

THE ISRAEL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

PROCEEDINGS • VOLUME III No. 4

*The Scribe at Ugarit
His Position and Influence*

by

ANSON F. RAINEY



Jerusalem 1968

© The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem



Set on Monophoto
at the Israel Program for Scientific Translations, Jerusalem

THE SCRIBE AT UGARIT

His Position and Influence

by

ANSON F. RAINEY

EVER SINCE THE LIGHT of modern discovery first began to illumine the culture of ancient Mesopotamia, scholars have been concerned to find contacts between the Babylonian-Assyrian world of cuneiform writing and that of the West Semites, the occupants of Phoenicia and the Land of Israel. The most obvious period for such inter-relations was that in which the Aramaic language served as a connecting link between the rulers of Mesopotamia (Asshur, Babylon, and later Persia) and the peoples of the West, i.e. the eighth–fourth centuries B.C. However, the archive of letters discovered at El Amarna in Egypt¹ had shown that as early as the fourteenth century B.C. the West Semites of the Levant were already well versed in the Mesopotamian language (Ak-kadian—mainly the Middle Babylonian dialect) which they used for diplomatic communication with Egypt. Such correspondence in that complicated writing system would have been impossible without the establishment of scribal schools in the various city-states of Canaan and North Syria.

The more than 25 seasons of excavations by Prof. C.F.A. Schaeffer at Ras Shamra,² just north of Latakia on the North Syrian coast, have produced the long awaited evidence of a western city from the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries B.C. in which the Babylonian language was extensively used while a local tradition of alphabetic writing in a West Semitic language was also engendered and flourished in its own right.

1 For general introduction, cf. E. F. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters*, Baltimore 1964, pp. 1–5; texts from this archive are cited herein according to the system adopted by Campbell, pp. 79–80, n. 29.

2 Summarized concisely by J. C. Courtois, 'Ras Shamra, l'ancienne Ugarit', *Bible et terre sainte*, 68 (Oct.–Nov. 1964), pp. 6–10, 15–20; 69 (Dec. 1964), pp. 8–17.

The striking similarities between this West Semitic language (called Ugaritic because we do not know what the native speakers called it)³ and Biblical Hebrew, and between its literature and that of the Bible, have been the main focus of research during the past thirty or more years since the archaeological investigations first began. This concern for the *written* evidence and its relation to the Sacred Scriptures of Israel also arouses a special curiosity with regard to the men who were actually engaged in this writing activity.

I. ORGANIZATION

One of the most fortunate of the early discoveries at Ugarit was the 'library of the high priest',⁴ which was, in reality, a training school for scribes as well as being the main center for preservation of the literary texts. Many of the numerous tablets discovered in this building were obviously the product of classroom exercises, or at least of copying by the pupils, usually from dictation. Although there are a few duplicate passages, the absence of more than one extant copy for most of the literary compositions is remarkable.⁵ Perhaps the excavators have yet to stumble upon the refuse dump containing all the rejected copies! The trainees in the scribal school apparently were classified as *lmdm* 'learners',⁶ just as were the apprentices of other professions. Nothing is known about the length of time required for their education or the requirements for admission to the course. In view of the high positions to which the scribe might someday aspire (cf. *infra*), it would not be unwarranted to surmise that the candidates were chosen from among the more influential families of the kingdom. The most illuminating passage in this regard is the colophon added by a certain copyist to the texts from his own hand:

*spr ilmlk šbny/lmd · atn · prln · rb / khnm rb · nqdm / t'y · nqmd mlk
ugr[t] / adn yr gb · b'l · t'rmn*⁷

- 3 *UT*, pp. 144–148; texts in the Ugaritic language are cited according to Gordon's system, *UT*, pp. 4–11, 257–289; where applicable an additional number has been added, viz. that of *CTCA*, pp. xix–xxiv.
- 4 C. F. A. Schaeffer, 'Les fouilles de Minet-el-Beida et de Ras Shamra, deuxième campagne (printemps 1930)', *Syria*, XII (1931), pp. 1–14; R. Dussaud, *Les découvertes de Ras Shamra (Ugarit) et l'Ancien Testament*, Paris 1937, p. 47.
- 5 The seasons of 1962 and 1964 have provided a few additional literary texts, some of them duplicates which facilitate the correction and completion of certain passages; see *CTCA*, p. 292.
- 6 *lmd(m)*, *lmdt*, *tlmd(m)*; for the relation of such apprentices to the various professions at Ugarit, cf. A. F. Rainey, *The Social Structure of Ugarit*, Jerusalem 1967, pp. 80, 83, 87–88 (in Hebrew).
- 7 *UT*, No. 62 (*CTCA*, No. 6, Col. VI), ll. 53–57.

The Scribe at Ugarit

The scribe (is) Ilimilku the Shubbanite,⁸ the pupil of 'Attanupur(u)linni the chief of the priests and chief of the (temple) herds-men,⁹ the Tha'ite. (During the reign of) Niqmaddu king of Ugarit, lord of Yargub (and) master of Thariman.

The *l'y* clan was quite prominent in Ugarit;¹⁰ its most illustrious member was the legendary king Keret. A certain *bn l'y* was a priest.¹¹ It is also evident from this cursory notation that Ilimilku had learned his craft from the chief priest. The close association between priesthood and the art of writing is illustrated by the many texts of a religious nature found in this archive. These include not only myths and legends but also lists of offerings, rituals, incantations, and a roster of various deities to whom worship was due. The continued ties between shrine and scriptorium are noteworthy for their apparent contrast with the situation in Mesopotamia where the scribal school had evidently broken away from the aegis of the temple by the beginning of the Old Babylonian period,¹² several centuries earlier than our texts from Ugarit.

There is no indication of how the candidates were chosen for scribal training. However, there are a significant number of cases where both a father and his son are known to have been scribes. One of the most widely attested amanuenses of the kingdom was a certain Šapšu-milku, who served during the reigns of three kings. His name was written in the usual sophisticated manner by the use of Sumerian ideograms meaning 'The sun god is king'.¹³ His son followed in his footsteps and took up the scribal profession even though his father had appar-

- 8 This is doubtless the gentilic of the place name Šubbānu, *PRU*, III, p. 267; the superficial resemblance to the name of Šebnā', the biblical scribe (Is. xxii:15; xxxvi:22; xxxvii:2, etc.) is probably coincidental.
- 9 For these terms, cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), pp. 70–71, 73, 84, 86; idem, 'The Kingdom of Ugarit', *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XXVIII (1965), pp. 122–123.
- 10 There apparently exists another root *l'y* meaning 'offering, to offer'; H.L. Ginsberg, כתבי אוגרייט (*Ugaritic Writings*), Jerusalem 1936, p. 43. But it does not seem to fit *UT*, p. 505. The suggestion of my student, Mr. M. Gil, to equate this vocable with Hebrew *šōa'* 'noble' (apparently also L. Koehler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leiden 1951, p. 956a, who has *š'* by mistake), which is of doubtful etymology (F. Brown, S. R. Driver & C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford 1952, corrected impression, p. 447b), would satisfy this and some of the ritual contexts as well. Cf. the personal name ¹ša-i-ia₈ (*PRU*, III, p. 256).
- 11 *UT*, No. 400 (*CTCA*, No. 113), Col. VI, l. 22.
- 12 H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness that Was Babylon*, London 1962, p. 189.
- 13 ⁴UTU.LUGAL; *UT*, p. 494; J. Nougayrol has transcribed this name Šamaš-šarru according to its Akkadian values (*PRU*, III, p. 256). The Ugaritic form assumed above is based on the occurrence of *špšm[l]k* (*UT*, No. 1052, l. 1) on a list with an 'Abduḥamanu (l. 3), the name of another known scribe (*PRU*, III, p. 240).

ently entertained higher aspirations for him by giving him the name 'Priest',¹⁴ written also with a Sumerogram but probably to be read *Kāhinu* in Ugaritic! Šapšu-milku had risen in his profession to the point where he could append the title *ṭupšarru emqu* 'proficient scribe' to his name.¹⁵ The 'Canaanite' equivalent to that phrase was *šù-pì-r yu-di-* 'a knowing scribe', and the Hebrew was, of course, *sôfêr māhîr*.¹⁶ The Ugaritic version of this title has not appeared in any of the texts. Just as there was a chief of the priests, so we also find reference to a *rb spr* 'chief scribe'.¹⁷ Unfortunately, nothing can be said at present about his status in the bureaucracy or his direct responsibilities. Perhaps it is worthy of note that his title appears on a broken text in which sacrifices are also mentioned. Thus our surmise is strengthened that the scribal organization was somehow closely connected with the cult. One may also remark that the senior priest, besides being chief of the (temple) herdsman, must have learned to read and write.

