PARALLEL WORD PAIRS IN THE SONG OF DEBORAH (JUDGES 5)

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In order to express thought parallelism in poetry, parallel word pairs or parallel terms[1] must be employed. Biblical Hebrew poetry, in which thought parallelism is a dominant characteristic, employs a large number of parallel word pairs. In Ugaritic poetry, too, the use of thought parallelism involves the use of parallel word pairs. Early in the 1930s, soon after the first translations of the Ugaritic poetic texts, scholars began to notice similarities between the parallel word pairs of Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry. The similarities were not only of a semantic nature but included the use of linguistically cognate terms. From these observations a number of hypotheses were developed concerning the interrelationship of Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry, and, specifically, arguments were made for the dependence of Hebrew poets on their Ugaritic/Canaanite predecessors. The most prolific contemporary scholar working in this field is M. Dahood, whose aim is to recover from the Ugaritic and Hebrew poetic texts "the Canaanite thesaurus from whose resources Ugaritic and Hebrew poets alike drew."[2]

There have been a number of scholars who (although open in general to the influence of Ugaritic-Canaanite literature upon Hebrew literature) have argued against the hypotheses of Dahood and others, both with respect to theoretical formulation and with respect to details.[3] The present paper is offered as a further critique of the hypothesis, particularly as it is given expression in the writings of Dahood. While Dahood has made a magnificent contribution to the subject, constant critical evaluation is required to assess the gains and progress that are being made.

This study has been limited to the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) for a number of reasons. First, the antiquity of the Hebrew passage makes it a good text for the evaluation of the relationship between Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry. Second, the Song of Deborah has a northern locale and

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[1]"Parallel terms" is the more traditional expression, being taken from R. Lowth's classical definition: "The words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, (I call) parallel terms": *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (tr. G. Gregory; London, 1787), II, p. 32 n. 10; the quotation in the note is from Lowth's *Preliminary Dissertation to Isaiah* (1778). "Parallel word pairs" is the expression most commonly used in the current debate.

[2]L. R. Fisher, ed., *Ras Shamra Parallels* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1972), I. 74. (The abbreviations *RSP* I and *RSP* II will be used in the following notes.)

[3]E. g., P. C. Craigie, "A Note on Fixed Pairs in Ugaritic and Early Hebrew Poetry," *JTS* NS 22 (1971) 140-143; J. C. de Moor and P. van der Lugt, "The Spectre of Pan-Ugaritism," *BO* 31 (1974) 3-26.

a Canaanite topic as its main theme (the war with the Canaanites), which further contribute to the positive aspects of a comparative evaluation. Third, at a number of places in the Song, affinities with Ugaritic/Canaanite poetry might be suggested.[4] Thus the possibility of an interrelationship of some kind between the Song and Ugaritic/Canaanite poetry is strong. What must be evaluated is whether the presence of common Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs in the Song can be given any significance whatever in the comparative study of Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry.

I.

The first point to be examined relates to the significance to be attributed to the *number* of cognate parallel word pairs common to Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry, for Dahood has placed more and more stress in recent years on the sheer quantity of common parallel word pairs. In *RSP* I, Dahood compiled some 624 parallel word pairs common to Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry; in *RSP* II, he increased the total to 690, and he promises further contributions for *RSP* III. From a different perspective, Dahood noted the presence of nine common parallel word pairs in the eleven verses of Psalm 29 and considered that to be evidence against those who have asserted that Psalm 29 does not have *direct* Canaanite antecedents.[5]

Insofar as an argument depends on quantity, it is difficult to evaluate its significance without access to all the relevant data. A total of 690 parallel word pairs common to Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry sounds like an impressive figure. But, for example, what percentage would this figure be of the total number of parallel word pairs employed in Ugaritic poetry and Hebrew poetry respectively? This question will be tested on a limited basis with respect to the Song of Deborah. The following numbers are necessarily approximate (+/-5) as a result of the difficulty of counting parallel word pairs in the Song of Deborah.[6]

Total Hebrew word pairs in Judges 5: 82
Total common Hebrew-Ugaritic Word Pairs in Judges 5: 22

The total of 22 common parallel word pairs represents approximately 27 per cent of the total number of word pairs employed in the Song.[7] Of the

[4]E. g., P. C. Craigie, "Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah," published in the new *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 2 (1976).

