Fig. 1. The Harbor of Ancient Ugarit in Northern Syria. The excavations in the foreground reveal the ruins of the port-town. The site is called today *Minet el-Beida.* (From C. F. A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I, Pl. VIII:2)

UGARITIC STUDIES AND THE BIBLE

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The name Ugarit is not new to readers of the *Biblical Archaeologist.*

A special article was devoted to the sensational discoveries asociated with that name in one of the earliest numbers of this periodical (Vol. II. 1), and data from Ugarit have been cited in various connections in subsequent numbers. A new, and more extensive, special article at the present time is warranted by the importance of the subject, which can hardly be exaggerated, and by the considerable quantity of new data which have become available despite the war and the interruption of excavations.

I. GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF UGARIT

Near the northern end of the Syrian coast, only about 25 miles south of the present Turkish frontier, there is a cove (Fig. 1) called Minet el-Beida ("the white harbor," "Whiteport"), into which flows a small stream. Today Minet el-Beida is neither a large nor a safe harbor, and is only used by a few fishermen; and the nearest town of any size is Latakia (Fig. 2), some 7 or 8 miles to the south. However, when archaeologists became interested in it 17 years ago, they discovered clear evidence that it had once been both larger and safer. At its seaward end, the white chalk cliffs from which it gets its name have been undermined by the waves and have tumbled into the sea, forming dangerous breakwaters; while at its landward end, as a result of the accumulation of sand and gravel thrown up by the boisterous winter sea and of soil and stones swept down by the swollen winter stream, the shoreline has advanced about 400 feet during the 3,000 odd years that have elapsed since it ceased to be the busy waterfront of the prosperous city of Ugarit. Of course, it should also be remembered that the ships of those times did not require nearly such large and deep harbors as ours do.

That there was once a very rich city half a mile to the southeast of the harbor has always been known to the people of the neighborhood. For here is the northwestern corner of a mound known as Ras esh-Shamrah (its ancient name was Ugarit; Fig. 3), in and around which they had often discovered valuable antiquities—including gold objects—both by chance and by treasure hunting. The attention of the scholarly world, however, was only attracted to this rather lonely spot in the spring of the year 1928, when, in the vicinity of the harbor, a peasant's plough struck what proved to be one of the stone slabs of the convex roof of a sepulcher. The latter was full of silt and valuables, and the peasants lost no time in removing most of the latter. However, the discovery came to the notice of the police, who in turn apprised the Department of Antiquities in Beirut; and when the representatives of the Department arrived they were still able to recover

some beautiful Cypro-Mycenaean pottery of the 13th century B.C. from the rubbish. As a result, both the harbor and, more especially, the aforementioned mound were excavated by a French expedition headed by Mr. Claude F. A. Schaeffer for about three months every year from 1929 through 1939. (May France and Mr. Schaeffer soon be in a position to resume these epoch-making excavations.)

A few exploratory shafts have revealed that the mound is the grave of not one but five cities lying one on top of the other. The lowest one is, of course, the most ancient. It flourished in the fifth, and perhaps even as early as the sixth millennium B.C. Of greatest interest to us, however, are

Fig. 2. Latakia, Syria. A French Air Force photograph, showing the harbor and a section of the modern city. Both the harbor and this city have replaced Ugarit and *Minet el-Beida* as the chief city and port of the area. (Courtesy of M. Henri Seyrig)

the second and first strata, representing respectively the first and second halves of the second millennium B.C. Both these cities were known as Ugarit. Obviously no stratum can be investigated methodically before those above it have been cleared away; and at present only the top one, or the younger Ugarit (c.1500-1200 B.C.), is at all well known. It is primarily with this Ugarit that we are concerned here. Roughly speaking, its history begins with the establishment—which may have been a reestablishment— of Egyptian sovereignty over this remote corner of Syria and ends with the irruption of the Aegean sea-peoples whom we also encounter in Pal-
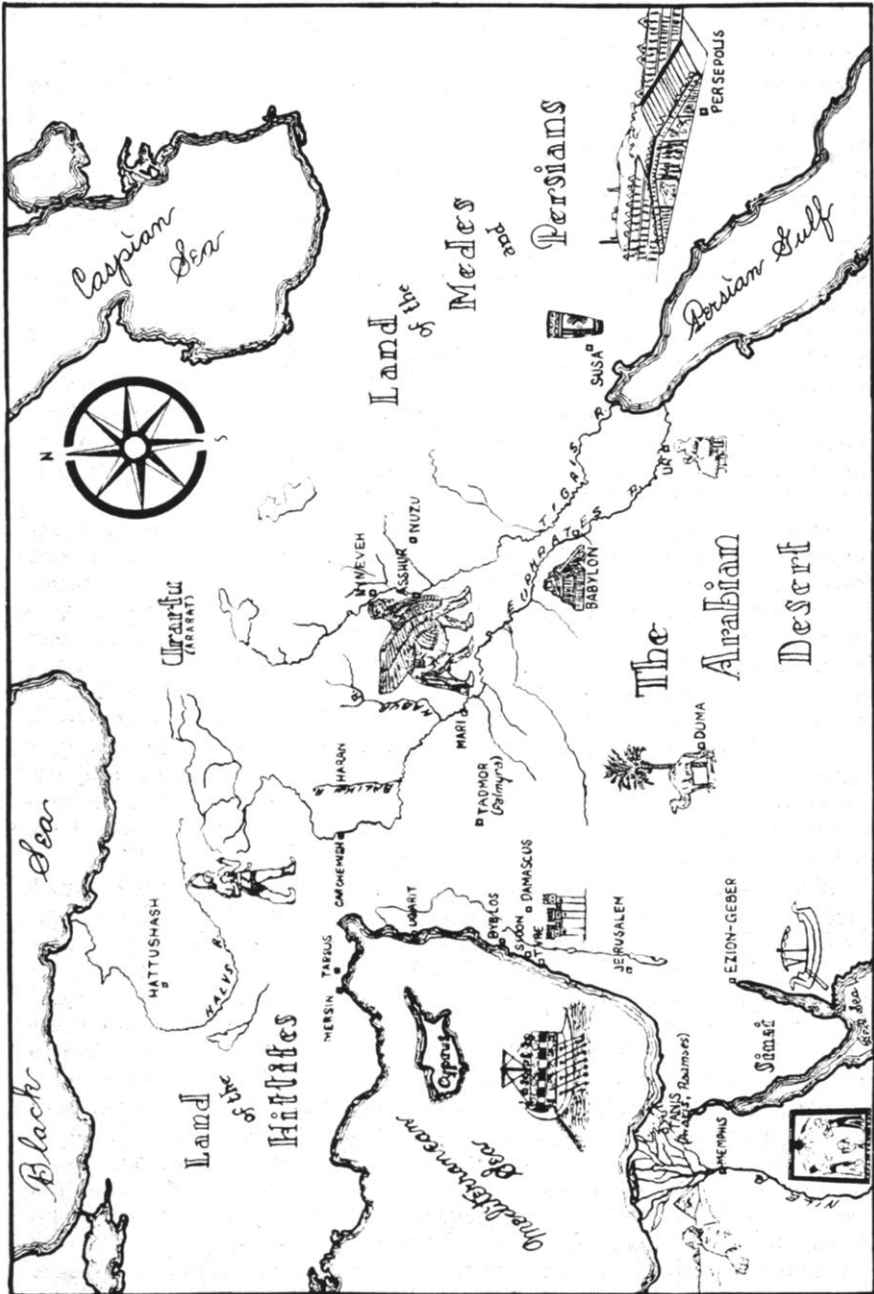
Fig. 3. A pictorial map of the ancient Near East. Ugarit appears along the coast of northern Syria, opposite Cyprus.

