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# Family, Household, and Local Religion at Late Bronze Age Ugarit

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*"Grandma, all the same, turned a candle on the anniversary of Mr. Lausch's death, threw a lump of dough on the coals when she was baking, as a kind of offering, had incantations over bay teeth and stunts against the evil eye. It was kitchen religion and had nothing to do with the giant God of the Creation who had turned back the waters and exploded Gomorrah, but it was on the side of religion at that."*

Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*

## Introduction

Over the last century, many historians in the wake of the French *Annales* school turned away from what they saw to be a narrow study of political, military, and diplomatic history (i.e., "traditional event-based narratives") to articulating long-term perspectives (what the French termed *la longue durée*) tied more to geography and climate, economic cycles, large-scale social and cultural factors, even the history of perception ("mentalities"). Archaeologists went from focusing on the material culture of great people and grand events to "the archaeology of society" with its fascination for the mundane and ordinary.<sup>1</sup> Textual scholars "read between the lines" of texts written (and edited) by those who wielded power in order to glimpse the lives of the semi-literate who held less or none at all.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the lives of ancient women started to emerge as scholars willed themselves to look for them.<sup>3</sup> Thus it is that we find ourselves, historians of religion of the present generation, focusing on non-elite (e.g., non-royal, non-priestly) communities that were slighted in the past in favor of the religion of the privileged. Studying the religion of families and households is long overdue.

## Four Challenges

Though a desideratum, searching for the lives of the non-elite is fraught with obstacles (one could even say inherently flawed). It is best to acknowledge four challenges we face at the outset lest we read more into the past than prudence allows. First, it is impossible to tackle all the beliefs and practices that could be listed under the heading "family/household religion." As seen from the present volume,

definitions vary as does the scope of treatment. What is "religion" and how ought one to study it?<sup>4</sup> Is family religion centered on cults of ancestors or the religion devoted to a family's patron deity?<sup>5</sup> Or, is family religion that which was practiced by a biologically related group of people (or kinship groups formed by some other means such as marriage or adoption)? Or, should we attend to the place of such activity? Family religion could then be any religious activity occurring in a domestic locale. Having introduced the question of "sacred space," shouldn't one further consider the activities of family groups at local (non-elite) sanctuaries, which in turn presents the notion of community religion?

It would seem that all of the above are necessary to the definition if we take our cue from the terminology of our primary sources. Consider the semantic ranges of the various words for family at Late Bronze Age Ugarit. The story of King Kirta starts out by telling us how his *betu* "family" (lit. "house") had perished.<sup>6</sup> Included in his "house" (*bt*) are his children (*ḫtk, mknt*), his siblings (*'abm, bn 'um*), his wife (*'at*), and future descendants (*šph, yrē*),<sup>7</sup> as well as physical space used metonymically to stand for the family (*bt, btr*).<sup>8</sup>

The house (*bt*) of the king has perished  
that had seven brothers (*'abm*),  
eight sons of a mother (*bn 'um*).  
Kirta, his offspring (*ḫtkn*) was crushed  
Kirta, his family line (*mknt*) was sundered . . .  
He married a wife (*'at*), but she departed . . .  
Kirta saw his offspring (*ḫtkb*),  
He saw his offspring (*ḫtkb*) crushed,  
His dwelling (*ḫtkb*) utterly sundered.  
Completely did his descendants (*šph*) perish,  
In their entirety his heirs (*yrē*). (KTU 1.14.1.7-15, 21-25)

In addition, ancestors remained a part of one's *betu* ("family") in death much as they did in life. The ancestral dead, many of whom were even buried beneath the family house (see below), could be referred to as "the god of the father" (on which, see below). In KTU 1.161 long-dead ancestors are invoked to participate in a mortuary ritual for a king who has just died. At the end of this text, sacrifices are offered to these ancestral kings of old who are then petitioned to bring blessings (*šm*) on the new royal family, i.e., the king, his household,<sup>9</sup> his queen (or kinsmen),<sup>10</sup> and her "house" (*bth*).

When used as a spatial term, *betu* can denote an individual's home, a community drinking house (see *bt mrrz* below), the king's home, and the god's home. The modern translations of "palace" and "temple" for the latter two are sensible, yet they strip away the commonality shared horizontally (across social stratification) and vertically (the divine-human encounter). Kings and gods have families (*betu*) as do commoners; so too all three groups have physical houses (*betu*) in which they eat, drink, interact, and sleep with their families. While their physical *betu* are

common in many respects (e.g., architecturally and symbolically), they are equally uncommon. The scale, ornamentation, and symbolic nature of royal or divine homes (i.e., palaces and temples), when compared with the homes of commoners, would reinforce the subservient role of the non-elite.

The second barrier is the nature of our sources. Searching out the religion of the family from elite (e.g., royal, priestly, legal) texts necessarily skews the portrait. Negligible literacy rates underscore that the texts from which we are mining our data were not produced or read by the majority of the population. Even the texts we find in private residences are often those of high-ranking officials (e.g., the archives found in the so-called "House of Rašapabu" and "House of Rapanu," both located in the residential quarter of the city).<sup>11</sup> K. van der Toorn has articulated well the constraints by which we must go about our work: "It is only on the assumption that dynastic religion is the royal version of family religion that the insights obtained from the Ugaritic texts can be given a wider application . . . [we cannot] be sure that the concepts and practices from these realms are representative of the general population of Ugarit."<sup>12</sup>

According to G. del Olmo Lete, even the elite version that we read in texts such as the story about King Kirta might be "rhetorical hyperbole" where what is stated for one king's royal ideology (especially the exaltation of an eponymous ancestor) may not apply to all kings.<sup>13</sup> Yet like van der Toorn, del Olmo Lete concludes that we can nonetheless go about our work because the texts still "provide interesting, if fleeting, glimpses of the social institutions of Ugarit and its ideology."<sup>14</sup> What is required is caution in how we extrapolate from our elite texts. There is no need to be overly pessimistic. For example, when an average Ugaritian heard of how Ilu intervened on King Kirta's behalf in providing him with a longed-for son or healing him from dire illness, he could easily see how the gods are intimately involved in meeting the daily needs of mortals. For an analogy closer to home, one need only consider how a Jew or Christian today might appropriate the royal psalms from Iron Age Israel to address his or her personal needs.

Third, archaeology is a necessity. Simply put, one *cannot* fully articulate non-elite religion without relying on what material culture offers. By its very nature, archaeology can uncover so much of what escapes the purview of elite texts. I have written elsewhere on the advantages and limitations of text and object as well as the desideratum to interface the worlds of philologists and archaeologists in a complementary fashion.<sup>15</sup> When it comes to Ugarit, all textual specialists thank the Mission de Ras Shamra for its ongoing and tireless efforts to bring the Late Bronze kingdom of Ugarit to life. Marvelous resources such as those found in the RSO series are simply indispensable.<sup>16</sup> Yet at the same time, one must lament that many of our resources for unpacking family religion remain under the ground or unpublished. Thus a full study of family religion at Ugarit must await a future time when a collaborative study of the latest findings may be undertaken.

Fourth, we must acknowledge at the outset that even our best synthetic efforts present only a schematic picture. Due to the brevity of our material (both in space and time), we are prone to generalize the data we have into a whole that never

existed. Granted, there are many aspects of family religion that resist periodization and would fit neatly into a Braudelian *longue durée* framework. Yet rarely do we sufficiently apply the discount factor to our data necessitated by variation within space and time. The family religion we depict at one locale at a given time may be different from the religion practiced some years prior or later, as well as being distinct from the religion of a different locale some miles away even if it is located in the general vicinity.

Overall, the Late Bronze Age city (kingdom) of Ugarit with its strategic location was quite successful economically with thriving commerce and industry. In the words of M. Yon, it enjoyed "spectacular prosperity."<sup>17</sup> Though small, it was a cosmopolitan city with an international presence. With its resident royalty, priesthood, merchants, and scribes, it enjoyed the benefits of arts and literature as well as the structure of administrative oversight. Even those on the lower rungs of society shared in benefits of urban life and international trade. It would be a mistake then to extrapolate from this narrow portrait a romanticized panorama about village life across rural Syria in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

## The Religion Practiced by the Family Household

The religion I am focusing on in this chapter is that practiced by local family (non-elite) households. Kings, high-ranking officials, elite merchants, and priests certainly shared certain familial concerns with commoners. All alike petitioned the gods for personal health and prosperity, for safe births, fit children and sturdy livestock, for snakebite remedies and sexual potency, for good weather, adequate water, and abundant crops. The overlap between elite and non-elite religious concerns was likely quite large. Yet elite religion was occupied with obtaining, securing, and bequeathing power (e.g., the throne, the temple economy) via divine and human diplomacy more than the transitions of life (birth, marriage, death) that characterized the religion practiced in the common household.<sup>18</sup>

## Viewing the Gods as Family

Language of the family (father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, in-law) permeates the Ugaritic pantheon at every turn. Ba'lu, for example, is the son of Dagan, the father to three daughters (Pidray, Tallay, and Arsay) and the brother of Anatu if not also her husband.<sup>19</sup> Ba'lu invites his brothers//his kinsmen//the seventy sons of the mother goddess Athirat to a family feast in his house (built by permission of his father Ilu through the intervention of Athirat, Ilu's wife; KTU 1.4.6.38–59).

