# MARGINS OF WRITING, ORIGINS OF CULTURES

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*edited by*

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*with contributions by*

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Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription, once part of Neo-Hittite royal monument. Basalt. Amuq Valley, Tell Tayinat, Amuq O/Iron Age II (Eighth Century B.C.). OIM A27861D–H

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Seth L. Sanders
Postdoctoral Scholar

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Other abbreviations occur at the end of some individual contributions and are taken from the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, the Chicago Hittite Dictionary, and the Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary.

| | |
|---|---|
| cm | centimeter(s) |
| diss. | dissertation |
| e.g. | *exempli gratia*, for example |
| fig(s). | figure(s) |
| ha | hectare(s) |
| ibid. | *ibidem*, in the same place |
| i.e. | *id est*, that is |
| km | kilometer(s) |
| lit. | literally |
| m | meter(s) |
| n(n). | note(s) |
| n.d. | no date |
| no(s). | number(s) |
| p(p). | page(s) |
| pers. comm. | personal communication |
| pl(s). | plate(s) |
| r. | reverse |
| vs. | versus |

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# INTRODUCTION

# 1

# MARGINS OF WRITING, ORIGINS OF CULTURES

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## THE SEMINAR

Writing and the state both first began in the ancient Near East. But what did they actually have to do with each other? Most of ancient Near Eastern philology consists of careful examination of the leavings of the state scribes; it has revealed a treasure-house of ancient culture, from haunting poetry to onion archives. But there is a significant blind spot in our perspective on the largest and oldest archive of the ancient world: the relationship between the vast body of official writing and the actual life of language as spoken, understood, and imagined by ancient Near Eastern people. The vital relationships between language and ethnicity, the connections between languages of empire and local identity, and way languages are born, live, and die in writing has remained the subject of more speculation than rigorous research. If recorded history began in the ancient Near East, we are just beginning to explore the powerful creative relationship between writing and the political identities of the Near East's cultures. This seminar was the first to bring leading philologists together with anthropologists and social theorists to explore what writing meant to politics in the ancient Near East.

The seminar was designed to encourage philologists to talk to theorists about how their material matters. It seems to have worked. The papers and responses give a vivid sense of the stakes and consequences of the oldest written texts in the twenty-first century. Collectively, the articles here provide well-documented challenges to conventional wisdom about what people actually used Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Hebrew for. We met over two days, on February 25–26, 2005, at the University of Chicago Oriental Institute's James Henry Breasted Auditorium. Fourteen participants attended; Piotr Michalowski, our fifteenth, was out of the country on an international research project and his contribution appears as a supplement to the second panel. The conference was well attended and large amounts of time were given over to discussion in which the audience participated vigorously. For space reasons we have not been able to include the discussion, which would have formed another book, but the contributions of Matthew Stolper, Eugene Cruz-Uribe, Lawson Younger, and Richard Beal, among many others, stand out in memory.

## INTRODUCTION

In the eighteenth century, the great Romantic philosopher and theologian Johann Gottfried Herder evoked the image of a key to history and politics: an "archive of paradise" that would contain the first writing in the world, in the first language in the world, written by members of the first nation in the world — in a single collection of texts, we would be able to solve the riddle of human difference by reading the origins of language and identity together. Herder evoked this image as part of a heated political and theological debate about whether there was an original language of humanity and he evoked it only to dismiss it, "for every ancient nation likes to consider

itself the firstborn and to take its territory for humanity's birthplace." Nothing like this archive would ever be found.[1]

But a strange thing happened — the nineteenth century brought a heroic period of trade, political conquest, and archaeological excavation in which European scholarship actually uncovered the oldest written texts in the world. Texts from Mesopotamia and Egypt dating to the dawn of writing and the state were uncovered. Was this the archive of paradise? Herder had imagined this archive ironically, as the philological answer to a political and theological question about priority: the oldest documents in the world should record the oldest language in the world, which should belong to the first nation in the world and therefore the most original nation, with historical priority over all the others.

In what is still the greatest overview of the archive scholars actually found, A. Leo Oppenheim began his *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* by asking what ancient Near Eastern studies have to say to modern questions and vice versa. Writing in the wake of a world war explicitly predicated on notions of nation and race, Oppenheim's answer had changed radically from Herder's: not political theology but cultural anthropology. The nineteenth-century discovery of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt was not part of a political contest but part of the West's opening itself to the rest of the world. "Eager to step out of that magic circle, the field of energy that protects, preserves, and confines every civilization," Oppenheim wrote, "European scholarship extended to embrace not only alien and exotic civilizations but, with equal inquisitiveness and eagerness, turned to the civilizations of the past, and not only to its own past."[2] With the ancient Near Eastern archive, we could not discover the first language in the world, but rather understand how a specific, historically situated people lived, manufactured glass, or interpreted dreams.

Ancient Near Eastern studies imitated anthropology in breaking through the barriers of European culture by studying someone else's. It was like anthropology, except all the natives were dead and all they left were texts and ruins. So the field was to be a kind of deciphering and reading. Its distinct qualities came from the extreme remoteness of its subject in space and time, its intellectual promise and methodological problem united in the fact that it is not someone else's *present* culture but someone else's *dead past*.

The problem is that this archive of paradise did not belong to Adam or Moses; it was not only somebody else's past, it was a past *nobody had remembered*. The major exception to this forgotten quality of the ancient Near East is of course ancient Israel, but it is definitely an exception that proves the rule. Because modern Europe had such a great stake in biblical Israel, and the connections between Babel and the Bible exercised such strong influences, both inspiring and distorting, major twentieth century scholars of the ancient Near East were justifiably wary of these connections. Already in 1926 the great Assyriologist Benno Landsberger put forth a program for understanding Mesopotamian culture strictly on its own terms, through the inherent linguistic structures recoverable from Sumerian and Akkadian texts, rather than through historical connections and influences. What is most distinctive about ancient Near Eastern culture is its *deadness*, the fact that cuneiform and Egyptian writing was decisively cut off from the rest of history in late antiquity.

In attempting to transform this deadness into a dialogue, Oppenheim spoke of Near Eastern studies' future in "the understanding and sustained co-operation of scholars in … the social sciences, above all, in cultural anthropology."[3] But with some important exceptions, including some

[1] For the context of Herder's irony, see Olender 2002.

[2] Oppenheim 1977: 8–9.

[3] Oppenheim 1977: 29–30.

major work by the Oriental Institute's own scholars, this dialogue with cultural anthropology never happened in any organized or sustained way.

It may be that the real loser in this has been the social sciences, as Sheldon Pollock and John Kelly have recently argued in different ways from the sides of both South Asian studies and anthropology; the problem with much social thought is that it is cut off and stranded in the present. If people reflect today on the vertigo caused by the promise and threat of globalization, a kind of economic and political cosmopolitanism, they fail to see that globalization is not modern: there have been cosmopolitan periods in the past, when people used universal languages to participate in vast communities across wide reaches of space. People of dozens or hundreds of different localities and dialects did their politics in Latin or their literature in Sanskrit.[4]

These ancient cosmopolitan worlds were succeeded by smaller, vernacular worlds. After the turn of the first millennium, people in both Europe and South Asia began turning away from the universal and started writing down French and German, Hindi and Tamil, rejecting this borderless world to live in bordered local worlds, writing vernacular languages that were not necessarily comprehensible outside their regions. In other words, as Pollock argues, the world of local cultures that we now imagine to be ending was one that itself grew out of earlier cosmopolitan cultures. Yet, social science has shown generally little ability to conceptualize this, part of what has been called its "retreat into the present." The terrible irony here is that, if social science is obsessed with the modern, it is then almost completely ignoring what makes it modern: the fact that something — God knows what — must have come before the modern in order to make it modern, something to be different from, a black box into which Latin, Sanskrit, and Babylonian, thousands of years, people, and miles are folded together and dumped.

How did we get from the archive of paradise to the trash can of history? In thinking about this disconnect between a social science isolated on the little island of the present and the vast archive of the premodern past, John Kelly points to some of the best recent studies of language and power as symptomatic: most of this work has been specifically focused on modern technology and politics. The most influential and creative studies, such as those of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the historian Max Weber, and the political scientist Benedict Anderson, have all concerned themselves with the interplay of printing and the nation-state.[5]

But if everyone agrees that everything interesting happens in the modern period, then by definition modernity becomes very difficult to understand because it does not really come from anywhere and there is nothing to compare it to historically. Kelly talks about how we painted ourselves into this odd corner using the example of Max Weber, a relentlessly historical thinker who saw modernity as a side effect rather than the end of history. The stories Weber told of writing and the state were ones in which modern German bureaucracy could not be understood without considering the configurations of Egypt or Rome. But as Weber was edited and interpreted for readers — note that almost no modern translations of Weber present his texts as he wrote them — Cold War scholars like Talcott Parsons reconfigured him as a high priest of modernity, treating the rational, bureaucratized nation state as the goal of progress rather than an unintended consequence.[6] With modernity as the only interesting question, social science loses the ability to explain it. The cost of the disconnect is the value of history and theory for each other. Kelly jokingly suggested to me one title that might sum up the problem of social theory for the study of pre-modern societies is "Why is this stuff so useless?"

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[4] Pollock 2002 and Kelly, this volume.

[5] Bourdieu 1991; E. Weber 1976; and Anderson 1991.

[6] On the reception of Weber, see Mommsen 1989, especially pp. 181–82.

Today we have a chance to retell this story so that it does not conclude in a dead end. In the rest of my introduction I sketch out some of the stakes I see for a dialogue between Near Eastern studies and social science around the politics of writing. I begin from one end by introducing the papers the first and second panels of papers; Sheldon Pollock and Peter Machinist will work from the other end, each discussing the consequences of the papers from the third panel according to their own viewpoints.

What did the archive of paradise actually turn out to be? The body of written material from the ancient Near East is the single largest and most diverse resource for the study of the remote past; beginning from the early writing of Uruk it has a longer history than that of what we call Western Civilization, if we begin that with fifth-century B.C. Greece. The Near Eastern corpus dwarfs that of Greece and Rome and represents the early history of writing from the perspective of dozens of different languages and hundreds of different human groups, from political units we find easy to recognize — the city-states of the Late Bronze Age — to states whose political theory is only now being understood, such as the nomadic, kinship-based social and military apparatus of the Amorites that repeatedly took over the Mesopotamian state and wore its writing and terminology like a mask in the Old Babylonian period (Fleming 2004). What the papers begin with is the very political fact of writing as a form of action: why did people bother to write down certain languages, in certain ways — what were the stakes for them and for us?

Writing is the most important technology for culture — obviously, we would not have the classics or newspapers without it. But it is also arguably the most important technology for power — you can conquer people with swords or guns, but you cannot collect taxes without bureaucratic records and it is hard for people to remember you unless you have a written literature.

In fact, as John Kelly argues in the first paper, it is possible that the story of the state might best be written as a struggle over the power to communicate, as much as over the power to coerce or to gain wealth. It was Max Weber who defined the state as a monopoly of legitimate violence, something we can perhaps recognize today in Iraq, where the main tool that the insurgents use to undermine its integrity as a state is their access to violence. It is strangely easy to forget that regime change itself is, above all, a military operation. As was typical of him, Weber began boldly, calling this monopoly of violence the essence of the modern state as a way to begin exploring the question more broadly. In a workshop where I put forth this definition as a beginning point, a classicist announced with apparent satisfaction that he had discovered why Weber's work did not apply to ancient states — as a philologist, he had noticed the word "modern" in Weber's definition on the handout, whereupon he left the room. Why is this stuff so useless, indeed? More to the point, what kind of stories can we tell about ancient states that help us understand modern states and vice versa?

Kelly goes on to argue, in a distinctly Weberian mode, that if we see the monopoly of legitimate violence as one tendency constitutive of state power, we need to juxtapose it with an equally important one, the monopoly of communication. It is here, Kelly argues, that we can begin to see a common thread in some very diverse political histories.

This is because Weber's definition depends on the state giving an account of itself: to think of the state as monopoly on *legitimate* force begs the question of what "legitimate" might mean — of how the state expresses and renders legitimate its actions. Whether the Iraqi insurgents are are classified as terrorist butchers or freedom fighters depends not just on whom they kill but on what is said and written about the killings. How can the state represent itself and its actions so people do not mistake its use of force for violence?

Kelly goes on to ask, "Should a reasonable definition of the state also involve the emergence and use of means of communication, semiotic technologies?" Certain starkly contrasting patterns

in state formation might make more sense from this point of view. In South Asian history the fact that Sanskrit literature, including the first extensive grammatical and scholastic works in the west, was created largely outside of writing and the "religious" authority systems of the Brahmin caste and the Buddhist monastery were based in religious study and ritual and only loosely connected to means of coercion and destruction. Contrast China, why did it "centralize" so early, with such stability, in comparison with South Asia — does it have anything to do with China's development of state archives? In India, texts and writing systems spread far outside the boundary of any one state across South, Southeast, and Central Asia, while Chinese officialdom imposed a death penalty for unofficial calendar making.

Kelly argues that the question of semiotic technologies (who controls and distributes knowledge and information, how?) might give us new insights into the history of how states and their others form and change, a history of monopoly of means of destruction with and without means of communication and vice versa, and the historical trajectories of means of communication with and without means of coercion.

These questions inspired me to look again at the epigraphic corpus from ancient Israel. This is a good time to do this since a series of fresh studies of the whole body of paleography and grammar of epigraphic Hebrew have appeared. What is remarkable is the level of agreement between these studies; from the eighth through the early sixth century B.C., for the first and only time in ancient history, written Hebrew constitutes a unity paleographically, orthographically, and grammatically.[7]

The focus is on two remarkable facts arising from the epigraphic materials: (1) uniquely in Iron Age I, the period prior to the rise of the state, most alphabetic texts in the Levant are inscribed on weapons; and (2) during Iron Age IIA, the period when a united state is traditionally presupposed, the few known inscriptions are in a Phoenician script,[8] none bearing distinctively Hebrew paleography or dialect features. By the ninth century, any unified state that might have existed has split. It is only in this period (Iron IIB), when two states exist, Israel in the north and Judah in the south, that we begin to find a unified Hebrew writing, with shared standard paleography, orthography, and numeral system in both.

If the Iron Age Israelite epigraphy forms a history of the means of communication, how does that match the history of the Iron Age state? It appears that the boundaries of Israelite writing, from the beginning, never mapped onto the boundaries of any Israelite state. Yet someone put in a great deal of work to make sure that Hebrew texts were the same as each other and different from their neighbors. What the epigraphic texts unequivocally attest is a standardized national language. And this raised a question for me: was there a national literature without a state in ancient Israel?

The result would be a major irony, startling but well documented. After multiple attempts to monopolize both communication and coercion, the result seems to be that Israelite scribes had a monopoly on communication in Hebrew while the state had no monopoly on coercion. This dimension of biblical literature has in modern times always stood under the sign of lateness and artifice: the Jews are a nation without a state, the Torah represents the laws of a kingdom without a territory. This lateness has been connected to a fundamental inauthenticity, or a paradoxical and ironic authenticity; the state is only imagined in retrospect and Israel is a creature of ritual

[7] All the necessary data are gathered and analyzed in Renz 1997. On the political contexts of early alphabetic writing, see Sanders 2004 with bibliography. The most sophisticated study of the relationship between writing and the composition of biblical history is Na'aman 2002.

[8] The newly discovered Tel Zayit abecedary, announced when this volume was in press, dates from the tenth century and displays letterforms with both Phoenician and Hebrew features. When fully published it will thus probably nuance but not overturn this conclusion.

and collective memory. The epigraphy suggests that it may be exactly the other way around. It is precisely in the Iron Age, when the people of Israel and Judah were separately autonomous in their land, that a national literature may have also created a kind of national identity and politics without a state. It is possible that the entire history of Israelite literature, as well as the history of Israelite material culture, could look different in this light.

William Schniedewind pioneered this approach, asking what would happen if you took seriously the material and cultural practices by which the Bible became a book.[9] In his paper, he addresses a turning point in this history, the point in the sixth century at which written Hebrew disappears, to be completely replaced by Aramaic for 300 years. What kind of subterranean life did Hebrew lead, as the scribal institutions and economic circumstances that supported its standardization were disrupted by the Babylonian and Persian conquests and how and why was it resurrected? This question provokes us to see written Hebrew as an artifact that was created and recreated multiple times. This is not to say that it is inauthentic, in some scandalous way, but that the very act of delimiting its boundaries was, and is, a deliberate and pointed creative act. Is it, for example, to be understood as continuous with Rabbinic Hebrew in a significant way? If so then the "biblical Hebrew" that we teach our students should be understood as largely a construct of Christian theologians, in collaboration with medieval Hebrew grammarians.

Furthermore, since the history of the Jews is often told as a history of a nation without sovereignty, longing for a lost state, how would it change that history if this nation's first known written remains already attested to a kind of politics that reached around the boundaries of a state, unified through their recognition of themselves as a people? Could we use this to write a history of alternatives to the state, alternatives that may be as complex but sometimes more durable? Today people not only read and pray in Hebrew and Sanskrit but in different ways have even used them in turn to reconstitute the state with a series of attendant wonders and horrors.

Kelly provides another angle that opens the following two papers. This is that the early history of writing suggests that writing is originally something that *encounters* language from the outside, rather than flowing directly out of language. Gonzalo Rubio makes a stunningly erudite case for this phenomenon as not being merely historically early, some mysterious point of origins lost in the sands of time, but as an essential possibility of writing and not only in the ancient Near East. In cases ranging from medieval Japan through Sumer, Ebla, and ancient Iran, he shows that alloglottography — writing down a text in a completely different language than the one in which it was composed and read — was a widespread scribal practice.

What are the consequences of writing not being originally intended to express words and thereby not bonded to a specific form of language? For one thing, it suggests that the "archive of paradise," the archaic early phenomena we see at the dawn of writing, might really help us understand much later and more widespread phenomena. If Mesopotamian "writing began as a system of demarcating things, with property and its accounting (and not, therefore, with language and its representation)," the history of writing might be written by examining the sometimes radically different relationships between language and writing that different institutions created. Rubio argues that increasing the distance between writing and other forms of language through alloglottography was actually a goal for a series of state scribal institutions across time — and Kelly proposes that much of the power of written language may arise in the way it is alienated from speech.

What, then, of writing when state institutions are dissolved in empires and markets? Here Jacco Dieleman's study of the Demotic Magical Papyri, a corpus of texts from late antiquity,

[9] Schniedewind 2004.

makes a fascinating point. While these papyri were discovered together with the famous Greek Magical Papyri, which the great classicist Arthur Darby Nock (1972/1:177) once described as reading like "the actual working copies of practical magicians," the papyri in Demotic show a totally different relationship to writing and tradition. While the Greek papyri were written in the lingua franca of the day, the Demotic Magical Papyri show the largest number of different scripts of any text in the history of Egyptian writing — seven, by Dieleman's count. Why is it that it is precisely when Egyptian temple and scribal institutions are decoupled from state support that the former curators of these institutions multiply their writing systems? Dieleman argues that the abundant overproduction of scripts was actually a deliberate strategy to decrease the number of potential readers. Egyptian writing is controlled and turned into a rare and valuable commodity, owned only by the priests, as the Egyptian ciphers prevent the average Greek reader from reading key parts of the spells. This can be tied together with the content of the rituals, which as Jonathan Z. Smith (1995) noted years ago was heavily concerned with writing and miniaturization. As the sacrificial victims are shrunk down to the size of tiny animals that can be easily transported to the marketplace, the spells themselves require an increasing amount of modeling and one of the most important ritual acts becomes writing itself. The spells are thus a sort of meta-writing, a rhetoric with which ancient Egyptian tradition argues for a new role for itself in a world where everything is open to negotiation.

If the first panel's papers revolve around the role of institutions in connecting writing and language, then the papers of the second panel investigate the different publics that those institutions can address and create through writing. Schniedewind addresses the complex politics of identity in Hebrew — if Hebrew writing created a national literature without a state, how and why did it give way to Aramaic and what mechanism is responsible for its resurrection and subsequent long life? Annick Payne investigates another early vernacular language, one whose cognitive value may lie in its being forgotten. If Hebrew is now remembered as the instrument of the Israelites' self-representation, then Hieroglyphic Luwian seems to have been created, over half a millennium earlier, for a similar purpose. In the Hittite empire, all documents — texts intended for correspondence, archives, and libraries — were done on clay in cuneiform writing. But every attempt to address the public, every monumental inscription proclaiming the announcements of a king, were written in a closely related, but different, dialect and a radically different writing system. Who were the readers of Luwian? In her paper, Payne traces the dialectic of two related Anatolian languages, Luwian and Lycian. She has chosen the phenomenon of bilingual inscriptions, monuments that raise a crucial question whenever they are read: which public do they speak to? A biliterate readership equally at home in two languages? A dominant minority making concessions to a restive majority who want to see their own language represented? At least in the case of the Greek-Lycian bilinguals, the linguistics of proper names suggest that difference was not politically marked, as we see every possible relationship between writing and identities, as Luwian names translate Greek and vice versa and each is transcribed into the other.

Christopher Woods' paper single-handedly revives a major debate in the history of Assyriology: what was Sumerian for? While scholars have found good reasons to see it as a dead language, confined to the realm of high culture for almost all of its written history, Woods uncovers both texts and theoretical perspectives that render such a view less likely. Ordinary people were making up names for their children in Sumerian when many have argued that it was only used by scholars. In this regard, the Akkadian story entitled, in modern times, "Why do you curse me?" may stand as an icon. The story tells of a highly learned doctor, schooled in written Sumerian, who travels to Nippur on business. There he encounters an ordinary woman who gives him directions; unable to understand the pragmatic language of her "street Sumerian," he assumes her

words represent terrible oaths and imprecations. Could this be part of the story of scholarship on Sumerian, which, like the learned doctor, has assumed that the pragmatic value of written Sumerian lay mainly in its alienation from spoken language as an exotic, dead language of ritual and mystification?

To conclude, I return to Oppenheim — as the project he spearheaded at the Oriental Institute, the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, draws to a conclusion, we can see that the Oriental Institute's fundamental philological projects are succeeding. Monumental text editing and grammatical work have rendered the archive of paradise accessible. We are now free to move forward. The success of the Oriental Institute's projects challenges the next generation of scholars to move forward in different directions. While retaining our roots in the most fundamental kind of philology — indeed, one of our contributors is spearheading a second monumental work, the Chicago Hittite Dictionary — we are charged with different questions. We came together in a collective attempt to broadly and deeply examine the pragmatic and political dimensions of written language in the ancient Near East. This volume, then, represents a first attempt to interrogate the achive of paradise in a new way; to ask, "What was it for?"

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# FIRST PANEL:
# PUBLICS

# 2

# WRITING AND THE STATE: CHINA, INDIA, AND GENERAL DEFINITIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

Writings, or writing. Languages, or language. Markets, or the market. States, or the state. Strange dilemmas in definition arise when we consider whether we expect singularity of the object we discuss. It may not be the same thing to seek the origin of writings and of writing. Of markets or "the market." Languages or language? Surely there is not one universal language (though whether there is at some level a general grammar is a more interesting possibility). Yet there could still be a difference between the origin of languages in the sense of variant systems of verbal signs in use and "the origin of language" in the sense of awareness or recognition of the existence of a system (or systems) of verbal signs. For an example of the latter, consider what happened in the definition of Brahmin in early historic South Asia: in the Vedic corpus, the Brahmins are priests, defined by the practice of Vedic rituals. But by the mid-second century B.C. (Christian standard time), a new sensibility emerged, articulated in Patañjali's classic commentary on Sanskrit grammar: a Brahmin is a knower of *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā* "perfected speech," a knower of Sanskrit language, and thus all Brahmins must know Sanskrit. How did language come to replace ritual at the vital core of Brahmins' dharma? As Brahmins worked creatively and conservatively in support of their ritual system, a corpus of supporting texts emerged and developed in their ranks, and even whole intellectual disciplines. The six *Vedāṅga* disciplines (limbs, *aṅga*, of the Vedas) all supported Vedic ritual practice (e.g., astrology/astronomy, *jyotiṣa*, to aid scheduling). Within the four of these Vedāṅga disciplines that concerned Vedic language and text — *chandas*, or metrics, *nirukta*, or etymology, *śikṣā*, phonology, and especially *vyākaraṇa*, grammar — knowledge about verbal sign systems systematically increased and recursively the language analyses, descriptions, and prescriptions that were originally concerned with maintenance and sustaining of the Vedic corpus also came to be applied to the increasingly distinct and thereby regular sign systems of the Vedāṅga. That system became known as *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā* "cooked" or "perfected" speech. Even within the earlier Vedic texts, the justification and merit of Brahmins as ritual performers was their knowledge. They were created, according to more than one myth, from the head of the self-sacrificing original deity, the knowers of how to sustain him and his universe. What constituted Brahmans' knowledge shifted and expanded due to their growing analytic competences and their performance of the ritual system, leading to critical recognition of the operation of their own sign systems. Thereafter their own analytic schools and texts defined forms, relationships, and usage rules, prescribed forms and proscribed others, and thus engineered *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā*, Sanskrit, with an explosion of further entextualizations on the paradigm of the ritual and language disciplines. Multiple disciplines emerged with central, aphoristic texts surrounded by justificatory commentary, addressing connections in form and content. And knowledge of Sanskrit gained an ontic centrality; *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā* was the language of the gods and not only incidentally, but necessarily. It was the gods' means, also, for awareness of and assertion of the truth.

So, existence of languages is not the same thing as awareness of language, in this sense, existence of language, as a thing, in praxis. A problem that has always vexed linguistic anthropol-

ogists is whether and how to render the existence of languages ontologically. Rather than taking coherence within and differences between languages as a given, quests are made to investigate the politics of distinction and the various centripetal and centrifugal forces in sign usage, to identify what makes distinct (and thereby disciplined and exclusionary) codes emerge from complex manifolds of sign usage. An iconoclastic aphorism distills the skepticism toward taking the emergence of languages for granted: "a language is a dialect with an army." Alas for the wisdom of witty chestnuts, the history of Sanskrit is already a counter example to the claim, unless we admit an "army" of priests and scholars. The emergence of a mission to know, protect, disseminate, and use Sanskrit developed in centuries when South Asia was dominated by ruling groups who were not Vedic orthodox: Buddhists, Jains, invaders from points west, and others. So languages can emerge without their own armies (though perhaps not without armies somewhere) and language, in the sense of awareness of language, emerged (in South Asia at least) at the center of awareness of text, not hand in hand with wielders of weaponry.

This paper stems from my interest in semiotic technologies and specifically in the Brahmin engineering of Sanskrit, as an example of success for the anthropology of knowledge. But it is not about language and languages, nor markets and the market. I want to consider, here, the relationship of writing and the state. Yes, this also implies the question of writings versus awareness of writing, states versus recognition of "the state."[1] Surveying these eight conceptions — writings, languages, markets, states, writing, language, the market, and the state — we have twenty-eight conceptual pairs into which we could inquire historically (remembering anyway that these four by two topics hardly exhaust anthropological possibility). Interesting speculations have been launched concerning most or all of the twenty-eight and some more than others. Writings and the market, for example, might be less interesting than writings and markets. This latter pair, writings and markets, has been made an issue in scholarship over the "The Earliest Precursors of Writing." Perhaps Denise Schmandt-Besserat has not actually located the pristine moment in which tokens for things became signs of signs (for a skeptical account, see Zimansky 1993). But it appears plausible and interesting that institutions of writing began in relationship with demarcation and storage of things, with property and its accounting (and not, therefore, with language and its representation). Writing systems and writings thereby emerge as limbs of markets and/or states, tools for property transaction and recognition, later making relationships with languages.

Languages and markets, even languages and the market, also have relationships worth attention. Here we might recall Benjamin Lee Whorf's provocative observations and speculations about relationships between languages and the market. Whorf thought that a historical affinity between language grammars and market logic supported both the development of markets in Europe and the emergence there of consciousness of "the market." Whorf observed an affinity between the general logic of commodity exchange and the measure phrase in "SAE," standard average European languages, that is, grammatical division of nouns between forms and substances, rendering easy the depiction of things as a form of a formless substance, a pile of sand, a cup of coffee. Whorf's Europeans easily find things of substantial value to exchange in partible, priceable units. Others have argued since whether commodity exchange, as against for example a general grammar, pressures this measure phrase, formless substance plus a form, into every language's syntax.

[1] I am aware that historical specificity on the awareness/recognition side of these pairs depends greatly on definitions of the object: the early historic Brahmins were not aware of either the historicity of Saussurean languages nor (well, except for some, it was controversial among them) the arbitrary nature of the sign. But in good Weberian fashion, I do not want to start with rigid definitions that delimit the facts absolutely. Instead, starting with provisional types that make description possible, I want the best definitions and with them, the best analytic conclusions to arise at the end of the study, aided by matters of fact pursued and unearthed.

But, leaving such topics with reluctance, I want to focus on another pairing, on writing and the state, by way of a specific comparison.

The Brahmin *śiṣṭa*, the learned Brahmins, engineered their *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā* in the era of their own political eclipse by heterdoxies. It is an interesting enough story when told as the emergence of a form of consciousness of language, a taking control of signs in the world with specific and increasing knowledge of their forms, relations, and powers. But it is even more interesting when reconsidered in light of relations to writing and the state. The *śiṣṭas* really did not care about writing. And they really were not central to the states of their time. They were not the knowledge authorities, even the priests or other religious authorities, for most of the emergent imperial formations that served as their context. Even after their intellectual means were adopted by the centers of power of their social world, the spread of Sanskrit was an ecumenical and not an imperial phenomenon, as Sheldon Pollock has shown. Both of these subjects are controversial and merit attention to details. But the situation becomes particularly clear in comparison. I want to compare here the Brahmin *śiṣṭa*, of, say, the third century B.C. to the third century A.D., to the literati, the *shi*, in China across the same time period. In short, when it comes to writing and the state the *shi* are exactly what the *śiṣṭa* are not. They were disciplined writers, highly self-conscious of writing as the central act of civilizing process, concomitant with law and culture. And the *shi* were state officials, often in fact and always in calling. For the *shi* to be moral, to be really *shi*, they must at least aspire to office because only in office can *wen* and *wu*, culture and force, the civil and the martial, be harmoniously fashioned in the writings and enforcements of the state. The *shi* are made by their education and talent, but they can only prove themselves and realize their telos in office. They are rendered legitimate by the state and they render the state legitimate in turn. And by the way, especially when compared to South Asia but even when compared to Europe (*pace* Rome), the state in China had a very strong tendency actually to exist, not always already in decline and fall.[2]

I consider my comparative method Weberian. I return to Weberian theory and method in the conclusion of this essay, to reconsider the viability of Weberian methodology and the wisdom of rescuing Weber from the modernists, as against letting the Habermases, Derridas, and Bourdieus set our questions. Before then our order of march is writing in South Asia, writing and the state in China, and the state in South Asia. And first, a further comment on what it means to use a Weberian comparative method as I understand it. The short version is this: Weber developed a method that allows empirical work not only to answer our questions but also to improve them, especially if we are willing to let it. Against the overwhelming tendency of positive social sciences from Comte to the present to seek to establish stages and universal tendencies (e.g., Goody, discussed below), Weber expected history to be irreducibly complicated without, thereby, deciding that nothing could be said about it that was of general importance. My one example is not his analysis of the Protestant ethic, which he intended to illustrate that a religious ethos could be economically relevant, even a significant cause of important economic change. That text was transformed in the

[2] Generally speaking, I leave comparisons to Europe and the Mediterranean to others. I apologize if this frustrates, but the issue in geographic comparison closely resembles that in conceptual starting points — I seek here some promising roads that are curiously little traveled. Most of the comparative work that exists is India-Europe and China-Europe in its organization. I think that part of the reason for the lack of China-India comparative work is high barriers to entry in linguistic and historic competence. Here, I do my own Sanskrit translating but rely on the increasingly abundant and insightful secondary literature to discuss the *shi* in emergent China. Of course, almost needless to say, this makes all my China descriptions and claims dependant and thereby suspect. And I doubt that I could have formulated my theses at all without the benefit of the insights of Connery 1998, Lewis 1999, and other specialists on "Writing and Authority in Early China" (cf. Lewis's title and Connery's subtitle).

Cold War into an "idealist" answer to Marx and there is no space here to investigate further this kidnapping. My example instead comes from something far more central to Weber's actual sociology, something from his largely forgotten second volume of *Economy and Society*, an analysis of the relationship of the state and capital.

Did either the state or capital develop as the child, the extension, the function, the dialectical fulfillment of the other? It was obvious that the synergy between them was profound for the business enterprises that relied upon state-backed legal systems to trust their capital to contracts. Once they became mutually reinforcing the growth of both was explosive, on specific lines and limits dictated by each other's needs. But on the question of early roots Weber was aware and skeptical of two theories at opposite extremes: Tolstoy's theory that the state was a military conspiracy, inventing the money economy as a further means of enslaving subjects, and Marx's that the state was a mere instrument of a capitalist bourgeoisie, an owning class. Throughout his corpus Weber casually, occasionally used Marx's analytic language of modes, means, forces, and relations but undid the dialectical delimitation of history to the dynamics of modes of production. Along the way, in his military sociology, Weber developed a fascinating analysis that connected the fall of Rome (I am no one to judge, but it is curious and worth remembering that Weber began his career as a Roman historian) to a matter of world-historical technological significance: the alienation of fighting men from the means of coercion. Centuries before the industrial revolution made it literally impossible for the working class to produce the means of life and subsist outside of economic relationships with capitalists ("the alienation of workers from the means of production"), the rise of castles, siege engines, armor, and other advanced weaponry did in the sword-wielding soldier, who could no longer own personally the sufficient means for successful military action. Thereafter, for technical reasons (romantically resisted, Weber once noted in passing, by the Bill of Rights in the U.S.) individuals will have no option but to accept and work within the terms of order of wielders of amassed and massive weaponry.

Are modes of coercion and destruction therefore the true axis of history? No, Weber argued against both generalized causal analyses. Painstakingly comparing cases of Great Power military organization and mercantile expansion over millennia, Weber (1978: 913) concluded that "the causal nexus by no means always points in a single direction." The point is not what had to happen but what did (as with his interest in why capitalism found its greatest expansion in the West and his turn to religious sociology for reasons) and what connections accounted for short- and long-term successes. Early in his career he argued that we would all still be speaking Latin, in a continuing Roman empire, if the Romans' development of free labor markets had not been overtaken by a flow of cheap, coerced labor from military conquests, creating a cheap but later unsustainable coerced labor regime in the early centuries A.D. The institutional twists and turns mattered and do not simply generalize, for example, to military support for the economy. The Roman military supported the economy, but the wrong way for long-term sustainable development and instead built an economy dependent on military supply of labor.

I do not think Weber regretted the fall of Rome. While he did not long for "revolution," neither did he fear disorder. If anything horrified him, it was the prospect of overwhelming forces that limited the vicissitudes intrinsic to complexity, as in his famous "iron cage." Such a thing would be a trap and yet an institutional situation. The last thing he thought likely were ineluctable laws in modes of production, coercion, or communication. He would have been appalled, for example, by a general theory of writing. Which brings us to Jack Goody and to South Asia.

## SOUTH ASIA AND WRITING

Whether or not anthropology is any kind of normal science, Jack Goody's theory of human literacy is challenged by a significant anomaly in South Asia. The anomaly is the insignificance of Sanskrit's graphic techniques — that, for a millennium or so, Sanskrit was really not about writing. The adepts, the Brahman *śiṣṭa*, who developed, sustained, and proliferated the Sanskrit language, attended minutely to oral-aural matters, mapping phonemic neighborhood effects and metric stress systems acutely, memorizing and reciting texts as the means of knowing them. And they almost never even mentioned writing. Fearful of mortal sin, loss of gender and ethnicity from mispronunciation, they betrayed no anxiety at all about the inscribed sign. They really did not care about their graphic techniques. The less important the text, the more likely that it was merely written. The more important, from the Vedas themselves to the core *sūtra* systems of every philosophical discipline, the more likely that the text was prepared in telegraphically economical sūtras. The student's first act was memorization and perfect recitation.

This was very bad news for the core thesis of Jack Goody's anthropology of literacy. Kathleen Gough was perhaps the first to confront Goody on the question, pointing out that (apart from the clearly separate Indus script) inscriptions in South Asia date from only the third century B.C. (this date can be moved a century or two earlier now, but the point is still the same). Brahman grammatical analytics preceded writing systems by several centuries and continued to value oral transmission techniques for a long time after the presence of writing. The point is still contested. Many archaeologists, with the deliberate materialism characteristic of their discipline, organize the facts on the premise that Goody must be right and therefore infer the presence of writing even in the absence of inscriptions (see, e.g., Allchin 1995). Goody himself, similarly, attempted quite persistently to infer the causal sequence he preferred, as in this, his first reply to Gough's point: "it is difficult to imagine the development of 'grammar' before the invention of writing, and it is significant that it was apparently not long after the introduction of alphabetic script into India that the great Sanskrit grammarian, Pāṇini, composed his pioneering work" (1968: 228). According to Goody, the persistence of oral techniques was part of deliberate restriction of knowledge, especially to sustain sinister priestly authority, while pioneering rationalism was attributable to the graphic technique's proponents.

There is ample evidence that Goody is wrong about all this. The image of Pāṇini as pioneer does much to sustain Goody's hope for an inceptive explosion of Sanskrit grammatical analysis at the advent of graphic systems, projected almost by fiat to have happened just before Pāṇini's day. The continuing difficulties of dating that day (not later than fourth century B.C.) do not, lucky for us, frustrate the evaluation of this argument. Only from our vantage is Pāṇini really the "pioneer." Like Kant's prolegomena for any future metaphysics, Pāṇini's grammar is the foundation for almost any future Sanskrit. But it is obviously not the first Sanskrit grammar. It refers to the work of ten predecessors (Cardona 1988: 1). Further, several occasions of uneven vocabulary and style within its rules strongly suggest that it is a synthesis of existing grammars rather than a wholly new invention.[3] Pāṇini's grammar is obviously composed to be memorized and recited. Thus, as difficult as it may be for Goody's school to accept, it should not be imagined a consequence of any writing system.[4] There is one piece of evidence above all to settle this matter: the narrowest version of the Sanskrit anomaly, the true scandal making Goody's position hopeless. As Gough

[3] For example, its rules for infixing verbal elements treat two similar classes very differently.

[4] On the subject of what is difficult to imagine, I am reminded of Andre Gunder Frank's (1998: 17) general objection to Weber's approach to economic history, that it was "even harder to understand than the Marxian one."

notes, the point was made as early as 1948 by Alfred Kroeber in his essay on alphabets. Unique among early scripts, the South Asian scripts, consistently and from their earliest form, arrange the vowels and consonants in a logical phonetic order, "in which groups of sounds formed against the back and front palates, gums, teeth, and lips, follow each other in sequences" (Gough 1968: 73). Writing did not organize South Asian phonetics and grammar. The phonetic system and the perspicacious science of grammar came before the writing.

So, we need a different — and better — anthropology of writing.

## WRITING AND THE STATE IN CHINA

It seems to me that comparison between the *śiṣṭa* and the *shi* shows that there is not just one, necessary developmental pattern to relationships between writings, writing, languages, knowledge of language, and between all these things and state structures. (And what is the state? We can start with Weber's definition, an institution with a monopoly on legitimate coercion. But I emphasize, start with. In classic Weberian mode, even while operating on Weber's own categories, I want to leave the matter of conceptual precision as something to emerge via discussion.) Clearly, states and the state, writings and writing, are relevant to the history of the *shi* in China. In fact, they were constitutive of the *shi*, and in an important sense, the *shi* were constitutive of the state.

The first writings found in China are records of divination. According to Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien, in the period of the Shang dynasty (ca. fifteenth century to 1046 B.C.) writings on bones and shells developed to make, or at least close, deals with the dead, especially royal ancestors. The spirits were instructed to receive offerings in exchange for favor and often oracular advice. The shell and bone techniques used in divination were codified by the early Zhou period (1046–256 B.C.) in the famous *Yi jing* (book of changes). Most inscriptions preserved from such early periods concern elite family interests, especially bronze vessels inscribed with names of ancestors asked to protect and support the continuing family. The first state-related inscriptions were apparently something like treaties, buried with sacrifices for the dead, including statements such as "whoever shall violate this covenant, may the bright spirits destroy him" (Tsien 2004: 5).

Chinese history allows us to be marvelously concrete, from here, tracking increasing relations between writings and states, leading to the emergence of writing and the state. In the Zhou period, states become subjects of and guardians of writings, diplomatic documents, written on bamboo, silk, and other materials. Official records of appointments, confirmation, and honors, speeches, odes, and hymns became parts of collections, books. Literacy skills were aristocratic, and the topics inscribed were still related to the history, property, ritual, and social lives of elite families. But the documents could have legal, even military importance. "In 634 B.C., when Duke Xiao of Qi invaded the borders of Lu, the marquis of Qi asked whether the people of Lu were afraid. The reply was that 'they rely on the document … preserved in the archives of covenant, under the care of the Grand Master'" (Tsien 2004: 6). The central theme of Connery's study of *The Empire of the Text* is already apparent in these examples: writing was more important than reading and texts did not circulate among communities of readers so much as reside at the location that they were written for, demarcating the event and relationship they were written both to make and record. The *shi* emerged as the officers of recording.

Confucius was not so much the paradigm of the *shi* as their theorist, more specifically the theorist whose school, centuries after his life, oriented a revolutionary transformation and consolidation of both writing and state structures. In Confucius's world (he is traditionally dated 551–479 B.C.), states were multiple and frequently in conflict, and all the more so in the Warring

States period that followed (453–221 B.C.). I do not attempt a general treatment of his eventual impact here, and barely mention even matters as relevant as the opening of training in literacy beyond aristocratic circles. Instead, I want to focus on the impact on the semiotic artifacts themselves. The famous goal of rectification of names follows from suspicion as well as appreciation of the potential powers of languages and writings. Disputes are the failure of words to correspond properly with actions and things; from Confucius and several other schools came versions of the project of building the ritual and political means of ending dispute by rendering language fully efficacious. Confucius and his school, as Lewis convincingly argues, were critical outsiders to power in their own era, but founders of the quest that was to organize the central institutions in future Chinese states. (Yes, margins, a theme of this volume more generally.)

During the Warring States period, states had archives maintained by *shi* and "private scholars" had their own large collections. Officials in charge of archives of documents were known to flee with them in emergencies and in conflicts and scholars also brought private collections with them when they moved from state to state. By the end of the Warring States period, the ambitious, powerful, and short-lived (221–206 B.C.) Qin state identified documents and their proliferation as itself crucial to their strategic situation. Before their conquest of the whole, the Qin court showed its aspirations in its scholarship.

> At the court of Qin, it is said, Lu Buwei (290–233 B.C.) assembled as many as three thousand scholar-politicians and asked them to write what they had learned. Lu then collected all their discussions into a book of more than 200,000 words, covering all the subjects. When completed, the book was displayed at the gate of the market place in the capital, and a reward of one thousand pieces of gold was offered to anyone if he could change a word of this writing to improve it (Tsien 2004: 11).

Once in control of China, the Qin set out to simplify and standardize the writing system and to create a government monopoly on key genres of writing. In 213 B.C., Grand Councilor Li Si began a campaign to consolidate Qin state control of the form and content of legal, historical, and philosophical archives. As a later chronicler depicted his campaign, he sought that

> all books in the historical archives, except the records of Qin, be burned; that all persons in the empire, except those who held a function under the control of the official scholars, daring to store the classical literature and the discussions of various philosophers, should go to the administrative or military government so that these books may be indiscriminately burned (Tsien 2004: 13).

If the tone seems disapproving, the Han successors to the Qin in many ways improved on their heavy-handed approach to information centralizing. Among the Han, central control was still the key.[5] But their approach was primarily productive, especially under the consolidating Emperor Wu, credited with establishing the imperial library, the Bifu. The Han's own chronicle summarizes the project:

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[5] This began even as Liu Bang, the future Han emperor Gaozu, was conquering the Qin capital, according to the Han's own narrative history:

> his army commanders struggled to get to the storehouse of gold and silk and treasure in order to divide it up. Xiao He [Liu Bang's ally], however, first went to confiscate the laws, decrees, charts, and writings of the Qin officials. Liu Bang thus knew of all the impenetrable areas and passes throughout the empire, of population figures, strong and weak strategic points, and of all the worries and sufferings of the people (quoted in Connery 1998: 54; Connery's bracket).

> So [Emperor Wu] established a policy of collecting writings, created the post of official copyists, and, extending down to the level of the various schools of philosophers and their commentaries, had them all stored in the Bifu. By the time of the Emperor Cheng, many writings had been lost, so Receptionist Chen Nong was dispatched to look for missing writings throughout the empire. Grand Master for Splendid Happiness Liu Xiang edited and compiled the classics, commentaries, philosophical works, poetry, and fu; Infantry Commandant Ren Hong edited and compiled military texts; Grand Astrologer Yin Xian edited and compiled works on astronomy, calendrics, and divination; Attending Physician Li Zhugduo edited and compiled works on medical formulas and cures (quoted in Connery 1998: 54–55).

It was a short, connected, and crucial step from the consolidation of the texts of the imperial archive, to the national academy and its examination system. Under the emperor Wu, the means were created to re-create the *shi*. The examination system was corruptible — one could still find ways to buy one's way in and the aristocratic class was capable of self-reproduction. But in self-conception and in task, the *shi* were made by the official record system that they, in turn, sustained. I have three final points then it is back to India.

First, regarding "orality to literacy," from Goody and Watt: with the invention and installation of this system of literacy, China exhibits way too much change, and the wrong kind, for any simple theory of literacy having an impact on human history. Goody's story emphasized the rise of rationalism, considered as intrinsically skeptical:

> In oral societies the cultural tradition is transmitted almost entirely by face-to-face communication; and changes in its content are accompanied by the homeostatic process of forgetting or transforming those parts of the tradition that cease to be either necessary or relevant. Literate societies, on the other hand, cannot discard, absorb, or transmute the past in the same way. Instead their members are faced with permanently recorded versions of the past and its beliefs; and because the past is thus set apart from the present, historical enquiry becomes possible. This in turn encourages scepticism; and scepticism, not only about the legendary past, but about received ideas about the universe as a whole (Goody and Watt, 1968: 67–68).

Skepticism about received ideas about the universe was precisely what the Emperor Wu's new semiotic machinery was designed to replace with commitment to its own imperial rectification of names. The Han institutionalized the Confucian tradition's suspicion of language and its powers:

> The way is preserved through an education program based on classic texts and rituals that generate an authority capable of suppressing the new realm of debate and disputation. The authority converges with the new vision of kingship … The text [Liu Xiang's *Xunzi*] insists on the importance of teachers, specifies that the aim of learning is to make one's mind identical with the teacher's, argues that the teacher and the model/law (*fa*) are the basis of social order, and asserts that for an individual to become a sage or a state to flourish both depend upon teachers…. the sage may speak because of his unique mastery of the guiding categories that underlie language. This is the image of the sage of the Mawangdui *Jing fa,* the Confucius of the *Guo yu*, or the Yu of the *Shang hai jing*, those who have the almost magical power to accurately name all things. The scholar, by contrast, is defined by few words. The lowest category, the philosopher of language and paradox, is characterized by volubility, rapidity of speech, and the relentless analysis of words. He represents the triumph of language for its own sake, detached from the concerns of human society.
>
> The *Xunzi* takes these adepts of disputation and their manipulations of language as one of the primary targets. Chapter 18, "Rectifying Judgments" is devoted to the refutation

> of the propositions attributed to "vulgar men of the world who engage in persuasions." Likewise the chapter "Rectifying Names," while adopting much of the terminology of the theoreticians of language, calls for the suppression of disputation through a restoration of the sagely Way in which names are fixed by the percipient monarch. Other passages attacking disputation are scattered through the text. Most of these are simply denunciations, but the chapter on rituals specifically sets the sages against the rhetoricians by asserting that the kind of intelligence involved in paradoxes and logical disputations is out of its depth when confronted with the principles underlying rituals (Lewis 1999: 92–93).

One might try to save the Goody school with its theory of skepticism as natural rationalism flowing from the intrinsics of literacy, by portraying the Chinese system as somehow unnatural or perhaps Oriental. But the Confucians are far more specific about institutions and disputation is out of its depth confronting ritual. The Confucians prizing order (and more specifically the restoration of order, rectification) consciously elevate the naming power of ritual to the center of intellectual as well as political life.

Focusing here on the plasticity of semiotic technologies, as against a theory of a single universal telos for literacy, I argue that something that could be done, with a certain level of development of forces of communication, was done in China — not something that had to be done, but something that could be done — and that the accomplishment of it, this elevation of the logic of ritual through the apparatuses of law and pedagogy, in turn led to the further development of specific semiotic technologies, forces of communication. A way to explain it would be to read the events within European "early modern" controversies about the fixing of meaning in language, as theories of rectification of names. Much has been written (see, e.g., Baumann and Briggs 2003) about Locke's and Herder's contrasting visions of good order among signs. In short, while Locke himself articulated a vision of arbitrary nature to signs, he saw well-constituted meaning in a relationship between sign and things in the world. Reference would work when sense corresponded to things. Herder had theological reasons and anti-Kantian motives for seeing much more in the arbitrary nature of signs, no hope for a final transparency, via signs, of things in themselves, but much beauty in the flowering of communal self expressions when and only when peoples were free to pursue their own chosen ends. Neither approach assigns responsibility for disorder, nor does either have a mechanism for preventing conflicts of word and meaning: the Herderian positively enjoins it as part of a plenitude willed by a Lutheran God and the Lockean naively waits for laws of nature (like Goody generations later) in matters clearly shaped by human will in action. From Locke and Herder we are drawn back to Hobbes, specifically to his theory of the necessity of judicial speech, to fix the meanings of the words of law amidst the wrangling of the lawyers, which otherwise never ends (see especially Skinner 1996). Resolution of the case requires judgment, fixing the application of legal phrases against the interested bending and breaking of meanings attempted by advocates of particular outcomes, and in this sense the Leviathan is a semiotic machine. On the right track, this would be, but from a rectification point of view the judge's judgment is only resolution of the case. The disorder of signs in ill-disciplined, self-interested use requires a more universal logic for actual harmony among people, things, and signs to be sustained, thus the logic of ritual and the pedagogy of rectitude, a state that orders things and people by ordering names (and, on the side we are not prepared here to address fully, commits the use of force to concord, too, with this ordering project: if all intellectualism is to find place within one ritualized project of settling an imperial naming system, so also all use of force is simultaneously authorized by and limited to the project, *wu* in concord with *wen* as vice versa).

The Confucian project was born, ironically, as a criticism of disordered actual states, ensconced in schools of sages not in a position to make the state of being they thought possible and

optimal. Mannheim argued insightfully that all political discourse could be divided between ideology, justifying an existing institutional order and utopia writing against its present. His theory is a great corrective to theories from Goody through Foucault that tend to find a unified order of things, on whatever conditions, in specific times and places. That the Confucian system was born utopian, later to become an imperial ideology, explains its extremism, its coherence, its impatience for frailty, its intolerance, and its totalizing impatience with exceptions and complexities, much better than any theory positioning it on a continuum from orality to literacy can account for. Its long term successes, and limitations, is another story, one about a type or kind of regime of literacy actually instituted and lived.

Second, from writings and states to writing and the state: a very particular kind of canonical unification was achieved by the scholars of the Emperor Wu, a self-consciousness of project of ordering made institutional. To grasp the significance of the canonization of texts around six arts, the creation of a national academy to teach those arts, and the institution of exams to test those arts and thereby select new *shi,* we have to see how tightly these institutions were woven together. As Connery articulates, a specific kind of literacy was created. The failed Qin began the project, consolidating negatively, and the Han instituted what Connery titles "the text-system."

> The need to control textual proliferation was recognized quite early and was probably behind the Qin dynasty's "burning of the books," which was not at all a rejection of the textual, as is sometimes claimed, but was clearly an attack on "private teaching" (i.e., non-imperial authority) and the uncontrolled and unofficial circulation of textual material. The only texts consigned without exception to be burnt were those that "used the past to criticize the present." Most texts proscribed at large were allowed to exist in the imperial library or under the auspices of officials assigned to their study (Connery 1998: 43).

Under the Emperor Wu, the "text-system" operated not merely by proscription of private teaching and consolidation of texts in the state archive, but also by filling the space of possibilities with prescribed and disseminated arts:

> The proximity, in Emperor Wu's reign, of the establishment of the canon, the library, of the Erudite positions, and the renewed and redirected Imperial University underscores the fact that canonical texts and pedagogy are intimately tied at inception. … the Six Arts are activities that account for nearly the whole of the "public" life of a gentleman: ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and numbers. By the late Former Han, in the writings of Sima Qian, Dong Zhongshu, and others, the Six Arts are texts: the *Book of Rites,* the *Book of Music* … (Connery 1998: 46).

In this text-system, the material circulation of the imperial texts was an end in itself, the central logic of the system. To write was to copy and to read was to write, Connery argues. The scholar, the *shi*, produced both copies of the texts he consulted and the appropriate variations on them, new memorial speeches, new calendars, new reports, new decrees connected to matters material and oracular, all in routine extension of given forms.

In early imperial China, in the age of manuscript technical culture, the position of early imperial reader is fundamentally interchangeable with the position of early imperial writer (Connery 1998: 72).

Reading is not a generalizable phenomenon across time and space, absent consideration of institutions and textual practices, Connery correctly argues. In early imperial China, there were writers of this kind, but no independent readers, and texts were not written to be read in the sense we would expect.

> Writing only creates the scene of pure reading under specific conditions, and I am arguing that those conditions did not exist within official textual culture in the Han dynasty. The activities of reading, studying, copying, transmitting, and creating knew no clear boundaries, and formed no discrete categories. What they all had in common was that they all constituted adherence to the regime of textual authority. … My understanding of Han textual culture is an experimental one that views every one of its members as a writer in the broad sense of the word, which encompasses reading, copying, transmitting, and teaching. … In the Empire of the Text, there is no dissent. To write at all is to perform allegiance (Connery 1998: 75).

Of course, as Connery also argues, this unity of practice and theory, institutions and interests, and military means to civil ends, this balancing of *wen* and *wu*, had its limits, its challenges, faced alternative interior and exterior forms of literacy and dissent after all. It was designed not to and its norms actually both survived long and were remarkably amenable to reinstitution after various kinds of failure.[6] It was despite itself only one possible state and society in history. But its own utopian ideology saw itself in unitary terms: civilization in harmony with force, on earth in harmony with heaven. It was the state and as such it was as dependent on its monopoly of signs as it was on its monopoly of force.

Third, this unification was not between language and the state but between the state and writing. Lewis titles his chapter (chapter eight) on the Han establishment of the Confucian texts as state canon (one is tempted to say, state ideological apparatus) not "empire of the text" but "empire of writing." The fact that this enormous state was oriented to its canon by writing meant more than that the texts had a material, portable artifact-substrate. Here in fact, text is less separable from text-artifact than we ordinarily expect; no one set of sounds goes with the graphs.

> The roots of an imperial literary policy were laid in the Qin. First and foremost, the Qin created a single script for the empire. This unification of writing in a nonphonetic script was crucial to the survival of the unified Chinese state, for it allowed communication across regions that shared no common tongue. Moreover, the written script and its texts established a high culture with its own distinctive language. Initiation into this language and culture became the hallmark of the ruling elite whose members were separated from the common people and attached to the imperial system through the very words in which they expressed their thoughts or conversed with their fellows. The unification of script

[6] Lewis depicts interior dynamics that resulted as a kind of textual dialectic:

> In this system, where the polity was created through a combination of paid agents and local allies, the texts of the imperial canon served as the central cord binding the state proper to the powerful families on whom it relied. … When the imperial court depended upon the great families' commitment to the scholarly enterprise in order to transmit its writ to all levels of society, this dependence meant that the state monopoly of text and truth was once again dispersed in multiple centers of patronage. … When the state defined itself through a group of texts, and justified itself through their teachings, then these writings could be invoked to criticize specific policies, or ultimately to condemn the state itself.
>
> These texts, however, also provided the means by which the imperial order could survive the demise of each of its incarnations. To the extent that this order was implanted in the values and aspirations of the powerful families, and that it was crucial both to their economic survival and their claims to superiority over rivals with no tradition of imperial service, the dream of empire would be carried forward and a new dynasty established in the rubble of the old. Thus writing was not only crucial to the administrative functioning of the state, but more important it served as the seed which, planted in the soil of local society, produced a new state each time the old one fell. … In this way the Chinese empire became a realm built of text" (Lewis 1999: 362).

> was also linked to that of weights and measures, and as we saw in chapter 6 both graphs and measures were by the Han traced back to a common origin in the *Yi* hexagrams. Thus the creation of a unitary state was completed in the creation of a unitary realm of signs and standards, all grounded in cosmic patterns (Lewis 1999: 339).

To return to the questions of Locke, Herder, and Hobbes, we are far from the free beauty of the language of the folk and from the language of nature, and even from the resolution of the judge to pin words to a standard. This is the state alienating the sign from the world of the subject. This is the alienation of the speaker from the ordinary means of communication, alienation of knowledge from ordinary language. Leaving aside the Lockean utopia of words that are true names for things, people also leave the communicative institutions of any folk lifeworld when they turn to the means of utterance in this kind of code, this reading that is also writing, also copying. If arbitrary signs gained their meaning within a speech community, the bridge from such lived signs to those of these written paradigms is narrow and one way.[7] The world of the graphs operates via its own terms and textures, in this sense less like diglossia than like mathematics interrupting and replacing verbal discourse, but with the added dimension, unlike mathematics, of the performance of the text-artifact not being separable from the truth of the text. The state of the *shi* performed its truths, and its truths were those, not so much of state bureaucracy, as of ritual, a real structural functionalism, the guaranteed expression and enactment of itself.

The Confucian state was, in fact, Weber's example of the place where new questions did not arise, the ossification of complexity that was his ultimate fear. Is this an Orientalist overdramatization? Perhaps — there was clearly history made, as Connery and Lewis also show. This synthesis also had its instabilities. And there is something inescapably specific about it, recognizable in the characteristic anxieties of the *shi*. In the later Han, years of warfare often included destruction of official archives and libraries, and concern grew at the center that the texts were degrading. Connery (1998: 70) quotes from the fourth-century A.D. *History of the Later Han Dynasty*:

> Cai Yong felt that the classics, due to the length of time since the days of the sages, had suffered many errors in graphs, and that ignorant scholars had made incorrect interpretations, thus misleading scholars in times that followed. Therefore, in A.D. 175 Cai Yong … [with a group of other officials] memorialized a request to make a definitive and standard edition of the graphs of the Six Classics. Emperor Ling assented. Cai Yong then wrote the texts on the stone tablets, and had workers engrave them and set them up outside the gates of the Imperial Academy. Thereby, future scholars and those who wished to study later would all have access to the correct versions. When the tablets were done and erected, those who came to look at them and copy from them numbered in the thousands of carts daily, blocking the streets and alleys of the city.

A strange, or not so strange kind of bureaucratic pilgrimage.

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[7] This is not to return to the view held by Leibnitz and many others since that literary Sinitic was a graphic language without verbal original. See Connery 1998: 33f. who concludes quite reasonably that this view spoke more to European desires for such a language than to actual Chinese history. Connery's own conclusion (1998: 36–37) is that the original of the graphs is verbal, but after all far more specific and infra-referential than any whole language: "the ultimate horizon for graphs is not a 'writing system' in toto but the canonical texts themselves. The canonical texts are not expressed by a pre-existent writing system. Rather, the writing system is only conceivable as a system because of the existence of the canonical texts. … The texts of reference are the canonical classics, of which all writing worthy of being so called is in some form a repetition." The position of the Vedas for the Vedāṅga, especially grammar, and the development of Sanskrit compares interestingly: again, a canon as the ontological occasion for the reality and truth of the rest, but very much not a culture of copying, all texts in some sense repetition — rather, exact repetition is the real and effective original (as in mantras), and all other texts are of different ontological status.

## WRITING AND THE STATE IN SOUTH ASIA

William Schneidewind, in *How the Bible Became a Book*, devotes a chapter to writing and the state and argues that in ancient West Asia, sorry, the ancient Near East, "writing was primarily an activity of the state," that "nowhere did writing flourish in the ancient Near East without the auspices of the state," and that writing began there primarily to keep a record of transactions. "Literacy held few benefits for those outside administration and barriers to acquiring literacy were considerable." In Mesopotamia and Egypt, "earlier texts were most often record keeping, with few literary pieces." Generally, in its origins "writing served an administrative and bureaucratic role … its primary role was not to preserve the cultural heritage of antiquity" (Schneidewind 2004: 35–37). With the alphabet, however, originally developed in Egypt to transcribe foreign names, a tool with broader utility was developed.

In the Near East, then, writings as the tools of state account keeping developed into the means of religious and communal narrative expression and transmission. In China, what began as a system of transaction especially with ancestors extended to the record keeping of states, later becoming the core ideological apparatus of the self-conscious state, a privileged graphic system for the fount of order, literally carved in stone to enable its stable use. Without Goody dogging us we might be drawn to the question of religious canons, sacred texts, and their modes of composition and transmission. Writings and sacreds, writing, the state and the sacred, monotheism and so on. But the continuity I want to trace here is the relationship between writings and states, writing and the state, much more rudimentary in the very early historic cases Schneidewind summarizes, but still tantalizingly there. Can there be states without writings? Can there be writings without states? Even if both can subsist without the other, at least to some degree, why do we find them together so much? Because South Asia is our exception proving the rule.

In Han China, we are told, 202 B.C. to A.D. 220, to read was to copy, to read was to write. In South Asia, across the same period, there were states, with writings. There were even vast efforts at encyclopedic synthesis, in colleges or assemblies of scholars supported and funded and sponsored by royal centers. The Buddhist Pāli canon may, or may not, have been rendered as graphic artifacts in this period (see Collins 1990). More likely, graphic form was given in the (western, in many senses) court of King Kanishka to the Mahā Vibhāṣā, the great commentary on Buddhist Abhidharma. One can readily imagine, in a world of palm leaf manuscripts and the like, the existence of readers who were writers and copyists, renewing the texts in a court archive.

But in South Asia there was already another kind of reading, one with access to its own truth, conserving after all forms of language increasingly alien and formulaic to the "readers." In the Brahmins' households and in the increasingly important monasteries, to read was to recite. Text was to be known rote. A Brahmin lineage was guardian and reporter of a specific section of the Vedic whole. And even among the Buddhists, the Jains, and other nāstika, non-Veda accepting schools, there was a pedagogy of mental rather than graphic inscription. No doubt, monasteries also became collectors and shielders of text-artifacts. No doubt, vast commentaries on core texts were written, too long and not important enough to be memorized and recited. Philologists have reconstituted more than one sūtra text by its inscription into the written commentary, where no version existed written without the comment. There were regimes of truth with their own semiotic technologies, not made by, for, or about the state. And the states were much weaker.

I wish we had more space for a tale of two texts that could make this matter clearer. Patañjali's commentary on Pāṇini's grammar, titled the Mahābhāṣya or great commentary, is the text I refer to at the outset of this essay, conferring on Brahmins the calling of Sanskrit, knowing and using perfected speech. The Pāṇinian system provided the perfect description of the perfect sign

system, the one used by gods and learned men, the *śiṣṭa*. It is not actually a chicken-and-egg problem in South Asian history, the relationship of the knowers to their means of knowing, the *śiṣṭa* and their *saṃskṛtā bhāṣā*. We have *śiṣṭa* in the Vedāṅga texts, knowers of the disciplines that support the Vedic rituals, centuries before we have description of a Vedāṅga language that is *saṃskṛta*. But as in China (though without the turn to state office as apotheosis of knowledge or virtue) we have a turn in disciplined, perfected language from ritual performance to various kinds of knowing discourse as virtual ends in themselves (explicitly so in the nāstika schools). Patañjali's comments render Pāṇini's grammar accessible and usable for new generations of students, self-consciously new means for producing *śiṣṭa* in a world needing them.

I want to contrast Patañjali's text with another, a text with a complex compositional history, much amended and rewritten, especially, added to by later centuries, but a text whose oldest portions clearly date to the period of India's first empire, the Mauryan. It is a text that, in time, most likely largely falls in between the writings of Pāṇini and those of Patañjali. The text is the Arthaśāstra.[8] While Pāṇini's and Patañjali's texts are connected at least by legend to specific monastic centers — there is more controversy about Patañjali's locale and time — both grammatical texts show few marks of royal or courtly patronage or location. The Arthaśāstra, in contrast, is saturated with references to specifics of states and statecraft. Much of it is reported as the views of Kauṭilya, a specific Mauryan minister; the Kauṭilyan opinion settles points of controversy. Again, without detailed commentary on the content of the text, though with much regret (though no regret at all that it will not be described by comparison to any Italians whatsoever) I want to go straight to pertinent questions about language and writing in the text.

Was the Arthaśāstra always, already a written text? Many commentators in later eras tried, without conspicuous success, to break it up into a structure of core sūtras and extended comments upon them, the format of the grammatical and other texts with a memorizable, recitable core. Is it in Sanskrit? This is an even more interesting question to me. To make a long story short, it does not always follow Pāṇinian rules, perhaps especially in its oldest sections, despite the fact that it almost certainly postdates Pāṇini's system, at least by a century. It is much closer to the Pāṇinian language, actually, than the other most famous texts of the Mauryan era, the rock edicts, that were not in Sanskrit, Pāṇinian, or any variant anywhere they were carved. Where there was writing, it was not necessarily Pāṇinian Sanskrit being written. Where there was Pāṇinian Sanskrit, it was not necessarily writing.

What then did this text of advice for young princes and ministers, this treatise on policy, statecraft, and self-interest, have to say about education in language? It is often reported that the Arthaśāstra enjoins Sanskrit for the princes and ministers, but this is an over-reading of the key passages, which are actually much more specific in their own, different way. The princes and ministers are enjoined to avoid *apaśabda*, that is, bad word formations, grammatical infelicities, to be sure, a term that Patañjali would also rely upon. But in the Arthaśāstra there is no citation of Pāṇini as the authority on *śabda* and *apaśabda*, good and bad word formation. The grammatical terminology diverges. And otherwise, the advice concerning sign formation in the Arthaśāstra is all about writing. Princes and ministers should learn to write clearly, concisely, without contradiction, with a clear hand making their orders and decrees unambiguous. They should not sound rustic and should be sure to get their points across.

[8] On dating and text construction issues start with Trautmann 1971. I include a much longer treatment of this comparison, including a detailed discussion of the dating issues for the Arthaśāstra and the comparisons of South Asia and China as well, in my book *Technography,* which I certainly hope will be forthcoming soon.

The Arthaśāstra is almost all about the state and its needs and when it is about good formation of signs it is almost all about writing. When it lists its own place in the whole education of princes and ministers, it decrees that state officials would be the best instructors in Arthaśāstra, just as many state specialists of other types would be appropriate instructors in other fields, sciences of wealth, for example, or military affairs. Brahmins (and *śramaṇ*s, but that is another story) also have a role in princely education, as instructors in *dharma*. But this, the Arthaśāstra, concerns the different domain of *artha*.

In South Asia, different semiotic technologies were emphasized in different domains of knowledge and practice. *Dharma* did not, ever, get encompassed by statecraft, and the prestige of the knowledge systems of the Brahmins traveled well beyond their own *āstika* disciplines. How do we know this? The later generations of state turned to the Pāṇinian language for their collections of knowledge, starting with Kaniṣka, the Kuṣāṇa king whose great Buddhist commentary on *abhidharma*, metaphysics, was explicitly modeled in form and language on an earlier textual authority: not Kauṭilya and the Arthaśāstra, but Patañjali and his Mahabhāṣya, another great commentary. Even the Buddhists adopted the Pāṇinian language when they pursued the truths of *dharma*.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS: WRITING AND THE STATE

"Bookstores are known to have existed in China before the Christian era," Tsien comments (2004: 15), with a citation from the first century B.C. The relation between writings and markets would seem worth more attention, given that the writings of the states often concern the monitoring of transactions. But more generally it is striking how little writing for the market seems to come up in the early histories of writing, text, and circulation of signs. Considering the audiences imputed for all the texts discussed here, none meet the criterion of Connery's "pure reader" (market reader? text consumer?). None seem to be any kind of text connoisseur or consumer. Perhaps we would have more doubt about that if different genres were in focus, if we had looked, for example, at the Kāmasūtra, a text similar in many ways to the Arthaśāstra, but addressed to the *nāgarika*, urban dweller. Still, it would seem fair to say that across all Asia, texts are bound up with writing and with states earlier than they are produced as commodities for markets, and that they are not always bound up with writing and with states, either, and, that in ways not yet completely clear, they get bound up with writing systems when they get bound up with states.

At a seminar of experts, I am not going to attempt to say much about the definition of writing. I do want, though, to make a comment on the distinction between writings and writing. You may well be dubious about the utility of a distinction based on awareness, self-consciousness, deliberateness, and recognition of technique. Consider then the presence or absence of anxiety over correct form, the presence or absence of standards internal to the craft that supersede mere practical competence and instead climb toward matters of ritual necessity, legal adequacy. When Cai Yong has the canon carved into stone, and a thousand literati come every day to see it and copy it, then writing rules (just as grammar rules, when Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu is said to have argued with chagrin, "If I do not understand the Vyākaraṇa [science of grammar], how can I ever understand the truth of Buddhism?" [see also Kelly 1993]). When text-artifacts are produced with manifest effects of awareness of standards for correctness of form that go beyond mere sign recognition by intended audience and rely on the reality and value of a code, we have writing and not merely writings.

And why, then, do we seem to find writing a fellow traveler with states, becoming thereby "the state"? If I am not overdrawing at the bank of abstractions, then we have found a major alien-

ation of humans from ownership of their own means of being, before the alienation from means of production and before alienation from means of coercion. If the advent of writing, and/or of grammar, is not literally alienation of the means of communication, since after all people can still talk, it is certainly alienation from the means of knowledge; henceforth, one needs to be within the circle of the educated and to deal in their codes to see, hear, know, let alone criticize or reason about the truth. Now, what is interesting, next, is what this has to do with the state. Weber defined the state as existing with and only with monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, monopoly over the means of coercion and destruction. And yet he put the individual swordsman out of business long after the origins of the state. A world of details was of course packed into Weber's addition of the conception of legitimacy to the monopoly. Part of the question of legitimacy is regard for the reality of continuing illegitimate violence, from crime to general outlawry, barbarian invasion, and insurrection. But there is much more to it than that. As Weber argued it, the very monopoly on legitimate violence leads any state into jurisprudence, as it fields claims of right from those transgressed against and thwarted from self-help by the state monopoly (think Romeo and Juliet, the tragedy of revenge-taking in a state with laws). And in jurisprudence it needs standards to justify its decisions and allocations. Weber's real interest was the rise of rational law, self-justifying legalism, distinct from claims of both tradition and charisma. Tradition as a standard is particularly problematic — whether it exists at all before the period of self-constituting law, as the name for precedents not yet reconsidered, might well be doubted. Because, for early periods, Weber has the cart before the horse in his scenario. There can be no monopoly on violence, legitimate or otherwise, when effective violence is an unalienated capability of everyone. So, states can at best be structures of collected force. Whether or not manifest in conquest, this is still a very different phenomenon.

I noted above Weber's interest in Marx's and Tolstoy's accounts of the relationship of capital and the state and his conclusion that the relationship was by no means unidirectional. A foil for Weber, on the origin of states, would be A. M. Hocart, who has the state, and kingship in particular, always begin with a "life-giving myth," with ritual systems, with central bestowal of potencies and potentials that make land and people fertile. (Note that this runs exactly against the grain of the Foucaultian modernism finding "power over life" a late, modern, addition to states primarily defined by "power over death.") Hocart's kings always begin with ritual and take on defensive, adjudicatory, and coercive functions by later necessity. But our Vedic Brahmins, famously, are precisely not the kings, almost ever.

I think that Weber's and Hocart's states are both too unilineal in their origins. I would rather locate states, and especially the state, precisely at the conjunction of ritual and semiotic "powers over life," on the one hand, and military-juridical "power over death" on the other. States emerge precisely when both semiotic and coercive technologies are gathered and deployed, the state precisely when monopoly, in one or the other, is achieved. And the state was a semiotic monopoly before it was a military one, historically, when and where command was achieved over the proprieties and potentials of the circulating sign, usually via a hegemonic system of writing.

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# 3

# WRITING IN ANOTHER TONGUE: ALLOGLOTTOGRAPHY IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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"L'écriture et la perfidie pénétraient chez eux de concert."
C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* (Paris, 1955), p. 345.

Alloglottography designates the phenomenon of writing a text in a language different from the language in which it is intended to be read. Both in the ancient Near East and cross-culturally, alloglottography is not such a rare phenomenon. Moreover, the use of a written language different from the language of utterance fits well in certain scribal traditions, which are dominated by textual artificiality and, in many instances, scribal antiquarianism.

The term alloglottography was coined by Ilya Gershevitch. In the inscription of Darius at Bīsitūn, the Elamite version was the first to be engraved, then the Babylonian, and finally the Old Persian. If the Persian king used Old Persian as his language, one may wonder why Elamite figures so prominently on the rock. According to Gershevitch, the Elamite version is the true original and represents the actual words of Darius, whereas the Old Persian on the inscription is a retranslation or back-translation. Thus, the Great King would have uttered the words in Old Persian, but the scribes wrote them down in Elamite and read them back to him (as the inscription says) in Old Persian.

## LANGUAGE AND WRITING IN ACHAEMENID IRAN[1]

The monumental inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings have Old Persian as their central language, even if many of them are bilingual and trilingual. Neither the Old Persian language nor, most likely, its script originated in Persepolis, the capital of the Achaemenid empire. The people directly associated with the use of Old Persian were the Achaemenid rulers and the ethnic group usually called Persian, after the region of Parsua (modern Fārs).[2] The language of the Achaemenid inscriptions is fairly close to Avestan, the language of the early Zoroastrian texts preserved in me-

[1] I must thank Wolfgang Behr, Miguel Civil, Jerrold S. Cooper, and Matthew W. Stolper for their comments and feedback concerning various sections of this contribution. Moreover, the organizer of the seminar and editor of this volume, Seth L. Sanders, must be thanked for his editorial work and suggestions, as well as for treating us so lavishly and kindly during the seminar. Needless to say, any pitfalls or errors are exclusively my responsibility.

[2] The toponym *Parsua* (< Iranian **Pārsva-*) is the origin of Old Persian *Pārsa*, Greek Περσίς, Babylonian *Parsu*, and Modern Persian *Fārs*, and it occurs already in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (843 B.C.); see Parpola 1970: 274–75. One should distinguish between *Parsua* in the Neo-Assyrian sources and *Parsumaš* (although the latter is not *Pārsa*/*Persis*, *pace* Potts); see Potts 1999: 288. However, these and similar toponyms may have been less specific in certain sources; see the attestations in Vallat 1993: 207–11 and Zadok 1985: 247–48. In fact, there are clearly two *Parsua*s: the *Parsua* in the Zagros and the *Parsua* associated with *Anšan*, which eventually became *Fārs*; see Zadok 2001. For instance, Cyrus is called "king of *Anšan*" (i.e., Tall-i Malyan) in the Cyrus Cylinder, but "king of *Parsu*" (i.e., Persia) in the Nabonidus Chronicle; see Schaudig 2001: 552–53 (on the alternation between

dieval copies. Although the basis for the language of the inscriptions must lie in the southwestern Iranian spoken in Fārs, the variety attested in the corpus of Achaemenid inscriptions is more likely to correspond to a literary and standardized dialect.[3] There were other ancient Iranian languages, but they are unfortunately very poorly attested. Median is the cover term used for the ancient Iranian linguistic materials attested in Old Persian inscriptions (names, specific vocabulary, etc.), as well as in texts in other languages (Elamite, Babylonian, Greek, Aramaic, and Egyptian), whose phonology departs from that of Old Persian and mostly resembles that of Avestan (e.g., Old Persian *xšaça-* "kingship" vs. Median PN *Xšaθrita*; cf. Avestan *xšaθra-*, Sanskrit *kṣatrá-*). In essence, Median is not so much a language (theoretically a northwestern Iranian dialect), but rather a conventional label for the ancient Iranian linguistic materials attested especially in non-Persian sources — for the most part, the ancient Iranian that non-Persians spoke and what was heard by Elamite, Greek, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Aramaic speakers.[4] Even less can be said about the language of the nomadic tribes known as Scythians (Σκύθαι) in Greek sources and as *Sakā* in Iranian texts.[5] Moreover, in ancient Iran there were other languages besides Iranian (Indo-European). In fact, long before the Achaemenid kings entered the picture, the Iranian plateau, known since the third millennium as Anšan or Elam, had been inhabited. The local inhabitants spoke Elamite, a language attested in inscriptions from, at least, the twenty-third century B.C. Already the first Old Elamite texts were written in Mesopotamian cuneiform. In the Achaemenid empire, Old Persian (the script of the dominant group) was used only on monumental inscriptions and in other display contexts (stone and metallic tablets, seals, stone weights, stone vessels and dishes, and architectural ornaments).[6] However, Mesopotamian cuneiform (employed to write Elamite and Babylonian) is the script used for all the clay tablets inscribed during the Achaemenid empire. Moreover, whereas there are plenty of inscriptions in Elamite — that is, in Elamite language and, therefore, in Mesopotamian cuneiform — there is not a single clay tablet with Old Persian script.

Possibly up to 30,000 tablets and fragments — of which over 6,000 preserve enough readable text — were found in the fortification wall at the northeast corner of the Persepolis Terrace (the so-called Fortification tablets). The tablets date to the 13th–28th years of Darius I (509–494 B.C.) and are concerned with transfers of food staples in the area around Persepolis; most of them were not written at Persepolis itself. Furthermore, in the southeastern part of the Persepolis Terrace 750 tablets and fragments — of which only 139 or so contain a substantial text — were found as well (the so-called Treasury tablets). This second, smaller cache is slightly later than that of the Fortification tablets: from the thirtieth year of Darius I to the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (492–458

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the determinatives URU and KUR preceding the toponym *Anšan*, see Schaudig 2001: 231–32); Grayson 1975: 107; and Glassner 2004: 236. The toponym **Pārsva-* probably existed long before these attestations. In the *Ṛgveda* (10.86.23), the name of Manu's wife or daughter is Paršu, which means "rib," but could also be related to the ethnonym *pārsa-* from **Pārsva-*; see Hoffmann 1940: 142 (= 1975: 9) and Watkins 2004: 66–67.

[3] On Old Persian as a *Kunstsprache* rather than the actual spoken language of the Achaemenid kings and the Persian population (a true *Umgangssprache*), see Schmitt 1989a: 56–57; idem 1993: 78–79; and idem 2004: 717.

[4] For instance, the Greek title σατράπης has to derive from a Median form **xšaθra-pā-* (> Elamite *šá-ut-ra-ba*) since the form attested in Old Persian (*xšaça-pā-van-* > Elamite *ša-ak-a-ba-ma*) cannot explain the Greek; see Hinz 1975: 136; Schmitt 1976; and idem 2004: 740. On Median dialectal features in general and the problem of "Median" as a linguistic label, see Kent 1953: 8–9; Hoffmann 1958: 4–5 (= 1975: 61–62); Schmitt 1967; idem 1989b: 87–90; Mayrhofer 1968; Gershevitch 1985: 194–222; and Molchanova 1998. On Median (i.e., non-Persian and non-Avestan ancient Iranian) anthroponyms, see Zadok 1976; idem 1976a; idem 1977; idem 1987; idem 1995: 442; idem 2001a; idem 2002; Hinz 1975; Schmitt 1978; idem 1982; idem 2002; Huyse 1990; Tavernier 2000; idem 2001; idem 2002a; and idem 2002d. I have not had access to Tavernier's (2002b) dissertation.

[5] See Schmitt 1989b: 92–93; P'iankov 1996; and A. Parpola 2002.

[6] See, for instance, Schmitt 1981.

B.C.). The Treasury tablets record mostly disbursements of silver. Of these two sets of Persepolis tablets, two tablets are in Babylonian, one in Greek, one in Phrygian, about 700 in Aramaic (still unpublished), and the overwhelming majority in Elamite.[7] Some of these tablets — at least 800 of the Elamite tablets — include Aramaic epigraphs inscribed on the clay, as happened with many tablets in first-millennium Mesopotamia.[8] Furthermore, 163 Aramaic inscriptions on mortars, pestles, trays, and plates were found in the Persepolis Treasury building, too.[9] The label given to them by Raymond A. Bowman, the original editor ("Aramaic ritual texts"), seems problematic. This was largely based on his interpretation of the *ʾškr* as related to the Semitic root for "drink," when it is most likely to mean "tribute" or the like.[10] These Aramaic texts record the manufacture of objects by artisans and the relinquishment of them to treasuries in the satrapy of Arachosia (whose capital was Kandahār). According to Bowman, these objects were used in the production of *haoma*, the famous hallucinogenic drink (cf. *soma* in the *Ṛgveda*). This hypothesis has found almost no support, and few would call these Aramaic texts "ritual" at all. However, Bowman's dating of the Aramaic texts is probably correct: from the seventh year of Xerxes (479/478) to at least the twenty-ninth year of Artaxerxes I (436/435).[11]

The level of ethnic and linguistic complexity of the Achaemenid empire was at odds with the conservatism and antiquarianism of the Elamite scribal tradition. This conflict surfaces in the clear split between the conventionality of written texts and the reality of oral communication. The Old Persian script may not have been used until Darius; the scribes of Cyrus used Babylonian — and to a lesser extent Elamite — as most of them belonged to the same tradition of the scribes of Nabonidus.[12] Nonetheless, there is a trilingual inscription (Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian) attested five times at palaces built by Cyrus at Pasargadae a generation before Darius (inscription CMa).[13] However, the Old Persian line (the first line of the inscription) was probably added later.[14] There are two other trilingual inscriptions at Pasargadae, one of which (CMc) occurs three times in Palace P but whose first line (the Old Persian) was destroyed around 1930, after Herzfeld's excavations, and another one preserved only fragmentarily (CMb). Even more complicated problems are posed by the gold tablets bearing inscriptions of Darius' great-grandfather Ariaramnes (AmH) and of his grandfather Arsames (AsH), which may or may not be authentic.[15] In sum, it is difficult to know with certainty whether this script was really invented during Darius' reign. Furthermore, as Igor Diakonoff argued, it may have been devised to write Median rather than Old Persian.[16] Although scripts are seldom phonetically suitable to write the languages for which they are first devised, Diakonoff's argument rests on the fact that the Old Persian script is rather defective in the notation of an etymological vowel in *Auslaut* and the vocalism in general. Whereas there is indirect information about the phonological relevance of these vocalic features in Old Persian (e.g., Old Persian names in Babylonian texts), foreign transcriptions of so-called

[7] See Cameron 1948; idem 1958; idem 1965; Hallock 1969; idem 1973; idem 1978; and Stolper 1984. See also Hallock 1985; Lewis 1994; and Roaf 2004: 408–09.

[8] See Fales 1986 and idem 2000.

[9] Bowman 1970; Naveh and Shaked 1973; and Delaunay 1974. On the Aramaic language during the Achaemenid period, see Delaunay 1974a and Folmer 1995.

[10] See Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995/1, 123–24.

[11] Delaunay 1974; Boyce 1982: 149; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 334–35; and Briant 2002: 940.

[12] Schaudig 2001: 69–74. The literary model of the Cyrus Cylinder may be found in inscriptions of Assurbanipal, rather than in Neo-Babylonian texts; see Harmatta 1974.

[13] See Boucharlat 2004: 356–57. The five attestations of CMa are on three of the eight antes on the corners of the porticos at the so-called Palace S, on a pillar of the entrance portico of Palace P, and at the entrance of Palace R, the latter having been destroyed in the nineteenth century; see Lecoq 1974: 52–57.

[14] Nylander 1967; Hinz 1973: 15–21; Stronach 1990; idem 1997; and idem 2005. For arguments in favor of the existence of the Old Persian script already by the time of Cyrus, see Huyse 1999: 51–55.

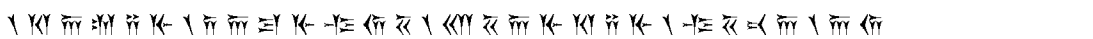
[15] See Lecoq 1974: 48–63.

[16] Diakonoff 1970.

Median names show the unstable and probably merely phonetic nature of the etymological vowel in *Auslaut* in that ancient Iranian dialect. Despite Diakonoff's proposal, one can still argue that most scripts are ill-equipped to write precisely the very languages for which they are conceived. Moreover, the specific asymmetries and inconsistencies of the Old Persian writing system can be explained on the basis of a principle of economy; only the signs that were absolutely necessary to avoid extreme ambiguity were created.[17]

The most famous statement concerning script and language among the Achaemenids is section 70 of the trilingual inscription of Darius in Bīsitūn.[18] The Old Persian section reads as follows (DB IV 88–92):[19]

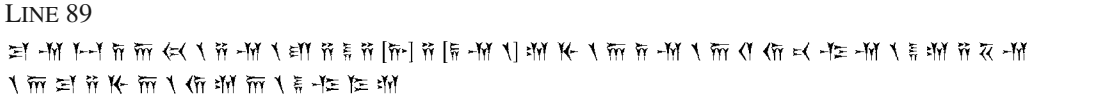
LINE 88



: θ-a-t-i-y : d-a-r-y-v-u-š : x-š-a-y-θ-i-y : v-š-n-a : a-u-

θātiy Dārayavauš xšāyaθiya vašnā Au-

LINE 89



-r-m-z-d-a-h : i-m : di-i-p-i-[c]-i-[ç-m :] t-y : a-d-m : a-ku-u-n-v-m : p-t-i-š-m : a-r-i-y-a u-t-a : p-v-s-t-

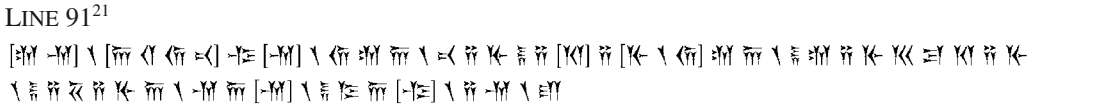
-ramazdāha ima dipi[c]i[çam] taya adam akunavam patišam ariyā utā pavast-

LINE 90[20]

-a-y-[a] : u-t-a : c-r-m-a : g-r-[f-t-m : a-h : p-t]-i-š-m-[c]-i-y : [n-a-m-n-a]-f-m : a-ku-u-n-v-m : p-[t]-i-š-[m : u]-v-a-d-a-

āy[ā] utā carmā gra[ftam āha pat]išam[c]iy [nāmanā]fam akunavam pa[t]iša[m u]vadā-

LINE 91[21]



-[t-m] : [a-ku-u-n]-v-[m] : u-t-a : n-i-y-p-i-[θ]-i-[y : u]-t-a : p-t-i-y-f-r-θ-i-y : p-i-š-i-y-a : m-a-[m] : p-s-a-[v] : i-m : di-

-t[am akuna]v[am] utā niyapai[θ]i[ya u]tā patiyafrasiya paišiyā mā[m] pasā[va] ima d-

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[17] See Hoffmann 1976: 620–45; Mayrhofer 1979; and Huyse 1999: 53–55.

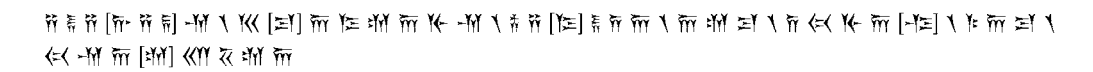
[18] It is more accurate to use the actual Modern Persian toponym, Bīsitūn (also Bīsutūn, Bīstūn), rather than "Behistun." The latter form would derive from Middle Persian/Modern Persian *Bahistūn*/*Behestūn* "with good columns," which would correspond to an unattested Middle Iranian **Bahistān* and, thus, lie behind the modern forms (Bīsotūn, Bīsitūn, etc., meaning "without columns"). This unattested form would actually go back to the unattested old name of the site, Old Persian **Bagastāna-* "place of the god(s)," which appears as Βαγίστανον ὄρος "Mount Bagistanon" in Ctesias and Diodorus (2.13.1); see Kent 1953: 108 and Schmitt 1989c. The source of Diodorus is Ctesias, *FGrH* 688 F1b (13) 1–2 = Ctesias 2004: 38–39.

[19] Harmatta 1966; Hinz 1972; Lecoq 1974: 63–86; idem 1997: 212–13; Herrenschmidt 1989; Stronach 1990; Huyse 1999; and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999. For the text of the whole inscription, see Kent 1953; Mayrhofer 1978; Schmitt 1990: 56–61; and idem 1991.

[20] In line 90, the reconstructed Old Persian **nāmanāfa-* "geneaology" (← *nāman-nāfa-* "name+navel/clan") corresponds to Elamite *hi-iš* "name"; see Hinz 1973: 145 and Hinz and Koch 1987/1: 662.

[21] In lines 90–91, the reconstructed Old Persian **(h)uvadāta-* "lineage" (Sanskrit *jātá-* "born," Avestan *zāta-* "born," Modern Persian *zād* "born, birth") corresponds to Elamite *e-ip-pi* "lineage"; see Harmatta 1966: 280; Hinz and Koch 1987/1: 392; and Schmitt 1991: 74. It was suggested that *uvādā-* was related to the root of Greek

LINE 92



-i-p-i-[c-i-ç]-m : f-[r]-a-s-t-a-y-m : vi-i-[s]-p-d-a : a-t-r : d-h-y-a-[v] : k-a-r : h-m-a-[t]-x-š-t-a

ipi[ciça]m f[r]āstāyam vi[s]padā antar dahaỵā[va] kāra hamā[t]axšatā

> Darius, the king, says: "By Ahuramazda's favor, this inscription, which I put opposite (*akunavam patišam*) in 'Aryan,' was 'seized'/copied both on clay tablets and on parchment. I also put opposite [my] name *(patišam-ciy nāmanāfam akunavam*).[22] I put opposite [my] genealogy (*patišam uvadātam akunavam*). And it was written and read before me. Afterwards, this inscription I sent off everywhere among the provinces. People toiled [for it?]."

Probably the key word in the passage is *dipi*[*c*]*i*[*çam*], whose Iranian cognates all mean "form, shape" (Avestan *ciθra-*, Parthian *cyhr*/*cyhrg* [cihr/cihrag], etc.).[23] Thus, one could interpret *dipiciça-* as referring to the Old Persian script itself ("form of writing"), rather than to the inscription.[24] However, there are reasons to believe the term denotes the inscription itself, more specifically the Old Persian version ("this inscription, this version").[25] First of all, both occurrences of the word in the inscription are preceded by the demonstrative *ima* (*ima dipiciçam*), which is rendered into Elamite as *daekki* ("otherwise, differently") the first time and as *ammi*(*n*)*nu* ("this, this very") the second time.[26] Moreover, the Elamite *tuppi-me* never means "script" or "writing system," but simply inscription.[27]

As Philip Huyse points out, the expression *akunavam patišam* (*kar- patišam* or *patišam kar-*) should be understood as meaning "I placed opposite" and *patišam* can be analyzed either as an adverb ("to place opposite") or as an adjective in the accusative singular neuter employed as a predicate in agreement with *dipiciçam* ("to make as opposite, facing").[28] The word *pavastāya-* (DB IV 89–90) is translated here as "clay tablet." Rüdiger Schmitt explains the Old Persian term as "the thin clay envelope used to protect unbaked clay tablets."[29] This interpretation stems ultimately from Émile Benveniste, who followed Louis Renou's suggestion in connecting the Old Persian term to the Sanskrit neuter noun *pavásta*.[30] This Sanskrit word occurs only in a couple of instances and is usually assumed to have a general meaning "cover, cloth."[31] In the *Ṛgveda* (10.27.7c), the expression "the two *paváste*" (*dvé paváste*) was glossed by Sāyaṇa in his fourteenth-century commentary as *dyāvā pṛthivī* ("heaven and earth").[32] In the *Atharvaveda* (4.7.6),

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ἔθος ("custom"), Sanskrit *svadhā-* ("character"; Indo-European pronoun **swe-*), etc.; see Wüst 1966: 41–42. However, the root **ðan-* is well attested in Iranian languages (Avestan *zan-* "to engender"); see Hinz 1973: 139.

In line 91, one should normalize *niyapai*[*θ*]*i*[*ya*], not *niyapan*[*θ*]*i*[*ya*]. The form *niyapan*[*θ*]*i*[*ya*] is found in Schmitt 1991: 45. However, this should be corrected and read *niyapai*[*θ*]*i*[*ya*]; see Schmitt 1992b: 153 n. 50 and Huyse 1999: 59 n. 10.

[22] Old Persian *graftam* ← *gạrbāya-*; compare German *greifen* "to grasp" and *Griffel* "stylus."

[23] See Bailey 1979: 103a.

[24] See Schmitt 1990: 56–60 and idem 1998: 458–59. See also Hinz and Koch 1987/2: 365.

[25] Huyse 1999: 46–48.

