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my opinion, that the rearrangement of the dwelling, market, and production areas may be linked to changes in the countryside (political instability and an arid climate), which led to the rural inhabitants moving to the city. How this postulated movement impacted the arrangement of the religious and royal spaces remains speculative.

The consideration of Ugarit as one of the first Mediterranean cities fits well into the cited studies, but it would be interesting to investigate the other models or, to quote J. Rykwert (*The Idea of a Town* [1976]), “ideas of city” (“oriental,” following Wirth, “Kontinuität und Wandel” [2000], Mesopotamian, or continental cities) that the Mediterranean one is confronted with in the given period. How does the shaping of the public space play a significant role in this difference?

Author Response

I am grateful to the four respondents for their insightful comments on the paper and to *JNES* for providing a forum to address them. I am pleased that, for the most part, the respondents welcome my attempt to decode Ugarit’s urban space in terms of governance. In particular, we are united in recognizing squares as significant and intrinsically political features of ancient Near Eastern cities. However, the respondents also raise important issues about several aspects of my analysis. I will limit this reply to three critical points. They include the economic and social differences within Ugarit’s urban population; the long-term existence of some urban features and their relationship to the political discourse of Ugarit’s ruling elite in the 13th century BC; and the possibility that squares may have had multiple functions.

In the paper, I argue that Ugarit’s urban population was consistently wealthy and did not include small-plot peasants. Herrmann and particularly Pucci are not convinced and favor models previously advanced by David Schloen and Marguerite Yon. Herrmann highlights the population’s “deep ties to the countryside,” and Pucci specifically advocates for increased population density due to rural flight. This contested point is essential to understand Ugarit’s urban community: was it a predominantly affluent and influential business crowd? Or did it bring together people of enormously different economic backgrounds, including destitute peasants? Agricultural installations and impromptu modifications of older buildings are indeed recurring features of

Ugarit’s urban fabric. However, I would argue that the scale of both is limited. In my opinion, the installations for the processing of agricultural produce, including most oil mills, are best explained assuming that the owner was a landlord who oversaw the delivery of agricultural produce *in loco* for the household’s necessities, rather than a peasant. Also, while larger properties were indeed split up into smaller ones and communal space sometimes shrank, I do not see convincing evidence that this was a generalized trend. In other cases, properties expanded (e.g., the *Maison aux Albâtres*, or Agaptarri’s House) and public space was enlarged by dismantling living quarters, as in the case of the Square with the Vase. Furthermore, the ubiquitous presence of luxury items throughout the city implies a generally high level of income. As a corollary issue, Fleming, Matoian, and Herrmann also question my argument that relationships between urban residents were competitive and lacked solidarity. I agree that this aspect needs further elucidation, perhaps through a targeted analysis of the textual evidence. Preliminarily, while I see that in many cases there may be strong loyalty between unequal partners, I contend that the unusually high degree of difference in size, infrastructures, and inventory between single properties likely generated contrasting interests and competitive aspirations, which texts (e.g., the “ritual for national atonement”) identify as a relevant social issue within the walls of Ugarit.

A second important point raised by the respondents concerns the long-term history of urban squares. In the paper, I deliberately focus on a specific and relatively short period, the second half of the 13th century BC. My choice is based on two considerations. First, monumental urban features were replanned or built anew in this period, including the royal palace and its squares. Second, while we have a reasonably good idea of how the city looked like in this period, we currently lack sufficient elements to reconstruct Ugarit’s urban development in the previous centuries. However, as Fleming and Pucci underscore, the role played by urban squares in Ugarit’s collective framework probably has older roots. This is confirmed by the fact that the 13th-century urban redesign integrated existing elements (e.g., the Building with the Vase). In the paper, I argue that the building activities of this period, including the focus, enlargement, and redecoration of ceremonial squares, were part of a specific political discourse which included (among other elements) an anti-Hittite stance and the promotion of local culture. However, I agree that, in general, the political meaning