Artículo-Recensión

In Search of the Canaanite Lucifer

Gregorio del Olmo Lete - Universitat de Barcelona-I.P.O.A.

The present study[1] is the revision of a doctoral dissertation carried out under the direction of Prof. F. Cross and aims at unravelling the possible hints or 'reflexes' of a proto-Canaanite myth of the (failed) Cosmic Revolt (CR[a]) against the Supreme deity of the Semitic pantheon, to be found both in the Ugaritic and Biblical *corpora* of texts.

The structure of the book is clear: methodology, *status quaestionis* and sources, Athtar (the presumed protagonist) in the Ugaritic texts, reflexes of the myth in the Biblical texts, summary and conclusions. Let us now consider all this.

Right from the start (pp. 2-3) the author specifies the characters on which he will focus his attention: Athtar in Ugaritic and *hyll bn šḥr* (Is 14:12) in the Biblical texts, as well as their possible identification, according to the interpretation of the Albright-Cross school. The methodology also follows its usual parameters, including the pattern of Hebrew prosody (n. 5) and the custom of vocalizing the Ugaritic texts. According to the author (p. 3), these texts are taken from the first edition by Dietrich-Loretz-Sanmartín (1976), but in the bibliography the second one (1995) is quoted. However, somewhat confusingly, both editions are used interchangeably, so that we never know which edition is meant (cf. pp. 17; n. 70; n. 75; n. 107; n. 150). No other text edition is taken into account, apart from Herdner, CTA, though only occasionally. As for the vocalization of Ugaritic and Hebrew texts, a common practice among American scholars, the author acknowledges the risks involved, but nevertheless assumes them to be necessary (p. 6) in this kind of study. However, the philological rules on which this vocalization is based are inevitably elementary and unnecessary in an academic publication. On the other hand, there are many inconsistencies and even mistakes when these rules are applied, for instance, in the vocalization of the prefix conjugation of the D stem: *taqaššir/tupattiḥ* (p. 182); *tukasse/tušallaḥ* (p. 184) / *yasappir* (p. 185), *yadabbir*, *yakabbid* (p. 194). Other questionable cases are *bi-ġalmu* (p. 81); *li-rabbatu*, 'O Lady' (p. 87, but cf. p. 105: *la-ḥatanu-mi*, 'O son-in-law'); *ba-ḥutmat-ka/ba-ḥutmata-ka* (p. 143) and *yōsinê* for *yāsinê* (stative) (p. 198). Of course, such inconsistencies both here and elsewhere can easily be corrected, but for that very reason I continue to hold this school exercise to be quite superfluous as it is already presupposed by the textual interpretation. In any case, in this connection Sivan's work should have be taken into account (the book is not listed on p. 7).

The *status quaestionis* section (pp. 9ff.) gives emphasis to the thesis of Morgenstern and the Albright-Cross school mentioned above (Albright, Clifford, Mullen, Hanson, Hendel). The author accepts its basic

1. H.R. Page, Jr., *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion. A Study of its Reflexes in Ugaritic & Biblical Literature* (SVT LXV), Leiden 1996, E.J. Brill, 16,5 x 24,6, pp. 232.

insights on the identification of Athtar as the 'rebel', on the origin and general contents of the myth and on the interpretation of the relevant Biblical texts (cf. *infra*), with Grelot, McKay and Craigie providing 'additional contributions', while only Pope and Wilson are quoted as divergent opinions. There are two related 'classical' themes of the debate that Page fails to deal with adequately. In this connection, the absence of a wider reference to the supposed El-Baal conflict is surprising; for instance, Oldenburg is no less worth quoting than Pope, although only the latter was the target of critique by the Cross school. Furthermore, many other scholars besides Cross have refuted Pope's opinion (p. 27). On the other hand, 'the Combat against the Dragon' (Day, Kloos, Wakeman, Ohler, Niehr, etc.), as the simplest example of a 'cosmic and celestial' (KTU 1.5 I 1ff.) or even an "astral" revolt in Ugaritic literature, should have been considered. Although evidently it is not the 'prototype' of the myth sought by the author, its plain reflex in the Hebrew and Christian Bible (Leviathan), and the role it played in eschatological combat, bring it considerably close to the 'celestial rebellion' studied here, perhaps as an 'intersecting' of mythological motifs, which may have contributed to its form. This is particularly clear in its post-biblical development as the sin and rebellion of the angels and Satan (Morgenstern, Hanson), that the author passes over as a subject of future research.