According to M. Smith (building on D. Schloen's significant work on the patrilineal household),<sup>20</sup>

the notion of the family [in the Ugaritic pantheon provides] a cohesive vision of religious reality . . . It is evident from the language of family relations that the model of the patriarchal household is central to the Ugaritic texts' presentation of divinity . . . Equally fundamental to the family unit is the language of parentage . . . The social metaphors for chief deities overwhelmingly reflected the patriarchal experience in households nonroyal and royal alike.<sup>21</sup>

Though family language is attested throughout the pantheon, a brief look at the two most prominent family deities (Ilu and Athirat) will serve to illustrate the point. Ilu was portrayed in text and iconography with grey hair and beard, apt depictions for "the father of years" (*'ab šm*). He was understood to be "father" to gods (see *'ab bn 'il* passim in KTU 1.40) and humans (*'ab 'admm*) alike. Family metaphors (*bn 'il, dr 'il, dr bn 'il*) are used to describe deities and humans as his children.<sup>22</sup> In a text celebrating his sexual prowess, women cry out to him "father, father," "mother, mother" (*'ad 'ad//um 'um* KTU 1.23). In this same text, he impregnates (the same?) women/wives who cry out to him as "husband, husband" (*mt mt*). In turn, they bear him two children (the gods Šahru and Šalimu).

Known for his wisdom (KTU 1.4.4.1-3; 1.4.5.3-4) and benevolence (*ltpn 'il d p'id*), we find Ilu beseeched by gods and humans looking for his blessings, especially the granting of children. In response to a request from Ba'lu, Ilu blesses Danlu with a son in the tale of Aqhatu (see below). In the Kirta Epic, Ilu blesses King Kirta, himself the "son of Ilu," (*bnm 'il//špš* KTU 1.16.1.10) with a wife and children (KTU 1.14.1.26ff; 1.15.2.12ff). The same story also tells of Ilu's beneficence in healing an ailing Kirta (KTU 1.16.5.10ff).<sup>23</sup> Time and time again Ilmilku, the scribe of this text, underscores Ilu's divine parentage of the king.

The goddess Athirat was referred to as the mother of the seventy minor gods referred to as her "sons" (*šb'm bn 'atrt*; KTU 1.4.6.46). She suckles newborn gods in KTU 1.23.24, 59, 61. She may also suckle King Kirta's heir (KTU 1.15.2.26-8), yet the reading of this text is now debatable.<sup>24</sup> Iconography such as the ivory panel of a winged goddess suckling two (royal?) individuals may lend support to her nurturing role though this relief is uninscribed and thus the goddess in question is unclear.<sup>25</sup>

Athirat is commonly referred to as *rbt*, "the Great One," a designation used also of the wives of human kings in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit.<sup>26</sup> There are strong hints that Athirat played a similar role along side of Ilu. Thus Ba'lu and Anatu in their quest to secure a house for Ba'lu (because all of Athirat's other sons have houses) approach Athirat first rather than going to Ilu directly. Athirat then approaches her husband Ilu with her request that he then grants. Later in the same story, Athirat is sought out by Ilu to choose one of her sons as heir to sit on the throne succeeding Ba'lu (who at this point in the story is in the underworld).

Because Athirat is Queen *Mother*, she is approachable by royalty such as King Kirta who makes a vow to offer her gifts of silver and gold in exchange for her assistance (along with father Ilu's aid earlier in the story) in obtaining Hurraya as his wife (KTU 1.14.4.34-43). While we have no text that explicitly says so, it is possible that

non-elite persons (having heard the famous story) may have dreamed that they too could be favored with Athirat's assistance in obtaining a spouse. We can conjecture that similar vows were enacted within family religion. Compare the betrothal of the gods Yarikh and Nikkal-Ib in KTU 1.24, a text that was then used in human wedding ceremonies to assure mortals of a divinely blessed union.

Elsewhere in a very interesting section in the Ba'lu Myth, Athirat, though *rbt*, is described as even more approachable as she goes about common domestic chores. Her activities are remarkable for their non-elite character. Every Ugaritic woman could fully relate to Athirat's working with a spindle, washing laundry, and setting pots on top of fire and coals (KTU 1.4.2.2-11).<sup>27</sup> Thus, even though Athirat's maternal nature is primarily focused on gods and royal children,<sup>28</sup> non-elite persons would have felt a special affinity for her much as Catholic parishioners hold Mary to be their mother even though her royal status is that of *Theotokos*.

## Cultic Activities Related to Family/Life Cycles

One way to define family religion is by describing the religious/cultic activities in which common (non-elite) families engaged. Not having the rights, privileges, and access to temple culture that the elite had, we may assume that many of their activities took place within the domestic and local sphere. In addition, in contrast to the religious activities a monarch would use to secure his reign or those cultic actions a hierarchical priesthood (or scribal class) would employ for power and influence, family religion centers on life transitions, issues pertaining to birth, marriage, and death and the related concerns of filial piety, adoption, illness, and inheritance. (It goes without saying that such matters would be of concern to the elite as well.)

Various literary genres provide avenues into these spheres of activities. Consider, for example, what can be gleaned from onomastica, prayers, letters, and even elite tales such as the famous Aqhatu story.

## Onomastica

Onomastic evidence (often a key indicator of non-elite religion) can mark an individual's identity by various means including place, occupation, and social group. The onomastic evidence at Ugarit reveals that a large percentage of personal names include a marker of family relationship, again underscoring the importance of the household. These include "son of," "daughter of," "brother of," "relative of," "household of," "husband of," "wife of," as well as references to inheritance that can refer to adoption.<sup>29</sup> D. Pardee and P. Bordreuil summarize:

Generally speaking, the Ugaritians seem to have considered the patronym the most important element to be stated when identifying a person, for it is usually given and

may indeed function as the only identifier (CTA 105), both masculine (*ḥm PN* "son of PN") and feminine (*ḥr X* "daughter of X"). Long lists, such as CTA 102, rarely omit the patronym.<sup>30</sup>

G. del Olmo Lete has also written insightfully of how

in everyday life, the giving of a name is one of the few ways by which we can learn about how personal and family piety was expressed, inasmuch as it tells us which gods were actually vital in the religious feeling of the ordinary faithful and the kinds of relationship they had with them and what they hoped to gain from them.<sup>31</sup>

In his catalogue of divine descriptors, familial and other intimate terms are attributed to the god *Ilu*. They include references to "father," "lover," "friend," "benevolent." As seen above through the mythological texts, here too *Ilu* is one who "creates" and "grants," a "fertile" god whose worshipers are portrayed as his "children."<sup>32</sup>

## Prayer

On the individual level, prayer would be at the heart of each and every ritual activity where one would beseech the gods for succor. Regrettably, individual prayers from the non-elite spheres of society are by their very nature absent from our textual evidence. In fact, there are precious few prayers overall in the texts that have been preserved for us from Ugarit. The most famous prayer (KTU 1.119.26'-36') prays for Ba'lu's help when the city is under attack.<sup>33</sup> We read of vows, sacrifice, various offerings, and a procession to Ba'lu's temple that give ritual expression to pleas for divine assistance. Such actions could easily be envisioned as part of any family's worship at a time "when the strong enemy attacks your (pl.) gates and city walls." Yet the first part of the text depicts a regularly prescribed series of rites including cultic obligations on the part of the king. Thus we can only guess at what degree if any of such actions and words would have been known by the average family.<sup>34</sup>

A similarly opaque text is KTU 1.65, the genre of which has been categorized in various ways (e.g., prayer, eulogy, deity list).<sup>35</sup> What is noteworthy is how family language is used in addressing one's attention to the gods:

*Ilu*, the sons of *Ilu*  
the family of the sons of *Ilu*  
assembly of the sons of *Ilu*  
Tukamuna and Shunama [= two of *Ilu*'s sons]  
*Ilu* and Athiratu.

What follows next is either an appeal to *Ilu* for favor (*ḥnn*), help (*nšbt*) and prosperity (*šlm*) or an assertion that *Ilu* has the qualities of grace, solidity and

well-being.<sup>36</sup> M. Smith notes how the vocabulary to describe the structure of the divine family is precisely the vocabulary used in administrative texts that list the various members that made up human families (e.g., KTU 4.360).<sup>37</sup>

## Letters

Everyday letters are more apt than other genres to provide a window into the religious life of the household. Regrettably, our corpus at Ugarit is small in number (approximately 100 letters in Ugaritic and 150 in Akkadian) and elite in nature (the Ugaritic letters contain mostly the correspondence of the royal family; the Akkadian letters reflect international diplomacy). Thus only rarely do they open a door into the private life of families such as when a certain official named Inritharuma expresses concern about putting his wife and children in peril (KTU 2.33.28).

Granted, opening greetings in epistolary texts regularly use religious vocabulary (even on a personal level), yet they are so tightly formulaic that it would be a mistake to read too much personal piety into them.<sup>38</sup> G. del Olmo Lete is optimistic in using letters "to enter the sphere of personal and everyday attitudes." He argues that "in spite of their stereotyped nature, . . . these formulae permit a glimpse of the widespread trust that the personal piety of the Ugaritic faithful had in the power and will of their gods to intervene in their favor and guarantee the basics of existence: well-being, health, and a long life."<sup>39</sup> One can certainly hope that there was heartfelt belief behind the standardized words Azzi'iltu (the son of the famous Urtenu) used to write his parents: "May it be well with you. May the gods guard your well-being, may they keep you well." In the same text, he addresses his sister similarly: "May it be well with you. [May] the gods keep (you) well, may they guard you, may they [keep] you [wh]ole."<sup>40</sup>

Consider too how the gods of one's family can be included in such greeting formulas as the givers of blessings:

Peace be upon you  
May the gods of the land of Tibet  
and the gods of the lands of Ugarit,  
and all the gods of our family (*dingir-meš biṯ ab[imi]*),  
keep you in good health,  
and give you favor  
and satiate you with old age  
before the gods of [our] family (*dingir-meš biṯ ab[imi]*), - forever.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps del Olmo Lete is correct, that such formulae provide us with a "glimpse" of the general ethos of Ugaritic society. Yet in the final analysis, one is forced to admit that stereotyped formulae can be mechanical as easily as they can be sincere.

