Yet Another Hittite Loanword in Ugaritic?

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

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

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\begin{align*}
\text{ṭrd. bśl. bmrym. spn.} & \quad \text{He expelled Ba’al from the summit of Mount Šapunu,} \\
mššš kšyr ūdnh & \quad \text{driving (him) out like a bird from his ū.} \\
gršh. lksi. mlkh & \quad \text{He ousted him from the throne of his kingship} \\
lnḥt. lkḥt. drkth & \quad \text{from the resting-seat}^2 \text{ of his dominion.}^3
\end{align*}
\]

The various proposals for the meaning of ûdn are:

(1) “ear”
A sample translation is “who pecked his ear like a bird”.⁴
– Critique: the expression remains obscure and has no parallels in other ancient Near Eastern traditions.⁵

¹ E.g. “Nest, Lager”, “Schilf”, “Sockel” or “Stammsitz” (Tropper 2008: 13) or simply “Behausung” (Tropper 2012: 331 §54.423b).
² Here there is hendiadys; the literal meaning of lnḥt lkḥt is “from the resting-place, from the throne (of)”.
³ 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. ūdn.
⁴ 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 ʿudnh 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). In fact, the meaning “nest” had been proposed long ago by Hans Bauer and is generally accepted.
– Critique: however, as indicated by Sanmartín, none of the cognates that Dijkstra mentions has this meaning. Neither Heb. ʾeden, “pedestal, base” (HALOT, 16a) nor Aram. ʿuddāna, “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).

(3) “perch”
Instead, Dietrich and Loretz proposed “Ruheplatz”, also based on Heb. ʾeden, “pedestal, base” and Aram. ʿuddāna, “armchair”, and translated the second couplet:

Ist jemand, der Baal von den Höhen des Ṣpn vertreibt,
der ihn wegscheucht wie einen Vogel von seinem Ruheplatz, etc.

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 ʾsū mlkh and ḫt ḏrkth and the corresponding translation is:

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5 “Die Wiedergabe von ʿudn 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).
6 It can also have the transferred meanings of “family” and “clan”, but these seem irrelevant here.
8 Sanmartín 1978; also rejected by Dietrich / Loretz 1982: 79.
9 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).
11 For the parallelism (srrt) Ṣpn /// ḫt see KTU 1.6 i 57-58 and the discussion in Wyatt 1995: 231.
Who would chase him as a bird from his dominion?\footnote{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 \textit{ǔdn} in his discussion (ibid. 64).}

The form of \textit{ǔdn} remains difficult. Sanmartín had explained Ug. \textit{ǔdn} as "ein *qutl-Abstraktum zu \textit{adn} «Herr, Schutzpatron»".\footnote{Sanmartín 1971: 450.} Alternatively, \textit{ǔdn}, "dominion", is simply a lexical allophone of \textit{ādn}, "lord", as proposed by Del Olmo Lete.\footnote{Del Olmo Lete 2014: 55; see also DUL, 20.}

– 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 Ṣapunu” (see next solution).

(5) "\textit{Land, territory}"

Instead of any of the above, I suggest that Ugaritic \textit{ǔdn} is a loan from Hitt. \textit{udnē}, "pays"\footnote{Vanséveren 2006: 100, with discussion of etymology.} / \textit{utnē}-, \textit{uti}-, "land", in the sense of “territory, country".\footnote{EDHIL, 953; cf. HW, 237-238 (“Land”). Either spelling seems acceptable, but in any case the equivalence of Ug. /\textit{d}/ to Hitt. /\textit{t}/ would not be a problem. See, for example, Ug. \textit{dḡ}, “incense offering”, which is a loan from Hitt. \textit{tuḫḫu}ai-/\textit{tuḫḫu}i-, “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.} The proposed translation of the passage in question, therefore, is:

\begin{verbatim}
\textit{ṭrd. bšl. bmrym. spn.} A He expelled Ba’al from the summit of Mount Ṣapunu, mšṣ ššr \textit{ǔdnh} A’ making him flee his \textit{territory} like a bird. gršh. lksi. mlkh B He ousted him from the throne of his kingship, lnḥt. lḥḥt. drkth B’ from the tranquil seat of his dominion.
\end{verbatim}

Here “Mount Ṣapunu” is parallel to “\textit{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. \textit{ana gisallāt šadī šaqqūti}
kīma iṣṣūrū ipparšu, “they flew like birds to the ledges of the high mountain” (AKA 42 ii 42); PN alâk gir[i]â i[šmēma iṣṣūriš ipparišma, “PN heard of the approach of my campaign and flew away like a bird” (Lie 1929: 153); īlū ištarātu āšib libbišu iṣṣūriš ipparšuma, “the gods and goddesses who dwelt there [in a town] flew off like birds” (Borger 1956: 14). 18

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

Abbreviations


CAD I. J. Gelb et al. (eds.): The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, vols. 1-21 (Chicago 1956-2010).

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**Bibliography**

