As we all know the ancient Ugarit, discovered by an Arab peasant in the spring 1928, was located at the coast of Northern Syria. Already in the Early Bronze Age it was a large city connecting the interior of Northern Syria with the Mediterranean coast via the Bdāmā Pass. It also was situated on the important coastal highway which led from Egypt to Anatolia. In the sixteenth down to the thirteenth centuries B. C. it was a flourishing and important city-state of medium-size by Syrian standards exerting its influence on a region much larger than its original territory which was defined by the Sea in the west, the mountain ridge of Bargylos in the east, the region of Rās el-Bussēt (later Posideion in Cilicia) in the north and the plain of Gebel (Old Testament Gebal) in the South. The economic strength of the city was commerce. Its scope was international, situated as it was in the field of force between the Hittite kingdom to the North, Mitanni/Hurri to the East, and Egypt to the South. During most of the fifteenth century a large region around the territory of Ugarit formed a neutral zone between Egypt and Mitanni which was evidently respected by both great powers. Later, in the fourteenth century, the king of Ugarit became first a vassal of Egypt, then a vassal of the Hittite king, but in neither case did it suffer heavily, apart from in the latter period the trade to Egypt (compensated by the access to Anatolian markets). In the following century Ugarit remained loyal to Hatti “to their common bitter end”, but fortunately 1284 Ramesses II of Egypt and Ḥattušiliš III of Hatti entered into a peace treaty which re-established the commercial relations with Egypt and the vassal states of Egypt in Phoenicia/Palestine.

Thus, when we encounter the texts found in Ugarit, we know that they are created (or at least written-down and used) near the northern borders of Palestine in the Late Bronze Age. This was a time of remarkable cultural and linguistic unity throughout the regions of Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. As Kathleen Kenyon remarks, “the same basic culture grew up in an area stretching from Ras Shamra in the north to the desert fringes of Palestine in the south. Moreover, the culture now introduced into Palestine was to have a very long life. In spite of the fact that a series of events took place of major political importance, there is no cultural break until at least 1200 B.C.”

The geographical location of Ugarit in the far north, as well as the archaeological evidence of a cultural homogeneity in the regions of Syria/Palestine in the time when Ugarit flourished, is important when we are going to assess the distinctive character of the Ugaritic language. It is also important to account for the fact that the writing employed in Ugarit for its native tongue shows a remarkable blend of qualities: it employs cuneiform characters, but it is not the Akkadian syllabic

*This paper is a revision of my docent lecture given on June 9th, 1988, at the University of Uppsala.
writing; it is an alphabetic writing like the Phoenician, but the number of signs is 30, contrasting with the 22 characters in the Phoenician alphabet. And although cuneiform in character, the signs of the Ugaritic alphabet are not found in the Akkadian writing. The signs may be regarded as new formations, although a similarity in form between some of the cuneiform letters and those in a number of linear Proto-Canaanite inscriptions is often pointed out. The order of the Ugaritic alphabet is interesting. The small tablets found in Ugarit exhibiting lists of the 30 alphabetic cuneiform signs show that the native order of the signs to a great extent conforms to that in the Phoenician alphabet. In the following transliterated list the signs that lack a counterpart in the Phoenician alphabet are put in square brackets:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a} & \quad \text{b} & \quad \text{g} & \quad [\text{h}] & \quad \text{d} & \quad \text{h} & \quad \text{w} & \quad \text{z} & \quad \text{h} & \quad \text{t} & \quad \text{y} & \quad \text{k} & \quad [\text{s}] & \quad l \\
\text{m} & \quad [\text{d}] & \quad \text{n} & \quad [\text{t}] & \quad \text{s} & \quad \text{s} & \quad \text{p} & \quad \text{q} & \quad \text{r} & \quad \text{t} \\
& \quad [\text{g}] & \quad \text{t} & \quad [\text{i}] & \quad \text{u} & \quad [\text{s}] 
\end{align*}
\]