His interest, however, is focused on the character of Athtar as the antihero of this myth (pp. 3, 34, 50, etc.) and on tracing the 'prototype' of the CR^a, which was thoroughly elaborated in post-biblical sources, as can be seen from Ugaritic [KTU 1.2 III 12-24; 1.6 I 42-46; 1.23.8-9, 57; 1.24.24-30] and biblical texts [Gn 6:1-4; Is 14:1-20; Ez 28:1-10, 11-19; Ps 82; Jb 38:1-28; Dn 11:11, 21, 36-39, 45; 12:1-3]. Some of the other biblical texts mentioned are highly questionable, not to say completely irrelevant, as the author has already indicated by a question mark; the same applies to other "oriental reflexes" (pp. 36f.). Of interest, however, is the 'concordance' provided by the author of all possible relevant texts (mostly post-biblical) related to the subject, where the myth shows its actual scheme, even though they are not analysed later (pp. 35-49). It is precisely from reading these texts that one may entertain doubts and ask whether there actually was such a CR^a 'Canaanite' myth. The author's belief is that it lies concealed in the character of the god Athtar.

In fact, the work can be considered as a 'Manual on Athtar', that elusive god in ancient near eastern mythology, who nevertheless occupies a significant place among the Ugaritic gods (p. 107; cf. already my *La religión cananea* [1992], p. 54; Eng. translation, [1999] p. 71). In this connection, a preliminary survey (pp. 51-59) of previous descriptions of his character (Athtar/Venus) is given, although, in my opinion, the best survey is by Smith.

Only at this point in the book does the author's personal involvement with the theme commence. As is compulsory, the author sets out his own method, which he wishes to have a cultural and ethnological (p. 61) perspective, very much in fact, what the great commentators on Ugaritic Literature believe to be their method as well. Of course, many things remain to be done in Ugaritic research, but the presumed void depends largely on the degree of information with which one tackles the subject, and in this connection the book suffers serious shortcomings. Following his 'innovative' method, the author aims to uncover the 'character' of this deity, gathering the 'personal information' (pp. 63, 59, 62) provided by the various texts in order to restore his 'personhood', and so correct the erroneous view of earlier Ugaritologists. Using this model, the author classifies the data according to the system of Murdock and Levenson-O'Leary (n. 48; works, incidentally, that are not listed in the 'Bibliography') in a form that strongly resembles in intent (p. 63, 77) the work by M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Cloud. Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (1990), which has a much wider perspective, a book the author did not consult.

One of the problems with this method is the scant attention paid to the formulaic, stereotype nature of the linguistic data, which could be applied to different 'divine persons' (cf. p. 64, but also n. 44); to the fragmentary state of many texts, which make their interpretation very hazardous and unsuitable for the construction of a serious hypothesis; to the 'levelling' of the literary contexts which deal with these data,

since they are taken as homogeneous wording; and finally to the lack of linguistic warranty for some of its interpretative options. I think that the linear development of the action is preferable to the list of personal 'features' (pp. 93, 94), action that is lost and becomes levelled in that list (but cf. p. 63), since in it all the data acquire the same statistical value. For instance, his conclusion that Athtar's character in not negative (p. 77), but 'mysterious' (p. 78) is gratuitous; his definition of this god as a "cosmic archetype of divine powers ..." is completely unwarranted and sounds like a 'parti pris' rationalization of a secondary figure of the Canaanite Pantheon, that could also be applied to other minor figures. Moreover, at times there is circular reasoning in his reshaping of Athtar's 'holistic' personality and in the conclusions drawn from analysis of the text (for instance, cf. pp. 86, 93).

