

The Role and Significance of Mot in the Vine Ritual in *KTU 1.23:8-11*

A. Introduction

KTU 1.23, which is also known as “The Feast of the Goodly Gods,” is traditionally regarded as a ritual text.¹ Its first part is instructional, divided by horizontal lines into nine sections and opens with an invitation to the Goodly Gods to participate in a feast, together with the royal family and other participants. The second part is a narrative. It contains an erotic description of El and his two wives, their pregnancies, and their omnivorous descendants, the (same) Goodly Gods. This part ends with a feast.²

Although the precise purpose of the ritual as a whole is not clear, scholars agree that its most prominent theme is fertility. Some also emphasize the viticultural tendency of the text, in light of the relatively numerous references to the vine and its produces (ll. 6; 9-11; 26; 74-76).³ The so-called vine ritual, on which the present article focuses, takes place in the second section of the instructional part.

¹ For the various studies on *KTU 1.23*, from its first publication through to 2006, see the comprehensive bibliography cited in M.S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, and Domination*, Atlanta 2016. To this one should add: G. J. Park, "El's Member in *KTU 1.23*", *UF 39* (2007), 617-27; D.T. Tsumura, "Revisiting the 'Seven' Goods Gods of Fertility in Ugarit", *UF 39* (2007), 629-41; M.S. Smith, "Sacred Marriage in the Ugaritic Text? The Case of *KTU/CAT 1.23* (Rituals and Myths of the Goodly Gods), in M. Nissinen and R. Uro (eds.), *Sacred Marriages: the Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, Winona Lake 2008, 93-113; J.-A. Scurlock, "Death and the Maidens: A New Interpretive Framework for *KTU 1.23*", *UF 43* (2011), 411-434; J.L. Cooley, *Poetic Astronomy in the Ancient Near East: The Reflexes of Celestial Science in Ancient Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Israelite Narrative*, Winona Lake 2013, 221-24.

² Perhaps a realization of the mythological feast? See T. L. Hetteema, "That it be Repeated: A Narrative Analysis of *KTU 1.23*", *JEOL 31* (1989-90): 92 ??? For the identity of the Goodly Gods, whether they are the twins Dawn and Dusk or not, see Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 68-9.

³ In addition, Schloen suggested to link the ambiguous term *mš'ltm*, mentioning in the narrative part with Hebrew ערללות "gleaning [of grapes and olives]"; see: J.D. Schloen, "The Exile of Disinherited Kin in *KTU 1.12* and *KTU 1.23*", *JNES 52* [1993], 217-218.) In light of all these references it was suggested that the ritual has relation to the ceremony that took place at the month of "The Beginning of the Wine"

During this performance, it is said that the vine pruners prune a god, bind him, and throw his tendrils to the ground like a vine. It goes as the following (ll. 8-11):⁴

<i>Mt-wšr</i> sits;	⁸ <i>Mt-wšr yṭb</i>
in his (one) hand a staff of bereavement,	<i>bdh ḥṭ ṭkl</i>
in his (other) hand a staff of widowhood.	<i>bdh ṽḥṭ ṽulmn</i>
The vine pruners prune him;	<i>yzrbnn zbrm gpn</i>
The vine binders bind him; ⁵	¹⁰ <i>yšmdnn šmdm gpn</i>
They throw his tendrils like a vine. ⁶	<i>yšql šdmth ¹¹km gpn</i>

The closed line of this section (l. 12) orders to recite these seven times.⁷

In order to explain the meaning of this performance, scholars searched for a similar magic ceremony in the Scriptures or among primitive societies.⁸ However, these acts,

(*riʿš yn*), documented in *KTU* 1.41/1.87; cf. T.H. Gaster, "A Canaanite Ritual Drama: The Spring Festival of Ugarit", *JAOS* 66 (1946), 49-76; Pardee, *COS* 1: 275; M. Dijkstra, "Astral Myth of the Birth of Shahr and Shalim (*KTU* 1.23), in O. Loretz, M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper (eds.), "*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf*": *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient: Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen* (AOAT 250), Münster 1998, 265-287. The date of the month "The Beginning of the Wine", however, is still vague.

⁴ The transliteration of all the Ugaritic material cited here follows *KTU*³. For translations of these texts, cf. S.B. Parker (ed.), *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, Atlanta 1997 (Lewis [*KTU* 1.23] and Smith [1.5-1.6]); *COS* 1: 241-286 (Pardee); For *KTU* 1.23 see also Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 2006.

⁵ An alternative translation, based on the last rhyme would be: "The pruners prune him (like) vine, the binders bind him (like) vine". In any case, the acts are the same.

⁶ The lexeme *šdm*, occurring also in the Hebrew bible, is dubious in both corpuses. Its derivation is unknown, therefore it can be interpreted only according to its context. Smith *The Rituals and Myths*, 45, discusses the two main options that were dealt with among scholars: 'terrace' and 'tendrils, shoots'. Both of them suit also in regard to the biblical occurrences of שדמת. In this case, like in the previous rhymes, both of translations lead to the same act. The meaning of "tendrils" (or shoots) that rendered here follows T.J. Lewis, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 206; N. Wyatt, "A New Look at Ugaritic *šdm*", *JSS* 37 (1992), 149-153; W.G.E. Watson, "Aspects of Style in *KTU* 1.23", *SEL* 11 (1994), 3-8. Cf. Deut. 32:32 and Isa 16:8.

⁷ This raises the question, whether the ritual was a performance or only a declamation. See the discussion of Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 50. I assume that this ceremony was declaimed in the feast as an imitation of the real one that took place in the vineyard.

⁸ Thus it was suggested to link it with the "circumcision" of trees (ערלה) à la the biblical law in Lev. 19:23-25; see N. Wyatt, "The Pruning of the Vine in *KTU* 1.23", *UF* 24 (1992), 425-426; Dijkstra, "Astral Myth", 286-87. Another suggestion associates it with the custom held by Zambian people, see

when taking place in the vineyard, are still of the most important operations that annually done. The pruning of tendrils are required in order to wake the vine from its dormancy, to enable the vine directing its energy into ripening fruit rather than making longer vines, and to synchronize the bunches' ripening. After pruned, the tendrils must be removed in order to let the fresh, young twigs to grow, and to reduce disease risks. The attaching of the remaining tendrils to supports, in which they climb up, contributes further to the increasing of the yield, as well as to prevent decay and insect infestation.⁹ The Ugaritic performance cited above thus seems to relate, by means of ritual, to a well-known viticultural acts which are designed to improve the vine produces annually. Rather than a deity related to fertility, however, the god upon whom these acts are performed during the feast is Mot, the terrifying lord of the underworld.

