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The Value of Ugaritic for Old Testament Studies

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Introduction

Ugaritic is the language of the North Canaanite literature unearthed by French excavating teams in 1929 and following at the ancient site of Ugarit, located at modern Ras Shamra and the nearby harbor Minet el-Beida. Ugarit is situated eight miles north of Latakia on the Syrian coast. The literary texts, dating from around 1400 B.C., include mythological epics about Keret, Aqhat, and Baal and Anat.[1]

A thorough treatment of the subject of this article would include the values of Ugaritic for the study of Hebrew and Canaanite phonology, morphology, poetic style,[2] culture (including religion and morality), etc. However, it is the purpose of this more limited study to focus on only three principal areas in which Ugaritic makes some significant contributions to the study of the Old Testament — polemic thrusts, etymologies, and new meanings of certain words.

1 At Ugarit in the fifteenth century B.C. and earlier Anat was the virgin warrior-goddess who fought Baal's battles (cf. H. L. Ginsberg, "Excursus on the Goddess Anath," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 87 [February 1945]: 8-10). But later and elsewhere legend syncretistically associated her with other goddesses and transformed her into an erotic goddess of fertility.

2 Long-time readers of this journal were introduced to this aspect of Hebrew and Ugaritic relationships by Charles L. Feinberg in an article entitled "The Poetic Structure of the Book of Job and the Ugaritic Literature," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 103 (July-September 1946): 283-92, and since reprinted in *Truth for Today*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), pp. 133-42.

Since this article is a survey, the reader who wishes to pursue the subject in greater depth is referred to the works cited throughout the article.[3]

Polemic Thrusts

Cassuto pointed out that the biblical record of creation in Genesis 1:1–2:3 is a polemic that opposes the false teachings of the nations in the ancient Near East:

> The purpose of the Torah in this section is to teach us that the whole world and all that it contains were created by the word of the one God, according to His will, which operates without restraint. It is thus opposed to the concepts current among the peoples of the ancient East who were Israel's neighbors; and in some respects it is also in conflict with certain ideas that had already found their way into the ranks of our people. The language, however, is tranquil, undisturbed by polemic or dispute; the controversial note is heard indirectly, as it were, through the deliberate, quiet utterances of Scripture, which sets the opposing views at nought by silence or by subtle hint.[4]

After reviewing some of those concepts current among Israel's neighbors, Cassuto adds:

3 A few of the useful treatments are these: Zellig S. Harris, "Ras Shamra: Canaanite Civilization and Language," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, 1937* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1938), pp. 479-502; "Ugarit; Ras Shamra," *The Biblical World,* ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), pp. 591-96; Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Ugarit," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* ed. George A. Buttrick, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 4:724-32; Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament,* trans. G. W. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); A. F. Rainey, "The Kingdom of Ugarit," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 28 (December 1965): 102-25; H. L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 8 (May 1945): 41-58, and since reprinted in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader,* vol. 2, ed. E. F. Campbell, Jr., and D. N. Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964), pp. 34-50; cf. also Ginsberg's translation of the major Ugaritic texts in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament,* ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 129-55; John Gray, "Ugarit," *Archaeology and Old Testament Study,* ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 145-67; Mitchell Dahood, *Ugaritic Studies and the Bible* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1962); Mitchell Dahood, *Ugaritic and the Old Testament* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1968); Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962); P. C. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *Tyndale Bulletin* 22 (1971), pp. 3-31; Loren R. Fisher, ed., *Ras Shamra Parallels* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1972).

4 Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis,* trans. Isaac Abrahams, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 1:7.

> Then came the Torah and soared aloft, as on eagles' wings, above all these notions. Not many gods but one God; not theogony, for a god has no family tree; not wars nor strife nor the clash of wills, but only one Will, which rules over everything without the slightest let or hindrance; not a deity associated with nature and identified with it wholly or in part, but a God who stands absolutely above nature, and outside of it, and nature and all its constituent elements, even the sun and all the other entities . . . are only His creatures, made according to His will.[5]

Cassuto comments as follows on Genesis 1:21, which states that God created the large creatures of the sea:

