

**Simon B. Parker (ed.),
Ugaritic Narrative Poetry,
Atlanta (Georgia): Scholars Press
1997, xiv + 265 pp., 2 plates**

The purpose of the series is explained in the foreword (vii/viii) by its editor, Simon B. Parker, Professor of Boston University. Materials from various cultures of the ancient Near East, from 3000 B.C.E. to 330 B.C.E., are made accessible to various kinds of readers. The ancient documents are translated into a fluent, current English.

Basic information about historical and cultural background of the texts is offered in the introduction (1-5). These texts from the 14th and 13th centuries B.C.E. were found in the ruins of the city of Ugarit, located at the Syrian coast opposite the eastern tip of Cyprus. They were written in the local language, classified as Northwest Semitic, on clay tablets, in cuneiform signs. The alphabet of 30 signs expresses in principle consonants, but three vowels combined with a glottal stop are indicated by letters; they are conveniently transliterated by vowels – *a, i, u* – alone (v. 5, n. 2). Poetic structuring is shortly explained. Baal, Anat and some minor gods are presented. In the translations only the passages preserved are rendered, speculative reconstruction of damaged fragments is avoided.

The translations (7-228) are presented in four sections, three containing major poems, Kirta, Aqhat, Baal, the last one consisting of ten shorter texts. Altogether 26 tablets are included.

Long and short poems are provided by introductions informing about content and character of texts. Ugaritic originals in transliteration and English translations are printed side by side on the same pages. The texts are arranged in poetic lines, while the lines of original tablets are indicated by their numbers and their limits marked by the sign *l*. This graphical arrangement well the poetic structuring, each colon on a separate line, and their combinations – mostly of two, less frequently of three – clearly displayed with help of spaces. Notes are offered at the end of texts; it would be more convenient,

especially for careful readers, to have them on bottom of pages, closer to commented words or passages. Some notes give the readings in tablets, which are corrected in transliteration and provided there by the sign *!*. Some notes explain ambiguous or difficult matters.

As textual basis standard editions were used, *CAT* – M. Dietrich, O. Lorenz and J. Sanmartin (eds.), *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit...* (Münster 1995) – and *CTA* – A. Herdner (ed.), *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit...* (Paris 1963). Also the macro-photographic record of West Semitic Research was effectively used.

„Concordances“ (229-230) relate numbers of texts in the edition under review with standard editions, *CAT* and *CTA*; the Ras Shamra excavation numbers are also indicated.

Selective bibliography (231-252) is arranged according to alphabetic sequence of authors' names.

In glossary (246-252) divine, personal and geographical names and some basic subject are characterized. All such names and subjects appear, with references to texts, columns and lines in the indexes (253-265); also references to the Bible and Pseud-epigrapha are listed there.

A map (ix) and two photographs, of Mount Saphon (at p. 81) and of the text *CAT* 1.100 (at p. 219), show the country and the appearance of sources.

Three major poems are arranged according to roles of „actants“: in Kirta humans are acting, gods appear only occasionally; in Aqhat the divines have more important roles in dealing with humans; in the Baal Cycle only gods are acting.

The translator of the Kirta text, E. L. Greenstein, provided his edition and translation (12-42) with introduction (9-12) and copious notes (42-48). He considers this epic to be legend. He explains and evaluates the story in which human problems are caused by not respecting obligations to gods.

In previous publications the name of the royal hero, written by Ugaritic consonants as *krt*, is expressed as Keret; this vocalization does not correspond to Ugaritic language, in

which no *e* vowel is attested. According to Greenstein Kirta is a known Hurrian name (9), which may be played to Semitic word meaning „cut off“, concerning the man separated from progeny (10).