In order to explain the unexpected occurrence of Mot here, two different interpretations were suggested. Since the protagonist bears a hapax double name *Mt-wšr*, some scholars assumed that this is not related to Mot at all, but should be interpreted as the noun *mutu*, "a man," and his title *šr* "ruler" (root *š-r-r*) or "singer" (root *š-y-r*). While *mutu* possibly referring to an anonymous person, it is often thought – in this context – to represent El, the protagonist of the narrative part. There, El is said

M.H. Pope, cited in M.S. Smith, "A Potpourri of Popery: Marginalia from the Life and Notes of Marvin H. Pope", UF 30 (1998), 663.

⁹ I am grateful to the agronomist and vinedresser Chanoch Plessner, from Beth-Shean valley, Israel, for his clarifications; cf. H. Kosmala, "Mot and the Vine: The Time of the Ugaritic Fertility Rite", *ASTI* 3 (1974), 147-151. For ancient descriptions of such activities (although late than the Ugaritic material) cf. e.g. John 15:1-17 and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 14.3 (see, however, W.F. Albright, "The North-Canaanite Poems of Al'êyân Ba'al and the 'Gracious Gods'," JPOS 14 [193]), 133, n.173). As was mentioned, these activities takes in late winter, thus might suggesting the time of this ritual as a whole. For other suggestions, see J.C. de Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu* (AOAT 16), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971, 79 n. 30; Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 47-48, and n. 3 above.

to have a staff as a metaphor of his penis (ll. 37-48).¹⁰ This suggestion does indeed solve the problem of Mot here, but it disregards the description of the divine figure with *two* staffs. Nor are widowhood and bereavement, here relating to his staffs, associated with El in any way. This option therefore cannot be accepted.

Other scholars have long ago thus suggested that the lexeme *mt* refers to Mot, while *šr* functions as his epithet.¹¹ On this reading, the agricultural acts are designed to banish Mot from the sown and fertile land (Ugaritic *mdr*⁶). While this suggestion is more commensurate with Mot and his horrible staffs, it is still incomplete. Why would a whisperer adduce such a destructive force as Death in a fertility rite simply to prevent him from forming part of the ritual? And further, how is Mot associated with the grapevine?

Comparison with other ancient Near Eastern agricultural rituals, performances and literary metaphors based on such rituals compound the enigma. In general, the gods associated with violent agricultural acts are fertility deities whose identity is closely bound up with life and death. No scholars suggest that chopping these gods to the ground, burying, dismembering, or burning them symbolize their expulsion. On the contrary, the harsh treatment symbolizes the cyclical agricultural year: as the god and crops perish, so they will arise again.

¹⁰ Wyatt, "The Pruning of the Vine"; Dijkstra, "Astral Myth"; cf. Pardee COS 1: 276-7, n. 13.

¹¹ In this case, "evil" as a translation of *šr* (root: *š-r-y*), was also suggested. See discussion in Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 40. According to a proposal of Fischer-Elfert, a literally Egyptian translation of the compound name [*Mt*]-*wšr* might be found in pLeiden I 343 + I 345 as [*Mt*] *hm*⁶ *Šr* (= *Mt* and *Šr*): see H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, "Samanu on the Nile: The Transfer of a Near Eastern Demon and Magico-Medical Concept into New Kingdom Egypt", in M. Collier and S. Snape (eds.), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K.A. Kitchen*, Bolton 2011, 197. Other commentators read it, however, as "[*B*⁶*r*]" (=Baal) and (the Syrian goddess, his spouse) *Šala*". For the god name ⁶*d wšr*, see *KTU*³ 1.123:13. For a new suggestion for the second element, see below.

B. Examples of ancient Near Eastern agricultural rituals

The following examples from Egypt (1-2), Mesopotamia (3-4) and the Levant (5) may demonstrate this principle, namely, that the agricultural act is likened to a fertility gods that bear aspects of death and regeneration, rather than to god who charge on death..

1. A spell from the second-millennium BCE Egyptian Coffin Texts, which is said to be a speech of the Grain-god Neper, identify the latter – and the emmer itself – with the life and death of Osiris (CT 330, IV 168-169):

I live and I die, I am Osiris (*ḥn̄(=i) mt=i ink Wsir*) ... I have gotten fat through you (*ḏd3.n=i im=k*), I have flourished through you (*rd.n=i im=k*), I have fallen through you (*ḥr.n=i im=k*), I have fallen on my side (*ḥr.n=i ḥr gs=i*), the gods live on me (*ḥn̄ ntr.w im=i*). I live and grow as Neper (*ḥn̄(=i) rd=i m Npr*) ... I live and I die, for I am emmer (*ḥn̄(=i) mt=i ink bdt*).¹²

Here, the agricultural cycle of the wheat – from its growth to its ripening ("I live") and the spread of its seeds on the ground ("and I die") – is framed in terms of the myth of Osiris ("I am Osiris"), who had been murdered and dismembered by his brother Seth, then became the lord of the underworld.¹³ The falling of the seeds to the ground, just before the emmer's withering, is depicted by the phrase “falling on its side” which often denoting Osiris’ violent murder (cf. the Pyramid Texts spells 412; 442; 478; 482; 485; 576; 637).¹⁴

¹² For the text see A. de Buck and A.H. Gardiner, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago, 1935–1961). The translation follows R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Warminster, 1973-1978); cf. C. Carrier, *Textes des sarcophages du moyen empire Égyptien* (Monaco, 2004).

¹³ For the pre-Ptolemaic details of the Osirian myth, revealed mainly by the funerary texts and magical papyri, cf. e.g. G.J. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult* (Leiden, 1980); J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (trans. D. Lorton; Ithaca, 2001), 123–47; B. Mathieu, "Mais qui est donc Osiris? Ou la politique sous le lindeu de la religion," *ENIM* 3 (2010), 77–107; J.F. Quack, "Resting in Pieces and Integrating the Oikoumene: On the Mental Expansion of the Religious Landscape by Means of the Body Parts of Osiris", in S. Nagel, J.F. Quack and C. Witsche (eds.), *Entangled Worlds: Religious Confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire*, Tübingen 2017, 244-73.

¹⁴ A close depiction is presented also in John 12:24-25.

