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F O L I A O R I E N T A L I A
Tome XXVIII 1991
PL ISSN 0015-5675

DOES UGARITIC GO WITH ARABIC IN SEMITIC
GENEALOGICAL SUB-CLASSIFICATION?

Alan S. KAYE

There are a number of compelling reasons why Ugaritic must be viewed as being closely related to Arabic.¹ In answering the question posed by the wording in my title, I shall be following the classic paper by Goetze (1941), which, to my knowledge, has never been countered. He states that soon after its discovery in 1929 in Ras Shamra, Syria, Ugaritic became associated as a kind of early Hebrew or early Phoenician. He writes (1941:128):

Several scholars, all of them trained linguists (J. Cantineau, J. Friedrich), have expressed disagreement, but their warnings have been disregarded. Two recent American publications, Zellig Harris' book Development of the Canaanite Dialects and Cyrus Gordon's Ugaritic Grammar, proclaim the appurtenance of Ugaritic to the Canaanite family as an established fact.

Goetze defines Canaanite as the ancestral language from which

at least Hebrew and Phoenician are descended. To this we can now definitely include Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite. His (1941) discussion inventories some twenty phonological and morphological characteristics for the Canaanite family; however, let me briefly consider only seven of them here:

1. Proto-Semitic (hereafter PS) *h and *x > h.
2. PS *q and *ḡ > ḡ and z, respectively,
3. PS *ā > ō,
4. Causative morpheme is hi-,
5. Definite article is ha-,
6. Plural for masculine nouns is -īma for all cases, i.e., morphological neutralization,
7. The nota accusativi particle (which came in late).

The following features are to be noted for Ugaritic:

1. PS *h and *x remain distinct but not in some late texts in which h > x,
2. PS *q remains (except in later texts) and, in all likelihood, so does *ḡ (consistently); however, graphemically the latter is also recorded as <d> (Segert 1984:35),
3. PS *ā remains (except in some late texts),
4. Causative morpheme is ḡ-,
5. No definite article at all in the literary/poetic texts; however, there is one (hn) used in the prose texts, especially epistles,
6. Plural masculine nouns -- -ūma for the nominative and -īma for the oblique cases,

7. No nota accusativi at all.

All of the above are shared by Arabic with the exception of the causative (note, however, the cognate element ḡ in Form X of the verb). Goetze concludes that for the entirety of the twenty items, Ugaritic shares only three with Canaanite. It seems obvious, therefore, that one is forced to conclude that Ugaritic cannot possibly be classified as a Canaanite language. (I believe Canaanite includes languages and not dialects.) He was absolutely right in his reasoning. Further, he hypothesizes (quoting a host of sources) that Ugaritic is an Amorite dialect,² that designation not being Canaanite either; yet he does not set up a genealogical tree showing the precise genetic derivation from PS. It is my purpose to postulate one in what follows.

Many leading historical linguists have written about how subgrouping should be accomplished. Lehmann (1973:137) takes the position that the Wellentheorie (Johannes Schmidt, 1872) is preferable to the Stammbaumtheorie cautioning: "If languages were relatively homogeneous, either theory would be acceptable" (ibid.). The most theoretical writer on this subject is probably Hoenigswald (1960:151), who relates that subfamilies are established on the basis of "shared innovations." However, he goes on to state the following important fact:

What makes problems of subgrouping difficult (emphasis mine) is the fact that, even in the field of sound change and of simple grammatical change, the clear-cut alignment

... is likely to be obscured by other influences, the more so, the less time has elapsed between the proto-language -- in other words, the more closely the subrelationships resemble the original relationship. (1960:152)

Another ranking comparativist who has written extensively on the problems of the subclassification of related languages is Dyen, who notes:

The evidence from unique corresponding pairs of cognates is based on the methodological assumption that only innovations are relevant for language subclassification. However, innovations can be such for only one node or meso-language; what is an innovation for one node is an inheritance for any later node in the history of a language. Not only must innovations be considered, but the fact must also be taken into account that innovations can differ among themselves as to the node for which they are innovations. (1990a:221)

Dyen (1990b) has gathered some striking evidence in favor of a new Indo-European subgroup, Slavo-Germanic; yet on his own turf of Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) languages, one can easily comprehend that subgrouping often involves stormy controversies. Blust (1990:231) writes that Dyen's proposed Austronesian family tree with 40 odd branches has been rejected by all scholars working in that field today.