## The Tale of Aqhatu

One narrative poem (the tale of Aqhatu) is particularly striking in the many issues of family religion that it addresses. Granted, the tale is an elite one and thus extrapolating from it for non-elite religion runs rewards and risks.<sup>42</sup>

As the story opens,<sup>43</sup> we hear of a legendary patriarch named Danilu, known for defending the claims and needs of widows and orphans (KTU 1.17.5.4-8), those members of the local community most likely to be in financial distress and lacking a voice among the elite. Day after day, Danilu, motivated by the most desperate of needs, presents food and drink offerings to the gods. Six days pass before we learn that his longing is for a son. The childless Danilu, robed in specific garments,<sup>44</sup> engages in prostration rituals at night, prompting some scholars to interpret the text as an incubation scene. The god Ba'lu compassionately intercedes on Danilu's behalf with the benevolent Ilu ('il d p'ia), the father of humanity. Ilu grants his request, blessing Danilu and his wife with conception, recognized as a divine gift in this text and elsewhere at Ugarit (KTU 1.15.2.16-28; KTU 1.24.5-7) just as much as Judeans recognized it in their traditions (e.g., Genesis 16:11; Isaiah 7:14).

Divine visitation follows. The Kathiratu (goddesses of conception and wedlock)<sup>45</sup> come to Danilu's house. There he holds a six-day feast in their honor. Note the simple fact that the feast is held in the home. No pilgrimage to a temple (with a specialized priesthood and cult) is necessary for family religion. The divine can be immanent in daily life and daily surroundings. Because the gods too have families who eat, drink, and sleep in houses (*betu*), it is proper for a petitioner to show them hospitality in his own house (*betu*). While the occasion (divinely inspired conception) is indeed special, the notion itself of having gods over for dinner is unremarkable; for family religion, it is understood. With their work of conception accomplished, the Kathiratu goddesses leave on the seventh day (perhaps to return as midwives at the birth of the child).<sup>46</sup>

Over a hundred lines are missing at this point in the narrative.<sup>47</sup> They most likely described the hoped-for piety of the son to be born (later named Aqhatu) and his early years. Yet we are not at a loss when it comes to filial piety for it was highlighted at the beginning of the story in the type of son requested by Ba'lu and granted by Ilu. In four refrains, we read of the duties of an ideal son.<sup>48</sup> The following text (KTU 1.17.1.25-34) contains the words of Ba'lu's intercession. These same words are then found in the mouths of Ilu as he grants the request (KTU 1.17.1.43-8), a messenger as he delivers the birth announcement to Danilu (KTU 1.17.2.1-8), and finally Danilu as he rejoices in the good fortune bestowed upon him by the gods (KTU 1.17.2.12-23).

(25) *yo ykn . bnh . b bt .* Let there be a son in his house,

*šr . b qrb (26) lklh .* A descendant in his palace;

*nšp . škn . 'il'ibh .* One who sets up the stela of his divine ancestor,<sup>49</sup>

*b qdš (27) zrr . 'mh .* In the sanctuary, the marker of his clansman;

## FAMILY RELIGION AT UGARIT

One who delivers his life from the Underworld,  
One who guards his footsteps from the Dust;

One who squelches his detractors' slander,  
One who drives away those who act against him;

One who holds his hand when he is drunk,  
One who supports him when he is full of wine;

One who eats his grain offering in the temple of Ba'lu,  
His portion in the temple of Ilu;

One who patches his roof on a rainy (lit. "muddy") day,  
One who washes his clothes on a mucky day.

That the six filial duties listed above combine mundane and cultic activities suggests that the Ugaritians might not have been as quick as we are to categorize activities as "religious" or "secular." The cultic duty of setting up a stela for one's Ilu-ibi, i.e., one's divine ancestor (or one's ancestor's god) underscores a central tenet of family religion. Elsewhere we read of sacrifices being offered to one's Ilu-ibi.<sup>50</sup> That the deity Ilu-ibi is the first god mentioned in the Ugaritic deity lists (the so-called "pantheon lists") is even more striking.<sup>51</sup> Scholars are divided as to whether Ilu-ibi refers to one's deified ancestor or the patron god of one's ancestor, yet the importance of this deity should not be lost in the debate.

The interpretation to which the present author holds is that the text refers to the devotion to one's deceased ancestor as a god.<sup>52</sup> K. van der Toorn has written eloquently on how "the dead were included in the community of the living." Commemoration rituals fostered "cohesion" by endowing "the living with a family identity that is anchored in the past."<sup>53</sup> In royal religion, we know from a mortuary text (KTU 1.161) that deceased kings were sought to grant blessings on the current monarchy.

Elsewhere we read of the Inashu-Ilma who "receive sacrifices as a collective entity."<sup>54</sup> In D. Pardee's words, they are "perhaps 'men (who have become) divine,' a designation of the dead, either limited to royalty or inclusive of the entire population."<sup>55</sup> We do not know to what degree commoners sought favors from their deceased relatives. The passage above gives no indication of the motive underlying setting up a stela or marker for one's divine ancestor. At the least, it is a ritual of commemoration that would have reinforced the familial bond between the living and the dead as would the frequent practice at Ugarit of locating the family tomb immediately beneath one's house. What is clear is that strengthening clan solidarity past and present was central to family religion.

When it comes to the sacred space mentioned in lines 26b-27a by the word *qdš*, it seems that it is the *local* sanctuary to which reference is made. It makes more sense to see the erection of a stela to one's deified ancestor (*škn 'il'ibh*) or marker of one's clansman (*zrr 'mh*) in a local sanctuary rather than in one of the two acropolis temples. (On the presence of local sanctuaries, see below.)

An alternate interpretation of Ilu-ibi argues that solidarity with one's ancestors is being expressed (and physically enacted) by the succeeding generations' worship of the same deity. (Here, compare the biblical "god of my/your/their father" or "the god of Abraham/Isaac/Jacob.") The sense of communion and belonging that one has with his/her family (present and past) is reinforced as each generation reaffirms, practices, and hands down the same faith as one's parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.<sup>56</sup> That the deity of one's ancestor is ranked first in the ritual pantheon would be a powerful testimony to the importance of a family's ongoing confession.

The other specifically cultic duty entails eating a sacrificial meal on behalf of one's father (lines 32b-33a). The two temples mentioned (one to Ba'lu, the other to Ilu) may correspond to the two temples on the acropolis at Tell Ras Shamra.<sup>57</sup> Here the good son carries on his father's ritual duties. Implied is that the son embraces his father's gods as his own and stands in his father's stead presumably because the father is unable to do so. The act of eating one's father's meal before (and with) the gods is yet another example of how family religion strengthens bonds both vertical (family to deity) and horizontal (family member to family member).

There may be other cultic acts in this narrative yet the text is too difficult to allow certainty. The word *qtr* in line 27 could refer to incense, and the drinking described in lines 30-31a could easily be seen in the context of a ritual banquet.<sup>58</sup> Drinking assuredly had stronger religious connotations than we might first assume. In the ancient Near East it was understood, to borrow the words from Judges 9:13, that wine cheers the hearts of both gods and humans (*tirōti hamštammeah 'elohim wa'anašim*).

When we resume the Aqhatu narrative (after the aforementioned large break in the text), we find Danilu advocating at the city gate for widows and orphans, people whose family support structure has been shattered. Ugaritians realized what the biblical prophet Amos would later make famous, that the words justice and righteousness were parallel terms (cf. Amos 5:24 where *mišpat/šedeqah*). Perhaps the original teller of the tale desired to underscore this feature when he chose Danilu's name and that of his wife Danataya, both of which are derived from the root meaning "to judge."

Next we hear of a second feast in Danilu's home, again one fit for the gods. This time the divine visitor is Kotharu-wa-Hasisu, the artisan deity sometimes referred to in the plural (see immediately below) due to his double name. Whereas Danilu served the first feast, his wife Danataya is the central character preparing a lamb for Kotharu-wa-Hasisu. She "dines and wines the gods, serves and honors them" (KTU 1.17.5.21-31). Again, note in family religion how the deity visits the home (rather than the petitioner traveling to a temple to have his visit mediated by specialists). The artisan deity bears a gift for the new son, a bow and arrows of exquisite craftsmanship.

The text again breaks off. Scholars assume from the few words preserved that Danilu is either presenting the bow and arrows to his son Aqhatu and/or training him how to hunt. That there is a broken mention of "game in his temple/palace"

(*šd bšk/llh*) reminds us of many cultures where hunting rituals are of a religious nature as are the prayers of thanksgiving to the gods for wild game on the dinner table.

