

SEMITISTIK

Halayqa, I. K. H. (Hrsg.): A Comparative Lexicon of Ugaritic and Canaanite. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008. S. 573. Alter Orient und Altes Testament Band 340, Lw. 118,00 €. 978-3-934628-95-3. Bespr. Giovanni Mazzini, Pisa.

The book under review is a revised version of a PhD dissertation submitted by the author in 2006. The work is essentially a lexicon in which 1643 Ugaritic lexemes are compared to possible Canaanite parallels. There were two major objectives to the investigation: 1) to contribute to the lexicography of Ugaritic and the Canaanite languages, 2) to revise the debate on the position of Ugaritic amongst the Northwest Semitic languages.

In the introduction (pgs. 9–31) the scholar surveys the principal theories on the classification of Ugaritic focusing on the “Canaanite hypothesis”, “Northwest hypothesis”, “Amorite hypothesis” and “Arabic hypothesis”. Some comments on the discussion of these hypotheses need to be made.

Regarding the “Canaanite hypothesis”, Halayqa lists the *pōlel* stem (as the intensive stem of the the middle *w/y* verbs) amongst the distinctive morphological isoglosses characterising Ugaritic and Canaanite. However, this stem also occurs in Ancient Aramaic (e.g. Tell Fekheriye inscription, lines 10, 11) and it should be considered a Northwest Semitic innovative trait. Halayqa includes the case endings as an Ugaritic/Canaanite isogloss while this is a conservative feature of Semitic.

In the discussion on the “Northwest hypothesis” Halayqa remarks that the pronominal forms of III sg. *m./pl. m./du hwt, hyt, hmt, hmt* are characteristic of Ugaritic and not attested in Canaanite. This feature should be considered a conservative feature because the enlargement *-t* can be found in both Akkadian and Eblaite and it is also preserved in Ethiopic.

Furthermore, Halayqa specifically emphasises Sivan’s critical remarks to Tropper’s 1994 article in which Ugaritic was classified as a Canaanite language. It is surprising that Halayqa appears to ignore Tropper’s updated revision of the subject in his “Ugaritische Grammatik” and his personal “Replik” to Sivan.¹

In treating the “Amorite hypothesis” Halayqa relies on the well-known 1941 article by Goetze, while the very recent revision of this hypothesis by Israel should have been considered. Finally, Halayqa states in relation to the “Arabic hypothesis”, that Ugaritic was connected to Arabic and that: “such a view was refused firstly by chronological, geographical considerations and, secondly, by Renfroe’s study” (pg. 15). It should be noted that the book by Renfroe² hardly addresses the issues of classification as

it is essentially a lexicographical enquiry.³ Furthermore, the striking linguistic affinities between Ugaritic and Classical Arabic are a significant aspect which is crucial in the identification of the so-called “Central Semitic”, as demonstrated by Hetzron.

In fact, the connection between Northwest Semitic (in particular Ugaritic as its earliest representative) and the languages of the Arabian Peninsula is a recent development in the Semitic studies. In particular, the linguistic data from ancient South Arabia have opened a new important field of research⁴ that will make a significant contribution to a revision of the classification of the Semitic languages.⁵ Halayqa simply points out that: “in other cases the Ugaritic lexemes have been separately compared with their cognates in Eblaite, Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac, Arabic, Modern South Arabic and Ethiopic” (pgs. 15–16). The only reference to Ancient South Arabian occurs in footnote 58 in which both Ancient South Arabian and Modern South Arabic are mentioned erroneously under the label “South Arabic”. In this regard, Halayqa cites an article by G. Mazzini, “The Term *Àbr* in KTU 1.40. A Possible Arabic-Ugaritic Isogloss” (SEL 18, 2001, 51–53) and a second by G. Rendsburg, “Modern South Arabic as a Source for Ugaritic Studies” (JAOS 107, 1987, 623–628), which do not deal with lexical parallels between Ugaritic and Ancient South Arabian.

