## PARALLEL WORDS IN HEBREW AND UGARITIC

# [1947]

In my essay 'Biblical and Canaanite Literature', which I published several years ago in Tarbiz,<sup>1</sup> I raised a difficult question regarding the history of Biblical literature: Why is it that already in the earliest stages of this literature we find finished and perfected compositions, as though they had been preceded by a development extending over many centuries? As a result of my examination of the problem, I came to the conclusion that the solution could be found in the premise that Hebrew literature was but the continuation of the earlier Canaanite literature. A number of characteristic features, common to both Biblical and Ugaritic literature, served as conclusive proofs of the correctness of this assumption. The affinity between the two literatures in their methods of literary expression points to a very ancient Canaanite literary tradition, from which evolved both Ugaritic literature on the one hand and Hebrew literature on the other. Just as the Hebrew language is only one of the dialects that grew from the ancient Canaanite stock, and is a continuation - with certain dialectal changes resulting from the ramification and development of the various Canaanite dialects in the second millennium B.C.E. - of the oldest and most homogeneous Canaanite tongue, so does Hebrew literature continue the Canaanite literary tradition, which had already taken shape among the Canaanite-speaking population before the people of Israel came into existence.

One of the features, common to both Ugaritic and Biblical literature, that I have enumerated in my aforementioned essay is the existence of *fixed* pairs of parallel words in the two cola of a poetic verse. In the literary tradition there developed a kind of permanent nexus between a given word and another word that was synonymous with it, a sort of established custom that posited that when a certain word occurred in the first line of a couplet, it drew after it, in the second line, the word that regularly formed a parallelism with it.

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In this way, for instance, the correlatives ארץ – עפר ['earth, ground –dust'] were originated. If a poet introduced the word ארץ in the first colon, he already knew that in the second colon he would have to use the word עפר. Or, contrariwise, if he began with נפר, he would have to conclude with ארץ. For instance, Psalms vii 6 [5]: וישג וירמס לארץ חיי, וכבודי לעפר ישכן סלה ['... and overtake me, and let him trample my life to the ground, and lay my soul in the dust. Selah']; ibid. xliv 26 [25]: כי שחה לעפר נפשנו, דבקה לארץ בטננו (for our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body cleaves to the ground']. This word-pair occurs no less than thirteen times in the Bible, and just as it is common in Biblical literature, so it is found with equal frequency in Ugaritic literature. In stating this, it is not my intention to convey that in Ugaritic poetry one frequently encounters correlatives meaning 'ground' and 'dust', but that precisely the same words are used in both languages: actually ארץ and actually עפר occur in Ugaritic as in Hebrew.

In my essay, to which I have referred above, I have cited twentytwo examples of word-pairs of this kind.<sup>2</sup> Here I propose to offer still further examples that can shed new light on the study of the Hebrew language.

# אדם – לאם ['man, men – people'].

In the Ugaritic poetic text V AB ii 7-8, it is written: tmhs l'im hp y[m], tşmt 'adm ş'at špš ('she smote the peoples of the seashore, she exterminated the men of the sunrise'); and in Isaiah xliii 4: ואתן אדם תחתיך, ולאמים תחת נפשך ['l give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life']. In the view of most contemporary commentators of Isaiah the word אדם in this verse is suspect, since they hold that in Hebrew אדם is not a suitable parallel to לאמים; hence they have suggested emending it and reading in its stead אדמות ['lands'] or איים ['isles'], or the like. Now we learn from the Ugaritic verse mentioned above that, on the contrary, this is a traditional and established parallelism in the history of the language, and that the Masoretic text is not to be emended at all.

# אויב – צרה ['enemy – adversaries'].

Among the word-pairs that I noted in my earlier article, I listed (צורר) אויב – אויב ['enemy – adversary' (or, 'vexer')]. In addition, it now seems to me that we can indicate another parallel, even more exact and interesting, between Biblical and Ugaritic literature, namely,

2 See above, pp. 43-56.

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. XIII, pp. 197-212; XIV, pp. 1-10 [see English translation above, pp. 16-591.

