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AN ASSORTMENT OF ARTICLES
IN A UGARITIC TEXT

1. Introduction

The text under discussion here (RS [Varia 23] (AO 21.090) = KTU 5.23), of unknown provenance, was first published over thirty years ago[1]. It is written on a small beige tablet by an unpractised hand, probably a scribe under training[2]. Apparently, it is a list of disconnected items, possibly household goods of some kind, but it could simply be a series of words written out for practice[3]. This means that there is no context and that meanings can only be suggested either because they correspond to known words in Ugaritic or because they have equivalents in cognate languages. There have been no further studies of this text and it merits another close look.

2. RS [Varia 23] (AO 21.090) = KTU 5.23

The readings in the latest edition (KTU) differ slightly from the first published edition (Caquot/Masson 1977)[4]. The text and translation of this tablet are as follows:

01 *šmn mr*	myrrh-scented oil
02 *qrn*	a horn(-shaped container)
03 *ṯl*{.}*ṯ azml*	three sacks
04 *pldm*	blankets
05 *ṯrdy*	a bowl (?)
06 *šmn nr*	lamp oil
07 *ṯḥṣ^c t*	[unintelligible]
08 *kdnt*	pitchers
09 *ṯrdm*	bowls (?)
10 *tqnt.*	adornments/garments;
11 *gpn.*	a date-basket (?);
12 *m^c ṣdm.*	sickles;
13 *lḥm. tnṯ*	boards; an ornament (?)
14 *dgm*	covers (?)
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15 [xx]x*mt*	[broken]
16 *mkkm*	carpets/scrapers:
17 *ṯn. dqm*	two small
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18 *mškkm*	necklaces
19 *qdḥm*	saucers

3. Philological notes

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[1] Caquot/Masson 1977; copy p. 16 (Fig. 3) and transcription p. 17.

[2] "Petite tablette de couleur beige, en partie brûlée au recto et en totalité au verso, de format presque carré (hauteur : 52 mm, largeur 60 mm). Une inscription gravée de manière grossière couvre la quasi totalité de la surface, faces et tranches. Si l'identification des signes est aisée, on a quelque peine à retrouver la disposition du texte. Le recto comporte cinq lignes qu'on lit entièrement. On discerne à la fin de la ligne 3 et au début de la ligne 4 des marques dont la présence pourrait être fortuite ... Le verso comporte sept lignes toutes assez courtes pour que le droit ait été d'abord laissée vide. Le scribe a ensuite utilisé cet espace vacant pour continuer l'inscription en disposant les lignes perpendiculairement aux précédentes..." - Caquot/Masson 1977, 15. "Wörter und Buchstabenkombinationen in ordentlicher Schrift, die außer Vorderseite und Rückseite auch den linken und rechten Tafelrand ausfüllen" - Dietrich/Loretz 1988, 183.

[3] "C'est une liste de noms communs dont quelques uns seulement sont connus. La maladresse du trait fait penser que la tablette était un exercice de vocabulaire gravé par un élève scribe" (Caquot/Masson 1977, 16).

[4] Line 13: *lḥm. tnṯ* not *lḥm. tn*; line 16: *mkkm* not *mk qtm*; line 17: *dqm* not *dmq*.

line 1: *šmn mr*, "oil of myrrh", i.e. "oil infused with myrrh"; see also *kd šmn mr*, "an amphora of myrrh-infused oil" (KTU 4.14:2, 8, 15; RS 94.2479:16) and *kt šmn mr*, "a jug of myrrh-infused oil" (KTU 4.91:15). Note also *šmn mr šmn rqḥ*, "myrrh infused oil, perfume" (KTU 1.41:21; 1.87:22). The equivalents in cognate languages are EA Akkadian *šamnu murru*, "oil of myrrh" (EA 25 iv 51; cf. CAD M/2, 221b) and Heb. *šaman hammōr*, "oil of myrrh" (cf. HALOT, 630).

line 2: *qrn* literally means "horn", but probably here denotes a horn used as a container, unless it is a horn-shaped container[5]. This meaning seems confirmed by the expression *lqḥ. hw šmn. b.qrnh*, "he took oil in his horn-container" (KTU 2.72:31-32). Similarly, in Akkadian texts, *qarnu* is a rhyton used for oil[6] and much the same applies to Heb. *qeren*, "horn (receptacle for oil)" (HALOT, 1145)[7].

