96, esp. 89–90; M. E. J. Richardson, "Ugaritic Spelling Errors," *Tyndale Bulletin* 24 (1973), 3–20, esp. 14–17; P. Xella, "Per una riconsiderazione della morfologia del dio Ḫoron," *AION* 32 (1972), 271–86, esp. 280–86. Besides these extensive treatments of text 607, there are many brief references to

(3/9/21) $a^2 (= x + y)$ $a' (= y)$	The mother of the stallion, the mare,
(4/8/20) $a''^2 (= x' + z)$ $a'''^2 (= x' + z')$	The daughter of the spring, the daughter of the stone,
(3/9/21) $a''''^3 (= x' + z'' + z''')$	The daughter of the heavens and the abyss,

(3/9/23) $a b^2$	Calls to her mother, Šapšu:
(4/8/20) $b^2 c d$	"Mother Šapšu, take a message

(4/11/26) $a b c^2$	To Il at the headwaters of the two rivers,
(2/9/20) c^2	At the confluence of the double-deeps:

(3/8/19) $a b c$	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) $b' c^2 (= c + y)$	For the scaly serpent's venom:

(3/9/22) $a b c$	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) $a c' d$	From it cast out the venom'."

(3/9/19) $a b c$	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) $b' c^2 (= c + y)$	Feeds the scaly serpent,
(3/10/22) $b'' d b'''$	Draws up a chair and sits.

(3/9/22) $a b^2$	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) $b^2 c d$	"Mother Šapšu, take a message

(4/10/24)	To Baal on the height of Šapan:

various sections of the text or to its interpretation. Several of these will be mentioned in the notes which follow. I am also indebted to two unpublished studies of text 607 which have been put at my disposal by the authors: Charles H. Bowman and Robert B. Coote, "A Narrative Incantation for Snake Bite" (paper prepared for the Ugaritic session at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, 1978); Robert Haak, "RS 24.244: Translation and Notes" (course paper, University of Chicago).

4 < > = "to be added to the text"; { } = "to be excised from the text"; [] = "complete restoration"; r l = "partial restoration"; (!) = "a new letter has been put in place of a faulty writing." A horizontal line indicates that the scribe drew a line across the tablet at that point. A dot between words indicates a word divider in the original text.

5 All vocalization of Ugaritic is questionable. I include it for two major reasons: 1) It functions as a grammatical statement on my analysis of the text; 2) it is a useful, albeit subjective, indicator of the poetic structure of the text.

6 A short vowel and a consonant are counted as one unit and a long vowel as two units. For this method of counting, see D. N. Freedman "Strophe and Meter in Exodus 15," in H. N. Bream et al., eds., *A Light Unto my Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers* (Philadelphia, 1974), 163-203, esp. 169. Freedman has since abandoned this method of counting (see *JBL* 96 [1977], 12), but I find it a useful means, alongside word and syllable counts, of indicating that one major feature of Ugaritic prosody is approximately comparable length of lines (see below and my article cited in n. 1).

		minûti niṭka naḥaši
10	nḥš . šmrr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari
11	mlḥš . 'abd . lnh . ydy . ḥmt . hlm . yṭq	lênahu mulahḥiša 'abbid
		lênahu yadayā ḥimata
		halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša
12	nḥš . yšlhm . nḥš . 'qšr . y'>db . ks'a	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
13	wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
14	tqr'u . lšpš . 'uomh . špš . 'um . ql . bl . 'm	tqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha
		šapša 'umma qāla bilī
15	dgn . ttlh . mnt . ntḥ . nḥš . šmrr	'imma dagani tuttulah
		minûti niṭka naḥaši
16	nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš . 'abd . lnh	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari
		lênahu mulahḥiša 'abbid
17	ydy . ḥmt . hlm . yṭq . nḥš . yšlhm	lênahu yadayā ḥimata
		halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša
18	nḥš . 'qšr . y'db . ks'a . wyṭb	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
		ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
19	tqr' u lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl . 'm(!)	tqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha
		šapša 'umma qāla bilī
20	'nt w' { . } ttrt 'inbbh . mnt . ntḥ	'imma 'anati wa'aṭṭarti 'inḏubah
		minûti niṭka naḥaši
21	nḥš . šmrr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . ml	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari
		lênahu mulahḥiša 'abbid
22	ḥš . 'abd . lnh . ydy . ḥmt . hlm . yṭq	lênahu yadayā ḥimata
		halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša
23	nḥš . yšlhm . nḥš . 'qš'r' [. y'] db ks'a	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
24	wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu

(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.

(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/8/19)	To Dagan in Tuttul:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.

(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(4/12/30)	To Anatu and Attartu in Inbub:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.

25	tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . ['um . ql .] bl . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
26	yrḫ . lrgth . mnt . ntḱ . [nḫ] 'š' . šmrr	'imma yarḫi laragatah minûṭī niṭka naḥaši
27	nḫš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḫš . 'abd . lnh . ydy	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulahḫiša 'abbid lēnahu yadayā ḥimata
28	ḥmt . hlm . yṭq . nḫš . yšlḫm . nḫš	halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša yašalḫimu naḥaša 'aqšara
29	'qšr . y'db . ks'a . wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
30	tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql b<l> . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
31	ršp . bbth . mnt . ntḱ . nḫš . šmrr	'imma rašpi babtah minûṭī niṭka naḥaši
32	nḫš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḫš . 'abd lnh . ydy	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulahḫiša abbid lēnahu yadayā ḥimata
33	ḥmt . hlm . yṭq . nḫš . yšlḫm . nḫš 'q	halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša yašalḫimu naḥaša 'aqšara
34	š<r> . y'db . ks'a wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
34a	⁷ <tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
34b	'ṭtrt . mrh . mnt . ntḱ . nḫš . šmrr	'imma 'aṭṭarti marah minûṭī niṭka naḥaši
34c	nḫš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḫš . 'abd . lnh . ydy	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulahḫiša 'abbid lēnahu yadayā ḥimata
34d	ḥmt . hlm . yṭq . nḫš . yšlḫm . nḫš	halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša

7 Lines 34a–34c are restored on the basis of the marginal note on tablet 607, here given at the end of the text

(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/8/19)	To Variḫu in Laragat:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaly serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaly serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.

(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/6/16)	To Rašpu in Babtu:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaly serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaly serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.

(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/7/18)	To Attartu in Mari:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaly serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,

34e	'qšr . y'db . ks'a . wyṭb >	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
35	tqr'u lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql bl 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
36	zz . wkmṭ . ḥryth . mnt . nṭk nḥš . šm	'imma zīzi wakamuṭi ḥuriyyatah minūtī niṭka naḥaši
37	rr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš 'abd . lnh	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulaḥḥiša 'abbid
38	ydy . ḥmt . hlm . yṭq nḥš yšlḥm . nḥš	lēnahu yadayā ḥimata halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
39	'q{ . } šr . y'db . ks'a . wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
40	[t] tqr'u lšpš 'umh . špš 'um ql . bl . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
41	mlk . 'ṭtrth . mnt . nṭk . nḥš . šmrr	'imma milki 'aṭtartah minūtī niṭka naḥaši
42	nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš 'abd . lnh . ydy	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulaḥḥiša 'abbid lēnahu yadayā ḥimata
43	ḥmt . hlm . yṭq . nḥš . yšlḥm . nḥš	halāma yaṭuqu naḥaša yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
44	'qšr . y'db . ks'a . wyṭb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayaṭibu
45	tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql bl . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
46	kṭr . whss . kptrh . mnt . nṭk . nḥš	'imma kuṭari-wa-ḥasīsi kaptārah minūtī niṭka naḥaši
47	šmrr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš . 'abd	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulaḥḥiša 'abbid
48	lnh . ydy . ḥmt . hlm yṭq . nḥš	lēnahu yadayā ḥimata

(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.
(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(4/12/27)	To Žižu-wa-Kamuṭu in Hurriyat:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.
(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/7/19)	To Milku in Artart:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaley serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.
(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(4/12/29)	To Kuṭaru-wa-Ḫasisu in Crete:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaley serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."

		halāma ya <u>tu</u> qu naḥaša
49	yšlḥm . nḥš . 'qšr . y'db ks'a	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
50	wytb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayatību
51	tqr'u lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl . 'm	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
52	šḥr . wšlm šmmh mnt . ntḱ . nḥš	'imma šaḥri-wa-šalimi šamēma minūtī niṭka naḥaši
53	šmrr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulaḥḥiša 'abbid
54	'abd . lnh . ydy ḥmt . hlm . ytq	lēnahu yadayā ḥimata halāma ya <u>tu</u> qu naḥaša
55	nḥš . yšlḥm . nḥš . 'qšr . y'db	yašalḥimu naḥaša 'aqšara
56	ks'a . wytb	ya'dubu kussi'a wayatību
57	tqr'u . lšpš . 'umh . špš . 'um . ql . bl	tiqra'u lēšapši 'ummiha šapša 'umma qāla bilī
58	'm ḥrn . mšdh . mnt . ntḱ . nḥš	'imma ḥōrāni maṣūdah minūtī niṭka naḥaši
59	šmrr . nḥš . 'qšr . lnh . mlḥš	šamrira naḥaši 'aqšari lēnahu mulaḥḥiša 'abbid
60	'abd . lnh . ydy . ḥmt	lēnahu yadayā ḥimata
61	bḥrn . pnm . trgn{w} . wtṭkl	biḥōrāni panīma taruḡan watiṭkalu bunuwwataha
62	bnwth . ykr . 'r . dqdm	yakurru 'īra dāqadmi
63	'idk . pnm . lytn . tk . 'aršḥ . rbt	'idaka panīma luyattinu tōka 'araššiḥi rabbati
64	w'aršḥ . trrt . ydy . b'šm . 'r'r	wa'araššiḥi tarīrati yadiyu bi'īšīma 'ar'ara
65	wbšḥt . 'š . mt . 'r'm . yn'rnḥ	wabišīḥāti 'īša mōti

(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaly serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.
(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(4/11/26)	To Šaḥaru-wa-Šalimu in the heavens:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) b' c ² (= c + y)	For the scaly serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/9/19) a b c	Then he binds the serpent,
(3/10/22) b' c ² (= c + y)	Feeds the scaly serpent,
(3/10/22) b'' d b'''	Draws up a chair and sits.
(3/9/22) a b ²	She again calls to her mother Šapšu:
(4/8/20) b ² c d	"Mother Šapšu, take a message
(3/8/21)	To Ḥoron in Mašūd:
(3/8/19) a b c	'My incantation for serpent bite,
(3/9/20) a c ² (= c + y)	For the scaly serpent's venom:
(3/9/22) a b c	From it, O charmer, destroy,
(3/9/20) a c' d	From it cast out the venom'."
(3/10/24) a b c	She turns her face to Ḥoron,
(2/9/20) c' d	For she is to be bereaved of her offspring.
(3/8/20) a b c	He returns to the city of the east
(3/10/22) d e a'	And heads
(3/9/21) f g ² (= x + y)	For Great Arašših,
(2/9/20) g' ² (= x + y')	For well-watered Arašših.
(3/10/22) a b c	He casts a tamarisk (from) among the trees,
(3/9/21) b' c ²	The "tree of death" (from) among the bushes.

