SOME RARE LEXICAL ITEMS IN UGARITIC

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The proposals made here are set out in the accepted sequence of the Ugaritic alphabet and depend largely on equivalences in other languages (Akkadian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Phoenician). They are intended as no more than suggestions and as material for further discussion.

1. *udr* «quarry» (KTU 1.4 V 17 // 1.4 V 40)

The word occurs only twice, in parallel passages:

tblk ǵrm mid ksp	May the crags bring you plenty of silver,
gbʿm mḥmd ḫrṣ	the hills, desirable gold,
yblk udr ilqṣm	may the quarries bring you gemstones (?).

This is the meaning proposed tentatively by Gordon (UT §19.94) and accepted by Wyatt[1]. If *udr* does mean «quarry», the root would be *dry*, «to cut»[2]. For a similar formation cf. *uzʿrt* from a root *zʿr* (cf. DLU, 66b). Unfortunately, the meaning of *ilqṣm* is uncertain (cf. DLU, 31a).

2. *mispt* «(sack used as a) cushion» (KTU 4.166:4)

The correction of *midpt* to *mispt*[3] is likely given that in the first line of the text *milḫ* is a mistake for *miḫd* (KTU², 276, n.1). From the etymology (root *ʾsp*; cf. DLU, 55a) the meaning is «una especie de saco o envoltorio, apto para el transporte o almacenamiento de la fibra del lino o de la linaza»[4]. It certainly does not mean «garment»[5], as Ribichini - Xella correctly noted, and they suggest either a skein or ball of linen (fibre) or a container similar in meaning to Punic *mʾsph*, «place or object where something is gathered» (DNWSI, 589) and to Akk. *mussipu*, «(a scoop)» from

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1   N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit. The Words of Ilimilku and his Colleagues* (The Biblical Seminar 53), Sheffield 1998, 102; surveys: *ibid.*, 102, n. 140; DLU, 11. The other possibility is «camel», Akk. *udru* (AHw, 1401b).

2   G. Garbini, *Il verbo* adr *in ugaritico*, OA, 29, 1990, 57-62. He compares this verb with Phoen. *zry*, which may mean «to cut» (however, cf. DNWSI, 26-27).

3   M. Dietrich - O. Loretz, *Word-List of the Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (ALASPM 12), Münster 1996, 128.

4   J. Sanmartín, *Tejidos y ropas en ugarítico: apuntes lexicográficos*, AuOr 10, 1992, 95-104 (98).

5   UT §19.283 («garments of some kind»); M. Heltzer, *Goods, Prices and the Organization of Trade in Ugarit*, Wiesbaden 1978, 44 and 67 n. 380.

the root *esēpu*, «to gather» (CAD M/2, 235)[6]. Recently, J. Pasquali has suggested equating Eblaite *ma-za-bu* with Ug. *mispt*, «cushion»[7]. M. Dahood[8] had already compared the Eblaite word with Heb. *mēsab*, which may mean «cushion» but could have other meanings[9] and to complicate matters further, Akk. *masabbu/masappu*, («a basket») (CAD M/1, 321b-322a)[10] can be mentioned, although its etymology is uncertain[11]. As Pasquali notes, the meaning «cushion» seems to be peculiar to West Semitic tradition[12].

3. *mdgl* «look-out post; tower» (KTU 1.119:12)

This would be the meaning of *mdgl* if the root were *dgl* (though the root is unattested in Ugaritic) although it is possible that *mdgl* is a metathesis of, or mistake for *mgdl*[13]. However, as suggested by del Olmo Lete, Ug. *mdgl* seems to be the exact equivalent of Akk. *madgaltu*, «Aussichtsturm, Grenzwache» (AHw, 572a), «watch-tower» (CAD M/1, 16a) (from the verb *dagālu*, «to look»)[14]. One can compare Akk. *nāmaru*, «tower» (CAD N/1, 218a-219) or more literally, «Stelle des Sehens», (AHw, 726a) from the root *amāru*, «to see», although in Assyrian it means «Turm», «Torturm» (AHw, 726a). See next entry.

