John F. Healy’s *Early Alphabet* and M. O’Connor’s “Epigraphic Semitic Scripts” (ch. 5 in Daniels & Bright’s *Writing Systems of the World*) help us to determine how to encode early Semitic scripts. Tables in this document are taken from O’Connor. The UCS already encodes four of the six Semitic scripts in modern use. Of these, one is a Southern Linear script:

1 *Ethiopic*

Three are Northern Linear scripts:

2 *Hebrew* (square (see table 5.5) and modern)
3 *Arabic*
4 *Syriac*, which encompasses *Estrangelo*, *Serto*, *Nestorian* (Eastern Syriac), *Jacobite* (Western Syriac), and *Manichaean*, *Christian Sogdian*.

The two scripts in modern use which are not yet encoded are also Northern Linear scripts:

5 *Samaritan*
6 *Mandaic*

The remaining historical Semitic scripts can be divided into three groups.

Southern Linear scripts (see table 5.7):

7 *Old South Arabian*, which encompasses:
   - *Epigraphic South Arabian*
   - *Later South Arabian*
   - *Thamudic Ethiopic*
   - *Consonantal Ethiopic*
8 Old North Arabic (see table 5.6), which encompasses:

- Dedanite
- Lihyanite
- Thamudic
- Safaitic

A cuneiform script:

9 Ugaritic

Northern Linear scripts:

10 Nabataean (see table 5.5)

11 Palmyrene (see table 5.5)

12 Hatran/Armazi (used in Armenia and Georgia)

13 Elymaic

14 Aramaic forms a rather complex family of scripts, with a number of descendants. Certainly there is a basic Aramaic, but it has many descendents (including Mongolian and possibly Brahmi) which are unique enough to merit their own encoding (see table 5.5). More research is required. However, Aramaic is expected to encompass at least:

- Aramaic proper
- Middle Persian
- Parthian
- Sogdian

Edessan is likely to be either Aramaic or Syriac. More research is required.

15 Phoenician is the catch-all for the largest group of related scripts including its ancestors, Proto-Sinaitic/Proto-Canaanite. Looking at tables 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4 (below) most of the scripts are so similar that there doesn’t seem to be any point in trying to encode them separately.
Phoenician encompasses:

Proto-Sinaitic/Proto-Canaanite
Punic
Neo-Punic
Phoenician proper
Late Phoenician cursive
Phoenician papyrus
Siloam Hebrew
Hebrew seals
Ammonite
Moabite
Palaeo-Hebrew

Note that Jony Rosenne once suggested that we should not encode Phoenician because it is a glyph variant of Hebrew. This is not true, despite the one-to-one correspondence of character entities. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, where the Tetragrammaton is written with Palaeo-Hebrew letters, it is (in UCS encoding terms) the Phoenician script in which the Name is written.

In the chart on the next page, note that Linear Hebrew and Palaeo-Hebrew derive from Phoenician, while Square Hebrew (see table 5.5) and the modern script derive from Aramaic.
Figure 4 is taken from O’Connor but I have modified it to show the scripts to be encoded by enclosing them in boxes.