2. An Egyptian ritual from the same period, recorded in the *Egyptian Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus*, compares Osiris' dismemberment with the harvest (cols. 29–33). After the grain is brought to the threshing floor to be trodden by oxen and donkeys, Horus turns to Seth's followers and asks: "Who is it who beats my father? (*m ḥwi it(=i) (i)ptn*)". The reply comes: "Beating Osiris (*ḥwi(t) Wsir*), chopping of the god (*ḥb3 ntr*): barley (*it*)." In the continuation, the oxen that tread the grain are said to represent Seth's followers, the donkeys - Seth, Osiris' adversary.¹⁵

We should note here that Osiris, despite his role as the lord of the underworld – like the Ugaritic Mot or the Mesopotamian Ereškigal – was not in charge of pain and death, nor the cause of it. Quite the opposite, he was the symbol of regeneration and rejuvenation in the underworld.¹⁶ In this aspect, he is rather close to the following gods,

¹⁵ For the text, see K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (UGAÄ 10; Leipzig, 1928), 13; C. Geisen, "The Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus: A New Edition, Translation, and Interpretation" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2012). The text and translation here follow Geisen, 277.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. J. Assmann, "Resurrection on Ancient Egypt", in: *Resurrection. Theological and Scientific Assessments*, eds. T. Peters, R.J. Russell and M. Welker, Grand Rapids 2002, 124-135. His definition for the "Egyptian resurrection" clarifies it well (p. 124): "In the context of these religions, ancient Egypt seems to have been the sole exception. Only here, human existence encompassed three worlds, the world of the living, the world of the dead, and an Elysian world for which there are many names and descriptions in Egyptian texts such as "field of rushes," "field of offerings," "bark of millions," and "house of Osiris." Here "resurrection" does not mean to return to life on earth, but to be redeemed from the world of the dead and to be admitted into the Elysian world...Again, the distinction between the world of the dead and the Elysian world, in order to make this absolutely clear, consists in the fact that the world of the dead is a place where the dead are dead, whereas the Elysium is the place where those who were granted resurrection from death lead a new, eternal life." See also E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (trans. by J. Baines), London 1983, 160: "The blessed dead and gods are rejuvenated in death and regenerate themselves at the wellsprings of their existence".

whose despite their violent death, were never became the lords of the underworld, and their stay there was considered as temporarily (at least in some traditions).¹⁷

3. An Old Babylonian text (CT 58.21), classified by its editors as a harvest ritual, describes the workers' families leaving for the steppe to gather the crop.¹⁸ They are taken there by boat – where they singing – and provide offerings to Summer and Winter. Then they pile up the crops "in the reed huts of Arali (é-gi-sig-ga a-ra-li-šè)... at the place where the herald caught the lad (ki-ğurus li-bi-re dab₅-ba-šè)". Immediately thereafter, the narrator appears to speak in the voice of a young dead god: "My head you covered with the garment (sağ-mu-a túg bí-e-dul); My body you recovered with my new garment (bar-mu túg-gibil-mà <bí->e-gi₄); my eyes (i-bí-mu)... (ll. 28-35)."

Arali is known as the place where Dumuzi, the young dying lad, tended his flock and was eventually trapped by the demons of the underworld (cf. e.g. Dumuzi's Dream [ETCSL 1.4.3]).¹⁹ His speech relates to the custom of dressing the corpse in clean clothes, which was part of funerary rituals.²⁰ This text thus seems to describe a ritual associated with Dumuzi's death, symbolized by the harvested crops.

¹⁷ The most recent and comprehensive essay that deals with this, is T.N.D. Mettinger, *The Riddle of Resurrection: "Dying and Rising Gods" in the Ancient Near East*, Stockholm 2001, 124-137; 185-204.

¹⁸ For the text and further details of the ritual, see B. Alster and M.J. Geller, *Sumerian Literary Texts* (CT 58), London 1990, Pl. 24 (# 21); D. Katz, *The Image of the Netherworld in the Sumerian Sources*, Bethesda 2003, 162-167. Translation and transliteration follows Katz.

¹⁹ According to T. Jacobsen, "Lad in the Desert" *JAOS* 103 (1983), 195, Arali was the local name of the desert between Bad-Tibira (Medinah) and Uruk (Warka). Only later, when the ancient topography of Uruk was forgotten, it was understood as a designation for the netherworld. This usage, however, is secondarily. Cf. Katz, *The Image*, 58-59. For a brief comprehensive summary on Dumuzi, see B. Alster, "Tammuz", in K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*² (DDD), Leiden 1999, 828-834

²⁰ Katz, *The Image*, 159 and n. 116. Cf. the Eršemma of Nergal (M.E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: the Eršemma*, Cincinnati 1981, 92-95 [# 164], ll. 25-27). For the unexpected description of Nergal as a young dying god, see Katz, *ibid*, 160-162.

4. Much later, a Neo-Assyrian text (SAA 3:38, rev. 6-7) compares Dumuzi's death with the grinding of grain: "His [de]ath ([mū]ssu) is the roasted barley (*qalâte*) which they throw on behalf of Dumuzi (*ša ina muḥḥi Dumuzi inaddû*) when they grind him with stone (*ina abnī kī iqamûšū*)..."²¹

A close ritual is attested also in mediaeval Haran, recorded by a Muslim author. As the pagans in Iraq preserved much of Dumuzi's cult and beliefs, it is worth mentioning it here, despite its very late date.

(The month of) Tammūz: In the middle of this (month) there is the feast of al-Būqāt, that is, of the weeping women. It is the Tāwuz, a feast dedicated to the god Tāwuz. The women weep for him because of how his master killed him and ground his bones in the hand-mill and then winnowed them to the wind. The woman do not eat nothing ground in a hand-mill; they only eat moistened wheat, chick-peas, dates, raisins and other similar things."²²

5. Lastly, Origen (ca. 185-253 CE) and Jerome (ca. 345-419) – both lived in Palestine, therefore are well familiar with its communities – document a local ritual in order to exemplify an up-date bewailing ceremony in parallel to Ezekiel 8:14. According to their reports, pagans understood the seeds buried in the earth to represent the death of

²¹ Cf. A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, Oxford 1986, 120-121, l. 19. Gabbay suggests to associate this act with the rising of Dumuzi, see: U. Gabbay, *The Exegetical Terminology of Akkadian Commentaries*, Leiden 2016, 251-52.

²² An-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, Dodge edition, 758 (B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, New York 1970). The translation here follows J. Hämeen-Anttila, "Continuity of Pagan Religious Traditions in Tenth-Century Iraq", in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena. Proceedings of the Third Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project. Held in Chicago, USA, October 27-31, 2000* (Melammu Symposia 3), A. Panaini and G. Pettinato (eds.), Milan 2002, 101. For discussion on the pagan communities and beliefs in Haran and Iraq in general at the 10th century CE, see also idem, *The Last Pagans of Iraq: Ibn Waḥshiyya and His Nabatean Agriculture*, Leiden 2006.