The dominant theme in what follows is the murder of Aqhatu by the goddess Anat, a huntress who is desirous of Aqhatu's gift.<sup>59</sup> It is hard to envision how such an action fits a story filled with family piety.<sup>60</sup> Yet S. B. Parker, following G. del Olmo Lete, notes how in the story of Aqhatu overall:

social roles and duties seem to receive supreme attention, judged by the number of such that are referred to, the extent to which they are described, and the frequency with which they are reinforced by repetition. . . . All of this speaks specifically of *familial* piety – a piety built on the assumption of the solidarity and indispensability of the family, including its past and future members. For this piety, the greatest tragedy and the greatest challenge is the loss of a son (cf. Gen 22). Danel's pious family thus faces the worst life can bring. Yet the poem shows that piety steadily, persistently, and apparently successfully copes with that worst.<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, the rest of the story of Aqhatu that is preserved brings us back to the family. The story that started with the womb ends at the tomb. For this final stage of the lifecycle, we read of mourning rituals by Danilu attended now by his daughter Pugatu who acts out her own faithful duties toward her father. When the news of Aqhatu's death reaches Danilu, he searches for his son's remains to afford him proper burial. Amidst wailing and cursing, a father buries his son. When Danilu returns to his home, the community (notably women) joins him in his house and in public with a display of weeping and wailing. Men add expressions of grief through bloodletting rituals of skin laceration. The mourning lasts "for days, for months; for months, for years; even for seven years." At the end of seven years, Danilu sends the mourning women and men away and offers sacrifices with incense to the gods. We last read of a daughter (Pugatu) seeking her father's blessing (*brk*) as she seeks revenge for the killing of her brother.<sup>62</sup> The patriarch gives his blessings, using the same idiom the father-god Ilu used at the outset of the story to bless Danilu with a full life.<sup>63</sup>

There is much more going on in this famous tale. Yet for our purposes, it is instructive to see how an elite tale can preserve references to religion taking place at the family level and within family space. It would be dangerous to draw detailed inferences about ritual practice from a literary poem such as this that may have been a "purely aesthetic . . . satisfying portrayal of life in an idealized past era."<sup>64</sup> We could easily mis- and over-interpret some items (e.g., that it was common practice for professional mourners to stay in one's home for a full seven years!) while mis- and under-interpreting other items (no mention is made of burial underneath the home as attested archaeologically at Tell Ras Shamra). Yet scholarly sobriety is equally dangerous if our exactitude leads to us missing one of the story's central tenets: the importance of the religion that took place within the home. When juxtaposed with the royal story of King Kirta (where he too longed for

progeny), one cannot fail to see how concerns about preserving the royal dynasty dominate the royal poem whereas they are absent in the life story of Danilu, his wife Danataya, and their children Aqhatu and Pugatu.

## Religion at the Local/Community Level

While family religion focuses inward on the cultic life played out within the domestic sphere, it must be stressed that many lifecycle events may have involved participants beyond immediate family members. Celebration rituals over births and weddings as well as mourning rites at burials would entail the gathering of the local community in larger venues. Certain concerns (e.g., illness) may have necessitated turning to religious specialists with the appropriate skills. Some of their procedures may have been done in private, even in the home, while others would have been done in dedicated local spaces. In many respects then, family religion is intertwined with community religion.

Rough estimates put the size of Late Bronze Age Ugarit at between 6,000 and 8,000 people living in approximately 1,000 houses.<sup>65</sup> The densely populated city constituted approximately 25 percent of the population of the entire kingdom that included some 150 towns and villages in the area. Thus local practices of religion made up the lion's share of the kingdom's religious experience.

Much has been written on the social organization and social stratification of Ugarit and its environs and the various models by which they may be understood.<sup>66</sup> Our information about the non-elite is only minimally reflected in our texts. They included farmers, herders, sailors, soldiers, conscripts, low-skilled workers involved in service industries, unskilled laborers, servants as a result of debt, and slaves. As far as local religion within the city of Ugarit is concerned, there was a mixture of elite and non-elite living in close proximity. (This contrasts with the two areas where space was restricted to the elite: the palace area and the acropolis with its two major temples and House of the High Priest.<sup>67</sup>) M. Yon has documented "clear social overlapping" in the archaeology of the residential area. "The large houses of the rich, small, simple habitations, and urban craft activities coexisted in the same blocks."<sup>68</sup> As for village life, the positions of father and elders were pre-eminent. This fact needs to be underscored if one aims to appreciate the importance of family religion on the local/community level. Nevertheless, as within the city, the position of the king – his control and involvement – permeated village life.

## Local Sanctuaries

The existence of local sanctuaries within the kingdom of Ugarit can be documented through text and archaeology. The best example of a local sanctuary positioned in the heart of the domestic sections of the city is the so-called Rhyton Sanctuary (see section below on archaeology).

Yet our texts are not altogether silent. KTU 1.17 (see full discussion above) refers to a sacred locale (*qds*) where a dutiful son was to set up a stela for his divine ancestor (*ʾilʾib*), or a marker for his clansman. In KTU 1.109.11–13 and KTU 1.130.12<sup>69</sup> we read specifically of sacrifices to Ilu-ibi offered "at the temple of Baʿlu of Ugarit" (*bbt bʿl ʾugrt*). While it is possible that the *qds* in KTU 1.17 also refers to one of the acropolis temples, it is also possible (more likely?) that it refers to a local sanctuary, many of which are preserved in the archaeological record (see below). The acropolis temples would have been proper places for the offering of blood sacrifices. Yet the erection of an ancestral stela would not have necessitated the presence of an altar and a system of blood disposal.

Two texts (KTU 1.79, 1.80) refer to local sanctuaries in villages outside of the city of Ugarit.<sup>70</sup> In particular, they mention three named *girtu*-farm complexes,<sup>71</sup> which were rural agricultural communities often under control of the king.<sup>72</sup> One specific *girtu* (Girtu-Ilištamī<sup>73</sup>) is mentioned in both texts. Reference is also made to two "houses" (*bt*) within these *girtu* communities where the cult took place. The word *betu* here surely refers to domestic or local sanctuaries. One "house" is that of an individual (Ubbiniyana in 1.80.2) while the other house involves a local assembly of some sort (*bt qds* in 1.79.8).<sup>74</sup> Both texts describe a religious officiant by the name of Šitqanu. In one text he sacrifices (*šbh*) seemingly a kid (*gdh*) to the god Rashpu (1.79.8) while in the other text he slaughters (*tlh*) a ewe and a ram, yet without mention of any deity as recipient.

Rashpu is named in the deity lists (in various manifestations and even in the plural *riḫm*) and is a regular recipient of offerings (e.g., ewes, rams, cows) in the ritual texts. He is usually thought to be a god of pestilence and a lord of the underworld due to his equation with Nergal in the deity lists and his mention as Šapshu's "gatekeeper," presumably opening the gates of the underworld for the sun goddess to enter when she sets in the evening (KTU 1.78). The story about King Kirta's family dying from disease and sword (referenced at the beginning of this chapter) mentions how Rashpu and Yamn were also responsible (KTU 1.14.1.16–21; cf. 1.103.39–40). Thus perhaps Šitqanu's offering on behalf of these rural farms was for the health and/or productivity of livestock. In fact, KTU 1.80 describes the slaughtering of the ram to be done "throughout shearing-time" (*qbb kl ygz t-l-b-bʿl ʾil*). Another text that may be relevant (KTU 4.15) was found on the acropolis in the house of the grand priest in 1929. Though brief, KTU 4.15 contains what seems to be a heading (*bt . ʾil*) followed by a list with nine references to *bt* that are then specified further by personal names.<sup>76</sup> In addition, the word *bʿl* precedes each entry.

- 1 *bt . ʾil*
- 2 *bʿl . bt . admmny*
- 3 *bʿl . bt . pdy*
- 4 *bʿl . bt . ngly*
- 5 *bʿl . bt . ʾlr*
- 6 *bʿl . bt . ssl*

- 7 *b'q. bt. t'm*  
 8 *b'q. bt. k'mn*  
 9 *[b'q]. bt. n'dbd*  
 10 *[—]. s'm*  
 11 *[b'q]. bt. b'm*  
 12 *sr(?) [...]*  
 13 *b[...]*

Due to the multivalent meanings of the word *betu* (see above), there is no consensus on the interpretation of this term in KTU 4.15 with some scholars preferring to see a patronymic list while others see a list of sanctuaries. Clemens states that "there is a broad (but by no means universal) consensus that [*bt. 'il*] in line 1 does in fact mean 'temple of Ilu.'"<sup>77</sup> Taking this as his cue, he concludes that "the most probable" interpretation "relates the text specifically to the cult and temple of Ilu."<sup>78</sup> The word *b'q* then may refer to laborers of specific families who would have worked within the temple. This is certainly a viable option. Alternatively, in light of the reference to the *betu* Ubbiniyana in KTU 1.80.2 (see too *bt q'is* in KTU 1.79.8 and *bt šm* in KTU 4.16.1), perhaps we have references to named local sanctuaries at *gittu*-farm communities that were under the supervision of the crown and/or temple of Ilu.<sup>79</sup> Thus, just as KTU 1.79 and 1.80 were found in the royal palace (due to royal administrative control of some kind), so too the find spot of KTU 4.15 in the house of the grand priest may not be a coincidence.

## Drinking as Religious Activity: Local Drinking Clubs

Another type of "household" or community-based religion is the institution known as the *marziḫu*. While attested over nearly two millennia throughout the Levant,<sup>80</sup> our discussion here will be limited to the *marziḫu* organization at Ugarit where it is mentioned in four Akkadian texts (RS 14.16; RS 15.70; RS 15.88; RS 18.01) and five alphabetic Ugaritic texts (KTU 1.21, 1.114, 3.9, 4.399, 4.642). (On the archaeology of the *marziḫu*, see below).

