

Re: Ugaritic Affiliations

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2007-09/msg00258.html>

- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 09 Sep 2007 14:22:59 -0700
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On Sep 9, 3:06 pm, "Richard Wordingham" <jrw0...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sep 8, 6:07 pm, "Richard Wordingham" <jrw0...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sep 8, 9:17 am, "Richard Wordingham" <jrw0...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

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.

Being a character list rather than a glyph list, it does have the disadvantage that glyph variants are not covered, so that for neo-Assyrian, for example, one has to use to supplementary tables, such as the alphabetically-ordered one at <http://www.sumerisches-glossar.de/download/SignListNeoAssyrian.pdf>.

??? Who in their right mind would even think of looking in Unicode for reliable information on cuneiform writing?

It's the natural place to look for the standard identification of a character, regardless of script. It has the advantage of being available to anyone with unrestricted internet access.

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That's like saying wikipedia has the advantage of being available to anyone with unrestricted internet access.

Unicode is very much a case of GIGO.

By what license do you separate out "Neo-Assyrian" from the whole universe of Akkadian cuneiform?

Why should I need a licence? Ideally one should have similar tables for Hittite and Neo-Babylonian, and probably other stages.

Right, those are the only three "stages" you've ever heard of?

There are three special features of Neo-Assyrian. 1) It is the style used by WWS. (That is probably a significant though extrinsic feature).

It is strictly a historical accident. Lloyd Anderson had already made Mac fonts containing most of the common characters, so I made a font with the few needed in the section, rather than trying to start from scratch.

Frankly I don't know why he had bothered, since

ASSYRIOLOGISTS DO NOT USE CUNEIFORM TYPE.

2) It is possible to make an alphabetic order using sign shapes.

I don't know what you mean. I've never discovered who first arranged a signlist according to the arrangement that's standard today (followed by von Soden, Labat, Borger, ..., with horizontals before angles before verticals), but it is neither the ancient order (which you'll find in the transcript of Syllabary A in WWS) nor the order used the first time someone assembled a cuneiform signlist (1807).

3) I know where

to find a list of signs, moreover, one in alphabetic order of sign shapes.

Regardless of whether it reflects any sort of epigraphic, philological, or linguistic reality!

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For Ur III forms one might hope to use the Unicode charts, though I don't doubt that the shapes of some of the signs, signs that are not attested (and don't exist) for Ur III, are Michael Everson's invention.

Oh, no, he's started meddling in cuneiform now, too???

Why can't you use Nissen and Green's signlist, with the corrections from Steinkeller's review?

At first glance the image of the 31st letter
[inhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugaritic_script] does indeed
appear to
be the
word divider. That seems to be a mistake, but I am looking
for
confirmation
based on some understanding of the basis of this 31st letter.

So it's not Colless's illusory added sh? Then why did you bring in Colless's list?

The 31st letter is clearly Colless's added 'sh'. I suspect the image in the Wiki page is derived by taking Colless's list, the 31 characters in the Ugaritic block of Unicode, putting 2 and 2 together, and making 5.

As opposed to going to ANY reliable source, such as a Ugaritic grammar.

I already mentioned that Colless is not well regarded. Does he provide evidence — graphical and etymological — for this new letter, this new letter that doesn't happen to be found in any of the nearly dozen abecedaries that have been excavated at Ugarit?

Everything I've seen, apart from the image on the wiki page, tells me that it is a variant of SHIN. I would not expect to see the two 'sh' letters in the same abecadary.

Since when are "variants" included in the list of letters in an alphabet?

Peter Daniels wrote of
Arabic and Ugaritic, 'Their
consonant

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inventories
are
in fact identical'. What is the
basis for equating SSU with
Arabic
dad?

I missed this one before. What don't you understand about "the third s
was added for Hurrian (or maybe IE) and is not used in Ugaritic
words"? Who has suggested that it has anything to do with Dad?

I'm not sure how to quote an additional post, but the following post has
been accessed using URL <http://groups.google.com/group/sci.lang/msg/8910eba34d128d67:>

A: On Sep 4, 11:30 pm, "Peter T. Daniels" <grammar...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:
A> On Sep 4, 3:47 pm, Yusuf B Gursev <y...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:
A> > On Sep 4, 7:53 am, "Peter T. Daniels" <grammar...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

A> > > If you don't know how similar Ugaritic and Arabic are (their
consonant
inventories are in fact identical), then you have no business making
any comments whatsoever touching on Semitic linguistics.

A> > according to my sources ugaritic has 3 non-emphatic sibilants but no
A> > Dad.

A> You haven't consulted a Ugaritic grammar. Dad was marginal but had a
A> letter.

[Richard again]

Classical Arabic has 28 consonants. The Ugaritic script has 28 characters.

No, it has 30 characters. Do you simply not believe this? Two of them
are the additional alephs.

That immediately raises the question of what Ugaritic consonants correspond
to Arabic <t.>, <d.>, <s.> and <z.>? (Lest this notation be ambiguous, note
that I am referring to the sounds represented by the letters whose names
Unicode butchers as TAH, DAD, SAD and ZAH.) Likewise, it raises the
question of what Arabic consonant Ugaritic SSU corresponds to. There's also
the lurking issue of what sort of correspondence the post is talking of when
the inventories are declared to be identical.

Do you also not have access to any comparative grammar of the Semitic

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languages, which lays out all the correspondences in one simple chart?
Semitic is an incredibly simple language family to master!

I recall a post saying that one should look to the end of the Ugaritic abjad for dad, but I can't find it, so perhaps I imagined it.

(The next quote is worth repeating!)

What don't you understand about "the third s
was added for Hurrian (or maybe IE) and is not used in Ugaritic
words"?

Just how little is known about what SSU represents.

IT DOES NOT REPRESENT ANYTHING IN THE UGARITIC LANGUAGE. Period.