[26] On *daekki* as an adverb rather than an adjective ("another"), see Harmatta 1966: 263–65; Herrenschmidt 1989: 198–202; Huyse 1999: 46; and Khačikjan 1998: 43. On *ammi*(*n*)*nu*, see Khačikjan 1998: 25.

[27] See Harmatta 1966: 255–63; Nylander 1967: 143 n. 19; Lecoq 1974: 67–73; and Huyse 1999: 46–47. On the derivational suffix *-me* in Elamite, see Khačikjan 1998: 12.

[28] Huyse 1999: 47, 60. This interpretation was anticipated by Lazard 1976: 182–84.

[29] Schmitt 1991: 73. See also Harmatta 1966: 275–77 and Lecoq 1974: 81–82.

[30] See Benveniste 1951: 40–49.

[31] On Sanskrit *pavásta*, see Mayrhofer 1986–2001/2: 105; Turner 1966: no. 8413; Monier-Williams 1899: 611b; and Böhtlingk 1879–89: 56b.

[32] In his translation, Geldner leaves *pavāsta* untranslated and lists previous interpretations in a footnote; see Geldner 1951/3: 166: "Die zwei… umspannen den nicht, der am anderen Ende dieser Welt gewirkt hat" (*dvé paváste pári táṃ ná bhūto yó asyá pāré rájaso vivéṣa*).

it seems to be an object one can exchange, which is commonly thought to be a sort of cover, cloth, or garment. In fact, this word may be a cognate of Prakrit *pottha-* "cloth." Furthermore, in Iranian languages, there are two semantically different sets of cognates: those meaning "skin, peel, cover (i.e., the external layer of something)" (Pahlavi *pōst*, Kurdish *pīst*, Persian *pōst*, Khotan Saka *pvīsta* "covered" and *pvīś-* "to cover") and those meaning "book" (Parthian *pwstg,* Khotan Saka *pūstya-*).[33] Thus, in the light of the Sanskrit and Iranian evidence, Benveniste's interpretation of Old Persian *pavastāya-* as related to earth, mud, and clay — which is based on Sanskrit *pavásta* — rests on very shaky grounds. Moreover, the only tablet envelopes from this period are letter orders, so a semantic connection between *pavastāya-*, envelopes, and clay tablets remains quite speculative. Nevertheless, the use of the word *halat* in the Elamite version of this passage (see below) sheds additional light on this Old Persian *hapax* and it is the main reason for which it is translated as "tablets" here. Still, one could translate *pavast-āyā utā carmā* (DB IV 89–90) as "on skins and parchments." Aside from the philological details, the diffusion of the Bīsitūn inscription is well attested, for instance, in the extant fragments of an Aramaic version found at Elephantine and the fragments of an inscribed stela from Babylon.[34]

Finally, the verb *hamātaxšatā* in the last line should be translated "they worked hard, strove, toiled," rather than "they copied." The verb *taxš-* means "to be active, work, produce" and has abundant cognates with similar meanings: Avestan *tāšt* "he builds" and *tatašā* "he has built," Sanskrit *tāṣṭi* "he creates" and *tákṣati* "they create" (root *takṣ-*), Greek τέκτων "builder (Indo-European **tetḱ-*)," etc.[35] However, the long vowel between the preverb and the imperfect is rather puzzling — instead of *hamātaxšatā* (h-m-a-[t]-x-š-t-a), one would expect *hamataxšatā* (h-m-[t]-x-š-t-a) — since it could hardly come from a contraction between the augment and the preverb *ham-*. Nevertheless, etymological and contextual reasons point to a meaning "to work at once, to work hard" for the verb *ham-taxš-*.[36]

This section is not translated in the Babylonian column (although there is enough space left on the rock).[37] However, it is included in the additional Elamite section, the so-called DB Elamite L, added in the field of the relief, above the (original) Elamite version of the titular of Darius (DBEL iv 1–10):[38]

| | |
|---|---|
| $^{I}$da-ri-ia-ma-u-iš $^{I}$SUNKI na-an-ri za-u- | Dariyamauš sunki(-r) na-n.ri |
| -mi-in $^{d}$u-ra-mas-da-na $^{I}$ú $^{h}$tup-pi-me | zaumin Uramasda-na u tuppi-me |
| da-a-e-ik-ki hu-ut-tá har-ri-ia-ma | daekki hutta harriya-ma |
| ap-pa šá-iš-šá in-ni šà-ri ku-ut-tá $^{h}$ha-la- | appa šašša in-ni šà-ri kutta |
| -at-uk-ku ku-ut-tá KUŠ$^{meš}$-uk-ku ku-ut-tá | halat-ukku kutta KUŠ-ukku kutta |
| $^{h}$hi-iš ku-ut-tá e-ip-pi hu-ut-tá ku- | hiš kutta eippi hutta |
| -ut-tá tal-li-ik ku-ut-tá $^{I}$ú ti- | kutta talli-k(-a)[39] kutta u |
| -ip-pa pè-ip-ra-ka$_4$ me-ni $^{h}$tup-pi-me am- | tippa pepra-k-a meni tuppi-me |
| -mín-nu $^{I}$da-a-ia-u-iš mar-ri-da ha-ti- | ammi(n)nu daiauš marri-ta-hatima[40] |
| -ma $^{I}$ú tin-gi-a $^{I}$taš-šu-íp-pè sa-pi-iš | u tingia taššu-p-p sapi-š |

> And Darius, the king, says: "By Uramasda's favor, I made this inscription otherwise (*daekki*), in 'Aryan,' which did not exist before, on clay tablet (*halat*) as well as on leath-

[33] Bailey 1979: 247b.

[34] See Greenfield and Porten 1982 and Briant 2002: 123.

[35] See Rix 2001: 638–39 and Mayrhofer 1986–2001/1: 612–13.

[36] See Harmatta 1966: 270–71, 281–82 and Schmitt 1991: 74. *Pace* Lecoq 1974: 75–77, 83–84.

[37] von Voigtlander 1978: 62.

[38] Grillot-Susini, Herrenschmidt, and Malbran-Labat 1993: 38, 58–59; Grillot-Susini 1987: 64–65; Lecoq 1974: 66–77; Herrenschmidt 1989: 193–94; and Malbran-Labat 1992.

[39] Hinz and Koch 1987/1: 274.

[40] Hinz and Koch 1987/1: 648–49.

> er. I made both [my] name and [my] genealogy. It was written and read before me. To all the lands (*daiauš marri-ta-hatima*) I sent this very inscription (*tuppi-me ammi*(*n*)*nu*). People copied it."

In the Elamite version, the statement that this inscription was the first in "Aryan" has elicited many different interpretations. Although this concrete point would take us too far from our path, it probably pertains to the writing system rather than the language. However, if we were to accept Diakonoff's proposal that the script was originally devised to write a different ancient Iranian language, Median, then this would seem to fit what Herodotus tells us (7.62):

> οἱ δὲ Μῆδοι ... ἐκαλέοντο δὲ πάλαι πρὸς πάντων ΄Αριοι, ἀπικομένης δὲ Μηδείης τῆς Κολχίδος ἐξ ᾽Αθηνέων ἐς τοὺς ᾽Αρίους τούτους μετέβαλον καὶ οὗτοι τὸ οὔνομα. αὐτοὶ περὶ σφέων ὧδε λέγουσι Μῆδοι.
>
> The Medes were formerly called by everyone Arians, but when Medea, the Colchian, came from Athens to the Arians, they too changed their name (like the Persians). This is the story the Medes tell about themselves.

The claim, explicit in the Elamite version, that this is the first time an inscription is made in "Aryan," probably refers to the Old Persian syllabary, which would have been used — at least so would the inscription claim — for the first time at Bīsitūn. It seems clear that the Elamite version was the first to be engraved, then the Babylonian, and finally the Old Persian. If the Persian king used Old Persian as his language, one may wonder why Elamite figures so prominently on the rock. More than two decades ago, Ilya Gershevitch put forward a truly groundbreaking theory.[41] According to him, the Elamite version is the true original and represents the actual words of Darius, whereas the Old Persian on the inscription is a retranslation or back translation (*Rückübersetzung*). This means that the Great King uttered the words in Old Persian, but the scribes wrote them down in Elamite and read them back to him (as the inscription says) in Old Persian. This phenomenon is labeled by Gershevitch as "alloglottography," writing a text in a language different from the language in which it is intended to be read. Among the linguistic clues that factor into this theory, the Old Persian verb meaning "to read" is especially important: *pati-pa̧rsa-* or *pati-prsa-* < *pati-* ("back") + *pa̧rs-*/*fraθ-* ("to ask").[42] The same compound verb occurs in other Iranian languages with the same meaning, "to read": Avestan *paiti-pərəsa-*, Manichean Parthian *pdbwrs*, Manichean Persian *phypwrs-*/*phybwrs-*, Sogdian *ptfs-*, and Pahlavi *ptpwrsytn* [patpursītan].[43] Thus, reading in Old Persian involved asking the scribe to read back or to *transfer* or *trans-late* the written word (Elamite) into an alien utterance (Old Persian). This mechanism would not be limited to inscriptions such as that at Bīsitūn, but it would also pertain to administrative texts, especially the Persepolis tablets, the vast majority of which are written in Elamite.

Although the mechanics of alloglottography described by Gershevitch are a bit oversimplistic, the device itself does fit the scribal setting of Achaemenid Iran. In fact, this translating motion would make particular sense since the mother tongue of the local scribes at Persepolis would seem logically to be Elamite. However, most scribes who are named in the Persepolis

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[41] Gershevitch 1979.

[42] The verbal root is well attested in Indo-European languages: Avestan *pərəsā* "I ask" and *frasā-* "question" (root *fras-*); Vedic *pr̥cháti* "he asks" and Sanskrit *prátiprāś-* "opponent in a legal matter" (root *praś*); Latin *poscō* "I demand" and *precor* "I beg"; Gothic *fraihan* (cf. German *fragen*); and so forth, all related to the Indo-European root **preḱ-*. See Pokorny 1948–1964: 821–22; Mayrhofer 1986–2001/2: 183–84; and Rix 2001: 490–91.

[43] Gershevitch 1979: 144 n. 9; idem 1961: §468; Nyberg 1974: 158b; Bailey 1979: 246b; and Kellens and Pirart 1988: 269–70.

texts happen to bear Iranian names.[44] For Iranian-speaking scribes, alloglottography would be rather preposterous. Still, one could argue that some or many of these Iranian names were hiding an actual Elamite ethnicity as a result of acculturation or simply for social convenience. Besides, perhaps the local scribes, bearing Elamite names, were less likely to be explicitly named. Furthermore, there were Babylonian scribes producing Elamite documents at Persepolis as well.[45] For these Babylonian scribes, the process of alloglottography would seem absent altogether since they were simply writing in an administrative language. Nevertheless, alloglottography does not need to be grounded in the mother tongue of the scribes. If Elamite was adopted as the administrative language of the Persepolis bureaucracy, as well as one of the languages of the Achaemenid inscriptions, then all scribes were writing in a language different from the language of utterance. Whether the native language of a scribe was Elamite, Babylonian, or Iranian, the fact is that they were all using Elamite to write administrative documents because that was the bureaucratic convention in keeping with the local, preexisting tradition of Elamite scribes. In most contexts, the intended language of utterance could not be Elamite, either because the scribe would read the texts in his own language (Iranian or Babylonian), or because he would be reading the texts in the language of the ruling group (Old Persian) or, more commonly, in Aramaic.

Despite all this, one could, at first glance, consider this alloglottography theory rather convoluted. However, there are other instances of alloglottography in the ancient Near East. In fact, alloglottography is attested in diverse cultures, from Iran and third-millennium Syria, to medieval Japan.

## ARAMEOGRAMS IN MIDDLE IRANIAN

In the same way that some of these manifestations of alloglottography are only hinted at in the writing interface (e.g., in third-millennium Syria and Mesopotamia), the Achaemenid alloglottography, after switching from Elamography to Aramography, would eventually leave traces in the manner in which later Iranian languages were written. The original alloglottography of the Achaemenid period, Elamography, progressively switched to Arameography probably during the fifth century B.C.[46] This new Arameographic alloglottography was partly preserved in those scribal relics known as Arameograms. The writing of Middle Iranian languages involved a large number of Arameograms, to the point that special dictionaries of Arameograms were compiled during the Middle Ages, such as the famous *Frahang-i Pahlavīk*.[47] For instance, the sequence of letters MLKʾ, which means "king" in Aramaic (*malkā*), was used to write Middle Iranian *šāh* and Sogdian *əxšēwanē*, both meaning "king" as well. In some instances, these Arameograms occur with Aramaic pronominal suffixes that do not appear reflected in their Iranian usage: ʾḤTH "his sister" in Aramaic for Iranian *xʷah* "sister"; BRH "his son" for Iranian *pus* "son." A particularly interesting feature of these Arameograms is that some of them (at least five among those listed in the *Frahang-i Pahlavīk*) occur with the first singular possessive suffix, although they clearly

[44] Lewis 1994: 27.

[45] Hinz 1971: 309; Stolper 1984: 305; and Lewis 1994: 24–28. Aside from the scribes themselves, the Persepolis tablets do bear witness to a rather multi-ethnic setting, with Egyptian, Akkadian, West Semitic, Anatolian, Greek, and, of course, Iranian names, as Stolper points out. See also Delaunay 1976; Root 1997; and Tavernier 2002c.

[46] Gershevitch 1979: 138–40 and Sundermann 1985: 104–05. The existence of Arameographic alloglottography *avant la lettre* was proposed long before Gershevitch's Elamographic theory; see Schaeder 1930: 199–212 (1–14) and Polotsky 1932 (= 1971: 631–41).

[47] Henning 1958: 21–40; Humbach 1974; Lentz 1978; Skjærvø 1983; idem 1989; Lemosín 1984; Sundermann 1985; Voigt 1989; and Toll 1990. On the *Frahang-i Pahlavīk,* see Junker 1912; idem 1955; Nyberg, Utas, and Toll 1988; and Ebeling 1941 (Ebeling's work is now partly obsolete).

stand for the noun without any suffix: MRWḤY = *x*$^{w}$*atāi* "lord"; ʾBY = *pit* "father"; ʾḤY = *brāt* "brother"; ʾMY = *māt* "mother"; and BRY = *pus* "son." Cross-linguistically, this phenomenon poses a mystery since the first singular person is the most marked in any pronominal system (as opposed to the least marked, the third singular person). Thus, to use forms with first-singular possessive suffixes as neutralized forms is quite unusual.[48] Nevertheless, this very phenomenon bears witness to the deeply alien nature of the use of Arameograms and adds to the conventional — that is, inherently deceiving and frequently deceitful — nature of writing as a scribal device bound by tradition and, probably, a vague sense of antiquarian delight stemming from the very origin of Middle Iranian scripts (i.e., Aramaic scripts).

## THE SEMITICIZATION OF SUMERIAN IN THIRD-MILLENNIUM SYRIA AND MESOPOTAMIA AND EARLY JAPANESE WRITING

The fact is that total or partial alloglottography was not particularly unusual in the ancient Near East. For instance, in Ebla (Tell Mardīḫ in Syria, mid-third millennium), even an apparently Sumerian text was actually read in Semitic.[49] This phenomenon has close typological parallels in Early Japanese writing. In texts from Ebla, as well as in several Early Dynastic texts from Mesopotamia, one finds apparently Sumerian words that show elements of Semiticization. This is hinted at by the occurrence of endings — normally the nominative case-marker *-u*[*m*] — that Semiticize the appearance of the Sumerian word. Examples can be found in texts of different genres, such as **u$_3$-sig$_{17}$-gu$_2$** and **u$_2$-si-gum$_2$** instead of **u$_3$-sa$_2$(.g)** "sleep" in an Ebla incantation (ARET 5 8b, 9). Moreover, elements of Semiticization occur in variant entries within lexical lists; for example, **a-gu** given as a reading of **aga** (**DUN$_3$-*gunû***) "crown" in a lexical list (Aa 8/1:132 [MSL 14 p. 492]). Similar forms — exhibiting a certain level of fluctuation in the final vowel, which mirrors the same phenomenon in Neo-Babylonian Akkadian — are not uncommon in later (mostly Neo-Babylonian) copies of the Syllabaries A and B (S$^{a}$ and S$^{b}$, MSL 3). This explicit Semiticization is particularly common in some sign lists and in sign names.[50]

The so-called "Ebla sign list" was a sort of card index that enabled scribes to read the Early Dynastic list LU$_2$ A (the latter is also known as the "Standard profession list").[51] In this Ebla sign list, the readings of the signs appear Semiticized essentially by attaching an /-um/ ending (i.e., the marker of the nominative singular case in Akkadian); in many cases, the attachment is the sign LUM, to be read **num$_2$** (**šita$_x$** = **ti-iš-da-num$_2$**, RAD = **me-si-za-num$_2$**, **adkin** = **a-ti-gi-num$_2$**), **gum$_2$** (**nisag** = **li-sa-gum$_2$**, **sig** = **si-gum$_2$**), and **lum** (**kisal** = **gi-za-lum**, **lagar** = **nu-gu$_2$-lum**). Further examples of the early Semiticization of Sumerian can be found in at least two other Ebla and Early Dynastic texts:

- One of the versions (A II) of an Ebla literary composition (ARET 5 24–26); for example, **nu-du-bu$_3$** corresponding to **nu-dub$_2$**$^{!}$(GEŠTIN), **nu-si-gi-ni** to **nu-siki**, **nu-du-gu$_2$-wi-in** to **nu-tuku$_x$**(HUB$_2$)[52]

[48] In Ebla texts, the first singular possessive suffix **-mu** occurs in a similar, neutralized distribution, such as **a-mu** = *a-bù* (e.g., **a-mu**-*sù* in ARET 11 ms. 3, 11). This might suggest the existence of a lost list of kinship terms with **-mu** (similar to the Old Babylonian **ugu-mu** list). However, the situation is probably more complicated and can elicit other possible explanations.

[49] Civil and Rubio 1999.

[50] See Christian 1913; Lieberman 1977; Gong 1993; idem 1997; idem 2000; and idem 2003.

[51] See Archi 1987. On LU$_2$ A, see Arcari 1983; Civil 1984: 94–97; and Civil and Rubio 1999: 265. Properly speaking, this Ebla "Sign list" (MEE 3 51–52 pp. 187–207 + TM.25.G.12680) cannot be regarded as a list of "sign names" since the latter follow completely different patterns in the later tradition.

[52] See Krebernik 1997.

- An unorthographic monolingual list of domestic animals from Ebla (MEE 3 62) with duplicates in Fāra (SF 81), Abū Ṣalābīḫ (OIP 99 25–26), as well as Ebla (MEE 3 13–16); for example, **šu-gu** instead of the expected **šu-gi** (later **šu-gi$_4$**)[53]

Some instances of Semiticization reflected in the spelling probably do not imply alloglottography, but rather the nativized use of technical *Fremdwörter*, as opposed to true *Lehnwörter*, especially in the case of sign names.[54] However, in the case of the Ebla corpus, it is quite unlikely that any text at all was ever intended to be read in Sumerian (i.e., to be read aloud in Sumerian).[55] In fact, a few texts from Ebla and from other Early Dynastic corpora point to the possibility of having Sumerian read as Akkadian, as well as, in the light of early Japanese typological parallels, having Sumerian read in a Semiticized version (e.g., with Semitic endings).[56]

The early texts in Old Japanese (*Zyōko Nihongo*), from the *Nara* period (ca. A.D. 700–800), offer an illuminating parallel. In the *Kojiki* (712), the *Nihon shoki* (720), and the *Man'yōshū* (ca. 759), whole sentences are written in Chinese characters following Chinese conventions and Chinese word order. Thus, such sentences would seem to be completely in Chinese. In fact, the preface to the *Kojiki* could pass, for the most part, for an actual Chinese text. Nevertheless, these sentences (*kanbun* sentences) can be read and understood both in Chinese and in Japanese.[57] There were two styles of reading for *kanbun* sentences: *ondoku* and *kundoku*. The latter was a true case of alloglottography: Chinese characters were read as the native Japanese words corresponding in meaning, the word order was changed (e.g., Chinese order is SVO, while Japanese is SOV), and Japanese morphological elements were added. The other style, *ondoku*, was rather simpler, and it implied only the modification of the Chinese reading of the character in order to make it fit into the phonology and phonotactics of Japanese.[58] Thus, the *ondoku* style was a mere process of reading Chinese characters in Japanized pronunciation. For instance, the sequence of Chinese characters 見物 *jiàn wù* (literally, "see thing") was read in two different ways:

- *ondoku* style ("written bilingualism") → 見物 read as *kenbutsu* (ultimately, an adaptation of Middle Chinese *kenH-mjut*)[59]
- *kundoku* style (alloglottography) → 見物 read as *mono-o-miru*, translating both lexemes into Japanese, reversing the word order, and adding the Japanese objective suffix *-o* and the conclusive *-ru*

From the point of view of writing, Chinese characters could be used as a phonetic means of writing Japanese in different ways.[60] For instance, the Japanese word for "mountain," *yama*, could be written in two different ways:

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[53] Krecher 1982; Krispijn 1981–82; and Archi 1992: 5.

[54] A *Lehnwort* refers to a true loanword that has undergone a process of adaptation or nativization, such as English *pantry* (< Old French *paneterie*) and Japanese *kuizu* (< English *quiz*). A *Fremdwort* is a foreign word that is used without attempting to adapt its phonology and morphology to those of the borrowing language and which remains foreign in usage and semantic range; for example, *zeitgeist* and *samurai* in English. Some (especially technical) terms may undergo partial nativization, frequently within the phonological realm, without losing their foreignness and restricted usage, as *diesel* in Spanish and *creole* in English. On *Lehnwörter* vs. *Fremdwörter*, see Yang 1990: 11 and Mankowski 2000: 8. Nevertheless, this dichotomy should not be taken as an all-encompassing classification of borrowings since it has some serious limitations; see Haugen 1950: 230.

[55] On the linguistic situation in Ebla, see Fronzaroli 1983; idem 1995; Civil 1984; Michalowski 1987b; and Civil and Rubio 1999.

[56] Civil 1984: 75–77.

[57] Lange 1973: 9–10.

[58] Lange 1973: 14.

[59] The transcription of 見 in Old Chinese was probably **kens* and in Middle Chinese *kenH* (*jiàn* < *kenH* < **kens*); 物 was probably read **mjut* in Old Chinese and also *mjut* in Middle Chinese. See Baxter 1992: 686, 767, 442.

[60] Seeley 1991: 49–53.

- With the Chinese sign 山 *shān*, which had two readings:
  - *san* as an *on*-phonogram in the *Japanizing* style (*ondoku*)
  - *yama* as a *kun*-phonogram in the properly Japanese style (*kundoku*)
- With a sequence of two Chinese signs, 也 麻 *yě* + *má*, regardless of their actual meaning in Chinese (*yě* is a marker of nominal sentences and *má* is a noun meaning "hemp")[61]

The use of Chinese characters as phonograms was called *man'yōgana* and included two different mechanisms: *ongana* (or *jiongana*), based on the *on* reading, such as 也 麻 *yama*; and *kungana* (or *jikungana*), based on the *kun* reading.[62] The *kungana* (more common in the *Man'yōshū* than in any other work) consisted in the use of a Chinese sign to write a Japanese word that was a homophone of the Japanese word having the same meaning as that Chinese character; for example, 張 (Standard Mandarin *zhāng* "to stretch") was used to write Japanese *haru* "spring" on the basis of Japanese *haru* "to stretch."[63] Thus, an early Japanese scribe used Chinese characters to write Japanese either according to their Chinese meanings (山 *yama*) or on the basis of their readings; and these readings could be either Sino-Japanese (*on*-readings such as 也 麻 *yama*) or Japanese (*kun*-readings such as 張 *haru* "spring"). The result made both the act of writing and the act of reading quite complicated and cumbersome and triggered meta-linguistic reflections, so to speak, already in the earliest compositions, such as the preface to the *Kojiki* itself.[64] In his commentary to the *Kojiki* (the *Kojiki-den*), the eighteenth-century Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga compiled detailed explanations of the use of writing, as well as the method of reading, and he inserted *kana* reading glosses to facilitate the reading of *man'yōgana* in his annotations.[65] Thus, these early writing strategies have been regarded as alien and often alienating by Japanese readers throughout history.

The early scribal strategies for writing Japanese phonetically with Chinese characters were, for the most part, abandoned when the *kana* syllabaries (*katakana* or "partial *kana*" and *hiragana* or "plain *kana*") were created. These syllabaries were the result of a process of simplification of the Chinese characters used in logograms, which came as a consequence of the wider use of phonographic writings. The creation of these small subsets of signs (syllabaries) with exclusively phonographic readings, without any logographic value, made unnecessary the phonetic recycling of logograms — although the latter persisted in traditional spellings and proper names. Thus, after this early period of orthographic hesitation, the Japanese writing system emerged as a graphematic device in which two (or three) different subsets of signs were specialized as logograms (*kanji*) and as syllabaries (*hiragana* and *katakana*).

Leo Loveday has argued that the *ondoku* style points to a diglossic bilingual setting in the realm of writing, while the *kundoku* style fits into an exclusively diglossic setting after a process of nativization which caused the loss of written bilingualism.[66] However, the situation of Early

[61] The use of *yě* 也 for a sound closer to /ya/ is explained in the light of its Middle Chinese transcription *yæH*, which is reflected in its common Sino-Japanese reading *ya*; see Baxter 2000: 162. See also Karlgren 1957: no. 4g.

[62] On the labels *phonogram* and *logogram*, see Unger and DeFrancis 1995: 50.

[63] *Man'yōshū* 529; see Seeley 1991: 50. Chinese 張 (Standard Mandarin *zhāng*) was read *trjang* in Middle and Old Chinese; see Baxter 1992: 808.

[64] See *Kojiki*, translated by D. L. Philippi (1968: 43): "If expressed completely in *ideographic* writing, the words will not correspond exactly with the meaning, and if written entirely *phonetically*, the account will be much longer. For this reason, at times *ideographic* and *phonetic* writing have been used in the same phrase, and at times the whole matter has been recorded *ideographically*" (italics mine).

[65] See Motoori 1997: 75–211.

[66] See Loveday 1996: 34: "Thus, the Japanese had come to reconceptualize reading and writing in Chinese characters as reading and writing Japanese in Chinese characters […] Because of this fundamental change of awareness, from foreign to native, of the language that was being represented by characters, although the surface script appeared basically unchanged in high-status texts, it is necessary to

Japanese was even more artificial than that of written bilingualism and written diglossia. Japanese scholars were not originally taught the actual pronunciation of Chinese characters in Chinese, but rather a specific Korean tradition of reading Chinese signs — that of the Korean kingdom of Paekche — as Bentley has pointed out.[67]

The *ondoku* reading of Chinese characters in a Japanized pronunciation was simply a way of reading, a style, which at the beginning did not affect writing. The Semiticized forms in Sumerian texts mentioned above can be regarded as the written reflection of an *ondoku*-like style of reading Sumerian in Semitic context, and might perhaps point to a diglossic bilingual setting within the scribal realm. Moreover, properly Semitic forms inserted in Sumerian texts would represent the written expression of a more complicated *kundoku*-like style of reading, a true instance of alloglottography. For instance, in Sumerian documents from the Ur III period, the many Semitic loanwords and Semitic foreign words (*Fremdwörter*) are always spelled with mimation, whereas the abundant Semitic personal names (both Akkadian and Amorite) sometimes do not have mimation when one would expect it. Furthermore, there were probably two styles of using Sumerian to write Semitic:

- Sumerian read as Semiticized Sumerian, at least in part, by adding endings that somehow sounded Semitic
- Sumerian read as Semitic, which is the usual mechanism hidden behind what we call Sumerograms, but which constituted alloglottography when it affected whole sentences

The first mode may have left traces in some Early Dynastic texts, whose genre or nature made them more likely to reflect this way of reading in the writing. This is clearer in the case of Ebla, whose inhabitants spoke Eblaite (an East Semitic language) and where Sumerian belonged to the realm of writing rather than to that of language. The second style is more difficult to detect due to the dearth of clues in the writing itself.

True alloglottography needs to be distinguished from partial alloglottography. The latter is not only defined by a variable of quantity but also by a qualitative criterion. Regardless of the number of words alloglottographically written, true alloglottography implies that the text in question could be read and grammatically understood in the *other* language. For instance, a Sumerian-looking inscription such as that of the Sargonic King Sharkalisharri attested in bricks and brick stamps was most likely never read in Sumerian (Šarkališarrī 4):[68]

šar-kà-lí-LUGAL-rí LUGAL a-kà-dè$^{ki}$ BA.DIM$_2$ E$_2$ $^{d}$en-lil$_2$

The main clue lies in the sequence BA.DIM$_2$, which cannot be a finite verbal form because of its position — Sumerian and Akkadian are verb-final languages. Thus, the BA sign is not a verbal prefix but probably a phonogrammatic determinative, a reading aid: $^{ba}$DIM$_2$ = *bānûm* "builder." In fact, this is the way BA.DIM$_2$ (= $^{ba}$DIM$_2$ = *bānûm*) is used in later royal inscriptions (Warad-Sin, Hammurabi, Sin-kašid).[69] The inscription was probably read in Akkadian: *Šar-kali-šarrī šar Akkade bāni bīti Enlil* "Sharkalisharri, king of Akkad, builder of the temple of Enlil." Since the sequence BA.DIM$_2$ in this inscription could hardly be read as a Sumerian verbal form, the text does not exhibit true alloglottography, even if all the words (other than names) are spelled with Sumerian sign sequences.[70]

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recategorize the setting from + diglossa + bilingualism to + diglossa - bilingualism."

[67] Bentley 2001.

[68] Gelb and Kienast 1990: 115–16 and Frayne 1993: 189–90.

[69] Frayne 1990: 211 (Warad-Sin 7:40), 350 (Hammurabi 13:6), 352 (Hammurabi 15:6), and 441 (Sin-kašid 1:4).

[70] This form cannot be explained in light of the use of the Sumerian verbal prefix /ba-/ in Ebla texts. It has been argued that in that corpus, /ba-/ was probably a marker of "preterite," whereas /bi-/ would have been a default prefix;

Some of the earliest Mesopotamian texts are still difficult to understand, and it is not always certain whether they were read in Sumerian or in Akkadian. Gelb put forward a series of criteria to decide the language of an early Mesopotamian text.[71] The features that pertain more directly to the writing interface are as follows: (1) the use of certain logograms that do not occur in later Sumerian texts; (2) the use of logograms without morphemes; and (3) the presence of syllabograms unattested in Sumerian. Criterion (2) is not particularly decisive, as early Sumerian texts show instances of morphemeless or almost morphemeless verbal stems that stood for finite verbal forms (merely a matter of the writing interface). Moreover, criterion (3) also poses some problems. For instance, the syllabic reading *ʾà* of $E_2$ mentioned by Gelb was not simply a Semitic reading. The reading *ʾà* can be connected to the seemingly irregular reflexes of **$e_2$-gal** in Semitic: Old Akkadian *akallum*; Old Babylonian *ekallum*; Hebrew *hêkāl*; Syriac *haiklā* (> Arabic *haikal*). It may be related to another Sumerian word for "house," **$ga_2$**.[72] Furthermore, the name of the god Ea may have actually been **Ḥayyā* (> **Ayya*). In sum, the Sumerian reading of $E_2$ as **$e_2$** is merely conventional in several instances.[73] Finally, in diachronic terms, criterion (1) is probably the weakest of the three. As Miguel Civil noticed, there was an extensive substitution of logograms in Sumerian texts — that is, the same words were written with different logograms — immediately before the beginning of the Ur III period.[74] Despite these three criteria, it is the culturally-grounded factors (measurement systems, patronymic conventions) that determine the language behind the writing in almost all the ambiguous cases in the corpus studied by Gelb. However, these factors are absent in other genres of early texts.

## LANGUAGE AND WRITING IN ANATOLIA

The scribes of Hattusa lived at a crossroad of traditions: the abundant Hurrian corpus, the pre-existing Hattic tradition in the Hattic language, the Mesopotamian curriculum that probably came together with the script, and their own Hittite texts (many of them versions of Hurrian compositions).[75] The so-called "Epic of emancipation" (Hittite *parā tarnumar* = Hurrian *kirenzi* "emancipation, manumission," like Akkadian *andurāru*) represents the intersection of all these traditions; it is an extensive (albeit fragmentary) bilingual (in Hittite and Hurrian) whose genre seems grounded in early Hattic songs of release.[76] For all these corpora and languages (Hurrian, Hattic, Hittite, and Akkadian) the Hittite scribes used cuneiform. A native script (Luwian hieroglyphs), originating in personal seals, was eventually reserved for monumental inscriptions, and occurs as well in a small group of letters and documents inscribed on soft lead strips. The dearth of attestations of Luwian outside seals and inscriptions speaks against the possibility of a missing corpus of Luwian hieroglyphic texts written on softer materials — although some may regard

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see D'Agostino 1990: 29–35 and idem 1991: 169–72. The writing of Sumerian verbal forms in Ebla texts did not generally obey the parameters of Sumerian grammar; it was rather the consequence of a specific scribal and lexicographic tradition of using Sumerograms, individually or in sequences, to write Eblaite. Regardless, in Sumerian, this object (**$e_2$ $^{d}$en-lil$_2$**) would normally occur with the verb **$du_3$**, but not with **$dim_2$**.

[71] See Gelb, Steinkeller, and Whiting 1991: 11–14.

[72] Gelb 1961: 25–26.

[73] See Diakonoff 1981:83 n. 22; Lambert 1984: 399; Kienast 1987; and Tonietti 2003. On **$e_2$-an-na** = /hayyan(n)a(k)/ > /hayyan(a)k-u/ > *ayyaku*, see Cavigneaux 1998 and Beaulieu 2002.

[74] Civil 1984: 87.

[75] On the Mesopotamian element in the Hattusa tradition, see Wilhelm 1992 and Karasu 2001.

[76] KBo 32 (Otten and Rüster); Neu 1996. See also Otto 2001; Wilhelm 1996a; and the articles in the first issue of the journal *Amurru* (1996). On the Hattic genre of "songs of release," see Daddi 2001. Concerning its possible Homeric parallels, see Schuol 2002.

this as merely an *argumentum e silentio*. In essence, Luwian hieroglyphs were always meant for display, be it on monumental inscriptions or be it on seals. Moreover, the difference between cuneiform Hittite and Hieroglyphic Luwian goes beyond the writing system and exhibits some important dialectal differences, as highlighted by the existence of Luwian texts in cuneiform script. The scribes were somehow bound to use one script or another, and one language or another, depending on very concrete variables: genre, tradition, scribal curriculum, etc. The Anatolian distribution of languages and scripts could suggest the existence of alloglottography, as in Achaemenid Iran. In order to explore this possibility, one needs to consider first the history of writing in Anatolia.

Cuneiform was adopted and adapted by Hittite scribes probably at the end of the third millennium or the beginning of the second. Because of the orthographic conventions, Gamkrelidze argued that both the Hurrian and the Hittite syllabaries probably originated in a North Syrian version of the Old Akkadian syllabary, or rather a North Syrian descendant of the Sargonic syllabary.[77] This North Syrian link would explain why the shapes of Hittite cuneiform signs are closer to those of texts from Alalaḫ Stratum VII (eighteenth/seventeenth century).[78] Aside from paleography, the use of *š*-signs in Hittite to write a plain *s* is probably due to the fact that in Old Akkadian the *š*-signs (ŠA, ŠE, ŠI, ŠU) were employed to write the interdental /θ/ — which eventually merged with /š/ in later Akkadian dialects — whereas /s/ was written with *z*-signs (ZA = *sà*, ZÉ, ZI = *sí*, ZU = *sú*).[79] Typological constraints aside — languages with a single voiceless sibilant have a dental sibilant, never a palato-alveolar — the Egyptian transliterations of Hittite names use /s/ instead of /š/: *Mrsr* = Muršiliš/Mursilis [mursili-s]; *Htrsr* = Hattušiliš/Hattusilis [hatusili-s] (<CC> = voiceless; <C> = voiced); etc.[80] Nevertheless, the name *Šuppiluliuma* appears as *θpllm* in Ugaritic texts. In Ugarit as well, the Hurrian noun *šarri* ("king"), which occurs in anthroponyms and is spelled with <š> signs in cuneiform, is spelled *θr*.[81]

Furthermore, there is a series of spelling features shared by the Hittite, Hurrian, Alalaḫ (Stratum IV), and Nuzi syllabaries:[82]

- Spelling of a double stop indicates voiceless consonant
- The sign PI is used with its value *w* + vowel (<wa>, <we>, <wi>, <wu>), while [pi] is written with the sign BI = *pí*[83]
- The sign QA is used as a mere variant of KA and GA

As mentioned earlier, the Syrian link in the transmission of cuneiform from Mesopotamia to Anatolia also affects the shape of signs. In the late second millennium, there were two scribal schools at Emar (Tell Meskene), a local Syrian school and a more international chancellery style (Syro-Hittite), both schools exhibiting differences in *ductus* and spelling conventions, as well as phraseology and grammar.[84] In terms of sign shapes, the Syrian type at Emar and everywhere else

[77] Gamkrelidze 1961 and 1982. See also Rüster and Neu 1989: 15–16; Klengel 1998b; and Klinger 1998.

[78] Klengel 1998b: 333 and Klinger 1998: 369. Alalaḫ VII (modern Tell Açana) was destroyed by Hattusili I and the toponym appears as *Alalḫa*/*Alḫalḫa* in his *Annals* (CTH 4) — not to be confused with *Alaḫḫa*/*Alḫa* — which are preserved in Akkadian and Hittite versions (KBo 10: 1–3); see Klengel 1998a: 39, 46–53 and Bryce 1998: 75–76.

[79] See Rubio 2003: 364–67.

[80] Kimball 1999: 106. For Egyptian names in Hittite texts, see Edel 1980.

[81] See del Olmo and Sanmartín 2003/2: 925, 931.

[82] Wilhelm 1970: 15–16 and Negri Scafa 1999: 68–69.

[83] In Hurrian, Hattic, Luwian, and Palaic texts from Boğazköy, the sign PI is followed by the signs A, E, I, U, or Ú, which work as phonetic post-determinatives ($wa^a$, $we^e$, $wi^i$, $wu^u$, $wu^ú$). In the case of Hurrian, the writing is frequently redundant ($wa^a$-a, $we^e$-e, $wi^i$-i, $wu^u$-u) and it may otherwise indicate /f/; see Neu 1988: 7 n. 12 and Wegner 2000: 38–39.

[84] Wilcke 1992.

in Syria is close to the Old Hittite script. Nonetheless, one should keep in mind that the Old Hittite textual tradition does not necessarily represent the beginning of the use of Hittite cuneiform, but simply the beginning of the archive from Hattusa.[85]

Because of the geographic and chronological proximity, Kaneš (modern Kül Tepe, in Anatolia) would seem a good candidate for the source of Hittite cuneiform. In fact, among the Old Assyrian documents from Kaneš, there are instances of a North Syrian *ductus*, very close to the Old Hittite and Syrian *ducti*.[86] However, these tablets with a North Syrian *ductus* date to the later phase of *kārum* Kaneš (Stratum 1b), a fact that rules out any role in the origins of Hittite cuneiform. Moreover, some scribes mentioned in tablets from Kaneš bear Hurrian names.[87] This would make Kaneš the place of adoption of Mesopotamian cuneiform in Anatolia and Hurrian scribes the likely adapters and diffusers of the script. However, the spelling of sibilants in Old Assyrian points to the merger of *$\theta$, *$\check{s}$, and *$\acute{s}$, which would not explain why Hittite used $\check{s}$-signs for what was a dental /s/.[88] Furthermore, Old Assyrian paleography is quite distinctive and it seems unlikely to be the model for Old Hittite sign shapes. All in all, the shape of Hittite cuneiform signs resembles quite closely that of Old Babylonian cursive, especially late Old Babylonian cursive from Alalaḫ VII.[89] Likewise, the Sumerograms and spelling conventions used to write Hittite texts are different from those used in Old Assyrian texts. In general, Hittite spelling conventions belong to a northern tradition also shared by the Hurrian, Alalaḫ (Stratum IV), and Nuzi syllabaries.

Nonetheless, Kaneš played an essential role in the cultural contacts between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, as did other towns near the border, like Ḫaḫḫum. Although the vast majority of texts from Kaneš are commercial letters, one literary text was found at that site in 1958. The main character in this composition is Sargon I, king of Akkad.[90] Moreover, this early composition shares many motifs with the later legends of Sargon and Narām-Sîn. Since in the legends of these Mesopotamian kings, Anatolia is the target of these rulers' campaigns and the land of the enemies of Akkad, it might seem strange that copies and even translations of some of these legends were found in the library at Hattusa. For instance, the composition known as "The king of the battle" (*šar tamḫāri*) narrates Sargon's campaign against the Anatolian city of Purušḫanda, and it was translated into Hittite (there are even copies of the Akkadian original found in Amarna, Egypt).[91] It would seem ideologically masochistic that Hittite scribes copied and translated this composition, in which Anatolia is the land of the enemy.[92] It seems more understandable that a copy of the Cuthean legend of Narām-Sîn inscribed on a hexagonal prism was found in Hattusa since the Cuthean legend portrays the *hubris* of this Sargonic king. However, Hittites seem to have seen themselves as outsiders in the land they eventually occupied, as much outsiders as Sargon and his troops campaigning in Anatolia. The scribal labels applied to the diverse languages attested in second-millennium Anatolia seem to link Hittite and probably Hittite-speakers to the area of Kaneš, rather than to Hattusa: *nešili*/*našili* (language of Neša), *nešumnili* (language of the people of Neša), and *kanišumnili* (language of the people of Kaneš) for Hittite; *ḫattili* (language of Hat-

[85] Klinger 1998: 374.

[86] See Hecker 1992 and 1996.

[87] See Wilhelm 1996b.

[88] Compare Hecker 1968: §40f.

[89] Wilhelm 1984: 649 n. 17; Rüster and Neu 1989: 15–16; Klengel 1998b: 333; and Klinger 1998: 369.

[90] See van de Mieroop 2000.

[91] For the Akkadian versions, see Goodnick Westenholz 1997: 102–39 and Vanstiphout 1998. On the Hittite translation, see Meriggi 1968; Güterbock 1969; and Rieken 1999.

[92] The relation between the Old Assyrian traders and the local population at Kaneš was probably not particularly idyllic. This is suggested by the use of the word *nuwā'um* (Neo-Assyrian *nu'û*) to refer to the Anatolian population in Old Assyrian texts, a word that basically means "fool, stupid" (Edzard 1989; AHw 799; and CAD N/2 356–57).

ti) for Hattic; *luwili* (language of Luwiya/Arzawa) for Luwian; *pabilili* (language of Babylon) for Babylonian; *palāumnili* (language of the people of Pala) for Palaic; *ḫurlili* (language of the Hurrians) for Hurrian.[93] Furthermore, the Anitta text (Anitta being one of the earlier Hittite rulers) reflects this early political conflict — or its legendary discourse — between the natives (the Hattians, in the cities of Hattusa and Zalpa) and the newcomers (the Hittites, in Kaneš/Neša and Kuššara).[94]

All monumental inscriptions at Hattusa are in the Luwian language and hieroglyphic script, dating from Muwattalli II to Suppiluliuma II.[95] There is an inscription (the Ankara silver bowl) mentioning the victory of a Tudhaliya *labarna*, who may not be Tudhaliya IV, but perhaps Tudhaliya I/II, six generations earlier.[96] During the last three generations of the Hattusa dynasty, from Muwattalli II to Suppiluliuma II, Luwian most likely became the main language spoken at Hattusa, while Hittite probably had already died as a spoken language for the most part, surviving mostly as a written language. However, this hypothesis concerning the linguistic setting of Hattusa toward the end of the Hittite period remains unsubstantiated.[97] In origin, this hieroglyphic script was not perhaps devised to write Luwian. In fact, older hieroglyphic seals contain Hittite cuneiform.[98] Moreover, in the northeastern outskirts of Hattusa, the rock sanctuary of Yazılıkaya was probably inscribed and decorated during the reign of King Tudhaliya IV (although the shrine itself already existed) with hieroglyphics to write the names of the deities of a Hurrian pantheon.[99]

This overview of the writing system setting of Hittite Anatolia does not suggest that alloglottography ever took place there, even if the issue of the language of the early inscriptions in Luwian hieroglyphs remains open for discussion. What second-millennium Anatolia does offer is an interesting parallel for the distribution patterns of diverse writing systems. In Anatolia the local script (Luwian hieroglyphs) was used mostly for monumental inscriptions — along with seals and a few letters and documents on soft lead strips — whereas the imported script (cuneiform) was written on tablets. In ancient Iran Old Persian (the script of the dominant group) was used only on monumental inscriptions, whereas Mesopotamian cuneiform (used to write Elamite) appears on tablets. However, the parallel lies in the very existence of a pattern, which was based mostly on the material on which the text was inscribed and the physical context of the inscription, rather than on the nature of the readership. The mechanisms that trigger alloglottography originate in the intersection between the contextually, physically determined use of a specific script, on the one hand, and the traditionalism of scribes, which bound them to use a certain writing system, on the other hand.

## ALLOGLOTTOGRAPHY, TEXTUAL ARTIFICIALITY, AND SCRIBAL ANTIQUARIANISM IN SECOND- AND FIRST-MILLENNIUM MESOPOTAMIA

Partial alloglottography is inherent to cuneiform writing: Akkadian texts are full of Sumerograms, and Hittite texts abound in both Sumerograms and Akkadograms. The use of a written

[93] See, for instance, Steiner 1981.

[94] Neu 1974; Steiner 1989; idem 1992; Singer 1995; Carruba 2001; and idem 2003.

[95] See Hawkins 1986 and idem 2003.

[96] See Hawkins 2003: 146.

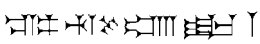
[97] Payne 2004: 3: "While one should not conclude that Luwian had therefore become the only spoken language, the preserved personal names from the period suggest that a majority of the population may have been Luwian speaking." See also van den Hout's contribution in the present volume.

[98] See, for instance, Carruba 1998; Dezzi Bardeschi 2001–2003; and d'Alfonso 2001.

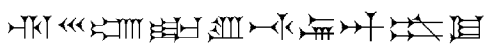
[99] Güterbock 1982 and Haas 1994: 632–39.

language different from the language of utterance seems the epitome of textual artificiality and, in many instances, scribal antiquarianism. There is a particular breed of scribal traditionalism in the antiquarian devotion to a script and a language, regardless of the practical act of reading. Alloglottography and scribal antiquarianism enhance the highly artificial nature of all cuneiform traditions. In the early years of Assyriology, Albert T. Clay already applied the label *antiquarianism* to this particular preoccupation with the past and its artistic remains in first-millennium Mesopotamia.[100] However, antiquarianism is not simply the collection of antiquities, but rather an intellectual framework within which the past is seen as a value on its own.[101] Collecting is not the object of antiquarianism, but rather a symptom of the melancholy of dispersion and loss, withering and decadence.[102] When a scribe of Assurbanipal consciously imitated the shape of some Old Babylonian signs in an inscription, this scribe was not only trying to add prestige through the patina of antiquity or a sudden atavism, he was also engaging the history of his craft and turning it into an antiquarian endeavor.

In the Mesopotamian literary and scribal tradition, the activities of writing and learning from texts are abundantly praised. There is a composition set in the scribal setting, the so-called "Examentext A," which is attested only in first-millennium copies: three from Assur, thirteen from Nineveh, one from Babylon, and one from Seleucid Uruk.[103] One of the most widely copied lines of this composition says:



sag-nam dub-sar santag



re-eš ṭup-šar-ru-ti sa-an-tak-ku (*rēš ṭupšarrūti santakku*)

The beginning of the scribal art is the wedge ("Examentext A," 12).

If seen rather than heard, this line would have an iconic strength since the Sumerian line ends precisely with the logogram for "wedge" (**santag**, *santakku*), which is itself a vertical wedge, the wedge par excellence.

Together with the signs, Sumerian as a literary and liturgical language was an important concern of scribal training. A Sumerian proverb states this in clear terms:[104]

dub-sar eme-gir$_{15}$ nu-un-zu-a a-na-am$_3$ dub-sar e-ne

A scribe who does not know Sumerian, what kind of scribe is he? (SP 2: 47)

Sumerian had died out at the end of the third millennium, when it stopped being anyone's mother tongue.[105] Although some still try to resurrect Sumerian and argue that it was a true living language after Ur III, this is completely at odds with the evidence. For instance, when Shulgi brags about his knowledge of languages (Shulgi hymns C 119–124 and B 206–219), he mentions Sumerian along with Amorite, Elamite, "Subartean," and perhaps the language of Meluhha.[106]

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[100] Clay 1912 and idem 1914.

[101] See, for instance, Krecher and Müller 1975; Beaulieu 1992; idem 1994; Renger 1996; and Rubio, in press.

[102] Of the collector Walter Benjamin (1983/1: 279 [Konvolut H 4 a, 1]) said, "er nimmt den Kampf gegen die Zerstreuung auf."

[103] Sjöberg 1975. To the textual witnesses used by Sjöberg in his edition, one must add now CT 58: 63, 64, 65. Only one seems to be a school text (KAR 111); see Gesche 2000: 218.

[104] Alster 1997/1: 54.

[105] See Gelb 1960; Kraus 1970: 89–93; Cooper 1973; Michalowski 2000 (as well as his contribution in the present volume). For a different historical approach to the death of Sumerian, see Sallaberger 2004.

[106] Shulgi B 211–12: [**lu$_2$**$^{?}$] **kur gi$_6$-gi$_6$-ga-ke$_4$ ga$_2$-e-me-en** [**gu$_2$ mu-na**]-$^{\lceil}$**de$_2$**$^{\rfloor}$**-e** "with the man of 'the black mountains' I myself speak." The expression "black mountains" may refer to Meluhha, as in the *Curse of Akkade* (48): **mu-luh-ha$^{ki}$ lu$_2$ kur gi$_6$-ga-ke$_4$** "Meluhhans, men of the

Akkadian does not appear explicitly mentioned in the list of Shulgi's languages. One does not normally boast about knowing one's own mother tongue. However, Sumerian does appear listed, and thus it is unlikely that Sumerian was Shulgi's native language. Moreover, Shulgi is said to have attended the **$e_2$-dub-da** ("the house of tablets," i.e., "the school"), one of whose main purposes was instruction in Sumerian (Shulgi hymn B 13–14). Furthermore, after Ur III, the death of Sumerian as a spoken language is implicit in many scholarly contexts. For instance, a Sumerian dialogue set in the school milieu (the **$e_2$-dub-ba**), which is preserved in at least fourteen different Old Babylonian copies from Nippur and is known now as "Edubba D," begins with an exchange that could only take place after Sumerian had already been dead for a while:[107]

$lu_2$-tur [dumu $e_2$-dub-ba-(a)-me-en dumu] ⌜$e_2$⌝-[dub-ba-me-en]
tukum-bi dumu $e_2$-dub-ba-[(a)-me-en]
[eme]-$gir_{15}$ e-zu-$u_3$-a[$m_3$]
[eme]-⌜$gir_{15}$⌝-ta inim e-da-bal-e-en

Young man, are you a student? — Yes, I am a student.
If you are a student,
do you know Sumerian?
Yes, I can speak Sumerian.

Sumerian was most likely used in scribal circles and probably spoken among teachers and scribes, as was the case of Latin in some academic and clerical circles well into the twentieth century.[108] Translation was frequently involved in the act of reading a Sumerian text in Akkadian, as a proverb seems to indicate:[109]

dub-sar eme-$gir_{15}$ nu-un-zu-a inim-bala-e me-da $he_2$-en-$tum_3$

If the scribe does not know Sumerian, how will the translator succeed? (SP 2.49)

In this context, a scribe had to deal with two parallel streams of tradition: a written curriculum characterized by an antiquarian ideology and an oral heritage of scholarly interpretation of this written tradition. This situation resembles the linguistic dichotomy of alloglottography, in which the oral component (the language of utterance) is completely divorced from the written anchor (the language in which the text is written).

Throughout Mesopotamian history, scribes painstakingly learned a language that had long died (Sumerian) and had to use an artificial and conservative variant of their native language (an Akkadian dialect).[110] For the most part, the late Akkadian dialects (Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Late Babylonian) were not spoken languages, but rather manufactured attempts to preserve a linguistic relic, from which all spoken dialects had departed long ago. The different degrees of fluctuation in final short vowels and case endings indicates that the actual language of these

black mountains." The same epithet (**kur $gi_6$** "black mountains") is used for Meluhha in *Enki and the World Order* (221). Thus, this may refer to the language of Meluhha. A Sargonic seal mentions an interpreter from Meluhha: *šu-i-lí-šu*$_{11}$ **eme-bal me-luh-ha**$^{ki}$; see Boehmer 1965: fig. 47 no. 557; Edzard 1968–69: 15 no. 33; Rubio 2000; and idem, in press. Although the majority of anthroponyms associated with Subartu are Hurrian, the label "Subartean" appears in some lexical list along with words that are neither Akkadian nor Sumerian in general (cf. A. Cavigneaux 1998: 640a). On Subartu and Subartean, see Michalowski 1986 and idem 1999.

[107] For the edition and study of this composition, see Civil 1985 (on the restoration of the first lines and the translation of the verb **inim — bal**, see Civil 1985: 73).

[108] On Sumerian spoken in the **$e_2$-dub-ba**, see Charpin 1994. This situation of restricted use as a "male language" would explain the features of spokenness that can be detected in some Ur III letters and administrative and legal texts (cf. Sallaberger 1999: 130). On the category of "male languages," see Ong 1977: 22–34; Michalowski 1987a: 60–62.

[109] Alster 1997/1: 54.

[110] See Leichty 1993: 27 and Rubio, in press.

scribes did not need these endings anymore.[111] This can be seen in the transition from Neo-Babylonian to Late Babylonian since the latter exhibits a much higher fluctuation in *Auslaut* vowels and case endings. In fact, the artificiality of Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian as preserved in the written record seems easy to accept.[112]

Grammatical variations in Neo-Assyrian have been regarded as a reflection of actual spoken variants.[113] It is true that some variations in lexicon and morphology may respond to geographical (diatopic), diachronic, and even diastratic and idiolectic variables, but most, especially spelling variations, are more likely to point to the agonizing status of certain grammatical features in the linguistic competence of the scribes.[114] In regard to final short vowels and case endings, it is true that Neo-Assyrian exhibits more regularity than Neo- and Late Babylonian. Nevertheless, Neo-Assyrian does present some unmistakable traits that confirm this general linguistic setting, especially the existence of numerous instances of substantives "with the wrong case ending" — as some grammarians still put it — and the frequency of the so-called shortened forms (i.e., verbs and nouns that are missing a final short vowel). In fact, this is a general phenomenon both in Akkadian and in other Semitic languages. The status of final short vowels and the apparent loss of mimation are structurally linked — as in the case of Arabic *iʿrāb* (final short vowels in nominal and verbal forms) and *tanwīn* (case endings *-un*, *-an*, *-in*) — and the spelling in late Akkadian dialects points to the conservative scribal struggle to keep the remnants of a disintegrating set of morphological markers.[115] Whereas it would be impossible to understand one of Cicero's sentences without the case endings, in Akkadian these morphological markers had always had a limited functional yield. Word order, prepositions, particles, and formulaic phraseology, were responsible for most of the marking of syntactical functions even in early dialects such as Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian.[116]

Eventually, the Aramaic presence in both Assyria and Babylonia left its deep mark on the language as many scribes had Aramaic as their native tongue. An alloglottographic way of reading (as with Old Persian and Elamite and, much earlier, with Akkadian and Sumerian) may have been fairly common at a time in which most people spoke Aramaic already.[117] It may not be mere coincidence that the expression "Assyrian letters (or script)" was used by some Greek authors (Ἀσσύρια γράμματα), in the so-called Demotic Chronicle (*sḫ ʾšr*) and in Rabbinical texts (*kětāb ʾaššūrī*), to refer to the Aramaic script.[118] Such interactive mechanisms transpire in the gradual *alphabetization* of the cuneiform syllabary in first-millennium Mesopotamia.[119] In such a schizophrenic scribal setting, the dissociation between writing and orality was quintessential to the conservative and ultimately antiquarian ideology of scholars and learned kings. Alloglottography, in all its incarnations and degrees, was an expression of this dissociative anxiety, which

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[111] See Hyatt 1941; von Soden 1995: §63e; Reiner 1966: 66; Mayer 1971: §49.1; Groneberg 1987/1: 78–79; Stein 2000: 31–34; Hämeen-Anttila 2000: 32–33, 50, 77; and Luukko 2004: 109–15.

[112] See Woodington 1982: 11–12.

[113] See Luukko 2004: 6–16.

[114] *Pace* Hämeen-Anttila (2000: 32–33) and Luukko (2004: 8–9).

[115] Rubio 2002: 240–41. In actuality, to talk about the "loss" of case endings is an oversimplification. On Arabic and the possibility of reconstructing a Semitic system with optional case endings, see Owens 1998.

[116] Outside Mesopotamia, the so-called "peripheral Akkadian dialects" (such as "Amarna Akkadian") are mostly constructs of modern grammarians. For instance, "Akkadian" letters were most likely read in the local languages, in a customary alloglottographic reading. See von Dassow 2003.

[117] On the Aramaic and Aramaean presence, see Tadmor 1982; Millard 1983; Fales 1986; idem 2000; Postgate 1989: 1–10; and Melville 1999. On Aramaic elements in Neo-Babylonian, see, for instance, Schaudig 2001: 309–13.

[118] Schmitt 1992a.

[119] Streck 2001. See also Geller 1997–2000: 144–46 and Cross and Huehnergard 2003.

estranged writing from speech to the point that writing and speech were inhabited by different languages.

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AHw | W. von Soden, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch |
| ARET | Archivi reali di Ebla, Testi |
| CAD | Chicago Assyrian Dictionary |
| CT | Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets |
| DB | Bīsitūn Inscription of Darius |
| DBEL | Elamite version of the Bīsitūn Inscription of Darius |
| KAR | Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts |
| MEE | Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla |
| MSL | Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexikon |
| OIP | Oriental Institute Publications |
| SF | Text from Fāra |
| SP 2 | Proverbs; E. I. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs 151ff. rev. ms. R. Falkowitz; new rev. ms. B. Alster (Gordon's numbering given in parentheses) |

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## POSTSCRIPT (DECEMBER 2007)

Since the completion of this contribution, a few important developments have taken place. A revised version of the first part of Jan Tavernier's (2002b) dissertation has now appeared in a handsome and extremely useful volume: *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Lexicon of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords, Attested in Non-Iranian Texts* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 158; Leuven: Peeters, 2007). Moreover, to the discussion of the nature of Median one should add the overview by Rüdiger Schmitt, "Die Sprache der Meder: Eine grosse Unbekannte," in *Continuity of Empire(?): Assyria, Media, Persia,* edited by Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, Robert Rollinger, pp. 23–36 (History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 5; Padua: Sargon, 2003). Schmitt stresses again the fact that we have no real attestations of texts written in Median and that all our Median words (normally part of anthroponyms) come from Old Persian, Greek, and Neo-Assyrian sources, as well as Babylonian versions of Achaemenid inscriptions. A few texts from Assur were first labeled as "medische Texte"; see Karen Radner, *Ein neuassyrisches Privatarchiv der Tempelgoldschmiede von Assur*, pp. 197–205 (Studien zu den Assur-Texten 1; Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker, 1999). However, as Schmitt points out (op.cit., p. 23 n. 2), these Assur texts barely contain anything other than anthroponyms and have nothing to do with Median.

The intention of this contribution was not so much to vindicate the theory put forward by Gershevitch in regard to Achaemenid Iran, but rather to explore this possibility in comparison to an unquestionable instance of alloglottography (Early Japan) in order to draw some conclusions applicable to the ancient Near East. Nevertheless, Achaemenid alloglottography remains an attractive scenario. It is somewhat puzzling that, despite Gershevitch's scholarly stature, this theory of his has been almost completely ignored by Achaemenid scholars and, for the most part, has received neither explicit criticisms nor endorsements of any kind. Thus, it may be useful to revisit some points in this postscript.

A comprehensive approach to alloglottography in the Amarna letters has been published by Eva von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124 (2004): 641–74. The traces of West Semitic morphology found in some Amarna letters are the written reflection of an allottographic setting. Moreover, the general assumption that the scribes of these letters used a sort of "mixed language" is at odds with our cross-linguistic knowledge of such historical phenomena (i.e., pidgins, creoles, and bilingual mixed languages). For the scribes writing the Amarna letters, Akkadian had never been a language of utterance. West Semitic scribes were using Akkadian because that was the language that came paired with that writing system (Mesopotamian cuneiform), as happened with Sumerian at Ebla earlier on. The same relation between language of utterance and written language can be found in Early Japan, when Chinese writing was introduced by Korean scholars trained in Chinese language and literature. Nevertheless, one should not always expect allottographic settings to result in any reflection in the writing interface. In fact, an absolutely certain case of alloglottography did not leave traces in the writing interface, at least in its earlier manifestations: Early Japanese written texts. If we did not know as a well-documented fact that Japanese scribes and scholars were able to read Chinese texts in Japanese (*kanbun* reading) and that they wrote apparently Chinese texts which were intended to be read in *kanbun*, there would be no trace of such a phenomenon in the Early Japanese culture of writing and reading and Early Japanese scribes would be regarded as fully bilingual in the traditional sense.

The main difficulty involved in the study of alloglottography is that it is a historical phenomenon stemming from a specific socio-linguistic setting. In terms of identifying the phenomenon in retrospect, it somehow resembles the situation of creoles: unless one has historical evidence of a creole-generating setting — a preceding pidgin that becomes nativized as a creole, a sharp contrast between *high* and *low* language in a concrete social milieu (e.g., a plantation economy), and so forth — it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine with complete certainty that a language was originally a creole. However, alloglottography can leave other traces that allow us to reconstruct precisely the setting that determines its own potential for development. In this respect, Gershevitch's proposal remains reasonable, even if his ethnolinguistic reconstruction of the Achaemenid realm and his understanding of the mechanisms involved in alloglottography now seem rather simplistic. Some could object to Gershevitch's theory on the basis that, as opposed to the Arameograms in Middle Iranian texts (Arameography), this early alloglottography (Elamography) would have left no tangible traces in the written texts (e.g., Tavernier apud von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," p. 657 n. 38). However, there is no reason to believe that Middle Iranian texts were read in Aramaic. That is a case of partial alloglottography, as with Sumerograms in Akkadian texts and Sumerograms and Akkadograms in Hittite texts. In this respect, one should bear in mind the fact that Middle Iranian scripts derive from Aramaic and are used in areas in which Aramaic was attested as a lingua franca in earlier periods. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, the absolutely certain case of alloglottography in Early Japan happens not to interfere with the writing interface: scribes simply *translated* the Chinese texts —supplying the necessary morphology, changing the word order, and adapting the phonology— without allowing this very act of translating/reading to be reflected in the writing interface. This was the case until Japanese scribes began to develop new writing strategies and conventions to write and note Japanese directly by using Sinograms not only logographically (i.e., semantically) but also phonetically.

The discovery of an isolated example of Old Persian written on an administrative tablet does not really affect the theory concerning alloglottography. On the discovery, see Matthew W. Stolper and Jan Tavernier, "From the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project 1: An Old Persian Administrative Tablet from the Persepolis Fortification," *ARTA: Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology* 2007.001.[1] If anything, the extreme rarity of such a text, as opposed to the staggering numbers of Elamite tablets, seems to reinforce the allottographic theory. There are other clay tablets with Old Persian, but these are basically drafts of inscriptions perhaps for the stone-carver to use as models from which to copy (Stolper and Tavernier, "From the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project 1," p. 8–9). What matters is that Old Persian is not written (with one exception found to date) on the thousands of administrative texts at Persepolis. Moreover, the commonly accepted idea that the Elamite version of Bīsitūn was written first, even before the Old Persian, clearly points to Elamite as the primary language of writing for the scribes involved, in contrast with the language of the Achaemenid court itself. What has been ridiculed as Gershevitch's "droll fantasy about the stone-carver at Bīsitūn" (Tavernier and Stolper, "From the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project 1," p. 8) cannot be disproved by a single attestation in an otherwise vast corpus. Rather than a dismissible concoction, Achaemenid alloglottography remains a perfectly likely scenario (albeit in need of nuances and corrections, as this contribution tried to do) to explain a variety of socio-linguistic and scribal oddities. Needless to say,

[1]http://www.achemenet.com/document/2007.001-Stolper-Tavernier.pdf. See also the news regarding a tablet with Old Persian found on Kharg Island: http://www.cais-soas.com/News/2007/November2007/20-11.htm (notice the upside-down photograph on that Web page).

this cannot be proven with absolute certainty. Neither the cases in which alloglottography left traces in the writing interface (e.g., Sumerian texts in Ebla and the Amarna letters), nor those in which such traces are nonexistent, can be defined with absolute confidence without external historical evidence that could bear witness to the phenomenon of alloglottography. Again, it is especially telling that an unquestionable case of alloglottography (Early Japan) left no traces in the writing system in its early stages.

One may wonder why an allottographic setting leaves traces in the writing interface in some cases (e.g., Amarna) and not in others (Early Japan). The West Semitic forms in the Amarna corpus are the result of an interference between the act of reading or utterance and the writing interface, the latter being radically divorced from the former in a setting in which the language used for the writing interface is not expected to be uttered by the scribes involved in the production of the text. The lack of utterability may be due to different reasons: in the case of the Amarna letters, the scribes did not speak Akkadian and had learned it as a written language exclusively for writing purposes; in Achaemenid Iran, the scribes were continuing their own local pre-Achaemenid tradition of Elamite usage, but they were writing and working for court officials who were alien to this linguistic and scribal tradition. In order for interference between these sharply divided acts of writing and utterance to occur, an important variable would lie in the linguistic and cultural connection between languages. Akkadian and West Semitic were similar enough for this writing interference to take place without implying a high level of foreignization or exoticization of the written texts. However, a clearly foreign and linguistically remote Chinese language learned by Japanese scribes from Korean scholars does not seem to lend itself to this kind of textual intrusion within the realm of writtenness. A similar scenario would be at work in Achaemenid Iran: not only is Old Persian linguistically alien to Elamite, but the former came with its own writing system, completely different from the Mesopotamian cuneiform employed to write Elamite. Those were too many hurdles for any linguistic interference to penetrate the written texture of the Elamite. On the other hand, in the case of the Semiticization of Sumerian in Early Mesopotamia and Ebla, as well as, in terms of partial alloglottography, that of the use of Arameograms in Middle Iranian texts and Sumerograms in writing Akkadian, the identity of the writing systems and the close cultural connection facilitated the interference. In sum, it would seem that alloglottography within situations of diglossia or similar to diglossia (e.g., closely related Semitic languages and historically intertwined cuneiform traditions) are likely to exhibit symptoms in the writing interface. However, in cases of hyperglossia (Early Japan, Achaemenid Iran), the writing interface would tend to remain immune to any interference attesting a possible allottographic setting.[2]

It is still possible to doubt and even reject the existence of alloglottography in the Achaemenid empire and nonetheless maintain its occurrence in other traditions and realms. Despite the aversion to even entertain this possibility among some, alloglottography provides the best explanation for the nature of the relation between language and writing interface in the Amarna letters and for the context of various Early Dynastic texts apparently written in Sumerian but produced by and for Semitic speakers (especially at Ebla). Moreover, first-millennium Mesopotamia, with an increasingly Aramaic-speaking population, seems another excellent candidate for diverse levels of alloglottography, as hinted by the presence of Aramaic glosses in Neo-Assyrian texts. Nevertheless, it would be almost impossible to demarcate the extension and exact nature of any allottographic setting in first-millennium Assyria and Babylonia.

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[2] On hyperglossia, see Sheldon Pollock's contribution in this volume.

In his thoughtful response to this contribution in this volume, Jerrold S. Cooper questions that any of this could be labeled "scribal antiquarianism." Cooper refers to the revival of earlier conventions and archaizing features (i.e., scribal atavisms) as better instances of antiquarianism. However, the conservatism of various scribal traditions, particularly the cuneiform traditions, exhibits both a keen awareness of the past and an inherent anxiety to remain linked to it, both of which lie at the core of any antiquarian ideology. Traditionalism and antiquarian concern dominate the most basic aspects of cuneiform scribal culture, from language choice to the relation between the language in which a text is written and the language in which the same text is read: the survival of Sumerian for two millennia after its natural death as anyone's mother tongue; the traces of alloglottography; and the use of conservative and frequently artificial variants of late Akkadian dialects to write texts at a time in which Aramaic was the language of most of the population. Thus, the continuous use of a written language that has ceased to be the language of utterance (alloglottography) would be the most radical manifestation of any antiquarian preoccupation.

# 4

# ABUNDANCE IN THE MARGINS: MULTIPLICITY OF SCRIPT IN THE DEMOTIC MAGICAL PAPYRI

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This article provides an overview of the form and function of the various languages and scripts used in the corpus of the so-called Demotic Magical Papyri (PDM). This collection of bilingual spells, dating to the late second or early third century A.D., is critical to the study of linguistic and cultural change in Roman Egypt, but has so far been neglected by both Egyptologists and classicists without good reason. The phenomena of bilingualism and combining multiple scripts are prominent and singular, but at the same time are put to use within the parameters of the native scribal traditions. As a result, the margins of the scholarly canon offer a unique insight in how social, cultural, professional, or ethnic groups can deploy languages and scripts to articulate a response to changes in religion and society.

## LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS IN ROMAN EGYPT

The intricate use of languages and scripts in the so-called Demotic Magical Papyri invites Egyptologists, classicists, and linguists alike to assess the social, cultural, and linguistic landscape of the society that produced these texts. The manuscripts date to the late second or early third century A.D., a period when Egypt was under Roman rule and the native priesthood had to face a precarious financial situation due to the lack of state funding.[1] This period presents a fascinating case for sociolinguistic studies, because not only was the country home to a variety of linguistic communities, but also because nowhere else in the ancient world — or perhaps even in the modern world — was the spectrum of written languages put to use so prominently to define cultural and social identities.[2] The majority of the population, living in the Nile Valley and the rural areas of the Delta, spoke colloquial Egyptian. Undoubtedly colloquial Egyptian was undergoing serious contact-induced change under the influence of Greek, but it is difficult to follow this development due to the fact that written Egyptian, called Demotic, did not reflect spoken language but represented an archaizing language variant.[3] The descendants of the Greek settlers and retired mercenaries who had come to Egypt in the aftermath of Alexander the Great's conquests (after 323 B.C.) and the establishment of the Ptolemaic kingdom (305 B.C.) had retained their language for both spoken and written communication.[4] In fact, since the beginning of Hellenistic rule in

[1] For the financial problems of the Egyptian temples, see Bagnall 1993: 261–68 and Kákosy 1995: 2900ff. Frankfurter (1998: 198ff.) discusses the possible effect of this situation on the role and identity of native priests.

[2] For more details, see Dieleman 2005: 104–10. For the second half of the Roman period, when Coptic became important, see also Bagnall 1993: 230–60. Fewster (2002: 220–45) presents some case studies in short.

[3] See also Ray 1994: 251–65. Quack (2004: 471 and n. 179) seems to be more confident about written Demotic reflecting the spoken language. Feder (2004) is somewhat naive about this problem.

[4] It should be noted that Greek speakers were not completely unaffected by living in an Egyptian language environment but adopted a fair amount of Egyptian loanwords through time. Torallas Tovar (2004) presents the relevant material.

Egypt, Greek had been the official language of state institutions and administration (on local, regional, and empire-wide levels), steadily replacing the Egyptian language variants and scripts in the public domain.[5] As a consequence, proficiency in Greek enabled upward social mobility for Egyptian elite and bureaucrats.[6] The majority of Greek speakers lived in the free Greek cities (in the Roman period: Alexandria, Naukratis, Ptolemais, and Antinoopolis) and the provincial capitals. However, a noticeable minority lived as middle-class or petty farmers in the countryside among the native population, with a considerable concentration in the Fayum region.[7] The governor with his entourage residing in Alexandria and the contingents of Roman soldiers (mainly auxiliary forces) who were stationed throughout the country made use of Latin. From a linguistic point of view, Roman Egypt must thus be considered a bilingual society, whose inhabitants displayed varying levels of bilingual proficiency depending upon their gender, class, cultural background, profession, and geographic location.

The complexity of the language situation is reflected in the preserved written sources of the period.[8] The administrative and legal documents, preserved on papyrus and ostraca, are written mostly in Greek although Demotic remained in use for this purpose in certain regions during the early part of the Roman period.[9] Demotic is a cursive script to write an Egyptian language phase of that name. It had come into use as a script for administrative documents around 650 B.C. having developed out of hieratic, a cursive of the hieroglyphic script. Letters — of a personal, official, or literary character — are preserved in Greek, Latin, and Demotic. Literary texts of this period have been found in abundance, both in Greek and Demotic.[10] Inscriptions for public display issued by the state or sponsored by municipalities or elites were in Greek, whereas inscriptions in the native temples or on funerary monuments were executed in hieroglyphs and/or Demotic. In the early Roman period, the scriptoria of the Egyptian temples were still active centers of learning, where texts were collected, redacted, and produced.[11] Texts executed on the walls of the temples were written in classical Egyptian, an archaizing and artificial variant of Middle Egyptian, the language of religious texts since the end of the third millennium B.C. The script of these temple texts, coined "Ptolemaic hieroglyphs" by Egyptologists, takes the semantic possibilities of the hieroglyphic sign as both a pictorial image and a conveyor of sound to the extreme. This intricate play with sound, image, and signification demonstrates that the knowledge of hieroglyphs was still alive and well among priests until the end of the second century A.D.[12] Texts conveying more practical or conceptual knowledge, such as liturgies, funerary compositions, medical and magical spells, astronomical observations, and ritual topographies, were also composed and copied

[5] An overview is given in Bowman 1986 and Bagnall 1995: 17–22.

[6] The most lucid account is Clarysse 1991; see also Clarysse 1985.

[7] For questions of demography, see Bagnall and Frier 1994. For the Fayum region in particular, see Bagnall 1997.

[8] For an overview of the material and main publications, I refer to the following useful books: Rupprecht 1994; Depauw 1997; and Hoffmann 2000. Somewhat Egyptocentric is Chauveau 2000.

[9] The documentation from Soknopaiou Nesos (modern Dime in the Fayum) bears witness to the continuation of Demotic as a language for legal texts. However, the majority is provided with a Greek summary (a statutory regulation of those days) and thus are strictly speaking bilingual; Kruit, Muhs, and Worp 2004: 341ff.

[10] For relevant secondary literature and questions concerning the sociology of reading and literature, I refer to Van Minnen 1998.

[11] Sauneron 2000 gives an overview of the different branches of knowledge. For an insightful example of text redaction, see Osing 1998. See also Frankfurter 1998: 238–48.

[12] Traces of incomprehension and lack of knowledge start to occur in the temple texts of the Khnum temple in Esna at the end of the second century A.D. (Sauneron 1973: 45). For the principles of the Ptolemaic hieroglyphic writing, see Kurth 1983 and Sauneron 1982: 47–80. For two case studies concerning the gradual decline in the knowledge of hieroglyphs as displayed on specific object groups before the second century A.D., see Sternberg-El Hotabi 1994 and Mosher 2002.

in classical Egyptian, but written in the cursive hieratic script on papyrus rolls. Starting with the second century B.C., the Demotic language and script, though initially designed for administrative purposes only, became accepted for composing new literary or religious compositions.[13] As a result, hieratic and Demotic were used side by side or sometimes even mixed on manuscripts dating to the Roman period.

## DEMOTIC MAGICAL PAPYRI

The manuscripts that form the topic of this article date, as has already been said, to the late second or early third century A.D. and therefore were written toward the end of pharaonic written culture. The manuscripts warn us that we may not conceive of this end as a slow process of decline and degradation starting with about the first century A.D., because not only are the grammar and orthography impeccable, but also the texts are written in a total of seven scripts. They are witnesses of a lively writing culture, which indulges in play with an abundance of alternative graphic codes, side by side, while ingeniously exploiting the radically different options these codes offer to convey information (on a grammatical, phonological, or symbolic level). The selection and combination of scripts is not arbitrary but governed by functional specialization for each script as is shown below. Thus, the abundance of scripts is not the result of incomprehension, lack of knowledge, and impulse on the part of the composers and copyists. On the contrary, we are dealing with a conscious effort to use writing to the fullest.

The corpus of Demotic Magical Papyri consists of four reasonably well-preserved manuscripts of varying length.[14] Two of these, pLeiden I 384 and pLondon-Leiden, were found together as part of a library of magical and alchemical handbooks, later termed the "Theban Magical Library," sometime during the 1820s in the hills of Luxor, south Egypt.[15] The collection of manuscripts was discovered by local farmers, who sold the manuscripts separately — and, in two cases, even torn in halves — to antiquities dealers on the black market, so that nothing is known about its archaeological context.[16] However, the majority of the handbooks of this library are not written in Demotic but in Greek. The Greek manuscripts date to the late third and fourth century A.D. and present randomly arranged recipes for magical rituals, such as divination with the help of oil lamps and water bowls, binding spells, initiations, dream sending, and table tricks. These handbooks make up the bulk of what is nowadays known as the corpus of the Greek Magical Papyri (PGM), which was edited by the classicist Karl Preisendanz in the period 1928–1931.[17] A word of caution is necessary here: these spells are written in Greek, but certainly not the product of a classical Greek milieu. As ritual texts the majority of spells is firmly rooted in Egyptian religion, both with respect to ritual techniques and religious imagery.[18] Yet the wide use of Egyptian, Greek, Semitic, and Persian god names makes them testimonies to a cross-cultural current of

[13] See also Dieleman 2005: 48–51.

[14] These are the following four manuscripts: pLeiden I.384 vo, pMagical (pLondon-Leiden), pBM 10588, and pLouvre E3229. These texts are available in English translation in Betz 1986 under the numbers PDM xii, xiv, lxi, and Suppl. For philological commentaries, see [pLeiden J 384 verso] Johnson 1975; [pLondon-Leiden or pMagical] Griffith and Thompson 1904–1908; [pBM. 10588] Bell, Nock, and Thompson 1931; and [pLouvre E 3229] Johnson 1977. For a number of important corrections, see Ritner 1986 and Quack 1999. To the corpus should be added pBM 10808 of which only one page has been preserved; see Dieleman 2004. Quack (2004: 428 and n. 10) came to the same conclusion.

[15] The discovery of the Theban Magical Library and the subsequent fate of the manuscripts is best presented in Brashear 1995. Be warned that a number of Brashear's statements concerning the Demotic manuscripts are inaccurate or incorrect; see next footnote.

[16] Dieleman 2005: 11–15 and 25–29.

[17] Preisendanz 1928–31. For the history of scholarship, see Dieleman 2005: 15–21.

[18] Quack 1998.

esoteric thought, which sought to come to terms with the international world of the eastern Mediterranean in the time of the Roman Principate.

The four Demotic handbooks are basically of the same format as the Greek handbooks, that is, randomly arranged selections of magical spells for divination, dream sending, phylacteries, and potions against snake bites and scorpion stings.[19] However, the Demotic manuscripts differ from the Greek spells in two important respects. First, the religious outlook of the Demotic spells is almost entirely confined to Egyptian mythology; second, the Demotic handbooks are written in a variety of scripts, whereas the Greek spells only make use of the Greek alphabet — except for the occasional inserted spell in the so-called Old Coptic script and the mystical *charaktêres* signs.[20] The main language and script of these handbooks are Demotic, so that they are aptly called the Demotic Magical Papyri. Nonetheless, this well-established designation has the drawback that one of the most fundamental characteristics of this corpus is marginalized from the outset, that is, the multiplicity of scripts (seven scripts in total) and languages (Egyptian, Greek and, allegedly, Nubian). This article hopes to bring this multiplicity to the fore and explore its meaning and purpose.[21]

## LANGUAGES IN THE DEMOTIC SPELLS

The base language of the manuscripts is Demotic, but occasionally an invocation in Greek or, as is stated explicitly in two spells, Nubian is inserted.[22] In these rare instances of code switching the allocation of function of the languages concerned displays a regular pattern.[23] The recipe section of the spell is always written in Demotic, which demonstrates that Egyptian was considered most suitable as the language of practical communication for the intended group of users. However, the invocation can be entirely in Greek or contain phrases in Nubian. The presence of Nubian is probably due to the desire on the part of the editors (and their clientele as well of course) to share in the ritual power of the Nubian language — even if the actual spells might be merely a collection of garbled or made-up sounds.[24] Egyptian literature of the Late Period testifies to the existence of an Egyptian priestly discourse on the powerful qualities of Nubian magic since it knows a fair number of narratives about magicians, in which Nubia plays a prominent role.[25] In the case of the Greek invocations, this explanation cannot apply since Egyptian priests did not consider Greek to be a language of ritual power.[26] In fact, in all cases where a Greek invocation is inserted, traces of the act of translation from Greek into Egyptian can be found in the immediate Demotic co-text surrounding the Greek passage. The presence of Greek is therefore the result of copying and selectively translating from a mother copy or *Vorlage* in Greek, which was used,

[19] The best overview is given in Ritner 1995. See also Johnson 1986 and Tait 1995.

[20] Old Coptic spells or phrases can be found in the following spells: PGM I.247–62, III.410–23, 633–731, IV.1–25, 52–85, 86–87, 88–93, 94–153, and 1227–64.

[21] Since this article aims only at introducing the reader to the material and the problems involved, the corpus is treated here as one homogeneous group. It goes without saying that, within certain limits, each manuscript presents its own intricate set of problems and idiosyncratic application of the scripts. The argumentation is mainly based on pLondon-Leiden, the most extensive manuscript. Informative in this respect is Quack 2004: 427–30.

[22] Greek invocations inserted into Demotic spells are: PDM xii.76–107 [PGM XII.453–65], PDM xii.135–46 [PGM XII.474–79], PDM xii.147–64 [PGM XII.480–95], PDM xiv.93–114 [PGM XIVa.1–11], PDM xiv.451–58 [PGM XIVb.12–15], and PDM xiv.675–94 [PGM XIVc.16–27]. Spells with allegedly Nubian phrases are PDM xiv.1097–1103 and PDM lxi.95–99.

[23] The topic of code switching, bilingualism, and translation in pLeiden I 384 vo. and pLondon-Leiden is treated in detail in Dieleman 2005: 121–44.

[24] The (short) phrases have resisted translation so far.

[25] For more details and references, see Dieleman 2005: 140–43 and 236–38.

[26] It was actually quite the opposite; see Dieleman 2005: 1–10.

among many others in Egyptian, in the course of composing and editing the Demotic spells.[27] In one telling case, the Demotic translation, provided with ritual directions, follows the original Greek invocation, which is stripped of any ritual instruction whatsoever and thus remains merely as a gloss to do justice to the source.[28]

## SCRIPTS IN THE DEMOTIC SPELLS

The scripts used in the Demotic spells can be listed conveniently, together with the language they record, as follows:

| | SCRIPT | LANGUAGE | WRITING DIRECTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Demotic | Egyptian | Right to left |
| 2. | Greek | Greek | Left to right |
| 3. | Alphabetic Demotic | *voces magicae* and single Greek nouns | Right to left |
| 4. | Hieratic | Egyptian; very exceptionally *voces magicae* | Right to left |
| 5. | Old Coptic | *voces magicae* | Left to right |
| 6. | Cipher | Greek nouns, Egyptian nouns and verbs | Left to right |
| 7. | *Charaktêres* | Sacred code — no true language | Left to right(?) |

Of these seven scripts only two were in regular use in the period when the manuscripts were composed, copied, and consulted. As said above, Greek was the language and script of civil administration for all inhabitants of Roman Egypt and the mother tongue for a large minority of descendants of Greek settlers. In the case of the manuscripts, the use of the Greek script is practically restricted to writing the inserted invocations in Greek. In a limited number of cases, single Greek magical names and pharmacological terms are given in Greek script in an otherwise Demotic sentence.[29] Some of these words are written as a supralinear gloss above a transcription of the term in alphabetic Demotic script — again, most likely, to do justice to the source. The base script of the manuscripts is Demotic, which, as outlined above, had been the native script and written language of business communication since the seventh century B.C. By the time of the second and third centuries A.D., it was almost completely replaced by Greek in public life. Only a small circle of native priests kept using the language and script for composing and copying literary and religious texts.[30] It follows then logically that only a native temple milieu could have provided the necessary literate environment for the production and circulation of the Demotic Magical Papyri.

The remaining five scripts of the above list knew only a highly circumscribed usage in the period concerned. The hieratic script, the ancient cursive writing of pharaonic Egypt, was used only for writing (mainly copying) liturgies and texts of traditional priestly knowledge, both of a ritual and encyclopedic nature, by the time of the Roman period. The Demotic spells contain a fair amount of words or even phrases written in hieratic inserted into the Demotic environment.[31]

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[27] For a corroborative view, see Quack 2004: 432 and 471.

[28] pLondon-Leiden 15/24–31 = PDM xiv.451–458 [PGM XIV.b.12–15]; see Dieleman 2005: 127–30.

[29] The majority of the pharmacological terms (names of plants and minerals) are clustered together on columns I–V on the verso of pLondon-Leiden, where short descriptions and explanations in Demotic are given to the Greek terms: PDM xiv.886–96, 897–910, 920–29, 933–34, 940–52, and 966–69. The Demotic transcriptions and descriptions show traces of translation out of Greek. The section is therefore clearly a copy of and commentary to a pharmacological text in Greek; see Dieleman 2005: 111–20.

[30] Tait 1992. Material from temple libraries were found in Tebtunis, Soknopaiou Nesos, and Narmuthis. For the Tebtunis library and references, see Osing 1998: 19–23; for Soknopaiou Nesos, see Lippert and Schentuleit 2005. For the Narmuthis library, see the introduction in Gallo 1997.

[31] For more details, see Dieleman 2005: 48–62. For the paleography of the hieratic signs in pLondon-Leiden, see Stricker 1955.

Such hieratic "borrowings" are often religious terms, thus adding further evidence that the scribes were working in a native temple scriptorium. Alternatively, many words are written in a combination of hieratic and Demotic signs. It is important to note that the standardized phrases giving instructions for use, such as "words to be spoken," "spell for this and that," "remedy against this and that," and common technical language of pharaonic magic, are most often written in hieratic. This shows that the compilers were familiar with and regular users of ritual texts in hieratic — texts which carried on a tradition of native temple ritual and ancient priestly knowledge. Since manuscripts of this nature were stored in temple libraries, the compilers of the Demotic spells must have had access to the temple and therefore were priests, who had gone through a traditional temple scribal training. By necessity, the readers must have had a similar training.

Alphabetic Demotic is a specialized script designed at first for the transcription of Aramaic and Greek names and terms into Demotic characters in administrative and legal documents when Egypt became part of the Persian and later the Ptolemaic empire. Such a derived script was necessary because regular Egyptian writing, be it hieroglyphic, hieratic, or Demotic, makes use only of signs that represent one or more consonants, thus leaving out the vowels, and relies rather on a conservative orthography than on the desire to represent faithfully the sounds of a word. Scribes had selected a limited, yet variable, number of Demotic one-consonantal signs and used this selection as a rudimentary alphabet, including consonantal signs used to approximate certain vowel sounds, to transcribe phonetically foreign names and titles.[32] This "alphabetic" device was not entirely new to the Egyptian scribal tradition. Since the late Old Kingdom (ca. 2200 B.C.) foreign toponyms and personal names could be spelled out in so-called group or syllabic writing, which was widely used for transcribing Semitic loanwords in the New Kingdom (ca. 1540–1075 B.C.). This writing system uses a limited selection of common hieroglyphic (or hieratic) signs, which are redefined in such a way that they signify syllables instead of merely consonants. This way a sign or group of signs indicates a consonant with its associated vowel, which enabled scribes to approximate the vocalic structure of a foreign word in Egyptian writing.[33] In the Harris Magical Papyrus and the London Medical Papyrus, both dating to the New Kingdom, group writing is even used to transcribe continuous incantations in Cretan and Northwest Semitic languages.[34]

In the Demotic spells the alphabetic script has developed into an almost standardized alphabet including signs or groups of signs to indicate single vowels and diphthongs.[35] The fundamental difference with the earlier attempts of the Ptolemaic period is that there is now a standardized Demotic equivalent for each Greek letter, including the vowels, so that scribes could replicate Greek orthography in Demotic instead of approximating the vocalic structure of the word. However, the script has not yet become a true alphabet because alphabetic Demotic signs are used quite often in combination with a hieratic sign or sign group to indicate syllables.[36] It is still used for transcribing loanwords, but its main application is spelling out the secret names of gods and demons, the so-called *voces magicae*, an international code of magical names derived from traditional

[32] Fundamental to the study of Demotic transcriptions of Greek names, although limited to the Ptolemaic period, is Clarysse and van der Veeken 1983: 133–65. For the second and third centuries A.D., see Spiegelberg 1901.

[33] The topic is best treated in Schenkel 1986 and Helck 1989. Syllabic writing became prevalent in the period of the New Kingdom empire for spelling Semitic words, but its earliest occurrences are found in the Nubian toponyms and personal names on the Giza execration figurines dating to the late sixth dynasty (ca. 2200 B.C.); Osing 1976.

[34] For the most recent publication of these papyri, see Leitz 1999. The sections concerned are: for the London Medical Papyrus, section VII, incantations 15–21 (= Wreszinski 27–33); for the Harris Magical Papyrus, section Q, VII/12. The translation of these foreign incantations is highly problematic; for the most recent attempts and references, see Steiner 1992 and Haider 2004.

[35] For the correspondence between the alphabetic Demotic signs and Greek letters, see Quack 2004: 433.

[36] A list is given on page 434f. in Quack 2004.

epithets in Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and possibly even Iranian.[37] These names occur as frequently in the Greek Magical Papyri, which were found in Egypt, and also on inscribed lamellae and magical gems, which have been found throughout the Mediterranean and even as far as France and Britain.[38]

The alphabetic Demotic transcriptions of the *voces magicae* are in the majority of cases accompanied by supralinear glosses,[39] which parallel the alphabetic Demotic spelling of the *vox*, sign by sign, in a script consisting of the Greek alphabet and eight additional Demotic signs.[40] This script is usually referred to as Old Coptic, a generic term (rather a misnomer)[41] for a number of idiosyncratic scripts that were devised to render the Egyptian language in Greek letters by supplementing the Greek alphabet with a variable number of Demotic signs to indicate sounds unknown to Greek phonetics.[42] Texts in this script date to the period from about A.D. 100 through the fourth century and are remarkably free of Greek loanwords (like Demotic, but unlike standard Coptic), while its subject matter is concerned with magic or the divine workings of nature in general.[43] Texts written in this script are clearly the product of a native priestly milieu.

These glosses represent a remarkable reversal of the expected relationship between original and transcription since it now appears that the glosses are the "originals." So far it has been generally assumed that, in the Demotic spells, the glosses were added to the alphabetic Demotic transcriptions of the *voces magicae* to ensure correct pronunciation since the Old Coptic script explicates vowel sounds with the Greek vowel signs. However, careful comparison of the alphabetic Demotic transcriptions with the Old Coptic glosses has made me highly suspicious of this view. In the majority of cases it is clear that the form of the alphabetic Demotic transcription depends upon the gloss, not the other way around.[44] Thus, for the moment I would like to suggest, with all due reservations, that the majority of glosses are remnants of the now-lost *Vorlage*, which were retained to do justice to the source. The *voces magicae* were copied from this *Vorlage* and transcribed into alphabetic Demotic to accommodate them into the matrix language and script. Since the transcription is letter by letter, loss of information with respect to pronunciation is negligible for a person versed in the phonology of (alphabetic) Demotic.[45] It is only secondarily that the glosses could be helpful for correct pronunciation.[46]

The "cipher" code is so far only attested in the Demotic Magical Papyri (pLeiden I 384 verso, pLondon-Leiden, and pLouvre E3229) and thus possibly only a local phenomenon restricted in use to this class of texts. Of the script thirty-six signs are known so far; six are merely the common Demotic signs known from the Old Coptic alphabet to designate Egyptian sounds, whereas

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[37] For these names, see Quack 2004; Brashear 1995: 3576–3603; and Bohag 2003. For transcription of loanwords in pLondon-Leiden, see Dieleman 2005: 110–20, 308–12.

[38] A good introduction to lamellae as magical objects is Gager 1992. For magical gems, see Delatte and Derchain 1964; Bonner 1950; and Michel 2001.

[39] Note that they are missing in pBM 10588.

[40] Glossing is not uncommon in Egyptian manuscripts, but explanatory glosses usually follow the word or phrase to be glossed on the same line. Supralinear glosses, both in Demotic hieratic and Old Coptic, occur on Papyrus I and IV of the onomastica from the Tebtunis temple library; Osing 1998: 40–66 and 279–83.

[41] For the difficulties in defining Old Coptic, see Quaegebeur 1982.

[42] Kasser 1991.

[43] A helpful overview is given in Satzinger 1991. Satzinger stresses rightly that Old Coptic is not so much a language or dialectical variant but a script. Of interest are earlier attempts at transcribing Egyptian with Greek letters without additional Demotic signs; for example, texts 11 and 12 (second to first century B.C.) in Pestman, Quaegebeur, and Vos 1977/1: 102–07.