Obviously, there is a connection between the two alphabets. But which? The most natural and straightforward conclusion is that the Ugaritic alphabet represents an adaptation of an already existing alphabet consisting of 27 letters and that three letters then was added at the end. Gordon maintains that the Ugaritic alphabet “is typologically, but not yet chronologically, earlier than the Phoenician-Hebrew alphabet”. His argument goes as follows: the five letters (plus the three at the end) that constitute the difference between the two alphabets “could only have dropped (sic) out of the longer to form the shorter version. If we try to make additions out of the five letters, there is no way (with reference to graphic form or phonetic description) to explain their haphazard insertion”. Carl Brockelmann on the other hand observed that one of the signs denoting a syllable beginning with a glottal stop stands at the head of the native alphabet, the other two signs at the end and concluded that the Ugaritic alphabet was shaped by supplementary insertion of signs for sounds that were felt necessary to convey the Ugaritic tongue, complementing the already known Phoenician alphabet from Byblos. Recent research on the origin of the alphabet seems to confirm the opinion of Gordon. In all probability the Ugaritic alphabet was the result of a conscious and official act in the middle of the fourteenth century, “since within a very short time all types of documents – administrative and legal, literary texts and letters – were written in this script”. There is no trace of a formative period, and so it must have been adopted from somewhere else. The source of the Ugaritic script is to be found in the Proto-Canaanite alphabet, which at the time of the formation of the Ugaritic alphabet may well have contained 27 letters since the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet from which the Proto-Canaanite may have been formed show this number of signs. There is no unanimity as to the chronology of the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet. Benjamin Sass, however, argues for a date during the reign of Pharaoh Ammenemes III (1859–1814 or 1817–1772) of the 12th dynasty. The earliest attested Proto-Canaanite inscriptions may be dated to the end of the Middle Bronze period, that is, early in the sixteenth century B.C. All this means that the Ugaritic alphabet most likely
was shaped in the fourteenth century "under Proto-Canaanite influence, but cuneiform shapes were adapted to it to suit the requirements of the Ugarit scribes." The Proto-Canaanite alphabet was adopted “lock, stock and barrel, with the same letter names and order. Cuneiform shapes were given to the letters in conformity with local scribal tradition, and the three extra letters were added. Two of these, 'i and 'u, were intended to fill in some of the lack of vowels, which hampered the Akkadian-trained scribes, and the third, a second samek, was, at least initially, used in writing foreign words.” Thus, the impetus behind the formation of the specific Ugaritic script is to be found in the south, in Phoenicia and Palestine.

Language relatedness is commonly defined as equivalent to the existence of a common source, from which the related languages are supposed to have developed. Two separate languages are related if they are "reflexes of a single parent language." This definition may be expounded by the expectation that two related languages will share early rules of grammar (so-called "isoglosses") – that is, those roles that are extant already in the common ancestor – and "differ only in those rules which have been added more recently". Thus, Theodora Bynon says, "In general terms, the larger the number of such unshared changes the less closely related will be the two systems. Closeness of relatedness can therefore be seen to depend on the number of rules held in common". It is also important to realize that linguistic relatedness implies that the speakers of the two languages somewhere in history or prehistory ceased to form a united speech community, which means that "language diversification can only be the result of the prior physical displacement of at least a portion of the speakers of the parent language".

The origin of the Ugaritic script discussed above, is mainly an indication of cultural (rather than linguistic) dependence. The direction of the influence, however, gives us some hints as to the political and cultural position of Ugarit in the Fertile Crescent in the middle of the second millennium. The dependence may be summarized as follows: the scribal technique (cuneiform characters) was borrowed from the east (Assyria); the alphabet as such was borrowed from the south (Phoenicia) and supplemented with some local characters. This process J. C. Greenfield describes as "a Canaanite model was 'cuneiformized'".

To a semitist, the Ugaritic phonological system conveys an archaic impression. It resembles the Arabic system and is obviously close to the Proto-Semitic stock of phonemes. We find in Ugaritic a rich variety of dentals and many spirants and laryngals, the latter fact immediately excluding the possibility that Ugaritic would be an Akkadian dialect. The scribes at Ugarit made use of a cuneiform technique to form the native characters, but this fact only testifies to the cultural and commercial importance of the Assyrian script at the time of shaping the signs.

In late and informal Ugaritic texts, found mainly outside Ugarit, the sign for τ merges in that of 9, the sign for ħ in that for h,  dhcp in n, and j in 9. This concerns especially the so-called "mirror" tablets, found throughout Canaan as far south as Beth-Shemesh, which like the Phoenician texts are written from right to left. This short cuneiform alphabet seems to have developed outside Ugarit, probably in Syria or northern Palestine in the thirteenth century. In this region the Ugaritic cuneiform alphabet was preferred to the Proto-Canaanite, possibly because of an earlier tradition of cuneiform writing. As was the case with the Proto-Canaanite
alphabet itself in the south, the cuneiform alphabet in this intermediate region "was shortened in accordance with the merging of consonants in the spoken language."29 There is no evidence that the short cuneiform alphabet was ever used in Ugarit itself, although a few such tablets has actually been found there. In all likelihood, this alphabet was identical with the 22-letter Phoenician alphabet.30 Thus, "the conservative phonology of Ugaritic vis-à-vis Heb.-Phoen. is not merely chronological but geographical".31