New perspectives on the genetic model have been advanced by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), who have revived the notion of Mischsprachen, which "include pidgins and creoles but are not confined to them ... mixed languages cannot be classified genetically at all ..." (1988:3). There is no evidence, though, to support the claim that Ugaritic is a Mischsprache, although Cyrus H. Gordon notes that Yaudian is a Canaanite-Aramaic Mischsprache (p.c.). In connection with the entire matter of classification, we agree, to a certain extent, with Gordon's sentiments (p.c.): "I must confess that I find classification rather subjective. It is usually achieved by selecting what you want and disregarding what you don't want." Be that as it may, many Semitists, especially those under the influence of William F. Albright, have regarded Ugaritic as a Canaanite language since they have, almost without exception, approached the study of Ugaritic from an Old-Testament, i.e., Biblical Hebrew point of view. Segert (1984:14), e.g., still calls Ugaritic "an ancient North Canaanite dialect," following, I believe, in this very tradition. There are many literary parallels to Old-Testament poetry, to be sure, and no one can deny this. In fact, a scholar like the late Mitchell Dahood (who, e.g., translated Psalms for the Anchor Bible Series) viewed a good portion of the Biblical Hebrew lexicon in terms of Ugaritic nuances and to a lesser extent, vice versa; however, the genealogical classification of a language must rest entirely on established linguistic grounds; a shared lexicon, even with similar parallelistic tendencies, must therefore be used with caution. Ugaritic literature has many similarities with Sumerian and Hittite

genres as well as with the Homeric Epics (witness the numerous writings of Cyrus H. Gordon on this subject, such as Gordon [1965]); yet these types of resemblances, often the result of diffusion, are simply irrelevant since they cannot be used for comparative-historical linguistic purposes.

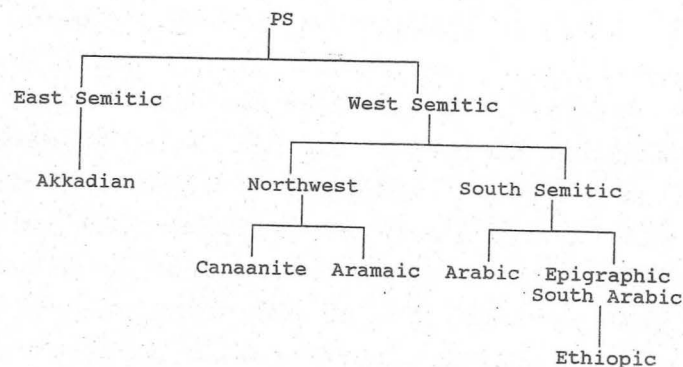
The question of classification thus boils down to a matter of linguistic isoglosses. Ancient Egyptian and Ugaritic are the only two Afroasiatic languages with a first dual pronominal suffix, *-ny* (which Gordon [1965b:145, fn. 1] claims is "quite probably" Nostratic, i.e., originally Holger Pedersen's ancestral composite of Indo-European, Afroasiatic, Dravidian, Uralic, Altaic, Kartvelian, Yukaghir, and Eskimo), yet no one would seriously claim that Ugaritic and Ancient Egyptian (indisputably related languages) are to be subgrouped together on this single criterion alone. This represents a coincidental survival. Things would be easy if languages split neatly from a common source, but that is, I believe, not the case anywhere. For Semitic, it is clear that we are dealing with many closely related languages, separated chronologically but spread over a vast area, with mutual interpenetrations down through the ages. Thus Semitic languages have continuously influenced other Semitic languages and, in turn, been influenced by them; however, we must reckon with the non-Semitic adstrata as well, as well as with "drift" and universal tendencies of linguistic change. This is why it is also possible but not probable to view the *-ny* mentioned above as evidence in favor of an Egypto-Semitic.