This explanation may be accepted, but the final vowel *-a* is problematic, since it indicates the Ugaritic accusative case; the nominative case is marked by *-u*, the genitive case by *-i*. It may be more appropriate to use the form Kirt, without end vowel, as it is usual for expressing other Ugaritic masculine names and general nouns. This problem can be observed on different forms of the name of another king, Ditanu (9) and Ditana (26), cf. 248; the form Ditan without vowel would solve the problem. Also the final *-i* in the royal name Pabuli (250, 256) may be omitted.

The Aqhat story was edited and translated by S. B. Parker (51-78; notes 78-80). In the introduction (49-51) the importance of Aqhat's father, Daniel, is rightly emphasized, with references to his representation in the biblical book of Ezekiel.

M. S. Smith edited and translated six basic tablets of the Baal Cycle (87-164; notes 164-176) and also variant version CAT 1.133 and 1.8 (177-180). In the introduction (81-86) the relations of tablets and the importance of Baal and his kingship are discussed. Some Baal traditions were applied to Yahweh and appear in the Bible. (Smith's *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* 1. was reviewed in *Religio* 4, 1996, 201-203.)

Shorter texts (180-228) are also provided with introductions and notes. They are listed with titles, references to CAT numbers, and names of translators.

Parker (181-193): Baal Fathers a Bull, 1.10; A Birth, 1.11; The Wilderness, 1.12; The Binding of a Monster, 1.83.

Lewis (193-214): El's Divine Feast, 1.114; The Rapiuma, 1.20-22; The Birth of the Gracious Gods, 1.23, v. infra.

Marcus (215-218): The Betrothal of Yarikh and Nikkal-Ib, 1.24.

Parker (219-223): The Mare and Horon, 1.100.

Smith (224-228): no title, 1.96.

Some of these short texts are connected with ritual: banquet 1.114; marriage, 1.24; cult of the dead, 1.20-22. This text deals with

Rapiuma, a group the name of which corresponds to biblical Rephaim.

The relatively well preserved poem 1.23 was translated into Czech and commented by this reviewer, v. „Ugaritská báseň o narození dvou bohů“, *Religio* 2, 1994, 53-68; summary, Ugaritic Poem of the Birth of Twin Gods, ib., 69. In this text both instructions for ritual mythical narrative are contained. In the introduction (205-207) to his edition and translation (208-214) Th. J. Lewis discusses various opinions about the literary genre of this text. His edition differs from CAT only in a few minor points, such as filling of the gaps. On the bottom of the obverse line 29 is longer than that in CAT; this longer reading, probably based on the recent photographs, corresponds to line 14. While in CAT *agzrym* is presented as one word, Lewis has two words, *agzrym*, translated „paired devourers of the day“; this differences on lines 58 and 61 are reflected in translations, one word can be as „devourers“. Two words on line 14, *gd* and *annh* are not translated; „coriander“ and „minth“ are most probable equivalents. On line 6 the word *ay* is understood as indicating high quality of bread and wine; the rendering as „any“ seems to be more appropriate.

In the „Pre-Ugaritic“ times, before 1929, the knowledge of ancient Canaanite religion was limited. Now the most important source for the study of this Pre-Israelite religion is conveniently accessible.

This edition and translation of Ugaritic narrative poetry is a valuable contribution to interpretation of frequently difficult texts. And it opens access to them for researchers and students of religion. References to the Hebrew Bible point to the importance of the traditions to biblical studies, as does the comparison of verse structures. Many suggestions for further study can be found in the translations and their introductions.

More conformity will be useful for continuation of Ugaritic studies. In the editions italics should be reserved for safely attested letters, while less safely attested or reconstructed ones may be printed in Roman letters. Problems with final vowels in rendering of Ugaritic masculine nouns were mentioned before, concerning Kirta – Kirt. The same problem can be observed at femi-

nime names, cf. e.g. Athtartu – with unnecessary -u, cf. Athtart (246) – and Anat, without final vowel (195). The numbering of texts according to CAT (=KTU 2) should be used consistently; the use of numbers of texts in this edition (v-vi) is not convenient, especially in the indexes (253-265).