		'ar'arama yana''irannaha
66	ssnm . ysynh . 'dtm . y'dynh . yb	sissinnama yassiyannaha
		'adattama ya'addiyannaha
67	ltm . yblnh . mgy . ħrn . lbth . w	yābilatama yabilannaha
		maḡaya ħôrānu lēbêtihi
		wayiṣṭaqilu lēḡazirihu
68	yṣṭql . lḡzrh . tl'u . ħ<m>t . km . nhl	til'û ħimata kama naḡli
69	tplg . km . plg	tapligu kama palgi
70	b'dh . bhtm . mnt . b'dh . bhtm . sgrt	ba'daha bahatīma minûti
		ba'daha bahatīma sagarat
71	b'dh . 'dbt . tlt . pth . bt . mnt	ba'daha 'adabat talāṭa
		pataḡi bēta minûti
72	pth . bt . w'ub'a(!) . hkl . w'iṣṭql	pataḡi bēta wa'uba'ā
		hēkala wa'iṣṭaqilā
73	tn . km . <mhry.> nḡšm . yḡr . tn . km	tin kama muhriya naḡašīma
		yaḡara tin kama muhriya
74	mhry . wbn . bṭn . 'itnny	wabinī baṭni 'itnāniya
75	ytt . nḡšm . mhrk . bn bṭn	yatatti naḡašīma muhraki
76	'itnkn	binī baṭni 'itnānaki

Margin:

'atr ršp . 'ttrt	'atra rašpi 'attartu
'm 'ttrt . mṛh	'imma 'attartu marah
mnt . nṭk . nḡš	minûti niṭka naḡaši

(2/10/23)	a b	With the tamarisk he causes it to go,
(2/9/22)	a' b'	With the fruit stalk of a date palm he causes it to go away,
(2/10/23)	a'' b''	With the succulent part of a reed he causes it to pass away,
(2/10/22)	a''' b'''	With the "carrier" he carries it away.
(3/10/24)	a b c	Then Ḥoron goes to his house,
(3/10/22)	a' c'	Arrives at his court.
(4/9/21)	a b c d	The venom is weak as though (in) a stream,
(3/7/16)	a' c d'	Is dispersed as though (in) a canal.
(3/10/23)	a b c	Behind her the house of exorcism,
(3/10/23)	a b d	Behind her the house she has shut,
(3/9/21)	a d' b'	Behind her she has set the bronze (bolt?).
(3/8/19)	a b c	"Open the house of exorcism,
(3/9/20)	a b d	Open the house that I may enter,
(2/8/18)	b' d'	The palace that I may come in."
(4/10/23)	a b ² c	"Give as my bride-price serpents,
(4/9/20)	c' a b ²	Lizards give as my bride-price,
(3/9/22)	c'' ² b'	Adders (as) my wife-price."
(3/10/24)	a b c	"I hereby give serpents as your bride-price.
(3/8/20)	b' ² c'	Adders as your wife-price."

After Rašpu, Aṭtart:

"... to Aṭtart in Mari:

'My incantation for serpent bite ...'."

Philological Notes

Line 2 *špš*. I have vocalized the divine names in this text with the triptotic case endings used for common nouns. There is some evidence from the personal names which contain divine elements that at least some of the divine names may have been used in a caseless *status absolutus* when not terminated by a vowel other than a case ending.⁸ On the other hand, the one bit of explicit evidence we have from Ugarit, the "Ugaritic" column of the polyglot deity list,⁹ gives all divine names with the nominative ending (e.g., *ša-ap-šu*, *ku-šar-ru*, *[a]-na-tum*, *g[a]-ša-ru*, *aš-ta-ru*, *ba-a-lu*).

Line 2 *'umma qāla*. In ZAW 91 (cf. n. 1 above) both these forms were vocalized as 1st c.s. possessive forms (*'ummī qālī*—see notes there). It has since become clear to me that the semantics of the phrase do not demand possessive forms. Because the orthography appears to indicate non-possessive forms, then, I have so vocalized here.

Line 5 *ydy*. In UF 7 (1975), 359, and in UF 8 (1976), 254–55, I lumped all verbal forms related to this one and meaning 'to cast' under the root form *ndy*. The syntax of the present text seems, however, to call for a root *ydy* (see already my article in ZAW 91). For that root in Ugaritic, see J. C. de Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu*, AOAT 16 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971), 243.

Line 6 *yšlḥm*. In addition to Astour's references to force-feeding by snake-charmers,¹⁰ see the references in J. P. Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore* (London, 1926), 152, 159. According to this technique the serpents are force-fed drugs in order to enervate them.

Line 8 *tqr'u*. The use of a *yqtl* form here, as opposed to the active participle (see ZAW 91) in line 2, appears to denote repeated or on-going action. The mare repeats her request twelve times, the last eleven indicated by *tqr'u*.

Line 9 *'m b'l mrym špn*. The corresponding unit in the first section consisted of an abi-colon of good parallelism and reasonably comparable length (*'m 'il mbk nbrm// b'dt thmtm*), whereas in this and all the remaining units the object of the plea for intervention is expressed in one line. This means either that the first three lines of each section should be analyzed as a tricolon (and thus lines 2-3 in the first section would be a quadricolon) or else that the object of the plea is expressed in a semi-prosaic fashion (i.e., without a parallel line). Because the *'il* section has a clearly recognizable parallelism, while the others do not, and further because the length of this unit varies widely (from 3/6/16 in lines 30–31 to 4/12/30 in lines 19–20), I have chosen the latter alternative.

8 See F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Studia Pohl 1 (Rome, 1967), on *ršp* (pp. 181–82) and *špš* (p. 195). For earlier examples pertinent to the divine names in text 607, see H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts* (Baltimore, 1965) on *'l* (pp. 162–65), *ršp* (p. 263), *sms* (pp. 250–51), etc.

9 *Ugaritica V*, pp. 246–49.

10 *JNES* 27 (1968), 18, n. 18; 19.

Line 9 *mr̄ym*. For the formation, see W. F. Albright, *BASOR* 50 (1933), 15, n. 14; R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, *HSM* 4 (Cambridge, 1972), 58; G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh, 1956), 161.

Line 15 *ttl*. The best treatment of the place names in this and the remaining sections remains that of Astour, *JNES* 27 (1968), 19–22.

Lines 34a–34e. These lines are restored on the basis of the marginal addition given above at the end of the text (marked “margin”). The scribe apparently omitted the seventh section and indicated on the margin of the tablet where it was to be inserted: “After (the section devoted to) Rašpu (comes the section devoted to) Aṭtartu. (After the introductory line it reads:) to Aṭtartu in Mari: ‘My incantation for serpent bite . . . (etc.)’.” If Richardson¹¹ had taken into consideration this five- or six-line haplography, it might have changed his conclusions about the potential extensiveness of Ugaritic “spelling errors” (mitigated only by the fact that this omission was detected before the tablet had hardened). It must be stated further that any interpretation of this text which does not recognize that it consists of twelve repeated sections, followed by two additional sections, is faulty.

Line 34b (from margin) *mr̄b*. This form points up the difficulties in reconstructing the form of the syllable containing locative *be*. The place name is generally known as *mari*. The vocalization *mariah* would go against Semitic rules of syllabification. The vocalization *mariba* seems to be contradicted by Hebrew *-āb*, always with long *ā*, unaccented, though other Semitic forms may support the presence of a vowel after the *be*.¹²

Line 36 *z̄z̄*. For the form of the signs in this place name and in *b̄z̄r* (line 68), see Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, *UF* 7 (1975), 105.

Line 36 *kmt̄*. G. Pettinato has apparently pushed the known history of this divine name back into the third millennium B.C., having found a *d̄k̄a-mi-iš* at Ebla.¹³

Line 41 *mlk* *ʿttr̄tb*. See S. Ribichini, “Un’ipotesi per Milk’āstart,” *RSO* 50 (1976), 43–55. Ribichini offers much evidence (including interesting Indo-European parallels on p. 53) for the association of two deities *mlk* and *ʿttr̄t*, but he is unable to come up with a satisfying explanation for the apparent division in 607:41 and 608:17 into deity and locality.

Lines 57–60. This section is shorter than the previous eleven because of the omission of the final tri-colon. Since the next two sections (lines 61–76) deal with the deity introduced here in line 58, Ḥoron, the variation is certainly correct and must be of importance for the interpretation of the drama being depicted. The most likely interpretation is that the tri-colon omitted here

11 *Tyndale Bulletin* 24 (1973), 14–17.

12 Cf. K. Aartun, *Die Partikeln des Ugaritischen*, *AOAT* 21/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1974), 40–43.

13 *OA* 15 (1976), 14–15.

described in the other sections the action of the various deities implored. The verb forms (*yṭq*, *yšlḥm*, *y'db*) do not vary from section to section, despite the reference to male and female deities. This is perhaps because each deity is depicted as a *mlḥš*, a charmer, and the verbs are thus all 3 m.s.¹⁴ If this interpretation is correct and if the interpretation of the verb forms is correct,¹⁵ then it appears that the eleven preceding deities were capable of acting as snake charmers, but were not willing or able to play a St. Patrick-like role and do the more thorough task of devenomizing the serpents.

Line 61 *trġn {w} wtṭkl*. The *waw* at the end of *trġnw* is apparently to be explained as dittography with the following conjunction.¹⁶ The meaning of the verb *trġn* has been a major stumbling block in the interpretation of this text. Dahood¹⁷ tried to relate it to Hebrew *r'n* 'be or grow luxuriant' and translated "Against Ḥoron her fury waxed . . ." (*pnm* = 'fury') and Lipiński,¹⁸ working with the same etymology, came to a more tempting, if less plausible, conclusion: given that Hebrew *r'n* is used primarily of plants, the verb should mean 'be green' ("Sur Ḥoron, le visage devient vert . . .").¹⁹ Rainey²⁰ also interpreted the verb as denoting anger, deriving it from Arabic *raġā* 'froth' ("On Ḥôrân the face froths [with rage]"). This notion of anger seems to come from the next line which nearly everyone interprets as indicating Ḥoron's loss of virility or posterity.²¹ If, however, *ṭkl* is given the normal sense of 'be childless, bereaved of children', in the base stem and 'deprive of children' in the doubled or causative stem,²² one becomes very

14 In my previous treatment (cf. n. 1) I analyzed the last tri-colon as part of the mare's speech. It appears to me now, however, that such an interpretation does not give due weight to the twelfth section, where the tri-colon is omitted. In any case, what is apparently found inadequate in the first eleven sections is simple snake charming, whether the deities are actually depicted as snake charmers or not.

15 *yṭq* 'bind' rests on a somewhat shaky Arabic etymology (*wṭq*), while *yšlḥm* could at least conceivably come from *šlḥ* 'to send' (so C. Krahmalkov, *BASOR* 223 [1976], 78).