estine from the twelfth century on under the name of Philistines. The abandonment of Ugarit around 1200 B.C. was no doubt due to just this invasion of the sea-peoples.

II. WRITING IN WESTERN ASIA IN GENERAL AND AT UGARIT IN PARTICULAR

Within the above period, the most interesting phase, not only in the history of Ugarit but in that of the Ancient Orient as a whole, is the first half of the fourteenth century. This is what is known as the Amarna Age, from the circumstance that the first insight into its character was afforded by the archives of Amenophis IV, better known as Akhnaten, discovered at Tell el-Amarna (in Egypt). These documents revealed that: Firstly, both this Pharaoh and his predecessor Amenophis III cultivated diplomatic relations with practically all the independent kings of western Asia and married their daughters. Secondly, their correspondence not only with Babylonia and Assyria but also with the other independent states of western Asia, and even with the Egyptian dependencies in Syria, was conducted in the script and (with very few exceptions to which I shall refer immediately) in the language of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The name of that language is Accadian, and for the sake of convenience I shall also refer to its script as Accadian.

It was subsequently discovered that the peoples in question had been doing their writing in the Accadian script long before the Amarna Age. However, the leading non-Semitic nations had adapted it to the notation of their own languages at an early date, so that already in the Amarna Age the kings of Arzawa (in Asia Minor) and Mitanni (in northern Mesopotamia) were disregarding the privileges of Accadian as the diplomatic medium and the convenience of the Egyptian Foreign Office by corresponding with it in their own respective idioms. But with regard to the western Semites, it was believed up to the year 1929 that their written language, even in purely domestic matters, remained Accadian until not long before the end of the second millennium, when writing in the vernacular became common among them simultaneously with the use of the Phoenician alphabet.

Then came the first season of digging at Ugarit (spring 1929) which brought to light a number of inscribed clay tablets from the Amarna Age; and behold, the great majority of them employed not the very complicated Accadian script but a previously unknown one. Upon examination the new system was found to consist of only some thirty simple signs, which obviously represented single sounds rather than syllables or ideograms (signs representing single words or ideas). We shall call it *the Ugaritic alphabet.* I may say here that to date no specimens of it have turned up at any other site, with two exceptions: 1. In 1933 a clay plaque inscribed with Ugaritic writing *in reverse* was unearthed at Beth-shemesh, Palestine. Unfortunately, too much of it is missing for any coherent reading. Is it a local product or did some much traveled person bring it to Beth-shemesh from Ugarit? 2. In 1944 a bronze dagger with an inscription in this alphabet was discovered near Mt. Tabor, Palestine, and an article on it by Mr. S. Yeivin has probably already appeared in the second volume of *Kedem,* a periodical publication of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Provided the language is known and the material not too limited, and provided that the words are separated from each other—in our texts they are fortunately marked off from each other, as a rule, by a special sign which we call a 'word divider'—such an alphabetic writing is relatively easy to decipher. By adopting the working hypothesis that the language, in view of the location of the find and of the brevity of the words, was akin to Phoenician (which in turn, as is well known, is closely related to Biblical Hebrew), the German scholar Hans Bauer succeeded in an astonishingly short time in identifying half of the letters correctly. That meant that every word which contained only letters from that half was transliterated by him in a manner which we now know to be correct. Then, with the help of a newspaper article in which Bauer gave a popular presentation of his results, the French savant, Ed. Dhorme, corrected Bauer's identifications of most of the remaining characters, so that he (Dhorme) read nearly every complete word correctly.

All this was accomplished despite the fact that the texts on which the decipherers had to work were, unlike some of those discovered in later campaigns, rather crudely written and very fragmentary and for the most part contained only lists.[1]

How was it done? In the observations which the French scholar, Virolleaud, prefaced to his copies of the first texts, he noted that in the first line of one of the tablets, a line which is marked off from the following lines by a horizontal stroke (in the manner in which the headings are frequently marked off from the bodies of letters in Accadian writing), a sign which we shall represent by x is followed by a sequence of six signs which also appears on 5 bronze adzes (Fig. 4). From this Virolleaud rightly concluded that the tablet in question is a letter, that its initial sign, x, means 'to,' and that the sequence of six signs designates in the letter the addresee. and on the adzes the owner. Now, in Hebrew and Phoenician the single letter that means "to" is l and is written together with the following word, so that a large proportion of words in a Hebrew or Phoenician text begin with l. Bauer observed that similarly a large proportion of words in these new texts began with our x; so apparently x had the value of l, and the language really was (as he had tentatively assumed) related to Phoenician.

