

KTU 1.24 (= RS 5.194):15
A REVISED READING*

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Introduction.

According to the most recent ‘critical edition’ of KTU 1.24 (= RS 5.194) by Dietrich, Loretz and Sanmartín (KTU², 1995:69-70), the current reading for line 15 is:

𐎎 . l *k̄rt* . <bnt> *hll*[sn]nt¹.

Excluding reconstructions, the Editors of KTU² record eleven signs and two word dividers preserved on line fifteen:

𐎎 . l *k̄rt* . *hll*[]nt.

Eight signs and two word dividers are considered clearly legible (*italic*), while the remaining three (roman) are recorded as damaged or barely legible².

It is commonly agreed that KTU 1.24:15 preserves the fragments of a poorly executed invocatory formula to the Kotharat, the Ugaritic goddesses of conception and childbirth³. Thus the editorial restoration of the perceived scribal omission <bnt> «daughters»⁴ and the reconstruction of the epithet [sn]nt, «bright ones» in the *lacuna*. This approach makes sense of a difficult section of the tablet and is attractive in that it offers a structure to the damaged portion of the tablet between lines 6-15; opening and closing with an invocation to the Kotharat, with a further invocation in the central position (KTU 1.24:6, 11 and 15)⁵.

* I would like to thank Jay Ellis at Harvard for reading a draft of this paper and offering some helpful suggestions, which I have included.

¹ Wyatt, RTU (1998: 338) translates this line: «O Kotharat, <daughters of> Ellil, [the Brigh]t Ones!».

² I have used the system for transliteration utilized by KTU² (1995: vi and xi).

³ It is possible our scribe mistook the final letter of the DN *k̄rt* for the final sign of *bnt*. See KTU 1.24: 5-6, where the scribe has possibly erred in his execution of the DN *k̄rt* (text: KTU², 1995: 69): ⁵*td bt .rt . hr[xx]* ⁶*hrt . l bnt . hll . [snnt]*.

⁴ This emendation first appears, without any comment, in Gaster (1938:84).

⁵ See the latest translation of Wyatt, RTU (1998:337-38) for this structure.

Revised Reading.

Inspection of a recently acquired set of photographs of KTU 1.24 (see **Plates 1-3**)⁶ reveals that the reading currently accepted for line 15 differs from the text preserved on the tablet. My preliminary examination of the photographs is presented below. Interpretation of the new reading awaits a full collation of the tablet, so none will be offered here⁷. This paper intends merely to make this new reading available as quickly as possible.

The revised reading for KTU 1.24:15 is:

𐤀 .laṛtxl[𐤍]nt

Ten signs and one word divider are preserved. Six signs (𐤀, *l*, *a*, *t*, *n* and *t*) are clearly legible, while three (*e*, *t* and *l*) are effaced but legible. One sign (*x*) is unclear (cf. **Pl. 1**), while approximately one third (± 25 mm) of the line has been destroyed between the second *l* and the *n*, written on the right edge corner of the tablet (**Pl. 2**). The remaining sign, *t*, is located on the tablet's edge (**Pl. 3**).

Notes on Text.

a The top edge of the second horizontal wedge is slightly effaced. It is clear from the photograph (Pl. 1) that our scribe has impressed two wedges in what appears to be the correct sequence and arrangement for *a*. Comparison with the *a* and *k* on line 16 and the *n* on line 17 (Pl. 1) confirm our identification⁹. Virolleaud read here three wedges and indicated effacement to the upper and lower left-hand pair (1936, Pl. XXV). He expressed no doubts over his identification of *k* in the notes accompanying his transliteration and translation (1936:215). Herdner (CTA, 1963:103, n.7) correctly identified only two wedges, but concluded, «le scribe a omis, par erreur, un des clous du *k*»¹⁰. Herdner's observation was either overlooked, or rejected by KTU¹ & ², who read, apparently, a perfectly legible *k*, while de Moor and Spronk (CARTU, 1987:60), record

⁶ These images were supplied by the West Semitic Research Project on CD-ROM. Many thanks to Marilyn Lundberg for her assistance in acquiring these images and to Professor Wayne Pitard for permission to publish the plates.

⁷ For interpretation of the evidence, see my forthcoming commentary on KTU 1.24, which will also include the results of a personal inspection of the tablet, currently residing in the Louvre (AO 19.995).

⁸ The damaged section of the tablet extends for approximately 25 mm.

⁹ Jay Ellis (private communication) agrees: «For the *a* I don't particularly like the alignment of the two wedges, but I do agree it is not a *k*. Comparison between the *k* elsewhere on the tablet and the *a* (and even the *n*) indicate that it should be an *a* because the collapsing of the first wedge is indicative of the first wedge in a sequential line of wedges. So, it must be an *a*».