[5]*RSP* II. 4; the argument is directed against B. Margulis, *Bib* 51 (1970) 332-348; P. C. Craigie, *VT* 22 (1972) 143-151.

[6]The difficulty in counting the total number of word pairs in the Song arises because (a) there are textual problems at a number of points, and (b) complex parallel sequences (as against simple pairs) could be counted in different ways (e. g., vv 4-5).

[7]A doctoral dissertation (1970) by R. E. Bornemann (cited by Dahood, *RSP* I. 70) gives the following data of comparative interest. Of 680 word pairs identified in Ugaritic, 97 had precise counterparts in Hebrew, and another 17 appeared with minor variations; viz., approximately 17 per cent of the Ugaritic parallel word pairs were employed also in Hebrew poetry. The percentage would be larger if repetitive word pairs were included and if all of Dahood's data were included in the argument.

total of 22 common parallel word pairs, 8 are pairs of prepositions, and 2 are examples of the same word pair used twice. The significance of these figures will be assessed in the concluding remarks.

II.

To assess what significance might be given to the 22 common Hebrew-Ugaritic word pairs employed in Judges 5, we must inquire whether these word pairs are also used in the poetry of other languages in which thought parallelism is employed. This is an important question, for it is obvious that in any poetry which employs parallelism of thought, similar word pairs will be employed.[8] The parallel word pairs of poetry in different languages will only be cognate terms, however, if the languages in question are close linguistic relatives. The comparison at this point could be extended to include many languages in which thought parallelism is employed in poetry (e. g., Egyptian, Finnish, English, Lowland Scots, etc.). But for practical purposes the scope of the following notes will be limited to Akkadian and Arabic poetry, so that the investigation does not go beyond the boundaries of the family of Semitic languages. Given that neither Arabic nor Akkadian is as closely related to Hebrew as is Ugaritic, one would expect *a priori* a smaller number of *cognate* common parallel word pairs. For the Akkadian notes that follow, I am employing principally the work of J. C. de Moor and P. van der Lugt.[9] The Arabic notes are derived principally from the Qur'an[10] and, to a lesser extent, from the writings of Al-Mutanabbi.[11] All the Hebrew-Ugaritic word pairs in the following notes are listed by Dahood, though not all are identified as occurring in Judges 5.

1. *Hebrew* (5:2): "when / / when" *(b / / b)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 135): "when / / when" *(b / / b)*
   Arabic (Q. 82:1-3): "when / / when" *('idha / / 'idha)*

2. *Hebrew* (5:3): "to hear / / to give ear" *(šm' / / h'zyn)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 361): "to hear ... ear" *(šm' ... 'udn)*
   Arabic No precise parallels have been found, though the two following pairs may be compared:
   (Q. 30:52): "to hear / / to hear" *(sami'a / / sami'a)*
   (Q. 84:2-5): "to hearken / / to hearken" *('adhina / / 'adhina)*

[8]See G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins* (London: Oxford University, 1912) 16-17.

[9]See footnote 3. I have already drawn on Akkadian word pairs in a paper read in 1973, "The Problem of Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," published in *Sem* 5 (1975).

[10]The Egyptian edition of the Arabic text is used in all references to the Qur'an (abbreviated as Q).

[11]A single ode (dedicated to Ḥamdānid Saif ad-Daula) has been used, published (in Arabic and English) by A. J. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965) 84-91. Line numbers, in the following notes, refer to Arberry's edition.