"Nothing conclusive can be said ..." (p. 85): this statement could be extended to the whole book. One could therefore ask why there is no myth about Athtar (p. 86) if he was such an important a god at Ugarit? All that we know comes from the Baal myth, where Athtar does not feature as a valid antagonist. This new interpretation of Athtar attempts (pp. 92-93) to suppress his 'descentricity' in the Baal myth; but inevitably Baal is central to his own myth and we have no other. To suppose that the minor 'personal' significance is a consequence of the official formulation of the Baal myth may be correct, but it is the only image we have. The rest is pure shadow and it is dangerous to look for reflexes of shadows and uncover them. To suppose, for instance, that Athtar decides to descend to the underworld in pursuit of Baal (pp. 85f., n. 94) has scant textual support and is based on a completely untenable analogy (cf. *infra*).

There seems to be a conflict throughout the book between the attempt to construct a new image of this deity and the honest evaluation of the actual textual data. Caught up in this conflict, the author is led to accept some readings which are 'obsolete' and linguistically ill-founded, and yet are assumed as a 'sure' basis for his opinion. On the other hand, the author's final summary of the Ugaritic evidence, like previous partial ones, turns out to be quite honest and balanced (pp. 108f.).

* * * * *

Beginning with this *corpus* of texts, we will substantiate our rather critical assessment by commenting on certain specific statements. One of the turning points of this thesis is the view of Athtar as a deity who *descendit ad inferos* according to the author's interpretation of KTU 1.6 I 63-64: "Athtar the terrible descended, he came down from Baal the Conqueror's throne and he became king of the Underworld (*wymlk bars*), god of all of it" (pp. 65f.). However, this interpretation is highly unlikely from many aspects. Nowhere in ancient tradition does Athtar appear as an infernal deity, even accepting the correlation between the astral and the infernal in ancient near eastern mythology. The assumed parallel with Shapash (p. 98) has no support whatever: neither Atthar nor the Moon has light or heat enough to be patrons of the dead; their peculiar astral cycle has its own avatars and mythological significance; in certain phases they are even visible during the day. But above all, the Underworld already has its king and its throne is surely no less powerful than Baal's: if Athtar becomes the king of the Underworld by his own volition (pp. 78, 92, 108, n. 117) one must ask what is his relationship to Mot and the position of this. Although the author is aware of the problem (pp. 92-93), he does not discuss it in a satisfactory way. Kingship is allotted by El to his 'most beloved sons' and gained in battle; to assume it by personal decision, and so invade the space of the only impaired rival of Baal, at the very moment when Athtar's unsuitability to occupy the later's throne is made apparent, sounds rather unlikely. A fight against Mot should have begun and it is not enough to "place Athtar in his proximity"; there is no room for two kings (but cf. *infra*). In strict logic, a new mytheme of 'the Combat between Athtar and Mot' should be supposed here, but no hint of such a mytheme is known. Thus the thesis is based on the semantic ambiguity of *ars*, but the 'logic' of the whole Ugaritic mythological system excludes the meaning 'Underworld' here; *ars* belongs to Baal who is *b*^{c}*l ars* (cf. KTU 1.6 III 21 and *passim*, here translated against all plausibility as 'Lord Earth', p. 75, were it only because of its normal feminine gender; is this a

typographical error for 'Lord of Earth', as given later on the same page?). [The simplest solution would be to take the expression as a rhetorical question: "And could he reign in the earth of a god, all of it?"; the phrase is formulaic (cf. KTU 1.3 VI 13-14 where it defines the abode of Kothar)]. Or, this interpretation, very doubtful to say the least, is one of the bases upon which the whole thesis of the peculiar 'personality' of Athtar is constructed and that later would induce and be 'reflected' in the CR[a] myth.

