

The Cuneiform Short Alphabet: Part 1.

Amurriyu's Sacrifice to Baal: KTU 1.77 (RS 6.411, UT 74, CTA 187, Syria 16, 186)

Detailed Discussion

Preliminary Remarks:

In the transliterations, I have used the symbol that most students of Ugaritic would expect for the various alphabetic signs. There is one fairly significant deviation from this practice and three other, less significant modifications of the practice. I have used C_2 (o) for the small circular pit. I have done this for ease of reading. Of course, it may stand for the long Ugaritic alphabet š, ś or ṭ or the assimilation of their associated phonemes. Likewise, I have used j_2 (∇) when # or j might be found in the long alphabet; $\grave{_}2$ (◄) for \acute{c} or \acute{t} ; Z and T are special cases that I will address as they come up in the texts. Letters in italics are clearly legible on the text. Letters not in italics are broken or illegible. "b/d" stands for a letter that could be "b" or, if broken, a "d." In a few places, such as KTU 1.77:1, 2, 3, I have restored signs in broken or illegible parts of the text.

KTU 1.77 is written from right to left on a broken jar handle (but below it is represented left to right).

Transliteration:

- 1) [am ry d b[h₂ (?)]
- 2) [ybrkn b[^cl]
- 3) [ybrk b`l k[t/d?]
- 4) [bm C₂k j₂tm . []
- 5) []b/dym kt m Z₂k[]

Notes of the Text and Orthography:

Most of the text appears to be intact. Little or nothing is missing from the right of the text; line 5 may be an exception. And only one or two, at the very most three, signs are missing from the left. Remember the actual text, unlike my transliteration, is written from right to left. The most interesting item in the orthography is the small circular pit in line 4 that almost certainly stands for š/ś/ṭ. Nothing like this sign is ever seen in the long Ugaritic alphabetic texts. I will elaborate on this sign when I discuss KTU 4.31 and KTU 4.710 below. If nothing else, this sign alone is indicative of a short alphabetic text. Likewise, the distinctive "m" (with its two wedges diverging obliquely and the normally horizontal wedge slanting upward rather than the usual one horizontal wedge and one vertical wedge at near right angles with the vertical wedge connecting with the end [small end] of the horizontal wedge) may also be an indication of a short alphabet text. I use Z_2 in KTU 1.77:5 because the sign most resembles the Z in the long alphabet. But it is not exactly like any letter in the long alphabet. The T (see, for example KTU 4.31:8) may also represent the same phoneme. I will have more to say about the short alphabet

sibilants after I have worked my way through all the texts. I have noted elsewhere (http://www.telecomtally.com/blog/2005/08/ayin_blogging.html) that the 'ayin is shaped like Pitard's, *JNES*, 51, 4, 1992, 261-277 type B 'ayin. In other words, it is more like the 'ayins in KTU 1.114 than those in KTU 1.14 iii or KTU 1.43. The "b" is also distinctive in this and most other (e.g. KTU 4.31, KTU 4.710) short alphabet texts. A difference, very similar to what one sees with the "b," also occurs with the "d." Except for their direction, the shapes of the other letters in this text are, more or less, what one would expect in any long alphabet Ugaritic text.

Translation:

- 1) []Amurriyu offers a sacrific[ice]
- 2) []May Ba'al bless him[]
- 3) [](May) Ba'al bless (this?) p[itcher]
- 4) []for Mushki (one of the) Hittites (?) from (among the)[??]
- 5) [?]bians, a pitcher of blended wine.[]

Notes on translation, grammar, and interpretation:

1) The personal name Amry is known from KTU 4.41:8; 4.415:5; 4.723:5. In KTU 4.723:5-6 the text reads *am ry bn . m ad[]*. The name appears to be a gentilic name based on "Amurru" (see Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 158). Perhaps one should translate "The Amorite." While reading *d b/d* in KTU 1.77, Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 157, restore *db[h₂]* and translate "*bringt (hiermit) eine Opferga[be.]*, against, and preferable to, Herdner, *Syria*, 25 (1946/48) 167 n.2 who restores *dbr* and reads ". . . *on peut proposer de restituer l'amry db[r << à Amry, ou à l'amorite (?) dis>>.*" On *d b[h₂]* see, among many other places, KTU 1.16:i:30-31, "Our Keret sacrificed (*dbH*) a sacrifice (*dbH*), the king pours out (*Cr*) a libation (*Cr*)." In the light of the overall context of our text, I believe Dietrich and Loretz' 1988 reading is to be preferred.

2) "Bless us O'Ba'al," but only if one sees a word divider between the "y" and the "b." Virolleaud (1935) 187 and Gordon, *UT*, 180 both read a word divider there but others do not see it or believe it is most likely not there (see KTU 1.77 and Sivan (2001) 135, but Puech, *RB*, 93, 1986, 199 is uncertain). Virolleaud translates, "*Baal bébira*" but then suggests that "*bénis (-nous?) (ô) B[aal]*" is better. The suggested word divider looks nothing like the nearly certain one in line 4 and more like a mark or imperfection on the handle that is not part of the written text. In the light of the clear parallel usage of *ybrk* in line 3, I believe reading the text without the word divider is the most parsimonious choice. One might also translate "They are blessing Ba'al" if one takes the verb to be a 3.m.pl. rather than an energetic verb (with a pronoun?). Sivan (2001) 135 reads *yabarrikan(n)a/yubarrikan(n)a* as a 3.m.s., D stem, "he blesses." Apparently, Sivan takes the final *n* to be an energetic formative suffix. The fact that other examples (e.g. line 3 of our text, KTU 1.15:ii:18, 19 and KTU 4.336:6) of *brk* in the *yqtl* form are not energetic may argue against Sivan's suggestion. Of course, a suffixed pronoun is not in these examples either. Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 157 translate "*B`l segne ihn!*" only explaining that they reconstruct *B`l* from line 3. Perhaps their "!" is intended to indicate

that they too take *ybrkn* as an energetic with "*ihn*" coming from the pronominal suffix "h" being assimilated into the "n" (See Sivan, 2001, 53 and Gordon, 1965, 38). Something like this is likely on the right track. Therefore, with some reservations, I take *ybrkn* to be an energetic form with or without an assimilated pronoun. In the light of line 3, the reconstruction $b[\overset{c}{l}]$ is all but certain.

3) See for example KTU 1.15:ii:18,19 and KTU 4.336:6. On *ybrk b`l*, see the discussion of line 2. Here the form is clearly not energetic, nor suffixed, but based on the previous line, I believe we should translate it as if it were energetic. Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 157 read a "p" before the break at the end of the line. If the last word begins with a "p," it is impossible to guess what it is or means. Watson, *UF* 26, 1994, 495, vaguely suggests the "p" may represent the particle "p" rather than the first letter of a word. However, he seems to withdraw the idea in the face of the Dietrich and Loretz', 1988, 157 reconstruction. I suggest that it be read as a broken "k" (\blacktriangleright) rather than a "p" (\blacktriangleleft). And that the last word in the line be reconstructed $k[d/t]$ and understood as "pitcher." Compare the "k" in lines 4 and 5, both of which are a little hard to read in Herder's photo (CTA II, Pt. LXXXVII). See also the table of signs in Puech, *BR*, 93, 1986, 204 and a somewhat similar one in Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 270 for comparisons of "k" and "p" in this text and others. The reason for the equivocation between "d" and "t" will be explained below when lines 4 and 5 are considered. While it could be argued that this reconstruction is little more than a guess, it has the merit of fitting the context of the preceding line and the text as a whole. I am not committed to the word referring to the exact jar on whose handle the text is written but I do find it an intriguing idea. I will have more to say on this when I consider KL 67:428p.