> Throughout the whole section only the general categories of plants and animals are mentioned, but not the separate species, save the sea monsters. This exception has not been made, we may be sure, without a specific motive. Here, too, it would seem, the Torah intended to sound a protest, as it were, against concepts that were current among the Gentiles, and to a certain extent even among the Israelites, but which were not in accord with its own spirit. In Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in the land of Canaan and in the countries of the East generally, all sorts of legends used to be recounted about the battles of the great gods against the sea dragon and similar monsters. In particular are the sagas of the people nearest to Israel, the people of Canaan, of importance to our subject. The Ugaritic epics mention among the enemies of Baal, along with the god Mot — his chief foe — and the lord of the sea, a number of different monsters like the Dragon, Leviathan, the Fleeing Serpent, the Twisting Serpent, and similar creatures . . . . I have already explained earlier how we have to interpret the attitude of the spiritual leaders of Israel . . . towards legends of this nature; here, too, the Torah is entirely opposed to these myths. It voices its protest in its own quiet manner, relating: *So God created the great sea monsters.* It is as though the Torah said, in effect: Far be it from any one to suppose that the sea monsters were mythological beings opposed to God or in revolt against Him; they were as natural as the rest of the creatures, and were formed in their proper time and in their proper place by the word of the Creator, in order that they might fulfill His will like the other created beings.[6]

Actually, while some protests were clearly registered against Egyptian and Mesopotamian religious beliefs, particularly in Genesis 1–11, most such veiled polemics in the Old Testament were directed against Baal, the Canaanite storm god (also known as the rain god or weather god), who gave life and fertility to the land. A classic example is Jeremiah 14:22:

5 Ibid., p. 8.

6 Ibid., pp. 49-51; cf. Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).

Can any of the false gods of the nations make it rain?
Or can the heavens send showers by themselves?
No, it is you, O LORD our God.
Therefore we look to you,
for you alone do all this.[7]

With this may be compared a description of Baal in Anat 2:38-41 (cf. 4:86-88):

She [Anat] scoops some water and bathes —
dew of the heavens, moisture of the earth,
showers of the rider of the clouds;[8]
dew that the heavens shed,
showers that the stars shed.[9]

It is as though Jeremiah is saying, "Yahweh,[10] not Baal, is the one who controls the weather, rain, and fertility. Therefore, trust in Him."

Amos 5:8 has a similar emphasis:

It is the LORD who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns blackness[11] into dawn
and darkens day into night.

7 The translation is that of Donald R. Glenn and the writer, prepared for the forthcoming New International Version (Old Testament).

8 This standing epithet of Baal ("rider of the clouds") may occur in Psalm 68:4, where the word "deserts" in Hebrew is probably a homonym of the word "clouds." If so, the verse should be rendered, "Sing to God; sing praises to His name. Lift up songs to (or Exalt or Prepare for) Him who rides on the clouds, whose name (or essence or revealed character) is the LORD [Hebrew יה, , an abbreviation of Yahweh]; yes, rejoice before Him." The polemic would be that it is Yahweh, not Baal, who is the real rider of the clouds, i.e., Yahweh is the one who controls the rain and weather, and so fertility.

9 The translation is that of the writer. The Ugaritic passage may be found in transliterated form in Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), p. 253.

10 On the meaning and significance of this name which is usually rendered "LORD," cf. the writer's article, "Lord," in *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 2:1047-49.

11 This word has been traditionally rendered (e.g., by the Authorized Version) "the shadow of death" — not only here but also in Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 9:2; and elsewhere. But the meaning, "darkness," "deep darkness," or "blackness," is now recognized and supported by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 853; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), p. 805; and William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 306. Also compare the cognates in Akkadian, Ethiopic, Arabic, and possibly Ugaritic.

He calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them over the land —
the LORD [Yahweh, not Baal!] is his name.[12]

Amos's contextual purpose is to demonstrate that the God who has the power to do all this has the power to judge. Such a God can indeed execute judgment and ought to be feared. Nevertheless, at the same time, it would seem that there is a polemic thrust against Baal.

Thus, through an understanding of Israel's pagan environment in Canaan, the text of the Old Testament is elucidated at various points by this added dimension. Numerous assertions about Yahweh and His power over rain, the sea, death, etc., are now best seen as subtle attacks on competing religious beliefs.[13]

ETYMOLOGIES

Perhaps the greatest abuses in the study of Hebrew have occurred in the fields of etymology and lexicography (new meanings of old words — cf. the next section of this article). In studying the etymology of a given word, one is seeking to discover its original root and thus its root idea. However, too many biblical scholars have made this their principal aim. Indeed, the pursuit of etymology has almost become an obsession with some. As the writer has pointed out, "To compare naked roots without due regard for meaning and usage is to engage in invalid and faulty methodology. A glaring weakness of many exegetes is their complete disregard for semantics and age of literature in their seemingly frantic search for the etymology of a given root."[14]

This too-common fault was also pinpointed by Kitchen in his extensive review of John Gray's recent commentary on 1 and 2 Kings:

> Throughout the commentary, Prof. Gray is constantly weighing the Hebrew vocabulary of Kings. For difficulties, he at times turns to Ugaritic, a language very close in time, nature and place to Biblical Hebrew. But far more commonly, he resorts to Arabic, even on words where the Hebrew contexts should suffice. This is methodologically dangerous; the vast mass of Arabic literature dates from

12 The translation is that of the forthcoming New International Version.

13 Additional illustrations may be found in Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3; Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (October-December 1975): 328-34; Leah Bronner, *The Stories of Elijah and Elisha* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968); and Rocky Miller, "Psalm 93: A Polemic" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975). Psalm 29 may also be studied as a polemic against Baal, bearing in mind the cautions noted by Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel."