16 So several commentators, e.g., Caquot, *Syria* 46 (1969), 248; Rainey, *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190. I express it as "dittography with the following conjunction" because of the word divider separating the two *waws* (with the second one being in the proper position, after the word divider). If the text is correct as it stands, then the *-w* should be seen as *mater lectionis* for the 3 m. pl. ending (*panūma tirġanū*) and my interpretation which takes the mare as the grammatical subject would have to be changed (see n. 28 below).

17 *Biblica* 51 (1970), 399–400; idem, *Orientalia* 39 (1970), 378. Cf. also W. G. E. Watson, *Biblica* 53 (1972), 197.

18 *UF* 6 (1974), 170, 172.

19 The tie-in with the texts discussed by J. van Dijk in "Vert comme Tišpak," *Orientalia* 38 (1969), 539–47, is intriguing but philologically untenable from the Northwest Semitic perspective: 1) Hebrew *r'n* means 'be luxuriant' not 'be the color green' (= *yṣq*), i.e., it denotes a quality other than color (cf. already Gaster, *JANES* 7 [1975], 51); 2) Hebrew *r'n* is probably cognate with Arabic *r'n* (not *rġn*) which, besides the common notion of 'foolishness', occasionally has notions of 'strength' and 'numerousness' (a possible semantic development from an old West Semitic notion of 'luxuriance' to 'foolishness' would be one which links weakness with luxuriance: luxuriant, beautiful, full, strong → soft, tender, loose, flacid → foolish, weak, confused).

20 *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190.

21 Virolleaud's early treatments included this interpretation: *GLECS* 10 (1964), 64; *Ugaritica* V (1968), 570–71.

22 Cf. Ugaritic *ṭkl* 'bereavement' (23[52].8; cf. 2002:4); Hebrew *Qal*, *Piel*, and *Hipbil*; Arabic Stems I and IV.

dubious about *tṭkl bnwṭh* referring to depriving of virility. Moreover, if one examines the structure of the text and observes that the mare has been the subject at the head of each preceding section and is also the subject at the head of the fourteenth, one is strongly tempted to see her as the subject of both *trḡn* and *tṭkl*. If she is subject of *tṭkl* the verb most likely means 'be deprived of children', and *bnwṭh* then means 'her children'.²³ This effectively removes any idea of anger, for *wtṭkl bnwṭh* becomes simply a statement on the mare's feared loss of her children because of serpent bites. One then seeks an etymology for *trḡn* other than Hebrew *r'n* and finds that Astour²⁴ has cited Arabic *raḡana* 'to incline one's body', 'to give ear', and that Caquot²⁵ and Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín²⁶ have cited Arabic *rāḡa* 'turn', Caquot opining that "Il s'agit peut-être d'une variante de l'expression banale *ytn pnm* 'se diriger vers . . .'." This latter solution appears correct, for it avoids the notion of anger and appears more suitable to the attested Arabic usages of *rḡn* (used primarily for listening) and of *rwḡ* (used primarily for various kinds of deviating, inclining, etc.). I have vocalized the Ugaritic form, then, as a middle weak base stem 3 f.s. plus energetic *nun* and have interpreted it as an intransitive verb of movement with a prepositional complement (*bḥrn*) expressing the direction of movement²⁷ and *panīma* in the oblique case as an "accusative of respect" ("towards Ḥoron, as to her face, does she turn"). It is possible that Ugaritic, as opposed to Arabic, had a transitive base stem, but it is not necessary to posit such a form as the syntax as given here is perfectly acceptable.²⁸

Lines 61–62, interpretation: If the above analysis of the individual words is correct, we must assume that the mare broke off her message to her mother Šapšu and went herself to Ḥoron. The second half of this bi-colon indicates the reason for her personal intervention and, if we are to see narrative progression as well as dramatic repetition in these twelve consultations with various deities, it would also introduce an element of growing need for a radical solution: as time passes with various deities able to do nothing but charm one or a few serpents at a time, the danger to the mare's offspring grows.

Line 62 *ykr 'r dḡdm*. The verbal form *ykr* shows a shift of person and apparently relates Ḥoron's reaction to the mare's personal intervention. Most authors have agreed that *ykr* is a form of the verb *nkr*,²⁹ though the exact nuance is disputed (simple departure or hostile action?). The basic notion of the root *nkr* is foreignness, hence the notion of hostility—but

23 As Astour remarks in *JNES* 27 (1968), 22: "... *bnwṭ* looks identical with Arabic *bunuwwat*, 'posterity, descendants'."

24 *Ibid.*, 22.

25 *Syria* 46 (1969), 248.

26 *UF* 7 (1975), 124.

27 Cf. Arabic *rwḡ b* 'rush on someone'.

28 If the *-w* on *trḡnw* is retained (see n. 16, above), the vocalization would be *biḥôrāni panūma tirḡanū* "To Ḥoron the face does turn," the real subject, the mare, being understood from the structure of the text (?).

29 Cf. Virolleaud, *GLECS* 10 (1964), 64–65; idem, *Ugaritica* V (1968), 570, 571; Astour, *JNES* 27 (1968), 23; Rainey, *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190; Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, *UF* 7 (1975), 124; and Gaster, *JANES* 7 (1975), 44.

I have found no form of *nkr* which denotes simple departure.³⁰ If from *nkr*, the form *ykr* is a base stem, and therefore has the basic notion of 'be foreign, strange with respect to'. I find Virolleaud's intuition ("il quitte") tempting in context (see next paragraph, discussion of *tb*) but can only cite the various Arabic notions 'disown, disavow, deny, disapprove' as perhaps indicating the possibility that *ykr* denotes a hostile departure.³¹ On the other hand, it must be admitted that there is no indication in the text of why Ḥoron would be showing any kind of hostility or estrangement for the city. Furthermore, if Astour's identification of 'aršḥ as the Tigris is correct,³² then one might expect the "city of the east" to be where Ḥoron is going, not the place he is leaving.³³ When one seeks a verb which would denote primarily movement and not necessarily departure, one thinks of the Semitic roots denoting circular action³⁴ and the possibility presents itself that *ykr* could mean 'he returns'.³⁵ This would imply that Ḥoron was known to practice serpent exorcisms based on Mesopotamian rites and that, on being implored to undertake such a rite, he would return to previous methods and locales. This would further imply that his prowesses were known and that the previous consultations were used for dramatic build-up. On the other hand, it could simply imply that he was returning to where Šapšu rises in the east, whence the call had been issued.³⁶

The poetic structure of the quadricolon beginning with *ykr 'r dqdm* is not immediately apparent, for one might expect 'idk (line 63) to begin a new poetic unit, as it frequently does elsewhere (e.g., 3 ['nt] .6.12; 4 [51] .8.10; 17 [2 Aqht] .6.46). But there is one idiom which pre-

30 Caquot's contention (*Syria* 46 [1969], 249) that Akkadian *niṭkuru* means 'changer de place' is belied by *AHW*. ('sich verfeinden'—719). Syriac 'etnakri, which Caquot glosses 's'absenter', has the following meanings according to Payne Smith: 'to be, become or be declared alien, strange, foreign; to be alienated, removed, dispossessed; to renounce, disown, reject, abstain'. Having supplied this rather dubious evidence for Virolleaud's position, however, Caquot backs away, suggesting that in 'r dqdm " . . . il s'agit plutôt de l'endroit où Ḥoron se rend" (i.e., the interpretation adopted below in this paper).

31 Rainey, *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190: 'renounce'. Cf. also the Syriac glosses in n. 30.

32 *JNES* 27 (1968), 23; cf. Gaster, *BASOR* 209 (1973), 23.

33 There is no evidence of which I am aware which would support that Ḥoron would have any primary association with Mesopotamia (Astour, *JNES* 27 [1968], 23; Xella, *AION* 32 [1972], 271–86; A. Caquot, M. Sznycer, A. Herdner, *Textes ougaritiques: I. Mythes et légendes*, *LAPO* 7 (Paris, 1974), 100; Gaster, *JANES* 7 [1975], 43). This point is somewhat complicated, however, by the use of *qdm* in several biblical verses and in the Sinuhe inscription for what may be a particular area more closely associated with Syria-Palestine (Albright, *JBL* 63 [1944], 211; Yahuda, *JBL* 64 [1945], 549–50; *ANET*, 19, n. 10; cf. Astour, *RSP II* [1975], 312–13; Gaster, *JANES* 7 [1975], 45). Finally, it should be noted that if this text was written from the perspective of Ugarit, Mesopotamia would be in the east, and not in the north as it is seen from a Palestinian perspective (i.e., the arrival route from Mesopotamia enters Palestine from the north).

34 Cf. Hebrew *krkr* 'dance' (2 Sam 6:14, 16) and *kwr* (nominal derivatives only); Arabic *kwr* 'roll' and *krr* 'return'.

35 Bowman and Coote (see n. 3, above) derive *ykr* from the root *krr*, compare Arabic *krr*, and translate 'fall back' (i.e., 'retreat'). I believe, however, that this suggestion does not pay enough heed to the general meaning of the root *krr* nor to the specific meaning in Arabic from which they are working. The general notion seems to be 'circular movement'. Specifically, the Arabic dictionaries state that *karra* means not only 'retreat', but 'retreat in order to charge again', i.e., perform a circular movement (e.g., Biberstein-Kazimirski: "revenir sur ses pas, revenir à la charge en se retournant; charger de nouveau l'ennemi après avoir simulé d'abord la retraite").

36 Virolleaud, *Ugaritica V* (1968), 571, 578; cf. Gaster, *JANES* 7 (1975), 44–45.

cedes the *'idk* formula: a form of the verb *tb'* 'depart' with or without *l(y)tb* 'not sit or not return' but without a parallel line other than the *'idk* phrase itself (e.g., 2.1 [137] .13–14, 19–20; 4[51] .4.19–20; 5 [67] .1.9–10; .2.13–14; 6[49] .4.30–31; 14[Krt] .6.263–65; .6.300–2; 18[3 Aqht] .1.19–20; .4.5). It is possible that the consistent use of *tb'* 'depart' in this poetic construction indicates that *ykr* should have the same meaning. Until further instances of the usage appear, however, I believe that it is safe to suggest that the poetic structure does not necessarily imply identity of meaning for *tb'* and *ykr* in the line which precedes *'idk*.

