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The Aramaic Leaning of the Semitic-p Language

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Curiously, Semitic-p exhibits considerable affinity with Aramaic, a Northwest Semitic language closely related to Hebrew and also spoken in Palestine at various times. Some vowelings of Sem-p are more like Aramaic than Hebrew. For example, Hebrew bááśaar 'flesh' is apparent in Sem-kw as UA *kwasi (5), but the vowels of Aramaic bəsár 'flesh' appear in Sem-p's UA *pisa (550). UA words for finger not only show the Sem-p expected s instead of c for the sibilant, but also show a voweling only found in Aramaic dialects, like Syriac sebʕa (> UA sivwa). Hebrew would show rounding for an initial aleph: Hebrew 'eṣbaʕ would be something like UA *wicpo, but nothing like that exists in UA. In addition, UA's absolutive suffix *-ta is found throughout much of UA and is quite identical to Aramaic's feminine definite article *-taa, which is also a suffix and is also dropped when the noun is possessed, as in UA:

(1273) Aramaic ***-taa** 'the' (feminine suffixed definite article, dropped when possessed)
> *UA ***-ta** 'absolutive suffix (dropped when possessed).
(1274) Aramaic(S) kookb-aa' / kookəb-aa' 'star-the'; Syriac kaukab 'star'; Syriac kaukb-aa' 'star-the': Sr kupaa' 'to shine (as of the stars)' (a verbalized noun, even with final glottal stop). All as expected: vowels generally rise from Semitic to UA (o > u); and Aramaic's suffixed definite article causes the last two consonants to cluster, and Sr -p- instead of -v- shows that a cluster underlies it, such as -kp-.

	Hebrew/Semitic sg		Hebrew/Semitic pl	maghrib Arabic	Classical Nahuatl
1st	'e-/'a-	'I (verb)'	ni-/na- 'we (verb)'	n- 'I verb'	ne'wa / nehwa 'I'
2nd	ti-/ta-	'you sg (verb)'	ti-/ta- 'you pl (verb)'	t- 'you verb'	te'wa / tehwa 'you, sg'
3rd	yi-/ya-	'he (verbs)'	yi-/ya- 'they (verb)'	y- he verbs'	ye'wa / yehwa 'he'

The Classical Nahuatl (CN) singular pronoun series—nehwa (I), tehwa (you), yehwa (he)—parallels the imperfective of the Aramaic 'be' verb—'ehwe, tehwe, yehwe. Though the Nahuatl first person singular (I) form (nehwa) differs from the verb form, the n- of the CN form is analogically like the fundamental n of most Semitic 'I/me' forms. In fact, the maghrib Arabic dialect did the same thing, that is, analogized the impfv verb prefixes to n-, t-, y- (Goldenberg 2001, 86), just like the Classical Nahuatl singular series—nehwa, tehwa, yehwa. The Hebrew pattern is 'ehye, tihye, yihye, with y vs. the w of Aramaic. So UA better matches the Aramaic pattern. Reflexes of Aramaic *hawa occur elsewhere in UA also:

At (1345) Aramaic hwy / hawaa 'exist, be, become'; Syriac həwaa > UA *hawa in Ls and Tb.
Aramaic hawaa contrasts with Hebrew hayaa, and the UA forms are like Aramaic, not Hebrew.
At (101) Uto-Aztecan *nï' 'I' does not align with Hebrew 'anii, because final -i is Uto-Aztecan's favorite final vowel, so if Hebrew 'anii 'I' were the source, there would not be a change in the final vowel. However, Uto-Aztecan *nï' 'I' does align very well with Arabic, Aramaic, and Syriac 'anaa' with loss of the 1st unstressed vowel, as happens in Syriac as well: *'anaa' > Syriac naa'—and 2nd V centralized *a > ï. WMU and other UA languages even have the final glottal stop as do written Arabic, Aramaic/Syriac.
At (105/106), Tr tumu / tumuhe (ustedes, vosotros, subj) and SP ŋumi 'you, your, pl obj pronoun' both resemble the Aramaic vowels of Aramaic antun 'you pl, subj' and -kon 'you (obj), your pl' after earlier Semitic *m > n.

In contrast to Hebrew/Phoenician z and Arabic/Proto-Semitic *đ, UA *t < Aramaic d:
(616) Semitic *đakar 'male, man'/ Aramaic dakar > UA *taka 'man, male, person, self, body'
(618) Aramaic di'b-aa 'wolf-the' > UA *tï'pa 'wolf' (vs. Hebrew haz-zə'eb 'the-wolf')
(617) Aramaic diqn-aa 'beard-the, chin-the'> UA *tï'na > *tï'ni 'mouth'
(in contrast to Hebrew zaaqaan 'beard, chin')

In addition, two of those three forms match perfectly the Aramaic form with definite article suffix, but not the Hebrew forms at all. In fact, besides Aramaic's suffixed feminine definite article *-taa, many UA forms include Aramaic's suffixed masculine definite article also *-aa. In fact, in some Aramaic dialects, the citation form would include the definite article. Also in Tb, Voegelin translates the Tb citation forms as 'the' whatever. In fact, notice how well the Western Numic languages' (Mn and NP) words for 'deer' reflect both the feminine -ta 'deer' and the masculine -a 'buck deer' as a distinction in Mn and NP.