Adonis, while the crops in which the dead seeds are reborn representing the god's resurrection.²³ Thus Origen states in his *Notes on Ezekiel (Selecta in Ezechielem VIII)*:

The one whom the Greeks call Adonis, is called Tammouz by the Hebrew and the Syrians, as they say... It seems that they perform a sort of rite every year: first they mourn him as dead, second they rejoice for him as if he had risen from the dead ... Those who understand the principle of the Greek myths...say that Adonis is a symbol of the fruits of the earth (τὸν Ἄδωνιν σύμβολον εἶναι τῶν τῆς γῆς καρπῶν), which are mourned when they [i.e. the farmers] sow (θρηνουμένων μὲν ὅτε σπείρονται), but which rise from the dead (ἀνισταμένων δὲ), therefore give joy to the farmers when they [i.e. the crops] grow (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χαίρειν ποιούντων τοὺς γεωργοὺς ὅτε φύονται).²⁴

In his *Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel (Commentariorum in Ezechielem prophetam III)*, Jerome similarly comments:

What we have translated as Adonis,²⁵ both Hebrew and Syrian speech calls Thamuz... They celebrate a solemn anniversary festival to him, in which women mourn for him as dead man, and after he comes back to life, they sing of him and praise him ... Paganism of this sort...honor the death and resurrection of Adonis by mourning and rejoicing, the former of which is shown in seeds that die in the earth (*quorum alterum in seminibus, quae moriuntur in terra*), the latter in the harvest that the dead seed are reborn (*alterum in segetibus, quibus mortua semina renascuntur*).²⁶

²³ For the unique characters of the Levantine Adonis, in relation to the Greek one, see Mettinger, *The Riddle*, 124-137. As he discerns correctly, while most of the Greek texts focus on Adonis' death, the Levantine texts, such as *De Dea Syria* etc. testify also on his resurrection. Apart from Jerome and Origen, the link between Adonis and the ripening of the fruit is also evidence by Porphyry and Ammianus Marcellinus; see Mettinger, *ibid*, p. 130-131; cf. S. Ribichini, "Adonis", in K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible² (DDD)*, Leiden 1999, 7-9; J.L. Lightfoot, *Lucian: On the Syrian Goddess*, Oxford 2003, 310-311.

²⁴ For the text, see J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Graeca* 13, cols. 797-800. I am grateful to Dr. G. Darshan for his assistance with the translation of this text. For other translations, see R. de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (trans. by D. McHugh), London 1972, 225 (= *idem*, "Sur quelques rapports entre Adonis et Osiris", *RB* 42 [1933], 45); Mettinger, *The Riddle*, 129.

²⁵ The vulgate renders Adonis as the name of Tammuz in Ezekiel 8.

²⁶ For the text, see J.-P. Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae Latina* 25, cols. 85-86. The translation follows (with modifications) T.P. Scheck, *St. Jerome: Commentary on Ezekiel*, New York 2017, 96. The acquaintance of Jerome with the mourning of Adonis/Tammuz in Bethlehem is known also from his letter to Paulinus (Epist. LVIII ad Paulinum, in *Patrologiae Latina* 22, col. 581, *ibid.*). Mettinger, *ibid*, 129-130, argues that

Traces of this rite may appear also in Ps 126: 5-6, which describes the weep of the workers during the sowing season and their sing during the harvest: "Those who sow in tears (הזרעים בדמעה), do reap with songs of joy (ברנה יקצרו). The one who carries the seed-bag weeps as he goes (הלך ילך ובכה נשא משך הזרע); the one who carries his sheaves, comes with songs of joy (בא יבא ברנה נשא אלמתיו)".²⁷

In all these rituals and texts – which vary in date and location – the gods' death and/or resurrection symbolize the agricultural cycle and vice versa. All the tasks associated with the treating of the crops – sowing, harvesting, grinding, burning, etc. – are interpreted as the gods' death, while their growth symbolizes the gods' resurrection. This raises the question: is it possible that Mot is also associated with the same phenomenon, thus accounting for his appearance in the agricultural ritual recorded in *KTU* 1.23?

C. The features of Mot in Ugaritic texts

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Mot is typically represented as a terrible underworld god who consumes the flesh of human being and gods as a metaphor of the process of death. Thus is how Mot described by the poet: "[A lip to ea]rth, a lip to heaven, [he (= Mot) set] a tongue to the stars ([špt l²a]rš špt lšmm [yšt] lšn lkbk²bm). Baal will enter his

despite the acquaintance of Jerome with the writings of Origen, his dependent on Origen's in this case is dubious, since the former adds the etiological tale of Adonis which is missing in Origen. Most of scholars do not agree with him; see, e.g. de Vaux, *ibid*, 227.

²⁷ Biblical translations are mine. Very few scholars have noted on the Levantine mythological or ritual background of these verses, all were unaware to the texts of Jerome and Origen. See: A. Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (trans. by H. Hartwell), London 1962, 762-763; F.F. Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament: A Study of Canaanite-Israelite Religion*, Leiden 1962, 132-134; A.A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms (73-150)*, Grand Rapids 1981, 865-866.

innards (*y^{rb} B^l bkbdh*), into his mouth he will descend like a dried olive, produce of the earth and fruit of the trees" (*KTU* 1.5 II, 1'-6'). And thus are the words which the poet puts in Mot's mouth: "I went hunting... (but) there were no humans for me to swallow, no multitudes of earth for me to swallow (*npš ḥsrt bn nšm npš hmlt ʿarš*)... (Then) I approached Baal, I took him (*ʿdbnn ʿank*) like a lamb in my mouth, like a kid he was crushed in the opening of my throat (*b tbrn q<n>y <n>ḥtu[?] hw*)" (1.6 II, 15'-23'; cf. 1.4 VIII, 14-20). Traces of this tradition occur in the biblical texts as well, ensuring that this was the typical image of Mot/Sheol: "Which like the underworld he widened his throat (אשר הרחיב כשאול נפשו), and like Death is never satisfied (והוא כמות ולא ישבע)" (Hab 2:5); "Therefore the underworld gapes her throat (לכן הרחיבה שאול נפשה), opening wide her mouth" (Isa. 5:14). A similar description also appears in the narrative part of *KTU* 1.23, here in relation to the omnivorous descendants: "They set a lip to earth, a lip to heaven (*št špt lʿarš špt lšmm*). Then enter their mouth (*wy^{rb} bphm*) fowl of the sky and fish from the sea" (*KTU* 1.23, 61-63). This forms one of the numerous ties between the two parts of the ritual, thus linking the image of the hunger Mot with that of the "Goodly gods".²⁸

Alongside this typical feature, however, Mot bears another aspect in the Ugaritic literature, which has no parallel in either the biblical or Mesopotamian descriptions of the lords of the underworld. In two episodes of the Baal Cycle, so it appears, Mot is depicted as a passive and regenerated god, who associates with verbs relating to agriculture.²⁹

²⁸ For a detailed list of the parallel themes and vocabulary of the two parts of *KTU* 1.23, see Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 136-139.

²⁹ Because of these episodes, early commentators regarded Mot as the god of fertility and grain: see R. Dussaud, "La mythologie phénicienne d'après les tablettes de Ras Shamra," *RHR* 104 (1931), 353-408; C. Virolleaud, "Les cultes phéniciens et syriens au IIe millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne," *Journal des savants* (1931), 172-3. Among more modern scholars, it is also held by de

According to *KTU* 1.6 II 31-36, when Anat searches after the dead Baal, she finds Mot instead. She then dismembers him with a sword (*bḥrb tbqʿnn*), winnows him with a sieve (*bḥtr tdrynn*), burns him with fire (*bʿišt tšrpnn*), grinds him with millstones (*brḥm tḥnn*), and sows him in the field (*bšd tdrʿnn*). The birds could not consume his body (*šʿirh l rʿikl ʿšrm mnth l tkly npr[m]*),³⁰ so the pieces of his flesh start calling out to one another (*šʿir lšʿir yšḥ*). This final act appears to represent the first stage of his rejoining (the following ca. 40 lines are broken).

