UGARITIC STUDIES WITHIN THEIR SEMITIC
AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN SETTING

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I

If I had come to Warsaw \(^1\) in 1962 (as was originally planned)
I would have been unable to benefit from at least three signi­ficant publications which have appeared since: they are, in chronological order, Mario Liverani’s *Storia di Ugarit* ("nell’ età degli archivi politici"),\(^2\) C. H. Gordon’s announcement that he has succeeded in deciphering the language of the pre-Hellenic inhabitants of Crete and especially his latest book entitled *Before the Bible*,\(^3\) and, finally, J. Aistleitner’s posthumous *Wörterbuch der Ugaritischen Sprache*.\(^4\) These important studies have not lightened my task today, for the wealth of documentation and power of ingenuity which they represent require the most careful and judicious appraisal; and I do not feel too confident that I measure up to this responsibility. And recently M. Virolleaud reported on some of the results of the latest excavations at Ras Shamra which have brought to light a large collection of clay models of sheeps’ livers which were apparently used by priest-magicians to teach their apprentices the art of divining when

\(^1\) Paper read to the Oriental Institute of Warsaw University in May 1963. An earlier, and slightly different, version formed the basis of a lecture delivered before the Near Eastern Society of Cambridge University in May 1962. I am grateful to Professor S. Strelcyn and Professor D. Winton Thomas for their invitations as well as their kindness.

\(^2\) Rome, 1962, Centre di Studi Semitici, no. 6.


\(^4\) Edited by O. Eissfeldt, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1963. Despite methodological weaknesses (especially when compared with the glossaries in Gordon’s *Ugaritic Manual* and Driver’s *Canaanite Myths and Legends*), incomplete documentation, and somewhat awkward arrangement this is an important *instrument de travail* for every Semitist.
sacrificing sheep. These livers have short inscriptions in Ugaritic and, together with some new poems, will greatly enrich our knowledge of the Ugaritic language and civilization. Moreover, a dozen tablets, or fragments of tablets, have been discovered which contain texts in Hurrian written in the Ugaritic alphabet. All these features contribute to an increasingly fuller picture of the unity of the world of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Ugarit, in the second millennium B.C., was an exceptionally cosmopolitan city, standing at a pivotal point for the interaction of ancient civilizations. The material and cultural remains of Ras Shamra reveal the impact of Egypt and Mesopotamia, of Greece and Cyprus, of Crete and Anatolia—a unique combination of the forces of the Eastern Mediterranean. All these elements are also represented linguistically, from Akkadian cuneiform to linear Cypriot, from the reflection of Hurrian and Hittite features to Egyptian hieroglyphs. Above all, the Ugaritic language and script themselves have contributed immeasurably to our knowledge of Semitic linguistics (phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicography alike), style, and literary form, as well as to our notions of alphabetic evolution. When to all this is added the commanding and mediatory role of Ras Shamra between the Aegean and Semitic spheres, no-one could reasonably question the justice of Gordon's claim that “the effects which these developments will have on prehistoric and biblical studies will in the long run exceed the impact of the Dead Sea scrolls”.

Great honour is due to the handful of scholars who have advanced our knowledge of this subject: to the decipherers Bauer and Dhorme, to the interpreters Virolleaud, Gordon, Driver, Ginsberg, Gray, to the archaeologists led by Schaeffer, and to others who have recognized and expatiated on the significance of these finds. Among Biblical scholars it is, perhaps, fair to accord a special mention to the late Umberto Cassuto who

1 Reported in the [Manchester] Guardian under the date line of Paris, 30 March 1962. I am obliged to my secretary, Mrs. Ann Kelly, for drawing my attention to this report.

2 The Times of 4 April 1962. Similar views on the vastly overpublicized Dead Sea Scrolls have recently been expressed by S. Sandmel in J.B.L., lxxxi (1962), 11-12.
has worked untiringly to show the relevance of Ugaritic to an understanding of the Old Testament.

In the analysis and survey which are to follow I shall place the principal weight on the linguistic and literary aspects of the Ugaritic documents, for my own studies have been largely concentrated on these problems, and this will of necessity be reflected in what I have to say today.