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6   S. Ribichini - P. Xella, *La terminologia dei tessili nei testi di Ugarit*, Rome 1985, 47 and n. 59. For the root *'sp* cf. V.E. Orel - O.V. Stolbova, *Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary. Materials for a Reconstruction*, Leiden 1995, 37, §146.

7   J. Pasquali, Ma'sapu, *«cuscino», nei testi di Ebla*, NABU 1995/99. According to him the root is also *'sp* and he notes that the word occurs in connection with a term meaning «seat, throne».

8   M.J. Dahood, *Love and Death at Ebla and their Biblical Reflections*, in J.H. Marks - R.M. Good, eds., *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, Guilford, CT 1987, 93-99.

9   E.g. «round table», «banquet» (cf. HALOT, 604a) or even «couch» according to M. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, Wisconsin 1985, 105.

10   «Korb» (AHw, 617b-618a) used for carrying chaff, flour or bread.

11   This in turn may explain the doubled *b* in the Hebrew term which occurs only in Song 1:12 as *mᵉsibbô*.

12   This may suggest another possibility for Punic *m'sp* in KAI 122:1. Although usually translated «the whole of» (cf. DNWSI, 589), since it co-occurs with *ks'h*, «throne» (DNWSI, 522) a meaning such as «cushion» cannot be excluded.

13   «This word is usually emended to [mgdl], «tower» (or *mdgl* is given the same meaning). Because, however, the word *mgdl* is attested in Ug. meaning «tower», and because the reading [mdgl] here is quite clear, it is preferable to await further textual evidence before adopting one or other of these solutions – Ug. may prove to have a word *mdgl* with a meaning distinct from *mgdl*,, D. Pardee, *Ugaritic Prayer for a City Under Siege (1.88) (RS 24.266)*, in W.W. Hallo - K.L. Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture* I, Leiden 1997, 283-85 (284, n.11). See now Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 419, n.18. The word *mgdl*, «tower» also occurs in Moabite (DNWSI, 592) and in the Amherst Papyri (DNWSI, 1259).

14   G. del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, Bethesda 1999, 300, n. 24. Cf. Sem. *dVgol-* «to look, see», Orel-Stolbova, *Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary. Materials for a Reconstruction*, §757; according to them, it derives from **dag-*, «to see, know», as in Eg. *dg3*, «to see».

4. *mšpy* «observation post» (KTU 1.16 IV 14)

This word occurs once only, in KTU 1.16 IV 13-14:

> *ʿl . lṭkm . bnwn*
> *ln . ḫnpt. . mšpy*

a passage which is translated in various ways:«Ascend to a tall building's shoulder, To the parapet (?) of a watchtower (?)»[15]; «go up to the parapet of the building, to the top of the tower»[16]; «Climb to the summit of the edifice, to the high terrace ... »[17]; «Subid encima del edificio, a lomos del torreón» (MLC, 317); etc. The couplet has a near parallel (in reverse order) in KTU 1.14 IV 2-4 (etc.):

> *w ʿly lẓr mgdl*   Ascend to the top of the tower;
> *rkb ṭkmm ḥmt*   Mount the city-wall's shoulder[18].

Inverting the sequence of lines in the second set helps to show the equivalences:

> *ʿl lṭkm bnwn*   *rkb ṭkmn ḥmt*
> *ln. ḫnpt mšpy*   *w ʿly lẓr mgdl*

This means that *bnwn* corresponds to *ḥmt* «wall», *ln . ḫnpt* corresponds to *lẓr*, «on the top of»[19] and *mšpy* corresponds to *mgdl*, «tower». The first two words are fairly clear: *bnwn* means «a construction»[20] and *ḫnpt* has been explained from Arab. *ḥanafa*, *ʾaḥnafu*, «back, spine» (see MLC, 589)[21]. Is it possible, then, that *mšpy* (:: *mgdl*) is a nominalized participle, Š stem[22] of *phy*, «to see»[23] (with elision of consonantal *h*)[24], in the sense of «place where one looks from, lookout(-tower)» (like *mdgl*, discussed above)[25]?