A similar description occurs in the fifth column, seven years after Mot's violently death and his reunion.³¹ Here, it is Mot himself who speaks (ll. 11-19):

[Day]s turn into months, months turn to years.

Then, in the seventh year, Mot ...raised his voice and declared:

"On account of you, Baal, I experienced abasement (*ʿlk Bʿlm pht qlt*);

On account of you, I experienced winnowing with a sword (*ʿlk pht dry bḥrb*)

On account of you, I experienced burning with fire (*ʿlk pht šrp bʿišt*);

On account of you, I experienced grinding with millstones (*ʿlk [pht tḥ]n brḥm*);

Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern*, 212, n. 1. Due to Mot's horrible character in other places, however, other scholars contend that Mot has no association with grain, and the references is purely metaphorical: see U. Cassuto "Baal and Mot in the Ugaritic Texts," *BIES* 9 (1942), 45-51 (translated into English in 1962, *IEJ* 12 [1962], 77-86); S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Ugaritic Fertility Myth: The Result of a Mistranslation," *IEJ* 12 (1962), 87-8; idem, "The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf," *Bib* 48 (1967), 481-90; idem, "The Killing of Mot in Ugaritic Myth," *Or* 41 (1972), 378-82; F.C. Fensham, "The Burning of the Golden Calf and Ugarit," *IEJ* 16 (1966), 191-3; Watson, "The Death of 'Death';"; N. Wyatt, "Atonement Theology in Ugarit and Israel," *UF* 8 (1976), 427; G. Mazzini, "The Torture of Mot: For a Reading of *KTU* 1.6 V 30-35," *SEL* 1 (1997), 23-7. This is still the prevalent view today. For recent discussion of these suggestions, with further bibliography, see N. Ayali-Darshan, "The Death of Mot and his Resurrection (*KTU* 1.6 II, V) in light of Egyptian Sources", *UF* 2018 (forthcoming).

³⁰ Most commentators interpret the Ugaritic preposition *l* here as an asseverative *l*, thus reading the sentence as a positive statement: "the birds consume his body." For further philological notes relating to the Ugaritic citations from *KTU* 1.6, see Ayali-Darshan, "The Death of Mot".

³¹ The motif of the of seven years as a time span between death and resurrection occurs also in relation to the death and resurrection of Baal or his enemies in *KTU* 1.12 (ll. 44-45), and cf. *KTU* 1.23, 66-67. Note that *KTU* 1.12 has links with both the Baal Cycle and *KTU* 1.23, bearing as well attributes of fertility/agriculture (see Schloen, "The Exile of Disinherited Kin", 217-20).

On account of you, I experienced winnowing with a sifter (*{lk} pht[dr]y bkbrrt*);

On account of you, I experienced withering in the field (*{lk} pht ġly bšdm*);

On account of you, I experienced sowing in the sea (*{lk} pht dr^s bym*)".

These episodes suggest that the Ugaritic Mot was a more complex divinity than usually assumed. In addition to his assertive aspect as the god who consumed Baal – in accordance with his terrifying nature as the lord of the underworld – he was also thought to be a passive dead god, whose corpse is dismembered by Anat and then re-assembled. Were we to take the description of Mot's death in the Baal Cycle on its own, the divine protagonist would be in effect the passive Mot, whom Anat abased, dismembered, burned, ground and winnowed for the sake of Baal. It is this aspect of Mot – that closely associated also with agriculture – which suits well with his role as a pruned god whose tendrils are fell to the ground in the vine ritual in *KTU* 1.23.

The two contradicted aspects of Mot – the horrible lord of the underworld who consumes, i.e., kills, human and gods on one hand, and the passive dying god who associated with agriculture on the other – are manifested in both the Baal Cycle and *KTU* 1.23. They thus were well familiar in Ugarit at the Late Bronze age. In terms of mythmaking, however, these two phases of Mot appear to have different origins. In light of Mot's name and attributes in Ugaritic and biblical literature, his passive and regeneration aspects seem to be secondary and late features. They might originate in a culture of which the lord of the underworld bears such of attributes and that had great influence on Ugarit during the Bronze Age. Of all the cultures around Ugarit, Egypt seems to be the most likely candidate.

D. The Egyptian material and its relation to Mot's features

The vast impact Egyptian culture had upon Ugarit is well attested. While it is most striking in visual representation, cultural influence is never restricted to one medium.³²

We may thus surmise in great confidence that – despite the lack of great evidence – the Ugaritic myth could have assimilate mythological elements from visual and oral Egyptian sources as well.³³

The story of Osiris, the Egyptian lord of the underworld, was documented in funeral and other ritual texts from the Old Kingdom onwards. Unlike Dumuzi and other Mesopotamian dying gods that were brought to the underworld, Osiris – like Mot – had been murdered through dismembering. When his members were reunited, he became lord of the underworld.³⁴ While the complete account of the extant Osiris myth was only composed in the late period, it has been preserved and is alluded to in various Egyptian genres—spells, hymns, and visual art and practices—going back to the third millennium BCE. This fact indicates its continuous existence among all strata of

³² For a concise survey and bibliography in relation to visual representation, see I. Cornelius, "The Iconography of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, eds. W.C.E. Watson and N. Wyatt (Leiden, 1999), 586–602; cf. V. Matošian, "Ugarit et l'Égypte: Essai d'interprétation de la documentation archéologique et perspectives de la recherche," in *Policies of Exchange. Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium BCE.*, eds. B. Eder and R. Pruzsinszky (Vienna, 2015), 35–84. In regard to literature, one of the most known examples is the identification of the Ugaritic Craftsman-god's (*Ktr-whss*) abode with *ḥkpt* (*ḥkpt arš nḥlthh*), the temple of the Egyptian Craftsman-god Ptah (Egyptian: *ḥwt k3 pth*), associated with Memphis: see W.F. Albright, "Recent Progress in North-Canaanite Research," *BASOR* 70 (1938), 22. Other mediums of Egyptian influence upon the Coastal Levant as a whole are also known, such as the figures of the Alphabetical letters and the demotic numbers.

³³ This anomaly appears to result, at least in part, from Egyptian literary conventions. Mesopotamian scribes committed myths to writing from a very early period; the Hurrians and Hittites following suit, thereby enabling modern scholars to compare their works with those written in Ugarit. As indicated by various texts, the Egyptians in contrast preserved the oral tradition of recounting myths for a much longer period, turning some of them into *belles lettres* on a large scale only in the thirteenth century b.c.e., towards the end of the New Kingdom period

³⁴ For references and bibliography, see **n.** .. above.