II. EDUCATION AND LITERARY ACTIVITY

Undoubtedly the most exciting aspect of the written archives from Ugarit is their multilingual nature. Of course the bi-lingual scribal tradition of Sumerian-Akkadian is well known from the libraries and schools of Mesopotamia.¹⁸ Likewise, the repertoire of tablets from Hattusas, capital of the Hittite Empire of which Ugarit was a vassal, includes, besides Sumerian and Akkadian, Hurrian, Hittite and other related Indo-Aryan dialects as well.¹⁹ For the student of Indo-European languages these latter materials are a special treasure. But the distinguishing feature about the scribal 'school' at Ugarit is the use of all

- 14 SANGU; *Šangû* in *PRU*, III, p. 256. The suggested Ugaritic form is due to *khn* (*UT*, No. 1075, l. 5). Note that this man who signs his name SANGU (= *kāhinu*?) son of ⁴UTU·LUGAL (= *šapšu-milku*?) is the last in the list of witnesses on a legal document—in the place where the scribe's name usually appears—even though he does not add the title *ṭupšarru*; see RS 16.114, rev., l. 14' (*PRU*, III, p. 34). Is it a mere coincidence that the preceding name on the list (l. 13') is 'Abduḥamanu (cf. supra)?
- 15 RS 16.142, l. 16 (*PRU*, III, p. 77).
- 16 Rainey, 'The Soldier-Scribe in *Papyrus Anastasi I*', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XXVI (1967), pp. 58–60.
- 17 *UT*, No. 73 (*CTCA*, No. 49), rev., l. 4; cf. the Phoenician *rb sprm* from Cyprus (*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, I, No. 86A, l. 14); and the Hittite *rab ṭupšarri* (*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*, Leipzig 1916–1963, I, No. 6, rev., l. 21); and *akil ṭupšarri* (*CAD*, I, p. 279a).
- 18 A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, Chicago 1964, pp. 228–287.
- 19 A. Goetze, *Kleinasien*, Munich 1957, pp. 45–63; O. R. Gurney, 'Anatolia, c. 1750–1600 B.C.', *CAH*, II², 1963, Chap. VI, pp. 4–7.

The Scribe at Ugarit

these syllabically written tongues in conjunction with the local West Semitic language for which an alphabetic writing system was devised. The conventional aspects of the cuneiform tradition are reflected in the lexicographical lists, viz. tablets arranged in columns with Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian, sometimes Hittite,²⁰ and in at least two instances with Ugaritic²¹ terms listed beside one another. Although only a smattering of these texts has been published, their editor, Prof. Jean Nougayrol, informs us that dozens of tablets or fragments, perhaps as many as 300, have been unearthed thus far at Ugarit.²² Most of them are still in the Damascus Museum awaiting publication. At least there can be no doubt that the Ugaritian scribe was well versed in the use of these standard tools of the scribal craft. Like all neophytes he was introduced to the wonderland of cuneiform writing by means of the 'Syllable Lists' including various sets of signs, each with a different vowel; several examples of this syllabary have recently been published by Nougayrol.²³ One such tablet actually has a syllable list on one side and a mythological text in alphabetic cuneiform on the other.²⁴ The few samples of an ancient 'dictionary' in which the final column contained the Ugaritic reflex of the Sumerian and Akkadian terms are of the utmost importance for an improved understanding of the Ugaritic language. Since the alphabetic system only indicated vowels in company with the consonantal *alef*, it is usually impossible to determine the vocalization of most vocables, especially nouns and adjectives. For example, the Sumerian *nu* is explained by the Akkadian *a-mi-lu*, the Hurrian *tar-šu-wa-an-ni*, and the Ugaritic *bu-nu-šu*, thus providing the vocalization of the ubiquitous term *bnš* which is the standard expression in the Ugaritic rosters for 'man'.²⁵ The word for 'male' is given as

- 20 C. Virolleaud, 'Les inscriptions cunéiformes de Ras Shamra', *Syria*, X (1929), Pl. LXXVII; F. Thureau-Dangin, 'Vocabulaires de Ras Shamra', *Syria*, XII (1931), pp. 225–266; idem, 'Nouveaux fragments de vocabulaires de Ras Shamra', *Syria*, XIII (1932), pp. 233–241; J. Nougayrol, 'Les archives internationales d'Ugarit en cunéiforme babylonien (20e campagne, 1956)', *CRAI*, 1957, pp. 79–80; idem, 'Nouveaux textes d'Ugarit en cunéiformes babyloniens', *CRAI*, 1964, p. 134; idem, *PRU*, III, pp. 211–214.
- 21 Idem, 'Nouveaux textes accadiens de Ras Shamra', *CRAI*, 1960, pp. 166–169.
- 22 Idem, '“Vocalises” et “syllabes en liberté” à Ugarit', *AS*, XVI, p. 29, n. 5.
- 23 *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31.
- 24 RS 22.225; discussed by C. Virolleaud, 'Un nouvel épisode du mythe ugaritique de Baal', *CRAI*, 1960, pp. 180–182.
- 25 Cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), p. 167, n. 143, for a complete list of text references; concerning the formation of this term, cf. *UT*, pp. 373–374; Rainey, 'New Tools for Ugaritic Study', *Léšonénu*, XXX (1966), pp. 269–270 (in Hebrew).

follows: *n i t á* (Sumerian), *zi-ka-rù* (Akkadian), *tu-ru-ḫi* (Hurrian), and *da-ka-rù* (Ugaritic).²⁶

The Ugaritian scribes were also obliged to become familiar with the various deities of the Babylonian, Hurrian and Hittite pantheons and the proper spellings of their names.²⁷ Lexical lists of divine names provide the equations for several of these cultures, e.g. ^dUTU (Sumerian), *ši-mi-gi* (Hurrian), *ša-ap-šu* (Ugaritic) 'the sun-god(dess)'.²⁸

Mesopotamian practice had long since created the fashion of writing one's name with Logograms; this method was adopted by Hurrians, Hittites, and West Semites alike. Thus, in a personal name the Sumerian signs UTU and IŠKUR (= IM) could stand for the deities Adad, Haddu, Tešub (written *tḫb* in Ugaritic), or Ba'1, depending upon the language to which the particular name belonged. Such distinctions were therefore essential for the scribe engaged in secular correspondence as well as for someone working at the temple.

Of course, the scribal curriculum was not limited to dry lists of terms and names. Reports from recent seasons of excavation have indicated that a wide range of literary texts from various genre have been discovered at Ugarit. Among them Nougayrol has enumerated examples from the Atrahasis-Gilgameš cycle and some important wisdom literature. Although none of this material has been published, we are assured by Nougayrol that the evidence is ample to show that the scribes at Ugarit were well versed in the 'classic' Babylonian literature; he is also convinced that the scholarly tongue, the equivalent of Latin in a later age, viz. Sumerian, was still 'alive' with the Ugaritian savants.²⁹

Magical and medical texts have also been found.³⁰ In this category, Virolleaud has also announced the discovery of counterparts in the Ugaritic alphabet! For example, there are liver models bearing Uga-

26 Nougayrol, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 21), p. 168. Sometimes the Ugaritian scribe added a Ugaritic word, spelled syllabically, as a gloss to some legal or technical term in an Akkadian text; cf. P. Artzi, 'The "Glosses" in the El-Amarna Tablets', *Bar Ilan*, I, Ramat Gan 1963, pp. 24-57 (in Hebrew).

27 For the most recent treatment, cf. M.C. Astour, 'Some New Divine Names from Ugarit', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXXVI (1966), pp. 277-284.

28 Nougayrol, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 21), p. 168.

29 Nougayrol, 'L'influence babylonienne à Ugarit, d'après les textes en cunéiformes classiques', *Résumé of a Paper Presented to the Xe Rencontre Assyriologique*, Paris 1961 (mimeographed); most recently, *idem*, *CRAI*, 1964 (cf. supra, n. 20), pp. 137-142.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 134.