To return to our central topic of discussion, viz., the

classification of Ugaritic within Semitic, Ugarit was, as is well known, the center of the Mediterranean world in the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C., as is clearly proven by the fact that excavations there have turned up texts in Akkadian, Hurrian, Egyptian, both Hieroglyphic and Cuneiform Hittite, Sumerian, and Cypro-Minoan (on this last point see Gordon [1966]). It is not surprising, therefore, to see that Ugaritic possesses features which have allowed various scholars to classify it together with Hebrew, South Arabic, or Akkadian. Gordon (1965b:144-48) remains the definitive statement on the position of Ugaritic in the Semitic family. Although Gordon did early on call Ugaritic "Canaanite" under the influence of Albright, he soon changed his opinion when the following sorts of facts became appreciated. In the Ugaritic tablets (1965b:text 64:8, 9), <ugrty> 'Ugaritian' is different from <knfny> 'Canaanite', a kind of foreigner (1965b:\$19.1272). Although Gordon (1965b:147) concludes that Ugaritic is Northwest Semitic, there can be no doubt that if phonology is considered to be an important criterion, its conservatism goes hand in hand with Arabic as opposed to Hebrew or Phoenician. In this connection, Al-Yasin (1952:187) concludes that Ugaritic is not Canaanite, but that its affinities within Semitic remain to be worked out. More specifically, however, he had the following to say: "This comparative study has shown that in conservatism and proximity to the primitive Semitic phonemes, Ugaritic comes only next to Arabic, and is therefore nearest to it, in that regard, among all the other sister tongues" (1952:6).

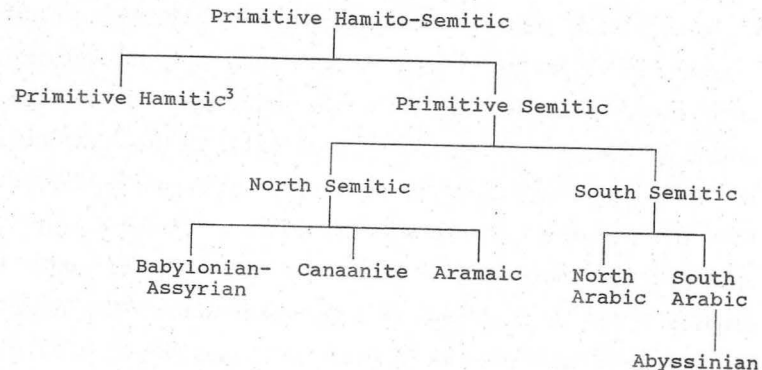
Let us now review some of the views of Semitists on the

development of the Semitic languages from PS. The classical view of Semitic genetic classification is expounded by Brockelmann (1908:7-8, 13, 21):



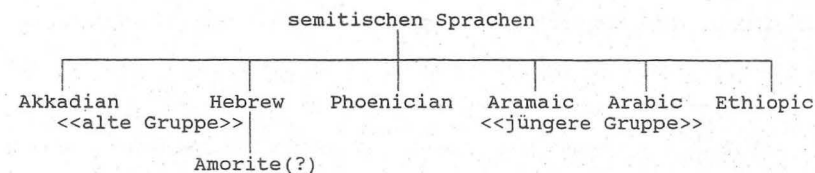
Here we note that Arabic and Canaanite are relatively distant.

Another classification is by George Barton, which he labeled "tentative" (1909:188):



This is, in essence, the Brockelmann (1908) position with the exception of a North vs. an East Semitic. It is this point of view which has, unfortunately, been perpetrated in many of the leading historical linguistic textbooks (e.g., Lehmann 1973).

Bauer-Leander. (1922:8) propose in yet another traditional classification the following picture:⁴

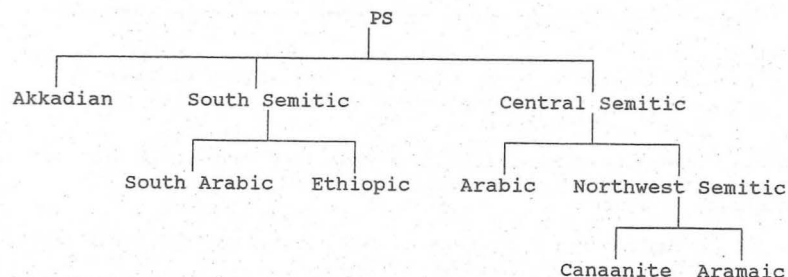


Here we see that Phoenician and Arabic are subgrouped together, as opposed to Hebrew.

The basis for the aforementioned classifications is supposedly isoglosses of the type Goetze (1941) used, although we have no way of knowing exactly how the isoglosses were weighted. Gordon's (1965b:144) stipulation that "... the classification of Ugaritic tends to become a matter of arbitrary definition" can now be easily understood. J. Friedrich tried to relate Ugaritic with Vaudian, problematic also in terms of its exact genetic classification. Some of these matters are discussed by Blau (1968), who concludes that there may never have been a Proto-Hebrew or Proto-Canaanite, thus calling into question the very essence of how most scholars comprehend the family-tree theory and the utilization of the comparative method.