Notes. Dahood cites two texts as evidence for the collocation of the terms *šmʿ ... 'udn.* If collocation simply means that the respective terms occur together, there is no difficulty. It should be noted, however, that in the first of the two texts cited *(CTA* 13.22-23) the text is difficult to translate, and, insofar as a translation is possible at all, it is not clear that the collocation implies any association with thought parallelism. In the second text, *CTA* 16.VI.42, there are three parallel expressions: *šmʿ // ištmʿ // wtqḫ. 'udn;* the parallelism between the verbs reduces the significance to be attached to the noun *'udn* in this example. Therefore the Ugaritic example in this case is considered to be of doubtful value, for there is no precise parallel word pair attested in Ugaritic. See further the critical remarks of de Moor and van der Lugt on this example *(BO* 31 [1974] 23).

3. *Hebrew* (5:3): "I // I" *('nky // 'nky)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 118): "I // I" *('ank // 'ank)*
   Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in *Gilgamesh* I.v.1 f.
   Arabic A semantic parallel occurs in Q. 109:2-5 ("I // I"), though the independent pronouns are not employed in the Arabic text.

4. *Hebrew* (5:3): "to sing // to chant" *(šyr // zmr)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 369): "to sing + to play music" *(šr + ḏmr)*

5. *Hebrew* (5:3): "to // to" *(l // l)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 242): "to // to" *(l // l)*
   Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in *Erra* I. 16 f.
   Arabic (Q. 92:7-10): "to // to" *(li // li)*

6. *Hebrew* (5:4): "when // when" *(b // b)*
   (See no. 1 above)

7. *Hebrew* (5:4): "earth // heaven" *('rṣ // šmym)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 126): "earth // heaven" *('arṣ // šmm)*
   Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: University Press, 1960) 58:37.
   Arabic (Q. 2:22): "earth // heaven" *('arḍ // samā')*
   Notes. (i) The reverse sequence (heaven // earth) is common in a variety of languages, as well as in Hebrew and Ugaritic: (a) Akkadian (see *RSP* II. 399); (b) Egyptian (see *ANET,* p. 365a, line 4); (c) Arabic (see Q. 91:5-6).
   (ii) There is a difficulty with the Hebrew word pair here in that it is a part of a complex parallel structure, including also "clouds" *('bym)* and "mountains" *(hrym).* In Arabic (Q. 88:19-20), we find the triple parallelism "heaven //

mountains / / earth." In Akkadian, the triple parallelism "heaven / / earth / / mountains" is attested.[12]

8. *Hebrew* (5:6): "in / / in" *(b / / b)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 134): "in / / in" *(b / / b)*
   Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e.g., in *Erra* IV.76 f.
   Arabic (Q. 100:9-10): "in / / in" *(fī / / fī);* see also al-Mutanabbi, line 2.

9. *Hebrew* (5:6): "day / / day" *(ywm / / ywm)*
   Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 202): "day / / day" *(ym / / ym)*
   Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e.g. in *Gilgamesh* XI. 142 ff.
   Arabic (Q. 76:10-11; 82:17-18; etc.): "day / / day" *(yawm / / yawm)*

10. *Hebrew* (5:10): "upon / / upon" *('l / / 'l)*
    Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 292): "upon / / upon" *('l / / 'l)*
    Akkadian De Moor and van der Lugt, while noting the use of this word pair in Akkadian, affirm that it is wrong to differentiate between word pairs which are morphologically identical but which would be translated by different English prepositions (see also nos. 1, 6, 8 above): *Gilgamesh* I.iv.18.
    Arabic (Q. 67:22): "upon / / upon" *('ala / / 'ala)*
    See also al-Mutanabbi (line 1) for the parallel use of *'ala / / 'ala,* though with the sense "according to."

11.-12. *Hebrew* (5:11, 13-14): "to descend / / to descend" *(yrd / / yrd)*
    Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 213): "to descend / / to descend" *(yrd / / yrd)*
    Akkadian *(Ishtar* 86-87):[13] "to descend / / to descend" *(arādu / / arādu)*
    Note. The verb *yrd* is used four times in these Hebrew verses; hence, two examples of the same parallel word pair have been counted.