14 Kenneth L. Barker, "A Comparative Lexical and Grammatical Study of the Amarna Canaanisms and Canaanite Vocabulary" (Ph.D. diss., Dropsie University, 1969), p. 5.

> the Islamic era *(i.e.,* 7th century A.D., ff.), nearly 2,000 years after Solomon, for example. The state of Arabic lexicography is such that one can always find something in Arabic vocabulary but without adequate control of usage and origins. The grammatical *structure* of Arabic retains much that is archaic — but this fact does *not* guarantee an equal antiquity for vocabulary and usage. It is, therefore, far sounder to turn to languages contemporary with Biblical Hebrew when context fails — Ugaritic, West-Semitic inscriptions (and loan-words in Egyptian) and Akkadian (Assyro-Babylonian).[15]

In the past the tendency was to explain difficult Hebrew words by dipping into the Arabic lexicon. Today the trend is to reconstruct Hebrew along the lines of a Ugaritic model. One example of the latter extreme is Dahood,[16] so much so that he has been charged with "pan-Ugaritic bias"[17] and "pan-Ugaritic machinations"[18] by Held. Because of these excesses, Barr, though overreacting to some extent, has sought to lay down some guidelines that will help the exegete avoid extremes and have a balanced approach.[19]

In spite of the preceding remarks, Ugaritic does shed light on the etymology of many words in Hebrew. Only four will be selected here as illustrative of the point.

One of the familiar appellations of God is Adonai, "Lord" or "Sovereign." By relating the word to an alleged Akkadian cognate, scholars had maintained that it pictured God as one having "power" or "strength." However, based on Ugaritic etymological cognates, it is probably preferable to regard the meaning, "Lord," as a semantic development from an original meaning of "father." The Ugaritic words involved are *'d* and *'dn,* both meaning "father" and/or "lord," and *'dt,* meaning "mother" and/or "lady." Text 52:32-33 in Ugaritic reads: "Behold, she cries, 'Father, father,' and behold, she cries, 'Mother, mother.' "[20] The word for "father" (*'d*) occurs parallel to the word for "mother" (*'m* = Hebrew אם, , the regular word for "mother"), making the meaning of *'d* clear. This derivation of

15 Kenneth A. Kitchen, "I and II Kings," *TSF Bulletin* 41 (Spring 1965): 14; also cf. the comments on this subject in the writer's review article on Kitchen's book, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), in *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 10 (Spring 1967): 136.

16 Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms,* The Anchor Bible, 3 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1966-1970).

17 Moshe Held, "Hebrew *ma'gal:* A Study in Lexical Parallelism," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 6 (1974): 107, n. 6.

18 Ibid., p. 114, n. 75.

19 James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968); cf. also his work, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).

20 Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* p. 174.

Adonai is allowed by Koehler and Baumgartner,[21] and is developed by Eissfeldt.[22] As Eissfeldt points out, the development of the meaning from "father" to "lord" is readily understandable.[23]

Hebrew has several words for the related ideas of "bowing down," "prostrating oneself," and "worshiping." One of these is הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה, which all the standard lexicons derive from שָׁחָה or שָׁחַח or both. Lambdin, however, explains that this is the Hishtaphel stem of the root חוה.[24] But this is known from Ugaritic, which Lambdin does not mention.[25] Ugaritic, then, demonstrates that this form is derived from an entirely different root than was once thought.

The Hebrew word for "table" (שֻׁלְחָן) was said to be related to an Arabic verb, *salaḥa,* with the resultant meaning, *"skin* or *leather mat* spread on the ground."[26] Now Ugaritic provides the true etymology with its cognate noun, *tlḥn, "table."* Since two of the phonemes differ from the so-called Arabic cognate, Ugaritic proves such an etymology to be incorrect. The word simply means "table," with nothing said about its nature, structure, or material.