4) On $m C_2k$, see Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 157 and their references to the name from Hattuša. On $j_2 tm$, see below. I take the "l" to be the preposition, which in this case means, "from." Note, for example, KTU 1.14:ii:26-27, ". . . came down from the roofs." I cannot find an example of this preposition meaning "from among" as it appears to mean here. Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 159 read "*für*" in the complete phrase "*für die Einwohner von [xx(x)]b*," correctly continuing onto line 5. There is a very clear word divider before the "l."

5) KTU 1.77 reads $b/dym kt m Z_2k$ but the Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 157 reading makes more sense to me. It is, after all, only a matter of word division. Something the text does not indicate one way or the other at this point anyway. $[. . .]bym$ is taken by Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 159 to be a plural gentilic with the part of the name before the suffix ending in "b." They list a few names ending in "b" from Astour, *UF* 13, 1981, 1-12. Perhaps the first readable letter is a "d" rather than a "b." On the plural gentilic, *ym*, see for example, *aDym* (KTU 4.230:3, Assyrians) and *m xrym* (KTU 4.230:10, Egyptians, compare *m xrm* in KTU 4:230:7).

Below are lists of candidate place names based on Astour, *UF* 13, 1981, 1-12.

Place Names Ending in "b"	Astour, <i>UF</i> 13, 1981 page
ṭ b	5
j b	2
ndb	8
Sallurba (ṭrb)	8
Ir'abu (ir'b*)	7
Ma`qabu (m'qb*)	7
m ^ṭ rb	5

Place Names Ending in "d"	Astour, <i>UF</i> 13, 1981 page
pd	11
m ld	6
Raqdu (rqd*)	7
Ma`qadu (m'qd*)	9
Kamkadi (kmkd*)	8

I ordered these lists by my judgment of the relative breadth of each place name as if they were rendered in the short cuneiform alphabet. Names ending in "d" are placed one row lower than names ending in "b" because "b" is the narrower symbol. *mld* is before *rqd* because the "r" character is relatively wide. I have highlighted those place names that I think are the most likely candidates, assuming the place upon which the gentilic is formed is local near Ugarit. If it is not, all bets are off.


With regard to *m Z₂k*: While there is certainly room to differ on how to read the sign I call *Z₂* I believe, in agreement with Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160, that, here, the most likely understanding is equivalent to the Proto-Semitic "s." Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160, list the various proposed options. None of these options, when their phonemic equivalents are considered, seem to match any reasonable Semitic root very well, if at all. I plan to consider this sign in more detail after KTU 4.710, KTTNM 6.1 (tell Nebi-Mendjar inscription) and the Beth-Shemesh tablet have been considered. As Puech, *BR*, 93, 1986, 199, says, ". . . *et du Z pour les values Z, x s.*" Therefore, one should see this word in the Hebrew *Ksm* and Ugaritic *msk*, "mixture" (see KTU 1.19:iv:62 and KTU 1.3:i:17 (as a verb, "to mix"). Driver, 1956, 67 translated *msk* in KTU 1.19:iv:62, "mead." Vogt, *Biblica*, 48, 69ff has a useful discussion of "msk" in Hebrew and Ugaritic. Vogt understands "*msk*" as the "*Mischen des Weines.*" Citing the Vogt article, Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160, translate, "Mischwein" or "Würzwein." The closes thing in English is "blended wine." But remember the word may well mean wine mixed with something else like spices, "Würzwein."

Special concerns in lines 4 and 5: With all the other issues in this text there are two things in the last two lines that stand out like proverbial elephants in the parlor. This is particularly true if one seeks to support the kind of interpretation I am building upon the work of Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160.