Among the tablets found at Ras Shamra there are commercial and legal documents, generally in Akkadian, as well as administrative, diplomatic, and military correspondence. But the most valuable texts are probably the great Ugaritic epics written in the indigenous alphabet and language. Their interpretation is based on the ensemble of Semitics, and there is hardly any Semitic language, ancient or modern, which has not contributed in some measure to the linguistic elucidation of these interesting texts. At times, it is true, scholars have been lured into dangerous pitfalls—known to every student of Semitic epigraphy—when the wellnigh unlimited vastness of the Arabic vocabulary appears to have invited somewhat indiscriminate raids upon its inexhaustible resources. But we have now arrived at a moderately secure general understanding of these epics, linguistically as well as in their literary and motif affiliations to biblical, Homeric, and other texts, though a very great deal of work remains to be done.

II

I should like to begin with a few examples which illustrate the connections between Ugarit and the Old Testament. From the earliest days of critical inquiry into the literature of the Hebrew Bible scholars have been endeavouring to explain the sudden flowering of Hebrew style, both in prose and poetry. The Hebrew scriptures show literary perfection of a high order; yet there are no antecedents, no experiments and faltering attempts

which have come down to us. The nineteenth century has tried to see this seemingly miraculous development against the background of the Egyptian and Assyro-Babylonian giants. Parallels became influences, and the impact was eventually conceived in such terms that Hebrew literature was merely a pale reflection of themes and motifs borrowed from Egypt and Babylon. With the discovery of the great epic Ugaritic literature things began to fall into place and to assume a more credible pattern: the Old Testament can now be understood as a phase, a decisive phase, in the steady evolution of Canaanite literature. It possesses distinctive values of its own, but its linguistic, stylistic, and general literary milieu emerge unfailingly from the over-all Canaanite setting. For here are not only literary allusions and vague connections, but Hebrew as a Canaanite tongue makes use of the long literary and artistic traditions, of the secular and religious means of expression and projects them all, mutatis mutandis, into the complex fabric of its linguistic and stylistic organization.

No longer need we look for a few isolated parallels but we can now observe a long tradition which expresses itself in common idioms, common poetic structure, similar collocations, and a basic identity of form. Identity of form—but not of contents or of spirit.

Ugaritic has derived much elucidation from the Old Testament, but our understanding of the latter in its turn has been deepened by entirely new insights and fresh information gained from the Ras Shamra tablets. It has long been recognized that many emendations proposed for the text of the Old Testament can, in fact, be shown to be superfluous and to derive from an insufficient knowledge of the linguistic and cultural background. Idioms and obscure expressions are now, for the first time, seen in their true meaning and setting. A few examples must suffice:

A fair number of conjectural emendations are concerned with verses in which the same verb, though in different forms, recurs in both hemistichs: In Hos. v. 5 we have יִפְּלָלָה—כִּשָּׁלֶת; in Amos vii. 4 נָאַל—כְּלָל; in Ps. xxxviii, 12 עֶגֶר—כַּפֶּרֶד; in

1 Suspected by Nowak in Göttinger Handkommentar zum A.T., p. 37; see also references in Harper, I.C.C. to Amos and Hosea, p. 270.
Ps. xciii. 3. There is, however, no reason to suspect such repetitions which are common also in Ugaritic and constitute an important stylistic feature in Canaanite poetry: št——bilhny, qlt bks išytnh (51: III: 14-16) "I have drunk [disgrace] at my table, scorn from a cup did I drink". A similar case occurs at 51: VI: 38-40. Or at 1 Aqht: 114-115: knp ršrm b'l ytr—b'l tbr dt ynm "Ba'al broke the wings of the eagles, Ba'al did break their pinions”. A change of verbal stem (binyan) occurs at 2 Aqht VI: 28-29: ässprk 'm b'l šnt—'m bn il tspr yrhm " and I will make thee count the years with Ba'al, with the son of El thou shalt count the months ”, i.e. alternation of šaf'el and qal to which one might compare in Lamentations v. 21: “ turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned ”.

A very significant light is thrown on the famous (and in its ritual consequences far-reaching) prohibition in Exodus xxiii. 19: " thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk ” by the Ugaritic passage tbh gd bhlb ānh bhmät. The precise connotation of the Ugaritic phrase eludes us—as does indeed the import of the Biblical verse, but their astonishing verbal resemblance helps to illuminate some of the obscurities of both: it is clear that the Pentateuch is inveighing against an obnoxious Canaanite custom, perhaps a fertility cult or some other ritually significant ceremony. 1

There exist, of course, some astonishing similarities of word and phrase. One need only think of the slaying of Leviathan described in the two literatures in such remarkably close terms:

(67: I: 1-2) (Isa. xxvii. 1)

Or the pleading for the widow and judging the orphan:

(2Aqht V: 7-8) (Isa. i. 17)

1 is again suspect in the eyes of Duhm, op. cit. p. 349.
2 Cf. H. L. Ginsberg, Kitbc Ugarit, p. 77; Cassuto, Goddess Anath, p. 40.
Or the blessing of Isaac:

\[ \text{מָלֶלֶת הָשָׁמָיִם} \]

\[ \text{מְשֹׁמֶרְתָּי הָאָרֶץ} \]

\[ (\text{nt II: 39}) \]

\[ \text{(Gen. xxvii. 28)} \]

as well as many other equally impressive instances.

