ASPECTS OF STYLE IN KTU 1.23

Wilfred G.E. Watson

Elsewhere I have published an extensive study of final ("enclitic") -m (here abbreviated to FM) in the Ugaritic texts. There, individual occurrences were examined and classified under a series of headings. The intention here, instead, is to see how this particle functions within a text. KTU 1.23 has been chosen because it is one of a small group of texts where FM occurs a relatively large number of times. A comparison is made with KTU 1.12, where FM is also found several times, since the two texts are generally considered to be related. Other stylistic features of both texts are also discussed.

The text in question is very difficult. It has been the subject of monographs and doctoral dissertations and of course has given rise to many articles. In a recent and welcome study Hettema has presented an analysis from the aspect of narrative, otherwise somewhat neglected in Ugaritic studies. Here, instead, the focus is on the

---

1 W.G.E. Watson, *Final -m in Ugaritic*: AuOr, 10 (1992), 223-52. A further study is in preparation, with corrections and additional material.

2 For other texts with multiple occurrences of FM see W.G.E. Watson, op. cit., under section Q. Note, in particular, KTU 1.100 and 1.2.


6 See TEO 2, pp. 116-17. To avoid rehearsing yet again the bibliography and the minutiae of textual and philological discussion only the most recent works will be mentioned here. However, reference to earlier studies will be made where necessary.


use of FM, which is generally given little more than a passing mention, and textual
and philological problems are only discussed where necessary.9

The lines in KTU 1.23 where FM is present are as follows (the letters in brackets
are for ease of reference):

(A) Line 3
   ytnm. qrt. 'ly [ ]

If translated «who set a city on high» 10 ytnm would be a plural participle with «the
gracious gods» as antecedent. The alternative «Let glory be given to the exalted
ones» 11, would entail the assumption that qrt is masculine 12. A definitive rendering is
still required.

(B) Lines 9-11
   yzbnn. zbrm. gpn
   y$mdnn. $mdm. gpn
   y$ql. $mdth km gpn

The vine-pruners prune him,
the vine-binders bind him;
they cause his shoots to fall like a vine13.

FM is present in the first two lines only if zbrm gpn and $mdm gpn are to be
analysed as construct chains14. It would also be possible to translate «The pruners
prune him <like> a vine, the binders bind him <like> a vine» with twofold ellipsis of
the preposition k 15.

I would like to thank Dr Nicholas Wyatt of Edinburgh University for sharing his thoughts with me
on KTU 1.23.

CML2, 123; ARTU, 118; TOu I, 369.

Xella, Mito, 41-42; MLC, 440.563.

The cognates are Heb. y$qar and Arab. qiratu (CML1, 143).

Another possible reference to pruning may be line 25: $ps. $mspr. dlthm, «Shapshu was trimming
their tendrils» (if $mspr can be explained by Akk. $epēru, «to trim hair etc.»; on dl see already
Xella, Mito, 60). For the meaning of $dmt see N. Wyatt, A New Look at Ugaritic $dmt: JSS, 37
(1992),149-53.

See D.L. Dobrusin, The Third Person Masculine Plural of the Prefixed Form of the Verb in
Ugaritic: JANES, 13 (1981), 5-14 on 11-12.

So MLC, 441.
(C) Line 14

\[ \text{g}zrm\ g.\ tb \]
the lad with the dulcet voice,

though Del Olmo Lete takes \( gzrm \) to be plural («mancebos»).\(^{16}\)

(D) Line 16

\[ tlkm.\ rhmy.\ wtsd \]
Off went Rachmayu and hunted.

Even if \[ a\text{grt} \] is to be restored at the end of the line\(^{17}\) («R. went, [A.] hunted») the initial verb form is fem. sing. with an enclitic.

(E) Line 33

\[ t\text{'irkm.}\ yd.\ 'il.\ kym \]
Ilu's 'hand' grew as long as the sea.

(F) Line 40 (// 43-44 // 46-47)

\[ ymt.\ mt \]
\[ nhtm.\ htk \]
\[ mmnnm.\ mt.\ ydk \]
O my husband, my husband lowering your staff, relaxing the stick of your 'hand'.

Both forms are participles with FM. There now seems to be no doubt that the root here is \textit{mnn}^{18}.

(G) Line 13 // 28

\[ w\text{sd.}\ sd.\ 'ilm \]
and the field is the field of Ilu (?)\(^{19}\).

\(^{16}\) MLC, 441.
\(^{17}\) Following Th.H. Gaster: JAOS, 66 (1946), 52 and MLC, 442.
\(^{18}\) See most recently Renfroe, AULS, 128-30.
\(^{19}\) Or «the divine breast»: cf. Xella, \textit{Mito}, 53.
It is uncertain whether «gods» or «Ilu» is required here, but since the protagonist is Ilu, the second alternative seems more likely.

(H) Also uncertain are the occurrences of phm in lines 45 and 48; the presence of FM is indicated by lines 38-39 where phm has no additional m:

\[ y\text{ḥrt yšt lphm.} \]

he plucked and placed on the coals.

(I) In addition it is used with prepositions: km (line 11) and as bm // b in a formulaic couplet bm nšq whr bḥ bq hmhmt (lines 51 and 56 - cf. KTU 1.17 1 39-40) in an inversion of the expected b // bm sequence.

(J) Note also the FM in line 15 (šb°dm) where it cannot be adverbial -m because šb°d on its own (as in lines 12 and 14) means «seven times».

These occurrences, certain or otherwise, can be tabulated with respect to the presence of FM:
- in second and/or later occurrences: (H), (J) – but cf. the inversion in (I);
- in refrains or repeated passages: (B), (F), (G), (H);
- with line-initial verbs and participles: (A), (D), (E), (F);
- with line-initial noun in a construct chain: (C ?);
- with second word of line: (B), (G);
- with third word of line: (J).