line 3: *ṯl{.}ṯ*: either there is an incorrect word-divider here within a word or an [*l*] has been written with four wedges[8]. Here the word *ṯlṯ* probably means "three" rather than "copper"[9], but either would be possible. *azml* means "sack"[10] or possibly even "harness"[11].

line 4: *pld*, "cloth" (also KTU 1.148:21; 4.4:4, 5; 4.146:7; 4.152:4, 7, 8; 4.205:1, 7; 4.270:8, 12; 4.363:8; 9.419:9). This term denotes a garment made of linen, wool or other material and in one text (KTU 4.363) it is specifically connected with horses and chariots. It would seem to be a general term for a textile or clothing – "ein Gewandtyp"[12] – that could also be used for horses[13]. In Akkadian texts from Ugarit it is written TÚG *pa-li-du* and TÚG *pa-li-du-ma*[14]

line 5: *ṯrdy*, "bowl" (?). This is a very tentative proposal based on Arab. *ṯarada*, "to crumble and sop (bread)", *ṯarīd*, "a dish of sopped bread, meat and broth" and *miṯrad*, "bowl" (DMWA, 102b)[15]. The function of the final –*y* seems to be to make a noun out of *ṯrd*: "belonging to *ṯrd*"[16]. No meaning for *ṯrdy* is given in the recent dictionary of Ugaritic (DUL, 931). The word recurs as *ṯrdm* in line 9.

line 6: *šmn nr*, "oil of a lamp", i.e. "lamp oil", also occurs in the phrase *kd. šmn. nr*, "a jar of lamp-oil" (KTU 4.786:8) and has a close equivalent in *kd. šmn. l. nr. ilm*, "a jar of oil for the lamp of the gods" (KTU 4.284:6).

line 7: *ṯḥṣ ͨt* may possibly be two separate words, i.e. *ṯḥṣ* and *ͨt*. If so, the second word (*ͨt*) could mean "moth", Heb. *ͨāš*, "moth" (HALOT, 895b), Akk. *ašāšu*, "kind of moth" (CDA, 27b; AHw, 79b) as proposed by Caquot/Masson[17]. However, the line makes no sense as it stands.

line 8: *kdnt*, "pitcher(s)", a meaning based on Syriac *kdn, kdn'*, "small pitcher" (cf. Brockelmann LS², 318) "a small narrow-necked jug" (Payne Smith, 205)[18]. The commonly accepted meaning "she-mule"[19] is possible, of course, but seems out of place in this list.

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[5] Translated "Horn", "Füllhorn (für Salböl)" (Tropper KWU, 101).

[6] See CAD Q, 138b meaning 4: "horn as a container, rhyton".

[7] Cf. also Eg. *wtḥ qrn*, "*qrn*-vessel" (CDD Q, p. 61).

[8] See Tropper UG, 70 §21.411 l.

[9] See Marzal 1963.

[10] "Sack" (als Maßeinheit)" according to Tropper UG, 106 §32.143.4.3.

[11] "È verosimile che questo tessile ... fosse impiegato nella bardatura degli equini, come l'acc. *azamillum* ..." – Ribichini/Xella 1985: 28.

[12] Tropper KWU, 95.

[13] The occurrence in KTU 4.152:4 is not connected with horses.

[14] See Ribichini/Xella 1985: 59; DUL, 671. Heb. *pelāḏōt*, of uncertain meaning, even though it is used in connection with a chariot (cf. HALOT, 929-930), is of no help in assigning a meaning.

[15] Ug. *ṯrdy* is very unlikely to correspond either to Syriac *šrd*, "bitter almond" (Brockelmann LS², 807) or to Akk. *šurdu(m)*, "part of a wagon wheel" (CAD Š/3, 342-343; CDA, 387).

[16] For this function of –*y* see Tropper UG, 273-274 §51.46 h-k.