On pgs. 20–21 the author accounts for the exclusion of Akkadian, Amorite, Aramaic, Arabic and Ethiopic in the lexical comparison with Ugaritic. Considering that one of the major purposes of the book was to discuss the position of Ugaritic within Northwest Semitic, the choice to exclude Aramaic is questionable. Halayqa also states that: “Additionally, the Aramaic corpus of inscriptions is still limited (...)” (pg. 20). If the scholar refers to the Ancient Aramaic inscriptional corpus, this is certainly limited, but the same argument should then also apply for the even more limited Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite corpora, which are included in this work. Furthermore, the author affirms that: “the oldest Aramaic inscription (Zekor inscription) comes from the 10th century B.C.” (pg. 17). If the author refers to the inscription of ZKR (KAI 202), there is wide agreement amongst scholars that this document dates to the very end of the 9th / beginning of the 8th B.C.⁶ Moreover, the name of the king ZKR may have been Zakkur on the basis of the Neo-assyrian transcription occurring in the Antakya stela,⁷ while the vocalisation proposed by the author “Zekor” is inconsistent. The author also states that: “In contrast to Canaanite, it is not evident that Aramaic shares significant linguistic features with Ugaritic” (pg. 20). In this regard an important essay by S. Segert could have been discussed.⁸ Note that in the Tell Fekheriye inscription the *pōlel* pattern is used, as was mentioned previously. In this regard, it should be mentioned that, in addition to the lexical data of the Canaanite languages, Halayqa also uses the non-Akkadian lexical material in the tablets from Emar because “it would be very

appropriate to affiliate the Northwest vocabularies from Emar to the Canaanite branch” (pg. 17). This statement is very questionable because the linguistic position of the genuine language of Emar is a problematic issue and Halayqa does not account for this. Strong evidence against his interpretation is the preservation of the Proto-Semitic phoneme *w-* in beginning of word (which is developed into *y* in Ugaritic and Canaanite).⁹

As was stated at the outset, the lexicon (pgs. 32–381) includes 1643 Ugaritic lexemes with Canaanite parallels. Every entry is provided with a translation but there is no discussion on the term’s original context. Halayqa has used Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín’s Ugaritic dictionary as the basic lexical source for Ugaritic and he has isolated from that source “1643 lexemes which have been identified as having Canaanite cognates” (pg. 26).

A review cannot do justice to a lexical investigation comprising 1643 lexemes. Nevertheless, a close analysis of one section of the lexicon provides a sample indicative of the treatment of this material.

Under letter Alef, 106 roots are assembled (pgs. 32–72). According to Halayqa these lexemes are common to both Ugaritic and Canaanite. In other words, these lexemes can be considered lexical isoglosses and therefore diagnostic for linguistic classification. However, it is surprising to note that the following roots are included: ’B (father), ’BD (to destroy), ’BN (stone), ’DM (to be red), ’DN (ear), ’GR (to hire), ’H (brother), ’HD (to take), ’HR (behind/afterwards), ’KL (to eat), ’L (god), ’LMNT (widow), ’LP (thousand), ’M (female servant), ’MM 1 (mother), ’MM 2 (elbow), ’NT (woman), ’NP (nose), ’RH (bull/cow), ’RK (to be long), ’RN (chest), ’RW(Y) (ferocious beast), ’RŠ (earth), ’SR (to tie), ’Š(Š) (fire), ’ŠK (testicle), ’TW (to come), ’YL (deer/ibex). These are well-known Semitic roots which are attested in almost every Semitic language and they only demonstrate that both Ugaritic and the Canaanite languages belong to Semitic.

Note that under the root ’H (brother), lexical item ’ah (noun), Halayqa also reports the meaning “companion, colleague, equal”, but he does not include the passage KTU 1. 18 I, 24 (’at ’ah w-’an ’a[ht-k] from the poem of Aqhat) in which Anat invites Aqhat to hunt. Here, the goddess addresses the hero with the term ’ah but she does not refer to blood brotherhood. Xella has demonstrated¹⁰ that the text alludes to an equal level of partnership expressed through the metaphorical use of the concept of brotherhood, as was typical of the diplomatic language of the Late Bronze Age. Under the root ’HD (to take), Halayqa mentions the lexical item m’ihd with this interpretation: “a place name < harbour, port”. The connection with the meaning “harbour, port” is essentially based on syll. Ug. *ma-ah-ha*[du] occurring in the polyglot vocabulary published in Ugaritica V, 243, which appears to have that meaning. However, the context of KTU 4. 335, 26 where m’ihd occurs is not completely clear. Nevertheless Halayqa renders the term “port”, proposing a parallel with the