The *marziḫu* has been treated by many researchers including this author.<sup>81</sup> Recent studies include works by J. McLaughlin, B. Schmidt, M. Smith, D. Pardee, C. Maier and E. M. Dörfler, D. M. Clemens, M. Bietak and K. M. McGeough.<sup>82</sup> Thus the relevant data are readily available. My conclusions stated previously were as follows:

What can be said about the *marziḫu* strictly from the Ugaritic evidence? It seems that the term *marziḫu* designated a socio-religious organization whose leader was called a *rb* and whose members were called *mr m'zḫ* = *LÜ.MEŠ mar-zi-i* (KTU 3.9). KTU 1.114 (*'il q'ib m'zḫ*) suggests that the term *marziḫu* could also function as a designation for a place, evidently a shortened form of *betu marziḫi*. But in the majority of texts *marziḫu* seems to refer to an organization (guild?) of some kind. RS 15.70 and RS 15.88 indicate that a member's ownership in the society's holdings was passed on

to his sons. The property of the *marziḫu* organization included vineyards, fields, storerooms, and most notably a "house." This *betu marziḫi* occurs in almost every text and seems to designate the meeting-place for the organization. It was presumably owned by the organization and paid for out of membership dues (but cf. also KTU 3.9 which attests that the *betu* could be leased).

Drinking seems to have been a primary activity to judge from Ilu's behavior in KTU 1.114 and the organization's ownership of vineyards (RS 18.01; KTU 4.642). In other respects, the various *marziḫu* organizations seemed to have engaged in normal contractual agreements. They could grow quite powerful as evidenced by their participation in large transactions requiring many witnesses (RS 14.16) and their property-owning status. J. C. Greenfield has noted that the *marziḫu* "had state sanction since the king transferred and confirmed ownership of *marziḫu* property." The *marziḫu* phenomenon seems to have been widespread and could occur in even relatively small cities (RS 18.01). A phrase from RS 18.01 referring to "the *marziḫu* of city X" (*bt-ri LÜ.MEŠ mar-zi-i ša m' A-ri ñ bt-ri LÜ.MEŠ mar-zi-i ša m' A-ri m*) might even signify that there was only one *marziḫu* organization per city. (Of course, such a reference could be due simply to the small size of these cities.)

The most notable religious feature is the association of the *marziḫu* organizations with a particular patron deity (see Šatana in RS 15.70; Hurrian Ištar in RS 18.01; and most likely Anatu in KTU 4.642). . . . Finally, the *marziḫu* is associated with the *rp'm* in KTU 1.21.<sup>83</sup>

If we use definitions derived from our primary sources, then the *marziḫu* with its emphasis on activities under divine patronage performed within its *betu* does indeed constitute a type of "household" religion. One text (KTU 3.9) even mentions how a certain individual established a *marziḫu* "in his house."<sup>84</sup> Anthropological studies have underscored the religious nature of many drinking rituals. Even biblical culture notes how wine gladdens gods and men alike (Judges 9:13). Yet because the religious activity of the *marziḫu* organizations did not entail sacrifice, D. Pardee concludes that "the absence of this most characteristic feature of West Semitic cultic activity leads one to believe that the primary characteristic of the *marziḫu* was not cultic."<sup>85</sup> Perhaps this is splitting hairs over the definition of "cultic," but such a statement underscores the need for nuancing our descriptions of the religious activities of local communities. Activities need not be centralized within a temple complex (with the altar as the focal point of its sacred space and rites) to be religious in nature. Community and family religion often escape notice precisely because their activities were, for the most part, not sacrificial in nature (but see KTU 1.79 and 1.80 above) nor took place within royal/priestly sacred space.

Rather than concentrating on family units, the "house" referred to in the *marziḫu* texts was centered around elective social affinity groups within the local community (though "sons" are mentioned in RS 15.70 and RS 15.88).<sup>86</sup> J. C. Greenfield's observations about the elite nature of the organization (see above) have been echoed in recent research. K. M. McGeough, reaffirms the conclusions of J. McLaughlin: "the findspots of the tablets relating to *marziḫu*, the kinds and

amounts of land owned by the group or its members, and the quantities of money involved in the *marziḫu* texts at Ugarit indicate that members of the group were elite inhabitants of the city.<sup>87</sup> Thus once again we are faced with the dilemma of teasing out non-elite religion from elite sources. (We should expect as much from the archaeological landscape – compare Yon's above-mentioned remarks about the "social overlapping" of elite and non-elite space even within the residential areas.) One text (RS 18.01) is particularly helpful in this regard. In this text we read of two *marziḫu* organizations located in southern border villages far away from the city of Ugarit itself. One *marziḫu* group was located in the village of Anu on the Ugarit side of the border, the other in an unnamed village on the Siyannu side of the border.<sup>88</sup> These two groups disputed the ownership of a vineyard located in Shuksu (Tell Sukas located within Siyannu) dedicated to Hurrian Ishtar.

Though royalty (Padiya, the king of the small state of Siyannu<sup>89</sup>) had a hand in resolving the dispute between these two *marziḫu* organizations, it is clear that we are dealing with border villages far smaller than the urban center of Ugarit. Thus one can conjecture that some of the *marziḫu* organizations were much smaller than others and may have included members who were not at all as wealthy or elite as those of their urban counterparts.

### Religious Specialists Working at the Community Level

It is common to find treatments of the elite religious personnel at Ugarit, whether they are royal, priestly or scribal. The king's prominent role in the royal cult is well known (especially through the ritual texts).<sup>90</sup> That the queen is associated with sacrifice in some respect (*bdbḫ mlkr*, KTU 4.149.14–15; cf. KTU 1.170) and royal sons and daughters with processional rituals (*bm mlk wbn/t mlk t'ln p'amt šb*; KTU 1.112.6–7) gives clear evidence for the religious involvement of the entire royal family. Elite cultic personnel are well attested in the persons of Attanu-purilimi (diviner?),<sup>91</sup> the chief priest (*rb khmm*) who was also the chief of the cultic herdsmen (*rb nqdm*; KTU 1.6.6.55–6), Hurasanu, the chief priest (*prn rb khmm*; KTU 6.10),<sup>92</sup> and Agaptharri, a diviner mentioned in liver models used for divination (KTU 1.141; RS 24.325).<sup>93</sup> As for the religious training of scribes, there is no better example than that of Ilmilku, who records his credentials as follows in a colophon at the end of the Ba'lu myth: "The scribe (*spr*): Ilmilku the Shubbanite, disciple (*lmd*) of Attanu-purilimi, (who is) chief of the priests, chief of the cultic herdsmen; *ḫa'iyu*-official of Niqmaddu, (who is) king of Ugarit" (KTU 1.6.6.53–7).<sup>94</sup>

Other religious personnel, due to their specialized skills, would also fall under the elite category although some were certainly of lower rank than others. Various offices include: *khmm* ("priests"; cf. "circle of priests," *dr khmm*), *qdām* ("holy" personnel whose cultic role is debated), *ḫa'iyu*-officials who would have performed the *ḫa'iu* sacrifice (yet see too the exorcism in KTU 1.169.3), *nqdm* (animal providers?),

*mlḫlm* ("purifiers"), *mlḫs* ("charmer"), *š'ib mqdš* ("water-drawer of the sanctuary"), *š'm* ("singers"), and *mšlm* ("cymbalists"). It is difficult to describe the roles of the above functionaries with any degree of specificity due (surprisingly) to their near absence in the ritual texts that describe some of the very actions they performed.<sup>95</sup> (Compare the frequent attestations to such functionaries in the administrative and economic texts, yet without mention of cultic functions.) The reason, one may assume, is the attention given to the king, the omnipresent religious officiant in these texts.

Due to the nature of our source material, scholars have been unable to articulate when and how the non-elite may have come in contact with elite functionaries. We can guess that commoners may have viewed certain public rituals such as divine images led in procession by elite personnel including the king (cf. KTU 1.43, 1.112).<sup>96</sup> It is obvious from economic texts that unskilled workmen (*b'im*) operated within elite sacred space on a regular basis. It is also clear from KTU 1.79 and 1.80 (see above) that certain religious functionaries such as Šitqanu were intimately involved with the lives of villagers.

It is logical to assume that certain royal rituals were public in nature and thus observed by the general population. Compare especially the national sacrificial ritual attested in KTU 1.40 which, although mentioning King Niqmaddu, presumably his queen (*'at*) and various foreigners, also mentions the citizenry of Ugarit, differentiating male (*bm 'ugrt*) and female participants (*bt 'ugrt*). According to D. Pardee, "the rite may have been to promote communion, both between the social groups named in the text and between humans and deities honored ('llu and his family)."<sup>97</sup> The ideology presented in the story of King Kirta (KTU 1.16.6.45–50; cf. KTU 1.17.5.4–8) also underscores that the king's role (religious and otherwise) was precisely to champion the case of the non-elite (the widow, the poor, the oppressed, the orphan).

As noted above, there were also occasions in the life of families where religious specialists would have been consulted depending on one's resources and connections, thus again blurring the lines between elite and non-elite religion. Our extant texts (surely revealing just the tip of the iceberg) refer to all sorts of occasions requiring religious expertise that would have concerned all inhabitants of Ugarit regardless of class: weddings (KTU 1.24), marriage and divorce (RS 15.092; RS 16.141; RS 16.158; RS 16.143), adoption and inheritance (RS 21.230; RS 16.344; RS 15.092), mourning rituals (KTU 1.19.4.9–11, 20–2), divination (e.g., KTU 1.127; 1.140), dream interpretation (KTU 1.86), treating snakebites (KTU 1.100), hangovers (KTU 1.114), sexual dysfunction (KTU 1.169), and the power of the evil eye (KTU 1.96).