In another text was found a word consisting of x flanked on either side by a sign which we shall call y. If x really $= l$, then $y = sh$, for the only Hebrew and Phoenician word consisting of l flanked by two identical consonants is the numeral $sh(a)-l(o)-sh$ "three." These identifications were confirmed by the presence in the neighborhood of the word read $sh-l-sh$ of a word $sh-sh$, evidently equivalent to Hebrew $sh(e)-sh$ "six." A four-letter word in the same vicinity was tentatively read *'-r-b-'* "four," and it was noted that the last two letters of it frequently combined with l to produce what was evidently the name of the great Phoenician god $b-'-l$ "Baal." Further, the first two letters of the word tentatively read *'-r-b-'* "four" fre-

quently occurred along with the letter identified above as *sh* in the combination *'-sh-r-z*, where *z* represents still another letter whose value had not yet been determined. Obviously, this combination is the name of the goddess *'-sh-r-t*, Phoenician *'Ashirt* (Biblical *Asherah*); so that *z = t*. The five-letter combination *'-sh-t-r-t* could now be identified without further ado as the name of the goddess Astarte, Phoenician *'Ashtart* (Biblical *Ashtoreth*). And so on. The working hypothesis that the texts were composed in a language similar to Phoenician soon became an established fact.

Fig. 4. Adzes from Ugarit now in the Louvre Museum, Paris. The one on the right has the inscription "Kharusenni, chief of priests" (*hrsn rb khnm*). The one on the left is one of four which were found, all of which bore the inscription "chief of priests" (*rb khnm*). Both inscriptions were written (and therefore are to be read) horizontally, not vertically. (From C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* I, Pl XXIV)

We shall call the Phoenician-like language which was written at Ugarit in the Ugaritic alphabet *the Ugaritic language*.

However, not long after the alphabet had been deciphered it was discovered that it was also employed for writing the language of at least one non-Semitic minority of the population of Ugarit; but the material of this

nature that has come to light is limited in quantity and still very imperfectly understood. On the other hand, the writings in the Ugaritic language published to date (for a certain amount of material still awaits publication) consist of thousands of lines. Large sections of them are now quite well understood, and at every turn comparison with the Bible is suggested.

III. MATERIALS FOR COMPARATIVE BIBLICAL AND UGARITIC STUDIES

While, however, it is primarily the Ugaritic texts that are of interest to the student of the Bible, it should be noted that, for obvious reasons, the Ugaritians still employed Accadian in diplomatic correspondence and, maybe out of sheer conservatism, often preferred it as the language of legal documents, business accounts and seals. Most surprising of all, perhaps, are a few Accadian hymns to Mesopotamian deities transcribed in Ugaritic characters and provided with rubrics in the Ugaritic language. The Biblical scholar has much to learn from all these writings too. I shall cite only two cases in point.

1. The Khabiru of the Tell el-Amarna correspondence, who act in cooperation with rebels against the Pharaoh's authority, used to be regularly identified with the Hebrews and adduced as proof that the Israelite conquest of Palestine took place in the 14th or even in the 15th century. Particularly since the First World War, however, evidence has accumulated to the effect that the word in question (1) is rather to be read *Khapiru*, (2) was in use all over the Orient in the second millennium B.C., and (3) designated men *of any and every nationality.* What all the people so designated have in common is that they are economically rootless or broken, just like those who gathered around the outlaws Jephthah (Jud 11:3) and David (1 Sam 22:2) or hired their swords to the usurper Abimelech (Jud 9:4). It is obviously this circumstance, and not racial kinship, that accounts for the analogous roles played by *Khapiru* in Amarna Age Palestine on the one hand and "vain and light fellows" in early Israel on the other. But the severest blow of all was dealt to the identification of *Khapiru* with *Hebrews* by the discovery at Ugarit of partly parallel Accadian and Ugaritic lists of towns of the kingdom of Ugarit. For the town which is called "Khalb of the Khapiru" in Accadian is called "Khalb of the *'apirim''* (not *'ibriyyim* [="Hebrews"] or the like) in Ugaritic.[2]

2. That the system of weights in use at Ugarit (Fig. 5) was not the Babylonian one but the one which the Israelites employed is proved not by an Ugaritic document but by a business account in the Accadian language and by a series of uninscribed balance-weights. The document reckons 3,000 shekels to the talent in agreement with Exod 38:25-26 and as against the Babylonian system, which (consistently sexagesimal) reckoned 3,600 shekels. The common balance-weights of Ugarit[3] tell the same story.

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[2]To the negative result that the Israelites are not identical with the Khapiru of the Amarna Age, may be added the positive observation that both archaeological and literary indications point rather definitely to the third quarter of the thirteenth century as the date of the Israelite conquest of Palestine. Most of the Ugaritic documents on the other hand, were copied in the second quarter of the fourteenth century; and in the case of literary works, that will usually mean that they were composed considerably earlier. When, therefore, a comparative study of Ugaritic and Biblical literature reveals resemblances which can hardly be accounted for otherwise than by borrowing, it must be the Israelites who borrowed from the Canaanites and not vice versa.

[3]In addition to the native mina of 470 grammes, the Ugaritians made occasional use of the Egyptian mina of 440 grammes and of the Babylonian mina of 490 grammes.

[4]See most recently Albright, *Annual of the American Schools of Or. Res.* XXI-XXII, 1943, pp. 76 ff.—The Palestinian units were heavier than the Ugaritian (11.4 grammes to the shekel as against 9.5 grammes), but their inner relationships were the same (50 shekels to the mina).