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that the word אריבים (srt) occurs in both of them as a parallel to אריבים, and in the light of this traditional parallelism we can see that in several Biblical passages this word is not used in its normal sense of 'trouble, calamity', but in a different, collective, signification -'a group of adversaries'. We read in Psalms cxxxviii 7: אם אלך בקרב נמינך ותושיעני ימינך f'though I walk in the midst of צרה, Thou dost preserve my life: Thou dost stretch out Thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Thy right hand delivers me'].3 According to the usual interpretation of the word, the expression בקרב צרה, signifying 'in the midst of calamity', is somewhat strange, and the thought does not fit the context, which deals with the oppression of the enemy and not with a calamity. In Ugaritic the word srt certainly denotes the adversaries as a whole, as, for example, in Tablet III AB 8-9: ht 'ibk, b'lm, ht 'ibk tmhs, ht tsmt srtk ('lo, thine enemies, O Baal, lo thou shalt smite thine enemies, lo, thou shalt exterminate thine adversaries').4 If we interpret the word thus in the above-mentioned verse of Psalms, the entire passage becomes fully comprehensive. So, too, we find in Psalm liv 9 [7]: for He has delivered me from ['for He has delivered me from every , and mine eye has looked in triumph on mine enemies']. Essentially the psalm does not speak of calamities, but of enemies and vexers; hence there, too, צרה is to be understood in the sense indicated, to wit, 'a group of adversaries'. The same applies to Psalms cxliii. This psalm also deals wholly with the oppression of enemies and at the end it is written (vv. 11-12): למען שמך ה׳ החיני, בצדקתך ... תוציא מצרה נפשי, ובחסדך תצמית איבי והאבדת כל צררי נפשי... name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life! in Thy righteousness bring me out of אנרה! and in Thy steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries...'].5 Verse 12 continues the thought of verse 11 and parallels it, and in it, too, the word צרה has to be understood in the above-mentioned sense. It may well be that the word is to be interpreted thus also in other parts of the Bible, as, for instance, in i Samuel xxvi 24; i Kings i 29; Nahum i 9.

בכה – דמע ['weep — shed tears'].

In Ugaritic: Tablet I D 34-35: tbky pgt bm lb, tdm<sup>e</sup> bm kbd ('Pgt wept in her heart, she shed tears in her liver'); ibid. 173-175, and

177-179: ybk l'aqht gzr, ydm' lkdd dn'il mt rp'i ('he wept for Aqhat, the mighty one, he shed tears for Kdd, the son of Danel, the Raphaman'). Similarly, a number of times in Tablet I K (26-27: ybky - ydm'; 31-32: bm bkyh - [b]dm'h; 39-40: ybky - ydm'; 60-61: bbk - bdm'); so, too, in Tablet II K (i 25-28: tbkn - 'udm't).

In the Bible: Isaiah xvi 9: דמעתי השבון ואלעלה על קן אבכה בבכי יעזר גפן שבמה אריוך ['therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sebmah; I drench you with tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh']; Jeremiah viii 23 [ix i]: איז מקור דמעה ז'ן ראשי מים ועיני מקור דמעה ['O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night...']; *ibid.* xiii 17: האבכה יומע ותרד עיני דמע תדמע ותרד עיני דמעה ז'ן ibid. xiii 17: במסתרים תבכה נפשי מפני גוה, ודמע תדמע ותרד עיני דמעה ['my soul will weep in secret for your pride, mine eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears']; *ibid.* xxxi 16: במסתרים תבכה ועינין מדמעה ז'ן; ibid. xxiv 16: מנעי קולן מבכי ועינין מדמעה ז'ן ולא תספד ולא תבכה ולוא תבוא דמעתן ['keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears']; Ezekiel xxiv 16: מנעי קולן מבכי ועינין ניע you shall not mourn or weep nor shall your tears run down']; Malachi ii 13: מסות דמעה בכי ואנקה ('you cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning']; Lamentations i 2: לילה ודמעתה על ['she weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks'].