The Scribe at Ugarit

ritic inscriptions.³¹ Similarly, there is a large, mutilated tablet recording omens derived from abnormal births.³² Events are predicted such as:

- mlkn yb'r ibh* 'Our king will rout his foe.'
mlkn lypq šph 'Our king will not produce a scion.'
mlkn yšlm libh 'Our king will make peace with his foe.'
mlkn y'zz 'l hpth 'Our king will overcome his freedmen.'
ibn yhlq bhmt 'Our enemy will destroy the cattle.'
ibn yspu hwt 'Our enemy will devour the realm.'

One cannot touch on the matter of syllabic texts at Ugarit without mentioning the presence of Hurrian compositions. They are usually of a ritual nature, incantations, etc. The study of the Hurrian language has been considerably advanced by the fact that some Hurrian documents have also been written in the alphabetic script as well. Thus, it was possible to define with greater precision the consonantal phonemes of that little known language.³³

Last but not least in the learned sphere of Ugaritian society is the problem of grammar. We have noted that the scribe was trained in Sumerian and Akkadian; the traditional Mesopotamian instruction went beyond the repetition of word lists to the mastery of the so-called 'grammatical texts', tablets which compared whole phrases or sentences in the two languages.³⁴ Naturally, scholars would like very much to have a text of this type which incorporates the renderings into Ugaritic! Every fragment and scrap of evidence for the Ugaritic language in syllabic writing is most welcome. As it is, we must depend mainly on the comparison of personal names spelled in the two systems, or on parallel passages in similar documents. Such material is disappointingly meagre. Only one fragmentary translation of a known Akkadian original has been preserved, viz. the official treaty and tribute list established between Hatti and Ugarit.³⁵ Comparison of the two versions was helpful in

31 C. Virolleaud, 'Les nouveaux texts alphabétiques de Ras Shamra', *CRAI*, 1963, pp. 93-94.

32 RS 24.247, discussed in *ibid.*, p. 84, n. 1. The citations from this text have been taken from glossary Nos. 495, 2030, 2424, 995, 450a and 850, respectively, from *UT*.

33 The corpus of texts in the Hurrian language from Ugarit are listed in the extremely valuable work by F. W. Bush, 'A Grammar of the Hurrian Language', Ph.D. Thesis, Brandeis University, 1964 (Ann Arbor, Univ. Microfilms, Inc., 1966), pp. 3-7. Cf. also, most recently, E. Laroche, 'Documents en hourrite alphabétique découverts à Ras Shamra', *CRAI*, 1964, pp. 152-153.

34 Cf. R. Hallock & B. Landsberger, *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexicon*, ed. B. Landsberger, Vol. IV, Parts II-III, Rome 1937.

35 *UT*, No. 118 (*CTCA*, No. 64), in Ugaritic; RS 17.227 and duplicates, *PRU*, IV, pp. 40-48, in Akkadian.

establishing certain lexicographical and linguistic details, e.g. Ugaritic *argmn* = *mandattu* 'tribute',³⁶ *mšmt* (< **mšmdt*) = *rikiltu* 'contract, treaty',³⁷ and *phy* = *ītamār* 'he saw' (thus demonstrating the root of this common verb which normally lacks its third radical in the literary texts).³⁸ The few examples of legal documents and epistles show, however, that they are either translations or at least based upon Akkadian proto-types. Among the dozens of 'land-grants' written in Akkadian³⁹ there were also two Ugaritic examples.⁴⁰ One of these, with our translation into idiomatic Akkadian from the same collection of documents, is presented below:

<i>lym·hnd</i>	<i>ištu ūmi annîm</i>
<i>'mîtmr·bn</i>	<i>'Ammiṭtamru mār</i>
<i>nqmp' ml[k]</i>	<i>Niqmepa' šar</i>
<i>ugrt·ytn</i>	<i>Ugarit ittaši</i>
<i>šd·kdḡl [·bn?]</i>	<i>eqlāt Kuṭuḡadal [mār]</i>
<i>u (?) šr (?) y·d·bš[d?]y-</i>	<i>Ušriya (?) ša ina eqlāt Y-</i>
<i>mr (?) [y?]d gth</i>	<i>— [qa]du dimtišu</i>
<i>[yd·zth?] yd·</i>	<i>[qadu serdišu?] qadu</i>
<i>[k]rmh·yd</i>	<i>karānišu qadu</i>
<i>[k]klh</i>	<i>gabbu mimmišu</i>
<i>[w?]ytn·nn</i>	<i>[u?] ittadinšu</i>
<i>l·b'ln·bn</i>	<i>ana Ba'lana mār</i>
<i>kltn·wl</i>	<i>Kiltan u ana</i>
<i>bnh·'d·'lm</i>	<i>mārišu adi dārīti</i>
<i>šhr·'lmt</i>	<i>urram šeram</i>
<i>bnš bnšm</i>	<i>awīlu mamman</i>
<i>l·yqḥnn·bd</i>	<i>lā ilaqqišunu ištu qāti</i>
<i>b'ln·bn·kltn</i>	<i>Ba'lana mār Kiltan</i>
<i>w·bd·bnh·'d</i>	<i>u ištu qāti mārišu adi</i>
<i>'lm·w unṭ</i>	<i>dārīti u pilku (unuṭtu)</i>
<i>in·bh</i>	<i>yānu (ina bīti annîm)</i>

36 Thus confirming what was already evident from the appearance of *arkamman-* in Hittite texts, J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1952, p. 30; cf. Rainey, 'The Social Stratification of Ugarit', Ph.D. Thesis, Brandeis University, 1962 (Ann Arbor, Univ. Microfilms, Inc., 1963), pp. 169–170.

37 M. Weippert, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CCXVI (1964), p. 193—Review of J. Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache*.

38 Noted independently by this writer, cf. *UT*, p. 91, and by Weippert, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 37).

39 These comprise the major part of *PRU*, III.

40 *UT*, Nos. 1008–1009.

The Scribe at Ugarit

From this day, 'Ammitamru son of Niqmepa', king of Ugarit, has taken the fields of Kuṯuḡadal son of Ušriya (?) which are in the fields (?) of Y—, with its 'storehouse', [with its olive orchard (?),] with its vineyard(s), with everything of his, (and) he has given them to Ba'lana son of Kiltan and to his sons forever. Henceforth no one may take them from Ba'lana son of Kiltan and from his sons forever. And there is no feudal obligation (on this estate).

It was surprising to find that the Akkadian *ittaši* is apparently translated by *ytn* in both of the Ugaritic texts of this type. The rendering of *itta-dinšu(nu)*, the second verb in this legal formula, by *ytn* is perfectly natural. A perusal of the syllabic land grants in *PRU*, III reveals five instances in which the verb 'to give' is used in place of 'to take up'. The two oldest, from the reign of Niqmepa', utilize *id-din* in juxtaposition to *i-ta-din-šu-[nu]*⁴¹ and *i-din-šu*,⁴² respectively. The other three,⁴³ all from the reign of 'Ammitamru, use *it-ta-din* followed by *ittadinšu*. In two instances, Nougayrol's emendations to read *ittaši* certainly seem justified due to the similarity of the signs ŠI and DIN at Ugarit.⁴⁴ But if such a textual error stands behind the two Ugaritic translations, it is strange that the mistake was not noticed by the scribe as he made the Ugaritic copy. The original mistakes in the Akkadian tablets are easily explainable. There was another legal formula for cases where the king was selling land in which the only verb used was a form of *nadānu*.⁴⁵ Likewise, a few special awards, such as the wedding present to the king's son-in-law,⁴⁶ and the reward for bravery to *Gab'anu*,⁴⁷ do not use the standard *ittaši-ittadin* construction.⁴⁸ Therefore, one may surmise that it was not difficult for the scribe to lapse into the simple formula and write *ittadin* in the first clause of a royal grant.⁴⁹ Perhaps we still do not have the correct Ugaritic translation of *ittaši* after all! The correspondence of *gt = dimtu* depends upon the semantic function

41 RS 16.150, ll. 4, 19 (*PRU*, III, p. 47).

42 RS 16.206, ll. 4, 8 (*PRU*, III, p. 106).

43 RS 15.126, ll. 3, 6 (*PRU*, III, p. 112); RS 16.242, ll. 4–5 (*PRU*, III, p. 154).

44 Cf., e.g. RS 16.202 (*PRU*, III, Pl. LXVI), the third sign in l. 2 (*š*) and the fourth sign in l. 4 (*din*).

45 RS 16.135 (*PRU*, III, p. 89); RS 16.282 (*PRU*, III, p. 160); RS 16.383 (*PRU*, III, p. 164).

46 RS 16.276, l. 4 (*PRU*, III, p. 69).

47 RS 16.269 (*PRU*, III, p. 68).

48 RS 16.190 (*PRU*, III, p. 64) only states that the king gave the grant as a 'gift' (*nidnu*); no cash payment or other circumstances are recorded in the document.