The largest is evidently a mina (one-sixtieth of a talent) and the others equal one-fiftieth of this mina or multiples or fractions of one-fiftieth. Evidently, therefore, the Ugarit mina was divided into 50 shekels (not into 60 like the Babylonian), so that again a shekel comes to (1/50 x 1/60 =) 1/3,000 of a talent. Interestingly enough the mutual relationships of the uninscribed weights of Judah similarly confirm Exod 38:25-26.[4]

But let us proceed at last to

IV. THE UGARITIC WRITINGS AND THE BIBLE

While letters, records of various sorts, a manual on the treatment of horse ailments,[5] and even a schoolboy's exercise are not wanting, the bulk of the Ugaritic writings are *literature*—or rather, unfortunately, fragments of literature—in the strict sense of the word. This literature is exclusively *poetical*, and it is for the most part *epic*. There are parts of two epics embodying *legends about kings* and parts of what was probably one great epic embodying *myths about gods*. There is also one smaller writing which seems to be a *ritual text* embodying a myth about gods.[6]

Obviously, such writings are not likely to furnish exact data on history or geography—least of all, in view of the place where they were found, on Palestinian history and geography. Yet that is precisely what was claimed for them by some European scholars during the nineteen-thirties. Some readers of the *Biblical Archaeologist* have doubtless heard of this "Negebite hypothesis." It asserted that some of the Ugaritic texts preserve the memory of the expulsion of the Phoenicians from their alleged original homes in an allegedly thriving South of Judah. Their supplanters were said to be a people bearing the name of Terah, which in the Bible is the name of Abraham's father. The events in question were consequently connected with the Abrahamic migration from Mesopotamia to Palestine. South Palestinian localities like Ashdod, Sharuhen, and the wilderness of Kadesh were also said to be named in the texts. However, some of the words in question (e.g., the alleged 'Terah' in some of its occurences) are in reality verbs, and others are common nouns. A probable exception is "the wilderness of Kadesh," but we shall see presently that the region thus designated is at least as close to Phoenicia as to Palestine. No, the startlingly prosperous and populous Negeb (south) of the Ugarit texts belongs in the same limbo as the important state of Musri flourishing in the dreary wastes of Sinai and Midian which Hugo Winckler claimed to have discovered in the annals of the kings of Assyria forty-odd years ago, and which he proposed substituting for "Egypt" (Hebrew *Misrayim*) in large segments of the Bible! What one can expect to learn from the poetical myths and legends of the Ugaritians is something about (1) their *ideas and ideals* and (2) the technique and quality of their poetry. Then, since in the Amarna Age the Semites of Palestine and the Syrian coast constituted a cultural continuum which may be called "the sphere of Canaanite culture," we may, with due caution, generalize our findings so as to cover the Canaanites of Palestine as well.

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[5]The *materia medica* includes "old fig-cakes," with which cf. II Ki. 20:7; Isa. 38:21.

[6]This text is of special interest to Bible students for two reasons. Firstly, a feature of the ritual was the boiling of a kid in milk, so that Maimonides was apparently right in attributing the prohibition of this very practice in Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21 to its pagan associations. Secondly, apart from Ps. 29:8, this is the only text in or out of the Bible in which "the wilderness of Kadesh" is named. On this, see anon.

1. IDEAS AND IDEALS

To put it tritely, their ideas about men are distinctly more edifying than those about gods. The piety, the loves, and the family life of the human heroes are (always allowing for human frailty) appealing. A good monarch like *King Daniel* "judges the cause of the widow, adjudicates the case of the fatherless"—a phrase which is familiar to every reader of the Bible. On the other hand *King Keret,* who is convalescing after a very serious illness, is admonished by his scapegrace son Yassib approximately[7] as follows:

> Hearken, I pray thee O Keret the noble! List, and let thine ear be attentive . . . Thou shouldst judge the cause of the widow, adjudicate the case of him that is in anguish of spirit. Thou shouldst deliver the poor man from his oppressors, shouldst feed the fatherless before thee and the widow behind thy back. How long hast thou been a brother of the bed of sickness, a friend of the lofty couch? Descend from the king's throne! Let me be king. Upon the seat of thy dominion let me sit.

No doubt the monarchic reality often contrasted luridly with this ideal among the Canaanites, as it notoriously did at times in the Israelite monarchy. But the ideal was there, and when the Israelites, late in the eleventh century B.C., took over from their neighbors the millennia-old institution of monarchy, they evidently also took over the ideal connected with it.[8] For one thing, they almost certainly knew about the legend of King Daniel, the ruler who was not remiss in "judging the cause of the widow, adjudicating the case of the fatherless." The prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 14:12 ff.) enunciates the doctrine that, when God visits upon a sinful land a nation-wide calamity, the righteousness of an indivdual dweller of that land can save the life of that individual but not the lives of any of his fellow-citizens, not even those of his own children. To bring his point home, he keeps reiterating that under such circumstances not even Noah, Daniel, and Job would save either a son or a daughter. There can be no doubt that in naming these men, Ezekiel is citing three classical saints of yore. The antiquity of Noah requires no proof. That Job was thought to have lived "in the days of the patriarchs" is evident from certain well known indications in our Book of Job. Between these two, the Daniel of the Book of Daniel, at best Ezekiel's own younger contemporary, is out of place; especially as Ezekiel is obviously illustrating a *general* proposition, which is applicable to *any* land, with types of pious men that might conceivably be found in any nation. Obviously his Daniel, whom, by the way, he refers to again in another passage (Ezek 28:3), is like Noah and Job, a saint of hoary antiquity, and consequently belongs to mankind as a whole. His identity with the Daniel of the Canaanite epic is highly probable.

But the Bible also contains a striking parallel to the son's rebuke of

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[7]The passage in question, II K 6:41-54, was published in *Syria* XXIII (1942-43) p. 12. Like everything else published in France after 1939, it has remained inaccessible to the scholarly world at large (I only learned of it very recently by a stroke of good luck), and so has not had the benefit of its concerted ingenuity. Consequently, the translation given here probably misses a number of fine points. The general sense, however, is clear.

[8]That ideal is the origin of the concept of the Messiah, the ideal ruler of "the latter days."

Keret, the king who allegedly did not "judge the cause of the widow, decide the case of the fatherless." The opening paragraph of Jeremiah 22, the famous chapter on kings of Judah, reads as follows:

> Thus saith the Lord, go down unto the house (palace) of the king of Judah and speak there this word. Say, Hearken unto the word of the Lord, O king of Judah that sittest upon the throne of David, thou and all thy servants that enter in by these gates (of the palace). Thus saith the Lord, Execute ye justice and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the

Fig. 5. Bronze weight from Ugarit, now in the Louvre Museum, Paris. It weighs 190 grammes, which make it 20 Ugaritian shekels. The remarkably lifelike face may possibly be a portrait of the merchant in whose shop it was found—but then again it may not! (From C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* I, Pl. XII)

> oppressor; and do no wrong, do no violence, to the stranger, nor the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there (continue to) enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David . . . But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation.