term *mhz* occurring in two Neo-Punic inscriptions (KAI 124, 2; 130, 3; 5). The latter, however, is interpreted as “market place”. The author also mentions the parallel with *māhōzāh* “harbour” attested in Biblical Hebrew. This comparison, however, is problematic because the term occurs only once in the Old Testament, Psalm 107, 30 (as a construct state *māhōz*; the form *māhōzāh* is unattested), and its interpretation in this context is unclear. Another attestation of this term might be in Isaiah 23, 10, only if one accepts the correction of the term *mēzaḥ* (shipyard) occurring in the Masoretic text. In this regard, consideration of an article by Borger¹¹ could have been useful. Additionally, a *maqṭal* nominal pattern (*ma-ḥa-zi*) attested in a Babylonian hymn to Šamaš with a possible meaning “harbour, port” may also have been mentioned, although the interpretation of the passage is controversial.¹² The occurrence of the same nominal pattern *m’ḥd* in Ancient South Arabian with the meaning “basin, reservoir” should also be taken into account.

A second set of roots included in this section reflects an archaic layer of Semitic. This is not surprising considering that Ugaritic is a language of the second millennium and that most of its lexical material is provided by literary texts. Some examples can be discussed here: nouns ’alp (bull/ox) and ’imr (lamb/sheep), are typical of Northwest Semitic (they are attested in Aramaic) and they are very common in Akkadian (remarkably root ’LP is also preserved in Soqotri, which is a conservative language). Adverb/conjunction ’ap (even, also), is typical of Northwest Semitic and is also attested in Eblaite. Noun ’ap’ (viper), is attested in Eblaite, Classical Arabic and in Ethio-Semitic. Noun ’ipd (type of dress), occurs in Akkadian and Eblaite.¹³ Root ’PY (to bake) is typical of Northwest Semitic (it occurs in Aramaic) and it is also common in Akkadian and Eblaite. Noun ’urbt can be compared with Eblaite *ur-pū-um* and more precisely with the form *ù-rí-ba-tum*.¹⁴ Root ’RŠ (to ask), is attested in Akkadian. Noun ’arz (Syll. Ug. *ar-zu*) is typical of Northwest Semitic (it is attested in Aramaic) and it also occurs in Eblaite.

A third set of roots included in this section is typical of West Semitic and is only useful for the classification of Ugaritic within West Semitic. Some examples include ’MN (to be faithful) and ’NŠ (human being). Halayqa includes the root ’PQ, with the meaning “to escape”, make oneself scarce, leave”, while the reviewer prefers the alternative interpretation “to constrain”¹⁵ which can also be paralleled with Ancient South Arabian.¹⁶

It is also remarkable that Halayqa includes terms such as ’a/irgmn, ’an, ’ank, ’at, ’atm. The term ’a/irgmn, meaning “payment, tribute, offering” is a well-known word in many languages of the ancient Near East including the non-Semitic ones and was used as an “international” technical term designating a type of “tribute/offering” and the “purple”. Although it is considered a genuine Semitic root by Cohen in the *Dictionnaire des racines sémitique* (vol. 1, 32), its origin is debated.¹⁷ It is clear that this term is particu-

larly unsuitable for linguistic classification. The terms 'an, 'ank, 'at, 'atm are part of the pronominal system of Ugaritic and they are usually discussed as morphological features rather than lexical ones.

A further observation should be made on the importance of a philological and epigraphic approach to the lexical enquiry. Halayqa considers the lexeme 'abyn (from the root 'BY) as an adjective with the meaning "poor, wretch, insolent" and according to the scholar this term occurs in both KTU 1. 17 I, 16 and KTU 1. 22 I, 27. However, recent revisions of both tablets appear to demonstrate that in KTU 1. 17 I, 16 the correct reading is 'abynt¹⁸ while in KTU 1. 22 I, 27 it is possible to read only 'aby [... because the text is fragmentary¹⁹. Consequently, the latter term is uncertain while the former one is a noun, not an adjective. The fact that 'abynt is a noun in KTU 1. 17 I, 16 implies that the other term 'anh, arranged in parallelismus membrorum with 'abynt (line 17), is a noun,²⁰ which Halayqa interprets as an adjective. At any rate, although Halayqa compares the term 'abynt to the Biblical Hebrew 'æbiôn, a possible parallel can be provided by the form abiyānum occurring in some letters from Mari (ARMT X 23, 44; 44, 10), which has been interpreted as a non-Akkadian, old Amorite word.²¹ This parallel may point to the Amorite layer reflected in Ugaritic.