The second point is even more feeble, and here the concatenation of mere guesses and simple lexical possibilities reaches a climax. It revolves around the interpretation of *mt w šr* (KTU 1.23:8) as "Death/Man and Shining" or "The Resplendent Warrior" (n. 128), following a suggestion of Mullen and finding here a designation of Athtar as "an astral combatant" (pp. 96ff., 100, 103, n. 294). Many others have suggested the interpretation of *mt* as "man, husband" in this passage (cf. for instance, Cunchillos, *Syria* 6 [1983] 205ff.; Wyatt, *UF* 24 [1992] 426, neither scholar quoted here), but most of them in reference to the god Mot/Mut. On the contrary, *šr* as 'shining' has not been accepted (however, cf. Margalit and Tsumura, who in another context translate the word as 'torch'); and justifiably so (cf. for instance, ultimately Pardee in Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture* 1997 pp. 276-277; Lewis in Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* 1997 p. 207; Wyatt in *Religious Texts from Ugarit* 1998 p. 326). The etymological support is very weak: morphologically in the languages (Akkadian, Arabic and possibly Syriac) where this lexical cluster occurs, forms are double /š-r-r/ without any contracted verbal G conjugation /š-r/; the root seems to be nominal in origin and mean 'spark', as a 'Primärwort' (the word 'shining', Ar. *šararī, šarārī, šarrār*, comes from this root). It is better to refrain from such linguistic 'dares' until we have a better argument against the well-attested meaning 'prince' for Ug. *šr*. Moreover the subsequent lines of the text turn out to be a good description of "Prince Mot/Mut". Otherwise, the temptation to discover 'shining ones' would be unrestrained throughout the whole book, for instance: *bn šrm* "sons of the Shining one" (KTU 1.23:2, 22; but cf. KTU[2]: *bn Šp*[and *ṯn šrm*, respectively); the paroxysm of this etymology *śar* = 'shining' reaching its climax in Ps 82:7 (p. 162), in the worst excesses of the Albright-Dahood school, reading in the text an altogether unknown Hebrew lexeme; the same meaning is possible even in Dn 12:1 (!) (p. 199; cf. *infra*). For the author the hypothesis (!) has become a certainty. Finally, on the interpretation of KTU 1.23 many authors later than Herrmann are ignored; for instance Xella (1973), Tsumura (1973), Clifford (1975) and Cunchillos (1976) and others (De Moor, Cutler-Macdonald, Cathcart, Wyatt, Lipiński, Segert, Hettema, Garbini, Ryckmans ...).

My disagreement on the interpretation of Ugaritic texts and lexemes concerns a large number of minor points which cannot be substantiated here. I would only object to some minor lexical points in a cursory way.

The interpretation of KTU 1.24:40-43 ("a petition ... on behalf of *prbḫt*", p. 104) seems very objectionable; in common with many others, I consider this to be a list of DNN.

As for objectionable readings, the following can be noted: *ᶜz* instead of *ᶜṣ*, KTU 1.6 VI 17ff. (p. 72; printing mistake); *lbum*, KTU 1.2 III 20 (pp. 64, 84), as a "zoomorphic epithet of Athtart" (but cf. KTU[2], CARTU: *lbdm*); *bn dgn* is missing in KTU 1.6 I 52 (p. 89, printing mistake); *ṭkt* for *ṯkt* (n. 370, printing mistake); *d m*[*lk*]/*dū mu*[*lki*], KTU 1.2 III 12, 18 (pp. 81, 82/83) is a mere hypothetical textual reconstruction, too weak to support this conclusion: "if he is an astral deity, *dū mulki* could be a reference to Athtar's authority over the assembly of celestial gods" (p. 82; but cf. KTU[2]: *ᶜṯtr d t*[, *ᶜṯ*[*t*]*r d*[*m*] respectively); the criterion supporting this reconstruction is amazing: "the reading *d mlk* is strange and unparalleled in the lore of Ugarit. However, it is precisely its strangeness that commends it as a possible reading here" (n. 83); it is precisely criteria like this that at times have turned Ugaritology into a realm of fantasy instead of an academic discipline. Finally, the proposed readings which presuppose the use of the article in a construct chain are simply unacceptable from the grammatical point of view, for instance: before *bnt* (p. 111); *hᵓnšy hšm* (?) (n. 176); *hᵓrzy hlbnwn* (n. 188).