[17] However, see SED II No. 45 pp. 63-64.

line 9: *ṯrdm* see on line 5.

line 10: *tqnt*, "adornments", corresponding to Akk. *tiqnu*, "embellishment, ornament, insignia" (CAD T, 422-423), "proper equipment, ornament" (CDA, 407a) or else to *tuqnu*, "a garment" (CAD T, 481a), "a headband" (CDA, 410a). Whether or not this is a loanword in Ugaritic is uncertain.

line 11: *gpn* probably does not mean "vine" here but may be an extended form of *gp*, "(date-)basket" (RS 94.2406:27)[20]. Or else it may mean "harness"; Tropper (2002, 133) refers to Arab. *ġff* (II), "to put a war-harness on a horse" and translates "Reit- od. Zugtiergeschirr" (KWU, 35).

line 12: *mᶜṣdm*, "sickles, scythes" (also KTU 3.6:7; 4.625:3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18; 4.632:3, 12) cognate with Heb. *mᶜṣd*, "(blacksmith's) tool" (HALOT, 865-866)[21]. Scholars are undecided as to the exact meaning of Ug. *mᶜṣd*. Greenfield notes: "... in the Gezer calendar l. 4: *yrḥ ᶜṣd pšt*, the root *ᶜṣd* is used for the harvesting of flax and the same use of *ᶜṣd* is found in Mish. Heb. It is equally possible that [Ug.] *mᶜṣd* was therefore a type of "hoe"."[22] According to Healey, "The cognates suggest *mᶜṣd* is a lopping tool"[23], and he rejects any connection with Akk. *eṣēdu*, "to harvest"[24]. Note that RS Akk. *maṣādu* means "melting pot" (cf. CDA, 200a), not "sickle".

line 13: *tnt*, "ornament" - Akk. *tenšû*, "ornament" (CAD T, 344) or "precious metal dress ornament" (CDA, 404a; cf. AHw, 1347b). *lḥm* is possibly a plural or dual of *lḥ*, "tablet, board"[25] but it could simply mean "bread".

line 14: *dgm*, "coverlets" or "lids", based on Semitic *dgy*, "to cover" (HSED, 173 §758), seems more likely than a plural of *dg*, "fish". It is very unlikely to be Eg. *dgm*, "Rizinus" (Wb 5, 500.9-13), "fruit, castor oil" (DLE II, 257).

line 16: *mkk*, "carpet", if it is equivalent to Syriac *mkkʼ*, "carpet" (cf. Brockelmann LS², 384) or "a rug" (Payne Smith, 271). Alternatively it may mean "scraper", if it can be explained by Akk. *mekēku*, "wooden scraper" (CDA, 206b), "scratcher, scraper" (CAD M/2, 6b). Should the second suggestion be correct, this would be a direct loanword since in Akkadian, *mekēku* derives from the verb *ekēku*, which is cognate with Aram. *ḥkk* and Arab. *ḥkk* (cf. AHw, 193b)[26].

line 17: *dqm* may qualify *mkkm* if *mkkm tn dqm* means "two small carpets". Alternatively, *dq* may mean "(piece of) gauze", equivalent to Heb. *dōq*, "veil, gauze" (HALOT, 229b), although the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. A further possibility is provided by Emar Akkadian *daqqu*, "link in a (necklace) chain", although this meaning is uncertain[27].

line 18: *mškkm*, "necklaces"[28] – based on Akk. *šakāku*, "to thread, string", and note the meanings "to string beads" and IV: "to be strung with gems" (CAD Š/1, 113-116; cf CDA, 348). Deivatives in Akkadian are *šikkūtu*, "string of beads" (CAD Š/2, 435b; CDA, 372) and *šikkatu*, "tassel, trimmings

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[18] It cannot be excluded that this noun may be related to Ug. *kd*, "amphora", or to Akk. *kuddu*, "a container" of wood or reed (< Sum.) (CDA, 164b).

[19] See DUL, 431; cf. SED II, 169-171, No. 124.

[20] It seems to correspond to Akk. *gipû*, "date-basket" (CDA, p. 93b) as discussed in Watson 20009 §1.

[21] Arab. *mᶜḏād*, "a lopping-tool" (Lane AEL, 1863ff., 2072f.)

[22] Greenfield 1967: 92; he also notes (92 n. 3) that in Mishnaic Hebrew, the *maᶜᵃṣād* is "an adze used by a carpenter".

[23] Healey 1983: 52.

[24] However, see HSED, 246 §1096 (*ᶜiçVd- "[to] harvest").

[25] Although the standard plural is *lḥt* (see DUL, 494-495).

[26] Semantically, it would be the equivalent of Punic *mgrd*, "scraper, scratcher" (DNWSI, 594).