[44] An exemplary analysis is available in Quack 2004.

[45] For more details, see Dieleman 2005: 71ff. Quack (2004) argues in support of this view.

[46] However, note that the Demotic hieratic and Old Coptic supralinear glosses in the hieratic onomastica of the Tebtunis temple library were indeed added to indicate correct pronunciation and meaning for a reader less proficient in the ancient cursive script; Osing 1998: 44–51.

the truly "secret" signs encode Greek letters. It is therefore highly likely that the present cipher code was adapted from, and expanded upon, a cipher of the Greek alphabet.[47] The signs are used alphabetically, written from left to right like Greek, to encode single Greek nouns (ingredients in recipes) and Egyptian nouns and verbs (also only in recipes). In total, only ninety-five nouns in cipher script are attested in the Demotic spells. Groff and Thompson could easily crack the code because, on pLondon-Leiden, a few recipes with some cipher words have a parallel in ordinary Demotic elsewhere on the manuscript. It is therefore questionable whether the script was really adopted to hide information. Maybe it was first and foremost an intellectual game. It is, however, noteworthy that the encoded Egyptian verbs, which are all concerned with describing the outcome of the ritual, do not recur decoded elsewhere on the manuscript. In each case, the ritual is aimed at attacking a person's health and well-being, so verbs such as "to die," "to be mad," and "to suffer from pain" are used.

*Charactêres* are a loose set of fanciful and undecipherable signs consisting of short straight lines with dots at their end.[48] They occur frequently in the Greek Magical Papyri, as well as on magical gems and lead lamellae and as such they were part, like the *voces magicae*, of an international current of esoteric thought. They were considered to represent divine writing and enabled written communication between gods and initiated persons.[49] Signs of this type occur only in pLondon-Leiden and then only in one spell (verso 17/1–8 = PDM xiv.1070–77). A string of twenty-nine signs is to be written on a reed leaf in a dream-sending ritual. The Demotic text does not refer to them as *charaktêres* but as "this name," which demonstrates that the scribe considered the string of signs to be a *vox magica*. Nonetheless, the concept was known to him because he used it as a loanword, transcribed into alphabetic Demotic signs, to refer to five pseudo-hieroglyphs in a divination ritual (pLondon-Leiden 5/5), which are to be written with myrrh ink on the wick of an oil lamp. In the co-text and parallel recipes they are referred to as "these writings" in Demotic.

## STRATEGIES OF SCRIPT USAGE

The abundance of scripts in the Demotic Magical Papyri cannot be taken for granted — simply because no other Egyptian text corpus displays such a variety of scripts. Writing must be viewed as a vital and purposeful feature of this group of texts. To examine productively the dynamics of writing in the corpus I suggest viewing the function of writing in the following three ways:

1. Writing stores and conveys information over time and place
2. Writing carries cultural values
3. Writing defines a readership

Since the manuscripts concerned are magical handbooks almost encyclopedic in nature, it is obvious that writing is used for the storage and conveyance of information, that is, instructions for ritual actions, ingredients for potions and offerings, prayers to be recited, etc. Regarding the conveyance of information, two levels are to be distinguished with respect to intended readership. First, being manuals for rituals, the texts are concerned with supplying ritual specialists with di-

[47] See Dieleman 2005: 87–96. To date, no text with this Greek cipher alphabet has been found.

[48] The best explanatory treatment is Frankfurter 1994: 205ff.

[49] In the magical spells, the direction of communication is from human to god. The signs occur also in books that were presented as having been written by the gods, so-called heavenly books; in that case the direction of communication is opposite.

rections for use. The most practical information, that is, ingredients and instructions for ritual acts, is provided primarily in Demotic (with the occasional insertion of hieratic signs and words). The majority of spells are carefully structured with headings in red ink to indicate the type of information contained in a subsection. These headings contain often age-old jargon in hieratic, placing the recipes in the tradition of native priestly knowledge. If an ingredient is a Greek loanword, it is transcribed into alphabetic Demotic or, in the case of the pharmacological section on the reverse side of pLondon-Leiden, left in Greek but provided with an Egyptian equivalent and/or explained in Demotic. The *voces magicae* are mostly given in alphabetic Demotic transcriptions together with glosses in Old Coptic, but occasionally also in hieratic, Old Coptic, or Greek. A few ingredients are given in the cipher script, both Greek and Egyptian words.

The second level of information conveyance is concerned with communication between humans and gods. This communication is established, on the one hand, in what I prefer to call "writing as ritual," that is, the ritual technique to inscribe a new piece of papyrus or metal lamella with a magical spell, which, as a letter to a god or demon, is to be deposited at a cemetery, a road, or a house.[50] Given the Egyptian priestly background of the material one would expect that Demotic was reserved for this type of communication, but a couple of the inserted invocations in Greek are also to be written down and deposited.[51] In this respect there is no difference in language attitude between the Demotic and Greek Magical Papyri, where this type of ritual occurs as frequently. By writing *charaktêres* the ritualist transcends speech altogether and delivers his message in a code known only to the gods and the initiated few. The opposite holds for the *voces magicae*, where speech is all that matters. It was apparently considered to be irrelevant to the gods whether the secret names are transcribed into alphabetic Demotic, Old Coptic, Greek, or hieratic. What matters to them is the correct pronunciation.

The second point concerns the cultural values that a script can carry for both the producer and reader of a text. When a scribe started out with selecting, editing, and composing spells to include in the handbooks, he had to decide which languages and scripts to use for which particular purpose. The outcome of his choices is likely to have been determined by a number of factors, which interact and can only be distinguished on a theoretical level. First of all, genre conventions dictate the textual format, that is, what a recipe and written magical spell should look like. In this particular case, the rules of the genre are rooted in the milieu of the Egyptian temple, whose members continued a long scribal tradition of producing technical handbooks for rituals, hence the pervasiveness of hieratic and the jargon of pharaonic magic in the Demotic spells. However, in comparison to the pharaonic period, the social, linguistic, and religious landscape had become more complex in the Roman period so that the number of options had grown considerably.

As a matter of course, from all possibilities, only those languages and scripts were selected that the editors deemed suitable and efficacious. But what leads one to put trust in the application of a language and script in a ritual? An instructive example is the use of Arabic in the production of amulets in present-day Djenne in Mali, West Africa. Although Arabic is not the spoken language of the region, local ritual specialists, who call themselves Marabout, take recourse to Arabic in the fabrication of written amulets.[52] One of them justified this as follows:

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[50] This magical technique is attested in pharaonic Egypt since the Old Kingdom; for example, execration figurines and Letters to the Dead; Ritner 1993: 136ff. and 180ff.

[51] PDM xii.76–107 [PGM XII.453–65], PDM xii.119–34 [PGM XII.469–70; 471–73], PDM xii.135–46 [PGM XII.474–79] PDM xii.147–64 [PGM XII.480–95], and PDM xiv.93–114 [PGM XIVa.1–11].

[52] Based on Geert Mommersteeg's fieldwork in Djenne in the mid-1980s; a more detailed discussion is available in Mommersteeg 1988 and 1990.

> Arabic is the language of Allah. It is the language in which the Holy Quran descended upon earth, the language of the Prophet in honour of whom the world is created. Arabic is the language spoken in 'the other world' and it is the oldest language with the oldest script. Upon the great writing tablet ("The Well-preserved Tablet") which is near God, everything that has happened, that happens and that will happen upon earth is written in Arabic. Unlike all the other and later scripts in the world, which are man-made, the Arabic language and script were revealed to the first man Adama by God through His angels.[53]

When asked for a love amulet, a Marabout selects first an appropriate Qurʿanic verse, which pertains in content somehow or other to the particular request of the client. To determine when and how to perform the writing ritual, he then calculates the verse's numerical value by adding up the value of each Arabic letter. During the course of this writing ritual he not only writes the Qurʿanic verse and the names of the client and the desired person, but also manipulates their arrangement in such a way that a meaningful and coercive relationship is suggested. In this case, the Arabic script not only functions as a phonetic code that conveys teachings communicated from god to men, but also as a numeric code that contains a key to creating an effective ritual setting and as an object that can be manipulated to produce and enhance a desired effect. The Arabic script is considered capable of doing this because of its presumed divine origin.

Similarly, during the Roman period, Hellenistic scholars regarded hieroglyphs as mysterious and powerful graphemes capable of expressing eternal truths about the divine without the distorting interference of speech.[54] This is a mistaken view based on preconceived ideas about Egypt and incorrect information.[55] Nonetheless, hieroglyphs were in high esteem and carried for these elites a whole range of positive values, such as wisdom, enlightenment, tradition, stability, etc. This discourse has certainly influenced the way the Greek magical spells were inscribed into the tradition because a fair number are presented (or, perhaps better to say, marketed) as being translations from rediscovered hieroglyphic texts.[56] In this light, it is very well possible that the international popularity of the *charaktêres* code originated in a general illiteracy in hieroglyphs combined with the desire to use such transcendent symbols.[57] Unfortunately, for the other scripts in the Demotic magical spells, a similar explanation cannot be adduced so easily since we have no explicit information concerning the values they carried for the producers and users of the handbooks. Elsewhere I have argued that the multiplicity of scripts in the Demotic spells is first of all a matter of redaction and textual transmission, less of cultural values.[58] The multiplicity of scripts came about in the course of compiling and editing the texts and results from the desire to be inclusive and to do justice to the sources.

With respect to point three, writing as a tool to define a readership, access to information depends upon knowledge of the key to decipherment of the script. When using multiple scripts the number of potential readers diminishes rapidly, especially in the case of an ancient society where literacy is a rare phenomenon. Abundance can thus be a strategy to define sharply the intended readership. Strategically switching between the variant scripts is then a sophisticated and effective way to define different levels in the transfer of information and to keep tight control over the dissemination of this information. For example, the cipher script is used infrequently and in those cases only to spell out single words, either nouns or verbs, in otherwise Demotic recipes. However, without the knowledge of the code the ritual cannot be performed properly, even if a reader

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[53] The quote is taken from Mommersteeg 1990: 67.

[54] The best treatment is still Iversen 1993. The sources are collected in Marestaing 1913.

[55] Assmann 2000.

[56] For the mystifying motifs in the Greek Magical Papyri, see Dieleman 2005: 254–76.

[57] Frankfurter 1994: 206ff.

[58] Dieleman 2005: 285–94.

were to be proficient in Demotic and could read 99% of the recipe. As said above, the application of the cipher may not have been meant to hide secret information, nonetheless it certainly prevented the dissemination of the information outside the in-group of professional ritual specialists. To a certain extent, the same holds for the *charaktêres* on the level of the invocations because ordinary humans were excluded as listeners and readers. But more importantly, since Demotic was solely known among native priests in Roman Egypt, the choice to write the spells in Demotic excluded a large number of users from the outset. Thus, the sphere of production and active use of these manuscripts must be located in an Egyptian temple environment. In this respect the Demotic Magical Papyri differ fundamentally from the similar Greek Magical Papyri, which are written in the lingua franca of those days and thus had a potentially larger readership.

To conclude, this overview of languages and scripts in the Demotic Magical Papyri has made clear that the Demotic magical spells use writing not only to store and convey information, either to a human or a god, but also as a tool to limit strategically the access of information and to inscribe international magical devices into a traditional Egyptian priestly environment. International trends are taken over, but not slavishly: by writing them in alphabetic Demotic or Old Coptic script the priestly compilers have accommodated them in their new environment. In this way, the texts present multi-layered writing — in the same way as the cross-cultural religious contents of these texts can be read on multiple levels.

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# 5

# RESPONSE FOR THE FIRST SESSION: ORIGINS, FUNCTIONS, ADAPTATION, SURVIVAL

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John Kelley's deflation of "the core thesis of Jack Goody's anthropology of literacy" caught me assenting — if wondering whether the gesture was still necessary — but also a bit defensive, since Goody's ideas were, I believe, important at the time to the study of writing and literacy and they were certainly highly stimulating for me personally. In 1968, the year I left the Oriental Institute, Goody had just edited *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Goody 1968), a collection of essays I encountered first on Miguel Civil's bookshelf a year later when I returned to defend my dissertation. I remember being especially impressed by S. Tambiah's essay in Goody's volume on literacy in a Thai Buddhist village, where some languages could be written as well as read, others could be read and understood but not written, and others still could be read aloud but no longer understood. It revealed whole vistas of possibilities for understanding the multilingual scribal corpora in ancient centers like Hattusas (Gurney 1961: 117–28) and Ugarit (Lackenbacher 2002: 19f.), or imagining the degrees of language competence of late first-millennium temple officials in Babylonia, who used Aramaic and Greek in their everyday lives, while within the temple precinct they copied, recited, and even composed texts in Akkadian and Sumerian cuneiform (Houston, Baines, and Cooper 2003: 450–56).

A decade later, when I began to work more seriously on writing systems and their origins, I read the book more carefully, along with *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Goody 1977). Although I was immediately skeptical that the cognitive effects of writing were as profound as Goody claimed, or that written texts necessarily enabled a critical stance toward tradition, and was especially contemptuous of his overvalorization of alphabets, I was very sympathetic to his emphasis on the power and importance of decontextualization. It seemed especially apt for Mesopotamia, where, from the very beginning of writing, the list was the most powerful tool of intellectual analysis (Veldhuis 2004: chapter 4), and where, for the first half-millennium or so after its invention, writing was otherwise almost entirely restricted to administrative records (Englund 1998 and Glassner 2003) that could have no counterpart in oral discourse. The writing system of these records, I might add, is not just a more developed version of a token system, but something very new and very powerful, nor did it have anything to do with markets, but rather enabled the bureaucracy of the nascent state to more efficiently coerce and control production and redistribution.

Seduced by how well Goody's functions of storage and decontextualization seemed to both explain and account for early writing in Babylonia, I rather too hubristically assumed that they should explain early writing in general. Because *our* earliest writing was done on durable surfaces, we cuneiformists have a privileged window onto the emergence of writing. Writing in Babylonia emerged as an administrative technology: you can have religion and ritual without writing, you can have royal display without writing, but you cannot (easily) run a large-scale complex society without writing, or rather, the difficulties you encounter in doing so will usually, sooner or later, lead to writing's invention. Since all so-called pristine writing systems appear in complex

societies — Babylonia, Egypt, China, Mesoamerica — it was easy to imagine that writing arose everywhere to meet administrative needs, but that the everyday administrative records that would have been written on papyrus, wood strips, cloth, or bark paper did not survive. What survived was commemorative, laboriously carved onto stone palettes or mace-heads or stelae, or incised into shell and bone; and commemoration, as we know from the Babylonian example, was not the use for which writing was invented, but a use to which it was later put (Cooper 2004).

I have learned, much too late, alas, from John Kelly that if I had read my Weber, I would have realized that comparatist forays need not lead to positing "universal tendencies" or "a general theory of writing's" origins. I have belatedly come to accept that commemoration may well be at least one of the original stimuli for early Egyptian writing (Baines 2004) and that the murky origins of Mesoamerican scripts may have more to do with calendrical complexities and identity than accounting (Houston 2004), even as I remain certain that Chinese writing was *not* devised for the purpose of divination or communication with the ancestors (Bagley 2004). And, after reading Kelly's paper, I think I have finally made my peace with the Indian anomaly, that ferocious fidelity to an orally transmitted tradition whose textual accuracy defies what would seem possible without the technology of writing.

Kelly describes two very different traditions of literacy, one focused on oral language and only loosely connected to the state and another firmly based on written language that becomes the basis and means of state control. My own knowledge of South and East Asian history is too poor to judge if Kelly is not drawing too stark a contrast. Was royal patronage and dissemination of Sanskrit learning insignificant? Why was state-bound Chinese learning so attractive beyond the borders of the Chinese state, in Korea and Japan and parts of Southeast Asia? In any case, cuneiform learning in ancient Western Asia exhibits broad similarities to both the Sanskrit and Chinese models, but unlike Sanskrit, neither Sumerian nor Akkadian was the language of the gods and unlike Chinese characters, cuneiform signs had no cosmological origin (Vanstiphout 1989). The Mesopotamian gods wrote through a multiplicity of phenomena large and small with the entire universe as a writing surface, in a language whose decoding was determined by precise rules embodied in the scores of thousands of lines in cuneiform divinatory treatises (Rochberg 2004).

On the one hand, writing and literacy in Mesopotamia were born in the service of the state, and the state both supported and sought to control the educational system that produced its officials and bureaucrats, as well as the scholars who enabled the king to know the will of the gods and constructed the ideologies that underpinned the state (Michalowski 1991; Cooper 1993; and Pongratz-Leisten 1999). Piotr Michalowski (1991) describes the Babylonian King Shulgi (ca. 2050 B.C.) in much the same way as Kelly describes the Qin emperor, destroying large portions of an earlier text corpus, and emperor Wu, having texts copied and corrected and collected sounds very much like a latter-day version of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal (668–630 B.C.; Finke 2004).

On the other hand, cuneiform literacy and scholarship traveled far beyond the reach of Babylonian armies. It arrived at Ebla around 2450 B.C., long before Ebla was conquered by the Babylonian rulers Sargon (ca. 2325 B.C.) and Naramsin (ca. 2250 B.C.), and flourished in many areas on the periphery of Mesopotamia that enjoyed complete independence from the center (Cooper 1992). Yet, an "'army' of priests and scholars" managed to keep the usage of the periphery current, more or less, with the usage of the center. Strange as it may first seem, it is during the period of maximum Mesopotamian domination of the periphery, in the first half of the first millennium, that we find cuneiform in full retreat, gone almost entirely from the western periphery apart from official Assyrian usage, and in the process of being replaced by alphabetic

Aramaic writing in the heartland as well. During its heyday, however, cuneiform operated in Western Asia as a hegemonic writing system via networks of scholars that could be co-opted by the state but existed very well, too, in the absence of a unifying state (Cooper 1999). The writing system that had originated as an accounting technology, on the bean-counting margins of Uruk culture, had become the vehicle of culture out there on the margins.

But Gonzalo Rubio's paper demonstrates that the situation was really not so simple. We may read and understand letters from Mari, Tuttul, Emar, or Alalakh as the Akkadian texts they are, but we are very aware that they may have been dictated and read out in local languages that would have been very different from the Akkadian in which they were written down, a possibility which becomes more certain as we move into the southern Levant, very far from the center. This alloglottography is difficult to detect because for most of the second millennium, speakers of other Semitic languages used Akkadian cuneiform when they needed to write (Cooper 1999), and their competence in Akkadian was quite acceptable. But the earlier alloglottography that Rubio discusses, the first attempts to use Sumerian cuneiform to write Semitic languages, is very different. Even when there are no phonetic Semitic elements whatsoever in a text, there are telltale syntactic, lexical, or grammatical clues which indicate that these texts were not intended to be read in Sumerian (although how they ever were read in Semitic is beyond me). But, most often, there are, scattered sparsely throughout a text, a phonetic pronominal suffix here, a conjunction or preposition there, indicating that the text surely was intended to be read in Semitic. This may, in Rubio's terms, be only "partial alloglottography," but it is just this partial quality that makes working with those texts so very difficult.

It is true, as Rubio tells us, that the use of Sumerograms in Akkadian texts of all periods is also a kind of partial alloglottography, but the persistence of Sumerograms in Akkadian, while certainly demonstrating the strength of tradition in scribal practice, is not scribal antiquarianism, which I would rather identify with the revival of older forms: the use of archaizing script, orthography, or linguistic features (e.g., Schaudig 2001: 56f., 86f.). The high frequency of Sumerograms in certain kinds of first-millennium texts, in fact, is the opposite of antiquarian. Rather, it represents the "modern development" of a very efficient style of technical writing that betrays no antiquarian yearnings (Cooper 1996: 52f.).

Eventually, of course, the entire cuneiform scribal enterprise became a kind of antiquarian pursuit, although much more than antiquarianism must have been at work for Sumerian and Akkadian to survive for 600 or more years after Cyrus conquered Babylon, as languages with neither army nor mother-tongue community, using script and media that were hardly competitive with the state-of-the-art writing systems of their time. The final centuries of cuneiform see it gradually restricted to fewer and fewer areas of use in Babylonian temple communities — surely, Rubio's evocation of "the melancholy of dispersion and loss, withering and decadence," is apt here for us if not for them (Houston, Baines, and Cooper 2003).

The very latest cuneiform texts concern astronomy and astrology, the stereotypical Chaldean disciplines — practiced by an ever smaller circle of adepts (Brown n.d.). So, too, in Egypt, although literacy in the ancient Egyptian language and writing systems survived several centuries longer than cuneiform literacy in Babylonia, "By … the second and third century C.E.," according to Jacco Dieleman, "Demotic was merely used by a small circle of native priests for literary and religious compositions." But if Greek provided strong competition for the native Egyptian language, a strong Egyptian mother-tongue community must have, at least in the realm of spoken language, resisted Hellenization, for how else does one explain the emergence of Coptic Christian literature in late antiquity. Whereas cuneiform scribes were preserving languages that had virtually nothing to do with what anyone spoke in Babylonia, Egyptian in the form of Coptic was

still spoken in Egypt in the middle ages and remains in use as a liturgical language in the Coptic Church today.

It seems fitting that a variety of languages, scripts, and signs would be used in magical spells, where the efficacy of language often lies not in its clarity but in the power possessed by certain names and sounds and designs. And although anyone literate in Demotic might have been able to read hieratic, Greek, and Old Coptic, the use of the so-called cipher script, even if easily *de*ciphered, can only have been intended to restrict further the already highly restricted readership, a writing for those on the margins of the already marginalized. The question remains why a "magical library" in which the great majority of manuscripts would have been completely accessible to a literate practitioner would also contain a small number of manuscripts with similar contents that seem to have been intended for a tiny minority of readers.

Markets, perhaps? If amulets with multi-scripted Demotic texts were especially prized, if, in fact, the sale of magical inscriptions constituted an important stream of income for late Egyptian priest-scribes literate in Demotic, then restricting access to these handbooks would be a necessary economic strategy. David Brown (n.d.) has recently suggested that the last couple of generations of cuneiform scribes in Babylonia probably survived by selling horoscopes. Markets, then, may have proved the last refuge of the most ancient writing systems of the Near East, centuries after states had abandoned them for alphabetic writing in newer languages.

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# SECOND PANEL:
# PUBLICS

# 6

# BILINGUALISM, SCRIBAL LEARNING, AND THE DEATH OF SUMERIAN*

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The death of Sumerian evokes a fascination and morbid curiosity, as the death of any language does. Like those faded photographs of the last known speaker of some exotic Australian language, it conjures up images of that Sumerian who with his final breath took the language with him. It is an issue about which seemingly every scholar of the ancient Near East has an opinion, in mind if not in print, but few are the facts that go uncontested. No one would seriously question the assertion that at some point in the third millennium there lived a people, among others, in the southernmost stretches of Iraq, for whom Sumerian was a first language, that to the north of Sumer, in Akkad, there were those, again among others, who spoke a Semitic language,[1] and that, at some point, Akkadian eclipsed Sumerian and the latter became relegated to the status of a dead, literary language. On these points we all agree: it is the "when" and "how" that are the questions — but questions, given the evidence at hand, that cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. Language death is a function of complex socio-economic, political, and ideological factors that we are ill equipped fully to comprehend, confined as we are to the written word of a long-dead civilization. And in this light we may view the very question of the death of Sumerian as a type of academic sensationalism, a curiosity over which much ink has been spilled, when scholarly attention, it could be argued, would be more fruitfully directed elsewhere. But as unsatisfying as our inability to arrive at a definite answer to our query may be, the debate and the theoretical frameworks in which the evidence is placed are enlightening in themselves.

The topic is a particularly apt one for this conference as two of the participants, Jerrold Cooper and Piotr Michalowski, have shaped much of the debate in recent years. Cooper's influential article "Sumerian and Akkadian in Sumer and Akkad"[2] is a classic and is as influential today as it was thirty years ago. And it was with anticipation that we awaited the publication of Michalowski's "The Life and Death of the Sumerian Language in Comparative Perspective," a revised and expanded version of which appears in this volume.[3] This reflective and linguistically savvy study, drawing upon recent findings in the area of language obsolescence, has redefined the problem. Cross-cultural and -linguistic comparisons certainly have their critics in Assyriological circles, but no one who uses such data would claim that they have predictive power. Their value

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[1] The purposefully vague term here reflects the uncertain early history of Akkadian.

[2] Cooper 1973.

[3] Michalowski 2000; also note his earlier comments in Michalowski 1987: 60.

lies not in providing answers, but in shaping the questions themselves, in providing informed expectations that are based on well-established linguistic patterns.[4]

Both Cooper and Michalowski conclude, although Cooper is more adamant on this point, that Sumerian was essentially a dead or dying language by the Ur III period (ca. 2100–2000 B.C.), that by this time it was already confined to the realm of writing. The genesis of this idea can be traced back to Gelb who saw southern Babylonia toward the end of the third millennium as continuing in "the direction of total Akkadization and elimination of Sumerian elements,"[5] as well as Kraus who, in his long monograph on the subject, expressed the opinion that loanwords reveal Ur III Sumerian to be "eine tote Schriftsprache oder die absterbende Sprache einer Minorität."[6] That this is the prevailing view may be seen in the comments of Thomsen, who claims without hesitation, in what remains the standard grammar of the language, "In Ur III the use of Sumerian as a spoken language seems thus to have been very limited,"[7] of Civil and Rubio, who conclude their article on the Semiticization of Sumerian with the statement that by the Ur III period "Sumerian was not a living language any more,"[8] of George, who most recently writes, "By the Old Babylonian period it seems that Sumerian had long died out among the people as a spoken language,"[9] and finally — bearing witness to the broad appeal of the position — of Goody, who unequivocally states of the Sargonic period (ca. 2300–2150 B.C.) that "Akkadian now became the dominant spoken language."[10]

It is in view of this formidable backdrop that I take the happier, if less cautious, road and argue from the other side, maintaining that Sumerian was still spoken into the first centuries of the second millennium and in some areas possibly beyond that. The position is a well-known one but has not been as well articulated; with the exception of Edzard's "Wann ist Sumerisch als gesprochene Sprache ausgestorben?" and Sallaberger's recent "Das Ende des Sumerischen. Tod und Nachleben einer altmesoptamischen Sprache," it has been expressed almost parenthetically, and in the case of Lieberman's oft-cited comments, relegated to a footnote.[11]

Of course, the very debate over the demise of vernacular Sumerian begs the larger question of defining language death. Sumerian continued to be the object of written composition long after it was spoken. And even if we build our definition upon the notion of the "mother-tongue," that is, a language dies when it no longer has native, mother-tongue speakers, we must contend with the not uncommon scenario in which speakers who learn a language secondarily have greater proficiency with that language than native speakers who, for a variety of possible reasons, for example, relocation, marriage, etc., have adopted another language and so have lost some fluency with their mother tongue, so-called "rememberers."[12] In addressing this issue, I follow the definition of language death commonly given by linguists and define the death of Sumerian as the point when the language ceased to be used as a means of regular, everyday communication.[13]

Focusing on language shift as a typologically common outcome of dual language use, I understand the Sargonic through Isin-Larsa (ca. 2000–1750 B.C.) periods to be times of asymmetrical bilingualism in which the south was increasingly bilingual, speaking both Sumerian and Akkadian, but in the north Akkadian monolingualism was, and continued to be, the norm. More than a scholarly conceit, asymmetrical bilingualism is, cross-culturally, the primary cause

[4] See Shopen 1985: 1 and Woods 2001: 1–11.

[5] Gelb 1960: 270.

[6] Kraus 1970: 93.

[7] Thomsen 2001: 17.

[8] Civil and Rubio 1999: 266.

[9] George 2005: 128, similarly, 135 n. 20.

[10] Goody 1987: 32.

[11] Edzard 2000; Sallaberger 2004; and Lieberman 1977: 20 n. 50.

[12] See Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 183.

[13] See Sasse 1992a: 18 and Thomason 2001: 224. Sallaberger similarly applies this definition to Sumerian (2004: 111, 136).

of language death. Instances of language death are actually instances of language shift. Barring genocide and other radical cases in which a community of speakers ceases to exist, a population that abandons one language necessarily assumes another. This invariably occurs in a bilingual, language-contact setting and it is a minority language that gives way to a dominant, majority language. In addressing the death of Sumerian, or more precisely the Sumero-Akkadian language shift, our goal must be to create a comprehensive model that methodologically takes as its starting point the typological rule over the exception and, moreover, accounts not only for the linguistic data, but also the historical, socio-economic, and political contexts, for language shift is ultimately rooted in the extra-linguistic setting. The point, of course, cannot be proved, but there is a converging circle of evidence that, in my view, strongly suggests that Sumerian was spoken through the Ur III period and only entered its terminal phase in the Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000–1600 B.C.) — indeed, the Old Babylonian scribal milieu may very well represent a reflex of this development. But before turning to issues of language, I first cover some well-worn ground, namely, the evidentiary value of personal names and writing as indicators of spoken language.

## SUMERIAN AS A SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE UR III PERIOD

It is a statement of the obvious to assert that Sumerian was an integral part of the ideological framework of the Ur III state. In the preceding Sargonic period, Akkadian replaced Sumerian as the language of administration and propaganda, but with the fall of Akkade and the rise of the Ur III polity Sumerian once again emerged in the south as the language of writing: portions of the Sumerian literary corpus, better known from later Old Babylonian copies, were composed at this time as Ur III kings sought to recapture the glories of a Sumerian heroic age of which they saw themselves as heirs. And, as scribes at court busied themselves with writing elaborate hymns of praise to their masters, their counterparts in the bureaucratic centers churned out administrative records by the thousands, making this one of the best documented periods before the industrial revolution. But what does any of this say about the spoken language of the period? — as *prima facie* evidence, well, nothing. And for the more skeptical it suggests the artificial imposition of a dead language as an instrument of prestige. However, much hinges upon how one views the Sargonic period. Implicit to such skepticism is the understanding that the Akkadian documentation from the south during the Sargonic period reflects the vernacular — that the political control exerted from Akkade effected a language shift in the south. But in fact, there is little evidence for the type of language policy or tight political control that would engender a shift. Rather, what we have in the south is the presence of bureaucrats from Akkade, mostly in outposts beyond the city walls of the major cities,[14] and the imposition of Akkadian as the official written language. Once this political pressure dissipated, the spoken language could resurface in the textual record.[15] Sumerian, in all likelihood, continued to be spoken after the Sargonic period much as it had been in the Pre-Sargonic period.

The language of writing and personal names stand at the center of the death-of-Sumerian debate — to accept Sumerian as a dead language during the Ur III period is to reject outright the evidentiary value of both, for not only are the vast majority of our texts written in Sumerian, but Sumerian personal names prevail in the south. Critics are quick to point out that onomastic data are not an accurate barometer of spoken language or ethnicity, and that it is quite possible to write in one language and speak in another. No one can quibble with the inherent validity of such isolated statements. Indeed, there is abundant evidence, ancient and modern, for personal names

[14] Westenholz 1999: 50.

[15] On this point, see also Sallaberger 1999: 129.

outliving their languages; Hittite and Luwian onomastic elements, for instance, appear in Anatolian names as late as the turn of the era,[16] while American personal names in origin represent a hodgepodge of languages with, for the most part, no meaningful relationship to the ethnicity of their bearers or to the English that they speak. And as the use of Sumerian itself in later periods bears witness, written language and spoken language need not be identical; to find a well-known parallel, we need look no farther than the use of Latin in the middle ages and beyond.

But before we completely abandon the evidence of personal names and written language — which, at any rate, certainly does not speak against Sumerian as a spoken language in the Ur III period — we must look at the particulars. First, there are no surprises here; the personal names and the language of writing correlate with what we know otherwise to be the case: Akkadian was spoken primarily in the north and Sumerian in the south, with Sumerian gradually giving way to Akkadian. Diachronically, this is also reflected in the distribution of names[17] and to a lesser extent by the texts; the apparent exception of the Sargonic period, evidencing a short-lived spike in Akkadian texts in the south, as I have argued, is to be explained as a northern imposition and not as an indigenous development. And while certainly not all of the formulaic Ur III texts were written by Sumerian speakers, it does not follow that none were. Second, the cases described in the previous paragraph represent exceptions rather than the rule. As facile and glib as the statement may seem, in most cases, in Mesopotamia and elsewhere in antiquity, there is a general correlation between spoken language, names, and writing — generally, people are named and write in the languages they speak. This is particularly true when names represent transparent predications, as they do in the ancient Near East, and so, necessarily, must be couched in the contemporaneous vernacular.[18] Thus, the burden of proof must be to demonstrate that the possessors of these names and the writers of these texts are not Sumerian speakers. The ad hoc assumption of the exception over the rule for both personal names and written language, while defensible for each in isolation, contextually weaves together an unlikely scenario that strains common sense.

The ideology implicit to writing in a dead language must also be taken into account, given that administrative records comprise the vast majority of written documentation for the Ur III period. In most cases, the purpose of doing so, whether it be Sanskrit, Old Church Slavonic, Classical Chinese, Classical Arabic, Rabbinic Hebrew, or Medieval Latin — "distancing languages" to use Ong's description — is to isolate the subject matter, "to separate and distance the knower and the known"[19] and as such, these languages are utilized most often to preserve a sacred religious tradition or, often bound up with it, to convey an arcane scholastic tradition that is the exclusive domain of the learned. It is precisely for these purposes that Sumerian was employed in later periods, when no one would reasonably claim that it was spoken. To what end a dead language serves mundane administration, the primary goal of which is efficiency, begs further

[16] T. van den Hout (pers. comm., 2/04/2005).

[17] Note, for instance, that for Pre-Sargonic Lagaš, Bauer states that Akkadian personal names account for less than 1% of the onomasticon (1998: 437); for the Ur III period, Heimpel (1974/77: 173) calculates that at Girsu Sumerian names account for 93.8% of the onomasticon, Akkadian names for 6.2%; at Ur 72.4% (Sumerian), 27.6% (Akkadian). For the intervening Sargonic period more generally, Foster (1982: 299) claims that in the south, specifically, Girsu, Umma, Mesag, and Adab, 80.5% of all names are Sumerian, while only 12.9% are Akkadian; in the north, that is in Kiš/Mugdan, the Diyala, and Gasur, Akkadian names represent 77.7% of the onomasticon, Sumerian names only 5%. For Girsu, in particular, he gives figures of 83% Sumerian, 13% Akkadian. Further onomastic data for lower Mesopotamia are provided and analyzed by Sallaberger (2004; see, particularly, charts 1–4).

[18] On this point, see already Gelb 1962. Sallaberger (2004: 112–13), arguing along similar lines as Gelb, provides the most rigorous defense to date of onomastic evidence as an indicator of spoken language in the ancient Near East, concluding that "Sumerische und akkadische und andere altorientalische Namen folgen in Orthographie, Phonologie, Morphologie und Lexikon der gleichzeitigen Sprache, sie wurden im gängigen Dialekt formuliert — ganz anders als wir es gewohnt sind, wenn aus einem überlieferten Fundus vorhandener Namen ein Name ausgewählt wird."

[19] Ong 1982: 112; see also Ong 1977: 22–34.

explanation. Again, one may cite Medieval Latin, which was used for prosaic purposes, but its relationship to the descendant Romance vernaculars is quite different from that which existed between Sumerian and Akkadian. Certainly, the discovery of Ur III texts of northern provenance written in Akkadian (e.g., from the SI.A-a and Tūram-ilī archives, and most recently the evidence from Garšana), showing that it was in fact not taboo for Akkadian speakers to write in Akkadian, does little to further the argument that in the south it was Akkadian speakers who wrote exclusively in Sumerian.

As for a dead language lingering on in the onomasticon, I, at least, cannot find a close typological parallel for the distribution that we have in Sumer. That is, the *en masse* preservation of personal names, many of which would be dead metaphors that originally conveyed sentence-level meaning. We must accept this to be the case in places like Lagaš and Umma if we assume Sumerian to be an ossified language by the Ur III period. In the instances of which I am aware, the persistence of a dead language in the onomasticon is sporadic, clustered, and far less uniform. Moreover, in most cases, names are translated into the new language, or, like any loanword, "nativized" to account for the phonological or syllabic structure of the host language.[20] Otherwise, in cases of widespread preservation of personal names, there are often further sociological factors involved, such as the stubborn resistance to acculturation and language loss — a situation quite unlike the willing abandonment of a language as we must presume to have been the case with Sumerian. Clearly, scribal names have to be disregarded and names that can theoretically be read in both languages must be used with caution, but these represent a small minority and we are still left with hundreds of bona fide Sumerian names, which in places like Girsu comprise an overwhelming majority of the onomasticon (see n. 17). These are the names of simple workers and peasants, names that one assumes are free of the complex political agendas that no doubt burdened royal names.

But more telling — and this fact has gone unnoted — there are qualitative differences between the Ur III and preceding Pre-Sargonic onomastica.[21] To be sure, the two periods have names in common, but many older names have fallen out of fashion by Ur III times and have become obsolete. And more to the point, there are many new Sumerian names in the latter period, while some older names appear to be refitted to reflect changes in the vernacular; note, for instance, the Pre-Sargonic name Gá-ka-nam-hé-tìl 'May-the-child-live-for-my-sake', composed with the adverbial postposition -akanam, a name which reappears at the end of the Ur III period as Gá-ke$_4$-éš-hé-tìl, with the synonymous adverbial -akeš, a postposition apparently first attested in the Gudea corpus.[22] In short, names of sentence-level meaning and belonging to common people are invented in the Ur III period — a surprising development indeed for a presumably dead literary language.

In the end, it must be asked if it is reasonable to conclude that Ama-ni-ba-an-ša$_6$-ge 'His-mother-favors-him', A-a-mu-dah 'Father-has-added(-another-one-to-the-family)', Bí-dug$_4$-ì-ša$_6$ 'She-said-"He-is-beautiful!"', and A-a-ud-šù-šè 'Long-live(-my)-father!',[23] and the hundreds of common workers like them, who tilled the fields of Ningirsu and Šara, were in fact Akkadian speakers who bore names which held no meaning for them or for the mothers who bestowed them. That the royal hymns and, moreover, the Ur III literary production — much of it likely bound to performance, full as it is with humor, satire, and political commentary of which we can

[20] Haugen 1956: 64–65 and Weinreich 1963: 52–53.

[21] I thank P. Steinkeller for this observation.

[22] Gudea Cyl. A xxvi 15. See the comments of Krecher 1993a: 193 regarding this personal name (with references) and its relationship to the vernacular.

[23] For these names, see Limet Anthroponymie and Struve Onomastikon s.vv.

only begin to comprehend — could be understood only by the extremely learned.[24] That as Sumerian grew in prestige at court, at least under the early Ur III rulers, as scribes continued to record the most mundane transactions in Sumerian, and as mothers continued to give their children Sumerian names, it was rapidly loosing prestige and being abandoned in the households of places like Umma and Lagaš. All of this is possible, I suppose, but is it likely? Prestige, of course, is the critical element here, for as Nancy Dorian puts it, "It might be said with a certain metaphoric license that languages are seldom admired to death but are frequently despised to death. That is, it's relatively rare for a language to become so exclusively tied to prestigious persons and high-prestige behaviors that ordinary people become too much in awe of it to use it or are prevented by language custodians from doing so."[25]

But the argument need not rest merely on personal names and writing. Even if we were to concede the dubious nature of this evidence, a case could be made solely on the basis of the language of the Ur III period. In contrast to the reduction in lexicon that is so often diagnostic of language death, one has the impression — although admittedly difficult to prove without the benefit of a dictionary — that Ur III texts display a richer vocabulary than that of the Pre-Sargonic period.[26] More compelling, however, are the unorthographic spellings that occur in sale documents from Nippur, which suggest a bond with the spoken language rather than the memorized relics of a dead language. Particularly common in small, private archives, as opposed to those records from the official administration, these sale documents were likely written by the sellers themselves — individuals with some scribal training, but not fully conversant with, or at least bound to, orthographic convention.[27] The unorthographic writings, which have most recently been collected and studied by Wilcke,[28] suggest phonological phenomena that are masked by the standard orthography. For instance, the spelling nam-i-$gi_4$-la (Owen Nippur 920: 4) for nam-ibila points to the phoneme represented by the ‹g› ~ ‹b› alternation, a phoneme not otherwise suspected in this lexeme.[29] And then there are writings of the type ki-lu-ti-ba (NRVN 96: 7) and ki-lu-ti-im-ba (TuM 1–2, 3: 7) for ki-ulutin-ba; nam-re-bi (Owen Nippur 293: 4), nam-bi-ru-bi (Sigrist Princeton, 263: 12), and nam-ru-bi (Gomi-Sato British Museum 221: 5.10) for nam-érim-bi;[30] Ud-dág-ga (NRVN 50: 13) for Un-da-ga; Hul-ti$^{ki}$ (NRVN 296 r. 3) for Hur-ti$^{ki}$; iti ga-ga-è (TuM 1–2, 27: 14) for iti gan-gan-è; A-huš-ša (BE 3, 13: 13) for Al-hu-ša (case); and finally iti ki-an-na (Pettinato L'uomo 42: 5) for iti kin-$^{d}$Inana — all of which suggest the assimilations, dissimilations, and the allophonic and allomorphic variations that belong to the realm of speech. And in this light it may be asked if the writings íb-ta-ab-la (MDP 28, 410: 7) for íb-ta-bala and íb-la (JCS 19, 27b: 12) for ì-íb-bala suggest that the verb bala undergoes a morphophonemic alternation in connected speech — that is, /bla/ similar to /skil/ in ki+sikil, /lgud/ in sa+lugud, and /kugre/ in ka+$guru_7$, as discussed by Civil[31] — whether more than a graphic phenomenon these spellings reveal a morphophonemic variation of speech that lies behind the frozen morphology of the standard orthography. The alternative interpretation of all the above writings, that they merely stem from the oral basis of scribal education, that the scribes were simply throwing orthographic convention aside and recalling from memory the oral drills of their school days, seems consider-

[24] See also Jacobsen 1988: 124.

[25] Dorian 1998: 3.

[26] I would like to thank P. Steinkeller for this important observation.

[27] See Steinkeller Sale Documents 6–7 and Wilcke 2000: 47–48.

[28] Wilcke 2000 — reference courtesy of P. Steinkeller; the following examples are quoted from tables 8f. Wilcke (2000: 47) similarly concludes that these texts were written by scribes for whom Sumerian was the mother tongue.

[29] Civil 1973a: 59–61 and Wilcke 2000: 36–37.

[30] Regarding the relevance of this particular writing for pronunciation, see the comments of Krecher 1993a: 191.

[31] Civil 1973b: 22. Note also ni-ip-pi-ig-ru for ní bí-ingùr-ru (Acta Sum 11, 50: 68B [Ur-Namma B (OB); see Krecher 1993a: 191]).

ably less likely. Indeed, some hint of the language of these scribes may be gleaned from the fact that glosses, which are frequent if idiosyncratic in these texts, are in Sumerian, not Akkadian, for example, $^{gá}$gar$^{ar}$, $^{la}$lahtan, $^{ki}$kiri$_6$, a particularly revealing case being apin$^{pil}$-lá for apin-lá,[32] the last showing the assimilation of /n/ to the following /l/, a phonological phenomenon that is again cloaked by the standard orthography.

Also to be found in the administrative texts are idiomatic expressions, some of which, from a pragmatic standpoint, are suggestive of belonging to the spoken language. A case that has further relevance for points to be made below is the expression na-me arad ha-me, i.e., nameš arad hameš 'they (lit. these ones, i.e., the sellers) will become slaves' (Steinkeller Sale Documents no. 45: 10), which occurs in a Nippur text of Ibbi-Sîn date. The remarkable form here is the plural demonstrative ne-meš 'they', a form otherwise attested only in the later, Old Babylonian grammatical texts. The conspicuous rarity of such forms in our textual evidence, as will be elaborated upon below, finds a ready explanation in the fact that deictics, the indexical or pointing elements of language, belong to the realm of spoken, face-to-face communication; beyond anaphoric usages, they are rare in written sources where pointing has little meaning. From the perspective of historical linguistics, the use of the independent plural demonstrative, in lieu of anene in our case, very likely represents a vestige of the evolution, so well documented among the languages of the world, of a demonstrative, in this case ne, into a third-person pronoun, i.e., ane.[33] Thus, there is a pragmatic and historical rationale for the existence, and at the same time rarity, of forms such as ne-meš. Our expression nameš arad hameš is then not to be viewed as the inscrutable artificial construct of some ambitious scribe working with a dead language, as some would presume, but rather as a glimpse into the idiomatic, spoken Sumerian of the period.

As Sallaberger has recently observed, an argument can be made for Sumerian as a spoken language in the Ur III period based on the non-formulaic language of letters and of certain administrative texts, for example, the reported speech in legal cases.[34] Epistolary, naturally, approximates the vernacular more than other forms of writing. Unlike the limited frozen formulas of most administrative texts and the boiler-plate information of legal texts that may be memorized and plugged in as the context demands, letter composition requires an altogether higher degree of productive proficiency with a language, a creativity which goes far beyond the passive or restricted literacy that is normally associated with dead languages.[35] Certainly productive skills can be developed with a dead language, the use of medieval Latin for prose as well as verse proves that much, but it is nonetheless a difficult and demanding task. Dead languages are rarely employed for extemporaneous composition, and when composition is effected, as I have noted, it tends to be reserved for religious or scholarly purposes, the purview of the extremely learned.

It is with this in mind that we note the remarkable personal letter published by Owen of Ur III or possibly Isin-Larsa date, which a wife chides her husband, asking, a-na-aš-àm dumu-dumu-e-ne-ke$_4$-eš inim-gar-mu íb-bé 'Why is it (that) he (i.e., the husband) demeans my reputation because of the children?' before launching into a string of defenses, explanations, and demands.[36] Like so many of its Old Babylonian counterparts, the letter mixes interrogatives, modals, and imperatives and is filled with idiomatic phrases and adverbial expressions — in short, the stuff of spoken, living language. It is difficult to imagine a scenario that would require such complex, personal information to be conveyed in a language that neither the sender nor the addressee could speak and so would require a translation from Akkadian into Sumerian and then back into Ak-

[32] See Wilcke 2000: 69 (table 11) for references.

[33] Woods 2000 and 2001.

[34] Sallaberger 1999: 130.

[35] Goody 2000: 4.

[36] Owen 1980; also Jacobsen 1988: 124.

kadian. Of interest for our purposes are the four occurrences in this letter, including the passage quoted above, of the infrequent adverbial postposition -akeš 'because of', 'on account of'. As the previous comments regarding the personal name Gá-ka-nam-hé-tìl (Pre-Sargonic) > Gá-ke$_4$-éš-hé-tìl (Ur III) suggest, the adverbial expression -akeš may have its origins in the early Ur III vernacular.[37]

Apart from this unique letter, the brief letter orders of the period, short communications from superiors to subordinates, as well as the legal cases, similarly demonstrate a natural flexibility with Sumerian, interspersing subordinate clauses with modals with a minimum of discernible errors. In short, the corpus of writing that best reflects spoken language, in my opinion, gives no indication that the language was dead or in its terminal phase. Creative competence is very much in evidence in Ur III Sumerian. As may well be expected, speakers of dying languages, as Schmidt in her influential study of the death of Dyirbal has demonstrated, rely on fixed, pre-packaged expressions rather than on spontaneous conversation,[38] a finding that is corroborated by cross-linguistic case studies — productive skill is severely diminished in dying languages.[39]

Similarly, the epistolary of the preceding Sargonic period gives the impression of the two languages living side by side. Aside from letters written in Akkadian and Sumerian, there are several letters written, apparently, in both languages. One Akkadian letter from Girsu, for instance, is concluded with a Sumerian verb.[40] But more telling is the case of the correspondence of a certain Mezi. We have one letter from and one letter to him written in Sumerian,[41] one from him in Akkadian,[42] and one from him written, remarkably, in both languages, with the salutation written in Akkadian and the body in Sumerian.[43] That the addressee of this last letter, referred to simply as "my lord," is likely none other than the Akkadian-speaking king in Akkade may hint at social conventions that dictated language use in this period. Another much-discussed letter displays a more complex intermixing of orthographies; it is of uncertain provenance but possibly from Nippur, a city where both Sumerian and Akkadian writing are well attested:[44]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | [1] Lugal-⌜á⌝-zi-da | Lugalazida, |
| 2. | árad Lugal-ki-gal-la | the slave of Lugalkigal, |
| 3. | énsi-da | from Ensi/the governor |
| 4. | in-da-zàh | escaped. |
| 5. | ki zàh-a-na | His hiding place |
| 6. | géme Ur-nìgin | the slave girl of Urnigin |
| 7. | ba-dug$_4$ | disclosed: |
| 8. | *in Maš-kà-ni*$^{ki}$-⌜ŠABRA⌝ | "In Maškin-šapir |
| 9. | *u*-⌜*ša*⌝-*ab* | he is dwelling; |
| 10. | ⌜*li*⌝-[*ru*]-*ù*-⌜*nim*⌝ | he should be brought here |
| 11. | ⌜*x*-*x*-*le*⌝ | …" |
| 12. | traces | |

As Michalowski points out, this letter, like others that are written in both Sumerian and Akkadian, is open to several interpretations.[45] Possibly, the entire missive is to be read in Akkadian,

[37] See the comments of Krecher 1993a: 193; see also Owen 1980: 195.

[38] Schmidt 1985.

[39] Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 182–86.

[40] Kienast-Volk SAB 112–13.

[41] Kienast-Volk SAB 37–39 and Michalowski LEM 29, 30.

[42] Kienast-Volk SAB 39–42 and Michalowski LEM 29.

[43] Kienast-Volk SAB 42–44 and Michalowski LEM 30.

[44] Kienast-Volk SAB 126–27; Michalowski 1998: 45; and idem (2000: 185–86 and in this volume). Note also sale document NRVN 226, which contains both Akkadian and Sumerian formulary — does the erroneous genitive construction *šībūtum kušurrā'im* (for *šībūt kušurrā'im* "witnesses of the restitution") point to a native Sumerian-speaking scribe as suggested by Wilcke (2000: 47)?

[45] Michalowski (2000: 185–86 and in this volume).

i.e., alloglottography (less likely, although theoretically possibly, it could also have been read in Sumerian). Some administrative texts are so laden with logograms that it is only the presence of an Akkadian preposition that betrays the language in which the text is to be read. But more likely, the mixture of writings in these letters represents dual language use, pointing to a type of code-switching that is typical of bilinguals. Closely associated with speech, but also occurring in more informal writing, or in formal types for stylistic affect,[46] code-switching is a communicative strategy in which the use of two or more languages alternate in the speech act.[47] As Hamers and Blanc explain, code-switching of the intersentential type that we have in our cases — that is, the languages alternate on the clausal level — demands competence in both languages, but not to the same degree as intrasentential code-switching, that is, switching within the clause, which requires a near-balanced bilingualism.[48] Obviously, the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic motivations behind code-switching are various and complex, although several stand out with regard to the letters cited here. Specifically, code-switching may serve as a strategy for distinguishing background from foreground information, for stressing a change of speaker, or for quoting — all of which may apply to the letter given in full above.[49]

## SUMERO-AKKADIAN LANGUAGE CONTACT

The extent and nature of Sumero-Akkadian language contact remain poorly understood and much debated. Like an equation with too many variables, the fact that Sumerian is an isolate, the member of some linguistic family that either died out before writing, or was simply not written, greatly encumbers the task of sorting out what is native and what is borrowed from Akkadian. With somewhat greater confidence can we speak of the effects of Sumerian on Akkadian, although even here uncertainties in the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic and early Akkadian (which, along with Eblaite, is the only extant member of the eastern branch of the Semitic family) complicate the picture — for example, is Sumerian responsible for Akkadian's SOV syntax, given that other Semitic languages are VSO? But was Proto-Semitic originally SOV? If so, did Akkadian branch off before or after the split? Although in my view there is little doubt Akkadian adopted SOV syntax under Sumerian influence, that it is open to debate at all is indicative of the uncertainties that cloud Sumero-Akkadian interference. Various morphological borrowings, in both directions, have also been posited, with some more likely than others;[50] in several cases functionally similar morphemes within their respective languages may have become more alike, that is, the symbiotic borrowing of function without form, another type of contact-induced change (here comes to mind Sumerian ba-/imma- and the Akkadian *t*-stem as well as Sumerian -m-, mu- and the Akkadian ventive [*-am*, *-m*, *-nim*] — or does this last pair represent the borrowing of function with form?). In the end, the best structural evidence for long-term Sumero-Akkadian contact is the reduction of the Proto-Semitic gutturals (i.e., the glottals *ʾ and *h, the pharyngeals *ḥ and *ʿ, as well as the voiced velar fricative *ǵ), likely the result of long-term contact with Sumerian which does not attest these consonants.[51] Beyond this, the evidence for contact comes down to lexical borrowings where we find ourselves on somewhat firmer ground, although the logographic nature of the writing system, words attested only in lexical lists, and I expect in the case of rarely attested loans,

[46] Grosjean 1982: 146–47.

[47] See Grosjean 1982: 145, with previous literature.

[48] Hamers and Blanc 2000: 267.

[49] Grosjean 1982: 149–57.

[50] See Pedersén 1989 and Edzard 2003: 173–78.

[51] Huehnergard and Woods 2004: 230.

ephemeral code-switches,[52] bedevil a firm assessment of the extent of lexical interference. Also to be included here, although less discernible, akin to the morphological borrowing of function without form, is the borrowing of semantic roles for individual lexical items. The evidence for lexical borrowing is considerable, but contrary to what is commonly held, not extensive. Edzard has shown that 7% of Akkadian vocabulary derives from Sumerian, a figure that includes lexical entries.[53] No similar figure has been compiled for Akkadian loanwords in Sumerian, although I am under the impression that, excluding words known only from lexical lists, there are more Sumerian words in Akkadian than vice versa,[54] the exception being the Ur III period for which the overwhelming documentation is written in Sumerian, a condition that no doubt skews the actual distribution.

Further evidence for contact, although again of a less quantifiable character, makes its appearance in the form of idiomatic collocations. This fact is rarely marshaled as evidence for Sumero-Akkadian interference, but as anyone who has worked with these languages would agree, if an idiom occurs in one language, it more often than not has a word-for-word isomorphic counterpart in the other, for example, géštug gar = *uznam šakānum* 'to pay attention' (lit. 'to set the ear'); igi gar = *pānam šakānum* 'to decide' (lit. 'to set the face'); gú šub = *aḫam nadûm* 'to be negligent' (lit. 'to throw the neck/arm'); ki-bi-šè $gi_4$ = *ana ašarīšu turru* 'to restore' (lit. 'to bring back to its place'); inim-ma tuš = *ana awātim wašābum* 'to obey' (lit. 'to sit at the word').[55] Associated with the phenomenon of code-switching discussed above, calques of this type — the literal loan translations of idioms — are a regular aspect of bilingual communication. For example, as Grosjean reports, among German-English bilinguals in Australia there is the expression *für schlechter oder besser*, a word-for-word translation of 'for better or worse' as well as *Wie meinen Sie*? < 'How do you mean'. Similarly, among Spanish-English bilinguals there are the loan translations *cambiar de mente* (rather than *cambiar de opinión*) < 'to change one's mind' and *tener buen tiempo* (rather than *divertirse*) < 'to have a good time'.[56]

The evidence, as Michalowski argues, may not point to extensive interference of the type that we see in other languages where grammar and lexicon are borrowed on a massive scale. But if, at a minimum, we accept the lexical borrowings, as we must, although we may quibble over certain items, and if we accept a certain degree of structural borrowing or interference, for example, the phonological evidence, as most would, then we can draw no other conclusion than that there was a group of bilingual speakers in early Mesopotamia, for bilingualism is a prerequisite to interference of this kind[57] — "The locus of language contact, interference and borrowing is the *bilingual individual*."[58] And it is bilingualism, which is often unstable in certain manifestations leading to monolingualism, I suggest, that underlies the language shift in southern Babylonia from Sumerian to Akkadian.

As discussed further below, some of our earliest clear-cut evidence for language contact, as well as for the suggestion of bilingualism, comes from Abū Ṣalābīḫ; located just 12 miles north of Nippur, this region lies on the frontier that separates Sumer from Akkad and in later periods offers a mixture of Akkadian and Sumerian writing and personal names. Here, in the middle of the third millennium (ca. 2600 B.C.), scribes who bore Semitic names composed some of the earliest

[52] For example, Thomason 2001: 68. Note that in the view of many linguists code-switching and borrowing represent the opposite ends of a continuum, with the former representing the mechanism that gives rise to permanent, stable borrowings; see Hamers and Blanc 2000: 259 and Winford 2003: 108.

[53] Edzard 2003: 178.

[54] Compare Michalowski (2000: 184 and in this volume).

[55] For these idioms, see Edzard 2000: 61 and idem 2003: 175–76.

[56] See Grosjean 1982: 319.

[57] See Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 66.

[58] Sasse 1992b: 60.

known Sumerian literary texts. One possible, if not likely, explanation for presumably Semitic scribes writing in Sumerian is that they belonged to a mixed ethnic, bilingual community. It is a suggestion that finds support in the observable grammatical interference. As is well known, the Akkadian conjunction *u* and preposition *in* alongside some month names and number words already make their appearance in the Abū Ṣalābīḫ administrative texts.[59]

The presence of these words, in particular the conjunction *u*, has solicited considerable comment and there is a common assumption that already at this early date Sumerian was toiling "under a heavy Semitic influence."[60] But it is important to put this evidence within its proper typological context. As is well documented, when languages with conjunctions come into contact with languages without — and here it must be noted that Sumerian -bi-da, literally "with that/its" is of limited productivity, being used only with nominals — conjunctions are among the first elements to be borrowed.[61] Thomason and Kaufman have produced a borrowing scale that is meant to serve as a rough, probabilistic indicator of the degree of contact; on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "Casual contact: lexical borrowing only" and 5, "Very strong cultural pressure: heavy structural borrowing," the borrowing of function words is a 2, and prepositions a 3.[62] Thus, while the presence of the conjunction *u* and the preposition *in* certainly speak to early interference and bilingualism, they can hardly be marshaled as evidence for particularly strong interference, let alone for the terminal stage of Sumerian.

As may already be discerned by the assumptions that the conjunction *u* has engendered, the prevalent view is that during the third millennium Sumerian was in a type of free fall, as if the decline of the language could already be detected, that the trajectory to its death was already mapped out. Kienast has gone so far as to claim that Ur III grammar strongly suggests that Sumerian was already a dead language during this period,[63] while Thomsen states that "the language of the non-canonical texts like documents and letter-orders, which presumably would be close to the spoken language, are very much influenced by Akkadian, thus indicating that the Neo-Sumerian scribes did not have Sumerian as their mother tongue."[64] The only evidence given for this claim is the distribution of the prefixes mu- and ba- in Ur III texts, which is a different issue altogether, one having nothing to do with mother tongues or the status of Sumerian as a living or dead language. This is not the place to delve into the intricacies of Sumerian grammar; suffice it to say that in our texts many of the alleged corruptions are actually issues of writing or may find more likely explanations in the ordinary evolution of the language — that languages are in a state of continual, internally-motivated change is a fact that is too often overlooked in discussions of Sumerian grammar. Certainly there are errors, and moreover borrowings, but Ur III Sumerian does not in any way bear witness to the massive structural and lexical interference that signal the death knell of a language. It is critical in this regard to distinguish malignant language decay, which is diagnostic of language death, from normal language-contact phenomena such as borrowing, which involve healthy, stable languages.[65]

Indeed, from the perspective of our textual evidence, Sumerian died with "its morphological boots on," to use Nancy Dorian's felicitous description of East Sutherland Gaelic, a language that is dying without loss of structure or intensive borrowing.[66] In fact — as Michalowski points out,

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[59] Krebernik 1998: 270.

[60] Biggs 1974: 32.

[61] See Dixon 1997: 21 n. 8. Note the loan of the Arabic coordinating conjunction *wa* 'and' into Turkish, as pointed out by Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 79, with previous literature.

[62] Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 74–75.

[63] Kienast 1982: 105–11.

[64] Thomsen 2001: 19.

[65] As emphasized by Sasse 1992a: 16; idem 1992b: 59; see also Crystal 2000: 23.

[66] Dorian 1978: 608.

also noting the superficial similarities between the death of spoken East Sutherland Gaelic and the death of Sumerian as read in clay — in the view of many linguists, languages do not disintegrate structurally owing to contact alone but maintain their structural integrity as long as there are fluent speakers. Rather, gross simplification, decay, and convergence are the work of the semi-speaker,[67] who makes his appearance when the normal transmission of language from mother to child is interrupted, and "whose command of the language is from the outset imperfect to a pathological degree." [68] What shape Sumerian took in its final hours we shall never know. Did it die with its "morphological boots on?" Or was it reduced to a pale reflection of itself, worn down to an unusable state and overwhelmed by structural interference from Akkadian as it was left to the tender mercies of Sumerian semi-speakers? These are questions that cannot be answered since the grammatical artifacts of such transformations are unlikely ever to become known to us, as writing cloaks such changes in the vernacular. Likely, the language died different deaths in different communities and socio-linguistic environments, with some terminal dialects being mere ghosts of the language Gudea spoke, while elsewhere the language died intact and it was fluent-speaking communities themselves that were dissolved, a possibility that I explore further below. From our perspective, at some point the gulf that always exists between the spoken and the written word widened, with the literary tradition preserving and ossifying a phase of the vernacular, giving it a second life as a language of letters. Many have assumed that writing commandeered the language at a much earlier date, but as I have stressed, the creative competence of the Ur III texts argues against this. And events at the end of the third millennium can certainly accommodate a scenario in which a largely bilingual Sumer was pressured into Akkadian monolingualism.

## ASYMMETRICAL BILINGUALISM AND THE DEATH OF SUMERIAN IN THE EARLY SECOND MILLENNIUM

In my necessarily speculative reconstruction, the death of Sumerian is tightly bound up with bilingualism, to be exact, asymmetrical bilingualism, which "very often results, sooner or later, in language shift," as stated by Thomason, who goes on to describe a number of cases of unstable bilingualism in which the majority language is in the process of overwhelming the minority language in bilingual communities: Native American and Australian Aboriginal languages, as well as Irish Gaelic, giving way to English, Ainu giving way to Japanese, Livonian to Latvian, Suba to Luo, etc.,[69] while Rouchdy adds the case of Nubian losing ground to Arabic in Egypt.[70] Language contact more generally is described as a cycle that begins with two groups of monolingual speakers, proceeds through a stage bilingualism, and "often ends with language shift, entailing near or complete monolingualism" in the dominant, majority language.[71]

What I suspect to be the case is that by the mid-third millennium, if not earlier, there was sufficient bilingualism, particularly in the frontier regions, for example, in places like Nippur and Abū Ṣalābīḫ, to effect some moderate level of lexical and structural interference phenomena, which at a minimum included a number of loanwords, including Akkadian *u* and *in*, as well as the reduction of the Proto-Semitic gutturals in Akkadian. In Sumer proper there were likely still groups who spoke Sumerian but not Akkadian (or another Semitic tongue), while in Akkad, the opposite held true. By the end of the third millennium these proportions had changed. In the Ur III period the majority of native Sumerian speakers were now bilingual — a situation that would

[67] See Michalowksi (2000: 191-92 and in this volume) citing Cook 1995, among others.

[68] Sasse 1992b: 61; see also Sasse 1992a: 11.

[69] Thomason 2001: 9; see also Romaine 1995: 49.

[70] Rouchdy 1989: 96.

[71] Myers-Scotton 2002: 30.

account for the increase in Akkadian loanwords, and perhaps interference, during this period, as well as the naming of royal children in both Sumerian and Akkadian[72] — but in the north Akkadian monolingualism (or at least a lack of knowledge of Sumerian) continued to be the norm.

Once again, Scottish Gaelic, perhaps the best-documented case of language obsolescence, provides an illuminating parallel. For centuries this language has toiled under heavy pressure from English but is only now in its terminal phase. Describing in 1972 the linguistic milieu of East Sutherland, a traditionally Gaelic-speaking portion of Scotland, Nancy Dorian notes that there were approximately 140 Gaelic speakers of the East Sutherland dialect. But, remarkably, there were no Gaelic monolinguals — and there had not been any for forty or fifty years.[73] Rather, all Gaelic speakers at the time were in actuality Gaelic-English bilinguals exhibiting various degrees of proficiency with Gaelic; few were more comfortable with Gaelic than English, but most were equally fluent in both languages, "skilled bilinguals," while at the far end of the spectrum there were some who were more proficient with English and whose Gaelic was flawed.[74]

Some support for asymmetrical bilingualism in our case may be found in the distribution of personal names and texts, which together point to an increasing Semitic presence in the south, to a primarily Semitic north making linguistic and cultural inroads into a primarily Sumerian south. There is the possibility that texts of Uruk III date (ca. 3000 B.C.) contain Semitic loanwords, as Steinkeller tentatively suggests, for example, MAŠ+GÁN for *maškanu* 'threshing floor', BA+DAR for *patarru* 'knife', and perhaps É+DÚR for é-dúru < *adurû* 'village'.[75] If this is the case, then already at this early date there was some degree of bilingualism in the south. But more certain evidence comes from the Pre-Sargonic period. In the archaic Ur materials (ca. 2800 B.C.) there are the Semitic personal names Pū-ʾabī and Dada-ʾilum. The somewhat later texts from the more northerly Fara (ca. 2600 B.C.) yield several Akkadian loanwords, for example, ma-na 'mina', dam-gàr 'merchant', pa-šeš '(anointment) priest', while just less than 3% of the personal names can be analyzed as Semitic; in the roughly contemporaneous corpus from the centrally located Abū Ṣalābīḫ, however, the percentage of Semitic names jumps to 40%.[76] Northern Sumer, the so-called near south,[77] not surprisingly, displays a greater degree of Semitic contact during the third millennium than the south proper. As summed up by Gelb, Steinkeller, and Whiting in their discussion of Semitic acculturation of the near south in terms of selling arable land, a phenomenon they see as spreading from north to south, "There is nothing radical about the assumption of the Akkadian influence in the near south between the Fara and Sargonic periods, as it can be corroborated by the use of the Akkadian language in letters and administrative documents at Adab, Lagash, of Akkadian personal names at Adab, Lagash, Nippur, Umma, and Shuruppak, and of

[72] The fact that a princess from Mari took the Akkadian name Tarām-Ur(i)am upon her marriage to Šulgi does not necessarily point to Akkadian as the vernacular of the Ur III court or, necessarily, to the relative prestige of Akkadian vis-à-vis Sumerian at court (cf. Michalowski 2000: 193 and in this volume). Rather, the name may simply speak to her Mari origins and her native tongue, which, no doubt, was a dialect of Akkadian; the adoption of an Akkadian name would have been politically and socially feasible — as indeed the names of the latter Ur III kings demonstrate — within an extensive bilingual setting.

[73] Dorian 1977: 24 and 31 n. 1.

[74] As described by Dorian 1977: 24 and idem 1978: 592. The parallels to the Sumero-Akkadian language area extend to language shift as a function, in part, of the physical environment. As the East Sutherland Gaelic community is confined to the Highland coastal areas of Scotland, a linguistic enclave encroached upon by a mainland interior that is dominated by English, in Mesopotamia geography similarly conspired with demography to further increase the pressure upon the minority language. The only topographically feasible outlet for Sumer — wedged as it was between mountains, the Persian Gulf, and the desert — was to the north(-west), a region populated by speakers of the majority language, Akkadian.

[75] Steinkeller 1995: 695, 700; compare Englund 1998: 73 n. 144.

[76] Krebernik 1998: 260–270. Also note the Semitic month names that appear at Abū Ṣalābīḫ, i.e., ITU *i-si* and ITU *za-ʾà-tum* (see Krebernik 1998: 257, 270).

[77] See Gelb Kudurrus 13.

Akkadian month names at Adab, Lagash, Nippur, and Umma."[78] It would not be overreaching to assume that this region was the engine that powered Sumero-Akkadian bilingualism in Sumer more broadly and was therefore critical to the Sumerian-to-Akkadian language shift.

The history of Akkadian loanwords in Sumerian may also speak to increasing bilingualism among Sumerian speakers of the Ur III period, although our ignorance of the rules that govern lexical borrowings makes any statement in this regard tentative at best. As has often been observed, early Akkadian loanwords are reduced to their morphological base without case ending, for example, nagar 'carpenter', šám 'price', ha-zi 'ax', or, more commonly, appear with the addition of the suffix /-a/, for example, dam-ha-ra 'merchant', ha-zi-na 'ax' (beside ha-zi), ma-da 'land', ma-na 'mina', and maš-ga-na 'threshing floor'.[79] In explaining the shape of these words, Gelb took a rather radical view, stating that "the occurrence of loan words without any endings or with the ending -a in Sumerian can be explained most plausibly as borrowings from a Semitic language or dialect having a declension without fully developed case endings."[80] How this would work from the perspective of comparative Semitics and Proto-Semitic he does not say. More likely, these loans are "nativized" — adapted to mesh better with Sumerian morphology. This meant dropping the foreign Akkadian case endings so that the loans represented only the morphological base of the Akkadian words, or, in other cases, adding -/a/, a morpheme that is, perhaps, to be identified with the nominalizer -/a/, one of the primary funcions of which is the generation of noun phrases.[81]

Beginning in the Ur III period, however, words were borrowed without alteration, for example, *nisqum* 'high quality', *ḫarrānum* 'journey', *mayyaltum* 'bed', that is, they maintain the Akkadian nominative case ending.[82] Kraus, as I note above, sees this second group of words as an indication that Sumerian was a dead or dying language by this time.[83] However, it may be argued that to borrow words into a dead language without subjecting them to a nativization process is to defeat the very purpose of utilizing a dead language in the first place, namely, to create a separation between what is spoken and what is written, to preserve the purity and immutability of the dead language as shown by our penchant for Latinized words. Plausibly, the development reflects an increase in the extent of bilingualism among traditionally Sumerian speakers — as fluency in Akkadian became extensive, the Akkadian forms were maintained in full. A typological parallel for such a development is to be found in Russian loanwords borrowed into Siberian Yupik Eskimo. Loans from the pre-Soviet era, when contact between the languages was casual and bilingualism limited, are nativized so that they fit the phonology and syllabic structure of Eskimo, for example, Russian *bljudce* 'saucer' > *pljusa*; *čaj* 'tea' > *saja*; *tabak* 'tobacco' > *tavaka*; *pačka* 'bundle' > *paska-q*. Late borrowings, on the other hand, taken over once Russian was established as a secondary language and Yupik speakers attained fluency in Russian, retain their Russian phonemic and morphological shape, i.e., *bljutca*, *čaj*, *tabak*, and *pačka*, respectively.[84]

No doubt the scenario described here is overly simplistic. To speak of bilingualism as a binary function alone is misleading because at every stage there were likely semi-speakers of every shade of gray between monolingualism and fluent Sumero-Akkadian bilingualism; nor should

[78] Gelb Kudurrus 13–14.

[79] Gelb 1961: 141.

[80] Gelb 1961: 142.

[81] Specifically, the nominalizer -/a/ creates subordinate clauses, which syntactically are noun phrases, from main clause conjugated verbs. Similary, with participles, i.e., nonfinite verbal bases, and their atttributes the morpheme imparts definiteness — definitiness is what I understand to be at the root of the semantic category that Krecher describes as "determination" (1993b: 81–98).

[82] Gelb 1961: 11.

[83] Kraus 1970: 92; also Falkenstein 1960: 313.

[84] Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 33, who further cite a similar development for English loanwords in Japanese; see also Thomason 2001: 73 and 135.

we assume a homogeneous regional distribution of bilingualism. The cases of Nippur and Isin, as well as Umma and Garšana, discussed below, suggest a heterogeneous picture, a mosaic of language use for the near south. To this we must add the likely existence of social restrictions that dictated "who speaks what language to whom and when," to use Fishman's turn of phrase[85] — as we have seen, the existence of such differential domains of language use may be hinted at by the Mezi correspondence.[86] Moreover, language shift is not a function of language, but a phenomenon that is triggered by the extra-linguistic setting, particularly socio-economic and political pressures. These are the factors at which we can do little more than guess.

Nevertheless, several developments provide insights into the motivations behind widespread bilingualism in the south and ultimately the shift to Akkadian. And once again, the evidence, sparse though it is, points to the Sargonic and Ur III periods. While it is difficult to imagine that Sargonic policy in Sumer — never a willing participant in the Akkade empire — did much to increase the prestige of Akkadian on the streets and in the homes, the reforms of Naram-Sîn, which saw the south administered by bureaucrats from Akkade and the introduction of Akkadian as the official language, may have made knowledge of Akkadian an economic necessity for some parts of the population. Indeed, the germ of language shift lies in a gradual inability to use a minority language in certain, often commercial contexts for which it was formerly suitable, niches which must now be filled by the majority language.[87] Because of its futility, the minority language acquires negative perceptions in which it may be regarded as provincial or backward, attaining "a kind of bumpkin status." [88] In short, the language suffers from a loss of prestige that ultimately affects language loyalty and the critical transmission from mother to child. In an observation that may be particularly relevant for Sumerian, given the broad cultural prestige enjoyed by the language, Sasse notes that the attitude toward the minority language "is often not entirely negative; it may be schizophrenic in that the retention of the language is valued positively for one reason, and negatively for another." [89]

We may also add — if even half the number of casualties given in the Sargonic royal inscriptions is true — the considerable disruptions to the southern demographic mix brought about through insurgency and war. New arrivals to the region, on the other hand, may have mastered only Akkadian, not because their native tongue was in any way similar to Akkadian, for example, Amorite — people only learn new languages when there is a social pressure to do so — but because it had the broadest speaker base and there were economic advantages to learning it.[90] Sumerian may have persevered in the major cities and villages with long-standing Sumerian speaking communities, while in the newer settlements populated by immigrants, primarily in the countryside, Akkadian may have been the vernacular. This may be what we are confronted with at Garšana, a site in the near south, in the vicinity of Umma, which was apparently a new settlement in the Ur III period as it is not attested before the end of Šulgi's reign.[91] Given that the administrative texts from this site betray a heavy Semitic influence as witnessed by the preponderance of

[85] Fishman 2000: 89–106.

[86] See Sasse 1992a: 10.

[87] See Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 185; Crystal 2000: 21–24; Dorian 1980: 85.

[88] Dorian 1980: 88.

[89] Sasse 1992a: 14.

[90] Compare Cooper 1973: 245. Note the comments of Fase, Jaspaert, and Kroon, "when migration is followed by a more or less permanent settlement, and both sides choose for integration rather than segregation, members of the minority group almost unavoidably shift towards the use of the dominant language in most of their contacts with the dominant group" (1992: 5).

[91] Owen 2001: 2.

Semitic personal names,[92] Akkadian glosses, and the insertion of Akkadian expressions within Sumerian texts, the site presents itself as Semitic speaking enclave within Sumer proper.[93]

Also to be considered in this connection are intermarriages between speakers of different languages that result in children who are monolingual, an occurrence that is often quoted as a destabilizing factor in the dynamics of bilingual communities where there is "usually a shift to the majority language." [94] Finally — and this may have been the blow from which the language could not recover — the fall of the Ur III state was bound up with an agricultural failure that affected Ur and probably Lagaš and Umma as well.[95] These events likely saw the displacement of peoples in traditionally Sumerian-speaking strongholds. The possibility assumes added significance in light of the well-documented role that radical demographic change plays in language shift, with the dissolution of a speech community being the surest route to language death.[96] Occupation of Lagaš and Umma, for instance, dropped, and there is even some indication of emigration to Elam.[97] In this way many bilingual, and even Sumerian monolingual communities, must have been dispersed into non-Sumerian areas to the north and east, where there were socio-economic pressures to learn another language or further rely upon their competence in Akkadian.

But I doubt that even with the upheavals at the end of the Ur III period Sumerian ceased to be spoken in one fell swoop, as not all regions of the south were affected to the same degree. Typically, language death is a gradual process, with individuals responding differently to pressures perceived. As Sasse observes, in "the normal situation … both types of shifters, the rapid and the gradual, are present in a single obsolescent speech community;" in balancing the continuum of responses, he reaches the conclusion that "the empirical findings of gradual death situations can in fact be fairly well generalized into a comprehensive model of 'prototypical' language death."[98] Such a scenario becomes all the more probable for our case when we note that we are not dealing with a single community, but with many. And unlike modern cases of language death, we are not contending with issues of centrally administered language policy, nor with supra-regional transportation, media, and the like, all of which can only hasten a language's end. We need merely cite Aramaic, still spoken in isolated communities and only now under the imminent threat of extinction, to show that languages can die hard deaths in such circumstances. Lieberman was likely on the right track when he wrote, "pockets of families of native speakers may have persisted long after the linguistic milieu had changed to Akkadian."[99] Vernacular Sumerian likely survived at least through the Isin-Larsa period in some locations and there were quite possibly enclaves, *Sprachinseln*, where it persevered for generations beyond that.

A natural habitat for an endangered Sumerian would, of course, be the marshes of southernmost Babylonia, a region renowned for its inaccessibility as much in antiquity as it was in the twentieth century. This cannot avoid bringing to mind some tantalizing anecdotal evidence, namely, the odd Sumerian names borne by many of the kings of the first dynasty of the Sealand (ca. 1750–1500 B.C.), i.e., Pešgaldaramaš, Adarakalama, Ekurduana, and Melamkurkura.[100] At minimum, these names reflect a residual knowledge, exploiting the memory of Sumerian as a phatic emblem of regional and social identity. And here we must also add the late comic tale "The

[92] Sallaberger (2004: 116, chart 2) gives figures of 9% Sumerian, 68% Akkadian, 23% other/unclear.

[93] Owen 2001: 1; on this point, see also Sallaberger 2004: 116.

[94] Romaine 1995: 42, 186.

[95] See Sallaberger 1999: 177, with previous literature, and now Sallaberger 2004: 134.

[96] See, for instance, Fase, Jaspaert, and Kroon 1992: 6–7; also Crystal 2000: 70–76.

[97] Lambert 1991: 56–57.

[98] Sasse 1992a: 22–23.

[99] Lieberman 1977: 20 n. 50.

[100] See also Edzard (2000: 69–70).

Illiterate Doctor."[101] In this short story, a doctor of considerable status — he is also the *šangā* $^{d}$*Gula* 'chief administrator (of the temple) of Gula' in Isin and so must have had training in Sumerian letters — pays a visit to Nippur in order to collect on a debt for curing a local man of a dog bite. He asks directions to his patient's home of a peasant woman selling vegetables on a Nippur street. She responds in Sumerian, but the doctor, unable to understand her spoken Sumerian, takes her comments for insults — it is only when she answers in Akkadian, for she is bilingual, that he can understand her.

What we have then is a doctor from Isin, who, despite his learning, is a monolingual Akkadian speaker, and a peasant woman from Nippur, who despite her likely illiteracy, is a native bilingual. However, the story is uncomfortably late and can be dated no earlier than the Kassite period.[102] One prefers to see this story as a late fictitious comedy composed for the benefit of the Edubba students. Such an interpretation would account for its didactic agenda in terms of the inclusion of esoteric logograms, the use of personal names attested elsewhere in the scholarly tradition, the divine genealogy incorporated into those names,[103] and for certain aspects of the plot itself. It is certainly not coincidental, for instance, that the doctor is from, of all places, Isin, and the patient suffers from, of all things, a dog bite — Gula, the goddess of healing, being the patroness of Isin, her animal being the dog. But the story likely has its origins in an anecdote of a previous age and so reflects the social realities of earlier, perhaps Old Babylonian, times. Specifically, the tale mirrors what is known from the distribution of early Old Babylonian personal names. As Sallaberger's recent analysis shows, Sumerian names comprise a majority of the Nippur onomasticon through the nineteenth century, a fact that is corroborated by the reputation Nippur enjoyed, even at a late date, as the hub of things Sumerian. Nippur was a real Sumerian city, with Sumerian, to extrapolate from the evidence of personal names, being spoken on the streets at least through the Isin-Larsa period. For its sister-city, Isin, a relative upstart, no similar claim can be made, at least not to the same degree, despite the city's considerable literary output. Already in the twentieth century Akkadian personal names outnumber Sumerian names by a wide margin and by the nineteenth century Sumerian names represent a negligible minority.[104] And if the account of one Edubba letter is to be believed, then even the quality of the scribal school in Isin lagged woefully behind that of its illustrious counterpart in Nippur.[105]

## SPOKEN SUMERIAN IN THE OLD BABYLONIAN EDUBBA

To argue for an Old Babylonian date for the death of spoken Sumerian is to invite further speculation on the role of the Edubba 'tablet house',[106] the institution of scribal learning that is

[101] Jacobsen 1988: 124; Reiner 1986; and Vanstiphout 1999. For a very different interpretation of this story, see George 1993.

[102] Reiner 1986: 1.

[103] See George 1993: 63–65.

[104] Sallaberger (2004: 118–20, charts 3 and 4) gives the following percentages based on a sampling of the onomasticon. For the twentieth century: Nippur — 63% Sumerian, 33% Akkadian, 4% other/unclear; Isin — 25% Sumerian, 65% Akkadian, 10% other/unclear. For the nineteenth century: Nippur — 53% Sumerian, 29% Akkadian, 18% other/unclear (cf. eighteenth century: 19% Sumerian, 66% Akkadian, 14% other/unclear); Isin — 4% Sumerian, 77% Akkadian, 19% other/unclear.

[105] See van Dijk 1989: 448–50.

[106] Translation based on the Akkadian equivalence *bīt ṭuppi* (e.g., ZA 64 [1975] 140: 2, 4). Uncertainty persists concerning the precise etymology of the Sumerian term, which is often written with a plene /a/ vowel, i.e., é-dub-ba-a, arguing against a simple genitival construction — é.dub.ak; in this connection also note the form é-dub-ba-àm (UET 6, 340: 6 [= 346: 6], where one would expect é-dub-ba-kam or the like [see AfO 23 (1970): 93 n. 5]). Edzard suggests understanding -ba- as a non-finite form of the verb ba 'to distribute', hence, 'house which distributes the tablets' (cited by C. Wilcke apud W. W. Hallo 1989: 237 n. 2; see now Volk 2000: 3).

particularly associated with this period. Structurally, the schools themselves appear to have been rather modest, likely privately run affairs.[107] Nevertheless, the Old Babylonian Edubba was an institution in the functional sense that the scribal curriculum drew upon a fairly fixed corpus which was largely canonized during this period; in fact, some compositions that were integral to elementary education can be clearly dated to the Isin period.[108] It is to the Old Babylonian Edubba that we owe the great mass of Sumerian literature in the form of thousands of exercise tablets, the by-products of scribal training. As the name and the production indicate, the mission of the Edubba was the training of scribes, instruction in writing Sumerian and Akkadian. But there was an oral component to the education as well, a component that is often underestimated, but which, no doubt, played an important role in the cultural and professional life of the scribe. In the scribal literature there are a number of texts that take as their theme scribal training itself and so give us a glimpse into Old Babylonian school life. From these texts, so-called Edubba dialogues, it is known that students were instructed and drilled orally. For the Old Babylonian period in particular, one has the distinct impression that the Edubba tablets were exercises in transcribing the spoken word, that the writing of Sumerian was learned orally.[109] The language of instruction was Sumerian or a mixture of Sumerian and Akkadian, and mastery over spoken Sumerian was a requisite scribal skill — dub-sar eme-gir$_{15}$ nu-mu-un-zu-a a-na-àm dub-sar e-ne 'A scribe who does not know Sumerian, what kind of a scribe is he?'[110] — to quote a proverb that may extol this virtue.

But the role of spoken Sumerian in the Edubba went beyond the rote mechanics of instruction. There can be little doubt that a register of Sumerian, however artificially maintained, was spoken in the schools as a means of communication. Anecdotal passages from the Edubba Dialogues point in this direction, stressing the necessity for a spoken competence with the language: tukum-bi dumu é-dub-ba-[(a)-me-en] [eme]-gir$_{15}$ e-zu-ù-à[m] [eme]-⌜gir$_{15}$⌝-ta inim e-da-bal-e-en 'If you are a student, do you know Sumerian? Yes, I can speak Sumerian';[111] ú-húb nam-dub-sar-ra ú-ug eme-gir$_{15}$-ra 'He is a deaf fool when it comes to the scribal art, a silent idiot when it comes to Sumerian';[112] eme-gir$_{15}$-šè eme-zu si nu-ub-sá 'Your tongue cannot manage the Sumerian language';[113] eme-gir$_{15}$-šè al-dugud eme-ni si nu-ub-sá 'His tongue is too "heavy," it cannot handle Sumerian'.[114] Like university Latin until recent times, Sumerian was not only the language of instruction, but also the language of the scholarly milieu. Sumerian was the glue that held the scribal guild together, and as such, it served a crucial ideological function in shaping scribal identity.

Evidence for this extra-curricula Sumerian, I suggest, is to be found in some long-overlooked portions of the Old Babylonian grammatical texts, that curious group of texts, which Black referred to as grammatical vocabularies, but which are, for the most part, actually scribal drill exercises.[115] Unlike some texts of this type that display a straightforward relationship between scribal instruction and scribal praxis, e.g., *ana ittīšu*, a list of words and phrases commonly used in writing legal texts, no such practicable use is apparent in these texts. Many entries in gram-

[107] See Veldhuis 1997: 26–28. The distinction between the physical and functional characteristics of the Edubba is a significant one, with the former bearing no necessary relationship to the latter. In this regard, note that the extensive school staff described in the Old Babylonian Edubba literature is not to be taken literally. Moreover, if most of the instruction was conducted in courtyards, because of poor indoor lighting, then we are largely ignorant of class size and whether the small Old Babylonian houses interpreted as Edubbas actually served as classrooms; compare George 2005.

[108] See Tinney 1999.

[109] Civil 1976: 130–131.

[110] Alster Sumerian Proverbs 2.47.

[111] Edubba D 2–4 (Civil 1985).

[112] Enkimansum and Girini-isag (UET 6/2, 150: 10; Sjöberg 1976: 161).

[113] Dialogue 1 (Two Scribes) 56; Sjöberg 1976: 161.

[114] Enkitalu and Enkihegal 97 (TuM 3, 42 ii 13 and dupl.; Sjöberg 1976: 162).

[115] See MSL SS 1, 72.

matical vocabularies of all periods are devoted to series of demonstratives and various deictic expressions, including pronominal forms, for example,

From OBGT Ia, obverse ii (MSL 4, p. 63) + CBS 6509+:[116]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4′ = 4′. | gú-e-ta | *iš-*[*tu an-na-nu-um*] | ‘from here’ |
| 5′ = 5′. | gú-še-ta | *iš-*[*tu a-na-ma-nu-um*] | ‘from there’ |
| 6′ = 6′. | gú-re-ta | *i*[*š-tu ul-la-nu-um*] | ‘from yonder’ |
| … | | | |
| 9′ = 9′. | gú-e-ta gú-re-eš | *iš-tu* [*an-na-nu-um ul-li-iš*] | ‘from here to there’ |

From OBGT Ia, obverse i (MSL 4, p. 62) + CBS 6509+:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2′. | gá-a-[gim] | [*ki-ma ia-ti*] | ‘like me’ |
| 3′. | za-a-[gim] | [*ki-ma ka-ti*] | ‘like you’ |
| 4′. | e-ne-g[im] | [*ki-ma šu-a-ti*] | ‘like him’ |
| 5′. | lú-še-gim | [*ki-ma a-nu-um-mi-im*] | ‘like that one’ |
| 6′. | lú-re-g[im] | [*ki-ma ul-li-im*] | ‘like the one yonder’ |
| … | | | |
| 13′ = 5′. | lú-ne-na-àm | *an-na-šu* | ‘he is here’ |
| 14′ = 6′. | lú-še-na-àm | *a-na-ma-šu* | ‘he is there’ |
| 15′ = 7′. | lú-re-na-àm | *ul-la-šu* | ‘he is yonder’ |

From OBGT Ib, reverse ii (MSL 4, p. 65) + CBS 6509+:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27. | [ki] lú-ne-ta | ⌜*it-ti*⌝ [*an-ni-im*] | ‘from this one’ |
| 28. | [ki] lú-še-ta | [*it-ti a-nu-um-mi-im*] | ‘from that one’ |
| 29. | ki lú-re-ta | [*it-ti ul-li-im*] | ‘from the one yonder’ |

Similarly, note Ni 9688 (MSL SS 1, p. 73):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | dub-sar-me-en | *ṭú-up-*[*ša-ru-um at-ta*] | ‘you are a scribe’ |
| 2. | dub-sar-me-en | *ṭú-up-š*[*a-ru-um a-na-ku*] | ‘I am a scribe’ |
| 3. | lú-e dub-sar-ra | *an-nu-um ṭ*[*ú-up-ša-ru-um*] | ‘this one is a scribe’ |

Literally hundreds of entries of this type could be quoted. What is interesting about these seemingly uninteresting entries is that demonstrative forms of this type are exceedingly rare in our textual sources — the one exception being the representation of direct speech, face-to-face dialogue, like that found in proverbs. The narratives of royal inscriptions and literary texts, or even personal letters, depend for the most part upon anaphora rather than on spatial deixis proper since in narrative there is a greater burden to track that which has already been mentioned than to make reference to the extra-linguistic context. Indeed, the very function of demonstratives, as noted above, is for face-to-face oral communication, allowing the speaker “to anchor his utterances in the extra-linguistic reality”[117] — beyond speech, their role in language is substantially diminished as their remarkably sparse attestation in most of our textual genres attests. Spatial deictics are used first and foremost to focus the addressee’s attention on objects and locations in the speech situation. Therefore, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, given the preoccupation with deictics in the grammatical tradition, that their purpose lay in the teaching and drilling of discourse Sumerian. It is a conclusion that finds support in the hundreds of additional entries in these “grammatical vocabularies” that consist of interrogatives, temporal adverbial expressions, and quirky idiomatic expressions of the type ne-nam al-dím$^{(di\text{-}im)}$ = *ki-a-am ma-ṣi* ‘This is enough!’; ka-mu šu àm-bar =

[116] CBS 6509+ represents the fragments CBS 6509 + CBS 6563 + UM 29–16–30 (+) CBS 6568 (+) “N 1761,” which supplement OBGT I, Ia and Ib; the excerpts follow the edition provided by Veldhuis (2000a: 242–46). The number following the equal sign refers to the MSL 4 line number, as per Veldhuis.

[117] Kryk 1987: 1; see Woods 2000 and idem 2001: 12–17, with previous literature.

*pi-ia wu-uš-šu-ur* 'My mouth is loose'; ka-mu ab-ša$_6$-ge = *pi-ia ṭa-ab* 'My mouth is sweet'; zíb-mu ì-tag-tag-ge = *it-ta-bu-ú-a ú-la-pa-ta-ni-in-ni* 'I feel my beauty marks(?)'[118] — the material of day-to-day speech. In fact, the verbal paradigms, about which so much has been written, with their preoccupation with injunctive as well as first- and second-person forms, likely served the same didactic purpose. Absent from tablet types indicative of the earlier phases of scribal training, these were the master tablets used in the oral drill exercises.

Incidentally, herein lies the moral of the story of the Illiterate Doctor, which was written, according to the colophon, "[for] the recitation of the apprentice scribes."[119] The learned doctor and *šangû* of the temple of Gula is obviously a man who knows his letters, a graduate of the Edubba who can read and write Sumerian — contrary to the title we commonly give this composition, he is quite literate. But he cannot speak Sumerian. He cannot conduct the simplest of conversations with the simplest of speakers.[120] The text itself underscores this dichotomy with the inclusion of a number of esoteric logograms among which is ŠUL for Bau in the writing of the doctor's name, i.e., LÚ-$^{d}$ŠUL for Amel-Bau, writings that epitomize the scholarly tradition. But from the point of view of speech, the doctor's name, to be read in Akkadian, is quite simple and must be seen as standing in stark contrast to the laughably long Sumerian personal names that belong to the patient and his family and which serve as the opening lines of the story: Ninurta-sagentarbi-zaemen, brother of Ninurta-mizideš-kiagani, nephew of Enlil-Nibru-kibigi.[121] The distinction between the written and the spoken language is drawn once again at the story's conclusion. Fed up with his inability to comprehend the spoken word, the gardening woman has the students of the Edubba chase the learned doctor from the city — the city, of course, being Nippur — with their practice tablets.[122] The moral for the student: Learn your conversational Sumerian! — gá-e-gin$_7$-nam eme-gir$_{15}$-ra-me-en 'Do you, as I do, speak Sumerian?'[123]

The Old Babylonian manifestation of the Edubba, which saw the rise of the grammatical tradition and the canonization of Sumerian literature, with its mandate to maintain the spoken as well as the written language, in my opinion, was a function of the state of decay in which vernacular Sumerian found itself. The institutionalization of scribal education at this time was an attempt to halt this process and establish not only a written, but also a spoken, standard. Conversely, it is perhaps significant that we do not have evidence for identical institutions during the Ur III period. Certainly scribal schools existed in the Ur III period — Šulgi claims to have founded two of them at Ur and Nippur,[124] while a number of literary texts better known from their Old Babylonian counterparts can be shown, either by internal evidence or the existence of early exemplars, to have been composed or at least copied during this period. But school tablets such as those well known from the Old Babylonian period have not been found in connection with the thousands of Ur III administrative texts and, beyond the purported existence of royal academies, we remain almost completely ignorant of scribal education during this period.[125] At our present state of knowledge, the Edubba remains a singularly Old Babylonian phenomenon, an institution synony-

[118] OBGT XII 11–15, 19–20 (MSL 4, p. 119).