As for objectionable meanings/translations, note: *ḫrḫrtm*, 'torches', KTU 1.2 III 13 (pp. 64, 82; cf. our *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica* [1996] s.v. and subsequently); /mrʾ/, 'to command', KTU 1.4 VII 50 (p. 75; cf. // /š-b-ᶜ/); *aliy qrdm*, 'Conqueror of Warriors', KTU 1.3 III 14 (p. 67, n. 99); *yd*, 'hand', in KTU 1.3 III 6 (p. 181; cf. // *ahbt*); Heb. *ḥzyz*, 'thunderbolt', in Hab:25 (p. 179, n. 341); *dgy*, 'fisherman', KTU 1.4 II 31 (n. 370); even for the author *išt* is a dubious possession of Athtar (p. 64); *yutarriḫ* cannot mean "paid", because the *trḫ* has not yet been weighed; at most it means "he will pay" (p. 106); the interpretation of *la-ḫatanu* as "O son-in-law" is not feasible, because Athtar is not married, nor will a daughter of Baal be his wife (p. 103); *ktmsm* (n. 110) ignores the long-standing debate on this point (p. 90); *mlk ṣbu špš* is not parallel to *śr ṣbʾ hšmym*: the formulaic text is incorrectly divided (p. 101); the meaning 'ravenous' for *agzry* had already been suggested by Albright in 1938 (n. 125); the version of KTU 1.24:28-30 is tendentious and out of context as well as being linguistically very objectionable: *ygtr* as Gt of /ġ-r/ (cf. Arab. *ġāra*, 'to fall in', etc.), is highly unlikely (the rare Ar. Gt *ʾiġtāra* has a completely different meaning) (p. 105); the same applies to *lbu yᶜrr*, 'let the Lion be aroused'; quite naturally the author concludes: "the exact meaning of these actions is unclear" (p. 106); nothing in the context allows one to speak of the 'arrival' of Shapash in KTU 1.23:54 (p. 100; the syntagm *ᶜdb l* never supposes an movement of approach); is it certain that the two *mštᶜltm* in KTU 1.23:35ff. are El's daughters? (n. 144); the translation of *mlkt wim lmlkt* (pp. 65, 84, n. 92, 86) ignores other occurrences of *im* as conditional functor (for instance in KTU 1.6 V 21 and in prose), *pace* Gordon, and the parallel expression *mlk ubl mlk* (KTU 1.4 VII 43).

Some points are treated only in an elementary way, for instance, the double divine names (p. 97); and some specific grammatical solutions are not justified, for instance, the value of the suffix *-y* = /-yyŭ/, 'his', precisely with two dual forms and within a dialogue (p. 100).

Typographical errors are few and easily corrected. Besides those mentioned above, note the following: Tryphon/Typhon (p. 26). On the other hand, the author seems to oscillate between 'allomorph' to 'alloform', the first of which is correct.

* * * * *

Without transition the second part deals with the biblical texts which are thought to be relevant (pp. 110ff.). Once again, on dealing with the first text, Gn 6:1-4 (pp. 110, 114ff.), important studies such as these by Cunchillos (*Cuando los ángeles eran dioses* ... [Salamanca 1976]) are missing; within this bibliographical context his opinion would be just one more. The analysis focusses on the morphology of *npyl* (p. 117). In this connection it must be taken into account that the 'passive' pattern (the 'fallen ones') is Aramaic, whereas its Hebrew counterpart denotes professions (cf. *nābîʾ, nāgîd, nāśîʾ*...) in relation to any of the multiple idiomatic usages of *nāpal* with rather 'active' value (e.g. *hippîl gôrāl*); in any case neither the semantics and the pattern nor the context favour the author's opinion; above all nothing is said of a celestial or higher 'abode' from where 'they fall' (p. 117); that is a mere speculation, and its equation with *mt wšr* and Athtar is not only "problematic" but altogether unlikely (p. 119). Here the 'reflex' is a pure 'mirage'. Even the author's textual treatment of Num 13:33 (original and glosses) is highly reminiscent of the old literary criticism.