Egyptian society through millennia. Elsewhere I have dealt with the Egyptian texts in relation to Mot's death, a few citations will be thus sufficient here.³⁵

Of the Pyramid Texts, the reunion of Osiris' members and his revival is alluded, for example, in the following spell: "Your elder sister, who collected your flesh (*s3q.t if=k*) ... who sought you and found you on your side on the river-bank of *Ndit*" (PT 482, pyr 1008b-c); and likewise: "Stand up for me, Osiris! this is me, I am your son, I am Horus. I have come for you ... that I might revive you (*s'nh(=i) tw*), assemble your bones for you (*inq(=i) n=k qs.w=k*), collect your swimming parts for you (*s3q(=i) n=k nbit=k*), assemble your dismembered parts for you (*inq(=i) n=k dm3.wt=k*)" (PT 606, pyr. 1683–1684).³⁶

In the Coffin Texts: "I join the members of Osiris (*dmq=i 'wt Wsir*), I collect his bones (*s3q=i qs.w=f*), I make his seed flourish (*srwd=i mt.wt=f*), I make his flesh hale (*sw3d=i h'w=f*)" (CT 80 II 38); "'My sister,' says Isis to Nephtys, 'This is our brother. Come, that we might raise his head (*mi ts=n tp=f*). Come, that we might assemble his bones (*mi inq=n qs.w=f*). Come, that we might arrange his members (*mi hn=n 'wt=f*)'" (CT 74 I 306–307).³⁷

The murderous act of Seth against Osiris is clarified well also in non-funerary rituals. Thus, the *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days*, for example, identifies the thirteenth day of the third month of Inundation (*III 3ht*) as the day when Seth scattered (*sr*) Osiris'

³⁵ Ayali-Darshan, "The Death of Mot".

³⁶ For the Pyramid Texts, see K. Sethe, *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und photographien des Berliner Museums* (Hildsheim, 1969). The translation follows (with modifications) R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts Translated into English* (Oxford, 1969). cf. J.P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Atlanta, 2005). The latter (*ibid*, 236 n. 23) contends that the reference to "swimming parts" alludes to the story of Seth's scattering of Osiris' members into the Nile, as documented in later periods (see below). Faulkner (*ibid*) renders "soft parts" as signifying a specific type of organ.

³⁷ For the text and its translation of the Coffin Texts, [see n. below](#).

limbs.³⁸ A passage in pLouvre 3239, paraphrased in four other equivalents, indicates that Seth immersed (*mḥi=f*) Osiris' dissected organs (*[ḥ]ʿ.wt =f nb.t pš.t*) in the water (*ḥr mw*) of *ḏ3t*.³⁹

As was shown above, Osiris' link with crops is also well attested, from the Middle Kingdom onwards. During the New Kingdom, Osiris even believed to be the one who "created barley and emmer to revive the gods as well as the cattle (i.e., mankind) after the gods" (*ḥr iw ink ir it bdt r s'nh ntr.w mi n3 i3wt ḥr-s3 ntr.w*)" (14:12).⁴⁰ In this role, he was closely associated with the grain-beds and grain-mummies that symbolized the rejuvenation of the body and the crops.⁴¹

³⁸ C. Leitz, *Das Buch ḥ3t nhḥ ph.wy ḏt und verwandte Texte* (ÄA 55; Wiesbaden, 1994), 119–22. This scene corresponds both to the *Contendings of Horus and Seth* and the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual*: see *ibid*; J. Jørgensen, "Egyptian Mythological Manuals: Mythological Structures and Interpretative Techniques in the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual*, the *Manual of the Delta* and related texts" (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2013), 53–4. For the verb *sr* in the meaning of scattering, see J.F. Quack, "Review of: LEITZ, Tagewählerei," *LingAeg* 5 (1997), 282.

³⁹ É. Chassinat, "Le papyrus magiques 3237 et 3239 du Louvre," *RT: pour servir de bulletin à la Mission Française du Caire* 14 (1893), 14–16, ll. 5–7; cf. the versions of pNew York 35.9.21, pBerlin 3027, pBrooklyn 47.218.138 and at Hibis, in J.-C. Goyon, "Textes mythologiques, II: Les révélations du mystère des quatre boules," *BIFAO* 75 (1975), 356–9. In regards to the amorphous term *ḏ3t*, and the translation of the verb *mḥi* as denoting "immersion," see the bibliography cited in Ayali-Darshan 2018.

⁴⁰ For the Egyptian text, see A.H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (Brussels, 1932), 57. The translation follows E. Wente, "The Contendings of Horus and Seth," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. W. K. Simpson (New Haven, 2003), 101. For the maintenance of this tradition, see also spell 142 in the *Book of the Dead*: "Osiris, pre-eminent in goodly grain, Osiris the lord of the grain": see T.G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: Documents in the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*. (Chicago, 1960), 119. For additional examples from the Dendera temple, see A.M. Blackman, "Osiris as the Maker of Grain in a Text of the Ptolemaic Period," *AnOr* 17 = *StudAeg* 1 (1938), 1–3.

⁴¹ For this practice, see M.J. Raven, "Corn-mummies" *OMRO* 63 (1982), 7–38; J.F. Quack, "Saatprobe und Kornosiris," in *Das Heilige und die Ware: Eigentum, Austausch und Kapitalisierung im Spannungsfeld von Ökonomie und Religion*, ed. M. Fitzenreiter (London, 2007), 325–31. Cf. É. Chassinat, *Le mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak* (Cairo, 1966–1968); M.J. Raven, "Four Grain-Mummies in the Archaeological Museum at Cracow," *Materialy arceologiczne* 30 (1997), 5–11; K.J. Eaton, "The Festival of Osiris and Sokar in the Month of Choiak: The Evidence from Nineteenth Dynasty Royal Monuments at Abydos," *SAK* 35 (2006), 75–101.

In light of Osiris' unique character as the lord of the underworld, the cultural influence Egypt exerted upon Ugarit, and the fact that Baal, Mot's rival, had been identified with Seth, Osiris' assassin, it is suggested that Mot became an *interpretatio Ugaritica* of Osiris during the Late Bronze age.⁴² This explains his depiction as a dying and regenerated god, who is killed by his enemy Anat on behalf of Baal, and his association with agricultural activities, side by side of his description as a terrifying god. The process of adaptation was never fully completed in Ugarit, however; up until the destruction of Ugarit, Mot was not depicted as a fertility god *par excellence*. The most we find of this phenomenon are the budding signs of his identification with Osiris.⁴³

E. Viticulture and the dying and rising gods

As viticulture is one of the agricultural industry, we may expect that dying gods as those that were mentioned above, including Osiris, would have also tied to the vine and its produces. And indeed, they do. One of the well-known deities in this respect is the Sumerian god Ningišzida "The Lord of the Good Tree", whose abode was in the underworld. As his mythology was greatly influenced by that of dying gods, like

⁴² For former suggestions in regard to the possible influence of the Osirian cycle on Mot, cf. T.H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*² (New York, 1975), 325; P.L. Watson, "The Death of 'Death' in the Ugaritic Texts," *JAOS* 92 (1972), 64; J.C. de Moor, *A Cuneiform Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit*, (Leiden, 1987), 88, n. 430; Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods'", 271; Ayali-Darshan 2018..