The resemblance of this admonition to the Ugaritic admonition to King Keret is of course not due to imitation, but it is due to the common

premise that a king's job is to execute justice. At the same time, the difference between the two cases should not be overlooked. The story of Keret is legend, that of Jeremiah history. Keret's son was demanding the throne for himself, and his high-sounding sermon was only a hypocritical pretext. But Jeremiah was motivated solely by the intense religious and moral earnestness of a Hebrew prophet. Even if it is granted (though it is very improbable) that the fate of the royal house, and even of the temple, was a matter of indifference to him, that of the nation was surely not; yet in another passage he makes the fulfilment of the same requirements an indispensable condition for the continued existence of both the temple and the nation (ch. 7).

Indeed, the Ugaritic texts themselves make it difficult to conceive of a Nathan, an Elijah, an Amos, or a Jeremiah arising in Ugarit, or Byblus, or Tyre, to denounce the failure of their princes to live up to the ideal of the legendary King Daniel. For the example of the human characters of Canaanite literature was heavily offset by that of the divine ones. The gods of the Ugaritic epics are not only anthropomorphic (in human form) and anthropopathic (with human emotions), but morally sometimes inferior to the genus homo at its best.

One of the most shocking examples, and the one most germane to our subject, is that of the ferocious warrior-goddess Anath. King Daniel's son Aqhat possesses a cunningly wrought bow, a gift of the craftsman-god Kothar. Anath coaxes him to give it to her in exchange for wealth or immortality, but Aqhat will on no account part with his bow. Thereupon Anath commissions an assassin to dispatch Aqhat. I do not pretend to be certain that the Phoenician princess Jezebel, who found the same happy solution for the problem of Naboth's unwillingness to sell his vineyard to her husband, the Israelite king Ahab (I Ki. 21), had read this particular story of Aqhat's bow or been told it by her nurse. But it does seem obvious that, other things being equal, a sovereign who had been brought up, like Ahab, in the sternly ethical religion of the Lord of Hosts would be less likely to get such bright ideas, and less ready to act upon them if he did, than one who had been brought up in a milieu where the notions of divinity prevailed which we find in the Canaanite literature. And a monarch who did resort to such practices was infinitely more likely to meet with an Elijah in a society which harbored the Israelite concept of deity than in one that harbored the Canaanite concept.

It is indeed fortunate that the Israelites did not borrow any fundamental ideas about God from the Canaanites! On the other hand, they did borrow, with profit, some subsidiary ones. An example is the notion of His successful combat, long, long ago, with a hydra-headed sea-dragon (Ps. 74:14), known as Leviathan and by several other names and epithets. and with other enemies. The seven-headed dragon, the very name Leviathan, and most of the other names and epithets recur in the Ugarit texts, according to which the same beings were vanquished by Baal (with the aid of trusty allies). Similarly, the Hebrew poets described Jehovah, just as the Canaanite poets described Baal (Fig. 6), as a storm-god riding in a cloud-enveloped chariot, uttering peals of thunder and sending out darts of lightning; and they even borrowed Baal's epithet of the "Cloudrider" and transferred it to Jehovah.

We also have a complete composition, namely Ps. 29, which is full of echoes of Canaanite poetry and whose geographical standpoint is not Palestine but Phoenicia, or at least the Syro-Palestinian "sphere of Canaanite culture."

It is well known that all of the rainstorms of Syria and Palestine
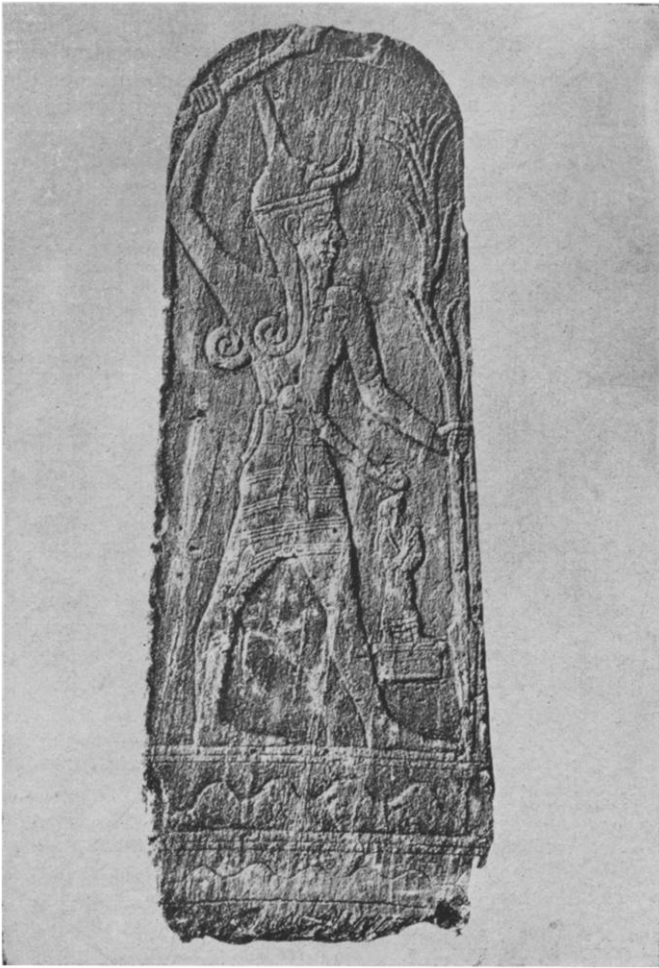