The question to be answered now is: What function or functions does FM have at these particular junctures in the text? The whole text is structured in various ways: by the ruled lines, by the repetition of passages and by numerical parallelism (see below). In addition there seems to be an element of chiastic patterning. However, it is difficult to establish a connection between any of these structural patterns, such as they are, and the overall distribution of FM. It occurs after the exordium (in line 3, although the occurrence is uncertain) and three times after a ruled line (lines 13, 16, 28), though it is not present after ruled lines elsewhere (lines 8, 12, 21, 23 and 30). It is also used in refrains (lines 13 and 16 again: lines 40 = 43-44 = 47; 51 = 56). In line 14b (ĝzm n gb) its function may be to focus on «the lad» while the explanation for its

---

21 See discussion by Renfroe, *AULS*, 13: he makes no reference to FM.
23 J.W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Ugaritic*: UF, 6 (1974), 421-36, esp. 433. This is accepted by Hettema, *op. cit.*, 92, n. 46.
Aspects of style in KTU 1.23

presence in šb‘dm (line 15) and in phmm (lines 41 and 48) is that these are repetitions. In line 33 it may mark the resumption of narrative after an incantation but its function in lines 9-11 is not evident. Further, it is remarkably absent from most of the latter part of the narrative (lines 56b-75).

We can now turn to KTU 1.12. Apart from content there are the following similarities to 1.23:

(1) Frequent use of FM
   with a verb: hmdm (1.12 I 38-39; II 8); yhmdm and yhrmm (138.39);
   with a subject: ilm (I 28);
   with prepositions etc. idm // idm (II 29-30); bm // bm (I 12-13); k // km (I 10-11);
   km // km (I 7-8.30-32: II 39-40.46-47.54-55); km (II 14) and l // lm (II 56-57);
   uncertain: ugrm (I 25); tkm (I 41).

An initial verb with FM is very rare; elsewhere it occurs only in KTU 1.4 VII 15-16; 1.19 IV 29 and, curiously, in a letter (KTU 2.39+ 33-34). In text 1.23 there are four examples (see above), in 1.12 probably one (I 41). A line-initial noun as a subject is extremely rare; apart from our two texts (gzm g. tb 1.23:14 and ilm. yp ‘r. šmthm 1.12 I 28-29) it is found only in 1.6 VI 49 (ktrm. hbrk «Kutharu is your companion») which is a nominal phrase (as in 1.23).

(2) Use of number parallelism

In 1.23:

8//7 The dwellings (?) of the gods are EIGHT ...
SEVEN times ... (lines 19-20).

<5//10> <They sat and they counted:
to FIVE for growth
to TEN for full completion>.

24 So Hettema, op. cit., 87, though he makes no mention of FM.
25 So MLC, 482 («en el suelo»).
26 Schloen, op. cit., 215 and n. 42, understands the verb as line-initial and translates «Be oppressed», a D form (passive imperative) with enclitic m.
27 For the difficult verb here (tadm) see Renfroe, AULS, 77-78.
28 «On hésite à rendre gm par "huit", malgré le parallèle šb‘, "sept" à la l. suivante. Il n’est pas d’usage que les séquences numériques se présentent dans l’ordre décroissant» - TOu II, 372, n. t. However, the chiastic pattern may have influenced the sequence here. Also the use of 6//4 in a Sumerian text (B. Alster: RA, 79 [1985], 131 rev. 1 1r-4) suggests such a sequence was not impossible. See, further, the sequences 8 + 1 and 6 + 3 in 4Q186.
29 Restored after line 51 as implied by the line of reasoning used by D.T. Tsumura, A Problem of Myth and Ritual Relationship - CTA 23 (UT 52): 56-57 Reconsidered: UF, 10 (1978), 387-95.
5/10 They sat and they counted:
to FIVE for growth
to TEN for full completion (lines 56-57).

In 1.12:
7/8 SEVEN years
and EIGHT cycles of time,
for he was clothed as with a cloak in his brother's blood,
as with a mourning-garment with his kinsman's blood.

7/8 For, SEVEN for his SEVENTY brothers he [ ]
70/80 EIGHT for EIGHTY (II 44-49)30.

Parallelism between numbers occurs sporadically in other Ugaritic texts31 but
nowhere else is its use so dense or systematic.

(3) Dialectal variations - with both texts using variant spellings for standard forms:

1.23: both dd (line 61) and zd (line 24) as well as perhaps šd (lines 13 and 27) for dd 32 - all meaning «breast».
1.12: z for š i.e. /t/ (passim) and mlbr (1 21.35) for mdbr.

The comparative features listed above do not prove the similarity between KTU
1.12 and 1.23 but to a certain extent they reinforce it33. In respect of both style and
content, then, the two texts have much in common, though it would be much too spe­
culative to suggest that they had the same author.

30 Unless these numbers are 77 // 88 as in KTU 1.5 V 19-21.
31 See especially Y. Avishur, tqbwlwt hmsprym bmqr' wbsprwt hšmyt šl hmr zb hqmwn [«Number
Parallelism in the Bible and in Ancient Near Eastern Literature»] [in Hebrew]: Seventh World
32 For a possible function of these variations in 1.23 cf. Hettema, op. cit., 89.
33 Both texts exhibit a high frequency of words ending in -m (whether FM or not). In 1.23, of the
approximately 164 words preserved, about 51 or just under a third, end in -m. Of the 230 or so
words preserved in 1.12, 56 or about one quarter of the total end in -m.