⁴³ Yet, one may wonder whether the entity named Mot (Mót) that is mentioned in the cosmogony of Philo of Byblos as "the putrefaction of a watery mixture", from which "was born every seed of creation and [the] origin of all" (806:20-22; trans. A.I. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, A Commentary*, Leiden 1981, 97) reflects a complete assimilation of the ancient Mot with fertility features. Philo additionally mentions the young god Mouth (Moòθ), son of Elos-Kronos, who died in his childhood, was sanctified "and the Phoenicians call this one Thanatos and Pluto" (812:9-11). The latter reflects another aspect of the same ancient Mot. Cf. Baumgarten, *ibid*, 111-113.

Dumuzi, so was he dragged by demons to the underworld (ETCSL 1.7.3), where he was appointed as a "chair bearer of the underworld" (*gu-za-lá-ki-an-na / guzalâ eršetim*).⁴⁴ His relation to wine is manifested in an offering to "Ningišzida of the wine house (*é ĝeštin*)" that was served in Nippur of the Ur III period. Occasionally, Ningišzida was mentioned with the beer god Siriš or the beer-goddess Nin-kasi, while in Lagaš he was venerated with his spouse Geštinanna "the Vine of Heaven."⁴⁵ The latter, entitled "chief scribe of Arali" (*dub-sar-maḥ-a-ra-li-ke₄*),⁴⁶ is most well-known as the sister of Dumuzi, who according to the last lines of Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld replaces Dumuzi in the underworld every half of the year.⁴⁷ Baal himself, the dying and rising god of Ugarit, has a vizier named *Gpn-wU²gr* "Vine and Field," who was sent to the realm of Mot by Baal several times, and left it without harm (*KTU* 1.4, VII 52 – 1.5, III).

And what about Osiris, *the* lord of the underworld? Apart from his close association with corn, Osiris was also known as *nb irp* "Lord of the Wine". In fact, his association with wine, although less attested, is earlier than with corn. A spell from the Pyramid Texts thus states:

⁴⁴ See F.A.M. Wiggermann, "Transtigridian Snake Gods", in I.L. Finkel, and M.J. Geller, *Sumerian Gods and their Representations*, Groningen 1997. 33-55; idem, "Nin-ĝišzida", *RIA* 9: 368-373 ; Katz, *The Image*, 391-95; B. Alster and T. Jacobsen, "Ningišzida's Boat-Ride to Hades, in A.R. George and I.L. Finkel, *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W.G. Lambert*, Winona Lake 2000, 315-44.

⁴⁵ Wiggermann, "Nin-ĝišzida ", 370; Katz, *The Image*, 397-401.

⁴⁶ *Udughul* 284-86: see Katz, *The Image*, 174.

⁴⁷ Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld, ll. 407-409 (*ETCSL* 1.4.1): "You for half the year and your sister for half the year (*nin₉-zu mu MAŠ-am₃*); when you are demanded, on that day you will stay, when your sister is demanded, on that day you will be released". For the integration of this deviate theme in the Sumerian composition, see D. Katz, "How Dumuzi Became Inanna's Victim: On the Formation of "Inanna's Descent", *ActaSum* 18 (1996) 93-103; idem, *The Image*, 273-87.

"This Great One has fallen on his side, he who is in *Ndit* is felled (*hr r=f ti wr pw hr gs=f ndi r=f imi Ndit*). Your hand is taken by Re, your head is lifted up by the Two Enneads. Behold, he has come as Orion, behold, Osiris has come as Orion (*Wsir ii m s3h*), the Lord of the Wine during the *W3g*-festival (*nb irp m W3g*). 'My beautiful one,' said his mother, 'My heir,' said his father.... (PT 442, pyr. 819-20).

The Great One who felled on his side at *Ndit* is Osiris. The epithet "Lord of the Wine" was given to him (through Orion or independently) during the *Wag* festival, a funerary feast that has been celebrated at the beginning of the inundation.⁴⁸ This is also reflected in the following spell:

"The Lord of the Wine during the flood (*nb irp m w3h*), his seasons have recognized him (*ip.n sw t(r)=f*), his times have remembered him (*sh3.n sw nw=f*)..." (PT 577, pyr. 1524).

The common interpretation of "his seasons" and "his times" associates these with the seasonal ripening of grapes, which symbolizes the resurrection of Osiris.⁴⁹

Visually, the grapevine frequently decorates the Theban tombs of the New Kingdom, the most famous example being Sennefer's "tomb of vine" (TT 96).⁵⁰ It is

⁴⁸ See M.-C. Poo, *Wine and Wine Offering in the Religion of Ancient Egypt*, London 1995, 149-151; cf. S.A.B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*, III, New York 1952, 738-39. According to Griffiths, *The Origins*, 162-163, this appellation was given to Orion, who merged with Osiris in this occasion. For the *Wag* Festival, see P. Posener-Kriéger, "Wag-Fest", *LÄ* 6, 1135-1139. Sources from the New Kingdom attest to the existing of Osirian performances related to his dying and resurrection during the *Wag*-festival.

⁴⁹ Thus Poo, *Wine and Wine Offering*, 150, following K. Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexten* 5, Hamburg 1962, 478-79. Cf. Mercer, *ibid.* The association between Osiris, the grapes and the *Wag* Festival is explained by M.-C. Poo, "Liquids in Temple Ritual", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, W. Wendrich (ed.), Los Angeles 2010: <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz0025dxbr>, as the following: "The festival itself was a funerary feast that was probably aimed at the celebration of the resurrection of life that the inundation brought. Since Osiris epitomized resurrection, there may be a certain connection between Osiris as the god of vegetation and rejuvenation and the symbolic coming to life of the grapevine. The fact that wine production depended upon the coming of the inundation might therefore have fostered the meaning of wine as a symbol of life and rejuvenation."

⁵⁰ See the images in https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/nobles/sennefer/e_sennefer_01.htm ff..

also appears in the Nakht papyrus of the Book of the Dead (late 18th or early 19th dynasty). Russmann describes the image thus: "a grapevine at the corner of the lake (where vines were not normally planted) seems irresistibly attracted to the face of Osiris, which sometimes, as here, is colored green to symbolize the god's association with plant germination and growth".⁵¹ As this is not a traditional place for the planting of vines, its occurrence seems to bear also a symbolic significance. This is true in regard to the Ta-udja-re papyrus as well, where in all scenes the female deceased protagonist holds a branch of vine leaves.⁵² In later periods, Osiris was identified with Dionysus, the Greek Wine-god. Herodotus is the first to document it, already in the 5th century BCE (II.42.3–5, II.144.10). This proceeded in the Ptolemaic period and forward.⁵³

F. *Mt-wšr* in *KTU* 1.23

Back to *KTU* 1.23, it seems that more than Mot's initial image as a horrible god, it is his secondary image as a dead passive god, associated with agriculture, that suit to his role in this ritual. The violent act of the vine workers on Mot during the feast - which

⁵¹ E.R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum*, Berkeley 2001, 196-197 (# 100); cf. J.H. Taylor (ed.), *Journey through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Cambridge, Mass. 2010, 250-251 (# 128).