When assessing the relative affinity between the Semitic languages a great obstacle is that they are attested in different periods of time. From the time of Ugarit (before ca. 1200 B.C.) very little is found of other Semitic languages except Akkadian. If we compare Ugaritic with later attested languages such as Hebrew or Aramaic, it should be held in mind that we know little of the state of these languages when Ugarit flourished. If the affinity of two languages is to be estimated that are attested from different periods of time, we have to take into account a reconstructed proto-form of the later attested language, in order to be able to perform a correct comparison. What do we know of the (Proto-)Hebrew language in the 13th century? Its stock of phonemes? Its verbal system? Not very much indeed, except for our own reconstructions out of the extant more recent texts. This situation means for all Semitic languages (except Akkadian) that we are forced to rely on texts that are several hundreds - in the case of Arabic and Ethiopic more than a thousand - years later than the Ugaritic literary corpus.32

If two related languages are attested from different times, a rule of thumb may be formulated thus: when the later attested, but not the earlier attested, language shows linguistic traits that are found in their known or reconstructed common ancestor, then this is an indication of a less close relation between the two. Obviously, the opposite is not necessarily true. If the more ancient language shows archaic traits as against the more recent one, this does not permit any conclusions. Only if, in the latter case, it can be made plausible that also the proto-state of the later attested language did not show these traits, are we entitled to draw any conclusions.

To get a reliable estimation of relatedness it is of course necessary to take into account as many such indications as possible. If they pertain vital parts of grammar or vocabulary, however, already a few such differing characteristics might be conclusive, at least in questions of relative relatedness, that is, questions of the relative position of a language within a specific family or subfamily of languages. Is a given language more closely related to one (subgroup of) language(s) than to another? This is especially the question posed in the present article.

When the Ugaritic texts were presented to the learned world it was at first felt that they represented a language very close to the Hebrew of the poetical parts of the Old Testament.33 Extensive parts of the texts could be read as a Hebrew consonant writing with a defective spelling and to a large extent common vocabulary.34 When the traits of Ugaritic grammar became more pronounced, however, it soon became obvious that Ugaritic could not be a Hebrew dialect, perhaps not even a Canaanite one. Several scholars, one of which was A. Goetze,35 meant it was not a Canaanite dialect, but a language close to the Amorite that can be traced in North-West Semitic personal names in Akkadian cuneiform texts.
In the discussion of the position of Ugaritic there are nowadays mainly two standpoints that have been maintained. Some scholars hold to the Canaanite character of Ugaritic,\textsuperscript{36} others propose that it cannot be classified as Canaanite, and should be distinguished as a separate unit within the North-West Semitic group\textsuperscript{37} together with the Aramaic and the Canaanite subgroup.\textsuperscript{38}

There are many features that Ugaritic has in common with the Canaanite languages as against Aramaic. Some of them are:

1) In Ugaritic as in Hebrew and Phoenician (but not in Aramaic) the common verb \textit{hi}k shows secondary formations in imperfect and imperative: \textit{y}lk and \textit{l}k (\textit{=lik}-), where the radical \textit{h} is dropped. Cf. Biblical Aramaic \textit{y}hk.\textsuperscript{39}

2) Both Hebrew and Ugaritic utilize the pôl el type instead of the pi"el type to form the intensive stem of verbs \textit{I}w: Ugar. \textit{yknn} (Hebr. \textit{ykwnn}) “establish” from the ideomorpheme \textit{kwn}, and Ugar. \textit{rm}m (Hebr. \textit{rwmm}) “raise” from \textit{rwm}. Cf. Syriac pael \textit{kawwen}/\textit{kayyen} “correct, rebuke”.\textsuperscript{40}

3) Hebrew/Phoenician and Ugaritic are the only Semitic languages with two parallel forms of the 1. sing. personal pronoun: in Ugaritic the pair \textit{an}/\textit{ank} corresponding to the Hebrew and Phoenician \textit{'ny}/\textit{nky}.\textsuperscript{41}

4) Many lexical correspondences including the masses of synonym pairs in poetry that Ugaritic and Hebrew have in common.\textsuperscript{42} “The great bulk of the vocabulary of Ugaritic, when not \textit{gemeinsemitisch} (\textit{klb}, \textit{bt}, \textit{'kl}, \textit{tbr}), has its strongest links with Canaanite”.\textsuperscript{43}

5) Change of Proto-Semitic \textit{d} to \textit{s}.