[119] George 1993: 67 ad 35.

[120] That the gardening woman's Sumerian includes syntactic anomalies as well as the Akkadian interjection *anni* 'yes' (interjections and other extra-sentential particles are often subjected to code-switching; see Hamers and Blanc 2000: 259 and Muysken 2000: 97–100) may be diagnostic of the terminal-stage, or semi-speaker register of the language spoken on the streets of Nippur in the Old Babylonian period (cf. George 1993: 65, 69 ad 30).

[121] George argues convincingly that these names are back translations; this may very well be the case, but the comic theme of the story, in which these names certainly play an important role, suggests that they are nevertheless to be read in Sumerian (cf. George 1993: 63–64).

[122] On Akkadian *imšukku*, see George 1993: 70–71.

[123] Enkimansum and Girini-isag (UET 6/2, 150: 66; Sjöberg 1976: 162).

[124] Šulgi B 308–10.

[125] Sallaberger 1999: 130–31 and Waetzoldt 1991: 640.

mous with the written word, but whose existence was ultimately bound up with the fortunes of the vernacular. As Baines points out with regard to the scriptorium in Egypt, "This institution became more prominent when written and spoken language had diverged a long way, and its position in society will have narrowed access to elite culture further than previously…."[126] Quite possibly, at least in the early Old Babylonian period, the students entering the Edubba represented a continuum of competence with the language: Akkadian monolinguals and bilinguals, rememberers and semi-speakers of varying types and degrees. Among the bilinguals may have belonged the sons of scribes, as the scribal profession was often passed from father to son — a-ru-a-mu eme-gir$_{15}$-ra-àm dumu dub-sar-ra-me-en 'My gift is Sumerian, for I am the son of a scribe'.[127] We may even entertain the possibility that the sons of scribes were taught Sumerian at home as a second language prior to entering the Edubba. There are well-known cross-cultural parallels to so-called "father languages," which often involve the passing of a sacred or secret language from father to son.[128]

Some evidence for this view may also be sought in the other significant source for deictics, the proverb collections. Veldhuis has recently made the intriguing suggestion that the purpose of proverbs within the context of the scribal curriculum was to teach Sumerian grammar, arguing that proverbs represented a midway point in scribal education, being mastered after the lexical lists but before the more complex literary texts.[129] Because of their simple grammar, he contends, they were the primary means by which scribes learned Sumerian grammar, that is, by example.[130] However, proverbs are among the most difficult and idiomatic texts and, accordingly, they are perhaps better understood as writing exercises for students who had some familiarity with the spoken language rather than as grammatical teaching tools for the uninitiated.[131] Indeed, such frozen expressions are the last holdouts of dying languages; as Sasse explains, a "language in the phase of decay is not a language in the sense properly understood (a structured code), but an amorphous mass of words and word forms, stereotype sentences and phrases, formulaic expressions, idioms and proverbs, which are learned in 'chunks,' whose forms are imperfectly known and whose functions are poorly understood."[132] The didactic value of Old Babylonian proverbs as exercises in writing may very well have lain in the fact that these were common turns of phrase that even the semi-speaker knew.

In closing this paper I would like to point out a curious group of texts that, if I am interpreting them correctly, elegantly bring together the arguments for an Old Babylonian date for the death of Sumerian and the role of the spoken word in scribal training. Civil has recently published a fragment that contains a bilingual dialogue in which a teacher is drilling a student in both Sumerian and Akkadian, requiring the student to repeat his Akkadian instructions in Sumerian and vice versa; the exercise consists of a series of imperatives concerned with the making of tablets, for example, Teacher: "[ … (now)] say it in Sumerian!" Pupil: "I will say it to you! '[qu]ick, [come here], take the clay, knead it, flatten it, [mix(?) it], roll it (like a ball), make it thick, make (the tablet), … hurry, … bring me [the …-clay], [cut it]!'" Teacher: "[ … ] beautifully said!"[133]

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[126] Baines 1983: 581; quoted by Goody 1987: 237; and idem 2000: 20.

[127] Enkimansum and Girini-isag (UET 6/2, 150: 61; Sjöberg 1976: 162 n. 11). The reader will, no doubt, appreciate my restraint in not connecting a-ru-a with im-ru-a, im-ri-a (= *kimtu* 'family'), as per the PSD A/1 sub a-ru-a B, i.e., 'my family (speaks) the Sumerian language and I am the son of a scribe'; see Sjöberg 1976: 162 n. 11.

[128] For example, see Romaine 1995: 19–20.

[129] Veldhuis 2000b: 385–87.

[130] Veldhuis 2000b: 385.

[131] I owe this insight to several discussions I had with P. Steinkeller in the course of writing my dissertation.

[132] Sasse 1992a: 16–17; note also Sasse 1992b: 63–64, 72. See also Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 183.

[133] Civil 1998: 1–7; the lines quoted are pp. 2–3: 11′–21′.

That is, the written exercise recreates a typical oral drill, which itself consists of the instructions a teacher must regularly give to a student. Simply put, the dialogue has a basis in the discourse reality of everyday scribal life. In fact, the pedagogic skeleton of this exercise, the actual drills that were pieced together to form the dialogue, appear in a text, which, like the deictic entries, has been cloaked under the vague designation, "grammatical vocabulary." Pointing to the obvious relationship between the two, Civil provides the following transliteration:

N 4217 + N 6939 = OBGT III (Civil 1998: 4–5; cf. Black Sum. Grammar, p. 152 and MSL SS 1, p. 91):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 74. | [im ga-ab-sìg] | *lu am-ḫa-*[*aṣ*] | 'I kneaded (the clay)!' |
| 75. | [i]m al-sìg-ge-en | *a-ma-aḫ-ḫa-aṣ* | 'I will knead (the clay)' |
| 76. | im nu-sìg-ge-en | *ú-ul a-maḫ-aṣ* | 'I will not knead (the clay)' |
| 77. | im hé$^{!}$-sìg-ge | *lu maḫ-aṣ* | 'Knead (the clay) now!' |
| 78. | ⌜im⌝ nu-sìg-ge | *ú-ul i-maḫ-aṣ* | 'He will not knead (the clay)' |
| 79. | ⌜x⌝ sal-la-ab | *ru-uq-qì-iq* | 'Flatten (the clay)!' |
| 80. | [ša] ⌜kalag⌝-ga-ab | *pi-si-i*[*l*] | 'Make (the clay) thick!' |
| 81. | [x]-⌜ak$^{?}$-(x)-ab$^{?}$⌝ | ⌜*ru-uq-qì*⌝-*i*[*q*] | 'Flatten (the clay)!' |

The texts to which I referred above are of this type, and they likewise consist of simple commands in Sumerian.[134] But they do not concern the isolated life of the Edubba. Rather, they involve the technical aspects of commonplace Mesopotamian activities, for instance, malt production, reed mat making, and agriculture.

Excerpts of TIM 9, 88 — malt production (entries with extant Akkadian only); note the code-switch *ḫubuš* in line 11:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | munu$_4$ kalag$^{?}$-ga$^{?}$ | *bu-uq-lum ši-b*[*i-iṭ*] | 'Thresh the malt!' |
| 6. | munu$_4$ šu hu-uz-za-ab | *bu-uq-lum* ⌜*ši-wi*⌝-*i* | 'Roast the malt!' |
| 7. | munu$_4$ šu du-bé$^{?}$ | *bu-uq-lum* ⌜*ku-mu*⌝-*ur* | 'Pile up the malt!' |
| 8. | munu$_4$ kum-mà | *bu-uq-lum ḫu-šu-ul* | 'Crush the malt!' |
| 9. | munu$_4$ bu-ul-la | *bu-uq-lum i-ši-ip* | 'Winnow the malt!' |
| 10. | munu$_4$ igi zàg-ga | *bu-uq-lum bé-e-er* | 'Select the malt!' |
| 11. | munu$_4$ *hu-bu-uš* dug$_4$-ab | *bu-uq-lum ḫu-bu-uš* | 'Break up the malt!' |
| 12. | munu$_4$ mug-[ … ] | *bu-uq-lum ḫa-am-*[*ar*] | 'Dry out the malt!' |
| … | | | |
| 14. | níg-bu-ul munu$_4$ | *nu-ša-ap-ti bu-u*[*q-lim*] | 'winnowed malt' |
| 15. | egir munu$_4$ | *pu-ši-iš-tum* | '(a type of) malt residue' |
| 16. | KA-gaz munu$_4$ | *ka-ar-ka-su* | '(a type of) mash' |

Excerpts from OBGT XI column ii — reed mat making (MSL 4, p. 114); $^{giš}$má in line 17, and implied in line 18, must refer to a boat used in the collection of reeds:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | [ ] | [*b*]*i-e-*⌜*ir*⌝ | 'Choose!' |
| 2. | [ ] | [*bu*]-*ul-li-il* | 'Mix!' |
| 3. | [ ] | [*pu-ut*]-*ti-il* | 'Braid!' |
| … | | | |
| 9. | a-[…]-ga-ab | *me-*[*e tu-ub*]-*bi-ik* | 'Pour out the water!' |
| … | | | |
| 11. | [gùn-g]ùn-na-ab | *bu-r*[*i-i*]*m* | 'Make colored!' |
| 12. | [si$_{12}$]-si$_{12}$-ga-ab | *wu*$^{!}$-*ri-iq* | 'Make green!' |

[134] Civil has already pointed out that these texts belong to a common genre; see MSL SS 1, p. 73.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13. | $bar_6$-$bar_6$-ra-ab | *pu-uṣ-ṣ[í]* | 'Bleach!' |
| 14. | dág-dág-ga-ab | *ub-bi-i[b]* | 'Clean!' |
| 15. | [š]u tag-ga-ab | *zu-úḫ-ḫi-in* | 'Decorate!' |
| 16. | [š]u tag-ga-ab | *te-qì-i-šu* | 'Daub it!' |
| 17. | [gi]$^{š}$má šú$^{l}$-a-ab | *ku-ti-im* | 'Cover (the boat)!' |
| 18. | [g]$i_4$-a-ab-ta | *ḫu-mi-iṣ* | 'Remove (the cover from the boat)!' |
| … | | | |
| 21. | [gi bar-r]a-ak | *qá-⌜na⌝-a-am qù-⌜lu⌝-up* | 'Peel the reed!' |

Excerpts from OBGT III — agricultural work (MSL 4, p. 69; the Akkadian column is broken):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21. | še-kín-gurum-ma | 'withered (over-ripe) barley' |
| 22. | še al-sul | 'the barley is spoiled (mildewed)' |
| 23. | še al-$ur_4$-$ur_4$ | 'the barley is reaped' |
| 24. | še al-ús bal-a-ni-ib | 'the barley is ready: Transfer it!' |
| 25. | še $guru_7$-e gar-ì | 'Put the barley into the granary!' |
| 26. | še zar tab-ba-a[b] | 'Arrange the barley into two stacks!' |
| 27. | še zar sal-la-ab | 'Spread out the barley stack!' |
| 28. | karadin kešda$^{da}$ | 'Bind the sheaves!' |
| 29. | še $ur_4$-ra-ab | 'Reap the barley!' |
| 30. | še ri-ri-g[a] | 'gleaned barley' |

Like the scribal drill exercise that formed the basis of the teacher-student dialogue, these texts, concerned as they are with highly technical jargon and specific procedural aspects of a given profession, are based in real world practice, that is, in the workplace. It is difficult to imagine that these texts, of Old Babylonian date, are anything other than the written artifacts of oral exercises that taught scribes the bare necessities of communication with workers in various occupations who spoke Sumerian — instruction in professional jargon. The pragmatic role of these texts is further suggested by the simplicity of their language. As instructions that are couched as imperatives, they are typical of the type of simplified registers of language that are employed to facilitate communication between interlocutors who do not share a common native language, such as "foreigner talk" and, of particular interest for our case, foreign-worker dialects and jargons, for example, *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ('guest-worker German').[135] By virtue of their uncomplicated morphology and invariability, imperatives, as well as infinitives, and singular forms of the verb, often replace the more complex inflected forms of the standard language in these reduced registers. Scribes, no doubt, were intimately involved in the work of which they were making record — indeed, the relationship should be turned around: they were members of various professional classes who happened to be scribes, graduates of the Edubba. In the Ur III period, for instance, seemingly most professionals and bureaucrats — whether a perfume maker (ì-rá-rá), boat captain (má-$lah_4$-gal), granary superintendent (ka-$guru_7$), or military lieutenant (nu-bànda) — were also scribes (dub-sar).[136] In these capacities, scribes would naturally have served as translators — dub-sar eme-$gir_{15}$ nu-mu-un-zu-a inim bal-e me-da hé-en-tùm 'If a scribe does not know Sumerian, how can he properly effect a translation?'[137]

The only other interpretation that presents itself for these Old Babylonian texts is that they belong only to the realm of writing, that as copies of earlier texts they represent the frozen written

[135] See Hamers and Blanc 2000: 256; Holm 1988: 61–62; idem 1989: 618–20; and Lattey and Müller 1976.

[136] Michalowski 1987: 62. See also Steinkeller's discussion of one Ur-emaš, who bore the title dub-sar and whose career path can be traced from worker (érin) to overseer (ugula) of a group of foresters (1987: 89).

[137] Alster Sumerian Proverbs 2.49.

tradition of an earlier, perhaps Ur III, oral practice. Possibly — but there is no compelling reason to assume so. At present, there is no evidence that texts of this type entered the scribal tradition in an earlier period. On the other hand, parallels in the Lu-list, HAR-ra = *ḫubullu*, and other lexical lists show the integration of technical instruction into the broader scribal curriculum, but as the regular absence of injunctive forms shows, without any connection to their original, Old Babylonian pragmatic function.

Interestingly, however, there were later attempts to maintain, or rekindle, the genre, although merely as a scholarly construct, stripped of its former practical purpose and bond with the workplace. Indeed, the Middle Babylonian text quoted below, in my view, belongs strictly to the confines of the Edubba, being composed in mimicry of the Old Babylonian exercises in professional jargon, as suggested by its date and, moreover, by its curiously dramatic subject matter, namely, preparations for battle.

Exercise tablet A29975 = 2N-T 343 (MSL SS 1, pp. 89–90):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ki-sù-a gú-zag-gar-ra è-ni | *ina ka-ṣí-a-ti* ⌜*x-x ṣí*⌝*-ma* | ‘Go out early in the morning …!’ |
| 2. | gìr$^{!}$(MÁ) si-il-la-ab | *še-pa-am pu-ru-us* | ‘Cut off the approach!’ |
| 3. | ki nu-bulug-ga dib-ba-ab | *ṣ/zar-ra-ar-tam šu-ti-iq* | ‘Advance into the open country(?)!’ |
| 4. | lú $^{giš}$šu-kár $^{giš}$mar-zu sa hé-ri-ib-gi$_4$-g[i$_4$] | *na-ga-a-rum e-riq-qá-ka liš-te-er-sí* | ‘Have the carpenter prepare your chariot (for battle)’ |
| 5. | GÍR zag h[é]-e-$^{ke\text{-}še}$ké[š] | ⌜*a-na*⌝*-an-tam ki-iṣ-ṣar* | ‘Prepare for battle!’ |
| 6. | $^{giš}$tir hé-e-sur$_5$ | [*qá*⌝-[*aš-t*]*am i-ši* | ‘Take up the bows!’ |
| 7. | da-ba-an ⌜šu tag⌝-ga-ab | *šar-*[*da*]*-pa tu-ru-*[*uṣ*] | ‘Pull taut the reins!’ |
| 8. | $^{giš}$mud [šu h]a-za-ab | *kak-*[*ka*] *tu-mu-*⌜*uḫ*⌝ | ‘Grab the weapon!’ |
| 9. | sa-dù ⌜hé⌝-e-gar | *tap-p*[*a* (*x*)] ⌜*x*⌝-[(*x*)]*-ši* | ‘… a net$^{?}$/companion$^{?}$’ |
| 10. | ú $^{kuš}$lu-úb-ba gar-ra-ab | *a-ka-lam ṣú-ud-di* | ‘Provide provisions!’ |

But perhaps the more optimistic scholar, seeing in this text a connection with the names of the Sealand kings and the story of the Illiterate Doctor, may reach different conclusions …

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AfO | Archiv für Orientforschung |
| Alster Sumerian Proverbs | B. Alster. Proverbs of Ancient Sumer: The World’s Earliest Proverb Collections |
| Acta Sum | Acta Sumerologica |
| BE | Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts |
| CRRA | Compte rendu Recontre Assyriologique Internationale |
| Gomi-Sato British Museum | Tohru Gomi and Susumu Sato. Selected Neo-Sumerian Administrative Texts from the British Museum |
| Gelb Kudurrus | I. J. Gelb, P. Steinkeller, and R. M. Whiting Jr., Earliest Land Tenure Systems in the Near East: Ancient Kudurrus |
| Gudea Cyl. A and B | literary compositions; F. Thureau-Dangin, TCL 8; D. O. Edzard, Gudea and His Dynasty. RIME 3/1, pp. 68–101 |
| Kienast-Volk SAB | B. Kienast and K. Volk, Die sumerischen und akkadischen Briefe |
| Limet Anthroponymie | H. Limet, L’anthroponymie sumérienne dans les documents de la 3$^{e}$ dynastie d’Ur |
| MDP | Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse |
| Michalowski LEM | P. Michalowski, Letters from Early Mesopotamia |

| | |
|---|---|
| NRVN | M. Çiğ and H. Kızılyay, Neusumerische Rechts- und Verwaltungsurkunden aus Nippur |
| MSL | Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon |
| MSL SS | Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon Supplementary Series |
| OBGT | lexical series; Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts; MSL 4, 47–128 |
| Owen Nippur | D. I. Owen, Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts Primarily from Nippur |
| JCS | Journal of Cuneiform Studies |
| Pettinato L'uomo | G. Pettinato, L'uomo cominciò a scrivere: Iscrizioni cuneiformi della Collezione Michail |
| Sigrist Princeton | M. Sigrist, Tablettes du Princeton Theological Seminary: Époque d'Ur III |
| Steinkeller Sale Documents | P. Steinkeller, Sale Documents of the Ur-III-Period (= FAOS 17) |
| Struve Onomastikon | V. V. Struve, Onomastika rannedinasticheskogo Lagasha |
| TIM | Texts in the Iraq Museum |
| TuM | Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection of Babylonian Antiquities im Eigentum der Universität Jena |
| UET | Ur Excavation Texts |
| ZA | Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie |

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# 7

# MULTILINGUAL INSCRIPTIONS AND THEIR AUDIENCES: CILICIA AND LYCIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Many peoples of the ancient Near East have left monumental inscriptions in more than one language, often recorded in separate scripts. What was the relationship between author and audience, between language and writing system? This paper examines and compares the motivation behind multilingual inscriptions in the Neo-Hittite state of Cilicia and epichoric[1] Lycia. The reasons for executing several language versions prove to be diverse and seem to be closely connected to the identity of the author as well as the audience addressed. The Cilician bilinguals in Hieroglyphic Luwian and Phoenician were erected by rulers and are part of the state's outward representation of itself. In Lycia, up to three languages are used — Lycian, Greek, and Aramaic — but there are only few political documents, the inscriptions largely consist of private epitaphs aimed at the local population.

Monumental inscriptions in more than one language are not an uncommon feature in the ancient Near East. In the first millennium B.C., bi- and multilingual inscriptions appear in various regions. In general, one cannot assume that many of the people who passed by these monuments would have been able to read even one version of the recorded text. Who was the audience of these texts, and why were they recorded in several versions? In the following, I try to consider the question of relationship between author, audience, and language as attested in multilingual inscriptions from two areas, namely the Neo-Hittite state of Cilicia and Lycia.

After a short overview of the historical background, we look at how the texts were composed, by and for whom, the role of the writing systems used, the relationship between the different language versions, and the significance of these inscriptions. Both Lycia and Cilicia preserve only a limited corpus of stone inscriptions, so that one must try and reconstruct the local history with these and references to the countries in foreign, often considerably later literature. This also means that literary genres are limited: in Luwian mainly to building or commemorative inscriptions with historical narratives and in Lycian mostly to sepulchral inscriptions. While one may assume that writing was also used for economic, administrative, and even personal purposes — taking place, unfortunately, on less durable materials than stone — there is almost no evidence for this.[2] Because of this chance survival, or rather the lack of it, we do not have ancient reflections on the role or origins of Luwian and Lycian writing, on the spread of literacy among the population, or

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[1] The period of datable Lycian inscriptions, late fifth to late fourth century B.C.

[2] Notable exceptions in Luwian originate from areas other than Cilicia (ASSUR lead letters, KULULU lead strips). It is conventional to cite Luwian inscriptions by the name of their findspot (in capitals). Unless indicated otherwise, editions of all Luwian inscriptions cited in the following can be found in Hawkins 2000.

on scribal training and access to scribal skills for illiterate people. Nor can we ever know whether Luwians or Lycians indeed wrote about such topics. On the other hand, the surviving inscriptions may offer interesting insight into the relationship between author, audience, and language, as we see below.

## CILICIA

The early centuries of the first millennium witnessed a number of small, mainly city-states in southern Anatolia and north Syria. One can distinguish two large groups among these, namely the so-called Neo-Hittite states that were heavily indebted to the cultural tradition of the Hittite empire and the new Aramaean states which expanded westward to their detriment until the eighth century B.C. By the mid-eighth century, Assyria had become the dominant power, gradually integrating the smaller states into her empire. An independent position was held throughout by Phoenician settlements along the coast. Control over trade routes from the Near East to Anatolia provided a good income for Neo-Hittites and Aramaeans alike and valuable markets for the Phoenician merchants. Already in the second millennium B.C., Cilicia — then known as the kingdom of Kizzuwatna, populated by both Hurrians and Luwians — held an important position, controlling major trade routes between the Anatolian plateau and north Syria. The Cilician capital seems to have been Adana, attested as hieroglyphic *Adana*(*wa*)- (KARATEPE), Phoenician *ʾdn*. While a causal connection cannot yet be proved, Cilicia appears to be the most promising candidate among possible places of origin of this peculiar script.[3]

The hieroglyphic script that appears as the autochthonous writing system in all of the Neo-Hittite states, and only there, can be traced back to the times of the Hittite empire. Its origins are still very much obscure and it appears to have had a strange, mutually exclusive relationship with another writing system during the empire period; Hittite archives preserve thousands of clay tablets in cuneiform writing, featuring literary genres as diverse as religious, cultic, administrative, legal, diplomatic and historical texts, and letters. The texts were recorded mainly in three languages, Hittite, Akkadian, and Hurrian, but up to five others are also attested, including a Luwian dialect used for cultic texts. Monumental inscriptions, however, were never written in cuneiform — despite plenty of possible role models from the Mesopotamian world — but in a script used exclusively for a different Luwian dialect; the two Luwian tongues are accordingly designated "cuneiform" and "hieroglyphic" Luwian but the exact relationship between the two remains at present uncertain. Other than on digraphic seals, the two writing systems were assigned distinctly separate usages and never occurred together. The survival of only one of these writing systems, the hieroglyphic script, may suggest that after the fall of the Hittite empire, if indeed not before, the majority of the population was Luwian speaking.

To explain the survival of this writing system, not only the language recorded with it but also factors beyond speech should be considered. Prevailing opinion has it that the knowledge of cuneiform was lost with the collapse of imperial cities such as Hattusa, eliminating administrative structures such as scribal schools and centers. Yet the structures of the hieroglyphic script are equally complex, so that it is hard to imagine it would have flourished to the degree it did outside of a context of formal scribal training and schools. The fact that with the abrupt and complete discontinuance of the internationally understood cuneiform script also the international lingua franca, Akkadian, was abandoned, seems to my mind to be more suggestive of a deliberate policy

[3] Compare Neumann 1992: 25–26 n. 1; Hawkins 2003: 169; and Payne, forthcoming.

than a simple loss of knowledge. Also, one should remember that cuneiform could also be used to write Luwian, as the surviving Bronze Age Cuneiform Luwian texts from the Hittite capital prove; indeed, in comparison with the hieroglyphic script, it was even slightly better able to record the language's consonant clusters.

## INSCRIPTIONS

Two Luwian-Phoenician bilinguals, KARATEPE and ÇINEKÖY were set up in the state of Cilicia.[4] Contextually, the ÇINEKÖY inscription of Warikas[5] must predate the KARATEPE bilingual, as the latter was written by Azatiwatas, who expressly states that he preserved the throne for the children of Awarikus, king of Adana.[6] While the exact date of the KARATEPE inscription is still disputed because the accompanying sculpture shows both ninth- and eighth-century characteristics, a late eighth-century B.C. date seems likely, if we correctly identify Awarikus with Urikki, attested in the annals of Sennacherib for the years 738, 732, and 710–709 B.C.[7]

ÇINEKÖY, found ca. 30 km south of Adana, preserves the first twelve to fourteen clauses of an inscription on a single piece of sculpture. The basalt base of a storm-god statue, in the shape of a carriage drawn by two bulls, carries a cursive hieroglyphic inscription, similar in character to KARATEPE. The inscription is placed between the feet of the animals, on the back of the carriage, and on the surface and side of the base. After twelve clauses, the text breaks off. While not preserved in full, it is likely on comparative grounds to have been shorter than the KARATEPE inscription.[8] The Phoenician text — only eighteen partly-damaged lines extant — is placed on the front of the block between the two bulls depicted; the Phoenician version lacks the last three clauses of the hieroglyphic text but seems to preserve two further clauses. The text records the *res gestae* of Warikas of the House of Muksas,[9] following the typical pattern of Luwian inscriptions of this type; namely, identification of the author, his preferential treatment by the gods, and his military successes and building activities. The preserved parts of both versions are very similar in content, but in contrast to the KARATEPE bilingual, here the Phoenician text deviates further from the Luwian. Personal as well as divine names are adapted to the setting of the respective cultures, thus the chief male god features as the Luwian storm-god Tarhunzas and Phoenician Baal.

It is worth asking what visual impression this inscription leaves. Because of the nature of the alphabetic script, the Phoenician text can appear on a single space leaving the impression of a compact, united text. Its place on the front of the base may possibly signal pre-eminence over the Luwian text. The hieroglyphic version, as we also witness in KARATEPE, is spread out over several, not always immediately connected spaces, wedged in between sculptural elements, leaving

[4] The ÇINEKÖY inscription can be found in Tekoğlu and Lemaire 2000. A third, unfortunately still unpublished inscription, comes from northwest of the Cilician Gates, from İVRİZ in the land of Tabal. As a copy of the İVRİZ inscription is not yet available, we must confine ourselves in the following to the Cilician bilinguals. A preliminary report is published by Dinçol 1994. Other than these Luwian-Phoenician bilinguals, only the Neo-Hittite state of Tell Ahmar has yielded a Luwian multilingual. Unfortunately, the trilingual Luwian-Aramaic-Assyrian inscription recorded on two portal lions from ARSLANTAŞ is still very poorly understood.

[5] His name appears as Awarikus in KARATEPE. While initial *a-* was frequently subject to aphaeresis in Luwian, the change between *-ka-* and *-ku-* in the last syllable is puzzling.

[6] §§III, XIV–XVI.

[7] Compare CHLI I/I, 20; 44–45; see also Hawkins 1979: 154f.

[8] For example, recurring topoi of both inscriptions appear in longer versions in KARATEPE.

[9] Attested in Greek literature as Μόψος (e.g., Strabo, *Historia* 14,675f.; Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 45f.). See also Houwink ten Cate 1961: 44ff.

the impression of a less harmonious, somewhat haphazard compilation. Nevertheless, it is worth keeping in mind that such arrangement around sculptured elements also occurs on monolingual Luwian monuments.[10] Is it, ultimately, the nature of the two writing systems that conditions this setup, or does it betray a ranking between the two language versions? Comparative data, unfortunately, is limited to the KARATEPE inscription. While the Luwian texts can be compared within the reasonably sized corpus of Luwian inscriptions, the situation is less fortunate as regards the Phoenician since KARATEPE is the longest Phoenician text we have.

Let us now turn to KARATEPE, the building inscription and *res gestae* of Azatiwatas, who ruled the House of Muksas after the death of Awarikus and came to power at the time of Sargon's death. In the Assyrian annals, he features as Sanduarri,[11] king of Kundu and Sissu in the northeast Cilician plain, who took part in an anti-Assyrian alliance with the king of Sidon and was killed by Esarhaddon in 676 B.C. With his death, his kingdom became Assyrian. Azatiwatas' place within the House of Muksas is not clear; he may have been a member of the extended family but seems not to have had children himself. His inscription follows the same pattern as the extant part of ÇINEKÖY, at times repeating clauses word-for-word, yet also enlarging on the earlier text's formulae. Compare, for instance, Warikas' claim, ÇINEKÖY, §§4–5:

> |*wa/i-ta* (EQUUS.ANIMAL)*sù-na* (EQUUS)*sù-wa/i* |SUPER+*ra/i-ta* |*i-zi-ia-ha*
> EXER[CITUS-*la/i/u-za-ha*] (‖) EXERCITUS[-*la/i/u-ni*] |SUPER+*ra/i-ta* |*i-z*[*i*]*-ia-h*[*a*]
>
> "and I made horse upon horse, and I made army upon army"

with Azatiwatas' statement, KARATEPE, §§VIII–X:

> **Hu.** |EQUUS.ANIMAL-*sù-ha-wa/i-ta* (EQUUS.ANIMAL)*á-sù-wa/i* |SUPER+*ra/i-ta*
> |*i-zi-i-ha* EXERCITUS-*la/i/u-za-pa-wa/i-ta* |EXERCITUS-*la/i/u-ní* |SUPER+*ra/i-ta*
> |*i-zi-i-há* |(<"> SCUTUM")*hara/i-li-pa-wa/i-ta* |("SCUTUM")*hara/i-li* |SUPER+*ra/i-ta*
> |*i-zi-i-há*; **Ho.** … OMNIS-*MI-ma-z*[*a*] |(DEUS)TONITRUS-*hu-ta-tí* DEUS-*na-ri+i-ha*
>
> "and I made horse upon horse, and I made army upon army, and I made shield upon shield — all by Tarhunzas and the gods."[12]

The KARATEPE inscription begins with the introduction of its author and his titles, affirming his intimacy with the head of the Luwian pantheon, the storm-god Tarhunzas (Phoenician Baal), thereafter recording Azatiwatas' good deeds, his military successes, relations within the royal family and to foreign kings, fortification and peace brought to Adana, the building of Karatepe, and settling of the gods there. The text concludes with sacrificial obligations, blessings, and protective curses against prospective enemies.

The inscription survives in two hieroglyphic and three Phoenician copies, one of each placed respectively at the Lower North Gate[13] and the Upper South Gate[14] of the city fortifications.[15] The two language versions appear to be word-for-word translations with only few discrepancies. Again, the Phoenician text by its nature occupies much less space than its hieroglyphic equivalent

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[10] Compare, for example, İVRİZ 1, MARAŠ 1. The new İVRİZ inscription also arranges the hieroglyphic text partly around a relief figure; compare the photos in Dinçol 1994. Yet the fact that on three sides of the stela the Phoenician text was placed below the hieroglyphic version suggests that it was of lesser importance.

[11] Compare Hawkins 1979: 153ff. and idem 2000: 43 n. 69.

[12] Hu. (hieroglyphisch, unten) and Ho. (hieroglyphisch, oben) refer to the two parallel hieroglyphic text versions of the Lower (North) and Upper (South) gate at Karatepe, respectively.

[13] Text complete and in situ.

[14] Text fragmentary and dislocated.

[15] A third, slightly different Phoenician text is found on the skirt of a statue which stood inside the South Gate.

and is found on adjoining orthostats. It provides the reading order for the hieroglyphic text which — if indeed found in situ[16] — is highly chaotic and irregular.[17]

What is the relationship between Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian in Cilicia? Can we declare one language more eminent than the other, or were they allotted equal status? The question is, of course, intimately tied to whether the local population spoke Luwian, Phoenician, or both. What do we know about the presence of Luwians and Phoenicians in eighth-century Cilicia? As the two above inscriptions comprise almost all indigenous source material, information has to be found within the texts themselves. There can be little doubt that the ruling dynasty, the house of Muksas, was Anatolian; the same name is first attested in a Hittite document, albeit in a fragmentary passage, as Muksus.[18] Yet so far, no overall agreement has been reached as to which version of the KARATEPE text came first; indeed, the puzzling order of the hieroglyphic text as compared to the neatly arranged Phoenician copy placed at the entrance of the gate would point to Phoenician readers as the first and main audience. On the other hand, the continuation of the Hittite tradition, especially the use of the hieroglyphic script seems to argue for a reasonable amount of stability in this area after the fall of the Hittite empire, enough, at least, to preserve memory and knowledge of this tradition and — we may assume — a large Luwian population. The writing system in particular may have been part of a collective memory in Cilicia and may have held strong symbolic character as both indigenous script invention and as status symbol of a mighty empire and a glorious past. During the Bronze Age, the hieroglyphic script may have been used as an identity marker among the diverse groups that comprised the population of the Hittite empire. The desire for such a symbol may well have been even greater for the society of a much smaller and less powerful state. Such a link with the past may even have been felt to be more important than the more practical advantages offered by scripts such as Aramaic or Phoenician alphabetic. The fact remains that all Neo-Hittite states continued to write in a hieroglyphic script, despite it being not only a more complicated and possibly archaic writing system but also not even particularly well suited to the language it recorded, as its syllabary cannot record consonant clusters, a frequent feature of Indo-European languages. Yet even today we can notice that writing conventions are particularly sensitive issues and that traditionalism often prevails over practical considerations; only think of English orthography. Writing practices are greatly influenced by tradition and in the case of the Neo-Hittite states, the chosen writing system not only provided a link with the past but also stood out as an original script creation, a matter of documented pride among many peoples ancient and modern[19] and presumably also among the Luwians. Further, its pictorial character must have invited comparison with the hieroglyphic script of the Egyptians. Whether and how this played a role for the Luwians we do not know. On a speculative level, however, one might argue that even to be mistaken as another but very famous nation of great antiquity — as indeed happened when Herodotus many centuries later identified the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the KARABEL pass as Egyptian[20] — could have been prestigious as it conveyed a positively exaggerated sense of one's might and importance.

But let us return to the Cilician bilinguals. Can we detect other Luwian elements? While the small number of preserved texts does not allow for proper onomastics, we note that Azatiwatas himself bears a good Luwian name, */aza=tiwat=(a)s/* "(whom) the Sun-god loves," as do the two scribes whose names are preserved on a separate block, unconnected to the bilingual, KARA-

[16] Hawkins 2000: 45.

[17] Compare Çambel 1999, pl. 52.

[18] KUB XIV 1, reverse 1.75.

[19] Compare, for instance, the creation of Persian cuneiform under Darius I, or more recently, the script invention of King Njoya of the Bamum in Cameroon.

[20] Compare Herodotus, *Histories* II, 102–11.

TEPE 4: Masanis and Masanazamis, "the divine" */masani≠s/* and "the beloved of (the) god(s)" */masan(i)≠aza≠mi≠s/*.[21] Even monolingual Phoenician texts attest to a Luwian rather than a Semitic population. For instance, an inscription from Cebel Ires Dağı in western Cilicia includes ten personal names, all apparently local Anatolian. Two of these appear also on the KARATEPE bilingual, firstly MSNZMŠ / Masanazamis[22] and King WRYK, either homonymous or identical with King Awarikus (written ʾWRK on KARATEPE). Even to the east of Cilicia in Samʾal-Zincirli, the ruling dynasty bore good Luwian names, such as Kulamuwa and Panamuwa — despite leaving Phoenician inscriptions only.[23] This seems to indicate a wide use of Phoenician among Luwian speakers in Cilicia and beyond.

The evidence thus appears to be in favor of the two bilinguals being original Luwian inscriptions with Phoenician translations. What reason, then, would the Luwians have had to add a Phoenician version to their texts? Was it a question of communicating with another local population group unable to speak Luwian or were literate people more likely to have mastered the simpler, alphabetic script? Was Phoenician possibly the main writing system used in Cilicia, its documents now lost as they were written on perishable materials for daily business? At least to a modern spectator, the Phoenician texts of both ÇINEKÖY and KARATEPE would seem to be more accessible, potentially more important because of their brevity and prominent display. One imagines that the skill to read the Phoenician alphabet was much more easily and quickly acquired than the ability to read the more complicated hieroglyphic script. As no evidence survives for scribal training among Neo-Hittites, one can only assume that literacy was presumably limited to professionals needing to read, that is, scribes, maybe extending to priests and doctors. But if considering monumental inscriptions from the point of view of an illiterate person, the hieroglyphic script would have communicated at least a certain amount of sense through the shape of objects depicted, and possibly the recognition value of specific signs, for instance the ideogram of a particular god. As mentioned above, the antiquity of the script and its connection to the Hittite empire may have added to its status, and its individuality could have been used as an identity marker among the people continuing this tradition.

To conclude, the Cilician bilinguals appear in a good Luwian environment, beginning with the outward design of the monuments. Personal and divine names and also textual structure and topoi stand firmly within the Luwian tradition which suggests that the texts were composed in this language and translated into Phoenician. No apparent traces of Phoenician influence are discernible in the Luwian text. Within the clearly Luwian setting of these texts, there is nothing to suggest that their authors ruled over a substantial Phoenician population. For what reason did they add a Phoenician translation, and moreover, place it before the Luwian text? It does not appear that the author took pride in his knowledge of foreign languages or scripts, unlike, for instance, the ruler Yariris of Karkamiš (ninth–eighth century B.C.):

> …]URBS-*si-ia-ti* |SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti sù+ra/i-wa/i-ni-ti*(URBS) |SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti-i a-sú+ra/i* (REGIO)-*wa/i-na-ti*(URBS) |SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti-i ta-i-ma-ni-ti-ha*(URBS) SCRIBA-*li-ti* 12-*ha-wa/i-*ʾ |"LINGUA"-*la-ti-i-na* (LITUUS)*u-ni-ha* |*wa/i-mu-u ta-ni-ma-si-na* REGIO-*ni-si-na-*ʾ |INFANS-*ni-na* |("VIA")*ha+ra/i-wa/i-ta-hi-ta*$_5$*-ti-i* CUM-*na ARHA-sa-ta* DOMINUS-*na-ni-i-sa á-mi-i-sa* |"LINGUA"-*la-ti* SUPER+*ra/i-*ʾ *ta-ni-mi-ha-wa/i-mu* (*273)*wa/i+ra/i-pi-na* (LITUUS)*u-na-nu-ta*,

[21] Written [I]DEUS-*ní-i-sá* and [I]DEUS-*na*-(OCULUS)*á-za-mi-sá* (§2).

[22] The Š clearly representing the Luwian nominative ending -s; thus already Mosca and Russell 1987: 7.

[23] I would like to thank Dr. R. G. Lehmann for discussing the Phoenician evidence with me.

> "… in the city's writing, in the Suraean writing, in the Assyrian writing, in the Taimani writing. And I knew twelve languages. My lord *gathered* the child of every country for me by wayfaring concerning language, and me he caused to know every skill."[24]

At whom were the Phoenician text versions aimed? We know of no resident groups of Phoenicians in Cilicia, and indeed the evidence of the preserved personal names as well as the unbroken tradition from the Bronze Age strongly favor a Luwian population. The most likely explanation is that Phoenician was adopted by the Luwian rulers as a prestige language, the new lingua franca from Cilicia to Sam'al (where it was later supplanted by Aramaic). This would also explain the prominent display of the Phoenician text version of both ÇINEKÖY and KARATEPE; it quickly and concisely informed the reader about the content of the inscription, possibly both aimed at communicating with an international audience and acting as a claim to modernity and worldliness on behalf of the Luwian dynasty.

## LYCIA

A summary of the main events of Lycian history must begin with a discussion of what we mean by Lycia. Lycians feature prominently — and maybe surprisingly, given the distance between Lycia and the Troad — in Homer's *Iliad*,[25] yet even by the sixth century B.C. one can hardly speak of Lycia as a territorial state.[26] The main settlements concentrate in the Xanthos Valley but despite a shared language and cultural heritage, there appears to have been little political unity between the individual cities. Herodotus relates that Lycia was a free country until a victorious campaign by the Persian commander Harpagos, who succeeded ca. 540 B.C. in besieging and destroying Xanthos, killing all but eighty families who were absent at the time.[27] This event marks both the beginning of Persian authority in Lycia and a change in her administrative setup. Xanthos was rebuilt and resettled and Lycia became politically and economically unified. A ruling dynasty was established in Xanthos, nominally controlled by Persia but also strengthened internally by its connection to such a powerful overlord; it lasted from ca. 520 until the early fourth century B.C. Again, it is Herodotus who informs us of some details of the Lycian-Persian relationship. We learn for instance that under Darius I, Lycia had to pay an annual tribute of 440 talents of silver, or that in the early fifth century B.C., she provided fifty ships for Xerxes' fleet.[28] These Persian connections seem only to have suffered for a short time during the middle of the century, when the Athenian leader Kimon "persuaded" Lycia, presumably because of her strategic location, to join the Athenian confederacy. Despite appearing on three Athenian tribute lists, for the years 452/451, 451/450, and 446/445 B.C., we know of no Athenian interference with local politics and the new allegiance was indeed quickly abandoned sometime between 440 B.C. and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War in 432 B.C. Relations with Persia were re-established in the last decades of the century and it seems likely that Lycia, once again under the control of a Persian satrap, took part in the Persian-Spartan alliance against Athens. The late fifth and early fourth centuries are not well documented but may have been times of strife and conflict in Lycia. We know that the ruler Erbbina took military action against Xanthos, Pinara, and Telmessos, yet he also minted coins at

[24] KARKAMIŠ A15b, §§19–22.

[25] For a list of relevant passages, compare Bryce 1986: 220–21. Curiously, the only reference to writing in the Homeric poem is connected to Lycia: having been defamed by the queen of Tiryns whose advances he refused, Bellerophontes is sent with a fatal letter on a wax tablet, specifying that its carrier must be killed, to King Iobates of Lycia (*Iliad* 6.144–211).

[26] The ensuing outline of Lycian history follows the main points of Bryce 1986: 99–114.

[27] Herodotus, *Histories* I, 176.

[28] Herodotus, *Histories* III, 90 and VII, 92.

Telmessos and erected two statues at the Létôon in Xanthos. Western Lycia appears to have been firmly under Persian control until at least 370 B.C. In the early fourth century, a powerful ruler emerged in East Lycia by the name of Perikle who ruled ca. 380–360 B.C. He defeated the ruler Arttum̃para,[29] conquered Telmessos, and effectively liberated Lycia from Persian authority, leading to Lycia partaking in a satrap rebellion against Persia. After the rebellion was crushed, Carian satraps of the Hekatomnid dynasty tightened control and re-organized the previous administrative system. The year 334/333 B.C. marks Alexander's conquest of Lycia.

The Lycian people appear to have been settled in this area since the Bronze Age, when the area was known as Lukka Lands. The Lycian language belongs to the Anatolian language group and it is most closely related to Luwian. Despite political ties to Persia and cultural links with the Greek world, according to Bryce neither Greeks nor Persians settled in significant numbers in Lycia until after Alexander's conquest, when society became more cosmopolitan and population numbers grew.[30] The influence of Greek settlers in particular continued to increase until finally the Lycians were known — presumably because of the language they spoke — as a Greek people.[31]

Lycian inscriptions on stone survive from the late fifth to the late fourth century B.C., a period of about a hundred years within which the Lycian language appears to be already in decline in favor of an increasing usage of Greek. The majority of bilingual inscriptions from this area, therefore, are Lycian-Greek inscriptions, but mention must also be made of two Lycian-Aramaic and two Greek-Aramaic bilinguals. Among the many multilingual Lycian inscriptions, we can differentiate the following: one trilingual Lycian-Greek-Aramaic inscription from Xanthos; nine full bilingual inscriptions with largely or wholly corresponding versions; six part-bilingual inscriptions with one shorter, partly translating or summarizing version; and two sets of largely independent inscriptions in Lycian and Greek, the fragmentary TL 65 and a votive inscription, N Suppl. 1.[32] The latter is not considered in the following, as correspondence is limited to an occasional detail.[33]

## INSCRIPTIONS

As mentioned above, the surviving text corpus of mainly sepulchral inscriptions severely limits our knowledge of the Lycian writing tradition. Few texts appear to belong to other literary genres, namely religious, commemorative, or historical texts, and the most interesting of these are, unfortunately, still largely unintelligible to us because we do not have enough comparable text material. Therefore, it is from the short epitaphs that we are able to learn most about the relationship between the different languages written in Lycia.

The full bilinguals, TL 6, 23, 25, 32, 45, 56, 117, N312, and possibly N Suppl. 2, consist mainly of sepulchral inscriptions, following a standard formula; namely, that the monument in question was built by person A (son of B, etc.) for (himself and) the following (named or unnamed) members of his family; sometimes stipulations against potential offenders are added, recalling the protective curses attached to many Luwian monuments. Two texts, TL 45 and N Suppl. 2, are too fragmentary to offer much data; TL 32 consists of names only. In almost all of the texts, the Lycian version precedes the Greek. Only one votive inscription, N 312, has the

[29] Instead of a circumflex, a straight horizontal bar is used here and in the following to indicate nasalization.

[30] Compare Bryce 1986: 171.

[31] Cicero, *Verres* 4.10.21: *Lycii …, Graeci homines*. Compare also Kolb 2003: 237.

[32] TL refers to texts published by Kalinka 1901 and N to new inscriptions (= *nova inscriptio*) published after 1901; compare Neumann 1979.

[33] Compare Bryce 1986: 51ff.

Greek first. Given the brevity of the inscriptions, there is little scope for detailed comparison. However, it emerges that the two versions are generally literal translations, with few minor divergences. Compare the two versions of the following bilingual, TL 6:

> (1–3) *ebēnnē ñtatā m≈ene≈prñnawātē pulenjda mullijeseh se≈dapara pulenjdah purihimetehe pr*[*ñ*]*n*[*e*]*zijehi hrppi lada epttehe se≈tideime se≈ije tiseri tadi tike ñtat*[*a*] *ebehi me≈ije* [*httēm*]*i punamaθθi aladahali: ada* <
>
> "This burial chamber they have built it, Pulenjda, (son) of Mullijese and Dapara, (son) of Pulenjda, household members of Purihimete, for their wives and children. And (if) therein anyone undertakes *evil*(?) concerning the burial chamber, (and) on him who inters (there shall be) [the wrath] of a total of 5 ADA."
>
> (4–7) τοῦτο τὸ μνῆμα ἐργάσαντο Ἀπολλωνίδης Μολλίσιος καὶ Λαπάρας Ἀπολλ[ω]νίδου Πυριμάτιος οἰκεῖοι ἐπὶ ταῖς γυναιξὶν ταῖς ἑαοτῶν [κα]ὶ τοῖ[ς] ἐγγόνοις· [κα]ὶ ἄν τις ἀδικήσηι τὸ μνῆμα τοῦτο ἐξώλεα [κ]αὶ πανώλεα εἴη ἀοτῶι πάντων
>
> "This monument created Apollonides, son of Mollisis and Laparas, son of Apollonides from the household of Pyrimatis for their wives and their offspring. Whosoever should harm this monument, to him shall be utter ruin and destruction of all (that he owns)."

Consider the final stipulation: the most likely offence would have been secondary use of the tomb for another burial. What, if any, are the social implications behind the different punishment that Lycian and Greek offenders can expect? Could fines have been collected only from a Lycian inhabitant, or was there less of a threat of a Greek mistreating the burial chamber? Or was Greek at this point in time mainly employed as a prestige language by local Lycians, so that the entire inscription was aimed at people who would know the punishment details from the Lycian text version?

A commemorative inscription, TL 25, lacks object and main verb in the Greek, yet adds a dedication to Apollo which has no equivalent in the Lycian text:

> (1–7) *ebeis: tukredis: m*[*… epi*] *tuwetē: χssbezē: krup*[*sseh*] *tideimi: se purihime*[*teh*] *tuhes: tlāñna: atru: ehb*[*i*] *se ladu: ehbi: tikeukēprē pilleñni: urtaqijahñ: kbatru se prijenubehñ: tuhesñ*
>
> "These statues he put [up …] Xssbezē, son of Kruppse, nephew of Purihimete, (man) of Tlos, (representing) his own person and his wife, Tikeukēpre of Pinara, daughter of Urtaqija and niece of Prijenube."
>
> (8–15) Πόρπαξ Θρύψιος Πυριβάτους ἀδελφιδοῦς Τλωεὺς ἑαυτὸν κα[ὶ] τὴγ γυναῖκα Τισευσέμβραν ἐκ Πινάρων Ὀρτακία θυγατέρ<α> Πριανόβα ἀδελφιδῆν Ἀπόλλωνι
>
> "Porpax, son of Thrypsis, nephew of Pyribates, (man) of Tlos (for) himself and his wife Tiseusembra of Pinara, daughter of Ortakijas, niece of Prianobas, for Apollon."

TL 56, meanwhile, enlarges the Greek translation by designating the tomb owner "Antiphellian" — a redundant appellative in Lycian:

> (1–4) *ebēnnē prñnāwu: m≈e≈ti prñnawatē iχtta: hlah: tideimi: hrppi ladi: ehbi se tideime: ehbije: se≈ije ti edi: tike: mētē: m≈ene qasttu: ēni: qlahi: ebijehi: se wedri: wehñtezi*
>
> "This mausoleum, he has built it himself, Iχtta son of Hla, for his wife and his children. And (if) therein someone does harm, the mother of the local precinct and the city of Phellos shall destroy him."

(5–6) Ἰκτας Λα Ἀντιφελλίτης τουτὶ τὸ μνῆμα ἠργάσατο αὐτῶ[ι] τε καὶ γυναικὶ καὶ τέκνοις· ἐὰν δέ τις ἀδικήσηι ἢ ἀγοράσηι τὸ μνῆμα ἡ Λητὼ αὐτὸν ἐπιτ[ρί]ψ[ε]ι

"Iktas, son of La, the Antiphellean, created this monument for himself and for his wife and children. But if someone should injure or harangue the monument, Leto shall crush him."

Given that this inscription was erected in Antiphellos, the most likely explanation for this addition would be that Ixtta attempted to add importance to his name through further epithets. The name of the goddess invoked, meanwhile, is transposed: the "mother of the local precinct" — whose Lycian name is still unknown to us as she is always referred to by her epithet — becomes Greek Leto.

While most bilingual inscriptions begin with the Lycian text, this is not true for all. A votive inscription from Xanthos, N 312, whose author carries a Greek name, places the Greek before the Lycian text. Whether the Lycian text was merely a sign of respect for an old but increasingly obsolete tradition or aimed at a possibly diminishing Lycian-speaking population, we cannot know. Note that the Greek uses a very idiomatic formula, namely ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ, known for example, from Aeschylus and Greek treaties, while the Lycian leaves out the verb:

(1–3) Δεμοκλείδης Θερβέσιος Λιμυρεὺς ἀγαθῆι τύχηι Ἀρτέμιδι ἀνέθηκεν

"Demokleides, son of Therbesis, from Limyra, set (it) up in the name of Artemis"

(4–6) *ñtemuxlida krbbe*[*s*]*eh zemuris ertemi xruwata*

"Ñtemuxlida, (son) of Krbbese, of Limyra: votive offerings to Artemis"

Of the six part-bilinguals, four are sepulchral inscriptions. TL 70, a typical Lycian epitaph, follows the Lycian text with the Greek form of the name of the tomb owner. Similarly, TL 134 records the names of the tomb owner and that of his wife in Greek. On the other hand, TL 143 precedes the Lycian inscription with the name of the tomb owner plus patronymic; interestingly, the father's name is not recorded in the Lycian text. N 302 also begins with a partly preserved Greek line which seems to end abruptly, as the following line bears the beginning of the Lycian text proper. An inscription of the ruler Erbbina, N 311, dedicating a statue to Artemis Therophonos, shows a two-line Lycian text followed by an eight-line, only partly preserved Greek epigram. Despite the state of preservation of the Greek text, it is clear that the Lycian can only have served as a summary of the main text. Chronologically, Erbbina features as one of the last members of the Xanthos ruling dynasty, datable to the early decades of the fourth century B.C.

What are we to conclude from such evidence? Was the use of the local Lycian language and script at this point already greatly reduced in favor of Greek? One would not think so when considering the case of TL 44, a stela from Xanthos with a most remarkable — and unfortunately largely unintelligible — inscription. A rare historical document, it carries three different text versions, one in the Lycian dialect attested in most inscriptions, a second in a rarely attested older dialect named Lycian B (or "Milyan"); the 243 Lycian lines are summarized in a short Greek epigram of only twelve lines. The text deals with events occurring in the late fifth century B.C., but until we are in a position to achieve a good translation of the Lycian, little can be said about the relationship between the various versions. Without further information, it seems as if the two inscriptions, N 311 and TL 44, are offering conflicting evidence, arguing for dominance of the Greek and Lycian language, respectively. Or does it rather indicate that both languages were used equally widely at this point?

Last but not least, there is the trilingual inscription N 320. This most spectacular find was discovered in 1973 at the Létôon in Xanthos. The stela, which by its content has been dated by

different scholars within the period 358 to 337/336 B.C.,[34] commemorates the setting up of a new cult for two local deities of Carian origin, known by their Lycian names as *χ̃ntawati χbidēñni* "King of Kaunos," and Arkkazuma. The monument carries texts in three different languages: Lycian, Greek, and Aramaic. While not too frequently attested in Lycia, there is no doubt that Aramaic was employed because it was the administrative language of the Persian empire. The actual use of Aramaic in Lycia in this function may in fact be heavily under-represented in the surviving text corpus because almost no documents of this sphere are extant. The Aramaic text of the trilingual Xanthos stela does not appear to be a translation of the Lycian and Greek text but seems to have been composed as the official administrative document for the cult.[35] In the following, let us consider how Lycian and Greek versions correspond. Scholarly opinion agrees that the original text was Lycian, with a Greek translation.[36] The Lycian text is not without its problems, and, especially where the other language versions do not correspond, is not always intelligible.[37]

The inscription starts with satrap Pigesere installing several officials for Lycia and Xanthos. For two local gods, a new cult and a priesthood are established, granting certain privileges to the resident priest. Yearly sacrificial obligations are specified, and the author further states that Xanthians and the surrounding people took an oath, firstly, to fullfil the demands recorded on the stela, and secondly, not to harm the new cult or its priest. The text concludes with a curse, designed to strike any delinquent, specifying the legal implications of doing wrong. The Greek text appears to be a relatively faithful translation of the Lycian, but yet again, it is with specific stipulations, here the sacrificial obligations and the provisions taken against offenders that the Greek provides considerably less detail. One gets the impression that the Greek text only wanted to explain the main points, whereas the Lycian version laid down binding rules in all particulars. Compare the following two passages:

> (25–30) *me≥ije≥sitēni≥ti: hlm̃mi≥pijata me≥ede≥te≥wē: kumezidi: nuredi: nuredi: arā: kumehedi: se≥uhazata: uwadi: χ̃ntawati: χbidēñni: sej≥erKKazzuma: me≥kumezidi: seimija: se≥de: seimijaje χuwati≥ti:*
>
> "and whatever is lying inside they gave extra, and he shall sacrifice it month by month in a rite with a sacrificial animal, and with an ox as annual tribute for the King of Kaunos and Erkkazuma. And Seimija shall perform the sacrifice, and whoever succeeds Seimija."
>
> (23–26) καὶ ὅτι ἂν ἐχφόριον ἐκ τούτων γίνηται θύειν κατ᾽ ἑκάστην νουμηνίαν ἱερεῖον καὶ κατ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν βοῦν
>
> "And that it shall become a payment of these, to sacrifice a sacrificial animal at every new moon and every year an ox."
>
> (36–41) *χttade≥me≥i≥ē: tike: me≥pddē: mahāna: smmati: ebette: sej≥ēni: qlahi: ebijehi: pñtrēñni: se≥tideime: ehbije: sej≥elijāna: pigesereje me≥ij≥eseri≥hhati: me≥hriqla: asñne: pzziti≥ti*
>
> "But if anyone causes harm therein, the place binds him to these gods and to the PÑTRĒÑNI mother of the local precinct and her children and the nymphs. And they shall hand (it) over to Pigesere, but the supreme court must always do what he decides."

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[34] Dupont-Sommer 1974: 139–40; idem 1979: 165–67; Badian 1977; see also Bryce 1986: 48f.

[35] Compare, for example, Garbini 1977: 269 and Dupont-Sommer 1979: 133.

[36] A notable exception is Hahn 1981: 52, who places the Greek version first.

[37] For example, lines 20–21, 40–41.

(32–35) ἄν δέ τις μετακινήσῃ, ἁμαρτωλὸς <ἔ>στω τῶν θεῶν τούτων καὶ Λητοῦς καὶ ἐγγόνων καὶ Νυμφῶν. Πιξώταρος δὲ κύριος ἔστω

"But if anyone should change (this), he shall be a sinner of these gods and of Leto and her (two) offspring and the nymphs! And Pixotaros shall be lord!"

While considerably more could be said about this inscription alone, let us consider what all examples so far have illustrated about multilingual inscriptions in Lycia. Ranging from brief epitaphs to longer, partly obscure but fascinating texts, the above inscriptions taken together paint an interesting picture of a slow language shift taking place in fifth- and fourth-century Lycia. Unfortunately, the available texts are for the largest part very short and not easily datable so that only a general outline but no clear chronology of this language shift emerges.

Firstly, what caused language variety in Lycia? The three attested languages in their respective scripts appear for specific and different reasons: Aramaic clearly functions as administrative tool of the Persian authority; Lycian needs no further explanation as the local idiom; yet the case of Greek, as we have seen, is not so straightforward and needs to be differentiated. When considering the relationship between Lycian and Greek and the corpus of bilingual inscriptions, we note a shift toward a prestige language, illustrated by the decline of a local language in favor of a more international medium. Similar developments occur throughout history but are rarely as well documented. Note, however, that the move toward Greek writing appears to be motivated by a cultural rather than ethnic or political connection to Greece.

If we keep in mind that the majority of Greek settlers only arrived in Lycia after the conquest of Alexander the Great, well after our inscriptions were composed, what reasons would the Lycians have had to add a Greek version to their texts? Let us examine the reasons put forth by Ian Rutherford.[38] Firstly, Greek might be added because it was the administrative language — yet the dominance of Persian political influence would lead us to expect Aramaic used much more frequently than Greek. Secondly, to make an inscription understandable to both Lycian and Greek speakers, or to address a wider audience by using an internationally understandable medium; if Lycian was still the language of the majority, Greek could have been used as a prestige language — a reasonable assumption given the strong Greek cultural influence — implying higher social or cultural status. This argument appears particularly apt, as many of the inscriptions must be attributed to the Lycian elite (see below). If, on the other hand, Greek was already widespread, Lycian could have been cultivated as a mark of tradition or symbol of identity. This, however, is considerably less likely, as one would expect to have found a larger number of monolingual Greek inscriptions.

Secondly, what can be said about the role of the respective writing systems? Unfortunately, the preserved literature only begins at a point where Greek influence is already felt; indeed, the known Lycian writing tradition is dependent on the Greek achievement of alphabetic writing. Whether other scripts were used in Lycia prior to the import of the Rhodian alphabet is not attested and the gap to the Bronze Age Lukka Lands can at present not be bridged. Both Lycian and Greek writing systems are visually very similar; indeed, the Lycian script, as mentioned, was adapted from a Rhodian Greek alphabet and therefore shares a good number of letters while also introducing a few new ones, notably the nasalized *ã, ẽ, m̃,* and *ñ*.[39] Greek influence, therefore, appears to stand at the very beginning of Lycian writing when cultural contact with Rhodes,

[38] Rutherford 2002, esp. p. 202.

[39] Bryce (1986: 58 and n. 32) interprets this as reminiscent of syllabic writing as practiced by the Luwians, yet despite the undoubted relationship between the two languages, there is a sizable gap between the last attested Luwian inscription and the earliest Lycian writing proper.

quite possibly involving trade and thus economic needs, seems to have sparked the native writing tradition. In any case there is no firm evidence suggesting that writing was introduced as a prestigious project of the state. This is a marked difference to the possible motivation behind the (Neo-)Hittite use of the hieroglyphic script. Lycian writing does not carry much force as an identity marker, as visually the script was not particularly distinctive — yet its use over and above the Greek alphabet seems to express a different notion. One may ask why the Lycians did not simply adopt the Rhodian alphabet as it was. Nasalization could have been represented by the letter *n* and the extensive velar series was easily transposed into Greek, as attested by the names occurring in the bilinguals. Despite the cultural indebtedness to Greece, there must have been a strong desire to establish a native Lycian tradition. Did the very same people nonetheless add Greek versions to their texts or do we witness two opposing movements: one group fostering Greek as a prestige language while another tried to strengthen the Lycian cause; possibly a reactive nationalistic current?

Thirdly, are we able to differentiate further between competing trends and fashions? Let us consider the various practices of name giving in Lycia and the rendering of Lycian names in Greek and vice versa. As epitaphs record not only names but also family relationships between the named persons, we know that in several cases Lycian and Greek personal names were present within the same family. Does this mean that we are looking at mixed Lycian-Greek families, or were names of a particular language adopted or given to a child because it may have been fashionable? The development seems to go either way: fathers with a Lycian name appear to have given Greek names to their children but also the other way round. For instance, Porpax, of the bilingual TL 25 discussed above, has a proper Greek name meaning "the handle of a shield," its Lycian equation Xssbezẽ, which bears no resemblance in sound, appears to be a translation.[40] Porpax's father also carries a Greek name, Thrypsis, yet this is Lycianized to a similar sounding Kruppse; on his wife's side of the family, all members carry Lycian names. The same principle of transposition can be noted when the Lycian name Pulenjda appears as Greek Apollonides (TL 6); Lycian Natrbbijẽmi, on the other hand, is translated into Greek as Apollodotos (N 320).

Visually, the Lycian and Greek scripts appear so very alike to the eye of the uninitiated that the significance of putting up Lycian-Greek bilinguals must lie in the language, not the script. Therefore, it is not an unlikely assumption that the most important version was placed first. But who was the audience? Who possessed the skills to read Lycian and/or Greek? While in contrast to the Luwian hieroglyphic script, Lycian and Greek could have been learned considerably more easily, one must still assume that literacy was confined to only a small part of the population. Another problem is that many of these tomb inscriptions were placed in most inaccessible spots, carved up high in rock facades. Leaving alone reading skills for the moment, who would have had the necessary eyesight to decipher these texts? Or were copies of the stone inscriptions kept in town or temple archives, as Bryce suggests?[41] And if these epitaphs were not generally read in situ, did the Lycians execute them because they believed in protective or other powers of writing?

## CONCLUSIONS

What picture can be pieced together from the textual material considered above? As we have seen, the Neo-Hittite states employed an autochthonous writing system, the Luwian hieroglyphic script, used solely to record the Luwian language which we must assume was spoken by the larg-

[40] The Lycian word for "handle of a shield" is otherwise unknown to us.

[41] Bryce 1986: 51.

est part of the population. Cilicia preserves two Luwian-Phoenician bilinguals and because we have no reason to believe that large groups of Phoenician speakers settled there, we are led to conclude that Phoenician was adopted as a prestige language, replacing the former lingua franca Akkadian in the coastal region. This conclusion is further supported by the existence of Phoenician monolinguals written by authors with Luwian names, as far afield as Cebel Ires Dağı and Zincirli. Despite addressing a predominatly Luwian-speaking audience, at least among the local population, the bilinguals seem to attest to a desire to communicate beyond the confines of the hieroglyphic script, which may not have been much understood outside of a small class of professional scribes. Presumably, the Phoenician alphabet, more easily learnable than Luwian hieroglyphic, made the inscriptions accessible to a wider audience. Therefore, adopting this writing system and its language would have demonstrated worldliness on behalf of the Luwian speaking rulers whose inscriptions survive, while status and a claim to the grandeur of the Hittite empire were embodied in the inherited hieroglyphic writing system used for the local vernacular.

In Lycia, meanwhile, a large number of multilingual inscriptions of varying kinds survive, yet most of these inscriptions are private epitaphs, possibly status symbols of a literate elite, as the cost of such interment would suggest. Many of these texts are very short and cannot easily be dated with enough precision to establish a tight chronology. Three languages feature in the Lycian text corpus. Lycia's administrative language was Aramaic as the area was, except for a short interlude, under Persian control. Aramaic texts are mainly found as summaries on official Lycian-Greek monuments and presumably existed in the archives of administrative centers. Much more frequently attested, however, are the two other languages, Lycian and Greek. The beginning of the Lycian writing tradition seems to be intimately connected to Greek influence, as the adaptation of the Rhodian Greek alphabet to create a Lycian national script shows. The surviving text corpus falls within a short time span of approximately a century, a time within which a language shift from Lycian to Greek was taking place — apparently motivated by cultural rather than political reasons. How quickly this language shift occurred and whether it was simply a matter of a one-directional move or whether different and competing trends and movements existed contemporaneously — giving preference at times to Lycian — at times to Greek, remains unknown. The picture gained so far from the available text material is that of a time of diversity where even within one family consequent shifts between Lycian and Greek occurred.

The use of writing, and the motivation behind multilingual inscriptions in Cilicia on the one hand and Lycia on the other, we must therefore conclude, was not directly comparable. Firstly, because author and content of the inscriptions and thus their audiences are very dissimilar. Secondly, because the differing cultural and political setting as reconstructed from these texts greatly influence the reasons for multilingualism.

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| CHLI | Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions — Berlin |
| KUB | Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi — Berlin |

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# 8

# ARAMAIC, THE DEATH OF WRITTEN HEBREW, AND LANGUAGE SHIFT IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD

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One of the most interesting cases of language shift in an ancient linguistic community took place in southern Palestine during the sixth through second centuries B.C. During this period, I would argue that the Jewish people living in the Persian province of Yehud "lost" — to some extent — their historical language (i.e., Classical Hebrew as reflected in biblical texts and inscriptions from the late eighth through early sixth centuries B.C.) and adopted the Aramaic language of the Persian empire. One might say that the written Hebrew language died, or more precisely, that the scribal institutions for Hebrew languished. Despite this decline (and perhaps because of it), the Hebrew language continued to serve an emblematic role for social differentiation, political legitimacy, and social identity.[1] The Hebrew scribal tradition was revived in the Hellenistic period — that is, when Aramaic no longer served as the language of the empire and was replaced by Greek. By the third century B.C., the (written) Hebrew language had been revived alongside indigenous Jewish political institutions. The revival of Hebrew scribal traditions went hand in hand with the development of independent political institutions. However, the revival of the Hebrew scribal tradition — that is, the revival of written Hebrew — also reflected a significant historical and cultural disjunction.

In this paper, I assume that language is part of a cultural system (Geertz 1973; Duranti 1997: 23–50). While that may seem like an obvious statement, it is by no means the typical approach by scholars who have studied ancient Hebrew (see Schniedewind 2004b). The study of Semitic languages has focused on phonology and morphology using a neo-grammarian approach despite the limitations of the writing systems. Given my assumption, the emergence, transformation, and even disappearance of the Hebrew language are part of a cultural process. It is this context that I begin to reflect upon the questions articulated by Michael Silverstein (1998) in a survey article on linguistic anthropology and local linguistic communities: What did it mean for the Jews to add Aramaic to their functional repertoire of languages? What did this encounter between Hebrew and Aramaic entail for the re-emergence of the Hebrew language in the Hellenistic period? Language ideologies would play a role in the perception and use of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages dur-

[1] The linguistic classification boundaries of Classical and Mishnaic Hebrew have certainly been shaped by language ideology (Irvine and Gal 2000: 35–36). In the case of Classical Hebrew — often understood as synonymous with biblical Hebrew — it is mostly a construct of Christian theologians and defined by the corpus of biblical literature. Classical Hebrew has usually excluded Mishnaic or Rabbinic Hebrew, which belonged to the next era of Jewish history, the period after Christianity's decisive break with Judaism. During the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a raucous debate ensued over whether Mishnaic Hebrew was an "invention" of the Rabbis (using Aramaic) or the product of a living Hebrew language of this period (see Kutscher 1982: 117–20 and Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 161–65). This debate was set within the tensions of the Jewish community of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The seminal work by Moshe Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, was first of all an apologetic for Hebrew as a living language, as becomes clear in Segal's (1927: 1–20) introduction to the book.

ing the Persian and Hellenistic periods.[2] Although there are limitations in our evidence, it seems clear that the speech community (i.e., the Jews in Palestine) and the Hebrew language were — to use Silverstein's phrase — "a precipitate of sociocultural process" (1998: 402). This sociocultural process begins with the enormous demographic and political changes that followed the Babylonian invasions in the early sixth century B.C.

Before going further, I need to provide some background to the development and use of the Aramaic language in the ancient Near East as well as the relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian period. I also need to acknowledge some of the limitations of our evidence. To begin with, we are working with very limited data. This limitation begins with the problem of using writing to speak of "language" — a problem not often enough reflected upon in Semitic studies. By language, linguists refers to vernacular, not writing, and writing — especially in the ancient Near East — is certainly not primarily an attempt to transcribe vernacular. Furthermore, the number and type of written texts from Palestine is also too limited. These limitations should push us to take into account the whole range of historical evidence to understand language as part of culture. The dialogue with linguistic anthropologists — I hope — will give us new ways of interpreting our evidence and even show us how we may bring new types of evidence into the discussion.

## ARAMAIC IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The emergence of the Aramaic language as a lingua franca in the ancient Near East begins in the eighth century B.C. with the spread of the Assyrian empire (see Tadmor 1975, 1982, 1989; Garelli 1982; and Beaulieu, this volume). The Assyrian empire adopted Aramaic as the imperial language as part of their political strategy for integrating the western provinces into the empire. In the Dûr-Sharrukîn cylinder inscription, the task of linguistic unification is given to the Assyrian monarch Sargon, who ruled from 722 to 705 B.C.:

> Peoples of the four regions of the world, *of foreign tongue and divergent speech*, dwellers of mountain and lowland, all that were ruled by the light of the gods, lord of all, I carried off at Assur, my lord's command, by the might of my scepter. *I made them of one mouth* and settled them therein. Assyrians, fully competent to teach them how to fear god and the king, I dispatched as scribes and overseers. The gods who dwell in heaven and earth, and in that city, listened with favor to my word, and granted me the eternal boon of building that city and growing old in its midst (Luckenbill 1968: 2.65–66 §122).

The Assyrians pursued an activist linguistic policy rooted in political ideology. Referring to the formation of European and Indian societies, Sheldon Pollock notes that "using a new language for communicating literarily to a community of readers and listeners can consolidate if not create that very community, as both a sociotextual and a political formation" (Pollock 2000: 592). Such vernacularization — that is, literary communication aimed at the masses — was critical to the formation of the empire in the ancient Near East.[3]

Before the eighth century B.C., the Aramaic "language" is known in a variety of dialects. Indeed, the classification of these many dialects has been one of the chief occupations of Aramaic scholars (Huehnergard 1991, 1995). The empire, however, succeeded in standardizing the Aramaic language, and the new literary standard — usually classified by scholars as "Imperial

[2] I am framing this using Kroskrity's (2000: 8) description of language ideology.

[3] Vernacularization was also a dialectic in the formation of the Hebrew Bible, particularly books like Deuteronomy (see my discussion, Schniedewind 2004a: 111–17).

Aramaic" or "Official Aramaic" — served a succession of empires (Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian) from the seventh century until the fourth century B.C.[4]

During the Persian period (538–333 B.C.), Aramaic was the language of the empire, and this included the small Persian province of Yehud. From Egypt to Persia, we find ample written evidence for Aramaic that reflects the impact of the empire in training scribes in a literary standard. This literary standard is even found in the Hebrew Bible, where sections of the books of Ezra and Daniel are written in "Official" Aramaic. Not incidentally, the literary characters of Ezra and Daniel are both officials of the Persian government and hence trained in the scribal chancellery. One indicator of authors' training is the use of the term *meforasû* (Ezra 4:18), which was equivalent to the Persian term (*h*)*uzvarisûn* and describes the unique method invented in the Persian chanceries for translating a document (Naveh and Greenfield 1984: 116); thus, when the Torah was read aloud in Jerusalem during the Persian period, it apparently needed to be translated into Aramaic to be understood. Although the Persian province of Yehud was economically poor and demographically depopulated, we still find hundreds of inscriptions in Aramaic reflecting the penetration of the imperial bureaucracy in virtually all aspects of economic, political, and domestic life.

After the conquest of the Near East by Alexander the Great, the Aramaic language no longer served as the language of empire. And, not surprisingly, a great variety of Aramaic dialects reappeared throughout the Near East in the following centuries. Without the empire, the standardization of the Aramaic language could not be sustained. In this respect, the history of Aramaic serves as a nice illustration for linguistic anthropologists interested in the impact of empire upon language (e.g., Kiernan 1991).

## HEBREW AND ARAMAIC IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD

What linguistic choices were available to the speech community of Persian Yehud? What choices in script were available? What choices in writing were available? How did these choices impact the speech community? There has been much debate about the extent to which Aramaic replaced Hebrew among Jews living in southern Palestine during the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. The debate, however, has not adequately laid out the basic sociolinguistic questions. Furthermore, the new archaeological and epigraphic data discovered in Syria-Palestine during the past few decades have further clarified the available linguistic choices and their import.

The consensus position describing the linguistic situation of the Jewish community was articulated in a classic article by Chaim Rabin: "The Jewish community in the Persian period was thus, it appears, trilingual, using Aramaic for purposes of outside communication and limited literary genres for internal consumption; biblical Hebrew for normal literary composition; and in all probability an older form of Mishnaic Hebrew as a purely spoken vernacular" (1958: 152). Joachim Schaper (1999), for example, argues that Hebrew continued to be the language of the rural population while Aramaic was the language of the Jewish elite (also see Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 112–13). These positions are largely dependent on assumptions about the composition of biblical literature, which many scholars assume was written in the Persian period (contra Schniedewind 2004a).

One gauge of the relative place of Hebrew and Aramaic is script. The Hebrew script becomes largely symbolic in the Persian period and is replaced by Aramaic script. Even when Hebrew literature begins to flourish again in the Roman period (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls), Hebrew is al-

[4] Although Aramaic scholars have detected dialectal elements within Imperial Aramaic (Greenfield 1978), what impresses most is the forging of a linguistic standard from the diversity of early Aramaic.

most always written with Aramaic script. Linguistic anthropologists have noted the important role of script and orthography for linguistic communities (e.g., Trudgill 2000: 136–44 and Eira 1998). The relative development of the Hebrew and Aramaic script and their role in the linguistic community certainly points to the shift from Hebrew to Aramaic that took place during the Persian period.

The Aramaic script underwent enormous development from the seventh through the second century B.C., while the Hebrew script saw very little development (fig. 8.1). The enormous change in the Aramaic script reflects the constant use and adaptation of a living language. The Hebrew script, in contrast, seems almost frozen in time.[5] Moreover, the use of the paleo-Hebrew script in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (and even on the coins of the modern state of Israel) served an ideological purpose. For example, the paleo-Hebrew script suggests claims to antiquity and legitimacy. It connected governments (e.g., Samaritan, Hasmonean, and Bar-Kokhba) and religious groups (e.g., the Qumran sect) with the golden age of ancient Israel. The different histories of the Hebrew and Aramaic script point to the changing role of these languages in the linguistic community.

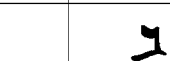
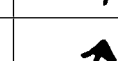
| Modern Hebrew Script | Sixth Century B.C. Paleo-Hebrew | First Century B.C. Paleo-Hebrew | Sixth Century B.C. Aramaic | Fourth Century B.C. Aramaic | First Century B.C. Aramaic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (ʾ) א | | |  | | |
| (b) ב | | |  | |  |
| (d) ד | | |  | | |
| (h) ה | | |  |  | |

Figure 8.1. Development of letters in Hebrew and Aramaic

The argument that the rural population of Palestine continued to speak Hebrew is predicated upon the assumption that the rural population was largely unaffected by the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and exile (e.g., Barstad 1996). While it is true that the Babylonians did not exile all Judeans to Babylon, the result of the Babylonian military campaigns to Palestine resulted in an economic blight that resulted in a massive demographic disruption (see Carter 1999; idem 2003; and Lipshits 2003). Archaeological surveys have suggested as much as a 70–80% decrease in population. Although some cities and villages show continued settlement after the Babylonian invasions (and presumably might have continued to speak their native Hebrew language), the majority of cities and villages ceased to be settled in the Babylonian period and new villages and cities emerged during the Persian period. As a whole, the region of southern Palestine remained relatively depopulated until the Hellenistic period (i.e., at least the fourth century B.C.). Even though population figures are difficult to estimate for antiquity, the demographic change in

[5] The small changes in the Hebrew script between the seventh and second century B.C. makes the differences almost imperceptible to all but trained epigraphers. This consistency over time allowed two biblical scholars (Rogerson and Davies 1996) to suggest redating a late eighth-century B.C. Hebrew inscription (the Siloam Tunnel inscription) to the second century B.C. While trained epigraphers (Hackett et. al. 1997) quickly corrected this mistake, it illustrates how little the Hebrew script had changed over five centuries.

ancient Palestine was certainly profound. As William Labov notes (2001: 503), changes in the demographic composition of the community are a central factor determining the course of linguistic change. This type of demographic disjunction must have resulted in significant language shift in southern Palestine during this period. However, previous discussions of the relative status of Hebrew and Aramaic during the Persian period have barely recognized the central role of demographics.

The argument that biblical Hebrew continued as a literary language of the Jews is necessitated by the assumption that Jewish scribes of the Babylonian and/or Persian period composed and edited a large part of the Hebrew Bible. This assumption, however, does not correspond to the social and political situation of Persian Yehud. Recognizing this, the biblical scholar Philip Davies actually suggested, "The view of Judah in the Persian period as a cultural backwater and as economically poor perhaps needs to be reconsidered" (1998: 79). Why does it need reconsidering? Because the great amount of scribal activity necessary to account for the production of the Bible in Hebrew is inconsistent with the portrait of the Persian province of Yehud upon which archaeologists and historians have agreed. It is difficult to reconstruct a social situation where Jewish scribes would have been trained specifically in Classical Hebrew during this period. To be sure, Hebrew and Aramaic are related languages and the Aramaic scribal training could have served for composing and editing some literature in Hebrew. Yet, the evidence for Hebrew in this period is not particularly compelling.

Epigraphic evidence suggests that Hebrew was not widely spoken even among the rural populations in Persian Yehud. To be sure, it is doubtful that the Hebrew-speaking rural populations would have been literate. Consequently, it is not surprising that there are no Hebrew inscriptions that would indicate the use of the Hebrew language among the rural population. But as Israel Eph'al points out, hundreds of Aramaic inscriptions dating to the fourth century B.C. derive from the rural population (1998: 108 n. 3). This difference in the epigraphic evidence probably also reflects geography; namely, any Hebrew-speaking villages would have been quite isolated in the Judean hill country with very little contact with the empire. The rural populations of the Judean foothills, in contrast, bordered on the coastal plain (with all its economic and military activity) and would have had more contact with the imperial administration and economy. While it is not possible in this paper to deal with all the archaeological and epigraphic evidence in detail, some examples can illustrate the extent of the shift from Hebrew to Aramaic as well as laying bare some of the ideological underpinnings of the revival of Hebrew in the Hellenistic period.

Outside of the Bible, evidence for the Hebrew language comes from before and after the Persian period. The epigraphic evidence for Classical Hebrew comes exclusively from the late Judean monarchy — that is, eighth through early sixth century B.C. (see surveys by Renz 1995 and Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005). When we begin to see Hebrew inscriptions again in the second century B.C., it is a strikingly different dialect of Hebrew written with Aramaic script. The main evidence for Hebrew in the Persian period would be the Hebrew Bible, but the dating of biblical literature is outside the scope of the present discussion.

One of the most striking differences between Classical Hebrew and Mishanic Hebrew is the verbal system. In Classical Hebrew the verb has a prefix (traditionally called an "imperfect") and a suffix ("perfect") conjugation. The prefix conjugation expresses the durative or cursive aspect of an action or process while the suffix conjugation expresses a punctual or constative aspect (see description and literature in Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 72–74).[6] Classical Hebrew usually contex-

[6] The nature of the biblical Hebrew verbal system is the subject of much debate among scholars. A general survey can be found in recent grammars.

tualizes time through the use of temporal anchors such as "at that time" or "after those things." Mishnaic Hebrew, in contrast, has two forms that express time: a suffix conjugation that expresses past tense and the "active participle" (according to the grammatical description of Classical Hebrew) used for the present and future. The prefix conjugation tends to have a modal function (Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 193–95). Although there is some debate about the nuances of the biblical and Mishnaic verbal systems, there is consensus that they represent major shift.

After the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in the early sixth century until the rise of Hellenism in the third century B.C., the epigraphic evidence for Hebrew is "very slight" (Naveh and Greenfield 1984: 119). While hundreds of Aramaic inscriptions have been found in Palestine dating to this period, there are almost no examples of Hebrew inscriptions dating to the periods of Persian rule in Palestine. The corpus of Hebrew inscriptions for this period is limited to a few seals or coins. The earliest evidence is found in seal impressions dating to the early sixth century (i.e., the beginning of Persian rule in Palestine), which were published by Nahman Avigad (1976). Avigad suggested that they were written in an archaizing Aramaic script but noted that the seals used Hebrew words such as *ben* "son of," *ʿamat* "maid-servant of," and the Hebrew prefixed definite article (*h-*). He explained the admixture of Aramaic script with some Hebrew words as resulting the very earliest period of Persian rule when the Hebrew and Aramaic languages were used concurrently. There are also a few coins dating to the mid-fourth century B.C. that use the Hebrew words "priest" (*kōhēn*) or "governor" (*peḥāh*) and are written in the paleo-Hebrew letters. From the late fourth century, there are also two Samaritan seal impressions written with paleo-Hebrew letters. These include a couple seal impressions from "[xxx]-yahu, son of Sanballat, governor of Samaria" that use the paleo-Hebrew script (Cross 1969: 42–43) — a script which would come to be known as "Samaritan" script. These types of inscriptions — coins and seal impressions — were official symbols of the Jewish and Samaritan governments. They point to the ideological role of Hebrew for the Jewish and Samaritan linguistic communities in the late Persian period. Such symbolic use of writing, however, is not evidence for the vernacular use of Hebrew. Indeed, a little more than a century after the Yehezqiah coins, the Hasmoneans would also make a point of using Hebrew on coins minted in their own image. In addition, the Dead Sea Scrolls evidence some interesting uses of paleo-Hebrew script that must be contextualized by linguistic ideology (see Schniedewind 2000). It is problematic given the symbolic nature of inscriptions such as coins or seal impressions, however, to use them in assessing the situation with vernacular language (cf. the discussion of Silverstein 2000).

The Samaritan seal impressions can illustrate the complexity of using seals and coins as evidence of the linguistic situation. The seals were part of the discoveries at Wadi ed-Daliyeh just north of Jericho (Cross 1969). The most important finds were Aramaic legal papyri including slave conveyances, property deeds, and marriage contracts. The inscriptions also included some seal impressions used to seal the document. While the seal impression of the son of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, was inscribed in the Hebrew language and script, it was affixed to an Aramaic legal papyrus. The use of the Hebrew language on the seal of a Samaritan governor most certainly acknowledges the ideological value of Hebrew as the old language of the Israelite and Judean monarchy and its use on a Samaritan governor's seal can be understood as asserting the antiquity of the Samaritan people and their roots in ancient Israel. At the same time, the use of Aramaic in the papyrus document to which the Hebrew seal was affixed is evidence of the language choices that reflect the different roles of Hebrew and Aramaic. Literary sources from the Second Temple period certainly point to the competing claims of leaders in Jerusalem and Samaria to antiquity and legitimacy. Seals and coins were one vehicle for asserting such claims. As such, they certainly reflect the important role that Hebrew would play in ideologies of linguistic

communities in Palestine during the Second Temple period. However, they are poor evidence for assessing the extent of the vernacular use of Hebrew. We must assess the role of all text-artifacts "in modeling the cultural phenomenology of nationalism" (see Silverstein 2000). It seems to me that letters, marriage contracts, or economic texts are more valuable in assessing vernacular than seals and coins. Seals and coins, however, are important indicators of the ideological import of language. In the present case, it is telling about the vernacular language that all legal and economic texts dating to the Persian and early Hellenistic period, whether from the government or from the rural population, were written in Aramaic.

## HEBREW AND ARAMAIC AFTER THE PERSIAN PERIOD

With the conquests of Alexander the Great and the subsequent end of the Persian imperial administration, the scribal training in Aramaic chancellery also ended. As a result, Hebrew saw some resurgence in Palestine, especially as a national script and a religious language.

The rise of autonomy of the Jewish linguistic community began already in the fourth and third centuries (Schwartz 1994). This autonomy was first of all expressed in the minting of coins with inscriptions in the Hebrew language and script (see Meshorer 1982). The use of Hebrew language and script on the Yehezqiah coins in the fourth century B.C. was the first expression of this new autonomy. With the emergence a Jewish state in the second century B.C., the Hebrew language and script was used on the coins of the Hasmonean dynasty. The Hebrew language and script was also used in the Bar-Kokhba coins (A.D. 132–135), although by this time the coins actually reflect a poor knowledge of the Hebrew language and script. Outside of coins, most "Hebrew" inscriptions of this period were written using the Aramaic script.

The Hebrew language also becomes important as a religious language during the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Aiken 1999; Weitzman 1999; and Schniedewind 2000). The Dead Sea Scrolls give evidence for the copying of biblical Hebrew manuscripts by the mid-third century B.C. Although the Qumran community itself seems not to have written in Aramaic, the Qumran library includes non-sectarian Aramaic works such as Enoch and the Genesis Apocryphon. Such Aramaic literature from the Qumran library is an ongoing legacy — at least in part — of the Aramaic scribal training of the Persian period that also reflects the continuing use of Aramaic by Jews in Palestine. Although the Hebrew language began to flourish again in the third century B.C., it continued to be written with Aramaic letters. Moreover, the linguistic character of the Hebrew language of the Hellenistic and Roman periods is quite distinct from biblical Hebrew (see Kutscher 1982 and Sáenz-Badillos 1993).

The mixed linguistic situation in the aftermath of the conquests by Alexander is illustrated by one recently published ostracon (IN17) recovered in the City of David excavations and dated to about 300 B.C. Interestingly, it is written with Aramaic letters and uses the Aramaic plural ending (*-n* instead of Hebrew *-m*) but uses Hebrew vocabulary (Naveh 2000: 9–10; cf. Eshel and Misgav 1988). How do we classify such a text? It uses distinctly Hebrew vocabulary but writes with an Aramaic morpheme (i.e., the plural) and script. The use of distinctly Hebrew vocabulary probably indicates the continuation of some type of vernacular Hebrew, but the Aramaic script and morpheme would seem to represent the continuing influence of the Persian scribal chancellery.

The Wisdom of Ben Sira was the work of one author who wrote in Jerusalem during the early second century B.C. and modeled his work on the book of Proverbs. Although the book is known mostly in its Greek version, fragments of the Hebrew original were first discovered in the Cairo Geniza between 1896 and 1900 and then more recently at Masada (see Yadin 1965). The prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira describes the translation of the work into Greek and suggests

that by the end of the third century B.C., a Jewish school had been established in Jerusalem for studying biblical literature and Hebrew (Aitken 1999). Ben-Sira (51:23), in fact, uses the term *beth midrash* "house of study," which seems to allude to an emerging Jewish social institution dedicated to the study of biblical literature. The Dead Sea Scrolls include biblical manuscripts dating back to the third century B.C., suggesting that the copying (and editing?) of biblical literature was taking place already in the third century B.C. By the second century B.C., manuscript discoveries from the region of the Dead Sea point to a flourishing of new post-biblical Hebrew religious literature (e.g., Ben-Sira, Jubilees, and Tobit).

When we survey the use of Hebrew in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, most scholars feel that spoken Hebrew did survive — at least in some isolated communities — as a vernacular language in Palestine until the second century A.D. (Fitzmyer 1970; Rabin 1976; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 112–201; and Alexander 1999). Although there were major demographic changes in the Babylonian and Persian periods, a small number of villages and towns survived and presumably Hebrew would have continued to be spoken in such places. One expression of the reassertions of Jewish autonomy in the fourth, third, and second centuries would be the revival of Hebrew scribal institutions, which would have drawn on the continuation of a vernacular Hebrew as well as the deeply entrenched Persian scribal chancellery.

Still, the shift from Hebrew to Aramaic on every level was profound and irreversible. Hebrew was revived as a literary language reflecting the political and religious aspirations of Jewish groups in the Hellenistic period. Still, the shift from Hebrew toward Aramaic was not halted by the ebb and flow of Jewish autonomy in the Persian through Roman periods. By the third century A.D., the language shift from Hebrew to Aramaic was complete and Hebrew had essentially disappeared as a vernacular language in Roman Palestine. Even while Hebrew language was receding as the vernacular and written language, it was being preserved as a liturgical language, a sacred tongue, and an icon of political legitimacy and national identity.

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# 9

# RESPONSE FOR THE SECOND SESSION: WRITING AT THE CHRONOTOPIC MARGINS OF EMPIRES

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Each of these fascinating papers takes up phenomena of shifting boundaries of what we term *language communities*, the people who communicate presuming upon a by-degrees shared denotational code, commonly termed a "language."[1] Each author looks through the lens of written artifacts to reconstruct how the users of various languages participated in social institutions that depended on writing, thus trying to get a sense of the ways the ancient language communities they treat intersected with one another in the social realities mediated by use of language. Christopher Woods discusses the gradual shift, particularly in southern Mesopotamia during the third millennium B.C., of people's membership in Sumerian and Akkadian language communities, arguing for an extended plurilingualism more socially and geographically complex than has been recognized in the literature. Annick Payne discusses similar shifts in two Anatolian regions, the Neo-Hittite states of the early first millennium, where Luwian, Assyrian, and Phoenician languages are documented, and Lycia to the southwest, where Lycian, Greek, and to some extent Aramaic co-occur in inscriptions by the fifth to fourth century B.C. William Schniedewind is concerned with the kind of Hebrew language use that persists from the sixth century B.C. in what appears to be an otherwise Aramaic-speaking language community in the Persian province of "Yehud"; he considers in this light the complex linguistic and inscriptional practices in Hebrew and other languages during the Hellenistic and Roman periods that followed.

Concerned as each author is with language communities as sociocultural realities, they interpretatively contextualize the evidence of the haphazard archive of surviving written records, drawing on ethnographic parallels as well as on framing documentation of political and social history of the areas they treat. In other words, at such time depths they must operate through a kind of linguistic archaeology, bringing to bear various considerations about inscription and other literacy practices to make interpretations about complex, frequently stratified economies of language use and hence about what these indicate about the users of language as monoglot or polyglot in various ways. As in any historical philology, the linguistic archaeologist encounters *text-artifacts*: thingy, relatively permanent objects the inscriptions on which constituted the substrate, the vehicles, of language-centered communication in various culturally practiced ways.

In their contextualizing interpretations, our authors are first concerned with the denotational texts to be discerned in these artifacts — "reading" them in the normal sense for "what they say" in a translatable message. But they really aspire to open these text-artifacts up in a more

[1] As I have elaborated elsewhere (Silverstein 1996: 127–30, 138 n. 1) *language communities*, groups organized by the presumption or presupposition of norms for using language as an instrument of denotation (reference and modalized predication) must be distinguished from *speech communities*, groups organized by the presupposition of norms for contextualizing language use as culturally appropriate and effective action. For example, even though there are many language communities in Europe, with overlapping membership through personal polyglottism, over large areas the various contextualizing norms for discursive interaction are relatively constant, making it a single, gradiently "Standard Average European" — the term is Benjamin Whorf's — speech community.

rhetorical sense. These authors want to discern the conditions under which some person or group linked with a language community intentionally created them within genre norms of inscriptional practice, whether public or for more restricted circulation. They want to discern how — and for whom, at the time of creation — what they say, or at least the fact of which language it is said/written in, counts as effective or consequential cultural activity of one or another sort. The linguistic archaeologist seeks, in short, to make inferences about the local sociocultural systems of *interactional textuality* — doing socioculturally consequential things with words — that might have brought into existence the archive of variously encountered types of inscriptions. This is the framework in which the distributions of text-artifacts in particular inscriptional technologies (syllabary, alphabetic, etc., signs on a matrix medium) for particular denotational codes, that is, languages, are rendered meaningful indicators of communities of verbal practice.

