

Re: Ugaritic Affiliations

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2007-09/msg00229.html>

- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 08 Sep 2007 08:31:55 -0700
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On Sep 8, 9:17 am, "Richard Wordingham" <jrw0...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in
messagenews:1189134036.477864.214910@xx

On Sep 6, 6:55 pm, "Richard Wordingham" <jrw0...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Digging around, it seems that there 31 characters
representing 28
consonants – three for the glottal stop – 'a, 'i and 'u, and two
for s^
(s
hacek), namely Unicode U+1038C UGARITIC LETTER
SHIN, and a form 'without
serpent' that is interchangeable with it. (I wouldn't bet on
interchangeability.)

How many times have you been warned about using Unicode documents as a
source for any sort of information at all about writing systems?

Unicode documents are a pretty reliable source of ISO 10646 character names,
which can be useful when there's uncertainty as to which character is meant.
These names are stable – perhaps too stable, as there are infamous examples
where names have been transposed compared to normal usage.

(Only to computer engineers and anyone else who might be in the thrall
of Unicode. To linguists, they usually look ridiculous, not least
because they use English values of the vowel-letters.)

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.

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The best source I have found for the claim of 31 characters is a posting to ANE by Brian Colless
(<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/pipermail/ane/2004-November/015436.html>):

<quote>

This table shows that the West Semitic cuneiform alphabet was based on the pictographs of the West Semitic proto-alphabet.

\$ (T) \$ O_o \$im\$: sun (with serpent)

s_o \$ O_o \$im\$: sun (without serpent)

</quote>

He gave references to his published drawings of the 'pictographic signs'.

There are (under the most generous analysis, that of Gordon Hamilton 2006) 27 proto-alphabetic signs. Ugaritic added three (two alephs and the third s). I don't know what you could be counting as no. 31 — the word divider??

Brian Colless, though prolific, has not attracted any adherents to his "decipherments" of, inter alia, Byblos hieroglyphs or the Wadi el-Hol inscriptions.

So, what is the status of this reported 31st letter? Glyph variant? I tried looking through the Unicode archives to see if there was any discussion of it, but I could find none. What does this form look like? Is the image shown at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugaritic_script with the label aina correct? I see that the Wiki page has illegitimately assumed that it has an encoding in Unicode. There is at present not even a proposal to add it.

Just one more reason not to bother with wikipedia!

Did you look, for instance, in WWS? or any Ugaritic grammar — Gordon, Segert, Sivan, Tropper magna, Tropper parva? or the Woodard encyclopedia, or the Hetzron volume?

Peter Daniels wrote of Arabic and Ugaritic, 'Their consonant inventories are in fact identical'. What is the basis for equating SSU with Arabic dad? Or is it some other Ugaritic letter that is being equated with dad?

Do we know what Mesopotamian cuneiform syllabograms were used for Ugaritic SSU in Hurrian? Frank Zeeb's report of Tropper's belief as to its phonetic significance and the account of Hurrian in WWS suggests that they were SA, SI and SU.

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Who's Frank Zeeb? Is the use of SA/SI/SU for third-s different from the cuneiform equivalents of the other s's?

For syllabic texts at Ugarit, consult John Huehnergard's dissertation, pub. as HSS 32 (1987).

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