Also the philological analysis of Is 14:4-20 (pp. 120ff., 127ff.) seems rather elementary and periphrastic; above all, the quotations and speculations based on the OG (LXX) seem to be irrelevant. Sometimes the Greek is incorrectly transcribed (nn. 186, 285, 292) or incorrectly translated (n. 276: *etheka*). The textual criticism dependent on this Greek version and also carried out according the linguistic criteria of the Albright-Cross school (deletion of the article, changing *ʾlhym* to *ʾl*, etc.) results in the reconstruction of a highly questionable 'original text'. Frequently the notes are elementary and unnecessary, dealing with obvious questions of Ugaritic grammar and the lexicon to be found in the standard reference works (*UT, WUS*, etc.). In general the analysis may be of some interest to biblical

exegetes rather to Ugaritic scholars. Once again a CR^a myth is assumed to lie behind Is 14:4-20, a prototype is looked for that goes back to Canaan and the figure of Athtar is reconstructed to fit it; the dangerous journey from reflex to shadow and from shadow to object is made yet again. A new synthesis and cursory repetition of concepts is carried out (p. 138). As in previous discussions of the text, the equation *helel - nephilîm* - Athtar (p. 139) is established, although it is acknowledged that nothing useful can be found in KTU 1.6 I in this respect. At all events, Athtar - *mt šr - hll bn šḥr* "appear to be related entities" (p. 139), because "*šr* and *hyll* have the same semantic range", an argument that clearly reflects the jump *de posse ad factum*, the possibility being in this case rather weak (cf. *supra* on *šr*). In these pages (pp. 139-140) and with these arguments, the central point of the thesis is reached. Nevertheless, in a recent article on this biblical text ("Down with Hêlêl! The Assumed Mythological Background of Isa. 14:12", in the *Loretz Festchrift* 1998, pp. 717-726), Spronk concludes: "the idea of a god named Hêlêl should be abandoned. *hyll* is no more than an epithet".

In this connection we would say that if a RC^a or RC^b did exist, it has yet to be recovered by other means. Moreover, the ancient myth envisaged seems to be linked inordinately to the commission of a sin (sexual in nature, according to Gn 6:2?) or revolt, and to the concept of the Underworld as a place of punishment for the wicked and rebellious, categories somewhat alien to Canaanite (and ancient near eastern) mythology. There are conflicts and rebellions in ancient near eastern mythologies (the most spectacular to be found in Anatolian and Greek sources; cf. in this connection the fundamental article by A. Bernabé in *Aula Orientalis* 7, 1989, pp. 159-179), but they cannot be claimed as prototypes of the post-biblical CR^a pattern. Instead, this seems to be the 'aetiology' of the 'wicked angel' and his role as prince of evil in the world, a component of the 'eschatological' scenery, that originated in the context of the developing 'angelology' of this late religious ideology, whereas in ancient near eastern mythology these rebellions have a 'protological' setting.