In a real sense, the most fundamental datum about plurilingual social formations in each of these papers is this: two or more inscriptional codes, bespeaking two or more denotational codes, are encountered. Considered together as part of a distributional totality, this indicates a suture, a juncture, a coming together of language communities in a certain time and place. Sometimes this totality is found in the compass of a single artifact, so that the datum is a "bilingual" inscriptional array and the nature of the translational or other relationship between inscriptions is to the point. Sometimes the totality is seen in the distribution of languages across artifact types, as these can be plotted in time and space. Sometimes the totality is visible only in a historically documented polity of some kind, for example, an autonomous city-state under imperial pressure, a province of an empire, etc. But these are merely static facts. Our authors consider the conditions of production of such artifactual co-occurrence to give an account of movement in time and space of language community boundaries, invoking various general principles such as the replacive spread of imperial at the expense of local languages, the kinds and intensities of code-mixing characteristic of social groups of plurilinguistic community membership, etc.

There seem to me to be several rich evidentiary dimensions about this complex object of inquiry to be recognized in these papers.

First, we have the RELATIVE ARTIFACTUAL DISTRIBUTION of denotational codes represented in literacy practices and the relative isolability/mixing of such codes in literacy practices. This distribution indicates something of the way two or more language communities may together comprise a more complex communicative formation, a plurilingual speech community. In our own day, note the politics of the choice of language, among several available in plurilingual speech communities, for road and street signage in decolonializing or re-ethnicizing situations. Note the variations in commercial signage in the public sphere of plurilingual cities and towns, even where alphabetic practices (if not styles of type fonts) are common across languages. Note how various kinds of ceremonial inscriptions — think of college and university seals and insignia, for example — may be in languages other than the one(s) spoken, though gesturing to an at least theoretical (aspirational or mytho-historical) plurilingualism. Observe the fact that in the Canadian province of Québec public signage is regulated so that French denotational code must appear above and in a larger size than English or another language. Note as well various handbook guidelines on how so-called foreign terms appear italicized or not when used in the course of English-language denotational text, an institutionally normative judgment of degrees of assimilation of borrowed material. Thus, what kinds of artifacts feature inscriptions in particular denotational codes, if there is any inscription on them; how do multiple such codes come together in particular artifacts, if they do so, and with what degree of interpenetration, if any?

Examples of significant facts of this kind are found throughout these papers. Schniedewind, for example, points up the distributional absence of written Hebrew in Palestine from the

early sixth century B.C. except on a few seals and coins. He even notes a late fourth-century seal impression from Samaria "inscribed in the Hebrew language and script" but "affixed to an Aramaic legal papyrus" — Hebrew, in short, indexing an identitarian framing, by appeal to anciently grounded ethnic linguistic practice, for the actual Aramaic-language contractual transactions laid out in the more extensive text such seals certify. Again, Woods considers the significance for inferring the existence of a bilingual scribal set from the mixing into Sumerian texts of Akkadian grammatical material, conjunction *u* and preposition *in*, in text-artifacts from Abu Ṣalābīḫ near Nippur and dating from ca. 2600 B.C.[2]

A second consideration is the GENRE OF DENOTATIONAL TEXT (Bakhtin 1986) with which we are dealing in reading inscriptional evidence. Some written forms are highly formulaic; thus multiple instances may be repetitious as to a schema or frame of denotational construction into which lexical forms like proper names and specific modifiers and predicates are inserted, individuating the text to that extent. (This is what we mean by the phrase "boiler plate [language]" in various genres that mediate the transactions of bureaucracies.) Of course ritually performative texts (Austin 1975) — some also bureaucratic — are highly formulaic in this sense as well, so that text-artifacts with such formulae may index the permanence, the detemporalization, of intended performative efficacy associated with their inscription (as opposed to the sometimes momentary transformative power of an articulated illocutionary formulae that, once uttered, has done its communicative work). We can recognize the genred formedness of denotational texts and take note of the language system or systems in which such genres occur. We can, further, project from genre distributions something of the social organization of communicative practices that bring members of language communities together or keep them apart in the way of sharing genred textual practice.

Thus, Payne surveys Lycian-Greek bilingual sepulchral inscriptions dating from the late fifth to the late fourth centuries B.C. Her argument rests on the coherence of the very epitaph genre, its highly formulaic character thus rendering significant any variation she discovers across the two language versions of purportedly the same text, such as elaborateness of formulaic detail, names and epithets, identifying genealogical information, and so on. Again, Woods recognizes a cluster of third-millennium B.C. language-exercise tablets for the Old Babylonian Edubba, the scribal educational institution. Thousands of such text-artifacts feature paradigmatic runs of parallel Sumerian constructions, complete with exophoric deictic operators such as "right here" and "over there," "I" and "you," that seem to point to teaching of phrases useful for projected contexts of spoken communication. Here, Woods argues, is strong evidence that the scribal classes had reason to presume upon a language still useful as a spoken reality outside of the institutional context, in a plurilingual Sumerian-Akkadian speech community.

A third line of evidence in discerning the contours of language communities rests on the CIRCULATORY PRACTICES INVOLVING TEXT-ARTIFACTS that would bring people into contact with the inscriptions, as potential readers of what others have written. Obviously, small items like coins are transferred from person to person and in this way subtend both a social space and a geographical space as, transaction after transaction, they move around as mediators of exchange value sanctioned by some issuing and regulating authority. At the other extreme, large, stationary,

[2] This type of borrowing is seen with Spanish clause connectives like *pero* "but" and *pues* "then," early and stably borrowed into numerous indigenous languages of Latin America, which have persisted as such for 500+ years but are only now yielding to asymmetric plurilingualism in the various states. It is, as well, seen in contemporary American English in the professional register use of French *sans* "without" as a preposition borrowed from technical talk of doctors and lawyers, but hardly bespeaking bilingualism.

built objects like tombs with their inscriptional surfaces may be only rarely encountered by anyone after an inscription is first made, though those encountering it do so by themselves moving into its presence, rather than vice-versa.

PUBLICATION in the sense of setting a text-artifact — or multiple copies — into an impersonally aggregate space of communicative encounter indicates something of the imagined language or speech community that the publishing authority wishes to draw to the message, or draw the message to. In this sense a bi- or multilingual text-artifact may well have been created and imagined to circulate so as to subtend the memberships of two or more language communities, whether denotationally or just emblematically. Think here of Canadian currency or postage stamps, user-friendly across the English- and French-speaking/reading communities, or any other officially or practically plurilingual media of state apparatuses. Tablets, seals, and other inscribed objects of clay and such as well move from writers to readers as a function of who is intended to be privy to the denotational or other meaningful content for which the object is the vehicle and frequently far beyond (think of originally unimagined linguistic archaeologists of the European West getting hold of the archives millennia after the fact!). Each such circulatory path of text-artifacts — in the "space" that intersects imaginative inscription with actualized communicative encounters — can be interpreted in relation to language community boundaries.

Thus, Payne considers the ca. eighth-century B.C. monumental inscriptions from Çineköy and Karatepe in the Cilician "Neo-Hittite" state, written in bi-orthographic and bilingual versions of Hieroglyphic Luwian and quasi-alphabetic Phoenician. The hieroglyphic is "spread out over several, not always immediately connected spaces, wedged in between sculptural elements, leaving the impression of a less harmonious, somewhat haphazard compilation" — in short, a visual mess available to the would-be reader-for-content as a coherent and unified denotational text only with some difficulty. By contrast, the Phoenician versions, with less full denotational content and many cultural adaptations (perhaps inscribed later), occur compactly at the front aspect of the base of the sculpture, readily available as a coherent denotational text for a presumably wider communication "with an international audience" happening upon the monuments, who might neither speak, nor certainly read, Hieroglyphic Luwian. Similarly, Schniedewind contrasts the epigraphic paucity of Hebrew texts throughout Palestine during three or more centuries after the Persian conquest and the wide presence of Aramaic, as evidence of the communicative ubiquity of the latter language as both spoken and written medium. However, beginning in the mid-third century B.C. at Qumran and elsewhere, there is evidence for at least a writing-mediated Hebrew-language revival as a Jewish literary register locally among religious elites, alongside long-standing Aramaic literacy practice long in place under Persian rule.

We must be sensitive, as well, to a fourth type of consideration in a linguistic archaeology of language communities. This type is the KIND AND CHARACTER OF SOCIOCULTURAL EVENT realized in and by the circuit of acts of inscription — circulation — entextualization of language. We must understand that cultures differ in how they conceptualize the relations across all the phenomenal modalities of language; in how they understand what we might term the thingy substantiality of language as a formed substance in one or another modality (let alone a medium for representing thoughts about imaginable states-of-affairs in the universe) and therefore the powers of one who can so form it sonically, visually, etc. Hence, the very act of inscription may not be driven exclusively or even at all by a cultural focus on denotational content (referring to things and modally predicating states-of-affairs about them) and, via this focus, on how graphically to represent what would be that content's formulation in oral expression at phonological or morpholexical planes. Concrete poetry in our own day, for example, plays

off multiple dimensions of visuality and its internal arrangements against whatever might be considered simple denotational content. Spelling bees celebrate virtuosity of mere alphabetic expression form. Placement of inscriptions, as of flags and similar visual emblems, on points of articulation, portals, and similar metaphorical "bodily" positions on buildings, vehicles, etc. is of paramount concern not only for architects, but also for a public who encounter such visual displays with an appreciation of their amulet-like indexical value, not their denotational messages. Compare amulets like Jewish mezuzzahs on doorposts, emanating the power of identification with the deity's commandment so to place them; they create a semiotic boundary.

The point is, these are inscriptively mediated sociocultural acts that operate in realms of meaning that crosscut any communication in the realm of denotational textuality as such. So we must ask of each of our situations to be analyzed: What acts are being accomplished in and by inscription — circulation — entextualization that imply contours of language communities as opposed to practices common across them? Are certain sociocultural effects dependent on actual understanding of the denotational content of inscriptions that, in turn, presume upon a structure of the perhaps plurilingual speech community? Does inscription as a cultural fact differ for members of each of two or more language communities?

Here, for example, I would further associate Woods's argument about the exercise tablets of the late third-millennium B.C. Babylonian Edubba. Woods lays out much evidence that students were drilled not merely in scribal practices such as cuneiform writing for tablet inscription in bureaucratic Sumerian. Rather, he sees preserved in these exercises a vast, Hobson-Jobson-like collection of bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian phrases, arrayed in teaching-text paradigms of contrast and poetic repetition-with-variation recognizable from those we experience in language drills in our own day. He suggests that the surviving archive of pedagogical exercises reveals instruction for actually speaking the language with various others with whom one might be engaged in practical kinds of activities — "the technical aspects of commonplace Mesopotamian activities, that is, malt production, reed mat making, and agriculture." Why would this educational practice be so structured as a cultural focus for this group, if there was not a community of speakers of the language, Woods reasons, with whom even asymmetrically bilingual Akkadian-Sumerian elites should be able to converse?

Payne, too, in considering that fifth- and fourth-century B.C. Lycian-Greek sepulcheral inscriptions "were placed in most inaccessible spots, carved up high in rock facades" asks "who would have had the necessary eyesight to decipher these texts?" But perhaps it is not in fact the denotational content that is at issue at all, notwithstanding its indication that people index thereby the local relevance of two language communities. Perhaps these inscriptions are performative-protective injunctions that are permanently actualized in bilingual versions, anchored across two corresponding pantheons by builders whose identities, too, revealed in interestingly corresponding names, seem to be correspondingly duplex. The protection envelops, then, the tomb structures, which thereby have become protective spaces in perpetuity as the resting place of those buried. Might we not understand this as the plausible cultural logic for going to all the trouble?

For the particular interpretations it presents, each of these papers projects across these factors, one or another weighing more heavily in each case, given the serendipitous nature of linguistic archaeological data. And, all the while appreciating the knowledgeable subtlety of the arguments fashioned, we must point out some of the complexity of the issues involved in reconstruction of language communities.

When left to our own cultural devices, we all tend to think of language communities in the modern, post-Herderian image that has been so powerfully a force in nationalism, imperialism,

postcolonialism, ethnicism, etc.[3] Certainly nineteenth-century philologies projected these images back in time as the interpretative framework for rendering text-artifacts into specimen texts and thence into the languages behind those texts, complete with speakers. Language communities in such a view seem to be populations distributed on a geography of continuous regions, giving language communities an imagined geopolitical uniqueness as being at, and historically coming from, some place, even if the boundaries may have been unstable and hence shifting over time.

Nothing could be further from the truth in any documented or currently experienced situation on earth. (The situations our authors treat are exemplary in this respect; we do not even have to look at New Guinea, North or South America, or any similar area of luxuriant superposed plurilingualism at any point on the world map of peoples.) The unilingual, ethnolinguistically homogeneous population is simply useless as more than our own folk myth about a past our reconstructions seek. So plurilingualism as such is not, in fact, a problem that must automatically indicate instability and language shift; the question is always what is the social organization of language usage within which one or more denotational codes — and their users — operate.

For plurilingual populations, we must really start asking instead the kinds of questions I have outlined above. What kinds of language users have access to inscriptional technologies? For which of their languages? What kinds of sociocultural meaningful acts do the various deployments of such technologies constitute — denotational communication not necessarily the central concern of inscription? How do the text-artifacts remain fixed in space-time or circulate in doing their communicational work? What is the semiotic economy of such circulation within its cultural order(s)? Once we start formulating our problem in such a form, we can address more realistically how language communities exist within socio-political and -economic orders and how the boundaries or borders of membership in such language communities are constituted as cultural realities.

A second area of concern arises in moving from text-artifacts to the dynamics of contact of language communities. Inscriptional technologies — graphic codes and their physical matrices — are generally not unique to a particular denotational code. These, too, are multi-purpose techniques the uses of which crosscut any differentiation of denotational codes at play in a social formation. Think of the typeface printing of Russian-based Cyrillic coding for the languages of formerly Soviet Eurasia, some of which had already been written with pen on sheepskin in Ottoman-derived Perso-Arabic scripts; or Devanagari and its congeners across all of Southern and Southeastern Asia; or indeed of cuneiform-on-clay as a technology across the time and space of Babylonian and Anatolian empires. Think of the "reduction" of so many Asian, Pacific, and African languages to writing and printing using the "universal" Latin-character alphabet of the London Missionary Society.

There is, in other words, a delicate differentiation to be made of language communities in the sense used here and of inscriptional communities, communities of semiotic practice relatively independent of one another (Yiddish, Jewish High German, written in Hebrew letters; and think of cuneiform used to record no fewer than eight languages during the Hittite empire!). Each one of these papers struggles against identifying denotational code with inscriptional technology, for example, in Schniedewind carefully differentiating Aramaic- and Hebrew-type graphemic styles from Aramaic and Hebrew as languages, or in Payne giving a historical geography of Cuneiform versus Hieroglyphic Luwian in Anatolia. But the evidence of inscriptions of course intersects

[3] The now classic general discussion of how language and its applied sciences of standardization have been central to nationalism and similar modern forces is Benedict Anderson's (1991), taking up a theme importantly adumbrated in a very different key by Ernest Gellner (1964). I have elaborated a critique in Silverstein 2000.

these two very different kinds of communities, as naturalized as their identification may have become for us, who live in the contemporary cultural universe of languages anchored by written standards.

That is particularly the reason it is important to ask how sociocultural practices with text-artifacts may become sites, over time, for destabilizing the boundaries of language communities. Put this way, I believe, the question is different from reading texts as mere indexes of change in language communities that goes on independent of the fact of the inscription itself, as though the inscription as a cultural fact was not relatively independent of what language(s) groups use, and perhaps are identified with. How, then, can inscription be read as a sociocultural site for transformation of language community boundaries over time? Answering this is the only way to render them more than mute.

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# SUPPLEMENT

# 10

# THE LIVES OF THE SUMERIAN LANGUAGE

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## INTRODUCTION[1]

It is a commonplace that history begins with writing. When the term prehistory was introduced in the nineteenth century, it was strictly associated with archaeology and geology, that is, with sciences that could delve back into times of the "fog and the flood" (Daniel 1962). The biblical account of the flood provided the stuff of many Victorian metaphors, as it allowed for a conceptual link between scholarly endeavors, morality, and theology. Assyriology was practically born as a result of the discovery of a text describing the flood, and many years later the search for the origins of the Sumerians was linked with purported archaeological evidence for such a flood uncovered in the ancient cities of Ur and Kish. The decipherment of the cuneiform script and the recovery of the languages that were used in Mesopotamia provided a solid foundation for "history"; its early phases and the times that preceded it were inferred from a developmental view of how human societies evolved. Although much new evidence is available to us today, interpretations of this material are still captive to the fancies of an earlier age. Our histories of ancient Western Asia often remain constructed in terms of the rise and fall, the growth and decay of nation-states, and the cyclical domination of "peoples," be they Sumerians, Babylonians, Hittites, or Kassites. These same metaphors often dominate our thinking about the rise and fall of languages, especially as these are seen to have been the attributes of specific peoples or folk. Such ideas went out of fashion to a degree but are now making a comeback of sorts. This is particularly true for the earliest epigraphically documented epochs: here the debate about the role of Sumerians and Akkadians, or more generally, of Semites, which in the early history of Mesopotamia is inextricably linked with controversies about the Sumerian and Akkadian languages. The case of Sumerian and Sumerians — sometimes even flavored by modern nationalism and racism — is perhaps the most complex of them all (Cooper 1991). Most problematic, however, is the anachronistic tendency to associate languages with "peoples," to speak or write about Sumerians, Akkadians, or Hurrians, creating labels that link language and nationality, projecting it back into a time when nationalism, in the modern sense, did not exist. To cite Sumathi Ramaswamy (1998: 66–67), writing about Tamil:

> In modern narratives of nationalism, the language of a nation assumes importance because it is the tongue of its citizens, the very essence of the people who speak it. Correspondingly, the power of the language appears to derive from the power exercised by that collective entity, "the people," in the nation. Yet, this was not always the case…

Such mentally constructed "nations" never existed in the earliest periods of recorded Mesopotamian history and neither did such "peoples"; conversely, we must look at languages as embedded in a different form of socio-political reality and credit them with very different values, values that

[1] This is a revised and updated version of a paper presented under the title "The Death of Sumerian in Comparative Perspective," at the sixth meeting of the Sumerian Grammar Discussion Group at the Oriental Institute, Oxford University, in September 1999, which is scheduled to be published in *Acta Sumerologica* 22 (2000), published in 2005.

are far removed from the disease of nationalism. The way in which we define and describe these languages may also be in need of reexamination.

In the first half of the twentieth century many speculated on the "origins" of a people designated as Sumerians, and much time was spent debating the exact historical or archaeological moment of their arrival in southern Mesopotamia; these investigations were very much in line with current notions on the rise, peaking, and eventual decay of all cultures. In a somewhat different manner, the issue then turned the other end of the purported evolutionary arrow: a motley and theoretically muddy set of issues concerning the end of Sumerian ethnicity, culture, and language, with particular emphasis on the latter. The death of the Sumerian language has been the subject of speculation, or rather of asserted theses, but it has never been discussed at length. There is agreement on one thing only: the spoken language died in antiquity. The date of this death has been variously estimated; at one extreme there was Joseph Halévy (Cooper 1991), who claimed that there never was such a spoken tongue, and on the other Stephen Lieberman (1977: 20), who seems to imply that there were Sumerian-speaking pockets in the south during the Old Babylonian period, around 1600 B.C. Halévy aside, the death of the spoken vernacular language has been variously placed as early as the beginnings of the third millennium or as late as the middle of the second (Cooper 1973). Banal as it may seem, there is only one undeniable fact in this discussion: no one alive today speaks Sumerian. Since the language was used in written communication for millennia, we infer that it was spoken at one time and that there had to have been a Sumerian vernacular. This assumption seems reasonable but were we asked to support it with evidence, we would quickly find ourselves in grave difficulty. The problem is primarily methodological: what criteria would one use to argue for the life or for the death of an ancient language? Most recent statements on the subject have relied primarily on the language and distribution of personal names (e.g., Heimpel 1974/1977), but such investigations have been based on a set of unquestioned assumptions about the relationship between spoken language and onomastic practice. If such an approach were not accepted, what kinds of data — short of native testimony — would one want to marshal in a discussion of the death of a language like Sumerian? There are no easy answers to such questions. The fact that we are dealing with the written remains of a language and that most of our data on the language comes from some time after its putative demise creates a situation that is unusual but hardly unique in the history of our species. In view of the socio-linguistic context of the use of the Sumerian language I would suggest that we cannot simply ask the usual question: "when did the language cease to be spoken," or, as some would prefer to phrase it: "when was it no longer understood in vernacular conversation." Perhaps, more precisely, one might want to know when it ceased to be a "complete" language, that is, one that "has its formal and informal styles, its regional accents, and its class or occupational jargons, which do not destroy its unity so long as they are clearly diversified in function and show a reasonable degree of solidarity with one another" (Haugen 1966: 932). This definition is also somewhat problematical because it is based on a view of a "complete language" that may be somewhat misleading; in practice we must probably think of more diffuse and less structured notions of what constitutes a linguistic system (Le Page 1994). But Sumerian had a long and complex life as a literary vehicle for millennia after the demise of its vernacular cousins, and this other life is no less valid from a socio-linguistic point of view. These are obviously complex matters that require several various modes of investigation. In this short essay I limit myself to a few preliminary questions: what was it that actually died out, does it really matter, and what are possible socio-linguistic ramifications of language shift in early southern Mesopotamian society?

## LANGUAGES IN EARLY WESTERN ASIA

The facts are limited and will probably stay that way for a long time to come. There is no way of avoiding the obvious: we cannot recover information on languages before the invention of writing and all the languages that we know of from early Mesopotamia have been dead for a very long time. This has not always been an obstacle to speculation on fourth- and fifth-millennium languages, including reconstructions of putative "proto-Tigridian" or "proto-Euphratean" tongues that served as the substrate for Sumerian (most recently Bauer 1998: 436). The existence of these languages has been inferred from the analysis of certain elements in the lexicon that were deemed as "non-Sumerian," but the arguments do not hold up very well, as it turns out that most of these words are either native Sumerian, Semitic loans, or *Kulturwörter* (Rubio 1999). One must admit, however, that most of the place and river names in southern Mesopotamia are neither Sumerian nor Semitic.

In recent years there has been much speculation on the deep prehistory of languages, and brave linguists, primarily from the former Soviet Union and the United States, have attempted to reconstruct linguistic families on a larger scale, such as Amerind, which would embrace all or most of the languages of the New World, or Nostratic, which would include many of the languages families of the Europe and Asia (Diebold 1994 and Campbell 1999: 311–26). There have even been attempts to link the distribution of language families with human genetic traits (e.g., Cavalli-Sforza 1997), although there has been strong opposition to such an approach (e.g., Noncentini 1993 and Straus 1998). Whatever one might think of these works, the new focus on language reconstruction has focused attention once again on historical linguistics and on such matters as the relationship between the study of language history, genetics, cultural evolution, and archaeology. Within the broad range of possibilities suggested by long-term linguistic history we can take a brief look at the context in which we must situate the isolate Sumerian.

What language or languages were spoken in Western Asia during the fourth, third, and early second millennia B.C.? The answer to this question depends very much on what we mean by "language." Common sense would dictate that we know very well what is meant by the term, but common sense is the locus of our most deeply felt cultural prejudices and, as Robert Le Page (1992: 75) has argued, our socio-linguistic definitions of what constitutes a communal language are stereotypes that are embedded in specific cultures. Moreover, in European conceptualizations, these stereotypes often assume monolingualism as a norm, although anthropologists and linguists have long recognized that multilingual societies are prevalent over our globe. The definitions and boundaries of genetically defined oral communicative modes are fuzzy at best, and therefore terms such as "Sumerian" and "Akkadian" are used here in a conventional manner, even though one could argue that they are mere abstractions. With this in mind, we return to the topic at hand. In western Iran we have evidence for Elamite, possibly, but not assuredly the western tip of a Dravidian continuum (Diakonoff 1967: 107–12 and McAlpin 1981); in southern Mesopotamia there was, presumably, a dialect continuum that is assumed to belong to "Sumerian," as well as a number of Semitic dialects; and in northern Mesopotamia and in Syria one has to posit a continuum of Semitic languages and dialects. Suddenly, in the middle of the third millennium one encounters Hurrian speakers (Michalowski 1987). Premature announcements to the contrary, there seem to be no traces of Hurrian presence in Syria in the early documents from Ebla and Mari. Toward the end of the third millennium, in Old Akkadian texts, we find the first occurrences of Hurrian words, personal and place names, the latter from northern Mesopotamia west of the Tigris (Steinkeller 1998). With the exception of Semitic, which I discuss briefly below, the broader family affiliations of these languages are a matter of speculation. Diakonoff (1967, 1984, and 1986) and

other Russian scholars have argued that Hurrian and Urartian are both part of the Nakh-Dagestan branch of the northeastern Caucasian language family. Similar claims have been made for Hattic, the pre-Indo-European language of eastern Anatolia (Diakonoff 1984: 5). In addition, some have placed Indo-European speakers in Western Asia at an early time, albeit without much success. However one views this, one thing seems clear: there is no evidence of very early contacts between Indo-European and Semitic (Haarmann 1994) and so the Indo-European dispersal either originated elsewhere or took place before the first Semitic spread.

In her highly influential book *Linguistic Diversity in Space and Time*, Johanna Nichols (1992) provides a new way of juggling genetic and areal linguistic history. She distinguishes between spread and residual zones; in her terminology the ancient Near East was a spread zone. Clearly, the area we are interested in has been affected by a number of Semitic spreads. In historical times we must reckon with three, if not more such spreads: the early one that gave birth to the languages attested in the Early Dynastic III documents, the late third/early second-millennium Amorite spread, and the controversial Aramaic one at the beginning of the first millennium if not earlier.

The first spread is an oversimplification, as we are still at odds over the relationship between the earliest languages attested in Sumer and Akkad and those known from Syria. The matter of speakers of Amorite dialects is one of the more interesting and best-attested linguistic spreads in early Western Asia. The personal names that are attested in the third-millennium Ebla, Mari, and Beydar tablets show no traces of Amorite. This language, or dialect cluster, is known to us only from personal names, as no connected Amorite text has been discovered to date; it is first attested, albeit sparsely, in Mesopotamian texts from the time of the Old Akkadian dynasty (ca. 2300 B.C.), but more abundantly in Ur III and Old Babylonian sources, beginning with ca. 2100 B.C. Although there is some variation in naming patterns from various regions of Syria, in general it appears that the geographical horizons attested in these documents bear witness to a prior spread of an earlier group of Semitic languages, including vernaculars whose written expressions are known as Eblaite and Old Akkadian, as well as other Semitic tongues whose fossil remains can be recovered from loans into Sumerian (Civil n.d.). The relationships between the written and spoken vernaculars, as well as the range of local and social variation of these languages is a matter of some debate and, for obvious reasons, is also the subject of much speculation. There is very little written information between the time of these third-millennium texts and the Mari tablets from the eighteenth century. The only post-Early Dynastic texts from Syria that precede the main Mari archives are the so-called *shakkannakku*-period tablets, some of which are earlier than and some of which overlap with the earliest texts from the reign of the eighteenth-century ruler Yahdun-Lim. The written conventions of these texts are different and although the language is Semitic, it is closer to Eblaite than to the Akkadian of the later archives. This does not mean that it was the vernacular, however. Just as the Akkadian of Mari was an import from elsewhere, specifically from Eshnunna, so it is equally likely that the earlier conventions are also expressions of an earlier written conventionalized koine (Michalowski 1987).

For decades the question of the origin of Sumerian was predicated on the notion that the ancestors of the people who spoke the first attested language of southern Mesopotamia had to have come from somewhere else and were intruders in the area. The isolated position of Sumerian, tucked away in a corner at the end of the Semitic spreads, suggests a very different scenario. On comparative grounds, it is more probable that this language represents but a remnant of a much broader linguistic continuum, areal if not genetic, that had areas of Western Asia before the Semitic spreads. Even when a language belongs to an extensive family, the issues of how to identify a "language" and the moment of its very beginning pose an imposing if not an impossible

task (Seebold 1996); to speculate about the origins and prehistories of ancient isolates may be foolhardy. Nevertheless, one could suggest that Sumerian and Hattic occupied a historical niche analogous to Basque and Etruscan in Europe — not that there is any agreement on the historical status of those languages. That is to say, these isolates are but remnants of larger linguistic groups, tucked away on the far borders of various spreads. The isolated nature of Sumerian is further brought into relief when we take a look at certain typological features of the language. In contrast to all the surrounding tongues, Sumerian has ergative argument marking and, as Nichols (1994) has shown, ergativity is relatively stable in areal terms and ergative languages tend to cluster together. On a very large scale her arguments are convincing, although once one begins to look more closely at the history of individual languages, problems do arise.

Consider, for example, the following broad-sweeping statement (Nichols 1994: 74):

> These spreads seem to have driven an accusative wedge into a continental interior that would otherwise be heavily ergative, for the languages all round the periphery are ergative: counterclockwise from the west they are Basque; three families of the Caucasus; Elamite (stative-active on an ergative base), Sumerian, and Hurro-Urartean of the ancient Near East; Burushaski and Tibeto-Burman languages to the south; Chukchi-Kamchatkan and Eskimoan on the northeast; Ket (stative-active on an ergative base) to the north. Only to the southeast are there accusative languages: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Ainu, Nivkh (Gilak).

Much depends on the level of generalization one is willing to live with; the ergative-based analysis of a Caucasian areal grouping has been questioned (Tuite 1999), the interpretation of Elamite offered above is open to serious doubt, and the chronological position of earliest Hurrian also creates problems. Nevertheless, the distribution of this pattern is suggestive.

All this leads me to posit once again that Sumerian was not the language of some overland or maritime marauders who had settled in Mesopotamia sometime in the fifth or fourth millennium. The history of archaeology is filled with speculation on cultural rifts that may signal the arrival of some new population group that may perhaps be identified as "Sumerian" (Jones 1969). The evidence is tenuous no matter how one looks on the matter, but I would argue that several unrelated sets of data support the view that speakers of the antecedents of what we know as "Sumerian" were present in Mesopotamia from very early on, although there were undoubtedly other languages in the area. The relatively late human occupation of the southern Mesopotamian alluvium does not leave very much room for too much linguistic history. We must also accept that there is at present no evidence at all for any other early language in the area, proto-Tigridian, proto-Euphratean, or whatever, as Gonzalo Rubio (1999) convincingly demonstrates. Sumerian is most likely present in some form or another in the earliest writing we have from Mesopotamia, that is, in archaic Uruk tablets from the fourth millennium and short of a miracle, we shall never go back much farther than that as far as direct evidence for language history is concerned. Even though Englund (1998: 73ff.) argues that there is no trace of Sumerian in the Uruk texts, I still stand by my earlier opinion (Michalowski 1993), holding with those who identify syllabic elements in the script that could only point toward Sumerian. The argument, which is too complex to be presented here in full, is partly theoretical in nature, as it very much depends on one's views on the structural nature of early cuneiform writing. Englund and others consider it to be ideographic and refuse to link it to any specific language. The whole notion of a writing system made up of ideograms, that is, of graphic marks that symbolize ideas and not linguistic units, is a curious one, which goes back to very early Western attempts to understand Egyptian hieroglyphs and then Chinese and derived systems. The notion has been explored in depth and thoroughly debunked by

J. Marshall Unger (1990) and there is no reason to extend this linguistically unreasonable idea to Mesopotamian cuneiform.

## SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN

Building on the work of predecessors, in particular on the researches of I. J. Gelb and F. R. Kraus, Jerrold Cooper (1973) two decades ago provided a succinct and balanced overview of the state of our knowledge concerning the relationships between Sumerian and Akkadian in Sumer and Akkad. His conclusion, that "in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it does not seem unreasonable to posit a situation in which the displacement of Sumerian as a spoken language in Sumer was in process in ED III" (Cooper 1973: 242), that is, in the middle of the third millennium, appears reasonable even today. Cooper clearly sided with Kraus, who saw little evidence for distinction between Sumerians and Akkadians in historical times; the position of Gelb, who was more inclined to see a separation between a northern Akkadian-speaking core as opposed to a south dominated by Sumerian speakers, is maintained to this day by some of his students, primarily by Piotr Steinkeller (1993), but also by Aage Westenholz (1999: 25ff.) and others. Although some of the arguments used by these scholars are linguistic in nature, they also stress cultural differences. As much as I admire their work, I have methodological qualms about notions such as "nation," "people," and "ethnic identity," notions that probably do not go back further than the seventeenth century in the West but are often projected into the past (Smedley 1999). This is not the place, however, to debate these issues.

Lexical borrowings are the main evidence for interference between Akkadian and Sumerian. The most commonly cited evidence of syntactic borrowing has been the matter of word order in Akkadian. Since almost all Semitic languages have a basic V(erb)S(ubject)O(bject) word order, the SOV structure of Akkadian has almost universally been attributed to the substrate influence of Sumerian and is cited as evidence for a long period of co-existence of the two languages, if not for a prolonged period of bilingualism in Sumer. On the surface, this seems to be a reasonable assumption. There is an analogy to the situation: the SOV word order of Amharic is ascribed, together with other features, to the substratum influence of Cushitic. There have been challenges to the standard interpretation of the origin of Akkadian word order. Talmy Givon (1976a, 1976b) has argued that proto-Semitic was verb final and that Akkadian, which branched off earlier than the West Semitic languages, actually preserved the original word order and was therefore not influenced by Sumerian, although he does not explain how other languages in the group became verb initial. His analysis was based on the order of pronominal affixes in the verb. G. Haayer (1986), while acknowledging Bernard Comrie's critique of Givon, took the idea further and offered his own explanation of the SOV order of Akkadian. Following Diakonoff (and in a way similar to the work of H.-P. Müller [1995]), he speculates that proto-Semitic had ergative noun marking; from this he deduces that the basic word order of proto-Semitic must have been SOV since many ergative languages are verb final. His initial claim is that Sumerian should not have influenced Akkadian syntax. He contradicts himself, however, and argues that while other Semitic languages changed, Akkadian, under the influence of Sumerian, did not. Lieberman (1986), apparently independently, provided a more complex analysis of the order of bound morphemes on verbs; he observed that proto-Afro-Asiatic probably had dominant SOV word order that changed to VSO when the verbal system shifted. He points to Cushitic and Omotic, both of which have SOV order. Like Givon, he suggested that Akkadian had branched off before the shift. His arguments may have to be revised in view of the interpretation of the relationships between constitu-

ent structure and word order recently presented by Dryer (1992), but for the time being one may accept Lieberman's formulations as a working hypothesis.

If we follow Lieberman's argument, then the main evidence for syntactic interference in Akkadian under the influence of substrate Sumerian evaporates. There may be other ways of looking at this problem that result in similar conclusions. Word order has been extensively studied and while there is some disagreement as to whether basic word order is really basic, if we accept such a category for the sake of the discussion, certain interesting consequences do follow.

Johanna Nichols (1992 and 1995), in an extensive comparative diachronic as well as synchronic analysis of the matter, concluded that word order was a stable areal phenomenon but was unstable genetically. Indeed, in her ranking of stability hierarchies word order was the most unstable feature in language stocks and the most stable areal feature (the other features are alignment, head/dependent marking, and complexity). On the basis of this, one might conclude that Mesopotamia, Syria, and surrounding regions constituted a linguistic area, after Akkadian broke off from its stock but before the wide spread of Semitic, one characterized by SOV word order, among other features. Most of the old languages of the area have verb-final syntax: Elamite, Hattic, and Hurrian/Urartean, although in the case of the latter we must assume that its precursors were spoken on the fringes, farther north than they are attested historically.

If we exclude the prize example of syntactic interference, we are left with loanwords and loan morphemes to trace the influence of Sumerian on Akkadian. It is often assumed that Akkadian borrowed a large vocabulary from Sumerian, but no one has ever actually studied the matter in full. Lieberman (1977) cataloged Sumerian loans in Old Babylonian Akkadian. He found 529 nouns, of which 102 are known only from lexical texts. Not all of his etymologies would be universally accepted, but even if we accept a rough figure of approximately 400 loans, that is hardly a large number. One would need to study the semantic classes and frequency distributions of these words in order to arrive at any firm conclusions and any full analysis of the matter would also have to take into account divine and personal naming patterns as well. However, from a quick look at Lieberman's work and at the statistics provided by D. O. Edzard in his reviews of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary volumes, one may conclude that while there was a small percentage of Sumerian loans in Akkadian, it was hardly an overwhelming phenomenon that would provide evidence of mass lexical interference.[2]

The situation is somewhat different in Sumerian. Unfortunately, even less has been done on Akkadian and Semitic loans in that language. Many that have been concerned with the issue would probably agree that from the earliest readable texts on, we find extensive evidence of Semitic loans (noted already years ago by Falkenstein, Gelb, and others; see, for example, Rubio 1999). There are obvious and culturally interesting loans such as iri "city," a/urad "slave," and puhrum "assembly," but there are also many less transparent loans that are masked by phonetic changes and loan conventions (Civil n.d.) and many were borrowed from the literary language, sometimes from the lexical lists. Indeed, I would risk the statement that the Sumerian we know has a much larger percentage of Semitic and Akkadian loans than the other way around. Assuming that this is correct, what does it tell us about the linguistic situation in early Mesopotamia?

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[2] Another indication of the complexity of language contacts in Western Asia is encountered in the case of an isolated early borrowing into Ugaritic and Aramaic of a word that was originally Sumerian, although the later never met the two Semitic languages in person. The word for "palace" in Sumerian was written é-gal and has a transparent internal etymology ("big house") and therefore one can be certain that the word is in fact Sumerian. How it entered Ugaritic and Hebrew as *hkl* and Aramaic as *h*(*y*)*kl* is a matter of some speculation (Kaufman 1974: 27).

Briefly stated, it appears that one can entertain two mutually complementary hypotheses. First, the unequal evidence of lexical interference would suggest that most of it took place in a situation in which the social prestige of Akkadian was much higher than that of Sumerian. One could also entertain the more radical working hypothesis that we should not be thinking about "Akkadian," but about other Semitic languages or dialects that were present in Babylonia when Sumerian was still a living tongue. This would find support in the work of Alexander Militarev (e.g., 1995 and 1996), who argues that many early Semitic loans in Sumerian came from languages different from Akkadian, although his work is not without its critics. The issue is clouded by the fact that what we call Akkadian is a complex matter, one that is not adequately handled by the charts and nomenclature in our grammars. In many of these we find an explicit or implied evolutionary progress from Old Akkadian, through the bifurcation into Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian and then onward and upward through these two "dialects," ignoring cautionary warnings. More than three decades ago Erica Reiner (1966) observed that "no one has ever shown that Old Babylonian ever descended from Old Akkadian" and I think that this still holds true today. More recently, Westenholz (1999: 33) has summarized his own and Gelb's thoughts on Old Akkadian in the following manner: "It has been known for some time that Sargonic Old Akkadian — certainly the dialect used by Sargon himself and presumably the dialect of Agade elevated to official language of record — is visibly different, both from the Pre-Sargonic Akkadian dialect spoken in Babylonia, and from the Akkadian of the Ur III sources, the latter being essentially an archaic version of Old Babylonian." The idea that what we call "Old Akkadian" is a local dialect that had been elevated to multi-regional "national" written status has also been argued more recently by Sommerfeld (2003). Hilgert (2003) is essentially in the same camp. Current debates over the status of Old Assyrian (Parpola 1988) only serve to highlight the problem of the complex history of "Akkadian," which is also primarily documented in the form of various learned normalized written dialects that are far removed from any spoken vernaculars; indeed one may argue that, like Sumerian, it was written in many times and places by people whose native language was not Akkadian and that the texts almost always reflected non-vernacular registers. Consequently, one may modify an old linguistic saying and argue that "a language is a dialect with a large army":[3] the dialect of Akkad was imposed, in writing at least, over the whole Sargonic state, from the Persian Gulf to Syria and Iran, although some cities continued to use Sumerian for local accounting. In a certain sense one could argue that this was the first real "language" in Western Asia. Sumerian would be spread by force only in the subsequent Ur III period; before 2100 B.C. it traveled as a cultural item, its spread fueled by prestige, interest, and practical motivations.

The complicated language situation in early Mesopotamia has been apparent to all who work on third-millennium texts. Among the third-millennium Early Dynastic literary tablets found at Abu Salabikh, there is one unusual text (Biggs 1974 no. 326). The tablet did not look like the other literary texts from the site and the copyist noted (Biggs 1974: 32) that "noteworthy is no. 326, in which ù "and," occurs; even at this early date Sumerian may have been under heavy Semitic influence." No progress was made until the recovery of the pre-Sargonic archives from Ebla in Syria provided us with a wealth of new written documentation. Among the literary texts from the site was found a syllabically written duplicate that demonstrated immediately that the text from Sumer was a literary text in a Semitic language (Edzard 1984 no. 6; Krebernik 1992). Robert

[3] The saying "a dialect is a language with an army" has traditionally been attributed to Antoine Melliet; its first documented use is found in a Yiddish article by Max Weinreich from 1945, who added "… and a navy." See Bright 1997: 469.

Biggs himself had earlier written about the difficulties of identifying the language of some early cuneiform texts, and his hunch proved to be more than correct.

The difficulties in identifying the linguistic identity of a text may seem puzzling, but they are inherent in the system of writing that was used in early Mesopotamia. In theory, one could say that there are only so many possible ways of using a system such as cuneiform for writing Sumerian and Akkadian. As has been noted (Civil 1984: 76; Civil and Rubio 1999: 264), a text could be:

1. Written and read in Sumerian
2. Written and read in Akkadian or some other Semitic language
3. Written in Sumerian and read in Akkadian, or some other Semitic language
4. Written in Akkadian and read in Sumerian
5. Written in Sumerian but read as Semiticized Sumerian

An early tablet inscribed exclusively with word signs (logograms) would seem to be linguistically impenetrable; if we knew all the signs then we could understand it, but we could not be sure of the underlying language. In practice, there are a number of clues that one can use to establish the probable linguistic identity of a given text. The origin of the object provides some information: a text from northern Babylonia is more likely to be Semitic, while one from Sumer should be Sumerian. This is only a rule of thumb, however, since there are demonstrably Sumerian texts from the north and Akkadian texts from the south. Another indicator might be found in just one or more syllabic signs that provide readings from a specific language. Thus if a royal inscription seems to be written in Sumerian, but contains, before a place name, a syllable */in/* that can only be interpreted as the Akkadian particle *in* (English "in"), we may assume that the whole text is to be read in Semitic. Other indicators are less obvious. There are a few logograms and syllabic signs that were used exclusively in Akkadian and other Semitic languages such as Eblaite, but never in Sumerian. A good example of this is the word for "witness," which was written in Sumerian as ki inim-ma, corresponding to Akkadian *šībum*, which means "elder," as well as "witness." But the standard Sumerian signs were not used as logograms in third-millennium Akkadian texts. Rather, this was expressed by means of the logogram that we transliterate as AB+AŠ$_2$ and which corresponds to the Sumerian word for "elder." These kinds of rules would seem to provide sufficient criteria for the linguistic identification of texts, but certain texts defy easy classification. Take, for example, the following fragmentary tablet (Westenholz 1975: 36):[4]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | [1] lugal-a$_2$-zi-da | Mr. Lugalazida |
| 2. | arad$_2$ Lugal-ki-gal-la | the slave of Lugalkigal |
| 3. | ensi$_2$-da | from Mr. Ensi |
| 4. | in-da-zah$_3$ | escaped. |
| 5. | ki zah$_3$-a-na | His hiding place |
| 6. | geme$_2$ ur-nigin$_3$ | the slave girl of Urnigin |
| 7. | ba-dug$_4$ | disclosed: |
| 8. | *in* maš-ka$_3$-ni$^{ki}$-[ŠA]BRA | "In (the town of) Mashkan-shapir …" |
| 9. | *u*-⌈*ša*⌉-*ab* | he is dwelling; |
| 10. | ⌈*li-ru*$^{?}$-*u*$_3$-*nim*⌉ | he should be brought here." |
| | rest broken | |

Armed with the criteria enumerated above, how are we to establish the language of this legal text? On the basis of the sign forms we can date it to the time of the dynasty of Sargon, that is, to the

[4] Here, as throughout this essay, Akkadian (or Semitic) words are rendered in italics.

very end of the third millennium. The provenance of the tablet is uncertain; it may have come from Nippur, but that is not a decisive feature since we have Sumerian as well as Akkadian texts from the city from this time period. One must add that the text is broken and that better information may have been contained in the missing lines, but the investigator must confront, more often than not, such incomplete tablets. Suddenly we find that the neat series of possibilities enumerated above may prove to be insufficient. Could one infer that the whole text was Akkadian, and that lines 1–7 are simply Sumerian logograms that were read in the Semitic tongue? More interestingly, however, one could claim that the two languages were intermingled; the main protocol of the juridical proceedings was redacted in Sumerian and the testimony of the main witness, registered as direct speech, was written down in the language in which it was given, that is, in Akkadian. This is precisely what the two editors of the text, Edzard (1968: 137–38) and Westenholz (1975: 36–37), claim and they may be right. The *language of writing* for this particular scribe and his intellectual milieu was Sumerian, but in reporting stylized direct speech he acknowledged that the vernacular in his world was already Akkadian, although it is also most probable that the formulation of the latter was no less formalized as the former.

Such obvious conclusions do not exhaust the inferences of this text. It appears to be written in two languages, corresponding to the two linguistic protagonists of our stories. It is highly improbable, however, that Mesopotamia was ever a strictly monolingual or even bilingual area since other tongues must also have been present. In this context suffice it to say that the first writing was created or developed in a multilingual environment and that from the beginning the choice of some form of standardized Sumerian as a vehicle for written expression was partly arbitrary. It is interesting to observe that the earliest texts may even preserve a hint that some form of Elamite, the large language group of Iran in antiquity, was also in play. Irving Finkel (forthcoming) has ingeniously pointed out that at least one cuneiform sign has a syllabic value that can only be attributed to an Elamite reading. The sign that we conventionally transliterate as dingir "god" or an "sky, Sky God," was originally a representation of a star; three of these was mul "star," but no satisfactory explanation has been proposed for the value nab of a combination of two such dingir signs, one on top of the other. Finkel proposes that the origin of this syllabic reading was the Elamite word for "god" *napirša*. This is an attractive, indeed a fascinating, proposal, with far-reaching consequences.

Multilingualism has many faces. One must, of course, allow for localized pockets of such language uses, but from a larger perspective one must allow not only for areal and social dialect differentiation, but also for a variety of contact languages as well. The constant interactions of Mesopotamians — whatever their native languages — with neighbors who used a variety of unrelated vernaculars, certainly must have given rise to a variety of contact languages. Translators aside (Gelb 1968), the multilingual ancient Near East must have produced trade jargons, interlanguages, and possibly even pidgins and Creoles. One usually associates the latter two with European expansion in the "age of exploration," but as Sarah Thomason and Alaa Elgibali (1986) have demonstrated, such linguistic phenomena can be documented much earlier and outside of the sphere of European expansion. Such new languages can come into being rather quickly and can disappear equally fast, but because of social restrictions on literacy, such contact languages would never make it into writing. Indeed, our written documentation will never reveal the full array of possible language use on the ground. Consider, for example, the following description of social use of language in one area of Amazonia (Aikhenvald 2003: 1):

> Language choice is motivated by power relationship and by status, and there are strict rules for code-switching. Inserting bits of other languages while speaking Tariana ("code-mixing") has different consequences that mirror existing ethnic stereotypes. Code-mixing

> with Tucano is considered a "language violation"; using elements of Baniwa is considered funny, while mixing different Tariana dialects implies that one "cannot speak Tariana properly." Overusing Portuguese is associated with the negative image of an Indian who tries to be better than his peers.

There is absolutely no way that we could detect such subtleties of behavior, or anything remotely similar, in ancient Mesopotamia, given the limitations of our sources. This may seem obvious, but it is vitally necessary to be aware of what is missing in our documentation, and of the levels of ignorance that we have to be willing to tolerate in our discussions. Thus, the scenarios that we construct in order to understand language use in a text such as the one cited above shall always remain speculative and incomplete, guided for the most part by "common sense," that is, by our own cultural prejudices. But whatever other realities may be needed to interpret it fully, this document serves to highlight once more the autonomous nature of writing and the formalization of written norms: the restricted and stylized versions of Akkadian and Sumerian that were preserved in permanent form do not in any way represent spoken language, alive or dead.

Thus our speculations can only hint at the socio-linguistic complexity of the cultural milieu of early Mesopotamia and little of what we suspect can be documented on the basis of the preserved textual record. One of the main reasons for this must be the immense chasm between spoken and written language. As we have seen, the vernacular, or rather the vernaculars were constantly changing; they changed by language contact and undoubtedly by local variation in cultural and historical circumstances. Most historical linguists today recognize that linguistic change and variation is primarily driven by socio-linguistic forces rather than by strictly structural matters (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). The ebb and flow of language variation and the events that eventually led to language shift are hardly reflected in the texts. Think of how little we know of Sumerian dialectology. Most scholars, if asked about the matter, would answer with reference to the "main dialect" as opposed to the "Emesal dialect."[5] There is absolutely no indication, however, that the latter was ever spoken and it seems to be very much a cultic reading convention rather than a true dialect. Although some have suggested that it had roots in the third millennium or earlier (Alster 1982; Maul 1997), there is little to support such a reconstruction. The word "dialect" seems to be used differently in Assyriology than in linguistics. In a recent cultural survey one reads of a "dialect," but the only characteristic of this dialect is a phonetic difference in verbal prefixes (Westenholz 1999: 38). Natural language does not behave in this manner. I have sketched some of the cultural context of Sumerian, reflecting only on selected issues, for one purpose only: to posit major differences between spoken and written versions of the language.

## WHAT IS SUMERIAN?

What then is, or rather, what was Sumerian? Jens Høyrup (1992 and many other places) has argued that it was a Creole, but his arguments do not wash from a linguistic or Sumerological point of view. I do not want to debate the issue here but only note that one would be hard pressed to find an example of a language with the typological features of Sumerian whose origins could be found in creolization. He was undoubtedly influenced by the attempts to brand Middle English as a Creole, attempts that have been well refuted by now (Dalton-Puffer 1995). Such conceptions are seductive, I must admit, as are, for example, those of Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1991), who thought

[5] Emesal ("fine speech") was used exclusively in literary texts from the end of the second millennium on. It appears in the direct speech of women and in certain types of cultic texts. The origin of this norm may have to be linked with the role of women in funerary laments (Cooper n.d.).

that proto-Indo-European was a mongrel areal phenomenon — that is a *Sprachbund*, in his original terminology. Sad to say, linguistics has played spoilsport to such imaginative ideas.

In Assyriology we are used to collapsing broad diachronic and synchronic spans with a single linguistic label such as "Sumerian" or "Akkadian." Since we know Sumerian solely through the medium of writing, it is extremely difficult to disentangle linguistic features of written language from anything else. Much of what we conceive of as historical language development can be conceived of as change in writing conventions. The vernaculars must have had more differentiation than we can detect in the written tradition, as there is simply not enough change in the language of the texts over a long span of time. Perhaps the best example of documented change is to be found in the early lexical texts. Since we read the language backwards, from the better documented and better understood early second-millennium texts, it comes as no surprise to find that many words that have been discovered in the earliest lexical lists cannot be translated. Some of this is due to difficulties with the writing system, but in many cases we can be certain that we do not know the meaning of words because they had gone out of use and were replaced by others, sometimes in relatively early times. Nevertheless, from Early Dynastic III times on, much of the change in the language that we can follow must be related to written conventions, although I do not mean to minimize the role of certain structural changes, such as the development of vowel harmony.

Such changes are usually described as changes in "spelling" or "orthography." Leaving aside the appropriateness of the term for such a writing system, I would like to suggest that much more is at stake here. We have no direct witnesses to any of the reforms that conditioned changes in the way cuneiform was written. Leaving aside for the moment earlier possibilities, there can be no doubt that one such reform took place during the reign of Naram-Sin of Akkad and that the reform was centrally imposed, with results that can be detected throughout the kingdom. How this was done we shall never know, but at least some of the effects must be attributed to central schooling. How else can we explain a relatively trivial matter, namely the abandonment of the use of an "upward" (from our point of view) stroke, a stroke that was by then limited to two signs, DA and ŠU? For us this is an important diagnostic feature, but at the time it could hardly have been a cosmic issue, and one can hardly imagine that it was enforced by royal edict. Most probably such a change, equivalent to crossing a t or dotting an i, was a random aesthetic change instilled at an early age by some influential schoolmaster in Agade. His students, and the fashion that went with them, spread throughout the realm, taking with them the new writing habit. But fashion in antiquity meant something completely different than it does today; communications were much slower and the role of tradition stronger. The speed with which this particular change spread is just one more indication of the way in which the administration of Naram-Sin imposed itself on local organizations together with a new set of bureaucrats and scribes. Thus, we have here an example of a minor change in writing habits; it may not be very interesting from a narrow linguistic point of view, but it is informative for the analysis of social and political realities. The context of such radiating change is a bureaucratic written language that seems to have been imposed on much of the Sargonic state, a language that may have been based on one specific dialect of what we call Old Akkadian.

It is possible that one or more writing reforms have to be attributed to the kings of Ur, although texts from the time of Gudea, which overlap chronologically with the beginning of Ur-Namma's reign suggest that a major reform may have actually taken place some time earlier. The Sumerian literary texts written under their patronage have survived almost exclusively in copies made a few hundred years later and, with a few exceptions, they have come down to us written in a manner that is quite different from the writing norms known to us from Ur III times. We shall have to await the publication of Gonzalo Rubio's dissertation on the small number of currently

known Ur III literary texts, the majority of which remain unpublished, before we make any rash statements about the differences between the literary texts of that time and the Old Babylonian texts that we know. A few Shulgi hymns have writings that either preserve some earlier habits or were consciously remade at some point to approximate, perhaps infelicitously, earlier norms (Klein 2000), but otherwise all earlier texts were reworked into a set of linguistic and writing conventions that might be called Standard Old Babylonian Sumerian. Can we imagine, however, that these changes were concerned only with writing conventions and a few lexical items that had gone out of use?

Discussions of Sumerian often make use of analogies with the role of Latin in the European Middle Ages, a comparison that is in many ways much too simplistic and often misleading. The history of Sanskrit, as described by Pollock (2001 and 2003), may provide a better historical analogy, but it may be best to assert the unique character of the many lives of Sumerian. Taking a different tack on such analogies, I would like to draw attention to the work of Roger Wright (1982). In his work on the rise of the Romance vernaculars, and on the invention of a new way of pronouncing Medieval Latin, Wright (1991: 111) insisted that the "Latin-Romance distinction of Later Middle Ages was created through such language planning, and that it would not have existed if it had not been invented." Charlemagne and Alcuin's reforms of Latin pronunciation created a new oral form of delivery that had little to do with the language of the old empire. Citing the example of these Latin pronunciation reforms, the late Chaim Rabin (1985) claimed much the same for Byzantine Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew. In all cases the standardization of written versions of the language went hand-in-hand with reforms of norms for reading aloud. It seems reasonable to assume that in Mesopotamia the periodic changes in writing habits were accompanied by new grammatical as well as phonological norms, norms that may have taken the language quite far from its vernacular roots, including special cultic traditions that go under the name of Emesal. I would suggest that the Early Dynastic "Semiticization" conventions of Sumerian, as described by Civil and Rubio (1999: 263–66), are but one instance of such formalized, invented processes of writing and reading. The proper metaphor for the history of the written Sumerian known to us is not gradual evolution but punctuated equilibrium (taken from paleontology and complex adaptive systems), a metaphor I have previously invoked in reference to the very origin of writing in Mesopotamia and elsewhere. If we accept a historical chasm between the written language, with its own complex history, and whatever vernaculars were once used in the land, the issue of the death of Sumerian has to be seen in a new light since we must ask ourselves what exactly died and when.

## SUMERIAN HISTORIES

Up to now I have discussed problems of writing as well as matters pertaining to vernacular language use. But Sumerian as we know it is a standard language, that is, a language that probably never had native speakers, which was never a mother tongue (Michalowski 1991). In this respect it resembles literary forms of expression such as Sanskrit or Standard German, which for more than 500 years had no native speakers (Weiß 2004: 649). That is to say, it was never spoken in the nursery, bedroom, or field, even though, as in the case of Sanskrit, poets and teachers may have found ways of conversing in the standardized idiom (Pollock 2003: 62). As I have already noted, however, this in no way means that as a means of written and intellectual expression it was not a living, evolving medium, one that had its own unique, very long history, or better, histories. In connection with this I would like to cite Sheldon Pollock (2001: 393) once again, as his writings on Sanskrit have influenced my thinking on these matters:

> Some might argue that as a learned language of intellectual discourse and belles letters, Sanscrit had never been exactly alive in the first place. But the usual distinction between living and dead languages is more than a little naïve. It cannot accommodate the fact that all written languages are learned and learned, and therefore in some sense frozen in time ("dead"); or, conversely, that such languages often are as supple and dynamically changing, ("alive") as so-called natural languages.

Writing was invented in southern Mesopotamia sometime in the middle of the fourth millennium B.C., but it was not until around 2600 that we encounter the first literary texts. As limited as our understanding of this early literature is at present, we can say that it had quickly spread across political boundaries and even beyond the immediate environs of the "Sumerian" city states into Syria and possibly to other places. It is also evident that the development of Sumerian language literary expression very quickly brought about similar developments in other tongues, those that we refer to as Akkadian or Eblaite. But in the third millennium Sumerian was not a lingua franca and, as far as we know, was not used for interregional diplomatic correspondence.[6] Indeed, at this time it seems that the first letters, including the first diplomatic letters, were in Semitic rather than in Sumerian. This is not surprising, as Sumerian never developed a robust epistolary tradition outside of the schools.

With the rise of the Akkad dynasty in Mesopotamia ca. 2500 B.C. and the spread of its reach into Syria and Elam came the first imperial spread of writing. Although parts of southern Mesopotamia maintained Sumerian for local administrative use, other parts of the kingdom and all written communication with the crown was now in Akkadian. Very little instructional material from the schools of the time has come down to us, but one must assume that Sumerian was still the focal point of instruction. When Akkad fell and around 2100 B.C. Ur-Namma constructed a new state (the Third Dynasty of Ur), there was a massive return to the use of Sumerian — and a newly formalized one at that — in most of the territory under his control. I have argued elsewhere that this was not motivated by vernacular use, but by political and practical interests: language reform carried with it uniformization and standardization, although local variations in bureaucratic expression remained in force (Michalowski 1987). Moreover, Ur-Namma and his son and successor Shulgi threw out most of the older literary texts, which were almost exclusively mythological, and refocused much of the literary expression on state and king, creating new uses for writing and a new school curriculum, which was to survive, although much revised, until the middle of the second millennium.

By the seventeenth century Sumerian was no longer used for communication and accounting; Akkadian had taken over completely. It was, however, the language that was taught in schooling, and the cuneiform writing system was hardly taught without it. Although Akkadian may have been a language of instruction, alongside Sumerian, it was hardly taught as a written language, at least not in the southern part of Mesopotamia. Sumerian, definitely not anyone's mother tongue, was common to all apprentice scribes, who studied hundreds of literary compositions in the language. After graduation, many of them may have never encountered it again, as their everyday means of written expression would now be Akkadian. Alongside schooling, Sumerian was used on a daily basis in the temples, and here most, if not all of the cultic chants were in the old language. Healers also used Sumerian, alongside Akkadian, Elamite, and other languages, in their ritual recitations.

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[6] Assyriologists use the term lingua franca in a rather loose manner; the Mediterranean prototype was a contact language that was used almost exclusively in spoken discourse.

The use of Sumerian in schooling began to decline by the middle of the second millennium. It would still be used for initial instruction, as word lists were the core of elementary education, but these were also largely bilingual, not always in writing but most probably so in memorization and recitation. The repertoire of Sumerian school texts was drastically reduced, and those that remained were transmitted in bilingual form, with Akkadian translations. Outside of Mesopotamia other translation languages were occasionally added. The details are not important here, but wherever one looks, from now on Sumerian literary language had no independent existence; it lived on only in bilingual texts. Incantations aside, there are a handful of first-millennium monolingual copies of literary compositions, but their exceptional nature only serves to underline the general principle. Moreover, outside of bilingual contexts, Sumerian texts were never translated into Akkadian or any other language: there are a few adaptations and one or two partial translations, but once again these exceptions only highlight the rule. It should be said that this phenomenon is not limited to Sumerian: in the ancient Near East there was very little direct translation into independent compositions; multilingual renditions and adaptations were the rule, as literary creations were fused with the languages they were composed in, and often to writing systems as well, but this is a matter for another discussion.

From the last centuries of the second millennium B.C. until the first centuries A.D., Sumerian continued to live on as an intellectual language of learned scribes and priests. In the temples the Emesal variety predominated in liturgical texts, although the "standard" variety persisted in healing and purification charms. In schools, the word lists and the bilingual texts remained in use and the language, bound to writing practices, was the source of grammatical and philological speculations. Akkadian was no longer the language of the street in Mesopotamia, having been replaced by forms of Aramaic, and so the intellectuals were using two standard, non-vernacular languages side by side. This did not arrest literary activity, as redactional and compositional work continued with vigor in the temples of Mesopotamia even under Seleucid and Parthian rule, when other languages such as Aramaic and Greek began to take over in everyday writing.

Such a potted history of Sumerian writing hardly does justice to the complexities of the matter and runs ragged over the many lacunae in our knowledge. It does, however, allow us to glimpse, ever so unsubtly, the lives of this language over three and a half millennia. Even with our imperfect knowledge, we can observe that the history of written Sumerian is a history of various attempts at standardization, even if we cannot establish the basis for such reforms. Is it possible that in early times an idealized dialect of a specific group of people in a specific place served as the basis for a literary version, just as Attic Greek imposed itself in certain intercity communicative modes and influenced the development of the Hellenic koine (Crespo 2004) or the Agade variety of Akkadian dominated writing in the Sargonic state? Even if this were the case, it is clear that the written versions of Sumerian were reformed and revised many times, and most of these standardizations were introduced by people whose mother tongue was of a completely different variety.

## THE END OF VERNACULAR SUMERIAN

Leaving aside the long life of written Sumerian in the schools and temples of the ancient world, we are confronted with complete silence on the demise, even on the very existence of everyday spoken version of the tongue. We assume that a large proportion of the population of southern Mesopotamia once spoke the language and that these people quietly switched to using Akkadian some time toward the end of the third millennium. How could something like this happen? Were the Sumerian speakers butchered to such an extent that the language died out with

them? This hardly seems possible, although the Sargonic kings did their utmost to decimate the inhabitants of the south, if we are to believe some of their claims. If we rule out such catastrophes, then we are probably dealing with but one more instance of language shift, that is, the replacement of one spoken language with another. The best succinct statement on these matters was given to us almost thirty years ago by Cooper (1973: 241), who wrote: "Barring violent incidents, such as wholesale annihilation, deportation, or deliberate suppression, language displacement is a slow process, and occurs when the bilingual community expands to include all members of one mother-tongue group, who then neglect to teach the mother tongue (here Sumerian) to their children." How does this statement conform to the current state of our knowledge about early Mesopotamia and comparative research on language death? Without concrete data linguistics cannot predict specific historical events, in the future or the past, but some patterns are observable through the comparative study of language shifts.

In her pioneering work on East Southerland Gaelic in Scotland, Nancy Dorian (1981: 51) observed, "in terms of possible routes toward language death it would seem that a language which has been demographically highly stable for several centuries may experience a sudden 'tip,' after which the demographic tide flows strongly in favor of another language." There has been a revival of interest in language attrition and death during the last decade or so, much of it strongly influenced by Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and the continuing work of Dorian herself. While details differ, there is much agreement that "heavy cultural contact is a necessary precondition for structural incursions of one language into another, but contact itself is not obviously the structural mechanism involved" (Meyers-Scotton 1998: 289). The study of dead and dying languages has revealed many instances of structural adjustment and attrition along the way, but none of the phenomena that accompany language shift can be said to be necessary and universal in such situations. Thus, while comparative linguistics can provide us with possible models for the shift from Sumerian to Akkadian, that is all it can do. Scholars working on the subject have claimed instances of case syncretism or merger (Huffines 1989), phonological, morphological, and syntactic reduction (Cambell and Muntzel 1989), or, more specifically, reduction in the use of relative clauses (e.g., Hill 1989 and Rottet 1998).

Not all linguists working in this area agree with these findings. Can one truly blame external linguistic influence for language death or attrition? Perhaps no one has opposed this view more consistently than Eung-Do Cook, who writes (1995: 218) that "fluent speakers of a dying language maintain its conservative characteristics with no evidence of convergence, while the simplification in the speech of semispeakers in internally motivated." Cook (1995: 227) further concludes that "the process of simplification and decay in language death is due to semispeakers' impeded and prematurely terminated learning process." Hoenigswald (1989), Huffines (1989), and others have expressed similar views. This means that socio-linguistic patterns have an effect on internally motivated change in a dying language; such change has often been misinterpreted as borrowing from or convergence with a dominant tongue. Moreover, such change is often not gradual but relatively quick. This dovetails with Dixon's (1997) recent arguments for a new model of historical linguistics that recognizes long periods of stability, disrupted by drastic, relatively rapid change. He even uses the metaphor of punctuated equilibrium to describe this model of language change.

Although the events we are trying to recover most probably took place centuries earlier, a cold, hard look at the historical evidence would suggest that the best historical backdrop for the "tip" of Sumerian was the reign of the kings of Agade. Since the shift often involves differences in social standing of languages, it need not have required any great new population to trigger the final move toward Semitic. We know that after Sargon defeated the south, he initially left many

of the local elites in power, but after rebellions he and his successors, especially Naram-Sin, installed their own people in high places throughout the realm in political and religious offices. This created a new aristocracy in the realm and it is most probable that the new elites were primarily Akkadian speakers. Centralized schooling at the capital undoubtedly created a situation in which access to bureaucratic careers involved Akkadophones, or bilinguals. If we pursue this line of reasoning and accept its premises for the moment, we cannot avoid arriving at a fascinating paradox. The shift to a Semitic language of one sort or another, which had roots in earlier times, but was precipitated by changing social and political realities, probably reached maturity in Ur III times. This means that the reign of the family of Shulgi, long considered a "Neo-Sumerian renaissance" and a reassertion of a putative Sumerian national pride (Becker 1985), was in actuality the epoch in which Sumerian was emitting its last breath. This would mean that the return to Sumerian as the language of accounting and bureaucracy throughout much but not all of the new kingdom took place just as the language was losing ground on the streets.

Such a scenario would fall in line with Walter Sallaberger's assertion (1999: 129; 2004) — arguing against both Cooper (1973) and the present writer (1991) — that Sumerian had to be a living language, albeit under pressure from Akkadian, in Ur III times. While I am not unwilling to entertain this possibility, I remain unconvinced that personal names and choice of written language are in any way indicative of the language of the streets. Sallaberger (1999: 129 n. 28) is understandably suspicious of my comparative arguments, pointing out that "*allerdings kann er dafür keine Argumente bringen, denn der Verweis auf Schreiberschulen Šulgis und ethnographische Parallelen allein reicht wohl nicht aus*." The problem is that no convincing arguments can be mustered for the alternative view: that Sumerian was still a living language in Ur III times. Whatever the linguistic situation may have been on the streets of Nippur or the small villages of Sumer, there is a fascinating clue as to the language of the royal court. When the king of Mari decided to give his daughter in marriage to one of Ur-Namma's princes, she took on a new name for the occasion, Tarām-Uram "she loves Ur," and the name was Akkadian not Sumerian (Civil 1962 and Michalowski 2004). One might be tempted to dismiss this as anecdotal — because Ur III royal children were named with both Sumerian and Akkadian names — but the serious diplomatic circumstances suggest a purposeful choice of homage in the prestige language of the court. This does not tell us if Sumerian was alive or dead, but it does provide a much better index of social prestige than does the officially imposed choice of written language.

This line of reasoning is supported by the words of King Shulgi, as expressed by ancient poets, whose lines are known to us only from later copies. In a royal hymn known today as Shulgi B we read (lines 206–19):

> When … like the torrential waters in the roar of a storm,
> While capturing of a citadel in Elam …
> I understand the replies of the mighty man who is in command.
> I am Sumerian by descent:
> I am a warrior of Sumer, indeed, a warrior am I!
> In third place, with [the men] of the black mountains
> I myself speak.
> In fourth place, with the mountaineer [Amorites] …
> I serve as interpreter.
> I myself correct the mistakes he makes in his own language.
> In fifth place, *when the Subarean shouts in the … mountain crevices*,
> I *intercept* the message in his language, even though I am not a citizen of his city.
> When I decide legal cases in Sumer,
> I answer in these five languages.

In still another hymn (Shulgi C 119–24) he is made to boast:

> I know Amorite as well as I know Sumerian,
> … the mountaineers that come from the highland ranges
> — they arrive here and I reply to them in Amorite.
> I know Elamite as well as I know Sumerian,
> … in Elam, … offerings …
> — they arrive here and I reply to them in Amorite.

Rubio (in press), who has brought attention to and analyzed these passages in detail, points out that

> … the languages mentioned are Sumerian, Amorite, Elamite, 'Subartean' (probably Hurrian), and the language of Meluhha. Akkadian does not appear explicitly mentioned in the list of Shulgi's languages. One does not normally boast about knowing one's own mother tongue. However, Sumerian does appear listed and, thus, it is unlikely that Sumerian was Shulgi's native language.[7]

It is an undeniable fact that the vast majority of the 90,000 or so published Ur III texts were written in Sumerian. It is also often noted that these come from a limited group of southern cites; a small number of unprovenanced tablets as well as those from the northern town of Išān Mizyad were redacted in Akkadian (Mahmoud 1989). Other text collections such as the SI.A-a (Steinkeller 1989: 305–07) and Tūram-ili (van de Mieroop 1986) archives contain a mixture of Sumerian and Akkadian documents. Can this be used as evidence for vernaculars in these areas? It is interesting to note that the geographical distribution of Sumerian and Akkadian language texts is different in Sargonic and Ur III times. Many Old Akkadian letters and documents are official documents used in communication with the capital, and that explains the choice of language; nevertheless, the patchwork of Akkadian and Sumerian in archives from the time is instructive (Foster 1982). The choice of official language is a political and ideological issue and not an ethnic one. Nevertheless, as Bram Jagersma pointed out to me, it does appear that until the end of the Ur III period areas such as the Lagash-Umma region show a pattern of consistent Sumerian writing combined with a massive predominance of Sumerian names (see now Bauer 1998: 437). One could therefore argue that already in this period there were regional differences in language use and that this area was the most conservatively Sumerophone part of southern Babylonia. One should also note the decline in occupation of this region in post-Ur III times, which may have been a factor in the demise of Sumerian in this part of the land.

The second matter that is often invoked in discussions of the language of the streets is the choice of personal names. By the second millennium this issue is surely most problematic. There are Sumerian language personal names from the Old Babylonian period, but they cannot be lumped together and used as evidence for a living Sumerian language. Scribal names have to be taken out of the count, as they were undoubtedly either given to the sons of literate officials and priests in anticipation of future schooling or taken on during the educational process. In many cases it is not actually clear that a Sumerian name was truly Sumerian. For decades scholars have wondered if common names such as Sin/Šamash-iddinam and Nanna/Utu-manšum "The moon/sun god has given (a son)" in Akkadian and Sumerian respectively, were distinct names or simply different ways of writing the same Semitic name. Tanret (1996) has recently shown that in the

[7] For a proper philological analysis of these passages, see Rubio (in press). I have benefited from his insights, even if my translation differs from his in a few small details.

northern city of Sippar, if not in other places as well, Sumerian names were for the most part simply alternative ways of writing Akkadian ones.

All of this is complicated by the history of Akkadian. If Westenholz is correct and there is a major historical divide between Ur III and earlier Akkadian, then we are at a loss to explain the Sumerian loanwords in Old Babylonian. Significantly, there are few such borrowings in Old Akkadian. This can only mean that the ancestor dialects of Old Babylonian, and I am not sure that this does indeed encompass the attested Ur III Akkadian, distinct from the Old Akkadian that we know, were the dialects used at a time when the two languages were in use in a bilingual situation. When and where this might have been, I do not know.

Thus, while Sumerian might still have been spoken in certain areas in Ur III times, there are other possibilities than the scenario outlined above. For example, we might seek the social conditions that could have given rise to the "tip" much earlier, prior even to the invention of writing. The Middle Uruk period could be a prime candidate. This was a time of immense social change, and with it must have come rapid disruption of the linguistic fabric. First, we have evidence of massive demographic shifts, including movements from countryside to the city. This must have brought speakers of new languages as well as of rural dialects of Sumerian into the linguistically volatile urban environment. People from Uruk and its vicinity moved to locations in Syria, Elam, and Anatolia (Stein 1999). They lived there in enclaves and within one generation would have produced internal language change: the homogenization of the native language as well as influence from the local vernaculars. The dynamics of change were different in each settlement, as were the local languages that interacted with the speakers from Sumer. The collapse of the "Uruk expansion" could have created two separate effects. Some settlers stayed where they had lived and blended into the local population; sometimes this may have had local consequences that we can only guess at. Others undoubtedly returned to the Uruk heartland; their speech would have been archaic, preserving elements that had been discarded or changed in the center, as well as innovative, changed through contact with other languages unknown to the residents of Sumer. This kind of linguistic change, which took place over hundreds of years, may have been the catalyst that led to the socio-linguistic tip needed for the process of Akkadian replacement to have begun. Even that statement is an oversimplification. If the arguments about early Semitic in Mesopotamia sketched above should prove to hold, we must conclude that the period leading up to the tip was characterized by a broad range of interference phenomena from a succession of Semitic languages, and not by Akkado-Sumerian bilingualism, the latter being but the final element in the process.[8]

## CONCLUSIONS

So how did Sumerian die, when did the last person who could understand the vernacular leave this earth? Did the heavens roar or was it more like Breughel's Icarus, a tiny splash far off on the horizon? What was one more or one less language in history? After all, it is estimated that "during the coming century, … 3,000 of the existing 6,000 languages will perish and another 2,400 will come near to extinction" (Hale 1998: 192). If that is how we phrase the question, I am afraid that we will never find the answer. Although some Assyriologists question the use of comparative

[8] It is interesting to note, in this context, the comments on the Semiticization of Sumerian at Ebla by Civil and Rubio (1999: 266): "Moreover Ebla would represent the written expression (or the peripheral and exclusively scribal expression) of the process which may have been taking place during the Early Dynastic period in Ur III, when Sumerian was not a living language any more: the switch from bilingualism in the Late Uruk and Ğemdet Nasr period to diglossia."

data to illuminate problems such as the one we are wrestling with here, I am afraid that without recourse to linguistic research we will never come close to any answers. Not only do we not have any direct evidence at present, but we also do not know what evidence we are looking for. If we agree that the linguistic identity of personal names and the "evidence" of written language are not indicative, we have little to argue with. We look for philological clues but, to cite Henry Hoenigswald (1989: 353): "obsolescence itself is a sociolinguistic matter and not a specifically linguistic one. Demise can be predicted, it seems, only at the terminal stage, where it is obvious, what with a last speaker surviving in California or on some Dalmatian island."

Perhaps the issue is not the death of the last native speaker, but the life of the language we know. The search for a living, albeit inaccessible, Sumerian seems driven by an unwillingness to accept a high degree of autonomy for written language (Michalowski 1987). I would suggest that in addition to a variety of vernacular multilingual situations, we must also reconstruct a parallel for of what one might call "complex monolingualism," to borrow and alter Wright's (1993) felicitous term. As already noted, the term "Sumerian," like any linguistic identity label, is a metaphor that stands for a broad range of variation in time and space. The written language and the pronunciation norms that went with it brought its own set of similar variations. If we accept the model outlined above, according to which the reading and writing conventions were periodically reinvented, then we must accept the consequence that we will never discover an ideal Sumerian phonological system, to cite but one element of the grammar. This has serious implications for the study of specific corpora. The Ebla texts have provided new evidence of glides in Sumerian (Civil 1984: 80), but does this have a bearing on any phase of Sumerian in the heartland or does it just point to reading conventions used in a Syrian town?

Moreover, I would argue that the apparent evidence of convergence between Sumerian and Akkadian does not support the idea of interference in the process of a slow gradual replacement of one language by the other, nor is it suggestive of a relatively late date for the death of the older tongue. Quite the opposite, if one takes seriously the work of Cook, Dixon, and others cited earlier, one might interpret such data as evidence for interference not among vernaculars, but in the restricted domain of written tradition. Pronunciation traditions as well as writing conventions of "standard" Sumerian would carry imprints of Akkadian, or even Amorite, linguistic traits in a manner quite different from a living language.

Strange as it may seem, my conclusions are not pessimistic. I reiterate that we still do not even know what criteria we might be looking for to answer the classic question on the demise of Sumerian. It is therefore better not to ask that question, but to continue to investigate the various lives of Sumerian, eschewing any notions of any "classical" form of the language. Seen in such a perspective there are no periods of decadence or incorrect norms, only normal linguistic change within writing rules as well as reading conventions. There are interesting consequences of such a point of view. Linguists have lamented the loss of intellectual, affective, and poetic aspects of human life that die together with languages (Woodbury 1998 and Mithun 1998). In ancient Mesopotamia, however, the long life of written Sumerian and its coexistence with written Akkadian, guaranteed the preservation and expansion of these cultural elements, albeit within limited social circles. For some it may be ironic, for others it may be reassuring, but one cannot escape the conclusion that most — if not all — of the long, complex, and extremely rich life of the recorded Sumerian language and of its cultural traditions was posthumous. It is not a bad way to go.

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# THIRD PANEL:
# COSMOPOLITAN AND VERNACULAR

# 11

# OFFICIAL AND VERNACULAR LANGUAGES: THE SHIFTING SANDS OF IMPERIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN FIRST-MILLENNIUM B.C. MESOPOTAMIA

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In the course of the first millennium B.C. Mesopotamia and the larger Near East witnessed the rise and fall of several empires. During that period our sources document the emergence, spread, retreat, or demise of a number of languages spoken and written by the peoples of that region, notably Akkadian, Aramaic, Persian, and Greek. The purpose of my paper is to reflect on the relation between the use of these languages in the official and private spheres, the creation of successive imperial identities at the political level, and the construction of cultural identity among the various ethno-linguistic groups who inhabited Mesopotamia. I also explore the question of the relation between language and content, that is to say, how and why certain languages were used in specific spheres of activity but excluded from others and the extent to which these parameters shed light on the various cultural identities that existed side by side in first-millennium Mesopotamia. The definition of cultural identity is a complex question that involves elements as diverse as language, religion, way of life, class, economic structure, as well as an array of personal and psychological factors which interplay with societal factors to shape the personality of individuals. It is almost superfluous to stress that the study of identity in ancient Mesopotamia is marred by the nearly complete absence of individual voices and critical stances in the cuneiform source material. This, indeed, has been repeated *ad nauseam*. Another problem is that cuneiform sources give us a skewed picture of society and culture, first because literacy was limited to a small number of individuals and second because the corpus of traditional Mesopotamian literature, science, and scholarship reflects mainly the official culture of the elite. Despite of these limitations I believe that the sources available for this period are rich and diverse enough to allow us to outline a certain number of patterns in the historical definition of identity among the various political and cultural actors of Mesopotamia.

## THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

The rise of Assyria to hegemony over the Fertile Crescent was a long process that started in the fourteenth century with the creation of a territorial state ruled by an expansionist monarchy.[1] Assyria was an early instance of caesaro-papism, the union of temporal and spiritual power. The king, in his role as pontiff of the supreme god Aššur, was responsible for administering and above all enlarging Assyria (*māt Aššur*) on his behalf. This set the Assyrians on an almost permanent warpath that ceased only with the complete disappearance of their country at the end of the seventh century and its absorption in the Babylonian empire. The growth of Assyria also entailed the

[1] General studies on Assyrian expansionism and political ideology include Liverani 1979; Postgate 1991–1992; Machinist 1993; and Tadmor 1999.

growth of an imperial ideology and the transformation of Assyrian religion and theology along more universalist lines. Imperialist expansion profoundly affected the ethno-linguistic fabric of Assyria, especially as the notion eventually emerged that the land of Assyria (*māt Aššur*) was more or less co-extensive with its empire, especially in the western provinces. This culminated in the full annexation of all vassal and conquered territories and the establishment of a centralized empire in the second half of the eighth century under Tiglath-pileser III. By that time the idea was already well entrenched that the result of imperial expansion was to turn conquered people into Assyrians. Since most of the expansion took place in Syria and the Levantine corridor, many of these new Assyrians were speakers of Aramaic in its various forms, as well as other West Semitic languages. Therefore Assyria was faced with the paradoxical fact that, as the empire expanded and more and more people were made Assyrian, the conquered people were making Assyria less and less Assyrian culturally and linguistically. They were changing the meaning of being Assyrian. The first analogy which comes to mind is of course Rome, also a city-state become empire, which underwent a radical transformation of its culture, identity, and civic organization as it absorbed large numbers of foreigners into its polity.

The spread of the Aramaic language everywhere in the territories controlled by Assyria was dramatically accentuated by the policies of mass deportations under Tiglath-pileser III and the Sargonid kings. The Aramaization of Assyria was not new. Aramaeans had already clashed with the Assyrians at the end of the second millennium. The reconquest during the tenth and early ninth centuries, which was often justified by the desire to make territories that had been lost to the Aramaeans Assyrian again, had already resulted in the inclusion of Aramaic speakers in the heartland of Assyria. It is only in the eighth century, however, that we begin to see tangible results of this Aramaization in our documentation. This process has been described by several historians (Garelli 1984; Tadmor 1984; and idem 1991). We have to look only at the recent *Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire* to see the large number of Aramaean and West Semitic personal names from all walks of life appearing in the cuneiform documentation of Assyria in the eighth and seventh centuries.[2] The spread of Aramaic as a written language even in the imperial core is proven by the appearance of Aramaic epigraphs on cuneiform tablets (Fales 1986) and also by the depiction in Assyrian palaces of scribes standing side by side, one holding a tablet and stylus, the other a scroll and pen.[3] Already in the Nimrud Wine Lists there is evidence for the existence of Aramaean scribes (*ṭupšarru armû*).[4] In the later documentation we see Aramaean scribes with Aramaean names and one text from Nineveh might even mention female Aramaean scribes.[5] A royal letter from Nimrud is quite significant in this respect because it refers to the expert scribes of the palace (*ummânu ša ekalli*) as *lu aššurû lu armû* "whether Assyrians or Aramaeans," indicating how much the late Assyrian state had become bilingual and bi-cultural even at the top.[6]

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[2] Published volumes of the *Prosopography* include Radner 1998 and 1999 and Baker and Parpola 2000, 2001, and 2002. For a synthetic survey of the social distribution of West Semitic names, see Fales 1991.

[3] One such relief from the reign of Ashurbanipal or later is reproduced in SAA 17: 5 (British Museum, ANE 124825b), with two scribes working side by side in southern Babylonia. See also Fincke 2003/2004: 127–28.

[4] CTN 1, 9: reverse 20′. $^{lú}$A.BA.ME KUR *ár-ma-a-a* (after Assyrian scribes and Egyptian diviners).

[5] SAA 7, 24: reverse 2. 6 $^{sal}$A.BA.ME *ár-*[*ma-a-a-te*] "six female Ar[amean] scribes," granting that the gentilic is mostly restored. For individuals designated as Aramaean scribes, see the lists of scribes by sites compiled by Radner 1997: 93–124.

[6] The text (ND 2356) is published in CTN V, 239–240 (Saggs 2001). Neo-Assyrian sources always contrast Aramaean (*armû*) with Assyrian (*aššurû*) scribes and expert scholars. The latter were trained chiefly in the Assyrian language and the Assyrian cuneiform system, with which the Assyrians identified very strongly despite the influx of

What were the effects of this Aramaicization on the Assyrians? The spread of the Aramaic language could apparently provoke adversarial reactions among the Assyrian ruling classes. Expression of such resentment occurs in an oft-quoted letter sent probably by Sargon II to the scribe Sin-iddina of Ur, who had previously asked the king if he could send him letters in Aramaic.[7] The royal answer was "why do you not write and send me messages in Akkadian?" (*minâmma ina šipirti akkadattu lā tašaṭṭarma lā tušebbila*). Sin-iddina must have been a native Aramaic speaker, like so many Babylonians already in that period. The Assyrian court was certainly accustomed to receiving letters in Assyrian, Babylonian, and Aramaic. Yet the king may have expected a Babylonian to write in a cuneiform language rather than in the new international vernacular. Such preventions did not stop the spread of Aramaic, as illustrated by the famous conversation, reported in 2 Kings 18: 26, between one of the officials sent by Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, to besiege Jerusalem, and Eli'akim, the head of Hezekiah's household, in which the latter asks the Assyrian to speak Aramaic: "Then Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, and Shebnah, and Jo'ash, said to the Rab'shakeh, — Pray, speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

We see some reflections of the relation between Assyrians and Aramaeans in the sphere of religion. Recently I reconstructed the evolution of the perception of the god Amurru in Mesopotamia as an emblem of ethnic identity (Beaulieu 2005). Amurru was not a West Semitic god, but a creation of Sumerian and Akkadian theologians to symbolize the presence of the semi-nomadic Amorites in the political and cultural landscape of Mesopotamia during the third and early second millennia. What is not known is that in the first millennium Amurru again became a symbol of western Semites, specifically the Aramaeans. This can be seen in the *alātu* temple of the god Aššur where Sennacherib set up doors on which the god is depicted riding a chariot, with Amurru at his side holding the reins and going to battle against Tiamat. Since such a role for the god Amurru is not attested previously, the scene is likely to be an invention of Sennacherib, who probably intended it as a mythological projection of the Assyrian king in his role as upkeeper of the imperial order, assisted in his task by Aramaeans, who had become by then the largest non-native contingent in the Assyrian army and administration. The position of Amurru in the cosmic battle against Tiamat reflects the role of Aramaeans and other western Semites in late Assyria as allies in maintaining the political and military order. This was not only an Assyrian perception imposed on conquered people, but it was also shared by a number of Aramaeans and other western Semites who, in the late Assyrian and Babylonian periods, for the first time in their history, began to wear theophoric names honoring the god Amurru, thus appropriating a purely Mesopotamian construct as emblem of their identity. This suggests that Aramaeans were well aware of their distinctiveness and proud to proclaim it, even on terms defined by others. However, they also apparently fully embraced their status as new Assyrians and identified with the imperial structure. Indeed, when Assyria came under attack at the end of the seventh century there is no evidence of a defection or rebellion of its Aramaean component. On the contrary, the north Syrian city of Harran became the last Assyrian capital after the fall of Nineveh and eventually the western part of the former empire became known as Syria, a short form of Assyria.[8]

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Babylonian learning in their country. To become an expert, however, a scribe was expected to master the Standard Babylonian literary language and the Babylonian writing system. Babylonian is usually designated by the word *akkadû* and its derivatives (e.g., *akkadattu* "in Akkadian").

[7] Originally published as CT 54, 10, the letter has recently been edited as SAA 17, 2. The date proposed by Dietrich is 710 B.C.

[8] Discussion by Oden 1977: 3 n. 6 (discussion and bibliography). See also more recently Frye 1992 and Dion

Another sign bespeaking the existence of an Aramaean identity in Mesopotamia under Assyrian rule is the tradition that grew around the figure of the sage Ahiqar.[9] Most of the extant literature in Aramaic is essentially Christian, Jewish, or Gnostic and stems from late antiquity.[10] The legend of Ahiqar (and the sayings attributed to him) gives us a glimpse of Aramaic culture and literature before the transition of the Near East to Judeo-Christian civilization and, with the Aramaic text in Demotic script, is the only significant piece of ancient Mesopotamian Aramaic literature that has come down to us. The story of Ahiqar is well known from later manuscripts in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and several other languages. The earliest known version of it was found in a fragmentary state among the Aramaic papyri of the Jewish community at Elephantine and dates to the late fifth century B.C. There are some indications that the reputation of Ahiqar had already traveled beyond the confines of the Near Eastern world by that time and migrated to Greece, where we find echoes of his sayings in the writings of Democritus and Theophrastus. The story of Ahiqar is a variation on the well-known literary motif of the wise and successful courtier who falls into disgrace, undergoes a terrible ordeal at the hands of his enemies, and finally reemerges victorious to be reinstated in his former position. This story provides a frame within which the sayings of wisdom, which form the core of the book, are inserted. The historical setting of the legend is the court of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon at the beginning of the seventh century, where Ahiqar held the position of royal advisor. Remarkably similar details have surfaced in a cuneiform list of Mesopotamian sages and their royal advisors found in the Rēš temple in Hellenistic Uruk. The name of the expert scholar (*ummânu*) paired with Esarhaddon is Aba-Enlil-dari, but the text adds that the Aramaeans (*ahlamû*) call him Ahuwaqar (= Ahiqar). This information, however, need not be taken too literally. We have a substantial body of sources from the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon that shed light on the circle of close advisors to the king. No advisor named Aba-Enlil-dari or Ahiqar/Ahuwaqar appears in them. On the other hand, the name Aba-Enlil-dari, which is a translation into learned Sumerian of the Akkadian name Mannu-kīma-Enlil-ḫātin, appears as an ancestral name in Nippur during the Achaemenid period.[11] Nippur was probably a heavily Aramaicized area already during the Neo-Assyrian period, and it would not be surprising if the legend and writings of Ahiqar originated there. Be that as it may, the position of Ahiqar as an Aramaean who helps the Assyrian king in the conduct of government closely parallels the figure of Amurru as helper of the god Aššur, but transposed in the realm of intellectuals and learned men. Both symbolize the position of Aramaeans in imperial Assyria. The writings of Ahiqar also testify to the existence of an Aramaic literature in Mesopotamia that was not a calque of cuneiform models. The sayings of Ahiqar are rooted in the tradition of West

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1997: 220–21, who both agree on Syria being derived from Assyria. This theory was originally aired by Theodor Nöldeke in 1871 and no satisfactory alternative explanation has since been proposed.

[9] The bibliography on Ahiqar and its dissemination in later traditions is quite large. For a general survey of the question, see Vanderkam 1992a–b.

[10] However, Aramaic was used for monumental inscriptions during the Iron Age and also for literary purposes by the fifth century B.C. The emergence of a literary form of Aramaic during that period is discussed by Greenfield 1974.

[11] References are provided by Lambert 1957: 6 n. 23a. The interpretation of the name is ensured by the explanatory list 5 R 44, which gives the following equivalence, 43c–d. $^{I}$a-ba-50–da-ri = $^{I}$*man-nu-ki-ma-*$^{d}$en-líl-*ḫa-tin* "Who is a protector like Enlil?" The number fifty is the sacred number of the god Enlil and the equation da-ri = *ḫatānu* "to protect" is attested in lexical texts (see CAD Ḫ, p. 148, s.v. *ḫatānu*, lex. section, for references). The names Ḫātin and Enlil-ḫātin, which occur in three generations of the Murašû family of Nippur in the late fifth century, are probably both short forms of Mannu-kīma-Enlil-ḫātin. As pointed out by Lambert, the fragment of a *šuilla* prayer to Ninlil BMS 35 (K 2757) has a very short and fragmentary colophon that reads as follows: $^{I}$EN.LÍL$^{ki}$ É $^{I}$a-ba-50–da-ra "Nippur, house of Aba-Enlil-dari." If this is a reference to a scribal academy claiming descent from that renowned scholar, it would bring us quite close to the reign of Esarhaddon, considering that the fragment comes from the libraries of Nineveh.

Semitic wisdom literature[12] and the story of the successful courtier, which has no real cuneiform parallels, suits very well the position of a cultural minority, which sees its identity and hopes crystallized in the figure of one of its own who rises to the top in the political structure that governs them but over which they exert limited influence.[13] The very fact that in Hellenistic Uruk a cuneiform text still recognizes the specificity of a group called *Ahlawû* demonstrates that despite their long history in Mesopotamia and despite the fact that their language had become the common vernacular of the Near East, the Aramaeans were still considered a separate ethno-linguistic group by some Babylonians.

The cultural and linguistic dynamics of the late Assyrian empire revolved in a significant measure around the Assyro-Aramaean dualism, but there are other dimensions to consider. The cuneiform tradition and the Akkadian language were not monolithic. They were multi-layered, adding further complexity to the interplay of spoken and written languages in the core of the empire. There was a long tradition of writing in the Assyrian dialect of Akkadian, starting with Old Assyrian in the first three centuries of the second millennium. However, Assyrian had always been used in writing mostly for economic and administrative documents and letters. Few literary works exist in Neo-Assyrian, the vernacular language of late Assyria, although occasional attempts were made to bring it to the level of a high literary idiom.[14] Most of the literature and official inscriptions of the Assyrian state were in Standard Babylonian. This was the language of literature and scholarship in Mesopotamia since the Middle Babylonian period in the second half of the second millennium. In Assyria, Standard Babylonian is tainted with Assyrianisms to various degrees, indicating that the scribes sometimes experienced difficulties in mastering it. However, the chasm between official Standard Babylonian and the Assyrian vernacular extended well beyond a simple matter of language. Most Mesopotamian scholarship and literature came from Babylonia and this is why Standard Babylonian attained such prestigious status. Because they shared a common civilization with Babylonia, the Assyrians came under heavy influence of Babylonian scholarship and literature in the late second and first millennia. However, Babylonian texts promoted a vision of Babylon as cosmic and political center of the world and as religious capital of Mesopotamia. This position became increasingly intolerable for the Assyrians as their country became a centralized empire in the late eighth century and Assyrian kings struggled to bring Babylon under their control. It is in this context that we must understand the religious reforms of Sennacherib, the desecration and destruction of Babylon, and the creation of an Assyrian recension of the Babylonian Epic of Creation in which Marduk is replaced with the god Aššur.[15] This conflict between Babylon and Nineveh was in many ways much more brutal and involved than any rift that might have

[12] Kottsieper (1990: 245–46) concludes his linguistic analysis of the Elephantine version of the sayings of Ahiqar by proposing southern Syria as their ultimate place of origin. The historical narrative that accompanies the sayings, however, is in Official Aramaic rather than ancient Western Aramaic and therefore is quite likely to have originated in Mesopotamia between the seventh and fifth centuries (Lindenberger [1983: 279–304] argues for northern Syria as the region of origin of the sayings).