Fig. 6. A bas-relief from Ugarit, now in the Louvre Museum, showing the Canananite weather-god. His proper name was Hadad, but he was familiarly called Baal (Lord). In his right hand he brandishes his thunder-bolt, and in his left he holds his lightning. Note his horned cap, short skirt, and dagger. The small figure beneath the dagger is probably the king, whose hands are upraised in prayer. He stands on a chest or tub with a lid, an archaeological illustration of the "brazen scaffold" (bronze chest or tub) which Solomon stood on to pray at the dedication of the Temple (II Chron. 6:13). (From *Syria* XIV, Pl. XVI. Photograph by C. F. A. Schaeffer)

originate in the Mediterranean Sea and proceed in a landward direction. (Cf. I Ki. 18:43-45.) Well, our Ps. 29 speaks of such a storm as if it were a ride across the skies by a thundering God. Naturally, His voice is first heard roaring over the "mighty waters" (v. 3). Next, it shatters the cedars

of Lebanon (v. 5). Still further inland, it shakes the Anti-Lebanon range (v. 6). Finally, far to the east, it causes the Syrian Desert to tremble (v. 8). (1) Now, while the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon do lie within the ideal boundaries of the Promised Land (Deut 11:24; Jos 1:4), they do not lie within the historic boundaries of Israel. (2) Furthermore, the name by which the Anti-Lebanon is designated here, namely Sirion (v. 6), is not the usual one. Apart from I Chr. 5:16, where Sirion is perhaps to be read for Sharon, the name only occurs again in the Scriptures in Deut 3:9, which verse states that it is the Sidonian, i. e., Phoenician, name of the range which is otherwise known as Hermon or Senir. And in effect, it is the name employed by Ugaritians and other northern peoples. (3) So, too, the great desert to the east of the Anti-Lebanon range, the Syrian Desert, is called in our Psalm "the wilderness of Kadesh,"— a name found nowhere else in the Bible[9] but mentioned in a ritual text of Ugarit, where only preconceived notions could have led anybody to take it to refer to a very circumscribed area on the border between the Palestinian Negeb (southland) and the Sinai Peninsula. (4) Finally, the climactic ("staircase") parallelism which is so characteristic of our Psalm (vv. 1, 4, 5, 8) is exceedingly common in the Ugaritic poems.

And I have already pointed out (5) that the very notion of the storm-riding thunder-god is a Canaanite borrowing.

The cumulative evidence for the ultimately Canaanite origin of Ps. 29 is therefore overwhelming, and examples of some shorter pieces of Canaanite verse adapted by the Hebrew poets will be cited presently. However, the procedure of the Israelites with these borrowings was the opposite of that which we observed in connection with the king-ideal; that is to say, they took them *less* seriously than the Canaanites, more as poetic ornamentation than as fact. (Compare the Puritan Milton's use of Greek mythology even in poems of a specifically theological nature.) For Israelite monotheism leaves no room for any powers which are not subject to the sovereign will of God. Consequently it leaves no room for mythology; which is why the Bible contains only a few fossils or erratic boulders of mythology. And it is incompatible with the notion of God's needing to fight; which is why such combats are only introduced for rhetorical or poetic effect, and why "God's enemies" becomes merely a figure of speech for "evildoers." Not only do the two expressions alternate with each other (Ps 68:1-2), but—very characteristically—they alternate with each other in a verse which is unquestionably adapted from a passage in a Canaanite epic that speaks *only,* and literally, *of an enemy.* In an Ugaritic text, an ally of Baal encourages him in preparation for an encounter with another god with the words: "Lo, thine enemy O Baal, lo, thine enemy wilt thou smite; lo, thou wilt cut off thine adversary." The Psalmist, on the other hand (Ps 92:9), expresses his confidence in the ultimate triumph of *righteousness* as follows: "For lo, Thine enemies, O Jehovah, lo, Thine enemies

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[9]Contrary to an impression which is not confined to adherents of the Negebite hypothesis, none of the wildernesses in the vicinity of Kadesh, or Kadesh-barnea, which admittedly plays an important part in the account of Israel's wanderings prior to her entry into the Promised Land, shares with that oasis the name of Kadesh. That oasis lies between the wilderness of Zin and the wilderness of Paran. (See Wright-Filson, *Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible* [1945], Pls. V, X.) Indeed, in view of Gen. 14:7 it is doubtful whether even the oasis was called Kadesh at the time when the Ugarit texts were written.

shall perish; all they that work iniquity shall be scattered."

This example, however, illustrates not only the ideas of the Canaanites as revealed by the Ugaritic texts and Israel's reaction to them, but also the

2. FORM AND QUALITY OF CANAANITE POETRY

and its influence upon Israelite poetry. And indeed, the most important and assured results of comparative Biblical and Ugaritic studies come under this heading. The formal elements of Hebrew poetry are largely borrowed from the Canaanites. I have already mentioned that climactic parallelism is a favorite device of Canaanite poets. The Ugaritic passage I have just translated is an example—as is also, of course, its Biblical modification. That the same kind of climactic parallelism also occurs in
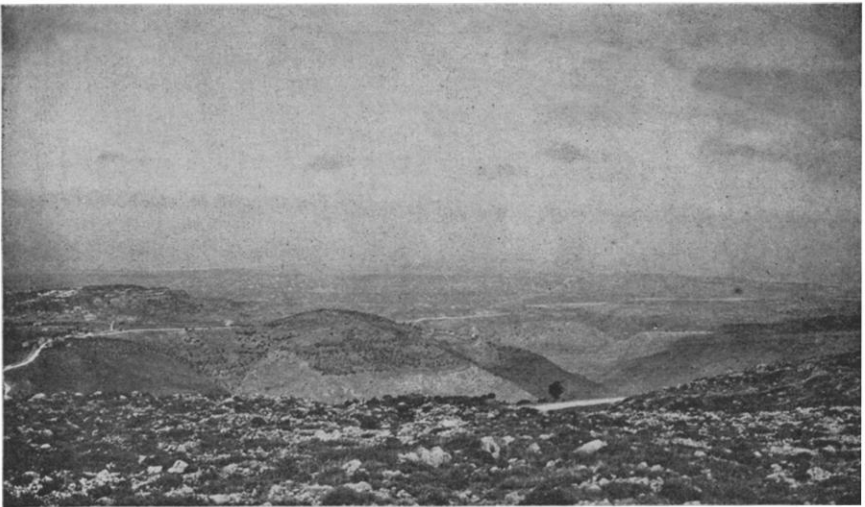