First is the *m* at the end of *j₂tm*. Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160 say, "das *Gentillzium Htm*" and compare it with the more normal orthography *j t* or *j ty*. If this is a plural gentilic one might expect *j tym* * as seen by the analysis of line 5 above. That someone from Hatti is intended is supported by the Anatolian name *m C₂k* (see the discussion of line 4). My suspicion is that *j₂tm* is simply a genitive plural, "of Hittites," in a construct

relationship with the proper name and not really a gentilic form at all. Of course, the orthography is unable to show the construct or the genitive in this case. I can't find a good example of this exact use of a construct plus genitive. One does think of well-known expressions like "King of the Hittites." But this use is better understood "king over the Hittites" rather than "King among the Hittites." However, I may see a bigger difference between these two usages than did those who wrote and read these ancient texts.

Second is the spelling of *kt* for *kd*(?). Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160 take *kt* to mean "Kanne, Krug." In other words, they take it to be equivalent to *kd* in KTU 4.710:3, 12, 13 and texts like KTU 1.41:23 etc. where it is a liquid measure (see Gordon, 1965, 417 #1195). As far as I can tell, Dietrich and Loretz, 1988, 160 give no explanation for this unusual spelling. They refer to the word *kt* as "wohlbekannte" (!) and translate it "(grosse) Kanne, Krug" as opposed to simply "Kanne" which they use for *kd* in KTU 4.7.10 (p. 162). Everywhere this word (or its cognates and loans) appears, from Greek,

καδοι, to Egyptian, , and in all Semitic languages where I have been able to find the word or its cognate the second consonant is "d" (Hebrew, דk; Aramaic,) dk;

Arabic, دk) And of course, in Ugaritic and even in the short cuneiform alphabet of KTU 4.710 it is *kd*. Also, note KL 67:428p ([j b r b), also on a jar handle, from Kamid el-Loz in Lebanon, which I will address in a later study of that text. Is there a grammatical explanation? We know that "d" is sometimes assimilated into a following "t" (dt>t) in Ugaritic as well as other Semitic languages. (See Sivan, 2001, 29 for examples). So could our "kt" derive from a theoretical "kvdtv" (where "v" stands for a vowel)? It is likely that "kt" is in the construct followed by *m Z₂k* in the genitive. We know that dk is feminine in Hebrew for example. But the form is not feminine *per se*. The Hebrew construct occurs in 1 Kings 17:14, for example, with the same orthography as in the absolute. In any case, one would expect an intervening long vowel between the "d" and the "t" if we were dealing with some feminine form. If one wants some kind of a grammatical explanation one then must explain *bkd C₂m n* in KTU 4.710:3 and a similar formulation in line 12 of the same text. And to complicate matters, the word "kt" does appear in Ugaritic meaning something like "heavy thing" or perhaps "Kition" (see Gordon, 1965, 424, #1318-1319, see also yt k in KAI 49:3). So, how should one understand this word in this context? The immediate context appears nearly the same as *bkd C₂m n* in KTU 4.710:3; blended wine in our case and oil in the case of KTU 4.710:3. I treat this word as an anomalous spelling of "kd" and would restore *k[t]* or *k[d]* in line 3 depending on resolution of this issue. [September 27, 2005 update: Sivan and Cochavi-Rainey, 1992, 25 note occasions when Northwest Semitic loan words or place names with "d" is are transcribed with "t" in Egyptian texts." While not the norm, these unusual transcriptions may indicate that these two phonemes were closer together than often thought.]

Summary Interpretation:

Written on the handle of a jar, the text reflects a sacrifice of blended wine offered to Baal by one Amurriyu on behalf of the Hittite Mushki who is living somewhere away from

home but among other Hittites. The text contains a petition to Baal to bless Mushki and the jar (pitcher) (?) itself (?).

While this text has its share of linguistic anomalies and uncertainties, there is nothing, when taken on its own, to indicate linguistic differences in the underlying language from that of the corpus of long alphabetic texts from Ugarit. Everything in this text, other than the fact that it is written in the short cuneiform alphabet, is within the linguistic range one would expect in a normal Ugaritic text written in the long alphabet.