Despite these observations, the reader will also find in this section some interesting lexical material which is only shared by Ugaritic and the Canaanite languages. The following lexical items can be mentioned here.

The root 'DM (human being). However, note that the term 'dm is also attested in Ancient South Arabian with the technical meaning of "vassal", which may have originated from the same basic idea occurring in Ugaritic/Canaanite.

The noun 'adn (lord, master), the root 'DR (wonderful, noble), the interjection 'ahl.

The plural form 'ilnm from the root 'il (god). This form is enlarged with the suffix -n- which is an isogloss shared exclusively with Phoenician.

The noun 'ulp (chef). Note that the parallel with Biblical Hebrew *'allûp* indicates a phenomenon of vocalic development (vowel harmony) peculiar to Ugaritic.²²

The verb form 'any (to sigh). This occurs only once in KTU 1. 3 V, 35. The parallel with the Ancient South Arabian form 'nyt is inconsistent because the context where this term occurs (R 3956 = Haram 35, 6) is unclear and the meaning "to sigh" does not appear to be suitable. By contrast the noun *t'a/unt* occurring in KTU 1. 1 III, 14 and 1.3 III, 24 interpreted by Halayqa "Seufzen, Stöhnen, Traurigkeit" appears to be problematic and in the reviewer's opinion the meaning "converse"²³ is more reasonable.

The noun 'nyt (ship). The parallel with *a-nu* "utensil" from Emar (and a possible comparison with Old Egyptian) may be connected to an archaic Afro-Asiatic root 'N designating "wood".

The verb form 'mš (to be strong). Note that this form occurs in KTU 2. 33, 5, while the occurrence of this term at line 39 is uncertain.

The noun in Syll. Ug. *úr-nu*. Note that the meaning given by Halayqa "laurel(?)" cannot be established with certainty in the context, which only indicates that it is a type of tree. This meaning is based on the parallel with the hapax *'ōraen* (Isaiah 44, 14) which has been interpreted by several scholars as "laurel", although this term is also unclear. Furthermore, there may be a connection with Akkadian *erēnu* "cedar".

In the conclusions (pgs. 466–476) the author states the following: "Based on this comparative and broad lexical analysis of all lexemes shared by Ugaritic and Canaanite as presented in this lexicon (...), we suggest the following: Ugaritic cannot be identified or classified as a Canaanite language but is definitely a Northwest Semitic language distinct from Canaanite, although both descended from the same ancestor (...). This lexical proximity comfortably establishes a strong affinity between the two languages, and shows that Ugaritic is indeed very closely related to Canaanite rather than to Aramaic (...)" (pg. 468).

As a further support to this the author provides a list of 597 unshared lexemes in Ugaritic and Canaanite (without any discussion or analysis), entirely based on the Ugaritic dictionary by Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín. These conclusions appear to be paradoxical because the large number of parallels assembled by the author actually point to a very deep linguistic connection between Ugaritic and Canaanite. Considering the treatment of the lexical material, which the reviewer has illustrated above, these conclusions appear to be very hazardous. Moreover, whatever the number of actual lexical isoglosses between Ugaritic and Canaanite, lexicography is a minefield when it is used for the purpose of classification. A much sounder methodological approach is required to establish the linguistic features that are particularly diagnostic for the classification of Ugaritic. As Tropper states: „Da bisher nicht geklärt ist, worin diese Merkmale genau bestehen (...), kann hier auch die Frage nach der Klassifikation des Ug. nicht entgeltig beantwortet werden“.²⁴

In the reviewer's opinion, this book is a helpful comparative repertoire of roots but the reader needs to use it with caution. The debate on the classification of Ugaritic appears to be still open.

¹ J. Tropper, Replik – Themen der ugaritischen Grammatik in der Diskussion, UF 33, 2001, 621–624.

² F. Renfroe, Arabic-Ugaritic Lexical Studies (ALASP 5), Münster 1992.

³ F. Renfroe, Arabic-Ugaritic Lexical Studies (ALASP 5), Münster 1992, 7–8.