¹⁰ Herdner (TOU I. 1974:393) makes no mention of this in her translation, apparently perceiving the error to be minor, and follows the common interpretation of the line.

the same effacement as Virolleaud, but also ignore Herdner's lost wedge. The following summary of "critical readings" for line 15 illustrates this point¹¹:

NK (Pl. XXV)	◌.lkrthl[]nt
NK (1936: 215)	◌.l kšrt hl{h (?) . l sn}nt. ¹²
UT 77	◌.l kṛt <bnt> hl[l sn]nt
CTA 24	◌.l k!ṛt <bnt> hl[l sn]nt
KTU ¹ 1.24	◌.l kṛ*t hll* [snn]w*t
CARTU	◌.lkṛt <bnt> hll [sn]nt
KTU ² 1.24	◌.l lṛt . <bnt> hll[sn]nt.

Herdner's conclusion regarding this sign may indeed be correct, but KTU² records no instances on any of the published tablets where a scribe has made such an error. The writing of *a* instead of *k* in KTU 1.24:15 is unusual¹³, but not impossible¹⁴.

r Minor damage to the sign as a result of erosion is evident, but there is no doubt that the sign is a *r*.

t Difficult reading. Erosion has almost obliterated this sign. The second word divider, read by the editors of KTU², is not apparent in **Pl. 1**. A slight impression in the tablet which extends diagonally upwards from the end-point of the *t* may be the remains of a word divider, but looks, rather, to be the result of erosion or damage. It would be premature, given the irregular use of the word divider throughout this tablet, to read one here.

x Written slightly higher than line. All previous collations read *h*, but effacement to this sign suggests caution over a secure identification. An upper and lower horizontal wedge are both visible, with space between for what appears to be the faint traces of a central wedge, which may begin slightly before the upper and lower wedges, suggesting a *g* rather than the perceived *h*. A further possible, but unlikely, identification is the sign *p*. We should not rule out the possibility (however unlikely) that the top horizontal

¹¹ Key to editions: NK = *editio princeps*, Virolleaud (1936); UT 77 = Gordon (1965); CTA 24 = Herdner (1963); KTU¹ & ² = Dietrich - Sanmartín (1976; 1995); CARTU = de Moor & Spronk (1987).

¹² Virolleaud originally transliterated Ug. *t* with *š*, and *š* with *š*.

¹³ The sign *k* is commonly confused aith *w*, or *r*: *k~w*: KTU 1.1:II:9; 1.14:IV:42; 1.17:I:20; 4.4:5 (see also KTU 3.9:4-5 [KTU², 1995: 203, n. 1]); *k~r*: KTU 1.6:VI:57; 1.17:VI:47; 1.65:4; 1.114:12; *r~w*: KTU 4.34:2.

¹⁴ Del Olmo Lete (1991: 74, n. 63) proposes that the reading *kṛt* (KTU 1.148: 25) is a scribal error for *aṛt*, giving us a possible instance where a scribe has mistakenly impressed *k* instead of *a*. There are, incidentally, two occasions where *k* has been omitted (KTU 1.5:I:4; 2.75:8), and one where *k* has been written where it is unrequired (KTU 1.12:II:26).

wedge, is the remains of a damaged sign on line 14, or the result of damage to the tablet creating the impression of a wedge, which would allow the identification of a *t* here¹⁵.

The damaged section of this line, in which the text has been obliterated, extends for approximately 25 mm between the second *l* and *n*, clearly legible on the tablet's edge (PI. 2). The third *l*, read by KTU², is not apparent in PI. 1.

n Written on the corner of the right hand side of the obverse (PI. 2). A slight 'bump' above the first horizontal suggests the possibility of a *w*, but the photograph shows this is the edge of a score on the edge of the tablet which has removed text, as may be seen more clearly in PI. 3. Here, Ellis disagrees:

«For the *n*, I am not unsure. The damage above the *n* does not look like it removed a wedge (thus the sign would not be a *w*), but this is possible from the remains and the alignment bothers me. The first wedge is inserted in such a way that I would expect the sign to be a *w*. The remaining two look like normal sequentials one would find on the *w* (or *n* for that fact)».

Conclusion.

My collation of KTU 1.24:15 proposes emendation to the current values assigned to the third and seventh signs on this line (*k* > *a*, *h* and *x*), and rejection of KTU²'s reading of a third *l*, and second word divider:

◌.laṛtxl[]nt.

Further interpretation of the evidence will be attempted in a forthcoming commentary on KTU 1.24 (= RS 5.194) currently under preparation.

¹⁵

Ellis' comments here are particularly interesting: «This could, as you say, be almost anything with a horizontal. However, I believe it is a *t* as well. If you look at the sequence *ttl* in line 14, the first *t* and the second *t* (if this is a *t* and that is a wedge), is probably from line 14 ... The small wedge above the second *t* (again, if this is a *t* and that is a wedge), is above the orientation and, while it is not impossible that it goes with line 15 (compare the *ḫ* below), I think it is unlikely. Given the comparison from line 14, i.e., *ttl*, I think that is more probable».

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PLATES
KTU 1.24 (= RS 5.194):12-17



Plate 1 (obverse)



Plate 2 (side)



Plate 3 (edge)