49 There are two texts that begin with the verb form *ittadin* for which the continuation is broken off; RS 15.127 (*PRU*, III, p. 132); RS 16.171 (*PRU*, III, p. 147).

of the two terms as elements in geographical names.⁵⁰ The order of the various installations and branches of a particular estate is relatively consistent. Nougayrol had posited that *gt* = ^{GIŠ}*serdu* because the Ugaritian scribes had apparently devised their own ideogram for *serdu*, viz. ^{GIŠ}GI.DÌM(.MA), which appears in a local syllabary followed on the next line by the entry [^{GIŠ}]sé-er-dum.⁵¹ Our suggestion that *serdu* might equal Ugaritic *zt* is based on such biblical passages as: וְאֶת-שְׂדוֹתֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים קָקַ וְאֶת-כְּרָמֵיכֶם וְחֵיתֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים קָקַ.⁵²

The epistolary style was strongly influenced by the standard forms in Akkadian. Note the following frequently used formula⁵³ so reminiscent of the El Amarna letters:

50 At Nuzi *dimtu* is frequent as the first element in the names of villages and districts. The Ugaritic texts use *gt*, apparently as a free variant required only under certain administrative circumstances; cf. e.g. *gt-ṭbq* (UT, No. 1084, l. 5) and *ṭbq* (UT, p. 406, No. 1030). Unfortunately, none of the examples of *dimtu* plus a geographical name that appear in the Akkadian texts at Ugarit (PRU, III, p. 216, s.v. *Biens* . . .) include a place name that is linked with *gt* in an alphabetic text. The apparent correspondence of *gt* and *dimtu* was noted independently by Jankovskaya and the present writer. See N. B. Jankovskaya, 'The Autonomous Community Government in Ugarit', *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 1963, No. 3, pp. 35 ff. (in Russian); A. F. Rainey, 'Gath of the Philistines', *Christian News from Israel*, Vol. XVII (1966), Nos. 2–3, p. 36, n. 2; No. 4, p. 34, additional note. There is another, evidently Ugaritic, term corresponding to *dimtu*, viz. *ḥw(t)*; cf. infra, n. 51.

51 'PRU, III, p. 226. In one property description the *dimtu* (written ^ÉAN.ZA.GÀR) is defined by the gloss *ḥa-a-yi* (RS 16.246 [PRU, III, p. 95]). The meaning of the gloss-word is made more precise in the equation ^ÉUÁKISLAḤ (= *maškanu* 'threshing floor, storage place') with *ḥé-ia₈-ma* (RS 15.109 [PRU, III, p. 103]). The native Ugaritic term also appears independently in the spellings *ḥi-i-yi-šu* (RS 15.145, ll. 6, 11 [PRU, III, p. 123]), ^É*ḥe-e-iú* (RS 15.119, l. 9' [PRU, III, p. 87]), and ^É*ḥe-e-ia* (RS 15.119, l. 6). The latter spelling (with *ia* instead of PI which served to represent *yi*, *ia₈* and *iú*) evidently requires the assumption that the form was **ḥēy-* (CAD, VI, p. 168b; W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden 1965, p. 339b), unless it happens to be an error — possible but not likely — which would permit **ḥēw-*. The appearance in recently published alphabetic texts of a vocable *ḥwt* which Gordon rightly differentiates from *ḥwt* 'life' (UT, p. 395, No. 850), and which probably means something like 'realm', or more likely 'storehouses, store-cities' (cf. Heb. *ḥawwôt*, Num. xxxii: 41; Deut. iii: 14, etc.; and Arabic *ḥiwā'*), raises this question anew. Perhaps one may suggest, with due reticence, that the alphabetic forms are plural while the syllabic spellings represent the singular (final *-t* never appears) which had undergone the following shifts: **ḥawy-* > **ḥayy-* > **ḥēy-*. In any event, it is clear that the Ugaritian scribes were somewhat uncertain as to how their local term should be written in Akkadian script (cf. the remarks by Artzi, *op. cit.*, supra, n. 26, p. 44, n. 46). Note the *ḥw-bṭnm* in UT, No. 1001, l. 6 which Virolleaud emends to *ḥr[!]-bṭnm* 'hole(s) of vipers' (PRU, II, p. 6) on the basis of *ḥur pāten*, Is. ii: 8.

52 I Sam. viii: 14. Cf. the *zt-ubdym* 'olives from feudal lands' (UT, No. 1095, l. 3).

53 UT, No. 89 (CTCA, No. 52), ll. 6–11; cf. UT, No. 95 (CTCA, No. 51), ll. 5–7; UT, No. 117 (CTCA, No. 50), ll. 5–6, etc.

The Scribe at Ugarit

<i>l · p'n</i>	<i>ana šēpē</i>
<i>adty</i>	<i>bēltiya</i>
<i>šb'd</i>	VII-šu
<i>w · šb'id</i>	<i>u VII TA · ĀM</i>
<i>mrḥqtm</i> ⁵⁴	<i>ištu rūqiš</i>
<i>qlt</i>	<i>amqut</i>

At the feet of my lady, seven times (backwards) and seven times (forward), from afar, I fall.

Nevertheless, one finds cases of slight verbal divergence from the nuance of the Akkadian original when a Ugaritic idiom could express the idea better than a word-for-word translation. The greeting *lū šulmu ana muḥḥika*⁵⁵ 'May peace be upon you' is rendered in Ugaritic by *yšlm lk*,⁵⁶ doubtless the G-stem imperfect of the 'stative' class in the jussive mood, i.e. **yišlam laka*. In an Akkadian letter this greeting was customarily followed by: *ilānu ana šulmāni liššurūka*⁵⁷ 'May the gods keep you in safety'. The accepted form for expressing this wish in Ugaritic was by a parallelism of the verb 'to keep, guard' from the root cognate to the Akkadian verb (*ngr*),⁵⁸ with the factative jussive of the root *šlm* instead of the adverbial compliment of the Akkadian original: *ilm tgrk išlmk*⁵⁹ (probably '*ilūma taḡḡurūka tuššalimūka*') 'May the gods keep you and give you peace'.

Comparison with the standard Akkadian idiom of the period helped to clear up the misunderstanding with regard to the alleged use of *aṭr* as an exact equivalent to Hebrew '*ašer*'.⁶⁰ The disputed word was simply the noun for 'place' in construct with a verbal sentence. The construc-

54 It is unlikely that this form contains the preposition **mi(n)* in spite of the parallelism with Akkadian *ištu*. The adverbial suffix *-tm* (*-m* in *UT*, No. 1012, l. 3) is probably added to a noun, *mrḥq* 'distance'.

55 RS 16.03, l. 4 (*PRU*, III, p. 3), and passim in *PRU*, III-IV.

56 *UT*, No. 54 (*CTCA*, No. 53), ll. 4, etc.

57 E.g. RS 11.730, ll. 5-6 (*PRU*, III, p. 12), etc.

58 The participle (?) of this root appears in literary (*UT*, No. 52 [*CTCA*, No. 23], ll. 68, 69, 70, 73) and administrative texts (*UT*, No. 2038, ll. 6, etc.) as a term for 'guard'. Ginsberg's suggestion to equate the verb form in this idiom with Heb. *'*yr* in Deut. xxxii:11, Job viii:6 and Arabic *'*ḡyr* 'to be zealous', is possible; see H.L. Ginsberg, 'Two North-Canaanite Letters from Ugarit', *BASOR*, 72 (1938), p. 19, n. 11. However, the parallel with *šillam* in Job viii:6 is probably fortuitous. The correspondence between verb forms of the roots **nṣr* and **ngr* in Akkadian and Ugaritic respectively in the same semantic context seems more likely.