Another aspect of linguistic and literary formal resemblances is seen in certain standard or stereotyped formulae, generally of an introductory character. On several occasions we encounter the Ugaritic formula \[ \text{idk ltn pnm} \] \[ (49: I: 4; 49: IV: 31, etc.) \]; this is, of course, identical with \[ \text{ירשִׁים את פַּנְיוּ} \] "he set his face towards" which occurs a number of times in Biblical literature (e.g. in Gen. xxxxi. 21). The degree of verbal and contextual similarity is at times very striking. One of the most frequent introductory tags in Ugaritic is \[ \text{ysu gh wysh} \] \[ (51: IV: 30; 49: I: 11, etc.), the precise equivalent of} \[ \text{יָשָׁהְלָ בְּיְהוָה} \] (Judges ix. 7 and elsewhere) "he lifted up his voice and cried". Similarly, the opening gambit \[ \text{XTh 1TS7 XfZH} \] "he lifted his eyes and saw" is employed in both literatures.\(^1\) To the same category belongs the frequent \[ \text{yprq lsb wyshq} \] "he divided the barrier of his teeth and laughed", to which I shall refer in greater detail later on.

Certain conventional collocations, some of them striking in view of the ample field of choice, involve verb and noun or noun and adjective. The Hebrew verb \[ \text{nšk} \] "to bite" is overwhelmingly\(^2\) applied to the serpent, although there are many animals which bite. This is true of Ugaritic as well, so that expressions like \[ \text{בְּעֵינָיָיו} \] (Amos v. 19) or \[ \text{yntkn kbtnt} \] \[ (49: VI: 19) \]. Buffalos \[ \text{ynghn ërimm} \] "they gore like buffalos" (49: VI: 17, 18) with \[ \text{raim ër} \] (Deut. xxxiii. 17). Particularly remarkable and numerous are the conventionally corresponding pairs which are employed in the hemistichs of the \text{parallelismus membrorum}. Only a very few need be cited here: \[ \text{yd—ymyn} \]

\[ \text{אֲלֵךְ עִדְּתָה אֲלֵךְ וְיֵשׁוֹא שְׁמִים} \]

\[^{1}\text{E.g. Gen. xviii. 2; xxiv. 63, etc. In Ugaritic:} \text{wyšu 'nh wy'n} \]

\[^{2}\text{Cassuto, op. cit. p. 23: ten out of twelve times.} \]
"mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens"—and Ugaritic "he did take his bow in his hand and his arrows in his right hand."

Similarly 'rs—'pr: "for our soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth"—and Ugaritic "The strong (?) shall fall to the earth, and the mighty to the dust (see also 2 Aqht: I: 28-29). Or r's—qdad (Deut. xxxiii. 16—67: VI: 15-16); הלב, הורן, כסה, שפתים, פה and very many others—all heirs of a common literary tradition. I must eschew piling up further examples—many of which have in any case already been collected—but we need a systematic and exhaustive study of these formulae, collocations, pairs, etc., which will establish statistically, rather than by merely impressionistic statements, the astonishing confluence of linguistic, literary, and ritual strands. Of their strength and reality, however, the foregoing random sample will, I hope, have provided adequate proof.

III

I now turn to literary forms which are shared by Ugarit and the Greek world. C. H. Gordon (who has done more in this field than anyone else) considers "the connections between the earliest Greek and Hebrew literatures as established, and the reason . . . is clear when we evaluate what took place at Ugarit: a city in Canaan where Semitic and Indo-European (Hittite and especially Greek Caphtorian) elements intermingled". I leave aside for the present common social, cultural, and religious patterns and concentrate on idiom and style.