### The Archaeology of Family Religion

Archaeology is the primary way that we can counter the nature of our textual evidence that, for the most part, evinces an elite perspective. For ancient Syria, one



Figure 5.1 Terracotta imprints of children's feet when they were sold into servitude to the chief diviner and scribe Ba'al-malik. From Temple M1 at Tell Meskene (Emar)

of the best examples of archaeology uncovering the lives of the non-elite comes from Tell Meskene (ancient Emar). Here where we have found in the Late Bronze Age Temple M1 the actual imprints (in terra cotta) of the feet of children who were sold by their parents into slavery to satisfy a debt (see Figure 5.1). As we view their individualized footprints (made all the more personal by their inscribed names), we become connected personally to the plight of this non-elite family who faced such economic desperation. Three of four children are named: Ba'la-bia, a two-year-old girl and her twin brothers, Ba'al-belu and Ishma'el-Dagan, each one year old. The parents (Zadamma and his wife Ku'e) themselves pressed each foot in the clay. A sales contract reveals that the purchaser of these slave children was none other than an elite religious official, a chief diviner and scribe by the name of Ba'al-malik.<sup>98</sup> At least for the two boys the story has a happier ending. Y. Cohen has documented (through colophons found in Temple M1) how they were educated (through colophons found in Temple M1) how they were educated by Ba'al-malik who trained them to be scribes.<sup>99</sup> Thus we have rare documentation of specific non-elite persons gaining specialized skills within the religious sphere.

Sadly, the majority of the non-elite go unnoticed. We rarely read of their names or the specifics of their daily activities whether sacred or profane. Our data force us to talk about them in generalities. Thankfully, the Mission de Ras Shamra has dedicated significant time and energy to uncovering the domestic areas of Ugarit. These include: the Residential Quarter (*Quartier Résidentiel*), the City Center (*Centre de la ville*), the South City Trench (*Tranchée Ville Sud*), and the Lower City (*Ville Basse*). Though not fully published, the literature on these areas is substantial and readers are directed there for detailed discussions.<sup>100</sup> M. Yon, the director of the

Mission de Ras Shamra's excavations from 1978–98, has summarized the relevant material for our present study:

Cult places are identified across the city's habitation areas (religious activities were omnipresent). These sanctuaries integrated into the insulae opened directly onto the public streets or belong to blocks otherwise occupied by residential buildings. Their sacral character is recognized in their architectural organization (the Rhyton Temple in the City Center) and/or, when the plan of an area is poorly preserved or difficult to interpret, in the furnishings discovered (ceremonial rhytons, cultic furniture, incense burners, statuettes and stela), and objects tied to the practice of divination such as inscribed liver and lung models. Domestic cults, which are a manifestation of the popular religion, are attested by the number and dispersion across the inhabited areas of small idols (pendants in precious metal, terracotta figurines).<sup>101</sup>

Elsewhere, Yon adds:

The existence of these places of worship found *throughout* the city is evidence of the presence of religious activities among *all* the inhabited areas, and not just the areas reserved for it. One cannot exclude either the existence of *domestic cults*, a manifestation of popular religion *side by side with frequentation of the great temples*, to judge by the number and dispersion in *all* areas of the site of small figurines, whether it be pendants in precious metal or the effigy of the goddess (Astarte?) or more humble figurines modeled in terracotta.<sup>102</sup> (emphasis mine)

As noted in the introduction above, a full analysis of family religion must await a future time when textual studies can be integrated with a synthesis of the archaeological material. Yet from Yon's remarks it is clear that we have just scratched the surface of unpacking domestic religion at Ugarit. For example, tombs located under family dwellings underscore the rich kinship Ugaritians shared with their ancestors whose remains needed to be kept close to the living.<sup>103</sup> Figurines could represent "prayers in clay"<sup>104</sup> of those who could not afford bronze statuary (see Figure 5.2). Anchors found in wells, springs, and tombs (as well as in the elite precincts of the Temple of Ba'lu) show how commoners (sailors and other seafarers) left behind physical signs of their attempts to secure protection as they sailed the seas.<sup>105</sup>

Particular attention needs to be given to the so-called "Rhyton Sanctuary" (referred above by Yon<sup>106</sup>), one of the best examples in the ancient Near Eastern world of community religion. Excavations between 1978 and 1982 revealed a local sanctuary situated in the City Center. The religious activities practiced within this residential cult complex (that included an oil press) were thriving at the same time as those taking place within the two acropolis temples, the palace, and the royal sacred space known as the "Hurrian" temple. Yet, as M. Yon underscores, the rhyton "temple did not have the status of those of the acropolis: this can be observed both in the mediocre quality of the architecture and the common quality of the offerings and furnishings found associated with it. There are no royal



Figure 5.2 Terracotta figurine of a nude from the City Center (Ugarit). M. Yon, *The City of Ugarit*, p. 155, notes how "the presence of these figurines in houses reflects the domestic cult"

aspects." Yon further suggests that the sanctuary (with its 17 rhytons) was a meeting place for a *marziḫu* organization (cf. K. M. McGough who thinks a better candidate would be the *Bâtiment au vase de Pierre* in the Residential Quarter).<sup>107</sup>

## Conclusion

The four challenges presented at the outset of this paper are not to be minimized. Describing the religion of families and households at Ugarit remains a daunting enterprise. In addition, as we have seen above, the porous boundaries between non-elite and elite religion make such a study murky. Nonetheless, one conclusion is firm: the religion of the family (*betu*) was of paramount importance

at Late Bronze Age Ugarit among humans of all social standings, especially the non-elite.

## Notes

- 1 See T. Levy (ed.), *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (New York: Facts on File, 1995).
- 2 See, for example, Rainer Albertz's groundbreaking work on popular religion: *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion: religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* (Stuttgart: Calver Verlag, 1978).
- 3 C. Meyers has boldly critiqued the way archaeological data are recovered and published. "Gender archaeology," she writes, "should be incorporated into the conceptual framework of all projects. Anything less represents a bias that should be deemed as ethically intolerable as tossing away the remains of periods that do not interest the excavator." See C. Meyers, "Engendering Syro-Palestinian Archaeology: Reasons and Resources," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66 (2003): 185-97, esp. 189.
- 4 Scholars teaching in departments of religious studies have long wrestled with problems of definition in theory (substantive vs. functional) and approach (e.g., historical studies vs. philosophy of religion vs. cultural studies) as well as in practice (e.g., what type of curriculum to offer to students or the area of the discipline to fill with any faculty opening). See D. L. Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 2nd edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 5 K. van der Toorn includes each of these in his *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 153ff.
- 6 On the motif of the loss of family group in the ancient Near East as well as the interpretation of the story of King Kirta, see S. B. Parker, *The Pre-biblical Narrative Tradition: Essays on the Ugaritic Poems Keret and Aqhat* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 146-216.
- 7 Compare the Hebrew cognate *miṣpāḥah* which includes nuances of the extended family and the larger clan. Perhaps by having his offspring die so too did Kirta's hope for a family legacy. On the other hand, it may be that *špḥ* here designates simply his immediate offspring. Cf. its use in KTU 1.14.3.48-9 parallel to *šlm* (Manfried Dietrich et al., *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 24 [Kevelaar: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976]). See D. Pardee, "The Kirta Epic," in *The Context of Scripture*, ed. W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1: 333 n. 11.
- 8 See Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilkū and his Colleagues* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 182 n. 22.
- 9 The text actually reads *bā(!)ḥ* but has been restored by most scholars to either *bih*, "his household" or *bnh*, "his sons."
- 10 The text is broken *[x/ry/x/]* and has been restored to read queen *[Tha]rye[li]* as well as *[a/ry/h]*, "[his] kinsmen."
- 11 M. Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 72-6.
- 12 van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, pp. 153, 169.

- 13 G. del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2004), p. 328.
- 14 del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, p. 327.
- 15 See T. J. Lewis, "How Far Can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, ed. B. M. Gittlen (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, 2002), pp. 169–217.
- 16 For domestic religion, see below, note 100.
- 17 M. Yon, "Ugarit," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5: 258.
- 18 It is not my intention to minimize the importance of securing an heir for the kingdom at large. Certainly commoners would have been impacted by the stability/instability of the monarchy.
- 19 See M. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 56–7 on the debate surrounding recent suggestions (e.g., by P. Day and N. Walls) that Anattu is not the spouse of Ba'lu.
- 20 J. D. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001).
- 21 Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, pp. 54–60.
- 22 For the language of family applied to Ugaritic conceptions of the divine, see M. C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990), pp. 232–64. For foundational works on family relations at Ugarit, see A. van Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature* (London: Luzac, 1954) and A. Rainey, "Family Relationships at Ugarit," *Orientalia* 34 (1965): 10–22. The latter work was based on Rainey's more extensive 1962 Brandeis dissertation, "The Social Stratification of Ugarit."
- 23 This is corroborated by the presence of Ilu's name at the head of twelve deities invoked in a therapeutic text dealing with snakebites (KTU 1.100). Yet in this text Ilu does not provide the necessary remedy (incantation) which comes from another deity, Horanu, more skilled in such matters. See too KTU 1.107.38, another snakebite text, where Ilu and Horanu are paired.
- 24 In KTU 1.15.2.27, E. Greenstein (*Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. S. B. Parker [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], pp. 25, 45 n. 66) now reads 'Atratu rather than 'Ahiratu. D. Pardee has the latter in "The Kirta Epic," p. 337.
- 25 For a picture of the ivory panel, see Lewis, "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Images," in *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East*, ed. N. H. Walls (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005), pp. 98–9 and fig. 4.32.
- 26 See Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 45, p. 221 n. 44 (with bibliography) and G. J. Brooke, "The Textual, Formal and Historical Significance of Ugaritic Letter RS 34.124 (KTU 2.72)," *Ugarit Forschungen* 11 (1979): 69–87.
- 27 A balanced summary of the numerous interpretations of this passage can be found in S. Wiggins, *A Reassessment of "Asherah": A Study According to the Textual Sources of the First Two Millennia BCE*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 235 (Kevelaar: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), pp. 44–8.
- 28 See Wiggins's (ibid.) conclusion on p. 71.
- 29 For an introduction to the onomastic evidence, see R. Hess's overview, "The Onomastics of Ugarit" in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. W. G. E. Watson and