At (638) Semitic *raxel ‘ewe’ > Mn tïhïta 'deer'; Mn tïhïya 'old buck'; Mn(L) tïhïhta ‘deer’;
NP tïhïdda ‘deer’; NP(B) tïhï’ya ‘deer’. So Mn has both and the genders match. The NP dialects show one of each as a general word, but NP(B) tïhida when possessing s.th.’
At (604) Aramaic(J) rə’emaan-aa / reemaan-aa ‘antelope-the’ > UA *tïmïna 'antelope’
At (618) Aramaic di’b-aa ‘wolf-the’ > UA *tï’pa ‘wolf' (vs. Hebrew haz-zə’eb ‘the-wolf’)
At (617) Aramaic(J) diqn-aa ‘beard-the, chin-the’> UA *tï’na > *tï’ni ‘mouth’
(in contrast to Hebrew zaaqaan ‘beard, chin’)
At (1130) Aramaic pagr-aa ‘corpse-the’ > Hp pïïkya ‘skin, fur’ (vs. Hebrew hap-pɛgɛr ‘the-corpse’)
At (1403) Syriac šigr-aa ‘drain, ditch, gutter-the’
> Hp sikya ‘small valley, ravine, canyon with sloped sides’.
At (1405) Arabic šqr ‘be of fair complexion, blond, fair-haired, color of fire’
> Hopi sikya- ‘yellow’; Hopi sikyà-ŋ-pï ‘yellow(ish) thing’; Hopi sikya-qa’ö ‘yellow-corn’.
At (1046) Hebrew ħgr ‘gird (self)’; Hebrew ħ^{a}goraa ‘girdle, loincloth, n.f.’; Aramaic *ħagor-taa
> UA *wikosa 'belt'. The -r- devoices next to voiceless t, then the whole cluster goes to -s-.
At (743) Aramaic tuumr-aa ‘palm-the / date-palm-the’ > UA *tu’ya ‘type of palm tree’:
Wr tu’ya ‘palmilla’; Tr ŕu’ya ‘kind of palm tree’. It fits Aramaic, but not Hebrew taamaar.
At (889) Hebrew rkb ‘to mount, climb up’; Aramaic rikb-aa ‘upper millstone-the’; Syriac rakb-aa ‘upper millstone-the’ > UA *tïppa ‘mortar, pestle’: TO čïpa ‘hole in bedrock
for mashing mesquite bean’; ST topaa ‘mortar’; Ls tóópa-l ‘mortar for grinding’ (Ls o < *ï)
At (794) Aramaic ’iibr-aa’ ‘penis-the’ > UA *wï’aC ‘penis’
At (1025) Aramaic guuryə-taa / guur-taa ‘cub (female), young of animal (lion or dog) > UA*koCti 'dog':
Sr koči’; Tr kočí. Ktn guci; Wr ku’cí ‘puppy’.

Longer Aramaic words of 3 and 4 syllables often lose the first syllable in UA:
At (1054) Aramaic raqbubit-aa ‘moth-the’ > UA *…kupïpika / *(C)Vkupïpika 'butterfly’
At (1055) Syriac ’aamaqqət-aa ‘lizard-the, n.f.’ > UA *makkaCta(Nka)-ci ‘horned toad’
At (1056) Syriac ħady-aa ‘breast-the, n.f.’, pl: ħ^{ə}daawaat- > UA *tawi 'chest'; UA aligns with the Aramaic plural with loss of the first short unstressed syllable of the plural.

When the 3rd consonant is Semitic y or ’ in Syriac/Aramaic (CCy/CC’), it is often not apparent in the Semitic perfect *CaCay > CaCaa, but UA sometimes shows the final glottal stop of Aramaic:
At (559) Hebrew bky/ bakaa^{y} ‘cry, weep’ (perf stem); Syriac bakaa / baka’ > Hopi pak- ‘cry’;
Tb pahaa’at / ’apahaa’ 'cry, bawl, howl' (Tb h < *k); Ktn paka’ ‘ceremonial yeller, clown who shouts all day to announce a fiesta’.

Sometimes the final glottal stop of Aramaic’s definite article suffix seems evident in UA, whether it is the masculine -aa’ or feminine -taa’:

Aramaic *ħaberet > UA *hupi- > Cr hïi (because *u > Cr ï, and *-p- disappears in Cora, so
Aramaic *ħaberet-taa’ ‘woman’ > Cr hüita’a ‘woman’ (Casad 1984, 161) is a very good match;
(1409) Aramaic kuuky-aa’ ‘spiderweb’ > Hopi kookyaŋw ‘spider’; even Cp kúka-t ‘blackwidow spider’ shows a final consonant where that glottal stop would be; otherwise, the absolutive suffix would be -l, instead of -t.
(1055) Syriac ’aamaqqət-aa’ ‘lizard-the, n.f.’ > NP makaca’a ‘horned toad’ (with echo vowel after -a’)
(967) Aramaic qušṭ-aa ‘bow-the’ > UA *kuCta-pi ‘bow’: Cp kútapi-š; Gb -kúčap (poss'ed); Ls kútupi-š ‘ash tree, bow’; AYq kuta wiko’i 'bow’. A reconstruction of *kuCtaC with a consonant cluster is needed given Takic intervocalic *-tt- (as *-t- > -l-). Aramaic form quuštaa ‘bow’ is identical except for the usual loss of s in a cluster, and final -pi < Egyptian p’y ‘his’. Tak -p- (instead of -v-) is again evidence that the final glottal stop of the Aramaic definite article was originally pronounced in UA.

Like many other matters remaining for future study, we ought to do a precise numerical count of the number of UA forms that better match Aramaic than other Semitic forms. The results may be significant.