6) The monophthongizations \textit{aw} \textgreater \textit{ə} and \textit{ay} \textgreater \textit{ɛ}.\textsuperscript{44}

7) Dual and plural endings of nouns with -\textit{m}-.

8) The enclitic mem and the locative \textit{he} is shared by Ugaritic and Canaanite.\textsuperscript{45}

9) The verbal syntactical sequences \textit{PC}/\textit{SC} and \textit{SC}/\textit{PC}.\textsuperscript{46}

10) The existence of the relative pronoun \textit{at}r in Ugaritic. The use of the corresponding \textit{'sr} as a relative pronoun has been attested only in Lachish, Biblical Hebrew, and in Moabite.\textsuperscript{47}

Since the features stated above would provide a strong evidence that Ugaritic belongs to the Canaanite family, I will in the following examine the most common arguments against a classification of Ugaritic as »Canaanite«, and see if they nevertheless might constitute a decisive refutation of such a relationship.\textsuperscript{48}

1) In Canaanite, as against Ugaritic, the phonological system seems to be reduced by:\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{align*}
\text{h, } \text{h} & \rightarrow \textit{ḥ} \ (\textit{ḥ}) \\
\text{t}, \ \text{š} & \rightarrow \textit{ṣ} \ (\textit{s}?) \\
\text{t}, \ \text{q}, \ \text{s}, & \rightarrow \textit{ṣ} \ (\textit{s})
\end{align*}

Evidently, the Phoenician alphabet is made up of 22 letters, which means that many Proto-Semitic phonemes are represented by the same graphic sign. However, as was observed above the Proto-Canaanite alphabet from which the Phoenician
one derives its origin contained 27 letters. Later, by the time of the thirteenth century, five of the letters of the Proto-Canaanite alphabet had disappeared through assimilation of some consonants. A parallel development may be observed in the texts written in the short cuneiform alphabet of Ugarit. The argument, therefore, presents no evidence against a classification of Ugaritic as a Canaanite dialect.

2) In Canaanite, Proto-Semitic ā has changed to ō. “This change has been widely regarded as the characteristic phonetic development of Canaanite”, being “one of the few changes which spread over all (or most) of the Canaanite area without being paralleled elsewhere”. Aramaic, on the other hand, has preserved Proto-Semitic ā. And with the exception of a few instances the latter is also the case in Ugaritic. An exception to the rule is Ugar. gen./acc. plur. tut = ți’ötּi, a plural (of ți “ewe”) ending in -ŏt− < -āt-, and probably also in Akkadian writing a-du-nu = ʻadōnu instead of ʻadänu. Since this phonetic law was in force as early as the 14th century (it is attested in the Amarna tablets) it is usually held that “the preservation of ā cannot be ascribed solely to the earliness to the Ugaritic documents”. This is perhaps the most important argument against a classification of Ugaritic as “Canaanite”. However, it is important to account for the geographical position of Ugarit on the northern fringes of the Palestine-Syrian region. The habit of pronouncing the original ā as a ō had not yet been fully established in Ugarit when the city perished about 1200 B.C. But Gordon remarks: “Perhaps with the passing of time the shift of ā to ō infiltrated the prose of Ugarit. Poetry is more resistant to change than prose is”.

3) Causative prefix in Canaanite is ha- but ša- in Ugaritic. This is not a strong argument. Causative prefixes in the verbal system seem to be distributed among the Semitic languages in a well-nigh haphazard manner, and it is obvious that the three causative prefixes ša (> sa), ha and ūa were used side by side also in a late stage of Proto-Semitic. Already in Canaanite, besides the Biblical Hebrew hi (< ha), the Phoenician language shows the causative prefix y < 'i, the prefix ūa has become established in Aramaic, North-Arabic and Ethiopic; h is used in the Epigraphic South Arabian (ESA) dialect Sabean, whereas in Minaean and other ESA dialects the prefix s (< s) is utilized, except in Ugaritic the prefix ša is found in Akkadian and Aramaic. In fact, in Aramaic all the three Proto-Semitic causative prefixes have been preserved in various dialects. The distribution of the causative prefixes in the Semitic languages indicates that the causative formations crystallized relatively late, and only after the individual languages had been separated. The forms of the causative prefixes cannot, therefore, be used as an indication of relative affinity (or non-affinity) within the Semitic family of languages.

4) Ugaritic possessed no definite article. In view of the diverse forms of the definite article in the individual Semitic languages – including its absence in Akkadian, Ya’udic, Ethiopic, and Ugaritic, it is obvious that Proto-Semitic did not possess a clearly circumscribed means of expressing the definite article, and that it evolved individually in the different languages. As Brockelmann, says, “In allen
sprachen, auch denen, die einen vollentwickelten bestimmten Artikel besitzen, finden sich deutliche Reste der Zeit, wo das Nomen an sich selbst scharfe demonstrative Determination enthalten konnte”.