[27] See Pentiuc 2001: 44 (but with no reference to Ugaritic). The word occurs in the expression [1] *ḫi-šu* GUŠKIN *qa-du da-qú-ti-šu*, "[one] gold necklace together with its links", as cited and translated by Pentiuc.

[28] Untranslated in DLU, 300 and DUL, 591; cf. Watson 2007, 95-96 #2.2.02.1 (177), 117.

(on clothing); string of beads" (CDA, 372a; cf. CAD Š/2, 432-433). Note also Akk. *šakkukum*, "a belt" (CDA, 349b). A meaning for Ug. *mškk* in the semantic range of ornamental clothing seems preferable to the translation "harrow", cognate with Akk. *maškakātu*, "harrow" (CAD M/1, 368; CDA, 202a), "Egge" (AHw, 626), although the underlying root seems to be the same.

line 19: *qdḥm*, "saucers", based on Syriac *qdḥ* and *qdḥ'*, "saucer"[29] and Arab. *qadaḥ*, "drinking bowl, cup"[30]. It is certainly a more plausible alternative to "briquet, étoupe", as proposed by Caquot and Masson[31].

4. Final comments

Even though this text may have been an exercise for a student of alphabetic cuneiform – either copying another tablet or writing from dictation – it does seem to contain items that could have belonged to a household[32]. However, they are not grouped in any obvious way nor is the significance of the ruled lines evident. Several of the words used only occur here (*kdnt, mkkm, mškkm, qdḥm, tqnt, tnt, trdym, trdy* and the unintelligible sequence *tḥṣᶜt*) and they could simply be nonsense words. An attempt has been made here to assign meanings to some of the more obscure terms, but in the complete absence of any parallels or even of a remotely similar text[33], these can be no more than conjectures. It would seem that there are no loanwords from non-Semitic languages, although some words may have been borrowed directly from Akkadian.

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Abbreviations

AEL   E. W. Lane, *Al-Qamūsu: an Arabic-English Lexicon*, vols. 1-8; London 1863-1893, repr. New York 1955).
AHw   W. von Soden, , *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden 1965-1981).
ALASP   Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens

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[29] Cf. Brockelmann LS², 646.
[30] DMWA, 745a. See also Afro-Asiatic **kad-* "vessel" (HSED, 334 §1534; and cf. §1579).
[31] Caquot/Masson, 1977, 18, based on Heb. *qdḥ*, "to set fire to" (HALOT, 1067), similarly, DUL, 693.
[32] Although, should *gpn* mean either "reins" or "vine", it would seem out of place in such a list.
[33] Some of the terms and expressions used recur elsewhere in Ugaritic.

AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
CAD	A. L. Oppenheim, ed., *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago - Glückstadt 1956 -).
CDA	J. Black - A. George - N. Postgate, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (SANTAG 5; Wiesbaden 2000^2).
CDD	J. H. Johnson, ed., *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago 2001).
DLE II	L. H. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*, Vol. II (Providence 2004^2).
DLU	G. del Olmo Lete - J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica*. Vol. I (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 7; Sabadell, Barcelona 1996); Vol. 2 (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 8; Sabadell, Barcelona 2000).
DMWA	H. Wehr - J. Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Wiesbaden 1971).
DNWSI	J. Hoftijzer - K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols. (HdO I/21; Leiden 1995).
DUL	G. del Olmo Lete - J. Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (English Version Edited and Translated by W. G. E. Watson) 2 vols (HdO I/67; Leiden 2002^1, 2003^2).
ELO	Elementa linguarum orientis
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* vols. I-V (translated by M. E. J. Richardson, Leiden 1994-2000).
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSED	V. E. Orel - O. V. Stolbova, *Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary. Materials for a Reconstruction* (HdO I/18; Leiden 1995).
KTU	M. Dietrich - O. Loretz - J. Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU: second, enlarged edition)* (ALASP 8; Münster 1995).
KWU	J. Tropper, *Kleines Wörterbuch des Ugaritischen* (ELO 4; Wiesbaden 2008).
LS^2	C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Hildesheim 1966).
SED II	A. Militarev - L. Kogan , *Semitic Etymological Dictionary*. Vol. II. *Animal Names* (AOAT 278/2; Münster 2005).
UG	J. Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik* (AOAT 273; Münster 2000).
Wb	A. Erman - H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, vols. 1-7 (Berlin 1926-1963) vols. 1-6 and *Belegstellen* vols. 1-5 (Leipzig 1825-1955).