⁴ See in general J. Haynes, The Lexical Relationship between Epigraphic South Arabic and Ugaritic, in *Semitic Studies in Honour of Wolf Leslau on the Occasion of his Eight-Fifth Birthday November 14th, 1991*, Wiesbaden 1991, 609–626 and G. Mazzini, *Ancient South Arabian Documents*

- tation and the Reconstruction of Semitic, in Proceeding of the 10th Meeting of Hamito-Semitic (Afroasiatic) Linguistics (Florence, 18–20 April 2001), Edited by Pelio Fronzaroli – Paolo Marrassini, (Quaderni di Semitistica 25), Firenze 2005, 215–238.
- ⁵ A. Avanzini, Origin and classification of the Ancient South Arabian languages, JSS 54/1, 2009, 205–220.
- ⁶ See in general E. Lipiński, The Aramaeans. Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion (OLA 100), Leuven – Paris – Sterling, Virginia 2000, 249–318.
- ⁷ See in particular line 4: ^mZa-ku-ri (V. Donbaz, Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae in the Antakya and Kahramanmaraş Museums, ARRIM 8, 1990, 6–7 and A. Millard, The Inscription of Zakkur, King of Hamath (2.35), in The Context of Scripture. Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World (eds. William W. Hallo/K. Lawson Younger Jr.), Leiden – Boston 2003, 155).
- ⁸ S. Segert, Ugaritisch und Aramäisch, in Studia semitica philologica necnon philosophica Ioanni Bakoš dicata, Bratislava 1965, 215–226. Note also J. Tropper, Dialektvielfalt und Sprachwandel im frühen Aramäischen soziolinguistischen Überlegungen, in The World of the Aramaeans III. Studies in Languages and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion. Edited by P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers and Michael Weigl (JSOT Ss 326), Sheffield 2001, 218, who emphasises the very archaic features of Proto-Aramaic and states: “(...) daß das Protoaramäische dem Protokanaanäischem sprachlich weit näher steht, als älteren Darstellungen der Thematik es suggerieren”.
- ⁹ D. Arnaud, Le dialecte d’Alalakh: un examen préliminaire, AuOr 16, 1998, 183–184.
- ¹⁰ P. Xella, Tu sei mio fratello ed io sono tua sorella (KTU 1.18 I 24), AuOr 2, 1984, 151–153.
- ¹¹ R. Borger, Weitere ugaritologische Kleinigkeiten. III. Hebräisch mḥwz (Psalm 107, 30), UF 1, 1969, 1–4.
- ¹² See the two different readings and interpretations of the passage by CAD 10, 1, 88 (harbour) and W. G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature, Oxford 1967, 130 (settling-place) respectively.
- ¹³ According to W. G. E. Watson, Non-Semitic Words in the Ugaritic Lexicon (3), UF 30, 1998, 751–752, the parallel with Old Egyptian ifd points to a loan-word.
- ¹⁴ G. Conti, Il sillabario della quarta fonte della lista lessicale bilingue eblaita (Quaderni di Semitistica 17), 1990, 154–155.
- ¹⁵ F. Saracino, Appunti in margine a RIH 78/20, SEL 1, 1984, 75, 80; M. S. Smith, The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1. Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2 (Vetus Testamentum Supplements series, volume 55), Leiden – New York – Köln, 1994, 117, 127.
- ¹⁶ G. Mazzini, Philological and Linguistic Remarks on the Term ’upqt in Ugaritic Tablet KTU 1.1, EVO 32, 2009, 231–233.
- ¹⁷ G. Garbini, Note di lessicografia ebraica, Brescia 1998, 22–28.
- ¹⁸ J. Tropper, Epigraphische Anmerkungen zur Neuauflage von KTU (2), AuOr 16, 1998, 292–294. 1998, 292.
- ¹⁹ W. T. Pitard, A New Edition of the “Rāpi’ūma” Texts, BASOR 285, 1992, 63, 67, 72.
- ²⁰ G. Mazzini, Miserable Daniel. Notes for a Reading of KTU 1.17 I, 16, UF 22, 1996, 257–270.
- ²¹ W. Von Soden, Zur Herkunft von hebr. ’ebjôn “arm”, MIO 15, 1969, 322–326. Note Th. O. Lambdin, Egyptian Loan Words in the Old Testament, JAOS 73, 1953 145–146, considered Ugaritic abynt/Biblical Hebrew ’æbiôn as a loan word from Egyptian.
- ²² J. Tropper, Ugaritische Grammatik (AOAT 273), Münster 2000, 173–174.
- ²³ M. S. Smith, The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1. Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2 (Vetus Testamentum Supplements series, volume 55) Leiden–New York–Köln, 1994, 160.
- ²⁴ J. Tropper, Ugaritische Grammatik (AOAT 273), Münster 2000, 4–5.