The fourth etymological correction comes from Isaiah 41:10, 23, in the word translated "dismayed" in the Authorized Version. A complete survey or history of the study of this word may be found in Smith's thesis,[27] so the writer will be brief here. The Hebrew word is תִּשְׁתָּע, which has been derived from שָׁעָה, "to gaze about." Since the parallelism obviously calls for the meaning, "to fear," lexicographers suggested some such idea as "to gaze about *anxiously."* Now it just so happens that the identical parallelism occurs in Ugaritic Text 67, 2:6-7, and Text 49, 6:30-31:

> Sore afraid is Puissant Baal,
> Filled with dread is the Rider of Clouds.
>
> Sore afraid was Godly Mot,
> Filled with dread El's Beloved Ghazir.[28]

21 Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon,* p. 10.

22 *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* s.v. "אדון," by Otto Eissfeldt.

23 Ibid.

24 Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 254.

25 Cf. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* pp. 83, 395; also cf. David E. Peterson and Kenneth L. Barker, "The Hebrew Old Testament Slidaverb Conjugation Chart" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972).

26 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon,* p. 1020.

27 Curtis Ted Smith, "Contributions from the Ugaritic Literature to the Exegesis of Isaiah" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972), pp. 18-21.

28 The translation is by H. L. Ginsberg in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* pp. 138, 141. (The text is in Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* pp. 178, 169.)

"Filled with dread" is the rendering of our word. In Ugaritic the root is *ṯt'*, showing conclusively that the Hebrew form is the simple stem of שׁחת, not שׁעה. This is now accepted by Holladay,[29] and is further confirmed by the appearance of the same word in the Phoenician inscription, Azitawadda (or Karatepe) 2:3-5: ". . . even in places which had formerly been feared, where a man was afraid to walk on the road . . . ."[30] "Feared" and "afraid" represent שׁחת . Therefore, Isaiah 41:10 should be rendered:

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help [or empower[31]] you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.[32]

In the light of all this, it is somewhat disconcerting still to find in the New American Standard Bible the rendering, "Do not anxiously look about you."

New Meanings of Words

Only four instances of lexical contributions will be selected from among the numerous possibilities. In II Aqhat 6:25-28 there is a most interesting passage:

The virgin Anat speaks:
Ask for life, O Aqhat the hero.
Ask for life, and I'll give it to you;
for immortality, and I'll bestow it on you.[33]

In addition to illustrating climactic parallelism (cf. Ps. 29:1-2a), the text contains the paired synonyms, "life" (*ḥym*) and "im-

29 Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon,* p. 385.

30 The translation is that of Franz Rosenthal in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* p. 500. (The text may be found in H. Donner and W. Rollig, *Kanaanaische und Aramaische Inschriften,* 3 vols. [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971], 1:5.)

31 Cf. Barker, "Amarna Canaanisms," pp. 100-101.

32 This rendering is that of the forthcoming New International Version.

33 The translation is the writer's; the text is in Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* p. 248. Incidentally, the passage continues:

I will cause you to count the years like Baal;
like the son of El you will count the months.

The word for "like" is *'m* (=Hebrew עם, from the root עמם), traditionally rendered "with." Anat is again promising immortality to Aqhat, and the language means "You will have immortality" or "You will live forever" — *like* Baal. Such a meaning for this preposition is proposed in the following biblical references, among others: 2 Chronicles 14:11; Job 9:26; Psalms 28:1; 73:5; 88:4; 106:6; 143:7; Ecclesiastes 2:16. The verb occurs with this basic meaning in, e.g., Ezekiel 28:3; 31:8. On the existence of this root in biblical Hebrew, cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon,* p. 715.

mortality" (*bl-mt,* literally "no-death"). Essentially the same parallelism appears in Proverbs 12:28, with the Hebrew synonyms, חיים and אל־מות . When viewed this way, the resultant translation would be:

> In the path of righteousness is life;
> in the trodden way is immortality.[34]

The last line may also be rendered: "in its pathway there is no death" or "the journey of her pathway is no-death."[35] Thus both Ugaritic *bl-mt* and Hebrew אל־מות are synonyms of "life."

Prepositions have been a very fruitful field of Hebrew and Ugaritic comparative lexical study. Gordon observes: "The most interesting feature of Ugar. prepositions is the meaning 'from' for both *b* and *l*. The ambiguity of *b* and *l* is troublesome in reading Ugar.: *b* is either 'in(to), by, with' or 'from,' while *l* is either 'to, for' or 'from.' However, even in the Old Testament, Hebrew *la-* and *ba-* sometimes mean 'from.' "[36]

A rather clear case of Hebrew ל meaning "from" was encountered by the writer in translating Jeremiah 4:12: "A wind too strong for that will come from me. Now I will announce my judgments against them."[37] For other examples see sources cited in footnote 36.