Valuable materials are well presented in the book under review, a few improvements may be welcome. Notes can be printed on the same pages to words and matters to which they refer. Numbers of texts should be printed on top of pages in the entire book, as they are on odd pages 183-227.

This edition and translation of Ugaritic narrative poetry will be usefully and gratefully appreciated by general readers and by specialists in many fields, among which religious studies can be substantially enriched by due attention to these materials, clearly and reliably offered. The bibliography provides directions for further study and research.

The book under review can be recommended especially to students, because of its many valuable features and easy access to them, and also because of the relatively low price of the paperback edition.

Price USD 14.95 paper, USD 34.95 cloth (= Writings from the Ancient World, Society of Biblical Literature, Volume 9)
Translated by Mark S. Smith, Simon B. Parker, Edward L. Greenstein, Theodor J. Lewis, David Marcus.

STANISLAV SEGERT

Y. Hoffman – F. H. Polak (eds.), 'wr lj^cqb – A Light for Jacob. Studies in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. In Memory of Jacob Shalom Licht, Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute – Tel Aviv University 1997, [10]+282+60*+[4] pp.

V článku „Jákov Licht. Život a dílo“ (*Religio* 4, 1996, 194-200) bylo uvedeno, že je připravován sborník věnovaný jeho památce

(viz s. 194-195). Tento sborník nazvaný *Světlo pro Jákoba* byl vydán pět let po Lichtově skonu. Připravili jej dva jeho kolegové z telenivské university. Na obalu je fotografie svítilního starověkého hliněného svícnu. Lichtova fotografie je na začátku hebrejské části sborníku.

Tato rozsáhlejší hebrejská část je uvedena předmlouvou obou editorů a obsahem. Hebrejský název článku, který napsal Frank Polak, znamená „Jákov Šalom Licht – člověk a exeget“ (1-5). Licht se narodil r. 1922 ve Vídni, vyrostl a studoval v Brně; r. 1940 se odebral do „země“ a studoval na Hebrejské universitě v Jeruzalémě. Polak oceňuje publikace i osobnost svého učitele.

V seznamu Lichtových publikací (7-13) je 12 knih, 44 článků, 93 příspěvků do encyklopedií a 14 recenzí. Téměř všechny publikace jsou hebrejské, jen několik anglických.

Hebrejské články ve sborníku jsou ve dvou oddílech: 13 článků o Bibli a jejím výkladu (15-197), 8 článků v oddíle o svítících od Mrtvého moře a o archeologii (199-282).

V prvním oddíle jsou výklady biblických míst a výrazů. Zde uvádíme ty, které napsali autoři známí i z jiných publikací. Šemuel Achituv (36-43) sleduje různé funkce hebrejského slova, jež znamená „obličej“. Moše Greenberg (68-77) sleduje v hebrejské Bibli a v anglických překladech smysl slova pro „právo“. Jair Hoffman (90-103) vykládá podrobně verš knihy Jeremiášovy 36:32. Meir Weiss (104-117) sleduje žalmy 42-43.

Příspěvatelé do druhého oddílu se platně podíleli na uveřejňování a výkladu rukopisů od Mrtvého moře. Chanan Ešel (201-210) uvažuje o vztahu esejského „Učitele spravedlnosti“ k „Výboru úkonů Zákona“ (MMT) ze 4. kumránské jeskyně. Magen Broši (201-211) sleduje protikumránské polemiky v talmúdu. Debora Dimant (220-226) podává reprodukci, text a výklad 2. sloupce rukopisu 4Q389, spisu hlásícího se k Mojžíšovi. Bilha Nican (227-253) uveřejňuje a porovnává zlomky o blahoslavenství ze 4. jeskyně, 4Q286-290.

Dlouholetý Lichtův přítel, profesor David Flusser (viz 1; viz též *Religio* 5, 1997, 70-71) přispěl článkem o smrti bezbožného krále (254-262). Přirovnává předpověď v kumrán-