On Ez 28:1-10, 11-19 (pp. 140ff.) the distinction between 'king' and 'prince' belongs, perhaps, to the theological interest of Ezechiel in omitting the title king (?) (cf. Ez 34:23ff.). In any case, the text deals with the criticism of the royal ideology as maintained by the Phoenician state-cities, above all Tyre with its patron deity Melqart. Perhaps this royal polytheistic theology is the actual Canaanite tradition reflected here (p. 158). The author does not take this into account and confuses the Canaanite religion of the second millennium with that of the Phoenician world of the first. Its peculiarity appears, for instance, in the position held by the god El in it, that simply cannot be understood from Canaanite mythology (pp. 142, 146): he does not appear as the head of the pantheon. For this ideology the king of Tyre is divine, he does not need to "be made like an astral deity" (p. 156); on the other hand, the special meaning of 'fire' in this ideology must be taken into account; it is more than a literary metaphor. In this connection, the absence of any mention of the discussions of Ez 28 by scholars of Phoenician is embarrassing. So it is possible that the 'divine' overtones of the royal title *mlk* there, like its 'messianic' implications in Israel, could have induced the prophet to assert that there will be no kings; or possibly this is the work of redactors (compare Ez 28:2 and 12). Furthermore, the entire discussion on the 'usurper' (!) is pure imagination: *ngyd* never had such a meaning in Hebrew. As in former cases, presumed astral references (!) are found anywhere in the text (pp. 151f., 156f., 161, 174) and also a possible relationship of the here mentioned Cherub with Athtar is proposed (pp. 157f.). But once again it is admitted that the Ugaritic mythology has nothing to say in this regard. Why then this stubbornness in looking for Ugaritic antecedents?

In Ps 82:7 the 'shining one' also occurs (p. 162ff.), according to the author's interpretation of Hb. *wk[ ]śrym tplw*, a mythological reading that is rejected even by Dahood, who sees here a simple merism for 'all mortals' (cf. *Psalms II* [1968], p. 270: "hence the numerous attempts to identify a mythological motif in *ʾaḥad haśśārīm* may well turn out to be exercises in misplaced ingenuity"). The connection with the former data is assessed positively again.

The same mythological reading is also carried out in Job 38:1-38. Job is supposed to stand "before El and Baal" rather than before Yahweh (pp. 169, 170); here the Earth is not the 'Underworld' as elsewhere (pp. 175), but again a deity (pp. 168, 173, n. 330, 183, 187, 188), who does not receive any sacrifices in Ugarit (but cf. KTU 1.148:5); also the East Wind is deified (p. 179), as are other natural phenomena and celestial bodies (n. 344, pp. 178, 183); but above all we have here once more the 'astral-mythological' reading: the 'rebels' (*rš*^{c}*ym*) and their 'leader' 'Light' (this time *'wr*, rather than *śr*) (pp. 174, 183) acquire cosmic relevance and testify to the attack against the Supreme God (!). On the contrary, no reference is made to the 'stores of snow and hail' in the Baal myth (p. 178); and in turn the Canaanite pairs of assistants to various great gods are a better testimony than the Akkadian pair quoted. Again, the relationship with earlier texts, Biblical and Ugaritic, is established (pp. 188-90), starting from the mention of 'their light', naturally equated with 'the shining' (*'wr//šr*), and the reference to 'wisdom'; the implication of Athtar is taken for granted: "therefore, it is possible that reference to Athtar or some other astral god could lie behind *'wrm*" (p. 189), even if nothing in the Ugaritic text supports a rebellion of Athtar, who descends willingly to the underworld (p. 189; cf. above) and was not a rebel (p. 186); as a frustrated figure Job himself is supposedly connected with Athtar (!) (p. 185). In the perspective of this imaginative exegesis, the supposed "escape of the rebels and 'their light' to Earth" (p. 189) reminds me of Anatole France's *La revolte des anges*, where such a 'scape' and its implications are superbly romanticized. It is a pity also that the author could not make use of De Moor's article on the Canaanite origin (!) of Job and his book (*UBL* 11, pp. 225-257); that would explain "the language of Canaanite myth" the poem acquires (p. 188), at the same time helping to revise the accepted date of composition (pp. 165, 169) ... All in all, the interpretation of Job 38:1-38 given here turns out to be the closest to the classic CR^{a}, as posited by the author, were it true.

