

# Yet Another Hittite Loanword in Ugaritic?

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*Abstract:* A meaning is suggested for the enigmatic Ugaritic word *údn*, which occurs in the Ba'al Cycle, on the assumption that it may be a loanword from Hittite.

*Keywords:* Ba'al Cycle, Hittite, Ugaritic.

The obscure Ugaritic word *údn*, which occurs in a passage from the Epic of Ba'al, has had a variety of explanations, none completely satisfactory.<sup>1</sup> The text in question (KTU 1.3 iii 47–iv 3) runs as follows:

<i>trd. bfl. bmrym. spn.</i>	He expelled Ba'al from the summit of Mount Šapunu,
<i>mššš kššr údnh</i>	driving (him) out like a bird from his <i>ú</i> .
<i>gršh. lksi. mlkh</i>	He ousted him from the throne of his kingship
<i>lnht. lkht. drkth</i>	from the resting-seat <sup>2</sup> of his dominion. <sup>3</sup>

The various proposals for the meaning of *údn* are:

## (1) “ear”

A sample translation is “who pecked his ear like a bird”.<sup>4</sup>

– Critique: the expression remains obscure and has no parallels in other ancient Near Eastern traditions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. “Nest, Lager”, “Schilf”, “Sockel” or “Stammsitz” (Tropper 2008: 13) or simply “Behausung” (Tropper 2012: 331 §54.423b).

<sup>2</sup> Here there is hendiadys; the literal meaning of *lnht lkht* is “from the resting-place, from the throne (of)”.

<sup>3</sup> Following Wyatt RTU, 80; for a translation as a question rather than a statement see Smith / Pitard 2009: 290-293: “The interpretation proposed in our translation sees the two bicola as questions, but Baal as the object of the verbs, and the enemy that Anat fears as the subject”. This does not affect the meaning of Ug. *údn*.

<sup>4</sup> Gibson 1978: 50; similarly, “golpeando como un pájaro sus orejas” (Del Olmo Lete 1981: 185); see also Aistleitner WUS §89 and §1835; Gordon UT §19.88, TOu 1, 169 and n. p, and Smith 1997: 112.

**(2) “nest”**

Dijkstra translates: “Is someone making him to leave his nest like a bird?”, commenting: “In this context the problematic *údnh* can hardly be anything else than ‘his nest’” as a metaphor for “dwelling” as in Num. 24:21, Prov. 27:8 and Akk. *qinnu*, “nest” (CAD Q, 257-260).<sup>6</sup> In fact, the meaning “nest” had been proposed long ago by Hans Bauer and is generally accepted.<sup>7</sup>

– Critique: however, as indicated by Sanmartín,<sup>8</sup> none of the cognates that Dijkstra mentions has this meaning. Neither Heb. *’eden*, “pedestal, base” (HALOT, 16a) nor Aram. *’uddāna*, “Sessel” (Dalman 1922: 7) means “nest” and the meaning “Nest, Lager” cited for Akk. *adattu* (AHw, 12) is incorrect since it means “succulent part of reed (used as fodder)” (CDA, 4; CAD A/1, 110).<sup>9</sup>

**(3) “perch”**

Instead, Dietrich and Loretz proposed “Ruheplatz”, also based on Heb. *’eden*, “pedestal, base” and Aram. *’uddāna*, “armchair”, and translated the second couplet:

Ist jemand, der Baal von den Höhen des Špn vertreibt,  
der ihn wegscheucht wie einen Vogel von seinem Ruheplatz, etc.<sup>10</sup>

This has been accepted by Wyatt (RTU, 80), who provides the slightly more lively translation: “knocking him like a bird from his perch”.

– Critique: the imagery seems somewhat frivolous in the context, although in effect it is equivalent to the previous proposal.