59 *UT*, No. 2009, ll. 3-4, etc.

60 Cf. C. Virolleaud, 'Les nouvelles tablettes alphabétiques de Ras Shamra (XVIIIe campagne, automne 1954)', *CRAI*, 1955, p. 76; M. Dahood, *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology*, Rome 1965, p.12.

tion is standard for Akkadian and neither does it violate the rules of Ugaritic syntax. The relevant passage⁶¹ can be placed alongside an idiomatic translation in the contemporary Middle Babylonian:

<i>aṭr · iṭ bqt</i>	<i>ašar ibašši (ibaššû) amur (bu''i)</i>
<i>w · štn · ly</i> ⁶²	<i>u šūbilaššu (šupuršu) ana (a) yâši</i>

Wherever it is, search and send it to me.

As is well known, the scribes of Ugarit have shed a great deal of light, albeit unwittingly, on the history of the alphabet. They have bequeathed to us a few examples of the order of letters as they traditionally learned them. Except that they used some consonants that had already been dropped from the Phoenician alphabet, they wrote the letters in exactly the same order as that later transmitted from Phoenicia to Israel and the Greeks. One puzzling tablet contained the Ugaritic signs followed by single syllable signs in the Akkadian script. Scholars were surprised to find that instead of *a, ba, ga, ha, da*, etc., the Ugaritian scribe had written *a, be, ga, ha, di*, etc. Finally, it was discovered by Professors F. M. Cross and T. O. Lambdin that the Akkadian syllables represented the beginnings of the names of the respective letters, e.g. *'alp-, bêt-, gaml-, harm-, dilt-*.⁶³ The presence of the *h* in the fourth position of the Ugaritic alphabet was also something of a surprise. That this consonant was dropped from the Phoenician alphabet adds a special nuance to another aspect of the inscriptions from Ugarit, and also from ancient Canaan.

Four tablets from Ugarit show special peculiarities in their script.⁶⁴ For one thing, they are largely written from right to left (though not entirely); for another, some of the signs have slightly different shapes from the standard forms in vogue at Ugarit. But the most startling feature of these unusual inscriptions is the presence of a special sign, not a group of cuneiform wedges, but a small circle. Only after the discovery of additional material⁶⁵ was it determined that the circle stood for three Semitic phonemes conventionally written at Ugarit by

61 *UT*, No. 2060, ll. 34–35.

62 For more detailed discussion and relevant examples from Akkadian texts, cf. Rainey, *Lêšonênu*, XXX (cf. supra, n. 25), pp. 261–263.

63 F. M. Cross, 'The Origin and Early Evolution of the Alphabet', *Eretz-Israel*, VIII, Jerusalem 1967, pp. 23*–24*. The reading *îé* for the HI sign in Akkadian texts from Ugarit was pointed out by this writer, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 62), p. 255; cf. now W. von Soden, *Das akkadische Syllabar*², Rome 1967, No. 231.

64 *UT*, No. 57 (*CTCA*, No. 207); *UT*, No. 74 (*CTCA*, No. 187); *UT*, No. 94 (*CTCA*, No. 206); RS 22.203; C. Virolleaud, 'L'alphabet sénestrogre de Ras Shamra (Ugarit)', *CRAI*, 1960, pp. 85–90.

65 Virolleaud, *loc. cit.*

The Scribe at Ugarit

two different cuneiform signs: *ś*, *š* and *ṯ*. For example: *bOO* 'Or *Omn* = **bṯṯ* 'śr *šmn*⁶⁶ 'With sixteen (jars of) oil'. It was clear that the users of this script did not distinguish these three phonemes in their pronunciation. Therefore, their position with regard to these sibilants was comparable to that of the language for which the Phoenician alphabet was originally invented. On the other hand, Egyptian transcriptions of place names and other West Semitic words from the Land of Canaan reveal that all three consonants were still distinguished ([*ś*] and [*ṯ*] were transcribed by signs with *s* while [*š*] was represented by signs with *š*; nevertheless, Egyptian *isdd* appears at Ugarit as *addd* and in Hebrew as 'ašdôd, showing that the phoneme was really [*ṯ*] and that its pronunciation must have been close to *dh*, i.e. *th*).⁶⁷ The situation can be illustrated graphically⁶⁸ as follows:

'Proto-Semitic'	<i>ś</i> <i>š</i>	<i>ṯ</i>
Ugaritic Alphabet	<i>š</i> ————— <i>š</i>	<i>ṯ</i>
Phoenician and the Short Ugaritic Alphabet	<i>š</i> ————— <i>š</i> ————— <i>š</i>	
Biblical Hebrew	<i>ś</i> <i>š</i> ————— <i>š</i>	
Language(s) of Canaan	<i>ś</i> <i>š</i>	<i>ṯ</i>

The authors of the 'minority' texts found at Ugarit did not distinguish between [*ḥ*] and [*h*], unlike either the Ugaritians or the residents of Canaan.⁶⁹ The strange thing is that they chose the sign *ḥ* to represent both consonants; one would have expected them to use *h* since this letter is the consonant that survived in the Phoenician alphabet (a fact that is obvious from the respective positions of the two signs in the fixed order of the letters). This could mean that the language (or dialect) of the 'minority' inscriptions had known a shift of [*ḥ*] > [*h*];⁷⁰ otherwise,

66 *UT*, No. 57 (*CTCA*, No. 207), l. 2.

67 F. M. Cross & D. N. Freedman, 'The Name of Ashdod', *BASOR*, 175 (1964), pp. 48-50.

68 Cf. F. M. Cross, 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs', *Harvard Theological Review*, LV (1962), p. 245, n. 95; p. 250, n. 115.

69 Cf. the Egyptian transcriptions by W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien*, Wiesbaden 1962: *man-ḥi-ta* = Arabic *minḥa*, p. 560, No. 91; *m()-ḥ-r* = Akkadian *maḥiru*, p. 561, No. 108. Nevertheless, there may be some exceptions where [*h*] and [*ḥ*] have not been distinguished; cf. Helck's remarks, *ibid.*, p. 589.

70 Could it be that the *ḥ-bi-r* of Wenamon (Col. I, l. x + 24; A. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories*, Brussels 1932, p. 67, l. 5) which was borrowed into Egyptian and appears in Coptic as *šbēr* (*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, ed. A. Erman & H. Grapow, Berlin 1961, III, p. 254), had developed from the original Semitic **hbr* in the same area represented by the alphabetic cuneiform texts in which Ḥ = [*h*] and [ḥ]?

we must assume that they borrowed the Ugaritic script and arbitrarily invented one new sign (the circle for [š], [ṣ] and [t]), while taking the first sign in the alphabetical order (*ḥ*) to write one sound in their own repertoire which had developed from two originally separate phonemes. Whatever the answer to that riddle, it is evident that the 'minority' texts are not native to the city of Ugarit; their very nature—inscriptions on small docketts, on the handle of a vessel (apparently a votive legend), or on the head of a votive 'nail'—strongly suggest that they are all *imports* from outside. The archives give ample testimony to Ugarit's political and commercial relations with other cities, especially those on the Phoenician and Palestinian coast.⁷¹ Therefore, it is a welcome fact that three inscriptions in this same script have been discovered in the Land of Israel.⁷² The latest of these, a docket from Taanach, proves by its context (a shipment of fine flour) that the cuneiform alphabetic script was used for everyday purposes in the Land of Canaan on the eve of the Israelite conquest.⁷³

III. PUBLIC FUNCTIONS

As 'public notaries' the scribes were often called upon to prepare legal documents of a 'private' nature. The examples published to date include: (1) a will and testament in which a man bequeathed all his chattels and real estate to his wife;⁷⁴ (2) a declaration by a father excluding one of his sons from his estate;⁷⁵ (3) a sale contract for real estate in which the land is *apparently* being redeemed by its former owner;⁷⁶ and (4) the purchase of a slave by the prefect (*sākinu*) of Ugarit.⁷⁷ The first three of these transactions pertain to areas in which the king had a special interest; the monarch was always concerned about the proper maintenance of the family estates in his realm since all land was theoretically his personal property being held as 'fiefs' by his subjects (who naturally

71 Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), pp. 87–88.