The definite article evolved late in those Semitic languages that came to possess this feature. In the Biblical Hebrew poetry, for example, the article is not necessary to achieve determination, and its usage is limited; in Old Byblian the article was very rare. We cannot, therefore, be sure that there was a fully developed definite article at all in those proto-stages of the Canaanite languages that were contemporary with Ugaritic. Consequently, the argument that Ugaritic lacks the definite article is inconclusive. The absence of the article indicates nothing as to linguistic affinity; rather, it is most probably due to the relative antiquity of Ugaritic.

5) In Canaanite, the masculine suffix of the dual is -ayma (Hebrew -ayim), whereas Ugaritic shows more ancient forms of the suffix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>abs.</th>
<th>cstr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>-âm-</td>
<td>-â</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen./acc.</td>
<td>-êm-</td>
<td>-ê</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Proto-Semitic dual endings were in all probability nom. -â, gen./acc. -ay (in the absolute state followed by nunation or mimation and case vowels). In Ugaritic – disregarding mimation and case vowels – the construct form of the Proto-Semitic dual suffix in gen./acc. coalesced with the absolute form due to the monophthongization of diphthongs. However, according to Akkadian transliterations of Canaanite words in the El Amarna tablets, the Old Canaanite dual of the absolute state ended in -ôma (nom.) and -êma (gen./acc.) respectively, which is very close to the Ugaritic forms, only that the Canaanite shift â > ö has taken place. In this instance the biblical Hebrew retention of the diphthong -ay- in the absolute state of the dual (-aym > -ayim) and the use of this dual suffix in all cases, represents a separate development. Again we see that a disparity between Ugaritic and the attested Canaanite dialects is due to the great span of time in between the languages.

6) The form of the existence particle in Ugaritic, 'î, is more similar to the corresponding particle in Aramaic, 'yt or 'yty, than in the Canaanite languages. This difference is not great, being one between ' and y: Hebrew/Phoenician y's. Moreover, there are possible traces of a variant y's even in classical Hebrew.

7) Ugaritic possessed case endings. This is only due to the antiquity of the Ugaritic texts. Old Canaanite possessed case endings as late as in the Amarna time, since they are written in the Canaanite forms and glosses in the Amarna letters even where the cuneiform orthography did not require them, but they were lost at the beginning of the first millennium B.C., because of the general dropping of final short vowels. In a dissertation by S. Parker it is even held that it is possible to trace a breakdown of the case system as well as final short vowels in general in the prose texts of Ugarit.
8) In Ugaritic, the prefix conjugation (PC) was the straightforward narrative verb form. Therefore, according to Bertold Spuler, Ugaritic cannot even be a North-West Semitic language! This is, indeed, a remarkable statement. In the ancient Hebrew language which together with Moabite has preserved many archaic traits in the verbal system it is still the PC that functions as the narrative form par préférence. What is the so-called “imperfect consecutive” in biblical Hebrew other than a narrative verb form that due to its frequency in such contexts has become a syntactic “fossil” from a time when the PC was even more freely used? The ancient Hebrew verbal system rather indicates that Old Canaanite possessed a verbal system that was very similar to that in Ugaritic. Goetze even adduces the predominantly stative force of the SC as a non-Canaanite sign of Ugaritic, although such a SC form would be exactly what we would expect of an archaic Canaanite language in view of the Hebrew verbal system.

9) Merging of d with z in Phoenician, Hebrew and Moabite, but a change d > d in Ugaritic. The latter seems to be a northern trait that Ugaritic shares with Aramaic. It is, however, hard to determine when the change took place in Hebrew or Phoenician.

10) The conjunction pa. This particle occurs in Ya'udic and Ugaritic (as well as in Arabic), but not in Hebrew or Phoenician. If it actually did occur in Proto-Hebrew, or was used in Old Canaanite in general we simply do not know. It is not attested, however, in the known Canaanite languages, and this is possibly one of the features that marks a distance to the Canaanite languages.