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15 S.B. Parker, *Kirta*, in S.B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, Atlanta GA 1997, 9-48 (37).
16 Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 233.
17 Pardee, *The Kirta Epic*, in Hallo - Younger, *The Context of Scripture* I, 333-43 (341).
18 Parker, *Kirta*, in S.B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 18.
19 Lit. «on the back of»; cf. Akk. *ina ṣēri*, with the same meaning.
20 Translated «edificio» in DLU, 113b; to the cognates given there add Aram. *bnwy*, «construction, building» (DNWSI, 173) and OSA *bnw* «building, construction» (Biella, DOSA, 47). Is there any connection with Eg. *inb*, «wall» (R.O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford 1962, 23; P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon*, Leuven 1997, 82-83)?
21 In both cases parallel to *ṭkm*, «shoulder(s)», with a modifier.
22 Or a noun, since Š-stem participles are rare; cf. J. Tropper, *Der ugaritische Kausativstamm und die Kausativbildungen des Semitischen* (ALASP 2), Münster 1990, 93-100 and 103-104 (only five examples).
23 For the verb see R.B. Coote, *Ugaritic PH(Y), 'See'*, UF 6, 1974, 1-5. It is uncertain whether the root is *phy* or *pwh*. The Arab. cognate may be *bāha* or perhaps *by(y)* or even «a verbalization of an original *pa-h* or the like, "and it/there was"» (Coote, *ibid.*, 5). See also M. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Vol. 1. Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU I.I-I.2* (SVT 55), Leiden 1994, 297, n.141.
24 For which cf. D. Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (HdO I, 28), Leiden 1997, 33-34.
25 Here can also be mentioned E. Lipiński, *«Leadership». The Roots DBR and NGD in Aramaic*, in M. Dietrich - I. Kottsieper, eds., «Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf». *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Loretz* (AOAT 250), Münster 1998, 501-514, where the meanings of NG/QD discussed («to travel, to lead», etc.) may also apply to Ug.

5. *smkt* «soil (?)» (KTU 1.16 I 35)

Recently I discussed this term and proposed Akk. *sumuktu*, «loose earth, dirt» as a cognate[26]. Interestingly, the difficult Phoen. word *mskt*, found only in the Karatepe inscription, is considered to be a translation of Hittite Luwian (FLUMEN) *haparis* which means «river-land»[27]. If this is the case, and if Ug. *smkt* is cognate with Akk. *sumuktu*, then it is possible that Phoen. *mskt*, which defies explanation, may be a metathetical form (either by mistake or through linguistic change) of **smkt*. A meaning such as «river-land» or perhaps «alluvial soil» would in fact fit the context in Ugaritic as well as its imagery of tears:

> *al . tšt . bšdm . mmh*   Let her pour her water in the fields,
> *bsmkt . şat. npšh*   (or) in the soil the flow from her throat[28].

This would then supply a further cognate to a Ugaritic word used only once.

6. *şpr* «goat» (KTU 1.14 III 19; 1.14 V 12; 4.296:8)

The word *şpr* occurs in the syntagm *klb şpr* which is used twice in the Kirta story where the king is described as unable to sleep (*wl . yšn*) for a series of animal noises, the last of which is described as

> *zġt klb şpr*   the howling of the *şpr*-dog(s)

There is no accepted translation. The possibilities are «hunting-dog(s)»[29] (where *şpr* is taken to mean «bird»[30] or else «to whistle»[31]), «watch-dog(s)»[32], «sheep-dog(s)»[33], etc.[34] It is significant, perhaps, that Phoen. *şpr* in the Karatepe inscription has been shown to mean «stag» in view of its Hieroglyphic Luwian equivalent (of

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nqd. To his evidence can be added Akk. *nāqidu* used with reference to a lead ox in a lexical text (Izi G 255, cited in CAD N/1, 333b; cf. *ibid.*, 335b). However, cf. S. Segert, *The Ugaritic* nqdm *After Twenty Years. A Note on the Function of Ugaritic* nqdm, UF 19, 1987, 409-410 (root *nqd*, «to point»).