Hetzron's (1972) classification (documented already in his earlier publications) is a real improvement over the older ones cited. It links Canaanite (and necessarily Ugaritic) more closely to Arabic; however, it was Hetzron (1972:128, n. 8) who credits Mayer Lambert (1921) for first classifying Arabic, Canaanite, and Aramaic together. Hetzron convincingly demonstrates that "South

Semitic, as represented by Ethiopian and South Arabian, has no more genetic affinities with Arabic than with other branches of Semitic" (1972:15). His proposed genealogical classification is as follows:



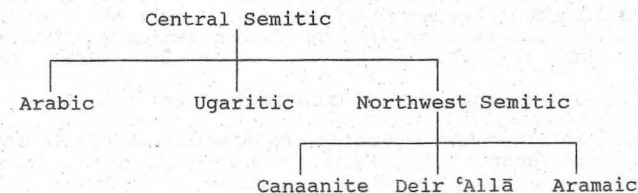
There is evidence for linking Canaanite with Arabic and Aramaic in a Central Semitic subgroup (Hetzron 1972:16), especially morphological, rightly considered by Hetzron to be the "safest criteria for language classification" (1972:13). However, it seems to me that, for the time being at least, there are reasons (as adduced by Goetze 1941) to postulate a third coordinate branch, viz., Ugaritic, to Central Semitic, on equal par with the others.⁵ Ugaritic should be considered a separate branch of Central Semitic⁶ much the same way Armenian is best viewed as a separate sub-branch of Indo-European, rather than the older classification which considered it subgrouped as an Iranian language (see Lehmann 1973:24).

Huehnergard (1991)⁷ is the most recent treatise on the matter of Northwest Semitic language classification. Although dealing specifically with the Deir 'Allā plaster text, Huehnergard shows how it would have been possible to have the language of this text develop uniquely and separately in its own right, thus postulating

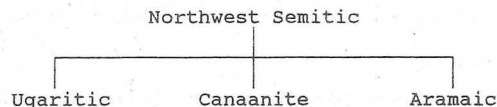
another "independent branch of the larger Northwest Semitic family" (1991:293). However, it is possible, in my opinion, that the immediate ancestor of Deir 'Allā is not Northwest Semitic at all but rather Central Semitic. Further, the shared innovation (linking only Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Canaanite) of the doubly-marked plurals, i.e., broken plurals plus sound plurals of gutl/gitl/gatl nouns may not necessarily be due to "an innovation in a common ancestor" (Huehnergard 1991:285). As Hetzron warns us about innovations, "those ... must preferably be found in the whole group. Even in this approach there is a trap. There are common innovations ... due to ... common universal tendencies" (1972:13). The forces of analogy; certainly a common universal tendency, have, as I see it, netted the doubly-marked segolate-type plurals in the languages which have them. As is known, identical changes may occur in many sub-branches after separation (see Bynon 1977:67). That is to say, doubly-marked pluralization is the result of parallel development.

CONCLUSION

What I am suggesting is the following genealogical tree:



What is new herein for Semitics is the idea that the following diagram is erroneous because this viewpoint fails to account for the close relationship between Ugaritic and Arabic:⁸



Notes

1. I had the opportunity to discuss this paper with the late Professor Andrzej Czapkiewicz, whose knowledge of Arabic and Semitics was outstanding, during my stay at Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków, January, 1990. It is indeed an honor to dedicate it to his memory. His reaction and those of some of his colleagues at the Instytut Filologii Orientalnej have enhanced my presentation here. I am grateful to Professor Cyrus H. Gordon, master of things Ugaritic and Semitic, for helpful suggestions on a preliminary version of this inquiry. The usual disclaimers apply, however.
2. Since there are no texts in Amorite (older spelling Amurrite), this conclusion is speculative. The thousands of Amorite proper names known are not enough evidence for a hypothesis suggesting a close affinity with Ugaritic. Gordon (p.c.) notes that there are "Amorite" features in Akkadian; however, "Amurru, meaning 'West' in Akkadian, is also the name of a little kingdom in Phoenician terrain, mentioned in the Amarna and Ugaritic tablets."
3. Almost no Afroasiaticists subscribe to this view today, i.e., there is no such entity which can be labelled the Hamitic family. Joseph H. Greenberg's outline of Afroasiatic as having five (or six, if one counts Omotic) major sub-branches is still the standard view today. That classification does not, however, mean that Proto-Afroasiatic neatly split into PS, Proto-Chadic, Proto-Berber, etc., as was pointed out in William Welmers' insightful review (1956) of Greenberg's work. In fact, Welmers was not at all sure how the family tree for Afroasiatic should look. Proto-languages like other languages had dialectal variation. See Hetzron (1990) for details.
4. See further their chronological-genetic chart (1922:17).
5. An interesting parallel to Ugaritic within Semitic can be seen in Venetic within Italic and Indo-European. Indo-Europeanists have also discussed "relationship problems" with Latin and Osco-Umbrian. See Beeler (1949) for details.
6. More research is still needed, in my opinion, concerning