The third illustration is well summarized by Kitchen:

> A lost meaning is sometimes recovered for a well-known word. *Bāmā* is the common Hebrew word for a high place. In Ugaritic, it also means "back," and this rendering would also fit very well in Deuteronomy 33:29, in the ancient Blessing of Moses:
>
> "Thine enemies shall submit to thee,
> And thou shalt tread upon their backs"
> [rather than: "on their high places"].
>
> The idea expressed is then similar to that in Joshua 10:24 or in Psalm 110:1, and finds plastic expression in Egyptian reliefs and statuary.[38]

Held would qualify the meaning of Ugaritic *bmt,* so that it

34 This assumes a double-duty preposition; cf. E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 384.

35 Cf. Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), p. 100.

36 Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* p. 92; cf. Barker, "Amarna Canaanisms," pp. 129-31, n. 19.

37 The translation is that of Donald R. Glenn and the writer, prepared for the New International Version.

38 Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament,* pp. 164-65.

would refer to the area of the waist and ribs all around the body.[39] Possible translations would be "waist, chest, ribs." Presumably, this semantic adjustment would also apply to the Hebrew counterpart in Deuteronomy 33:29.

In the process of Old Testament text transmission, even the most careful scribe occasionally committed an error in judgment. One type of such an error is fission, the division of a single word into two. Apparently, this error was made in Proverbs 26:23, which contains the fourth and final illustration to be cited here. The scribal mistake was discovered by H. L. Ginsberg[40] and acknowledged by Albright.[41] Perhaps the mistake was made because it involves a rare poetic word that was not in common use and so eventually dropped from the language. Whatever the reason, in the proverb a person with fervent (smooth?) lips but a wicked heart is compared, as the Masoretic text now stands, to an earthen vessel overlaid with "silver dross" or "dross silver." The text is difficult for at least two reasons. First, the Hebrew expression means literally "silver of dross," on which Albright aptly comments parenthetically, "(whatever that might mean)."[42] Second, silver dross, or dross silver, was not used in plating earthenware, nor would it make an attractive exterior, which is needed in the comparison.

However, if the two Hebrew words are written together, the first consonant can be taken as the preposition meaning "like," and the rest of the word can be related to a Ugaritic word meaning "glaze." In the same passage on the problem of immortality referred to in the first illustration in this section, Aqhat has this to say concerning man's old age and mortality:

> Glaze will be poured on my head;
> plaster (or, potash) upon my head.
> And I will die as everyone dies;
> I too will surely die.[43]

39 Moshe Held, "Studies in Comparative Semitic Lexicography," *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965,* ed. H. G. Guterbock and T. Jacobsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 406.

40 H. L. Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth of Anath and Aqhat," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 98 (April 1945):21; cf. also Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 8 (May 1945):57-58.

41 W. F. Albright, "A New Hebrew Word for 'Glaze' in Proverbs 26:23," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 98 (April 1945):24.

42 Ibid.

43 The translation is the writer's; the text is II Aqhat 6:36-38 and may be found in Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* p. 249.

The Ugaritic word for "glaze" is *spsg,* and this word seems to be hidden in the proverb. Kitchen summarizes and applies the data as follows:

> In Proverbs 26:23, there occurs the *crux interpretatum,* "silver dross" *(kesep-sigim),* in the context, "Silver dross overlaid upon an earthen pot are fervent lips and a wicked heart." This can now be read as *k*^{e}*-sapsag-mi* [treating *-m* as an enclitic *mêm*], "Like glaze," and the whole sentence be rendered:
>
> "Like glaze coated upon an earthen pot,
> are frevent lips with a wicked heart."
>
> The word *sapsag* for "glaze" first turned up in Ugaritic *(spsg)* and has received independent confirmation from Hittite documents (in the form, *zapzagai-*, and variants).[44]

Of course, an earthen vessel overlaid with glaze is precisely what the context requires. Perhaps it should be added that there is now archaeological evidence that pottery was glazed in Palestine at this time. Specifically, glaze was laid over a core of crushed quartz.[45]

Conclusion

Other relationships between Hebrew and Ugaritic could be explored and additional illustrations given, but these should suffice to demonstrate the fact that Ugaritic does indeed possess considerable value for Old Testament studies. Therefore, it merits full investigation and use by any serious biblical exegete or theologian.

44 Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament,* p. 163; on the enclitic *mêm* which he mentions, cf. Horace D. Hummel, "Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957):85-107.

45 Albright, "A New Hebrew Word for 'Glaze' in Proverbs 26:23," p. 24.