[13] Dalley (2001: 153–55) points to *Ludlul be-l ne-meqi* as a possible Mesopotamian antecedent of the story of the successful courtier. However, the historical details of the sufferer's misfortunes in *Ludlul* are left vague, and she recognizes that the closest parallels to the Ahiqar story and instructions are definitely to be sought in the Egyptian, biblical, and West Semitic world.

[14] Literature in the Neo-Assyrian language is discussed by Livingstone (SAA 3: xxi) with editions of the available texts, eight in total. See also George 1987 and the engaging study of Assyrian elegiac poetry by Reiner (1985: 85–93).

[15] The Assyrian recension of Enuma eli was based on Standard Babylonian, but with the addition of Assyrian theological elements, notably the identification of the god Aššur with the primeval deity Anšar and with the Babylonian demiurge Marduk (Lambert 1997). Other elements of the cultural wars of Sennacherib against Babylon are discussed by Machinist 1984/85.

resulted from the Assyro-Aramaean dualism. It was a political and cultural conflict to resolve the question as to which city, Babylon or Nineveh (and Aššur), would claim the status of cosmic center and thereby claim political and cultural leadership of Mesopotamia.[16]

With the sack of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and the fall of the Assyrian empire the cuneiform tradition disappeared completely from Assyria and retreated to where it had begun nearly three millennia earlier, Babylonia. The discovery of four Assyrian tablets at Dur-Katlimmu dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II has shown that we cannot completely exclude that Assyrian cuneiform continued for some time in northern Mesopotamia.[17] Yet, on the whole, the widespread and swift disappearance of cuneiform from that area should indicate that by the seventh century cuneiform learning had become sponsored mainly by the Assyrian state. Once that state disappeared, so did cuneiform and its millennial tradition. The creation of the great libraries of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, two generations before the collapse of the empire, was a final, grandiose testimony to a dying culture. Aramaic had won the vernacular battle without a fight. Babylon had won the cosmological and political one by force of arms. Centuries after the fall of its empire, life came back to Assyria, now under Parthian rule, with Aššur and Hatra as the two best known centers. While the documentation found in these sites attests to the survival of elements of Assyrian culture, chiefly in the area of religion, it is significant that Aramaic is now the predominant language of inscriptions and probably also the main spoken language of the region (Beyer 1998).

## THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

At the end of the seventh century Babylonia very quickly replaced Assyria as the leading power of the Near East. The empire assembled by Nabopolassar and his son and successor Nebuchadnezzar in the space of one generation lasted little more than half a century, yet it left an indelible mark on the historical memory of the Near East, particularly the Judeo-Christian tradition. During that period Babylonia experienced a spectacular revival of its civic and religious institutions under the patronage of an ambitious monarchy that propelled the old Babylon-centered theology and cosmology of the intellectual elites to the status of an imperial ideology, propagated mainly in the numerous buildings inscriptions of the dynasty. These inscriptions legitimize the rule of the Neo-Babylonian kings almost exclusively in their role as preservers and restorers of the rituals and temples of Sumer and Akkad (Talon 1993). The inscriptions are all written in Standard Babylonian, but with a significant number of forms borrowed from the contemporary Late Babylonian vernacular as well as Aramaisms and even some Assyrianisms, the latter found mostly in the inscriptions of Nabonidus.[18] Their style is not entirely uniform. The inscriptions of Nabopolassar tend to be more archaizing and often hark back to those of the Old Akkadian period,[19] while the inscriptions of Nabonidus are generally written in a more classical idiom. All kings commissioned building inscriptions not only in the contemporary, Late Baby-

[16] Babylon as cosmic center is discussed from different points of view by George 1997 and Maul 1997.

[17] For publication and discussion of these important texts, see Brinkman 1993, Fales 1993, and Postgate 1993.

[18] The language of Neo-Babylonian inscriptions is discussed recently by Schaudig 2001: 315–17. He notes that one of the distinctive traits of royal inscriptions is the use of the preterite as the main narrative tense, in conformity with earlier usage, whereas other texts in Standard Babylonian from that period such as the Verse Account of Nabonidus use the perfect for that purpose, following the usage of the Late Babylonian vernacular.

[19] The influence of Old Akkadian inscriptions on those of Nabopolassar and the effort to stress historical continuity between the Sargonic and Neo-Babylonian empires is discussed by Beaulieu 2003b. The Cruciform Monument of Maništūšu, probably a forgery originating in Sippar, is also a manifestation of the Late Babylonian interest in the Sargonic empire.

lonian script of archival and scholarly texts, but also in an archaizing monumental script that the scribes learned in the elementary stages of their school training.[20]

The strong archaizing bias of these inscriptions and the uniform cultural facade they display agree with the fact that the institutions of Babylonia during this brief imperial heyday and even after the loss of independence continued by and large to be very traditional. But this apparent cultural uniformity conceals a growing ethno-linguistic diversity, which one can appraise to a limited extent from the data yielded by the numerous archival texts of that period (letters, administrative, and legal documents). Expectedly, the largest group of non-Babylonian anthroponyms is West Semitic (Zadok 1977). However, we also have growing evidence for Arabs and Egyptians living in Babylonia[21] and the few published administrative documents from the storerooms of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon list foreign residents, many of them prisoners of war, from peoples as diverse as Judeans, Philistines, Phoenicians, Lydians, Ionians, and others (Weidner 1939). A number of communities of deportees that were resettled in Babylonia founded towns bearing the names of their city of origin, as for example Tyre, Sidon, Neirab (discussed below), and as we now know thanks to a new group of cuneiform texts, Jerusalem, called the city of Judah (*āl Yahūdû*).[22] Such ethno-linguistic diversity was not new. Already in the Neo-Assyrian period Babylonia had a mixed population of Babylonians, Aramaeans, Chaldeans, and other communities. These ethnic groups came not only as invaders but also as a result of the systematic deportations of the eighth and seventh centuries. In a letter to a Neo-Assyrian king (ABL 238), a local official of Nippur writes that many languages are spoken in the city. Later on, writing at the beginning of the third century B.C., the Babylonian cleric Berossus projected the ethno-linguistic diversity of Late Babylonia into primeval times, stating that before civilization began Babylonia was inhabited by many different peoples: "In Babylonia there was a large number of people of different ethnic origins who had settled Chaldea." [23]

The diversity of the Babylonian population is probably not faithfully reflected even in archival sources, which are almost exclusively in cuneiform and stem mostly from the temple and the private sphere of patrician families linked to the temple and other civic institutions. These texts are written in the Late Babylonian vernacular and the people who appear in them generally tend to belong to the same social and cultural stratum. One of the main questions raised by this documentation is the extent to which Late Babylonian was a spoken language.[24] The sheer number of documents that have survived, in particular a corpus of a few hundred letters composed in a seemingly idiomatic vernacular, appears to suggest that Babylonian was not yet a dead language. On the other hand, the survival of languages in written form for non-literary use even after their dis-

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[20] Gesche 2000; Schaudig (2001) also discusses the archaizing script in a special section

[21] Zadok 1981 and 1990 discusses Arabs in Babylonia, while Eph'al 1984 is a general study of early Arab penetration in the Fertile Crescent. For Egyptians in Babylonia, see Zadok (1992) and the interesting text from the Neo-Babylonian archives of the Ebabbar temple at Sippar published by Bongenaar and Haring (1994).

[22] The first text from that group was published by Joannès and Lemaire 1999. The entire archive will be published by Laurie Pearce, who has already given lectures on the subject (Pearce 2003).

[23] See the recent translation and commentary of the fragment by Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996: 44. The theme of the ethnic diversity of Babylonia in primeval times also surfaces in the biblical story of the tower of Babel, although it is impossible to determine whether the two traditions are related.

[24] In Assyriological studies the term Late Babylonian (*Spätbabylonisch*) usually refers to the Akkadian of letters and economic and administrative documents written in Babylonia after 626 B.C., while Neo-Babylonian refers to the language of the preceding three centuries. In the present article I use Late Babylonian to refer to the vernacular Babylonian of the first millennium, and Neo-Babylonian to refer to other aspects (e.g., political, cultural) of the civilization of Babylonia during the same period.

appearance as spoken vernaculars is well documented in history. The first case that comes to mind is Latin. Also, as we move forward in time, texts written in Late Babylonian display an increasing incidence of decadent orthography, frozen forms, and improper spellings which can hardly be reconciled with the notion that the scribes really spoke the language in which they wrote these texts. Yet one must keep in mind that the phonology and grammar of Late Babylonian was vastly different from the classical Babylonian language in which the scribes were still trained and that improper spellings may only reflect the inadequacy of the cuneiform script to reproduce this late stage of Babylonian. Greek transcriptions of Babylonian words as they were pronounced in the Hellenistic and Parthian period prove indeed that traditional cuneiform spelling of Akkadian had become completely inadequate linguistically.

One fact appears indisputable, however. Whether it was still spoken or not, Babylonian was not the only language of Babylonia at that time. As was the case in late Assyria, Aramaic had probably become the dominant vernacular, even at the official level. All the Aramaic documentation has disappeared save for a number of inked or carved endorsements on cuneiform tablets, but the pervasive use of Aramaic is proven by the frequent attestations of the term *sēpiru* "parchment scribe" in cuneiform archives of that period. The vast majority of these *sēpiru*s bear Babylonian names and this raises the question as to whether these scribes were Babylonians (or Babylonian speakers) who had mastered the Aramaic language, or, more probably, Aramaic speakers who had fully assimilated into Babylonian culture, adopted Babylonian names, but retained use of their language in everyday life. If we suppose that Late Babylonian was already a dead language, then the question becomes completely irrelevant. At any rate, even if Babylonian was still spoken, it is indisputable that Aramaic was gaining increasing ground and was well on its way to becoming the sole vernacular of Babylonia. Despite this, there is much less acknowledgment of an Aramaean or Aramaic presence in the cuneiform documentation from the time of the Babylonian empire than there was in late Assyria. In fact, there is almost none, and with one or two exceptions we do not see any individual with a non-Babylonian name in a position of power during the time of the Babylonian empire. This is a fact of great importance to understand Babylonian civilization in its final stages. One perceives a very clear political will to impose the old civilization of Sumer and Akkad and traditional cuneiform learning as the sole official culture of Babylonia, as its privileged conveyor of a common identity. This meant that to integrate into this dominant identity, the majority of the population that spoke Aramaic and belonged to ethnic groups other than old-stock Babylonians was constrained to adopt Babylonian civilization, culture, and religion, take Babylonian names, even be trained in cuneiform in the schools for those few who could afford it and had the ambition of working for the royal administration. Such massive and wholesale adoption of a waning culture is an almost unique phenomenon in world history. As Oppenheim once stated, the proficiency of the Aramaeans in Akkadian and cuneiform learning gave Babylonian culture and belles lettres a few more centuries of life.[25] Nevertheless, this did not happen uniformly with similar effects on each group. In this respect a notable difference can be observed between Aramaeans and Chaldeans.

The geographic designation Chaldea occurs for the first time in an inscription of Ashurnaṣirpal II. In his annals his son and successor Shalmanezer III claims that he encountered the three main Chaldean clans, the Bīt Dakkūri, Bīt Amūkani, and Bīt Yakīn, during his campaign to Babylonia.[26] They mainly controlled the rural areas located along the Euphrates River from

[25] Oppenheim 1967, introduction.

[26] See general surveys of the Chaldeans by Brinkman 1968: 260–67; also by Cole 1996a: 30–34, particularly in reference to Nippur.

Babylon to the Persian Gulf and were organized in large clans named *bītu*s, which were in turn apparently divided into smaller units led by kings. From the ninth to the seventh century the Chaldean clans formed the spearhead of resistance to the Assyrians in their repeated attempts to control Babylonia. Several kings of Babylon, notably Marduk-apla-iddina II, were Chaldeans. As for the question of their ethno-linguistic affiliation, it must be noted that most individuals directly identified as Chaldeans or as belonging to one of their three most important clans bear good Babylonian names. However, in the few cases where a Chaldean bears a name that is not Babylonian, the name is almost always West Semitic or Aramaean. This is also the case for their patronymic ancestors, Amūkanu, Dakkūru, and Yakīn.[27] The etymology of Amūkanu is unknown. However, Yakīn is obviously West Semitic, whereas Dakkūru is probably identical with the Aramaic royal name Zakkūr, attested in Syria at the end of the ninth century. One chieftan of Dakkūru is named Adini, which is identical with the name of an Aramaean clan of Syria that was conquered by the Assyrians. Therefore the evidence leans toward the Chaldeans being a branch of the Aramaeans. Yet the etymology and meaning of the term Chaldean (Akkadian *kaldu*) remains unknown.

During the entire period of Assyrian ascendancy the Chaldean clans were identified in sources from Assyria and Babylonia as a distinct cultural and political entity. The geographic designation Chaldea (*māt Kaldi*) occurs many times in Assyrian inscriptions to designate the areas of Babylonia settled by Chaldean tribes. After the fall of Assyria, however, the term Chaldean paradoxically disappears from Babylonian sources, which begin to display an increasingly archaizing image of the country.[28] At the same time the word Chaldean becomes one of the common designations for Babylonian in the view of outsiders. The Bible, for instance, consistently portrays Nebuchadnezzar II as king of Babylon (*melek babel*), the title normally borne by the king in his own inscriptions (*šar Bābili*), but also as leader of the Chaldeans (*kaśdim*), a term passed over in silence in Babylonian sources. Later, in the works of Greek authors, the word Chaldean became a synonym for Babylonian. It also acquired a more restricted meaning as a designation of Babylonian astronomers and diviners. The geographic designation Chaldea then resurfaced in the same meaning it had in Neo-Assyrian sources to designate the area of Babylonia along the Euphrates basin between Babylon and the Persian Gulf. The only Babylonian source which agrees with Greek and biblical terminology is Berossus, who uses Chaldea and Chaldean interchangeably with Babylonian and Babylonians, the two realities appearing to be more or less identical for him.

The insertion of Aramaeans in Babylonian society took a slightly different course. Whereas it would be difficult to find any statement about the existence of the Chaldeans as a collective entity in cuneiform sources after the rise of the Babylonian empire,[29] there are some indications, though admittedly very limited ones, that Aramaeans were still considered a distinctive group. As discussed above, such perception of their distinctiveness is suggested by the fact that the literary tradition in Aramaic concerning the figure of Ahiqar was still linked to the Aramaeans (*Ahlamû*) in Hellenistic Babylonia. We also find a very limited expression of this distinctiveness in the area of religion with the worship of the "Aramaean goddess" (*Ahlamītu*) in Late Babylonian Sippar and Uruk.[30] Worship of a Chaldean deity in Babylonian cultic context is not attested. Aramaic is acknowledged as the other language of Babylonia in *Cam* 143, a text from the Egibi archive dated

[27] On these three names, see Amukānu in Radner (1998: 107–08); Dakkūru in Radner (1999: 370–72); and Iakīnu (Yakīn) in Baker and Parpola (2000: 489–90).

[28] The mention of Chaldea (KUR *kal-dù*) in an inscription of Nabonidus listed in RGTC 8: 192 has now been corrected to Lebanon (KUR *lab-‹na›-ni*) by Schaudig 2001: 713.

[29] In sources from the time of the Babylonian empire and the early Achaemenid period the Chaldean clans of Bīt Amūkani and Bīt Dakkūri continue to be mentioned, especially in texts from Uruk.

[30] References are collected in Beaulieu 2003a: 309.

in Opis in the second year of Cambyses which states that a slave belonging to Itti-Marduk-balāṭu has his name marked on her wrist in both Akkadian and Aramaic (*akkadattu u ahlamatti*).[31]

The different relations developed by Aramaeans and Chaldeans with the old culture of Mesopotamia probably find their roots in the modalities of their initial settlement in the country and of their integration and eventual assimilation in the general population. Small groups of Aramaeans may have come to Babylonia already during the late second and early first millennia. However, the earliest mentions of significant areas of Aramaean settlement do not antedate the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III in the second half of the eighth century. These inscriptions mention a large number of Aramaean clans in the region along and east of the Tigris. Aramaeans were also found around Sippar in northern Babylonia. But inscriptions found in the late 1980s at Anat in the Middle Euphrates region prove that bands of Aramaeans already posed a threat before the accession of Tiglath-pileser III to the throne and therefore it is possible that the arrival of large contingents of Aramaeans to eastern Babylonia dates to that period.[32] The Aramaean element would have been steadily reinforced by mass deportations, which culminated in the century between 745 and 640. The fact that the Chaldeans were already established in Babylonia in the ninth century may therefore account for their greater degree of assimilation. However, I would be inclined to see the geographic factor as more determinant. The country settled by Chaldeans along the Euphrates was the most heavily urbanized area of Babylonia. Almost every major city and center of learning was located along a narrow strip that closely followed the courses of the Euphrates and the Royal Canal: Sippar, Kutha, Kish, Babylon, Borsippa, Uruk, Larsa, and Ur. The only truly important Babylonian city located slightly outside that strip was Nippur. Therefore the Chaldeans were in a privileged position to identify with the old urban civilization of Sumer and Akkad and its millennial traditions of learning. The Aramaeans, by contrast, settled mostly in the Tigris area, which was more eccentric and belonged to the dimorphic zone of Babylonia, where the life-style of semi-nomadic pastoralists was dominant. Indeed, in the sixth century we have evidence from temple archives, particularly those of the Eanna of Uruk, that herds of animals sent out for grazing in those areas were often entrusted to the local chieftains, many of whom were certainly of Aramaean origin.[33] This might ultimately explain why Aramaeans because of their relative isolation, greater opportunity to keep a traditional life-style, and lesser interaction with the urban centers and their scribal academies could maintain their distinctive character more successfully. Yet, Aramaeans could also fully identify with Babylonian civilization just like the Chaldeans. The best-known example is the Babylonian King Neriglissar (Nergal-šar-uṣur), who may have stemmed from the Aramaean clan of Puqūdu located along the Tigris region in southeastern Babylonia.[34]

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[31] This text is discussed by Stolper 1998: 141, who also publishes a text from Yale (NBC 6156) referring to a similar inscription in Egyptian. Among the parallel examples mentioned in his article one may also mention AO 19536 (Arnaud 1967), a text from Uruk dated to the seventeenth year of Nabonidus which records a trial before the royal judges in Babylon concerning the status of a woman. The woman had a star branded on her wrist together with an inscription attesting that she belonged to the Eanna temple. A *sēpiru* was brought to the tribunal to read the inscription, suggesting that the writing was in Aramaic, not in Akkadian.

[32] See the recent edition of these texts by Frame (1995: 275–323). The local governors who commissioned these inscriptions, Šamaš-rēša-uṣur and Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, are difficult to date precisely but fall within the first two-thirds of the eighth century, before Tiglath-pileser reasserted royal power.

[33] Cole 1996a: 29 n. 44 and Lipiński 2000: 432–34.

[34] The Aramaean origin of Neriglissar (Nergal-šar-uṣur) was argued by Weisberg 1974 from four sources: the statement found in Berossus that Neriglissar was the brother-in-law of Amel-Marduk, Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor; the mention of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, Kaššaya, alongside one Bēl-šum-iškun, son of Nabû-epir-laʾi, in a text from Uruk dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (now published as Weisberg 2003: no. 120); the mention of the same Bēl-šum-iškun (with same

Of course, both Chaldeans and Aramaeans spoke Aramaic, which eventually also became the vernacular language of old-stock Babylonians. The questions addressed in this paper could therefore be fully resolved only if a significant body of sources in Aramaic from first-millennium Babylonia had survived. This is unfortunately not the case. The biggest such corpus consists of incantations from a later period that shed light only on certain aspects of religious life.[35] However, in addition to the Ahiqar tradition, two Aramaic texts in Demotic script from Egypt preserved on the same papyrus testify to the existence of a Mesopotamian literature in the Aramaic language.[36] The first text contains fragments of a New Year ritual in the Babylonian style. According to Steiner this ritual was imported from Bethel to Syene in Egypt by exiles originally from Rash, identified by him as Rašu (Arašu) east of the Tigris between Elam and Babylonia. This would set the origins of this piece of literature right in the dimorphic zone settled by Aramaeans when they came to Babylonia. The second text is a historical novella on the war between Ashurbanipal (Sarbanabal) and his brother Šamaš-šum-ukīn (Sarmuge) and may well originate in the same region. No evidence of a similar literary tradition in Aramaic has yet surfaced from Chaldea proper.[37] It is probable that the high culture of the Chaldeans remained Babylonian until the Hellenistic period and it is dubious whether any significant corpus of cuneiform texts was ever translated into Aramaic.[38] Some elements of Chaldean culture, mostly in the realm of astrology, eventually found their way into the Hellenistic mainstream when Chaldeans began to migrate to the Mediterranean world. The vernacular culture of the Chaldeans, expressed in the Aramaic language, probably remained largely oral. It may be claimed that their complete espousal of Babylonian civilization and cuneiform learning inhibited the development of a significant written culture in their own language. It follows that behind the impression of uniformity created by cuneiform civilization, the only one that has survived for us to study, a complex web of culture, languages, and identities once thrived in Late Babylonia.

An interesting example of the complex linguistic situation in the Babylonian empire is provided by the cuneiform documents from Neirab. At Neirab, about 8 km southeast of Aleppo in Syria, a cuneiform archive comprising twenty-seven tablets was found during the 1926/1927 excavations and soon after published by Dhorme. The tablets record the transactions of a single family, the descendants of Nusku-gabbē, and they cover a period of about forty years, from the

father) as sheikh of Puqdu alongside one Nergal-šar-uṣur who is listed as *simmagir* official in the *Hofkalender* of Nebuchadnezzar; and Neriglissar's own inscriptions which claim that he was the son of a prince named Bēl-šum-iškun. The evidence is of course quite circumstantial since nothing proves conclusively that Kaššaya was Neriglissar's wife, and her occurrence alongside Bēl-šum-iškun in the Uruk text could be coincidental. In addition, there is no proof that this Bēl-šum-iškun is identical with Neriglissar's father.

[35] The largest corpus of such texts is in Mandaic and comes from late antiquity. The most important document for studying the origins of this tradition is the Aramaic incantation in cuneiform script from Hellenistic Uruk preserved in the Louvre Museum. It is a clear forerunner of later texts and testifies to the existence of an Aramaic tradition of incantations in Babylonia that was to a large degree independent of cuneiform incantations. The most recent treatment of the Uruk incantation and its historical and cultural significance is by Müller-Kessler 2002.

[36] As opposed to the sayings of Ahiqar, which are a work of Aramaic literature from the West transplanted to Mesopotamia. The Aramaic text in Demotic script has been studied by Steiner and Nimms 1985 (Tale of Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukīn), Steiner 1991 (Liturgy of New Year's Festival), and Steiner 1997 (translation of the two texts with notes and bibliography).

[37] The only exception might be the Ahiqar tradition if we place its origins in Nippur. However, Nippur was not specifically a Chaldean city.

[38] There is of course some survival of elements of Babylonian culture in the Aramaic corpus from late antique Mesopotamia, chiefly in Mandaic texts, but there is no evidence for any cuneiform text translated into Aramaic and surviving the demise of Babylonian civilization in the Parthian period. The survival of Babylonian culture in Mandaic texts is addressed by Müller-Kessler (2004: 54–56) with references to her previous work on the subject.

reign of Neriglissar (560 B.C.) to the early years of Darius I (522–520 B.C.). These tablets were long considered to have been generated by a group of natives of Neirab steeped in the cuneiform tradition. However, this assumption was questioned by Eph'al who argued that they were brought from Babylonia by a group of Neirabites who had been deported to central Babylonia, possibly at the time of Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar, who both campaigned there to bring Syria under Babylonian control.[39] They were forcibly settled in the region of Nippur, where they founded a small community also called Neirab. These transplanted Neirabites presumably returned to the Syrian Neirab at the beginning of the reign of Darius I, taking with them the records of their financial activities while they were living in Babylonia. The hypothesis that these contracts were drafted in Babylonia is strongly supported by the fact that, contrary to the parties involved in these transactions, who mostly bear West Semitic names, all the scribes, ten in all, have Babylonian names. This should indicate that these Neirabites, during their stay in Babylonia, never learned Akkadian cuneiform, but turned to professional Babylonian scribes for drafting their transactions. Not surprisingly, five out of the twenty-seven tablets from that group are provided with ink endorsements in alphabetic Aramaic. It is generally assumed that such notations were designed to help the non-Akkadian speaker, or at least the cuneiform illiterate, to identify summarily the content of a document without the help of a scribe. The high incidence of these notations on the Neirab tablets is by itself suggestive that this family of Syrian origin was literate in its own language, Aramaic, but not in the Late Babylonian vernacular of their new home.

These Neirabites had been transplanted from Syria and eventually returned there. However, even the native population of Babylonia was mixed and bi-cultural. This is exemplified on a small scale by the case of Larsa, a city located in the area defined by ancient sources as Chaldea. The city of Larsa was a very important center of Sumero-Akkadian civilization during the Old Babylonian period, but its conquest by Hammurabi of Babylon dealt it a mortal blow from which it never recovered. The city may have been nearly abandoned in the early part of the first millennium and stagnated as a town of little importance until it was revived by King Nebuchadnezzar II, who rebuilt the Ebabbar temple. Cuneiform documentation reappears in Larsa around that time and is particularly detailed for the sixth century. The business archive of Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu and his son Arad-Šamaš includes more than two hundred tablets ranging from the early years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar until the end of the reign of Cyrus.[40] Smaller groups of texts from the same time period are attested, the most important one being the archive of the Šamaš-bāri family with more than twenty tablets. Larsa is also documented during that same period by more than a hundred legal and administrative texts and letters from the archive of the Eanna temple in the neighboring city of Uruk. Most of the period of Achaemenid control is not documented at all, but we now have a very small but growing number of texts from the late Achaemenid and early Hellenistic periods.[41]

Viewed from the perspective of the cuneiform documentation, the institutions of Larsa appear very traditionally Babylonian. However, documents from the sixth century tell us that the *qīpu* of the Ebabbar temple during the reign of Cambyses was named Šameś-'idrī "the god Šameś is my helper," a West Semitic name honoring a West Semitic solar deity equivalent of the Mesopotamian sun-god Šamaš, the patron god of Larsa. This very unusual occurrence of a western Semite at the helm of a traditional Babylonian temple is quite significant because it epitomizes

[39] This was initially proposed by Eph'al 1978 and is now widely accepted, although Oelsner 1989 and Cagni 1990 have voiced doubts.

[40] See Wright 1994, as well as Beaulieu 1991 and 2000b. The archive of Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu and Arad-Šamaš has increased considerably with the recent identification of more than a hundred new texts in the British Museum.

[41] These have been published by Stolper 1990 and especially Joannès 2001.

the emergence of a dual culture in Babylonia.[42] It may also indicate that Larsa was ethno-linguistically much less Babylonian than the cuneiform documentation seems to indicate, an impression reinforced by the discovery of an Aramaic ostracon there (Dupont-Sommer 1945–1946). The case of Šameś-ʾidrī appears in fact to herald what happened later at Larsa during the Hellenistic period. Archaeologists have determined that the Ebabbar temple, which had been continuously in use and repaired from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the Macedonian conquest of the Persian empire, was abandoned in the late fourth century for a period of about one hundred years (Lecomte 1987). This in itself is a sign of the relative weakness of traditional local institutions. This hiatus finds some correspondence in the written documentation, which stops in the late fourth century to resume with only one text one century later. The middle Hellenistic re-occupation of the temple lasted from the late third century until its final destruction in the early Parthian period. Dating to that final period of occupation were found a number of animal bones, including camels, in a clear cultic context. Sacrifices of camels are not recorded in Mesopotamian texts. In the Arabian peninsula, however, sacrifices of camels in connection with the cult of solar deities such as Dusares are well documented.[43] This leads one to suspect that in the second century the Babylonian cult of Šamaš at Larsa underwent a transformation dictated by the presence of a permanent or transhumant Arab population that continued the same pattern of acculturation as the long established West Semitic element, bringing the dual nature of Late Babylonian culture to a final stage of development.

It is important to emphasize that the impression we gain from the single cuneiform text from that period dealing with the affairs of Larsa is quite different. OECT 9, 26, is dated to year 86 of the Seleucid era, or slightly later. It records the assignment of incomes to ceremonies of the goddess Aya, the spouse of Šamaš, and contains a list of twenty-one witnesses, eleven with Babylonian names, ten with Greek names. OECT 9, 26, presents the official image of a traditional Babylonian civic cult practiced by a mixture of people bearing Babylonian and Greek names, thus vividly contrasting with the archaeological evidence. The presence of a layer of Greek or Hellenized administrators at Larsa is suggested by the find of a few bullae of the type that were tied to parchments. Those bullae bear signet-ring impressions with an iconographic repertoire typical of the Seleucid period at Uruk and Seleucia. Therefore the cuneiform evidence once more reflects the imperial identity at the official level, in this case the traditional Babylonian identity onto which was grafted the Greco-Macedonian identity of the Seleucid empire. Yet other archaeological remains reveal a more complex milieu where the old Babylonian religion has become heavily syncretistic under the influence of a Semitic population that did not necessarily share the culture propagated by the one surviving cuneiform source.[44]

I can now interpret the evidence from Larsa in the *longue durée*. The site was nearly abandoned in the early Iron Age and came back to life mainly through the political will of Nebuchadnezzar, although the general expansion of population and settlement in Mesopotamia from

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[42] As already noted by Greenfield 1982: 471–72: "It is difficult to find in the Neo-Babylonian and later periods the bearer of an Aramaic name who fills an important position."

[43] Mashkour, Lecomte, and Eisenmann (1998) prefer to view the presence of horse, ass, and camel bones either as a sign of impoverishment (Larsa was so deprived of resources that any animal could be sacrificed to the gods) or as a testimony of the limits of textual cuneiform evidence, which never tells us about such sacrifices although they may always have existed (I find this opinion dubious). See Turcan (1996: 186–87) for offerings of camels to the Arab god Dusares, who probably was a solar deity.

[44] It should be noted that the text BRM 2, 51, discussed at length in Lecomte (1987: 239–40) and long thought to belong to the early Parthian period, has now been conclusively assigned to the period of transition between Achaemenid and Greco-Macedonian rule in the second half of the fourth century by Joannès (2001: 257).

that period onwards certainly played some role too. The revival of Larsa was clearly accomplished within the framework of the new Babylonian imperial ideology promoted by the dynasty. The main building inscription of Nebuchadnezzar commemorating the rebuilding of the Ebabbar temple consists literally of a miniature theological and political manifesto.[45] According to the official version the site of Ebabbar was so completely covered with sand that its original outlines could not be seen. Out of compassion the god Marduk intervened and released the four winds to disclose the layout of Ebabbar. This miraculous event allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to restore the temple properly and bring the god Šamaš back to his shrine. The release of the four winds is obviously reminiscent of the Babylonian Epic of Creation, where the god Marduk hurls the winds at Tiamat to subdue her, kill her, and create cosmic order out of her dismembered body. The derelict state of the Ebabbar temple is obliquely compared with primeval chaos, the intervention of the god Marduk constitutes a ritual act of recreating order by dispelling the sand and revealing the original layout, while the act of rebuilding by the king transfers the cosmic act of creating order to the political realm, to the consolidation of the Babylonian empire and the extension of its official culture and institutions in an outlying and neglected area. Nabonidus continued the building works of Nebuchadnezzar at Larsa and propagated the same ideology in his own inscriptions for the rebuilding of Ebabbar, with the exception that the god Sîn replaced Marduk in his role of upkeeper of imperial order. The traditional Babylonian identity imposed on Larsa and revised to fit the imperial ideology of the dynasty might not have taken root without such decisive state support. Indeed, after the disappearance of the Babylonian empire the cuneiform evidence from Larsa declines sharply and the Ebabbar temple itself is abandoned during the first century of the Hellenistic period. Left to its own devices the city might never have produced any evidence of belonging to the traditional cuneiform civilization of Babylonia.

The transformations of the cult of the sun god at Larsa also provide an interesting example of the numerous cross-cultural syncretisms between the religions of Babylonia and other Semitic peoples of the Near East. It seems particularly interesting that the *qīpu*-šameś-idrī was a near contemporary of Nabonidus because the last Babylonian king promoted a syncretism very similar to the one we can infer from the name of that official. Nabonidus was not only a devotee of the Mesopotamian god Nanna-Sîn, but also, as the Verse Account of his reign tells us, of the god Sahar, the lunar counterpart of the solar god Šameś in Syria and among western Semites living in Babylonia (Beaulieu 1991: 78–81). The cultural dualism exemplified by Šameś-ʾidrī and duplicated in countless examples in Late Babylonia made its way with Nabonidus into the imperial bureaucracy. Whereas his predecessors had carefully avoided any official acknowledgment of the duality of Babylonian culture, Nabonidus openly mixed Babylonian and western Semitic cultural elements in his theological and imperial propaganda, particularly in his inscriptions from Harran. This is especially interesting because at the same time the inscriptions of Nabonidus were written in a version of Standard Babylonian which is on the whole better than those of his predecessors. Obviously very learned officials working in the royal administration were commissioned to write these texts for the king, who even claimed himself to be skilled in the scribal art and was derided for his pretensions. In a sense Nabonidus was the perfect Chaldean, rooted in the West Semitic world but able to master Standard as well as Late Babylonian and the intricacies of Mesopotamian theology, although he was probably not a Chaldean by origin, more probably an Aramaean from Syria through his mother.

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[45] Recent translation by Beaulieu 2000a. I also addressed the political and theological content of the inscription in a paper (2002).

## BABYLONIA IN THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

With the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great in the fall of the year 539 B.C., the long history of Mesopotamia as an independent political and cultural entity came to a close. Nevertheless, in contrast with what happened in Assyria, where the state structure collapsed from the top and the cuneiform tradition all but disappeared, life in Babylonia continued apparently undisturbed. The former Babylonian empire was co-opted almost whole within the Achaemenid imperial structure under the designation of "province of Babylon and Transeuphratene" (*pīhāt Bābili u eber nāri*), an entity which is attested as late as the middle of the thirty-sixth year of Darius I (October 486 B.C.) and may have been dissolved only after the Babylonian revolts in the first years of the reign of Xerxes.[46] Cuneiform documentation shows no interruption in any significant private or temple archive published to date. Cyrus, now ruler of Babylon, even commissioned three inscriptions in the Babylonian style, the well-known Cyrus Cylinder from Babylon and two short brick inscriptions with Cyrus' titulary found at Ur and Uruk.[47] Like most inscriptions of the previous Babylonian kings, these are in essence building inscriptions. The cylinder commemorates the repair of the defensive wall of Babylon and presents Cyrus in the garb of a traditional Mesopotamian ruler. It also contains a sweeping condemnation of the previous Babylonian ruler Nabonidus, whose neglect of Marduk's cult is presented as the leading cause of Babylon's fall. Despite the obvious propagandistic nature of the text, Cyrus' claims are in perfect consonance with traditional Babylonian thinking, to the extent that the cylinder might well have been written independently by Babylonians trying to explain why their city fell into the hands of foreigners. Indeed, the only plausible reason for the foreign takeover was that Marduk had willed it to signify his displeasure at his people and at the king, the custodian of his cult. The successful co-opting of native Babylonian theology into this important foundational document testifies to Cyrus' political ability.

The only language with a written tradition in Iran up to the time of Cyrus was Elamite, but its reach and influence was limited to the region covered by the old kingdoms of Elam and Anšan. Short inscriptions of Cyrus in Old Persian have been found at Pasargadae but most scholars now believe these were added later after the introduction of the Old Persian script under Darius I in order to bring Cyrus and his ancestors into the Achaemenid lineage.[48] Cyrus was essentially, as cuneiform inscriptions tell us, king of Anšan.[49] Iran was still an oral culture, a cultural fact that the creation of a script to write the Persian language did little to alter. Therefore, the adoption of the medium of Standard Babylonian by Cyrus for inscriptions celebrating him as ruler of the former Babylonian empire seems largely to have been dictated by necessity. The fact that none of his successors emulated him in this respect is significant because it shows that the Achaemenids were essentially foreign rulers with no interest in the millennial traditions of Babylonia. Indeed, no other royal inscription in the Babylonian style is known until the Seleucid ruler Antiochus I,

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[46] The various arguments and details of this question are discussed in Stolper 1989. Briant (1996: 560–61) emphasizes the lack of direct evidence for the abolition of the province by Xerxes.

[47] New editions by Schaudig 2001: 548–56. Discussion by Kuhrt 1983. The cylinder fragment UET 1, 307, from Ur, tentatively attributed to Cyrus by Kuhrt (1983: 89) is assigned to Nabonidus by Schaudig (2001: 480–81).

[48] The Pasargadae inscriptions of Cyrus are very short and trilingual (Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian). Only two of them are well preserved. The theory that they were added later, probably under the reign of Darius I, is accepted now by many historians (see Briant 1996: 74). Recent edition by Schaudig (2001: 557–62) with bibliographical references to previous discussions and the question of their authenticity. Lecoq (1997: 77–83) takes a contrary stand, claiming that the inscriptions could well be authentic. He also rejects the current interpretation of paragraph 70 of the Bisitun inscription as a reference to the invention of the Old Persian script under Darius I.

[49] See the data collected most recently by Waters (2004: 94). The author also takes up the whole question of the relationship between the respective ancestries of Darius I and Cyrus the Great, with references to earlier works.

whose cylinder commemorating the rebuilding of the Ezida temple in Borsippa in the early part of the third century stands in splendid isolation and is the last official inscription in cuneiform commissioned by a ruler of Mesopotamia.[50]

This sudden abandonment of the traditional models of cuneiform building inscriptions after Cyrus signals a dramatic shift in the situation of Babylonia in the Achaemenid empire, only a few years after the loss of independence. The Neo-Babylonian kings legitimized their rule almost exclusively by providing for the temples. This had always been the primary responsibility of Mesopotamian rulers. The refusal of the Achaemenids to fill the same role spelled the disappearance of the old Mesopotamian royal ideology and also jeopardized the survival of the branch of cuneiform learning that supported that ideology. According to Gesche's (2000) reconstruction of the late Babylonian school curriculum, texts reflecting the traditional royal ideology were studied mainly in the initial stage of training in cuneiform (*erste Schulstufe*), together with other practical aspects of the language and writing system that must be mastered by the apprentice scribes contemplating careers in the palace administration. This program of study paved the way for the more advanced stage of cuneiform learning (*zweite Schulstufe*), the one leading to the mastery of the *ašipūtu*, to become the last bastion of Babylonian culture, a fact which is easily verifiable when one considers that cuneiform in the Achaemenid and Seleucid periods became increasingly confined to the areas of activities controlled by the temples.[51]

The political developments just described came to full fruition under Darius I and are epitomized by the great relief inscription at Bisitun, which is the most important Achaemenid royal inscription ever discovered and is composed in a style and language largely independent of previous Mesopotamian models. To be sure, the relief was certainly inspired by earlier works, especially the very similar relief of the Lullubite King Anu-banini at Sar-i Pul-i Zuhāb. In terms of literary content it also belongs in some degree to the Mesopotamian genre of triumphal inscriptions that were instituted by the kings of the Old Akkadian period in the third millennium (although with some Sumerian antecedents) and provided models for a long tradition of royal inscriptions and annals from northern Mesopotamia until the Neo-Assyrian period. The basic plot of these inscriptions is that a new ruler who has recently ascended the throne faces a sudden and widespread rebellion within his empire or an external assault which threatens his power and the very foundations of the state. In Mesopotamian literature this type of royal inscription gave birth to the literary genre of the *insurrection générale*, well known from the historical-literary tradition concerning Narām-Sîn.[52] The Bisitun inscription of Darius is to some degree heir to that tradition, even as it radically contrasts with the building inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian kings, which brought to a close the long tradition of southern inscriptions, almost completely devoid of military and political details, initiated by Gudea and the rulers of the third dynasty of Ur.

There is general agreement on the order in which the various parts of the reliefs and inscriptions of Bisitun were carved, but the questions of the original language (*Vorlage*) and of the

[50] Edition and discussion by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991. There are two other building inscriptions from Hellenistic Uruk in cuneiform. One is dated to the year 68 of the Seleucid era and mentions king Seleucus (II). The text, however, was not directly commissioned by the king, but by the local city administrator, Anu-uballiṭ-Nikarchos. The other one is a brick inscription from a later date and was commissioned by Anu-uballiṭ-Kephalon. It refers to the reigning king (Antiochus) but is undated. Editions and discussion by Doty 1988.

[51] Detailed reconstruction of the curriculum by Gesche (2000: 61–198).

[52] I would argue that Assyrian annals were also ultimately inspired by this genre because in their basic format they adhere to the motif that the king, as soon as he ascends the throne, becomes an embattled general fighting for the survival of his kingdom. Indeed, the entire expansion of the Assyrian state after the middle of the fourteenth century is based on this notion.

relation between the various versions are still open to debate. The inscription appears to have been written first in Elamite (first Elamite version). The Akkadian and Old Persian versions were added later, as well as the second Elamite version, necessitated by the expansion of the relief which was partly carved over the first Elamite version. Fragments of another Akkadian version, also probably dating to the reign of Darius I, were found in Babylon, while fragments of an Aramaic version were discovered at Elephantine and Saqqarah in Egypt but date to the latter part of the fifth century. The Elamite and Old Persian versions are quite similar, while the Akkadian and Aramaic versions share elements not found in the other two, notably the inclusion of the numbers of casualties during each rebellion and the use of (supposedly) Median rather than Persian forms for certain geographical names. Whatever solution we adopt for the interrelation between the different versions, it seems quite assured that both the Akkadian and the Aramaic versions were translated from Old Persian or Elamite, though they do not necessarily always closely follow the Bisitun versions in these two languages. Be that as it may, the important fact remains that versions were actually prepared in Akkadian and Aramaic, two languages which were not native to Iran and which the Persian rulers must have encountered in any significant measure for the first time after their conquest of the Babylonian empire.

The adoption of Akkadian by the Achaemenid rulers as one of the official languages of their inscriptions has generally been evaluated by historians as a recognition of the importance and perennialness of Babylonian civilization. This judgment needs to be nuanced. The fact that Achaemenid rulers ceased to sponsor the rebuilding of Babylonian temples directly and the fact that their own inscriptions from Iran, though often written in Akkadian in addition to Old Persian and Elamite, bear no formal relation to the building inscriptions of Babylonian kings, indicate that their adoption of Akkadian signaled a new departure as much as it symbolized continuity. One point which has generally been neglected and which necessitates careful consideration is the linguistic nature of Achaemenid Akkadian, the dialect of the Akkadian language used in the Bisitun inscription and all other inscriptions of the Achaemenids. Contrary to Elamite and Aramaic, which became widely used as administrative and chancery languages by the Achaemenid government, Akkadian found little or no place in Iran outside the very limited genre of official inscriptions. Only two tablets written in Akkadian were found at Persepolis compared with thousands of administrative tablets in Elamite and hundreds in Aramaic, while the number of Aramaic documents on parchment, all of which have disappeared, must have been even larger, especially considering that the interruption of Elamite documentation after the middle of the fifth century B.C. has generally been linked to the abandonment of that language in favor of Aramaic even for the day-to-day administration of the empire. Achaemenid Akkadian is obviously related to the Late Babylonian vernacular in which letters and administrative and legal documents of the Neo-Babylonian period were written. On the other hand, it displays a number of idiosyncratic features which set it resolutely apart. Some of these features can be explained as calques of Old Persian or Elamite, which suggest that Achaemenid Akkadian was a translation language artificially contrived by Babylonian scribes in the service of the Achaemenids. The question which comes to mind is why the need arose to create such a translation language when it would have seemed much easier to import Babylonian scribes who could compose official inscriptions in the Standard Babylonian dialect used by the previous Assyrian and Babylonian rulers. Two answers suggest themselves. The first one is that Achaemenid Akkadian was created on analogy with Imperial Aramaic, which was probably modeled on the contemporary Aramaic vernacular from Babylonia, but with certain features that lend it the character of a contrived official idiom.[53] Even Old Persian has certain fea-

[53] Beyer 1986: 14–15.

tures of an artificial language. The second one is that the creation of Achaemenid Akkadian was primarily motivated by the need to appropriate the Akkadian language for the purpose of imperial propaganda, while at the same time signifying a rejection of the high cultural tradition conveyed by official literary Standard Babylonian. The fact that Achaemenid royal inscriptions in Akkadian use the Late Babylonian script rather than the monumental archaizing script in which many of the building inscriptions of the Babylonian empire were written also signals an implicit rejection, perhaps even an intentional one, of the official culture of the preceding empire, with its antiquarian nurturing of a prestigious inherited past.

That a modified version of the Late Babylonian vernacular found primarily in archival documents and letters should have been adopted outside Babylonia as an official language is not completely unparalleled. Four literary letters composed in a language that appears to be a mixture of Late Babylonian and Standard Babylonian have come down to us from the Neo-Assyrian period (SAA 3, 25–28). These letters, purportedly addressed to the king of Assyria, are full of interesting figurative language that bespeaks a conscious effort to mold the contemporary Babylonian vernacular in a literary idiom worthy of Standard Babylonian, but intended for Assyrian court entertainment. That such a creative attempt should have occurred is hardly surprising when one considers that the Assyrian kings received a substantial correspondence in Late Babylonian from their numerous advisors and administrators residing in Babylonia. The adoption of Late Babylonian forms to compose texts for the Assyrian court can be viewed as a simple case of appropriation of local culture by the imperial ruling elite. The case of Achaemenid Akkadian is somewhat different because it resulted in the transposition of Late Babylonian into a literary genre, that of royal inscriptions, for which it was not originally intended, and for which there already existed a literary form of Babylonian. This leads me to the conclusion that the abandonment of Standard Babylonian (and of the medium of traditional building inscriptions in the Babylonian style) was a political act, largely motivated by the fact that this language and the style of inscriptions it was used for were the vehicle of the culture sponsored by the Mesopotamian empire of Nebuchadnezzar, a cosmological state centered on Babylon which was on an ideological collision course with the universal Achaemenid empire promoted by Darius and his successors. Previously, the Assyrians had appropriated Standard Babylonian because they shared a common civilization with the Babylonians. The Persians were in a different position and were apparently determined to reshape Babylonian traditions on their own terms.

A highly revealing monument in this respect is the Akkadian version of the Bisitun inscription found on fragments of a stela discovered at Babylon at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Kasr area. These were republished recently by Ursula Seidl (1999), who offers many improvements and new insights compared with her previous reconstruction of the monument (Seidl 1976), which now clearly appears to be an abridged version of the Bisitun relief and inscription dealing only with the events in Babylonia. The surviving fragments indicate indeed that the relief had room only for depictions of the two Babylonian pretenders standing before the victorious figure of Darius I trampling over Gaumata. Instead of the winged divine figure hovering over the scene found at Bisitun and sometimes identified as Ahura-Mazda, the Babylon monument originally had a star and probably also symbols of the sun and moon in traditional Assyrian and Babylonian fashion. Finally, in the inscription from Babylon Ahura-Mazda is replaced with the god Bēl. Therefore the stela of Darius was clearly devised for a Babylonian audience and put in public view near the triumphal gate of Ishtar. In fact, the political intent of the stela may have been even more specific. Since the two Babylonian pretenders who rose against Darius claimed to be sons of Nabonidus, it is quite possible that the monument of Darius aimed at superseding the Nabonidus stela, probably still in view in Babylon, with a similar monument extolling the power

of the Achaemenids. The curvature of one of the fragments indicates that the Darius stela had a rounded top, a shape familiar from a number of Assyrian monuments and reused by Nabonidus for his stelas found at Harran and Babylon. In addition, the three astral symbols of the Darius monument are reminiscent of Nabonidus' stelas, which display these symbols exclusively and conspicuously.

The Nabonidus stela survived in one piece, although in a poor state of preservation, to be rediscovered in the early nineteenth century by the expedition of Claudius Rich. The Darius stela, on the other hand, was intentionally smashed in antiquity, and only a few pieces of it survived. Seidl posits that it was destroyed during the second wave of Babylonian revolts in the early years of the reign of Xerxes, Darius' successor. This proposal seems very likely. According to the accumulating evidence from Late Babylonian archives, the traditional urban elites of Babylon and Borsippa lost considerable prestige and power as a result of the suppression of the uprisings of Bēl-šimanni and Šamaš-erība against Xerxes, which suggests that they were the target of the repression and may therefore also have been the main driving force behind the revolts.[54] This shows the failure of Achaemenid propaganda to win over the old urban elite of Babylonia, and the irrelevance of Achaemenid Akkadian as a token of cultural continuity. It indicates rather that patronage of the cuneiform tradition by the Achaemenid rulers was to be on their own terms, not on those dictated by the urban elites who maintained that culture and probably still identified with the old Babylon-centered cosmological state which had come to an end in 539 B.C. In a sense, the Akkadian language as transformed into an official idiom by the Achaemenid administration created an impression very similar to that of certain works of art from Persepolis, which reproduce elements of Mesopotamian and Egyptian iconography with a degree of transformation just sufficient to make them feel alien to the tradition from which they were borrowed.

In the end Babylonia seemingly accepted its subordinate status, probably encouraged by an official Persian policy that fostered a certain degree of tolerance as long as compliance prevailed. Yet the traditional identity of Babylonia was wholly incompatible with the imperial ambitions of the Achaemenids, as it had been with those of the Assyrians. And that identity did not necessarily wane because of the linguistic Aramaization of Babylonia. The Chaldeans had embraced it and profoundly identified with their country of adoption. This explains its resilience. In view of the importance of the urban elites of Babylon in their resistance to the Achaemenids, it may be more than coincidental that the terms Babylonia and Babylonian impose themselves for the first time during that period as a designation for southern Mesopotamia and its inhabitants. Indeed, these were not native Babylonian terms. There is no word for the concept of Babylonia in Akkadian which is derived from the name of Babylon (*Bābili*). The cuneiform tradition always refers to Babylonia as Sumer and Akkad, more rarely as Karduniaš and sometimes as simply Akkad. The term Babylonian (*Babilayu*) does exist, however, but always in reference to a resident of Babylon, not to a Babylonian in the sense we now understand it. Only during the Persian period did the words Babylon and Babylonian begin to apply to the entire country rather than just to the city and

[54] See in particular the important study by Kessler 2004, who argues that the rise of the cult of Anu in Uruk in the middle of the fifth century should be linked to the departure of Babylon families who had been established there for a long time. These families would have been expelled from Uruk in the wake of the rebellions against Xerxes in order to break the old Babylon-centered polity which had survived the conquest of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus. The question has also been discussed by Waerzeggers (2003/2004) in relation to the interruption of cuneiform archives in Babylon, Borsippa, and Sippar in the early years of Xerxes. The fact that the archives which came to an end were those generated by the Babylonian city and temple elites should indicate that these elites were the focus of Xerxes' repressive measures. These measures did not so much entail a destruction of the temples, as was long claimed on the basis of Herodotus, as a reorganization of their administration under a new management controlled by new men favored by the Persian administration.

its residents. Later on these concepts entered the Greek language, from which we have inherited them. They were not a Babylonian creation and never became common currency in the late cuneiform record, which became increasingly archaizing and conservative during the Achaemenid and Seleucid periods. They were essentially based on outside perceptions of Babylonia.

## HELLENISTIC BABYLONIA

With the conquest of Alexander and the foundation of the Seleucid kingdom at the end of the fourth century, Babylonia became subjected to a new imperial system. It is generally assumed that by then Akkadian had completely given way to Aramaic as spoken vernacular. The Late Babylonian language of legal and administrative texts during that period shows clear influence of Aramaic syntax in the reversal of the word order, with the verb now frequently occurring in initial position. Despite the death of Akkadian the cuneiform tradition continued for a few more centuries, to disappear only under Parthian rule in the first decade of our era. The spread of Hellenistic culture and the Greek language over the Near East and the Mediterranean confronted Babylonia with the challenge of adapting to a new international environment and a new cosmopolitan culture. During the Achaemenid period a number of Persian words related to the administration of the empire are attested in cuneiform texts. The same happened for Greek words during the Seleucid period. These borrowings only reflected the realities of political domination. Yet the advent of Hellenism seems to have had a much more profound impact on Babylonian culture than its integration in the Persian empire two centuries earlier. At Uruk we see a number of Babylonians adopt Greek names with increasing frequency during the reign of Antiochus III. We also know that individuals defined as Babylonians or Chaldeans in Greek writings learned Greek and participated in the international community of Hellenized scholars and scientists. One such case is the astronomer Seleucus of Babylon. His works have not survived, but he was known in antiquity as one of the supporters of Aristarchus' heliocentric hypothesis.

The best-known example of acculturation into Hellenism is Berossus, who wrote his *Babyloniaca* for the Seleucid King Antiochus I at the beginning of the third century B.C. Berossus' writings are not extant but can be partly reconstructed from substantial quotations of them found in the works of ancient authors. Our increased knowledge of the cuneiform literature of Hellenistic Babylonia has corroborated the writings of Berossus on several points, showing that he was steeped in traditional Babylonian learning. Although Berossus is often categorized as a historian, it must be emphasized that the historical content of his *Babyloniaca* is limited. He makes only selective use of Babylonian chronographic texts, although the Babylonian Chronicle Series were presumably available to him in their entirety at the time he was composing his book. His chief interest is to demonstrate the cosmic centrality of Babylon and its perennial destiny as navel of the world. Babylonia is described as the locus where civilization began and the original revelation of knowledge was given by the gods and their envoys to humankind. His notes on the more recent history of Babylon revolve around its fate during the late Assyrian and Babylonian empires and seem on the surface to reveal more genuine historical leanings. Yet these parts of the book are devised to demonstrate the glory of the city in a time when its cosmological role was matched by its political might. Berossus appears more as a theologian than a historian, but in this respect he only continues the old tradition of cuneiform learning in Babylonian schools, propagating the same outlook shared by the city elites of Babylon for centuries. With the exception of a number of intrusive Greek elements and allegorical interpretations of Babylonian myths, the same book could have been written in the time of Nebuchadnezzar or Darius. The fact that it came to life in Greek during the time of Antiochus I reveals the need of the Chaldean elites of Babylon to find a

voice in the emerging Hellenistic culture which dominated a world where Babylonia had a limited impact. Indeed, the works of Berossus failed to arouse widespread and sustained interest. The Chaldeans became known in the classical world only for their skill in astronomy and astrology. Such reputation was not at all undeserved, but it probably failed to satisfy their self-image and intellectual ambitions.

Another area of interest is the phenomenon of the Graeco-Babyloniaca. This term refers to clay tablets that contain transcriptions of traditional cuneiform texts into Greek letters, with or without the original in cuneiform (Maul 1995 and Geller 1997). Gesche has recently demonstrated that these tablets were in fact school texts that all belonged to the *zweite Schulstufe* of Babylonian education (Gesche 2000: 184–85). This was the education which led to mastery of the exorcist's lore, the door to advanced expertise in science, medicine, divination, and traditional Babylonian wisdom, in other terms, the key to becoming a perfect Chaldean. Although the texts forming the Graeco-Babyloniaca were written in Standard Babylonian and Sumerian, the two languages of traditional learning, these Greek transcriptions reflect the Late Babylonian phonology of Akkadian. This shows that the schools kept a living tradition of speaking Akkadian long after the language had actually died out rather than reverting to an archaizing pronunciation that would have more accurately reflected Old and Standard Babylonian.

It is hard to imagine that Greek transcriptions were confined to clay tablets and one wonders if traditional Babylonian learning was not transmitted during the Hellenistic and Parthian periods in part by transcribing cuneiform works in Greek letters on parchment or papyrus. The question may also be raised as to why they used the Greek instead of the Aramaic alphabet with which they were presumably more familiar. One plausible, though not necessarily compelling reason may be that Greek, with a full system to write vowels, was a much better tool for transcribing Akkadian and Sumerian, especially as scribes trained in cuneiform were already accustomed to full vowel notation. Another plausible answer is that the prestige of Greek culture may have extended to using the Greek alphabet, even for writing other languages. Aramaic never attained such prestige status in Babylonia. As I discussed earlier, the Aramaic-speaking Chaldean and Babylonian elites probably considered Greek in the same way they did Akkadian cuneiform, as two great traditions that provided their country with a high cultural expression and identity. Yet in the end the language spoken by the people won. The first official sign of this is the appearance of short monumental inscriptions in Aramaic at Uruk, alongside those in Akkadian and Greek.[55] Eventually Akkadian and Greek disappeared, while Aramaic became the vernacular and literary language of Mesopotamian Christianity, Babylonian Judaism, and Mandean Gnosticism. Had Aramaic never taken roots in Mesopotamia and Akkadian lived on, then the country might have taken a path similar to Egypt, where the Coptic language emerged as the last stage of pharaonic Egyptian, written with an adapted form of the Greek alphabet and infused with Greek vocabulary. Should history have taken that course, the Near East might have witnessed the emergence of a Christian literature written in a form of Late Babylonian using the Greek alphabet.

## CONCLUSION

Akkadian was arguably the first cosmopolitan language and culture in the history of the world. Initially promoted as the main language of administration and official inscriptions in Mesopotamia by the Sargonic kings in the twenty-fourth and twenty-third centuries B.C., Akkadian replaced Sumerian as the main language of literature and culture during the Old Babylonian pe-

[55] Schaudig 2001: 315 n. 341.

riod (eighteenth–seventeenth centuries B.C.). During the second millennium, the Old Babylonian dialect of Akkadian and its successor Middle Babylonian gradually became the international languages of the Near East, while cuneiform learning written in Standard Babylonian spread to Syria, Anatolia, Elam, Palestine, and even Egypt during the late Bronze Age. In the first millennium, however, Akkadian retreated to Mesopotamia proper, paradoxically in a period when Mesopotamian empires reached the climax of their power. When the Assyrians and the Babylonians finally succeeded between the eighth and sixth centuries in establishing their hegemony over most of the Fertile Crescent, Aramaic had already become the dominant language in international relations as well as in Mesopotamia itself, this despite the official protection accorded by these empires to the traditional cuneiform languages.

The period of dominance of Aramaic in the first millennium B.C., specifically during its official phase between the eighth and fourth centuries, presents some singularities, especially as we compare it with other international languages of the ancient and medieval worlds, such as Akkadian, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and Arabic. The main fact which strikes us is that during that period Aramaic never became a dominant cultural vehicle but remained mostly a language of communication and administration. The reasons for this specialized use are several. Important to consider is the fact that the Aramaeans never created an empire; therefore they never could propel their culture to a hegemonic position. Only in the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria of the early Iron Age, before their incorporation in the Assyrian empire, did Aramaic play that role. Unfortunately, almost nothing from the corpus of early Aramaean writings has survived save for a relatively small number of inscribed monuments. A standardized form of the Aramaic language, Imperial or Official Aramaic, was propagated by the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Achaemenid Persian empires. These empires, however, were not controlled by the Aramaeans, and their ruling classes identified with cultures, religions, and traditions that were to a large degree foreign to them. Thus Aramaic, during the period of its greatest dissemination at the time of the Achaemenid empire, occupied a huge space of written and spoken communication, from Afghanistan to Egypt and Asia Minor. However, contrary to Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek, Aramaic at the peak of its internationalization did not become the vehicle of a specific religion or culture with massive adhesion to its imaginary space and this makes it a peculiar case in the history of world languages. After the demise of Achaemenid Persia, Aramaic began a slow phase of vernacularization which culminated in late antiquity with the rise of literary dialects such as Syriac and Mandaic. Yet even then Aramaic still did not attain a hegemonic position, as it now had to compete with the great cosmopolitan language of that age, Greek, and later with Arabic.

The fate of Akkadian in first-millennium Mesopotamia also provides much material for reflection, especially as we examine the case of Babylonia. Even as Aramaic was spreading as vernacular and administrative language, the Assyrian and Babylonian empires continued to sponsor cuneiform learning as emblem of their official identity, but in different ways and with different outcomes. In Assyria there was more acceptance, or at least official acknowledgment, of the Aramaic component of the empire. In Babylonia, on the other hand, the monarchy and urban elites who controlled the temples and the schools promoted an archaizing vision of their culture which practically denied the existence of any participant in Babylonian civilization other than themselves. As far as the cuneiform record is concerned, these other groups were invisible and their presence can be detected only in the onomastic record. Even patterns of name giving, however, were determined by the desire or necessity to adhere to the dominant culture and it may be accurate to state that a very substantial proportion of individuals with Babylonian names who appear in sources from that period were not old-stock Babylonians or speakers of the Late Babylonian vernacular. The old dichotomy between Standard Babylonian and vernacular Babylonian,

which to some extent reflected the chasm between literary and spoken language within the same linguistic community, became increasingly irrelevant with the disappearance of Babylonian as spoken language and its replacement by Aramaic. Late Babylonian retained its status as written vernacular until the Hellenistic period, but in turn became, like Standard Babylonian, a *Kunstsprache*, which in one of its more aberrant forms was raised to the status of language of official inscriptions by the Achaemenids.

After the demise of the Babylonian empire in 539 B.C. the urban elites of Babylonia became solely responsible for the leadership of their civilization. During the first decades of Persian rule they attempted to restore their old monarchy in two waves of rebellion that occurred in the early years of the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes. These attempts were abortive and their failure led to a gradual reformulation of Babylonian identity as the urban elites completely retreated into the imaginary space provided by the temples and the schools, laying the grounds for the emergence of the Chaldeans as an identifiable community of scholars, astronomers, and diviners. This Chaldean reformulation of Babylonian identity as a philosophy and religion was already accomplished by the end of the Achaemenid period, as indicated by the Greek accounts of Alexander the Great's encounter with the Chaldeans when he entered Babylon and took up residence there. The installation of Seleucid rule may have raised some hopes of a restoration of Babylon as center or political power, but these failed to materialize, even though the Greco-Macedonian Seleucid rulers occasionally paid heed to the ancient civilization of the country they now ruled.

The civilization of Late Babylonia, in the form in which it was sponsored by the urban elites, provides a very interesting example of an ancient imagined community, to borrow Benedict Anderson's felicitous expression. That imagined community was by no means a nation in the modern sense of the term. This indeed would presuppose widespread literacy within the same linguistic community, with a significant convergence between spoken and written language. Nevertheless, Late Babylonian urban elites also created and maintained an imaginary community by means of schooling in a tradition that was intended to provide a cultural identity for themselves and the larger society. These urban elites were organized mostly into extended families that claimed descent from a common ancestor, sometimes a prestigious scholar associated with famous works of cuneiform literature. Although they were restricted in number, their control of temple and civic institutions enabled them to exert considerable influence on the larger society and to bring a substantial part of the population into their cultural space. This was accomplished by various means, such as the performance of festivals, public rituals, and the adhesion to an old legal system that validated the use of cuneiform. The fact that the chasm between the archaizing culture they promoted and the ethno-linguistic, cultural, and political realities of Babylonia increasingly widened through the centuries highlights the fact that this community was, indeed, very much an imagined one. The case of Babylonia does not stand in complete isolation, however. Israel underwent a similar, albeit more successful reformulation of its identity during the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, with a dead or dying language, Hebrew, as the conveyor of collective identity and a living one, Aramaic, as a tool of everyday communication. Thus neither Babylonia nor Israel conform to the pattern observed by Pollock for cosmopolitan and vernacular phases of languages. While Latin, Sanskrit, and Arabic after their cosmopolitan phase gave way to vernaculars that became vehicles of national cultures, the scenario for Mesopotamia and the larger Near East in the first millennium B.C. is far more complex because of the number of cosmopolitan and vernacular languages attested over the area, their intricate interrelations, the multiplicity of dialects and grapholects even within the same linguistic space, and the politicization of language, often resulting in the affectation of specific dialects to the expression of certain identities and their exclusion from other imaginary spaces.

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ABL | R. F. Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Letters |
| AfO | Archiv für Orientforschung |
| AO | tablets in the collections of the Musée du Louvre |
| AoF | Altorientalische Forschungen |
| BMS | L. W. King, Babylonian Magic and Sorcery |
| BRM | Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan |
| CAD | Chicago Assyrian Dictionary |
| CT | Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets |
| CTN | Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud |
| NBC | tablets in the James B. Nies Babylonian Collection (Yale University) |
| OECT | Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts |
| RB | Revue biblique |
| RGTC | Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (= TAVO Beihefte Reihe B Nr. 7 1974ff.) |
| SAA | State Archives of Assyria |
| UET | Ur Excavation Texts |
| ZA | Zeitschrift für Assyriologie |
| ZDMG | Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft |

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# 12

# INSTITUTIONS, VERNACULARS, PUBLICS: THE CASE OF SECOND-MILLENNIUM ANATOLIA

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## INTRODUCTION[1]

The society of the Hittite kingdom and subsequent empire between 1650 and 1180 B.C. was one of two scripts and — at least — two languages: Hittite written in cuneiform and Luwian in a "hieroglyphic" writing system. Initially, that is, in the earlier second millennium, it was the Hittites, the rulers of the Hittite empire, who prevailed and imposed their language and script as the means of official communication, but by the end of the second millennium the roles were reversed: Hittite and its cuneiform script disappeared while Luwian and its hieroglyphic script survived.

Hittites and Luwians were not simply two groups defined by two closely related but clearly different languages[2] and each language being used by its own group. Second-millennium Hieroglyphic Luwian has come down to us almost exclusively through the ruling elite of the empire that increasingly used it from the fourteenth century onwards for specific purposes next to the Hittite records in cuneiform. But when shortly after 1200 B.C. the empire collapsed, the Hittite language and its cuneiform script vanished while Luwian and the hieroglyphic script survived as the major (monumental and perhaps also domestic) means of written communication in southeast Anatolia and northern Syria, an area that, so to speak, claimed itself to be the successor to the Hittite empire. The questions I would like to concern myself with here are the following: What was the nature of the coexistence of the two languages, scripts, and population groups in the second millennium and why did Luwian with its hieroglyphic script live on and Hittite with its cuneiform script become extinct? Rephrased in terms of institutions, vernaculars, and publics, the Hittite ruling class was the institution, almost completely dominating our present picture, but to what extent was Hittite the vernacular? And who was the public of the large royal inscriptions in Hieroglyphic Luwian?

[1] I am very grateful to Trevor Bryce, Petra Goedegebuure, Eric Hamp, Seth Sanders, Ilya Yakubovich, and the staff of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary for reading earlier drafts of this paper and for their valuable suggestions and insights. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for the views expressed here.

[2] For the problem of distinguishing between languages and dialects, see Haugen 1966. Following Haugen's socio-linguistic approach Hittite would be more of a language and Luwian a dialect. But from the viewpoint of mutual intelligibility (cf. Dixon 1997: 7f.), however difficult to assess for dead languages, the two might be considered languages. An impression of the lexical discrepancies between Hittite and Luwian may be gleaned from the two tables in Ivanov 2001: 153–62. But as Eric Hamp reminds me, grammatical and syntactic differences might be even more revealing: think of such basic differences as sentence initial *nu-* (Hittite) vs. *a-* (Luwian), the different sentence particles or the plural common gender noun endings in Hittite and (cuneiform and hieroglyphic) Luwian. Quite intuitively, I refer to Luwian and Hittite as languages instead of dialects, reserving the latter term for the distinction between Hieroglyphic Luwian and Cuneiform Luwian.

## THE INSTITUTION

### HITTITE AND LUWIAN IDENTITIES

The Hittite texts that have come down to us are the exclusive expression of a ruling elite and their immediate dependents that chose the Hittite language as their internal means of communication. "Hittite," it seems, can only be defined in political, not in linguistic or even cultural terms.[3] Looking at names in Hittite texts from the earliest period of attestation onward, various linguistic strands can be recognized: Indo-European, that is, both Hittite and Luwian, and Hattian, the non-Indo-European language of the substrate population. This mix is how we usually define "Hittite" and over the course of history Hurrian influence from the east considerably added to that picture. Culturally, too, Hittite is this very mixture of cultural-linguistic elements as kings in the course of imperial expansion actively sought to incorporate formerly foreign elements, at least into their written documents. The Hittites called themselves geographically "the people of Ḫatti-Land," using the local Hattian name of the area. But to what extent inhabitants or subjects of the Hittite empire called themselves by that name we simply do not know. The ruling class certainly imposed the concept of Hittite on the territory they controlled. Hittite kings speak of making other territories "Hittite" when incorporating them into their empire. There was a clear sense of "the other" already starting with the Hittite King Anitta around 1750 B.C. when he avenged the carrying off of "Our God" by the king of Zalpuwa and when he spoke of the city god of Ḫattuš as "their god."[4] A certain sense of community might be seen in the fact that citizens from all over the empire could appeal as far up as the Great King in Ḫattuša himself if they felt they were treated unjustly.[5] Although this path is not likely to have been open to all inhabitants in equal measure, it does show that even on the fringes of the Hittite empire there was a vision of belonging to a state headed by a ruler in a far away capital.[6]

Luwian and other attested language groups, on the other hand, in second-millennium Anatolia go hidden almost completely behind the facade of Hittite power, attested as they are exclusively through sources from the Hittite official archives. Although there was a distinct Luwian pantheon and although there are artworks from Luwian territories that make it likely there existed a Luwian identity independent from the Hittite state, they stem from the period of the Hittite empire only and it is very difficult to prove their independence.[7]

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[3] For a very useful and recent discussion of Hittite ethnicity and the term Hittite itself, see Bryce (1998: 14–19).

[4] Singer 1995; on the general notions of foreigners and outsiders, see Klinger 1992.

[5] Compare the case of the priest Zuba'al in Emar on the far southeastern fringe of the empire (cf. Singer 1999).

[6] On the basis of these general traits the Hittite state can be shown to have shared some characteristics with more modern nations, at least from the elite's perspective. Anderson (1983: 6f.) defines the concept of nation as "an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." Modern nations are described as involving a "horizontal comradeship" between citizens, established through written communication in a common vernacular. As explained by him, the community is *imagined* because without knowing personally all of their fellow citizens, all inhabitants recognize each other as sharing the same "nationality." It is *limited* because it simply encompasses only part of the world, it is sovereign because it is completely free and independent, and it is a *community* because despite inequalities the nation is thought of as a comradeship: there is a clear sense of "us" and "the others." Although devised to describe phenomena of nationalism in the modern world, this definition may help us — despite differences in time — to portray the Hittite empire as an institution.

[7] These problems are apparent and clearly outlined in the treatments on Luwian religion and Luwian art by Hutter 2003 (especially pp. 215–18) and Aro 2003 (especially pp. 281–88) respectively.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE HITTITE LANGUAGE CORPUS

The Hittite corpus is massive and shares an overwhelmingly unified character. Over 30,000 tablets and fragments of tablets from the Hittite capital Ḫattuša, its provincial centers Maşat Höyük/Tapikka(?), and Kuşaklı/Šarešša, and the more incidental finds of documents from elsewhere can almost entirely be characterized as administrative.[8] And, with just two clear exceptions, we can state that they pertain to the administration of the Hittite kingdom and empire: they are either produced by the chanceries of the empire itself or were addressed by foreign administrations to the Hittite chanceries. The exceptions mentioned consist of two texts, the so-called Arzawa tablets that were part of a correspondence between the independent kingdom of Arzawa in the west around 1400 B.C. and the Egyptian court of the Amarna pharaohs.[9]

The archives of the Hittite capital are among the very few in the ancient Near East where we can analyze and follow an administration over several centuries.[10] These archives distinguished between records that had a long term interest and those of only temporary relevance.[11] Records of the first group were regularly copied according to need and sometimes kept for several centuries. Records from the second group, on the other hand, were not considered important enough to be copied and were kept for relatively brief periods only before being discarded, that is, either recycled or destroyed. The speed at which this happened was dictated by a sliding scale of relevance: economic administration may have had a turnaround of no longer than a fiscal period whereas correspondence or oracle reports may have been kept as long as persons involved lived or certain affairs mattered to the current administration. The following table gives an overview of the genres present in the Hittite archives divided according to these principles:

| *A. Texts in multiple copies* | *B. Texts in single copies* |
|---|---|
| Historical prose, treaties, edicts (CTH 1–147, 211–16) | Correspondence (CTH 151–210) |
| Instructions (CTH 251–75) | Land deeds (CTH 221–25) |
| Laws (CTH 291–92) | Lists and rosters (CTH 231–39) |
| Celestial omina (CTH 531–35) | Economic administration (CTH 240–50) |
| Hymns and prayers (CTH 371–89) | Court depositions (CTH 293–97) |
| Festival scenarios (CTH 591–721) | Cult inventories (CTH 501–30) |
| Rituals (CTH 390–500) | Non-celestial omina (CTH 536–60) |
| Mythology, Anatolian (CTH 321–38) and non-Anatolian (CTH 341–69) | Oracle reports (CTH 561–82) |
| Hattian, Palaic, Luwian, Hurrian texts (CTH 725–91) | Vows (CTH 583–90) |
| Hippological texts (CTH 284–87) | Tablet collection shelf lists (CTH 276–82) |
| Lexical lists (CTH 299–309) | Tablet collection labels (CTH 283) |
| Sumerian and Akkadian compositions (CTH 310–16, 792–819) and the Hurrian-Hittite bilingual | |

[8] See van den Hout 2002. The texts from Ortaköy remain largely unpublished but are likely to reflect the same character.

[9] EA 31 and 32, see Moran 1992: 101–03. Although diplomatic correspondence was usually in Akkadian and the Egyptian-Hittite correspondence was indeed conducted in that language, the Arzawans in the far west probably were too far removed from Mesopotamia and cut off by the Hittite empire from that world to be able to conduct Akkadian language correspondence. Significant in this respect is their explicit request to the Egyptians to write in Hittite. Probably, this was the nearest international language they had access to.

[10] For the latest assessment of the building history of Ḫattuša, see Seeher 2005. According to this view the most important places of tablet storage (the storerooms surrounding Temple 1, the so-called *Haus am Hang*, both in the Lower City, and Building A on the acropolis Büyükkale) may be considerably older than hitherto assumed.

[11] For this see van den Hout 2005 and forthcoming.

The only compositions that do not seem to fit the overall archival character[12] are the non-Anatolian myths, the lexical lists, the Sumerian and Akkadian compositions, as well as the Hurrian-Hittite bilingual. They may have been part of a so-called archive-library that kept compositions that were not the product of administration per se but did have an as yet to be defined relevance for the administration. Another possibility would be to think of some of them as library material that was specifically collected for "academic" and/or even entertainment or literary purposes. There can be no doubt, however, that all these records, documents, and compositions were the product of the ruling class of the Hittite state. The language of this class was Hittite but their status as an international power and their religious ideology of incorporating deities and cults of annexed territories and populations living within their borders made them collect and maintain other language compositions in their archives and (archive) libraries.

## CUNEIFORM AND HIEROGLYPHIC LUWIAN

As was already briefly stated, there exists a clear one-to-one relation between the Hittite language and the cuneiform script.[13] For Luwian, Hittite's close relative, the situation is more complex. Usually we keep Luwian written in cuneiform and Luwian in hieroglyphs strictly apart as two very closely related but nevertheless different varieties of the Luwian language. For the Hieroglyphic Luwian corpus see more in detail below. The Cuneiform Luwian corpus consists of two subcorpora: (1) rituals or ritual passages inserted into Hittite rituals as well as two fragments of letters, and (2) Luwian words in Hittite compositions (among them the so-called *Glossenkeilwörter*).[14] The differences between the two varieties of Luwian are slight. Cuneiform Luwian, for instance, no longer has a separate genitive case but uses an adjectival suffix instead that can be added to every noun and agrees in gender, case, and number with the noun it modifies. Although Hieroglyphic Luwian has the same genitival adjective, it still has a genitive case ending. Another difference concerns the common gender plural of the noun inflection.[15] Compare the following table:

| | | Cuneiform Luwian | Hieroglyphic Luwian |
|---|---|---|---|
| Plural | Nominative | *-nzi* | *-nzi* |
| | Accusative | *-nza* | *-nzi* |
| | Dative | *-nza* | *-nza* |

The relation of Cuneiform Luwian vis-à-vis Hieroglyphic Luwian is difficult to assess; according to Frank Starke they would have been mere sociolects,[16] and Craig Melchert suggests that Cuneiform Luwian might have been an archaic dialect from Kizzuwatna.[17]

## THE CHARACTER OF THE HIEROGLYPHIC LUWIAN LANGUAGE CORPUS

The hieroglyphic-written documents can be divided into three groups: inscriptions, graffiti, and seals, the latter mostly preserved in the form of seal impressions. For the period of the Hit-

[12] For a discussion, see van den Hout 2002.

[13] But not vice versa: Hittite appears written only in cuneiform, but cuneiform could be used also for a number of other languages in the Hittite scribal centers: Palaic, Luwian, Hattian, Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hurrian. The situation for the hieroglyphic writing system is the other way around: in the Hittite empire it was used for Luwian exclusively while (at least a very closely related form of) Luwian could also be written in cuneiform.

[14] For the Cuneiform Luwian corpus, see Starke 1985 and CLL.

[15] For more details, see Melchert 2003: 170–210.

[16] Starke 1997: 457f.

[17] Melchert 2003: 174.

tite empire we know about eighty inscriptions on stone.[18] They are either building inscriptions, mostly dedicatory in nature, or short epigraphs in the form of captions accompanying iconic representations of deities and royalty. The self-representations of royalty — both Hittite Great Kings and Queens and local vassal kings — found spread all over Anatolia are sometimes believed to have served as boundary markers. Many of these inscriptions have been inscribed on rock surfaces, some taking the form of stelae, others taking the form of reliefs, often as part of an architectural structure. All stem from the thirteenth century, with each king from Muwatalli II up to the last known King Šuppiluliyama (II) represented thus far except for Urḫiteššub/Muršili III and Arnuwanda III.[19] In the context of this paper it is important to note that as opposed to the cuneiform Hittite documents, the hieroglyphic monuments that contain more than just names and titles are the most straightforwardly propagandistic texts that have come down to us. Hittite annalistic prose in which kings tell of their *res gestae* certainly depict the king's wisdom and military skills but hardly his prowess in battle.[20] It would have been true propaganda if these compositions had been disseminated in any way by, for instance, public readings but the real *Sitz im Leben* of these texts is a much-debated problem.[21] It is interesting to see that some of the few cuneiform instances that do sound unabashedly propagandistic contain hints at public display and can be seen as either copies or drafts of inscriptions.[22]

Geographically, the inscriptions range from the far west on the Anatolian coast of the Aegean (KARABEL, SIPYLOS) through central Anatolia (BOĞAZKÖY) to the south (KARADAĞ, KIZILDAĞ) and southeast (ALEPPO). North of the area of Boğazköy they have not been found so far.[23]

Graffiti or inscriptions on objects like cups (cf., for instance, the Stag "rhyton" of the Schimmel collection[24] or the Boston Fist[25]), bowls,[26] and weapons[27] are far fewer in number and often difficult to date. If correctly dated, one of the oldest inscriptions of this type on a silver bowl would go back to Tudḫaliya I of the late fifteenth century B.C.[28] Unfortunately, the provenance or exact archaeological context of these objects is rarely known.

To this corpus of inscriptions and graffiti some 5,000 published seals and seal impressions can be added.[29] The overwhelming majority of seals and impressions comes from Boğazköy; about 700 come from elsewhere or are of unknown provenance. Among the findspots of those not found in Boğazköy, all Hittite centers are attested: Alaca Höyük, Maşat Höyük, Kuşaklı, Emar, Karkamiš, and Ugarit.[30] But seals and seal impressions have been found also as far west as

[18] For a listing, see Marazzi 1986: 89–120; for the Boğazköy texts, see Hawkins 1995: 121; for editions of most, see Meriggi 1975: 259–331 and Hawkins 1995.

[19] Compare in chronological order the inscriptions from ALEPPO I and SİRKELI (Muwatalli II), FRAKTIN (Ḫattušili III and Puduḫepa), BOĞAZKÖY, EMIRGAZI I (A–D)–V, KARAKUYU, YALBURT, YAZILIKAYA (Tudḫaliya IV), NIŞANTAŞ, and the Südburg (Šuppiluliyama II).

[20] For this, see especially the work of Cancik 1976 and Hoffner 1980.

[21] Compare the studies of Roszkowka-Mutschler 2002 and Gilan forthcoming. At the conference Sheldon Pollock pointed out that such public readings to the population took place in ancient India with Sanskrit inscriptions. For reading texts out loud in Hittite society, see van den Hout 2002: 866f.

[22] See the Anitta Text obverse 33–35 (ed. Neu 1974: 12f., Carruba 2003: 30f.), KBo 12.38 (ed. Güterbock 1967); for the latter text see further below. Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi 2004 see a development from the less propagandistic cuneiform annalistic tradition to a more visual and public Hieroglyphic Luwian one.

[23] For a map, see Hawkins 2003: 142f.

[24] Muscarella 1974: no. 123.

[25] Güterbock and Kendall 1995.

[26] Emre and Cınaroğlu 1993 and Hawkins 1997.

[27] Dinçol 1989.

[28] So Hawkins 1997.

[29] For a full bibliographic overview of seals and seal impressions up to 1995, see Souček and Siegelová 1996: 316–38.

[30] Seals are also reported to have been found at Ortaköy.

Troy,[31] in Tarsus on the southern coast, and as far east as Korucutepe in the northern Euphrates area. Seals were a legal instrument functioning in a self-contained system without the need for accompanying written documents and attesting to the correctness or validity of objects sealed. Such objects could be written documents where the seal owner vouched for the correctness of the contents of the document, they could be goods or objects the quality, quantity, or integrity of which was guaranteed by the seal owner. It should be kept in mind that, although these seals display the Hieroglyphic Luwian script, nothing can be said of the language. The names on the seals appear uninflected while the titles are almost all logographic. The only important question here is the motivation for the choice of the hieroglyphic script instead of the cuneiform. That cuneiform seals are perfectly possible needs no elucidation: Hittite kings themselves used cuneiform next to hieroglyphic signs but the interesting thing is that they were the only ones to do so, making the use of cuneiform for these purposes practically a royal prerogative (see also below). A chronological development can be observed if we look at the so-called *tabarna*-seals of the *Landschenkungsurkunden* of the Older Hittite period. Here the names of the kings and the curse formula are written in cuneiform. In the center of the seals we find at best some of the early symbols like VITA and BONUS. Only the BONUS sign would be part of the later Hieroglyphic Luwian script. It is with the seal of Šatanduḫeba of the early fourteenth century that hieroglyphs can be observed as a full-fledged syllabic writing system for the first time.

The Hieroglyphic Luwian corpus is largely linked to the ruling class of the Hittite state. Many inscriptions, graffiti, and seals explicitly refer to individuals belonging to that group (a king, a prince, an official known from the cuneiform texts). In general, style and "wording" are fairly uniform throughout Anatolia. Although the origins of this style may have lain outside the Hittite state, by the time the hieroglyphic writing system is firmly attested, this style was adopted and perhaps even dictated by that state. To what extent inscriptions and seal legends belong to individuals that were not part of the Hittite empire is difficult to determine.

## THE VERNACULAR: THE POSITION OF LUWIAN VIS-À-VIS HITTITE

### STATUS QUAESTIONIS

The fact that the genres (building inscriptions, captions for iconic representations, boundary markers?) for which the hieroglyphic script was used show no real overlap with the genres in cuneiform speaks for a deliberate choice on the part of the ruling class. What motivated this choice? We are either dealing with a bilingual society where the choice of the Hieroglyphic Luwian language and script was geared toward the intended audience of the monuments and seals, or a largely monolingual Hittite-speaking society in which the hieroglyphic script was chosen for aesthetic and decorative or prestigious reasons. The Luwian language that came with the script may in some way have been traditional with only a very small group within that same ruling class who could actually understand it. In the latter case, Luwian would probably go back to some old and venerated tradition and may have been the elevated or high (H) language variety as opposed to the low (L) variety of Hittite.[32]

The status of Luwian as the main language in large parts of west, south-central, and southeast Anatolia is not in dispute,[33] but the question discussed here is to what extent the Luwian language was present in the fourteenth and thirteenth century in the core Hittite area within the Halys ba-

[31] Hawkins and Easton 1996.

[32] For high (H) and low (L) language and dialect varieties, see Ferguson 1959.

[33] Melchert 2003: 11.

sin where most of the second-millennium Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions have actually been found. This question is closely related to the status of Hittite: a substantial Luwian presence in the Hittite heartland is mostly seen as lowering the status of Hittite to that of a mere chancellery language. A certain Luwian presence there is evident in Luwian language elements in the Hittite records of the capital and its nearby provincial centers. Those language elements are of two kinds: phenomena in Hittite grammar that find their best explanation as coming from Luwian and more directly, Luwian speech forms, mostly nouns and verbs inserted in genuine Luwian or Hittitized form in Hittite context. The first category may be the result of language convergence of two ethnic groups living or having lived in direct proximity over an extended period of time, although that period may have ended some time ago. The second category may show a more direct contact at the time of composition of the record the Luwian form is attested in. The latter forms are the most tangible form of Luwian interference and it is the only kind of evidence that is in any way measurable. These words fall into two categories: Luwian words in Hittite texts marked by one or two preceding oblique wedges (𒑱, 𒑲), the so-called *Glossenkeile*,[34] and unmarked Luwian forms in Hittite texts.

It was on the basis of such words that the theory of Hittite as a *Hof- und Amtssprache* was first put forward by Bernhard Rosenkranz in 1938. His most important observations concerned the wide variety of genres such words are attested in, not limited to a specific group of texts, and that they often denote objects or emotions from daily life. This led him to conclude that Luwian was the scribes' vernacular[35] whereas Hittite was probably only used at the court and in the chanceries, that is, spoken as well as written.[36] Several years later (1954) he retracted this claim and suggested that the Luwian influence might be better ascribed to the close and intensive contacts between the Hittite ruling class and Luwians in the years that the capital had been moved to Tarḫuntašša in southern Anatolia during the reign of Muršili II's successor, Muwatalli II (ca. 1295–1274 B.C.).[37]

In 1956 Hans Güterbock re-examined the question of the *Glossenkeilwörter* (henceforth 𒑲-marked words). In opposition to Rosenkranz, he considered their number "rather limited"[38] and observing that "a considerable number" of the compositions they appeared in were related to Kizzuwatna,[39] he tried to explain this interference as coming from Kizzuwatna, the Hittite province in southeast Anatolia, the area known in classical times as Cilicia Campestris.[40] Kizzuwatna was a mixed Luwian-Hurrian region from which a number of ritual compositions was incorporated into the tablet collections of the capital Ḫattuša. It is also thought to have been responsible for the wave of Hurrian culture and texts that invaded those same tablet collections in the reigns of King Tudḫaliya I and his immediate successors at the end of the fifteenth and early fourteenth century. Ḫattušili III's marriage to the Kizzuwatna priestess Puduḫepa in the late 1270s B.C. may have

[34] See Rüster and Neu 1989: 217 (no. 248).

[35] Rosenkranz 1938: 280.

[36] Rosenkranz 1938: 282. To attribute to him the view that Hittite was used for writing purposes only, as is sometimes done, is not correct as follows from his own term *Umgangssprache*: "Das Hethitische selbst war die Sprache einer Oberschicht und diente wohl nur als Hof- und Amtssprache (und deshalb auch als Literatur-sprache). Inwieweit es noch für *weitere* Kreise als *Umgangssprache* diente, läßt sich einstweilen nicht feststellen" (italics mine). Only later did Rosenkranz (1954: 309) refer to Hittite explicitly as "Schriftsprache." That Rosenkranz did think that Hittite as a real mother tongue for people was dead at the time of the 𒑲-marked words, however, follows from his remark (1938: 282) that "[d]ie alte Grundlage der hethitischen Schriftsprache war zur Zeit der Schreiber wohl schon tot." With "Hof- und Amtssprache" he may have intended a form of diglossia with Hittite comparable to the status of Latin at the Vatican or that of modern standard Arabic.

[37] Rosenkranz 1954: 309 with n. 9.

[38] Güterbock 1956: 137.

[39] Güterbock 1956: 138.

[40] In this he was followed by others, compare, for example, Kammenhuber 1959: 9f.

caused a second Hurrian wave in Ḫattuša. According to Güterbock, scribes from Kizzuwatna learned Hittite in the capital,[41] but they could not help reverting now and then to their own tongue resulting in a kind of *Mischsprache* where Luwian words were inserted in Hittite.[42] On the other hand, the fact that these words not only figure in local Kizzuwatnean texts but also spread to historical narrative, diplomatic documents, and works of foreign literature shows the importance of these scribes in Ḫattuša according to Güterbock.

At a conference in 1963 Jaan Puhvel judiciously referred to Rosenkranz's 1938 hypothesis as suggesting that Hittite "may have been on the road to becoming a scribal petrifact, and that Luwian was spreading as a vernacular of the empire."[43] He mentioned how it had been widely rejected but conceded that it "may contain some grain of truth." In 1965 Ruggero Stefanini also repeated the original claim of Rosenkranz.[44] In the conclusion to his edition of the New Hittite text KBo 4.14 which was then still regarded as one of the last Hittite texts, dated to the reign of the last known king, Šuppiluliyama II, he saw the option of Hittite as a language restricted to writing and liturgy as the only possible one to explain the high number of ḫ-marked words in that text. He accepted Güterbock's immigration of Kizzuwatnean scribes only for the initial phase but supposed that by the end of the thirteenth century the situation had turned around: a scribe's first language was Luwian now with Hittite only for the "literary" tradition and liturgical use. The ḫ-marked words were no longer used, not because a scribe could not think of the proper Hittite term but because everybody used them. In a more recent attempt at a "diachronic reconstruction of the linguistic map of ancient Anatolia" Stefanini is more cautious, holding on to the notion of Hittite as a written language but not denying "its own changes … up until the end" and its continuation as a spoken language in certain parts of society.[45]

In a recent volume on Luwians, their language, history, and culture, Craig Melchert rejected as "simplistic" and "artificial" the hypothesis that Luwian was the spoken language throughout Anatolia with Hittite a mere administrative or chancellery language used only in writing.[46] The morpho-phonological and syntactic changes we observe throughout the history of the Hittite language during its almost 500 years of attestation seem incompatible with such a notion while he considers the presence of Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions in the capital as "irrelevant for the

[41] Güterbock (1956: 138) suggested that this "is more easily understood if it [i.e., Hittite] was still spoken in the center than if it had already become a dead language."

[42] At this point Güterbock (1956: 138) gives the beautiful example from German immigrants into the United States: "Hast du die onions schon geweedet?" where "'onions' corresponds to a Luwian plural and 'geweedet' to a Hittitized hybrid." The example is somewhat misleading, however. The base language here is German with some Americanisms inserted. In their daily language the Kizzuwatnean immigrants no doubt did the same: a native Luwian sentence with Hittite words strewn in but in the Hittite texts we only meet them in their capacity as scribes and officials using the state idiom. If they were the ones composing texts like the Annals of Muršili II or the Apology of Ḫattušili III, their command of that language was near perfect. If they were just copying them why would they insert Luwian words? If a native speaker of Luwian who had not quite mastered Hittite as a foreign language were to compose a Hittite text one might expect a text like KUB 24.12+ (CTH 448 – NS, ed. Taracha 2000: 86–95), where the plural dative-locative of nouns is consistently represented by the plural accusative (cf. *kēdāš tarpalliuš* ii 29, iii 4/11, UGU-*ziuš* DINGIR.MEŠ ii 33, iii 8/15, 10/17; see also KUB 55.66 iv 9, 11; the emendation to a singular dative-locative *tarpalli‹‹uš›› by Starke apud Hawkins (Hawkins and Starke 1980: 146) is unlikely in view of the consistency and the preceding *kēdāš*). As noted by Yoshida (1991: 54f.), this finds a good explanation through Cuneiform Luwian where the plural accusative and the plural dative-locative were written identically (*-nza*). The text contains many other deviations from Hittite grammar (cf. Rieken 1994: 51 n. 37). If it is true that the text is a New Hittite composition or edition as claimed by Taracha (2000: 150) and the explanation of Cuneiform Luwian influence is valid, this is important for the understanding of the status of Cuneiform Luwian in the thirteenth century B.C.

[43] Published as Puhvel 1966: 239.

[44] Stefanini 1965: 78f.

[45] Stefanini 2002: 784 with n. 2.