Fig. 7. A view from the Lebanon mountains, looking down to the coast and the Mediterranean Sea. The city in the distance is the modern capital of Lebanon, Beirut, over 100 miles south of Ugarit. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

early Accadian poetry is beside the point. The Canaanites, whose written language, as we have seen, was originally Accadian, doubtless adopted this and other techniques from Accadian poetry. But that was long before the Israelites appeared upon the scene, and the latter could only have borrowed those techniques from the Canaanites. Moreover, for the determination of mutual relationships, the frequency of a feature is at least as important as its mere presence. The well known parallelism of clauses is present in a certain measure in the poetry of many ancient and modern peoples. (It is very prominent, for example, in the national epic of the Finns!) But in the Ancient Orient, it is only in Canaanite poetry that its

use attains the same, sometimes monotonous, regularity as in Hebrew. In order to meet the exigencies of such a prosody, the Canaanite and Hebrew poets have some fixed pairs of synonymous words or phrases for certain concepts which poets have frequent occasion to express (e. g.: head, eternity, to fear, to rejoice). Many such fixed pairs are common to Ugaritic and Biblical poetry (though of course the words were not *pronounced* exactly alike in the two languages). Moreover, the members of such a pair are—with apparently no exceptions in Ugaritic poetry and with very few in Hebrew—always employed in the same order, and that order is also nearly always the same in both literatures. Common to both is the rule that it is the more usual expression that comes first, the second in some cases being hardly used at all except precisely for the purpose of balancing the first. For example, the ordinary Hebrew word for "eternity" is *'olam* (or *'olamim*), and if the poet wishes to express this concept a second time in a parallel clause he uses "generation and generation," *dor wa-dor* (or *dor dor*, or *dor dorim*). And except for the pronunciation, it is the same in Ugaritic. Thus, the continuation of the encouragement of Baal which I quoted above is, literally:

"Thou wilt win thy kingdom of eternity (*'lm* = Heb. *'olam*), thy dominion of all generations (*dr dr* = *Heb. dor dor*);"
with which compare (Ps. 145:13):

"Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all eternity (*'olamim*), and Thy dominion endureth through all generations (*dor wa-dor*)."
I need not point out that the importance of this illustration is not limited to the use, in the same sequence, of the same pair of synonyms for "eternity"! Our verse, like Ps. 92:9 which I quoted above, is obviously borrowed and adapted from its Canaanite parallel.

But to return to the identical use of fixed pairs of parallel synonyms, such agreement goes beyond a mere agreement of form and results in a considerable similarity of diction. So great, in fact, is the agreement in poetic diction that the Ugarit texts have become—in absolute terms to a very modest extent, but in relation to their limited bulk to a surprisingly large extent—an *aid to* the *textual criticism* of poetical passages in the Hebrew Bible; sometimes confirming emendations previously proposed, sometimes suggesting convincing new ones. For example, Ps. 42:2a is rendered in both the Authorized and the Revised Version: "As a hart panteth after the water brooks." However, "hart" is masculine, whereas the verb rendered "panteth" is feminine in form in the Hebrew. Now, all that is necessary for changing the Hebrew word for "hart" into the word for "hind" is the addition of a final *t*; and as the following word begins with a *t*, scholars have long suspected that, as frequently happens, our "hart" is simply due to the failure of a scribe to write the *t* twice (at the end of the substantive as well as at the beginning of the following verb) instead of only once. It so happens that the same figure of speech occurs in an Ugaritic passage, and there the feminine form of our substantive (i. e., with final *t*) is employed, thus confirming the proposed emendation in the Psalms passage. So, too, an Ugaritic parallel to II Sam 1:21 shows that instead of *u-sde terumot* "nor fields of offerings"—which no serious exegete regards otherwise than as a makeshift translation—*we-shera' tehomot* "nor upwelling of the deeps" (i. e., flowing of springs) is to be

read. Again, in Job 37:3 the rendering "He sendeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth" is unsatisfactory for three reasons: firstly, because a mere pronoun "it" stands in parallelism to a substantive "lightning"; secondly, because "it" does not mean "lightning" but refers back to the "sound" (i. e., "thunder") of the preceding verse; and thirdly, because the verb rendered "sendeth" does not have that meaning anywhere else in Hebrew or in the related idioms. However, the observation that a substantive from the same root means in Ugaritic "a flash of lightning" suggests that we have here an example of the opposite error from that which we have just noted in Ps. 42:1; i. e., the scribe

Fig. 8. The Plain of Antioch, some fifty miles northeast of Ugarit. St. Paul and many other Christians of the early Church crossed this plain on their way from Antioch to Tarsus and other cities in Asia Minor via the pass through the mountains to be seen in the center background. Here was the scene also of pre-Christian activities and cities. The mound in the foreground is now called *Tell-ej-Judeideh*, first settled in the sixth or fifth millennium B. C. It has been excavated by the Oriental Institute and is the key to unlocking the early history of Syria. In the right center of the photograph may be seen another mound, called *Chatal Huyuk*, also excavated by the Oriental Institute. Both of these sites were occupied in the early Christian period. A small church, dating from the sixth century A.D., was found among the surface ruins of the former. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

has repeated at the end of the verb the w with which the following word begins. With this final w omitted, the word reads instead of $yishrehu$ "he sendeth(?) it"—$yisre(h)$ "he flasheth"; and in a flash, all three of our difficulties are solved. (Probably *Sarai*, the original name of Abraham's wife Sarah, is from the same root and means "brilliance.")