Over ten years ago I investigated the recurrent introductory formula yprq lsb wysq which occurs either in parallelism or in

close proximity to ḫš t qh wyšḥ. I think the rendering "he divided the barrier [of his teeth] and laughed" has now been generally accepted. Ugaritic ḫb, the narrow opening between the two ridges of the teeth, is thus the exact counterpart to Greek ἔρκος οὐδόντων. Narrowness is implied also in the Homeric idiom, for otherwise φύγεν would be an ill-adapted simile in the verse in which Zeus, the cloudgatherer, says to Athene ἀκροβάτης ἑμῶν ποίον σε ἑτος φύγεν ἔρκος οὐδόντων (Odyssey I, 64). This vigorous and picturesque idiom is symptomatic of the spirit and character of the epic literatures of Greece and Ras Shamra.

The "cloudgatherer" is an interesting expression, for νεφεληγερέτα or νεφεληγερέτης bears an extraordinary resemblance to Ugaritic ḫkb ṣpt \(^2\) and Hebrew רכח נערובות \(^3\) which are generally translated as "the rider on the clouds". It is, however, somewhat doubtful if "rider" is a very happy rendering. The verb ἀγείρω in νεφεληγερέτης means, of course, "to gather, to compose", and there exists a good deal of evidence to suggest a similar basic connotation for Semitic ḫkb. It is, I think, recognized that the sense of "riding", i.e. sitting on an animal, is a late development and that the original meaning is concerned with the "harnessing" of the animal. In Ethiopic ḫkb is "to encounter, collect, compose"; the same is true of the ḥif il of this root in Hebrew, the II form in Arabic \(^4\) and Syriac paʾel; in ESA ḫkb is a "bridle". Dillmann \(^5\) voices the opinion that potestas radicis prima in . . . componendo esse videtur, a very acceptable suggestion, for the connecting link between "to gather, collect" and "to ride" must, of course, be sought in the action of yoking (ζευγνυμι) and harnessing.

There is, moreover, additional evidence to support the suggestion that ḫkb ṣpt is "the cloudgatherer" (= νεφεληγερέτης) rather than the rider on the clouds. No more vital function can be envisaged for a Near Eastern deity than to provide rain at the

1 Gordon, UM, p. 285; Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, p. 159.
3 Ps. lxviii. 5.
4 The VI form is even listed in Hava's Dictionary as "to heap up clouds" (=νεφεληγερέτης), but I have failed to find the evidence on which this entry is based (probably on a specific literary occurrence of which I am unaware).
appropriate time. And, indeed, *rkib 'rpt* (i.e. to gather clouds in preparation for rain) occurs in close juxtaposition with rain and dew: *"tl smm smn ars rbb rkib 'rpt"* “dew of heaven, fat of earth, rain of *rkib 'rpt*”. Even more significant is the drought passage in 1 Aqht: 38-44: “Thereupon Danel the Rephaite prayed that the clouds in the heat of the season should rain early rain and give plentiful dew in summer for the fruits. Ba'al failed for seven years, *rkib 'rpt* for eight [leaving the land] without dew, without showers”.

In the light of these considerations it seems to me that the identity of *rkib 'rpt* and *nefelepyreptis* “cloudgatherer” has excellent support.

One of the most common stylistic features shared by Ugaritic, Biblical, and Homeric literature is the climactic arrangement of numerical sequences. Here we may observe not only an important aspect of style but a widespread Eastern Mediterranean numerical lore. A few examples will suffice:

2+3: Ugaritic *tN ql'm* . . . *"tl ql'm*

“Two slings . . . three slings” (321: III: 2-3; 4-5);

*aA' tt qa uqtaq* δύω τ' ἡματα . . .

ʻ'all' ὀτε δὴ τρίτον ἡμαρ . . .

“thus for two nights and two days . . .”

but on the third morning . . .”

(Od. IX, 74-76).

And similarly Od. X, 142-4.

3+4: Here one naturally thinks first of the famous verses in Amos i: "על שלשה . . . עז ברגו בל א摈בומ " for three . . . even for four I shall not reverse it”. Or in Proverbs xxx.

1 *'nt : II : 39-40.
2 ἀπεκ δνιλ mt
    ῥπη γςλυ 'rpt
    βημ ιν yr 'rpt
    τμτς βς τl γτlλ
    ιγνμ τβ' στυ
    γςτκ βl τμ τl rbk
    'rpt bl tl bl rbb.
3 It is worth noting, incidentally, that the mention of the night precedes that of day—to which one would compare such passages as Gen. i. 5 et passim :"ירח וריב וים בך.