13. *Hebrew* (5:15-16): "in, among / / in, among" *(b / / l)*
    Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 139): "in / / upon" *b / / l)*
    Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in *Erra* I. 192.
    Arabic An approximate parallel may be seen in the pair "in / / to" *(fī / / 'ila)* in Q. 2:29.
    Notes. The Hebrew word pair (which I have listed, but which is not listed in this context by Dahood) is morphologically parallel to the Ugaritic pair, though it differs in its semantic function.

[12]See A. Globe, *Bib* 55 (1974) 176, ing É. Lipiński, *Bib* 48 (1967) 186.
[13]See P. C. Craigie, *Sem* 5 (1975). For further examples, see de Moor and van der Lugt.

However, the Hebrew text might be questioned here (v 15 *bplgwt,* v 16 *lplgwt);* some Hebrew MSS contain the reading *bplgwt* in both verses.

14. *Hebrew* (5:19): "king / / king" *(mlk / / mlk)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 265): "king / / king" *(mlk / / mlk)*
Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in *Atra-ḫasīs* I. 43-45.
Arabic No precise parallel, though a general parallel may be seen in Q. 2:247: "king / / kingship" *(malik / / mulk)*

15. *Hebrew* (5:20): "heaven + stars" *(šmym + kwkbym)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 357): "heaven / / stars" *(šmm / / kbkbym)*
Arabic (Q. 82:2-3): "heaven / / stars" *(samā' / / kawākib)*
Note. For the reverse sequence in Arabic see Q. 77:8-9.

16. *Hebrew* (5:23): "to / / to" *(l / / l)*
(See no. 5 above)

17. *Hebrew* (5:24): "to be blessed / / to be blessed" *(brk / / brk)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 149): "to bless / / to bless" *(brk / / brk)*
Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in Frankena, *Tākultu,* p. 7: VII, 39 f.
Note. This particular Hebrew example is not listed by Dahood; I have included it on the basis of the common root, even though a passive form is employed in the Hebrew.

18. *Hebrew* (5:25): "milk / / butter" *(ḥlb / / ḥm'h)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 182): "milk / / butter" *(ḥlb / / ḥm'at)*
Sumerian De Moor and van der Lugt note the triple parallelism in Sumerian of "butter / / fat / / milk" in *Lugalbanda* 156 ff.
Notes. De Moor and van der Lugt state: "No poetical parallelism has been detected in Ugaritic." This particular parallel was initially proposed by U. Cassuto in 1942[14] and appears to be legitimate provided that Cassuto's translation of *CTA* 23:14 is accepted (this being the single example of the word pair in the Ugaritic texts). But the precise reading of the text is uncertain; see Herdner's comments in *CTA* I. 98 n. 9, and note that the pair involves reading a marginal note as integral to the text.

19. *Hebrew* (5:25): "he asked / / she offered" *(š'l / / hqrybh)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* II. 29): "to draw near + to ask" *(qrb + š'al)*
Notes. The evidence for the Ugaritic word pair is weak, not only because the terms occur in "juxtaposition" *(CTA*

[14]Reprinted (in English) in U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), II. 50.

14.I.37-38: *wyqrb bš'al.krt),* but also because the forms (and hence meanings) of the root *qrb* differ in the respective texts. There is no evidence, beyond this single text, for the existence of the Ugaritic pair.

20. *Hebrew* (5:26): "(left) hand / / right hand" *(yd / / ymyn)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 195): "(left) hand / / right hand" *(yd / / ymn)*
Akkadian The reverse sequence occurs in *Atra-ḫasīs:* "right hand / / left hand" *(imittu / / šumēlu).*[15]
Arabic The reverse sequence occurs in Q. 90:17-19.