Lines 63–64 *'aršb rbt w'aršb trrt*. There has been a great deal of discussion as to the use of the terms *rbt* // *trrt* in the Krt text,³⁷ where the terms unquestionably apply to a city. Now with respect to text 607, Virolleaud first took *'aršb* to refer to a country,³⁸ then to a city or country,³⁹ while Astour wanted *'aršb* to mean 'Tigris'.⁴⁰ Two etymologies have been proposed for *trrt*: Akkadian *šerru* 'small', as the proper parallel to *rbt* 'large', and Arabic *tarra(n)* 'abundant in water of other liquid' (the verb *tarra* means 'have much liquid' [water, milk, blood]). Unfortunately, until the etymology of Akkadian *šerru* is resolved (*AHW* lists Ugaritic *trr* as the only cognate for *šerru* and that with a question mark), it is difficult to come to an unequivocal decision as to the etymology of Ugaritic *trrt*. One is, then, cast back on Astour's explanation of *'aršb* as denoting the Tigris and on the literary observation that *rbt* // *trrt* elsewhere in Ugaritic is applied to a city. Which of these contradictory data should have precedence? I would cast in the further observation that according to my analysis of the preceding lines of this section, *'r dqdm* should be the city to which Ḥoron is heading, not the one he is leaving. Is it possible that the city he is heading towards is named *'aršb*, that it is located on the Tigris, and that it takes its name from the Tigris? Such a solution encompasses Astour's explanation of *'aršb* and the previously attested usages of *rbt* // *trrt*. Unfortunately, it does not solve the problem of the etymology of *trrt*,⁴¹ though a city located beside the Tigris might be more likely to have two parts called 'great' and 'well-watered' (2 Sam 12:27) than 'great' and 'small'.

Lines 64–65 *ydy b'šm 'r'r wššpt š mt*. Two very elementary literary points must be made before discussing the words and the poetic structure. First, *ydy* answers the *ydy* of the twelve-fold plea to remove the serpent venom (// *'abd*). This repetition of *ydy*, not a common form in Ugaritic, in the section which recounts Ḥoron's response to the plea, should denote that he is carrying out the request by an action closely related if not identical to the one requested. Second, *'r'r*, the object of *ydy*, is the first in the list of plants given in lines 65–67 which actually effect the neutralization of the serpent venom. This repetition should denote that whatever Ḥoron did to the *'r'r* in line 64 was a necessary prelude to the resulting action of the *'r'r* in line 65.

37 For a recent discussion with an introductory bibliography, see L. Badre et al., *Syria* 53 (1976), 111.

38 *GLECS* 10 (1964), 65.

39 *Ugaritica* V (1968), 571.

40 *JNES* 27 (1968), 23.

41 As Badre et al., *Syria* 53 (1976), 111, had hoped (i.e., that *trrt*, applied to the Tigris, could only mean 'abundant in water').

There have been two main lines of interpretation, hinging on the meanings of *b* ('from' or 'into') and *šht* ('bush' or 'Pit').⁴² There is some variation in the actual translations,⁴³ but the basic question is whether the '*r*' and the '*š mt*' are being removed from among the other trees for the purpose of effecting a venom-eradicating rite, or whether they are being cast into a pit.⁴⁴ The basic interpretive question, then, is which of the two actions will best fit the literary structure of the text (*ydy . . . ydy . . . 'r' . . . 'r'*) and allow the '*r*' to do its work as depicted in line 65. Unfortunately, a general interpretive answer may not be given to this question: In the 'from/bush' interpretation, the '*r*' and the '*š mt*' are being removed from among the other trees because they are needed for a *namburbi*-type rite,⁴⁵ whereas in the 'into/pit' interpretation one could say that the '*r*' and the '*š mwt*' cause the venom to flow with them down into the Pit as they are cast there.

In spite of the fact that there is no clear-cut answer to the general interpretive question, I believe that an answer is possible on other grounds.

1) Comparative. I have already stated my conviction⁴⁶ that, given our lack of Northwest Semitic parallels for this text, the Mesopotamian ones cited by Astour⁴⁷ must be heeded.

2) Poetic. Dahood's interpretation⁴⁸ at first resulted in the following poetic structure:

He hurled into the Hole the tamarisk	a b c
And into the Pit the tree of death.	b' c' ²

The obvious difficulty with this beautiful parallelism is in giving to '*šm*' the meaning 'Hole', apparently a figment of Dahood's imagination.⁴⁹ The meaning ascribed to '*šm*' seems to have

42 For the earlier bibliography, see Pardee, *UF* 8 (1976), 255. The only really different interpretation since the listing in *UF* 8 of which I am aware is that of Bowman and Coote (cf. n. 3, above), who see the *b* as instrumental, "He dispells with the tree, the tamarisk, // And with the shrub, the tree-of-death." If I understand this translation correctly (there is no note on this particular bi-colon) 'tree' and 'tamarisk' are in apposition, as are 'shrub' and 'tree-of-death'. I believe this points up the difficulty in the new interpretation: there is no direct object for *ydy* (*b 'šm 'r* is an instrumental phrase, with nothing left to supply an object for *ydy*). This may not be an insuperable difficulty, but it may not be ignored. The only author of whom I am aware who mixes the two older interpretations is Gordon (*UT Supplement* §19.1903 [p. 554]: "he hurls the *tamarisk* from the trees, yea the Tree of Death into the Pit.").

43 I.e., some may not translate *b* 'from', but their interpretation involves 'movement from': tearing out, uprooting, etc.

44 In Dahood's interpretation the *šht* is invariably the 'Pit', i.e., Sheol, Hades, Hell (*UF* 1 [1969], 28; *Psalms III*, Anchor Bible 17A (Garden City, N.Y., 1970), 25–26; *Biblica* 54 [1973], 355–56).

45 Astour, *JNES* 27 (1968), 24–25.

46 *UF* 8 (1976), 255.

47 *JNES* 27 (1968), 24–25.

48 *UF* 1 (1969), 28; *Psalms III* (1970), 25–26.

49 In *Psalms I* (1965), 63, he first proposed a root '*šm* 'dig/pit' (for Ps. 10:10) comparing Ugaritic '*šm*' in 12(75).1.23–25 (an incorrect comparison in my view, see *UF* 8 [1976], 255, n. 504). This position was repeated in *Biblica* 50 (1969), 353, adding 607:64–65 as further evidence from Ugaritic, and repeated again in *UF* 1 (1969), 28; *Psalms III* (1970), 25–26; *Biblica* 52 (1971), 337–38; *RSP I* (1972), 303; and in "Additional Pairs of Parallel Words in the Psalter and in Ugaritic," in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch: Beiträge zur Psalmen und Propheten. Festschrift für Josef Ziegler*, Forschung zur Bible 2 (Würzburg, 1972), 39 (none of the last contributions added further evidence from Hebrew or Ugaritic for '*šm* 'dig/hole'). It appears unlikely that a word for which there is, ultimately, no parallel from Ugaritic, no other comparative Semitic

bothered Dahood himself, for in *RSP I* (1972) he was already using ambiguous language,⁵⁰ and in 1973⁵¹ he changed his interpretation:

He violently hurled the tamarisk,
even to the Pit the tree of death.

Though Dahood does not this time propose a poetic analysis, it would be a b c // d c'², leaving only 'r'r and 'š mt in parallel. Although such a poetic structure is by no means impossible,⁵² the analysis of b'šm as 'among the trees', with the resulting poetic structure a b c // b' c'², provides the most common meaning for the words in question⁵³ as well as a more regular poetic parallelism and thus must be judged more plausible.

3) Individual words. a) *ydy*. Literarily, etymologically,⁵⁴ and from Ugaritic usage,⁵⁵ *ydy* should mean 'to throw, cast, hurl, etc.' Thus Astour's⁵⁶ 'uproot' depends a bit too much on the parallels for uprooting plants or tearing off branches in the Mesopotamian rituals he cites. *ydy b* in Ugaritic (when compared with *ndy b*) should mean 'cast out from', or 'cast out (while) among'.⁵⁷ On the basis of Ugaritic usage, then, the line should mean "he casts out a tamarisk, that tamarisk having been among the trees," or "he, being among the trees, casts out a tamarisk," both of which boil down to "he casts out a tamarisk (from) among the trees." It appears to me that the terminology of this section (especially lines 68–69), the modality of the *namburbi* rituals cited by Astour (which frequently involve casting wood into a river), and the Asian Indian texts cited immediately hereafter indicate that the tamarisk and the 'š mt are being cast out from among the trees for the purpose of being cast into the Tigris and bearing away the venom apotropically. In my previous study of the first part of text 607 I followed several authors in citing Indian parallels for some of the main features of the text. It is one section of the Hymns of the Atharva-Veda⁵⁸ which provide the closest parallels (X, 4). I cite here the paragraphs which cast the most light on the use of the trees in text 607:

evidence, and no other parallel from the Bible, will solve the many problems of Ps. 10:10.

50 "This parallelism is valid only if one accepts the translation and interpretation proposed by M. Dahood, *UF*, I (1969), 27–28." This is asking quite a bit, since Dahood himself shortly abandoned his *UF* 1 interpretation (see following).

51 *Biblica* 54, 355–56.

52 Cf. my analysis of 12(75).1.23–25 in *UF* 8 (1976), 255, n. 504.

53 It appears that one of Dahood's major concerns has been to find an extra-biblical parallel for Hebrew *šahat* 'pit'. Without straining the Ugaritic evidence, one may find a much older extra-biblical example. It was published by G. Dossin, "Documents de Mari," *Syria* 48 (1971), 1–19, and has since appeared as *ARM* 14:2. In this text, the word *šahatum* is used four times (lines 8, 10, 16, 17) for the pit used to trap and destroy a marauding lion (cf. *AHW.*, 1008b). This text provides a welcome background in *realia* for the use of *šahat* in the Bible to describe physical persecution.

54 See note above to *ydy* in line 5.

55 The only question being whether both *ydy* and *ndy* occur in Ugaritic; see note above to *ydy* in line 5 and my comments on what I took to be the root *ndy* in *UF* 8 (1976) 254–55.

56 *JNES* 27 (1968), 22; cf. also Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 17 (with no defense).

57 Examples are cited in *UF* 7 (1975), 359.

58 *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, trans. M. Bloomfield (Sacred Books of the East 42; Oxford, 1897; reprint: Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi, 1964, 1967), 152–54.

- X, 4:3 Strike down, O white (horse), with they forefoot and thy hindfoot! As timber
floating in water, the poison of the serpents, the fierce fluid, is devoid of
strength.
- :4 Neighing loudly he dived down, and, again, diving up, said: "As timber
floating in water, the poison of the serpents, the fierce fluid, is devoid of
strength."
- :21 As skilfully I cull the fibre of the plants, as I guide the mares, (thus), O
serpent, shall thy poison go away!

