

Re: Ugaritic Affiliations

There are 30, not 31, letters in the Ugaritic script, and they represent the 27 letters of "Proto-Canaanite" plus two extra aleph letters (when aleph is followed by i or by u) and an extra sibilant not used in Semitic words.

If the standard transliteration is broadly consistent with a 'standard' reconstruction of Proto-Semitic (PSem) – call it a spelling to avoid unnecessary dispute – the coronal consonants seem to match up as follows:

Standard_transliteration (ASCIIfication) Shortened_Unicode_name
*ASCIIified_PSem

t (t) to *t
d (d) delta *d
m (t.) tet *t.
o (t_) thanna *t_
(d_) dhal *d_
s (s) samka *s
z (z) zeta *z
c (s.) sade *s.
a (s^, \$) shin *s^, *\$ (Competing notations – one character, one PSem phoneme)
l (l) lamda *l
r (r) rasha *r

Unmatched Proto-Semitic:

*t_.
*l- (voiceless lateral fricative)
*l. (emphatic voiceless(?) lateral fricative)

Unmatched Ugaritic:

“(z.) zu
[, s, (s', s2) ssu (Competing notations. I'm assuming the grave in WWS Table 5.2 is a typo.)

The non-Roman transliteration I've seen offered for zu include Hebrew teth gersh and 8 U+0638 ARABIC LETTER ZAH. I have no examples of its use.

Now, the non-Roman transliterations I've seen offered for ssu include Hebrew sin, underlined Hebrew unpointed shin, and Arabic sin with a grave accent. The example of use offered by Brian E. Colless is in <samk> 'support (spine)'. The closest my meagre resources offer is Hebrew <semek> 'support' spelt with samekh, not sin.

There is a remarkable statement in the Unicode proposal for Ugaritic – 'The letters I, U and SSU were added to the alphabet to support Hurrian'. The authors of the proposal are Michael Everson, Rick McGowan and Kenneth Whistler, but I don't believe any of them is a Semiticist.

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I've seen a claim of two mergers from Proto-Semitic to Ugaritic – of *l- and *\$ (as in Akkadian but none of Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic), and of *s. and *l. (as in Hebrew but neither Arabic or Aramaic). The example stem for the latter is PSEM */ar.l./ 'land' – Ugaritic _'ars._, Hebrew _'eres._, Aramaic _'ar`_ (stem form, I presume), Arabic <'rd.> (in various guises). Other examples can be found at <http://www.freeweb.hu/etymological/AEDweb.htm>. That dictionary suggests to me that Ugaritic <z.> corresponds to Arabic <z.>, both transliterated 'dz' there, but I can't confirm the transliteration for Ugaritic.

So, what's wrong with my results? Obviously long study would have given me more information.

Or consulting a grammar of Ugaritic rather than anything put into Unicode.

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