

A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition

Del Olmo Lete, Gregorio and Joaquín Sanmartín. *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Translated and Edited by Wilfred G.E. Watson. 3rd Revised Edition. Handbook of Oriental Studies/Handbuch der Orientalistik 112. Leiden: Brill. 2 vols : xlii + 989pp. \$354.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-28864-5 (hardback, set); 978-90-04-2957-4 (hardback, volume 1); 978-90-04-28958-1 (hardback, volume 2); 978-90-04-28865-2 (ebook).

Since the discovery of the first cuneiform tablets from Ras Shamra in 1928, Ugaritic has become an essential tool for understanding the language of the Hebrew Bible as well as the religion and culture of Israel's closest neighbors. It has elucidated many items of Biblical Hebrew, especially lexicography. Because of the wealth of insight to be gleaned from Ugaritic, every library that supports advanced students of the Hebrew language should provide access to Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín's recently updated dictionary.

Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín's lexicographical work has a storied history of being a great resource for students of Ugaritic. The first edition was in Spanish (*Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica* [2 vols., Aula Orientalis, Supplementa 7, Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 1996–2000]). When Wilfred G. E. Watson saw the value of their work, he translated and expanded this first edition into the second edition published in 2003. This third edition was precipitated by the publication of several new Ugaritic texts and updates to the standard reference grammar. The new texts are published in Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz and Joaquín Sanmartín's *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (3rd Edition, AOAT 360/1, Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 2013) and the standard reference grammar is Josef Tropper's *Ugaritische Grammatik* (2nd Edition, AOAT 273, Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 2013). One shortcoming in the bibliography is the absence of Thomas Richter's *Bibliographisches Glossar des Hurritischen* (Weisbaden: Harrasowitz, 2013). The Hurrian dictionary that the authors use dates from 1988, and there have been numerous insights into the language since the mid-1980s. The texts from Ugarit are some of the best sources for Hurrian, and the cultural relationship between Ugaritic and Hurrian makes this lack of an updated dictionary surprising.

Each entry is well documented and thorough. The entries begin with basic grammatical information and broad, English glosses. Next, all relevant comparative words are listed with bibliographies to the standard lexicons in those languages. The glosses for these languages are given based on the lexical source. For example: Akkadian words from Von Soden's *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Weisbaden: Harrasowitz, 1965–1985) are given in German. After the comparative section, words are listed as they occur in the syllabic texts from Ugarit. Many Ugaritic words appear in syllabic cuneiform, mostly in lexical lists (where they are compared to Akkadian, Sumerian, Hittite or Hurrian). Some Ugaritic words occur in Akkadian texts; these are listed after the syllabic occurrences. The next section of the entry lists all words that appear as parallels to the lexical item. This section exploits the tradition of poetic parallelism to illustrate semantic range. After this, all of the forms from the alphabetic texts are listed, including different grammatical forms, as well as forms with suffixes and prefixes. After this preliminary and comparative data, the different uses of the word are categorized semantically, with copious examples for each use, which are transliterated, translated and referenced. The layout of each entry is clear, detailed, accurate and judicious, as well as easy to grasp.

The single biggest weakness of this dictionary is that cognate Hebrew and Phoenician words are cited without attested vowels. This is a problem for the student of Ugaritic because reconstructing the vowels

in the Ugaritic texts is an important heuristic exercise. Because Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín did not include these vowels, it requires the student to have ready access to additional materials. One other essential tool for the student using this dictionary would be the inclusion of a table of character equivalents between the different Semitic languages. These two additions would be a significant aid to the user.

This work does not contain appendices for word roots and cognates. One of the biggest difficulties for students of Semitic languages is the fact that some letters are assimilated or hidden in many grammatical forms. An index of roots would help the student find possible matches, as well as expand lexicographical study to trace all the possible forms of a semantic root. An index of cognates would be a great aid to the student of Hebrew so she could easily see the relationship between Ugaritic and Hebrew and find Ugaritic cognates as an aid to understanding Hebrew etymology. This would also help students of other ancient Near Eastern languages such as Hittite, Hurrian, and the various Akkadian dialects.

In conclusion, this work is essential for all students of Ugaritic and an important tool for advanced students of Hebrew. It is an outstanding lexicographical resource. This is all the more impressive because of the fragmentary and limited corpus of Ugaritic. Everywhere the authors display scholarly erudition, judicious conclusions, and comprehensive bibliographical references. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín's work is to be applauded.

Shawn Virgil Goodwin
Metadata Control Analyst
Atla
Chicago, IL