⁵² A. Piankoff and N. Rambova, *Mythological Papyri*, New York 1957, 133-142 (# 15). Cf. M. Heerma van Voss, "Die Ranken und die Toten im alten Ägypten," in J. Phillips et al. (eds.), *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Near East: Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell*, 1, San Antonio 1997, 235-237; M.R. Guasch-Jané, "The Meaning of Wine in Egyptian Tombs: the Three Amphorae from Tutankhamun's Burial Chamber", *Antiquity* 85 (2011), 853.

⁵³ Cf. L. Coulon, "Osiris chez Hérodote", in L. Coulon, P. Giovannelli-Jouanna and F. Kimmel-Clauzet (eds.), *Hérodote et l'Égypte: regards croisés sur le livre II de l'Enquête d'Hérodote: actes de la journée d'étude organisée à la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée*, Lyon, le 10 mai 2010, Lyon 2013, 177-181; M. Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia*, Oxford 2017, 409-411.

while taking place in the vineyard it wakes the vine from dormancy and improves its ripening - is clear only in light of these features of Mot.

In light of these, I would like to suggest a new interpretation of Mot's designation – *Mt-wšr* – occurring in *KTU* 1.23. The conventional explanation of the second element *wšr* divides this lexeme to the epithet *šr*, which is customarily understood as deriving from an Ugaritic root, *š-y-r*, *š-r-r*, or *š-r-y*, and a conjunctive *waw* that links it with the first element of the name, *mt*.⁵⁴ None of the suggested roots for *šr*, however, are consistent either with Mot's characteristics or Ugaritic linguistic usage. In some Ugaritic double names, on the other hand, a borrowed title without Ugaritic derivation is attached to the name of the local god in order to identify him with his foreign counterpart. This is apparently the situation in *Ktr-wHss*, *Nkl-wIb*, and perhaps also *ʿttr-wʿtpr*.⁵⁵ Referring to the close relation between Mot and Osiris noted above, *Wšr* may thus be the Ugaritic alphabetical transliteration of the Egyptian name *Wsir* (𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏) – namely, Osiris, while the conjunctive *waw* is assimilated into the initial *w*.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See n... above.

⁵⁵ *Hss* is probably a local adaptation of the Hurrian epithet/name of Ea: ^d*Ha-az-zi-iz-zi* (see N. Ayali-Darshan, "The Meaning of Hyn dhrš ydm in Light of a Parallel from Emar," *UF* 43 [2011–2012], 1–6), *Ib* a local adaptation of the Akkadian epithet of Ningal (who herself was borrowed in Ugarit and Syria as Nikkal): *Ilāt inbi* (see G.R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, Edinburgh 1956, 125, n. 4), and *ʿtpr* is a local adaptation of the Syrian god Aštābi (see D. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24e campagne (1961)*, Paris 1988, 252–253).

⁵⁶ The pronunciation of the first pictogram 𓏏 as *ws* in Egyptian was first mooted by A. Erman, "Zum Namen des Osiris", *ZÄS* 46 (1909), 92–95 in light of Coptic (ⲠⲮⲉⲣ–), Greek (Ὀσῖρις), and Aramaic (אוסרי, וסרי, אסרי) orthography, as well as Egyptian syllabic writing from the Ptolemaic period (𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏; 𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏). Some scholars recently argue (D. Lorton, "Considerations on the Origin and the Name of Osiris," *VA* 1 (1985), 125–126 n. 27; Y. Muchiki, "On the Transliteration of the Name Osiris", *JEA* 76 (1990), 191–194; J.P. Allen, "The Name of Osiris (and Isis)," *Ling. Aeg* 21 (2013), 9–14), in light of the same scripts, that the *aleph* at the beginning of the name Osiris was pronounced in ancient Egypt. However, the Egyptian syllabic and Coptic script from the 21st onward with *w*, and the limitation of the Aramaic alphabetical system to represent it, leave this conjecture valid; see J.F. Quack, "Sarapis—

Further, if this is the original meaning of the title *Wšr*, the bereavement and widowhood staffs that *Mt-Wšr* holds in his hands according to *KTU* 1.23 as a symbol of his original terrible features, might be in effect a local interpretation of the well-known image of Osiris holding his scepters, the crook (*hq3.t*) and flail (*nh3h3*), painted in local Ugaritic colors.⁵⁷

G. Summary

In seeking to elucidate the role that Mot plays in the vine ritual in *KTU* 1.23, parallel agricultural acts that serve in the ancient Near Eastern cultures were examined. While these symbolize the casting down of a certain god, they always relate to a god with attributes of fertility and regeneration. Since Mot at first glance does not suit this paradigm, scholars found it difficult to explain his appearance in the Ugaritic vine ritual of *KTU* 1.23. Close examination of the Baal Cycle reveals, however, that the Ugaritic Mot has in fact attributes of agriculture and resurrection. The contradiction these attributes raise with his horrible figure as the god who charges on annihilation appears to be resulted from an external influence upon the local Mot. Suggesting that the firm association between Seth and Baal have led in turn to attributing Mot some of Osiris' features, it may explain Mot's dismemberment and re-assemblage as well as his

Bemerkungen aus der Sicht eines Ägyptologen" (with B. Paarman), in N. Zenzen *et al.* (eds.), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung. Wechselnde Perspektiven auf die Antithese von ‚Ost‘ und ‚West‘ in der griechischen Antike* [Oikumene: Studien zur antiken Weltgeschichte 10], Heidelberg 2013, 231, n. 14. In regard to the pronunciation of the consonant *s* in the Egyptian name Osiris, there is not disputation, as Semitic languages rendered the Egyptian *s* as both *š* and *s*, the former corresponding also to the Neo-Assyrian transliteration of Isis (*-ešū*): see Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic*, Atlanta 1999.

⁵⁷ Cf. the above mentioned scene of Osiris in the Nakht papyrus of the Book of the Dead. In light of this we might identify the Ugaritic seated golden god that crowned with Osirian hat (today in the Damascus museum) as Mot rather than El.

association with the corn and grapevine. As the two gods never fully merged, however, Mot's old features as the god of bereavement and widowhood (whether in their original meaning or as a local interpretation of Osiris' staffs), remained alongside his association with fertility in general, and the vine in particular, in *KTU* 1.23.