My conclusion is that the evidence against a classification of Ugaritic as close to Canaanite is meagre, although there are some uncertainties. A. F. Rainey and A. Goetze have maintained that “Canaanite” is a misleading term, since there is evidence that the inhabitants of Ugarit did not reckon themselves as “Canaanites”. This is a valid statement, but it does not alter the linguistic facts. Instead, it turns the whole question to “a matter of arbitrary definition”. The linguistic evidence, however, is not arbitrary. It rather indicates that whether the inhabitants of Ugarit would have liked to call themselves Canaanites or not, their mother tongue should be regarded as an ancient and peripheric Canaanite language, spoken on the northern fringes of the Palestine-Syrian region. This means that the cultural unity observed by Kathleen Kenyon in the whole Syro-Palestinian area also involved a linguistic unity that characterized the spoken languages for the greater part of the second millennium.
NOTES

1. The destruction of Ugarit by the so-called sea peoples is assumed to have occurred during the reign of ‘Ammurapi in the beginning of the twelfth century, ca 1180 B.C., see O. Loretz, Ugarit und die Bibel. Kanaanäische Götter und Religion im Alten Testament (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 7.

2. Comprising the region north of Şumur (thus named in the Amarna letters, Arabic Rās ez-Zémara), west of the Barylos mountains, and south of Alalah (Tell el-‘Aţšânê).

3. The political position of Ugarit is outlined by M. C. Astour in “Ugarit and the Great Powers”, in Ugarit in Retrospect. Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic, edited by G. D. Young (Winona Lake, 1981), 3-29. The citation is from p. 23. Recently, a brief survey of the commercial and cultural position has been given in O. Loretz, Ugarit und die Bibel, especially pp. 12, 175-180.

4. This is pointed out by i.a. L. M. Muntingh in "Israelite-Amorite Political Relations During the Second Millennium B.C. in the Light of Near Eastern Politics", in Atti del secondo congresso internazionale di linguistica camito-semitica, Firenze, 16-19 aprile 1974, edited by P. Fronzaroli, Quaderni di semitistica, 5 (Firenze: Istituto di linguistica e di lingue orientali, Università di Firenze, 1978), 215 f. Earlier W. F. Albright has pointed to the same fact: “From the geographical standpoint, there was a homogeneous civilization which extended in the Bronze Age from Mount Casius, north of Ugarit, to the Negeb of Palestine, and in the Iron Age from north of Arvad (at least) to the extreme south of Palestine. This civilization shared a common material culture (including architecture, pottery, etc.), through the entire period, and we know that language, literature, art, and religion were substantially the same in the Bronze Age. From the twelfth century on we find increasing divergence in higher culture, but material culture remained practically the same in all parts of the area”, in “Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom”, Festschrift H. H. Rowley (Leiden, 1969, c. 1955), 2.


6. I disregard in this instance the mass of cuneiform tablets in the Akkadian and the Hittite languages found in Ugarit.


9. E.g. the texts KTU 5.4 (UT 320), KTU 5.6 (UT 401) and KTU 5.14 (UT 1189). The line division of the alphabetic list given above conforms to KTU 5.6. The order of the signs, however, is the same on all the alphabetic tablets. The pronunciation of the signs is indicated by Akkadian cuneiform syllabic signs on the tablet KTU 5.14. See Gordon, Ugarit Textbook (= UT), § 3.1; M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartin, Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Teil 1 Transkription (= KTU) (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1976). S. Segert, A Basic Grammar, § 21.5.

10. This is, among others, the opinion of E. Lipiński, “Les phéniciens et l’alphabet”, 236, and A. R.

11. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook § 3.2.


15. The number might even have been higher. Sass mentions 27–29 letters, The Genesis of the Alphabet, 106.


19. The two Ugaritic graphemes are taken from the syllabic cuneiform script, M. Dietrich, and O. Loretz, Die Keilalphabete, 126.


21. Dietrich and Loretz, however, without knowledge of the work of Sass maintain that the Ugaritic long alphabet is the result of an influence of two independent and simultaneous alphabetic traditions, the northern Phoenician/Canaanite and the southern Arabian, see Die Keilalphabete, 305. Their arguments are mainly typological and in many cases not very convincing. If a similarity is observed between letters in the Ugaritic alphabet and in the South Arabian script this might as well be due to affinity with a common ancient ancestor alphabet rather than to a direct influence on the formation of the Ugaritic letters. That both the South Arabian and the Phoenician script are descendents of the Proto-Canaanite alphabet (including the Proto-Sinaitic writing) is the standpoint of J. Naveh in Early History of the Alphabet. An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography, 2d revised ed. (Jerusalem, 1987), 27. A very ancient dating of the South Arabian alphabet is stressed by many scholars in recent times, mainly because of the discovery of a cuneiform alphabet table at Beth Shemesh near Jerusalem exhibiting an alphabetic order that corresponds to the South Semitic alphabet. See, apart from the work by Dietrich & Loretz above, A. G. Lundin, “L’abécédaire de Bet Shemesh”, Le Muséon 100 (1987): 243–251; E. Lipitaki, “Les phéniciens et l’alphabet”, 237; J. Ryckmans, “L’ordre alphabétique sud-sémitique et ses origines”, in Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Maxime Rodinson par ses élèves, ses collègues et ses amis, edited by C. Robin, Comptes rendus du Groupe Linguistique d’études chamito-sémitiques, supplément, 12 (Paris, 1985), 358 f. The two different alphabets may indicate the existence of two scribal schools in Canaan in the Late Bronze Age. Ryckmans points out, however, that “La famille des alphabets sud-sémittiques est de toute évidence génétiquement appariée à celle des alphabets linéaires nord-sémitiques (et même à l’alphabet cunéiforme d’Ugarit, à notre avis simple habillage cunéiforme d’un alphabet linéaire)”, op. cit., 356.