Notice that the Indian text seems also to belong more to the genre of poetic incantation than to that of prosaic ritual as do the *namburbis* and that the precise relationship between the venom and the timber is not clearly stated in the Indian incantation (as it is not stated in the Ugaritic text). The rhetorical form in the Indian text is simply that of the simile with no need felt to expatiate. If one totally unacquainted with Indian studies may make a suggestion, however, it may be that an ancient rite somehow comparable to the *namburbis* and to the one I claim to see in text 607 stands behind this portion of the Vedic hymn.

b) *šm*. As stated above (n. 49), Dahood has cited no comparative evidence beyond Ps. 10:10 and Ugaritic text 12(75).1.23–25 for *šm* 'dig/hole'. *šm* 'strength' is perfectly acceptable etymologically but weakens the parallelism in the present text. Thus context and poetic structure alike indicate that *šm* probably means 'trees' here.

c) *šht*. Virolleaud first suggested that this was the plant known as *šaḫatu* in Akkadian.⁵⁹ Astour referred to Hebrew *šāḥ* 'shrub'.⁶⁰ According to von Soden,⁶¹ the *šaḫātu* plant is known only from the lexical text Aa (he translates "eine 'Stinkpflanze'"). If the Akkadian term were better known, or if it occurred in *namburbi* ritual texts, the parallel might be more inviting. As it is, it appears safer to see a genetic relationship between the Hebrew *šāḥ* and *šht* (Hebrew *šāḥ* appears from its few occurrences to be a generic term for 'brush'; the feminine form in Ugaritic, though not attested in Hebrew, should not occasion surprise for inter-dialectal variations of gender are frequent in common nouns). If we deny to *šm* the meaning 'hole', then *šht* 'pit' becomes less likely. It appears to me, in any case, that we would need more than this text, which appears to lean in the direction of 'trees' rather than that of 'Hades', to prove that putative Ugaritic *šht* 'pit' would have the marked netherworld connotations of Hebrew *šaḫat* (the Mari Akkadian instance cited above, n. 53, is completely this-worldly). Finally, Rainey has pointed out⁶² that Hebrew *šht* is probably cognate with Arabic *sāḥa* (*swḥ*) 'fall and get stuck in the mud; sink to the bottom of water', which, if correct, rules out a Ugaritic form with *h*.

59 GLECS 10 (1964), 65; Ugaritica V (1968), 571.

60 JNES 27 (1968), 25.

61 AHW., 1129.

62 JAOS 94 (1974), 190, n. 20. But for an opposing position, see M. Held, JANES 5 (1973) = *The Gaster Festschrift*, 173–90.

d) 'š *mt*. Astour⁶³ assumes that 'š *mt* is a synonym for 'r'r. This is of course possible, but it is equally possible that it denotes a second type of tree, for the *namburbis* make use of more than one kind of wood and, indeed, four types are listed below in lines 65–67. Thus 'š *mt* may be either the 'r'r or any one of the other three types of wood or, for that matter, yet another. I know of no Semitic parallels which might aid in the elucidation of the term. Gordon⁶⁴ tells us that "The Tree of Death is a necessary counterpart of the Tree of Life," but he offers no specific comparisons.

To sum up this long discussion of the bi-colon in 607:64–65: The imagery involved is arboreal rather than hellish. The picture is that of the god Ḫoron appearing at a (mythical?) city which bears the name 'Tigris' and which was probably considered, therefore, to be located on the Tigris. He goes into the scrub and casts out a tamarisk and a 'tree of death'. If the rite effected is like the *namburbis*, ceremonies would then take place on the river bank, with the plants eventually thrown into the river.⁶⁵ The following quadricolon states the effect of the trees on the venom and the closing bi-colon states the effect in terms of water imagery. The conceptual framework is apotropaic simile: as the water carries away the wood, so the power of the venom is borne away.

Line 65 'r'rm. By comparison with 'dtm and ybltm (lines 66–67), 'r'rm (and ssm in line 66) must be either singular with some sort of adverbial or enclitic *mem*, or else dual. Since 'r'r is not marked for plural or dual in line 65 (it is doubtful that 'š *mt*, if synonymous with 'r'r, would make up the dual), I deduce that 'r'rm is singular. Rainey proposes that the -m here is equivalent to the Akkadian instrumental -um.⁶⁶ I have also translated as instrumental, but have simply vocalized as accusative plus enclitic *mem*, remaining skeptical about a separate instrumental particle with *mem*.

Line 65 yn'rn. Two problems are involved with this word, the meaning of the verb and the antecedent of the pronominal suffix. Virolleaud did not propose a meaning for n'r,⁶⁷ but Astour proposed Hebrew n'r 'shake'⁶⁸ and in this has been followed by most commentators.⁶⁹ I have found no one, however, who notes that BDB's etymology for n'r is Arabic nġr 'boil, etc.,' and that this is apparently the etymology which the authors of KB² had in mind also.⁷⁰ Whether this etymology is correct or not is another question. Arabic has two roots, nġr which denotes 'boiling' and 'anger,' among other things, and n'r which denotes a certain harsh sound and move-

63 JNES 27 (1968), 25.

64 Ugaritica VI 1969), 280.

65 Astour, JNES 27 (1968), 24.

66 JAOS 94 (1974), 190, citing W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*, An. Or. 33 (Rome, 1969), § 66e, part of a discussion on "Der Lokativ-Adverbial auf -um."

67 GLECS 10 (1964), 65; Ugaritica V (1968), 571.

68 JNES 27 (1968), 25.

69 Caquot, Syria 46 (1969), 250; Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, UF 7 (1975), 124; Gaster, JANES 7 (1975), 45; Lipiński, UF 6 (1974), 173; Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 17, 47.

70 They give Arabic n'r 'be very angry'. This must represent an omission of the diacritic over the 'ayin for all the Arabic dictionaries I have consulted give nġr as the root meaning 'be angry'.

ment out or up. There is one instance of *n'r* in Hebrew used for the sound of a lion (Jer. 51:38 // š'g 'roar') and this root appears also in Akkadian,⁷¹ indicating that the association with noise is ancient. On the other hand, in Arabic there are several meanings associated with movement.⁷² The etymological question mystifies me at the moment, and I will only cite, following Caquot,⁷³ Exod. 14:27 *wayna' ēr YHWH 'et-miṣrayim b'êtôk bayyam*, translated by the NEB "... and the Lord swept them out into the sea." Here the translation 'shake out' is quite inapt and the end result of the action is that the Egyptians remain in the sea, rather than escaping, and are destroyed. This is also Ḥoron's purpose with respect to the venom, that it be borne away on the water and thus lose its force. I would thus link *n'r* here up with at least some usages of Hebrew which denote movement (perhaps the notion of movement was primary and that of shaking secondary) and with the Arabic usages which involve movement.

The problem of the antecedent for the pronominal suffix is equally difficult. Astour⁷⁴ translates "The tamarisk shook it (= the evil) off," though there is no mention of 'evil' anywhere in the text. Lipiński⁷⁵ takes *'r'm* and the following nouns as hanging nominatives, with the suffix referring back to *'r'm* as the accusative: "Le tamaris, il le secoue." This analysis does not, however, explain the enclitic *mem* on *'r'm*. Though I have hesitated to make the *mem* specifically instrumental (see note on *'r'm*, above), it would be preferable to give it some adverbial force, because it is repeated on each of the four nouns in question. I prefer, since the twelve-fold plea was to *ydy ḥmt* 'cast out the poison,' and since the *'r'r(m)* which Ḥoron has just 'cast out' from among the trees may now be doing the work requested of each deity, to see in the pronominal suffix a reference to the *ḥmt*. When the text was recited orally, the feminine object suffix, without an obvious immediately preceding antecedent, would attract notice and ultimately call attention to the fact that Ḥoron is indeed carrying out the function requested of him. If this analysis is correct, it shows up a rather high level of literary sophistication in the composition of this incantation.

Lines 66–67 *ssnm . . . yblnb*. The interpretation of these words is basically Astour's,⁷⁶ partially dependent on Virolleaud.⁷⁷

Line 68 *ḥzrh*. On the reading of the second sign as *z*, see Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartin, *UF* 7 (1975), 105–6.

Line 68 *tl'u ḥ<m>t*. These two words provide the *crux interpretum* of this section. If it were absolutely certain that *ḥt* is to be restored *ḥ<m>t* (or otherwise),⁷⁸ we would have better criteria

71 *AHw.*, 694a.

72 Biberstein-Kazimirski list "lancer, faire jaillir avec bruit le sang . . .," "se lever et se mettre à quelque chose," "survenir tout à coup," "venir chez quelqu'un," "s'éloigner . . ."

73 *Syria* 46 (1969), 250.

74 *JNES* 27 (1968), 22; cf. Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 17.

75 *UF* 6 (1974), 170; cf. Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartin, *UF* 7 (1975), 122; Gaster, *JANES* 7 (1975), 39.

76 *JNES* 27 (1968), 25–26.

77 *GLECS* 10 (1964), 65; *Ugaritica* V (1968), 571.

78 Cf. already Virolleaud's doubts about the validity of *ḥt*, *Ugaritica* V (1968), 572. Rainey, *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190, restores <p>ḥ<l>t (though he does not give a translation of the bi-colon to enable us to see how

for deciding the meaning of *tl'u* and would be on safer ground in the over-all interpretation of the bi-colon. The most obvious difficulty with *ht* is that no such word is known. (The most likely interpretation of the word if it is left as it stands is as a noun from the root *ḥwy/ḥyy* 'live', giving 'life', 'vitality', or even 'serpent' [cf. Aramaic *ḥewyâ*],⁷⁹ but the loss of two root consonants is unlikely). Previous students of this text who have adopted the restoration *ḥ<m>t* are divided as to the meaning of *tl'u*, either 'be strong' (Brown; Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartin) or 'be weak' (Caquot). Both senses are attested in the Semitic languages, with the best evidence for the sense 'be strong' in Akkadian *le'u*⁸⁰ and that for 'be weak/be unable' in West Semitic (Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic). In Ugaritic it is the sense "be strong" which has been the best attested to date: in the title '*al'iyin* applied to Baal ("mighty Baal"), in the passage where Kirta is overcome by sleep (14[Krt].1.33), and in the passage describing Kirta's healing (16.6[127].2.14). It is quite possible, on the other hand, that *l'a* in *l'a šmm byd bn 'ilm mt* means 'be weak'.⁸¹ Now which is the more likely in the present passage? I believe that 'be weak' is the more likely because of the structure of the text and the Indian parallel cited above. This bi-colon is situated between Ḥoron's return to his house after successfully effecting a venom-destroying rite which consisted of throwing wood beside and probably into a river and his arrival at his house to pursue marriage negotiations with the mare. The most likely statement at such a juncture would be one to the effect that the rite had been successful, that the venom had been overcome, with the implied conclusion that Ḥoron was the proper husband for the mare. This situation corresponds almost exactly to the Indian text cited above (the major difference being that Ḥoron has been the actor, rather than a horse), of which I cite again one line, which is repeated twice in the section quoted (§§ 3, 4):⁸² "As timber floating in water, the poison of the serpents, the fierce fluid, is devoid of strength."⁸³

The most cogent objection to this interpretation of *tl'u* is that of Brown:⁸⁴ "... the terms *nḥl* and *plg* do not seem compatible with the idea of weakness (cp. Amos 5:24, Ps. 1:3, etc.)." This observation is correct, for in Ugaritic the one idiom containing *nḥl* denotes plenty,⁸⁵ while in Hebrew the *naḥal* is also an image of fullness and force unless otherwise explicitly

the mare would fit into the context). Caquot was, I believe, the first to restore *ḥ<m>t*: *Syria* 46 (1969), 251; followed by Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 53; Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartin, *UF* 7 (1975), 125.

79 The latter possibility has not, to my knowledge, been previously suggested.

80 Von Soden, *Allw.*, 540b, derives *la'û* 'small child, baby' from West Semitic *l'y* 'be weak'. *CAD* has no comment on the etymology of *la'û*. The passages wherein von Soden takes *la'û* as an attributive ('schwächlich') *CAD* interprets as containing substantives in apposition.

81 3('nt VI).5.26; 4(51).8.22; 6(49).2.25. See Aistleitner, *WUS*, §1429.