**(4) “dominion”**

This meaning is based on parallelism with *ksū mlkh* and *khṭ drkth*<sup>11</sup> and the corresponding translation is:

<sup>5</sup> “Die Wiedergabe von *udn* mit “Ohr” hat mit der Schwierigkeit zu kämpfen, daß der Sinn der Rede völlig dunkel bliebe und hierfür keine Parallelen beizubringen wären” (Dietrich / Loretz 1982: 79).

<sup>6</sup> It can also have the transferred meanings of “family” and “clan”, but these seem irrelevant here.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. “*Depriving* like a bird of its *nest*” (Gordon 1949: 20, with italics denoting uncertainty) and most recently by Niehr (2015: 206): “der ihn ausgehen läßt wie einen Vogel (von seinem Nest)”. See also De Moor 1987: 12 (“aerie”) and similarly Hvidberg-Hansen 1990 I, 76 and II, 53 n. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Sanmartín 1978; also rejected by Dietrich / Loretz 1982: 79.

<sup>9</sup> However, note the line in a Sumerian poem: “Lest I make them (the people of Aratta) fly away like a bird from its permanent nest” (*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, line 116; translation: Vanstiphout 2003: 63).

<sup>10</sup> Dietrich / Loretz 1982: 81.

<sup>11</sup> For the parallelism (*šrri*) *špn* // *khṭ* see KTU 1.6 i 57-58 and the discussion in Wyatt 1995: 231.

Who would chase him as a bird from his dominion?<sup>12</sup>

The form of *údn* remains difficult. Sanmartín had explained Ug. *údn* as “ein \**qutl*-Abstraktum zu *adn* «Herr, Schutzpatron»”.<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, *údn*, “dominion”, is simply a lexical allophone of *ádn*, “lord”, as proposed by Del Olmo Lete.<sup>14</sup>

– Critique: while certainly acceptable, this would be a unique occurrence of the word in Semitic. Also, a meaning seems to be required that is parallel to “Mount Şapunu” (see next solution).

### (5) “land, territory”

Instead of any of the above, I suggest that Ugaritic *údn* is a loan from Hitt. *udnē*, “pays”<sup>15</sup> / *utnē-*, *utni-*, “land”,<sup>16</sup> in the sense of “territory, country”.<sup>17</sup> The proposed translation of the passage in question, therefore, is:

<i>trd. bšl. bmr̄ym. špn.</i>	A	He expelled Ba‘al from the summit of Mount Şapunu,
<i>mššš kššr údnh</i>	A'	making him flee his <b>territory</b> like a bird.
<i>gršh. lksi. mlkh</i>	B	He ousted him from the throne of his kingship,
<i>lnht. lkht. drkth</i>	B'	from the tranquil seat of his dominion.

Here “Mount Şapunu” is parallel to “land” (A//A') just as “throne of kingship” is parallel to “seat of dominion” (B//B'). To some extent, the imagery of the first couplet is reflected in Assyrian royal inscriptions, e.g. *ana gisallāt šadī šaqūti*

<sup>12</sup> Gray 1971: 317 and n. 9. It has been accepted by Pardee (1997: 252b), who translates: “... him who would have caused (him) to flee like a bird (from)(the seat of) his power”, but the plethora of brackets indicates some uncertainty here. Considerably more obscure is the rendering by Van Zijl (1972: 62): “One who makes trouble like birds his lordship (?)”, but with no mention of *údn* in his discussion (*ibid.* 64).

<sup>13</sup> Sanmartín 1971: 450.

<sup>14</sup> Del Olmo Lete 2014: 55; see also DUL, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Vanséveren 2006: 100, with discussion of etymology.

<sup>16</sup> EDHIL, 953; cf. HW, 237-238 (“Land”). Either spelling seems acceptable, but in any case the equivalence of Ug. /d/ to Hitt. /t/ would not be a problem. See, for example, Ug. *dgt*, “incense offering”, which is a loan from Hitt. *tuhhuai-/tuhhui-*, “smoke” (EDHIL, 895), as first proposed by De Moor 1970: 200; see Watson 2007: 120; DUL, 266. For the reflexes of Hittite dentals in Ugaritic see the discussion in Patri 2009: 96-102.