[46] Melchert 2003: 12f.; compare also, for instance, Melchert 1994: 8 (with lit.) and Oettinger 1979: 387.

question of Luwian as a spoken language in Hattusa." More relevant according to Melchert for the socio-linguistic relation between Luwian and Hittite is the influence of the Luwian language on Hittite that becomes especially notable from the end of the fourteenth century onward. The oldest borrowings suggest close cultural contact while for the later period Melchert concedes "a gradually increasing Luwian presence in Hattusa and in central Anatolia."[47] The Luwian influence referred to is the Luwian *i*-mutation (see below) that led to a confusion of Hittite *a*- and *i*-stem nouns and that of Luwian nominal and verbal forms in Hittite contexts.

Most recently and in more detail, Melchert has returned to the question of the 𒁴-marked words and non-marked Luwian words in the wider context of Luwian influence on Hittite.[48] In a survey of Luwian and other foreign words he concludes that Luwian influence is already in evidence for the Old Hittite period although no unambiguous Luwian inflected forms occur in Old Hittite manuscripts.[49] Even for Middle Hittite manuscripts he quotes only three such forms.[50] His survey confirms the observation already made by Rosenkranz in 1938 that the distribution of Luwian words and forms is wide and includes practically all genres. He does, moreover, observe some interesting discrepancies within certain genres. Grouping the material into semantic fields (food, utensils, clothing; hunting and herding; military; religion and cult; social order), he concedes that the first three categories could be seen as colloquialisms. However, strongly opposing the view that Luwian would have been the vernacular and Hittite an administrative or chancellery language, he characterizes a colloquial explanation for the latter two as highly implausible. As an alternative he offers the possibility that foreign words added "to the high tone of a consciously literary composition (cf. the use of French words in English)." On the whole Melchert is reluctant to draw any conclusions other than that New Hittite has a "liberal sprinkling" of Luwian loanwords.

Besides the use of Luwian words and inflected forms in Hittite contexts there is also the more general influence on Hittite grammar which forms the second part of his paper.[51] In most cases an original Luwian grammatical feature was remodeled in Hittite by adding, for instance, a Hittite ending to a borrowed Luwian stem or suffix, often already attested in the Old Hittite period. Examples of these are Luwian nominal suffixes *-alla/i-*, nomina agentis in *-(a)t(t)alla-* as well as verbal forms in *-(i)yai-*. Of somewhat later date is the more general uncertainty in nominal *a*- and *i*-stems in Hittite caused by the Luwian phenomenon known as *i*-mutation. In this system Luwian common gender nouns and adjectives of several stem classes are marked by an *-i-* in between the stem and ending of the singular and plural nominative and accusative common gender, while the oblique cases have *-a-*. As shown by Elisabeth Rieken[52] the resulting vacillation in Hittite stems is not limited to specific genres or to texts from a certain region: such forms occur indiscriminately in texts from a Hattian or Kizzuwatnean background and in rituals, oracles, lexical lists, and historical prose alike. In this context we may recall that Norbert Oettinger already explained the productivity of the semi-consonantal *ḫi*-class (of the type third-person singular *šuḫḫai:* third-per-

[47] Melchert 2003: 13; for Hittites and Luwians having lived in each other's immediate proximity in prehistoric and early historic times, see Yakubovich (forthcoming).

[48] Melchert forthcoming. I am most grateful to Craig Melchert for allowing me to use his manuscript and to include his findings here in my investigation. Pending the publication of that paper I refer to paragraph numbers.

[49] In Old Hittite "the loanwords … are fully adapted to Hittite patterns": thus already Melchert (2003: 13). In dating Hittite compositions and tablets I follow the system of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary: left of the slash the period in which a text was composed is given (Old, Middle, or New Hittite: OH, MH, NH), right of the slash the period in which the tablet was written (Old, Middle or New Script: OS, MS, NS).

[50] For the latter observation, see already Rieken 1994: 48 n. 25.

[51] See Melchert forthcoming §§3.1–3 building on earlier work by Starke and Oettinger.

[52] Rieken 1994: 48.

son plural *šuḫḫanzi*) and the *mi*-class of verbs in *-iya-* through Luwian influence. In both cases he sees the reign of Muršili II as the point from which such changes become visible. Again, Melchert does observe a dramatic increase for some of these changes in the New Hittite period but steers clear of "any attempt at characterizing this influence more precisely in terms of language-contact typologies."

In the following I discuss both the 𒍑-marked words and those that are unmarked. The former group is the easier one since they are instantly recognizable. Only rarely were non-Luwian words marked by the wedges; there are a few examples of Hurrian or West Semitic words with the markers without any trace of Luwianization and they have not been included here.[53] Since I am interested in the socio-linguistic situation in the thirteenth century B.C. and "real," that is, unequivocal Luwian forms seem the best indicators of "live" Luwian language use in Hittite surroundings, I have for the non-marked forms — unlike Melchert — restricted this investigation to only such exclusively Luwian forms. As he has convincingly demonstrated, Luwian has exerted influence on the Hittite language in the form of lexical roots and stems, certain suffixes and derivations already early on as is evidenced in Hittite texts from the Old Hittite period. But such older borrowings may not tell that much about the linguistic realities of the thirteenth century.[54] The non-marked Luwian words used here were selected therefore because they show exclusively Luwian endings; for the noun and adjective these are the neuter singular nominative-accusative *-ša*/*-za*, ablative *-ati*, common plural nominative *-nzi*, common accusative *-nza*, dative *-nza*, for the verb the first-person singular active present *-wi*, second-person singular *-ti*, third-person singular *-ti*, *-iyai*, first-person plural *-uni*, third-person plural *-nti*, first-person singular preterite *-ḫa*, third-person singular -V*tta*, third-person plural *-nta*, second-person plural medio-passive *-tuwar*(*i*). In general, Luwian names (for gods, birds, breads, etc.) and epithets have not been included since they could easily be used without their being evidence of influence on the Hittite language.

## THE 𒍑-MARKED WORDS

The corpus of 𒍑-marked words gathered here comprises 337 different words,[55] often attested in several inflected forms and found in 130 compositions distributed over practically all genres of documents.[56] In most cases both the stem and the ending are Luwian, occasionally the ending is Hittite. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a specific form is either Luwian or Hittite but the Luwian character of the overwhelming majority of words marked with gloss wedges suggests that the form in question or at least part of it was felt as Luwian by the scribe.[57] These wedges to mark Luwian words start appearing in texts from the reign of Muršili II (ca. 1318–1295 B.C.) onward with only a single uncertain older example dating to the earlier fourteenth century.[58] A few other examples occur in later copies of Middle Hittite compositions where the possibility

[53] For example, 𒍑*g*/*kupaḫi-* "tiara, crown" (cf. Laroche 1976–1977 s.v. *kuwaḫi* and Catsanicos 1994: 318); 𒍑*našarta-* "?" (cf. Laroche 1976–1977 s.v. *našarti*, 179, CHD L–N s.v. (:)*našarta-*); 𒍑*kubateš* Msk 75.57+98:9 (cf. Salvini and Trémouille 2003: 233, 237, and 239).

[54] Thus also Melchert forthcoming §2.6.

[55] Words are defined here as separate entries in a dictionary. This means that derivatives of a lexeme — except for the genitival adjective — are counted separately but inflected forms of a single derived stem are not.

[56] Compositions are defined as entries in E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris 1971 = CTH) now in enlarged and updated form accessible through S. Košak, *Konkordanz der hethitischen Keilschrifttafeln* (I–LX) at http://www.orient.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/, version 1.

[57] Melchert 1994: 35 correctly warns against taking all occurrences of the gloss wedges as indicating Luwian origin of some kind although the position of Oettinger 1986: 51 is more nuanced than Melchert makes it seem. For the different uses of such wedges, see Souček 1957–1971.

[58] This is HKM 88:12 (𒍑*annarā*) from the small Middle Hittite corpus from Maşat Höyük, but the fragmentary context makes it not quite certain.

of a later modernization cannot be ruled out.[59] From Muršili II to the end of the empire, compositions from the reigns of all kings are attested except for the two very briefly reigning and in documents scarcely attested kings Urḫiteššub (ca. 1274–1267 B.C.) and Arnuwanda III (late thirteenth century).[60] The distribution of ˀ-marked words over genres can be seen in the following table:

| *GENRE* | *NUMBER OF WORDS* | *% OF TOTAL* |
|---|---|---|
| Historical prose, treaties, edicts | 79 | 20.4% |
| Correspondence | 27 | 7.0 |
| Administration | 15 | 3.9 |
| Instructions | 13 | 3.4 |
| Depositions | 21 | 5.4 |
| Translated literature | 1 | 0.2 |
| Mythology (foreign) | 30 | 7.7 |
| Hymns | 10 | 2.6 |
| Rituals | 29 | 7.5 |
| Cult inventories | 24 | 6.2 |
| Oracle reports | 65 | 16.8 |
| Vows | 18 | 4.6 |
| Festival scenarios | 29 | 7.5 |
| Texts from Luwian milieu | 18 | 4.6 |
| Texts from Hurrian milieu | 2 | 0.5 |
| Medical text (CTH 808) | 1 | 0.2 |
| CTH 832 (unclassified fragments) | 6 | 1.5 |
| *Total* | 388 | |

As observed by Rosenkranz (and again by Melchert) the distribution is wide and practically all genres are represented. This spread is all the more wide when one takes in consideration the date and language of a composition. Almost all gaps in terms of CTH numbers are either Old or Middle Hittite compositions or foreign, most notably those in Akkadian or Hurrian. Examples for the first group include the laws, Old and Middle Hittite historical prose and diplomatic documents, the hippological treatises, and indigenous Anatolian myths. The number of ˀ-marked words in

[59] Compare the examples of ˀ*ḫanḫaniya-* "to be malicious," ˀ*dūr* "urine," and ˀ*zūwa-* "bread" in the Instructions for Temple Personnel (CTH 264), but the exact date of this composition remains uncertain. All manuscripts are New Script, but a composition date around 1400 B.C. seems likely; the Chicago Hittite Dictionary usually characterizes the text as "pre-New Hittite/New Script." The fact that the first and third words are attested in two and three manuscripts respectively (the second one, ˀ*dūr* may be preserved in KUB 13.6 iii 18 ([…-]*úr*) which would make it attested in two manuscripts as well) makes it less likely they are later modernizations. It is conceivable, however, that only the wedges are the modernization while the Luwian words were already in the (older) original. The certainly Middle Hittite/New Script instruction KUB 31.84 has the hapax ˀ*katapenniš* (cf. CLL 103, Pecchioli Daddi 2003: 110f. with n. 287), but as a hapax it cannot yet be linked to anything known in the Luwian lexicon. The Middle Script ˀ*sakuwa* "eyes" in the Šunaššura treaty is purely Hittite (the Luwian word for "eyes" being *tāwa/i-*; cf. CLL 224); see already Güterbock 1956: 133, 135f. The (Old Hittite/)Middle Script attestation of ˀ*warkuššan* (= *warkun=šan* "his anger" or similar) in KUB 17.10 iii 12 is puzzling: it would be the oldest instance of the gloss wedges to indicate Luwian. The parallel *warkuiššan* (= *warkuin=šan*) does not have the wedges and differs in spelling. Is *wa-ar-ku-uš-* a mistake for *wa-ar-ku-iš-* and did the scribe want to draw attention to the deviating form (thus tentatively Houwink ten Cate 1970: 55; cf. also Weitenberg 1984: 271; and Kellerman 1986: 117)? If so, or if the wedges are there for any other reason than marking the word as Luwian, there is no independent evidence for a stem *warku-* in Luwian and it should be deleted from CLL 259.

[60] This is the same situation as we faced in the case of Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions (see above): Arnuwanda probably reigned very briefly and there are no texts that can be assigned to him with any certainty. Urḫiteššub may have ruled for seven years but very few texts can be ascribed to him.

compositions of clear Kizzuwatnean origin is quite low. Among the twenty-nine ritual compositions that have one or more Luwian words with wedges in them, only CTH 485 (ritual of drawing paths), 492 (ritual for the primeval gods/gods of the Netherworld), 495 (rituals of counter magic), and 500 (fragments of Kizzuwatnean rituals) originated from there.[61] They are good for only six of the 337 ˹˺-marked words.

The ˹˺-marked words are especially frequent in ephemeral records from Group B (see above). If we group them accordingly we get the following numbers:

*GROUP A* (longer-term documents, multiple copies)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Historical texts | 79 | |
| Instructions | 13 | |
| Translated literature | 1 | |
| Mythology | 30 | |
| Hymns | 10 | |
| Rituals | 29 | |
| Festival scenarios (including Luwian, etc.) | 49 | |
| Medical text | 1 | |
| *Total* | 212 | 55.5%[62] |

*GROUP B* (short-term documents, single copies only)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Correspondence | 27 | |
| Administration | 15 | |
| Depositions | 21 | |
| Cult inventories | 24 | |
| Oracle reports | 65 | |
| Vows | 18 | |
| *Total* | 170 | 44.5%[63] |

Although the total for Group A is still higher than in Group B, we have to keep in mind that the 212 of Group A is an accumulation of over about a century (from Muršili II around 1300 B.C. until shortly after 1200 B.C.). The records of Group B, however, date to the last decade(s) of the administration. This means that either the tendency to use such words became ever more widespread toward the end of the empire or, since in general we do not have texts of Group B dating before 1240/1230 B.C., that such words were used especially frequently in the most ephemeral texts where there was little or no influence of tradition and where elevated language was the least present. Had we had earlier Group B records their total could well have been much higher.

## THE UNMARKED LUWIAN WORDS AND FORMS

The picture for the unmarked Luwian words as selected according to the above criteria is quite different. I have counted 131 words distributed over ninety-nine compositions.[64] The difference concerns not so much the total number of words or compositions as their spread over genres and their dating:

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[61] Following Miller 2004: 447–52, I do not include here rituals like that of Ḫantitaššu (CTH 395) or Tunnawi (CTH 409).

[62] On a total of 382 occurrences = 388 - 6 of CTH 832 (unclassified compositions).

[63] See preceding footnote.

[64] For the definition of "word" and "composition" see above notes 54 and 55.

| *GENRE* | *NUMBER OF WORDS* | *% OF TOTAL* |
|---|---|---|
| Historical prose, treaties, edicts | 7 | 4.6% |
| Correspondence | 5 | 3.3 |
| Administration | 10 | 6.6 |
| Instructions | 3 | 2.0 |
| Hippological | 2 | 1.4 |
| Laws | 1 | 0.6 |
| Depositions | 2 | 1.4 |
| Mythology (foreign) | 3 | 2.0 |
| Hymns | 5 | 3.3 |
| Rituals | 38 | 25.4 |
| Cult inventories | 14 | 9.3 |
| Omina | 2 | 1.4 |
| Oracle reports | 13 | 8.6 |
| Vows | 5 | 3.3 |
| Festival scenarios | 15 | 10.0 |
| Texts from Luwian milieu | 23 | 15.4 |
| Medical texts | 2 | 1.4 |
| *Total* | 150 | |

The distribution leans heavily toward rituals, festivals, and texts with Luwian content that make up over 50% of the occurrences. The difference for each of these three groups in comparison with the 𒀸-marked words is very significant:

| | *𒀸-MARKED WORDS* | *UNMARKED* |
|---|---|---|
| Rituals | 7.5% | 25.4% |
| Festival scenarios | 7.5 | 10.0 |
| Texts from Luwian milieu | 4.6 | 15.4 |

On the other hand, there is an inverse relation in the following genres:

| | *𒀸- MARKED WORDS* | *UNMARKED* |
|---|---|---|
| Historical prose, treaties, edicts | 20.4% | 4.6% |
| Correspondence | 7.0 | 3.3 |
| Depositions | 5.4 | 1.4 |
| Mythology (foreign) | 7.7 | 2.0 |
| Oracle reports | 16.8 | 8.6 |
| Vows | 4.6 | 3.3 |

These shifts are reflected in the great majority of occurrences in texts from Group A (longer-term documents, multiple copies) as opposed to Group B (short-term documents, single copies only) among the unmarked Luwian words and forms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | 101 | 67.3% |
| B | 49 | 32.7 |

In dating this group also differs fundamentally. Whereas among the 𒀸-marked words we could identify only a single possible instance in a (late) Middle Script text (HKM 88:12 𒀸*annarā*),

there are contrary to the claims of Rieken and Melchert at least[65] eight, possibly nine,[66] different Middle Script manuscripts with unmarked unambiguous Luwian forms:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *akkurriyai* | third-person singular active present indicative | IBoT 1.36 iii 59 | CTH[67] 262 |
| *zapzagaššanza* | plural dative-locative[68] | KBo 17.93:18 | 470 |
| *zurkiyanza* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | KBo 21.41 reverse 22 | 480 |
| *arnamitti* | third-person singular active present indicative | KUB 29.7 reverse 63[69] | 480 |
| *kunzigannaḫiša* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | KBo 17.65 reverse 42 | 489 |
| *šaḫhanza* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | KBo 29.92 reverse 5[70] | 693 |
| *alaššiyanza* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | KUB 11.31 vi 5 | 700 |
| *šarraššiyanza* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | KUB 11.31 vi 3 | 700 |
| *murtanza* | neuter singular nominative-accusative | HKM 72:35 | 190 |
| *arunainta* | third-person plural active preterite indicative | HKM 109:1 | 239 |
| *mannāimminzi* | common plural nominative | KBo 23.50+ ii 23 | 433 |
| *mannāimminza* | common plural accusative | KBo 23.51+ i 18, KBo 23.50+ iii 32[71] | 433 |

Of these texts the CTH nos. 285, 480, 489, 693, and 700 originated in Kizzuwatna or came to Ḫattuša through southeast Anatolia in general. If we look for later copies of originally Middle Hittite compositions we count about thirty of those. On the other hand, the genres where we just observed a significantly lower number of Luwianisms in the unmarked group (historical prose/diplomatic records, administration, correspondence, cult inventories, oracle investigations, vows) all date to the thirteenth century (Muršili II and later). This means that we have a kind of complementary distribution: in the religious texts there was a higher tolerance for unmarked Luwian forms as opposed to the more secular genres of historical prose, diplomatic documents, and Group B texts where most Luwian forms were marked. In general, one can say that the numbers and percentages become even more pronounced when extending the material along the lines followed by Melchert.

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[65] One might add to the following list of exclusively Luwian forms as well some present plural 1 verb forms ending in *-uni*: *tiyauni* … SIG$_5$-*aḫḫuni* (both 1691/u ii 18, CTH 375 - MH/MS), *ḫatrāuni* (KUB 14.1+ reverse 36, CTH 147 - MH/MS), mentioned by Hoffner 1997: 15. As remarked by Hoffner, a scribal error for the first two is unlikely. The interpretation of *šekkuni* in HKM 48: 24 (MH/MS) remains uncertain. Other possible Middle Script Luwian forms are neuter singular nominative-accusatives in *-ša: ḫanzarwiša* Bo 90/758: 3 in a land deed of Ḫantili II as edited by Rüster 1993: 64f. with commentary 68, $^{TU_7}$*nirikkiš*[*a*] KBo 10.52:6 + KBo 15.16 ii 17, edited by Taracha 2000: 42 with commentary on p. 110, and the plant names *ankišša* and *gakkūšša* in the lexical list from Ortaköy (Ortaköy 95/3 ii 12, 13, 23) as edited by Süel and Soysal 2003: 349–65. Rieken (1997: 173 n. 35) also draws attention to the possible Luwian infinitive *āršūna* KBo 32.47a iii 8 (MH/MS).

[66] The tablet KBo 23.50+51++ containing the two forms at the end of the list (*mannāimminzi/a*) is given as "mh?" in Košak's *Konkordanz*, which is the equivalent to Middle Script in the Chicago Hittite Dictionary system (see above n. 50).

[67] For CTH-numbers as a classification of genres, see above n. 57.

[68] Thus with Neu 1995: 399, although his analysis remains unclear and he does not comment on the apparently Luwian character of the form; Rieken (1997: 173 n. 35) rightly recognizes it as Luwian but prefers to take it as a neuter singular nominative-accusative.

[69] The fragment KUB 29.7 is part of the same tablet as the preceding entry KBo 21.41.

[70] Compare also ibid. iii 8, and perhaps obverse 11 as well as KBo 24.37 i 17. For a discussion, see Starke 1990: 228f.; CHD Š lists this and other attestations as ablative but where context is preserved an interpretation as accusative seems compelling to me.

[71] The fragments KBo 23.51+KBo 20.107 are part of the same tablet as the preceding entry KBo 23.50.

The share of compositions from Kizzuwatna and (south)east Anatolia is considerable in the unmarked group, but not in that of the ˹-marked words as was already noted above. However, in the unmarked group we also find Luwian words in compositions that arose in the core area of the Hittite empire (e.g., the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma, the Annals of Muršili, all the oracles, administrative texts, and cult inventories).

### THE ˹-MARKED AND UNMARKED WORDS AND THE REST OF THE HITTITE LEXICON

Finally, we have to put the above numbers of Luwian words and forms into the wider perspective of the Hittite lexicon at large. "Hittite" here means all words used in Hittite context which includes Luwian, Hurrian, Hattian, and Semitic elements. The total number of different Luwian words from both groups comes to about 480. With an estimated 4,000 words in the known Hittite lexicon this brings the Luwian share of that lexicon to 12%. If we count all different words in Melchert's list this number climbs to almost 600, equaling 15%.

## THE PUBLIC

### SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND THE EARLIER VIEWS

The combined evidence of the ˹-marked words and the unmarked Luwian words suggests that Luwian interference in the form of words and inflected forms became prominent in the written record from the late fifteenth century onward.[72] Unmarked words and forms seem well established in the fourteenth century if we look at the Middle Script manuscripts and the number of older compositions in that group in general. To what extent we may posit an increase for the thirteenth century is a difficult question. In absolute terms the numbers certainly go up and taking into account the chronological limitations of Group B texts, our numbers almost certainly are on the low side. Our sources, however, flow more generously over time and the overwhelming majority of the records dates to the thirteenth century. What the present evidence does unambiguously show is that *Glossenkeile* preceding Luwian words and forms were a relatively recent and "sudden" phenomenon that must have been introduced during the reign of Muršili II (ca. 1318–1295 B.C.).[73] Looking at their distribution Luwianisms of both kinds were an accepted feature of religious texts, but they increasingly appear in secular genres from Mursili onward, this time, however, accompanied by the wedges.

The presence of these Luwianisms in Hittite texts found and mostly written in the capital during roughly the last two centuries of the Hittite empire (ca. 1400–1200 B.C.) presupposes either intensive contact with Luwian speakers or the presence of many Luwians among the scribes in Ḫattuša. The wide range of forms and the heavy presence in the most ephemeral records with no literary or traditional character plead strongly against an explanation as frozen forms and phrases to heighten the literary tone of a composition or to showcase the erudition of a scribe or author. Both intensive contact with or the presence of many Luwian speakers amount to the same conclusion: the population of the Hittite heartland is likely to have consisted of many Luwian speakers.

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[72] Note also for this earlier period — as pointed out by Watkins (2004: 574) — the passage in the Instruction for the Royal Bodyguard IBoT 1.36 iv 45–46 (MS, ed. Güterbock and van den Hout 1991: 38f.) referring to orders given to some guardsmen in Luwian.

[73] Thus already Kammenhuber 1969: 262. Besides the one not quite certain instance already referred to (see n. 59) these wedges may have been used for other purposes already earlier, but the institutionalized use to highlight Luwian words dates to the reign of Muršili II.

If indeed many scribes spoke Luwian as their first language, they must have been employed in all offices given the wide distribution over genres; as a consequence, they were not a special task force hired to write and copy Luwian compositions only, just as we know there were specialists for Akkadian language texts and probably also for Hurrian texts.[74] It is reasonable to assume they were probably recruited locally, which would again speak for many Luwian speakers in the local population. In turn, this would probably mean that they had not enough genuine Hittite speakers to fill those positions. This might *a fortiori* be true for non-scribal positions.[75] The inevitable conclusion of all this would have to be that Luwians formed the clear majority of the population in and around the capital.

If with Güterbock one were to assume that at sometime in the fifteenth century a contingent of Kizzuwatnean scribes immigrated into the capital that was otherwise Hittite speaking, the continued Luwian interference until the end of the Hittite empire would be difficult to explain.[76] Usually, immigrants living and working within a society speaking another language lose their language within three generations and often sooner.[77] By this measure, a generation of scribes that came in around 1425 B.C. would have completely assimilated linguistically by the middle of the fourteenth century. The first generation of immigrating scribes, moreover, may be expected to have written texts with mistakes influenced by their native Luwian, something which has thus far never been claimed.[78] Also, if this phenomenon was indeed due to the Kizzuwatnean cultural wave that seems to have been brought in with the coming of Tudḫaliya I toward the end of the fifteenth century, one wonders why there are so few Hurrian words with wedge markers.[79] It is more than likely there were Hurrian scribes in Ḫattuša whose task it was to write and copy Hurrian language texts whose number by far exceeds the Luwian corpus. If they had been asked to write Hittite texts as well one would expect many more of those. To be sure, especially in ritual texts and oracle reports there are very many Hurrian terms, but they are never marked and clearly belong to a very limited technical repertoire. What is more, in the corpus of 𒀸-marked words and non-Hittite words that are unmarked, there are several hybrid forms that have a Hurrian stem and a Luwian ending.[80] All this brings back to mind Rosenkranz' initial observation that many 𒀸-marked words belong to the sphere of daily life.[81] The corpus of Luwian words in Hittite texts is indeed different in this respect from Hurrian as well as Hattian words that generally belong to specialized vocabulary.[82]

Rosenkranz's later idea (1954, see above) that the temporary move to Tarḫuntašša under Muwatalli II in the first quarter of the thirteenth century was responsible for the rise of Luwians to Hittite court circles and that this would more easily explain the Luwian interference in the Hittite language is in my opinion not very likely either. The move proved short-lived when his succes-

[74] For Akkadian scribes at Ḫattuša, see Beckman 1983 and Klinger 1998. For Hurrian scribes, see Mascheroni 1984.

[75] Melchert forthcoming §4 reminds modern readers that our observations can only concern "a very small number of people," that is, the scribes, and that "we may assume that the overwhelming majority of the population was illiterate." In my opinion this only reinforces our conclusion that Luwian was widespread; if even the "learned" scribes mixed their Hittite with Luwian, how much more could we expect the common man to do so?

[76] Note, however, that according to Miller 2004 the Kizzuwatnaean influence has been overestimated.

[77] See, for instance, Hamers and Blanc 2000: 296–98; see also the contribution to this volume by Christopher Woods.

[78] For the kind of mistakes one might expect, see above n. 42.

[79] See above n. 53.

[80] See, for example, CLL s.vv. *āḫrušḫit-, irimpit-, nišḫi-, šūntinna-, zuzḫit-*; for *allaššiya-, šarraššiya-,* see Haas and Wilhelm 1974: 125; for *zurki-*, see van den Hout 1984: 72.

[81] Rosenkranz 1938: 278f.

[82] For the latter, see the negative assessment of Melchert 2003: 15–22.

sor Urḫiteššub moved the capital back and by the 1260s Ḫattušili III had reinstated the Ḫattuša scribal "dynasty" of Mittannamuwa.

As we saw earlier, Melchert suggests that Luwian words and forms might have been used to lend a composition a certain literary character.[83] He follows a similar line of thought when he calls the fact that thirteenth-century Hittite kings used Luwian and the hieroglyphic script in their monumental inscriptions "irrelevant for the question of Luwian as a spoken language in Hattusa."[84] It is true that from inscriptions in, for instance, Latin on modern buildings and monuments we should not infer that Latin is in any way a spoken language in any of those societies. But the status of Latin as the language of learning and high culture *par excellence* and especially the widespread associations (without any necessary knowledge of Latin) of power and dominance harking back to the days of the Imperium Romanum cannot be compared to that of Luwian in second-millennium Anatolia.

If Luwian had been a kind of high (H) language variety one would have expected many compositions to have been written in Luwian, especially those that were to be solemnly deposited in a temple, often in the form of metal tablets. Of course one could argue that the clay copies that we have were all just drafts to be translated into Luwian for the official or engrossed version. This, however, seems quite inefficient and we should have found at least some drafts in Luwian as well. Moreover, one such engrossed copy in bronze does exist: the text of the treaty with Kuruntiya, vassal king of Tarḫuntašša, which once was deposited in several copies in several temples.[85] Although this treaty is even concluded with the king of a Luwian-speaking region, the entire text is in Hittite. Also, all historical narratives like the Annals of Muršili II or his biography of Šuppiluliuma I that was to be transferred to a bronze tablet are known in Hittite only. Finally, if Luwian was added to texts to enhance their literary character, why do we find it so frequently in the most ephemeral texts like economic administration, oracles, and cult inventories?[86]

The assumption that Hieroglyphic Luwian was the language and script of an old tradition or was chosen for reasons of prestige thus lacks in my opinion any basis. For all we know, Hittite should have been that language and yet Hittite kings chose Hieroglyphic Luwian for their large, publicly displayed inscriptions. Putting up such inscriptions for visitors from the Luwian-speaking areas outside the Halys basin without having a parallel version in some other medium (i.e., Hittite in cuneiform) for the supposedly local Hittite-speaking core population would seem strange and unwise from a propagandistic point of view.[87] A bilingual option, that is, the assumption of a society in central Anatolia containing a large Luwian-speaking component, seems the only realistic one. Without going into a discussion of literacy, the minimal sense these monuments have to make is that they must have been recognizable to Luwians as Luwian. And then still the question remains: Why only Luwian and not also Hittite?

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[83] Melchert forthcoming §2.6. His observation that the terms *nū-* and *tummantiya-* as "ideal elements of a peaceful and ordered society" in the Old Hittite/Middle Script Myth of Telipinu (KUB 17.10) are far from colloquial is certainly true but only in a hypothesis that sees the relation between Hittite and Luwian as one of low (L) versus high (H) language. Note, however, that the presence of the goddess Kamrušepa in the same text could point at Luwian influence; compare Haas 1994: 439–41 and Hutter 2003: 230f.

[84] Melchert 2003: 13.

[85] This is Bo 86/299 edited by Otten 1988; for the list of places where the copies had been deposited, see the same text column iv 44–51 (edited by Otten 1988: 28f.).

[86] Neither is there any serious evidence for a Luwian kingdom or empire in the past that might have lived on in legends and that might have been a source for Luwian as a language of tradition. From the earliest beginnings of Hittite history it was the Hittites who dominated, starting with Anitta around 1750 B.C. and evident as well through the mention several times of the country Luwiya in the Old Hittite Laws where Luwiya appears as a closely related territory where Hittite Laws seem to have been in effect; on the earliest Luwian history, see Bryce 2003: 27–31.

[87] Compare the remarks by Versteegh 2002: 56, on the use of Sanskrit in political inscriptions outside India.

## A DIFFERENT PICTURE: LUWIAN AS THE MAIN LANGUAGE IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ḪATTUŠA

Overseeing the evidence of ⸢-marked words, unmarked Luwian words and forms, the wider grammatical influence of Luwian on the Hittite language, the presence of the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions and seals, and adding the implied realities as just sketched, I would advocate a largely bilingual Hittite-Luwian society for the thirteenth century B.C. where the Hittites politically and militarily dominated an increasing Luwian-speaking or increasingly Luwian-speaking population.[88] The presence of the Luwian language as noted above betrays a substantial Luwian undercurrent in what we usually perceive as "Hittite" society in the core area of the empire. Despite this large presence it was the language of the Hittite ruling class that was the official language of the empire imposed on all its "employees." As Trevor Bryce puts it: "the retention of this language would have helped reinforce the sense of dynasty, of unbroken family continuity through a succession of generations. [Hittite] was to remain the language of royalty throughout the period of the Hittite kingdom. This need not indicate continuing political supremacy by a particular group. Rather it reflects the retention of an important dynastic tradition." [89]

But the same employees were able to switch languages when needed. A rare example of code switching may be hidden in the alloglottography in the cuneiform Hittite text KBo 12.38. Alloglottography is defined as "the use of one language (L1) to represent an utterance in another language (L2) … in such a way that the original utterance in L2 can be accurately and unambiguously recovered from the document in L1." [90] As shown by Güterbock, Laroche, and Hawkins[91] KBo 12.38 contains the text of two inscriptions that must have been executed in Hieroglyphic Luwian in the capital. One of the two texts can even be identified with the Hieroglyphic Luwian NIŞANTAŞ inscription in the Upper City of Ḫattuša. Hawkins explicitly calls it a draft for this Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription. Güterbock recognized how the beginning of the second text (ii 22–23: *ūk=za* $^{d}$UTU-*ŠI tabarnaš* $^{m}$KÙ.GA.[P]Ú-*aš* LUGAL.GAL LUGAL KUR $^{UR}$[$^{U}$*Ḫa*]*tti* etc. "I am His Majesty, *tabarna*, Šuppiluliyama, Great King, King of Ḫatti" etc.) exactly follows the model of Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions and not that of the usual cuneiform royal edicts and similar records (*kiššan*/*UMMA* NN: "Thus speaks NN"). So this is not an example of a bad translation but a deliberate phrasing of the text according to typical Hieroglyphic Luwian stylistic patterns by a court scribe intimately familiar with Luwian and able to switch from one to the other.[92]

The choice of Luwian and the hieroglyphic script for public inscriptions from about 1300 B.C. onward can only be understood in this light. These monuments mainly addressed the majority of Luwian speakers in the Hittite heartland. The fact that no cuneiform Hittite versions were put up suggests that there may not have been a significant, larger Hittite-speaking population besides that of the ruling elite; they were making the propaganda but did not need persuading themselves. It does not have to mean (and most likely does not) that the population at large could read them,[93]

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[88] The latter implies a subtle but important shift from a society where Luwian and Hittite language speakers kept largely to themselves to one where through, for instance, intermarriage such divisions became less prominent and Luwian became more and more the language of daily life.

[89] Bryce 1998: 17f.

[90] Langslow 2002: 44f.

[91] Güterbock 1967; Laroche 1969–1970; and Hawkins 1995: 58f.

[92] Compare similarly Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi 2004: 171, although in contrast to Hawkins they see Luwian as the source language in this case and Hittite as the target language.

[93] One should be careful with such claims, however. First of all, we should, of course, distinguish between active and passive literacy. Secondly, the hieroglyphic script was and is much simpler to learn and to memorize than the highly abstract cuneiform script. The iconographic inventory of signs, moreover, must have been much more recognizable to them than to us.

but Luwians would have recognized the medium and as a consequence (or at least the ruling class hoped so) their rulers as theirs.[94] The message of a public inscription is often not so much its contents but simply its being public in a specific form; the form itself is an important part of the message.[95] The choice, then, for this medium by the ruling elite was not inspired by "solidarity with the masses," a notion rightly rejected by Melchert,[96] if understood as an expression of compassion. Rather, it was to send the message of alleged solidarity, a strategy to survive. On the one hand the ruling class considered it important to maintain the status of Hittite as the traditional and official language of power, on the other hand Luwian imagery in script and word was the perfect means not to alienate the majority of the population and to make state propaganda effective. Hittite as the official language of the state also makes it understandable why within the Hittite empire only Hittite Great Kings used cuneiform on their stamp seals. Given the fact that seals of officials give their name in hieroglyphic script only, the use of cuneiform seems to have been a royal prerogative. One could say the same of the Hittite text corpus in as far as all texts come from the royal archives and may be said to have been ultimately issued by the king.

How far the imposition of Hittite as the language of power could go can be seen in the fact that scribes in their appended private notes to official letters used Hittite.[97] The use of wedge markers can sometimes be understood along the same lines. The term *Glossenkeile* or gloss wedges is due to their use elsewhere in the ancient Near East as elucidations of words or phrases in a text.[98] They were inserted in the text following or near a term that needed explanation. Relatively rare is their use simply to signal words from a language other than that of the rest of the document, for instance, Hurrian words in otherwise Akkadian texts of the earlier or mid-fourteenth century in Syrian Qatna.[99] In these cases it has been assumed that Hurrian was the language of the local population with Akkadian as the administrative medium.[100] For the Hittite situation scholars have also taken them, albeit mostly implicitly, as calling attention to unusual, often non-Hittite elements in a text.[101] Melchert compares the modern "sic," which is commonly defined as an "editorial interpolation."[102] If we are right in assuming that the wedges were used for calling attention, that is, to warn readers that the following word was not Hittite, it seems simplest to assume a situation analogous to the one supposed for Qatna, where the scribes' first language was Luwian and, to speak with Güterbock, at times they "were not able to rid themselves from their own Luwian idiom."[103] Given the breadth of attestation and lexicon this implies a large Luwian-speaking contingent living right in the center and occupying many of the scribal positions.

Another consequence of the above regards the linguistic status of the Luwian words in Hittite context. Since the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions would address the same group of the population to which the scribes belonged that used the Luwian words in their texts, the $^{\text{LÚ}}$-marked and unmarked words would more likely be Hieroglyphic Luwian than Cuneiform Luwian regard-

[94] See Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi 2004: 158. For the same phenomenon in rituals where a ruling elite uses local popular ritual elements in creating state rituals, see Gilan 2004.

[95] An interesting case of playing with this notion can be seen in downtown Amsterdam where a modern structure in postmodern style carries the "Latin" inscription HOMO SAPIENS NON URINAT IN VENTUM.

[96] See Melchert forthcoming §2.6.

[97] According to Melchert forthcoming §3.2 this would be an argument in favor of Hittite as a spoken language. This may certainly be true, but it could have been the preferred office language. It is interesting to note that Ferguson (1959: 329), in his famous article on diglossia, gives "personal letters" as a typical H category.

[98] See Krecher 1957–1971.

[99] See Richter 2003: 171–76.

[100] See already Krecher 1957–1971: 438 and Richter 2003: 172.

[101] See Rosenkranz 1938: 283f.; compare also Güterbock 1956: 119; for other uses of the wedges, see Souček 1957–1971: 440.

[102] Thus Gibaldi 2003: 271; similarly *The Chicago Manual of Style* [Chicago, 2003] 464 [§11.69]).

[103] Güterbock 1956: 138.

less whether one thinks of Cuneiform Luwian as an archaic dialect with Melchert or a sociolect with Starke.[104] The only morphological feature that separates Hieroglyphic Luwian from both Cuneiform Luwian and Hittite (see above) is the common plural accusative in *-nzi* as opposed to Cuneiform Luwian *-nza* and Hittite *-uš*. Looking at all the 𒍑-marked words there is only a single specifically Cuneiform Luwian common plural accusative 𒍑*tarpanallinza* "substitutes (in a substitute or scapegoat ritual)" KUB 24.5 reverse 16 (CTH 419).[105] Substitute rituals originated in southern Anatolia ranging from the west to Kizzuwatna in the east[106] so that this specific ritual could well be a genuine Cuneiform Luwian composition. This form, moreover, can be contrasted with one common plural accusative in *-nzi*: 𒍑*ḫutanuenzi* "?" KUB 8.63 iv 13 (CTH 347) which as a Cuneiform Luwian form would have been incorrectly used but would be correct according to Hieroglyphic Luwian grammar. In the corpus of unmarked Luwian words there are some more examples of such "incorrect" forms in *-nzi* in object function: *ḫalalenzi* "clean, pure" KBo 11.2 i 10 (CTH 703), *marwāinzi* "dark" KUB 54.65 ii 11 (CTH 425), and *šeḫellinzi* "pure" IBoT 2.129 obverse 23 (CTH 574). Scribes make all kinds of mistakes, but using a wrong case form is rare. I am not saying that the 𒍑-marked and unmarked Luwian words and forms are all Hieroglyphic Luwian rather than Cuneiform Luwian but that our separation by script risks being artificial and that the possibility of Hieroglyphic Luwian material among the Cuneiform Luwian words should be seriously considered as was already cautiously suggested by Melchert.[107]

The scenario sketched here for the socio-linguistic situation in the heartland of second-millennium Anatolia also fits the fact that with the abandonment of the capital by the ruling class shortly after 1200 B.C. the Hittite language and the cuneiform script disappeared forever from Anatolia. On the basis of the three Hittite-style Great kingships that emerged in the Karadağ-Kızıldağ area, in Elbistan-Karahöyük and Malatya/Karkamiš in the twelfth century B.C. it is assumed that the last Hittite ruler and his retinue moved in a southeast direction.[108] This is the same region where Luwian survived and where we see an almost explosive increase of Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions in the early Iron Age.[109] Although they would have moved into an area formerly part of the Hittite empire, the Hittites apparently no longer had either the political or numerical weight to assert themselves as they had for the past 500 years. The former empire completely broke up and the language and its cuneiform script disappeared.

In a final speculation I may perhaps offer a possible scenario where "it went wrong": what was the "tipping" point that may have given the Luwians the majority in the center of the empire making the eventual demise of the Hittite language only a matter of time? If we consider the rise and fall of languages along the lines of the punctuated equilibrium as proposed by Dixon,[110] we

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[104] That is, if he means by this a variety used for cult purposes especially.

[105] The duplicate KUB 36.94 reverse 12 has the singular 𒍑*tarpallin,* but the anaphoric demonstrative *apūš* in KUB 24.5 reverse 16 confirms the correctness of the Luwian plural there; see also Soysal 2004: 104 n. 12.

[106] See Janowski and Wilhelm 1993: 134–39.

[107] Melchert 2003: 173. A morphological feature shared by Hieroglyphic Luwian and Hittite but not by Cuneiform Luwian is the singular genitive in *-(a)š*. As is well known the Luwic languages together innovated in creating an adjectival genitive in *-assa/i-*. Whereas Hieroglyphic Luwian and Lycian retained the old Indo-European ending **-os* alongside the new formation, Cuneiform Luwian seems to have done away with *-aš* (< **-os*) completely (cf. Hajnal 2000 and Melchert 2003: 186–88). Several of the 𒍑-marked words have genitives in *-aš*. Because of hybrid forms among both the 𒍑-marked and unmarked words where a Luwian stem is provided with a Hittite ending like, for example, an ablative in *-az* as opposed to a Luwian ablative *-ati*, or an plural accusative in *-uš* as opposed to a Luwian one in *-nza*, such genitives are usually labeled as "Hittite." They are attested about as often hybrid ablatives: I know of eight ablatives in *-az* versus nine genitives in *-aš*. In fact, it would be better to leave that decision open since we could be dealing with genuine Hieroglyphic Luwian forms.

[108] For the inscriptions, see Hawkins 1988.

[109] See the map in Hawkins 2003: 142.

[110] Dixon 1997.

should be looking for such a punctuation in the course of Hittite history. The more than twenty-year long epidemic during the last quarter of the fourteenth century may be a good candidate. According to Hittite sources the widow of one of the last Amarna pharaohs, possibly Tutankhamun, asked the Hittite King Šuppiluliuma I around 1325 B.C. for one of his sons to become her new husband and king in Egypt.[111] After having waited too long, Šuppiluliuma complied but the son was killed; the widow had to marry an Egyptian and the Amarna dynasty came to an end. Enraged, the Hittite Great King sent another son out on a punitive raid into Egyptian controlled territory in Syria and he returned to Ḫatti with prisoners of war. Among these prisoners an epidemic developed that spread and raged through Hittite territory for over twenty years according to Šuppiluliuma's second successor Muršili II. Both Šuppiluliuma and his first successor Arnuwanda II fell victim to the illness which suggests that it went around in the capital itself. This is also the impression one gets from the so-called Plague Prayers of Muršili where he threatens the gods that nobody would be left to bring them their offerings. The picture he paints is that of devastation and decimation of the population.[112] If we date the outbreak of the epidemic to 1323 B.C., it lasted into Muršili's nineteenth regnal year or 1300/1299 B.C. If we suppose that the epidemic was confined to or had its greatest effect on the core part of the empire, the consequences for the population here may have been very serious. It may well be that as a result the Hittite administration was increasingly dependent on more peripheral areas for its labor force thereby setting in motion a reversal of the ethno-linguistic composition of that core area. This need may be reflected in the very large numbers of deportees from Luwian Arzawa in the west, Karkamiš in the southeast, and Azzi-Ḫayaša in the northeast, that Muršili brought to the capital early in his reign. Especially the high number of inhabitants from Arzawa, where a form of Luwian (Muršili mentions 66,000 + 15,000 + 4,000 = 85,000 deportees from there[113]) was spoken, must have significantly changed the demographic makeup of the core area and may in the end have proved fatal for Hittite as a language.[114]

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Was Hittite society in the capital bilingual with the minority imposing its language as the official one where most Luwians spoke Hittite but not all Hittites knew Luwian?[115] Or was there a situation of diglossia in which Hittite was the high (H) language variety and Luwian a low (L) language variety?[116] A minority determining a nation's official language is nothing unusual, "so long as it is a minority of sufficient political weight."[117] According to Hobsbawm half of the population of France did not speak French in 1789 and in Italy "only 2½% of the population used [Italian] for everyday purposes" around 1860.[118] However, these were nations *in statu nascendi* where the ruling minority was to impose its language successfully to the detriment of regional

[111] For a full account of this affair and its aftermath, see Bryce 1998: 193–99, 223–25.

[112] Trevor Bryce (pers. comm. April 7, 2005) rightly warns me that "The Plague Prayers are highly emotional pleas which seek to present the plague in the most catastrophic light possible. They are not dispassionate historical sources of information."

[113] See the listing in Hoffner (2002: 61) and also Bryce (2003: 61f.).

[114] For such demographic changes as determining factors in language death, see also the contributions by William Schniedewind and Paul Zimansky to this volume. An interesting consequence of this would be that if I am right in seeing Hieroglyphic Luwian as the form of Luwian spoken in the center rather than Cuneiform Luwian, the former would have been in all likelihood the Arzawan variant or one heavily influenced by it.

[115] Compare Dixon 1997: 22f.

[116] For diglossia in ancient language corpora, see Langslow (2002: 26–28) and Versteegh (2002: 54f., 66–70).

[117] Hobsbawm 1990: 60.

[118] Hobsbawm 1990: 60f.

vernaculars in centuries to come. The Hittite state, on the other hand, was already some 400 years old and had around 1300 B.C. during the reign of Muršili just entered its last century; in hindsight it was a nation in decline. If there had been a time when Hittite was in full bloom at least in the Anatolian heartland, there may have been a shift at some point where Hittite had to cede its majority status to Luwian. The situation originally envisaged by Rosenkranz of Hittite as the standard language for more official and literary purposes but nobody's first language while Luwian was the real vernacular may be one step further in the possible decline of Hittite.

There may be no need, however, for an either/or opposition as convincingly argued by Kees Versteegh; vernacular and standard language can also be seen as two extremes in a linguistic continuum.[119] The written record, especially if it is the "official" record, is notoriously unreliable. Our view of Hittite is almost certainly skewed by the one-sidedness of our evidence. To say that Luwian was the vernacular does not deny that Luwian linguistic expression had or may have had its own sophistication, but we hardly have an independent textual transmission to support it: practically all sources for both languages are documents issued by the Hittite state. We have only one extreme of the continuum.[120] Neither are there independent Luwian texts that might show its use as a widespread means of regular daily communication. Unmarked Luwian forms, whether genuinely Luwian or in a Hittite guise, may have been in the language for a long time before they reached a point of written acceptance where they may no longer have been felt as foreign. This is where the *Glossenkeilwörter* are so important; they show the contemporary awareness of Luwian interference and force us to consider the realities behind their use.[121]

## NOTE TO *APPENDICES A* AND *B*

The *Appendices A* and *B* contain the Luwian material used in this study. *Appendix A* lists all words known to me preceded by one or two *Glossenkeile* (𒑱/𒑲) that can be considered Luwian, *Appendix B* all Luwian forms as given earlier that are not marked by *Glossenkeile*. All entries in both lists are ordered by CTH numbers. For the sake of brevity, words that are listed in Melchert's *Cuneiform Luvian Lexicon* are only referenced by volume and text number of the cuneiform edition (e.g., KBo 4.14, KUB 23.1, or ABoT 65). Attestations that are not in CLL get additional column and/or line numbers (e.g., KBo 5.4 reverse 29, KUB 26.32 i 12, or HKM 88:12). "Hattušili Apology" refers to the edition of this text in Otten 1981, and "Bronze Tablet" refers to the edition of this text in Otten 1988. If a reference in CLL is to the excavation number only (e.g., Bo 6447 or 1762/c) and the fragment has been published meanwhile, the excavation number is given in parentheses (KUB 48.80 (= Bo 6447) or KBo 41.200 reverse 14 (= 1762/c)).

The following list gives the groups of CTH numbers and the genres they correspond to as they are listed in the text:

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[119] See Versteegh 2002 on the relation of standard languages vis-à-vis vernaculars.

[120] Compare also the remarks of Watkins (2004: 552) on the virtually complete lack of dialectal variation consistent with the status of Hittite as a "literary language." Nevertheless, as Watkins rightly observes, the changes in Hittite over the course of its attestation are also consistent "with the development of a spoken language. At the same time, the extensive Luvian elements … would point to widespread use of Luwian and bilingualism."

[121] Note also the hieroglyphic graffiti of at least ten scribes in several public places in Ḫattuša interpreted as advertisements by Dinçol and Dinçol 2002.

| *Genre* | *CTH* |
|---|---|
| Historical prose, treaties, edicts | 1–147, 211–216 |
| Correspondence | 151–210 |
| Administration | 221–250, 276–283 |
| Instructions | 251–275 |
| Hippological | 284–287 |
| Laws | 291–292 |
| Depositions | 293–297 |
| Lexical lists | 299–309 |
| Translated literature | 310–316 |
| Mythology (Anatolian) | 321–338 |
| Mythology (foreign) | 341–370 |
| Hymns | 371–389 |
| Rituals | 390–500 |
| Cult inventories | 501–530 |
| Omina | 531–560 |
| Oracle reports | 561–582 |
| Vows | 584–590 |
| Festival scenarios | 591–722 |
| Texts from Hattian milieu | 725–745 |
| Texts from Palaic milieu | 750–754 |
| Texts from Luwian milieu | 757–773 |
| Texts from Hurrian milieu | 774–791 |
| Medical texts (CTH 808) | 808 |
| Unclassified fragments | 832 |

## APPENDIX A: ˹/˺-MARKED LUWIAN WORDS

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 61 | guršawar | KBo 3.4 |
| 61 | šamlayaya- | KUB 14.24 |
| 61 | ḫui(ya)- | KBo 3.4 |
| 61 | tapar- | KBo 3.4 |
| 62 | ḫuiduwaluwar | KBo 5.9 |
| 67 | wiwida(i)- | KBo 5.4 reverse 29, 36 |
| 68 | iyant- | KUB 6.41 |
| 68 | tarpanalašša- | KBo 4.7 |
| 71 | waššura(ya)- | KBo 4.8 |
| 81 | arpa- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | ḫui(ya)- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | ḫumma- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | irmala- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | lulut- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | marḫ- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | marna- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | palaḫša- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | tapar- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | taḫušiya- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | dannatta/i- | Hattušili Apology |

*APPENDIX A: ˀ/ʾ-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 81 | karna- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | aršaniya- | Hattušili Apology i 32 |
| 81 | ḫuwappa- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | arpaša- | Hattušili Apology |
| 81 | kuwaya- | Hattušili Apology |
| 85 | ḫupal- | KBo 6.29 |
| 85 | maruwae- | KBo 6.29 |
| 85 | arkammanalla- | KUB 23.127 |
| 85 | warwalan- | KUB 21.37 |
| 86 | šarl[a- | KUB 31.26:5 |
| 87 | arannu- | KBo 4.12 |
| 89 | kupiyat(i)- | KUB 21.29, KUB 23.123 |
| 90 | ḫuwantala- | KUB 21.8 |
| 105 | ḫuta- | KUB 23.1 |
| 105 | upaḫili- | KUB 23.1 |
| 105 | kugurniyaman- | KUB 23.1 |
| 105 | kupiyat(i)- | KUB 23.1 |
| 105 | tišša(i)- | KUB 23.1 |
| 106 | ḫallapuwant- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | ḫarmima- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | ḫinnaru(wa)- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | kantanna | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | kuwappal- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | lapan(a)- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | upatit- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | warwalan- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | nawila- | Bronze Tablet |
| 106 | wani(ya)- | KBo 4.10 |
| 106 | zantalanu(wa)- | Bronze Tablet (= Bo 86/299) |
| 106 | lapanalli(ya)- | KBo 4.10, Brt. |
| 106 | lapan(a)- | Bronze Tablet |
| 123 | allalla- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | aplušan | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | ḫalwatiya- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | ḫiššalla- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | kuwaya- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | marša- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | naḫḫuwa- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | pappaša- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | limma(n)- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | pašattarma- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | kuw(ay)ata- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | mal(a)i- | KBo 4.14 |
| 123 | kuw(ay)ta- | KBo 4.14 |
| 124 | ḫurtiyant- | KUB 26.32 i 12 |
| 124 | ḫarpanuwant- | KUB 26.32 |
| 124 | iyant- | KUB 26.32 |
| 124 | kuwayata- | KUB 26.32 |

*APPENDIX A: ˹/ʔ-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 125 | kuwayata- | KUB 26.33 |
| 126 | ḫattalla/i- | KUB 26.25 |
| 126 | kupiyat(i)- | KBo 12.30 |
| 126 | mali- | KBo 12.30 |
| 126 | zammuratt(i)- | KBo 12.30 |
| 176 | annan | KUB 21.38 |
| 176 | luppašti- | KUB 21.38 |
| 177 | puškantatar | KUB 23.101 |
| 180 | purpuriyaman- | KUB 23.85 |
| 181 | kargaranti | KUB 14.3 |
| 181 | pašiḫa(i)- | KUB 14.3 |
| 181 | zaršiya- | KUB 14.3 |
| 181 | uša(i)- | KUB 14.3 |
| 181 | ḫašpa- | KUB 14.3 |
| 183 | guršawar | KUB 26.91 |
| 186 | anzanu- | KBo 18.48 |
| 186 | annari- | KBo 18.48 |
| 187 | upaššalla | KBo 18.24 i 11 |
| 190 | annara? | HKM 88:12 |
| 192 | iyašḫant- | KUB 19.23 |
| 192 | karšantalla/i- | KUB 19.23 |
| 192 | iyašḫanduwant- | KUB 19.23 |
| 203 | parzašša/i- | KUB 40.1 reverse! 15 |
| 203 | šiwari(ya)- | KUB 40.1 |
| 203 | dayalla | KUB 40.1 reverse! 16 |
| 203 | uwalla | KUB 40.1 reverse! 7 |
| 209 | antari- | KBo 2.11 |
| 209 | arkamman- | KUB 26.92 |
| 209 | gaši- | KBo 2.11 |
| 209 | puḫaršan[(-) | KBo 18.23 obverse 11 |
| 210 | tatta-x[ | KUB 60.65 reverse 2 |
| 210 | tata-x?-yama | KUB 60.65 reverse 4 |
| 211 | wašda- | KUB 23.13 |
| 212 | zamurai- | KUB 40.33 |
| 212 | arza- | KUB 40.49 |
| 214 | ḫašpa- | KBo 16.22 |
| 214 | kulani(ya)- | KUB 21.20 |
| 214 | wanna[(-) | KUB 48.80 (= Bo 6447) |
| 215 | palḫa- | KUB 60.81:4 |
| 239 | arramma/i- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | ašḫaimmattanašša/i- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | ḫuiellari- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | lalatašša/i- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | muttanawann(i)- | KUB 8.78 |
| 239 | paratašša/i- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | tarpanutiya- | KUB 8.78, KBo 19.19, KBo 19.25 |
| 239 | tapašuwant(i)- | KUB 8.75 |

*APPENDIX A: ˹/ˀ-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 239 | ašan(aššа/i)- | KUB 8.75 |
| 239 | zaršiya- | KUB 8.79 |
| 241 | parzaki- | KUB 42.22 r.c. 13 |
| 242 | pišate-? | KUB 60.1:8 |
| 242 | puriyalla/i- | KBo 18.153 |
| 244 | pariyaššaima/i- | KUB 42.29 |
| 247 | lalinaima/i | KUB 42.84 |
| 255 | ḫalliya- | KUB 26.1 |
| 255 | ḫuḫupa- | KUB 26.13 |
| 255 | kukupalatar | KUB 26.1 |
| 255 | kugurniyaman- | KUB 21.42 |
| 255 | kuništayalla/i- | KUB 26.1, KUB 31.97 |
| 255 | mazalla- | KUB 21.42 |
| 256 | gallar | ABoT 56 iii 13 |
| 256 | taparamaḫit- | ABoT 56 |
| 256 | waškuit- | ABoT 56 |
| 261 | katapenna- | KUB 31.84 |
| 264 | ḫanḫaniya- | KUB 13.4, KUB 13.5 |
| 264 | dur | KUB 13.4 |
| 264 | zuwa- | KUB 13.4 |
| 293 | ḫarpanalla/i- | KUB 13.35 |
| 293 | lalama/i- | KUB 13.35 |
| 293 | lawarr(iya)- | KUB 13.35 |
| 293 | šallakartatar | KUB 13.35 i 25, iv 43 |
| 293 | dušduma/i- | KUB 13.35 |
| 293 | walwayalla/i- | KUB 13.35 |
| 294 | mana- | KUB 31.76 |
| 295 | tarpaša- | KUB 13.33 |
| 295 | mientiš(n)- | KBo 3.15 |
| 295 | mišti- | KUB 13.35 |
| 295 | parzašša/i- | KUB 13.35 |
| 297 | tarši(ya)- | KUB 31.71 |
| 297 | ziyadu- | KUB 26.49 |
| 297 | daddawant- | KUB 54.1 i 11 |
| 297 | ul[i? | KUB 52.93 obverse 2 |
| 297 | zammurinu- | KUB 54.1 ii 20 |
| 297 | zarta(-)enni- | KUB 60.98 reverse 12? |
| 297 | zela- | KUB 54.1 i 35 |
| 297 | kunduriya(i)- | KUB 60.97 obverse 13 |
| 297 | ḫaḫreške- | KUB 31.71+ ii 6 |
| 297 | mal(a)i- | KUB 40.80 |
| 316 | tarpi- | KBo 12.70 |
| 341 | aggat(i)- | KUB 8.56 |
| 341 | akkušša- | KUB 8.56, KBo 10.47 |
| 341 | galpariwala- | KUB 8.51, KBo 10.47 |
| 341 | niwalla/i- | KUB 8.48 |
| 341 | pinta- | KUB 8.50 |
| 341 | pittanummi- | KUB 8.50 |

*APPENDIX A: ˹/ₔ-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 341 | pulpuli- | KUB 8.53 |
| 341 | šapp(a)- | KUB 8.50 |
| 341 | winal | KUB 8.50 |
| 342 | šaššumai | KUB 36.35 |
| 342 | mišti- | KUB 36.35 |
| 343 | niwaralla- | KUB 33.111, KUB 36.2 |
| 343 | šuwaru- | KUB 36.2 ii 22 |
| 343 | niwaralla- | KUB 33.111, KUB 33.112, KUB 36.2 |
| 343 | zuwa- | KUB 36.5 |
| 345 | ikunta | KUB 33.96, KUB 33.98 |
| 345 | maltani- | KUB 33.106 |
| 345 | šapidduwa- | KUB 33.113 |
| 345 | tarpanalla/i- | KUB 33.96 |
| 345 | gulluši(ya)- | KUB 33.106 |
| 345 | tišša(i)- | KUB 36.12 |
| 346 | ḫuwaḫuwanala- | KUB 36.25 |
| 346 | laḫpa- | KUB 36.25 i 4 |
| 346 | malušteya- | KUB 36.25 |
| 347 | ḫaršanta(n)- | KUB 8.63 |
| 347 | ḫutanu(i)- | KUB 8.63 |
| 348 | puri- | KBo 26.82 obverse 8 |
| 349 | tatta- | KUB 23.97 |
| 350 | ḫanḫama(n)- | KUB 33.89 |
| 363 | ḫapa(n)zuwalatar | KUB 24.7 |
| 378 | kappilazza- | KUB 14.8 |
| 381 | ḫuwayalla/i- | KUB 6.46 |
| 381 | ziladuwa | KUB 6.46 |
| 381 | kulani(ya)- | KUB 6.46 |
| 382 | gulzattar | KBo 11.1 |
| 382 | tarawi(ya)- | KBo 11.1 obverse 15 |
| 383 | iyašḫanduwant- | KUB 14.7 |
| 389 | auwalla- | KUB 36.96 |
| 389 | awiyaḫḫa | KUB 36.96:12 |
| 389 | mumuwa- | KUB 36.96 |
| 390 | ḫurdant- | VS 100:2, 9(?) |
| 391 | mulatar | KBo 13.109, KUB 57.122 (= Bo 898) |
| 395 | nut- | KBo 11.14 |
| 401 | iyawa(n)- | KUB 30.33 |
| 402 | padumazzi(ya) | KUB 24.11 |
| 409 | alli- | KUB 12.58 |
| 419 | tarpalla/i- | KUB 36.94 |
| 419 | tarpanalla/i- | KUB 24.5 |
| 431 | wašša- | KUB 17.12 |
| 433 | ḫaršanta(n)- | KUB 36.83 |
| 434 | šamma/i- | KBo 20.82 ii 30, 35, 37 |
| 434 | ušantari(ya)- | KUB 58.108 |
| 441 | ammašša- | KUB 12.26 |
| 441 | wašan | KUB 12.26 ii 26 |

*APPENDIX A: ˀ/ʔ-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 448 | ḫalḫalzana/i- | KUB 24.12 |
| 448 | mammanna- | KUB 24.12 |
| 450 | uruḫḫi- | KUB 39.41 i 10 |
| 451 | lila(i)- | KUB 30.27 |
| 470 | aranati(ya)- | KBo 13.200 |
| 470 | luppašduwala/i- | KUB 60.137 |
| 470 | šalupz[a(-) | KBo 7.56 |
| 470 | ušantaraḫit- | KBo 13.104 |
| 485 | kattawatnalla/i- | KUB 58.73 |
| 492 | luḫa- | KUB 17.20, 1516/u |
| 492 | dummanteya- | KUB 17.20 |
| 492 | ušašša/i- | KUB 17.20 |
| 495 | zazkitalla/i- | KUB 46.42 |
| 500 | artalliyama/i- | KUB 44.50 |
| 500 | šuwaru- | KUB 44.50 i? 10 |
| 501 | ḫupitawant- | KUB 38.1 |
| 501 | lupanauwant- | KUB 38.1 |
| 502 | ḫupitawant- | KUB 38.3 |
| 504 | kinzalpa- | KUB 12.1 |
| 505 | ḫašḫannari- | KBo 2.7 |
| 505 | kummayanna/i- | KBo 2.13 |
| 505 | dupša- | KBo 2.7, KBo 2.13 |
| 505 | kulani(ya)- | KBo 2.7 |
| 509 | titaimma/i- | KBo 2.1 |
| 509 | walipattašša/i- | KUB 2.1 |
| 514 | duppaun[- | KUB 38.4 |
| 518 | larella | IBoT 2.131 |
| 518 | lapanalla/i- | IBoT 2.131 |
| 518 | lapan(a)- | IBoT 2.131 |
| 519 | zuzunimma/i- | KBo 2.8 |
| 519 | ḫupitawant- | KBo 2.8 |
| 524 | tarmattar | KUB 38.25 |
| 525 | ḫurpušta- | KUB 17.35 |
| 530 | alattar | KUB 42.91 |
| 530 | ariaz[i(-) ? | KuSa 6 reverse 8 |
| 530 | mallitiwalla/i- | KUB 42.91 |
| 530 | parašamešmašša/i- | KuSa 6 reverse 10 |
| 530 | taḫarimaima/i- | KuSa 6 reverse 11, KuSa 7:1? |
| 530 | ušantara(ya)- | 1167/z |
| 557 | šaruš- | KUB 18.1 |
| 561 | arpa- | KUB 5.1 |
| 562 | putalli(ya)- | KUB 40.106 (= Bo 5607) |
| 566 | atupalašša/i- | KUB 22.70 |
| 566 | pinkit- | KUB 22.70 |
| 566 | walantalamma/i- | KUB 22.70 |
| 566 | takkišra/i- | KUB 22.70 |
| 566 | marušama/i- | KUB 22.70 |
| 566 | wašda- | KUB 22.70 |

*APPENDIX A: ١/٢-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 569 | arandaz | KUB 16.77 |
| 569 | aršula(i)- | KUB 16.32 |
| 569 | ḫazziwit- | KUB 16.77 |
| 569 | zappantalla(i)- | KUB 16.77, KUB 49.93:3 |
| 569 | šakkuriya- | KBo 9.151:2, KUB 50.6 ii 52 |
| 570 | šaḫuidara- | KUB 6.2 |
| 570 | šarqaza | KUB 52.34 obverse 5 |
| 570 | malḫaššallaḫit- | KUB 5.6 |
| 570 | iyant- | KUB 22.31 |
| 570 | kuwayata- | KUB 22.52 |
| 572 | šalta-x-li- | KUB 18.58 |
| 572 | kulan- | KBo 13.76 |
| 572 | iyant- | KUB 6.5, KUB 22.42 |
| 573 | pallašarinu(wa)- | KUB 6.12 |
| 573 | tita/i- | KUB 49.19 iii 27? |
| 574 | kiša(i)- | KUB 18.24 |
| 575 | arpa- | KBo 23.117 |
| 575 | lulut- | IBoT 1.33 |
| 577 | ḫapuš- | KUB 16.66:6, 7 |
| 577 | mantalla/i- | KUB 16.17 |
| 577 | mataššu | KBo 2.2 |
| 577 | parataššata- | KBo 24.126 obverse 29 |
| 577 | paštari(ya)- | KUB 18.57 |
| 577 | šargašamma/i- | KUB 5.24 |
| 577 | tapašša- | KBo 2.2 |
| 577 | urana(i)- | KBo 23.112:3, 4 |
| 577 | paštarnuwa- | KUB 5.24 |
| 577 | arpa- | KUB 52.49 ii 2 |
| 577 | šargašamma/i- | KUB 16.31 |
| 577 | wiḫu-x[ | KBo 41.200 reverse 14 (= 1762/c) |
| 578 | ašanay(a)- | KUB 5.5 |
| 578 | parri(ya)- | KUB 22.61 |
| 578 | maliyašḫa- | KUB 49.92 iv 4 |
| 578 | gallaratar | KUB 5.5 ii 28 |
| 579 | ḫuwalli- | KUB 22.40 iii 17 |
| 579 | nan(a)i- | KUB 22.40 |
| 579 | tišša(i)- | KUB 5.9 |
| 579 | tiššalli- | KUB 5.9 |
| 580 | šurašura- | KUB 18.9 ii 8 |
| 582 | ḫaḫḫaluwant(i)- | KUB 6.15 |
| 582 | ḫallapa- | KUB 16.2 |
| 582 | ipatarma- | KUB 16.57 |
| 582 | naduwan(t)- | KUB 52.91 iii 3 |
| 582 | tarrawi(ya)- | KUB 6.15 |
| 582 | ipru-xxx | KBo 44.210 reverse 17 |
| 582 | maliya- | KUB 18.46 |
| 582 | marušama/i- | Msk. 74.57:30 |
| 582 | tiwatani(ya)- | KUB 18.3 |

*APPENDIX A: ˹/˺-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 582 | walwaḫiššar | KBo 31.32:5 |
| 582 | duwi(?)pa | KuSa 14 reverse 1 |
| 582 | ziddari- | Msk. 74.57+98:53? |
| 582 | arpa- | KBo 22.260 |
| 582 | ipatarma- | KUB 22.17 |
| 582 | lawarr(iya)- | KBo 44.210 |
| 582 | šargašamma/i- | KUB 6.6 |
| 582 | šardi- | KUB 52.91 ii 5 |
| 584 | ḫuwaḫḫuwartalla- | KUB 15.23 |
| 584 | purani | 391/w iii 7, 9, 15 |
| 584 | šanduri- | KUB 31.77 i 20, 25 |
| 584 | talla- | KUB 15.3 i 20? |
| 584 | ušan-x[ | KUB 31.77 iii 14 |
| 584 | mataššu- | KUB 15.3 |
| 590 | arraḫḫani(ya)- | KUB 15.12 |
| 590 | ḫul[a- | KUB 60.60 r.c. 11 |
| 590 | iparwašḫa- | KUB 15.26 |
| 590 | gaštarḫaiya- | KBo 9.96 |
| 590 | kuwarayalla/i- | KUB 15.12 |
| 590 | piḫatt- | KUB 56.28 reverse 26 |
| 590 | titita/i- | KUB 56.28 obverse 8 |
| 590 | tuwant- | KUB 56.28 reverse 10, 11 |
| 590 | warpa/i- | KBo 9.96 |
| 590 | palayanalliya(n)- | KUB 48.126 i 11 |
| 590 | tapar- | KBo 8.63 i 10 |
| 590 | ḫelwati- | KUB 56.28 reverse 12 |
| 600 | luppašti- | KUB 36.97 |
| 617 | annari- | KUB 10.81 |
| 628 | marani | KUB 59.60 iii 4, 5 |
| 628 | ḫauni | KUB 59.60 iii 4, 5 |
| 628 | kur(a)i- | KUB 51.27 |
| 638 | uraliya- | KBo 13.256 (= 2184/g) |
| 641 | tuwaš- | KBo 29.213 |
| 655 | luḫa- | KBo 3.65 |
| 669 | nikrani- | KUB 10.91 |
| 671 | marwatar | KUB 36.89 |
| 671 | ipatarmay(a)- | KUB 36.89 |
| 671 | lalama/i- | KUB 36.89 |
| 672 | alpašša/i- | KBo 2.4 |
| 672 | gaḫari- | KBo 2.4 |
| 672 | tarwa(na)šša/i- | KBo 2.4 |
| 678 | alalanima/i- | KUB 57.112 reverse 4 |
| 682 | ḫaladdašša/i- | KUB 2.1 |
| 682 | tarpatta- | KBo 2.38 |
| 682 | ḫandattašša/i- | KBo 2.38 |
| 682 | ḫišda | KBo 12.59 |
| 682 | paraštarašša/i- | KUB 2.1 |
| 682 | lapan(a)- | KUB 2.1 |

*APPENDIX A: ١/٢-Marked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *GLOSS* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 682 | lapan(a)- | KUB 44.16 |
| 691 | ḫappinant- | KUB 17.24 |
| 692 | manna- | KUB 27.52 |
| 701 | unatiwala/i- | KBo 23.42 |
| 712 | ḫuwart(i)- | KUB 37.1 |
| 716 | dummanteya- | KBo 2.9 |
| 717 | iši- | KUB 24.7 |
| 765 | ḫuwanda- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | zallawar | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | ḫaršani- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | kuwar(i) | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | mannaima/i- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | mutti(ya)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | palpadama/i- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | papartaman- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | patalḫa(i)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | dannamma/i- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | dawalli(ya)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | dummantiyal | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | zalli(ya)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | zam(n)ant(i)- | KUB 44.4, KBo 13.241 |
| 765 | zunni(ya)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | duwa/i- | KUB 44.4 |
| 765 | palḫa- | KUB 44.4 |
| 770 | apparant(i)- | KUB 35.130 |
| 781 | mišti- | KUB 36.36 |
| 790 | puri- | KUB 45.26 ii 7 |
| 808 | mamanaš(a)- | KUB 37.1 |
| 832 | kuwalumuš | KUB 58.89 obverse 5 |
| 832 | dumman(t)- | KUB 58.89 obverse 4 |
| 832 | duwadu- | 2025/g |
| 832 | wira- | IBoT 3.7 |
| 832 | malwana(nt)- | KBo 40.223:4, 6 |
| 832 | arraḫḫani(ya)- | KBo 13.50 |

## APPENDIX B: UNMARKED LUWIAN WORDS

| *CTH* | *LUWIAN* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 40 | iyašḫa- | KBo 5.6 |
| 61 | pawari(ya)- | KUB 14.20 |
| 61 | tapar- | KUB 19.29 |
| 62 | damaš- | KBo 5.9 |
| 81 | taḫušiya- | Hatt. |
| 89 | mazzallaša- | KUB 21.29 |
| 106 | nuratašša/i- | Brt. 106 |
| 181 | pašiḫa(i)- | KUB 14.3 |
| 182 | šiwari(ya)- | KUB 19.55 |
| 190 | murta- | HKM 72 reverse 35 |
| 203 | pašiḫa(i)- | KUB 40.1 obverse 9 |
| 209 | alalu- | KUB 21.40 |
| 224 | aš- | KUB 26.58 |
| 225 | ḫuramman- | KUB 26.43 |
| 239 | aruna(i)- | HKM 109 obverse 15 |
| 241 | lakkuššanzani- | KBo 18.175 |
| 241 | aḫḫuwatar | KUB 42.19 |
| 245 | kulaima/i- | KUB 42.69 |
| 245 | lalinaima/i- | KUB 42.69 |
| 245 | lammamma/i- | KUB 42.69 |
| 250 | palšuwan- | KUB 42.75 |
| 257 | ḫapalli(ya)- | KUB 31.100 |
| 259 | ziyadu- | KUB 13.20 |
| 262 | akurriya(i)- | IBoT 1.36 iii 59 |
| 279 | nuḫḫari(ya)- | KUB 8.36 |
| 284 | zalla- | KBo 3.5 |
| 285 | taštari(ya)- | KUB 29.44 |
| 291 | karmalašša- | KUB 6.4 |
| 294 | mana- | KUB 31.76 |
| 297 | zuzunni(ya)- | KUB 43.76 |
| 342 | ḫalanza- | KUB 36.35 |
| 363 | pašš- | KUB 24.7 |
| 370 | ḫappinatta- | KUB 36.49 |
| 372 | wenal | KUB 31.127 |
| 376 | lauwar- | KUB 24.3 |
| 378 | kappilazza- | KUB 14.10/11 |
| 380 | ammašša- | KBo 4.6 |
| 386 | ḫalwatnazza- | KUB 36.88 |
| 390 | parti(ya)- | KBo 3.8 |
| 391 | ḫurtalla/i- | KUB 27.67 |
| 395 | lilipa- | KBo 11.14 |
| 398 | puwa(i)- | KBo 4.2 |
| 409 | tiyanešš- | KUB 7.53 |
| 409 | ḫartuwaḫartu- | KUB 12.58 (= Tunn.) |
| 412 | ḫurkilašša/i- | KUB 35.148 |
| 412 | zida/i- | KUB 35.148 |
| 412 | tiwatani- | VBoT 111 |

*APPENDIX B: Unmarked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *LUWIAN* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 425 | mura/i- | KUB 7.54 |
| 425 | marway(a)- | KUB 54.65 |
| 431 | kuwal(a)i- | KUB 17.12 |
| 431 | partanna/i- | KUB 17.12 |
| 431 | warmanna/i- | KUB 17.12 |
| 433 | mannaima/i- | KBo 23.50/51 |
| 448 | ḫaššuwašša/i- | KUB 12.16 i 10 |
| 450 | šamamma(n)- | KUB 39.7 ii 17 |
| 457 | ušantaray(a)- | KUB 35.84 |
| 461 | tišnit- | KUB 44.64 |
| 470 | šitarni(ya)- | KBo 38.209 (= 1153/c) |
| 470 | zapzagašša/i- | KBo 17.93:18 |
| 470 | paḫḫit- | KBo 38.209:2 (= 1153/c) |
| 470 | zurki(ya)- | KUB 58.57 i? 11, 14 |
| 471 | nišḫi- (hurr.) | KBo 5.2 |
| 471 | šuntinna- (hurr.) | KBo 5.2 |
| 475 | natḫit- | KBo 31.110 right column 7 |
| 476 | paḫḫit- | KBo 5.1 |
| 477 | paḫḫit- | Bo 4951 |
| 477 | kunzigannaḫit- | Bo 4951 |
| 479 | katmarši- | KUB 30.31 |
| 480 | zurki(ya)- | KBo 21.41+ reverse 22 |
| 480 | arnami(ya)- | KUB 29.7 |
| 481 | arnami(ya)- | KUB 29.4, KBo 8.90 |
| 481 | šarlatta- | KUB 29.4 |
| 489 | kunzigannaḫit- | KBo 17.65 |
| 495 | lila(i)- | KUB 17.32, KUB 46.38 |
| 500 | painit- | KBo 31.149 (= 258/d) |
| 500 | paḫḫit- | KBo 22.135 |
| 504 | kiklibaima/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | mallitalla/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | šakantama/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | tittalitaimma/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | aḫḫuwatar | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | baštaima/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 504 | lalinaima/i- | KUB 12.1 |
| 507 | ḫupita(wa)nt- | KUB 38.26 |
| 508 | wattattar | KUB 38.32 |
| 509 | anna/i- | KBo 2.1 |
| 510 | tarmaima/i- | KUB 38.6 |
| 519 | zuzunni(ya)- | KBo 2.8 |
| 522 | kurutauwant- | KBo 26.147:8 |
| 522 | ḫupita(wa)nt- | KBo 26.147:2 |
| 552 | ḫappi(ya)- | KUB 4.1 |
| 552 | muwizza- | KUB 4.1 |
| 564 | zaḫarliti- | KUB 18.12 |
| 569 | gulzattar | KUB 50.6 |

*APPENDIX B: Unmarked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *LUWIAN* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 569 | mantalli(ya)- | KBo 2.6 |
| 570 | dammara- | KUB 5.6 |
| 570 | lalatta- | KUB 22.67 |
| 572 | ḫatarni(ya)- | KUB 22.37 |
| 574 | šeḫelli(ya)- | IBoT 2.129 |
| 574 | purulliyašša/i- | KUB 16.35, IBoT 2.129 |
| 577 | aštaniya- | KBo 24.126 |
| 579 | kangat(a)i- | KUB 22.40 |
| 579 | duddu(wa)- | KUB 22.40 |
| 582 | mantalli(ya)- | KUB 22.35 |
| 582 | tamma/i- | VBoT 25 |
| 584 | targašnalli(ya)- | KUB 31.71 |
| 590 | papartama/i- | KBo 44.226 obverse 14 |
| 590 | -ḫ]u?wanaššari | KUB 31.67 |
| 590 | ḫapuš- | KBo 31.169 (= 342/f) |
| 590 | kunzigannaḫit- | KUB 56.30 reverse 3 |
| 616 | kaluti(ya)- | KUB 20.59 |
| 628 | irḫatta- | KUB 20.74 |
| 641 | natḫit- | KUB 40.2 |
| 670 | zuzḫitašša/i- (hurr.) | 643/z |
| 671 | ḫalwatnazza- | KUB 36.89 |
| 691 | šuwatar | KUB 27.59 |
| 693 | šaḫḫan | KBo 29.92 (= 509/d+) |
| 694 | šuwatar | KUB 46.51, KBo 29.65 |
| 700 | alaššiya- | KUB 11.31 vi 5 |
| 700 | šarrašša/i- (hurr.) | KUB 11.31 vi 3 |
| 700 | kullit- | KBo 10.34 |
| 702 | gulza(i)- | KUB 9.2 |
| 703 | ḫalal(i)- | KBo 11.2 |
| 706 | irimpit- (hurr.) | KUB 10.92 |
| 707 | alalu- | KBo 17.103 |
| 757 | tata/i- | KUB 9.31 |
| 761 | ḫaliyatta- | KUB 35.33 |
| 764 | arraḫḫani(ya)- | KBo 12.89 |
| 764 | tapašallat(i)- | KBo 12.100 |
| 764 | wašummaniyaull(i)- | KBo 12.100 |
| 765 | putalli(ya)- | KUB 44.4 |
| 767 | ḫalta- | KUB 35.145 |
| 767 | malwara- | KUB 35.145 |
| 767 | palḫama/i- | KUB 35.145 |
| 767 | šapartara- | KUB 35.143, KUB 35.145 |
| 767 | taḫḫara | KUB 35.145, KUB 35.144, KUB 17.15 |
| 767 | dunduma/i- | KUB 35.145 |
| 768 | alašša/i- | KUB 60.59 (= Bo 1391) |
| 770 | alašša/i- | VBoT 60 |
| 770 | annarumm(i)- | VBoT 60 |
| 770 | anni- | HT 82 |
| 770 | karš- | VBoT 60 |

*APPENDIX B: Unmarked Luwian Words (cont.)*

| *CTH* | *LUWIAN* | *ATTESTATION* |
|---|---|---|
| 770 | la- | VBoT 60 |
| 770 | lala- | VBoT 60 |
| 771 | šawatar | KUB 25.37 |
| 772 | awi- | KUB 55.38 |
| 772 | immara/i- | KBo 44.200 i? 8 |
| 772 | nirikkit- | KBo 14.121 |
| 808 | pattur/n- | KUB 37.1 |
| 808 | puwa(i)- | KUB 37.1 |
| 831 | šunnuwanti- | KBo 19.155 |

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Bo | Inventory number of Boğazköy tablets excavated 1906–1912. |
| CHD | The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, edited by H. G. Güterbock, H. A. Hoffner, and Th. P. J. van den Hout. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1989–. |
| CLL | Cuneiform Luvian Lexicon, by H. C. Melchert. Lexica Anatolica 2. Chapel Hill, 1993. |
| CTH | Catalogue des textes hittites, by E. Laroche. Paris: Klincksieck, 1971. |
| EA | Die El-Amarna-Tafeln, by J. A. Knudtzon. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915. |
| HKM | S. Alp. Hethitische Keilschrifttafeln aus Maşat-Höyük (Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, TTKYayın VI/34) — Ankara 1991. |
| IBoT | İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri(nden Seçme Metinler) — Istanbul 1944, 1947, 1954, Ankara 1988. |
| KBo | Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi (vols. 1–22 are a subseries of WVDOG) — Leipzig, Berlin. |
| KUB | Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi — Berlin. |

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# POSTSCRIPT (NOVEMBER 2007)

Since submitting my manuscript for the above contribution a few articles have appeared that take up the discussion concerning the role of the Luwian language in Hittite society in general and especially that of the thirteenth century B.C. In her article "Zum hethitisch-luwischen Sprachkontakt in historischer Zeit" (*Altorientalische Forschungen* 33 [2006]: 271–85), Elisabeth Rieken lays out in considerable detail how the Hittite language underwent a number of changes that resulted in a morphosyntactic structure that increasingly resembled that of the language we call Hieroglyphic Luwian. She cautiously describes this convergence as the result of "Einfluß des dominanten Hieroglyphen-Luwischen," most notably since the reign of Muršili II around 1300 B.C.

In a review article of the influential volume *The Luwians,* edited by H. Craig Melchert (2003), Itamar Singer (*Bibliotheca Orientalis* 62 [2005]: 430–51) elaborates on the notion of an ever larger Luwian component in the "sociological profile" of Hittite society. As a "working hypothesis" (cols. 447–51) he suggests that the army may have been an important home to many deportees while at the same time being a potential breeding ground for a powerful revolt "in times of distress and disarray."

Relevant in this same context is the article "Last Writing: Script Obsolescence in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Mesoamerica," by Stephen Houston, John Baines, and Jerrold S. Cooper (*Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45.3 [2003]: 430–79), that — thanks to Melissa Rosenzweig — came to my attention only after the first publication of this book. In the case of second-millennium Anatolia the demise of Hittite went hand in hand with the obsolescence of its cuneiform script and the survival of the hieroglyphic script used for the Luwian language. In their final discussion (pp. 467–71) of the extinction of Egyptian hieroglyphic, Mayan glyphs, and Mesopotamian cuneiform, the authors mention "sociolinguistic, 'spheres-of-exchange,' and demographic assaults" (p. 467) as general responsible factors. "All these scripts had as alternatives 'target' writing systems, often connected to dominant groups and languages" (ibid.). All this applies to the death of cuneiform in Anatolia as well. On the other hand, as the authors observe (p. 469), script disappearance or replacement is mostly an issue of high culture, all three script systems they study being "deeply embedded in their civilizations." For the Hittite case this may not be true: the use of cuneiform seems to have been restricted to the administration of the ruling class with no public display function and there is no evidence for the use of cuneiform by other levels of society. Whenever the elite wished to address a wider audience they seem to have used the Luwian language in its own hieroglyphic script. The change in Anatolia therefore looks more political than anything else.

The article by Melchert on "The Problem of Luvian Influence on Hittite" quoted as still forthcoming in my bibliography has meanwhile appeared in *Sprachkontakt und Sprachwandel, Akten der XI. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, 17.–23. September 2000*, edited by G. Meiser and O. Hackstein (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 445–60. In the more recent article "Indo-European Verbal Art in Luvian" (in *La langue poétique indo-européenne*, edited by G.-J. Pinault and D. Petit [Leuven-Paris 2006], pp. 291–98), Melchert analyses a number of passages from Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of both the second and first millennium B.C. "to demonstrate that the HLuvian dedicatory inscriptions … emphatically are not unreflecting and spontaneous 'simple prose' derived from the pattern of ordinary speech. They are on the contrary the products of a highly developed and in some cases remarkably sophisticated

compositional technique" (p. 295). This is certainly true and in keeping with the remark in my "Final Thoughts" that identifying Luwian as the vernacular in the late Hittite empire does not deny it its own high form of expression and possible literary sophistication. We need to keep in mind, though, that all Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of the second millennium that contain more than just names and titles were products of the Hittite ruling class.

For my article "On the Nature of the Hittite Tablet Collection," quoted as forthcoming, see now *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 47 (2005): 277–89.

Finally, to the three instances of Luwian plural accusatives in *-nzi* that are correct according to Hieroglyphic Luwian grammar but not to that of Cuneiform Luwian (see p. 240 in this volume) a fourth one can be added: KUB 24.5 obv. 29 + KUB 9.13:17 has SISKUR [ ... *-i*]*n-zi* DÙ-*zi* "(the king) performs the ... rituals."

# 13
# WRITING, WRITERS, AND READING IN THE KINGDOM OF VAN

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The advent of literacy in eastern Anatolia was intimately associated with the leadership of one particular political entity, the state of Biainili (Van; fig. 13.1).[1] By the standards of the Near East, it was a late arrival. The earliest inscriptions in this kingdom appeared around 830 B.C. (see figs. 13.2–8 for examples of Urartian inscriptions), by which time Assyrians and Hittites had been using cuneiform in lands to the south and west by for more than a millennium. There is nothing extraordinary about this tardiness, however, since prior to the end of the ninth century there was no society in eastern Anatolia sufficiently complex or populous to have any compelling need for literacy.

Nor is there anything unusual about the way in which writing developed in Biainili/Urartu. It followed a familiar pattern seen, for example, among the Hittites. At the time the state was congealing, external contacts prompted adoption of both the writing system and the language of a literate neighbor as a medium of literacy. Then, after a brief interlude, the borrowed script was used to write the native language.[2] In Urartu, the stimulus and models came from hostile interaction with Assyria, but within a generation Akkadian was relegated to a small, geographically concentrated group of bilingual texts, and the unrelated Urartian language, rendered in a streamlined and predominantly syllabic cuneiform, prevailed.

Two things about writing in Biainili do seem to be anomalous, however. The first is that the adoption of cuneiform runs against a prevailing historical trend. As Gernot Wilhelm has pointed out, the sphere of "Keilschrift-Kultur" was shrinking at the time (Wilhelm 1986: 96–97). Cuneiform had disappeared from central Anatolia at the end of the Bronze Age and, as the Iron Age progressed, was on its way to being replaced by alphabetic scripts in many other areas where it had reigned supreme. The transportation of cuneiform into the vast and virgin territory of eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia constituted its last great expansion, but not all the intellectual baggage usually associated with the writing system seems to have accompanied it (Wilhelm 1986: 97–98).

The second anomaly, a central concern of this communication, is the very limited and specific use to which writing was put for most of Biainili's history: it seems to have been employed almost exclusively as an instrument of royal display. Only in the kingdom's final phase did writing begin to play a role in mundane administrative communication and accounting. When it did, literacy almost seems to have been invented anew, with different cuneiform signs and an expansion of alternative writing systems.

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[1] Although contrary to scholarly convention, it is probably most appropriate to refer to this kingdom by this name, rather than the term applied to it by its neighbors, Urartu. The latter is a geographic designation with a much longer history than the polity and culture that command our attention and has an inexact territorial congruence with them. Much effort in identifying the origins of the polity of Biainili has probably gone astray through conflating it with the territory of Urartu, at the expense of recognizing elements that were brought in from outside when the state was created.

[2] *Whose* native language Urartian was remains to be established. It is usually assumed to have been widely spoken in eastern Anatolia in the early first millennium B.C., but there is no evidence either to support or refute this belief. If the language was as intimately bound to the state and its ruling dynasty was doing the writing, one need not even grant that it was a vernacular in the core of the kingdom. On this point, see Theo van den Hout's contribution to this volume.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF CUNEIFORM TO EASTERN ANATOLIA

There is no documentary evidence from eastern Anatolia in the Bronze Age, and very little discussion of the area by outsiders. The Hittites did not penetrate the region and their only major text of possible relevance is the treaty between the Hittite King Suppiluliuma I and Huqqana of Azzi/Hayaša, a land located to the east of Hatti, but not with any precision.[3] Assyrian royal annals chronicle the emergence of the state of Biainili in the ninth century by recording campaigns against increasingly united opponents, but the first inscription of a person native to the area was erected at Van by Sarduri, son of Litupri. We assume this is the same man who is called Seduri in the entry for the twenty-seventh year in the annals of Shalmaneser III (831 B.C.; Zimansky 1985: 48–50).

We have only one text from this Sarduri, repeated six times on large building blocks at the northwestern foot of the citadel rock at Van (Arutjunjan 2001: nos. 1–6, pp. 9–11). It stands as a precedent for the most common type of Urartian text, the royal building inscription, conveying the simple message that Sarduri brought these stones from the city of Alniunu and built this "wall." The form of the text and the royal titulary appear to be cribbed from the Assyrian King Assurnasirpal II, whose reign had ended roughly thirty years before the inscription was carved. Sarduri's name and patronymic are substituted for Assurnarsirpal's, and $^{KUR}$Nairi stands in place of Assur as the land over which the king ruled. The first word of the inscription, however, is an anomaly: IM *šá* $^{md}$*Sar*$_5$-BÀD (*duri*)… = "tablet of Sarduri…" This is a strange way to begin because the logogram IM normally refers to a clay tablet, not a stela or a stone monument. It is sometimes used at the beginning of letters in Mesopotamia although not official Assyrian letters. In his consideration of this text and its significance in tracing the ancestry of Urartian scribal traditions, Wilhelm suggests the composer was an inhabitant of the northern fringes of Assyrian territory:

> Man kann aus diesem Befund auf einen Schreiber schließen, dessen Ausbildung die Kenntnis einiger wichtiger Formeln der assyrischen Königsinschrift der vorausgehenden Jahrzehnten umfaßte, dessen eigentliches Metier aber das eines normalen Schreibers war, wie er gewiß in allen assyrischen Städten für den Bedarf eines privaten Publikums zur Verfügung stand, nämlich Briefe (und wohl auch Urkunden) zu schreiben (Wilhelm 1986: 106).

Whatever the explanation, one is left with the impression that the people who arranged for the stonemasons to transcribe the text from a tablet had little idea of what it actually said.[4] The IM is not a mistake in copying a single sign because it is repeated in all six exemplars. This is writing for an audience but not for readers. It probably had the same impact on the inhabitants of Biainili as it has had on all subsequent visitors to Van, including modern tourists: a demonstration of the power of the king to create a monument of size and to control the written word. It loses impact in the latter capacity if you are familiar with the content of Assyrian royal inscriptions and can actually read it.

Under the next king, Išpuini, the important step of writing in the Urartian language was taken, and from this point forward the only Akkadian inscriptions written by Urartians were components

[3] For an English translation of the treaty, see Beckman 1996: 22–30. Yakar (2000: 431) argues that Hayaša was located in the Erzurum region, which would put it well outside the area in which the state of Biainili was formed.

[4] They did know enough to break the lines in different places for each rendition without breaking words cross lines. Although line breaks within words are sometimes found in Old Persian inscriptions, which generally have word dividers, they are almost never seen in Mesopotamian or Urartian cuneiform.

of bilinguals, of which there are only four, all associated with the buffer state of Muṣaṣir, which lay between Urartu and Assyria.[5]

It is difficult to give precise numbers to the size of the text corpus because there is little agreement on how to count the various duplicate or partially duplicate inscriptions and new texts continue to be unearthed at the rate of two or three a year, but there are around 400 texts that can be assigned to the kings from Sarduri I to Rusa I, that is, from the founding of the kingdom until 714 B.C.[6] Of these, roughly 220 are on stone blocks or rock faces; the rest are short property markers on bronze objects.[7] All bear the name of the king. Among the inscriptions on stone, short texts of a few lines predominate, but there are a few dozen texts with more than twenty lines and two sets of annals — for Argišti I and Sarduri II, respectively — that are hundreds of lines long.