82 Reference in n. 58, above.

83 Cf. also §8: "The two serpents in this field, man and wife, they are both bereft of strength"; §9: "Without strength here are the serpents, those that are near, and those that are far"; §18: "Indra slew thy first ancestor, O Serpent, and since they are crushed, what strength, forsooth, can be theirs?" Cf. also the charms cited on p. 28, §§7-II; p. 29, §§3, 6, all referring to the serpent being bereft of force or strength.

84 *Serpent Charms* (1974), 53.

85 6[49].3.6-7, 12-13:

šmm šmn tmṭrn The heavens rain down oil,

nḥlm tlk nbtm The wadis run with honey.

stated.⁸⁶ I believe, however, that previous commentators on this text have not considered another possibility of interpretation, one based on an important feature of prepositional syntax according to which comparative *k(m)* may cause the elision of a following preposition.⁸⁷ In the present case the preposition elided would be *b* and the image is thus not that of the *nhl* being weak, but of the venom being weak because it is dispersed, diluted, and carried away as though it has been cast, like the tamarisk, into a stream of water.

Line 69 *tplg*. The best commentary on the use of *plg* is perhaps furnished by Prov. 5:16:

<i>yāpūšû ma'y^enōtêkâ ḥûšāh</i>	Should your springs be dispersed in the streets,
<i>bār^eḥōbôt palgê-māyim</i>	As rivulets of water into the squares? ⁸⁸

The image is that of division and dispersal. The use of the verb *tplg* as a *figura etymologica* may depend on *plg*, itself apparently a traditional parallel to *nhl* in the first line.⁸⁹

Lines 70–71 *b'db . . . tlt*. My interpretation of this tri-colon is essentially unchanged from *UF* 7 (1975), 361, and *UF* 8 (1976), 257–58. The only feature I would change is the interpretation of *tlt* as 'three-fold conjurations (?)'. In the general interpretation of 607 adopted here, the mare is not locked in the house carrying out exorcisms.⁹⁰ Rather, she has locked herself up in the house while Ḥoron neutralizes the serpents. On his arrival back she insists that he give her proof of his prowess in the form of (certainly devenomized) serpents before she will let him in. There is some question as to whose house she has entered, her own or Ḥoron's. According to my analysis of line 61, it is the mare who has gone to see Ḥoron. If she has remained there while Ḥoron has travelled east, then the statement in lines 70–71 is that she has locked herself up in *his* house, ready to open up and become his bride only if he can prove himself a powerful devenomizer. It is possible, of course, that she has accompanied him to the east and locked herself up in her own house.

Lines 70, 71 *bhtm*. Because of *bt* in line 71, it is clear that *bhtm* is used here in the frequent

86 For a negative connotation, see the passage beginning with Job 6:15, which opens with a statement of comparison as in the passage under discussion ('*aḥay bāg^edû k^emô nāḥal* "my brothers deceive like a wadi"), but which then goes on in the following verses to explain that sometimes full wadis also dry up, leaving the traveler disappointed who arrives hopeful of finding water.

87 For Hebrew, see *GKC*, § 118.6. For Ugaritic, cf. 4(51).4.62–5.63 *ybn bt lb'l km 'ilm wḥzr kbn 'atrt* "A house shall be built for Baal as (for) the gods, a court as (for) the sons of Aṭirat" (cf. *UT*, § 10.9). An example with elision of *bet*: 4(51).1.42 ṣ' 'il dqt k'amr "a bowl of Il hammered thin (?) as (in) Amurru" (cf. de Moor, *AOAT* 16 [1971], 50, n. 46: "Too often it has been overlooked that after *k* other prepositions may drop out . . .").

88 See also Prov 21:1 where *palgê-mayim* is used to describe the changeableness of a king's mind directed by YHWH.

89 To date only this example and a rather inconclusive one from Hebrew (Job 20:17) are cited by Dahood (*RSPJ* [1972], 276).

90 This rules out the alternative interpretation of lines 70–71 considered at the bottom of p. 257 in *UF* 8 (1976).

sense of 'palace' (i.e., large house, one consisting of several or many apartments or sections).⁹¹

Line 70 *mnt*. "House of incantation" could either be the mare's house (cf. line 4 and parallels) or Ḥoron's (he has proved himself capable of powerful incantations by his previous work and his present work for the mare). As explained above in the note to lines 70–71, I have opted for the latter interpretation.

Line 71 *tl̄t̄*. Scholars have been notably unsuccessful in explaining this word in its present context. I here abandon my previous 'three-fold conjurations (?)'⁹² because of what I hope is a better perception of the general structure of the text (see note to lines 70–71, above). Working from known meanings of *tl̄t̄*, it should here mean either 'three' (doors?) or 'bronze' (bolt, door?).⁹³

Lines 71–76 *pt̄h* . . . 'tnnk. The final three poetic units of this text consist of speech capsules containing a dialogue between Ḥoron and the mare. The forms *sgrt* and 'dbt in lines 70 and 71 indicate that it is the female who has shut herself up, whereas *mbry* and 'itnny in line 74 indicate that in the second of the three direct speech units it is the female speaking (in marriage proceedings the *mbr* goes from the male to the female side, as does the 'tnn). Therefore the order to open the house (lines 71–72) comes from Ḥoron, as well as the promise to deliver the requested bride-price (lines 75–76).

Lines 71–72 *pt̄h* . . . w'istql. Notice that the poetic analysis here is a b c // a b d // b' d' and that there is not, therefore, a parallelism of *pt̄h* and b' as held by Dahood.⁹⁴

Line 72 w'ub'a. For the reading of this word, see references in *UF* 8 (1976), 258, n. 539.⁹⁵ Since that writing Rainey has termed the form 'ub'a "surprising" and has further criticized Dahood's interpretation.⁹⁶

Lines 73–74. Once again an apparently faulty text makes the interpretation difficult. In this case it is the prosodic analysis which is rendered questionable, not the over-all interpretation which is quite clear. It appears to me that Avishur's attempt⁹⁷ to take *km* as an "emphatic particle" is fruitless, since his final text contains as many emendations as the one adopted here

91 *UT*, § 19.463. See also M. Liverani, "La royauté syrienne de l'âge du bronze récent," *Rencontre assyriologique internationale* 19 (1974), 329–56, esp. 341–42.

92 Inspired from Gaster, *BASOR* 209 (1973), 24.

93 Bowman and Coote (cf. n. 3, above) translate 'bolt' but offer no defense of the translation.

94 *RSP I* (1972), 318; cf. in Ziegler (n. 49, above), 39. Fisher also misperceived the poetic division (*UF* 3 [1971], 356; cf. de Moor and van der Lugt, *BO* 31 [1974], 20) as did Virolleaud before him (*Ugaritica V* [1968], 572) and Lipiński after him (*UF* 6 [1974], 170). Astour had it right in the first full-scale study of this text (*JNES* 27 [1968], 26) and was followed by Avishur (*UF* 4 [1972] 3).

95 Correct *u* to *w* in my statement there about Dahood's interpretation. It should read: "Dahood leaves the *w* of *w'ub'a* out of his transliteration . . ." and " . . . perhaps the omission of the *w* was just a slip . . ."

96 *JAOS* 94 (1974), 190.

97 *UF* 4 (1972), 4.

while his interpretation is based on a rare form rather than on a common one. Rainey⁹⁸ simply excises the first *km* and adds a *n* to *yḥr*:

<i>tn { km } nḥšm yḥr<n></i>	Give serpents, Oh (!) Ḥôrân,
<i>tn km mbry</i>	Give as my marriage price,
<i>wbn bṭn 'itnny</i>	Yea, sons of the asp as my love gift.

This reading results in the following prosodic analysis:

<i>tin naḥašīma yaḥôrāna</i>	(3/9/22)
<i>tin kama mubriya</i>	(3/6/14)
<i>wabina batni 'itnāniya</i>	(3/9/21)

The disparity between the second line and the other two is obvious and, once again, while we are emending why not emend in such a fashion that a poetic regularity emerges which is comparable to the rest of the text?⁹⁹

The restoration of *<mbry>* in my text is taken from Astour¹⁰⁰ as the most plausible from the perspective of sense and prosodic balance. The repetitive parallelism of *mbry* should cause no surprise, since we have seen the phenomenon in both of the preceding tri-cola (*b'db // b'db // b'db*, *bhtm // bhtm*, *ptḥ bt // ptḥ bt*). Moreover, in two of the three cases of repetitive parallelism in the preceding tri-cola, the repeated element was paralleled by a different word in the third line resulting in an A // A // B parallelism (*bhtm // bhtm // tlt*, *bt // bt // bkl*¹⁰¹). So here

98 JAOS 94 (1974), 190.

99 If it did not involve three emendations, I would suggest the following form for this tricolon:

<i>tn nḥšm yḥrn</i>	<i>tin naḥašīma yaḥôrāna</i>	(3/9/22)	a	b	c
<i>tn nḥšm km mhry</i>	<i>tin naḥašīma kama muhriya</i>	(4/10/23)	a	b	d ²
<i>wbn bṭn 'itnny</i>	<i>wabina batni 'itnāniya</i>	(3/9/21)	b' ²	d'	
	Give serpents, O Ḥoron,				
	Give serpents as my bride-price,				
	Adders (as) my wife-price.				

This form of the tricolon would correspond exactly to the proper form of the "climactic" or "staircase" parallelism (see most recently E. L. Greenstein, "One More Step on the Staircase," *UF* 9 [1977], 77-86). It should be noted on the other hand that the two preceding tricola (11. 70-72) are improper staircases as I have analyzed them and, further, that the form of the tricolon under discussion corresponds more closely to the preceding two tricola as I have reconstructed it in the text than it would in "proper" form.

100 JNES 27 (1968), 26; followed by Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, *UF* 7 (1975), 122.

101 About this example, at least, there can be no doubt. See Dahood, *RSP* I (1972), 153.

the restoration of *mbry* results in an A // A // B parallelism of *mbry* // *mbry* // *'tnny*.