Comparison with the Ugaritic texts proves not only that in the ancient literary tradition the parallelism between the stems and was a stereotyped common feature, but also that a whole series of figurative expressions connected with the notion of weeping was established in the tradition. The eyes are deemed a source of tears both in Jeremiah viii 23 [xi 1] (רעיני מקור דמעה), and in II K i 27 (qr 'nk); the verb כלה in relation to eyes that waste away in tears occurs not only in Lamentations ii 11 (כלו בדמעות עיני) כלו בימעות ניני) (mine eyes are spent with weeping'], but also in II K, loc. cit. (26-27: 'al tkl bn qr 'nk, 'do not consume, O my son, the source of thine eyes'); the whole head, or the brain therein, is depicted, in parallelism with eyes, as though it had wasted away and become water through the tears that run down from it, in Jeremiah viii 23 [ix 1] מי יתן ראשי) מים ועיני מקור דמעה) even as in the above-mentioned verse of II K (which continues, after the word 'nk, with: mh r'išk 'udm't, 'the brain of thy head with tears'); the expression ויתן את קלו בבכי ['and he wept aloud'] is found in Genesis xlv 2 (compare Jeremiah xxxi ומנעי קולך מבכי ), and likewise, actually word for word, in II K i 13-14 (ytn gh bky). I have already cited, in my essay in Tarbiz,6

6 See above, p. 34, No. 2 and 3.

<sup>3</sup> On the parallelism יד - ימין see above, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> For further Ugaritic examples, see my previous article above, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Note should also be taken of the word הצמית, which also occurs in the Ugaritic verse cited.

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Biblical and Ugaritic expressions like 'drinking tears', and 'being sated with weeping', or 'melting the bed' with tears. All this evidences the existence of a broad-based and comprehensive tradition, which prevailed through the entire range of the literary language.

#### ('give - send'] בתן - שלח

In Ugaritic: Tablet II D vi 17–18: ['i]rš ksp w'atnk [hrs w'aš]hk; and *ibid* 27–28: '*irš hym w'atnk*, *blmt w'ašlhk* (both verses according to the reading correctly proposed by Ginsberg),<sup>7</sup> 'ask for silver and I shall give thee, gold and I shall send thee; ask for life and I shall give thee, immortality and I shall send thee'.

In the Bible: Psalms lxxviii 24-25: ודגן שמים נתן למו ... צידה שלח להם לשבע ['and gave them the grain of heaven... he sent them food in abundance']; Job v 10: הנתן מטר על פני ארץ, ושלח מים על פני חוצוח ['He gives rain upon the earth, and sends waters upon the fields']; compare also Joel ii 19: הנגי שלח לכם את הדגן והתירוש והיצהר... ולא בגוים בגוים אתן אתכם עוד הרפה 'behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil... and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations'], although in this verse the verb נתן is used in a different sense. Similarly, in Ugaritic: NK 21-22: 'islh thrm 'iqn'im, 'itn šdh krmm, 'I shall send bright sapphires, I shall make her fields vineyards'. At all events, from all the passages that I have cited it will be seen that we can establish a special connotation of the stem שלה in which the writer sends to inform the addressee of something, led to the use of the term 'send to someone' in the sense of 'write to someone in a letter',8 so the custom of presenting gifts by means of a messenger caused the same expression to acquire the meaning 'to give to someone', even where no actual sending is involved.

7 BASOR 98, 1945, pp. 17-20. For the expression compare, as Ginsberg has suggested, p. 17: i Kings iii 5: שאל מה אתן לך 'ask what I shall give you']; Psalms ii 8: שאל ממני ואתוה גוים נחלתך ('ask of Me, and I will make the nations your heritage...']; *ibid.* xxi 5 [4]: שרלם ועוד ערה לו, ארך ימים '(he asked life of Thee; Thou gavest it to him, length of days forever and ever'].

8 So, for instance, in the Lachish ostracon, No. 3, line 7: מאז שלחך אל עבוך, signifying, 'since you wrote to your servant'. See Torczyner's remarks in Te'udot Lakhish, Jerusalem 1940, pp. 56-57 [and in The Lachish Letters (Lachish I), London 1938, p. 52], and my observations in my article on the Lachish ostraca in RSO XV, 1936, p. 174 [see also below, p. 231].

ישמזים – שפחים ['mouth – lips'].

A very important proof of the power of the literary tradition is provided in the fact that several pairs of parallel words keep recurring in the Bible ever so many times as a common and conventional literary usage. Of the examples that I have given in *Tarbiz* it is worth noting, from this aspect the pair  $\neg \psi \neg \psi \Box$  ['earth, ground — dust'], which occurs in the Bible thirteen times, and the pair  $\neg \psi \Box$  ['for ever' — 'through all the generations'] which occurs in Scripture twenty-eight times. Because of the importance of such correlatives for determining the stylistic techniques of literary Hebrew, it appears to me that another example should be added that appears in the Bible twenty-four times, namely, the word-pair  $\Box \oplus \Box$ ['mouth' — 'lips'].