- N. Wyatt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), pp. 499–528. This work includes a full bibliography. Note in particular the works by D. Pardee, D. Sivan, W. H. van Soldt, and W. G. E. Watson.
- 30 D. Pardee and P. Bordreuil, "Ugarit: Texts and Literature" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6: 713.
- 31 del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, p. 338.
- 32 Ibid., p. 339.
- 33 Convenient translations can be found in Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, pp. 416–22; del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, pp. 304–5, 341; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), pp. 50–3, 149–50.
- 34 Wyatt (*Religious Texts from Ugarit*, p. 416) speaks of the "pride in citizenship" and "corporate identity" in relation to this text. del Olmo Lete (*Canaanite Religion*, p. 305) sees the king taking part "in a communal liturgy in the interest of the whole of Ugarit."
- 35 Convenient translations can be found in Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, pp. 363–5; del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 340–3; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 21–3.
- 36 Compare and contrast, for example, the translations of del Olmo Lete (*Canaanite Religion*, pp. 341–2), Pardee (*Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 22–3) and Wyatt (*Religious Texts from Ugarit*, pp. 363–5).
- 37 Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, pp. 58–9.
- 38 Even servants use such religious formula when writing their masters. See Pardee, "Anantenu to His Master Hidmiratu," in *The Context of Scripture. Vol. III. Archival Documents from the Biblical World*, ed. W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 112.
- 39 del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, pp. 336–7.
- 40 This is the translation of Pardee, "Double Letter, from 'Azzit'utu to his Parents, From Same to his Sister," in *The Context of Scripture. Vol. III*, p. 112.
- 41 This letter (RS 20.178 = Ugaritica V, #55) is one of the Akkadian texts found in the private residences of Ugarit's upper classes. It was written by a high government official by the name of Rap'anu to his sister. The translation here is that of van der Toorn (*Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, p. 168) to whom I am indebted for bringing my attention to this passage.
- 42 The tablets were found in the so-called high priest's house near the two temples on the acropolis. The elite status is also underscored by the colophon on the left edge of KTU 1.17 mentioning the name of the prominent scribe Ilmilku. See the astute comments of Parker (*The Pre-biblical Narrative Tradition*, pp. 142–3) as to "why this work elevating traditional, family responsibilities [was] recorded by the scribe laureate of Ugarit, and kept in the residence of the high priest of Ugarit."
- 43 About ten lines are missing from the beginning of the story.
- 44 See Wyatt's (*Religious Texts from Ugarit*, p. 251 n. 6) discussion of the history of scholarship on these garments. Wyatt notes that "the garments Danel wears (*st, mizrt*) [are] presumably a ritual one appropriate to the occasion and an undergarment." For further difficulties with this passage, see Pardee, "The 'Aqhatu Legend," in *The Context of Scripture. Vol. I. Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 343 n. 2.
- 45 For further on the Kithiratu (or Kotharatu), see Pardee, "Kotharoth" in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd edn., ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. Van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 491–2.

- 46 Our texts are broken at this point in the story.
- 47 Pardee, "The 'Aqhatu Legend,'" p. 345 n. 23.
- 48 Note that our text is gendered in two respects. No mention is made of the duties of the ideal daughter. The filial piety here is moreover what the son does for his father, not his mother.
- 49 Or "his father's god." See below.
- 50 E.g. KTU 1.41.35; KTU 1.91.2-9; KTU 1.109.12, 15, 19, 35; KTU 1.130.12; KTU 1.148.1, 10, 23; 1.164.3, 6. These are royal texts but one may assume that commoners also sacrificed to their *ilu-ibi*.
- 51 The deity lists are KTU 1.47. 1.65, 1.74, 1.102, 1.118, 1.148 and RS 20.24. See Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, Ras Shamra-Ugarit 12 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2000), vol. 1; idem, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 11-24 and Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, pp. 360-2.
- 52 See van der Toorn, "Ilib and the 'God of the Father,'" *Ugarit Forschungen* 25 (1993): 379-87; idem, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, pp. 154-68. KTU 1.113 also shows how deceased kings were deified. We do not know if the average Ugaritian thought that only the royal dead were accorded such deification or if people of lesser rank could also achieve preternatural status. On KTU 1.113, see Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 195-202; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 39 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 47-52.
- 53 van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, pp. 48, 52.
- 54 Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 280. See below on how one's deified ancestors were sought to intervene in healing rituals.
- 55 Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 280.
- 56 When a king would sacrifice to his ancestor's god (e.g., *id yabib mlk l'ili'ib* in KTU 1.164) he would be strengthening the royal dynasty and his position within it.
- 57 Ritual texts refer to a "temple of *ilu*" (*br 'il*, e.g. KTU 1.119.14; see too *qds 'il* in 1.119.6) and it may be that the acropolis temple usually designated "the temple of Dagan" (based on the nearby discovery of the Dagan stela; see KTU 6.13, 6.14) was in reality *ilu's*. See note 79 below.
- 58 See Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, pp. 53-71.
- 59 On the nature of Anatu as a huntress, see P. Day, "Anat: Ugarit's 'Mistress of Animals,'" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51 (1992): 181-90.
- 60 Some scholars have seen a marriage proposal in Anatu's words "Listen, valiant [Aqhatu], You are my brother, I am your sister]" in KTU 1.18.1.19-25. Yet this is unlikely and the broken state of the text rules out any confidence in any interpretation. See the judicious comments of Neal H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth*, SBL Dissertation Series 135 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 193-4.
- 61 Parker, *The Pre-biblical Narrative Tradition*, pp. 142-3.
- 62 Though our sources at Ugarit are limited, vengeance too can be filled with religious connotations as easily seen in the Hebrew Bible's *go'el haddam* passages.
- 63 As surely pointed out by Pardee, "The 'Aqhatu Legend,'" p. 355 n. 127.
- 64 Parker, *The Pre-biblical Narrative Tradition*, p. 143.
- 65 See M. Helzer, *The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976), pp. 103-12; M. Liverani, "Ras Shamra, histoire," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1979), 9: 1319-20; Yon, "Ugarit: The Urban Habitat - The Present State of the Archaeological Picture," *Bulletin of the American*

- Schools of Oriental Research* 286 (1992): 19-20; W. H. van Soldt, "Ugarit: A Second Millennium Kingdom on the Mediterranean Coast," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson et al. (New York: Scribner, 1995), 2: 1258; Yon, "Ugarit," p. 260; J.-P. Vita, "The Society of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, p. 455.
- 66 The literature here is vast. For a sampling, see Helzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1982); idem., "The Late Bronze Age Service System and Its Decline," in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. M. Helzer and E. Lipiński (Leuven: Peeters, 1988), pp. 7-18; E. Lipiński, "The Socio-Economic Condition of the Clergy in the Kingdom of Ugarit," in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, pp. 125-50; P. Vargyas, "Stratification Sociale à Ugarit," in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, pp. 111-23; van Soldt, "Ugarit: A Second Millennium Kingdom," pp. 1260-4; Vita, "The Society of Ugarit," pp. 455-98; Schloen, *The House of the Father*, W. G. E. Watson, "Daily Life in Ancient Ugarit (Syria)," in *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*, ed. R. E. Averbeck, M. W. Chavalas, D. B. Weisberg (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), pp. 130-9.
- 67 Granted, there is a large residential area to the south of the temples (excavated in 1935-6), yet its character has yet to be defined. Elite objects such as an Egyptian basalt statue of Princess Chnumet, a highly decorated gold bowl, and a gold cup depicting a (royal?) hunt come from this area. See Yon, *The City of Ugarit*, pp. 106-7, 114, 130-1 fig. 12, 164-5 figs. 56-7.
- 68 Yon, "Ugarit," p. 260.
- 69 See conveniently Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 31, 33.
- 70 For the most complete study of these texts, see Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, pp. 428-38.
- 71 On the meaning of *gi*, see Schloen, *The House of the Father*, pp. 232-5; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 122 n. 9.
- 72 KTU 1.79 and 1.80 were both found in the Royal Palace.
- 73 See van Soldt, *The Topography of the City-State of Ugarit* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005), p. 9.
- 74 Alternatively, *qds* could be a personal name similar to Ubinniyana in KTU 1.80.2. See, *Les textes rituels*, p. 433. Compare also *bi šm* in KTU 4.16.1.
- 75 Following the restoration by Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, 435 and *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 122 n. 9.
- 76 Helzer (*The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit*, pp. 72-3) had earlier understood most of these terms to be deity names with a few terms referring to Ugaritic villages. See the critique in D. M. Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 284 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), pp. 286-7.
- 77 Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, p. 281.
- 78 Ibid., p. 283.
- 79 There are multiple references to the temple of *ilu* in our textual sources (see above, note 57). One would expect as much for the head of the pantheon. As noted above, the acropolis temple commonly referred to as the Temple of Dagan may have been *ilu's*. This is very appealing when one compares the more prominent role of *ilu* in our textual and iconographic sources. See Lewis, "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Images," figs. 4.12, 4.18, 4.19.
- 80 In addition to its presence at Ugarit, it is also attested in biblical texts (Amos and Jeremiah), Phoenician texts from Carthage and Piacus, Aramaic texts from

Elephantine, Palmyra and Nabatea, rabbinic references by both the Tannaim and Amoraim, and the mosaic map at Madaba (6th c. CE).