Finally, Dn 11:21, 36-39 and 12:1-3, but with strong historical overtones, provide hints of the myth under discussion; even if "it is possible that the form *śr* 'prince' (said of Michael *hśr hgdwl*) is in fact meant to be read 'shining one'" (p. 199). For the umpteenth time the comparison with the former texts is established and confirmed (p. 200), to conclude that there is no Canaanite myth of Athtar as a rebel, nevertheless the allusions in these biblical texts 'are' of Canaanite origin (p. 200).

In a penultimate conclusion the biblical scheme of the data of the myth is set out (pp. 203ff.) and the certainty of their semantic relationship with *mt-šr* is assessed (p. 104), including the postulated existence of this Canaanite myth (p. 204), with Athtar as the anti-hero (p. 204). I would in principle be ready to accept it, but unfortunately this is not warranted. Rarely has such a 'sure' hypothesis been based on such weak foundations. If the textual CR^{a} comes from the sixth century, why resort to an uncertain Ugaritic origin instead of looking preferably for a contextual historical origin that would provide abundant data in this regard?. Throughout the pages of this book a subliminal contradiction constantly resounds: there is no CR^{a} at Ugarit, no 'rebel' Athtar; nevertheless it should have existed. And following this move, a reconstruction of Athtar and of his 'rebellion' is attempted, even though it is clearly unacceptable and unjustified (p. 206). This is a myth about a myth. Yet, notwithstanding this pervasive endeavour, the author's bad conscience, or simply his basic honesty, is echoed in his conclusion: "to the extent that a convincing linguistic argument can be established linking Athtar and *mt wšr* on the one hand, and *hyll*, the Cherub, the *'bny 'š*, the *rš*^{c}*ym* and their 'light', and the 'shining=one(s)' known from the Hebrew literature on the other, one may suggest tentatively than an *astralized hypostasis* of Athtar is the protagonist of the reflexes of Proto-CR^{a} found in Isaiah 14, etc..." (p. 207). Yet throughout the book, one gains the impression that this 'tentative' is taken to mean 'certain'. One of the clearest proofs of the uncertainty of this 'tentative' suggestion is the continuous attempt to summarize the data, interpreting and drawing conclusions from the meagre 'evidence' available; an effort to deduce what is not present in the

available data. In fact most of the presumed 'Ugaritic' elements of the myth (p. 208) are common to the ancient near east or simply not Ugaritic at all.

In this way, the repeatedly confessed absence of direct Canaanite-Ugaritic evidence is replaced by a simple 'unfounded' hypothesis. As argued above, one can surmise that there is no Canaanite myth of celestial rebellion at all and that it is an apocalyptic by-product projecting back to its origins the eschatological combat (itself a retrojection of the primordial cosmic fight among the gods and the combat against the 'dragon'). As stated above, it is simply an aetiology of 'Satan', the serpent, the evil, as described in the primordial fight among gods (but not against El). In this sense, the threats of Anat against his father El are perhaps the topic most similar to a CR[a] to be found in Ugaritic literature.

Summing up, rarely has an American dissertation been so limited in its information and so endogamic, and with such a strong emphasis on American (and British) scholars. As a result, the research is biased, incomplete and dangerously hypothetical. Authors such as De Moor, Ginsberg (ANET), Caquot, Cunchillos, Del Olmo Lete, Xella, Avishur, Dietrich and Loretz, Pardee, and others, who have translated and commented on the Ugaritic and biblical texts quoted, have been almost completely ignored, while the venerable 'old masters', Albright, Gaster, etc., together with Cross and his 'tradition' of more recent times, are in the foreground. As generally recognized, this Albright-Cross tradition is of considerable importance in the study of the biblical Hebrew tradition, but has remained secondary and marginal to the mainstream of Ugaritic research, at least from the European perspective (but cf. also e. g. the 'American' bibliography appended to the version of the Ugaritic texts in Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture I*, 1997, 367-375). In this respect, to list the omissions in the bibliography would take far too long.

As a final assessment I would apply to this book the Latin dictum: *curris bene sed extra viam*. Any caution will be little in dealing with this nice product of the freest and most dangerous use of fantasy in mythological research.