Walther Zimmerli's studies on the recognition formula and the so-called Erweiswort in Ezekiel have furnished Old Testament scholarship as never before with a thorough insight into the origin and function of this literary form.¹ For the roots of this locution, i.e. acknowledgement of a certain state of affairs (Erkenntnisaussage), Zimmerli refers to ways in which 'evidence' is acquired in daily life and in the cult through the mantic arts of the priest.² The method of the Philistine priests in the story of the Ark (1 Sam. vi) is especially instructive. There the problem is how to clarify the question: is the Ark the cause of all the trouble in the Pentapolis, or is the presence of the Ark and the outbreak of the plague a pure coincidence? The proof will be the return of the Ark on a wagon, pulled by two milch-cows: 'If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-Shemesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm; but if not we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance' (1 Sam. vi 9). In some trials a clear alternative sign is formulated (compare, for instance, the agreed token in 1 Sam. xiv 9-10), but mostly the negative outcome is implicitly supposed if a trial should fail. Such a test by means of a token is often tried to clarify unclear situations. Are the brothers of Joseph trustworthy people or not (Gen. xlii 33-34)? Is Gideon really the one by whom Israel will be delivered (Judg. vi 36 ff.)?

Zimmerli points to the fact that this way of learning the will of God is used frequently in the early stage of Israel's history: "Auf dem religiösen Boden bekommt die Erkenntnisaussage dagegen wohl früh besonderes Gewicht im Zusammenhang der Befragung Gottes. 1. Sam 6 lässt vermuten, dass sie auch in der außertestamentlichen Zeichenschau Heimatrecht hatte.‖ The text he quotes is, however, the only example to support this view apart from a general reference to the science of omens in Mesopotamia.⁵

I am of the opinion that a passage from the Ugaritic myth of Ba' al, which tells about a trial by means of an incubation dream, may support his view. I refer to the well-known text KTU 1.6 ( = CTA 6). III.1-13. The reason why our text has not been connected before with this mantic method of trial by means of a sign may be the result of two complications: 1) the fact that the alternative token is lacking in the preserved text, and 2) the fact that the agreed token

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is disguised in the form of a symbolic dream. This oracular dream has in some degree blurred the fact that it is itself part of a trial by a dream which is to determine whether Ba'\(\text{al}\) is dead or still alive. On this point, Zimmerli's investigations and the Old Testament parallels help us to understand this passage better, whereas the Ugaritic text, in turn, confirms Zimmerli's views.

Unfortunately, the comprehension of the text of KTU 1.6.III in its context is complicated by two big gaps in the first three columns. So much is clear, however: that after Ba'\(\text{al}\)'s burial and 'A\(\text{ttar}\)'s temporary installation as king in KTU 1.6.I the goddess 'Anat is again searching for her beloved Ba'\(\text{al}\) in KTU 1.6.II. She does not seem to be convinced of Ba'\(\text{al}\)'s death and even Mot's reply appears to her unsatisfactory. Apparently, the 'destruction of Death' gives her the conviction that Ba'\(\text{al}\) is alive somewhere. It is this conviction that is put to the test in a provoked incubation dream of El:

\begin{align*}
\text{a) And if Ba'\(\text{al}\), the Almighty, is alive} & \\
\text{b) in a dream of the Benevolent, El, the Good-Hearted,} & \\
\text{c) the skies will rain oil,} & \\
\text{d) and I shall know that Ba'\(\text{al}\), the Almighty, is alive,} & \\
\text{and if his Highness, the Lord of Earth, exists,} & \\
\text{in a vision of the Progenitor of creation (?)} & \\
\text{the wadies will run with honey,} & \\
\text{that his Highness, the Lord of Earth, exists.} & \\
\end{align*}

Compare this passage with the structure of Gideon's trial (Judg. vi 36-37):

\begin{align*}
\text{a) If it is thou, who wilt deliver Israel by my hand...} & \\
\text{b) Behold, I spread a fleece of wool on the freshing floor.} & \\
\text{c) If there is dew on the fleece alone} & \\
\text{and it is dry on all the earth,} & \\
\text{d) then I shall know that thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand...} & \\
\end{align*}

and further the alternative proof in the words of Moses (Numb. xvi 28 ff.):

Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me...

If these men die the death of all men, or if they are visited by the fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.

But if the Lord creates something new,