72 S. Yeivin, 'A New Ugaritic Inscription from Palestine', *Kedem*, II (1945), pp. 32–41 (in Hebrew); W. F. Albright, 'The Beth-Shemesh Tablet in Alphabetic Cuneiform', *BASOR*, 173 (1964), pp. 51–53; D. R. Hillers, 'An Alphabetic Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach (TT 433)', *BASOR*, 173, pp. 45–50.

73 Hillers, *ibid.*, p. 50.

74 RS 8.145; F. Thureau-Dangin, 'Trois contrats de Ras Shamra', *Syria*, XVIII (1937), pp. 246, 249–251.

75 RS 16.129 (*PRU*, III, pp. 32–33).

76 RS 8.213; Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 74), pp. 247, 251–253; concerning such 'redemptions', cf. most recently J. J. Finkelstein, 'Some New *Misharum* Material and its Implications', *AS*, XVI, pp. 241–242.

77 RS 17.251 (*PRU*, IV, p. 236).

had to keep the tax payments up to date!).⁷⁸ The fourth one concerns one of the highest officers in the government,⁷⁹ and the purchase may even be an acquisition for the palace staff rather than a private transaction. In other words, even the function of a scribe in this capacity was public in nature. It is not known what payment, if any, he may have received for such single cases.

The most commonplace activity was the keeping of records. Doubtless this was the least interesting of all the jobs carried out by the scribes, and to the modern student the tablets they have left behind are not the most attractive subjects for a reading exercise. However, a careful analysis of such texts can produce valuable results for the humanistic understanding of life at Ugarit. For example, the rosters prepared for the temple record the various deities known and worshipped in the kingdom.⁸⁰ They also give some indication of the animals used for sacrifice and the terminology pertaining to the various types of offerings,⁸¹ e.g. *atm* 'guilt offering',⁸² *šlm* 'peace offering'.⁸³ Administrative tablets from the various palace archives permit at least a limited reconstruction of various aspects of the Ugaritian society, its strata and its major institutions.

Within the palace itself there were six major foci where clay tablets were concentrated.⁸⁴ They were usually in or nearby one of the chambers adjacent to an entryway or an inner court. Beside the main entrance to the palace was the office of fiscal administration. Predominant among the tablets found there were lists of the various towns and guild organizations in the kingdom with quotas of taxes and corvée labour to be provided by them.⁸⁵

At the opposite end of the palace, beside the doorway leading out to the inner-residential quarter of the town, another collection of tablets came to light. Most of them were in a room from which a staircase led to the upper storey. The varied contents of the inscriptions suggest that

78 Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), pp. 31–36; idem, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 9), pp. 112–115.

79 Cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), pp. 55–57.

80 Cf. Astour, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 27).

81 For a notable contribution in this area, cf. B. Levine, 'Ugaritic Descriptive Rituals', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, XVII (1963), pp. 105–111.

82 *UT*, No. 27 (*CTCA*, No. 180), *passim*.

83 For references, cf. *UT*, p. 490, No. 2424.

84 *PRU*, III, pp. xi–xxv.

85 M. L. Heltzer, 'The Village Community and Other Forms of Real Estate Ownership in Ancient Ugarit', *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 1963, No. 1, pp. 35 ff. (in Russian), deals in particular with the matter of corvée and other services imposed upon the local townships of Ugarit as reflected in these texts.

this may have been a 'clearing office' for palace business, both foreign and local.⁸⁶

The southern wing of the palace produced the important body of international correspondence.⁸⁷ Here the official diplomatic *communiqués* would be received and duly read before the king and/or his chief ministers of state, especially the prefect.⁸⁸ The courier or ambassador who delivered the tablets to Ugarit may have, on occasion, read them aloud to the intended recipient.⁸⁹ But this may not have always been the case. The local scribe at Ugarit probably had the task of reading the epistles before his lord.⁹⁰ The same procedure is reflected in the poetic literature of Ugarit; the sending of messengers (*mlakm*) from one deity or dignitary to another is a recurring theme. Yamm sent his emissaries to intimidate the council of the gods;⁹¹ Mot sent them to threaten Ba'1;⁹² King Keret negotiated with his besieged opponent for the hand of the latter's lovely daughter.⁹³ In each case, the messengers were instructed to 'speak the word of X (the sender) to Y (the recipient)'. Nevertheless, Ba'1 urged the council of the gods to let one of their number reply to (or to read aloud) the tablets (*lht*) of the two messengers from Yamm, even though they actually stood before the gods and delivered their

86 Though the collection from this locus does include some tablets pertaining to the *sākinu* (RS 11.730 [PRU, III, p. 12]; RS 15.19 [PRU, III, p. 13]; RS 15.33 [PRU, III, p. 15]; RS 15.41 [PRU, III, p. 38]; RS 15.89 [PRU, III, p. 53]; RS 15.182 [PRU, III, p. 36]) and the *rābišu* (RS 15.11 [PRU, III, p. 19]; RS 15.24 [PRU, III, p. 18]; RS 15.114 [PRU, III, p. 112]), the majority of texts concerning the *sākinu* were from the international archive in the southern wing of the palace, while *most* allusions to the *rābišu* came from the central archive which dealt with matters of a 'feudal' nature within the realm. Neither do the alphabetic texts from the eastern archive present any uniform picture of the activities carried on there (PRU, II, p. xliii).

87 PRU, IV, pp. 1–6.

88 RS 17.78 (PRU, IV, p. 196); RS 17.288 (PRU, IV, p. 215); RS 17.343 (PRU, IV, p. 226); RS 17.424 C (PRU, IV, p. 219); RS 17.425 (PRU, IV, p. 218). One epistle addressed to the prefect concerning the arrival of an ambassador was found, strangely enough, in the western archive (RS 11.730 [PRU, III, p. 12]) and two others were in the eastern archive (RS 15.19 [PRU, III, p. 13]; RS 15.33 [PRU, III, p. 15]). Note the one letter of this type addressed to the commissioner (*rābišu*) that appeared in the eastern archive (RS 15.24 [PRU, III, p. 18]).

89 A.L. Oppenheim ('A Note on the Scribes in Mesopotamia', *AS*, XVI, p. 254) has stressed this point.

90 Cf. Oppenheim's illuminating discussion of the scribe's function in dealing with royal correspondence at various ancient places, e.g. Mari, Jerusalem, Akhetaten (*ibid.*, pp. 254–256). He does not deal with the evidence from Ugarit.

91 *UT*, No. 137 (*CTCA*, No. 2 [III AB], Col. I).

92 *UT*, No. 67 (*CTCA*, No. 5 [I* AB]), Col. I, l. 1–Col. II, l. 6.

93 *Krt* (*CTCA*, No. 14 [I K]), ll. 123–153, 236–306.

announcement verbally.⁹⁴ The emphasis in such passages on the verbatim reiteration of the message as originally dictated by the sender shows that it may have been taken for granted that the legendary 'angels' had written down their message and would read it upon arrival at their destination. But one may argue that angels and heroes had good memories; they did not need to take notes. Be that as it may, the real life ambassadors (*mārū šipri*) were not permitted to take chances. Everything was put in writing, and the court scribes were responsible for seeing that it was in the correct 'form'. This practice is the *Sitz im Leben* for the ubiquitous opening phrases used in this type of correspondence: *umma, Šamšima, ana 'Ammittamri qibīma* 'Thus (speaks) the Sun, say to 'Ammittamru!'⁹⁵ The comparable expression in Ugaritic dress was: *tḥm špš/l·mrpi·rgm* 'The message of the Sun, speak to 'Ammurapi''.⁹⁶ Thus, one can see that the prosaic formula for an epistle found its echo in the poetic style for delivery of a message.

Whether the scribe had to give a running translation for his master is impossible to say. It is well known that some written translations into Ugaritic were made. A few texts of this sort were actually found in the oven where they were being baked at the time the palace was suddenly attacked and destroyed by a foreign enemy.⁹⁷

Quite a number of the tablets in the diplomatic archive are legal decisions rendered by the Hittite emperor or by the vassal king of Carchemish who was regional governor in North Syria. In some cases a high-ranking Hittite official, generally the *kartappu*⁹⁸ or a son of the king,⁹⁹ would conduct legal proceedings during a personal visit to Ugarit. These cases pertained to disputes of an international nature, i.e. between parties from Ugarit and neighbouring states. The Ugaritian scribe was called upon to act as court secretary and to write up the decisions rendered in these cases.