A fourth example is Prov. 26:23, in which a person with smooth lips but a bitter heart is compared, as our text now reads, to "an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross." Apart from the question as to what exactly "silver dross" is, the Hebrew expression means rather "dross silver"—which

is not much easier to define. Moreover, neither "silver dross" nor "dross silver" is used for plating earthenware in real life and, what is more serious, neither would form a particularly attractive exterior. However, if the two Hebrew words in question (*ksp sygym*) are written together, i. e., as *kspsygym,* the intial *k* can be taken as the particle meaning "like," while the rest of the word can be identified with Ugaritic *spsg* "quartz, glaze." And "an earthen vessel overlade with glaze" is exactly what the context requires.[10]

The last three examples illustrate, besides the value of Ugaritic literature for the textual criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures, its contribution to Hebrew *lexicography.* Under this heading may also be included the confirmation which it affords for the surmise, previously made by an American scholar on the basis of the Arabic, that the verb rendered "to be dismayed" in Isa. 41:10, 23 is not the hithpael of *sha'ah* "to look" but an independent verb *shata'* "to be dismayed," as also its testimony that the Hebrew word for "table" does *not* mean properly "a skin mat," nor the word for "window" "a hollow." In general, the number of Hebrew words whose meanings have been correctly understood but whose etymologies will have to be revised in view of their Ugaritic correspondences is surprisingly high.

I have yet to say a word about the quality of Ugaritic poetry. After what I have already hinted about the crudity of the Canaanite concept of divinity, it will come as no surprise that some of the passages are quite crude, and that few display real power or profundity. However, some— especially those about men!—are not without delicacy and grace. But there can be no two opinions about it: the Israelite pupils far outstripped their Canaanite masters.

I would add, however, that the purpose of comparative studies is not invidious comparison, but better understanding. The literature, archaeology, history, and individuality of Israel, the world it lived in, and its place in that world and in history, have all been clarified in varying degrees by the discoveries made at Ugarit, and will undoubtedly be further clarified by further study and discovery.

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[10]For further examples see *Jour. of Biblical Literature* LXII (1943), pp. 109 ff.

Archaeolological News and Views

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B. A. PROGRESS REPORT

Readers may be interested in the progress which *The Biblical Archaeologist* is making: that is, in regard to its circulation and financial position. We publish these figures because this journal is prepared as a service, not for profit, and because we should like subscribers to feel that it is their journal.

Starting from scratch in 1938 the B. A. has come along surprisingly well. The first issue was a four page lithoprinted pamphlet, 2500 copies of which were printed and mailed. By 1940 the paid circulation was about 950 copies. Since the outbreak of the War, that number has more than doubled, so that the circulation of the February number (Vol. VIII.1) was 2027. Of this figure 1766 were sent to subscribers, while 261 were sent to members of the American Schools above the rank of Associate Member and to a few people as gifts or in exchange for other journals. Most of the issues in the first five volumes have had to be reprinted, sometimes repeatedly. While at the moment reprinting has been suspended because of the paper shortage, we plan to keep all issues available for those who desire them at 15c per copy or 50c per volume.

The present size of our circulation has been achieved, not so much through the efforts of the Editor and Publisher, but through you, the readers. Before the War we sent out a few sample copies each year, but that is the only advertising which we have done. This journal has grown and will, we trust, continue to grow because readers find enough of value and interest in it

that they recommend it to their friends.

Now for a financial report. Here follows the record of receipts and expenditures for each full year of the journal's existence:

Year	Receipts	Expenditures
1938	$361.24	$318.05
1939	488.84	375.00
1940	420.51	274.95
1941	687.95	563.63
1942	740.38	446.50
1943	1313.36	1209.47
1944	1338.76	1180.32
TOTALS	$5351.04	$4367.92

Thus in the seven years it would appear that we have made a total profit of $983.12. However, this "profit" is not entirely clear, since the B. A. budget does not include any provision for secretarial help or office upkeep. The "profit" means that we have been paying a bit over $140 per year on the average for such expense.

What about the future? I certainly hope that the circulation will continue to increase so that two years from now, when we reach Vol. X, we shall be mailing at least 3000 copies of every issue. There is a certain degree of pride in the fact that already our journal has a larger circulation than any other dealing specifically with Biblical, archaeological, or oriental subjects. That does not mean, however, that there is no room for improvement! At this point, the suggestions and advice of our readers are needed and greatly appreciated. There is no doubt but that this journal could play a much more significant role in the future, provided that there is sufficient vision behind it. There are certain things in my own mind,

however, which thus far have governed both form and content.

In the first place, the purpose of the journal is a limited one. It does not aim to teach the whole of Biblical truth, theologically or historically. Instead it simply seeks to provide an aid to Biblical understanding through the publication of certain information and discussion of a type which is virtually inaccessible in reliable form elsewhere, at least to most people.

In the second place, since the above is our aim, it would appear advisable to keep the journal somewhere near its present size. The last two issues of Vol. VII were 24 pp. each, instead of the customary 20 pp.; and in the future occasional numbers might be as large as 28 or 32 pp. As it is now, however, one gets the impression that the journal is being read. It is sufficiently compact that the average reader can go through it at one sitting. Were it to become more bulky, this would not be the case, and less of its matter would be read. Any future enlargement, therefore, might better be in the issuing of six, instead of four numbers per year. Such a move, however, would have to wait for the time when the circulation reaches 3000 or more.

In the third place, what about the style of the journal? Such criticisms as we have had in the past have been to the effect that the articles are either too popular or too technical! Since the criticisms have largely cancelled each other, we have simply continued in the way we have been going, not knowing which way to turn! Frankly, our aim has been to get a new type of scholarly writing: that is, to secure articles which are clearly and in-

terestingly written so that people who are not specialists can understand them, and yet which do not suppress data merely because of its technical nature. I have never been able to understand why it is that more scholars do not see the importance of using the English language as it is intended to be used: that is, of writing up their material in such a way that the language is a help rather than a hindrance, and that one is encouraged rather than discouraged from reading it. Typical scholarly writing all too often digs a hole and pulls the earth in over it, so that comparatively few can peep in to see what is going on. This is one of the major causes of the intellectual fragmentation and segregation of our day. It is scarcely wisdom. It is not even folly. It is foolishness!

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the average scholar, who knows so many things which we all ought to know, hesitates to take the time to write what he considers to be a "popular" article; and, when he does so, it is often with a degree of condescension. This has made the task of this journal difficult. Your forbearance is requested, as is also and especially your continued criticism and advice.

G. E. W.

P. S. Your Editor, having reread what he had written in the preceding two paragraphs with some perturbation, should hasten to add that he does not consider his own contributions to the B. A. as shining examples of the way things should be done! To the contrary! Yet he and others who have been writing are trying to learn, and with your aid perhaps they can.