23. Bynon, Historical Linguistics, 11.

24. Bynon, Historical Linguistics, 64.

25. Bynon, Historical Linguistics, 64.


30. Thus Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, § 14.5. In some of these texts the alphabet was not yet identical with the 22 letter alphabet of Palestine, as M. Dijkstra observes in “Another Text in the Shorter Cuneiform Alphabet (KTU 5.22)”, Ugarit-Forschungen 18 (1986): 123.
36. Thus, e.g., Z. S. Harris, *Development of the Canaanite Dialects. An Investigation in Linguistic History* (New Haven, 1939), 10 f.
37. Thus J. Cantineau, “La Langue de Ras Shamra”, *Semitica* 3 (1950): 34. A criterion of this group, shared by Ugaritic, is that initial bilabial w- becomes palatal y. thus Ugar. yld should be compared with Proto-Sem. *walad(a)*, Arab., EBA and Ethiopic *walada*, Akk. *dādā* (older *walādu*), but in North-West Sem.: Aram. *yld*, Syriac *yld*, Phoen. *yalad(a)*, Hebr. *yalad*. Cf. Cantineau, “La langue de Ras Shamra”, *Syria* 21 (1940): 53. Another characteristic of North-West Semitic found in Ugaritic is the so-called Barth-Ginsberg law: if the imperfect stem has vowel a, then the prefix vowel becomes i, *aqatal-* > *yiqtal*- (Cf. M. Sekine, “The Subdivisions of the North-West Semitic Languages”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 18 (1973): 210; and Harris, *Development*, 8. Harris also points out the assimilation of l to q in forms of the “root” *laq*, as peculiar to Canaanite and Aramaic, as well as the extension of the bi-vocalic stems with plural suffixes as the regular plurals of uni-vocalic noun stems (in Hebrew e.g. *m’lakim < malak-* as plural form to *mašekek < mašik*, in Ugaritic *rašm = ra’ašāma* plural form to *riš = reš’ < ra’š*), op. cit. p. 9. It should be pointed out that the names employed for the subgroups of the Semitic languages refer to the commonly adopted classification advanced by T. Nöldeke and C. Brockelmann and found in e.g. S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden, 1969); for a refined discussion of the subgroupings of the Semitic languages see R. M. Voigt, “The Classification of Central Semitic”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32, 1 (1987): 1-21.
40. This feature is pointed out by Greenfield, “Amurrite”, 97.
41. Sekine, “Subdivisions”, 211.
42. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, § 14.3-4; Segert, *A Basic grammar*, § 12.2 Strangely enough, Goetze refuses to accept this as a common feature, maintaining that the vocalization of *ank* and *an* “remains unknown”, see “Is Ugaritic a Canaanite Dialect?”, *Language* 17 (1941): 132.
44. These changes occurred very early; according to Z. S. Harris before 1500 B. C., see *Development of the Canaanite Dialects*, 29 f.
45. This feature is pointed out by Greenfield, “Amurrite”, 97.
46. M. Held, “The YQTL-QTL (QTL-YQTL) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical hebrew and in

47. This is pointed out by M. Dahood, “Linguistic Position”, 269. Also W. L. Moran, “The Hebrew Language”, 61, recognizes Ugaritic aṯr as a relative pronoun. It should be noted, however, that A. F. Rainey in “Observations on Ugaritic Grammar”, Ugarit-Forschungen 3 (1971): 160, calls for great caution as to the relative function of this aṯr.

48. One of the first to criticize the routine-like designation “Canaanite” for Ugaritic was Goetze in “Is Ugaritic a Canaanite Dialect?”. Many of his arguments came to be repeated in the subsequent debate and are therefore accounted for in the following discussion.