Since this paper was written S. E. Loewenstamm’s valuable article “The Climax of seven days in the Ugaritic Epos” appeared in Tarbiz, xxxi. 3 (April 1962).
15, 18, 21, 29: "there be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea four which I know not"... etc. The same *bîtît* "for three"—*bârb'i* "for four" occurs in Ugaritic 3:3-4, but unfortunately the text is broken here and we do not know to what these numbers refer. The Odyssey knows the identical numerical sequence: 'ηδη γὰρ τρίτον ἐστὶν ἔτος, τάχα δ' εἶσιν τέταρτον "for three whole years—in fact for close on four..." (Od. II, 89).

Very widespread over the Eastern Mediterranean area is the seven-day sequence which has its *locus classicus* in the first chapter of Genesis but is attested also elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible: e.g. in Joshua vi, the compassing of Jericho which is to be carried out for six days (verse 3), but on the seventh day (verses 15, 16) ... the wall fell down (verse 20). Or the case of Job’s friends who sat with him for seven days and nights (ii. 13), but after this Job opened his mouth (iii. 1). This may also be seen in the Gilgamesh Epic (xi. 142-6): "One day, a second day Mount Nisir held fast the ship..." and so on till "when the seventh day arrived, I sent forth a dove"... Precisely the same sequence is found in 2 Aqht: I: 6-17 and in 51: VI: 24-33. The latter describes the progress of a fire (which threatens to destroy the palace) from day to day until on the seventh day the fire is extinguished. And so in the Odyssey (X, 80-81): "for six days we went ahead... and on the seventh we arrived at..."... and again at XII, 397-9.

7+8: See the example in footnote 2, p. 244 above or the interesting case in 52: 66-67: šb śnt tmt ṣmn ṭpt 'd "for seven whole years, for eight revolutions of time". The figure 9+10 occurs mainly in Homer, and with some frequency, but is attested also in Egyptian texts. There exist some higher climactic arrangements as well.

An excellent account of the poetic structure of the Ugaritic texts will be found in Gordon’s indispensable *Ugaritic Manual* (§13.98 ff.) which contains many relevant and important

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1 Od. IX, 82-83; X, 28-29; XII, 447; Iliad I, 54-55.
3 Ibid. §§181-2.
observations on Hebrew as well as other Semitic poetry. His warning against Old Testament emendations *metri causa* is particularly pertinent. Although there is a great gulf between Semitic parallelism and the Greek metre, Gordon believes that there exist "links resulting from a common heritage".¹ He throws out the suggestion that "the sharp break in the middle of each Hebrew or Ugaritic verse is the inescapable consequence of parallelism. In dactylic hexameter the caesura in the middle of the line has no function that seems formally necessary; and accordingly it may reflect the influence of parallelism in the pre-Homeric East Mediterranean" (ibid.). I am unable to assess the substance or otherwise of this ingenious idea.

There are other random similarities of idiom which cumulatively add up to a not unimpressive total: El, the head of the Ugaritic pantheon, is called both "Father of Men" (*āb ādm—Krt 37, 43, 136, 151, 278) and "Father of the Gods" (*āb bn il—2: 25, 33)² which corresponds, of course, exactly to Zeus' epithets πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

In both Iliad and Odyssey we encounter the idiom οὔ πως πᾶν εἰρήττο ἔπος (Od. XVI, 11) "not yet was the word fully uttered" which appears also in the Ras Shamra tablets: *bph rgm lysi* "from his mouth the word had not yet gone out, when . . ." (1 Aqht: 113, 141). Similarly, the recurrent ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἐρέω (Od. XVI, 299; XVII, 548) expresses the same as Ugaritic ἄφ μὴν ῥημαὶ ἀργμὸς (51: 1: 20, etc.) "yet another thing I will tell you".³—Greek χόρες καὶ τρίτην ἡμέραν is, of course, precisely Hebrew מֵתוֹל שָׁלְוֹשׁ מֵיֵם.

Already before the discovery of the Ugaritic documents we had some reason to think that the great epics of the Semites (Gilgamesh, the story of the creation, the flood, the Patriarchs, Judges, and Kings, etc.) and those of the Greeks were different manifestations of a great Eastern Mediterranean tradition. There is more here than the repetition of universal themes: we encounter idiomatic and stylistic parallels which go far beyond the merely fortuitous. But above all we are able to sense resem-

blances of atmosphere and milieu. Now Ras Shamra has provided the firm link which elucidates many obscurities.¹

IV

The position of Ugaritic within the Semitic languages and its proper classification has produced a considerable volume of scholarly discussion.² I do not myself attach undue weight to classification schemes, because they are apt to obscure almost as much as they illuminate. For in the end all will depend on the selection of some facts and the inevitable relegation of others, the tracing of some isoglosses and the omission of others. But in the case of Ugaritic, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicography seem to me to combine and to present a sufficiently clear picture of a North-West Semitic language of the second millennium B.C. with a large number of archaic features which disappear in the division of the North-West Semitic languages into the complex and variegated patterns of the first millennium B.C. The great importance and significance of Ugaritic must be seen in the fact that it alone affords us a view of an early North-West Semitic language with all its pertinent characteristics which otherwise could only be conjecturally reconstructed.