In Ugaritic: NK 45-47: hn bpy sprhn, bšpty mnthn ('lo, in my mouth is their number, on my lips their count'); I D 75: bph rgm lys'a,<sup>9</sup> bšpth [hwt] ('speech went forth from his mouth, utterance from his lips'), and similar passages.

Seeing that the Biblical examples are so numerous, I shall refrain from quoting them, but will content myself with giving the references: Isaiah xi 4; xxix 13; Malachi ii 6; ii 7; Psalms li 17 [15]; lix 8 [7]; lix 13 [12]; lxvi 14; cxli 3; Proverbs iv 24; x 31; xiii 3; xiv 3; xvi 10; xvi 23; xviii 6; xviii 7; xviii 20; xxvii 2; Job viii 21; xv 6; xvi 5; xxiii 12; Ecclesiastes x 12.

It would be possible to add many more examples, such as: – אא אאר שישים ['brother — son of mother']; הודים – אהבים ['affection — love']; ['judge — judge, govern']; היים – אלמורת [life — immortality']; דין – שמח – גיל ['rejoice — exult']; שמח – גיל ('rejoice — glow (as a sign of joy)']; שמח – בון; שמח – בון; ['lips — tongue']; and many more. But I am compelled to be brief, so as not to take up too much space in this journal. With these and similar examples I shall deal specifically on another occasion.

Even more so it appears to me desirable to postpone the discussion of those word-pairs that are not actually identical in the two languages — only their signification being the same — even in so far as one of the two words is concerned, for example: rac + rac +

<sup>9</sup> For the expression, compare Job xxxvii 2: והגה מסיו ('and the rumbling that comes from His mouth').

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I shall add only two notes here in connection with the parallel words.

The first is that sometimes the study of Ugaritic parallelism can help us to determine the signification of an obscure word in the Bible. I shall cite in this regard an example with which I dealt seven years ago.10 In Tablet I D, lines 61-67 and 68-74, there occur two similar and parallel paragraphs; in one of them the word bsql is used, and in the other, in the parallel passage, the word *šblt*. The two words are undoubtedly synonymous, and consequently it is evident that the obscure word bsql denotes something like שבולת ['ear of grain']; the context also makes it clear that the reference is to a fresh ear of grain. Now in ii Kings iv 42 we find an obscure word that resembles the obscure Ugaritic word, and there, too, ears of grain are referred to, actually fresh ears, וכרמל בצקלונו: ['(fresh) fruit'] כרמל בצקלונו. According to the Masoretic vocalization, the Bêth of Exercisi looks like the propositional Bêth, and the stem would in that case be צקל; but it is very difficult to believe that the similarity to the Ugaritic word bsql is only accidental. Hence, it seems, the Bêth must be regarded as a radical letter. Possibly the original form of the text was בבצקלוון and one of the two identical letters was lost through haplography, or the word may actually have been written בצקלונו by haplology, just as we often find in the Bible בית ['house of'] instead of בבית ['in the house of'], or החם ['entrance of'] in place of בבית ['in the entrance of'] (Bauer - Leander, p. 217).11 If the explanation I have proposed is correct, then the comparative study of the Ugaritic writings has helped us to understand an unintelligible Biblical word.

The second note pertains to the use of two synonyms, one of which is masculine and the other feminine, like שבי – שביה ['captivity'] in Jeremiah xlviii 46: אוי לך מואב, אבד עם כמוש, כי לקחו בניך נשביה ובנתיך בשביה ['woe to you, O Moab! the people of Chemosh is undone; for your sons have been taken captive, and your daughters into captivity']. A parallelism of this type, too, can be explained on the basis of the Ugaritic texts. In Tablet II AB, it is stated in con-

- 10 Orientalia, New Series, VIII, 1939, p. 242 [see English translation below, p. 197]; now see also Torczyner in Ben Yehuda's Thesaurus, XI, Jerusalem 1945, p. 5612.
- 11 In Ugaritic there is a similar phenomenon. Ginsberg has explained the words bk, bky, blmtk, as though their meaning was bbk, bbky, bblmtk (BASOR 98, 1945, p. 16, note 27, and p. 20 note 46). Also in Ugaritic, as in Hebrew, the word bt (i.e. 'house', like Hebrew בית) is used without a prepositional Bêth in the sense of bbt ['in the house'] (III K ii 22).