As a further rectification of line 73, one is tempted to restore *yḥr<m>* (*yaḥarīma*) 'lizards'. Not only would the formal parallel with *nḥšm* then be complete, but the quantitative result would be more uniform: 4/10/23 // 4/10/23 // 3/9/22. The present word/syllable balance of 4/10 // 4/9 // 3/9 has its own uniformity, however, and I have retained it. As for the sense of *yḥr*, Caquot¹⁰² first suggested an Arabic etymology: *waḥrat* (pl. *waḥar*), a type of venomous lizard. If the text is correct as it stands (*yḥr* as opposed to *yḥr<m>*), *yḥr* is to be analyzed as a collective singular or as a broken plural. For the association of serpents and other venomous creatures, see, e.g., Hymns of the Atharva-Veda, VII, 56.¹⁰³

Line 74 *'itnn*. Though Dahood¹⁰⁴ cites the biblical Hebrew juxtaposition and collocation of *mbr* and *ntn* (Gen. 34:12; Exod. 22:15–16), he says nothing to explain the unexpected parallelism of *mbr* and *'itnn*, for in biblical Hebrew the latter means 'hire of a prostitute' (Deut. 23:19 *'etnan zônâ*; elsewhere in pejorative figurative expressions). I have indeed found no one who appears particularly worried about the parallelism of *mbr* and *'itnn*, some taking it as though it were Hebrew 'prostitute's price',¹⁰⁵ others as though it were a simple payment¹⁰⁶ or gift.¹⁰⁷ *mbr*, however, means 'bride-price' in both Hebrew and Ugaritic (24[77] 19), as well as in Arabic (verb forms as well as the noun) and Aramaic (Jewish and Christian). Considering the established usage for *mbr*, it must be assumed that *'itnn* is a generic word for gift (cf. Hebrew *mtn*), a more specific word for gift given by a man to a woman, or, more specifically yet, a gift given by the groom to the bride at marriage.¹⁰⁸ In any of these possibilities, the Hebrew usage of *'tnn* reflects a specialization (in the first two) or a deviation (in the third) in the usage of the term. It appears to me unlikely, in any case, that *'itnn* in text 607 means 'prostitute's price', because of the parallelism with *mbr*. There is, moreover, no indication in the text that the mare is a prostitute.¹⁰⁹

Line 75 *ytt*. Astour¹¹⁰ perceived that *ytt* is an exact parallel to the Hebrew perfect of the "I

102 Syria 46 (1969), 252; followed by Gaster, JANES 7 (1975), 49, and Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, UF 7 (1975), 125.

103 Pp. 29–30 (n. 58, above).

104 RSP I (1972), 257, crediting Gray in Ugaritica VII (in proof—the volume itself was unpublished).

105 Astour, JNES 27 (1968), 26: 'love gift'; Caquot, Syria 46 (1969), 254: 'salaire d'amour'; Brown, Serpent Charms (1974), 17: 'love gift'; Gaster, JANES 7 (1975), 39: 'harlot's fee'.

106 Lipiński, UF 6 (1974), 170, 174.

107 Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín, UF 7 (1975), 122, 125.

108 For the possible complexity of gifts and arrangements for bestowing the gifts associated with marriage, see A. Jacobson, Marriage and Money, Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia 28 (Lund, 1967).

109 Gaster's interpretation, based at least in part on his interpretation of *'itnn*, that the last part of the text consists of Ḥoron reaching the house of "a certain lady" who "offers him her favors in return for a bride-price or mere harlot's fee . . ." (JANES 7 [1975], 38) leaves the text severed in two at line 67b (within the thirteenth section). It appears unlikely to me to assume that the first twelve sections would be devoted to the mare finding a deity active in serpent-banishing, that the first part of the thirteenth section would be devoted to Ḥoron somehow or other reacting to this request, but that the last part of the thirteenth section and the fourteenth would allow Ḥoron to wander off into the clutches of "a certain lady" (see already note to *mnt*, line 4, in my article cited in n. 1, above.).

110 JNES 27 (1968), 27.

hereby give" type.

Line 77 *btñ*. The identification of this serpent is uncertain.¹¹¹

Poetic Analysis

In the type of analysis employed here (words, syllables, vocables, parallelism) the medium is the message and little need be said beyond questions of detail on particular analyses, restorations, or vocalizations. I believe that the message of the medium in this case is that attempts to give undue emphasis to word-count¹¹² or to syllable-count¹¹³ overlook and do violence to the fact that one criterion cannot describe Ugaritic poetry and that no analysis of Ugaritic poetry which demonstrates extensive uniformity of lines and cola can be trusted. Margalit's use of the term "unit-valence" to account for short words, long words, and various bound forms indicates that word length is important only as it contributes to line length. Stuart's variable vocalizations, supplying or omitting case endings (and other more extensive emendations) in order to furnish regularity of syllable count, can impress no one because of the subjectivity they reveal.¹¹⁴ He may be correct in stating that "case endings may have been omitted at the whim of the composer in the context of construct chains and proper nouns,"¹¹⁵ but we have no way of knowing this. Therefore, when we supply them or omit them in order to demonstrate something about Ugaritic poetry, and thence something about Hebrew poetry, the value of the argument is null since we have created the evidence. On the other hand, there is extensive evidence for case endings in Ugaritic, and until someone proves, from inner-Ugaritic evidence, that these endings were extensively altered in poetry, the more conservative approach is to vocalize the texts as best we can utilizing regular criteria and to analyze the poetry from that basis. In my opinion, the results are remarkable enough as they are, and they indicate that precise equation of length of line was probably not a goal of the Ugaritic poet.¹¹⁶ Rather, the primary feature of the poetry was parallelism, with *approximately* comparable length of line as the ideal frame for the parallelism. This conclusion was already reached on the basis of lines 1-7,¹¹⁷ and the analysis of the complete work undertaken here has only strengthened the conclusion in my mind.

Thus the *Oxford English Dictionary's* first definition of meter does not fit Ugaritic poetry: "Any specific form of poetic rhythm, its kind being determined by the character and number of the feet or groups of syllables of which it consists." No Ugaritic poem can be shown to have a specific rhythm with a determined number or kind of syllables or feet from beginning to end or

111 See *IDB*, 1:260 (at "Asp"); *CAD B*, 141-42 ('a horned serpent'); K. R. Joines, *Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament* (Haddonfield, N.J., 1974), 3.

112 B. Margalit, "Studia Ugaritica I: Introduction to Ugaritic Prosody," *UF* 7 (1975), 289-313; see already my criticism in the article cited above in n. 1.

113 D. K. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter*, *HSM* 13 (Missoula, MT, 1976), esp. 51-78 on Ugaritic poetry.

114 See E. M. Good's remarks on this matter in his review, *JBL* 97 (1978), 273-74.

115 Stuart, *Studies*, 25.

116 The caution "probably" is inserted because, until we are on surer ground in the vocalization of Ugaritic, no prosodic analysis is certain.

117 Cf. n. 1, above.

even in extensive segments. There is no way to predict whether a syllable will be short or long or how many syllables or feet will be found in a given colon or group of cola. Even Stuart's forced regularity only produces lines with an equal number of syllables within a given colon, and not consistently, that is, predictively, there. If the operative words in the *OED* definition just cited are "specific," and "determined," then the term "meter" cannot properly be applied to Ugaritic poetry. Ugaritic poetry could only be described as exhibiting meter in the very broad sense that a certain type of regularity—that members of a colon should be of approximately the same length—was required of the poet. There is in Ugaritic poetry, then, no meter in the narrowest sense, i.e., a pre-determined and relatively unchangeable form into which every line of a given poem must fit.

The only non-poetic feature which has come to the fore in the analysis of text 607 is the object of the plea for intervention in the last eleven of the visitation sections (see note to 'm b'l mrym špn above). This is almost certainly owing to the fact that Il's abode is regularly expressed by a parallel line,¹¹⁸ whereas the other expressions of deities' residence do not have a clearly established parallel.¹¹⁹ Thus the necessities of the genre led to a small amount of non-poetic expression. But even this should not be surprising since a certain amount of non-poetic expression is present even in the major poems, especially at junctures involving displacement.¹²⁰

As for the observance of traditional parallelism by the author of this work, there can be no doubt that he was well acquainted with this facet of the poet's art as practiced in his time. A thorough look at my analysis of the parallelism of each colon and at Dahood's collection of parallel pairs¹²¹ should establish this point without a doubt. It has surprised me that this minor genre should represent so well the art of Ugaritic poetry, but this reaction was purely subjective and probably based on the fact that it is the major mythological works which have received the most attention and, for that matter, which represent the greatest amount of known Ugaritic poetry. As the poetic texts published in *Ugaritica V* receive more attention, and as more texts of reduced length and varied genre come to light, we shall certainly learn much more about the applications of the poetic art within Ugaritic society.

Finally, a word should be said about the division of this text into sections (Astour called them "strophes"). The first and in some ways the most important remark to be made is that there are twelve repeated sections, and not eleven. Heed must be paid to the scribe of this text who noticed (or who had it called to his attention by a superior!), before the clay had had time

118 The parallel line is elsewhere somewhat different from here, qrb 'apq thmtm rather than b'dt thmtm (see Whitaker, *Concordance*, 410–11).

119 Not even, somewhat surprisingly, does Baal's abode mrym špn have a systematically observed poetic parallel (see Whitaker, *ibid.*, 571). b'alp šd rbt kmn is used twice (4[51].5.85–86; 3[nt].4.81–82) in apposition to 'm b'l mrym špn; but in 5(67).1.10–11 'm b'l mrym špn has no clear parallel. This inconsistency of usage probably resides in the fact that b'alp šd rbt kmn, though a good line to indicate that distance is being covered, is not itself semantically parallel to mrym špn while, moreover, it has its own internal parallelism. In text 607, where the following ten destinations would not be expressed in parallel fashion, there was no reason to include the bastard parallel b'alp šd rbt kmn.

120 Cf. Pardee, *UF* 8 (1976), 219–20.

121 See the index to *RSP I* (1972), 490. It should be noted not only that Dahood's list must be used with caution (cf. notes to lines 64–65 and 71–72, above) but that his listing includes only those parallel pairs which occur in both Hebrew and Ugaritic. No one has yet published a complete list of Ugaritic (or Hebrew) parallel pairs.

to harden, that he had forgotten a section and who added a notation to the margin of the tablet where the additional section was to be inserted.

There are two features of importance in this division into sections: First, there are twelve repeated sections and two additional ones, giving a total of fourteen. Readers of this journal are aware of the importance of the numbers twelve and fourteen (twice seven) in biblical and ancient near eastern society,¹²² and there is every reason to believe that at least the carrying of the plea to twelve deities, with only the twelfth responding in the most positive fashion, was a purposeful and meaningful facet of the text. Whether the reason for dividing the last part of the text into two sections was to bring the total number to fourteen is much more debatable but must be considered a strong possibility: twice seven would denote double perfection, double completion, and thus a powerful reinforcement of the power of the incantation.¹²³

Second, this work can make at least a small contribution to the difficult question of the strophic structure of Ugaritic and other Northwest Semitic poetry.¹²⁴ To date no real strophic system is observable in Ugaritic poetry and the only clear cases of something approaching strophic structure in Hebrew poetry are in longer acrostic poems (e.g., Ps. 119, Lam. 1–4). We now have a genre of Ugaritic poetry where sections of somewhat comparable length are marked off on a tablet. This is unquestionably owing, however, to the extra-poetic structure of the text and the comparable length of the sections is owing to the repetition within this structure, for it is only the second through eleventh sections which are of the same length (with the exception of the line beginning with 'm in each section)—and the equality of length is owing to the exact repetition of almost the entire section! The first and the twelfth through fourteenth sections vary in length, the first because it includes the introduction, the twelfth because it omits the final tri-colon of the first eleven sections, while the thirteenth and fourteenth sections lack repetitive elements. We should thus hesitate to call these sections strophes. They certainly do not correspond to the *Oxford English Dictionary's* "wider sense" of strophe as "one of two or more metrically corresponding series of lines forming divisions of a lyric poem." It appears, then, that the division of this work into fourteen sections was decided for reasons other than regularity of metric structure. The first twelve sections are meant to increase the dramatic and magic power of the work, while the last two either depend on a pure sense break or were formed in order to bring the total number of sections to fourteen, another number perhaps considered to possess intrinsic importance. I believe, then, on the basis of previous scholars' work in Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry and on the analysis presented here, that any attempt to find strophes in Ugaritic poetry as a prosodic or poetic element (as opposed to sections of comparable length which are due to an exterior motivation) is doomed to failure. Moreover, the use of the term "meter" to describe Ugaritic and Hebrew poetic structure is at worst wrong and at best misleading, for it conjures up notions of regularity comparable to that found in Greek and Latin poetry. Since even the most easily produced regularity, that of syllable count, is the result of subjective reconstructions and does not demonstrate a consistent regularity which would have

122 See the articles in *IDB* by M. H. Pope on "Number, Numbering, Numbers" (3:561–67); "Seven, Seventh, Seventy" (4:294–95) and "Twelve" (4:719), for a short introduction.