[26] W.G.E. Watson, *Comments on Some Ugaritic Lexical Items*, JNSL 22, 1996, 73-84 (77-78).
[27] K. Lawson Younger, *The Phoenician Inscription of Azitawadda. An Integrated Reading*, JSS 43, 1998, 11-47 (36-40).
[28] For the positive sense here (rather than «Let her not, etc.») cf. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 224, n. 214.
[29] E.g. Pardee, *The Kirta Epic*, 335, without explanation.
[30] «Los perros de caza (?)», MLC, 295. 299.615; cf. previously J. Pedersen, *Die Krt Legende*, *Berytus* 6, 1941, 63-104 (96).
[31] Gibson, CML², 85 and n.7; «Lit. "... the dog (to which) he whistled"», *ibid.*, 88, 156. The meaning «hungry» (WUS §2346) is rather unlikely.
[32] «Watch-dog», Parker, *Kirta*, in S.B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 16, 21; cf. H. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (BASOR Suppl. 2-3), South Hadley MA 1946, 19, etc.
[33] TOu I, 523 («chien de *berger*»).
[34] Other possibilities are discussed in TOu I, 523, n. w.

which it is a translation)[35]. This seems to favour the meaning «hunting-dog(s)» for Ug. *klb ṣpr*[36]. The word *ṣpr* also occurs in KTU 4.496:8 and since *alp*, «ox» and *uz*, «goose» are listed in the same text it probably means «goat» there rather than unspecified «bird(s)», although Gordon (UT §19.2186) prefers the latter[37].

7. *šiy* «raptor(?)» (KTU 1.18 IV 23.35)

Yet again, the term occurs only in two parallel passages:
> *špk km šiy dm*   Spilling his blood like a *šiy*
> *km šḫṭ lbrkh*   like a falcon(?) over his knees.

Elsewhere I have suggested that in terms of the imagery here, both *šiy* and *šḫṭ* denote birds of prey and that a possible cognate for *šiy* is Akk. *ša'u*, «to fly»[38]. The proposal seems to be confirmed by Egyptian *si3*, which means «falcon»[39]. The equivalence of Egyptian *s* and Semitic *š* is attested[40], as is metathesis in loanwords[41]. However, Nicolas Wyatt has pointed out to me that these lines are *similes*, describing the way in which Yaṭpan attacks and so cannot be taken literally as referring to birds of prey. Furthermore, he claims that like Heb. *šāḥaṭ* (cf. HAL, 1352b-1353), Ug. *šḫṭ* means «to butcher» and that birds of prey do not hit «twice on the skull, three times above the ear» (KTU 1.18 IV 33-34). Hence he translates the couplet
>   Pour out (his) blood like a murderer,
>   like a slaughterer (you must bring him) to his knees[42].

Yet it can also be argued that the «twice - three times» parallelism need not be taken literally (it is hyperbolic) and that perhaps an element of wordplay is involved. The passage is still difficult and the possible equivalents for Ug. *šiy* remain intriguing.

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[35] Details in Younger, *The Phoenician Inscription of Azitawadda. An Integrated Reading*, 32. See also DNWSI, 973.

[36] However, if *ṣpr* were to mean «(he-)goat», as proposed by Hawkins, *apud* Younger, *The Phoenician Inscription of Azitawadda*, 32, then «sheep-dog(s)» would be more appropriate. As noted in TOu I, 523, n. w, «la traduction proposée ici [chien de *berger*] sous toute réserve, se fonde sur le rapprochement de *ṣpr* avec héb. *ṣâpîr* «bouc». Un «chien de bouc», c'est à dire chargé de veiller sur les troupeaux de boucs et de chevreaux désignerait le chien de berger».

[37] The personal names *ṣpr* (KTU 4.170:7; 4.332:18) and *ṣpen* (4.232:20; 4.261:4) could also denote either animal, although the spelling *ṣu-pa-ra-nu ...* indicates «claw»; cf. PTU, 190.

[38] W.G.E. Watson, *Two Similes in* Aqht, UF 23, 1991, 360-61.

[39] P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon*, Leuven 1997, 796.

[40] J. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Ancient Egyptian Texts*, Princeton 1995, 433 (Table 1) and 436 (Table 3).

[41] Hoch, *ibid.*, 419-21.

[42] Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 285 (and similarly the corresponding passage on p. 286). See *ibid.*, 285, n. 154.