- 81 Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, pp. 80–94.
- 82 Complete bibliographies may be found in Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, pp. 269–70 n. 645 and K. M. McGeough ("Locating the Marzihu Archaeologically," *Ugarit Forschungen* 35 [2003]: 418–20).
- 83 Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, pp. 83–4.
- 84 Yet note the difficulty of the reading *bny* where one would expect *bth*. Due to repeated graphic missteps with the letter *b* in this text, Pardee (*Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 220 n. 14) "wonders if the scribe was simply having a bad day."
- 85 Pardee, "Marzihu, Kispu and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult: A Minimalist View," in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture*, ed. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. Lloyd (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1996), p. 278. Elsewhere (*Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 217), he refers to "the essentially noncultic nature of the [marzihu] institution." He also comments: "though each *marzihu* appears to be devoted to a particular deity, and though cultic personnel could be members, the institution itself was neither cultic nor located in a holy place" (*Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 184 n. 2). McGeough ("Locating the Marzihu Archaeologically," pp. 411, 414) concludes similarly about the "non-cultic" nature of the *marzihu* in his attempt to dissociate it from the Rhyton Sanctuary.
- 86 See M. O'Connor, "Northwest Semitic Designations for Elective Social Affinities," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 18 (1986): 67–80.
- 87 McGeough ("Locating the Marzihu Archaeologically," p. 410) summarizing the conclusions of J. McLaughlin (*The Marzeah in the Prophetic Literature* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], pp. 66–70).
- 88 See the van Soldt, *The Topography of the City-State of Ugarit*, pp. 69–71.
- 89 On Syannu and Ushnatu, see van Soldt, *ibid.*, pp. 64, 68–71.
- 90 See Pardee, *Les textes rituels and Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*. The literature on royal cult is vast. See, for example, J.-M. de Tarragon, *Le culte à Ugarit* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1980), pp. 79–129; P. Merlo and P. Kella, "The Ugaritic Cultic Texts," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, pp. 296–300. Even the sacrifice by a foreign king is mentioned in KTU 2.40.14–17. See Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, pp. 223–3.
- 91 On the meaning of *prh* as "diviner" corresponding to Akkadian *baru*, see van Soldt, "Atu Prh," "Attā'enu the Diviner," *Ugarit Forschungen* 21 (1989): 367–8 and the bibliography in Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, pp. 876–7. On Atranu-purulini, see further Lipiński, "The Clergy at Ugarit," pp. 131–3.
- 92 For the history of scholarship on the term *bny*, now taken by most scholars to be a personal name, see Lipiński, "The Clergy at Ugarit," pp. 126–313 and Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, pp. 489–91.
- 93 See Lipiński, *ibid.*, pp. 133–7.
- 94 Numerous translations of this passage exist reflecting various and nuanced interpretations of each of the terms for cultic personnel. This translation is that of Pardee, "The Ba'lu Myth," in *The Context of Scripture*, Vol. 1, p. 273. On the *ta'aynu*-official, see D. Fleming, "The Voice of the Ugaritic Incantation Priest," *Ugarit Forschungen* 23 (1991): 146–8 and van Soldt, "Babylonian Lexical, Religious and Literary Texts and Scribal Education at Ugarit and its Implications for the Alphabetic Literary Texts," in *Ugarit: Ein ostmediterranes Kulturzentrum im Alten Orient*, ed. M. Dietrich and O. Loretz (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), p. 189.

- 95 This is not the proper venue to treat the many theories about the status and functions of such personnel. Readers are directed to the secondary literature on the topic that includes: de Tarragon, *Le culte à Ugarit*, pp. 131–44; Heltzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit*, pp. 131–9; Lipiński, "The Socio-Economic Condition of the Clergy in the Kingdom of Ugarit," in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, pp. 125–50; Vargyas, "Stratification Sociale à Ugarit," in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, pp. 111–23; Heltzer, "The Economy of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, pp. 433–6; M. Dijkstra "The List of *qāsim* in KTU 4.412 + ii 8ff," *Aula Orientalis* 17–18 (1999–2000): 81–9; Vita, "The Society of Ugarit," pp. 455–98; Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice*, pp. 319–26, 330–1, 448–50, 1085–9; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, pp. 239–40; Watson, "Daily Life in Ancient Ugarit," pp. 140–2; McGeough, "Exchange Relationships at Ugarit: A Study of the Economic Texts," (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2005) Ch. 3, 5.
- 96 Pardee notes Mari parallels where the divine statue traveled from rural sanctuaries into the city. See *Les textes rituels*, p. 222 n. 21, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 69.
- 97 Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, p. 78.
- 98 C. Zaccagnini, "Feet of Clay at Emar and Elsewhere," *Orientalia* 63 (1994): 1–4; J.-M. Durand, review of D. Arnaud, *Recherches au Pays d'Alalâ, Emar VI, Revue d'Assyriologie* 84 (1990): 74–5. I owe these references to Y. Cohen (see n. 99).
- 99 Y. Cohen, "Feet of Clay at Emar: A Happy End?" (forthcoming). I am indebted to Cohen for sharing this manuscript with me prior to publication.
- 100 J. C. Courtois, "L'Architecture Domestique à Ugarit au Bronze Récent," *Ugarit Forschungen* 11 (1979): 105–34; O. Callot, *Une Maison à Ugarit: Études d'architecture domestique*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 1 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1983); M. Yon, P. Lombard, and M. Renisio, "L'organisation de l'Habitat: Les Maisons A, B, et E," in *Le Centre de la ville, 38–44<sup>e</sup> (1978–1984)*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 3, ed. Marguerite Yon and Olivier Callot (Paris: Éditions Recherche de la Civilisation, 1987), pp. 11–128; M. Yon, "Ugarit: The Urban Habitat," pp. 19–34; Callot, *La Tranchée "ville sud": Études d'architecture domestique*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 10 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1994); Yon, *La cité d'Ougarit sur le tell de Ras Shamra* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1997); Callot, "A Visit to a Home," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 63 (2000): 202–4; Callot and Y. Calvet, "Le Bâtiment au Vase de Pierre" du 'Quartier Résidentiel' d'Ougarit (feuille 1966)," in *Études Ougaritiques: I. Travaux 1985–1995*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14, ed. M. Yon and D. Arnaud (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2001), pp. 65–82; C. Castel, "Naissance et Développement d'une Maison dans la 'Ville Basse' orientale d'Ougarit (feuille 1936)," in *Études Ougaritiques: I. Travaux 1985–1995*, pp. 41–64; J. Mallet and V. Maroian, "Une Maison au Sud du 'Temple aux Rhytons' (feuilles 1979–1999)," in *Études Ougaritiques: I. Travaux 1985–1995*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14, ed. M. Yon and D. Arnaud (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2001), pp. 83–190; Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*, McGeough, "The Material Remains of the Ugaritic Economy," in *Exchange Relationships at Ugarit*, pp. 417–51.
- 101 Yon, "Ugarit," p. 260.
- 102 Yon, "Ugarit: History and Archaeology," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6: 704.

103 S. Marchegay ("The Tombs," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 63 [2000]: 208-9) has tabulated 16 tombs in the Residential Quarter with its large houses, 14 in the South City Trench, over 20 in the South Acropolis Trench, and 31 in the Lower City. She concludes: "the more dense the housing in a quarter, the more tombs it possesses."

104 For this designation, see Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Paravallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), p. 274 followed by W. G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 58, 185. The interpretation of figurines remains very uncertain. For additional material from Syria, see A. A. Petty, "Anthropomorphic Figurines from Umm el-Marra, Syria: Chronology, Visual Analysis and Function," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2005.

105 See H. Frost, "Anchors Sacred and Profane," in *Arts et Industries de la Pierre*, Ras Shamra-Ugarit 6, ed. Marguerite Yon and Annie Caubet (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1991), pp. 355-410; Wyatt, "The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, p. 583; and A. Brody, "Each Man Cried Out To His God": *The Specialized Religion of Canaanite and Phoenician Seafarers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

106 See, too, Yon's fuller treatment: "The Temple of the Rhytons at Ugarit," in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture*, ed. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. Lloyd (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), pp. 405-22.

107 McGeough, "Locating the Marzihu Archaeologically," pp. 407-20.

## Family Religion in Ancient Israel and its Surroundings

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When I investigated what I called "personal piety" in ancient Israelite families about 30 years ago in Heidelberg for my *Habilitationsschrift*,<sup>1</sup> there were very few Old Testament scholars who were aware that such a phenomenon as "family religion" existed.<sup>2</sup> Slowly, the situation has changed remarkably. With my differentiation between "personal piety" and "official religion" in mind, Karel van der Toorn wrote his detailed study *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel* (1996).<sup>3</sup> I myself tried to describe the development of family religion through the course of the history of ancient Israelite religion (1992/94),<sup>4</sup> and Erhard S. Gerstenberger conceptualized the first Old Testament Theology that demonstrates an appropriate appreciation for family religion (2001).<sup>5</sup> This aspect of religion was incorporated in the latest book on families in ancient Israel, edited by Leo G. Perdue (1997).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, at the end of 2004, the first comprehensive guide to ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern religions was published. Among other topics, it deals with the "Religious Practices of the Individual and the Family" in each of the civilizations under consideration.<sup>7</sup>

### Terms and Concepts

To distinguish a family religion within a given religion requires recognition of a kind of religious pluralism. Among Old Testament scholarship there is still a high degree of uncertainty as to how to deal properly with the obvious pluralism within Israelite religion. Three main concepts are in use and sometimes mixed together: the concept of syncretism, the concept of popular religion, and the concept of internal religious pluralism. I would like to present a short survey of these three