I will not dwell at length on the Urartian language,[8] but a few general comments are in order. It is a non-Semitic, non-Indo-European language with putative connections to some of the more obscure modern languages of the Caucasus.[9] Its relationship to Hurrian is close enough that Urartian grammar is now rarely studied independently. The Urartian phonemic inventory was clearly different from Akkadian and the conventional readings of cuneiform signs we take from Mesopotamia were probably only approximations of the values they had in Urartu. For example, when Sargon and other Assyrians mentioned the common Urartian royal name *Rusa*, which is consistently spelled with the *ru* sign of the cuneiform syllabary in Urartian inscriptions, they were apt to transcribe it as *Ursa*, suggesting that the sound they were hearing was not quite what they regarded as an initial *r*.[10]

Urartian monumental inscriptions make use of a very stripped down inventory of signs. There are about one hundred commonly occurring syllabic signs, seventy-five logograms, and fourteen determinatives.[11] Among the syllabograms, some that we would expect to find, such as the *mi* sign (#427 in standard Akkadian sign lists) are not used. When the Urartians wanted to write this phonetic syllabic value they wrote *mì*, occasionally following it with the sign for the vowel *i*. *Mi* is one of approximately sixteen syllabograms that were used by Urartian scribes only for Akkadian

[5] Of these, the Kelishin Stela (Arutjunjan 2001: no. 30) is the best preserved and most informative. The Topzawa Stela (Arutjunjan 2001: no. 387) and Mergeh Kavan inscriptions appear to be duplicates; both are badly damaged. See Salvini (1984b) for an edition of both texts. The fourth bilingual, recently discovered, is now in Tehran and unpublished.

[6] Complicating simple counts are such factors as the discovery of piles of bronze bowls at Karmir Blur, each of which had a simple dedication by Sarduri I. In some cases one logogram was used for the word for "property" (NÍG) and in some cases another (NÍG.GA). Sometimes there was only the name of Sarduri himself, and sometimes his name plus patronymic. There are also variations in the way the name Sarduri might be spelled. So how many different "texts" does this trove include? The most recently published corpus of Urartian texts striving for comprehensiveness is Arutjunjan 2001. For maintaining a format similar to earlier text collections, occasionally assigning separate numbers to multiple inscriptions that have exactly the same wording (with each of the six blocks on which Sarduri I repeated his inscription) and sometimes not, Arutjunjan was criticized by Salvini (2001b). The latter has his own corpus in preparation, which promises a more rational system of enumeration.

[7] The inscriptions on bronze have recently been cataloged by Seidl 2004: 18–44.

[8] A concise, but informative and up-to-date sketch of the grammar is provided by Gragg (1995: 2170–73). The most recent comprehensive studies of the grammar are Chačikjan 1985 and Wilhelm 2004.

[9] Diakonoff and Starostin (1986) have argued that Hurro-Urartian is one of five branches of an "Eastern Caucasian" family. This view was challenged by Smeets (1989) in a detailed review article.

[10] Since this proper name is the only word in Urartian texts to begin with /r/, it was perhaps foreign to both Akkadian and Urartian.

[11] This count is only approximate, particularly in the case of the logograms, which are often made up of several signs. I take, somewhat arbitrarily, five instances of a sign's use as the threshold for "common." I admit to lacking the stamina to make a full count of the logograms, so this figure is more of a guess than the others. It is clear, however, that nothing like the variety of cuneiform signs found at Nineveh was employed by Urartian scribes.

or Akkadograms in Urartian texts, but it was not used for such obvious things as the royal name Minua. With a few exceptions (like *u* and *ú*, *aš,* and *áš*) a given syllable was almost always written with the same sign and the scribes eschewed the many other choices Mesopotamian cuneiform offered them. They did make frequent use of what appear to us to be unnecessary supplementary vowel signs: following a *CV* sign with the *V* of the same quality. For example, $^{d}$*Hal-di-i-ni-ni uš-ma-a-ši-i-ni* could just as easily have been written without any signs for individual vowels.[12] It was this fact and the repetitive simplicity of Urartian that greatly assisted Hincks in the original decipherment of the full cuneiform system (Hincks 1848) — had scholars been required to work on Neo-Assyrian texts alone, it might have taken quite a bit longer to identify correctly the syllabary. Most Urartian cuneiform is in fact syllabic and very simple.

Another distinctive aspect of Urartian cuneiform was the development of "broken horizontal" wedges. Where a horizontal wedge would cross a vertical or a group of verticals in most cuneiform writing, the Urartian masons would break it, so there was no intersection, and then resume it to the right of the vertical with another horizontal. This purely decorative device may have been adopted to make inscriptions in stone easier to execute by eliminating the danger of broken corners at the intersections. In any case, it was an Urartian innovation of the late ninth or early eighth century. Melikišvili may perhaps have gone too far in designating these forms "Urartian" in contrast to the "Assyrian" forms of the first inscriptions (Melikišvili 1960: 34), but they were confined to Urartu for the time they were in use. The demands of stone carving may also be responsible for the relative infrequency of the elaborate logogram for "king" (LUGAL) in royal inscriptions. The sign used instead is the number twenty, two triangular wedges.

The basic point here is that the Urartian writing system used in royal inscriptions is not very complicated. Sign forms are highly standardized and their readings are almost invariably clear to us, as they were, presumably, to the Urartians. This is not a script that would take anyone a great deal of time to learn, as the number of characters is so small as to be close to the range of pure syllabaries like Japanese kana and Linear B. Even the longer texts would be easy to read if one spoke the Urartian language.

Our problem today is that we do not. The very lack of variety that makes simple inscriptions so readable works against our understanding the few inscriptions that are lengthy and discursive.[13] The texts overwhelmingly relate simple actions completed in the past, in either the first or third-person singular, with only the curse formulae to suggest forms for imperatives, imperfectives, or the future. There is only one feminine name in the entire corpus. The affinity of the language with Hurrian is now exploited in grammatical interpretations, but this can only suggest features in a very defective corpus. Above all, how the Urartian language that we know from royal inscriptions relates to what was actually spoken in the territories under Biainili's control is a question about which we can only speculate.[14]

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[12] It was recognized early in the history of Urartian decipherment that these extra vowels were purely decorative. This reinforces the point that what the texts looked like was very important consideration to their creators — this was writing to be seen and not necessarily read.

[13] For example, the third longest Urartian inscription was recently excavated at the site of Ayanis. Unlike the two longer inscriptions, which are annals in the form of formulaic yearly entries for campaigns, this is a multifaceted dedicatory inscription for the building of a temple recounting sacrifices, other construction, and military campaigns. It partially duplicates other, long-known building inscriptions of the same king. Nevertheless, after translating eighteen of the eighty-eight lines, Salvini, the best-informed scholar working on Urartian today, states "From here on it is impossible to give a complete translation" and offers a general description of the contents with translations of the disjointed phrases that are reasonably clear (Salvini 2001a: 260).

[14] For my arguments for assuming linguistic diversity in Urartu's territory, see Zimansky 2001.

## AUDIENCE AND OBJECTIVES OF URARTIAN ROYAL DISPLAY INSCRIPTIONS

The terrain over which the kings of Biainili spread their imperium was mountainous and divided. In all historical periods it has been characterized by low population densities and considerable ethno-linguistic diversity. Because the archaeological evidence associated with the Urartian state is so uniform, it is often tacitly assumed that cultural uniformity, including language, prevailed there as well. A moment's reflection, however, is enough to cast doubt on this view. Urartian material culture, as we currently understand it, is essentially a product of the central government and military priorities. The excavated sites are almost exclusively fortresses, or settlement areas that were created beside fortresses. The styles of artifacts from such contexts were probably determined by deliberate choices of a small number of people and, far from representing any large-scale ethnic or linguistic phenomena, reflect on only one component of the society as a whole.

The kingdom was put together quite rapidly by military conquest; within forty years it spread from an enclave on the eastern shore of Lake Van to embrace all the land between the Taurus, Pontic, and Ante-Caucasus mountains, from the confluence of the Firat and Murat Rivers near Malatya to the southern shore of Lake Urmia (fig. 13.1). It is unlikely that all of the peoples in this sphere shared a common background, and whatever its military prowess, it is equally unlikely that Biainili's leadership imposed a koine in so short a span. In fact, there are grounds for suspecting that the royal dynasty itself, in whose name all of the early inscriptions were composed, was not native to the territory of Urartu at all. The god Haldi, who was to become the head of the Urartian pantheon under the second ruler of the dynasty, had his primary cult center in Muṣaṣir, outside of the political boundaries of the state (Salvini 1995: 37–38). The Kelishin bilingual, composed late in the reign of the same ruler and the Topzawa bilingual of the penultimate decade of the eighth century indicate that Urartian kings were deeply involved with Muṣaṣir.[15] Salvini has argued that this location could only have had such importance if it had earlier been a center of the Urartian ethnos and the Urartians were forced northward by Assyrian pressure in the ninth century (Salvini 1984a: 17–18). Since this god and the kingship he validated were closely identified with the rulers of Biainili, and the cult of Haldi itself remained centered in Muṣaṣir, it seems unnecessary to posit the movement of anything more than a group of warriors whose leader initiated the dynasty in Van.

In the eighth and seventh centuries, when royal annals appear, it is clear that large numbers of conquered peoples were being moved into and within the kingdom. For example, when Argišti I founded the fortress of Erebuni — the name of which survives in modern Erevan — he claims to have settled 6,600 people from Hatti and Ṣupani there (Arutjunjan 2001: text 173, p. 190). To judge by booty lists, the acquisition of human captives and livestock was the primary objective of annual royal campaigns. As many as 52,675 prisoners are claimed for a single year, and the median of the campaigns for which figures are given is around 20,000 (Zimansky 1985: 58). This undoubtedly contributed to a society with a very diverse linguistic makeup.

To what extent did "local identity" survive in the valleys of this highland empire? Urartian cuneiform texts give us almost no clue, as they are so focused on the monarch and his activities as to suggest that there was never more than one Urartian in existence at a given time. A quite different perspective is afforded by observations made by Assyrian spies, who kept an eye on activities

[15] For a discussion of the content of the latter and political circumstances under which it was composed, see Salvini 1995: 82–84.

within Biainili as a matter of military necessity. They represent the kingdom as a patchwork of lands ruled by governors who acted with a measure of independence and controlled their own troops.[16] These documents date to the end of the eighth century and from the same time we have a detailed description of the Urartian countryside by the Assyrian King Sargon II, who marched through five of its provinces in his celebrated campaign of 714 B.C. He, too, sees the kingdom as a group of "districts,"[17] each with its own principal sites and character.

In reconciling these quite different portraits, it is logical to see the testimony of the Urartian royal inscriptions as a representation of the way things ought to be in the eyes of the monarch: a solidly unified kingdom governed from Van, wherein building projects were undertaken[18] and sacrifices piously made to Haldi and lesser gods. The Assyrians show us the fissures and fault lines in the plate tectonics of this empire, which was in fact, like all others, put together with force, pragmatism, and more than a little jury-rigging. Throughout the kingdom there were royal establishments, re-settled populations, and surviving local elements jumbled together. Inscriptions carved in border areas marked the limits of royal conquests (e.g., Arutjunjan 2001: no. 244). These were the audiences to whom Urartian royal inscriptions were addressed in the eighth century. I argue below that in the seventh century, Rusa II appears to have attempted to restructure the kingdom and conditions may have been somewhat different.

The very limited scope of surviving inscriptions leaves little doubt as to the role they were intended to play in the polity of the Urartian state. They were artifacts of display and advertisements of royal prowess.[19] The choice of cuneiform as a script was a logical link to the dominant model for imperial kingship of the time, the Neo-Assyrian empire, but the use of the Urartian language gave a separate delimitation to the sphere of control. Urartian need not have been the language of a significant percentage of the population to achieve these purposes — all that was required was that it be unambiguously linked to the rulers of the state.[20] There is, in fact, no explicit evidence

[16] The question of subdivisions or "provinces" of the kingdom is reviewed in Zimansky (1985: 89–94). More up-to-date translations of Assyrian letters in question are provided by the State Archives of Assyria series published by Helsinki University Press, especially Parpola 1987 and 1990.

[17] The Akkadian term for these, *nagû*, is also the word for "island."

[18] Smith (2000: 131; 2003: 160–65) argues that display inscriptions advanced a claim to royal legitimacy by the king's unique ability to transform and "civilize" the natural world through construction. This view may have some validity, but it is only certain that the control of writing is uniquely royal, not necessarily the building activity. The majority of Urartian sites do not have associated building inscriptions.

[19] In comments at the conclusion of the seminar in Chicago at which this paper was presented, Sheldon Pollock raised the issue as to whether it was appropriate to evaluate writings such as these as self promotion or propaganda in the modern sense since democratic institutions were manifestly absent. What point would there be in convincing a public for whom political opinions and actions were irrelevant, if not proscribed, of the legitimacy and prowess of the ruler? This question could, presumably, be extended to all forms of royal display. There is certainly no explicit statement in any of the texts about who the intended audience was, or what thoughts and actions the inscriptions were intended to engender. Nevertheless, there seems to be little doubt that Urartian royal inscriptions were meant to be seen. They were placed in clear view on facades of public buildings and approachable rock faces and not hidden away in tombs, foundation deposits, concealed surfaces of building blocks, etc. Moreover, other forms of personally identifiable material representations of the king and his deeds are lacking in the archaeological evidence of Urartian civilization. The only putative images we have of an Urartian king in art are on seal impressions (e.g., Abay 2001: 327 and Seidl 1988: 146–47); if any reliefs or sculptures in the round were ever created, they have not survived. Thus, as far as we know, monumental inscriptions were the sole enduring expression of personal royal actions in this kingdom. It seems unlikely that the institutions of political leadership were so secure in Biainili that a king could disdain all forms of personal public presentation, and writing is the only one to have lasted.

[20] A language that was not widely spoken might have been a positive advantage in holding a large and diverse imperial entity together. In the context of sacred languages called upon to unify great classical communities, Benedict Anderson noted parenthetically: "… the deader the written language — the farther it was from speech — the better: in principle everyone has access to a pure world of signs" (Anderson 1991: 13).

to suggest that Urartian fostered group identity within the kingdom by any other means than this political connection. We have no native name for the language we call Urartian and it seems improbable that any such term would have suggested an ethnic identity congruent with the state of Biainili to anyone living at the time.

The paucity of non-royal documents from Urartu before the seventh century is an indisputable archaeological fact. There are a few capacity markings on pithoi, but had cuneiform been widely used for administrative purposes, one would expect a great deal more of it to have survived. Ninth- and eighth-century foundations like Anzaf, Çavuştepe, and Erebuni had storerooms comparable to those at seventh-century sites like Bastam, Karmir Blur, and Ayanis, but while discarded bullae and tablet fragments are known from the latter group they do not appear in the former.

Could a state as large, complex, and militarily effective as Biainili have functioned with such minimal use of literacy? The success of Andean empires, particularly the vast and tightly controlled state run by the Inca from Cuzco, demonstrate the possibility of administering complex polities without writing within the framework of a military command structure. The mountainous and divided topography of Urartu presented those who would govern it with similar challenges, albeit in a society in which the potential of writing for administration must have been known. One of the most striking features of Biainili is how well the geographical extent of its territory corresponds with snow cover — almost all of Turkey with more than eighty days of snow per year was once part of Biainili, areas with less snow were not. This, incidentally, may well have protected the nascent kingdom from being overwhelmed by Assyrian armies, which, limited to a few summer months of action in annual campaigns by having to cross and recross the Taurus Mountains, would have been less effective here than elsewhere in the Near East. Throughout much of the year, the *ovalar* (lowland areas) in which irrigation agriculture can be practiced and in which the Urartian establishments were built are sealed off from one another. Even in the summer months, communications between them are channeled between a few passes and transportation of bulk goods must have been very difficult. It seems very likely that the Urartians developed a system of government which held these natural "islands" together through various military and ideological mechanisms that left them with the capacity to function independently, at least on an economic and administrative level, for long periods of time. Thus, in the eighth century, orders probably could be passed down the chain of command, through face to face contact of people who knew each other personally, without the need for writing. Our eighth-century evidence shows us primarily a network of fortresses and military establishments. The report of Sargon's eighth campaign suggests that most of the population was actually dispersed in very small settlements that remain archaeologically unknown (Zimansky 1985: 32–47). One assumes that authority in these communities rested with a chief or a headman, who would deal only occasionally with the authorities of the central government who were based in the local fortress. So it is possible that absence of writing other than royal display inscriptions and markers of royal property is a reflection of the actual state of affairs, although this is admittedly an argument from negative evidence on a subject that has not received adequate archaeological investigation.

## ALTERNATIVES TO CUNEIFORM IN URARTU

At least two types of "hieroglyphic" writing are attested within the kingdom of Van at the same time that cuneiform was in use. One of these was borrowed from the from Biainili's southwestern neighbors: Luwian hieroglyphs. To date, these characters have only been found at Altıntepe, in the vicinity of Erzincan, the westernmost Urartian site excavated and are nothing

more than markings of capacity on storage vessels (Klein 1974). Despite the foreign origin of the script, it is used here to render the words for Urartian standard units of liquid volume, written elsewhere in cuneiform as *aqarqi* and *ṭirusi*. Perhaps because the final sibilant of the latter is a *zi* in the hieroglyphs, Laroche judged this Urartian to be something other than the Van dialect (Laroche 1971).[21] In any case, this particular script seems to be a very local phenomenon in Urartu.

The other, more specifically "Urartian" hieroglyphic script is quite enigmatic. It bears a resemblance to Luwian hieroglyphs that prompted Lehmann-Haupt, the first to note the existence of the script, to regard it as an import from the west (Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 108–09). While Hieroglyphic Luwian was used primarily for display in the late Hittite empire and among Iron Age principalities which maintained its legacy,[22] there is no evidence that hieroglyphs were used for that purpose in Urartu. Indeed, no long texts have survived. The two most substantial inscriptions are a short tablet from Toprakkale (Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 108) and an unprovenanced bronze plaque from the antiquities market (Barnett 1974), neither of which has more than a few words on it. The script is likely to remain undeciphered unless more extensive texts are recovered, and for the time being it is not clear whether it constitutes a full writing system or simply a shorthand for accounting and votive purposes.[23]

The antiquity and derivation of these glyphs is uncertain, and their connection with Biainili, as a political entity, is less straightforward than is the case with cuneiform. Barnett, admitting that the script is not actually attested before the time of Minua, offers "with much diffidence, a suggestion that might carry it back to the fourteenth century B.C. at least, like the Hittite hieroglyphs which it so closely resembles" on the basis of comparison to forms found on Hittite stamp cylinders (Barnett 1974: 51). Ali and Belkıs Dinçol intriguingly suggest it was a much later and deliberate creation:

> There is also evidence of a desire to create a "national" Urartian hieroglyphic writing system as an alternative to Assyrian cuneiform… These [hieroglyphs, among which those on hundreds of votive plaques from Giyimli are specified, as well as on other materials] are not phonetic in character, but logograms or ideograms expressing an entire word or concept. These were easily memorized symbols invented to enable minor officials unable to read cuneiform to keep economic records. We can conclude that the collapse of the Urartu state soon after this hieroglyphic system made its appearance prevented it from developing further (Dinçol and Dinçol 2003: 125).

In any case, these hieroglyphs were widely used at Urartian sites in both the eighth and seventh centuries. Before further considering the relationship of this script to cuneiform, it is necessary to consider changes in the use of the latter that appear to have begun in the second quarter of the seventh century.

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[21] The most significant contribution of the Altıntepe hieroglyphs was to effect a re-evaluation of the reading of two of the most common signs in Luwian hieroglyphs, which the absence of vowels in the Phoenician version of the Karatepe bilingual had obscured (Hawkins, Davies, and Neumann 1973).

[22] Hieroglyphs were also common on seals, which is where they first appeared, around the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. From the Iron Age there are a very small number of inscriptions on lead strips, which were letters of private correspondence. Poor preservation of metal in the archaeological record may make these non-royal uses of Luwian appear less significant than they in fact were, but one recognizes that all media other than clay and stone are under-represented.

[23] The status of decipherment attempts is summarized by Salvini 1995: 203–06. While there is reasonable certainty in the identification of symbols that are used for numbers and the units *aqarqi* and *ṭirusi*, almost nothing else is established, including whether the script is primarily logographic or syllabic.

## RUSA'S "REVOLUTION" AND WRITING IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

In the second quarter of the seventh century B.C. dramatic changes appear to have taken place in Biainili. Modern scholarship has been slow to recognize these because the evidence for them has built up gradually in the last three decades and because they are not apparent in Assyrian historical records, which have little to say about Urartu in the critical period. It is essentially from archaeology that the new perspective has come, and evaluating that perspective demands consideration of the significance of negative evidence.

Let us begin with the positive findings. Excavation at even the most minimal standards of contextual sensitivity and recording did not begin in Urartu until after the Second World War. Prior to that time, most of the archaeological objects that could be designated "Urartian" came either from the art market or from undocumented excavations at Toprakkale, on the outskirts of Van, or both. The first site to be extensively studied with a modicum of care was Karmir Blur, then in the Soviet Union, and thereafter Turkish, British, German, and Italian expeditions began work at sites in Turkey and Iran. What is astonishing about the cumulative results of this work is that by far the greatest part of excavated material can be assigned to the reign of Rusa II (Zimansky 1995b). This king was the founder of the five largest and richest sites yet discovered in Urartu: Toprakkale, Karmir Blur, Kef Kalesi (Adilcevaz), Bastam, and Ayanis. Each of these sites required hundreds of man-years of labor to construct and all were violently destroyed. Ayanis, Karmir Blur, and Toprakkale were full of small finds, particularly bronzes, whereas Kef Kalesi and Bastam appeared to have been pretty well cleaned out before they were put to the torch. Only the sites built by Rusa provide us with clay tablets and sealed bullae, upon which there were sometimes cuneiform notations. They are also the only sites at which residential areas have been excavated. In short, what we know about Urartian material culture, aside from the plans of some fortresses and buildings founded by earlier kings, and of course display inscriptions, comes from the time of Rusa II. This imbalance in favor of the seventh century is compounded by the fact that we do not have any clear example of a site that was destroyed before the end of the kingdom, so we do not really know what an eighth-century assemblage looks like. Despite Sargon II of Assyria's claim of devastating Urartu on his eighth campaign, we have yet to locate a single site that he destroyed. Even some of the portable materials from the important site of Anzaf, founded in the ninth century, date to the time of Rusa II, if not later.[24]

The scale of Rusa's building is so vast and unprecedented, the conclusion that he undertook a major re-organization of the kingdom seems inescapable. The motives behind this are unknown to us. In the scholarship of an earlier era, when Assyrian records formed the sole basis for reconstructing Urartian history, it was widely understood that the kingdom had suffered a devastating defeat at the end of Rusa I's reign, shortly after 714 B.C. Not only did Sargon's eighth campaign account relate that the Assyrian army put Rusa to flight and then pillaged five Urartian provinces, but Assyrian espionage reports also record a more believable and serious defeat for the Urartians at the hands of the Kimmerians at about the same time. Although the Urartian kingdom lasted for approximately another century, it was customary to see this as a time of weakness and decline. The few Assyrian references of the seventh century suggested more cooperation than hostility between the two empires.

While archaeological evidence indicates that the reign of Rusa II was anything but a period of decline, the patterns of writing do suggest that the reign of his hapless grandfather, Rusa I, was

[24] A tablet recently discovered by Oktay Belli at Anzaf apparently contains prosopographic information to confirming a late date. Its publication is currently in preparation.

indeed something of a watershed. The number of surviving building inscriptions falls off dramatically under Rusa I; even under the prolific Rusa II it does not reach eighth-century standards. Part of the discrepancy is that eighth-century kings were wont to have separate inscriptions for individual buildings, whereas Rusa II satisfied himself with dedicatory inscriptions for whole sites. In any case, building inscriptions become much rarer.

Rusa II's prodigious building program was something quite new in scale and substance, despite stylistic links with the cultural traditions of the eighth century. Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, it was not a "restoration" or "reconstruction" of the kingdom, at least in the sense of re-creating something that had existed before. The huge administrative centers, noted above, were bigger than any of the sites the Urartians had built previously and more complex. They contained larger storage facilities than earlier sites and extensive settlement areas were built beside them. The eighth-century kings had focused their energies on one or two sites, at least insofar as their inscriptions inform us; usually the strategic reasons for the creation of a new center are transparent. For example, Argišti II founded Erebuni to secure his control of the plain of Ararat when the Urartians moved north of the Araxes. Rusa's multiple "super sites," on the other hand, are not associated with new territorial acquisitions. On the contrary, most of the sites we know about are within sight of previously existing Urartian fortresses. All of this would suggest that Rusa was restructuring the kingdom, concentrating populations that might previously have been dispersed, and in essence homogenizing the kingdom with a new round of importations of captives from external conquests.[25]

This reorganization had an impact on the character of literacy within Urartu. To the best of our understanding, it coincides with the appearance of the first use of cuneiform on clay and the first evidence for the use of writing for mundane bureaucratic purposes in Urartu. Besides tablets which were royal letters and decrees, large numbers of clay bullae have been found in storage rooms and other areas, many of which bear short cuneiform notes.

Let us consider the tablets first. The most curious fact about them is their small number. No major group has ever been discovered and the total available for study is less than thirty. Karmir Blur, at which eleven tablets were found (Diakonoff 1963: nos. 1–11), remains the site where they are most abundant. In the ten years of excavation at Bastam only five tablets and fragments were unearthed (Salvini 1979: 115–27; 1988: 129) and an equal number of seasons at Ayanis have produced only two fragments (Salvini 2001a: 312–15). Four, or perhaps five, were recovered from Toprakkale (Diakonoff 1963: nos. 12–16) . One cannot attribute this paucity to poor physical conditions for the survival of tablets. The same sites have produced hundreds of unbaked-clay bullae and the few tablets that have been recovered are in excellent condition. In having fewer tablets from Urartu as a whole than one routinely finds at individual second-echelon Neo-Assyrian sites like Ziyaret Tepe and Tall Šeh Hamad we may simply be the victims of bad archaeological luck.

The subjects of these tablets are varied. Some fall into the category of "administrative" documents and take the form of lists. The most important of these is from Toprakkale, which tallies several categories of palace personnel, coming up with a grand total of 5,507 individuals (Diakonoff 1963: no. 12). Another is a list pairing one sheep in each entry with a personal name (Salvini 1988: 129). One tablet from the Ayanis citadel is a lexical list (Salvini 2001a: 312–14), which would suggest that scribal training was being undertaken at the site. Royal letters and decrees ac-

[25] Evidence for the previously unknown military conquests comes from an inscription discovered on the facade of the temple at Ayanis in 1998. It states that conquered peoples were brought from Assur, Targuni, Etiuni, Tabal, Qainaru, Hatti, Muški, and Ṣiluquni. This is more or less a gazetteer of the lands surrounding the Urartian kingdom. For the text, see Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001: 253–70.

count for almost half of the tablets. These are either sealed by the king, or by an official with the title $^{lú}$*aṣuli*. The theory, offered by Diakonoff, that the latter might be literally interpreted as "Son of the Lady," that is, *czarevitch*/crown prince (Diakonoff 1963: 62), was based on a misidentification of one of the cuneiform signs, but some connection with the royal family seems likely since all of the names associated with that office were borne by Urartian kings at one time or another. Besides seals of the king, the only other seals to bear cuneiform legends identifying their owners were those of the $^{lú}$*aṣuli*. It is also noteworthy that these are the only people besides kings for whom patronymics are given. Other individuals mentioned in tablets are only identified by name and title, or name and toponym.[26]

In his publication of all of the Urartian tablets known at the time, Diakonoff (1963) conducted an analysis of the script of the tablets. He concluded that aside from minor differences in handwriting all of the tablets were written in a similar "cursive" cuneiform, which differed from the "epigraphic" cuneiform of the inscriptions on stone. Although the latter is indisputably descended from Assyrian royal inscriptions, Diakonoff found this was not the case with the "cursive" and sought to tie it with second-millennium Hurrian sign forms seen at Nuzi and Alalakh (Diakonoff 1963: 18–21). While it seems highly improbable that some sort of independent tradition of cuneiform survived, unattested, in Anatolia from the Late Bronze age to the seventh century, the point that the script on clay did not conform to what was being written on stone emphasizes that distinction in purpose for the two kinds of writing.

The tablets are not the sole, or even the most common type of this "cursive" writing. Cuneiform notations on the sides of bullae testify to the routine use of cuneiform for bureaucratic purposes. Tear-shaped bullae have been found by the hundreds at Urartian sites, with roughly 1,200 coming from a group of three rooms at Bastam (Seidl 1988 and Zimansky 1988). Most of these are not inscribed, unless one counts the cuneiform legends of the royal seals which were often rolled over them. However, sometimes short notes are written on their sides. The storerooms of Ayanis have provided quite a number of these inscriptions, which often note quantities of commodities, cities of provenance, and the names of individuals (Salvini 2001a: 279–92). These short labels are executed in a very abbreviated style which makes understanding the grammar behind them difficult. Place names are frequently given simply as acronyms.

There is one class of bulla that suggests something of how cumbersome the Urartian bureaucracy was. We scour the Urartian corpus looking for any system of dating in vain. The Assyrians used the celebrated *limu* system to date documents and in Neo-Babylonian southern Mesopotamia it was customary to give the regnal year of the king as well as day and month. Three instances where a year is described in some detail are now known from Urartu. One of these is on the Toprakkale personnel list alluded to above. The other two are on bullae: one from Bastam (Salvini 1988: 130–37) and the other, discovered in the summer of 2004, from Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu, pers. comm.). It would appear that when one wanted to give a specific year date, one had to describe things that happened in it, and there was no regular dating system.[27] Certainly none of the shorter notes on other bullae give us any suggestion of a date.

[26] The number of non-royal personal names in the corpus is very small, however, and the idea that patronymics were part of common Urartian names cannot be ruled out entirely. More tablets and bullae would help to clarify the picture. Apart from patronymics, the lack of genealogical information in Urartian texts generally, and royal inscriptions specifically, is conspicuous. Unless one counts the Sarduri I's reference in Akkadian to his father Lutipri and "co-regency" texts composed in the names of both Išpuini and Minua, no Urartian ruler ever mentions his father by name, let alone his grandfather. This is quite unlike Hittite and Assyrian traditions.

[27] For example, the Bastam bulla says, "The year in which Rusa, son of Argiti set up the throne in Rusahinili before Mt. Qilbani [i.e., Toprakkale]. Boards and carpenters x-ed." These statements are followed by the name of the location where the bulla was presumably inscribed: Rusai-URU.TUR [i.e., Bastam] in the Land of Alani.

Let us now return to the issue of the relationship of the hieroglyphs, which may or may not have constituted a full writing system, and cuneiform. In the storerooms of sites founded by Rusa it is commonplace to find a few glyphs carved into the sides of pithoi. Smaller vessels are also apt to bear hieroglyphs, both as maker's marks and as measures (Kozbe, Çevik, and Sağlamtimur 2001: 102–05). For example, the common trefoil pitcher often has a triangle at the base of its handle, with numbers above it. The sign forms from Karmir Blur, Bastam, and Ayanis are all similar. The pithoi at these sites are much more apt to have cuneiform notations of capacity than hieroglyphic notations, but cuneiform never appears on smaller vessels. With notations on bullae, cuneiform is more common, but there is a respectable number of hieroglyphic notations, at least at Ayanis. Salvini argues for a different classes of scribes:

> It is not easy to understand fully the reason why the two systems, cuneiform and hieroglyphic, were used simultaneously in the same centres, even in the records of the same storeroom, as had already been noted in the writings of Karmir-blur and as may now be confirmed also for the bullae of Ayanis. One may think that the two systems were used by the different categories of scribes: the experts in cuneiform writing must have belonged to an intellectual category (or, as it were, "literate") and as can be seen from these documents, the hieroglyphic system was far more elementary and consisted of an extremely limited number of signs of pictograms (Salvini 2001a: 297–98).

Kozbe, Çevik, and Sağlamtimur, in their study of marks on pottery, point out that there were also chronological factors at work:

> The issue of pictographic versus cuneiform inscriptions on Urartian pottery has been a matter of speculation for many years. It is known that Urartian sites occupied only in the eighth century B.C., such as Kayalıdere, have only hieroglyphic signs, whereas those which, while founded in the eighth century, continued into the seventh century, such as Çavuştepe have both notation systems. Finally those sites which were founded in the seventh century, such as Ayanis, Toprakkale and Bastam tend to have much wider use of cuneiform inscriptions. Perhaps what we are seeing here is the substitution of cuneiform for local systems of hieroglyphic notation as part of the increasing centralization of the Urartian kingdom (Kozbe, Çevik, and Sağlamtimur 2001: 105).

This is, of course, precisely opposite of what Dinçol and Dinçol suggested above — that there was an effort to create a "national" script by replacing the hieroglyphs with cuneiform. The resolution of this depends very much on having a better balance of eighth- and seventh-century materials to work with, and more writing generally, so that statements based on the absence of contrary evidence carry more force. But in any case, it seems likely that the bureaucratic and administrative devices employed in these storerooms in the twilight of Biainili's existence demanded very little in the way of literacy on the part of those who used them.

## CONCLUSIONS

The kingdom of Biainili was indeed on the margins of literacy. For the first century of its existence we have no evidence that cuneiform was used for anything other than royal display and marking royal ownership on prestige goods. Inscriptions were an instrument for expressing the power of the state by highlighting the construction activities, military accomplishments, and religious sacrifices of the reigning monarch. They were carved into living rock or on large blocks of stone that were incorporated into buildings. They were also an absolute royal monopoly.

In the seventh century, very near the end of its history, the kingdom underwent a transition with the creation of a more nucleated system of large administrative centers. The association of

cuneiform with the monarchy continued in some spheres. This is the time that royal sealings first appear in archaeological record and they alone bear cuneiform legends. The seals of other individuals are sometimes inscribed with hieroglyphs which presumably give their names, but none are readable to us. But the seventh century also sees an expansion in the uses for which cuneiform was employed. It is clearly in evidence in storerooms of royal citadels, where it marked capacity on pithoi and the provenance of commodities on bullae. It was used to transmit letters and royal decrees on clay tablets, as well as to transcribe lists in what appears to be very mundane accounting. The hieroglyphic writing continued, but never rose above the level of a simple accounting and administrative device, possibly no more worthy classification as a writing system than the *quipu*s of Inca bureaucrats.

The massive building program and socio-political re-organization undertaken by Rusa II, whatever the purpose envisaged by those who executed them, appear in retrospect to have been a failure. All of the new administrative centers were gone within a generation, their citadels torched and their settlements abandoned. Perhaps most remarkable was the thoroughgoing disappearance of any Urartian cultural tradition. The Urartian language, literacy, the god Haldi, indeed the memory of Biainili itself simply vanished. Although a few place names like Erebuni, possibly Erciş (from *Argišti*) and Van (from *Biainili*) persist, Xenophon had no clue that a great kingdom had once existed in this territory when he marched through it and the early Armenian historian Moses Khorenats'i, who saw Urartian inscriptions and tombs on the rock cliff at Van, attributed them to the Assyrians (Khorenats'i 1978: 101).

I have argued elsewhere that the failure of Biainili to make a deeper impression on historical memory is in part due to the rather superficial nature of its culture; the materials that we regard as "Urartian" were merely the trappings of a small elite who imposed their military control over a territory that they probably failed to influence very much at more basic levels of culture (Zimansky 1995a: 262–65). Writing fits into this pattern. The Urartian leadership had very specific and limited purposes in mind when they adopted it: primarily to demonstrate the power of the monarch in a broad and publicly visible manner. This did not create a necessity for a large class of literate people by itself and incentives that might have led in that direction were simply not undertaken. The state, in its militarism, had other mechanisms for passing information up and down the chain of command, and it was only in the final decades of Biainili's history that it sought to extend the power of writing into the spheres of administration and long-distance communication in non-public spheres. If the hieroglyphic script carried any cultural freight, it was neglected. The power of literacy to unify and strengthen a state as a whole was probably insufficiently understood by the Urartians, or recognized too late, to imprint a lasting memory of Biainili on either local or neighboring populations. A society with no readers is, in the long run, not much influenced by its writers.

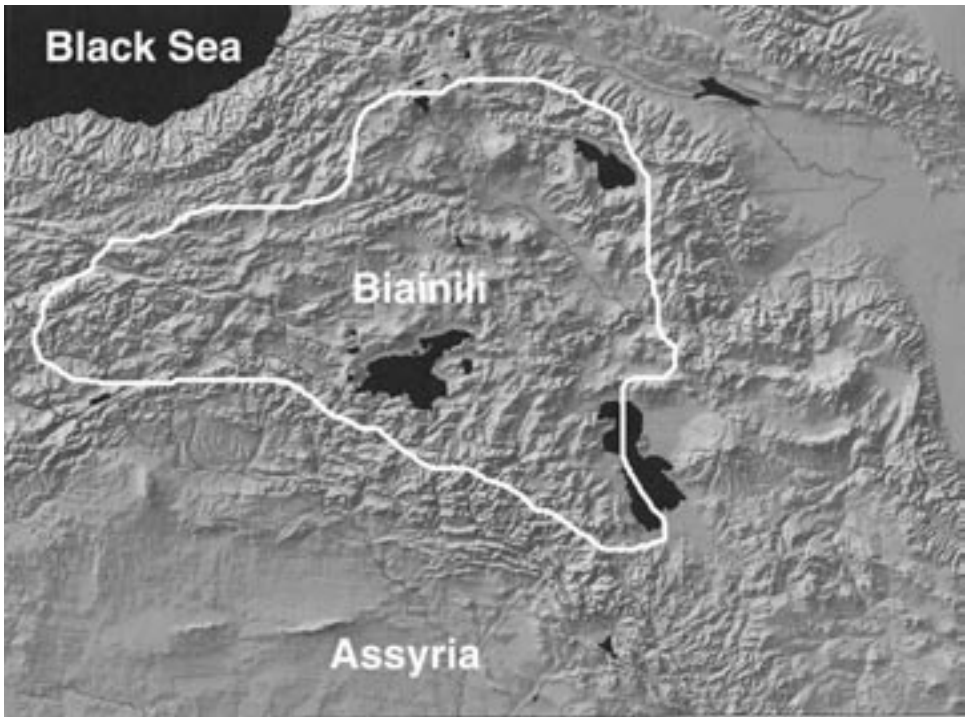


Figure 13.1. Approximate area controlled by Biainili in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.

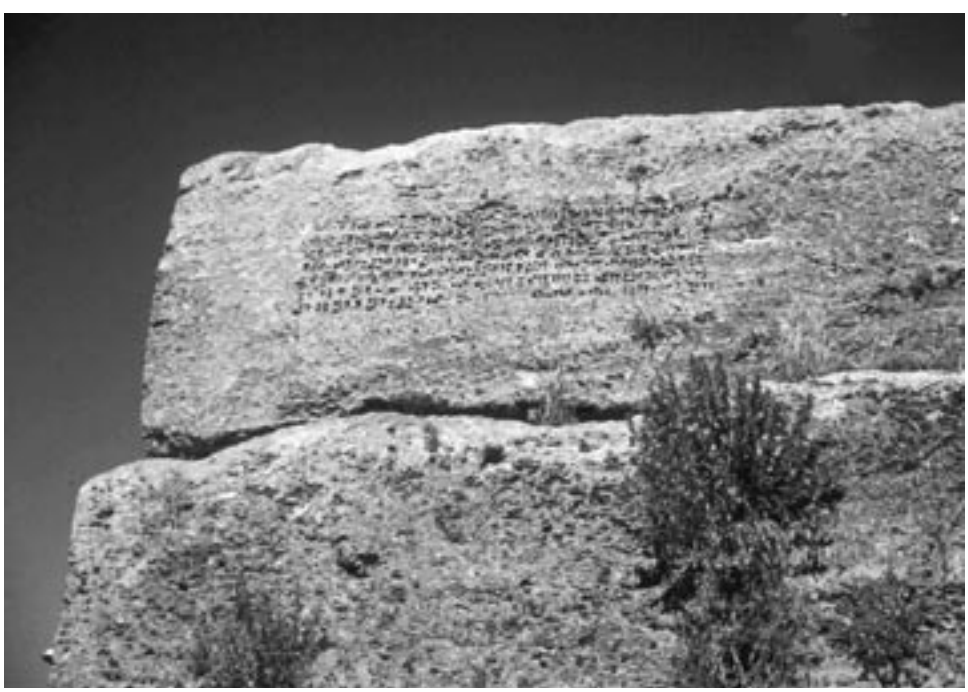

Figure 13.2. The first Urartian royal inscription, written in Akkadian in the name of Sarduri I, ca. 830 B.C., beside the Van citadel

Figure 13.3. Typical building inscription, now in the Van Museum. Minua records the construction of the "gates of Haldi"

Figure 13.4. Dedicatory inscription of Minua in a garden south of Van, containing the only feminine name (Tariria, daughter of Minua) in the Urartian corpus

Figure 13.5. Sealing of Rusa II on a bulla from Bastam with cuneiform legend above and below figures. Scale ca. 4:3

Figure 13.6. Seventh-century clay tablet from Bastam listing sheep and personal names. Scale 2:1

Figure 13.7. Concluding portion of a date, inscribed on a bulla from Bastam. The beginning of the description of events that took place in this year is on the edges of the bulla. Scale 2:1

Figure 13.8. A demonstration of how little later people knew of Uraritan. The top part of the stela has been re-carved to make a tombstone, but the Urartian curse formula for anyone who damages the stone has been left in place at the bottom. Van Museum

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# 14

# RESPONSE FOR THIRD SESSION: POWER AND CULTURE BEYOND IDEOLOGY AND IDENTITY

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## HYPERGLOSSIA AND THE DIVISION OF LINGUISTIC LABOR AS A RESEARCH PROBLEM

Some of my recent work on the history of culture and power in premodern India has been concerned to understand how small languages come to find a voice in a world of big languages. By voice I mean not only the capacity to record reality — what can be termed the documentary function — but also and especially the capacity to add to reality through the expressive, aesthetic, interpretative — what can be termed (following Dominick LaCapra following Martin Heidegger) the workly function — above all by enunciating matters of power and culture.[1] This binary characterization of function should not be very controversial. In modern Western universalizing theory it has become routine, however much the terminology used to capture the distinction may vary (the binary is sometimes expressed as content versus expression, or information versus imagination, or even, with a little tweaking, constatation versus performance). But premodern local theories, too, have defined in their own way the workly function. One common distinction in Indian theory is between *kāvya*, what in English we typically call literature, and *śāstra*, science or systematic thought.

"Big" and "small," however, are not very precise terms, though they are no less precise than other terms we might use. I often think of them as languages that travel much (the big ones) and languages that travel little (the small ones), though geographical dispersal, itself a relative measure, is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition of the bigness I have in mind since the capacity for the workly is also required. We also need to keep in mind the fluidity of the application of these terms, since small languages can become big — and indeed, big ones (such as Latin) typically start their careers as small. Sanskrit itself seems something of an exception to this rule, however, given its wide diffusion from a very early period through the movements of Brahman communities.

Once we look at actually existing languages some of this imprecision begins to recede. Chinese has been a big language for much of its history and by comparison Vietnamese and Korean have been small ones for most of theirs. This is not to say they were intrinsically small, it is to say that historically they never became big. The same is true of Sanskrit and the south Indian language Kannada, respectively, or Latin and Castilian (before 1492, of course, when *la lengua fue compañera del imperio*, a linkage to which I return below).

In understanding how small languages actually do find a voice I view two processes as significant. One of them, again not controversial, I call *literization*, my rebarbative translation of *Verschriftlichung*, the process whereby a language (or what thereby becomes *a language*)

* I thank Seth Sanders for both his initial invitation to participate in this fascinating conference and his careful reading of an earlier draft of this response.

[1] LaCapra 1983.

acquires written form. The other process is more complicated and I must use an even more barbaric word to do so: *literarization*, by which I mean the development of expressive capacities appropriated from a superposed, big literary culture. As just noted, finding a voice is not just about the ability to communicate, it is about varieties of communication. Something decisive in cultural and political history occurs when users of a language seek not just to write (by recording a bill of sale, for example) but to write literarily (by enunciating the fame of the king, for example). Users of small languages seek to make them big (or bigger) through this double process. There is no predetermination whatever in this, despite what cultural evolutionists would have us believe. Not all languages even come to be literized; many in India were not until missionary Christianity arrived. Even fewer are literarized. The time lag between literization and literarization can be substantial, sometimes many centuries, and when literarization does occur it signals a new cultural choice typically within the context of a new political state of affairs: the redefinition of the political order as empire in Rome, for example, as nascent nation-state in the later High Middle Ages, or as the "vernacular polity," as I call it, in medieval southern Asia. Culture change and power change are typically coeval, and power has cared about culture seriously, if variously, long before modernity in the guise of industrialization and print capitalism, which most scholars have argued were the necessary preconditions for such care.[2]

The literarization of a small documentary language is a crucial moment in the history of the displacement of a big language. Before this occurs, its relationship to the dominant workly language is far more than what is usually called diglossia. That is the situation where two spheres of usage are divided between a higher and lower pole of the same language; the situation I am describing obtains between two unrelated languages. I have named this situation hyperglossia to indicate a maximal form of language dominance: one language is used for expressive purposes, another for the recording of the quotidian — and these languages are cognitively grasped as separate and distinct by the actors involved.

This was the situation in southern Asia for a millennium when the Sanskrit ecumene flourished. Salient cases are legion, stretching from Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Andhra to Cambodia and Java. But there is an ironic reversal built into the situation of hyperglossia. The very presence of a hyperglossic language is the primary condition of possibility for vernacularization, or the process by which an unwritten language becomes first literized and documentary, but then eventually aspires to wider dissemination through the process of literarization. In my parlance, preliterate languages are not called to be called vernaculars, they are not in fact languages. They are, again according to the conceptual schemes of their speakers (to the degree this is knowable in the absence of writing) only undifferentiated smears on a linguistic spectrum, unnamed often, perhaps even invisible in some sense. It is literization and, far more literarization — which typically includes "philologization" through the creation of grammars, dictionaries, and prosody manuals — that creates them as distinct vernaculars in the first place. This was certainly the case across the Gangetic plane in north India: it was only through the double process of literization and literarization (and chronologically only deep into that process) that what had long been called simply "speech" — *bhākhā* (or *bhāṣā*) and not Hindi or anything else — became cognized and differently named as languages, Gwaliyari, Avadhi, Brajbhasha, and eventually (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) Hindi and Urdu.

The two most powerful cases of this model of vernacularization — of the elevation of a small language for literary and political work — are South Asia and Europe. Here the correspondences are astonishing, from the written emergence and literary career of Latin in the third century

[2] Most famously Gellner 1983.

B.C. — chronologically and morphologically paralleling Sanskrit — to the development of Old English (a Germanic language) in the ninth/tenth and Italian (a Romance language) in the thirteenth/fourteenth — chronologically and morphologically paralleling the emergence of Kannada (a Dravidian language) and Brajbhasha (an Indo-Aryan language). But the model may not be universally applicable. So far as I can see, it does not really work in the Chinese sphere. Vietnamese and Korean, even despite the creation of new writing systems in the fourteenth or fifteenth century (prior to that period they were written in Chinese characters, much as Yiddish is written in Hebrew characters), did not achieve cultural-political independence until centuries later. As for "vernacular Chinese" itself, we are told that outside of the texts of early Buddhism, "the amount of unadulterated writing in the … vernacular Sinitic topolects and languages is so pathetically small as to be virtually nonexistent."[3] Do the model and any of its associated theoretical consequences apply to the materials examined in this book? That is one question I want to ask very briefly in this response and I stress "ask" and "briefly" since it would be absurd for me to try to sort out these complicated materials myself.

I am also interested in the problems these papers raise in respect to political theory since I hold culture and power to be inseparable phenomena. Such theory has been important to me in trying to make sense of the dialectic of cosmopolitan and vernacular — or big and small cultural and political practices — in Asia. Here the challenge has been to find ways to understand these processes that are not hostage to the historical circumstances in which modern political-cultural theory arose and which that theory was designed to interpret.[4] Last, I want to ask whether we can elicit from these papers any larger generalizations that enable us to use them comparatively, so they can illuminate and be illuminated by power-culture processes occurring at other times or at other places. This requires asking what kinds of explanatory frameworks are available for making sense of these generalizations.

The chapters of Paul-Alain Beaulieu, Theo van den Hout, and Paul Zimansky are extraordinarily rich in terms of their command of the data — it is not easy to believe that more than a few other people in the world command the knowledge they present — but a challenge for the outsider to synthesize, or even to understand fully in their complex implications. Let me just pick out a couple of things about them, in the hopes that my introductory statement may serve as a stimulus for the presenters themselves to do the synthetic work. What I offer are less comments than questions.

The division of linguistic labor offered by my model, its place in the relationship of big and small languages (hyperglossia), and the related division of communication objectives and of the languages appropriate for the different objectives (documentary and workly) is precisely one topic of Beaulieu's paper. Certainly Aramaic in the Assyrian and Achaemenid formations has the role of documentary language, whereas Akkadian (or Middle Babylonian) is the superposed culture language par excellence, pushing out (if I understand correctly) even Neo-Assyrian, which remained almost completely and forever in the domain of the documentary. This seems to have been true also of Aramaic, even when it became, in my terms, quasi-cosmopolitan — "quasi" because though it traveled well it seems not to have undergone literarization in any serious way so as to become a medium for imaginative participation in a vaster world (Beaulieu uses the term "international vernacular"). We are told that "only one significant piece of ancient Mesopotamian Aramaic literature has come down to us."[5] The literary-historical situation may actually be rather

[3] Mair 1994: 707, 725, and 730.

[4] See Pollock 2006b, chapter 13.

[5] See Beaulieu, this volume.

more complicated than this since the biblical and Qumran Aramaic literature reflects an international milieu extending to Mesopotamia.[6] But the absence of a rich archive of workly texts, especially those expressive-political and imaginative-aesthetic texts we now call literature, is puzzling and begs for some kind of explanation.

To some degree van den Hout's Hittite formation is at least partly accommodated in my model. Cuneiform Hittite was used for private-official documents, whereas everything public and monumental seems to have been written in Hieroglyphic Luwian. But surprisingly, Hieroglyphic Luwian was a very local idiom and by no means a superposed literary language; indeed, there seems to be a kind of inversion of functions of the language of the dominant and subordinate. So problems again confront us.

Just the opposite seems to be the relationship between Hieroglyphic Luwian and cuneiform Urartian in Zimansky's kingdom of Van. The situation here, we are told, was originally complicated by the presence of Akkadian. But early on cuneiform Urartian seems to have superseded Akkadian for symbolic functions, being used for display, far less significantly for administrative communication. By contrast, Hieroglyphic Luwian was reserved for such mundane tasks as recording measurements on jars.

With respect to the hyperglossia model, this does seem to hold for Beaulieu's material: standard Babylonian, the language of the late editions of Gilgamesh and of Babylonian science, was the expressive high language, whereas official Aramaic was the language of bureaucracy. It holds, too, though with more complications, for van den Hout's data: Luwian was used for public monuments, Hittite for the internal circulation of bureaucratic documents (but also some literary texts). For the ancient Near East, then, the hyperglossia model, like that of diglossia, may offer a useful hypothesis for further testing. On the other hand, both Hieroglyphic Luwian and cuneiform Urartian seem to violate the model of literization; as we can tell, their first and main written form was royal monumental inscriptions. If most languages have literariness thrust upon them, others may have been born literary.

It would be very helpful if all this mass of linguistic material were to be organized according to some agreed-upon taxonomy. I do not know whether the terms cosmopolitan and vernacular — by which I mean writing for and feeling oneself to belong to the bigger or the smaller world — are right for this time-space. And in place of documentary and workly a different distinction — between, say, language of record and language of display — might be more useful. But as an outsider it seems to me critical to get the ancient Near East terminological house in order, and to specify what categories refer to what ("official," "vernacular," and so on). Once this is done it would be especially helpful to have some kind of synthetic account of how languages may have moved from one category to another and when — which may enable us then to ask why they moved at all and why they moved when they did. What I have been unable to draw consistently from these papers are the great dichotomies that were to become evident in the worlds to the west and east, between languages that are imperial in their ability to travel far and enunciate the world in a workly fashion or a universalistic project, and languages that stay home and do the workaday tasks of documentary recording. Equally important for me — and again I get no clear sense from the papers — is the place of the literary in imperial language in the ancient Near East: what is the literary and how is it constituted as literary? (Both Sanskrit and Latin intellectuals argued this out with care, the Indians far more consciously than the Romans.) What do we mean, in emic terms,

[6] See Greenfield 2001: 111–20 (I thank Seth Sanders for the reference).

when we speak of "Aramaic literature"? And when and how were the attempts made on the part of the documentary vernacular to seize eventually the prerogatives of the cosmopolitan world? [7]

## WHERE DO EMPIRES COME FROM?

Moving from the more strictly language-oriented problems, let me turn to the problem of political change. What becomes apparent when reading the essays together is the degree of emulation found among political formations in the ancient Near East. This emulation was mediated through culture, powerfully affected by the element of superposition, and marked as a consequence by the incessant borrowing of cultural goods. Thus, Van borrowed from the Assyrians, the Assyrians from the Akkadians, late seventh-century Babylon from Sumer and Akkad, the Persians (though some scholars dispute this) from the Assyrians.

Although the evidence for this kind of emulation is everywhere in evidence in the papers, we are never told why it occurred. Yet the authors can hardly be blamed for what is in fact a huge lacuna in political theory. So far as I know we have no comprehensive account, let alone satisfactory explanation, for what is in fact a ubiquitous phenomenon of premodern (and, arguably, modern) polity. I have elsewhere tried to suggest some lines of inquiry by sketching out a strong thesis of political imitation in the case of the empire form.[8]

The empire form has been continuously recreated through a process of imitation that is historically specifiable and that seems to have run along two axes simultaneously: diachronic (through historical memory) and synchronic (perhaps through what archaeologists have named peer polity interaction). The course of imperial imitation can be plotted along these two axes among a range of embodiments: the Achaemenid version in Iran (followed by the Sasanid and perhaps the Ghaznavid); the Hellenic-Macedonian (followed by Byzantine); the Roman (followed by the Carolingian and Ottonian; the overseas imperial version of the early-modern era, Dutch-English-French-Portuguese-Spanish, and twentieth-century Fascist); the Maurya version in India (followed by the Kushana, and Gupta, and perhaps also the Khmer of Angkor in Southeast Asia). Other empires were joined in other networks of diachronic and synchronic linkages: the central- and inner-Asian version, for example, connected the Xiongnu, Turkic, Uighur, Mongol, and ultimately Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman polities.

Empires and the coming-into-being of empires in antiquity were not a fact of nature but a fact of culture and thus required an instrumentarium of cultural resources, not least an imperial, monumental, universalist, disciplined-and-permanent (and not vernacularly lawless) language. Or rather, at some point empire came to require such a language. It was of no importance to the Mauryas (320–150 B.C.) but it was central to the Guptas (A.D. 320–550), of no interest to the Achaemenids (550–330 B.C.) but central to the last of the Achaemenids, Alexander (320 B.C.) and his successors, the Romans (27 B.C.–ca. A.D. 425). But what made imperial language necessary and what place did language have in earlier quasi empires (assuming if we agree with most scholars that the Achaemenid formation constituted the first political world empire)?

The implications of large-scale historical borrowing need to be theorized anew. Things are much more complicated than Marx believed, who saw political actors as nothing but con artists who "anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past," using "time-honored disguise and borrowed

[7] See Beaulieu, this volume.

[8] Pollock 2006a, from which some of the following materials are drawn.

language." [9] Many of us have assimilated this deception model of historical change. It does not seem to me a very illuminating way of explaining social action, as I want now to argue.

## CONCEPTUALIZING PREMODERN POLITICS

My goal in turning from these specific questions of culture and power in the ancient Near East to the matter of Big Theory is to provoke in the good sense (if there is still a good sense after the provocations of the president of my alma mater).[10] I am concerned here above all with how we develop new higher order conceptualizations to explain new data. There is an obvious reluctance in all three chapters even to embark on this task, a reluctance insistently signaled by what used to be called the sanitary quotation mark, what we now call the scare quote (or "scare quote"). For me this is really the scary quote, wildly proliferating over the past decade and furnishing as clear a sign as punctuation can furnish of the crisis of explanation.

When I organized a project on the history of literatures in South Asia (since published as Pollock 2003), I came to believe that scare quotes were replacing thinking and I proscribed their use in the book. To be sure, scare quotes have their place in identifying a category or concept that is contested in its very definition (such as "disabled" or "race"), but they have none when they allow us to avoid the responsibility of specifying historically what constitutes the difference between the category and its doppelganger. I would like to suggest generalizing this practice of abstention. We should be prohibited from using any of the following, as they are used throughout the papers in this conference: "imagined communities," "nation" and "national," "identity," "pure" language, and "propaganda."

It is the task of historical scholarship, in its theoretical or interpretive capacity, to do the hard work of argument and conceptualization that we refuse to do when we blithely pass off this work to scare quotes. We need to grasp what precisely it is that makes the premodern political formation different enough from the contemporary nation that we have to qualify our use of the term when speaking of the ancient "nation." These old polities issued no stamps, they had no flags, no national anthems, no knife-edged borders — but what in fact did they have that makes us hesitate about their status as power-culture formations, that makes us think of them as precursors of something most contemporary scholars (rightly or wrongly) believe was invented in the nineteenth century? The whole point of the exercise is to capture this premodern difference — if it is all more of the same why bother? And we must not let typography do that kind of work for us because it cannot.

The problem here goes beyond typography, however. The explanatory framework in evidence in these papers, above all, legitimation theory, derives from notions of power developed in modern Western capitalism to explain modern Western capitalism. What authorizes us to extend them backward in time to ancient Babylon or Persepolis? The explanatory laxity in these papers seems to me to stand in very stark contrast to the extraordinary rigor of their empirical work. The impression one gets is of astonishing labors expended to unearth the unknown, and then of complete indifference to the predictability of the interpretation. Again, what is the point of seeking to know the unknown if we are going to use it to tell the same old story, that all culture served merely to legitimate power, or to genuflect before models invented to explain very different historical periods with their very different technologies of dissemination? (After all, it is only print capitalism, according to the Andersonian model, that makes it possible for a community to be

[9] Marx 1964: 15

[10] See "Furor Lingers as Harvard Chief Gives Details of Talk on Women," *New York Times*, February 18, 2005.

imagined at all.) Then, too, these models have been found problematic by social theory itself even for explaining the phenomena from which they were developed. Consider for a moment that now omnipresent conceptual object, identity.

For many scholars this term has lost all explanatory salience. Notice what two very serious social scientists, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, have to say on the matter: "'Identity' [is not ] something that all people have, seek, construct, and negotiate. Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of 'identity' saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary."[11] Once we free ourselves from the vocabulary of identity we might see our way forward to freeing ourselves from the fact of identity, from assuming its transhistorical validity. In India, for example, I would argue that "ethnic identity," at least in the sense that social science strictly uses the term — a community of common descent with shared memories and horizontal solidarities[12] — did not even exist in premodernity.

Even if it did exist, ethnic identity certainly had little to do with language. Multilingualism, even having multiple mother tongues, was the order of the day and not the exception, and often still is. A. K. Ramanujan, my late colleague at the University of Chicago, famously described how he grew up completely trilingual in the southern Indian city of Mysore, speaking Tamil in the kitchen, Kannada in the streets, and English in his father's study.[13] More than this: We find everywhere in the historical record what I would call decisionism in the use of language. Capitalist modernity has led us to think of language as not only a crucial but a necessary, inevitable — in Ben Anderson's words, "fatal" — component in the process of self-definition. The materials I work with — and I believe this may be corroborated by the papers under review — suggest that this fatality is not transhistorical. On the contrary, people in the past would decide to use one or another language for one or another objective without any reference to identity. Think only of the Mughals of India, speakers of Chagtai Turkish who adopted Persian for their empire (while their subjects spoke and prayed in many languages, from Arabic to Brajbhasha, from Sanskrit to Tamil).[14]

Before modernity, it was typically not identity but the particular genre of discourse in use that regulated language choice (religion was a far weaker determinant). This was true even in the early centuries of vernacularization both in India and Europe. As one historian of pre-nationalism has pointed out, in late-medieval Spain Castilian was used for solemn prose, Galician-Portuguese for lyrics, Norman for didactic works.[15] Or as Charles V is said to have put the matter, "I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse." And this condition persisted until eventually, for reasons that have much to do with the power-culture conditions of early modernity in both worlds, every language began to try to do everything.

## DOES LEGITIMATION EXPLAIN ANYTHING IN PREMODERNITY?

With these general observations in mind we may approach the more particular problem of ideology and its subspecies, the legitimation of power, in the explanation of premodern power-culture. This is a very complex question, too complex for a brief response paper, especially when I am already over budget. But I want at least to put this question on the table.

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[11] Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 2.

[12] See, for example, Hutchinson and Smith 1996.

[13] Ramanujan 1999: 448–50; and compare p. xiv.

[14] For a recent overview, see Alam 2003.

[15] Armstrong 1982: 269.

Let me start with some quotes from various papers as they were originally presented at the seminar:

- **The growth of Assyria also entailed the growth of an imperial ideology.**
- An ambitious monarchy which propelled the old Babylon-centered theology and cosmology of the intellectual elites to the status of **an imperial ideology**, **propagated mainly in the numerous buildings inscriptions** of the dynasty. These inscriptions **legitimize the rule of the Neo-Babylonian kings** almost exclusively in their role as preservers and restorers of the rituals and temples of Sumer and Akkad.
- The creation of Achaemenid Akkadian was primarily motivated by **the need to appropriate the Akkadian language for the purpose of the imperial propaganda,** while at the same time signifying a rejection of the high cultural tradition conveyed by official literary Babylonian. **This would make the creation of Achaemenid Akkadian a pure ideological and political statement**.
- Moreover, the use of the **paleo-Hebrew script in the Hellenistic and Roman period (and even on the coins of the modern state of Israel) served an ideological purpose. For example, the paleo-Hebrew script suggests claims to antiquity and legitimacy.** It connected governments (e.g., Samaritan, Hasmonean, and Bar-Kokhba) and religious groups (e.g., the Qumran sect) with the golden age of ancient Israel.
- It is a statement of the obvious to assert that Sumerian was an integral part of the ideological framework of the Ur III state. After Akkadian had replaced Sumerian as the language of administration and propaganda during the preceding Sargonic period, Sumerian once again emerged in the south as the language of writing: portions of the Sumerian literary corpus better known from later Old Babylonian copies were composed at this time, likely originating as court performances as **Ur III kings sought to recapture the glories of a legendary Sumerian heroic age of which they saw themselves as heirs, such was the foundation of their legitimization.**
- Sumerian was not only the language of instruction, but also the language of the scribal milieu, the glue that held the scribal guild together. **And so it served a crucial ideological function in shaping scribal identity.**
- It seems very likely that the **Urartians developed a system of government which held these natural "islands" together through various military and ideological mechanisms** that left them with the capacity to function independently,
- Smith … has argued that **display inscriptions advanced a claim to royal legitimacy by the king's unique ability to transform and "civilize" the natural** world through construction.

I could have assembled precisely the same kinds of quotations from contributions to any conference on South or Southeast Asian premodern studies, where ideology in general and the legitimation argument in particular are the first choice in industrial-strength solvents for all historical problems. My difficulty with legitimation theory specifically — aside from the fact that it is entirely mechanical and utterly predictable — is that it makes a range of assumptions about the past that we are not authorized to make. This is where (to revert to John Kelly's image) Weber's worst nightmares would come true, where what was offered originally as a hypothesis has since hardened into an axiom. How legitimation explains anything seems itself never to be explained, let alone critiqued and defended, as Weber would certainly have insisted; instead, it is simply asserted as a fact of universal human behavior. Weber may have invited this consequence upon his head when he proclaimed that "*in no instance* does domination voluntarily limit itself to the

appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition *every such system* [of domination] attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy," though he did leave room for maneuver when he elsewhere added, "The usefulness of the above classification [of ideal types of legitimate domination] can only be judged by its results in promoting systematic analysis … The idea that the whole of concrete historical reality can be exhausted in the conceptual scheme about to be developed is as far from the author's thoughts as anything could be."[16] Legitimation as well as ideology (the latter in the strong and useful sense of the term — the systematic miscognition of reality through discourses that sustain asymmetrical relations of power — not in the imprecise sense of "idea system") are terms invented to explain how power reproduces itself under the peculiar conditions of capital. Many have argued this out for ideology, though so far as I know there exists no in-depth critique of legitimation as a social-science explanation of the non-modern world. If the briefest and most selective quotation can capture such complicated matters let us note Claude Lefort: "Ideology is the sequence of representations which have the function of re-establishing the dimension of a society 'without history' at the very heart of historical society," that is, of capitalist society; and Paul Ricoeur: "Ideology arises not on the collapse of the ritual dimension but from the open conflictual situation of modernity."[17]

Moreover, the underpinnings of the concepts of ideology and legitimation have been in hot water in the past decade, at the hands of social scientists themselves who find they make no sense even for capitalist societies in the way we normally think of them. For the sociologist Nicholas Abercrombie and his collaborators, ideology works not to create false consciousness in the masses but to build ruling class consensus. Social scientists who work in peasant societies, such as James Scott, argue that ideology is basically meaningless there: no one is listening. And even if the dominated in the past were listening, why believe that elites sought to secure their consent by the false consciousness of ideology, or sought to convince them of something in which they didn't believe themselves? — and we are committed to just this interpretation if we say they are deploying culture for purposes of what our contributors often call "propaganda."

Indeed, legitimation implies the attempt, through the application of ideas or acts, to make a political or other phenomenon appear to conform to a set of norms when *ex hypothesi* it does not. Such an assessment of a theory of action is vulnerable to a host of criticisms. It rests either on a model of consensual rational choice that is largely belied by experience, or else on a conspiracy theory of politics: "legitimation" suggests a knowledgeability on the part of rulers that is unavailable to people at large, who are therefore cultural dopes and dupes, since they are induced to believe in ideas opposed to their interests as rulers know them to be. Moreover, from what vantage point, in a world of continuous political practices — that is, in the world of premodernity — would it be possible even to perceive the asymmetry between political fact and political norm that legitimation would be called upon to reconcile? In the historical experience of a Luwian or Assyrian, there had always been kings, who had always exercised power in a given way. No one had ever experienced anything else; no standard of comparison existed for doubting the inevitability of kingship, which accordingly approximated a natural law. In other words, you only need legitimation when something is, in objective fact, illegitimate. But where does that objective fact of illegitimacy come from, from what norms of legitimacy does it deviate? Rulers in antiquity could indeed be just or unjust, true heirs or false, and they could most certainly terrify or mollify.

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[16] See Weber 1978/1: 56 and 63 (emphasis added); 216 respectively (and cf. p. 263).

[17] Lefort 1986: 181–236; Ricoeur 1986: 259–61. See Pollock 2006b, chapter 13, from which these paragraphs have been adapted, along with the paraphrases of the ideology critique from the oeuvre of the sociologist Anthony Giddens.

But there is no reason to assume they cared, let alone needed to secure the assent of their subjects to the legality and validity of their rule. The requirement to elicit such assent is a necessity of modernity, where coercion has been limited by, for example, constitutional freedoms.

What if rulers were not manipulators and the ruled were not dupes? What if people believed in what they were doing? What if power and culture bore a completely different relationship to each other in premodernity from what we find under the very peculiar conditions of capitalist modernity? We cannot even begin to ask such questions if our kneejerk explanation is legitimation, ideology, and propaganda.

In closing let me try to put the methodological proposal here in the broadest terms possible. I suggest we develop theory and devise an explanatory apparatus open enough to allow us to be *surprised* by the past. That's not how we should always and forever start out since there are indeed long-term continuities in history (to say nothing of the hermeneutical prison house constructed by our own historicity). But that is how I think we should strive to be: open to the unpredictable. A graffito I saw in almost-post-modern Berlin in 1989 captures something of what I am trying to describe. Marx famously argued, against the philosophical idealists, that it is lived social reality that calls the tune for our thinking: "Es ist nicht das Bewusstsein der Menschen, das ihr Sein, sondern umgekehrt ihr gesellschaftliches Sein, das ihr Bewusstsein bestimmt." In short, "Das Sein betimmt das Bewusstsein," being founds consciousness.[18] The graffito writer argued otherwise: "Das Sein *ver*stimmt das Bewusstsein," being confounds consciousness. Life and history, in other words, can astonish us.

[18] Marx, *Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, in Marx and Engels 1956–1968: vol. 13: 9.

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# FINAL ROUNDTABLE

# 15

# FINAL RESPONSE: ON THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENTS, LANGUAGE, WRITING, AND THE STATE

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This has been a seminar ranging widely in topics, yet interconnected in theme, and the rich feast it has afforded would not have been possible without the careful planning and hard work of Seth Sanders and his colleagues at the Oriental Institute. Let me begin, therefore, with many thanks to them all. Given the richness and diversity of the feast, I am not able to respond to it comprehensively. I shall have to be selective and do so with remarks organized in two parts: first, two general observations on what I take to be the setting and shape of the seminar overall; then, three comments about specific issues posed in the papers, particularly those of Paul-Alain Beaulieu on first-millennium B.C. Mesopotamia, and of Paul Zimansky, also treating the first millennium, on the kingdom of Van/Urartu.

## TWO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The importance of a seminar like this is not simply in the specific illumination it can bring to its stated theme: the impact of language and writing on state formation and national identity in the ancient Near East. The importance is also, as Seth Sanders has signaled in his introductory paper, in the example the seminar puts forward that ancient Near Eastern studies are not, or do not have to be, a quaint, dispensable enterprise, an "ivory tower" luxury. That they are still so regarded is distressingly plain, in society at large and the universities in particular, even if the recent looting of the Baghdad Museum and the destruction or serious damage to numerous archaeological sites in Iraq have captured broad public attention and sympathy. But this attention and sympathy, I fear, are only momentary because not really very deep or knowing. If there is to be an interest more solid and lasting, at least in the college and university world, it will come only from organized intellectual efforts like this seminar. The audience may never be large, but a quick reflection should make it clear that ancient Near Eastern studies do have a place in university, and non-university, settings because they deal with vital issues of human behavior and thought that, while in part culturally specific, also reverberate on a wider, even universal, human plane. In terms of the seminar, this means that investigating the lines connecting language, writing, state formation, and national identity in the ancient Near East requires not only a knowledge of the ancient data, but also a serious awareness of how such phenomena have been connected in other human societies and of how these connections have been studied. And this awareness is not one-sided: ancient Near Eastern studies being just the borrower of analogies, models, and methods utilized elsewhere. It is also that the other fields have much to learn about their own subjects from the data, approaches, and case analyses worked out by Near Eastern specialists, who, after all, have as their arena some of the earliest human attempts at complex cultures, on which many later attempts were built, deliberately or indirectly.

At stake in this interplay between the fields of study is, of course, the challenge of how one undertakes cultural comparisons, and behind that is the necessary dialectic between theory and

data. Both are issues fundamental to this seminar, as Seth Sanders has outlined it, and both are embedded, some more explicitly, some less so, in the papers that make it up. Data, it may be recalled, have no meaning, may be said not even to exist, without an underlying theory, whether that theory is articulated or not. And without a theoretical frame, comparisons of one group of data to another would have no meaning as well. On the other hand, theory, whether directly or indirectly, is ultimately rooted in data, which give it flesh and blood — its life. All of this may seem obvious, yet in fact the awareness of the particular mix of theory, data, and comparisons in the research we pursue is not always to be found. The result can be a lack of rigor about what is being pursued and a lack of recognition of and openness to the possibilities for how it should be pursued. And with the lack of such rigor, recognition, and openness, we face a greater difficulty in communicating the sense and significance of our pursuits to our colleagues, in our own fields and especially in others. Developing a self-consciousness about theory, data, and comparisons, therefore, is an essential ingredient in finding our places in the intellectual world around us, and this seminar may serve as an expression of, and an impetus toward, that goal.

In so doing, it is worth observing, the seminar continues a tradition at the Oriental Institute that goes back to its founding by James Henry Breasted, who in various statements envisioned the Institute as a comprehensive laboratory, gathering the methods and data of all relevant fields of knowledge, for the study of the origins of human civilization in the Near East.[1] Among the manifestations of this vision has been a series of symposia and lecture programs that have proved to be important for the conception of the ancient Near East as a whole and its relations to other fields of study. Arguably, the most formative of these occurred sixty years ago: a set of public lectures by Institute faculty, organized by Henri Frankfort and his then wife, H. A. Gronewegen-Frankfort, which eventuated in the book, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (1946).[2] The book aimed to find the common points of cultural behavior and outlook in several of the major civilizations of the Near East before Hellenism and to compare these with the classical Greek picture. The effort was not new, but never carried out with such range, subtlety, and mastery of the ancient sources. To be sure, it made little explicit reference to theoretical writings about human culture — not surprising given the popular audience it was addressing — but its view of the pre-Hellenistic Near East as sharing an essentially mythopoeic view of the world drew on a lively scholarly discussion of "non-rational" and "rational" thought, and here there were a few particular citations of the philosopher, Ernst Cassirer.[3] The impact of *The Intellectual Adventure*, or its abbreviated paperback version, *Before Philosophy* (1949),[4] on the lay and scholarly public cannot be calculated, in my judgment. It is still very much with us, whatever criticisms we may level at it, because it remains in many ways the only systematic, coherent presentation of a theory of culture for the ancient Near East before Hellenism: a pre-eminent statement of the intellectual legacy of that Near East to what came after it. It set out a challenge for the kind of broader dialogue within the study of human culture that the present seminar aims to join.

While this seminar has explored a variety of relationships among language, writing, and society in the ancient Near East, it is important to note one relationship that has virtually been left out: that between the structure of a particular language, for example, its verbal morphology and syntax, and the ways in which the speakers of that language classify and conceptualize the world

[1] See the quotations and discussions in the biography of James H. Breasted by his son, Charles Breasted (1943: 238–39, 397–99).

[2] Frankfort and Groenewegen-Frankfort 1946.

[3] Frankfort and Groenewegen-Frankfort 1946: 27, 388.

[4] Frankfort and Groenewegen-Frankfort 1949; this version, reprinted several times, omits the section by William Irwin on biblical Israel.

around them. In the twentieth century the study of this relationship was particularly associated with the name of Benjamin Lee Whorf,[5] but the discussion is much older, going back at least another century to Wilhelm von Humboldt.[6] Throughout, it has been lively and controversial — the possibility of a connection between language and Weltanschauung often being conceded, but along with that the difficulty of proving it in detail, especially in showing a causal link: if and how language can influence a speaker's world view.

In ancient Near Eastern scholarship, the issue has had several prominent expressions. One was the inaugural address of Benno Landsberger at the University of Leipzig in 1926 entitled "Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der babylonischen Welt."[7] In this, as part of a general thesis that a culture must first and foremost be studied within its own native sources and its own native terminology, Landsberger embraced the notion that key features of the Mesopotamian Weltanschauung can be discovered in the ways the two principal Mesopotamian languages, Sumerian and Akkadian, are configured — and that not simply in lexicon, but in morphological and syntactic structure. The lecture has had a substantial influence on several generations of Assyriologists, although eventually more in its call for inner cultural study than in its language-Weltanschauung connection. In biblical scholarship, language-Weltanschauung has also been visible, focused on contrastive analyses of biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek and the different views of reality they are supposed to encode, and carried out by such scholars as Thorleif Boman, in his *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*,[8] and Gerhard Kittel and various associates in the volumes of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.[9] As in Assyriology, so in the biblical context, the reaction to such connections began with more enthusiasm than it has retained. Indeed, in the Bible, the reaction has become generally negative in the last forty or so years, and the scholar most responsible for this has been James Barr. Especially in his *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961),[10] Barr showed himself in general skeptical, though not entirely dismissive of a connection between language and Weltanschauung but was sharply and powerfully critical of what he took to be the crude, simplistic formulations of a Boman or a Kittel (see, e.g., his concluding remarks on pp. 294–96).

If, then, the general claim of a connection between language and Weltanschauung remains controversial, though by no means passé, in ancient Near Eastern studies it is not a focus of contemporary scholarship. The papers of our seminar reflect this attitude, if implicitly, by seeking not to ask how language structures may have influenced the political and ethnic thinking of their ancient speakers, but to discuss how the choice of script and language, including the particular dialect or register, as well as the literary and physical form of the communication — monumental versus non-monumental, especially — may serve as markers of particular ancient political and ethnic groupings and their ideologies.

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[5] See Carroll 1956.

[6] Particularly helpful is the collection of von Humboldt's essays by Harden and Farrelly (1997), especially the reprinting there of his 1822 article (von Humboldt 1997: 23–51).

[7] The address was republished, along with an afterword by Landsberger and a later and related essay of his student, Wolfram von Soden (1965). Landsberger's essay was also translated into English with an introduction (see Landsberger 1976).

[8] Boman 1960.

[9] For the original German publication, see Kittel (1932–1942), who was principal editor until his death. For later volumes, see Friedrich (1954–1979). For the English translation, see Bromiley (1964–1976) and Pitkin (1976).

[10] Barr 1961.

## THREE SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Let me now turn from more general observations on the setting and shape of this seminar to three specific comments on the mix of language, writing, culture, and politics, in part based on what Paul-Alain Beaulieu and Paul Zimansky have discussed for the Near East of the first millennium B.C.

The first comment concerns the intersection of culture and politics in ancient Near Eastern history. Modern scholarship has sometimes exhibited a certain suspicion about this, that is, about the place of culture — writing, literature, art, etc. — in the political and economic life of ancient Near Eastern states. Cultural expressions have even been seen as excrescences on the course of political and economic history: as ideology in a kind of Marxist sense, to which Sheldon Pollock gave reference in his response — a con game that rulers played to cover the *Realpolitik*, and, if you will, the *Realökonomie*, by which they exercised power. In this perspective, then, the real task of historians is to find ways through and/or around this cultural/ideological screen in order to get at the political, economic, social, and military realities the screen was designed to obfuscate and distort. The problem, however, is not so much to decide what is most important or primary as the agent of historical maintenance or change — politics, economy, military actions, culture, etc. It is, rather, to recognize that these elements are inevitably interwoven, and so to appreciate the complexity of the mix and how it works. Imperialism, for example, whether among the Assyrians of the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods B.C. or among the British of the nineteenth century A.D., seems never to have been a matter simply of naked political and economic power; it has also involved the question of self-definition: the need of the empire to find, understand, and justify a place for itself, in time and space, in the intersecting worlds of humanity, nature, and the divine. In this process, culture plays a dual role: as literature, art, and the like, it provides the pre-eminent means of formulating and promulgating imperial self-definition; but it is also part of the definition itself because one of the pre-eminent roles of the empire is to be the possessor of culture — or, better, Culture — the one which owns and defines, as several of our seminar papers and discussions have emphasized, the essential means of communication and the traditions they communicate.

This point is well recognized in Paul-Alain Beaulieu's paper on first-millennium Mesopotamia. Among the several cases he treats in it is the recurrent series of conflicts in the first millennium between Assyria and Babylonia. As he perceptively argues, these were in large measure over political identity, indeed, cosmological identity: which state, which capital — Babylon, Assur, Nineveh — would be the cosmic center? Put another way and focusing on the Assyrian ruling elites specifically, we may say that Babylonia was for these elites not simply a military or political problem of governance; it was also a problem of the ownership of the cultural patrimony of Mesopotamia. The issue was joined particularly sharply in the reign of the Assyrian King Sennacherib, as Beaulieu notes. The successive efforts on the part of Sennacherib to take control of Babylonia climaxed in his conquest and apparent destruction of the capital at Babylon and his personal assumption of the title of Babylonian king into his imperial sovereignty. But the emphasis in his texts and in those of his successors not only on military and political conquest, but on such features as his removing the dust of Babylon and the statue of its principal deity, Marduk, to the old Assyrian cultural capital at Assur, and his adaptation of the Babylonian form of the New Year's festival and its mythic composition, Enuma eliš — all of this indicates that for Sennacherib what was ultimately at stake was the neutralization of the cultural/cosmic imperium that Babylon represented and its transfer to Assyria. The strategy becomes all the more clear when it is

juxtaposed to that of a Middle Assyrian predecessor to Sennacherib, Tukulti-Ninurta I.[11] Here we can observe a very similar combination of cultural, political, and military actions toward Babylon, and Sennacherib's awareness of this parallel is suggested by one of his inscriptions, which was originally attached to a large presentation seal of the Middle Babylonian/Kassite King, Šagarakti-šuriaš. The inscription is actually a combination of several texts, each from a different king and period: the earliest attesting the ownership of Šagarakti-šuriaš; a later one by Tukulti-Ninurta I, making clear his capture of the seal in his conquest of Babylon; the latest by Sennacherib, in which he reports that the seal was taken back to Babylonia after Tukulti-Ninurta's demise only to be recovered again by Sennacherib himself in his conquest of Babylon.[12] In a sense, then, the successive layering of texts in this inscription, the interpretation and ordering of which are controlled by the latest text, of Sennacherib, epitomizes the overall strategy Sennacherib pursued: of resolving once and for all the longstanding Assyrian-Babylonian struggle by a final act of conquest, transfer, and replacement of Babylon as cultural and cosmic center.

A second point raised by the papers of Beaulieu and Zimansky, indeed, in one way or another, by all the contributions to this seminar, concerns the modes in which language communicates. Michael Silverstein in his response has laid out a valuable taxonomy of these modes. In particular, his distinction between the inscriptional technology and the denotative code of a language speaks directly to the monumental writing whose use in the states of the ancient Near East has been a frequent topic at our seminar. The point is that by the very fact of its display, that is, the inscriptional technology, a royal monumental inscription such as a stela or a relief communicated a message of power and sovereignty, whether or not the individual could read the actual message, that is, the denotative text, that he was facing — and throughout we must keep in mind the limited literacy in the ancient Near Eastern states. It was the very monumentality of the inscription, in other words, that communicated the monumentality of power and sovereignty — a monumentality that could be enhanced by artistic scenes and symbols that were not infrequently joined to the denotative, the inscriptional text. The denotative text, then, gave to those who could read it another form of enhancement because it specified and nuanced the message of power and sovereignty not only by what it actually said, but by the sense of exclusiveness, the privilege of elite membership, it conferred on its readers. And if these readers were a minority in the population, their numbers shrink even more when we recognize that not everyone of them would have had full access to the content and linguistic repertoire of the text, particularly if the text was a highly literary one. As for those who could not read the denotative text at all, there was a message as well. For these illiterates would have recognized, from the general availability of written materials around them, what writing looked like. But their inability to read the writing, their helplessness before it, would have communicated to them the superior authority of the rulership from which the writing came, and so, in a way complementary to those able to read, would have confirmed the hierarchy that the overall political system was founded on.

My third and last point has to do with the issue of Assyrian culture, as it concerns especially the Neo-Assyrian imperial period which both Beaulieu and Zimansky address. Is there something, indeed, that we can label Assyrian culture — in the sense of a coherent and persistent complex of group behaviors and beliefs, high and low — and can we describe it from the surviving record? The issue is difficult on at least two grounds. First, high culture in Assyria — traditions in the various arts, thus to be found primarily among the elites — was in a pronounced way derivative of Babylonia, even if, as the case of Sennacherib illustrates, with various Assyrian adaptations. An

[11] For a brief discussion of the parallels, see Machinist 1984/1985: especially 361–62.

[12] An edition and translation of the seal inscription may be found in Grayson 1987: 280–81, no. 28.

Assyrian high culture, thus, there was, but a really distinctive Assyrian high culture does not seem to be attested. Second, the territorial expansion of the Neo-Assyrian empire brought into its midst, and at many levels, a number of non-native Assyrian populations, especially the Aramaeans, who according to the official texts could be given the label "Assyrian." Yet, as Beaulieu has observed, their increasing presence, manifest linguistically and in other ways — note in particular the spread of Aramaic not only as a vernacular, but into the official realms of the empire — made less and less clear where "Assyrianness" was to be located.

If the search for an Assyrian culture, distinctive or not, appears difficult, it is not fruitless. An obvious starting point is the national/imperial god, Ashur, whose character, cult, and connection with the office of Assyrian king made up a complex specific to Assyria, and, in particular, rather different from the situation in Babylonia, although by the first millennium one can notice some mutual influence. But to understand the cultural profile that is rooted here, it would be beneficial to look at it not only from the Assyrian sources themselves, but from outside states and other groups with which Assyria, in its Neo-Assyrian phase, came into contact. In this regard, Paul Zimansky's paper on first-millennium Van/Urartu, coupled with the evidence of contemporary Israel/Judah, offers an instructive pair of case studies.

As Zimansky has carefully presented the situation, the limited amount of writing in Urartu, that is, in cuneiform and in hieroglyphic, was meant largely to serve the interests of the ruling elites, whether for public promulgations — propaganda — in the form of monumental display inscriptions, or for administrative accounting in the seventh-century B.C. reforms that Zimansky posits for the reign of Rusa II. As concerns the monumental display, it is significant that the Urartian rulers did not hide their indebtedness to the state that was their major opponent, Assyria, borrowing quite openly from the conventions of the Assyrian royal inscriptions not only elements of the royal titulary, but in many ways the very structure of the texts. Indeed, the first monumental royal inscription that we know from Urartu, of Sarduri I, is, as Zimansky points out, one whose model can easily be traced to the Assyrian Ashurnasirpal II, the father of Sarduri's rival, Shalmaneser III.

What we have here is a lateral transfer of political culture: the Urartians understood themselves, or aspired, to operate at the same political level as the Assyrian empire, but lacked in their estimation the native linguistic and literary culture to express this level adequately. So they borrowed the Assyrian traditions, making only modest changes in personal names and in some of the wording of the titulary to suit their local circumstances. The Assyrian traditions, in other words, were useful to the Urartians not only because they came ready-made for the occasion, but also because they served as a public signal that whoever used them were indeed the equals of the Assyrians. This situation is well known elsewhere in the history of the ancient Near East and beyond. For example, in Neo-Assyria itself in the latter ninth and earlier eighth centuries B.C., several Assyrian potentates, like Shamshi-ilu, chose to compose their own inscriptions in the Assyrian royal style not unlike what the Urartians did, so indicating their increasing independence of and challenge to their imperial master, the Assyrian king himself.[13]

Israel/Judah offers another instance of response to the political culture of the Neo-Assyrian empire, but in an opposite direction from that of Urartu. The most explicit evidence comes from the Hebrew Bible, and within it the major corpus is that portion of the prophetic book of Isaiah concerned with the First Isaiah, the prophet who was active in the latter half of the eighth century B.C. In this period an energetic series of Assyrian rulers initiated an aggressive expansion of ter-

[13] On these potentates and their period, see Grayson 1993: especially 26–29 and 1999: especially 261–69.

ritory and reorganization of the imperial administration, which engulfed Israel and Judah, among many other areas. The First Isaiah was very much concerned with the new imperial thrust, and one of his most penetrating responses to it is the poem in Isaiah 10:5–15, which begins, "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger."[14]

The particular context of the poem, given its urgent, polemical language, must have been a crisis with Assyria. The crisis, more particularly, seems to have been the military campaign of Sennacherib against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B.C., and one clue to this is that the Assyrian conquest of Samaria/northern Israel is described in the poem in the past tense, while that of Jerusalem is in the present or future (Isaiah 10:11). The challenge of this crisis for Isaiah seems to have been two-fold. On the one hand, the prophet had to recognize the overwhelming force of the Assyrian empire and its army, which a minor state like Judah could not realistically defeat. On the other, Isaiah had to find a way in the midst of this force to preserve or create for himself and his community what I might call mental space: "You may have knocked me down in body, but you can't take my mind and spirit." The challenge here is not unknown, of course, in many totalitarian regimes, and Isaiah 10:5–15, it may be proposed, is an attempt to answer this challenge.

It does so first by admitting the power of the Assyrian juggernaut, indeed describing its military accomplishments in some detail through the mouth of an apostrophized "Assyria," representing both the Assyrian king and the empire as a whole (Isaiah 10:8–11). But at the same time the poem makes clear that these military accomplishments are possible only because of Yahweh, the God of Israel, whose servant and agent the Assyrian king is (Isaiah 10:5, 12, 15). The accomplishments, thus, are re-configured from being Assyrian victories to Yahweh's punishment of Judah for its willful disobedience of Yahweh by its worship of other deities. And in this scheme the Assyrian king also does not emerge unscathed. For he too is indicted for acting against Yahweh — though out of willful ignorance, not, as for Judah, out of deliberate awareness of Him — in pursuing his military destructiveness excessively, beyond the bounds that Yahweh had set for him, and arrogantly claiming it was all his own doing (Isaiah 10:7, 12, 15). The consequence is that in the future Assyria and its king too will suffer punishment from Yahweh (Isaiah 10:12).

This theological orientation, in which one group construes its weakness and defeat by another group as punishment of itself by its own deities for sins committed against them, is well attested in ancient Near Eastern literature. Isaiah here is clearly a part of this broader tradition. What makes Isaiah's poem, however, more interesting is that the broader tradition is formulated more specifically, using images, ideas, and language drawn from the ruling ideology of the Neo-Assyrian empire which Judah faced. For example, the list of military exploits recited by the Assyrian king in the poem (Isaiah 10:8–11) is a central part of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and like them, our poem emphasizes that the exploits involve taking spoil (Isaiah 10:6) and cutting off nations and their borders (Isaiah 10:7, 13).[15] The arrogant boast of the Assyrian king in Isaiah, that he won his military successes all by himself, Yahweh's crucial role not being acknowledged (Isaiah 10:12; cf. 15), recalls the charge in the Assyrian inscriptions that the enemies of the Assyrian king fell before him because they trusted in themselves alone, not in the god Ashur.[16] In Isaiah, in other words, the Assyrian king fills the slot that the enemy is given in the Assyrian inscriptions.

These and other examples suggest that what is at stake in the Isaiah poem is not a simple borrowing from Assyrian ideological, more particularly, inscriptional conventions, as in the case

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[14] Baruch Levine (2003 and 2005) has studied this poem in the context of the development of Israelite monotheism. It should be noted that while all scholars are agreed on where the poem begins, in Isaiah 10:5, they disagree on where it ends, in verse 15, 19, etc., and on what editorial additions, if any, it exhibits.

[15] On the issue of border changes, see Wazana 2003.

[16] See Machinist 1983.

of Urartu; it is a deliberate inversion of those Assyrian conventions. Indeed, it is an inversion not only of individual conventions, but of the Assyrian royal inscriptional tradition as a whole. In the inscriptions, the center is the Assyrian king, who operates as the servant/agent of the Assyrian gods, especially the principal imperial god, Ashur. In the Isaiah poem, that center remains the Assyrian king, except that the god is not Ashur, but Yahweh. The Assyrian king's failure to recognize and act on this is construed, then, as a category mistake of the first order, leading to the charge that he will eventually disqualify himself as divine agent since he trusts in himself alone. The possibility that he could trust in Ashur, which is what the Assyrian inscriptions would affirm, is in Isaiah never even raised since the foundational assumption is that the structure with Ashur in first position is false; the first position can belong only to Yahweh. Isaiah 10:5–15, in short, may be said to be an Assyrian inscription in reverse, or, as Isaiah would doubtless have put it, an Assyrian inscription as it should properly be formulated. And the fact that Isaiah had the intellectual ability and audacity to make this claim — to turn some of the principal instruments of Assyrian ideology upside-down — becomes, then, proof that he can find the mental space with which to resist the otherwise irresistible Assyrian imperial machine.

In sum, the cases of Urartu and Isaiah in Judah move in opposite directions: the first a lateral or horizontal transfer of Assyrian cultural conventions with no essential differences; the second a vertical transfer, from superior to inferior, with a fundamental inversion. Put together, however, these differences turn out to be complementary perspectives on what is the same view of Assyrian culture. It is not a high culture, dealing primarily with literary, artistic, or scholastic themes, although these are mixed in. It is, rather, a political culture of imperial ambition and activity. The Assyrian coronation ritual captures this directly in its proclamation that the real king is the god Ashur ("Ashur is king; Ashur is king!"); the human king is his steward or priest (*šangû*), whom Ashur commands, as arguably his central duty, to expand ceaselessly the imperial realm [17] — a command that is clearly echoed in the Isaiah poem's statement that the Assyrian king cuts off not a few nations and removes the boundaries of peoples (Isaiah 10:7, 13). In this political culture, at least as articulated in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, just about anyone has the possibility of becoming an "Assyrian," even granting that not all may be considered equally "Assyrian." The fundamental criterion is not something like race or a knowledge of Akkadian or Sumerian; it is the active demonstration of obedience and service to the empire, that is, to the king and the gods in whom the empire is embodied.[18] Ideological resistance to this imperial Assyrianness, then, can be demonstrated by the use of cultural conventions that are proper only to the Assyrian emperor: so for the Urartian rulers in their quest to be accepted as worthy opponents of Assyria, on the same level. But resistance can also be manifest in the inversion and parody of the imperial ideological system as a whole, such as an inferior, vassal subject like Isaiah put forward to try to compensate for the vast gap with Assyria that Judah presented in military and political forces.

[17] The text of the coronation ritual, which seems to be Middle Assyrian in date, is edited by Muller (1937: especially 8–10, column 1, lines 22–46). The wording is echoed centuries later in the coronation hymn of the Neo-Assyrian monarch, Ashurbanipal; see Livingstone 1989: 26–27, no. 11.

[18] On the conceptualization of "Assyrian" in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, see Machinist 1993. It should be added that there is no scholarly consensus on whether the Assyrian empire actually required worship of its gods on the part of its subjects who had the status of vassals; for a recent review of the problem and related issues, see Holloway 2002.

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