<sup>17</sup> Hitt. *udnē*, which occurs in the *Proclamation of Anitta* (lines 11, 38, 66 [as KUR]; for the text see Neu 1974 and for a recent translation see Hoffner 1997) and elsewhere (text references in Neu 1974: 109-113), means “land, territory, country”. According to Oettinger (2000: 184), in the mountainous country of Anatolia, typically a “land” is the same as a river valley and similarly, Yakubovich (2008: 294) suggests that “it was restricted to mountainous areas, where river-valleys separated from each other by mountain ridges would be perceived as separate ‘countries’”. The other Hittite word in the same semantic field is *tēkan-*, *takn-*, but it means “earth” (EDHIL, 858-862) in the sense of “soil, ground”.

*kīma iššūrū ipparšu*, “they flew like birds to the ledges of the high mountain” (AKA 42 ii 42); PN *alāk girri[ia i]šmēma iššūriš ipparišma*, “PN heard of the approach of my campaign and flew away like a bird” (Lie 1929: 153); *ilū ištarātu āšib libbišu iššūriš ipparšuma*, “the gods and goddesses who dwell there [in a town] flew off like birds” (Borger 1956: 14).<sup>18</sup>

To sum up, while the meaning “dominion” for Ug. *údn* remains a viable option, there is strong evidence that it may mean “land”, as in Hittite, as proposed here.<sup>19</sup> Although there are several other Hittite loanwords in Ugaritic,<sup>20</sup> it is difficult to determine why one was used in this particular text.<sup>21</sup> It may be significant that in the same passage *kht*, “throne” and possibly *ñht*, “tranquil” are Hurrian.<sup>22</sup> Since *údn* occurs only once in the whole Ugaritic corpus, no firm conclusions can be drawn and the matter remains undecided.<sup>23</sup>

## Abbreviations

AHw	W. von Soden: <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> , vols. I-III (Wiesbaden 1965-1981).
AKA	E. A. W. Budge / L. W. King: <i>The Annals of the Kings of Assyria</i> , I (London 1902).
CAD	I. J. Gelb <i>et al.</i> (eds.): <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> , vols. 1-21 (Chicago 1956-2010).
CDA	J. Black / A. George / N. Postgate (eds.): <i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> (Wiesbaden 2000 <sup>2</sup> ).

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<sup>18</sup> All as cited in CAD I/J, 209-212. Comparable similes in Sumerian are: “Beware lest I make [the people of Aratta] flee from their city like a dove from its tree” (*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, line 115; translation: Vanstiphout 2003: 63) and “Its [Eridu’s] lady, like a flying bird, left her city” (*The Lament for Eridu*, line 14; translation: Green 1978: 133). See also the imagery of Sennacherib making Hezekiah a prisoner in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage” (cf. Cogan 2000: 303).

<sup>19</sup> Although originally it may have been Luwian (as *\*wadni*: see Yakubovich 2008: 294-296), it was probably loaned through Hittite. For other Luwian loanwords in Ugaritic see Watson 2010: 832, 833, 835, 837 and 840-841.

<sup>20</sup> For a survey see Watson 2007: 118-124 §2.3.01.

<sup>21</sup> Possibly, as suggested by Krzysztof Baranowski (University of Warsaw) in a personal communication by e-mail, the author may have been trying to impress his fellow scribes with his erudition, as most probably they could understand foreign words.

<sup>22</sup> For details see Watson 2007: 53, 97, 130, 100 n. 295, 151.

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- TOu 1 A. Caquot / M. Sznycer / A. Herdner: *Textes ougaritiques. Tome I. Mythes et Légendes. Introduction, traduction, commentaire* (Paris 1974).
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