21. *Hebrew* (5:28): "through / / through" *(b'd / / b'd)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 290): "unto / / unto" *('d / / 'd)*
Akkadian (de Moor and van der Lugt): e. g., in *Gilgamesh* XI. 244 f.
Notes. The parallel is listed by me, not by Dahood. The Hebrew pair *'d / / 'd* is morphologically identical to the Ugaritic, though in conjunction with *b* it has a different semantic function. The pair *b / / b* occurs in both Ugaritic and Hebrew; see no. 8 above.

22. *Hebrew* (5:29): "to answer / / to reply" *('nh / / hšyb)*
Ugaritic *(RSP* I. 300): "to answer / / to reply" *('ny / / ṯb)*

III.

Let us now summarize the results of the foregoing notes in the following table:

(a) Total number of proposed Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs present in the Song of Deborah = 22.
(b) Total number of Hebrew-Ugaritic-Akkadian parallel word pairs present in the Song of Deborah = 13 (nos. 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21).
(c) Total number of Hebrew-Ugaritic-Arabic parallel word pairs present in the Song of Deborah = 10 (nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 (?), 15, 16).
(d) Total number of Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs apparently *not* employed in either Akkadian or Arabic = 5 (nos. 4, 18 [but see Sumerian], 19, 20 [reverse in Akkadian and Arabic], 22).
(e) Dubious Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs = 1 (no. 2; see notes). Probably no. 18 should be included in this category also.

Of the 22 Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs employed in the Song of Deborah, only five appear to be in any sense distinctive [(d)

[15]P. C. Craigie, *Sem* 5 (1975).

above]. But even these five do not necessarily carry any significance for an argument concerning the relationship between Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry, for they would have to be considered in the light of other evidence. For example, there are parallel word pairs occurring in Judges 5 and in Arabic poetry but apparently not occurring in Ugaritic poetry; two examples are listed:

(a) *Hebrew* (5:20): "from / / from" *(min / / min)*
Arabic (Q. 113:2-5): "from / / from" *(min / / min)*

(b) *Hebrew* (5:20): "to fight / / to fight" *(nlḥm / / nlḥm)*
Arabic (Q. 2:191): "to fight / / to fight" *(qātala / / qātala)*[16]

Presumably further investigation would bring to light further examples from both Arabic and Akkadian poetry.

Now it would be dangerous to draw too firm conclusions concerning common Hebrew and Ugaritic parallel word pairs on the basis of this limited evaluation of the subject in Judges 5. But this much can be said with some certainty. The evidence developed above seems to lend support to the *a priori* assumption that any poetry, insofar as it is characterized by thought parallelism, will tend to give evidence of the same or similar parallel word pairs. Those word pairs will contain a higher or lower percentage of cognate terms depending on the degree of linguistic proximity between the languages and literatures concerned. That is, one would expect *a priori* more cognate terms in Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs than one would in Hebrew-Arabic word pairs.

Can it then be argued that the large number of common Hebrew-Ugaritic parallel word pairs points to a "Canaanite thesaurus from whose resources Ugaritic and Hebrew poets alike drew"? While a "Canaanite thesaurus" remains a possibility, the evidence examined in this short paper in no way requires such a conclusion. It is equally possible that the Hebrew and Ugaritic poets created their word pairs independently.[17] It might still be argued that the use of *thought parallelism* was taken over by the Hebrews from the Canaanites (though Egypt and Mesopotamia are equally possible as places of origin), but, even granting that strong possibility, nothing further is required with respect to parallel word pairs. Once thought parallelism is chosen as the mode for poetic expression, *inevitably* common parallel word pairs must be employed.

None of the argument employed so far *disproves* Dahood's hypothesis. It only stresses the *hypothetical* nature of the position of Dahood and others, for the evidence does not require the hypothesis, nor does it prove it.

[16]If it is argued that this particular passage from the Qur'an is not particularly poetic in its composition, it may be responded that Dahood employs prose texts in his Ugaritic evidence, including administrative texts; e. g., *UT* 2068:25-26 (see *RSP* I. 277).

[17]See further P. C. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *TB* 22 (1971) 3-31, esp. p. 6.