123 Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 104.

124 Cf. Stuart, *Studies* (1976), 52, 79.

been the result of a determinative or predictive metrical system, it is probably best to drop the term "meter" altogether when referring to Ugaritic poetry.¹²⁵

General Interpretation

Most of the details of this text were fixed with remarkable acuity by Astour in 1968, and I have been repeatedly impressed by the quality of this early contribution. The only major point of interpretation of the text itself where I believe that Astour took a wrong turn (followed by most commentators since) was at the beginning of section 13 (his strophe XII) where he sees an element of hostility between Ḥoron and the mare.

There is one feature of the general interpretation, which is related to the preceding one, wherein I differ from Astour: that is the importance given to snake charming techniques. Astour finds that the snake charming practices described in lines 6–7 (and repeated in each of the first eleven sections) were viewed positively in the schema of this text and that the object of each of the initial sections was to place the Ugaritic snake charmer "under the protection of the supernatural powers."¹²⁶ Thus Ḥoron's treatment must be viewed negatively,¹²⁷ for he does not charm the serpents as the other deities had done. If, on the other hand, the action of the other deities was regarded as acceptable, but insufficient, then Ḥoron's response is the high point of the text and qualifies him to marry the mare. It appears to me that the conclusion of the text requires that the entire Ḥoron section be interpreted positively, rather than negatively, and that, therefore, the snake-charming elements of the first eleven sections be viewed as insufficient.¹²⁸ As described by Astour¹²⁹ and in the Indian literature just cited¹³⁰ the snake charmer's activities, could only be applied to a few serpents at a time. A powerful incantation, however, has the effect of incapacitating or destroying a major portion of the serpent kingdom:

Compelled by the powerful spell, the serpents came from every side, quivering and hissing and curling round one another with head and tail, and hurled themselves into the blazing flames. They were white, black, and dark blue, old and young, and they produced sounds of various kinds. Some were a mile

125 A fuller discussion of the various metrical schemes accepted by philologists and literary critics in other languages may be found in my "Ugaritic and Hebrew Metrics," to be published in the proceedings of the Ugaritic Symposium held under the auspices of the Midwest branches of the American Oriental Society and the Society of Biblical Literature in Madison, Wisconsin, February 26, 1979.

126 *JNES* 27 (1968), 19.

127 *Ibid.*, 22.

128 That snake charmers were not always viewed as positive elements even in a society plagued by serpents may be surmised from the story from the *Champeyya-jātaka* (No. 506) as recounted by Vogel in *Indian Serpent Lore* (1926), 151–54 (cf. also other references pp. 133, 157–63, 176–77, 184–86). The charming technique used by these charmers includes at least one of the features of this text, force-feeding (cf. note above to *yšlḥm*, line 6), and since the charmer is maltreating the serpent hero, the technique is described in negative terms.

129 *JNES* 27 (1968) 16–19.

130 See n. 128.

in length, others not larger than a cow's ear. Some were swift like steeds, and others huge-bodied like unto elephants. In hundreds and thousands, in myriads and millions, they were drawn irresistibly towards the fire in which they found a certain death.¹³¹

I do not wish to suggest that Ḫoron's action was viewed as being of this magnitude, but, nonetheless, as working on a more important plane than that of the charmer who incapacitates one or a few serpents at a time.

I would summarize the text, then, as follows. The mare calls to her mother the sun to take a message to certain deities. The message consists of her own incantation against the power of serpent venom and the object is to see the reaction of the deities in question. The first eleven deities are depicted as reacting as a snake charmer: they bind a serpent, force-feed it, then cease their activity. Finally, the message is taken to the twelfth deity, Ḫoron, certainly already renowned as a chthonic deity with power over various life forces.¹³² No reaction is recorded on his part until the mare herself visits him,¹³³ whereupon he heads east to the Tigris and performs a *namburbi*-type apotropaic ritual. He returns to his home and the result of the trip is stated: the venom is dissipated as though diluted in a stream. But when he reaches his home, he finds himself locked out, with the mare inside demanding serpents and venomous lizards as a bride-price. Given the tenor of the account up to this point, we are apparently to assume that the serpents and venomous lizards being requested have been de-venomized and that she is asking for proof of Ḫoron's powers. He promises to fulfill her request and the text ends.

As the mythic background of this text, I have suggested¹³⁴ that it represents a meeting of east and west, with "the Indo-European mare, mother of the serpent-destroying steed who draws the sun's chariot . . . seeking out a Syro-Mesopotamian male consort." She will marry the one who can do something more efficacious than bind and force-feed a serpent. If this interpretation is correct, it must be admitted that it is based entirely on conceptual parallels to the Indian literature, for there are no lexical traces of direct Indo-European influence. Thus, if there is an eastern background to this text, it has long since been acclimatized in the west.¹³⁵

This mythic background is suggested as a possible hypothesis to explain the many conceptual parallels with Indian literature. It says nothing, however, about the life setting of the text within the culture of Ugarit. Astour¹³⁶ refers to this text as "written for magic recitations," and considers that the companion text, 608, was "used as an incantation with a supporting nar-

131 Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore* (1926), 69 (cf. also 121).

132 Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 80–97; Gaster, *JANES* 7 (1975), 43–44, 50–51; Cross and Saley, *BASOR* 197 (1970), 47–48.

133 Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 54–56, 112, interprets the female protagonist of section 14 as the sun, not the mare. My objections to this come from my analysis of the structure of the text; as I analyze the text, the sun is never an active agent in sections 1–12. She only receives orders. But there is definitely a female protagonist in sections 13 and 14. It appears much more natural to me that the subject of *trygn* and *sgrt*, etc., be the mare, who after the sun has undertaken twelve embassies for her, acts for herself when the right deity is found. No "speak for yourself, John" for her!

134 Cf. n. 1., above.

135 Cf. Brown, *Serpent Charms* (1974), 77–80.

136 *JNES* 27 (1968), 13.

rative for succeeding in the serpent charmer's trade."¹³⁷ In this he was followed by Caquot:¹³⁸ "Le pacte de Horon et de 'um p^hl, récité ou simplement fixé dans les lettres de la tablette, assurera la préservation du fidèle pour lequel on lit ou qui possède le texte." Brown¹³⁹ interprets these texts as magical, with the mythical elements "used as a precedent." Gaster¹⁴⁰ simply refers to the text as a "charm against snakebite." Mulder,¹⁴¹ on the other hand, suggests that the text may have been used primarily as a ritual text, understood as reflecting the victory of the sun over serpents it would have been used as part of the summer solstice rituals. Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín¹⁴² also give it a ritual interpretation: it is a fertility ritual used at marriages.

The problem evident in these various interpretations is whether to give more weight to the mythic elements, and consider the text a pure myth or a ritual myth, or to the intent of the story contained in the myth, the dissipation of serpent venom. I would suggest that both elements have equal weight and that the text was used for the ritual dissipation of serpents and their venom. First, considering the place of this text within Ugaritic literature, one immediately sees that 607 and 608 are the only texts which deal with serpents in an extensive fashion. Granted, we know about only a small fraction of Ugaritic culture, but one has to work with what one has, and on that basis these two texts are unique. They simply do not seem to be dealing with the major concerns of a summer solstice or of a marriage (24[77] may have been used as a marriage ritual, but why all the snakes in text 607 if marriage were its primary purpose?¹⁴³). The text deals with serpents and that makes it likely that the purpose of the text was to say something about serpents—in this case, something about controlling their venomous power. Second, the use of "historical" (i.e., mythical) motifs in serpent incantations is known from the Indian literature:

To Indra belongs the first chariot, to the gods the second chariot,
to Varuna, forsooth, the third. The serpents' chariot is the last:
it shall hit a post, and come to grief!

The horse of Pedu slays the kasarnîla, the horse of Pedu slays the
white (serpent), and also the black. The horse of Pedu cleaves the
head of the ratharvî, the adder.¹⁴⁴

Thus the place of mythic motifs in texts intended primarily for incantatory purposes is established in a culture which furnished many parallels for text 607.

137 Ibid., 35.

138 *Syria* 46 (1969), 254.

139 *Serpent Charms* (1974), 5.

140 *JANES* 7 (1975), 33.

141 *UF* 4 (1972), 90–91.

142 *UF* 7 (1975), 125.

143 The association of serpents with various fertility notions is well known (cf. Joines, *Serpent Symbolism*), but the concerns of text 607 are clearly with serpent control, rather than with their symbolic value.

144 *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda* (reference in n. 58), 152, § X, 4:1, 5 (cf. also 7, 12, 16–18; p. 29 § VI, 12:2).

On the basis of these considerations, I would suggest that the text is an incantation with mythic elements intended to provide the basis for the text's power.¹⁴⁵ Because the text appears to go beyond the practices of a simple snake charmer, I would suggest further that it was not used by a simple snake charmer to further his craft,¹⁴⁶ but by members of the Ugaritic priesthood in an annual rite devoted to exorcising Ugarit of serpents and thus protecting her people. Given the direct speech that recurs in several places in the text, I would suggest further that this text contains the outline of a libretto for the ritual. In the ritual the parts of the mare, the sun, Ḥoron, and the eleven other deities would have been played by members of the Ugaritic priesthood, with the apotropaic rite described in lines 64–69 actually carried out. The promise contained in lines 75–76 would have been fulfilled on the spot (“I hereby give”!) with the priest presenting live de venomized snakes to the mare-goddess. Whereupon he would have entered, shut the door, and left the rest up to the imagination of the assembled crowd.

Addendum

Through a mix-up in the mails, M. L. Barré's article “^dLAMMA and Rešep at Ugarit: The Hittite Connection,” *JAOS* 98 (1978), 465–67, reached me too late to be considered in the body of this article. In a footnote (p. 467, n. 32) Barré presents the evidence for the cult center of the deity Rešep (Rašpu) as a town name written in syllabic cuneiform as *bi-bi-it*. Thus, the place-name in line 31 of *UT* 607 should be vocalized *Bibitah* or *Bibitahā*.

145 “... used as a precedent ...” in Brown's terms (*Serpent Charms* [1974], 5).

146 Astour, *JNES* 27 (1968), 35–36.