49. This argument corresponds to Goetze’s features (1), (2), and (4); “Is Ugaritic a Canaanite Dialect?”, 128 f., 131.


52. C. Brockelmann, Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen I (Berlin, 1908), § 51g. This is Goetze’s feature no. (3) of Canaanite, “Is Ugaritic a Canaanite Dialect?”, 129, 131.

53. Harris, Development, 44.

54. In text UT 1153 from the royal palace of Ugarit.

55. Segert, A Basic Grammar, § 37.2. Additional examples of the shift in Ugaritic is given by Harris, Development, 43 f.

56. Brockelmann, Grundriss, I § 51g. The attestation in the Amarna tablets makes the standpoint of J. Blau less probable. He says, “it stands to reason that this feature did not arise in “Proto-Canaanite”, but developed in the various dialects independently”, Blau, “Some Difficulties”, 36.

57. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, § 5.17.

58. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, 31 note 2. In this instance it is interesting to note the hypothesis proposed by S. Segert that a language in the periphery of a linguistic group tends to be more conservative than the central sector which is characterized by greater innovation, Ugaritica VI (ed. by C. F. A. Schaeffer 1969), 468–473; the account is taken from Brent, “Placement of Ugaritic”, 98.

59. Goetze’s feature (9); “Is Ugaritic a Canaanite Dialect?”, 130, 132.

60. Brockelmann, Grundriss, I, § 257e. The derivation yi- < *hi- given as “Eine mögliche Erklärung” in J. Friedrich and W. Röllig, Phönizisch-punische Grammatik (Rome, 1970), § 147, is not likely.


63. This is one of M. Sekine’s major distinguishing features, see “Subdivisions”, 211. A. Dillmann, Ethiopic Grammar (London, 1907; reprinted Amsterdam, 1974), 424, argues, against D. H. Müller, that Ethiopic never possessed an appended definite article, not even in its earliest stages.


65. Brockelmann, Grundriss, I, § 246A.

Thus, Segert, *A Basic Grammar*, § 12.3.
69. Friedrich & Röllig, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik*, § 216. In the construct state of the dual there was no case vowel or mimiation (op. cit. § 226).
76. B. Spuler, “Der semitische Sprachtypus”, in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* I:3 (Leiden, 1964 (1953)), 4. A similar argument is suggested in Dietrich and Loretz, *Die Keilalphabete*, 311, where the authors maintain that Ugaritic cannot be a Canaanite language.
78. This pertains also to the poetic language of Ugarit, in which the aspectual function of the SC and the PC agrees with that of the archaic Hebrew poetry, cf. Segert, *A Basic Grammar*, § 13.2.
79. In his study of the Ugaritic “tenses”, “The Tenses of Ugarite”, Goetze makes many valuable observations; he notes that “the qtl forms of Ugaritic have a descriptive stative connotation” (p. 284), and says: “This use of the qtl seems very important. It makes us understand how, in West Semitic, the ‘perfect’ could acquire its familiar connotation, namely of past action. The difference between ‘he has an ass yoked’ and ‘he has yoked an ass, he yoked an ass’ is very slight. It is primarily a difference in focus” (p. 283). In his extensive study *Das Verbum im Dialekt vor Ras Schamra* (Kopenhagen, 1941), E. Hammershaimb tries to modify Goetze’s results concerning the SC and maintains, not only that the SC in Ugaritic is narrative and “drückt blos aus, dass die Handlungen abgeschlossen ist”, but also that this feature is Proto-Semitic: “dass der R. S.-Dialekt mit der Entwicklung und Bedeutung des westsemitischen und aräb. Perf. auf einer Linie steht, so dass ein Hinweis auf Pernamiv irreführend ist”, 72, 75. In this instance, however, he is wrong, and the first scholar to have definitely clarified this fact is F. Rundgren. Cf. B. Isaksson, *Studies in the Language of Qoheleth*, 28 (and the bibliography). The Ugaritic verbal system has been extensively treated by E. Verreets in a series of studies: “Abris des ugaritischen Verbalsystems”, *Ugarit-Forschungen* 18 (1986): 75–82; “Beobachtungen zum ugaritischen Verbalsystem”, *Ugarit-Forschungen* 16 (1984): 307–321, 17 (1985): 319–344, 18 (1986): 363–386, 19 (1987): 337–353.
81. M. Sekine puts forward this distinguishing features as one of ten major criteria for a classification of the North-West Semitic languages, vide Sekine, “Subdivisions”, 210.
83. Greenfield comments, that “If, then, the term Canaanite as a general rather than a particular name does not fit the needs of our research any longer, let us seek out a better one – but one that is clear and unequivocal”, Greenfield, “Amurrite”, 101.
REFERENCES