At the very heart of the royal headquarters about 200 texts were discovered from two centrally located courts and their contiguous chambers. Of those documents, 164 were legal enactments, most of them bearing the official dynastic seal of the royal house of Ugarit. The majority of the texts have to do with grants by the king of real estate

94 Cf. ll. 25–26, 28 with ll. 32–35 of *UT*, No. 137 (*CTCA*, No. 2 [III AB], Col. I).

95 RS 17.133 (*PRU*, IV, p. 118), ll. 1–3.

96 *UT*, No. 2060, ll. 1–2.

97 C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, IV, Paris 1962, pp. 31–45; *PRU*, V, pp. 81–93.

98 RS 18.20 (*PRU*, IV, pp. 202–203); probably also RS 17.248 (*PRU*, IV, p. 236); RS 17.299 (*PRU*, IV, p. 182); RS 17.319 (*PRU*, IV, p. 182).

99 RS 17.28 (*PRU*, IV, p. 109); RS 17.232 (*PRU*, IV, p. 239).

to loyal subjects in return for their service to the crown.¹⁰⁰ Copies of these official awards were probably given to the recipients, but it was even more important that the record be duly filed in the palace archives.¹⁰¹ The scribes usually signed their names along with the other notables who were acting as witnesses.¹⁰² It was doubtless the scribe who rolled the official cylinder seal across the text.¹⁰³

The scribes themselves were also the beneficiaries of such awards. Certain instances of grants to scribes will serve to illustrate their importance and the high standing to which they might aspire in the government. But first it may prove instructive to review another type of evidence that demonstrates the influence they could exert from time to time on behalf of some personal acquaintance.

Among the few letters discovered in the central archive are included some of those addressed to the queen.¹⁰⁴ There are other messages directed to her that have turned up elsewhere, and the role of the scribe frequently stands out in a remarkable way. A certain Belubur, in a letter which Thureau-Dangin reckoned to be from Asshur,¹⁰⁵ addressed himself to his compeer (his 'brother') with the request:

*inanna anumma [t]uppāteya ša ušēbilakkunni ana pāni šarrati šisīma
u hi[s]a[t]a[š]a awāteya damqāte ana pāni šarrati dub[b]u¹⁰⁶*

Now then, read the tablets that I have sent to you before the queen, and make entreaty before the queen with my favourable words.

The recipient of the message was Ilimilku (written 'DINGIR·LUGAL) and may possibly be identified with the Ilimilku who took his scribal training from the high priest.¹⁰⁷

There is a good possibility that two court secretaries attained the rank

100 *PRU*, III, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

101 Is it possible that the two Ugaritic copies discovered thus far (cf. *supra*, n. 40) were made for the recipients of the grants? The official text on file may have been in Akkadian as a matter of form while the citizen needed a copy in his own native language.

102 For a complete list of the references, cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 6), p. 139, notes 317 and 318.

103 C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, III, Paris 1956, pp. 77–79; R. Haase, 'Zum Recht von Ugarit', *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité*, 3rd Ser., XI (1964), pp. 13–16.

104 Cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 6), pp. 42–43.

105 F. Thureau-Dangin, 'Une lettre assyrienne à Ras Shamra', *Syria*, XVI (1935), pp. 188–193.

106 Cf. *UT*, No. 138 which is addressed by someone named *Ewrišarru to a certain *Ewripuḥenni who is requested to ask a prominent woman at the court (*Taryelli; cf. *Ugaritica*, III, pp. 79–83) about tablets (including *UT*, No. 1012?) sent to her by *Ewrišarru; *Ewripuḥenni is also urged to mention the sender's name to the king.

107 Cf. *supra*, n. 7.

of *sukkallu* ‘vizier’. During the reign of Niqmepa‘ one of the scribes was named Karra,¹⁰⁸ who may perhaps be identified with another by the name of Karranu.¹⁰⁹ A Karranu with the title *sukkal šar Ugarit* ‘vizier of the king of Ugarit’ appears in a document which more than likely dates from the reign of the succeeding ruler, ‘Ammitamru.¹¹⁰ Also during the reign of this latter king, there was a scribe named ‘Iltahmu.¹¹¹ Now ‘Iltahmu, or at least someone with the same name, is also known as *sukkallu* from a text dating to ‘Ammitamru’s reign, and he was the son of []-ra-na (= [kar]-ra-na?).¹¹² So it may be that we have to do with ‘Iltahmu son of Karranu—a father-and-son team who had each climbed the ladder from scribe to vizier.

The best known father-and-son combination in the scribal profession was that of Ḥuṣānu and Yāširānu. During the short-lived reign of Arḥalbu at Ugarit, they seem to have been in trouble. This ruler, who evidently represented a Hurrian inspired revolt at Ugarit against the hegemony of Hatti,¹¹³ confiscated the estate (‘house’) of Yāširānu son of Ḥuṣānu (along with the real estate of three other men of whom ‘Abdu may also have been a scribe),¹¹⁴ and gave it to a prominent *maryannu* ‘chariot warrior’, whom he was promoting to the status of *mūdu šarri* ‘king’s friend’.¹¹⁵ Arḥalbu was subsequently removed from his office by the Hittite king and replaced by his brother Niqmepa‘. Apparently, Yāširānu and his father managed to regain their positions at court because they both reappear in official documents. Ḥuṣānu was working as a scribe as evidenced by his signature on royal edicts.¹¹⁶

108 RS 15.119 (*PRU*, III, p. 88); RS 16.207 (*PRU*, III, p. 109).

109 RS 16.284 (*PRU*, III, p. 99); cf. *PRU*, III, p. 248.

110 RS 17.137 (*PRU*, IV, p. 106); cf. *PRU*, IV, pp. 90 and 110, n. 194.

111 RS 15.140 (*PRU*, III, p. 136); RS 16.353 (*PRU*, III, p. 115); apparently also RS 17.299 (*PRU*, IV, p. 182), and in addition the unpublished texts RS 17.88 and RS 17.356 (cf. *PRU*, IV, p. 246).

112 RS 18.20 (*PRU*, IV, p. 203). The scribe mentioned on this tablet, whose name was Na‘mu-^dNERGAL (= Na‘mu-Rešpu?), was a contemporary of ‘Ammitamru; cf. RS 15.131 (*PRU*, III, p. 133); RS 15.143 (*PRU*, III, p. 117); RS 15.168 (*PRU*, III, p. 136). Some other scribe, whose name is not preserved on the relevant texts, is known to have been the son of Sukkallu (RS 8.098 [*PRU*, III, p. 129]; RS 15.113 [*PRU*, III, p. 168]; RS 16.183 [*PRU*, III, p. 168]; RS 16.148 [*PRU*, III, p. 116]), and in an additional fragment the traces suggest that Sukkallu was himself a scribe (RS 8.207 [*PRU*, III, p. 34]). But the passages are too broken to permit firm conclusions.

113 M. Liverani, *Storia di Ugarit*, Rome 1962, pp. 57–66; K. A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, Liverpool 1962, pp. 36–37; S. Smith apud *PRU*, III, p. xxxvii, n. 2; *PRU*, IV, pp. 57–58.

114 RS 16.239 (*PRU*, III, pp. 78–81).

115 Rainey, *op. cit.* (supra, n. 6), pp. 52–53.

116 RS 15.138, l. 25 (*PRU*, III, p. 101); RS 16.285, rev. 8’ (*PRU*, III, p. 107).

Though Yāširānu does not appear in the capacity of scribe at this time, he was the recipient of real estate awarded by Niqmepa'. The text recording this transaction is somewhat broken, but it seems evident that the property was not identical to the family estate lost to him in the days of Arḫalbu. In fact the 'field' in question was apparently in the hands of the noted merchant, Sinnarannu, and was being sold to Yāširānu with the king's sanction.¹¹⁷

It is during the reign of Niqmepa's son, 'Ammiṭtamru, that the signature of Yāširānu begins to appear as scribe on official royal documents.¹¹⁸ But the climax of this chequered career probably may be seen in an award made by this king to Yāširānu. It was not merely a gift of fields or an estate but rather the assignment of a whole town to him and his descendants forever!¹¹⁹ The tithe of its grain, strong drink, and flocks was to be his income, and in addition, he was to receive the fees derived from the *susapinnūtu* 'best men',¹²⁰ and the *šarrakūtu* 'devotees'.¹²¹

It is unfortunate that we know so little about Yatarmu the scribe, who apparently wielded powerful influence in the kingdom of Ugarit during the reign of Niqmaddu II. We are told that :

*inūma nakir Yatarmu ṭupšarru itti šarri bēlišu u Gab'ānu idukšu u innadin Beqa'-Ištar ana šarri*¹²²

When Yatarmu the scribe became hostile to the king his lord, then Gab'ānu slew him and Beqa'-Ištar was given¹²³ (back) to the king.