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nection with the banquet that Baal prepared for his brothers, the sons of Asherah, on the occasion of the dedication of his house (vi, lines 47-54): špq 'ilm krm všpq 'ilht hprt/špq 'ilm 'alpm/yšpq 'ilht 'arht/spq 'ilm khtm/yspq 'ilht ks'at/spq 'ilm rhbt yn/yspq 'ilht drkt [yn] [Hebrew translation: סיפק לאלים כרים, לאלות יספק רחלים; סיפק לאלים פרים.לאלות יספק פרות: סיפק לאלים ספסלים, לאלות יספק כורסות: סיפק . לאלים כדי יין, לאלות יספק צנצנות יין. - English translation: 'He provided the gods with he-lambs, the goddesses he provided with ewelambs; he provided the gods with bulls, the goddesses he provided with cows; he provided the gods with benches, the goddesses he provided with chairs; he provided the gods with jars of wine, the goddesses he provided with pitchers of wine'].12 From this we learn that they were accustomed to use synonyms based on gender: in connection with a male they employed a masculine synonym, and in relation to a female a feminine synonym. The usage goes so far that in Tablet III K iii, lines 23-24, Keret's children by his wife Mtt-Hry (or Hry) are divided into two categories: the sons are called the sons of Keret, while the daughters are termed the daughters of Hrv. In conformity with a similar convention, the word sml [a masculine form] occurs in Phoenician inscriptions to denote the (graven) image of a man, and the word smlt [a feminine form] to signify the image of a woman;<sup>13</sup> in Aramaic inscriptions, salma and salamta<sup>14</sup> are used in a similar way. On the basis of this idiomatic usage, we can understand the verse in Jeremiah cited above: שבי is used in connection with sons, שביה in relation to daughters. We also comprehend why, in the parallel passage in Numbers xxi 29, it is written: ובנותיו בשבית ['and his daughters captives (literally, 'in captivity')']. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads , but this is just one of the many instances in which the Samaritan recension endeavours to change difficult or rare expressions for simpler and more common locutions. In the same way it is possible also to understand the change from כי תצא למלחמה על איביך ונתנו :in Deuteronomy xxi 10-11 שביה למלחמה על איביך ונתנו יפת תאר וגו׳ (when you go ה׳ אלהיך בידך ושבית שביו, וראית בשביה אשת יפת forth to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hands, and you take them captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman...']; in conjunction with איב ['enemy']

- 12 I determined the correct text and meaning of this paragraph in Orientalia, New Series, VII, 1938, pp. 288-289 [see English translation below, p. 137].
- 13 Lidzbarski, Handbuch, p. 151.
- 14 Op. cit., pp. 160-161, 358; Levi della Vida, Clara Rhodos IX, 1938, pp. 139-148.

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שביה [a masculine noun] is used; relative to אשת יפת תאר we find שבי [a feminine noun]. Here, too, the word כסוחס שביה connotes the group of captive women.<sup>15</sup> In this manner also we can explain Isaiah iii 1: 1: בי הנה האדון ה׳ צבאות מסיר מירושלם ומיהודה משען ומשענה the Lord, the Lord of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay and staff']. The customary interpretation that the expression judah stay is intended to signify every kind of stay has no basis. Apparently, the feminine word משענה refers to Jerusalem and the masculine word משען to Judah (compare in the continuation of the passage, verse 8: [masc.] ירושלם, יהודה נפל [for Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen']), the order being chiastic.<sup>16</sup>

- 15 In verse 13 we find שמלח שביה and not שמלח שביה, because there the reference is not to a body of captive women, but to the general state of captivity, as in verse 16; while the feminine form already occurs in the word שמלה.
- 16 In verses like Psalms cxliv 12: הנותינו כוויעים... בנותינו כוטיעים... אער בנינו כנטיעים... בוותינו כוויות ('may our sons be like plants... our daughters like corner pillars'], or Proverbs i 8: אמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטש תורת אמך ('hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching'], and the like, the use of masculine and feminine may be purely fortuitous (in Proverbs vi 20, the text reads: ואר מש חורת אביך ואל תטש תורת אביך ('my son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching']).