whether Ugaritic split off directly from Proto-Central Semitic or perhaps from an intermediary Proto-Arabo-Ugaritic stage. This should be explored much in the same way Dyen (1990b) came up with the evidence for a Slavo-Germanic.

7. There are many challenging ideas in Huehnergard's (1991) paper, and it should be consulted for additional pertinent bibliography. Let me cite here only Voigt (1987), mentioned by Huehnergard (1991:283). Voigt postulates an Arabo-Canaanite sub-branch of Central Semitic.
8. This is the view of most scholars re-affirmed by Huehnergard (1991:286).

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Heikki PALVA

THE -ūn IN THE COLLOQUIAL ARABIC GENITIVE EXPONENTS

ḥaggūn, taba'ūn AND btā'ūn

In the region of Ša'dah near the northern border of Yemen, Peter Behnstedt has attested the plural form *ḥaggūn* of the genitive exponent, which in three local dialects is inflected as follows:

sing. masc.	fem.	pl. masc.	fem.	
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggat</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	(Sāḡēn)
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggit</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggāt</i>	(an-Naḡīr)
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggat</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggāt</i>	(im-Maḡḡah)

Behnstedt compares the form *ḥaggūn* with the Upper Egyptian and Sudanese equivalents *bitā'īn*, *ḥaggīn* and *līlīn*, and then puts forth the interesting hypothesis that this /-ūn/ actually might be a preserved old nominative morpheme.¹ In a dialect area where the unique archaism /ḡ/ : /ḡ/ is convincingly attested,² this assumption naturally suggests itself. However, similar forms have been attested for some other dialect areas as well, and therefore some comparisons should be made to test the plausibility of the hypothesis.

Apart from the Ša'dah region, similar plural forms of the genitive exponent have been reported to occur in urban Hijazi dialects: Snouck Hurgronje cites it in the form *ḥaggūn* (Mecca), whereas Schreiber mentions that the plural forms *ḥaggōn* and *ḥaggīn* occur in Mecca, both of which are used with reference to persons only.³ Significantly, the only example given by Siény for the use of the plural form in urban Hijazi, 'aḡ-ḡalabah *ḥaggōn* 'alḡām'ah 'the students of the university', is in accord with Schreiber's observation.⁴

If *ḥagg* were the only genitive exponent in the modern dialects of Arabic which displays the plural marker /-ūn/ (or /-ōn/), it could be possible to explain it as a preserved nominative morpheme. But, as a matter of fact, the same plural marker occurs sporadically with other genitive exponents as well, viz. *btā'* and *taba'*. Thus, Bauer ascribes the plural forms *btā'ūn* masc. and *btā'āt* fem. to Palestinian peasants: *el-byūt btā'ūni* 'my houses', *el-k'ūrūm btā'ūna* 'our vineyards', *hadōl btā'ūna* 'these are ours'.⁵ Among Cowell's examples from Damascus is the form *taba'ūli* 'mine', which Cowell presumes to be rendered from *taba'ūn*, perhaps reinterpreted as a quasi-verbal form with an /-l-/ suffix: *taba'ū-lo* 'belonging (pl.) to him'.⁶ It is also worth noting that *btā'ūn* and *taba'ūn* always seem to be used parallelly with *btā'īn* and *taba'īn*. In this respect the case resembles that of urban Hijazi, whereas in the region of Ša'dah the form *ḥaggūn* is not reported to have variants of this kind. On