In this way, while the Ugaritic language has been recovered from the ensemble of our knowledge of Semitics, it has in its turn shed much light on Semitic linguistics and the evolution of individual languages. Moreover, we have so far found at least

¹ Apart from the literature already cited, Gordon’s “Ugarit and Caphtor” (Minos, vol. iii, 1954) and “Ugarit as Link between Greek and Hebrew Literatures” (RSO, xxix, 1954) should be consulted; also W. Baumgartner’s “Israeli­tisch-Griechische Sagenbeziehungen” (Schweizer Archiv f. Volkskunde, vol. Ixi, 1944). In the summary remarks contained in these pages I have concentrated on specific similarities of style and idiom which are, perhaps, more susceptible to reasonable proof than the enumeration of common themes and legends.

two texts (Gordon Nos. 75 and 77) which represent either a variant dialect or an older stage of Ugaritic. For, as I have shown elsewhere, the position of the cuneiform character (16) in the Ugaritic alphabetic order makes it highly probable that the sound shift $d>d$ occurred after the formation of the Ugaritic alphabet. We are thus in the exceptionally fortunate position of being able to observe in Ugaritic the actual evolution of a sound-shift which is well attested in part of the North-West Semitic area.

From a graphic and alphabetic point of view the Ugaritic letters appear by and large in the same order as is known to us from the Phoenician-Hebrew system. There are, however, eight additional symbols which are distributed as follows: $i$, $u$, $s$ are clearly innovations and as such were placed at the end (after $t$). The remaining five characters reveal no detectable reason for their sequential arrangement, either on phonetic or graphic grounds, for $h$ is placed between $g$ and $d$ (as in Arabic where, however, the arrangement is based on similarity of shape), $s$ between $k$ and $l$, $d$ (or $z$) between $m$ and $n$, $z$ between $n$ and $s$, and $g$ between $t$ and $t$.

The Ugaritic sound inventory includes interdentals (which later disappeared in Phoenician, Hebrew, and Aramaic) and uvular fricatives (likewise absent in those languages). The morphology reveals the three-case Semitic declension (visible in nouns ending in $'u$, $'i$, $'a$), the feminine element $-t$, and other archaic features of which traces can at times still be discerned in Hebrew. There are also many ambiguities which occasionally complicate our understanding of the literary sources; thus $b$ and $l$ stand for "from" in addition to their usual meaning, and $l$ is both affirmative and negative—and not always can context be relied upon to determine which is intended. The mimation suffix $-m$ (so well known from Akkadian and South Arabian—to bedevil classification still further!) is of very uncertain force and does not appear to be affected by either case or status. The verb shows a developed system of moods and a $\hat{s}af'el$ causative. The syntax, as far as can be judged from poetical texts, corresponds to the usual requirements of Semitic sentence structure.

1 Driver issue of the J.S.S., autumn 1962.
The Ugaritic vocabulary deserves more profound study than it has received hitherto. There has been a good deal of special pleading by those who detect particular affinities with Arabic or any other Semitic language. I have found it quite diverting, though not very profitable, to make out a case for Ugaritic pro-pinquity to every single Semitic language in turn. What would be of value, however, is not the tracing of chance relations between individual roots but the collection of complete semantic fields. There can be little doubt that such an investigation would strengthen our impression of Ugaritic as a North-West Semitic language which, in its literary character, reflects not only its Semitic hinterland but also forms a bridge towards other civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The linguistic and literary factors thus combine with historical and cultural elements to present a unified picture of an early Canaanite city-state which repays the closest study by anyone who wishes to understand the world of the Old Testament or who tries to appreciate the Homeric epics against a wider background or who endeavours to gain an insight into the workings of an ancient Semitic tongue in its relationship to the other representatives of the group. Ugaritic has taught us that "no longer can we assume that Greece is the hermetically sealed Olympian miracle, any more than we can consider Israel the vacuum-packed miracle from Sinai".  