117 RS 16.206 (*PRU*, III, p. 106).

118 RS 16.205, l. 26 (*PRU*, III, p. 154); RS 16.282, ll. 16–17 (*PRU*, III, p. 161). Nougayrol (*PRU*, III, p. 292) suggests that perhaps the name of a certain scribe which is written ¹*ia-ši-ra* (RS 15.118, l. 16 [*PRU*, III, p. 131]) may be intended for ¹*ia-ši-ra* <-na > and thus could be identical with our Yāširānu. As evidence for reading the IGI sign (= *ši*) as *ši*, Nougayrol points to the case of another man called Yāširānu son of Ġallamānu whose name is spelled ¹*ia-a'-ši-ra-nu* (RS 15.92, l. 4 [*PRU*, III, p. 55]) and also ¹*ia-ši-ra-na* (*PRU*, III, ll. 12, 15).

119 RS 16.153 (*PRU*, III, p. 146).

120 Cf. Rainey, *op. cit.* (above, n. 6), pp. 73, 110, and 144, n. 135.

121 *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73, 144, notes 115, 119, 132, 134.

122 RS 16.269, ll. 7–10 (*PRU*, III, p. 68).

123 The normalization of *i-na-din* as N preterite may be justified on several counts: (1) It removes the apparent difficulty of tense—G-stem would normally require a past tense form such as *iddin* or *ittadin*. (2) Such a writing of an N-stem is not only permissible according to the general rules of cuneiform writing (though somewhat unusual), it is clearly adopted in the statement from Hattusas: *ištu ūmi annim, dīnūti eglāt Šuksi u dīnātu eglāt Ḥarmana i-da-i-nu* (= *idda'inū*) *ana pāni Šamši* (RS 17.123 [*PRU*, IV, p. 230]), 'As of this day the cases of the fields of Šuksi and the cases of the fields of Ḥarmana have been judged (contra *CAD*, IV, p. 102b) in the presence of the

The Scribe at Ugarit

Certain questions immediately come to mind. Had Yatarmu been the master of the town of Beqa'-Ištar? Perhaps he had received the hegemony over the town by virtue of a grant from the king of Ugarit. How had he gained sufficient power to openly rebel against Niqmaddu? Whatever the facts may have been, the incident illustrates the power that a scribe might aspire to wield.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The publication of all the dozens of tablets from Ugarit, in both syllabic and alphabetic script, will open new and undreamed of vistas for the study of linguistic and literary relationships between Mesopotamia and the Levant. Meanwhile, it is also worthy of note that the epigraphic discoveries have not been limited to the so-called 'library' and the offices of the main palace and the 'small palace'. In fact, collections of texts have come to light in various parts of the residential area on the tell. Let us hope that someday we may know more about the occupants of those houses and their literary interests.

Furthermore, it is not too much to hope for that similar archives will be unearthed here in the former Land of Canaan. The possibility still exists that one day we will be able to study both syllabic and alphabetic cuneiform texts reflecting the cultural and linguistic achievements of scribes who lived and wrote in such cities as **Akkā*, **Hašōru*, **Magiddā*, **Gazru*, **Lakišu*, or even **Urūšalim*!

Enlarged version of paper read in Hebrew 30 January 1968

Printed December 1968

Sungod.' And finally (3), the interpretation of the verb as passive makes more sense in the context.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AS, XVI = *Assyriological Studies*, XVI: *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965*, ed. H. G. Güterbock & T. Jacobsen, Chicago 1965
- BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
- CAD = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago-Glückstadt 1956
- CAH = *The Cambridge Ancient History*
- CRAI = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
- CTCA = A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939* (*Mission de Ras Shamra*, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer, X), Paris 1963
- EA = El Amarna Tablet
- PRU, II = C. Virolleaud, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, II (*Mission de Ras Shamra*, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer, VII), Paris 1957
- PRU, III = J. Nougayrol, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, III (*Mission de Ras Shamra*, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer, VI), Paris 1955
- PRU, IV = J. Nougayrol, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, IV (*Mission de Ras Shamra*, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer, IX), Paris 1956
- PRU, V = C. Virolleaud, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, V (*Mission de Ras Shamra*, ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer, XI), Paris 1965
- RS = Ras Shamra, Nos. refer to tablets discovered there
- UT = C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, Rome 1965

THE ISRAEL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
PROCEEDINGS

Volume One

- 1 N. H. TUR-SINAI, *By what Methods and to what Extent can we Establish the Original Text of the Hebrew Bible?* 1963. 13 pp. (out of print).
- 2 A. A. FRAENKEL, *The Principle of Choice and the Continuum Problem.* 1963. 10 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 3 G. TEDESCHI, *Insufficiency of the Legal Norm and Loyalty of the Interpreter.* 1963. 22 pp. (out of print).
- 4 L. PICARD, *The Quaternary in the Northern Jordan Valley.* 1963. 34 pp., 2 plates (out of print).
- 5 I. BERENBLUM, *On Attempts to Elucidate the Origin of Leukaemia Formation.* 1963. 13 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 6 N. ROTENSTREICH, *Alienation, Transformation of a Concept.* 1963. 13 pp. (out of print).
- 7 B. MAZAR, *The Philistines and the Rise of Israel and Tyre.* 1964. 22 pp., 1 plate (2nd printing). IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 8 D. AYALON, *The Mamluks and Naval Power — A Phase of the Struggle between Islam and Christian Europe.* 1965. 12 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 9 M. SELA, *Chemical Basis of Antigenicity.* 1965. 9 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 10 S. PINES, *Scholasticism after Thomas Aquinas and the Teachings of Hasdai Crescas and his Predecessors.* 1967. 101 pp. IL 2.00 / \$ 1.

Volume Two

- 1 S. SAMBURSKY, *Three Aspects of the Historical Significance of Galileo.* 1964. 15 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 2 S. H. BERGMAN, *Schelling on the Source of Eternal Truths.* 1964. 12 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 3 Y. BAR-HILLEL, *Neorealism vs. Neopositivism — A Neo-Pseudo Issue.* 1964. 9 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 4 E. E. URBACH, *Class-Status and Leadership in the World of the Palestinian Sages.* 1966. 37 pp. IL 1.50 / \$ 0.75.
- 5 H. J. POLOTSKY, *Egyptian Tenses.* 1965. 26 pp. (2nd printing). IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 6 J. PRAWER, *Estates, Communities and the Constitution of the Latin Kingdom.* 1966. 42 pp. (out of print).
- 7 S. PINES, *The Iranian Name for Christians and the 'God-Fearers'.* 1967. 10 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.

- 8 S. SAMBURSKY, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism*. 1966. 15 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 9 H. TADMOR, *Introductory Remarks to a New Edition of the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III*. 1967. 20 pp., 4 plates. IL 1.50 / \$ 0.75.
- 10 M. BANITT, *L'étude des glossaires bibliques des Juifs de France au moyen âge — Méthode et application*. 1967. 23 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 11 H. BEINART, *The Records of the Inquisition — A Source of Jewish and Converso History*. 1967. 17 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 12 J. SCHIRMANN, *Problems in the Study of Post-Biblical Hebrew Poetry*. 1967. 9 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 13 S. PINES, *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source*. 1966. 74 pp. IL 2.00 / \$ 1.
- 14 D. AYALON, *The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy*. 1967. 19 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.

Volume Three

- 1 U. HEYD, *Ḳānūn and Sharī'a in Old Ottoman Criminal Justice*. 1967. 18 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 2 A. V. LEVONTIN, *Conflict of Laws with Reference to Transnational Contracts*. 1968. 91 pp. IL 2.00 / \$ 1.
- 3 Z. A. BAR-ON, *On Possibility and Modal Analysis*. 1968. 16 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.
- 4 A. F. RAINEY, *The Scribe at Ugarit — His Position and Influence*. 1968. 22 pp. IL 1.00 / \$ 0.50.